

Company D, 1-15th Inf. keeps peace in Jisr Diyala

SPC. BEN HUTTO
3RD HBCT, 3RD INF. DIV.

FOB HAMMER — Some units might have been discouraged by the way the mission went.

For four hours, Soldiers in 3rd Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment patrolled up and down the streets of Jisr Diyala. They moved slowly, making sure their Mine Resistant Armor Protected vehicle didn't pull down one of the hundreds of low-hanging telephone and power lines that stretched across each street like black vines. After searching several homes and abandoned warehouses, the weapon cache they were looking for never materialized. For many Soldiers, it was just another day on the job.

"It's kind of like going fishing; sometimes you catch something and sometimes you don't," said Pfc. Darrell Deshotel, from Oakdale, La., a 3rd platoon infantryman. "We'll get it next time."

The platoon has conducted hundreds of combat patrols in Jisr Diyala since Company D assumed responsibility of its battle space in March.

"Jisr Diyala is a very fragile area because we can't be over-aggressive there, but we can't be too slow, either," said Sgt. 1st Class Donal Mathena, from Phenix City, Ala., platoon sergeant of 3rd platoon. "We are very cautious there. Since the ceasefire, the people there seem to be waiting. It's hard to tell what they are thinking. They could be waiting for the ceasefire to be lifted or they could be waiting for us to clean up their streets. It's hard to tell which,



Spc. Ben Hutto

Soldiers in 3rd Platoon, Co. D, 1-15th Inf. Regt., move debris as they look for weapons caches during a search operation in Jisr Diyala Feb. 9.

to be honest."

Despite the uncertainty in Jisr Diyala, 3rd platoon continues to conduct aggressive offensive operations when necessary.

"We've grabbed every HVI (high value individual) and insurgent leader that has tried to operate there and haven't lost one guy doing it," Mathena said. "The platoon has done a good job. Instead of picking a target house, going in and ripping it apart, we have done a lot of knock and search operations. Our Soldiers have been very respectful and I think the locals respond favorably to that. Our guys aren't reckless. They stay professional at all times."

For many of the younger Soldiers,

their current mission isn't what they expected. They had heard stories from more experienced Soldiers in 1-15 Inf. Regt. about gun battles and air assault missions. Mathena stresses to them that their current mission, while not as exciting, is just as important.

"This is my third deployment," he said. "I've been involved in countless engagements and in past deployments saw little come from them. You talk to anyone of my guys that have been over here more than once and they will tell you that this is the best operation they have been involved in. The Iraqi people are standing up for themselves. In the past, that wasn't always the case. I can

Street lights restore sense of security

SGT. KEVIN STABINSKY
2ND BCT, 3RD INF. DIV.

FOB KALSU — After 45 days and Coalition funding, one stretch of road was illuminated Jan. 30, eliminating a hiding place for insurgents.

Sons of Iraq in the area helped bring security into the neighborhood, but under cover of darkness insurgents still moved around, said Capt. Joseph Inge, commander of Company D, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. To remove this last vestige of cover, 30 solar lights were placed on 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."

Residents of Arab Jabour share that sentiment. With the 30 lights, installed by a contractor for the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Hercules Company, people are feeling more confident in their neighborhood, walking the streets during hours they once feared being out.

Families once displaced by violence are returning to their homes in greater waves than before with the new street lights up, said Abas Rashed, an SoI member.

While manning checkpoints in the neighborhood, he said there were hours when people once refused to



Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Newly erected street lights line a stretch of Arab Jabour road.

go outside. Now, people are willing to stay out longer and conduct daily business.

Because the lights are powered by the sun, Jowd said, they do not cut into the area's normal flow of electricity.

Such a design was purposeful, McCorkle said. Currently, the people of Arab Jabour get about six to eight hours of power a day and sometimes up to 12 hours, a vast improvement since Coalition Forces first arrived.

He said Coalition Forces did not want to cut back that power by adding more lights, despite the increase in security they would give. Thus the decision was made to install solar power lights that recharge themselves during the day.

Soldiers of the 1-30th Inf. Regt. continue to think ahead about improving 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.

Inge 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.

