

DEMON



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wish CAB a
Happy Holiday*

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Briefing

THE MOMENT



Photo by Spc. Michael Howard

We have been the victims of an unnecessary tragedy. Your help is instrumental in making sure your Soldiers return from R&R alive and well

For Soldiers lucky enough to receive R&R in this month, the holidays can be a wonderful time for gathering with friends to celebrate and share the joy of the season.

However, as you relax on your R&R, do not let down your guard, always remain vigilant in terms

of safety. This time of year can be deadly, and the month of December is particularly dangerous.

On Nov. 24, the Combat Aviation Brigade lost a Soldier to a vehicular accident. Alcohol and excessive speed were involved. This Soldier didn't own the edge; he went over it. This tragedy

demands our immediate, collective attention. The diminished situational awareness and reduced coordination makes us vulnerable to making the same mistake.

We must make a commitment to allow no more loss of life!

The bottom line is that alcohol kills! Driving while intoxicated is not the picture of a Soldier we want to portray, and

drunkenness is not part of the Army Ethos.

Leaders and supervisors, counsel your Soldiers and help them mitigate the hazards associated with R&R. Instill in them the importance of individual responsibility, and let them know the choices they make affect not only themselves, but their family, friends and fellow Soldiers.

We have had too much tragedy to date. We must make a commitment to allow no more loss of life!

Thank you for the difference you are making this holiday season, flying and sustaining the aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles of the Combat Aviation Brigade. The Multi-National Division North and the Brigade Combat Teams, within Multi-National Division North, greatly appreciate your efforts. Their gratitude is testimony to your effectiveness on the battlefield.

You may not be at home with your family, but you have family here who are willing to stand beside you as you decorate a tree or sing Christmas carols. I know you will find just how much family you have here when those treats arrive. Ensure that you keep in contact with your loved ones. Call home or send out an old-timey "snail mail" to your family this holiday season. Your family at home needs to hear from you and you need to hear from them – a voice or letter from home makes all the difference in the world during difficult times.

You will always remember this Holiday season and what we were doing. You will remember how, even though the dining facility did a tremendous job of making a holiday feast, the gravy wasn't quite like mom's

Make a Difference. Three months into our deployment, we've got momentum behind us and we are falling into a battle rhythm. Keep working as a team and keep safety and your fellow Soldiers in mind. **Col. Jessie O. Farrington speaks out on teamwork and safety**



Photo by Staff Sgt. Franklin Angelo

and the pie just didn't compare to grandma's.

Through all this, we must remember that we are here to conduct a mission, a mission that every Coalition Force Soldier and Iraqi is counting on us to do. Over the past few months

you have endured over 35,000 accident free flight hours, moved over 1,400 tons of cargo and carried more than 34,000 passengers safely across Iraq to their destinations.

In order to continue this success, I need everyone to check each

other when it comes to safety. If tasks don't pass the common sense test, adjust them. Apply personal risk management to all of your activities to ensure that we stay battle focused and safe. Think about where your unit is most vulnerable and come up with a plan to "check" that vulnerability. If you are thinking about this everyday, you will undoubtedly save a life. Finally, leadership and risk management are hands on tasks and must have your full attention.

Along with our everyday stressors, we must be especially observant for the signs of distress during this holiday season. The CAB has accomplished much in the past three months. You serve our fellow Soldiers through all that Army Aviation does when it's at war. Thanks for your service, and for making a difference every day. Your Army and the Nation are proud of you.

Col. Jessie O. Farrington is the commander of the Combat Aviation Brigade

Standards and Discipline. Junior Soldiers have stepped into leadership positions to train and prepare the Combat Aviation Brigade for their deployment to Iraq. **Command Sgt. Maj. Buddy Wallace speaks out on our mark in history**

Over a year ago I sat in what seemed like a never ending series of meetings hearing that “we can’t get there from here” and about the inexperience of this formation. I even caught myself saying it a few times. Boy was I wrong! But now that we are in the thick of it, you would have a great deal of trouble pointing out that inexperience. The hours flown, missions executed and number of Aircraft Phases completed is absolutely impressive!

I am taken back each and every day by the continued success of the Soldiers, NCOs and Officers in this BDE. Sergeants, we have junior Soldiers that are not only filling sergeant and staff sergeant positions. They are performing at that level already, so embrace them! They are a mission multiplier for you and your unit, as well as our Army’s future!

Our Brigade already has Soldiers in the Environmental Leave (EML) process, and we have



Photo by Maj. Enrique Vasquez

experienced a few hiccups. Leaders at all levels need to give careful consideration before providing names to fill projected slots. Please don’t jot down names only to be changed later! This action not only causes frustrations for the

Soldier trying to get out on leave, but also puts family members through a great deal of unnecessary frustration.

All leaders must engage Soldiers in the area of safety. Safety is not only a “on the job requirement” it’s a 24 hour a day

requirement. Find ways to do composite risk assessments every day. We have lost one Soldier in an auto accident during EML. Let’s make it our last! We need each and every Soldier in our formation on the ride home!

Counseling a Soldier on paper may not be the answer. By doing this it becomes more of a check the block counseling session rather than a conversation your Soldier will remember! That is what under the Oak Tree counseling or Trooper Talk is all about. Sergeants it’s imperative that you find a way to get through to them, NOT TALK AT THEM! You know your Soldiers better than anyone else and they know you better than you think they do! They can tell you who is sincere and who is checking the block. Identify at risk Soldiers and address it from there.

Thank you for your service, and the sacrifices you and your Families have made! Continue to assist each other through the holiday season. Let’s make this Christmas season as enjoyable as possible! And have a safe New Year!

Command Sgt. Maj. Buddy Wallace is the command sergeant major of the Combat Aviation Brigade

The true spirit of Christmas: Humility.

Chaplain (Maj.) Suk Jong Lee talks about using the strength of Christ to free yourself from the discomfort around you.

Demon Redeemer speaks from the land of Jesus' birth

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon his shoulder.

And His name will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Isaiah 9:6

These are the words in Handel's Messiah which I expect to hear as the Christmas decorations go up at the Chapel and around the CAB area in COB Speicher, Iraq. This year, thanks to the deployment, I may be able to focus on the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God and Prince of Peace Isaiah speaks of, instead of worrying about what to buy for Christmas gifts.

In Christian tradition, the Advent season is when we not only anticipate the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, but also the Second Coming of Christ the King when we will be accountable for our faithfulness or the lack of. The Scripture tells us that no one knows when the Second Coming will be except God.

We, Christians believe that Jesus is that Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God and Prince of Peace and we are looking forward to the day when he reigns over us. But... who is Jesus?

