

ESSAYONS *forward*

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Gulf Region Division, Iraq - Volume 5, Issue 4

April 2008

**Baghdad's
Al Rasheed Hotel
renovation nears
completion**

Pages 4-5



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On the cover:



An Iraqi worker stains teak paneling in a guest room of the Al Rasheed Hotel. A \$5.16 million renovation of the hotel is nearing completion in Baghdad.

USACE photo by Grant Sattler



USACE photo by H. Al-Taie

Visit from Capitol Hill

Congressional visitors (from left) Texas Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, New Hampshire Representative Carol Shea-Porter, and Indiana Representative Brad Ellsworth listen March 19 to an update on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' reconstruction efforts in Iraq presented by Gulf Region Division Commander Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Dorko. Also pictured is GRD Command Sgt. Maj. Eloy Alcivar.

Commander's Commentary

Disciplined thought, action make success

Over the next few months, we will work to complete the remaining Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF) projects and turn them over to the Government of Iraq.

Yet as we move toward completion of the historic IRRF program, we are seeing a parallel increase in the number of projects coming to the Gulf Region Division funded by the Economic Support Fund, Military Construction, Operations and Maintenance, Foreign Military Sales and other mechanisms.

And as you all know, every bit as critical as the brick and mortar work we do are the great contributions you are making in the realm of capacity development. We need to absolutely guarantee that this fabulous work of the Coalition and Iraq will be here for decades or even generations to come. No matter the funding source, the scope, scale or type of work, rest assured that your every effort is critically relevant.

American Statesman and inventor Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) said, "Energy and persistence conquer all things." And that idea was never truer than in the difficult construction environment of Iraq. Dedicated and disciplined people bring that



energy through disciplined thought and disciplined action. Which brings me to our latest arrivals to the GRD Team.

The Soldiers of the 412th Engineer Command have arrived here in Iraq from many and varied assignments around the world and they have hit their stride, contributing already in significant ways even as they have just finished the transition aboard. And I'm delighted to welcome not only the 412th, but every one of our courageous and selfless Team Members who have answered the call to service.

There are huge challenges ahead and our Coalition and Iraqi customers are counting on us to deliver on the promise of durable facilities and reliable utilities. GRD will remain the right organization for this difficult mission as we stay agile and focused on delivering quality projects.

At the end of the day, every Team Member has contributed to successful projects that improve the quality of life for the Iraqi people, aid their popularly elected government in providing essential services, and bolster security and stability for Iraq and the region.

I look forward to continuing to serve with you all in this noble mission.

ESSAYONS!

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

Command Sgt. Maj. Message



Personal integrity core value

This past summer, the news of shocking improprieties alleged to have been committed by an Army contracting officer in Kuwait and his accomplices made national headlines. Such acts of greed not only severely tarnish the reputation of the U.S. military, but who can say what impact such misdeeds may have on Soldiers on the battlefield?

That brings into sharp focus the core necessity of individual integrity to our mission for all our civilian and military work force.

Matters of integrity are not only gross theft, engaging in kick-back schemes or bribery. Poor integrity includes smaller acts of commission or omission: padding a time sheet, taking excessively long breaks or passing off one's rightful share of work to others to accomplish.

Integrity, one of the Army values, means to "Do what's right, legally and morally." It is a key ingredient that provides the stability and dependability of our institution; it is part of the rule of law.

Certainly there are many laws, rules and regulations to guide our actions, but one of the best measures for personal integrity

is found in the axiom that one's true character is "who you are when no one else is looking."

Be honest in small things and doing the right thing in the face of temptation is easier. Tinker around the edges of integrity and you may fall into the abyss. Certain business practices might have been the norm before in Iraq, but the standards that apply to U.S. Government funds are the same around the world. If you have a question, ask the legal counsel.

Greek philosopher Aristotle (384 B.C. – 322 B.C.) said, "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."

Continue to practice integrity on the small scale and be the example for others.

Our mission, the reconstruction of Iraq's infrastructure, is too important for us to allow any gray in the black and white matters of integrity.

Thank you for your continued excellence and integrity. Thank you to your families and those who support you in your deployment here.

ESSAYONS! Army Strong!
*Command Sgt. Maj. Eloy Alcivar
Gulf Region Division*

Al Rasheed gleams again

BY GRANT SATTLER

GULF REGION DIVISION

Restoring the luster to a Baghdad gem, a \$5.16 million Al Rasheed Hotel renovation is nearly finished as work on the 9th floor, the last to be refurbished, nears completion. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-managed rehabilitation of the circa 1982 luxury hotel began June 14, 2005.

Renovating the 14 stories of guest rooms and suites, workers attended to the appearance and comfort offered by what was once the city's premier hotel. The contemporary style hotel features the full offering of amenities and more than 400 rooms set on 20 landscaped acres across from the Conference Palace in Baghdad's International Zone.

The hotel is operated under the auspices of the Iraqi Ministry of Tourism and presently houses foreign guests, as well as dignitaries and officials of the Government of Iraq on business in the IZ.

The grand hotel was already showing signs of two decades normal wear and tear, but received heavier than usual use as a billet for Coalition personnel, and suffered extensive damage to several rooms during an Oct. 26, 2003, insurgent rocket attack.

"When we first came into Iraq, this was some of the main billeting for military staff," said Mike Baum, the construction quality assurance representative for the Gulf Region Division.

GRD is managing the floor-by-floor work accomplished by Iraqi contractor United Contractors Group. Employing from 30-50 Iraqi workers from many different Baghdad neighborhoods with a variety of trade skills, the contractor managed daily challenges impacted by security in different parts of town.

Baum said work centers around renovation, replacement and cosmetic



An Iraqi worker pours adhesive for carpet padding as work nears completion on the final floor.

