

March 2006

I did not write during the month of March. We left Port Hueneme on March 1st. After stops in Bangor, Maine, Shannon, Ireland and Budapest, Hungary, we finally landed in Kuwait. We stayed at Camp Morrell for about 4 days. We had classroom presentations, received our combat vest and went to the range to battle sight our weapons. We got the word that we were leaving for Al Asad at about 16:00 on March 8th. The C130 took off at about 0300 in the morning. It was a smooth flight.

We landed at Al Asad and waited for NMCB 22 to pick us up at the airport. The landscape of the area makes you think that you are on another planet. The entire area is a dust desert. Most of the camp is in down in an ancient river valley. After a few briefs, we got some rest and started to find our way around our new home.

My turnover with NMCB 22 started the next morning. The EAs have their own testing lab on base. It is set up very well and will be a good place to work for the next 6 months. The LPO for NMCB 22 broke her leg the morning that I was supposed to start my turnover. EA2 Perez took her place and did an excellent job of giving me a turnover of the projects.

The main project that is going on is the runway repair. Perez showed me how they were doing their quality control for the project. He had a very good relationship with the Turkish concrete company which helped my job.

My job on the turnover was kind of confusing at times. I needed at least one more person to come with me. I had to try to juggle getting the EA lab turnover along with the project turnover. Most of my nights were spent being up until at least 2100. It seemed like I could never get organized.

The war hit us early when we came here. The third night were we here, we took three indirect fire rounds. I was lying in my bed almost asleep when they went off. Something told me that they were different than the round that EOD was setting off at Camp Morrell. Somebody was actually trying to kill us. The round hit the base in different locations. The closest one hit about 250 yards from the cans that I will be moving into.

Most of the rest of my guys got here between March 9th and 13th. It was a lot easier when I only had myself to account for. I now have now have 12 people to worry about. I try to keep them busy every day and have them work for other departments when I do not have work for them.

The concrete job had not been going very well. (Pause April 2nd) The concrete mixture that we have been getting is very stiff. There was something wrong with the mix. NMCB 22 had done a mix design, but I do not think any of them had actually done this type of work before. I sent most of my guys to a concrete class when we were in California. I also contacted my business partners back in the states for some help. Together with my new trained Seabees and some advice from some concrete people back in the states, we

came up with a design that has become more workable and hopefully will meet the strength that we need.

Our concrete project was put on hold on in the early morning of March 26th. It seems that an AV-8B Harrier pilot wanted to get a good look at our project. There are two parallel runways. This pilot landed on the wrong one. He ended up taking out one of our generators and a water tanker. It could have been worse. He barely missed hitting a light plant, an excavator and a dump truck. When it was all set and done, he ended up in one of our open trenches. It took a few days for the Marines to get the plane out.

Another IDF attack happened on March 27th. I had just finished up dinner at about 8:40 and was walking home with EA2 (SCW) Dan Miracle. We heard a blast and then we heard the sound of a missile and heard a louder blast. When you can hear the sound of the missile, you know that someone is trying to kill you. My instinct was to get to a hardened building in case more rounds were inbound. We ran for the PX and waited for the all clear. We are not in Kansas anymore Toto. After a few minutes, the all clear was sounded and then the process of locating everyone on camp begins. It took our unit over 3 hours to account for everyone. Nobody was hurt in the attack.