

IRON STRONG DAILY



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Chew on this: Mosul receives basic staples for Ramadan's end

**Story and photos by
Pfc. Adam Carl Blazak
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Two poverty-stricken areas in eastern Mosul received humanitarian aid in hopes to build stronger relationships between the Iraqi Army and the people whom they protect.

Residents in the neighborhoods of Karama and Intisar gathered outside their homes to receive boxes of basic staples, baby care kits, clothes and school supplies by Soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi Army Division.

The items in each of the 150 boxes came from a variety of non government organizations, said Cedar Springs, Mich. native Maj. Tony Vacha, civil affairs team chief, Company C, 415th Civil Affairs Battalion.

"During Ramadan it is important to give to the needy," said Mishawaka, Ind. native Staff Sgt. Jon. C. Anderstrom, civil affairs team non

commissioned officer in charge, Co. C, 415th Civil Affairs Bn. "In the eyes of the people, all they (the Iraqi Army) do is search vehicles and raids. Now the people can see the IA in a new light."

With Ramadan nearing its end, many residents are starting to prepare for a three day celebration known as Eid al-Fitr.

"We've accumulated a lot of products from a lot of non government organization's and specifically pooled them together for Ramadan and for Eid al-Fitr, which is a three-day celebration that will start at the end of Ramadan," Vacha said. "It's a time of getting gifts. Instead of piece mailing the products out in the city, we wanted to congregate them together for the IA to build relationships within their area of operations."

With the IA battalion consisting of mainly Kurdish Soldiers, constructing working relationships with the Arab community within their AO is a high priority to them.

"The IA selected these (mainly Arab) neighborhoods," he continued. "When you have a primarily Kurdish unit with a primarily Arab populace, we need to create bridges between those people."

"The success of this, the end state, is new relationships and new contacts within the local community," Vacha said. "We are also helping the IA transition to civil-military operations."

Vacha also said that the IA played an intricate part in the planning phase, which led up to the execution of the mission.

Throughout the IA's



An Iraqi Soldier helps a young girl lift a food package distributed by Soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi Army Division in Mosul, Iraq. The primarily Kurdish Soldiers chose the predominately Arab neighborhoods of Intisar and Karama to hand out the packages in hopes to build better relationships.



An Iraqi Soldier hands out toys to children in the Intisar neighborhood of Mosul, Iraq during a civil-military operation. The primarily Kurdish Soldiers handed out food, toys, clothes and school supplies to help build a working relationship with the primarily Arab neighborhood.

mission, a small, U.S. Force presence was providing security around the operation's perimeter.

"Hours of dedication lead to moments of freedom," Anderstrom said.

"I think it's a viable civil-military operation," Vacha said. "I think it is sustainable in the fact that we are teaching the IA how to plan this kind of mission, how to execute it and, more importantly, what the benefit is of the mission, which is creating the legitimacy of the government and the government security forces."

"I was very impressed with the IA's execution of the mission," he said.

IA delivers school supplies, hygiene items to children

**Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Kyle J. Richardson
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Kids, kids, please! No pushing, no shoving or fighting. Stand one behind the other, exclaimed an interpreter with 3rd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi Army Division.

Ordinarily, this is a phrase young children would hear while in school. However, the children of Yarminjah, a village located in the southeastern region of Mosul, Iraq had a reason to gather with anticipation and excitement.

As Ramadan continues to wind



3rd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi Army Division Soldiers distribute personal hygiene, clothes and school supplies to the children of Yarminjah located in the southeastern region of Mosul, Iraq. The majority of the items were donated by the villagers by the Church of Latter-day Saints.

down and a new school year quickly approaches, the 3-5-2 IA delivered school supplies and hygiene items to the children of Yarminjah.

“The kids are getting ready to go back to school, said Capt. Ken Cook, operations officer, 3-5-2 Military Transition Team. “What better way to send these guys back to school than with clothing, school supplies and personal hygiene stuff.”

