

ESSAYONS *Forward*

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Gulf Region Division, Iraq - Volume 5, Issue 5

May 2008

**U.S. Air Force
engineers augment
Iraq reconstruction**

Page 8



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On the cover:



U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Jennifer Alecci visits one of her projects at the Iraq National Depot, Taji. For more on Air Force members of the Gulf Region Division, see page 8

USACE photo by Kendal Smith

Check It recognizes process improvements

Multi-National Force - Iraq Commanding General Gen. David Petraeus presents Melissa George, right, and Danny Huffman, below, with Department of Defense certificates in Baghdad on March 18, 2008.



The two Gulf Region Division Resource Management team members were recognized by the DoD Check It Campaign for process improvements that freed up \$831 million of Fiscal Year 2007 funding.

The funding was re-invested in critical items for Iraqi Security Forces. The action made possible by George and Huffman garnered the Multi-National Security Transition Command - Iraq the first round of the Check It Campaign - Most Improved Process Competition.



Courtesy photos

Commander's Commentary



Every project writing history

As we continue the rapid pace of the enormous mission to reconstruct Iraq, it is easy to become wrapped up in the day-to-day issues to be resolved and obstacles to surmount and lose site of how much we have achieved together.

Many outstanding feats have gone unheralded because more challenges demanded our attention, but each has contributed to the legacy of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq.

All projects require collaboration and teamwork to result in completion within schedule and budget targets. Some in Iraq stand out because of their complexity, others because of the security environment of the surrounding area. Some are notable for both reasons.

Take for example, the recently completed 400 kV substation at Al Amarah in Maysan province. One of many substations constructed or repaired with Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Funds, Al Amarah substation involved international coordination, long lead times for critical parts and is situated in what was a high-risk security area throughout construction.

It is the dedication and mission focus of our people that enables us to successfully complete projects like Al Amarah substation. Exemplary teamwork among the joint venture contractors, the Ministry of Electricity, the Iraq Transition Assistance Office, the Gulf Region Division and Gulf Region South district added this

project to the reconstruction success chronicle. The more than 785,000 people in the province have more reliable electricity today.

This story that is being repeated day after day as we continue to complete vital projects for the people of Iraq in support of their new democracy.

Every one of you is making a critical contribution, in an incredibly difficult environment, under the extraordinary demands placed on us by our situation and our customers. I remain confident that when history is written the reconstruction program in Iraq, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' critical role in it, the record will note that you all made a difference in the establishment of a secure and prosperous free Iraq.

This is a mission you all have a vital part in and can be proud of. Every team member is important and no job is less important. Each of you bring valuable skills and the uncommon ability to adapt to changing seas while staying on course.

I commend you for your selfless service and exemplary devotion to this mission of great importance to Iraq, the region, the United States and the world.

ESSAYONS!

*Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Dorko
Gulf Region Division
Commander*

Command Sgt. Maj. Message



Safety depends on individuals

It's stating the obvious to say that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division operates in a lethal war environment with inherent security challenges and high risk.

Safety of our personnel is tantamount – we work constantly to keep engaged with the latest information

on the threat, ongoing Coalition and Iraqi Security Force operations, team with top private security personnel in the business and adjust our operations and static protective measures constantly to mitigate the efforts of the enemy to do us harm – all so we can continue to work and live in greater safety and travel to conduct mission critical face to face meetings and quality assurance checks that are the kingpin of our reconstruction success.

Despite all this collective effort, our safety depends entirely on you.

Yes, every individual working for the Gulf Region Division, no matter where he or she is located, is standing shoulder to

shoulder in our collective defense to prevent the next accident.

Accountability, preventive maintenance, required procedures and actions at check/access points, traffic laws, sanitation, General Order # 1, compliance to existing dress code and uniform and physical conditioning are some of the major areas that require your assiduous compliance to well established rules and requirements.

We must always remain situational aware and comply with the well-established force protection rules and requirements; failure to comply will definitely increase the potential for a catastrophic event to occur, which will not only affect you and your family, but the entire GRD team.

Thank you and your family for your continuous honorable service.

ESSAYONS! Army Strong!

*Command Sgt. Maj. Eloy Alcivar
Gulf Region Division*

Decisive action required on qualifications, corruption

COMMENTARY BY J.J. ANAJAR
GULF REGION DIVISION

The greatest nations throughout history have been built by great leaders who dedicated their lives in the interest of prosperity and happiness of their people. They did not favor race, sect or religion, but recognized that equality of their citizens meant all could contribute fully to the greater welfare of the nation.

Who helped such leaders of vision arise in democratic countries? The people who elected them.

The people often select the right leaders for the right positions when they practice their rights freely through transparent elections.

Not everything even distinguished leaders do is successful—sometimes accomplishments are small, little progress is made during a term, there are complete failures—but greatness lies in learning from and correcting mistakes, striving to do more.

After 30 years of oppression and suppression under Saddam's regime, Iraqis have started to know the meaning of democracy by practicing their right to vote for their representatives.

Unfortunately, during the transitional period the sponsors of Iraq, including the United Nations, for some reason or another, did not take care to apply an appropriate election system in Iraq. Electoral lists were closed: voters had no information about the nominees or their qualifications. Additionally, the political parties involved in the past general election used either religious, racial or sectarian slogans to get the vote of the largely uninformed populace.

Consequently, the political blocs that won by majority in the past election include many unqualified individuals who have held important positions in the ministries and other government institutions that need qualified staff. These officials came to power through popular election, however their loyalty is only to their political parties, entities and blocs, not to the people. In any province in Iraq, including Baghdad, too many people still lack essential facilities and services despite the substantial funding allocated to each province by the Government of Iraq.

While the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division has executed and supervised many different projects throughout Iraq, such as building power plants and substations, water treatment facilities, sewage treatment plants, schools, Primary Healthcare Centers and hospitals, bridges and roads, renovating railway stations, airports, sea ports, oil wells and refineries; all that is insufficient, for Iraq was neglected for more than 30 years. Repair of its infrastructure requires huge money and effort to provide essential services for all Iraqis. Cooperation and coordination is necessary across all levels of the government and the organizations involved in the mission of Iraq reconstruction.

There is, however, a misconception prevailing in political and media circles that says Iraqi politicians are acting based on sectarianism and that every political bloc, whether Sunni or Shiite, is working solely for the benefit of its sect.

In my opinion, this is not true since none of the parties work

for the interest of their sect, rather these parties work for their own interests and for the foreign powers that have backed them.

This makes Iraq run in circles without making progress. Gen. David Petraeus, the top U.S. Commander in Iraq said in an interview* that Iraqi leaders have failed to take advantage of a reduction in violence to make adequate progress toward resolving their political differences. 'No one in the U.S. and Iraqi government feels that there has been sufficient progress by any means in the area of national reconciliation or in the provision of basic public services,' Petraeus said.

Many officials who are occupying important positions in the national government, city councils and parliament are not qualified to exercise their role for the benefit of the people. Some of the governors have no qualifications to make them eligible for their positions.

Al Hurra TV aired a report on the governor of Babil, south of Baghdad, whose high school diploma is alleged to be a forgery. Some Babil city council members have called for his removal.

The shortcomings of the faulty election process are especially poignant considering Babil was once Babylon, capitol of a great nation ruled by Hammurabi the great king whose contributions to humankind include his Code of Laws written between the second year of his reign, circa 1727 BC, and the end of his reign, circa 1780 BC. Perhaps the single most striking feature of Hammurabi's Code is its commitment to protection of the weak from being brutalized by the strong. He believed that he had been ordained by his gods to establish the rule of law and justice over his people. Hammurabi's Code is one of the oldest examples establishing the "Rule of Law" for a nation.

One day, I called an Al Hurra news reporter in al-Diwaniya in southern Iraq to compliment him on his report highlighting neighborhoods suffering from the shortage of essential services in order to get the attention of the officials responsible. The reporter's response surprised me when he said that a member of the city council chastised him for making such reports! Staying in the wrong leads to catastrophe.

