

Postcards from Iraq

Iraqis courageous in helping their country move forward

By William S. Zett, GRS Internal Review
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region South District, Iraq

Serving in Iraq with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is without a doubt a fitting climax to a 40-year career as a civil service employee and a former member of the Texas Army National Guard.

My military career began in Austin, Texas on 22 May 1968 serving the Texas Army National Guard. Being employed by the Texas Army National Guard meant that I had to be a member of the Texas Army National Guard in order to maintain my civil service job. When I accepted my current job in Iraq starting in October 2006, I could not attend drill, so I was discharged into the Inactive Ready Reserve on 1 November 2006.

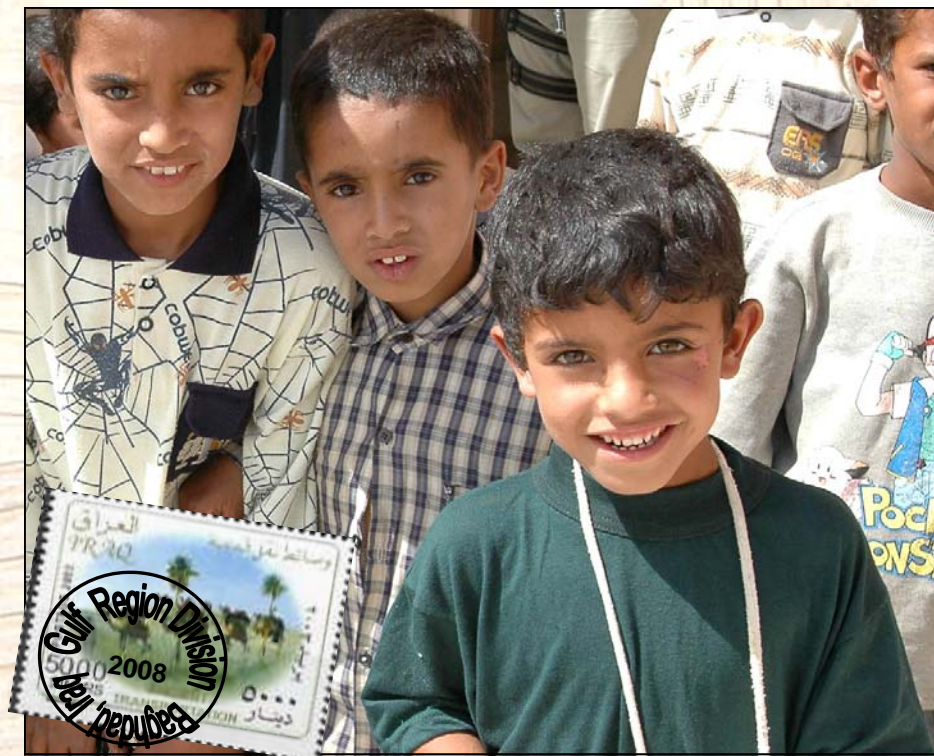
I work as the Internal Review officer for Gulf Region South District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in Tallil, Iraq. My job entails many of the same duties I would have in the States. Simply stated, I'm responsible for conducting reviews as required by the command as well as liaison with many external audit agencies.

Before taking on this assignment, I knew little about the Iraqi people. Over the last year-and-a-half, I've had the opportunity to interact with a number of them and there's no question they want the same things we do—to raise their families in a free nation, to see their children attend quality schools, and to enjoy family get-togethers on special occasions without the fear of mortars, car bombs, or snipers. To know an Iraqi is to love his or her desire to help their country move forward to a more prosperous and secure homeland. This job has been extremely rewarding.

Many Iraqi Local Nationals (LN) are on our staff, employed as engineers, project managers and safety officers. They risk their lives every day visiting our project sites to ensure quality construction. These projects include — hospitals, schools, water treatment and distribution, courthouses, electrical, road building/paving — things in America we often take for granted.

Their courageous efforts are leaving a legacy that will benefit their children and grandchildren for decades to come.

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Iraqi Children



"Iraqis have the same goals and dreams we all have — providing a brighter future for their children and grandchildren." — Bill Zett, GRS, Tallil, Iraq.