


from the Afghan border

Finding the Heart to Help the People of Afghanistan!

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[Home](#) > [Daily Journal](#) > SPECIAL – Gary Sinise and Daman Elementary School – Part 3 -

SPECIAL – Gary Sinise and Daman Elementary School – Part 3 -

 November 27th, 2009

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November 23, 2009

November 23, 2009 10:00 am. Our troops headed out to the Daman elementary

school.

November 2009

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Daman students were still studying when we arrived.

What an amazing day it was! I could not believe what just happened to us. A Hollywood celebrity flew all the way out to us to do a small Humanitarian Aid project together! That was just unbelievable. One simple request by email made all this happen. When God is involved and willing, nothing is impossible. A lesson learned again! =)

Two platoons drove off to the Daman elementary school one hour prior to the arrival of Mr. Sinise. He was arranged to fly directly to Daman school, and we were to pull a full security on the helicopter landing zone (HLZ)

for him. Dr. Rafi and I rode on a military truck with all the gifts loaded on the back of the truck, while Asad rode with his Platoon that he interprets for. We had two pallets full of gifts with us. The teachers submitted 104 students' names in Daman school and requested to have their children be included in the gift list which was 21 extra students; Dr. Rafi accepted, and we prepared enough for all of them.



Dr. Rafi and Asad, sorting out the gifts according to the list of students present.

Captain Kramer had invited the Goshta Sub-Governor, the Goshta education line director and the Goshta interim Chief of Police over to assist with the distribution with Mr. Sinise. Shortly after our arrival, they arrived, and we waited for Mr. Sinise to appear.

The night before, CPT Kramer informed me that a Division Commander Major General Scaparrotti was also flying in to meet Mr. Sinise. Wow... Two-Star General was coming, too? I was amazed how this little project blew up, because of Mr. Sinise. He must be quite a man, I thought.

Two platoons arrived to Daman and secured the HLZ. We were supposed to start distributing the gifts at 11 am, but due to the flight delay, Mr. Sinise arrived about an hour

and a half late.

We heard the bird fly in. Looked up and there he was... The landing stirred up quite a bit of dust. It was like the sand storms I saw on Indiana Jones. It was quite the grand entrance for someone

« Oct						Dec »
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

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Gary Sinise

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of his stature... =)



Soldiers, pulling security of the HLZ for Mr. Sinise!

Col. Shock was with Mr. Sinise. He and I interacted via email so many times before today, I felt like I knew him for a long time. We exchanged hand-shakes and expressed that we were glad to finally meet each other. Mr. Sinise thanked me for sending him an email regarding this, and I thanked him for accepting and coming all the way out here for us.

Before Mr. Sinise's arrival, Dr. Rafi talked to the teachers and had them bring back a complete list of students in class; then Asad and Dr. Rafi sorted out only the backpacks for students who were present there. This way, we could simply call out the names attached

to the backpacks.



Mr. Sinise, handing a gift package to a 2nd grade student.

As soon as Mr. Sinise landed, Dr. Rafi asked the teachers to line up the students by class; Dr. Rafi and Asad called out the kids' names on the backpacks and one by one, each student came through the line and received the backpack.

We had Goshta Sub-Governor and Mr. Sinise handed gifts out to the kids, and I helped out as well. It was an amazing feeling seeing these children with big smiles on their faces with the gifts in their hands. Many of them were bare footed receiving the gifts. I am sure some of them were a bit too excited to even look for their flip-flops, but I know there are students who could not afford shoes, too. I was glad we were able to provide a pair of shoes today, and I am sure Mr. Sinise felt the

same way.

Contrary to what the teachers submitted to Dr. Rafi, only about 70 students were in class, but some local neighbor kids rushed in, and we handed many backpack gifts to those children as well.

Then, Jim from American Airlines pulled me aside and presented me 'two FREE airline tickets,'

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flying anywhere in U.S., Mexico, Bermuda, the Caribbean, or Canada. It was a very strange moment for me. Yes, happy, of course, but something like this only happens on T.V. I have never thought something like this could actually happen to me. Having Mr. Sinise on one of our projects was the grand prize itself, but these tickets were a real surprise! I couldn't wait to tell this to my wife, now! =)



This kid was so anxious, he rushed out in bare feet! Cute!

Kids took the backpacks back to their tent classrooms and opened them up and started to giggle and laugh with happiness. It just made my day. I was sure Mr. Sinise felt the same way. I knew Dr. Rafi and Asad were happy, too.

