

ESSAYONS

Forward

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Gulf Region Division (Provisional), Iraq Volume 3, Issue 3

December 2006



**Building a Healthy Iraq —
Basrah Children's Hospital Progresses**



December 2006
Volume 3, Issue 3

Inside this issue:

<i>CG/CSM columns</i>	3
<i>Baghdad challenges</i>	4
<i>ABOT</i>	5
<i>Electricity</i>	6
<i>Construction update</i>	7
<i>Water treatment plant</i>	8
<i>Safety record awarded</i>	9
<i>Basrah children's hospital</i>	10 - 11
<i>Najaf teaching hospital</i>	12
<i>MILCON</i>	13
<i>Aegis bridges gap</i>	14 - 15
<i>Educating Iraqi engineers</i>	16
<i>Al Anbar outlook</i>	17
<i>Iraq sees benefits</i>	18
<i>Mahmudiyah market</i>	19
<i>Hail & Farewell</i>	20



U.S. Naval Academy 1968 class (and room) mates, retired Marine Col. Jack Holly, Director of USACE-GRD Logistics, left, and Marine Lt. Col. Ollie North recently met and discussed GRD's Logistics Management Movement Control Center, one of Holly's many vitally important areas of responsibility in helping bring more than \$10B worth of material into Iraq for its reconstruction. (Photo by Thomas O'Hara)



COVER: Work continues on the Basrah Children's Hospital in southern Iraq.
(Photo by Thomas O'Hara)

ESSAYONS FORWARD

USACE-GRD, Baghdad APO AE 09348 DESK: 540-665-1233* *CONUS area codes

ESSAYONS FORWARD is the field magazine of the Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in accordance with AR 360-1. It is produced for electronic dispersal and limited hardcopy circulation as needed. Production in the theater of Iraq. Letters, articles, notices of events, photographs and art are welcomed, but may be edited for clarity or brevity. Publication of any submission is at the discretion of the editor.

Submissions can be emailed to: CEGRD.PAO@tac01.usace.army.mil

All photos must be high resolution and include complete caption information. The views and opinions expressed in this field magazine are those of the writers and are not necessarily those of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, or the Department of Defense.

ESSAYONS FORWARD is on-line: www.grd.usace.army.mil/news/Essayonsforward

Commanding General: Brig. Gen. Michael J. Walsh

Division/District Public Affairs staff:

Thomas A. O'Hara (Chief PAO, GRD) * Kimberly Mielcarek (Deputy PAO, GRD) * Tom Clarkson (GRD)
Erich Langer (GRD) * J. Anajar (GRD) * Lee PAO (GRD) * Shahrzad (GRD) * Norris Jones (GRC) * Polli Barnes Keller (GRN)
Lana Aziz (GRN) * James Bullinger (GRS) * Betsy Weiner (GRS) * Mohammed Allawi (GRS) * A. Al Bahrani (GRS)
Troy Rolan (Broadcaster, GRC) * Steve Wright (GRD-PA Rear, TAC)

KEEP IT LOCKED ON...

Al Asad	107.3 FM	Kirkush	107.3 FM
Al Base	107.3 FM	Mosul	105.1 FM
Ar Ramadi	107.3 FM	Q-West	93.3 FM
Baghdad	107.7 FM	Taji	107.3 FM
Balad	107.3 FM	Tal Afar	107.3 FM
Fallujah	105.1 FM	Taqqadum	107.3 FM
Kirkuk	107.3 FM	Tikrit	100.1 FM

Freedom Radio

Commander's Two Bits



There is a Chinese proverb that states, "May you live in interesting times."

Now in December 2006, three years after the liberation of Iraq, we are definitely living during interesting times while we spearhead the largest construction effort since the Marshall Plan.

As the fortitude of the American public is tested, and our leadership assesses and debates the American resolve and path forward on this mission -- while still engaged in the mission -- we are definitely living during interesting times.

While the people of Iraq struggle with the complexities of an infant government and battle those who are determined to see it fail, they continue to work diligently - insistent that their fight for freedom not falter. As fellow free people, Americans are definitely living during interesting times.

When we look back on this mission when we are older and grayer, I am confident we will not only be able to say our time here was not only interesting, but important to freedom and democracy.

It is easy to become disheartened, frustrated and sometimes pessimistic with the day-to-day struggles here. But the struggle, the intensity of the battle, is why this effort is so important. It is important to take a moment to step back and put the magnitude of our mission and our role in that mission into perspective.

Three years ago, there was a dilapidated and struggling power infrastructure that fed only the privileged. Now, although not yet at the level to feed this entire country, the people of Iraq share a more equitable and reliable power infrastructure -- withstanding even the constant attempts by those who want to see it fail.

Three years ago, many of the school children in this country attended class in crude mud huts and had no medical support. Today, thousands upon thousands attend school in hardened structures and have much improved medical facility to receive inoculations and simple treatments.

Where there was once sewage in the streets of villages throughout Iraq in 2003, there now are lift stations and treatment plants working to remove disease and infestations from where families live.

Things are improving due, in large part, to the time you are spending here standing side-by-side with our Iraqi brothers and sisters.

The next year will be a challenging one for the people of Iraq, the American people and its heroes serving here, but we have shown that we are up to the challenge.

As your commander, I am privileged to serve with you during these interesting times.

Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh
Gulf Region Division
Commander

Cmd. Sgt. Major's Message



Goodbye 2006 - Hello 2007!
As calendar year 2006 comes to an end and we begin 2007, it is time for us to reflect the 2006 chapter of our individual and

collective accomplishments.

We must recognize that we, the members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, have served a vital and important role as we have greatly assisted the Government of Iraq through its many ministries.

We have been instrumental in providing professional engineering assistance in the progress of the Iraqi Reconstruction Mission to the U.S. Department of State and Multi-National Force - Iraq. At the same time, we initiated and participated in the early stages of capacity development as we continue to help and employ many Iraqi people with engineering expertise. We also assisted in capacity development that related to the many issues of operating and maintaining their key plants and critical facilities.

The last eight months of 2006, we saw an increase in sectarian violence and bloodshed throughout this ever-changing environment -- no where more than in Baghdad. We saw an increase in the use of IEDs, buried and surface laid mines, sniper fire and suicide bombers by the terrorist or militia groups throughout this country. The U.S. and Coalition Forces learned that trying to maintain security, train the Iraqi Police Force and the Iraqi Security Forces/Army, while trying to stabilize this country, is a hard and demanding business for all.

I won't begin to say it has been easy or perfect - we know that this environment has its hard moments and many difficult challenges at times. However, we managed to prevail and be successful throughout the year even with the heightened security issues. We did this by taking care of one another, by making solid and significant contributions one small safe step at a time.

We have clearly demonstrated our organization's flexibility and our ability to get the difficult and most demanding jobs done. This has only been possible through the efforts of some very dedicated professionals willing to place themselves in harm's ways for something bigger than themselves. These dedicated professionals have clearly demonstrated their adaptability, capability and flexibility along with their personal drive and energy toward improving the key infrastructure and facilities for the people living throughout Iraq.

Now that most of our people have completed their R&R leaves throughout the holidays, let us welcome them back and bring in the New Year 2007. As our boss (BG Walsh) would say "we ain't done yet" and now is the time to continue our forward momentum in the completion of remaining construction projects and the long continuous task of project closeout for 2007.

At the same time, our division is going to go through a lot of change this year. However, it is no different than any other year - if you look at our organization the one thing that has been constant is change. We have continually changed since our activation in 2004 and we have been chasing after the changes ever since. We know that dust doesn't settle when you are on the move and this year will be no different for us. Proud to serve! God bless,

Goodbye 2006 - Hello 2007!

Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Bill McDaniel
Gulf Region Division
Command Sergeant Major

Baghdad counts on local improvements

Right: Maj. Robert Nash, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division, checks one of the sewer lift stations being rebuilt in Baghdad.

Below: Lt. Col. Glen Masset, 9th Engineer Battalion, visits one of the many school in Baghdad being renovated by his battalion and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

(USACE photos)



Baghdad is facing some challenging times and for the situation to get better, most officials believe local residents need to see that their government is working and improvements are taking place.

