

SHARON D. ALLEN

Lost in Translation

We work with a lot of Turks and Iraqis, especially Kurds. I wish that every deployed soldier had a chance to meet them because they are very different from the Arabs to the south. The Kurds love us.

I started to learn Kurdish to keep score in volleyball. Eventually I learned about two hundred words and phrases, but it wasn't so easy because they have sounds Americans can't pronounce. They can't say "left" or "six" for some reason, so I guess we're even.

One of our guys brought this guitar around to the guard shacks and played some American music for them. Note to Enrique Iglesias: Iraqis know you. For what it's worth, you rank right up there with Michael Jackson, Madonna, and Shakira.

Sometimes they'd try to join in. You haven't lived until you've seen a bunch of Iraqi soldiers, complete with AK-47s, sitting around and singing with gusto as they mangle the Beatles' "Let It Be."

In times of trouble, mother Mary comes to me, speaking words of wisdom . . . Little Pea."

They really got into it.

Little Pea, Little PEA! Little Pea, yeah, Little Pea . . . Whisper words of wisdom, Little Pea.

It was a good day.