Soldier lifts children's spirits

Warrant officer leads toy drive, brightens lives

By Cpl. Todd Pruden
372nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD — Being in a hospital can be a miserable and frightening experience for children. It can be difficult bringing joy to them there.

But, with help from a soldier in Iraq and generous Americans, smiles were abundant at the Central Teaching Hospital for Children in Baghdad earlier this month.

Chief Warrant Officer Paul Holton, an interrogator with the 141st Military Intelligence Battalion, a Utah Army National Guard unit from Salt Lake City, spearheaded a toy drive to brighten the lives of misfortunate children in Baghdad.

Armed with a busload of toys and his warm demeanor, he visited as many hospital rooms as he could, distributing toys and checking on the children's progress.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Houghton

Chief Warrant Officer Paul Holton, 141st Military Intellingence Battalion, chats with an Iraqi child after giving him a soccer ball at the Central Teaching Hospital for Children in Baghdad Oct 19.

"I'm trying to do something for Iraqi children," Holton said. "It's rewarding to perhaps change an attitude, a perspective of a new generation of Iraqis and how they might feel about us and the rest of the world."

Dr. Quasem Al-Taey, hospital director, said the toys seem to lift the children's spirits.

"Happiness matters for the children," said Al-Taey. "It gives them the power to fight diseases."

According to Holton, the toy drive started when he asked friends to send things for Iraqi civilians. But, that evolved into something more. He said the thing that really kicked things off was when he saw a little girl crying at one of the Coalition checkpoints, looking for her mother.

He rushed to his office and grabbed some toys that had been sent to him and gave them to her to console her. "Just from the joy I saw in her face and the smile and the twinkle in her eye, I knew I needed to do this on a larger scale," Holton said.

He then asked his friends to send toys, but that was not enough. "I asked people to send more toys so I could do this in hospitals, orphanages, schools and neighborhoods around Iraq," he said.

Holton decided to use the Internet as a medium to solicit this request. Holton has a Web site where he posts his personal journal of experiences he has had in Iraq.

"My Web site gets between 6,000 and 7,000 hits per day," he said. "It's definitely not my writing style or my interesting journal that's drawing in most of the people," Holton added.

The web site, at www.cheifwiggles.blog-city.com, details types of toys to send, the mailing address and testimonials by Holton and photos of the actual distribution process.

Since the posting about the toy drive on his Web site, Holton said he has received more than 700 boxes of toys from people around the world.

Paratroopers take on 'new enemy' in south Baghdad

By Sgt. Brent M. Williams
49th Public Affairs Detachment (Airborne)

BAGHDAD — Paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division's Task Force Falcon work to eliminate former regime loyalists and extremists hostile to Coalition forces.

The current mission before the paratroopers, from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team's 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, is to conduct offensive operations and defeat hostile forces in Baghdad's Al Rashid District, said Col. Kurt Fuller, brigade commander.

"We have defeated (former regime loyalists), and they are really no longer a major threat," Fuller said. "Now, a new enemy has emerged."

The brigade, responsible for an area that is home to about 1.5 million people, now faces groups of religious extremists opposing Coalition efforts and Iraqi people, he said. The extremists do not support Coalition efforts or the will of the Iraqi people, which is to rebuild a country ravaged by nearly 20 years of war, sanctions, and poverty, Fuller said. Extremists are calling their followers to form their own governments and militias, he said. These unofficial and unrecognized governments reflect one particular community and do not represent the Iraqi people, he added.

Task Force Falcon is working to reduce the extremists' influence on the people of Iraq by working directly with local leaders, Fuller said. Commanders have also been working with Iraqi Police, Facility Protection Services, and the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps to search for weapons and weapons-making materials hidden inside Iraqi religious sites, said Capt. Tyson Voelkel, commander of Company A, 3rd Battalion, 325th AIR.

"The guys we're working against now, they're better trained," Voelkel said. He said some extremists may be from neighboring countries, and these foreign instigators are "trying to persuade younger Iraqis to turn against the Coalition."

Increasing Coalition patrols and search and seizure operations, the 82nd is working to engage these unconventional forces. "Just as the enemy has adapted to us, we have adapted to them," said Capt. Sam Mokhiber, plans officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 325th AIR. "We are making measured success in each operation."

Task Force leaders continue to identify the major needs of the Iraqi people and continue to work with local leaders, providing stability and progress for the Iraqi people and new Iraqi government, said Mokhiber.

Their efforts will take time, he explained. Any movement by the brigade combat team against the anti-Coalition extremists is carefully planned and handled with sensitivity to prevent a violent response from their followers and to show respect to the Iraqi people, said Fuller.

