

Postcards from Iraq

Call to duty in Iraq

By Command Sergeant Major Thomas H. Thrasher
Gulf Region Division South District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

I'm concluding my 2nd mobilization in the past five years — the first deployment was to Afghanistan, this time to Iraq.

I've traveled throughout the country on this assignment, from the north to the south, serving as the Command Sergeant Major for Gulf Region Division South District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Tallil, Iraq. We're overseeing nearly 200 projects valued at \$1 billion in Iraq's nine southern provinces helping improve basic essential services for Iraqi families including access to clean water, functioning sewers, medical care, courthouses, roads and bridges.

As the senior enlisted advisor for the District, I've had the privilege to work with a great team of people all striving to help Iraq move forward — military and civilians, and the Iraqis themselves. Nearly 150 Iraqi engineers are part of our staff, working hard each day to provide a brighter future for their children and grandchildren.

I've been outside the wire on numerous occasions to see the ongoing work. I've seen real progress here. The Iraqis are taking control of their country's future and the security situation is much improved. This is my first deployment with USACE and I'm proud to be part of their historic mission. Iraq is known as the cradle of civilization, the land between two rivers (Tigris and Euphrates). It's got great resources, families who value education, and a bright future.

As I complete this tour and return stateside, I want to thank everyone for their service and dedication. We could not effectively do this job without the support of our families who make the real sacrifices.

The USACE team is making a difference here. It's been an incredible journey, one of the best deployments of my career. Thanks to everyone and stay safe.

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CSM Thomas H. Thrasher



COL Jack Drolet (GRS Commander, left), MG Michael R. Eyre, GRS CSM Thomas H. Thrasher, and GRD CSM Richard M. Prater visit a new water treatment plant being built in Thi Qar Province.



CSM Thrasher gives an Iraqi youngster a new soccer ball provided by stateside donors.