

**Iraq Veteran Interview
With Troy Dreberstadt
By Nora Drews
February 13, 2007**

T. Dreberstadt: I like the U.P. and I like this area.

Nora Drews: I am here with Troy. He is a veteran back from Iraq and I am just going to ask him some questions. What is your birth date Troy?

Troy Dreberstadt: July 19, 1983

Nora Drews: What is your full name and rank?

Troy Dreberstadt: My full name is Robert Troy Dreberstadt II and I am a Sgt. in the US Army.

N. Drews: Where are you from?

T. Dreberstadt: I am from Charlevoix, Michigan.

N. Drews: Where is that, is it down State?

T. Dreberstadt: It is down State. North of...[can not make out]

N. Drews: So does your family live there then?

T. Dreberstadt: Yes.

N. Drews: So uh just a question about your parents, what did they think about you enlisting in the military?

T. Dreberstadt: Um, My Dad was prior military, so uh, they thought it was kinda cool. My Dad was kinda proud.

N. Drews: Oh I am sure. What did they think when you said you were gonna go to Iraq?

T. Dreberstadt: Um, again my Dad was proud, but my Mom did the whole like Mom thing. She was kinda worried about it.

N. Drews: So then, how did you end up here at MNU? Did you end up serving first and then coming here? Or did you go here?

T. Dreberstadt: Um.. I joined the Army out of High School and ah I joined the National Guard and I went through and did my training and I tried to go to a community college. But was called up for [can not understand] one. Ended up not going, went back to community college [not understood] did a semester, got called up again and went to

Iraq this time. Then after I got back from Iraq decided I better finish college, so I came up here.

N. Drews: So... that's how you were deployed?

N. Drews: Ok. And like what exactly made you want to come up here?

T. Dreberstadt: Yes

T. Dreberstadt: I like the U.P. and I like this area.

N. Drews: Thus, when you were deployed was it... were you really excited or were you

N. Drews: What is your major here?

T. Dreberstadt: Sports Medicine.

N. Drews: Oh ya, how far along are you?

T. Dreberstadt: I'm a Junior.

N. Drews: Oh ok, and how did you end up, well kinda obvious but, with the military science program here at MNU? How did you become involved in that?

N. Drews: Oh ok... and how long were you there?

T. Dreberstadt: I got involved in ROTC, basically just taking some filler class's and it would be pretty easy A for history and whatever, but um, then I decided I'll want to go and become an officer, so I'm sticking with it and I gonna be commissioned after I graduate.

N. Drews: Really. So moving into the Iraq questions, where exactly did you end up when you went?

N. Drews: Oh Ok... What's that about?

T. Dreberstadt: Um, we were stationed in an air base called Camp Anzonda just north

T. Dreberstadt: Um, I'm uh, enlisted right now and to become an officer in the Army you either have to go through West Point, ROTC or OCS. So I am becoming an officer through ROTC.

N. Drews: What is that?

N. Drews: Oh Ok, and then being in Iraq and being a veteran from there, does that help your peer's? Is it...

T. Dreberstadt: Um, as far as, like the other people in the ROTC program? I think it does have a , I know there's two other people who have been over there, who are in the program. We pretty much help a lot of people. Tell that what to expect once they get into the real Army, and uh let them know what it is really like.

N. Drews: Cool...Do you get any benefits at MNU from being already in Iraq?

T. Dreberstadt: Um, we do get benefits? I get the GI Bill which pays me a certain amount of money each month to help defer the costs of a tuition and also a get a helped out through the national guard with tuition assistance, so.

N. Drews: Cool...Do you get any benefits at MNU from being already in Iraq?

T. Dreberstadt: Um, we do get benefits? I get the GI Bill which pays me a certain amount of money each month to help defer the costs of a tuition and also a get a helped out through the national guard with tuition assistance, so.

N. Drews: Oh ok, definitely big benefits. Then you said you where in the national guard first?

N. Drews: Towards the walls of the base?

T. Dreberstadt: Yes

T. Dreberstadt: Ya, there on the outer perimeter you just stand there and look out.

N. Drews: So... that's how you were deployed?

T. Dreberstadt: Yes ever come across any body trying to sneak in?

N. Drews: Then, when you were deployed was it... were you really excited or were you a little scared and apprehensive?

N. Drews: Oh ok... And I read up on a little bit about that. That like camels and goats

T. Dreberstadt: Um I was really excited actually, um a little bit scared for the first couple of weeks that we got there, but that kinda wore away. Once we started doing what we were doing.

