



NEWS

JULY 2007

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



LTG Robert L. Van Antwerp, Chief of Engineers, speaks at Victory Base Complex June 22.

Chief of Engineers praises ongoing work to rebuild Iraq

Baghdad, Iraq – U.S. Army’s 52nd Chief of Engineers visited Gulf Region Division Central District (GRC) June 22 at Victory Base Complex and had high praise for the staff’s ongoing efforts to help rebuild Iraq.

During a town hall meeting, Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp said, “When I look at your board of pictures, at who is in a Resident Office, in the Resource Management Office, or the Contracting Section, the work you do is of a magnitude for the size of the teams you have that’s just phenomenal.”

He provided his insight about the word “T-E-A-M”.

The T is for trust, “and I think we’ve got some work to do here.”

The “E” in team is excellence. “I think it’s so important that we deliver not just projects, and not just on time, but projects that will stand the test of time.”

The “A” in team is “it’s all about people.” He noted that when newcomers arrive in Iraq and step into this environment, it can be a lonely experience. He recognized everyone for welcoming those people to the team. “If you’re going to have a world-class

organization, you have to attract world-class people. And what attracts them? You have to have a mission that has a purpose and we have that. People can get more experience with us in a short period of time than anything they could do anywhere else. We need people of character in the Corps of Engineers. In this room, one of the things that describes all of you, you are people of character.”

The “M” in team is for motivating. He questioned how does one keep their motivation. He then singled out GRC’s Chief of Contracting Sherry Gaylor and asked her how many overseas expeditionary tours she’d done. Gaylor answered “11 tours.” He asked, “What keeps you motivated?” She responded, “the people.” Van Antwerp agreed.

He pointed out that when they called and asked if he would be willing to be the Chief of Engineers and go another four years – “that was an interesting question – Are you willing.” (At that time Van Antwerp had 35 years service and was already a 3-star general.)

He continued, “In a job like you have, you have to come to grips

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LTG Van Antwerp attends Sapper Call



LTG Robert L. Van Antwerp, the Chief of Engineers, arrived in Iraq June 22 and his first stop at Victory Base Complex was an office call with MNC-I Commander LTG Raymond T. Odierno. He then visited Gulf Region Division Central District for a Town Hall Meeting followed by an outdoor steak dinner at the monthly Engineer Sapper Call hosted by Col. Randal G. Martin, 1169th Engineer Group. About 200 combat engineers attended that event including members of the 9th EN BN, 20th EN BN, 130th EN BN, 1CD DSTB, 2/10 MTN BDE EN and Engineers from BSTB, 4/1 ID BDE EN, 1/64 Armor, Corps C7 with the Australian EN Deputy, 1CD DIVEN cell and Deputy PRT Commander, and the Air Force's 769th Prime Beef.



Al Faw Palace



LTG Odierno (MNC-I Commander) and LTG Van Antwerp



Chris Mansfield, GRC's IT Chief, talks to LTG Van Antwerp.

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sooner or later, with the question what makes your life worth living. My wife and I and our kids have decided that it's only worthwhile if we live it for someone else. If you're just living it for yourself, being selfish, and just thinking about yourself all the time, that gets old. Our motto is the only life worth living is a life you're doing things for others. And I want to tell you, you all are doing things for others on a big scale, both in your internal group and then external. I think it's crucial."

He noted GRC was centered in one of the most dangerous places in the world, "and I don't have to tell you how important it is to get this right." He said, "What happens in Iraq is a strategic corporal (a project or program that has strategic implications for the whole organization). What you do, and I don't want to put rocks in your rucksack, but the truth is a lot of our reputation is being built here and gained here — you are so much a part of that."

He explained his six priorities. "The first one is to support the Global War on Terrorism and expeditionary missions" and GRC is definitely part of that.

The 2nd priority is to enhance the quality of life of soldiers and their families, civilians and their families, "and we've added one for the Corps of Engineers ... the public."

The 3rd priority is to complete the transformation of the Theater Engineer Commands.

The 4th priority is to enable the Gulf Coast recovery. The 5th priority is to plan and prepare for disaster relief. And the 6th priority is to deliver military programs, civil works, research and development. "The verb 'deliver' is very important. To get customer satisfaction, you've got to deliver what they need, it means you're working with stakeholders." He said, "I know this is a tremendously hard environment, but a lot of our reputation is on delivery."

Along with those priorities are three tenets: (1) communicate transparently, (2) focus on the mission, (3) teaming. On that final tenet, Van Antwerp said the Corps of Engineers has about 35,000 employees, and their contractors involve another 300,000 people. "Can a project be delayed or not delivered because a contractor doesn't do what we've asked them to do? Yes. So they aren't just a partner, they can make or break us. They've got to be part of the team."

It's Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp's intention to take the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from a good organization to a great organization and he's using those six priorities and three tenets as the foundation of that effort.

"I want to say thanks from the bottom of my heart for the heavy lifting you're doing for the Corps. You are one of the strategic corporals. Our reputation rests with you to a great degree. So go out there and deliver. Thank you very much."

Chief of Engineers thanks GRC staff



John Thompson, GRC's Chief of Construction Services, is in his 17th month on this deployment. He started as a construction manager and was promoted to his current assignment. For six months he manned that office on his own until additional personnel could be hired. During his tenure, he's been responsible for developing the Scopes of Work, Independent Government Estimates, and Estimated Bills of Quantity for 700 projects valued at over \$500 million in such areas as schools, health clinics, police and fire stations, courthouses, water treatment plants, electrical generation and distribution systems, bridges, road paving, all of which are improving the quality of life for Iraqis. His duties also include assistance with contract modifications, claims and equitable adjustments. He currently supervises a staff of three additional construction/project managers.



Jeremy Way is the Resident Engineer at Iraq National Depot in Taji which has current and projected work valued at over \$100 million. He's supervising a staff of 4 U.S. personnel. Iraq National Depot includes the construction of the Iraqi Army's National Maintenance Depot (for repair of tanks, guns, weapons) and a facility upgrade for the Iraqi Army National Supply Depot (where currently \$500 million in parts and supplies are located). He started this deployment in October 2006 and basically stood up the Iraq National Depot Resident Office single-handedly until additional personnel arrived. This is Way's 2nd deployment to GRC. From 2005-2006 he was a project engineer at Loyalty Resident Office responsible for \$40 million in projects including fire stations, youth centers, water compact units, road paving, and Al Baladi Hospital in Sadr City.



Chief's Coin awarded to 4

Simeon Francis has worked at GRC since April 2005, first as the Water Sector Manager at the USAID Project Office for 13 months, then starting in May 2006 as GRC's Water Sector Project Manager (CERP-funded). Currently he's responsible for 185 projects valued at \$385 million in Baghdad and Al Anbar Provinces. Apart from those duties, he also filled in as GRC's Electricity Sector lead for 7 months overseeing 268 projects until a new Electrical Project Manager was hired. He has worked for USACE for 12 years and deployed from the Walla Walla District.



