

Postcards from Iraq

A Look Back...A Way Forward

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When I was around 10 years old, I received my first taste of construction when my grandfather, Pete Conlin Sr., took me to the site of our church, which was in the process of being torn down so we could build a new one. My job was to help scrape mortar off of the old bricks so they could be reused in the new church. My grandfather was a general contractor himself and had a reputation for detailed perfection. My hands were raw by the end of the day in an effort to achieve his expectations.



Grandfather Pete Conlin Sr.

Thirty-three years later, I find myself in Iraq as part of the reconstruction effort. It is hard to describe the mix of feelings I have experienced over the past year as I get ready to redeploy to go home. To see the gratitude of teachers, students, and parents when they enter their new school is a feeling you want to hold onto forever.

I had the privilege of supervising nearly \$370 million in reconstruction during my time here. I have an incredibly talented and dedicated team of military and civilian staff who work long hours every day to make it all happen. I am also grateful to the staff of 20 Iraqi Associates who risk their lives everyday to help rebuild their country and make their vision of peace a reality.

It's hard to achieve perfection in this country given the challenges, and I know my Grandfather would still pick out a lot of things. I hope, however, he is looking down with a sense of pride, knowing that what he taught me has been used to help others. My service here is dedicated to him.



Lt. Col. Pete Conlin in Taji, Iraq.

Lt. Col. Pete Conlin and friend.

