**MARK KISH**

Brick Location: A10

“THE DAY I SAW DIVINE INTERVENTION.”

On a recovery mission for a truck that had been hit by an IED and the TCN killed; the only thing left of the smoking truck was burnt pickles, cans of air and flashlights. People are killed for petty stuff over here.

After loading up, we were told to move one mile down the road near Taji; a fuel tanker had been ambushed by small arms fire killing the driver. On arrival we set up our security perimeter; KBR was loading the burnt truck when we noticed two Iraqis on a building 300 meters to our front watching us. My team leader wanted to get on my gun, so I let him and I took his position as truck commander in the front right seat. Minutes later gunfire erupted from the bushes 100 meters to our front right, then they started dropping mortars on us. Yeah, mortars, they never do that, they can’t his stuff with them. They normally only shoot at the base because it’s so big, they have to hit *something!*

These guys were trained; they set this ambush for us. They were on the building as spotters, and they were walking rounds right into our truck.

The first mortar round hit 30 meters in front of our truck and then right behind us, and then another, and then one hit right beside my door about one to five meters…*the kill zone!* By an act of God, no more damage than scratches on our truck. When it hit I checked myself and looked over at Pvt. Willis, an 18-year-old kid fresh out of basic. I thought to myself, the next round is going to kill us. They had a bead on us…they had us…if that round were just two meters closer it would have landed in the turret killing us. The look on their faces was utter shock. Jaka dropped down into the truck and Willis froze in place. I looked at Willie and said ,”I know they’re not trying to kill us?” Smacking Jaka on the leg, I said “Put some suppression fire on that 3 o’clock position.” I then dropped the window and engaged the enemy, there was about five that I could see, the rest were just flashes in the weeds.

1st Sergeant was with KBR outside the truck. He did a power slide on the pavement, got into the truck, dropped a window and started firing also. After the Bradley’s showed and laid down fire for us, we popped some smoke so the KBR could get out safely.

We did our job…KBR lived…they tried like hell to kill them, they shot up their trucks; sparks were flying everywhere.

Ironically, the coronal was with us that day. Had he been killed, it would have been tragic.

How many people we killed that day, I will never know, but if they lived through that hail fire, then they deserved to.

Cpl. Mark Anthony Kish, Jr. was with the Ohio National Guard 1-148th Infantry unit deployed after 9/11 for one year to Rock Island, Illinois. He then volunteered to go to Iraq with the North Carolina National Guard in 2004 and served with the 1-120th Infantry Unit out of Jacksonville, NC. His deployment with them was 1 year. He volunteered again to serve in Iraq with the 5th-113th Heavy Artillery Unit out of Raleigh, NC in 2006 for 1 year, and during his tour he was awarded the Bronze Star for his actions during an ambush. In 2007 he returned to the Ohio National Guard 1-148th Infantry and is currently serving again in Iraq with them in 2008.

He was born and raised in the Jefferson Township/Gahanna area.

Submitted by:

Regina Kish

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