

ESSAYONS *forward*

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Gulf Region Division, Iraq - Volume 5 Issue 1

January 2008

*7th Engineer Dive Detachment
helps clear way for Sarafiya bridge
reconstruction.....10*



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On the cover:



A U.S. Army diver from the 7th ENG DIVE places demolition charges to assist Iraqi divers with removal of portions of the destroyed bridge.

courtesy photo

Improvements on Victory Base Complex



photo by Norris Jones

Spencer O'Neal, left, briefs visiting Gulf Region Division Director of Programs Lloyd Caldwell during his visit to Gulf Region Central district projects on Victory Base Complex Nov. 26. Work there includes a \$2.3 million project adding four environment-friendly trash incinerators.

Commander's Commentary



Anniversary marks progress, commitment

As we enter the New Year, we are fast approaching the fourth anniversary of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division, activated Jan. 25, 2004.

On that date, GRD set out on the monumental task of initiating a program of reconstruction for a national infrastructure suffering from decades of underfunding by the socialist Ba'athist regime led by Saddam Hussein. Building on the momentum of separate USACE elements that had served in Iraq since the start of the war, the division unified Task Force Restore Iraqi Oil, Task Force Restore Iraqi Electricity, the Iraq Reconstruction Office, the Iraq Area Office, and the Iraq Provisional Command and Forward Engineer Support Teams around the country.

Answering the call to volunteer for duty in Iraq were many stalwart individuals who faced the challenges undaunted. They can certainly stand proud today as we move near the completion of the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund program, having finished more than 3,700 projects. More than a few of those early volunteers are here now, others have come and gone, some several times. Together with our Iraqi Associates, military members from all branches, and contractors, they have helped tremendously in this historic mission.

Never before has USACE undertaken a program of this magnitude in a combat environment. This program eclipses the reconstruction aspects of the Marshall Plan undertaken in

Central Europe and is being done in an environment where anti-government insurgents, criminal elements, and Al Qaeda terrorists do not want to see us be successful.

But by staying the course, by being successful on project after project, we have demonstrated to all the people of Iraq the commitment of the United States and the Coalition to helping their popularly elected government provide services the former totalitarian regime only doled out selectively.

We have also shown the vital contribution USACE brings to the military as a highly capable engineering and project management organization. This success comes from the depth of capability contained in USACE and our organization's ability to work with other engineering and contracting entities, bringing synergy to the fight.

While the present security situation is showing positive trends in many areas, and some former insurgents are being won over, we also know we face an enemy who is as committed as he is evil and will most certainly attempt more spectacular and heinous criminal acts against the people of Iraq. Where they sow hate and destruction, we build with vision and purpose. Where they seek to sow divisiveness, our efforts show the benefits of cooperation. I believe at the end of the day, freedom will win once more over tyranny.

ESSAYONS!

*Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Dorko
Gulf Region Division
Commander*

Command Sgt. Maj. Message



Warrior Ethos, Army Values complementary

Happy New Year! I really wish all of you a prosperous, healthy, peaceful and safe New Year. I will continue to express my infinite gratitude to you and your family for your continuous service.

I strongly believe that the Army Warriors Ethos and the Army Values co-exist, they complement each other; they are well articulated

guide lines to live our daily lives serving our nation.

The Warrior Ethos for me are power, short and clear statements that focus an individual's priorities and commitment to his/her profession and the nation they serve. "I will always place my mission first; I will never accept defeat; I will never leave a fallen comrade".

I am proud to say that I observe daily our Gulf Region Division civilian and military personnel demonstrating these important actions of commitment.

As I look at the seven Army Values—loyalty, duty, respect,

selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage—respect stands out as one clearly demonstrated by outward actions. But respect is really based on a core quality internalized by the individual. One might also say it is a "Corps" quality; one that is exhibited by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in its missions here in Iraq.

It is easy to see how the Army Value "respect" applies to the line Soldier in the performance of his/her duties. You might think at first it means the kind of respect due to superiors in rank or position. The Army Value means that and much more. It is also the respect many of us first learned as the "Golden Rule," commonly taught as "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

The Army Value "respect" is defined as "Treat people as they should be treated." This of course includes showing proper deference for rank or position, but is more encompassing. Respect is what allows each of us to appreciate the best in other people. For Soldiers on patrol, it is a basis for successful interaction with a local population. How we consider others reflects upon each member of the unit, both personally and as a professional organization.

see Respect, page 17

NIGHT DAY

Anbar between the past and the present

COMMENTARY BY J. ANAJAR
GULF REGION DIVISION

No one imagined that Al Anbar province, once the most heated area in Iraq, would turn between night and day to become a quiet area. So calm in fact that many politicians cite the status quo in Al Anbar when they talk about the future of security in Iraq.

In the recent past, the word Anbar stood for Al Qaeda stronghold, terrorism, killings, discrimination, destruction and suffering. But when the people there decided to show their strength in unison to overcome the obstacles that faced them, they managed to uproot and eliminate the terrorist bases.

This honorable and heroic action has freed the people of Al Anbar from oppression of the terrorists who enslaved and humiliated them.

In the past, after noon you would seldom see anybody moving in the street except for the armed insurgents and terrorists who wandered about looking for more innocent victims. Public life and commerce ceased. There were no operating medical facilities; the chronically ill suffered for lack of treatment, shortening their lives; the absence of the emergency health services meant many innocents injured by the haphazard shooting and maleficent bombings died of treatable wounds. Tons of rubbish accumulated in the open lots and curbside, sewage flowed in the streets. Darkness shadowed the province as a whole and specter of death oppressed the minds of people.

Now the situation is totally different, the dark clouds over Al Anbar have been dispersed. A new dawn has emerged in this province by the virtue of the steadfastness of its people in the face of the barbaric attacks aimed at humiliating and dominating them.

The Gulf Region Division, for its part, is returning smiles and hope to the people as it reconstructs what the wicked destroyed.

In the area of healthcare, it has built 10 primary healthcare centers at the cost of \$5.2 million, designed to provide medical services to approximately 150 patients per day. Notable among these centers are the An Nazal PHC which has been constructed in Fallujah on behalf of the Ministry of Health, and Nasr Wa Salam's new PHC located between Baghdad and Fallujah. The medical staff there is seeing 250 to 450 patients daily and residents say they are very pleased with the expanded capabilities that new facility and equipment provides their community. Other medical work includes the completed renovation and new modular construction on two hospitals in Ramadi and Rutba, benefiting 360,000 residents at a total cost of \$2.4 million. In addition, the renovation of the 260 bed Ramadi Women and Children's Hospital has been completed. Ar Rutbah Hospital in west Al Anbar province was completely rebuilt with a cost of \$1.23 million. The project benefits a population of 60,000.

Education, like healthcare, is a very important area in Iraqi

society that suffered from years of neglect. The current efforts will benefit thousands of students and families for generations to come. In Al Anbar, \$17.7 million is being spent on renovation and construction of 39 schools. These schools provide a better learning environment for about 20,000 students.

In the area of security, 23 border forts costing \$6.2 million have been built along Al Anbar's extensive borders with Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Syria to help stop infiltrators from getting into Iraq to destabilize the situation inside. Police stations have been built in Ramadi, Fallujah, Karma and Saqlawiyah costing a total of \$3.6 million that serve a population of approximately 500,000 residents along with renovation on an Iraqi police school.

After clearing Fallujah from the terrorists, more projects

have been executed in the most heated neighborhoods such as Al Tahadi where the residents there last year celebrated the opening of a new water treatment facility with the capacity of producing enough water for about 50,000 area residents. An identical facility, the Al Askari water treatment has been constructed to pump fresh water to Fallujah's northeast section.

Many of the 27 sewage projects planned have been completed. These projects with

the cost of \$76.1 million are primarily in Fallujah. A wastewater treatment plant for the city is under construction to serve the population of 200,000, improve living conditions for the people of Fallujah and providing jobs for local tradesmen and contractors.

In the area of electricity, one generator project is complete and one is on going for the cities of Ramadi and Haditha (benefiting more than 400,000) with the cost of \$19 million.

