

ESSAYONS

Forward

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Gulf Region Division (Provisional), Iraq - Volume I, Issue 5

June 14, 2004



**The Human Infrastructure:
Engineering Iraq's Bright Future**



June 14, 2004

Volume 1, Issue 5



Essayons Forward

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Photo: (top) Castle in Kirkuk (Photo by Maria Or). (Inset) Commander photo illustration by Tom Hudson, CENWO-IM.

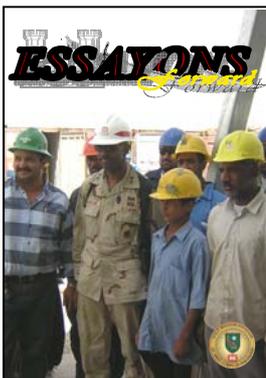
Col. C. Kevin Williams, Central District commander, (left), Pfc. Juan Perez, C Co. 8th ENG BN, 1 CAV, "Hero of the Battle" for the month (center) and Byron Weichel, Central District, cut the Army birthday cake with a bayonet at the celebration held June 14 at the Gulf Region's Headquarters. (Photos by Nola Conway)

Cake-cutting crew

Flags, cake and singing was the order of the day on June 14. Though far from home, Gulf Region Division team members gathered at the Division Headquarters to celebrate three auspicious events — Flag Day, the Army Birthday and the re-enlistment of two cavalry soldiers.

The celebration was sponsored by the Gulf Region's Central District. Lt. Col. Steve Jeselink, Central District Deputy Commander, introduced the event and was followed by Mr. Gary Hawkins of GRD with an invocation.

Mike Mitchell, Central District, sang the National Anthem followed by Col. C. Kevin Williams, Central District commander. Two soldiers from the 1st Cavalry re-enlisted during the celebration.



Cover: Nehad (green hat), Maj. Gen. Ronald Johnson (center) and young Mustafa (right of Johnson) and other workers stand shoulder to shoulder in building the Buzrgan Power Station.

(Photo provided by Steven Foster)

Restore Iraqi Oil Mission a Success; Oil Management Back in the Hands of Iraq



Dr. Iyad Allawi, Prime Minister of Iraq, speaks during a separate ceremony on June 1. (Photos by USAF S.Sgt. Ashley Brokop)

In a simple and all-Iraqi ceremony full authority of the Oil Ministry was transferred to Iraq's interim government on June 8, three weeks before the national transfer of power planned on June 30. The announcement of the transfer was made at the Al-Doura Oil Refinery near Baghdad by Iraq's Prime Minister Iyad Allawi and recently appointed Minister of Oil Thamir Ghadhban.

Following the announcement Iraqi refinery workers applauded and shook hands with the officials and lined up to congratulate each other. Both Allawi and Ghadhban made statements in Arabic to the press.

Allawi said full control of the ministry passed to the new government of Iraq reflecting the confidence in the oil ministry and the new oil minister. Ghadhban was appointed to the position of Oil Minister by Iraq's Interim Government.

The Prime minister underscored the misuse of oil revenues under Saddam Hussein's rule and that the wealth the resource brings should serve all Iraqis rather than a few criminals.

In the past, Iraqi oil was used in building palaces, buying weapons to achieve one person's goals. Today the most important natural resource has been returned to Iraqis, to serve all Iraqis, Allawi said. This transfer puts the Iraqis back in charge of how the oil revenues are used.

"Iraq is the second largest country in oil reserves; it has more than 110 billion barrels of crude oil and about 100,000 trillion cubic meters of natural gas," he said.

The assumption of full authority for the oil ministry marks an important event for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Fifteen months ago, members Task Force Restore Iraqi Oil entered Iraq with Coalition Forces to help preserve Iraq's oil infrastructure. This Task Force composed of Corps military and Civilians were assigned the mission of putting out oil fires and then restoring Iraq's prewar oil production.

The mission success of the Corps involved rapidly bringing back Iraq's oil workers and by working together with Iraq's oil industry. Together they have succeeded in bringing oil production from zero barrels following the liberation to 2.5

million barrels per day, achieved this March, only one year after the invasion.

