

November 11, 2005

Dear Mom,

How's everything back home? I got the package & two letters you sent. Thanks. It's always nice to have something when mail is handed out. The gummy bears didn't make it through the day. (I had been craving them at the time & had been unable to get any.)

We've been pretty busy recently. A couple of weeks ago we moved to the area surrounding Rutbah (probably the western most "big" city in Iraq) to do Main Supply Route security. We did that for a few days, then received a frag order that told us to convoy north to the Al Quain region. After readjusting we commenced an attack to clear the city of Husaybah, which is about 1-1.5 km from the Syrian border.

We've been systematically clearing Husaybah, the Husaybah-Karabilah triangle, & western Karabilah for the past week. We initially ran into the enemy sporadically but he lost the will to fight pretty quickly once we brought in the tanks and air-delivered ordnance on him. Things have gone pretty smoothly & essentially without incident since the first couple of days of the operation. This op is about complete & we will soon be moving on to the next one, whatever that is.

I don't know how much of this made it on the news back home, but it seemed to be of substantial interest from what I've heard. The Battalion suffered a few minor casualties, none of which occurred in my platoon. I think the enemy is too afraid of us after seeing what happened in Fallujah to stand and fight, especially when we mass combat power like we did here.

The Marines have worked very hard & have done a phenomenal job, as have the Iraqi Security Forces attached to my Platoon. We've seen evidence of the cowardice and ruthlessness of the enemy and it only reinforces my belief that these insurgents must be systemically killed or captured. The Iraqi people deserve a life free from the influence of these terrorists—and they are terrorists. People that commit the kind of atrocities that these terrorists do deserve nothing less than death.

I know this war is not popular back home, but people must understand that to pull out before the Iraqi Army is fully ready to assume responsibility for security of their country is not only irresponsible of us, but would ensure the persistence of terrorism and fear that grips so much of the population here. If you walk through these cities & see how poor and terrified the Iraqi citizens are of terrorists & how thankful they are that we finally came to their cities, you could not possibly consider doing their job incompletely.

I guess I'll get off my soap-box now. I just feel the people back home don't appreciate what's happening over here well enough to stand so whole-heartedly against the war.

Well, I hope all is well. Tell everyone I said "Hi". I'll write or call again as soon as I get a chance. By the way, we are going to be extended & I don't expect the ship to get us back before mid-February. Could you possibly send my storage facility company an additional monthly payment to get me through March? I hate asking you to do that, but right now you're the only way I can get that done. Thanks.

Have faith in the Marines & what we're trying to do here. I'm constantly surrounded by the finest young men America's got. We'll be just fine. If this doesn't reach you before then, Happy Thanksgiving!

Love,
Ryan