

# Postcards from Iraq

## Helping Iraqis realize their dream

By Vickie Whitehouse, Executive Secretary  
Commander, Gulf Region South District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Tallil, Iraq

To my family and my extended family at U.S. Army Network Enterprise Technology Command/9<sup>th</sup> Signal Command (Army), Fort Huachuca, AZ — I write to you from a country that is offering me the most incredible experience imaginable . . . I'm serving in Iraq.

In the United States, we are so blessed. We are fortunate to have had great leaders so many centuries ago with the vision of a bright future. We are fortunate enough to have the ability to acquire the knowledge we need to succeed. We are fortunate to have the finances to pay for what we need. We are fortunate to have the men and women of the Military who are willing to fight not only for our freedom but for the freedom of others.

Now, I am fortunate to be able to work alongside people who share my interest in helping Iraqis realize their dream that they too can be just as blessed. I work with a tremendous group of professionals from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region South.

The projects that we're overseeing are helping Iraq move forward. In partnership with the Government of Iraq, Iraqi companies and Iraqi construction crews, we have built additional classrooms to provide children a better learning environment — prior to this effort, it was common to see three students sharing one desk. We have built water treatment plants and distribution networks to provide clean, drinking water — in many cases for the first time ever. Hospitals have been renovated or expanded to ensure medical treatment is available to all. There is so much important work being accomplished here and still more that needs to be done. I am so honored to be a part of this success.

We have Iraqi workers who are part of our team. They have the same dreams we do — they want their children and grandchildren to have a brighter future. They want to be able to provide the basic necessities without having to fear for their lives. On a daily basis, they are such an inspiration to me. Donations are received from a number of organizations in the United States. The look on the children's faces when they receive the toys is a sight to behold. Some of our Iraqi engineers take candy to the children when they visit a site. Everyone does what they can to make life easier and a little happier.

I want to thank my coworkers and friends at NET-COM/9<sup>th</sup> SC (A) for allowing me this opportunity. I know they are sacrificing to allow me this privilege. I want to thank my family for their continued support. Although I am missing my four grandchildren, I know I made the right decision to volunteer and be part of this great mission. I will continue to help here in Iraq in anyway I can in the coming months and look forward to sharing my experiences with everyone when I return home.

Love you — Mom, Grandma  
Vickie Whitehouse  
Fort Huachuca, AZ



*"In Iraq, it's common to see two or three students sharing one desk in the classroom — and most of the schools have double shifts, with one group of students attending class in the morning, a second group in the afternoon. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is overseeing a number of construction projects adding additional classrooms to help correct that situation" — Vickie Whitehouse, Executive Secretary, Gulf Region South District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Tallil, Iraq.*