According to Philippians 2: 6-11, "He always had the nature of God, but he did not think that by force he should try to become equal with



Photo by Spc. Michael Howard

Deck the Halls: Staff Sgt. Patricia Font and Spc. Whanja L. Brown, both chaplain's assistants, decorate the Victory Chapel for Christmas

God. Instead of this, of his own free will he gave up all he had, and took the nature of a servant. He became like man and appeared in human likeness. He was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death – his death on the cross. For this reason God raised him to the highest place above and gave him the name that is greater than any other name.

When Jesus was on earth over 2000 years ago, he not only exemplified the character of humility by coming down to earth in human form, but also taught his disciples to be humble and be servant to one another.

Just picture this. Twelve men are arguing and trying to convince each other that oneself is better than the

other. Instead of chiding or correcting them, Jesus quietly gets up from the supper table, and brings a basin with water. Then without any words he starts washing the disciples' feet one by one, and the disciples are caught by surprise. It is unthinkable and possibly too radical for them to grasp the concept of a servant King, for one of them almost refused to be washed. Perhaps, we are also struggling to understand the meaning of the foot-washing. Is that what Jesus asking of us – to serve those we consider less than ourselves? Instead of buying gifts, I should think ways to serve soldiers around me in concrete ways. Perhaps, that may be the best gift I can give to my God and King.

Worldview: Tikrit.

When U.S. Troops deploy in support of their country, the Red Cross is right behind them, facing danger in order to serve servicemembers. **Life among America's wounded warriors**

BY SPC. ERIC RUTHERFORD

Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines have a lot to worry about in a forward-deployed combat zone. Besides roadside bombs, sniper attacks, and ambushes, they also have to worry about their families back home who may have emergencies arise while the servicemember is away. That is why the Red Cross is on the front lines.

The Red Cross's mission here is to ensure service members have communication with their families back home in the event of an emergency, said Debby Hutton, assistant station manager for the American Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services, who added that the Red Cross will initiate a message from the family to the deployed service member's command. The command will then make the decision to send the service member home on emergency leave based on information provided by the doctor treating the family member back home, said Hutton, of Kingsport Tenn., who has been a volunteer for 15 years, and an employee of the Red Cross for the last five years.

"The most rewarding part of my job is the interaction with Soldiers and being able to help," said Hutton, wearing her desert camouflage uniform that was issued to her by the Red Cross. "It is a small part in what goes on over here, but when you get to pass off the birth

Photo by Spc. Eric Rutherford, 115th MPAD



Debby Hutton gives a comfort kit to Army 2nd Lt. Larry Cook at the 325th Combat Support Hospital on Contingency Operating Base Speicher

messages—the good news, that is really great."

Another service the Red Cross provides for servicemembers, said Hutton, is visiting wounded warriors in hospitals.

"It is a bad situation if a servicemember is there," said Hutton, "If you can go talk to them for five or 15 minutes and take them a magazine or a phone card to call home when they get out, so you can make them smile—then that makes the day worth while."

Hutton, who transferred to the Armed Forces Emergency Services side of the Red Cross from a local chapter in Kingsport, said she wanted to work more closely with the servicemembers because she

respects what the men and women in the military do and wanted to be able to help them more.

Aside from the missions Red Cross performs for service members here, Hutton has her own mission as well.

"I had a mission when I came over here, that everybody I met, I would make them smile," said Hutton. "I have run up against a few—I am still working on them. I have gotten smirks, not full smiles, but I will get a smile before I leave. It is my mission."

The current members of the Red Cross Station here provide services to all Marines in theater as well as the majority of servicemembers in northern Iraq.



