

ESSAYONS *forward*

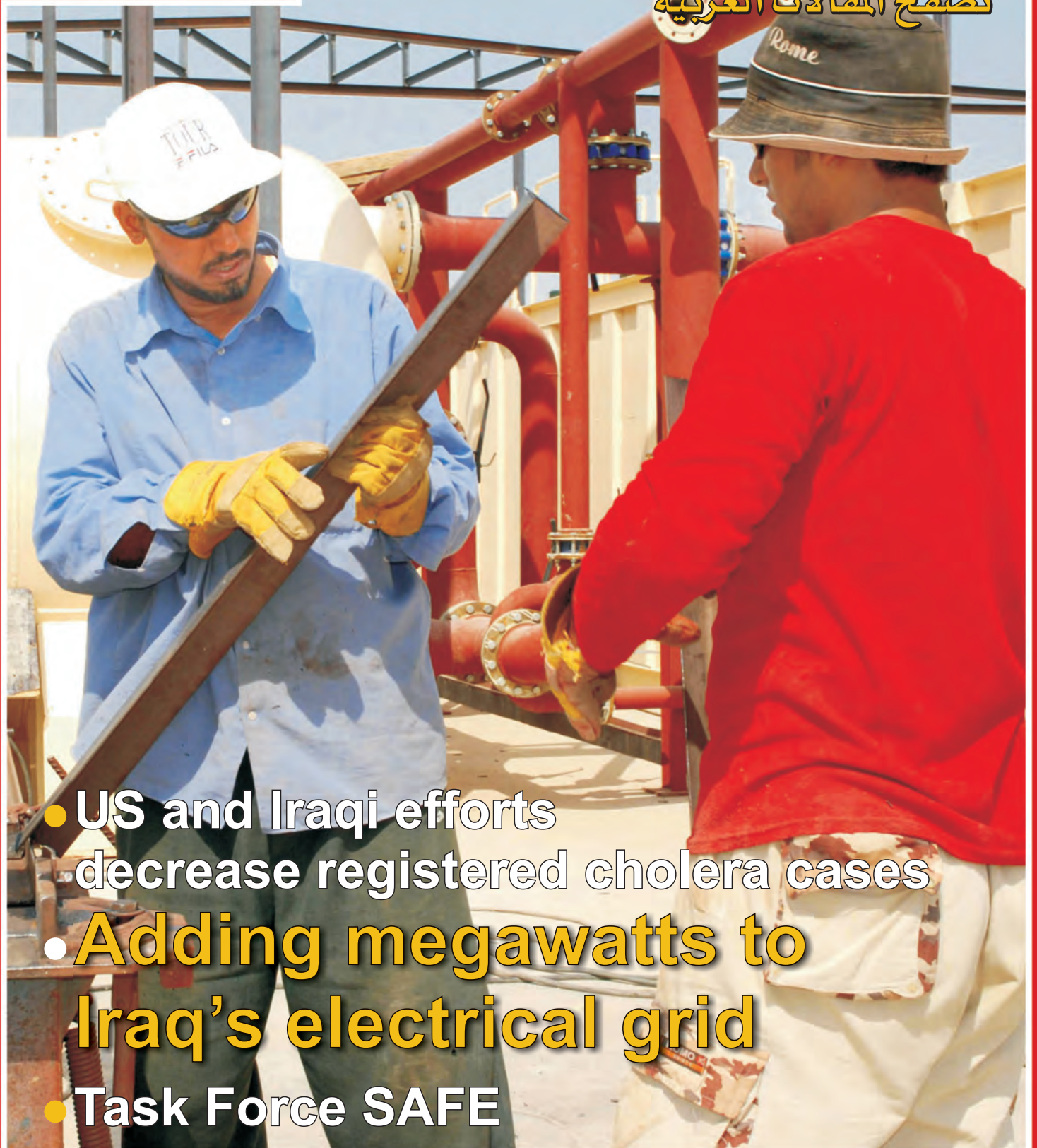


U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Gulf Region Division, Iraq - Volume 5, Issue 10

November 2008

BUILDING STRONG SM

تصفح المقالات العربية



- US and Iraqi efforts decrease registered cholera cases
- **Adding megawatts to Iraq's electrical grid**
- Task Force SAFE
- **Schools bringing hope to Iraq**

ESSAYONS *Forward*

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ESSAYONS Forward is the field magazine of the Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, published in accordance with AR 360-1. It is produced for electronic distribution with limited hardcopy circulation as needed. It is produced in the Iraq theater of operations. The views and opinions expressed in this field magazine are those of the writers and are not necessarily those of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, or the Department of Defense. Letters, articles, notices of events, photographs and art are welcomed, but may be edited for clarity and brevity. Publication of submissions is at the discretion of the editor; photos must be high resolution and include caption information.

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BUILDING STRONG™

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On the cover:



Iraqi crew helps construct additional capacity at Fadiliya's water treatment plant.

From the **kindness** of your **hearts**

Dear readers:

Your donations often bring smiles to the faces of Iraq's people in need, and reflect your American generosity. Instead of expressing our gratitude with words only, we would like to extend our thanks by publishing these expressive photos.



Message from ME



Reflecting on our great GRD family

We're in the midst of the holiday season, which is always a special time of reflection for me, however this year is especially unique, because in addition to nostalgic thoughts of family and friends, I am struck by how remarkable all this is – where we are and what we are doing is truly historic.

As we near the end of 2008, I find myself in awe of all that we've accomplished so far – and optimistic about all that the New Year will bring to Iraq and the U.S. There is a lot of uncertainty, but to quote our GRS Commander, Col. Jack Drolet, “this is a really exciting time to be in Iraq!”

Everyday we are witnessing more of the government of Iraq's ability to assume full responsibility for all the work we've accomplished together. Everyday, we help to develop a little bit more of the capability in this country, ensuring that all we've done will be managed and sustainable long

after we're gone. Everyday, we make a difference in the lives of the people of Iraq – bringing them clean water, medical facilities, schools, more power, and jobs – for the short and long term.

None of this would be possible without you – and those who came before you. You are giving a tremendous gift to the people of Iraq. I am so appreciative for the great sacrifice each of you is making, to be here and help leave Iraq a better place than we found it.

Please also share my personal thanks with your loved ones, because they are also making significant sacrifices, which are more pronounced as we celebrate the holidays and move into 2009.

We are in this together – the GRD Family – and we are making a difference!

ESSAYONS!

Maj. Gen. Mike Eyre
Gulf Region Division
Commander

From the desk of the CSM



“Carry on, all is secure”

As the holidays approach, we will find ourselves thinking about family, other loved ones and home. Hopefully you have found some special way to recognize your family, even if it is small.

Being away is never an easy thing, but is a necessary part of what we do here.

Morale suffers with certainty through these times. We should all take the opportunity to share with each other a holiday greeting, get together, luncheon or dinner. We are the family that you will spend the holidays with, so let's make the best of it.

As you find ways to get through the coming days, remember that your GRD family is here to support you. We are all here for the same reasons and can relate to one another's tribulations.

We experience freedom in our daily life, and it is the unknown person serving here who plays Santa's role -- bringing us freedom for an entire life. Holidays bring us a lot of things, but life deployed remains the same every

season.

In a poem written by LCpl Schmidt in 1986, he tells a story about finding Santa visiting the room of a Soldier to present him with a gift, but is shocked to see his condition and weeps for his poor state. The Soldier reassures him and makes him understand that it is a part of his duty. He ends the poem with “Santa please don't cry, this life is my choice” – He rolls over in bed to send Santa on his way with a “Carry on, all is secure”.

