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Marines to the rescue in Afghanistan

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A crowd of Nawa citizens forms a line along the bank of the canal as Marines of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, prepare to recover a stuck car near Forward Operating Base Spin Ghar Dec. 22. Photo by Sgt. Brian Tuthill

When the unoccupied car of a Nawa citizen careened down a steep canal embankment and splashed into the swift, cold waters just outside Forward Operating Base Spin Ghar Dec. 22, Marines quickly came to the rescue.

A squad of Marines with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, were on scene within minutes to assess the accident. A humvee was brought out to tow the vehicle back up the embankment.

“The car was parked on top of the hill and the emergency brake wasn’t on,” said Lance Cpl. Adam D. Masle, rifleman, 1st Platoon, Bravo Company, who was standing his guard post and saw the car plunge into the water. “It started to roll forward and then went over the side and right in. The little kids there were watching it and then the owner came out and he looked really mad.”

The car came to a stop with the front right tire and bumper submerged in the canal and the other front tire sunken into the muddy embankment. When the car’s owner first saw it, he quickly made his way down the hill and tried to reverse the car, only making his predicament worse, Marines said.

As Marines positioned their humvee to pull the car out, a crowd of children and local residents began to form on the road to watch the events unfold, but were asked to stand back for their own safety.

Once the car’s rear axle was rigged for tow, Lance Cpl. Edward J. Stevens, III, a rifleman with 1st Platoon, Bravo Company, slowly drove forward as his fellow Marines guided him.

The car jolted backwards as it freed from the mud, but was eventually pulled back to the high ground of the road to the driver and crowd’s rejoice.

“I had good directions and Marines were watching all around so it wasn’t very difficult,” said Stevens, 19, from Potaski, N.Y. “We’ve towed out our own vehicles, but not a local national’s.”

The Marine patrol and humvee quickly packed their gear and returned to their normal duties at the forward operating base as the car drove away.

“We helped the people out and showed our support here, that really improves relations and wins hearts and minds,” said Masle, 20, from Fulton, N.Y. “And I think that guy will use his brake from now on.”

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Story by Sgt. Brian Tuthill

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