



NEWS

GRC IRAQ

AUGUST 2006



COL Debra Lewis and Sheik O'rhaman Hama Rahman cut the ribbon officially opening Assyria Women's Center



Assyria Women's Center opens

Sheik O'rhaman Hama Rahman, Chairman of the Hamamiea Council, officiated at the official opening of the Assyria Women's Center Aug. 2 located near Taji military base. The new \$230,000 CERP-funded 400-square-meter facility includes 12 sewing machines and 12 computers to encourage female business opportunities benefitting not only the 4600 residents in Assyria Village but the surrounding area as well. Sheik Rahman said he was optimistic the security situation would improve and women in other neighborhoods would drive to Assyria Village to utilize the facility and better their lives. Council member Gulbahar Khudar Kader said their first goal was getting local women to start sewing uniforms for area schools and they had invited merchant Hadi Hamad to attend the Aug. 2 ceremony as he would be helping market that apparel. Colonel Debra Lewis, Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Central District, participated in the ceremony and said it was great to see the community's positive outlook and pride in what the Center represents for their future.



CPT Holly Hanson, team leader with Charlie Company of the 414 Civil Affairs Battalion, talks with Sheik Rahman and Fred Nightengale, Resident Engineer of GRC's Taji Office.



Women's Center opens

by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Hunt
1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th ID

CAMP TAJI — Assyria Village held a grand opening for a women's center just outside the gates of Camp Taji Aug. 2. The center will provide women in that small community a place to meet, sew, cook and use the center's computers.

The \$230,000 building is brand new and is equipped with 12 sewing machines, 12 computers, a kitchen, office space, a back-up generator and two ovens.

"This is the first building I've ever heard of that is just for women," said Capt. Holly Hanson, a team leader for 414th Civil Affairs Battalion

"This project has been very well received in this community," said Fred Nightengale, resident engineer for Camp Taji with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Nightengale has been a part of the project since its inception.

"Here in Iraq, women don't get to do a lot. The center is a real boost to this community because it gives them an opportunity to help out."

The center plans on having education classes for women to improve literacy, which remains a problem throughout the country. In addition, women can take classes on the internet and can make a living by making garments in the sewing shop.

"I'm planning on making clothes here to sell to people so I can make some money for my family," said a local woman, who was already making clothes at the grand opening. "I've been waiting for this place to open for a long time, and I'm very happy now that I can come sew here."



GRC CSM Randall Cady chats with a youngster attending the Assyria Women's Center Grand Opening Aug. 2.





Al Rasheed Hotel work continues

by **Norris Jones**

He's been responsible for a variety of reconstruction efforts in Iraq – building sewers and water lines, electrical distribution networks, and roads.

But project engineer Ross Warner says his work on Baghdad's most-famous hotel has been both his biggest challenge and most rewarding experience during his six-month tour.

"I'm proud of the progress we were able to achieve on the Al Rasheed Hotel," said Warner on his final day in Iraq. "I plan to return in September to see the project finished." Warner and his team of a half-dozen Iraqi engineers are part of Gulf Region Central District's International Zone office. He says the \$5.8 million renovation should be completed before the end of the year.

That work includes renovating over 400 hotel rooms and associated facilities including a new air conditioning system, repairs to the roof, electrical, plumbing and wastewater lines, and a new fire alarm system. One of the interesting facts about the facility is that when it was built in 1982 (during the Iran-Iraq war), bullet-proof glass was used in all windows. For windows that now need replaced, those same specifications are required by the contract.

"Ensuring that all partners were in agreement (regarding certain essential decisions) required patience and understanding," Warner explained, "whether that involved the Ministry of Tourism, the hotel staff, or various U.S. military entities."

He points out that it took months, for example, for all to agree on the type and style of new carpeting and wallpaper. That decision was

finally reached only after all interested parties made a trip to Turkey to visit the carpet and wallpaper factories and talk to people there about their concerns."

Warner notes that when the hotel was constructed 24 years ago, it was a 5-star world-class facility. "The Iraqis justifiably want to ensure there are no shortcuts and the Al Rasheed retains its luster and reputation as a high quality facility." He says the work is currently 60 percent finished. "Three of the 14 floors have been totally renovated and turned over, four are close to being completed. And the big job of rebuilding the hotel's infrastructure is done.

"I'm pleased with the work we've accomplished so far. I look forward to the day when the hotel is completely restored."

Warner has worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers a quarter-century, the same length of time he's drilled as an Army Reservist. In 2003, he was recalled to active duty for a year in Kuwait as a Sergeant First Class where he worked at Camp Arifjan for the base's Department of Public Works writing scopes of work, conducting project inspections, and contract administration.

"That's one of the main reasons I wanted to come to Iraq. I had heard from others about their experiences and I wanted to see Baghdad firsthand. What we're involved with here is a part of history. I'm glad I could contribute."

He says his family has been very supportive. He and his wife Virginia have been married 37 years. They have four children. Ross is a Civil Engineer Technician with USACE's Savannah District and is based at Ft. Bragg, NC. URI 19994.



Project Engineer Ross Warner

DEPARTING MEMBERS



**BMC (SW)
ANIELLO PROTA**
NCOIC Taji FOB
Annapolis, MD



PEGGY POINDEXTER
Project Engineer
PW/B Resident Office
St. Louis District



THERESA GONZALES
QA Rep
Public Works/BIAP
Resident Office
Omaha District
Ft. Carson, CO



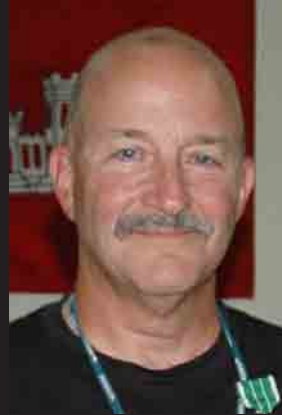
CHRIS CEJKA
Project Engineer
Loyalty FOB
Kennewick, WA



ANGELITA ALCAZAR
GRC HQ
Budget Analyst
Jacksonville, FL



DAVID STANTON
GRC HQ
Facilities Manager
Lakeland, FL



**CRAIG
SCHOENBERGER**
4ID Project Engineer
U.S. Military Academy
West Point, NY



**CDR FRANK
THORNGREN**
Al Anbar PRT LNO
NAB Little Creek, VA



**NAVY BMC (SW)
BRIAN CISELL**
NCOIC Victory South
USS Abraham Lincoln
Bremerton, WA



GERALD RAMOS
Chief of Party
USAID Project Office
Hunsville Center

Garcia helps save fellow soldier's life

Four 60mm rounds blasted Forward Operating Base Loyalty south of Sadr City at 7:20 p.m. July 29.