It is this message that we send home. It is this message that we send to the world during our holidays, and it is possible to send this message because of people just like us. We serve while the rest of the world will seem to take pause, reflect, rejoice and celebrate.

Thank you for your service, thank you to your family for allowing us to have you to serve and we certainly wish that you have a wonderful holiday season.

ESSAYONS! Army Strong!

Command Sgt. Maj. Richard “Mitch” Prater
Gulf Region Division



Dr. Ehsaan Jafar, director general of public health at the Ministry of Health, Lt. Col. Jarrett Purdue, water sector lead at GRD and Maj. Dan Guinan, sector lead, provincial reconstruction development council programs, discuss efforts to reduce cholera and bring skilled doctors back to Iraq at a press conference November 12.

US and Iraqi efforts decrease registered cholera cases

BY M. AMEER
GULF REGION DIVISION

The rate of cholera infection is dropping, according to the Iraqi Ministry of Health, as U.S. and Iraqi efforts continue to fight against the disease in different ways.

The Ministry of Health registers and treats the cases with the available medicine, according to Dr. Ehsaan Jafar, director general of public health at the ministry. For its part, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers helps by building primary public health centers and water treatment plants in order to enhance the quality of life for Iraqis.

"Nine people died of cholera since the epidemic disease was reported in Maysan province," Jafar said in a joint U.S. and Iraqi press conference on November 12.

"The infection rate dropped, since the Ministry of Health used to receive from 40 to 70 infected cases a day previously, but now only 25 cases were reported in the last 10 days.

"Most cases came from not well-served areas in terms of potable water, and also from areas that are not receiving electricity for a long period of time, which affects the operation of water treatment and pumping stations," Jafar added.

Cholera is mainly transmitted through contaminated water. In an effort to help

Iraq's government improve the country's infrastructure, USACE's Gulf Region Division completed dozens of public health clinics as well as water treatment plants and handed them over to the Iraqi government.

Reconstruction efforts include the health sector, where GRD transferred 133 Primary Health Clinics and 40 hospitals, according to Maj. Dan Guinan, sector lead, provincial reconstruction development council programs.

"An additional two health clinics and 13 hospitals are under construction," said Guinan.

He clarified GRD's interest in providing comfortable residence for doctors by saying "at 17 of the primary health clinics we provide on-site accommodation for four physicians. Each physician is provided a suite that includes a bedroom, kitchen, living room, and bathroom ... refrigerators, microwaves, televisions, and beds."

GRD launched 660 projects, worth \$1.6 billion, in the areas of potable water,

sewer, and water resource, according to Lt. Col. Jarrett Purdue, water sector lead.

"Our team, which includes our Iraqi government counterparts and numerous Iraqi construction companies, has built five major water treatment plants and repaired or expanded many more." Purdue said, "The largest project is the Nasiriyah water treatment plant."

According to the Associated Press, 20.9 million Iraqis have potable water, and 11.3 million have sewage removal service, as of November.

"We are in the process of turning over the new Sadr R3 water treatment plant to the Baghdad Water Authority,"

Purdue said, as he held up a bottle full of clean water from the plant demonstrating the purity.

He finished by saying, "Although we are not in the healthcare business – our projects have a direct impact on improving the quality of life for millions of Iraqis."

GRD launched 660 projects, worth \$1.6 billion, in the sectors of potable water, sewer, and water resource.

جهود عراقية-أميركية تخفض حالات الإصابة بالكوليرا بعد وفاة تسعة مصابين

مكتب العلاقات العامة
فرقة منطقة الخليج

بغداد، العراق - اعنت وزارة الصحة العراقية يوم الأربعاء ان الخط البياني لعدد الاصابات بالكوليرا في حالة انخفاض بعد وفاة تسعة اشخاص بالوباء منذ ظهوره. فيما تستمر جهود عراقية واميركية مشتركة للقضاء على هذا المرض وغيره. وتقوم وزارة الصحة برصد حالات الإصابة ومن ثم علاجها بالادوية التي تتوفر جميعها لديها،

بحسب الدكتور احسان جعفر مدير الصحة العامة في الوزارة. من جانبه يقوم فيلق مهندسي الجيش الأميركي ببناء مراكز للصحة الأولية ومحطات معالجة المياه بغية تحسين مستوى معيشة العراقيين.

وقال الدكتور جعفر في مؤتمر صحفي "توفي تسعة أشخاص جراء الإصابة بالكوليرا، منذ ظهور الوباء في محافظة ميسان ومن بعدها في محافظة بابل وقضاء الحمزة في الديوانية". و اضاف "لكن الخط البياني للاصابات في انخفاض حيث كانت وزارة الصحة تتلقى من ٤٠ الى ٧٠ حالة اصابة في بعض الأيام بينما تلقت ٢٥ اصابة في الايام العشرة الماضية". وتابع "يظهر في كل عام ما معدله ٩٣٥ حالة كوليرا، وتنتشر

الحالات غالبا في المناطق غير المخدومة بشكل جيد من حيث المياه الصالحة، والتي تنقطع عنها الكهرباء لفترات طويلة ما تؤثر في عمل محطات معالجة وضخ المياه". ووفقا لوزارة الصحة، فان جرثومة الكوليرا مستوطنة في العراق على مدار السنة لكنها تنشط في المدة من شهر آب الى كانون الأول.

وفيما يخص الجمره والخبثه، قال جعفر ظهرت حالات في عقره بمحافظة دهوك حصرا، حيث لوحظ نفوق الحيوانات واصابة الذين يعملون مباشرة معها كالفصابين والذباغين، مشيرا الى ان نوع العدوى هو الجلدي وليس

بخصوص قطاع المياه، أطلقت فرقة منطقة الخليج ٦٦٠ مشروعا بتكلفة ١,٦ مليار دولار تشمل مياه الشرب ومياه الصرف الصحي.

الذي يصيب الجهاز التنفسي او الهضمي. والكوليرا من الامراض المنقولة بالمياه الملوثة، وفي اطار مسعى فيلق مهندسي الجيش الأميركي في مساعدة الحكومة العراقية في النهوض بالبنية التحتية، قامت فرقة منطقة الخليج التابعة للفيلق بانشاء عشرات المراكز الصحية الأولية وكذلك انشاء وترميم محطات معالجة المياه. وطالت جهود اعادة الاعمار القطاع الصحي حيث ساعدت فرقة منطقة الخليج من خلال برامج تمويل مختلفة على تسليم

الحكومة العراقية ١٣٣ مركزا للصحة الاولية فضلا عن ٤٠ مستشفى فيما تزال اعمال البناء تتواصل في مركزين للصحة الاولية و١٣ مستشفى، بحسب الميجور دان كينن، قائد قطاع برامج التنمية في اعادة اعمار المحافظات.

واوضح كينن اهتمام الفرقة بتوفير سكن مريح للطباء قائلا "في ١٧ مركز صحي أولي، زودن سنا يتسع لأربعة أطباء، لهم جناح مؤثث يحتوي على غرف نوم وأسرة ومطبخ فيه فرن مايكروويف وثلاجة وغرف معيشة فيها اجهزة تلفزيون وحمامات".