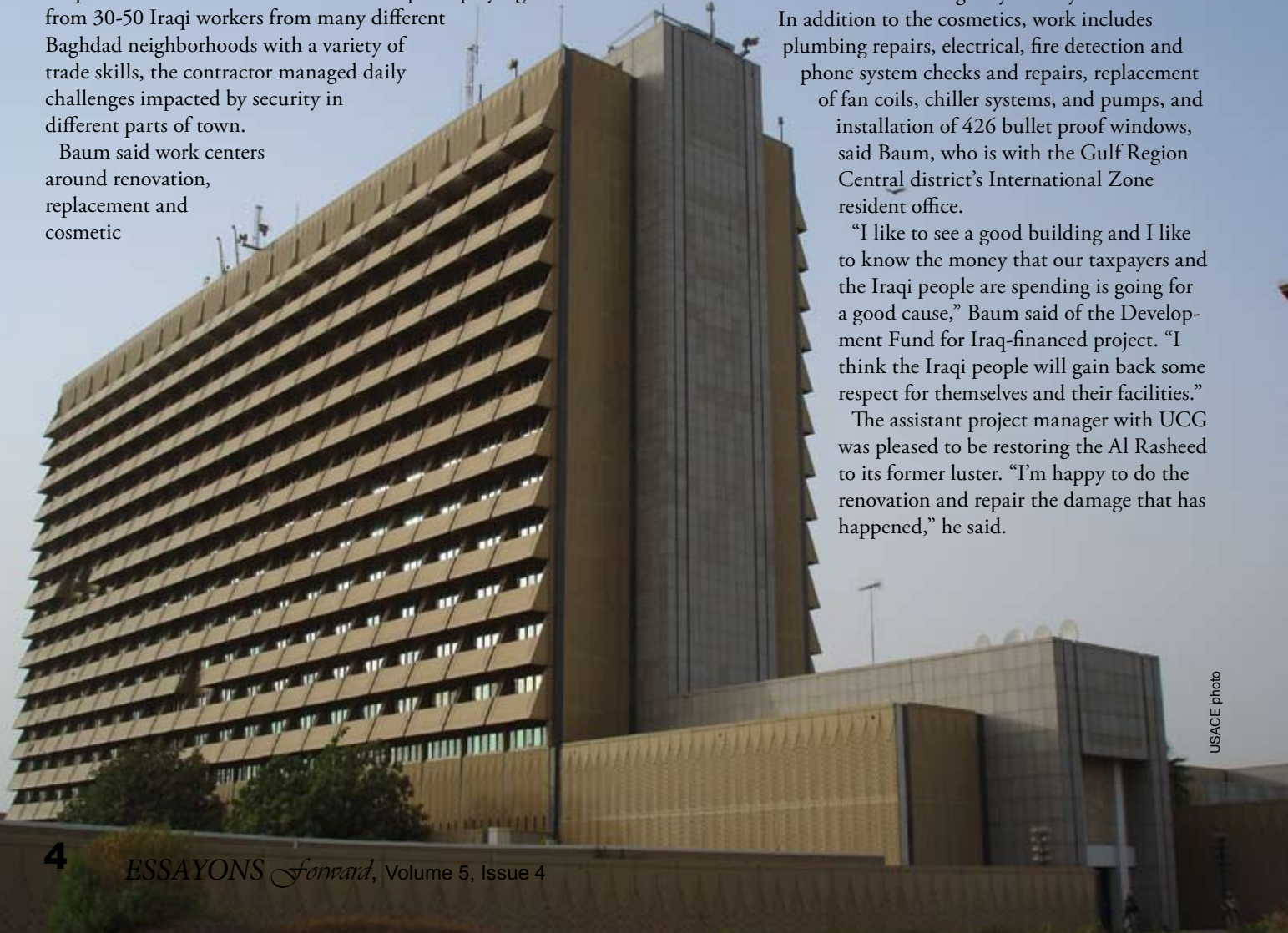
repairs, including bathroom marble tile and grout, painting ceilings, replacing wall paper, refinishing baseboards and teak woodwork in hallways and rooms. New carpeting has been installed throughout.

"It's a lot of hand work," Baum said, showing off the new wood finishes. "Something they do very well."

In addition to the cosmetics, work includes plumbing repairs, electrical, fire detection and phone system checks and repairs, replacement of fan coils, chiller systems, and pumps, and installation of 426 bullet proof windows, said Baum, who is with the Gulf Region Central district's International Zone resident office.

"I like to see a good building and I like to know the money that our taxpayers and the Iraqi people are spending is going for a good cause," Baum said of the Development Fund for Iraq-financed project. "I think the Iraqi people will gain back some respect for themselves and their facilities."

The assistant project manager with UCG was pleased to be restoring the Al Rasheed to its former luster. "I'm happy to do the renovation and repair the damage that has happened," he said.



USACE photo

Right: Hallway view of a renovated wing ready for guests.

Below right: A worker polishes a marble floor. Extensive hand work was required for the renovation.

Below: A comfortable suite is ready for furnishings.

Bottom: The Al Rasheed lobby and reception area welcomes guests from around the world.





The Amarah 400-kilovolt substation significantly enhances electrical power reliability in Maysan province.

Largest Maysan province electrical project connected to national grid

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

The connection of a 400-kilovolt electrical substation at al-Amarah to Iraq's national electric grid brings significant improvement as electricity reaches homes and businesses.

Barry Stuard, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers resident engineer for Maysan, said USACE turned the project over to the Iraqi government in December 2007 and, with the cooperation of the Iraqi Ministry of Electricity, connected the project to the national grid March 1.

"The project significantly and immediately benefitted the people of Maysan and will enhance the electricity supply, and provide additional capacity and continuity of electricity to the southern area of Iraq," Stuard said.

He said this event is an example of what the USACE Gulf Region Division is here to do: bring a better quality of life to

people like those in Maysan, so that they can live as others do around the world.

"Our Iraqi engineers in the field did a wonderful job of working with the Iraqi MOE and the contractor to complete this huge task," Stuard said, describing the team effort. "No matter what kind of problem was put in front of them, they always seemed to find a way to overcome it."

