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Incoming deputy commander visits Gulf Region South district

By John Connor
Gulf Region South District



Air Force Col. Vince Saroni, incoming deputy commander of USACE's Gulf Region Division, with Iraqi children near Basrah. (USACE photo)

joined GRS Commander Col. Steve Hill in meeting with the Maj. Gen. Habib Talib Al Hussein, commander of the Iraqi 10th Division, and his deputy, Brig. Gen. Jabbar Naeemah Karam Al-Tae, to discuss security in connection with the USACE reconstruction activities and related matters.

The colonel also was visiting Basrah when it sustained its heaviest rocket attack in memory. Other than that, he said he is grateful for the reception he has received in the south.

TALLIL, Iraq – Col. Vince Saroni, the incoming deputy commander of the Gulf Region Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, said the people who work for the division's Gulf Region South district “have a lot to be proud of.”

The colonel said the district is doing great things for the people of Iraq and that Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Dorko, the GRD commander, holds the southern district in high regard. He said GRS is doing pioneering work in such areas as moving to increase the management responsibilities of its Iraqi engineers.

Saroni, an Air Force officer, made his comment during a seven day familiarization visit to the GRS district, which encompasses the nine southern provinces of Iraq.

A reservist with Headquarters, Air Mobility Command, Saroni is scheduled to become GRD deputy commander next month, succeeding Col. Dale Adams.

During his week long visit, Saroni saw a number of projects and met a host of USACE personnel. He also

A graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy and the father of five children, Saroni is a reservist with a master's degree in engineering who works as a municipal engineer for the city of Mesquite, Tex., a Dallas suburb.

He volunteered for duty in Iraq and his impending status as an Air Force officer serving as the deputy commander of a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Division is thought to be unprecedented.

Saroni related a conversation he had with an Iraqi who wondered what his family thought about him coming to Iraq. Saroni said he responded that "My family said I was to come and help your family." He said the Iraqi thanked him profusely.

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