أما بخصوص قطاع المياه، فأطلقت فرقة منطقة الخليج ٦٦٠ مشروعا بتكلفة ١,٦ مليار دولار تشمل مياه الشرب ومياه الصرف الصحي، بحسب قائد قطاع المياه لدى فرقة منطقة الخليج اللفتناننت كولونيل جاريت بيردو.

وقال بيردو الذي يدير قسمه برامج تنقية مياه الشرب "بني فريقنا، الذي يضم نظراؤنا في الحكومة العراقية والكثير من الشركات العراقية، خمس محطات معالجة مياه رئيسة كانت كبراها محطة مياه الناصرية، ونحن الان بصدد تسليم محطة مياه الصدر لدائرة ماء بغداد".

واضاف "برغم اننا لسنا نعمل في مجال العناية الصحية، لكن مشروعاتنا لها تأثير مباشر في تحسين معيشة ملايين العراقيين".



أحد أحواض تنقية المياه في محطة الصدر ر ٣ التي تم انجازها مؤخرا وتقدم خدمات الى نحو ٢٠٠ ألف نسمة.

Anbar Justice Center the province model for justice

BY KENDAL SMITH
GULF REGION CENTRAL DISTRICT

“The Anbar Justice Center will be the province model for justice and we want to ensure the building reflects work done with care and precision,” said Al Anbar Province Chief Justice Mohammed Al-Kubaisie.

The \$21.5 million renovation and new construction at the Anbar Judicial Complex in the provincial capital of Ramadi is designed to do just that. The project is 14 percent complete and making good progress toward the completion date of June 2009. The complex is a part of the Al Anbar Province project workload for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq.

“We’re well on our way to meeting the customer’s needs for the judicial complex,” said Construction Representative Paul Ijames, who is part of the project management team working in the Ramadi Resident Office. “It is important to us and to Anbar Province to do this well, as a model justice forum facility, especially knowing the history of this compound.”

The first phase of the renovation will transform two former palaces of Saddam’s sons to individual 1,000 square meter courthouses by the end of December 2008. Design delays have created a construction shift from an earlier expected renovation finish date. Each palace turned courthouse will contain a central courtroom, investigation offices, bathrooms and judges’ chambers. A smaller 500-square-meter courthouse will be used as a juvenile courtroom facility. Included in the renovation are: a pre-trial detention building; two 440-square-meter buildings for offices and training; and a cafeteria.

Phase 2 is new construction to add to the complex’s security, capabilities and suitability as a judicial center to be completed by the end of June 2009. Housing for the justices, as well as barracks for the junior and senior security guards, will enable them to live in a secure environment. Also in this phase are plans for student billeting and classrooms to incorporate training for court reporting and paralegal workers. Training units for the guards and housing for the detainees will provide additional support structures.

Essential services are included in this project, including an



Grinding down the welds on an Anbar Judicial Complex steel fence post produces sparks.

electrical generator facility, a water treatment plant, a sewer treatment plant, plus facilities for refrigeration, laundry, a supply warehouse and equipment storage.

In related security and judicial construction, USACE recently completed the \$11.3 million Rusafa Justice Palace serving over 1.2 million Iraqis in the Baghdad area and more than 150 border posts, nearly 100 fire stations, and 48 courthouses. There is also ongoing construction and rehabilitation projects on six correctional facilities.



Work progresses in laying foundations for the judicial housing areas.

Success at Al Hillah Hospital renovation measured in heartbeats, non-stop care

ALICIA EMBREY
GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

How do you measure success? “Regarding the \$7 million newly-renovated Al Hillah Maternity and Children's Hospital, located in Babil Province, it's more than bricks and mortar — it's all about saving lives,” said U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Construction Representative Edward Jones.

Like many USACE military, civilian and contract employees serving in Iraq, Jones will soon return home knowing his efforts directly benefitted thousands of Iraqi families.

“There are many stories that I will take away from this project but there is one that will stay with me forever,” Jones said. “On our final site visit to the hospital, I saw a father hurrying in, carrying his small son. The boy appeared to be unconscious and the man was very upset.”

Although worried about the child, Jones said this event gave him an unexpected understanding and closure to the project. “I was concerned for the child but confident that he was going to receive the quality care that could make all the difference. This scene may have played itself out hundreds of times over the four-year span of this project, but for me it was a first, and that image is a memory I'll keep forever.”

The rehabilitation included new nurses' stations, doctors' offices, an operating room, patient rooms, kitchen and cafeteria. From a construction standpoint, the facility received a face lift that includes new lighting, ceramic tile, ceilings, flooring, paint and more. Upgrades were also made to the mechanical, communications and electrical systems, including the installation of new oxygen generators, a heating/cooling system, two 1000kVA generators, a reverse osmosis water purifier, and a medical waste incinerator. A new electrical synchronization switch gear allows multiple generators to operate together meeting load requirements of the facility, Jones said.

“The list of hospital improvements is impressive. But the success of this project, as I see it, is measured by the people this facility helped during its renovation. This is a maternity and children's hospital. Its name says it all.

Iraqi families found quality professional medical care when they needed it, and that's why this project touches your heart,” Jones continued. “To my knowledge this facility never closed its doors at anytime during the renovation. Considering the hospital sees an average

of 500 people daily, with 300 requiring an overnight stay, keeping those doors open was vital to the well being of the entire community.”

Throughout Iraq, USACE has renovated 40 hospitals and an additional 13 are ongoing.



U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, Ryan C. Crocker, presents gifts to one of the young patients at the Al Hillah Maternity and Children's Hospital October 30.



USACE Project Engineer Colleen Hickey (left) and Construction Representative Toni Graves view construction progress at the new 200-cubic-meter-per-hour facility providing additional water treatment capacity for the community.

Women working to expand Iraq's water treatment capacity

BY NORRIS JONES

GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

Residents in a southern Iraqi city will soon receive more drinking water thanks to the efforts of three women with remarkable stories.

In Fadiliya, the community of 10,000 people currently receives only 60 percent of its water needs from existing infrastructure. A new 200-cubic-meter-per-hour treatment facility is under construction and expected to be complete by the end of the year.

Project Engineer Colleen Hickey and Construction Representative Toni Graves with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region Division, are overseeing the construction of the \$748,000 facility located adjacent to the existing water treatment plant there. Engineer Montaha, the Iraqi contractor's senior representative, is in charge of the crew doing the work. She grew up in nearby Muthanna Province and attended Basrah University, majoring in civil engineering.

According to Hickey, this is the largest facility of the 15 water treatment plants she is managing. She has high praise for

Engineer Montaha and the quality of construction her workforce is doing.

"As an engineer, you always look at the angles and lines, and everything there is as it should be," said Hickey. "It's a well-maintained, clean site, and unique in many aspects. For instance, in the landscaping plan, they're putting in a garden area. The storage room for chemicals is tiled in blue ceramic. It's a showpiece site and everything is done well."

Hickey enjoys her job. "I love it. I enjoy going out in the community and seeing what's really going on, how families live, talking with residents. They appreciate our efforts. They see things are getting better."

Working with USACE for 5 1/2 years in both environmental engineering and construction operations, Hickey started in the Chicago District, then Los Angeles, and most recently San Francisco District. She grew up in Chicago and graduated in 2003 from Marquette University where she says about a third of the College of

Engineering was made up of women.

Arriving in Iraq this past July, Hickey plans to serve a nine-month tour. She says her family and friends are very supportive. "They may have thought I was a little crazy, but they enjoy hearing what we're doing here and the impact we're making."

