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Army goes by the book for boosting morale



The Defense Department is using preloaded audio books to boost troop morale in Iraq. Paying an undisclosed multimillion dollar sum, the Pentagon recently ordered 150,000 Playaway audiobooks from Findaway World, the private Cleveland company which created the 2-ounce battery powered digital devices. Soldiers don't have to download anything; the devices are each preloaded with single titles, ranging from the *New Testament* as read by James Earl Jones to *Learning Arabic! Anywhere* by Penton. There's lighter fare too, including works from Robert Ludlum

and James Patterson. The initiative was spearheaded by the Department of Defense Morale, Welfare and Recreation Library Program. Devices are being deployed to more than 450 military bases. As one company commander in Iraq put it, "These are the same soldiers who would be spending their time with a PlayStation controller."

By Edward C. Baig

Photo by Chaplain Andrew Shulman, U.S. Army

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