

Spartan Chronicle

pointing out the weekly news from the 2nd BCT

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Construction firm surveys police site

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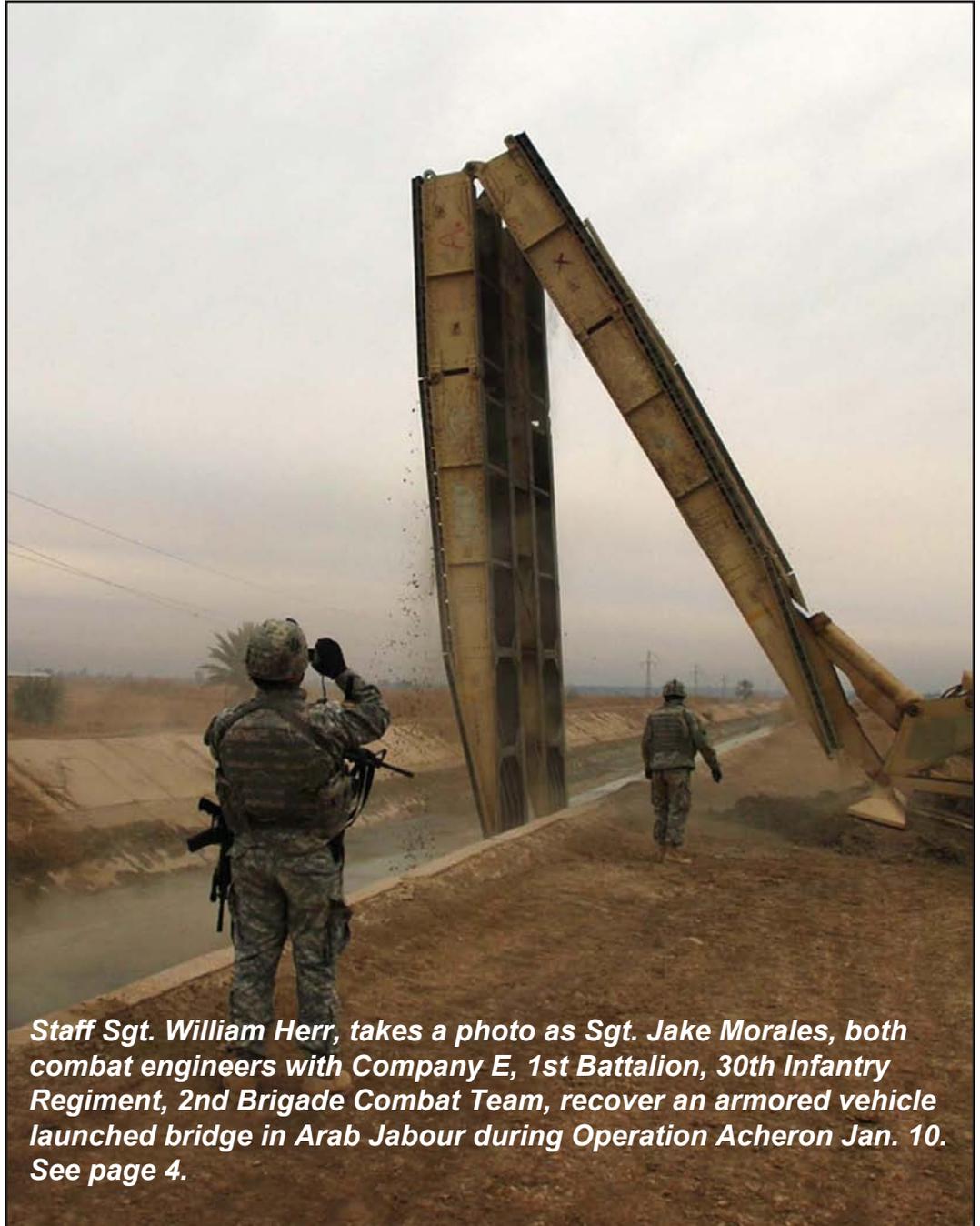
Medical aid helps many

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Passing time

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Staff Sgt. William Herr, takes a photo as Sgt. Jake Morales, both combat engineers with Company E, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, recover an armored vehicle launched bridge in Arab Jabour during Operation Acheron Jan. 10. See page 4.

Photo by Sgt. Luis Delgadillo



Foundations laid for future police station

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
2nd BCT PAO

An empty field behind the Palestine School in Arab Jabour will soon be the site of the first police station in the area's history.

On Jan. 7, engineers with Mercury Development construction went to the proposed site with Soldiers of the 153rd Military Police Company, Delaware City, Del. National Guard, to do a site survey.

"We're going to take photos and get an idea of the local infrastructure," said Mustafa Al Waeli, the senior project manager for Mercury Development construction. "It will help us draw up an assessment of how to build the station and the cost of project."