Ali Thaar, a resident of Hay Al-Mualimeen neighborhood in Maysan, said to have a reliable source of power was like a dream. "We suffered for a long time from the shortage of electricity, but now everything is getting better. We have power with three hours on and three hours off, and we believe this is just the beginning of the electrical sector improvement in Maysan," he said. "It's the largest and the most modern electrical project here and it's the first time this high technology has been used in the province."

An Iraqi deputy resident engineer working for the Maysan resident office said the substation is computerized and uses 2005 technology. "More than 785,000 residents in Maysan will enjoy the new technology and have a reliable source of power."

For Stuard, this was a culmination of multiple projects that will have a huge effect on the total outcome. "GRD has put a lot of effort into the electrical sector in Maysan and now we are beginning to see the result," he said. "This will be a day that everyone involved in this project can stand back and be proud to say they had a part in. I look at the three hours on and three hours off as having electricity half of the day and this is the first step in getting it 100 percent of the time."

Stuard said as more and more projects are completed, the citizens will see even more results throughout the province, not only in the electrical sector but in all aspects of life throughout Maysan.

أكبر واحد مشروع كهربائي في محافظة ميسان يتم ربطه بالشبكة الوطنية



المحولات الثلاث ذات الـ 63 ميكافولت امبير وهي تعمل لخفض الفولتية من 400 كيلو فولت امبير الى المستوى الاعتيادي المستخدم محليا، تصوير أ. البحراني

أ- البحراني

فرقة منطقة الخليج- المنطقة الجنوبية

ميسان، العراق - يسهم ربط محطة كهرباء العمارة (400 كيلو فولت) الى الشبكة الوطنية بشكل كبير في تحسين مستوى الطاقة الكهربائية التي تصل الى المنازل والمصانع.

وقال باري ستوارت، المهندس المقيم لمكتب محافظة ميسان، انه تم تسليم المشروع للحكومة العراقية في كانون الأول/ديسمبر 2007 وتم ربط المشروع بالشبكة الوطنية بالتعاون مع وزارة

الكهرباء العراقية في الاول من آذار 2008

وسيخدم المشروع، بشكل فعال ومباشر، سكان ميسان وسيساعد على زيادة الطاقة الكهربائية ويوفر استمرارية في الطاقة للمناطق الجنوبية من العراق، بحسب ستوارت.

أن هذا الحدث يمثل ماذا يعمل فيلق المهندسين الامريكي هنا في العراق من اجل تحسين مستوى المعيشة للشعب العراقي بحيث يمكنهم العيش كبقية اقرانهم في العالم. واتى ستوارت على فريق العمل قائلا "قام مهندسونا العراقيون بأعمال رائعة في اتمام هذا المشروع الضخم من خلال التنسيق مع وزارة الكهرباء العراقية والشركة المنفذة"، مضيفا

"لايهم نوع المشككلات التي واجهها فهم دائما يجدون وسيلة لحلها."

وقال علي ثامر، احد سكة حيا المعلمين في ميسان، كان الحصول على مصدر مستمر للطاقة بمثابة حلم لدينا، و اضاف " عاتينا ولمدة طويلة من الانقطاعات المستمرة في التيار الكهربائي، لكن الان كل شئ في تحسن فنحن الان نحصل على ثلاث ساعات مستمرة من التيار الكهربائي مقابل ثلاث ساعات اطفاء وهكذا، نحن نؤمن بان هذه الخطوة تمثل البداية في تحسن مستوى القطاع الكهربائي في المحافظة."

من جهته، قال المهندس العراقي نقيب المهندسين المقيم لمكتب ميسان الاقليمي أن المحطة تستخدم تكنولوجيا عام 2005 وهي تكنولوجيا حديثة حيث ان كل شئ يعمل من خلال البرمجة الالكترونية. " وان اكثر من 785,000 مواطن في ميسان سوف يتمتعون بهذه التكنولوجيا من خلال ثبات مصدر الطاقة الكهربائية."

من جانبه، يعتبر ستوارت هذا المشروع نتويجا لمشاريع متعددة سيكون لها تأثير كبير في النتيجة الجمالية. " ان فيلق المهندسين كرس مساع كبيرة لقطاع الكهرباء في محافظة ميسان والان نحن نحصد ثمار هذه المساعي" و اضاف ان هذا اليوم سيكون يوم فخر لكل شخص عمل او كان جزءا من هذا المشروع، ساعات التشغيل الثلاث تعني لي استمرار التيار الكهربائي لنصف يوم وهذه هي الخطوة الاولى للحصول على طاقة كهربائية متواصلة في اليوم.

وتابع ستوارت ان اتمام الكثير من المشاريع سيكون له اثر كبير في النتائج التي يحصل عليها المواطن في المحافظة، ليست منافع في القطاع الكهربائي فقط بل في كافة مجالات الحياة.



ابراج النقل في محطة العمارة (400 كيلو فولت) تسهم في تحسين شبكة توزيع الكهرباء في المدينة. تصوير أ. البحراني

Prison supports rule of law

BY MOHAMMED ALIWI
GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

The Government of Iraq has started to establish the basis of national unity by creating a democratic political process and conditions for Iraq to assume a leading role both in the region and internationally.

“Through the justice and security projects, the Iraqi Government is trying to transition Iraq to security through self-reliance,” said Ali Nasir, Nasiriyah prison warden, Dhi Qar province. He said these projects will help Iraq strengthen the rule of law and promote civil rights; build government capacity and provide essential services; strengthen Iraq’s economy; increase international support for Iraq; strengthen public understanding of international efforts; and create public isolation of the insurgents.

“To preserve the peace and to ensure the safety and security for all Iraqis, rule of law is a critically important part of the Iraqi security forces effort. Rule of law requires confidence in all the factors of security stability; and trust in the institutions of government, provincial and city governments, elected officials and police,” Nasir said.

Nasir has been impressed by what he feels are many courageous Iraqi leaders, judges, prison officials, police officers, non-governmental organizations and other entities that pursue rule of law principles while operating in the midst of violence. “We are trying to make a difference in our lives and help our people for future generations,” he said. He added that the new prison gives him enthusiasm for an Iraq without terrorists as better

Workers complete painting of one of the cell blocks finished recently at Nasiriyah prison.



