



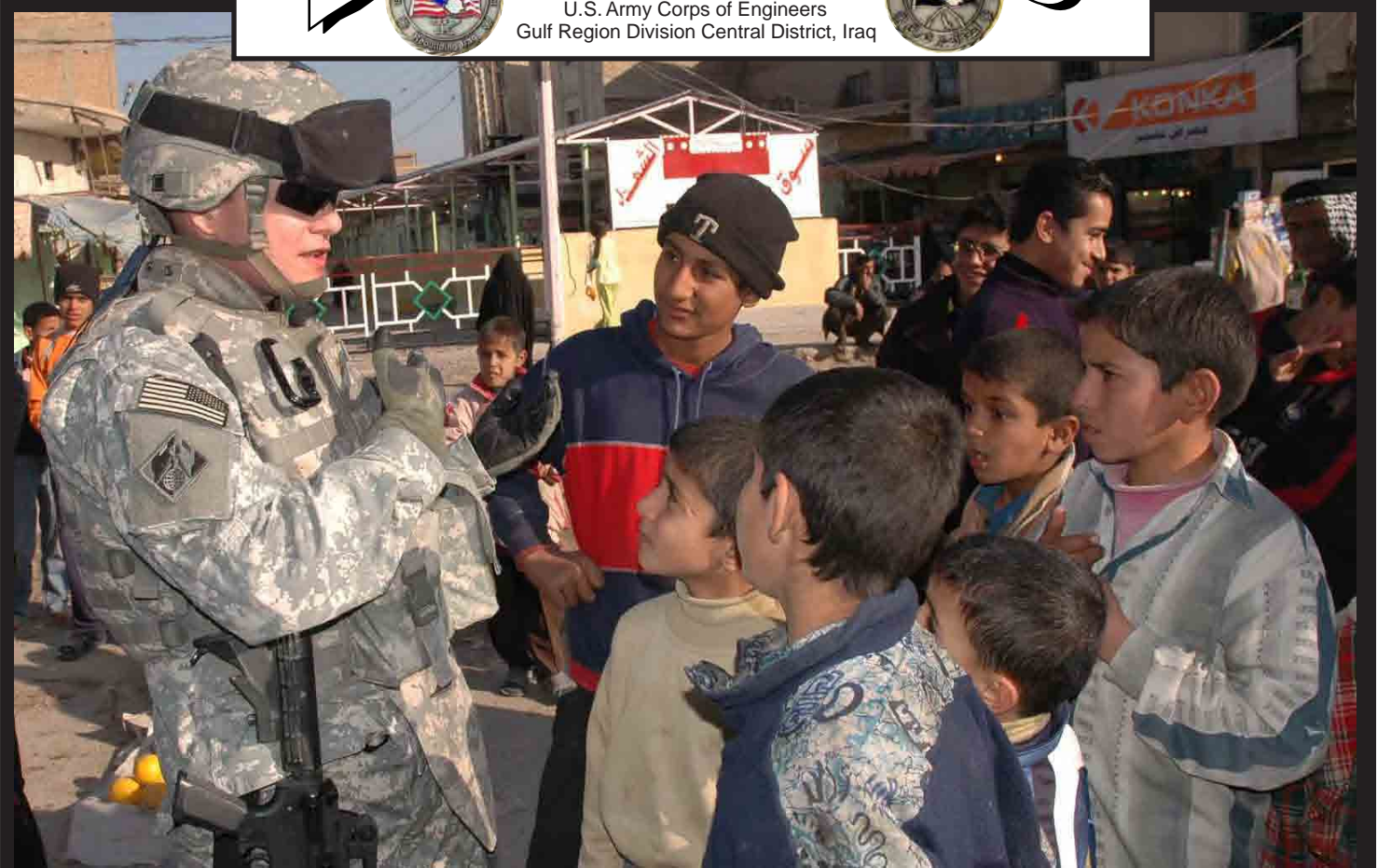
NEWS



JAN 2007



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



Maj. Steve Martinelli (OIC Victory Resident Office South) speaks with residents in front of the new Mahmudiyah Market.

Mahmudiyah takes pride in market renovation

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

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

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

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

Maj. Steve Martinelli, Officer in Charge of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Victory Resident Office South, says the market is a gathering place where families interact. "It's a source of community

pride and provides a semblance of normalcy that's great to see," Martinelli said.

Lt. Col. Robert Morschauser, Commander of Task Force 2-15FA, 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, agrees and points out the market renovation clearly demonstrates that Mahmudiyah's democratically elected government is working and improvements are taking place.

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

A number of other projects are now underway in Mahmudiyah, including a new primary healthcare center, school renovations, new power lines, and renovation of the water treatment plant and pump station. The community also is planning to build a park a few blocks from the market that will feature an amphitheater and soccer field. Regarding the importance of such projects, Mayor Muayid concluded, "We have to fight terrorism in different ways. We need to offer alternative activities for our children that will keep them away from the insurgents. The Mahmudiyah market renovation project is expected to be completed by February. (See more photos pages 2-3.)



GRC CSM Randall Cady looks over the fresh produce at Mahmudiyah Market.



Mahmudiyah Mayor Muayid Fadhil and Lt. Col. Robert Morschauser (Commander of Task Force 2-15FA, 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division) view the new Mahmudiyah Market renovation project Jan. 18.



Maj. Steve Martinelli speaks with the Director of Mahmudiyah's Water Department



Mahmudiyah Mayor Muayid Fadhil, Col. Ali (Cdr. of Iraqi Army's 4th Brigade 6th Division) and Maj. Martinelli visit Mahmudiyah Market.



GRC CSM Randall Cady



Navy Commander James Lee, GRC's engineer on the Al Anbar Provincial Reconstruction Team.

Al Anbar outlook getting more optimistic

"In one of Iraq's most turbulent areas, we're seeing signs that the situation is changing," says Navy Commander James Lee.

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

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

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

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

One of Ma'Moun's priorities has been economic development. "Iraqis face the same struggles we all do. They are concerned about the welfare of their families and their future. They want to be gainfully
(continued on next page)



Youngsters throughout Al Anbar Province are seeing much better conditions at their schools. Apart from renovations, a number of new million-dollar schools are under construction.



Al Anbar Governor Ma'Moun and Cmdr. James Lee

Al Anbar outlook getting more optimistic

(continued from preceding page)

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

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

One of Governor Ma’Moun’s primary interests is developing and promoting Al Anbar’s renewable resources. “He believes agriculture is the base of their economy, something that’s sustainable. He believe Al Anbar dates are the best in the world. I tasted some and I believe it – they’re humungous and very sweet.” The Governor is also interested in identifying and growing plants for medicinal purposes that thrive in Al Anbar’s desert climate. “Governor Ma’Moun has impressed me with his breadth of knowledge. He knows what he wants for his people and intends to leave a legacy that will endure.”

