
Subject: Live from Baghdad - word from Ripintou
Posted by [Crimson](#) on Mon, 12 Sep 2005 02:59:31 GMT
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Posted on behalf of Ripintou:

Unclassified -

Christine / Everyone

Yes, everything is going ok ... still in one piece. Was out and about the other day when another rocket hit the area; missed us by about 100 yards and the explosion was extremely loud, never did find out what kind of rocket that one was.

Baghdad appears to be a mess ... always some car bomb, insurgent attack and we're still loosing too many dam soldiers! It also appears that the Iraqi's can't seem to reach an agreement on a unified government; all to do with different sects of their religions and control of oil ... a commodity that I'm sure will be used against the US in the future.

I can tell you that you won't hear about one fifth of what goes on here in the news. The chow (food) hall is pretty good. The soldiers eat very well here considering the dangers they face everyday. On the north side we get mortared frequently. The rounds usually land where no one is. Thank God the insurgents can't shoot for shit.

Children are very receptive to getting something from the Americans. The principle idea behind these programs are to win the hearts and minds of the kids, hopefully they will influence their parents who might be anti-coalition and this influence might keep one of them from shooting an RPG at our forces. Some children are afraid of the soldiers but that's normal. Imagine you are an eight year old and some big monster-looking guy/gal with a gun and helmet comes into your classroom.

It is plain to see that they have nothing in their classrooms. Quite the contrast to what American schools have for resources. As you can see some of the girls wear a covering on their heads. Not all of them do. It depends on how religiously conservative the family is. All of the girls wear dresses and have fairly long hair. The boys usually have a pretty short haircut, may wear short pants or regular pants and sneakers. Not much different from American kids.

Not all Iraqi's live like paupers, there are upper class homes/areas in Baghdad as you can see in these photos -

Communication in Iraq was almost non existent. Computers and the Internet are two more things that did not exist except for a select few in the upper levels of Saddams' regime. Computers were against the law. If you were caught with one, it usually resulted in your execution. And in a matter of 2 years, computers are here and internet access is here. Cell phones are the primary means of

phone communication in Iraq. Regular telephone service is almost non-existent. They are starting to modernize.

Don't believe everything in the news

When you hear on the news about an "innocent Iraqi shot by US Forces" don't take it at face value. We have rules of engagement that are very specific. When these locals get shot at checkpoints or other places it's because they are doing dumb stuff. When soldiers gesture for them to pull over and stop or gesture to get back, they will gun their engines and keep on coming. When a local is shot, it is because they did something wrong. This is a combat zone, there are people who want to kill soldiers and there have been many attempts to do it. When "Ali Iraqi" ignores everything and keeps on coming, he leaves a soldier no choice.

Had another dust storm the other day, it was impossible to see anything and everything was orange. Just had to wait it out, it lasted almost 2 days.

The tour is starting to wind down. Our replacements will be here soon and we will train them and then prepare to go back to the states. Look forward to being back home. Made pictures small because it takes forever to upload/download anything here. I think our speed is 6-12 kbs!

Anyways, take care and hopefully I'll be back before ya know it ...

Dave
Ripintou
