



VOL IV

PORTRAITS
IN COURAGE





Senior Airman
ANTONIO ANTUNEZ
99th Security Forces Squadron
SECURITY RESPONSE TEAM LEADER

Senior Airman, then-Airman First Class, Antonio Antunez deployed to southern Iraq during the winter of 2008, to assist with the transfer of detainees. As part of his duties, two hours before each transfer, he conducted sweeps for improvised explosive devices (IEDs) that could disrupt the transfers.

Airman Antunez's team was performing such a sweep when they heard an explosion in the distance. Shortly after passing a deserted Iraqi checkpoint, their HMMWV was hit, a victim of an ambush. The vehicle was on fire, causing .50-caliber machine gun rounds to explode with deafening noise, all around him. The driver and passenger escaped out the front doors, but Airman Antunez and an interpreter remained inside. He pleaded for the interpreter to leave the burning vehicle, but the interpreter was frozen with fear. Quickly realizing the situation, Airman Antunez reached across the burning vehicle, opened the door, and kicked the interpreter out. The door slammed shut before he could follow.

As he made his way out of the vehicle through the gun turret, insurgents opened fire with small arms. Airman Antunez didn't want to fire back with the .50-caliber for fear of striking civilians. Instead, he grabbed his M-4 rifle and shot toward the tracers as he jumped off the top of the HMMWV. Once on the ground, Airman Antunez took command, assembled his team and held position so he could assess the situation. While securing the area, the other convoy vehicles rammed the burning vehicle out of the kill zone and recovered the team.

For his brave actions, Airman Antunez was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor.

Master Sergeant
DAVID BEALS
 Army Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha
COMBAT CONTROLLER

Master Sergeant David Beals proved himself a hero through direction of precise close air support (CAS) against a determined enemy in the remote Afghanistan countryside during the winter of 2007.

On 4 December of that year, Sergeant Beals was part of a 200-vehicle convoy conducting a combat reconnaissance patrol through a route saturated with improvised explosive devices (IEDs). After being attacked by an IED and small arms fire, Sergeant Beals returned a heavy stream of fire from his M-240G machine gun, enabling the convoy to continue on its path with zero casualties.

When his convoy again came under heavy fire from fortified positions the next morning, he called for immediate CAS. For the next 15 hours, he coordinated aircraft attack efforts. He deconflicted 150 friendly mortar calls, providing integration of devastating air-to-ground attacks on the enemy. Sergeant Beals controlled 20 CAS, missions releasing 19,000 pounds of ordnance that decimated the enemy and killed 87, including a Taliban commander. During the same patrol, his team was ambushed by direct enemy fire. With RPGs exploding in the air over their heads, he engaged the enemy with his mounted weapon, killing five insurgents and providing covering fire for vehicles caught in the kill zone. Finally, he simultaneously controlled five attacks and utilized CAS to demolish three compounds, killing 19 enemy attackers. His valiant efforts led to the liberation of a village, ending a nine-month Taliban occupation.

For his actions during this patrol, Sergeant Beals was nominated for his third Bronze Star Medal with Valor.





Major

MARY JO BURLEIGH

205th Regional Corps Advisory Command
STAFF NURSE ANESTHETIST

Major Mary Jo Burleigh's deployed to the Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan, where she administered over 300 anesthetics to critically wounded Afghan Army soldiers.

Major Burleigh quickly recognized the factors contributing to the local Afghan hospital's high casualty rate, including the lack of logistical support and practice of Civil-War era anesthetic techniques. Major Burleigh dispersed cultural fears of using narcotics for pain; previously, no Afghan patients received pain medication during or after surgery. She assisted the overwhelmed Afghan surgeons, taught anesthetists, and managed eight mass casualty events while enduring more than 40 rocket attacks and Taliban insurgents freely roaming the facility.

On one particular day, Major Burleigh received an urgent call; an interpreter, shot through the pelvis by an AK-47 at close range, was in critical condition. While in surgery, the interpreter lost most of his blood. Unfortunately, the hospital lacked a single pint to transfuse. The interpreter's condition was grim, and the Afghan surgeons had given up on him. Realizing the severity of the situation and urgent need for blood, she initiated a walking blood drive, transfusing over 20 bags of blood donated from US service members from the adjacent forward operating base. She worked on him for over 9 hours until he stabilized, then stayed with him around the clock until he could be safely removed from the ventilator, a task that Afghan medics could not perform.

