



NEWS



NOV 2008

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Gulf Region Division South District, Iraq



Ambassador Ryan Crocker (left), Babil Provincial Council Chairman Engineer Al-Masoudi, Babil Governor Al-Muslimawi, and GRD Commander MG Michael Eyre cut the ribbon to mark the completion of a \$2.8 million renovation of Al Hillah Maternity and Children's Hospital in Babil Province. (Photo by Jeff Daigle)

Hospital rehabilitation transforms facility into 'beacon of hope' for Babil Province

By Jeff Daigle

Al Hillah, Iraq – Years of neglect of the national health care system have left the people of Iraq with extremely inadequate medical facilities. But a USD \$2.8 million (ID 3.4 billion) renovation of the Al Hillah Maternity and Children's Hospital – situated in the heart of a former militant stronghold – has changed this situation for the 600,000 people of Babil Province, located south of Baghdad.

The rehabilitation effort, managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), transformed the hospital into a modern medical facility. The goal of the rehabilitation was to create an environment that will allow the hospital to provide health care so that children, mothers and their families feel comfortable, safe, and positive.

To celebrate the completion of the rehabilitation project, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, Ryan C. Crocker, recently traveled to Al Hillah for a special ribbon cutting ceremony.

"The strength of a country comes from the strength of its people and the health of its people is therefore a national priority," Ambassador Crocker stated during the ceremony.

"So I'm very pleased to be here with you today to help dedicate the renovated Al Hillah Maternity and Children's Hospital, which will insure the strength and health of the people of Babil Province," he added.

Joining the Ambassador at the event were H.E. Salim Salah Mahdi Al-Muslimawi, Governor of Babil Province; Engineer Muhammed Ali Hussien Al-Masoudi, Babil Provincial Council Chairman; Dr. Muhmood Abedul-Ridah, Babil Director General for the Ministry of Health; and Major General Michael R. Eyre, Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division.

The rehabilitation included new nurses' stations, doctors' offices, an operating room, hallways, patient rooms, kitchen and cafeteria. 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.

(continued on next page)



Over 15 Iraqi media outlets interview officials at the Al Hillah Maternity and Children's Hospital ribbon cutting ceremony Oct. 30 including GRS Construction Representative Ed Jones with the Babil Resident Office.

Hospital rehabilitation transforms facility into 'beacon of hope' for Babil Province

(continued from front page)

"We couldn't have done this without the tremendous support of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Babil PRT," said Dr. Muhmood Abdul-Ridah, the Babil Director General for the Iraqi Ministry of Health. "Their generous support of the Al Hillah Maternity and Children's Hospital has made it a beacon of hope for our community."

Renovation began on the Al Hilla Maternity and Children's Hospital in May 2006, and the hospital continued to operate throughout construction. Although shutting the hospital down or razing it completely may have made the project easier and less expensive to complete, thousands of people would have had no access to medical care during that time. Therefore, keeping the facility open during construction was crucial.

This achievement was only made possible through the collaborative efforts of the Government of Iraq's Ministry of Health, the Babil Provincial Council and the U.S. government through the USACE and the Babil Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT).

Stressing this cooperation, Major General Eyre said, "What you see before you today – and the progress you are seeing throughout the country – would not be possible without the dedicated partnerships of the Government of Iraq, the many other U.S. agencies, and members of the Coalition."

The hospital will also benefit from a medical equipment-purchase program that the Babil Provincial Council is conducting

with the assistance of the PRT. This project will provide the Al Hillah Maternity and Children's Hospital – as well as 11 other medical centers in Babil Province – with basic medical equipment such as patient beds, infusion pumps, blood pressure machines, and portable suction devices.

The equipment will be provided by Globus Relief, a non-profit humanitarian organization. The equipment will come from hospitals around the U.S. and will be refurbished like new.

"The opening of four new hospitals and the projected expansion of our eight existing hospitals in the province have been delayed due to lack of functional equipment" said Dr. Osama with the Babil Provincial Council. "But with the help of the Babil PRT and Globus Relief, not only will the Al Hillah Maternity and Children's Hospital be well equipped, we will be able to open new facilities around the province."

For this project, the Babil Provincial Government has earmarked USD 5 million (ID 6.45 billion) for refurbishment and transportation costs, which will result in the hospitals of Babil Province receiving medical equipment worth more than USD 50 million (ID 64.5 billion) over the next year.

The Babil PRT is part of the Iraq Provincial Reconstruction Team initiative, a U.S. civilian-military inter-agency effort that serves as the primary connection between U.S. and coalition partners and provincial and local governments in all of Iraq's 18 provinces.

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

by Alicia Embrey

Al Hillah, Iraq – 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 concerned for the child, this event gave Jones 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, hallways, 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 any-time 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,” he concluded. Throughout Iraq, USACE has renovated 40 hospitals and an additional 13 are ongoing.



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



USACE Construction Representative Edward Jones (left) says hello to a young Iraqi patient and her father following a ribbon cutting at Al Hillah Maternity and Children’s Hospital Oct. 30.

ARRIVING MEMBERS



JERRY CUMMINGS
GRS HQ
Safety Manager
New Orleans District



VICKY CUMMINGS
Adder Area Office
Admin Asst.
New Orleans District



DONALD PLYMEL
Basrah Area Office
Construction Rep
Melbourne, FL



SUETTE "SUE" JACKSON
GRS HQ
Financial Analyst
Mississippi Valley Division
New Orleans, LA



TSGT JAMES CRISP
AF MILCON Liaison
Fairchild AFB, WA

Postcards from Iraq

'Go ahead for both of us'

By Steve Farkus, Project Manager

Gulf Region Division South District, Tallil Air Base, Iraq

(Deployed from the Louisville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)

When I was first approached by the Louisville District leadership about volunteering, I said I had to confer with my wife. Marcella's response was, "go ahead over for both of us." Little did she realize she would have her own trip and special mission. I'm blessed to have a wife who not only was positive about my deployment but willing to make the sacrifice herself.

A few weeks ago I received a care package from my brother Joe — a carefully assembled collection of photos, art and candy that help to make me feel connected to those I love. Now it's my turn to mail a care package! My connection back home in Louisville recently took an interesting twist. Marcella (Denton) is now deployed in support of the recovery effort for Hurricane Ike in Austin, Texas. She's leading the debris mission and coordinating the Corps' efforts with the state of Texas. This is a repeat of 2005 when I was in Afghanistan and Marcella was called to mobilize for Hurricane Katrina. (Large storms hitting the US coastline during my deployments are only coincidence!)

