



### ***Fathers Day in Iraq***

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Baghdad, June 19, 2005 - It is 2300 here, and I just returned from the military hospital across the street. Three hours ago, a friend passed me in the hallway of our headquarters - and said "pass the word - they have an emergency need for A positive and A negative blood at the hospital - tell everyone." Although I was working on something 'really important' - I went and told the aide-de-camp that I thought priorities had changed...and I was going to see if I could donate blood. I was struck by the scene - about 25 people, a Marine colonel, young soldiers of all ranks, senior folks, Army civilians - everybody who had heard that somebody needed help was waiting patiently in the dusk outside of the hospital near a small building where they were drawing blood. It took three hours for the last of us to get in there - but as I sat waiting my turn, I watched everyone, and was both saddened by the crisis and yet renewed by the caring that showed in the faces of everyone. This was a true emergency - as quick as donors were done the medics were running with the whole blood to the operating room. Two soldiers - military policeman - were severely injured by an improvised explosive device in a convoy this night. In the end, one NCO would require more than 200 units. We tend to think of war - even when stationed here in the international zone - as something alien. Tonight, I was reminded how truly close it can come - not physically, but emotionally - but I will turn in praying that a little bit of me and the other great folks who were with me on this Father's Day may help somebody else's son survive a terrible moment and make it home. May God Bless the Men and Women who wear our country's uniforms - and the United States of America. My best - John Harrison