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

He and his wife Dangsun (“Danielle”) have three children Ryan 10, Karis 8, and Raina 5. “They were concerned about my safety but always very supportive. They knew I was coming to Iraq to do a noble mission and they’ve been behind me 100 percent.”

His family has relocated to Springfield, VA., as Lee is concluding a three-year tour at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and is transferring to Naval Sea Systems Command Headquarters in Washington, DC.



Al Anbar youngsters receive some gifts from a U.S. Marine Corps Civil Affairs Group.



Commander James Lee

From the Commander . . .

Wherever We Go From Here...

"Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you will help them become what they are capable of becoming."

- Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

I am fascinated by the patterns of behavior I see around me and how these actions inspire, facilitate or deflate our efforts to accomplish any task. What would you say is really going on in Iraq and what more might we discover from the creative ideas of those all around us? What has the news media been reporting and in what ways do their stories affect our efforts? Is there agreement on what "success" looks like? Describe it! By what we say and how we spend our time, what can we do to create even greater opportunities to successfully achieve our goals?

Whenever I'm faced with situations involving people harshly judging individuals and their organizations, followed by extreme pressure to change immediately, I've learned to remember to review a few basic principles before proceeding. We learn lessons early in life, yet many can easily be forgotten along the way in our busy pressure-cooker lives. Our lifetime experiences are certainly no guarantee that we will improve our ability to know what to do to achieve preferred outcomes in the future. See if any of the following observations sound familiar:

- What happens when our actions do not produce outcomes others expect or desire? Do other people and the media give us and others the benefit of the doubt by asking questions accordingly to find out why and how they can help, or are they more likely to judge us harshly, seek changes immediately, perhaps with very specific guidance on what must change?... I've observed the latter, how about you?

- In an increasingly complex and ever-changing world, who must we depend on to achieve any desired outcome we might select?... Other people!

-With increasing interdependencies, what people directly or indirectly influence the outcome of our efforts, especially for the long-term?... Just about everyone!

- How long do people remember something said when they were harshly criticized for their actions?... Maybe forever!

- Once people face harsh criticism, how much easier does that make it for them to contribute further or offer creative solutions?... Much harder, or they may even disengage!

- Given what may first appear to be the situation, especially "negative" outcomes, how possible is it that something very different is true based upon further investigation?... A really good chance!

Early in my career, I worked for a few people who considered themselves "successful" and "helpful", yet preferred to "shoot" me first or react negatively to ideas I might use to approach tasks. Acting with so little information, they could still make life very difficult, even if my ideas were accepted later. At first, I did not always engage them since my inexperience made it easy for me to conclude I must be at fault. I only knew I was trying hard under tough circumstances, while their expected picture of "success" was elusive. Others shared that they too were similarly treated when they presented new ideas or strategies to existing plans that had made little sense through a "new" set of eyes. Ultimately, outcomes to our actions were rarely "failures", instead usually becoming important lessons to help us recognize better paths to a more sustainable "successful" outcome.

(Continued on next page)



Col. Debra M. Lewis
GRC Commander

From the CSM . . .

Wow, 2007 already. Another one for the history books! I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Many were able to go home for the holidays and spend time with family. I hope everyone enjoyed their time and expressed how much we appreciate their sacrifices and support. If you didn't, I hope you were able to call and let them know that you're safe and doing well. I am looking forward to another prosperous year and hope you are too.

I'd like to start the year off right by having everyone start thinking about safety. On the military side we always talk about and apply pre-combat checks, (PPC's), Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTP's) from lessons learned and our situational awareness. On the civilian side, it's all about common sense. Common sense isn't something we're born with. It's a combination of life's experiences, environmental awareness, self preservation and the concern for our fellow workers — pretty much the same thing. Even so, 20% of deaths and injuries in the theater of operation are a result of accidents, not combat losses. 80% of all accidents are caused by unsafe acts, not unsafe conditions. We try to provide a safe and healthy work place, but it is up to you to be aware of your work environment and to follow safe work practices.

Some of the most common unsafe acts include: being in a hurry, taking chances, being preoccupied, having a negative attitude and

failing to look for hidden hazards. You can do a quality job without rushing. Keep that positive attitude and your mind on your work. Remember, safety is all about common sense and keeping focused on the tasks at hand.

We are working on a safety awareness day for next month which will include going over several topics: GRC's updated Emergency Action Plan, our PSD Teams will explain the procedures on transportation and transferring of clients, a presentation from the Fire Department including proper use of fire extinguishers, the Combat Stress Team will brief us on services available through them, and a briefing from our own safety office.

Be aware of your surroundings and remember, safety starts with each individual and is everyone's responsibility. If you see an unsafe act... stop it before someone gets hurt.

"A lot of guys make mistakes, I guess, but every one we make, a whole stack of chips goes with it. We make a mistake, and some guy don't walk away -- forevermore ... he don't walk away." John Wayne



Command Sergeant Major
Randall Cady

Ramadi Reconstruction Conference



Al Anbar Reconstruction efforts

Iraqi Sunni tribal leader Sheikh Abdel Sattar was among those who spoke at the Ramadi Reconstruction Conference organized between the U.S. military and tribal leaders January 10, 2007, in Anbar province. Shown with him is Lt. Cmdr. Arturo Aseo, OIC of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Ramadi Office. Sheikh Sattar, leader of the anti-Al-Qaeda coalition, Sawah Al-Anbar, is working closely with American forces in a bid to stabilize Ramadi. In the top photo with LCDR is Saber Qader, GRC's Bilingual Bicultural Advisor for Al Anbar.

Navy CDR Geoffrey Schuller, Al Anbar Provincial Reconstruction Team LNO for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, was among those attending the Ramadi Reconstruction Conference Jan. 10. Those participating included local sheiks, contractors, civic leaders, and a large media contingent. Discussion focused on efforts impacting healthcare, water, electricity, industry, agriculture, transportation, sewage and sanitation, communication, education, and governance. Shown above with CDR Schuller is Col. Fadel Meklef, Deputy to Al Anbar's Governor, and Saber Qader (right), GRC's Bilingual Bicultural Advisor for Al Anbar.

