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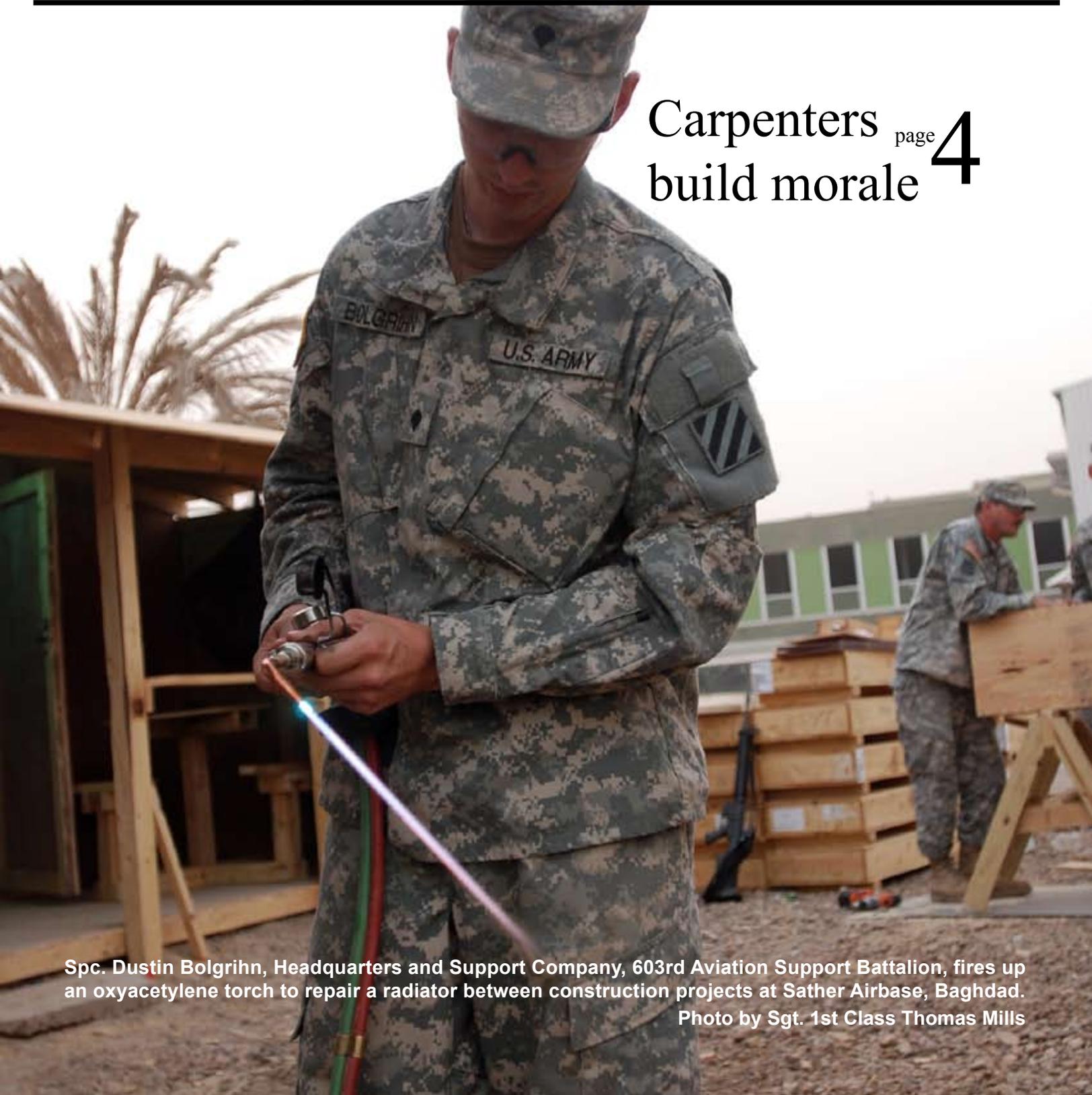
FALCON FLYER

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For the Soldiers and Families of the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade

August 2007

Carpenters page 4
build morale



Spc. Dustin Bolgrihn, Headquarters and Support Company, 603rd Aviation Support Battalion, fires up an oxyacetylene torch to repair a radiator between construction projects at Sather Airbase, Baghdad.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mills

Falcons take the fight to the enemy

Col. Daniel Ball
CAB Commander

I'd like to take this opportunity to give you a quick overview of what's been happening here in Iraq. We've been at steady state operations for more than a month and a half now and we are beginning to see a difference in Multi-National Division Iraq -- Center. Everyone is doing a truly spectacular job.

In July we began a series of operations here in MND-C starting with Operation Marne Torch. We are now well into another operation called Operation Marne Avalanche. These operations are designed to target specific spots in our area of operations in order to stop the flow of the things -- materiel, enemy insurgents, and weaponry -- that accelerate violence in Baghdad.

Our role in that fight is multi-faceted. We have conducted around 50 air assault missions using our Black Hawks of 4-3 Avn., and our Chinooks of 2-3 Avn. These assault missions have mainly been supporting troops from 2nd BCT, 10th Mountain Division and 4th BCT (ABN), 25th Light Infantry Division in their respective operations. We have also performed countless missions to find and destroy enemy and materiel in the area using our Apaches from 1-3 Avn., and our Kiowas from 3-17 Cav. Our maintenance crews and support personnel from 603rd ASB have worked around the clock to keep the aircraft flying and get us what we need to continue the fight.