This sustained level of production is higher than the prewar production that ranged in the vicinity of 1.8 million barrels of daily crude production.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will continue to have a role in the future of Iraq's oil industry. The Corps will provide construction management for new work projects in Iraq's oil infrastructure working for the new Project and Contracting Office (PCO). PCO is the new replacement designation for the Program Management Office.

An important part of the new construction management mission of the Gulf Region Division (GRD) will be involving and mentoring Iraqi counterparts in the construction and installation of new equipment.

This cross-training and mentoring will be critical as the GRD, a provisional division for the Corps, is now fully withdrawn from its direct involvement with the oil industry.

This future point was alluded to in Oil Minister Ghadhban's comments. "We are totally now in control, there are no more advisers. We are running the show. The oil policies will be implemented 100 percent by Iraqis. This is the way forward," Ghadhban said.

—Steven Wright



The announcement of the transfer of sovereignty for the Ministry of Oil was much like many other recent celebrations such as this press conference held to announce the new posts of cabinet members in a packed room in Baghdad.

Getting Ready for the New Tenants



Local Iraqi workers of the Watkinson-IPM company clean and paint the outside of the newly renovated Project and Contracting (formerly PMO) Building. (Photo by Tom Baker, GRC)

Eddie Miller and Max Hayes, project officers of the Central District – West Baghdad Area Office, are in charge of the renovation of the new Project and Contracting Office (formerly Program Management Office) Building in the Green Zone, Baghdad, Iraq. Work is scheduled for completion June 30, 2004.

“The contractor and local workers are doing a great job and may finish this job before the end of the month.” According to Eddie Miller. “The PCO personnel, who will be using this building, have dropped by to visit the project several times and expressed their great satisfaction in the work being done.”

“Of course we are in the customer care business,” said Baker. This is just one of the many projects being worked on by the WBAO.

Max Hayes is overseeing the contractor daily and said, “This is a very rewarding project that is helping the local economy by hiring local workers.”

“I take great pride in the work that is being done,” Max said he is looking forward to new challenges when this project is finished. “We have a lot of work to do over here and I am ready to help in any way I can.”

The West Baghdad Area Office is just one many project office’s that make up Gulf Region Division Central District, commanded by Col. C. Kevin Williams.

— Robert Pruett, GRC

Better Late Than Never

Each week the Gulf Region Division ‘hails’ its new arrivals and says ‘farewell’ to those whose tour is nearing completion. Acknowledgment for outstanding service and presentation of service awards usually takes place at this event. This past week, the Gulf Region Division took this as an opportunity to compensate for long over-due recognition for two of their ‘seasoned’ veterans. Steve Stockton, SES for Business Management Office, (left) presented Steve Wright (center) and Frank Trent (right), the Southwest Asia Civilian Service Medal for their service in support of Desert Shield and Desert Storm operations way back in 1992. Wright and Trent had served as part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Kuwait Emergency Recovery Office (KERO). When informed that these two awards had been ‘lost in the system’ since the early 90s, Scott Lowdermilk, reach back coordinator for GRD, made it a mission to correct the oversight. “These guys are here on their second, and third tours for the Corps to support missions in the Gulf Region, the least we could do is make sure that dedication is recognized,” he said. (Photo by Nola Conway)



No time for playing, Iraqi boy faces family challenges like a man

Mustafa is an Iraqi who wants to build a better Iraq for his family. Like many of his fellow workers, he has traveled some 40 miles to seek work, provide for his family, and build a better country. Like his Iraqi brothers, he is willing to roll up his sleeves, work hard, and never complains that the mission ahead seems sometimes impossible. Unlike his fellow workers at the Buzurgan project, Mustafa is only thirteen years old.

The Maysan Province of Iraq is like many others in the south. Hard working citizens who have long suffered under the thumb of Saddam for the decade following the first Persian Gulf War. Denied electricity from Baghdad systems and support to maintain their old systems, many in this area have reluctantly become used to surviving in the harsh conditions of the sweltering Iraqi heat.

