

Marine posthumously awarded Bronze Star for valor

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

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.

– Gunnery Sgt. Floyd Holley a Marine with 1st Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, 7th Engineer Support Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal with combat distinguishing device during a ceremony here, Feb. 11.

The medal was accepted by his wife, Christen Holley, from San Jose, Calif.

According to the award citation, during Operation Roadhouse II, Holley, 36, from Casselberry, Fla., led his team in a night assault to seize high ground west of Safar Bazaar. It was known to be a key to the enemy's defensive plan for Safar Bazaar. When they entered the area he immediately led his team into action without hesitation or regard for his own safety and began to clear the area of IED's. Following the route he courageously cleared, 1st Platoon was able to seize the area. For days without the chance of reinforcement, he searched, found and disposed of numerous explosives in the surrounding area, often in the face of enemy small arms fire. On Aug. 29, 2010, while dis-



Christen Holley from San Jose, Calif., accepts the Bronze Star Medal with combat distinguishing device for her husband, Gunnery Sgt. Floyd Holley, 36, from Casselberry, Fla. He was killed in action, Aug. 29, 2010, while conducting counterinsurgency operations with 1st EOD Company, 1st MLG (FWD) in Helmand province.

arming an IED under enemy small arms fire, Holley was mortally wounded by a premature detonation.

Four other EOD Marines were also honored during the ceremony.

Staff Sgt. Joshua J. Cullins was posthumously awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal. It was accepted by his father James Cullins.

"I feel honored to accept this award for Joshua," said James, from Simi Valley, Calif. "I've been around these Marines a few years now, and I can say he loved his job and every Marine he

worked with here."

Staff Sgt. Cullins, 28, also from Simi Valley, Calif., also gave the ultimate sacrifice Oct. 19, 2010 while serving in Helmand province, Afghanistan, with 1st EOD Company, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward). When he wasn't serving his country with the Marine Corps, he was serving his community as a police officer with the Los Angeles Police Department.

Gunnery Sgt. Brendan McInerney, from New York, Staff Sgt. Eric Olson, from Goldendale, Washington and Staff Sgt. Robert Perez, from Phoenix each

were awarded Purple Heart Medals for wounds suffered while conducting combat operations with 1st EOD Company in Helmand Province.

"It just goes to show you what these Marines go through and how dedicated they are to their job," said Capt. James Shelstad, company commander of 1st EOD Co., 7th ESB, CLR-1, 1st MLG. "Each one of them wanted to stay and continue helping their fellow Marines," said Shelstad, 42, Canby, Ore.

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Marines dispose of expired ammunition in Afghanistan

Story by

Cpl. Shannon Mcmillan

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CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – A controlled detonation of high-explosives left a cloud of smoke lingering hundreds of feet in the air near Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, Feb. 19, as Marines with 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) took charge of destroying unusable ammunition.

Often times, Field Ammunition Supply Points receive ammunition deemed unusable and to ensure Marines are not using defective ammunition, Marines must dispose of it properly.

Time plays a factor with ammunition; rounds can become old, rusty and unserviceable, said Sgt. Tristan Brown, squad leader of 1st Platoon, Security Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 15 (Forward), 1st MLG (FWD). When unserviceable munitions start to accumulate at the FASP, they need to be disposed of safely. In this case, 1st Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company assisted in this task along with CLR-15 (FWD)'s Security Company.

All the Marines involved in this controlled detonation took part in making sure all safety requirements were met before more than 7200 pounds of unserviceable tank rounds and mortars were destroyed using 1700 pounds of C-4.

"The Marines took their job pretty seriously," said Brown, 26, a native of Oak Harbor, Wash.