USACE PHOTOS BY BJ WEINER

The administrative building will provide space for inmate processing.

place with a future.

Security progress in Iraq requires more than military success; it also requires advances in Iraq’s institutions, including its criminal justice system, said Lt. Col. Jan Carter, senior project manager with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq. Carter is assigned to the USACE Gulf Region South district and works with the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I).

“There are three separate contracts in the An Nasiriyah prison project,” she said. “Phase I is a \$15.3 million contract. This contract required the designing and building of a multi-phased construction of a new maximum security correctional facility located near the city.”

Jim Marple, project manager with the

Gulf Region Division in southern Iraq, said that the contract includes all design, construction and furnishings for an 800-inmate facility. Currently, there are two maximum security buildings that will house 400 inmates per building with a visitor control building attached to each. Also included in the original contract is an administration building that will process people coming into the facility. Additionally, there are four pre-engineered packaged metal buildings, which include a medical, laundry/kitchen, maintenance and a prayer building.

“Phase II is a \$6.2 million project,” said Marple. “It contains the housing portion of the facility - with a visitor control building attached to each. Phase III is a \$7.3 million contract that will provide an additional pod to increase the capacity of the prison and will house 400 additional inmates.”

Carter said that this project will alleviate a congested Iraqi prison system. The prison was designed under U.S. standards for prisons and includes recreation and visitor buildings. This facility will also provide more than 1,000 jobs and an economic boost to the Nasiriyah Region, she added.

“The Nasiriyah prison is an important project, which will help overcome insurgency and put an end for terror in a country torn by the influx of the terrorists from the neighboring countries that are trying to destroy us and watch our people die,” said Nasir.

مشروع السجن يدعم حكم القانون في العراق

محمد عليوي

القسم الجنوبي لمنطقة الخليج

العراق. عينت كارتر في القسم الجنوبي من فرقة منطقة الخليج التابعة للفيلق وهي تعمل لدى القيادة متعددة الجنسيات الناقلة للمسؤولية الى العراق.

وقالت كارتر ان "هناك ثلاثة عقود منفصلة في مشروع سجن الناصرية"، مضيئة "المرحلة الاولى بتكلفة 15,3 مليون دولار، وتوضع فيها التصاميم وتنفذ اعمال البناء متعدد المراحل لمبنى السجن الاصلاحى ذي الحماية الفائقة القريب من المدينة".

من جهته، يقول جيم ماربل مدير المشروع، وهو يعمل لدى فيلق مهندسي الجيش الاميركي في القسم الجنوبي من فرقة منطقة الخليج، ان العقد يتضمن جميع التصاميم واعمال البناء وتأثيث مبنى يستوعب 800 سجين، ويوحد حاليا مبنيين للحماية الفائقة بامكان الواحد منهما استيعاب 400 سجين، ويلحق بكل منهما مبنى للزائرين، ويتضمن العقد الاصلي مبنى للسيطرة للتعامل مع الاشخاص الذين يتم احضارهم الى السجن، بالإضافة الى ذلك هناك اربعة مبان تضم اقسام صحية واخرى للغسيل ومطبخا وقسما للصيانة ومصلى.

واضاف ماربل "تكلفة المرحلة الثانية 6,2 مليون دولار ... وتضم قسما للايواء ومبنى للزوار فيما يتكلف عقد المرحلة الثالثة 7,3 مليون دولار ويضم ملحقات لزيادة الطاقة الاستيعابية للسجن بقدر 400 نزيل اضافي".

وقالت كارتر ان المشروع سيخفف من اعباء نظام السجون العراقية، حيث يغص معتقلا ابو غريب وبوكا بالسجناء ومن المحتمل ارسال بعضهم الى الناصرية، وتم وضع تصميم السجن على وفق المعايير الاميركية للسجون وتضم مبان للالعاب الرياضية والزيارة، وستقدم هذه المنشأة فرص عمل لاكثر من الف شخص ما يسهم في تعزيز الحالة الاقتصادية في الناصرية.

بدوره، قال ناصر ان "مشروع سجن الناصرية مهم، وسوف يساعد في التغلب على التمرد ويضع نهاية للارهاب في البلاد التي مزقتها تدفق الارهابيين من دول الجوار التي تحاول ان تدمرنا لترى شعبنا يموت".

الناصرية، العراق - بدأت الحكومة العراقية بوضع اساس الوحدة الوطنية باعتماد عملية سياسية ديمقراطية واجواء ديمقراطية للعراق ليتسنى دورا قياديا في المجتمع الدولي.

وقال علي ناصر، مدير سجن الناصرية في محافظة ذي قار "من خلال تطبيق العدالة والبرامج الامنية تحاول الحكومة العراقية نقل العراق الى بر الامان باعتماد على الذات"، مضيئا "سوف تساعد هذه المشاريع العراق على تعزيز دور القانون وتثبيت الحقوق المدنية وبناء قدرة الحكومة وتقديم الخدمات الاساسية، وتقوية الاقتصاد العراقي وزيادة الدعم الدولي للعراق والتعريف بالجهود الدولية المبذولة وعزل المسلحين عن عامة الشعب.

وتابع ناصر "لحفاظ على السلام وضمان الامن لكل العراقيين يكون لجهود قوات الامن العراقية دور مهم في الحكم بالقانون، وهو يتطلب الثقة في كل عوامل الاستقرار الامني والثقة في مؤسسات الحكومة ومجالس المحافظات والسياسيين المنتخبين والشرطة".

ويشعر ناصر بالارتياح ازاء ما يقوم به قادة عراقيون شجعان وقضاة ومسؤولي سجن وضباط شرطة ومنظمات غير حكومية وكيانات اخرى تتبع مبادئ حكم القانون في عملها وسط دوامة اعمال العنف الدائرة في البلاد.

