

STAFF SERGEANT DANIEL JENSEN

Following in the boot-steps of several relatives, U.S. Army Daniel Jensen always knew he would enlist in the Army and continue the tradition of service that his great-grandfather had started.

Ironically, on Sept. 11, 2001, Jensen was in the middle of completing his Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test when he heard the news about the terrorist attacks. As he watched the Twin Towers fall, he recognized that America's freedom was attacked and that it was his time to serve.

"Everyone says you remember what you were doing that day, and for me, I clearly do," he said. "I was surer than ever before that I wanted to join the Army and serve in uniform."

Jensen enlisted immediately after high school and has since deployed twice to Iraq. Most recently, he served with the Military Police as a vehicle logistics coordinator in the motor pool. He was responsible for the Military Police Unit's vehicles, including maintenance, work orders, auto parts and man-hour information. This was important to the Military Police's overall mission because the unit's safe transport to and from the base was imperative. If a vehicle broke down or if a vehicle wasn't ready for transport, it was Jensen's responsibility.

"If a vehicle breaks down, it's not like you can pull off to the side of the road and wait for AAA to come get you," said Jensen. "Ensuring the Military Police's safety as they drove to and from the Iraqi police stations was critical to our mission."

Frequently, Jensen rotated out of his logistics job to serve with the Military Police units, manning the "gunner position" in the first vehicle of a convoy. He used his keen attention to detail to be on the lookout for insurgents and ensure the safety of the entire group.

"Overall, the Military Police have a pretty big task. They make sure all the Iraqi police are trained and can police themselves," said Jensen. "The motor pool's mission was to make sure the Military Police could do their mission."

During the year-long deployment, his company was relocated from Baghdad to the city of Basra—more than 300 miles away. Although Jensen said it was a chaotic time, it provided the opportunity for him to travel through much of the country and see the progress since his previous deployment in 2005.

"I definitely saw clear and definite improvements my second time," he said. "The Iraqi people were more able to help themselves."



SSG Daniel Jensen has deployed twice to Iraq.

Since returning from Iraq in January 2010, Jensen has witnessed his younger brother, who just turned 18, follow in his footsteps. Jensen's brother will report to basic training later this summer and intends to serve on active duty as a mechanic. Knowing that he helped to encourage his brother to serve, Jensen said he is proud of him and hopes to one day have the opportunity to deploy alongside of him.

"I'm proud to be a Soldier because I love to serve our country," said Jensen. "Wearing the country's flag on my right shoulder makes me proud to protect the things that many people take for granted."

Jensen returned to the Tampa area in March and has resumed his studies at the University of South Florida. Due to his two deployments and other military obligations, it will take him close to eight years to complete the four-year history degree. Following his graduation next May, he hopes to find a job in the sports management field. He already has some experience in the industry under his belt, proving his ability to balance his life as a student and a soldier.

"While we are stateside, I can have my civilian life as well as a military career," said Jensen, an Army Reserve Soldier. "I am pleased that I can serve my country and still go to school."