

DeGlopper Memorial: Terry Crowe remembered for his bravery, service to country

BY MICHAEL J. BILLONI

Sgt. 1st Class Gary Villalobos feels guilty about the tragic death of his patrol partner, Lt. Col. Terrence Crowe, on June 7, 2005, in Tel Afar, Iraq.

Crowe was the leader of one of three Battalions that made up the 8th Brigade and, according to Maj. Michael T. Ansav, who worked closely with him, Crowe was transferred there at his own request.

"Tal Afar was known as a very dangerous city and most soldiers hoped to avoid entering it," he explained. "LTC Crowe volunteered for it."

To do so, he had to leave his existing team. He transferred to an Iraqi National

Guard unit (109th ING). This was more of a rag-tag bunch that desperately needed solid leadership and advice. Crowe was perfect for the job, as he created a new team from volunteers and moved them to Tal Afar, working with the Iraqis alongside the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) in a partnering relationship. The 3rd ACR traveled in Bradley Fighting Vehicles and tanks as it patrolled the city. Once soldiers reached their objective, the Iraqis would dismount and begin foot patrols.

According to Ansav, foot patrols inside the cities are by far the most dangerous missions.

"Your only level of protection is your body armor," he said. "Not surprisingly, soldiers are very reluctant to lead off on such patrols."

Being the great leader he was, LTC Crowe would not ask his Iraqis or his team members to do anything he would not do himself. Therefore, he repeatedly led off on such patrols. He would continue to do so until the Iraqis and his team members gained their own confidence."

On the morning of June 7, Crowe's troop from the U.S. Army made its way to Tel Afar, a smuggling route for weapons and fighters from Syria. At 2 a.m., they arrived at the spot where intelligence had 30 insurgents. The task was to hit at first light and nab or kill them. As time got closer, it became tense for the U.S. and Iraqi soldiers working together on the mission.

"It was do or die," Villalobos said on a 2008 YouTube documentary titled "The Battle of Tal Afar: Soldier Braves Gunfire in Attempt to Save Friend."

The ramp suddenly drops and everyone runs into a courtyard until they hear the house was clear. Suddenly, the troops hear machinegun fire. U.S. helicopters are reporting they're taking hits from the enemy. The decision was made to sweep the neighborhood, looking for the enemy who was shooting at the helicopters. Villalobos, Crowe and 13 Iraqi soldiers went through a narrow alley with Crowe taking the lead.

"The alley was not straight. There were a lot of turns and, as we came around the first bend, LTC Crowe was in the kill zone and caught the brunt of 4-5 AK47s firing simultaneously," Villalobos explained in a somber tone.

Crowe was shot in the leg and groin by an automatic weapon positioned on top of a two-story building. He was also hit in his femur artery while continuing to fight back, waiting for other forces to maneuver to help him.

"I did my best to suppress the enemy from shooting at LTC Crowe, but it sounded like there were AK47s being shot from every direction," Villalobos said. "I pulled out a hand grenade and with all my power launched it in their direction. Suddenly, the firing ended. We were able to get him back to the base, but when I asked about his condition that evening, they said he did not make it."

"We patrolled together quite a bit and he always treated everyone with dignity and respect. I feel guilty because I should have been in the front and he should have been in the rear or somewhere in the middle, but not the point man. I normally am in the lead and I do not feel right about it today."



Lt. Col. Terrance Crowe (Photo courtesy of Peg White)

Ansav added: "LTC Crowe is largely responsible for the success that our brigade had in the north of Iraq. LTC Crowe's team led the way with captured insurgents, recovered weapons and explosives, and the collection of intelligence information."

"LTC Crowe was truly one of the great, if not the best leader the 98th Division had to offer. He was a genuine warrior. He always led from the front and performed

SEE LTC continued on Page 5



Terry Crowe as a student at Huth Road Elementary School. (Photo courtesy of Peg White)

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TERRENCE K. CROWE

August 9, 1960 - June 7, 2005



LTC Terrence K. Crowe, who grew up on Grand Island, was commissioned as a 2nd Lt in the infantry upon graduation from Niagara University in 1982.

In 2004, LTC Crowe, who was 44 years old and serving as a ROTC instructor at Canisius College, was called to active duty for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

On June 7, 2005, while attached to the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, he was leading an Iraqi team on dismounted patrol in Iraq. While leading from the front, he was mortally wounded while under heavy enemy fire.

For LTC Crowe's heroism and bravery he was posthumously awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart as well as the NYS Conspicuous service medal. The Reserve Mobilization BN Headquarters at Ft Dix was named in his honor. LTC Crowe was laid to rest at St Stephen's Cemetery.

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