Sherry Gaylor, GRC's Chief of Contracting, is on her 11th overseas deployment (previous tours Afghanistan, Kosovo, Macedonia, Bosnia). She and her team of 10 contract specialists have awarded and are administering over 400 contracts valued at more than \$1 billion in Baghdad and Al Anbar Provinces. In an effort to encourage more local contractors to participate in the bidding process, she and her staff have hosted numerous workshops in Ramadi, Fallujah, Mahmudiyah, and Baghdad explaining what a "winning proposal" is all about. She deployed from USACE's Wilmington District and has 30 years experience with USACE and the U.S. Army.



One of USACE's busiest staffs working to help Iraqis succeed

They're overseeing one of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) busiest Districts in the world responsible for nearly 400 active projects valued at more than \$1.2 billion.

Gulf Region Division Central District (GRC) is managing the construction of essential service projects benefiting Iraqis in Baghdad and Al Anbar Provinces and four of its top military and civilian leaders are women. Col. Debra M. Lewis is the District Engineer, Derya Smith the Deputy District Program Manager, Sherry Gaylor the Chief of Contracting and Janet Faust the Chief of Resource Management. "We're renovating hospitals, building schools, repairing sewer lift stations, paving roads, installing new water and sewer lines, constructing courthouses, and putting in new electric distribution networks throughout Baghdad," Lewis explained.

"In Fallujah, one of our other key cities, we're managing \$80 million in contracts to put in that community's first-ever wastewater treatment plant and collection system. Residents there are currently using septic tanks with raw sewage running in the streets and into the Euphrates River. We've also got \$57 million in

contracts to upgrade its electrical network including new substations, over 45,000 utility poles, and 2400 kilometers of cable. We're building four new primary healthcare centers there each capable of providing medical care to 150 patients daily." (Apart

from the ongoing work, GRC has closed out over 500 projects valued at over \$650 million during Col. Lewis' one year in command.)

The four female leaders are in charge of a staff of 170 U.S. military and civilian personnel as well as over 100 Iraqis. Most of those local nationals are engineers who serve as quality assurance representatives visiting the various projects every day to ensure the contractors are providing quality construction in a safe manner.

"I volunteered because I wanted to be part of this historic undertaking," explains Smith. "Those projects are having a positive impact on people's lives. Iraq is in large part an engineers' war and we're making a difference. Those Iraqis on our staff are proud to be part of this. They're building a future for their children and grandchildren," she continued. "Life is all about change and learning. That's the best part of this job – interacting with some very dedicated individuals from throughout the world."



Gulf Region Division Central District's senior leadership includes, left to right, Sherry Gaylor, Derya Smith, Col. Debra Lewis and Janet Faust.

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Derya Smith, Sherry Gaylor, Janet Faust, Col. Debra Lewis

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Gaylor, who supervises a staff of 10 contract specialists, says Iraq has proved to be the most challenging assignment she's had but also the most rewarding. She definitely has a wealth of experience in an expeditionary environment as this is her 11th overseas deployment including tours to Afghanistan, Kosovo, Meccenia, and Bosnia.

One of her priorities is customer service ensuring all contracting actions have been thoroughly coordinated with all interested parties including the U.S. military, U.S. Department of State, Iraqi Ministries, local Iraqi city officials and the contractors themselves. To encourage more local participation in the bidding process, Gaylor and her staff have hosted one-day workshops in Ramadi, Fallujah, Mahmudiyah, and Baghdad to explain to Iraqi construction firms what a "winning proposal" is all about including the various steps involved from the Statement of Work and Advertisement, to the receiving of proposals and awarding the contract. Despite her demanding job, Sherry always try to greet people with a smile and upbeat attitude.

Faust says one of the most important responsibilities she has is ensuring the Iraqi contractors get paid. She and her staff of six professionals are also involved in finance, accounting and budget activities including workload analysis, project closeouts, manning document reconciliations, fund type process issues (there are over 20 different funding codes), contracting and program management issues. "I will remember my time in Iraq as a two year educational journey working alongside some exceptional team members," Faust said. "You can't learn in 10 years in a stateside District what you learn here in one," she added. "Our mission here is an awesome challenge. We work alongside Iraqis everyday on a noble mission of improving their infrastructure."

Lewis is the first female District Engineer USACE has assigned to a war zone command. She's a woman of many firsts, a member of the first class of women to graduate from West Point. Her female colleagues at GRC had high praise for her leadership. They say she is one of the most hard working individuals they've ever met, handles her responsibilities with definite grace, and ensures that throughout her Command everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

"It's an honor to serve as GRC's Commander," Lewis said. "I feel blessed to be working directly with the people of Iraq. I have seen many examples 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," she continued. "While the only thing constant here seems to be change, one thing that doesn't change is the realization that getting things done is 90-95% interpersonal relationships and communication, with the remainder being the content or technical skills we bring to the table."

Col. Lewis enjoys collecting quotes and one of her favorite is Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe who said, "Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you will help them become what they are capable of becoming."

GRC's four female leaders have over a half-century of combined experience with the U.S. Army. They lead a team dedicated to making a difference for the people of Iraq today and for future generations.

Editor's note: Janet Faust deployed from USACE's Baltimore District, Sherry Gaylor from USACE's Wilmington District, Col. Lewis was District Engineer at Seattle, and Derya Smith was the Program Manager for the U.S. Army Contingency Construction Program at the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management (ACSIM) located in the Pentagon, Washington D.C.

Will engineering efforts be Coalition's legacy for Iraq?

Referring to the diverse group of civilians and military comprising Gulf Region Central District (GRC), Brig. Gen. Vincent K. Brooks said, "you are pros coming from all corners of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers world."

Brooks, Deputy Commanding General for Support with Multinational Division Baghdad, was the highlight of a two-day senior leader conference hosted at GRC headquarters on Victory Base Complex July 1-2. He talked about the years of decrepitude in Iraq's infrastructure. "And so the challenge you face, in concentrating your efforts as world class engineers to leave the situation better than you found it, is harder than you can ever imagine."

He also noted that Iraqis have very high expectations of the United States and many of those are unrealistic. "You have to be an All Star Team because average work is simply not going to be adequate. Only above average work, superb work, excellent work will give us even a chance to progress further than we are right now."

He encouraged those attending to partner with the Brigade Combat Teams (there are 6 in Baghdad, 20 in Iraq), the local Iraqi Neighborhood and District Councils, the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, the Amanat (City of Baghdad's government), Beladiya Director Generals, and various Iraq National Ministries in ongoing reconstruction efforts.

"This is a rich country. It has all kinds of resources. It has everything every other country in the world wishes it had. They haven't been able to tap into their own wealth because of internal politics and the decrepitude I spoke about due to their inheritance from a socialist regime. They have oil, water, arable land, an industrious people, a history unparalleled throughout the world, it's all here."

Brooks said the riches of Iraq had not been committed at this point and "we have to stimulate that commitment."

His final issue regarded what would be the long-term legacy of the Coalition's investment in Iraq, having lost 3750 lives and expended billions of dollars at this point. "I often hear as I go around about the British experience at the end of World War I. And many of Iraq's strongest institutions were generated at that point. Bridge construction became the legacy of the British. There's a term they refer to the British at that time – they call it 'Abu Naji.' They harken back to the excellent engineer work of Abu Naji, not Abu Naji's benevolence, not the things that helped them build government, but the bridges. I wonder what the legacy

will be when they think back to the experience of the United States, 80 years hence. If it's like Abu Naji, it's going to be what the engineers left. It will be things that are iconic of presence and commitment, especially if it's done well and it endures over time."