From the Commander . . . message from Col Lewis

(Continued from preceding page)

Armed with this knowledge and numerous other basics I learned along the way, I met many good people who unfortunately were enabling others (detractors) to make our "problems" worse because they were given free rein to harshly criticize those with different perspectives and plans that were not obvious winners. Few engaged these detractors, even if they knew that ongoing harsh criticism was inhibiting everyone else's desire to address root cause issues. Even the best people could quickly turn defensive, focusing their energies on deflecting or fixing blame. Our choices do matter under these circumstances.

Looking ahead to 2007, we sure have our hands full doing the Nation's bidding as we support an enormous reconstruction mission in the face of constant media criticism and cynicism regarding U.S. chances to "succeed" in Iraq following the President's recently released "New Way Forward" plan. I've already learned of many remarkable achievements accomplished by the talented Iraqi people working alongside us. While we may not achieve a 100% success on our tasks, it is important to place this in context, since many construction projects in the United States do not, either. The incredibly tough set of

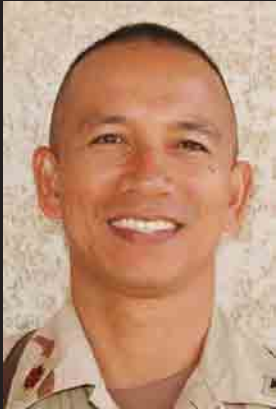
circumstances we find in Iraq provides many opportunities to see what is going right here, yet most reports prefer to note only what is wrong. I wonder how a major city in the U.S. (with 5-7 million people equivalent to Baghdad) would fare if the media only highlighted each day the three or so worst stories (killings, failures, accidents, rapes, etc.). How long do you think it would take for the readers to lose confidence in the city leadership and perception of that city?

Gifted people are here working hard every day to make a difference. The people of the U.S. and Iraq need to continue to hear these powerful stories and our talented PAO staff is available to support your efforts. Our ideas and our actions do influence our world. Applying what we already know or can learn from each other offers us the very best chance to directly benefit the Iraqi people as we and our Nation strive to build a brighter future for us all.

"We as humans have a built-in bias for empathy, cooperation and altruism -- provided we develop social intelligence to nurture these capacities in ourselves and others ... we 'catch' others emotions."

– Daniel Goleman, author of "Social Intelligence"

HELLO TO OUR ARRIVING MEMBERS



LCDR ARTURO ASEO
OIC Ramadi
Naval Air Facility,
Atsugi, Japan



LCDR JOE YATES
Deputy OIC
Anbar Area Office
NAVFAC EURSWA (Italy)



NAVY CHIEF (YNC)
MICHELLE GUILIANO
NCOIC, Victory PW
Resident Office
Point Mugu, CA



NAVY CHIEF (AOC)
ELIZABETH DEWALD
NCOIC
Taji Resident Office
Virginia Beach, VA



PHILLIP TAYLOR
Project Engineer
Victory Public Works
Resident Office
Salem, OR



KAREN YAEGER
GRC HQ Operations
Program Analyst
Moon Township, PA



ROBERT BALAMUT
Victory Resident Office
QA Rep
Rock Island District



MICHAEL JAKUBIAK
Fallujah
Project Engineer
Chapel Hill, NC



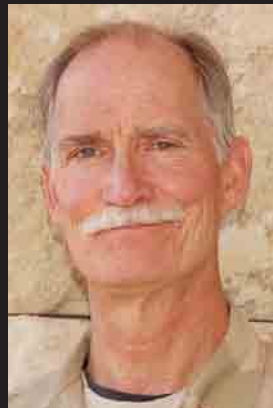
MELINDA MARQUIS
GRC HQ RM
Budget Analyst
Seattle District



JOSEPH PINTAL
Victory Public Works
Project Engineer
Detroit District



RONALD VALENTI
Resource Management
Fallujah
Philadelphia District



GERALD VINCENT
GRD Environmental
Engineer to MNCI C-7
Sacramento District



JAMES UPTON
RSOI
Coordinator
Birmingham, AL



JIM JOYNER
GRC HQ Operations
SBH Project Engineer
Fallon, TX

Lt. Col. Jones sends letter home to Far East District

For the last several months I have been serving as the Deputy OIC and in December took over as the OIC for the Baghdad Area Office, Gulf Region Division Central District.

Our office has been heavily involved in the Baghdad Security Plan and Operation Together Forward II. After Coalition forces move into the most troubled areas of the city and clear out insurgent forces, we have the mission of helping rebuild essential services. This has been accomplished working shoulder to shoulder with maneuver Brigades, the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, USAID, State Department, and local Iraqi government officials. Within the USACE purveyance, these projects reflect sewer system upgrades, sewer and water lift station rehabilitation, school refurbishment, electrical network repair and upgrade, as well as road paving and canal clearing. Many of these regions had been essentially neglected during the Saddam Regime, often having no existing sewer system, or no paved roads other than the main boulevard. These projects provide Baghdad residents clear evidence their government is working and things are getting better. Our USACE Project Managers and Engineers are proud to be part of it.

Overall Baghdad Area Office currently manages 178 active projects worth \$496 million with another 56 projects worth \$70 million awarded but not yet started. This work ranges from a \$15,000 water tank replacement to a \$160 million power plant upgrade. We are organized as a 6-person HQ element, and three separate resident offices, with roughly 6-8 US Military or USACE Government Volunteers in each one. Most Resident Offices also have Iraqi Engineers who serve as Project Engineers and Quality Assurance Representatives assisting with that workload. It's quite an eclectic group of professionals, with folks from many different USACE districts participating. Projects range across the various sectors, from road paving, to school, clinic, and hospital upgrades, to sewer and water projects, to electrical generation and transmission projects. Chances are, if you have an area of expertise or interest, Baghdad Area Office has a project involving it. And that's just

my little corner of Iraq. There are 8 other Area Offices in Iraq with varying work loads and types of projects.

Pace of operations is fairly brisk. Work is typically 6 ½ days a week, with most individuals working 8-12 hour days. USACE Government Civilians are working up to 160 hours in a two week period when the work load requires it, but we try not to run you into the ground.

Work can be incredibly rewarding. Don't let me kid you, building in a war-zone can be frustrating. There are security challenges,

material challenges, contractor challenges. But you can see progress being made, and know you are making a real difference. Especially when you see the smiling kids in the school you built, or see the clean street after you fix the pump station that had the lake of sewage there three months before. This is not to imply that it is all work, all the time. Despite being in a combat zone, the Area Offices and resident offices take the time to try and blow off steam and keep morale up. The offices use the major holidays to conduct parties and get-togethers. The groups do movie nights, flag football games, as well as weekly hail and farewells. Of course, the various camps and forward operating bases (FOBs) have gyms, PXs, dining facilities, and Recreation Centers. Believe me, the gyms are needed as they do feed you here. I've even seen kimchee in the main DFAC on Camp Victory. All bases have internet access. We get various entertainers who travel from far away to come perform. As far as quality of life goes, all USACE personnel get private rooms in buildings or trailers. No tents here. All rooms and offices have AC and heaters. I've heard from others deployed here after visiting our facility, "If you have to go to war, go with USACE".

