

Soldier Continues Family Tradition of VFW Membership

‘It’s Not Yesterday’s Army’

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Reprinted with permission. Checkpoint July/August 2009 — When Staff Sgt. Laura Eng returns from Iraq, she plans to join her father and grandfather—as a VFW member. In an e-mail to her family, Laura wrote: “Tell Grandpa he has to stay strong and healthy so when I come home, he can take me to join the VFW.”

Laura’s grandfather, Gordon J. Jones, served in the Japanese occupation after WWII and the Korean War. A VFW life member, he is a past national aide-de-camp, District commander and charter member of Post 3351 in Flandreau, S.D. He has been sick and in the hospital frequently in recent months.

“I wrote an e-mail asking if he would want to take me to sign up for the VFW,” Laura said. “I know sometimes if people have something to look forward to, they hang on and keep fighting. My plan worked—Grandpa is excited and already making plans to sign me up.”

One of the soldiers Laura served with in Iraq told her that his grandpa took him to VFW and signed him up as a life member. “It seems fitting to have a grandfather take his grandson and have him join, but I didn’t know how the older guys would take it when their granddaughters were joining,” she said. “It’s not yesterday’s Army.”

Gordon’s son and Laura’s father, Capt. Charles E. Jones, also is a life member. He gained his eligibility serving in 1991 Persian Gulf War. Laura also is earning her eligibility in the Middle East.

She arrived in Iraq in February 2008, and served four months in Ramadi and four in Taji with the 327th MP Battalion as a construction supervisor. She extended her tour in October 2008, transferring to the Joint Robotic Repair Detachment at Camp Victory in Baghdad, where she serves as an administrative sergeant. Laura describes her position as “handling anything that doesn’t involve the robots.”

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“Our 25 personnel take care of over 3,000 robots in country,” she said. “I don’t do much with the robots other than drive them around the parking lot.”

Cutline:

Staff Sgt. Laura Eng has been serving in Iraq since February 2008. She initially served with the 327th Military Police Battalion, and extended for a tour with the Joint Robotic Repair Detachment in Baghdad.