SFC David Garcia says he and the staff took cover in their concrete bunker when they heard a young soldier from the 101st screaming for help in a nearby parking lot.

"I surprised myself on what happened next," Garcia says. "It must have been the Army training but the next thing I know I'm racing for our first aid kit and then dashed across the street.

"I cut away the soldier's t-shirt and there was a huge open chest wound from the shrapnel. I've never seen anything like that and I hope I never do again.

"He was bleeding really bad and had a lot of trouble breathing. I applied a trauma dressing but it wasn't working. I remembered they said in the Combat Life Saving Class to use anything to seal the wound. While others gathered to help, I ran across the street, got some duct tape and a plastic sheet protector and when we put that on he started doing a lot better." They loaded him on a stretcher and rushed him to the Troop Medical Clinic (TMC).

Garcia says the soldier, apart from the chest wound, had to have reconstruction surgery on his liver but is reportedly doing fine at Walter Reed Hospital.

This is Garcia's second straight year being deployed. He was recalled to Kosovo last year. He's a member of the 578th Engineer Battalion out of Santa Fe Springs, CA, where he and his wife Teresa reside. For his civilian career, he's a foreman for ARB Inc., a world-wide pipeline construction company headquartered in Lake Forest, CA. Regarding the episode, SFC Garcia says, "I surprised myself. I really did."



From the Commander . . .

"A Change in Attitude Has the Power to Change My Day"

I look forward each day for the opportunity to get to know the tremendous people in our district and the many talented partners working with us to provide responsive and quality construction related services to benefit the people of Iraq and our deployed forces. Doing construction anywhere is difficult, but is perhaps the most challenging here for so many reasons. Recently departed Chief Cissell summed up our task here nicely when he said "we all worked hard here to ensure that democracy in Iraq 'shall not perish'." This month we bid farewell to a group of special folks, just like Chief Cissell, who really made a difference and made us very thankful for our time together. We also felt fortunate to greet a terrific group of new volunteers similarly committed to our vital mission.

When I first arrived, MG McCoy shared his philosophy with me. I thought I'd share many of his and a few other basic principles to help guide you in your daily activities.

What you can expect of your leaders:

- We will let you do your job → + Enjoy your job
- Broad guidance → + Don't abuse your authority
- Our support → + Make sure we're doing the right thing
- Consistent standards
- A sense of humor

What we like:

- Good staff work (coordinate, do your homework, write well, pick your fights ... and ours)
- Innovation and Initiative
- Team Work
- Open and Effective Communications (Find out who else needs to know!)

What we expect you to be:

- Be a leader (leaders focus on bringing out the best in everyone)
- Be honest, courteous, proficient, sharp, loyal, a team player, mission-oriented, innovative and creative, safe, cheerful



Col. Debra M. Lewis
GRC Commander

What we expect you to know:

- Know what you know and know what you don't know
- Know and understand your oath
- Know and live by the Army's Core Values
- Know your skill
- Know how to train
- Know your limitations

"It takes each of us to make a better world for all of us." Unknown

From the CSM . . .

This month I'd like to talk a little about security, both physical and operational (OPSEC). Physical security consists of three elements. First are obstacles which are designed to frustrate trivial attackers and delay more serious ones. Next are alarms, proper security lighting, security guards and patrols which will detect attacks and give us notification. The final element is security response which will repel, frustrate or catch the attacker. However, another important piece is your mental attitude and the awareness of your surroundings. We are in a hostile environment where being complacent could result in serious injuries or loss of life. Remember, we are only a short distance from the base exterior. Use your battle buddy and let someone know where you go.

Force Protection is a big part of physical security which includes our Emergency Action Plan. Our current plan is under review and will soon be updated and forwarded to all GRC personnel. A training session for all will be forthcoming, giving guidance for emergency situations covering fire and bomb evacuations, indirect fire plan, ground assault plan, chemical munitions attack, and a ground assault evacuation plan. This will be a mandatory training and walk thru exercise. Your safety is our top priority!

OPSEC is a process which focuses on identifying, controlling, and protecting information which, if it becomes known to the

enemy, could be used to our disadvantage. Facts concerning activities, capabilities and the intentions of friendly forces are needed by the enemy to cause our mission failure. This information can be obtained from non-secure radio transmissions, public briefings, phone calls, public releases and friendly conversation. OPSEC prevents critical information from being obtained through unprotected sources. Mailing labels, old packages, envelopes and return labels have been used to gain addresses and send threatening messages to family members. When finished with these, please burn or shred, as insurgents have been known to go through trash looking for this type of information. For more information or questions concerning OPSEC and physical security please contact SSG Zane Martens, Security NCO or Mr. Jerry Breznican, Security Manager.

"Tomorrow is the most important thing in life. It comes into us at midnight very clean. It's perfect when it arrives and it puts itself in our hands. It hopes we've learned something from yesterday."
-- John Wayne. Essayons.



Command Sergeant Major
Randall Cady



Seabees support reconstruction effort

CDR Keith White, GRC's Deputy Commander, had an opportunity to unfurl his Seabee flag and fly it at Camp Liberty recently. About 15 Navy officers and enlisted are part of GRC's staff.



