



Fans in military follow Cubs online

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By Carrie Muskat / MLB.com

There are more Chicago Cubs fans in the military than we anticipated. Thanks for all the emails and insight into how you follow the Cubs from several time zones away. Here are a few of the responses -- and keep up the good work.

From: Joe Dulmage and Jose Rodriguez:

We've been in Iraq now for the last 14 months, part of the troops who's mission was extended in April. Being that we don't have WGN over here, we can't watch the Cubs on their run for the championship, but we can listen to Pat and Ron via the Internet! Hopefully we'll be back in Wrigley by early August to root for them in person!

As far as Iraq goes, it's summer here, and the weather is HOT! Our mission here is to provide the signal support for 3rd squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, and we have been in quite a few different places over the past year. Since the season has started, listening to the games has given us something to look forward to at the end of each day. And yes, we turn up the speakers and sing along during the seventh-inning stretch! We all appreciate the amount of support that you've shown towards the troops serving overseas. Thanks and God Bless! LET'S GET SOME RUNS!!!!!!

From: SSgt. Jacob Hey, U.S. Air Force:

I'm originally from Dixon, Ill. and I'm a lifetime Cubs fan. Right now I'm on the Air Force World Class Athlete Program, training for the Olympics in Greco-Roman wrestling. We travel to tournaments all over the world but that never stops me from following the Cubbies. Although I do like to watch the games from my own couch when I can and sing the seventh-inning stretch with my son Jevon (6), and my daughter Kamryn (5) who are already huge fans. GO CUBS!!!

From: PFC Luis Cintron, U.S. Marines:

I'm stationed near Al Hit. I'll be patrolling the cities everyday and with my few hours off I try to follow up on the Cubs game-by-game on cubs.com and espn.com. I've been though a lot. We've been ambushed and attacked many times but I'm keeping my hopes and prayers high. I can't wait to get back to Chicago in September and see my family. Everybody back home is very patriotic and praying for us and for that I thank everybody who is doing this. Over here in Iraq, it's a different world and it could get scary at times. I killed a lot of bad guys and I don't regret it because we are trying to free the Iraqis and give them a taste of freedom we have. I'll be back soon and I hope the Cubs are in first when I get back.

From: Sgt. Michael Smith:

I have been a Cubs fan since I can remember first watching baseball. Growing up, most people in North Dakota are Minnesota Twins fans but my grandma was a big Cubs fan and I followed in her footsteps. I'm a 23-year-old National Guard member serving a year tour in Iraq for my country. I was a volunteer with the 141st Engineer Combat Battalion based out of various cites throughout North Dakota. I am stationed south of Baghdad. It's almost like a different world over here. Not the one I had imagined though. I thought that I would be seeing camels and sand dunes. But instead I am seeing trees, vegetation, and farmers growing crops. With how hot it is here I had no clue that anything could grow here. I also just got the privilege of seeing my first camel spider. I think that they call them by that name because they are so big that they could probably take down a camel. Maybe not, but it was bigger than any spider should ever be.

I am actually hoping that if I get my two weeks leave sometime in August or October that I will be able to go to Wrigley for the first time! I drove to Milwaukee when I was seventeen to watch the Cubs play the Brewers in County Stadium. It was a great game and I got to watch the Cubs down the Brew Crew, 3-2, off a Scott Servais two-run homer. It always makes my day when I can check the Cubs' Web site and see all of the great info and stories about the Cubs. I really hope that the Cubs get healthy and run away with the Central Division, then on to the World Series. I'm just another Cubs fan that thinks that waiting till next year is over and this is finally next year!

From: PFC David Hernandez:

What's up Chicago? I'm stationed here in Balad, Iraq and I do flight operations and it's a pretty cool job. I'm in the National Guard in Peoria, and I make it to about five Cubs games a year and was totally excited about this coming year with all the offseason moves (Cubs GM, Jim) Hendry made and was a bit upset to know I would be missing a whole season. I'm making it though. I've managed to get the Internet in my room and I check the Cubs' Web site everyday and I purchased the MLB radio package so I can listen to Ron on the radio. Plus the Cubs are on the AFN (Armed Forces Network) quite a bit and I wake up and watch every time.

I just want to say thank you to everyone including the players and people in the front office for all the support to the people in Iraq. It feels good to know that the people are behind you. I'm hopefully coming home in the beginning of July for my two weeks leave and hope to get Cubs tickets whether it's at beautiful Wrigley Field or in Milwaukee. Thanks again to everyone and tell the Cubs' players I said to stay healthy, and tell Alou to keep it up -- he's doing AWESOME. Thanks again for all the support and I look forward to watching the Cubs in the playoffs.