Recently, our district just held it's Holiday Christmas party which was another chance to unwind a little. Even got our visit from Santa. The office has been under siege from the holiday mail being delivered. While the PX has the basics, you can get anything else through the mail.

This being my first real USACE experience, I cannot have imagined I'd be working with a nicer group of folks so dedicated to accomplishing the task. Everyone is mindful that we are far away from home and really look out for one another. It's been a great introduction to the district side of USACE.



Navy Cmdr. Jerry Gompers, GRC's Deputy Commander, officiated at the promotion ceremony for Lt. Col. Quay Jones Jan. 8. Jones is a 1990 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, a 1999 graduate of the Naval Post Graduate School, and is the Baghdad Area Office OIC.

DEPARTING MEMBERS



ARTHUR CAGE
Project Engineer
Al Anbar Area Office
Alexandria, VA



**NAVY MA1
LAURIE TAYLOR, NCOIC**
Victory Resident Office
Guam



**NAVY SCPO
JO PREWITT**
NCOIC Al Anbar Area
Office
North Richland Hills, TX



CDR JAMES LEE
Al Anbar PRT LNO
Washington, DC



ALLEN SHELVIN
Project Engineer
Victory Public Works
Resident Office
Huntsville Center



FRANK SPEARS
GRC HQ
Contract Specialist
Vicksburg District



**NAVY CHIEF
RICHARD DEVLIN**
NCOIC
Victory PW Office
NAVSTA Everett, WA



ALFRED EVERETT
Construction Rep
Victory South
Europe District



LCDR CHRIS VIA
OIC Ramadi
NAVFAC Far East
Japan



CHARLES OGLE
Fallujah
Construction Rep
Nashville District



**NAVY CHIEF
SILAS KING**
NCOIC Taji
HSC-3
San Diego



LCDR CARL KIRAR
Anbar Area Office
Deputy OIC
NAVFAC Atlantic
Norfolk, VA



**CAPT JOSHUA
KOVACIC, USAF**
Project Engineer
Fallujah
Peterson AFB, CO



MICHAEL RIVARD
Construction
Project Manager
North Bay Village, FL



ROSS MARIS
IT Specialist
Anbar Area Office
Los Angeles District



George Sims, GRC Construction Services Branch Chief



David Schmidt, District Dep. Cdr. Project Management

Contract management 4-day class

John Briggs and Alex Herrera (USACE, Louisville District) taught a four day class at GRC Dec. 10-13 on effective contract management techniques. They hosted a brown-bag lunch discussion Dec. 12 featuring GRC commander Col. Debra Lewis, Construction Division Chief Tom Semotuk, Construction Services Branch Chief George Sims, Contracting Division Chief Sherry Gaylor, GRD Office of Counsel Larry Vogan, and District Deputy Commander Project Management Dave Schmidt. Col. Lewis provided a broad overview of district contract activities followed by a panel discussion that highlighted the District's key contract management issues. The four-day class focused on improving the performance of district employees, especially resident engineers and project engineers in contract management techniques in a challenging expeditionary environment.



Tom Semotuk, Construction Division Chief

BBA success stories

Shirwan helps ensure success with ongoing Baghdad construction

He's currently helping with the proposed \$500 million Taji National Depot specifications, the development of the Taji Master Plan, and ensuring a better working relationship between the Baghdad Amanat and GRC regarding projects throughout the city.

Shirwan Aran of Jonesboro, GA, grew up in northern Iraq earning a Bachelors Degree in civil engineering there and then studied Urban and Regional Planning in Baghdad before emigrating to the United States 1997.

"He and his fellow Bilingual Bicultural Advisors, provided by the Department of State, have been critical to our mission success," says Colonel Deb Lewis, Commander Gulf Region Central District (GRC). "For example, he was a key member of our delegation to the Amanat recently regarding the \$24 million water distribution network project in Sadr City involving 10 contracts. He is a trusted advisor and has provided an unbiased perspective of their expectations and how we can reach a mutual understanding."

On almost a daily basis, he assists GRC's Chief of Contracting in answering questions from Iraqi firms responsible for essential



service projects including water, sewer, electrical, and road repairs throughout Baghdad Province. For instance, he's currently translating the Iraq government's requirements for the 18 Baghdad gas stations currently being renovated to ensure they meet all the Ministry of Oil's specifications. This is not just a translation issue, it requires someone with Shirwan's engineering background to determine if the existing contract to renovate those stations meets the Ministry's needs.

Shirwan has helped GRC's PAO office. He has accompanied media to view the new Benook Fire Station and ongoing renovation work at Alwaiya Children's Hospital serving as an interpreter for Col. Lewis, again utilizing his engineering background to assist in answering Iraqi TV interviewers questions about what improvements are taking place.

GRC's Deputy District Commander for Project Management, David Schmidt, agrees with Col. Lewis. "The BBAs are an invaluable resource. We are turning to them every day for input on our projects – either from a technical perspective, translation, cultural, or diplomatic perspective. They quickly have become a major value-added component of our team. GRC is overseeing 1500 projects valued at \$2.7 billion,

Saber talks to Fallujah leaders about projects, encourages support

Saber Qader is an Iraqi born US citizen. Saber is an experienced civil engineer who has volunteered to come to Iraq to help rebuild his native country. Through a partnering agreement with the Department of State, he's been assigned to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), AlAnbarArea Office in Fallujah, Iraq, as a Bilingual Bicultural Advisor.

Saber brings his engineer skills and expert knowledge of Iraqi construction methods and standards to USACE at a time when it is needed most. "My goal is to involve more local people and engineers in the construction process to make the construction fields safer," Saber said.

His past experience in bridge design and knowledge of Iraqi construction standards has already had an impact on a couple of USACE projects. When asked what his review of the project documents concluded, he said "During my review of two bridge assessments in Ramadi, I caught quite a few mistakes that would have had a negative impact on the existing



bridges." His knowledge of Iraqi bridge construction safety factors applied (or not applied) saved the project from potential failure and redesign.

