



Marine ensures no troops go without clothing

Story and photo by
Cpl. Jessica L. Kent
MNC-I PAO

Wounded servicemembers and civilians who arrive at the 10th Combat Support Hospital, Baghdad, are usually rushed inside with no clothes to wear during their recovery.

Marine Staff Sgt. Ryan A. Kohrig, Multi-National Force-Iraq, decided to help after one of many visits to the hospital. He organized Operation Taking Care Of Our Own, a program in which boxes of donated supplies are delivered to patients at the 10th CSH.

“I have come to the realization that there is nothing I enjoy more than taking care of Marines,” Kohrig said. However, the assistance is not only for Marines. All servicemembers and civilians at the hospital may receive a box of donated T-shirts, flip-flops, towels, pajama bottoms or underwear.

“The donations are not just for Marines; they’re for every patient that comes through here, whether they’re with the U.S. military, or an Iraqi civilian or part of the Iraqi Army,” said Sgt. Enrique Rangel, who serves as the Marine Liaison, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, 10th CSH.

The hospital has approximately 65 beds. It boasts two intensive care units, two wards, and a step-down unit for patients whose conditions are not as critical.

“I’m honored to help out the wounded heroes here,” said Rangel, who distributes an average of 20 donated boxes a week to

the patients.

The boxes are mailed to Camp Victory and transported to the 10th CSH. It takes little time for items to be in the hands of wounded servicemembers and civilians.

“The donations go from the States to the wounded servicemembers’ beds



Marine Sgt. Enrique Rangel, left, and Staff Sgt. Ryan A. Kohrig guard mailed donations for the Taking Care Of Our Own program, in which donations are transported to the wounded servicemembers and civilian patients at the 10th Combat Support Hospital.

within eight days with no extra cost,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Joshua Clark, Navy information systems technician, MNF-I, and an assistant coordinator for

the program. “It’s probably the most direct way for people to contribute.”

Staff Sgt. Michael A. Mendoza, a Marine scout sniper wounded in combat and transported to the hospital, said from his recovery bed, “I wouldn’t be wearing the clothes that I am wearing right now if it wasn’t for these people. I am very appreciative of everyone involved in this; it makes me feel at home and more comfortable.”

To those who have donated supplies, Kohrig and Rangel also express their thanks. The support is not just beneficial to patients at the hospital, but also to the staff.

“Everybody here, all of the staff, greatly appreciates the help and support shown to us – not just for wounded patients, but for everyone here,” said Rangel. “It makes our jobs a whole lot easier.”

A major contributor for the Taking Care Of Our Own donation program is the Packages From Home group within the United States. Margie Sparkman, a group volunteer, became acquainted with the organization when her son, Marine Sgt. Michael Marzano, gave the ultimate sacrifice in 2005 in Haditha, Iraq.

Sparkman said she feels honored to help servicemembers in Iraq. Volunteers with Packages From Home may be contacted at info@packagesfromhome.org.

There are many people who want to contribute, said Kohrig, and this is their way to donate. A drop-box inside the Palace at Camp Victory is another avenue for contributions.

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