



(U) Deployment Sketches - Part 1

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(U//FOUO) My experience during my NIST deployment was fantastic! I had initially thought I would volunteer to support my parent service (USAF), however, I decided the NIST was the way to go - I could use the experience I gained in the Geospatial Exploitation Office and apply it at the front lines. My team was deployed from 9 March to 8 June (give or take). One team member, [REDACTED] already wrote an article, so I will try not to be repetitious.

(U//FOUO) I was part of our "advance team" which included the team Officer in Charge (OIC) and a "comms guy". We flew from BWI on a chartered flight along with another advance team from NSA going to support the I MEF. We arrived at Doha, Kuwait, got shown to some warehouses to catch up on sleep, and then were convoyed about an hour north to Camp Virginia. The first day we were at Doha was my first experience with a combat situation. We had a SCUD drill in the middle of that first afternoon - I admit, once I got my mask and suit on, I fell asleep. I was just too tired from the flight (BWI to Shannon, Ireland, to Cypress, to Doha).

NSA's Baghdad teams attend Musketeer brief

(U//FOUO) When we got to Camp Virginia (in Kuwait), we were shown to a Bedouin tent with about 60 other cots in it. We would stay there until the rest of the team showed up. I stepped outside with my toothbrush, and asked a staff sergeant where should I brush my teeth. She pointed at the ground. So that's where we brushed our teeth - outside, with a bottle of water, and we spit on the ground.

(U//FOUO) Our mission when we arrived at Camp Virginia was to support the Army's V Corps. Even though seven years of my 10 years of Air Force experience has been in joint assignments, this was different. In fact, except for the NSA team, the rest of the personnel were Army. We first had to establish relationships with the watch-center personnel, and the G-2 (i.e. the Intelligence Director).

(C) I think as a team, we did really well. We bribed the G-2 and the warrant officers with our gourmet coffee. We did the very best to remember that we weren't out there to just pass serialized product reports from the TOPIs or make read files: we were out there to leverage all of NSA's assets to keep the troops ahead of us alive. We produced actionable intelligence from NSA information.

(S) One night, I came across a target, got up, walked five steps to the Artillery Officer, and it was on the list to be destroyed literally that fast. Later, our comms team set up an NSTS line from our desk to the artillery desk, and then ran another line out to the operations floor to the Brigadier General in charge of targets, so



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we could have our own "private hot line". It made communication instantaneous (and a lot safer than running through three very crowded tents).

(TS//SI) There are so many memories...

- the Intel guy from Seal Team 5 who mysteriously appeared in our [SCIF](#) and asked for some help, but didn't give us feedback until weeks later (no connectivity to do so).
- Shooting off some rounds at the Republican Guard facility near the Republican Palace (thank you TEAM OSD) with no lights or ventilation. (We were sent with 5000+ rounds of ammunition, and fired some off in a safe area. We put a broken piece of mirror on a desk outside, then pulled another mirror off the wall and used it to reflect sunlight into the room.)



Shooting Range

- All of us getting our smallpox shots and then the contests to see who had the grossest scar forming.
- The day one of our OGA (other governmental agency) friends asked for us to find one of their sources who claimed they were kidnapped (they weren't).
- The day we tracked a communications device associated with the Republican Guard to our front door, literally - the [TAREX](#) guys who brought it to us said it had been ringing the whole trip.
- When 2nd ACR (armored cavalry regiment) needed help with a pile (about five feet tall) of Iraqi comms gear.
- When ETC (European Technical Center) shipped us four desperately needed air conditioners.
- Taking my first-ever Blackhawk ride to the Birthday Palace in Tikrit to help resupply the [MUSKETEER](#) Team.
- Taking my second Blackhawk ride to resupply them again on a hill in the middle of nowhere (see  article - number 5 in this series - to see a picture).
- Surviving what a 28-year Sergeant Major called the worst convoy she had ever been on.
- Reenlisting in the SSO's comms center in the basement of the Al-Rasheed Hotel.



Re-enlisting

(U) Watch for part two tomorrow!

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