Press Release

“Thunder Run” hero receives the nation’s second highest award for valor

Staff Sgt. Stevon A. Booker, a 3rd Infantry Division Soldier who was assigned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment and killed in action in Iraq in 2003, is slated to be awarded (posthumously) the Distinguished Service Cross – the nation’s second highest award for valor – in Pittsburgh, April 5.

He was originally awarded a Silver Star for his actions that day. However, following a comprehensive review directed by former Secretary of Defense Ash Carter of all awards issued during Operation Iraqi Freedom, it was determined that Booker’s award would be upgraded to the Distinguished Service Cross.

Booker’s mother, Freddie M. Jackson, will be presented the award 16 years to the day after her son sacrificed his life for this nation. The ceremony is scheduled to be held at the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall at 10 a.m. in Pittsburgh.

Now famously known as “Thunder Run”, Booker’s unit led an offensive armored-attack into Baghdad on April 5, 2003 – subsequently resulting in the collapse of the Saddam Hussein government.

During the raid, Booker’s platoon came under heavy small-arms and rocket-propelled grenade fire. Booker immediately reacted – communicated the situation to his chain-of-command, returned fire with his mounted machinegun and reassured his crew that they would make it to their objective.

When his crew machinegun malfunctioned, Booker completely disregarded his personal safety and took up an exposed prone position on the top of his tank. While still engaged by heavy enemy fire, Booker maintained communication with his platoon, accurately destroyed an enemy vehicle and effectively protected his platoon’s flank.

Booker continued to engage the enemy and protect his platoon while exposed for nearly five miles until he was fatally wounded.

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