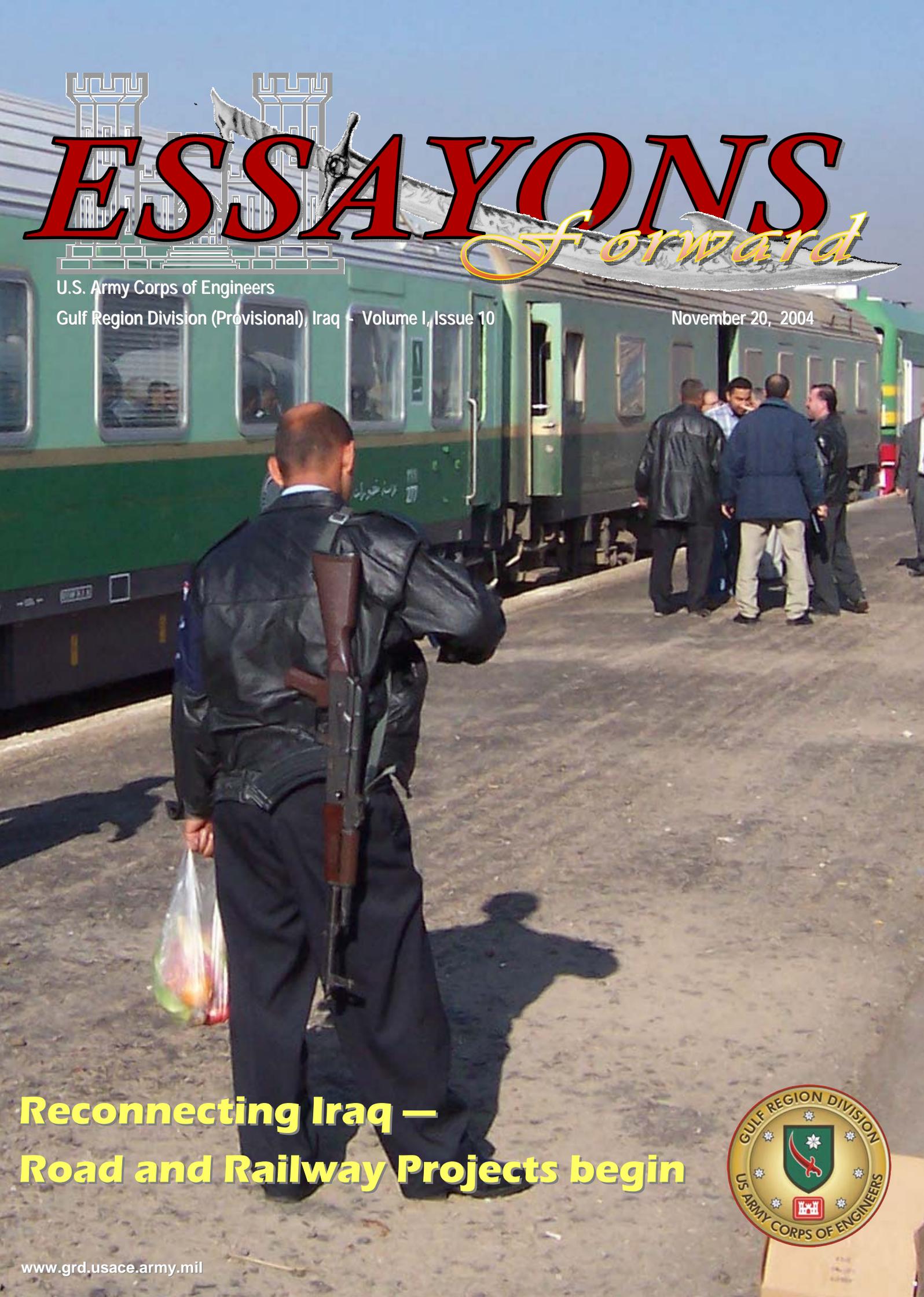


ESSAYONS

Forward

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Gulf Region Division (Provisional), Iraq - Volume I, Issue 10

November 20, 2004



**Reconnecting Iraq —
Road and Railway Projects begin**



November 20, 2004

Volume 1, Issue 10



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Commander's Column



Another great month of work serving the men and women in uniform and the people of Iraq has been completed. We've started over 700 projects on our way to a goal of over 1800 project starts by December 31, 2004 with an estimated value of over \$4 Billion. As the insurgency picks up the pace of attacks during Ramadan, MNF-I is effectively focusing on key cities throughout Iraq including Najaf, Samarra, and Tal Afar. The reconstruction effort following these battles is vital and achieving success. Even PCO projects in these cities are being accelerated to put Iraqis to work and to show visible signs of reconstruction progress. The focus of PCO projects during post-battle operations has been schools, and with schools starting during the month of October, these projects are quite timely and most important.

We hit another milestone within the Restore Iraqi Electricity Team by bringing the Qudas power plant on-line with 192 MW added to the grid in two consecutive days in October; this was the highest two day increase on record. Additionally, RIE has turned over 12 power plants to the Minister of Electricity. Construction is beginning to move out across the country particularly with schools, border forts, police stations, health clinics, hospitals and a number of other areas.

We had two major Engineer Gatherings this month with Ambassador Negroponte and General Casey meeting with the engineer community in Baghdad to express the importance of the reconstruction effort to the overall campaign plan and to the Iraqi people. We also had the second Engineer Summit, or the Deliverance Summit where we were hosted by TF Danger in Tikrit where they really put on a first-class affair. The summit highlighted panels on contracting, regionalization and project delivery teams.

This month was also a very sad month as we lost three members of our team who were building the trailers for GRD. Jose Ignatius Purathur, Kamel Ali, and Saleh Makli worked for Global Freight Systems, and they were here supporting GRD, and making a difference in the lives of the Iraqi people. To their family and loved ones, we pass on our deepest condolences and hope for their inner peace during this difficult time. We dedicate this issue of Essayons to these three men for their service and sacrifice.

On behalf of all the entire Corps team, I would like to thank each of the volunteers who serve here in the Gulf Region Division. All are making a difference in our future, and in the lives of the Iraqi people. Thank you for volunteering to serve your nation. We must win this fight, and together with the men and women in uniform, our great civilians, our coalition partners and our Iraqi friends, we will win! God Bless you all.

Thomas P. Bostick

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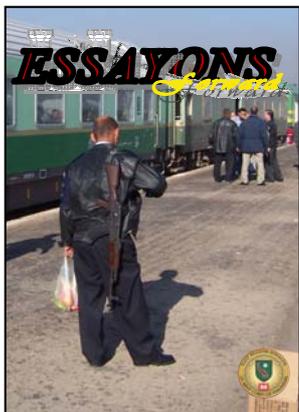
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The views and opinions expressed in this field magazine are those of the writers and are not necessarily those of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, or the Department of Defense.

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Cover: The Baghdad rail station is one of many transportation hubs being reconstructed in Iraq.

(Photo by PCO)

Village Roads

Connecting the dots on a map

Looking at a map of Iraq, there are many small towns and villages dotting the country. Many without roads between them marked on the map. That does not mean there are no roads. Mostly it means the road is not an all weather improved road. Most of them are little more than dusty trails used by everything from four-wheel to people on foot.

Many of these roads are impassable when the rains come and turn them into muddy quagmires. It has been that way for centuries.

Today something is being done to remedy the lack of all weather roads between many of these villages and to also connecting them to existing improved roads.

Nearly \$40 million is being spent to provide hard surfaced all weather roads to these small towns in 15 of the 18 governances.

Dr. Moe, an Iraqi engineer with the Programs and Contracting Office for the multinational forces said, "Good roadways are very important to villages and farmers. Not only for economic reasons, but for humanitarian good as well." He continued, "For instance, I heard of one occasion when the family could not get the body of a loved one to a burial because the rains had made the roads impassable. It's important for people to get the hospital. When it rains here and the rainy season is coming, all that mud makes many roads unusable."

From 30 to 80 kilometers of roads are to be built in each governance, many only a few kilometers long. The majority of the roads are being built over existing dirt roads, smoothed graded and given a hard surface. They will be six meters wide plus improved shoulders. Usually the construction uses an asphalt finished surface.

Moe said the Iraqi standards are considered more than sufficient to meet the needs of the intended users. "Every day usage by the local population is seen as the main reason for these roads. In addition, they provide invaluable access to arteries vital centers," he said.