Fortunately some officials realize that taking decisive action is very important. The Mayor of Baghdad, for instance, has dismissed three of his deputies for corruption. On his last visit to Basra the deputy prime minister declared an effort to rein in corruption, lawless groups and militia that control many local government institutions, including Basra seaport. And so, last month, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki ordered the security forces to confront armed groups in Basra, Iraq's second largest city; these forces have worked, some what, in its task through disarming the outlaw elements.

All Iraq's associates and friends, including its closest friend the U.S., must exert efforts to help put the political process in the right direction by listening to the voice of Iraqi public opinion as it says put the right person in the right position.

Otherwise the consequences, in the long run, will be negative.

* An article written by Cameron W. Barr and released by the Washington Post on P. A10 on March 14, 2008

Sanitary project mends Al Sadr Teaching Hospital *Cleaner environment in Basrah*

STORY & PHOTOS BY A. AL BAHRANI
GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

After years of neglect, Al Sadr Teaching Hospital will soon witness a significant improvement.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in southern Iraq is refurbishing the existing sewage network system and constructing a new 40 cubic meter / hour sewage treatment plant at the only hospital within a 30-mile radius in Basrah province.

The \$1.9 million project includes installation, testing and commissioning of two manholes, replacement of eight-inch PVC conduit in the ground and main grids, said the Basrah Area Engineer Daniel Foltz.

The rehabilitation of the sewage network and a new waste water treatment plant will mean that doctors can operate and see patients in a cleaner environment, said Quality Assurance Inspector John Morgan from the Basrah Area Office, Gulf Region South district of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

“The installation of a complete sanitary sewage treatment plant will positively affect the hospital condition and provides a healthier environment for the hospital,” Morgan said.

Deputy Administrator of Al Sadr Teaching Hospital, Talib Saleem, who has been working in this hospital for more than ten years, said, “The old waste water treatment plant located in the grounds of this hospital



Iraqi workers install wooden forms and reinforcing bar for the construction of the two new manholes.

has been nonoperational for about 15 years and a large amount of waste and waste water just sat in the unit,” he said. “The project will help to remove unhealthy odors from the old nonfunctional waste water treatment plant and create a healthier environment for the hospital.”

He added that the three-decade old

facility sees about 480 patients daily and more than 100 of them are emergencies from Basrah and the other southern Iraqi provinces.

According to Foltz, this project aims to provide waste water treatment for the only six-story and 390-bed facility in the province. Hospitals produce waste that is harmful to be dumped directly in to Shatt Al-Arab, so the project treats that water before it is discharged.

The existing sewage system leaks into the basement of the hospital. Part of the job is to replace the broken and damaged lines in the basement area, according to Ferdinand Guese, USACE project engineer.

“The Corps will install and connect a 250 kilovolt generator to provide a 24 hour operation plant and enhance the capacity of the sewage system for the hospital,” Guese said.

Foltz added, “This plant will provide for full use of bathrooms and provide sanitary working conditions.”

Foltz said the Gulf Region South district is currently overseeing 144 projects throughout the nine southern provinces of Iraq and 27 of these projects are in the Basrah province.



The old waste water treatment plant sits in disrepair, nonfunctional for more than 15 years.

العمل جار في دار أيتام ومركز للمسنين في اربيل

أربيل، العراق – قال المهندس كاري يورك، من فيلق مهندسي الجيش الأميركي في مكتب اربيل المقيم "اصبح شائعا في الولايات المتحدة رؤية مراكز الرعاية التي توفر المأوى وتحسن معيشة كل من الكبار والصغار فيها وهم يقضون اوقاتهم معا بونام".

اعجبت الفكرة محافظ اربيل نوزاد هادي، واليوم تم انجاز ٣٠ بالمائة من دار أيتام اربيل التي تتضمن مشروع مركز الكبار، حيث ينزل فيها ١٦٥ صبيا و١٨٠ صببية بأعمار دون ١٨ عاما، فضلا عن ٦٠ مسنا.

وقال يورك "تعد دار أيتام اربيل الاولى التي اشرف عليها فيلق مهندسي الجيش الأميركي في العراق، على حد علمي، وقررنا أن ندمجها بمركز للمسنين، وعادة تكون المودة متبادلة بين الاطفال وبين كبار السن".

وفي وسط دار الأيتام هناك قاعة دائرية متعددة الأغراض محاطة بستة منازل يتألف كل منها من ثلاثة طوابق وساحة للعب.

وقال يورك "اعدنا ترتيب بعض عناصر الموقع عدة مرات فاصبح ملعب الأطفال يقع قبالة منزل المسنين".

وتضم القاعة المتعددة الأغراض قاعات تعزف فيها الموسيقى ومختبرات للحاسوب، في حين احتوى منزل الكبار على مصعد هيدروليكي فضلا عن ابواب كبيرة وحمامات فيها احواض ومرافق للمعاقين منهم.

واضاف يورك "من المؤكد ان العراقيين لم يألفوا ما يوفره قانون المعاقين الأميركي ... أنشأت في الدار الكثير من المزايا بإمكان

المعاقين الوصول اليها. هناك أجهزة الانذار بالحريق وشبابيك وابواب عالية الجودة، يحتوي كل منزل على مطبخ صغير يعد النزلاء فيه الشاي وليجعلهم يشعرون كأنهم في منازلهم".

واردف يورك ان اعادة اعمار هذا المشروع تتضمن انشاء ميزة جديدة وهي نظام ضغط المياه بدلا من الاعتماد على خزان الماء التقليدي فوق سطوح المنازل العراقية، وأوضح "نريد مصدرا جديدا لضخ الماء، لان الطريقة التقليدية تحدث بمرور الزمان اضرارا بالمبنى اذا لم تتم صيانتته من وقت الى آخر".

وتتمتع الدار بتصميم حديث "سيجلب الانتباه، من الجميل انشاء مبنى يعجب كل من يراه". من جهته، قام الكولونيل مايك فيننك قائد القسم الشمالي من فرقة منطقة الخليج التابعة لفيلق

مهندسي الجيش الأميركي بزيارة المشروع في اذار/مارس، وقال ان "هذا مشروع معقد يقوم المتعاقد بانجازه بنحو جيد جدا"، مضيفا ان "للمشروعات من هذا النوع تأثير على المدى الطويل في معيشة السكان".

ويتولى مكتب اربيل المقيم مسؤولية ادارة المشروع فضلا عن تسعة مشروعات اخرى في المحافظة تتراوح مراحلها من اعداد التصاميم الى المضي قدما في اعمال البناء.

ومنذ ٢٠٠٥، اكمل مكتب اربيل المقيم ٨٩ مشروع اعادة اعمار في محافظة اربيل تكلفت اكثر من ٣١٥ مليون دولار، ومول صندوق الدعم الاقتصادي الأميركي هذا المشروع بـ ٣،٧ مليون دولار ومن المزمع اكتماله في ايلول/سبتمبر.



Project joins orphanage, senior center

STORY & PHOTO BY LUANNE FANTASIA
GULF REGION NORTH DISTRICT

"In the United States, we're starting to see day-care centers on assisted-living properties because seniors and kids get along well together," said Gary York, area engineer in the Army Corps of Engineers' Erbil Resident Office.

Erbil's Governor Nawzad Hadi liked that idea and today the Erbil Orphanage and Senior Center project is 30 percent on its way to being home for 165 boys and 180 girls up to 18-years-old, and 60 elderly citizens.

"The orphanage is the first of its kind that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has managed in Iraq, as far as I know, and we decided to combine it with a senior center, since the elderly and the small children like each other," York said.

At the heart of the property is a large, round multi-purpose hall, encircled by six, three-story residential houses and a play yard. "We changed the site orientation a couple of times so that the small children's playground is in front of the seniors' home," York said.

The multi-purpose hall features music rooms and computer labs, while the seniors' home has a hydraulic elevator, as well as the expected wider doors and both handicap-accessible tubs and showers.

