

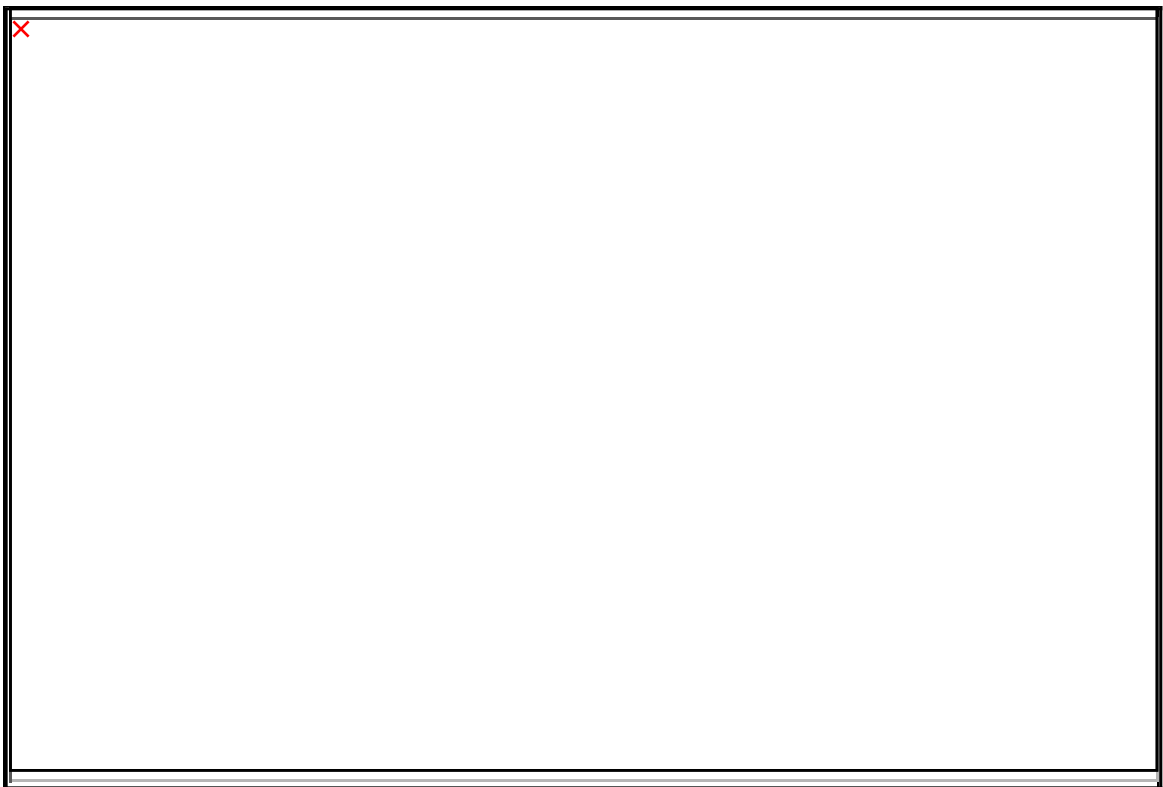
# Former EOD sergeant awarded Purple Heart for injuries suffered in Iraq

Robert D. Martin, USAWC Public Affairs

## Former EOD sergeant awarded Purple Heart for injuries suffered in Iraq

April 23, 2015 -- Former Army Sgt. Richard T. Beasley received the Purple Heart award for injuries

sustained in combat while assigned to the 756th Explosive Ordnance Company at Joint Base Balad in Iraq. In a small Bliss Hall ceremony with gathered members



of the College and Garrison command groups, Command Sgt. Major Malcolm Parrish presented the award.

Then-Sgt. Beasley was on a route clearance mission from Balad to find improvised explosive devices. "While out on patrol we found an IED in a hole and we laid a round in there," Beasley said. "We did what we typically do -- we tried to detonate it, tried twice, and it just dented the round and did not actually explode.

***Purple Heart awardee Richard Beasley stands with Command Sgt. Major Charles Rosado, top NCO of the Army Garrison at Carlisle Barracks (left) and Command Sgt. Major Malcolm Parrish, Army War College CSM, at the United States Army War College's Bliss Hall, April 23.***

"We decided that it was safe enough to throw into the truck and carry on with the mission,"

Beasley added. "While in the cab of the truck we noticed there was an odor. We pulled over and threw it into the side bin of the truck ... and, the next day I noticed while out on another route clearance mission that my pant leg was wet and discovered blisters at the same time."

It would later be determined that Beasley had been in contact with mustard gas. While still on active duty, Sgt. Beasley's name was submitted for a Purple Heart that was disapproved by headquarters of the American-led coalition. His Purple Heart award was recently approved by the Defense Department. The DoD has re-set its policy to provide medical support to Americans exposed to chemical agents in March 2015, including mustard and sarin, during the Iraq War, and to recognize veterans who had been previously denied awards.

"I was overwhelmed to receive this award from Sergeant Major Parrish," he said, after the ceremony. He said that if he had received this award earlier, it would not have been at this scale. Beasley continued to say that when he was originally denied, he felt scorned. "It wasn't like I intentionally hurt myself, and I definitely did not put that round in the ground, said Beasley.

"It's good to have the Purple Heart," he added. "It feels good to be acknowledged."