

# Postcards from Iraq

## Father's Day in Iraq

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Most people would think that spending any special day, especially a day like Father's Day, away from their family would be a bad thing. I was pleasantly surprised on this Father's Day to find out not only could the day be special, I think it may have been one of the best Father's Days that I have ever had.

My day started out by seeing a nice e-mail from my family when I came to work in the morning. My family had also taken the time to prepare a very special Father's Day gift box which they sent and asked me not to open until Father's Day. From the moment I opened the gift box, I was cast into a day of reflection. I thought about what it meant to be a father, a son, and a husband. As fathers we have a great responsibility in raising our children. When we're deployed (this one is my fifth deployment to a military operation with USACE), our spouses and family members take on a much greater burden in our absence. I'm not quite sure how they do it sometimes.

My wife and I have three children. They have always been supportive of every deployment. I am also fortunate that I have a great father. He has always been there for me, this time has been no different. My dad and I are very close, we are best friends. So what made this particular Father's Day so special? After reading the Father's Day e-mail from my family, I opened the package they sent. First were the cards; one from my wife and each child. I can't even begin to describe how special each card was. Each card made me feel as if I were the only Dad on earth. Next were pictures of each child, then one of my wife and I. Then the sentimental gifts, a book with a CD enclosed from my daughters titled Butterfly Kisses. For any dad who has daughters, this is a must read book and listen to CD. Next, my son sent a book/CD combination titled, A Father's Love. Wow, powerful. Still there is more. Every Sunday a good friend of mine from our church back home sends me the audio from the entire service. He was in a particular hurry on 20 June, Father's Day, to send me the audio files. He had sent them to me within an hour after church ended, which ironically is about the same time I returned from our Sunday evening church service here in Iraq. He wanted me to listen to track five in particular. It was a recording of my son announcing a special Father's Day tribute. He introduced a song that I first shared with my dad back in 1994 when it first came out. The song, Hero, is about a young son who wants to do everything like his dad; his dad is his hero. The song is about the relationship between a father and his son, and how the son's father leads him to a relationship with our Heavenly Father. After listening to the soundtrack of Hero, I then called my Dad to wish him a Happy Father's Day. We reminisced about lots of things that we had gone through together over the years. What a great way to end my day.

Although I would have given anything to be with my family on this special day, they taught me that love can span the miles and that there are special ways we can keep in touch and share moments in time. For those of you debating on serving a tour in Iraq, I would encourage you to give it a try. Not every day here is going to be special, but there is one thing you can count on, we are making a difference in the lives of the Iraqi people. Although it is not evident every day, you must learn to measure the progress in miles, not inches. If you get the chance, look at the GRD website sometime at [www.grd.usace.army.mil](http://www.grd.usace.army.mil) to see what we are doing.



My family: Wife Michelle, and Children from left to right, Moriah, Christopher, and Samantha.