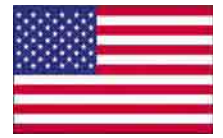




NEWS

FEB 2007



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



Ali Bunni, Qada Council's Deputy Chairman in north Baghdad, officially opens a new girls high school Feb. 5.

North Baghdad community opens girls high school

Residents in north Baghdad hosted the official opening of a new \$470,000 16-classroom girls high school Feb. 5.

Ali Bunni, Deputy Chairman of the Qada Council there, officiated at the ribbon cutting along with local three tribal sheiks. Bunni said that his community had been trying to get a new school built for years long before Coalition forces arrived, but it was their generosity that made it happen. "We cannot adequately express our happiness on this special occasion," he continued. "This is great news for the 40,000 residents in this area."

The school's headmistress pointed out that girls in that area had to travel long distances to go to high school and most stopped attending once they completed primary school. "The construction of this building offers these girls an opportunity to complete their secondary education at which point they can qualify for better job opportunities or college," she noted.

Several students stepped up during the formal program and read poems about the importance of education. All the students joined in a chant saying, "By working hard and education, we'll build this country." Col. Debra M. Lewis, Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division's Central District, was asked to speak and told the audience, "Today is a very special day. Our future

lies in education. You wanted this to happen and it has taken many days and many sacrifices. Edward Lewis once said, 'We define ourselves by the best that is in us, not the worst that has been done to us.'" She then led a round of applause for all who worked so hard to make the Grand Opening such a special occasion.

414th Civil Affairs Battalion enhanced the project through the Commanders Emergency Response Fund, purchasing 225 two-person desks, blackboards, chalk, computers, file cabinets, installation of a new concrete basketball court, and school supplies for all students. Cpt. Holly Hanson, a 414th team leader, said, "Local residents told me how important this school was to their community and I got numerous calls wanting to know when it would be finished. The local council got involved and provided us a list of what the teachers needed and we were happy to help."

Construction on the 1500-sq.-meter two-story structure was started a year ago for an enrollment of up to 450 students. Apart from the classrooms, the facility includes five faculty rooms, restrooms, generator, and a 130 sq. meter guard house.

At the end of Calendar Year 2006, GRD has constructed or renovated 962 schools – providing quality learning environments for more than 500,000 students.



New Girls High School opens



Three tribal sheiks were among those applauding during the opening ceremony of a new girls high school Feb. 5 in north Baghdad. The \$470,000 project includes 16 classrooms that will be able to handle an enrollment up to 450 students. Ali Bunni, The Qada Council's Deputy Chairman officiated and said he could not adequately express in words his community's happiness about the new facility.



Col. Debra M. Lewis, GRC's Commander, presents several soccer balls to the headmistress of the new Girls High School in north Baghdad. Members of the Daughters of American Revolution as well as Seattle churches have been mailing items to Col. Lewis to help the Iraqi people.



Ali Abid Abbas, the Qada Council's Education Committee Chairman in north Baghdad, was among those expressing thanks for their new girls high school.



Student get new notebooks & pencils.



A Baghdad motorist says he waited in line three hours to fuel his vehicle. That situation should dramatically improve as 18 gas stations are currently being renovated and non-working pumps replaced with new ones.

Baghdad renovating 18 gas stations

Despite being in one of the world's largest oil producing countries, Iraqis continue to wait in long lines to fill up their vehicles with gas.

Iraqi officials are working with Coalition forces to correct that problem as 18 Baghdad gas stations are currently being refurbished.

"The pumps are old and worn out," said 1st Lt. Andrew Webber, a member of 2nd Brigade's Infrastructure Coordination Element (ICE), 1st Cavalry Battalion. "The first station we stopped at today in south Baghdad had only 4 of 18 pumps operational, the second one had none. The upgrade will dramatically improve that situation."

He noted that many residents have opted to buy black market gas costing two or three times the standard rate to avoid those long delays. "We're helping the City of Baghdad in a systemic way and it's going to have a very positive impact on residents everywhere."

An average of about \$180,000 is being spent to renovate each gas station. Most of that work started in late-November early-December and overall is nearly 50 percent complete.

"Those renovations include all new pumps, general clean-up, repair and repainting of the perimeter walls, building new guard

shacks, and installing overhead cover on the pumps to provide shade in the summer," said Maj. Robert Nash with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "We're working in partnership with the Ministry of Oil to get this work completed. They want gas, diesel and kerosene more accessible to Iraqis everywhere."

Maj. Nash said he spoke to the gas station managers at the two sites in south Baghdad and learned supply was not a problem right now. One reported all their above ground and underground tanks were full for diesel, gasoline and kerosene.

"Iraq's Ministry of Oil has committed to provide fuel to those 18 stations," Maj. Nash continued. "It's a very good sign to see that the fuel is getting to these stations. It's pretty common right now to see lines over a mile long and drivers pushing their vehicles because they've run out of gas. When Iraqis can go and get gas and it's no big deal, that's going to have a huge positive impact. If local people are happy, they're more apt to be upset when the bad guys show up. So this goes hand in hand benefiting Iraq's security."

Nash recognized both the 2nd Brigade 1st Cavalry Division and the 9th Engineer Battalion for their help in getting out to the projects and seeing what's going on. "We couldn't do this job without their support." 1st Lt. Webber added, "We're all part of the same team trying to get Baghdad up on its feet."



Only 4 of 18 pumps are currently working at this Baghdad gas station and soon 18 new pumps will be installed.



1st Lt. William Pendleton (ICE team leader) talks to residents.



Maj. Robert Nash speaks to the manager of a south Baghdad gas station about availability of fuel.



1st Lt. Andrew Webber hands out candy and pens to local children during a recent site visit to two gas stations.



South Baghdad neighborhoods get water, sewer upgrade

Crews are busy installing new water mains in three small neighborhoods in south Baghdad and another contractor is just about finished repairing a major sewer collapse there.

