

Postcards from Iraq

Proud to be helping Iraq move forward

By Keith Adams, Construction Representative
Gulf Region Division South District, Basrah, Iraq
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



Construction Rep Keith Adams, from Springfield, MO, finds that Iraqis are sincerely appreciative of U.S. help.

I am one of less than 400 DoD civilians working with the US Army Corps of Engineers helping rebuild Iraq. We work long hours every day. We are not overseeing repairs to facilities we destroyed -- we are rebuilding a country whose infrastructure was in deplorable shape through years of neglect.

I work daily with educated Iraqi Engineers, and unskilled laborers alike, who love their country and are sincerely appreciative for what the US has done for them. The press would have you believe there are a large number of Iraqis who hate Americans — that is not the reality I see here on the ground.

Though our cultures are very different, their hopes and dreams are the same as ours. They want their children and grandchildren to have a better life. One of my Iraqi contractors told me a story about his son -- he was away at secondary school (high school). My contractor was talking to his son on the phone and told him he had gone 2 weeks without the power going out once. His son did not believe him and said that was impossible. I remember a couple years ago my frustration and disbelief when during an ice storm we went 2 weeks without power -- what a contrast.

I am proud to be an American. We are doing wonderful things here, and the Iraqis are grateful. Their fragile democracy is taking hold and confidence is growing in their elected officials. I see it happening, little by little, step by step -- we have made a difference and it's gets better every day. I go out in the red zone a lot, and when you talk to Iraqis on the street, you can't help but see in their smiles that hope has returned — they're on the road to a brighter tomorrow.



Construction Rep Keith Adams oversaw the Basrah Courthouse construction that features an 11-meter-high rotunda.



Maj. Gen. Michael R. Eyre, Construction Rep Keith Adams, and Iraqi Engineer Al-Muthana Naiel Abdul Jabbar visit the new \$10.9 million Basrah Courthouse.



Construction Rep Keith Adams oversees infrastructure improvements in Basrah, Iraq.