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## **Commander of Galva unit feels the whole story isn't being told**

*By DAVE CLARKE Regional Coordinator*

CAMP VICTORY NORTH, Baghdad, Iraq -- Major Mike Kessel is apparently fed up with the way the news media is covering the war in Iraq.

Kessel is commander of our boys in Baghdad, Foxtrot Battery of the 202nd Field Artillery, Illinois National Guard, out of Galva.

Earlier this week, he fired off an e-mail with attached photo in a one-soldier effort to present a more balanced picture of what our troops are doing in Iraq to counteract nightly photos on the TV news of the bloody aftermath of car bombs and the seemingly endless need to show naked Iraqi prisoners stacked like cord wood.

"In an effort to get the truth out about what is going on in Iraq, not the garbage that is being put out on a daily basis, I want to begin sending you pictures of what my soldiers are doing," Kessel bluntly wrote.

"Basically, in a nutshell, there are a lot of good things over here that are just not getting the press they deserve," said Maj. Kessel. "There are many things our soldiers are doing that would, in my opinion, change many people's minds about the war," he said.

As an example, Maj. Kessel e-mailed a photo of an Iraqi boy whose mobility was restricted by a birth defect who now has a new wheelchair, thanks to the efforts of Battery F's Third Platoon.

"Through the efforts of 3rd Platoon, El Salem Fadel Hadad Al-Jabouri now has a brand new wheelchair which will give him newfound mobility," said Maj. Kessel.

"In addition to the combat patrols we conduct 24 hours a day, throughout the F/202 ADA sector, we work daily on various civil-military operations and other humanitarian projects."

"With that said, I will now get off my soapbox," said Kessel, who, in civilian life is a stockbroker from Champaign.

The commander said he will make an effort to send more about the positive accomplishments in Iraq by the troops of the Galva, Kewanee and Dixon National Guard members serving in Battery F.

"I will try to send you something every week," said Kessel. "It's not all about prisoner abuse."

We hear you loud and clear, major, and appreciate that you are taking the time to make sure this part of America finds out what our troops are really doing over there!

As we receive the material, it will be featured in the Star Courier's "News from the Front" series.

Families and friends of the soldiers risking their lives every day over there for our freedom are eager for any news about what our unit, specifically, is doing -- and how they are doing.

We had the honor of talking briefly with SSG Larry Comer, home on leave from Iraq, at the Galva Memorial Day service, Monday, and were told that members of the Galva National Guard have "the best living conditions possible" in the air-conditioned, dorm-style trailers, in spite of heat which now reaches 120 degrees some days. He said they live constantly with the chance their camp may be the target of a mortar attack, or they may be shot at while on patrol, but overall, things are going well for the 120 men of Battery F.

### **Public hearing held to discuss future option on Stark County Highway**

TOULON -- A capacity crowd attended a meeting in Toulon Thursday night concerning the possible sale of the Stark County Highway Building in Toulon as a site for a new Dollar General store.

### **Coroner's jury rules in two April 22 deaths**

CAMBRIDGE -- A Henry County coroner's jury ruled Thursday that Abby M. Dana, 18, of Kewanee, came to her death on April 22 accidentally due to massive trauma from a lacerated liver incurred in a car accident.

### **Gorby named overall winner in regional competition**

KEWANEE -- The Kewanee Police Department's K-9 team -- officer Chuck Russell and canine officer Gorby -- won the Region 24 United States Police Canine Association (USPCA) patrol dog trial held recently in Lansing, Ill.

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### **Kewanee soldier now operating website from 'Beautiful Baghdad'**

For a "peek inside the trenches," one member of Battery F has now set up his own website.

### **Food program starts today**

The Housing Authority of Henry County (HAHC) is working to make sure that no children in Kewanee go hungry when school is out this summer.

### **Police blotter**

Accidents