



ESSAYONS

Forward

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Gulf Region Division (Provisional), Iraq - Volume 2, Issue 4

May 31, 2005

**Remembering those serving —
Memorial Day in Iraq**



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Gulf Region Division's Deputy Division Commander, Col. Francis Kosich (left) visits Rustimya Waste Water Treatment Plant near Sadr City with 1st CAV Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Holmes, and 3ID Brigade Troops Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Gayton while Spec. Johnson stands guard. (Photo by Alicia Embrey)



COVER: Soldiers and Civilians serving in Iraq show their "American Spirit" - Baghdad style - during a May 17th Toby Keith concert at Camp Victory, Iraq. The crowd of more than 300 enjoyed 30 minutes of down home entertainment courtesy of Toby Keith and MWR.

(Photo by Alicia Embrey)

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Commander's Column



The reconstruction effort continues to make important strides breaking 2500 project starts valued at over \$5.5B. Despite the many challenges facing Iraq, the spirit, determination, and courage of the Iraqi people, combined with the support of the men and women in uniform and many dedicated Civilians, are making an enormous difference. The Iraqi government continues to progress as evidenced by its selection of the Iraqi Transitional Government including the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and 32 ministers. The Iraqi Security Forces also continue to grow in ability, confidence, and strength each day.

To date, the team effort on reconstruction has completed 1175 projects, valued at \$1.2B. Earlier this month, we celebrated the 1000th project completion, a school in the Northern Province of Dahuk. The Gulf Region North District held a special media event to recognize this watermark achievement. As we continue to make progress on schools, the true beneficiaries are the children of Iraq who are the future of this country.

As our mission continues, the near term future will be a time of transition. This summer will bring about many changes to the GRD and its leadership. A major transition in May was the GRN change of command with Colonel Kurt Ubbelohde relinquishing command to Colonel Rick Jenkins in a ceremony held in front of the new GRN headquarters. Our thoughts, prayers, and many thanks go out to Kurt and his entire team for their tireless efforts during this past year. We wish him safe travel as he reunites with his loving family, and welcome Rick to the fold.

This past month's Society of American Military Engineers' luncheon was another huge success. The guest speaker, Dr. Latif Rashid, Iraqi Minister of Water Resources, addressed the future of Iraq, the need for MNF-I's continued support, and the critical need for support from donors and investors to help rebuild the country.

The MNF-I Commander's Conference this month also focused on reconstruction. Specifically, the conference addressed both the structure in the field and the remaining projects for this calendar year. The field structure consists of the Provincial Support Teams resourced from both MNF-I and State Department leaders, and the Provincial Reconstruction Development Councils, which consists of local Iraqi governmental leaders. The effort to include the newly elected Provincial Councils in the reconstruction process is underway and has the potential to contribute significantly to the Iraqi government's success at the local level.

May also provided the opportunity to celebrate Mother's Day, to recognize the many mothers who are deployed, and to remember those who support our deployed Soldiers and Civilians. We thank each of our mothers for their love and support during good times and bad, and for their continuing words of encouragement. In an environment such as ours, unconditional support can make a tremendous difference.

God Bless you all.

BG Thomas P. Bostick



Cmd. Sgt. Major's Column

Memorial Day... a day of remembrance ... means many things to many people.

What does it mean to you?

In our culture, when reflecting on this day, it's easy to visualize children playing in the yard, families arranging festivities -- backyard barbecues, trips to the beach -- and a myriad of other activities that represent joyous times and celebration. The men and women of the Gulf Region Division also close their eyes and see the euphoric visions of times when they participated and indulged with families and friends.

During my studies and daily reflections prompted by my dear mother, she suggested I look at the book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament of the Bible. Obediently, I followed her guidance and advice and, in so doing, found the discourse both touching and illuminating ...

"Ecclesiastes 3:8 - ¹ For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: ² a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; ³ a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; ⁴ a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; ⁵ a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; ⁶ a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; ⁷ a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; ⁸ a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace."

Memorial Day is more than barbecues and happy times; we know this as Americans and citizens of a world that prefers peace to war. The men and women of the Armed Forces currently engaged in the Global War against Terrorism also are responsible for keeping the peace and assisting in the reconstruction of nations in difficult parts of the world. Their everyday tasks are a bit more complicated than the presentation of seasons in Ecclesiastes.

Today's warriors find themselves *simultaneously* in seasons of war and peace -- where dying and killing, mourning and dancing, and rebuilding of nations and the corresponding human spirits are everyday realities.

The Commanding General and I often travel and spend time mourning with our Soldiers as we honor their lives in memorials throughout Iraq. Stateside families and friends will find themselves mourning the loss of loved ones. They will sadly learn that this year's barbecue will not be the same when someone dearly loved is absent.

It is not only fitting to reflect and remember our fallen warriors during this time of the year. We must focus, as well, on honoring their sacrifices with both joyful and contrite hearts. Their sacrifices are the prices paid for our liberties -- for family and friends to enjoy their lives in seasons filled with peace and quiet laughter ... where children can run free without fear, and the elderly can enjoy their families, young men and women can aspire to fruitful futures, moms and dads can take pride in their families, business people can support themselves and stimulate our economies, and people of all faiths can worship their God without persecution.

On May 30, we remember our fallen. We mourn and honor them, and thank them, their families, and friends for their sacrifices. We do so with tearful and joyful hearts.

For the men and women of the Gulf Region Division, this is a time of sacrifice as well as a time to work hard and deliver the reconstruction of Iraq. It is a time to share with the Iraqi people as they rebuild their nation and their dreams.

May God bless the men and women of our Armed Forces and the men and women of the Gulf Region Division as they collaborate with the world community and the Iraqi people during this bittersweet time

CSM Jorge L. Gutierrez

Partnering key to rebuilding Iraq's capacity

Rebuilding the neglected infrastructure in a country is a daunting challenge for any government. In Iraq, where years of neglect and conflict have taken a serious toll, a major reconstruction partnership continues between the Iraqi Transitional Government and the Coalition Forces. Despite security concerns, this team effort is successful. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has partnered with a number of stakeholders on the delivery team, working diligently together to rehabilitate the nation's infrastructure, provide jobs and services for the Iraqi people, and build ownership by the Iraqi government.

In Salah ad Din Province at the field office level, a network of engineers, Soldiers, and Iraqi governmental officials have partnered together. Gulf Region North District has established an Area Office and two Resident Offices to execute construction management of reconstruction projects for the Project and Contracting Office (PCO) and the 1st Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 3rd Infantry Division. These offices include project engineers, construction representatives and support staff to execute contract construction the same way the Corps manages work worldwide. New to the process in Iraq are the close ties between the Iraqi local government, Iraqi engineers and coalition team members.

The Resident Office at Forward Operations Base Danger has hired a team of local engineers to work as project engineers and quality assurance inspectors for all projects executed in the local area. The Iraqi engineers visit project sites daily, provide quality reports, direct contractors to repair or replace deficient work and materials, and are involved with the acceptance of completed work. The Iraqi engineer's relationships with government engineers from the local district and provincial government enable them in working through and resolving daily issues and questions. The Danger Resident Office has a team of nine Iraqi engineers, trained and equipped to execute the quality assurance program. To date, the team of skilled engineers has been instrumental in the completion of many successful projects.

The area and resident engineers work closely with the military engineers who are leading the construction effort for the 42nd Infantry Division and 1-3 BCT. The area engineer meets weekly and communicates nearly daily with the BCT Engineer and his staff to coordinate the reconstruction program in Salah ad Din. The Brigade Engineer works through Task Force commanders to develop requirements for projects, coordinate military operations for security in the area, and engage local sheiks and city councils for their support. Corps project engineers and construction representatives work with the military engineers and civil affairs teams to coordinate site inspections and provide technical support. Corps engineers have worked with the military to complete technical assessments of bomb-damaged buildings, develop statements of work for renovation of facilities, and execute design work of new structures to support the security mission.

The Iraqi network of governmental engineers is the critical element to the success of the program. Deputy Governor, retired General, Abdulla Hussein leads the reconstruction effort at the Salah ad Din provincial level. His Assistant for Technical Affairs leads a team of well-qualified engineers who are located throughout the province in each district. The team provides the technical coordination in developing and executing projects in each district and supports the Directors General from each Ministry. The Directors General for each ministry sector coordinates all requirements for their area of responsibility and communicates directly with their ministry counterparts at the national level in Baghdad.

