

## MAJOR SHANNON FORTNER

When U.S. Army Major Shannon Fortner arrived in Iraq in March of 2003 it was during the initial phase of the invasion.

"It was my first deployment in any arena," so being in the ramp-up portion was particularly interesting and illuminating, she said.

Fortner's job title was "Adjutant", in the Logistics Cell of a Battalion.

"I just helped run [the battalion]," she said. "It was interesting to get all the soldiers ready and account for them and get them on the planes and go through the readiness portion, getting them to Kuwait and then forward into Iraq."

Stationed in Tikrit, Fortner "quickly sorted through the chaos to focus on those tasks essential to the battalion's successful deployment," states the citation of the Bronze Star Medal she earned for the deployment.

Fortner's efforts ensured that personnel deployment was properly phased, and also worked to facilitate a "rapid building of combat power in theater," according to the citation.

"It was through her personal efforts that the Battalion was able to precisely track soldiers dispersed in a 3500 square kilometer area of operation," as well as those that were medically evacuated from that theater of operation, the citation states.

Interacting with the soldiers as they arrived and deployed within Iraq, as well as being part of their career progress and participating in their promotion ceremonies are among the things that Fortner liked best about her duties. She also tracked injured soldiers on their journeys back to the United States and through their recoveries as well, she said.



Tybee Island, GA  
The Bronze Star

Fortner demonstrated "brilliant leadership qualities" as Adjutant and "Battalion Captain", the citation states.

"Her ability to remain focused on the commander's priorities ensured that all staff sections remained synchronized," the citation states.

While she might have been earned her Bronze Star in part for her own leadership qualities, it was the leadership of the men and women she worked with that she found inspiring.

"They were all awesome leaders," she said.

Fortner is currently attending the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College with some of the same people she met during that deployment.

"They were willing to get out there and be a part," she said. "We don't do combat, but we do go out and do support... They would get out there and lead and take care of [the soldiers]. All of them were just fabulous."

Fortner was successful in her work, despite restricted resources.

"Her ability to creatively work through bureaucracy and procedural uncertainty ensured that soldiers' personnel actions were executed in an accurate and timely manner, increasing soldier morale across the task force," the citation states.

# HEROES

"I came back as a stronger leader and with a better understanding of what troops go through when they deploy. And that's exactly why I volunteered to redeploy," she said.

In January of 2005 she deployed back to Iraq, this time as company commander.

"Just being able to go over there and take care of soldiers and lead," was a great experience she said. "Being with soldiers is the best gig. Absolutely."

Fortner was a "great asset" to the entire battalion, the citation states.

