

Specialist counted on training, teammates to survive IED

Story and Photo by Sgt. Ginifer Spada. Combined Joint Task Force 1-Afghanistan, June 23, 2011

Attack does not deter patrol, unit morale



Spc. Brian Walker, 2nd Platoon, Co. C., 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Regt., “TF Cacti,” 3rd BCT, 25th ID, talks about his experience as a Purple Heart Medal recipient and how he is looking forward to rejoining the fight in Kunar province’s Combat Outpost Honaker-Miracle, Afghanistan, recently.

NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — It was just another day, with another mounted patrol in the mountainous area outside of Combat Outpost Honaker-Miracle, here, recently.

Soldiers in 2nd Platoon, “Renegades,” Company C, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, “Task Force Cacti,” 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, were riding in a mounted patrol when it hit an improvised explosive device.

“Everyone was doing exactly the right thing,” said Spc. Brian Walker, platoon infantry radio operator, about his team and their training. “Everyone fell back on their training and did exactly what they were supposed to do.”

“As soon as everything popped off, everyone did the right thing,” said Staff Sgt. Simon Bachmann, squad leader. “The driver got them through the kill zone, everyone in the truck began buddy aid, they all responded to a ‘T’ (and) they reacted perfectly.”

Four Soldiers received shrapnel injuries. Walker was in the lead vehicle and received minor injuries. He lost consciousness multiple times and was sent to the Traumatic Brain Injury Clinic at Bagram Air Field, here, to be assessed and recover. He is now recovering in a hospital.

Walker received the Purple Heart medal from Command Sgt. Maj. Saia Vimoto, senior enlisted advisor, Regional Command-East, and Maj. Gen. Dan Allyn, commander, RC-East and Combined Joint Task Force-1.

“I was honored,” Walker said. “The command sergeant major and commander of the biggest base in Afghanistan ... I was just honored.”

Although the more relaxed battle rhythm at the TBI Clinic — in stark contrast to that of Combat Outpost Honaker-Miracle — is helping Walker recover, he is anxious to get back to his fellow Soldiers and to do his job.

“I know that they need me,” Walker said. “I want to get back and do my job ... get back and be there for the guys.”

Walker and Bachmann both agreed that everyone in the platoon shares the same dedication to each other and their jobs.

The Renegades are at the beginning of their yearlong deployment to eastern Afghanistan. These Soldiers said they believe their perseverance and dedication to each other and their jobs is unstoppable — even when hit by an IED.

Credit to: <http://www.hawaiiarmyweekly.com/2011/06/23/specialist-counted-on-training-teammates-to-survive-ied/>