

# MOVING MOUNTAINS AND SETTING FOUNDATIONS IN IRAQ

*OPERATIONS IN TALLIL, IRAQ*  
John L. Kachelman, Jr.

In November I received communication from a Colonel in Iraq where he asked me to convey his appreciation for the cooperation and amazing response from the churches of Christ in pleas to assist Iraqi citizens that were housed in a sprawling IDP (Internally Displaced People) camp in Najaf. Good reports continue to come as a result of that operation. Upon Bob's safe return to normal life in Chicago, IL and subsequent to the success of that first shipment I was assured that "all of Iraq was now open to us" and military personnel were posted and poised at the ready awaiting instructions on future shipments. We have two other shipments ready to go as a part of this operation—one out of Parkersburg, WV and one out of Judsonia, AR. These shipments continue our involvement that began in northern Iraq with the Kurdish population some years ago when we worked with the church in O'Fallon, Missouri to send in commodities. A member of that congregation had been posted in that sector and had sent word of the great need of the population for anything (clothing; dishes; school supplies; etc). Through the efforts of the O'Fallon Church of Christ a large quantity of items for the community and the school children were collected, transported and distributed. The Kurdish opportunity opened the possibilities in Najaf which has, in turn, opened up "all of the country to our efforts."



Two weeks ago I received a call from Ron Moreton who works with the WestArk Church of Christ's C.U.R.E. Program ([www. http://www.westarkchurchofchrist.org/indexf.html](http://www.westarkchurchofchrist.org/indexf.html)). Ron said he had been contacted by the brethren at the Mount Hope Church of Christ in Joplin, Missouri. They were concerned about the welfare of the children in the Sonoobar School because it is located near to where a member of the congregation is posted and a visit had revealed needs for basic living items. The congregation was trying to get blankets into Tallil, Iraq and had heard of the possibilities of transportation via military space available. And Ron said CURE could help provide the blankets and other items but he was calling asking for information on transportation.

Below is an email stream discussing the preliminary plans for this project. I thought you would be interested in reading it for several reasons: First, you will read about some of your brethren in a far away location doing good things that have an incredible impact upon the future. Second, you will read of how our military personnel are working in Iraq to help the communities be able to function on levels that will help assure the continuation of democracy. Third, you will read of some of the different, but interesting, cultural difference that Christy discovered on her trip to the school.

Please remember this congregation in your prayers as they work to continue moving mountains and setting foundations for the Lord's Church in Iraq. Continue to rejoice in the opportunities that are being presented that allows record in the historical chronicles the work of the Lord's Church so that in future

—John L. Kachelman, Jr.

**From:** John L. Kachelman, Jr. [<mailto:jkachelman@centurytel.net>]

**Sent:** Friday, February 13, 2009 6:25 AM

**To:** 'Bukowski, L SGT 287 SB HHC Human Resources SPC'

**Cc:** rgarcia@us.army; 'Moyer, R LTC 287 SB Civil Affairs Officer'; 'Moerike, CPT 287 Medical OPS'; 'Randall, S MAJ 287 SB STB XO'; Dana A (USAID); Micheal E CTR USAF AMC 437 APS/DPX; Kenneth H I CTR USAF AMC 437 APS/X

**Subject:** Iraqi school children needs



Hi Christy,

Is it not wonderful the ready response that the USA folks give to such needs? I continue to be overwhelmed with actions in Ukraine, Sudan, Zambia, and numerous other sites. And you military folks are...FANTASTIC! Thank you!

I have not yet received any information. Ron Moreton (CURE) called and he has had some contact already so maybe he is getting the data. I am glad you are getting together a shopping list of items. I hope that we will be able to supply commodities that are needed for all men, women, and children in the project's site.

I am adding to the email list those involved in logistics. Often they get the project only after all has been done and miss out on the preliminary communication that shows how critical they are in the process. Dana is in DC and Mike and Ken are in Charleston.

I am ready to go here as soon as I get the necessary documents. Thank you to all for your good work and your service. You remain in our hearts and prayers.

Keep safe!  
John



**From:** Bukowski,L SGT 287 SB HHC Human Resources SPC  
**Sent:** Friday, February 13, 2009 1:11 AM  
**To:** jkachelman@msn.com  
**Cc:** roeneblk@yahoo.com; rgarcia@us.army.mil; Moyer, R LTC 287 SB Civil Affairs Officer; Moerike, J CPT 287 Medical OPS; Randall, S MAJ 287 SB STB XO  
**Subject:** FW: Iraqi school children needs (UNCLASSIFIED)

John -

I'm hoping that LTC Moyer has been in contact with you already. I apologize that I've not responded to you earlier - but he will be your contact for arranging most of the points you listed below. He works closely with the PRT team here on our base as well as coordinating/arranging our Humanitarian Missions for

our Brigade and Battalion.

In the same regard, I've been speaking with CPT Moerike who is on our medical staff to coordinate a "shopping list" of the needed medical supplies. He has been in contact with Roene and will hopefully have a good list to her within the week.