From: Sgt. Charles Rumschlag:

My name is Sgt Charles A. Rumschlag and I am currently stationed in Fort Carson, Colo. I served a tour in Iraq and while I was there I wrote a letter to the club. I thought that it was very cool that the Cubs wrote me back. Thanks for your letter and time. You wouldn't believe how many men are Cubs fans in my old platoon so I shared the letter with them.

For morale reasons, you must respond to every soldier that writes you. Trust me, they are doing a (great) job over there and deserve your thanks. You also owe them a World Series, Chicago! Thanks again and (play well) on the ball field and the men still in Iraq will keep kicking for America!

From: Alan A. Jacobs:

This may be old history, but in 1969 while stationed on the USS Boston off the coast of Vietnam, I followed the Cubs though the *Stars and Stripes*. I worked in the ship's post office with one guy from Queens and another fellow from Atlanta. All three of us tried to get as much news as we could, all the teams were in the hunt and it was the first year of divisional play, a very interesting year.

I wrote to WGN for an audio taped game and they sent it to me. It was played across the ships entertainment system for the enjoyment of all hands with commercials and everything. The captain of the ship wrote a letter of thanks to WGN.

It was too bad the way the season ended. I ate cow as the guy from Queens ate it up. I wished we had had the Internet.

From: Vincent Perez:

I am so happy today that Mark Prior is coming back. I am on the USS George Washington CVN-73 in the Persian Gulf right now. I can't wait to get home to catch a Cubs game. I had bought four tickets to see the Cubs beat up on the Houston Astros (my home city, but a real Cubs fan). But I will not be able to go because of the ship's schedule. But I will be home some time in August. I will be out on Waveland and Addison looking for tickets. I was one of the lucky Cubs fans to see the Cubs beat up the Braves in Game 5 in the playoffs last season. I also was traveling to see my loveable Cubs win the first round. I was stationed in Norfolk, Va. at the time. I was convinced to go down to Atlanta to see the Cubs play that Sunday. I had bought tickets online and accidentally had them sent to my house in Chicago. So my parents had to send them express mail to my aunt's house in Atlanta. I had the time of my life. Now I am out to sea and have my parents sending me recorded games, the *Chicago Tribune* and when I hit port I have been sporting my Prior jersey and my variety of Cubs caps. I have all kinds of Cubs memorabilia up in my rack and lockers. I hope Sammy (Sosa) and Kerry (Wood) come back sometime after the All-Star Game. I don't think we are doing too bad right now.

On game days I pop in my Blues Brothers' soundtrack and put it on track 10, "Sweet Home Chicago." I believe this is our Cubby year.

From: Cpl. Mario A. Reyes:

Hi, I'm a Marine deployed to Iraq for the second year in a row. And for the second year in a row I've been following the season on the Internet. Everyday I wake up I check the scores on your Web site and that either makes my day a lot better or a lot worse. Because of the time difference, when I wake up is usually when the games are over. I've been shot at, mortared, and had explosive devices blown up while I've been driving through this desert. It comes with the job, but nothing puts me in a better mood than learning that the Cubs have put another "W" on the board. It's been frustrating watching the injuries mount up but soon everything is going to fall into place and I'll be back home in Chicago for the playoffs. GO CUBS!! Get well soon Sammy!!

From: Cpt. Brian David:

I'm assigned to the 101st Military Intelligence Battalion, First Infantry Division located in Tikrit, Iraq. I've been a huge Cubs fan since I was a kid. I try and stay in touch with the Cubs on a daily basis using the Web site and getting all the latest news and scores on the Cubs. There are several other soldiers in my unit who are also Cubs fans, and we spend at least a few minutes a day talking about each game and the latest news. This provides us with a well needed break and motivation each day. We have not been able to actually watch any games yet, but we do have AFN and hope to see some games soon. Our friends and families back home are also sending taped games so we can watch the games that way also. We are very much looking forward to the return of Mark Prior, and hopefully the rest of the starting lineup very soon.

Thanks for the support you have shown to all the soldiers deployed here in Iraq. GO CUBS!