Another aspect of the road construc-

tion, according to Moe is that it also increases morale in the local population and they will help restore national security.

"When you create job opportunities for people in those governances you are putting money into the pockets of the local citizens. Money they badly need," Moe added.

Construction of the roads will create about 8,000 jobs using local contractors.

According to local officials and members of the Ministry of Housing and Roads, it is a good start. They quickly point out the initial contracts for these small village roads are really just the beginning.

One official from a southern governance, who wished to be nameless, said, "I think it is important to do this at the local level; we want to see how successful we do this. It's a pilot program. Then we can do this throughout Iraq."

"The first contracts have been signed and work should begin very, very soon," he added.

Although it is a small start, it begins to connect dots on a map to form the beginning of an improved infrastructure of roads and highways so badly needed to tie all of Iraq into a nation that is just beginning to realize its potential.

Ross Adkins

Editor's Note: The name, Dr. Moe, was used to protect the identity of the Iraqi engineer working for the coalition forces
Watermark and below: Road infrastructure in Iraq varies from crude dusty trails to deteriorated paved supply routes. Multinational efforts to improve these routes will greatly improve overall commerce in Iraq.
(GRD Photos)



Reconstruction underway to restore Iraqi railroads

Iraq Republic Railway mixed bag of reconstruction challenges

Railroads in Iraq were a multinational construction effort long before the current restoration effort began.

Railroad construction in Iraq was started in the late 1800's by Imperialist Germany.

After the British invasion in the early 1900s, they proceeded to engineer and begin construction of the railroad patterned after their narrow gauge system.

When Iraq became independent, it enlisted construction help from Russia, Korea, Brazil and others. This diversity of construction created a mix of railroad standards on tracks running from Turkey to Basrah. In some cases to get a shipment from one point in Iraq to another, you would have to unload and reload a shipment because the railroad cars traveled on different track sizes.

Today, the Ministry of Transportation considers standardizing, reviving and modernizing the railroad a vital recovery link for Iraq.

Rails now run from Mosul in the north to Basrah in the south, a nearly 1,263 mile long lifeline.

Restoration by the Ministry of Transportation and the multinational agencies is now underway starting with the three main railroad stations at Mosul, Baghdad and Basrah. Restoration efforts at another 28 of nearly 130 small stations at cities across Iraq will begin in the next two weeks.

An anti-aircraft gun on the roof of the Baghdad station made the depot a target during the 2003 ousting of the former regime. A complete modernization of the main terminal is underway and is expected to take about six months to complete.

Rehabbing of the stations will cost more than \$55 million, said Safa Shubat, an engineer familiar with both U.S. and Iraqi railroads. Much, he said, is also being done by the Ministry and



other agencies to include upgrading the track for safety as well as rolling stock. Shubat grew up in Iraq and traveled to the U.S. for his degrees in engineering.

Back in the systems glory days, the state-run railway employed around 9,000 people, including 500 at the Baghdad station. More than 500 of those have returned and more are expected as the restoration continues, according to a recent Baghdad newspaper account.

"Many more local workers have been employed to perform the upgrades and basic repairs including fixing windows and leaks in the roof," Shubat said.

The first post-Saddam train in Iraq ran between the southern seaport of Umm Qasr and Basrah. It was not long before the railroad workers got other trains moving throughout the country. But bridges are still out and roadbeds need repaired before rail traffic can make the complete north to south run.

Today officials estimate the railroad is running about 10 percent of its former capacity.

Schedules are still very flexible and are expected to remain so for up to a year or more, according to Iraq's Minister of Transportation.

"Much of the work we are doing is to upgrade the electrical wiring, air conditioning system, painting and they are thinking of installing fiber optics as a part of the communication system needed to operate a modern day rail way system," Shubat said. "After all, a modern communications system is necessary to conduct safe operations."

Ross Adkins

The Baghdad rail station is one of many transportation hubs being reconstructed in Iraq.
(Photo by PCO)



‘Helping hands’ improve productivity at Baghdad site



Quality Control manager Gerry Valliant gives first aid to an Iraqi worker who smashed his finger while cutting rebar.

(Photo by Mario Guzman)

“I just want to show them someone cares, and if I have to buy a few band aides and some ointment to do it, then that’s ok.”

—Gerry Valliant

Two U.S. Army Corps of Engineers employees at the Falcon Power Plant project in south Baghdad are proving the adage “take care of your people, and they will take care of you” by ensuring the Iraqi work force has first aid for its minor, work related injuries.

The quality control manager for the contractor, SEI Group, Inc., Gerry Valliant, and the quality assurance manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mario Guzman, at Camp Falcon are improving the productivity of the Iraqi workers by caring for their construction-related, minor injuries, such as blisters, cuts, scrapes and headaches. The two Good Samaritans have not only volunteered to help build a free Iraq, but are using their personal, as well as donated, first aid supplies to treat the Iraqi workers.

However the increased productivity was a side benefit of what the two managers saw as their opportunity to improve conditions for the Iraqi workers at their job site. Their efforts began as simply complying with the safety requirements of the contract.

The two managers began performing caring first aid at the project’s beginning in June 2004 and they plan to continue until its completion in November. The minor first aid is being performed for the workers because both of the managers feel that the workers deserve respect and better treatment than they had under the Saddam regime.

“When we started the project some workers were showing up wearing sandals, flip-flops and some of them even bare-footed, Mario and I contacted our families and had them collect and send us used boots to give to the workers as a reward for a safe job,” said Valliant.

As time passed, their efforts turned to helping workers who had minor ailments. Because of safety concerns for the workers, the Iraqis are housed in tents on the work site. “When I would walk through the tent in the evening someone would say ‘come look at this’ and I would do what I could to help,” said Valliant.

“These guys had years of suffering under Saddam. I just want to show them someone cares, and if I have to buy a few band aides and some ointment to do it, then that’s ok,” said Valliant. “I just want to assist them, show them...that we’re there for them.”

Both Valliant and Guzman downplay that they’ve done anything special, but they took the opportunity to show the Iraqi works that they genuinely cared about their welfare.

“I really don’t do anything,” said Guzman. “I just help Gerry when he needs something.” But his actions contradict his modesty when others relate the times he has used personal supplies to aid workers who otherwise have no access to the first aid items.

“The Iraqi workers appreciate the caring attitude of the QA and QC managers and it shows in their productivity and allegiance to the project,” said Wes Snowden, 5th Brigade Combat Team Resident Engineer. “The Iraqi workers fondly refer to Gerry Valliant as Doctor Geddy.”

Nor does it appear the lessons of caring will end with the project. “Iraqi engineers on this project are observing and learning to care for their countrypersons,” said Snowden.

“There is no greater caring than to work after hours and to use your own money to administer first aid to Iraqi workers to make their lives more comfortable and enjoyable,” he added.

Pat Jones

Iraqi, U.S. engineers join forces to rebuild country

New program partners local engineers with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

GRD begins integrating engineers from the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works into a nationwide team. Sixteen interns are slated to begin work with the Corps by end of the year. More than 65 Iraqi engineers expressed interest in the program.

(GRD Photo)



Decades of dictator rule and sanctions have left a bruise on the improving Iraq, a country of 25 million still in its infancy of freedom.

An oppressive regime that feared an educated public and sanctions imposed by international organizations cloaked the country from modern practices and improvements in technology and business.

A new initiative between the top construction management agency here and some of the country's best engineers is aimed at not only removing the veil of isolation but building the country's schools, power plants and infrastructure it so desperately needs.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, an agency charged with overseeing the majority of the reconstruction effort here, will soon begin integrating its first class of engineers from the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works into its nationwide team.

The first group of 16 is slated to begin work with the Corps before the end of the year, and more than 65 Iraqi engineers are expected to participate next year.

The program couples engineers from the Ministry with engineers from the Corps at project sites across the country, allowing top Iraqi engineers to work alongside one of the Corps' project managers or quality assurance representatives at the project sites.

"There is a real need to have the Ministries involved in construction to ensure what we are building is what Iraq needs for the future," said Derrick Dunlap, a 42-year-old project manager with the Corps in Baghdad. "Since we manage most of the projects here, it is a natural fit."