Graves, a construction representative with 34 years of government service, deployed to Iraq in December from USACE's Louisville District, Fort Knox Area office. During her 12 years there, she was involved with civil works projects such as flood control, detention basins, state parks, locks and dams.

Regarding her Iraq duty, Graves says, "I think it's wonderful we're able to help some very needy families get access to fundamental necessities. They're always kind and friendly, delighted to see these projects take shape, and grateful for what we're doing."

USACE has helped complete hundreds of other water projects in Iraq, with dozens more ongoing.

نساء يعملن لتحسين معالجة المياه في العراق

بقلم نورس جونز
قسم الجنوب في فرقة منطقة الخليج

تخصصها، الهندسة المدنية، في مشروعات تنوعت بين السيطرة على الفيضانات وأحواض خزن الماء والمنتزهات والسدود. وتقول كريفز بخصوص مهمتها في العراق "أعتقد أنها رائعة لاننا نساعد بعض العائلات المعوزة في الوصول الى الضروريات الأساسية، هم دائما لطيفون ووديون، وأنا مسرورة لرؤية هذه المشروعات وهي تتبلور وبما ننجزه".
وقدم فيلق مهندسي الجيش الأميركي المساعدة في الاشراف على ٨٢٠ مشروعا لمعالجة المياه في العراق وهناك ٨٥ مشروعا اخرى قيد الانجاز.

ماركيت حيث تقول ان نحو ثلث طلاب كلية الهندسة هناك كانوا نساء. وجاءت هيكي الى العراق في تموز 2008 وتعتزم البقاء تسعة أشهر، وقالت ان عائلتها وأصدقاءها كانوا مشجعين جدا لها، "ربما ظنوا أنني مجنونة بعض الشيء، لكنهم يتمتعون بسماع أخبار ما نعمله هنا والتأثير الذي نحدثه".
من جهتها، خدمت ممثلة البناء كريفز في الحكومة الأميركية لمدة ٣٤ عاما وجاءت في كانون الأول 2008 الى العراق من قسم لويسفيل في فيلق المهندسين، وخلال الأعوام الاثني عشر هناك، مارست

ذي قار، العراق - سيحصل سكان محافظة عراقية جنوبية قريبا على المزيد من المياه الصالحة للشرب، بفضل جهود ثلاث نساء لديهن قصص مميزة.
ويحصل ١٠ الاف نسمة يسكنون الفاضلية ٦٠ بالمائة على حاجتهم من الماء من موارد البنية التحتية المتوفرة لديهم، فيما تتواصل أعمال انجاز منشأة جديدة لمعالجة المياه بطاقة ٢٠٠ متر مكعب في الساعة يتوقع اكمال العمل فيها بأواخر ٢٠٠٨.

ويتولى كل من مهندسة المشروع كولين هيكي وممثلة أعمال البناء توني كريفز من فرقة منطقة الخليج التابعة لفيلق مهندسي الجيش الأميركي الاشراف على المشروع البالغة تكلفته ٧٤٨ ألف دولار والذي يقع بجوار محطة تنقية مياه موجودة أصلا، وتعمل الى جنبهما احدى المهندسات العراقيات، وهي كبيرة ممثلي المتعاقدين العراقيين والمسؤولة عن العمال.
ونشأت المهندسة العراقية في محافظة المثنى القريبة وتخرجت في كلية الهندسة المدنية في جامعة البصرة.
وبحسب هيكي، هذه المنشأة هي الكبرى بين ١٥ محطة لمعالجة المياه تديرها هذه المهندسة. وأثبتت هيكي عليها وعلى اتقان عمالها لأعمال البناء.

وقالت هيكي "بوصفك مهندسا، ستنتظر دائما الى الزوايا والخطوط، وكل شيء هنا كما ينبغي له أن يكون"، مضيفة ان المشروع "يتمتع بصيانة جيدة وموقعه نظيف وفريد من نوعه من عدة جوانب.
وعلى سبيل المثال، تم تخطيط حتى الحديقة وتحديد مواقع الاشجار فيها بمخطط المشروع وكذلك تم رسم مخزن المواد الكيميائية المكسو بالقرميد الأزرق، ان المكان مثال يحتذى تم انجاز كل شيء فيه بنحو جيد".

وتتمتع هيكي بانجاز عملها وتقول "احبه، أتمتع بالخروج الى المدينة ورؤية ما يحدث فيها وكيف يعيش الناس والتحدث اليهم، وهم يثمنون جهودنا بينما يرون الامور تتحسن".

ولاتزال هيكي تعمل لدى فيلق مهندسي الجيش الأميركي منذ خمسة أعوام ونصف العام في مجال هندسة البيئة وعمليات البناء، وبدأت في قسم ولاية شيكاغو التي نشأت فيها وتخرجت في ٢٠٠٣ في جامعة



عامل عراقي يمارس عمله في محطة مياه جنوبي العراق تشرف على بنائها ثلاث نساء.

Task Force

SAFE

BY JOAN KIBLER

TRANSATLANTIC PROGRAMS CENTER

Electrical hazards in Iraq have caused several fatal electrocutions and a number of shocks and related fires.

In response, the Multi-National Force-Iraq created Task Force for Safety Actions for Fire and Electricity – Task Force SAFE – and has begun a massive inspection program of facilities used by U.S. troops and civilians in Iraq. With recent contract awards, the Transatlantic Programs Center and the Philadelphia District are supporting the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' response to this significant life safety effort.

Task Force SAFE is leading the efforts to provide a safer environment for service members and civilians. It uses a multi-pronged approach of awareness campaigns, education and training among the troops; improved plans, policies and procedures; and inspection, repair and quality assurance to ensure that U.S.-occupied facilities meet fire and electrical codes. The task force is a partnership between MNF-I, the Defense Contract Management Agency, and the Corps of Engineers.

MNF-I asked the Corps of Engineers to provide master electricians and fire inspectors to assist with the inspections.

On Sept. 12, TAC awarded a \$59.5 million contract to support electrical and fire safety inspections throughout Iraq. The task order contract was awarded to the joint venture Stanley Baker Hill LLC. of Muscatine, Iowa, for one year, with two six-month option periods.

Under its contract, SBH provides the services of 70 master electricians and more than 30 fire protection specialists. The SBH team was in Iraq by Oct. 30.

“To support Task Force SAFE efforts, Corps of Engineers and SBH personnel are providing electrical system and fire protection assessments on existing facilities throughout Iraq,” said Christopher Campbell, TAC project manager, Iraq Branch.

The contract calls for SBH to inspect more than 85,000 military facilities, approximately 4,500 buildings and up to 250 contingency operating locations. These facilities include those covered under the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program as well as facilities maintained by others.



Substandard wiring found by Task Force Safe.

Immediate USACE Response

Until the SBH contract was awarded and its team arrived in country, the Corps responded with a “bridging effort,” according to Whitney Scully, USACE Military Programs Directorate. “More than 30 government employees responded to the call that went out in September for volunteers to assist Task Force SAFE,” Scully said. Specifically, the Corps sought electricians, electrical engineers and fire safety experts skilled in all types of building electrical and fire safety inspections.

“This effort included 16 Soldiers from the 249th Engineer Battalion (Prime Power) who arrived in mid-September and another 17 government personnel who arrived by mid-

October,” Scully said.

The 249th is a power generation battalion assigned to the USACE to provide commercial-level power to military units and federal relief organizations.