Work on the electrical grid includes not only generation but also transmission. There are seven projects which will deliver electrical power to the residents of Haditha, Al Qa'im, Fallujah, Ramadi, and outlying areas of Anbar, benefiting more than 600,000 residents. The total cost is \$84 million. In distribution, 31 projects more than half of which are complete will supply power to more than 500,000 people in the communities of Ramadi, Saqlawiyah, Fallujah and the outlying areas of Al Anbar. Electricity projects also included installing new substations with different capacities and renovating others in different areas throughout Al Anbar.

Moreover, the Gulf Region Division has taken an active role in repairing and resurfacing key roads and building new ones, as well. Examples of work in the \$30 million program include road work in Saqlawiyah and the road between Ramadi and Haditha.

All people in Anbar are working hand in hand to rebuild their province. Contractors are providing employment for hundreds of Iraqi workers and the improvements they make will help spur the economy.

The inhabitants of those remaining areas of Iraq where strife is still chosen over cooperation could do well to look at the lesson of Al Anbar if they are seeking a better and safe life.

...inhabitants of those remaining areas of Iraq where strife is still chosen over cooperation could do well to look at the lesson of Al Anbar...

PILGRIMAGE FLOWS THROUGH MOSUL PASSENGER TERMINAL

BY LUANNE FANTASIA
GULF REGION NORTH DISTRICT

MOSUL, Iraq – A long awaited passenger terminal here that had lagged behind schedule was completed and ready for its first passengers Dec. 1. Less than three months after contractor Mustafa Yoldah left his company’s office in Turkey and came to Mosul with a new foreman and extra workers, the Mosul passenger terminal project was finished.

“He made it happen,” said Alda Ottley, project engineer for this facility. The terminal was operational and ready to process its first 152 Iraqis on their way to Mecca, Saudi Arabia. A tenet of Islam is that able-bodied Muslims make a pilgrimage to Mecca once in their lives.

“The hajj flights will be the first commercial flights since 1993,” Ottley said. The original airport was built in 1992-1993, but commercial flights were available for less than a year before the Mosul air space became a no-fly zone.

The Mosul airport fell into disrepair over the years. It is currently located between two Coalition bases; FOB Diamondback and Marez. Recent renovations include a new air-traffic control tower in addition to the passenger terminal, both with program and construction management by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

“It’s always good to see a project finished; considering the problems we encountered and how we overcame them,” said Ottley. “I learned from this project...from a construction and engineering standpoint.”

By Dec. 11, 2,629 pilgrims and their luggage were processed, boarded and flown to Baghdad for their connecting flight to Medina, Saudi Arabia. Ottley explained that passengers were cleared through security and baggage checks at another location; then transported directly to the entrance of the Mosul passenger terminal.

R.C. Shackelford said hajj committee agents stay with their groups of 76 people 24/7 through the entire trip—until they return to Mosul. Shackelford is the provincial program manager for the Department of State’s Iraq Transition Assistance Office in Mosul. He said at one point, the ground and flight crew turned a B-737 aircraft—with 105 passengers—around in 24 minutes. “This is a true accomplishment.

“And, now we’re halfway to the goal. Operations bringing the travelers home begin later this month and finish in January. The Iraqi government hopes to have two commercial flights daily to Baghdad by spring, which would be a real boost to the economy,” Shackelford added.

Ottley has been a project engineer in the Gulf Region North district more than two years. She deployed from her home district in St. Paul, Minn.,



Recent renovations include the passenger terminal and a new air traffic control tower; both with program and construction management by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

to Sulaymaniyah in 2005, and worked there until she moved to the Mosul Area Office in February 2006. Currently, her other reconstruction projects include the Mosul Courthouse, which was extensively damaged in September by a truck bombing, and the Ibn Sena cardiac surgical wing renovation, only the second one in Iraq.

For the first time since 1993, the gates at the Mosul airport opened for commercial business Dec. 1, as 152 passengers began the pilgrimage to Mecca.



Rx for rural community

Primary Healthcare Center sees hundreds daily



As work is completed on Nasr Wa Salam's new primary healthcare center located between Baghdad and Fallujah, the medical staff there has taken over beneficial occupancy and are seeing 250 to 450 patients daily. They say residents are very pleased with the expanded capabilities that the facility and equipment provide.

STORY & PHOTOS BY NORRIS JONES
GULF REGION CENTRAL DISTRICT

If you build it, they will come. And when a new primary healthcare center recently opened between Baghdad and Fallujah, come they did in record numbers.

Dr. Mohammad Gassan said at the old clinic they were seeing 75 to 150 patients daily. Today they are treating 250 to 450 patients daily. "Some mothers are walking miles to bring their sick infants here," he said. Through word of mouth, residents

have heard that a new facility has opened with new equipment and they want the very best for their families, so they are willing to come from long distances to get here, he continued. "With the weather getting cooler, the most common ailment we're seeing is upper respiratory infections including colds and flu."

The clinic is open six days a week, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Physician's assistant Sa'ad Naji Fayadz, who is in charge of the clinic's respiratory department, points out that the project

was delayed for more than two years and people kept asking, "When will it be finished?"

The delays continued and the situation did not improve "until we got rid of the insurgents." He said the community was very grateful when construction restarted and the new facility finally opened earlier this month. "It's very beautiful. Everything is as it should be and we've never seen a place like this in our lives," he added.

Navy Cmdr. Steve Frost with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers knows from personal experience the turnaround in that community. "In April, as we were exiting the unfinished facility, we had a 40-minute gunfight there during which one of our vehicles was destroyed by an RPG. Today, you have mothers coming up, inviting you to hold their babies, a big step for Iraqis. It is truly rewarding to see the smiles on their faces and this has been well worth the effort." Frost is overseeing the construction of 30 new PHCs in Baghdad Province and 11 PHCs in Al Anbar Province.

The new facility includes a birthing center where an average of four newborns are delivered each week. "We monitor expectant mothers with regular monthly checkups, keeping an eye on their blood pressure, weight, blood and urine analysis," said Nurse Sumaya Hamid Rashid. "If any problems arise, we provide treatment." One of the goals of Iraq's 142 new primary healthcare centers is reducing



A pharmacist fills a prescription in the new primary healthcare center recently opened at Nasr Wa Salam between Baghdad and Fallujah.

إبتسامات الفرح في وجوه المجتمع الريفي لاكتمال مركز الرعاية الصحية

وقد تكلم ستيف فروست القائد في البحرية لفرقة منطقة الخليج الاميركية ومن خلال تجربته الشخصية اثناء عمله في شهر نيسان قائلا "بينما كنا نعمل ومتحمسين لهذا المشروع وكنا هنالك وحدث اطلاق للمبارات النارية والذي استمر الى اكثر من اربعون دقيقة وذلك نتيجة لتعرض احدى مركبتنا الى هجمة بالار بي جي والتي ادت الى تحطم المركبة وهذه من احدى الحوادث التي تعرضنا لها

اما اليوم فهناك العديد من الامهات وفي احضانهن ابناهن الحديثي الولادة وكم من المعفرح والجميل ان نرى المهات ينادون من اجل حمل اولادهن والبسمة على شفاهن وهذه تعتبر خطوة متقدمة ونقطة تحول وتقدم كبير للعراقيين .

ويتولى فروست الاشراف على ثلاثون مركزا صحيا في بغداد واحد عشر مركزا في الانبار حيث تتضمن مراكز الرعاية الصحية في مركزا للولادة حيث تبلغ نسبة الولادات اربع ولادت في الاسبوع وكذلك تتولى هذه المراكز مراقبة حالة الام الحامل وفحصها شهريا فحصا منتظما ومراقبة ضغط الدم وتحليل الدم والادرار اضافة الى مراقبة الوزن .

ان الغرض الرئيسي من انشاء هذه المراكز هو الحد من نسبة الوفيات للاطفال الحديثي الولادة والطفال الرضع في العراق وقد تم تسليم 76 من المراكز الصحية الى وزارة الصحة العراقية ثلاث وثلاثون من هذا المراكز قد تم افتتاحها اما البرنامج ككل فانه قارب من نسبة 95 بالمئة من الانتهاء . وهذه المراكز تحتوي على قسم الاشعة والمختبرات ومنخر الادوية وغرفة الطوارئ ومختبر للتحليلات المرضية وقسم التطعيم وقسم لفحوصات الفم والاسنان وصالة للمرضات والعمال ولاطباء

بقلم نوريس جونسون
ترجمة شهرزاد

اذا كنت تبني هم سياتون...