The Corps, which currently manages nearly 700 active reconstruction sites across the country, will soon harness the language skills of the Iraqi engineers as the Iraqi engineers gain new information and awareness of technology and new practices working alongside the American engineers.

"[The Iraqi engineers] have been excluded for more than 35 years from knowledge and technology," said Zana Rawandoozi, director general of Human Resources, Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works. "The engineers here are very thirsty for train-

ing, especially training abroad. Sometimes I joke with them that I need a Titanic to take them all abroad to learn. Since I don't have one ... this is their chance to learn."

Educating the local workforce and building capacity for the new Iraq has always been one of the cornerstones of the U.S.-led reconstruction effort. Millions of dollars in subcontracts have been awarded to Iraq-based firms for school construction, electricity plant rehabilitation and a host of infrastructure projects.

It's a process that employed more than 83,000 Iraqi laborers in October and despite the security challenges present here, is expected to employ more as 1,800 projects are planned for start before year's end.

Concerns by Iraqi engineers thwarted interest in the partnership program this summer when many worried of being killed for working with what was seen as an American reconstruction effort.

"They were scared, scared of being killed for working with the Americans and scared of the unknown," Rawandoozi said. "So I held a meeting with some of our engineers and explained to them that the Americans were here to help us."

"I told them that these projects are serving Iraq, and most importantly, the Iraqi people working at these locations in the field are serving their country," she said.

While patriotism pulled many into the program and prompted 16 to begin processing, the 300,000 Dinar monthly salary paid by the Ministry sealed the deal. The monthly salary is equivalent to \$250.

"This is for their country," she said. "They are not serving the Americans, they are serving their country. The Americans have the knowledge and the information our engineers need.

"This is about developing our capacity of people," she said.

The partnership effort between the U.S. and Iraqi agencies marks yet another chapter in the life of Rawandoozi, a 62-year-old grandmother who was persecuted under the former regime for similar ideas of global learning and idea sharing.

Formerly a management consultant in the Ministry of Planning under the former regime, she was exiled to southern Iraq for six months in 1979 for her failure to join the Ba'ath Party and her ideas of globalization.

"They put me in a castle alone, and at night I would hear terrible things," she said. "I would hear fighting, and when I would see the director in the morning, he would say I was just dreaming and to forget about it."

After her release, she sent her daughter to live in France with relatives and began applying for jobs with the Iraqi government. After months of bribes and pleas, she was allowed to return to government service at a library.

For the next year and a half, the woman who was cast into isolation for fear of spreading knowledge was left to manage a facility filled with it.

"I wasn't back in my old office, but I was back to work," she said. "I had very little to do at the library, so I read a lot and improved my knowledge.

"I think I wrote five reports while I was there," she said.

She soon worked her way from the library to the Ministry of Planning, where she remained until the last year.

Originally from the Kurdish sect of Iraq, she has earned bachelors degrees in English and business administration from Baghdad University and a masters degree from Tokyo. Her most recent education from Syria in Total Quality Management in 2000, earned her constant supervision by Iraqi Intelligence

Service operatives prior to the fall of the former regime.

"They saw my education as someone who was spreading thoughts of globalization and free distribution of ideas," she said. "That was completely counter to what Saddam wanted.

"I was called to meet with them two weeks before the Americans liberated Iraq," she said. "Thankfully I didn't have to make my appointment."

Soon after the war she was appointed as the first director general of human resources for the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works and now spearheads the management effort of more than 42,000 Ministry employees across the country.

"Being a mother of two and a grandmother of three, I look at these engineers and I want to inspire them to use their talents and develop them to their highest potential," she said. "This partnership is the perfect opportunity to do just that."

The partnership also avoids a situation where the Corps is trying to recruit the same high-caliber English speaking local engineer that Ministry is trying to retain and develop, she said.

"The Iraqi engineers are the catalyst of the reconstruction effort," Dunlap said. "We will not be here forever. We are merely here to help them get off on the right foot and create a successful start to the reconstruction effort."

Mitch Frazier

Intern program will help redesign, rebuild Iraq infrastructure

A lack of trained professionals has left Iraq struggling to rebuild its crumbling infrastructure since the fall of the decades old oppressive Saddam regime. But an agreement between the Iraq Ministry of Water Resources and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to implement an intern and study program is designed to help resolve the problem.

For the past three decades Iraq's infrastructure has been ignored. Under the agreement, the two agencies selected a group of Iraqi engineers for an intern program and to attend the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education in Delft, the Netherlands, for advanced studies in hydraulic, sanitary and environmental engineering. The group arrived in the Netherlands Oct. 15.

The Development Fund for Iraq provided the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers \$1.5 million to defray the cost of the intern program. However, the funds must be used exclusively to fund tuition, travel, per diem, supplies and other costs in direct support of the Iraqi students. Funding may not be used to pay for salaries of the interns or administrative costs.

Generally, any member of the Ministry of Water Resources staff may apply for the program provided he meets the technical requirements established by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, however, a person's degree of motivation and a desire to improve skills are influential criteria for selection, said Margaret Jones, who oversees the Corps portion of the program. Despite the difficulties and personal dangers in the war-torn country, 16 engineers submitted all the required information and were academically admitted to the institute.

The interns consist of civil, irrigation, environmental and agricultural engineers. At the institute, they will specialize in hydraulic engineering and river basin development, environmental planning and management, environmental science and technology, water resources management, surface water hydrology, water supply engineering and water quality management.

"The 18-month master's degree program's goal is to build a knowledge base in water resources management for Iraq in the fields of flood control, infrastructure development, environmental engineering, consensus building, water

policy and educational methods and systems," said Jones.

"Providing for the nation's water needs must be a priority," Jones said. "In meeting this goal, the nation does not just build and maintain its infrastructure, it provides real jobs, with real wages, and builds the country's quality of life."

Investment in Iraq's infrastructure benefits the entire economy, therefore helping stabilize the country and promoting a free Iraq. For example, every major construction project creates hundreds of jobs for the local populace. Overall, the construction industry has provided thousands of jobs for the country. Investment in infrastructure rebuilding means Iraqis can go back to work repairing the electrical grid and water distribution system and giving Iraqis hope for a secure future.

The internship will provide not only the opportunity for advanced schooling, but will give the interns a chance for on the job training with experienced counterparts within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Pat Jones

Four Iraqis injured after attack

Iraqi security guards taken to hospital, treated and released

Bandages and memories are all that remain of a roadside gun battle in central Iraq Oct. 12 that left four Iraqi security guards injured and at least five insurgents dead or wounded.

All of the Iraqi guards were taken to a military hospital north of Baghdad for treatment; the last of the four was released today. All are expected to make a full recovery.

The guards, who are sub-contractors for the U.S.-based security firm DynCorp, are members of a security team charged with protecting the armored convoys of military and civilian electricity restoration officials from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Two Soldiers and one Army civilian traveling in the convoy escaped the attack unscathed.

Shortly after 9 a.m. Oct. 12, the convoy began receiving gunfire as they passed a small village near Balad, 60 kilometers north of Baghdad.

Bullets ricocheted off the vehicles as they sped past, but flattened the tires of one, sending it careening out of control and off the right side of the road.

Inside, a team of five heavily armed Iraqi guards grasped for something to anchor themselves as the vehicle darted back across the road, leaving a cloud of gravel and dust in its wake. Within seconds the vehicle struck a berm and rolled.

"I am watching all of this happen in front of me, as we continue to take fire at 60 miles per hour," said Maj. Erik Stor, the front seat passenger in one of the vehicles and the operations officer for the Corps' effort to restore Iraq's electricity. "I saw the vehicle as we passed, and I looked back and I didn't see anything but this huge plume of brown dust.

"I knew we had a problem," he said.

The radio crackled with demands to turn the convoy around for a rescue mission to save the guards, as a clan of three gun-totting Arabic men in white robes advanced on the now overturned vehicle with the team trapped inside.

"There wasn't a question in my mind at that point that we have to go back and get those guys out of there," Stor said. "They are our comrades."

Stor and the team of U.S., African and Iraqi security guards turned the convoy around beginning a 30-minute gun battle as the insurgents attempted to flee the area. Screams of pain could be heard crying out from the crumpled truck over the constant drone of gunfire. As the team advanced on the berm where the vehicle had come to rest, the pleas for help grew more intense.

