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'Exceptional warriors' receive Purple Heart

by
Staff Sgt. Michael Carden
3rd BCT PAO

CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS BASE SPEICHER, Iraq — Two Soldiers were recognized by Lt. Gen. John R. Vines, XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg commander, during an awards ceremony Sunday at COB Speicher.

Sgt. Aaron George, infantryman, and Spc. Justin Saint-Jacques, medic, both with Company B, 2nd Battalion,

505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, were awarded the Purple Heart for injuries suffered during an attack on their mounted patrol Oct. 2, in the Market Street district of Tikrit, Iraq.

Saint-Jacques, a native of San Antonio, was also awarded the Army Commendation Medal with "V" device for valor as well as the Combat Medic Badge. "I love to promote Soldiers," Vines said to a foyer-filled group of para-

troopers at the 3rd Brigade Combat Team headquarters, "but more than that, I love awarding exceptional warriors for distinguishing themselves in combat."

Saint-Jacques and George's vehicle was stopped at an intersection pulling security for other vehicles in the patrol when the passenger side was struck by what they called an anti-tank missile, said George, who received burns to his right leg and lacerations to his face and hands.

Amid a second missile strike and a ruptured, bleeding eardrum, Saint-Jacques knew he had to get the wounded out of the vehicle. He treated them as best he could inside the vehicle, but the cramped space inside the up-armored humvee restricted the medical care, he could provide, he said.

The front, passenger-side door was jammed because of the explosion, making it difficult for Saint-Jacques, or Doc, as he's known by his

unit, to tend to the wounded. He dismounted the vehicle, and then pulled his platoon sergeant out of the passenger seat through the front, driver-side door for treatment, George recalled.

"Doc was great," said George, a native of Milwaukee. "Even with his own injuries, he really came through for all of us."

"It was really intense," Saint-Jacques said. "It was strange that I couldn't hear

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Two Bragg Soldiers killed in Iraq

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Two riflemen assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Abn. Div., died during combat operations near Samarra, Iraq Oct. 15.



Baroncini



Bicknell

Sgt. Lester Baroncini, 33, was from Bakersfield, Calif.

"It is a tremendous honor for me to have served alongside Lester Baroncini," said Lt. Col. Viet Luong, commander, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Abn. Div. "His story is that of honor, courage and sacrifice. He died defending the freedom of our great nation and trying to make this world a better place. His sacrifice amalgamates our resolve and strengthens our commitment towards mission accomplishment. This hero will be sorely missed and will forever live in our memories."

Baroncini joined the Army in October 2003. He completed infantry One Station Unit Training at Fort Benning, Ga., in February 2004 and the Basic Airborne Course in March 2004. He was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division in March 2004.

Baroncini deployed in support of Hurricane Katrina relief efforts in October 2005 and deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom as a member of 3rd Brigade Combat Team in July.

Staff Sgt. Timothy Jones, a weapons squad leader in Co. A, remembers Baroncini for his smile and passion for his job. "He was the company armorer, and he always did his job with a smile on his face and was a pleasure to work with," said Jones. "His passion was working with weapons. "He was a subject matter expert," added Jones.

According to Jones, Baroncini dreamed of returning to California and working on his grandparents' ranch. "He always talked about getting back to that ranch," Jones said. "He will be sadly missed."

Pfc. Stephen Bicknell, 19, was from Prattville, Ala.

"As their commanding officer, I only got to know Pfc. Bicknell on a professional level," said Capt. James Uptgraft, the commander of Co. A. "I was truly impressed. He was a professional, competent and proficient paratrooper."

Bicknell joined the Army in January 2006. He completed infantry One Station Unit Training as a rifleman at Fort Benning in May 2006 and the Basic Airborne Course in June 2006. He reported to Fort Bragg and was assigned

New command aims to improve Soldier support

by Ned Christensen
IMA PAO

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Army activated the Installation Management Command Tuesday to consolidate and strengthen installation support services to Soldiers and their families through the full authority of command.

