Postcards from IRAQ…” I can do it”

By Lisa Lawson

Next month, I will have been deployed in Iraq for two years. I’m a Project manager in Mosul Resident Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region North District. What a life-changing experience! In Iraqi infrastructure suffers from over 35 years of negligent and damage. The Corps of Engineers has construction management oversight for an $11 billion Iraq Reconstruction Program. In that program, I have managed over 110 projects; nearly $40 million; projects involving repairing or restoring Water treatment plants for drinking water; sewer and water networks; Iraqi army barracks; schools, and resurfacing roads and pothole repair. Our mission it to provide quality, responsive, full spectrum engineering services in Iraq in support of military and civil construction, and aggressively assist the Iraqi government to assume full responsibility for national reconstruction. These projects involve working with and training Iraqis to manage and implement their own projects to rebuild Iraq.

(Continued on pg.3)

Lisa is the guest speaker for the February Meeting

When: Tuesday Feb 4, 2008 11:30 am
Where: Tulsa District CoE 4th floor conference room

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Postcards from Iraq (Continued from page 1)

The days go fast. I have never managed this type of work before. It's challenging: especially since the rules are a little different than they would be in the states, and it's dangerous to leave camp. I feel fortunate with my living conditions. We're housed two-per-trailer with a shared bathroom. Bottled water is everywhere to use for consumption. We have good food to eat. There's a gym to use for exercise. I jog on the road outside of the runway fence. Our camp is next to the Mosul Airfield. There's always some activity with the helicopters, jets, gun-firing, and mortars coming in and out. I have my individual body armor, or IBA, and Kevlar helmet handy. We're not allowed to leave our perimeter—LSA Diamondback—without our private security detail (PSD) or fly out on a Blackhawk helicopter to our project sites and meetings. The PSD travels in a group of special-armored vehicles. They have a briefing before we travel and tell us that they will protect us with their lives...and they do.

I'm proud of the work I'm doing here in Iraq. Although the conditions are dangerous, I feel I'm making a good contribution to the start of rebuilding a country that has somehow been left behind in modern advancement. So many Iraqis appreciate us being here, the smiles on the children's faces say it all.

I encourage and recommend a deployment to Gulf Region Division in the Iraq Reconstruction Program. It's humbling, rewarding and patriotic experience. Your experiences here will become a part of history. I feel it's a life event that takes one to a new, higher level of life. Your limits are pushed; you become a stronger person, and you gain a greater appreciation for life.
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February Meeting— Speaker: Lisa Lawson, Project manager-Tulsa CoE
11:30 Tulsa District CoE 4th floor

MARCH 7, 2008
Young Member’s Bowling Night (Stay tuned for more details)
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Oklahoma exams for becoming a Registered Professional Engineer are given in October and April. First-time examinees
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www.els-examreg.org/oklahoma.php
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