Major Robert Nash with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers says, "The Iraqis like seeing people working in their community. That area in Doura has been neglected for decades and residents appreciate our efforts."

He's optimistic about that particular neighborhood's future despite ongoing insurgent clashes. "People are starting to get a grasp of what's really going on and what we're trying to do. There are more shops open, more people walking around, more kids playing in the street than I've seen in a long time. We're working shoulder to shoulder with Baghdad's government to make this happen."

Nash believes that once the essential service improvements are completed including new roads there, those neighborhoods will look completely different and much nicer. "We're hopeful people will once again take pride in their neighborhoods and keep things cleaned up. Best case scenario is that the people themselves will push the bad guys away. That's happened in other parts of Iraq and I'm confident it will happen here. It just takes time."

Each of the three mahallas (neighborhoods) is getting about 22,000 meters of new water mains installed, ranging in size from 100 millimeters to 300 millimeters (4 to 12 inch pipe). "We're putting in a total of about 41 miles of water mains in those three areas," Nash continued.

Regarding the collapsed sewer main in Mahalla 824, the contractor is replacing 280 meters with new 900 millimeter pipe
(continued on next page)

Water network replaced

Contractors in Doura are installing nearly 41 miles of new water mains that will connect hundreds of homes to a more dependable network of fresh, potable water. Those mains range in size from 4 inches to 12 inches replacing a dilapidated worn out system prone to numerous leaks. The improved water pressure will benefit the entire community.



A toddler accepts a colorful pencil from a soldier with the 2nd Brigade's Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, during a recent trip to Doura checking essential service project improvements there.



Despite insurgent threats, more shops are open and more people are on the street in Doura as conditions there continue to get better. Several essential service projects are underway to help improve that area's sewer and water networks.

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(35.4 inches in diameter). "We're just about finished with that project and it's definitely making a dramatic improvement eliminating a huge pond of standing sewage that has been there a long, long time."

Echoing Maj. Nash's comments was Maj. Chip Daniels, Operations Officer with 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division.

"Residents are seeing that we and their government are committed to bettering their community and this definitely has a direct positive impact on the security situation. Iraqis there, when they wake up in the morning, want clean water in their homes, a functioning sewer system, the ability to send their kids to school, be able to go to work, and have a life as a family. We're doing everything we can to give them that opportunity. There are a few bad people out there who are trying to hold up progress in this country, but all in all, the average Iraqi wants to move forward and they want to get beyond this."

Daniels concluded, "Improving the essential services lets residents see that things are getting better. A vast majority of Iraqis want a future for their country and this is a step in that direction."

(Reporter's note: Iraqi contractors are currently involved in over 100 water and sewer projects throughout Baghdad Province. Nash recognized the maneuver units he works with from the 2nd Brigade 1st Cavalry Division and the 9th Engineer Battalion for their continued help in getting engineers out to projects so his staff can identify any problems and take corrective action. "We could not do our job without their help.")



Before



Today

A contractor is nearly finished repairing a sewer collapse with 280 meters of new 900 millimeter (35.5 inch) sewer pipe in Mahalla 824 in south Baghdad. That project has eliminated a large pond of sewage effluent providing families there a much healthier, cleaner environment to raise their children.



Maj. Robert Nash with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Maj. Chip Daniels with the 2nd Brigade's Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, check on the status of several essential service projects in Doura.



Over 1300 days in Iraq and counting ...

“With every project, we’re helping Iraqi families,” says Andy May with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

He’s currently managing a dozen projects in north Baghdad Province valued at \$30 million. He just oversaw the completion of a \$470,000 girls’ high school and is building a new elementary school nearby. Each features 16 classrooms and will educate about 450 students.

“This is some of the most satisfying work I’ve been involved with during my 22 years with USACE,” May said. “We’re making a difference and it’s great to be able to help some very needy people in some very poor areas.”

One of those communities is Husseiniya, a city of 450,000 people. “It could be one of the most beautiful places anywhere. But today there’s sewage in the street and the kids are walking barefoot through it. It’s just a sad situation.”

May, a project engineer, is responsible for a \$2.2 million contract purchasing materials for that community’s first-ever sewage system. It’s the latest in a series of improvements for Husseiniya including a new police station, courthouse, primary healthcare center and fire station. “This area had been neglected for decades. But today residents are seeing evidence that things are getting better.”

May has served over 1300 days in Iraq. He flew into Baghdad International Airport in April 2003 shortly after Sadaam’s regime fell and helped establish Camp Victory. “There was no running water or electricity. I remember bartering with Iraqis trading them beehives located on the base for critical electrical parts.” (He went home on emergency leave in August 2004 for a couple months when four hurricanes hit Florida. He’s been part of the Taji Resident Office ever since.)

May was a Quality Assurance Representative on the Kissimmee River Restoration Project in Florida prior to deploying to the Middle East in 2001. He says he’d worked a half dozen hurricane disasters and enjoyed the change of pace those assignments offered. That’s when he decided to

Project Engineer Andy May oversees the construction of the \$7.9 million Taji Special Forces Barracks . Seven existing warehouse structures were kept in tact as new barracks facilities were built inside each one providing housing for 560 troops. Each 18.5-meter by 60-meter structure required nearly 800 cubic meters of concrete, 280 cubic meters of concrete in the roof alone. Work was completed two months ahead of schedule in September 2006. (U.S. Army photo by Norris Jones)



Project Engineer Andy May

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volunteer for overseas duty. He was serving on a four-month tour at Camp Doha in Kuwait when 9-11 happened and extended there until Operation Iraqi Freedom got under way and he moved north to Baghdad.

