

War is Hell

WAR IS HELL

by Penny Allen
with Photos sent from
Iraq by Sgt. R.

A young man sat down next to me
on a plane leaving Paris for the U.S.

I noticed he was a U.S. Army soldier.

He'd won the (*)th Infantry Lottery-
two weeks leave to see his wife
and child in a small town in the
States after seven months in Iraq.
Then he had to go back to Iraq
for a year.
He was wildly over-stimulated and
talked for ten hours straight.



Hi there, ma'am.
Where you headed to?

Did you just come from Iraq????

TODAY!!
Can you
believe it?

Helicoptered outta my unit, mortars comin'
at us, flew to base camp, took a different
copter to Kuwait City, then Qatar, then Paris.

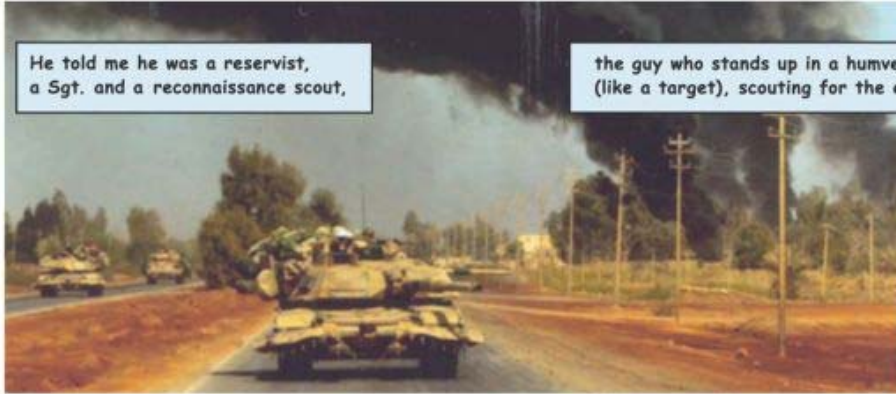
But those guys kept me locked in a room for four hours
until this flight 'cuz I'm military personnel in transit...
I don't have a passport !! So I didn't see much of Paris ...

I'm sorry..!



He told me he was a reservist,
a Sgt. and a reconnaissance scout,

the guy who stands up in a humvee
(like a target), scouting for the enemy.



Christ, yesterday... shit... my buddy's humvee hit a
booby trap... got blown up... this was yesterday !!

And today I'm
sittin' here !!

He was half blown up, half crushed
under his vehicle... fuck.

I couldn't even...

I don't think you
wanna hear this...

It's okay,
go ahead...



... He's dead !

Really,
I'm so sorry...





We do hearts and minds during the day... give candy to the kids... come back at night and kill the men !! We're animals, man !! How can that work? I mean, what the fuck?

I don't even know why we're there !! They hate us !! I'm an animal, man !! I kill people !!

Oh, excuse me. I'm gonna get in trouble, talkin' like this... I shouldn't...

That's what we do, we kill people !! No wonder they hate us... I'm sorry, you don't have to listen...

No, it's okay.

I'm listening.

Week before last we were passing out candy...



the rebels launched a mortar rocket at us... hit their own kids !! What kind of people do that? They throw their women in the back of the truck with the sheep !!

Animals, man. We're all animals.

War is hell, man... I want everybody to know it.

Shit, I gotta calm down...

The soldier was quiet for fifteen minutes, then, just as the plane was landing in the States, he got out his computer and started to show me a video he and his fellow soldiers had made in Iraq ...

"War is Hell"
Video made in Iraq by combat troops
Dec., 2004

Look at this...

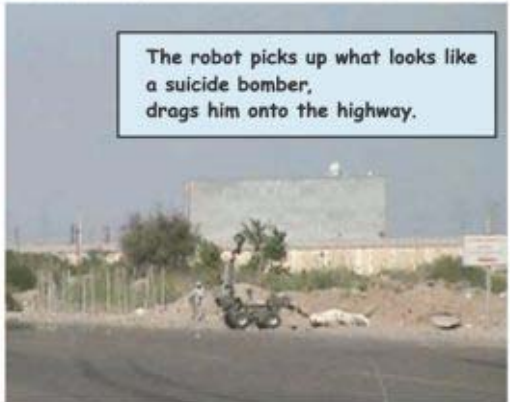
The music is "Paint it Black" by the Rolling Stones, the same song used by Vietnam veterans against the war...



Driving down the highway the bridge may be boobytrapped.



It explodes before we get there. The noise is deafening... the explosion... everyone shouting...



The robot picks up what looks like a suicide bomber, drags him onto the highway.



I can't look.

You have to look!!



We continue on, looking for the enemy.

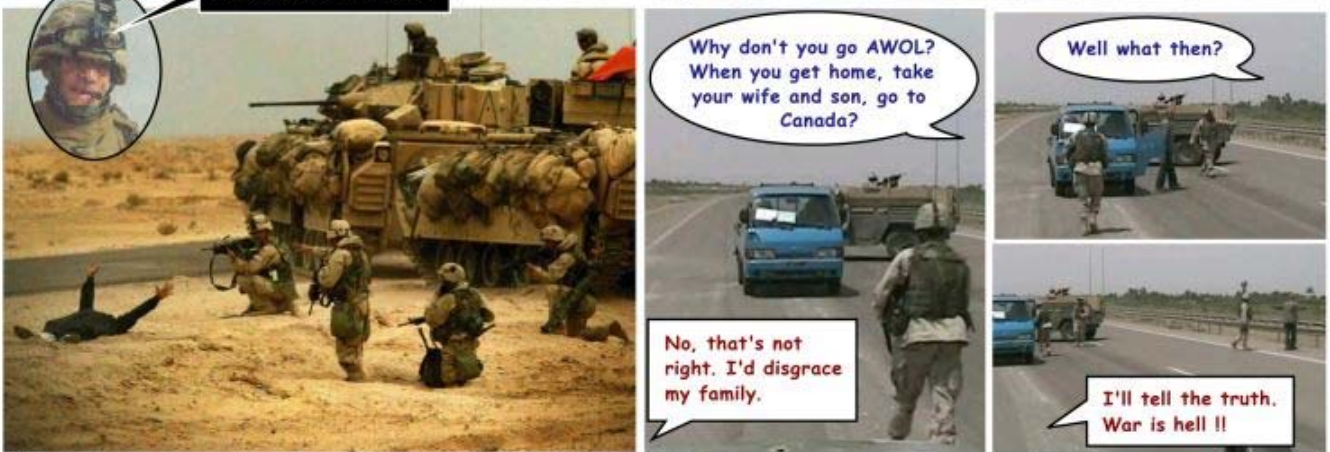
A convoy's been hit.



I cannot look at that.



You have to look. Me, I have to look...



designed by Rebecca Migdal

Go to Penny Allen's Web Site – <http://www.pennyallen.info>