MND-NORTH

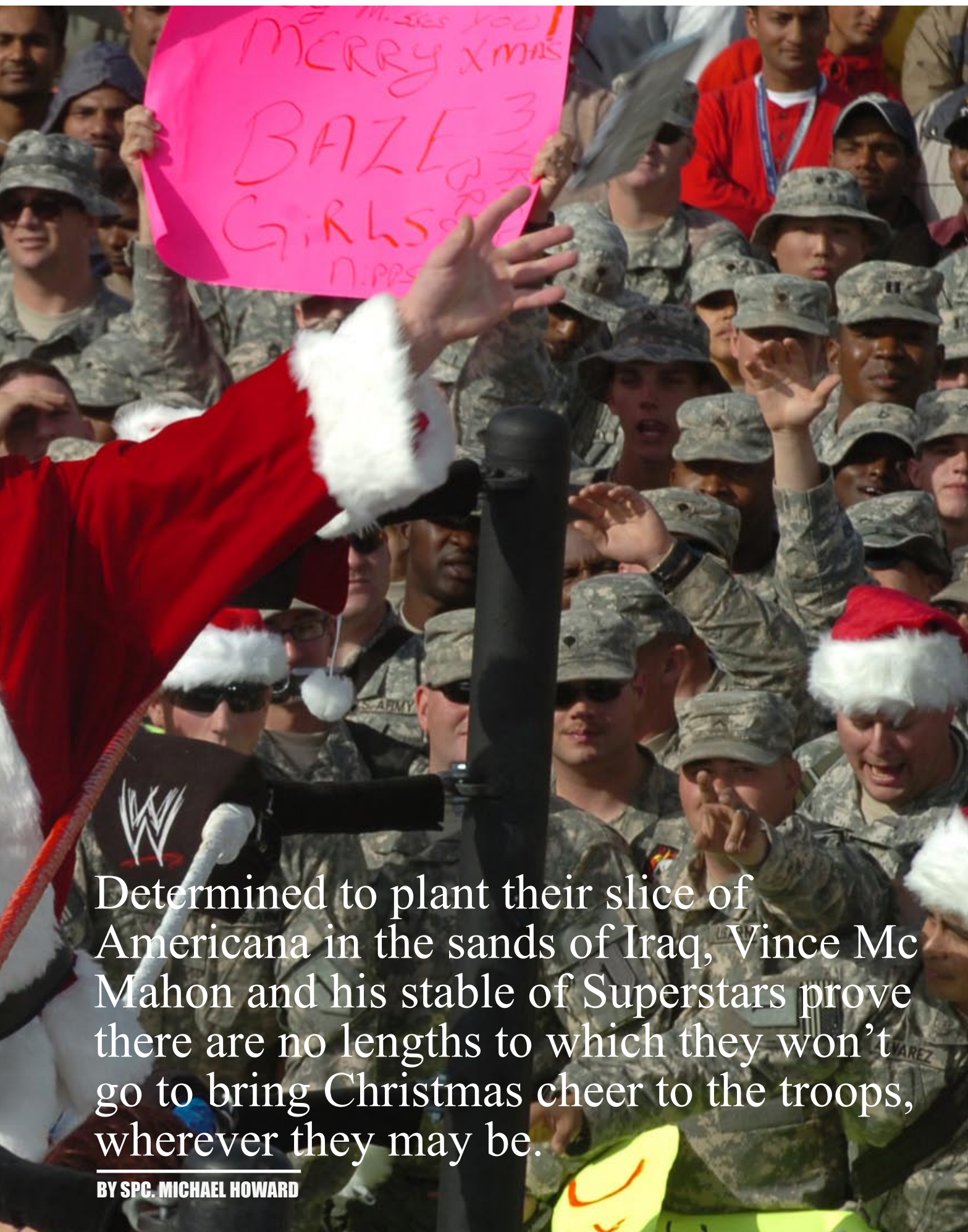
The Gift of RAW

Playing Santa

*World Wrestling
Entertainment wrestler
John Cena throws out
WWE themed gifts to an
audience of Contingency
Operating Base Speicher
Soldiers, Airmen,
Marines, and Civilians*

**Photo By Spc.
Michael Howard**

Photos by Spc. Michael Howard and Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Troth



Determined to plant their slice of Americana in the sands of Iraq, Vince McMahon and his stable of Superstars prove there are no lengths to which they won't go to bring Christmas cheer to the troops, wherever they may be.

BY SPC. MICHAEL HOWARD



World Wrestling Entertainment and the Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division teamed up to bring a bit of Christmas cheer to Soldiers deployed across northern Iraq. WWE stars to include John Cena, Chris Jericho, Randy Orton, and JBL hopped into CAB helicopters and flew to more than 20 forward and contingency

operating bases, making the days of thousands of deployed Soldiers, Marines, Airmen and civilians.

To visit the maximum number of troops possible, the wrestlers split into four groups and visited bases in Taji, Balad, Tikrit, Tarmiyha, and Mosul. Not content to do staged meet-and-greets in secure locations, the Superstars headed outside the wire to visit troops in combat zones.

The visit culminated Dec. 7 in a full-fledged “Monday Night Raw” show on Contingency Operating Base Speicher. The WWE Superstars wanted nothing more than to boost morale and leave servicemembers a token of their support, said WWE Chairman Vince McMahon.

The gratitude of the troops is a more than sufficient reward, said McMahon. “I take back the faces,



how they do their jobs, their smiles, I'll never forget. I want to thank all who were involved in putting this together," he added.

The trip to Iraq is completely voluntary for the Superstars, and each of them have their own reasons for traveling into a war zone to meet men and women on the front lines. WWE Superstar Chris Jericho, who was visiting for the first time, said it was meeting

the families of deployed troops that convinced him to come.

"I had taken some time off from the WWE to work on my book, and after it was published I did a lot of autograph signings for my book at military bases. I met a lot of families who had Soldiers in Iraq. I was just amazed. I wasn't aware of how long guys came over here before--15 months, 18 months... I met babies who hadn't

TOURING WITH TROOPS *WWE superstars learned, posed, travelled, and entertained Soldiers on COB Speicher as part of their tour*

even met their fathers yet, and it hit me. I decided, 'I need to go,'" said Jericho

At the close of the visit, Jericho knew he had made the right decision. "After 17 years in the wrestling business and traveling around the world, this could

possibly be the best experience I've ever had. My goal when I came here was just to say thank you. And I think that goal is accomplished, because on so many different levels everyone was so happy to see us, but not as happy as I was to see them."

It might be difficult, however, to top the enthusiasm displayed among the hardcore WWE fans in Iraq. Spc. Candice Price, a supply clerk with Headquarters Company, 1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment, has watched the WWE since she was a child, and says that the WWE Superstars' visit was "a dream come true."

"I think this visit is wonderful," said Price, "I think it shows that their hearts are in the right place, and that means a lot to me because they have other things they could be doing, but they come out here and make this big show just for us. It shows that they support us that they understand what we are doing. I think it's a wonderful idea because there are a lot of WWE fans out here, and it gives us something to look forward to." Though some of the Superstars were visiting for the first time, for others like Ron Simmons, the yearly visit to Iraq has become all but a Christmas tradition. No matter how many visits he makes, however, the trip never gets old. "This is my 5th time over here, and I'm sure I'll be coming back. You know, I love doing it. It does something for me. I wish I could do more," said Simmons.

"This is my favorite trip of the year, and I think if you asked any of the other Superstars they would tell you the same," agreed WWE superstar John Cena, "I love having



DOWN TO BUSINESS *As the grand finale of their tour, the WWE Superstars put on a two-hour, five match show for the troops*

the chance to meet the men and women who keep our flag flying high. They are truly the most special people on earth."

The Superstars spent time learning about daily life for CAB

Soldiers. They rode in UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, and spent time on the flight line talking with Soldiers about the helicopters they flew and maintained, even performing a simulated medevac on a Black Hawk. "Seeing the Chinooks, the Apaches, the Black Hawks, and even the [Kiowa] warriors was amazing," said



Jericho. “Being able to fly in the Black Hawk was one of my favorite parts of the trip. It was so cool,” added WWE Diva Mickie James.

Jericho expressed surprise at the CAB Soldiers’ high quality of life, and was especially impressed with the CAB Dining Facility. “I think a surprise was your DFAC. I’ll

tell you the reason why. Being a rookie, I was expecting literally something off of M.A.S.H. You

Even after a grueling show, the WWE Superstars made themselves available to the troops

know, some chef named Cookie with a big hat serving you gruel and hash. Just seeing the variety of food there, it was better than a lot of restaurants, it was great.”

“The accommodations have been very good, very good. Everything’s been very good, the company is great, the food is good, the people are good. What they’re doing is hard, and I admire them for that,” agreed Simmons.

The grand finale to the WWE Tribute to the Troops tour could not have happened without Price and a handful of CAB Soldiers and other COB Speicher troops. They worked around the clock for two days with a team of Kellog, Brown and Root contractors to build a full-fledged WWE ring and arena. The end result was a two hour show that featured five matches and brought a slice of America to the sands of Iraq.

Even after a grueling show, the WWE Superstars made themselves available to the troops, signing autographs and taking photos with the troops. “I really don’t want to leave,” said James.

Cena, who has been coming to Iraq since the Tribute to the Troops inaugural visit in 2003, stuck to his tried and true philosophy when asked for a parting message.

“I say the same thing every year, and I’m sticking to it. These guys and gals are my favorite, I love them all, I want to say thank you very much, once again, for opening your homes to us, I will let the people back in America know that we are in good hands,” said Cena, “You make me proud; you make every American proud to be an American. I appreciate what you do; we all appreciate what you do. This is where freedom happens.”

