

June 12, 2005

Medical Field Reports From Iraq Part II: 50th Medical Company

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PM Contributing Editor Leslie Sabbagh is currently on assignment in Iraq. During her tour of military medical facilities, she is filing blog entries for popularmechanics.com. To read her previous dispatches, [click here](#).



PHOTO BY LESLIE SABBAGH

June 10—It's over 100°F. mid-afternoon outside the 86th

[Dec. 2004 PM](#)) was treated here in June 2004. My photographer, Lucian Read, and I are waiting at the CSH's helo pad for our ride to the 50th Medical Company in Camp Cook, Taji, about 20 miles northwest of Baghdad. The company is our new home for the next few days.

There's the constant "whup-whup-whup" of rotors, but those helos aren't coming for us. They're Apaches (attack helicopters) and they hunt in pairs. It's an amazing sight to see them prowl in staggered-right flight. Then there's more whupping as our Blackhawk lands and I climb into the jump seat. Oops! I can't figure out the harness. so the medic helps buckle me in.

It's a short trip across Baghdad, everything beige and dun-colored, then barren dusty land crisscrossed with roads. Right after we see row upon row of parked Apaches, Chinooks and Huey helos, Capt. Holt sets ours down. We're now with the 50th Medical Company, embedded with our medevac crew.

I think what they say may be true, that Camp Cook has the best DFAC (dining facility) in Iraq. We eat with our crew—I get half a succulent Cornish hen and freshly cut pineapple. But this is still a war zone; after dinner we get a safety briefing from Holt.

June 11—Our crew gets the call: "Medevac, medevac, medevac" over their radios. We drop everything and move fast out to the helo. Ten minutes after the call, we're airborne with the patient, on the way to the 86th CSH. Half-way there, we're forced to turn back—the flight ceiling is down to 300 ft.

Then the world starts closing in and the sky turns a weird milky white. Visibility shrinks to maybe a quarter-mile. This is an Iraqi dust storm, and it stretches to Syria. We're grounded. Today, all the medevacs will be by wheeled ambulances.—*Leslie Sabbagh*

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Re: Medical Field Reports From Iraq Part II: 50th Medical Company

Dear Ms. Sabbagh, My love is a blackhawk pilot with the 50th Med Company... I miss him wildly! His name is CPT Scott Brown... If you see him, could you please give him a BIG HUG from me?! Many thanks, Bambie Plante

Re: Medical Field Reports From Iraq Part II: 50th Medical Company

I love reading about the 50th Med Co. My son is a crew chief with the 50th. His name is Spc. Blake D. Vogt. I miss him so. If you happen to see him tell him that his mom is anxiously waiting his return home. God Bless all our Troops.