



THE KRITZBERG

of Alameda

An Awesome/ful Year



The Parthenon at High Noon



Beetles swarming on Crete



Sarah, enjoying Holland



Richie, enjoying a playground in Leyden

American magician David Blaine starves himself for 44 days while suspended above the River Thames. Go figure.



Gwendi, after session with makeup artist from "The Lion King" in London

Coming Soon:
IRAQ PORTFOLIO
on www.kritzberg.com



Bill, not really enjoying Iraq

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A modern windmill



Griffin guarding the gates of Westminster



Athens Metro (built by Bechtel)

A Year of Movements

– Peace and Otherwise



Dutch Bug

A YEAR of great tragedy and amazing success. Gross error and pinpoint accuracy. Bald-faced lies in high places, true grit in the desert. A year of huge loss and great opportunity.

A YEAR when Bill and Sarah decided “we’re mad as hell and we’re not going to take it anymore,” and joined millions of our fellow human beings in public demonstrations against what we viewed as an unwise, unnecessary, and eminently avoidable war.

A WAR that nevertheless came, and was considered a great success by those who thought it was a good idea in the first

place, proud of the fact that, after spending trillions of dollars to build the most powerful military ever seen, we can reliably whup any tin-pot dictator we choose.

And – *debunking the pundits who declared irony dead after 9/11* – this was **A YEAR** that took Bill to Iraq to work on reconstruction of the shattered and looted country... and later gave Sarah, Gwendi, and Richie a chance to tour Greece, England, and Holland with Bill.

A YEAR that finds Bill back from Iraq in time for the holidays, feeling more than usually thankful to be here!



We gather in the back yard before our first antiwar march

Travel Highlight: UK



After the Beefeater’s bloodthirsty tales during the Tower of London tour, Gwendi and Richie are suspicious of his grin

Our England-Holland adventure began at London’s Heathrow Airport, where the four of us converged from Alameda and Baghdad at the end of September. Trains are a viable form of public transportation in the UK (unlike the US), so we take the rails from the airport to London, then Northampton, and then Nottingham on our second day. Nottingham has been a center of influence for thousands of years, and saw much action during the Robin Hood (13th Cent.)

days and English Civil Wars (1640s). Next we visited York (an important Viking trading center in the 900s), including York cathedral, one of the largest gothic structures in Europe. Another charming feature of York are walks along its medieval city walls, still intact and accessible for miles of their length.



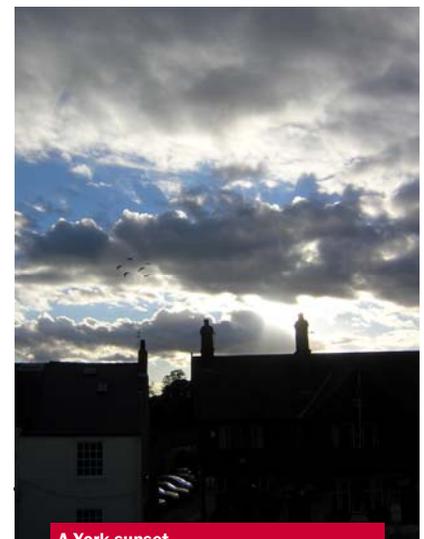
Sarah lounges comfortably between the paws of one of the four lions guarding Trafalgar Square

Q: Why all this travel ?

A: International assignments like Iraq have a 70-hour work week: 10 hours a day, 7 days a week. After 8 weeks of this, you get 2 weeks off. We decided to turn these R&R weeks into world tours.

From York we went to Newcastle to board the ferry to Amsterdam (see story, right).

Upon our return several days later, we tried to see all of London, making it to Trafalgar Square, the Tower of London, the National Theatre Museum, the Natural History Museum, boating on the Thames, being busked in Covent Garden, climbing all over 6 generations of buses in the Transport Museum, walking across Tower Bridge, and wandering the West End theatre district.



A York sunset

Travel Highlight: Greece

Greece and the study of antiquities was our first Iraq-facilitated jaunt, and Bill arrived at Athens airport a little frazzled from his first 2-month cycle in-country. We set off to see the sites, finding the Acropolis and Parthenon to be just as huge and impressive in real life as they are in the movies.

Shopping in the Placa, an “old town area,” enhanced our tour, as did the War Museum



Sarah, gazing at the glory that was ancient Minos

attractions of the place included the swarms of beetles and cicadas that gave Gwendi & Richie an endless supply of things to chase.

