

Sec USAF Mike Wynne '66 ★ Ring Melt 2007 ★ Women in Combat

# ASSEMBLY

West Point Association of Graduates

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MAY/JUNE 2007

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# This is Why We Ride!



Brie Stoianoff and Kevin Byrne '93.

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Kevin J. Byrne entered West Point at 17½ years of age. Born and raised in the Bronx, NY, his interest in the Academy grew throughout his high school years, and at the end of high school, he only applied to two schools: USMA and USAFA.

When he graduated from the Academy in 1993, he proudly said that he was one of the few graduates who got to do exactly what he wanted for every assignment. Branching Aviation led to Flight School to transition into the AH-64A Attack Helicopter and then on to Ft. Bragg, where he walked straight into an Attack Platoon Leader job in 3/229 Aviation (Attack). While still a first lieutenant, he had progressed to primary staff as battalion S-4. Competing in the 3/229 Annual Top Gun Aerial Gunnery Competition, he won all three years he was with the unit, twice as a platoon leader and once while in the position of S-4.

In 1998, he returned to Ft. Rucker for the Advanced Course and the Aviation Officer

Maintenance Management Course, stopped at Ft. Leavenworth for CAS,<sup>3</sup> and then went to Korea to command D Troop, 1/6 Cavalry, at Camp Eagle. After about nine months in command, he experienced some numbness, pain, and loss of feeling and movement on his right side. Sent to Seoul for additional testing, he then was evacuated to Tripler AMC in Hawaii for a spinal tap and more tests.

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The intense treatment reduced the severity of the disease, however, and he was approved to remain in Korea. Then, in June 2000, his medical condition worsened; he returned to the States and spent the next several months at Walter Reed. In late October of that year, he was medically retired from the Army at age 29.

Now what? He started a new career in Corporate Strategic Sourcing and Supply Chain

Management in Pittsburgh, determined not to let MS defeat him. He succeeded, moving on to opportunities in Brussels, Belgium; New York City; and, most recently, Delaware, always struggling with the pain and symptoms of multiple sclerosis.

Byrne's medical condition has currently stabilized (up to a point), allowing him to function day to day under constant treatment via the Veterans Administration health care system. Physically, he is as stable as can be hoped for until a cure for MS is found. Emotionally, the support of other disabled vets and the Long Gray Line has made the difference and brought him back. Then, he met a wonderful woman, Brie Stoianoff, who agreed to become his wife. They married on 18 March 2006.

Byrne started to work on giving back to those who helped via the National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS). MS Bike Tours are run around the country to raise money for the research, support, and advocacy needed to fight this terrible disease. He has ridden in the MS Bike Tours for the last several years with the Delaware Chapter of the NMSS. Thanks to incredible care and support from the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, every day brings new advances in medication, treatment, and programs for those who have MS.

This year, Byrne and his wife, Brie Stoianoff, will ride in the "Bike to the Bay" MS event on 29–30 September 2007 and now are looking for help and support from the Long Gray Line. Although they deal with the effects of MS every day, the continuous treatment, aid, and support Byrne has received since his diagnosis in 1999 have made the difference. In turn, he hopes to raise as much as possible to help fund research into the cause, treatment, and cure for MS.

Since he started riding on the NMSS Bike Tours in 2003, Byrne's "Team Amulet" has raised more than \$17,500 to help the NMSS. Hence the slogan, "This is why we ride!"

To reach CPT (Ret.) Kevin Byrne, call 302 685-0133 (mobile), e-mail him at: <KevJByrne@gmail.com>, or visit his website at: <www.brieandkevin.com>. ■