

Postcards from Iraq

Many good things going on in Iraq

by Mac Drake
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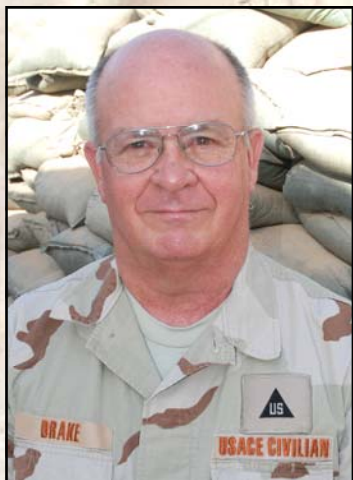
I've been serving in Iraq 9 months overseeing a variety of projects helping communities get some basic essential services we in America often take for granted such as functioning water and sewer lines. Two projects I'm particularly proud of — the construction of a \$5 million maternity hospital, and the \$7 million expansion of a local vo-tech college, both in Babil Province about 60 miles south of Baghdad.

I'm 57 years old and, apart from raising my daughter, this is the most rewarding experience I've ever encountered. I've always wanted to serve my country and when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers offered me this opportunity, I knew it was the right decision to step forward.

When I look at Iraq, a cornerstone of our civilization, I see such tremendous potential here. There's significant archeological sites in every direction. And their natural resources are unbelievable — it's the land of two rivers (Tigris and Euphrates), rich farm ground, abundant oil, a society that deeply believes in the values of education.

Iraqis want the same things we all do -- and they put their lives on the line every day working hard to provide a better future for their children and grandchildren. Their heroic effort at rebuilding their nation is making a difference. When I visit our job sites checking that the construction is meeting our standards, there's nothing more motivating than when local townspeople stop by to thank us. It instills a compassion in my heart for what we're doing. I'm proud to be part of this historic mission.

Mac Drake
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"We're making some real progress on the essential service needs of Iraqis. I'm proud to be part of this historic mission." — Mac Drake