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Task Force Liberty trauma medics save lives



Capt. Heather Moss, a 3/69 Armor Physicians Assistant, explains how to properly apply a wrist splint to Spc. Jayson Zimmerman, a medic attached to 3/69 Armor at the Brassfield Mora Troop Medical Clinic April 24.

Story and photo by Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.
1st BCT Public Affairs

Forward Operating Base Brassfield-Mora, Iraq - At 3:00 a.m., a man bursts into a room, rousing Soldiers out of a deep sleep. An Iraqi soldier has been shot and is bleeding badly.

The Soldiers don't bother to get fully dressed, knowing that a man's life is at stake, and every second counts.

Upon entering the small troop medical clinic at FOB Brassfield-Mora outside of Samarra, Iraq, they get vital signs on the patient, and perform emergency care to keep the man alive. Once stabilized, he is medically evacuated to FOB Speicher for further treatment. Because of the quick actions of the emergency medical team, the man lives.

"One of the challenges out here is being able to react to things in the early morning hours when we're all bedded down," said Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Caulk, 3rd Battalion 69th Armor Regiment medic platoon sergeant. "There have been days when we've had three or four (evacuation patients) in here, and our treatment area only has two beds. Once you (stabilize) the patients and have them (evacuated) out, we're all exhausted. As far as treating the patients, it's no

problem. Trauma is trauma."

The medics take care of any Soldier that is wounded, American or Iraqi. According to Caulk, their success rate has been 100%.

The medics working at the Brassfield-Mora Troop Medical Clinic (TMC) were well trained when they arrived in theater, but treating actual trauma cases has greatly honed their skills.

"We did a lot of training back at Fort Stewart, but most of the training we've done here. Until you get an actual casualty in front of you, it's a totally different reality. They are much better at it now I think because a lot of it is actually hands on, and they don't have to stand back and watch the doctor do the work. In fact, the doctor is usually the one in the back, just telling my guys what to do."

Working with patients who have life threatening injuries has hardened the Soldiers nerves so that not much can surprise them. "A lot of these guys never treated any trauma type patients before we came out here," Caulk said. "Since being here, they've all gotten their feet wet. They're pretty good, there's nothing that will shock them now. They've pretty much seen everything."

The Brassfield-Mora TMC is not a place where patients stay once they are stabilized. It is a facility used solely to make sure the patient can be

medically evacuated to a bigger facility, or combat support hospital.

"My responsibility here is to provide first line medical care once the casualties are brought into the treatment facility," said Capt. Charles Speed, a physician's assistant attached to 3/69 Armor. "Our job is to take care of patients and to stabilize them, make sure they have an airway so they're breathing, that their not bleeding, and then get them out to the support hospital as quick as we can."

"The Soldiers here perform fantastic," Speed said. "These guys are well trained, they're highly motivated and they really care about the Soldiers they are treating. They love the responsibility placed on them, because they feel like they're contributing and doing something positive."

"Twenty four hours a day, anytime, a trauma can come in," said Pfc. David Witt, medical supply specialist attached to 3/69 Armor. "If I don't get an order in, we could be short on something that could save a life."

Speed and the medics said they were very confident of their ability to perform their job, and talked about what keeps them going in such an intense work environment.

"What keeps us going is that we care about the Soldier, we care about the patient," Speed said. "We handle the stress by having a kind of bizarre sense of humor. We laugh at things that most people would think were kind of strange or maybe even hideous at times. We laugh, we relate to each other, we tell a lot of jokes and we watch a lot of videos that kind of keep the comedy up."

The Soldiers here put up with a lot of hardships, Speed said, but they endure it well. "The living standards can be a bit challenging and trying, but our Soldiers will get the job done. The 3/69 Armor motto, 'speed and power,' applies to this unit 100%."

The fruit of the medics' labors is obvious, Caulk said. They have received praise from several different sources, and it makes them proud of what they do.

"We get feedback saying 'hey, you saved this guy's life,'" Caulk said. "They call saying 'whoever it was, good job'. We'll go up (to Speicher) to see how the patient is doing and the family will be there, and someone will tell them, hey that's the guys that saved them. That's pretty awesome. That's the most rewarding part of the job."

Local Iraqi artisans celebrate liberation



A student points to a drawing celebrating liberation from Saddam Hussein's dictatorship at the Diyar Bakr School in Kirkuk, Iraq

Story and Photos by Maj. David Rock
358th Civil Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, IRAQ – Local artisans celebrated liberation from the brutal dictatorship of Saddam Hussein at a school in Kirkuk, Iraq, by displaying art that both remembers and looks ahead.