The threat these extremists pose is extremely difficult to counter, said Fuller, but the majority of the Iraqi people are making tremendous progress towards forming a representative government and setting conditions for peace and prosperity.

Business center opens way to economic progress

Entrepreneurs look to rebuild country as they share contracts, earn success

Story and photo by
Spc. Briana G. Wright
319th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD — The devastating effects of the Ba'ath Party regime on Iraq's welfare are unmistakable, especially in the realm of economic development.

The average Iraqi businessman was favored against by Saddam's governmental control, losing contracts to big business families and those who were willing to pay bribes for tenders. However, the ones who were not are anxious for a chance at the success that was not readily available to them before.

The Baghdad Business Center, operated by the economics and commerce team of the 354th Civil Affairs Brigade from Riverdale, Md., leads the way in the country's economic progress and offers more than 1,000 Iraqi businessmen a chance to thrive without government interference.

> ***"No one is demanding equal results, they just want equal access and opportunity."***
>
> ***— Capt. James Sosnicky***
> *Baghdad Business Center Officer -in-charge*

The BBC acts as a one-stop shop for finding Iraqi contractors for organizations such as 1st Armored Division, the Coalition Provisional Authority, Kellogg Brown and Root, Bechtel, the 10 Iraqi ministries and the Rebuilding Iraqi Oil team to complete improvement projects.

Bechtel, one of the main companies dealing with the reconstruction of Iraq, awards about 85 percent of its contracts to Iraqi businesses, making them a major provider of tenders coming through the center.

The business center currently has 1,500 Iraqi companies registered in their database and plenty of tenders to employ them with.

"Everyday we're getting five to 10 projects coming through the office," said Capt. James Sosnicky, officer in charge of the business center. "There are things going on like schools being rebuilt, clinics and parks repaired and trash picked up off the streets. We identify who's out there to perform these services," he said.

According to Spc. Varetta Barnes, BBC database and marketing manager, the system is very effective in getting people to work in a timely manner. It also aids in linking unemployed people with contract winners to try to get everyone working.

During Saddam's reign, all big businesses were owned by the government, which kept individual businessmen dependent upon the work the government provided.

Spc. Varetta Barnes, database and marketing manager with the 354th Civil Affairs Brigade, answers questions from a local Iraqi at the Baghdad Business Center.

Now, with the former government abolished, their source of income is gone. According to Sosnicky, who has been working with some of the major business families in Iraq, much of the anti-American sentiment resulted from unemployment.

"One of the biggest problems is hundreds of thousands of young men aren't working," he said. "If you get people working again, a lot of problems with attacks will go away."

One of the many things the center provides is equal opportunity for all people in a fair market system. According to Sosnicky, there was previously no proper bidding process under the old regime. Contracts were hidden and given to only a select group of people.

However, with the help of the BBC, the already wealthy entrepreneur as well as the average Joe is offered a chance to compete for business and earn a living.

To do this, they've developed a system of sending out a nightly newsletter by e-mail of all of the available job opportunities to the contractors and vendors registered in their database.

People without e-mail accounts can stop by the office for the information or log on to their Web site at www.baghdadbusinesscenter.org.

"They want to have a fair chance to compete," Sosnicky said. "No one is demanding equal results, they just want equal access and opportunity. We instill that sense of openness and fairness."

Information technologist, Ahmed Mansour, has been in business for 15 years and can attest to the better availability of resources and ease of getting contracts through the BBC.

"Before, I had to go everywhere to find out about contracts, but the business center brings things to me," Mansour said. "It saves a lot of time."

Aside from complete government control and unfair business practices,

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Ramadan Meal Hours

The Islamic holy period of Ramadan began Oct. 27 and will last until Nov. 24. Ramadan is a period of complete fasting from sunrise to sunset.

The following are Ramadan meal hours in the Coalition Provisional Authority dining facility for Islamic personnel.

- **Today - Saturday....4:10 - 4:55 a.m.**
- **Sunday - Nov. 8.....4:15 - 5 a.m.**
- **Nov. 9 - 15.....4:20 - 5:05 a.m.**
- **Nov. 16 - 24.....4:30 - 5:15 a.m.**

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Have an announcement for CJTF-7/CPA members?

Place it in the **Coalition Scimitar**

E-mail your announcement or event to cpiccmdinfo@baghdadforum.com

Dr. (Lt. Col.) Mark Harris, 1st Armored Division's deputy division surgeon, talks with Baghdad-area physicians during a three-day Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics course taught by 1st Armored Division doctors.

Local doctors learn latest in obstetrics procedures

Story and photo by Sgt. Mark Bell
372nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD — Dr. Arwa Al Shahwani and 31 other physicians from across Baghdad gathered at the Iraqi Forum recently for a three-day course, Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics, taught by 1st Armored Division doctors.