One of the unique aspects of his overseas duty is that May (in what little spare time he has) has taken up playing the violin. He says his grandfather loved that instrument but died before he had a chance to hear him. He read some manuals and picked it up on his own. He likes classical music with his favorite composer being Vivaldi. He appreciates his co-workers understanding when he does get a chance to practice. "They say it's tolerable," he chuckles, "and those who have been here awhile kid me that I may even be getting better."

He and his wife have a 42-acre farm in Florida. "It's been in my family since 1880 and I'm the fifth generation to live on that piece of property. We have a 'u-pick' grape vineyard and also offer customers blueberries and vegetables."

The 58-year-old says his family continues to be supportive of his work in Iraq but hopes sometime soon he'll be able to spend more time with his two grandchildren who were born while he's been deployed.

May will take a short break in February to see the birth of his third grandchild. But he's already submitted the paperwork to sign up for another year in Iraq.

"I believe if we don't confront the Islamic extremists here in Iraq and elsewhere, my grandchildren will be fighting them there. An enemy willing to kill 30 innocent Muslim children won't hesitate to kill 30,000 American infidels.

"Every Iraqi engineer or laborer working on one of our projects risks his life every day. But they keep coming back because they want something better for their children and grandchildren," May continued.

"The Iraqis I interact with appreciate what we're doing. I'm honored to oversee projects benefiting our brave troops and even more motivated by the smiles I see on young Iraqi faces on special occasions such as when they walk into their new school for the first time."

Andy May oversaw construction of the new \$1.1 million three-story Husseinia Fire Station that was completed in June 2006. The 925-sq.-meter concrete structure features five bays, three for ladder trucks and two for SUVs. It also includes a dormitory area for 25 fire fighters, dining room for 30, commercial grade kitchenette to feed 40 people, a training room for 20, locker room, a control room, and a Chief's office. Mohan Al-Fiaydh, chairman of the Istakal Qada Council, officiated at the dedication ceremony and praised the workmanship of the structure as well as its value for the community. "We have 75 fire fighters who will work out of here, 25 per eight-hour shift."



Andy May enjoys playing the violin as a pastime.

From the Commander . . .

Signs of Progress...

"For their tomorrow, we gave our today." – Sign on a memorial described by Gen. George W. Casey Jr.

The New Year is here and with it some very positive signs of progress along with obvious reminders of how fragile and changing life can be. One exciting event this month occurred when we took time to celebrate our third anniversary as the Gulf Region Division (GRD), US Army Corps of Engineers. As you know, many special people from all over the world volunteered to join our Central District (GRC) team to protect us, take care of our facilities, provide life support, and work alongside us to successfully accomplish our mission. For this celebration, a number of talented people brought us delicious treats to eat and educated us on their organization and where they came from.

I personally cannot imagine a better "dream team" to work with, especially under such challenging conditions. It is indeed an honor to be your GRC commander and the highlight of my career to work with you through the tough situations we face each day, knowing the sacrifices you make to be here. *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman once wrote that, before serving in Iraq, people should be given a test which asks them "What is the shortest distance between two points?" If the answer given is "a straight line," then that person would definitely not be allowed to serve in this complex, foreign and constantly changing environment. I imagine that you, however, successfully passed this test very quickly!

Three recent events allowed me to see, firsthand, examples of ongoing progress in Iraq since our last update. First, I returned to the Assriya Women's Center built by a contractor hired by USACE and witnessed the talent of the village women who had quickly turned it into a growing economic center of the village, despite the recent loss of their tribal sheik who had played an enormous role in bringing the facility to the village. Second, I was honored to attend the recent opening of a girls' high school. The opening ceremony was meticulously planned, and well attended with over 120 people, including the tribal sheiks and government officials from the Qada council. Finally, a key water pump stopped working. This situation was promptly identified and quickly repaired through

the actions of several key Iraqis, as part of a greater Iraqi-led solution. Upon notification of the disruption, the Iraqi ministry from the National Government responsible for electricity (ME) immediately sent people to fix the main problem, while the representative from the Amanat, Baghdad's city government that operates the water pumps, closely coordinated with the ME and with GRC personnel. In all, many others throughout the coalition force and Department of State were involved in helping resolve the situation.

I feel blessed to be working directly with the people of Iraq. I have seen many examples, such as these, where there is clear initiative, high standards, and a sincere desire to take responsibility and ownership of getting things done. The Iraqis working as a part of our GRC team and those I meet throughout Baghdad and Al Anbar Provinces are very inspiring and possess great courage, as do the many people from around the world who are here to help the Iraqis build a better future.

An important change in U.S. command occurred recently. On 10 February, General Petraeus assumed command of the Multi-National Force, Iraq (MNF-I) from General Casey. (General Casey leaves Iraq to take over the critical job of Army Chief of Staff.) In his first speech as Commander MNF-I, Gen. Petraeus assured the audience that "Hard is not hopeless" when referring to the task ahead of us. He also emphasized the importance of all people rejecting both corruption and those willing to commit violence against places where citizens gather and shop daily, such as a girls' school and a pet market this past week. He acknowledged the indomitable spirit of the Iraqi people to want to live and prosper, along with his confidence in the men and women of the Coalition Force to do what must be done to support them.

"It is not an 'us' and 'them' world. It is all 'us'. As soon as people understand this fact, the world will be a better place."

– Church Saufley



Col. Debra M. Lewis
GRC Commander

From the CSM . . .

On the 16th and 17th of February GRC personnel at VBC will have the opportunity to go through weapons training and a familiarization range. The purpose of this exercise is to keep our military personnel proficient while providing our civilian work force with proper safety training, a knowledge and understanding of the weapons functions, along with actual firing and target engagement.

The 16th will be required weapons familiarization training for everyone shooting on the 17th. The following topics will be covered for both the M-9 pistol and the M-4 rifle: proper clearing procedures, disassembly, cleaning, inspection, lubrication, and function check. To assist your capabilities, basic marksmanship fundamentals will be covered including steady firing positions, proper aiming, breathing techniques, and trigger squeeze. Above all safety will be the primary focus. Range time and required equipment to be worn will be covered during the training portion.