HOLIDAYS

Home for the Ho



Photo By Spc.
Michael Howard

olidays



Henry Mare Sr. gave his son his word he would join him in Iraq. Despite all odds being against him, he came through, meeting his son with two days to spare. Here's how.

BY SPC. MICHAEL HOWARD

No matter what happened, Henry Mare Sr. never in his life broke his word to his son. So when he told his son that he was going to join him in Iraq despite being stuck in Texas with little cash, no job offers, and generally no means to take himself halfway across the globe, his son Pfc. Henry Mare Jr. knew that if anyone could pull off the seemingly impossible, it would be

Thanks and Praise

Henry Mare Sr. and Pfc. Henry Mare Jr. pray together before sharing their Thanksgiving meal. Father and son reunited in Iraq two days before Thanksgiving

Henry Mare Sr. and Pfc. Henry Mare Jr. pose in front of the Combat Aviation Brigade's Big Red One mural

his father.

Mare Jr., a command driver with Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division is deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 07-09. His father, an ice plant operator for Kellogg, Brown and Root, arrived in Iraq 2 days before Thanksgiving just in time to spend the holidays with his son.

Both Mares are natives of Bronkhorstspuit, South Africa, where both Mares enjoyed what Mare Jr. described as an idealistic childhood on a 220 acre farm with the nearest town about 15 miles away.

"When I first went to school, my grandma had to show me how to cross a road, because I was so used to the farm that I didn't know how to cross a road," said the younger Mare.

It was in Bronkhorstspuit where both Mares cemented a bond that would last them a lifetime. Mare Jr. described their bond as one unique among father-son relationships.

"We grew up together. My dad raised me as a father, but he raised me more as a friend. He was the fatherly figure when he needed to be, but he was more a friend. If I asked him something, he wouldn't lie to me. Most parents would beat around the bush because they knew their children wouldn't understand, but my dad told me the truth. Whether I understood or not, it was always the truth. I think that's how we were friends."

From the time his son was born, the elder Mare made him the first priority in his life. "Ever since he was a kid, when he went to school,

Photo courtesy Pfc. Henry Mare Jr.



“Most parents would beat around the bush because they knew their children wouldn't understand, but **my dad told me the truth.** Whether I understood or not, **it was always the truth.**”

--PFC. HENRY MARE JR., a command driver with Headquarters Company, Combat Aviation Brigade. The younger Mare reunited with his father two days before Thanksgiving

“ I was on the phone with Henry and I told him that I was coming to see him in Iraq. I was in Texas, and there is no reason I would have been heading over here, but I just had a feeling.”

--HENRY MARE SR., took a job as an ice plant operator that allowed him to be on the same base in Iraq as his son.

for functions or sports, he would ask me, ‘dad, will you be there?’ and I would say, ‘You have my word.’ As far as the contracts I was working on, I would tell my company, ‘I’ve got to do something more important. My son is important to me and I love him dearly,’” said the elder Mare.

The elder Mare said that his time with his son in South Africa were some of the best days in both men’s lives. “I never had one day’s problems with Henry. I always say, I’m his father but I’m his best buddy, and he’s my best buddy.”

The younger Mare said that the only time he and his father argued was on the job, and that that was for the benefit of their customers.

“They would hire us more for entertainment than getting the job done. I’m not kidding. We would be joking, and people would think we were going to tear into each other at any moment, but we always got the job done!” the elder Mare laughs.

The elder Mare decided to seek his fortune in America in 1995. Five years later the younger Mare, who had been living with his grandparents, joined his father in America. “I wanted to live with him, so he bought me an airplane ticket and I came over,” said the younger Mare.

Life in America was hard on the Mares at first. Their first residence together was a one bedroom apartment. The Mares shared the bedroom, sleeping on two inflatable mattresses. They ate on plastic plates with plastic cutlery, but they were together, and the Mares said that was all that mattered. “It

Henry Mare Sr. and Pfc. Henry Mare Jr. prepare to enjoy a meal in the Combat Aviation Brigade dining facility



Photo by Spc. Michael Howard

Pfc. Henry Mare Jr. learns about his father's job managing an ice plant

doesn't matter where we are, what the situation is, as long as we're together, we're happy," said the younger Mare.

The Mares' happiness was cut short when the elder Mare had to return to South Africa to care for his mother, whose health was failing. The younger Mare joined the Army, and was deployed almost immediately after basic and advanced individual training. The elder Mare, who was in South Africa for 3 months, missed Mare's farewell ceremony by two days. It looked like the Mares, who had sacrificed for years in order to be together, were about to be split for the next 15 months. Enter KBR.

Even before KBR recruited him, the elder Mare said he knew deep inside that he was going to join his son in Iraq. About two months into his son's deployment, the elder Mare told the younger Mare and about his feeling in a phone call.

"I was on the phone with Henry and I told him that I was coming to see him in Iraq. He thought I was just kidding at the time, and he laughed. I mean, I was in Texas, and there is no particular reason I would have been heading over here, but I just had a feeling. He wouldn't believe me. He laughed, and said, 'yeah, right.' And I left it at that."

Ten minutes later, the elder Mare's phone rang. It was a call from KBR regarding a job as an ice plant operator that he had applied for in 2002. The elder Mare agreed happily, but he had a request. "I said, 'you know, it just so happens that my son Henry is in camp Speicher. Do you have anything available there?' She said, 'well,



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Troth

let me just check on the computer to see if we've got anything.' She came back on the line and said, 'yeah, sure. I do have an opening for you.' I said, 'well, sign me up!'" Nine days later, he was on

the first leg of a 14 day trip that took him to camp Speicher.

The elder Mare admits to being completely unsurprised that a job offer that KBR took five years to respond to would come to him



Pfc. Henry Mare Jr. documents his tour in Iraq. The South African native has been to six countries so far and plans to visit more

“I don’t have to be at home for it to be a holiday. **Being with him is a holiday.** No matter where we are.”

--HENRY MARE SR, an ice plant manager with Kellog, Brown, and Root

within 10 minutes of the time he needed it.

“It is Heaven sent,” he said, “I said to him on the phone before I came over, ‘Henry, we don’t understand time, not the Lord’s time. God works in mysterious ways, ways we don’t understand. It’s beyond our comprehension.’ I have never in my life broken my word to my son, and now I gave it to him.

The younger Mare says that he has few memories in his life as vivid as the moment of their reunion. “It was... wow,” he said, “I was sitting around back, and I had just gotten back from lunch, and all the sudden I heard this voice say in Afrikaans, ‘you better

get back to work, you lazy bum.’ When I heard that I turned and saw him, and I just dropped everything and ran. I just ran, and hugged him. It was wonderful.”

