

Sailor recognized for heroic actions in Afghanistan

Story and photo by
Cpl. Shannon McMillan
 1st MLG (FWD)

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – In the humble manner so closely associated with his personality, Petty Officer 1st Class John A. Gromer credited Marines on his team for saving his own life and enabling him to do his job.

The sailor from San Diego was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with combat distinguishing device by Brig. Gen. Charles L. Hudson, commanding general of 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), during a ceremony here, Feb. 19.

Gromer, 27, a corpsman with the Commanding General's Personal Security Detachment, Combat Logistics Regiment 15 (Forward), 1st MLG (FWD), was recognized for heroic actions during a mounted

combat patrol, Oct. 25, 2010.

During the patrol, a vehicle struck an improvised explosive device, initiating an enemy ambush. As the Marines began receiving enemy small-arms fire from three different directions, Gromer assessed the Marines injured by the IED blast. As he was finishing his assessment and evacuating the injured, Gromer learned of another Marine who had been shot while recovering the damaged vehicle.

Without fully knowing the details of the Marine's injuries, Gromer acted on instinct and went to his assistance.

"I hopped in my vehicle and told the driver to head up to the location," he said. "I had to get to him."

While moving toward the location of the wounded Marine, Gromer remembers his vehicle being hit by small-arms fire from all directions.

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Petty Officer 1st Class John A. Gromer, 27, a native of San Diego, received the award for heroic actions during an enemy ambush, Oct. 25, 2010.

Marine earns award for combat valor in Afghanistan

Story by
Cpl. Shannon McMillan
 1st MLG (FWD)

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – A Marine from Benson, Minn., was recognized for valor in combat during a ceremony here, Feb. 17.

Sgt. Darren J. Mumm, team leader, Commanding General's Personal Security Detachment, Combat Logistics Regiment 15 (Forward), 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps

Achievement Medal with combat distinguishing device by Brig. Gen. Charles L. Hudson, commanding general of 1st MLG (FWD) for actions during an enemy ambush.

The combat distinguishing device, or Combat "V", is awarded specifically for heroic actions in combat.

During a mounted combat patrol to Forward Operating Base Edinburgh, Nov. 2, a vehicle in Mumm's convoy struck an improvised explosive device initiating a complex enemy am-

bush. Mumm directed the fire of his vehicle's turret gunner onto the enemy's position, helped suppress enemy fire and facilitated the medical evacuation of a fellow Marine wounded by the IED blast.

Mumm remembers moments before the incident and how everything seemed out of place.

The patrol was going through a market, explained Mumm. In the past, the market would be filled with local nationals and vehicles. But when the

Marines were going through it, it was deserted.

"No one was around," said Mumm.

Moments after entering the market, the lead vehicle struck the IED resulting in a Marine with open-fracture wounds to both of his legs.

After receiving the report on the injured Marine, Mumm knew "it was urgent to get that Marine out of there."

Mumm quickly decided the best, most safe location for a

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“They knew someone in the vehicle was going to help that Marine,” said Gromer.

Without hesitation, with bullets impacting all around, Gromer jumped out of his vehicle and went to the Marines’ aid. Under constant enemy fire, Gromer stabilized the wounded Marine and then provided suppressive fire on enemy positions until the Marine was medically evacuated from the battlefield.

Gromer said his ability to do his job would not have been possible if it weren’t for the Marines to his left and right who were providing security and suppressive fire while he was attending to the injured Marine. There are four Marines in particular who Gromer believes are respon-

sible for his patient’s survival and his own: Sgt. Eric A. Nelson, Cpl. Jeremy Floyd, Lance Cpl. Martin J. Kim and Cpl. Anthony J. Danish. Kim and Danish provided suppressive fire while Nelson and Floyd carried the wounded Marine to safety.

Gromer enlisted in the Navy in October 2001, serving honorably until October 2008 when he ended his active-duty service. As an inactive reservist, Gromer volunteered to deploy with the PSD team.

