



Task Force Danger Progress Report

June 21, 2004

2nd BCT/25th ID support Iraqi children in Operation Crayon



KIRKUK AIR BASE, Iraq—The education of children is pivotal to the future of Iraq. This is why the Coalition has focused so much on school improvements and the welfare of students during its rebuilding of this country.

One of the most recent Second Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division (Light) projects has been the adoption of Operation Crayon, which is being coordinating through the 2nd BCT Unit Ministry Team. Operation Crayon is an outreach project that has already been implemented in other parts of Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Kosovo, in order to assist deployed Soldiers whose mission is to help children in need.

"It's one part of a huge effort for America to reach out across the world," Chaplain (Maj.) Jonathan Etterbeek, 2nd BCT Chaplain, said about the Operation Crayon project on Kirkuk Air Base.

The purpose of Operation Crayon is to seek school supplies so that American

troops can distribute them to needy children in the countries where they are deployed. It offers an approach for posts, units, and especially family members to support their troops as they promote goodwill in war torn countries.

Currently on base, 2nd BCT Soldiers and Airmen are volunteering their time in this joint operation to stuff bags of school supplies that be given to every student in the Kirkuk area.

"Our goal is to provide every child in our AO [area of responsibility] with a school supplies bag by September," said Chief Warrant Officer Randall Reynolds, an officer with the 2nd BCT Information Operations cell, who has volunteered his time toward Operation Crayon.

There are more than 300 schools and 30,000 students inside 2nd BCT's AO. So far, the Chaplain's office has received about 270 packages and has filled 500 bags of school supplies.

"We still have a long way to go," said

ICDC Soldiers Recognized for Heroism, Valor and Service

In the Headquarters of the 205th ICDC Battalion, dignitaries, local sheiks and various civil leaders mingle on an open deck over watching the Diyala River. It is hot like most days but the elevated platform allows for a cool breeze to keep things bearable. About a hundred local leaders gather each with a myriad of titles and job descriptions. Although they may possess minor disparities, they have put aside any differences in politics for the afternoon to support a common and worthy cause.

They have gathered to show their unequivocal patronage for members of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps

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Staff Sgt. Warren Cotton, Chaplain Etterbeek's assistant. "If anyone wants to be part of the team here as far as helping the Soldiers and being a part of the rebuilding process in Kirkuk -- you don't have to send a whole lot, any small donation is fine.

Items that are needed to help support this operation are: writing paper, construction paper, pencils, pencil sharpeners, pencil erasers, pens, markers, chalk, chalk board erasers, glue, rounded-end scissors, coloring books, soccer balls and jump ropes, band-aids, and of course crayons (preferably in 24 packs).

Mail donations to: Operation Crayon
Chaplain Jonathan Etterbeek
HHC 2nd BCT 25th ID
APO AE 09347-9998

Story and photos by Spc. Sean Kimmons, 25th ID
(L) Public Affairs Office

ICDC Awards continued

who were receiving awards for valor and service. They were also demonstrating their compassionate support to the families of four ICDC soldiers recently killed in an ambush. The ceremony was a snapshot of the new Iraq and a glimpse of the extraordinary untapped potential within the country. It was an event to be remembered by all.

As Maj. Gen. John R.S. Batiste arrived, an impromptu receiving line formed. Local leaders, both civil and religious, shook hands as U.S. Army officials expressed their appreciation for being invited. As everyone settled down, the ceremony began with a welcome from the 205th ICDC Battalion Commander. Leaders from the local community handed off the microphone one by one after delivering speeches with common embedded themes of heroism, service and commitment to rebuild Iraq.

Across the open aired deck sat seven men being recognized for extraordinary service. They all wore the official ICDC uniform and seemed a bit nervous to receive awards for their acts of valor and unparalleled commitment to the ICDC team. As their names were called, each one snapped to attention and marched confidently towards the Governor who was presenting the awards. The ICDC medals were pinned on the soldiers' chests as local leaders shook their hands. Although each soldier

could overcome their nervousness with military professionalism and confidence, they could do little to hide their faces teeming with pride.

As soldiers were recognized for being wounded in action, the crowd looked on with admiration. Perhaps the most significant event of the afternoon occurred concurrently with the ceremony on the lower deck. Younger ICDC soldiers looked up from afar and saw what it meant to serve their country.

The ICDC Executive Officer looked up from watching these soldiers and said, "Events like this will show especially these soldiers that the true traitors to Iraq are the ones hiding in bushes" waiting to ambush coalition forces." One wounded soldier was still bedridden from his wounds. His peers attempted to lift his bed but local leaders insisted on moving to him. Their sincere appreciation for his service was apparent.

Sitting in places of honor at the front of the ceremony were the family members of those ICDC killed in an ambush. They have given the ultimate sacrifice and the pain still runs deep. Their loss was not in vain. The ICDC Battalion Commander states, "When their country needed them most, they responded to the call."

After the ceremony ended, local leaders sought out those wearing the dangling red and black medals. Many hugged the family members of the deceased while others shook the hands of those wounded for a job well done.

The group moved downstairs and spent time eating an incredible assortment of food and speaking of the future. The people were as diverse as the 205th ICDC itself. All different backgrounds with all different beliefs shared an afternoon together in harmony. The ceremony was over but the hope for a cohesive and stable Iraq remains. It was definitely an event to be remembered by all. In fact, in the search for models of stability and peace, such events should be remembered...and practiced.

(Story by Capt. Brian Ducote, TF 2-2 Infantry PAO)



Dr. Abdullah Rashid, the Diyala Provincial Governor, awards an ICDC soldier a medal for valor as Maj. Gen. John R.S. Batiste, 1st ID and TF Danger Commander looks on. (Photo by Spc. David Dyer, 196th MPAD)

2BCT & ICDC Brigade conduct joint small arms range

Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, conducted its first Joint Small Arms Range with the 30th Brigade of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) on June 15.

There were 8 soldiers from the ICDC present, under the command of Maj. Akram. Captain Jeyanthan Jeyasingam organized and oversaw the training. Also involved in the training were 1st Sgt. Gilbert M. Stewart, Spc. Jeffrey Breen, and Spc. Chet Bateman.

Training conducted included: operating a small arms range, range safety, range duties, range conduct, Priority Maintenance Inspections (PMI) and cross training on M16/M4 and AK 47 rifles.

Captain Jeyasingam said that it was "a very positive experience. Our ICDC counterparts were very professional and were quick to learn and adapt to our range procedures...Definitely looking forward to conducting this joint training again."