Following his talk, Brooks opened it up to questions and spoke about the importance of providing access and context to media, especially Arabic language journalists, so those in Iraq and neighboring countries know and understand what's going on here.



Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks says hello to Staff Sgt. Katrail Smith.

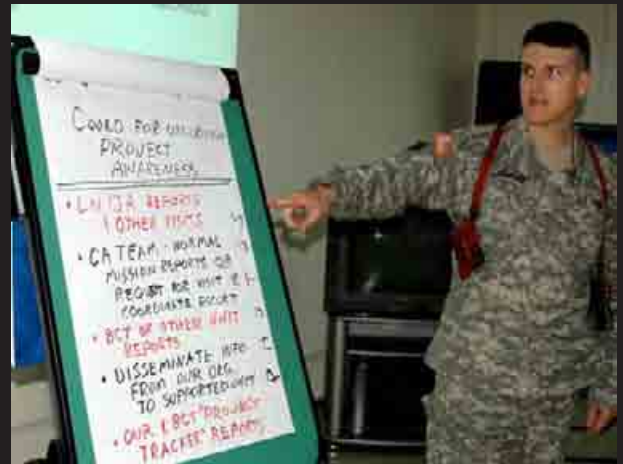
"It's not their responsibility to provide context, it's yours," he charged.

Brooks, the U.S. Army's former Chief of Public Affairs, pointed out that Multinational Division Baghdad has more embedded reporters since November when they took over than the previous three years combined. "We opened the doors up ... access plus context gives the potential for accurate content."

He said newsletters like the one Gulf Region Central District publishes monthly also go a long way in communicating what's going on.

Col. Lewis thanked Brig. Gen. Brooks for making GRC part of his team. "That has made it possible for us to do so much more."

GRC hosts Senior Leader Conference



Maj. Clark Johnson summarizes discussion points.



Lt. Col. James Moore, Anbar Area Office OIC

About 35 GRC personnel participated in a two-day Senior Leader conference July 1 and 2. The highlight of the event was a one-hour sit-down discussion with Brig. Gen. Vincent K. Brooks, Multinational Division Baghdad's Deputy Commanding General for Support. Brooks spoke about the critical role USACE had in the ongoing battle shaping Iraq's future. The senior leaders reviewed and made additions to a new GRC Handbook, participated in the bi-weekly PgRB, and discussed the importance of enhancing coordination between key partners to successfully oversee projects from inception to completion. The group

was divided into four discussion panels on key subjects at various times during the two days to spur additional comments/input from all participants. On the MWR side, Al Anbar's team of Ramadi Resident Engineer Craig Robinson and acting Al Asad Resident Engineer Sam Farhat won the baggio tournament and were congratulated by Col Lewis and MG (Ret) Rick Olson (outgoing Deputy Director Office of Provincial Affairs).



Bill Kiddy and Elizabeth Johnson



Craig Robinson and Sam Farhat win baggio tourney.

From the Commander ...

Goodbye My Friend...

"Work may give you a sense of accomplishment, but relationships give you joy."

It certainly has been an incredible journey these past 13 months, much like a ride on the frequently turbulent Iraqi winds. As Les Dixon once told me, we ought to count our time in dog years here; 7 days back home for every one here, along with one fourth the staff with three or more times the workload.

Early in June 06, I grew somewhat alarmed when I discovered there were no days to "catch up" as I did back home, nor real time to reflect. If I thought I had some sense of what it takes for a district to get through the end of the fiscal year... I was wrong. This GRC was no ordinary district. Worse, no real pauses in action would occur anytime during the year, month, week or day. Far from it... heavier workloads, many competing requirements, increasing visibility, extensive coordination, many additional supported units transitioning boundaries, along with more determined insurgents, and increased injuries to our people; all added to a greatly increased complexity of our tasks as each day passed. With mere mortals, it would have been a daunting task attempting to deal with it all.

Rather than run the other way, each of you became energized and worked even smarter to get it all done, both within GRC and with our many partners throughout this theater and the rest of the world, including back home. Despite many tough setbacks,

including the sad and tragic loss of special friends along the way, your actions continue to inspire and renew our efforts to make a difference in the precious time we are given. It is simply amazing what we have accomplished this past year.

Words will never adequately convey my sincere admiration and appreciation for what you do for

others each and every day. I will always treasure the wonderful friendships made along this life-changing part of my journey. You are about to be similarly blessed with our talented new commander, Colonel Bob Vasta. Winding down our transition period, I can say with the utmost confidence that you will find him more than eager and up to the challenges you will face together in the future. I can't promise it will be easy, but it will be infinitely rewarding.

I wish each of you much happiness and success, along with enough strength to carry you through the many unexpected challenges along the way. As I make my final preparations to leave Iraq, several songs have been running through my head. These words from one of my favorite artists, Karla Bonoff, seem most fitting.

"Oh we never know where life will take us. I know it's just a ride on the wind ... I'm okay now... goodbye my friend. - Karla Bonoff



Col. Debra M. Lewis
GRC Outgoing Commander

From the CSM...

Greetings to everyone and I hope that you're all enjoying the month of July and the heat that comes with it. It's been an exceptionally busy month, with lots of change. We all know that with change come significant shifts in attitude, performance, focus, invasion of space complex, and the excitement from it all.

There is constant change here at GRC. It's most obvious at every Hail and Farewell. But this month we've had significant "player" movement. These are crucial moves that affect all of us at one point or another. The coming and going of these folks could be categorized as; "Who moved my cheese" or "I can deal with this."

First, my comrade, confidant, and member of your command team, CDR Steve Frost is back. He's sore, moving slow, but never-the-less on the mend and in good spirits. This is a rewarding change for us all.

Second, I am sad to say that "Sir Richard Osterman" has moved on to greener pastures in the IZ with GRD. We will miss you Richard. I will miss you and thank you for the tons of advice and great conversation about all subjects from "soup-to-nuts".

Last, but not least, our most significant change is the loss

and gain, of a Commander. Colonel Lewis, we wish you well and thank you for all that you've done. Colonel Vasta, welcome aboard and hang on, this ride will get rough, but we sense you have the "right stuff."

There have been others who gave of themselves here in Iraq that contributed heavily to our reconstruction efforts. I believe we all have one simple goal. As people, we simply want to make a difference while we're here in Iraq.

As I write this letter, only the memory (and pictures) of the Change-of-Command ceremony remains. To all of you that participated, thank you for all your efforts. As a team you may have set up and identified seating or prepared and served the meal, I thank you. Perhaps, you parked cars, directed traffic, or escorted a VIP, again I thank you. Certainly, all of you attended the ceremony and represented us well -- once again I say..... thank you.



