

Postcards from Iraq

Serving in Iraq — answering our Nation's call

*By Jose Marrero, Information Technology Specialist
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baghdad*

On Sept. 11, 2001, I was at work in my home office in El Paso, TX., when I heard and saw the news about terrorists attacking the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

As background, in 1990 I was honorably discharged with medical conditions from the U.S. Army with over 17 years service. Following 911, I sincerely wanted to return to duty but my injuries prevented me from obtaining a waiver.

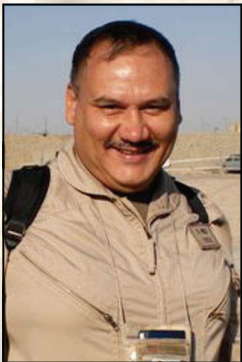
Six years went by and then I was offered a position with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Gulf Region Division helping rebuild Iraq.

In accepting the USACE assignment, my only wish was to serve in some way to help my country achieve its goals of defeating an unseen and cowardly enemy which hid behind the civilian populace using them as human shields and pawns, in their quest to destabilize ours and the Iraqi way of life.

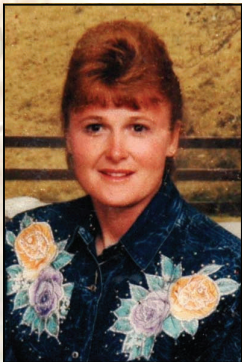
Since arriving in Baghdad, I've seen first hand the immense needs of families here but despite those challenges I've been amazed by their genuine warmth and kindness. I know I'm involved in a noble mission. My job as an IT Specialist may not put me in the "trenches" fighting the enemy, but it allows me to assist many good people on our staff who are helping local townpeople enjoy a better way of life. The amount of decrepitude in this country, after decades of neglect by Saddam Hussein, is unimaginable. We're building schools, renovating hospitals, repaving roads, installing new water and sewer lines, constructing fire stations, and putting in new electric distribution networks.

If we, in the long run, can confront Muslim extremists and prevent another 911 while at the same time provide a more secure way of life for our Iraqi friends, then I feel that this job has been worth my time and sacrifice away from my loved ones. I thank my wife Inge and my family for their continued support.

Being part of this great Coalition team is inspiring, rebuilding Iraq historic, helping others along the way priceless. May God Bless America and give us the courage, strength, and fortitude to defeat evil wherever it may be. **ESSAYONS!!**



Jose Marrero



My lovely wife Inge

