

From Farmfront To Warfront, Former Susquehanna County 4-H'er Serves In Operation Iraqi Freedom

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Special Correspondent

TUNKHANNOCK (Wyoming Co.) — When Bill Hardic joined the Navy in 2000, this former Susquehanna County 4-H member from East Rush never dreamed that he would be serving his country during wartime. As he continues to fulfill his duties during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Hardic, 25, draws from his 4-H and farm experiences as a strong foundation to fulfill his duties on the aircraft carrier, USS Theodore Roosevelt.

"The 4-H's, Head, Heart, Hands, and Health," said Hardic, "4-H encourages you to live by these four things. The Navy has three things that they start drilling into you right from the first night of boot camp. Honor, Courage, and Commitment. These three things and the four H's are very similar. Honor. To keep your word and do the right thing always. Courage. Always take credit for your actions, no matter the consequences. Commitment. To the country you serve and those who serve with you. 4-H instilled these things in me, but the Navy perfected them."

Hardic, a 2nd Class Petty Officer, was a member of the Susquehanna County 4-H Community Club and the Delmonico Beef Club. This is where he had his first leadership opportunity as a 4-H club president. As he has risen in rank in the Lighting Shop on the Roosevelt, those early leadership opportunities have remained helpful as he continues to develop his leadership skills and gain more responsibility.

Growing up on his family's small beef farm and raising 4-H beef steers have proven instrumental in his drive to get the job done "right the first time."

"I am not afraid to do good honest hard work, because I am used to it," Hardic noted. "On a farm you learn to do the job right the first time. Re-work costs a lot to anyone, but even more to a farmer who can't afford much to begin with. Re-work in the Navy could mean someone might die if you do not do it right the first time."

Through his hard work and leadership, Hardic has received two Letters of Commendation from the Commander of the USS

Enterprise battle group for his service on the aircraft carrier, USS Enterprise, during Operation Enduring Freedom after the September 11 attacks. According to Hardic, the greatest reward he has received is "serving his country."

However, with rewards come challenges. Hardic's greatest challenge is to keep his mind on his mission and why he is there, while wife Shelly remains at their home in Norfolk, Va., awaiting their first child. He wishes he could be with her, but knows that he has a job to do.

When thinking of home, the list of things he misses is quite long: missing his wife, his parents Donald and Marie Hardic of East Rush, family, friends, fresh country air, and clear night sky — the list is endless.

As Operation Iraqi Freedom forges ahead, Hardic and the other sailors on the Roosevelt realize they have a job to do. Hardic might not be flying missions from the flight deck, but the jobs he is assigned are important to help keep the Roosevelt operational. As his mission continued



Farm, 4-H, and Navy background provided a firm foundation for Bill Hardic's role in Iraqi Freedom.

Hardic's nerves settled, and it's business as usual aboard ship. In his spare time, Hardic takes advantage of e-mail to stay in touch with his friends and family, song writing, and he jokingly remarks that he has cultivated a new hobby while at sea of "standing in line," waiting for meals or to use a facility on the ship.

Although it has been several years since Bill Hardic has been a 4-H member, he values his 4-H experience as something priceless, providing him with a strong

foundation that has seen him through many challenges and successes and will guide him as he decides what to do after his release from the Navy.

"4-H ... To Make the Best Better, and for me it has," Hardic said in summing up his entire 4-H experience. "My time in the Navy is built on this foundation, and no matter where life may take me, to a farm or to work for an electrical contractor, both will always have a large impact on my life."

Cedar Crest FFA Conducts 38th Annual Awards Banquet



From left, Amber Frank, Kyle Seyfert, and Gretchen Artz are pictured at the Cedar Crest FFA Banquet with their Star Awards.

LEBANON (Lebanon Co.) — The Cedar Crest FFA recently conducted its 38th Annual Parent Member Banquet at Cedar Crest High School, with more than 260 people in attendance.

Amber Frank, chapter president, was MC and opened the banquet at 7 p.m. The welcome was presented by Kevin Kreider, chapter sentinel. Gretchen Artz, chapter chaplain, gave the invocation. After the buffet style meal, Kyle Seyfert, chapter vice-president, introduced the many guests that attended.

The Keynote speaker was the State FFA Eastern Region Vice President, Courtney Miller, who spoke on taking advantage of the opportunities that the FFA has to offer. The freshmen class presented Honorary Chapter Degree plaques to Mr. and Mrs. Scott Artz and Mrs. Betty Knapp.

Gretchen Artz and Amber Frank both received their Keystone Degree Award presented by Harvey Smith, former area Ag. Consultant.

Tamara Gettle, Emily Doll, Brad Bucher, and Heather Hawkins made a video that reviewed the years' FFA activities. Awards were presented by Mr. Harold Berkheiser, chapter advisor.



Bill Hardic's assigned job on the USS Theodore Roosevelt adds to the success of Operational Iraqi Freedom.

Tough Row To Hoe For Iraqi Farmers

COLUMBUS, Ohio — What do Iraqi farmers grow, and how is the war affecting them?

If two armies were fighting each other, and you were stuck in the middle, would you want to be out in the open — say, plowing a field or driving a tractor?

Probably not. You might get hurt.

Which is exactly the situation many Iraqi farmers are in. With a war going on around them, they're afraid or unable to work in their fields. That makes it hard to grow anything.

So one of the war's effects on Iraqi farmers, as well as on the people they feed, may be fewer crops and less food. At least until help — donated food — arrives.

Normally, Iraqi farmers produce about 30 percent of the food their country needs. The rest is

bought from other countries.

Key crops include winter wheat (normally harvested now), spring vegetables (normally planted now), rice, dates, barley and cotton.

Sheep and cattle are the primary livestock. But more than half of them died in 1999 from foot-and-mouth disease, which is highly contagious.

Also before the war, drought hit, screwworms (a pest of people and livestock) spread and half the country's date palms — 15

million trees — died.

It's a tough row to hoe to be a farmer in Iraq.

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