

## **A Tale of Two Soldiers**

- by ESGR Area 9 Representative Christine Nitz

What do Kevin Dailey and Jim Beckman have in common? The obvious answer is that they are both engineers at Carleton LS in Davenport, Iowa. They have something else in common though. They are both “Citizen Soldiers. It is at this point their stories differ.

When on active duty, Kevin is the CWO (Chief Warrant Officer) and Commander of the 300<sup>th</sup> Engineer Survey Detachment attached to the 389<sup>th</sup> Engineering Battalion in Dubuque, IA. The Engineer Survey Detachment is new and growing so CW2 Dailey is currently responsible for the day-to-day activities of six personnel. He relies on his leadership and communications skills as much as his technical expertise – and in many instances, may find himself using these skills under politically charged or even adverse conditions. When in uniform, he not only represents himself and his unit, but he and the members of the 389<sup>th</sup> also represent the United States.



(Pictured: Kevin Dailey holds the 5-Star Award Presented to Carleton Life Support after Brian Heath, Director of Operations signed their Statement of Support)

In May and June 2007, Kevin spent 10 days training at the UN facilities in Mongolia for Khan Quest 07. They returned to Mongolia in July and August for a Humanitarian Civil Action (HCA). The mission of the HCA was to totally renovate the Neurological wing for Child and Maternal Health at a Mongolian hospital.

Under Kevin’s command, the eleven soldiers from the 389<sup>th</sup> worked along side eleven Mongolian Soldiers to replace the HVAC, plumbing and electrical systems, flooring, ceilings and walls. By the time they left, the wing was like new and ready for patients.

When asked about language issues Kevin replied “We worked through interpreters, but you’d be surprised how much you can communicate even without a translator. We all learned from each other.”

He continued, “When I talk to people about joining the Reserve, they say they don’t want to go to Iraq. I let them know that as members of the Army Reserve, we are deployed to lots of other places besides Afghanistan and Iraq. And a lot of what we do is humanitarian in nature and greatly appreciated.”

I'm sure Kevin's leadership and his dedication to the mission are also appreciated by his Carleton LS customers.



(Pictured: Jim Beckman holds the 5-Star Statement of Support signed by Brian Heath, Director of Operations at Carleton Life Support)

Jim Beckman, a manufacturing engineer at Carleton, works on SCUBA (Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus) for military applications in his civilian job. In his military career, he is a member of the Illinois Army National Guard. Up until recently, he was the First Sergeant for A Battery, 2/123<sup>rd</sup> Field Artillery Battalion in Milan, IL. Three weeks ago he was promoted to Sergeant Major (SGM) and transferred to HQ Battery where he is now responsible for Battalion Operations.

What does a SGM responsible for Battalion Operations do? SGM Beckman coordinates, plans, and provides oversight for between 400 and 450 men, their education, communications, equipment, safety, supplies, housing, support and risk management.

Whew! Sounds like when Jim leaves his “day job” and puts on his uniform, his military job description reads a lot like that of a Plant Manager. “Only in this job, if I make a mistake, someone can either get hurt or even killed. In the Field Artillery, you can go through the motions and dry fire up to a point, but when you actually conduct fire missions – the ammunition is 155mm high explosives. In my Military role, the level of responsibility is greater than that of my civilian job. The risks are greater and mistakes have more serious consequences.

Before joining the engineering team at Carleton LS, Jim was employed by McLaughlin Body in Moline, Illinois. While at McLaughlin, his unit; A Battery, 2/123<sup>rd</sup> was deployed and sent to Iraq. Jim was there from November 2004 – January 2006.

“Although we are a Field Artillery Unit, while in Iraq we didn't do many Artillery Missions because of the potential for collateral damage inherent in Field Artillery operations. Our mission in Iraq was Security. As a Security Force Unit we provided convoy escort, secured detainees and transported prisoners, performed route recon or

checking for IED's and potential trouble spots along routes used by military convoys. We spent most of our time in Western Baghdad" reports Jim.

When asked about the level of support he received while employed at McLaughlin Body and now at Carleton LS, Jim responded, "At McLaughlin my direct supervisor had a brother in the military so he really understood."

"I get the same level of support from the people at Carleton. Because of my command responsibilities at HQ Battery, I often drill more often than once a month. They don't complain. Sometimes I have long drill weekends after working 5 days a week at the plant. In order to recuperate, I try to take a vacation day on the following Monday just so I can get a break. I really appreciate the fact they (Carleton) don't have a problem with that." Jim reports.

So here you have a tale of two soldiers – two engineers at Carleton LS: one in a combat arms unit (Field Artillery) the other a member of an Engineering Battalion. Both men are members of our all-volunteer military, and both are willing and able to shoulder the responsibilities associated with carrying out stress-filled missions under dangerous conditions. Our heartfelt thanks go to SGM Jim Beckman and CWO Kevin Dailey, and to the many men and women like them. Our "thanks" also to the many civilian employers who like McLaughlin Body and Carleton LS, go above and beyond the legal requirements in support of our all-volunteer military and their own citizen soldiers.



(Pictured: Kevin Dailey, Brian Heath, Area 9 ESGR Chairman Harry Cockrell and Jim Beckman.)

Carleton Life Support received the prestigious 5-Star award for "above and beyond" support of their employees in the National Guard and Reserves. They provide supplemental pay and secondary health care coverage to employees who are deployed, and make certain drill and training time is not a problem for their employees. They proudly display their 5-Star award in the lobby of the corporate office and each year pay special tribute in their newsletter, to military/employees and military family members of employees.

### **About Carleton Life Support.**

Carleton Life Support is located on Hickory Grove Road in Davenport, Iowa. Carleton designs, manufactures, installs, and maintains life support systems for military flight crews. Outside the day-to-day business of life support systems for Military applications, they also have a strong tradition of community support for our men and women in uniform.

In addition to meeting USERRA guidelines in support of their own civilian soldiers, they are the sole sponsor for the military flight teams appearing at the local Quad Cities Air Show.

Because of the strong tie with the aviation community, in 2006, the employees of CLSS “adopted” the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne stationed in Northern Iraq. For Veterans Day, employees working at CLSS put together a CD containing personal video messages from the veterans working at the plant. The “Thank You” CD was sent to members of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne while they were deployed.

Because they had a “dismal kitchen” in October and November employees at CLSS collected gifts and cash and donated two George Forman grills – one a real monster. “They really needed something better than a small microwave oven!” To make Over 250 lbs of gifts and 94 lbs of reading material found their way to Northern Iraq and the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne with “thanks” from the employees of Carleton Life Support.