

# HEROES

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



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## Air Force Senior Airman Phillip M. King

Establishing security in the war-torn nation of Afghanistan requires international and Afghan security forces to work in tandem across the country, in operations that often see Afghans risking their lives for Americans and Americans risking theirs for Afghans. In August 2006, Senior Airman King fought side-by-side with his brothers in arms, and dealt the enemies of a free Afghanistan a blow.

King was leading a convoy on a quiet street in Ebrahimkhel, just north of Khandahar, when a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) landed near his Humvee, followed by a hail of machine-gun fire from a nearby fortified compound. He later remarked that "his training kicked in": He moved his vehicle to block the rest of the convoy from torrents of bullets, and he fired back with his M4 and grenade launcher. Despite suffering a concussion from an RPG blast, King continued to expose himself to enemy fire even as he directed the aim of the Afghan soldiers. Shortly after clearing enemy positions, King discovered another ambush site, where the Taliban had pinned down five Afghan soldiers. King rammed a truck stuck in a wadi, allowing the soldiers to escape.

The Airman then helped establish a perimeter to more effectively beat back the enemy forces. At this point, the team phoned in air support. For 20 more minutes, however, the convoy continued fighting as they waited for the planes. Shortly before support arrived, King again braved enemy fire as he marked the targets for the bombers. The firepower from the aircraft destroyed the Taliban, and ended the battle.

In all, King's actions helped eliminate 20-25 Taliban, while saving over a dozen Afghans. His heroism earned him the Bronze Star with Valor in July 2007. Air Force [story](#)

## Marine Corps 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Paul T. Archie

A year ago, many people fretted that Iraq's Anbar province was lost. Yet since then progress has come at an almost unthinkable pace, the results of principled and dangerous work by Marines working with locals. As the top enlisted Marine in his company, 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Archie provided consistent leadership in battle from August 2006 through February 2007, a key period of the turnaround in Anbar.

In October of last year, insurgents launched a brazen attack on his company's base: mortars, rockets, AK-47's, and a suicide bomber driving a truck. Archie coordinated the defense of the base by setting up fortifications on six rooftops and sending out Humvees to block roads from incoming insurgents. Under constant and heavy fire, he moved throughout the battlefield, making sure his Marines had everything they needed. He also successfully oversaw the evacuation of two wounded Marines from the fight. Archie is largely credited for the defense of the base during the intense hour-long fight.

That was not 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Archie's only encounter with insurgents: His company saw combat all over Anbar during the seven-month deployment. In all, Archie undertook more than 200 combat missions and guided his company through more than 100 engagements with the enemy. Archie estimated that in many areas, there was a 50 percent chance his unit would face an Improvised Explosive Device attack.

For his leadership, dedication, and courage, 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Archie received the Bronze Star with the Combat Distinguishing Device at Camp Lejeune on July 30, 2007. Marine Corps [story](#); News & Observer [story](#)



Santa Rosa, CA  
*Bronze Star with  
Valor Recipient*



Dallas, TX  
*Bronze Star with Combat  
Distinguishing Device  
recipient*