Maj. Robert Nash, Officer in Charge of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers International Zone office, points out his staff oversees about 150 projects worth \$500 million to upgrade essential services in Baghdad. “We’re rebuilding gas stations, paving roads, repairing sewer lift stations, installing new potable water networks, and paving roads. We’re also renovating hospitals, building healthcare centers, installing neighborhood electric distribution networks, and rehabilitating water treatment plants.”

The new initiative is called Operation Together Forward with an emphasis on clearing out insurgent elements in certain key areas and then funding a variety of community projects so residents can see that things are getting better. “We’re just getting started on those new projects,” Nash continued. “When fully underway, there will be thousands of Iraqis employed and their work will have a lasting, positive impact. As an example, 18 gas stations are being renovated throughout Baghdad and a variety of water and sewer issues are being resolved.”

Nash’s office works with U.S. military units attached to the 1st Cavalry Division including the 9th Engineer Battalion commanded by Lt. Col. Glen Masset, who keeps track of all ongoing community improvements in the northwest quadrant of Baghdad. Baghdad City Government, U.S. Agency for International Development, the Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction Team,

USACE, and Masset’s Brigade are all sponsoring projects to help the Iraqi people. “Our top priority is helping the Iraqi government get on its feet as local and city officials work to improve various essential services for their residents.”

Masset said townspeople gave them a definite positive response when they started a trash clean-up program in west Baghdad. “We’re also putting in street lighting, getting an abandoned slaughterhouse for cattle and sheep renovated, cleaning a ... drainage canal, and providing portable generators to area schools, including 500-liter fuel tanks and 500 liters of fuel.”

Operation Together Forward involves neighborhoods throughout the metropolitan area. An example is Doura, a community of 265,000 residents, where Nash’s engineers are overseeing the following projects:

- Construction of two new million-dollar schools.
- Four road projects: paving 35,000 square meters of roadway and overlaying 60,000 square meters in Mahalla 856; overlaying 35,000 square meters of roadway in Mahalla 848; paving and overlaying roads in Mahallas 822, 824, 826; paving about 4 kilometers of road in Mahallas 850 and 852.
- Four sewage system improvements: rebuilding the sewage pump station in Mahalla 848; replacing generators, electrical panel boards and pumps for sewage lift stations in Mahalla 856; constructing a combined sewer in Mahalla 840; repairing a collapsed sewer network in Mahalla 824 that includes 280 meters of sewer pipe, concrete manholes, and new storm drains.
- Construction of a potable water network in Mahalla 824.

Apart from work helping individual areas, big-ticket projects are also part of the effort including more than \$100 million for a new electrical distribution network and more than \$20 million for new water lines in Sadr City (an area with 2.5 million residents), as well as \$300 million for three major sewer trunk lines helping the entire metropolitan area.

Abdul-Kareem, one of the Iraqis working in Nash’s office, says his neighborhood is noticing a difference. “They’re repairing six non-functioning sewer lift stations that haven’t had maintenance in 15 years, as well as cleaning out blocked collection lines. That work is getting sewage off the street preventing disease that’s threatening our children. These are important indicators we’re moving in the right direction.”

Norris Jones, GRC



The Al Basrah Oil Terminal, or ABOT, is Iraq's principle export facility located near the Persian Gulf. Watermark, workers lower a new hose assembly with fire-fighting foam capabilities onto the upper platform of ABOT. (USACE photos by David Anderson)



Army engineers work to improve Iraq's oil export

The regime change in Iraq has opened many new opportunities and important development projects in the southern oil fields of Iraq. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is working on various projects to ramp up oil production for the new democratic country and help improve Iraq's economy.

One important project is the Al Basrah Oil Terminal (ABOT), formerly known as Mina Al-Baker. ABOT is considered to be the gateway to Iraq's prosperity.

"Right now oil is Iraq's major export. It isn't easy to increase oil exports, but the Corps has plans of raising the crude output to meet three million barrels per day in 2007," said Bob Tillisch, oil program manager with the Basrah Area Office of the Gulf Region South District. He said experts estimate Iraq has about 115 billion barrels of oil reserves, concentrated mainly in the south.

"The main objective of the ABOT development project is to create a strong and reliable source of income for Iraq, improve Iraqi living conditions, and create new opportunities for employment," Tillisch said.

During Phase One of the refurbishment of ABOT, according to Tillisch, a hydraulic bridge system was installed at Platforms A and B, and the telescopic platform bridging systems at Berths 1, 2, 3 and 4 were removed, repaired and reinstalled. Also, the hydraulic power units, the directional control valves and other system-critical equipment were refurbished.

ABOT previously operated without a functioning fire and gas protection system, Tillisch explained, and there were no fire or gas detection sensors or pressure alarm systems. The emergency shutdown valves were either corroded or missing, and the firewater pumps did not work effectively.

"During Phase Two, we (USACE) provided a modern fire-fighting system with both diesel and electrical fire-water pumps throughout the platform in case of fire. Also, this new system will have fire-fighting foam capabilities in order to increase its effectiveness. This replaces the previous system which was outdated," he added.

At present, there is no effective way of metering how much oil is loaded on board tanker ships. Iraq's South Oil Company

(SOC) has to measure the cargo tanks by hand.

USACE will supply modern metering devices for platforms A and B, Tillisch said, which will ensure that the total amount of oil exported can be accurately measured electronically.

"The renovation includes new radio communication equipment at eight sites throughout the southern Iraq oil fields and refineries including the ABOT," Tillisch said. "This will ensure that pumping oil from the mainland to the ABOT can be done more safely and effectively by a modern communication system.

"The installation of radios, battery back up systems and new microwave dishes will greatly increase safety to enable the South Oil Company to start and shut down in an orderly and efficient means. In case of an emergency at the ABOT, all pump stations can be shut down immediately. Such an action will increase the safety in case of fire here at the ABOT," he said.

USACE will provide an emergency shutdown system for Platforms A and B, according to David Anderson, a construction representative with the Basrah Oil Office.

"This will consist of an electrical control station and all associated wiring and valves," Anderson said. "In case of an emergency, the SOC operators will have a safe and efficient means to turn off the loading to the oil tanker which is tied alongside the pier."

In order to provide a reliable source of lighting and power for ABOT, USACE refurbished the four old diesel generators installed in 1979. The Corps also is providing life-saving equipment and life rafts for evacuation from ABOT if needed.

"Remember, being on the ABOT is almost like being on a ship," Anderson said. "All SOC personnel can safely use the SOLAS (Save Our Lives at Seas) equipment, which are approved life-saving boats."

For Anderson, this \$50 million project has been designed to increase the terminal's loading capacity to three million barrels of oil per day, and to enhance the reliability and safety of the terminal operations.

A. Al Bahrani, GRS

Engineers improve electricity in Iraq

Local villagers watch as an Iraqi contractor crew sets a new electric tower in place for the Al Mazraa Tower Project in North Babil, a project to increase electrical capacity and better power transmission in the region.

The huge consumption of electricity as a result of the large quantity of electrical goods the Iraqi people are buying with their increasing prosperity, combined with the sabotage of power lines, has contributed to Iraq's challenge of keeping up with demands.

Despite those obstacles, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has made significant progress in improving electrical production and distributing power equitably throughout the country.

USACE engineers oversee the building, refurbishing and upgrading of the electrical power systems, including generation, transmission and distribution countrywide, according to Lt. Col. Anthony G. Reed, resident engineer for the Karbala and North Babil resident offices of the Gulf Region South District (GRS).

"The Babil Province has awarded 24 electrical distribution networks and several substation projects in 2006. Ten of these projects have been completed and 14 are still under construction," he said.

Reed believes that every project helps improve the flow of electricity to Iraqis to some degree.

Most projects focus on distributing electricity from one town to another, and to the outlying neighborhoods. Some of these neighborhoods have never had electricity before, he said.

"Due to the fact that the projects are focused on distribution, they really don't reduce the number of blackouts created by power generation source failures. However, the electrical feeders do help people get electricity when they have the power coming to them," he explained.

