

Narrative Page

NARRATIVE TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF

THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL WITH VALOR

TO

SGT EMMET S. CULLEN

Sergeant Emmet S. Cullen, United States Army heroically distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous conduct in the face of the enemy of the United States as a Sniper Team Leader in Recon Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company 2-3 Infantry Regiment, Mosul, Iraq, from 12 OCT 06 to 12 OCT 06 during Operation Iraqi Freedom. At 1730 hours on 12 October, 2006, HHC/2-3 INF Recon was departing FOB Marez when the platoon observed mortar rounds impacting on the Combat Support Hospital at LSA Diamondback. The platoon changed direction and moved to clear a potential enemy mortar firing point. Sergeant Cullen was riding inside Headquarters 24, a Stryker recon variant. At 1745 hours, the platoon heard outgoing mortar fire in an open field bisected by an elevated dirt road similar to a cut. Headquarters 24 turned onto the elevated road where Sergeant Cullen observed 13 AIF members armed with AK47s firing four mortar systems onto LSA Diamondback and FOB Fortitude. The platoon immediately initiated a hasty attack. Sergeant Cullen successfully engaged two AIF mortar men during this initial contact resulting in two enemy WIA. Simultaneously, three AIF overwatch positions manned by approximately 15 additional insurgents armed with AK47s and medium machine guns began to place suppressive fire onto Sergeant Cullen's sniper team from the southeast, south, and west respectively. Under intense direct fire, Sergeant Cullen established his sniper team in a support by fire position. At this point in the attack, the platoon leader split the platoon into two sections and maneuvered away from Sergeant Cullen's sniper team in order to destroy AIF forces fleeing to the north. This decision left Sergeant Cullen and six other soldiers in direct contact with over 25 AIF firing from three distinct, prepared positions. Headquarters 24 began to maneuver but the ground on the elevated dirt trail gave way under the four left tires. The Stryker bottomed out with the two-man vehicle crew trapped inside and at imminent risk of death from a vehicle rollover down the elevated road and into a canal that fed the Tigris River. After assigning sectors of fire to his sniper team, Sergeant Cullen moved forward under effective fire to assist two scouts, Corporal (P) Jason Funaro and Specialist Richard Oxford, with the recovery of Headquarters 24. Exposing himself to enemy fire for extended periods of time, Sergeant Cullen worked rapidly to prevent Headquarters 24 from rolling down the elevated trail and into the canal by completing a tow hook up to anchor Headquarters 24 to a nearby Stryker. Soldiers providing suppressive fire on the insurgent position observed numerous rounds impacting the dirt road around Sergeant Cullen. Despite the grave threat to his own life, Sergeant Cullen demonstrated gallantry under fire and superb soldiering skills by completing the tow hook up in less than two minutes. His actions saved the lives of the vehicle crew operating Headquarters 24. Sergeant Cullen's personal bravery inspired awe in the soldiers who observed his courageous act and spurred them to redouble their own efforts against the enemy. After returning to the support by fire position, Sergeant Cullen and his sniper team delivered accurate, precise fires over the next 30 minutes resulting in an additional three AIF WIA or KIA. During this time, Sergeant Cullen's reports built the common operating picture for the battalion. At 1820, 1st Platoon, Blackhorse Company arrived to reinforce the battalion snipers. Sergeant Cullen conducted link up with that element and guided them into initial security positions. Once the reinforcing platoon had established a cordon, Sergeant Cullen began to clear nearby buildings as part of a three-man stack. Sergeant Cullen was the number two man as the stack entered a room with a waist high wall partitioning the room. As the point man moved forward, an Iraqi male jumped from behind the wall and grabbed the barrel of the point man's rifle. Sergeant Cullen engaged the Iraqi male in hand-to-hand combat and incapacitated him. After clearing the building, Sergeant Cullen returned to his sniper team and prepared them for further combat operations. The platoon learned that there were ten urgent coalition casualties on LSA Diamondback from the initial mortar fire, yet the AIF forces were unable to fire more than a third of their mortar rounds because of the platoon's rapid response. The battalion commander estimated that the platoon's hasty attack on the AIF mortar element saved twenty American lives at LSA Diamondback and FOB Fortitude. Sergeant Cullen's bravery while under fire enabled the platoon to maintain tactical flexibility and the ability to maneuver. As a result of Sergeant Cullen's actions, the battalion scouts and snipers destroyed a four mortar battery composed of 3x82mm and 1x120mm mortar systems with 2xAIF KIA, 12xAIF WIA/KIA, and 4xAIF detained without suffering any casualties to members of the platoon or attachments. Sergeant Cullen's actions are in keeping with the finest traditions of military heroism and reflect distinct credit upon him, the Arrowhead Brigade, and the United States Army.