

# Postcards from Iraq

## Wish I was there

Dear Family and Friends,

Good news! I'll be home soon. More good news! Reconstruction in Iraq is happening and I saw it with my own eyes. So many of you including my co-workers, witnessed terrorism personally on 9/11. I'm glad to say I have successfully contributed toward the Global War on Terror.

The past six months here in Mosul have been interesting and different. Together with my co-workers I oversaw seven projects ranging from paving roads and building courthouses to renovating granaries, totaling over \$17 million.

While doing so, the comforts of home were missing; but FOB Diamondback tried to make it like home. The most rewarding part of my time spent here has been the fantastic people I've had the pleasure of getting to know and work with. Here with the MAO/MRO family I shared meals daily, walks in the evening around the airfield or a break on the sidewalk with a few laughs to make the frustrations tolerable.

I have had the wonderful experience of standing in a Christian monastery, riding in a military convoy and interacting with the Iraqi people. When the days are good, they are great. When they are bad, they are catastrophic. The loss of life experienced by the Iraqi people in the efforts to make a better life is heartbreaking. I know my contribution is a step in the right direction for reconstruction and development.

When I get home I'll have one heck of a story to tell you. I know my experiences will encourage other USACE personnel to step up to the challenge, because this is what it has been: a challenge ... and one I'll never forget. I look forward to coming home and reacquainting myself with my co-workers in New York District. I'll ask them if they're up for the challenge, because stepping up to this challenge allows for advancement opportunities and a chance to make a difference. I want to thank them as well as my family for allowing me this opportunity to help make the world a safer place. Thank you all for understanding and supporting this decision.

John