The reconstruction program comes together at the provincial Project Quality Review Board (PQRB), a committee of leaders established by an agreement between the Provincial Governor and the BCT Commander. The board directs the reconstruction program, coordinates actions by all team members, and solves challenges to the execution of projects in the province. Deputy Governor Abdulla and Lt. Col. Doug Victor, 1-3 BCT Engineer, jointly lead the PQRB. Other coalition members include Matt Hoh, PCO regional director, Lt. Col. Andrew Nelson, Corps

Salah ad Din provincial Project Quality Review Board members 1BCT Engineer, LTC Doug Victor, Corps Resident Engineer, Tom Urbaniak, Deputy Governor Abdulla, and Tikrit Area Engineer, LTC Andrew Nelson. The board directs the reconstruction program, coordinates actions by all team members, and solves challenges to the execution of projects in the province. (Photo Derek Chow)



Area Engineer, Tom Urbaniak, Resident Engineer, and Maj. Josh Stevens, BCT Civil Affairs Officer. Other Iraqi members include the Assistant for Technical Affairs, Engineer Khatan Hamada Salih, the Director General of Roads and Bridges, Engineer Khalid Hassan, the leaders of the provincial Chamber of Commerce and Business Center, and representatives from various ministries.

Partnered with various contractors, this team is executing over 150 projects valued in excess of \$200 million throughout the province of Salah ad Din. Projects include school, rail, fire station renovations, road construction, construction of new health clinics, and major upgrades to electrical transmission and distribution networks. Construction contractors vary from large American design/build firms executing major national infrastructure projects to small, local Iraqi companies renovating schools in their home village. The project team is working to designate more contracts to local Iraqi companies. Currently, the Corps' Tikrit Area Office is managing 77 projects valued over \$10 million contracted directly to Iraqi companies.

This effort is providing a significant impact to the local economy by providing services to the Iraqi people, jobs for the work force, contracts and orders for vendors and suppliers, as well as management experience for the companies and local



Derek Chow, Resident Engineer, Danger Resident Office instructs Iraqi engineers in Quality Control Management. Derek is a Senior Project Manager in the Honolulu District's Civil & Public Works Branch. (Photo Tom Urbaniak)

government. Each project executed by the team adds to the capacity of the local and provincial governments, enabling them to take responsibility for their own infrastructure rehabilitation and development. The Iraqi team members prove every day that they are willing and able to take on the leadership role of this task..

LTC Andrew Nelson, GRN



Corps' Danger Resident Office team takes time for a group photo at the resident office in Tikrit, Iraq. This team along with their Iraqi counterparts are executing over 150 projects valued in excess of \$200 million throughout the province of Salah ad Din. (Photo Tom Urbaniak)

Rockers, chevrons and Civilians in Iraq

A flag football photo symbolizes the teamwork between GRD Soldiers and Civilians in the Iraq reconstruction effort. GRD Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Jorge Gutierrez (back row with woolen cap) and Brig. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick, (second from right, front row) commander for GRD, have participated in flag football and softball activities.

(Photo by Pat Jones, GRD)



They hold military positions, but the vast majority of people with whom they work and come in contact are civilians. Their assignments are in Iraq, but it would be a rare occasion that required them to use their weapons. They are Army service members, but at least one of them maintains his office on a U.S. airbase. While assigned to the largest public engineering, design, and construction management agency in the world, they do not necessarily require any engineering training in order to be effective in their respective roles.

Despite what appears to be a series of contradictions, the four U.S. Army Corps of Engineers sergeants major dispersed to the Gulf Region Division, or GRD, each have varied backgrounds that render them well prepared for the diverse tasks assigned to them.

Activated in January 2004, the GRD operates three district offices located throughout Iraq and a division headquarters office in Baghdad.

With a staff of more than 700 Corps employees and local nationals in country, the GRD is involved in more than 2,900 planned Iraqi reconstruction projects. The organization concentrates its reconstruction efforts in the areas of hospital renovation and construction, primary healthcare facilities, municipal buildings and schools, water and wastewater treatment facilities, police stations and border forts, electrical power generation and distribution, roads, sea and airports, and courts and prisons.

The current GRD budget for these projects is \$11.4 billion.

So, how do four sergeants major with a combined total of 107 years of military service fit in an organization comprised of 98 percent civilians and only two percent service members? According to GRD Command Sgt. Maj. Jorge Gutierrez, the answer is “prominently.”

“As the Command Sergeant Major to the Gulf Region Division, my sergeants major and I get involved in all aspects of the organization and its operational climate,” said Gutierrez.

“Besides the normal functions germane to being the most senior non-commissioned officer and personal advisor to the commanding general and staff, I am also responsible for many other areas that are important to deployed members of the Corps. Though they may be considered intangibles, these areas have the potential to impact the health and welfare of the organization and its people,” he said.

In Iraq, contributions and duties tend to intensify because of distance, time, communications (or lack thereof), and the ever-present enemy threat. Here, the command sergeant major travels either

alone or with the commanding general to the various district and area offices scattered across the country, in order to interface with everyone in the organization. This non-commissioned officer (NCO)

leader listens to all individuals’ concerns and senses their issues with a careful ear in order to provide invaluable problem-solving assistance.

Typically, Gutierrez encounters issues regarding matters of policy, pay, safety, health and welfare, morale, force protection, resource management, and EEO. This eclectic listing reinforces the fact that an engineering background is not mandatory for an employee to achieve success in the Corps.

Gutierrez earned a Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts from Excelsior College, Albany, New York, and currently is pursuing a Master of Science in Management/Leadership through Thomas Edison College. While Gutierrez completed Advanced Individual Training as a Combat Engineer, his three fellow GRD sergeants major traveled different paths to reach their current Corps assignments.

Sergeants Maj. Thomas P. Sigeo, Sr.; Jerry Shoopman, and Wilbur R. Knight, Jr., (Gulf Region-Northern, Central, and Southern Districts, respectively) garnered their diverse pool of experience from the

“(A Sgt. Major) becomes an expert in conflict management, training, counseling, safety, and force protection, just to name a few of the intrinsic attributes that are considered combat multipliers for the commander.”

—Gutierrez

active duty, reserve, and civilian worlds.

Their extensive backgrounds in the areas of Health and Safety, Operations, Intelligence, Logistics, Artillery, Training, Administration, and Transportation have well prepared them to assume responsibility for advising and making recommendations to the three GRD district engineers and their staffs on all aspects of unit operations, intelligence, security, training, and safety.

Additionally, they each bear and enforce standards, mentor to all unit personnel, as well as provide oversight and guidance on risk management.

The current GRD environment necessitates this pool of diverse expertise because, according to Gutierrez, Iraqi insurgents have created a non-permissive environment that restricts mobility.

“In order to accomplish our mission, we must adhere to some of the most stringent standards ever faced by our work force,” said Gutierrez. “Fortunately, a command sergeant major has a wealth of tactical experience as a war fighter from which to draw.”

“His or her normal career path has pertained to dealing with Soldiers’ everyday issues and solving problems,” he said. “As a result, he or she becomes an expert in conflict management, training, counseling, safety, and force protection, just to name a few of the intrinsic attributes that are considered combat multipliers for the commander.”

One has only to look at Sgt. Maj. Sigee’s background to see an illustration of Gutierrez’s words. In his civilian life, Sigee is the director of a diverse and unique program called pre-trial release. The cost-saving program allows his department to interview and evaluate non-violent individuals charged with a crime. Through this program’s release procedures, Sigee and his colleagues offset the \$75.00-per-day cost of holding perpetrators in jail.

In the course of this work, Sigee also has to coordinate and stay on line with a five-person commissioner court and seven District and Misdemeanor judges.

Sigee’s formal education includes a Bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice, with a minor Political Science, and an Associates Degree in Business Administration. Additionally, he is a recent graduate of the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy.

Sigee began his military career 27 years ago. During that time, he worked in the career management fields of Air Defense Artillery, Logistics, Administration, and Transportation. He has served in numerous geographic locations to include Germany, Texas, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq.