All of this effort has produced tremendous gains on the ground, however Marne Torch and Marne Avalanche have just be-

gun the process of clearing vital areas of insurgents and to block the flow of the accelerants into Baghdad. This is, indeed, a long fight and we know it will take some time. The point I want to express to you, though, is we are moving in a positive direction and our successes in disrupting the enemy operations will translate to a more peaceful Baghdad allowing the government of Iraq to move forward in turn.

This progress in the fight could not have come about without our Soldiers and leaders, and civilian contractors, who have worked tirelessly, day in and day out. I applaud everyone who is a part of our continued success as a fighting unit, to include our family members. Thank you and God Bless.

Wings of the Marne!

LEGAL NOTES

Corrective training straight from the regulation

Sgt. Robert Boatwright
CAB OP LAW

AR 600-20 states, "[o]ne of the most effective nonpunitive, corrective measures is extra training or instruction." Many NCOs will agree and use corrective training on a regular basis to improve the discipline and competence of subordinates.

The most important word is "nonpunitive", meaning not punishment. A Soldier may only be punished by a commander, and only through the process of a Court-Martial, or more commonly, Article 15 proceedings. However, occasionally corrective training is confused with punishment.

Commonly, focus is on the word "corrective" instead of on the training aspect. "Smoking" a Soldier, as in an order to perform physical training for tardiness, only changes behavior temporarily. However, training Soldiers to correct deficiencies will pay off in the long run, as they are groomed into effective, professional leaders. The guid-

ance from AR 600-20 shows training must be oriented to improving a problem area. An example is remedial PT, corrective training designed to improve deficiencies in regard to physical fitness.

AR 600-20 also states corrective training should "continue only until the training deficiency is overcome." This is an important aspect of extra instruction often overlooked. By specifying a duration at the outset of corrective training, the leader is effectively and wrongfully punishing the Soldier while denying the right to due process. A Soldier's corrective training should be open-ended, meaning the Soldier has an interest in determining its duration, motivating him to make the changes needed.

Situations in which a Soldier cannot be trained out of an inappropriate behavior will continue to exist. It is then administrative action or punishment should be considered. But, if the leaders can hone the skills of effective corrective training and extra instruction, commanders will spend less time on unfavorable actions, and young Soldiers may escape having any blemishes on their records.

"The most important word is "nonpunitive", meaning not punishment. A Soldier may only be punished by a commander..."

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Pfc. Monica K. Smith



Photo by Pfc. Monica K. Smith

First Sgt. Spencer Davis, A Co., 603rd ASB, sings with country singer Gina Notrica at the north MWR stage, July 7, during her visit to Camp Striker.



Photo by Pfc. Monica K. Smith

Sgt. Maj. of the Army, Kenneth Preston visits Baghdad International Airport, and answers questions from 3rd ID soldiers over dinner at the Camp Liberty dining facility, July 16.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mills

Pfc. Precious Haynes (facing), Co. D, 4-3 Avn., is sworn in by Chief Warrant Officer David Wells, also of Co. D, to complete the CAB's reenlistments for the fiscal year 2007.

OPINION

Private Prissy: More to life... than Gucci sunglasses

Pfc. Monica K. Smith
CAB PAO

In April of last year I walked into the recruiter's office wearing my teal Hollister top, white Old Navy skirt, brown Roxy flip flops and the top of my iBook peeking over my pink school purse (I didn't use backpacks).

I should have translated the laugh I heard when I entered the room into meaning, "She's gonna learn the hard way."

After my first field training exercise at Fort Jackson, the tired females rushed into the bathroom trying to get a shower with hot water. It was there I looked into the mirror and saw my first blackhead - on my own face.

It was then I realized the life I chose.

Goodbye Anne Taylor skirts to school and work. Goodbye glittery nail polish and curled hair. Goodbye American Eagle flip flops with capri-pants, tank top, coral-shell necklace with sparkly earrings.

"I wish I had some makeup" I thought to myself as I pondered how to remove the blemishes on my face.

The more I thought about it, the more I felt ugly and incapable. I wanted to feel better about myself when I looked in the mirror. Oh, how I longed for eyeliner, "If only I had eyeliner then I would feel better." But eyeliner never rescued me.

After I finished basic training I came to understand you shouldn't need things to feel "pretty" or "capable".

My former life of shopping for the latest trends, reading about the hottest makeup techniques and "must-have" accessories didn't make me a better person.

When I went home, no

one cared I was still wearing my generic tennis shoes from basic training.

I grasped what it meant when people said, "there's more to life than how you look or what you wear."

The brand on my shoes isn't as important as what I do in the places they take me. Here in Iraq we should be standing firm, steadfast in our duty and in our commitment to the mission, to each other and to the families we've left at home.

The style of my watch isn't as important as whether I make time to do what's right. Opportunities to do wrong present themselves at every turn and we may have to create time to do the things we know we need to do, such as physical training and communicating with family back home. At other times we may need to pursue the discipline required to simply do our jobs when we feel burnt out.

The makeup I use isn't as important as what people see when they see me. When others see me do they see "private prissy" - the one who doesn't volunteer to help take out the trash or sweep the tent? When others see me do they see someone who looks out for themselves or do they see someone who cares more about the well-being of their comrades than their own self-promotion.

It's not about me. It's not about adorning myself but finding ways to better the world I live in. I represent my country, my family, my comrades - not Abercrombie & Fitch, not Adidas, not Cover Girl.

Although, I did ask my NCO if I could wear Gucci sunglasses instead of my ballistic glasses.

I guess some things take time.

