



Postcards from Iraq

Working with Heroes in Iraq

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Commanding the Central District, Gulf Region Division, of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has been the most difficult and challenging assignment of my career. I have never faced both the high quantity and tremendous complexity of challenges in any other organization. Yet, I would not trade this experience for anything. It is impossible to put into words the excitement and good feelings that result from the daily successes we have in re-building the infrastructure of Iraq.

I have been able to work and team with every level of the Iraqi government, along with dozens of Coalition organizations on hundreds of important construction projects across both Baghdad and Al Anbar provinces.

The people on our District team are heroes. They work so very hard, every day, to turn ideas into

a physical reality that improves life for the Iraqi people. I am humbled by their service and so very glad that I have had the opportunity to serve with them, to learn from them, and to share a precious part of their lives.

The Iraqi people are heroes. Stricken by violence, lacking basic services and challenged to provide even the bare minimum for their families, they continue to work towards a better future. I will always cherish my memories of these two groups of heroes.

Photos: above, COL Robert J. Vasta greets an al Farouq classroom full of future Iraqi heroes in the USACE-built school near Baghdad; right, the April 2008 GRC Senior Leaders' Conference demonstrates one of the many challenges in Iraqi construction, the Iraqi weather.

