

Postcards from Afghanistan



Left: Reed Freeman (left) in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, mentoring the laboratory staff at a construction trades school.

Below: Reed Freeman (right) while working with the South Korean military on culvert rehabilitation for the Bagram Airfield in Bagram, Afghanistan.

with civil engineers and laboratory technicians. While deployed, I've worked closely with Afghan contractors, Afghans hired by AED to serve as quality assurance representatives, and Afghans starting new construction materials laboratories. I've mentored by means of classrooms, working side-by-side toward building an airfield, and while performing laboratory tests together. In all cases, I found the Afghan citizens to be a joy

both to teach and to work alongside. The Afghan citizens have tremendous work ethic, a thirst for knowledge, and honest appreciation for visitors who wish to share time and resources for the good of Afghanistan.

Over the past year, I've come to realize how much the Afghan citizens have taught me. While I instructed in technical areas, the Afghans were teaching me a greater appreciation for family, culture and peace. They also demonstrated to me honorable behaviors including politeness, humility and respect for others. While I hope

Shared Growth

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I recently started my fourth deployment to Afghanistan, since first arriving in this country in 2004. These deployments, totaling more than 2 years, were made possible by the support of my home employer, the Geotechnical and Structures Laboratory, U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center, in Vicksburg, MS. I consider my time in Afghanistan to be the highlight of my career so far, primarily due to the enjoyment I've found in mentoring Afghans in technical areas related to construction.

Nearly every position in the Afghanistan Engineer District offers opportunities for working with Afghan citizens. For me, these opportunities have been available mainly through working



my technical coaching has helped Afghanistan, I know now that my personal growth was the much larger reward gained from my overseas deployments.