The event began when the Marines conducted a combat logistics patrol toward the detonation site. The security team went out about two kilometers from the site to set up a 360 degree security cordon, as the Marines with the FASP and EOD began placing the munitions into the prepared shot hole. Once the Marines were finished with the unloading of the unserviceable ammunition they pushed out to the security cordon as the EOD technicians lit the fuse and started the count down.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Owen

Marines with 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), makes sure everything is secure before conducting a controlled detonation near Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, Feb. 19. The purpose of the controlled detonation was to destroy more than 7200 pounds of unserviceable tank rounds and mortars.

During this particular mission, Brig. Gen. Charles L. Hudson, commanding general of 1st MLG (FWD) and Sgt. Maj. Anthony Vizcarrondo Jr., sergeant major of 1st MLG (FWD), came out to view the controlled detonation for themselves and to see their Marines at work, said Brown.

"[Brig. Gen. Hudson] wanted to go out there and show support for his Marines working," said Staff Sgt. Anthony Wilder, convoy commander of Commanding General's Personal Security Detachment combat logistic patrol for this mission. "He wanted to get out there and get a feel for how the detonation worked and how everything was executed."

The mission was a success for all parties involved.

"The blast, no matter how cool people think it was, actually served as a legit purpose," said Wilder, 27, Louisville, Ky. "Cycling out damaged ammunition is an important part of combat readiness."

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Photo by Sgt. Brandon Owen

More than 7200 pounds of unserviceable tank rounds, mortars and 1700 pounds of composition C-4 detonates near Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, Feb. 19.

LS Marines support resupply operations during training exercise



A helicopter support team with Landing Support Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, attach cargo to a MV-22 Osprey. A typical helicopter support team consists of five Marines. Two signal Marines (not pictured), who give commands to the pilots and three underneath the aircraft who physically attach the load. This exercise is part of the Marines pre-deployment training.

Story and photos by
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MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRMAR – Marines with Landing Support Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, facilitated Helicopter Support Team training here, Feb. 17. MV-22 Ospreys approached the landing pad, where

they slowed to a hover over a 1,500-pound cement block representing a resupply load. The load was then attached by the landing support team, and the aircraft lifted the block to circle the landing zone and place it back in its original position.

According to Cpl. Jon Thornton, HST commander, LS Co., CLR-17, 1st MLG, this training is used to prepare both the flight

crews and support crews for the vital resupply operations they will encounter during missions.

“Training exercises like these seem easy to Marines that have the experience,” says Thornton, 22, Lake Havasu, Ariz. “That’s why we do the training. So everyone (logistics crews and pilots) feels just as comfortable.”

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LS MARINES

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The resupply process consists of the aircraft flying into position over the gear to be picked up. The aircraft flying into position over the gear to be picked up, dropping a tow cable to a waiting helicopter support team who uses a static wand to diffuse the electricity generated by the aircraft. The helicopter support team then hooks the load to the cable followed by the aircraft lifting the resupply load and delivering it to the location of the supported unit.

As simple as it sounds, says Cpl. Korie Hinson, landing support specialist, LS Co., CLR-17, 1st MLG, there are numerous intricacies that complicate the process.

One of those intricacies is the Ospreys ability to shift its wings into a vertical position to allow it to hover. This is the feature that enables this aircraft to perform external resupplies, but it also creates a downdraft that can reach speeds in excess of 125 miles per hour. This is almost equivalent to performing the task in a category 3 hurricane, explains Thornton.

"Among other things, the plane generates an electric charge that is a danger to the supply teams," says Hinson, 22, Cocina, Calif. "We have a [Marine] on the team, the 'Static Man', whose specific mission is to negate that danger."

A typical helicopter support team consists of five Marines. Two signal Marines, one closer to the aircraft and one further from the aircraft to ensure commands can be seen from the air. These Marines relay communications to the pilots and crew chiefs. The rest of the team is located underneath the aircraft and consists of the static man, a Marine



Marines from Landing Support Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, prepare a 1,500 pound cement block to be picked up by a MV-22 Osprey. The blocks are used during training exercises to simulate cargo being shipped by air to units on the front lines.

who physically connects the load to the aircraft, and a safety non commissioned officer to supervise the process.