Since liberation, as part of the Restore Iraqi Electricity program of the Gulf Region Division of the US Army Corps of Engineers, many of those same local residents are pitching in to assist in the construction of a \$52 million new generation project at Buzurgan, in one of the Al Amarah substations. Once it and a new transmission line project are completed, 43 MW (ISO) of new generation will be available to cool the homes and promote commerce in this region.

“Several times Iraqis from Al Amarah would travel here hoping that some of the already contracted workers would fail to show up and they could get a days worth of work,” said Steven Foster, engineering technician for the South District of the Corps. “These locals would stand around and wait for all of the tools to be handed out for the day. If by chance the person that used a shovel, or any other tool, the day before did not show up for work, a replacement was chosen among the locals to use that tool for the day.”

Often, when workers would demonstrate regular attendance and reliability, they would be offered the opportunity to become a fulltime worker for one of the three subcontractors working to build the power plant.

“Soon word spread through the city that there was work going on in Buzurgan, and that there were jobs available,” said Foster. “These workers would come to work in orange and white “taxis”, sometimes 14 or 15 per vehicle. Most had full time jobs, others just rode along hoping that today might be their day to work.”

One of the Guys. (Left to right) Project Engineer Jesse Pullen, Mustafa, Engineering Tech Steve Foster and Kamil, a worker for IMCO take a break from the building of the Buzurgan Power Station. Watermark: Mustafa.

(Photos provided by Steven Foster)

No one noticed at first, but there was a little boy stowed away in one of these taxis and he came to the site with the same dreams as the rest, but with a much different story.

pull or run to get needed parts for assembly of a pipe rack.

“The people of Al Amarah are also fighting a battle,” said Nehad. “They are fighting the insurgents that want to see the coalition fail in all of the good they are trying to do. The people of Al Amarah want to see the new Iraq succeed and are anxiously awaiting the new power that they area about to receive when the Buzurgan power plant is online”

Nehad, a citizen of Kuwait, is proud to have helped over 120 families in addition to those he has employed as workers in helping rebuild Iraq. “These people need to be given a chance. When given one, they will strive to succeed.”

Maj. Gen. Ronald Johnson, Gulf Region Division commander, who met the young man upon a recent visit to inspect the progress at the project, also recognized Mustafa’s dedication. “When I look at Mustafa, I know Iraq will have a bright future and he will be a part of it,” said Johnson.

“There was a generation of skilled craftsmen missing in Iraq, but we have been able to work with them and fill this missing generation,” Johnson continued. “At the end of the day, it has to be the Iraqis building their country. People working hard on building this nation up will not tear it down by making roadside bombs.”

Unlike the nationwide systems of oil, water, electricity and other systems that deteriorated under the former regime, Iraq’s human infrastructure is as solid as they come.

As for his hopes and dreams, this little boy that should be going to school and playing with his friends, said “I want to work and support my family, someday going to school to become an engineer like you” referring to the Corps employees at the site whom he admires and buddies up to.

Referring to Mustafa’s admiration, Foster joked, “I think its because he knows we like him and give him candy.”

Mustafa, an Iraqi with the enthusiasm and optimism of a youth, but the responsibilities of a man.

-Steven Foster, Steven Wright and Thomas O’Hara contributed to this story.





Sometimes the biggest impact by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq happens on the smallest scale. Amidst the missions to restore electricity, oil, and provide major construction, a simple effort led by a dam boat 'river-rat' from Tennessee may be one of the longest lasting for those living in the Green Zone. It's...

Oney's Mission

As a Civilian performing the Operations non-commissioned officer role for the Gulf Region Division's Central District, Robert "Oney" Pruett is tasked to make things happen so the engineers can engineer, managers can manage and everyone otherwise operate here in theater. His duties range from making the daily mail run to the palace, providing mess hall meals to Soldiers on duty and otherwise keep the engineering machine running.

But Oney's passion in Iraq does not only lie within the confines of the missions being accomplished by district and division operations in Baghdad. Less than two miles away, still within the Green Zone, lies a simple elementary school for boys and girls that Oney has adopted as his own.

"These are my kids," said Pruett.

Since arriving in Baghdad in January, Pruett has worked to help improve the conditions at the much impoverished school, much like military counterparts are doing throughout theater, as an unofficial ambassador of goodwill.

