Spartan Chronicle

pointing out the weekly news from the 2nd BCT

Vol. 2, Issue 12 **February 10, 2008**

Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Hussen Jowd, the Arab Jabour butcher, prepares a sandwich of bread, mutton, tomatoes and cucumbers for a local child outside his butcher shop Feb. 7. Turn to page 10.

Soldiers deliver wheelchair to boy

- page 6

Soldier makes history

- page 7

Soldiers play general

- page 12

NEWS

Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Combat engineers of the Ironclaw Route Clearance Team, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Inf. Division, Fort Stewart, Ga., conduct a route clearance mission on the outskirts of Hawr Rajab Feb. 8. Thanks to the efforts of these Soldiers, Highway 37 was cleared of improvised explosive devices, allowing the farmers of Sayifiyah a safe route to transport their goods into Baghdad and bring economic stability to their community.

Road to economic revival opens

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
2nd BCT PAO

Highway 37 is the main route into the heart of Baghdad for the people of Sayifiyah, and is now the only paved road leading from the farming community to the lucrative markets in Baghdad.

With the winter rains making the dirt roads nearly impassible, the importance of keeping Highway 37 open is vital to the economic lifestyle of the people, said Maj. John Pope, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, brigade engineer.

To help bring life into the area, Soldiers from the 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th BCT, and 5th Squadron, 7th Cav. Reg., 1st BCT, both of 3rd Inf. Div., Fort Stewart, Ga., helped clear the road of improvised explosive devices left by insurgents.

The three-week project required

See ROAD page 3

2 SEND ME

The Spartan Chronicle is an authorized electronic publication for members of the U.S. Army produced weekly by the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

Contents of the Spartan Chronicle are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the 3rd ID.

All editorial content of the Spartan Chronicle is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the 2nd BCT public affairs office.

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

clearing a total of 14 kilometers and numerous road repairs to damaged sections, Pope said.

Many of those 14 kilometers were covered by combat engineers of the Ironclaw Route Clearance Team, 3rd Battalion, 7th Inf. Reg., 4th BCT. This dedicated group of Soldiers clears routes to allow others to use them safely, said 1st Lt. Matthew Holler, 6-8 Cav Reg., squadron engineer.

During one particular five kilometer stretch, the route clearance removed 27 IEDs, providing freedom of maneuver for both Coalition Forces and the Sayifiyah population.

"Knowing that people can go where they need to without fear, that's the most fulfilling part of the job," said Holler, a native of Mazomanie, Wisc.

Holler said he hopes to help the Iraqis gain self-sufficiency. He said on many of the projects his Soldiers work with the 535th Engineer Company, 82nd Engineer Battalion, Bamberg, Germany, and the aid of Iraqi contractors.

Although no contractors were used for the repair of Highway 37, he said on many smaller roads and bridge repairs, they have relied on contracting local construction companies. This provides jobs, economic growth and the skills necessary to maintain the roads once Coalition Forces leave the area, he said.

Additionally, U.S. Army units are relying on the aid of Iraqis to help keep the roads free of insurgent activities. Soldiers have established a patrol base while establishing Sons of Iraq checkpoints along the roads. At these checkpoints, locals who have decided to rise up against terrorism, stand watch for illegal activities, keeping the roads safe for their community.

Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

The claw on a Buffalo vehicle used by combat engineers of the Ironclaw Route Clearance Team, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Inf. Division, Fort Stewart, Ga., is used to remove a piece of rubble possibly hiding an improvised explosive device during a route clearance mission on the outskirts of Hawr Rajab Feb. 8. Thanks to the efforts of these Soldiers, Highway 37 was cleared of improvised explosive devices, allowing the farmers of Sayifiyah a safe route to transport their goods into Baghdad and bring economic stability to their community.

The completion of the road repairs and subsequent safety comes at a good time for the residents of Sayifiyah, who have recently seen their area cleared of insurgents by Coalition Forces. Due to the new stability in the area, economic projects are set to begin, including the introduction of a farmer's union.

These unions, which have seen success in areas like Hawr Rajab, Arab Jabour and Al Rashid, help unionize local farmers to increase their harvests. By showing proof of land ownership, farmer's can join the union. Through union dues, the association provides farmers goods like seeds, plastic and fertilizer at a reduced cost to union members. The proceeds from these ventures go into a large communal pot used to buy the goods and other equipment farmers can rent.

