

# Postcards from Iraq

## A Step Back In Time

by Robert Deroche  
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**W**hen I signed up for the EnvST (Environmental Support Team) program a little over 2 yrs ago (just 9 months after 9/11) as a way to contribute in non-combative way to the Global War on Terrorism, little did I know that I would embark on a journey that would take me, quite literally, halfway around the world to Iraq.

Ironically, I left the U.S. on Independence Day, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2004 towards a country that is in its own infancy, as far as independence is concerned, yet a country that is one of the oldest, most historic, in terms of recorded civilizations. As a biologist, I have had the opportunity to visit many different parts of this country, each having its own unique character. My experience around the country has been the same regarding my exposure to the local citizens; they are happy to see the U.S. in their country and always welcome our passing with waves and the “Thumbs-up” sign wherever our convoys happen to go.

Recently, I was able to spend a few days amid the ruins of the ancient city of Babylon, in the center of the Biblical region known as Mesopotamia. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think that I would have the opportunity to visit Babylon. I am in the position of Environmental Protection Specialist for the MultiNational Corps in Iraq. I am not only able to work on environmental policy in a nation which basically has no policy, but am also able to do hands-on work out in the field. This photograph was taken atop of Saddam Hussein’s Babylon Palace during my trip to Babylon to do an environmental baseline survey and closure report on a Coalition Camp. It shows the rebuilt Palace of Nebuchadnezzar and the ruins of ancient Babylon.

The hours are long and sometimes arduous, the living conditions are not always 5-star, but it is rewarding to me knowing that I am helping the United States leave this country in better condition than when they first entered it, both in terms of government and the environment. I strongly urge my fellow Corps employees to volunteer for what may be YOUR Experience of a Lifetime, as well.

**Essayons!**



**Robert Deroche takes time from his duties serving in the Corps Gulf Region Division to appreciate the historic sites around him — such as the ruins of Babylon.**

*(Photo provided by Robert Deroche)*