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GRD Update

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Parsons Joins Team RIO in the North

The Parsons Worley Team is here. They made it to Kirkuk to join the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division, RIO Directorate – Restore Iraqi Oil late last month.

As Parsons ramps up to take over most of the former contract belonging to KBR – Kellogg, Brown and Root in the north area office, they bring new faces to join Team RIO.

With the help of the Corps and KBR, they've immediately started work on five task orders, said Sam Parker, Corps area engineer for the north area office.

With only a small advance team and more Parsons' employees trickling in to camp, they are working on these projects with a network of people globally.

Parsons has a coordination center in Baghdad, headquarters in Houston and engineering offices all over the world. So depending on what needs to be done, Parsons in Kirkuk, Iraq, is capable of pulling resources from seemingly an infinite amount of locations to get a job done right, said Tony Porter, the deputy program manager for Parsons in the north area office.

On transitioning, Porter admits it is a very difficult

situation naturally, with transferring responsibility from one company to another, but relationships will continue to develop within and with the Ministry of Oil operating companies.

As Team RIO welcomes Parsons, Corps employees on the ground are also saying goodbye to the many good working relationships they've developed with KBR.

"I'm going to miss the people," said Parker, who is nearing the end of his own four

month tour of duty, "they've got some real competent people."

A small group of KBR employees however, will continue working on a couple of specified projects until their completion.

One of the projects is a major horizontal directional drilling project that involves putting pipes under the Tigris River. The other involves replacing 50 kilometers of the Iraq to Turkey pipeline that suffers from corrosion as a

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Parsons, Kellogg, Brown and Root and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers partner together to restore Iraqi oil infrastructure in the north. Tony Porter, Parsons' Deputy Program Manager, Sam Parker, Corps' Area Engineer and Wes Jordan, KBR's Senior Project Manager study a map intently and discuss Team RIO progress.



Parsons Share Team RIO Vision

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result of poor maintenance during Saddam's regime.

KBR, during their tenure in the north, developed excellent working relationships with the Ministry of Oil operating companies. In one of their final meetings with KBR, Northern Oil Company officials expressed their gratitude and sincere feelings of loss in seeing their friends leave.

According to cultural reference materials, in the Iraq, relationships are fundamental in every aspect of life including business. The key to establishing good working relationships with Iraqis is to establish good personal relationships.

Parsons seems to be savvy of that.

"I think pretty much, we all have the same vision," said Porter who has had many years of experience working in the Middle East on a multitude of projects prior to joining Team RIO.

"Our guys are completely committed to making a success of this and part of our proposal was to involve as many nationals and the Iraqis as we can," he said.

Parsons plans to be fully staffed within the next couple of months. Depending on the quantity of work, it is likely Team RIO family will soon be welcoming a hundred new faces.

The 'Get it Done' Team Helping the Children of Iraq

Where there is a will, there is a way. Diane Hobbie does not lack courage. Several months after the bombing at the Baba Club at the NOC - Northern Oil Company, she brought new blood and inspiration to the northern office Team RIO family - Restore Iraqi Oil.

Despite warnings about the potential dangers of leaving base and going to downtown Kirkuk, she has been busy coordinating trips to local

schools to deliver school supplies.

Diane, Team RIO's administrative assistant, certainly has a will and has forged a way working with security operations to arrange the necessary armed escorts to accompany Corps employees out to the schools.

Those who go out to the schools are required to follow strict security regulations and

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Local schools in Kirkuk are impoverished. The day before this photo was taken, it snowed. The children are wearing their coats and jackets indoors because the classrooms are not heated. Northern Area Office Team RIO Corps employees accompanied by an Air Force Chaplain pose for a photo with the teachers and children after distributing school supplies. From left to right: Jim McClain, AF Chaplain Gary Garvey, Frankie Johnson, Clark Roberts, Sam Parker, Yousef Bechara, Diane Hobbie, David Webster, and LTC Robert Morris



Team RIO was honored by red roses and a certificate of appreciation for their generous donations and help in repairing the schools on the Northern Oil Company. Sam Parker and LTC Robert Morris accept the framed certificate.

