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Soldier Edition

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An issue dedicated to soldiers' stories

## Soldier's heartfelt response to Iraqi child's condition

STAFF SGT. MICHEL SAURET  
4TH BCT, 3RD INF. DIV.



FOB KALSU— Little Rawan bounced on the couch, clapping her tiny hands, gaining laughter from those watching her in the room.

From the color of her blue lips, she looked as though she might have savored one grape-flavored lollipop too many. She sang while she bounced, but her voice came out as wisps of air, as if she were playing a joke on her grandparents to force them to listen closely. Her skin is pale for an Iraqi child, compared to the rich skin color of her grandfather and grandmother, who visited with U.S. Soldiers to talk about her condition.

Rawan, who is five years old, has a congenital heart disease, and her condition is extreme as it is affecting her pulmonary arteries and lungs, which causes her to talk in soft rasps, limiting oxygen to her skin thus causing the blue color of her lips.

Her family brought Rawan to the civil-military operations center on Forward Operating Base Kalsu in hopes of receiving help. Soldiers with the 415th Civil Affairs Company and the 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery have been working with Rawan's family since June, when the mayor of Jabella approached one of their officers about her condition.

"They're showing everybody they are really great people who really care about humans; doesn't matter if Iraqis or Americans," Rawan's grandfather, Ali Isa Amran, said of the Soldiers offering help.

"They do care about Iraqi (children) right here and that's showing a really good picture of America to all of the world."

Ever since June, Spc. Michael Kim has



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michel Sauret

Specialist Michael Kim, of Manhattan, N.Y., a member of the 415th CA Co., holds Rawan, a five-year-old Iraqi girl with a congenital heart disease, in his arms during her visit to the civil-military operations center on FOB Kalsu.

been spearheading the effort to find good medical care and raise money for Rawan's operation.

"I feel that in America we try to help the poor, and I think that just because I'm here in Iraq, it shouldn't stop me from being an American citizen and doing my duty to serve," said Kim, of Manhattan, N.Y. "Not just as a Soldier but as a citizen helping people because back home I used to send people to the homeless shelters; I used to refer them to food pantries."

His drive to serve the people of Iraq comes from his faith and religious studies. Kim studied philosophy and religious psychology at Yale University, and carries those teachings with him wherever

he goes. At one point, Kim was a Marine Reservist with a parachute unit and later a Coast Guard officer. He left the military, however, to answer a spiritual calling to become a Dominican friar, serving and studying at university monasteries in San Antonio, and later in St. Louis. Now, as a civilian, he works as a combat trauma specialist and psychoanalyst for a Veterans Affairs hospital in New York City.

It's been 16 years since he last put on a uniform as a service member before coming to Iraq. He decided to return to the military for a one-year commitment and volunteered for a deployment in Iraq

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# Translator uses skills to assist Iraqis, Soldiers

SPC. JUSTIN SNYDER  
MND-C PAO



**CAMP VICTORY**— Specialist Wilson Alnar does a lot of talking. That's because he's a translator with the Multi-National Division – Center Public Affairs Office.

"It's my job to be that bridge between the Iraqi people and the Coalition forces," said Alnar, a native of Atlanta.

When the Army first arrived in Iraq in 2003, the communication barrier between Iraqis and Soldiers was a big issue.

In Feb. 2003, the Army Reserve came up with a positive solution with adaptation of the "Translator Aid" military occupational specialty, better known to Soldiers as an O9L.

Native speakers of Arabic, Dari and Pashto were recruited and inserted into the Individual Ready Reserve. In 2005, a report was submitted to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and then in Feb. 2006, the program became an official MOS and was expanded to all components of the Army.

Soldiers in this MOS read, write and understand foreign languages. They put their skills to use as interpreters for troops operating on the streets of a foreign country. Nowhere today is this job more important than in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Alnar, who had been working as a custodian at an Atlanta school since 2002, learned of the MOS after talking with a friend who was serving in the Army.

"One of my friends deployed to Iraq in 2005 as an interpreter. When he came back in 2006, he started telling me how great it was and about the opportunities I would have," Alnar said. "I already spoke Arabic, so it seemed like the perfect job. It was my chance to do my part for the country and the Army."

First he had to convince his wife that it was a good idea.

