

Postcards from Iraq

'Proud to Serve'

By Lt. Cmdr. Theron C. Colbert, P.E.
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Frame of reference — at my Navy permanent duty assignment in Charleston, SC, we managed \$72M annually in construction with a staff of 38 people. As a Navy Individual Augmentee working for USACE here in Iraq, my office is doing over 2.5 times that amount with a quarter of the staff — two military and eight civilians! Despite the heavy workload and long days, the camaraderie here is truly inspiring and motivates us all to keep charging ahead.

Between two and four years ago, certain events transpired in my life which led me to the teaching ministries of Joyce Meyer, Joel Osteen, T.D. Jakes, and Paula White. Looking back, I can now see that God was preparing me for my journey here. I realize that He's continuing to mold me, transform me, and watch over me for an ultimately higher calling which He's preparing me for. I really miss my wife and boys, and sometimes worry about my mom, dad, and sisters being stressed out over me being here. But whenever I have to go off-base to a construction site, I meditate upon the 23rd and 91st Psalms to provide me reassurance and comfort. And I often reflect upon the stories of David, Daniel, Joseph, and Moses to give me the courage I need to get through the day.

If I'm disappointed at anything while over here, it would have to be the U.S. national news media's fixation on only the absolute worst, horrific and shocking events in Iraq. No stories of the courageous Iraqi contractors nor of our Iraqi USACE employees who are putting their lives at risk every day — trying to make a difference for their families, their neighbors and this nation.

When I complete my tour, the accomplishment I'll be proudest of (especially as an electrical engineer) is our efforts to provide reliable electricity to the 1.2-million people throughout Al Anbar Province. I'm also humbled that we played a significant role in providing nearly 180,000 people in some of the poorest and most remote regions of Iraq with clean, potable drinking water.

This deployment has been a tremendous opportunity to learn and grow — both personally and professionally.

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**132 kV Mobile Substation and Pump Station
at Al Qa'im in Al Anbar Province**



**Lt. Cmdr.
Theron C. Colbert**



**Lt. Cmdr. Colbert
speaks with local Iraqi officials.**



GRC's Al Asad Resident Office staff