



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
MARINE LIGHT ATTACK HELICOPTER SQUADRON 169
MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP 39
3D MARINE AIRCRAFT WING
BOX 555781
CAMP PENDLETON, CA 92055-5781

1650
CO
29 Dec 09

From: Commanding Officer, Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 169
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (ASM)
Via: (1) Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 39
(2) Commanding General, Third Marine Aircraft Wing
Subj: RECOMMENDATION OF [REDACTED] XXX XX
[REDACTED] / [REDACTED] USMC FOR THE MARINE CORPS AVIATION ASSOCIATION (MCAA) 2010 GAINES B. GILBERT ORDNANCE MARINE OF THE YEAR AWARD
Ref: (a) MCO 1650.29G
Encl: (1) Summary of Action
(2) Personal Biography
(3) Proposed Citation
(4) Unit Point of Contact and photograph captions
(5) Two 8X10 Official Photographs
(6) Five 8X10 photographs in the working environment
(7) Nomination package CD

1. Per the reference, the enclosures are submitted with utmost enthusiasm in support of Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 169's recommendation of [REDACTED] for the MCAA 2010 Gaines B. Gilbert Ordnance Marine of the Year Award.

2. [REDACTED] personifies every quality and trait of a Marine. His inspiring leadership, superb judgment, and boundless work ethic have been examples for all to follow. [REDACTED] has truly dedicated his heart and soul to the advancement of Marine Corps Aviation. The impact he has had on all those he comes in contact with is immediate, uplifting, and noticeable. The Marine Corps is profoundly better for his contributions. It is my distinct honor to nominate [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for this award.

3. HMLA-169 point of contact: Lieutenant Colonel Brendan Reilly, DSN: [REDACTED], email: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
B. REILLY /

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION

██████████ displayed exceptional performance of duty from 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2009 while serving as an Ordnance Non-Commissioned Officer for Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 169, Marine Aircraft Group 39, 3D Marine Aircraft Wing, Camp Pendleton, California.

██████████ made significant contributions to Marine Corps Aviation during the year, highlighted by an intense and difficult deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. His technical expertise and exceptional leadership were unparalleled by his peers. Beginning 12 March 2009, ██████████ departed for Kandahar, Afghanistan as part of the Advance Party, tasked with coordinating all aspects of the Squadron's impending arrival. Without previous HMLA operations at Kandahar, ██████████ was tasked with preparing for immediate combat operations, while complying with all directives and orders pertaining to the storage, transportation, and loading of ordnance. With no previous template or operating procedure, ██████████ was instrumental in designing the initial procedures utilized by all future squadrons. When aircraft began to arrive via C-17, ██████████ ensured that the weapon systems of each helicopter were checked and properly configured to support the combat ordnance load out.

Combat operations began within five days of the initial delivery of aircraft. ██████████ performed his tasks flawlessly, ensuring the reliability and release of ordnance with each trigger pull. ██████████'s professional conduct of managing the demanding flight schedule and maintaining safe loading and arming evolutions validated his reputation as a superior leader. The immediate and successful combat operations in the Helmand Province proved to be a catalyst for the Ordnance Division. Their value was immediately apparent. Success on the battlefield was a direct result of the hard work and attention to detail that the Ordnance Division demonstrated.

As the Advance Party representative, ██████████ implemented the procedures, made liaison with adjacent commands, and ultimately ensured the fluid and dependable delivery of ordnance to the flight line. As a technical expert he maintained the confidence of his subordinates. His communication skills, motivation, and attitude energized all who observed him. ██████████'s leadership and mentorship resonated throughout the division during the difficult and confusing days the Squadron encountered while continuously engaging the enemy. ██████████ forged bonds within the department that can only develop when exposed to adversity and

while operating in harms way. During this first month, the Squadron expended over 2000 rounds of 20mm ammunition, five HELLFIRE II missiles, and over 100 rockets while engaging enemy forces.

On 5 May 2009 the Squadron moved to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Bastion to continue combat operations. [REDACTED] seamlessly transitioned to the new environment which proved to be arduous and demanding with temperatures often reaching over 120 degrees. The expeditionary airfield prepared for the Squadron at Bastion was expanding in conjunction with arriving aircraft. Just like Kandahar, infrastructure and support were non-existent. Again, [REDACTED] was instrumental in preparing the tarmac and driving grounding rods for ordnance staging and storage areas while simultaneously ensuring aircraft were prepared for missions. [REDACTED]'s effective management of the flight schedule and his crew allowed for the Marines to prepare the flight line while not compromising combat readiness. The operational pace for the remainder of the deployment would prove to be just as demanding and unpredictable. During the next six months of operations at FOB Bastion the Squadron would expend 27 HELLFIRE II missiles, 1000 rockets, 167,000 small arms rounds, and 21,000 rounds of 20mm ammunition. [REDACTED] flawlessly performed the loading, launching, and arming of squadron aircraft in a timely manner, without mistake for seven consecutive months without a single day of rest. His hard work in support of combat operations during Operation ENDURING FREEDOM displayed a devotion to Marine Aviation that is a testament to his staunch character and further reinforced his excellent reputation. The successes of these achievements in Marine Aviation ordnance were only attainable by his technical expertise and uncompromising leadership.