"The Americans With Disabilities Act is, of course, unfamiliar

to the Iraqi people," York said, "but there are many handicap access features built into the facility, as well as fire alarms and high-quality hardware, windows and doors...and each residential house has a kitchenette so that residents can have their tea, or just feel at home," he added.

York said another feature unique to this Reconstruction project is a pressurized water system instead of the rooftop water tanks normally seen in Iraq. "We went a different way on that feature because rooftop water tanks eventually cause structural damage if they're not meticulously maintained."

The functional facility has a modern design. "It will be an attention-getter ... and it's nice to have a beautiful building or structure that pleases people when they see it," he added.

Col. Mike Pfenning, commander of the USACE Gulf Region North district, visited the project site last month. "This is a complex project being done very well by the contractor," he said. "Projects such as this have a long-term impact on the local residents."

The Erbil Resident Office has project and construction management responsibility for this project, as well as nine others in the Erbil province that are currently either ongoing or in the planning stages. Since 2005, the Erbil Resident Office has completed 89 reconstruction projects in Erbil province, totaling more than \$315 million. This \$3.7 million project, funded through the Economic Support Fund, is scheduled for completion in September.

Bombed building re-opens

BY LUANNE FANTASIA

GULF REGION NORTH DISTRICT

Less than a year after a vehicle-borne explosive device tore through its buildings in May 2007, the Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Interior complex in Erbil is open for business.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provided project and construction management for the facility that restores the KRG's ability to oversee security programs for the Kurdistan region —

including intelligence gathering, special police, and homeland security actions — in one central location.

"Two days after the attack, the KRG asked if we could help them rebuild," said Colonel Michael Pfenning, commander of the Gulf Region North district. "Our mutual level of trust and relationships with the KRG ministries are very strong, and they were deepened more so by them asking us to help."

The project was funded with \$5.8 million from the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP), and \$1.5 million from the KRG.

"We have a good partnering relationship with the KRG and we owe a great deal of that to the former deputy commanding general for MND-North, Brig. Gen. Frank Wiercinski," Pfenning said. "He made a commitment at that time to use CERP money to assist the KRG in rebuilding their Ministry of Interior complex."

The Minister of Interior's building, as well as the service and administration buildings, guard houses and the perimeter wall were funded by CERP, all of which have been turned over to the KRG.

The security building and surveillance technology, funded by the KRG, are not yet completed, according to Kameran Abdulrahman, general director of administration for the KRG Ministry of Interior.

In a March 31 meeting, Abdulrahman expressed his appreciation for the MoI building reconstruction and discussed other projects the KRG plans to propose for approval. "This partnership is going very well," he said.

Part of the Gulf Region North's mission is to help its seven provincial governments assume responsibility for managing their infrastructure development — and the capability to sustain it. To date, GRN has completed 1,357 reconstruction projects in its seven northern provinces, for a total of \$2.1 billion. Another 126 projects are currently ongoing, totaling \$436 million.

USACE photo by Gary York



Col. Mike Pfenning sees the results of a bomb on the KRG Ministry of Interior building shortly after last year's attack.

Transitions



USACE photo

The Baghdad Joint Planning Commission meeting was led by the Amanat for the first time March 13 — signaling the transition of leadership from Coalition Forces to the local Baghdad government. The weekly meeting — which was created a year ago — is a joint effort between the Coalition and the Government of Iraq to synchronize the combined reconstruction efforts of the 10 districts of Baghdad.

Air Force enablers

BY GRANT SATTLER
GULF REGION DIVISION

In combat, a joint service team comprised of Army, Air Force and Navy is a force multiplier. Just such a team is also helping “win the fight” in the mission to reconstruct Iraq.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Gulf Region Division owes a large measure of its success in rebuilding Iraqi infrastructure to expertise provided by deployed members from each of the military branches. The joint approach combines the best attributes from each of the armed services’ engineering communities and provides a deeper pool of personnel to draw from.

The U.S. Air Force is providing much needed capability to the GRD mission, particularly in resource management, logistics, security forces and engineering.

Air Force **Col. Vince Saroni**, an Air Force Reservist deployed to Iraq for seven months, is the first sister-service officer to hold the post of deputy commander. “Gulf Region Division, as a joint division, uses engineers from different services to fill its senior leadership positions. This is a tribute to GRD and contributes to the strength of the organization.”

He said that GRD has at its core the business processes and project and program management practices of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

“The USACE division model brings stability to accomplishing the GRD mission and it is my experience that Air Force personnel fit in nicely,” he said. “Air Force engineers complement and enhance GRD; there is a synergistic effect.”

Since the Air Force mission is to fly and fight, the air force base is a critical system in the ability to project air power. Air Force engineers train to build an air base platform in expeditionary environments and consequently have experience in project management and construction techniques. Project management and program management are core competencies for Air Force engineers and an officer develops these skills earlier in their career than in other services. “The Army and Navy both have different missions and thus different foundations are laid for their engineers,” he said. “Since the Air Force base is a primary weapon system, our company grade officers acquire the skill set needed for project management from the onset, so a captain or major serving GRD brings that with them.

“We also bring with us a focus on diplomacy and consensus building,” the colonel said. “We have a strong background in building teams, which dovetails with the USACE project delivery team concept. The vocabulary may be different, but that skill set is very complementary.”

Saroni said the opportunity that a deployment with GRD provides is unparalleled. “We are able to work on projects and programs on a much large scale than anywhere else in the world—both the dollar amount and large number of projects that are under our span of control,” he said. “Then you add to it the combination of working in the Middle East and in a combat environment. It is a unique experience and an honor to be a part of history here.

“Every Air Force member I have talked to is enthusiastic about being here,” he said. “GRD sent me on battle-field circulation for three weeks throughout Iraq allowing me the opportunity to visit project sites and to meet many GRD team members including our Air Force engineers serving in the district offices. Unsolicited, I had Army engineers boasting on Airmen and Sailors and then Air Force and Navy engineers trying to out compliment each other. Engineers are working side-by-side to get the job done, hand it over to the Iraqis and get home.

“In addition to engineers, we also have Airmen proudly serving in GRD from the security forces, resource management, personnel and logistics readiness career fields,” said Saroni. “With pride, GRD Airmen see a direct correlation in how their work and their sacrifice make a difference in the lives of the people of Iraq, contributing to their prosperity and freedom.”

The colonel himself responded to an Air Mobility Command call for a deployable colonel. He was the first to raise his hand, but only after gaining the full support of his wife and his employer, the City of Mesquite, Texas, where he is a municipal engineer. “Mesquite is very supportive of the war against terrorism and the rebuilding of Iraq, so that allowed me to deploy,” he said. “The other deciding vote was from my wife, Betsy. I have five children at home and she’s got the huge task of raising our five children and taking care of the household. During this time



Col. Vincent Saroni

Air Force

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

of deployment, we're both serving."

Prior to his deployment, Saroni was able to meet with USACE personnel at Southwestern Division in Dallas for a valuable orientation to GRD and the environment in Iraq. Many division personnel have deployed with GRD or with the earlier Task Force Restore Iraqi Oil. "Their insight was very helpful," he said.

Col. Saroni is the Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA) to the director and served as the acting deputy director, Installations and Mission Support, Headquarters Air Mobility Command, Scott AFB, Illinois.

Col. James Iken is the Gulf Region Division's Director of Military Programs. A full time Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) member, he is deployed to Baghdad from his position at the Pentagon, where he is director of Installations and Logistics with the Office of the Chief of the Air Force Reserves. He has been on active duty since 2002. At GRD, he is responsible for what is currently the largest construction sector. At more than \$5 billion in work, Military Programs is more than double the present

reconstruction program handled by GRD.

"Military Programs encompasses everything we do except reconstruction," Iken said. Military Programs manages Military Construction (MILCON), Operations & Maintenance (O&M) funded projects, Department of State-funded construction projects and construction programs associated with the Iraqi-funded Foreign Military Sales program.