Saber's work goes beyond his engineering talents. He is an emissary between Iraqi contractors, engineers and local officials and USACE personnel in the mutual endeavor to reconstruct the infrastructure in AlAnbar Province, Iraq. He actively works to facilitate meetings with the local sheiks and engineers, as well as helping the Resident Offices recruit Iraqi nationals to work as engineers and quality assurance representatives for USACE.

Regarding his goals, he says, "I will try my best to have contact with the local Sheiks and local people to explain to them

the value of our work and the potential positive impact on their community." LTC Danny Thurmond, Officer-in-Charge of the Al Anbar Area Office, states his belief that "Saber's continued efforts will have lasting positive impacts on our mission accomplishment." Al Anbar Area Office is managing 148 projects valued at \$266 million.

Postcards from Iraq

Why I Serve ...

By Sherry Gaylor, Wilmington District

This was a calling to me and I wouldn't trade this experience for anything. There is no better place to be part of a team, no better place to grow morally and ethically than here at Gulf Region Division Central District. I volunteered to serve for my sons and my grand kids. You truly understand the importance of your job when you see the impact you're having on families here in Iraq, as you help provide them things



we take for granted ... running water, functioning sewer system, electricity, nice school for their children. We're overseeing hundreds of such projects and it touches your heart. Bottom line --we're making a difference.

Sherry Gaylor,
GRC Contracting
Division Chief



GRC Contracting Division Chief Sherry Gaylor talks to one of 300 Iraqi business representatives attending a Contracting and Networking Opportunity Day hosted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Baghdad. Gulf Region Division is overseeing \$4 billion in construction this year throughout Iraq.

Postcards from Iraq

S-M-I-L-E

By Wenda McGilberry
St. Louis District

I have completed another year here in Iraq and the experience is never-ending. This deployment

(Nov. 2004 thru Sep. 2007) is one I will never forget and my co-workers never cease to amaze me with the abundance of knowledge they put to great use in rebuilding this country. Since my deployment, I have gone through the elections, my birthdays, all Iraqi holidays, mortars, threats, Saddam's trial, you name it ... but I would not have traded this opportunity for anything in the world. The friends I have made at work and church will be embedded in my heart —

I miss all of you and don't hesitate to join me at any time ... smile.

Wenda McGilberry
Victory Area Office Admin Assistant



Wenda McGilberry

P.S. For St. Louis District deployees ... I will personally come and welcome you once you enter Iraq — love and peace to you all...

Video stories available at GRD web site

To play our latest broadcast stories, go to GRD's "video center" at ... <http://www.grd.usace.army.mil> Those videos will play directly from that web site on your computer.

GRC's "postcards" are also available at that site.



Al Anbar Iraqis working to build 'a better future for their families'

He helps manage construction projects in one of the most volatile areas in Iraq. Navy Lt. Carl Kirar is working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in Al Anbar Province helping oversee projects that range from the installation of an \$80 million city-wide sewer system in Fallujah, to the construction of new schools for all age groups in Ramadi, to the repair and upgrade of power transmission lines serving the entire area. He serves as Deputy Officer in Charge of USACE's Al Anbar Area Office.

"While the strong dose of serving in one of this war zone's most dangerous areas has sometimes disheartened me, I have seen and met some very intelligent, motivated and heroic Iraqis trying to do what they can to build a better future for their families. There is hope in this country and our efforts here are supporting it," Kirar said.

He had high praise for the hundreds of troops who patrol that area. Every time I see young Marines and Army soldiers going outside the gate, I know they voluntarily put themselves in danger and routinely risk their lives for a cause greater than their own," Kirar said.

"US forces have been working very hard to help out the Iraqis and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has recently taken more direct steps to understand the Iraqi way of contracting by partnering with the Department of State to obtain Iraqi-American engineers who can bridge that cultural and language gap. All in all I have been humbled by this experience. Everyone here is working hard to help out the Iraqis, get them on their feet, and get us back home," he continued.

Kirar is working shoulder to shoulder with the First Marine Expeditionary Force to improve key essential services so Iraqis see firsthand that their government is working and things are getting better. "Both as a civil engineer and as a Navy Seabee, this assignment has been one of the most professionally and personally rewarding of my career."

While his time in Iraq has been challenging, he's confident that somewhere down the road "the seeds of freedom we're planting now will turn into shade trees of peace in the future." He notes that this is the first time he's been away from home for the holidays. "I've been fortunate over the years to always be able to come back to Shawano. I wish all those back home my best."

He and his wife Heidi reside in Norfolk where he's assigned to Naval Facilities Engineering Command Atlantic. Lt. Kirar is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Mike Kirar, 523 W. 2nd St., Shawano, WI.



Lt. Carl Kirar, Anbar Area Office Dep. OIC



Joanne Dishmon-Gibbs
Database Manager
GRC USAID Office

Maj. Gen. Johnson praises Gibbs for CNN interview

Ms Gibbs,

I just saw your interview on CNN and I cannot express in words how proud you made me feel to be on the same team as you. Your poise, your eloquence, your sincerity, and your passion to serve all came through in your interview. Your selfless service and your desire to make a contribution to our Soldiers (and our country) are indeed to be commended. It was a wonderful expression of your commitment to serve and to step up to the plate that warms my heart. I wish you and the great Sergeant, Darrin, all the best on this special day in which we celebrate the joy of the season brought by His birth. Thank you for being such a wonderful Ambassador for the Corps of Engineers! God bless and keep you and yours. I'm honored to have the privilege of leading wonderful people like you.

**Respectfully,
RONALD L. JOHNSON
MG, USA
Deputy Commanding General and
Deputy Chief of Engineers
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**



Joanne D. Gibbs and her son Sgt. Darrin Gibbs are shown above during CNN interview in Baghdad that aired Christmas day.

‘Try it you might like it’ -- Joanne Gibbs

I must say I am thrilled with my deployment in Iraq. The opportunity to be part of this team as we help rebuild Iraq and serve the Iraqi people is awesome. It's an historic endeavor and a very personally rewarding experience..

It's just such an honor to be here. We're impacting the lives of others. I have not only had the chance to meet dozens of Iraqis, I have built relationships with many. They're very special individuals coping with unimaginable challenges and getting the job done. Their friendships and relationships will be with me forever.

Each day I am in awe of their courage. I now know and understand the true meaning of selfless service. I am surprised to be working with people from all over the world at the USAID office — individuals from Africa, El Salvador, Haiti, Peru, and the list goes on and on.

Regarding my family, they've been great. My son Darrin, who has been to Iraq, gave me the courage to take on this venue. My daughter, Dorrian, has been equally supportive. I love you both!

