



BRO Progress

1st Infantry Division

Youth outreach program is a success in Baqubah

BAQUBAH, Iraq--Word spreads like wildfire with neighborhood children living near the Civil Military Operations Center (CMOC): "It's time for school, it's time for school!"

The children line up at the gate in eager anticipation, smiling and giggling as SGT Marc Farris and SPC April Phillips lead another "Neighborhood Kids Program" class with the local children.

Farris and Phillips are Soldiers from the 415th Civil Affairs Battalion located at the CMOC in Baqubah. Farris graduated from and is employed by New York University in New York and Phillips is a college student in North Smithfield, R.I. Teaching a class for the local youth was a natural role for both of them.

"We had kids that would be near our gate just watching us," Phillips said as he reflected on the origins of the program. "We knew that they wanted to meet us, but it was a matter of figuring out how to break the ice. One day I went and handed out candy to the children, and that pro-

vided a starting point."

From there a curriculum was developed.

"We needed to start to bridge the language gap between ourselves and them," said Farris. "A good starting point was to learn common English greetings such as hello, good-bye, etc. The children caught on amazingly fast and this put us in a position to expand the program."

While the children have learned basic English language phrases, they also have had classes on proper hand washing, dental hygiene, the fire prevention technique "stop, drop and roll," how to count to 10, watercolor painting, and doing sidewalk chalk art.

Farris and Phillips also like to make the experience as fun as possible for everybody, so they had classes where the roles are reversed and the children teach them Arabic.

"The children just love being able to teach their language to us," said Phillips.

The classes, held one to three times per week, are announced by word of mouth. Due to safety concerns, there are no set times. Class size ranges from eight to 25 children with an average age of 8 years old.

"Any time Coalition Forces can develop a bond of friendship with the children, it will have an impact for a long duration and will be remembered for a lifetime," said MAJ Leon Dyer, officer in charge of the CMOC.

"It also has a secondary ripple effect, as the kids will tell their family and friends what a good time they had with the Americans. I've personally seen where this program has been a real morale booster for both SGT Farris and SPC Phillips."

Phillips best summarized the rewards of the experience as she said, "The neatest thing is to be walking across the compound and I can hear this little voice yelling my name. When I peer through the gate and I see a child waving at me, this tells me it's all worth it."



Tikrit Fire Department receives new equipment



TIKRIT, Iraq- The 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment provided the Tikrit Fire Department with fire turn-out gear and safety equipment.

In April, CPT Aaron Coombs, Commander, C Company, TF 1-18 learned that the fire department was well-trained and had several new fire trucks. However, they lacked the personal equipment to safely and efficiently perform their duties.

Task Force Vanguard turned to the Commanders Emergency Relief Program for help.

To meet the need for emergency services equipment, the Task Force ordered more than \$80,000 worth of turn-out equipment for the Tikrit Department. The order was placed with the same vendor

that provides the equipment to the New York City Fire Department. The order was for twenty complete fire fighter uniforms to include helmets, jackets, pants and boots as well as several entry tools like door ponders and pry-bars.

The Tikrit Fire Department was very happy with the new equipment. The Tikrit Fire Chief, COL Nazir, expressed his gratitude saying, "It means a lot to know that you have enough confidence in us to give us such nice equipment."

With their new equipment, the Tikrit fire fighters are suited up and ready to battle blazes in their city. This not only bolsters security in Tikrit, it enhances the 1st Infantry Division's already strong relationship with Iraqi Emergency Services in Tikrit.

Pediatrician treats Iraqi children

TIKRIT, Iraq- "This is a nice break from sick call," CPT Jennifer Mbuthia remarked during a medical assistance visit to Iraqi villagers in the vicinity of Forward Operating Base Speicher on the morning of Sept. 18.

CPT Mbuthia, a pediatrician from Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany attached to E Company, 701st Main Support Battalion (MSB), accompanied a 12th Chemical Company combat patrol from FOB Speicher.

The mission was to visit, assess and treat the villagers, and distribute medical supplies, clothing and toys.

Mbuthia treated five farming families who have little access to routine medical care in Tikrit. She also conducted thorough medical assessments and treated more than 25 children.

"To examine kids, to look at kids, helped me to remember why I became a doctor. This is what I love to do," said Mbuthia.

She saw everything from sore throats to a newborn baby boy on the mission. She provided creams, eye drops and medication and administered quick exams and prenatal vitamins to six pregnant women.

"I love treating Soldiers," Mbuthia said. "But this gave me a chance to treat something other than lower back pain and prepare profiles."

CPT Mbuthia hopes to assist 12th Chemical Company Soldiers on future patrols.

"It's important to support the 1st Infantry Division mission by supporting these families," she said.