You may wonder why I came over. I think we have to wrap up our efforts in Iraq in the most efficient way. Tax payers (like myself) expect prudent use of our funds. My years in the Army as an Engineer officer and my years with the Corps managing military construction have placed me in a position where I'm the right man for the job.

I'm one of two project managers for the Military Construction Program in southern Iraq. Our projects help to make sure our soldiers, sailors and airmen are supported well. There is much to coordinate and the responsibility is immense. I don't let the scale of the tasks at hand bother me. As PM, I'm the advocate for our customers. I stay with a project from cradle to grave and the leadership looks to me to head the Project Delivery Team and get it built. The work consists of a lot of reports, spreadsheets, meetings and conference calls. We live by schedule, scope and budget. If you don't like people or have a problem telling someone things they don't like to hear, this is not the job for you. My friends here rib me about my energy level and positive attitude. That's easy to explain — five years ago we beat my wife's cancer. Now, I'm lifted by the thoughts and prayers of my friends and family at home and in my home district. I feel like each day with life is icing on the cake. Your funny stories of events back home and the day-to-day incidentals are what interest me the most. I got a kick out of our friend, Brenda Sullivan, asking me what were the funniest stories I had about her husband and my Louisville co-worker, Terry, to be told at his 50th birthday party. I do get sad when I learn of a retirement at the office. I pray for the health of my uncle George, Aunt Dolores and Aunt Nan who are all in their 80's. I want to see them as soon as I'm home.

It does get tough being deployed — it can't be good when I'm standing in heat above an oven setting and putting my hands in my pockets is the only way to stop the pain of the 128° heat of Kuwait. Now it has cooled off and barely cracks 105°. It's funny how the term "hot" is all relative.

We're making a difference here. I'm grateful for the opportunity to be part of this historic effort.



Project Managers Craig Bush & Steve Farkus with Const. Rep Mac Drake check soil borings for a new Dining Facility Overhead Coverage System that is being built to protect the troops.



Wife Marcella
in Hurricane
Ike recovery effort

New Basrah PHC opens



An Iraqi woman holds her grandson after getting him some medication at the new Al Muhandiseen PHC in Basrah Province.

A physician's assistant determines an Iraqi girl's weight at Al Muhandiseen PHC, Basrah Province.

Basrah neighborhood welcomes new primary healthcare center

By A. Al Bahrani

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

Dr. Hadeel Sami, the clinic's administrator, reports they're seeing 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 new, two-story medical structure 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, laboratories, classrooms, vaccination and treatment rooms, pharmacy, offices for doctors and administrative staffs, and meeting rooms.

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."

Al, an Iraqi who is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Basrah Deputy Area Engineer, said, "The opening of the new \$330,000 Al Muhandiseen PHC is another important step to achieving the goal of offering modern healthcare services to all Iraqi neighborhoods." USACE recently completed six other PHCs in Basrah Province and has another three nearing completion.



Pharmacist Zainab helps provide medicine to an Iraqi family at the newly Al Muhandiseen PHC. (USACE photos by A. Al Bahrani)

Fadiliya water treatment facility expands



GRS Construction Representative Toni Graves, Iraqi Engineer Montaha, and GRS Project Engineer Colleen Hickey are working to ensure the new facility expanding Fadiliya's water treatment capacity meets expectations.

Women help expand Iraqi city's water treatment capacity

by Norris Jones

Residents in a southern Iraqi city will soon be getting considerably more drinking water thanks to the efforts of three women

The existing water treatment facility in Fadiliya, a community of 10,000 residents near Nasiriyah in Thi Qar Province, was meeting just 60 percent of residential needs. So a new 200-cubic-meter-per-hour treatment facility is now under construction and is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Project Engineer Colleen Hickey and Construction Representative Toni Graves with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 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.

Ms. Hickey says 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 work force is doing. "As an engineer, you always look at the angles and lines and everything there is as it should be. It's a well-maintained, clean site, and unique in many aspects. For instance, in their 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."

Ms. 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."

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

She plans on doing a nine-month tour and arrived in Iraq in July. She says her family and friends have been 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."

Construction Representative Toni Graves deployed to Iraq in December from USACE's Louisville District where she worked at the Ft. Knox Area Office. During her 12 years there, she's been involved with civil works projects such as flood control, detention basins, state parks, locks and dams. She has a total 34 years government service. Regarding her Iraq duty, she 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." Women are making a difference in Iraq. They're among those helping the country move forward.

Throughout Iraq, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has completed 831 water supply projects with an additional 78 ongoing.



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



Iraqi youngsters say hello.

Fadiliya water treatment facility expands



USACE Project Engineer Colleen Hickey (left) and Construction Representative Toni Graves



**GRS
attorney's
perspective**



John Kassebaum at a recent Hawaiian luau hosted by GRS staff.

Kassebaum finds plenty to smile about in Iraq

by John Connor

Working as an attorney in southern Iraq for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on the nitty-gritty legal details of construction contracts and handling other lawyerly chores doesn't mean you can't savor other aspects of your environment.

John Kassebaum, counsel for USACE's 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.

He also recalled 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," the USACE attorney said.

Other memorable sidelights include sharing fresh yogurt and dates with Iraqis while learning various local customs from them. These are pieces in the mosaic of a tour Kassebaum described as "a great experience both personally and professionally."

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. This \$53 million project was USACE's first Foreign Military Sales project in Iraq and is funded by the Government of Iraq."