Unfortunately, due to the distance factor, the outlying FOBs will not be participating in the weapons training at Camp Victory. If possible, I would like to have our outlying offices coordinate with units to link up with their weapons training or range usage. At a minimum, proper clearing procedures should be emphasized and practiced routinely by all military personnel. This is a situation where the buddy system is needed, everyone should be clearing someone. Look for those selector levers to be on safe and watch for and remind people of muzzle awareness. Safety is everyone's responsibility. Don't get complacent.

We are the professionals. We've been taught proper weapons handling, clearing, and safety. For us there is no such thing as an "Accidental Discharge". It is a NEGLIGENT DISCHARGE and is totally unacceptable. Remember, guns don't kill people, people do!

Within the next few months, there will be a good number of GRC personnel redeploying. Supervisors, it is your responsibility to ensure proper awards and evaluations are completed for those departing. Take your time and make sure they get what they deserve. To those leaving, I want to remind you not to be like the horse smelling the hay and run for the barn. Your deployment isn't over until you are back at home safe and sound. Don't get complacent and take shortcuts. To those staying behind, we may have to pick up some slack until replacements arrive just like others have done before us. We are a team and our job here is to "do what's right, not what's easy". Thank you all for what you do and a special thanks to your families for allowing you to be here.

"Windage and elevation Mrs. Langdon, always remember, windage and elevation." -- John Wayne

Essayons.



Command Sergeant Major
Randall Cady



Ike Borja barbeques some steaks for Norma and Al Gapasin.



Sherry Gaylor and Maria Otero.

Logistics serve steaks at Superbowl cookout



George Haskett and Ted Falcon.



Desmond Brumfield



CSM Randall Cady and Joe Loop.



Phillip Taylor and Roger Nowicki.



Hot tasty steaks and crab legs -- hm, hm good!



Shirwan Awan and Janab Mudhafar.



GRC conducts safety training

GRC conducted a daylong safety stand down and training session Feb. 10. Trainers included Cat Bosold, GRC safety manager, Maj. Proud, Clinical Psychologist with the 113th Combat Stress Company, Dan Markwick, GRC operations officer and Mark Randell, Aegis Regional Manager. Bosold discussed general safety issues and required actions if an injury or significant property damage should occur. Markwick explained the GRC Emergency Action Plan. Maj. Proud gave a very entertaining and instructional talk about coping with stress. Randell and other Aegis employees presented an overview and demonstration of the capabilities and services provided by the Aegis Security Escort Teams.





Ramadi staff

Members of the Ramadi office include (left to right) Project Engineer Derek Walker, acting Resident Engineer Bill Kiddy, MA1 (SW/AW) Robin Jones (NCOIC), Project Engineer Sgt. David Perkins, LCDR Arturo Aseo (OIC), outgoing Resident Engineer Kevin Addison, and Project Engineer Jim Jackson. (Not pictured is Project Engineer Bob Balamut.)

Ramadi office oversees variety of projects

During the past year, Ramadi Resident Office oversaw the completion of almost \$9 million worth of construction and renovation projects, including a hospital, a health clinic, four public schools, four roads, and three police stations.

The \$5.5 million renovation of the Ramadi Women and Children's Hospital was completed. That 20-year old facility had fallen into serious disrepair, but is now back in service making health care available to 150,000 Iraqi Women and Children.

The 7-person office oversaw the completion of \$1.5 million in Iraqi Police Station contracts, two new construction projects, one renovation project, and a contract for the construction of a food galley for Iraqi troops.

The staff is currently overseeing the construction of 32 water treatment plants, totaling \$9.5 million. Most of these facilities are expected to be completed this year and will provide clean, safe drinking water to thousands of Iraqi citizens in Al Ramadi. The office is also involved in studies for construction of sewage treatment plants and additional water treatment plants and renovation of the community's storm sewer. "We're striving to make a significant contribution toward the goal of providing clean, safe drinking water to all citizens of Al Anbar and eliminate the unhealthy discharge of raw sewage into the Euphrates River," said LCDR Arturo Aseo, USACE's Officer in Charge in Ramadi.

Apart from improvements helping local Iraqi families, the Ramadi office also oversaw the completion of \$15 million in force protection construction and billeting for U.S. Marines and Army personnel.

Additional details about the projects are as follows.

Water Treatment Plants

Majority of the water treatment projects are located in rural areas near Ramadi, and are designed to serve villages ranging from 1,500 to 4,500 residents from communal taps. They will produce a combined total of 9 million gallons per day of clean water and most are nearly complete.

Electrical Projects

Two projects are ongoing to upgrade the electrical infrastructure of Ramadi. These two projects are expected to be completed sometime late summer of 2007. The first one is a \$3 million project to install a redundant 132kV service line into the Ramadi Al Warar substation. Currently Ramadi receives its 132kV supply line from Fallujah and is the last station on the line, resulting in unreliable power.

The second one is \$28 million project to upgrade or replace the existing substation.

Generator Projects

Repair Tameem Southeast Generators: Power generated by this farm will be sent into the Ramadi city grid at 11KV. Contract is to install additional fuel tanks, install fuel piping, install wire connecting generators, transformers and switchgear and testing and commissioning. This project is about 60% complete, and is expected to be done in March.

Kabeer Water Treatment Plant Generators. Scope of work: Install two new 2MW generators (Government furnished). Relocate existing generator. Three transfer switches (Government furnished). Fuel tank and buried cable from the generators to the plant. Reinforced concrete pads for the equipment, sunshades and operator training. Project part of "Ramadi Surge". Two 2-MW generators will be installed at the Kabeer Water Treatment Plant to allow the plant to run all required processes 24/7 to continuously provide water to the Ramadi city distribution system. Project is about 85% complete and is expected to be finished this month.