“This is actually an important mission for us, said Chicago native, Maj. John Ruckauf, intelligence advisor for the 3-5-2 Military Transition Team. “It is the month of Ramadan. It is the month of giving and prayer. This is an opportunity for the Iraqi Army to engage the local population, continue to gain their trust and support Ramadan.”

The 3-5-2 IA distributed more than 200 boxes of goods. The majority of the boxes were donated by the Church of Latter-day Saints. The 3-5-2 MiTT assisted the IA in collecting the boxes. Also the MiTT provided security to allow the IA to fully concentrate on passing out goods to the growing crowd.

Although Coalition force Soldiers play vital roles in security when it comes to some of the IA lead mission, one Soldier’s family took interest in helping the villagers.

“My son sent me a pair of his shoes,



The children of Yarminjah village located in the southeastern region of Mosul, Iraq, line up behind one of the 3rd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi Army Division’s truck. The IA distributed personal hygiene, school supplies and clothing before the start of a new school year.

actually the whole kindergarten class got together and sent shoes out,” said Virginia Beach, Va. native, Staff Sgt. David Wenger, combat medic for 3-5-2 MiTT. He wanted me to get a picture of his favorite pair of sandals, which he had for several years.”

The 3-5-2 MiTT usually fills a supervisory role and provides extra security for the 3-5-2 IA, however, sometimes some operations mean a little more.

“It’s a great feeling, it’s about compassion and love here at this point,” said St. Louis native, Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Benford, noncommissioned officer in charge as well as fires and effects sergeant for 3-5-2 MiTT.

As the last box is overturned and the last packaged is given to the last child, the IA and MiTT can leave Yarminjah in a better state and a little more prepared for school.

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SHOULDER-TO-SHOULDER

NO ONE STANDS ALONE

Prevention of suicide should be everybody's concern. Suicide is a preventable tragedy for Service Members, Family, Civilians and the Military Community.

WHY DOES ANYONE THINK ABOUT SUICIDE?

Causes of suicidal feelings...

- Problems with personal relationships, especially divorce, cheating or keeping secrets.
- Overwhelming combat stress.
- Legal, financial or UCMJ problems.
- Death of a friend, spouse, child or other family member.
- People lose their sense of worth.
- Problems build up and it seems like there is nowhere to go for help.
- Depression or other medical problems are not treated.

People say to themselves...

- “My marriage is a failure...I'm a failure.”
- “I just can't seem to do anything right. There is no way that I'm going to fix this.”
- “I am in so much trouble that my life is over.”
- “There's no way I can live my life without that person.”
- “No one really cares if I'm here or not.”
- “I don't care about myself or anyone else.”
- “Nothing feels right; I don't understand what is happening. There is no hope of anything getting better.”

WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS FOR SUICIDE?

Someone has a “fatal attitude...”

- Saying that they hate – or don't care about – themselves, their spouse or family.
- Talking or hinting about suicide or a desire to die.
- Suddenly finalizing personal affairs, paying off debts or talking about “what you should do if I'm gone.”
- Giving large gifts or giving away personal items.
- Making a suicide plan or arranging to be alone for no good reason.
- Obsession with depressing music, poetry or artwork.

Noticeable changes in behavior...

- Avoiding normal hobbies, fun activities or daily routines.
- Big increases or decreases in appetite.
- Wanting to spend a lot of time alone.
- Refusal to talk/email with friends, family or loved ones.
- Strange emotional outbursts.
- Failure to maintain uniform standards, hygiene or PMCS of personal equipment.
- Drop in duty performance or apparent skill level.
- Unusually dangerous, foolish or risky behavior, as if they don't care about their life.

IS THERE ANY WAY TO PREVENT SUICIDES?

Individuals...

