

MOROCCO

2004

I have corresponded with Aziz Benlayachi since our work in 1999. Many is the time that he has asked me to come to Basra to visit with him and his family. Either the shortage of money, or the abundance of work has prevented me from going. Until now!

Thank you, Cynthia!

September 10th

Evening ~ clear, 65 degrees, I am at George and Natalie's home in Naugatuck, CT. I drove my pick-up truck down today on the 1st leg of my journey. Dinner was a grinder from Nardelli's - a welcome change from the typical pizza joint food. Natalie's ultra-sound revealed that their 2nd child is a boy! The circle continues! Don started the front half of the barn roof today.

All is well~ Thank you!

September 11th

@ 7 A.M. ~ clear 60 degrees in Naugatuck, CT ~ Breakfast - omelet, muffin and coffee~ I called Nancy

@ Noon ~ Lunch was the last 3rd of last night's grinder. George drove me to Waterbury Transportation Center for Connecticut Limo Service to JFK.

@ 3:30 P.M. ~ I'm checked in @JFK ~ a bumpy ride from Waterbury; the limo service is a small bus, that weaves in and out of traffic! - At the Air Maroc ticket desk, the supervisor asked for my pre-printed ticket - he read it - then informed me the flight was cancelled until Monday! His quick broad smile let me know of his joke! The New York skyline is visible from the west side of Terminal #1. I've seen the Empire State Building

@ 4:45 P.M. ~ I placed a quick call to Nancy, just to re-assure her that all will be well. I had a small something to eat from a vendor in the upper lounge.

September 12th

@ 8 A.M. ~ Casablanca 72 degrees; I am having coffee with Aziz at airport. The plane landed at about 6:30, and we cleared customs in a flash. Seeing Aziz after 5 years is as if it were yesterday! We both had our concerns that we would not recognize each other.

@ 10:30 A.M. ~ I'm on the train from Casablanca to Rabat and Sale', 55 DH for each one. There is a train station in the airport, that connects to all destinations, in Morocco.



This morning, we visited with Aziz's Uncle Kacem, who lives in Sale'. His home is spotlessly clean, with all of the modern conveniences. It has the most beautiful ceiling decorations. We had mint tea and a delicious lunch of small, fried fish, cooked onions with raisins, vegetable tagine, and krone. Kacem noticed that I was having difficulty removing the bones from the fish, so he showed me.



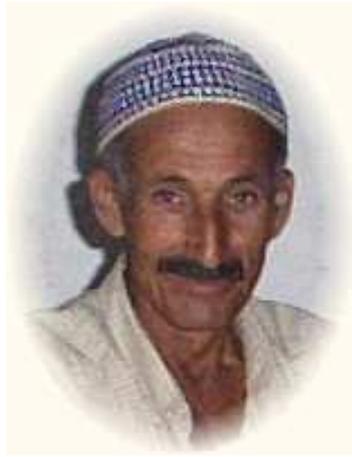
Kacem has a big family.

We then walked a short distance to Uncle Ahmed's, where we had tea. By about 3pm, we had ridden the bus to Souk Al-Arba for 50 DH each. The bus was crowded, and dirty, but leaves on time.

In Souk Al-Arba we found a taxi ride to Basra for 25 DH's each. The typical taxi is a late model Mercedes, in somewhat need of repairs. When the taxi has the compulsory 5 passengers, it departs for its destination; it has no schedule! The cost per passenger is based on the distance to the destination. The ride is not for the faint of heart, as it is fast, no seatbelts, and passing is done with what seems as, no regard.

@8 P.M. ~ Lt. Rain ~ I am now In Jaouna el Basra ~
I feel at ease and at home.

Aziz's Family



Alami



Fatima



Aziz



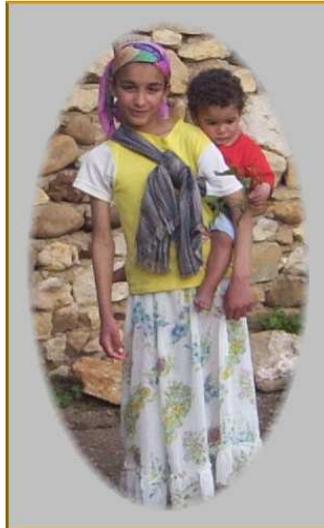
Touria



Mohamed



Zohra & Siham, 2006



Leila & Siham, 2006



Abderrahim



Hanan & the new baby, 2004

September 13th, Monday

@ Noon ~ 80 degrees ~ There have been many good changes in Basra and the village -many new homes, and all of Basra now has electricity. And they receive a monthly electric bill! Progress has it's price.

Aziz and I walked to "The Village of Srafah". We took a taxi from the village to Souk el-Arba to cash two travelers checks for \$200. Wafa Bank would not cash them, so we went to BMCE Bank. At a nearby cafe', I had a coffee and Aziz had Lemonade and a Coca Cola.

We rode the bus from Souk Al-Arba back to Basra for 200 DH's. Last night for supper, we had yellow rice in oil with tomatoes & onion, cooked by Aziz's sister's Touria. Alami joined us for supper. Today for breakfast, we had tea, Millwe and cookies. Also prepared by Touria. For lunch we ate small, fried fish and melon and krone. I cannot decide who is the better cook ~ Fatima or Touria! My apologies to Fatima!



Jaouna el Basra



September 14th, Tuesday

@ 3:30 P.M. ~ Sunny and breezy!

Last night for dinner, we had various fruits, potatoes, chicken Tagine and green grapes for dessert. We watched T.V. news and "Charmed 2" movie. I telephoned Nancy- she is well but cold ~ 40 degrees (5 degrees C) today, at home!

This morning, I slept until 8:30 a.m. For breakfast, we had coffee with milk and bread (Krone) and cookies. The man who counts for the census was here during breakfast. He is also the schoolteacher for Basra.



Taking the Census



Srafah

@ 7:20 P.M. ~ Aziz and I walked to Srafah (The village) with Abderrahim (Abdo). It was like walking with my sons when they were little. He is so very happy and smiles with his eyes! I carried him on my shoulders for a while! I think he is still a little afraid of me. A man gave us a ride in his new Mercedes. Although he is originally from the north, he has built a home on a hill S/W of Basra, under the electric wires. He has built a fence of barbwire along his entire boundary. Aziz explained to him that I am a surveyor from America, and told him about the Basra survey. I felt important, so I gave him one of my white business cards. We mailed the 6 postcards for 60 DH, each. We walked past the Gendarmerie, who were busy checking vehicles. Perhaps my registration with the Consulate in Rabat was a good thing to do, because they barely glanced our way. We had tea, boiled egg, and krone for the before dinner meal.

@9:30 P.M. ~ our dinner was meat and sferzla and krone! I am very full- the dinner was very good. Aziz accompanied me to the toilet, because the dogs are not used to me yet. I could not see anything. Aziz asked me, "why are you walking so slow." I told him "because I can not see in the dark." He turned me towards the tree and asked me if I could see his brother. No! His brother responded with 'Hello Jim". Aziz and his family are able to see in the dark! When I need a flashlight!
All is well, thank You!

Al Basra's South Hill



September 15th, Wednesday

@9:15 P.M. Dark ~ I did not sleep well last night. But well enough! This morning after "Spanish coffee" prepared by Fatima we went to Milodat to visit Hanan and her new baby - many photographs. Milodat is a village, a bit smaller than Basra, about 5 KM east.

We then flagged down a small bus, which we rode to Souk Al-Arba. There was an argument on the bus between a few of the men. Aziz chose not to explain it to me. I suspect it was because of overcrowding, and the cost of the ride.

We visited with Aziz's uncle Farid, and his family. We watched a video of his wedding, which was 3 weeks ago. Then had lunch of small roasted fish, salad, kroun and eggplant.

Farid is a most gracious host - he picked the bones out of the fish for me. I still have not learned how.

Farid owns a small store, which he proudly showed me.

Aziz, Farid and I walked around much of Souk Al-Arba - there is much to see, though little to do - we stopped at Cafe Dubois - I had coffee, Aziz had coke, and Farid had Fanta.