Sadr City 38 sectors water lines

Project Managers Emily Wicoff and Simeon Francis along with Loyalty Resident Engineer Zach Kluckowski comprise the Technical Evaluation Board reviewing the first of 10 proposals to build a new water network in 38 sectors (about half) of Sadr City that will benefit one million residents there. They expect to finish their work the first week of September at which point 10 contracts, worth a total of about \$21 million, will be awarded.

HELLO TO OUR ARRIVING MEMBERS



**JOANNE
DISHMON-GIBBS**
UPO Database Manager
Vicksburg District



DAVID CARTE
Env FEST Team Lead
Project Engineer
Kansas City District



GEORGE SIMS
Chief Construction
Services Branch
Albuquerque District



PENNY COULON
VAO Chief
of Maintenance
Sacramento District



DORA NAVEDO
GRC HQ
Contract Specialist
Ft. Buchanan, PR



AEC (AW) SILAS KING
NCOIC Taji
HSC-3 San Diego



FRANK SPEARS
GRC HQ
Contracting Specialist
Winchester, VA



**LCDR THERON
COLBERT**
OIC Al Asad
Charleston, SC



LCDR CHRIS VIA
OIC Ramadi
NAVFAC Far East
Yokosuka, Japan



LT CARL KIRAR
Al Anbar Area Office
Deputy OIC
NAVFAC Atlantic



PAUL KOSTERMAN
VAO Project Engineer
PW/B Resident Office
St. Paul District



Baghdad Moon Company started construction and installation of the Fallujah Sewer Outfall, URI 27398, (\$2.6M—DFI), in Fallujah, Al Anbar Province on 6 August 06. The Estimated Completion Date for this project is 22 Nov 06. This project is to install a 1,000 mm diameter GRP outfall pipeline between the Fallujah WWTP and the Euphrates River. The project includes piping materials supplied by the Government as well as construction of pipeline drains, air/vacuum release valves, a steel pipe bridge over an irrigation canal, and a concrete headwall with rock riprap into the River. This project is one of 34 projects that make up the Fallujah Wastewater Treatment System as a complete and usable public work.



Photo at Al Mamoon before demolition



A 13-story concrete stairway is removed Aug. 5, clearing the site for the new \$22.7 million Al Mamoon Exchange and Telecommunications Center for Baghdad.



Iraqi workers celebrate after successfully pulling down a 13-story concrete stairwell Aug. 5 as they clear a site for the new \$22.7 million Al Mamoon Exchange and Telecommunications Center. In all, 70 Iraqi workers are employed there now and that number will grow to about 400. For Saturday's demolition, Iraqi Army troops blocked off the nearby street to ensure security and safety. "We're doing this for the Iraqi people," the First Sergeant in charge of the detail said. "We're very pleased this new facility is being built."

Progress



Artist's sketch of new Al Mamoon Exchange

Baghdad to get \$22.7 million telecommunications center

A 13-story 1600-ton rectangular concrete stairwell, the last remnant of the old Al Mamoon Exchange and Telecommunication Center, was removed Aug. 5 to make room for a new seven-story telecommunication building on the 70x135-meter site.

GRC's International Zone Office Deputy Resident Engineer Karem, a lifetime resident of Baghdad, says the "facility will serve as a hub through which Iraq can connect to the global community." The Ministry of Communication offices will be located there as well as a 1300-square-meter post office. The structure will also feature a 200-seat auditorium, a cafeteria capable of serving 150 people, an exhibition hall, numerous conference rooms, several floors of communication switch gear, a 250-car covered garage and parking for 10 mail delivery vans and a loading dock for two trucks. "This will provide Iraqis reliable communication. It will definitely be a focal point for the City of Baghdad," Karem noted.

The 41-meter-high building is expected to be completed next year. Over 70 Iraqis are currently on the crew and that number will soon grow to about 400 Iraqi laborers.

"The facility will be the heart of Baghdad's telecommunication system," said 1LT Dawn Harrison, Project Engineer at GRC's International Zone Resident Office. Of the 115 projects she and her fellow engineers oversee valued at \$368 million, the Al Mamoon \$22.7 million IRRF-funded project is one of the largest. Alfa Consult of Luxembourg is the Prime Contractor.



Three tow trucks, each capable of pulling 30 tons, with the help of pulleys and an hydraulic jack take out the final supports Aug. 5 keeping a 13-story 1600-ton concrete stairwell standing. Shown prior to the demolition are Site Superintendent Jean Pierre Mainil and 1LT Dawn Harrison with GRC's IZ office.



GRC IZ Office Resident Engineer Stanley Reese looks at the rubble after the 13-story concrete stairwell was flattened.



1LT Dawn Harrison gets a high-five from local kids.



Shu'la Youth Center

GRC Project Engineer Peter Debski makes a final inspection at the Shu'la Youth Center in Kadamiyah District of Baghdad in February. Get Ace Engineering had the \$410,000 contract to renovate that facility building a new restroom, renovating interior and exterior walls and floors, repairs to the roof, plumbing and electrical system, new air conditioners, new fence around the playground, painting the bleachers. About 1500 youths are involved in programs there.



Helping Iraqi youth 'best part of my job'

by Norris Jones

Bettering the lives of Iraqi youngsters is what Peter Debski says is the best part of his job.

He's been involved in overseeing millions of dollars of reconstruction work in and around Baghdad over the past 10 months including new water and sewer networks, electrical distribution projects, police and fire stations, and primary healthcare centers. But he says "renovating two youth centers and four schools were definitely the most personally rewarding projects, seeing the joy on the children's faces, knowing we're bringing a little normalcy to their lives."

Debski is a project engineer with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Central District. One day he'll always remember was when they celebrated the re-opening of Al Huriya Youth Center March 25 and U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad spoke. "The United States stands with Iraqis as they attempt to improve their community. The various sporting activities that Iraqi children will engage in here offer several useful and timely lessons. This center will provide activities for youth of all sects and ethnic groups and teach them the benefit of teamwork. The sports that will be played here encourage children to compete but within an established system of rules. Finally, sports will allow us to succeed or fail – not based on who we are or where we come from – but rather on our merits as individuals."