By early December, personnel of the 249th will redeploy from Iraq, but Scully expects many of the government volunteers to remain, at MNF-I's request, as advisors to Task Force SAFE. “Several volunteers have already extended their deployments for up to a year or expressed interest in extending,” he said. “The work is critical for the life safety of our service members and civilians serving in Iraq.”

In addition to the SBH contract award, the Philadelphia District awarded a \$9 million contract to Inglett & Stubbs International of Smyrna, Georgia, for electrical inspections and assessments and for making immediate life, health and safety repairs at up to 250 contingency operating locations throughout Iraq.

“ISI is a utilities contractor providing 20 journeyman electricians, who operate in two-man teams, to do inspections and make repairs,” said William Bailey, Philadelphia District project manager and contracting officer. The contract is for six months with an option for 6 months.

After ISI completes the repairs, 249th personnel perform the quality assurance reviews. After the 249th departs, government inspectors will perform the quality assurance, Bailey said.



Sgt. Shane Basler, left, and Sgt. Timothy Florentino determine if the panel box is in compliance with the electrical code. This is part of the training for Task Force SAFE.

Urgency of the Work

According to a Sept. 29 article in Victory Times, published by the Multi-National Corps-Iraq, fires occur frequently at U.S.-occupied facilities. Maj. Gen. Timothy McHale, head of Task Force SAFE, said the “fires are caused by overloading circuits, constant running of electrical equipment, ballasts burning out, putting clothes on top of wires, or running wires underneath beds.”

In other cases, shocks and electrocutions could be traced to improper wiring of temporary facilities, according to Lt. Col. Paul Olsen, 249th commander.

The focus of the inspections is on grounding and bonding within the facilities to ensure they meet the electrical code and minimize the risks of injury, death and fires.

“A safely wired facility is bonded and grounded with the presence of a wiring system that permanently joins all metallic parts in a facility or unit, and provides a safe path for electrical current to travel back to its source, or to the ground,” Olsen said.

Early inspection results by the 249th found some bonding problems that could be fixed quickly, while in other cases, electrical work was not in compliance with any code.

The SBH personnel are part of 35 teams, each with two electricians, one fire inspector and a DCMA representative, Campbell said. “DCMA personnel are in the lead to provide the inspection oversight for MNF-I.”

Through daily inspections, SBH is identifying electrical installations that do not comply with the required codes – either U.S. or British standard – that could contribute to deaths, injuries, electrical hazards or fire. SBH will perform minor disassembly and reassembly of electrical components,

such as electrical panel board covers and ground connections.

When electrical faults are identified at the military installations, they are reported to the mayor's cell or the unit commander and then the unit passes the repair work to a contractor. The mayor's cell is akin to a small town, handling the facilities and infrastructure. When faults are identified at the contingency operating locations, they are repaired by ISI. The DCMA-led teams will then reinspect the repairs.

SBH Contract

Compared to other architect-engineer task order contracts that TAC awards, this \$59.5 million contract is significant, according to David Worthington, civil engineer, Engineering Division.

That's especially so considering the volume of work to be accomplished in a one-year period. “Not many A-E contracts have this level of capacity,” he said.

“SBH possesses significant reach-back capabilities from its stateside partners Michael Baker Jr., Stanley Consultants and Hill International,” Worthington said. “These are three well-established and all-encompassing firms that can provide the resources required for this task order in an expedited manner. A single A-E firm on its own would not have this same capacity or capability.”

Worthington also said SBH has the requisite experience to successfully deliver projects in Iraq and the firm “understands the critical nature of the electrical problems in Iraq.”

Because of the urgency of the work, TAC completed the contracting action in less than 30 days.

“These actions will help the Soldiers and our civilians overseas, and I am confident that we can correct the issues and deficiencies that led to this task order effort,” Worthington said.

“

I love to travel and am a student of history and archeology, so being next door to the ancient city of Ur, the Ziggurat and the house of Abraham has been a real treat.

John Kassebaum, with the Gulf Region Division South district, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, office of counsel



Kassebaum finds plenty to smile about in Iraq

BY JOHN CONNOR
GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

John Kassebaum, counsel for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region South district, found that sunrise in the desert is a great time of day. “Everything is quiet and peaceful until the sun gets up in the sky and the heat and wind turn the place into a blast furnace,” he said.

Kassebaum is winding up an eight-month tour in Iraq and will return shortly to his job with USACE's Charleston, South Carolina district where he worked for 10 years. A graduate of the University of South Carolina School of Law, Kassebaum said, “Iraqi business practices are different but I think both the contractors and the GoI (Government of Iraq) view us as fair and equitable in our administration of construction contracts; sort of like the honest broker, which is why Iraq has provided new funding for the U.S. to use for projects that benefit the Iraqi people.”

GRS is headquartered at Tallil Air Base near the city of Nasiriyah. The district

oversees construction projects in Iraq's nine southern provinces, helping communities with new schools, hospitals, courthouses, water treatment plants, roads and bridges. Kassebaum's job is to provide legal advice and assistance to the GRS commander and staff or as he put it, “basically, my job here was to help with construction contract formation, award and administration.”

“Probably the highlight was working to award the Port of Umm Qasr pier and seawall project,” said Kassebaum. “This \$53 million project was USACE's first Foreign Military Sales project in Iraq, which means it's funded by the Government of Iraq.”

Kassebaum recalls walking to work one morning and seeing a small fox strolling across the compound, an experience that brought to mind the “Desert Fox” of World War II fame. “I saw the fox a few more times, but I think he's moved on,” he said. Other memorable sidelights include sharing

fresh yogurt and dates with Iraqis while learning various local customs from them.

Kassebaum will return home to his two children, a daughter of 14 and a son who turned 12 while he was in Iraq. “I miss them very much and am very excited about being back with them again.” He grew up in Kansas and moved to Charleston 28 years ago. “We all love being on the water, fishing, and just going to an uninhabited island beach for the day in our boat.” He also has family in Council Grove, Kan., Huntsville, Tenn., and Fairfield, Conn.

Reflecting on his tour, Kassebaum said, “I love to travel and am a student of history and archeology, so being next door to the ancient city of Ur, the Ziggurat and the house of Abraham has been a real treat.”

These are pieces in the mosaic of a tour Kassebaum described as “a great experience both personally and professionally.”

US, Iraq partner on \$15 million police academy project

BY LUANNE FANTASIA
GULF REGION NORTH DISTRICT

The Irbil Police Academy was turned over to the Government of Iraq Oct. 15 as a result of the partnership between U.S. and Iraqi government entities' working together for a common goal.

"This project is an example of the successful partnership between the Kurdistan Ministry of Interior, the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team [CPATT] in Irbil, and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers," said Gary York, resident engineer at the USACE Irbil Resident Office. "The training provided at the new academy will help stabilize the security for not only the Kurdistan region, but all of Iraq."

The \$15 million project was funded by both the Kurdistan Regional Government and the U.S. Government; \$5 million and \$10 million, respectively. It sits on 149,000 square meters, and consists of an administration building, restaurant, dormitory and education center; a sports field; and all supporting infrastructure for the facility. The year-long project completed without contract modification, on time and within budget.

Maj. Gen. Nelson J. Cannon, director general for the CPATT of the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq, said the academy will help provide the specialized training Iraq needs to uphold the rule of law. "The future of a stable, secure and prosperous Iraq begins when communities and government have trust and faith in their police force," Cannon said. "A police force has to be competent and demonstrate everyday their respect for upholding the rule of law."

