

Tripler Army Medical Center

Media Release

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Tripler Public Affairs Office, 808-433-57

Release Number 05-005

Jan. 9, 2005

Bronze Medal awardee receives Purple Heart for wounds in separate combat incident

Family witnesses Tripler's Commanding General pin the Purple Heart on the 25th Infantry Division Soldier and Tripler patient

Tripler Army Medical Center Public Affairs Office

HONOLULU— For wounds suffered during an attack near Kirkuk Dec. 11, Sgt. Meriamme Salcepuedes, 29, received a Purple Heart medal at Tripler Army Medical Center Dec. 29. Tripler's Commanding General Maj. Gen. Gale S. Pollock pinned on the medal at a ceremony attended by Salcepuedes' family and friends. This is his second major medal. Earlier last year, he received a Bronze Star for bravery in combat for his actions last April.

The Guam native was wounded Dec. 11 by shrapnel to his right leg, when an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) was detonated by remote control under his Humvee shortly before noon. His unit was returning to Forward Operating Base (FOB) McHenry north of Kirkuk, after completing a morning mission to open up suspicious containers.

The convoy was less than one kilometer away from the base, when the attack occurred. "I was riding in the back of the fourth vehicle in a five-vehicle convoy," said Salcepuedes. "It blew me 15 feet off the road."

When the five-year Army veteran landed, he was conscious and immediately checked his body. While his right knee was badly wounded, he was relieved to find all of himself in one piece. "I could feel everything," he said.

Two other Soldiers in the Humvee were also wounded, but only Salcepuedes required extensive medical care. He was quickly evacuated to a field hospital, then to Landstuhl Army Medical Center in Germany, and on to Tripler, where he arrived Dec. 21.

Besides the Purple Heart, Salcepuedes has also received the Bronze Star award with the "V" device for valor for his actions April 7. That day, he was assigned to a quick reaction force to monitor a demonstration in Hawijah, a town about 45 minutes north of Kirkuk.

When grenades exploded several blocks away, the force responded. Salcepuedes' squad was the first to engage the enemy after the attack. While under intense enemy fire, he pulled his wounded squad leader to safety and took charge of the squad. Exposing himself to several high-explosive rounds, he then provided cover for his squad to advance upon the enemy. These actions led to the Bronze Star citation.

Salcepuedes has been with Company B, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment (Wolfhounds) of the 25th Infantry Division since December 2002. He deployed with his company to Iraq in February 2004.



Photo by Les Ozawa

A Family Hero. Sgt. Meriamme Salcepuedes (seated) displays his Purple Heart award with Maj. Gen. Gale S. Pollock, commanding general of Tripler Army Medical Center. From left are Salcepuedes' wife Divina; his son, Devin Paul; daughter, Isabella; Salcepuedes; Pollock; Salcepuedes' sister, Marilou Robelledo; and niece, Sofia.