



**3rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command
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Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq
DSN (NIPR) 318-827-6101
DSN (SIPR) 302-243-5104
keith.anderson@iraq.centcom.mil

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Guardsmen medic goes above and beyond

By Spc. Joshua Medford
2nd Battalion, 146th Field Artillery

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq – Spec. Jessica Burdge, medic, Headquarters and Headquarters Btry., 2nd Battalion, 146th Field Artillery, goes above and beyond to help Soldiers.

“The leadership role that I’ve filled on this deployment has to be the biggest achievement for me,” said Burdge, from Ft. Lewis, Wash.

Among the scrapes, bumps, and bruises, Burdge takes care of other crucial medical duties. Recently she shouldered the task of completing the battery’s “line-of-duty” injury paperwork — a tedious, detail-oriented task requiring no small degree of clerical skill.

When not on a convoy, Burdge taught a multitude of medical classes, to include the unit-level Combat Lifesaver refresher class, to ensure that HHB Soldiers and medics remain familiar with life-saving techniques. Along with teaching classes, Burdge cared for the medical supply inventory for the battery, keeping the rest of the unit’s medics and Soldiers fully equipped with the latest medical supplies, and providing the instruction on the proper use of the equipment.

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BURDGE/2-2-2

Burdge came to HHB from C Co., 181st Brigade Support Battalion, after completing a month-long training program at Camp Buliss, Texas. She will return to C Co. in the fall when the unit redeploys. This is her first deployment to Iraq since joining the National Guard in 2003.

Burdge also volunteered to deploy with the Oklahoma National Guard following Hurricane Katrina, which devastated New Orleans. She dropped out of college in order to serve as the lead medic for her company and provided medical aid to injured civilians in New Orleans for two months following the hurricane.

“It was the first time I was able to put my medical training to the test,” said Burdge. “That experience taught me what it was like to be away from my family for an extended period of time and know what it was like to be a medic twenty-four seven.”

The experience in New Orleans prepared Burdge for Iraq where she continues to serve as a medic “twenty-four seven.”

“It’s a good learning process, though stressful and overwhelming sometimes,” Burdge said. However, she said she feels a sense of accomplishment.

Upon returning home, Burdge plans to finish her degree in elementary education and hopes to be hired as a Combat Lifesaver instructor while making up for lost time with her husband Darol, her daughter Kiersten, and sons Ayden and Zachary. Darol, an active duty Army medic, has deployed to Iraq once before and will deploy again soon. So the reunion could be short.