Despite working miles apart on a base where private transportation is scarce, the Mares make time to see each other every day, usually at lunch. The younger Mare says he now looks forward to his lunch hour more than any part of his day.

The elder Mare will be in Iraq for one year, and his son was three months into his 15-month tour when his father arrived. Since their return to the states will take place at almost the same time, they have already made plans for their return.

“We’re going to go back, and

we’re going to take a two week cruise. We’re just going to cruise and relax and just spend a lot of time together,” said the elder Mare.

The younger Mare had more to add. “My dad said to me, ‘Before we spoke about it, I was thinking we would just do a normal cruise. But you know what? We need to go all out. We need to do a really top of the line cruise.’ I said, ‘okay, if you say so! By all means! Let’s do it!’”

Though the Mares are not technically at home during the holidays, both Mares said that home is where the heart is, and that as far as they are concerned, as long as they are together--they are home.

“This is awesome. I don’t have to be at home for it to be a holiday. Being with him is a holiday no matter where we are, because we have so much fun together. We have a lot in common. We could entertain ourselves in the middle of the desert sitting on an old carpet,” said the elder Mare.

The younger Mare joked that though spending Thanksgiving with his father was an incredible experience for him Christmas was going to be awkward, because the PX has a fairly limited gift selection.

The elder Mare, however, said that he has already been blessed with a holiday gift that surpasses any other gift he could receive.

“The biggest gift I ever got was from the Lord, and that’s Henry. I don’t really need gifts. Our time together is so valuable, money can’t buy it.”

Outer Scars

Inner Beauty

Roever's Rebirth Marred physically from a white phosphorus grenade, Dave Roever triumphed spiritually, and is sharing his faith with Soldiers in Iraq.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SPC. MICHAEL HOWARD

Vietnam combat veteran Dave Roever's face is marked with the scars of burns he suffered when a sniper shot and detonated a white phosphorus grenade he was about to throw during a battle in southern Vietnam. The scars on Roever's body are thick, but after years of developing his faith in Christ, they are the only scars he still harbors.

The public speaker visited Contingency Operating Base Speicher Nov. 23. He gave a morning speech at Victory Chapel here, hosted a prayer luncheon at



Opener *Ms. Betsy Brown played to the crowd with a series of upbeat religious favorites*

the Dining facility, and visited the Combat Aviation Brigade's Unmanned Aerial Systems Company and the 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 1st

Aviation Regiment. The visit was sponsored by the Multi National Corps-North Chaplain Office and the Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division Chaplain (Maj.) Suk Jong Lee.

Across three speeches, all full of inspiration delivered with large doses of humor, Roever spoke to hundreds of deployed servicemembers.

Lee was eager to host Roever's visit in part because of a previous encounter. "I met him before, about two years ago. He was very down to earth," Lee said, "He is



Spiritually Strong
*Dave Roever
addresses a crowd
from the Victory
Chapel pulpit*

able to relate to Soldiers. He has shared a lot of their experiences.”

Doctors pronounced Roever dead in 1969 following his injury. After many reconstructive surgeries and years of spiritual growth, Roever’s Christian beliefs and military experience influence the message he delivers across America and Iraq each year.

During Roever’s recovery, he said he drew his strength from what he called his “triangle of support.”

“Family, friends and faith. It’s an unbeatable triangle.” Roever said.

During his time in the hospital, Roever began to realize that his

Roever draws strength from his “Triangle of support,” Family, Friends and Faith

life was changed forever. At the same time, Roever said he began to realize that “He (God) is going to turn my tragedy into triumph.” He decided to “let God be God.”

Roever, 61, who now wears an artificial right ear that he said falls off at the most inopportune times and who fails to resemble the man he was when he went to war, balanced his sincere message with a lighthearted tone.

Outlining the sequence of events the day the Brown Water Black Beret sailor suffered his injuries, Roever said he now tells people he got the scars “bobbing for French fries.”

That anecdote, along with other one liners, elicited loud laughter.

Roever’s routine seems to be to let fly with a few jokes and follow them by a life lesson centered around God.



Mutual Respect

Sgt. Joshua S. Soelzer thanks Dave Roever for his speech. Likewise, much of Roever’s speech was dedicated to thanking deployed Soldiers



Roever spoke of emotionally charged time spent with wounded and dying Soldiers as a prime influence in creating some of his programs.

He told the servicemembers gathered in the chapel of a scene in his life where he once held a dying Soldier in his arms. Like Roever, the Soldier was badly burned, but his burns were fatal.

As Roever held the Soldier in his arms, he told the Soldier he wasn't on a gurney but on America's altar of liberty. "You're a Soldier for freedom," Roever told the dying Soldier. Roever said that as he held him, the Soldier drew his last breath. Before the soldier died, Roever said, "I told him thank you." Among servicemembers who had earlier roared with laughter, there was teary silence.

Roever's gratitude to the troops goes well beyond mere words. Roever created Eagles Summit Ranch, a center for wounded soldiers located in Westcliffe, Colo.

Roever brings the worst of the wounded coming back from the the Global War on Terrorism to Eagles Summit and helps them get back on their feet.

The ranch is an accredited college, and classes are free to the wounded warriors.

Roever's visit seemed to impress Lee, who had nothing but good things to say about Roever's visit.

"I really appreciate his approach. He said that he came to thank us, to thank the Soldiers personally. He shared his story and told a few jokes.

"But he made it very clear. He came to thank us in person. I appreciated that he came with that kind of mindset, coming to convey how much people at home are supporting our Soldiers."



No Pain — No Train (ing)

With their Soldiers going outside the wire almost every day, the 601st QRF team launches an ambitious plan to certify every member of their team--and ensure that every one of their Soldiers is able to save a life under pressure.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SPC. MICHAEL HOWARD



Ouch Pfc. Bobbi Jo Michalski, a member of the Shadow platoon QRF team, grimaces as Pfc. Michael R. LaPointe inserts an intravenous needle into her arm. Pfc. Marvin Pierre applies a Combat Action Tourniquet to the arm of a casualty, above right



It has been said that in the heat of battle, a medic is a Soldier's best friend next to God. If that is the case, when the 601st Aviation Support Battalion's "Shadow Platoon" goes outside the wire for a mission, they've got a lot of friends.

