

‘Doc’ Becker defines combat medic



Pfc. Sarah Becker, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, Special Troops Battalion, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Military Police platoon, greets local children before teaching a first aid class conducted Dec. 1 in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.

*Story and photos by Pfc. Daniel M. Rangel
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NANGARHAR, Afghanistan — “It’s a very prestigious thing to be called ‘Doc’ when you’re around people that you work with,” said Army Pfc. Sarah Becker, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, Special Troops Battalion, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Military Police platoon. “It means that they respect you. It’s not about the rank, it’s about

what you can do for them.”

The Greenwich, Ohio native has spent most of the year deployed as an Army medic gaining the respect of Sky Soldiers across the Nangarhar Province. Becker, a young and petite Soldier, now spends much of her time teaching Afghan National Police personnel her specialty and held her last class Dec. 1 in Jalalabad.

This isn’t the first class

she’s taught either. Becker estimates she has conducted between 20 to 30 classes since she’s been in Afghanistan. Her supervisor, Army Staff Sgt. Victor M. Diaz, explained why there is such a high demand for these classes.

“We always get new [ANP] coming in,” Diaz said. “So we’re constantly training the new personnel for each situation such as how to give first aid, how to react to contact and so on.”

The classes focus on first-responder care. Afghan National Security Forces are frequently faced with life or death situations on the battlefield and their knowledge of first aid can save many of their own lives. And although the classes are focused on battlefield situations, ANSF forces are encouraged to take their new knowledge of first aid to help their local communities with more common health issues. In an evaluation of Becker’s performance in the field and in the classroom, Diaz explained that Becker is a competent and thorough professional.

“She does an outstanding job. She knows what she’s doing,” Diaz said. “When she gives a class, she goes step-by-step. She doesn’t miss any steps. Soldiers ask her questions and she answers in detail. That’s the way that we want her to do it.”

Becker’s last class focused on having an ANP platoon learn the meaning of the acronym MARCH.

“MARCH is an acronym that one of my senior ranking [Noncommissioned Officers] taught me,” Becker said. “It stands for Massive hemorrhage, Airway, Respiration, Circulation and Head trauma. It’s all things that you can look at in your initial assessment as you’re packaging

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up your casualty to get them on to higher facility care."

Becker's instruction sticks with her students who practice the techniques she teaches, said ANP 2nd Lt. Abdul Waqaf, operation team leader.

"We review it with our Soldiers," Waqaf said. "We get a lot of good training from [Coalition Forces]. If we don't review than we will not be able to remember."

ANSF listen to Becker because she brings with her ample combat experience. Over the past summer she was attached to the 66th Military Police Company in Camp Torkham by the Pakistani border here in Nangarhar Province. She has been on convoys that have been attacked while with the 66th MPs

and has treated numerous combat injuries.

"I actually had four traumas that I took care of," Becker said. "They were on different days [only] about a week apart."

When she's not conducting a class or treating injuries, Becker is pulling security like every other Soldier in her platoon.

"The number one priority every time we get out of the vehicle is to pull security," Becker said.

The life of a combat medic is stressful, the missions are plenty and the hours are long, but Becker handles the challenge well and manages to keep the spirits up of the Sky Soldiers she works with.

"She's very friendly,

she's kind. She likes to work.

She's a hard worker," Diaz said.

"She's constantly going on missions because she's the only medic we have in the platoon. If we have two missions in one day, she has to go on both missions. We'll come back from one and she'll jump from one vehicle and go into the other. She never complains."

Becker is a well of inspiration to those around her. She loves the people in her unit and the local Afghans, especially the children. Her inspiration comes from helping people.

"Being a medic I get to help people," Becker said. "I get to not only help U.S. Soldiers but I help the kids too. And as you can see it puts a smile on my face."



Pfc. Sarah Becker, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, Special Troops Battalion, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Military Police platoon, pulls security at a bridge with Afghan National Police after her first aid class concluded Dec. 1 in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.