We went back to the taxi stand about 6:30, and waited quite a long while for Aziz to find a taxi willing to bring us to Basra, this late in the day. The driver had us wait in the car while he went to the market. It was full dark when we started for Basra. Shake! Rattle! And one low beam! Fortunately both high beams worked. Fatima served tea and cookies, when we returned. Then yellow rice with meat. I was still full from lunch! Last night, Aziz told me much about Islam that I had no idea of. He explained numerous passages from the Quran and some of the most important instructions. All of Aziz's family is very understanding of my lack of culture knowledge.

All is well!

September 16th



Aziz & Mohamed

@ 8:30 A.M. ~ Beautiful sunshine

I had breakfast with Mohamed (Aziz's brother), Tea, egg and harsha. Zohra prepared the meal. Mohamed showed me his entire home, that he has built. He is able to do many things: make charcoal, build a stable, farming.

(I telephoned Nancy at 7:20a.m.)

@ 7:45 P.M. ~ Dark, cool, new moon. In September, the second day of the new moon is Shaaban. We have just returned from Ouazzane, which is about 30 km N/E.

The ride to Ouazzane was enjoyable - normal speed for a bus and I had a window seat. The road to Ouazzane is more winding but also more vegetation. Steep hillsides, some rugged out crops of rock, numerous groves and pine trees. As we came upon the city, my first impression was that the city seems to be cleaner than some portions of Souk Al-Arba.

After walking around the city, my conclusion is it may be much worse. It is certainly more crowded. I had Nescafe and Aziz had a lemonade soda at a cafe. Then we walked around the shops, looking for a green and white Tagiya - knitted hat without bill ~ like a stocking hat. The ride home was by taxi. It was in better condition than last night's taxi. Finding a taxi is not easy! 20 DH each. For lunch today, Fatima prepared roasted eggplant, roasted green peppers, fried egg and French fries and also a tomato relish-kind of like stew tomatoes but much better and melon, harsha and kroun. For supper- after tea and cookies - we had yellow rice. I think it was better than yesterday. My "system" is adjusting well thanks to the care of Fatima. I suggested to Alami that he and I should go to Moulay Bouselham to swim in the ocean - Aziz can watch the cows and sheep! He smiled.

All is well!

September 17th, Friday

@9:10 A.M. ~ Sunny and bright, quite warm. I've washed, shaved and eaten breakfast: Tea, a small plate with olive oil that was pressed from olives Aziz has grown, harsha, cookies & egg. Aziz has given me a wonderful gift of a new Tagiya, my favorite color green, and white! No wonder he didn't look too hard for one yesterday.



Aziz's home has walls of pure white; 4" diameter poles that are alternately painted red or green supports the ceiling of bamboo stalks. There are 2 windows, about 30" square, that open into the room. The doorway is centered between the windows, with a metal door that can be locked. A curtain covers the doorway, when occupied. His home is very clean as though no one lives there. Aziz's family has 2 dogs, Bebi 1 and Bebi 2- the dogs are not kept as pets and not allowed into the home. Dogs are only for hunting and for guards. Bebi 2 was injured by a boar while hunting in the forest, with Aziz and many men. The forest is N-NW of Basra.

"Flying crickets" They are just like flying grasshoppers, but black like crickets.

@ 11:45 A.M ~ each day starts with cool bright sunshine- the temperature climbs quickly. Today I'm guessing that it's near 90 degrees - a breeze has started. As most days the breeze will cool the air. I must remember to drink more water. Touria has just finished washing my clothes - Aziz says she does not mind - she works very hard alongside of Fatima all day. When it's dark, before dawn, I hear Alami, Fatima, and Touria start their chores. They will continue until well after it is dark - a very long day.

@ 10 P.M. ~ Today is the Sabbath- noon prayers are attended by all men- the service is on loud speakers for all to hear. Lunch was potato and chicken, harsha, kroun, and melon. Alami insisted that I eat more- I asked Aziz if all Americans have such a difficult time learning to eat without utensils, or just me? It's just me! After a nap, Aziz and I went to Souk Al-Arba so I could cash the rest of my travel checks. We went to a Cafe - then to Farid's store - tea and a nice visit. On the walk back to the taxi station, we stopped at a cafe'. Aziz, Farid and I had kafta / red-onions, kroun and tea. Then back to Basra by taxi after dark. Fatima had made coffee and served cookies and melon- Alami wants me to eat more!

When Aziz went to pray, Alami, Fatima, Touria, and I tried to visit- we all laughed at my lack of understanding! Even with the use of an Arabic dictionary I could not understand- but it is ok-

All is well!



Touria on her way to get water



Alami & Abdo

September 18th, Saturday

@ 3 P.M. ~ Hot 90 degrees ~ I am alone at the house! It is good to be trusted. Tea and harsha for breakfast-eating little-6 BM's so far today. I went with Mohamed to the village for Sidi Ali (bottled water)- we walked thru the fields rather than the road. On the way I was re-united with 4 of the workmen from 1999 - "the night watchman" - it is good to be remembered! Then by taxi to Zohra's family where they are having a wedding. I met everyone! Tea and cookies!



Dancing at the Wedding

Back to Aziz's for lunch: Yellow potato/chicken, small bite sized pieces of goat, seasoned deliciously by Touria! On the walk back with Mohamed, he told me about "the man" whom I gave my white business card to. I think I should not have given him my card! Aziz has brought the cows to pasture- all other members of the family are at the ceremony to name the new baby.

@4p.m. Aziz made coffee- then we went to get the sheep. They were 'lost' but they came when Aziz called them! I watched the house while Aziz went for the cows.



On the south hill, looking southerly for the sheep

September 21st, 4 A.M. Naugatuck Ct.~

(Remembering due to lack of convenient times to write)

September 18th, evening: Aziz called around and got a taxi for tomorrow morning. Then he made dinner of Harsha (flat, round, corn meal, unleavened bread) coffee and some gooey stuff made from grated tomatoes, oil and maybe cheese or partially cooked egg whites. He did not eat due to upset stomach - I think he got what I had - some TV time and to bed.

September 19th

We had eaten and I had washed by 8:15 a.m.

At about 10 a.m. Aziz went to call about the taxi. It's long overdue. Touria and Alami have come back from the celebration- they and I are just hanging around waiting.

@ 10:25 ~ **Bousselham Chakí** arrived by foot. No small task for a man of his age - white head wrap, sport coat over the shoulders, black shoes and a cane! We greeted each other warmly and sat for a bit! At 10:30 the taxi arrived-"all things have a purpose"!

An elderly woman, a young woman, a boy about 15, Aziz and I, and 4 bound live chickens in the trunk departed Basra for Sale'. On the way I napped - as we approached each checkpoint we had to "put on our seat belts-pull it across the body and sit on the top end because it didn't have a buckle. It was a more relaxing ride than most. Around 1:30 we arrived at Uncle Kacem's home- uncle Kacem wears black framed, very thick glasses. I suspect he has only one good eye as one is surrounded by green oozy stuff. Uncle Kacem, his son Ishmael, and I went to Rabat by bus- we walked to the King's Mosque.



Ishmael

Then by ferry boat across the river which separates Sale' from Rabat. The boats are about 15-20' long; wide enough to allow seating on both sides and is rowed by the owner. We stopped at a cafe- Kacem and I had tea and Ishmael had "Fanta". A long walk back to the bus stop- Kacem limped due to a prior sprain of his left ankle- he didn't look too bad to me. Much lively discussion with his family while eating steamed white rice/ milk for dinner- more tea! Kacem reviewed all the photos of the past week- I took a short walk with Yacine, Kacem's son while Aziz went outside to call around for a taxi to take us to the airport in the morning. Success- a taxi will be here at about 5 A.M. Off to sleep about 11:00.

September 20th

I woke to the call to prayers around 4 A.M. The yowling cat kept me awake most of the night. - The taxi arrived while I was washing and getting dressed. The taxi was by far the best one - all decked out with beads hanging from the windshield, a dashboard cover and curtains on the side and rear windows. We left Kacem's at 5A.M. and arrived at airport at 6:30. In the cafe, we had coffee and little talk! Both lost in thought. Check-in started at 8:30- everyone mulling around, jockeying for position in 7 lines. I was #2 in line # 7 when it, and line 6 were closed! I suspect for a coffee break! Much yelling broke out- the police were called to re-establish order! They set up one isle with those retractable straps and then the luggage inspection started. All passengers had to form a single line to have the baggage inspected prior to check-in! The whole process was a nightmare- by 10A.M. Aziz and I had our final coffee and our goodbyes. I started the processing thru customs. 2 more inspections and 2- passport checks- then onto the plane. (My batteries were confiscated and I received a pat down!) The plane ride was boring! Again, I decided not to eat due to the amount of gas it would create. We arrived at JFK on time- the ride was smooth but noisy due to the number of children.

