

U.S. forces to practice strategy with game sets

By Amy Rose
staff writer

Although U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia have not seen war, soldiers are still faced with a battle of sorts: fighting the boredom blues.

And while a homemade cookie sent overseas might give service men and women a tasty reminder from home, it doesn't alleviate that problem. How long can it take to eat a cookie?

Enter Troy toy store owner Bruce Weiner.

Weiner, owner of Your Toy Box, 3848 Rochester Road, is doing his part to help com-

bat soldier doldrums. He is selling at cost, pocket-sized magnetic chess and checker sets specifically to be sent overseas to U.S. forces.

"They're extremely bored over there — they have nothing to do," said Weiner, who says he got the idea for the gesture after a customer came in wanting a small durable toy to send to her soldier-husband in Saudi Arabia.

Weiner's chess and checker sets are perfect gifts for the soldiers, said the woman, because the magnetic pieces won't be carried off by desert winds, and they are small enough to fit into a pocket.

Weiner was able to strike a deal with the toy sets' manufacturer, Smithport Specialty Company, of Smithport, Pa. Smithport is selling Weiner the toys at its cost, so Weiner can sell them at his cost. The sets can now be bought for \$1.54, when they would normally sell for \$4. Weiner said he would receive 50 sets by the end of this week.

"THAT'S ALL these (sets) are for, for the folks in Saudi Arabia," Weiner said.

When asked how he would prevent others from taking advantage of the discount, he laughed, "Well, if it seems kinda suspicious,

and we ask who's the toy going to, and they kinda don't know, then we're kinda not going to be too happy about it. We're going to trust people — it's the honor system."

Norma Hubbard thinks it's a great idea.

Hubbard, a 24-year-old day care worker in the Ann Arbor area, is the customer who planted the toy campaign idea in Weiner's head. She had been looking for a chess set, because her husband, cook-specialist John Hubbard, loves chess. But she had not been responding to his request for such a toy, since he just left for the Middle East last week, and she hasn't heard from him yet.

Instead, Norma Hubbard learned how

bored the soldiers were through a support group she began attending in Ypsilanti, and she wanted to surprise her husband.

"Soldiers have been writing to their wives saying 'Please send us Nerf balls, board games — send us something,'" she said. Hubbard has already arranged to ship overseas a few of the magnetic chess and checker sets.

Hubbard, who was just married this summer, said she is not worried that she hasn't heard from her husband yet, because she knows soldiers are allowed few calls.

"If we haven't heard anything bad on the news, he made it over there OK," she said.

Chamber PAC backs area Republicans

Three Republicans running in Farmington-area races this November were endorsed by and received money from the Political Action Committee of the Oakland County Chamber of Commerce.

Dennis Alexander, candidate for the 18th District State Senate race; Rep. Jan Dolan, incumbent in the 69th state House district; and Oak-

land County Commissioner Donn Wolf in District 27, all received endorsements and money from the PAC.

County Commissioner David Moffitt of District 15 received the PAC's endorsement, but no money.

The chamber PAC contributed nearly \$10,000 to 32 candidates throughout the county and state.

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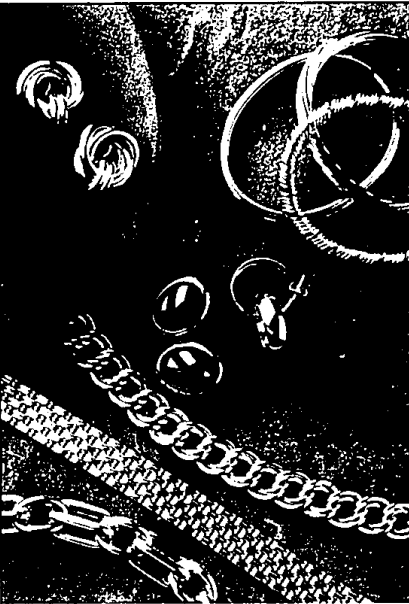
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