

Postcards from Iraq

Something Greater Than Ourselves...

When the opportunity came up so that I could deploy to Iraq as a civilian with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, I was overjoyed. The fact that my husband was there as well made the opportunity even better. Even in all my excitement, my friends and family still wanted to know why I wanted to deploy so much.

I have many reasons why, but

the biggest one is that I want more than anything to be a part of the mission – rebuilding Iraq. Having spent two years in the military in 90s I was never able to deploy with my fellow Soldiers. I never got to be a part of the mission. Then, after September 11, 2001, I put it in my heart to do my part for the Soldiers and their Families that deployed – anyway that I could.



Jana and Travis Edwards fly to Iraq on a C-130 Hercules in 130+ degree heat on their journey to be a part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reconstruction mission in Iraq.

I also have stood by my husband, my big brother, my little brother, and many of my military friends as they deployed to Iraq to do their part. I supported them on the numerous deployments in the Global War on Terrorism. From Family Readiness Groups to personalized care packages, I did my part – but it was not enough for me. I wanted to be a part of something greater than ourselves – I wanted to be part of the mission.



The good news that I was deploying came on Mother's Day weekend, while I was at home visiting my family in Richmond, Virginia. I was lying down resting when my husband called to let me know that I "needed to pack." I went through many different emotions that night from crying and laughing to shock and nervousness. My family was there through it all.

I feel very proud to be a part of this mission and the support that I have received from my family and friends have been wonderful. Just knowing that they are praying for my husband and I every day makes me feel good about what we are doing.

Fast forward through medical screening and deployment training to the flight to Kuwait where the real adventure began and that is when it hit me that I was deploying – oh, and the heat hit me too. It was 101 degrees when we landed in Kuwait in the middle of the night.

I cannot explain how amazing it felt to be issued body armor that my family members may have worn, to sleep in the same tent city, to board the same military aircraft, and to set foot on the same tarmac in Baghdad, Iraq – to be a part of something great than ourselves...the reconstruction of Iraq.

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