"They really didn't have much and they needed help" said Pruett.

It's a daunting challenge. The library consists of a few dusty shelves with loose-leaf and ripped paper documents, most bastardized versions of history written under Saddam. The slate on the chalkboards in most classrooms is worn to the backing and the children often suffer in hot stuffy classrooms. The walls are pale and starving for paint and in some cases the doors hang by loose hinges. "I'm amazed these teachers can do what they do," said Pruett.

"If I can make a difference to help these teachers educate these kids, then I feel I'm helping build the human infrastructure here as well," Oney said. "We are building a bridge of friendship." "We are ambassadors for our country."

Upon seeing the conditions Oney made a personal commitment to make a difference for the future generation of young Iraqis. He quickly discovered he wouldn't have to make this commitment alone.

"Before I knew it I had more help than I knew what to do with," Oney grinned. Several fellow Corps personnel, especially from the Central District in Iraq, jumped on board the effort.

Boxes upon boxes began arriving from state-side districts eager to join the cause. Central District Commander Col. C. Kevin Williams had two pallets (2000 lbs) of donated school supplies shipped to Baghdad. Mike Henry, safety officer for the Central District, quickly raised more than \$3500 from St. Louis District and members from his church community. Other Corps members in Iraq added thousands of dollars more. The donations quickly outgrew the small generator room used to temporarily warehouse the items. Eventually these were moved to a grand ballroom in one of the palaces along the Tigris to be sorted and bagged by tired district and division personnel, often after working their typical twelve to fourteen hour shifts.

"You don't feel tired when you realize who you're doing this for," said Henry.

"The donations have poured in from all over the U.S. to everyone here on the school team," said Pruett. "We have collected hundreds of pounds of



Employees for the Gulf Region Division and Central District delivered donated items to the children at the Washington Group International donated labor and playground equipment. The ongoing effort will much im





boxes containing pencils, pens, rulers, scissors, crayons, coloring books, stuffed animals, toys, book-bags, candy and athletic equipment of every description.”

Support also came from outside the Corps. When visiting with members of Washington Group International, a contractor working for the Corps on a hospital project in the Green Zone, Oney happened to mention the effort he had initiated. “They insisted to be allowed to help out,” he said.

Oney explained one thing he was having a hard time tackling was improving the playground for the school. The stone-laden area was devoid of any equipment and was often a collection point for trash and debris. Ernie Waterman, operations manager for WGI said, “It’s done, we’ll take care of it.”

WGI quickly raised money from their own employees, in addition to those contributed by the company, and ordered durable playground equipment to be shipped from Jordan. Their workers have also volunteered labor hours to install the equipment and help with other construction needs at the school. An Iraqi woman working with them, Najet, helps bridge the language barrier when trying to understand the specific needs of the school. “They all have been great,” said Oney.

The goal to improve the Green Zone School, located in an impoverished community, became contagious to the local Iraqi parents and teachers as well. The two co-located schools, one for boys and one for girls, began working together to improve the segregated facility.

Under Saddam, boys and girls were forced to be schooled separately. The two principals often had to struggle to ensure limited resources were available to the students in their charge – sometimes the competition generated fierce disagreements between the two educators. While the segregation has not been officially changed under the new Iraqi government, the growing cooperation exhibited by these two schools is an encouraging sign for the future of this community.

“They’re learning that working together they all win,” said Oney. Working with a local Iraqi, Nahala, who helps to translate with the two principals, Oney has encouraged this teaming of the two sides of the school.

As weeks pass by new paint appears on doors and walls that used to show wear of neglect. New doors smell of fresh stain and furniture is appearing in once-barren classrooms. New chalkboards will replace worn wooden boards. A recent \$40 million grant by the World Bank to the Ministry of Education will provide 72 million new textbooks to schools throughout the country this fall and should help stock the barren library with new and accurate history books. New air-conditioning units and fans already cool otherwise sweltering classrooms.

Oney and his helpers are also coordinating with Operation Iraqi Children a non-profit program (www.operationiraqichildren.org), working on similar support efforts countrywide, to one day broaden their support as the local environment changes and the countrywide movement, and access to schools outside the Green Zone, becomes less dangerous.

