

Dear Mom,

I'm going to try to divide this letter into 2 parts, one for you and one for you and everyone else. I have no clue how this is going to work so please bear with me!

For Everyone...

To all my loved ones and friends back in the states. I'm doing fine and I finally have the time to write about some things that my unit has gone thru over the past couple weeks.

20 Mar 03: It's my birthday and we've gone to war. We roll out of Virginia Kabal and into our attack position (AP Salt Lake). We hear that there was a couple of missile attacks on Kuwait with one landing in the city.

21 Mar 03: After waiting all day, we finally receive orders to move into Iraq. We cross over at 1916 hrs about 12 hours behind 3rd Infantry Division. Our movement will take us to Objective (OBJ) Mines.

22 Mar 03: Receive orders enroute, we will bypass OBJ Mines and set up at approximately OBJ Houston 24 enroute to OBJ Firebird, the Tallil Airbase. We are not to cross Phase Line (PL) Canada.

23 Mar 03: Still waiting at OBJ Houston 24. We are wondering why it is going so slow.

24 Mar 03: We cross PL Canada and arrive on Area Supply Route (ASR) Jackson (Highway 6). All news so far is very good. 3rd ID is making good progress. We set up defensive positions outside Tallil Air Base on ASR Boston.

25 Mar 03: Our first bad news. It seems that American POWS are being executed after being broadcast on TV. There is a lot of anger among our men. It is reported that 2 female soldiers had been taken about a mile from our battalion's positions. The winds pick up to hurricane force. The dust storm reduces visibility to 5 meters. Reports come down that the Iraqi's are using the storm to conduct an attack. We take up defensive positions but the storm is so bad that even our thermals weapon sights are useless.

26 Mar 03: A good thing, no attack materialized. The dust storm left so much dust our guns are jammed. We remain at Tallil.

27 Mar 03: We are placed under operational control of the 3rd Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division, which is now arriving at Tallil. We begin moving along ASR Boston.

28 Mar 03: Take up positions along a pipeline charging station and find signs of enemy use. No enemy found, but we collect up the RPG's (Rocket Propelled Grenade) and blow them up. Move on to As Samawah, Iraq.

29 Mar 03: We take up positions outside As Samawah. A Company, 1st Battalion, 41 Infantry Regiment moves in closer, finds enemy and fires on them killing 11. One platoon from A Company receives mortar fire in front of me, about 1,000 meters out. Their vehicles evade and take up positions very close to me. They soon take mortar fire, which now means I'm taking mortar fire. Understandably, I evade and move back and out of range.

30 Mar 03: B Co 1/41 (my company) relieves A Co 1/41 inside As Samawah with my unit taking up positions and setting up a traffic control point (TCP) on ASR Jackson which is now on Highway 8. My section (B23, my Bradley Fighting Vehicle identification number, & B24) move back to refuel. While returning to our position we encounter 7 enemy. Both vehicles attempt to fire machine guns and both jam. My vehicle switches to 25mm High Explosive (HE). We fire 5 rounds. The first round is a depleted uranium due to standard operating procedures (DU is designed to penetrate enemy armor) and it zips between 2 enemy soldiers (300 meters away). The next 4 rounds are HE and one round actually hits an enemy, the results were... very graphic. We kill 2 and probably got a 3rd, but I don't count it. So 2 kills with 5 rounds fired. The rest escape around a building. B24 reports that they were returning fire but I didn't see that. They were running!

31 Mar 03: Early morning. My platoon moves further into town by about 600 M. My vehicle takes up a forward position and we encounter 3 enemy. The range is about 300 meters. Again we fire the machine gun 3 rounds and another jam. (This problem is chronic across the unit). They run to cover behind an isolated building and we switch to HE. It takes about 30 min. (with a lot of waiting), but we get the 3. 30 HE rounds expended. We are desperate now to figure out the machine gun problem. It seems that no amount of cleaning will keep it from jamming.

