

Postcards from Iraq

This tree keeps growing in spite of all

**Shirley Crowder, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE),
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While my husband, Claude, has been with the USACE for the past 30 years, I decided to take a recent opportunity to come to Iraq. Claude did his first year in 2005 and his second year in 2007, but I am a new Corps employee as an Administrative Assistant serving the Baghdad Area Office. We have remote sites at the Loyalty and International Zone Resident Offices. I do not get to see all of my immediate coworkers every day, so I am delighted to interact with them when they pass through on their way for R&R, to come to work here in Baghdad or return to the U.S.

USACE has always made tremendous contributions all over the world, whether it's Desert Storm or disaster relief. I am proud to have joined in the effort to make a difference in time and history for a great cause.

Discovering Iraq is quite interesting. It's not just about the people that live here; it is also about the country. Iraq has a great deal of unique beauty, from the desert sands that I walk in daily to the palm trees, the delicious figs and the rivers that tell a different story...there is so much to appreciate about Iraq.

Since I have been here, I have seen the country in all its beauty; the moon seems to be brighter and the sunset, . . . aawwww, you have to see it to believe it, because the sunset is incredibly beautiful in Iraq.

A special tree here on Victory Base tells a story of amazing strength because it was bent against its will at an immature age and still manages to sustain life while the roots remain strong and firm in the ground. Although this tree may never grow to the mature height of other trees, it shows no sign of weakness, regret or shame. I have fallen in love with this tree because it shows what the people in Iraq are going through. I will have regrets when I leave, because that tree has become a part of me...just like the country of Iraq has.

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



Shirley Crowder visits her tree at Victory Base in Baghdad.



Shirley Crowder sits on "Saddam's Chair" in Baghdad's Al Faw Palace.