

# Postcards from Iraq

## The sky is the limit . . .

**2LT Shane Deckert, Officer in Charge,  
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Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**



**2LT Shane Deckert visits a Corps of Engineers project site near Taji, Iraq.**

Now there's the phrase that most describes my experience in Iraq and the lessons I've learned out here.

If you would have asked me at the end of my College Career (2007 graduate at University of Portland), if I thought I would get the amount of experience and opportunity that I have within a year of graduating, I probably would have said, "yeah... right... I'm only a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt!" Well, well, well, I was proven wrong.

A few months after graduation and going active duty at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, I was given the opportunity to come to Iraq and work with the Central District (GRC), Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Wow, what an opportunity! Aside from that, they would make me an Officer in Charge! And when I got here, I soon realized it was a test of 'sink or swim' for 'the youngest OIC in Iraq'. I chose to swim, and it was a doggy paddle the first few weeks, but soon caught on. I was given a seven-month job at the Taji Iraq National Depot Resident Office (INDO) with an office of great people and hard workers to complete the mission. This was when I realized the sky really is the limit.

Being able to wake up, drive to my projects on the Iraqi National Depot side of Camp Taji and get out of the truck for hands-on construction experience at my projects everyday was an invaluable experience... and I sure had an awesome time doing it!

By the end of my seven months in Iraq, I'd learned an incredible amount of information. I have enough hands-on experience at Taji INDO projects to satisfy my hopes for a deployment that would give me great civil engineering experience and a chance to help change a country. And in doing so, I also got the honor of serving in the best military in the world for the greatest country on earth.

With the amount of responsibility entrusted in me during this deployment, I was given an outstanding opportunity to excel, and it showed me in my career and in life...

**"The Sky is the Limit"**

For more information on challenging GRC jobs in Iraq visit: <http://cpolwapp.belvoir.army.mil/coe-gwot/>

**Sand storm skies near Taji, Iraq, create an orange background for 2LT Shane Deckert.**

