

Sergeant First Class Matthew T. Gruidl



Sergeant First Class Gruidl distinguished himself while serving as Platoon Sergeant of 2nd Platoon, Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, Third Air Defense Artillery, from 27 January to June 2003. On 22 March 2003, Task Force 2-7 Infantry made contact with Iraqi Forces in As Samawah, Iraq. Sergeant First Class Gruidl willingly and without orders volunteered to reestablish linkup for a lost and separated portion of Task Force 2-7 convoy that was receiving small-arms fire. With complete disregard for his personal safety, Sergeant First Class Gruidl continually exposed himself to hostile fire while using his Bradley Linebacker to shield the lost convoy against sporadic AK-47 fire as

he led it out of the hostile area to safety and reestablished linkup with the remainder of the Task Force 2-7 Tactical Operations Center. Numerous rounds of small-arms fire hit his Bradley Linebacker with one round striking his combat vehicle crewman helmet. On 24 March 2003, Alpha Battery was ambushed while securing Objective JENKINS by a large Iraqi infantry force. Sergeant First Class Gruidl maneuvered his Bradley Linebacker toward four Iraqi soldiers hiding in a ditch. The Iraqi soldiers immediately exited the ditch, and one ran around the rear of his platoon leader's track. Almost immediately, one of the Iraqi soldiers leapt onto the platoon leader's Bradley Linebacker. Without hesitation, Sergeant First Class Gruidl engaged the Iraqi soldier with a burst of .50-caliber rounds that removed the Iraqi soldier from the platoon leader's vehicle. His quick action saved the lives of the three-man crew. During the seizure of Objective LIONS (Saddam International Airport) on 4 April 2003, Sergeant First Class Gruidl contributed to the sustainment of platoon operations, which enable the only Air Defense Artillery elements at Objective LIONS to successfully complete their mission. His actions at Objective LIONS directly affected his platoon's success.

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Legends