Command Sergeant Major
Orville Wang



Taji visit



Taji update

During a visit June 13, Col. Doug Satterfield (MNC-I C7 Facilities Chief, left) and Col. Debra Lewis checked on construction progress at the new Taji Resident Office that will soon be ready for occupancy. Also in the photo are Jeremy Way (Taji National Depot Resident Engineer) and LTC Peter Conlin (USACE's Taji National Depot OIC) who briefed them about that multi-million-dollar project.

ARRIVING MEMBERS



CHRIS MCGINTY
Al Asad
Project Engineer
Houston, TX
(SBH)



ICCS (SW/AW)
STEPHEN BLEASE
NCOIC Fallujah
DISA Pentagon
Brooklyn NY



GENE EMBREY
Chief
Resource Management
USACE SW Division
Glenn Heights, TX



PATRICK ADDISON
Al Asad
Project Engineer
Omaha District



ROBERT SNYDER
Taji National Depot
Project Engineer
Los Angeles



DANIEL ERBACH
Ramadi
Project Manager
Los Angeles (SBH)



DOUG HAMILTON
Loyalty
Construction Rep
Big Stone Gap, VA
(SBH)



FCC (SW)
TIM HEDGLIN
GRC OPS
Movement NCOIC
Momence, IL



ICC (SW)
EDEN OLGUIN
Taji NCOIC
Albuquerque, NM



HUNTER LOGAN
GRC HQ Admin Asst.
Andrews AFB, MD



CLIFTON GETER
GIS Fallujah
Vicksburg District



HARRY VAN DOREN
Engineer Tech
Victory South
Resident Office
Ft. Bragg, NC



SCOTT DEMUTH
Fallujah
Project Engineer
Omaha, NE



KIMBERLY PUGH
Contract Specialist
Huntsville District



DEAN RUDISILL
Office Engineer
Victory Area Office
Ft. Bragg, NC



**New towers
go up on VBC**



Project Engineer Gerald Carden (photo, left) and Construction Rep Walter Mattingly (photo above) are overseeing a number of projects on Victory Base Complex in Baghdad including the construction of two new 20-meter-high observation towers. An Iraqi crew used an 80-ton crane to hoist the heavy structural steel into place June 27. Others viewing the work included Col. Debra Lewis, Lt. Col. Daniel Jacobsen, and Maj. David Noble.

MASS CASUALTY EXERCISE



Aegis/Erinys take the high ground to defend the compound.



Mock casualties are triaged and evacuated.



Mock gas attack is part of the Mass Casualty Exercise involving all personnel at GRC headquarters June 12.



Gurkhas stand guard at every entrance.



LTC Culen Robinson and Monique DeZiauto coordinate actions at GRC's Crisis Action Center



Len Fairbanks, Desmond Brumfield, and Dan Cahill were among those attending the AAR following the exercise.

Postcards from Iraq

Why I made this trip to Baghdad

By Carolyn Steuart, Project Manager

Victory Public Works Resident Office, USACE

I wanted to say one last "good bye" to everyone and to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the great passion that each and every one of you show in the reconstruction efforts ongoing here in Iraq.

My short journey here has been rough and sometimes seems fruitless; on those challenging days, it seems I always meet one of the Local Nationals in the hallway with a huge smile on his/her face and I realize once again why I made this trip to Iraq.

I realize I have only contributed a tiny part toward helping the Iraqi people on their march toward freedom. We're involved in a noble and historic mission and there's no question the Iraqis I work with are committed to providing a brighter future for their children and grandchildren. Their effort, drive and desire is awesome. They continue to press forward despite the threatening obstacles that have been laid out before them. They are not quitters.

I am proud for the remarkable opportunity to get to know them and work alongside them. I will close this postcard with a request to please take care of yourselves, and for a short time, my husband who is staying behind. Stay safe and continue with the fight to make a difference!

This country will continue to need our assistance for quite awhile and I will always remember my times here with this remarkable team of Military, Civilians and Iraqis who I have had the privilege to work with and learn from.

God Speed and as they say in the south "See Ya"!



Carolyn & Terry Steuart



Staff thanks Carolyn at farewell

Carolyn Steuart, Europe District



*Project Manager
Carolyn Steuart*

To view GRC's 65 post cards, go to <http://www.grd.usace.army.mil/news/postcards/index.asp>

DEPARTING MEMBERS



NAVY CHIEF
MICHELLE GUILIANO
NCOIC Victory PW
Resident Office
Pt. Mugu, CA



NAVY CHIEF
ELIZABETH DEWALD
NCOIC
Taji Office
Virginia Beach, VA



BRIAN SOUTER
GRC HQ
Contract Specialist
St. Paul District



JOSEPH PINTAL
Project Engineer
Victory PW
Resident Office
Detroit District



LCDR ARTURO ASEO
OIC Ramadi Office
NAVFAC Far East
NAF Atsugi, Japan
Hometown: Oxnard, CA

DEPARTING MEMBERS



**NAVY LCDR
JOSEPH YATES**
Baghdad PRT Engineer
NAVFAC Europe, Naples



JANET FAUST
GRC HQ Chief
Resource Management
Baltimore District



CAROLYN STEUART
Project Manager
Victory PW
Resident Office
Europe District



ZACH KLUCKOWSKI
Loyalty Office
Resident Engineer
Mobile District



MARIA OTERO
Contract Specialist
Army Contracting
Agency
Ft. Buchanan, PR

Postcards from Iraq

No shortcuts to greatness

*By Col. Debra M. Lewis, Commander
Gulf Region Division Central District, USACE*

What to expect in Iraq? . . . the experience of a lifetime!

My greatest joy has been serving with such talented people from all over the world, especially the Iraqis. With an average personnel turnover of 15% each month, our district is the most diverse organization I've ever served with. We include military (Active, NG, RC, retirees), U.S. Government civilians from a variety of organizations, worldwide contractors, Iraqi Associates, and, of course, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers personnel. Together, we manage a daily program of \$1.2 billion in active essential service projects (potable water, sewage systems, electricity, roads and buildings, health clinics, schools, fire stations, etc.) to benefit the people of Baghdad and Al Anbar provinces. The magnitude and complexity of issues facing us each day are astounding, and moving from one point to the next never follows a straight line. With so much to do, a 7-day work week is the norm with one morning a week off. Unfortunately, I have been unable to discover more than 24 hours in a day.