4:45 P.M.- The Ct Limo Service turned out to be a regular city bus owned by Ct limo, that made frequent stops, including one at LaGuardia Airport. The ride was 3 hours long. When we arrived at the transportation center in Waterbury, it was closed. A man offered me a taxi ride in an unmarked taxi and I accepted- now, looking back it was OK to do, but I wasn't so sure on the ride. A quick shower, chicken leg and bread, coffee and some chips for dinner at 9:30.

All is well, thank YOU!

October 1, 2004

Because of Aziz's reoccurring bouts of "T.B"- Dr. Kaplan felt it is best for me to get a "T.B" test. I did so today at Manchester Health Department, \$10. A small injection under the skin on my left forearm. Results due 10/4.

All is well! Thank YOU.



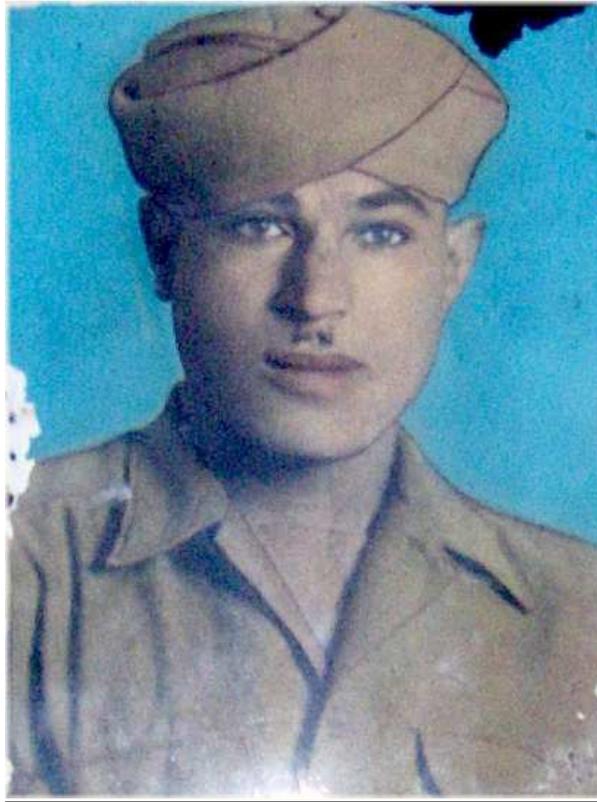
On The South Hill, Looking Northeast

BOUSSELHAM CHAKI

After our 1999 archaeological survey work in Al Basra, Morocco , I started searching for information about the involvement of the Moroccan military in Vietnam. Eventually, I found the Oral History Project, of the The Vietnam Archive, The Vietnam Center, Texas Tech University. The OHP has an interview guide and a set of questions. I brought the questions, and a mini-digital recorder with me for the sole purpose of conducting the interview. Shortly before mid-day we went to visit Bouselham Chaki and his son Mohamed Chaki . We talked with Bouselham about his military experience in Vietnam fighting with the French. Actually, I listened, while Aziz asked the questions. I think Chaki is around 90 years old.



Bouselham Chaki and Jim Franklin in 2004



BOUSSELHAM CHAKI



Du 4th Regiment
De Tirailleurs Marocains

Letter to Mohamed Chaki

Dear Mohamed,

I trust that God has kept you well.

I am hopeful of being able to travel to Morocco this summer, God willing. When I am there, I would like to visit with Yacine who helped me with the first survey, and Said who is now a professor. I especially want to come to Basra so that I may visit with you and your father, and also with Aziz. Aziz has invited me to stay at his home while I am in Basra.

A University in Texas, USA, is creating a Viet Nam War reference library. Part of that library is a section for personal narrative accounts of those people who fought in the war. Vietnamese, Americans, Australians, Koreans, ... anyone who was a part of the war. I have decided to participate by writing a personal account of my experience while in Vietnam, and after. A wonderful part of my experience after the war was meeting your father. I believe that God directed me to Basra and to your father. For what reason, I do not know, and I do not ask.

I would be most grateful to your father if he will agree to discuss with me, his personal experience while in Vietnam, fighting with the Colonial French Forces. If he agrees to do this, his personal narrative will be published in a computer database for all to study and learn from.

I will help your father do this, by tape recording an interview with him. The interview may take place for 2 to 3 hours each day, for 2 or 3 days. The University has written an outline of questions to guide the interview process. He will not have to write anything, just discuss his experience with me.

When I have returned home, I will have our conversations translated and transcribed. That may take many months, but when it is complete I will send it to your father, and then a copy to the University. This will not cost your father any money, and the University does not pay any money for doing this.

If you and your father agree to do this, please have Aziz write to me, or telephone me, and let me know. I would like to come to Morocco the last week in July and the first week in August. I have enclosed some photographs of me while in Vietnam, and a map of all Vietnam. These are for your father. The other photograph is for you.

God willing, I will visit with you soon.

Jim Franklin
Spring 2004

Interview in Morocco
2004
BOUSSELHAM CHAKI

Interviewer (Aziz Benlayachi) AB: Start from the beginning!

Bousselham Chaki (BC):

In 1942, the American Army came to Morocco and we went with them to Tunis. There was the German army over there. We had to fight them and then they retreated to Italy. We stayed in Italy for more than three years, until 1945.

After that, we went to France in Alsace where we had to fight in the cold snowy mountains. We stayed over there more than 4 months. We had to cross some river to finally reach Switzerland and then we came back to Morocco for three months. Then we went in to Vietnam in 1947 and we stayed from 1947 to 1950 until we went back home. I went with the fourth battalion.

We were 30,000 Moroccan chosen by the French occupation army for the fight. We came from Casablanca, Agadir, Marrakech, from everywhere.

The war was the worse over there. We had to walk barefoot to Saigon.

We had a difficult time in Vietnam, we had a soldier with us everywhere, even when we were sleeping, eating, and going to the bathroom, which was in the river. The fight in Vietnam was very hard.

AB: When did you start the military?

BC: 1939.

AB: How old were you?

BC: When I started I did not know how old I was. They had to find out my age through my weight, my height, and then they told me that I was born in 1915. So I was 22 or 24 years old when I started.

AB: Why have you been in the military?

BC: We had no choice at that time. We had nothing to do, no school, no job.

AB: What was your job description? What kind of gun did you have at that time?

BC: Just being whatever they ask you to do. You can be an officer or a chief. I had a submachine gun, but nothing special to do. Our duties were to be ready at anytime for the fight, to go on guard and being in the armored car.

We had to protect some strategic points as arming factory, and pipeline. The differences between the Africans and the others, we used to have a special helmet.

AB: How many soldiers were under your command?

BC: 12 soldiers. I was their chief. We had with us, God forgive him, FEKIR (name of person who died) and then I started to be Corporal in Chief, because I did a good job over there. It was a kind of promotion.

AB: Where were you in Vietnam? What is the name of the place?

BC: Saigon. We always stayed in Saigon. We had to go 100 km around the area, far from there and came back.

AB: Do you remember name of the other places?

BC: Chinese names sound all the same. They took us in those big trucks without any information about our destination.

AB: For how long did you stay there?

BC: 3 years. From 1947 to 1950. We had to be ready for any time. Vietnam was a very dangerous place, and the fight was everywhere.

AB: Have you been to Cambodia?

BC: Yes, I did go there.

AB: And what did you do there? What role did you play in Cambodia?

BC: We had to be ready for fighting in case of enemy attack.

AB: Did you go to Cambodia by truck or did you fly?

BC: We went by truck and we had to take a boat to go through a river. The French had tanks and armored car. The trucks were especially for Muslims soldiers chosen by our chief.

