

# Postcards from Iraq

## Where's Al Asad?

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One of the first reactions I get when I tell people that I'm stationed in Al Asad is where's that? Of course I didn't know myself when I first heard of it. If you are stationed in Al Anbar Province you quickly learn about Al Asad. It is a former Iraqi Air Force Base located in the desert with perhaps the second longest runway in the country and is the biggest FOB in the province. And it is probably one of the safest bases in Al Anbar; being out in the desert with no urban population near your main gate does have its advantages. The closest town is Baghdadi (and yes, for those wags who have been to Baghdad, there really is a Baghdadi) about ten miles to the east on the Euphrates River. For those who don't think there's anything there but dust and sand, it does have a genuine oasis, "Abraham's Oasis," complete with palm groves.

The Al Asad Resident Office is probably the largest geographically; its territory covers everything in Al Anbar just west of Ramadi, which makes for some long and interesting road trips to project sites. We have projects from the Euphrates River to the Jordanian border, from the Syrian border in the north to the Saudi border in the south. Our most visible project is Haditha Dam on the Euphrates. Haditha Dam is the main electric power plant in Al Anbar and it also supplies power to Baghdad. Up there we have a USACE representative to help ensure that the dam keeps functioning and power keeps flowing. The dam itself towers ten decks above the river and four below. It is a great place if you want to stay in shape and lose some weight as none of the elevators work and a lot of time is spent going up and down stairs to troubleshoot

problems, attend meetings, and to ensure the Iraqi workers keep up with the maintenance.

Life on Al Asad is like life on any other major FOB. It's got its PX, Burger King, Pizza Hut, and Green Bean Coffee shop. It also has its share of convoy traffic, fine powder dust, and hordes of bicycles.

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Abraham's Oasis, Al Asad



Al Asad Mosque



SFC Wong at Haditha Dam