

Postcards from Iraq

A Letter from Sissy

by Sissy Scott
Mobile District

This is the second day of July and 4th of July weekend. Even in Mosul Iraq. DFAC (Dining Facility to some, Chow Hall to others, and Mess Hall to us old folks) is planning to serve Dinner/Lunch from 1200 to 2000. This is a real change from the normal hours of lunch from 1100-1400 and dinner from 1800-2000. I heard they are planning to have a barbecue of hot dogs, hamburgers, and ribs.

The pool opened about a week ago and lots of people are enjoying it. It opens at 0900 in the morning and stays open till 2100 at night. Only open when there is a life guard there. Strange isn't it? Kids over here in mortal danger every day but they can't swim without a life-guard!

Which reminds me. We are having ever more signs of civilization on our FOB (forward operating base). They are busily creating speed bumps all over the place. Now let me tell you, this place is so small, that if you have a car to go from our palace (don't you love it? to be able to call the place you work a palace!) to our pad (our little collection of trailers where we live) on the opposite side of the base, you hardly get out of second gear.

But we are going to have speed bumps! And you should see how they are being built. The Turkish guys who work on the grounds and the buildings work in the horrible hot sun with pick axes and shovels to dig up the asphalt. But first, the rectangular area that will be the bump is soaked with gasoline and set fire. After it has burned for a while, and while it is still burning, they shovel out the soft asphalt and dump it on the side of the road. It makes a very nice uniform and neat hole. Then later they come back and hand mix the cement and build up a hump. Now it is not engineered to a 15 mph smooth drive. You had better be going about 4-5 mph when you go over this barrier or you will leave a lot of your car behind. I don't know what it does to a stryker though. I don't think anything slows down a stryker! They are awesome machines. I am very glad our guys have them for protection when they leave the walls of this base.

You know, I have been thinking about how easy it is to get used to things. We (all of us humans, I guess) can adjust to just about anything. We tell ourselves "I could never do this, or never do that" but when we have to, we do. I see that in all the soldiers, men and women. How many of them, a few years ago, would have dreamed that they would be in Mosul, strapping on armament and loading guns to ride through a very foreign city looking for bad guys; and killing them, if they have to? Yet, they do it. Then they come back to the mess hall and eat hot dogs and hamburgers and stand in line for stir fry and kid each other and talk about movies and swimming. And they do it every day and they do it very well.

You should be very proud of them. They are very polite and very serious about their jobs. They break my heart when I see them leave the base for their daily run into Mosul. I don't have any idea what they do or what they are thinking as they load their weapons and test their equipment and go through the drills to start out. But they are very professional and very intent. When they buckle everything up and settle into those strykers and head out the gate they are Warriors. They have a job to do and nothing will get in their way. They are the best of America and, at the risk of sounding like an old grey-haired lady, I love every one of them. I really wish everyone in the States could see them. It would make you so proud.

You all know that I am a card carrying, bleeding-heart liberal, but I support these guys! And, though I am not religious, I thank whatever god there is when I see them come back within our walls. Joe always waves at the guys when he sees them coming or going; some wave back, most don't. But they tolerate us old folks who are unabashedly proud of them.

Well, those are my thoughts from Iraq on this 4th of July weekend. I hope you all have a wonderful holiday and drink a beer for us!

Much love,

Sissy



Sissy Scott and her husband, Joe Birindelli at GRN (photo provided)