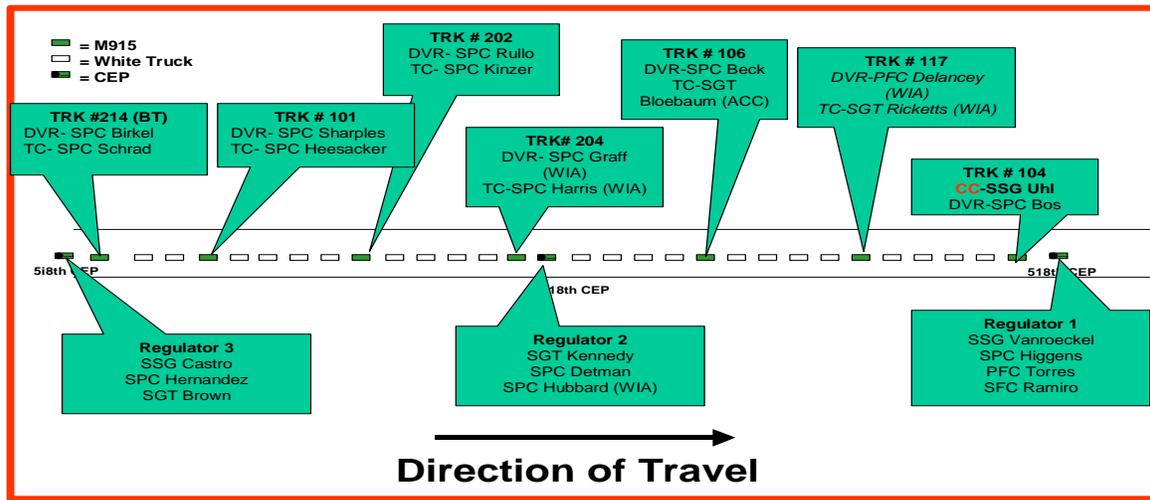


Convoy 678N Engagement Narrative

On a northward move along an ASR enroute to LSAA on March 20, 2005, a 7th Transportation Group convoy was attacked by insurgents. The convoy was executing an Iraqi Express mission and was around an area called Salman Pak near the western side of Baghdad. The convoy consisted of 22 Department of Defense and TCN-driven tractor trailer systems, six M915A3 tractor-trailer systems, two M915 bobtails, and three HMMWV convoy escort platforms (CEPs) provided by the 518th Guntruck Company (P) (see Convoy Schematic Diagram). The CEPs went by the callsign Regulator. An estimated forty to fifty insurgents set up an ambush that consisted of the following elements: heavy small arms fire; an IED placed in the road median; two road obstacles meant to funnel and fix the convoy; accurate RPG fire with direct hits to vehicles; and a ground assault of 10-15 insurgents upon a line of CEPs. The insurgents captured were carrying handcuffs and we concluded they were intending to capture US Troops.

Convoy Schematic Diagram

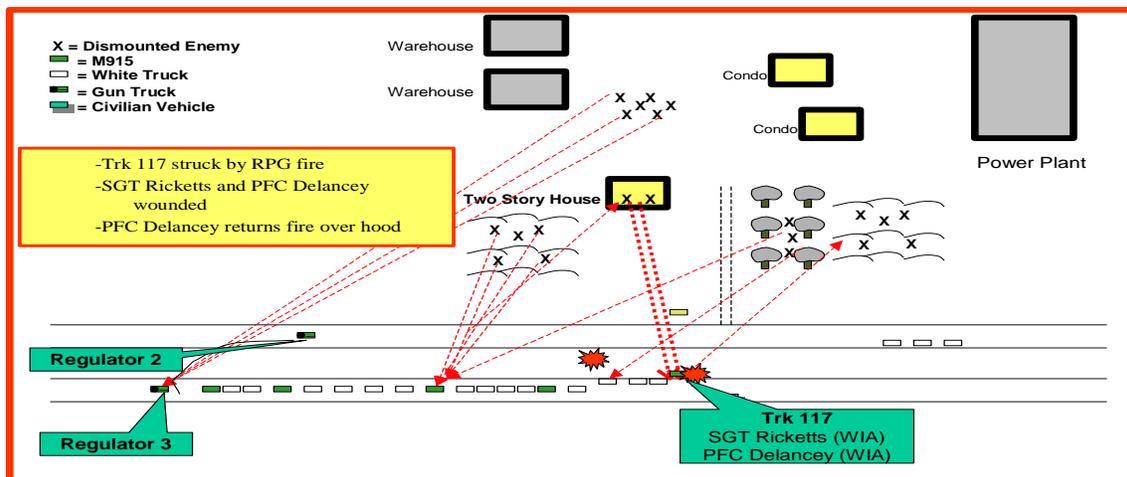


At 11:20 AM the convoy passed an Iraqi checkpoint manned by both Iraqi security forces and US Forces. The road was a four-lane highway with a dirt median between the northbound and southbound lanes; the convoy was utilizing the northbound split of the highway and Iraqi Nationals were using the southbound lane to go both directions. The convoy had to move to the southbound lane and had made the crossover when SPC Higgins, the driver of Regulator 1 (the lead CEP), heard a hail of gunfire impacting her truck. She immediately radioed contact left. SSG Uhl, the convoy commander in the first M915 truck, maneuvered his truck to the right around the CEP after a brief deceleration. As they attempted to leave the kill zone, a civilian SUV swerved from the southbound lane into the northbound lane and crashed perpendicularly into another civilian vehicle that had pulled over to let the convoy by. SGT Uhl's truck sped up and rammed through the SUV, spun it around, and left the kill zone. The civilian tractor-trailers behind him did not leave the kill zone with him.