The loudest came from an Iraqi, covered in sweat and blood, which lay in the front passenger compartment of the truck unable to move. He was facing out the rear window of the vehicle behind a machine gun before he was tossed forward when the vehicle rolled. Others were bruised, disoriented and suffered only minor cuts.

All were pulled from the vehicle and placed in another armored truck nearby.

For nearly 25 minutes the team of Americans, Africans and Iraqis battled the insurgents. A pair of scout helicopter who

were supporting an infantry unit in the area, also joined in the fight.

Seconds before the attack, Stor's team had passed two military vehicles from the infantry unit unaware they were unearthing an improvised explosive device that was set to be part of the gun battle they were now waging.

"It was crazy," said 'LD,' an Iraqi translator on the security team that earned his nickname of Little Dude for his short 4-foot, 10-inch frame. "There were probably 10-12 guys fighting us, and all you could hear was the fighting and smell the gunpowder."

As the fighting began to wane nearly 30 minutes after the first shot was fired, a truck made its way to the south of the vehicles and fired at least one shot, striking one of the Iraqi guards in the calf.

A hail of bullets rang out and fighting ceased.

The rolled vehicle was totaled. Weapons were collected; radios were removed and a thermite grenade was tossed inside to explode the vehicle in place.

"Imagine the scene, you've got the burning vehicle, you got guys screaming cause they're in pain, you've got guys hobbling all over the place, and then about 40 minutes you have this medevac helicopter coming in," Stor said. "It was unbelievable."

The injured were loaded aboard the helicopter and taken to the nearby hospital near Balad, and the team returned to Baghdad's International Zone.

All have been treated and released.

The next day Stor met with the team to prepare for another mission, this time to an Iraqi government building in Baghdad. Instead of gloom faces and jittery guards, he was met with smiles and handshakes.

The Iraqi guards had watched a recount of the battle on Al Jazeera News.

"Apparently, the insurgents had brought an Al Jazeera film crew out to demonstrate how they were going to ambush an American convoy," Stor said. "Al Jazeera reported exactly what they saw. They saw a vehicle roll. They saw some fighting, and then they saw the insurgents run like the cowards they are."

"The news crew saw that the insurgents can't stand the fight and they won't stand the fight," he said.

While the insurgents proved their inability to stand the fight, this is the third time the team had proven themselves under fire in the last month.

In September, the team was hit with an improvised explosive device that totaled an armored vehicle. Less than a week before the most recent attack, the team was hit with gunfire from a passing motorists south of Baghdad.



Stor

“From ambushes to IEDs, this team has proven themselves,” said Stor, who has logged more than 35,000 kilometers on the road with the team. “When they started firing back, I immediately realized that they wanted a future, and they were willing to fight and die for what they believe in.

“All the rhetoric and stuff you see on TV, those are small soundbites. It is not the whole story,” he said. “I saw the whole story. I saw that these guys want freedom and are willing to fight for it.”

Most of the Iraqis on the team are no strangers to fighting. ‘LD’ is a former member of Saddam’s elite Republican Guard, and a host of others on the team have donned the Iraqi Army uniform in the past.

“We know that we are working for the future of this country,” ‘LD’ said. “We need electricity, and to have it, the team from the Corps of Engineers has to get out to the project sites.

“It’s our job to get them there safe,” he said.

At home, ‘LD’ and his wife and two daughters receive 15-20 hours of electricity a day. It’s not perfect, but it’s better, he said.

“I do this for my family and for my country,” he said. “Everyday when I leave my house, I stop and look around. I know that today may be the last time I can come back here. I know I may not be back, but it is for the right reason.”

More than 2,000 U.S. civilians and military service members have served in the country with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and none have been killed or seriously wounded.

Since arriving in country a year ago, the Corps’s electricity team has brought 1,717 megawatts to the Iraqi national electricity grid – enough to service 5.15 million Iraqi homes. The team has also built 1,200 electricity towers and strung nearly 1,000 kilometers of transmission line.

Mitch Frazier

“We know that we are working for the future of this country...it’s our job to get them there safe.”
—“L.D”, Iraqi security



Private security contractors and local Iraqis augment security provided by units in theater. OPSEC concerns prohibit photos of contracted personnel .
(DoD image)

Flip of the calendar produces 1

Neighborhoods once dark during the summer months are now casting a hue of incandescent yellow as Iraq's electrical infrastructure continues to better.

Declining demand courtesy of cooler autumn temperatures and the addition of four rehabilitated generators in September have helped the country's antiquated electrical infrastructure stabilize after a summer of partial service.

The commissioning of the generators in September added 47 Megawatts of electricity to the grid – enough to fuel 141,000 Iraqi homes adding to the estimated 15 million Iraqi homes already serviced by the national grid.

"This is a very important step in overcoming the power shortage across the country," said Raad Shalal, a senior Iraq Ministry of Electricity official. "This will help us reach our goal of increasing power for Baghdad and the country."

"We continue to work in partnership with the Ministry of Electricity and the Iraqi people to bring the country more electricity," said Maj. Erik Stor, the operations officer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Restore Iraqi Electricity Directorate. "We know how important electricity is to the safety and security of Iraq, and we continue to work on their behalf with the Ministry to bring the country additional electricity."

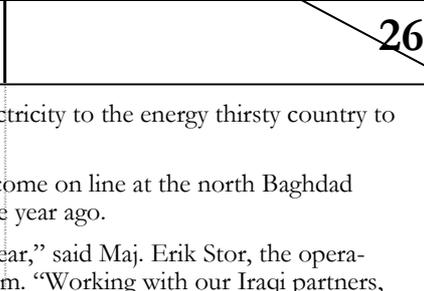
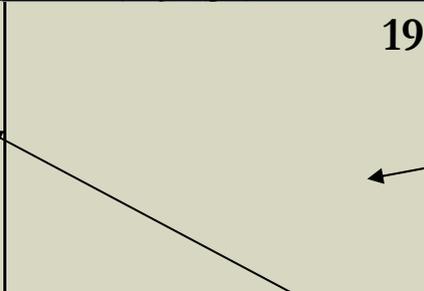
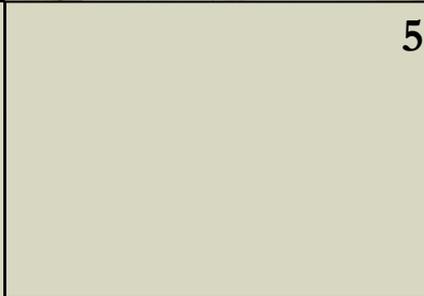
A new 30-kilometer transmission line was also brought online in September in South Central Iraq, bringing more electricity to the region and linking the country's first new power station to a key substation in the region.

The installation of the line and commissioning of the four generators are the latest successes in the \$1 billion effort to rebuild the country's antiquated electrical infrastructure.

The move signifies more than completion of the reconstruction efforts; it places the Interim Iraqi Government back in charge of the revamped electricity generation from the sites that currently serve 1.28 million Iraqi homes.

"We found a dilapidated infrastructure when we arrived," said Lt. Col. Jeffrey Ogden, the Corps' top electricity reconstruction official in Baghdad. "Thanks to the hard work of the Iraqi contractors and laborers and our Corps team, we are leaving behind a system that is much better than what we found."

"Our job here isn't just to bring Iraq more electricity, it is to help the Iraqi people create a fair and equitable system that will last for years to come," Stor said. "It's about new and rehabilitated generators, spare parts, training; it's about giving the Ministry and the Iraqi people a solid foundation to build from after we leave."



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A new generator came online here today bringing enough new electricity to the energy thirsty country to fuel more than 275,000 Iraqi homes.

The new 96 Megawatt generator is the second new generator to come on line at the north Baghdad plant since the U.S.-led reconstruction effort began at the site one year ago.

"This site was just an open field with a switchyard and two generators last year," said Maj. Erik Stor, the operation's officer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Restore Iraqi Electricity team. "Working with our Iraqi partners, engineers and the Ministry of Electricity, we have transformed this into one of the largest electricity plants in the country."

"When we're done we'll have more than doubled the original capacity here," he said.

Nearly \$150 million has been poured into the site by the Iraqi and U.S. governments to bring six new generators online, an effort that when complete will increase electricity production here to 516 Megawatts – enough to service 1.5 million Iraqi homes.