Schools Supplied

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guidance each time they go out. They are always to wear their Kevlar helmets, flak vests and never to leave the sight of their trained security escorts who sometimes include military infantry soldiers.

But such risks have brought much satisfaction to those who have gone out to the local schools.

Smiles reach from ear to ear as little boys received blue grab bags and little girls received red ones. Each bag especially packed by Diane and a small crew of people she recruited. Supplies are sorted and equally distributed so every child gets something, she explained.

Containing more than just crayons and binder paper the

bags are also filled other supplies and most importantly with good intentions. "I want these people to know American's are not so bad," said Diane.

It was a bright day in Kirkuk, Iraq when Team RIO successfully made their first trip out to a couple of schools located at the edge of the city on the NOC. Just as bright were the smiles of the children who saw them coming.

For months, the north area office collected school supplies and toys from stateside family and friends. But also for months the supplies sat piled high in a corner of their office.

They gathered so long not because no one could find the time to deliver them, but because for those who work in Kirkuk know, it's a calculated risk each time they leave the air base they live on.

Traveling to and from project sites is not the safest thing to do because of variable risks. Team RIO employees in the north are often warned they should not travel off the Kirkuk Regional Air Base, where many work and live, unless they have to.

Yet as the supplies grew with each delivery of the post and by a large donation from a Kellogg Brown and Root employee, Emma Sotillo, from Baghdad, so did Team RIO's courage to see that they made it out to the underprivileged schools in town.

With Diane's arrival to the north area office, she brought along a surge of enthusiasm to get things done. She endearingly calls her coworkers the 'get it done' team as they help her pack thousands of grab bags for distribution.

The schools in Iraq are impoverished. "Nails stick out of school benches," said Yousef Bechara, a Team RIO translator, with excitement and concern on his face. Teachers have chalk boards, but no chalk. With a calling of his own, Yousef has also been working hard to make connections to raise money and resources to improve the infrastructure of the schools on the NOC.

But as all the NOC schools become saturated with school supplies and support, Diane and her coworkers look forward to venturing out to other local schools in Kirkuk and also villages near RIO project sites.

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Helping Children

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The Air Force Ministry recently hooked up with Team RIO also by contributing donations they've received. Because of the difficulties in going off base, the Chaplains have not been able to distribute their supplies to local schools either. "We've collected about half a million dollars worth of supplies," said LTC Gary Garvey, a Chaplain of the 506th Air Expeditionary Group.

With the help and courage of Diane and her 'get it done' team however; local schools will continue to see a lot more of the 'not so bad Americans'.



Frankie Johnson, a quality assurance representative for Team RIO, hands out little blue grab bags to children. His family and friends mailed boxes and boxes of school supplies from the states.

GRD SPOTLIGHT

Diane Hobbie

**RIO Directorate
Administrative Assistant**



Diane Hobbie, a Realty Specialist for Alaska District, deployed to Kirkuk, Iraq, early February.

As an administrative assistant supporting the Gulf Region Division Restore Iraqi Oil Directorate, she is also completing a mission of her own as a personal incentive.

She admits her main motive for deploying was to see how the children of Iraq have been affected by their surroundings and to figure out how to help them.

A Corps employee for nearly nine years, she has been with Alaska district for a total of three. She left Alaska once however, but she came back. When asked why, she said, "I love Alaska!"

Her friends and coworkers have been sending her care packages everyday. "I love the people I work with," said Diane, "I also miss my puppy and my husband."

Diane's husband, David, also works for Alaska District as the Deputy Chief of Regulatory Branch. Good thing for her, he's in-country too! David deployed to be a project manager for the RIO Directorate late February. He is stationed in Basra, but the two have hopes to be reunited occasionally.