

## SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

### **Sergeant Richwine NAM "V"**

Sergeant Richwine was in receipt of imminent danger pay during this time period.

Sergeant Adam C. Richwine is enthusiastically for the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with Combat Distinguishing Device for heroic achievement in the performance of his duties while serving as Assistant Team Leader, 2d Platoon, Company C, 3d Reconnaissance Battalion, 2d Marine Division (Forward) in August 2011 during Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.

On 15 August, he was on a partnered combat patrol in the villages of Pirozai and Ghora, Sangin District, Helmand Province, Afghanistan. This was one of the first patrols his company had conducted in this area and the purpose of the patrol was to disrupt enemy activity and build baseline atmospheric conditions of the local population of the area. 15 August would be the first of a series of engagements that his company would fight in this volatile and dangerous corner of the Upper Sangin Valley.

At approximately 0900 his team was moving between two compounds along a canal when they were ambushed by multiple enemy fighters approximately 15 meters from the patrol. The initial volley of fire resulted in the wounding of Sgt Richwine's team leader. The casualty suffered a gunshot wound to his right thigh. The bullet left a large exit wound and caused severe venous bleeding. Sgt Richwine was overseeing a HIIDES enrollment 75 meters away when the ambush began. Upon hearing the fire, Sgt Richwine sprinted 75 meters along the canal directly towards the enemy fire. Sgt Richwine arrived at the site of his wounded team leader and dragged him behind cover while under enemy fire which was impacting in his immediate vicinity and cracking overhead. Sgt Richwine immediately began conducting life saving steps while rounds impacted all around him. Sgt Richwine placed a tourniquet on the casualty's leg, placed a pressure bandage over the exit wound and administered 10mg of morphine. The casualty was panicked and going into shock and Sgt Richwine's decisive casualty care and calm demeanor countered the Marine's stress. The patrol counterattacked and the insurgents egressed south to a preplanned fighting position. This counterattack allowed the patrol to link up with an adjacent platoon and cross deck the casualty. Upon cross decking of the casualty, Sgt Richwine succeeded in the patrol's leadership from the Point Man to become the Assistant Team Leader.

Immediately after handing over the casualty the patrol aggressively maneuvered south from the ambush position seeking to regain contact with the insurgents (INS). One hundred and fifty meters south of the initial ambush point the patrol was again engaged by multiple INS firing from at least two positions. Sgt Richwine led his Marines south through six foot tall cornfields directly towards the INS position. As the patrol closed in, the INS egressed east to a third planned fighting position and established another ambush for the Marines.

Sgt Richwine led his element to an overwatch position while the other half of the patrol began a flanking maneuver south towards this new INS position. Before they could close on the INS, the Marines were halted and told to seek cover as a danger close artillery strike was executed less than 100m from the patrol. As the fires lifted, the patrol maneuvered east onto the enemy's last known position. Sgt Richwine led an element that secured the bodies of two of the fighters killed in the strike. Intelligence would report that a third fighter died days later from wounds suffered in the engagement.

On 19 August, Sgt Richwine was on a partnered patrol in the village of Malozai, Afghanistan. Enemy fighters had been disrupting an adjacent company's humanitarian aid distribution, and Sgt Richwine's team was sent out on a contact patrol to relieve pressure on the adjacent company. Malozai was perhaps the most hostile village in the Upper Sangin Valley during this period of the summer. The battalion had suffered a KIA in Malozai earlier that month, and three Marines from Sgt Richwine's company had been severely wounded in this area during intense fighting in July.

While approaching a cluster of buildings, the patrol was ambushed from the front by multiple Taliban fighters armed with rifles and at least two PKM machine guns, from approximately 25 meters in front of

the patrol. Due to the constricting terrain the INS were able to achieve devastating enfilade fire down the long axis of the patrol. Sgt Richwine was the second Marine in the order of march and was under a steady volume of automatic fire during the initial seconds of the firefight. With rounds impacting inches from him and no cover available, Sgt Richwine stood up and charged 15 meters forward directly at the enemy machine gun position. With complete indifference to the PKM rounds all around him, Sgt Richwine fired four 40mm HEDP rounds directly onto the enemy machineguns. This decisive one-man assault silenced the enemy PKM fire and allowed the patrol to gain fire superiority. Without Sgt Richwine's assault, the patrol would have suffered multiple casualties from the enemy's machine guns. After silencing the enemy PKMs, the patrol maneuvered east onto the ambush position. The enemy egressed north and were engaged by the bravo element of the patrol who had conducted a flanking maneuver upon initial contact. Intelligence would report that two fighters were killed by the flanking maneuver, which was made possible only as a result of Sgt Richwine's audacious one man assault that restored momentum to the tactical situation.

Sgt Richwine's extreme tenacity and refusal to yield in the face of personal danger turned a dire situation into a victory for his platoon.