An Iraqi electrical engineer with the Babil Residence Office, requesting anonymity, said new projects include "two 132,000 volt overhead lines and three 33,000 volt overhead lines."

"We supervised three 33,000 and 11,000 volt substations in Babil, four electrical distribution networks in Al-Mahweel and



Al-Imam districts, and four electrical distribution networks, which were installed in Al-Iskanderia area north of Babil," the Iraqi said.

"All the projects GRS executes are to improve the distribution networks in the residential neighborhoods and businesses. It also improves the ability of the transmission feeders to handle the transmitted power between the 132kv substations," he said.

The Iraqi electrical engineer explained that electrical transmission lines were a target for sabotage by terrorists in the Hilla, Karbala and Najaf areas.

"When such sabotage happens, it causes a shutdown for all substations that are connected to the 132kv line," he said.

Maj. Kevin J. Stoll, the Babil resident engineer, blamed sabotage for contributing to power outages in the country.

"Combined with the antiquated system that existed under the previous regime, sabotage keeps power from reaching homes for an extended amount of time. When one central grid transmission tower falls, it knocks out power to the entire grid," Stoll said.

"It then takes time to repair or replace that tower and any others that are affected, and even more time to re-energize the system (sometimes 48-72 hours) before ... getting power to the consumers."

Stoll believes consumer demand for electricity has hindered the supply of reliable power.

"Because of the freedom to purchase the 'luxury' items that were not as readily available in the past—such as air conditioners, heaters, refrigerators and microwaves—extra demands have been placed



An Army engineer officer gets an update from Iraqi contractors building a new electrical distribution substation in Hamzah, one of 60 substations the Gulf Region South is constructing in southern Iraq.

Continued on next page

on power grids at an incredible rate over the past three and a half years. Sometimes the power demand exceeds the amount generated, causing brown- and black-outs,” he said.

Greg F. Fillers, GRS chief of programs and project management, said that the Corps is responsible for reporting progress on projects.

“The electrical projects are assigned to us to monitor during construction. We have a total of 160 electrical projects for the nine southern governorates worth about \$964 million that GRS is responsible for,” he said. “In Thi-Qar Province that total is 17 projects worth \$149 million.”

The biggest improvements for the city of An Nasiriyah are the upgrades to several substations and construction of additional new substations.

“The new substations prevent problems with overloads to the electrical network, which causes equipment to fail and power outages without warning,” Fillers said. “The Corps recently provided An Nasiriyah with 50 new transformers to replace the outdated ones, which were the main cause for the outages and the rationing across the city.”

He explained the old transformers could not handle the amount or load of high voltage electricity flowing through to feed the damage from all of the electrical devices this past summer, and this caused continuous blackouts during the summer.

New transformers were ordered and installed to convert the electricity to usable levels at the consumer end.

“Most of the new construction substations are in other towns around Thi-Qar, which takes a load off of the existing substations in Nasiriyah and prevents damage,” Fillers said.

Mohammed Aliwi, GRS



Construction was completed on three Gas and Oil Separation Plant projects in Basrah Province, totaling \$15 million. The projects will help increase Iraq’s crude oil processing capacity, feed gas required to support liquid petroleum gas, and sustain crude oil flow in pipelines. (USACE photo)

Construction update: Ongoing projects, completions

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division completed 11 reconstruction projects and began 12 new projects from Dec.1-17, 2006.

Construction was completed on three Gas and Oil Separation Plant projects in Basrah Province (pictured). The \$15 million projects replaced looted and missing items; rehabilitated each plant, which included restoring electrical systems; and provided commissioning assistance. These projects will help increase Iraq’s crude oil processing capacity, feed gas required to support liquid petroleum gas, and sustain crude oil flow in pipelines.

Other completed projects include 2.4 kilometers of paved roads in Ninewa Province, and 14 kilometers of paved roads in Babil Province – providing more than 130,000 residents more access and safer, smoother thoroughfares.

“Iraq’s vast oil and natural gas resources promise a prosperous future for the country,” said Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh, commander of the Gulf Region Division. “GRD has an end goal of 3 million barrels of crude oil per day. By working with our Iraqi partners, we are confident we will reach this goal and assist in Iraq’s economic recovery.”

More than 97 percent of the Gulf Region Division’s Transportation and Communications sector projects – which include roads, bridges, airports and railroad stations – have been started.

At the transfer of sovereignty in June 2004, there were just 200 projects started. As of Dec. 8, 2006, the Department of Defense has 3,446 total planned projects representing a construction cost of \$6.77 billion.

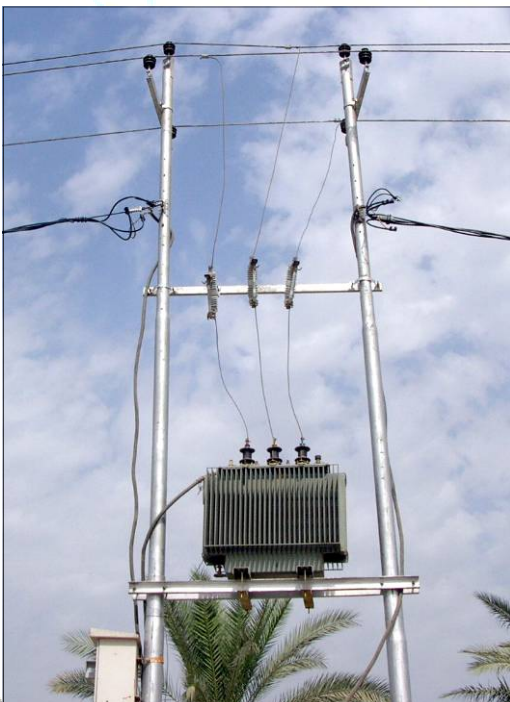
- 642 are under construction at a construction cost of \$2.50 billion.
- 2,687 have been completed at a construction cost of \$3.56 billion.
- 117 more projects are planned.

The results of these efforts have improved the quality of life for all Iraqis. Due to added capacity and normal operation and maintenances of systems, electrical generation is at 4,228 megawatts, serving approximately 310,000 homes with an end goal of 6,000 MW and 1.3 million homes.

Potable water is at 430k m3/day with 2.2 million people affected with an end goal of 1,136k m3/day and an end goal of 5.2 million people affected. Crude oil production is at 2.5 million barrels per day with an end goal of 3 million BPD.

Throughout Iraq, U.S. government ongoing projects contribute to the ever improving quality of life and economic stability – helping provide the foundation for the country to build upon as it overcomes a generation of neglect.

GRD



The Babil Province has awarded 24 electrical distribution networks and several substation projects in 2006. Ten of these projects have been completed and 14 are still under construction. (USACE photos)

A contractor representative talks with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officers about training requirements to operate and maintain the equipment on one of five skimmer tanks at the Nasiriyah Water Treatment Plant. (Photo by James Bullinger)

Water treatment plant offers employment opportunities

Building and completing a multi-million dollar water treatment plant in Nasiriyah poses many challenges under present security conditions, but training local workers to properly operate and maintain that plant introduces another set of challenges project engineers and contractors working in the Gulf Region South district of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division (GRD) must meet.

The plant, designed to serve over 500,000 people in the Dhi Qar communities of Nasiriyah, Suq Ash Sheuk, al-Diwaya, al-Shatra and al-Gharraf., is a “world-class facility,” according to Lt. Col. Dale Johnson, Adder area engineer, “and the largest water treatment facility in Iraq.”

“The project contractor, Fluor-AMEC (LLC) has worked for 26 months without an on-site work accident – that is 4.5 million man hours without a recordable lost work-day accident,” he said. “Now we are looking for people to fill the technical employment positions.”

The Ministries of Municipalities and Public Works (MMPW) will own the water treatment facility and it is recruiting for employment at the plant. Fluor-AMEC, according to the terms of its contract, must provide three months of training for operators and plant staff on all levels, said Ken Dorr, GRD Project Contracting Office water sector program manager.

“Training for the position is a 30-day block and people interested in employment must attend all 30 days to be eligible for employment,” he said. “The positions are for plant operators, the plant manager, maintenance crew, software technicians and laborers.”

