

August 15, 2006

Help wanted—in the Middle East

Like many Americans, Tracy Rumph would like the basics, workwise: a steady job with a good income.

But this Gulf War veteran, also like many Americans, has worked for many companies throughout his career.

Tracy has been a pipe welder for 20 years, ever since he learned how to weld in the Job Corps. Since then he has worked at about 15 different companies.

But next week he'll start a new job—in the Middle East.

For a long time it seems we didn't hear anything about U.S. contractors working in the Middle East, but a search on Google today reveals almost **200 million sites** devoted to work in the Middle East, as if job opportunities there are the hottest thing to hit the American work force.

Some sites are dedicated resources for **finding and getting set up to work in the Middle East**. Many sites list **opportunities for tradespeople**, including **welders, pipefitters, electricians, and mechanics**.

But one of the most informative sites I found—one that requires subscribers to pay for its information and services—is called **Danger Zone Jobs**.

That's right, Danger Zone Jobs. Its name alone should give job seekers pause about working in the Middle East.

This Web site offers the latest news about job trends in the Middle East, and it shows that the demand is growing for military and protective service jobs. Oil refineries are being built, and pipelines are under construction too.

But with all these opportunities, a certain amount of risk is assumed. That's why Tracy Rumph can't tell me what he'll be doing or where he'll be working—he'll reveal that information to me later, when it's safe for him to tell me.

The last several weeks, I've talked to Tracy about his expectations. He said he may work overseas for three years and assured me he'll be well-secured.

His motivation to seek a job in a danger zone isn't a shortage of work here in the U.S.—it's more how much money he can make, income he can't earn here.

"It's about double the money," he said. The pay motivates him because he has a wife and three children, one of whom will be graduating from high school soon.

He said it's not impossible to find that steady, decent paycheck in the U.S. if you play your cards right.

"The only thing I can say is you gotta know your job, for one," he said. "If you get with a company that seems like it's stable, get with them—a large company that's going to keep you busy so you don't have to worry about money."

In the meantime he's going to make his own good money in the Middle East. He hopes to come back to see his daughter graduate—and be able to afford to give her a nice graduation present.

"I want to get her something real nice, you know," he said, "like a car or something."

Godspeed and good luck, Tracy.

Posted At : 8:17 AM. | Posted By : Stephanie Vaughan