I truly miss everyone back stateside but I would not trade this mission for anything. There's an old cliché that seems appropriate to conclude this note. Not sure where or when I heard it but I challenge each of you at Vicksburg District, Waterways Experiment Station, and Mississippi Valley Division to "try it you might like it."



Joanne D. Gibbs at the USAID Office says she and her co-workers (from all over the world) are there to help the Iraqis build a better life.



FOB Loyalty's "mini-mart"



Rec center with pool tables and TV.

Typical day on a Forward Operating Base

(Editor's note: Lt. Cmdr. Jeff Powell's hometown newspaper in Bluffton, SC, "Bluffton Today," asked him to write a letter about what a typical day in Iraq is like. The following is what he submitted.)

I thought the drainage in Bluffton was bad. It has been raining here in Baghdad for the better part of four days, and tonight the usual 100-yard walk to the dining facility is now a choice between wading through ankle-deep water or taking a quarter-mile detour in the still-pounding rain. Of course the third choice would be skip dinner, but tonight is seafood night, and no amount of rain can keep me from fried shrimp and crab legs. I opt for the longer walk.

After the holidays, life goes on as usual for the U.S. forces deployed to Iraq. Living here is monotonous and exhilarating at the same time – work, eat, sleep, exercise when you can, and then tomorrow do it all again. It is the same routine day after day, occasionally interrupted by the sound of distant gunfire or sirens, the discussions in response to the President's latest speech, and the reports of successes and triumphs by our brave men and women who face dangers and trials on a daily basis.

Apart from the challenging mission we have here, I wanted to show the readers at home a small glimpse into daily life in Iraq. The amenities and opportunities vary depending on the base, but the routine is basically the same. As mentioned in my first letter home, I am stationed at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Loyalty, located in east Baghdad about 3 miles south of Sadr City, as Officer in Charge of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers resident construction office. There are approximately 1500 military personnel on this FOB, mostly from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 2nd Infantry Division out of Fort Carson, Colorado. Other tenant units here include an Air Force military working dog team, and a U.S. Navy Explosive Ordnance Detachment out of Charleston, SC.

Like I alluded to earlier, the food at all the dining facilities in Iraq is excellent. There is a wide variety of main dishes, vegetables, fruit, pizza, burgers, plus a full salad, sandwich, and dessert bar. You can always find something to eat, and the atmosphere is pleasant with seasonal decorations and 3 flat screen televisions, each showing sports or news.



To counter the effects of the ample dessert bar, and for general stress relief and physical fitness, this FOB has two exercise facilities. One has a full size indoor swimming pool with aerobics room and cardio machines, and the other is a full service gymnasium with free weights, nautilus, and cardio machines. Both facilities are open 24 hours a day to accommodate the various schedules of the troops stationed here.

To occupy your free time, activities on base include a movie theater that shows a couple of movies each night, a recreational building with ping pong tables, books, movies, and video games, an AT&T phone center for calling home, and a small store for snack food and toiletry items.

Other services on base include a computer center, post office, and laundry. There are no self-service laundry machines at FOB Loyalty — it is all done under the same life support contract that runs the dining facility and performs facility maintenance on the FOB. Service is excellent and the turn around time is usually one day. This base receives mail about three times per week in a large shipping container and it usually takes the two soldiers that run the post office about a day to sort it all out by unit. As you can imagine, mail is a significant morale booster, and everything from letters to packages can really make your day.

This particular base was the former home of the secret police under Saddam Hussein, and most of the buildings are still usable to some extent. Soldiers are typically housed two to a room, or a single room depending on rank, and some work and live out of the same space, separated by a curtain or a row of filing cabinets. Larger rooms in each building are used as conference rooms or communication centers. In general, the plumbing and restrooms in each building are non-functioning, so almost everyone has to use the shower and restroom facilities in temporary trailers. Other than having to walk to get there, the trailers are very clean and spacious.

Soldiers stationed in the Green Zone or Camp Victory near the airport have much different amenities, including multiple dining facilities to choose from, larger stores (we affectionately refer to them as "Wal-Mart's"), international bazaars, fast food restaurants, and coffee shops. As nice as it is to visit those other bases, I would not trade the opportunity to live and work at FOB Loyalty, which ironically has the same small town feel as Bluffton, SC. I should be home in April.



Rath learns about Iraq, himself during deployment

Joseph Rath is currently on a six-month assignment with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division Central District at Camp Victory. Rath serves with the Victory Resident Office as an engineer technician.

Volunteering to deploy to Iraq as a Department of Navy (DoN) civilian in November 2006, Rath wanted to contribute his part to the historic undertaking of rebuilding a country.

For Rath, an engineering technician at the Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Mid-Atlantic Public Works Department at Naval Support Activity Mechanicsburg, Pa., curiosity was also a motivating factor in his decision, and his request received the full support of his chain of command.

"I wanted to see for myself what was going on here and help with the

effort in any way I could," Rath said. His current boss at NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic, a U.S. Navy commander, was there last year and encouraged Rath to apply.

"He said the hours would be long, I'd meet some terrific people, and the rewards would be many. He was right," Rath added.

Rath applied for the position through the Army's job site under "Operation Iraqi Freedom - Serving our friends in Iraq and Afghanistan (SOFIA)," which is a reimbursable detail.

Rath has been in Iraq almost two months and has worked with many nationalities and organizations comprising many diverse cultures and backgrounds. According to Rath, he has discovered that pride in one's country and freedom is a universal language.

"It's clear to me that people have basically the same needs worldwide, a desire for meaningful work, providing a decent standard of living for their families, respect, dignity, living life to the fullest, and enjoying laughter," he said. "My Iraqi counterparts come to work motivated with those goals. I admire their courage and conviction to make Baghdad a better place for their children and grandchildren. They each voice pride in their country and believe we're making a difference."

In addition to learning new and more efficient processes in construction, contracting, and material accountability, Rath is discovering other inner qualities and traits, like patience and persistence, which help get things accomplished.

After a four-year tour in the U.S. Navy, Rath went to work for the Army at Fort George G. Meade in 1987 as an electrician. He started at NAVFAC in 1989. He primarily plans and performs electrical projects for various shops on the 800-acre Mechanicsburg base, which includes roughly 8 million square feet of warehousing and administrative space.

"I'm glad I came," Rath said. "Of my 23 years in government service, this is definitely one of the more interesting and challenging assignments I've ever had. I'm confident our efforts are making the world a safer place to live."