وقد العديد من المراجعين الى مركز الرعاية الصحية الواقع مابين بغداد والقوجة عندما تم افتتاحه، فقد قال الدكتور محمد حسان كنا في العيادة القديمة نستقبل 75 الى 150 مريضا يوميا اما اليوم فنقوم بتقديم الخدمات الى اكثر من 250 الى 450 مريضا يوميا .

وتقطع بعض الامهات الاميال الطويلة في سبيل معالجة اولادهن في هذا المجمع . فعندما تنقل الى اسماح الاهالي بان هنالك مركزا صحيا ومزودا بمعدات طبية جديدة وحنينة فرحا كثيرا وكثرو فعلا ممتنين لهذا العمل وهذه الجهود وذلك للمطوح الموجود لدى جميع المواطنين وفي اي بقعة في الارض بتقديم وتوفير افضل الخدمات لعوائلهم وابنائهم

وتقوم هذه العيادة الشعبية بتقديم الخدمات الطبية للمواطنين لمدة ستة ايام في الاسبوع ومن الساعة الثامنة صباحا حتى الساعة الثانية ظهرا .

وقد اشار المعاون الطبي سعد ناجي والعامل في هذا المركز والمسؤول في قسم التنفس بان المشروع قد تاخر لاكثر من سنتين وكان الناس يسألون دائما متى ينتهي هذا المشروع فقد تلكن العمل في هذا المشروع بسبب الاوضاع الامنية المتدهورة اذناك واستطعنا انجاز المشروع عندما تم التخلص من البور الارهابية القاسدة هذا مقال له احد المهندسين الاميركان لهذا المشروع.

Iraq's overall infant mortality rate. So far, 67 of those PHCs have been turned over to the Ministry of Health, 33 are open to the public, and the program is 95 percent complete.

Sumaya said that because of the large influx of new patients, they have asked the Ministry of Health to consider extending their hours with the eventual goal of offering round-the-clock healthcare. She said area residents are "proud and happy to see their new facility. Every day more and more people come. It's benefitting our entire community." Currently six doctors, four dentists, and 14 nurses make up the medical team there.

The 1,940-sq.-meter single-story medical facility (a C-level clinic, the largest of three types of PHCs being built) provides medical and dental examination and treatment rooms, X-ray capabilities, testing laboratory, pharmacy, vaccinations, an emergency department, newborn nursery and ultrasound room, a labor and delivery department, a laundry and sterilization area. The \$1 million project includes a water treatment system and diesel generators for emergency power.

"This is great," said Lt. Col. Doug Lougee, 2nd Battalion Surgeon with the 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. "Just a month ago it was an empty building and now it's one of the pillars of the community. The clinic has been packed and it's really gratifying to see that they now have their own medical home that they can come to," he continued. "The clinic staff is wonderful. We know them all, and they're working hard for their people."

Above left: A mother and infant await a checkup at the new clinic.

Left: Navy Cmdr. Steve Frost visited Nasr Wa Salam's primary healthcare center recently. "It's truly rewarding seeing the smiles on people's faces. Some walked miles carrying their sick infants to get medical assistance here," he said.



CONTINGENCY REAL ESTATE

GOOD DEEDS SUPPORTING SOLDIERS, MARINES



A U.S. Army Blackhawk flies over Baghdad neighborhoods.

BY GRANT SATTLER
GULF REGION DIVISION

Keeping track of U.S. military use of private property is a big job for four government civilians and two Iraqi associates working in Baghdad's International Zone. Their efforts are helping to ensure Iraqi citizens are compensated fairly for military use of private property.

This handful of real estate specialists works in support of U.S. military throughout Iraq to handle real estate matters that arise when troops use or need to use private property. For the most part, as the Iraqi army collapsed in 2003, coalition ground troops primarily occupied property owned by the former regime—military bases, government compounds, and the grandiose palaces where Saddam Hussein squandered the nation's wealth. But in many instances there is no suitable government property and other facilities or land must be used.

As the increased troop levels from the surge taper down, the workload for the Contingency Real Estate Support Team co-located with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division is increasing.

"As the troops are drawing down, they are turning properties back over," said Lisa

Spell, a real estate specialist on temporary duty in Iraq from Headquarters U.S.

Army Corps of Engineers in Washington, D.C. A return of property means termination of a lease and payment to the private property owner, all of which has to be calculated based on the size, condition and amenities of the property and paid based on fair market value.

Real estate specialists typically work with the military unit's Staff Judge Advocate. The SJA is not only responsible for executing leases, but they also adjudicate any claims from Iraqi property owners. "Those two go hand in hand," Spell said. "If not deemed to be a claim, it could very well be deemed to be a lease, if we're still using the property."

Improvements in security in areas of Iraq like Al Anbar province has also allowed members of the real estate team to go out more with military units to calculate lease payments for complicated properties.

"Sometimes you can't just sit at your desk and figure it out from a map, sometimes really do need to go out," Spell said. Complexities include determining property payments when the occupied property belongs to multiple owners, working with expansions, mixed private and government property and the like.

"Sometimes you have to go out in the field

and see for yourself," she said. "Before, due to security, we were not able to get out as much. Now we are able to go out with the Marines and help them execute their real estate actions."

For the majority of lease actions, however, the real estate specialists have to work with information provided by the units.

William Gibson, chief of Real Estate for the Gulf Region Division, said photographs and measurements provided by the units is often all they have to work with. "There are too many properties to visit them all, and the Army can't support us to physically visit each one in any case," Gibson said.

An international realty portfolio manager for the U.S. Department of State, Gibson is "on loan" on a reimbursable detail. He routinely works with properties around the world for U.S. embassies, and for other federal agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Agency and U.S. Customs.

Gibson said his contingency real estate experience in Afghanistan and Iraq differs from most of his work overseas. In most countries, "...for any real estate action you can go to brokers, there is the paperwork, you actually inspect the property, take photos and conduct a walk through," he

see Payments, page 13

Courthouse, witness protection facility source of pride, showpiece for Basrah provincial government

BY A. AL BAHRANI
GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

BASRAH, Iraq—A courthouse and witness protection facility project is providing hundreds of jobs as well as technical and management training for many people in this southern Iraq city.

At last count the project was employing on average 350 local workers a day and has helped the local economy to grow, according to Leo Sandoval, resident engineer with the Basrah Area Office of the Gulf Region South district of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

In addition, Sandoval said, USACE has trained construction and management staff on construction processes from in-the-trenches field construction to management responsibilities for handling multi-million dollar contracts. This has enabled a number of Basrah workers to become leaders for others to follow in the process of rebuilding Iraq.

The project involves the construction of a two-story courthouse and witness protection annex in Basrah, the second largest city in Iraq. “When completed, the installation will provide the Iraqi people with a complete courthouse and witness

protection facility to assist in the justice process,” Sandoval said.

The courthouse is about 85 percent complete and the witness projection annex is approximately 90 percent complete, according to the Iraqi deputy resident engineer with the Basrah Area Office.

The contract is split into two contract line items, Sandoval explained. He said

‘The rule of law...is crucial to the success of Iraq.’

- Leo Sandoval

the first is the main courthouse facility built at a cost of \$8.8 million and the second is the annex built at a cost of \$2 million for a \$10.8 million total cost for the complex.

In addition, GRS has renovated three other courthouses in Basrah Province and is in the process of building another courthouse costing about \$1.4 million in the Shat Al-Arab area, he said.

The total cost of all these justice-related projects is just under \$15 million,

according to Tom Eidson, head of engineering and construction for GRS. Eidson said the new courthouse and witness protection facility in Basrah will be a source of pride and a showpiece for the entire provincial government. The Basrah Province is one of the nine southern Iraq provinces in which GRS is conducting reconstruction projects.

Eidson said an effective legal system is essential to a stable social structure and a foundation of a high standard of living.

“The rule of law is something I strongly believe in and feel is crucial to the success of Iraq,” Sandoval said. The witness protection annex, he said, “...will provide protection to the people of Iraq who wish to come forward in the name of justice.”