During this period, no Squadron in Marine Aviation was tasked with a more important mission than the Marines of HMLA-169. The consequences of failure were catastrophic. No other Marine ordnance division was challenged with a more important role than the one posed to the Vipers. [REDACTED]'s performance while in combat was surpassed by no other. His leadership, character, and performance were without peer and worthy of the highest recognition. [REDACTED], through his loyal devotion to the Marine Corps and notable contributions in the field of Aviation Ordnance, has proven his unrivaled worthiness for this prestigious award.

BIOGRAPHY

[REDACTED] was born on [REDACTED] in [REDACTED], Florida. He attended high school in [REDACTED] Florida and upon graduation he enlisted in the Marine Corps. On 24 December, 2004 [REDACTED] began recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) Parris Island, South Carolina. Upon completion of recruit training, he then attended Marine Combat Training (MCT) at Camp Geiger, North Carolina followed by the Aviation Ordnance Basic School ("A" School) in Pensacola, Florida where he earned the Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) 6511. After completion of "A" School, [REDACTED] then reported to the Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training (CNATT) "C" School for UH-1N "Huey" and AH-1W "Cobra" helicopters where he earned his current MOS 6531, Aviation Ordnance Technician.

On 24 October, 2005 [REDACTED] reported in to his first and current command Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 169 Camp Pendleton, California. From March 2006 to Oct 2006, [REDACTED] Deployed to Al Taqaddum (TQ), Iraq in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. In March of 2007, [REDACTED] was temporarily detached from the command in support of Weapons Tactics Instructors Course (WTI) 2-07. Soon after returning, [REDACTED] re-deployed to TQ, Iraq, once again in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM from October 2007 to May 2008. This deployment was again followed by another WTI, which [REDACTED] supported. On 1 April 2009, [REDACTED] was promoted to his current rank. Soon after, in March of 2009, [REDACTED] was selected to go as a member of the Advance Party to Afghanistan in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.

During his tour at HMLA-169, [REDACTED] held the Billets of Non-Commissioned Officer-in-Charge (NCOIC), Collateral Duty Inspector (CDI), and Quality Assurance/Safety Observer (QA/SO).

[REDACTED]'s personal awards include the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

[REDACTED] and his wife [REDACTED] currently reside in [REDACTED].

PROPOSED CITATION

THE BOARD OF AWARDS AND TRUSTEES OF THE MARINE CORPS AVIATION ASSOCIATION TAKES PLEASURE IN PRESENTING THE
2009 GAINES B. GILBERT AVIATION ORDNANCE MARINE OF THE YEAR AWARD TO:

██████████
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

FOR

PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT IN THE SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE OF HIS DUTIES AS ORDNANCE NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER, MARINE LIGHT
ATTACK HELICOPTER SQUADRON 169, MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP 39, 3D MARINE AIRCRAFT WING FROM 1 JANUARY 2009 TO 31 DECEMBER 2009.
DURING THIS PERIOD, ██████████ PERFORMED HIS DUTIES IN A HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL MANNER AND DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF AS THE MOST
VALUABLE AVIATION ORDNANCE MARINE IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS. HIS TIRELESS WORK ETHIC AND BRILLIANT TECHNICAL
ABILITIES IN THE ORDNANCE FIELD HAVE SET THE STANDARD FOR ALL TO EMULATE. HIS FLAWLESS MANAGEMENT OF ORDNANCE WHILE
DEPLOYED IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION EDURING FREEDOM DIRECTLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE COMBAT SKILL OF THE SQUADRON PILOTS AND THE
IMPROVED PROFICIENCY AND READINESS OF THE ORDNANCE MARINES. HIS FIRM LEADERSHIP AND TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE ENSURED THE SAFE
COMBAT EXPENDITURE OF OVER 160,000 POUNDS OF ORDNANCE IN SUPPORT OF MARINES AND NATO ALLIES ENGAGED IN COMBAT AGAINST THE
TALIBAN. ██████████'S EXCEPTIONAL PROFESSIONAL ABILITY, INITIATIVE, AND LOYAL DEDICATION TO DUTY REFLECTED GREAT CREDIT
UPON HIM AND WERE KEEPING WITH THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS AND UNITED STATES NAVAL SERVICE.

Enclosure (3)

1. Unit point of contact for this award is [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], Comm: [REDACTED], DSN: [REDACTED] or
[REDACTED]@usmc.mil.

2. Nominee point of contact information:
Work address and phone number:
Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 169
Marine Aircraft Group 39
3D Marine Aircraft Wing
Box 555781
Camp Pendleton, California 92055
DSN: [REDACTED]
Comm: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]@usmc.mil

Home address:
[REDACTED]

3. The following photos are included as a display of Sergeant Smith in action:

- a. [REDACTED] conducting an inspection a LAU-68C/A rocket pod.
- b. [REDACTED] providing instruction on bomb rack maintenance.
- c. [REDACTED] inspecting maintenance on the 20mm gun.
- d. [REDACTED] providing instruction on the Electronic Countermeasures (ECM) panel.
- e. [REDACTED] inspecting a 20mm flexible chute.