

Postcards from Iraq



Lt. Col. James Moore checks a wadi crossing in Al Anbar.

Citizen – Warrior What does that really mean in the 21st Century?

**Lt. Col. James Moore
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
OIC, Al Anbar Province Area Office, Iraq**

I first heard the term, Citizen – Warrior, when Mike, one of my older brothers, went to the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) and then again when another brother, Dick, went a few years later.

From the age of 13, I was repeatedly asked the question, “Are you going to go there, too? VMI is a great engineering school and produces citizen-warriors and leaders.” “No way,” was my reply, “the military life is not for me.”

Well, I ended up going to VMI after all. But, I said back then, “I would only do my six years of U.S. Army Reserve duty obligation and then get out.”

Here I am, twenty-four years later, still in the Army Reserve and finishing up the second deployment of my career. The first being right after 9-11 in November 2001 when I went to Uzbekistan and Afghanistan as part of a seven-Soldier Facility Engineer Team from the U.S. Army Facility Engineer Group to manage Base Camp construction. That deployment was to support the U.S. military only.

This tour I’ve had the great pleasure to discover more examples of what I see are Citizen – Warriors; not in the strict sense of citizens that are also in the military reserve, but civilians who have volunteered to give of their own-self towards the betterment of others.

The civilians who have come to Iraq, as well as the Iraqi citizens who have put their and their families’ lives at risk, work side-by-side with the Army Corps of Engineers in order to make a difference in the infrastructure reconstruction efforts and to provide opportunities for this country.

Today, from the efforts of those before me and of those here today, the Iraqi citizens of the Al Anbar Province have rural water treatment plants, public health clinics, a waste water treatment plant and collection system, solar lights for

safety, and the Provincial Government that is functioning again to continue to improve the services for its citizens.

My greatest pleasure has been to meet with local citizens and sheiks and to see them proudly speak of what has started as a new beginning and to know that I, as much as they, am a part of a new dawn for Iraq’s future generations.

What I’ve discovered for me is that the definition of a Citizen – Warrior is no longer just one who puts down the plow and picks up a weapon to fight and defend his land and way of life, but one who can change the lives of others through their efforts and deeds to make a difference.

The path that I shall continue to travel was the right choice for me.

ESSAYONS!

Jim Moore



Lt. Col. James Moore (center, in Army green combat uniform) discusses Al Anbar reconstruction issues with tribal sheiks.