The academy will provide training for more than 650 police cadets at any given time. "We share responsibility as Iraqis to

provide security for all people of Iraq--whether they be Iraqi, Kurdish or Turkoman," said Irbil's Minister of Interior Sinjari. "We must do everything to make sure our homeland does not become a haven for terrorism...we must prevail."

The early-morning events on the new campus included a pass in review of Iraqi police officers and cadets, followed by the dedication of a bronze bust of Army 1st Lt. Ashley Henderson-Huff.

With her father present and participating in the dedication, the monument of Henderson-Huff was uncovered. Henderson-Huff was a Military Police Officer assigned to the Irbil Police Transition Team in 2005. She was instrumental in the development of the Irbil Police Academy plans, working closely with Sinjari and the Provincial Director of Police—having a strategic impact on the Irbil Province. She died of injuries suffered in Mosul, Iraq in September 2006, when a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated near her mounted patrol during combat operations.

"This Irbil Police Academy did not just happen," York said during the event. "It was a dream and hope of many people...and one of them was 1st Lt. Ashley Henderson-Huff."

Since the Iraq Reconstruction Program began in 2004, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Irbil Resident Office has provided project and construction management for more than 87 reconstruction projects in the Irbil Province of northern Iraq. Completed projects total more than \$314 million and include health and education; electrical; security and justice; public works and water; and transportation.



The new academy will provide training for more than 650 Iraqi Police cadets at any given time; with the specialized training Iraq needs to uphold the rule of law.



Maj. Gen. Michael R. Eyre (standing) discusses concerns raised by members of the Iraqi Navy delegation about the Umm Qasr pier and seawall project at the October 16 meeting.

US, Iraqi leaders partner on major Iraqi-funded project

BY PATRICIA RYAN
GULF REGION DIVISION

Construction is scheduled to begin on new piers and a seawall at Umm Qasr, in the Al Basrah Province of Southern Iraq, at the end of 2008.

Leaders from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region Division, the Iraqi Navy, Iraq Ministry of Defense, contractors and support staff met October 16, to discuss the new conceptual design for the construction of the first Foreign Military Sales project for USACE in Iraq. Foreign Military Sales is a program which allows the host country to pay the U.S. government for construction and supplies related to its military. The meeting served as an opportunity to clear up misunderstandings and develop the partnerships that will see this project to completion.

“I commit to the head of the Iraq Navy, that if he wishes, he and I, or our representatives, will personally inspect the project monthly, and resolve any issues that might arise,” said Brig. Gen. Charles D. Luckey, deputy commanding general, Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq, Security Assistance Office. “The ultimate agent to make sure Iraq gets what it pays for on this project at Umm Qasr is the U.S.A.”

Representatives for the contractor selected for this project, CCI Inc/PolyEarth Construction, International, provided a thorough briefing on the conceptual design for the piers and seawall at Umm Qasr. Jeffrey R. Mckinda, director of operations for PolyEarth, assured the Iraqi Navy he would personally be on site throughout construction to ensure all aspects of the contract are delivered as promised.

Rear Adm. Mohammed Jawad Khadum, commander of the Iraqi Navy, expressed the need for assurances from USACE representatives that they would be directly involved with quality control, which prompted a discussion and exchange of ideas.

Col. Jack Drolet, commander Gulf Region South district said, “The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers delivers a quality product. We hold the contractor responsible for delivering the project up to standard, on time and within budget. As construction progresses, we will perform detailed inspection and analysis of materials and closely coordinate with the construction team to ensure we are all moving forward with the same expectations.”

“Thanks to the team for the long discussions,” said Jawad. “The Iraqi Navy is pleased to have a voice in the process.”

The team adjourned on a positive note and agreed to meet again soon to make certain all parties are aware of the process and to ensure construction will proceed on time to meet the scheduled delivery of the new Iraqi Navy ships slated for late 2009.



Coalition leaders discuss the future of Umm Qasr at the partnering meeting on October 16.

Army engineers provide training, guidance for the future of Iraq

BY LUANNE FANTASIA
GULF REGION NORTH DISTRICT

Engineers with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region Division, are teaching and mentoring their Iraqi counterparts on every aspect of reconstruction project development, preparing them to continue building and managing Iraq's infrastructure after the Coalition leaves.

Lt. Col. Jack Hourguettes is an Army engineer assigned to the Kirkuk Provincial Reconstruction Team—a joint effort to integrate infrastructure projects in the province; training, coaching, advising, increasing engineering expertise, and improving decision-making, while balancing political and engineering requirements.

“We've been in Iraq five years and have had PRTs for three years,” Hourguettes said. “We (the U.S.) are still cleaning up from Katrina after three years. Our efforts in Iraq will not be an overnight success. It will take the Iraqi people maintaining and pursuing from this generation to their grandchildren's generation, but the rewards will be so much better than if we had just walked away.”

PRT engineers are teachers and diplomats, simultaneously ensuring their Provincial Reconstruction Development Council (PRDC) is capable of performing engineering assessments; designing scopes of work and conducting quality assurance and quality control; accomplishing construction processes and managing projects.

Hourguettes splits his time equally between the Kirkuk Government Building downtown and in remote villages. He works with the deputy governor of the Kirkuk Province, as well as the deputy generals for water, sewer, roads and bridges, and electricity. Other Kirkuk PRT members work with the deputy generals for rule of law, education and others, he explained.

“The deputy generals are appreciative, well-educated people who are experts in their field of work,” he said. “They have a great ability to visualize and conceptualize projects and I have the greatest confidence in the world in them.”

Today, the city of Kirkuk looks and plans ahead 20 years. Funds from the Iraq Central Government have been secured for the first phase of the 32-kilometer Kirkuk Southern Bypass Road that will allow the city to expand for residents and businesses; a sewer master

plan will replace existing septic tanks with a modern sewer and rain water system. The final or working design is funded by the central government, which Hourguettes said, “...is a major milestone for them to take ownership.”

Both of these infrastructure upgrades are included in a four-volume, 20-year master plan for the city of Kirkuk, commissioned to a private American contractor and funded with Economic Support Funds.

“The 20-year master plan reflects where the city of Kirkuk started and where it is today with a breakdown of its infrastructure,” Hourguettes explained. “The plan identifies how property can be used more efficiently and outlines where the city can grow geographically and the best areas for industry and business. It's not a directive, but a map to how Kirkuk can attract business and grow accordingly.”

When the Coalition Forces first arrived in Iraq, they brought with them the funds

and the ability to hire experts to design key reconstruction projects. “Now we're finishing the design work and turning it over to the provincial governments,” said Hourguettes, “and it's incumbent on them to secure funding to actually build these projects. It's the same as a state in the United States securing federal funding for an infrastructure improvement.”

Hourguettes biggest enjoyment here is out in the remote villages and talking to the village elders. “We try to assess realistic needs of the village and put together realistic project proposals; submit them to the PRDC; and follow through to funding by the Iraq Central Government in Baghdad. We're here such a short time (10 – 12 months) that we may get to see only a few projects to the end.”

“I guess the tag line to us being here in Iraq,” Hourguettes said, “is that we're trying to bring a better infrastructure, stability and unified peace to Iraq's children and grandchildren.”



Hourguettes' poster of John Wayne in "The Green Berets" hangs in his Kirkuk office. A quote at the end of the movie reminds Hourguettes daily, "...[children] are the reason we're fighting this war."