He said Iraq’s children deserve the hope of a life of freedom from fear.

Sandoval added, “The Iraqi Minister of Justice has followed this project very closely and in fact has visited the site personally and by representation on numerous occasions to ensure that the project is proceeding without impacts. They have expressed that they are very satisfied with the construction they have seen and know that this is critical in their country’s pursuit of peace and justice.”

Maysan primary healthcare centers handed over

BY MOHAMMED ALIWI
GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

TALLIL, Iraq — In the continuing effort to improve the health care system in Iraq, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently turned over three primary healthcare centers to the Iraqi authorities in Maysan province.

Robin Parks, a project manager with USACE’s Gulf Region South district, said the three bring to 19 the number that has been turned over to the Iraqi Ministry of Health for the nine southern Iraqi provinces. Eight of those are now open to provide service to the public.

Fifty eight are planned in total for the southern provinces. Forty of the PHCs are in various stages of completion, with 35 of these over 80 percent complete, Parks said.

Parks added that two facilities continue to face security issues that have prevented progress and two new PHCs have been approved for construction in the Economic Support Funds (ESF) program.

An Iraqi engineer with GRS said there are three types of PHCs –Types A, B and C.

All designs call for facilities providing medical and dental examination and treatment. Requirements also call for optometry; medical and dental X-ray capabilities; immunizations; testing laboratory; pharmacy; public education; maternity;

surgical procedures; and emergency services.

These PHC projects include furniture, office and medical equipment, and an initial supply of consumable medical and office supplies.

The Iraqi engineer said each of these health facilities will provide essential medical services to an average of 35,000 people per year. He noted that complete and usable facility projects allow for medical training for local health care workers and will employ many people.

Parks said the three types of PHCs differ in design and dimension.

- Type A: 1,155 square meter two-story facility providing for medical/dental examination and treatment with space dedicated for X-rays, vaccinations, laboratory, pharmacy and public education.

- Type B: 1,327 square meter two-story facility providing the same services as the Type A facility with additional medical training space that includes lecture halls, instructor offices and a library.

- Type C: 1,940 square meter two-story facilities that provide space for all the Type A functions plus space for emergency room, labor and delivery department that includes a pre/post delivery ward, delivery room, newborn nursery, ultrasound room, laundry and sterilization, and staff living quarters.



DEMOLITION

MISSION: Perform a reduction by demolition on the Sarafiya Bridge located in the vicinity of Baghdad, Iraq, in order to enable Iraqi state contractors with access to complete reconstruction on the bridge.

BY LT. COL. ANDRE DEMPSEY
GULF REGION DIVISION

A ten man Coalition Force underwater demolition team from the 7th Engineer Dive Detachment (7th ENG DIVE) in Kuwait completed demolition work on the Sarafiya Bridge on Nov. 28, 2007. The operation included partners from the State Commission for Roads and Bridges (SCRB), state-owned contractor Al Faw, the Iraqi Ministry of Defence, Multi-National Corps Iraq, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division.

The Sarafiya Bridge, a steel truss bridge constructed in the 1950's, spans the Tigris River in Baghdad. Until April 2007, it provided an important connection between the communities of Rusafa and Karkh.

On April 12, 2007 the bridge was destroyed by a vehicle borne improvised explosive device. The resulting explosion dropped two 37 meter spans into the river and a third, 103 meter span remained partially supported by the piers. A decision to rebuild the bridge came from the highest levels of the Iraqi government. The Deputy Prime Minister described the reconstruction of the Sarafiya Bridge as a "nationally significant event." A partnership between the Ministry of Construction and Housing's SCRB and the Ministry of Industry and Minerals (MIM) was formed to rebuild the bridge. The MIM was responsible for the fabrication of the new steel structures while SCRB, on the other hand, was responsible for removing the damaged portions of the bridge,

repairing the piers, and preparing the site for delivery and installation of the new truss structures.

The Partnership

This partnership was expanded in October when SCRB asked GRD for assistance in removing a 37 meter span that was blocking Al Faw's progress in driving the piles to support the new bridge. The submerged span measured 37 meters by 13 meters, was comprised of steel decking, reinforced concrete and asphalt overlay, and was in three meter deep water. GRD turned to the 7th ENG DIVE team to bring their unique expertise and capabilities to the task. The low visibility water, highly reinforced concrete structure, and the non-permissive environment of the Rusafa area of Baghdad turned a normally simple task into a very complex operation. An MNC-I fragmentary order (FRAGO) was issued to kick off the operation which included arranged support from the 7th ENG DIVE team, sourcing sufficient explosive materials, coordinating security between four battle space owners and the Baghdad Operation Center, and communicating with the Iraqi principles.

The Plan

The dive team and Al Faw Company formulated a plan with inputs from the Iraqi divers and under the leadership of Engineer Saady, the Sarafiya Bridge engineer and Maj. Mike Biankowski, MNC-I C7 project officer. The plan included multiple days of underwater demolition operations followed by concrete removal

operations by the Iraqi contractor and his divers. The key to success of this mission was the frequent and open communication between all of the parties. This allowed the Army divers to adjust placement of the explosives to achieve maximum effect.

Demolition Operations

Oct. 27: Hasty reconnaissance at the bridge to meet the contractors, Iraqi divers, and see the work site.

Nov 4: Planning meeting between dive team, MNC-I, SCRB, GRD, contractor, and Iraqi divers to discuss scope of work and develop an initial plan.

Nov 9: Dive team conducted a deliberate reconnaissance to take measurements, survey bridge span, and test demolition charges (including a C-4 breaching charge, and a M2A4, 15lb shape charge)

Nov 12: Follow-up meeting between all parties to discuss results of deliberate reconnaissance. Agreement to use 150lb shots consisting of ten 15lb shape charges.

Nov 19: First day: Completed two 150lb shots on the east side of the bridge.

Nov 21: Second day: Completed four 150lb shots on the east side of the bridge.

Nov 24: Third day: Completed five 150lb shots, two on the east side, two on the west side, and one in the center.

Nov 28: Final day: Completed four 150lb shots.



Above: 7th ENG DIVE Soldiers pose during a shot to clear underwater obstructions. Left below: Preparation of demolition shape charges.

The Celebration

The partners met Dec. 1, 2007 to celebrate their important accomplishments. The representatives from the MoD, SCRB, and Al Faw presented tokens of their appreciation to the dive team. GRD Director of Programs Lloyd Caldwell presented certificates of appreciation to the Army divers and the Iraqi partners on behalf of Brig. Gen. Jeffery Dorko, commanding general of GRD. During the exchange of gifts, Sundus Ali captured the spirit of what was achieved when she said, "the Sarafiya Bridge is more than a physical structure; it symbolizes a bridge of friendship between our two nations." It was clear from this operation that everyone plays a vital role in the reconstruction of Iraq. This mission would have been impossible without the support of the 7th ENG DIVE team, but it would have been equally impossible without the cooperation, assistance and technical advice from the Iraqi experts.



Far left: Iraqi workers demolish and remove the damaged bridge spans as new spans are built.

جسر الصرافية ... جسر تاريخ .. محبة وجسر ذكريات

فجميع هذه المسائل محفورة في الذاكرة الا ان الارهاب اراد ان يمحي هذه الذاكرة فقام باعدائه الاخير على هذا المعلم التاريخي, نعم قامو بتدمير جسر لكن من المستحيل تدمير ذاكرة وسرعان ما سارع العراقيين في العمل في اعادة اعمارهم حيث قام طاقم من المهندسين العراقيين والغواصين العراقيين والاميركان بالعمل في هذا المشروع حيث يعتبر عملا فريدا وذلك لوجود مشكلة الغوارق ورفعها وهي تجربة فريدة من نوعها واولى في العراق وتمت هذه العملية الضخمة في جسر الصرافية وقد تحدث المهندس مختار اسماعيل مدير عام شركة الفاو الهندسية عن تفجير الغوارق تحت الماء قائلا: ان عملية اعادة اعمار جسر الصرافية تتم وفق مراحل متعددة والمرحلة المهمة فيها هي عملية رفع الغوارق اذ تم اكمال الجزء (37) من جهة الكرخ وسلم الى وزارة الصناعة التي باشرت بتنفيذ المراحل الخاصة بهم, الجزء الثاني (103) وهو اهم جزء في الجسر اذ يقع بين الدعامتين المتضررتين حيث تم رفع الجزء المتدلي من جهة الرصافة والجزء المتدلي من جهة الكرخ ويطول 22 م, ورفع نصف الجزء المتبقي من الوسط بالجزء (59), والجزء (37) الاخير من جهة الرصافة تم رفع الهياكل البارزة منها تحت الماء بواسطة غواصين قاموا بقطعها, واستعانوا بقوات التحالف لاجراء عملية التفجير تحت الماء لعدم وجود الخبرة الكافية لدينا في هذا المجال.