وقال "نحاول احداث تغيير في حياتنا ومساعدة الاجيال المقبلة"، وتابع ان "السجن الجديد يعطي بريقا امل من اجل عراق خال من الارهابيين بوصفه مكانا لمستقبل مشرق".

ويحتاج التقدم على الصعيد الامني في العراق الى ما هو اكثر من النجاح العسكري، فهو يحتاج الى التقدم في مؤسسات العراق، ضمنها النظام القضائي، بحسب اللوتنانت كولونيل جان كارتر، مديرة المشروع، من فيلق مهندسي الجيش الاميركي في

Back for the future

Al-Qudis Boys' High School re-opens



Students gather in the front of recently re-opened al-Qudis school during a break between classes.

STORY & PHOTOS BY KENDAL SMITH
GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

In September 2007, destruction was everywhere, inside and out, of the upscale Mansour District's al-Qudis High School for Boys. The windows were broken, doors off their mangled hinges, the blackboards blasted off the walls, unusable desks destroyed and multiple evidence of classroom wall fires. The al-Jamiaa neighborhood where Qudis is located had seen its share of turmoil, being variably occupied by Coalition Forces and insurgents, during the past few years.

According to locals, the school was a frequent target of insurgents because of the location in a wealthy neighborhood and

the reputation as one of the leading boys' schools in Baghdad. When a terrorist explosion in late summer claimed the nearby Baghdad Satellite TV Channel, it was the last straw for holding classes at Qudis. The school was further, extensively damaged, shut down and temporarily abandoned. With improved security and the help of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), things have changed dramatically for the better.

"All the school was damaged from the blast. But now, with the rehabilitation, the school is more beautiful than before. The students are eager to attend and study," said Enas Abdullah, a chemistry teacher, through an interpreter.

Fortunately, the three major school buildings and their

SEE **DAMAGED**, PAGE 11

Damaged school re-opens early after major renovation

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

superstructures were not significantly damaged, so renovation and reconstruction were the most challenging jobs. Removal of extensive debris and replacing all electrical wiring headed the list of needed repairs. Major renovation was needed for the fresh water and sewage systems. Toilets were rebuilt or replaced and new cooling and air conditioning units installed. Various tasks in masonry and brickwork were followed by repainting of interior and exterior walls. Extensive landscaping and gardening completed the new look. The school grounds and area were also treated for Iraqi termite extermination.

Completed and reopened a month ahead of schedule, the more than \$568,000 project was overseen by Navy Lt. Cmdr. Charles Smith, the USACE International Zone Resident Office chief.

"It's a great feeling of accomplishment. Going there and seeing the kids use the school. All in all, a good news story," Smith said during a recent visit to show the school to media.

"Here's a good example of the way things are supposed to work," Smith continued. He went on to explain the process for this particular project. Coming from the Provincial Reconstruction Development Council to USACE to execute and supervise, Smith explained Qudis was an Iraqi concept and design, completed by an Iraqi contractor, with the oversight of an Iraqi USACE project engineer. Money for the project came from the Economic Support Fund.

Al-Iraqiyah state-run TV, Al-Hurra TV and the Associated Press visited the site of the Iraqi-led renovation in March. There were more than 500 young men 15-18 years old at work on their studies and university preparation. In Iraq, high school students are channeled into two primary divisions for higher education, science or literature. The potential impact these science students could have in their country is not lost on them.

"I want to help my country to rebuild, so I'll try to get the damaged buildings back to their condition before they were destroyed by the insurgency. And the way it used to be before the destruction," said

Mahmud, one of Abdullah's students.

This 11th grader hopes to score well enough on his end-of-school tests next year to have the option of engineering or medicine. A score above 90 or 95 percent respectively is required to make that happen. He looks studious despite the obviously crowded and noisy class during the visit. Some desks have three students at them, but they are comfortable talking to media, a sure sign of a more stable, secure environment.

According to the contractor, there was great support from the local residents as they frequently offered food and encouragement to the workers. All the laborers were from the Mansour neighborhood in western Baghdad. Training was conducted to help the Iraqi workers understand topics including standards of health, safety, immediate action in the event of an incident and danger-zone construction. In addition, a strategy was used by the contractor to speed the building and work. They referred to

employment of "on-hand" workers used as needed to surge during the busiest times at the job site. That brought needed jobs to the local area and helped the security as well.

The new facilities were even selected for a special event visit by a Deputy Minister of Education to officially re-open the school last month.

"Attendance is good. I can even say it's perfect," said Abdullah. "We hope that God keeps the youth who are our future."

In another certain mark of improvements both in education and security, student Mahmud offers that along with his hope of improved electricity he shares a goal of teenagers everywhere, ". . . lifting the curfew in all the country."

Sounds very familiar from an 11th grade young man, doesn't it?

It's a great feeling of accomplishment...all in all, a good news story.

Navy Lt. Cmdr. Charles Smith
Gulf Region Central district
International Zone Resident Office



Exterior work on al-Qudis school included painting and grounds work.

Paving project improves security



USACE photo by Kendal Smith

A contract worker monitors the flow of hot asphalt into the dump trucks for delivery to the Alternate Supply Route Uranium pour site.

BY KENDAL SMITH

GULF REGION CENTRAL DISTRICT

Uranium Road from Hit to al-Asad is getting a \$29.6 million makeover in the longest road project by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq. The mission-essential 51-kilometer Alternate Supply Route (ASR), now more than 60 percent finished and targeted for completion in early April, is Phase 1 of a planned two-stage project.

When pouring 1.5 km sections on the ASR, the Gulf Region Division-contracted work force lays down about 500 metric tons of asphalt daily. The asphalt used on the route is produced on a secure site at Al Asad Air Base with equipment brought to Iraq by the Iraqi-owned contractor, Iraq Technical Assistance Services (ITAS) Engineering & Contracting. The 92 pieces of heavy, medium and light equipment include the largest, a D9 Caterpillar bulldozer, for the initial cut and fill work. Extensive asphalt manufacturing modules operate to continually supply the transport dump trucks rotating from Al-Asad to the asphalt pour site.