"She was not too enthused with the idea of me in the Army. It took a while, but eventually she gave in," explained Alnar. "Now she, along with my daughter, are very proud and supportive."

He joined the Army in 2006 and departed for basic training. He then took a six week advanced individual training course at Fort Jackson, S.C.

The official language of his native country of Sudan was Arabic, so he was already fluent. However, the dialect in Sudan was slightly different than Iraq's. The AIT allowed him to brush up on his knowledge and skills about Iraq, by learning more about the culture and practicing with Iraqi dialect.

"The Arabic language is one of the hardest languages there is to master," Alnar said. "It took me almost 18 years, compared to the 4-5 years with English, to really become fluent."

"It's just like in the United States, where people in the South speak a little differently than the people in the North. The dia-



Photo by Maj. Tommy Spagel

**Specialist Wilson Alnar, translator with the MND-C Public Affairs Office and a native of Atlanta, Ga., speaks with an Iraqi policeman while on a mission in al-Kut, Iraq.**

lect was a little different than what I was used to in Sudan, but I caught on quickly," he added.

Deployed to Iraq since early August, he now finds himself using his language skills to help in the war on terrorism and the rebuilding efforts here.

When he's not putting his interpretation skills to use in the field, he translates documents from Arabic to English and serves as an advisor to his fellow Soldiers, teaching them about the Arab culture. He also assembles reports of web site and news station monitoring to help inform the command of reports by the Iraqi media.

However, he doesn't feel that any of these jobs are his most important.

"First and foremost, I'm a Soldier," said Alnar proudly. "I do a lot of things, but I'm still trained as a Soldier, and I need to be ready at all times.

"He hopes to go to college when he redeploys next year, but not before he leaves his mark in this country.

"I have a very important job because good communication is needed," Alnar stated. "I want to do well so I can help the Soldiers accomplish their mission and also help the Iraqis get their needs across. I'm gaining more experience every day, and I'm looking forward to a long career in the Army."

## THE Mountain View

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Division Special Troops Battalion, 10th Mtn. Div.  
Task Force 49



# RAWAN

From page 1

with the U.S. Army. It was a year he wanted to dedicate to serving in a civil manner, and meeting Rawan gave him exactly that opportunity.

“I think that it has to come down to my commitment to Army Civil Affairs and also being a former Dominican friar,” Kim said of his decision to help this little girl. “My previous calling to serve God is also tied to my country’s mission to not just be (deployed) in this country, but to help the people. That’s just as important as finding an insurgent. It helps the community.”

Ever since becoming involved with Rawan’s case, Kim summoned the help of fellow Soldiers and organizations back home to raise money for Rawan’s surgery. He spoke with Iraqi doctors at the National Iraqi Assistance Center in Baghdad to seek their help evaluating Rawan. He helped link Rawan with the Ibn al-Bitar Hospital in Baghdad to have her receive an echocardiogram to scan her heart. He then contacted medical institutions and hospitals throughout the U.S. to look at Rawan’s echo screening, which unfortunately revealed how severe her condition truly was.

“Rawan’s cardiac condition has limited her quality of life and she’s often tired ... Her heart defect has also affected her lungs so she has trouble breathing. Because of all of this it’s been a challenge to find help,” he said.

Since taking on Rawan’s case, Kim has slept only four or five hours a night, often working late into the night doing online research and contacting people in the U.S. and doctors in Iraq to see what more he could do to help.

A group in the U.S. known as Team Rawan has been raising money and even found someone to donate frequent flyer miles to cover Rawan’s travel to a hospital willing to perform the operation.

The group is made up of four women, Siobhan Dolan, Lina Raspaolo (both of New York City), Karla Reilly (of Montgomery, Ala.), and Heather Foley (of Washington, D.C.) who together have been able to raise \$1,500 and plan on raising more. More

friends in Daytona, Fla., held a 500-person party to raise awareness and money. Kim has even started the “Prayer and a Dollar” fund drive, asking service members on FOB Kalsu to donate their prayers and charitable giving.

Babylon University in Hillah has also offered to help, providing cardiac tomography imaging to see the extent of Rawan’s operation needs. As far as providing the operation, Kim is looking at options in India where doctors are treating children from developing countries and leading the way for progressive medicine.

