

MAJOR ALAN KOZLOWSKI

Just before the end of his deployment to Salah ad-Din province in Iraq, U.S. Army Reservist Major Alan Kozlowski had the pleasure of completing a project he and his team had been working on for months: A shipment of over 100 wheelchairs arrived in Tikrit and were distributed to medical facilities around the city.

The wheelchairs, intended for general civilian use, had been difficult to come by, Kozlowski said. And it was harder still to get them delivered to Tikrit.

"You can't just go online and order these things," he said. "It took us about three months from inception to final delivery. There was a lot of coordinating."

Working with non-commissioned officers (NCOs) in Baghdad, Kozlowski and his team coordinated the procurement and delivery of the much needed wheelchairs.

"It was a great project for us to pursue," he said. "Just as we were leaving, 100 wheelchairs showed up."

As commander of a Civil Affairs unit during the 2007-2008 deployment, Kozlowski led missions like this all the time.

Civil Affairs teams, Kozlowski said, "are the folks who help the local population during a time of war... providing essential services once things have been destroyed."

He described the work they did as "very multifaceted". Soldiers on Civil Affairs teams must learn about the local culture and people so they can effectively partner with them on the reconstruction projects they lead, he said.



Pulaski, NY
The Bronze Star

"That is the rewarding part of helping these folks out," he said. "They're stuck in the middle. We work to give them some relief."

Rebuilding sewer lines and medical facilities were two of the major projects Kozlowski focused on during the deployment.

"What the army and the entire military [are] doing now is trying to go to a full spectrum operations structure of warfare. Not only do you have offense and defense but you also have stability operations. That's a big part of Civil Affairs," he said.

Kozlowski's company of 32 soldiers was spread throughout the province, with teams of four or five soldiers based in the cities of Tikrit, Balad, Bayji, and Samarra. He credits his first sergeant, Command Sergeant Major Ray Pockett for helping him "build a cohesive unit that could work together," he said.

Kozlowski was awarded a Bronze Star for his work during that deployment, both leading his unit and executing so many successful Civil Affairs projects, according to the award citation for the medal.

While he was proud of the "creativity and foresight" he and his unit used to do their jobs, he said he was humbled when he found out he was going to get a Bronze Star.

"I honestly thought that I was just doing my job," he said.



HEROES

Rather, Kozlowski named two men he had looked up to: Pockett and General David Petraeus.

Of Pockett he said, "I respect him as a great NCO and a great leader. He inspired me to look at the human element of organizations and make sure that people are taken care of."

"As Civil Affairs we do it for the folks being effected out in Iraq and Afghanistan. But someone needs to do it for the people in the organization," he said. "I admire [Pockett] and still talk to him."

Kozlowski also looks up to Petraeus "as a great leader who recognized that there is more to war than being on the offense or being on the defense," he said. "He understands the entire concept to include the human element...I truly admire Gen. Petraeus."