بقلم شهرزاد

جسر الصرافية هو جسر يربط مابين الكرخ والرصافة وكذلك جسر يربط مابين قلوب الكرخيين والرصافيين ايضا فما من طالب متوجه الى جامعته الواقعة في الرصافة الا وحمل في حقيبة ذكرياته الفكرية نسيم نهر دجلة في الصباح . وفي الصرافية كانت هنالك ثلاثة معالم متممة لحياة البغداديين وهذه المعالم هي (التين والباكلة والجراديق) اما تين الصرافية والمشهور بالتين الوزيري فقد كان يمتاز بضلاله الوارفة وسواقيه الجارية واشجار التوت والصفصاف وقد كان البغداديون يتقاطرون عليه ايام الجمع لعقد جلسات الانس والطرب . اما الباكلة فهي مزرعة كانت تمتد بين طريق الاعظمية وشارع الوزيرية وكانت تبدو في امسيات الربيع وكأنها مسرح فلكوري كبير حيث يتوافد عليها البغداديون ومن شتى الشرائح من اجل التنزه واللهو. والجراديق فقد كانت تنصب في اعلى الشاطئ وتشرق على النهر وكانت هنالك ثلاث مناطق تنصب فيها الجراديق تتصل ببعضها مع بعض في الصيف فتبدو وكأنها جرادق واحد وانوار تلك الجراديق تنعكس على على صفحة دجلة في الليل واصداء جالغيات بغداد تتردد من الجانب الاخر والتي كانت ارضا خلاء تعرف في الماضي باسم المتوليات وهي نفسها المنطقة التي تسمى الان بالعطيفية كون الصرافية مجاورة لدجلة وملتية بالبستين انذاك.

Looking for strong finish

BY JOHN CONNOR
GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

TALLIL, Iraq – The Adder Area Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is hoping to wrap up more than a dozen projects of different sorts before the end of the year.

Navy Cmdr. Mike Lang, officer in charge of the office, said the intent is to end the year “with a strong finish” by closing out a significant number of projects. The office is part of the Corps’ Gulf Region South district, which serves Iraq’s nine southern provinces.

Among the projects being eyed for completion before year’s end are three primary healthcare centers in Dhi Qar province. These facilities are among the nearly three dozen PHC’s nearing completion across southern Iraq that will provide essential medical services to countless Iraqis each day and also will employ many Iraqis and provide medical training for local health



Workmen pause during construction of the Al Harbia pedestrian bridge in Dhi Qar province.

care workers.

One project awaiting turnover is the Al-Warka compact water unit and network in Muthanna province. It will provide clean water for the village of Al Warka, which has a population of 90,000 people. The project, which entailed the construction of two 200 cubic meter/per hour compact water units and the installation of a 3.4 kilometer piping network, cost \$948,000.

Other projects targeted for close out

before the end of the year include a new convoy support center and accompanying dining facility at a cost of \$24.1 million; two electrical feeders; the first phase of the Nasiriyah Prison; a pump generator in Nasiriyah; a road project; a bridge project; and the rehabilitation of the Nasiriyah Maternity and Pediatric Hospital.

The Al Harbia pedestrian bridge in Dhi Qar province is being built at a cost of \$213,000 to give pedestrians a safe way of crossing the Euphrates River. The local community in the area lives on both sides of the river.

The Al Eshtaraki Road, a \$3.5 million project in Dhi Qar province, runs for approximately 21 kilometers and has an average width of six meters, with two meter shoulders on each side.

The Nasiriyah Maternity Hospital project has been inching toward completion and USACE officials remain hopeful it can be wrapped up before long.

Comrades say goodbye to fallen mate

BY JOHN CONNOR
GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

TALLIL, Iraq – Personnel from Aegis, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other organizations gathered Nov. 26, 2007 afternoon to bid farewell to Stephen Dixon, who lost his life Nov. 24 when his vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb while escorting Corps employees on project site visits.

Dixon was a veteran of the British Army and an employee of Aegis, a London-based private security company that provides security services to USACE in Iraq. He was stationed in Basrah.

“This afternoon, with a light breeze in the air and the sun setting to the west, it is important that we stop for a moment and recognize the service, the character and the ultimate of selfless sacrifices – as we pay tribute to Stephen Dixon,” said Col. Steve Hill, commanding officer of the Gulf Region South district.

The strains of bagpipe music—including “Amazing Grace”—wafted through the USACE compound here in southern Iraq on a chilly late afternoon as nearly 100 persons from Aegis, the Corps of Engineers, Army units, government organizations and private security firms gathered to honor Dixon.

Dixon, 29, joined Aegis in June 2007.

He previously worked for another security firm, Control Risk Group, and before that served more than nine years with the 2nd Battalion, Royal Green Jackets, a famous



infantry regiment.

He is survived by his wife Sarah, and two children, Caitlin, 7, and Niall, 5.

Timothy Mundell, the Aegis regional director, read from a work by a World War I British poet who spoke of the passing of comrades and mates and the opening of heaven’s gates.

“Stephen made it possible for GRS to sustain a reconstruction mission – to diligently work to help the people of Iraq and to make

life better for others,” Col. Hill said. “He protected us – he protected us on missions here and most frequently on missions in Basrah.

“Our organization’s mission – is to lead the reconstruction effort by providing engineering and construction management services in Iraq while assisting the government of Iraq to assume all infrastructure responsibilities – this mission simply could not occur without Steven’s dedicated daily efforts and the efforts of those who live, train and protect along with him,” the colonel said.

“Here today we remain unified in our purpose – to simply pay tribute to a professional, a great teammate and a colleague who put the safety of others before his own,” Hill continued. “In closing, those who venture ‘outside the wire’ to complete our missions continue to place our unqualified trust, confidence, and our very lives in the hands of the qualified, courageous, and dedicated security professionals from Aegis. These professionals, like Steven, routinely put their lives in ‘harm’s way’ for us every day.”

Dhi Qar province roadway under construction

BY MOHAMMED ALIWI
GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

DHI QAR, Iraq — In cooperation with the Iraqi Ministry of Roads and Bridges, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is constructing the An Nasiriyah-Al Diwaniyah (Al Eshtarki Road) road project in the Al Fajir District of Dhi Qar province.

Michael Fellenz, project engineer with the USACE Gulf Region South district, said the intent of this project is to connect paved roads for everyday use by the local population. In addition to providing invaluable access to major arteries throughout the governorate, this project will also please the local populace and help restore national security.

The two lane road will connect Al Fajir District with the highway of Al Diwaniyah province. “The contractor’s responsibility was to review the existing design, revise and complete the design as necessary, and construct the roads to meet the requirements of the contract,” Fellenz said. The design also included the excavation and installation of more than 605 linear meters of culverts, he said.

According to Falih Ali, GRS project engineer, the two lane bituminous roadway is to be 21 kilometers long, six-meters wide with a two-meter shoulder on each side. “The contractor is to construct the roadway pavement section with depths of asphalt bituminous base course and crushed aggregate sub base per approved pavement design,” Ali said. “All work meets with the specifications

and the measurements of the Roads and Bridges Directorate.”

The project engineer said there have been no troubles at all between the Al Fajir’s people and the contractor during the construction. The provincial Reconstruction and Development Team of Al Fajir has been very cooperative with the contractor and his laborers. “They even cook for them and were very happy to have a new paved road in their area. For the very good treatment and the cooperation of the people of Al Fajir District in Thi Qar province, the contractor volunteered to fund and build 500 hundred meters to connect the new road with the highway of Al Diwaniyah,” Ali said.