Mohammed Al Zuhari, one of the surveyors, was pleased with the site. Besides having roads nearby that could accommodate construction equipment needed, the field is located near an electrical transformer, allowing easy access to electricity.

Two kilometers up the road, there is a water purification plant as well, Zuhari said, which provides multiple ways to get potable water to the station.

Although the contractors studied the site before on maps, this was



Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Mohammed Al Zuhari, (right) Mercury Development construction, calls out to fellow surveyors reviewing the land for the Arab Jabour police station Jan. 7. The police station, the 46th built by the company, will take between six and eight months to complete. It will be the first police station in the Arab Jabour area and will house up to 220 police officers who will patrol the Arab Jabour and Al Buaytha area.

the first time they were actually able to put their eyes on the site.

The next step will be to put boots on the ground.

The company will mark off the boundaries of the site and fence it in while constructing a temporary dwelling for site supervisors to stay at.

These supervisors will help oversee the ground leveling of the area and preparations for the building of the station's foundation, Zuhari said.

In time, the hope is the station will help build upon the foundation of security already established by Coalition Forces and Concerned Local Citizens in the area.

These CLCs, besides providing the security necessary for such a project to take place, will also be the pool of potential officers from which the future station will be staffed by, said 1st Lt. Daniel DeFlaviis, a Delaware state trooper

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2nd BCT PAO
Maj. James Brownlee
1st Lt. Kalen Smith
Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
Sgt. Luis Delgadillo
Sgt. Jason Stadel
Sgt. Randall Townsend

and member of the 153rd MP Company.

Under DeFlaviis' guidance, the applicants have already received some training by the 153rd MP Co. to help prepare them for an Iraqi police academy.

"We feel privileged to be able to contribute to this area," he said.

Likewise, Waeli said he is pleased to help his fellow Iraqis in the area, just as his company has in the past.

Waeli said his company has a long list of police stations they have built in Iraq. Over the past two years,

as a subcontractor for Innovative Technical Solutions Incorporated, the company has built 45 police stations around Iraq, he said.

Of the 45 constructed, Waeli said he was most proud of work the company did in Al Kut. In the province, the group built 14 police stations.

"We changed the situation in that province," he said. "It's a lot more secure."

The same success will hopefully occur in Arab Jabour as well. Although the station will take between six and eight months to be completed,

benefits of the project will begin much sooner.

Once construction begins, the company will begin hiring laborers from among the local population. Waeli said over one hundred people will be needed for the construction effort, 90 percent of which will come from local Iraqis.

Such employment will help place money into local economy, already seeing growth due to the improved security in the area and introduction of small business grants to local merchants to help them repair their stores and build up their

businesses.

The first steps toward hiring for the project was taken when Zuhari met with Sheikh Tomah Al Juburi, a prominent local area sheikh who has taken an active role in rebuilding the infrastructure of Arab Jabour.

Due to Tomah, the land was acquired and given over to the Iraq Ministry of Interior for approval of a police station, DeFlaviis said.

Working with Tomah will also help spread the word of the need for laborers once the project begins and help bring out qualified applicants.

In time, just as the Ministry of Interior is working with the local government in Arab Jabour, the creation of a police force in the area under the jurisdiction of the government of Iraq will also help strengthen ties between the local and central government.

The police force, once created, will be responsible for the security of the Arab Jabour and Al Buaytha regions, DeFlaviis said.

"This has been very successful today," he added. "The great thing about having these gentlemen here is they're helping build the first organized police station."



Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Sheikh Tomah Al Juburi, (center) a prominent local area sheikh who has taken an active role in rebuilding the infrastructure of Arab Jabour, meets with the contractors after the site survey Jan. 7. Tomah helped secure the land for the police station. By meeting with the sheikh, the contractors were able to foster relationships and discuss their ideas.



Photo by Sgt. Luis Delgadillo

Sgt. Jake Morales and Spc. Christopher Matthews (in vehicle), both combat engineers, with Company E, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, launch an armored vehicle launched bridge in Arab Jabour during Operation Acheron Jan. 10.

Building bridges: engineers span canal junction

Sgt. Luis Delgadillo
2nd BCT PAO

Opening a new passage, Coalition Forces moved and set up an armored vehicle launched bridge and cut 200 meters of new road in southern Arab Jabour Jan 10.

Sgt. Jake Morales, combat engineer with Company E, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, said the bridge's movement and the road were necessary in order to allow for easy movement to operations in Zambraniyah.

The new path, connecting access roads leading from Patrol Base Hawkes to vital canal roads to the west, was made possible by Soldiers of the Company E, 1-30th Inf. Reg.

The bridge move and road established crossing points for Soldiers of Co. B, who frequently operate in the area.

"This is the first time I've launched a bridge since OIF I," said Morales who along with fellow combat engineer Staff Sgt. Tommy Mays boast the only

combat bridge launch for the 2nd BCT.