The next day, Major Burleigh identified other life-threatening injuries, arranged his transfer to the NATO hospital, and provided anesthesia for another six-hour surgery. Just three weeks later, he miraculously walked out of the hospital.

Technical Sergeant

ROBERT BUTLER

227th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division

EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL

When a bomb goes off, most people do not run toward it. If you're Robert Butler, that's exactly what you do. For Sergeant Butler, an explosive ordnance disposal team leader, it's a selfless act of heroism, one that saves lives; five to be exact.

In June 2007, then-Staff Sergeant Butler was riding in a convoy led by Iraqi police when the unarmored police vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device (IED). Immediately, his explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) vehicle pulled up to the scene. The driver waited in the vehicle as Sergeant Butler jumped out and swept the area for secondary explosive devices. "In an emergency like that, there are guys injured," Sergeant Butler said. "You don't have time to sit back and drop a robot to look for secondaries. You pull up, you get out, and you're walking, or running in some cases."

"The hardest part about completing a sweep after an IED goes off," he said, "is knowing the enemy is watching and waiting to push the button. You just try to be faster than the bad guys." After Sergeant Butler completed the sweep and collected evidence, he immediately assisted the combat medic in performing life-saving measures. Afterwards, he evacuated the injured police officers to medical care in Kirkuk, Iraq.

Despite the viciousness of the attack and traveling two hours for care, his quick actions ensured all five Iraqi policemen survived.





VALOR

: noun

boldness or determination in facing great danger, especially in battle; heroic courage; bravery



Major
VICTORIA ELLIOT
203rd Corps Afghan National Army
MEDICAL SERVICE CORPS

During her deployment in the summer of 2007 to Afghanistan, then-Captain, Victoria Elliot participated in two convoy missions will forever be ingrained in her mind.

In August of that year, her ground assault Coalition convoy encountered a complex ambush with improvised explosive devices (IEDs), rocket propelled grenades (RPGs), mortars, and small arms fire. Immediately initiating radio communications, Captain Elliott relayed location information to the convoy commander. Her actions were critical in determining the enemy's position and establishing a counter-ambush plan. Her tactical awareness and evasive driving rallied the rest of the convoy forward, out of the kill zone.

In October of the same year, her convoy was attacked on two separate occasions during a single mission in the treacherous Tanga Valley. Experience told her something was terribly wrong when the local children began running into their homes. As the street cleared, the first attack started, and a barrage of mortar shells and small arms fire rained down on the convoy. During the ensuing battle, Captain Elliott's window stopped a sniper bullet from entering the vehicle. Her team was able to break contact and move out. Just one kilometer after remounting, the convoy was attacked a second time. The enemy directed RPGs and small arms towards the rear of the convoy and an IED to the lead vehicle. Captain Elliott guided her driver, who was temporarily blinded by debris from the IED, through the narrow winding road, and led the convoy from the kill zone.

Capt Elliott received the Bronze Star Medal, Army's Combat Action Badge and the sniper's bullet from her vehicle's window, for her bravery.

*Captain***DAVID W. GOLDEN**2-506th Infantry Battalion Air Assault**BATTALION ELECTRONIC WARFARE OFFICER**

Captain David Golden deployed to Afghanistan to maintain counter-radio controlled improvised explosive device (RCIED) electronic warfare equipment on more than 250 vehicles traversing an area the size of Delaware.

With intermittent weather and limited helicopter assets, Captain Golden found himself traveling outside the wire, in ground convoys to properly maintain combat-capable vehicles. Enemy ambushes and IEDs became a common occurrence. During one convoy, with Captain Golden manning his vehicle's M-240 crew-served weapon, the convoy was ambushed. He immediately returned fire but quickly ran out of ammunition. Switching between multiple weapons, he continued to provide protective fire. During the engagement, an armor-piercing incendiary round struck Captain Golden's vehicle, barely missing him.

On a separate mission to replace two antennas damaged by an earlier attack, Captain Golden and his team were once again engaged by the enemy. During the ensuing firefight, he was struck in the forehead by 107mm rocket shrapnel. Immediately, he noticed other members of his squad were severely wounded. Despite his head wound, Captain Golden performed life-saving techniques on the wounded, placing a tourniquet on one soldier's arm above a deep gash. Only after the soldier was moved to the casualty collection point did Captain Golden accept medical aid. Once treated, Captain Golden was back on his feet, helping the wounded to the first medical evacuation helicopter before accepting a seat on the second helicopter.