As SSG Uhl was leaving the kill zone, an AAFES bus was moving southbound in the median and was hit by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) and thrown thirty to forty feet in front of the second M915 vehicle operated by SGT Ricketts and PFC Delancey. SGT Ricketts swerved to the left of the burning bus and became mired in the mud that was in the median between the lanes. Immediately his truck was engulfed in small arms fire and SGT Ricketts was shot in the leg by a round that pierced his vehicle's Level III armor. Upon hearing his co-driver yell in pain, PFC Delancey laid down suppressive fire to the right with his M249 Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW). SGT Kennedy, the TC of Regulator 2, the second CEP, acknowledged enemy contact and told SPC Hubbard, the driver, to move directly into the kill zone, effectively shielding the convoy from the full force of the attack. At this time the CEP received a heavy volume of small arms fire which resulted in SPC Hubbard being wounded in the abdomen. Shortly after he was wounded, the fire extinguisher sitting behind him exploded. Unaware that the white fog in his CEP was from the fire extinguisher, SGT Kennedy told SPC Hubbard to throw the vehicle in reverse and get out of the kill zone. SPC Hubbard did as instructed until he fell unconscious. SPC Detman, the gunner, manned the turret but his .50 caliber machine gun was malfunctioning, so he alternated between that weapon system and the dual-mounted M249 Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW) on his CEP while SGT Kennedy focused on keeping SPC Hubbard conscious long enough to drive his vehicle out of the kill zone. He finally managed to get his CEP out of the kill zone by moving SPC Hubbard's leg out of the way, straddling the center of the CEP, and placing his foot on the accelerator as he steered the vehicle from the center of the CEP.

RPGs began hitting the convoy near SGT Rickett's and PFC Delancey's position around 11:40 AM (see diagram below). One RPG round landed on the hood of their truck about two feet in front of PFC Delancey's seat. SGT Ricketts was crushed under the truck console, which collapsed from the force of the RPG impact, and PFC Delancey was knocked out of his seat. His skin was seared along the right shoulder from the blast. He was temporarily blinded from the flash of the RPG and sustained wounds in the face from the shattered glass from the explosion. PFC Delancey fought off the impact of his wounds and scrambled to regain a good defensive position. As he did this, a round pierced the left front of his helmet, grazed his scalp, and exited out the back of his helmet. Seconds later another round collided with the rear right of his helmet.

Truck hit by RPG fire



Sensing that their survival depended upon getting the gunfire off of his truck and hearing SGT Rickett's yell "this is where we die," PFC Delancey angrily scrambled back into his seat, kicked out the shattered window in front of him, crawled out on the dismembered hood of his truck, and fired at the rifles that he saw pointing in his direction. According to witnesses of this encounter, PFC Delancey killed or wounded two to five insurgents.

Regulator 3, the rear CEP, started to receive a heavy volume of fire from the left that flattened three of its wheels. SGT Hernandez, the driver, yelled to SGT Brown, the TC, that they've got to get out of there. SGT Brown told SGT Hernandez to drive around the right side of the convoy. They moved forward, found a gap in the convoy, and saw two KYNG CEPs in the service road across the median. They pulled up to that position and saw that there was one injured soldier on the ground. The drivers of the CEPs had driven the vehicles such that they directly faced the position that they were attacking, which resulted in the CEPs being unable to rapidly withdraw. The gunner of the first CEP was still manning the .50 caliber machine gun, but SSG Castro, Regulator 3's gunner, had given up on his malfunctioning .50 caliber machine gun and was firing his M16. SGT Hernandez and SGT Brown dismounted and moved the injured KYNG soldier into his HMMWV. SGT Hernandez performed first aid on the soldier as SGT Brown ran back to his CEP to call for a MEDEVAC; SGT Brown was informed that a MEDEVAC was already inbound for his location, so SGT Brown set up a defensive position in the CEP line with his M249 SAW. SSG Castro dismounted and also took up a defensive position.

SSG Uhl was monitoring the radio from the forward CCP and saw that no one was coming out of the kill zone. He radioed back to the convoy that he was coming back in when SPC Beck, the driver of the third M915, advised him to hold his position because the convoy was coming out. She ordered trucks to move out of the kill zone so SPC Graff drove around the convoy and out of the kill zone. His co-driver, SPC Harris, received a wound to the head and SPC Graff was shot in the arm. They pulled around the convoy and met SSG Uhl in the box. SSG Uhl had already called for a MEDEVAC and assessed the casualties as they came in.

