

# My Experience of War in Iraq

*Dwight Christian*

As a veteran who did two combat tours in Iraq, I found there were many different experiences I had to adapt to. Three common facts of life for any soldier in Iraq include dealing with the harsh climate, going out on countless convoys, and being prepared for Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

The weather in Iraq is extremely hot. Temperatures can get up to 130 degrees. This is extremely uncomfortable. The combat gear that we had to wear made the heat almost unbearable. We learned that to avoid becoming a heat casualty, you have to drink lots of water and stay constantly hydrated.

Next, as soldiers, we had to always be prepared to go out on convoys. We had to prepare the vehicles to be combat ready before each mission. We had to make sure each vehicle had enough fuel, check that all the radios were in good work-

ing order, and mount all the weapons securely. Then each of us had to do our own personal inspection to make sure we had everything we would need for the mission and for survival.

Finally, we were constantly on the alert for IED explosions. These were very common and became an everyday experience for many soldiers. We learned that if we were in or around an explosion, we had to try to stay as calm as possible and get our bearings. If we were not hurt, it was our job to look for the person or people who might have set the explosion.

These are just some of the situations that I had to adapt to during my duty in Iraq.

*Dwight Christian joined the Army in 2001 after the 9-11 terrorist attacks.*



## Why Did the U.S. Invade Iraq...Twice?

**Look at the following** list of reasons for the 1991 invasion of Iraq (the first Gulf War) and 2003 invasion of Iraq. Which reasons have you heard? Which ones do you believe? Put a “1” or a “2” next to the reason if you associate it with the first Gulf War or the second.

**A.** The U.S. believed that Iraq had “weapons of mass destruction” and so we should invade it and occupy it in order to get rid of the weapons of mass destruction.

**B.** The U.S. invaded Iraq to ensure our access to the oil supply in the region.

**C.** The U.S. disagreed with Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait.

**D.** The U.S. invaded Iraq because Saddam Hussein was a brutal dictator who murdered many of his own people. The U.S. wanted to bring democracy to the Iraqi people.

**E.** The U.S. wasn’t so concerned that Saddam was a dictator. The U.S. was concerned, however, that Saddam was acting too independently. So the U.S. created a pre-text to invade (see A).

**F.** The U.S. invaded Iraq to destroy Al-Qaeda.

**G.** The U.S. sees itself as “policeman” of the world and so must occasionally showcase its power. The U.S. invaded Iraq to show off its weapons, justify a huge military budget, and enrich private contractors who would be in charge of “security” and “rebuilding.”