

Iraqi girl travels to U.S. in effort to see for first time

SGT. DAVID TURNER
2ND BCT, 3RD INF. DIV.

FOB KALSU – During a morning visit to Taha Naji Deyad's house, 1st Lt. Michael Kendrick sits at the family table, eating flatbread with jam and fried eggs, and sipping chi tea.

"I eat a lot of meals here," says Kendrick.

It's clear he is a welcome guest and a family friend, and not just because he's the leader of the platoon responsible for this neighborhood in al-Buaytha. As he sits at the table talking to Taha, Taha's 5-year old daughter Noor insists on sitting next to him. She often holds his hand; sometimes she whispers in his ear or offers a kiss on his cheek.

Kendrick, the father of two young daughters himself is not only tolerant; he enjoys the little girl's company. She wears a pair of purple children's sunglasses that Kendrick's wife, Robin, sent as a gift for her.

Soon she may need them.

Kendrick's visit today is special. With him is Lt. Col. Hyun Lee, battalion surgeon from the 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, who is here to review final preparations for a trip Noor is taking. It's a trip that, if successful, will give Noor the ability to see, something she has never been able to do.

Noor has been blind since birth. A condition called sclerocornea makes it possible for her to detect only vague impressions of light. Her father, a schoolteacher, has a brother with the same illness who lives with the family in their house on the banks of the Tigris River.

When Kendrick arrived here last year as part of 3rd Platoon, Company D, 1-30th Inf. Reg., 2nd Brigade Com-



Sgt. David Turner

Noor, a young girl receiving eye surgery in the U.S., leads 1st Lt. Michael Kendrick, platoon leader for 3rd Plt., Co D, 1-30th Inf. Regt., on a walk through her yard in al-Buaytha.

bat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, he began meeting residents of al-Buaytha, often leaving the safety of his armored vehicle to walk in the neighborhoods.

"Our philosophy, especially mine, is that we would get out and get with the people to talk about what their issues were, what their problems were," he said.

Soon he met Taha, who in addition to teaching at the nearby al-Harah school, is also a contractor and community council member, working on projects

to rebuild his village's damaged infrastructure.

"He's been our go-to guy," said Kendrick, from Phoenix. "He's a friend of mine; he's a friend of all of ours. He takes care of my men and we try to take care of him and his family. He's part of our extended family as far as our platoon is concerned."

Taha helped with work on several community projects, such as rebuilding and improving the school. He said his friendship with Kendrick began as soon as they met. Then Kendrick visited the family's house and met young Noor.

"When I started talking with him, Noor just seemed to follow right along. She follows [Taha] everywhere. Because his house was in my area of responsibility, it was natural that I would find her," Kendrick said.

"When he came and sat with me, he saw Noor," Taha said. "Noor sat with him and touched him, because she can not see. She thinks everyone cannot see, like her. After that, she asked me about Kendrick: 'Father, where does Kendrick come from? Father, is Kendrick a good man or a bad man?' Every time she would ask about him. One day she told me, 'Father, I want to tell you something, but I don't know if it's good or bad.' I said, 'Tell me.' She said, 'I love Kendrick.'"

After the initial visit, said Kendrick, he and Taha stayed in touch daily.

"We're there five to six days a week on patrol, so Noor was naturally part of our patrol. We'd check in with Taha, see how they were doing and check in on Noor as well," Kendrick said.

Then Kendrick got the idea to try and do something about Noor's blindness.

Plaque Dedication honors fallen Soldiers



Staff Sgt. Michel Sauret

Command Sergeant Major Jesse Andrews (left), command sergeant major for Multi-National Division – Center, and Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, MND-C commanding general, unveil a plaque honoring 98 MND-C fallen comrades on Memorial Day during a dedication ceremony on Camp Victory, Iraq.

Ministry of Agriculture conducts air campaign

SGT. KEVIN STABINSKY
2ND BCT, 3RD INF. DIV.

FOB KALSU – One May 22, an aggressive aerial campaign in Sayafiyah and Arab Jabour targeted pests which

had caused countless dollars in damage to palm trees over the past year.