Fluor-AMEC has successfully held the training in other parts of Iraq, said Dorr, because of support from the local government.

“This training is classroom and hands-on,” he said. “We have a three-month operations and maintenance period so that when we are done and the commissioning is complete, we have Fluor technicians working there doing on-the-job training with the local work force.”

Dorr emphasized the importance of local government support and added that doggedness and diligence is the answer to staffing the plant adequately with the properly trained individuals.

“The folks I have encountered are high quality people who care,” he said, “from both sides. We need to have more teamwork because on the projects where it does exist, we have a wonderful success rate. If we work on something together, people will be more motivated because they have invested time into the project.”

Johnson added that the training classes at the plant are a “perfect opportunity for Iraqis who have a technical background – in biology or engineering for example – or someone who has a degree to go out, learn a skill and function as a professional.”

James R. Long, project engineer for the water treatment plant, said that he met with the local representative for the MMPW in Baghdad to resolve some issues involving training attendance, which has been sporadic.

“The (representative) assured me that his ministry is working on these issues,” he said. “Part of the problem has been transportation because of the distance some trainees have to travel. The problem has been solved now and he came out to speak to one of the training classes. He encouraged all trainees to continue attending and awarded each a monetary stipend for their efforts thus far. This underscores the ministry’s support of our program.”

An Iraqi engineer who works for GRS noted that working at the water treatment facility offers inexperienced engineers an excellent place to begin their careers, and that these kinds of positions are important because they offer skill development.

“We have to make the young engineers understand that this is a good first step for them,” he said.

“The engineering students from the school in Nasiriyah often do internships in the summer, fixing pumps or working on oil generators. But this is an opportunity for a permanent job. And they receive a stipend to attend the training – this only encourages the beginning engineers.”

He underscored the need for training, not only in the engineering profession, but also for Iraq’s businessmen and potential project managers.

“The most effective thing we can have here in Iraq is training,” he said. “The problem right now is that no one is taking his role in our society. We are looking for people who care. This is what will make a difference for our country.”

Betsy Weiner, GRS

Contractor recognized for record setting site safety milestone

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Gulf Region South (GRS) recognized the extraordinary team effort of a contractor and its employees Nov. 18 for achieving 4.5 million man-hours without a recordable lost work-day accident.

Fluor-AMEC Joint Venture Corp., the principal contractor responsible for the design and construction of the massive water treatment plant located north of An Nasiriyah, was recognized for its success in accident prevention from Aug. 7, 2004, the start of the project, to Oct. 8, 2006.

GRS oversees the contract, which, when finished, will provide safe water to about 500,000 people in the Dhi-Qar province.

During those 793 days, the contractor supervised more than 750 workers a day, with a peak work force of up to 1,419 people, without a recordable loss work-day accident.

The work in this 26-month period included the construction of five skimmer tanks, a water clarifier facility, five elevated storage tanks, three booster pump stations, and more than 100 kilometers of water transmission pipelines with five river crossings.

The project required the placement of more than 40,000 cubic meters of concrete up to heights of 52 feet.

Col. Gary Johnston, GRS commander, presented the Commander's Safety Recognition Award to Fluor-AMEC's Ricky Moore, the task order manager, and Gerald W. J. Shaw, the safety adviser and project safety manager at the water treatment plant.

The company also recognized the efforts of others helping to contribute to its safety record, including presenting plaques to its subcontractors and safety certifications to its workforce.

Daniel Fujimoto, Gulf Region Division's chief of Safety and Occupational Health for the Gulf Region Division, said that Fluor-AMEC's record is an outstanding achievement.

"Not too many contractors in the States can claim this level of excellence. This is truly a success story on what can happen when we (USACE) and the contractor partner together for safety," he said.

This award refers to the company's accountability; with recognition of many individuals who have done their best to provide guidance and advice.

According to Fujimoto, the idea of the recognition award was started by June Morales, a former GRS project engineer, who wanted to recognize Fluor-AMEC for their safety.

"GRD supported the idea and provided the guidance and direction to GRS on how to generate the safety recognition certificate. Margaret Williams was the

acting GRS safety manager who completed the task," Fujimoto said.

For Williams, a project engineer, it is Fluor-AMEC's approach and commitment to safety that made the difference.

"(The company's) safety engineers do an excellent job. They walk around the construction sites with the on-site engineer and point out items of concerns. Many times they have the violations corrected immediately," she said.

Williams believes that safety in Iraq is improving and safety violations and hazards are minimized.

"By continuing to educate the Iraqi contractors on the importance of safe work practices, it minimizes accidents on our construction sites. By doing so, it also makes the contractors more efficient and more productive," she added.

Shaw said construction safety is different than in the United States.

"This varies tremendously at the different ends of the scale. There are Iraqi laborers who apply all they are taught for their own safety and the safety of others around them. They wear and take care of their personal protective equipment. They work safely and carefully while also keeping their work area clean and tidy.

"Then there is the challenge with the higher educated and more qualified Iraqi line management, who sometimes have difficulty accepting their responsibility to implement safety and to care for the workers under their control," he said.

Shaw also mentioned he's been challenged with maintaining the company's record.

"Mentally, it has been very hard to continuously work at being proactive, while not being distracted by the symptoms creating negativity," he said. "Initially, there was a very hard set of attitudes to overcome and still that journey goes on."

Shaw explained a change in roles can change a person's focus and make a difference in responsibility and performance.

"The Iraqi safety engineers have had their role changed from safety officers to safety managers. This has been a huge step for them and has seen their effectiveness levels increase with proven results," he said.

"Getting workers to comply is a challenge. 'Leading' workers is the solution applied. Our success is humbling because we are not perfect and we go on



Col. Gary Johnston, right, presented a Commander's Safety Recognition Award Nov. 18 to Ricky Moore, left, and Gerald W. J. Shaw, both of Fluor-AMEC Joint Venture. The company achieved 4.5 million man-hours without a recordable lost work-day accident at the Nasiriyah Water Treatment Plant.

(Photos by James Bullinger)

with all the compassion and determination we can maintain.

"At all times, it has been essential to use approved standards. Here in Iraq, our company group safety management systems are developed from the Army Corps of Engineers Safety and Health Requirements Manual," Shaw said.

Fluor-AMEC's safety program theme is simple and easily understood by the workforce – "Nobody Get Hurt."

According to Shaw, Fluor-AMEC uses a variety of methods to impart safety, including "training the trainer" classes; using on-site interpreters; pre-work safety meetings; and on-site demonstrations and examples.

Shaw is quick to point out it is a team effort that contributed to the company's safety record.

"Here in Iraq, it is my company, through our corporate Safety Department for Systems, the site safety engineers and helpers, the company site line management team, and the GRS construction representatives as part of the combined team," he said. "And it is also the subcontractors' management teams and their workforce, for without them we achieve nothing."

Safety applications in Iraq and the United States are essentially the same, Shaw said.

"We are applying the same standards. Achieving full compliance is our goal. It's why we need to continuously apply ourselves to build on our achievements," he said. "In that, we are no different. It does test our experience and initiative to best use the resources we have here, in people skills and equipment, to do the work safely."

Mohammed Aliwi and James Bullinger, GRS

Watermark: A heavy equipment operator uses a safety observer to provide warnings and watch for other workers while compacting the soil between skimmer tanks during construction at the Nasiriyah Water Treatment Plant.

Basrah Children's Hospital provides more than healthcare



Of the thousands of reconstruction projects in Iraq, those that benefit children have special interest.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is leading the construction efforts for the Basrah Children's Hospital (BCH), which when complete, will provide help generations of Iraqi children.

Lt. Cmdr. Scott King, a U.S. Navy Civil Engineer Corps officer, is the USACE resident engineer for the BCH project. He leads the BCH Project Office (BCHPO) team, which includes a project engineer, a construction representative, an engineering staff of three, and eight local national engineers.

"The project was originally identified through a 2003 investigation into the state of Iraqi health care by Project HOPE, an international non-profit health, education and humanitarian assistance organization," King said. "The statistics uncovered in the investigation were staggering: Child mortality rates were very high with 150 out of 1,000 children dying before reaching the age of five.