While Mays was busy assisting with road construction, Morales was assisted by Spc. Christopher Matthews, another Co. E combat engineer.

Even with much time passing since his last bridge launch, Morales had little trouble guiding the massive two-piece hinged steel structure to its new location.

The bridge was picked up

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by Matthews with the armored vehicles large hydraulic lifting arm then transported to its new location, a stones throw from PB Hawkes.

With the vehicle's engine revving up and pressurizing the hydraulic lines, the giant, more than 50 foot span, began to unfold. Soon, people in the neighboring villages began to gather and question the reason for the bridge.

Though land owners weren't thrilled with the idea of having a bridge come through their fields their worries were appeased by Capt. John T. Newman, commander of Co. B.

Through an interpreter, Newman explained to the farmers the importance of the road and told them that they would be fairly compensated for any



Photos by Sgt. Luis Delgadillo

Combat engineers, with Company E, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, launch an armored vehicle launched bridge in Arab Jabour during Operation Acheron Jan. 10.

land disturbed by the construction.

The road itself would run along a property line and cause minimal damage to the farmer's fields but Coalition Forces were still prepared to handle any claims for damage.

The bridge, in its previous location, was being used by Soldiers

of Co. B to move west during clearing operations, which connected PB Hawkes with fellow Soldiers of the 6th Squadron 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th BCT, 3 Inf. Div. Fort Stewart, Ga. who operate to the far west of PB Hawkes.

It was a vital crossing point, used by Coalition

Forces to connect two of the 2nd BCT's maneuver battalions.

Now the bridge and new road would serve as a route for Soldiers to speed into neighboring Zambraniyah where Newman said insurgents have a foothold.

Having calmed the farmer's nerves Co. E pressed on and cut their vital road through the soggy field and worked into the night.

As of now the road is drivable and the bridge makes a 35 foot gap passable for vehicles. In the coming days more gravel will be laid down to reinforce the road.

In time its foundation will be firm much like the hopes of Iraqis who now watch patiently waiting for when they too can bring the fight to al-Qaeda.



Soldiers cross the bridge spanning a canal separating roads leading from Patrol Base Hawkes to vital canal roads to the west. The bridge, set up Jan. 10, established a crossing points for Soldiers of Co. B, 1-30th Inf. Reg., who frequently operate in the area. The bridge will allow them speedy access into neighboring Zambraniyah.

Keeping comms up all in day's work

Capt. Jeffrey Brizek
2-3 Brigade Troops Battalion

Communication is key on today's battlefield, and thanks to dedicated Soldiers of the 2-3 Brigade Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, Soldiers at Patrol Base Copper and Forward Operating Base Mahmudiyah can stay connected with their comrades.

Each week, Soldiers of the 2-3 BTB rotate out to both locations in order to provide FM radio networks to the Soldiers stationed there.

The FM network allows the bases to communicate with each other throughout the brigade area of operations.

Originally set up by Soldiers of Company

C, 3rd Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment, 4th BCT (Airborne), 25th Inf. Division, the network's retransmission stations needed to be updated to accommodate the new units there and allow them to communicate with the 2nd BCT higher headquarters.

At both locations, the 2-3 BTB Soldiers have set up relay stations to facilitate the airwaves. They also set up a living station in the modular workstation at PB Copper to facilitate the Soldiers who work there.

Sgt. Javier Rivera, Company B, 2-3 BTB, is one of the Soldiers who work at PB Copper.

"I feel that what we do at Copper Patrol Base is vital to our brigade's operations," said the



Courtesy Photos
Sgt. Javier Rivera, Company B, 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, works on a vehicle's comm systems at Patrol Base Copper Jan. 4. Rivera is one of many Soldiers who perform weekly rotations to PB Copper to ensure they have communications.

Orlando, Fla., native.

By setting up FM links at places like PB Copper, Company B Soldiers are providing their services on the front lines of operations in the area of the Samra Jungle.

"We can hear the traffic being transmitted through the radio systems; that makes us aware of how important our job is to providing communications to the fight," Rivera said.

Safety Alert - Limited visibility driving

- * During periods of limited visibility or brown outs, ensure that you leave enough space between vehicles so that the driver can react to objects in the road.
- * Keep your vehicle's windshield and lights clean at all times.
- * Driver and crew must communicate with each other and keep scanning with their eyes.
- * Reduce your speed or stop moving whenever you cannot see the road or vehicle in front due to limited visibility or brown outs.
- * Speeds must be adjusted to allow adequate reaction time.
- * Graveling the entrances to FOB and patrol bases is a good way to prevent excess dust

- * Water sprayer trucks work good on FOBs to prevent dust outs.



Health care brought to area farmers

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
2nd BCT PAO

Medical care was provided for free to residents of Arab Jabour Jan. 8. Soldiers from Company D, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, hosted a civil-military engagement to provide basic care, but it led to much more.

