



Washington, D.C.
The Bronze Star

STAFF SERGEANT BRIAN HAWTHORNE

When Staff Sergeant Brian Hawthorne entered the Army Reserves in 2003 as an 18-year-old, he did not know in four short years he would be viewed by senior officers, fellow comrades, veterans, and students as a resolute leader who consistently rises to the occasion.

Hawthorne first deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom in May 2005 with the Alpha 401st Civil Affairs Battalion to Mosul. He then redeployed to Baghdad with the 450th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) in July 2007.

Although he deployed as a Civil Affairs Specialist, he recognized his company could use his secondary military medical skills when the position was vacated in 2007. Without a hint of hesitation, Hawthorne volunteered to be the company medic. He took initiative to train and equip his fellow company and brigade members in combat life saving skills.

On Sept. 26, 2007, around 10:55 a.m., then-Sergeant Hawthorne, was traveling in the second vehicle of a five-vehicle convoy from the West Rasheed Beladya to a nearby water treatment plant when the third vehicle was struck by an explosively-formed penetrating (EFP) improvised explosive device. The convoy was halted.

While under attack by an armed enemy, "Doc Hawthorne" – as the unit came to call him -- remained poised and directed other soldiers to assist in the evacuation and treatment of five casualties, who included a civilian contractor and other soldiers.

"The most severely wounded (Sgt. Shaun Chandler) received direct hits of the EFP slugs in his leg and arms."

"He sustained many broken bones, and had severe blood loss," Hawthorne recalled.

"I did what I was trained to do as a medic," he explained. "I applied tourniquets, administered intravenous fluids and medicines and treated the soldier for shock."

His Bronze Star Medal citation notes that "there is no doubt that his efforts and skill saved Sgt. Chandler's life."

As the noncommissioned officer in charge of security for his company, he led more than 60 combat patrols, and participated in more than 100 such patrols in his 10 months in Baghdad.

Hawthorne's military service and impressive leadership skills did not diminish when he returned from duty. The 23-year-old veteran co-founded the George Washington University Veterans Organization and is the D.C. director of Student Veterans of America.

On a daily basis, Hawthorne reaches out to fellow veterans by raising awareness about organizations and campus communities appealing to veterans and creating a community of veterans willing to discuss social and mental health issues.