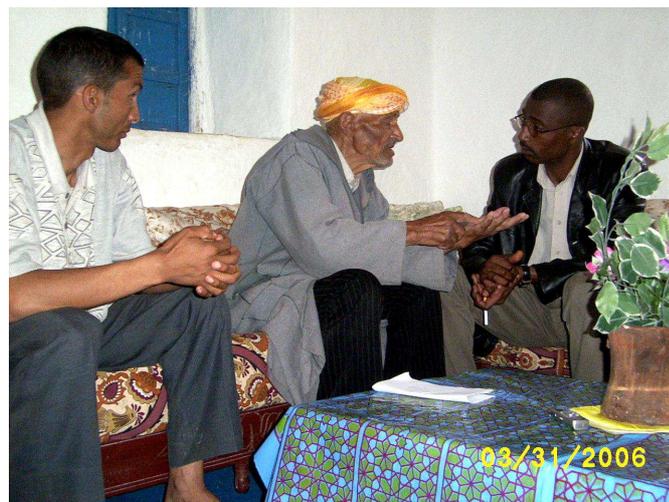
AB: In World War II you fought with the French against the Germans; and then you fought with the French against the Vietnamese. But in the World War, the Vietnamese fought against the Japanese. France was occupying Morocco and they were occupying Vietnam. I don't understand why you fought with the French against the Vietnamese. So why was someone from Morocco with the French and fighting the Vietnamese? Why did you go there and help them in Vietnam?

BC: The Moroccan army was not independent. Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia were under French occupation. We had to follow the orders.

We were under French occupation. We had to fight with them, and we had no choice.

AB: The people of Morocco should have revolted and said no.

BC: We did revolt against the French in 1956.



AB: were you wounded in Vietnam?

BC: Yes

AB: How was the circumstances? How were you wounded?

BC: We were in the middle of the battle fighting. I was injured by a mine explosion. My Command in Chief was seriously wounded and one corporal was killed. The truck rode on the mine and I found myself a few meters away. I was blessed by God, thank God.

AB: Did you have any disabilities from your wound?

BC: No disabilities.

AB: What was your most memorable moment aside from the attack experience during that period? I remember that in some base camps, they had monkeys. Did you have this kind of an experience that was pleasant for you?

BC: Yes. I remember that I didn't eat as much rice and as many dogs in my life than I did during the Vietnam War.

AB: Some had memorable experiences because of the recreation and baseball, soccer, and basketball. What was yours?

BC: We never had anything like that. No recreation, no rest, just fighting. We used to go to the city on Sunday but with the same equipment.

AB: What were the name of French officers and the name of the Commander of the unit? Which was the name in charge of the unit?

BC: De Gaulle was the French President at that time during the war, but we had Oulfekir, Mesrani, Moroccan officers, and Butchi as French officer, and General Beaudilateau. We had Fekir as Commander in Chief.

AB: Did you learn to speak French or Vietnamese languages during the Vietnam War?

BC: I was just speaking French. Nobody knew Vietnamese language.

AB: In which conditions were you living?

BC: We used to live in a huge habitation like a garage, built with brick. And, they used to feed us with rice, paste, and Lents.

AB: Do you remember any funny story?

BC: I don't remember any funny story. We had no vacation, and for us, it was wartime.

AB: Did you correspond with relatives or friends in Morocco, or did you write letters to Morocco from Vietnam?

BC: I was sending letters to my mother and some money too.

AB: Were you married?

BC: No, I was not.

AB: After you came back, when did you get married?

BC: Yes when I came back from Vietnam, I got married in 1950.

AB: Did you keep a diary or journal?

BC: I am not educated enough for doing that stuff. I don't know how to write. I just kept letters that I received from my mother or relatives.

AB: Did you bring any pictures from Vietnam?

BC: Yes, I did.

AB: Since the war ended, have you gone back to visit Vietnam?

BC: Who's going to take me there? Traveling to Vietnam costs a lot of money.

AB: If you had money would you go back to Vietnam?

BC: Never, Vietnamese eat more dogs than we eat chicken. I don't like their living style.

AB: Many veterans went back to visit France, Germany, London. If you had the chance to visit or the opportunity to visit to do that, would you?

BC: Of course I would. I would love to go there. Maybe to France, Germany or Holland.

AB: Were you practicing your religion in Vietnam?

BC: Yes, I was doing my daily prayers and fasting during Ramadan time. They have a mosque where we were doing our prayers, and there were a lot of Muslims there.

AB: Have you seen any lions or tigers in Vietnam?

BC: We had seen snakes two meters long. They look like a bamboo. Snakes whistle as machine whistle. We had gun machine that was carrying more than 500 cartridges. We had to open fire to kill them and of course they have lions, tigers and monkeys. We had all our weapons from Americans troops.

AB: Did the unit have a mascot? Some had a dog, cat, cow and some had even a monkey.

BC: No, we didn't have any of this. Somehow, one of our officers had witnessed deliveries of deer when she had a baby. He brought one of them to Morocco.

AB: Were you welcomed back or were you not welcomed back?

BC: We were very happy to be back of course, and being around our family.

AB: Did you all come back as one group, all at one time?

BC: We all came at the same time by boat. We made a stop in Oran, Algeria and then we took the train until Casablanca. Then, when we were there, they started to write down in the board from which area we belong.

AB: Did you receive more medallions?

BC: Yes, I do have more but I lost them.

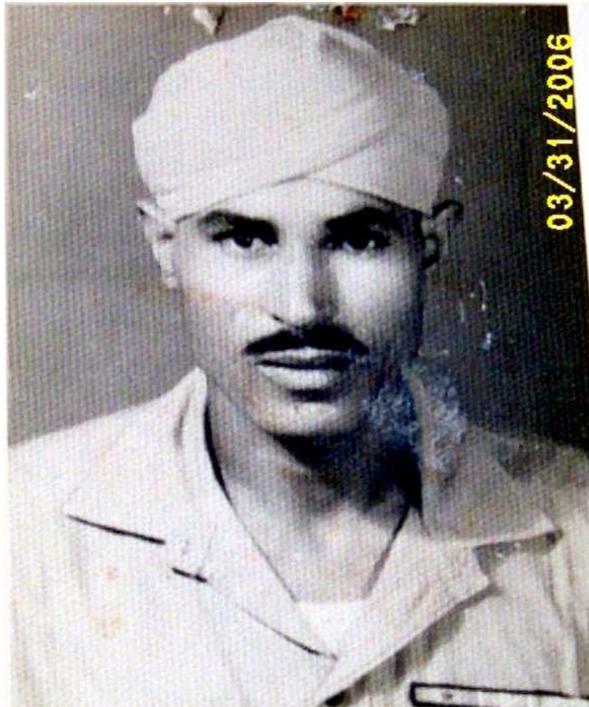
AB: You have a medallion from Algeria, Italy. You have more than seven or eight. In America, a person can write to the government for replacement. Do they do it here?

BC: You have to send money to get replacement. You have to pay them 50 Moroccan Dirhams for just one.

AB: Can you buy new ones with the paper or the certifications that you have?

BC: Where can I buy them again. I have no idea where to get them again.

BC: I still have the certification and few pictures from Vietnam with my troop. Even the pictures of the boat that we came with. I have pictures with some Vietnamese soldiers. This other picture is with two sergeants and me. We were in France for World War 2.



SERVICE

MAROC: 01/06/1940 TO 13/02/1943
ALGERIE: 14/07/1943 TO 25/11/1943
ITALIE: 26/11/1943 TO 11/01/1944
MAROC: 12/01/1944 TO 19/02/1945
METROPOLE: 20/02/1945 TO 29/03/1945
ALLEMAGNE: 30/03/1945 TO 05/02/1946
METROPOLE: 06/02/1946 TO 09/03/1946
MAROC: 10/03/1946 TO 31/05/1946
MAROC: 01/06/1946 TO 11/04/1947
MER: 12/04/1947 TO 01/05/1947
INDOCHINE: 02/05/1947 TO 10/09/1949
MER: 11/09/1949 TO 07/10/1949
MAROC: 08/10/1949 TO 28/10/1949
CONGES FIN COMPAGNE: 29/10/1949 TO 19/02/1950
MAROC: 20/02/1950 TO 19/03/1950



BOUSELHAM CHAKI

with the medals he received in 2006

courtesy of Francois Gauthier, Consul General De France in Boston, Massachusetts; Adele Boufford Baker, Consul Honoraire de France au New Hampshire; and the author. Translation services were provided by Real Gilbert, President of "WORDS" Foreign Languages Translation and Interpreting Services, Inc., of Manchester, NH; additional coordination and support were provided by Genevieve Clerin, of "WORDS".



