



Postcard from Afghanistan

Mike R. Abate - Tulsa District



This current deployment is my second. My first was done back in 2009 for Gulf Region South in Iraq. Since I had such a great time in Iraq, I wanted to give Afghanistan a try. So, since around April 10 I have been the resident engineer for Off-Camp Shaheen Resident Office, which is a part of the Mazar-e-Sharif Area Office. My team was responsible for the Corps' construction projects in the four provinces of Balkh, Jawzjan, Samangan and Sari Pul. Our construction portfolio consisted of 30 projects with an approximate program amount of \$150 million. The majority of the projects were for the Afghan National Police; however it included projects for the Afghan National Army as well as schools for the U.S. Agency for International Development.

I had a great time traveling around northern Afghanistan outside the wire. I was blessed to take more than 50 trips outside the wire to visit our project construction sites. I will always remember

our trips to the north going through the dunes to Shor Tipa and getting stuck and our ribbon cutting trips to Sang Charak and Roi Do Ab. I will never forget all my trips through Mazar-e-Sharif. The most notable was the trip with the 40th Engineers where we went to check on one of their projects at the Blue Mosque. To see this historic structure in person will always be a very fond memory of this deployment.

Finally, the best part of my deployment was the outstanding people that I had the honor and privilege to serve with here in Afghanistan. From my Afghan Corps family located here in MeS to the American Soldiers of the 40th Engineers Brigade; I want to thank all of you for what you do. To my Afghan brothers that I have had the unlimited honor to work with to build valuable infrastructure for your country -Tashakor. As this simple country boy steps back onto that Oklahoma soil, I will be thinking and praying for all of you as you finish our mission over here.