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Margate Marine honored as 'warrior of the week' in Afghanistan

By Mike Clary

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MARGATE

In civilian life, Margate resident Angelica Cendales is a nursing student with a part-time job in a doctor's office and a full-time passion for the Miami Dolphins.

As a U.S. Marine, she is a 24-year-old supply sergeant, who after serving a year in Iraq was called back to active duty as a reservist for a seven-month tour in Afghanistan.

Now, add to Cendales' resume "warrior of the week," an honor given her by the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Kabul.

Her reward?

"They try to give us a half-day off, but I haven't been able to take it yet," Cendales said Friday in a telephone interview from her base in Afghanistan. "But that's all right because I like to stay busy."

Indeed, Cendales said she was nominated by her unit for the award in part because of her willingness to volunteer, she said. Her job involves issuing uniforms, ammunition and other supplies to security forces comprising representatives of several American military branches and international troops.

Longtime friend Roxana Amador said she wasn't surprised that Cendales distinguished herself. "She is very committed to her work," Amador said.

Born in Colombia, Cendales enlisted in the Marine Corps after her 2002 graduation from Nova High School, a move that surprised her older brother Alex.

"It was kind of crazy and kind of cool," said Alex Cendales, 29, a Hollywood electrician. "She was always a girly girl, but always kind of adventurous."

Sgt. Cendales agreed with that description. "I never thought I'd be tough," she said. "But being in the military matures you and makes you humble."

She mentioned "seeing kids here with very little, begging for water, for things we take for granted" as



part of that maturation.

In Iraq, Cendales endured weekly rocket attacks. And although she again is in a war zone, her time in Kabul so far has been serene, she said.

"It's quite beautiful here," Cendales said.

On her return to South Florida in the fall, Cendales said she plans to resume her studies at Keiser University and get ready for the Dolphins' season.

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