While Soldiers met with the population and discussed their needs and desires, the townspeople's immediate health concerns were addressed by the medical personnel.

"This MEDCAP operation gives us the chance to come here and do good things," said 1st Lt. Bryan Deminico, platoon leader, Company D, 1-30th Inf. Reg. "It helps us to help the people; put a good face on what we are doing."

Over the course of the afternoon, 234 people were treated for various ailments. Flu season was the main cause of the problems. The most common illnesses treated were colds, flu-like symptoms such as runny noses, and diarrhea, said Maj. Catherine Haverty, Baghdad 7 embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team health official.

Coalition medical personnel, three Iraqi doctors, and an Iraqi nurse treated minor ailments, but there were several more severe cases.

Two girls, one who was electrocuted and another who burnt her hand on a stove, had their burns cleaned, disinfected and dressed, Haverty said.



Photo by Spc. Angelica Golindano

A group of Arab Jabour citizens line up outside a building for medical screenings and treatment Jan. 8.

The most severe was a toddler, Shahad Muhanad Raief Al Dulaimi, who suffers from spina bifida, a birth defect in which the spine's neural tube is incompletely formed, Haverty said.

Due to this disease, she also suffers from hydrocephalus, or water on the brain. There is pressure on some of her internal organs and she is unable to walk, Deminico said.

A shunt was implanted during past treatments, to drain the water from her head to relieve pressure on her brain, but there was little the doctors could do at the medical operation because the only option she has is surgery.

Haverty said there are doctors in Iraq who could perform the procedure to correct the spina bifida. However, Shannon's grandmother said she lacks the money needed to pay for the surgery.

Deminico said Coalition Forces are trying to get the ball rolling for the family by submitting

paperwork to try to get help from both their higher headquarters and the Iraqi Ministry of Health.

The ePRT has liaisons with doctors in the International Zone working with the Iraq Minister of Health to help address this problem and bring a more permanent presence into the area.

"There are a lot of Iraqi doctors not working in the area," she said. She explained that getting more doctors depends on whether MoH blesses off on the clinics there. If recognized, the clinic will provide area farmers who have long been without health care access to this quality of life improvement.

When the unit redeploys, they want it to be a place where they are accepted and the people are living in a safe and secure environment, free from the grip of fear once imposed by al-Qaeda.

"We are here to help, we are here to fight alongside the community to remove any insurgent forces that threaten the community," said Deminico.



Courtesy Photo

Staff Sgt. Reginald Everette, Company G, 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, goes over basic marksmanship skills with U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Gary North, U.S. Central Command Air Force commander.

Air Force generals visit Army Soldiers

1-9 Field Artillery Staff
1st Bn, 9th Field Artillery, 2nd BCT

The commander of the United States Central Command Air Forces visited Soldiers at Logistics Support Area Anaconda Dec. 26 to see first hand the how the Soldiers secure the LSA.

Securing the LSA's gates, or entry control points, is one of the main jobs for Soldiers from Company G, 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team. In doing so, they provide base defense and track the convoys and personnel that enter and leave.

Air Force Lt. Gen. Gary North, USCENTAF commander and Air Force Brig. Gen. Burton Field,

332nd Air Expeditionary Wing commander, were given a rundown of how the Company G Soldiers provide security.

"We enjoy having the Air Force leadership take an active interest in the hard work the Soldiers of Company G, 26th do at the north entry control point," said Capt. Alana Whitney, Johnstown, Neb., Co. G commander. "It is a great opportunity for my Soldiers to interact with different service personnel."

The generals were also given preliminary marksmanship instruction on the weapons used by the Soldiers while they guard the LSA, followed by test fires of two

"It is a great opportunity for my Soldiers to interact with different service personnel."

-Capt. Alana Whitney
Company G, 26th BSB, commander

sniper rifles and a shotgun.

After the range and tour Soldiers from Co. G 26th BSB were rewarded with coins from the generals.

"It was a great pleasure to see someone with that much rank take time to come see what the Soldiers at checkpoint one do on a daily basis and to recognize all of them for what they do," said Sgt. William Campney, Co. G.

Butcher cuts deep into economic opportunities

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
2nd BCT PAO

With a nickname like the “Butcher of Arab Jabour,” one might think Hussen Jowd was a major terrorist.

He was mentioned by President George W. Bush during a speech about battling terrorists, when he addressed a group of basic training graduates in November 2007.

Hussen Jowd, a butcher in Arab Jabour, a region south of Baghdad, is the biggest success of the microgrants program being implemented by the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, said Capt. Rems Keane, Company B, 426th Civil Affairs Battalion. These grants have allowed him to expand his business.

The program is designed to help give the local economy a shot in the arm, said Keane, a native of Weston, Fla. Like the American economy, Iraq’s economy follows the supply-chain distribution economic model.

