

Today's Issue...

- ▶ [Page One](#)
- ▶ [City](#)
- ▶ [Regional](#)
- ▶ [Sports](#)
- ▶ [Weather](#)
- ▶ [Obituaries](#)
- ▶ [World News](#)
- ▶ [Entertainment](#)
- ▶ [Town Hall](#)
- ▶ [Stock Quotes](#)
- ▶ [Health News](#)
- ▶ [Shopper](#)
- ▶ [Classifieds](#)
- ▶ [About Us](#)
- ▶ [Archives](#)
- ▶ [Illinois Lottery](#)
- ▶ [e-mail](#)



Search The Web

- [Web Directory](#)
- [Yellow Pages](#)
- [White Pages](#)
- [Meet Someone](#)
- [My Page](#)
- [City Guide](#)
- [Lottery Results](#)
- [Weather](#)
- [Movie Listings](#)
- [Maps/Directions](#)
- [Horoscope](#)
- [Greeting Cards](#)



Regional

Sgt. Adams reports from Baghdad

By Star Courier staff

Editor's note: Staff Sgt. Jason Adams of Toulon recently returned to Baghdad and Battery F, Illinois National Guard, after two weeks' leave. Here are excerpts from his report on the trip.

BAGHDAD, Iraq -- Tonight, I find myself back in Kuwait after a long journey across three countries and an ocean. Even though we are all beat from the time change, the endless hours on the plane and the restless sleep that comes from trying to sleep sitting up, we are still not at the end of our trip. We still have to fly back to Baghdad tomorrow and the sad thing is that as my travel buddy and I were discussing on the way here "I would rather be back in Baghdad!" No joke! This place is no fun at all. We get prodded around like sheep and we sleep in a giant warehouse on bunks that who knows how many other smelly grunts have slept on. Of course, the "disgustingly, nasty mattress thing" is not new to us.

I left Toulon at 4 o'clock in the morning on Oct. 14. My flight left Peoria at 6 a.m. Mom, Dad, Steph (wife) and the girls took me to the airport.

In Chicago, our plane took off at 8 a.m. and we were in Dallas by a quarter after 10. There were several things of note that took place while we were there, some good, some bad.

The USO people had a room set up so that we could put our bags in and not have to carry them around with us.

Later, a very smartly dressed middle-aged woman approached me and asked if I was coming home or going

to Iraq. I answered that I was indeed going rather than coming. Then, she just stood there for an uncomfortable length of time and stared at me. Then she said "I am not a nut, but..." Okay folks, if a total stranger comes up to you and some of the first words out of their mouth is "I am not a nut," you know that you are in for a memorable conversation! She then proceeded to assail me with a barrage of conspiracy theories regarding the government and especially the military. She was going on and on about the inoculations that we get and how they are all poisonous, the supposed "\$10 million dollar life insurance policies" that the government takes out on each soldier, the "fact" that we are at war for money, and last but not least, my personal favorite; the "fact" that the average Iraqi doesn't want us in their country. She asked me if I had seen "Fahrenheit 911." Then she started bashing our president. I thought to myself "Big mistake lady!"

Had I not been in uniform, I would have jumped on my soapbox, grabbed my megaphone and let her have it! Instead, I merely asked if she had ever been to Iraq and seen for herself what the average Iraqi wants. Of course, she had never been there. Question two: Do you really think that the government is going to inject me with something potentially harmful and keep me from doing my job that they have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars training me to do? No reply. Question three: What kind of insurance company is going to insure me for \$10 million when they know I am going to war? Part two of question three: Given the fact that we have lost over a thousand soldiers in this war, if each one is insured for \$10 million, what kind of insurer could handle that kind of payout? No reply. I also told her that in my opinion, had Michael Moore been born a hundred years ago, he would have been shot for treason.

I maintained my composure and was polite throughout the exchange and finally she left. In hindsight, I kind of feel bad for her, I mean, what must it be like to go through life that paranoid? It was not my desire to get into a verbal altercation en route to Iraq, but some fights need to be fought.