"This will benefit any farmer in Sayafiyah," said Pope, a native of Marion, Ala., of the highway repairs. "It will help them get their goods into Baghdad."

Street lights restore sense of safety

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
2nd BCT PAO

Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Abas Rashed, a Son of Iraq for the past six months, speaks with Coalition Forces Feb. 7 on the improvements in security he has seen since the installation of the solar powered street lights in Arab Jabour. The 30 lights, which were activated Jan. 30, have helped improve security in the area by denying insurgents freedom of movement during the night.

After 45 days and $221,000, the darkness on this road has been pushed back, eliminating the last hiding place for insurgents on this stretch of road Jan. 30.

The Sons of Iraq, helped bring about security into the neighborhood, but in the cover of darkness, insurgents still moved around the area, said Capt. Joseph Inge, commander, Company D, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment. To help remove this last vestige of cover, 30 solar lights were placed onto the route.

"The lights will help give people confidence; (insurgents) will be less likely to do bad things when lights are on," said 1st Lt. Brent McCorkle, Company D executive officer. "This is just another turning point."

Such remarks are echoed by the people of Arab Jabour. With the addition of the 30 lights, installed by United States Army Corps of Engineers contractor Hercules Company, people are feeling more confident in their neighborhood, walking the streets in hours they once feared to be in.

"Now security is perfect," said Abas Rashed, a Son of Iraq for the past six months. "Many families are coming back."

These families, once displaced by violence, are now returning to their homes in greater waves than before with the new street lights up, Rashed said. As for the families who elected to stay behind, Rashed said he also sees a difference.

While manning checkpoints in the neighborhood, he said there were hours when people once refused to come outside. Now with the lights illuminating the darkness, people are willing to stay out longer and conduct their daily business.

One person who has seen his business blessed by this is Hussen Jowd, the butcher of Arab Jabour.

"The illumination improves a lot," he said. "It allows me to keep my shop open longer."

Equally amazing for him was how the lights do not drain away the normal electrical grid. Because they are powered by the sun, he said they do not cut into the area's normal flow of electricity.

Such a design was purposeful, said McCorkle, a native of Greenville, S.C. Currently, the people of Arab Jabour get about six to eight hours of power a day, some up to 12, a vast improvement when most of the area got little to no power when Coalition Forces first arrived, he said.

He said Coalition Forces did not want to cut back that power by adding more lights, despite the increase in security they would give.

See LIGHTS page 5

Thus the decision was made to install solar power lights that recharge themselves during the day.

"It was the result of someone trying to think ahead," he said.

Likewise, Soldiers of the 1-30th Inf. Reg. are continuing to think ahead to improve the area. Inge, a native of Richmond, Va., said his Soldiers are committed to the people of Arab Jabour and helping improve their quality of life.

His company has already conducted four medical civil military engagements, treating over 1,000 residents of their illnesses and has plans to conduct more. He also said he hopes to add more lights, increase the amount of electricity available, and install water purification pumps to give the people fresh drinking water.

Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

A family, returning to the area, drives down Route Redwings Feb. 7, with their truck loaded down with their goods. Families are returning to Arab Jabour after being driven out by insurgent violence now that security has improved.

A sharp lookout...

Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Sgt. Brian Shirley, Company D, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, keeps his fellow Soldiers safe by providing lookout while manning the gunner's hatch during a mission in Arab Jabour. Shirley, a native of Pleasant Grove, Ala., is one of many Soldiers working countless hours to help secure the region and bring about safety and security to the people who live there.

Disabled boy given new wheelchair

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
2nd BCT PAO

Despite having nerve damage in his legs, rendering them useless, 7-year-old Yasser Mahmed remained in good spirits, always waving to Soldiers passing through his neighborhood.

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, pass through Arab Jabour regularly, and decided to give him a new wheelchair Feb. 7, with rugged tires to help navigate the terrain.

For some time, his wheels were powered by the legs of his 12-year-old cousin, Achmed Sluman. Though the duo did not cover much ground, what they lacked in horsepower was more than made up through heart power. The boys touched others' hearts, inspiring the Soldiers of Company D to reach out and make a difference.

