

Postcards from Iraq

Serving in Iraq
well worth the sacrifice

Dorothy Ivey, Construction Representative, Mobile District

I first came to Iraq in September 2005 on a six month tour — 28 months later I'm still here. This is a unique, historic tour ... the most challenging and rewarding assignment of my 27 years with the Federal Government. Memories from this tour will stay with me forever, something I can share with my family and especially with my three grandchildren . . . Megan, Jake and Benjamin.

It's a mission I'm proud to be part of. I believe in the efforts we, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, are making to help Iraq and its people gain control of their country so they can truly experience what freedom is all about.

I serve as a Construction Representative here at Al Asad and we manage many projects, both on base and at sites throughout western Al Anbar Province. Our projects off base are new electrical substations, schools and medical clinics. Most all of my current projects are off the base, which gives me the opportunity to go out and visit facilities such as Haditha, Rawah, Bagdadi and Furat electrical substations. Our project at Haditha is the Haditha/Al Qaim 400 kV transmission line, connecting the Haditha Dam switchyard with the Al Qaim 400 kV substation to improve

the reliability of the electric power transmission system between these two locations. These projects will stabilize the electric grid in much of western Iraq and people in those areas will eventually see a significant improvement in their way of life.

As we drive through the streets of Furat and Baghdadi, you can see the Iraqi people and the resilience exhibited by all of them — men, women and even very, very young children — it's during those moments when you realize you made the right decision to be a part of the Operation Iraqi Freedom. Another real blessing here is the great staff USACE has assembled including five Iraqi engineers. We learn from each other and I sincerely appreciate their graciousness and willingness to help us understand their culture, their sensitivities, and their priorities.

For over two years, I've served alongside thousands of U.S. troops who quietly go about their job of helping Iraq move forward. I cannot express how proud I am of their courage and dedication. The only thing that most of them complain about is

that the TV networks back home only cover the negative aspects, ignoring the real progress that's being made here. Once I return to my home in Mobile, AL, I plan to encourage folks to accept a tour here in Iraq, even if it's for six months. The memories you'll take with you are well worth the sacrifice.

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Dorothy Ivey speaks to Fox News correspondent Oliver North about the projects she's overseeing in western Iraq.

