

Noor from Buaytha, Iraq

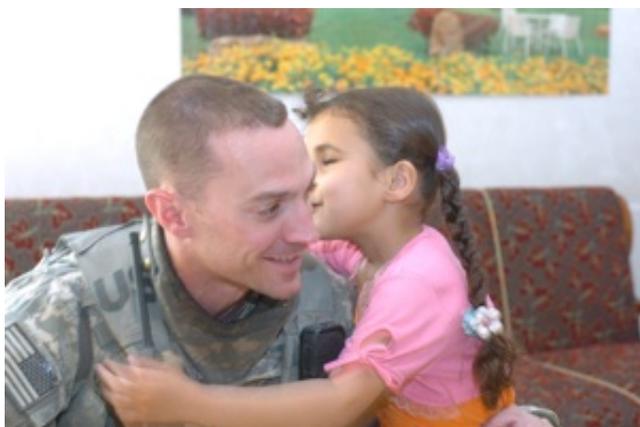


Dear Jacquie,

Noor Taha Najee is a 5 ½ year old Iraqi girl who was born blind. She is able to perceive light in her left eye better than the right eye. She has opaque film covering both eyes and the dark shadow of her iris seems larger in the left eye than the right. Her family has not been able to find treatment for her condition as she was born just months before the war began. Noor's father is concerned about what he will be able to tell her next year when others her age go to school and she cannot as there are not programs in Iraq at this time for children with disabilities.



Noor's father was instrumental in convincing his neighbors of the good faith of US military and became a close friend to many in our battalion.. Helping Noor gain her sight is one tangible way in which we can show that Americans mean to help and not to injure.



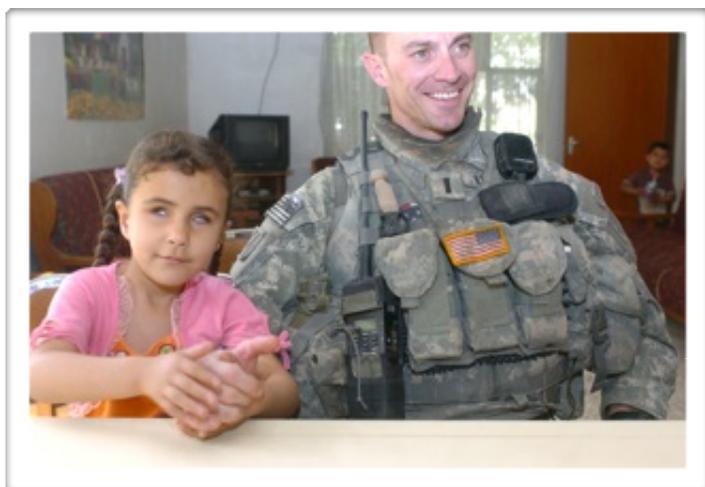
You are answer to our prayers by agreeing to help us treat little Noor. Please understand, those of us in the military we are all blessed to be able to do what little we can to help the innocent civilians in this war-torn country.

-Hee-Choon S. Lee LTC MC 1-30th IN Battalion Surgeon



Above Photos: 1st LTC Michael Kendrick at her family's home. Army Capt. (Dr.) Angie M. Pruitt, 86th Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad with Noor and her father. Noor and her family at their home south of Baghdad.

"They've changed me as much as I've changed them," said 1st Lt. Michael Kendrick, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, of his interaction with the people of al Bu'yatha, a village in the Arab Jabour region south of Baghdad. Bu'yatha is where Taha Najee, Noor's father first met Lt. Kendrick, the Soldier who helped transport his daughter, Noor, to the United States for eye surgery.



Noor could not see the violence in her village, but her family could. Taha, Noor's father knew it was not the future he wanted for his family.

"There were a lot of problems," Kendrick said. "We tried to fix as many as we could."

Problems weren't just limited to the insurgency. Citizens who did not take up arms against the Soldiers still harbored ill will and fear toward them, Taha said.

When Taha first saw American Soldiers in al Bu'yatha, he feared the worst. The media's coverage of the war affected the way he and other people in al Bu'yatha initially viewed the Soldiers. Kendrick said he remembers the time vividly. During the initial push into the area, violence was common; the sight of people was not. The streets were desolate; schools were empty; shops were boarded up; children hid in their homes rather than play outside. Among those children were Taha's daughter, Noor, her younger brother and several cousins, all living in the same household.



To limit the insurgency, the Iraqi Government shut down most power into the area, leaving families without electricity to run the water pumps to get from the canals to their homes and farms or air conditioning to escape the summer heat. Insurgent's roadside bombs injured innocent Iraqis. The economy was dwindling and schools were closed – this deeply affecting Taha, who worked as a school teacher.

Coalition forces pushed forward, and restored a



sense of security and normalcy to the area. Seeing this, Taha began to reach out to the Americans to offer his help.

Kendrick attributed much of his unit's success to Taha's assistance. Taha's grasp of the English language, education and connections in the community made him an important contact for Kendrick.

"He's been very helpful to Coalition forces here in this area," Kendrick said.

"His willingness to sit down and talk, share ideas; you just don't meet people like that every day, with more than their self interest at the forefront of what they do," Kendrick said. "When I came over I did not expect to have a family or (an) individual make such an impact on me."

The village sees Kendrick as a hero of sorts for all the work he has done in their community.

"All the people in my village know the American Army is here to help us as they helped my daughter," Taha said.

