

Postcards from Iraq

Most rewarding six months of my military career

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I have been honored to be part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) team serving as the Officer in Charge of the Ramadi Resident Office for the past six months.

The Ramadi Office is responsible for the safe and successful execution of 25 projects valued at over \$160 million. Most of the projects focus on improvement of basic infrastructure within the Ramadi area, which includes construction of rural water treatment plants, electrical substations, and electrical distribution lines. As the security environment continues to improve in the Al Anbar Province, new projects have been awarded to help develop the business and commerce industries. Renovation of the railroad and major bridges will improve the Iraqis' ability to travel and move goods throughout their country. Being involved with these projects has been very rewarding as they have a direct impact on the Iraqi citizens, but as with every tour in my career, it is all about the people I have met.

I had the opportunity to work with many Iraqi governmental officials, engineers, and contractors. Each of them had their own story of hardship and struggle before and during the war. Although these stories humbled me, their perseverance to improve their quality of life proved to be a major source of motivation..

The professionalism and dedication of the Marines, Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen with whom I have had the privilege of working were truly inspiring. Specifically, I had the opportunity to work closely with the civil affairs teams. I was amazed at the level of knowledge these young men and women developed in just a short time. From construction to governance, they repeatedly proved their ability to adapt and succeed.

Finally, I owe many thanks to the members of the USACE team. Their support and patience never wavered. Their service to our country often goes unnoticed as those of us in uniform receive most of the attention, but they play an integral part to the progress we make on a daily basis.

I would have to say, this deployment has been the most rewarding six months of my career. I look forward to returning to my family and friends, whose love and prayers always remained constant. I will forever remember my time in Iraq and the great people I met along the way.

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Some Iraqi children stop by to say hello near one of the rural water treatment plants being built in Anbar Province.