From: Sgt. Mark Stach:

I am in Iraq with "F" Battery from Galva, Ill. This battery is made up of soldiers from all over northern Illinois. The Cub fans in the battery listen to Pat (Hughes) and Ron (Santo) call the games on the Internet and watch the games on television when possible. This means getting up in the middle of the night to catch the games and losing some sleep, but it is worth it. I fly win and loss flags outside my room, just like the Cubs do on the center-field scoreboard, to let passersby know the outcome of the games. We also have a blackboard that I use to post division standings, box scores, injury updates, Cubs stats and trivia questions.

Cubs baseball has been a nice distraction from the situation in Iraq. A World Series win would be an even better distraction.

From: AO2 (AW/NAC) Joshua Evirs:

I am a 2nd Class Petty Officer in the U.S. Navy. I am not currently in Iraq, although I just returned home in the beginning of May from BIAP (Baghdad International Airport). I was there for roughly four months with my squadron HCS-4. We are a helicopter squadron stationed in Norfolk, Va. I grew up in Westmont, Ill. (I'm from the suburbs) and have been a lifelong Cubs fan sticking through the highs and lows.

When I was in Baghdad, I followed the Cubs very closely via the Internet and the Cubs' homepage, especially before the season started and all the moves were being made. Once the season started I pretty much developed a routine. First thing in the morning I would check the scores from the day before and in the afternoon read the game previews for the current day. Then at night, if I could manage to snag a computer for long enough, I would watch MLB's play-by-play on Gameday. I actually even got to watch the season

opener in Cincinnati on the Armed Forces Network. It was great!

But I would have to say the best thing for me was to be able to see a Cubs flag flying every morning and every night in "tent city." You see, we do not fly American flags publicly in Iraq. So I had my girlfriend send me a Cubs flag and I raised it up above my tent. I raised it the first day of Spring Training and there it stayed. I eventually had to move it into the tent to "protect it" and eventually retired it the night before I started my journey home. But now that I am home I would like to say thank you to all the loyal citizens of this country who support us, like those that are a part of the Cubs' organization and the Cubs' Web site, and a most important thanks to my fellow sailors, Marines, soldiers, and airmen still fighting for us in all parts of the world!

From: Jack Chase:

I just want you to know I am a die-hard Cubbie fan. When I am at home I watch them religiously on television. Winning season or not. Goats, fans, foul balls, interference, jinxes, whatever -- I am there when possible.

I was in the previous military campaign called Enduring Freedom and also in the one called Iraqi Freedom, both times I was deployed by the Army and sent to the desert sands. I read everything on the Cubs as I could, each newspaper (*Stars and Stripes*) was a little old by the time I got my hands on one (about a week old was average). Then on the second deployment, when nearing Baghdad and things had settled down some, we had satellite TV piped into the MWR area and I saw a few scattered broadcasts. I stayed there watching them even until the commercials were over, just to make sure I didn't miss seeing a favorite Cubbie or two.

I've probably seen at least four games last season and part of a fifth. This time the papers were only 2-3 days old when I got them. Then the biggest improvement of all, I retired from the Army on Apr 30th this year and went back to support the effort as a civilian contractor and am currently in Kuwait. This time I get newspapers real quick, but best of all is the fact that I paid for the MLB.TV this time and when I am off in my apartment in downtown Kuwait City, I can watch almost every single game my favorite team is playing. WOW! What a concept, watch the Cubbies on my computer! I want you to know this is the best deployment ever, because this time I even have Sammy, Kerry, Mark, and Moises right here with me in Kuwait! Nice to see you guys!

Stick it out guys, everyone will be healthy real soon and the fireworks are about to begin! Your No. 1 Fan in Kuwait.

From: PFC Christopher P. Froelich:

I am from Grayslake, Ill. and graduated from Carmel High School in 2003. I am 19 years old and my one-year mark in the Army will be June 6, 2004. I am stationed at Camp North Victory in Baghdad, Iraq. The temperature right now is in the low 100s and high 90s for the highs and the lows are in the 70s. There is almost never a cloud in the sky. And almost every day is a beautiful, hot, summer day. I keep track of the Cubs by going on the Internet, calling home, and my huge Cub fan brother Jeff mails me his Vinelines. I have been lucky to see two Cub games when they play on ESPN. I am anxious as the rest of Cubs' nation when it comes to the return of Wood and Sosa. I play MVP Baseball 2004 on my Playstation 2 to help me feel like I am not missing this great season. Luckily I will be home on leave during the late summer and will be able to go to a Cubs game or two. I'd liked to say all the support I get from family and friends is greatly appreciated. I'd like to say thanks to my sister Kim, my brothers Chuck, Kevin, Jeff, Brian, and Sean. I'd also like to say thanks to my parents. I really appreciate everything you guys do. I love you all. GO CUBS!

