

Postcards from Iraq

Dust Don't Settle Here...

I have passed the NCO Sword which symbolizes my release of responsibility as the Gulf Region Division Command Sergeant Major and with that ends my tour of duty here in Iraq. It is time for me to start the long journey home to my Family.

Just as it is with so many of us, this time for me has been significant in so many ways, whether it was helping the people, increasing my understanding of the local culture, bonding with my deployed Army Family, supporting each other and understanding those on our team. Also, just experiencing the many risks and dangers associated with living, traveling and working together in this dangerous environment with the many complexities we encountered in just doing our business.

In volunteering to serve here in Iraq, "we" have all

worked together to help so many in a war torn country during this historic reconstruction mission while at the same time helping the World, this and future generations fight and combat terrorism.

I use the word "we" not only for my GRD Family here in Iraq, but the USACE Divisions, Centers and Districts back in the states, but equally as well for my Family (my wife & children) back in Missouri who have stood by my side as we all sacrificed and assumed the same uncertain risks during my deployment...none of us do it by ourselves! I also must say thanks to my extended Family (my Mother, Father, Brother, Sisters, Aunts, Uncle, Cousins, In-Laws and all the children) in Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Missouri.



Command Sgt. Maj. Bill McDaniel stays focused on his personal objectives: the safety of his troops, positive progress of the USACE mission to rebuild Iraq, and his safe return to his Family at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri (and eventual retirement as well).

Finally, thanks to the greater Fort Leonard Wood communities, my friends, church groups, school children and others throughout the world that have encouraged me, stayed in touch with me, sent me cards, care packages or emailed just to check on me, all the while supporting me in this effort. Thanks for understanding what my Family was experiencing and being there for them.



I served two great General officers who are superb leaders (MG McCoy and BG Walsh) and I must thank them both publicly for the opportunity to serve this great Gulf Region Division. I have enjoyed meeting and working with so many great people who selflessly give of themselves each and everyday. The memories are forever lodged in my mind. My hope is that our efforts will continue to make a positive difference for the People of Iraq and their Country. These efforts are real and significant and it will probably be years before they are fully understood by many around the world. Let us not forget the solid contributions of those before us, those who are serving now and those who follow us in the future.

I know we will never ever forget our wounded and fallen comrades who gave so much during the fight in this war on terrorism and our historic reconstruction mission. Reflecting on my own experiences, I can clearly say that freedom comes at a cost and the price of our freedoms will never be free! I have always said those things that we sacrifice the most for in life are those that we remember the most!

For those of us who stepped onto the field of battle while placing ourselves in harms way and clearly in danger, day in and day out, understand in this game of life that helping others will always challenge us to greater heights. In my book, we will always be winners and we are clearly different because of this experience! We know our efforts are significant and we all feel a sense of pride in our volunteerism to this effort. We clearly send a message everyday throughout the world, which is loud and clear, to everyone about our patriotism, our honor and selfless service to a noble cause of helping others.

I pray that God will continue to bless you and your Families with happiness, good health and safety as well as your ability to continue to make such a positive difference for so many others here in Iraq and throughout the World!

The Dust Don't Settle Here...Proud to Serve...ESSAYONS!

CSM Bill McDaniel

Gulf Region Division

Baghdad, Iraq