

Postcards from Iraq

Volunteering for Iraq... no experience like it

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What were we thinking leaving our comfortable jobs back in the states? As our children are all grown up starting their lives with their own families, Al & I found ourselves as empty nesters. Our life was boring with no kids to take care of anymore.

We have been dreaming of taking positions in other countries, but what held us back were the kids. Nothing was holding us back now and what a great time to be in a new place helping rebuild a country.

Al and I talked to the kids regarding our decision to go to Iraq. We saw the concerns on their faces but explained that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity. What a story to share with our family when we return home.

The day we left, Al and I were like two giddy 18 year olds happy to finally leave our parents' home and start a new adventure. Once we arrived at our destination at GRD in the IZ and settled down, we met a lot of wonderful people including our co-workers in the office, people we met at the DFAC (dining facility) while eating our meals, the security guards from Aegis/Eriny's, the servers and our own U.S. soldiers as well as military personnel from other nations.. We became close to everyone, as if they were family. In fact, people started calling Al and I "Pop" and "Mom" including the Iraqi guards.

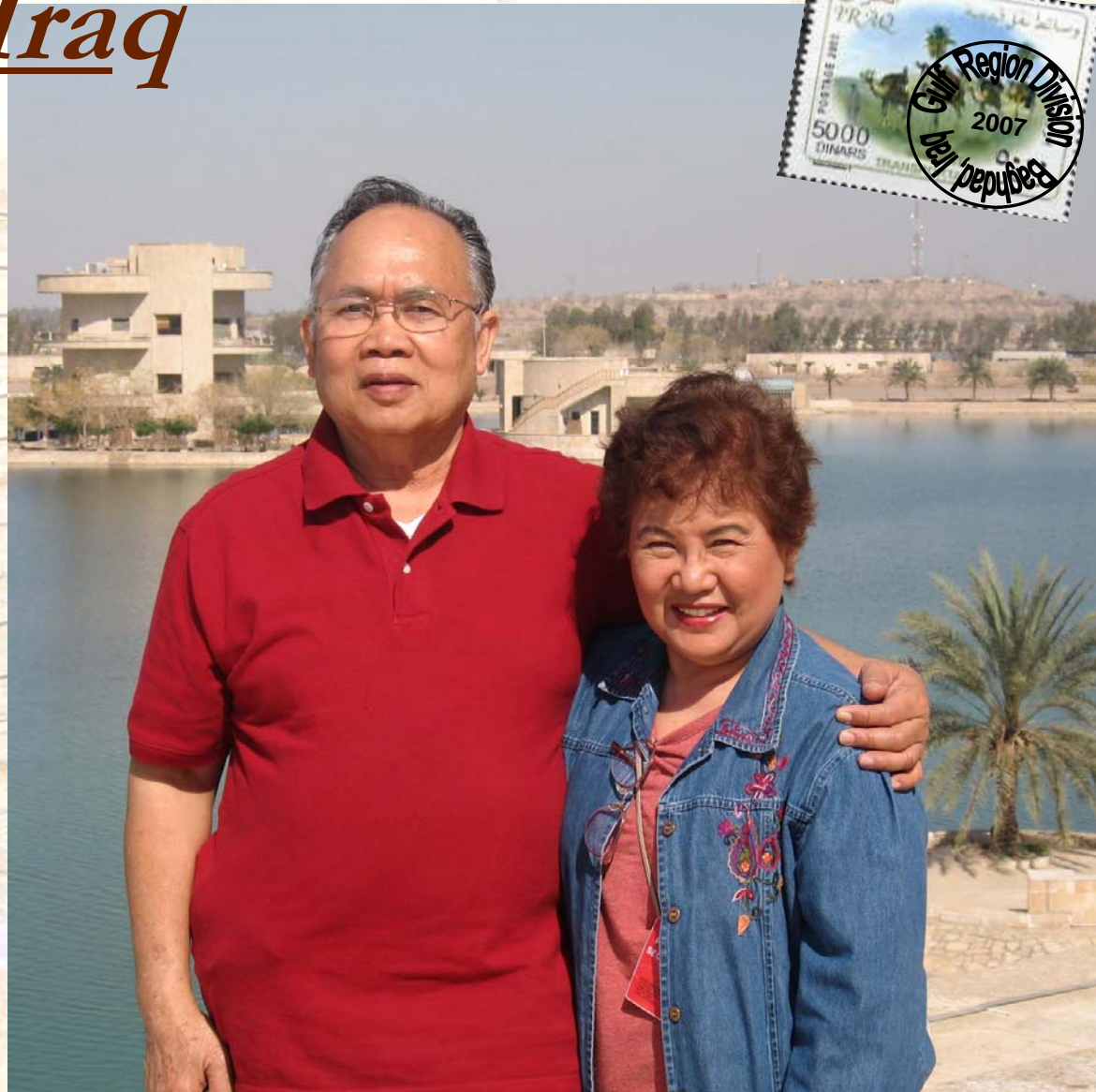
I was able to help distribute items to the less fortunate and our injured troops in the hospital. What a great feeling to show our soldiers how much we care along with being able to put a smile on their faces.

This is also a great experience for young Civilian employees. Not only is it for young adults, but it is also a wonderful experience for oldies like us. We need employees with a wide variety of experience as there is a lot of work here that still needs to be done.

If you are looking for a change or wanting a mid-life adventure like us, come on over. If someone were to ask Al and I, "Would you do it again?", our answer would be "Yes, because this experience is priceless!" We have so many wonderful memories that we cannot wait to share with our family and friends.

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Al and Norma Gapasin mark their 40th Wedding Anniversary in Baghdad.