- Keep in mind the Army Values
 - *Selfless Service*: make the effort to help someone else.
 - *Integrity*: be honest about the problem.
 - *Personal Courage*: admit that you or someone else needs help.
- Talk to your buddies about your problems.
- Listen to your buddies' problems. Don't judge.
- Be worried about someone with a failing relationship.
- **Be blunt!** Ask “Are you thinking about suicide?”
- If someone is suicidal, NEVER LEAVE THEM ALONE, even for a “just a minute.”
- Get help immediately. Don't try to solve the problem.

Leaders...

- Look for warning signs in anyone with relationship, financial or legal problems
- Learn about the Army's suicide prevention strategies.
- Empower NCOs and Officers to get help for themselves and their Soldiers.
- Coordinate training, counseling and treatment.
- Involve Soldiers, Families and civilians in teamwork to build resiliency and support systems.
- Implement a suicide prevention plan, including a unit watch program.
- Take advantage of Behavioral Health assets.

HOW CAN YOU PREVENT A SUICIDE?

Protect them...

- NEVER LEAVE THE PERSON ALONE.
- Take away their weapon or whatever they might use to harm themselves.
- Do not “try to talk them out of it.” Listen and tell them that you understand.
- Tell them that you know their problems are real and that you want to help them.
- Talk to them about why they feel the way they do.
- BE PROFESSIONAL! Do not joke around or belittle someone for asking for help.

Get help...

- Take the person to the chaplain, medic, 1SG or commander immediately. Follow your Unit Watch SOP.
- If needed, send someone else to get help. Don't leave them alone.
- Arrange for medical evacuation with an escort if help is not available locally.
- After they return from treatment, ensure that they go to their follow-up appointments.
- Keep tabs on people who have had problems in the past.
- Make time for unit-level education and discussion.

Understanding suicide can prevent it.

NEBRASKA



(AP) A former teacher who fled to Mexico with a 13-year-old student so she could have sex with him was sentenced Monday to six years in federal prison. Kelsey Peterson, 26, had pleaded guilty in July to a charge of transporting a minor across state lines to have sex and avoided a similar charge that would have carried a mandatory 10-year minimum sentence.

She will be credited for nearly one year she has already served and could get another year off for good behavior, said U.S. Attorney Joe Stecher.

The guilty plea doesn't mean Peterson is off the hook on state charges, which include kidnapping and first-degree sexual assault.

Her attorney, James Martin Davis, said he hoped those charges will be dropped, but Dawson County Attorney Elizabeth Waterman said she will proceed with a state case.

Peterson and her relatives and friends cried as they waved to each other across the courtroom and said, "I love you" after the hearing.

She started having sex with the boy when he was 12 years old and a student at the middle school where she taught in the south-central Nebraska town of Lexington.

Peterson's attorney, James Martin Davis, had publicly questioned the boy's birth certificate. Davis said the boy was likely at least 16, and that

he was the aggressor.

Amy Peck, attorney for the boy and his family, bristled at the suggestion.

"He was a 12-year-old boy and the defendant knew it," Peck said in July, after Peterson's guilty plea.

Peterson was the boy's sixth-grade math teacher at Lexington Middle School during the 2005-06 school year, then started having sex with him in November 2006, according to court documents.

She and the boy disappeared in October, soon after the school district's superintendent confronted Peterson about allegations of an inappropriate relationship with the boy.

Peterson was arrested a week later in Mexico after the boy called his family.

The Associated Press previously named the boy as police were searching for him but stopped using his name after authorities charged Peterson with a sex crime.

The boy was an illegal immigrant at the time but has been granted humanitarian parole by the Department of Homeland Security.

Peck has said she plans to seek a visa that could put the boy and his parents on the path to citizenship.

She said there is no relationship between Peterson and the boy.

"I would fully doubt if there will be a relationship in the future," Peck said.

SCIENCE

(AP) NASA's Phoenix spacecraft has discovered evidence of past water at its Martian landing site and spotted falling snow for the first time, scientists reported Monday. Soil experiments revealed the presence of two minerals known to be formed in liquid water. Scientists identified the minerals as calcium carbonate, found in limestone and chalk, and sheet silicate.

