

Postcards from Iraq

Bilingual, bicultural advisor
proud of ongoing work

*By Saber Qader, Bilingual Bicultural Advisor
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My deployment as a bilingual bicultural advisor has been a wonderful experience to serve my country and my homeland. I lived and worked in northern Iraq for most of my life before moving to USA 10 years ago. This is my second tour to help Iraq by supporting the US military. After the liberation of Iraq from Saddam's regime, I was eager to support America's cause and was excused from my position as a civil engineer to serve the military for six months as a translator.

My second tour in Iraq began in October 2006. My family was very concerned after hearing of my desire to volunteer again, this time as an engineer. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity to serve both countries - Iraq and USA. It touches my heart every time someone speaks about Iraq, my first home and the country where I grew up with many memories.

It was with great pride and honor I accepted my assignment with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Our work helping Iraqis improve their essential services is not only a rewarding experience but I'm learning more than I had hoped for. What great people and a great leader our Corps has!

These wonderful individuals travel thousands of dangerous miles to rebuild Iraq. Many Corps employees repeatedly extend their tours to serve this vital mission. Some are committed to serving until the mission is over – they are compelled to see it through to the end.

I am fortunate to work for this great team and through them help Iraqi citizens and contractors. It is very rewarding to spend time with Iraqi engineers, teaching them how to improve their capacity as they work on a variety of projects. I have been privileged to learn Corps contracting processes and to mentor my native brethren on how to compete for opportunities to support the Corps mission. I have the satisfaction of knowing I am teaching them how to secure a brighter future. They are eager to learn what the Corps offers them.

It is a great honor to participate in the new Iraq from reconstruction to changing the government systems to democracy. The average Iraqi wants these improvements. They want opportunities for their children. They're concerned about the safety and well being of their loved ones - the same things we all desire. It is sad when we see insurgents use outside influence to kill Iraq civilians to dampen their spirit and hopes. I am confident and optimistic for our success. One day we will proudly tell how we helped the Iraqis achieve a better life for their children and grandchildren they desire and deserve.

What a story to share with my family when I return home - from the great service of people volunteering to help Iraq, to wonderful friendships that will continue the rest of my life. This experience has helped me appreciate even more what we have in America. I see how much the Iraqi people want freedom - they sacrifice everything they have to share what many Americans take for granted. I'm very grateful to be part of this awesome team helping Iraq move forward.

**Saber Qader
Oshkosh, WI**



Saber Qader participates in a workshop in Ramadi explaining to local contractors the essentials of bidding on a project.