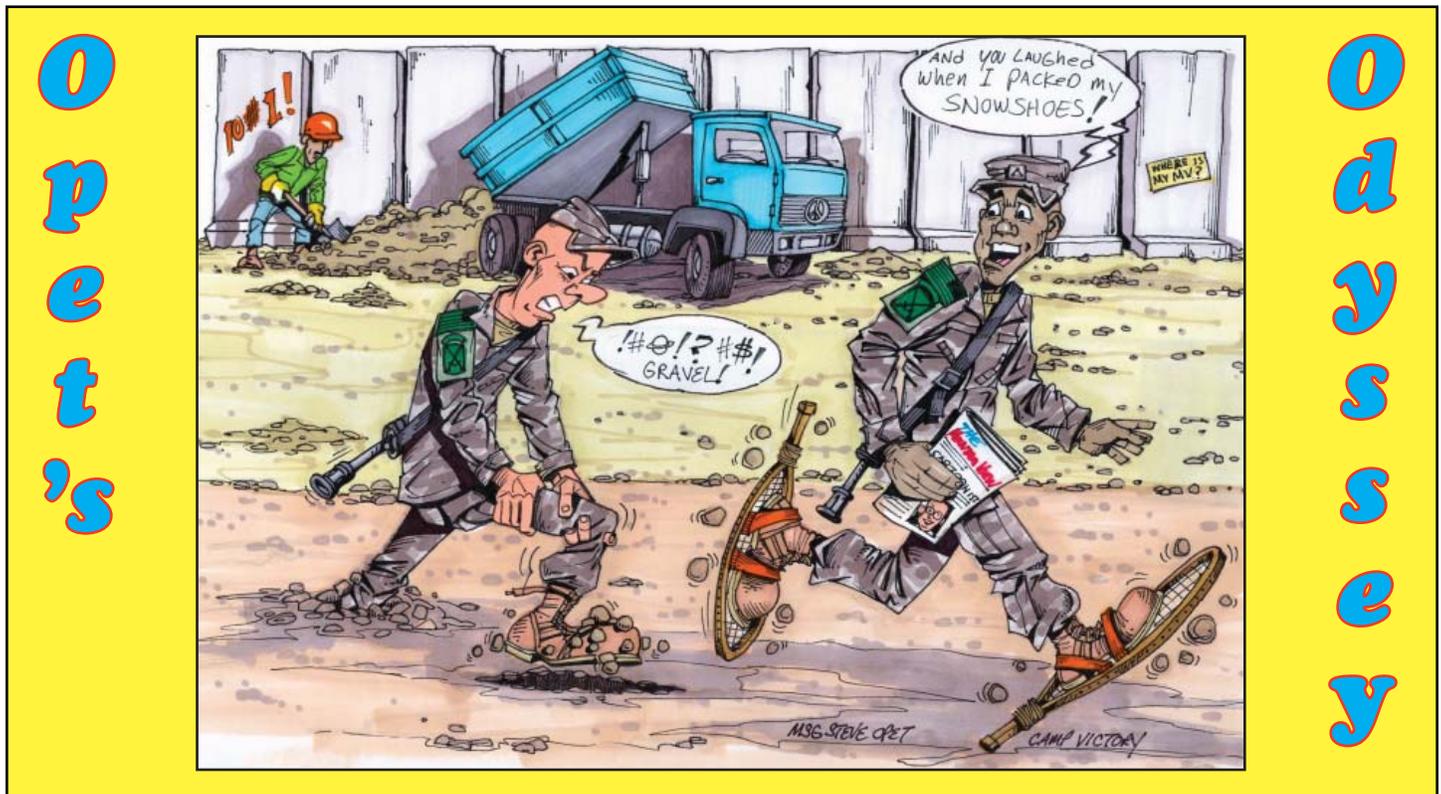
Admittedly, Kim has said he’s faced doubt on many occasions in trying to find a solution for Rawan. It is only because of the support he has received from people around the world that he has found the strength to keep going.

“It’s a wonderful thing because no man is an island, so said a famous monk, Thomas Merton ... It means you can’t just think that you’re here alone as far as being your existence or doing the different things in your life for yourself or for others. You’re not by yourself and luckily I’ve got Soldiers and concerned Americans and others and Iraqis who are very supportive,” he said.