Larry Washington says goodbye



First I want to give thanks to God from whom all things are created, and to my parents who is up there with him or her watching over me. Next I want to thank Janet M. Faust for her leadership, guidance's and knowledge who helped me dot the I's and cross the T's in CEFMS and finally...thanks to all the people at the Corps for their friendship and professional knowledge on making me feel at home, and giving me the opportunity to learn the Corps processes. I will pray that all of you have a safe tour and a safe trip home on your re-deployment.

Larry Washington
GRC Budget Analyst
DFAS Columbus, GA

Victory Area Office and Resident Office staffs



VAO's Victory Public Works Resident Office includes (left to right) Lt. Cmdr. Jayson D. Mitchell (OIC), Sybral L. Farris, Navy Chief Petty Officer Michelle M. Guilliano (NCOIC), Thomas I. Anderson, Carolyn J. Steuart, Bert Gray, and Philip G. Taylor.



VAO's Victory South Resident Office includes (left to right) Allan Nelson, Alfred Everett, Maj. Steve Martinelli (OIC), Braven L. Dyer (Resident Engineer), Sgt. 1st Class George Wong (Incoming NCOIC), Navy Chief Petty Officer Richard J. Devlin (Outgoing NCOIC).



VAO's Victory Resident Office includes (left to right) Steven B. Shephard, John Overfield (Resident Engineer), Maj. Ronald E. Ford (OIC), Gerald R. Carden, Navy Chief Petty Officer Matt A. Sutterluety (NCOIC), Roy P. Brase, and David Newman.



Victory Area Office staff includes (left) Wenda McGilberry, Sgt. 1st Class David A. Eckert (NCOIC), Lt. Col. Robert "Ken" O'Connor (OIC), and Terry L. Steuart (Area Engineer).



Mahmudiyah Mayor Muayid Fadil speaks with David Schmidt from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



Mahmudiyah proposes signature project to boost local economic development

Mahmudiyah's mayor wants to chart a new course and believes a signature project for his community would be welcome news.

Mayor Muayid Fadil Hussein Habib is viewing several possibilities including a Vocational Technical College, a soccer stadium, and a vegetable and fruit processing factory.

"My hope is that we can convince Iraqi and American officials to invest here in a facility that will have a meaningful impact for decades to come," Muayid said. "These projects would employ local people not only in the construction phase, but would benefit our area and help the local economy as a lasting legacy," he noted. He was also hopeful that a facility like a Vocational Technical College would encourage other small industries to open in his community such as a new cement plant or metal fabrication shop.

"We need to boost our local employment opportunities that will benefit not only Mahmudiyah but the surrounding villages." He was hopeful farmers in his areas could qualify for low-interest loans so they could expand their agricultural opportunities including fish farms, poultry and beef operations. "If we can help them with the start-up costs, they will be able to repay those loans with the profits. It's another way to help the local economy."

David Schmidt with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers met with Mayor Muayid Jan. 9 to discuss those possibilities as well as ongoing work in his city. Schmidt encouraged the Mayor to work through his Iraqi officials and the Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction Team to determine what was possible and identify funding.

Ongoing work includes repairing the community's water treatment plant, rebuilding Mahmudiyah's Market, school renovations, a new primary healthcare center, and electrical distribution upgrades.

Regarding such projects, the Mayor asked that local contractors be utilized. Schmidt said his office is interested and willing to schedule a meeting with local contractors to provide them training on how to prepare bid proposals — the documents and references that are required. He also suggested that someone in the Mayor's office attend so they could offer that information to others in Mahmudiyah. "It shows them the steps necessary to qualify for the work," he added.

Schmidt complemented the Mayor on his interest in economic development. "This is a definite priority for all — business and job creation is something we're all interested in," Schmidt said.

"We need new projects offering long-term benefits," the mayor noted. "This is how we're going to build a new Middle East. Such efforts will encourage trust and friendships we're all looking for."



Mahmudiyah Mayor Muayid Fadil officiated at the Qa'da meeting Jan. 10 attended by representatives from Mahmudiyah, Yusefiya, Latifiya, Rashid, Iraqi Army, Iraqi Police, and Coalition Forces. They discussed security concerns, ongoing and planned projects.



Christmas orphanage visit

Col. Lewis and CSM Cady visited a Baghdad Catholic orphanage Dec. 15 and brought the children stuffed animals, clothes, shoes, fabric and sewing notions, pencils, crayons, coloring books, kids novels, soap and lotion, toothpaste and toothbrushes, and candy. In addition, GRC personnel contributed for a cash gift.



Baghdad youngsters are all smiles as gifts are delivered.

Baghdad youth appreciate America's giving spirit . . .

About a dozen GRD personnel recently helped Santa deliver gifts to needy youngsters in a poor Baghdad neighborhood . As those volunteers were getting into their vehicles, Navy Lt. Jon Letourneau from Brunswick ME, yelled out, "Let's go make a difference today."

Letourneau and Chief Warrant Officer Kevin Haymond pointed out their families back in the United States asked what they wanted this Holiday season. "We told them we didn't need anything for ourselves, but it would be great if they could send us items for others," Haymond said.

Letourneau noted the response was tremendous. "It just took a life of its own and we started Operation Santa's Workshop as over 60 boxes of donated items arrived." Those packages contained toiletry items, snacks, cookies, candy, toys and stuffed animals.

The GRD logistics group have sent boxes to Marines in Al Anbar Province, soldiers at Forward Operating Base Speicher, two orphanages, the Combat Support Hospital in the International Zone, and on Dec. 24 made a stop in Baghdad to deliver toys and candy to local youngsters.

"I don't know whether it was better for the kids or me," Letourneau said. "We had a lot of fun. I can't think of a better way to mark the Holidays than to put some smiles on some youngsters' faces. It was wonderful."

Those participating from GRD's reconstruction logistics group included Letourneau, Haymond, Mick Omun, Kent Aldridge, Air Force Capt. Myron Shirley, Allyson Fischer, George Mong, and Michael Frakes. Not pictured but a key member helping organize the effort was Navy Lt. Cmdr Rick Mosley.



Santa and his elves help bring some Holiday cheer to youngsters in Baghdad.

In 2006

Baghdad, Al Anbar residents see variety of improvements

Baghdad and Al Anbar neighborhoods have seen significant improvements in the past year and more are underway.

In 2006, nearly 600 projects valued at \$700 million were completed, about 40 percent more than the previous year. That work includes 108 sewer and water system upgrades, 23 road repairs, 11 hospital renovations, 14 police stations, and 101 electric distribution network and substation improvements.

“These projects provide Iraqi residents clear evidence their government is working and things are getting better,” said Col. Debra M. Lewis, Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Gulf Region Division Central District.

