



Airborne! (Again)

*By Captain Thomas Cieslak and
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A paratrooper who was injured in Iraq has taken the final step in his recovery—a step out of a military aircraft into the skies above Key West, Florida.

On 23 June 2009, Sergeant Daniel Powers, 118th Military Police Company (Airborne), 503d Military Police Battalion (Airborne), 16th Military Police Brigade (Airborne), completed his first parachute jump from a military aircraft since he was stabbed in the head with a nine-inch knife while serving in Iraq. Sergeant Powers and twenty-nine other paratroopers descended from an Air Force C-130 Hercules aircraft into the ocean near Fleming Key. The jump was Powers' 44th and his first from an aircraft tailgate into water.

Sergeant Powers, who was serving his second tour of duty as a squad leader in Iraq, was investigating the site of an explosion when an Iraqi teenager approached him from behind and plunged a knife into his head. Sergeant Powers was evacuated from the scene and transported to Iraqi doctors, who extracted the knife and saved his life. He was later transported to the United States, where he underwent multiple surgeries.

Throughout his recovery, Powers was determined to return and lead Soldiers as a military policeman and paratrooper. "I had to get back and back into the fight" said Powers in a recent interview with Ms. Michelle Tan of the *Army Times*. "Back to work and back into the fight because it's not over yet."

Powers prepared for the jump by completing refresher parachute jump training and water training. When it came time for the jump, Colonel John Garrity, commander of the 16th Military Police Brigade, led Powers out of the aircraft. Powers' parachute deployed smoothly, and his jump was a success.

In reference to the paratroopers who were once in his squad, Powers said, "They'll always be my guys no matter where they are. I still hear from some of them who have gotten out, which is always nice. The 118th—they're all my guys too, so I can't wait to get back with them."

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