

# **MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION – BAGHDAD**

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## **Ironhorse medic provides much more than ‘relief to the wounded’**

By Spc. Douglas York  
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Since the latter half of the 19th century, the International Red Cross has existed under various names and titles, names as broad as “International Committee for Relief to the Wounded.”

Although the name of the organization has changed many times through the years, the organization and its volunteers who’ve worn the famous symbol have endured and improved.

The reality is that a large number of those volunteers have been women, serving as nurses or doctors’ assistants in what used to be one of the few professions, both in and out of the military, accessible to them. However, in an ever-improving and hopeful world, that reality now comes in the form of equality and choice, an equality that can be seen in the ranks of the 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

“I’m in charge of the pharmacy, all of the ordering, all medication or prescriptions, and I do all of the scheduling,” said Staff Sgt. Angelina Marrero, a native of Mesa, Ariz., who serves with Headquarters Support Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B. “We also run the (detainee holding area). I’m not in charge of the DHA, but I do all of the scheduling for it.”

While she isn't in charge of every aspect in the section's realm of responsibility, she handles a great deal of it.

Marrero is the noncommissioned officer in charge of DSTB’s aid station on Camp Liberty. She and her troops are responsible for manning the sick call hours, administering immunizations and providing medical coverage for all service members and civilians within their area of operations.

Having served the bulk of her seven years of service as a medic for the Ironhorse Division’s Fires Brigade, switching over to DSTB just prior to the deployment, Marrero has seen and dealt with every aspect of her position, including potential misconceptions or former stereotypes about her gender.

“A lot of people say that it's still a ‘man's’ Army, but things have changed a lot and things are definitely different than what they used to be. I'm fortunate as I don't think I would have been able to live, say, in the 40s or 50s because I'm really independent,” she added, noting that she has read about military women, most recently the Army's first four-star female general, Gen. Ann Dunwoody, who have been an inspiration to her.

Those same inspirations, the efforts of her predecessors and the level playing field she has to work with make it possible for Marrero to tackle the equally important and pressing issues within her unit.

Sometimes the work load is overwhelming, with a shortage of people to share the burden, but they always figure out a way to overcome the challenges, Marrero said.

“An operation of this size would have a platoon of medics and we have a section, but we make due with what we have.”

Additionally, Marrero elaborated that they have used other Soldiers who will be reclassifying from their current jobs to become medics to fill roles on a more minor scale, such as the administering of immunizations, record keeping and prescription filling.

Whatever the challenges she faces, Marrero does everything she can and works tirelessly to overcome them. These efforts do not go unrecognized by the aid station’s officer in charge.

“There are not too many folks that you can just say, 'Hey, I need this done,' and they'll get it done,” said Capt. Luis Wilmot, a native of Corpus Christi, Texas, whose primary duties are those of physician assistant and OIC of DSTB’s aid station. “Staff Sgt. Marrero is one of those folks,” he added, noting that in addition to Marrero, he has two other great NCOs.

Having been in the Army for 10 years, Wilmot was a former NCO, rising to the rank of staff sergeant prior to switching to the officer corps three years ago. In short, he knows the qualities NCOs must have.

“She embodies the NCO Corps, and she lives those values,” Wilmot said. “For noncommissioned officers, their job is to take care of Soldiers – bottom line – and that's what she does,” adding that Marrero tirelessly puts in long hours, ensuring that her troops have everything they need for success.

One of those troops, Pfc. Aubrey Childress, a medic with DSTB, and a native of Holly, Mich., agreed with her OIC.

“She's outstanding; she is very selfless and always looks out for her Soldiers,” Childress said, elaborating that while Marrero expects a lot from her troops, she gives much more in return.

“I'm really proud of my Soldiers. I have the best section I've ever had; they're outstanding,” Marrero said. “When we started doing the flu shots, we did 600 of them in three days. Everything that we do, we do a lot considering the (small) amount of Soldiers we have,” she added.

Despite their relatively low numbers, she still finds ways to take care of her troops and prevent them from being over-worked.

“I try to give them as much down time as possible because if I don't need them (at a particular moment), then I make sure that they are taken care of,” Marrero said.

“Almost all of them are in college, so they are working on school work or working out, and I will stay later if required.”

Marrero said she believes that it is an NCOs job to go the extra mile and shield their Soldiers from being strung out as much as possible. Her troops appreciate the efforts and seem to be acquiring more deep-rooted qualities from Marrero and her fellow NCOs in the process.

“Military bearing and being aware of your surroundings,” Childress said, of two of the key things she's learned from Marrero. “Always be aware of who's around, what you're saying, who you're saying it to, and don't let your personal feelings affect the way you behave at work,” she added.

She said Marrero's guidance is easy to follow – because she practices what she preaches.

“I give (Marrero) guidance: 'This is what I need,' and she provides the end state. It's awesome,” Wilmot said. “She works as my pharmacy, Class 8 supply NCO, pretty much running the aid station and is responsible for the medical readiness for the entire battalion.”

