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FOUR 'CAV' TROOPS WITH V CORPS COMBAT TEAM EARN VALOR MEDALS

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FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARHORSE, BAQUBAH, Iraq -- Four Soldiers with F Troop, 4th Cavalry were awarded Army Commendation Medals with valor here August 6. The unit is part of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team of V Corps' 1st Infantry Division here.

Lt. Carl E. Gregory of Stilwell, Okla.; Sgt. Mitchell W. Wagner of North Canton, Ohio and Spc. Paul Carrisoza of Hemet, Calif. earned the medals for heroism while combating enemy forces in Baqubah, Iskandariah and Najaf last April.

Pfc. John M. White of Anchorage, Alaska earned his medal for heroic actions aiding a wounded Soldier when a rocket-propelled grenade struck his wingman's vehicle April 10 north of FOB Warhorse.

Col. Dana J.H. Pittard, 3rd BCT commander, awarded the medals.

Pittard also presented Capt. Thomas H. Johnson Jr., outgoing commander of F Troop, with a Combat Infantry Badge. Johnson has been tapped for an assignment with the division's 1st Battalion, 63rd Armor.

Gregory said he, Wagner and Carrisoza were attached to a tank company during the first battle of Baqubah from April 11 to 13. He said they were able to open up an avenue of approach to attack in the center of the city.

In a sworn statement recommending the three men for ARCOMs with valor, Capt. John S. Combs, commander of the division's 2nd Battalion, 63rd Armor, wrote that the three Soldiers "undoubtedly saved the lives of many Soldiers" with their "aggressive attitude and willingness to fight under less than ideal conditions."

While driving a Humvee for a unit platoon sergeant, White saw his wingman's vehicle struck by an RPG and "instinctively grabbed the Combat Lifesaver's bag, and while receiving enemy small arms fire, moved tactically to the aid of his wounded comrade," according to witness' reports.

White was lauded for his "selfless service, composure, courage and discipline under extreme circumstances."

"I'm very proud of you all," Pittard told the Soldiers. "You've got to know that we are making a difference in Diyala, especially Baqubah."

"Baqubah is a relatively safer place because of you," Pittard said. "Have faith in what you are doing."

