



The Old Ironsides Report

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Soldier conducts toy drive for Iraqi children

Story by Cpl Todd Pruden
372nd MPAD

BAGHDAD, Iraq – Being in a hospital can be a miserable and frightening experience for children. It can be difficult to bring joy to children in these places. But, with the help of a soldier in Iraq and generous Americans in the states, smiles were abundant at a children's hospital in Baghdad Oct. 19.

Chief Warrant Officer Paul Holton, an interrogator with the 141st Military Intelligence Battalion, a Utah Army National Guard unit from Salt Lake City, has spearheaded a toy-drive to brighten the lives of misfortunate children in Baghdad. Armed with a busload of toys and his warm demeanor, he visited as many rooms as he could, distributing toys, checking on the children's progress and talking to their mothers.

"I am trying to do something for the Iraqi children," Holton said. "It's rewarding to perhaps change an attitude, change a perspective of a new generation of Iraqis and how they might feel about us and the rest of the world."

Dr. Quasem Al-Taey, director of the Central Teaching Hospital for Children in Baghdad, the hospital Holton visited, said the toys seem to lift the children's spirits.

"Happiness matters for the children," said Al-Taey. "It gives them the power to fight diseases."

According to Holton, the toy drive started when he asked friends to send things for Iraqi civilians. But that evolved into something more. He said the thing that really kicked things off was when he saw a little girl crying at one of the coalition checkpoints, looking for her mother.

He rushed back to his office and grabbed some toys that had been sent to him and gave them to her to console her.

"Just from the joy I saw in her face and the smile and the twinkle in her eye, I knew I needed to do this on a larger scale," Holton said. He then asked his friends to send toys, but that was not enough.

"I asked people to send more toys so I could do this in hospitals, orphanages, schools and neighborhoods around Iraq," Holton said.

Holton decided to use the Internet as a medium to solicit this request.



Chief Warrant Officer Paul Holton, an interrogator with the 141st Military Intelligence Battalion consoles a sick child.

Holton has a Web site where he posts his personal journal of experiences he has had in Iraq. When he posted his request for toys, the response was overwhelming.

"My Web site gets between 6,000 and 7,000 hits per day," he said. "It's definitely not my writing style or my interesting journal that's drawing in most of the people," Holton added.

Chaplain's Thought for the Day 26 OCT 2003

This Little Light of Mine

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven. – Matthew 5:16

The Lake Michigan shoreline is dotted with lighthouses built to enable ship captains to navigate into safe harbors. The structures are varied in size, shape and color, but each has unique charm and beauty. Pictures of the lighthouses are featured in books and calendars, and some people collect replicas and other lighthouse items. But lighthouses were not built just to be admired; they were built to hold lights that guide sailors to safety. A lighthouse is most useful and appreciated when, in the darkness of night, only its light can be seen – not the structure itself. Just as a lamp's purpose is to give light, we also are to let our light shine. We're most effective when we shine brightly in the darkness, guiding people who need to find safe harbor in God.

A little light makes a big difference in the darkest night.

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NEWS

Anti-War Rallies Today on Both Coasts

To chants of "Impeach Bush," thousands of anti-war protesters rallied in the nation's capital Saturday and delivered a scathing critique of President Bush and his Iraq policy. Demanding an end to the U.S.-led occupation and the quick return of American troops, the demonstrators gathered on a sunny fall day at the Washington Monument to listen to speeches and songs of peace. The Rev. Al Sharpton, who's running for the Democratic presidential nomination, exhorted the crowd not to be content with the gradual withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq.

Wal-Mart to check its payrolls for illegal workers

Wal-Mart Stores Inc. said on Saturday it would review the status of its 1.1 million U.S. employees and fire any illegal immigrants on the payroll if U.S. law requires it. The internal probe at the world's largest retailer comes amid a government investigation into allegations that contractor cleaning crews used by Wal-Mart had recruited illegal immigrants to work on cleaning crews at the stores for the world's largest retailer. The company, which has promised to cooperate with federal officials, said it would scrutinize the background of its own employees to ensure that none are employed illegally.