This is thanks in part to their recent combat lifesaver recertification and situational training exercise, which is but one example of the constant training the QRF Soldiers receive to ensure that when they go outside the wire, they are as prepared as the Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, can possibly make them. The Department of the Army requires that 20 percent of Soldiers in a unit be combat lifesaver certified. The 601st ASB QRF teams are aiming to exceed that standard by a factor of five, with every Soldier on the quick reaction force capable of administering immediate medical care in the event of an injury. Consequently, every Soldier from Shadow platoon attended the training one day and the other QRF platoon, Venom, went the next day. The training was a combination

of a standardized combat lifesaver recertification course and a customized STX lane that incorporated the boots on the ground battle experience of the quick reaction force's senior leadership.

For Shadow platoon, the training began at 0900. It started off with slow but vital refresher training on nasopharyngeal airways, tourniquets, and physical assessment of the casualty. Sgt. Kimberly LaCrosse, a shift leader at the CAB troop medical clinic and a combat medic, says that while the Combat Action Tourniquet may not be the most exciting portion of the class, it is possibly the most vital. "The CAT is 100 percent effective if put on correctly. With the cravat or the other items, it's not perfect because you still have blood that comes out, but the tourniquet is 100

The 601st ASB QRF teams are aiming to exceed Army standard by a factor of five

percent effective,” she said. “It’ll save a life quicker than anything.” The training day continued with recertification on intravenous drips. These drips are a vital lifesaving skill because they can stabilize a Soldier with massive blood loss when nothing else can, said Spc. Ryan A. Moya, a combat medic with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, CAB. The course also covered medical tools of the trade and methods which have undergone improvement since Operation Iraqi Freedom began. The IVs now incorporate a saline lock, which can make it easier to administer an IV to a patient with a collapsed vein. Some Soldiers claimed that the IV insertion is one of the more difficult parts of the course to master.

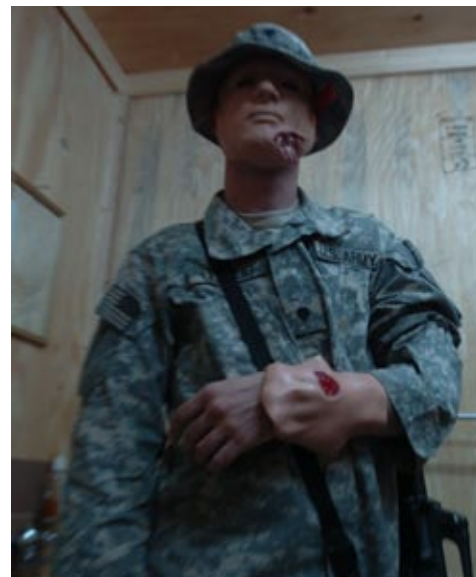
“It’s hard to get it right. It’s hard to get the needle in the vein and get the flash and everything. But the training is solid, and my partner [Pfc. Michael R. LaPointe] did a great job on sticking me. I mean, there was a prick, but it could have been a lot worse. He did really well,” said Pfc. Bobbi Jo Michalski, a member of the Shadow platoon.

After the recertification, the team headed outside for STX lane training. The course was tailor-made to meet the specific demands of the QRF team.

“I went to the QRF, and asked them what they want to learn,” said LaCrosse. “We are happy to adjust our training to what the QRF Soldiers feel they need most.” The medics tasked a few Soldiers to role-play casualties, and “embedded” them with the other Soldiers. During the STX lane, the medics simulated an IED hit by throwing water bottles at the



Getting the flash Pfc. Trung Van Tran of Shadow Platoon QRF team inserts an intravenous needle into the arm of Sgt. Bobby A. Reyes



Special Effects Spc. MacKenzie R. Lambert dons moulage gear to roleplay an injured Soldier in a Situational Training Exercise



Calm under fire Sgt. Gyasi Moore of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 601st Aviation Support Battalion, reassures Pfc. Ramos V. Mendoza, who is role-playing a burn victim

vehicles. The “casualties” then role-played their injuries and some of the non-injured personnel fell into their medic roles and performed tactical casualty care under fire. Simultaneously, other members of the QRF pulled perimeter security and then called in a nine-line medevac request

before transporting the patients to a casualty collection point for evacuation. “During the training, the instructors added pressure to the situation by constantly reminding the Soldiers that time was a factor. LaCrosse said the reason for cranking up the pressure on these exercises is to eventually build the confidence that



Takedown Sgt. Gyasi Moore of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 601st Aviation Support Battalion, pulls down Pfc. Ramos V. Mendoza, who is role-playing a burn victim

is vital in a successful medic under fire.

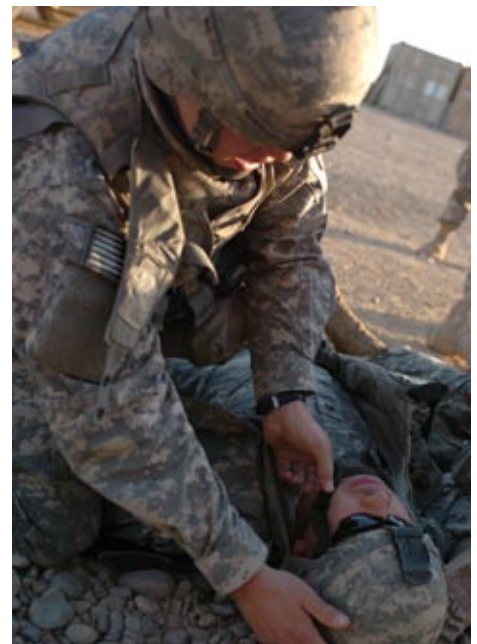
“We want them to learn to be confident in what they are doing, because if they’re not confident they’re going to mess up out there and someone’s going to die if they don’t [use] the skills that I know are in them,” LaCrosse said. Perhaps the most vital component

to building both the confidence and skills necessary for the Combat Lifesavers to maintain the Combat Aviation Brigade’s perfect zero casualties in combat record is treating the medical training as a never-ending process.

“Just tonight [after the training], we set up a time where I’m going to go over there once a week and



In the Classroom Sgt. Kimberly LaCrosse demonstrates a chest decompression for the Shadow QRF team



React Spc. Nicholas Albrecht checks the pulse of Sgt. Richard Alonzo during a Situational Training Exercise

keep them fresh on their [IVs]. The training’s available for them as long as they want it,” LaCrosse said.

And there is no doubt that the Soldiers want the training. “We go outside of the gate every day, and lives are at stake,” said Michalski. “We need the classes and the training – they’re vital.”



Using the latest tracking software, teamwork and coordination, and a lot of old-fashioned hard work, 1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment maintainers are making sure their aircraft are...

ON TARGET

STORY BY MAJ. ENRIQUE VASQUEZ

In today's world of technologically advanced aviation, Army pilots alone cannot keep AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopters operational without ground crews. Sustaining the intricate workings of digital and complex avionics requires sound and proficient

It all works together and it ensures we all know what it takes to keep the birds flying.

