

Postcards from Iraq

New Experiences and Old Friendships Renewed

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Tom Anderson, (left), discusses a Victory Base project with Resident Engineer Doug Plachy.

Working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in Iraq, I have experienced a lot of things that I thought I would never do or see. I've had the opportunity to have a part in USACE projects ranging from a Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit (ROWPU), a Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP), overhead protection improvements for buildings, sewage lift stations, lakes, pumps, canals and even to work at Saddam's Al Faw Palace, just to name a few.

The time that I spent in Iraq has been very fulfilling and rewarding, definitely one of the highlights of my life. I have enjoyed the opportunity to work alongside the Iraqi people and understand their culture a little better. By the time that I finish my tour, I will have 19 months in country.

I would love to come back to Iraq for another tour, but this November I am getting married to a wonderful woman, so it might be a little tricky getting back anytime soon.

There have been a number of good things that happened to me in Iraq, from developing a new outlook on life, to running into old friends that I haven't seen for ten years from my Marine Corps days. The

last place I thought I would have a reunion was Iraq. One old friend was the instructor for training soldiers on mine sweeping and safety. The other is an Army Black Hawk pilot. It was good to see that they were doing well. We had a great time together just talking about what we've been doing since the last time we saw each other. I know I have started some good friendships over here that I will keep in touch with back in the States.

I come from a Marine Corps family. My father, sister, brother-in-law and I have all served. My family is very supportive of the choices that I've made to serve both in the Marines and here in Iraq with USACE. They are equally proud of our country and the armed forces and the job that so many are doing in rebuilding Iraq and around the world.

We pray daily for the armed forces, civilians and families and salute the sacrifices that each and everyone of them has made for the freedom that we live in...



Tom Anderson, (right), renews old friendships with 1LT Dustin Klingenberg (left) and Ray Valdez in Baghdad.