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Iraqi Engineers in USACE Wassit Office Brief Brass

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Iraqi engineers at the Wassit Area Office brief visiting U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officers on the status of on-going and future projects. (USACE photo by Kevin Olsen)

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Dorko, commander of the Gulf Region Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other USACE leaders were briefed recently by senior Iraqi engineers with the USACE Wassit Resident Office.

Joining Dorko at the briefing at FOB Delta, site of the Wassit office, were Col. Steve Hill, commander of the Gulf Region

South district; Col. Jack Drolet, the incoming GRS commander who was on his pre-deployment site survey tour; and Maj. Clay Morgan, the Wassit Resident Engineer.

The briefing lasted more than two hours and was "the highlight" of a Wassit tour that found the officers inspecting several USACE projects, including a recently

opened primary healthcare center, said Morgan.

Hill, who has emphasized increasing the management responsibilities of Iraqi engineers employed by USACE, called the key role played by Iraqi engineers in the Wassit office "a model" for the wider USACE effort in Iraq.

The Wassit Resident Office has 15 Iraqi engineers in a tiered organization, with each reconstruction sector having a senior engineer who in turn has one or two quality assurance engineers, "young, professional and well-trained in their fields," explained Morgan.

"These engineers are the strength of the Wassit Resident Office and main reason for our successful project delivery," said Morgan.

Topics discussed at the briefing included project development, pre-award activities, construction execution, close coordination with the Wassit government officials, and thoughts about the future roles of engineers rebuilding Iraq, Morgan said.

Wassit is one of nine southern Iraq provinces where GRS does reconstruction work and the USACE delegation saw some USACE projects during their tour of the province.

"We crossed the Tigris River using our completed Sheikh Sa'ad Bridge and went to the operational Sheikh Sa'ad PHC (primary healthcare center)," said Morgan.

"The hallways and waiting room were crowded with men, women and children waiting for treatment," he said. "It was a very rewarding experience to see the Iraqi doctors and patients using the clinic that our team completed."

He said the facility treats 200 to 250 persons a day.

"We also traveled to the Bender Water Compact Unit Site to see the ongoing construction," Morgan said of a project in Al Bender, a small village south of Al Kut. "We were greeted and briefed by the site engineer on the progress and future milestones of the project."

This project, which entails the design and construction of a 50 cubic meter per hour compact water plant with an above-ground storage tank and a distribution system at a cost of more than \$600,000, is about 60 percent completed.

Note: John Connor is the former Public Affairs Officer with the Gulf Region South district, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. For more information, contact Grant Sattler, Gulf Region Division deputy public affairs officer at 540-665-1233 or email requests to CEGRD.PAO@usace.army.mil For more information on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq, visit www.grd.usace.army.mil.