"I am grateful for the assistance," said Mahmed's father Yasser Mahmed Hussen. "I would like to say thank you more than one time."

Although just a small act of kindness to the Soldiers, for the family it was a major blessing, one that showed not only on Mahmed's face, but also of his cousin Sluman.

Sluman, who said that family is very important to him, said spending time watching and pushing his younger cousin around was something that just comes naturally. "There are strong relationships in Iraqi families. We rely on our families," he said.

The Soldiers hope that through small acts of kindness like this they can show the Iraqi people they can rely on Coalition Forces.

"The overall goal is to build trustful relations between us and the community," said 1st Lt. Bryan Deminico, platoon leader, Company D. "Little things done at the community level show we are here to help."

Photos by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Achmed Sluman smiles as he receives a wheelchair for his younger cousin Yasser Mahmed on Feb. 7. Mahmed, who has nerve damage in his legs, received the wheelchair courtesy of Company D, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment. Sluman wheels his cousin out to see Soldiers when they go through his neighborhood.

Yasser Mahmed enjoys a lollipop in his new wheelchair. Despite having nerve damage in his legs, 7-year-old Mahmed always waved to the Soldiers passing through his neighborhood.

Female first: top tanker trooper

Unit Public Affairs Representative
1-64 Armor Reg.

Courtesy photo

Spc. Melissa Irizarry shakes hands with Georgia congressman John Barrow at Camp Liberty. Irizarry was the first female to ever win the 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment Soldier of the month.

Although Women's history month is still two months away, one female in the 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team is making history a little early.

Spc. Melissa Irizarry, a motor-transport operator with the 1-64 Armor Regt. forward support company, became the first female Soldier in the history of the Rogue Battalion to be named Soldier of the Month.

Irizarry was born in Chicago, Ill., and raised in Queens, N.Y. After graduating from high school, she began taking nursing classes at Springfield Technical Community College, Springfield, Mass., while working as a medical assistant at a local health clinic.

In January 2006, she joined the Army to explore the job opportunities, take advantage of the education assistance benefits and travel.

After attending basic training and advanced individual training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., she was assigned to the Rogues in June 2006, where she was placed in the FSC ammo section. From day one, she distinguished herself as a natural leader and Soldier, always striving to better herself personally and professionally. Her initiative, personality and drive for knowledge were all inspiring and motivating to the Soldiers and noncommissioned officers in her platoon.

This drive and motivation was apparent even in Iraq. Since deploying in May, 2007, she has served as the lead gun truck driver for Support Platoon's combat logistic patrols. Her dedication to duty in numerous patrols and humanitarian aid missions earned her the Combat Action Badge, Army Achievement Medal and a certificate of achievement.

It also helped give her the confidence needed to succeed in the January Soldier of the Month board.

Initially, she did not intend to participate. However, while helping some of her peers study for the board, she decided to participate.

"I knew it would be me against a bunch of male Soldiers. Some people said it would be harder for me because of this, some said it would be easier," she said. "Needless to say, I had some doubts as to how I would do. I decided I would just do the best I could and see what happened."

What ended up happening was she only missed one question, scoring 73 out of a possible 75 points in the initial round, advancing to the final round with two other Soldiers. Having never attended a Soldier of the Month board, she seemed to be at a disadvantage. Her two competitors had already been to a promotion board and the previous month's Soldier of the Month board, giving them the advantage of knowing what to expect.

Despite the long odds, she would overcome and win the board and a little piece of history.

"She went in there and did great. She had great composure and bearing," said Sgt. Timothy Southern, her section sergeant and board sponsor. "I think this is good for her and good for the unit. This gives some validation to the competency and caliber of Soldiers in the FSC."

Courtesy photo

Spc. Joseph Torres, of Manhattan, N.Y., 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, poses with a curious Iraqi boy from the town of Adwaniya Feb. 8.

Adwaniya residents see brighter future

Unit Public Affairs Representative
6-8 Cav. Reg.

In the last year the community of Adwaniya has seen the worst of what the insurgency has brought to the people of Iraq.

