



Albemarle, NC
Bronze Star Medal

Sergeant First Class Michael C. Gainey

Along the dangerous Route Gator on the sprawling outskirts of Baghdad, then, Staff Sergeant Michael C. Gainey of the United States Army added saving American lives to his list of accomplishments on his tour of duty in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Without Staff Sergeant Michael Gainey of the United States Army in the gunner's turret, October 22, 2007 could have ended in tragedy.

As the three vehicle patrol Gainey was in went down Route Gator in Baghdad, enemy fire transformed a normal mission into a life or death struggle for him, the fellow troops in his patrol, and several dismounted soldiers caught right in the jaws of the attack. From Gainey's vantage point behind the imposing M240B machine gun, he was able to coordinate the counterattack with precisely aimed shots and suppressive fire.

The enemies' attention locked onto his turret, firing a salvo at him, fragmenting and wounding him in the neck and hand. Undeterred, he refused medical treatment, preferring to heal his wounds by repulsing the ambush with automatic weapons fire from his position.

The vehicle commander knowing the American troops in the distance were doomed without his assistance, ordered the driver to advance to their position, requiring Gainey to call out upcoming obstacles from his elevated perch and maintain a hail of machine gun fire at the insurgent positions. From his exposed mount he refused to yield and fired more than 150 rounds – killing or repelling the last of the failed ambushers.

Because of Gainey's steadfastness under enemy fire, his precisely aimed fire, and effective coordination with the vehicle's crew, American lives were saved that day. His heroism earned him the Bronze Star with Valor.

