

Postcards from Iraq

Aiming High and Surpassing All Expectations

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My tour in Iraq started with high expectations as I complete my 29th year in the Air Force Reserves. All my fellow active Air Force counterparts, who came to support the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers mission in Iraq tell me it was the best job in their careers. Well, it was more than the best job. It was the best experience! Helping the Iraqi people to rebuild their security through their own funding was extremely satisfying. I had the pleasure of working on the first Foreign Military Sales project for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq—the port and sea-wall project at the Port of Umm Qasr. My experiences included meeting the people of Iraq, understanding their culture, and having a small part in the advancement of freedom.

I left my family in the states, knowing I'd miss my daughter Samantha's first play and son Joey's freshmen football season. I put an awful lot on my wonderful spouse's shoulders. They all did amazing, though, because of so many friends and family, not to mention the gracious Americans who just wanted her to know they supported the troops! My wife, Melanie worked as a teacher in the middle school, volunteered for countless organizational groups, including the USO. She handled all thrown at her - magnificently!

Now, I know my family's sacrifices were great, but because of my experiences in Iraq I am more aware of those special moments and what they mean to me and my family, and I am now even better prepared to enjoy future firsts with more enthusiasm. I have gained a tremendous amount of patience and understanding from my interactions with the government of Iraq; which is working so hard to find compromises in this multi-ethnic society, realizing each group has a part in the success of the country. I feel this assignment has made me a better person for my family and my community!

Thank you USACE
for the opportunity to
help the Iraqi people,
and thanks to my team,
and Paul and Van for your
friendship!



Serving up the Thanksgiving feast



Important meetings with the Iraqi Ministry of Defense



My team—couldn't have done any of this without them!