

# Postcards from Iraq

## Six days and a wake-up

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In a week, I'll be on a plane back to Jacksonville, Fla., where I work with the Corps of Engineers. For the past eight months, I've worked as the Program Analyst in Balad, Iraq, at the Anaconda Area Office, Gulf Region North district, US Army Corps of Engineers. I process invoices to ensure that all payments are paid on time in the Iraq Reconstruction Program. Here at Anaconda, we have a huge military construction program, totaling approximately \$103 million. The Reconstruction projects are funded by several different appropriated funds.

I like the challenge of the work in Iraq so much, this is my second tour. My first tour was about 18 months when I was assigned to both the North and the Central districts; in Mosul and Baghdad, respectively. It's really not bad living here; it just lacks a few luxuries ... like shopping in the big malls, and visiting friends and family.

Our camp is next to an airfield and the hospital on Anaconda, so there's always some activity with the helicopters flying overhead, jets, gun-firing, and yes...incoming mortars. More than once I've woken up to the tune of incoming mortars and had to run for the bunkers! This happens during the days, too, at which time I can be found hunkering under my desk.

Bottled water is an important commodity here because of the hot temperatures. We have to drink water regularly to avoid dehydration. We also use bottled water to brush our teeth because the tap water is not good for drinking.

You always know when you've been here too long because all of the food in the dining facility—fondly referred to as the DFAC—begins to taste the same. Luckily, we have a few fast food places on the base, and sometimes I go there just to treat myself after the long day at work (or under my desk!)

My time here is almost over, and I'm excited to go home. I know I'll miss this place, and the people I work with. They have been very supportive of me and their friendships are really great.

*Best to all!  
Angelita*