### **Sergeant Washington NAM "V"**

Sergeant Patrick T. Washington is recommended for the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with Combat Distinguishing Device for heroic achievement in the superior performance of his duties while serving as Reconnaissance Marine, 1st Platoon, Company B, 3d Reconnaissance Battalion, 2d Marine Division (Forward) from June 2011 to July 2011 in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.

On 30 June, Team 2 was clearing compounds in the village of Malozai in support of Operation FOLSOM STATE. While moving to the last compound in their assigned sector, Sergeant Washington's element came under fire from three different enemy positions at distances ranging from 100 to 150 meters away. Upon contact, Sergeant Washington immediately sprinted from the rear of the element up to the most engaged Marines on point. Once he reached his point element's firing positions, Sergeant Washington's team leader directed him to maneuver across 25 meters of open field to enter the nearest compound and establish overwatch for the team. Without hesitation and with substantial enemy fires sweeping the open terrain, Sergeant Washington moved to the compound. Upon entry, he single handedly conducted an immediate hasty clear and established an overwatch position on the rooftop then provided suppressive fires that effectively enabled the remaining members of his team to move out of the open field and into the compound to finish a more detailed clear. Sergeant Washington was undeterred over the next two hours as insurgents continued to sporadically fire at his rooftop position while he provided cover for Marines clearing compounds in the immediate vicinity.

Later that day, Sergeant Washington had just been relieved from his post and was located in a room inside the compound when the Marines in the rooftop overwatch position began receiving enemy medium machinegun fire, effectively suppressing them behind an 18-inch lip along the edge of the roof. As soon as he heard the gunfire, he ran into the courtyard and saw pieces of the roof's lip breaking apart as the rounds impacted around the suppressed Marines. Sergeant Washington immediately grabbed a LAAW, climbed onto the roof into the hail of bullets, gained positive identification of the shooters who were firing in between a break in a compound wall 150 meters away. Identifying the enemy's firing position; he sprinted across to the edge of the roof. Despite rounds impacting on the lip directly in front of him, Sergeant Washington had the technical proficiency and composure to adjust his sights to the proper distance and warn the Marines in the courtyard below to get inside rooms due to the back blast danger. Once his sights were set, Sergeant Washington rose to a kneeling position on the rooftop as rounds quickly adjusted to target him. With rounds continuing to chip away at the roof and snapping inches away, Sergeant Washington checked his back blast area, aimed in at the enemy machine gun position, yelled "rocket, rocket, rocket" and fired the LAAW. The rocket struck within inches of the break in the compound wall and destroyed the enemy machinegun position, causing the remaining insurgents to cease firing and egress. Sergeant Washington's bold decision to immediately get a high explosive

solution on to the enemy threat with no regard for his own personal safety resulted in his team breaking the enemy's will to fight.

On 6 July, while conducting a clearing operation in the village of Kang, Sergeant Washington's team was tasked with establishing an overwatch position in order to allow other members of his platoon to move across an open danger area to clear a compound cluster that had not yet been cleared. Atmospheric information and intercepted communications traffic indicated that contact with the enemy was imminent. As Sergeant Washington's element moved across a small tree line adjacent to an open field, the element was engaged with a high volume of machine gun fire from an enemy position approximately fifty meters away. The machine gun fire immediately pinned down the lead two Marines. Sergeant Washington sprinted forward across twenty meters of open ground through the intense gunfire and, despite having the enemy shift their rounds onto his position, he calmly and accurately employed a LAAW rocket to destroy and silence the enemy fighting position. Sergeant Washington's violence of action and deadly accuracy ended the engagement and prevented his element from sustaining any casualties.

Sergeant Washington's initiative, perseverance, and total dedication to duty reflected credit upon him and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

### **SSgt Froio Bronze Star "V"**

Staff Sergeant Jeremy D. Froio is enthusiastically recommended for the Bronze Star Medal with combat distinguishing device for heroic achievement in the performance of his duties during ground combat operations in the Upper Sangin Valley, Sangin District, Helmand Province, Afghanistan on 6 June 2011. SNM was in receipt of imminent danger pay on this day.

Staff Sergeant Froio was serving as the Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) for 1st Platoon, Bravo Company and traveling with Team 1 during a clearing mission near the village of Balozai on 6 June, 2011. Team 1 was preparing to clear compound clusters north of the village in order to establish overwatch positions for the Company's extract later that evening. Team 2 was conducting a local national engagement on the south side of the compound cluster that Team 1 was responsible for clearing.

Just after Team 1 commenced their clearing operations, enemy forces engaged the Team 2 position with effective small arms fire (SAF). Immediately following the initial volley of fire, all of the local nationals fled the area. The platoon commander held Team 2 in place and tasked them with identifying enemy positions and establishing overwatch for the movement of Team 1.