“I knew my life would be in danger, but I volunteered for this deployment,” said Gromer, who has been deployed four times, each time by his own request.

“I love the military, and I love deployments,” said Gromer as he expressed his passion for the military and the opportunity to do his job.

Gromer’s focus and dedication to his job have made him an integral

part of the PSD team.

“He raises the confidence of the PSD Marines both on a medical stand point and as a warrior,” said Sgt. Maj. Anthony N. Vizcarrondo Jr., sergeant major of 1st MLG (FWD).

HM1 Gromer always carries himself with a sense of pride and always has his game face on, explained Vizcarrondo, 46, from Tingsboro, Mass.

While the basic human instinct would have been to run from danger, Gromer ran toward it to save a life.

“I’m not an observer,” he simply says when asked why he continues to serve with the Marines on the “Greenside”.

“I adhere to the corps values,” said Gromer. “I consider myself a Marine with a medical background.”

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landing zone and called in a 9 line –a report used to rapidly provide information for a medical evacuation.

Simultaneously, the enemy began firing on the Marines who were rigging the damaged vehicle for tow.

Instinctively, Mumm directed the driver of his vehicle to move to a position from which to best engage the enemy. He swiftly dismounted the vehicle and began firing on the enemy.

Mumm said he couldn’t have accomplished the mission without the hard work of his fellow PSD Marines.

“Receiving this award only credits a thank you to the Marines in the team,” said Mumm, “Without them, I would have never received it.”

Though Mumm believes the recognition should go to his fellow Marines, others believe the recognition he received was most deserving.

“He is the epitome of the sergeants in the Marine Corps, he leads from the front,” said Sgt. Maj. Antonio N. Vizcarrondo Jr., sergeant major of 1st MLG (FWD). “He embodies everything about the Marine



Photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Lautenslager

Sgt. Darren J. Mumm is awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with combat distinguishing device by Brig. Gen. Charles L. Hudson, commanding general of 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, Feb. 17. Mumm, 25, a native of Benson, Minn., received the award for heroic actions during an enemy ambush, Nov. 2.

Corps: honor, courage and commitment.”

Through his actions that day, the wounded Marine was safely evacuated, the damaged vehicle was recovered, and the enemy ambush was defeated.

“Out of the 300 something days out here,” said Mumm. “It’s a day I won’t ever forget.”

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'Medusa' drives on despite IEDs

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Kenneth Jasik
1st MLG (FWD)

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – She sits about 15 feet tall and weighs about seven tons, and despite being blown up by several improvised explosive devices, she hasn't thrown in the towel just yet.

Her nick name is Medusa, an AMK-36 wrecker belonging to the Marines of 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division (Forward).

Medusa's job is to recover damaged or immobilized vehicles. On her last mission a few months ago, Medusa struck an IED – her third since arriving in Afghanistan in early 2009.

But now she is ready to return to the fight once again due to the efforts of the Marines of Motor Transport Maintenance Platoon, Maintenance Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 15 (Forward), 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), who spent countless hours restoring her back to full duty.

"We replaced pretty much everything that makes a wrecker, a wrecker," said Cpl. Andrew S. Wertz, a mechanic with Maintenance Co., CLR-15 (FWD), 1st MLG (FWD), who worked on Medusa.

This is not Medusa's first trip to the Intermediate Maintenance Activity. Medusa has been fully repaired at least two times before, due to battle damage. Every time the truck has been struck by an IED, the motor transport maintenance Marines have been able to repair Medusa.

The maintenance Marines take a lot of pride in repairing wreckers, because the vehicle's role is important to anyone on the road. A wrecker adds a significant advantage to any combat logistics patrol due to its ability to quickly recover any broken or damaged vehicle.

