

## Episode 13: The 7th Inning Stretch

Written by Jedi 6 (aka Maj. Merv Brott)  
Tuesday, 03 March 2009 14:44

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March 3rd, 2009, Combat Outpost Meade, Iraq

Our team is in the phase of deployment that I refer to as the middle innings, or now maybe even the 7th inning stretch. We have around 4 months to go. It's a little early to get too preoccupied about redeployment, but those thoughts are creeping in.



On a long journey like this, there is a lot of excitement and energy at the outset. Likewise, once the end begins to come into focus, your energy and spirit is renewed. The middle part, though, is as difficult as a desert crossing.

The hard part is staying focused and vigilant every time we go out on a patrol which, for us, is every single day. We have been fortunate so far, no IEDs or serious incidents, but we have had multiple close calls.

We have had several cases where we were about one hour or less from passing by an IED on our route, and just a few days ago we were shot at while traveling on a major route after dropping one of the guys off for R&R.

We had so much to work on through mid-February. Much of our activity was focused on the security for the provincial elections at the end of January. I don't think anyone who knew of the specific terrorist threats thought that the election security would go so well. I'm glad it did go so well. Don't get me wrong — I was just pleasantly surprised.

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Now we have had the public announcement of the U.S. pullout of “combat” troops 18 months from now. From my foxhole, it is time for us to be drawing down. The Iraqis can hold their own now if they put their mind to it. For insurgent types (the people who want us out of Iraq are ecstatic), they now have their plan set: lay low until we leave and then continue their plan to destabilize Iraq. These groups do not want to see a stable Iraq.

### **Writers' burnout runs rampant**

I thought it was just me who was in this “writer burnout,” but it’s everyone on the team. The ones that have a blog have not posted in a while (like me). I’ve noticed that guys are not taking very many pictures right now. I know that this will change as we get closer o redeployment and we will pick things up again.

Time marches on for us. As we say on the team, “There are no timeouts in Iraq!” It is very difficult to be away from family, friends and loved ones or so long. It was July 2008 when I last saw my wife. I will be the last one on the team to go on R&R in May. Saying I can’t wait would be an understatement. We are still busy enough that the days seem to keep rolling by, which is good. Starting a few days ago, we now have a small “ceremony” to celebrate turning the calendar to the next month. Hey, it’s the little things that get you by!

Until next time, this is Jedi 6, out!