That \$442,000 project, financed by the 10th Mountain Division through their CERP (Commander's Emergency Relief Program) funds, included upgrading the plumbing and electrical systems, installing new air conditioners, repairing and replacing floors, as well as replastering and painting both interior and exterior walls. In addition, a new basketball/volleyball court was built.

"The youth center project was selected because the community itself identified it as a top priority. They know how important it is to their community," Debski said. "It's a legacy we're leaving behind as Al Huriya families will use that youth center for years to come." About 1500 young people are involved in various sporting activities there on a daily basis including wrestling, boxing, soccer, weightlifting, basketball, volleyball and judo.

Debski says he's grateful to be part of USACE's historic mission and for the opportunity to work alongside some incredible Iraqis.

"I'm in awe of the courage our Iraqi project engineers demonstrate every day reporting to work and getting the job done. They're professional, highly educated, care about their work, and know they're making a difference. I admire each and every one of them."

Debski is leaving Iraq this month and will be heading to Jordan to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers there. He and his wife Teresa have two children, Julia and Matt.

"This has been a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, a great experience. I've worked for contractors on construction projects in Antarctica, Pacific Islands, and Europe, but nothing compares to what we're doing here."



U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad attends ceremony marking official re-opening of Al Huriya Youth Center.



GRC project engineer Peter Debski talks with one of his office's Iraqi quality assurance representatives and fellow engineer Emad during a pre-final inspection of the Yarmok Fire Station. In the middle photo is Emad and his family with their index fingers ink-stained, proud of their newfound freedoms in a democratic Iraq.

LTG Strock sees Joint Robotic Repair Facility



BG Michael Walsh checks out a 'Toughbot'



LTG Strock tours Camp Victory's new Joint Robotic Repair Facility



LTG Carl A. Strock, the Army's Chief of Engineers, toured the \$1.7 million Joint Robotic Repair Facility that was recently opened on Camp Victory. That project includes a 5,000 sq. ft. and 2,400 sq. ft. pre-engineered climate-controlled steel buildings for the repair/maintenance of EOD robots and an LSA for 8 trailers. Leading the tour was the facility's OIC, Maj Joseph Parker, USMC.

COL Lewis and BG Walsh



David Newman, VAO Construction Rep at the recently-opened Joint Robotic Repair Facility on Camp Victory, talks with LTG Strock and MG McCoy July 30.



MG McCoy maneuvers a MARCBOT EOD robot



Lisis Batista



BMC Brian Cissell



Emily Wicoff



Fred Nightengale



Simeon Francis



Chris Beaman

Ten GRC employees recognized

LTG Carl A. Strock, Army's Chief of Engineers, said during a Town Hall Meeting at GRC July 30 that USACE's #1 priority is supporting the Global War on Terrorism. He recognized ten GRC employees including 4ID POC for PHCs and Baghdad Police Academy Lisis Batista; BMC Brian Cissell, NCOIC Victory South; Emily Wicoff, MILCON Project Manager; Fred Nightengale, Taji Resident Engineer; Simeon Francis, Water Project Manager; Chris Beaman, GRC's Safety Manager; Jeannette Newlen, Chief Human Resources; Mike Doty, Project Engineer at Fallujah; Harry Turrell, Construction Rep at Baghdad Police Academy; and SFC Craig Mason, NCOIC IZ Office.



LTG Strock, Army's Chief of Engineers, hosts a Town Hall Meeting at GRC.



Jeanette Newlen



Australian COL Neal Greet, MNCI Deputy C7, chats with LTG Strock



GRC staff with BG Michael Walsh, MG William McCoy Jr., and LTG Carl Strock

Chief of Engineers visits



Arbor Drinkwine and Sybral Farris with Victory PW/B Resident Office.



Jose Gonzalez



Project Engineer Mohammad Dadhah



Project Engineer Peter Debski



Navy Petty Officer Laurie Taylor



IT Specialist Monique Deziauelo



Construction Representative Roy Brase



Admin Asst. Wenda McGilberry



Dave Schmidt, CSM Cady, LTG Strock, COL Lewis, MG McCoy, BG Walsh, CDR White



AI Asad QA Rep Dorothy Ivey and LTG Strock.



COL Jonathan G. Miclot (Commanding Officer 3d Marine Aircraft Wing) and his staff brief LTG Strock on AI Asad.



