

Postcard from Iraq

Always ending with a hand over the heart...



I deployed to the Gulf Region Division in July 2007 from my position as a Drilling Individual Augmentee (DIMA) assigned as the Deputy Legal Counsel to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, at the Pentagon. Prior to this assignment, I was mobilized in 2004 to work in the Office of Iraq Transition, Office of the Secretary of Defense, at the Pentagon.

When I was offered the opportunity to come to Baghdad, I jumped at it and viewed it as a chance to get out of Washington, D.C., to see what the real situation in Iraq.

At the Pentagon, I work on contract and fiscal issues for the Joint Staff, as well as legislative proposals that will help DoD better utilize its funds in the Global War on Terrorism.

While it is at times exciting to work with famous civilian and military leaders at the Pentagon, I had a sense that I was missing where the real problems existed and the work was being done.

Having never worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, this deployment was an opportunity to work with dedicated professionals of the Corps. Seeing them in action has been a special privilege and I am proud to say that the work they are doing here will make a definite and positive impact on the everyday lives of People of Iraq.

As I get ready to leave, several things stand out in my mind. First, is the friendliness of the Iraqi People. At GRD, I have met several Iraqi Associates and we have struggled together through trying to communicate always ending with a smile and the right hand over the heart. Second, the dedication and sacrifice of the American Soldier continues to amaze me.

Working and living across the street from a Combat Support Hospital you see the steady flow of Blackhawks and Humvees bringing wounded Soldiers and Iraqis for medical treatment.

It is a constant reminder that this is a tough and dangerous environment, yet the mission goes forward and good work gets done. Finally, I am surprised at how difficult it is to leave and quickly my time here has passed.

Here is a photo of me standing near a bunker one night in the International Zone, Baghdad, Iraq.

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