Extreme CONSTRUCTION

Soldiers build morale

Pfc. Monica K. Smith
CAB PAO

The words on the small building say "Beach Paradise". Additions to the run-down building can be seen: an office, an additional room, a porch and a table with four seats. A palm tree with a semi-circle bench appears to grow from the side of the building. Near the palm tree, working on a bookshelf, is Spc. George Boldi and Spc. Ed Cornett, the craftsmen of the "Beach Paradise" additions which serves as their office.

Boldi, a wheel vehicle mechanic, and Cornett, who works on heat and air conditioning repairs, both members of Headquarters and Support Company, 603rd Aviation Support Battalion, are now improving the work areas of others by creating a variety of furniture including corner shelves, gun racks and work benches.

"I told my commander I had carpentry experience and I've been doing this since I got boots on the ground," said Cornett. "But I enjoy doing this. You get to see your work in progress."

The two carpenters have had help from welder, Spc. Dustin Bolgrihn also a member of HSC 603rd ASB.

"Collectively, between the three of us, we said 'lets make something better,'" said Bolgrihn. "So we started with the office. We're going to build a shop next. It will be [20 feet by 20 feet], and the materials are already on order."

Boldi has also been woodworking since arriving in Iraq often putting in long hours to finish a project, all with the support of his company.

"There are days when I stay 24 hours to finish a project," said Boldi. "The chain of command here is really supportive which helps our morale, which helps us accomplish our work, which turns around and helps their morale - morale is a big factor here. The Soldiers are really good about helping out when I ask. Officers come by and help out, or I'll just ask, 'hey can you give me a hand, sir?'"

Both Boldi and Cornett have 15 years of experience in carpentry. Cornett worked construction and has done some remodeling while Boldi worked as a roofer and doing home repair. Bolgrihn grew up with his father teaching him how to weld and his grandfather teaching him how to be a blacksmith.

"I got a general knowledge of metal creativity and how there's a lot of different things you can do with metal," said Bolgrihn. "That's where I get my creative side, blacksmithing."

Bolgrihn's work is appreciated by both Boldi and Cornett who say his work with aluminum and steel is "excellent." His contributions include door handles and a triangle which hangs from the roof.

The list of requested items is nev-

er diminished however the three-man team is not discouraged.

"It makes the day go by a lot faster," said Boldi. "I've done 29 projects so far - and that is just what I've done, not what [Cornett] has done. We try to keep track of what we've done so when people ask I can show them. There's a lot of things that come to us that we just can't get to because of more pressing matters - people just need to be patient and we'll get to it eventually. I try to hurry but if it starts to look sloppy I slow down."

The response has been positive said Boldi with many people expressing thanks.

"I usually get something like, 'Wow. Gee, it's just what I wanted,' said Cornett.

So what's next for the construction team?

"A hot tub", said Cornett, "with cold water."



Photo by Pfc. Monica K. Smith

Spc. George Boldi and Spc. Ed Cornett, HSC, 603rd Aviation Support Battalion, work on creating a book shelf outside their "Paradise Beach" office at Sather Airbase, Baghdad.

Ride of their life

Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mills
CAB PAO

What started as a routine reconnaissance mission for two Troop C, 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry pilots suddenly became 30 minutes of intense action as the pilots found themselves shot down, surrounded by enemy fighters, then finally rescued.

Chief Warrant Officers Mark Burrows and Steven Cianfrini had just finished spotting a suspected roadside improvised explosive device for an infantry unit south of Baghdad and had begun to recon other routes for the troops on the ground.

"We were out doing a standard recon," said Cianfrini. "The situation was normal."

Cianfrini was running mission systems for the scout helicopter while Burrows was on the flight controls.

When Cianfrini saw tracer rounds arching up toward them he shouted to Burrows to turn away.

"We started taking fire from behind the aircraft," said Cianfrini. "I saw the tracer rounds come up through the rotors and at that point we tried to get out of range, check our instruments, make sure our systems were good and that nobody was hit."

The firing stopped and the two decided to return to base, even though everything checked out okay.

"It was silent for about 30 seconds and I looked out the left door and saw and heard a heavy machine gun open up on us," said Cianfrini. "The aircraft took substantial hits along my side of the aircraft."

That second volley was more intense, said Burrows, and came from multiple positions.

"I believe we were being shot at from all sides," said Cianfrini.

There was no time to use the helicopter's weapons systems to fire back, said Burrows. They could only dodge and weave and try to get away from the enemy.

"The large caliber munitions started hitting the aircraft, feeling like sledgehammers hitting it," said Burrows. "The aircraft took quite a bit of damage and I was very surprised that it kept flying for as long as it did."

The instrument panel was lit up with warning lights, emergency alarms were sounding in their ears, said Burrows. Then the instrument panel exploded, said Cianfrini.

"One second it was there and then the next it was a mess of wires," he said.

Being hit by a combination of large and small caliber weapons for an extended period of time had proved too much for the Kiowa.

"From the time the second engagement started to when we hit the ground we were

taking fire the whole time," said Burrows.

Burrows made the decision to try a controlled landing in a field. The main rotor had been hit, he figured, and the helicopter was trying to shake itself to death. As he slowed, though, the aircraft began to try to spin on its axis, a sign that the tail rotor had been rendered useless.

Burrows brought the aircraft down hard and it bounced over a canal, landing on its left side near a road.

With only bruises and scratches, the two pilots scrambled out of the aircraft and met at the nose. After assessing the situation, they discovered that Cianfrini's M4 rifle had been ejected from the aircraft during the crash. At the same time they started to receive fire from the other side of the aircraft.