There were reports of kidnappings and murders in the community after members of al-Qaeda in Iraq forced some residents out of their homes in February 2007. AQI sought to impose a government base on extreme Islamic law. After the residents realized their way of life under AQI would be a step backward and away from a democratic government, they began to work with Coalition forces to rid their community of AQI.

Over the course of the next few months the Adwaniya citizens saw the progress being made against AQI in Hawr Rajab, a community to the north of Adwaniya.

When AQI began to murder and kidnap Adwaniya residents many of the citizens moved out of the community.

Hawr Rajab had a well-established Sons of Iraq program and worked hand-in-hand with Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces. The partnership increased security and drove AQI out.

After seeing the model set by Hawr Rajab, Adwaniya citizens Hazim Shaker Ahmen and Riyah Yas Khudayr, both former Iraqi Army officers, began working with Coalition forces and started their own program in October 2007.

In mid-November AQI mounted an offensive against U.S. Soldiers, Iraqi Army and Sons of Iraq. At the time Troop B, 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division was the Army

See FUTURE page 9

unit patrolling Adwaniya. Troop B and the Sons of Iraq repelled the offensive and since then AQI members have been detained or fled the community.

Now, Troop B, 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. controls the battle space and the future of Adwaniya is bright as AQI's presence has started to diminish.

"The local leadership, the Sons of Iraq and Iraqi Army all played an important part in making this a success and they continue to do so," said Capt. Douglas Hoyt, Troop B, 6-8 Cav. Regt. commander, of Columbus, Ohio. "The willingness to make a stand, to sacrifice and work hard has paid off."

In December 2007, a Sons of Iraq headquarters was set up and a town council was also established.

Word began to spread during the New Year, the community was becoming safer, the residents started to move back into the city and businesses started to re-open.

Courtesy photo

Construction workers repair a drainage pipe and bridge running through the town of Adwaniya, while Spc. Joseph Torres, 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat TEam, 3rd Infantry Division of Manhattan, N.Y., engages a curious Iraqi boy Feb. 8.

"The situation has gone from bad to better," Ahmed said. "The task has begun to improve the security, economic and employment situation and the relationship with the central Government of Iraq."

Assisting with the improvement in security Troop B, 6-8 Cav. Regt. opened Patrol Base Dolby in the community to help with keeping the residents safe, help to rebuild the infrastructure and try to boost the economy.

Safety Alert - Slip, Trip, and Fall Hazards

* Inspect areas where Soldiers will work at elevations to identify fall hazards and develop controls.
* Maintain three points of contact when climbing ladders, stairs, or vehicles.
* Ensure holes are identified and marked or fenced off to ensure personnel do not step or fall in them.
* Ensure high traffic areas are well marked, free of debris, and graveled/concreted to reduce accumulation of mud.
* Use flashlights at night when the tactical situation allows.

Avoid holes from tent pegs, poles

Watch for holes and other hazards

Maintain three points of contact when off the ground

Mr. Daryl Lusk, safety officer

FEATURE

New restaurant in town hits spot

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
2nd BCT PAO

Money may not buy happiness, but it is definitely putting a smile on the face of Hussen Jowd, the butcher of Arab Jabour. Although spending more money than ever, it is money well spent, as it is increasing the size of his business almost as much as the smile on his face.

It wasn't always like this for Jowd. Before Coalition forces moved into the area, the community was plagued with violence. Terrorists roamed the area, making it a safe haven for insurgents and a staging area to flood their instruments of destruction into the southern borders of Baghdad. Yet despite living in this nightmare, Jowd still held onto his dream, a dream of one day expanding his small butcher shop into a larger enterprise.

"I've been very busy," he said, noting that the return to peace has done wonders for his shop.

In one successful day, Jowd recounted how in three hours time he sold 50 kilograms of meat. While his main customers are still the people of Arab Jabour, another blessing that has come with the peace is an increase in market size.

In recent weeks, he said he has received orders for his products from Baghdad. While normally villagers in the rural community look for higher goods from Baghdad, for Jowd the equation works the other way.

Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Abas Rashed, a native of Arab Jabour and member of the Sons of Iraq, enjoys a meal Feb. 7 courtesy of Hussen Jowd, the Arab Jabour butcher. Thanks to the combined efforts of Coalition Forces and the Sol in making Arab Jabour a safer neighborhood, Jowd is experiencing a surge of growth in his business.