"I have been waiting for this for a long time," said the plant manager at the site about the transfer. "We have worked with the Americans for a year now, and we have a new site that will help improve the electricity situation here."

"With more than half a million new jobs created, new industries and new factories coming on line and with the sale of thousands of washing machines and air conditioners, Iraq has experienced a rapid increase in electricity demand," according to a fact sheet published by the Iraq Ministry of Electricity. "The increase in demand is a good sign of a thriving economy emerging from three decades of isolation."

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November 1

2

more flips-of-the-switch in Iraq

29

Boxes of air filters and oily tools sit in the shadow of a shiny new generator at an electricity station north of Najaf.

The exhaust spewing from the gas turbine generator rattles the tin walls of a nearby tool shed and masks the sound of the clanking wrenches and tools being rifled through inside.

“Are these yours or are they ours,” shouts Maj. Erik Stor to the contractor and two blue jumpsuit-clad Iraqi engineers as he picks up two volt meters inside the shed. “We need to figure out what goes and what stays.”

With Iraqi engineers in tow, Stor, the operations officer for the Army Corps of Engineers Restore Iraqi Electricity Directorate, spearheads the effort to transfer the site back to the Iraq Ministry of Electricity.

After spending more than \$24 million over the past year bringing the new 23-Megawatt generator to life, the time has come to count spare parts, place filters in storage and officially transfer the sprawling site back to Ministry control.

“We have to make sure we are leaving them the equipment they need to be successful,” Stor said. “We have worked together building this site, and we need to make sure that work wasn’t in vain.

“The worst thing we could do is to walk away without making sure they have the tools and training necessary to keep this place running for decades to come,” he said.

The station is one of the first to be transferred back to the Interim Iraqi Government, a step that signifies mission completion in the sea of reconstruction efforts now underway.

“This is a great step for the people of Iraq, but we need more training and more time,” said the plant’s manager. “We are very thankful for the work here; we just want more time with the people here to help us.”

In a country where few were allowed to act independently and make decisions on operations and maintenance, training has been an on-going issue for the electricity reconstruction effort. More than 40 hours of classroom instruction and side-by-side operation in the plant is part of the process to bring Iraqi operators to a better understanding of the controls and equipment brought in to bring more electricity to the country.

Computer controls, scheduled outages for maintenance and safety systems were all new to the employees who had not seen new electricity generators for more than a decade.

It’s the final step for the projects that began more than a year ago and have served as the daily fuel for Stor and the team of Iraqi and international contractors working to rebuild the nation.

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For the second time in two days, Iraqi and U.S. engineers have commissioned a new generator near the capital city.

The commissioning of the 96 Megawatt generator marks the largest two-day increase in electricity generation since the U.S.-led reconstruction effort began here last year.

“This is a very important step in overcoming the power shortage across the country,” said Raad Shalal, a senior Iraq Ministry of Electricity official. “This will help us reach our goal of increasing power for the country.”

Electricity production in the country hovers near 5,300 Megawatts, a level that far surpasses the pre-war level of 4,400, and services an estimated 15.9 million Iraqi homes.

The addition of the two generators at the north Baghdad plant comes at a time when many electricity stations across the country are being transferred back to the Interim Iraqi Government’s ministry of Electricity.

Inventory of the spare parts, hours of classroom instruction and final inspections by senior officials have already been completed at 14 electrical stations across the country and transferred back to the Ministry of Electricity.

The transfers complete an effort at the sites that put 1,588 Megawatts on the national grid and continue to bring electricity to 4.7 million Iraqi homes.

The generators at the north Baghdad plant are slated for completion by the end of October. Two additional power stations are slated for transfer to the Ministry in October and November, returning an additional 604 Megawatts of generation capacity to the IIG. The Corps’ team of civilian and military engineers and their Iraqi counterparts has resurrected more than 20 electricity plants across the country from their pre-war state of disrepair into the cornerstone of the effort to revamp Iraq’s aging infrastructure.

The effort to increase electricity availability by the Corps and its U.S. and Iraqi engineers has added 1,813 megawatts to the national grid and has pumped more than \$1 billion into the international economy.

While creation and maintenance of the generation and distribution system continues, Stor said the future for Iraq looks brighter every day as more electricity generators come on line to service the country.

Despite the addition of power to the country’s national grid, the demand for electricity in Iraq continues to grow.



Baghdad electricity plant returns to Iraqi government

Plant manager risks life to bring more Megawatts on line

Abrahim is used to danger. He has lived through four wars in Iraq, an attempted hanging by the Saddam Hussein regime and threats against his three daughters, wife and himself.

It's become a routine for the 43-year old electricity plant manager. Daily he braves the explosive-laden roads of one of the city's toughest neighborhoods to trek to work at an electricity station in a southeastern Baghdad suburb. Like many in the county, he cloaks himself and his family in silence, telling only a select few his profession and even fewer his stories of contact with Americans.

"We have no choice. We must get out from our homes, face the community and face life," he said from his power station office. "We have to work to improve this country. We have been given a new start; now we must do something."

For nearly a decade, Abraham has worked to restore the nation's electrical infrastructure.

His work at an electricity station in the southern reach of the city fed the south half of the capital with electricity during the

Gulf War and now provides an emergency source of power for the country during the daily peak hours en-

ergy consumption.

Last night the plant pumped 16 Megawatts to national grid, partially quenching the country's ever-increasing thirst for electricity.

"This makes me feel good and to make a difference for my people," he said. "I am very happy to produce electricity, 100 kilowatts or one Megawatt whatever; because I know it is going to the people."

Decades of war and sanctions have left their mark on the station. Ship engines transformed into generators from Holland, stacks of mobile generators from the U.S. and rows of Syrian-made generators dot the site and reflect the effect of decades of war and unavailability of parts.

Sanctions prevented parts for the Holland-made generators to be delivered until after the recent liberation. More than 10 years of sludge, sand and atrophy had left three of the four inoperable, prompting leadership to truck in new U.S.-made generators in the wake of fighting in 2003. The Syrian-made generators helped fill the void left in the 90s as the ship engines began to deteriorate, but like much of the infrastructure here are now showing the signs of sandy air, age, desert heat and over-use.

"The situation is very complicated," he said, "but it is getting better. We now have a schedule for maintenance, and we have the spare parts to fix the machines."

Progress at the site began days after the Baghdad fell in the spring of 2003 when the U.S.-led reconstruction effort brought more than \$26.3 million to revamp the site.

The year-long effort is now complete, and Abraham and the Interim Iraqi Government have a plant capable of filling the void in the country's electricity infrastructure.

Behind the closed door of his office, he talked candidly with two camouflage-clad U.S. Army Corps of Engineers members who led the effort to revitalize the plant. The two had come to drop off boxes of binders and documents to officially transfer the plant back to the Ministry of Electricity but found themselves engaged in a discussion on life in Iraq and the Iraqi view of reconstruction as the three sipped tea.

The near constant ring of the three turquoise phones that line his desk and the frequent visits by employees with progress reports changed Abraham's mood from jovial to stern. He could not be seen in front of his workforce enjoying frank discussion with Americans.

Despite the interruptions and the near chameleon changes, the conversation continued for nearly an hour.

The two shook Abraham's hand, wished him well and departed.

Abraham remained in his office.

They knew he could not be seen with the Americans; he knew this would be the last time he would see them.

It's an occurrence that has become common for the Corps team, as it has transferred eleven electrical stations across the country back to the Ministry of Electricity. The transfers marked the completion of an effort at the sites that put 715 Megawatts on the national grid and continues to bring electricity to 2.1 million Iraqi homes.

Seven additional power stations are slated for transfer to the Ministry in October, returning an additional 474 Megawatts of generation capacity to the IIG.

The transfers and the progress come as Iraq readies for presidential elections in January and experiences its second autumn season free from dictator rule.

"This freedom means a lot to me and to my family," Abraham said. "It means a man can do anything in life without someone else restricting him or watching over his shoulder. It means life."

Abraham's life was nearly cut short two years ago when his efforts at the plant to restore generation nearly got him killed.

"A man came here and talked with my manager and told him I was a traitor," Abraham said. "He told my boss I was a traitor to my country, to the Baath Party and to the government."

"When my manger told me this, all I could do is deny it, because it was untrue," he said. "I know if Saddam were still here I would probably be in jail or hanged."

