

# DCMA Employee Helps Save

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**T**o be honest, I don't remember much of what happened that day," Army Spc. Lukas Shook said about the rocket attack that nearly took his life. "I remember the impact of the rocket, and then, at most, a few seconds after. The next thing I really remember is waking up in the hospital."

Fortunately for Lukas it was during his "forgotten" period of time that Loren Duwel, a Defense Contract Management Agency Aeronautical Division emergency essential employee, took action.

Duwel said Nov. 30, 2008, seemed just like any other day. He never thought this would be a day that would be forever imprinted on his mind. Duwel was pulling an SUV out of a parking space at Forward Operating Base Freedom, Iraq, when out of nowhere the impact of a 107 mm rocket just 75 feet away jolted him into the realities of living and working within a warzone. Trying to process mentally what had just happened, and



While recovering from his injuries sustained in Iraq, President George W. Bush shakes the hand of then Army Pfc. Lukas Shook after presenting him with a Purple Heart Monday, Dec. 22, 2008, during a visit to Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Looking on are Pfc. Shook's mother and father, Dennis and Cynthia Shook. (White House photo by Eric Draper)

dealing with what he called a "surreal situation," Duwel witnessed a soldier being thrown by the explosion into the parking lot.

Instinctively, Duwel scrambled to put on his body armor and helmet. His next instinct was to find better protection from any additional incoming rockets. He ran to a nearby dumpster only to

realize that following a soldier into a nearby building would offer more protective shelter. Duwel said, "As the soldier entered the building, he started yelling, 'medic!'" A medic immediately grabbed his aid bag and left to assist the injured. Without thinking, Duwel turned and followed behind the medic as he went out the door.

After hurrying to the injured soldier's location, Duwel and the combat medic could now see that the soldier thrown by the explosion had sustained a large laceration to his head and several large wounds to his back and legs. While assisting the medic, frantically doing whatever he

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# Soldier's Life

could to stop the soldier's bleeding, another soldier with shrapnel wounds to his leg came up seeking medical help. Duwel, certified as an Army combat lifesaver while in Baghdad, quickly assessed the soldier's leg injury.

Realizing both soldiers required greater medical attention than both he and the medic could provide, Duwel informed the medic they could use his nearby vehicle to take the soldiers to the hospital within the Green Zone. Bringing the vehicle to the injured soldiers' location, he and the medic loaded the more critically wounded soldier into the back of the SUV — allowing the medic to continue to work on the soldier during the drive to the hospital. After assisting the soldier with leg injuries into the passenger seat, Duwel sped off in the direction of the hospital.

Acting off of adrenaline and prior training, "I just remember telling the wounded soldier in the passenger seat to keep telling the other soldier he could see the gates to the hospital — hoping to calm the soldier and slow his bleeding," said Duwel. "Throughout the drive to the hospital, I remember the medic working frantically on the critically injured soldier while yelling for him to 'stay with us man.'" Managing his way through Green



From left: Army Spc. Lukas Shook and Loren Duwel, DCMA Aeronautical Systems Division emergency essential employee, pose for a picture during their reunion at Walter Reed Medical Center on May 2. Duwel assisted in getting Lukas to the hospital for treatment within the International Zone in Iraq after a rocket exploded nearby causing a large laceration to his head and several large wounds to his back and legs. (Photo by Cynthia Shook)

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Zone checkpoints, Duwel said he was relieved when he actually saw the gates to the hospital and even more relieved to see emergency medical staff standing outside the hospital ready to take over care of the injured.

As the staff rushed the injured soldiers into the emergency room, Duwel was asked to provide any information he could on the soldiers to assist in admitting both of them. He said “it was at this moment I first remember hearing the name Lukas Shook” — the name of the critically wounded soldier. It was also at this time he learned Lukas was assigned to the 110th Military Police Company.

Shortly after being admitted to the hospital doctors discovered Lukas had a blood clot on his brain. The clot required immediate removal, or Lukas would die regardless of the treatment and stabilization of his other injuries. According to Cynthia Shook, Lukas’ mother, Duwel played a critical role in getting her son to the hospital in enough time for the hospital staff to identify and treat the clot as quickly as possible.

Lukas summed up his appreciation for Duwel by saying, “Simply put, I wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for Loren and the medic doing everything they could to get me treated and transported to the hospital. The actions taken by Loren that day saved my life.”

A feeling shared between both Lukas and his parents is how Duwel’s being “in the right place at the right time” was more than just a coincidence.

“My husband and I were, and still are, eternally grateful for the act of courage that Loren exhibited,” said Cynthia. “We feel Loren was an instrument in the hand of the Lord that day in the saving of our son’s life. We will be forever grateful for Loren’s part in saving our son’s life.”

Cynthia says Duwel’s actions to help her son in the face of danger remind her of the saying that, “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good.” Based on this saying, Cynthia knows, “Loren is a good man.”

From Iraq, Lukas was eventually transferred to Germany and then on

to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C. for further treatment and operations.

Lukas is working through an intense physical therapy routine and is progressing well through his program. He said he is approaching his rehab like any other mission the Army threw at him. He is confident, with the help and strength of everyone around him, he will accomplish this new mission the same way he did all others before this one.

After much coordination and effort, Duwel was able to reunite with Lukas before a recent surgery of his at Walter Reed Medical Center on May 2. Duwel said his meeting with Lukas was a “rewarding and emotional experience that further solidified how tough a soldier Lukas is.”

Loren is currently on his second DCMA deployment — this time to Afghanistan. Loren is scheduled to be presented a Bronze Star during his unit’s homecoming at Fort Carson, Colo., sometime in August. 



Loren Duwel, DCMA Aeronautical Division emergency essential, poses for a picture with Army Gen. David Petraeus, U.S. Central Command commander, during his most recent deployment to Iraq. During his deployment to Iraq, Duwel assisted a fallen Army soldier who was injured by a rocket that struck Forward Operating Base Freedom on Nov. 30. (Courtesy photo)