Satellites at risk from sun storm

An electromagnetic storm originating on the sun could knock out communications satellites, mobile phone networks and electricity grids today, scientists warned last night. Electronic equipment is at risk from explosive flares ejected from a giant sunspot toward Earth, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said. The interaction of the solar flare with Earth's magnetic field is likely to generate a bright display of the northern lights. NOAA added that there might be by an even more powerful storm next week.

Space station's crew returning

After six months of living and working aboard the international space station, American astronaut Ed Lu and Russian cosmonaut Yuri Malenchenko will return to Earth on Monday. Joined by European Space Agency astronaut Pedro Duque of Spain, the two men are to make a landing in remote Kazakhstan aboard a Russian Soyuz spacecraft at 8:41 p.m. CST. On Friday, the landing preparations included efforts to stow an American air sampling device aboard the cramped Soyuz. NASA asked the Russians to find a spot for the device, which is as large as two coffee cans, to help address concerns raised about the quality of the station's breathing air. Air and water quality sampling devices aboard the station have faltered and gone unrepaired without regular visits by the space shuttle, which NASA grounded in the aftermath of the Feb. 1 Columbia accident. Shuttle missions, which assure a steady supply of spare parts and replacement equipment, are not expected to resume until mid-September at the earliest.

SPORTS

Florida Marlins Take Series



AP

Brad Penny

The surprising Florida Marlins have won Major League Baseball's World Series, defeating the storied New York Yankees 2-0.

Marlins' ace pitcher Josh Beckett earned the complete-game victory late Saturday in New York, shutting down the powerful Yankees' bats with nine strikeouts, while allowing just five hits.

The Marlins broke a scoreless tie in the fifth inning when Alex Gonzalez slid under Jorge Posada, the catcher's tag and barely touched home plate with his hand, after a single by Luis Castillo.

Florida added an unearned runs in the sixth after an error by Yankees' shortstop Derek Jeter.

The World Series title is the second for Florida in just 11 years of existence. Meanwhile, the Yankees lost out on winning their 27th title in the long history of the franchise.

This Day in History 26 October

- 1774** 1st Continental Congress adjourns in Philadelphia
- 1825** Erie Canal between Hudson River & Lake Erie opened
- 1863** Worldwide Red Cross organized in Geneva
- 1863** Football Association forms in England, standardizing soccer
- 1868** White terrorists kill several blacks in St Bernard Parish La
- 1876** President sends federal troops to SC
- 1881** Shootout at the OK corral, in Tombstone, Az
- 1903** Yerba Buena is 1st Key System ferry to cross SF Bay
- 1905** Union of Sweden & Norway ends
- 1911** Phila A's beat NY Giants, 4 games to 2 in 8th World Series
- 1916** Margaret Sanger arrested for obscenity (advocating birth control)
- 1942** US ship Hornet sunk in Battle of Santa Cruz Islands during WW II
- 1949** Pres Truman increases minimum wage from 40¢ to 75¢
- 1962** Beatles tape "Please Please Me" & "Ask Me Why"

FINAL

 VIRGINIA TECH (3)	7
 WEST VIRGINIA	28

FINAL

 UAB	13
 GEORGIA (4)	16

FINAL

 PURDUE (10)	3
 MICHIGAN (13)	31

FINAL

 WISCONSIN (20)	7
 NORTHWESTERN	16

FINAL

 NEW MEXICO	47
 UTAH (24)	35

FINAL

 WAKE FOREST	24
 FLORIDA ST. (6)	48

FINAL

 OHIO ST. (8)	35
 INDIANA	6

OVERTIME

 TENNESSEE (22)	40
 ALABAMA	43

FINAL

 NORTHERN ILLINOIS (12)	18
 BOWLING GRN (23)	34

FINAL

 PENN ST.	14
 IOWA (16)	26

FINAL

 SOUTHERN CAL (5)	43
 WASHINGTON	23

FINAL

 OREGON ST.	30
 WASH. ST. (6)	36

FINAL

 IOWA ST.	0
 NEBRASKA (14)	28

FINAL

 OKLAHOMA ST. (18)	38
 TEXAS A&M	10

FINAL

 OKLAHOMA (1)	34
 COLORADO	20