To keep the work flow as expeditious as possible, the Engineers coordinated with Marine Regimental Combat Team-5 (RCT-5), who manage the battle space area, to direct all convoy traffic to other routes. This diversion allowed more constant application

of the asphalt and less time spent on road repair. Routine convoy traffic on Uranium impaired the initial ASR work, requiring periodic restoration of sections that were previously ready for asphalt.

Security also played a part in the initial slow progress, however, the contractor's local hiring and purchasing practices helped moderate some of the concerns. The contractor hired additional security to allow more work to occur simultaneously at multiple work sites, and RCT-5 were instrumental in coordinating clearances for them. Security and coordination with the Marines were two key success factors to enable the project to get back on schedule with now a very high likelihood of finishing the job on time or ahead of schedule.

"We are making a daily difference in the lives of my countrymen," said ITAS Iraqi owner, Talat Younis. "When they are working, there is bread for the children, then there is a better life, a more secure one for everybody." More than 300 employees working the site, including 80 Iraqis hired as security forces, are from the nearby cities of Hit and Baghdadi. Younis believes the jobs provided income and stability for the communities. The contractor also makes local purchases of material and equipment rental that he thinks are helpful in keeping the project safely moving along.

SEE **ASPALT**, PAGE 13

Asphalt smooths road, security

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

“Mr. Younis did a very smart thing by hiring many local nationals from Baghdad and Hit to work this project,” agreed Lt. Cmdr. James Lee, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Al-Asad Resident Office Commander. “He’s definitely made it of greater interest and concern to the Iraqis in the area. People want to work for him.” That was not the only security consideration for Uranium’s paving.

Sweeping of the road when convoys were traveling on it resulted in some work stoppages as IEDs were found along the way. With the road completion, expectations are that it will be easier to spot any disturbances along the route and, therefore, make it safer for the Marines and others to travel the road to al-Asad.

The stages of progress in the road building effort are generally divided in four parts, which now occur simultaneously over the length of the project. They are the initial grading followed by sub-base laydown and compaction, then base course application and, finally, the asphalt pour. Another 49 kilometers of ASR Uranium would repair the road from al-Asad to Haditha as Phase 2.



USACE photo by Lt. Cmdr. James Lee

Workers pour hot asphalt onto Alternate Supply Route (ASR) Uranium near Al-Asad Air Base as part of GRD’s longest road project in Iraq.



USACE photo by Kendal Smith

A worker monitors the proper asphalt mix and flow through the system by computer.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Gulf Region Division

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QUENCHED THIRST



Al-Bender pump pier.



Workers mix plaster for the al-Takadoom plant.



Al-Maamel water treatment plant provides potable water to more than 1,400 people.

Clean water on tap for rural villages

STORY & PHOTOS BY GRANT SATTLER
GULF REGION DIVISION

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is quenching the thirst of three Iraqi farming villages for clean drinking water. USACE is managing construction of 50 cubic meter per hour compact water treatment plants for the communities of al-Bender, al-Maamel and al-Takadoom. The villages lie in rural areas near al-Kut, a city of more than 400,000 on the banks of the Tigris River in Wassit province.

"All three 50 cubic meter plants are of typical design, but site specific," said Maj. Clay Morgan, resident engineer of the Wassit Resident Office.

Each compact water treatment plant includes a submersible pump, gangway and intake piping from a nearby source of surface water, a walled and gated compound, an administrative and storage building, an enclosed chlorinator building, treatment tanks and pumps under a steel roof, a transformer connected to the national power grid, a back up electrical generator and fuel tank, and an elevated water storage tower to pressurize the distribution network to residences.

An elevated tank has advantages over a pressure tank. "During low usage periods, you continue to pump into the elevated tank and that treated water pressurizes the network," said Morgan. "You are storing water and energy."

The projects range in cost from \$525,000 to \$680,000 with the difference being primarily the distance of the distribution network from the plant to village homes and the number of house connections.

Begun in September 2006 with the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund, al-Maamel village water treatment plant impacts an estimated 1,400 people.

"The other two, al-Bender and Takadoom, are two that were requested from the Provincial Reconstruction Development Council and funded by U.S. State Department's Economic Support Fund program..." said Morgan, who has been the Officer In Charge of the Wassit Resident Office of the USACE Gulf Region South district since July 2007. "The Wassit governate,

Provincial Council, and Provincial Reconstruction Development Council made a determination that those villages were going to get compact water units." Construction for the Bender and Takadoom projects began in September 2007.

Morgan said the scope of work for two of the projects was adjusted within the budgeted amount after more displaced people heard of the plants and decided to build along network lines. "As the population increased along the distribution network, we made changes in distribution in the contract," Morgan said. "We swapped out [a quantity of] large diameter pipe for more house connections...clean water service to more families and made more people happy."

The water treatment plants will also provide employment through the owning Iraqi governmental entity. Although staff requirements are minimal, there will be a need for security and operator/maintainer personnel. Morgan said the system does require periodic maintenance and monitoring. The contractor will operate the system for a period of time after commissioning to ensure any deficiencies are resolved and continue operation until appointed personnel are trained.

"They are powerful projects and they are bringing in essential services" Morgan said. "The concern is to make sure that they are taken care of...we'd like to see it running a year, two years... five, 20 years down the road, the construction is of that quality. It's just based on the operator and the maintenance plan and program, from the government or that village, however it's determined who is responsible to operate it to make sure that they are doing their utmost... changing filters, making the minor repairs that are needed to keep things going."

Construction of the plants is going well, Morgan said, citing the benefits of using a local construction company and the dedicated efforts by our Iraqi project and quality assurance engineers. "It's always better to have a contractor from the area," he said. "They are more responsive; they are known and have a reputation to maintain."

Morgan said additional compact water treatment plants are in the approval process for Economic Support Fund funding for next year in Wassit province.

Haditha effort energizing power generation



Construction Representative Bob McKechnie and Lt. Cmdr. James Lee, Al Asad Resident Office.

Top: View of Haditha Dam and spillways. Above: The Euphrates River seen from atop the Haditha Dam.