Kassebaum is winding up an eight-month tour in Iraq and will return shortly to his job with USACE's Charleston (SC) District where he has worked for 10 years. A graduate of the University of South Carolina School of Law,

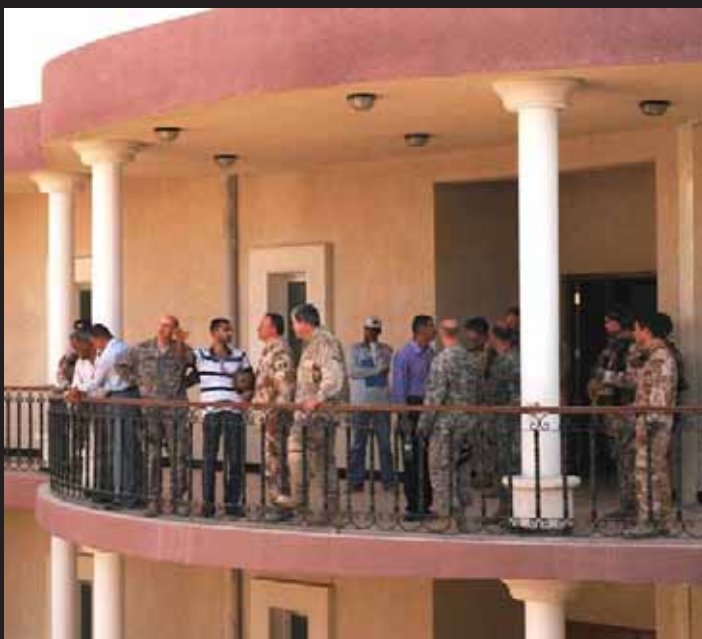
Kassebaum said: "Iraqi business practices are different but I think both the contractors and the GOI (Government of Iraq) view us as fair and equitable in our administration of construction contracts; sort of like the honest broker, which is why the GOI has provided new funding to the ICERP (Iraqi Commander's Emergency Response Program) for the U.S. to use for projects that benefit the Iraqi people."

Kassebaum will be returning to his two children, Eliza, 14, and Philip, who turned 12 while his dad was in Iraq. "I miss them very much and am very excited about being back with them again," said the lawyer, who 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, his first stint overseas, 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."



Proudly wearing their Camp Adder matching shirts are Art Patterson (left), John Kassebaum, Sylvester Rainey, and John Billoft.



**MND-SE
Commander**



Commander MND (SE) MG Andy Salmon visited the Basrah Children's Hospital and the Basrah Regional Courthouse Oct. 15. The \$163.8 million 160,000-sq.-ft. 94-bed hospital was partially funded by a \$22 million grant from the Government of Spain, \$30 million from Project Hope, and over \$10 million from the Iraqi Ministry of Health. The 11,200-sq.-meter \$10.9 million courthouse and witness protection facility will have more than 70 judges and 200 employees working there. (USACE photos by A. Al Bahrani)



Umm Qasr new pier



Construction on a new \$53 million pier and seawall will soon get started at Umm Qasr in southern Iraq that will provide the Iraqi Navy new port facilities as it continues to expand its naval capabilities. It will include a 210-meter main pier, two smaller piers, and facilities for power, water and fuel distribution. Navy Col. Ahmed Jasim (lower, right), the Iraqi Commander of the Umm Qasr Navy Base, said, "We consider this a critical project due to its military and economic importance for our country, We're very happy the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is involved because USACE has a very good reputation in supervising and administrating such work." The completed pier and fueling facilities will support new naval vessels being purchased by Iraq. Together, the new facilities and supported patrol vessels will significantly increase the Iraqi Navy's capacity to secure the vital port infrastructure and seaways in Iraq's territorial waters, which are critical to Iraq's security and continued economic development, Col. Jasim explained. Construction of the new pier is scheduled to be completed in September 2009. (Photos by A. Al Bahrani)



Iraqi Navy Security Officer LTC Ali Abdul Kadhim greets LTC Humberto Ramirez at the Iraqi Navy Base, Umm Qasr.

U.S. Iraqi leaders partner to build Umm Qasr pier-seawall complex

*By Patricia Ryan
Gulf Region Division*

Baghdad, Iraq – Construction is scheduled to begin on a pier and seawall complex 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 Oct. 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 set expectations, provide initial information regarding the project, and develop the partnerships that will make this project successful.

“I commit to the head of the Iraqi 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/Poly Earth Construction, International, provided a thorough briefing on the conceptual design for the piers and seawall at Umm Qasr as well as examples of some of their completed projects utilizing similar technology and design. Jeffrey R. Mekinda, director of operations for PolyEarth, said 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, requested assurances from USACE representatives that they would be directly involved with quality control.

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.”

Construction of the pier and seawall complex is scheduled to be completed in late 2009 when Iraq’s Navy will be taking delivery of new ships.



GRD Commander MG Michael R. Eyre and RADM Mohammed Jawad Khadum (Commander of the Iraqi Navy) at the Oct. 16 partnering conference in Baghdad. (USACE photo)