"I'm sure 3/5 is happy to get their wrecker back," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Elizabeth R. Schell, motor trans-



Cpl. Yosty Villafuerte, quality control inspector, Maintenance Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 15 (Forward), tests 'Medusa,' an AMK-36 wrecker, after it was repaired following its third improvised explosive device strike, a few months ago. Medusa can now resume her mission of recovering vehicles during combat operations thanks to the Marines of Motor Transport Maintenance Platoon.

port officer, Maintenance Company, CLR-15 (FWD), 1st MLG (FWD). "It is an important asset. If a truck gets hit [by an IED], a wrecker is the best thing to get it out."

Although she has struck multiple IED's during her time in Afghanistan, Medusa is still running and will continue her mission of recovering vehicles thanks to the Marines of Motor Transport Maintenance Platoon.

"The spirit and drive to take care of our fellow Marines through the maintenance of essential wheeled assets is a primary focus here at the IMA," said Schell, 40, from Wylie, Texas. "Every mechanic who worked to put this vehicle back in service did so with pride, determination and professionalism. They continue to amaze and impress me with their skill, 'can do' attitude and esprit de corps."

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'Medusa,' an AMK-36 wrecker, stands ready for duty after being repaired by the Marines with Maintenance Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 15 (Forward).

Marine uses welding skills to improve Helmand province

Story and photo by
Cpl. Daniel Woodall
Combat Logistics Battalion 3

CAMP DWYER, Afghanistan – A generator’s hum followed by an intense flash of light means only one thing to the Marines of Combat Logistics Battalion 3’s Engineer Company: Lance Cpl. Jesse G. Mudd is working.

While deployed aboard Camp Dwyer and various locations throughout Afghanistan’s Helmand province, Mudd serves as the only metal worker and welder for Engineer Company, CLB-3, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward).

For the past four months, the 20-year-old native of Smith Center, Kan., has established himself as a mission-critical asset for several engineering projects.

Engineering and civil development projects, including bridge construction and road repair, often require steel reinforcement in order to create more permanent structures for coalition forces and Afghan civilians.

Given the constant demand for these projects, CLB-3’s Engineer Company calls upon Mudd to employ his welding skills. With no welding experience prior to joining the Marine Corps, Mudd has since attained a great appreciation for the craft.

After completing high school in 2008 with only 31 fellow graduates, Mudd enlisted in the Marine Corps to serve his country and gain some valuable life experience. According to Mudd, the most accurate portrayal of his small-town



Lance Cpl. Jesse G. Mudd, 20, a welder for Engineer Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 3, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), welds metallic siding to a bridge in Durzay, Afghanistan, Jan. 22. Mudd, a native of Smith Center, Kan., is the only metal worker for CLB-3’s Engineer Company. While deployed to Afghanistan, Mudd has played a key role in several military construction projects for coalition units as well as civil development projects for the Afghan community.

upbringing can be summed up by detailing the proximity of well-known establishments to his home town. For instance, one would have to travel nearly 90 miles to reach the nearest Wal-Mart or McDonald’s restaurant – a disturbing thought for some people.

“Smith Center is an amazing town,” Mudd said. “Everyone knows everyone, everyone cares for each other – It’s just home. It’s a small community, but no matter where life takes you, you never feel like you’re home until you go back there.”

Since CLB-3’s arrival in Afghanistan in October, Mudd has used his welding skills in the construction of five bridges and various other projects to give coalition and Afghan personnel

greater mobility in southern Afghanistan.

“Welding is a good trade, and the Marine Corps has given me the tools to succeed when I go back home,” Mudd said. “Welding is a little more difficult while deployed – every mission has [different] requirements so I just have to make it work. I also try to assist in other aspects of combat engineering – whether that involves heavy equipment vehicles or manual labor – whatever it takes to get the mission done.”

With the amount of time CLB-3’s Engineer Company spends operating in forward areas, Mudd is grateful to be able to help the Afghan people and complete projects without interference from Taliban insurgents. Rather than

citing good fortune, Mudd attributes each site’s security to the hard working Marines operating in Helmand and those within his own company.

