

MAJOR GINAMARIE MCCLOSKEY

Even though U.S. Army Major Ginamarie McCloskey was not personally on the front lines in Iraq or Afghanistan during her deployment, she “absolutely,” felt a connection to the soldiers who were, McCloskey said.

McCloskey, who served as a Detailed Inspector General while stationed in Kuwait, knew that the work she was doing was helping those soldiers have success on the battlefield, she said.

“If I can help a soldier who’s not getting paid right, that is going to affect him, and put his mind back in the battlefield,” she said. “[I’m] supporting them so that they can focus on their jobs.”

McCloskey started her career in the U.S. Army 27 years ago. Military Police by trade, McCloskey planned to retire after 15 years. She was encouraged by fellow soldiers to stay in and become an Army Officer, she said.

When she was assigned to serve as an Detail Inspector General during the deployment, at first she didn’t know what to expect, she said.

Stationed in Kuwait, McCloskey ended up really enjoying the job, she said.

“Assistance, inspection, and investigation,” McCloskey said, were the three main objectives of the job.

“We inspect to insure that commanders are doing what they’re expected to do and that they’re doing...what the regulations say they are supposed to be doing,” she said.

“You are there for the command. There’s so much more to it than hearing complaints,” she said. “We research advice, and provide training for new commanders...The IG can help guide them in.”

As advisors and fact-finders, McCloskey traveled into Iraq, Afghanistan, as well as Djibouti. One trip to Afghanistan was for a “special investigation,” she said.

“It was the most awesome experience. I was so glad I got to go. It’s a beautiful country. It’s like going back in time. I got to see the units in combat and help them,” she said.

During the inspection, which was to see if there was excess property in theater, McCloskey was traveling from one part of Afghanistan to another. The aircraft she was traveling in was hit by enemy sniper fire.



The Bronze Star

“It took out the rear rotor,” she said.

They landed at a base known as Forward Operating Base Gardez, where it took seven hours to complete the repair.

That base, however, was historically important. There had been a huge battle there at the beginning of the war, she said.

“It was an honor to be there,” she said. And to see the place where soldiers had given their lives “trying to protect the people of Afghanistan.”

McCloskey earned a Bronze Star for her service during this deployment.

“Her exemplary service included three significant achievements,” the award citation states. Besides leading the inspection in Afghanistan, McCloskey led the “forward IG team as a junior major when no lieutenant colonel was assigned...[and completed] more investigations and inquiries that any other IG – over 100 cases, a phenomenal feat!”

“In addition, MAJ McCloskey took an exceptionally active role in professionally developing officers and [Non-commissioned-officers] in the Command,” the citation states.

HEROES

"As an IG working cases, MAJ McCloskey is without peer, -- both from the number of cases, complexity, and research conducted. With over 100 assistance inquiries and investigations to her credit, her work ethic was inspirational. MAJ McCloskey understood the importance these cases had for the Command, and each one was completed above the published standard, --clearly increasing unit effectiveness and Soldier morale."

"You feel so good when you have a two-star [General] say 'Gina I need your help with this,'" she said. "It's very rewarding."

"I was very honored to get [the Bronze Star]," McCloskey said. "It was pretty cool. When they said 'Bronze Star' I was like 'What?' because I didn't know I was getting it."

"I am not a person who cries very often, but that almost brought a tear to my eye," she said.

The IG "really fixes small problems that affect big army," she said. "It's a great job."