The confrontation came only five years after one of Abraham's previous business partners escaped the country eluding

**"We have been given a new start,
now we must do something."**

—Abraham

capture by the former regime for making business transactions in American dollars.

Despite the decades of threats, near misses and deplorable conditions, Abraham still smiles.

“It is human nature in Iraq to deal with this,” he said. “Before the war, this is all we knew. After all we have survived four wars, and we are used to some dangers that most are not.

“We have faced the same situation every day. It is what we are used to,” he said.

The situation for Abraham often means awaking to no electricity at his south Baghdad home and making an early morning trek to siphon gas from his car to fuel the generator.

It means sending his three daughters off to school in an environment that is not secure, and leaving his wife at home while he works to bring more electricity to his neighbors and the entire country.

“I am sitting here right now and missing my children; I worry about them,” he said as he looked through tears. “Sometimes I fee like crying because I have three daughters now and my wife would be demolished if anything happened to me.

“The situation now is very difficult for everyone. We must face life and make jokes and get through this,” he said as he fought the tears.

Continued threats force many Iraqi workers to keep their work assisting reconstruction efforts a secret. While their heroism may go unrecognized for the moment, their impact will forever be remembered in the legacy they leave for their county. (GRD Photo)

In a country where violence tops the evening news and insurgency keeps most off the streets, laughter is welcome.

“I am a simple man,” he said. “I just want to live at home in peace, come to work and know my family is safe.”

Reconstruction officials hope an improved infrastructure will help create that safety by thwarting the insurgency now underway.

The Army Corps of Engineers, a predominantly civilian agency, is one of many U.S. government agencies deployed to restore Iraq’s aged infrastructure.

The Corps and its contractors have rebuilt more than 1,200 electricity towers, restrung 8,600 kilometers of transmission line and brought enough generators online to service and additional 4.8 million Iraqi homes. The efforts have boosted electricity production to an average of approximately 5,200 Megawatts, a total that exceeds the pre-war level of 4,400.

The thousands contractors deployed as part of the multi-billion U.S.-funded reconstruction have began more than 600 reconstruction projects that will build new schools, hospitals, clinics, roads and bridges.

More than 1,800 reconstruction projects are slated for start by December with a price tag of more than \$ 4 billion.

Mitch Frazier



Iraqi leads effort to rebuild substation near Sadr City

Community-focus keeps project safe

Kalid Badrakhn is businessman. Raised as a child in the Kurdish sect of Iraq and educated at the U.K.'s Aston University, he understands the two worlds in which he now lives: the one inside his air-conditioned office near Sadr City and the one of war that lies less than a mile outside of his window.

Twelve days after the Saddam regime was toppled in April 2003, he kissed his wife and son, said farewell to his British business partners and departed for the capital of the war-torn country he had been prohibited from as a child.

As a Kurd under the former regime, he was banished from Baghdad, left only to read of the opulent places and full-time electricity that grace the city. But today, he is not only witnessing the city's sprawl, he is pumping new life into its antiquated electrical system.

"I had never been allowed to come here before," he said as he walked the clean concrete streets of a Baghdad substation he is rebuilding. "I came back because I think it is time to come back. I was missing home, plus I am a very good business man and wanted to serve my country.

"We all serve our countries in our own ways," he said.

Badrakhn's way placed him in the role of managing director for one of the country's first woman-owned construction management companies, FCM.

Since logging its first project only days after Baghdad came under control of the U.S.-led coalition, the company has scored several electricity projects from Basrah to Mosul.

An Iraqi laborer removes insulation from a transmission line prior to installation.

(Photo by Mitch Frazier)

Its latest, a substation completion, lies on the outskirts of one of the city's nastiest neighborhoods, the Shiite slum of Sadr City.

Construction on the substation began in 2000 but was stymied when French contractors on the site withdrew when fighting erupted in early 2003.

Pools of human waste and mounds of garbage quickly filled the site in the wake of the exodus, dashing hope for the area's supply of electricity that was slated to flow from the station upon completion.

Today that hope is once again alive.

A soccer field is being built where the sewage once pooled. Clean concrete drives and freshly painted buildings have replaced the mounds of garbage, and more than 140 Iraqi engineers and laborers are now working to complete construction of the country's largest gas-insulated switchgear substation.

It is a key element of the effort to revamp the country's electrical infrastructure, transforming the high voltage electricity from the country power plants into a voltage that can be distributed to homes.

"This is like the transmission in your car," said Maj. Erik Stor, the operation's officer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Restore Iraqi Electricity team. "You can generate power, but you can't go anywhere without these things."

The substation is unlike many found

in the states, as it uses gas-filled tubes to carry electricity as it is stepped down to a more usable voltage. The gas helps insulate the electricity and prevent it from arching in the sandy desert air.

Iraqi laborers clad in jumpsuits and hard hats constantly mop the floor of the 300-meter long building housing the tubes to cut down on airborne dust and large alcohol swabs clean the tubes as they are put into place.

"It's got to be clean because of the high voltage," said 39-year-old Wes Davis, the site's construction superintendent from Bastrop, Texas. "Everything has to be clean; covers have to be kept on the tubes, and the dust ... the dust just has to be gone."

Davis, who has spent almost two years in the country working for the Texas-based contractor giant Kellogg Brown and Root, has seen the substation evolve from the sewage-laden site into a near complete substation in three months.

The goal, he said, is to be complete before the impending month-long Ramadan holiday, which is set to start Oct. 15.

"We know that when Ramadan comes everything slows down because the Muslim workforce won't eat or drink during the day," he said. "So we are working two shifts, 24 hours a day now to get construction complete before the 15th."

Finishing the construction marks the nearing end of an accelerated program to bring the substation on line and distribute



Lt. Col. Jeff Ogden, RIE director, talks with Kalid Badrakhn, project manager, at the substation near Sadr City. (Photo by Mitch Frazier)

electricity to one of the city’s most impoverished areas.

“This is the first step in many that will help this area get better,” Badrakhn said. “Without substations, you will not be able to distribute the electricity and have people be able to benefit from it. We know this is important to the people, and that is why we are working so hard on getting it completed.”

From the woman chief executive officer to the chief electrical engineer who only two days ago had her Haifa Street house littered with bullets, the motivation to succeed is unwavering in the ranks of the Iraqi company.

“This would have never happened before because women were not allowed to take leadership positions in companies or the ministries,” Badrakhn said. “Despite their excellence, they could never achieve more than second or third line in a company.

“They are excellent in their profession, and that is the whole idea of FCM; bring all the expertise together, whether they are men or women,” he said.

Even in an environment of constant threats and danger, the concept is working.

No engineers or laborers at the site have been injured or killed by the insurgency, and the community is welcoming of the work onsite.

It’s a rarity in the area that has been the breeding ground for terrorists and anti-Iraqi activity.

“Sure I have been threatened, but you know this a place for no one to be scared. If you are scared, you can’t do your job. So you might as well not be here,” he said. “There are threats everywhere in Baghdad in Iraq so it makes no difference where you are.

“I come to work because I have a job and I am a professional person, nothing emotional. I have to do a job, and I am paid to do it. That is why I come,” he said.

Badrakhn has applied the same ideology to his efforts to bolster the relationship with the local community. Daily he employs a squad of nearly 40 local youth to tour the 4-acre complex to collect trash and improve the appearance of the site.

The kids receive a day rate, meal, medical care and safety gear in exchange for their day-long shift.

“This helps us strengthen the relationship with the community,” he said. “We are giving work to their children, and at the same time we are teaching them about pride, work ethic and safety.

“We are engineers here; it’s not a matter of war. We are here to serve them, and this substation is for the Iraqis and built by Iraqis,” he said. “We want the community to understand us. We know we cannot work without their protection.”

The effort to bolster community support has not only saved the lives of the more than 150-member team onsite, it has saved the lives of residents in the nearby community.

Infection, parasites and stomach-illnesses plague the city, but 51-year-old San Antonio native Michael Smith, the onsite health



and safety officer for the project, has taken his medical treatment to the streets.

Smith, a licensed vocational nurse and Navy Reserve medic, opened a makeshift medical treatment a couple days a week to treat minor injuries in the city.

It’s a program that has reinforced the relationship between the community and the project, and one that has kept more of the local laborers on the jobsite.