Burrows and Cianfrini decided then to escape across the canal, away from the enemy fighters. The canal's thick growth of reeds afforded camouflage for the pilots and seemed like the best route.

"When we got into it we realized the water was up to our necks and we were in knee deep mud," said Burrows. "We physically couldn't move from the center of the canal."

As luck would have it being stuck in the canal was a good thing. A group of insurgents was approaching the other side of

the canal and the two pilots would have run right into their arms, Burrows said.

Soon insurgents were gathered on both banks of the canal and they began shooting blindly into the reeds with their assault rifles, trying to hit the pilots they couldn't see.

"They were within 15 to 20 feet of us on either side of the canal," said Cianfrini.

All the two pilots could do, said Burrows, was wait for what seemed to be the inevitable. Bullets clipped the reeds around them, hitting the water they were standing in, but not them.

"They just didn't see us," said Burrows. "I had one of the attackers in my sights but I knew if I'd shot him they would have known where we were."

A truck pulled up with a heavy machine gun and it began to fire into the reeds. Again, though the rounds came close none hit the pilots as they hunkered down in the water.

Burrows said the insurgents began moving down the canal, firing into the water, but soon they loaded up into vehicles and left.

"When they started leaving, walking away, I felt amazement that we were still there," said Burrows.

Burrows used his radio to send

See Pilots, page 6



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mills

Chief Warrant Officers Mark Burrows and Steven Cianfrini, Troop C, 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry, pose for a photo at Task Force Marne Media Operations Center, before TV interviews July 5 at Camp Victory, Baghdad.

Pilot awarded Soldier's Medal, promoted by CG

Pfc. Monica K. Smith
CAB PAO

Chief Warrant Officer John Pratt, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment received the Soldier's Medal, 1 July, from Gen. Rick Lynch, commander, 3rd Infantry Division at Camp Striker, Baghdad.

"This was an unexpected honor and surprise," said Pratt. "This is one of the most ornate and special events of my career."

Pratt was also promoted from Chief Warrant Officer Four to Chief Warrant Officer Five by Lynch.

"This shows years of dedication," said Lynch, of the promotion. "I am proud to do this on behalf of a grateful nation."

Pratt, a helicopter pilot from Bellville, Ill., gave thanks to his family saying, "All of our loved ones made sacrifices and put in the extra effort that allows us to do the things we need to do."

Pratt received the Soldier's Medal for his actions last April when he and another Soldier came upon a minivan that had only moments earlier been involved in a car wreck on top of a bridge. The two stopped and began to attend to the one passenger who was unconscious and bleeding from a number of locations.

Pratt looked over the side of the bridge and saw a dual-cab pickup truck lying upside down approximately 50-60 feet below the bridge. The truck had two people inside the truck, while another lay nearby. The contents from the bed of the truck were also nearby, piled in a bramble bush and burning.

Pratt, along with four other military officers, two US Army Lieutenants, and two Hungarian Lieutenants, made their way to the vehicle and began to care for the occupants while battling flames. They learned the vehicle carried ammunition which would sporadically fire off as Pratt and the others worked on the victims.

"One of the 2nd Lieutenants was saying, 'Reminds me of Baghdad,' and I didn't really grasp what he meant," said Pratt. "I heard the snaps and pops but I thought it was all the branches burning. We asked the guy if there were any live ammunition and he said 'yeah there's a bunch of [22-caliber bullets] in the back of the truck. I just stayed low.'"

Pratt and the others continued to work using fire extinguishers to keep the fire at bay. Eventually a fire hose



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mills

Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, commander, 3rd Infantry Division, pins the Soldier's Medal on Chief Warrant Officer John Pratt July 1. Pratt was awarded for heroism while helping several people involved in a car wreck in Florida last April.

was lowered from the edge of the bridge and Pratt and another person at the scene used it to extinguish the flames.

"I only did what any of us in here would have done," said Pratt. "I did what a Soldier is trained to do."

The Soldier's Medal is awarded to any person of Armed Forces of the United States, or of a friendly foreign nation, who shows heroism by risking personal danger or risk to life not involving conflict with an armed enemy.

PILOTS from page 5

out a distress signal and Army helicopters and Air Force jets began to arrive on scene. The Kiowa Warrior that had been flying with them had been hit as well and had retreated to a safe distance at the start of the shooting where it had called in reinforcements over the radio.

"Aircraft started arriving on scene and they were circling over head so we assumed it must be safe," Burrows said. He climbed out of the canal, leaving Cianfrini in hiding with the radios, and waved down a Kiowa helicopter.

A pair of Apaches from the 1st Cavalry Division had responded to the "Fallen Angel" call and was circling nearby. One of the Apaches, piloted by Chief Warrant Officers Allan Davison and Micah Johnson, landed nearby. Johnson, the front seat pilot, jumped out to check Burrows and Cianfrini for injuries.

Because of the possible danger of enemy fighters returning the pilots decided to extract Burrows and Cianfrini immediately instead of waiting for further assistance so they performed what is commonly called a "spur ride." The spur ride is an unconventional means of extraction in which the pilots clip themselves onto the outside of the aircraft using their built in safety harness and d-rings, said Burrows.

Cianfrini was placed in the front seat of the Apache, and then Johnson strapped himself onto the outside

of the Apache on the right, while Burrows strapped himself onto the outside of the Apache on the left.

Once they gave the thumbs up to Davison who was at the controls of the Apache they took off and flew the ten minutes back to Baghdad International Airport where 3/17 Cav. is based.

