

Soldiers recognized for rendering aid in mall panic

By Sgt. Benjamin Northcutt GSB, 3rd SFG (A) | Posted: Thursday, October 13, 2016 1:07 pm

Movies show when a chaotic situation arises, people panic and run from danger. If there was a gunman in the building, what would happen?

Pfc. Kyle Lyzenga and Pfc. Clayton Reynolds, parachute riggers assigned to the Group Support Battalion 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) found themselves in the middle of that exact situation on Aug. 13.

Around 2 p.m., while at Crabtree Valley Mall in Raleigh that day, there was panic and reports of a suspected gunman.

“We were there to get Pfc. Reynolds’ phone fixed,” said Lyzenga. “People just started shouting, ‘shooter!’”

In the panic that ensued, people started running for the exits, said Reynolds.

“One lady fell and people just started trampling her,” he said.

“We ... were able to help her to her feet and then outside to an evacuation area,” explained Lyzenga and Reynolds.

“Everyone was running around and pushing people over and just knocking everything down running toward the doors.

“We helped the lady out to the parking lot and we saw everyone running toward their vehicles, and we heard someone say that a guy jumped off the top of the parking structure,” said Reynolds.

“While we were outside in the evacuation area, we saw another lady running fast out of the mall. She was out of breath and running so fast, she just collapsed on the ground in the parking lot, and we ran to help her out,” said Lyzenga.

“We picked her up and carried her to a tree and some shade,” said Reynolds. “We got her some water and kept her in the shade to cool her down.”

“It was all crazy, that was all we did, ... it wasn’t anything, it was what we are trained to do,” said the Soldiers.



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Pfc. Clayton Reynolds, a parachute rigger assigned to Group Support Battalion 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), received the Army Achievement Medal on September 7, 2016 at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. When word of an active shooter spread through the Crabtree Valley Mall in Raleigh, North Carolina on 13 Aug, 2016, PFC Reynolds and another Soldier assisted patrons of the mall who were knocked down as people raced towards the exits.

Thankfully, the report was later proven to be false, but unbeknownst to Lyzenga and Reynolds, the possibility of a gunman was very real.

Lyzenga and Reynolds are great examples of Soldiers doing what they are trained to do — which is helping people whenever needed.

The Soldiers were recognized by their chain of command and peers at an award ceremony on Sept. 7.

Col. Bradley D. Moses, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) commander, presented Lyzenga and Reynolds with the Army Achievement Medal.

“They did what they were trained to do and ran toward what seemed to be gunfire,” said Moses.

“I am proud of what they did as a Soldier but more as a human being,” said Moses.

“Our job is to help people when they are in need of help.”

Lyzenga and Reynolds did not help out to be recognized and rewarded, they did it because it was what they were trained to do and what they would hope anybody in their situation would do.