LTG Strock tours
AI Asad, Haditha Dam

GRC AI Asad OIC LCDR Lilly and NCOIC SFC Wong

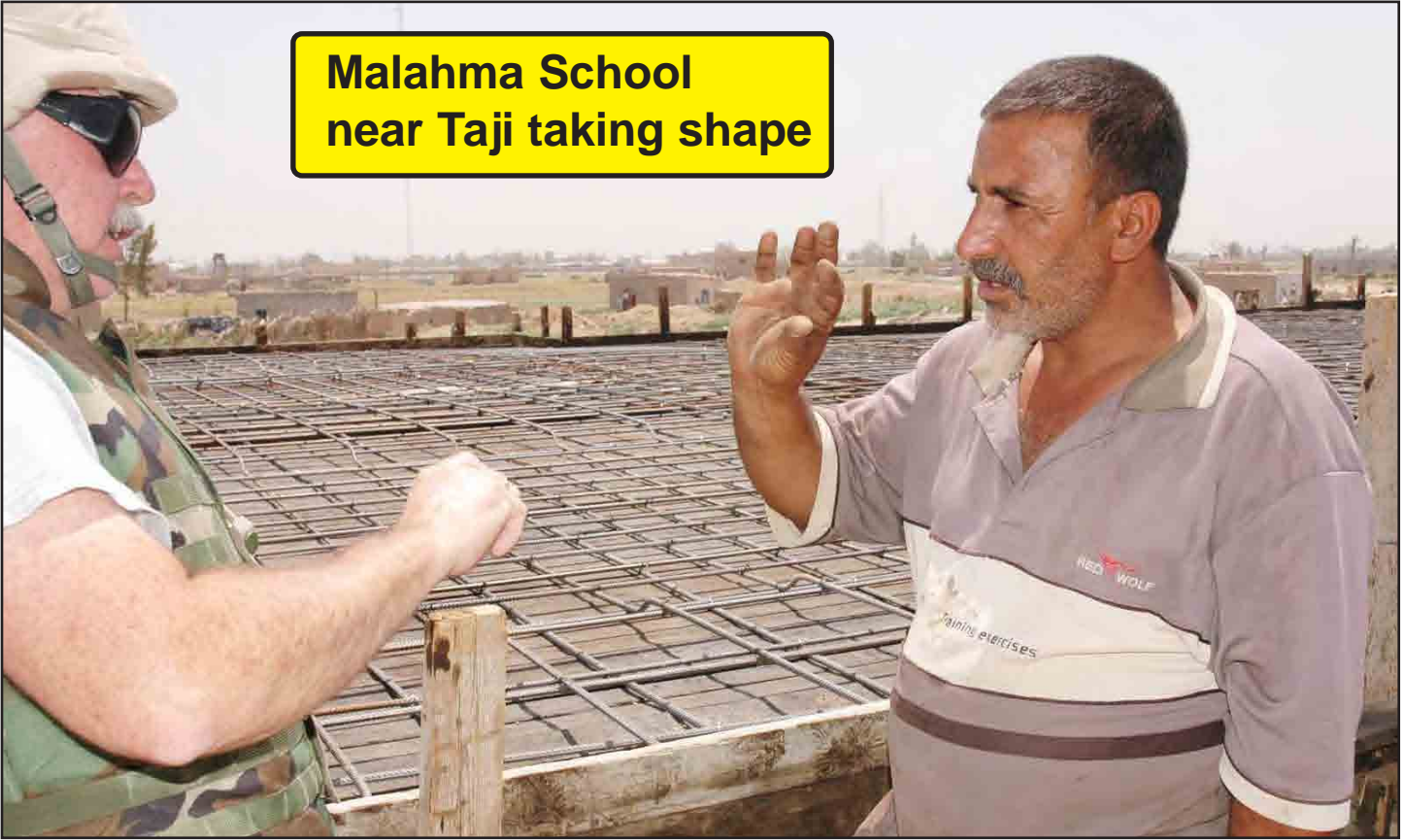


MG McCoy and LtCol Norman L. Cooling, (Commanding Officer 3rd Battalion 3rd Marines) at Haditha Dam.



LTG Strock, MG McCoy and BG Walsh get update on Haditha Dam electric generation needs.

Malahma School near Taji taking shape



Malahma School

Naseem Uruk General Trading Co. has the \$501,179 CERP-funded contract to build the 22-classroom Al Malahma School in north Baghdad Province. The 1250-square-meter structure will include 675 square meters on the first floor with 10 classrooms there as well as faculty rooms and toilets, 575 square meters on the 2nd floor with 12 classrooms there, a 90-square-meter separate guard house with bedroom and kitchen, as well as a 70mx80m security wall. About 500 students will benefit from this project. GRC's Taji Office is overseeing the work with Andy May the Project Engineer.





BEFORE



AFTER



Al Alwiyah Maternity Hospital, Baghdad

Scope of Work: Al Alwiyah Maternity Hospital in Baghdad, a 15,000 sq. meter facility, is undergoing a \$5.5 million renovation. The work includes boiler upgrades, air conditioning, electrical and structural system improvements, and elevator repairs. The project also will provide the hospital new features such as a reverse osmosis water purification system, medical waste incinerator, medical gases center, nurse call system, and data communication network.

Effects: When construction began in Sep 2004, the hospital was only capable of supporting 70 beds out of the original 300 beds. Once the renovation is completed in December 2006, the facility will support 344 beds and provide full spectrum medical care for women from a population of more than 1 million. The hospital staff includes 45 doctors and 60 nurses. GRC's IZ office is overseeing the work with MAJ Robert Nash the OIC, Stanley Reese the Resident Engineer.



Al Judriya Post Office, Baghdad

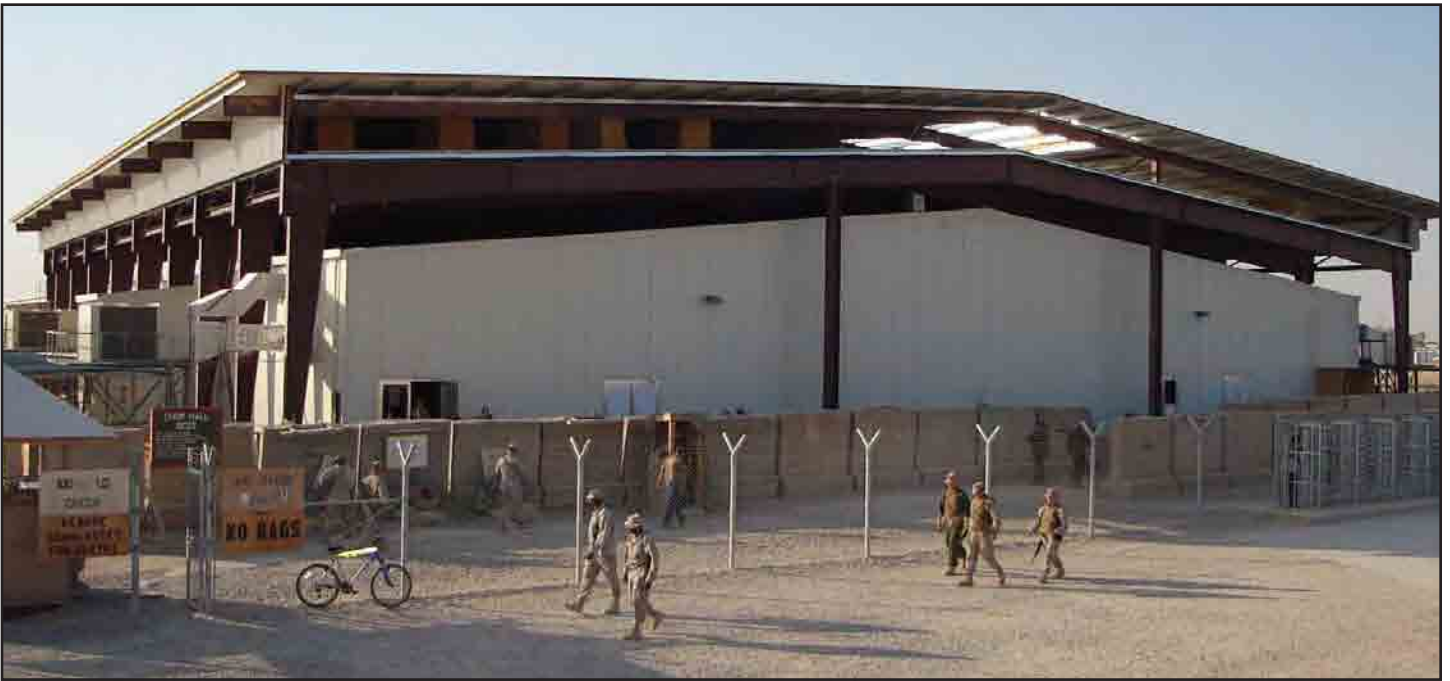
Scope of Work – This \$792,790 IRRF-funded project is a new, single-story post office building. It features approximately 590 square meters of finished space to include offices, mail sorting area, break room and bathrooms.