Sergeant Maj. Shoopman’s path to his current leadership assignment is diverse from his colleagues, yet, just as effective. For 13 years, he worked as a mechanic, bricklayer, welder, crane operator, and relief supervisor for a research and development company.

Shoopman also served as a chemical process operator for a major chemical company for five years. While in that assignment, he performed both outdoors work and indoor control board operations while overseeing a multimillion-dollar chemical distillation process.

Prior to his two-year mobilization at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, in January 2003, Shoopman had completed technical training for GE 7FA Gas Fire, A-10 steam-driven turbines, and a heat-recovery, steam generation system. Two years ago, he was in the process of commissioning the new Cogentrix Southaven Power Plant, located in Southaven, Mississippi, when his reserve unit was called up to support the global war on terrorism.

The sergeant major’s previous assignment was as the command sergeant major for the 2nd Simulation Exercise Group, 1st



(Left to right) Sergeants Major Jerry Shoopman, GRC, Thomas P. Sigee, GRN, Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Jorge Gutierrez, GRD, and Sgt. Maj. Wilbur R. Knight, Jr., GRS, provide leadership and counsel to Soldiers, Civilians and Iraqi local nationals throughout the division. (Photo by Harry Weddington)

Brigade, 75th Division, Fort Sill, Oklahoma. There, he trained mobilizing units by certifying their command staffs using Command Post Exercises and Mission Rehearsal Exercises. Prior assignments include serving as the command sergeant major for the 4005th U.S. Army Hospital and the 6th Military Intelligence Battalion. Shoopman volunteered to come and serve with the Corps because of his desire to contribute to the mission in Iraq.

In his personal life, much like his sergeant major colleagues, Shoopman appreciates the value of a formal education. He earned his Associates degree in Science from Clarendon College and remains only one semester from completing his Bachelors degree in General Studies.

Shoopman is proud to say that he has two beautiful, intelligent daughters who live and work in Ontario, Canada, while attending college part time.

Twenty-eight years of military experience have molded his leadership style to be flexible enough to depend upon the situation before him.

“I do not believe in micro-management. I am smart enough not to change things if they are working well, to fix them if they are not working, and to recognize the difference,” he said. “As in all organizations, change is constant and my leadership helps to stabilize the organization’s ability to accomplish its mission by meeting or exceeding its goals.”

Knight is equally well prepared to interact with his civilian Corps colleagues. He has held numerous non-military positions in the areas of investigations (with concentrations in financial fraud, business ethics, and workplace violence), safety, and intelligence/force protection.

During the last 28 years, he has lived and worked in Iraq, Russia, Nigeria, Kosovo, Croatia, Brazil, Columbia, Bolivia, Mexico, Singapore, Thailand, Canada, and other various U.S., South American, and European locations.

In addition to being a Certified Fraud Examiner, Knight holds three college degrees – the highest is a Master of Science in Human Resource Management.

His philosophy for dealing successfully with either military or civilian colleagues is simple and direct.

“I don’t throw around my rank regardless of the situation. If you treat people like people, no matter whom they are, they will respond appropriately,” he said.

Denise Calabria

Setbacks aside, Al-Oubaidy District improvements continue

Reconstruction is an ongoing process throughout Iraq and daily strides improve the living conditions in the southern, central, and northern regions of the country.

As with any progress, along with each step forward, there may be occasional steps backwards. The 425 civilians, 80 military, and numerous Iraqi contractors working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) take each step forward and each occasional setback in stride and continue to move ahead. Together, they remain focused on a common goal -- reconstruction of Iraq for the Iraqi people.

The Oubaidy District sewage network is just one of 28 planned for renovations throughout Iraq, of which 13 are completed. The badly neglected network was designed for use by ten thousand people, but now supports a population ten times that number. As a result, the neighborhood has suffered for 25 years.

According to Capt. William Clark, USACE Resident Office, Officer in Charge, stationed at Camp Loyalty, the project starts with cleaning the streets of debris and raw sewage.

"The surface cleaning of the streets is an on-going process that will continue throughout the course of the project," he said. "The Oubaidy project is coming along quite nicely; however, we have had some snags. With the recent rains, they have had some setbacks getting the streets clear of sewage and garbage."

The problem lies with the existing surface drainage system of ditches and small pump stations that pump sewage to the Diala River.

"Several of the pump stations are not working or are working at minimal capacity due to poor maintenance, theft of components, no electricity, or a lack of fuel for the backup generators. This causes the sewage to pool in the streets and, when it rains, the problem is amplified," said Clark.

As the cleanup effort progresses, the streets begin to dry out and life returns to a form of normalcy in Al-Oubaidy District, Baghdad. (Photos by Alicia Embrey, GRC)





Left: Although the cleanup effort is underway, recent heavy rainfalls still cause pooling in the street due to trash-clogged drainage systems.

Below: The massive cleanup effort requires the use of dump trucks to haul the sludge and debris away from the community.



Clark went on to say that despite every setback, Iraqi contractors continue to press forward.

“The Iraqi contractors are currently surveying the Mahallas, placing sewer laterals in the streets, and casting concrete manholes in their storage yard. The laterals and trunk line network has to be completed first before any homes or surface drainage is connected,” he said, “to avoid having sewage running through the unfinished network.”

As the work continues, the neighborhood shows signs of improvement and its occupants show signs of optimism.

“Members of the Oubaidy neighborhood are quite happy that they are finally getting a sewer network. Several members of the neighborhood have invited the contractors and their workers to dinner, offered to work for free for them, and so on,” said Clark.

The construction is centering on a complete sanitary sewer system with trunk lines and rehabilitation of the current water distribution system. The new system includes sewer mainline pipes and manholes, connections and/or construction of laterals to approximately 12,500 homes – each averaging 8 to 10 occupants, as well as businesses. The project also provides for the construction of three pump stations.

Alicia Embrey

PCO and GRD keep the 'football' moving in Iraq

The reconstruction of Iraq's infrastructure has been compared to an old fashioned grid iron battle between those who want to move the country forward and those who want nothing to do with the billion dollars of improvements badly needed in the second largest oil rich nation. However, this pugnacious competition has a number of players on the field that desire only to move the football or in this case, the nation, forward. Those troupes, often caught in the bellicose quagmire, are the democratically elected provincial council members and the regional commanders of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Gulf Region Division – GRD). Both are charged with delivering to the Iraqi people a vastly improved quality of life through massive building of schools, health centers, hospitals, water treatment plants, fire stations, border posts, military bases, police facilities, railroad stations and scores of other basic necessities that most modern governments provide for their citizenry. The task has been anything but easy in this terrorist-rich environment. Local governments growing into a new way of thinking for themselves are now making decisions that will affect the future of their country and impact generations to come in Iraq.

Often at the center of the reconstruction efforts are the newly elected council members in the various governorates alongside the American engineers charged with building a quality project that can be managed successfully by the Iraqis. In the south, Al Basrah provincial council chairman Jalal Al Noori is the man on the front line for the people of Iraq that would like to move his region forward. Standing with Noori is his American partner and new friend commanding officer Col. Roger Gerber of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Gerber handles reconstruction efforts in the nine southern governorates that consist of Karbal, Babil, An Najaf, Al Qadisiyah, Wasit, Maysan, Al Muthanna, Dhi Qar and Al Basrah. This area is known as the Gulf Region South. Recently, PCO public affairs interviewed these two pivotal players in the \$18.4 billion reconstruction endeavor in southern Iraq. Excerpts of the two interviews with Noori and Gerber about their struggles and their hopes for the future of Iraq after reconstruction are included below:

At a recent Project Coordination Team meeting, Al Basrah provincial council chairman Jalal Al Noori (left) discusses reconstruction priorities with fellow council member Janan Jabbar (right). During PCT meetings, GRD engineers work out solutions to the many problems they face working against insurgent activity in Iraq. (PCO photo)



Questions to Al Basrah Provincial Council Chairman Jalal Al Noori:

What do you see as the primary infrastructure needs of Basrah?

"Basrah was virtually destroyed in the past 35 years. We need a lot of projects especially for the city. That includes all the PCO sectors such water, health, transportation, buildings, education and many things.

How closely are you working with PCO in rebuilding the infrastructure in southern Iraq?

