

Postcards from Iraq

Why volunteer for Iraq duty?

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Well, here I am in Baghdad and my family and friends continue to ask ... 'why'?

No matter how I answer their questions it doesn't seem to fully satisfy their curiosity. I have a lot of reasons to "why". But it all comes down to one basic answer — it's for myself. In my heart I know I'm supposed to be here doing what I'm doing. I could do contracting back at Hanscom Air Force Base in Massachusetts and contribute a lot. But here in Baghdad, I'm helping Iraqi families and future generations. We're making a difference.

I have no regrets about volunteering. I'm responsible for awarding construction contracts to build medical clinics, police stations, town council buildings, parks and playgrounds, sanitary sewer lines, waste water treatment plants, storm sewer projects, electrical substations, paving roads, upgrading gas stations and my favorite ...schools (elementary, high schools, vocational technical schools). It is my belief that if we are to succeed here, it has to start with the children. If we provide them the tools so they can develop an inquisitive mind open to other ideas, we will have made a lasting positive impact.

The Iraqi people deserve a chance for a better way of life. I've met some great individuals and they share many of the same values we all do, just trying to provide a brighter future for their families. The other day I was talking to an Army private about our efforts to rebuild Iraq and he told me, "What you do is saving soldier's lives. Thank you." I'm glad I'm here and part of this historic effort.

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Roger Nowicki in Baghdad