"It wasn't the most comfortable flight but I was elated to be out of there," said Burrows. "(The Apache) was going 120 mph so you can imagine the wind was pretty strong. I had no hearing protection and I couldn't open my eyes so I just held on and rode it out and was just glad to be out of there."

An Air Force Thunderbolt II destroyed the downed Kiowa with two 500-pound laser-guided bombs some time after the extraction.

Both pilots say they can't believe they came out with nothing more than scratches and bruises. From the moment their aircraft hit the ground to when they started the flight back to base was a span of nearly 30 minutes, said Burrows. At the time, he said, they didn't really think too much about how lucky, or unlucky, they were to survive that half hour.

"It happened so fast I don't think we really thought about much except just trying to stay alive," said Cianfrini.

The whole time all they could do was hope that they made it out alive, Burrows said.

"I knew we would be rescued but I can't believe that through all this series of events we made it through (without serious injury)," said Burrows. "That's the kind of unbelievable part."

**It's not the size of the dog in the fight but the size of the fight in the dog...
still, sometimes it helps to have-**

BIG DOGS



Pfc. Monica K. Smith
CAB PAO

Chinook crews of the Combat Aviation Brigade are finding their missions are extending past the traditional role of transporting supplies and materiel to a more aggressive form of transportation. Chinooks are participating more often in air assault missions transporting military forces to confront and attack enemy insurgents.

"Doing the (nightly) transporting thing is good," said Spc. Stanford Horne, crew chief, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment. "But with air assault you kind of feel like you are accomplishing something, which we are in the first place - we're putting people where they need to go."

Traditionally the CAB uses Black Hawks for air movement and air assault by moving personnel around the battlefield rather than on the roads, which have improvised explosive devices, said Capt. Daniel Morris, battle captain, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2/3 Avn.

Black Hawks are able to maneuver into smaller landing areas, however, Chinooks have the capabilities to facilitate larger missions simply because of their size, said Spc. John Huber, also with Co. B. Chinooks can carry 33 people, 24 medical litters or stretchers, and have a payload of up to 25,000 pounds. In addition, the seats are "quick release" meaning they fold up to fit more equipment if needed.

The ground commander has a working knowledge of each helicopter's capabilities and will make a request based on his needs. Often a combination of Black Hawks and Chinooks will be used, depending on the number of troops to transport. The Black Hawks can carry 11 people meaning the Chinook carries three times as much.

"We use [Chinooks] a lot when we have a bunch of people we need to move," said Morris.

However, size isn't always a positive aspect of the Chinook. Because they often carry more weight the Chinook is not as agile as the Black Hawk.

They also take longer to unload on the ground just because of the number of Soldiers they carry.

"The fact that we can carry a lot of troops means that we have to spend more time on the ground during the assault getting rid of the troops whereas the Black Hawks, as soon as they're on the ground

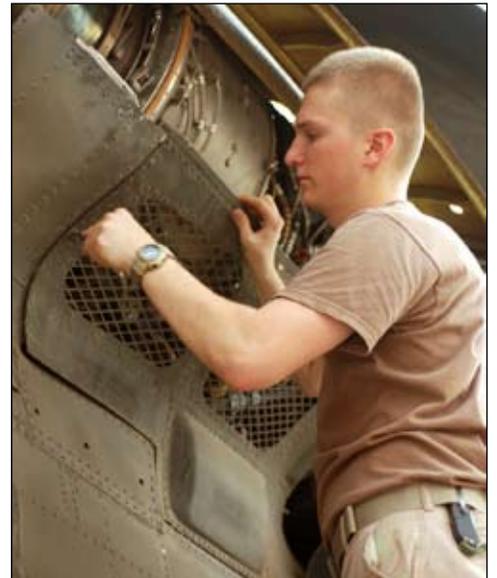
those guys are out in a nanosecond. We're out in 3 or four seconds and that can be significant depending on the conditions of the field," said Chief Warrant Officer Manny Portela, pilot with Co. B.

The time on ground can be nerve wracking to some of the Chinook crewmembers because conditions in theater can change at a moment's notice. Huber's first air assault mission was simple: drop off soldiers who were going after IED manufacturers. However when a mortar hit nearby, Huber realized his role in this theater was more than as a simple taxi service.

"I was scared," said Huber. "But I started thinking about it and that's why we're here, to help the guys on the ground."

During their second air assault, Huber's fellow crewmember, Horne, armed the ramp gun, sitting on the edge of the ramp and anchored to the helicopter. The gun seat, which would normally be there, was removed to allow infantry soldiers to be able to exit the aircraft quickly. Despite the uncomfortable flight, Horne enjoys participating in air assaults.

"I like it. It keeps you on your toes," said Horne. "You don't have room to mess up. It makes you better, at least that's how I feel." Huber echoed Horne's opinion, "I love it."



Photos by Pfc. Monica K. Smith

Spc. John Huber, B Co., 2/3 closes the covers on a Black Hawk as he prepares for their second air assault mission at Sather Airbase, Baghdad.

VIPERS

the 911 call for the Division

Pfc. Monica K. Smith
CAB PAO



(Above) Pfc. Nicholas Alft of B Co., 1/3 ATK, prepares an Apache for use in a quick reaction force mission. The Apaches must be maintained to fly in 20 to 30 minutes after being called for a mission.

(Below) 1st Lt. Jeffrey Meinders, also B Co., checks the systems of the Apache to ensure the helicopter is prepared for the next quick reaction force mission.