Thank you SO much for your willingness to donate your time and efforts on this mission. I will do everything I can to ensure that we tie everything together on our end—we have several people who are willing to help. It was exciting to see the work that was accomplished through COL Garcia—thank you, Sir, for the work you started and continue to leave behind you.

I must admit, when we sent out emails requesting assistance to gather school and medical supplies, we had no idea that it would blossom into this! However, we're excited and we look forward to working with you!

Thank you,

SGT BUKOWSKI, C  
287TH SB SPECIAL TROOPS BATTALION  
BN, HUMAN RESOURCES

---

From: [jkachelman@centurytel.net](mailto:jkachelman@centurytel.net)  
To: [bettymoreton@cox.net](mailto:bettymoreton@cox.net)  
CC: [cmoyer@iraq.centcom](mailto:cmoyer@iraq.centcom); [rgarcia@us.army](mailto:rgarcia@us.army); [cbukowski@iraq.centcom](mailto:cbukowski@iraq.centcom)  
Subject: RE: Iraqi school children needs  
Date: Thu, 5 Feb 2009 06:42:10 -0600

ALCON

I have received information from Ron Moreton about shipping humanitarian aid supplies into Iraq. I am willing to help. I have previously shipped into the Kurdish regions where a member of the MO Guard was posted and working with the authorities there. His church in O'Fallon, MO was sending parcels over to help children and it was costing too much. We arranged for several pallets of assistance to be shipped to them. I am currently working with Roberto Garcia in shipping into Najaf and other areas. We have delivered one shipment and have 2 others waiting to go. I am attaching media coverage from our last shipments and Bob's great help. I am cc Bob of this communication.

In order to get commodities transported we need to follow certain guidelines. These are not difficult and are very reasonable. The items will be transported on "space available" military aircraft. FYI I am attaching the guidelines for this transportation assistance so you can have a complete understanding of what is involved. NOTE: The space available becomes no problem when shipments are going into areas where our military are actively involved. We should have no problem getting into Iraq.

On sending clothing...Please be sure that any clothing item is acceptable for the recipients' culture. In previous shipments into Muslim nations we have been advised NOT to send women's clothing articles. I will be asked if the clothing articles are acceptable and if the Consignee has agreed to these clothing items.

Through the Denton Program we can ship items to Iraq free of charge. The need is great and an unbelievable opportunity to make a difference is present. Through our efforts in collecting and packing these items we add immeasurably to the successes of our military and together will help Iraq.

Here are things you need to do at the beginning: Understand there is a minimum weight required. The guidelines read, "Requests to transport less than 2,000 or more than 100,000 lbs. cannot be accepted."

- ✓ I need a Consignee registered with the Iraqi government that is permitted to receive international humanitarian aid
- ✓ I need the Consignee to scan and send me the registration certificate for the NGO
- ✓ I need the Consignee to secure a "duty-free" letter permitting our cargo entry into Iraq
- ✓ I will need you to plan on media coverage in the USA and in Iraq

I hope these points will help your group as you begin this important project.

Best wishes,  
John

John L. Kachelman, Jr.  
Judsonia Church of Christ  
P. O. Box 422  
Judsonia, Arkansas 72081  
Mobile: 901-626-4538  
Home: 501-279-2598  
Office: 501-729-3004

*The greatest trees stand today because some "nut" held its ground!*

---

To: [jkachelman@msn.com](mailto:jkachelman@msn.com)

Subject: FW letter from my contact in Iraq

Date: Wed, 4 Feb 2009 06:29:27 -0800 (PST)

From: Roene

Here is the letter and pictures I just received from my contact in Iraq. She includes the name of the Civil Affairs Officer—LTC Clinton R. Moyer including his phone and e-mail address. If you need more information for the contact person I'm sure you could e-mail him directly for it.

Christy did not specify HOW many blankets there are in need of, but for each child shown in those few pictures, there is at least one family probably with other children in the household as well as their parents. I will see if I can get an approximate number from her as it sounds as though there is apparently more than one place where they can be distributed. Would there be the possibility of getting 1,000 blankets and some linens to go with them?

I will see if I can get more specifics on the Medical supplies as it would be best if we can narrow it down to exactly what is their need which would help on both their end and ours. It would not be a wise use of resources to send items which would not be usable to them and would then not be available to someone else who really needs them.

Look forward to seeing you all next Thursday!