"I get calls from Baghdad for my meat. They love the quality," he said, noting the farming fields of Arab Jabour where his flocks graze are good for "fattening up" the flock. "In Baghdad, they don't have the fields to raise these animals."

The quality also comes from Jowd's assurance to his customers that the meat he sells is guaranteed fresh. Each day he butchers the day's sales, refusing to keep meat any longer than a day, a promise which has left his customers satisfied with their products.

The freshness is also apparent in his new restaurant, a small building located next to his butcher shop. In the confines of the four brick walls, he prepares his own products, the most popular being tikka, a kabob delicacy in Iraq. Covering the meat with a blend of herbs and spices, he cooks the meat on a grill in front of his customers, before placing it in a neat bread roll stuffed with home grown cucumbers and tomatoes.

"I've been very busy fulfilling all the requests," he said.

The business has caused him to have to expand his operations. Originally, the trade, which he learned from his father and dates back deep into his family's history,

See STORE page 11

was only practiced by himself and his son, who he hoped to pass the trade onto. Now, with demand so high, he has taken on an additional 10 apprentices.

He said he is also teaching them about how to run a successful business, in the hopes that one day they too will be able to be reach out and bless their communities, giving their fellow Iraqis a safe and steady form of income to help better their families and communities.

While a blessing to so many Iraqis, Jowd said he could have never done it without the support of Coalition forces.

Coalition forces, through the use of microgrants, grants that are given to business owners to help encourage economic growth, have been jump starting many business like Jowd's butcher shop, to expand.

The expansion will hopefully have the same effect on the economy that Jowd is having; the increase of jobs and potential for economic growth in the area, said Capt. Rems Keane, Company B, 426th Civil Affairs Battalion, attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team.

Photos by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Hussen Jowd, the Arab Jabour butcher, fans charcoal on his grill to heat up some sheep kabob, an Iraqi favorite outside his butcher shop on Feb. 7. Hussen's business has seen a dramatic increase in sales since the neighborhood was cleansed of insurgent activities by Coalition forces and the Sons of Iraq. Jowd hopes to increase his business even further by purchasing a delivery truck.

Jowd also prepares tikka, a type of kabob in his shop. Jowd spices the meat with herbs and adds vegetables.

The creation of jobs is vital, not only to the economic welfare of the community, but also to the safety and stability of the community. The lack of jobs in the area, and availability of income, was a major tool used by the insurgency to gain recruits.

Many of the detainees taken in by Coalition forces that were questioned by Pfc. Mariano Sperzagni, a interrogator with the 2-3 Brigade Troops Battalion, 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., cited their reason for aiding the insurgency was not out of love for their ideals, but due to monetary reward promised by the insurgents, he said.

By increasing the amount of jobs and economic opportunities available, Coalition forces are cutting out the legs from the insurgency. Already he has plans to continue his expansion, spreading the blessing given to him by Coalition forces amongst his Iraqi brethren.

His next goal: saving up his revenue to buy a delivery truck, allowing him to deliver his meats all across the community. Already he said he has several installments set aside.

For now though, he is focused on the task at hand; butchering sheep and cows, selling the meat to area families, and creating his own take-out sandwiches for those individuals just looking for a good quality meal.

Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Residents with trucks full of household goods are seen returning Feb. 7, a more common sight in Arab Jabour due to security improvements. Coalition Forces and the Sons of Iraq work together to keep insurgents from targeting neighborhoods with violence.

Sunni, Shia unite for peaceful future

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
2nd BCT PAO

Arab Jabour native, Abas Rashed, joined the Sons of Iraq to fight terrorism. He now patrols the streets of the community and watches for insurgent activities.

Rashed knows the damage these insurgents can do firsthand. Before the insurgency entered his community, he said the area worked together, ignorant of the differences between them. The farming community, although a Sunni Muslim majority, did contain some Shia Muslims.

Despite the differences in religious philosophy, the two groups shared a common desire: to see their children grow up in a better environment, to grow up in peace.

Sunni and Shia worked farms together, he said, and some families had neighbors of different denominations. He said the insurgency, in an attempt to stir up violence against Coalition Forces, began to exploit differences in the two sects.