An Iraqi police patrol provides the contractor with security he needs to complete his job.

Payments benefit property owners, local community

Continued from page 7

said. “Here we just have paperwork filled out and you hope everything is right.”

The Real Estate team does employ local contractors to visit the appropriate land office to pull and verify deeds of ownership before payments are made. The contractors and the Iraqi nationals on staff are critical to the mission. “Locals are very important to the operation because they have to do all the translations,” Gibson said. He said that along with the difficulties the security situation presents, the frequent lack of documentation is a significant hurdle.

“I’m learning patience,” Gibson quipped. Sometimes after traveling out with a military convoy, by helicopter, or with a personnel security team, one finds oneself “...sitting in a dark room hoping someone shows up.”

Spell said contingencies are always different because you have to work with what you have available. “Most of the time we don’t have too much of anything because the land offices are no longer in existence,

or destroyed during civil unrest,” she said.

Nevertheless, Real Estate has established an extensive data base of U.S. military leases and tracks when leases are coming to an end. “A lease will expire on its own terms, or the units will choose to renew it,” Spell said. “If it will expire on its own terms, it is the responsibility of the occupying unit to provide us with the necessary photographs and paperwork so payment can be made.”

Those payments are helping to provide greater stability and economic benefit to the local economy.

Spell said tribal sheiks, who have been instrumental in Tribal Awakening Councils that have worked together with Coalition forces to remove Al Qaeda, have been very helpful. “To date we have executed over a thousand leases in the Al Anbar area of operation, which is good for the citizens there because it has helped them to rebuild,” she said. “[The sheiks] have expressed appreciation for what we have done for the people there

“Within the last couple months going out to Al Anbar, I can really see a big difference. The people in the community are willing to help the Marines out there,” Spell said. “The Marines do an awful lot for the community, the humanitarian part. Leasing and claims is a big thing for the folks out there.”

Gibson said that Real Estate does not deal with foreign governments, only

private individuals or companies. Occasionally, property in use by U.S. forces belongs to the Government of Iraq or another governmental entity. “If someone needs to determine ownership, our contractor will go out and he will pull the deeds. We’ll set up a package and inform them that it’s either government, private, or mixed... whatever it turns out to be,” Gibson said. “The project owner will determine how to go forward. If it is private property then we can lease from the individual, if it is government property it is a different route.” Most often arrangements for use are made through the Iraq Transition Assistance Office or the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq.

Spell said her experience with contingency deployments is that they are learning experiences. “[It’s] a fast paced job where it’s constantly busy,” she said. Seeing Iraq has also been an experience on the personal level. “The biggest thing that I can honestly say is it makes you appreciate what you have when you see there are others who are less fortunate than you are,” Spell said. “[Especially] the children, they didn’t ask for it.”

But with the mantra “First in – last out” the GRD Real Estate office will continue to make a positive impact. “It’s true, when the last American unit leaves, someone has to be here to straighten up the land issues,” Gibson said.

Iraqis complete postal training

BY JENNA BISENIUS
GULF REGION DIVISION

BAGHDAD, Iraq—A nine-month postal employee training program for 27 Iraqis was completed in mid-November. The training took place in Baghdad; Dubai, United Arab Emirates; and Amman, Jordan.

The training program was provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division as part of the Postal Point of Service (PPOS) project for Iraq. The PPOS project is a key step in helping the Iraqi Post Office (IPO) modernize their services to be better able to effectively and efficiently serve the Iraqi populace.

The recent training will enable Iraqis to operate the new equipment and understand the modern-day methodology that is the cornerstone of the PPOS project. Twenty males and seven females participated in the course. The students included administrative personnel, engineers, technicians, software and database developers, graphic designers and transportation and procurement staff.

The PPOS modernization effort includes installing up-to-the-minute hardware and software at IPOs selected for the project. This includes setup of computer-based standardized postal services to allow secured systems and transactions, two-dimensional barcode identification systems and digital scales, all fully integrated. The integration of new-age

software technology and advanced postal equipment will enable IPOs to provide improved postal services to Iraqi customers. For example, digital franking machines can be set up to interface with computerized scales to determine and print postage, thereby replacing traditional stamps.

Additionally, the PPOS project will permit IPO managers and the Iraqi Ministry of Communications to have global reporting and management control of IPO financial activity and revenues.

Upon completion, it is expected that the PPOS project will greatly improve Iraq's postal system security and will help to transform the Iraqi postal service into a service-oriented organization that can compete with retail post office networks.

Diwaniyah postal facility opens

BY JOHN CONNOR
GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has built all sorts of projects in Iraq, large and small, depending on the needs of the various regions and local communities.

The people of Diwaniyah needed a post office and a post office they have received.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held to mark the opening of the Diwaniyah Postal Station, which will provide essential and reliable postal services to Diwaniyah City. A delegation from the Ministry of Communication in Baghdad was on hand to officiate.

The facility was constructed at a cost of \$485,000 with Iraq

Relief and Reconstruction Fund money and employed about 30 skilled and unskilled workers on average daily.

An estimated 20 postal workers will be employed at the post office, said Su-Chen Chen, Qadisiyah resident engineer with the USACE Forat Area Office. The post office will serve an estimated 500 persons a day, according to Chen.

The post office is equipped with air conditioning, electrical lighting, a latrine, a kitchen, and an auxiliary generator, she said.

Diwaniyah is located in Qadisiyah province, one of the nine southern Iraq provinces served by the USACE Gulf Region South district. The district to date has completed over 1,300 projects costing more than \$2.5 billion. It still has over 200 projects costing about \$815 million on the books.

Governor thanks USACE engineers for work in province

BY JOHN CONNOR
GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

TALLIL, Iraq—The governor of Muthanna province has extended his thanks to the engineers of the Gulf Region South district of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the district's work in his province.

"We would like to send our thanks and appreciation for your great works, which help Al Muthanna province in construction and services," said Muthanna Gov. Ahmed Marzoq Salal in a recent thank you letter addressed to GRS American engineers.

"Thanks for your continuous works," said the governor, who voiced hope that more help and support will be

forthcoming from GRS.

Muthanna is one of the nine southern provinces of Iraq served by GRS, which to date has completed more than \$2.5 billion of projects across the south of Iraq and has nearly another \$1 billion worth of projects left to be done.

John Overfield, GRS resident engineer for Muthanna, in turn thanked the governor and other Muthanna officials for the excellent cooperation the Directors General have extended to the Corps of Engineers. The DGs are those Iraqi officials with whom the Corps personnel work closely on projects.

He said this spirit of mutual cooperation in part reflects the combined efforts of the five Iraqi construction engineers and the two people who have joined the

Muthanna Resident Office since mid-August, Cecil Whitehouse and Ulysses Gracia.

Overfield said current projects in Muthanna include the installation of telephone lines in the province's three major cities, a vehicle bridge, a pedestrian bridge, water storage tanks, several irrigation projects, and two road paving projects.

In addition, he said, a primary health-care center in the province is nearing completion and is being eyed for turnover soon. He also said work is progressing on three electrical projects—two substations and one feeder line.

Further, Overfield said, two compact water units, which provide clean drinking water, have been completed in the province since summer and that one more remains to be finished.

'Hope becoming a reality'

Construction contractor sees improvements bringing change

STORY & PHOTO BY NORRIS JONES
GULF REGION CENTRAL DISTRICT

Thousands of Iraqis are helping rebuild their country.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is currently overseeing 541 projects valued at \$2 billion in a variety of areas including renovating hospitals and schools, installing new water and sewer lines, electrical generation, new water and wastewater treatment plants, bridges and road paving. (In the past three years, more than 3,700 projects valued at \$5.6 billion have been completed.)

Namir El Akabi, chief executive officer of ALMCO Group which has 6,500 Iraqis on its payroll, says his firm has been involved with both new construction and refurbishment.

"We're the largest Iraqi-owned company doing this kind of work.

We have completed about 80 projects, both small and large. The U.S.-funded projects have been the main engine for employment within Iraq. This work has allowed Iraq to survive, because without these strategic projects, things would have been much worse. It would have been a complete disaster."

