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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Making progress one mile at a time

By Kevin Casey
Gulf Region Central District

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is overseeing a number of road improvement projects in Iraq including a one mile stretch on Victory Base Complex, Baghdad. And while that particular project may be inside the wire, it is having an impact in town.

Hayder Mohammad, a 26-year-old, is among those commuting from their Baghdad homes every day to help upgrade a gravel road into a paved main thoroughfare. "I like this job. It's steady work. They treat me well here and the money is good." He says the security situation in Baghdad is better than what it was six months ago. "Step by step, things are improving and I'm happy with that."

Construction Manager Zuhair Bandar, whose firm has 80 people working on a half-dozen infrastructure projects on Victory base, says he is proud to help. "We feel like we're part of the Soldiers of the Corps of Engineers. We are here at any time, 24 hours. Whenever we are needed, you will find us."

USACE Construction Representative Wayne Birgado says, "It's a win-win situation because the Iraqis are eager to learn. They're pretty good workers. We're trying

to show them the best way we can and they're willing to learn." The new 1.6-kilometer road consists of a 7.4-meter-wide asphalt surface 75-millimeters (three inches) thick, crowned in the middle for drainage. "Iraq's way is not too different from our way – we both believe in providing a product that will last a long time," he added.

When the new road is finished, Bandar's crew will move on to another project, making progress for Iraq one mile at a time.



Graders prepare the roadbed for asphaltting. Iraqis are upgrading roads throughout Iraq including this one on Victory Base Complex, Baghdad. (USACE photo)

Note: Kevin Casey is a Public Affairs Officer with the Gulf Region Central district, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. For more information, contact him at 540-678-4771 or email requests to 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.