Left unchecked, the dubas beetle, which bores into the tree and kills it, can seriously disrupt the production of dates in the area, said Mike Stevens,

Baghdad-7 embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team agriculture adviser.

Behind oil, dates were once the main export of Iraq, said Stevens, a native of

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THE Dog Face Daily

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SIGHT

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"We inquired through our medic what the process was in getting her seen by a doctor and getting an evaluation," Kendrick said.

They sent pictures to the battalion surgeon, Lee, who then personally evaluated her. The ball just started rolling from there, Kendrick said.

As it turned out, little Noor was a prime candidate for surgery, which involved the battalion further.

When Lt. Col. Kenneth Adgie, 1-30th Inf. Reg. commander heard about Noor, he backed the project.

"He had the opportunity to meet Taha [and Noor] one-on-one, and that's all it took. As soon as he met Taha and saw what kind of man he was, he just went with it. He's been fully supportive," Kendrick said.

Initially, Air Force ophthalmologists were to perform the procedure, but when that option failed, other avenues were explored. Then the Eye Defects Research Foundation, a non-govern-

mental organization based in Los Angeles, stepped in to help. They found a doctor in the United States willing to perform the procedure and secured visas for Noor and her mother Shaymaa to travel there.

Early Memorial Day morning, Kendrick and members of his platoon picked up Noor, Shaymaa and Taha and gave them a ride to Baghdad International Airport in the back of a Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle. Noor smiled as the vehicle bounced up and down dirt roads, her mother holding her tightly. At the airport, Noor said goodbye to Kendrick and her father. Visas were granted only for her and her mother. After giving Kendrick a last peck on the cheek, she and her mother were escorted to the terminal. For a while afterward, Taha wept.

Kendrick, who is scheduled to go home with the rest of the 2nd BCT in July, would like to see Noor return home before he leaves.

"It would be an awesome capstone, to get this done," Kendrick said. "This is one of a hundred things we've ac-

complished as far as improving the lives of people in our area. As far as my piece of the puzzle is concerned, I can lay my head at night knowing I've done everything I can do."

Kendrick was careful to point out that his measure of success for his time in Iraq doesn't necessarily depend on the success of Noor's surgery. He has many other good experiences to look back on. When he arrived in al-Buaytha, terrorist violence was still common; now it looks as if the peace is becoming permanent.

"It was awful. Now you've got kids going to school every day, kids walking to school. You've got families opening stores. People walk around their [neighborhoods]. They're proud of their communities again," he said.

Though the surgery isn't guaranteed to give Noor her vision, Taha, as a father and a teacher, is hopeful of her prospects.

"Before now, we told ourselves maybe she can not go to school. Now we hope to see Noor next year in my school, with my kids," he said.

CAMPAIGN

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Alexandria, Minn.

Because of dates' importance to the economy, pesticides were distributed via two helicopters over orchards in al-Buaytha and Arab Jabour, in southeast Baghdad Province. With the hatching season for the dubas beetles occurring between May and June, Stevens said it was important to conduct the spraying now.

"Otherwise it proliferates the propagation of the beetles. If you don't spray (one) year, the next year will be 10 to 100 times worse," he said.

The spraying had no Coalition force involvement. Unlike many previous projects in the area, this one was conducted solely by the Government of Iraq.

Using their helicopter fleet, the Ministry of Agriculture conducted the operation. Currently the MoA has flown 292 spraying missions, spraying approxi-

mately 233,100 donums, said Cmdr. Brian Lasher, Multi-National Forces Iraq Strategic Effects officer. A donum is about three-fifths of an acre.

Spraying, which will also cover the Baqubah, Muqdaduyah and Tarmiya areas, should be completed by May 30, Lasher said.

The entire campaign represents a significant step for local farmers and shows the population that the GoI is taking action to bring aid back to the area.

Safety Tidbit

Recently there were two negligent discharges where Soldiers failed to remove the magazine while clearing their weapon. This resulted with a negligent discharge into the clearing barrel. Fortunately, no one was hurt. We need to remember these six steps in the weapon's clearing process.