The author, James E. Franklin, 1968 at Camp Enari, in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam, where he served from October 1967 to October 1968 with the 584th Engineer Company (LE), 20th Engineer Battalion, 18th Engineer Brigade, primary MOS 64B20.



MOROCCO ~ 2006

March 21st, Tuesday

Noon, Waterbury, CT. Drove to Naugatuck, CT., yesterday to Jamie's & Natalie's on my first leg of the journey. I am now waiting at the Travel Center in Naugatuck, CT., on Bank Street for the shuttle bus that will take me to JFK.

Later ~ The ride to the airport was very rough and noisy, but seems to not have taken as long as last time. I think I dozed between stops. I'm now sitting in JFK, in the upstairs lounge, having coffee and cake. There are about a dozen Americans in an organized tour. I talked with a few of them. Told them not to drink the water, unless it is from a bottle or in tea.

Later still ~ while on the plane ~ "Lilly from Gabon" sat in the seat next to the window, with her knit hat and winter jacket on, the entire trip. She is a beautician and student, a mere slip of a girl, who smiles a lot. Her native language is French, and I'm not sure how much English she understood. She slept for about an hour, resting her head on my shoulder.



March 22nd

@7 A.M. ~ Clear, sunny. I'm in Casablanca at airport Mohammed V, waiting for Aziz. A 6 and one half hour flight. The customs inspection was exciting! I seemed to have been singled out from the other Americans. Perhaps it was because I was carrying a black plastic tube, 24" long and 4" in diameter. Even in my mind, it looks like a stinger! One official took the tube from me and tried to open it. Finally gave it back to me to open. The maps were withdrawn from it, studied, and the supervisor was called. I tried to explain the purpose of the maps; showed him my map of Morocco with the Basra Ruins highlighted; then I showed him my letter from 1998 with the official letterhead and names. That seemed to satisfy him. Then he started into my bags. Right away, they tried to open the wrapped package containing Chaki's medals. I protested, and dug out the photographs of the medals. The chief inspector was called. He looked at the photos, noted the "Indochine" Medal, and asked if it was mine. I did my best to explain about Chaki and the purpose for my visit. I think he understood English better than he originally let on. Or he got tired of my long story, which he most likely did not understand.

All is well.

Thanks be to God!

@ 9 A.M. ~ I am having tea with Aziz, in the airport lounge.
The train he was on was delayed.



@ 10:30 A.M. ~ I called Nancy at 10:15 on Aziz's cell phone.

@ 3:30 P.M. (Moroccan time) ~ 70 degrees sunny clear ~ we are in our room at the Hotel Royal in Rabat. 490 DH!! Which is 100 DH more than the posted rate!! I've showered and shaved. I wanted to spend the night in Rabat at the Hotel Splendide but no double occupancy were rooms available. Aziz and I took a train from the airport to Rabat for 55 D (each).



Hotel Dining Room



Yacine and Aziz

@ 9:30 P.M. ~ We met Yacine around 5pm, for visit and tea. Yacine worked with Nancy & I on the survey, in 1998. A great dinner of kafta, krone and tea in the Medina. Aziz and Yacine are very good company!! A very long day. Thank You!

March 23rd

@ Noon ~ 75 degrees in Kenitra. We are in a crowded bus, on the road from Rabat to Souk-el-Arba. This morning we met Yacine for coffee. We discussed "Chaki"- Yacine is agreeable to taking over the interview, the transcription of the interview tape and to write more about Chaki's experiences. Yacine will telephone Aziz regarding when.

@ 3 P.M. ~ In Souk-Al-Arba, while waiting for a taxi to Basra, 2 boys solicited us for shoeshines. Aziz agreed and we both got a shine. When time to pay, a big ruckus ensued! They wanted double the money. Aziz took charge- said no, back and forth argument. A big truck pulled up, and Uncle Farid arrived. They really got into it then. Farid slapped one of the boys upside the head. The boy picked up 2 rocks and prepared to throw them at Farid and me. Two other men chased the boys away. Aziz gave the money to the two men, who gave it to the boys. They got the regular amount. Seems as though the boys had noticed my bags and that I was American.

Basra Hillside

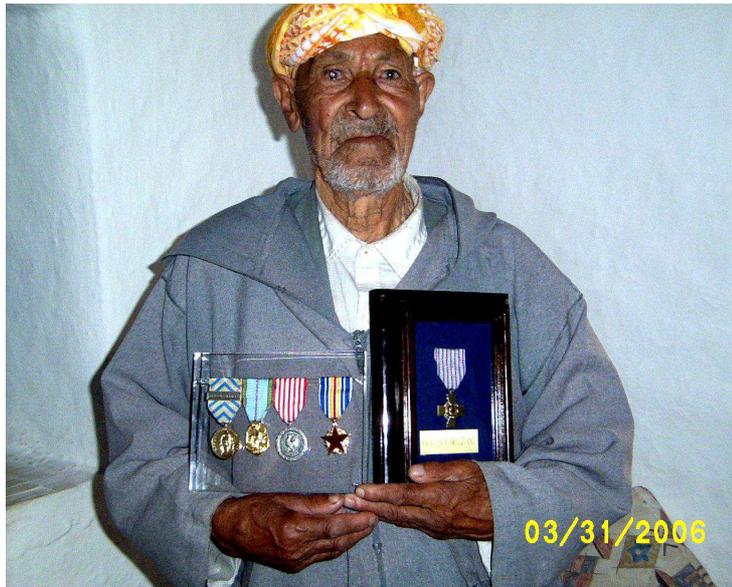


@ 7:30 P.M. ~ we have been in Basra since 4:00 +/- . Tea and cookies upon arrival in Basra; washed and then a short nap; visited with all the family. It was very nice to see them all again. We are just back from a short walk with "Abdo". I think he has not grown. "Black flies"! are hatching! All the hills are beautiful green! And clean! Mohamed and Zohra have a baby girl Siham.

March 24th, Friday

@ 2:30 P.M. ~ Overcast 60 degrees. Light rain this morning. Slept in till 9 A.M. Dogs barked all night, but they did not disturb Aziz. Millwe and tea for breakfast. Couscous with chicken, cabbage, and squash tagine for lunch. Excellent!! I've written the post cards. But I can't find the addresses.

"CHAKI"



BOUSELHAM CHAKI

with the medals he received in 2006 courtesy of Francois Gauthier, Consul General De France in Boston, Massachusetts and the author.

@ 5 P.M. ~ Bousselham Chaki has his medals. "Chaki" had Aziz's ear! From what Aziz related to me, Chaki wanted me to go with him to Casablanca to protest the small veteran payment he recently was awarded by the French government for his years in the military and his being wounded. Aziz explained that I have nothing to do with the French government. Tea and Millwe (but not as good as Fatima's)! We will return when Yacine comes.

@ 7:30 P.M. ~ Cool, clean, 50 degrees, dark. We've been for a long walk to the N/W around the forest. Saw signs of a pig's rut and track. Good conversation!

@ 10 P.M. ~ I called Nancy. All is well at home.

March 25th

@ 3:30 P.M. ~ 80 degrees, sunny, light breeze. I spent the morning with Mohamed in the "forest" where he cuts wood for charcoal. I picked up sticks. I'm not much help, but it kept me occupied.



Lunch at 2:30- Excellent! Krone, Peas, carrots, potatoes, and meat tagine. Aziz has gone to the village for phone card and to mail my post cards. They are a few days late. What I have been calling "harsha is really krone"! For 6 years I've been wrong. Jason was right.

@ 9 P.M. ~ The post office was closed. This afternoon I napped and read some till 5. Then a short walk out to the "wall". When I returned, I visited with Mohamed at his home till 8. Coffee and cookies. Even though neither of us speaks the other language, we had a fun visit. I begged off dinner cause of the big lunch and I've still got Tuesdays tuna and shrimp sandwich in me!

This A.M., while in the forest with Mohamed, we found where the pigs rut, wallow, and dug for snails. I erased 2 photos cause I don't appreciate looking like 59- my mind says I'm 40. I don't want to confuse myself. My Tinytus is almost deafening tonight.