N. Drews: How old were you when you went? there. What was like weather like there?

T. Dreberstadt: I was twenty. summer it was really hot. It would get down to about 60 or 70 at night. So when you go from 115, 120 to 70 it feels really cold.

N. Drews: Oh ok...and how long were you there?

N. Drews: Oh that.

T. Dreberstadt: About a year and a half.

T. Dreberstadt: And uh... in the winter time especially in northern Iraq it got really cold.

N. Drews: Really. So moving into the Iraq questions. Where exactly did you end up when you went?

N. Drews: Oh really. Did that, kinda like when it did snowed did it kind of almost make

T. Dreberstadt: Um, we were stationed in an air base called Camp Anaconda just north of Baghdad by a town called [Blahd not sure of spelling] um it was the biggest base in Iraq. It was the main hub and uh we were pretty much doing convoy security full time.

N. Drews: What is that? , definitely... Um what about like other conditions and

some. [interruption occurred] Ok, I read that um and I have seen a lot pictures where

T. Dreberstadt: It's basically a um .. When the supplies came into Iraq they came into this air base and then they are dispersed through out the rest of Iraq. So we would a follow the convoys pull security for them. Make sure, you know, they didn't get into any trouble and if they did we were there to protect them. of those and it was pretty intense.

N. Drews: Oh ok.. So that was your, type of jobs you had. Did you have any other jobs?

T. Dreberstadt: Um the last two months we were there, um, we were pulled off the road and put on guard towers on base, just cause we were getting geared down to go back home. So

N. Drews: Really.

N. Drews: So guard towers, I am guessing are these high?

T. Dreberstadt: Ya it is weird, um but that is mainly out in southern Iraq.

T. Dreberstadt: Ya, there are.

N. Drews: Oh ok.

N. Drews: Towards the walls of the base?

T. Dreberstade: South east or south west part of the desert. Ya its pretty, pretty weird.

T. Dreberstade: Ya, there on the outer perimeter you just stand there and look out. Make sure no one try's to sneak in.

N. Drews: Did you ever come across any body trying to sneak in?

T. Dreberstade: No, it was mostly just farmers and sheep herders.

N. Drews: Oh ok.... And I read up on a little bit about that. That like camels and goats and that kind of thing are pretty common.

T. Dreberstade: Ya.

N. Drews: So you probably saw a lot of them there. What was like weather like there?

T. Dreberstade: During the summer it was really hot. It would get down to about 60 or 70 at night. So when you go from 115, 120 to 70 it feels really cold.

N. Drews: Oh I bet.

T. Dreberstade: And uh.. In the winter time especially in northern Iraq it got really cold. And actually a couple of times it snowed so it was really surprising.

N. Drews: Oh really. Did that, kinda like when it did snowed did it kind of almost make you feel like you were home again?

T. Dreberstade: No, it just made us mad, cause it was cold.

N. Drews: Oh (giggle) Ya, definitely... Um what about like other conditions sand storms. [Interruption occurred.] Ok, I read that um and I have seen a lot pictures where there is the big sand storms and every thing looks unbelievable red and people are covered with dirt. How was that?

T. Dreberstade: Um, I was only involved in like two of those and it was pretty intense.

N. Drews: I bet.

T. Dreberstade: It was kinda like out of the movie The Mummy you just, you see like this big wall of sand coming towards you.

N. Drews: Really.

T. Dreberstade: Ya it is weird, um but that is mainly out in southern Iraq.

N. Drews: Oh ok.

T. Dreberstade: South east or south west part of the desert. Ya its pretty, pretty weird.

N. Drews: Ya it looked, the pictures I have seen looks really pretty but I can imagine. I wanted to know if you were involved in any combat?

T. Dreberstade: Um, ya we were a, because we were a convoy security we were on the roads a lot. And because of that we were hit a lot with IED's or Improvised Explosive Devices, road side bombs. Um, that was probably the biggest thing over there. Seemed, I forget how many times we were hit, probably like in the 70's or 80's.

N. Drews: Really!

T. Dreberstade: [could not make out]

N. Drews: Like, hit, what do you mean by that?

T. Dreberstade: Hit by the like, saying we are driving down the road and something on the side of the road just blows up.

N. Drews: Wow.

T. Dreberstade: That's considered a hit. A lot of times they miss or if they do hit ya the are little enough it just spreads debris on the truck or whatever. But a couple times, um, it'll do damages.