"In the past, we did not have the trust and the communication between the money givers (U.S. taxpayers) and the users (Iraqis) of the money. These PCO project coordination team (PCI) meetings are building that trust and communication. We are able to discuss the needs of our region and we get results when we do -- especially with Col. Gerber. He has helped us with many projects and with pushing all projects (in Basrah) forward."

Being a local representative of the people, do you get a sense what the people are expect from the massive PCO efforts?

"The main thing to remember, Basrah was neglected during the Saddam era. There was no economic development in this region during that time. The people want the government they elected in the recent election, to provide good security, infrastructure development and growth in employment for our community. That is what the people expect of us and that is what our local and national government will provide. Remember our people in the south had been suffering for a long time. For 35 years, we have suffered a long time. But we now have hope for our future with the reconstruction."

Upon completion of the reconstruction what is your hope for the people of Basrah?

"Basrah is the main source of oil. The 1.5 million barrels of oil that is exported each day is from this southern region. The port (Umm Qasr) is in Basrah. Many farmers produce crops in this region. All the elements of civilized life existed here. We are comparable to cities in the United States and the United Arab Emirates. Because we have the resources to continue our growth, I would like the future to be a continuation of these industries in Basrah."

What are your expectations for the future of Iraq?

"If God is willing, we will teach the world about democracy. We want the quality of life for our people to be improved. After all we taught the whole world about reading and writing because we invented all of those things here (in Iraq). We had a civilized society and knowledgeable people and we have those opportunities now with our freedom. We now have the opportunity to make a new life for all the people of Iraq. The revolution of the blue finger has been the most profound thing that has ever happened here in Iraq. That was a response of trust of the people for the future of Iraq and the trust they have in the new government. We hope the people continue to support our leaders like Prime Minister Al Jaafari as we all move forward."

Questions to Col. Roger Gerber, USACE Gulf Region South District commander:

How many Army Corps of Engineers do you have working in the southern provinces in Iraq and what role are they playing in the reconstruction effort?

“We have about 100 Corps engineers and around 110 Iraqi engineers on staff. We rely upon our Iraqi engineers to go out and do quality assurance on the reconstruction projects. They are able to visit the sites frequently and bring back reports of the quality of the construction and discuss that with the (PCO) project engineers and resident engineers. With our limited personal security detachment (PSD) assets we do get out with our US engineers to the projects but not as often as we would like. With 700 projects that have been completed or under construction, it is difficult (for US engineers) to get out more frequently than the two or three times on each project. But the final inspection or sign off is always done by a U.S. engineer. This (getting out) has been a challenge for us.”

Are you discovering new ways to overcome the challenge of not being able to visit the reconstruction projects as often as you would like to?

“We have attempted to form Project Delivery Teams (PDT) for the larger projects or groups of small projects. This PDT is where we have the contractor, Iraqi Director General, the owner or end user of the infrastructure project and the Corp of Engineer’s project engineer. They form the PDT and meet on a regular basis. If they have issues they can’t solve, we elevate those concerns at the PCT level. At that level the local Iraqi provincial council members play an active role in the reconstruction process. These local elected officials have reconstruction committees designed to address the issues of reconstruction. And what we have been doing at these PCT meetings is invite them (Iraqis) in and train them to conduct these meetings themselves. It is our hope to have these PCT meetings turn into Iraqi meetings. The next round of meetings will be conducted by them. They will chair the meeting and we will be in support. The attempt is for them to take ownership of the project construction and be responsible for the coordination of (reconstruction) issues such as land issues and security issues for ongoing projects. And more importantly they will be identifying the requirements for future projects, putting together scopes of work, putting together the priorities for these future reconstruction projects, and then we will help them try to get funding. Whether it is through Commanders Emergency Relief Program (CERP) funds, program funds through MND, IRRF funds if available, World Bank, United Nations and other NGOs. The intent is that all of those organizations come together at the provincial level and the newly formed

reconstruction committees will match requirements with resources.”

How successful have you been in working with the local provinces in addressing reconstruction issues?

“We have been working with the local provinces since last September (in this region). Initially, we had a few of the director generals and the technical leads come to the PCT meetings. What is new (in this relationship) is bringing the council, the elected members to the table. They are coming into this newfound power by making leadership decisions. Under the former regime and CPA, the DGs basically answered to Baghdad. The ministries had primary control over the resources. I am seeing a shift now that the decision making is at the provincial level. How that will work out has not been determined as of yet. But I see this (local coordination) as a positive step because if we have land issues and security issues at the local level then they can take ownership of that problem and solve it.”

How would you characterize your assignment in Iraq?

“It has been one of the most rewarding assignments I have ever experienced. It has been extremely rewarding in the sense of seeing the Iraqis get engaged, working with them. Truly I see us making a difference. Case in point is the projects such as the police stations in the Basrah province, the Iraqi security training facilities, the schools and the replacement of mud schools with brand new schools. All the projects we have started are being handed over to the Iraqis now, and it is very rewarding to see that happen.”

The other day, the Basrah provincial council chairman Noori jokingly offered you a house and two wives to stay in Iraq. Have this experience of working with the Iraqis built lasting friendships as well?

“It is going to be difficult to leave. Some of the Iraqis I have worked with I met back in July and August of last year. Throughout the governorates, there are some I have worked very closely with during my tour here. It has been rewarding in a sense of building a personal relationship with the Iraqis. I am going to change command on the 15th of July and head on back to my family and that is a good thing. But it really gets into your blood. By the time I leave, we will have completed most of our assignments. We will have our processes down and systems in place. Our project delivery teams will be well-established. There will be issues, many issues but there is a process in place to deal with them, get resolution and move on. I think if we use the resources we have here then the Iraqis will be left with some quality projects. It is my hope to read about the continued success in Iraq from my next and last assignment in Germany.”

LCDR Abram McGull, USN, PCO

For more information on PCO and how it works with the US Army Corps of Engineers to rebuild Iraq, visit its web site at: www.rebuilding-iraq.net.

Below: GRS commander Col. Roger Gerber (left) engages in a conversation with Basrah engineer Mazin Samad (right) on some finer points of the massive reconstruction effort in Iraq’s second largest city. When complete, GRS will have managed more than 300 projects valued at nearly \$380 million. Watermark: PCT meetings are held throughout the provinces to discuss issues such as verifying local Iraqi contractors, security and land issues. Issues unresolved can delay certain projects for months. (PCO photos)



Two Kirkuk rail stations' reconstruction complete

Passengers and consumers in the Kirkuk area will be pleased to learn that two rail station rehabilitation projects were recently completed in Kirkuk. The Kirkuk and Al Maraai stations are the first two completed of four station renovations scheduled in Kirkuk Governorate. Stations in Al Thawra and Al Reyadh are scheduled for completion later this year. From all indications, the once bustling Iraqi rail system is on the track to steady recovery.

Both station renovation projects took about four months to complete at a cost of over \$70,000 each. The initial work mainly consisted of cleaning and removing rubbish from the sites and demolishing unsafe portions of the buildings. Station renovations included repair and replacement of plumbing and sewer systems, replacement of roofing and other structural components, painting, plastering, installing new windows, doors and frames, as well as flooring and tile.

The Iraq Republic Railroad (IRR) supervised all of the renovations performed. Prior to 2003, the IRR operated a network of 2,603 kilometers of railway.

The main railway routes are Um Qasr/Basra-Baghdad and Baghdad-Husaiba on the Syrian border. There are also branches to Kirkuk and Akashat.

"There are 105 kilometers of railway in Kirkuk," said Shakir Mahmoud Shukri, manager for Kirkuk Region IRR.

Renovations and repairs to these stations and others around Iraq are restoring the operational readiness of the IRR.

"Rehabilitation of the railway and stations will allow the IRR to move passengers and commodities throughout the region and connect Kirkuk by rail to the other parts of the country," said Shukri.

The rehabilitated railroad stations will provide the facilities necessary to accept the control equipment required to operate the railroad. Operational readiness and safety were exacerbated by the lack of pre-war maintenance and post-conflict looting. According to Shukri, work on the railway and the stations improves as the local security situation improves.

A local contractor employed about 30 local hire Iraqi trade workers and artisans applied their skills to reach the finished product. The renovation projects positively affect the local economy through the hiring of labor and the purchase of necessary construction materials. The use of local contractors and local labor has been instrumental in inspiring pride in the local communities and injecting money into the local economies.