Effects – This facility, which was completed July 30, will offer mail service to the residents of Baghdad's Karada Peninsula with a population over 200,000.

Bookbags, soccer balls



Bookbags and soccer balls were handed out to local youngsters at a soccer field alongside the Rasheed Primary Healthcare Center in south Baghdad Province which will be opening Aug. 15. The bookbags were donated by Light-house Church in Abilene, Kansas, thanks to the efforts of one of the parishioners there, Jessica Cherms, who did a six-month assignment at Gulf Region Central District. "They all wanted to do something and agreed to take up a one-day offering to help the people of Iraq," Cherms said. At their Dec. 18 service, they collected \$1700. In all 230 bookbags and school supplies were purchased and about 40 were passed out Aug. 4. Jeanne Marie Rowan, wife of COL Peter Rowan (former GRC Commander), sent boxes of soccer balls and equipment last month courtesy of the Squire Roses, a girl's youth service group sponsored by the Knights of Columbus out of Fairfax, VA. Shown in the top photo are MAJ Ron Ford and MAJ Steve Martinelli with the Victory Area Office who helped distribute the items.



Ramadi Office -- Overhead Protection, Hospital Renovation

TOP PHOTO - This overhead protection project at Camp Ramadi and Camp Taqaddum is designed to cover high-density gathering facilities. The overhead cover system includes 'E-Glass' protective layers, concrete foundations, retrofit of the existing facility, and installation of steel support structure and pre-detonation screen. The overhead cover system will protect troops from artillery, rocket propelled grenades and missile attack. BOTTOM PHOTO - Ar Ramadi Women and Children's Hospital, a 260-bed inpatient facility with a staff of about 500, is undergoing \$4.9 million in renovations. The hospital is designed to provide inpatient and outpatient service to Ramadi and the surrounding area (about 400,000 people). The work includes structural repair, upgrading mechanical, electrical, sewer and water systems, doors, windows, walls, roof, elevator, and ceilings. LCDR Matthew McCann is the OIC of GRC's Ramadi Resident Office and In Park the Resident Engineer there.



Taji Office

GRC Commander Col Debra Lewis and GRC CSM Randall Cady recently visited the Taji Resident Office. Shown in the photo above are (left to right) BMC (SW) Aniello Prota, CSM Cady, COL Lewis, Iraqi Project Engineer Ahmed Salman, QA Rep D.J. Moser, Project Engineer Andy May, Project Engineer Roy Johnson, Resident Engineer Fred Nightengale, and OIC LT Glen Messer.

Gonzales writes about her 3-year tour in Iraq

In the 3 years that I have been here, I've got to do things what I never imagined. When I first arrived, I was told I would live in the Al Faw Palace because there was no other place for me. I thought okay...a palace...Wow!!! But there were no working bathrooms or running water and no AC. My first night here was spent sleeping on a window ledge on the top floor of the palace. It was just too hot to sleep in the little utility closet that was to be my room for a month. That next morning I awoke to the sound of the call to prayer and it echoed from all the mosques in Baghdad. I realized I was now in the oldest civilization on the planet ... I was closer to God, and I fell in love.

Three years later I think about all the good things and bad things I have experienced. I've lost so many Iraqi friends to the madness in Baghdad. I can't even count the number of friends and workers who have been senselessly killed. I have photos to remind me of our experiences on job sites, sharing meals, stories about our families, their concern about my spiritual life, and teaching me Arabic. I have learned that being Muslim, a true Muslim is beautiful, as Christianity is beautiful. Islam has just been so distorted by fanatics. I have been humbled many times by the Iraqis' generosity towards me. Literally I have been offered the shirts off workers backs when I know they barely make enough to feed their families. I have shared meals where we would split 4 boiled eggs, 2 cucumbers and tomatoes, and bread between 8 people. We have all drank tea from the same beatup plastic cup. I wasn't treated as an American woman, but as a friend.

As for the Corps of Engineers.....the leadership from the Army, Navy and civilians has been wonderful. I was given a clear path to do my job on Victory Base while my command supported me 100%.



Theresa Gonzales

I love construction. I love being in the field, I love concrete, I love dirt work. I've had so much fun. The leadership in VAO has been outstanding and VAO is a family that I will miss. Our routine Circle of Friends is not so routine ... it's a time to check on your co-workers, to laugh a little, to connect.

LTC O'Connor, I want you to know that you have my respect. Each military leader we have had in VAO brings something new and different. You are a combination of all the leaders we have had. You are tough but fair, you are a leader we want to follow because you have our best interests in mind all the time, and you know when to be a soldier and when to be friend. Thank you for supporting me.

