

Postcards from Iraq

It is all about the Iraqi people

By Rod Hill
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Let me start by saying that this is my third deployment to Iraq to participate in the biggest reconstruction mission the U.S. has ever undertaken. I will admit when I first was deployed to Baghdad in 2004, it was for all the wrong reasons... the money being the biggest reason. However, after being in country for only two weeks, I realized that my being there was not for the money, but for the Iraqi people. It was not until I began to meet many of our Iraqi associates that I truly understood their struggles under the Saddam regime.

It is this understanding that has me back in Iraq for my third tour. Each tour in Iraq has been a very rewarding and life changing experience. Not only are we fulfilling our mission as the reconstruction agent for the country, we also participate in many humanitarian efforts.

As the chief of contracting for the U.S. Army Gulf Region South District, I am responsible for the day-to-day contracting endeavors for the reconstruction mission.

Performing the contracting mission in such a volatile environment is definitely the biggest challenge of my 18 years of government service. Although it is a challenge for us all, we get through the many challenges that come our way. For me, it is the smiling faces of the Iraqi children and the warm hellos from our Iraqi associates that keep me focused on my job here. Many people believe that we should not be here, but once you personally meet and get to know the Iraqi people (some of which refer to me as their "big American brother"), it becomes apparent our reasons for being here...to help rebuild this country and to help the Iraqi people rebuild there lives. I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve the Gulf Region South District. If I had it to do all over again, I would not change a thing. Essays!



Rod Hill is pointing at the town where he serves nowadays. (ARMY PHOTO BY MOHAMMED ALIWI)