

## Tigris and Euphrates Bears

Your “Bears” continue to set the standard for health care in Iraq. Both Hospitals, Bear North and Bear South, have been busy with many outpatients, admissions, and surgeries. One thing is consistent, whether North or South, patients receive the very best in medical care with they are treated by the soldiers of the 21<sup>st</sup> Combat Support Hospital.

The hospital laundry and bath section set-up their two laundry trailers – Tigris and Euphrates – this past week. We finally have a place where we can wash the hospital linen and clean our uniforms without resorting to soap and a bucket.

Some of our families have “discovered” the online daily news reports from the Tacoma Tribune reporters attached to the 62<sup>nd</sup> Medical Brigade (<http://www.tribnet.com/news/iraq/embed>). The reporters are covering local stories for the Fort Lewis-based 62<sup>nd</sup>, but some of the stories mention our soldiers. I’d recommend you look at their stories on the convoy to Mosul, loss of our first patient (“Commander urges troops to keep focused”), and the recent toy delivery. However, the reporters like to “spice-up” the reality of our daily routine so don’t take everything they say at face value. 62<sup>nd</sup> has embedded print reporters, but we have a PBS film crew from their NOVA program videotaping our soldiers and hospital. Look for a PBS special on Army Hospitals in about 5 months.

Tragedy struck earlier this week with the loss of one of our MEDEVAC helicopter crews. The courageous flight team was lost while evacuating a patient to our hospital. Their spirit and sacrifice was honored in a somber memorial service.

Over the next few weeks you’ll hear announcements of units returning from Iraq, but the 21<sup>st</sup> will remain for now. We fill a vital role in providing health care for the soldiers that are stabilizing Iraq so commerce can flourish and free elections can take place. I do not expect our return dates to be announced until the redeploying units have departed.

Mail continues to be hit and miss. We are receiving more letters and packages as the postal system “finds” our hospital companies, but everyone I talk to is convinced they have 3 packages that are lost in the system. I can assure you that we have folks everywhere watching for our mail and it is delivered to the soldiers within hours after we receive it. Please send letters and packages and CSM Brock again reminds me that “Bears” are partial to chocolate chip cookies!

I’ll close this note by focusing again on the outstanding medical care available at our hospitals in Iraq. All of our soldiers, whether working as a Doctor, Nurse, Medic, Mechanic, or Radio Operator, are contributing to the overall success of the 21<sup>st</sup>. You should be proud of their hard work for our patients and our nation.