

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR A DEPLOYMENT IN IRAQ

NOTE: This is meant to be read with a sense of humor!

by CPT Brian Johns

1. Sleep on a cot in the garage.
2. Replace the garage door with a curtain.
3. Six hours after you go to sleep, have your wife or girlfriend whip open the curtain, shine a flashlight in your eyes and mumble, "Sorry, wrong cot."
4. Renovate your bathroom. Hang a green plastic sheet down from the middle of your bathtub and move the showerhead down to chest level. Keep four inches of soapy cold water on the floor, stop cleaning the toilet and pee everywhere but in the toilet itself. Leave two to three sheets of toilet paper or for best effect, remove it altogether. For a more realistic deployed bathroom experience, stop using your bathroom and use a neighbor's. Choose a neighbor who lives at least a quarter mile away.
5. When you take showers, wear flip-flops and keep the lights off.
6. Every time there is a thunderstorm, go sit in a wobbly rocking chair and dump dirt on your head.
7. Put lube oil in your humidifier instead of water and set it on 'high' for that tactical generator smell.
8. Don't watch TV except for movies in the middle of the night. Have your family vote on which movie to watch and then show a different one.
9. Leave a lawnmower running in your living room 24 hours a day for proper noise levels.
10. Have the paperboy give you a haircut.
11. Once a week, blow compressed air up through your chimney making sure the wind carries the soot across and on to your neighbor's house. Laugh at him when he curses you.
12. Buy a trash compactor and only use it once a week. Store up garbage in the other

side of your bathtub.

13. Wake up every night at midnight and have peanut butter and jelly on a saltine cracker.

14. Make up your family menu a week ahead of time without looking in your food cabinets or refrigerator. Then serve some kind of meat in an unidentifiable sauce poured over noodles. Do this for every meal.

15. Set your alarm clock to go off at random times during the night. When it goes off, jump out of bed and get to the showers as fast as you can. Simulate having no hot water by running out into your yard and showering with the garden hose.

16. Once a month, take every major appliance completely apart and put it back together again.

17. Use 18 scoops of coffee per pot and allow it to sit for five or six hours before drinking.

18. Invite at least 185 people you don't really like because of their strange hygiene habits to come and visit for a couple of months. Exchange clothes with them.

19. Have a fluorescent lamp installed on the bottom of your coffee table and lie under it to read books.

20. Raise the thresholds and lower the top sills of your front and rear doors so that you either trip over the threshold or hit your head on the sill every time you pass through one of them.

21. Keep a roll of toilet paper on your night stand and bring it to the bathroom with you. Also bring your gun and flashlight.

22. Go to the bathroom when you have to pass gas, "just in case."

23. Announce to your family that they have mail, have them report to you as you stand outside your open garage door after supper, and then say: "Sorry, it's for the other Smith."

24. Wash only 15 items of laundry per week. Roll up the semi-wet clean clothes in a ball. Place them in a sack in the corner of the garage where the cat pees. After a week, unroll them and without ironing or removing the mildew, proudly wear them to professional

meetings and family gatherings. Pretend you don't know what you look or smell like. Enthusiastically repeat the process for another week.

25. Go to the worst crime-infested place you can find, go heavily armed, wearing a flak jacket and a Kevlar helmet. Set up shop in a tent in a vacant lot. Announce to the residents that you are there to help them.

26. Eat a single M & M every Sunday and convince yourself it's to prevent malaria.

27. Demand each family member be limited to 10 minutes per week for a morale phone call. Enforce this with your teenage daughter.

28. Shoot a few bullet holes in the walls of your home for proper ambience.

29. Sandbag the floor of your car to protect from mine blasts and fragmentation.

30. While traveling down roads in your car, stop at each overpass and culvert and inspect them for remotely detonated explosives before proceeding.

31. Fire off 50 cherry bombs simultaneously in your driveway at 3:00 a.m. When startled neighbors appear, tell them all is well, you are just registering mortars. Tell them plastic will make an acceptable substitute for their shattered windows or just put sand bags over them.

32. Drink your milk and sodas warm.

33. Spread gravel throughout your house and yard.

34. Make your children clear their Super Soakers in a clearing barrel you placed outside the front door before they come in.

35. Make your family dig a survivability position with overhead cover in the backyard. Complain that the 4x4s are not 8 inches on center and make them rebuild it.

36. Continuously ask your wife to allow you to buy an M-Gator.

37. When your 5-year old asks for a stick of gum, have him find the exact stick and flavor he wants on the Internet and print out the web page. Type up a Form 9 and staple the web page to the back. Submit the paperwork to your spouse for processing. After two weeks, give your son the gum.

38. Announce to your family that the dog is a vector for diseases and shoot it. Throw the dog in a burn pit you dug in the neighbor's back yard.

39. Wait for the coldest /hottest day of the year and announce to your family that there will be no heat/air conditioning that day so you can perform much needed maintenance on the heater/air conditioner. Tell them you are doing this so they won't get cold/hot.

40. Just when you think you're ready to resume a normal life, order yourself to repeat this process for another six months to simulate the next deployment you've been ordered to support.

41. Above all else, keep your perspective and sense of humor. You're going to need them.