Lt. Gen. Robert Wilson assumed the IMCOM command at a Pentagon ceremony hosted by Lt. Gen. James Campbell, Director of the Army Staff. The new command places the former Installation Management Agency, the former Community and Family Support Center and the former Army Environmental Center under a single command as a direct reporting unit.

"Today we take the next step in the evolution of Army installation management...in order to create a more efficient, effective and agile organization to ensure the best Army in the world is supported by the best installations in the world," Wilson said.

In keynote remarks, Campbell drew a parallel between the IMCOM and the new Army advertising slogan, "Army Strong." He defined "strong" as the ability to take stand up for oneself, while "Army Strong" is the ability to stand up for everyone else.

"In my mind, the Installation Management Command shows that it is Army Strong each and every day," Campbell said, "with the strength to make an installation a community; a set of quarters a home; and complete strangers, friends.

As IMCOM commander, Wilson is dual-hatted as the Army's assistant

chief of staff for installation management, reporting directly to the Army Chief of Staff. Brig. Gen. John A. Macdonald, former IMA director, became IMCOM's deputy commander.

Under IMCOM, CFSC is renamed the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command, and becomes a subordinate command of IMCOM, commanded by Brig. Gen. Belinda Pinckney, with its own flag. The AEC is now the Army Environmental Command - also a subordinate command, commanded by Col. Michael O'Keefe, and with its own flag.

The Army announced the establishment of the Installation Management Command as a direct reporting unit in August. This initiative is part of Army efforts to reorganize its commands and specified headquarters to obtain the most agile command and control structures to support the expeditionary, modular force.

Consolidating the installation management structure under IMCOM optimizes resources, protects the environment and enhances well-being of the Army community. IMCOM will provide efficient support to commanders in the performance of their tactical and strategic missions.

The new command also will consolidate the four Installation Management Agency regions within the continental United States into two as required by Base Realignment and Closure. The Western Region will stand up in November at Fort Sam Houston, Texas with consolidation taking place over the next few years. The Eastern Region will locate at Fort Eustis, Va., in 2010.

