



North Carolina
Bronze Star with "V" recipient

Air Force Special Agent Gregory Carmack

The Air Force has long been associated with bombing, air superiority, lift, and search and rescue missions. In recent years, the USAF has taken on unconventional missions as well, such as training explosive ordnance specialists, assisting convoys on the ground, and deploying weapons intelligence teams. Still, thwarting a suicide bomber on the ground would appear to be an unlikely task for an airman. But that is precisely what Air Force Special Agent Gregory Carmack did last year in Kirkuk, Iraq. His quick thinking during a surprise suicide attack protected his convoy from harm and saved dozens of lives. Carmack's heroism earned him the Bronze Star with "V" for valor.

Carmack, a 15-year veteran of the Air Force, knew well the terrain of Iraq and the Middle East, having spent six tours in the area. His duties during this tour in Iraq included locating high-value targets, performing counterintelligence missions, and assisting ground combat operations. On June 14, 2006, Carmack's three-vehicle OSI (Office of Special Investigations) convoy moved to capture a terrorist in Kirkuk. The convoy met a nine-truck Army detachment to discuss operational details. At this time, Carmack heard a shot ring out and saw a small truck ram through an Iraqi police checkpoint and move toward the OSI and Army vehicles. Having broken the perimeter, there was nothing between the truck and the disembarked team of soldiers and special agents.

Instinctively, Carmack recognized the imminent threat to the convoy. He began firing at the truck. The other convoy members took cover – only Carmack had a clear shot at the incoming attacker. Carmack hit his target: The mortally wounded driver lost control, and he hit an unoccupied Army Humvee without detonating the explosive-laden truck. An analysis performed after the planned attack found two 130-millimeter cannonshells attached to the passenger side of the vehicle – more than enough ordnance to kill or injure all the servicemembers present. Thirty six seconds elapsed from the time Carmack noticed the bomber until the threat was neutralized. Carmack credits his training for his ability to spontaneously react to such threats. Of note, Carmack completed the mission his OSI convoy originally set out to accomplish: Three days after the failed attack, Carmack captured the high-value target near Kirkuk.



Carmack emphatically supports his mission: "I believe in what we are doing. I've been there, been on the ground every day for six months. What we do there is making a difference." On September 13, 2007, Carmack received the Bronze Star with Valor. He currently serves at Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii.

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