Photos by Pfc. Monica K. Smith

The sound of helicopters flying overhead can bring a sense of relief to ground Soldiers facing opposition. When these Soldiers get into a bind they know who to call – the Vipers of 1st Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment's quick reaction force.

"When you hear the ground guy call, they're always calling for the Vipers," said Cpl. Jacob Butler, crew chief in Company B, 1/3 AVN, Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division. "They always call us to come in, we get there quickly and can stay on scene longer."

The QRF utilizes Apaches of Companies A, B and C of 1/3 AVN. These companies stand ready to take flight in 20 to 30 minutes after receiving a call requesting their support from whoever may need the watchful eye and powerful presence of an Apache.

"We give the ground guys a sense of relief, comfort of having an Apache," said Chief Warrant Officer Carlos Roman, pilot with Co. B, 1/3 AVN. "They just know that for the two minutes you were over them no one was shooting because everyone is afraid of an Apache. They know if they do shoot we'll shoot back and it will hurt pretty badly. Our mission is looking for bad people doing bad things and arranging the meeting be-

tween them and their maker. It's what we do. We're like the 911 call of the division."

The companies rotate each week providing defensive air coverage for escorting VIPs around the Baghdad area and in QRFs. These companies have a stand-by room where they wait to be called to fly on a moment's notice.

"The companies stand ready to jump on the aircraft," said Co. B 1st Sgt. Elving Peralta. "There is an aircraft ready and usually a vehicle ready to drive the pilots to the aircraft quickly."

A crew is on stand-by 24-hours each day with each crew working 14-hour shifts. Time is spent checking to ensure the helicopter is operational, troubleshooting problems that arise, reloading the weapons and other preparations to ensure the helicopter is primed for the next mission.

"We make sure that [the Apache] makes mission no matter what," said Butler. "We work 24-hours a day, seven days a week, maintaining the aircraft to go on any given time. We always make mission. It makes you feel good to see the bird take off on a mission, being able to launch the bird because you know you put it in the sky."

The crew's dedication to maintaining their aircraft and ability to take flight quickly combined with the aircraft's weapons capabilities make the Apache a fearsome force to contend with.

The Apache is the only aircraft in CAB with 30-mm M-230 [automatic cannon] in addition to being able to carry 16 Hell-fire missiles and 19 rockets, said Peralta.

The QRF provides cover and defense from the enemy working to support the ground commander.

"We try to deter as much as possible insurgency and destroy valuable targets," said Chief Warrant Officer Angel Gutierrez, also a pilot with Co. B. "Every part of my job is hard, some parts are just more challenging: the tempo changes, the timeline, you have to have flexibility. Not every day you shoot at someone but everyday is something different."

All the challenges are worth knowing their efforts are appreciated by the Soldiers who fight on the ground.

"Always in the back of my mind is knowing we're making that difference, or that we could be making the difference for the guys on the ground," said Butler.

The Learning C

Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mills

CAB PAO

On May 17, 2007 in a big white tent at Camp Buering in Kuwait, a slim female figure stood before roughly 200 Soldiers from 603rd Aviation Support Battalion. Beside her was an easel with butcher paper covered in phonetically spelled Arabic words. She looked out across the sea of Soldiers crammed into the long tent and raised her voice for quiet.

The class on Arabic language, history and culture was about to begin and 2nd Lt. Heather Wilson, military intelligence officer, 603rd ASB, Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, wanted to make sure everyone heard what she had to say.

"My hope is that every Soldier, every small interaction, can be a positive one," she said about the purpose behind her class. "I think that it's so important to learn the culture when you go to that country."

Learning, say Soldiers working with Wilson, is something at which she excels. Already, they say, Wilson has shown a remarkable promise as an officer and a leader through hard work, high initiative and a stick-to-itiveness that is rarely seen in young officers.

"She's great," said Sgt. Kelvin Cooley, 603rd ASB military intelligence NCO-IC. "I mean, she's really willing to learn."

One example is the Arabic language itself, said Cooley. After taking one Arabic class in college Wilson began studying Arabic on her own time. Many nights she can be found sitting at her desk with an Arabic language primer opened as she works toward developing her skills in this difficult language.

"She's really dedicated and always willing to learn and she takes initiative," said Cooley. "Arabic is probably one of the hardest languages to learn beside Farsi or Urdu."

Despite being described as a dedicated MI officer, Wilson's varied life didn't necessarily point to that vocation.

Mostly raised in Lusby, Md., Wilson didn't set out to become an MI officer in the Army. Her thoughts were on much loftier goals.

"Actually, I wanted to be an astronaut as cheesy as that sounds," she said.

When she was a small child she lived near Cape Canaveral's Kennedy Space Center. She went on a tour of the complex and was hooked on the concept of flying in space and piloting in general.

"Later I reevaluated my skills and how clumsy I was," she joked. "Five concussions later I decided that I shouldn't be a pilot."

Instead the intrepid young girl turned to art only to become a professional painter as a pre-teen.

"I did my first oil painting at 12," she said, "and it was entered in several (adult level) art shows where I won some honorable mentions. Then they found out I was only 12 and that got them excited."

After selling several paintings locally Wilson, who was attending Patuxent High School in Mary-

land, said she tired of the art business and retired as a professional painter at the age of 16. Creating art wasn't challenging enough, she said, and she was looking for something that tested her limits.

From there Wilson attended college at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Co. She was the first of her family to go to college, and it was there that she set her sights on the Army and specifically on being a military intelligence officer. Both of her parents were enlisted in the Navy, said Wilson, but that wasn't the reason she wanted to become an officer in the Army.