“A lot more still has to be done,” said Pruett who is frustrated since his current tour ends shortly. He plans to return later this year for another tour. “School will be back in session and if my kids are here, I’ll be here.”

Last month a young Iraqi girl walked up to one of the Corps employees as he helped deliver the latest shipment of fans purchased locally with funds donated from families in the US. She tugged his arm and signaled that she wanted to whisper him something. “I have a secret,” she indicated in surprisingly good English. Bending down to hear what the pigtailed kindergarten student wanted to tell him, she wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled herself close to his ear. Quickly pecking his cheek she whispered, “I love you.”

--Thomas O’Hara



boys and girls school in the Green Zone. Iraqi parents contribute time and labor to improve the school. improve the co-located elementary school in the Green Zone. (Photos by Thomas O’Hara, Nola Conway and Carrie Loy).



This is the fifth of a multi-part series highlighting the achievements and advancements made by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. This series will continue up to June 30, 2004, the scheduled date for the transfer of authority from the Coalition Provisional Authority to the new interim government of Iraq.

One Year Later: Corps support to USAID continues

When Coalition Forces rolled into Iraq in 2003 it was obvious that this was a country that had been without essential services for many years. Most of the damage to the country was not from bombs or battles but neglect from a regime that had put its efforts into palaces and weapons rather than infrastructure.

Efforts to repair and replace structures damaged from past wars were stagnated by a lack of spare parts. And to add to the lack of investment in infrastructure, the looting and sabotage of government facilities that took place after Coalition Forces arrived in 2003 was credited with doubling the cost of reconstruction.

It was obvious that no one agency could accept a mission of that magnitude alone. It became the mission of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to assist the Iraqis in reconstructing their country, working with the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA).

The ground war was still going on when the USAID advance party came into Iraq in April 2003. Corps soldiers and civilians were already here with the Coalition Forces, working to assess battle damage and the condition of essential services – such as electrical grids, water systems, sewers, schools, hospitals – with Forward Engineering Support Teams, consisting of soldiers and civilians, in the north, central and south.

The Corps provides technical advice as well as evaluates and monitors the USAID's infrastructure reconstruction program that includes power, water, sanitation, hospitals, schools, roads, bridges, railroads, airport, and seaport rehabilitation.

“We can move anywhere in the world and then deliver. We're facing an enormous task in Iraq as the infrastructure is in pretty tough shape. But we're leveraging our technology, and the situation gets better every day,” said Lt. Gen. Robert B. Flowers, Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

FEST teams grew into task forces and reconstruction offices. The Corps' Iraq Reconstruction Office (IRO) was stood up as a technical advisor to USAID for construction management oversight of the Iraq infrastructure reconstruction contractor, Bechtel National Inc.

Royal British Navy Capt. John Murphie (left) meets with Gulf Region Division representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Umm Qsar, the only Iraqi port on the Persian Gulf. (L to R) Murphie; Hank Maser, chief of Construction Division, GRD South District; Lt. Col. David Press, Director of Restore Iraqi Electricity, GRD; Col. Thomas Koning, commander, GRD South District; and Maj. Gen. Ronald Johnson, commanding general, Gulf Region Division.

(Photo by Steven Wright.)



“We can move anywhere in the world and then deliver. We're facing an enormous task in Iraq as the infrastructure is in pretty tough shape. But we're leveraging our technology, and the situation gets better every day.”

**Lt. Gen. Robert B. Flowers
Chief of Engineers**

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) mission in Iraq

USAID assists Iraqis in reconstructing their country by working with the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). USAID programs are implemented in coordination with the United Nations, coalition country partners, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and private sector partners.

The USAID Mission in Iraq carries out programs in education, health care, food security, infrastructure reconstruction, airport and seaport management, economic growth, community development, local governance, and transition initiatives.