In Christian love,

Roene



---

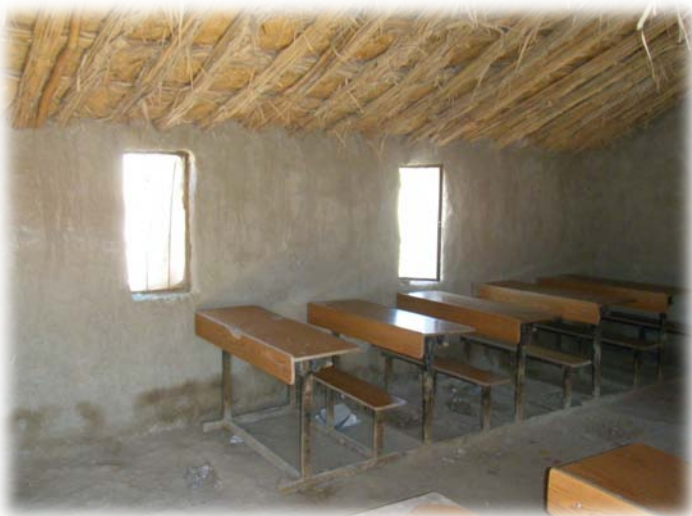
On Wed, 2/4/09, Christy wrote:

From: Christy

Subject: My mission to the school house

Date: Wednesday, February 4, 2009, 2:09 AM

I sent this email out last night and meant to include you on the distribution...This was the first trip I had taken out to see the people and the kids—and, boy, is the need obvious! Roene, I've spoken to our CAO who schedules these trips out and works with the local Sheiks to find the needs - he is completely on board and you should use him as the contact name here at Tallil to send the pallets to his attention. His full name is LTC Clinton R. Moyer, Civil Affairs Officer. Once the pallets arrive, we would have the



opportunity to travel with them out to the people to distribute them. We will be able to get several photos of where exactly they are going and the people who will receive them—It's always nice to see the end result!!

What else do you need from me? I think you were asking what kinds of needs there were—there is every need. ANYTHING you put together will be properly distributed and we will work closely with the Medical folks to get the medical supplies to where they are most needed. More than likely, the blankets will be taken out on several different missions and not just to one place.

There are other groups out of KS that are trying to put together school supplies—and yesterday when we went out, we took 2 soccer balls and some pumps—the kids just LOVED those!

Thank you for all of your work on this—I cross my fingers that everything will go through ok. Also, even if it takes a few months to get here, that is fine. We will be here at least for another 7 months so we will have the time to get the trips planned...

God Bless~Christy

---

From: [cls\\_lucky](#)

Subject: My mission to the school house

Date: Tue, 3 Feb 2009 13:43:03 -0500

What an amazing day!! I found out 2 days ago that I had been selected to go on a humanitarian mission out to a small mud-hut schoolhouse today. We were only out of the "wire" (off of the base) for a total of 6 hours—and it took less than an hour to get there. We were going to hand out school supplies and also to read books to the younger ones. Of course, Nathan was the one who gave me my intel brief on what to expect/roadway conditions/maps/weather...etc... ;) We pulled up and I couldn't believe (even though I had seen the pictures before) that this is where these kids grew up and went to school. I wished I would have gotten more pictures taken of the outside and of their homes but we were in our full "battle-rattle" and not easy to shift holding your weapon AND get the camera out AND watch your surroundings all while walking with kids by your side wanting to talk to you and wanting ANYTHING from you.

SO we get inside and there were a couple of the local Sheiks that I had seen on the trip to the Ziggurat—evidently this schoolhouse was also within their region. We read to the kids and I had put a bag of candy together before I left our room of anything that had been sent to us—luckily, I had a stock pile of hard candy to hand out to them! It amazed me how well behaved these young kids were in their seats! To look into their faces, they are so---quiet, reserved, curious, grown-up and beautiful. The girls seemed to stare more—maybe it was because I was a girl and they were amazed that I was allowed to walk around without being covered from head to foot. (On the way back out—walking towards the vehicles—there were the older girls peering out from doorways dressed in the long, black robes—but smiling and waving at us as we left) So after we're finished handing out candy and getting pictures, the Sheik walks in and gives us some tea from these little saucers and plates. In the back of my mind, the thought came that—here I am, standing in a mud hut with a straw roof and yet they offer us tea with LOTS of sugar (could see it standing in the bottom of the cup) and serving it to us in glass saucers and cups with little silver spoons. It really just seemed surreal....



Soon we load up into our vehicles (I got to ride in an MRAP for the first time) and one of the interpreters was riding with us. We started talking about all the difference between his country and the United States—before I know it, we're talking about Old Wives' Tales and how his mothers are able to tell the future. Next, he's holding my hand (I thought he suddenly had an urge to play thumb war) and twisting his thumb on my thumb then looks up at me and tells me that I will become married again! LOL—I look down at my thumb and said, "Oh boy, Nate's going to be surprised to hear that!"

Then he takes my arm and measures from the crook of my elbow up to the points of my fingers—since his hand did not reach all of the way to the end of my fingers in two rotations then that means I will not be able to bear any children....I told him he needed to grow bigger hands...haha Then we got onto the topic of the difference of beauty between the US and Iraq...he said that when a woman has thick ankles, larger hips, long fingers and a big mouth that she is considered attractive. Trust me folks, I'm not making any of this up!! Of course, this goes back to their culture of using women for childbearing as their main way of contributing to the household.

Anyway, it was a day I will never forget. What different lives we are able to lead in America—and I do miss it there. I got back and was listening to the news and it spoke a lot about the recession going on....still don't have it as bad as a lot of other people out there.

Hope you enjoy the pictures!!

U.S. Army Home <http://www.army.mil/>

U.S. Forces Command <http://www.forscom.army.mil/>