

Postcards from Iraq

Exploring the Cradle of Civilization

by Nancy J. Brighton
New York District

Although this deployment was my third tour in Iraq, it was my first mission working at a Corps district in country. On this assignment I was a member of the Gulf Region South (GRS) Archive Closeout Team, which included two other USACE team members from the St. Louis District, Kelly Bertoglio and Amy Williams. The Archive Closeout Team was charged with reviewing all of the district's completed or closed-out contracts and creating reference files for each contract. Our objective was to archive evidence of the reconstruction efforts accomplished by USACE in the GRS AOR. In processing these closed contracts, I saw first hand the substantial volume of work completed by GRS project teams over the years, and the good work USACE has accomplished in the region.

The GRS office is situated in what was once the southern portion of Mesopotamia, known as the birthplace of civilization, and home to some of the world's earliest cities, including the ancient city of Ur, which is located only a short distance away. Today, the remains of the City of Ur consist of the ziggurat, which I could see from our office window, the ruins of the royal cemetery, and numerous mud brick building foundations, all dating to about 4,000 years ago. Sitting atop the ziggurat looking across the site to the city of Al Nasiriyah, I was at the same time delighted to be exploring the cradle of civilization, and yet saddened that the region is in such a state



Nancy Brighton, Environmental Analyst with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region South district, pictured at a Tallil, Iraq, recognition ceremony for local base workers.

(USACE PHOTO BY MOHAMMED ALIWI)

of turmoil. The projects that GRS has completed and those that the district continues to work have made a difference in the region.

I am glad to have deployed to assist in our missions in the area.

Essayons!