All will be well.

March 26th

@6:45 P.M. ~ 65 degrees. (Nancy's Birthday) Tuna and shrimp gone! We went to Souk-el-Arba today by taxi. I watched for the boys- just in case! We had coffee and watched soccer at the cafe. I bought a grey & white tagiya for 25 DH. I got a haircut at a man's barbershop. The radio/sports; the banter by the men, the slight man odor. It was good to be there. I emailed Nancy- "Happy Birthday!" And I emailed Jason that he was correct about Harsha. I emailed Nancy Benco that I had delivered the final prints of my survey to Saadia Maski at the Fullbright Office. Lunch with Aziz, his cousin Ibrahim and Uncle Hicham (Farid's brother)- krone and kafta at a cafe! I am still full.

Aziz asked me to give his uncle Hicham some "Bowie" chewing tobacco. Jokingly, I gave Aziz the universal sign for limp (xxx) and told him that's what would happen if he ate it. They all laughed but Aziz ask me why I ate it! The joke was on me! Taxi to back to Basra. Washed! I feel better. Touria and Ameena bought me a white Tagiya!

@9 P.M. ~ dinner of krone, peas, squash, carrots, potatoes, meat tagine & fruit cocktail.



Due East At Basra

March 27th

@10 A.M. ~ Coffee, cookies, dates. I've talked with Saïd and Yacine via phone, but their plans are vague. Aziz is going to Souk-Al-Arba. I'm going for a walk

- Left at noon.

@6 P.M. ~ Back from 5 hour walk around the perimeter of Basra by following the watercourses. I started on the easterly side and finished on the northwesterly side by the forest. I found a blue plastic sheet near a small pool of water, so I decided to take a nap. Awoke with a tick on my face.



My Napping Place

I think I took about 25 photographs of flowers.





March 28th

@ 6:15 P.M. ~ Clear; I folded my laundry, that Touria washed yesterday. Breakfast was tea and cookies and krone. Walked with Alami to watch him cut fodder for cows. Nice walk. At 2pm, we had krone, chicken, peas, carrots, squash, and rice flavored with fish or shrimp and a tasty cabbage salad. Just back from the village to buy water. A gas station has been constructed in the "village", but it is not open for business yet. During our walk, I asked Aziz what he would do if he injured himself, seriously. He replied that he would go to the "village hospital". It has a full time staff.

Basra has a Cafe' ~ quite new according to Aziz, but he did not take me there. He went there, one evening, to watch a sporting event on TV. I watched TV with his father.



The wall at Basra

March 31st, Friday

Transcribed from loose leaf sheets written in Ifrane

The 29th ~ Around 9 A.M., I decided to be brave, and take a train from Souk el-Arba-du-Rharb to Meknes, alone. I telephoned Saïd Ennihid, who I met in 1999, at the Basra dig site. He is now a professor at the "American School", Al-Hakawayn university, in Ifrane. Aziz brought me to the train station, gave me detailed instructions, and purchased the ticket. He even gave me a note, written in Arabic. He told me to give it to the station director, if I missed the connecting train in Sidi-Kacem, or if I got lost!



Souk el-Arba-du-Rharb Train Station

The ride to Sidi - Kacem was quiet, as I shared a berth with only one man. I dozed more than I thought, because when the train slowed, the man woke me and gestured to me that I needed to change trains for the next leg of the trip to Meknes. That train had standing room only!

Said met me at the station. We had a quick coffee and walked around Meknes for about an hour. Then a 45-minute car ride to the university, so he could show me where he teaches.

At the entrance to his building, in a shaded corner where two buildings join, there was a pile of snow! His response to my surprise was to inform me of the winter weather conditions, and that on occasion, the roads are closed due to the amount of snow. The air around the university is filled with the sent of

cinnamon, from the trees. It is spring and all the trees are budding. We had dinner in the center of Ifrane, at a very nice hotel - restaurant. I had a tagine of chicken and peas, krone, and tea. Saïd had a "sub" of small, spicy beef sausages and fries. I should have gotten that, as it looked much better than the tagine. We then went to his bachelor apartment - very nice, not fancy though. I've showered (a real shower), shaved and had my first sit-down since leaving home. Saïd directed me to his bedroom, and would not even discuss me sleeping on the couch.

He asked me "By the way, what would you have done if you had gotten lost on the train ride to Meknes?" I told him, "No problem", and gave him the note Aziz had written for me. Saïd read it and asked me if I knew what it said. So I told him. His reply was to read the note to me, "My name is James Franklin. I am an American, on my way to Ifrane. My money is in my back pocket, Please steal it!" We both laughed. I had forgotten what a good sense of humor he has.

March 30th

@9 A.M. ~ Sunny, 75 degrees. I am in the center of Ifrane, at a nice cafe'. I slept from 9:30 P.M. until 6:30 A.M., very quiet. Saïd & I had breakfast here, tea & croissant.

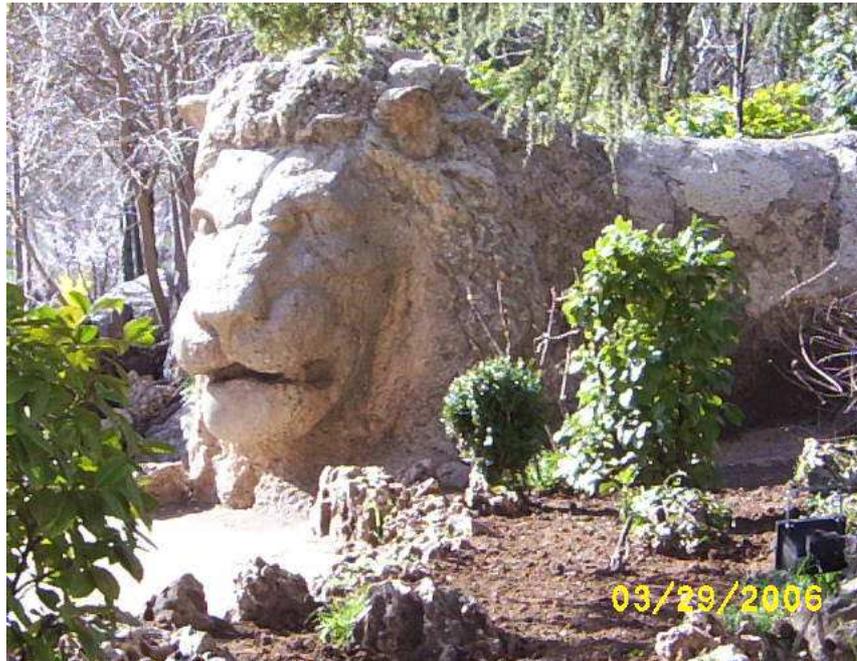
He is now at his duties at the university. I am to meet him here at noon. Ifrane is quite a tourist destination. Saïd explained that it was constructed by the French, for the French, as a place to get away for short vacations. He said that the Moroccans were not allowed to live there. I have seen four tour buses unload their passengers. Two bus loads are speaking French, and two speaking German. I've seen five types of uniforms, either police or military, and their civilian dressed supervisors. I can tell that

they are supervisors, because they walk around doing nothing, while talking into two-way radios.



The Hotel, Cafe, and Restaurant

@ 10 A.M. ~ I just had to find a toilet! After walking around for a while, to no avail, I noticed that a "Tourist Information Center" had just opened. I politely asked the attendant for the use of the facility, and he pointed me around the corner, into a tiny room with a sink and commode. When I was finished, I was slightly embarrassed by having to ask the man how do I flush. There was no water in the tank, nor did the sink work. He had to turn it on, because it leaks when left on. Just like in the "States", it is easy to find a restaurant, but hard to find a toilet, without going into a restaurant. I wandered around the center shops and found a Tagiya: red, yellow, green and black, for 40 DH.



Sculpted from a single boulder by a "POW", during WW II

@ 2 P.M. ~ I am back at Saïd's apartment. We had lunch at the same cafe' - we both had a "sub" of the little sausages, fries, and tea. I am about ready to take a nap, while Saïd has returned to his university duties.

@ 6:30 P.M. ~ I am watching soccer on TV, broadcast in Spanish. I slept till about 4. Saïd is a little late.