For Kim, though, the challenge is even greater because his one-year commitment ends in November, and he may not be able to see Rawan’s case being carried through in person. However, he intends to keep helping and keep the work going after he returns home and reassured Rawan’s family that the next civil affairs unit will continue to work with them and resume the progress already made by the 415th CA Company.

“I have to always remember that it’s a team effort, that I recognize that there are a lot of Soldiers and American citizens and doctors and hospital staff that are behind me and with me, so I don’t really focus on the impossible even though at times I spend a lot of nights worrying about (Rawan). Every morning I wake up and say, ‘I got people working with me, so everything’s okay.’”

To help Spc. Michael Kim in his efforts, he can be contacted at [brotheryoga@hotmail.com](mailto:brotheryoga@hotmail.com)



# Homophones

A homophone is a pair of words which sound the same but are spelt differently and have different meanings.

from AskOxford.com

Identify the pairs of homophones from the following clues.

**Example:** One word means a place for keeping aircraft; the other word means a shaped piece of wood, metal, etc. on which you can hang clothes.

**Answer:** Hangar/hanger.

1. One word means simple; the other means an aircraft.
2. One word means expected; the other word means condensed vapour.
3. One word is nautical; the other is central to the body.
4. One word means connections; the other is an animal.
5. One word means an occasion; the other is a herb.
6. One word means to hit; the other is a vegetable.
7. One word means permitted; the other means audible.
8. One word is a singer; the other is a sum of money.

# WORD SEARCH

from LiveWire Puzzles

G T T H E A T H L E T I C S F I R J M S  
 T N R W E I G H T L I F T I N G U O S B  
 L T I L Y M G N I T O O H S P D I C I A  
 L G A L L A B Y E L L O V Y O M N A N S  
 A G T B C S T R A M P O L I N I N G A K  
 B N H T L Y T A O F O O T B A L L N I E  
 Y I L G Y E C A E C H G G I H L G I R T  
 E L O N E A T V E K Y A N P O L N X T B  
 L T N I N E C E R M W T I F C A I O S A  
 L S E E C O T H N S E O C C K B W B E L  
 O E N O L H T A T N E P N R E D O M U L  
 V R O N R E S N N I I O E D Y N R F Q T  
 H W E A N T W I I A N S F S O A N A E D  
 C I S C I T S A N M Y G C I M H T Y H R  
 A A C C O G N I V I D M G N I M M I W S  
 E A S Y R E H C R A W A T E R P O L O N  
 B S O F T B A L L L L A B E S A B E C I  
 G N I M M I W S D E Z I N O R H C N Y S

## Summer Olympics

- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Archery             | Shooting              |
| Athletics           | Softball              |
| Badminton           | Swimming              |
| Baseball            | Synchronized swimming |
| Basketball          | table tennis          |
| Beach volleyball    | Taekwondo             |
| Boxing              | Tennis                |
| Canoeing            | Trampoline            |
| Cycling             | Triathlon             |
| Diving              | Volleyball            |
| Equestrianism       | Water polo            |
| Fencing             | Weightlifting         |
| Football            | Wrestling             |
| Gymnastics          | Yachting              |
| Handball            |                       |
| Hockey              |                       |
| Judo                |                       |
| Modern pentathlon   |                       |
| Rhythmic gymnastics |                       |
| Rowing              |                       |

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SCARY MOVIE?



Photo by Staff Sgt. Amber Emery

“My favorite scary movie is ‘A House of a Thousand Corpses’ because Rob Zombie directed it,” said Staff Sgt. Brian Niggli, Division Special Troops Battalion, 10th Mountain Division career counselor.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Amber Emery

“My favorite is all of the ‘Saw’ movies because people get killed,” said Pfc. Alex Boswell, Battalion Security Team member for Division Special Troops Battalion, 10th Mountain Division.

Our allies can have a beer.  
 Why can't we?  
 Or should we be allowed?

Have an idea?  
 Go to the Mountain Sound Off Blog at  
[www.taskforcemountain.com](http://www.taskforcemountain.com)



# Trivia of the Week

Who was the director of Pulp Fiction, Reservoir Dogs, and Kill Bill Volume I and II?