"The incidence of childhood cancer was found to be eight to 10 times more common than in the west, and cancer rates in southern Iraq were even higher than that of the national average," he said. "Statistics such as these made it obvious that a children's hospital with a special focus on pediatric oncology, built in Basrah, would have an enormous positive impact to the country, especially in the southern governorates."

Frederick Gerber, Country Director, Iraq, for Project HOPE said the hospital would fulfill a dire need for health care services targeted to children in Iraq.

"The World Health Organization statistics indicate that 53 percent of Iraqis are adolescents, so we estimate that the hospital will support more than half of the population of Basrah alone," Gerber said.

The BCHPO accepted management for the hospital's construction at the end of the summer from another U.S. government agency, when construction was approximately 30 percent complete.

"Taking over a major construction program midstream with project materials and equipment in various locations across the Middle East has certainly been a challenge," King said. "Thanks to some great cooperation from the previous management team and some long hours from our current team, it's been a reasonably seamless process.

"We've assembled a talented team to move the project forward and are having a lot of success partnering with the contractors and other government agencies involved with the project's funding and execution," King added. "The pace has picked up on-site and the community is seeing a lot of progress."

Andy Frank, a BCHPO project engineer, said the construction project funding and contractor staffing is a multi-national effort.

"The cost to make the facility fully operational is estimated to be \$157.1 million. The U.S. is providing about \$95 million, with \$84 million from the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund, and \$11 million from the USAID's Child Survival and . The Project Office also manages two additional contracts with specialized hospital and medical equipment design and consulting firms out of Jordan.

Brian Pitt, the lead engineer for the BCHPO, said USACE has the lead role in the project.

"The Gulf Region South District's Basrah Children's Hospital Project Office will directly oversee approximately \$74 million worth of design, construction, medical equipment procurement and integration, furnishing procurement, and facility maintenance contracts," he said. "In addition, the project office has



Far page: More than 70 children participated in a community celebration at the construction site of the Basrah Children’s Hospital recently.

Left: Dignitaries from the Government of Iraq, local government officials and community residents participated in celebratory event. Below: Members of the Gulf Region South district give Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh a tour of the construction site. Watermark: Interior scaffolding.

(USACE photos)

the lead in coordinating the efforts of their fellow partners in the project, the Iraqi Ministry of Health and Project HOPE.”

According to Frank, the BCH project is located in the southwest section of Basrah and is being constructed on a 71,000 square meter site.

“A specially designed foundation and engineered soil was brought in to prepare the existing conditions for the hospital complex,” Frank said. “The project includes a two-story 16,350 square meter main hospital facility, a separate 1,000 square meter building that provides sleeping accommodations for 32 physicians and nurses, two separate electrical and mechanical buildings at 600 square meters each, three separate guard houses, landscaping, paved parking, a soccer field and a 1,134 meter security wall enclosing the site.”

The main hospital facility has 94 patient beds, 20 outpatient exam rooms, an eight-bed pediatric intensive care unit, a seven-bassinette neonatal intensive care unit, and four general nursing wards, Frank said.

Other features include two operating rooms, an oncology center; an imaging department with radiography, fluoroscopy, CAT scan, MRI and ultrasound capabilities; an emergency department, and an outpatient endoscopy suite.

Besides the positive health aspects of a new hospital, the project will boost the overall economic prosperity of the region.

“Within the first month of our contract, the project was employing over 400 people on a daily basis including construction workers, a supervisory staff of over 30 contractor personnel, and over 100 security workers who provide 24-hour site security, said Paul Farley, the BCHPO’s construction rep.

The project is expected to employ between 450 to 750 workers during the various phases of the project.

Gerber said there will be other benefits as well.

“The children’s hospital will have a huge economic impact on the Basrah area, not only with the employees, physicians, nurses and ancillary personnel hired and paid by the Iraqi government; but with such supporting industries as food, lodging, supplies, equipment, facilities, grounds maintenance, retail stores, etc., in the surrounding areas,” Gerber said. “While the hospital will require a minimum of 510 Iraqis to staff the facility, additional employees will be needed to staff the grounds, kitchen, laundry and other ancillary operations.”

The hospital also complements the Basrah Medical College, Gerber said, and will be “a support base for training physicians and nurses in the Basrah Province.”

The BCHPO is helping to ensure the success of the hospital when finished by integrating the end-users of the facility into the construction process.

“There are three Ministry of Health engineers, who will eventually manage the hospital’s systems, working full-time alongside our Iraqi quality assurance engineers,” King said. “When we turn the hospital over to the Ministry of Health, they’ll be much more familiar with the installed systems, facility operations and required replacement parts.

“Going forward, our major challenges will be ensuring the site is properly staffed with the right skill-sets, while integrating

the specialized medical equipment and furnishing requirements into the facility construction,” King said.

Despite previous funding issues that slowed construction efforts in the past, King said the project is back on track and that construction was more than 30 percent complete at the end of November.

“Construction of the hospital is expected to be completed in the summer of 2008,” he said.

Following the installation of medical equipment, commissioning, and the initial outfitting of the hospital, it is scheduled to open its doors to patients in early 2009.

“The completed hospital will deliver much needed specialty medical care to the children of Iraq and serve as a model training hospital for the nurses and physicians of the country. It will be a major step towards reducing child mortality rates and improving the health and quality of life of Iraqis – a definite sign of hope for the people of Iraq during challenging times,” King said.

James Bullinger, GRS



Najaf Teaching Hospital nears completion



The new hospital facility of the Najaf Teaching Hospital has seven floors, 13 operating rooms and can house more than 400 patients. (Photos by Betsy Weiner)

Hospital will employ 1,250 people, house more than 400 patients

The Najaf Teaching Hospital, a project worth more than \$10 million, will open in early 2007 featuring a seven-story building capable of housing 420 patients and containing 13 operating rooms.

The hospital development, which has survived gun battles, the termination of its primary contractor and serious security issues, first came to the attention of the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office (IRMO) in September 2004.

During that month, the flooded basement, containing debris and human remains, was cleaned and repaired, as were outpatient emergency services areas. After assessing the damage, IRMO decided to refurbish the entire hospital in December 2004.

Parsons Corp., the design-build contractor for the project completed the emergency repairs in February 2005, but pulled out of the project soon thereafter. A local contractor finished the outpatient facilities and completed all the immediate emergency repairs by April 2005.

"We awarded the final 370-day design build contract to a local Najaf contractor in July 2005," said Jim Lockard, health care project manager for the Gulf Region South District (GRS). "Renovation features that were included in this phase of the renovation were to renovate the industrial kitchen, laundry and mechanical rooms; repair the second through the seventh floors; refurbish the doctors' residences, the morgue, the sewer treatment plant and several other buildings on the hospital campus."

Bids were taken for the work that remained from the original contract, the hospital director was consulted and the award was made to a local company, Lockard said.

"We selected an Iraqi engineer Kal (not identified for security concerns) to be the project manager and he has been a great motivating force on the project for the past 18 months," Lockard added.

Najaf is a holy city to Shiite Muslims, not only because of the shrine of Al Iman Ali, son-in-law to the prophet Mohammed, who was killed while praying in Al Kufa Mosque, but also because of the Valley of Peace, a gargantuan graveyard in which the Shiite prefer to be buried.

Many Islamic religious institutions, called the Al Hawza Al Ilmia or scientific schools for clerical candidates, are also located in Najaf, adding to the mystique of the city. Because of its importance to the Shiite faith, millions of people visit the city, placing extra demand on the hospital, Kal said. He added that the facility also serves the entire Najaf Province, as well as adjacent provinces for certain medical specialties, such as oncology and kidney dialysis.

"Many physicians who worked at the hospital, but left when it closed, are now returning to work," he said. "Sixty-five specialists and 145 general physicians work here now."

The hospital will employ about 1,250 people, Kal said. About 100 physicians will reside on the hospital grounds and 200 medical and 50 pharmaceutical students will train at the facility, he said.