Repair Tameem Northwest Generators: This project is currently on re-award process. The generators will be connected to the grid through the Warar Substation. The Director General of Electricity will decide where to distribute power to Ramadi. Priority right now is for residential customers.

ARRIVING MEMBERS



DANIEL LILLARD
Asad Area Office
Contracting Officer
Ft. Leonardwood, MO



NORMA GAPASIN
Victory Area Office
Accountant Resource
Seattle District



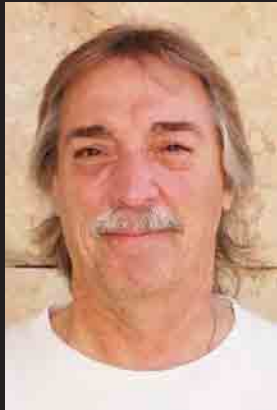
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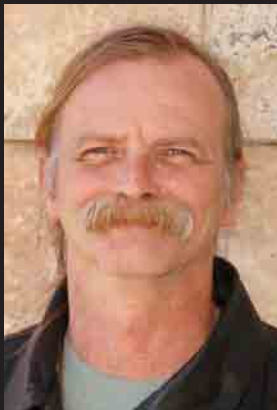


CDR STEVEN FROST
Incoming
Deputy Commander
NOSC, Phoenix, AZ



RICHARD WALKER
Project Management
Security & Justice
Tinker AFB, OK

DEPARTING MEMBERS



HENRY SHELTON
Taji National Depot
Const. Rep
Benton, IL



KEVIN ADDISON
Ramadi
Resident Engineer
Louisville District



D.J. MOSER
QA Rep
Taji Resident Office
St. Paul District



TERESA REINIG
Closeout Manager
USAID Project Office
Omaha District



GEORGE SIMS
GRC HQ Chief
Construction Services
Albuquerque District

Postcards from Iraq

Helping Iraqis get the simplest things we take for granted

I really started my journey here 30 years ago. When I joined the Corps of Engineers in the 1970's the people in the field carried slide rules. I can remember seeing my first engineering calculator and also my first computer in a Corps of Engineer office. Anyway I wanted to go overseas then. There was this big build up in Saudi Arabia and the Corps of Engineers was involved in that build up. Each time I asked about applying for a position back then, I was always told not now, later.

Well when later came, the Corps had completed their mission in Saudi. So my life moved on and my career lengthened. A friend of the family came over here during the first phase of the reconstruction and while home on R&R he visited our home in Southern Illinois and we, his wife and my wife sat around the living room and talked about the work going on over here.

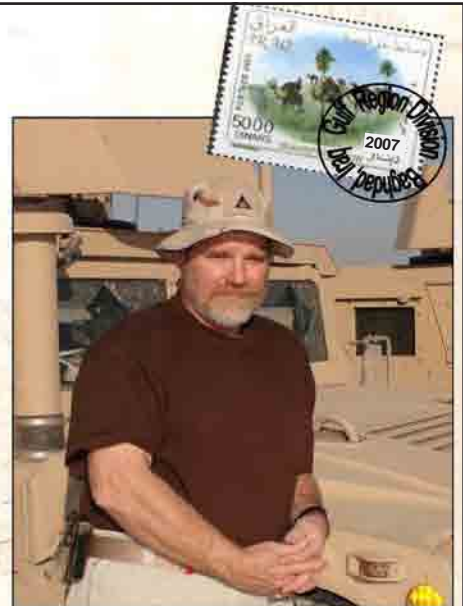
When they departed my wife looked at me and said you really want to go over there don't you? Since I do not lie to the best friend I have, I told her yes. As she walked away she said, "Well, I guess you better go and get it out of your system." When I brought up the subject to my supervisor, he told me that if I finished the project that I was working on that he did not see a problem with me going. When I got here in September 05, things were not exactly how I had seen in the brochure.

But my biggest problem was family. For the first couple of weeks, I could not call home. Not that I could not use a phone and call home, I just could not talk to my family. I just sent emails. The first couple of times we talked, it was really bad. To hear their voices, my wife had set up a speaker phone so all could talk. My daughters are in college so you can say my family is grown and my wife and I have been married for nearly 25 years. Still yet it was very hard. But once you get into the groove here and working the long hours you become sort of challenged with all the work.

My first tour I had projects outside the wire and traveling with the military—you can see everything up close. You see the infrastructure that is so bad that it just does not work anymore and that the people do not have the simplest of services. After I returned home from my first tour, my family and I went out to dinner and when the waitress came to our table with a glass of water with ice in it, my mind flashed back to Iraq and I started thinking about drinking water ...that you can go to just about any place in the United States and get a drink of safe drinking water.

Life does not get any simpler than that. And I started thinking about coming back ... then coming back again and I guess I am still trying to help the Iraqi people get the simplest things that we all take for granted.

Mark W. Gibson, Project Engineer
Victory South/BIAP Resident Office (Nashville District)



Al Asad Resident Office personnel gathered for a photo to mark the GRD's 3rd Anniversary Jan. 25. Staff there include (left to right) NCOIC BMCS (SW) William Martin, Engineer Tech Joe Ariaz, Project Engineer Juan Carvajal, Resident Engineer Craig Robinson, QA Rep Dorothy Ivey, Project Engineer George Afram, QA Rep Jerry Sander, and OIC LCDR Theron Colbert.

Al Asad

GRC staff members share some memorable moments

(Editor's note: GRC's Broadcast Journalist Troy Rolan asked the staff for their most meaningful moment in Iraq for a recruiting video he's putting together to inform stateside personnel about what's going on over here. His introduction to that video and some of those quotes are published below.)

