

HEROES

Each week the Defense Dept. highlights the military men and women who have gone above and beyond in the global war on terror.



Sept. 26, 2007, Vol. 2, Issue 34



St. Paul, MN
Silver Star recipient

Minnesota Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Chad Malmberg

Outnumbered by almost two to one, an ambush closing in like a vice, more than a thousand rounds raining down for 50 minutes – the chances of success, much less survival, might seem impossible. But for Staff Sgt. Chad Malmberg of the Minnesota Army National Guard's 34th Infantry Division, the day he and his men faced those odds was also the day they managed to repel a large coordinated attack – without suffering a single casualty. "It's not the size of the dog in the fight," he later said in an interview, "but it's the size of the fight in the dog. That day, we had a lot of fight in us." For his gallantry in battle, Malmberg became the first Minnesota Guardsman in his division – known as the "Red Bulls" – to receive the Silver Star since World War II.

On January 27, 2007, Malmberg's convoy, which included more than 20 gun trucks and logistical vehicles, was traveling from Baghdad International Airport late at night when an IED exploded. The convoy stopped to assess the situation; it soon became clear, however, that the IED was only the beginning of the attack – the largest ambush during Malmberg's 16-month deployment. Hostile forces melted out of the night and fired rocket-propelled grenades and small-arms. In the darkness, it was difficult to pinpoint the exact location of the fire. Malmberg knew he had to get closer, so he moved forward and engaged several enemy positions. He then exited his vehicle and attempted to direct the other trucks out of the kill zone. The concentration of enemy fire made this maneuver too difficult – which meant that Malmberg and the rest of the team would have to stand their ground and fight to the end.

Malmberg saw fire from behind and moved to support the rear elements. He dealt the attackers a blow with an AT-4 anti-tank shot – before calling in air support.

The enemy fire continued relentlessly, and in such close quarters, the aircraft did not have a clear shot. For the next half hour, Malmberg's team of 15 soldiers continued to fight an enemy force that outnumbered them. The hostile forces eventually drew to within 20 meters. Malmberg, recognizing that the convoy could be overrun, again entered the kill zone and threw a hand grenade into a nearby ditch, killing several insurgents. That action neutralized the offensive, and prevented the convoy from being taken over.

Despite the long odds and the fierce fighting, Malmberg's leadership as a Convoy Escort Team commander prevented his 35-member team of soldiers and civilians from taking casualties. The St. Paul native is currently enrolled at Minnesota State University as a full-time student, and plans to pursue a career in law enforcement after graduation.

Minnesota National Guard [story](#); Mankato Free Press [story](#); St. Paul Pioneer Press [story](#); WCCO-TV [story](#)



Staff Sgt. Malmberg receives the Silver Star from Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty