

Postcards from Iraq

As I complete seven months here in Iraq, I look back fondly on my time here. From SEP 2006 to MAR 2007 so much has changed, but so much remains the same. I served as the Deputy G1, and for a short time the Acting Division G1, for the Gulf Region Division. In laymen-speak that means I am a Human Resource Manager. I helped identify the need for replacements within our organization and then coordinated replacements, mostly military personnel. I also helped manage the personnel database for accounting of personnel assigned to our command and those assigned within theatre. I am Active Duty Army and am a Human Resource Officer full time in my regular assignment.



What I found to be the most motivating event during my deployment was a Citizenship Ceremony held on Veteran's Day for 300

Soldiers hailing from 75 different countries at the Multi-National Corps- Iraq (MNC-I) Headquarters. The event touched my heart, to see so many young people wanting to be part of something bigger than their selves and better than where they came from.

Fortunately, I was not involved in any combat engagements. The sounds of gunfire and bombs are enough. The closest I have been is receiving falling debris. We have been hit a couple times on our compound. On one occasion I was in the vicinity of a mortar hit, but luckily I was far enough away that I was not in any imminent danger.

Being a Soldier overseas, I am most proud of my family. They are my strength. Because they carry on, they allow me to focus on the task at hand. Military families are unique in that they sacrifice so much for the success of our great services. In many ways, America's



In front of the Crossed Swords my G-1 battle buddies celebrate GRD's 3rd birthday.



freedom rests in the hands of our Service Member's families. I am from a military family. My father served for more than 28 years in the US Army. My sister Dina is married to an Airborne Soldier and is stationed at Fort Bragg. My brother John is married to an Army Operating Room Tech and they are stationed in Germany. And my brother James was in the Marines for four years and served in Iraq during Desert Storm. He passed away three years ago from cancer at the age of 33. So I am intimate with the sacrifices our families make for us, for the nation.

What I miss most about home is just being with family. The phone calls and letters are great, but they do not compare to seeing them, hugging them and having dinner with them. I have found a myriad of activities to keep me busy while deployed, to include Scrabble champion, working out, a myriad of fitness classes and volleyball once a week.

I leave GRD with a sense of pride for the Corps of Engineers, the Army and all the Coalition Forces. I feel privileged to have been able to be part of the Reconstruction of this beautiful country.

"Essayons!"

Capt. Candace B. Hurley

Gulf Region Division - Baghdad, Iraq



My friends and I join together for Make a Difference Day 2006 in Baghdad,