N. Drews: What kind of trucks were you guys in?

T. Dreberstade: Um we were in, my group was in [cant get] humvie's, but the people who were driving the supply trucks were in like tractor trailer type trucks. With metal plating on them, so it gave them some kind of protection.

N. Drews: Ok, wow, um so in any of those instances were you guys had to deal with a little bit of the bombing and being hit, did you ever have to deal with somebody passing away or somebody being seriously injured?

T. Dreberstade: Um ya we had a couple of guys who've got severely injured. Um one guy who was burnt over 90% of his body and we had one guy that was a killed. So..

N. Drews: Wow. And how was that for you? When you had to deal with a death face to face?

T. Dreberstade: Um, it was ah, pretty upsetting because we were such a tied knit group. You know, we had been living with each other for about a year. To lose someone, especially, ah someone of, he was a higher ranking NCO um so that was difficult. Um, we got through it together because of our closeness to each other.

N. Drews: That's good. So it was a pleasant going home, so you said it felt pretty good.

N. Drews: That's good. So um, of course being far away you always want to be able to contact your family and friends. How often did you get a chance to do that?

T. Dreberstade: Ya, it was really nice to get, finally going back.

T. Dreberstade: Um we were lucky if we got to call home once every week. Sometimes we would get a chance to use the internet and drop a quick email, but then again that was just luck, um a lot of times you have so many people wanting for it you really don't have time to do it.

T. Dreberstade: Ya.

N. Drews: I heard there was long lines.

N. Drews: Was it an easy transition coming back home?

T. Dreberstade: Ya.

T. Dreberstade: No, not really. No, it was kinda difficult for me, just cause of that, like

N. Drews: Like when it was phone call day. They time, they haven't really experienced what you have so it was kinda difficult relating to them. So for a while there it was

T. Dreberstade: Ya and a lot of times the systems didn't work. Cause there like satellite up link whatever, was always a pain. But the chances we did get to talk to em it was nice. And plus my family and I wrote really frequently, so that was nice. um when you get

T. Dreberstade: Ya.

N. Drews: Oh good. Did you besides family did you have to leave like a girlfriend behind or very close friends?

T. Dreberstade: Ya I left a bunch of really close friends and a close girlfriend.

T. Dreberstade: Ya I left a bunch of really close friends and a close girlfriend.

N. Drews: Um, how did they do with you coming back?

T. Dreberstade: Um it was kinda weird coming back, because it seemed like I was coming back where I had just left off and a their a year and a half later in their lives, so that was kinda of.

T. Dreberstade: Not really.

N. Drews: Ya, I could see how that would be.. So you were there you said for a year and a half.

T. Dreberstade: Ya.

T. Dreberstade: Ya.

T. Dreberstade: Ya.

N. Drews: And when it was coming time for you to come home, was it an easy thing or were you kinda like waiting for a long time? Were you told the day you got to leave and you had to wait even longer then that? How did that work?

T. Dreberstade: Um it seemed like we were waiting a long time, but we were really only waiting about week or two. They told us a date that we possibly would be flying out on, they did not tell us an exact date. The said sometime in a week or two. So, felt like a long time but it really wasn't, there was guys who were waiting ya know a month. But your just sitting there doing nothing on a base so, it is not that bad. It is not like your out on the road. Thinking I could be going home here, so it is not that bad.

N. Drews: That's good. So it was a planned going home, so you said it felt pretty good,

really glad to be going home?

T. Dreberstadt: Ya, it was pretty nice to get, finally going back.

N. Drews: And you said that is was almost like time kinda stopped and you got home and everyone was on with their lives and you kinda had to rush.

T. Dreberstadt: Ya

N. Drews: Was it an easy transition coming back home?

T. Dreberstadt: No, not really. No, it was kinda difficult for me, just cause of that, like everyone has been going on with out you for a long time, they haven't really experienced what you have so it was kinda difficult relating to them. So for a while there is was pretty awkward.

N. Drews: Really? I could see how that would be. So then how long from when you got back did you end up here at MNU?

T. Dreberstadt: Um, about a, a half a year.

N. Drews: What did you do while you waited?

T. Dreberstadt: Um...I worked at night and took semester at a community college.

N. Drews: oh.. Alright... Is there anything you would like to share about your Iraq experience?

T. Dreberstadt: Not really.

N. Drews: Ok. Thank you for your time.