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16th Sustainment Brigade
Public Affairs Office**

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California, Tennessee guardsmen strengthen bond with local Iraqis

by Sgt. 1st Class Paul W. McKenna, Jr.
Alpha Co., 1-184th Infantry, 30th CSSB

DEBECKA, Iraq – California and Tennessee guardsmen from Contingency Operating Base Q-West brought soccer balls, school supplies and medical attention here April 1.

In March, a child from the community ran in front of an Alpha Co., 1-184th Infantry, 30th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, vehicle during a patrol and was struck by the mirror, causing some superficial head trauma and a depressed skull fracture.

After the boy ran into the road, the driver was able to pull off to the right, which may have saved the boy's life.

The purpose of this mission was to check on the condition of this child, his family, and to re-enforce relations with the community.

“It was important to check on the young boy to ensure he is getting the proper medical treatment from the local authorities and to demonstrate our care and concern for the local populace and their well being,” said Lt. Col. Tommy Baker, commander, 30th CSSB.

The unit delivered a claims card to the boy's family and explained the procedures for them to follow in order to be compensated for the medical bills and associated expenses.

“He appeared well when we visited him,” said Maj. Michael Price, surgeon, 16th Sust. Bde. “I believe he is going to make a complete recovery with no permanent neurologic deficits.”

Spc. Michael Rankin, the driver of the vehicle, spent some time with the child while doctors from the 16th Sustainment Brigade Surgeons Cell reexamined him.

“It was good to see how well the young man was doing and to have the chance to show him that we care,” said Rankin.

Alpha Co. Soldiers and 30th CSSB leaders also brought a dozen soccer balls, pens, pencils, school supplies and many treats to the children of this community.

“The village was extremely receptive to our visit and our troops had a chance to interact with the locals which is always good for building stronger relationships,” said Baker. “Overall, this mission will strengthen relationships between coalition forces and the local populace in that area of MND-N.”

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Spc. Michael Rankin, driver, Alpha Co., 1-184 Infantry, 30th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, poses with an Iraqi child that ran into the street and was struck by a mirror during one of the unit’s patrols. Rankin’s quick reactions during the incident may have saved the boys life. The boy suffered superficial head trauma and a depressed skull fracture. (courtesy photo)