REMEMBER:

- Place weapon on safe.
- DROP MAGAZINE
- Lock slide to the rear.
- Inspect chamber for round.

- Release slide/Place weapon on fire.
- Pull trigger and place weapon on safe.



File photo

Headline Highlights

Foot found; baby for sale; oldest man to climb Mt. Everest

Mystery deepens as 4th severed foot found

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (Reuters) – Another severed human foot has been discovered washed ashore on Canada's Pacific coast, but police are no closer to solving the gruesome mystery.

The foot, still wearing a shoe, was discovered on Thursday on a small uninhabited island south of Vancouver in the Strait of Georgia, and is the fourth discovered in the region in the past 10 months.

The previous cases all involved right feet still in sneakers, and each was found on a different island.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police have not said if the latest discovery was a right or left foot.

DNA testing has failed to link the earlier discoveries to any missing person cases.

German police investigate mum who put baby on eBay

BERLIN (Reuters) – German police are investigating a couple after they offered their eight-month-old son for sale on internet auction site eBay.

Renee Beck, a police spokesman in the Bavarian town of Krumbach west of Munich, said on Saturday the 23-year-old woman told them it was only a joke.

But he said police were neverthe-

less continuing their investigation and the baby was put in state custody.

"She says it was a joke," he said.

"That's not yet clear. Detectives are investigating on suspicion of child trafficking," he added.

A number of people called authorities across Germany after seeing the offer on eBay that read: "Baby -- collection only. Offer my nearly new baby for sale because it cries too much. Male, 70 cm long."

The opening bid was 1 euro (\$1.57). There were no bidders during the two hours before the offer was removed, police said.

The mother was quoted in Bild newspaper saying: "It was only a joke."

"I just wanted to see if someone would make an offer. They've taken my son to hospital and I've got to take psychiatric tests next week," she added.

76-year-old man oldest to scale Mount Everest

KATMANDU, Nepal (AP) – A 76-year-old Nepalese man reached the summit of Mount Everest on Sunday and became the oldest person to climb the world's highest mountain, a tourism official said.

Min Bahadur Sherchan reached the 29,035-foot summit early in the morning with his climbing guides, said a Nepal Tourism Ministry offi-

cial, Ramesh Chetri.

Sherchan was just 25 days away from his 77th birthday, Chetri said.

He beat the record set last year by Japanese climber Katsusuke Yanagisawa, who scaled the peak at age 71.

Sherchan was in good health and was descending from the summit, Chetri said.

The former soldier climbed smaller mountains before Everest and has been an active sportsman, Chetri said.

He said about a dozen climbers scaled Everest on Sunday following one of the busiest weeks in the mountain's climbing season.

A veteran Sherpa guide scaled Everest on Thursday for a record 18th time.

Appa, who like most Sherpas goes by only one name, reached the summit along with several colleagues.

He was among more than 80 climbers to reach the summit that day — the largest number ever in a single day from the Nepalese side of the peak.

Mountaineers were able to resume Everest climbs on May 9 after the Nepalese government lifted a temporary ban ordered to prevent protests against China's rule in Tibet during an ascent by Chinese climbers carrying the Olympic torch.

The Chinese torch team scaled the summit on May 8 — from the northern Tibetan side of Everest — and Nepal lifted the ban a day later.

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	6		5					7
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		3						2
			3	2		1		
1		2		5				
		9		8	4			
			9					6

from Sudoku Easy Presented by Will Shortz

Solution to yesterday's puzzle:

5	4	7	9	1	3	2	8	6
8	6	3	7	5	2	9	1	4
2	9	1	8	6	4	5	7	3
4	1	9	2	3	8	7	6	5
3	7	8	6	9	5	1	4	2
6	5	2	4	7	1	8	3	9
9	8	6	3	2	7	4	5	1
1	3	4	5	8	9	6	2	7
7	2	5	1	4	6	3	9	8

ARABIC QUESTION OF THE DAY

How far is it?

ish-ged il-meh-sah-feh?