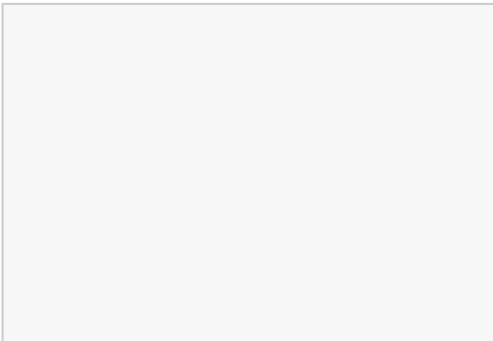
We took a big photo with the kids who were screaming with joy. How many times in these kids' lives so far do you think they received big gifts like these? Once? Perhaps never.... What would be the chance of anybody finding this small tent school in a remote part of the country near the Pakistan border and bring down this many gifts to them? Very little, I assume.

What would the chances be that without a prior arrangement a major Hollywood celebrity flies in to your backyard and gives you bunch

of gifts?

The more I think about, the more amazing I feel about the whole event. I could not have done it myself. This was way out of my league. Everything just went perfect. I could not have asked for anything more for our projects. This was great! I am just so thankful for it happening for these kids.

It truly was the highlight of my deployment.



After the Daman visit, Mr. Sinise flew in to our base, and I got to fly along with him. There Major General Scaparrotti gave me his Commander Coin (a Commander's Coin is like an award to Military personnel), and Mr. Sinise also presented me his CSI:NY DVD series with his autograph on it. That was amazing!

It was a tremendous honor to have met them and be able to distribute these gifts to some of the Afghan children.

2009

- August 2009
- July 2009

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During the short visit to our base, Mr. Sinise had a meet and greet with our soldiers and had a little time to chat with them.

I am extremely happy I was able to provide this opportunity to my fellow soldiers who I served in Afghanistan for a year alongside. Thank you for your great service my fellow combat friends! Great job!

I sincerely appreciate Mr. Sinise, Col. Shock, Jim (sorry, I do not know the last name) and Maj. Gen. Curtis M. Scaparrotti, CSM Capel, and most of all, CPT Kramer, 1SG Reese, Dr. Rafi, and Asad!

Today was only possible, because we all worked together. Thank you! And this event inspires us to do even more humanitarian aid for the Afghan people. Before Mr. Sinise left, I gave him a copy of a CD with Power Point presentation showing all my past projects and future plans. I hope he gets a chance to take a look at it and help us a little more with the Widow Project we are planning.



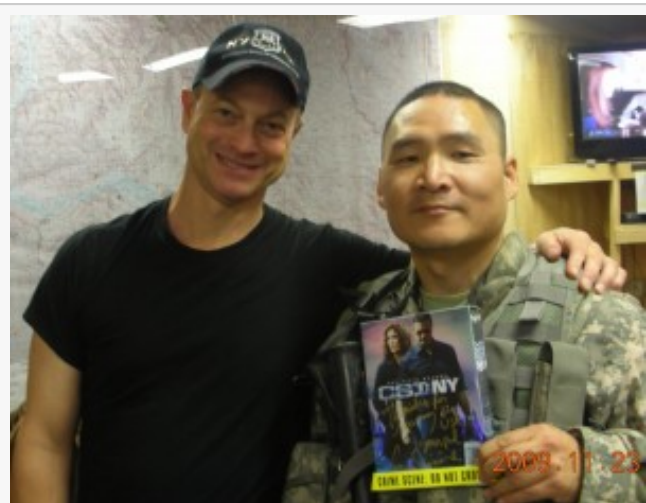
It was amazing to witness these kids getting so happy! Smiles on these kids...Priceless!!



Presented gifts to teachers and the land owner!



Asad, Col. Shock, Mr. Sinise, me!!! =)



Mr. Sinise gave me the entire series of CSI:NY with his signature on it!



Jim(executive officer) from American Airline awarded me with 2 FREE airline tickets! Thanks, sir!!



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Maj. Gen. Scaparrotti gave me his Commander's coin. Thanks, sir. It's an honor!

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Cindy Baugh

December 2nd, 2009 at 11:13 | [#1](#)


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Truly appreciate all your efforts to help the children of the world. One by one (I saw that). More over, the heart of compassion that emanates is/will Make a Difference for many lives. Bless You!

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