

# Postcards from Iraq



## **Building Trust, Enhancing Relationships**

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It's like being in a pressure cooker all the time. A big, sand-filled, dusty, no-frills pressure cooker, turned up on high. That's what it's like when you're working on a 'star' project like the MDHU (Modular Detainee Housing Unit) retrofit. There are a lot of people that have their eyes on this project, and its success will be setting the bar for future projects of this type.

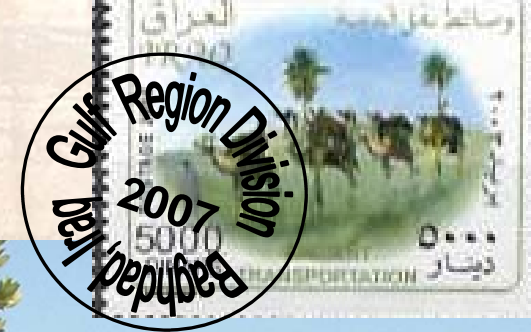


Despite the pressure, the long hours and the austere conditions I don't think I would trade it for a position that offered more creature comforts. This is good, challenging work and I enjoy doing it. The interaction with the Iraqi contractor is interesting to say the least. This may be a detention facility, but it represents so much more. It's an opportunity to reach across cultures and work together to build a new future.

It's a microcosm of the relationship between Iraq and America...building trust, enhancing relationships, learning and moving forward.

I can sum it up with an addition to a quote by President Ronald Reagan, "Some people spend an entire lifetime wondering if they made a difference. The Marines don't have that problem" ...and neither will I. ESSAYONS!

USACE PHOTOS



**Patrick Melaughlan at Camp  
Black Adder in Basrah province  
In Iraq**