After several trucks moved out of the kill zone and enabled her to push her way around the blockage, SPC Beck maneuvered her vehicle forward to respond to a wounded soldier's cries for help. Under fire, she dismounted her truck to assess the situation of the disabled military vehicle when a civilian driver ran up to her and showed her the wound that he received from a bullet grazing his back. She instructed him to get into her truck as she moved towards the disabled vehicle. Ron Hart, a retired Army Department of Defense driver, had maneuvered his truck next to the disabled M915 and was looking into PFC Delancey's cab. Mr. Hart saw that PFC Delancey had been wounded and relieved him of his M249 SAW. SPC Beck came around the front of Mr. Hart's truck, looked into PFC Delancey's cab, and saw SGT Ricketts lying on the floorboard of his truck crushed under the console. SGT Ricketts told her that he could not move and that he was not going to get out of there. She yelled "there is no way that we're leaving you here" and pulled him through the crushed console of his truck. She pulled him through the passenger side of the truck away from enemy fire, got him to the ground, and was pulling him around the front of Mr. Hart's truck when he saw that she was exhausted and helped her drag him the rest of the way. She climbed into her truck and saw that there was no room for SGT Ricketts with the three other people in her cab. SPC Beck radioed the trucks behind her and told them they had to recover SGT Ricketts. She then dismounted her truck again to instruct Mr. Hart to hold that position until one of the soldiers behind her recovered SGT Ricketts. SPC Beck signaled to the civilian drivers behind her to get ready to go, mounted, and drove her M915 out of the kill zone with several of the drivers behind her following her out.

By this time, the civilian drivers had dismounted their vehicles and were hiding in the ditch for cover. SPC Sharples, the driver of the second-to-last M915, dismounted and ran the length of the convoy trying to get the drivers back in their trucks. Scared and unable to speak English, most of them did not yield to his orders and remained hidden in the ditch. He ran to the rear M915 and told SPC Birkel, the TC, that they've got to get the civilian drivers back in their trucks. SPC Birkel was listening to the radio and knew that SGT Ricketts had not been recovered. Prompted by SPC Sharples, he radioed that he was going to get SGT Ricketts and dismounted his truck. SPC Schrad, his co-driver, dismounted and, with the help of SPC Detman in his withdrawn CEP, laid down suppressive fire on insurgent positions in a dune and a house, effectively neutralizing those positions and killing or wounding two to five insurgents. SPC Birkel and SPC Sharples ran three to four hundred meters under fire to the front of the convoy, found SGT Ricketts, put him in Hart's truck, and told Hart to get out of the kill zone. As they ran back to their trucks, they forced the civilian drivers back into their trucks. They saw that one tractor had its airlines damaged and switched it out with an undamaged bobtail. SPC Birkel and SPC Schrad remained in the kill zone until the last of the civilian drivers.

During this time, the crew of Regulator 3 had been firing at the insurgents in the grove, ditches, and buildings next to their CEP position. The gunner of the first KYNG CEP had been shot in the hand and could no longer fire the .50 caliber machine gun. Five dismounted soldiers armed with a M4, two M16s, a M9, and a M249 SAW were engaging 15-20 insurgents while the convoy moved out behind them. One of the KYNG soldiers picked up the AT4 from the hood of his CEP and fired it at one of the buildings, killing or wounding three or four insurgents. The rest of the insurgents mounted a coordinated rush toward the CEP position but were repelled by the five soldiers with SGT Brown as the base of fire with his SAW. The last insurgent fell three to five meters away from their CEP position.

Quick reaction forces rolled into the CEP position around noon to provide assistance. SGT Hernandez, recognizing that the injured KYNG soldier needed to be MEDEVAC'd soon, mounted the KYNG CEP that the wounded soldier was in and drove him to a casualty collection point (CCP) that was set up at the checkpoint that they crossed earlier. SGT Brown told SGT Hernandez that he was following him there in Regulator 3 so that they could move to the north CCP, but he saw that Regulator 2 was still sitting in the kill zone behind the maintenance bobtail. SGT Brown pulled up to Regulator 2, was informed by SGT Kennedy that SPC Hubbard was wounded, and called for a CEP from the south CCP to come pick up SPC Hubbard. SGT Brown and SSG Castro pulled SPC Hubbard from his vehicle and put him in the QRF CEP, which delivered him to the south CCP. SGT Hernandez drove back to the attack site, linked up with SGT Brown in Regulator 3, and they drove to SSG Uhl's CCP with Regulator 2 following them. All mission capable vehicles and uninjured soldiers were consolidated at SSG Uhl's CCP at 12:10 PM.

The documented enemy loss from this attack was 26 killed, 8 captured, and six RPGs, sixteen rockets, fifteen machine guns, twenty-two assault rifles, more than 2,900 rounds, and forty hand grenades were seized. The convoy under attack was the 1075th Transportation Company (Nebraska NG), 106th Transportation Battalion (101st Airborne Division AASSLT, Fort Campbell KY), 7th Transportation Group. The convoy suffered five US soldiers wounded-in-action (WIA), three civilian WIAs, two destroyed M915s, and four destroyed civilian tractor-trailer systems.