

Postcards from Iraq

Heading in the right direction



**CDR Steven Frost, Deputy Commander,
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I volunteered for my fourth trip to Iraq. First time I was here in Desert Storm 1990-1991, building the main supply route across Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and part of Iraq. Then I worked as a liaison officer on construction at the Syrian border and reconstruction projects in Al Anbar Province during back-to-back tours 2004-2005. I have a history and a vested interest in this ancient country. I had a desire to return and help complete the job. My personal motivation, the thing that keeps me coming back, is to help the Iraqi people obtain their freedom, a better life and see their wishes fulfilled. The other part of my motivation is that I'm a firm believer in the need of a military presence to stop the spread of terrorism in the world, in the United States.

It kind of goes back to my dad who was in the Navy and on two submarines that sank and he survived. I have three sons and two of them are in military service now and one is seriously considering working as an Army linguist.

Initially, Iraqi people were very hesitant to step up and try to control their own destiny, not the government, but the ordinary people. Now as time has gone on, in some of the more dangerous neighborhoods where we had tough battles, you see more and more the people, the regular citizens, are deciding and acting to take charge of their future. In Fallujah, for example, you now see neighborhood watch programs – and actual U.S.-style signs on walls – that basically say they want to be more peaceful and have a secure life. We had one of our fiercest gun battles where those signs are posted now.

The people here have come a long way - there is still a long way to go, but you see more and more that the Iraqi people understand the Americans and the coalition forces have helped them out. Even though there may be Iraqi contractors doing the building, the people understand it's largely the American public that's paying for it. And they're very grateful.

In our own country, we're very impatient nowadays. But, when you think about it, the newly formed United States took 10-12 years for a Constitution to be formulated, signed and adopted. We struggled too for a long time. Women weren't even allowed to vote until the 1900s, for example. The Iraqis are working through a lot of issues, but it's going in the right direction.



At a \$160 million expansion project on the Qudas electric generating facility north of Baghdad, CDR Frost inspects the diffuser.



Corps of Engineers Chief, Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp, applauds CDR Frost's award of the Bronze Star.



CDR Frost chats with a family at a newly opened clinic in Baghdad.