In this model, goods are produced from a

natural resource. These goods are distributed to retailers, who provide them to consumers. At the point of consumption, where consumers obtain the goods from the retailers, money is introduced into the supply-chain distribution system.

This money, now in the hands of the retailers, is sent back up the chain, strengthening the links above it. This in turn benefits the consumer by providing more goods, and so the cycle continues, adding more jobs as well.

These jobs in turn give the consumers the money needed to involve themselves in the chain at the point of consumption.

By introducing capital into this cycle of economics explained Keane, it will help stimulate the economy. The stimulation will hopefully lead to a stable economy, a strategic goal that must be met before American forces exit the region.

The microgrants are currently targeted at the retailer level of



Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
Hussen Jowd, a butcher in Arab Jabour, cuts up a sheep outside his shop Nov. 13. Thanks to a grant from Coalition Forces, Jowd is expanding his business. He hopes to add a restaurant and delivery service in addition to a new building he is currently constructing.

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the supply-chain distribution economic model, Keane said. By giving businesses the money, up to \$2,500, he said they can help expand their markets and improve their businesses.

In order to receive a grant, business owners must first provide a plan of action for how they will use it and also agree to three conditions. These conditions are: business owners must use the money for their business and not for personal gain, owners agree to attend business training, and owners agree to attend local business association meetings.

While Coalition Forces currently host the training and meetings, work is being done to incorporate nongovernmental organizations into the process, organizations with more business skills, Keane said.

Although the government of Iraq doesn't fund the program, the organization ensures the businesses that apply for grants are legitimate organizations, said Keane. The end state is to transition from a microgrant program to a microloan program, where the GoI provides businesses loans they will eventually pay back.

Currently, because the money is a grant, businesses do not have to pay the capital back, although they do have to provide proof to Coalition Forces, who visit them bimonthly, that the money is being used for the right purposes.

If used for the right purposes, Keane said the money can go a long way into helping create a self-sustaining economy, at which point the GoI can step in and begin the