Col. James Iken

Iken is one of slightly more than a dozen Air Force personnel serving with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq. "We have a number of people here, serving from top to bottom," he said. "From Air Force engineers in the field to the deputy commanding officer and myself as the largest sector lead here... I'm gratified that USACE and GRD are confident enough in us to accept us in these leadership roles."

Iken said the Air Force abilities augment the skill sets of Army

SEE **AIR FORCE**, PAGE 10

Airmen augment Central District

BY KENDAL SMITH

GULF REGION CENTRAL DISTRICT

"Reconstruction projects move along because of people moving them along, and GRC's Air Force officer and Staff Sergeant make a difference in that process every day," said Col. Robert Vasta, district commander. "I'm very grateful to have these two highly competent individuals as part of the GRC team."

Air Force **1st Lt. Jennifer Alecci**, from Twig, Minn., has been in charge of the Iraq National Depot Resident Office in Taji since November 2007. With more than 48 projects worth more than \$122 million the mission is to help rebuild the Iraqis' military capability.

"It's simply amazing to see the progress," Alecci said. "When I got here, the Depot buildings were in rubble and dilapidated. Now, they're usable facilities."

Alecci deployed from Elmendorf AFB in Anchorage, Alaska. A Michigan Tech graduate in Environmental Engineering, she works as a civil engineer.

One of the other projects dear to Alecci's heart is the support provided to the Taji Girls' School. On a trip with Taji Area Office staff, school supplies, soccer balls and shoes were welcomed by the headmistress of the USACE-constructed school for Taji area girls, ages 12 to 15. "I was really nervous before the visit," Alecci said. "I learned in Arabic to introduce myself... So, I read it off my cards and the little girls were so still. After we started to give them things they relaxed, but one classroom was extremely reserved. I thought maybe they didn't want the things and, perhaps, we had offended them.

"Then I peeked back into the classroom," she continued, "as we were about to leave and caught the girls smiling, talking and enjoying the stuff we'd given them! So I smiled and waved and they did the same. That told me they were appreciative and broke the cultural ice. It really made me feel good about the event, really good. It's something I'll never forget."

Air Force **Staff Sgt. Robert Smith**, of East Liverpool, Ohio, deployed to GRC HQ from Goodfellow AFB in Texas. Working as a personnel NCO, he feels very much a part of the work



USACE photo

1st Lt. Jennifer Alecci hands a ball to a student at the Taji Girls' School during a visit.

flow and the reconstruction effort. Initially trained as an Arabic linguist, he was transitioned to personnel, but the language skills still come in handy on the job at GRC.

"I enjoy meeting and working with all the service components and the many civilians here," Smith said. "It's a great experience and an interesting job every day. I hadn't heard about the Corps of Engineers efforts in the media Stateside, and this is really good stuff. I'm very proud to be a part of the effort."

Smith is the GRC HQ NCO who oversees and monitors all military personnel actions including orders, awards, performance evaluations and extension requests. He manages and maintains the Joint Manning Document for GRC.

Smith's wife, Senior Airman Jocelyn Smith, is also serving in Iraq with the 732nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron Detachment based at Victory.



USACE photo by Kendal Smith

Senior Airman Jocelyn Smith and Staff Sgt. Robert Smith visit al Faw Palace.

Air Force

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

and Navy engineers. "We're different," he said. "We develop different skill sets in our careers, so we make very good complements for each other here in theater."

Iken described what the Air Force brings to the fight. "Air Force engineers are steeped from the beginning of their careers in facilities. The Air Force is different from the Army in that our bases are part of our force projection...we fight from our installations," he said. "It certainly makes it a very good fit in terms of managing the kinds of programs USACE has responsibility for here."

In addition to the familiar MILCON and O&M work, Military Programs is picking up construction programs associated with Foreign Military Sales. "For example, the Iraqis are buying half a dozen Lockheed C-130 aircraft," Iken said. "We're building hangars, ramp space and maintenance facilities to bed those down... They are also buying a number of ships from the Italians and we're building seawalls and piers to berth those ships at Umm Qasr."

Another growth area for Military Programs is the Environmental program. "As we either close or 'shrink and share' Coalition Operating Bases throughout Iraq, we have to clean up after ourselves. That's something the Air Force occupies a niche for," Iken said. "The Air Force Center for Engineering Excellence is here in country and USACE works very closely with AFCEE...and we're reaching back to the USACE Louisville District to use existing contracts as well." He said the environmental program in Iraq is in its infancy, with baseline studies under way.

Iken said Air Force engineers are taking away a great deal from the experience and the people they are privileged to work with. "Anyone will tell you there is certainly a sense of healthy competition between Army and Air Force engineers, and I think our experiences here bring a greater appreciation for the job USACE is tasked with."

Lt. Col. Mark Russo is deployed for six months from the Resource Management office for the Air Force Civil Engineer to serve in an Individual Augmentee billet as Government Lead for the Water Sector. He said he's been blessed to have many jobs that prepared him for this "capstone-like" experience. "Working on the Air Staff, I was familiar with the challenges of the apportionment process to get the funding we need to do the critical infrastructure work in Iraq," he said, adding that he also was the operations officer in a civil engineer squadron and led the utilities sections "...where we made our own water and treated the sewage for a base of over 15,000 people."

Russo said he has learned a lot working "with the great men and women" of the Gulf Region Division. "It has been an honor to help build a stronger country with such brave Iraqis that have sacrificed much for the betterment of their homeland," he said. "I've had the pleasure of working with the Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) and the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works (MMPW) on just about everything related to water."

He said it is humbling when he thinks about the Iraqi perspective on Water Resource management: they have been doing it longer than anyone else. "The first evidence of irrigation systems in the world is from 5,000 BC by the Iridu Civilization, centered just south of Nasiriyah. We are basically following the path that was laid by the Iraqi ancestors with new technology..."

"I've met and worked with international experts working to

restore the natural ecosystems that the Saddam regime destroyed by diverting billions of cubic meters of water a year from hugely populated marshes." He said the marshes are coming back and support hundreds of thousands of subsistence farmers and wildlife. "Some of the projects we are working on with the MoWR will allow the reclamation of over a million hectares of land for productive farming," Russo said.

He said water borne diseases cause severe health problems and lead to a high mortality rate among Iraq's children. "It has been very rewarding to work to install new compact water treatment units across Iraq," Russo said. He has worked on finishing major water treatment plants and pump stations in Baghdad, Nasiriyah, Basrah and Irbil, providing water to more than 5 million people. "It has been inspiring to team with the MMPW to build the first sanitary sewer plant and collection system for Fallujah," he said.

He said nothing accomplished would be possible without the hard work and dedication of the district and regional offices. "I would recommend anyone coming over to prepare for long days, but short weeks," Russo said. "The camaraderie is outstanding. There is no doubt the experience here will make us stronger civil engineers and leaders in our future assignments."

At the end of his tour he returns home to a family that has also worked through many challenges in his absence. "My thanks and love to them for supporting me while I was gone."

Lt. Col. Rick Blaisdell, a program manager in Reconstruction Sector, is serving on a volunteer deployment from Headquarters Pacific Air Forces at Hickam AFB, Hawaii. There the 19-year Air Force civil engineer is the lead civil engineer inspector on the PACAF Inspector General team for all Air Force units in PACAF.

In Iraq, Blaisdell is the lead program manager for the Government of Iraq bridge construction and repair program and ministerial liaison with the Iraqi Ministry of Construction and Housing.

Meeting with ministry representatives several times a month, Blaisdell has found his Air Force project management experience in solicitation and execution of construction projects has enabled him to assist the MoCH in overcoming issues delaying execution of their bridge construction and repair program.

"Our efforts are important because the transportation of goods and services are vital to the Iraqi reconstruction efforts, for commerce and mobility of the Iraqi people. Roads and specifically bridges are crucial to this endeavor," Blaisdell said. "It is our goal to complement their bridge construction and repair program with technical and programmatic experts and to coordinate security between the Facility Protection Service (FPS), Ministries of Defense and Interior and Coalition Forces."

Blaisdell said he has thoroughly enjoyed participating in the Iraqi reconstruction effort and takes pride in all GRD has been able to accomplish as an organization.