Captain Golden returned to duty, finished his tour, and knew that on his watch, none of the vehicles he managed were struck by RCIEDs.





Staff Sergeant

TRAVIS GRIFFIN

732nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron
PATROL LEADER

Selected to head a Police Transition Team, Staff Sergeant Travis Griffin was considered to be the perfect tactical leader. His mission: negotiate the worst streets of Baghdad and restore law and order while training, mentoring, and coaching Iraqi police.

Every day, he led 14 heavily-armed Airmen into the insurgent-infested stronghold. Sergeant Griffin, who was on his fifth combat deployment, had two goals: to train Iraqi police forces, and ensure his Airmen returned home safely. He insisted that both goals were best served by commanding from the front. Through the first six months, Sergeant Griffin had been exposed to multiple improvised explosive device (IED) strikes and indirect fire attacks. In February 2008, Sergeant Griffin's squad was hit by an IED strike, seriously injuring a soldier. Despite the chaos, Sergeant Griffin led his convoy back through the kill zone, ensured site security, and administered life-saving treatment to wounded comrades, all the while under small arms fire and threat of secondary IEDs.

On April 3, 2008, while leading his squad on a combat operations patrol on one of the most dangerous routes in Baghdad, Sergeant Griffin's vehicle was struck by an explosively formed penetrator--the deadliest IED found in Iraq. Within seconds of the attack, and with Sergeant Griffin gravely wounded, his squad reacted exactly as he trained them, providing site security, clearing buildings, and detaining possible insurgents. Despite relentless efforts by an Army medic, Sergeant Griffin's injuries proved fatal.

Sergeant Griffin would have refused to trade places with anyone that day. His security forces Airmen knew him as a warrior's warrior, dedicated to a higher calling of Service Before Self.

*Major***ERIC HOLT**1st Special Operations

Critical Care Evacuation Team

ANESTHESIOLOGIST

Major Eric Holt was on his fourth deployment, providing battlefield care for special operations forces (SOF) at forward operating bases. Known for his superior skill and zeal, he has treated and recovered SOF teammates on three continents.

In January 2009, Major Holt accompanied members of a Marine special operations team as they staged forward to conduct a nighttime direct-action mission in southwest Afghanistan. While returning from the mission via a ground convoy, his SOF team was struck by an improvised explosive device (IED). The IED detonated under his vehicle, ripping it apart and throwing Major Holt 35 yards from the vehicle, seriously wounding him. Ignoring his injuries and slipping in and out of consciousness, he attempted to assess and treat his teammates.

Major Holt sustained multiple intracranial hemorrhages, extensive facial bone and skull fractures, and a burst-fractured cervical vertebra. Members of his medical team evacuated him via helicopter to a nearby field surgical station, where he continued to help triage and aid the other Marines and a fellow Airman wounded by the blast. Eventually, the surgical team stabilized Major Holt and placed him on mechanical ventilation. He was then medically evacuated. He survived his wounds and continues to endure the litany of evaluations and treatments that are necessary for recovery from his blast injuries.

Major Holt fully expects to be able to treat people again, and plans to return to the operating room, in a SOF physician's role.





HONOR

: noun

1. honesty, fairness, or integrity in one's beliefs and actions.
2. a source of credit or distinction.



Staff Sergeant
GARY HORN

205th Regional Police Advisory Command - South
AEROSPACE MEDICAL TECHNICIAN

In March 2008, then-Senior Airman Gary Horn, was deployed to Afghanistan on a Joint mission with the Army as part of a police mentor team responsible for training members of Afghan National Police on combat medical techniques and battlefield medicine.

During a patrol, an Afghan National Police truck struck an improvised explosive device. The driver suffered a severely broken leg, and the passenger a partially amputated ankle with a shrapnel wound to his upper leg, causing arterial bleeding. Sergeant Horn immediately grabbed his medical gear and, despite the danger, treated the wounded policemen. He put his combat medical training to use, and with advanced battlefield care, stabilized the wounded until they could be safely evacuated. Because of his actions, both men survived.

Only 1 month later while on night patrol, Sergeant Horn's team was ambushed by Taliban fighters. Sergeant Horn was driving the rear truck, which took a direct hit from a rocket propelled grenade (RPG). Disregarding his injuries and under direct small arms and machine gun fire and with multiple RPGs exploding all around, he successfully maneuvered his HMMWV through the kill zone to higher ground and safety. In the end, Sergeant Horn sustained glass wounds to his left arm and shoulder, a ruptured ear drum, a concussion and traumatic brain injury. By training the Afghans, his medical techniques will become force multipliers as the Afghan National Police use the skills he taught them.