ARRIVING MEMBERS



JERRY BREZNICAN
GRS Security Manager
Nashville District



GARY WEILER
IT Specialist
Alaska District



BARRY BRAGG
GRS IT Chief
Army Recruiting CMD
Columbia, SC

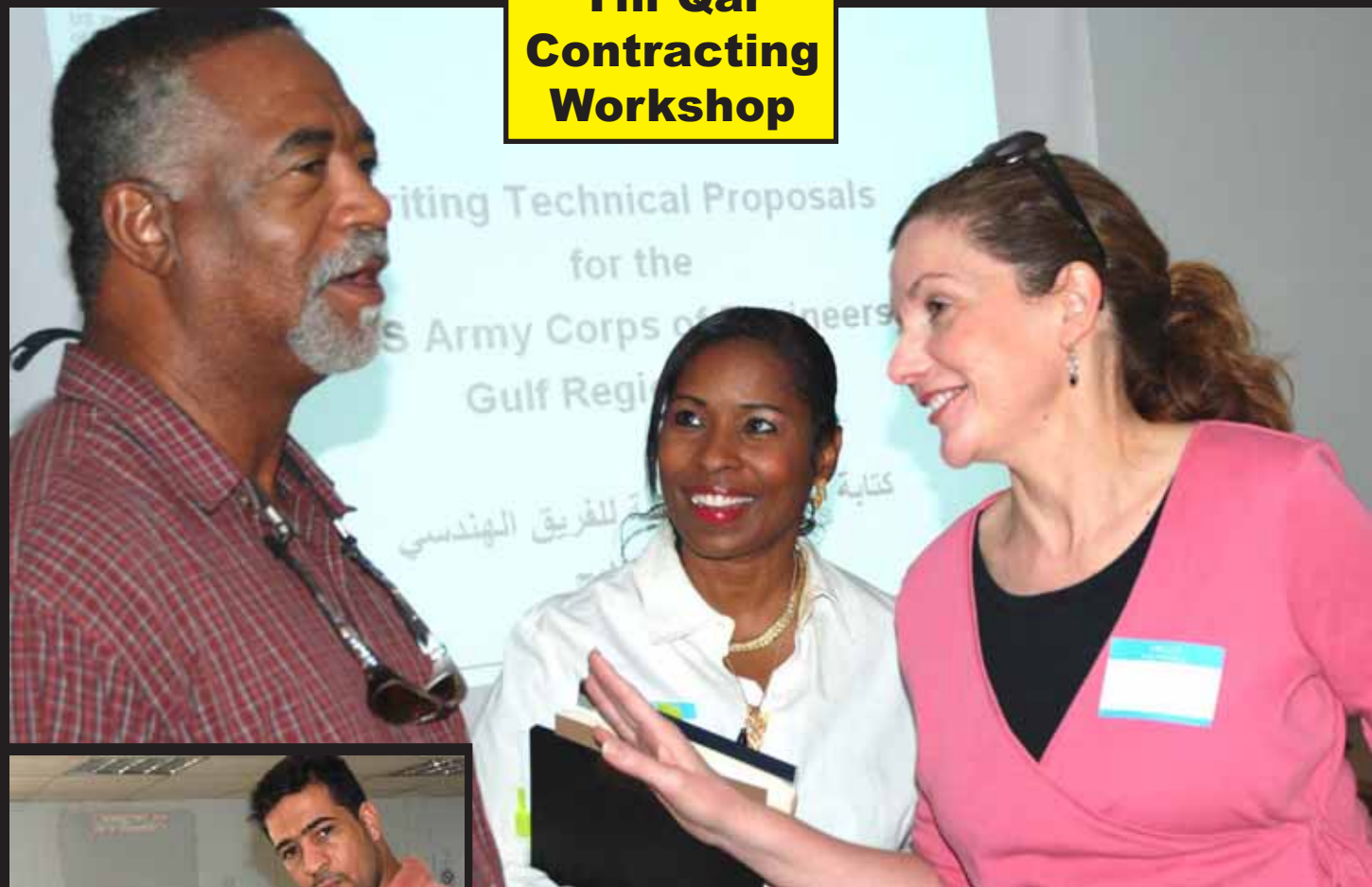


LOUELLA SIMONETTI
Contract Specialist
Baltimore District



BOB WEIS
Project Manager
Sierra Army Depot
Herlong, CA

Thi Qar Contracting Workshop



About 20 Iraqi businessmen attended a one-day workshop at Tallil Air Base Oct. 16 to learn what's required when submitting a bid proposal for a construction project. GRS Project Manager Sheila Hyde, Contract Specialist Karen Johnson, Thi Qar Provincial Reconstruction Team Engineer Art Patterson, and GRS Iraqi Engineer Murtatha Abas (who served as the interpreter) presented information on topics such as how to read and understand government solicitation requirements, the key steps in the USACE contracting process from initial scopes of work to contract award, adhering to the Defense Base Act (DBA) insurance requirements, other important documents (i.e. past performance evaluations, letters of recommendation, security plan), the need for accurate Electronic Fund Transfer information for payment purposes, and accessing solicitation web sites such as www.baghdadbusinesscenter.org.

DEPARTING MEMBERS



CHUCK COMEAU
Adder Area Office
Acting Area Engineer
Maxwell AFB, AL



EDWARD SULLINS
GRS IT Chief
Fayetteville, NC



SSGT ERIN ZEITLER
GRS HQ Admin NCO
Holloman AFB, NM



JOHN KASSEBAUM
GRS HQ
Office of Counsel
Charleston District



DOLORES ROHM
Adder Area Office
Admin Asst.
Rock Island AMC



Basrah officials attend 5-day course on functional analysis, urban planning

by A. Al Bahrani

BASRAH, Iraq— About 20 representatives from the Basrah Urban Planning Directorate and Basrah Municipalities recently attended a five-day course to learn about modern functional analysis. According to MAJ Dan George, Basrah Provincial Reconstruction Team Engineer, the course started Oct. 9 to teach urban planning so local Iraqis could better control their destinies and develop their cities.

“This course was very useful. Apart from the new information, it helped refresh knowledge we already had,” said Bader Abdulzahra Bader, Chief of Urban Planning, Basrah Governor Office. “It strengthened communication between the urban planning directorate and all others,” he added.

Awattif Al Mahdi, a civil engineer with the Basrah Municipality said, “This is the first course of this kind we’ve attended and I think we as Iraqi government employees need this kind of information. Our country is going to open widely to foreign investments within the next few years and we have to be ready for that step. The five-day course was very useful and we need to schedule more.”

Des Ogrady, the urban planning instructor, said, “We aim through these courses to give the basic skills to help the participants to begin the task of plan making for their municipality. It was designed to help them analyze their planning area, make a forecast, and prepare options for major land use changes. This course helped to begin the process.”

**Pre-con for
Combat Aviation
Brigade project**



GRS HQ hosted a pre-construction conference Oct. 24 for the \$58.5 million Combat Aviation Brigade Beddown Project being built at Ali Air Base. Most of the Project Delivery Team attended including the prime contractor, KBR Government and Infrastructure and their prime subcontractor, Kulak Inc. The project involves constructing a seven-story Air Traffic Control Tower and to provide over 75 acres of contingency airfield parking for rotary and medium-load fixed wing aircraft along with supporting utilities, infrastructure and security necessary to make the facility complete and usable. The customer is AFCEE (Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment) and the 407th ECES (Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron).

Postcards from Iraq

Challenging . . . but rewarding

By Danielle Billings, Project Manager

Gulf Region Division South District, Tallil Air Base, Iraq

(Deployed from the St. Louis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)



Danielle Billings says hello to some Iraqi youngsters

I began working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a Program Analyst in the St. Louis District in 2005, after graduating with a degree in International Business. I worked as a Student Cooperative Educational Program Employee (SCEP) in a Support for Others Program Analyst role, and later a Civil Works Program Analyst, while working towards a MBA in Finance. In 2007, I took on an additional duty as the Mississippi Valley Division (MVD) Regional P2 Coordinator before deciding in July that I was ready for something different.

I had spoken with a co-worker who had deployed to the Gulf Region North District and the former Deputy Commander in St. Louis who had deployed to the Gulf Region South District before deciding that Iraq didn't sound so bad. With my MBA program completed and the positive feedback I received, I decided to take the plunge. I expected the tour to be challenging - with the work schedule, environment, and a new group of people - but it turned out that this experience has been one of the most rewarding things I have ever done.

I have been in Iraq for a year now and have made some close friends while deployed. I have also learned about Iraqi culture and have a new appreciation for the Iraqi people. Our mission is crucial to allowing Iraqis to stand on their own and I wish that more people would volunteer to support this effort. Deploying to support GWOT may not sound like it's a lot of fun but I can honestly say that I am happy that I made this decision. For anyone who is considering whether or not to come to Iraq, I would highly recommend it and cannot say enough about all of the wonderful things my tour to Iraq has brought. Coming over here has helped me grow both personally and professionally and I would not trade this experience for the world.

