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Family of Major KIA support Iraqis, deployed military

BAGHDAD – On April 6, 2008, an incoming mortar round hit the Fitness Center on Forward Operating Base Phoenix in the International Zone. U.S. Army Maj. Stuart A. Wolfer and U.S. Army Col. Stephen K. Scott were killed in action, and a total of 17 other soldiers were wounded.

For the family of Wolfer, support of the effort since their loss has never been more important.

Wolfer's family has continued his community service in honor of the fallen soldier. They refuse to allow his commitment to his community to be buried alongside him, said Beverly Wolfer-Nerenberg, president of the Major Stuart Adam Wolfer Institute out of New York.

"Major Wolfer was involved in a variety of community service initiatives," said Wolfer-Nerenberg of the Boca Raton, Fla., native. "While serving in the Green Zone, Stuart was an active member of B'nai Baghdad – a Jewish lay minyan; a liaison to the Iraqi Jewish community; a participant in the Green Zone Council and Iraqi boy and girl scout troop and a member of the cricket team amongst the multi-nationals of the Green Zone."

The institute, created in the summer of 2008, is involved with schools, community groups, synagogues, churches and local businesses. Commitment to both supporting U.S. troops overseas and their community service projects is the organization's goal, said Wolfer-Nerenberg.

Some of the projects supported by MSAWI include Support a Soldier Packages that are sent to forward-deployed servicemembers, Cell Phones for Soldiers where inoperable cell phones are recycled and used to purchase calling cards, Soldiers See a Need in support of the community service projects of deployed personnel and Educational Programming that enhances awareness about the military in schools and communities on Memorial Day.

“The institute seeks to increase awareness of the sacrifices our servicemembers make on our behalf each and every day through educational programs at schools, communities and religious institutions,” said Wolfer-Nerenberg.

Members from the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq have taken advantage of the community service program that MSAWI offers. Iraqi national families have been adopted into the IZ and basic necessities donated by the organization are handed out by volunteers.

The group not only invests a lot of time in the vision they have; they also encourage that their donators spend time giving.

For clothing shipments to refugee camps and orphanages, it is requested that donations are selected with a specific family in mind. The institute also asks that patrons create their own decorations to send servicemembers in holiday packages.

Letters both to and from the warzone have been moving, said Wolfer-Nerenberg.

“Reading the letters that Americans write to soldiers overseas has been so rewarding,” she said. “Americans want to support our soldiers. The letters of appreciation we have received from soldiers have been so meaningful. Our very small acts have meant so much to soldiers who receive our packages,” the organization president said.

Servicemembers deployed overseas are not the only group that MSAWI is looking to help. Local Iraqi nationals also see donations from the institute.

“By helping the local Iraqi nationals, who in many cases have lost their homes and/or their livelihoods, we remember the human toll any war has on the local people,” Wolfer-Nerenberg said. “With all we have, it feels good to be able to help others in real need. These are lessons we can teach to our children.”

A few weeks ago, the president of MSAWI went through stuffed animals with her children and found at least 25 to send to Iraqi nationals.

“It was meaningful to my children to realize they can help other children in such an easy way,” she said.

MNSTC-I’s efforts in helping the local Iraqi nationals and garnering support from home represents a vital step toward Iraq’s self-sufficiency in reaching the Security Agreement goals between the United States and the government of Iraq.



BAHGDDAD - A young Iraqi girl does what she can to move some bottled water provided by volunteer servicemembers from the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq. Supplies were also donated to the nationals by the Maj. Stuart Adam Wolfer Institute and handed out by personnel. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Clay Murray)



BAGHDAD – Children adopted by the International Zone gather together moments before gifts and supplies donated by the Maj. Stuart Adam Wolfer Institute were handed out. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Clay Murray)



BAGHDAD – Iraqi children sit together before supplies, gifts and donations were handed out to the Iraqi National families in the International Zone. Donations were handed out by servicemembers from the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq and provided by the Maj. Stuart Adam Wolfer Institute. (U.S. Air Force photo by Capt. Tommy Avilucea)



BAGHDAD – Capt. Myrna Montminy holds an Iraqi girl during a humanitarian mission to hand out supplies and gifts to local nationals. Supplies were donated to the Maj. Stuart Adam Wolfer Institute and distributed to servicemembers from Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq who passed them out.

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