

# Postcards from Iraq

## **We came, we saw, we rebuilt**

by Ronald Ray  
Huntington District

**W**hy do they do it? Why do many Corps employees of the Huntington District as well as employees throughout the Corps volunteer for service in Iraq? Why do many of them extend their initial tour of duty, and why do many of them take additional tours? Perhaps the answer is in the wording on the sign pictured here: "We Came, We Saw, We Rebuilt."

The primary mission of the Forat Area Office is to rebuild. The geographic scope of that mission includes the Iraqi provinces of Babil, Karbala, Najaf, Qadisiyah, and Wasit. This comprises the heartland of Iraq. Forat is the Arabic word meaning heartland. Projects completed or currently in process include Buildings, Health, and Education, 50; Water, 35; Communications, 19; Electrical, 7; Security, 108. These include police stations, schools, hospitals, and others.

Pictured in the photo are (front, left to right): Ron Ray, IT Specialist from Huntington District serves in that capacity for the Forat Area Office and the five resident offices. Will Hettchen, PE is a Civil Engineer from Baltimore District where he serves as Resident Engineer for the DC Schools projects. At the time of this picture Will was Assistant Area Engineer and Resident Engineer at Qadisiyah Resident Office, co-located with the Forat Area Office. Wesley Watson, Civil Engineer from Buffalo District at the time of this picture was serving as Area Engineer. He has since become the Area Engineer at the Basrah Area Office. (Back Row, left to right): Allen Diaz, from St. Louis District works aboard the dredge Potter of the Mississippi. He was active duty in the U. S. Army during both Desert Shield and Iraqi Freedom. After seeing how poor conditions were, he came back to help the Iraqi people rebuild what Sadaam had let go to waste. He serves the Qadisiyah Resident Office as a Construction Representative. Tonya Myrick is an Environmental Specialist in the Regulatory Branch at Vicksburg District. She serves as the Qadisiyah Resident Office Project Manager. Julia Davis is an Administrative Assistant at Albuquerque District and works at John Martin Dam in Colorado. She serves the Forat Area Office as an Administrative Assistant. LTC Greg Raimondo at the time of this photo was serving as Deputy Commander of the Forat Area Office and has since returned to St. Louis District where he serves as Deputy District Engineer. Russ Davidson, PE is a Civil Engineer in the Hydropower Analysis Center, Northwestern Division, in Portland, Oregon. He serves as a Project Engineer for Area Office and the Qadisiyah Resident Office. LTC Andrew Goetz (not pictured), Jacksonville District now fills the Forat Deputy Commander position. Will Hettchen now serves as Area Engineer.

Why do people volunteer for an assignment in Iraq? Ask any of these and you'll get an answer in some way related to the message on the sign: "We Came, We Saw, We Rebuilt."



The sign was the brain-child of Allen Diaz (left back row). It was his design, and was painted in honor of LTC Greg Raimondo (2<sup>nd</sup> from right, back row), who was at the time of the photo serving at Gulf Region South (GRS) District as Deputy Commander for the Forat Area Office. As LTC Raimondo's tour of duty in Iraq came to a close the sign was painted as a means of expressing the gratitude of the other Corps employees in the Forat Area Office. (Photo provided)