1 Apr 03: No direct enemy contact with my platoon. A scout from our battalion was killed due to an RPG round hitting his Humvee. We find many of the buildings around us have weapons stashed away including RPG's and BM21 rockets (artillery type).

2 Apr 03: Still at our TCP, we captured 15 POW this day! (Our platoon)

3 Apr 03: Spend most of the day at the TCP. 82nd Airborne Division relieved us in the evening. We have a 3:00 AM attack to conduct on the enemy headquarters (HQ) on the far side of As Samawah. We get to cross the Euphrates!

4 Apr 03: We conduct our attack on the HQ. We (the company) set up on the south bank of the Euphrates River. My platoon guards the company's rear facing back to the south to protect the company's back. The gunfire sounds are tremendous and very one-sided. We cross the river. It is my platoon's assignment to attack the HQ. We move to OBJ Masters (HQ) and fire a lot of 25 mm HE into it. It had already received 30 min. of 120 mm mortar fire, so the building was really wrecked. After we finish with HE, we send in the rifle squads. The rifle squads go in searching for enemy & weapons stashes. There was none to be found because it turns out that OBJ Masters is nothing more (WAS

nothing more) than a schoolhouse (oops!). Thankfully the building was empty at the time of attack. B Co 1/41 moves north from OBJ Masters with my platoon in the lead. B22 (SSG Paulson) reports that there are donkeys in road. At that point bullets and RPG rounds start flying at flying at our vehicles. We have been caught in an anti-armor ambush. The donkeys have no chance. (They were used to slow us down). B22 takes a hit on the turret with minimal damage and 4RPG's fly between B24 and my vehicle. My vehicle again attempts to lay down a base of machine gun fire as we roll by machine gun again jams! I drop down out of my commander's hatch, open the machine gun doors and reload the machine gun and then I hold the rounds to relieve the weight of the rounds before they enter the feed chute...problem solved!!! We are able to fire about 400 rounds without a jam before we ceased fire. They made a mistake ambushing us. We had no casualties, B22 (Paulson) accounted for about 8 enemy killed to include 2 machine gun mounted trucks. When we get a chance to stop, my driver finds a 5 inch by 3/4 inch shard of shrapnel on the front deck. It is now a good luck talisman that is taped to my vehicle's antennae.

5 Apr 03: We set up on Highway 8 on a bridge a few kilometers north of As Samawah. At this point, it is the only way into town from the north. We bag a lot of POW's including 6 in full uniform driving a nice Russian Jeep. One of the 6 breaks down crying (it was probably his Jeep). The Company Commander claims it now and it has been given the designation B3.

6 Apr 03: We move north on H 8 to Ar Rumaythah. We are very happy to be leaving As Samawah! We arrive at Ar Rumaythah and 1st platoon misses their turn and goes about 100 meters too far and comes under friendly fire from 50 cal machine guns and AT-4 anti-tank rockets from the 82nd Airborne Division. Thankfully both AT-4's fired miss, but 3 vehicles take hits from 50 cal. fire. No casualties. Daylight arrives and out come the townspeople. Talk about a mob! They are very friendly, sociable, and they are thieves and rookie con artists. We endure this for about 9 hours (9 gruelling hours). An 8 year old girl reaches up and hands me a pink flower. About an hour later when the crowds are getting too close to the vehicle, I shoo them back. Out of the crowd of 50 that is at my vehicle's back ramp only one runs away. The little 8 yr old girl. I feel like crap! But no choice. We move along late in the afternoon and we are now south of Al Hamzah. After all we went thru in Ar Rumaythah we are glad not to be in this town. They (the townspeople) are now conducting a liberation parade. (Poor A Company).

This concludes a summarized version of what's happened since the war started. I have no idea what's going on in the news or in fact what is going on elsewhere in the country of Iraq. Take care everyone. Love and Best Wishes to All!

Ed

7 Apr 03: C Company, 1/41, attached to 2 Battalion, 70th Armor Regiment reported a KIA and 1 WIA last night.

Typed as written...received 4/22/2003