His firm has been working for three years on the \$50 million R3 water treatment plant in east Baghdad that will provide 25 million gallons daily (4,000 cubic meters per hour) of potable water. "Water is the essence of life. We'll finish that project in January and its impact on Sadr City's standard of living will be dramatic."

El Akabi is proud to point out that his workers are being paid some of the highest salaries in Iraq "The secret to our success is honesty in execution, quality production, and looking after our Iraqi employees." He notes that at the conclusion of every project, 20 percent of the profits are distributed to his Iraqi crew. "That helps with motivation. They know they are part of the company. And that's



Namir El Akabi, chief executive officer, ALMCO Group, Baghdad sits recently for an interview with Iraqi news media

'...We have to keep going down that road to rebuild Iraq, to establish democracy and freedom...'

why we have been able to execute so many projects in such a short time. I look after our Iraqi employees and they produce."

El Akabi grew up in Iraq and left at age 10. "It was a dream of mine to come back." He returned to Baghdad in 2003 and started his company with five employees. He notes that most Middle Eastern countries don't have

the natural resources his homeland possesses. "They don't have water, they don't have oil, they don't have minerals – Iraq has everything."

He hopes that someday soon, Iraq will become the next Dubai.

He said he's often asked when Iraq will be secure and safe. He answers, "I don't know. But we have to keep going. We have to keep going down that road to rebuild Iraq, to establish democracy and freedom. Things have improved tremendously."

He pointed out that in 2006, his company had a terrorist incident every week – an attack on one of their convoys, at a project site, or the kidnapping of an employee. "For the past two months, I don't remember one incident where a fatality happened. The Iraqi people are fed up with all this blood, all this terrorism, all these people coming from the outside and dictating how we should think, what is right and what is wrong. The Iraqis are an intelligent people by nature and the minority have been misguided, misguided by other countries and by other ideologies such as Al Qaeda which is wrong by any standard."

He said that people today, for the most part, can go about with their normal life activities. "I'm optimistic. During the last three or four months, I've seen changes. In 2006, when things got really bad, we were all very depressed. We

couldn't see hope. But we had to keep telling ourselves there is hope. Now I actually see hope. I can see it with my eyes, I can feel it. Today, hope is becoming a reality."

'The Iraqi people are fed up with all this blood, all this terrorism, all these people coming from the outside and dictating how we should think...'

Iraqis construct Fallujah's first-ever sewage system

STORY & PHOTO BY NORRIS JONES
GULF REGION CENTRAL DISTRICT

About 450 Iraqis are working to get Fallujah's first-ever sewer system operational by next summer.

That number is expected to soon grow to a construction force of 700 locals. The \$85 million project includes a collection system, trunk mains, pump stations and a wastewater treatment plant processing 40,000 cubic meters daily (10.5 million gallons).

"People are happy because our community is safer now and there are more American projects creating jobs in different areas," said Construction Manager Awaf Abdul Rahim at the wastewater treatment plant. "It's helped Fallujah's unemployment. When the security situation improved earlier this year, we were inspired to work hard. Our construction crews became more serious and active and are now getting more done."

Peter Collins, with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is the project manager overseeing the work. "The long term benefit is huge. At the moment Fallujah's raw sewage is flowing into the Euphrates River, polluting it, impacting communities downstream who depend on it as a drinking source," Collins said.

Apart from the Iraqi work force, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has 35 Iraqi engineers visiting the various project sites daily, checking on the quality of the ongoing construction and encouraging worker safety.



Work is under way to provide Fallujah its first-ever wastewater treatment plant and collection system.

Collins says the new treatment plant will have the capacity to serve Fallujah's needs until 2025, even if the community has a 50 percent growth in population (from 200,000 to 300,000 residents).

"People in Fallujah may not fully appreciate the impact of this project because they have never lived in a sewage-free city. Next year there will be no wastewater flowing in the streets and their children will be able to play safely outside," Collins said. "It represents a monumental step forward and that's what motivates us as we work to achieve that goal."

العراقيون ينفذون لأول مرة منظومة مجاري في الفلوجة

ترجمة عبدالهادي النجار

وقال السيد بيتر كولنز، مدير المشروع الذي ينتسب لفيلق المهندسين الامريكى، ان فوائد هذا المشروع طويلة الامد وكبيرة، وعند ملاحظة مايجري الان ان مياه المجاري يتم التخلص منها في مياه نهر الفرات الامر الذي يؤدي الى تلوثه مما يضر بصحة اهالي المناطق التي تستخدمه للشرب. ويعمل مع فيلق المهندسين الامريكى 35 مهندسا عراقيا يزورون مواقع العمل يوميا للاشراف عليها والتأكد من سلامة العمال وكفاءة العمل.

ويضيف السيد كولنز ان محطة معالجة فضلات المجاري ذات طاقة عمل يمكن ان تستمر لغاية سنة 2025 حتى اذا ارتفع عدد السكان بنسبة 50% (اي يرتفع من 200,000 نسمة الى 300,000 نسمة).

وربما لا يدرك الناس بشكل كامل اهمية هذا المشروع لانهم لم يعتادوا على العيش في مدينة خالية من مياه المجاري، وستشهد السنة القادمة تحسنا ملحوظا حيث لن تكون هناك مياه مجاري تطفو في الشوارع وسيلعب الاطفال هناك دون تأثيرها، ان هذا المشروع يمثل خطوة مهمة الى امام الامر الذي يدفعنا لتحقيق هذا الهدف، هذا على حد قول كولنز.

يعمل حاليا حوالي 450 عاملا عراقيا من اجل اكمال منظومة مجاري الفلوجة، التي تنفذ لأول مرة هناك، في الصيف القادم. ومن المتوقع ان يرتفع العدد الى 700 عامل عندما تتقدم مراحل البناء. ويتضمن المشروع الذي تبلغ كلفته 85 مليون دولار نظاما لتجميع المجاري مع نصب انابيب رئيسية ومحطات للضخ مع محطة لمعالجة الفضلات بطاقة 40,000 متر مكعب في اليوم.

وقد قال السيد عوف عبد الرحيم، مدير الانشاءات في محطة معالجة المجاري، ان الناس في الفلوجة سعداء لان مدينتهم اصبحت اكثر امانا مما ساعد على تنفيذ المزيد من المشاريع الامريكية في مناطق مختلفة منها.

ان هذا المشروع وفر فرص عمل كثيرة لاهالي المدينة مما شجعهم على العمل بجد وبذل المزيد من الجهود لانجاز المشاريع بكفاءة عالية.

Girls school renovation nears completion

STORY & PHOTOS BY VAN WILLIAMS
GULF REGION DIVISION

Children in one Baghdad suburb are one step closer to having a better school thanks to the efforts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Iraqi construction workers.

Finishing touches are being made on the Thifaf Al Neel School in Al Bayaa, near Baghdad.

The area was an insurgent stronghold until a few months ago and the project was behind schedule. But thanks to the U.S. military surge, security improved and construction crews were able to continue work.

USACE Gulf Region Division's Command Sgt. Maj. Eloy Alcivar recently inspected the project, and remembered his first visit there. "When I first came to the school, the principal and an English teacher asked me for help," Alcivar said. "They touched my heart."

The \$659,000 project renovated parts of the secondary school and built an addition to the building that nearly doubles the size of the facility. The new addition includes nine classrooms and four large laboratories, and will provide classroom space for 300 students.

Command Sgt. Maj. Eloy Alcivar checks on window operation in the new classrooms during a recent visit to the project..



Command Sgt. Maj. Eloy Alcivar presents the school's principal with a desk pen set and a personal donation for school supplies.

Beyond the bricks and mortar, this school represents an investment in the future of Iraq--its children. "This is a poor neighborhood and the security situation here was not helping," the principal said.

"We are isolated from other areas of the education department. Even the school teachers and staff couldn't get to those areas to ask for supplies," she continued.

After the inspection, Alcivar gave the students treats, and gave the principal a desk pen set. The command sergeant major also donated \$1 million Iraqi Dinars [approximately \$830 U.S.] of his own money to the school. The school's principal was grateful to receive the donation. "The female students in this area have been deprived of many educational supplies, such as computers, laboratories and other school activities," she said.

"Don't give up hope," Alcivar told the principal. "We will help you all we can."