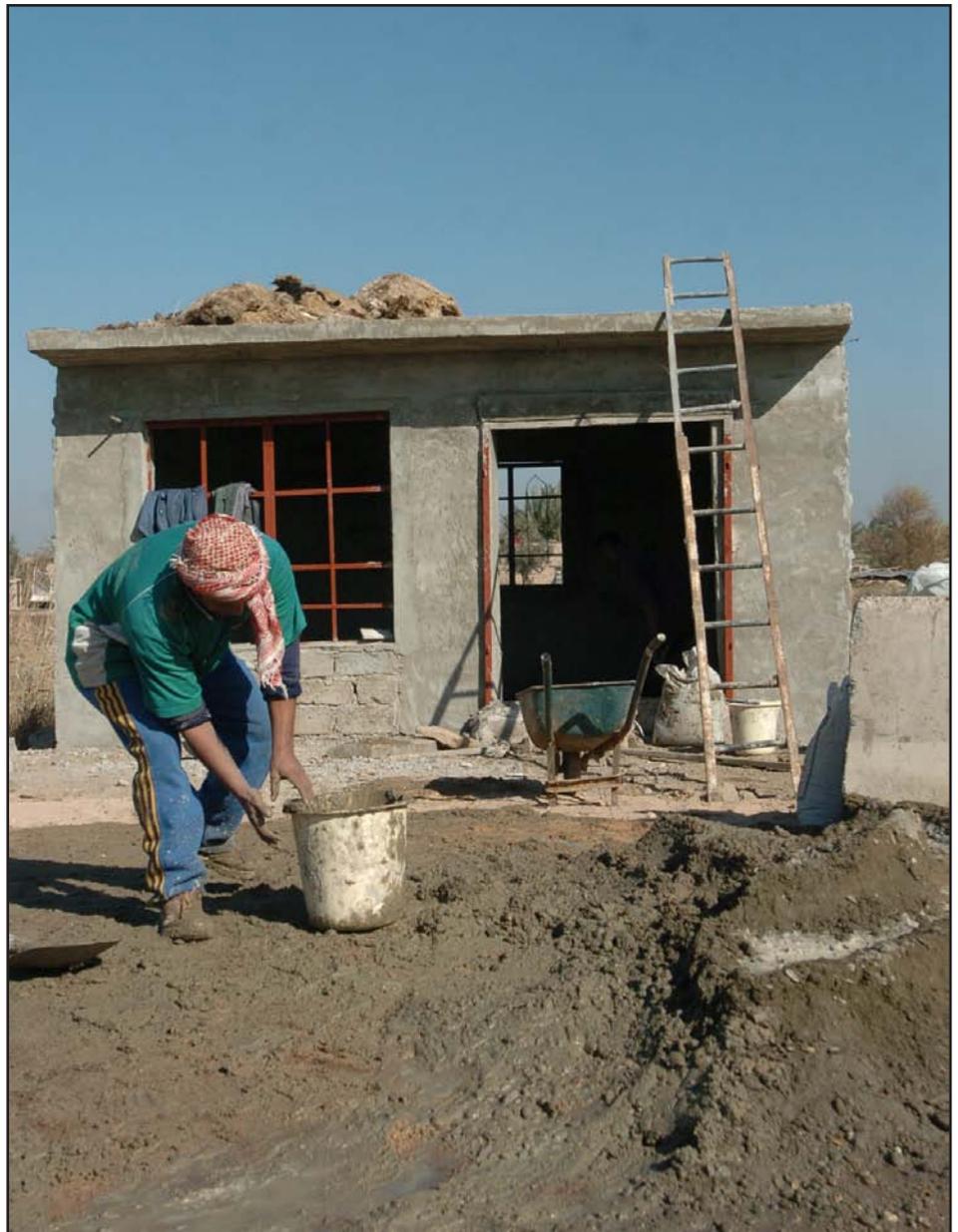


Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

An Arab Jabour man grabs a bag of fresh mixed concrete to take into a new building being built for the area butcher, Hussen Jowd, Jan. 7. Jowd is expanding his business due to an increase in security in the area. His improvements are being funded by micro-grants, Coalition Forces provided sums of money used by businesses to increase their markets and improve their stores.

microloan process.

The effect of the money being used correctly is evident in Jowd's butcher shop.

Jowd has used his money for several purposes, Keane said. His grant has increased the size of his stock, provided new equipment for his business and is currently being

used to construct a new building.

Jowd said his old building was no longer suitable for his business, which has seen a boom in production since the implementation of improved security in the region.

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Before terrorists were removed from his community, he sold one or two sheep a week. With security improved and people moving about again, he now sells the same amount daily.

Once the new building is complete, Jowd said he would like to expand his products by making soups to sell, as well as meat. He also plans to use further grants to build his own restaurant and purchase a delivery truck to expand his market to other communities.

Keane said while the grants were originally meant only for the retailer

portion of the economy, Jowd's entrepreneur spirit is filtering into the levels above and below. His truck will increase the distribution link and as his business expands it will create more jobs for the area. Currently he is employing two men to construct the new building.

"I've got supplies and the people are getting money," Jowd said of the grant given to him that financed his expansions.

While Jowd's business is the poster child for success, the program has other successful ventures, Keane said.

"I've got supplies and the people are getting money... The money has made my shop beautiful. You're (Americans who provided the grants) all my friends."

**-Hussen Jowd
Arab Jabour butcher**

These include a Baghdad university student in Al Buaytha who used his grant to open a convenience store across from the Al Aharar School. The profits he is enjoying from his business are financing his school expenses, Keane said.

To date the program has distributed more than \$140,000 to local businesses in Arab

Jabour, Hawr Rajab, Al Buaytha and Adwaniyah.

While a price tag can be put on the money given away, the dividends reaped from the initial investment are priceless, a sentiment echoed by the tone of all the people helped by the project.

"The money has made my shop beautiful," Jowd said. "You're (Americans who provided the grant) all my friends."



Photos by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
Left: Hussen Jowd, a butcher in Arab Jabour (right), stands outside a new building being constructed for his business Jan. 7. Jowd's improvements to his business have been a result of the microgrant program, which provides business with up to \$2,500 to help expand their businesses.



Right: An Arab Jabour man waits to smooth out the new building's floor.

SPORTS & GAMES

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
2nd BCT PAO

Soldiers on Forward Operating Base Kalsu are heavy into their flag football season during week six of the competition.

Coming into this week's game, the Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, were looking to even up their record and hit the .500 mark. Standing in their way was the rival HHC, the Iron Horses of the 4th BCT, 3rd Infantry Division.

The Iron horses had multiple substitutes available for their team, but the Roughriders were able to keep the game tight, running an even

6 - 6 at the end of the first 20-minute half.

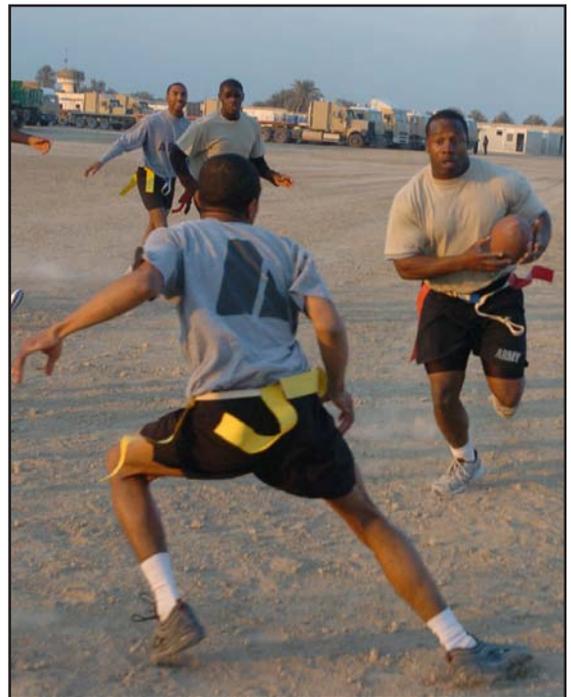
However, the Roughriders, with only one sub, had to rely on keeping at least six men on the field the whole game, while the Iron Horses were able to keep a fresh seven men on the field per drive.