But exactly how that happened remains a mystery.

"It's really kind of all up in the air," said William Boynton, a mission scientist at the University of Arizona at Tucson.

A laser aboard the Phoenix recently detected snow falling from clouds more than two miles above its home in the northern arctic plains. The snow disappeared before reaching the

ground.

Phoenix landed in the Martian arctic plains in May on a three-month mission to study whether the environment could be friendly to microbial life. One of its biggest discoveries so far is confirming the presence of ice on the planet.

Scientists long suspected frozen water was buried in the northern plains based on measurements from an orbiting spacecraft. The lander also found that the soil was slightly alkaline and contained important nutrients and minerals.

Scientists think there could have been standing water at the site in the past or the ice could have melted and interacted with the minerals.

"Is this a habitable zone on Mars? I think we're approaching that hypothesis," said chief scientist Peter Smith of the University of Arizona. "We understand, though, that Mars has many surprises for us and we have not finished our investigation."

Mars today is frigid and dry with no sign of water on the surface, but researchers believe the planet once was warmer and wetter.

NASA extended the three-month mission through the end of the year if Phoenix can survive that long. With summer waning, less sunlight is reaching the spacecraft's solar panels.

Phoenix will be out of touch with ground controllers briefly in November when the sun is between Earth and Mars, blocking communications.

Scientists are racing to use the remaining four of Phoenix's eight tiny test ovens before the lander dies. The ovens are designed to sniff for traces of organic, or carbon-based compounds, that are considered the building blocks of life. Experiments so far has failed to turn up definitive evidence of organics.



BASEBALL

(AP) Alexei Ramirez spread his arms wide, raced around the bases like a little kid and jumped into Paul Konerko's embrace at home plate. No wonder they were so happy. The White Sox would play one more day.

Ramirez set a rookie record with his fourth grand slam of the season, and Chicago beat Detroit 8-2 in a rainout makeup Monday, forcing a one-game tiebreaker against Minnesota for the AL Central title.

The Twins will visit the White Sox on Tuesday night, with John Danks starting for Chicago on three days' rest against Nick Blackburn. The division champ begins the playoffs at Tampa Bay on Thursday.

"Tomorrow, 162 games mean nothing. It's only about one game and that's great," White Sox manager Ozzie Guillen said. "A good feeling."

When Guillen told Ramirez to relax before batting with the bases loaded, the 27-year-old infielder made a promise.

"I told Ozzie to have confidence in me. I'm going to go out and get these runners home somehow," he said.

Did he ever. Then again, his days on the Cuban national team taught him about big games.

"My team in Cuba was always in the playoffs and I played in the Olympics and international games. I've been in tougher situations, I feel," he said through a translator.

Washed out earlier this month, Chicago and Detroit waited through a rain delay of more than three hours before starting. Gavin Floyd (17-8) won on three days' rest — short rest has been successful trend for many

teams in the stretch.

The loss left the Tigers in last place, capping a season they began with hopes of reaching the World Series.

"It's been a tough year," manager Jim Leyland said. "Today pretty much sums up what's gone on all year, really. It hasn't been a very good year and it wasn't a very happy ending."

Detroit, with nothing really to play for, took a 2-1 lead into the sixth. But former White Sox ace Freddy Garcia, who'd allowed only two hits to that point, had to leave with tightness in his right shoulder with a runner on second and no outs.

When Garcia left, things got wild.

Leyland summoned Armando Galarraga (13-7) — the team's best starter this season — and he threw two wild pitches that allowed the tying run to score.

After Jermaine Dye walked, Bobby Seay relieved and threw Detroit's third wild pitch of the inning.

Jim Thome struck out, but after an intentional walk to Konerko, Seay also walked Ken Griffey Jr. to load the bases.

Ramirez sent the first pitch from Gary Glover, another former White Sox pitcher, into the left-center field bleachers, setting off a happy trip around the bases for the rookie whose nickname is "The Cuban Missile."

