

I STRIKE Soldiers spend quality time with Stephen Colbert in Iraq

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The Soldiers and Sailors of the I-Strike Battalion, 3-3 ADA are deployed throughout Iraq ensuring the safety of coalition forces from the threat of enemy indirect fires. The requirements of this mission allow little time for the troops to relax and unwind amidst the harsh realities of combat, and the opportunity to “tune-out” for a few hours and have a laugh is something that everyone looks forward to. When the announcement was made that the “Colbert Report” was planning to tape shows at the Victory Base Complex in

Baghdad, Iraq, the Soldiers and Sailors of TF 3-3 ADA lined up to ensure they were represented.

Mr. Colbert’s visit to Iraq was a joint effort between the USO and the Comedy Central network. In interviews made with the media prior to his arrival in Iraq, Mr. Colbert stated that he wanted to visit Iraq to keep OIF in the American consciousness. In addition to taping four shows, Mr. Colbert also went to multiple locations in Baghdad to meet with Servicemembers and share some of his famous comedy. When initial coordination for Mr. Colbert to tour one of the C-RAM sites fell through, the Colbert Report staff provided key personnel inside 3-3 ADA with VIP tickets and backstage passes.

The first taping of the Colbert Report was on June 7th and the Task Force was well represented throughout the audience. Mr. Colbert spoke with the audience prior to the taping and showed that the “real” Steven Colbert is a patriotic and thinking American, while his TV Persona is a little less grounded in fact and reason. As soon as the show began, Colbert walked out on stage in an ACU pattern suit, Golf Club and baseball hat in an homage to USO great Bob Hope. Throughout the taping the audience was treated to video messages from John McCain and the Honorable Mr. Barack Obama. General Odierno was the guest of the first show and treated Mr. Colbert to a free, US Army regulation haircut.

After the show a few members of the Task Force were taken backstage to meet with Mr. Colbert and had a good discussion on the C-RAM mission, Soldiering and the great morale of the Task Force. Mr. Colbert spoke with each Soldier individually, and noted when shaking hands with CPT Snyder that “...you guys really work out a lot”.