Sergeant Horn's dedication and courage on the battlefield resulted in zero casualties for his fellow U.S. and Afghan comrades.

*Technical Sergeant***JAMES HOWARD****732nd Expeditionary Security Forces
SECURITY FORCES SPECIALIST**

Technical Sergeant James Howard was a Police Transition Team squad leader in Iraq. During his third week of a year-long deployment, he had already performed more than 20 combat patrols on the day his sister squad struck an improvised explosive device.

Sergeant Howard instinctively directed his 18-member team out of the kill zone. He jumped into action, rendering combat medical aid to three Airmen wounded in the attack. After stabilizing the wounded Airmen, he began establishing a security cordon. Sergeant Howard sprinted from building to building, shouting instructions to his team members to “take cover” and “hold the line” in an effort to prevent further injuries to the hundreds of Iraqi civilians and coalition forces operating in the area. Once the cordon was established and the perimeter secure, he directed the team to evacuate more than 70 civilians within the cordon where fire from the blast was producing toxic fumes.

Two months later, Sergeant Howard was tasked with leading a combined team to collect intelligence and evidence in a case involving the murder of several Iraqi civilians. Joint intelligence warned that insurgents were continuing to terrorize and destabilize the district by killing local residents. His human intelligence-gathering efforts yielded more than 300 pieces of evidence; with his investigative skills proving crucial in the arrest of three murder suspects and the prosecution and conviction of two confirmed insurgents. Sergeant Howard’s ability to lead tactical teams in an uncertain and fluid combat environment was renowned within the Coalition community.

Iraqi policemen who worked with him still ask newly-assigned security forces personnel, “When is Sergeant Howard coming back?”





Senior Airman

CHRISTOPHER HUBENTHAL

1st Calvary Division
COMBAT CAMERA

Moving from city to city in Iraq, Senior Airman Christopher Hubenthal captured the scenes of Operation Iraqi Freedom with his camera. Standing side-by-side with outside media agencies, Airman Hubenthal fought to tell the positive story of coalition forces liberating the Iraqi people.

Airman Hubenthal took photos for use in after-action reports and intelligence and reconnaissance briefings. His photography was used to plan for future operations and depict the brave efforts of American service members. Embracing the truism, "a picture is worth a thousand words," his primary weapon was a Nikon digital camera. However, during Operation Arrowhead Ripper, a combat mission clearing a road leading the way for an explosive ordnance disposal team, Airman Hubenthal and his team took intense sniper fire, small-arms fire, and rocket-propelled grenades (RPG). As fire rained down from rooftops trapping the Army team, Airman Hubenthal continued to document the unfolding events. Photographs from this mission were used to brief the President of the United States on ground conditions in Iraq.

In the midst of Arrowhead Ripper, a Soldier was wounded by RPG shrapnel. Still under fire from snipers, Airman Hubenthal put down his camera and picked up the fallen Soldier's weapon, acting as the point man for the injured Soldier's security team. He successfully escorted the Soldier four blocks while under fire to a point where he could be medically evacuated.

Airman Hubenthal's quick thinking and leadership not only preserved the life of the injured individual, but also exemplified our warrior ethos.

*Technical Sergeant***MATTHEW JONES**Task Force 373, 3rd Ranger Battalion**SECURITY FORCES SPECIALIST**

In October '07, Technical Sergeant Matthew Jones, a battlefield interrogation team leader, led his team on a mission searching for high-value militia leaders in the mountains of Afghanistan.

During the assault, the Chinook helicopter transporting his team suffered a hard landing due to "brown out" conditions. Sergeant Jones sustained extensive abrasions and contusions to the left side of his body. After evacuating the helicopter, his team immediately engaged nine hostiles, killing six on the initial assault. The assault force divided to pursue the remaining hostiles on foot, ultimately capturing two and killing one, while sustaining zero friendly casualties. Due to the continuing enemy threat, the group had to await a nighttime extraction. Under heavy fire from rocket-propelled grenades and small arms, Sergeant Jones traveled with the assault force on foot between two mountain ranges. Using weapons fire to cover movement, the assault force advanced one kilometer to a nearby compound and quickly established defensive fighting positions. Despite injuries received under fire, Sergeant Jones sprinted the remaining 200 meters to the compound with two detainees in tow.