The USAID Mission in Iraq implements programs in four strategic areas:

- Restoring Essential Infrastructure
- Supporting Essential Health and Education
- Expanding Economic Opportunity
- Improving Efficiency and Accountability of Government

USAID’s Key Accomplishments in Iraq

- Working in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Iraqi Ministry of Electricity, generated 4,518 MW on October 6, surpassing the pre-war peak level of 4,400 MW.
- USAID is working to add 827 MW of capacity through new generation and rehabilitation projects.
- Conducting water and sanitation projects worth \$183 million that will benefit 14.5 million people.
- Rehabilitating three key bridges (Khazir, Tikrit, and Al Mat) critical to the flow of passengers and goods throughout Iraq. Al Mat Bridge was the first to be completed and reopened March 3.
- Reopened Umm Qasr seaport on June 17. Approximately 40 ships offload cargo per month.
- Completed emergency work to prepare Baghdad and Basrah airports for operations. More than 5,000 flights have arrived and departed Baghdad International Airport since July, which now averages more than 20 non-military movements per day.
- Restored international calling service and activated more than 140,000 subscriber lines in Baghdad.



The Thermal Generation Project at Baiji is just part of the USAID’s contribution to the effort to improve electrical capacity in Iraq. (Photo by Steven Wright)



What a difference a year makes...

When the Gulf Region Division stood up in January 2004, the Corps' support of USAID then came under the GRD's USAID Project Office (UPO).

One year later, the Corps is still supporting USAID, providing effective engineering and technical assistance, solutions and sustaining and building relationships for the Nation, the Army, Multi-National Forces – Iraq (MNF-I), and Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA).

"USAID and USACE have forged a strong partnership during the past year to help rebuild Iraqi infrastructure," said Thomas Wheelock, USAID infrastructure project manager, in Iraq.

"The Corps' team of officers, managers, and engineers has been invaluable for program management, contract administration, and quality assurance of USAID's reconstruction contracts. Additionally, the Corps provides important liaison with military units through the US Army division engineers. The USACE team supporting USAID has undertaken these tasks in a highly professional manner and under increasingly difficult security circumstances," Wheelock said.

"The first year achievements of the reconstruction program -- opening Umm Qasr seaport, improving Iraqi electricity supplies, rebuilding damaged bridges, increasing supplies of potable water -- are the product of a tremendous team effort among USAID, USACE, and Bechtel," he said.

"The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is a partner with the Iraqi people and an enabler to the rebuilding of Iraq," said Maj. Gen. Ronald L. Johnson, commander, Gulf Region Division.

—Nola Conway



Maj. Stephen Ward and Jeff Qunell, FEST members from Seattle District, assess a bombed out building in Mosul, Iraq. (Photo by Nola Conway)

(Below) Refurbished Baghdad International



(Right) Water and Wastewater projects in Nasiriyah

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provides technical advice and evaluates and monitors the USAID's infrastructure reconstruction programs. USAID is involved in a variety of construction and humanitarian projects throughout the country.

(Photos courtesy of USAID)



(Above) Al Nijoon School reconstruction in Al Basrah



(Right) Telephone switching repair in Al-Mamoun



Logistic support Iraq: Montanan District staffer answers the call for volunteers

Coming from the tree-lined foothills of the Rocky Mountains in northern Montana, to the rock-lined hills of northern Iraq, the month of May was quite a change for Mike Greco, a materials handler at Libby Dam.

There was still snow at home when he left, and, even though he is an avid snowmobiler, and it has snowed in northern Iraq, there's not a snowmobile to be found here.

He didn't have much time to think about that, after deciding to throw his hat in the ring for assignments in northern Iraq. Greco said he no sooner volunteered for a logistics position at the North District, Gulf Region Division, that he heard that he had been selected and had two weeks to get ready.

"I knew they needed people over there, but didn't know it was going to be that fast.

Within a couple of weeks he was at the CONUS (Continental United States) Replacement Center at Fort Bliss, Texas, for a week of training, then on his way overseas.

It took a lot of preparation for Greco, who is single and was renting at the time.

"I gave up my rental, put my personal items in storage, and if it weren't for the help of family and friends, I would have never gotten it all done," he said.

Greco grew up in Spokane, Wash., and served for 10 years in the active Navy and Reserves as a medical corpsman. For the same reason as he did his stint in the Navy, he volunteered to serve in Operation Iraqi Freedom, for the adventure.

