



Jamestown, SC
The Bronze Star

MASTER SERGEANT JEFFREY D. WAGNER

A shy and reserved man with many talents who displays incredible calmness under fire --- that's an accurate description for then-Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Wagner. When his convoy was ambushed on main supply route Michigan between Fallujah and Habbaniyah, the Air Force non-commissioned officer remained composed but acted swiftly.

"I basically did what I was trained to do," said Wagner. Insurgents had attacked with two Improvised Explosive Device detonations within meters of his vehicle and small arms fire from nearby fields.

"I stayed on the road, accelerated through the threat, and put our vehicle in a position where my gunner Tech. Sgt. Matthew Walter could engage and eliminate the hostilities," he continued. His citation noted that his team and he then "provided suppressive fire to allow the assault team to neutralize the secondary threat."

This was one of several incidents that Wagner was recognized for. His unending initiative and leadership were cornerstones for the establishment of a major operational base that was designed for U.S. military forces and Iraqi Army to jointly destroy insurgent forces. Wagner was not only in charge of a Coalition Military Assistance Training Team at the Multi-National Security Transition Command in Iraq but also 220 Iraqi soldiers.

"Part of my job was to design a Base Defense Plan to protect more than 2,000 coalition personnel living on Camp Habbaniyah," explained Wagner.

This plan included extraction of all U.S. military and Department of Defense contractor personnel in the event insurgent forces attempted to take over the base, according to Wagner. On May 6, 2006, he had an opportunity to put his plan to the test... a real test.

At 3:32 p.m. the base came under attack by enemy forces along multiple areas of the perimeter. Without concern for his own safety, he willingly placed himself in the line of fire, exposing himself to grave danger in order to assist in defending the southern perimeter of the base.

When asked about the success of the plan, he said, "Plans are only as good as the personnel performing them. I do have to say that during my time there, they [Iraqi Army] never allowed a perpetrator to penetrate the base perimeter."

Wagner understood the Iraqi culture and boundaries; that helped him advise the Iraqi Army leadership on a security plan for the democratic elections. He also took control of an investigation that led to the recovery of 48 stolen weapons and the capture of two Iraqi Army thieves. For all of these actions, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

"I definitely don't think I am a 'hero.' There are other Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines more deserving of this honor. I just did my job, what I was trained for and what I was called on to do," Wagner insists.