The Gulf Region Division, IRMO and the Japanese government are supplying equipment to the campus. GRD and IRMO will provide beds, room accessories and enough equipment for three of the operating rooms.

"Getting the equipment here – that has had security challenges," Kal said. "A lot of times, the roads were closed or there was a curfew because it was unsafe. But we faced the same problems with some of our technicians, so we told the contractor he had to house some of these people until the job was complete. And he did that."

Kal emphasized the fact that hospitals construction requires technical people capable of building complicated systems and these people were not easy to find. This put an extra strain on

Continued next page



Frank Garcia (middle) a resident engineer with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, says the new living area (inset) will provide Soldiers a better standard of living, and offer more protection from the element.
 (Photo by Polli Barnes Keller)

Caring for Troops: *\$2.4M living support area completed*

More than 1,000 troops relocated from tent city to hard structures on Contingency Base Speicher before winter set in. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently complete a \$2.4 million living area (Living Support Area No. 20) on the base.

“Even though we are in an expeditionary type of environment, we should give our soldiers the best we can,” says Frank Scopa, an area engineer with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. “Social amenities make their life easier, which helps them focus on what is important and that is part of our mission. Having to walk through the mud and rain to get to the shower and latrine facilities is not good. There is no reason why our troops have to live uncomfortably.”

Living Support Area No. 20 consists of 36 dormitory buildings with electricity, sewage and running water. Each dorm is

designed with two bedrooms on each end, divided by a kitchenette and bath. With 504 bedrooms, two people per room, the military plans to house more than 1,000 soldiers.

Frank Garcia, a resident engineer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, says of the new living area: “Soldiers are the backbone of the success in Iraq and their quality of life is paramount. Moving soldiers from temporary tent structures to hardened facilities before the cold weather comes will enhance their ability to complete the mission. We have a duty to care for our soldiers.”

Included in each bedroom is a desk, air conditioner/heater, a closet and a bed. The kitchenette comes with a sink, a microwave and a small refrigerator.

Polli Barnes Keller, GRN

Najaf (cont’d)

the contractor, as well as on the laborers doing the actual building, he said. Systems such as the mechanical, electrical and plumbing – all demanded that the team work closely with the construction company to ensure quality work.

“In the medical field, it is necessary to always have back-up systems because the hospital cannot adequately treat people if these systems fail,” Kal said. “So we spent extra time with the contractor to make sure he understood the scope of work.”

Security issues in Najaf itself cost the project five months time, but were overcome by the dedication of the team and

the tenacity of the Iraqi engineers who worked the project.

“The GRS team could not always make it out to the site because of the danger,” he said. “And sometimes the hospi-



tal staff tried to direct the contractor to perform their agenda. But after many meetings with them, we were able to convince the staff to work with us as a team to finish the job.”

At one point, Kal said, the hospital was sending “disappointing reports to the health ministry, but now they come with us every day to inspect the systems and accept them. And because of this big change, the end production is good and the project is running smoothly.”

But the project experienced a severe loss when the hospital director, Dr. Safaah Al Ameen, was murdered in September 2006.

“It was a very sad day,” Kal said. “But the only impact his assassination had on the project itself was the coordination between GRS and the hospital’s engineers.

It took us two weeks, but we got back on schedule. And he would have wanted that.”

Betsy Weiner, GRS

Security contractor helps bridge the reconstruction gap

Since Iraq's liberation in 2003, construction here has been a challenge. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division has identified strategic and innovative solutions to undertake projects that will most impact communities, while ensuring the security of workers and area residents.

From large-scale, capacity projects to smaller, effects-based projects to making the final "last mile" connection to the end-user, the construction solution has been a moving target.

One method identified by GRD has been to utilize the Aegis Reconstruction Civil Affairs teams. The RCA, which is funded through donations from the Aegis Foundation in the United Kingdom, undertakes projects – from distributing donated goods to undertaking minor reconstruction issues - that do not exceed \$3,000 and complement efforts of GRD projects.

"If coalition and Iraqi teams are now focused on the 'last mile,'" said Col. Deb Lewis, the commander of the Gulf Region Central district, "then the AEGIS RCA team helps close that final 50 feet on some projects."

Through December 2006, RCA has completed nearly 100 projects with an additional dozen ongoing. More than \$284,000, including in-kind donations, has been spent – all through private sector and personal efforts. (See sidebar on typical RCA projects).

"All charities have overheads, all, that is, except for the *Aegis Foundation*, which is able to donate all gifts in their entirety to humanitarian aid," says David Cooper, RCA director.

With a fluid security environment, most non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other short-term assistance agencies cannot meet the needs of local communities, but by partnering with groups like the RCA, GRD is able to establish relationships with local leaders and activists in rural and urban areas to assess and help address their needs.

The RCAs partner with MNF-I civil affairs units to distribute school supplies, clothes, toys, hygiene kits and medical supplies to local councils, which immediately benefit the needs of the communities. The goods are donated from groups and individuals in the United States to GRD, who in turn utilizes the RCAs knowledge and connections to community leaders to provide supplies that are most needed.

The donations enable local councils to gain credibility within their communities because they are addressing basic needs, while relations between CA and local authorities are strengthened. In the end, Iraqis lives are made better.

Making a Difference

Paula Morris, a member of the human resources staff for GRD, acts as a clearinghouse for the donations in her free time and ensures they are distributed properly. It's a big task, but one that Morris feels is worth the extra time.

Below left to right: Children in northern Iraq receive support from RLT team. Students in central Iraq display new school supplies provided through RLT efforts. Watermark: Aegis team helps assemble desks for school. (All photos provided)

"I believe we're put on this Earth to help others, and I think most Americans feel the same way," Morris said. "They [Americans] have huge hearts; they want to help; it's in their soul to help. I don't believe GRD is just here to rebuild Iraq, we're here to win the hearts of the Iraqi people. Those that send the donations feel in some small way they are helping those in need and winning hearts at the same time."

Some projects undertaken by the RCA include delivering school supplies to remote villages; upgrading lavatory facilities in schools; donating desks and heaters to schools, and clothing to orphanages. The teams have provided schools with water purification units, clinics with consumable supplies, and rehabilitated communal buildings. One project partnered RCA with a local contractor who provided repairs for a water tank that supplied an entire village with clean water.

Projects are identified by working with the Gulf Region Division districts and local civil affairs groups, both of whom work with communities on a daily basis. Once identified, RCA uses its knowledge and relationships with communities to ensure the donations or projects have the greatest impact on the communities.

"Aegis Civil Affairs, in collaboration with Coalition Forces, has been able to provide the Iraqi people with the items necessary to improve their overall quality of life and help stabilize the newly formed government," said Sgt. Adam Shaver, a CA partner.

While the majority of GRD's projects are long term, quick, short-term improvements helps ease tensions and build hope in communities while they await the completion of the bigger, permanent projects.

"You go into these places amidst all the chaos and you talk to these people, said Maj. Gregory Longfield, a civil affairs team member. "They have a vision of building a new Iraq and making life better for their community. You see they do not have the means to accomplish it, so it only remains a dream, a shared hope. With the *Aegis Foundation*, we provide them with the tools to succeed...a realization that it's not a dream anymore."

Overall, GRD commanders across Iraq are feeling the positive impact of this partnership.

"(RCA teams) are an extremely valuable and effective asset that allow us an opportunity to leverage local support and to gain greater 'ground truth' of local perceptions and feelings concerning reconstruction," said Lt. Col. Kenneth McDonald, the deputy commander for the Gulf Region South district. "They can reach a level in the local communities that we are unable to do in our standard GRS organization."

If you are interested to know more about Aegis RCA or the *Aegis Foundation*, email G7@AegisIraq.com, and visit the *Aegis Foundation* website at www.Aegis-Foundation.org.



