



Geography

Iraq is a country with a difficult terrain and quickly changing weather. The terrain is one of mountains, desert, and marshlands.

Marshes are found along the Iranian border in the south with large flooded areas, and mountains line the borders of Iran and Turkey. Iraq is mostly desert with mild to cool winters with dry, hot, cloudless summers.

“You wouldn’t believe how quick the temperature changes. During the day you’ll be sweating, and at night you’ll think you’re going to freeze,” said Donald Strickland, veteran of the Gulf War.

In the northern mountainous regions of Iran and Turkey, locals experience extremely cold winters. The winters have extremely heavy snows which cause major flooding in the spring. Iraq is 437,072 square kilometers. To get a mental picture of the size, Iraq is slightly larger than twice the size of Idaho. The

coastline stretches approximately 58 kilometers.

Iraq is known for its natural resources of natural gas, phosphates, sulfur, and petroleum.

Family life

Family life can be full of tension and drama, but being part of a military family only adds to the stressful atmosphere. The military does its best to aid in the stress that family members may endure while their loved ones are serving their country.

440th Air Reserves Billy Mitchel Field Air Force Base in Milwaukee, Wis. provides information, assistance and support to the approximate 1400 families in their unit.

According to Angela Pedersen, Director of Family Support at the 440th Air Reserves Billy Mitchel Field Air Force Base, separation from family members is challenging, especially for children.

Members of the reserve are committed to working

one weekend a month at the base and a two week long tour to destinations halfway around the world, plus whatever other time is spent away from home at the base.

“It’s a very stressful time,” said Pedersen.

Age appropriate packets are sent out to people who may be affected by the absence of a loved one.

The different support groups meet to provide comfort for one another and to learn how to deal with the added stress caused by an estranged family. There are different types of classes depending on the needs of the people in the area, and the location of people.

Students enlist

Everyday Antioch Community High School students are given the option to say the pledge. However, to those students who have chosen to enlist in the armed forces the pledge has taken on a whole new meaning.

“I always saw the pledge as something right to do, but now that I’m enlisting in the Air Force and our country is taking military action in Iraq I say it loud and proud,” said P.J. Reasons, ACHS junior.

According to James Phibs, who works with the administration of the Navy Chicago recruiting, there has been a large increase in the amount of people enlisting since the events of Sept. 11, 2001. Since the Iraq campaign, the amount of students enlisting had increased with an even larger force.

“I worry a little, but I still feel the same as the day I enlisted with the Marines. The war has not changed my mind,” said William Cree, ACHS senior.

According to Phibs, when someone is in their country’s armed forces, it’s a normal job, though they are always training for the day their country will call them to service.

“If my country needs me, I’m there ready to do whatever asked,” said Michael Fair, ACHS senior that enlisted in the Air Force.

Though the military action is taking place overseas, the war is closer than Americans may realize.

