



Sgt. Rosy Hart, a native of Manheim, Germany and an administrative assistant with the 13th SC(E), plays with an Iraqi infant in Al Jamiah Jan. 15 to try and get him to crack a smile. (Below) Pfc. Daren C. Ruby from Sand Springs, Okla., a combat medic with the 2-82 takes an Iraqi man's blood pressure before he is diagnosed in Al Jamiah, Jan.15.



1st Lt. Wayne Wilson of Cleveland, Texas, a physician's assistant with the 2-82 speaks with an interpreter while recommending care for an Iraqi infant's cut foot Jan. 15.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SPC. ALEXANDRA HEMMERLY-BROWN

MEDICS WITH a MISSION: administering aid in

Task Force 2-82 Soldiers assist Iraqi doctor, medical staff during recent visit to

AL JAMIAH, Iraq—Iraqi citizens stood in line holding their numbered tickets, and children trudged barefoot through the cold, ankle-deep mud anticipating a chance to be seen by U.S. and Iraqi doctors.

They were waiting for members of 2nd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery

Regiment, who rode to the nearby town of Al Jamiah to conduct a medical day-clinic Jan. 15 for the residents there.

The clinic was a pre-cursor to the medical facility's projected grand opening in a few months. "The ultimate goal is to get this to be a fully-functioning clinic," said Capt. Andrew T. Short,

battery commander for the 2-82 FA.

Al Jamiah does not currently have a clinic, or any facility in which its residents can receive medical assistance. Most small towns have a clinic, but they fight to stay open because the people do not trust government-run establishments, and they are often unable to pay for medical services. It is the Army's intent to empower the local Iraqi doctors, and help them gain the citizen's trust through these kinds of missions, Short said.

"We are trying to ... legitimize their span of control through missions like these," Short, a Detroit native said, referring to the Iraqi doctors and the Iraqi government, who sponsor these clinics.

Short said clinics usually have three major problems; security, doctors willing to work, and a reliable supply chain. He said the concept is to get Iraqi citizens used to coming to a clinic, so they will trust their own health-care givers.

"We are trying to put an Iraqi face on the help," said 1st Lt. Wayne Wilson of Cleveland, Texas, a physician's assistant in the 2-82.

Wilson, the Army doctor on this mission, said they try to put these types of projects in the Iraqi's hands, and let the Sheiks take credit for heading them.

"It's good to help the Iraqi people," Wilson said. "We work with their doctors, see how they treat people, and we learn from each other."

Medical missions are unadvertised in the towns for security reasons. When a convoy arrives in a town, they will set up a perimeter, tell children to go and spread the word of the day-clinic, and wait for villagers to line up.

It doesn't take long for town residents to rush to the day-clinic for their chance to have their health concerns addressed. Soldiers on the Jan. 15 mission gave the patients in line tickets depending on their level of urgency, and they were ushered





An Iraqi boy takes a small bite out of a candy sucker during a recent visit by American Soldiers.



Soldiers from 2-82 FA carry in medical supplies during a recent medical assistance visit outside of LSA Anaconda.

nearby villages

LSA Anaconda's close neighbor of Al Jamiah

into the clinic to visit the four stations set up there.

The building used was built by coalition forces and had not been in use. Soldiers inside set up an initial check-in station where two U.S. medics spoke with patients and diagnosed their ailments. Each adult had their blood pressure taken as a precaution.

for the U.S. doctor, and one for the Iraqi doctor. Patients were divided up evenly between the two doctors, and those with serious problems went in to see one, while others moved on to the "pharmacy."

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- 1st Lt. Wayne Wilson

At the "pharmacy," patients received antibiotics and other medication for their illnesses. The medical supplies were donated by the U.S. Army, and arrived at the clinic via a trailer on the

back of a Humvee. Which medicines to bring were simply chosen by which illnesses are most common in the area, and what the doctors expected to treat, said Spc. Hubert Sowizral, a combat medic.

On their way out the door, patients could pick up some dental hygiene items at the last station, as well as get a little education on keeping their teeth clean.

There was also a room designated for civil affairs donation items such as clothes, shoes, toys, and candy.

Wilson said most of the patients he sees on these types of missions have only minor illnesses such as colds and infections, but occasionally he gets to assist in medical emergencies.

He said a few weeks prior, he was on a medical mission where an infant was brought in who was choking on a zipper and starting to turn blue. Wilson said he was just at the right place at the right time to help the child, and was luckily able to save the baby.

"As a father and husband, you'd rather be doing these jobs," Short said of the medical missions compared to his usual security-based missions.

An integral part of these missions is that Iraqi forces assist in the security, Short said. He said these missions are only temporary fixes, until the Iraqi people are

managing things on their own. "It's a non-standard mission," Short said. "We hope to continue these until we get the clinic up and running."



(Above) Master Sgt. Tessie Coe from Bethlehem, Pa., a chaplain's assistant for the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), slips a shoe on an Iraqi boy Jan. 15 to see if it fits. (Left) Sgt. Rosy Hart, a native of Manheim, Germany and an administrative assistant with the 13th SC(E), gives an Iraqi infant candy to stop her crying at a day-clinic in Al Jamiah, Jan. 15.