@ 10 P.M. ~ Getting ready for sleep. Saïd returned around 7. We drove to the center, had tea & Millwe, walked around quite a lot and talked. Then to the "Marche" to get some dinner. Saïd had nothing; I got a Brochette Sub and fries, which Saïd insisted we bring back to the apartment.



March 31st

@ 9 A.M. ~ Said has gone to work; I've showered & shaved, and I'm getting ready for a walk.

@ 10 A.M. ~ I am sitting in the "Marche" at a small cafe" with only one table & two chairs. The walk took about 40 minutes. I am having a "Poms" just for Jason ~ 50 DH. It is too much for me to drink at one sitting.



The Fire House @ the Marche

The 'Marche' is a collection of buildings, shops and stores, laid out as all connecting, with a central inside walkway, and perimeter walkway. Kind of like a Mall. It is about 400' by 400'. Very clean compared with downtown Souk el-Arba. The typical small Moroccan shops that sell groceries, shoes, clothing, food, electronic devices, photo copies, and cafe'.

@ 11:15 A.M. ~ I'm in the center of town, where I cashed a travel check at Bank Populaire. For future reference, neither Wafa Bank nor BMCE Bank in Ifrane will cash a travel check.

@ Noon ~ I am at the Marche, at the same cafe, having a coffee and pastry.

@ 1 P.M. ~ I am Saïd's apartment - the walk back to Saïd's from the Marche took 2,400 steps. A step being each time one of my feet hit the ground. By my estimation, based on thirty years of pacing, each step is about 3 feet. So multiplying it out

as 2,400 steps times 3 feet per step = 7,200 feet, each way; or about 3 miles round trip. But it was a nice walk, along a road with a treed, landscaped 4-lane road, with sidewalks on both sides.

@ 4 P.M. ~ I am on the train back to Souk el-Arba. Saïd arrived around 1:15. We had lunch at the University's "community center". Quite good. A tagine of some kind with krone and tea. I had my first real Harrisa! It was like fire inside my mouth!! Then the car ride to Meknes, and our goodbyes.

@ 6 P.M. ~ I am with Aziz in Souk el-Arba at a cafe'. The ride from Meknes to Sidi Kacem was standing room only. I shared a doorway with three young people. One was a man who is attending police academy. He practiced his English and I practiced my Arabic. We did OK, but not too much conversation. From Sidi-Kacem, I found a birth with a seat. Then gave it up to a very old, tired woman. When the men saw what I did, they all motioned me to come back and they squeezed together so I could sit down. I guess a gentlemen is recognized everywhere. One of the men was carrying his x-rays and a medical report. He looked it over many times. He performed his prayers while sitting, with all politely not watching. When I arrived in Souk el-Arba, I got off the train on the side opposite the station. Then I hid behind a tree until the train left and Aziz got a worried look on his face. I just had to get him excited, if only for a short time.

@ 8 P.M. ~ we are "Home" in Basra. A most tiring day. A most speedy taxi ride to the village. Fatima is in Souk el-Arba celebrating the birth of a new baby. The walk from the Village to Basra was dark! Very dark! I've washed with cold water, my choice, and had coffee and cookies. I'm ready for bed. All is well Thank YOU!

April 1st, Saturday

@ 8:30 A.M. ~ we've been up since 6:30. I had a terrible nights

sleep. Foot cramps, sore hips bones, sore shoulder; dogs barked till late; donkeys braying etc. I got up for the toilet at 6:15. Alemi and Touria have been up for a while. Alemi has taken the cows out. I woke Aziz, unintentionally, and I explained that I needed to get up. He heated water for me, so I washed, dressed, and asked for coffee. At 7:45, Touria brought coffee and krone with apricot marmalade. Now Aziz has taken the sheep to pasture. I've got sun blisters on my scalp from the walk yesterday. They are oozing some- not many, 3 or 4.

"CHAKI" ~ Yacine arrived by taxi from Souk Al-Arba! He rode the bus from Rabat. After lunch, we visited Chaki. Yacine did the interview with the small cassette recorder from my last visit. The interview took about two hours, with about 1-1/2 hours of recording. See photos!! He will transcribe, type in Arabic and English and send me copies. When I last saw Yacine, he was hitching a ride in a truck back to Souk Al-Arba. He is hoping for a bus, back to Rabat tonight. (*Note: the interview was erased sometime between 4/1/06 and when I received the tape recorder in October 2008. I now consider it lost forever.*)



Mohamed & Zohra

Jim & Mohamed via "Photoshop"





@ 6P.M. ~ Tea and millwe for a snack with the ladies and Mohamed. Watched 2 soccer games in the evening. Dinner of couscous- I think it was cooked with milk. I called Nancy at 5 (Aziz' time). Much good news from her!

@11 P.M. ~ Visited with Mohamed for about 2 hours, 9 to 11. As best we could, we discussed some most interesting possibilities: 2 wives, 2 homes!!! One in America and one in Basra. Much laughter!

April 2nd, Sunday

@ 7:30 A.M. ~ Slept ok, better than the last night. Quick wash, coffee, millwe, cookies. I've got a slight headache, which arrived in the night. Called Nancy- No call back.

@4:30P.M. ~ Abdo is being chased by his grandmother with a broom. Just like Nancy did with the boys!! He is running and laughing every which way! I'm going for a walk.

April 3rd, Monday

@ 6 P.M. ~ 75 degrees. Nancy called at 10:30 A.M. All is well at home. She will fill me in with details when I get back. I went with Aziz to Souk-Al-Arba today to cash checks, buy batteries and get a small electric coffee grinder for Fatima. Struck out with all three- no explaining it. Banks that cashed travelers checks before won't do it today. Will send letter to check company when I've returned. Since no money= no grinder-no batteries- I would have been more persistent if on my own. When returned, washed with pail and cool water. Tea and fish and a great big orange! The family has a refrigerator- Whirlpool - a Fridgedair they call it. I don't know when they got it. It was not here in 2004. Aameena, Et al, left this A.M.

@ 9 P.M. ~ Peas, carrots, potatoes, lamb tagine with krone for dinner. Aziz and I split an orange for desert.



April 4th, Tuesday

@ 9:30 A.M. ~ A man died last night- he was diabetic. The 2nd death since I've been here. I sat with Fatima and Touria for breakfast. Coffee, fried harsha (like french toast), and a hard-boiled egg. I went with Touria to get potable water at the pump station. When we got there, one woman was slowly filling a small pail from an overflow pipe that runs from the pump station. Zohra was waiting to do the same. I saw Mustafa, the station operator, standing in the doorway, and asked Touria "why don't you go inside?" She shook her head and replied, "No, Aziz, no"! She asked me to go for them. Seems as though the women are not allowed to go into the station because Mustafa lives there alone. Mustafa explained it best he could.



Mustafa's Pump Station

@ 10:00 A.M. ~ Alami just returned from digging the grave in the cemetery, on the hill E-S-E of Basra.

A new "bed" has appeared in my usual sleeping place; one of the foam couch pillows. Except for the first night sleep, I've been sleeping on, in order for the bottom up: 2 sheep skins, 2 heavy wool, woven blankets, and me inside a spun wool blanket, all on the floor. Fatima is "churning butter": she suspends a plastic bucket with a lid, from the roof by a rope. Then she pushes it to and fro, sloshing the milk back and forth inside the bucket until it turns into butter.

@ 10:15 A.M ~ the sun has burned off the haze; a slight cool breeze. Touria is washing clothes. Last night I finished reading my book "People of the Mist".

@ 11:15 A.M ~ 3 cows, with their front legs hobbled, have just come trotting into the yard. The lead cow went directly to the barn, opened the door with its horn and led the others inside.

Touria stopped what she was doing, grabs a tether and secured them. She is a very capable young woman, and can do most any type of work.

@ Noon ~ I am sitting, watching Touria prepare the mid-day meal. She is frying Kaftas and has offered me a small sample. She has made a drink from oranges and beets (I think); she cut them into small irregular pieces and pureed all of it together. Then placed it into a large glass jar, and stored it in the refrigerator. She has also fried an egg, and made a diced onion & tomato salad, more like a relish really.

