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Habur Gate medics treat burned Iraqi boy, spread goodwill

BURN

By Sgt. 1st Class Adam V. Shaw
16th SB Public Affairs

HABUR GATE, Iraq — Medics from Logistical Task Force Alpha, 16th Special Troops Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, treated an Iraqi child at the aid station here Oct. 6, who had suffered second-degree burns to his chest and abdominal area.

The boy's father, who works at the Habur Gate customs yards, asked for medical assistance.

"I've always had a soft heart for kids," said Staff Sgt. Daniel De Luna Jr., aid station non-commissioned officer in charge, LTF-A. "So I told him that we would help out his son."

The father, who lives more than an hour away from the base, drove back home to pick up his son.

"The kid was scared, but his dad was right there calming him down," said Spc. Jayson Clark, medic, LTF-A. "We gave him a stuffed teddy bear and he really took to it and stayed pretty calm."

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Clark, a native of Kalamazoo, Mich., cleaned and dressed the wound the young Iraqi boy got after reaching for a pot of boiling water and knocking it over.

“We see a lot of burns with the kids here,” said Clark. “With kids in the states, it’s ‘a-kid-jumps-off-the-couch-and-bumps-a-knee,’ here it’s burns.”

After the medics treated the child, they taught his father how to clean and bandage the wound so it will heal properly.

“We gave his father a 5-day supply of medicine so they wouldn’t have to keep driving that long distance,” Clark explained. “Normally we would want to see them every day with a burn like that.”

Clark has been an Army medic for two years but has also served as an emergency medical technician for seven years between the Read City and Kalamazoo fire departments in Michigan.

Clark said he joined the Army as a change of pace and wanted to do a little bit more.

“I like what I’m doing here,” said Clark. “People talk. The Iraqis go back and say that the Americans are taking care of them and the word spreads. In time, the people realize we’re not the bad guys.”