“The main thing I see down there is parasites and stomach problems,” Smith said. “There are a lot of infections, so I try to teach them to boil their water and to treat their wound properly.

“The hope is that they will come see me before they have to miss time from work for being sick,” he said.

The effort has also allowed Smith to teach others in the community basic health care techniques.

“Whenever I treat one, I bring everyone around and take them through the procedure step by step,” he said. “The next time, I make someone else do it while I watch. That way everyone gets hands on experience.”

Smith has also started a telemedicine program at his makeshift clinic, linking the remote site to the country’s central trauma center in Baghdad.

Employing the local population and treating the sick paid off in April when insurgency in the city turned the area into a war zone.

AK-47 fire and shelling pummeled the community, but prompted a government broadcast from the area’s minaret to not attack the substation or its workforce.

“Do not attack the power station. These are good people,” the loudspeaker crackled.

Work is slated to continue on the substation throughout the remainder of the year and is set to begin providing electricity to the area in January.

“We are helping this society make the changes it needs,” Badrakhn said. “Soon this will be operational, and we will have transferred much of our know-how and technology to the Iraqi people. They will have electricity and new skills, and we will be happy for having helped them.”

Mitch Frazier

CNN Welcomes Chicago Troops Home on “American Morning”



Bill Hemmer of CNN’s “American Morning” interviews Col. Jill Morgenthaler (center) and Lt. Col. Norm Grady (right), two recent OIF veterans from Chicago. (Photos by Kate Pardo)

CNN’s “American Morning,” based in New York, visited Chicago for daily live shows in the Windy City during the week of Oct. 18 – 22nd. Wednesday’s interview was broadcast from Chicago’s famed Union Station.

“The war in Iraq hits home here in Chicago. Many of its sons and daughters have gone off to serve in Iraq. . . This morning, we are proud to welcome two of its members recently back from Iraq,” announced Bill Hemmer, host of CNN’s flagship morning show. He then introduced Col. Jill Morgenthaler and Lt. Col. Norm Grady onto the show on Wednesday, October 20th.

Both Morgenthaler and Grady are recent Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans who live in the Chicago suburbs.

Morgenthaler, an Army Reservist, served as a Multi-National Force – Iraq Public Affairs Officer in Baghdad from February through September 2004.

Grady was the Deputy Commander and Deputy District Engineer for the Gulf Region – Southern District of the

US Army Corps of Engineers from January until August of 2004. He was based in Basrah, Iraq.

“Part of our responsibility is to help local communities welcome troops back from Iraq and Afghanistan,” said Master Sgt. Gerrold Johnson of US Army Public Affairs – Midwest. “CNN gave our efforts to do this in Chicago a great boost by welcoming our local troops home on national TV.”

The segment was titled “Home from the war,” and it covered both of the officers’ homecomings and life back in Chicago.

“This interview shows that the media is starting to pick up more of the positive stories surrounding the Global War on Terror,” said Johnson. “It was great that CNN let the officers relay their positive firsthand experiences to a national audience.”

The veterans also discussed more in depth issues with Hemmer, such as what Morgenthaler and Grady thought was the key to success in Iraq.

Morgenthaler thinks that the Iraqi

elections are key to victory. “The Iraqi people need to be able to vote, because they are embracing their freedoms. And a lot of people are standing up, and they are risking their lives to make this happen,” she said

“If the Iraqi people can develop a government that will allow them to be able to gain confidence with the Iraqi people, then that frees up the ability to do the reconstruction mission, and we can continue to be successful,” added Grady.

Hemmer asked Morgenthaler about Abu Gharib, given her former position as the chief military spokesperson for the scandal.

“When you came back to Chicago, how many folks asked you about Abu Gharib? And what are their questions, Colonel?” asked Hemmer.

“Most people are very horrified that it happened and embarrassed,” she answered.

“How do you explain it to them?”

“I explain it as seven individuals without leadership who got away with some terrible things,” replied Morgenthaler.

The anchor also asked Grady about the reconstruction effort, working with the Iraqi people and how his job with the USACE in Iraq compared to work in Chicago.

Grady spoke of the resolve and dedication of the coalition civilians he directed and worked with for the USACE in Iraq.

“What did you learn about the Iraqi people through all of that?” responded Hemmer.

“It amazed me the degree to which they were willing to work to make their country a better place,” answered Grady.

Hemmer finished off the interview with the now common “Welcome home, and thank you for your service.”

To read the transcript from Morgenthaler and Grady’s interview, please visit: <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0410/20/ltn.05.html>. Please note, this is not an official Department of Defense website. The DOD is not responsible for the content of this Web site.

Kate Pardo, Army News Service

“It must be done!”

A word from the Division’s Command Sergeant Major

Thank you for a great reception. Since arriving to the Gulf Region Division (GRD) my experiences have been vast and rich. Many people have done their best to make me feel welcome. They worked hard to show me around and fill me in on the different ways we conduct our daily business.

One important lesson I have learned has been how diverse we are, and yet how many things we have in common as Civilians and Soldiers. Our team has many faces and is ethnically diverse. It challenges our senses to realize how we have adapted to the myriad of cultures. And, in spite of these differences, we are here together as members of a team. The GRD team.

Let us not forget what brought us here in the first place, the attack on American soil on September 11, 2001. On this day we became united as a nation and a global community. Today we have ordinary people doing extra ordinary things in Iraq.

The reconstruction of Iraq as our given mission, gives our team a common goal. As we have come to learn - failure to accomplish that mission is not an option “...it must be done...” we have no other choice – our work here is that important and the Iraqi people depend on us to get this mission accomplished.

To get the most out of a team, it’s important to address these two principles. We must view ourselves and others as valued members of the GRD team; Civilians and Soldiers

alike must work together *in a unit* with one purpose, the reconstruction of Iraq.

The reconstruction of Iraq is key to winning the Global War on Terrorism. We can be proud to be called volunteers and take part on this great task. Our investment in the future of Iraq truly shows the character of our people, the strength of our US Army Corps of Engineers employees, our military, the Iraqi people and everyone associated with our mission. Our GRD team is made up of people like Ms. Vera Moseley, Mr. Brian Harper, Ms. Laura Athearn, Sgt. Follmer, Ms. Suha, Sgt. Major Koontz, Mr. Robert Dils (CSM R), Capt. Rainey, Ms. Colleen Haney, Mr. Garris Ebron, Ms. Joie Lyles and Mr. Mark Esola, Sgt. Major Flickinger and Mr. Scott Lowdermilk, just to name a few; people whose hard work and dedication to duty make the difference every single day on getting our mission done.

Remember 9/11 – when we were attacked and our citizens were slaughtered by our enemies, not just American citizens, but also citizens of many other nations – that’s why we fight and work today. Stay focused, take care of each other and remember that at the end of the day... we are the GRD Team **and what we do....it must be done.**

v/r

Cmd. Sgt. Major Jorge L. Gutierrez



FORMER RIO COMMANDER HONORED. Former U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Task Force Restore Iraqi Oil (TF RIO) commander, Brig. Gen. Robert Crear (second from right) was invited to toss out the first pitch for the Oct. 7th National League Division Series in St. Louis, Mo. Crear currently serves as commander of the Corps Mississippi Valley Division. Also pictured (left to right) Cardinals mascot, U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Bobby Posey (who also recently returned from Iraq), the Cardinals honorary ball boy (name unavailable), and Cardinals’ utility infielder Bo Hart. The Cardinals would win the Division and National League Championships series but lose to the Boston Red Sox in the World Series in four straight games.

(Photo courtesy of MVS)



Powered by Plachy

Savannah District's Doug Plachy played a very big part in restoring Iraqi electricity. He managed a \$1.5 billion budget and worked with everything from the hydroelectric power generators and dams to the transmission lines.

"We are behind the scenes in most of this work. We established a good reputation for the United States by getting things done," said Plachy.

When the Corps first came to Iraq they had several independent missions such as Restore Iraqi Oil (RIO) and Restore Iraqi Electricity (RIE) under the umbrella of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). The Corps was working with a variety of customers and were supported by different Divisions. When they consolidated all the different task forces and support offices and created the Gulf Region Division (GRD); RIE became a Directorate that reported directly to the Commanding General. Plachy came to be the Senior Program Manager for GRD-RIE responsible for a \$1.5 billion program.