STORY & PHOTOS BY KENDAL SMITH
GULF REGION CENTRAL DISTRICT

Decades of directed non-interaction and perpetual isolation by Saddam Hussein closed interdepartmental Ministries communication and continued to severely affect Haditha Dam operations after his downfall. But two U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' workers at the dam are changing that, and with their efforts have launched a grass-roots movement to improve electrical generation.

Program Manager Jeff Daniels started and continues to facilitate monthly managers' meetings referred to as the "Mayor's" or "Town Hall" meetings. Construction representative and functional expert Bob McKechnie attends these meetings as the USACE Gulf Region Central district contact. It seems simple, but information was not so easy to exchange.

The meetings were originally developed to encourage trust and communication among the Ministry of Electricity managers concerning electrical generation, transmission and distribution with the consideration of the Ministry of Water Resources. Trying to reach an integrated and mutual agreement about production is not easy, however, given the primary purpose for the dam.

"The main focus of Haditha Dam is for irrigation, and, because of that, the electrical production takes the background and doesn't seem to get the focus it deserves to keep the production up. I don't think they have as big a voice as the irrigation department and that makes it frustrating for everyone," reports McKechnie.

MNF-West Marine Maj. David Johnson understood the need to develop such meetings and agreed to be the focal point to

prevent residual interdepartmental antipathies from interfering with attendance or any solutions. Johnson is the 3rd Battalion, 23rd Regiment, Headquarters Support Company Commander, for the Haditha Dam area. Open discussions in the meetings set a foundation that solidified local management into a unified and well-balanced team.

The team then requested to meet the province governor. Engineer members went to the Marine Corps Commander at Haditha Dam, who coordinated a visit with the al-Anbar province Governor Ma'amoon Al-Alwani. The Haditha management team presented their issues and concerns to the Governor. Issues were shared regarding electrical power generation, transmission and distribution.

Adel Abdulsalam, the al-Anbar Manager of Electric Transmission at the dam, says, "Yes, these meetings are very beneficial. We are meeting with the Governor every two weeks and are a part of the Governor's Power Committee."

An ongoing success story, the Power Committee is designed to help solve some of the major electrical problems for al-Anbar province and work on solutions that will result in a stable power grid to support electricity 24-7.

The issues of electrical generation and distribution are being resolved by the citizens of Anbar, the local Ministry Managers, the Province Governor, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' staff, the Marines and Coalition Forces at Haditha Dam and in Anbar province, all working together as a team. It is a new way for the Iraqis to conduct business, but the way electricity will best be available to the province.

That is generating very good news for the more than 160,000 Iraqis who are served by Haditha Dam.

Maysan surgical hospital

Groundbreaking starts major medical improvement

Courtesy Djjah Consulting Engineers



An artist's impression of the new hospital anticipated to be the best in the province when completed.

BY A. AL BHARANI

GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

Marking the transition of a brighter and healthier future for Maysan province, a ground-breaking ceremony was held March 6 for a new surgical hospital, touted to be one of the best medical projects in the province.

Barry Stuard, resident engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region South district, said expressing the importance of the new project is “hard to put it into words. I know this is a great moment for both the people of Maysan and the people of Iraq. This hospital will be a much needed facility due to the fact that it will be the only modern hospital in the province.”

Adel Mohdr Rhady, Maysan’s governor, in remarks to Iraqi Parliament members, members of the Maysan Provincial Council, and representatives of political and religious parties who attended the ceremony, said, “We have faced many challenges and problems in the progress of the reconstruction movements and it’s time to focus on major projects to develop strategy and service projects in the province. Through them we can move a step forward.”

Stuard said, “Every engineer and



USACE photo

Dignitaries, including Maysan Governor Adel Mohdr Rhady; Iraqi Parliamentarian Dr. Adel Al-Shawi; members of the Maysan Provincial Council; and representatives of political parties and religious and political movements, attend the March 6 ceremony.

contractor with whom I have met have all commented on the importance and excitement felt throughout the communities about this project. You can tell the importance of this facility with the number of citizens, community and provincial leaders who attended the ground-breaking.”

The new project involves the construction of a two-story surgical hospital that will have about 100 beds and house a surgery department, an obstetric / gynecology department, an X-ray department and clinic, as well as ancillary support services, according to the GRS district’s Iraqi deputy resident engineer. The total cost of the hospital will be about \$12.7 million, he said.

The 62,000 square-meter facility includes a support building. This structure will contain a morgue, laundry, materials management, engineering, external wall and medical gas storage. There will be a

physician resident building to house about eight physicians, he said.

“The start of construction for the new Maysan Surgical Hospital marks an important step for improvement in healthcare for the people of Maysan,” said Thomas Eidson, chief of Engineering and Construction for GRS. He said that essential medical services that will save lives will soon be more available to the people in undeveloped urban and rural areas of Maysan Province as a result of this project.

Eidson added that the availability of medical professionals and medical facilities will have a significant impact to the local economy as Maysan province transitions to a brighter and healthier future. This facility will be a positive catalyst for growth and development and improvement in the way of life and standard of living for each person in Maysan, he said.

Al-Amarah—al-Maymunah addition to ease traffic, improve road safety



Soil is added before compaction and asphaltting of the new roadway parallel to the existing highway.

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

The completion of a new two-lane highway in al-Amarah will mean a significant drop in traffic congestion, according to officials with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Maysan office.

The al-Amarah – al-Maymunah Second Carriageway is a \$6 million project designed to parallel an existing road that joins the two cities to relieve traffic strain there, according to Master Sgt. Harold Stewart, construction representative.

"... Maysan [will] have better roads - this is our goal," Stewart said. "The addition of this traffic artery is critical to efficient traffic management and operational safety." Safe passage for people on their way to work and other places during the day will contribute to economic development and security, he added.

An Iraqi engineer working as a project manager for the project said, "Despite the security issues in Maysan, the project is about 51 percent complete and employing more than 50 local workers a day on average. Those numbers could increase when the projects picks up speed."