Members of LS Company are trained to perform any task on the team. Pfc. Cale Smith, landing support specialist, LS Co., CLR-17, 1st MLG, graduated from his military occupational specialty school, Dec. 2010, and the HST training, Feb. 17, was his first practical application of the skills he learned.

"In the school house, we learned the theories behind what we do, but we didn't get a whole lot of opportunity to practice what we learned," said Smith, 24, Picayune, Miss. "Training exercises like this are great for people like me because I'm learning to anticipate the movements of the more experienced guys and seeing the way they do things really helps me to learn my job."

Cpl. Travis McCrea, landing support specialist, LS Co., CLR-17, 1st MLG, says that although exercises like [the training, Feb. 17] seem routine to NCOs and senior Marines, they are vital for

the junior Marines to grasp the fundamentals of the process.

"We have to remember, also, that these exercises are not just for our team, but for the pilots as well. It's good for us to practice with so many different [aircraft], that way, our guys can be ready for anything," said McCrea, 23, Livermore, Calif.

After each pick up the team performs, they briefly come together to discuss any successes or areas that may need improvement before the next mission. In this way, says Hinson, the team can develop together and become tactically proficient.

Smith describes the HST training as the most exciting portion of his job.

"It is essential that he invest himself in these types of things," says Thornton. "Because in the fight, it isn't like it is at the school house. Here he can develop a realistic timeline and the adaptability to become a part of the team and accomplish the mission."

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El Paso Marine retires after 20 years of service

Story and photos by
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MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Gunnery Sgt. Gustavo Ramirez retired from the Marine Corps here, Feb. 11, after 20 years of faithful service. He was the personnel chief for Combat Logistics Battalion 5, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group.

“It’s been a long time,” said Ramirez from El Paso, Texas. “I’ve spent many years in the Corps and have been many places, now it’s my time to hang it up.”

Ramirez spoke about his various duty stations and positions he held in his 20 years in the Marine Corps.

“I received my [military occupation specialty] here in Camp Delmar,” Ramirez said. “I’ve been to places like Japan and just finished a deployment in Afghanistan, now I’m retiring where I first started.

He also added that he worked with a lot of great people and that he took something from all of them.

“I’ve learned something new from every one of you,” said Ramirez. “From my [private first class]’s all the way up to the [commanding officer].”

Ramirez was the recipient of the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal and certificate of appreciation during the ceremony.

Ramirez’s wife and children along with friends and fellow Marines and sailors attended the cer-



Gunnery Sgt. Gustavo Ramirez, personnel chief for Combat Logistics Battalion 5, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, salutes Lt. Col. Jeffrey Jarosz (not pictured) during his retirement ceremony at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 11. Ramirez an El Paso, Texas native retired after serving 20 years on active duty in the Marine Corps.

emony to give recognition for his hard work and dedication to serving his country. Ramirez’s wife received flowers on behalf of the Marines in his section, and she also received a certificate of appreciation from the command.

“My wife has been with me through it all,” said Ramirez. “For almost 20 years she put up with my mess, I love her for that.”

Even though Ramirez is hanging up his uniform and transitioning to the next chapter in his life, the Marine Corps will always be a part of him and his legacy will live on through the Marines he mentored along his 20-year journey.



Lt. Col. Jeffrey Jarosz presents Gunnery Sgt. Gustavo Ramirez’s wife with a certificate of appreciation during Ramirez’s retirement ceremony at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 11. Ramirez, an El Paso, Texas native and the personnel chief for Combat Logistics Battalion 5, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, retired after serving 20 years of active duty in the Marine Corps.

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Heavy equipment Marines make air resupplies possible

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

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – Military flight lines are a hub of activity; both fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft are constantly flying in and out to rapidly deploy cargo and personnel to the forward operating bases and combat posts.

