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Bus Operator Fulfills Dream of Serving in Iraqi War

By KIM SIM



Operator Walter Brady
is an Army Reservist

(April 27, 2004) When his unit headed out to Iraq last May, Specialist Walter Brady was forced to stay behind. The Army Reservist and Metro Bus operator was deemed unfit for war service after he suffered a knee injury during training.

Less than a year later, Brady is finally getting a chance to represent his country in the field.

Brady, 50, rejoined his unit, Transportation Company 1498 in February. He is currently in Kuwait as a driver, transporting soldiers, retrieving disabled and damaged vehicles and making trips north into Iraq. Unless his duty is extended, he is scheduled to return at the end of May.

"It's about doing my part," Brady said, in a phone interview from Kuwait with the Los Angeles Times. "It's about me coming here and doing my part."

'He's holding up'

His wife, Juanita, says he sometimes calls home twice a day and that "he's doing pretty good, he's holding up."

Brady, a 17-year Metro veteran assigned to East Valley Division 15, enlisted days after the Sept. 11 attacks.

He wasn't called up until February 2003, when he checked into Camp Roberts, near Paso Robles, Calif.

But during a practice in March 2003, he jumped into a 5 ½-foot deep foxhole and injured his knee. His companions left two months later in May; he had to stay behind.

Still hoped to serve

Brady's hopes were dashed, but he never gave up trying to fight for his country.

The Palmdale resident had served during the Vietnam War, but because he was stationed in Alaska, never saw actual combat. He tried twice after that to enlist as an Army Reservist, but was denied both times because of his weight.

When he finally made it to Camp Roberts in 2003, he told the Antelope Valley Press, "This is what life is about — protecting your fellow citizens."

As Juanita Brady says, "He was determined to go back at some point. It was worth anything he's going to go through."

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