



**Fort Salonga, NY  
The Bronze Star**

Not new to combat, Clagnaz led a total of 74 Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen at 17 Forward Operating Bases across Iraq, accomplishing documentation of 923 coalition missions.

Clagnaz joined the U.S. Army right after high school. He had his first combat tour during the invasion of Panama. During his second combat tour in August 1990, immediately after Iraq invaded Kuwait, he deployed as an Apache helicopter turbine engine mechanic.

"My unit fired the 'first shots' of the Allied Offensive, destroying two Iraqi early warning/ ground control intercept radar sites," explained Clagnaz. "This opened a radar-black corridor to Baghdad and marked the beginning of Operation Desert Storm." He later returned to the States, received an Air Force ROTC scholarship and earned his commission in 1998.

Fast forwarding to his most recent deployment, Clagnaz downplayed his acts of heroism and noted that it was really his team who deserves the recognition. In the midst of fighting, they documented imagery of key events including the aftermath following the termination of Al-Qaeda terrorist leader Abu Musab al Zaraqawi, the search and recovery of two kidnapped U.S. Soldiers, and the Regime Crimes Liaison Office's Iraqi High Tribunal investigative hearings. This documentation and the installation of two satellite terminals improved imagery transmission by 75 percent and created a robust network architecture that expanded the military's situational awareness in the region.

## Major John Clagnaz

Major John Clagnaz, the son of European immigrants and a first generation American, is known for leading from the front. His decisive actions and leadership throughout his tour in Iraq resulted in his receipt of a Bronze Star.

On June 18, 2006, "he led a Combat Camera team on a patrol with the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team in Mosul that resulted in the seizure of a substantial enemy weapons cache," according to the narrative that accompanied his Bronze Star Medal.

He recalls a mission with Bravo Company, 2-6 Infantry in the suburbs of Ramadi on August 16, 2006, when the patrol came under intense sniper fire while dismounted and performing random vehicle searches.

"One U.S. Soldier was hit by enemy sniper fire in his back while returning to his vehicle," said Clagnaz. A few feet away one of his videographers documented the scene with members of the patrol dragging the injured soldier out of the line of fire and treating him. Once the Soldier was stabilized, he was moved to a Bradley Fighting Vehicle for medical evacuation. "Suddenly, the patrol came under heavy fire from the enemy position across an open field approximately 100-150 meters away," Clagnaz described. "Members of the patrol returned fire."

Now two men short – one soldier wounded and another administering first aid – his combat camera team stepped up to fill the vacancies as the convoy raced across the field to capture the enemy combatants firing at the patrol.

