

Division 3's Randy Montes is Happy to be Home from Military Duty

By LISA HUYNH

(July 11, 2003) Back home and out of uniform, North Los Angeles Division 3 Operator Randy Montes – a Marine Corps reservist – is relieved to have made it home safely from Iraq.

The journey wasn't easy, though. The 33-year-old lance corporal says it was frustrating, scary and boring at times.

"I was very homesick, says Montes. "I missed my friends and family. I also missed being an operator. It feels so good to be back."

After learning that Montes would be called to duty in early February, Division 3 operators Teresa Love and Pablo Riveros made "care packages" to show their love and support for their co-worker. [See metro.net report July 11, 2003 > Care Packages](#)

"I didn't receive any of the packages until after the war," says Montes. "But when I found out, it felt really good. I love my friends."

Montes and his platoon first arrived in Kuwait and eventually made their way to various parts of Iraq. Their mission included providing security and raiding military compounds.

One of Montes' least favorite things was the unpredictable weather condition. "We dealt with rain, sand storms and really hot temperatures. The shade would be 120 degrees."

The war has made Montes appreciate life even more. "Material things are not important to me anymore. My brother damaged my truck recently, but it didn't bother me. You can't replace the people you love."

Looking back at his experiences, Montes says he would do it all over again to protect his family and friends.

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Division 3 Operator Randy Montes at a military compound in Iraq. Below, Lance Corporal Montes - a Marine Corps Reservist - with comrades Justin Fleming, Gus Ramos and Jay Partida.