Later on in our layover, we went to Chili's. As we finished ordering our meals, a man approached us and asked if we had paid yet. Keep in mind that there were four of us there eating. We answered "No." He then told our waiter to make sure and bring our tab to his table. He stood and talked with us for some time. Most of what came out of our mouths were words of thanks. This man

did not know us, nor did he owe us a dime, yet he took it upon himself to buy our meals. The total had to be at least 50 bucks, too! What a nice gesture! This is not a rare instance either. I have heard many stories of such instances from many of our guys who were coming back on the plane with me. It seems that the folks back home still love their men and women in uniform.

I had worried that prior to Sept. 11 our idea of patriotism had waned and was just a cozy thought brought up every July 4th. I remember thinking that it had been so long since our liberties had been threatened that the military was just thought of as a tax dollar black hole. But like America on Dec. 7, 1941, America post-9/11 has burst forth like a phoenix from its ashes and is still shining forth with boundless patriotism. It is truly an awesome sight to behold. Patriotism is such a powerful thing! True, patriotism is just a word, but the ideology behind it is perfect and the power that it wields is invincible. For as long as our spirit is not broken, we will not fail. Patriotism, like democracy must be cultivated and instilled in everyone's hearts and minds.

We must teach our children what that simple word entails. Our kids will take the reins of this country from us someday and we must teach them what we all are feeling right now. That way this country of ours will forever remain like a lighthouse, a beacon of hope on the shore of the sea of oppression and injustice for the entire world to see!

We met some soldiers that were enroute to Iraq for the first time. They seemed pretty nervous, and rightly so. We tried to reassure them some and told them not to worry. Still, you couldn't pay me enough to be in their shoes!

We landed in Kuwait around 7 o'clock at night, local time, and pretty much went to sleep. We got up the next day and went to the food court at the PX for breakfast. We found a doughnut shop there and I had the best apple fritter I've ever had. Who would have thought that an Islamic dude that hardly spoke English would know more about apple fritters than Dunkin' Doughnuts? I am constantly amazed! After that, we got to our plane around 4 p.m. Flying in a C-130 is rough. There are no windows to speak of and the seats are canvas webbing. The flight to Baghdad usually takes well over an hour. We landed and when they dropped the ramp I could see that we were back in Kuwait. Apparently, something was wrong with the plane and the cabin wouldn't

pressurize. Around midnight, they found us a plane. When we got to the airport, we were in the plane and gone in a matter of minutes.

We landed in Baghdad around 2 a.m. and it was almost 4 before I got back to my trailer. It was an arduous, miserable trip to and from home. But, in doing so, I was able to spend precious time with my family and friends. That time is priceless and I would do it all over again for just one more day. It is in being without; that we come to know the full value of what one more day is worth.

Keep us all in your prayers and we will all be home before the grass turns green in the spring.

Staff Sgt. Jason Adams

F Battery, 202ADA

Baghdad, Iraq

[Second accident in two days in Elmira](#)

ELMIRA -- For the second time in two days, Elmira resident Dawn Milburn raced to the phone to call 9-1-1 after hearing the sounds of a vehicle crash coming from her front yard.

[Area students to attend National FFA Convention](#)

LOUISVILLE, Ky. -- The Kewanee High School FFA Chapter will be among 28 from Illinois to receive National Chapter Awards at the 77th annual National FFA Convention, Oct. 27-30 in Louisville, Ky.

[Sgt. Adams reports from Baghdad](#)

Editor's note: Staff Sgt. Jason Adams of Toulon recently returned to Baghdad and Battery F, Illinois National Guard, after two weeks' leave. Here are excerpts from his report on the trip.

[Stark County students attend D.C. forum](#)

TOULON -- Three Stark County High School students spent last week in Washington, D.C. at the National Youth Forum on Defense, Intelligence and Diplomacy.