"We had power plants, new generation and rehab generation, transmission lines, distribution and controls. We had everything in the electrical area," said Plachy.

When the Corps came together in one division, it made a big difference because it allowed the Corps to harness all of its vast capabilities in a coordinated and focused way, according to Plachy. Many times Plachy would work with the Iraqi Minister of Electricity, and when a problem arose with a project, Plachy and his 12 program managers always took ownership of the situation and worked it out.

"We had been in a discussion with the Minister of Electric-

ity about the schedule and the problems that were an issue, and at the end of the conversation, he looked over at me with a twinkle in his eye and said, 'Why don't you work some of that magic that you guys do,'" said Plachy.

The Corps gained the respect of the Iraqi people because it got things done, according to Plachy. The Corps by getting things done, and on time, showed progress on a daily basis. Plachy found the vastness of the Corps resourceful in solving problems. The story of the hydroelectric power plants in Iraq gives a good example of the types of difficulty Plachy and his program managers would deal with. Most of the plants are of German, Russian or French manufacture. These countries opposed not only Operation Iraqi Freedom; they refused to sell parts and assist in repairing these plants, according to Plachy. This did not stop or slow Plachy's progress. When faced with the problem of finding parts unique to one power plant, Plachy gathered his program managers together and sent messages out to all the districts' commanders asking if they could find the parts. Sure enough, they found one part in the Northwest and one here in Georgia.

"It was only because we have that kind of network. Otherwise we would never have found parts for that power plant," said Plachy.

Working 14 or more hours a day, seven days a week, not much other than the job at hand came to Plachy's mind, except for the mortars going off.

"It's a war zone. And it's dangerous in the sense that you have to be aware of the situation," said Plachy.

All the Corps' project managers, and the contractors, lived

Doug Plachy pauses momentarily during his tour in Iraq for a photo at the Qudas Power Plant north of Baghdad.

(Photo by Anthony Risko, RIE)

on the site where they worked. They did not travel as much as one might expect.

“The only time you put yourself at risk is when you travel and the reason is because of the randomness of the terrorists hiding explosives on the side of the road. You were at more of a risk traveling down the highway than staying stationary,” said Plachy.

Not long after Plachy arrived in Iraq he went to his first meeting. Suddenly, a mortar went off about a half block away. It startled him, but after hearing them go off frequently he got used to it. Plachy remembers that just before handing Iraq over to it’s new government things turned bad.

“...there was a lot of action going on in April. After April it kind of eased up a little. As we got closer to July we expected more activity in June and it didn’t happen. When they turned the government over [to the Iraqis] early that threw a lot of entities off and it didn’t happen,” said Plachy.

The Army works very hard to keep everyone safe behind the scenes and on the scenes. As many as 100 soldiers protect each project, according to Plachy.

“The crime and rumors about somebody getting picked up by terrorists is probably about the same as the instances of crime in one of our big cities, given the fact of the multitude of civilians that are over there,” he said.

Plachy felt very secure while in Iraq, and the fast paced work environment made it exciting.

“You can’t manage from a desk, you have to get your feet on the ground. I used a phrase over there that I borrowed from President Regan, ‘Trust but verify,’” he said.

Many good things happen in Iraq because the Corps knows how to get things done. One serendipity: an opportunity to put a lot of Iraqis back to work.

“Nothing is worse than having a bunch of idle hands out there, so that is what ambassador Bremmer wanted to do, ... put Iraqis back to work,” said Plachy.

Plachy returned to the U.S. on July 29. Would he go back?

“One of the reasons I would go back to Iraq is that it is an opportunity to serve our country and accomplish something,” he said.

By Jim Cunningham, Savannah District

““We build things. And we manage things very well. Those are the two areas people from the Corps have really made an impact [on Iraq].”

-Doug Plachy



Plachy surveys the Qudas Power Plant with RIE Operations Officer, Maj. Eric Stor, in June 2004.

(Photo by Thomas O’Hara)

Hail and Farewell

Hailing:

William Bequette, Electrical Engineer GRS, Seal Beach CA
 Erik Blechinger, Chief of E&C GRN, Kansas City District
 Eric Bush, PM GRS, Jacksonville District
 Donna Castro, Admin Officer GRN, Portland District
 CPT Sean Connolly Operations Officer GRN, TAC
 Brian Evancho, Con Rep GRN
 Patrick Haas, Chief of Construction GRS, Huntsville
 William Huxford, Civil engineer GRS, Savannah District
 Harry Knight, Resident Engineer GRN, Europe District
 Kaz Kordecki, Engineering Tech GRS, Los Angeles District
 Robert Krienheder, Deputy Area Engineer GRN, Europe District

Rich Maskil, Construction Supervisory Engineer GRN, Northwestern Division
 Jim McCoy, Con Rep GRN, Portland District
 Vickie McDonald, IT Specialist GRN, ERC
 Mary Sue Morgan, Project Engineer GRN, Seattle District
 Earl Newton, Civil Eng Tech GRS, Louisville District
 In Park, Con Supervisory Engineer GRN
 Tammy Pooser, Con Rep GRN
 Rudy Posis, Program Analyst GRN, Japan District
 Dwayne Roeder, Con Rep GRN, Portland District
 Ken Samsel, Con Rep GRN, Portland District
 Ben Schiff, Con Rep GRN
 Roger Wilson, Con Rep GRN, Mobile District



Michael Costello
 Mgmt. Analst. GRS
 Returning to:
 Fort Worth District



Lon Lyford
 Proj Engr GRS
 Returning to:
 Alaska District



Renee Inabnitt
 GRD G-1
 Returning to:
 Portland District



Ruby Pierce
 GRD G-1
 Returning to:
 TAC



Shelby Harvey
 RIE
 Moving to:
 PCO



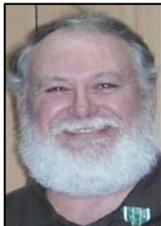
Steven Stockton
 Exec Office (SES)
 Returning to:
 South Pacific Division



Thomas Berry
 QA Rep GRS
 Returning to:
 Louisville District



Elaine Bustillos
 Admin Asst GRS
 Returning to:
 Nashville District



Robert Sutton II
 Con Rep GRS
 Returning to:
 Louisville District



Robert Vanoer
 PM GRS
 Returning to:
 Chicago District



Capt. Starr Corbin
 CG Aide de Camp
 Returning to:
 1st CAV



James Cullum
 GRD Counsel
 Returning to:
 Little Rock District



Maj. Joseph Angrer
 GRD G-2
 Returning to:
 Lakes & Rivers Division



Marlene Judy
 GRD PM
 Returning to:
 Charleston District



James Leary
 GRD Real Estate
 Returning to:
 HQ USACE



Phil Davenport
 GRD IM
 Returning to:
 TAC



Rene Lopez
 GRD G-3
 Returning to:
 Europe District



Ralph Werthman
 GRD Real Estate
 Returning to:
 Rock Island District



Lisa Rodighiero
 Budget Anlst GRS
 Returning to:
 Walla Walla District



Mike Greco
 Logistics GRN
 Returning to:
 Seattle District



Lawrence Leahy
 PCO Proj. Mgr
 Returning to:
 Southwestern Division



Phyllis Ritchie
 GRD
 Returning to:
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 PM RIE
 Returning to:
 Kansas City District



Julie Richardson
 GRD
 Returning to:
 Walla Walla District



Melissa Dickerson
 Admin Asst. GRD
 Returning to:
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Julio Arocho
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 Returning to:
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Cindy Lee
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Mitch Frazier
 GRD Dept. PA
 Returning to:
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Russell Johnson
 Office Engr GRN
 Returning to:
 Portland District



James Drake
 Qual. Assur. GRN
 Returning to:
 Walla Walla District



Ron Cuff
 Con Rep GRN
 Returning to:
 Tulsa District



James Allen
 Con Rep GRN
 Returning to:
 Kansas City District



Shunte' West
 Con Rep GRN
 Returning to:
 Walla Walla District



Capt. John Panhorst
 Operations Off GRN
 Returning to:
 Savannah District



Andrea Leal
 GRD Contracting
 Returning to:
 Albuquerque District



Billie Fagan
 GRD RM
 Returning to:
 Charleston District



Carlos Glover
 GRD RM
 Returning to:
 Vicksburg District