

Postcards from Iraq

Reflecting on the “Mecca for Engineers”

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Major Culberson, General David Petraeus and Navy Lt. Ben Dunford pose at the Rusafa Justice Palace opening.

As my second deployment to Iraq comes to an end, I must reflect on what has truly been one of the greatest experiences of my life. All of the late nights and long days spent learning my craft as a civil engineer in college and over twenty years of military experience and training as an engineer officer has all come together during this deployment. Through it all, I must credit the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for this experience. It is very easy to measure ones accomplishment by the sheer number and magnitude of construction projects that were managed and completed under my supervision as the Resident Office, Officer in Charge for both Loyalty and Victory South. But, what are most satisfying are the relationships that were developed, fostered and matured during the different phases of the construction process.

This process includes working with the different disciplines within the Corps, the Government of Iraq and its Municipality, and the many Iraqi Contractors all working towards a common goal. Then for one to

see the impact that these projects are making to the quality of life for the Iraqi people, it is truly amazing. The gratitude shown by the Iraqi children when a school has been rehabilitated or newly constructed is an unbelievable feeling. The appreciation received from the local communities for supplying potable water networks, sewer networks and electrical network systems to their homes many of them for the very first time. I thank God for the chance and blessing to be able to help the people of Iraq in their reconstruction efforts.

Throughout my deployment I have always referred to Iraq and the Corps mission as the “Mecca for Engineers” to apply their experience and knowledge of their craft. The task and mission success has been both challenging and rewarding to me in this very high tempo environment. But, the mission must continue and I am truly thankful for the opportunity to serve. I will be leaving some magnificent USACE personnel and Iraqi friends that I will cherish forever. At the same time, I look forward to the reunion with my family and my return to the New Orleans District.

Building Strong!!!

Iraqi National Police Command Brigadier Amir greets Major Robert Culberson at the Kamaliyah Sewer Network ribbon cutting.