The Diyar Bakr School sponsored an art show in mid-April where students and local artisans of all ages were able to publicly display their works. Themes included the mass murders and mass graves created by Hussein, Hussein's fall, first Kurdish lessons and celebrating the liberation.

"This event demonstrates that the Iraqi people, including children, are enjoying newfound freedom of expression," said Maj. David Rock, a 358th Civil Affairs Brigade team leader attached to the 116th Brigade Combat Team who attended the event. "This freedom could be seen in the art and crafts that were presented at the school."

The themes at the art show remembered the past, but also looked forward to the future. A ribbon cutting ceremony opened the show, followed by dancing in full ceremonial dress.

Iraqi linguists receive Titan Heart awards for injuries in line of duty

Story and Photo by Capt. Monte Hibbert,
116th BCT Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, IRAQ— Two Iraqi linguists assigned to the 116th Brigade Combat Team here were awarded the Titan Heart April 20 for wounds received while serving coalition forces as interpreters in Iraq.

Khalil Asmail Mahmood and Goran Husain Habib received the award from Lt. Col. Robert Lytle, 116th BCT executive officer, at the Army chapel on Forward Operating Base Warrior. The Titan Heart is given for wounds received by employees of Titan Corporation, the primary contractor for linguists to the military in Iraq. The award is equivalent to the Purple Heart awarded to military members wounded by hostile fire.

"The reason we're here is to recognize two fine men who have sacrificed for Iraq," said Mr. Sam Tillett, a Titan Corporation regional manager for East Iraq who introduced the awardees and gave a short history of their service.

According to Tillett, both awardees held respectable positions in their communities prior to coming to work as linguists in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Mahmood was a supervisor at the Baiji power plant and Habib held a position as an electrical technician.

Mahmood was on patrol with Soldiers of the 2nd BCT's 1-27 Infantry last year when their vehicle was hit with an explosive device. Injures sustained in the blast

resulted in the loss of one of his eyes and other injuries. After treatment and recuperation, he returned to work as soon as he was able. He now works for the 116th BCT's Task Force 1-163 Infantry, who replaced the 1-27 Infantry in February.

"He never stopped work," said Tillett. "His desire was to forget about his injury and get back to work."

Tillett said Habib, while also working with the 1-27 Infantry last year, was the "target of an assassination attempt" when insurgents entered his home at night and shot five AK-47 rounds into his back. The severity of his wounds prevented him from coming back to work, but he is still recuperating and is assigned to the 116th BCT.

"I remember his determination to fight through these injuries and live," said Tillett.

During the award presentation, the award citation was read aloud as the awards were hung around the neck of each honoree by the 116th BCT Executive Officer Lt. Col. Lytle. The citation reads that the awards are for "wounds received in action in the Republic of Iraq."

"We have over 4,000 Iraqi linguists that work daily," said Tillett. "It takes a lot of courage and bravery to do what they do."

Working with its Iraqi partners, the 116th BCT is helping establish security, assisting Iraq's new government, supporting economic development and facilitating communications as the country moves toward democracy.



Lt. Col. Robert Lytle, 116th Brigade Combat Team executive officer, presents the Titan Heart award to Khalil Asmail Mahmood (left) and Goran Husain Habib (right) at a ceremony in mid-April at Forward Operating Base Warrior for wounds received in action.



Rainbow remembers Dachau

The 42nd Infantry Division marked the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Dachau Concentration Camp on April 29th, 2005.

Soldiers from the Rainbow Division helped liberate more than 30,000 inmates of Nazi Germany's most notorious death camp. Two other Army units, the 45th Infantry Division and 20th Armored Division, participated in Dachau's liberation.

Arriving in the mid-afternoon on April 29th with a security detachment, Brig. Gen. Linden Henning, the Rainbow Division Deputy Commander, accepted the surrender of the camp from its SS guards.

"This day is over, this April 29th, 1945," said Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz, one of the prisoners at Dachau. "I will celebrate it for the rest of my life



as my second birthday, as the day that gifted me life anew."

A battalion from the 222nd Infantry Regiment secured the camp following Brig. Gen. Linden's arrival. Soldiers from the division's 242nd Infantry followed the next day while the Rainbow Division continued on its drive to capture Munich on April 30th. The war would end less than two weeks later.

"The crimes done behind the walls of the worst of all Nazi Concentration Camps, now live only to haunt the memories of the Rainbow men who tore open its gates and first saw its misery," said Technician 3rd Class James Creasman, HHC, 42nd Infantry Division on May 1st of 1945.

RAINBOW,...NEVER FORGET!