The stations in Kirkuk are part of a 15-station project that includes the recon-

struction of 11 stations in Ninewa Governorate. The goal of the project is to repair the stations and make them safe and efficient once again.

Rebuilding the train stations allows the Iraqi people to see steps are being taken to restore the country's infrastructure. At the same time, renovation projects such as these send a clear message to the insurgents that, despite their attacks, Iraq is moving forward.

"I am looking forward to the return of full operation of the IRR serving the people of Kirkuk and being part of the national rail system," said Shukri.

Mike McAleer

Jenkins named Corps' Gulf Region North Engineer

Col. Richard B. Jenkins has assumed command of the Gulf Region Division, North District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He replaced Col. Kurt F. Ubellohde.

The Gulf Region North District (GRN), headquartered in Mosul, is one of three districts that comprise the Gulf Region Division located in Baghdad. The other districts are Central in Baghdad and Southern in Nasiriyah. Together the districts are responsible for the construction management and quality control of billions of dollars in reconstruction and new construction throughout Iraq. Critical infrastructure is being rebuilt to provide essential utility services such as reliable electric power and clean water. Smaller yet vital projects are also being delivered to provide quality healthcare, transportation, and education facilities for communities.

Before assuming command of GRN, Jenkins served as Deputy Commander, Mississippi Valley Division and Secretary, Mississippi River Commission.

Colonel Jenkins was commissioned in the Corps of Engineers upon graduation from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1980 and has served in a variety of assignments in the United States and Europe. His initial tour of duty was with the 23d Engineer Battalion, 3d Armored Division, in Hanau, Germany, from 1980-1983. He then served with the 31st Engineer Battalion in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, from 1984-1986, followed by a tour as an intern in the Civil Engineering Branch of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1986-1987. After completing graduate school at Cornell University, Col. Jenkins served as an Assistant Professor of Civil Engineering at the U.S. Military Academy from 1990-1993. Upon graduation from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, he served as the S-3 of the 4th Engineer Battalion, Fort Carson, Colorado, from 1994-1995, and as Commander of the 299th Engineer Battal-

ion, Fort Carson, Colorado, during its inactivation in 1995. He then served as the Director of Operations of the U.S. Army Space Command at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, from 1996-1997.

From 1997 to 1999, Col. Jenkins commanded the 9th Engineer Battalion, 1st Infantry Division, Schweinfurt, Germany. In June 1999, the battalion supported the 2d Brigade Combat Team during the initial deployment into Kosovo with Task Force Falcon and KFOR as part of Operation Joint Guardian. After changing command in Kosovo, he assumed duties as the Chief, Plans and Projects Management Section, Engineering and Security Investment Branch, Allied Forces North Europe, in Brunsum, the Netherlands, from 1999-2001. During his tour with NATO, he returned to Kosovo, where he served as the Chief of Infrastructure for KFOR in Pristina.

His military education includes the Engineer Officer Basic and Advanced Courses at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, the Combined Arms Services Staff School and the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and the Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island. Colonel Jenkins earned a Masters of Engineering (Civil) degree from Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, in 1990 and a Masters of Arts degree in National Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, in 2002. He is a registered professional engineer in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The GRN area of responsibility includes the seven northern provinces of Iraq: Dahok, Diyala, Erbil, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salah ad Din and Sulaymaniyah. Reconstruction efforts are managed out of four area offices at LSA Anaconda, Kirkuk, Mosul and Tikrit, as well as thirteen resident offices. The District's area of responsibility encompasses three main subordinate commands (MSCs): Task Force Freedom in Dahok and Ninewa, the Republic of Korea in Erbil and Task Force Liberty in Diyala, Kirkuk, Salah ad Din and Sulaymaniyah. The District has assigned liaison officers to each command.

The Corps and its multinational partners have reconstruction sectors aligned with the Iraqi ministries. Projects include border forts and border entry points, military bases, police and fire stations, police training academies, schools and health clinics, new roads, and airport renovations. Improvements are also being made to the country's oil infrastructure, its power plants and its sewer and water distribution systems.

Mike McAleer

Adventures in Iraq:

Engineer helps rebuild a nation while helping its children

When Richalie Griffith volunteered to help the Corps of Engineers rebuild Iraq, she knew her work there could positively change the lives of the Iraqi people. But when she arrived at the Anaconda Base on Feb. 2, she didn't know that she would be directly touching the lives of the children.

Originally identified to work as a construction representative, Griffith, a DA Intern at the New England District, quickly assumed the duties of a project engineer doing various QA, review and inspection work. That was when she met Charlie Comer and learned of his personal crusade to put a smile on the face of the Iraqi kids visiting the base's hospital (ESSAYONS FORWARD Vol. 2, No. 1). Comer had been passing out treats and gifts to the children since November 2002, and didn't want the good work he started to end. Griffith didn't have to be asked twice. "I took it over because I went out to the gate and saw the kids," she said. "Most don't have shoes. A lot of them are injured, some badly. To think that they are in pain or are cold and don't really have much at home is something I could not see. I have seen little children with gunshot wounds. If I can give them something as small as a toy and see them so happy, it makes the whole scene so much better."

Griffith said that the children that receive the presents are from different parts of Iraq. Some arrive at Anaconda to have injuries treated while others are visiting relatives that are patients, such as Iraqi police and National Guardsmen who have been injured. "Each day there is a different number," she said. "I can't even count how many come through here."

There is one child, however, that Griffith won't ever forget. "I went up to a little girl to give her some small toys and she turned to look at me," she explained. "I saw that part of her face was gone. She had been shot in the face when she was younger. It was horrible. She looked about 3 or 4 years old. I have never seen a child so happy to receive a gift in my life. She was so happy to get a doll."

Aiding Griffith with her charity work is Capt. Chris Ackerman, a Health Facility Planning Officer who is overseeing the construction and design of the hospitals and warehouses at Anaconda and surrounding areas. "His family and friends send stuff all the time," said Griffith.

Griffith also turned to her New England District co-workers and requested that they send items to her so that she could pass them on to the children. And as they have always done when asked for help, District employees responded to her request.

Beverly Lawrence rallied the aid of her two daughters' Brownie and Girl Scout troops, which sent eight boxes with over 140 pounds of toys, school supplies, and candy to the kids as a service project.

"As soon as I read Richalie's request for toys and school supplies, I knew I wanted to help," she said. "I remembered at the Girl Scout meeting I had in late January with Marissa's Brownie troop (which I am the main Leader), when we were discussing items we needed to do this year to prepare the Brownies to Bridge to Junior Girl Scouts, one of the 3rd graders said 'so when are we going to help people?' Although we have done a couple of projects this year to help people, they all agreed they wanted to do more."

Both of Lawrence's daughters were excited to help out other kids. "It felt good to help the kids, and to give toys to kids who didn't have much," said Marissa Lawrence of Brownie Troop 3711, Reading, Mass. "I enjoyed trying to fit everything in the box."

"It made me feel good," said Meredith Lawrence of Girl Scout Troop 3297 also in Reading. "In a way I feel like I just packed up boxes and carried them to the post office, but I know I helped the kids."

Troops 3295 and 1306 also of Reading heard what the Lawrence girls were doing and pitched in to help pack the boxes.

The New England District's Work Environment (WE) Committee also stepped in and offered to reimburse postage to anyone who would send a package to Griffith. The committee donated over \$100 in the effort. "We were very happy to help out with Richalie's humanitarian efforts in Iraq," said Jerry Stalder, WE Committee Chair.

Griffith is not the only New England District employee in Iraq who finds satisfaction in aiding the country's smallest citizens.

Bob Hanacek, who is currently serving as a resident engineer in Tallil, has received about 20 boxes (400 to 500 pounds) of school supplies such as calculators, pencils, erasers, chalk and toys and soccer balls for the local children. His son Mark's Boy Scout Troop 273 from Dudley, Mass., sent the goods, which are put in plastic bags and given to students whenever a new school is opened.

Griffith is expected to return to New England District at the end of May. But she has found her work so fulfilling, both as a project engineer and gift giver, she wants to return as soon as she possibly can. "I plan on returning June 26," she said. "That's June 26, 2005."