With 360-degree security established, Sergeant Jones interrogated his captives and acquired the location of a terrorist training camp north of the assault force's position. Sergeant Jones relayed this intelligence to command, who quickly initiated a successful air attack on the training camp by A-10 aircraft and Apache helicopters. While waiting for extraction, the assault force continued engaging hostiles, killing more than 80 enemy personnel.

Sergeant Jones received treatment for his injuries and returned to duty. He received the Air Force Combat Action Medal for his heroic efforts.





DEVOTION

: noun

1. profound dedication; consecration.
2. earnest attachment to a cause, person, etc.
3. an assignment to any purpose or cause.



Captain
SCOTT LINK
Joint Task Force MED
FLIGHT SURGEON

Captain Scott R. Link deployed to Afghanistan in January '07 to stand up the new Craig Joint Theater Military Hospital.

During a visit by former Vice President Dick Cheney, a suicide bomber attacked the front gate, killing 20 personnel and wounding dozens of others. Captain Link bravely charged into the volatile scene, leading the initial medical response to the gruesome attack. With complete disregard for his own safety, he administered medical care to all wounded individuals and ensured prompt evacuation of the critically injured.

In March '07, Captain Link's mission was to provide medical care for two severely wounded Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers in response to a mortar attack. Captain Link departed on a Blackhawk helicopter for the mission. The Blackhawk experienced a complete tail rotor failure and crashed, injuring Captain Link. Despite painful neck and back injuries, Captain Link treated the injured Blackhawk crew. Once they were stable, he ran to a second Blackhawk which landed near his downed helicopter. There, he continued to the forward operating base in the second helicopter to evacuate the wounded ANA soldiers-his initial mission. His remarkable courage and selfless dedication to the mission at hand directly resulted in the saving of both ANA soldier's lives. Despite chronic pain from his back injury, Captain Link completed the full duration of his deployment. Upon his return to home station, he required surgery on his spine followed by months of painful physical rehabilitation.

The heroic actions of Captain Link directly saved the lives of dozens of Coalition force personnel and Afghan nationals.

Staff Sergeant
ZACHARY RHYNER
 21st Special Tactics Squadron
COMBAT CONTROLLER

Then-Senior Airman Zachary Rhyner, a combat controller, was deployed to Afghanistan, supporting Special Forces and Afghani Commando units. In April '08, during a 6 ½-hour air-assault raid to capture high-level terrorists, his team was attacked in a complex ambush.

His 10-man element climbed a near-vertical, 60-foot cliff to reach the mountain top objective, while sniper, machine-gun and rocket-propelled grenade fire poured down. Within 15 minutes, enemy forces killed one and wounded three teammates, including Sergeant Rhyner. They were pinned down. Insurgent forces on the high ground maneuvered 40 feet from the team. With disregard for his own life, and while his left leg was being treated for a gunshot wound, Sergeant Rhyner directed and controlled more than 50 "danger-close" air strikes and strafing runs against an estimated 200 well-trained insurgent forces. The strafing runs were within 100 to 200 meters, hammering the enemy forces with cannon fire, Hellfire rockets, 500-pound bombs, and a 2,000-pound bomb. The blasts showered the team with dirt and debris, but ultimately killed the enemy.

Sergeant Rhyner repeatedly risked his life by placing himself between enemy forces and wounded soldiers. Even while he was lowered by rope from the cliff, Sergeant Rhyner continued to direct fire from aircraft overhead. Additionally, he fired more than 100 rounds from his M-4 rifle to deter the enemy's advance and protect his team. His selfless actions saved the lives of the entire team, eliminated 40 insurgents and injured another 100.

For his actions, Sergeant Rhyner received the Air Force Cross and the Purple Heart.





Technical Sergeant

Working Dog

KERRY THOMPSON + BLECK

755th Air Expeditionary Group,
382nd Military Police Detachment
SECURITY FORCES K9

Technical Sergeant Kerry Thompson and Military Working Dog (MWD) Bleck proved invaluable on three separate occasions while deployed to Afghanistan.

After completing a mission, the Task Force Eagle Division came under fire from 107mm rockets. The first two rockets targeted the building where MWD Bleck was kenneled. Realizing this, Sergeant Thompson maneuvered through the impact zone and retrieved Bleck without concern for his own safety. Subsequently, a rocket flew overhead impacting a barrier near him. Sergeant Thompson protected Bleck as two more rockets impacted within 30 meters of the team, pelting them with shrapnel, fragmentation and debris. Sergeant Thompson's actions saved the life of MWD Bleck, which later proved invaluable.