RCA Projects Include:

Essential Services

- Water purification units
- Tools for municipal or local public service office
- Minor water/sewer pipe repair/replacement

Equipment, Furniture & Consumables

- School supplies/furniture
- Clinic consumables/minor equipment
- Generators
- Art courses and Supplies
- Sports equipment
- Inoculations
- Goods distribution
- Water tanks

Rehabilitations

- Windows/door repair
- Lavatories in schools/clinics
- Inside painting and locks for community buildings
- Minor rehab to facilities
- Grading of playground and sports fields

Media & Communications

- Local media support
- Public information campaigns
- Surveys to assess community needs



Inset top left: Children receive soft toys in central Iraq. **Inset right:** Water tank repair in northern Iraq. **Right:** RLT provides soft toys to rural villages in south central Iraq. **Below:** Child drinks from water purification unit installed in southern Iraq.



Right: John Briggs, a resident engineer with the Fort Campbell Resident Office, teaches contract decision making to Iraqi and U.S. engineers, and construction representatives in the Construction Contract Administration course at Camp Adder. Below: Instructor Alex Herrera, with the Fort Campbell Resident Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District, teaches Construction Contract Coordination.
(Photos by Betsy Weiner)



Army spearheads instruction for Iraqi engineers

Twenty-four of Gulf Region South (GRS) District's Iraqi engineers joined six of their U.S. counterparts in the U. S. Army Corps of Engineer's Construction Contract Administration class Dec.3-6, the first time such a course of instruction has taken place in Iraq.

The class provides project and resident engineers with information about day-to-day job duties, according to Russell Holeman, chief of the Engineering

and Construction Division, GRS.

"The training was conceived by my predecessor, Andy Adams," he said. "We provide a lot of information to the engineers in the field, but realized that we send our people in the States through a lot of training courses to be in (project and resident engineer) positions. Why not do the same thing with the Iraqi engineers?"

He said the class, as taught in the United States, stresses information on day-to-day contract administration, and the roles and limitations of engineers administering those contracts. "The class gives them an explanation of how to interpret drawing and specifications and how to present that information to a contractor," he said.

"The class also teaches engineers about conferences - preconstruction conferences - and the meetings throughout the life of a contract. It presents general information about construction quality management; what to look for and how to ensure quality. The contractor is responsible for achieving that quality, but the engineer needs to understand his or her role making sure we get a quality product that we can turn over."

Holeman contacted the Huntsville Training Center in Alabama and coordinated with Marilyn Lang there to export the classes to Iraq.

Instructors Alex Herrera, project engineer, and John Briggs, resident engineer, with the Fort Campbell resident office, Louisville District, volunteered to come to Iraq and present the course of

instruction not only for GRS, but also in the North and Central districts as well.

Both men teach the course throughout the United States and both have been to Iraq on multiple tours -- Briggs for three and Herrera four.

"We both served in the al-Hillah area doing assessments and then we traveled to Basrah to set up the original GRS office," Briggs said. "I got the call a month ago from Marilyn and both Alex and I decided to come over. We believe in the mission and this is something we really wanted to do."

Briggs said the course focuses on the rules and regulations surrounding contract administration and the responsibilities of the project, area and resident engineers.

"I took the course five years ago and it is the same course," he said. "It explains how the Corps deals with its contractors -- from estimations to negotiations, and how to get the quality we need from them."

Both men recognized many of the Iraqi engineers from previous tours and that made the experience even more gratifying.

Herrera commented about the high quality of their work and their efforts to get the right information.

The instruction materials from the manuals to the final exam are on the leading edge of the Corps' technology -- and the feedback Herrera received from the students was "they are learning a lot. We have asked for their feedback throughout the whole course."

Continued next page



Engineers (cont'd)

“The training sessions are so useful and concentrate on the daily methods of dealing with construction projects administration,” said an Iraqi architect, who works with Thi Qar Area Office. “The U.S Army trainers gave us the solutions and the answers for all the problems and the questions that could face us at any construction site in the future.”

“The Corps also supplied us with data books which will be our references to accomplish correctly our site missions. This training should have been done before now, but overall, we are so thankful

and grateful for all the people who participated to set up this training. And we hope to get more training in the future,” he said.

An Iraqi civil engineer who works with Basrah Area Office said, “The training is very interesting. It added lots of information to what we know. It has enhanced our engineering experiences and helped develop our technical skills to be able to handle any engineering difficulty and to fix any contracting violations in accordance with the project engineers.”

Briggs explained that this course was the first of its kind taught in Iraq and that the GRS Commander, Col. Gary Johns-

ton, will evaluate feedback from instructors, Holeman and the students to determine whether he needs to bring more prospective classes in or offer other internal training here.

“GRS is at the spear point to bring in the Iraqis engineers and train them to be able to take over our work in the future and to get them all here,” Briggs said.

“This group is amazing. GRS is leading the way in transferring our responsibilities to them – the Iraqis. One of the engineers said to us, ‘Now you are giving us the road to get to the end.’ It is exciting to be a part of it,” he said.

Betsy Weiner, GRS

Al Anbar outlook more optimistic

““ In one of Iraq’s most turbulent areas, we’re seeing signs that the situation is changing,” says U.S. Navy Cmdr.

James Lee.

Lee just finished a six-month tour with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as their representative on the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) for Al Anbar Province, which includes the cities of Ramadi and Fallujah.

“At one point the local tribal leaders and the population at large fought against us. But as they observed our continuing efforts to improve their communities, they’ve taken noticeable steps switching their alliance from sympathizing with the insurgents to helping us get the security situation under control,” Lee explained.

“We’re working on schools, water and sewage treatment plants, hospitals and primary healthcare centers, electrical generation and distribution networks, waterway maintenance, roadways, police and fire stations, and the local residents appreciate our efforts. Those times I would get discouraged about the ongoing challenges, it just took a stop in one of the many villages we were assessing for projects to get re-energized about our mission. The thankful smiles of their youngsters did it for me every time.”

Lee joined the PRT just as it was getting organized and he was one of the first on the ground at their new office in Ramadi. He worked directly with Al Anbar Governor Ma’Moun Sami Rashied, a fellow engineer. “He’s a courageous man, having survived over 20 assassination attempts on his life. I believe in my heart he’s a patriot of Iraq and there’s no question he loves the Al Anbar Province and its people. The sacrifices he and his family have made (including the kidnapping of his son who was eventually returned unharmed) is something to be admired.”

One of Ma’Moun’s priorities has been economic development. “Iraqis face the same struggles we all do. They are concerned about the welfare of their fami-



Navy Cmdr. James Lee, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers representative on the Al Anbar Provincial Reconstruction Team, says the situation in Al Anbar is changing for the better. (Photo by Norris Jones)

lies and their future. They want to be gainfully employed, doing productive work, earning an honest wage,” Lee continued. “The PRT helped the Governor identify about \$9 million in U.S. funding and over \$100 million in various Government of Iraq funding that will provide thousands of jobs while improving essential services in Al Anbar. This effort is having a significant impact on the Iraqis. They’re beginning to have confidence that their government is working and things are getting better.”

When Lee began his work in Ramadi, he says Ma’Moun and a few of his staff were the only ones reporting to work at the Provincial Government Center. “Due to murder and intimidation tactics, other officials stopped coming. With the recent support of the Council of Sheiks, however, some of those officials are now returning to work and the Al Anbar Provincial Government is beginning to function as it should.”

One of Governor Ma’Moun’s primary interests is developing and promoting Al Anbar’s renewable resources. “He believes agriculture is the base of their economy, something that’s sustainable. He believes Al Anbar dates are the best in the world. I tasted some and I believe it – they’re humungous and very sweet.”

The Governor also is interested in identifying and growing plants for medicinal purposes that thrive in Al Anbar’s desert climate. “Governor Ma’Moun has impressed me with his breadth of knowledge. He knows what he wants for his people and intends to leave a legacy that will endure.”

Lee volunteered for duty in Iraq because he wanted to help Iraqis rebuild their nation. “I was hoping I could contribute and our efforts would make a difference. It’s been a very satisfying, rewarding experience.”

Norris Jones, GRC

Iraqis see definite benefits from ongoing construction



An Iraqi workcrew helps renovate a school in northwest Baghdad. (USACE Photos)

An Iraqi boy watches while workers renovate a school in his neighborhood in northwest Baghdad.