Nice house, nice car, good job. Same thing every day. You like your job but, you want to do more, or maybe just something different. Come do your job with us for a while, we're USACE in Iraq. I know you've heard all about us, but have you heard from us?

My most meaningful moment is to see the school pictures of innocent smiles on children's faces. Those innocent smiling faces can tell us the meaning of that generation which is surviving the terror and chaos of the war. Fanny Quesada, Budget Analyst, (Mobile District)

I had a project where we were laying a water line to a farmer's field. I remember the smiles on the neighborhood children's faces when I gave them candy ... there are no words for how I felt inside. The day we completed the project and turned on the pumps, the farmer's face lit up as he watched the water coming through the pipe. Carolyn Steuart, Project Manager Victory PW Resident Office, (Huntsville)

Helping an Iraqi contractor with picking up his DFI project cash payment in the IZ for work done on the four Fallujah Schools. He was so nervous he did not want me to leave his side. After receiving his cash, turned around and said, thank you for helping me, Sheikh Janet. Janet Faust, Resource Management Program Manager (Baltimore District)

Seeing rural Al Anbar water treatment plants that I started on my last tour become operational. Gloria Markovci, Project Manager Security and Justice (Baltimore District)

Being able to help other people in such a harsh environment that really want to succeed is priceless. Joseph Pinal, Victory PW Resident Office Project Engineer (Detroit)

I've only been here for a month and I really don't have any memorable moments here yet. I do however, have an experience I'd like to share. It happened during my convoy training in Kuwait. It was three days before Christmas and we had just returned from three days of training in the desert. We returned to Camp Morrell when we were told there were care packages waiting for us. We all lined up to receive care packages addressed to "Any Service Person." I had prepared packages for others in the past but I never pictured myself ever being on the receiving end of one. It was a memorable and humbling experience. YNC Michelle Guiliano, NCOIC Victory PW Resident Office (Pt. Mugo, CA)

Standing on the roof of dorm building #1 and seeing the runway lights at BIAP. When I arrived here there were no lights burning at night anywhere. Mark Gibson, Project Engineer Victory South/BIAP Resident Office (Nashville District)

You don't have to know anything about what is going on here to see who Iraqis turn to for help and who Iraqis feel are fair and good. The Iraqis trust Americans. Joseph Nolin, IZ Office Resident Engineer (Ft. Wainwright, AK)

The memorable moment is going to the DFAC three times a day. All the food is Freeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee! Cherita Williams, Contract Specialist (Philadelphia District)

I am preparing a Master Plan for Taji Military Base (Iraqi), When I did joint planning with Iraqi commanders and we reached a consensus on exactly what's needed, that was my most meaningful moment. Such facilities are power, sewer, communication, Multipurpose Recreation complex, barracks, toilet, showers, laundry and beautification of the base environment. Mohammad Dadkhah, Construction Services Project Manager (Ft. Stewart, GA)

On December 23, 2006, the Chief of Naval Operations and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy spoke to all Navy personnel in Baghdad, thanking them for their service and contribution to the rebuilding of Iraq. LCDR Jeffrey Powell, OIC Loyalty Office (MCAS Beaufort, TX)

When I successfully accomplished getting 5 Iraqi citizens approved for "Life Support" on Camp Victory base. It was a tremendous amount of work, but well worth the effort. Monique DeZiauto, IT Specialist (Los Angeles District)

Two Bradley armored vehicles pulling up to the hospital and unloading the wounded onto a stretcher. Reality slaps you in the face - all I could do was say a prayer and wipe away the tears. Teresa Reinig, USAID Project Office Resident Engineer (Omaha)

A US soldier (warfighter) told me what I do saves soldiers' lives. And this came from a soldier who actually goes out everyday and confronts the bad guys and fights them. Roger Nowicki, Contract Specialist (Hanscom AFB)

I manage the 10th CSH O&M and R&I contract. So, knowing that what I do as an Engineering Tech at that hospital to keep it operational has a direct affect on saving soldier's lives. Dennis Graham, IZ Resident Office Engineer Tech (Seattle District)

The most meaningful moment is eating a peanut butter and jelly sandwich on 2 slices of bread and sharing with others those special moments. Susan Newby, Contract Specialist (Seattle District)

My most meaningful moments here in Iraq has been, sharing Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner with my son who is stationed here with the HQ 1st Cav, and working with GRC to help rebuild Iraq. Sherry Gaylor, Chief Contracting Division (Wilmington District)

When I found out that the staff in my office is not here permanently. Wenda McGilberry, Victory Area Office Admin Asst. (St. Louis District)

Retiring from the Army after 23 years of deployments, it's the first time I've had my own room with AC and heat I control, a fridge, microwave, TV, DVD player and internet - this is not a deployment, it's the Hilton. Troy Rolan, Broadcast Journalist (Rome, GA)

Christmas. Daniel Markwick, Operations Officer (Ft. Polk, LA)

Watching our committed, dedicated, and brave soldiers go out everyday putting their lives on the line in support of freedom for the Iraqi people. Joanne Gibbs, USAID Project Office Database Manager (Vicksburg)

If you've ever felt you "owe" something or you just wanted to "give something back", here's your chance. Join USACE in Iraq, we're rebuilding Iraq, we're doing something worthwhile and the best thing is... we're just doing our jobs- come do your job it will never mean so much to so many. it will never mean so much to you. Call Jeannette Newlen, at 540-665-2645 or email her at Jeannette.M.Newlen@tac01.usace.army.mil.





Al Anbar Area Office and Fallujah Resident Office take a snapshot to mark GRD's 3rd Year Anniversary Jan. 25.