While providing explosive detection support to Task Force Crazy Horse, the group learned insurgents were setting up improvised explosive devices (IED) on commonly-trafficked roads. Sergeant Thompson alerted his commander and took immediate action. He and Bleck cleared more than three miles of roads, detecting two previously missed IEDs and ensuring a safe travel route.

Upon returning from Joint patrol duty, Sergeant Thompson's convoy was ambushed with combined IED, small-arms, mortar-fire, damaging his vehicle. He took cover and returned fire. Realizing the convoy was still in the kill zone and there may be additional IEDs, Sergeant Thompson and Bleck moved south by foot, exposing themselves to enemy fire. They detected the location of two additional IEDs, marking them and communicating their locations, which enabled the convoy to safely move out of the kill zone without any loss of life.

Sergeant Thompson was awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal with Valor, Air Force Combat Action Medal and Army Combat Action Badge.

Technical Sergeant

JASON WEISS

336th Training Support Squadron

INDEPENDENT-DUTY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN

In December '07, Technical Sergeant Jason Weiss' eyes narrowed and his smile disappeared as he threw open the door of the hovering UH-1N Huey. A frigid mix of wind, rain and snow sucked the warmth out of the helicopter.

Sergeant Weiss scoured the vast snowy landscape of the tree-lined mountains in the Snoqualmie Pass, 45 minutes outside Seattle, Washington. As a search and rescue crew member, he was looking for a lone, injured 38-year-old Mark Thompson. Mr. Thompson had been stranded in the mountains for more than two days after being swept up in an avalanche, which fractured both bones in his lower left leg. Mr. Thompson's wife and best friend perished in the avalanche. When the team spotted the injured hiker, they lowered Sergeant Weiss to the ground, roughly 80 yards from the victim. Once released from the hoist, Sergeant Weiss sank to his chest in the snow. "I had to crab crawl for about 40 yards so I wouldn't sink in the snow. When I got to the victim, he was hungry, dehydrated and nearing hypothermia," Sergeant Weiss explained.

Making matters worse, the helicopter was running low on fuel and a blizzard was brewing. The sergeant slung the 176-pound hiker over his shoulders in a fireman's carry. He trudged through the waist-deep snow toward the extraction point. With his legs and lungs burning, Sergeant Weiss pulled Mr. Thompson by the hood of his jacket for the last 40 yards.

Once in the helicopter, Sergeant Weiss tended to the victim as they airlifted him to definitive medical care.





Senior Airman

DANNY WILLIAMS

755th Air Expeditionary Group
Operating Location - Bravo

EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL

One man's sacrifice to save the lives of others is something Senior Airman Danny Williams witnessed first-hand in April of 2009.

It is his duty to "render safe" improvised explosive devices (IEDs) threatening American and Coalition forces in Afghanistan. Airman Williams lost his team leader and his friend, Technical Sergeant Phillip Myers, while rendering safe an IED along a main casualty evacuation route in Afghanistan. With no robot available and an IED prohibiting movement along a main casualty evacuation route, Sergeant Myers was responsible for inspecting the IED and choosing a course of action. He instructed Airman Williams to fashion a device they would use to disarm the IED. Moments later, Airman Williams heard an explosion. He turned to see Sergeant Myers lying on the ground.

As everyone rushed to the aid of Sergeant Myers, Airman Williams stopped them. He knew the IED was not yet safe and further lives could be lost. Airman Williams now had the responsibility to render the IED safe. He probed the area, working around Sergeant Myers' body and the IED. He picked up his fallen teammate and moved back to a safer location. He then destroyed the IED and transported Sergeant Myers back to a coalition forward operating base.

Even after experiencing the death of his friend and knowing his next mission could be his last, he stayed behind and pieced together the same IED that took Sergeant Myers' life. By removing the IED threat, the road could stay open to transfer casualties and ensure more lives would be saved.



AND I WILL NOT FAIL.

A time for heroes...
to meet the highest
of expectations.

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Note: Many of the Airmen, featured in this publication, are wearing the Army Combat Uniform (ACU). All are in compliance with USAFCENT uniform policy. The Air Force will soon transition to the Airman Battle System-Ground uniform which will provide enhanced force protection for Airmen serving in contingency operations and negate the requirement to wear the ACU.