From: Cpt. Brian J. Gerber:

I am currently stationed in Baghdad with the First Armored Division Fire Support Element. You may know, we have been here a long time and were extended in mid-April. Luckily, the Cubs season was underway and that certainly brought a positive spin on the subsequent days.

I have been fortunate enough to be able to track the scores and highlights from the games via the Cub's homepage. I compile them on a spreadsheet and share them on my own little Cubs Fan distro list. We have the scores, game notes, game time in the Central time zone and Baghdad time zone, etc. Looks like they are going to let us go home for real here sometime soon. I live in Rockford and hope to be at a game in -- let's say early August. We ought to be division leaders by then, gearing up for the playoffs once again! The support group here at 1AD headquarters is alive and well! Best to you all!

From: Spc. Kenneth P. Mateer:

Just a note from a diehard Cubs fan stuck in Iraq wishing I was home watching the Cubs on WGN or listening to them on radio. I do get a chance to keep up with them on the computer. Every morning the first thing I do is go to the Web site and check the score. I am so happy that Mark Prior is back and can't wait until the rest of the team is healthy. I keep telling everyone that with my luck waiting all these years for the Cubs to win it all, this will be this year and I'll be stuck in Iraq and not able to party. GO CUBBIES!

From: SPC Wiliam Garreans:

I am currently serving in Iraq in support of OIF. I am in the U.S. Army, and I'm part of HHC 7th Signal Brigade stationed in Mannheim, Germany. I would like to say that no matter where I am at or what I am doing I ALWAYS follow the Cubs. I have and always will be a die-hard Cubs fan. I remember the first time I was introduced to the Cubs was by my grandfather, he lives in Chicago and his house is filled with Cubs stuff. I remember my first game -- I couldn't tell you who was pitching or who the Cubs were even playing -- but I can tell you I was amazed by the whole feel of Wrigley. I was only six years old, but I loved it and I knew that I would always have a special spot in my heart for Wrigley and the Cubs.

I remember when the Cubs lost Game 7 last year, I truly cried. It took me a few months to get over that, and even to this day I still imagine what could have been. I even have dreams about it, and trust me they always end in the same way, the Cubs winning the series.

I would like to end this email by sending a message to the team, no matter what happens this year, if we win or lose, I will still be a

die-hard fan. In my eyes, you guys are the greatest.

From: Sgt. Chris Allen:

I am stationed at Camp Caldwell (KMTB). I have been a Cubs fan since 1986, and even while I am in IRAQ I still keep up with their season on a weekly basis. I am a subscriber to MLB.com so that allows me to watch highlights whenever I get a chance to check out the scores and injury updates. I tell my family and friends that this will be the Cubs year because I will not be there to witness it (inside joke). But as the old saying goes for all Cubs fans, I can just wait until next year. And I know with Wood and Prior and the rest of the pitching staff they are going to be good for a long time. To all the players and fans good luck and have a wonderful year.

I have been here since March, 2004 and plan on being here for one year.

From: SSgt. Ramon Collazo:

Don't forget about us over here! We have a huge population of Cubs fans here in Afghanistan. We keep up with the games as much as we can, and a few of us are coming to Wrigley Field on leave this month. Nothing will put a smile on a tired soldier's face, like a hot dog and a Cubs game!

The Web site is pretty much the only why we can keep up with the Cubs. Most of the computers are in a morale tent and we get about 10 minutes to surf the Internet (about five minutes to write home and the other five to check up on the Cubbies!) and it's hot all the time! But the sandstorms, snakes, and scorpions are far worst than the heat. Small things like the Web site keep us connected to the world that, sometimes feels so far away!

Thanks for showing your support to the troops! We need all we can get.

From: Maj. James Robideeau:

You should know Chicago's own 33rd Area Support Group from the Illinois Army National Guard was mobilized in February and sent to Afghanistan for a year. You have a dedicated group of Cubs fans out here even though we're 10 time zones ahead.

Following the games is difficult, especially since we can't listen to Pat and Ron broadcast the games over the Internet. We have to follow the games, if we're awake early in the morning, on Gameday.

From: AME 3 Michael J. Patterson:

Hello, I am from Dunnellon, Fla., serving our great country in the U.S. Navy. I am 25 years old, doing my part in VFA-136 from NAS Oceana, Va. I work on the ejection seats and the environmental control system in the F/A-18C Hornet. I am missing potentially the best season for the Cubbies in many years! I am in the Arabian Gulf aboard the USS George Washington, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Let me say that it is very hot out here even in the middle of a body of water! It is usually 115 degrees on the flight deck and the sun is scorching.