Ann Marie R. Harvie, New England District



Richaline Griffith and some of the Iraqi children whom she has helped. (Photos provided)

1000th reconstruction project completed

The public spotlight recently shone on an unassuming, eight-classroom school in the town of Zakho, Iraq, and for good reason. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region Division, responsible for oversight of reconstruction in Iraq, announced it had identified Betas School as its 1,000th completed reconstruction project.

The Betas School, located amid rolling hills on the outskirts of the town of Zahko, in the northern-most province of Dahuk, is home to headmaster Ibraheem Nuri, 60 students, and seven classroom teachers.

When asked for his reaction to the school's renovations, Headmaster Nuri was visibly pleased and proud.

"I have been the headmaster at Betas School for many years," he said, "but I never imagined it could be such a wonderful school. I am very happy for the teachers and students."

Nuri and his students took part in the school's ribbon cutting ceremony. The children presented flowers and refreshments to all invited guests, including local government and tribal representatives.

Colonel Kurt Ubellohde, District Engineer, Gulf Region Northern District, and numerous Corps staff members, as well as members from Washington Group International, the company that performed the renovations, also attended the ceremony and local Kurdish television and U.S. military media chronicled the event.

Renovations to the school included the replacement of water tanks, water piping, and sewer pipes; installation of toilets, lavatories, and sinks; the laying of a concrete floor and terrazzo tiles; installation of ceiling fans, interior and exterior lights, and a school bell. Additionally, in the interest of both student and staff wellbeing, repairs were made to the school safety wall.

While GRD identified Betas School as the 1,000th project, the pristine schoolhouse also serves as a symbol of the 840 planned school projects throughout the country. To date, 171 of these projects are ongoing and 580 school projects are completed.

Spending on reconstruction projects in Iraq has reached over \$5.5B. Thus far, of the 3,200 total GRD planned projects country-wide, 2,389 have started, 1,215 are ongoing, and 1,174 have been completed in the sectors of Buildings, Health, and Education; Oil, Security and Justice, Electricity, Transportation/Communications, and Public Works and Water.

Denise Calabria

Left:: Betas School students file through the gates of their newly-renovated school to take part in the ribbon-cutting ceremony. **Below:** Col. Kurt Ubellohde, District Engineer, Gulf Region Northern District, and local dignitaries cut the ceremonial ribbon at Betas School, the 1,000th GRD completed project. *(Photos by Harry Weddington)*



No shortcuts for safety in war zone



McNamara briefs workers on safety at Camp Victory.

(Photo by Alicia Embrey)

The safety and welfare of the USACE employee and contractor workforce is essential. For decades Iraqi professional and laborers have worked without necessary tools - so safety measures - are the last thing on their minds. "They are all reasonably healthy young men, and when they are 40 and 50 years old I want them to still be reasonably healthy," said Edward McNamara GRC-USACE safety officer.

Experience from three overseas deployments - once to Hungary and twice to Iraq, has taught him not to deploy with preconceived ideas. "I learned early on to hold things lightly when deploying. I didn't come with set plans and my personality is inclined to initially watch and listen, then formulate plans and ideas," McNamara said.

During his first deployment to Iraq McNamara traveled extensively throughout Iraq checking construction sites from Basrah to Mosul. "Although my office was in the International Zone, I spent a lot of time at the Basrah, Hilla, and Mosul offices and their respective construction sites," McNamara said. "The enemy wasn't as well organized then, and we pretty much hit the 'open range'. Of course, around Nov '03, when the resistance organized and violence escalated, that changed."

While traveling the country McNamara had the opportunity to meet and see what living in austere conditions was doing to the Iraqi people. "We'd meet men and woman who obviously had very, very hard lives. I'd see a woman who I would guess to be in her 50's and learn that she is barely 35. I'd meet a man who, if he told me he was in his late 50's I'd believe him, but he's really in his early 40's. Lifestyle stresses - cultural, economic, and political - all affect this," he explained.

McNamara believes we should teach the best of our values - human life. "Americans are here - not the Russians, Chinese, Iranians, North Koreans, etc. The Americans are here, and we should export the best of our values. One of our values is placing a high value on life. So this includes training them to expect a workplace that, as much as possible, is a safe and healthful environment. All risk can't be eliminated, even in the U.S., but we control it as much as possible," he said. "I do want this country to succeed. That's one reason I'm here. I'm a 'safety guy'. I'm doing my part in my AOR to facilitate that success."

But he is not alone in his quest for safe construction sites. He credits a successful construction safety environment to a team effort. "I don't work alone. I followed another USACE safety manager, Dan Mitchell, and I work closely with the GRD

Safety Manager, Jeff Pfannes. "We are establishing a basic training safety course. This will be directed to both our Quality Assurance personnel and Iraqi contractors/supervisors/safety representatives. This is only a short course of 3 - 5 hours. A very basic course; however, with it, we want to lay a foundation of SOH philosophy, risk management principles/tools, and some basic SOH standards to emphasize on our sites," he said.

In an effort to team up, USACE contractor Washington Group International supplied McNamara with necessary Arabic safety training aids. "As

we 'team up', the better it will be for all of us. We'll all be consistent with our practices and expectations, and that is also good for the Iraqis," he said.

"Doing short safety meetings onsite with the Iraqis is just an expedient training method. They have received so little safety and health training, that I have much opportunity. These little safety talks are not effective in themselves. There must be follow-up, and we've got to get the Iraqi contractors/employers to see it as a value. The 'talks' are one thing, but 'safety management' is another."

McNamara said construction sites over the past two years have placed emphasis on very basic work practices: hardhats, shoes (as opposed to sandals or bare feet), safety glasses, and gloves. "Those safety battles are mostly won, however the transition was not easy for our guys or the Iraqis. There was much resistance and it's still not 100%," McNamara explained.

"Now it's time to 'raise the bar' again," McNamara said. "Fall protection is a big issue, e.g., scaffolding, the lack of guardrails and housekeeping on worksites is disastrous. These are big cultural challenges."

Although he's still forming an opinion, McNamara is optimistic the Iraqi people will change - en sha allah. "The Iraqis are human, and humans generally don't like change. Regarding workplace safety & health, we have forced them to do things they don't want to do. We will probably force them to change more (regarding workplace safety and health).

One influence against change is a central tenet of Islam. Moslems are very deterministic or fatalistic: if it's meant to be, it will be. A common expression is "en sha allah" - "if Allah wills". The logical social and cultural extension includes if Allah wills you'll be rich, you'll be poor, you'll be healthy, you'll be safe at work - en sha allah!

Of course, my attitude is that Allah wills workers to be safe. The proof is that the Americans are here, so apparently en sha allah," he said.

McNamara points out that during his first tour in 2003, the Iraqis wanted to talk about how cruel Saddam was and how much they suffered. "Now in 2005 I don't hear that. The Iraqis are talking about their future: what Iraq will look like in 3, 5, and 10 years. I think that's significant and an indicator of a growing 'hope'. The Iraqis could

In Dahuk Province, Reconstruction is Academic

The U.S. Military Academy's list of famous alumni includes such stellar names as Generals Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant, George Patton, Omar Bradley, Dwight Eisenhower, and Norman Schwarzkopf, Jr., to name a few. It is safe to say that West Point has the capability to mold a promising young cadet into an outstanding military leader.

Iraq is a prime example of a country in dire need of outstanding military leaders. Therefore, the reconstruction of a major Iraqi military academy is a 'boot step' in the right direction for the reform of this country.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region North District (GRN), has oversight for the more than \$5 Million contract to renovate the Zahko Military Academy, in Dahuk Province, northern Iraq. Renovations to the academy include a new cadet barracks building and headquarters building, a wastewater treatment plant and sanitary sewer system, a new water supply and distribution system for a population of 5,000 occupants, as well as major renovations to the existing dining facility.

Additions, including a new parade field, a new 400-meter track with interior soccer field, an obstacle course featuring at least 15 obstacles, a volleyball/basketball court, and renovated swimming pool, will meet the cadets' physical training and recreation needs. Finally, ever mindful of force protection, the Iraqi cadets will enjoy all of these im-

provements from within the shelter of a newly constructed, perimeter security wall.

Iraqi Major General Shihab Ahmed Duhoky, a career officer, accepted his assignment to Zahko Military Academy in 1997. As the academy's senior leader, he is most mindful of what the renovations will mean to his current and future cadets.

