

The Daily Roar

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Tuskers transport youngster to surgery

by **Capt. Mark Miller**

4th Battalion, 64th Armored Regiment

BAGHDAD – The morning of Jan. 22 was a calm and pleasant morning for Saydiyah and most of its inhabitants.

People could be seen wandering about, walking to work, or waiting for buses and rides. But, this was no ordinary day for Mohmad Salman Abaas. For the 7-year-old the day held hope – he would get needed medical attention to deliver him from a debilitating pain that had prevented him from enjoying a normal life.

On Jan. 6, Maj. Martin Preen, battalion surgeon of Task Force 4th Battalion, 64th Armored Regiment, attached to the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div., personally traveled to the family home to visit Mohmad and assess his condition. Preen, who hails from Columbus, Ohio, identified the child as having a hernia and requiring surgery.

A few weeks later on Jan. 22, a patrol led by Concord, Calif. native 1st Lt. Benjamin Hartig from A Co, 4-64 met Mohmad and his father Hieler Salman Abaas outside the family smoothie stand in Saydiyah.

After being transported, the two of them waited outside the Combat Support Hospital in the International Zone to be escorted inside, where the anticipated routine surgical procedure was expected to allow the youngster to resume the kind of pain-free existence and physical activities that most take for granted.

After speaking with the boy's father, Spc. Stephen Saunders, a medic with Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 4th Bn., 64th Armor, said Mohmad needed surgery to return his life to normal.

"His father was concerned that Mohmad could not play soccer and other sports like the other kids in the neighborhood," Saunders said. "He was also having trouble sleeping. People talk about the 'American Dream,' but it's not just American. People want to be happy, and for him, having his son live the normal life of a child represents that happiness. I think it's a

good thing that we were able to help."

The boy is currently in medical custody at the Combat Support Hospital preparing for surgery. His release date will depend on recovery time.

Company A, 4th Bn., 64th Armor, has already made necessary arrangements with the hospital personnel to pick the boy and his father up when he is to be released so they can escort them back to Saydiyah.

"Iraq's medical system cannot currently support all the needs of the people. We don't just help with security needs here, but all the needs of the people to include medical assistance," said Lt. Col. Johnnie Johnson, a Tampa, Fla. native and commander of TF 4-64.

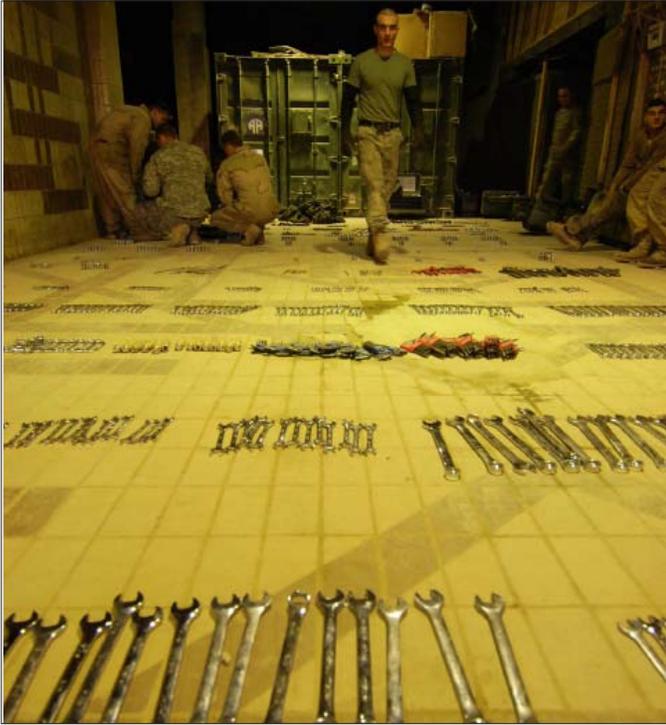
"It's great," he said. "That's one more voice and one more example out there that Coalition Forces are making a positive difference."

The "Tuskers" of 4th Bn., 64th Armor Regt., are a part of the 3rd Infantry Division stationed at Fort Stewart, Ga., but are currently attached to Task Force Dragon based in Fort Riley, Kan.



U.S. Army Photo

Columbus, Ohio native, Maj. Martin Preen, checks the condition of Mohmad Salman Abaas, a 7-year-old boy, Jan. 23, prior to taking him to the Combat Support Hospital in the International Zone for hernia surgery.



by Staff Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2nd BCT, 82nd ABN Div. PAO

100 percent

Austin, Texas native Spc. William Moore (walking), of 2nd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division, lays out tools prior to a 100 percent equipment inventory in the motor pool area of Combat Outpost Callahan in Baghdad's Sha'ab neighborhood Jan. 21.