ARTIFICIAL CORNEA TRANSPLANT SURGERY

VISION FOR NOOR

LT. KENDRICK & NOOR

NOOR IN ROCHESTER, NY

[ARTIFICIAL CORNEA TRANSPLANT INFO](#)

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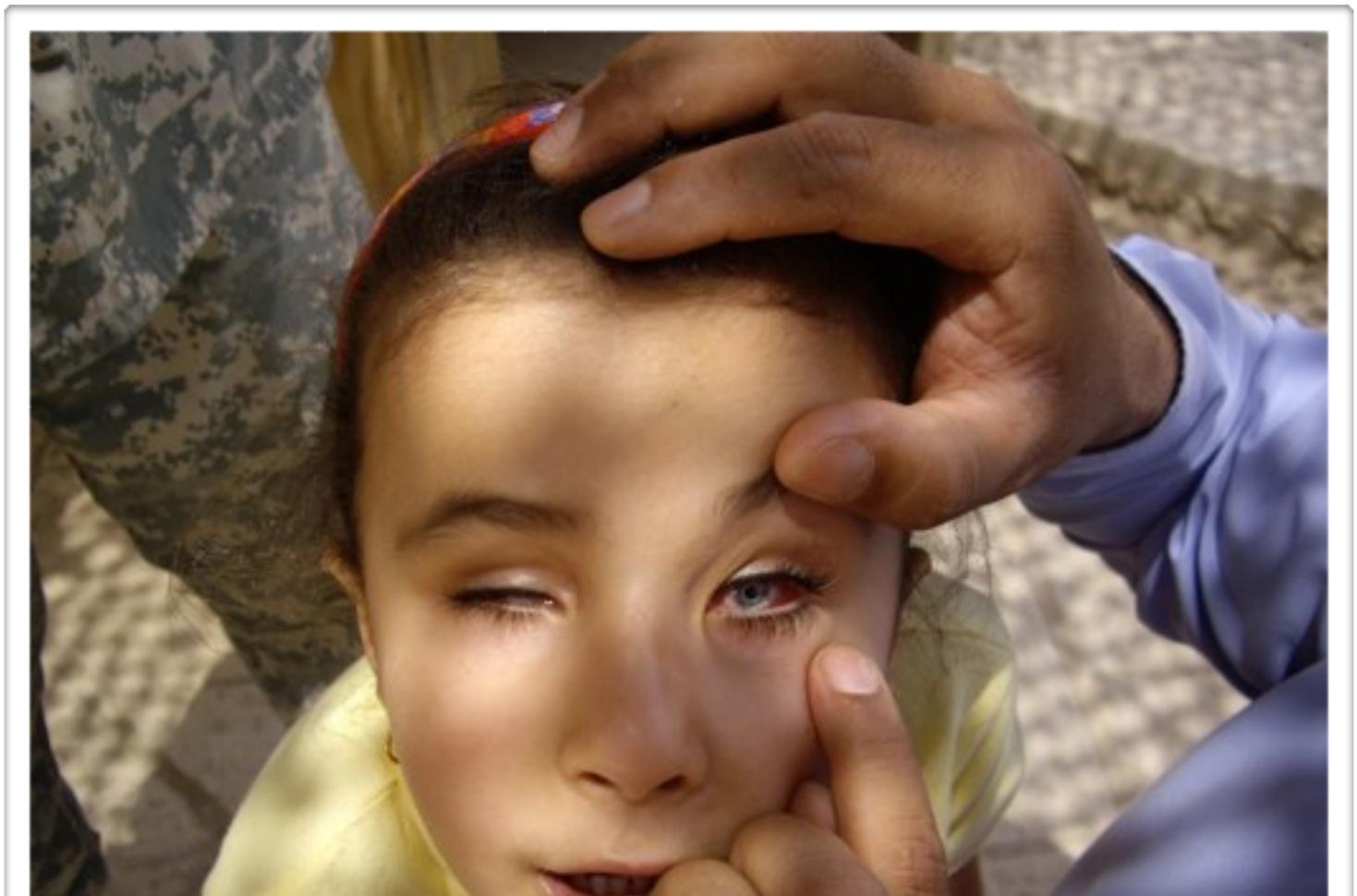


Progress Report August 2009

I just wanted to give you an update on Noor. Good news- her father reports that she has been asymptomatic over the last 3 weeks and the only complaint is her inability to adequately control her ocular movements. She continues to improve on light perception. Now she is able to locate the source of light at even greater distance”

Eduardo A. Alvarez
CPT, SP PA-C
Squadron Physician Assistant
HHT 6-8 CAV

Photo Near Right: Noor with her father Taha- April 2009
Photo Far Right: Noor Pre-Op
Photo Below: August 2008 60 Days Post-Op





Progress Report October 2009

Sent: Thursday, October 08, 2009 11:50 AM

Subject: Taha Naji

I am very sorry to report to you that I received word from Mr. Malik, chairman of the security council, that Taha Naji was killed by insurgents last night. I am still in disbelief myself because I just met with Taha yesterday morning. Apparently, insurgents attacked him last night. Taha expired at a local hospital. It is reported that Taha made a final request on his death bed. Taha apparently asked for the coalition forces to help get the remainder of his family to the United States for their safety and so Noor could get the treatment she needed. I am very saddened by this loss.

Taha was certainly an outstanding man! I have already spoken with Major Riley about the incident and we are working on meeting with the State Department to expedite the move for the remainder of the family. I will send you more details as they become available. Once again I am very saddened to have to report the loss of Taha to you.

Respectfully,
Christian Smith

Christian Smith
CPT, IN
A Co 1/252 CAB
Commanding

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Caveats: NONE