Loyalty Resident Office



IZ Resident Office



BIAP Business Center

David Schmidt, GRC's Deputy for Project Management, and VAO Construction Rep Alan Nelson attended the grand opening of the Baghdad International Airport (BIAP) Business Center. The event was hosted by the Iraqi American Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IACCI). Representatives from the Iraqi Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Trade, Civil Aviation Authority along with the Iraqi Airlines and local business leaders attended. The Business Center will provide services to international businesses who wish to invest or partner with Iraqi establishments. This center provides a safe, secure, and strategic location for communication, coordination, and collaboration for private and public sector businesses. The Business Center is the first of several catalyst projects for economic stimulation at BIAP. Future catalyst projects include the BIAP Convention Center that will host international trade shows and provide office space for businesses and a full-service hotel. The convention center will be created by the renovation of two existing terminal buildings. The \$5.4 million contract for this work was awarded Jan 28.



Gulf Region Division Central District -- part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers team.



Cherita Williams and Sa'ad bring in a few of the dishes.

Staff hosts special day to mark GRD's 3rd year

More than 100 people gathered at GRC headquarters near the Baghdad Airport in January to mark the 3rd year of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division (GRD).

Col. Debra M. Lewis, Commander of Gulf Region Division Central District (GRC), opened the program quoting the presiding officer when GRD was activated on Jan. 25, 2004. Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez, Commanding General of Combined Joint Task Force 7, said the new division "underscores the coalition's absolute commitment to working hand in hand with the Iraqi people, their ministries and national government to improve the quality of life for all Iraqis and establish an enduring, safe and secure environment in which a democratic government may thrive."

Lewis pointed out that in order to get a task like that done, it takes people. She then recognized some of GRC's current staff who were there in the early days prior to GRD being established including District Deputy Commander Project Management David Schmidt, Chief of Contracting Sherry Gaylor, Security Manager Dennis Henley, Project Manager Simeon Francis, Taji Project Engineer Andy May, and Stanley Reese (outgoing USAID Project Office Chief of Party).

She noted that GRC's staff currently has people from all over the world including USACE employees from Albuquerque, Baltimore, Huntsville, Jacksonville, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Memphis, Mobile, Portland, Rock Island, Sacramento, Seattle, Vicksburg, Walla Walla, Wilmington, Savannah, Detroit, St. Louis, ERDC, and TAC. She also praised those in uniform from the Army, Navy and Air Force, including Reservists, National Guard, and retirees along with those from the private sector who volunteered to serve.

During the program, representatives from Fluor, the Iraqi workers, Aegis, Erinys, and the Gurkha guards all stepped up to provide background info about their group and how long they had been assisting GRC with its mission.

(continued on next page)



Contract Specialist Susan Newby cooked a pot of chicken adobo ... hm, hm good!



Recognizing those who came before.



Hassan (center) started working for Victory Area Office in April 2003 and is among those with the most seniority.



Singing to the background music was part of the fun.



Homemade cookies from stateside a big hit.



Iraqi facility staff were among those attending.

(continued from preceding page)



Some special Nepalese tasty entrees.

Lewis complimented all present for their teamwork and superb attitude. "This is a tough mission, it's a tough task, it's a tough place," Lewis said. "Nothing is as simple as we thought it would be. Every day our mission is changing, our conditions are changing, world opinion is watching us."

She then quoted Edmond Burke who said, "Our patience will achieve more than our force." She noted GRC is providing a non-kinetic force, but one that is "far more sustainable, far more powerful than any kinetic force. All of you here and the rest of our organization located throughout the country represent a tremendous work ethic. You have an attitude that's necessary in order to partner with many, many people, especially the Iraqi people, as we work to leverage everyone's talents to accomplish this very vital mission."

She pointed out that "our staff is in constant transition, rotating at least 15 percent every month. I don't know of any other organization with that kind of turnover that's able to sustain such a great team as we have here in Iraq."

She recognized those who back in January 2004 started Gulf Region Division. "The reality is that the mission is definitely bigger than any one of us. And because our environment is constantly evolving we must adapt, we must change, we must figure out new strategies in order to be successful — we must establish new priorities and we have to do that each and every day. We cannot go on past assumptions. We must test those and continue as we work ahead."

She concluded her remarks quoting Abraham Lincoln who said, "Determine that the thing can and shall be done, and then we shall find a way." She added, "The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region Division, and all who make up the GRC family know that better than anyone else. I look forward to the days ahead as we continue to work this mission and succeed ... and show the rest of the world that we can make a difference."

Those helping organize the special day included Jose Gonzales, Barbara Windham, Wenda McGilberry, Dan Markwick, Cat Bosold, Mary Bowman, Desmond Brumfield, and SFC Leai Toeie; as well as those who helped cook the Iraqi, Filipino, and Nepalese special dishes that all enjoyed.



Joining in to cut the cake marking GRD's 3rd year.

Postcards from Iraq

By Kevin Addison, Ramadi Resident Engineer

Gulf Region Division Central District

I've been deployed to Iraq the past six months working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in Al Anbar Province. I've managed projects ranging from military force protection improvements, to water treatment plants, to the installation of power transmission lines.