Adding megawatts to Iraq's electrical grid

BY ERICH LANGER
GULF REGION DIVISION

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region Division's largest remaining electrical generation project added two work shifts to keep pace on one of Iraq's most important infrastructure projects, the Qudas Generation Plant.

The Qudas expansion initiative, first started in September 2006, will result in an additional 200 mega watts of power added to the electrical grid. More than 200 Iraqi skilled and semi-skilled laborers are working hard to finish construction, and begin commissioning and testing in early 2009. Full electrical production is scheduled for April 2009.

"We are helping meet the basic needs of the people of Iraq - with electricity, water and medical care... things many of us take for granted everyday," said Maj. Gen. Michael R. Eyre. "After Qudas is finished, GRD's goal of adding 2,160 megawatts to the Iraqi grid will be complete."

U.S. Navy Commander Jerome Zinni has been in Iraq for almost four months with most of his time spent at Qudas. He has a short mission statement: "Finish Qudas and get those mega watts on the grid to strengthen the Baghdad ring."

The \$170 million project features two huge General Electric Frame 9E generators that will add much needed megawatt capacity to the grid, resulting in more hours of power for average Iraqis "that have growing desires, but still have a very limited supply of electricity," Zinni said. "Formulas vary and are far from an exact science; but each mega watt is enough to benefit approximately 904 households."

Using these figures, more than 180,000 Iraqi households could benefit from the Qudas expansion project. Many factors determine hours of power, but this expansion will create more power that is not currently on the Iraqi grid. Demand outstrips available power supplies as Iraqis purchase and hook up energy hungry electrical appliances like air conditioners, refrigerators, microwave ovens and a litany of other electrical items.

GRD Deputy Energy Division Chief Kent McAnany explained that essential services such as "hospitals, police, fire stations and other Government of Iraq services are supposed to receive power 24/7, while additional government buildings (schools, etc.) receive electricity during regular business hours." "Finally, Iraqi residents get the remainder," he said.

During the former regime, little money was expended on the development or maintenance of the electrical infrastructure in Iraq. In 2004 the World Bank estimated that \$20 billion would be needed to rehabilitate and restore Iraq's electrical infrastructure. Since then, the U.S. Department of State's Iraq Transition Assistance Office analysts have determined the actual cost may be closer to \$30 billion.

"GRD's role is to help 'jump start' Iraq infrastructure construction and rehabilitation after three decades of neglect," said Eyre. To date, GRD and its Iraqi partners have completed more than 4,200 projects in electricity, oil, water, health, education, and security and justice projects.



The \$170 million Qudas Generation Plant expansion features two huge General Electric Frame 9E generators that will add much needed megawatt capacity to the grid.



More than 200 Iraqi skilled and semi-skilled laborers are working at the Qudas expansion initiative, which started first in September 2006, and will result in an additional 200 megawatts of power added to the electrical grid.

توسيع محطة كهرباء عراقية كبيرة يضيف ٢٠٠ ميكاوات الى الشبكة

بقلم اريك لانكر
فرقة منطقة الخليج

بغداد، العراق - تتواصل اعمال البناء في أكبر مشروع لتوليد الطاقة الكهربائية بين المشروعات التي تشرف عليها فرقة منطقة الخليج التابعة لفيلق مهندسي الجيش الأميركي وذلك عن طريق استحداث وجبتي عمل اضافيتين لمشروع محطة القدس الكهربائية التي تعد واحدة من اهم مشروعات البنية التحتية العراقية.

وبدأت مبادرة توسيع محطة القدس في أيلول ٢٠٠٦، وسوف تولد ٢٠٠ ميكاوات من الكهرباء تضاف الى الشبكة المحلية. ويعمل بجد في المشروع قرابة ٢٠٠ عامل عراقي ماهر أو غير ماهر بغية انجاز أعمال البناء، ومن ثم البدء بالاختبارات في مطلع ٢٠٠٩. ومن المقرر أن تعمل المحطة بطاقتها القصوى في نيسان ٢٠٠٩.

وقال الميجور جنرال مايك أير قائد فرقة منطقة الخليج التي تشرف على المشروع "نعمل على المساعدة في تلبية الحاجات الأساسية للشعب العراقي، كالكهرباء والماء والعناية الطبية ... وهي أشياء نعددها من المسلمات في حياتنا اليومية".

وأضاف أير "بعد انجاز محطة القدس، سوف يتحقق هدف فرقة منطقة الخليج في اضافة ٢١٦٠ ميكاوات الى شبكة الكهرباء في العراق".

من جانبه أوجز الكوماندر جبروم زيني، الذي قضى معظم مدة خدمته البالغة أربعة أشهر بالعراق في محطة القدس، مهمته بالقول: "انجاز العمل بمحطة القدس و اضافة هذه الطاقة المقدره بالميكوات الى شبكة بغداد".

ويضم المشروع الذي تبلغ تكلفته ١٧٠ مليون دولار مولدتين كبيرتين طراز جنرال إلكتريك الأميركية، ومن شأنها ان تقلل ساعات قطع الكهرباء يوميا للعراقيين الذي يقول زيني بخصوصهم "لديهم رغبة متزايدة، لكن لايزال التجهيز بالكهرباء محدودا جدا"، مضيفا "الأرقام متفاوتة، لكن كل ميكاوات واحد يكفي نحو ٩٠٤ منزل".

وباجراء عملية حسابية، فان بإمكان أكثر من ١٨٠ ألف منزل عراقي الاستفادة من مشروع توسيع محطة القدس. وتحدد عدة عوامل ساعات التجهيز بالكهرباء، وبفوق الطلب على الكهرباء تجهيزها الحالي فيما يواصل العراقيون شراء اجهزة تستهلك الكثير من الطاقة مثل مكيفات الهواء والأفران العادية والميكروويف وغيرها.

وأوضح نائب مدير قسم الطاقة لدى فرقة منطقة الخليج كينت مكاناني ان المرافق الأساسية مثل "المستشفيات ومراكز الشرطة واطفاء الحرائق والمرافق الحكومية الأخرى يفترض ان تصلها الكهرباء على مدار الساعة، في حين ان مباني رسمية أخرى (كالمدارس، الخ) ينبغي أن تصلها الكهرباء خلال ساعات الدوام النهاري ... ويحصل المواطنون العراقيون على ما تبقى".

وصرفت خلال عهد النظام السابق مبالغ قليلة على تطوير البنية التحتية الكهربائية وصيانتها، وفي ٢٠٠٤ قدر البنك الدولي حاجة اعادة تأهيل واصلاح البنية التحتية للكهرباء العراقية بمبلغ ٢٠ مليار دولار، لكن بعدها قدر مكتب المساعدة الانتقالية في العراق التابع لوزارة الخارجية الأميركية التكلفة الحقيقية لذلك بنحو ٣٠ مليار دولار.

وختم أير بالقول ان "دور فرقة منطقة الخليج هو المساعدة في دفع اعمال بناء و اعادة تأهيل البنية التحتية في العراق الى الامام بسرعة بعد ثلاثة عقود من الازمة".

ولغاية يومنا هذا، انجزت فرقة منطقة الخليج وشركاؤها العراقيون أكثر من ٤٢٠٠ مشروعا مختلفا في قطاعات الكهرباء والنفط والماء والصحة والتعليم والأمن والعدالة.