Floyd gave up five hits and one earned in six innings. He struck out eight and walked two while throwing 118 pitches.

"He admitted he was nervous, which was good because if you're not nervous in that situation, there's something wrong with you," White Sox catcher A.J. Pierzynski said. "He didn't have his best stuff but he battled and made pitches when he had to to get through it."

Pierzynski added an RBI double during a two-run eighth.

Floyd's error helped Detroit take a 2-1 lead in the sixth. Miguel Cabrera doubled with one out before Marcus Thames hit a hard liner that White Sox third baseman Juan Uribe snagged for the second out.

When Ryan Raburn hit a slow roller between the plate and mound, Floyd bobbled the ball while reaching down to pick it up and threw high past Konerko at first, allowing Cabrera

FOOTBALL

WEEK FOUR

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2008

FINAL	1	2	3	4	SCORE
ATLANTA	3	6	0	0	9
CAROLINA<<	7	7	3	7	24
HOUSTON	3	7	7	10	OT 0/27
JACKSONVILLE<<	7	3	7	10	OT 3/30
SAN FRANCISCO	3	3	3	8	17
NEW ORLEANS<<	0	21	0	10	31
GREEN BAY	7	0	7	7	21
TAMPA BAY<<	0	13	7	10	30
SAN DIEGO<<	0	0	3	25	28
OAKLAND	5	10	0	3	18
WASHINGTON<<	0	17	3	6	26
DALLAS	7	3	7	7	24
CLEVELAND<<	3	0	0	17	20
CINCINNATI	0	6	0	6	12
DENVER	0	10	3	6	19
KANSAS CITY<<	6	7	3	17	33
ARIZONA	0	0	21	14	35
NY JETS<<	0	34	0	22	56
MINNESOTA	0	10	0	7	17
TENNESSEE<<	10	10	3	7	30
BUFFALO<<	6	0	7	18	31
ST. LOUIS	7	7	0	0	14
PHILADELPHIA	7	7	3	3	20
CHICAGO<<	7	14	0	3	24

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2008

FINAL	1	2	3	4	SCORE
BALTIMORE	3	10	0	7	OT 0/20
PITTSBURGH<<	3	0	14	3	OT 3/23

Scoreboard info from statesman.com

to score.

Chicago scored in the first but had a much bigger inning brewing when the first three batters reached against Garcia. He walked Orlando Cabrera and DeWayne Wise before Dye hit an RBI single, but retired the next three batters.

Detroit tied it in the fifth as Raburn singled, stole second and scored when Brandon Inge doubled to left over the leaping Wise.

After his early struggles, Garcia rebounded, retiring 11 straight before Griffey singled with two outs in the fourth.

Garcia was 40-21 with Chicago from 2004-06 and won three games in the postseason of 2005, including the clinching Game 4 of the World Series. He is close friends with White Sox manager Ozzie Guillen and they texted each other leading up to the game.

Guillen warned that the White Sox had better "be ready for Freddy."

Garcia was traded to the Phillies after the 2006 season for Gio Gonzalez and Floyd, and both of the starters wore jersey No. 34 on Monday. Garcia, who had shoulder surgery in August 2007, signed a minor league contract with the Tigers on Aug. 14 of this year and was making his third start for Detroit.



MEXICO

(AP) The bodies of 11 men and one woman, some with their tongues cut out, were found dumped in an empty lot next to a Tijuana elementary school Monday morning, an hour before children were scheduled to arrive.

City officials suspended classes after finding the victims, most of whom had been bound and tortured. Some were only partially clothed, said Baja California attorney general's office spokesman Jose Manuel Yepiz.

Baja California state attorney General Romel Moreno said seven of the victims had their tongues cut out. He said a plastic bag containing five human tongues was also found near the bodies.

"We're in a war," Moreno told a news conference late Monday. "We're in a constant battle."

