



For Immediate Release  
September 28, 2007  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

## ***Basrah Children's Hospital project provides hundreds of jobs***

By John Connor  
Gulf Region South District

**BASRAH**, Iraq – The construction site of the Basrah Children's Hospital is a hot-bed of activity these days, with an average of 750 workers on the job each day, according to Navy Lt. Cmdr. Chad Lorenzana.

And this number likely will jump to 1,000 or more workers a day as the hospital project enters new phases, said Lorenzana, the resident engineer overseeing the project for the Basrah Office of the Gulf Region South district of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The lieutenant commander provided these figures on a day when he guided a group of visitors around the high-profile project, whose list of patrons is headed by First Lady Laura Bush. Among the visitors were Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Dorko, who will assume command of USACE's Gulf Region Division on Oct. 10; Col. Dale Adams, the GRD deputy commanding officer; and Col. Steve Hill, the GRS commander.

After the visitors walked through the site and surveyed the progress being made, the general said that "it's a magnificent project and I can't wait to come back and see it when it's finished." Construction is now 66 percent complete, Lorenzana said.

The 94-bed hospital, which will focus on oncology, is targeted to open in January 2009. Once badly foundering, the project has been moving ahead steadily since USACE assumed responsibility for its management and a new contractor was



Iraqi roofer at work at Basrah Children's hospital project site. [USACE Photo by John Connor]

brought in.

In addition to eventually helping children in an area with an abnormally high incidence of cancer among youngsters, the project is providing "a lot of jobs" for Iraqis and is putting money into the local economy, said the GRS commander. The overall cost of the project is estimated at \$163 million.

Dorko cast a professional engineer's eye on the construction work and pronounced it "decent." He said hospital construction is very hard to begin with, and added that "I can't imagine how much harder it is" in place that has had to cope with oppression, war and violence.

The general asked how the hospital's ongoing operations will be funded once it's up and running. Lorenzana said that will

be the responsibility of the Iraqi Ministry of Health.

The Basrah Children's Hospital is only one of a number of job sites the general is visiting before taking command of GRD. He said pictures are great but that there is nothing like walking a job site to get a real feel for what is going on and what the issues are.

Messages delivered by Brig. Gen. Dorko as he visited different USACE offices and job sites throughout Iraq included these: Corps of Engineers people are doing a great job; he's fortunate to follow such a strong leader and "great guy" as Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh, the current GRD commander, and to have an opportunity to familiarize himself with the tasks and challenges before assuming command; and "we're here to enable you to do better."

Among the projects visited was a new "RoRo," standing for Roll On, Roll Off Berth, at the port of Umm Qasr. Hill said it basically doubles the port's capacity.

The \$2.7 million RoRo facility constitutes "a gateway," said Brig. Gen. Dorko, who noted that it was planned years earlier and thus represents a link between Iraq's past and its present and its future.

Dorko also visited the sprawling Camp Bucca, where 20,500 detainees are housed. Some 130 projects are under way there, including big ticket internment facilities and many other things such as ice and water treatment plants. The visit there included a frank discussion initiated by Col. Hill as to what can be done to make the construction of certain internment facilities move more quickly. The answer, in part, was effective communication with construction firm management.

Upon departing Camp Bucca, Adams, the GRD deputy commanding officer, made a point voiced elsewhere by his colleagues, saying "there's absolutely no substitute" for visiting a job site and eyeballing what's going on.

Note: John Connor is a public affairs officer with the Gulf Region South district, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. For more information, contact Grant Sattler, public affairs officer at 540-665-1233 or email requests to [CEGRD.PAO@tac01.usace.army.mil](mailto:CEGRD.PAO@tac01.usace.army.mil). For more information on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq, visit [www.grd.usace.army.mil](http://www.grd.usace.army.mil).