Respect shows in mission

Continued from page 3

How does "treat people as they should be treated" apply to us in the Gulf Region Division?

I believe it shows in our pursuit of the highest standards for safety possible on our jobsites. Respecting the individual Iraqi worker enough to consistently insist that management never shortcut on safety.

I believe it shows in our demand for integrity and quality in the design and construction of projects for the Iraqi people. The Iraqi public deserves much better than the previous regime provided.

It shows in our dealings with our Iraqi counterparts in understanding their ways are sometimes different. We can achieve much more together when we respect the position, respect the

person and respect the abilities they bring to the table. Communication must be based on respect.

In each of our own workplaces, respect of others is vital to a well functioning team. Respect is trusting that all team members are contributing and fulfilling their duty. Self-respect results from knowing you have put forth your best effort.

As we embark on the year 2008, I know that you are putting forth that best effort in your service to the Gulf Region Division, the Army and the nation.

Thank you for your diligence and thank you to your family for supporting you during your deployment. You have my respect.

ESSAYONS!

Army Strong, Engineer Ready!
Command Sgt. Maj. Eloy Alcivar
Gulf Region Division

USACE team checks projects, makes donations

By JOHN CONNOR
GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

TALLIL, Iraq – A team from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers paid a visit not long ago to the village of Al Haboosh in Dhi Qar province with several goals in mind.

For one thing, the team members wanted to check on the progress being made by the contractor building a new compact water unit for the village, a project funded with ESF (Economic Support Fund) money by the Provincial Reconstruction Team for Dhi Qar province.

That project, which cost \$650,000 and will provide clean drinking water to an estimated 1,500 Iraqis, is proceeding satisfactorily, said Navy Cmdr. Mike Lang, officer in charge of the USACE Adder Area Office.

The project is expected to be finished by mid-April, 2008. It is one of eight compact water unit projects being constructed in the province, one of the nine southern Iraqi provinces served by the Gulf Region South district of the Corps of Engineers.

The team members also wanted to meet with the local sheik, Sheik Haj Abdul Raznak Abed Al-Moshen Rebeb, to discuss what might be done in the way of future projects. They inspected a nearby school at his request. The school was renovated by UN-Habitat with funds provided by the government of Japan. It accommodates 250 children, with five classes per day for five days a week. The school currently lacks electricity since the



USACE photo by Cmdr. Mike Lang

From left, Chuck Comeau and Art Patterson visit with Iraqi children after delivering school supplies and toys to school in Al Haboosh Village, Dhi Qar province, and inspecting compact water unit project in progress there. About 250 children attend the school.

village transformer has been placed but not connected.

In addition, the team members wanted to check out the village's other needs, hand out school supplies donated by soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division, and give local children several boxes of toys and a soccer bag. "It was a joy giving out the toys and seeing the smiling faces on all the kids," Lang said.

Among the possibilities discussed for new projects, according to Lang, were power hookups to the school, power hookups to a new transformer, and gravel

improvements to an existing road to improve travel between villages.

The team consisted of Art Patterson, PRT engineer for Dhi Qar; Mike Fellenz, project engineer for Dhi Qar; Chuck Comeau, resident engineer for Dhi Qar, and Lang.

Commenting on the overall trip, Lang said, "Part of our goal over here is to help build governance and make life better for these people. These projects, where you can see just how much you are impacting lives for the better, make being over here in arduous conditions worthwhile."

Connectivity service providers recognized



Laura Callaway, former Gulf Region Division G6, right, presents a plaque to the USACE TeleEngineering Operations Center represented by Rick Burrows, center, and Leo Koestler.

Former Gulf Region Division G6 Laura Callaway presented the USACE TeleEngineering Operations Center a plaque of appreciation for support May 2005-July 2007. The TEOC provides critical command and control secure video teleconference capabilities between the GRD HQs and its districts as well as back to HQ USACE and the Department of the Army.

The plaque included a GRD G6 coin designed by the GRD G6 staff of Americans and Iraqis. The front of the coin symbolizes the communications across Iraq with a Corps castle, satellite, and satellite dish and the back depicts the partnership of the American and Iraqi governments with an American eagle and an Iraqi falcon side by side and with the phrase "Providing Communications for Iraqi Freedom" in English and Arabic. The Corps motto ESSAYONS is around the edge of the coin in Binary Code.

Not pictured are TEOC Director Rhonda Taylor, Jeff Williamson, Mary Gaines and Sabrina Kingston-Miles.

TALKING BUSINESS



USACE photo by BJ Weiner

Gulf Region Division's Director of Programs Lloyd Caldwell, center, talks with Gulf Region South district leaders and staff during a recent visit to southern Iraq.

Director of Programs visits Gulf Region South district

BY JOHN CONNOR
GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

TALLIL, Iraq – Lloyd Caldwell, director of programs for the Gulf Region Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, said the rate of execution of the Economic Support Fund (ESF) program is receiving great attention from the U.S. leadership.

Caldwell said staff has looked at ways to increase the rate of execution including process improvements and adding capability at the USACE district level to work with the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in the ESF program. That includes hiring more Iraqis to work on the program.

At the same time, he said the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad faces a challenge with respect to the program--to promptly use ESF monies that Congress has appropriated for the program or face the risk that the Office of Management and Budget back in Washington will direct the money to other uses.

The ESF program is managed by the State Department, with projects guided by Provincial Reconstruction Teams through Iraqi Provincial Reconstruction Development Committees. The actual construction work is overseen in most cases by USACE. A primary objective of the ESF program is to build Iraqi local governing capacity, which requires mentoring and coaching the provincial governments to plan and develop scopes for the projects to serve their citizens.

Caldwell, the senior civilian official in

GRD, made his remarks at a meeting with GRS leaders and staff during which he said “you are doing great things” and that there is “good leadership here in the district.”

He urged the leaders and staff to keep their collective eye on the fundamentals and never lose sight of the good they are doing in Iraq.

Col. Steve Hill, the GRS commander, said the district has about \$850 million worth of projects in process. He said ESF is a top priority and asked Caldwell about other priorities.

Caldwell said that “every program we have must be done well, and one does not have a priority over another.” He acknowledged resource constraints, but advised, “Don’t constrain hiring.” He said the district should continue to hire people for the forecast workload, and that management decisions will be made about reducing resources when requirements are forecast to drop off.

Under a scenario where reconstruction work does drop off, Caldwell said in response to a question, GRD could be a slightly different type of organization--a theater engineer command with a smaller group at GRD and area offices in the various regions collapsed into a single district office. He said such reorganization is not schedule driven, and specified that there is no timeline in this regard and that decisions depend on how programs develop.

“Right now, focus on doing the work we have now,” said Caldwell, who has been

in the construction business for over 30 years, more than 20 of that in the field.

“I’m impressed with you, and the important contribution that you are making to this nation,” Caldwell told the GRS personnel. He urged them to focus on the fundamentals, saying things typically go well when the basics are covered.

Caldwell also urged the district leaders to focus on the good things they and their teams are accomplishing, not the problems they inevitably encounter along the way. He said that “our business is about resolving problems,” and that a primary responsibility of leaders is to ensure that their team members do not lose sight of the goodness of their work.

He said the Iraqi ministers and other Iraqi leaders that he meets in Baghdad regularly express their appreciation for the work and commitment of Corps of Engineers employees in Iraq.

Caldwell said he is confident that the Corps of Engineers’ work with Iraqi local nationals, officials and companies will leave a lasting imprint by their adoption of the good business practices demonstrated by USACE.

He said he has seen other developing nations adopt USACE project management and construction business practices after a few years of working with USACE, although it is not uncommon for locals to push back initially but eventually to use those very methods because they see the results. “I think we’ll see the same thing here,” he said.

East Baghdad schools renovated



Renovations were completed Oct. 23 on an elementary school in east Baghdad. The \$287,117 project included new mosaic floor tiles, repairing the roof, replacing the electrical system and lighting, new student restrooms, new plaster and painting of interior and exterior walls, new walkway and new lighted school signs. About 35 Iraqis were on the construction crew doing the work. The facility houses the Wady Al-Aein elementary school for boys and the Um-Selma elementary school for girls in Zafaraniya. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Loyalty Resident Office oversaw the work.



photos by Norris Jones