She wanted to be an officer in the Army because it seemed like it would be as much of a challenge as she could handle.

"I love that the Army is hard for me. I love that,"

she said. "You definitely learn your limits."

Lt. Col. Adrian Farrall, commander, 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, also part of the 3rd CAB, was Wilson's battalion commander at the Military Science Course at Colorado State. He remembers a remarkable young cadet who thrived on challenges.

"She was a great student and a great cadet," he said. "She took a full course load and her cadet work, but she was more than able to deal with it."

On top of the course work

See Learning, next page

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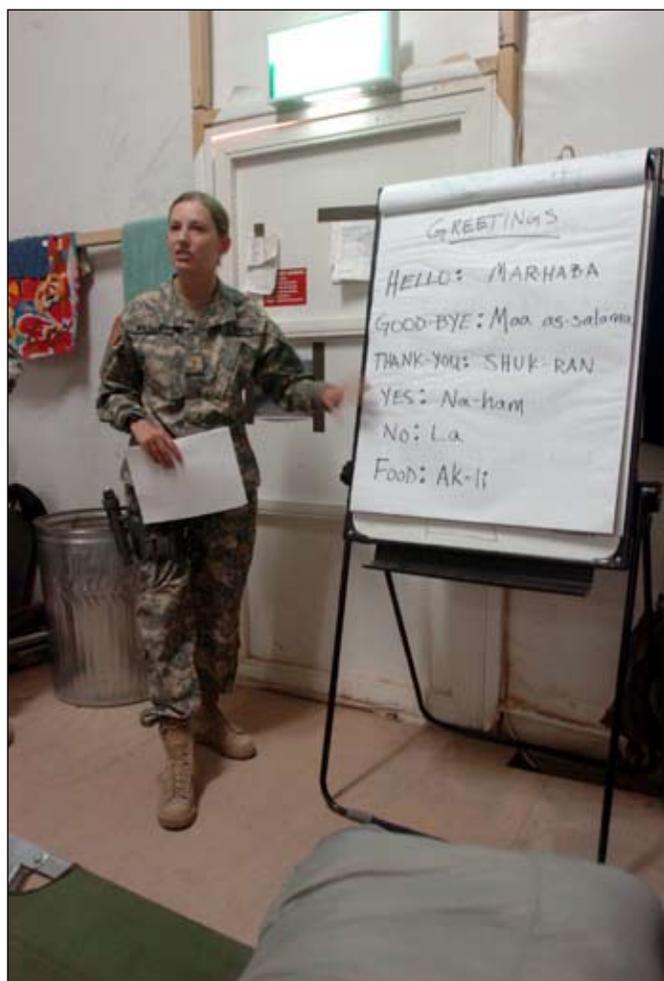


Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mills

2nd Lt. Heather Wilson, military intelligence officer, 603rd ASB, instructs members her unit on Arabic language and customs during training at Camp Buering, Kuwait, May 17.

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and cadet studies, Wilson also found the time to volunteer as a sexual assault and rape counselor at the school.

"She powered right through any challenges she faced," said Farrall.

As many know for officers the job you wish to get is not necessarily the job the Army wants you to have. Wilson's goal was to become a military intelligence officer. Her mentors all had that same goal: Make Wilson a military intelligence officer.

"All five branches of the military revolve around those guys on the ground kicking in the doors," said Wilson, referring to the ground troops that fulfill the Army's daily mission in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. Wilson knew that intelligence and operations go hand in hand, and you can't be successful without good military intelligence. "I wanted to be a part of that," she said.

She was also looking toward the future. Wilson said she knew she would deploy to the Middle East once she was commissioned and it was in college that she began studying Arabic and Middle Eastern culture. Being able to use all of that knowledge, though, hinged on her becoming a military intelligence officer.

Therefore when it finally came time to learn what branch of the Army she was going to be a part of it was still up in the air. Farrall called her into his office, but he wasn't going to make the announcement of her branch easy for her.

"He messed with me for about 10 minutes," she said. "He said, 'Have a soda,' and I was like, 'Tell me what my branch is!'"

Finally Farrall told her she would become a MI officer and the wait was over.

"I'm really lucky I got to do something I have such a passion for," Wilson said. "I'm glad I had good mentors to steer me in the right direction."

Since joining the ranks of the 3rd Infantry Division's Combat Aviation Brigade after being commissioned in May 2006 Wilson has proven that MI was the right choice.

"(Wilson) brings enthusiasm, technical expertise, learned from her intelligence courses, and a tremendous work ethic and an extreme willingness to listen and learn which I personally feel is one of the most important traits for a young officer," said Lt. Col. William McGarrity, commander, 603rd ASB.

Because the 603rd ASB is a support unit Wilson's work centers on ground intelligence, whereas the other battalions maintain an air focus, McGarrity said. She provides route and enemy analysis, and allows the support unit to understand, from a ground role, what the enemy is doing and is most likely going to do. She also works with the brigade intelligence elements to keep the 603rd ASB "in the loop" with regards to the threat, he said.

She does all of this, he said, with a seriousness and maturity level not normally seen in too many lieutenants.

"She clearly is destined for future greatness in the Army," said McGarrity. "I can tell that by observing her at this level. There are some officers you just know will do well. She is one of them."

Inside the 603rd ASB headquarters tent Wilson's potential is duly noted.

"As an NCO I really admire her. She's going to be very successful in life," said Cooley. "She's an effective leader, she does what she needs to do, and I do what I need to do. We work hand in hand."

While Wilson is building a potential career, either in the Army or in another government agency, she said she's comfortable with her place in life right now.