The Player of the Day Award is presented to Spc. Mitchell Lafleur for outstanding performance as a patient administrator. Lafleur demonstrates great initiative on a daily basis. He performs his duties with a sense of purpose and takes time to understand the significance of his tasks. His selfless service and dedication to duty make him today's 4th Inf. Div. Player of the Day.

Baghdad Three Day Weather Forecast

Friday
Clear

HI: 59F/15C
LO: 39F/4C



Saturday
Partly cloudy

HI: 57F/14C
LO: 42F/6C



Sunday
Partly cloudy

HI: 59F/15C
LO: 39F/4C



The Daily Roar

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Anthropologist helps Soldiers understand Iraq

By Sgt. James P. Hunter

2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div.

BAGHDAD—To measure economic growth, one must venture out into the community and interact with the local populace. In the streets of Baghdad, a simple minded person from a foreign land can look at the streets cluttered with trash, roads bent out of shape and think poverty, “third-world country.” But it goes deeper than that to some of the simpler things of life: the produce.

Before being “thin” or “chiseled” were the so called thing in Western societies, wealth was measured by how healthy one ate, which meant people were predominately thicker; in turn, wealthier.

In Iraq food is no different, said Dr. Marcus Griffin. Wealthier Iraqis eat rice, lamb and fish. Poorer individuals eat bread, eggs and beans. However, all Iraqis have one thing in common: their daily intake of cucumbers and tomatoes. The difference here is the quality of these products.

“These are quick indicators of market infrastructure,” Griffin said.

Economic growth can easily be measured by the quality of produce in these inner-city markets, he said.

Griffin, an anthropologist, is helping Soldiers and leaders from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), better understand the needs and living conditions of the Iraqi citizens in northwest Baghdad. Griffin is a 40-year-old professor who put his teaching on hold for a year to bring his knowledge and experience to the fight.

Using anthropology and sociology methods, he tries to determine whether the micro-grants are having any affect on the communities. Griffin often looks at the quality of produce, the quality of fish, and where they are getting their tomatoes. This helps him assess the growing economy. The better the quality of food, the more the

economy is on the rise.

“His expertise in analyzing the type of food being sold in the markets has been useful,” said Shreveport, La. native, Capt. Thomas H. Melton, commander of Troop A, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment. “He was able to explain the markets in my [area of operations] are receiving poor quality fruits and vegetables, indicating the area is fairly poor and malnourished.”

Recently, Griffin toured the markets in southern Ghazaliyah with Strike Soldiers from Troop A, 1-75th Cav.

There are four markets in southern Ghazaliyah: 8th Street, Nafla, Afran, and Zawia.

“All four have shown substantial growth since my [transfer of authority] in early December. With the exception of Zawia, the markets are all traditional, open air markets with bakeries, butcher shops, and fruit and vegetable stands,” he said. “These markets cater to the residents of Ghazaliyah from within the muhallahs. Zawia Market is more like a western style strip mall catering to traffic on a main highway.”

“Store owners are returning everyday, but this market is very much in a rebuilding phase. The other markets are each seeing expansion, specifically Nafla and Afran,” Melton said. “The presence of new stores, including restaurants, indicates that the economy is improving and the people feel secure.”

Griffin wanted to see the economic boost and help identify the needs of these Iraqis to help the economy grow even more, because, according to Griffin, “A bakery can change a neighborhood with just the basic necessity of bread. It can cause change, especially to the economy.”

And that is where Griffin started his day, at the local bakery talking with some of its workers.

According to Melton, the doctor has taken special interest in this bakery and “will help us facilitate a micro

grant approval for this business in order to study the effects that the micro grant process has on the community.”

The smell of freshly baked bread straight out of the kiln filled the afternoon air as they approached the bakery. Three men worked inside under no lighting except for the glow of the fire baking the bread. The bakery sells nearly 10 pieces at a time at 1,250 dinars. But keeping the business running is a problem. Having the money to purchase flour and fuel can be quite difficult.

Griffin toured much of the area that day, spending quality time with an Iraqi family. They sipped on Chai Tea, ate lamb patties and discussed much of their needs in the area. Their needs, however, mostly dealt with the electricity. Lately, they are only getting a half-hour of electricity a day. Meanwhile, Griffin noted all the difficulties they are facing, hoping to fully understand their needs and what it would take to satisfy their desires.

“The biggest needs of the Iraqi people are the improvement of essential services. The residents average between one and two hours of electricity per day. The lack of electricity forces them to spend much of their income on black market fuel to run generators,” said Melton. “Additionally, it prevents the sewage pump stations from working, which contributes to the bad standing water problems in the streets.”

Griffin also stopped at a fruit stand during his visit, oddly noticing it selling coconut—a rarity, to his knowledge, in Iraq. This here shows signs of growth, having the ability to bring in an exotic, luxurious food.

“As we move toward tactical over watch, we need to see visual indicators quickly of how the community and economy is doing; see the growth within,” said Griffin. “It keeps a pulse on the population.”