LCDR Bo, thank you for your support. You have been wonderful to work for. I do wish I could have been here through your tour and it was me saying farewell to you.

We are not soldiers armed with weapons. We are civilians armed with knowledge. We are here to mentor, teach what we know about construction, improve not only hospitals, schools, police stations, and the bases where Iraqi people work but to also, improve the quality of life for the Iraqi people so that they will want more for themselves, for their children, for their children's children by showing that Americans are compassionate and caring.

Look out for your battle buddy. Stress can really mess with you in ways you can't imagine in this environment. This place brings out the best in you and the worst. Friendship is so important over here. A very good friend told me that friendships you make in a war zone are connections that last a lifetime and no one can take from you. Take care and remember...a smile goes a long way over here. Goodbye.



Wathba Water Treatment Plant upgrades capacity

by Norris Jones

For nearly two years, the Al Wathba Water Treatment Plant has been undergoing a \$22 million upgrade to bring more fresh, potable water to Baghdad residents.

That facility serves the Rusafa area in northeast Baghdad with markets, businesses, medical facilities, and about 300,000 residents dependent on its output.

“Al Wathba is over 40 years old and the dilapidated, poorly maintained equipment was producing about 1000 cubic meters of drinking water per hour,” points out Iraqi project engineer Sadiq with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Central District International Zone office.

“The renovation included state-of-the-art new pumps, pipes, filters, new chlorination system, and new controls for automatic operation. We expanded the plant’s capacity almost 2 ½ times and it is now able to produce 2400 cubic meters of water per hour. Last week we tested the system and immediately started getting ‘thank you’ calls from area residents who appreciate the increased pressure and quantity of fresh water available in their homes and businesses.”

Sadiq is pleased with the quality of work and points out the project should be completed in about two months. “Without this investment, Al Wathba would have had to be shut down,” he

cautioned. “The old equipment could not have continued to handle the demand.” Al Wathba pulls in water from the Tigris, purifies it, and then delivers it to a 1000-millimeter water main (about 40 inches in diameter) that serves the northeast quadrant of Baghdad.

“The city now has a 21st century facility that will be a dependable source of water for decades to come,” Sadiq concluded. Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Funds (IRRF) paid for the improvement.





GRD CSM Gregory Glen (left) and GRC CSM Richard Grab congratulate SFC Mason at his promotion ceremony Nov. 27.

SFC Mason -- a soldier to emulate

by Tom Clarkson

Once in a while one meets an individual that it's impossible not to like. Such a person is Sergeant First Class Joel "Craig" Mason.

With but short, thoughtful pauses from his work, the kind-eyed, non-commissioned officer-in-charge of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region Central (USACE-GRC), International Zone Resident Office, spoke briefly of his year of duty in Iraq. No stranger to deployment – this was his fourth – when not serving on active duty, he is a member of Ohio National Guard's Bravo Troop, Second of the 107th Cavalry, in Lebanon, OH. Totaling up all of his Guard and active duty years, he now has served over 20.

A residential homebuilder by profession, living in Columbus, OH, he is a logical choice to be in charge of so much diverse reconstruction work. With his camouflage splotched, battle dress uniform blouse off, wearing his shoulder holstered 9mm pistol over his brown Army issue T-shirt and leaning forward at his desk piled high with work, he looks up from his computer screen on which he is finishing a report and quietly makes an observation. "This job has been both very rewarding and highly humbling. The first, as we can see that we are truly making a difference for thousands of Iraqis. The second through the realization of how much danger our Iraqi engineers and laborers must daily face. In all reality, the mere act of coming to work is a virtual gauntlet of death. Quite literally, this simple daily chore has been cause for the murder of many."

Turning so as to fully face his interviewer, he says, "In a small way I can relate somewhat. My three personal IED (improvised explosive device) and one VBIED (vehicle borne IED) experiences certainly left me with a keen awareness of my own mortality. Imagine they're facing that 24/7! I hold all of the Iraqi people who conscientiously are trying to make good lives for themselves and their families in the highest regard. But also, I can't express how tremendously I admire the young enlisted soldiers who,

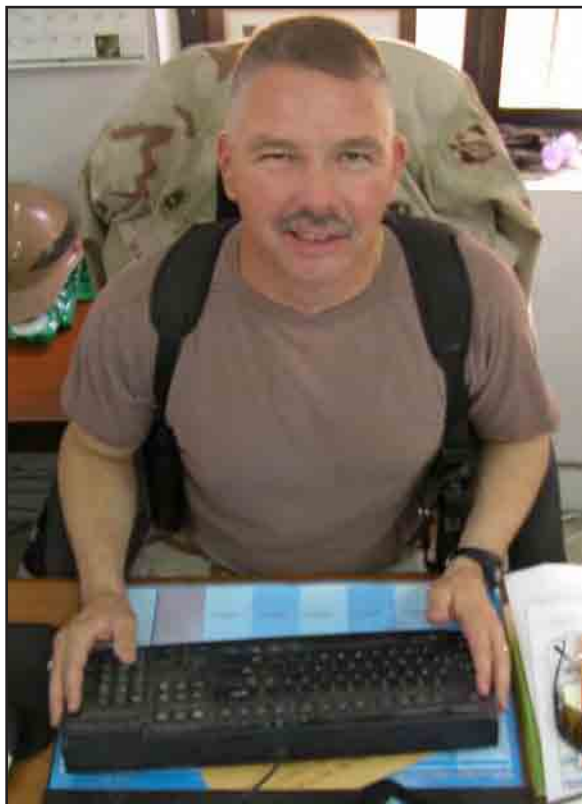
daily, must make split second, life and death decisions as they work to remove terrorism from this country." Regarding the attacks he has survived, Mason was recently awarded a Combat Action Badge "for his heroic actions under fire" from Colonel Debra Lewis, the GRC commander. But an indicator even beyond this recognition of professional soldiering was his selection and induction into the Audie Murphy Club. He was selected for this auspicious honor by a panel of Command Sergeants Major who found him to be an "outstanding non-commissioned officer who has set the example for all to emulate."