"I saw how much (the military) impacted my parents. The positive impact it had on them," she said. "I find my family here. I find a great sense of purpose here."



Photo by Pfc. Monica K. Smith

2nd Lt. Heather Wilson, MI officer, 603rd ASB, studies Arabic during a break at Camp Spiker, Iraq, June 23.



Photos by Pfc. Monica K. Smith

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Peter Pace, and 3rd Infantry Division Commander Gen. Rick Lynch, swear in Soldiers during a reenlistment ceremony June 17, at Camp Liberty.



Chaplain (Lt.) Andrew Shulman, HHC 4/3, was promoted to Captain, July 11. at the Camp Striker chapel by Gen. Ronald Silverman, who is the highest ranking Jewish soldier.

(right) Spc. Jordan Ahrens, Troop E, 3rd Squadron, 17 Cavalry Regiment attached to the CAB, cooks hotdogs and hamburgers at the Work-horse Café dining facility, July fourth at Sather Airbase, Baghdad.



Pfc. Phillip Clark, A Co., 1st Battalion 3rd Aviation Brigade watches as Sgt. Paul Allen, also with A Co., cleans an Apache at Sather Airbase, Baghdad.



Spc. Nathaniel Doorlay, Co. A, 603rd ASB, wears a patriotic hat, sent to him by his wife, in celebration of the Fourth of July, at Sather Airbase, Baghdad.

Parting Shot

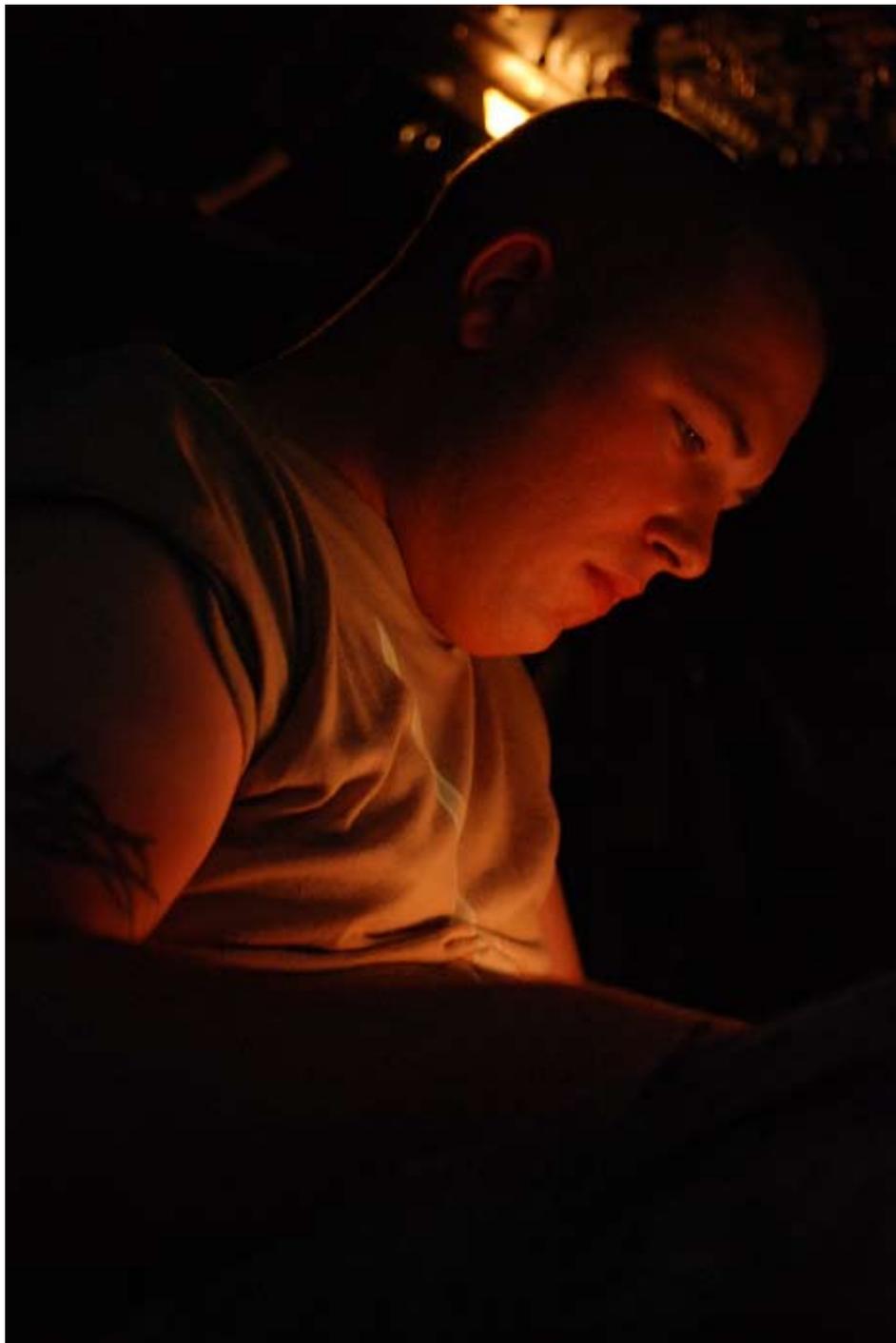


Photo by Spc. Monica K. Smith

**Spc. Jonathan Richter, Company D., 2nd Battalion 3rd Aviation Regiment
fixes a trim switch on a Black Hawk, 23 July, at Sather Airbase, Baghdad.**