School gets four new classrooms

SGT. 1ST CLASS STACY NILES
214TH FIRES BRIGADE

FOB DELTA — Three hundred students in the village of al Yousofia gained four new classrooms and a terrace at their school Feb. 7.

The addition at Adil Nassir Primary School expanded the school from eight rooms to 12 rooms and added a terrace, said Lt. Col. Tito Miranda, the 9th Cuscatlán Battalion's civil affairs commander.

The school houses grades one through six and the addition helped relieve overcrowding at the school, said Miranda.

After the sixth grade, some students continue their secondary education at the al Kut high school, but most go to work.

An agricultural community that grows onions, Al Yousofia village is home to approximately 500 families and has benefited from three other Coalition projects — an improved road, a water compact union and a primary health care clinic, said Lt. Col. Carlos Tejada, the Salvadoran battalion's civilian military cooperation commander.

"Iraq is a very rich country in natural resources, but it is very poor and the people lack a lot of basic services," said Lt. Col. Roberto Soriano, the Cuscatlán battalion executive officer.

Al Yousofia village is one of the closest villages to FOB Delta.

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PEACE: *Infantry platoon aids in keeping security intact in Jisr Diyala*

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finally see a way out, the way things are going. Things are looking up. I can say this is the most rewarding deployment I've done. I feel a huge sense of accomplishment, not in terms of medals or awards, but in terms of accomplishing our mission and making things over here better."

To his younger Soldiers, or "first-timers" as he likes to call them, Mathena motivates and assures them that their service is just as important without firefights.

"What we trained them to do was based on what we were doing last deployment," he said. "It's different this time, but they have to realize that everything they do is a 'Soldier's job'. There is no such thing as a tanker's job or a scout's job anymore. What you are trained for isn't necessarily what you will be doing."

1st Lt. Benjamin Hooker, from Shelby, Mich., platoon leader of 3rd platoon, is proud of the way his senior noncommissioned officers have handled the platoon.

"They have got our Soldiers operating within our commander's intent," he said. "They have been operating flawlessly in a sometimes fragile environment. I feel they are all very professional Soldiers that deserve a lot of credit. I couldn't ask



Spc. Ben Hutto

As the Soldiers in his platoon provide security, Spc. David Bougourd, an infantryman in Co. D, 1-15th Inf. Regt., pries open a warehouse door in Jisr Diyala Feb. 9.

for a better group."

Hooker said the senior NCOs have been very effective in leading troops out in the field.

Being patient and thorough has helped the platoon find three important caches, including one in Jisr Diyala.

"Every time we have rolled out and snatched up an HVI or a cache, it felt good," Deshotel said. "We make a difference out here every day. Our company set up the first Sons of Iraq program in 3rd

Brigade's AO (area of operations). We have gotten every HVI that has tried to operate here."

These accomplishments are important to Mathena, but he is most proud of the things in his battle space that don't make headlines.

He points out that improvised explosive device attacks are down. He explains that bullets haven't been needed by his Soldiers to accomplish their missions. He believes his Soldiers have

made a positive impact on everyone they encounter.

"How are we gauging success in Iraq?" he said. "Do you gauge it by how much violence and action you are seeing in your AO or do you measure it by how peaceful your area is? Do you measure it by how many shots are fired or how many projects you set up? I'm proud of everything my guys have done here because at the end of the day, they did their job and helped the people here."

Safety Thought of the Day

Stress

- Some amount of stress is necessary to enhance performance by challenging us.
- If the amount of stress crosses the threshold of what the individual can handle, performance will suffer.
- Acute stress — intense, brief episodes of work where factors of fear of failure or fear of physical harm are paramount.
 - Loss of concentration
 - Impaired task performance (making mistakes)
 - Impaired judgment
- Chronic stress takes place over long periods of time

and can lead to behavioral problems.

- Modulate your stress by:
 - Ensuring good general physical fitness with an adequate, moderate diet.
 - Developing a good work/rest cycle to ensure adequate rest
 - Modifying work conditions to maximize your productivity
 - Developing high levels of confidence and proficiency through realistic training
 - Staying connected with family and loved ones

Headline Highlights

Israel spring roll strike; roof riders' spray-down

Eateries go on spring roll strike

JERUSALEM (Reuters) — Israel's Asian restaurants went on a one-day spring roll strike Tuesday in protest over government plans to rid kitchens of foreign chefs, and said sushi and noodles would be the next items off the menu.