I would like to thank my family and friends who have been there to support me and the co-workers with whom I have had the opportunity to serve. It isn't always easy to be away from home but it most certainly has been enjoyable!

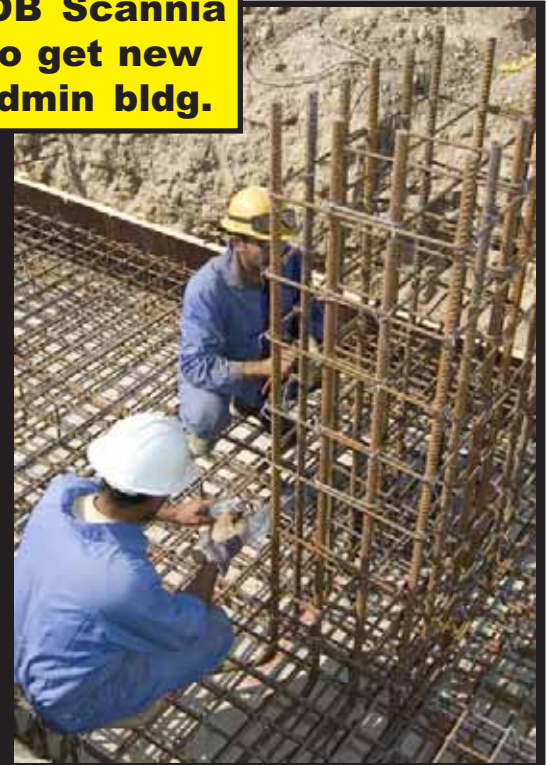


Danielle Billings visits the ancient city of Ur and sees one of the world's oldest arches..



Senior GRS staff in a photo taken this summer including Project Manager Danielle Billings (front row, third from left).

**FOB Scannia
to get new
admin bldg.**



MAJ Glenn Kiesewetter (2nd from left), LTC Mike Darrow, and MAJ Kevin Branch (right) view ongoing construction at FOB Scannia where a new administration building is being constructed so military personnel can more effectively manage the day-to-day activities there. In addition, improvements are being made to the dining facility moving the hand-washing stations into an indoor, climate-controlled area. FOB Scannia is located in Iraq's Qadisiyah Province. The \$2.3 million project is 18% finished and scheduled to be completed in February. About 30 Iraqis are on the crew.



Students pleased with renovation



Before



After



Students welcome USACE team overseeing renovation project at their high school. See story next page.

Students happy with renovation



Al Dhyabat Village students in Thi Qar Province pleased with ongoing renovations at their high school.

School upgrade means jobs, better learning environment

An Iraqi crew is renovating a high school in southern Iraq repairing the leaky roof, replacing hazardous electrical wiring, and fixing the non-functioning toilets.

The project means jobs to the local community with about 40 residents on the construction crew, building materials purchased from area businesses, and the school itself employing 19 teachers.

“These improvements are enhancing the learning environment here,” said Construction Representative Toni Graves with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. “My job is to check on the progress and quality of the work. It’s inspiring to see the appreciative smiles from the students at Al Nadwah School in Al Dhyabat Village, northern Thi Qar Province.”

The Iraqi laborers are rehabilitating the floors, ceilings, doors, windows, staircases, interior and exterior walls. New electrical panels, wiring, florescent light fixtures, ceiling fans, power outlets, and switches are being installed. The \$152,000 project is expected to be completed next month.



Two students at newly-renovated school in Thi Qar Province.

Over 240 students attend classes at the 15-room facility which was constructed nearly 30 years ago. The building includes 10 classrooms, three offices, and two storerooms.

Headmaster Mohammed said this is the first major renovation his school has had and the community is very appreciative. “It’s looking great. The Iraqi workers, many of whom live here, know how much their efforts mean to area families. Everyone is pleased.”

Throughout Iraq, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has overseen the completion of 1,089 school projects, and 39 are currently underway.



DEPARTING MEMBERS



LAUREN KELLY
Contracting Office
Admin Asst.
Winchester, VA



TONYA MYRICK
GRS HQ
Project Manager
Vicksburg District



LTC JOHN BURGESS
Basrah Area Office
Special Projects Officer
Mobile District



RICHARD RUPPERT
Resource Management
Program Analyst
Rock Island District



MICHAEL DRAGO
Project Manager
Pittsburgh District



LTC Mike Darrow



Palm Reader Joyce O'Shea



Sheik -- SFC Gary White



Forat enjoys Halloween fun

Aegis RLT member BBQs steaks, hot dogs.



MAJ Phillip Johnson

Musayib water treatment



The Musayib Water Treatment Plant in Babil Province will soon have a new look under a \$1.6 million repair project.

Water treatment plant's repairs, training offer long-term solution

An Iraqi crew is repairing Musayib's Water Treatment Plant so it can provide drinking water to 50,000 households in the area.

"After years of neglect, the facility is currently pumping water directly from the Euphrates into the city's drinking water distribution system with little or no filtration," said Lt. Col. Michael Darrow with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "The only treatment that is being provided is chlorination. It is unregulated and insufficient to adequately treat the raw river water's high solid levels," he continued.

About 34 Iraqis are on the crew rehabilitating the plant's major mechanical systems with the goal of restoring its full design capacity of 2,160 cubic-meters-per-hour. The \$1.6 million project is currently 32% finished.

The Babil Provincial Reconstruction Team and embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team supporting the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, are working to develop programs to train and certify Iraqi operators, so once the plant repairs are completed next spring, those individuals will know the operating procedures to produce clean water and the proper maintenance requirements to avoid major breakdowns. "The intent is to offer a certification process similar to what the typical water treatment plant operator in the United States is required to go through," Darrow noted.

