



(U) Deployment Sketches - Part 2

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(U//FOUO) This is the conclusion of TSgt [REDACTED]'s two-part article.)

(U//FOUO) What I learned during my NIST deployment:

- Always call first: if the supporting unit doesn't know your space requirements, they will give you a card table, a laptop, and one chair next to the coffee mess.
- You can sleep through a "SCUD Drill" even with all of your gear on... but when you know it's real, there's no way you can sleep through it.
- There's no padding in the seats of a "hum-vee." And the back seats aren't meant for people with long legs.
- There are those in the SIGINT/Intell community who don't know what NSA is, or what we do. And those people are either scary in their ignorance, or excited in their innocence.



In what used to be the Sherezade Bar in the Al Rasheed Hotel

- There's no such thing as "a dry heat." Hot is hot!
- Army chow halls will call boiled beef, carrots, and cabbage "stew" if it is served with potatoes, but "stir fry" if they serve it with rice.
- I can only stay awake for 48 hours before I shut down.
- Somehow, I never got the coveted Hamburger Patty MRE. I think I ate maybe 50 MRE's, but not once did I get the hamburger.
- When they say the tent sleeps 10, they are lying. We had 8 cots in there, and two guys were hot-racking, and we still had to go outside to change our minds.
- Clean is a relative term - Gunny was right. All I could get was clean-er, but I was never clean...
- It's easier to leave than be left behind. Working 12+ hour days (or night shift), in a combat situation, there's no extra time to think - you shower (if possible), eat, go to work, and sleep. That's it. I didn't have the luxury of a lot of free time to think about my family. (On the upside, I was able to talk to my husband who works here via the NSTS, and email him, as well.)
- The Army burns everything - trash, latrines, everything. I have never been so glad to be an NCO (non-commissioned officer) with NSA, as we were not required to perform a particularly nasty detail. Porta-johns were a luxury.
- When you set up a tent, and shower, make sure you don't put it



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next to a heli-pad. The rotor wash will knock over your shower, and the dust gets all over your stuff.

- When evicting sheep from your living spaces, you must make sure they have somewhere else to go, or they'll keep coming back. And back, and back.
- It rains mud in Baghdad... The dust is so fine, that by the time rain hits the ground, it is mud.
- The Quartermaster can make your uniform so wrinkly and small, that it is easier to wash it in a bucket. Also, they can turn white clothes a variety of colors: gray, green, black, and brown!
- Pringles rarely survive the mail. And a bar of Irish Spring soap will make every thing in the box taste like it.

(U//FOUO) Would I do it again? Absolutely! This is what I'm supposed to do - I'm in the military... we kill people, and blow things up. It's our job. It's my job to make sure that the people doing the overall mission do it with the best intelligence in the world. And NSA has it. I owe a big thanks to all of the people who produced the intelligence so we could support V Corps, and I owe a big thanks to my team who kept me safe, to the GEOCELL who gave me the training and opportunity to use it, and to my husband who I knew would take such good care of the boys that I never had to worry about them, and could concentrate on the job.

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