

Postcards from Iraq

A learning adventure...

By Janet Faust

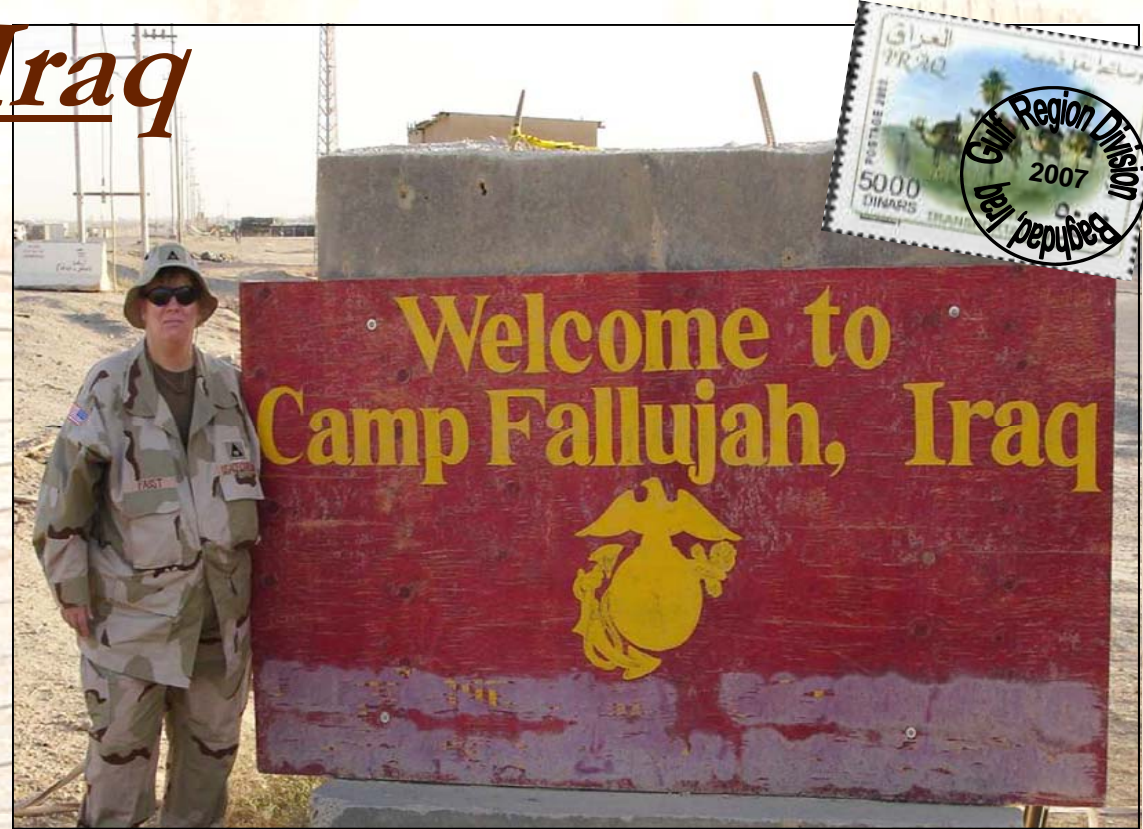
**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
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The Corps' mission in Iraq is an awesome challenge, and yet we successfully work alongside Iraqis everyday to build and repair schools, roads, fire stations, courthouses, and other infrastructure projects. Being in the resource management (RM) business in Iraq, means you actually experience the important role that RM plays — helping Iraqi contractors get paid!

I will remember my time in Iraq as a two year educational journey working alongside some exceptional team members. Knowing the functionality of the Corps of Engineers Financial Management System (CEFMS) and very little about finance and accounting, contracting, project management, or budgeting, I volunteered for an 11 month assignment in Fallujah Area Office as a program analyst. Together with my team buddies, we often obliterated the preverbal “stay in your lane” concept as we were sometimes forced to cross over to help solve complex problems, all while learning from each other. Later, I was able to take my newfound knowledge and apply it to another one year tasker.

I accepted a program manager position to serve as Chief of RM at Camp Victory/Liberty in July 2006. In order to survive, I had to continue to rely on “seasoned” team professionals to teach me the basics...and beyond. I soon realized I was addicted to the pace and the rush of learning, as well as being a part of something far greater than myself. You can't learn in 10 years in a stateside District what you learn here in one. An Iraqi assignment provides a rich learning environment with many opportunities, whether personal or noble. I encourage any self starting RM looking for a learning adventure to join our team!

**Janet Faust
Program Analyst, Baltimore District**



Janet Faust with LTG Carl Strock and LTC Steven Miles