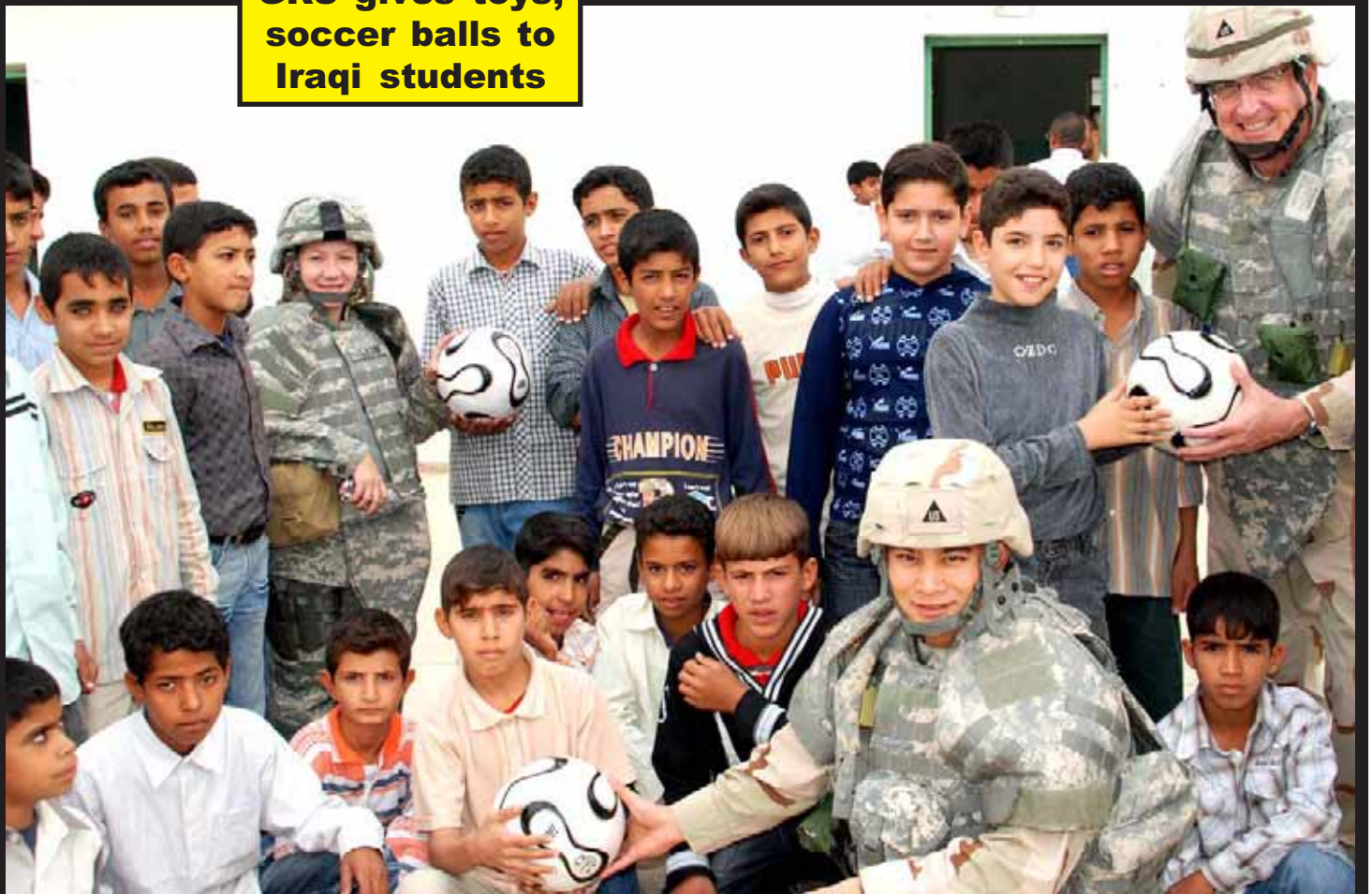
Major Kimberly Peeples, Deputy Team Leader of the North Babil ePRT, said, "We all recognize that operations and maintenance is one of Iraq's biggest challenges and that a priority needs to be placed on capacity development. We are working hand-in-hand with the Babil Water Director General and the Babil PRT to identify a sustainable solution.

"We are committed to assisting the Iraqis take this important step," she concluded. "It will ensure Musayib families can count on clean water coming out of their taps for years to come."



Repairs to the Musayib Water Treatment Plant will allow it to provide potable water for the first time in years.

**GRS gives toys,
soccer balls to
Iraqi students**



SSgt Ginelda Lyons, Project Manager Mike Monte, and Engineering Branch Chief Paul Flamm presented soccer balls to the Al Hakheeta School Nov. 3. Headmaster Majet said the school sincerely appreciated the kind gesture.



Paul Flamm hands out stuffed toys donated by his daughter Hayley (a college student) and visits the classrooms.



SSgt Ginelda Lyons says hello to some Iraqi primary students.

GRS visited the 12-classroom Al Hakheeta school near Tallil Air Base Nov. 3 and gave away stuffed animals and soccer balls to the students. That school has over 800 students attending, with 450 primary-age youngsters in the morning, a second session for 350 high school students in the afternoon. The school, which has 22 teachers, was built in 1979. For those stateside family and friends interested in supporting this program, mail clothes and shoes (any size), and toys for all ages to the following address: USACE GRS, Toys/Donation Closet, COB Adder, Tallil, Iraq AE 09331.

**GRS gives toys,
soccer balls to
Iraqi students**



Hundreds of Iraqi students at Al Hakheeta School near Nasariyah in southern Iraq were beaming with smiles Nov. 3 as they were given colorful toys, thanks to the generosity of stateside donors. SSgt Ginelda Lyons (seen in photo), Project Manager Mike Monte, and Engineering Branch Chief Paul Flamm passed out the gifts. GRS families and friends interested in supporting the program can mail clothes and shoes (any size), and toys to the following address: USACE GRS, Toys/Donation Closet, COB Adder, Tallil, Iraq AE 09331.



Project Manager Mike Monte was warmly welcomed by the Al Hakheeta School near Nasiriyah Nov. 3.

**SGT Colson
re-enlists**



With 5 years service, SGT Danielle Colson re-enlisted for an additional five years Nov. 6. She deployed in March from Schofield Barracks, HI, and is assigned as the GRS Supply NCO at Tallil Air Base, Iraq. Officiating at the ceremony was COL Jack Drolet, Commander, Gulf Region Division South District. She will be completing her tour in March, 2009, and will be reporting to the Family and MWR Command in Alexandria, VA, as the Dept. of the Army representative to the BOSS program (Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers). She is daughter of Donald and Diane Colson of Kennesaw, GA.