Despite keeping pace for the first twenty minutes, the odds eventually overcame the Roughriders, who fell to 2 - 4 following the 20 - 6 loss.

The loss was a setback, but Capt. Terrance Montgomery, Roughrider's coach, said the chance to make the playoffs is still alive.

He said the playoff spots are

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Photos by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Sgt. Wallace Johnson, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, communication sergeant, puts up a defensive wall against an ongoing rush Jan. 9.



The Iron Horse quarterback (center), 4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., avoids being taken down by Spc. Kenny Busch, brigade personal security detail, by handing the ball off to the team's running back.

still up for grabs, noting that no team is a clear cut dominant force in the league. Also, the tournament organizers, Kellogg Brown and Root and the Kalsu Morale, Welfare and Recreation department, have yet to determine how playoff spots will be open.

All these unknowns have the makings of a dramatic season.

“We’re a good contender,” said Montgomery. “The only thing lacking is support. With a couple more players, we’d probably be the best.”

Even if they don’t take the prize, some just play for the morale-boost it brings them, like Staff Sgt. Demarcus Lewis, HHC supply sergeant.

Likewise, Pfc. Anthony Farris, also HHC supply, said on field, all the



Photos by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

First Sgt. Richard Henson, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, first sergeant, avoids losing his flag while searching for a receiver.

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Pfc. Anthony Farris, HHC supply, catches one of Henson’s passes. Henson finished the game with one touchdown pass to Sgt. Wallace Johnson, HHC communication sergeant.

worries, stresses and concerns of deployment go away. “When I go out on the field I don’t see anything but the ball.”

The desire to have a good time is what Lewis credits with the success of the program, as well as the other competitions, such as basketball and volleyball, put on by the Kalsu MWR office.

While the season will still be considered a winner due to all the good times the group has had even if they don’t make the playoffs, the group is still trying to go for the goal.

The next game for the Roughriders will be Jan. 14 at 3 p.m. at the Kalsu football field, located by the coffee shop on the western side of the base. The Roughriders will be taking on the 2-3 Brigade Troops Battalion Soldiers, the Titans.

“We appreciate all the guys who come out and support,” Montgomery said.



Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

A Soldier with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Brigade Combat Team, Iron Horse flag football team, leaps high to pull down a pass during a Jan. 9 flag football game against the Rough Riders, the 2nd BCT HHC.

We Want YOU! Shoutout for DVIDS shoutouts



1. We have another request for HOCKEY Shout outs!!! The Pittsburgh Penguins would love to get some troops saying hi to the team!

All you need to say is your: Name, Rank, Where you are stationed in Iraq, Where you are from and add a message to the team.

2. TEAM SHOUT OUTS NEEDED FOR:

Buffalo Sabres
Detroit Pistons
Minnesota Timberwolves
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NY Islanders

*All interviews are taped and can be shared over the Web with your family – and it’s free!

See www.dvidshub.net for more details and to see what the world’s finest Soldiers have been up to.

To participate, e-mail 1st Lt. Kalen Smith at: kalen.marie.smith@2bct3id.army.mil





Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

A Soldier plays a racing game on an X-Box signed out at the Forward Operating Base Kalsu Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center Jan. 11. The center has four big screen TVs and X-Boxes Soldiers can sign out, along with 42 games. As long as there is no wait, Soldiers can play as long as they want, limited only by their free time.

Game not over: Soldiers play games at MWR

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
2nd BCT PAO

When Soldiers deploy, they leave behind plenty of things, often times including their hobbies. But one they don't have to leave behind is their video game playing thanks to the Forward Operating Base Kalsu Morale,

Welfare and Recreation Center.

In order to give Soldiers some options to chill out, the center offers four big screen televisions and X-Box game consoles they can play at the center. In addition to bringing their own games, Soldiers can also sign out one of the

42 available titles.

