

Postcards from Iraq

I consider myself very fortunate

This is my second tour here in Iraq. Both tours were very rewarding but this second one was even better.

My first tour I was in the IZ in 2004. I oversaw many high profile projects in Baghdad and it was very challenging.

This second tour though was more rewarding because I was directly connected to our soldiers. All of my customers and end users were the US Military. I was a Construction Rep at Al Asad Air Base for 15 months. It might seem like a long tour but when you're enjoying what you're doing, the time passes quickly.

Even though I was on a secure air base it didn't mean that the challenges of contract administration were any less. Security was so tight on that base that there were times I wondered if the military really wanted the contract finished. In the end I realized it was all about the safety of our fine military.

Now that I am redeploying I look back and wonder how a person can work so many hours for so many months without any time off. I have come to realize that this is what makes it so rewarding, so satisfying. No where back home will I be able to do what I have accomplished here.

Al Asad Air Base is the largest in this region with an average of 1000 missions flown daily. It was a challenge to do any kind of work on the airfield with that kind of action going on around you. But the projects got done. All of my contractors were Turkish. This was a challenge in itself. All of the materials were brought in from Turkey. This posed unique challenges in having the contractors follow their schedule and security procedures.

I don't feel like I'm finished here in Iraq. It's true what they say about going back and settling into your old routine. It's hard to get used to the slower pace of life. After my first tour ended, I swore I would never be back and here I am. I will probably be back for another tour. I'll see some of you then.

I don't think this work and life is for everyone back home but for the ones who are curious and need some adventure in their lives, this is an opportunity that can't and shouldn't be passed up. I will some day look back on all this and be able to say that I was proud to have served alongside the best of the Corps of Engineers and honored to have helped out our military on this mission. God Bless you all and stay safe.

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