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Team "Tribal" delivers smiles to Iraqi children

By Pfc. J. Princeville Lawrence
4th BCT, 1st Armd. Div.

COB ADDER – Kids love anything free. So when Border Training Team Tribal delivered children's medicine and candy to the Iraqi people in Maysan province recently, kids were elated – at least for the candy.

BTT Tribal's mission was to distribute children's medicine to the Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 41st Iraqi Army Brigade.

"What we're trying to do is build relationships with the village," said Sgt. John Young, an Aurora, Colo., native and a medic with Team Tribal. "This medicine is mostly for the children."

"There's a lot of good stuff here," said Young as he delivered the medicine, "Penicillin, cough medicine, children's vitamins."

Rashead Tiema, a medic with the 1st Bn., 41st IA Bde., looked through the box of medical supplies and said simply, "Thank you."

"A lot of them have the training but not the supplies," said Sgt. 1st Class Steven Ward, a Fort Walton Beach, Fla., native and Team Tribal's chief medic. "This will help them get experience."

"Anytime you see a smile on their faces, it takes your mind off everything (bad) that happens here. That's the reason we're over here."

-Sgt. John Young, Team Tribal medic

Photo by Pfc. J. Princeville Lawrence

Sgt. John Young, an Aurora, Colo., native and a medic with Border Transition Team Tribal delivers food to Iraqi children recently in Maysan province. The 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division is deployed from Fort Bliss, Texas to Maysan province in Iraq, where they advise and assist Iraqi Security Forces.

"We can give this to the children and we can help build relations," said Maj. Hussein Yuones, commander, 1st Bn., 41st IA Bde. "For the medical supplies, we have plans for the children in the village here. If there are any children who are sick, they can find help."

Meanwhile, other BTT Tribal members were congratulating an Iraqi Army Soldier who had found a rocket in the nearby village.

"It's great seeing our training put to work," said Sgt. 1st Class Alfonso Mendoza, Jr., a native of Muleshoe, Texas, and BTT Tribal platoon sergeant.

Members of BTT Tribal also visited the motor pool, where they talked with their Iraqi counterparts to ensure they had the proper technical manuals and replacement parts for their humvees.

Before leaving the base, Young had hatched a plan to hand

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out treats to children in the nearby village. There was a box of Meals, Ready-to-Eat stashed in the back of the truck and Young, taking time to remove the pork products, took out all the goodies: candy, cookies, applesauce and energy bars.

Shortly after leaving the IA compound, BTT Tribal stopped in the nearby village, where soon there was a crowd of curious and eager children. The children held up their hands while the adults and teens stood in the background, grinning. The assertive kids ended up with armfuls of food while the shy kids hung around the periphery waiting for things to turn their way. Knowing this, Young and Mendoza made a conscious effort to reach over the thicket of children's arms to ensure everyone received something.

The box of treats ran out in approximately five minutes. The children came and left like the tide, but not before Young and Mendoza could pose for pictures with them.

There's something cathartic about helping kids, about giving armfuls of candy, cookies and treats to kids who need them, Young said.

"Anytime you see a smile on their faces, it takes your mind off everything (bad) that happens here," said Young. "That's the reason we're over here."

And when those kids complain of stomachaches, at least now the citizens of Iraq will have the medicine to treat them.

Photo by Pfc. J. Princeville Lawrence

Sgt. John Young, an Aurora, Colo., native and a medic with Border Transition Team Tribal, delivers childrens' medicine to Iraqi Soldiers in Maysan province recently. Rashead Tiema, a medic with 1st Battalion, 41st Iraqi Army Regiment, looked through the box of medical supplies and offered a simple "Thank you."

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