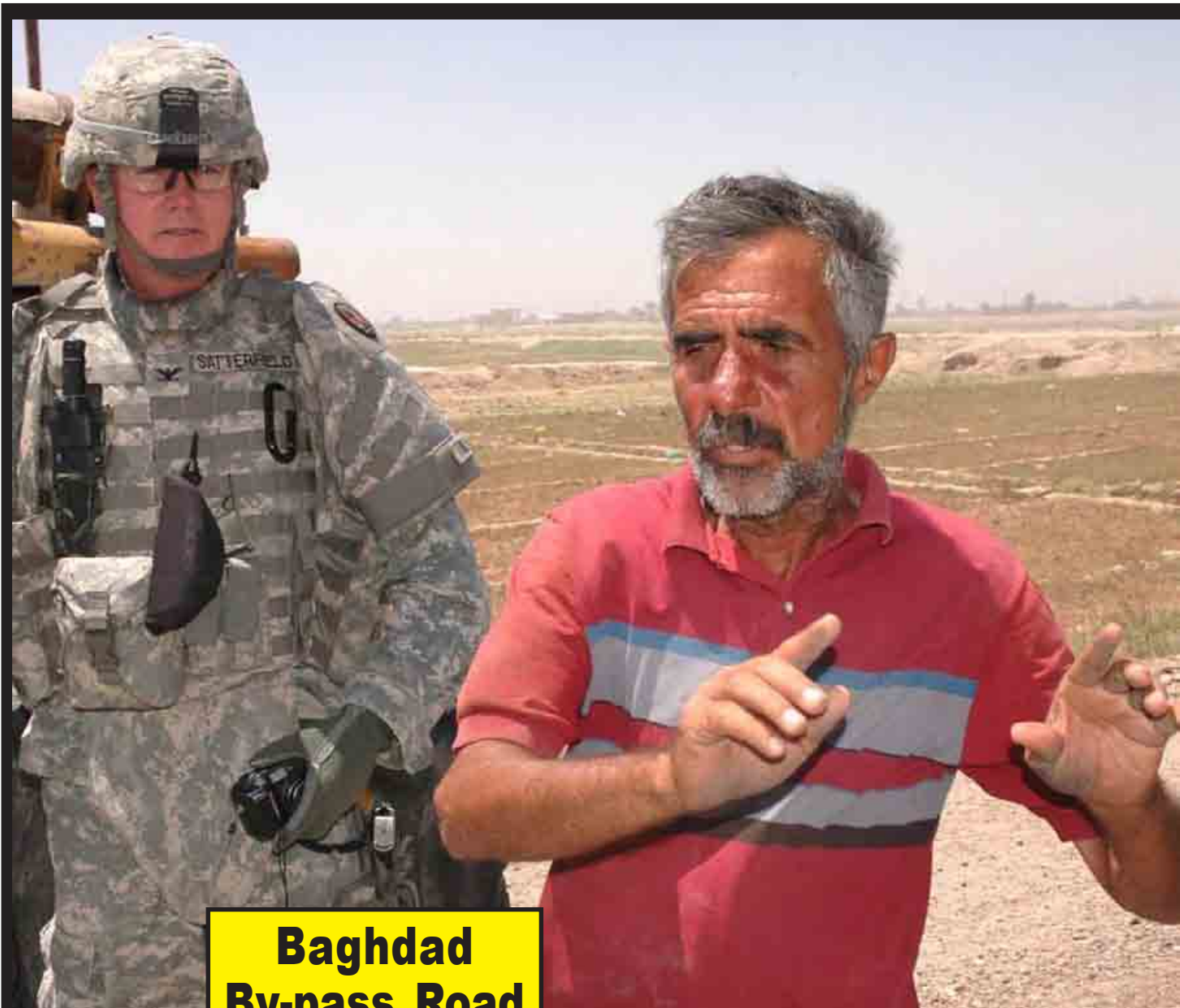
Negative forces often abound in a world viewed in extremes, but stories of courageous Iraqis and our many partners, especially the maneuver brigades and combat teams working diligently to keep us safe, inspire us and keep us motivated. Most of all, seeing the faces of and being around the Iraqi children is enough to light up our smiles and open our hearts. Many reports on Iraq omit the sacrifices made and commitment shown by so many. A key Iraqi, actively leading Government of Iraq efforts in support of reconstruction, learned his son was murdered just this week. One of our Iraqi employees, a gentle and generous man with a young family, was kidnapped and brutally murdered this past month as he was traveling to check on a health clinic under construction. Yet, in the face of this violence, average citizens of Iraq are increasingly banding together to stop the killing of others, such as in the Al Anbar province. In Kurdistan, a group of terrorists assumed the local population would do nothing to stop their activities. They drove there and began planting bombs. Immediately, however, the local people emerged from their homes, beat up the culprits, and detained them for the local security forces. Enemies of peace (terrorists, religious extremists, neighboring countries, common criminals, and others who tell the Iraqis it is futile to fight for their freedom) continue to deliberately impede Iraq's enormous potential to be the most prosperous country in the Middle East.

We should remember that, to guarantee the freedoms Americans often take for granted today, our own founding fathers overcame incredible odds, even as they and their families suffered many sacrifices. No shortcuts to greatness existed then, as they don't exist now. It has been an honor to serve with these ordinary citizens who are making extraordinary sacrifices so that others may also experience the unalienable freedom to pursue life, liberty and happiness.



*Col. Debra Lewis visits
newly-completed Assriya Women's Center
and Taji Girls High School.*

To view GRC's 65 post cards, go to <http://www.grd.usace.army.mil/news/postcards/index.asp>



Baghdad By-pass Road



Baghdad By-pass

Despite ongoing threats, a Baghdad contractor is continuing work and is about 75% finished on a 9-kilometer section of the new Baghdad By-Pass Road. That \$6.6 million project was started Feb. 24 and is scheduled to be completed this summer. About 30 Iraqis are on the crew daily. Visiting the site June 13 were Col. Debra Lewis (GRC Commander), Col. Doug Satterfield (MNC-I C7 Facilities Chief, top photo) and LTC Dan Jacobsen (Victory Area Office OIC).

Postcards from Iraq

Lending a hand to Iraq — an historic mission

By LCDR Joseph Yates, USN, NAVFAC Europe, Naples

I'm a US Navy Civil Engineer Corps Officer finishing up an Individual Augment assignment with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in Iraq. This was my second deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom. During this tour, I feel fortunate to have had a "two for one" that included assignments in both Fallujah and Baghdad.

I started off in December 2006 in the USACE Al Anbar Area Office in Fallujah. Anbar had been considered the Wild West of Iraq, but during my time there, surprisingly, the number of insurgent incidents dropped remarkably as local sheiks became genuinely interested in working with Coalition Forces on improving security in the province. The USACE office where I worked managed construction contracts on the various Marine bases in the region, and we handled reconstruction projects in the rural cities of Fallujah and Ramadi and other smaller towns throughout Anbar province. I really enjoyed working the reconstruction projects, which included repairing sewer and electrical systems that had suffered from years of neglect under Saddam, installing small potable water plants in rural villages, rebuilding bridges over key rivers, renovating schools, and building new public health clinics. During my time there, I was particularly impressed by the dedication of the USACE civilians in our offices. All were volunteers who left home to serve a year in Iraq. Those civilians are the unsung heroes out in Anbar.

About halfway through the deployment, I was sent to Baghdad to fill the USACE engineer position at the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). The US Embassy had provided nearly \$120 million to fund reconstruction projects in Baghdad and USACE needed someone to develop the new projects and track existing construction. The contrast between rural Anbar and Baghdad was striking. Baghdad is a city with over 7 million inhabitants and one of the largest cities in the Middle East. Leaving Anbar, I traded my dusty office trailer in Camp Fallujah for a cubicle on the fifth floor of an office building in the much-publicized Green Zone, and I left my USACE civilian co-workers for State Department Foreign Service Officers in business suits. My new Baghdad department also had a large number of local-national and ex-patriot Iraqi engineers, and I found that working with them offered a great opportunity to view Iraq through their eyes. I was struck by how dedicated they all were in the effort to bring their country out of the decades of abuse suffered under Saddam's rule. Some of my coworkers were Sunni, some Shia, and some Kurdish, but they all worked together at the PRT toward the same goal. We interacted with the "Amanat" (City Hall) on basic city service projects (sewer, water, trash), and with the Ministry of Education on a plan to build no less than 200 new schools across the city. During the short time I was with the PRT, I was proud to report that we managed to get 10 new schools designed, funded, and approved for construction.