As one example, nine new fire stations were completed in Baghdad. During the official opening of the Al Ameen Fire Station in east Baghdad this summer, U.S. Embassy Baghdad Charge D’Affaires Ambassador Daniel Speckhard said that the dedication ceremony was inspiring “because it’s a symbol of Iraq’s future.” He noted that fire fighters throughout the world were recognized for their courage, “but I think in Iraq there is a special admiration of your bravery because you’re putting your lives on the line every day to save fellow Iraqis.”

During the dedication of Husseiniya’s new fire station, Baghdad Fire Department Major Raaft Nashat (who oversees operations at five of Baghdad’s new fire stations), said compared to a decade ago, Baghdad fire fighters are much better prepared regarding personal protective equipment, fire fighting pumpers and tankers, new rescue equipment, and the renovated and new fire stations. Response time has been reduced from an average of 15 minutes to 5 or 6 minutes.

Baghdad Central Train Station and International Airport have both been renovated. The \$5.9 million train station project included new electrical, water and sewer lines, repair of the roof, replacement of the windows, installation of two new seven-passenger elevators, and an all new power plant including two 1.25mva generators. Abdul-Kareem, Deputy Resident Engineer with the USACE’s International Zone Office, says when he was a youngster that facility was notorious for non-functioning restrooms and a foul odor from standing sewage in the basement. He noted of the many projects he’s overseen, he’s most proud to have been part of this one because of what it represents for Iraq.

“Baghdad Central Train Station has the potential to generate a lot of jobs --- not only those working at the railroad station itself, but taxi drivers, as well as those at nearby hotels, shops and businesses. This will benefit Iraq’s economy for years to come.”

Regarding the Baghdad International Airport, about \$13 million in improvements have been completed. USACE Quality Assurance Representative Allan Nelson says when he started overseeing that work two years ago none of the air conditioning units worked, the sewer lines were blocked, and water was pouring from the bathrooms out into the corridors. “That airport was built in the early 1980s and little was invested on routine maintenance over the years. Much of the infrastructure there was nonfunctional when I arrived,” Nelson said. Today the airport employs 1200 Iraqis with 20 flights scheduled daily. Nelson points out that with the improvements, it now has the capacity for 10 times that amount.



Youngster at Mustafa School

Before



After



Mustafa School’s \$290,000 renovation in Sadr City was completed in April.

A number of government buildings have also been built including one for the Al Ahnaf Nahia Council in northern Baghdad. Anmar Thamer, Chairman of that Council, said during the ribbon cutting ceremony in May, “After 35 years of neglect under the old regime, our residents finally have something they can call their own. Our goal is to have this facility open six days a week so anybody who lives in this area has an opportunity to come here and get help

— whether it’s to file a claim against the government if there’s a problem, or doing normal documentation like verifying one’s residence.” That new 300-square-meter masonry structure will also host various committee meetings in such areas as agriculture, health and sports, he noted. “This facility is visible proof that democracy is working. We’re very grateful for the projects bettering our community.”

Concerning education, 42 schools in Baghdad and Al Anbar have been renovated in the last year. One such completed project is the Mustafa School in Sadr City which serves 930 high school students in the morning, 430 elementary students in the afternoon. That \$290,000 project included 300 new interior lights, 55 ceiling fans, 11 window air conditioning units, 300 square meters of new concrete playground surface, remodeling of the restrooms, roof repair, raising the perimeter security wall one meter, repairing all broken glass and installing a steel mesh to protect

(Continued on next page)

Baghdad, Al Anbar residents see variety of improvements

(Continued from preceding page)

exterior windows, painting all interior and exterior walls, and supplying a new 80kva generator. "It's one of many school renovations we oversaw in East Baghdad in the last year," says Jeremy Way, USACE project engineer. "This country's youth are the future. I see hope in their eyes. They deserve so much more than the dilapidated structures ignored by the previous regime. In identifying priorities, we looked at the most urgent needs such as safety and sanitation and then used the remaining funds to make those structures bright, cheerful places where students could learn. I believe those renovated schools are making a difference."

Children in Baghdad also benefited from seven youth centers that were renovated. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad attended the re-opening of the Al Huriya Youth Center in March along with Iraqi Minister of Youth and Sports Talib Aziz Zaini. Work there included upgrading the plumbing and electrical systems, installing new air conditioners, repairing and replacing floors, replastering and painting both interior and exterior walls, putting in a new basketball/volleyball exterior court. The Youth Center offers programs and training in weightlifting, boxing, wrestling, judo and soccer. During the tour, the guests viewed young Iraqi boxers sparring, wrestlers practicing takedowns, soccer players kicking goals, and weightlifters pumping iron. Pleased by the \$442,000 in renovations, Khalilzad stated, "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. Sports allow us to succeed or fail – not based on who we are or where we come from – but rather on our merits as individuals."

In Al Anbar Province, progress is also taking shape.

Fallujah community leaders gathered last spring to celebrate the opening of a new water treatment facility, the first such investment in their community in a quarter century. Fallujah's main water treatment plant was built in 1981 capable of producing 2,000 cubic meters per hour. But over the years, little was spent on equipment upgrades, and today that facility is producing only about half what was originally intended. In April, work on a new 400 cubic meter per hour plant in the southwest corner of Fallujah was completed to help residents in that area and an identical plant is now under construction to help residents in the northeast corner.

Fallujah's vice chairman of the Reconstruction Committee, Engineer Khalid, had high praise for the investment being made in his community regarding essential services including those water treatment facilities. But he singled out the four schools that are being constructed as a special source of pride. "These are high quality structures with an excellent design. We're asking the Ministry of Education to consider using two of those buildings for a medical, engineering or girls college in Fallujah," he continued. Each of those 3,074-square-meter two-story masonry structures features 24 classrooms, 4 labs, a gym, cafeteria, courtyard, play area, and can handle 1200 students.

He also noted that the \$80 million wastewater collection system and treatment plant under construction is one of the largest such projects outside Baghdad. It will replace the city's current reliance on septic tanks. In addition, Fallujah's electrical network is being totally rebuilt and upgraded and four new primary healthcare centers constructed. "We consider these as gifts from the American people. Our residents understand that millions are being spent to rebuild our community. We appreciate your efforts."



Iraqi firemen demonstrated their fire fighting, rescue and first aid techniques during a demonstration in June as part of the dedication of the new Al Ameen Fire Station in eastern Baghdad.



Anmar Thamer, Chairman of the Al Ahnaf Nahia Council, officially opens their new facility in north Baghdad Province in May.