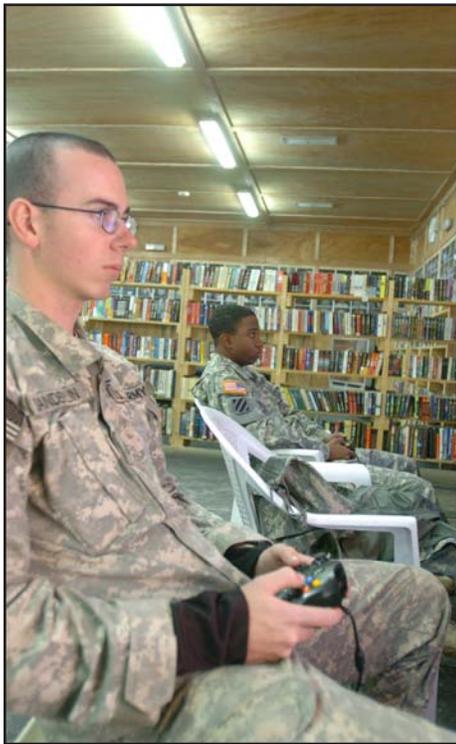
"The selection is pretty good," said Pfc. Jacob Sanderlin, Company G, 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team. "They got racing, fighting, role playing and first person shooters."

Sanderlin, who has

been without an X-Box since giving his away to his brother before deploying, finds some comfort in the program. He is also finding some sequels he has yet to play.

Currently Sanderlin, a native of Fort Stewart, Ga., fills his time playing

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Photos by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Pfc. Jacob Sanderlin, Company G, 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th BBCT, plays Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic II on the X-Box at the FOB Kalsu MWR Center Jan. 11 (left) while Spc. Raymond Allen, Company F, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Air Assault Division, plays Guitar Hero.

the role-laying game “Stars Wars: Knights of the Old Republic II.” Having already beaten the first one at home, the game was a natural choice to help fill his time.

“Days tend to go by and feel the same,” he said, explaining that without weekends off, days seem to run into each other. “This gives people some variety; they aren’t doing the same thing everyday.”

Despite not liking the monotony, Sanderlin said one common habit of his was coming to the center each day after his work shift to progress his way through the game. He said it helps relieve boredom.

While finding fun ways to fill the hours is a common reason to want to play, other Soldiers have different reasons. For Spc. Raymond Allen, Company F,

2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), the motivation is keeping his music skills up to par.

Allen, a Goose Creek, S.C. native, is an avid musician who plays the guitars, drums and keyboard and is also a member of a band back home, said he enjoys coming to the center to keep his fingers in tune.

Allen, who said music helps give him a release, visits the center as often as he can to play Guitar Hero, a music simulation game.

The game, where players play along to real songs on a plastic guitar by following notes on the screen, gaining points based on how well they play, is very similar to playing the guitar, he said. The only difference is the guitar has buttons instead of strings, he said.

Besides wowing several onlookers with five star performances on several songs, Allen said the game allows him to keep his ear in tune and his mind sharp.

Likewise, he said it is a good way to stay out of trouble. Like his musical habit he credits with keeping himself out of trouble growing up, playing games can fill the off hours with a positive activity.

Soldiers looking to get their game on can visit the center anytime to sign out a system and game. Soldiers can sign out the system for as long as they want as long as there is no line. If others are waiting, systems and games have a one-hour time limit.

Soldiers can also compete in tournaments hosted by the MWR

Word on the street

“How do you think the New Hampshire and Iowa primaries will affect the presidential race?”



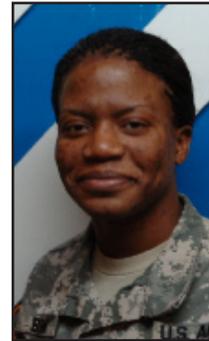
“It’s really too early to determine who will go forward to represent their party. If one candidate won both then I’d start leaning, but it is too early to tell.”

Maj. Luis Feliciano
2nd BCT S2



“Still too early for me to decide. I am pulling for Clinton.”

Sgt. 1st Class Vashana Chambers
HHC, 2nd BCT re-enlistment office



“I don’t think it will affect it at all. I don’t think two states will be the deciding factor.”

Sgt. Betty Brine
HHC, 2-3 BTB

JANUARY MWR

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
30 Halo 2 Oldies music night	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE	1 NEW YEAR'S Talent Show	2 Salsa music night	3 Pool Dominoes	4 Movie Night Spades	5 Texas Hold'em R&B music night
6 Halo 2 Oldies music night	7 Checkers Chess	8 Monopoly Spades	9 Salsa music night	10 Pool Dominoes	11 Movie Night Spades	12 Texas Hold'em Country music night
13 Halo 2 Oldies music night	14 Ping Pong Chess	15 Checkers Spades	16 Salsa music night	17 Pool Dominoes	18 Movie Night Spades	19 Texas Hold'em R&B music night
20 Halo 2 Oldies music night	21 Checkers Chess	22 Monopoly Spades	23 Salsa music night	24 Pool Dominoes	25 Movie Night Hip hop music night	26 Texas Hold'em Country music night
27 Halo 2 Oldies music night	28 Ping Pong Chess	29 Checkers Spades	Unless otherwise stated, all events begin at 1930. Times and events are subject to change. Special events are in red italics .			