The restaurants are angry at government plans to purge Japanese, Chinese and Thai eateries of Asian cooks and replace them with Israelis as part of a broader program to cut the number of foreigners working in the Jewish state.

The Israeli Ethnic Restaurant Organization said the country's 300 Asian restaurants refused to serve spring, or egg, rolls — among their most popular dishes — Tuesday, and planned a follow-up strike in two weeks for sushi and noodles.

"Today there is no egg roll and in two weeks time there will be no sushi and noodles," Arnon Volosky, head of the organization, told Reuters.

Israel attracts virtually no immigrants from Asia since anyone seeking citizenship there must prove they have Jewish family or links to the country.

Seeking to plug a gap in the labor market during the first Palestinian uprising, Israel allowed foreigners to work in the Jewish state. Now it is trying to limit those numbers to create more jobs for Israelis.

This year the government is granting 500 permits to Asian chefs compared with 900 last year. Next year no permits will be issued, although restaurants willing to pay twice the average national salary will be allowed to

employ chefs as "experts." The government argues Israelis can be trained.

Asian restaurants first started dishing up chicken chow mein and Thai green curry to Israelis about 30 years ago and have evolved into a 1-billion-shekels-a-year (\$275 million) industry.

Volosky said his organization had asked Israel's Supreme Court to force the government to rethink the decision, arguing it could force many out of business or make them inflate prices to cover the salaries needed to secure "expert" visas for chefs.

Psychic paid to evict council house ghost

LONDON (Reuters) — British officials paid a psychic to exorcise a supposed poltergeist from state housing after the distressed occupants said otherwise they would leave and become homeless, a council official said on Tuesday.

Easington Council in County Durham said the family could not be persuaded to stay in the house, and that through paying half the psychic ghost-hunter's \$235 fee they were saving money as otherwise they would have had to pay for emergency housing.

The Fallon family told reporters they heard banging from the loft, saw items fly across rooms and had doors slammed in their faces. They called police, who found nothing. Then they called in psychic Suzanne Hadwin and asked the council to help pay.

"This is the first time we have had to take such a measure," a council spokeswoman said. "However, the tenants were extremely distressed at the time

and we therefore believed it was the most appropriate course of action."

Hadwin told the Sunderland Echo she used her Russian spirit guide and some angels to help rid the property of evil, which she said was linked to the murder of a woman in the house years earlier. The council said the family were now happy to stay in the house and therefore they believed their money was well spent.

Roof riders to be sprayed

JAKARTA (Reuters) — Indonesian commuters riding on the roofs of trains will be sprayed with colored liquid so that security officers can identify and arrest them, a report said Saturday.

Electric trains linking the Indonesian capital and its neighboring towns are packed with passengers during rush hours, with many sitting on the roofs due to a lack of space inside or to avoid paying. After several failed attempts to discourage roof riders over years, the state owned railway company PT Kereta Api will from next week douse them with a colored liquid so that officers can identify them when they get off the train, the Jakarta Post said.

"We will confiscate their IDs and give them a ticket," Kereta Api regional spokesman Akhmad Sujadi was quoted as saying. "We will send a copy of the ticket to their family, their local neighborhood unit head, their employer, or, if they're students, their headmasters," added Sujadi, who described the move as "unique." Although illegal, roof riding is rampant due to a lack of efficient and affordable means of transport for commuters in the greater Jakarta area.

Sudoku

					9	1		6
	7	5				8		
				1	2	3	5	
9				2			6	3
			4		7			
4	2			9				1
	1	9	2	5				
		6				9	1	
8		2	9					

from Sudoku: The Original Brain Workout From Japan

Solution to yesterday's puzzle:

8	1	3	4	6	9	2	7	5
9	5	7	2	8	1	3	6	4
4	2	6	7	3	5	9	1	8
3	9	2	5	1	4	7	8	6
7	4	5	6	2	8	1	9	3
1	6	8	3	9	7	4	5	2
6	3	1	9	5	2	8	4	7
5	8	4	1	7	3	6	2	9
2	7	9	8	4	6	5	3	1

ARABIC PHRASE OF THE DAY

Point to it

Esh-shir