



Knoxville, TN  
The Silver Star

Even though Ambrosia and his men maintained some safety behind a mound of rocks, the smoke from the mounted vehicle engulfed their position. He began call for aerial support from AH-64 Apache helicopters, he said.

Enemy radio traffic intercepted by Ambrosia's interpreter let the paratroopers know the insurgents planned to overrun their position and take them hostage, but they were able to repel the attack, he said.

However, Ambrosia's radio requests for Apaches to provide aerial support wouldn't arrive for another 45 minutes, he added.

"That's when it began to get really hairy," he said. "The enemy was getting really close and using hand grenades."

Ambrosia's actions and direction of his men repelled the enemy fighters long enough for the helicopters to arrive. The modest captain said he doesn't know exactly how many enemies were killed, but knows that two of his men were wounded. None were killed.

"I'm very thankful for that," Ambrosia said.

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Mike Mullen personally awarded Ambrosia the Silver Star in Korengal Outpost for his valor under fire after running into a hail of enemy gunfire to help save fallen comrades.

### Captain Gregory Ambrosia

Although Army Capt. Greg Ambrosia's tour at a secluded combat outpost in Afghanistan was somewhat primitive, with few luxuries and the bare essentials, his mission of counterinsurgency was quite complex. Ambrosia, executive officer of Company A, and his troops often found themselves patrolling the rugged Pech Valley and surrounding areas for days at a time with little contact with the rest of the world. However, on Sept. 25, 2007, they encountered a Taliban force that not only outnumbered but surrounded them.

Ambrosia and his men set up a makeshift outpost after a nighttime air assault into the valley. The troopers made contact with the enemy early the next morning, receiving a hail of rocket-propelled grenades and gunfire. But they couldn't spot where exactly the attack was coming from, he said.

"We spotted an enemy scout and eventually made contact, but he was able to [disengage and communicate] our location to other fighters in the valley," Ambrosia explained.

Ambrosia's element had a translator monitoring the enemy communication with a basic one-way radio. After the initial contact, it was quiet for about 45 minutes. The interpreter continued to monitor the radio, and Ambrosia learned that the scout was coordinating with other enemy fighters in the area to launch an attack, he explained.

Soon there were at least three enemy elements with three to five fighters each closing in on the platoon. So close, in fact, they were in hand grenade range of his troops, he said.

"At one point, I started calling the vehicles in the valley to start shooting on our position, because the enemy was too close to call in artillery or mortar fire," Ambrosia continued. "So we ended up having our guys shooting on our own position."