“Afghanistan has been quite an eye-opener,” Mudd said. “Being out here makes you appreciate what you had before. When the temperature drops down in the 20s and we’re trying to finish our work in the middle of [Helmand province], you start to realize certain things you’ve taken for granted. This deployment isn’t over, but I’m proud of the Marines in my company and the work we’ve done.”

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7th ESB train at Infantry Immersion Trainer

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Jerrick Griffin
1st MLG

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – In preparation for a deployment to Afghanistan, Marines and sailors from Security Platoon, 7th Engineer Support Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group conducted training at the Infantry Immersion Trainer here, Feb. 7.

The Infantry Immersion Trainer simulates a Middle Eastern village. The buildings replicate Afghan structures complete with a farmers market and a mosque. To give the IIT a realistic human presence there are also role-players from Afghanistan.

“The role-players really make this course realistic,” said Sgt Kris-



A Marine with Security Platoon, 7th Engineer Support Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group inspects a vehicle for booby-traps during the Infantry Immersion Trainer, Feb. 7.

topher Fabbro, platoon sergeant, 1st platoon, security platoon, 7th ESB, CLR-1, 1st MLG. “This [course prepares] the Marines to properly [interact] with the locals.”

During the training the Marines were presented with scenarios which in-

cluded vehicle recovery and patrolling through a village.

Having the Marines train with actual Afghan civilians during the course provides the Marines with an experience similar to what they will face when they deploy. It helps them understand Afghan culture and beliefs better.

“This place is very similar to Afghanistan,” said Bahram Sarwary, who served as the linguist for the Marines during the training evolution and also is from Afghanistan. “There are a lot of the same type of buildings and stores there.”

Sarwary explained that the role players conduct themselves here the same way local citizens do in Afghanistan.

During the scenarios,

instructors observed the Marines utilizing all of the tactics they have been taught. After the Marines completed the scenario, the instructors critiqued them what they were doing correctly and incorrectly.

“We did a lot of things right during the training but we also did some things wrong,” said Cpl. Charles Eichler, motor transport operator, security company, 7th ESB, CLR-1, 1st MLG. “The instructors pointed out the things we can do better and the next time we go through we will know what to do and how to handle the situations.”



Marines with Security Platoon, 7th Engineer Support Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group attach a tow bar to their Humvee to recover a downed vehicle during the Infantry Immersion Trainer, Feb. 7.

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CLB-3 generator mechanics ensure success on battlefield

Story and Photo by
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CAMP DWYER, Afghanistan - Whether deployed or in garrison, Marines require electrical power to maximize their operational efficiency. Lightweight, tactical generators provide Marines with a mobile power source that they can rely on.

Like most frequently-used military equipment, lightweight, tactical generators require routine maintenance. Thankfully, generator mechanics with Combat Logistics Battalion 3's Utilities Section work around the clock to ensure that Marines operating throughout Helmand province have the electric power they need to accomplish their mission.

Fewer than 30 Marines with CLB-3's Utilities Section are responsible for providing generator maintenance for every camp, forward operating base, combat outpost and patrol base in southern Helmand province, said Staff Sgt. Jason Garcia, utilities maintenance chief, Support Company, CLB-3, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward). They are also tasked with repairing water pumps, portable showers and air-conditioning/heating units.

"Most Marines out [in Helmand province] don't have the basic necessities we have here at Camp Dwyer," said Garcia, a native of Moreno Valley, Calif. "The quicker we can repair a generator and send it back to the Marines in the fight, the sooner they have the ability to continue operating and accomplish their mission. The most rewarding aspect of my job is seeing my Marines completely repair a generator from scratch. These Marines are able to troubleshoot this equipment efficiently and with a quick



Cpl. James McCarthy, 29, generator mechanic, Support Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 3, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), repairs a generator aboard Camp Dwyer, Afghanistan, Feb. 17. Marines with CLB-3's Utilities Section have repaired nearly 300 generators and utility equipment for Marines operating in Afghanistan's Helmand province.

turn-around. They do it on a constant basis – as if it were second nature – and the warfighters use [these generators] to their advantage."

