

## A Picture is Worth 1000 Words!

September 06, 2004

Family and Friends,

I am now out of Najaf and back in Baghdad after a 10 hour road convoy. It was a very intense month. Still have all my fingers to type this email to you as well as my sanity (I think????!!). I never thought I'd hear myself say "I can't wait until I get back to Baghdad!" A paradise by no means, but I guess it's all relative.

We were returned here to provide security and medical coverage for the upcoming 8-million-man holiday march. The last holiday march resulted in bombings, uncontrollable crowds, flames on the streets, and multiple bruises from thrown stones. This one will hopefully be less eventful. Hmmm...

Many of you want to know "what is it like out there?" I'm sure there is lots of coverage on the news. I have already shared pictures with you of my living conditions. Here are some more personal shots that I would like to share with you guys. I tried not to make them too gory! Enjoy!



Patient care. Trauma, trauma, and more trauma! We are "on call" 24 hours a day for the whole deployment... ready for whatever whenever.



This unfortunate patient was shot in the chest and required emergent bilateral thoracotomy (needed his chest opened on both sides). We are performing internal cardiac massage in this picture. This was done in the inside of a tent in Najaf.



Patients are evacuated to the Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad by helicopter after we stabilize them. Eventually, if seriously injured, they return to Germany then the States. "Have an extra seat for me?"



Recreation. Exercising during free time. Not much else to do! When I am bored and have time to work out that is a good thing. When the doctor is "bored" we are not taking casualties. Doctor boredom is welcomed! Conveniently located mortar bunkers in the background in case of attack! Workout routine: Pull-ups, hear explosion, run under bunker, duck, do more pull-ups. Joy.





This is the cemetery where much of the fighting took place in Najaf. Imagine a dense cemetery 3 kilometers x 2 kilometers with countless tombstones, underground tombs, underground stairwells, and tunnel systems. Then imagine Al-Sadr militia fighters popping out and shooting! Boo!



1st Cavalry medic in the streets of Najaf by the Imam Ali mosque. This mosque was occupied by Muqtadr Al-Sadr and his militia for about one year until last month's activities helped return it to the people of Iraq. Al-Sadr and his militia were forced to put down weapons and evacuate. The date is incorrect on this picture.



Pretty self explanatory! These are the improvised explosive devices (I.E.D s) that are randomly scattered on the roads. Wrong place at the wrong time=game over.



Much of our missions are done at night. This shot is through the night vision goggles we are issued. They are like binoculars and that is why the picture is circular. Yes, everything does look green viewing through them!



Unfortunately funeral ceremonies are a reality out here. Too many brave soldiers have lost their lives.



Soldier formation during funeral ceremony.



Meeting with 4 Star General Casey who is in charge of the multinational forces in Iraq.

Hope you all enjoyed! You are in my thoughts and I look forward to the day I can use my now battered, sand-filled camera to take pictures with you all!

Thank you for your support.

Peace in the middle east (yeah right),

Sudip

Deployment motto: "It could be worse!"