

Postcards from Iraq

The greatest challenge ever —

By Daphne Morrell, Administrative Assistant
Lake Lanier and Buford Dam, Mobile District

This all started when my supervisor, Don Simpson from the Mobile District (who at the time was stationed at Gulf Region North). asked if I was up for another challenge. Don knew my background — that as a former military spouse I had traveled throughout the world over the past 19 years and had numerous family members also serving in the military ... that I had a definite interest in seeing new places, learning new things, and exploring new opportunities. I said “yes I would love to and why not.” I had been pondering the idea of deploying for awhile. It was definitely time for a change. I discussed it with the most important person in my life, my only child, my daughter Tia. It was hard and she was scared due to the fact that her father, an uncle, and 4 cousins, had all served in Iraq.

I also knew that a good friend of mine, Karen Johnson from the Mobile District, was currently deployed. When I was contacted by the S-1 office at Gulf Region South, the ball started rolling and I knew I did not want it to stop. As the Bible says “ask and it shall be given”. I waited until the weekend of my departure to call my family and friends to drop the news that I was deploying to Iraq that Sunday. My family was not happy.

They all know I am the one who is constantly challenging myself for a new adventure. I had the experience of riding across the desert from Kuwait to Tallil, Iraq. During that trip, I'll admit I started having second thoughts about the whole deployment thing but realized it was too late then to turn around. Two days later when I rode up to Diwaniyah, Camp Echo, Iraq, I thought, you prayed for this which meant “God brought you to this, he will bring you thru this.” I spent 17 months at the Forat Area Office in Camp Echo working closely with our Iraqi engineers and Iraqi contractors. I have had the awesome opportunity of visiting various projects we're managing, seeing the smiles and the genuine appreciation of the Iraqi people regarding our efforts to help them rebuild their country.

I came to the South District S-1 office in June 07 until 15 Sept 08. It has truly been a blessing and an honor to have been part of this enormous mission. I will never forget the challenges that we faced and how we all came through this stronger, more humble, and with a completely renewed outlook on life. I will always treasure this gift. With the good has come the bad, and on 14 Oct 06, I lost a loving long-time close friend, 1SGT Charles Monroe King, killed by a roadside bomb in Baghdad. He was a great man and honorable soldier. I will love, cherish and honor him always. Many courageous individuals have given their lives. They will all be missed and their sacrifice not forgotten.

I conclude my tour here a few days after 11 September. We're making a difference in Iraq. I'm proud to have been a member of this great team .

Daphne Morrell, Administrative Assistant

Gulf Region Division South District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Tour: 22 Jan 06 - 15 Sep 08).



Daphne Morrell visits with Iraqi students and passes out donated school supplies.



Daughter Tia Thomas



Brother SSG Brian Bowman serving in Baghdad



Nephew Marine GySgt. Kevin Spivey in Fallujah



Friend 1SGT Charles King killed in Baghdad in 2006



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