

# Crist Receives Distinguished Flying Cross Medal for Heroic Act in Iraq

By Rachel Knight



CW2 Allen Crist received the Distinguished Flying Cross for a heroic act in which he gave up his seat in an Apache helicopter for a wounded foot Soldier during a battle in Iraq.

It was just past midnight on July 1, 2007, CW4 Kevin Purtee, of Houston, and CW2 Crist used their Apache to evacuate a badly wounded 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division Soldier from the middle of a heavy firefight.

CW2 Crist and CW4 Purtee were part of a four-Apache team that came to the help of U.S. troops who were pinned down under heavy fire in the flashpoint town of Ramadi.

The heavily armored Apaches destroyed two tractor-trailers used as cover by the insurgents. As the battle dragged on, the Apaches took numerous hits from small-arms fire. The ground commander warned that he had a critically wounded Soldier and that the medevac choppers had yet to arrive.

CW4 Purtee and CW2 Crist landed their Apache in the middle of the firefight and put their improvised plan into action. CW2 Crist and two other Soldiers helped put a badly wounded SPC Jeffrey Jamaleldine, of Fort Smith, Ark., into the front seat of the Apache helicopter. CW2 Crist then strapped himself to the side of the helicopter and they quickly flew back to the refueling site, where Jamaleldine was taken to a field hospital.

“Seeing [Jamaleldine] the next day is what made it worth it,” Crist said when he received his award.

CW2 Crist and CW4 Purtee didn’t call it a day there - they refueled and reloaded weapons and flew back to rejoin the fight.

A documentary film was made about this heroic act called the “Battle of Donkey Island.” The film was shown prior to CW2 Crist receiving his award.

COL John Anderson, 35<sup>th</sup> Combat Aviation Brigade commander, did the honors of presenting CW2 Crist with the medal during the special ceremony.

“It is a real distinct honor to be giving this outstanding honor to you,” Anderson said.

The Distinguished Flying Cross is a medal awarded to any officer or enlisted member of the United States armed forces who distinguishes himself or herself in support of operations by heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight, subsequent to Nov. 11, 1918.

“It’s just part of the job,” Crist said.