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From the Angel of GRS MWR

By Emily Mullet
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Dhi Qar, IRAQ--Aside from the feeling of pride that one gets from being a part of the ongoing efforts of rebuilding Iraq, one may wonder what we do to take a break from the seven-day work week to re-energize ourselves and build up morale.

True, work is fast-paced with long hours and the team must constantly stay focused, keeping the mission our top priority, but every now and then we put aside working as a team to play as a team. Here at the Gulf Region South district, we have an MWR (Morale, Welfare & Recreation) Committee which plans events for everyone to participate in.

These events bring together GRS employees, our security teams (Aegis) and occasionally our local Iraqi workers. They develop camaraderie among folks from many states/countries/cultures, while enhancing the command climate and develop new and lasting friendships. Here is an inside peek at past morale building events....

A good time was had by all at our Halloween costume party. Of course, we took advantage of the situation and planned games to poke fun at our good-natured leaders. We had the last laugh as we watched our officers be rolled up with toilet paper from head to toe in the Mummy Contest!

And then there was our memorable Christmas Party where Santa made a surprise grand entrance in his red suit and long white beard, toting a sack of presents over his shoulder for all good little civilians and Soldiers.



Emily Mullet deployed from New Orleans District to work as a budget analyst with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region South district. [USACE Photo by Mohammed Aliwi]

Sometimes to escape from the hooch, we had movie and/or poker nights. Since you can't bet with money here, to keep it interesting, we had prizes or inducted the winners into the GRS Poker Hall of Fame. We have farewell dinners for friends redeploying or get-togethers at the local Hookah hang-out.

At the New Year's Eve party, we popped open the corks of champagne bottles – (even if it was only sparkling white grape juice inside!) The die-hard football fans rolled out of their beds to attend our Super Bowl party. The fact that it aired in Iraq at 0217 didn't stop them.

But my favorite is our recent addition of horseshoe pits where we can hold tournaments for some fun rivalry. So, if you're considering a deployment, I can promise you this - you will work hard and long. But you will be well rewarded along the way.

In the end, you'll return to your normal everyday life. But right before you do - at the very end of your tour, you may be recognized at a farewell ceremony. In that moment, you will know that your time here was well spent and leave knowing that you've helped make life in Iraq better for others. You will have gained a clearer vision of the mission than you thought you had when you were 6,000 miles away watching the evening news.

They have a saying here referring to the rebuilding of Iraq as "Living the Dream." I'm glad I was afforded the opportunity to live a part of it.

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