

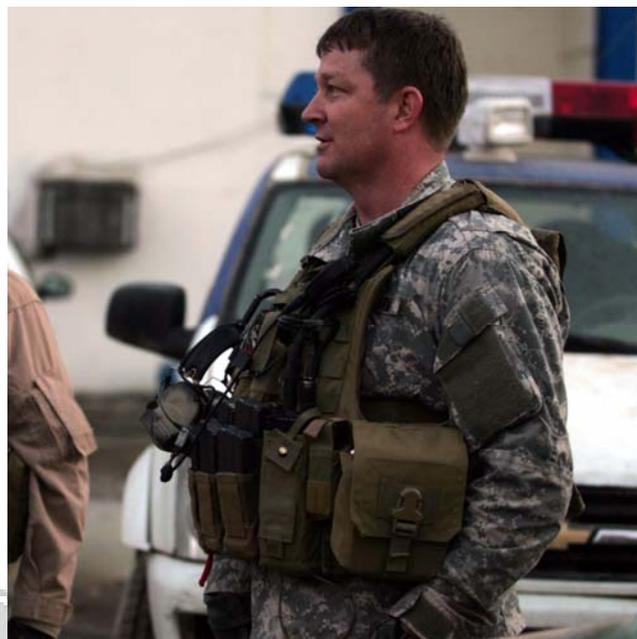
Chief Warrant Officer 4 James B. Herring

Just two days before Christmas 2006, then-Chief Warrant Officer 3 James B. Herring, 46, was leading a five-vehicle patrol near Baquabah, Iraq, searching for a Sunni-Arab insurgent cell responsible for assaults on Coalition Forces, when they were attacked. His heroic efforts saved the lives of 23 American and Iraqi men and earned him the Silver Star.

On December 23, 2006, CW3 Herring, a North Carolina National Guardsman, was the Detachment Commander for Operational Detachment Alpha 2084, Special Operations Task Force – North and was serving as the Ground Force Commander of the mission.

As he led his force down the narrow streets of the nearby village of Tahrir, they were fired upon by three insurgents with machine guns. As they moved forward, Sgt. Broughton Aragon, the gunner on Herring's Humvee, was able to kill the first three insurgents, only to face 20 more pouring over a concrete wall less than 30 feet away.

As the gunner began to fire upon the large group of insurgents, the driver Spc. Stephen Haas was shot through his right thigh, and the vehicle came to stop. As Sgt. Aragon continued to fire, CW3 Herring noticed another group of insurgents coming from the opposite direction.



Roanoke Rapids, NC
Silver Star recipient

CW3 Herring jumped from the vehicle and fired his rifle, killing two of the enemy gunners. The other insurgents then fled into nearby buildings.

Alone against the larger enemy force, CW3 Herring, his gunner, a medic, and a now-wounded driver were blocked from support by an immobilized Iraqi vehicle. Realizing his driver was critically wounded, immobile and in need of immediate medical care, CW3 Herring left the relative safety of the vehicle again. He was knocked to the ground by the impact of a rocket propelled grenade, but got up and – covered by his gunner – ran to the driver's side of the vehicle. Fearing that Spc. Haas' femoral artery was hit, CW3 Herring successfully removed Spc. Haas from the vehicle and placed him in the rear seat so the medic Sgt. 1st Class John Masson could continue treatment.

CW3 Herring then climbed into the driver's seat, advised headquarters of the situation, called for medical evacuation, and maneuvered the vehicle – with a heavily damaged ballistic windshield obscuring his view – and led the combined ground assault force through the narrow side streets and back to Forward Operating Base Gabe.

CW3 Herring's heroic efforts turned the tide against a well-prepared enemy, killing many and preventing any member of the combined force from being killed or wounded. The decorated law enforcement officer in the Chesterfield County (Va.) Police Department remains on leave from his civilian job and continues to serve on active duty with the North Carolina National Guard.

He told the Army Times, "I think that we spent about 400,000 minutes in Iraq and you get recognized for something that took three minutes. I want to reiterate I wasn't the only hero out there. All those guys out there are heroes to me. They did things that warrant the same award, in my opinion."

Army Times [story](#).