Yassen Kodaier Hussein, a Sunni living in Arab Jabour, said he once had Shia neighbors until the insurgency moved in. Capitalizing on the headlines in the news about rogue militias, both Sunni and Shia, he said the insurgency began to instill fear into the population.

"At first we rebuffed any difference," he said. "So they tried to make difference apparent." The differences were spelled out in blood, both Shia and Sunni, he said.

To recruit members into al-Qaeda, a mainly Sunni based organization, they said their only protection against rogue Shia militias was to join their numbers. They played up the fear by killing Sunni families and then placing the blame on rogue militias like the Mahdi Army.

"They killed both sides to make a problem," Hussein said of the sectarian violence that drove many families from their home. "We didn't see this problem until they came."

The problem drove many families away, Rashed said. Most of the Shia families he knew fled to southern Iraq, a predominately

See UNITY page 13

Shia area, or to the nearby areas of Karbala and Adwaniyah.

"The terrorists made the difference a priority, reinforced differences," he said.

Rashed said he and several other neighbors helped their Shia coworkers escape the violence targeting them. "We helped Shia people move and to keep them safe."

Several families in neighboring communities took in Shia refugees, helping to prevent the bloodshed. The already predominately Sunni area was becoming exclusively Sunni.

The insurgency overplayed their hand. Their recruited "allies" borne out of fear were seeing the supposed source of that fear, the Shia, be removed from their midst. In its place came the strict rules of al-Qaeda. "They interfered with our lives," Hussein said.

Despite wanting to return to normalcy, many community members had no where to turn, until American forces came into the area.

As part of the surge strategy, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team arrived in the area to prevent the influence of al-Qaeda from spreading north into southern Baghdad.

Using the counterinsurgency tactics formulated by Gen. David Petraeus, commander of Multi-National Forces Iraq, the 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment began living amongst the population, providing the locals a safety net.

Like the Anbar province, in which Sunni leaders began to band with American forces to dispel the terrorists living amongst them, the people of Arab Jabour did the same.

Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Yassen Kodaier Hussein, a Sunni living in Arab Jabour, (left) and Abas Rashed, Sons of Iraq member (center), talk with Alex, an interpreter from the 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, about the return of many Shia families to the neighborhood Feb. 7.

Many, such as Rashed, joined Coalition-sponsored neighborhood watch groups.

These watch groups helped create a total reversal in the security situation, said Richmond, Va. native Capt. Joseph Inge, commander, Company D, 1-30th Inf. Reg. "It has been a total 180 (degrees)," he said of the security situation.

The results are being seen in more than just the decrease in casualties, incidents of violence, and improvised explosive devices found. For the first time in months, the area is beginning to revert back to its previous makeup.

Rashed said because of security improvements, some Shia families he once knew are returning to the area. Just as they helped move them out to escape the violence, the Sons of Iraq are helping to move them back in, keeping them informed of the security situation. "We need to work together," he said.

> ***"We are Iraqis first, then Muslims, then finally Sunni or Shia."***
>
> - Yassen Kodaier Hussein
> *Arab Jabour native*

It is a sentiment shared by Hussein. "I want to imagine a unified Iraq, one Iraq, free from outside interference," he said. "We have to stop the militias, work together to finish off the militias."

Hussein said he thinks focus needs to be shifted toward the borders. "We have to keep foreign people out, close the borders to prevent outside interference. We are Iraqis first, then Muslims, then finally Sunni or Shia."

Chessboard generals command armies

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
2nd BCT PAO

Despite the rank on their collars, two Soldiers from Company D, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, played general Feb. 6.

Like the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, U.S. Army for which they fight, their forces, arranged on a 64-square board in front of them, were comprised of multiple types of units which would need to be utilized to their maximum potential if victory was to be theirs.

"We fight for a living. For a game we play war," said Pfc. Kenneth Jones, 1st platoon.

One of the Soldiers playing, Cpl. Andrew Ricket, 3rd platoon, claimed to be a novice chess player. Still, he found himself commanding the white army after taking up the challenge from Jones.

"I never back down from a challenge," said the Vancouver, Va. native.