I have been a Cubs fan about 20 years I can still remember watching the game with my dad and how enthused he was to watch Rick Sutcliffe and the Cubs take the field and Lee Smith close it out. I am expecting my firstborn will be able to recall the same such things 20 years from now. He will be born just in time for this year's World Series. Even though I am missing most of my wife's pregnancy, I should hopefully be there for my son's birth. It is worth it to protect the privilege I have to watch the greatest team in baseball, play in the best stadium in the United States, and be able to share that with my son.

I know that things will come together when the disabled list is less occupied, and fortunately our farm system and bench allows us to still contend when injuries plague the team. I have never been to Wrigley Field, but the magic of the stadium and the team are obvious even over the TV or the Internet. I wish the best of luck to the whole team and I pray that by the time that I come home, I can turn on the TV and watch the Cubs in Game 1 of the World Series! Good luck.

From: U.S. Air Force SSgt. Samuel S. Reeley:

I am a staff sergeant in the Illinois Air National Guard. I currently am serving my country at Balad Air Base, Iraq. I live in Springfield, Ill., and am in the middle of Cubs and Cardinals country. My parents are Cardinals fans and I grew up liking and eventually loving the Cubbies. Ryne Sandberg was my sports idol as I grew up. I loved to watch him play. I am looking forward to seeing Sammy Sosa and Kerry Wood start playing again. I am very excited to see Mark Prior back in uniform and playing.

While over here in Iraq, I follow the team's progress to the top of the NL Central by any means necessary. I sometimes can actually see a game on AFN (Armed Forces Network). I am looking forward to getting back home to watch the Cubs live in person as I am going to the July 11th Cubs/Cardinals showdown in St. Louis. As always GO CUBBIES!

From: SA Vance K. Warren:

I am a special agent with the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations and on active duty with the U.S. Air Force. I am currently stationed in Baghdad, Iraq, where I am the team leader of a personal security detail helping to ensure the safety of senior level U.S. military and civilian officials, as well as UN officials, as they work to rebuild the country. As I have throughout my 18-year career in the military, I follow the Cubs through whatever means possible. As a lifelong Cubbie fan, I have found that keeping in touch with the team (even during the offseason) helps me feel close to home, no matter where my military duties take me.

During my stateside assignments, I follow the Cubs on WGN and cubs.com. During my overseas assignments (Germany, South Korea, Italy, Spain, Turkey, and now in Iraq), I have relied on cubs.com or the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper to keep me informed on that greatest team in professional sports. Until recently, I have never been assigned to an Air Force base close to Chicago, which is one of the reasons I have not yet realized my lifelong dream of seeing the Cubs play in Wrigley.

I was recently assigned to a base only a few hours from Chicago and had planned on making my first visit to Wrigley this summer. Unfortunately, my deployment to Iraq made me postpone those plans until late this season or certainly next season. Thank you for helping those of us away from home stay in touch with the Chicago Cubs. If possible, please thank the Cubs players, team and organization and pass along my best wishes for another successful run through the postseason. Rest assured, Cub fans everywhere will somehow, some way, find a way to go along for the ride!

From: Sgt. Benjamin Pardee:

Viva los Cubbies! Greetings and salutations from Iraq. I am currently assigned with the 3rd Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division from Ft. Lewis, Wash., deployed to Mosul, Iraq. I've been doing my best to follow my beloved Cubbies' progress and was delighted to see the return of one of my favorites, Mark Prior. And having my favorite player, Corey Patterson, back and in his top form this season is a true spirit lifter! I've followed that kid since his early days and knew he'd be a star -- I'm glad Dusty agrees!

Although we're currently in a little slump -- what Cubs fan doesn't know the agony of a slump? I'm more than confident we'll bounce back with Mark's return, as well as Sammy and Kerry, and show those guys in the Central how it's done! One of my favorite things to do after a long, hot day in the Iraqi sun patrolling the roads, is to check on the events of the day in Wrigleyville. Thank you guys so much for giving me something to look forward to. Being far away from home and loved ones is hard, but you guys make it a little easier knowing that you're thinking about us and working your (rear ends) off to entertain us the best way you can. I don't get to see any games because of the time zone difference, plus the work load here doesn't provide a lot of time to watch, but I can still keep track thanks to mlb.com and cubs.com.

Good luck in the post-All Star break and knock one over the ivy for me and my boys.

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