"My experiences here in Iraq have shown me the importance of forging strong relationships between important stakeholders in an issue, process or project," he said. "I have learned the importance of making such relationships last to ensure a better end product that serves in the best interests of all stakeholders."

"I particularly enjoy all the great people I have had the honor of working with...Coalition Force personnel, Iraqi government officials and local nationals working with the Army Corps of Engineers," he said.



Master Sgt. Emberly Dominguez

is serving in the Gulf Region Division as a budget analyst in resource management. She deployed from Vandenberg AFB, Calif., where she is Non-Commission Officer in Charge of the Base Operations Support Program with the 30th Comptroller Squadron. There, she is the budget analyst for the Civil Engineer Squadron.

In Iraq, Dominguez brings her 10 year's experience as an Air Force financial analyst as the POC for financial reporting on \$35.7 billion direct and reimbursable funds from 38 different funding sources including the Department of Defense, Executive Office of the President, Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, Department of Energy, Department of Justice, and the Government of Iraq supporting management information needs for numerous stakeholders at all levels. "I am also responsible for providing fiscal management guidance as well as tracking disbursements on contracts valued at more than \$181 million," Dominguez said.

"Working for the Corps of Engineers has been a vast learning experience; I see my job as a budget analyst from a totally different perspective," Dominguez said. "Prior to my arrival, I did not fully understand the scope of the work, but now I clearly see how vitally important the USACE mission is for the future of Iraq.

"To work in a joint environment gives you a much broader perspective on the work that must be done." She said she will continue to learn USACE practices and contribute as much as possible as she work with the Army, Navy and Marine Corps. "It is a truly amazing blending of talents and skill sets."

Lt. Col. Manuel Griego serves with the Gulf Region Division Logistics Directorate as deputy director and the Logistics Movement Coordination Center director. He is on temporary duty from his position as squadron commander of the 9th Maintenance Operations Squadron, Beale AFB, Calif.

"This is the most challenging, dynamic environment I've experienced in my career: the fulcrum of combat logistics supporting not only U.S. and Coalition forces,

but also the people of Iraq in the huge task of Iraqi reconstruction and counter insurgency operations," Griego said.

As a career aircraft maintenance officer, Griego said he has had the opportunity to lead the professional "wrench turners" to maintain, repair and launch aircraft to support training and operational sorties. "Integrating transportation, supply, and logistics planning was required daily to obtain mission success," he said. This foundation provides a logistics baseline that helps him operate in his unique ground transportation logistics and contractor officer representative tasking.

"I can walk away from this tasking knowing I received an exponential amount of logistics experience and mentorship from my fantastic supervisors and peers, and from the teammate commercial contractors operating convoy operations, private security,



and logistics planning," Griego said.

He said his Army, Navy and Marine Corps military counterparts and teammates have given him a broader logistics perspective and exposure to the "purple" network to get the job done. "Without a doubt, this experience has widened my eyes to the world of logistics way beyond the aircraft maintenance stovepipe I came from," he said "[I will be] leaving with a new tool set ready to employ as a refreshed logistician."

Master Sgt. Jason Raven, deployed from Laughlin AFB, Texas, where he is the S4 Superintendent, joins the Gulf Region Division in Iraq as the Antiterrorism Officer (ATO) in Security, Plans and Operations.

Raven brings to GRD more than 17 years of U.S. Air Force Security Forces experience. As the ATO, he manages the AT program for GRD, correcting U.S. Central Command vulnerabilities and ensuring compliance with Multi National Force-Iraq standards. He procures funding for Force Protection enhancements Iraq-wide to protect personnel and resources.

"I am proud to serve with each and every one that has a role in the reconstruction of Iraq," Raven said. "We are a team of one and we will succeed!"

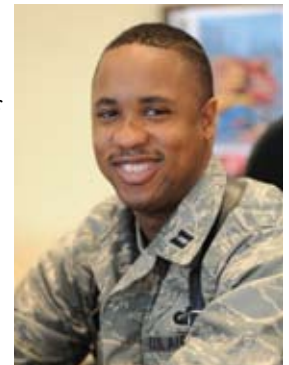
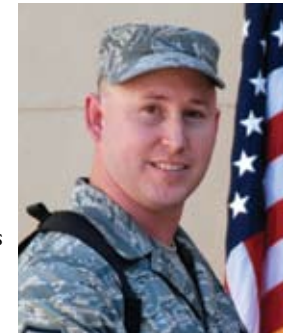
Capt. Douglass Eagleton volunteered for a six month deployment as assigned by the AF Air Expeditionary Force Center (AEFC) and joined Gulf Region Division Resource Management as the team chief, Program Funding Execution & Analysis Section.

"I'm very fortunate to have been afforded the opportunity to aid in the reconstruction of Iraq," he said. He is responsible for providing all aspects of financial management, analysis and reporting support to the GRD Programs Directorate and the Iraq Transition Assistance Office (ITAO) to facilitate the execution of the \$12.7 billion Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF) program, the \$1.3 billion Economic Support Fund program, the \$94 million International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INL) program, and the \$13.4 million Child Survival and Health Programs Fund program. He also works with the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq to facilitate the execution of the \$15 billion dollar Iraq Security Forces Fund program.

"This is the first time I've worked in a joint environment," said the captain, who has four years experience as a major command budget analyst at Headquarters Air Combat Command at Langley AFB, Va., providing resources to 18 wings and tenant units. "It has been a very rewarding experience...This experience has enabled me to think better strategically, as well as have a better understanding of how the Air Force contributes to the reconstruction effort."

Eagleton said the technical skills and expertise gained from ACC's Plans & Programs branch have helped him in developing GRD's command operating budget brief, obtain Fiscal Year 04/08 IRRF funding to resource priorities in support of the Iraq reconstruction mission, and develop a tracking matrix for senior program analysts to research undelivered orders and unliquidated

SEE **AIR FORCE**, PAGE 12



Lt. Col. Griego stands in front of a "mother of all generators."

Air Force

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obligations that will cut research time by half.

"The Gulf Region Division is a great organization that fosters teamwork, and esprit de corps," Eagleton said. "Proud to serve!"

Technical Sgt. Aaron Levisay joined the Gulf Region Division Resource Management shop after transferring from an Air Force Individual Mobilization Augmentation position at Camp Victory.

"I certainly think that this accounting experience will help me when I get back to my full-time job as an AGR back with my unit, the 114th Fighter Wing, in the South Dakota Air National Guard," he said.

Levisay's Air Force specialty is accounting and financial management. In an unusual move for a traditional Air Guardsman, Levisay is deploying for three back-to-back tours that when completed this coming fall will be just a few weeks shy of 12 months in the Operation Iraqi Freedom area of operations.

"I wanted to do my part, having watched everything here in Iraq happening on TV for all of these years. I'd deployed before to Operation Enduring Freedom in 2005, so I wanted to get a chance to come here," Levisay said. "When I found out I was going to Baghdad, the center of it all, I was thrilled."

Levisay has a Finance background in the Air Guard and is applying his accounting and finance skills to help with both the "economic surge" and reconstruction efforts of rebuilding Iraq. "Some of the Army accounting and processes are different," he said. "But many of the accounting theories are basically the



same. There are processes to obligate money for needed projects, and then pay vendors as the work gets done...rebuilding Iraq, project by project, vendor by vendor, just like that."

Levisay said his individual part is small in the rebuilding of an entire country, and yet, "...this is far-and-away the most important thing I think I've ever done for my country, for my service..."

"I've had the thrill of a lifetime meeting Gen. Petraeus. I've been awed by going and eating in one of Saddam's palaces where he planned nefarious activities. I've been humbled and awed by meeting a small Iraqi boy on a humanitarian mission a couple of months ago in a Baghdad suburb by his just being happy to get a toy. I've been humbled again to donate blood for those real heroes of this effort, our troops, who are battling for the future of this country as hard as they would my own.