Holding a BA in business administration as well as an MBA, he's as intelligent and educated as he is "field smart" in his military work. The combination of people skills, experience, and scholarly pursuits is obviously a good one as his supervisor, Major Robert Nash described him as "clearly, one of the most competent Soldiers with whom I have ever had the honor to serve."

Understanding his role in his team's objective – the rebuilding of all major infrastructure west of the Tigris River in Baghdad – he acknowledges that, given the constraints they faced, they have done a "marvelous job in accomplishing that work". However, he concedes that he shares others' concern about the security situation and what impact that will have on the continued reconstruction mission.

With apparent concern and sincerity he says, "Hopefully, the recent, increased efforts by our troops here in Baghdad will quell the majority of these difficulties and have a calming influence. But beyond

that, I'd be remiss not to credit the tremendous civilians, multi-service military members and Iraqi engineers who have labored so long and hard to do everything possible to thwart difficulties in Iraq by providing essential services." By his conduct, demeanor and his carefully thought-through-before-speaking words, it is easy to see why so many think so very highly of him and why he is a role model Soldier extraordinaire.





Reconstruction tough challenge in 'Triangle of Death'

by Norris Jones

"We're making a difference, one project at a time," says a Navy man who is finishing a six-month tour deployed to one of Iraq's most dangerous areas. "I'm proud of what we were able to accomplish working side by side some truly remarkable and courageous Iraqi people."

Chief Boatswain's Mate (SW/AW) Brian Cissell was responsible for overseeing 55 projects in an area in south Baghdad Province referred to by many as the "Triangle of Death." He was involved in four separate improvised explosive device detonations, two damaging the front of his humvee, one the side, the fourth the rear end. He earned an Army Combat Action Badge for one of those engagements and has been nominated for a Navy Combat Action Ribbon for a firefight involving insurgents.

He says despite the constant insurgent threat there, he made it a point to get out and visit community leaders and residents on almost a daily basis in places such as Mahmudiyah, Yusufiyah, and Lutifiyah.

"I opened the one-person GRC office at Mahmudiyah Forward Operating Base in March. It was pretty spartan conditions, but the opportunity to positively impact the lives of families in nearby neighborhoods was awesome."

Cissell, working with five GRC Iraqi engineers, helped upgrade hospitals, schools, police stations, and council buildings, but he says his top priority was getting water and sewer plants functioning and electrical distribution networks back on line. Of those projects he singled out the Yusufiyah Water Treatment Plant as his favorite. That \$211,800 CERP-funded project was completed in June upgrading a dilapidated plant constructed in 1972. The components were all rebuilt including the pumps, the generator, the treatment tanks, the chemical injection system, and the electrical control system. The plant is capable of producing 1,000 cubic meters of fresh, potable water per hour, enough to meet the needs of 100,000 residents in that area. "This wasn't a quick-fix project ... it addressed the long term needs of the community," Cissell said.

"Unfortunately, militias and Anti-Iraqi Forces continue to target basic essential services throughout that area as they try to discourage residents and force them to leave. Those local families

(continued on next page)



Chief Brian Cissell passes out candy to some youngsters near Yusufiyah's Al Qanadel Pre-School which underwent a \$31,450 upgrade including new floors, new security exterior wall, and reaping windows and fixtures. That school serves 150 students ages 4-5.



Jeanne Marie Rowan, wife of COL Peter Rowan (former GRD Commander), coordinated with the Squire Roses, a girl's youth service group sponsored by the Knights of Columbus in Fairfax, VA, to collect toys for Iraqi children. In all 42 boxes of Beanie Babies and Match Box Cars were sent to Mahmudiyah Forward Operating Base for distribution. Chief Brian Cissell assisted in getting those items distributed to needy families there. Mrs. Rowan wrote: "Each day you and your peers reach out to the people of Iraq is another day that reinforces why you and the coalition forces are serving there."



New playground equipment installed at an apartment complex in Mahmudiyah.

Interacting with Iraqis keeps projects moving

(continued from preceding page)

look to us for assistance and I'm very pleased we've been able to help. We're getting them more electrical power each day, sewage is being pumped out of the streets, we've completed a couple new schools, a number of water treatment plants, and the drainage canals have been cleaned out.

"Millions of dollars have been invested in those neglected towns and the people appreciate the effort. And it's not just the big-ticket items where we've been able to reach out."

He recalled one specific tiny area where insurgents had blown up some water mains. "The townspeople said they had no equipment to repair them. We purchased some shovels and pipe and the people went to work on their own. A couple days later, fresh water was again reaching their homes. I talk to community leaders almost every day. They call me on my cell phone when problems occur. I have mixed feelings about leaving here. It's hard to walk away because we still have unfinished business."

Cissell says he learned that "leadership has no boundaries. We were successful because of daily interaction among a variety of U.S. and Iraqi personnel -- the 1st and 2nd Brigade's infantry units, PSYOPS and civil affairs teams, S2 and S3 as well as our Iraqi engineers, Iraqi Army units, Iraqi Police, and the Iraqi people. Communication was the key.

"I'm convinced that now that the government is up and running and the local mayors and councils have a voice in where the reconstruction dollars are being invested, that this process will help legitimize the government and once that happens the Iraqis will start trusting the system and things will get better."

Cissell and his wife Tammy have four children and reside in Bremerton, WA. He is assigned to the USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN-72) and his wife is also in the Navy.

"I volunteered for Iraq because I wanted to see it on the front line, I wanted to interact with the people here, I wanted to help improve their lives. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers offered me an opportunity to make that happen. As I return to the aircraft carrier, I'll be telling my shipmates about duty here ... that we all worked hard to ensure democracy in Iraq 'shall not perish' ... those last three words our ship's motto from Abraham Lincoln himself."



Chief Cissell and members of Alpha Company, 413th Civil Affairs Battalion, at Mahmudiyah



Chief Cissell speaks with Mahmudiyah Mayor