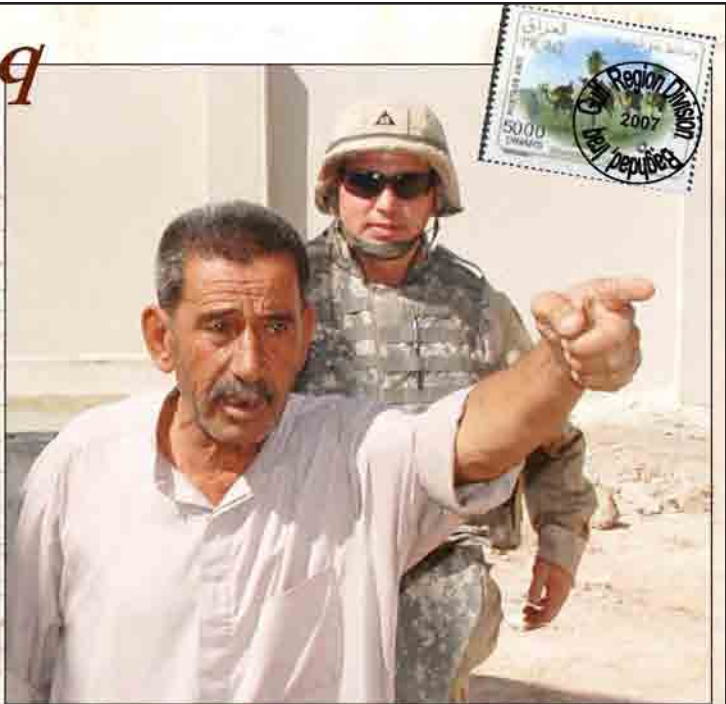
During my first three months here, I served as a project engineer at the Fallujah Resident Office then was asked to take on the duties as Resident Engineer for the Ramadi Office. As Resident Engineer, I had the overall responsibility for managing 60 projects, totaling over \$70 million.

I started this assignment in August and will be returning in February. It's definitely been an adventure of a lifetime. I've met people from a variety of backgrounds. I've had the privilege of working with the military, USACE employees from across the country, and many Iraqi contractors. There have been so many exciting challenges and opportunities to learn. As both project engineer and resident engineer, this assignment has been one of

the most professionally and personally rewarding of my career.

USACE has made great strides in Iraq's reconstruction effort, but there's still a lot of work to be done. I'm confident the projects we're involved with are helping the Iraqi people take the next step to a brighter future.

Kevin Addison
Ft. Knox Resident Office
Louisville District



Kevin Addison visits new Fallujah water treatment plant.



Taji visit

Col. Debra M. Lewis and CSM Randall Cady visited the Taji Resident Office Jan. 26. During the visit they met with Col. Paul Funk (Commander of 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team) to talk about the status of reconstruction projects in his area. Shown above, left to right, are GRC's Bilingual Bicultural Advisor Shirwan Aran, QA Rep DJ Moser, QA Rep Brett Barnhart, CSM Cady, Project Engineer Andy May, Col. Lewis, OIC LTJg Robert McCharen, and NCOIC AOC Elizabeth De Wald.



Construction administration

Eighteen GRC staff members participated in a two-day Construction Administration class Jan. 29-30. Those attending included (left to right) Cherita Williams, Sandi Williams, Mohammad Dadkha, Brian Souter, Roger Nowicki, Mark Heiller, Phillip Taylor, Sherry Gaylor, Maj. Ron Ford, Daniel Cahill, Col. Lewis, Richard Sallans, instructor Darralyn Williams, Maria Otero, Mark Gibson, Daniel Lillard, Fanny Quesada, Felix Guzman, Jose Gonzalez, Joseph Pinal, and instructor John Briggs.



Iraqi media roundtable

Iraqi TV and print reporters attended a briefing Feb. 3 that focused on Baghdad Security and Justice issues. Dr. Alabagh (Government of Iraq spokesman) led the discussion. Among those providing information was Maj. Robert Nash (OIC IZ office, third from right) and LCDR Jeff Powell (OIC Loyalty Office, second from right) who talked about the variety and scope of essential service projects in their area.



Sheik Luqman Raheem



Small Iraqi village shows what working together can accomplish

A small town in north Baghdad Province provides a positive glimpse of Iraq's future.

Assriya Village, located outside Camp Taji, has about 4600 residents representing all sects.

"Assriya" in Arabic means "modern" and its name exemplifies the way residents treat each other. They worked together to build a Women's Center that officially opened in August and today that facility is producing apparel for children.

The \$230,000 400-square-meter facility includes 12 sewing machines and 12 computers to encourage female business opportunities. Local residents have sewn dozens of dresses, sold many in the local market, and are now looking to expand their business enterprise.

They're working with Camp Taji to open a store there. They're also contacting Baghdad merchants about the possibility of selling their apparel.

Col. Debra Lewis, Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Gulf Region Central District, recently visited the facility and talked to those operating it. "It's great to see the community's positive outlook and pride in what the Center represents."

Col. Lewis brought with her 16 boxes of fabric, thread and other sewing items donated by Americans wanting to help. (The Daughters of the American Revolution and Seattle churches are among those supporting the effort.) Six of the local women who are part of the work force all expressed their sincere appreciation.

Col. Lewis says she plans to continue seeking stateside support for this facility, and doing whatever else she can, after seeing the impact this is having on that community.

On a sad note, the local village's leader, Sheik O'Rahman Hama Raheem, was kidnapped on a trip into Baghdad in December and later killed. He was the town's biggest advocate to get the Women's Center up and running. His son, Sheik Luqman Raheem, has stepped in and is continuing his work. Sheik Luqman thanked Col. Lewis for the donations saying it helps local families better their lives.

The 414th Civil Affairs Battalion at Camp Taji was responsible for getting the project funded through the Commanders Emergency Response Program. USACE oversaw the construction of the facility. Cpt. William LeFever with the 414th says Sheik Luqman has done a good job getting the Women's Center going and also has plans to open an internet cafe there to generate even more revenue for the facility.



Col. Debra Lewis checks the professional quality of the apparel being produced at the Assriya Women's Center in north Baghdad Province.



A variety of children's apparel is displayed for sale at the Assriya Women's Center.



Col. Debra Lewis shows the contents of one of the 16 boxes of fabric and sewing materials donated by Americans wanting to help the Assriya Women's Center.



Stuffed pet named "Learey"

Jeremy Way, a project engineer at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Loyalty Office near Sadr City, received several boxes of stuffed animals from the pre-school and kindergarten classes (photos, lower right) in his hometown of Klamath Falls, OR. Those were distributed to Iraqi children and many of those youngsters have named their new toys after the U.S. children who donated them.