Moreno said at least three of

the victims were teenagers. He said the federal attorney general's office has taken over the investigation.

Yepiz said the 12 bodies were discovered next to a message written on a white piece of cardboard that read, "This is going to happen to all of those who are with 'The Engineer' for being blabbermouths."

Minutes after the grisly discovery, four other bodies were found in another empty lot in Tijuana, and two other bodies were discovered late Sunday in a lot next to a factory.

Investigators believe 16 of the victims were killed by warring drug gangs. The other two were victims of street crime, Yepiz said.

He said police also found a message with the four bodies found in an empty lot in a residential area that read, "I'm not a traitor but I don't like to be with in the company of cowards."

Victor Clark Alfaro, director of the Binational Center for Human Rights, said the killings come as the Arellano Felix cartel suffers internal strife and seeks to fend off Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman's push into the region.

Tijuana is among the cities hardest hit by violence as Mexico's drug cartels battle for lucrative smuggling routes past the border to supply illegal drug users in the United States.

Nearly two years ago, President Felipe Calderon launched a nationwide battle to take back territory controlled by some of the world's most powerful drug gangs, and the cartels have responded with unprecedented violence.

The violence has battered Tijuana's once-boisterous tourist economy, silencing discos and shops.

SOUTH KOREA

(AP) U.S. nuclear envoy Christopher Hill embarked on a mission to rescue an unraveling disarmament deal with North Korea, traveling to the region Tuesday as part of a rare trip to the communist nation.

Hill's visit to the North, set to begin Wednesday, could determine the fate of the disarmament-for-aid pact that Pyongyang has been flouting with a series of moves to reassemble its Yongbyon nuclear facilities.

Hill is scheduled to arrive in Seoul on Tuesday afternoon for talks with South Korean officials. The diplomat plans to enter the North through the heavily fortified Demilitarized Zone dividing the two Koreas on Wednesday morning, according to a person familiar with Hill's travel plans. He asked not be named,

saying he was not authorized to discuss the trip with media.

North Korea alarmed regional powers by abandoning its promise to disable its Yongbyon nuclear facilities, including the country's sole operational atomic reactor. Since mid-August, authorities have taken steps to restore the facility, citing anger over Washington's refusal to grant the regime a promised reward — removal from the U.S. terrorism blacklist.

The United States says the North first should accept a plan to verify its accounting of past nuclear activities.

In New York, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told reporters Monday that North Korean officials extended Hill an invitation to come to their capital, Pyongyang, "so we hope that there is some effort to address the verification protocol because that's what we need."

Rice said the U.S. "will look to see what they have to say."

U.S. State Department spokesman Robert Wood said in Washington that Hill is traveling to the North "to encourage them, once again, to submit this verification package, which we've said is not an onerous task that we have asked the North Koreans to undertake."

He called it a "standard verification package" that has been carried out by other countries.

Wood did not have details

of when Hill would be in North Korea or with whom he would meet. His North Korean counterpart is Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan. The spokesman said Hill would also go to China and Japan for talks.

It would be Hill's third visit to North Korea, with the earlier visits made in June and December last year.

North Korea agreed in February 2007 in talks with the United States, Japan, China, Russia and South Korea to disable the Yongbyon facilities in exchange for economic aid and political concessions, including removal from the terrorism list — a long-coveted goal of Pyongyang.

The North began disabling its facilities in November and in June blew up a cooling tower in a display of its determination to carry out the process.

But the deal ran aground in late July when Washington delayed North Korea's removal from the terrorism list until the North agreed to verification.

Pyongyang protested, saying verification was never part of the pact, and stopped disabling the plant in mid-August. Last week, the regime ordered U.N. nuclear monitors to leave the country, saying it would reinsert nuclear material into the reprocessing facility. Experts say scientists could have the plant up and running within months.

Hill's visit also comes amid reports that the North's autocratic leader, Kim Jong Il, is recuperating from a stroke. Kim, 66, has been out of public view for more than a month.

