

Global War on Terrorism Support

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Military Support 11/09/82 TO 05/31/05

91W First Sergeant

5 October 2006

Class 57

Abstract

My military personal experience started on 9 November 1982, that's when I swore in again at the Richmond Virginia, Military Entrance Processing Station. Over the next few years, I will experience being a Private and finally a Senior Noncommissioned Officer. Also I will review my experience when I was a Drill Sergeant during the first Gulf War also called Operation Desert Storm. I will also capture my time when I was assigned to FT. Irwin, CA and FT. Polk, LA as a First Sergeant during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

I shipped out to basic training on 9 November 1982, from Richmond Virginia, Military Entrance Inprocessing Station at the age of 18. This was my first time that I was on my own in my life and the first time that I flew on an airplane. I was headed to FT. Leonard Wood, Missouri with four other people. We arrived at St. Louis airport and took a 2-hour bus ride to the Post. I remember that I was nervous during the whole trip, I did not know what to expect when we- arrived. My third oldest brother was in the Army a few years earlier, he told me to just do what they tell you to do and everything will be just fine. We arrived about 2200 that night and we did some inprocessing. For the next, few days we stayed at the reception stationed area and did more inprocessing i.e. receiving our uniforms and boots, getting our inoculations and administration paper work. Now the day has arrived for us to be picked up by the Senior Drill Sergeant. He put us in a so-called formation and gave all of us a friendly pep talk. I said to myself this is going to be all right, we filed into a cattle car with our duffle bags and the driver took off to our next destination to meet our assigned Drill Sergeants. Majority of the Privates on the cattle car seemed like they were in a good mood and that life will be fine for the next 9 weeks.

The cattle car stopped in front of a long sidewalk leading to a barracks. I looked out of the cattle car and noticed several Drill Sergeants positioning themselves like in a receiving line on the sidewalk leading up to the barracks. The driver opened the door and before you could take your next breathe there were swarms of Drill Sergeants around shouting and pointing their fingers in your face. The atmosphere had suddenly changed from welcoming to chaotic. For the next several weeks, we trained hard and long throughout the Missouri winter. By the end of basic training, I received a letter of Appreciation for being a Squad leader and scoring 297 out of 300 on the APFT. Also received a Letter of Commendations from the Battalion Commander for

being selected over 159 other Soldiers by the Association of the U.S. Army, as the Honor Graduate for the eight-week basic training period.

After graduating from basic training on 27 January 1983, I went on to FT. Sam Houston, TX for my Advance Individual Training (AIT) as a Medical Specialist. After AIT, my first duty station was FT. Campbell, KY assigned to the 2/17 Cavalry (AIR CAV). There I had the opportunity to train with 19 Deltas (CAV SCOUTS). We went to the field numerous times in my four-year tenure there. While at FT. Campbell I obtained the Expert Field Medical Badge (EFMB), Air Assault Badge; deployed to Sinai Egypt MFO for six months with Charlie Company Task Force, 4th BN 187 Infantry (Rakkasans Raiders) and was promoted to Sergeant.

June 1990 I was assigned to Company E-187th Medical Battalion as Drill Sergeant. This was my time to train large groups of Soldiers and reinforce the standards that they were taught in Basic Training. August 2, 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait, which started the Gulf War also called Operation Desert Storm. Because of the war, the U.S. Army started calling up the Army Reserves and National Guard and Individual Ready Reserves (IRR). Since there was a large troop deployment, there was a great need for medical personnel such as Doctors, Nurses, and medical specialties. This meant a influx in medical Soldiers coming to FT. Sam and they needed to be retain on basic soldering skills and issued their TA-50 for deployment. FT. Sam Command started a Minimal Essential Training Course on 24 November 1990. Our Battalion was task for providing 10 Drill Sergeants to be the Command and Control of all incoming Soldiers. This was a great chance to be involved in the War effort; there was many Drill Sergeants that wanted to be deployed, but all of us were nondeployable. We had the mission of accountable of the doctors and nurses, we had to go the hotel put them in formation put and onto the Blue bird buses to transport them to Post for inprocessing. I had the chance to talk to the Doctors and other medical

professionals; some of them told me that they had their own private practices. Some of them had to close it down or put some else in charge of it while they were deployed. The longer they stayed deployed they was going to lose a lot of money in the civilian world. Majority of the deploying Soldiers were older in age, over weight and haven't done physical training in years, there wasn't a need at that time to start enforcing them to do PT because of the risk of someone getting hurt. As the Soldiers fully inprocessed they were shipped out to support the war, some were ready to go and some were scared to go. All in all it was a challenging task from 24 November 1990 to 16 September 1991 we transitioned 1,700 Soldiers from their respective component to active duty in support of Operation Desert Storm.

As the years passed by, I was promoted several times. The period now is February 2000; I was stationed at the National Training Center FT. Irwin, CA. I was assigned as the First Sergeant for the Weed Army Community Hospital. This was my second time doing First Sergeant duty; the first time was in Korea in 1997 as a Sergeant First Class. At FT Irwin, I was an E-8. I had the privilege of being the First Sergeant for 210 Officers and Enlisted personnel. I advised the Company Commander on all enlisted issues, such as UCMJ actions and personal matters. As the MEDDAC First Sergeant, you have another duty as the Medical Hold First Sergeant. About 5 to 10 soldiers on average were assigned to medical hold company you constantly had to stay on top of their medical appointments and their overall medical processing. While at FT. Irwin I planned, coordinated, and moved 50 MEDDAC Soldiers from one barracks to another and all the Company's hand receipted furniture. This was also the first time in my career that I had the opportunity to attend college. I enrolled in Barstow Community College; I earned two Associate Degree's one in Business Management and the other one in Allied Health. I maintained a 3.5 GPA and made the Deans list.

