

This is Bear Note #14 and I am happy to be writing to you from the warm and sandy climates of Iraq. As I write this all of the Bears are well. You may have heard of recent unrest, but I assure you that we are actively engaged in protecting our soldiers and making our health care facilities less vulnerable to enemy fire. Without mentioning the specifics let me just say that the company commanders are tired and the clinicians are growing happier by the day.

Change of command occurred on 27 June, and the soldiers looked superb in the morning light outside the hospital entrance. I admire the job that COL Jim and Linda Bruckart did while in command. This magnificent organization is his legacy, and he should be proud of the quality and endurance of his soldier-medics. My hat is off to you, Jim.

One item of news that has the camp buzzing is the arrival of Prime Power. An 800kW diesel generator unit built by Caterpillar in Peoria, Ill will arrive within days. This will significantly improve life here at Bear South, allow some small enlargement in the size of tentage devoted to clinical work, and eventually allow conditioned air in sleeping areas. Another unit is on the way to Bear North in the near future. Life is getting better.

Planning is underway to provide a permanent building for Bear South. None of us will see the completion of this long term project, but it will serve to improve health care available to American service-members in this area, and simplify much of what we do. The new hospital will include a dental clinic next door, and close access to a helipad.

Many thanks to all the family and friends of the 21st CSH. Your support and encouragement make life bearable. There is no word on when we might redeploy, but I will share that information as soon as I have it. The important work of caring for America's daughters and sons continues at the 21st Combat Support Hospital. Fear Not!