We also went to Minos, of Minotaur fame, the city Plato may have thought was Atlantis. The notable thing about these major cities of antiquity is that they were very small (Greater Minos including suburbs was about 20,000 people), what we would call towns today.

We left Crete and split up in Athens, Bill back to Iraq and Sarah and the kids to the USA.



Noble Greek Whatsisname being shown no courtesy by an avian critic

and the with some rather disturbing variations on the human form. We took a day trip to Mykinos (aka Mycenae), a city that dominated the Greek plateau in late Bronze Age times.

Next we made a major relocation – by ferry – to Crete, where we installed ourselves in the Miramar Hotel Apartments, with its 3 swimming pools, free breakfast, and location less than 100 yards from the ocean. Special



Asleep on a Mycenaean bed?

Travel Highlight: the Netherlands

Arriving by ferry from Newcastle (and cleverly avoiding loss of touring days by sleeping while traveling), we based ourselves in Leyden (a part of the urban triangle whose other anchors are Utrecht and Amsterdam) and spent our first day wandering along the canals and alleys of Leyden.

Training to Amsterdam daily, we next went to the Rijksmuseum to look at more famous paintings than I ever seen in any one place, took a boat tour of the extensive canal system, and visited Nemo, a children's science playground (much like the Exploratorium in San Francisco, for those who are familiar with it). Nemo is built on a subma-

rine theme and most of the exhibits/workstations are water-related.

Many in the family think the high point of the trip was our bicycle excursion into the countryside, a 30 km ride we took following only a leaflet. It was great – we cycled through farms, gardens, villages, past flocks of swans feeding in a side canal, ate tradi-



Bill on the lookout on the canal

tional Dutch pancakes in a little restaurant you only can find by bike, wandered the back streets of Amsterdam's suburbs, and rode on top of the dikes, noticing how much higher the water was on one side than the land was on the other!



Along the grand canal in Leyden – a scene crying out for someone to paint it



AMSTERDAM – city of bicycles

This is a very interesting time to tour Europe as an American. I certainly got an earful about our foreign policies from local people



Bill providing too much information in response to Richie's question



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Secret of Teleportation Revealed

- One of the dangers of working in Iraq (or living there, for that matter) is what they call "UXO" – unexploded ordnance. After three wars in 25 years, the place is littered with live bombs, rockets, and missiles of every description and age. This doesn't even count the hundreds of unguarded munitions depots and caches all over the country, where the bad guys like to shop for new weaponry – in bulk.



- Obviously, caution is the watchword here. Work sites are cleared by EOD (explosive ordnance disposal) experts before engineers and construction teams go in.

I levitated about 4 feet, turned around in mid-air à la Keanu Reeves, and teleported a full 10 feet, landing at a dead run. This is not easy wearing 40 pounds of armored vest and helmet. Helpfully, a nearby officer yelled "run away!" which I tartly informed him I was already doing.

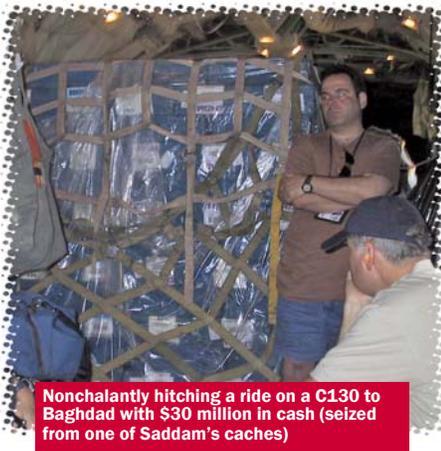
- So there I was at the Tikrit Bridge, in Saddam Hussein's hometown, being very careful indeed (see photo below). The site was under the control of the 1st Infantry Division, and soldiers provided perimeter security while the engineering team examined the shattered structure.

As it turned out, the site's perimeter was ringed by tripwire-activated flares (photo above) to prevent infiltration at night, and I had set off one of these. Between gales of laughter, the troops were very apologetic about not warning us.

- Making my way over to the upstream side of the bridge, eyes fixed on its underside, I felt a slight tug at my ankle. Suddenly a bright flash erupted right in front of me.

Just another day in Iraq.

IRAQ: A Snapshot Gallery



Nonchalantly hitching a ride on a C130 to Baghdad with \$30 million in cash (seized from one of Saddam's caches)



The despot's chair



Spectacularly destroyed Al Fathah Railway Bridge



Bill inspecting the Tikrit Bridge along with the Army Corps of Engineers



Babylon over open sights



Saddam's secret weapon (not WMD)