The project originally started in October 2006. "The work is perhaps one of the most challenging road construction projects in Maysan," the Iraqi engineer said.

Stewart said completion is expected in the second half of 2008.

He added that the 23-kilometer road project involves providing a six-centimeter asphalt layer for the two-lane addition with three bridges through the largely rural area stretching from al-

Maymunah city in north of Maysan to al-Amarah city, capital of Maysan province.

"This project was requested by the Maysan governorate and the Maysan director general," Stewart said. "He was actively involved in selecting the local roads to be upgraded."

Mr. Mohan, a member of Maysan Provincial Reconstruction Development Council said it is a great feeling to see the construction work in the area for the people of Maysan. "As members of the Maysan PRDC, we are trying to provide all the permission and assistance to the contractor to accomplish this work," he said.

All the tests were carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Iraqi regulations for highways and bridges, according to the Iraqi project engineer.

"The pavement of the 80 mile/hour minimum-designed road will be 21 centimeters of bituminous pavement on 40 centimeters of aggregate sub-base" said Stewart. "The project will directly enhance al-Amarah – al-Maymunah highway safety, improve its alignment and provide reliable routes."

Stewart, who was construction inspector when he supported the U.S. Army Reserve for construction and deployment missions, said the improvement road project for the one of the busiest roads in Maysan province was badly needed because of the large volume of truck traffic in the area. Stewart added that the project will also free up more space for civilian traffic on other roads.

"We have to work together to fix Maysan" said Stewart. "We want the people of Maysan to feel good about these projects."

طريق العمارة - الميمونة السريع يسهم في التطور الاقتصادي والامني

أ- الجرائي

فرقة منطقة الخليج- المنطقة الجنوبية

أنشاء ثلاثة جسور في منطقة زراعية شاسعة تمتد بين الميمونة الواقعة في شمال محافظة ميسان الى العمارة. وأوضح ستيوارت "تم طلب هذا المشروع من قبل محافظة ميسان ... هم الذين شاركوا بشكل فعال في تحديد الطرق المحلية التي يجب ان تطور".

من جانبه، قال السيد موهان عضو مجلس أعمار محافظة ميسان أن من الجيد ان ترى عملية الاعمار في المنطقة ولصالح المواطنين في هذه المحافظة"، مضيفاً "نحن كأعضاء في مجلس اعمار المحافظة نحاول تقديم كافة التسهيلات والمساعدات الى المقاول المنفذ من اجل أتمام هذا العمل بشكل صحيح".

وقال المهندس العراقي ان تطبيق كافة الاختبارات تم وفقاً للمواصفات العراقية للطرق والجسور.

أن أكساء الطريق الذي صمم للسير بسرعة 80 ميلا (120 كم) في الساعة كحد ادنى سيتضمن 12 سم من مادة البتيومين (القار) على 40 سم من الاساس المتين، وقال ستيوارت

ان "المشروع وبطريقه مباشرة سوف يزيد من الامان ضمن طريق العمارة - الميمونة السريع و يحسن من مساره ويوفر طرقاً فرعية آمنة".

وقال ستيوارت، الذي كان يعمل مفتش بناء يساند الجيش الامريكي في نشر البعثات، ان مشروع تطوير واحد من اكثر الطرق اختناقاً في محافظة ميسان كان من الضروريات لشدة وكبر حجم العربات التي تشغل هذا الطريق. و اضاف ان المشروع سوف يسهم في تخفيف شدة ازدحام السير للمدنيين والعربات في الطرق الاخرى.

واضاف "يجب ان نعمل سوية من اجل أعمار ميسان"، وتابع "نريد ان يكون مواطنو ميسان سعداء من خلال انجاز هذه المشاريع".

ميسان، العراق - سيودي الانتهاء من انشاء طريق العمارة - الميمونة السريع الى انخفاض كبير في حجم الأختناقات المرورية في المنطقة وفقاً لمسؤولين في فيلق مهندسي الجيش الامريكي - مكتب ميسان . وقال الرقيب هارولد ستيوارت ممثل الاعمار أن طريق العمارة - الميمونة الثاني الذي تبلغ تكلفته ستة ملايين دولار صمم ليقابل او يوازي الطريق الموجود الذي يربط بين المدينتين ليسهم في تخفيف الأختناقات المرورية في هذه المنطقة.

وتابع ان "ميسان سيكون لها طرق جيدة وهذا هو هدفنا"، مضيفاً ان "اضافة هذا الشريان المروري امر حاسم لكفاءة حركة إدارة المرور وسلامة النقل"، أن وجود ممر امن للمواطنين في طريقهم الى العمل والاماكن الاخرى خلال اليوم يسهم في تعزيز الاوضاع الاقتصادية والامنية في المنطقة.

من جهته، قال المهندس العراقي الذي يدير المشروع "على الرغم من الاوضاع الامنية في محافظة ميسان فإن نسبة المشروع تبلغ 51% وأكثر من 50 عاملاً محلياً يسهم في اعمال الانشاء يومياً. علماً بأن هذا العدد قد يزداد عندما يبلغ المشروع ذروته".

وبدأ المشروع في تشرين الاول/أكتوبر 2006 ، وبحسب مدير المشروع "تعد عملية انشاء هذا الطريق من اكبر التحديات في محافظة ميسان".

وقال ستيوارت ان من المتوقع انجاز المشروع في النصف الثاني من العام الجاري، وأن الطريق الذي يبلغ طوله 23 كيلومتراً يتضمن أكساء ستة سنتيمترات من طبقة الاسفلت للطريق الجديد بالإضافة الى

Left: Work continues on the al-Amarah-al-Maymunah second carriageway as compactors compress the sub-base.

Below: Compaction work progresses near one of three bridges north of al-Amarah city.



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Heather Everett
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Alfred Everett
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Navy Chief
Eric Anderson
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Army Maj.
Charolotte Rhee
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Perry D'Amico
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David Brown
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Carl Trotter
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Philip Haag
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Ruby Pierce
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Prixie Crux
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