



Charleston, South Carolina
Army Commendation Medal

2nd Lieutenant Palmer

Unshakable leadership under fire and the ability to guide young soldiers through fierce fighting defined Second Lieutenant Philip D. Palmer's mission as a combat advisor to the Iraqi Army.

Days after the "troop surge" was announced, a young second lieutenant would persevere under fire to lead a burgeoning Iraqi Army unit to victory. Second Lieutenant Philip D. Palmer of the United States Marine Corps was assigned to a Military Transition Team working with the 1st battalion of the Iraqi Army during operations in the Ma'Laab district in Ramadi, Iraq. The morning of January 14th, 2007, would serve as a defining moment in his life and the lives of all the Iraqi troops he shepherded through danger.

The Iraqi platoon, led by Iraqi Lieutenant Allah, worked its way through the dangerous city streets, unaware of what was ahead. As the patrol bounded ahead, gunfire erupted from nearby positions hitting Lieutenant Allah squarely in his armor. While the rounds were stopped by his layers of armor, he was shell-shocked and stunned by the near-death experience. With Allah paralyzed by fear and incapable of leading his men under such hectic conditions, Palmer seized the initiative.

Seeing that words alone would not be enough to organize this nascent Iraqi unit, Palmer knew he must act. Standing like a monolith in the face of incoming enemy fire, Palmer took command of the broken unit, rallying them through his bold example. Taking point, he pushed forward towards the attacking insurgents with his newly inspired Iraqi unit who followed close through the chaotic streets.

Palmer kept in mind the mission and the 13 Iraqis he was attached to as he led the fight against the insurgent forces. At the end of the day, he successfully concluded the operation and brought every one of the Iraqi soldiers back to base alive. His heroic assumption of command and leadership under intense attack earned him the Army Commendation Medal with Valor.