At 2:30 P.M. ~ The man is buried! Aziz and Alami attended. The men formed a chain, and passed the coffin along it, shoulder to shoulder, until it and the men, reached the top of the hillside cemetery. We've eaten the wonderful meal that Touria made earlier. Now Touria is going to make cookies for me to take home. I'm going to estimate the amounts: sugar- 2 cups ground fine in the cuisinart blender; 2 cups of oil; 2 eggs; 1 cup toasted sesame seeds.



Touria in the family kitchen



Zohra The Oven-Box Touria

****IN THE BOWL****

Put the oil, both eggs, 1-1/2 cup sugar, and sesame seeds, mix by hand. It looks rather runny and oily now. Then add wheat flour till it forms regular dough like consistency. Add 16g baking soda, (She used a measure for this). Then add 1 & 1/2 cups of softened butter, keep mixing. It looks like banana bread at this point. Add more flour until a very stiff dough forms. There should be enough so it can be divided into two, 6" diameter balls. She rolled out half the mixture onto a board, about 1/2" thick. Then used a small glass to cut out half moon shaped cookies. One 6" diameter ball yields about 60 cookies. These were placed on an oiled sheet pan, not touching each other. They were cooked in the inside gas "Oven-Box" by placing the sheet pan on the upper rack, After about 5 minutes, they were moved to the lower rack, while a new batch was put onto the upper rack. After the next 5 minutes, the lower sheet was removed, the upper sheet was moved to the bottom, and a new sheet put onto the top rack.

The other 6" diameter portion was rolled into a long roll, about 2" diameter, and cut into 1" sections. These were pressed with a fork, into an oval shape. After baking in the same manner, one-half of each cookie was dipped into frosting made from oil and powdered chocolate. The frosting has the consistency of thick paint, rather than frosting.

A man, two women and a baby came to visit in the kitchen- very crowded - very noisy! From the reaction of the women, I suspect the man is well respected. Fatima, seeing my discomfort, suggested to Touria that she rescue me from the room, so she led me outside, and into Aziz's.

Touria had made the cookies for me, and gave me the entire batch, inside a yellow plastic pail, with handle and lid.



Uncle Aziz and "Abdo"

I made the mask for Abdo, from the sleep mask the airlines provides.

@5 P.M. ~ I decided to go for a walk alone. Wandered W and SW around wet areas, just looking. I sat for a short while on a small rise to watch the fields and look for the pigs. Two dogs out hunting got my attention and I moved out of their site. While walking around the wet areas, I got my new yellow shoes muddy. I found a clump of wool, and cleaned the shoes the best I could. When I got back by the "wall", Aziz was waiting. He had been watching me all along. He scolded me for getting my shoes muddy. I replied, "I am just a big Abdo".

@ About 7 P.M. ~ A commotion in the yard took Aziz out to help Alami and Fatima capture the bull! He had escaped from the barn and was trotting around inside the yard. Aziz and Alami were trying to capture it, while Fatima was blocking the exit routes. I half expected the bull to try to get into the house. Aziz had been stepped on by the bull but no real damage. It was all quite exciting, from inside the safety of Aziz's room!



Aziz & Touria Load the Barn While Abdo Poses

April 5th.

@ 8:30 A.M. ~ High overcast, 70 degrees ~ didn't sleep well, most likely due to the new bed. It is impossible for anyone to make Krone or millwe like Fatima. She showed me the Krone she had made early this morning and invited me to watch her bake it. She built a roaring fire with twigs, and small branches in the oven. I could feel the heat from 10' away! After it died down, rather quickly as twigs do, she put the bread on a baking sheet and placed it in the oven. She then covered the opening with the sheet metal and some wet rags. Now I know how she gets the wonderful, smoky taste. It took about 20 minutes to cook.



The Outside Oven



Mohamed Starting The fire for Charcoal

I spent the afternoon with Mohamed, while he got his fire stabilized for making charcoal. I didn't see him start the fire only after he had started to cover it with old ashes. Then to his house for coffee and his "smoke". He and I played soccer with Abdo and Leila. I partook as little as possible as it seems they were enjoying his company a lot more than mine. The evening snack was in the kitchen with Touria, Alami, and Fatima. That was the fourth meal I've been invited to, inside the kitchen-Krone, butter, orange marmalade and coffee. Aziz is off somewhere with "Younis. I suspect to the Mosque, in-as-much-as it is prayer time and Younis is studying to become an Imam.

@ 7:30 P.M. ~ I've watched Fatima make couscous, not from the box, but from flour and water. She started with little of each, and rolled it between her hands till she had the right size kernel. She then cooked it with milk, rather than water.

April 6th

@ 8 A.M. ~ A steady rain since 7 A.M.- washed, 3 cups coffee and little krone. The family is staying under cover for the most part. Fatima has made Krone and has started the fire in oven. Alemi is digging in the yard to keep the water flowing away from the barns and house. Time to say our goodbyes.

@ 9 A.M. ~ We went to the road to wait under the overhang of the roof of the old cafe', for a bus or taxi. Got a bus around 10 A.M- still raining. The bus was packed-standing room only till Souk-Al-Arba. All the standees had to crouch down at the police checkpoint, so the police could not see that people were standing. I had a seat from Souk-Al-Arba to Rabat. I slept till Kenitra. 3 people vomited within 1 seat of me! I suspect they had eaten something from a roadside vendor. Noisy, smelly ride-1 crying baby- 2 boisterous hawkers selling something that would make you healthy!

@ 1:30 in Rabat- took Taxi from the bus station to the center where we found the "Hotel Central" for 200 DH with shower and toilet and 2 sagging beds. Windows open on to street. The room is clean.

@ 2:30: Cashed both travelers checks at BMCE exchange- no questions- not even hello!

@ 4:30: Aziz's cousin Yacine arrived. He is disturbed that I didn't visit him on my arrival. We then walked to the medina where I purchased a Jalaba for Nancy and scarves for Fatima, Touria, Zohra, and Leila; Olive oil for me and a "Poms" for Jason! At 7 we ate at a cafe- me, kafta, french-fries and a poor excuse for millwe. Aziz and Yacine had tea and millwe. @ 8:15 coffee and desert pastry. It's about 10 P.M.- I've just talked with Nancy- All is well- Time for shower and bed!

Thank You, all is well





April 8th, @ 4 A.M. Lt rain

I'm in Naugatuck, CT., at Jamie and Natalie's. It will take me a few days to adjust my clock back to EST.

Yesterday- up t 5:30 A.M. poor sleep due to city street noise. I was a little disappointed that I didn't hear the call to prayers, this morning. We walked to train station in Central Rabat about 1/4 mile or less. Had a seat all the way to Casablanca Airport. Very overcrowded commuter train ride with many stops. At the airport, ticket information and issuance of a boarding pass was a breeze due to the number of ticket agents. Much improved since 2004. Aziz and I sat from 9-10:30 at cafe.

Gave him rest of my DH. He said he would give some to his mother for all her work and food and some to his father. I told him to do "as you wish". Then he asked me if I would send him money, in a week or so, so he could have a tooth pulled. I told him I did not have any money come in while I was away, "ok, ok-if you can".

Customs check was orderly without much waiting. A more thorough pat down than 2004- but still, 3 custom inspections. Boarding the plane is the same most everywhere. I got a window seat on the wing, without a companion, so I had plenty of elbowroom. We had 2 "meals"- I ate both this time-gas not a problem- I just let it go like everyone else. I took as many "Citron" sodas as seemed fair. I have not seen them available for purchase in the "States". Watched "The Family Stone" movie with one earphone working. Read the Koran as the inspiration struck me. The ride was smooth except for one short rough spot. I waited in my seat until I was next to the last person off. Then helped an old woman with her carryon bags out to the gangway, where attendants with a wheel chair met her. Customs inspection was polite ~ the agent asked me if I had been on a farm where livestock, and poultry were. Because I replied yes, he inspected the shoes I was wearing. That was all. I went to the courtesy counter to inquire about the CT Limo service and the next scheduled pick up.

I grabbed a cup of terrible coffee, and sat on my bags to wait.

The ride to Naugatuck was OK. I sat across from a woman from Germany, who had just arrived for a visit with her family in Windsor, CT. By the time I got to Naugatuck, it was dark. I called Jamie to come pick me up. He and Nancy arrived about a half hour later. A welcome surprise for her to meet me.

All is well, thank YOU!

