

Postcards from Iraq

“One Team”

By Lt. Allen E. Willey
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Over a year ago my family and I made the decision to deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and though the deployment has been tough on all of us, I can honestly say it feels good to have served with people who believe in sacrifice with those serving now and to all who have served before us.

At the time, I had no idea what to expect from service with the US Army Corp of Engineers. I was informed that I would be assigned as the Basrah Children's Hospital Resident Engineer and all that came to my mind was “Wow, what a awesome opportunity!”. I was juiced up about serving with the Army and helping the people of Iraq pursue peace and hope. Especially after I found out that 105 out of every 1000 children of southern Iraq die from childhood cancers.

I was surrounded by people dedicated about making a difference. My team of US civilians and Iraqi associates were supportive, dedicated and passionate about building a hospital, which made my job easier, rewarding and enjoyable.

Performing engineering and construction management, my challenging assignment to build a \$150M state of the art children's hospital in such a volatile and austere environment, became the biggest challenge of my 21 years with the Military. Although it is a challenge for us all, it's the people and our comrades at arms which motivate us through the days. In the Seabees, we have built a reputation on “Can Do!” It's been a pleasure Can Doing with all of you. We are “One Team” made up of many diverse personnel from all USACE districts and military personnel from the Army, Navy, Air Force. I have to say, it has been an honor to serve with all of you and to have had the opportunity to serve the Gulf Region South District in our efforts to re-build a better Iraq. Essays!



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