--- SPC. CHRISTOPHER LARA, APACHE REPAIR MECHANIC

ground crews and technical personnel. The soldiers of the 1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment, known as the Gunfighters, work diligently around the clock maintaining, testing and sustaining the Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division's battalion of Apache attack and reconnaissance gunships currently serving in northern Iraq.

Preventative maintenance is a major facet of success for the Apache ground crews.

"We do preventative maintenance services, which is a basic tear down of the aircraft, checking for common things that are broken. In addition we do 50 hour inspections to check out the major flight controls," said Spc. Jedediah

Cooke, Apache crew chief, Company C, 1-1 ARB.

Not all the work the ground crews perform on the Apaches is routine or scheduled.

"If aircraft were to come back (from a combat sortie) with possible flaws or a deficiency it is our mission to ensure maintenance is conducted and aircraft are repaired, put back in the air, and remain flyable at all times," said Sgt. 1st Class Antonio Ruiz, maintenance platoon sergeant Co. C, 1-1 ARB.

"As the platoon sergeant, I oversee maintenance on the flight line. I have my crew (mechanic section) along with the armament section that I utilize. When aircraft return broken in any way, I go

Keeping the birds flying *Spc. Marcus Emanuel of CO D, 1-1 ARB works on the targeting system of an AH-64 Apache Longbow as Spc. Antonio Baragan looks on. Right: Spc. Michael P. Pridgen, an Apache crew chief with Co C, 1-1 Aviation, adjusts the tail rotor of an AH-64 Apache Longbow.*

ahead and look at the aircraft and take a look at the fault the pilots give me,” said Ruiz.

“I go ahead and hand it out or delegate the fault to the back shops so they are repaired in a timely manner. There are a lot of eyes looking at the aircraft. There is Soldier, the supervisor and the technical inspector,” said Ruiz. Although Apache ground crew leadership and maintenance plays a key role in mission success, aviation Soldiers also understand the importance of their mission.

“Everybody takes this job really serious because, you want to do the best you can, you don’t want any birds going down especially out there during a mission,” said Spc. Christopher Lara, Apache repair

mechanic, Co C.

“We are supporting ground units in northern Iraq, providing coverage from the air. It makes you feel good, (because) without air support the ground troops would not have that (added protection),” said Lara.

Cooke said he also takes pride in his job. He knows if an Apache takes off from the tarmac, it is heading out to support American, Iraqi and coalition forces.

“I think I do help those guys out there kicking in doors, I have been told by infantrymen that they love to see these aircraft fly over. This is why we work as hard as we can,” said Sgt. Chris Martin, Apache repair mechanic, Co. C.

The hard work that goes into a stringent aircraft maintenance program is truly appreciated by the pilots themselves.

“These guys are working on 30 million dollar aircraft. They keep track of numerous moving pieces working six days a week and sometimes even working on their

days off. It is very impressive to see what they do on a daily basis,” said Chief Warrant Officer Joseph Thompson, maintenance test pilot, Co. C. Teamwork and everybody knowing their job also contributes to the complete sustainability of aircraft. “When aircraft land they may have avionics or electrical problems and there are separate shops to deal with each, we also work with production control,” said Martin.

“I trust armament and I trust my shops, we have no issues.” “Depending what the maintenance issue is we are out there working with the armament section, they know their job and they want us helping them and we are out there getting them what they need,” said Lara.

“Everybody knows their jobs, Delta company knows their job, all the line companies know their jobs,” said Lara.

“It all works together and it ensures we all know what it takes to keep the birds flying.”

Photo by Maj. Enrique Vasquez



Spotless *Spc. Dennis Preciado of Company B, 1-1 ARB washes an AH-64 Apache Longbow as part of combat preparations for a mission.*

Photo by Maj. Enrique Vasquez



Off the ground *An Apache Longbow crew chief conducts pre-flight checks as he prepares the aircraft for takeoff*



Mission Possible *The 601st SSA works around the clock to keep the Task Force Supplied*



Santa's got nothing on us. The 601st Supply Support Activity is open holidays and weekends to offer one stop shopping for CAB Soldiers from Private to Colonel

BY SGT 1ST CLASS JAMES G. COLE

THE SUPPLY SUPPORT ACTIVITY platoon of Company A, 601st Aviation Support Battalion, works around the clock to deliver all aviation parts and equipment to its customers with the help of the transportation platoon.

The SSA Warehouse consists of five sections: receiving, issue, turn-in, storage, and stock control. The team is made up of quartermaster Soldiers and civilian contractors. "Every Soldier and civilian knows the importance of their role here in Iraq. No aviation mission in theater is possible without the parts that we process. It's that critical," said 2nd Lt. Duane D. Dumlao, the SSA platoon leader.

At the heart of the SSA is Stock Control, which deals with every shop and tracks every part, from a washer to a helicopter blade.

"My average day is a long one,

consisting of helping customers with walk-thru's (a walk-in request for a part), processing orders, daily stock control functions, and helping the other sections throughout the day," said Sgt. Mary J. Callejas, a stock control sergeant at the SSA. "It keeps my hands full. Thankfully, I have Pfc. [Jason A.] Beasley to help me."

Pvt. Felicia M. Forgette, who works in the issue section, ensures that the 601st ASB's SSA runs at full efficiency, ensuring that orders are met and no moment is wasted.

"Our mission is endless: 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. It's very tiring, but if the Soldiers of the SSA were not here to support the Combat Aviation Brigade, how would the overall aviation mission be accomplished?" asked Forgette.

"Even the Soldiers at the lowest level know the importance of our work here. It is their dedication to this duty which guarantees the

customers leave more capable than they arrived," said Dumlao.

"Staff Sgt. [Karl H.] Gedeon, the SSA warehouse non-commissioned officer in charge (NCOIC), has been with the unit since its movement from Germany to Fort Riley, Kansas, to Iraq. He has seen the operation and the personnel evolve to meet the demands at hand and ensure the accomplishment of the mission. His guidance and mentorship has been essential in the development of the SSA, as both a functional warehouse and a team," Dumalo continued.

'No aviation mission in theater is possible without the parts that we process. It's that critical.'

--2ND LT. DUANE D. DUMALO

"Sometimes it seems like the shipments will never stop, but when there are moments of calm in the storm, it gives us all a moment to breathe and realize that we are one day closer to being home with our families," said Forgette.

A tragic loss. Friends and comrades gathered to mourn the passing of Pfc. Philip Diaferio, Soldier

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SGT 1ST CLASS JEFF TROTH

The Soldiers of 1st Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment, came together in the Troop E hangar to pay honor and tribute to a fallen comrade and friend during a memorial ceremony Dec. 2.

