



## ***USACE auditor finds Tallil fish 'the most finicky' he has encountered***

By John Connor  
*Gulf Region South district*

**TALLIL, Iraq** – “It’s always nice to catch a fish when you go fishing,” according to Bill Zett, “but it’s not necessary.”

Zett, an auditor with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, goes fishing most every Friday morning at Lake Wisconsin, a man-made lake not far from the headquarters of the Corps’ Gulf Region South district on this sprawling onetime Iraqi airbase. He said it is peaceful and relaxing and helps break up the routine of long work weeks.

Zett, 58, said he has been told Lake Wisconsin is so named because it was built by a National Guard unit from Wisconsin. He said

it is home to three kinds of fish: asp, which he likened to small-mouth bass back home, catfish and carp.

On his most recent outing, Zett caught none of the above. In fact, he had only had a few nibbles and saw just one fish break the surface. “I can’t believe they’re not biting,” he said at one point. Later, he said that “these are the most finicky fish I’ve ever been around.”

Still, Zett said it was a most enjoyable couple hours, a pleasant break from his work as the command’s internal auditor. And he applied some homespun wisdom to the fishless fishing expedition, saying, “All I know is if you don’t fish, you won’t catch anything.”

On this day, Zett used dates as bait. He said Patricia Biltoft, the S-1/administrative chief of GRS, accompanied him to the fishing hole recently and caught seven fish using corn and peas as bait.

He said he has caught some three or four pounders in Lake Wisconsin, and remarked that people will tell you all sorts of things about the key to catching fish, such as the fullness of the moon or the time of day. When he does land some fish, he said he throws them back.



Bill Zett, full-time USACE auditor and part-time fisherman, fishes Lake Wisconsin at Tallil most every Friday morning. (USACE photo by John Connor)

Zett, a native Texan who worked back home for the Texas National Guard since 1969, is on his second year in Iraq, having extended for a year. He left the Texas Guard altogether "to support my country" in Iraq. He said his work can be taxing at times but that he enjoys the people and the mission and serving his country, something his family has done before.

Zett said his father and two other relatives were at Pearl Harbor when the Japanese attacked on Dec. 7, 1941, and that his father managed to get off the USS Utah before it sank. He said all three survived, and that his father spent nearly two years afloat during World War II without touching land.

Zett has two children, a daughter and a son. He and his wife live in Austin.

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