

## Marines save four of their own from fiery blaze

Story by Lance Cpl. Ray Lewis



Lance Cpl's Robert A. Montgomery, a 23-year-old squad leader, and Ian A. O'Neal, a 20-year-old rifleman, radio a helicopter near Husayba, Iraq Oct. 19. The two and other Marines with K Company, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment all worked together to save fellow Marines and a sailor from an improvised explosive device blast. Montgomery is from Sumter, S.C. O'Neal is from Matthews, N.C. Both Marines serve under Regiment Combat Team 5 and will be conducting operations for the next several months. (photo by Lance Cpl. Ray Lewis)

HUSAYBA, Iraq (Oct. 19, 2006) - Marines assigned to K Company, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment showed "grace under fire" when they saved three Marines and a sailor from a fiery blaze caused by an improvised explosive device blast here Oct. 19.

The Marines were on patrol through a nearby Iraqi village interacting with locals when the bomb detonated.

The blast sounded like thunder. A cloak of smoke covered a hummer. The Marines on patrol instantly ran to the scene. It was a few of their own.

"Our immediate action came into play," said Lance Cpl. Ian A. O'Neal, a rifleman with K Company. "We didn't second guess what we did; we just did it."

The 20 year old from Matthews, N.C., thought insurgents were just testing them to see how he and his fellow Marines would react.

They did react, quickly.

Within minutes, Marines got their own hidden at a safe location for an air evacuation.

Marines said the helicopter played an important role in bringing their own to safety. A helicopter crew chief said he is always glad to be there for his Marines. He said saving his Marines comes first for him.

"My primary concern prior to picking up the wounded is getting to the zone as quickly as possible," said Sgt. Travis D. Pfister, a helicopter crew chief with the "Purple Foxes" of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, operating out of Al Taqqadum, Iraq, and a neighbor to the battalion. "Regardless of what it is that you are doing when that alarm goes, you drop it and go full sprint out

to the aircraft."

The 27 year old from Richland, Wash., said every minute his team shaves off getting the wounded to the hospital is just that much more of a chance for them to survive.

Read more at <http://www.cemnf-wiraq.usmc.mil/imef/InfolineMarines.nsf/0/534C83EAE08C1DD1C32572190069440A?OpenDocument>