"Today we mourn, but most importantly reflect on the life of Pfc. Philip Diaferio," said Lt. Col. John Thompson, commander of 1-6 CAV. "And I, as a commander, feel cheated in two ways. One, the squadron is minus a trooper that contributed to the fight on a daily basis. And two, as a father of two teenagers I can not even come close to imagining the heartfelt sorrow that Pfc. Diaferio's family

is feeling right about now."

Diaferio, of Troop E, 1-6, was home in Endicott, N.Y., on R&R leave when he died in a car accident Nov. 24.

Thompson told those gathered about his last memory of Diaferio. While Diaferio was filming his Christmas shout out video to his parents, a UH-60 Black Hawk took off in the background and the commander thought how much Diaferio "being such a good cavalryman, he would have wanted an OH-58D (Kiowa Warrior) in the back ground instead."

He may have not had the cavalry helicopter fly behind him during

his shout out, but they lined the taxi way outside his memorial service. The ceremony gave Soldiers that knew him a chance to tell a little bit about their friend.

"He was a great friend from the time that we were roommates in AIT, and he always talked about New York and how much he loved growing up there," said Pfc. James Odum. "I remember the day that we were told what units we were going to be assigned to. Once we found out we were both assigned to 1-6 CAV he had a smirk on his face and said, 'Odum I just can't get rid of you.'"

"Although he left us all, his spirit lives on, it lives in each one of us that knew him. And the ones that knew Diaferio know how great of a person he really was."

"For everyone that did not know Diaferio as well as we did, I am sorry because you missed out on a good person and an even better friend," said Pfc. Steven Tolby, of Troop E. "My heart goes out to everyone who knew him, to his family and his friends. He will be missed by everyone."

After a final roll call by 1st Sgt Derick Jones and a lone bugle playing Taps, all in attendance had the opportunity to give their fallen trooper a final salute and visit the memorial in his honor.

"Pfc. Diaferio, your death, while tragic will serve always as a constant reminder of how precious and short life is," said Capt. Richard Greenwood, commander of Troop E. "It will remind us not to take tomorrow for granted, but to live for today. Pfc. Diaferio, the sorrow of your passing will only be overshadowed by the camaraderie that you left us all with."

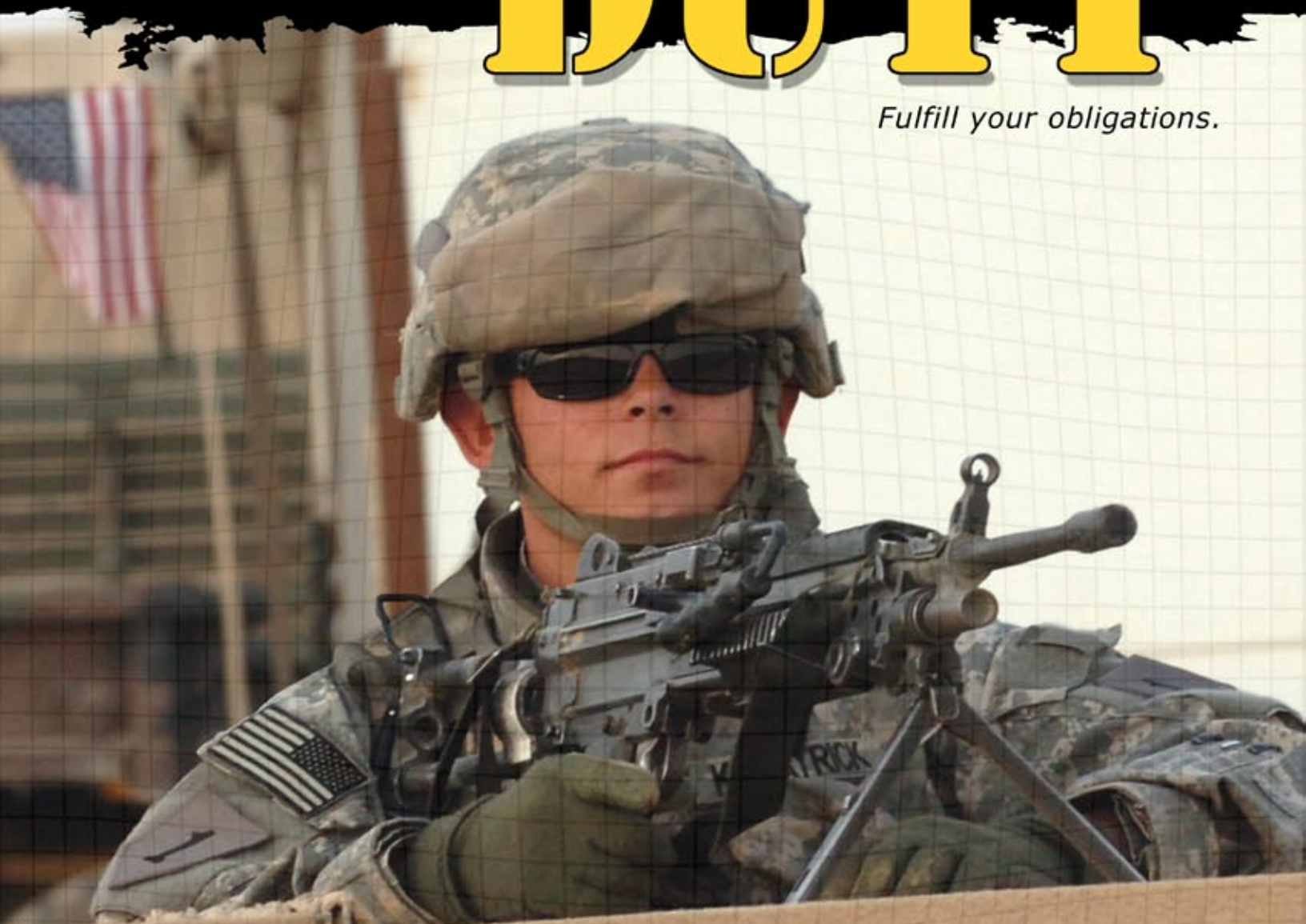


Mourning a passing
A 1-6 CAV Soldier holds a program for Pfc Philip Diaferio's memorial service. A 1-6 Soldier, right, holds Difario's ID tags in a final remembrance of the calvaryman



DUTY

Fulfill your obligations.



"The liberties of our country, the freedom of our civil Constitution, are worth defending at all hazards; and it is our duty to defend them against all attacks."

— Samuel Adams

U.S. ARMY
CALL TO DUTY
BOOTS ON THE GROUND



U.S. ARMY

1

ARMY STRONG.

ARMY VALUES