Although he answered the challenge as an individual, the game quickly turned into a little rivalry between the two's respective military occupation specialties. Jones, a cavalry scout, and Ricket, a tanker, both see the board as a battle ground not only for individual bragging rights, but also to represent their respective jobs.

"It's tanker versus scout to see which is smarter," Ricket laughed as the two settled in to play.

The ability to laugh and have fun is an appeal for them. "It gets my mind off of the stresses (of deployment)," Ricket said. "It eases my headaches."

Likewise, Jones said he found the game a good release. "It takes a lot of brain power. It is very intriguing," he said.

Ironically, Ricket, the tanker, chose to lead his charge with the cavalry, and relied on his knights to move around in their distinct L-shaped pattern, and broke up the advance of Jones' pawns, until Jones' back row pieces came into play.

Despite being able to turn the tide with his heavy artillery, Jones still swore by his pawns. "Pawns are my favorite pieces. There are so many of them," he said.

Pointing to the rank on his collar, he joked, "They remind me of being a private."

Ricket on the other hand, showed very little love for his front rank of eight pawns. "Pawns don't do anything. You got to get the big pieces out."

Unfortunately for him, his disdain for pawns and willingness to throw his heavy hitters deep into the fray cost him dearly. Ricket's queen, wreaking havoc in the middle of the board, was picked off by one of Jones' bishops.

See CHESS page 16

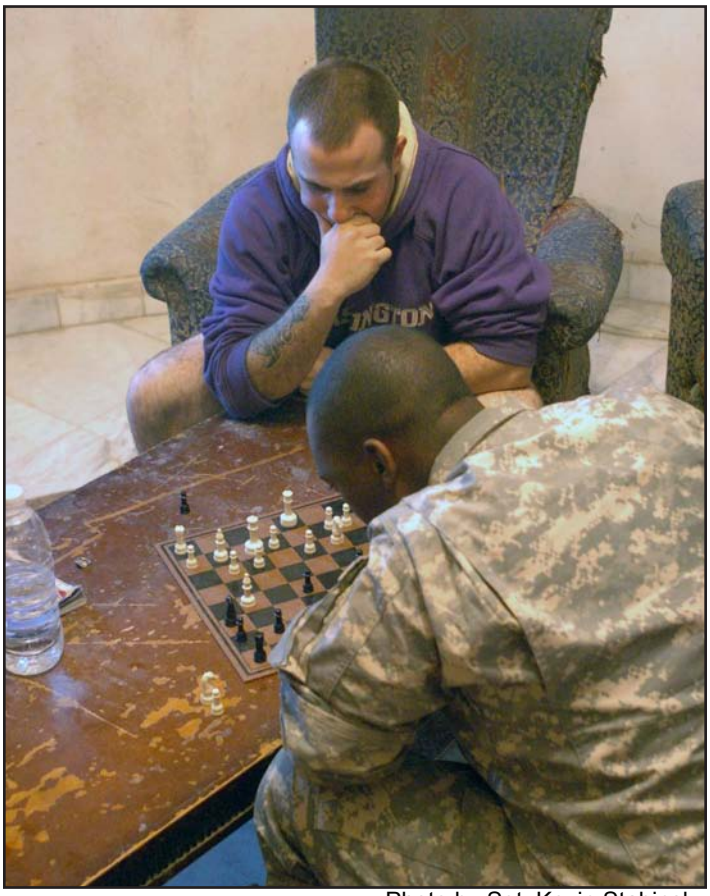

Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Cpl. Andrew Ricket (left), plays Pfc. Kenneth Jones, both Company D, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, in a game of chess at Patrol Base Red Feb. 6. The two Soldiers, a tanker and cavalry scout respectively, were battling it out to prove which job had more brains than brawn. Playing chess is a relaxing way the two use to relieve the stresses of deployment.

Lost in the sea of pawns, the clutter of the center caused Ricket to miss the threat.

Emboldened by the loss of Ricket's most powerful piece, Jones, a native of Cleveland, Ohio, began to put the pressure on. For several turns, Jones kept Ricket's king in check, effectively stalling Ricket's earlier offense.

But in turning his attention to Ricket's king and other pieces such as his rooks and pesky knights, Jones created a fatal flaw. As he closed in for the kill, content with his king's hunkered in a corner battlefield position, he ignored the slow advance of one of Ricket's pawn.