"It's not a picnic every day, but I can honestly say that I've never done anything more life-changing, more important (in its small, small, small way) or more gratifying (when I look at the big picture) than this experience with USACE-GRD-RM here in Baghdad," Levisay said.

Lt. Col. Douglas Wise is the Gulf Region Division, Special Projects Sub-Sector Lead for the Provincial Reconstruction District Council (PRDC) program, Infrastructure Security Program (ISP), Basrah Children's Hospital (BCH) project, and the Commanders' Emergency Response Program (CERP).

He comes to the position from his assignment as chief, Programs Development, Headquarters United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE).



SEE EXPERIENCE, PAGE 13

Airmen serve in southern Iraq

Maj. Joseph Brands is the project manager for the first Foreign Military Sales project for the Government of Iraq, a design-build project to construct a pier facility to be used by the Iraqi navy.

He said his U.S. Air Force experience has benefitted him in the position two ways. "First is an expeditionary mindset and the experience gained from previous deployments to Saudi Arabia and Oman. Second, is construction program management experience gained in previous Staff-Level positions while on the A-7 staff at the Air Mobility Command HQ's.

Brands is serving on temporary duty from his position at the Air Force Civil Engineer Agency at Tyndall AFB, Panama City, Fla. where he is a program manager for the Prime Base Emergency Engineer Force (Prime BEEF), REDHORSE and equipment modernization program. His work there "...encompasses supporting the development of guidance related to organizing, training and equipping Air Force civil engineers for contingency and warfighting requirements."



Brands said he is gaining a much greater understanding of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers organization structure and process in managing a project, which will prove very beneficial in future dealings in the States regarding MILCON project management which USACE accomplishes for the Air Force.

Along similar lines he said he is getting a much better understanding of Army and Navy cultures and processes which will prove valuable in the ever increasingly joint environments.

Staff Sgt. Erin Zeitler is serving with the Gulf Region South district as the S-1 noncommissioned officer. He is deployed from the 49th Mission Support Squadron based at Holloman AFB, N.M.

"Deployed Personnel Journeymen from the Air Force have a priority mission on a Personnel in Support of Contingency Operations (PERSCO) Team, accountability of personnel in theater," Zeitler said. "That is what I am doing for GRS, as well as administrative support to all Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen deployed with USACE in the GRS."



Experience working with USACE builds for future

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

“My organization is filling an In Lieu Of tasking for GRD and the U.S. Army,” Wise said. “I am the third engineer officer from HQ USAFE to fill this six-month deployment position.”

Wise said that though it is difficult to leave family and friends, he was eager for the opportunity to again serve his country and work with the Corps of Engineers.

The PRDC is currently a \$700 million program with more than 475 projects that strengthen Iraqi Provincial Governates through allocations of funds to provide master planning, improve infrastructure and sustain capabilities.

The ISP is a \$227 million program consisting of 41 projects to harden oil, water and electrical infrastructure.

The BCH is a \$163.8 million project to construct a 94-bed pediatric oncology hospital in Basrah.

CERP is currently a \$175.1 million program, 121 projects to date, that allows commanders to respond to urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction needs for the Iraqi populace.

Wise said his multiple deployments during his career and a short-tour in the Middle East total more than four years. His background includes experience as a project and program manager, both in the States and deployed.

“These experiences provide insight into construction practices in this area of the world as well as the culture and beliefs of the Iraqi people,” he said.

He said working with GRD provides a unique professional opportunity. “Typically, Air Force engineer officers work ‘with’ the Corps (usually as the client), but this is a first for me working ‘within’ the Corps structure,” he said, noting that his deployment provided insight into the USACE structure, project and program reporting, and project database management systems. “In the future, when I again interface with the Corps as a client, I will have a better understanding and insight into their processes, which will facilitate communication and, ultimately, a quality product, on-time and within budget.”

He also felt he is able to make a significant impact to the mission. “I am assisting in development of projects that will help to strengthen Iraq’s decentralized self-governance, provide Iraqi community services and protect critical Iraqi infrastructure assets,” he said. “All of these efforts serve to boost Iraq’s security, economic and political capacity, capability and stability.”

He said that as with all deployments, the people he works with make all the difference. “Sister service personnel from the U.S. Army and Navy, U.S. Government employees, contract personnel, and most importantly, the Iraqi people themselves,” Wise said.

“I admire the Iraqis for their courage in the face of adversity and enjoy their warm and hospitable nature as they continue their struggle to bring a better way of life to their country, their people and themselves,” he said.



Northern airmen

Maj. Douglas Gilpin, USAF, PE
Officer In Charge Anaconda Area Office

“Air Force Civil Engineers and the Army Corps of Engineers have a long history of working together. Although I’ve had some experience working with USACE in the past, it pales in comparison to the past three and a half months.

“What a great opportunity it has been to work with USACE...but to do so at the area office level where the rubber meets the road! After spending the past few years doing staff work, it’s been rewarding to get back to base level and do some no-kidding construction.

“The amount of active USACE construction here in the Salah ad Din and Diyala provinces is absolutely amazing. With just over \$110 million in MILCON here at Balad Air Base and another \$100 million in provincial projects, we are definitely making an impact—both for the Iraq people and the Coalition Forces.”

Maj. Elwood “Woody” Henry
Anaconda Area Office USAF Liaison

“I’ve been extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to work closely with USACE on this deployment. The dedication and professionalism of the men and women in the Anaconda Area Office is consistently inspiring. They truly are playing a key role in the Reconstruction of Iraq and should be proud of their accomplishments.

“Once I return to the world of USAF Civil Engineering, I will certainly have a greater appreciation for the work USACE does and the effort required to accomplish that work. Finally, I’m positive that Gary ‘El Gato’ Chaney, the Anaconda Area Engineer, does have the coolest nickname in GRN.”





Workers grind welds on a hatch beside sludge drying beds of Fallujah's future sewage treatment facility.

Fallujah sewage plant midway

STORY & PHOTO BY KENDAL SMITH
GULF REGION CENTRAL DISTRICT

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division is directing an \$85 million first-ever central wastewater treatment facility for Fallujah's estimated 200,000 residents. Started in May 2007, the project is the largest in Al Anbar province and more than 45 percent complete.

The facility is projected to be sufficient for all of Fallujah's wastewater treatment needs when the city integrates its own collection systems later and through population expansion to the year 2025. The facility is a four-train facility – a term that describes a complete beginning-to-end treatment system that usually exists in parallel and complementary sets with other trains. Included in the work is a collection system for 27 percent of the present city population, trunk mains for the projected 100 percent capability, pump stations, and a wastewater treatment plant processing 40,000 cubic meters daily (10.5 million gallons). The remainder of the collection system will be developed by the Government of Iraq.

An operational plant of Trains 1 and 2 should come on line by the end of August, while Trains 3 and 4 will likely complete around October 2008, according to Peter Collins, a project manager with the Gulf Region Central district. Having several trains enables a treatment facility to handle emergencies and to provide for future expansion, he said. Two trains

are sufficient for Fallujah at its current population, although the city is expanding faster than anticipated due to the improved security in Al Anbar province.

Key to the operation are two central pump stations that are 13 meters below ground level and will have a pumping capacity of 40 million gallons daily. Fallujah's sewerage will be sent to inlet tanks, and then directed to aerated grit and oil removal tanks, on to 60-meter diameter aeration tanks, sent to settling tanks and, finally, a chlorination contact chamber before release into the Euphrates River.

"The impact on the people of Fallujah and the environment of the Euphrates River Valley will greatly improve the health of the citizens, particularly the infants, both within the city, but also downstream where the Euphrates is the primary drinking source," Collins said. "By the end of this summer, there will be no wastewater in the collection-connected streets and children will be able to play safely outside. This represents a monumental step forward for all Al Anbar province and that is a great motivating factor for those of us bringing this project on line."

On site, Trains 1 and 2 are at the early stage of electro-mechanical work, pending delivery of the major electro-mechanical plant. Trains 3 and 4 are at the first stage of civil works. Earth fills for the two, 60m-diameter aeration tanks and four, 30m-diameter final settling tanks are in progress.