ARRIVING MEMBERS



GREG VECCHIO
GRS Chief
Resource Management
Buffalo/Chicago
Districts



VICTOR AQUINO
Babil Resident Office
Construction Rep
China Lake (CA)
Naval Weapons Station



ARTHUR "ART" DAVEY
Basrah Area Office
Construction Rep
USAG Ft. McCoy, WI



FRANCIS "DUTCH" STEELE
Babil Resident Office
Construction Rep
NAVFAC Hawaii



MITCH PETERSON
GRS HQ
Project Manager
NAVFAC SW
San Diego

Hillah Courthouse



New Hillah Regional Courthouse under construction.

New courthouse taking shape to bolster Babil's 'rule of law'

by Alicia Embrey

Al Hillah, IRAQ – A new regional courthouse is taking shape to help Babil Province enforce the rule of law. The new \$7 million facility is scheduled to be completed next spring.

“The Iraqi judiciary has a long and proud history going back before the founding of the country itself,” said Mark Robbins, Rule of Law advisor with the Babil Provincial Reconstruction Team.

“For the most part, the judiciary in Babil enjoys the respect of the people. But many years of neglect under the previous regime has left it with a crumbling infrastructure and inadequate facilities to meet the rule of law needs of the local population,” he noted.

“The construction of a new Regional Courthouse and upgrades to the old Courthouse have been a long and complicated project. But the PRT has remained committed to it. We look forward to working with the Babil judiciary to ensure that it will soon work in a facility that better reflects the honor and respect of the Iraqi judiciary,” Robbins said.

According to Babil Resident Engineer Jun Morales with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the new 35,000 sq. ft. multi-story courthouse will consist of the main office

building and adjoining service buildings (cafeteria, guard houses and bathrooms), two fountains, public and employee park areas. “All buildings will have air conditioning, potable water and inter-com system. The older Al Hillah courthouse, for the Municipal Court, will receive a facelift and security upgrades. About 100 Iraqis are involved with the construction daily,” Morales said.

Babil, south of Baghdad, became the 12th of Iraq's 18 provinces

to take the lead for its own security operations Oct. 27. “The Regional Courthouse is an expansion of their judicial system and a symbol of a new phase within the government,” Morales added. “It's a key institution in the community's quest for law and order.”

Currently, 90 judges and prosecutors, 175 employees, along with 190 judicial police and security guards are working at the older Municipal Courthouse. In addition, 450 lawyers use the existing facility. After the new courthouse complex opens, the total number of judges and employees is eventually expected to increase.

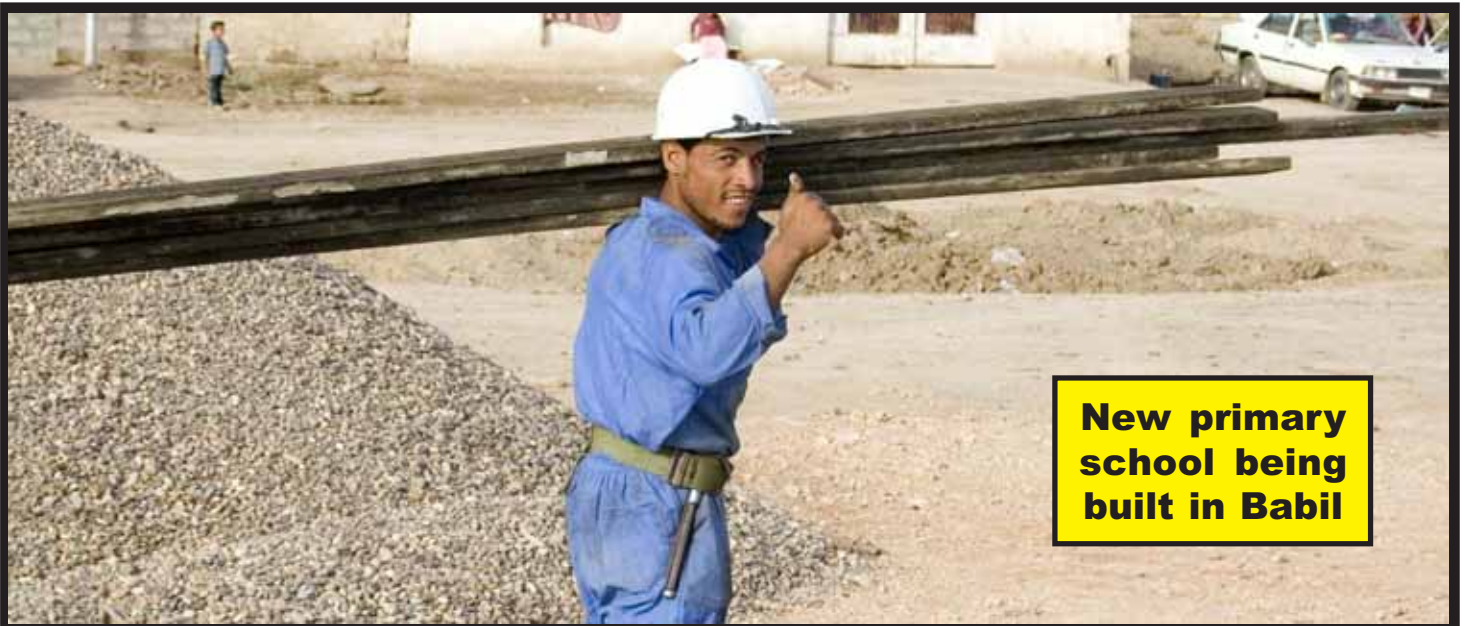
Throughout Iraq, USACE has completed 55 courthouse projects with an additional 11 ongoing.



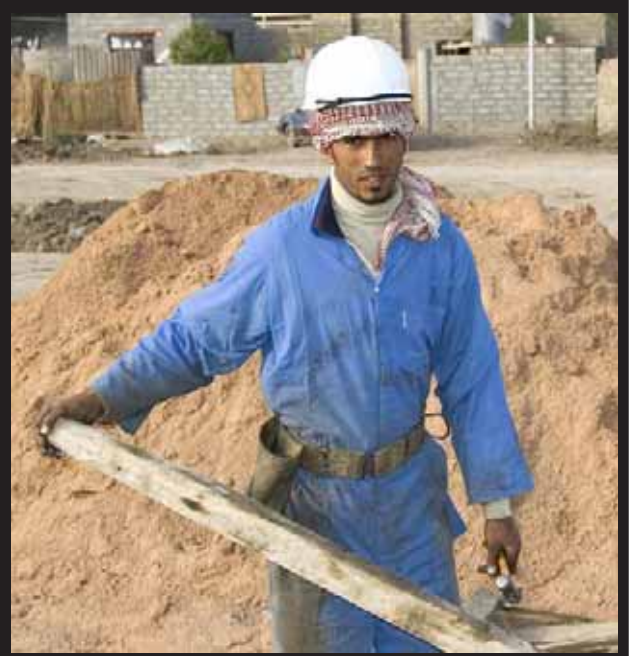
Circular staircase near the main rotunda.



