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COVER STORY

Morgan Lewis Donates Supplies To Its Employee's Army Squad

By **Jonathan Vanian**
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It's not every day that a paralegal goes off to fight in a war. And it's not everyday that a law firm raises money to chip in for military supplies.

Aaron Isaacson, a 30-year-old paralegal at the San Francisco office of Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, is scheduled for deployment to Afghanistan early this spring, where he will be a member of a 16-person squad named Team Azadi. "Azadi" means freedom in Dari, a Persian language spoken in Afghanistan.

Isaacson, a Kansas native, had been working at Morgan Lewis for approximately a year when he got word from the Kansas National Guard that he was to be deployed to Afghanistan in 2008.

This is Isaacson's third tour of duty in the military. He was first deployed in 2004 to Iraq, where he was stationed at the Al Asad Air Base in the Al Anbar Province. His second tour put him in Baghdad for all of 2006.

"I told my superiors at the firm, the partners, what was happening," Isaacson said, "and almost immediately they asked, 'What can we do for you?'"

Jami McKeon, a partner in the firm's San Francisco office and chair of the commercial litigation practice, said when Isaacson told her about his upcoming tour of duty, she thought there had to be a way that the firm could help.

Although the military provides soldiers with the necessary equipment to accomplish a given mission, Isaacson said, other specialty items must be purchased out of the soldier's pocket. Isaacson suggested to McKeon that the firm could purchase extra pieces of equipment for his team that the military isn't providing, he said.



Courtesy Photo

Aaron Isaacson, a Morgan Lewis paralegal and member of the Kansas National Guard, is scheduled for deployment to Afghanistan early this spring. Morgan Lewis spent \$12,000 on supplies for his team.

Over the course of the Iraq War, there have been a number of complaints levied against the military for failing to adequately provide supplies such as body armor to soldiers.

McKeon and partners at the firm rallied behind Isaacson and asked what items the firm could purchase that would be useful to the mission or beneficial to the soldiers' comfort.

Isaacson showed McKeon a Web site that specializes in selling outdoor supplies, military gear and other tactical equipment. He pointed out GPS systems and tactical gear, including specialty outfits designed for the use of holding pieces of body armor, medical supplies and ammunition.

The firm spent \$12,000 on these supplies for the team, McKeon said.

"The army is just happy," Isaacson said. "They awarded Morgan Lewis with an outstanding employer award."

Isaacson and his team are currently stationed in Fort Riley, Kan., where they are training for military operations in Afghanistan. They'll be working as embedded tactical trainers, Isaacson said, meaning that they'll train members of the Afghan National Army and accompany them in operations against opposing forces along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

For McKeon, Morgan Lewis's efforts to help Isaacson's team plays just a small role in the scope and scale of what lies ahead for Isaacson and his colleagues in Afghanistan.

"In comparison to what they are doing, we are doing nothing," said McKeon.