While maneuvering to the entrance of the northern compounds, Staff Sergeant Froio and Team 1 began receiving medium machine gun (MMG) and SAF from multiple fighting positions less than 100 meters to their north, effectively pinning them down in a dried out canal that paralleled the compound cluster they were moving towards. One of the enemy machine gun positions had a principle direction of fire (PDF) down the long axis of the canal. Due to the fact that the enemy's machine guns were achieving highly effective grazing fire on the Team 1 point element, they were unable to maneuver and the company commander declared a "Troops in Contact" (TIC) situation.

Multiple members of the team were unable to lift their heads above the lip of the canal in order to positively identify (PID) enemy positions due to the high rate of accurate enemy fire. On his own initiative, Staff Sergeant Froio immediately sprinted from the back of the formation towards the pinned down point element of Team 1. As Staff Sergeant Froio reached the trail element of Team 1, he came under intense MMG fire, AGS 17 automatic grenade launcher, and rocket propelled grenade (RPG) fire from an enemy

position 40 meters to the east which now completed a well coordinated, 180 degree ambush from multiple positions at or within 100 meters of the Platoon. Despite being under intense enemy fire, Staff Sergeant Froio rose from his position of minimal cover and engaged the enemy position 40 meters away with several High Explosive Dual Purpose (HEDP) rounds. This bold action enabled the remaining Marines still caught in the open to maneuver and seek better cover in the micro terrain.

Staff Sergeant Froio realized that the Marines in the trench were having difficulty identifying all of the enemy positions due to the intensity of enemy fire. Therefore, on several occasions and despite being repeatedly targeted by the enemy with MMGs, Staff Sergeant Froio crawled out of the trench and marked enemy locations with 40mm smoke, allowing other Marines to identify enemy positions and concentrate their fires onto those marked positions.

This was the second time during the initial stages of the engagement that Staff Sergeant Froio executed action that would change the dynamic of the fight and create offensive opportunities for the Marines in his platoon. Additionally, Staff Sergeant Froio's initiative under fire allowed the platoon corpsman to retrieve a wounded ANA soldier caught in the open due to the enemy fire.

By now the fight had continued for more than an hour. As a result of the complexity of the attack and the high volume of fire that it brought to bear, the company commander began planning for supporting arms against the enemy. With the enemy positions all within 100 meters of the Marine platoon, Staff Sergeant Froio would have to gain precise information on all friendly and enemy positions for any chance of a Close Air Support (CAS) mission to be successful against the enemy while leaving friendly forces unscathed. For the third time in the engagement, Staff Sergeant Froio maneuvered under fire into a position from which he could begin receiving position and situation reports from the different elements of the Company to confirm both enemy and friendly locations. His actions started to bring order out of chaos, painting an accurate and detailed picture to the Battalion Air Officer of enemy and friendly locations.

Every attempt the platoon made to maneuver out of the trench was met with responsive, suppressive fires from the enemy. The fires kicked up dirt, rocks, trees and threw down chunks of compound wall debris onto the Marines which only made identifying enemy dispositions much more complicated.

The platoon commander was finally required to request a Danger Close CAS mission as all other efforts throughout the day had failed to suppress and reduce the enemy threat. Staff Sergeant Froio began working not only a CAS mission, but a near simultaneous artillery mission on the two most threatening enemy positions. With a hail of debris still raining down on the Marines in the trench, Staff Sergeant Froio's exemplary bearing and demeanor under these conditions exerted a calming and steadying effect on those around him. His ability to communicate to both the Battalion Air Officer over the Tactical Air Direction Net while keeping the platoon commander informed of the status of fires was calm, cool, and reassuring to all both in the field as well as back in the Reconnaissance Operations Center.

While being engaged by enemy MMGs and RPGs, Staff Sergeant Froio conducted a Type II control for a GBU-54 released from an AV-8B Harrier. The ordnance hit the enemy position located 40 meters away from his position with perfect accuracy, striking the compound and silencing the enemy position. It is impossible to overstate the earth shattering affect this ordnance had on the platoon at such close range. However, Staff Sergeant Froio remained calm and focused on the task at hand as he was still working a pending artillery mission against an active enemy position just 70 meters away from which the Marines continued to receive effective fire.

Staff Sergeant Froio called for two artillery rockets (HIMARS) on that enemy position which, at 70 meters away from the lead element of the platoon, was well inside the limit for danger close and allowed for absolutely no error when determining target location. The HIMARS impacted the interior of the compound with absolute precision and allowed for elements of the platoon to maneuver out of the enemy's former PDF. The effects of the HIMARs also forced the remainder of enemy forces to withdraw.

Despite being caught in a U-shaped ambush with the enemy maneuvering to within 35 meters, Staff Sergeant Froio's courage and calmness under fire, coupled with his precise communication with higher headquarters and spot-on target identification produced a favorable end to the engagement and enabled his platoon to evacuate the wounded ANA soldier to an ambulance pickup point 800 meters away.

By his zealous initiative, courageous actions, and exceptional dedication to duty, Staff Sergeant Froio reflected great credit upon him and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service