Hillah Courthouse's plaza will feature fountains with service buildings also part of the plan.



New primary school being built in Babil



Construction recently started on the new Al Mashro'o 12-classroom primary school in Babil Province. The \$970,000 project will include an administrative wing, playground area, toilets, perimeter wall, walkways, a generator, furniture and computers. The project is expected to be completed next summer. Shown above is Construction Representative Victor Aquino with the Babil Resident Office.



Two Iraqis work on the 33kV cable trench which will help provide permanent power to the Sweetwater Canal Pump Station #2. (USACE photos by A. Al Bahrani)



An Iraqi crew prepares the rebar for a concrete pad that will support the fuel storage facility at the Sweetwater Canal Pump Station.

Work continues to help Basrah get reliable source of water . . .

By A. Al Bahrani

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

A \$5 million project, scheduled to be completed 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-MVA (megavolt amp) transformers, and two new 1.5 megavolt back-up generators.

“The project is directly impacting Basrah’s economy,” said Iraqi Engineer Sattar who works for the Gulf Region South District, 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.

Once complete, the Sweetwater Canal Pump Station will be connected 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 3 back up additional diesel pumps with the capacity of 3600

cubic meters per hour for each one. “Basrah 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 benefiting families in more than 25 area neighborhoods,” he concluded. Throughout Iraq, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has overseen the completion of 831 water supply projects with another 78 ongoing.



Two Iraqi technicians replace an old valve at one of the intake pipes at the Sweetwater Canal Pump Station #2 located 90 kilometers from Basrah. (USACE Photo)



GRS enjoyed bingo Veterans Day courtesy of the Troy (IL) American Legion Post 708 that provided the game materials.



**Veterans Day
bingo fun**

Shirley Goodine organized GRS' first bingo event and is shown with some of the prizes.



Belinda Dillback and Vickie Whitehouse



All were winners at bingo Nov. 11 including CSM Thomas Thrasher, Norris Jones, and Tom Eidson.



Linda Christensen



Shelly Carter



CDR Terry Hart and Barry Bragg



SSgt Ginelda Lyons, LTC David Berczek, Vicky Cummings win some prizes.



Joanne Milo



Robin Encarnacion

**Veterans Day
softball action**



MAJ Dee J. Katzer, Jairus Rice



Jose Morales



*Jose Morales tags out
LouElla Simonetti at home plate.*



LouElla Simonetti



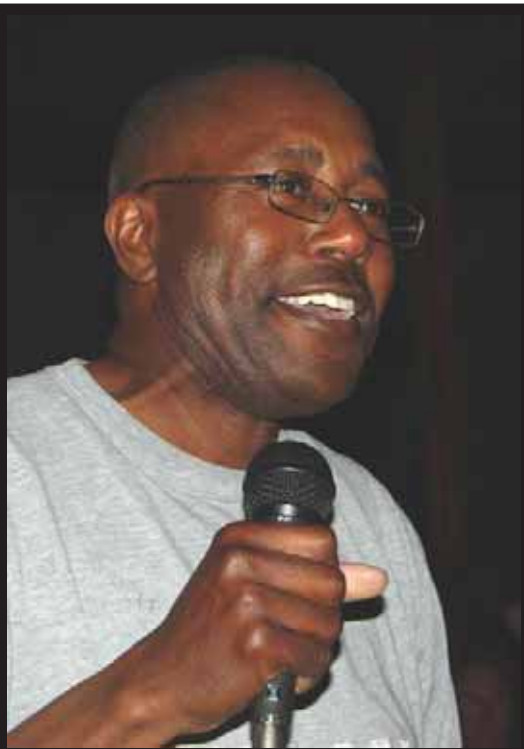
MAJ Edward "Coach" Wright



George Sims



CPT Patrick Powe, CDR Terry Hart



CSM Thomas Thrasher



Crowd loved CSM Thrasher's Clarence Carter impersonation.



Joanne Milo



SSG Alan James sings Charlie Daniels' "Devil went down to Georgia."



Robin Encarnacion, Shirley Goodine, and CPT Patrick Powe



Sylvester Rainey and Robin Encarnacion

**Veterans Day
karaoke**

**Karaoke
features
Diana Ross**



CPT Patrick Powe & Sylvester Rainey



Sue Jackson (center), LouElla Simonetti (left), and Avril Jones brought to life some classics from "Diana Ross and the Supremes" during the GRS Karaoke night Nov. 11.

**Shatt Al Arab
new courthouse
taking shape**



An Iraqi construction crew is making progress on the new Shatt Al Arab Courthouse at Al Tanoma, Basrah Province.

Chief Judge pleased with quality construction at courthouse

by A. Al Bahrani

Basrah, Iraq— People of Al Tanoma, a city east of Shatt Al Arab River, will soon open a new courthouse.

Laith Abdul Sammad, the Chief Judge on the Basrah Supreme Judiciary Council, said when the new, modern facility is completed next spring, it will have a direct impact on the rule of law here.

About 40 local Iraqis including judges, clerks and security personnel will work at the new facility when it opens and that number is expected to grow in the ensuing months once its fully operational, said Chief Judge Laith.

“I’m looking forward to seeing this project finished because the 27-year-old existing facility in Al Tanoma is not sufficient for the 120,000 residents of the area,” he explained. “The new courthouse will serve as the central pillar for a fair judicial process, strengthening the community’s pursuit of peace and justice,” he added.

The Iraqi firm building the \$1.4 million courthouse is making good progress and the project is 54 percent complete, said Iraqi Engineer Al, the Deputy Area Engineer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. “Currently the 30 local Iraqis on the construction crew are plastering the interior and exterior walls and installing the main electrical panel

and wiring,” he noted. “The 588-sq.-meter three-story courthouse compound will feature parking lots, a maintenance room, generator, administrative checkpoint, and two gardens,” he continued.

“The local Iraqi crew is taking pride in their work and the Chief Judge is pleased with the construction quality he’s seeing,” he concluded. Throughout Iraq, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has completed 55 courthouse projects with an additional 11 are ongoing.



Work continues on a new courthouse project near Basrah.