

**LOCAL**

**PALMER**

From 1A  
 she's no hero. "My stepdad calls me a hero - he's proud of me - but the heroes are those men and women still in Iraq fighting for freedom and freedom isn't free," she said as she relaxed with her family after spending the morning at Carr Elementary School in Dallas with her niece, first grader Haley Whisnant. She gave them coins and paper money with Saddam's picture on the front and talked to them about the language difficulty in Iraq and the various ethnic religious groups such as Kurd, Sunni and Shia.  
 She told the youngsters there are 18.5 million Arabs, 5 million Kurds, 800,000 Assyrians, Chaldeans and 500,000 Turkoman in the Middle East and on her third trip she was stationed at Ali AFB in the Southern part of Iraq where the temperatures reached 130

degrees, the sand storms made it difficult to drive a jeep and see in front of you, and where there was forever fear of the unknown. Palmer's job was training new, young troops. She taught them to be calm, aggressive and when to pull the trigger and to think before they shoot. "I am so damn proud of my second family," she said of the members of her troop.  
 Laura missed her family but she worked 12 hour shifts and focused on the job that all service personnel have to do. Laura kept in touch with her family and they sent her snacks, pre-cooked bacon and other care packages from home that she shared with troop members.

"I met a lot of nice people, but we put our lives on the line and we have to remember that we never know what's around the next corner and we have to be prepared," she said.  
 She said some of the saddest people were the little

children who stood on the sides of the road and begged for food. Laura said that one child was killed by a convoy - not American - when she apparently darted in front of the vehicle which didn't stop.

"We tried to help them but it's hard," she said. "It's a heart-breaking story of war."

Busting a cache of weapons that were en route to Baghdad, digging up explosives, serving as security officer for the Prime Minister of Iraq, conducting security flyaways, and participating with coalition forces in securing the 100,000 ballots for the Iraqi election were some of the experiences she related as she emphasized that "we took our 13 member team and thank God we brought all 13 back."

"It was just my job and natural for me," said Laura. She was permitted three 20 minute telephone calls per week and email daily unless a siren went off and there

was fear of attack.  
 Last week Laura met her two-year-old niece, Alexis Whisnant for the first time and there were hugs all around for niece Haley Whisnant and a visit is planned to Virginia for a visit with another niece Ashlee Keller and her family. She has mementos from three sisters and their families and is anxious to hear what's happening in their lives.

"I was 18 when I joined the Army National Guard," said Laura, whose number one goal was to serve her country and to get a sense of direction for her life. She has excelled in both goals.

Laura said that women in Iraq still wear the face veils to show respect but many of them are becoming westernized. Iraqi females can't drive a car and the custom is to walk a step behind the male. She said one of the reasons she was hot, too, was that she carried 65 pounds of gear and wore a bullet proof vest.

She was a member of the patrol team that worked outside the wire of their tent compound to search for explosives and weapons. "We found a lot," she said and arrested the suspects.  
 Palmer described Iraq as a sad country. "We bring in new troops to train and they see lots of destruction from war and it's a dangerous time but not everyone is out to kill us," she said.

Palmer's father, Tom Palmer, served in the Vietnam Conflict and her step dad also serviced in the Army.

It was traumatic for her to see starving children and she said that soldiers give help wherever they can.

Palmer has completed her M/Sgt. examination and also has earned credits for her associate degree from the service.

Her second career will resume in her home state of Michigan with the Department of Corrections and her goal is to be an

inspector, which would correspond with the rank of major. She will return to her former employment, Corporal on active duty helping run a boot camp for adult felons. The facility serves over 400 male and female residents who have been charged with a number of offenses and with whom Palmer will work to give a second chance. They'll run two miles a day and do push ups, among other programs.

It's likely that Palmer may be recalled to duty and she's willing and able.

As her mother watched all the news reports about the war it made her nervous. "I want every child home alive," says Mrs. Zeunik.

But her faith was strong. She said she knew God had his arms around her daughter. She says she's grateful for the prayers that have gone up for soldiers in harms way. "You can't have too many prayers," said the obviously happy Mom.

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 Directions: From Charlotte NC, I-85 S. toward Gastonia approx. 24 mi. Merge onto US-74 W. Exit 10B toward Kings Mountain, Shelby, Travel approx. 2 mi. Take NC-161 Exit toward Bessemer City. Turn right onto Cleveland Ave./NC 161. Continue to follow NC-161 for 1.5 mi. Turn right onto Payne Rd. Turn slight left onto Goins Farm Rd. Watch for Auction Signs.

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**TERMS:** Payment in Full at the Auction by Cash, Check, Visa & Mastercard. 10% Buyers Premium. **CONDITIONS:** The information contained herein and all related auction materials are gathered from sources deemed reliable. Auction company is not responsible for errors or omissions.

**AUCTIONEERS NOTE:** Mr. William Goins (deceased) and Margorie Goins (living) have appointed Brinderlyn G. Brooks and Gennie Goins-Setzer (daughters) as Attorney In Fact. They have instructed Tarheel Auction & Realty to sell this property at Absolute Auction.

**Tarheel Auction & Realty**  
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