

Profile: Sgt. Steve Reyes, Green Beret

By Tabitha Armstrong

They couldn't tell their families where they were going. They planned their strategies in complete isolation before a helicopter flew them in. They were among the first Americans to enter the hostile territory. They grew their hair out to avoid being recognized as American soldiers. Covers hid them as they traveled lying in the backs of trucks. Many times they thought they were about to die.

These are some of only a few experiences U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Steve Reyes could share about his four months in Afghanistan. Much of the warfare he and his nine team members did is under classified orders.

"We performed covert operations on the Northern Alliance front lines," says Reyes, whose team directed aircraft to targets on the Taliban ridge.

Humanitarian aid was also on their agenda. "I had opportunity to do surgery on some Afghani children who were wounded by ... ammunition that they were playing with, left behind from the Russian-Afghani war," he says.

Reyes, a Special Forces soldier with

a specialty in medicine, has been in the Army since July of 1996. He's a member of the Green Berets, a special operations branch of the Army and is based in Ft. Campbell, Kentucky.

Reyes graduated from Asbury College in 1983 with a bachelor of arts in physical education and biology. Before receiving a master's in exercise physiology from the University of South Carolina, he attended the University of Dayton and taught physical education and health for two years. He worked as a country club tennis pro before joining the Army in 1996.

Had he not gone to college, says Reyes, he would have coped with his Afghanistan experience much differently. His whole life would be "absolutely, radically, 100 percent different." College, he says, "helps focus life's priorities."

Reyes' wife, Joy, says "In my mind, he's my hero. ... I think of all that he's been through and all the training he's been through and sometimes I'm just totally amazed that this guy who is a hero in my eyes and lots of other peoples' eyes is my husband." 🇺🇸



U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Steve Reyes, center, and members of the Close Air Support (CAS) team enroute to Northern Alliance "front line" in Afghanistan. Their mission: identify enemy targets and direct aircraft onto target.

ROTC Opportunities

By Heather Sandusky

The opportunity to experience college without the financial burdens and with the guarantee of a job upon graduation with rank is exactly what the ROTC Scholarship program offers. The benefits extend even outside of the military. Fortune 500 companies often give preferential hiring to former military officers.

Peter McDonald, a senior, currently attends Asbury College, a college he would not have attended without the Air Force ROTC Scholarship funds. The Air Force ROTC training he has received while in college has built him into a strong leader. "You have continual opportunities for challenge that I just never knew existed." Peter has already commanded 40

people and led a physical fitness program.

Captain Shane Prater, former Air Force ROTC instructor for University of Kentucky, is one of the many who has benefited from the scholarship program. Prater joined the program his sophomore year in the University of Kentucky after learning of it through a friend.

According to Prater, it gave him more focus with which to make future goals and provided him with "a wonderful job and career after college."

Immediately after his graduation from UK, Prater was transferred to his first three-year assignment in the Royal Air Force at Mildenhall, England. While on assignment, he obtained his masters degree. Captain Prater served

as an escort officer in the Military-to-Military Contact Program, which assists the United States in establishing close ties with former Soviet Republics by hosting week-long visits for senior officers from Latvian and Belarusian militaries.

In 1997, Prater was deployed to Gabon, Africa during Operation GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL to evacuate Americans from Zaire during a coup d'etat. Following Prater's assignment in England, he was sent to Anderson Air Force Base (AFB) in Guam for a year and traveled to Okinawa, Japan and Bali, Indonesia. Prater's experience is much like many others who have joined and completed the ROTC program.

There are three types of scholarships that cover different amounts of college tuition. The scholarships are awarded to students of all majors. Physical and academic requirements must be met. The scholarships provide money for tuition and fees, annual textbook allowance and a monthly living allowance.

Scholarship opportunities are extended to enlisted members as well. The Air Force wants to encourage learning, and makes an effort to provide the means for its members to do so. To find more details on the scholarship program or to apply, visit the Air Force ROTC Web site, www.afrotc.com. To find information on the Air Force in general, visit www.af.mil. 🇺🇸