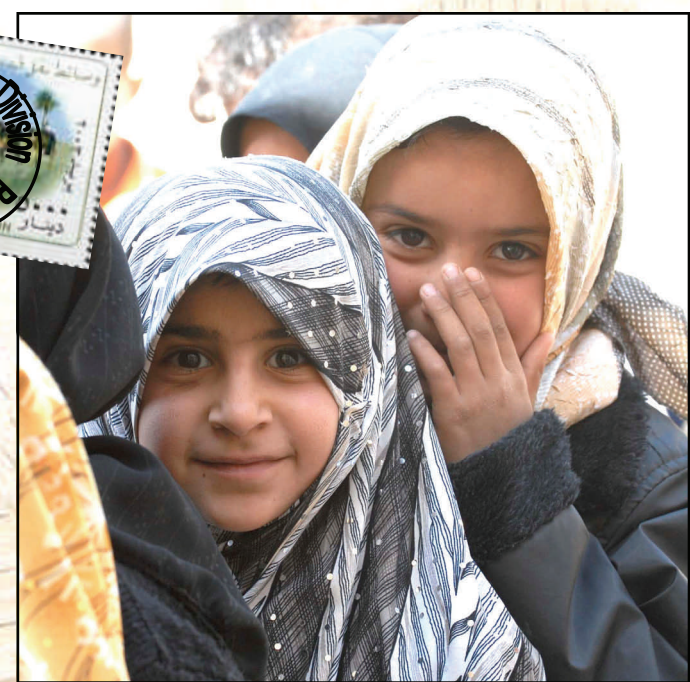


Postcards from Iraq

Iraq duty — we're making a difference

By John Kassebaum, Office of Counsel
Gulf Region Division South District, Tallil Air Base, Iraq
(Deployed from the Charleston District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)



From the second story window of the Gulf Region South Headquarters building, I can see the ancient city of Ur and the birthplace of Abraham. The 4,000-year-old Ziggurat of Ur stands on a hilltop not far away and is the most visible reminder to me that this part of the world is known as the “cradle of civilization.” As a student of history being able to explore the tombs of Ur was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and I wish I had the chance to explore more but work took precedence. I have had the honor of serving my country and the pleasure of helping the Iraqis rebuild theirs. I work as the legal advisor for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in southern Iraq which is overseeing work building hospitals, schools, water treatment facilities, electrical substations, and roads.

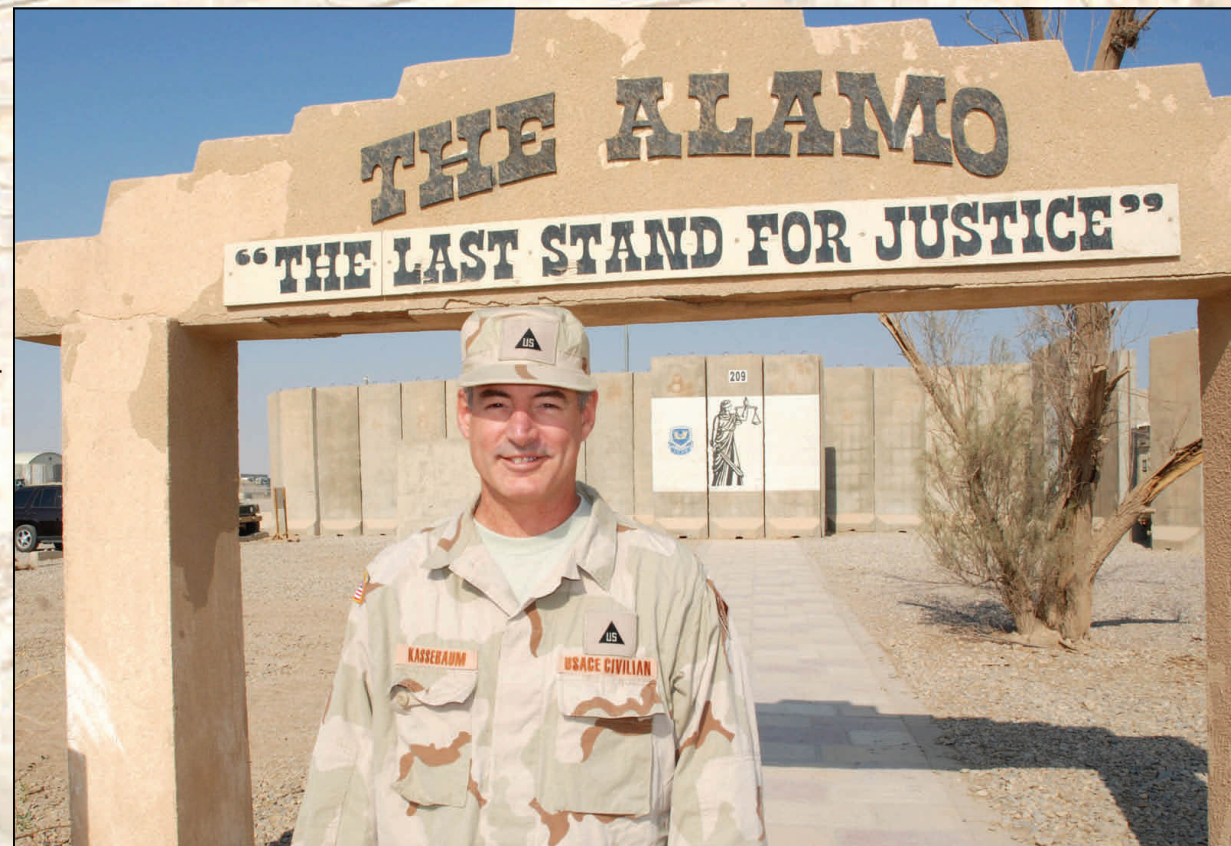
The Gulf Region Division South District is headquartered at Tallil Air Base. We have area offices throughout Iraq's southern nine provinces and employ over 600 civilians and contractors; 150 of whom are local Iraqi engineers. I am on my way home now and have been here for eight months. Along the way I have met new people from many different countries who are all here helping Iraq move forward. Being able to experience a new part of the world and participate in a reconstruction mission that is making a difference in people's lives is an unforgettable experience.

This was actually my second opportunity to volunteer to come to Iraq and the experience has been well worth the time and effort to get here. Iraq is a country rich in heritage and worthy of our help. Iraqis are a proud and generous people who want to raise their families in a safe and stable environment. The people I have met here are respectful, full of good humor and hard-working.

I want to thank all my family and friends for their support, prayers, emails and phone calls. I also want to thank all my coworkers with whom I shared this fantastic experience and without whose help I could not have done my job.



John Kassebaum
GRS Office of Counsel



GRS attorney John Kassebaum enjoyed this sign in front of the legal office at Tallil Air Base, Iraq.