



(U) Questions About Deploying? Here Are Some Answers

FROM: the Expeditionary Group/ National Intelligence Support Team Office
(S1421)
Unknown
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(U//FOUO) Here's a Q&A about what you can expect when you volunteer for a tour at a CST or CSG* in the Middle East...*

(U//FOUO) How does the NIST Branch support the CSTs and CSGs?

- (U//FOUO) The NIST Branch provides the training and the personnel that deploy to the CSTs and CSGs.

(S//REL) Where are the CSGs and CSTs that are supporting the Global War on Terrorism located?

- (S//REL) They are located throughout Iraq, Afghanistan, Qatar, and the Horn of Africa. Specific cities include: Balad, Mosul, Tikrit, Baghdad, and Babil in Iraq, Bagram and Kabul in Afghanistan, Doha in Qatar, and Djibouti in the Horn of Africa.

(U) What kind of people would I be working with?

- (S//REL) Your CSG/CST colleagues may be civilians or military from any of the military services:
 - On a CST, you will be part of a team of 4 people. You will support and work directly with tactical-level U.S. military personnel.
 - CSGs are typically composed of 8-10 personnel, and support higher-level, headquarters elements. You will likely interact with senior officers.

(U) Are there people from other intel agencies at these locations, too?

- (S//REL) Yes, there are people from other agencies, such as from DIA or CIA.

(U) What are living accommodations like?

- (U) They vary. Personnel may live in tents or trailers, and in some cases we occupy palaces!

(U) I'm a civilian. Do I have to wear a uniform?

- (U//FOUO) Yes, in all areas but Kabul, where casual dress is appropriate.

(U) What do I need to bring?

- (U//FOUO) Your TA-50 gear, which consists of 2 pairs of combat boots; socks; 4 sets of DCUs (Desert Combat Uniform); 2 hats; shoulder, side and leg holsters for your 9mm; safety glasses; Kevlar with inserts; helmet; 2 flashlights, 1 overcoat, NBC gear (full set of nuclear, biological, chemical warfare protection outfit); anti-radiation medication; under-armor shirts; 3 duffle bags (2 with rollers); as well as personal hygiene items. You may also bring entertainment items such as books, personal computers, game systems,

etc...

(U) Are there showers?

- (U) Yes

(U) Will I have free time, and what activities are available to keep me occupied?

- (U) You will have very little free time. However, they do have MWR gyms, a PX (a post store) and the bazaar (local market place located on base).

(U) How hot is it really?

- (U) Some days have reached into the 120's in Iraq, while Afghanistan reaches the 100's. In the winter however, it gets down into the 20's.

(U) How dirty is it really?

- (U) It depends on the location, but generally there is a lot of dust in the air. On occasion there have been sand storms reported. It gets pretty muddy after a good rain.

(U) Where and what would I eat?

- (U) All the locations have chow halls. Baghdad also has Burger King, Popeye's, Pizza Hut, Subway and Cinnabon.

(U//FOUO) What percentage of deployers are women?

- (U//FOUO) About 20%.

(U) What's it like being a woman in the Middle Eastern culture?

- (U) It is fine as long as you adhere to their standards. A female cannot wear sleeveless tops or shorts. If you respect their ways, they should respect you.

(U//FOUO) What's the civilian-to-military ratio of SIGINTers?

- (U//FOUO) About 1 civilian to every 8 military members.

(U) How will I keep in touch with my family?

- (U) In addition to having regular U.S. postal service, the bases have internet cafes that are free, morale calls are available, and they also sell calling cards at the PX.

(U) Can I use my cell phone?

- (U) Only if you have a GSM provider.

(U) Is there any opportunity for R and R , so that I could meet up with my family in Europe?

- (U) No, you won't have the opportunity to take a vacation during a 90-120 day deployment.

(U) Will my family know where I am?

- (S//REL) Yes, once you have arrived you will be able to inform your family of your general location (country/region), but your specific location cannot be disclosed. However, you will travel with a "cover."

(U) What are the medical requirements for people interested in deploying?

- (U//FOUO) A person has to pass a worldwide deployable physical and psychological evaluation.

(U//FOUO) What are the medical facilities at the CST locations?

- (U//FOUO) They are either tents or buildings, relatively close to the living quarters.

(U) What's this about weapons training?

- (U//FOUO) A person is required to become qualified on the M-9 pistol and the M-16 or M-4 rifle. Training lasts 4 days.

(U) What do I have to learn?

- (S//REL) All personnel who commit to a deployment through the Expeditionary Group/NIST will receive the following top-notch training: 2.5 weeks of GEO Bootcamp, AOR-specific office visits, 2-3 weeks of analyst training in the MOC/HAC/CT Product line, as well as various computer-based training courses. In addition to the previous, Officers-in-Charge (OICs) will receive: OIC training in GEOCELL, and a TDY trip to CENTCOM Tampa and NSA/CSS Georgia.

(U) Will I carry a weapon when I'm there?

- (U) Yes, all the time.

(U//FOUO) Have any NSA deployers had to use their weapon?

- (U) Not to our knowledge.

(U) What's the work environment like?

- (U) It is an exciting, fast-paced environment. You'll always be busy!

(U) Will I have a desk?

- (U) Normally, yes.

(S//REL) Will I have a computer with NSANet access?

- (U) Yes.

(U//FOUO) I'd like to talk to someone who's already deployed to a CST. Can you connect me with someone?

- (S//REL) Yes, all deployment locations have secure NSTS lines, and we can arrange for you to speak with someone.

(U) What is available regarding "culture training"? Tell me more about that.

- (U//FOUO) Volunteers who are training to deploy will attend a "Hostile Area Pre-Deployment" briefing. Within this course, culture training is covered. This is 3.5-hour course that covers general culture issues, customs and courtesies.

(U) What does deployment to a CST do to my career progression?

- (S//REL) It gives a person a thorough understanding of how tactical SIGINT supports the war fighter in a joint environment - this is great experience for many SIGINT jobs.

(U) Regarding my promotability, will it hurt me to be out-of-sight, out-of-mind for several months?

- (U//FOUO) NSA and SID leadership have expressed its strong support for these deployments.

(U) My supervisor tells me that this would be a bad move. True?

- (U//FOUO) False! Almost all deployers are thrilled by the experience and return with the hope of deploying again in the near future.

(U) Baghdad

*(U) Notes:

CST = Cryptologic Support Team

CSG = Cryptologic Services Group

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