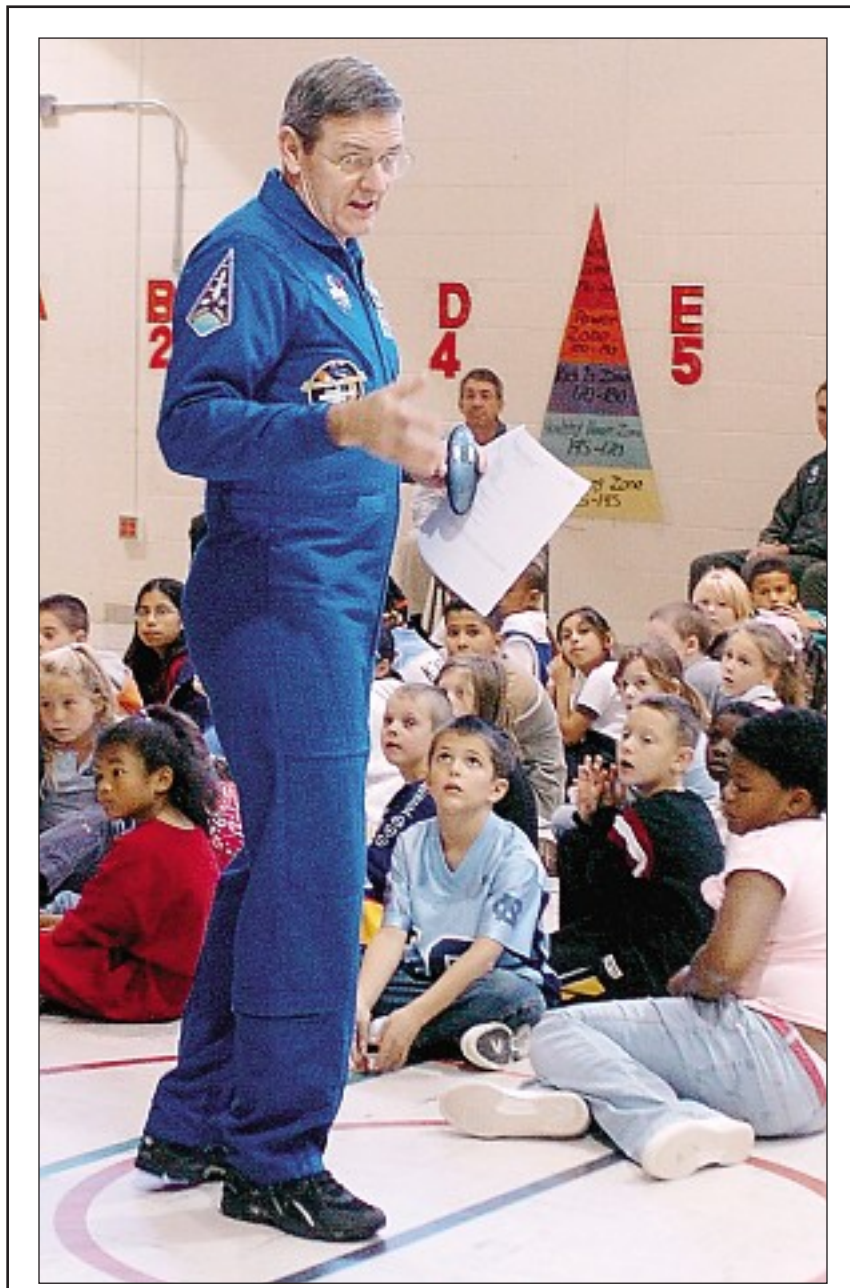


photo by Lucille Anne Newman/Paraglide

Visitor from outer space

NASA Astronaut Bill McArthur, talks to students Wednesday at McNair Elementary School about his experiences in space. See story and photos in next week's Paraglide.

Wounded Soldiers go through mental, physical anguish on road to recovery

by Staff Sgt. Randy Randolph
2nd BCT PAO

SILVER SPRING, MD. — When Spc. Jay Erwin use to hear reporters speak of "wounded" soldiers on the evening news, he envisioned troops with minor scrapes and bruises who medics could quickly patch up and send back into the fight after a day or two.

Today, as Erwin sits in a wheelchair in the second floor lobby of Walter Reed Army Medical Center, he sees things much differently.

"Hearing about our guys that were wounded didn't really affect me," he said. "I was just glad that guys I was fighting with were still alive. It didn't occur to me that there's a lot more mental and physical pain involved with being wounded, and I'm learning that now."

Erwin, an indirect fire infantryman team leader with Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, was severely injured when his position was mortared while on a mission south of Baghdad. Doctors had to



photo by Staff Sgt. Randy Randolph/2nd BCT PAO

82nd Airborne Division commander, Maj. Gen. David Rodriguez, pins a Purple Heart Medal on Staff Sgt. Bryan McNees at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

perform emergency surgery.

"I was in a high state of pain," Erwin said. "I saw smoke bombs going off, people yelling, I was bleeding through my pants. When I

started to see all the blood spurt I put on a pressure dressing thinking 'I have to get something done or I can't help out,' I was trying to stay in the fight, but save my life as well."

Although now Erwin's injuries are not life-threatening, he faces a much different obstacle in trying to recover mentally and physically from wounds that force him to rely on others in performing daily tasks he once took for granted.

"I have to take baby steps now," said Erwin. "Every day I face challenges to get through my pain and recover. I'm working hard to learn ways to compensate for my injuries."

Once a soldier is stabilized, WRAMC staff are dedicated to helping guide troops like Erwin through the obstacles on the long road to recovery.

"The goal is to have a complete recovery, or exhaust as much occupational or physical therapy as we can to get these guys functional and even retainable in the Army if possible," said Sgt 1st Class Maurice Grant, XVIII Airborne Corps casualty assistance liaison.

"After a Soldier gets over the initial shock of what has happened, and what they will have to face due to their injuries, and physically sees their wounds, they come to grips fast," Grant said.

Grant said that the Army's policy of moving family members close to the hospitals where their loved ones are recovering helps Soldiers get better faster.

While family members are more than happy to provide love and support by moving to the areas where their soldiers are recovering, Sue Erwin, Erwin's mother, said the upheaval involved with relocating

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