Since October, CLB-3's Utilities Section has repaired nearly 300 generators and other types of utility equipment for several units throughout Helmand province. According to Sgt. Joshua Q. Brown, platoon sergeant, Support Company, CLB-3, 1st MLG (FWD), the mechanics' efforts provide several advantages for Marines in Afghanistan. From a tactical standpoint, these generators provide Marines with the power to maintain communication and command and control operations. However, these generators also provide certain morale-boosting amenities.

"These generators supply running water, climate control and

power for computers, phones and anything that requires electricity," the 25-year-old Houston native said. "Without these mechanics, any irreparable piece of gear is useless – but we provide a level of repair which salvages that gear. The good work our Marines do here positively affects other Marines' morale. Operating in this climate, power is necessity."

More than ever, coalition forces require a reliable source of electrical power to conduct combat operations. Fortunately, the efforts of generator and utility mechanics will continue providing the power necessary to keep Marines operating in any climate and place around the world.

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Logistics 'heavy hitters' ensure success on battlefield

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Jennifer Brofer
1st MLG (FWD)

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan

- Before a single truck rolls out on a mission anywhere within Regional Command (Southwest), a group of Marines here carefully calculate exactly what is needed for that particular mission. Everything from fuel and supplies to maintenance and medical personnel is coordinated well in advance to ensure Marines have everything they need for mission success.

The G-3 is the epicenter of all logistics operations for 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward). Comprised of three sections - Current Operations, Future Operations and Planning, and the Logistics Readiness Center - 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) G-3 personnel are responsible for providing tactical logistics support to warfighters across Helmand and Nimruz province.

"We're the focal point for all tactical logistics and support to Regional Command (Southwest)," said Col. Edmund Bowen, assistant chief of staff, G-3, 1st MLG (FWD).

With more than 19,000 Marines, sailors, soldiers and airmen within the area of operation, it takes a lot of moving parts to ensure they have everything they need to conduct counterinsurgency operations, to include supplies, maintenance, transportation, general engineering, medical support and other services.

With a logistics effort so multifaceted, the G-3 Marines are responsible for ensuring all of the moving parts work together as one well-oiled machine.

Before any small- or large-scale combat operation is conducted in the region - whether it be a routine patrol or major clearing operation - G-3's Future Operations and Planning team ensures every angle of tactical logistics support is covered.

For instance, when 1st Marine Division (Forward) forces conducted a clearing operation in southern Helmand, G-3 made certain they were resupplied with food, water, fuel and ammunition via combat logistics patrols and helicopter support teams. A Mobile Trauma Bay of Navy doctors and corpsmen was also positioned in the logistics support area to provide on-site medical care to the wounded. In addition, vehicle-

recovery teams were employed to recover damaged or immobilized vehicles during the weeklong operation.

While the Future Operations and Planning team prepares for the next mission, the Combat Operations Center - a facet of Current Operations - monitors all unit operations using Blue Force Tracker, a GPS-enabled system that allows commanders to track troop movement in the battlespace 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If a service member is injured in combat, corpsmen track patients from their initial point of injury through every phase of medical care, said Petty Officer 1st Class Chat Rice, leading petty officer and patient tracker for G-3, 1st MLG (FWD).

"We let the [commanding general] know how they are doing and if they need anything from us," said Rice, 29, from San Diego. "He's very concerned with how his Marines are doing."

The final facet of G-3 is the Logistics Readiness Center, which monitors future operations and tracks logistics requirements for each unit on a daily basis.

"I get to be a part of every aspect of supporting Marines and sailors on the ground," said Maj. Kevin Chunn, Logistics Readiness Center officer, G-3, 1st MLG (FWD), 38, from Savannah, Mo.

The LRC ensures every unit has enough supplies to last at least 30 days, including the fuel needed to power everything from vehicles to generators.

