



**US Army Corps
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Corps of Engineers Civilian Deploys on Fourth Overseas Contingency Operation

By Lacey Justinger, Honolulu District Public Affairs

(FORT SHAFTER, HI NR 03-10) Ike Borja has served three year-long deployments with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Gulf Region District in Iraq, but that didn't stop him from volunteering for a deployment to the Corps Afghanistan Engineer District.

"I hope to learn the different aspects of the Corps, experience what the Corps is doing in Afghanistan and to do my part in assisting with the reconstruction of Afghanistan," said Borja.

He said that after his Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) deployments, he is used to the high-paced demands and recommends that other civilians in the District volunteer for deployments to experience firsthand and assist with what the Corps does overseas in the Middle East.

"I would advise them to prepare for a fast paced experience," Borja said. "But be flexible when it comes to time and accommodations. You will get used to the saying 'Hurry up and wait'."

He stated that his multiple OCO stints are so rewarding and he is so used to the fast pace that he doesn't enjoy the 'downtime' in-between deployments.

Borja shared the initial deployment-readiness process for civilians, to help alleviate any questions someone who is considering a deployment might have.

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OCO 2-2-2

After selection confirmation from the USACE Headquarters, the USACE Deployment Center (UDC) assigns a point of contact to assist with and send all the required paperwork (like medical, physical, payroll etc.) to get the process started. Once all the requirements are fulfilled, a report date is issued along with travel orders and flight itinerary. Civilians first travel to the UDC in Winchester, Va., to attend down-range training and preparation briefings for a few days. Hotels and transportation are provided during this process. After arriving at the OCO destination, deployed employees meet with an assigned sponsor and receive office briefings.

“The deployment process was pretty much painless,” Borja added.

The Honolulu District provides family and deployment support for any federal employee in Hawaii who volunteers to deploy in support of a USACE requirement in Iraq or Afghanistan. Career opportunities to serve with USACE in Iraq and Afghanistan can be found at <http://cpolwapp.belvoir.army.mil/coe-gwot/> or <https://cpolwapp.belvoir.army.mil/public/vabSelfNom/index.jsp> and choose COE GWOT from the special programs options. For additional USACE civilian deployment information and requirements, visit the UDC website www.tam.usace.army.mil/UDC/.

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Cutlines

OCO group: Ike Borja (center second row) stands with his most recent Overseas Contingency Operations training group at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Deployment Center.

OCO civilian: Ike Borja, a civilian with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District, deploys to the Afghanistan Engineer District.