

Middle East crisis hits close to home

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Derek predicts that this situation in the Middle East will worsen. "If this becomes a war," he says, "it would be the doom of most of the people I know over there."

Heather Baldwin Marine Safe For Now

Former BC student Heather Baldwin says she is "safe for now in the midst of the crisis in the Gulf. Heather, who is a lance corporal in the Marine Reserves and a sophomore at East Carolina University, isn't pleased with the situation in Kuwait.

"I'm very scared," she says, "if I have to go, I will...but I won't be happy about it."

Heather, whose reserve unit is in charge of supplies ("beans, bullets and bandages"), says her responsibilities focus on "...being a pencil-pusher behind the lines; securing rear areas. If I went," she says, "I'd just go do my duties in clerical work, but --" she adds, "No one is really safe over there. You never know what will happen."

Because she is a student reservist, if she were called, she would have to withdraw from school. "I don't want to leave school," she says, "but the University has said they would allow reservists to withdraw without penalty and they would receive a refund for the semester."

Heather says when she first became aware of the situation in the Gulf, "...it just knocked the air out of me. I was sitting in my living room watching the news when President Bush came on and said he was sending the Reserves."

She says, "Every time I hear news about what's going on over there, my heart beats faster."

Heather doesn't see a peaceful solution in the future. "It's not an 'if it happens' anymore," she says. "Somebody's going to get an itchy trigger finger."

Not only is she worried about her future but she also has friends and acquaintances in the same situation. "I have one friend on active duty. He'll be over there for probably six months. I'm worried about him." She continues, "I also wonder about friends I've met in service. I wonder where they are -- if they're over there. I'll be keeping them in my prayers

Erik Gibbs 'Somewhere in the Gulf'

"I just never thought one of my kids would be involved in this," says Naomi Gibbs, former director of BC's Learning Center.

Ms. Gibbs, who is on leave of absence, studying at Appalachian State University this year, says she isn't sure where in the Persian Gulf her son Erik is.



Brevard College Reservists John Massie (left) and Craig Register

"He called me on August 13," she says. "He said his mission was so secret, he couldn't tell me whether he was on land or water... I heard airplanes, though. So I think he's on an aircraft carrier."

Erik, who is in the Navy, has already celebrated his 21st birthday in the Middle East. Ms. Gibbs says her son has a "real positive attitude about this, and," she says, "believes in his reason for being there."

Dale Wiener A Special Perspective

BC Director of Financial Affairs Dale Wiener has a special understanding of the crisis in the Gulf.

As a 27-year veteran and retired Colonel in the Air Force, Wiener says he feels positive about situations in the Gulf soon diminishing. "I like the way it has unfolded," he says. "I don't anticipate a shooting war."

Wiener also has a personal interest in the situation. His son, Chris, a BC graduate and a student at UNC-Charlotte, is also in the Army Reserves.

"Chris doesn't serve in one of the specialized fields selected for call-up," says Wiener. He has, though, been alerted that he may be called to help in out-processing." Wiener says Chris, if called, will assist in loading and

preparing other units with are Gulf-bound.

Wiener says he is comfortable with the United States' actions in the Gulf so far. "Under President Bush's leadership, we were able to gain support of other countries. Until very recently," he explains, "we lived in a bi-polar world. The U.S. and the Soviets had different allies." He continues, "Now as a result of Glasnost, there has been a lessening of hostilities between East and West. These Third World nations who were caught between siding with the U.S. and siding with the USSR found it easier to commit to our sanctions."

Concerning the United States' decision to impose an embargo on Iraq, Wiener says, "Generally, embargoes don't work. However, this blockade will work because everyone is participating." He says because Iraq is a land-locked nation surrounded by hostile countries, the sanctions the United Nations have taken will be especially effective.

Wiener does not refer to Saddam Hussein as a "mad man". "I don't think he's totally crazy," he says. "He realizes he has miscalculated. He knows he has to save face."

Wiener also says that the hostage situation isn't benefitting Hussein any. "Hostages require a lot of care," he says. "He's dealing with so many foreign employees."

Wiener does not foresee hostilities in the Gulf to escalate. He remains confident that the diplomatic sanctions enforced by the United Nations will work as a solution to occurrences in the Middle East.

Whatever the outcome, BC students, faculty, administration have been forced to face the Gulf Crisis head on as it affects them here at home.

Hostages are people... not statistics

by Derek Bauer
Clarion Reporter

When I was asked to write an article about Kuwait and how I felt about it, I found words hard to come by. Now, after living there two years, that seems silly to me, but when you have a lot of emotions about something it is sometimes hard to focus on them.

On August 31, 1990, my parents called me from South Carolina. I talked first to my dad, then my mom, and lastly my little brother. The usual things were said -- you know: "I love you, how are classes? Miss you..." and so on.

We were about to end the telephone call when my dad got back on the line and said, "Son, there is something I've got to tell you. Bobby and Odessa have been in a wreck."

"Wait!" I exclaimed. My dad explained the situation to me. Mr. and Mrs. Bobby and Odessa Higgins were trapped in Kuwait and had been one of the families ordered to go to Baghdad, Iraq. They started their drive fine, but along the way they were involved in an accident. Bobby Higgins received a broken arm, cuts and bruises, and Odessa Higgins is in critical condition in Kuwait Mubarek Hospital. Now there are little to no medical supplies in Kuwait. I said good-bye to my father and hung up the phone.

I was dazed for a second after I hung up. Mr and Mrs. Higgins had been like a second family to me in Kuwait. In fact, I drove with them last Christmas from Kuwait to Baghdad, on vacation.

My insides were torn up, I had to go outside and walk around. It was around 10 p.m. and totally dark. I left Green Dorm and ended upon a little walk-bridge that crosses the stream which runs through campus. I stood there with my hands on the rail, watching the stars and listening to the running water. I began to cry soft, silent tears.

Through those tears I wondered out loud if I would ever see any of those