For more than a decade, doctors like Al Shahwani, a physician at Baghdad's Al Numaan Hospital, have been cut off from the latest techniques in emergency obstetrics.

With hands-on training and the latest information, the course participants will soon be able to teach fellow physicians, residents, and midwives procedures that could curb the number of deaths attributed to bleeding during pregnancy and delivery, said Dr. (Lt. Col.) Mark Harris, 1st Armored Division's deputy division surgeon.

"We have been very delayed during the last 13 years in the latest medical treatment procedures," said Shahwani. "We need to be in touch with new advances in obstetrics and gynecology."

Both Shahwani and Harris agreed Baghdad has an average rate of five births per mother, which is considered high. Harris said although Iraqi physicians are highly trained and educated, bringing the course to them could help decrease mother and child mortality rates during and after pregnancy.

"We were looking for a way that we could get together with Iraqi physicians and share some good medical education," said Harris. "We are giving them a tool they can use to teach their residents, students, midwives and non-specialists, who don't deliver babies, the best ways to handle emergencies in obstetrics during delivery."

Harris said most women who have been pregnant before have some sort of bleeding in their first trimester. "Bleeding in the first trimester of pregnancy is frightening and has dangers of losing the baby," he warned. "There are some causes for bleeding, some of which are very dangerous. We are teaching them how to manage that bleeding safely."

Harris said other complications during pregnancy, such as seizures, the inability to deliver a baby vaginally or when the baby has trouble in the uterus, are also life-threatening situations the team of doctors are teaching Iraqi physicians to handle.

Because of the high death rates associated with bleeding, Shahwani said being a physician trained on latest techniques allows her to do her most important job, helping give the greatest gift of life.

Shahwani comes from a large family of doctors who currently practice in the United States and Canada. "I am very proud that I am a doctor and especially an obstetrician," she said with a smile.

Growing up in Michigan and returning to Iraq to go to school to become a doctor, Shahwani said the process of bringing a new life into the world doesn't have political agendas or language barriers. Whether a mother is giving birth in America or Iraq, it has the same joyous feeling around the globe, she said.

"I am helping women and babies, and I am dealing with a very difficult moment in their lives," she said. "I am looking out for two people at the same time, and it's great for me to be a witness giving a new life. I like to help humanity and that's why I am a doctor."

The ALSO course is taught in 18 countries and is the preferred method of teaching obstetrics for Harris. The course is one of the common teaching methods in America. Bringing it to Iraq for the first

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Central Iraq briefs

Carjackers arrested

BAGHDAD — Military Police from Task Force 1st Armored Division and Iraqi Police Service Officers conducted a raid recently and arrested nine men suspected of carjacking.

Iraqi Police Services investigators identified the nine suspects and found their hideout in the Kadhimyah district. Officers raided the house where the men were staying. During the raid, several shots were fired and one of the suspects was wounded in the leg. Police confiscated two AK-47 assault rifles. (Courtesy 1st Armored Division Public Affairs)

RPG suspects captured

BAGHDAD — Soldiers from Task Force 1st Armored Division's 2nd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, captured three men suspected of firing a rocket-propelled grenade at Coalition forces in the Al Rashid district last week.

The RPG attack on a battalion command post took place at about 7:45 p.m. The grenade did not explode.

A quick reaction force team searched the area from which the round was fired. Soldiers saw a car with three men inside. The driver was driving suspiciously so soldiers stopped the vehicle and conducted a search.

They found two AK-47 assault rifles. The driver and two passengers were detained for questioning.

Shortly afterward, the QRF soldiers saw another vehicle driving in a suspicious manner. They stopped the vehicle, conducted a search, and confiscated another AK-47. The second driver was also detained for questioning. (Courtesy 1st Armored Division Public Affairs)

Mortar caches found

BAGHDAD — Task Force 1st Armored Division military police found more than 60 mortar rounds in two caches in the Ad Hamiyah district earlier this month.

While on routine patrol, a resident flagged down the MPs and directed them to a field where they found more than 60 mortar rounds and ammunition. Police marked off the ammunition and notified the 1st Brigade Combat Team.

A few minutes later in another neighborhood, a second resident told police of another weapons cache. He brought MPs to a stash of more mortar rounds and other ordnance. The MPs marked the location and contacted 1st Brigade.

The MPs turned the ammunition over for disposal. (Courtesy 1st Armored Division Public Affairs)

Remember
OPSEC
Operational Security is everyone's business!
Report any suspicious persons or activities to your commander or unit security and intellgence officer.