Apart from a 450-member Iraqi work force, the project has 35 Iraqi engineers visiting the various project sites daily, checking on the quality of the ongoing construction and encouraging worker safety. GRD officials meet regularly with the various construction firms on 13 separate contracts, as well as city and Iraqi ministry officials to ensure issues are worked out and the project continues to completion.

With the building of such a large structure, safety at every work location is a daily concern. A resident Iraqi Safety Engineer is expected at Camp Fallujah soon. The addition of two Safety Engineers into the Fallujah Quality Assurance (QA) team will then give the project a defined safety structure. This will mean that GRD project supervisors can raise concerns from Camp Fallujah and have them transmitted in Arabic to the QA Team on site, and they will resolve the issues directly with the contractor.

Safety and security in other areas are also noteworthy, according to Awaf Abdul Rahim, a construction manager. Fallujah's citizens are benefitting all-around.

"People are happy because our community is safer now and there are more American projects creating jobs in different areas," Rahim said. "It's helped Fallujah's unemployment. With the improvement in the security, we are inspired to work hard. Our construction crews became more serious and active and are now getting more done."

فيلق المهندسين يبني أول منشأة مركزية لمعالجة مياه المجاري في الفلوجة



عمال بناء يثبتون القضبان الحديدية قبل عملية صب الاسمنت.

بقلم كندال سمث

فرقة منطقة الخليج - قسم الوسط

الفلوجة، العراق - يقوم فيلق مهندسي الجيش الاميركي بالعمل في أول منشأة مركزية لمعالجة مياه الصرف الصحي في الفلوجة بتكلفة ٨٥ مليون دولار. وبدأ العمل فيها في أيار/مايو ٢٠٠٧ وتم انجاز ٤٥ بالمائة من مشروع يعد الأكبر في محافظة الأنبار.

ويهدف المشروع، ذو أربعة انظمة معالجة متوازية، الى تغطية حاجة الفلوجة بعد أن تدمج انظمة الجمع في المدينة اواخر ٢٠٠٨، واخذت بالحسبان زيادة السكان المتوقعة حتى عام ٢٠٢٥، ويتضمن المشروع نظاما يجمع المياه من ٢٧ بالمائة من أحياء المدينة البالغ سكانها نحو ٢٠٠ ألف نسمة، كما يضم محطات ضخ ووحدة تعالج ٤٠ الف متر مكعب يوميا (١٠،٥ مليون غالون) من مياه الصرف.

ويقع على عاتق الحكومة العراقية تطوير باقي نظام الجمع. وسيدخل حيز العمل نظاما معالجة متوازيان بحلول اواخر اب/اغسطس في حين يرجح أن يكتمل النظامان الباقيان في اواخر تشرين الأول/اكتوبر، بحسب مدير المشروع بيتر كولينز.

وهناك بعض انظمة المعالجة المتوازية تستعملها المنشأة لتعالج الحالات الطارئة ونهية المشروع لتوسيعات لاحقة.

وبامكان نظامي معالجة متوازيين سد حاجة سكان الفلوجة حاليا. ويرتفع سكان المدينة بنحو أسرع من المتوقع جراء التحسن الأمني في محافظة الأنبار عموما.

وانجز العمل في محطتي ضخ مركزيين مهمتين تقعان على عمق ١٣ مترا تحت سطح الأرض بامكانها ضخ ٤٠ مليون غالون يوميا. وترسل مجاري الفلوجة الى خزانات كبيرة لمعالجتها.

وقال كولينز "سوف يحسن المشروع كثيرا صحة السكان وبخاصة الأطفال في الفلوجة والمناطق المحاذية نهر الفرات والمناطق التي يعتمد سكانها النهر مصدرا رئيسا لمياه الشرب. وفي اواخر هذا الصيف ستختفي مياه الصرف في المجاري المكشوفة بوسط الأحياء وسيكون بامكان الاطفال اللعب خارج منازلهم في شوارع نظيفة".

واضاف ان "هذا يمثل خطوة عظيمة للأمام لصالح سكان الأنبار ما يعطينا حافزا قويا لاكمال هذا المشروع".

ويعمل في المشروع ٤٥٠ عاملا عراقيا، ويزور ٣٥ مهندسا عراقيا مختلف مواقع المشروع يوميا.

ويلتقي موظفو فيلق المهندسين، بنحو منتظم، شركات البناء التي تنفذ ١٣ عقدا ويلتقون مسؤولين وزاريين واخرين من مجلس المحافظة لضمان استمرار المشروع حتى اتمامه، ويضم فريق ضمان الجودة مهندسين من الأنبار.

وقال مدير اعمال البناء العراقي "الناس سعداء لان المدينة الان أكثر أمنا فيما تخلق المشروعات الاميركية فرص عمل في حقول عدة ... وهذا يجعلنا نعمل بجد ونشاط".



المعالج البيولوجي، فريق فيلق مهندسي الجيش الاميركي يتفحص خزان معالجة المياه الثقيلة الذي يبلغ قطره ٦٥ مترا.

Little town of Tuz gets big boost

BY LUANNE FANTASIA
GULF REGION NORTH DISTRICT

The town of Tuz, Iraq, has played a significant role in Coalition operations since 2003, and today more of its 15,000 residents have reliable electricity.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in northern Iraq completed an electrical network project in February that brings electricity generated at the Baiji power plant to approximately 3,000 Iraqi homes in this village located 110 miles north of Baghdad.

“We expanded the existing distribution system so that the same amount of electricity could be provided to more homes in the neighborhood,” said Oni Gomez, resident engineer in the Gulf Region North district’s Tikrit Resident Office.

Rehabilitating the existing Tuz power network in Salah ah Din province



USACE photo

Contractors prepare to hoist a 250 kVA transformer for placement on new power poles in Tuz, Iraq.

included installing 30 new transformers, as well as eight kilometers of conductors and power poles, Gomez added. The contractor began work in October 2007 and the project was turned over to the

Director of Electricity in Tuz on Feb. 12. The \$1.1 million project was funded through the Economic Support Fund.

“The way forward from here is for power generation to be increased,” Gomez said, “so that the system we installed in this project can be used to its full potential.”

The Gulf Region North district provides project and construction management services for military and civil construction in the seven Northern provinces of Iraq, helping the new provincial governments assume responsibility for managing their infrastructure development, as well as the capability to sustain it.

The Gulf Region North district has completed 207 reconstruction projects in the Salah ah Din Province, totaling \$209 million.

Another 28 projects are currently ongoing, totaling \$64.4 million.

Water pumps keep pressure on

Dibbis pumps project in Kirkuk province turned over to Government of Iraq

BY LUANNE FANTASIA
GULF REGION NORTH DISTRICT

Twenty-four million gallons of water a day is enough to more than whet the water appetite of 16 Iraqi villages, an Iraqi army training facility, a Coalition forces forward operating base, and at least part of the 776,000 residents of Kirkuk. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed the Dibbis Pumps project in northern Iraq last month. The project increases the supply of potable water from 18 million gallons daily to 24 million gallons daily for thousands of Iraqi citizens and Coalition forces in the region.

Water is treated and pumped through an upgraded pump station and a newly constructed intermediate station. Six new

vertical pumps were installed, an additional ground water storage tank was built, a chlorine injection system added. Also part of the project were two new transformers, medium- and low-voltage electric lines, and tie-ins to the water mains.

The \$8.2 million project, which started more than two years ago, was completed last month and turned over to the Government of Iraq. The Dibbis Pumps project was funded through the Commander’s Emergency Response Program, whereby brigade combat teams work directly with their local Iraqi community leaders to meet essential services needs.

The Gulf Region North district has completed 162 reconstruction projects in the Kirkuk Province, totaling more than \$301 million. Currently, 21 projects are ongoing, totaling \$43.9 million.



USACE photo

The Dibbis pump station increases the supply of potable water to 24 million gallons daily for the citizens of Kirkuk Province. The \$8.2 million project included six new vertical pumps, above.