In both Anbar and Baghdad, we made every effort to award construction contracts to companies that would hire local workers. After contract award, we worked with them to ensure they built facilities that not only met our contract requirements, but also were constructed to American standards. We mentored the Iraqis about workmanship, quality, and jobsite safety. As a byproduct of this process, it's my opinion that we showed formerly-disenfranchised people that there is a better way of life available to them; a way where the average citizen can take pride and responsibility in his own work, and in the process create a better life, not only for himself, but also his community at large. I'm glad to have had the opportunity to lend a hand in this historic effort.



To view GRC's 65 post cards, go to <http://www.grd.usace.army.mil/news/postcards/index.asp>



ABC-TV visits Rusafa

ABC-TV sent a two-person Iraqi team to Rusafa Courthouse June 21 to gather B-roll of the construction underway. Saad Raheem Abdul Wahah was the cameraman, Waleed Abdul Wahab the sound technician. Leading the tour were LTC J.P. Moszer (Baghdad Area Office OIC) and LT Robert Leines (Loyalty Resident Office OIC). That 5000-sq.-meter project is 27% completed.



Victory Base road work

Several roads on Victory Base Complex are being repaved. Iraqi crews are installing hot asphalt for a new 7.3 meter wide smooth surface. The projects include earth work to improve drainage, speed bumps, turn pads, markings and signage. Dozens of Iraqis are involved in the construction and an asphalt plant is set up on base. Gerald Carden (bottom, left) is the Project Engineer, Steven Shepard the Construction Rep.

Postcards from Iraq

Why volunteer for Iraq duty?

By Roger Nowicki, Contract Specialist
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Well, here I am in Baghdad and my family and friends continue to ask ... 'why'?

No matter how I answer their questions it doesn't seem to fully satisfy their curiosity. I have a lot of reasons to "why". But it all comes down to one basic answer — it's for myself. In my heart I know I'm supposed to be here doing what I'm doing. I could do contracting back at Hanscom Air Force Base in Massachusetts and contribute a lot. But here in Baghdad, I'm helping Iraqi families and future generations. We're making a difference.

I have no regrets about volunteering. I'm responsible for awarding construction contracts to build medical clinics, police stations, town council buildings, parks and playgrounds, sanitary sewer lines, waste water treatment plants, storm sewer projects, electrical substations, paving roads, upgrading gas stations and my favorite ... schools (elementary, high schools, vocational technical schools). It is my belief that if we are to succeed here, it has to start with the children. If we provide them the tools so they can develop an inquisitive mind open to other ideas, we will have made a lasting positive impact.

The Iraqi people deserve a chance for a better way of life. I've met some great individuals and they share many of the same values we all do, just trying to provide a brighter future for their families. The other day I was talking to an Army private about our efforts to rebuild Iraq and he told me, "What you do is saving soldier's lives. Thank you." I'm glad I'm here and part of this historic effort.

Roger Nowicki, Contract Specialist, Hanscom AFB, MA



Contract Specialist
Roger Nowicki

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Chief of Engineers

Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp (photo at left), U.S. Army's Chief of Engineers, speaks with Lt. Col. J.P. Moszer (Baghdad Area Office OIC) and Lt. Col. Culen Robinson (GRC HQ Chief of Operations) during a visit June 22. Col. Debra Lewis shows Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp the photo board depicting GRC's team of professionals. He mentioned it in his comments during a town hall meeting later that day.





**Col. Lewis views
Al Asad projects**



Abraham's Oasis

Col. Debra M. Lewis visited Al Asad Resident Office June 10-12. She viewed project sites on the Air Base, including PMI's LSA Montezuma with ConRep Dorothy Ivey, the ITAS Asphalt Batch Plant and PMI Working Dog Facility with Resident Engineer James Worthington, and the EMTA Trash Incinerator Facility MILCON site. She also talked with 2nd Marine Air Wing Al Asad Air Boss, Col Mark Bamberger; Regimental Combat Team TWO Regimental Commander, Col H. Stacy Clardy; U.S. State Department's Al Anbar/AO Denver Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team Leader, SES-3 Stephen McFarland; II MAW G-4, Col Donald Hales; and 226th ASG Commander, COL David S. White and staff. During a 48-hour field visit, the Colonel inspected ongoing work at the Rawah "Qatha" Primary Healthcare Center (bottom photo, left) and the Hit "Hai Al Bakr" Primary Healthcare Center (top photo, left). While in Rawah, she spoke with 1st LAR Battalion XO, Major Hezekiah Barge; and was accompanied to the Hit PHC by 5/10 Civil Affairs Team Leader Capt Patrick Eldridge.

During Abraham's journey from Ur to Haran (Genesis 11:31), villagers in western Iraq believe he stopped to drink water and washed his feet at a spring at Al Asad. The Euphrates river is located 8 kilometers east. The Arabic name of the oasis is "Eyen Al Asad," which means "Spring of the Lion," a name derived from a time when the area was a forested wilderness with all kinds of wild animals, including lions. From about the 1920's, this area was a village that had been inhabited by six large Iraqi families until 1985, when President Saddam Hussein decided to turn the area into an Iraqi Air Base. So the Iraqi Gov't, under Saddam's leadership, evicted all of the people that had been living there the previous 4-plus generations.



Ike Borja, Navy Chief Tim Hedglin, and Jose Gonzalez barbecue hamburgers and hot dogs for the special holiday occasion marking America's independence.

GRC staff celebrates 4th of July



Cheryl Parks, Frank Kelly, and Kim Pugh



Chris Mansfield, Eric Peterson, and Troy Rolan



Roy Brase, Roger Nowicki, and Tom Anderson



Maj. Ed Liu, Lt. Col. J.P. Moszer, and Sgt. 1st Class Robert Stallcup



Wenda McGilberry and Navy Senior Chief Wydena Mosley



Shirwan Aran and Derya Smith



Desmond Brumfield



Jose Marrero and Jeffrey Jones



Cherita Williams

**Volleyball action
part of 4th of July
GRC holiday fun**



Sgt. 1st Class Robert Stallcup



Neil O'Sullivan battles Lt. Col. Quay Jones at the net.



Gurkhas await their turn at volleyball.



Tom Manok



Shirwan Aran



Navy Chief Tim Hedglin



Staff Sgt. Tyler Schmoker



Col. Debra Lewis



Lt. Col. Culen Robinson



Russ Wood



Rock Island connection

Col. Debra M. Lewis, USACE Gulf Region Division Central District Commander, on a visit to her Ramadi Resident Office had a chance to talk with Project Engineers Bob Balamut (left) and Jim Sager. All three have a Rock Island connection. Balamut is a Lockmaster at T.J. O'Brien Lock & Dam, Sager is an Electrician for Upper Mississippi Maintenance Unit, and Col. Lewis's father, LTG (Ret) Bennett L. Lewis, served as Commander, U.S. Army Armament Command at Rock Island from September 1975 to January 1977.



