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 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

USACE team checks water projects, makes donations

By John Connor
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From left, Chuck Comeau and Art Patterson of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers visit with Iraqi children after delivering school supplies and toys to school in Al Haboosh Village, Dhi Qar province, and inspecting compact water unit project in progress there. About 250 children attend the school. (USACE photo By Cmdr. Mike Lang)

TALLIL, Iraq – A team from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers paid a visit not long ago to the village of Al Haboosh in Dhi Qar province with several goals in mind.

For one thing, the team members wanted to check on the progress being made by the contractor building a new compact water unit for the village, a project funded with ESF (Economic Support

Fund) money by the Provincial Reconstruction Team for Dhi Qar province.

That project, which cost \$650,000 and will provide clean drinking water to an estimated 1,500 Iraqis, is proceeding satisfactorily, said Navy Cmdr. Mike Lang, officer in charge of the USACE Adder Area Office.

The project is expected to be finished by mid-April, 2008. It is one of eight com-

pact water unit projects being constructed in the province, one of the nine southern Iraqi provinces served by the Gulf Region South district of the Corps of Engineers.

The team members also wanted to meet with the local sheik, Sheik Haj Abdul Raznak Abed Al-Moshsen Rebeb, to discuss what might be done in the way of future projects. They inspected a nearby school at his request. The school was renovated by UN-Habitat with funds provided by the government of Japan. It accommodates 250 children, with five classes per day for five days a week. The school currently lacks electricity since the village transformer has been placed but not connected.

In addition, the team members wanted to check out the village's other needs, hand out school supplies donated by soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division, and give local children several boxes of toys and a soccer bag. "It was a joy giving out the toys and seeing the smiling faces on all the kids," Lang said.

Among the possibilities discussed for new projects, according to Lang, were power hookups to the school, power hookups to a new transformer, and gravel improvements to an existing road to improve travel between villages.

The team consisted of Art Patterson, PRT engineer for Dhi Qar; Mike Fellenz, project engineer for Dhi Qar; Chuck Comeau, resident engineer for Dhi Qar, and Lang.

Commenting on the overall trip, Lang said, "Part of our goal over here is to help build governance and make life better for these people. These projects, where you can see just how much you are impacting lives for the better, make being over here in arduous conditions worthwhile."

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