"The Ministry of Defense came and looked at the academy and said it is the best place [in Iraq] to do the training. Our cadets will come from all over – from Baghdad, Mosul, and Tikrit," said Duhoky.

"The first reason is for security," he said. "The security here is very good and things are looking much better. I believe the academy will be number one in Iraq."

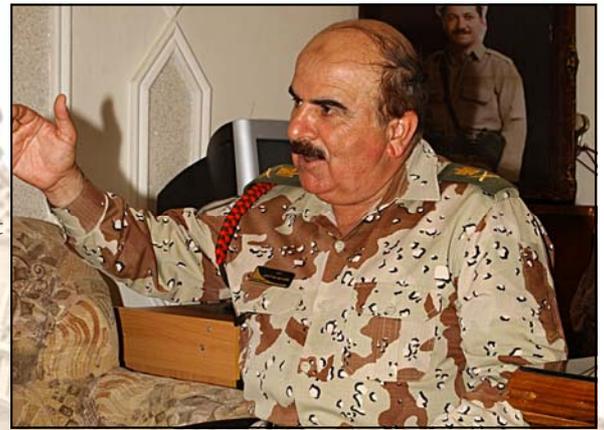
Set amid the tranquil, rolling hills of Iraq's northern-most district, Zahko Military Academy has the potential to inspire many beautiful photographs once renovations are complete. Even amidst the rebuilding, two dedicated groundskeepers lovingly maintain Major General Duhoky's prized flower gardens and the scent of roses fills the air.

The academy's ideal locale, however, did not guarantee a trouble-free renovation.

According to Muhammed Hassan Mustafa Al-Barwary, GRN Project Engineer, border closures and bad weather had an impact on the reconstruction project.

"We had 35 days of rain and freezing temperatures. Naturally, that affected concrete pouring. Additionally, border closures delayed the shipment of necessary building supplies," said Al-Barwary.

Mr. Joshua Adekanbi, GRN project engineer and project manager for the military academy project, focused his attention more on the calendar than the thermometer.



Iraqi Maj. Gen. Shihab Ahmed Duhoky, Zahko Military Academy commander, discusses the school's renovations and elaborates on the cadets' daily training schedules.

"The biggest challenge is doing so much at the same time. We have six months to do it all," said Adekanbi.

The time taken to rebuild the academy is time well spent. After all, the building and renovations will provide not only campus structures, but also the very foundation for the future of Iraq's military leadership, as well.

In the total Iraq reconstruction program, there are two military academy projects, both of which currently are ongoing. The Security and Justice Sector of the reconstruction program also includes police station and training facility projects, five courthouses, six military bases, fire facilities, border posts, points of entry, and two prisons.

Despite great personal risk, Iraqi citizens are gradually taking the security of their country into their own hands, by signing up for the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Security Forces. More than 165,000 of these courageous citizens have stepped forward and been trained and equipped as Iraqi police, soldiers, sailors, and airmen.

Denise Calabria



Left: Iraqi workers take part in work at the academy's various construction sites. Watermark: The entrance to Zahko Military Academy. (Photos by Harry Weddington)



Division welcomes Iraqi Interns

GRD Command Sergeant Major Jorge Gutierrez addresses the eight Iraqi engineers taking part in the GRD Intern Program. The CSM officiated at the interns' graduation ceremony, which marked the end of their formal classroom training. *(Photo by Harry Weddington)*

As part of their preparation, the interns attend classes such as “What is Construction Quality Management,” “Contractor and Government Responsibilities,” “Theory of Project Planning,” and “Project Construction,” to name a few.

The interns report to a Corps field office immediately following their classroom training. There, they team up with their Corps sponsor and begin individual, on-the-job training by shadowing and assisting Corps engineers and project managers. Once they complete the internship program, the Iraqi engineers return to their respective MMPW positions.

The initial group of interns consisted of one female and seven male engineers. Although they did not wish to reveal their names due to security concerns, they were anxious to give their opinions of the program.

“It means a lot to us. We are not used to taking courses such as this,” said one intern.

“It’s useful to us. Some information was new to us as well as some procedures.”

Another intern responded, “Although our engineering methods are basically the same, the [Corps] Quality Management is much higher than ours.”

According to Dalton, the GRD expects both the U.S. and Iraq to benefit from the six-month intern program well into the future.

“As we award more contracts to Iraqi firms, the information sharing facilitated by the MMPW Intern Program will greatly assist GRD in better administration of these contracts. And participants in the program will experience valuable on-the-job training by spending time at our district offices,” said Dalton.

The interns also speculated on what their participation in this program will mean to them in the future.

When asked what changes they hoped to institute in their country over the next ten years after graduating from the GRD internship program, one intern responded, “I want to see potable water accessible to all Iraqis – whether in cities or villages. I want all my people to have the basics.”

Due to the collaborative effort between the GRD and MMPW, these interns may be able to institute those improvements firsthand.

Denise Calabria

We have all heard the saying, “... teach a man to fish and he’ll feed himself forever.”

Based upon its current reconstruction mission in Iraq, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region Division, has updated that axiom to read, “... and if you train and enable an Iraqi engineer to intern with your experienced staff, he or she can become a prominent contributor to Iraq’s reconstruction.”

The Corps works in cooperation with the Iraqi Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works (MMPW) to build capacity to design, supervise, and maintain the country of Iraq’s infrastructure over the long term. In order to make this goal a reality, the GRD has entered into an agreement wherein promising MMPW engineers from across the country attend a six-day training course in Baghdad to familiarize themselves with Corps standard construction practices. During that initial period, in addition to formal classroom instruction, the interns also garner hands-on experience at construction sites in the International Zone.

“The Intern Program is an important step in helping Iraq and the U.S. governments better understand how we both manage construction and to identify the best business practices of each,” said James Dalton, GRD Director of Business Management.

The program trainees attend classes designed to prepare them for the unique reconstruction program currently underway in Iraq – a program focused on rebuilding war-related damage, shoring up an infrastructure ignored for over three decades by the previous regime, and ongoing attacks by a determined insurgency. Applicants require backgrounds in the disciplines of Electrical, Civil, Mechanical, Fire Protection, and Structural Engineering, as well as Architecture in order to qualify for internships with the program.

Mitch Frazier (right) sits with Warda (center), the Iraqi contractor whom he helped save, her mother (back) and Jim Cullum, lawyer for Little Rock District, who also assisted in the life saving efforts.

(Photo provided)



Corps writer's action louder than his words

A Kansas City District employee received the Federal Executive Board Distinguished Valor Award in a special ceremony, May 5, 2005, in Kansas City, Mo., for showing extraordinary courage, selflessness and bravery in a war zone, which resulted in saving a contractor's life during his tour in Iraq last October.

Mitch Frazier, chief of Public Affairs for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Kansas City District, volunteered to serve four months in Iraq in 2004 as part of the Corps' Gulf Region Division.

"At approximately 1400 hours on October 9, 2004, I was sitting at my desk when I heard an explosion," Frazier said. "I grabbed my combat lifesaver bag along with other gear, and headed outside to see if I could do anything to help."

The Contracting Office Compound in the Green Zone, located in Baghdad, had been struck by an insurgent's mortar attack. While many people were running away, Frazier ran 400 meters into the impact area to render aid. Upon arrival, he discovered four civilian contract personnel and one U.S. military personnel who were injured in the attack.

"I checked the five casualties, and four of them didn't have a pulse," Frazier said. "When I got to the fifth casualty, I was able to feel her pulse, so I immediately began to administer first aid."

Although it had been two years since Frazier had completed the Army's combat lifesaver course, he was able to recall the first aid training and went to work applying bandages to the casualty's six shrapnel wounds located on her back.

"She had fluid building up in her lungs, and she kept coming in and out of shock," Frazier said. "So I made sure she had a proper airway and kept talking to her and asking her questions to keep her from going into shock."

Frazier and Jim Cullum, a lawyer from Little Rock District, were able to prep the casualty onto a stretcher and prepare her for immediate evacuation. Once the ambulance arrived, Frazier gave the medical personnel a quick assessment of the victim's condition.

"Mr. Frazier is an outstanding example of the many Corps employees serving in theater as a part of our global war on terrorism," said Col. Michael Rossi, Kansas City District commander.