Iraqi Police Training Center Barracks, Fallujah

Col. Debra Lewis and Col. Robert Vasta traveled to Fallujah Forward Operating Base (FOB) July 7. They stopped at the Multi-National Force West (MNF-West) Headquarters, and made an office call with Col. Holden, MNF-West Chief of Staff. Next, they visited the Aegis Operations Center and spoke to the operations officer and his staff. They also viewed ongoing work on office and housing facilities at the Iraqi Police Training Center on Camp Fallujah. The work, being performed by Al Folathey Co., consists of renovating two buildings to accommodate up to 150 short-term residents. Project Engineer Paul Kosterman and Major Benje Jackson led the tour of the \$408,544 project (URI 46145) that is currently 38% finished. Before leaving the Fallujah FOB, Col. Lewis spoke with members of Al Anbar Area Office and Fallujah Resident Office, introducing Col. Vasta, and thanking the staff for the significant work they were overseeing in helping rebuild Iraq.





Village to get fresh water

Lt. Col. Quay Jones, Maj. Ed Liu and Sgt. 1st Class Robert Stallcup from the Baghdad Area Office visited First Kurtan Village water purification project in southern Baghdad to check on progress of the \$407,249 project. Al Firgan Co. of Baghdad is installing a 50 cu. meter per hour compact water unit along with water mains connecting that facility to the community that will serve 80,000 residents including the youths shown above.. The project is 37% finished. (Photos by Maj. Ed Liu)

Postcards from Iraq

Finding your true calling

**By Cherita Williams
Philadelphia District**

I'm a humanitarian. I like helping people.

I had some concerns about deploying to a war zone but a couple of my co-workers in Philadelphia (Jenifer Bordelon and Lane Gary) who both have served in Iraq assured me I'd have no regrets. Jenifer said, "If you go, you'll find it's the best thing you could do." She was right.

I'm part of a great team, a family of professionals who are all working hard to get this job done. I'm making memories every day, interacting with Iraqis and helping them build a better life for their children and grandchildren. We're awarding contracts to renovate schools, pave roads, rebuild electric substations, upgrade sewer pump stations and water networks, canal cleaning, and opening new health clinics.

Iraqi contractors, despite the dangers, continue to step forward eager to help improve their communities. Their courage is remarkable. This is the best assignment I've had in 20 years government service and I'm enjoying every minute of it.

I've had great support from my co-workers stateside and my family. My son Jerome was very understanding and said, "Mom, if this is something you really want to do, I'm behind you."

It's an awesome assignment and there's no holding me back now ... this is my true calling. We're making a difference here and I'm grateful to be able to say I was part of this important moment in Iraq's history.

**Cherita Williams, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Gulf Region Division Central District**



Contract Specialist Cherita Williams

**GRC staff says
goodbye to Col. Lewis**



CSM Orville Wang presents USACE flag signed by GRC staff as they bid farewell to Col. Lewis.



CDR Steven Frost, GRC's Deputy Commander.



Baghdad Area Engineer Frank Kelly



LTC Culen Robinson, GRC Chief of Operations



Victory Area Engineer Terry Steuart



GRC Chief of Contracting Sherry Gaylor

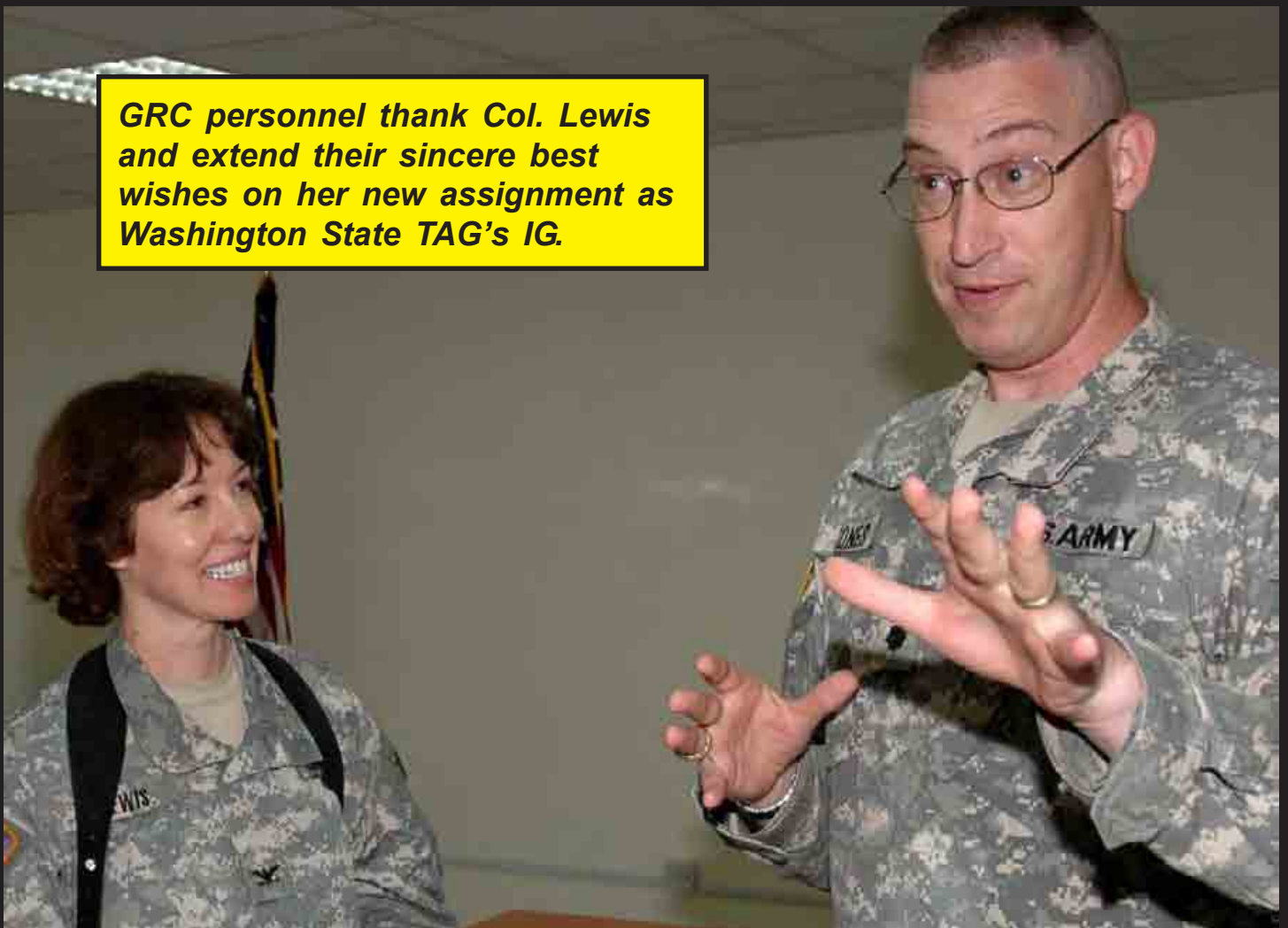


Admin Asst. Debra Ramirez



Gene and Janet Embry

GRC personnel thank Col. Lewis and extend their sincere best wishes on her new assignment as Washington State TAG's IG.



