



For Immediate Release
June 25, 2007
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Lone USACE Soldier Runs Remote Area Office

By LuAnne Fantasia
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SULAYMANIYAH, Iraq — It is one thing to deploy to Iraq, but the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers sent Master Sgt. Scott Horst to the edge of the northeastern most province - Sulaymaniyah.

In March, 45 Soldiers from the Bismarck-based 34th Engineer Brigade were called to active duty in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. After being mobilized at Camp Atterbury, Ind., the unit deployed and was scattered to various positions in Iraq.

Horst, a Mandan, N.D. resident says he is doing well being the lone-Soldier at the Corps' remote office here.

Despite the intense heat, Horst said, "I like it here because the terrain reminds me of home," motioning toward the mountain range surrounding his camp.

"Thanks to excellent communications, I talk to my wife everyday, when her day is just beginning and mine is winding down," he said. And, with video camera capabilities, Horst sees his family on his computer...with no delay...to say goodnight to them every night. "That alone makes this tour easier," he added. "If it weren't for that, this would be hard."

Horst is an Active Guard Reserve combat engineer Soldier, and a 22-year Army veteran.

In this tour, he is the non-commissioned officer in charge of this remote Corps office—which has quality control responsibilities for reconstruction projects in the province of Sulaymaniyah.

"The majority of our reconstruction projects are border forts, which are all on the border of Iraq and Iran," he explained. To date, 43 border posts and point-of-entry facilities have been completed in the Sulaymaniyah Province since Iraq's sovereignty in 2004.

Horst has a small support staff of local national engineers, and logistical and security personnel - he is the only American on the camp.

For Sulaymaniyah, Horst's area office currently has completed 83 projects; 11 are ongoing and 15 are planned to start. These numbers reflect projects such as schools, water projects, courthouses, police stations and training facilities.

The Iraq Reconstruction Program is a nationwide effort to help the Iraqi people rebuild its economy and infrastructure after more than 35 years of neglect.

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