“Hundreds of projects are under construction and Iraqis are seeing the results,” says the individual responsible for helping upgrade Baghdad’s essential services.

“We’re employing thousands of Iraqis. They need to put food on the table just like anyone else and those with a job are more likely to be supporting their government,” said Lt. Col. Jonathan Revolinsky, the Officer in Charge of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Baghdad Area Office, before returning to the Sacramento District this month after a six-month tour.

Revolinsky works with a number of different entities, including the Baghdad city government (Amanat), District Advisory Councils and Neighborhood Advisory Councils. “This nation is used to one person issuing orders from the top down. That mindset is now changing and Iraqis are understanding the value of hearing from people on the street, getting feedback, developing a dialogue, encouraging an interaction. It’s what democracy is all about.”

The real story not being told, Revolinsky said, is the one about ordinary Iraqis putting up with extraordinary challenges, but reporting to work nonetheless every day in an unassuming way just trying to make life better for their families.

He directs a staff of 30 U.S. military and civilian personnel along with 50 Iraqi engineers who have the goal of turning Baghdad back into a great city. “It was the birthplace of civilization and today we’re investing huge amounts of money to rebuild 30 years of neglect as residents regain their confidence that this city has a future. It’s hard when you’ve been repressed for that many decades to stand up for what you believe and that’s the challenge we’re facing.”



Revolinsky

But Revolinsky is optimistic and that viewpoint starts with the Iraqis on his staff. “They’re awesome individuals. They put their lives on the line every day going out in the community to oversee the work going on. They sincerely want to help their country, they want to do a great job, and it’s a shame the hardships and danger they and their neighbors have to put up with. I respect them immensely. They want to make Baghdad a better place.”

Most of the Iraqis working for USACE are educated engineers trained at Baghdad University. “They visit the projects, write the reports, provide recommendations and suggest courses of action, and our intent is to eventually transition our office over to them as we work ourselves out of a job. They’re breaking the mold of listening to dictatorial orders that they grew up with and today are solving problems on their own. I’m very pleased with the direction we’re going.”

Throughout Baghdad Province, Revolinsky’s team is managing more than 300 projects valued in excess of \$1.2 billion. That work includes \$300 million for three major sewer trunk lines, more than \$100 million for replacing the electric distribution network in Sadr City, refurbishing 18 gas stations, renovating hospitals, building new primary healthcare centers, new courthouses, new water distribution networks, repaving roads, repair of area schools and the construction of several new ones.

Nine new fire stations have been built in Baghdad decreasing response time from an average of 15 minutes to 5 or 6 minutes. “Residents can see first hand that their government is working, that improvements to their neighborhoods are taking place, that there’s reason for hope.”

Norris Jones, GRC



Mahmudiyah takes pride in market renovation

One of the top priorities for the mayor of Mahmudiyah is rebuilding his city's downtown market. "It's the heart of our community," Muayid Fadhil said.

"We are going to build a new market as a memorial to those innocent men, women and children who have been killed there. It will tell the insurgents we will never give up, they cannot stop us."

That market has been the target of numerous insurgent attacks in the past year. Currently, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is overseeing a \$245,372 project to construct new market stalls with overhead cover, and renovating storefronts along the street that have been damaged by bomb blasts and small arms fire. That work includes new doors, windows, stucco and paint, as well as new gates at each entrance of the market.

About 100,000 residents in the Mahmudiyah area (located 20 miles south of Baghdad) utilize the market and local farmers bring in their produce and meat for local consumption. It's a main economic engine of the community "and our residents really appreciate the improvements that are underway," the mayor noted.

Maj. Steve Martinelli, Officer in Charge of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Victory Resident Office South, says

the market is a gathering place where families interact. "It's a source of community pride and provides a semblance of normalcy that's great to see," Martinelli said.

Lt. Col. Robert Morschauser, Commander of Task Force 2-15FA, 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, agrees and points

out the market renovation clearly demonstrates that Mahmudiyah's democratically elected government is working and improvements are taking place.

"Those officials are listening to their townspeople and getting things done," Morschauser said. "We've talked to the shopkeepers and they're very happy with what's going on. This is an excellent example that Iraqi officials are in the lead."

A number of other projects are now underway in Mahmudiyah, including a new primary healthcare center, school renovations, new power lines, and renovation of the water treatment plant and pump station. The community also is planning to build a park a few blocks from the market that will feature an amphitheater and soccer field.

Regarding the importance of such projects, Mayor Muayid concluded, "We have to fight terrorism in different ways.



Above and inset: Hundreds of families visit the Mahmudiyah Market every day, buying fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, and other staples. The facility is undergoing a major renovation, including new stalls and overhead cover, and is expected to be completed in February.

(Photos by Norris Jones)

We need to offer alternative activities for our children that will keep them away from the insurgents."

The Mahmudiyah market renovation project is expected to be completed by February.

Norris Jones, GRC



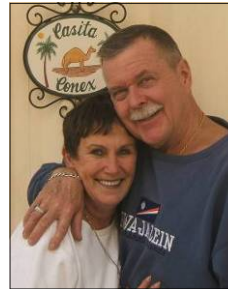
Hail and Farewell

Hailing:

Zeinab Ahmed, GRD
 James Aldrich, GRS
 Zahraa Alwash, GRD
 Alonzo Andrews, GRN
 Laura Avery, GRD
 Muhamad Aziz, GRC
 Mark Baressi, GRN
 Bruce Bartoo, GRS
 Ken Bright, GRD
 MA Steven Coy, GRD
 Vincent Dorio, GRD
 Mark Fleck, GRD
 Andrew Frank, GRS
 Melissa George, GRD
 John Goggin, GRD
 Ruth Goodman, GRD
 Bill Gross, GRD
 MAJ Benjie Jackson, GRD
 Bryon Johnson, GRN
 Florine Jordan, GRD
 CPT Asfandyar Khan, GRD
 COL Rich Kilburn, GRD
 COL Christian Klinefelter, GRD
 Rene Lopez, GRD
 BMCS(SW) William Martin, GRC
 MAJ Gregg Matsumoto, GRD
 LT(JG) Robert McCharen
 Mike McGarvey, GRN
 Shakir Misir, GRN
 LCDR Suzanne Montgomery, GRN
 LCDR Rick Mosley, GRD
 Leo Mueninghoff, GRS
 Milton Naumann, GRD
 Bruce Nestor, GRC
 Michael Osborne, GRS
 Kele Owens, GRN
 Theuron Owens, GRN
 Jae Park, GRD
 Eric Perkins, GRD
 CPT Mike Pinson, GRD
 Joe Rath, GRC
 Altaf Rehman, GRS

Joe Rofrano, GRD
 Troy Rolan, GRC
 CPT Myron Shirley, GRD
 Jim Simmons, GRD
 SGM Felix Soto, GRD
 1LT Adam Sterling, GRD
 MAC(SW) Matt Sutterluety, GRC
 Carolyn Wardell, GRC
 Thomas Waters, GRD
 Joe Wendl, GRN
 Robert Wheaton, GRN
 Paul Whitmer, GRN
 Cherita Williams, GRC
 AMC Philip Wright, GRC

Farewelling:



Tom and Patty Clarkson
 Puerto Vallarta, Mexico



Ben Perkins



Lisa Lawson



PO1 David Cayer



TSGT Garey Payne



Lisis Batista
 Miami, FL



LCDR Charles Bowers



Rona Parker-Anderson



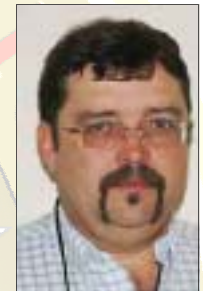
Fred Nightengale
 Mauston, WI



James Myers



Jack Wilkerson



Jesse Dalby
 Ft. Bragg, NC



Bart Shivers



Cheryl Hodges-Snead



Kathy Johnson
 Washington, D.C.



Gail Thearle
 Sacramento District



MAJ William Kale



LTC John Revolinsky
 Sacramento District



LTC Lorenzo Valenzuela



Andy Adams
 Ft. Rucker, AL



LTC Sherry Brown



CDR Thomas Clements