

Postcards from Iraq

What counts is service for others

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“Be alert to give service. What counts a great deal in life is what we do for others.”- Anonymous

Let me start off by saying that my deployment with the Central District (GRC) in Baghdad has been one of the most fulfilling and rewarding experiences I have ever had in my life. I came to Iraq because I wanted the opportunity to serve. I know that I am leaving having gained more than I could have ever given.

I have had the distinct pleasure to serve as the Officer in Charge of two different Resident Offices during my time with USACE; Victory South Resident Office on the west side of the Tigris River and the Loyalty Resident Office on the east side of the Tigris River. I have had a chance to see and work in many different parts of Iraq...from the wide open rural areas of Mamudiyah, Yousefiah and Lutifiyah to the congested, populated areas in and around the city of Baghdad.

I have also had the pleasure to meet so many great people while in Iraq. I am in constant awe of the hundreds of military personnel, government and contract employees who volunteer to come from all over the world to serve with USACE.

I am in awe as well of the dedicated staff of Iraqi engineers and quality assurance representatives. Many of these folks have risked, and in some cases, continue to risk, their lives by working with the Coalition Forces in order to keep their country moving forward. I have enjoyed the opportunity to work alongside these wonderful people and will never forget what they have taught me about their country and about myself.

It is important to convey that the US Army Corps of Engineers' mission here isn't to rebuild Iraq, but to help the people of Iraq rebuild their country. All together, I and my Teams of both American and Iraqi engineers have managed well over 100 projects worth more than \$170 million. Every type of project you can imagine from water treatment plants, police stations and clinics; to sewer systems and judicial buildings. I would have to say that my favorite projects were the schools. The children truly are the future of any country. I have two young children and I know how important the smallest things are to them....there are no differences with the children here. It is my prayer and my belief that what we have done for the children of this ancient country will have long lasting effects.

Finally, I would like to take this moment to thank everyone that supported me while I have been deployed, especially my family for giving me this opportunity to serve.

Essays!



Baghdad area school children greet Lt. Col. Marshall Banks during a site visit.



Lt. Col. Marshall Banks inspects a pump station on the Tigris River with Col. Ron Light.



The Al Farouq school headmaster accepts the school building from Lt. Col. Marshall Banks.