



Luna Pier, MI  
**Bronze Star with Valor Device**

## MAJOR JOHN DETRO

Focused on a high value target from a major terrorist group, the 3rd Ranger Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment was on a direct assault mission in Northern Iraq in 2005.

Enemy assault soon ensued and then-Cpt. John Detro, an Army Physician Assistant, went to work treating the wounded while constantly threatened by incoming rounds.

"Prior to the mission, we had intelligence that the enemy was heavily armed and large in number," recalls Detro.

He explained that as his unit moved in hitting targets about a mile out, they could hear their air assets relaying information about the enemy movements. They were relocating to roof tops.

Although armed with the intel, the unit still was not fully prepared for what lay ahead.

"We assaulted the building with a force of approximately 50 personnel," Detro said. "As soon as we breached the door, the first two men were shot. We all moved into the building and received fire from above in the court yard, from adjacent stairwells, and from fighters within spider holes."

He explained that spider holes were hiding places in camouflaged walls.

Within minutes of the engagement, the 3rd Ranger Battalion had five urgent patients and 22 wounded. The infantrymen were in hand to hand combat in the hallway while Detro and two medics treated the wounded.

"At times we had to cover them [wounded] as incoming grenades landed around us," said Detro.

Detro and the other two medical personnel were wounded – though nothing major to slow them down. They received shrapnel fragments from exploding grenades. Nevertheless, they were able to move those they were treating to a nearby medical vehicle.

Bottom line – the mission was successful.

"As we were ready to leave the objective, the platoon sergeant came to the medical vehicle and stated we had a seriously injured member in the courtyard," recounted Detro.



# HEROES

"The majority of the force had vacated the area so the two of us went back inside and found the ground force commander and my medic providing care to a seriously wounded soldier with a gunshot wound to the left chest which severed his auxiliary artery."

"The medic and I did not have time to clamp it due to continued enemy presence so we placed a hemostatic dressing into the wound and compressed his arm to the chest wall."

The two left with the patients and headed for the helicopter landing zone.

"I flew with the casualties to the Combat Support Hospital where I assisted my former boss (Colonel James Ficke, deputy commander) and his staff in performing surgeries into the next evening."

Conducting a total of nine surgeries throughout the night, Detro and the medical team were able to save all of the seriously injured and the majority are still serving today. For his sound judgment and exceptional performance, Detro was awarded the Bronze Star with Valor Device and Purple Heart.