Coalition Provisional Authority Chapel

Worship and Prayer Schedule

Daily Islamic prayer
Times vary.
See schedule posted on chapel doors.

Sunday
7:30 a.m. — Episcopal, Lutheran and Anglican
10:30 a.m. — General Christian
2 p.m. — Latter Day Saints
4:30 p.m. — Roman Catholic
6 p.m. — Contemporary Protestant

Monday
7 p.m. — General Christian

Tuesday
6:30 p.m. — Ladies Bible study

Wednesday
6:30 a.m. — Morning Bible study (In chaplain's office)
7 p.m. — Bible study

Friday
7 p.m. — Choir rehearsal
(For 10:30 a.m. Sunday worship service)

Saturday
12:30 p.m. — Buddhist worship service

CPA welcomes any Islamic or Jewish personnel interested in performing services as a Lay Leader. If interested, call Chaplain Wismer at (914) 330-6485 or stop by the CPA Chaplain office.

Seventh Day Adventist service

Saturday
11 a.m. — 30th Medical Brigade headquarters building, second floor

Jewish services
Camp Victory Chapel

Sunday 7:30 p.m.
Saturday 10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Ready warfighters

Photo by Spc. Steven Renken

Soldiers assemble weapons during a recent warfighter competition at the 18th Military Police Brigade headquarters in Baghdad. Teams met and competed against MPs from around the world as they honed their skills to work and fight together.

DOCTORS
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time is monumental for Harris and his staff.

"It's a very good, solid way of doing things," he said.

Using the "evidence-based" medicine method for teaching Iraqi people ensures that not only the instruction methods and practices are proven, but helps Iraqi doctors understand the importance of participating in the world medicine community, said Dr. (Capt.) Lisa Foglia, a provost OB/GYN doctor assigned to the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Landstuhl, Germany.

"Hopefully, they will teach these proven methods to other doctors and residents," she said. "We are teaching them everything that has been graded on validity, and it's not based on one person's experience or practice, but rather a worldwide group consensus."

Harris and the other instructors said conducting this and future courses can only help bring better health care to the Iraqi people.

"According to Iraqi doctors I have spoken with, Saddam neglected women's health care terribly," he said. "It's something that resulted in higher numbers of mothers and babies dying during pregnancy or right afterwards. So there is a tremendous need for this type of education here."

In the end, the Baghdad region will graduate several dozen physicians trained in the latest pregnancy and birthing techniques.

Aside from the camaraderie as professionals in the medical field, Harris hopes this course helps bridge gaps of friendship, knowledge, and experiences between the two countries.

"We're colleagues and professionals in this together," said Harris. "I want them to know we are here teaching them and willing and able to help them build a better country."

BUSINESS
Continued from Page 10

the technology in Iraq extends as far back as 1979, which puts it way behind in the global economy.

To alleviate this problem, the business center hosts foreign trade delegations, providing networking opportunities between foreign companies and the local business community as well as the CPA ministries.

Currently, it is working with Indian companies interested in bringing their businesses here. The Chinese, South Koreans, British, Dutch, Fins and Spanish are also interested in bringing assets to Iraq.

Sosnicky is hopeful about the effects their presence will have on Iraq's economy.

"You bring in a company from any modernized country, and they're going to bring with them money, jobs, technology and modern management skills," said Sosnicky.

Empowerment of Iraqis is something the center strives to achieve. Because Iraq is neighborhood-centered, the number of business partners for individuals are limited.

Through the Iraqi Networking Project, the BBC can introduce Iraqis to other Iraqis at regular networking events hosted by them.

"We try to provide a place for these guys to meet," he said. "We want the general contractor to meet the sub contractor, the retailer to meet the wholesaler, etc. The idea is to build up professional associates and develop a strong merchant class in Baghdad."

Iraqi women are also offered opportunities in their business pursuits. The Women's Meeting Place is a program designed to meet the needs of women who were previously discouraged from working.

The women meet weekly to voice their concerns, and BBC does all it can to get the help they need. Recently, they arranged for the Baghdad police chief to talk to the women about their concern for security in the city.

According to Spc. Lisa Wellington, Women's Meeting Place coordinator, women were afraid to go to work because they didn't feel safe enough to travel alone.

Now, with this issue being taken care of by local authorities, there is one less obstacle in the way of women working and more time to help them find jobs.

"These women want to work," Wellington said. "We want to help them get their foot in the door so the workforce can see they are just as capable as men."

Despite challenges they face in helping rebuild the weakened economy, they are confident in the skill and potential of the Iraqi people to obtain a piece of the economic pie.

"We're not starting from zero," Sosnicky said. "We're starting in a relatively advanced country that's been deprived of modern technology and management practices. We're going to empower them with that, and I think they're going to take off."