"At first I was in it for the adventure, but now what keeps me here are the great people on the ground. If you want to see real teamwork, this is the place," said Greco.

Greco is responsible for all of the logistical support of a district. That includes managing the Corps' trailer pad at Camp Freedom Forward Operating Base, where the North District's headquarters offices are located and where the staff lives. He also orders, purchases and provides supplies, and maintains a fleet of vehicles, for an area that takes in everything north of Baghdad. It is quite an undertaking and one he will soon get assistance with, as more volunteers come on board. Though he has time in the service, working in a combat environment is a first for him.



"Things are better than I expected, as far as living conditions," said Greco, who was prepared to live in a tent instead of a trailer.

"The daily stresses have been very taxing, but the people around keep me going. We all need each other more here than back in the states, so everyone seem to try to work together," said Greco, who typically works 12 hours a day, seven days a week.

Describing himself as a diehard snowmobiler, he also enjoys fishing hunting, hiking and listening to all kinds of music. The latter comes in very handy while deployed. "I didn't bring enough music with me, but everyone shares, so it helps to like a little bit of everything," smiled Greco.

Advice he has for those volunteering, make sure your regular life is in order before coming to Iraq. This is a great experience, but you must be 100 percent committed -- mentally and physically -- to endure the long, taxing hours that are required.

"The self satisfaction for providing support to a unit that truly needs you, and appreciates what you do for them, is overwhelming," he said. —*Nola Conway*



Mike Greco, left, sorts through supplies in the storeroom at the Gulf Region North District in Mosul, Iraq. Above, shown at his desk in the Headquarters office. Photos by Nola Conway.

Hail and Farewell

(June 1 — June 13, 2004)



David Elmore
GRC-Hydraulic Eng.
Hailing from:
New Orleans District



Stephanie Ehnstrom
GRD-DPM
Hailing from:
St. Paul District



David Snyder
Electrical QA Engineer
Hailing from:
Portland District



Dennis Holm
GRC-UPO
Hailing from:
St. Paul District



Lourdes Pastrana
GRD-PMO
Hailing from:
Norfolk District



Michael Coggin
GRC-UPO
Hailing from:
Fort Hood DPW



Timothy Pinner
GRC-Eng. Tech.
Hailing from:
St. Louis District



David Manka
GRD-RIE
Hailing from:
Kansas City District



Miles Johnson
GRN-Kirkuk AO
Hailing from:
Little Rock District



Marlene Judy
GRD-DPM
Hailing from:
Charleston District



Nola Conway
GRD-PA
Hailing from:
Walla Walla District



Carroll Correll
GRD-IR
Hailing from:
TAC



Jason Boothe
GRN-Dibis
Hailing from:
Mobile District



Rona Parker-Anderson
GRN-Dibis
Returning to:
Kansas City District



Henry Shelton
GRC-QA Rep.
Returning to:
St. Louis District



Dale Walters
GRN-Kirkuk
Returning to:
Walla Walla District



Roger Kohls
GRN-Al Kasik
Returning to:
Seattle District



CPT Taylor Hwong
GRD-Special Proj.
Returning to:
TAC



Amanda Smith
GRN-Dibis
Returning to:
Mobile District



Willie Ann Mays
GRD-Contracting
Returning to:
Jacksonville District



Robert Hallet
GRN-E&C
Returning to:
Omaha District



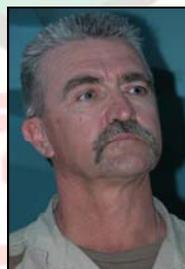
Dale Bestgen
GRN-Kirkuk
Returning to:
Kansas City District



John "Bobby" Simpson
GRC-Taji
Returning to:
Mobile District



David Webster
GRN-Kirkuk
Returning to:
Tulsa District



Randolph "Mike" Rabbe
GRD-Env Spec
Returning to:
Omaha District



Phyllis Svetich
GRD-RIO
Returning to:
Sacramento District



Christine Altendorf
GRD RIO
Returning to:
Tulsa District



Mary Ann Schimid
GRD RIO
Returning to:
Alaska District