What I learned while assigned to the MEDDAC, was that we had a number of officers and enlisted that were slotted to fill PROFIS positions. For a better explanation on what a PROFIS position is, below is an excerpt from the Medical Corp Professional Development Guide dated March 2002:

The Army Medical Department (AMEDD) Professional Officer Filler System (PROFIS) predesignates qualified Active Component health professionals serving in Table of Distribution and Allowance (TDA) units, upon mobilization or upon the execution of a contingency operation, to fill Active Component and early deploying and forward deployed units of Forces Command (FORSCOM), Western Command (WESTCOM), and the OCONUS Medical Commands.(Medical Corp Professional Development Guide dated March 2002 page 25)

PROFIS selected soldiers in the WEED Army Community Hospital are assigned to Medical TO&E Units by the Hospital Commander. The higher Medical Headquarters in the Western Region at FT. Lewis, WA manages these Soldiers. When there is a need to change, one soldier to another Hospital S-3 must notify the higher Headquarters with the request to change and the reason why. PROFIS Soldiers train on Common Task at least once year and qualify with the M16A4 and 9MM. Annually they have to go TDY to their assigned PROFIS unit and train with them for five days, this is usually happens when their PROIS unit goes to the field. They also have to go through the Soldier Readiness Process (SRP) to update their immunization and dental record. They must also process through JAG, Chaplin, and various other agencies to be fully SRP qualified. Even though they might not be deployed the entire time while they are assigned as PROFIS, they must SRP at least once a year. The Hospital S-3 schedules and

manages the whole process of ensuring that the PROFIS Soldiers go through all of the above steps. All what I learned after Two years at FT. Irwin as a First Sergeant and my knowledge about PROFIS Soldiers would definitely help me out at my next duty station.

In November 2002, my wife and I were stationed at FT Polk, LA. I had an assignment as a First Sergeant for the Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital and my wife was at 115TH Field Hospital. In February 2003, her unit was notified that they would deploy to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. There were other Medical Field units that were in the Great Plains Region that were deploying with the 115th in support of OEF/OIF. This meant that a majority of the assigned PROFIS soldiers would deploy with their unit. This would affect the Hospital health care in a serious way. We were going to lose some of our specialty doctors and clinical nurses, logistics soldiers. Most of the Hospitals in the Great Plains Region were adversely affected by the numerous deployments.

Knowing that the deployments were not going away any time soon, the MEDDAC received 54 Reservist from the 7232nd Medical Company from the Louisiana Reserve component. They backed filled most of the vacant positions left by the deployed active duty Soldiers. The 7232nd were a huge relief to the Hospital. As time went by, I found out from a few of them that being called up were not bad at all. Some had no permanent jobs back home. Some had medical problems that they let linger as a civilian. However, when they were activated they took the opportunity to get them checked out. Some had serious medical problems and where medical boarded out of the Army. Some Soldiers that took advantage of their situation, attended College, and received their Degrees. One Soldier was selected for the Green to Gold program. The 7232nd Medical Company spent a long year assigned to the MEDDAC. They definitely was

an asset to the organization. When it was time for the unit to leave, some volunteered to deploy to continue their support on the Goble War on terrorism.

When the 7232nd departed, the 4010th Medical Company replaced them, which was another reserve unit. They had about 80 Soldiers; their function was almost the same as the 7232nd except some Soldiers augmented the medical section of the Post SRP site. The 4010th was well run by their First Sergeant, this was my first time working side by side with a Reserve First Sergeant; we came to become good friends.

Between 1 January 2005 and 31 May 2005, I was rated as the Command Sergeant Major (CSM) for the Hospital; the previous CSM was selected for a normative position in Europe. This was another chance for me to show case my leadership skills. The Hospital is considered a Major Subordinate Command; I had the opportunity to interface with the Post CSM and all the Brigade CSMs. During this period, I coach and mentored a Soldier to win the Fort Polk NCO of the 2nd Quarter Board and NCO of the Year runner-up. This was a very demanding time in my career; I had to plan and coordinate a Hospital Change of Command. As the CSM, I had to go TDY to FT. Sam Houston, TX to attend Conferences with the Regional Commander and Command Sergeant Major. Overall I had time to excel in the position, I received a Meritorious Service Medal as the First Sergeant for my PCS award and Army Commendation Medal as the acting Command Sergeant Major.

Conclusion

From the first day that I entered the Army and until the present I have a lot of respect for all the Soldiers in uniform. For the past 24 years and counting, I received a lot of military knowledge and training that is immeasurable. I have been around the world and had the pleasure meeting countless military and civilian people. I experience many cultures and customs from

different countries. As long as the Goble War on Terrorism (GWOT) continues, I will keep on supporting while in uniform and when I retire. The Army has afforded me the opportunity to grow as a Leader and provided me the skills to take better care of my family and Soldiers.