In one week alone, a single combat logistics battalion transported 40,000 gallons of fuel - a drop in the bucket compared to the more than 10 million gallons transported throughout Helmand province since 1st MLG (FWD) arrived in Afghanistan in March 2010.

"It's very important because fuel is the lifeline of the fight," said Gunnery Sgt. Damien Anderson, 36, from Opelousas, La., bulk fuels officer, LRC, G-3, 1st MLG (FWD), who tracks and coordinates all ground fuel movement within RC(SW). "From pilots in the air all the way to the warfighter on the ground, fuel is one of the key tools of a moving battlefield."

No matter how remote the forward operating base may be, G-3 personnel ensure the Marines have the supplies they need to keep going.

"We're able to anticipate what they need before they know it," said Bowen, from



The 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) G-3 is 'the focal point for all tactical logistics and support to Regional Command (Southwest),' said Col. Edmund Bowen (pictured). The 1st MLG (FWD) G-3 is responsible for providing tactical logistics support to warfighters on the ground.

Staten Island, N.Y.

Bowen remembers visiting a FOB that was located in a remote region of Helmand province; roads weren't trafficable so resupply missions had to be conducted by air. Bowen met with a lieutenant there and asked him what supplies he and his Marines needed. The lieutenant - surrounded by pallets of recently-delivered food, water and mail - couldn't think of a single provision he needed that 1st MLG (FWD) hadn't already provided.

"No matter where they are, we're getting it to them," said Bowen, proudly.

Likening the G-3 to a baseball team, Bowen said all of his Marines are "heavy hitters" who do an outstanding job of supporting the Marines and sailors deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

"They hit the ball out of the park every day when it comes to tracking, monitoring and providing support to the forces," said Bowen.

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India-born Marine combat meritoriously promoted

Story and photo by
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1st MLG (FWD)

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – A Marine born and raised in India who came to the United States when he was 15 was combat meritoriously promoted to staff sergeant at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, Jan. 30.

Staff Sgt. Jacob Gill, platoon sergeant, General Support Motor Transport Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 15 (Forward), 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), was living with his family in India until 1998 when they moved to Indianapolis, Ind, to live near his grandparents. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in August 2002 and attended recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego. His decision to join the military stemmed from his desire to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather who served in the Indian army for 26 years.

“The Marine Corps was the service that met the standards I was looking for,” said Gill, 28. “I wanted the discipline, leadership and everything the Marine Corps has to offer.”

“Staff Sgt. Gill defines the reasoning behind our Corps having combat meritorious promotions,” said 1st Sgt.



Staff Sgt. Jacob Gill, platoon sergeant, General Support Motor Transport Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 15 (Forward), 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), raises his right hand as he reaffirms the oath of enlistment during his promotion ceremony at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, Jan. 30. Gill, 28, who was born and raised in India, was combat meritoriously promoted to his current rank following his selection for one of two quotas by the I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) combat meritorious selection board.

Adam E. Fraser, company first sergeant, GSMT Co., CLR-15 (FWD), 1st MLG (FWD). “Not only has this Marine displayed an exceptional track record of proven success throughout all his vast combat experience, both current and prior, but he also has the instinctive abilities and actions to perform in a capacity within the operating forces achieving and influencing pristine results for any unit.”

This is not the first time Gill has been singled-out for recognition by his unit leadership.

In 2009, Gill was nominated for a staff

sergeant combat meritorious board, in which he placed fourth – there were only two available spaces. Again in 2009, Gill was nominated for a board and placed third, but there were only two spots for promotion.

It wasn't until 2011, when he was nominated for a third time, that he won the Marine Expeditionary Force-level board.

“I was nervous because there are a lot of talented, stellar sergeants that I was competing against,” said Gill. “I felt honored being selected.”

Gill plans to lead

Marines and serve his country with honor for the long haul, he said.

“I am doing at least 20 years,” said Gill. “My plan is to serve as long as the Marine Corps will allow me.”

