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Alaskan Answers Call to Serve, Donate

By Grant Sattler
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On a blistering Baghdad summer day, with the troop surge in full force, the need for blood products at the 28th Combat Support Hospital at Iraq's Ibn Sina Hospital can come at any time.

One of Alaska's own, former commander of the 297th Support Battalion, Alaska Army National Guard, in Wasilla, Alaska, Col. Doug Gorgoni, regularly answers the call to donate blood platelets.

"Whenever the call for donations comes - our Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, Airmen and Civilians answer the call and roll up their sleeves to donate. It is the least I can do," he said.

Gorgoni is assigned as the Chief Financial Officer for the Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in Iraq where he oversees finance and contracting for reconstruction exceeding \$30 billion.

"It's exciting being part of this historic chapter in the story of Iraq. Though very challenging and at times dangerous, performing reconstruction with the Corps of Engineers directly helps the country by providing clean water, electricity, medical facilities, and much more to the people of Iraq," he said.

When not deployed, Gorgoni lives in Anchorage and is assigned to the 9th Re-



Staff Sgt. George Anderson, left, 28th Combat Support Hospital laboratory technician, prepares to draw and separate blood platelets for donation from Col. Doug Gorgoni, Alaska Army National Guard and member of the Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, during a visit to the Ibn Sina hospital Aug. 13. [USACE photo by Grant Sattler]

gional Readiness Command, U.S. Army Reserve, headquartered in Honolulu, Hawaii. He volunteered to deploy for one year, and is scheduled to return home in December.

"One interesting side note is that our blood donations go to the next patient, whether U.S. or Coalition forces, Iraqi forces or civilians - even the wounded insurgents. It's one fact that makes me proud to be an American and to be here," Gorgoni said.

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