Marrero deflects much of the praise and simply offers that it is her Soldiers who are self-driven to do the extra-curricular things outside of their daily duties that will help advance their military careers and their lives, such as school work, exercising, military correspondence courses and studying for the promotion boards. Rarely are they found being idle.

Whether it is motivating her troops, responding to Wilmot's and others' requests or simply thinking about her own future, Marrero has not forgotten where she is, neither has she lost sight of how she got there and what could have been without the efforts of the leaders and women before her.

“I've never been discriminated against. I was never raised in a family that was gender-specific,” Marrero said. “But women, we have come a long way. and it's extremely impressive to see what some of these ladies around here are doing.”

However, that is not to say that the path she travelled to get to where she is now was easy, by any means.

“It was definitely a rough road to get here, but being in this position is probably one of the easiest positions that I've been in,” Marrero said with a smile.

“My workload is much more in this position, but it's easy in terms of the people I deal with. My leaders, my Soldiers, they do a lot to ease my 'pain,' and this is definitely the best position I've been in.”

She drew comparisons to her past experiences where the support and leadership weren't always to the level she now enjoys and the expectations were sometimes unreasonable.

The residual effects of those experiences taught Marrero, and she, in turn, taught her fellow NCOs to never allow those things to happen to their troops. Marrero's Soldiers are constantly taken care of and mentored, and it has shown as her troops have developed during the deployment.

“We wanted them to become independent and be at the levels they need to be so we can step back and they can start taking over our positions,” she said.

That independent mindset reflects in all of her troops and, not coincidentally, on Childress, who also realizes the significance of what she is able to strive for.

“I'm glad to be a part of it. I'm glad to have the opportunities and am grateful to those who had to go through much more to get us where we are today,” Childress said. “I feel fortunate that I can be here with more of an equal opportunity, the same as men, than we would've had 10-20 years ago in the Army.”

Her personal pride about being a woman has caused her to never want to do anything which will tarnish what other women have accomplished. It is that same pride, image and desire to be successful that Wilmot sees in Marrero.

“She's setting the bar towards what women can accomplish even higher,” he said.

Marrero had, at one time, thought about putting in a packet to become a physician's assistant as well. Instead of pursuing that goal however, when the Ironhorse Division's stay in Iraq is over this time, so too will be the military career of this Steadfast and Loyal NCO.

"I'm actually (getting out of the Army)," Marrero said of her near-future plans. "I love the Army and think that it is a great institution, and I will never trade anything that I've ever done. It's made me who I am, that is for sure."

Her decision to leave the service was very difficult but centers around time with her 8-year-old daughter and the goals she had set for her life prior to her first enlistment.

Whatever life has in store for Marrero, one thing will always ring true for her and she hopes for the Soldiers she leads.

"I'm a Soldier. I am always going to be a Soldier even if I don't wear the uniform," she said. "I am very proud to be a Soldier, and I would stay 30 years if I felt that it was my calling."

She went on to convey her belief that life's path has other things she still needs to accomplish. Future plans aside, Marrero loves her current troops, peers and leaders. She recognizes their efforts and realizes that the mission does not happen without the team effort. It is that camaraderie and sense of duty that she will never forget.

"I love the Army; I really do; and I'm glad that I made the decision when I was young to come in because I know that this is what I was supposed to have done. It's helped build me into what I am."

She finished with a personal motto and a parting thought for her peers and troops.

"Always do your job, always do it right; do the best that you can every day. Take care of the ones that you're supposed to take care of."

The irony is that while women have progressed in our nation, attaining equality in every aspect of life, Marrero is a woman who found her niche in one of the first professional fields available to women. Moreover, as a medic, she has left her mark on many people during her years of service doing the very thing women are arguably the best at – taking care of others.

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**Explanation.**

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Staff Sgt. Angelina Marrero, a native of Mesa, Ariz., who serves as the noncommissioned officer in charge of the battalion aid station, Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad, explains the ins and outs of her and her troops' day-to-day

responsibilities at the aid station Nov. 11. The duties include sick call, immunizations and all medical coverage for DSTB.

(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Whitney Houston, MND-B PAO).



**Happily serving.**

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Staff Sgt. Angelina Marrero, a native of Mesa, Ariz., who serves as the noncommissioned officer in charge of the battalion aid station, Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad, smiles broadly when talking about her military service at the aid station Nov. 11. Marrero is one of the supervisors of the aid station and oversees sick call, immunizations and all medical coverage for DSTB.

(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Whitney Houston, MND-B PAO).



**Reaching for more.**

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Pfc. Aubrey Childress, a native of Holly, Mich., who serves as a medic at the battalion aid station, Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad, reaches for the supplies she needs to administer to a patient at the aid station Nov. 11.

Childress works alongside her peers and leaders, overseeing sick call, immunizations and all medical coverage for DSTB.

(US Army photo by Sgt. Whitney Houston, MND-B PAO).