Accomplishing this milestone was a proud moment in his military career, he said.

“The feeling of knowing I accomplished something that not many have done, especially where I come from, was a great feeling,” said Gill.

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Marines bond during 12-month deployment

Story by

Lance Cpl. Kenneth Jasik
1st MLG (FWD)

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan

– The personal security detachment for the commanding general of 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), Brig. Gen. Charles L. Hudson, completed its last mission in Afghanistan, Feb. 14, before heading home after a 12-month deployment.

The PSD's mission is to escort and ensure the safety of the commanding general and other high-ranking personnel as they travel through the battlespace.

"The CG is responsible for doing battlefield circulations to visit the Marines of 1st MLG," said Sgt. Eric A. Nelson, team leader, PSD, 1st MLG (FWD). "It's our job to ensure safe travel so [Brig. Gen. Hudson]'s mission can be accomplished."

Conducting more than 100 mounted patrols, the PSD Marines traveled all across Helmand province, from Combat Outpost Kahn Neshin Castle in the south to Sangin and the Buji Pass in the north.

"I liked that we visited so many different FOBs," said Cpl. Richard L. Martin, military policeman, PSD, 1st MLG (FWD). "We got the experience to meet higher-ups and help them get from one place to another."

Traveling the battlefield was only one of the aspects of the deployment the PSD team enjoyed. They were also glad to be part of a small, elite team.

"I have never seen camaraderie like this," said Nelson, 25, from Seattle. "We became a family in a matter of months, and like any family we fight with each other, but when it comes to getting the job done, we all know that the man next to us is willing to take the bullet for you."

"I liked the responsibilities we had as the PSD team," said Nelson. "I also liked having the opportunity to conduct a lot of combat missions."



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Owen

Marines of the Commanding General's Personal Security Detail, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), escort Brig Gen. Charles L. Hudson (left), commanding general, 1st MLG (FWD), across a recently improved route in the Garmser district of Helmand province, Afghanistan, Jan. 6. The PSD's mission is to escort and ensure the safety of the commanding general and other high-ranking personnel as they travel through the battlespace.

During their mounted patrols, the Marines had to engage the enemy three times and struck four improvised explosive devices. Two Marines on the team were awarded the Purple Heart Medal after being wounded on missions. One Marine and one Navy corpsman were recognized for their heroic actions with one earning a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with combat distinguishing device and the other being awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with combat distinguishing device.

"We had some Marines injured due to an IED strike, and we started taking small-arms fire," said 1st Lt. Mike A. Tozzolo, aide-de-camp for the commanding general of 1st MLG (FWD). "The PSD did extremely well in suppressing the enemy's attack and [evacuating] out the injured Marines."

Over the course of the past year, the small group of Marines logged close to

5,000 miles together traversing Afghanistan's desert terrain.

"The experiences our small group of guys shared were good," said Martin, 21, from King George, Va. "We've been together through so many things, we are like brothers."

The PSD team enjoyed the experiences gained during their missions.

"I loved being out there, getting dirty and doing things," said Martin. "It's exciting, and it gets your blood pumping."

After successfully completing their mission, the Marines are ready to head back home but look forward to returning for their next Afghanistan deployment in 2012.

"The Marines are glad that they are going home to be with their families, and the majority of them are motivated to be coming out next year," said Nelson.

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Marines with Security Platoon, 7th Engineer Support Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group drag a Marine who simulated being injured by a IED during the Infantry Immersion Trainer, Feb. 7. The IIT provided Marines with realistic scenarios to help them prepare for what might happen on their deployment to Afghanistan.

Photos from around 1st MLG



(Above) Lance Cpl. Jesse G. Mudd, 20, a welder with Combat Logistics Battalion 3, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), played a key role in several military construction projects for coalition units as well as civil development projects for the Afghan community. (Right) A Marine with Landing Support Company loads a container onto a Logistics Vehicle System Replacement during a Port Operation Group exercise, Feb. 9.

