



photo illustration

Mayor Arthur J. Ward, Bristol, Conn., reads Proclamation recognizing 368th Engineer Battalion Soldiers who saved a car accident victim.

## Mayor honors Soldiers for saving woman

Story and Photo by

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**E**ight Soldiers assigned to the 368th Engineer Battalion have been honored by the city of Bristol, Conn. for saving the life of a woman who was involved in an auto accident, Memorial Day weekend.

The Soldiers responded to the crash while preparing for Memorial Day activities at an American Legion post on May 24, 2009.

Another vehicle cut the woman off while she was driving her automobile near the post during slick road conditions. The car flipped several times and hit a telephone pole.

Spc. Natasha Cunningham, a firefighter with the 468th Engineer Company, said she saw smoke coming out of the flipped car so she quickly alerted her fellow Soldiers. Sgt. James McLaughlin, a team chief with the 339th Engineer Detachment and a Boston area firefighter was among the Soldiers who responded.

"I first needed to make sure the woman was not severely injured, so I screamed 'nobody touches

her,' just in case she had suffered any spinal injuries," said McLaughlin.

The Soldiers needed to act quickly because electrical wires from the telephone pole had landed on the car.

Once he was sure that the woman could be moved, McLaughlin and the other Soldiers pried the car doors open and lifted her out of it.

1st Lt. Peter Torromeo, 368th Forward Support Company executive officer, directed traffic and performed crowd control until the police arrived.

"Their military training took over, and there was not one ounce of hesitation; they took charge of the situation and there is no doubt in my mind they saved that young lady from further injury," said Bristol Mayor Arthur J. Ward.

Ward was with the Soldiers at the American Legion post at the time of the accident, and he witnessed the rescue.

Ward gave each Soldier a key to the city and in a proclamation during a ceremony in Connecticut on Nov., 4, 2009; he said the city of Bristol and the accident victim were greatly indebted to the Soldiers for their quick action and compassionate character.

The 368th which is based in Londonderry, N.H. has supported the City of Bristol's Memorial Day events since 2006.

"The Soldiers of the 368th are now Bristol residents from afar; you are family", Ward Said.

The following Soldiers and the ones mentioned earlier received keys to the city and were included in the proclamation for helping to save the woman: Spc. James Dixon, Spc. Kurtis Haberman, Spc. Christine Bashor, Spc. Christopher Elliott and Spc. Brett Haynes.



Mayor Arthur J. Ward, Bristol, Conn. presents Spc. Brett Haynes, 368th Engineer Battalion with a Proclamation and a key to the city for his efforts in helping to save a car accident victim.