Water plant rehab, expansion complete

STORY & PHOTO BY GRANT SATTLER
GULF REGION DIVISION

Like a long, cool drink, this spring the residents of southeastern Baghdad are refreshed by the recently completed renovation of the Wahda Water Treatment Plant.

“The impact is significant for the citizens of Baghdad,” said Navy Capt. Tom Brovarone, director of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division’s Reconstruction Sector. “Water is essential for life. With the summer season coming up, availability of water is even more crucial.”

Originally constructed in the 1950s, the British-designed facility was in disrepair and operating significantly below its designed capacity when improvement work began in August 2006.

Gulf Region Division’s Rod Hardeman oversaw program management for the completion of extensive renovation and new construction work funded by the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund, monies allocated by the U.S. Congress to help rebuild the Iraqi infrastructure. The Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment (AFCEE) handled the project manager role.

Hardeman explained that the treatment plant is comprised of two trains, the term for the series of sedimentation basins, filters, chemical mixers, tanks and associated plumbing that water is moved through in sequence to ensure it is safe for drinking before being pumped into the city’s distribution system.

“Prior to our arrival the plant was operating at less than 50 percent capacity,” Brovarone said following a late April visit to the jobsite. “We renovated one of the trains with equipment and retrofitted another, so today we started the wet commissioning, or the performance testing, of the train that we just finished working on.”

The project restored train 2 to its original designed output of 1,610 cubic meters an hour and almost doubled the design capacity of train 1 from 947 to 1,600 cubic meters an hour. A new sedimentation basin was built for train 1 and existing sedimentation basins for both trains were rebuilt.

“Work on the first train was completed about eight months ago,” Brovarone said. “The plant manager told me the capacity is about 1,500 cubic meters per hour. Its design capacity is 1,600, so



Potable water production is more than doubled from previous output at the Wahda facility in Baghdad.

he’s operating pretty darn well.”

Process buildings for both aluminum sulfate (used to settle particulates for removal) and chlorine (to kill harmful bacteria) steps were constructed, additional pressure filters were added, pumps were replaced in both low and high lift pump stations, the inlet structure was rebuilt, and plant electronics were upgraded for continuous operation. Management of plant operations by 25 permanent workers is directed from a new administrative building.

Brovarone said several entities orchestrated the \$17.6 million rehabilitation of the plant.

“This restoration was in concert with the Baghdad Amanant and the mayor of Baghdad in consultation with the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works ... and with our senior consultants in the State Department,” Brovarone said.

“We take a lot for granted when water comes out of our tap and when it goes down the drain. We don’t give a second thought about what it takes to provide that,” Brovarone said. “But being involved in supplying that in a country that is trying to rebuild itself is really something.”

Certainly something satisfying to another 48,000 Baghdad residents who are enjoying safe water today.

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**US Army Corps
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Khor Al-Zubair vocational technical center rehabilitation improves community skills

STORY & PHOTOS BY A. AL BAHRANI
GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently completed the rehabilitation of the basic infrastructure of the Khor Al-Zubair vocational technical center in al-Zubair district in southern Basrah province.

“The completed rehab project aims to provide a renovated facility that will promote vocational education for all Iraqis,” said James Hodges, the chief construction representative with the Basrah Area Office, Gulf Region South district.

“The school is now capable of providing training in a wide variety of trades and skills which can be further applied upon graduation,” Hodges said. “We really had a great visit with the head master, the contractor and the local people who are involved with the Khor Al-Zubair project. It’s very exciting to be able to turn over a completed project that helps the local community.”

Hodges said the work enables the school to start teaching skills to more community people.

“Really, I was very happy to be a part of the team with the head master and the school staff. I’m encouraged to see the change in the school,” he added.

The \$1.5 million project renovated two facilities comprised of more than 24 workshops, said the Basrah Area Office Iraqi Deputy Resident Engineer Al, whose last name is held for security.

According to Al, more than 6,000 square meters of new metal siding and about 1,400 lighting fixtures including wiring were installed. The water and sewer system were upgraded, including tanks, pumps and underground piping networks.

“The work also included renovating and outfitting the existing



Students practice welding in one of the 24 workshops in the Khor Al-Zubair tech center renovated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

administration building, classrooms and computer lab at the vocational technical center in addition to replacing the old 1,600 meter fence with a three-meter high brick masonry wall,” said Al.

Head Master of the Khor Al-Zubair vocational technology center, Ali Al Aibee said that since established in 1976 the school has received no maintenance or upgrade work. “The school is now ready to support the needs of 600 students and we hope to increase this number in the future, thanks to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,” added the head master.

According to the Basrah Area Engineer Daniel Foltz, cooperation was the most important element that made the Khor Al-Zubair vocational technology center project successful; cooperation between GRS and the head master and the cooperation of the community.

“With the community’s support, GRS will be able to work more in Khor Al-Zubair with follow on work at the votech as well as on other projects that will help the community,” Foltz explained.

Foltz said this project is very important to the locals as it provides them with the opportunity to learn skills that can improve both their community and their families’ standard of living.

Head Master Al Aibee said, “We are very fortunate to meet Mr. Hodges and to work together with the GRS to complete this critical project which will help the Iraqis to develop their skills and participate in rebuilding their country.”

Hodges said the project began in October 2007 and was completed on March 23, 2008. Khor Al-Zubair district (population 64,000) will benefit from greater skills in the community and improved employment opportunity for residents.



The new main entrance gate at Khor Al-Zubair tech center, which supports the needs of 600 students.

Helping others energizes electrician

BY A. AL BHRANI
GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

“The source of my enjoyment is that I’m seeing the small projects that we started become bigger and of more benefit to the Iraqi people,” said James Hodges, chief construction representative with the Gulf Region South district, Basrah Area Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. “I see everything is getting better. People’s lives are getting better and the goal is coming together.

“There is a huge change from when I first got here,” said Hodges, an electrician on his second deployment to Iraq. “There is a long way to go, [but] when I drive to Basrah and I see palm trees recently planted and I see more people movement out on the streets, I feel that there is hope and a good future for those people.”

A journeyman electrician for Oregon, Hodges works as a power plant electrician at the Bonneville Dam on the Columbia River. “I do miss seeing my kids grow up,” said the father of four, “but our efforts here are critical and very much needed by the people of Iraq.” He said the Basrah Area Office is doing a great job for the country and its people.

“I am proud of the fact that I have been able to work with so many Iraqi engineers and others who are making a difference in their country,” said Hodges, whose jobs include contacting contractors and the GRS Iraqi engineers in the field. He ensures communication flow and visits project sites about weekly.

“Communication is a huge amount of work,” he said. “Everything is difficult with communication.” Hodges said he is getting



Courtesy photo

His 1995 Harley-Davidson FLHT touring motorcycle has taken Hodges across the States several times.



Courtesy photo

James Hodges, no. 40, relaxes his mind in August 2007 between Iraq tours learning to race on a Suzuki GSX-R 600 on a track in Atlanta.



USACE photo by A. Al Bahrani

James Hodges visits the Khor Al-Zubair vocational technical center in Basrah province.

better at basics of the Arabic language for use on the job site. “I’m still not good at Arabic, but I’m getting better.”

An adventurer, during his R&R trip home last summer Hodges accomplished a 12,000 mile cross-continental roundtrip on his 1995 Harley-Davidson FLHT motorcycle, covering both coasts and points in between. “I’ll never grow tired of motorcycling,” he said. “The hills and mountains, cities and on the track.”

The Stevenson, Wash., native, who has been working as an electrician for more than 25 years throughout the United States said he is not ready to stop and go home. “I really enjoy working here and the kind of work,” he said. “It wasn’t foreign for me to come here and work with the local nationals. I’ve worked in Mexico, Africa and in other places in the world.”

He said history is being made here, and while the job is challenging, it is worthy of all the effort. Hodges tells his Iraqi co-workers that he hopes others will not see Iraq only as a war-torn country, but appreciate it for its history and heritage.

“I see what it is to be, and I see what can be done with lots of work,” he said.

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