LTC Quay Jones recalls a humorous story from Col. Lewis early days in Iraq.



**GRC hosts
Change of Command**

**High
visibility**

Four two-star and three one-star generals were among those on the front row at GRC's Change of Command ceremony July 14. They included, left to right, MG James Simmons (MNC-I/DCG), MG Darryl Scott (JCC-I/A CG), MG Walter Gaskin (MNF-W CG), MG James Snyder (99th RC CG with ITAO), BG Vincent Brooks (MND-B DCG), BG Michael Silva (411th En Bde CO), BG Edward Cardon (3ID/DCG). Also on the front row were Dr. Lester Dixon (GRD Director of Programs) and Donn Booker (Director of Business Management).



Col. Debra Lewis, as GRC's outgoing Commander, passes the organizational colors to BG Michael Walsh.



Col. Lewis, BG Walsh, and Col. Vasta.



BG Michael Walsh passes the organizational colors to incoming GRC Commander, Col. Robert Vasta.



Bronze Star Medal

BG Michael J. Walsh presents the Bronze Star Medal to GRC Commander Debra M. Lewis preceding the Change of Command ceremony July 14 as she concluded a 13-month tour in Iraq. The citation reads in part: "As the Senior Engineer Commander responsible for reconstruction in the Al Anbar and Baghdad Provinces, she successfully executed more than 1400 projects worth \$2.9 billion through a comprehensive and synchronized reconstruction program. Col. Lewis significantly improved the lives of the Iraqi people and provided an economic foundation for growth to the newly established government of Iraq."



Color Guard

GRC's Color Guard, commanded by CSM Orville Wang, included SSG Tyler Schmoker, Navy Senior Chief Wydena Mosley, SFC Robert Stallcup, SSG Katrail Smith, and Navy Chief Tim Hedglin.



Col. Robert Vasta cuts the cake.



Col. Lewis thanks the 1st Cavalry Division Band for their participation.



MG James Simmons, MNC-I DCG



1st Cav Division Band



Ike Borja, Jose Gonzalez, and Desmond Brumfield marinated and grilled steaks for the Change of Command luncheon.

Postcards from Iraq

Providing Iraqis hope for a better tomorrow

By Brian Souter, USACE, GRC Contract Specialist

I'm concluding my second deployment to Iraq this month, this time as a civilian. Last year I was a soldier with the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment out of Ft. Carson, CO, and participated in the major battle at Tal Afar known as Operation Restore Rights that cleared that city of insurgents.

For this tour, I worked as a Contract Specialist with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers whose mission is helping rebuild this country, giving the Iraq people tangible signs that their government is working and things are getting better. Whether it's renovating a hospital, installing new water and sewer lines, building courthouses, putting in new electrical distribution networks, constructing neighborhood primary healthcare centers, these are civil works projects that not only improve the day-to-day life of local families here but gives the younger generation hope for a better tomorrow. Our effort will pay dividends for decades to come.

The very first contract I worked on was the construction of a school in southern Baghdad Province. That \$729,000 project calls for the demolition of the existing 576-square-meter building, replacing it with a new two-story 921-square-meter masonry structure in Yousifiya. I'm confident students there and their parents will appreciate that investment.

I was also involved with the overhead protection structures safeguarding our dining facilities from incoming mortar attacks. Now our soldiers can eat in relative peace knowing they're protected from indirect fire, a real threat especially at some of our Forward Operating Bases.

There's no question, this is a demanding assignment. You're separated from family, no weekends off, and you are in a war zone. You have to be flexible because change is constant – that's the nature of our business. I plan to encourage people stateside to consider volunteering for a tour here. We're making a difference and you walk away with a real sense of accomplishment.

GRC's Contracting Section was tight knit, everyone looked out for each other, they became my extended family, morale was great, and I made some lifelong friends. In 2005 I was among the last units to deploy with their own stateside equipment. We drove from Iraq's southern border through the entire country to its northern border with Turkey. I met and talked with Iraqis all along the way. I've seen how they lived and how they work. I'm grateful for the opportunity to help and wish them my best.

Brian Souter, Contract Specialist, St. Paul District



*Contract Specialist
Brian Souter,
St. Paul District*



Heather McDonnell, Maria Otero, and Brian Souter are accompanied by an Iraqi guard on a tour of Iraq's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the Baghdad International Zone.

To view GRC's 65 post cards, go to <http://www.grd.usace.army.mil/news/postcards/index.asp>

ARRIVING MEMBERS



*MICHAEL D. BAUM
QA Rep
IZ Resident Office
Amman, Jordan - SBH*



*MAJ. DAVID NOBLE
OIC
Victory Resident Office
Victory PW Office
West Point, NY*



*PENNY COULON
Construction Rep
Victory Resident Office
Sacramento District*



*LCDR JEFFREY MCCOY
OIC
Al Asad Office
NAVFAC Washington*



New fire station opens in Kharma, Al Anbar Province.

Al Anbar residents welcome new fire station, water treatment facilities

Despite ongoing insurgent turmoil in some tough Iraqi neighborhoods, a North Dakota soldier is seeing a number of projects take shape helping residents there.

Master Sgt. Kevin Mayer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers oversaw the completion of a new fire station last week for Kharma, a city of 75,000 residents near Fallujah. He says the Kharma Fire Chief is thrilled to have that additional capability and three new fire fighting trucks are scheduled to be delivered soon.



That community has two fire stations, an older one in the northeast corner of town, and the newer one now serving residents on the south side where the city's industrial area is also located. "The fire chief is pleased with the quality of construction and the quicker response time two fire stations now offer," Mayer said. About a half-dozen fire fighters are expected to man the facility on a full-time basis.

The \$400,000 project included the construction of a 16x25-meter masonry structure with two bays for four vehicles, sleeping quarters, a kitchen, office, conference room, and emergency generator. With 28 years service, Mayer is a member of the North Dakota National Guard's 34th Infantry Division and began his one-year deployment in April.

His workload also includes supervising the installation of 22 rural water treatment facilities in Al Anbar Province of which four were completed this week. "Potable water is now available in communities ranging in size from 2,500 to 10,000 residents. Their only choice before was taking raw water directly from canals or the Euphrates River posing serious health risks. This is the kind of work I was hoping to be involved with, improving the lives of Iraqi families."

Mayer knows something about meeting people's needs. In his civilian career, he's been the Public Works Supervisor for 16 years at Casselton, ND, a town of 2,200 residents. He's in charge of the city's water and sewer system, road work, park repairs, and trash/garbage pickup. "There's something very satisfying in working through the challenges and assisting others."

Mayer says his wife Fran and two daughters, Brittany 18, and Brooke 14, are concerned about his deployment to a war zone but are proud of what he's doing in helping rebuild Iraq. He sincerely appreciates the unwavering support Casselton is providing, especially those in his department who have stepped up and are filling in while he's away.