To quickly move the supplies on and off the aircraft, Marines utilize the Heavy Equipment Detachment, Landing Support Platoon, Headquarters and Service Company, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward).

“Our mission is to provide heavy equipment support to Landing Support Platoon as well as several other units here at the Bastion flight line during both fixed and rotary wing operations,” said Staff Sgt. Christian J. Keyser, engineer equipment chief, Heavy Equipment Detachment, LS Platoon, H&S Co., 1st MLG (FWD). “We load and unload all cargo that comes through Bastion Airfield on Marine aircraft.”

The Heavy Equipment Detachment handles about 100,000 to 200,000 pounds of cargo daily.

“It’s a lot of work,” said Lance Cpl. Francisco Araiza, heavy equipment operator, Heavy Equipment Detachment, LS Platoon, H&S Co., 1st MLG (FWD). “We are constantly loading and offloading birds.”

The Marines tirelessly move supplies for coalition forces all over Helmand and Nimruz provinces. Since they arrived in September, the Marines have loaded and helped ship more than 40 million pounds of cargo for troops both heading to the fight and returning home.

“They like knowing that the gear that they move makes its way all over Afghanistan,” said Keyser, 33, from Canyon Country, Calif. “Ma-



Lance Cpl. Levi Anderson, heavy equipment operator, Heavy Equipment Detachment, Landing Support Platoon, Headquarters and Service Company, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), prepares to load a MV-22 Osprey at the Camp Bastion Airfield, Afghanistan, Feb. 22. Marines utilize the Heavy Equipment Detachment to quickly move supplies on and off of the aircraft.

ines are relying on them to get it there in order for them to accomplish their own mission.”

Operating material handling equipment that move large amounts of cargo is not an easy task. The operators have to work their large vehicles precisely, so they do not cause any damage to an aircraft.

In addition to loading and unloading the aircraft with care, the Marines also maintain their vehicles to keep them fully operational.

“With cargo operations going twenty-four hours a day, they work long shifts,” said Keyser. “When they’re not behind a [aircraft], they have to transition to performing preventative maintenance to ensure that their equipment is in good order and can provide continuous support.”

“I am really lucky to have the Marines and [noncommissioned officers] that I have here,” said Keyser. “Their work ethic, skill and dedication have made my job as their supervisor easier during this deployment.”



Cpl. Todd A. Forsha, heavy equipment operator, Heavy Equipment Detachment, Heavy Equipment Detachment, Landing Support Platoon, Headquarters and Service Company, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), loads a KC-130J at the Camp Bastion Airfield, Afghanistan, Feb. 22. Marines utilize the Heavy Equipment Detachment to quickly move supplies on and off of the aircraft.

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Photos from around 1st MLG



Photo by Lance Cpl. Jerrick Griffin

(Above) Petty Officer 1st Class Thomas Riggs, corpsman, Regimental Aid Station, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, shakes hands with Gunnery Sgt. (Ret.) Welter Washington, a representative with The Montford Point Marine Association of San Diego, after he was named Senior Sailor of the Year 2010. (Left) Petty Officer 2nd Class Jeremy Young, corpsman, Regimental Aid Station, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, receives a T-shirt from Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Melvin Chestnut, a representative with The Montford Point Marine Association of San Diego, after he was named Junior Sailor of the Year 2010.



Photo by Lance Cpl. Jerrick Griffin



Photo by Cpl. Zachary Nola

(Above) Wounded warriors take aim with their air rifles during the 2011 Inaugural Marine Corps Trials at the 33 Area Fitness Center, Feb. 22. These warriors competed for a chance to earn a place with the All-Marine Corps team competing in the upcoming 2011 Warrior Games at Colorado Springs, Colo. (Right) Marines from Landing Support Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, attach a 1,500 pound cement block to a MV-22 Osprey. The Marines are preparing for their deployment this spring.



Photo by Lance Cpl. Michael Ito