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## *Agencies join forces for Muthanna medical/ veterinarian event*

By BJ Weiner  
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**MUTHANNA, Iraq--** Personnel from the 2nd Brigade, 10th Iraqi Army, supported by the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 7th Sustainment Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division; the Australian Overwatch Battle Group (W) 4; the 835th Civil Affairs Team Alpha, 43rd Medical Detachment; Multi-National Forces-Iraq, J9; the Muthanna Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT); and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, sponsored a medical event recently in Muthanna province attended by more than 800 people and herds of livestock.

The Medical and Veterinarian Civil Action Program (MEDCAP/VETCAP) was intended to provide primary health care services to a rural, underserved community in Muthanna province, according to Maj. Virginia McCabe, 1/ 82nd public affairs officer. Iraqi and Coalition Forces provided primary medical treatment and humanitarian assistance to more than 800 residents from the areas around al Toum village. Coalition Forces distributed 200 wheelchairs and 100 pairs of crutches to needy Iraqis. Iraqi and U.S. veterinarians provided vaccinations and treatment for approximately 400 sheep and 15 cows for farmers in the neighboring communities.

Senior medical personnel in attendance included U.S. Embassy Health Attaché Dr. Bruno Himmler and 7th Sustainment Brigade Cardiologist Col. Thomas Dove. Other senior personnel in attendance included Maj. Gen. Robeson, MNF-I Strategic Plans and Policy Officer, and Brig. Gen.



Navy Cmdr. Stephen Seaman, Adder area engineer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region South district, speaks with an Iraqi doctor at the MECAP/ VETCAP event in the Muthanna province. (USACE photo by BJ Weiner)

Salam, commander, 10th IA.

People from the most rural areas of Muthanna were invited to bring their families for medical treatment and supplies, and to have their livestock vaccinated, said Navy Cmdr. Stephen Seaman, Adder Area engineer for USACE. The State Department provided the medications which were distributed, he noted.

"We also saw wheel chairs being distributed to the folks who needed them," he said. "This was a Godsend for some of these kids who have serious physical challenges and some children who have developmental disabilities." Local tribal representatives brought flocks of sheep and



Roughly 800 people attended the MEDCAP/VETCAP event in a rural Muthanna village. The event, sponsored by the 10th Iraqi Army, brought medical and veterinary assistance. (USACE photo by BJ Weiner)

goats to be vaccinated by veterinarian technicians from of the 1/ 82nd CBT, he added.

Salam, who presides over the rural areas of Muthanna, expressed his concern to Seaman about the dearth of projects being built by the Corps in the rural areas. As the Army's reconstruction branch, USACE has been heading reconstruction efforts in Iraq for five years.

"I explained to him that projects in rural areas – the need for them – should be brought to the attention of the PRT, or the Provincial Reconstruction Development Council," Seaman said. "We [USACE] do not select the locations for new construction."

The selection of project sites is up to the PRDC in each province, he explained. Local government representatives, through the PRDC, identify potential new projects and, in conjunction with the provincial government, determine what projects are needed and where they should be located. The list then gets prioritized and sent to the PRTs. These groups then



A sheep ram is vaccinated by a vet technician with the 1st Combat Brigade Team, 7th Sustainment Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division. (USACE photo by BJ Weiner)

put together packages for USACE officials to solicit and award, Seaman said.

"Once we know what the funding amounts will be, that determines on the priority list how far down we can go," he added. "Once the list is firmed up with funding we solicit and award and begin to place the projects."

As Adder area engineer, Seaman heads a team of eight engineers and construction representatives who serve the provinces of Muthanna and Dhi Qar. They administer projects involving water, electricity, security and justice, buildings, health and education as well as agriculture.

"Right now, in health care, we have nine ongoing projects in Dhi Qar and one in Muthanna," he said. "We are refurbishing one of two hospitals in the Nasiriyah area, and building eight PHCs. As far as Muthanna – we have three primary health care facilities (PHCs). Two of these are completed and one is in the process of being turned over to the government of Iraq, so we have been quite successful here."

Funding for most of the projects approved by the Provincial Council comes from Economic Support Fund out of the State Department. "Many of projects the Corps will do in the coming year are out of ESF," Seaman said. "We have 12 or so for Muthanna – one is in the solicitation process – and we should be getting the bids back on the 20th of February for the first project which is an underground feeder line – an electric project. We have five or six water compact units that are approved and above the line for funding. We anticipate they will go out for solicitation shortly, once the packages are approved by the project management office."



A physically challenged girl receives medical treatment from the staff doctors at the MEDCAP/ VETCAP event recently in the Muthanna province. (USACE photo by BJ Weiner)

The PHCs are located in villages with larger populations, he said. The PHCs in Dhi Qar are in Nasiriyah and eight other towns – all of them larger metropolitan areas. All fit into one of three standard designs and sizes: Types A, B and C.

"Types A and B are 2 stories facilities: about 1,200-1,300 square meters," said Seaman, "and Type C facilities are about 2,000 square meters. They include maternity wards, emergency rooms and dental clinics."

Seaman added that seeing the kind of cooperation going on at the MEDCAP/ VETCAP event was thrilling. "Personally," he said, "This is why I am here – to see this. America has been given much and I think we need to extend that to whoever we can. It was a great day."

**Note:** BJ Weiner is a public affairs specialist with the Gulf Region South district, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. For more information, call her at 540-542-1528 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).