

Postcards from Iraq

Hope for a better future...



I left the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District at the beginning of August 2006 on a temporary duty assignment to Winchester, Va., to support the Iraq Mission and traveled in October 2006 to Iraq. I have extended my tour several times because I saw the need to support this mission. And I wanted to be part of Iraq's restoration. I have learned a lot from this tour and I would do it again to see this mission finished, if required.



(Above) Celia holds an abandoned infant at the Ibn Sina hospital.

I have enjoyed interacting with the Local Nationals, hearing their stories, and have tried to encourage them that positive changes will come in the near future.

My work as Administrative Contracting Officer has been rewarding and was indeed a great way of supporting this war effort, by awarding contracts for the reconstruction of Iraq. This is my way to support the Iraqi people by helping creating a better environment.

I enjoyed visiting the Soldiers at the hospital and praying for them. One of my most precious memories was hold a little baby girl found abandoned in the trash after her parents were tragically killed. Called "D-B Dumpster Baby" she was brought to the *Ibn Sina* Combat Support Hospital where she was loved by everyone and began to gain weight immediately. I will never forget that little smile on her precious face.

Another significant point for me was learning to

say good morning in different languages. Greetings such as "Bulla, Bulla" from guards from the Fiji Islands, "Sabah Alkheir" from the Iraqis, "Acha Hai" in the Hindi language, and of course "Buenos Dias" in Spanish with the Peruvians. Spanish was the most familiar, since I was born in Panama.

I left my precious daughter Denise, of whom I am very proud, back in the States and I know she is anxious to see me soon as I am to see her. I received prayers and support from my co-workers and friends in Galveston District and my family in Panama.

I am taking a lot with me and I hope I left some joy, peace and hope for a better future for the Iraqi people. I met several Christian Iraqis and shared interesting moments with them trusting that Sweet Jesus will take care of them and us all. My tour will end soon in December 2007. But I carry sweet memories of my stay. I will remember my hooch and T-walls, my co-workers and new friends I have made here.

Suckram. I will keep Iraq in my heart. And God Bless America.

Celia E. Brown-Cockburn

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(Right) Standing in front of an Iraqi Tomb of the Unknown in the International Zone.

(Far right) Climbing aboard a Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle.