The pawn, which Ricket showed so much disdain for, proved to be Jones' undoing. Crossing the battlefield, the pawn maked it into Jones edge of the board and received a battlefield commission to queen. Trapped in the corner, Jones' king had no escape: checkmate.

It is hard to tell who is more stunned at the reversal of fortunes. Grabbing his winning queen, Ricket placed it atop a water bottle and proclaimed it his "trophy."

Meanwhile, Jones studied the board, looked for any possible hope for his doomed king, resigning with a sweep of the board, clearing the battlefield away.

Although the war in which they fight is not so easily swept away, for an past hour the two played, the memories of it were pushed aside. With more missions upcoming, the two will eventually have to return to the battlefield in Iraq. But just as the missions await them outside the confines of Patrol Base Red, inside waits another battle, one much more fun and pleasing, one to take them away from the stress of the real battle.

Sitting on the bottom shelf of a wooden cupboard, the chess set lies, waiting for the next "general" to pick it up and continue the fight.

Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Pfc. Kenneth Jones, (left) Company D, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, regrets a move he made during a game of chess at Patrol Base Red Feb. 6. Several mistakes would end up costing Jones the match against Cpl. Andrew Ricket, also Company D.

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:
   1) Buffalo Sabres
   2) Detroit Pistons
   3) Minnesota Timberwolves
   4) 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***

Super Bowl Sunday surprises Soldiers

Photos by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Left: A Soldier leaps for joy upon seeing the New York Giants score the winning touchdown in the Super Bowl. Soldiers gathered in the Forward Operating Base Kalsu dining facility the early morning of Feb. 4 to watch the New England Patriots play the New York Giants in the Super Bowl. The Giants won 17 – 14 in a close game that wasn't determined until the last few minutes.

Lower Left: Staff Sgt. Tommy Brown, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, points to the banner of the New York Giants once their victory was assured in the Super Bowl.

Soldiers cheer their teams on during the Super Bowl during the last few minutes of play, during which the game was decided by a late New York Giants touchdown. Soldiers crammed into the dining facility (below) to watch the game, enjoy pizza, nachos, buffalo and chicken wings, mozzerella sticks and drinks.

Word on the street

"What was your opinion of the Superbowl this year? Any predictions for next year?"

"The Giants defense just held him (Tom Brady). The Giants kept the op tempo of the game at their pace. Next year I want to see the Chargers. I think they have the talent."

Staff Sgt. David Headley

2nd BCT Engineer section

"I thought it was a well played game. I'm really happy the Giants came out strong. I'd like to see Indy go to the Super Bowl and win or the Baltimore Ravens."

Spc. Timothy Moffitt

2nd BCT Engineer section

"The Giants definitely wanted it a lot more but the Patriots are still a better team. Obviously the Bears."

Capt. Joseph Seibert

2nd BCT BAE plans officer

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
Unless otherwise stated, all events begin at 1930. Times and events are subject to change. Special events are in *red italics.*					1 Movie Night Spades Salsa night	2 Texas Hold'em Old school music night
3 ***Flag Football Superbowl @ 2 p.m.***	4 ***Superbowl kickoff @ DFAC, 3 a.m.***	5 Foosball Spades	6 Halo 2: 2 vs 2 NFL bench press comp.	7 Pool Chess	8 Movie Night Spades Salsa night	9 Texas Hold'em Old school music night
10 Darts Strongman comp.	11 Ping Pong Dominoes	12 Foosball Spades	13 Halo 2: 2 vs 2 Pullup comp.	14 ***Valentine's Day dance @ MWR, 8 p.m.***	15 Movie Night Spades Salsa night	16 Texas Hold'em Old school music night
17 Darts NFL Bench press comp.	18 Ping Pong Dominoes	19 Foosball Spades	20 ***Kalsu Idol @ DFAC, 8 p.m.***	21 Pool Chess	22 Movie Night Spades Salsa night	23 Texas Hold'em Old school music night
24 Darts Max bench press comp.	25 Ping Pong Dominoes	26 Foosball Spades	27 Halo 2: 2 vs 2 Strongman comp.	28 Pool Chess	29 Movie Night Spades Salsa night	