Diana McCoy, Kansas City District

Memorial Day – A solemn remembrance

Memorial Day is a unique holiday ... an important national day of patriotic observance ... the most solemn day we set aside for recognition. This is a day of mixed emotions ... a day for reflection in honor of all the Soldiers, sailors, Marines, airmen, and Coast Guardsmen who made the ultimate sacrifice throughout our history. The number is staggering – more than one million men and women (either full-time professional or reserve component warriors) who have fallen in battle since the birth of our great Nation.

It is truly impossible to grasp what that loss means, but it should be obvious that this sacrifice deserves much more appreciation than we could possibly demonstrate on one given day of the year. Memorial Day is a time of personal sorrow for those who have lost loved ones in uniform. It is also a day for the country to mourn, to show its collective national pride, and to illustrate its appreciation for an almost unbearable sacrifice. We honor our brave warriors by refusing to forget them. We honor them by not allowing ourselves to take for granted what they did or why they did it.

During reflection, we may recall wars fought on our own soil or those that raged in foreign lands. It is a testament to our country's strength that the majority of our brave service members fell on foreign soil ... stopping aggression before it ever reached our shores. Those who trod their last steps on strange terrain – as our modern veterans still do today – must have died an even more difficult death than those who fell near their own homes since they were so far from their loved ones.

Though the enemy may change and the venue of battle may vary between land, sea, and sky, the grim experiences of war remain constant and endured by young adults who faced their duty with little complaint. Those who died tried their best to hide their fears from those at home and their fellow warriors. They went into battle scared ... but they *STILL* went, and in a flash of violence and horror, they were gone forever.

Each of those individuals was a loved one cherished by family and friends. Each was a tragic loss to his or her community. Each made the ultimate sacrifice for their nation.

Let us pause to pay tribute to those who served in the past, and those who are POWs or MIAs, as well as to recognize today's service men and women. As you read these words, their line of selfless service stretches around the globe as the armed forces of the United States stand guard in a world that continues to pose significant threats to our country and our allies. Their continued vigilance is itself, an important way of honoring those whom we remember on Memorial Day. May today's defenders of the peace learn from history – from past mistakes as well as past victories – so they need not lose the precious ground bought with the blood of those who marched before them.

During the past year, America deployed its military members to more than 100 countries. Over 100,000 American service men and women followed their orders to foreign lands to preserve and defend the freedoms and liberties with which we are blessed. Because of their efforts and sacrifices, our country is fully prepared to meet the challenges of today.

Let us never forget the kindness, dedication, and sacrifices of our military members. We can start to pay our debt of gratitude to those who gave their lives by vowing never to forget their sacrifices, what they did, why they died, and the tenacity and determination with which they fought.

James Dalton, Director, Business Management Office

Hail and Farewell

Hailing:

We're catching up on a lot of Hails from the past month, many of those below have been in theater for some time.

Masako Agulto, GRD, Transatlantic Programs Center
 Pam Avery, GRD, Arlington, Va.
 Sgt. 1st Class Tanwa Ayers, GRN, Ft. Carson, Co.
 John Baker, GRD, US Naval Facility, San Diego, Ca.
 Joe Birindelli, GRN, Retiree from Mobile, Ala.
 Maj. Patrick Briley, GRN, HQ USACE
 Eleanore Bostwick, GRD, Baltimore District
 Margaret Brant, GRN, Savannah District
 Maj. Patrick Briley, GRN
 Laura Callaway, GRD, Mississippi Valley Division
 Stephen Chapman, GRN, Tulsa District
 Jimmy Crompton, GRN, Ft. Hood, Tex.
 Francisco Garcia, GRN, Galveston District
 Thomas Gorman, GRN, Omaha District
 Lonnie Hansen, GRN, new hire
 Joe Horning, GRD, Lake & Rivers Division
 Lt. Col. Harvey Jones, GRN, Wilmington District
 John Lonnquest, GRD, HQ USACE
 Mike McAleer, GRN PAO, Portland District
 Joe McClammy, GRD Photographer, new hire

Lee McCormick, GRN, Omaha District
 Dianne McCoy, GRN, Kansas City District
 Lt. Col. John McElree, GRD, HQ USACE
 Capt. Ali Palmer, GRD, Ft. Benning, Ga.
 Ron Plante, GRD, Rock Island District
 Lt. Col. Bobby Rakes, GRN, Japan District
 Eric Reinert, GRD, HQ USACE
 Landra Robinson, GRD, General Services Administration
 Richard Ryan, GRN, Jacksonville District
 Sissy Scott, Community planner GRN, Mobile District
 Jim Simmons, GRD, Memphis District
 Adesanya Soriyan, GRD, Algeria
 Clarice Sundeen, GRN, Memphis District
 John Sundeen, GRN, Memphis District
 Michelle Thrift, GRD, Transatlantic Programs Center
 David Varner, GRN, Rock Island District
 Gary Wageman, GRN, Portland District
 Derek Walker, GRN, New York District
 Judy Walters, Prog. Analyst GRN, Rock Island District
 Randy Walters, GRN, Rock Island District
 Gary York, GRN JOB, Omaha District



Jeffrey Yost
 Const. Srvs. GRC
 Returning to:
 Huntington District



William Long
 Construct. Rep. GRC
 Returning to:
 Philadelphia District



Ted Nakamoto
 Constr. Mgr. GRC
 Returning to:
 Los Angeles District



MAJ Stew Stanton
 LNO, MND CS GRS
 Returning to:
 Ft. Lewis, WA



Rich Riley
 Const. Rep. GRS
 Returning to:
 New England District



LTC Greg Raimondo
 Dep. Cmdr AE HRS
 Returning to:
 St. Louis District



MSG Timothy Miller
 G3 NCOIC (Security)
 Returning to:
 HQ USACE



Eileen Lodge
 Cont. Officer GRS
 Returning to:
 TAC



David Kratz
 Resident Engineer GRS
 Returning to:
 New England District



William Huxford
 Asst. Area Engr. GRS
 Returning to:
 Savannah District



Roy Boyd
 Contract Spec. GRS
 Returning to:
 Kansas City District



David Black
 PBO GRS
 Returning to:
 Pittsburgh District



Robert (Bob) Bauer
 Const. Services GRS
 Returning to:
 Baltimore District



LTC William Allen
 Dep. Cmdr/AE GRS
 Returning to:
 Japan Engineering Dist.



Louis Uptmor
 Res. Engr. GRC
 Returning to:
 Los Angeles District



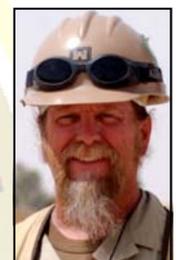
John Stiffey
 Const. Rep. GRC
 Returning to:
 Rock Island District



Cecil Dorrell
 Const. GRC
 Returning to:
 ERDC



Kathy Pehnke
 Admin Officer. GRC
 Returning to:
 Ft. Worth District



Richard Oneto
 Const. Rep. GRC
 Returning to:
 Sacramento District



Lisa Peterson
 Project Manager GRC
 Returning to:
 Kansas City District



Travis Lynch
 Proj. Engr. GRC
 Returning to:
 USA Maneuver Spt. Ctr.



Eric Lockington
 LOGCAP QAP, GRC
 Returning to:
 St. Paul District



Leonard Lettner
 Const. Rep. GRC
 Returning to:
 St. Paul District



Robert Giles
 Area Engineer GRC
 Returning to:
 Omaha District



Christopher Lennon
 LOGCAP QAP GRC
 Returning to:
 St. Paul District



Denise Mellinger
 Contract. Spec. GRC
 Returning to:
 Baltimore District



Tom Waters
 PCO LNO, GRD
 Returning to:
 North Atlantic Division



Larry Drape
 EO, GRD
 Returning to:
 Far East District



Maj. Bryan Pratt
 RIE/PM GRD
 Returning to:
 Charleston District



Joyce Owen
 GI GRD
 Returning to:
 TAC



Eugenia Nussbaum
 Admin Asst. GRC
 Returning to:
 Vicksburg District



Thomas Dow
 Proj. Eng. GRC
 Returning to:
 Kansas City District



David Kitzman
 QA GRC
 Returning to:
 St. Paul District



Christian Hawkinson
 Office Engineer GRC
 Returning to:
 Rock Island District



Damon Young
 Project Eng. GRC
 Returning to:
 Mobile District