

Poetry

Pilgrim Nurses

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Australia sent the call, for twenty in all -
A med team to Iraq should be flown.
To an air force strip, in the great sand pit
Near where the Garden of Eden had grown.

It was all "edge of seat" stuff – we were given the heads up
As to roughly where we were going.
For what we knew to be true, was that there had
been a huge "blue"
And the conflict was now largely growing.
The day came and went, when finally sent
To this land of war and car-bombings.
With heart-wrenching goodbyes, and tears in our eyes
We bid farewell to our loved ones...left sobbing
I'll bet we were a sight when we arrived on our flight
Dressed in Kevlar, weapon and webbing.
The obvious jetlag, plus the flight from Baghdad
Was nothing to the heat we were dreading.



At 50 degrees (that's Celsius please!)
We felt like a steak on the Barby.
With not a cloud in the sky, our tongues dusty and dry
And only warm bottled water to drink in the army.

When up came the shout, that we were about
To be driven to our accommodation.
Dusty tents and trailers we saw - some hundreds maybe more
Were arranged in perfect formation.

The trailers, so neat, were a shelter from the heat
And air conditioning? Well, a surprise and a blessing.
Our US neighbours we met, were friendly and yet
For some, it might have seemed depressing.

For the base here you see, was not as safe as could be
As the insurgents were giving their best
Mortar rounds were-a-falling, BEFORE alarms were calling
And we'd figured this'd be a tough test.

To the hospital tent, we courageously went
To start in our new place of employment.
A trauma unit you see, with theatres times three,
And one ER – no place of enjoyment.

Here, the broken and twisted, of men who enlisted
To fight for Iraq's freedom and peace
Were rushed through the doors - their blood on the floors
At times their numbers seemed never to cease.

The med. teams worked long, and we tried to keep strong
To help these poor souls who were broken.
For the war they'd been fighting and the trauma we'd been
righting

Had always seemed far from token



We had no control, over the forces that moulded
The events that occurred here some days.
But to continue to care for the man or woman in despair
Gave us more honour than we care to say.

There's too the survival in war, and of courage that tore
At the heart of we nurses who listened.
It made us humbled and proud, to be chosen-allowed
And calmed those who seemed enraged and tight-fisted

The best we could do is what we were trained to do
From this we never ventured or strayed.
And from the command we've been given to Love
God and the living
This gave us purpose each day.

But the time has now come for most to go home
And make way for a new wave of carers.
There'll be homecomings and hugs, tears and some shrugs
For us all who have been the flag bearers.

There are some things that I, won't miss at goodbye
"Porta- Potties" and "Code Reds" spring to mind
The dust too- like a shroud, and the Helos - so loud!
I'm glad to be leaving behind

So, with a tear in our eyes, we Aussies say "goodbye"
To "ya'll" who have worked by our side
Our time here has been an adventure, it seems
And has filled these Pilgrim Nurses with pride.

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