

DCMA CCAS Employee Awarded Bronze Star for Service

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“So what do I do specifically? My folks and I manage the major contractors who provide all the meals, housing, recreation and services to nearly all the troops in Iraq. I can think of no greater honor then being able to provide this direct support to so many troops. We also manage the contractors responsible for all major logistics throughout the country from fuel, to water, to food to whatever. I remind my folks at least monthly how privileged we are to be part of the support and sustainment of the coalition forces. Every day, our efforts help bring a little piece of America to the troops here.” – excerpt from Lt. Col. Anthony McGraw’s Contingency Contract Administration Services deployment journal

Air Force Lt. Col. Anthony McGraw, Defense Contract Management Agency Raytheon Los Angeles commander, served as DCMA Northern Iraq’s commander from May to October 2007. During McGraw’s management, execution and oversight of the logistics civil augmentation program contract, troops in northern and western Iraq received an average of 225,000 meals a day, 415,000 bags of clean laundry a month and nine million gallons of fuel a month.

A *Blackhawk* gunner at the ready to engage the enemy if needed, south of Kirkuk, Iraq. (Photo by Air Force Lt. Col. Anthony McGraw, DCMA Raytheon Los Angeles)

“Our team of quality assurance personnel, contracting officers, contract property administrators and support staff were absolutely awesome,” said McGraw. “They would make anyone successful. They advised me when I needed it; they taught me when I needed it, which was a lot; and they executed the mission perfectly with devoted service, sweat and even, sometimes, tears,” he added.

At the conclusion of his tour as commander, DCMA Northern Iraq, McGraw received the Bronze Star medal, which was presented June 25 at DCMA Raytheon, El Segundo, Calif. In his remarks during the ceremony, McGraw praised his DCMA team. “As a team, we did many great things together. I didn’t do all those things they put on the citation, just the travel,” said McGraw. “The team deserves the recognition. I cannot be convinced otherwise.”

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McGraw and his team encountered more than 330 insurgent rocket and mortar attacks. Quite a few of these attacks were very close to the DCMA team. One attack was only the length of a football field from the DCMA office building at Camp Anaconda, north of Bagdad. “The stress that we encountered, not knowing if you were going to be hit or not, was incredible. We were not under direct attack, but a mortar or rocket could land right in front of you at any time. You just didn’t know, but you found a way to put it out of your mind and press on with the mission,” said McGraw.

When “Operation Lightning Hammer” reached a critical stage in confining al-Qaeda terrorists to Baqubah, Iraq, McGraw facilitated the delivery of barriers to surround the city. He was recognized for his efforts assisting warfighters in fulfilling their mission objective to rid the city of terrorist operatives.

McGraw and his team traveled often to various locations and bases in northern and western Iraq. McGraw explained that flying in Iraq is nothing like flying with the airlines in the U.S. Reservations are requested three days in advance, and one must cite an alternate date; whatever date is assigned is final. If the flight is cancelled, the traveler’s reservation does not get carried over, but he or she goes on standby for a few days until the new reservation is entered into the system and approved. According to McGraw, it can be very frustrating. “In Iraq, you get an estimated flight time, so sometimes the flights are early, and they leave without you. Sometimes the flights are cancelled, usually three to four hours after the estimated departure time, due to weather, or routes are too dangerous to fly or sometimes just through an act of God,” he said.

On a *Blackhawk* helicopter flight from Camp Victory/Camp Slayer to Camp Anaconda, McGraw tells a story of “typical” travel in Iraq. “I checked in around 11:50 p.m.,



Air Force Lt. Col. Anthony McGraw in a *Blackhawk* helicopter during a daylight mission at Camp Anaconda, Iraq, en route to Camp Victory, Iraq, for a follow-on nighttime flight to Fallujah, Iraq, July 2007. (Photo courtesy of Air Force Lt. Col. Anthony McGraw, DCMA Raytheon Los Angeles)



Air Force Lt. Col. Anthony McGraw poses with an F/A-18 *Super Hornet* and its U.S. Marine Corps crew chief as the aircraft sits on combat alert with a full combat weapons load at Al Asad Airbase in Western Iraq. (Photo by Air Force Lt. Col. Anthony McGraw, DCMA Raytheon Los Angeles)

and they told me to sit and wait in tent number three,” said McGraw. “There were several people ahead of me on the standby list, but none of them was in tent number three with me.”

McGraw explained that he heard the helicopter land, and someone came into the tent and began calling standby passengers to Balad Air Base, Camp Anaconda. McGraw immediately put on his body armor and helmet so he would be ready to go. His was the last name called. “As we were exiting the tent to [go to] the helicopter,” McGraw continued, “a gentleman caught the lady to

ask about the flight. Her response, ‘You were supposed to be in tent number three. You missed roll call because you were not in the tent. Hurry up and grab your stuff or you will be left behind.’ That guy was lucky!”

McGraw and his team always had the customers’ needs in sight, specifically the 25th Infantry Division and Second Marine Expeditionary Force, as well as hundreds of thousands of airmen, soldiers, marines, sailors and U.S. civilians, contractors and subcontractors from other countries. Each day, he saw his customers in the dining facility.

He also got to know some of the people who relied on the services that DCMA supported. One person he recalls fondly was an Army pilot named Jan.

Jan flies small Army intelligence aircraft. When McGraw met her, her unit was busy looking for three soldiers who had been kidnapped. As they continued to talk, he learned that her job demanded long hours, but what impressed McGraw was she volunteered at the hospital in her free time. “Jan showed me a sheet of ragged paper where she had written many Iraqi words and phrases so she can speak to some of the Iraqi patients,” McGraw said. “She would volunteer for any task the hospital needed — even meeting the medical evacuation helicopters when they arrived with wounded people.”

Jan befriended a young Iraqi orphan in the hospital. She checked on the girl nearly every day to ensure the girl knew someone cared about her. Jan would also do any task in the hospital: bathe patients, clean up personal messes or do whatever needed to be done. “She is one of the many unsung heroes you will never hear about in the news or read about in a book,” said McGraw. “God bless her!”

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