أضيف الى محطة كهرباء القدس التي تكلفت ١٧٠ مليون دولار مولدتان طراز 9E من انتاج شركة جنرال موتورز، ما ستضيف مزيدا من السعة الانتاجية مقدره بالميكوات الى شبكة الكهرباء الوطنية في العراق.



Basra neighborhood welcomes new primary healthcare center

BY A.AL BAHRANI
GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

A newly-opened primary healthcare center in Basra is providing improved medical care and much-needed jobs for the local community.

Dr. Hadeel Sami, the PHC's administrator reports serving about 90 patients daily. "We plan to double our staff of 30 personnel within the next few months and offer additional services," she noted. "Local families tell us they're very happy to have this facility in their community."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

oversaw construction of the new two-story medical facility, which serves the Hai Al Muhandiseen neighborhood of about 10,000 residents. The healthcare center is equipped with exam rooms, dental rooms, an x-ray facility, as well as laboratories, classrooms, vaccination and treatment rooms and a pharmacy. There are also offices and meeting rooms for the doctors and administrative staff.

Pharmacist Zainab Ali, with seven years experience dispensing medications to Iraqis, says this is the most modern

facility she's been assigned. "It's got state-of-the-art equipment, plenty of space, a data system, public address and fire alarm system, as well as emergency generators for backup power."

Abo Laith, who seriously injured his right hand in an accident said, "I'm lucky that my home is just a ten minute walk from here. If this facility did not exist, I would have had to drive about 20 kilometers to get emergency medical care. We're very fortunate to have this available nearby."

The Basra deputy area engineer for the Gulf Region South district is an Iraqi known as Engineer Al. Al oversaw the facility's construction and said, "The opening of the new \$330,000 Al Muhandiseen primary healthcare center is another important step to achieving the goal of offering modern healthcare services to all Iraqi neighborhoods."

USACE recently completed six other PHCs in the Basra Province and has another three nearing completion. Throughout Iraq, of the 132 primary healthcare facilities financed by the Iraqi Relief and Reconstruction Fund, 125 have been turned over to the Iraqi Ministry of Health.



A pharmacist helps provide prescription medication to an Iraqi woman at the newly-opened Al Muhandiseen Primary Healthcare Center.

Dependable water source coming soon to Basra

BY A. AL BAHRANI
GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

Two million Basra residents will soon have a more dependable source of household water for cleaning, cooking, bathing, and washing.

A \$5 million project, scheduled to complete next summer, will connect permanent power to the Sweetwater Canal Pump Station #2. About 70 Iraqis are on the crew installing a new switch gear room, two 5 megavolt amp transformers and two new 1.5 megavolt back-up generators.

"The project is directly impacting Basra's economy," said Iraqi engineer Sattar, who works for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "Local Iraqis are on the construction crew earning steady paychecks and most of the construction materials are being purchased from area businesses," he noted.

Prior to the war, only 12.9 million people in Iraq had access to potable water. Now, nearly 21 million people do, according to Associated Press statistics.

Once complete, the pump station will connect to Iraq's permanent power grid, lessening its reliance on generators. "So far, 78 kilometers of 33kV transmission lines and 517 steel

pole structures have been installed to provide power there," he said.

Taha Yaseen, who has been the facility administrator there for 11 years, said, "these upgrades to the Sweetwater Canal Pump Station #2 are very critical. Without them, the facility would not meet its capacity. Part of the project includes about 500 meters of chain-link fence to make the site more secure."

The facility contains 16 major electrical pumps and three additional back up diesel pumps with the capacity of 3600 cubic meters per hour for each one. "Basra has long relied on this two-decade-old pump station to supply its domestic water needs," Yaseen continued.

"Once the work is finished, the pump station will have a reliable power source for round-the-clock operations immediately benefitting families in more than 25 area neighborhoods," he concluded.

Throughout Iraq the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers oversaw the completion of hundreds of other water supply projects with dozens more ongoing.

Schools bringing hope to Iraq

BY KENDAL SMITH
GULF REGION CENTRAL DISTRICT

Themes of hope dominate school openings and ribbon cutting events throughout Iraq. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Gulf Region Division has overseen the renovation or new construction of nearly 1,100 schools, and another 38 are still in construction.

"This ancient civilization of Mesopotamia between the two rivers taught the world how to read and how to write," said Ahmed Rubayee, director general of Baghdad's Rusafa secondary education department at Al Neel School, which opened in July. "That is what we are doing here today, establishing a school - and to once again be civilized and concentrate on teaching our children to read and write."

With the same theme of hope in a stable civilization for education, a new wing of six classrooms for Al Abrar primary school, south of Baghdad, opened for students on Oct. 15. Located in the Mahmoudiyah Qada district, this nearly \$500,000 project adds much needed classroom space and facilities for this rural area.

"The ribbon cutting for this school not only signals the completion of a building, it signals one small addition of hope for the Iraqi people," said Col. Ron Light, Gulf Region Central district commander. "While we are here to celebrate the completion of a school, more importantly, you can see the faces of hope on the children. You see the joy of being at a decent school, and that is exciting."

The school has more than 650 students, but due to a lack of teachers, can only conduct one crowded session. At the ceremony, Al Abrar's headmaster, Mahmoud Alewee said, "This new building serves us well since the school was never expanded from its beginning in 1960 until now, but we need more rooms."

Two additional new-construction schools in the Qada area are 50 percent complete and are expected to finish in January before the second semester begins.

Buildings are a large concern, but adequate teachers and headmasters continue to be an issue for the Ministry of Education. By most western standards, Iraqi schools open with too many students and not enough staff.

Typical of Iraqi school construction for both elementary and secondary, the two-story masonry buildings at Al Neel contain 12 classrooms, an administration



Ribbon Cutting: Al Abrar Headmaster Mahmoud Alewee cuts the ribbon with Project Engineer Philip Taylor, of Gulf Region Central district .

section, a workshop, and bathroom facilities in a 3,500 square meter walled compound. Another similar school is near completion in Husseinayah, as Imam Al Sadiq Elementary will open soon. Clearly the newest building in a rubble-strewn area north of Baghdad, Al Sadiq is remarkable for the contrast to its surroundings.

Al Bayaa Elementary School is an additional example of ongoing construction to meet increasing demands. Its 12 classrooms for 500 students will reside in a two-story masonry building with a one-story administration building, restrooms, a canteen and playground on a 7,500 square meter property in the



Students run back to classrooms after Al Abrar ribbon cutting ceremony.

southwestern part of Baghdad. Al Bayaa is scheduled for occupancy by the first of next year.

As a definite bonus to educating the local children, the more than 1,100 school projects throughout Iraq have significant economic stimulus inherent with the hiring of local contractors, suppliers, craftsmen and laborers in the specific neighborhoods where the work is executed.

According to Director General Rubayee, there are 100 more schools, similar to the high standards of Al Neel, being built in the Rusafa area alone. He says Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has announced plans for 4,000 more schools in the very near future.

"Thank you for your patriotism and the support to Iraq in this critical time," Rubayee said to the USACE staff at the July opening. "We are all doing this for the children, for the future of Iraq."

"This is a symbol of Iraq returning to normalcy," Light said at Al Abrar. "It is a progression of wonderful things happening in Iraq for the benefit of the Iraqi people."

"Abrar" is a reverential word related to doing good deeds. In rebuilding an ancient nation working to restore its civilization, such deeds are not only essential, but critical to success.



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