

Postcards from Iraq

A great sense of pride and accomplishment

By 1st Lt. Richard Lam, Program and Budget Execution team lead
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I was born and raised in Houston, went to college at Baylor University in Waco and then stationed at Dyess Air Force Base in Texas. It seemed as if there was a powerful unseen force keeping me in the great state of Texas!

When I first received word of my assignment in Iraq, I had no idea what to expect. I thought, "Wow! This is a great opportunity for growth, to be a part of a joint environment and to get out of Texas for a little bit." Then it occurred to me that there may be bullets whizzing past my ears, mortars falling out of the clear blue sky, rockets flying overhead striking hardened buildings.

Thankfully, by the grace of God, the past few months have been very good. It has calmed down significantly which has enabled us to steam ahead in our mission to rebuild a war-torn country. My task in Iraq was to manage the \$12.8 billion dollar Iraqi Relief and Reconstruction Fund and then ultimately oversee the close-out of the appropriation 30 September 2008. After successfully closing out the program, my responsibilities began to increase and eventually I was assigned to be the team lead for the programs and budget branch.

It's amazing how well the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines work together to bring stability and contribute to the reconstruction of a region that has been around since the beginning of civilization. During my time here, I was reunited with a few other Baylor Alumni ROTC graduates, one of which was my former instructor while I was a cadet in training.

I leave here with a greater sense of pride and accomplishment. I made friends from many different walks of life and have learned to truly appreciate the simpler things we take for granted back at home. I am proud to have been able to serve my country and the people of Iraq. See you soon.

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