

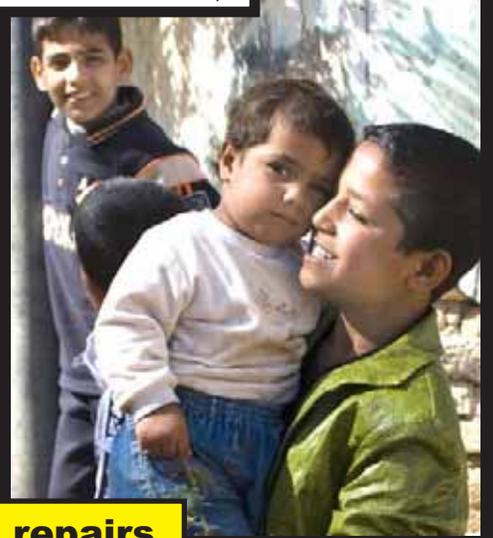
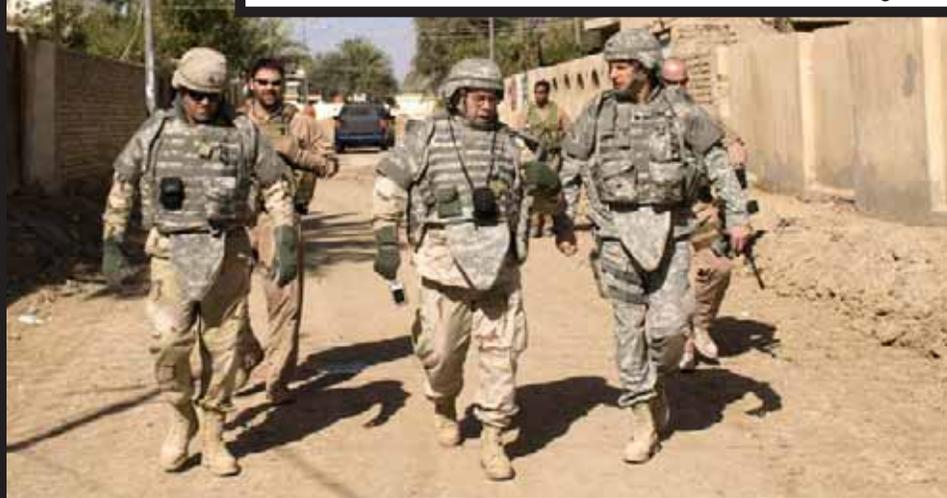


NEWS



MAR 2009

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



Residents happy with road repairs



Local residents of Al Tameem District in Diwaniyah greet U.S. Army Corps of Engineers representatives Lt. Col. John Osborn, Construction Representatives Earnie Mendenhall and Barry Campbell who stopped by to view ongoing work on a \$2.17 million project there paving sections of 36 roads. Residents said they are happy their neighborhood was selected for the needed repairs. The project began in December and is expected to be completed next fall.

Al Jumhoury PHC opens



Provincial Reconstruction Team Leader Michael Klecheski (L) and Diwaniyah's Director General of Health Dr. Abdulameer al-Obaidy (R) officially marked the opening of Al Jumhoury Primary Healthcare Clinic during a March 8 ribbon cutting ceremony. (USACE photo by Alicia Embrey)

Diwaniyah welcomes new primary healthcare center

By Alicia Embrey
Gulf Region Division South District

DIWANIYAH, Iraq – Local townspeople, Iraqi and American officials joined together March 8 to mark the opening of the new \$475,000 Al Jumhoury Primary Healthcare Clinic in Diwaniyah.

During the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Dr. Abdulameer al-Obaidy, Diwaniyah's Director General of Health, thanked the local Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and the Iraqi contractor for their efforts in building such a quality facility.

Ahmed A. Razak, USACE's Senior Iraqi Deputy Resident Engineer, pointed out that the state-of-the-art clinic includes four doctors' offices with adjoining exam

rooms, two dental exam rooms, an x-ray room, a laboratory, a pharmacy, two treatment rooms, and a classroom. "It is designed to provide basic medical care for this neighborhood's 15,000 residents and offers advanced diagnostic and monitoring capabilities for acute and chronic illnesses," he added.



"Building this clinic took cooperation, courage and resolve, especially on the part of those Iraqis who helped design the project, oversaw its construction and did the hard work of building it," said Michael Klecheski, the Team Leader for Diwaniyah's PRT.

"Constructing facilities such as this one required a partnership between Iraq and the United States," he added. "May this clinic always stand as a symbol of what working together can accomplish."

Al Jumhoury PHC opens



The March 8 ribbon cutting ceremony officially opening the Al Jumhoury Primary Healthcare Center in Diwaniyah was covered Iraqi media including *Aswat al-Iraq*, *al-Sabah*, *al-Salam*, *Diwaniyah Today Newspaper*, and the *Associated Press*. Dr. Abdulameer al-Obaidy (Diwaniyah's Director General of Health), Michael Klecheski (Provincial Reconstruction Team leader), and Lt. Col. Dwight Davies with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provided remarks and were interviewed by the reporters. The state-of-the-art \$475,000 clinic includes four doctors' offices with adjoining exam rooms, two dental exam rooms, an x-ray room, a laboratory, a pharmacy, two treatment rooms, and a classroom. (USACE photo by Alicia Embrey)



An Iraqi woman holds her son after getting a checkup at the new Al Jumhoury Primary Healthcare Clinic in Diwaniyah Province. The new \$475,000 facility will provide much needed basic medical care to a neighborhood of about 15,000 people in Diwaniyah. (USACE photos by Alicia Embrey)



Children playing outside of the clinic said they were happy it was built in their neighborhood. Adel (center) said he was wearing the surgical mask because he wants to be a doctor.

Basra CSI gets forensic lab upgrade

By A. Al Bahrani

BASRA, Iraq – Basra crime scene investigators are now working out of a modernized forensic laboratory thanks to a \$263,000 renovation that was completed Feb. 22.

“I’m very pleased with the new capabilities our renovated Basra Criminal Evidence Department Laboratory offers,” said Iraqi Police Capt. Bassim. “This is the first time in ten years our facility has been upgraded. The five-month project increased the tools we have available to effectively analyze crime scene evidence and solve crimes,” he added.

“The completed project provides Basra a great facility to conduct criminal forensics,” said Project Engineer Arthur Davey with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who oversaw the work. “The evidence they collect at a crime scene, such as DNA, fingerprints, fiber, and ballistics, can now be processed in a clean, efficient workplace with improved equipment and fixtures safeguarding the integrity of their findings,” he pointed out.

Robert Vanoer, USACE Basra Area Engineer, said this project represents an important step toward developing a strong rule of law in Basra and in Iraq. Apart from the forensic lab, Vanoer and his staff are overseeing 27 other construction projects in Basra Province valued at nearly \$336 million including courthouses, police stations, water treatment, new medical facilities, and vocational training.



Iraqi Police Maj. Raed Faleh was among those doing a final inspection Feb. 22 of the renovation work upgrading the Basra Criminal Evidence Department laboratory.



Iraqi Police Maj. Raed Faleh, DNA investigator with the Basra Crime Evidence Department, checks the new fume exhaust hood installed as part of a \$263,000 upgrade of the forensic laboratory there.

(USACE photo by A. Al Bahrani)

ARRIVING MEMBERS



CPT JOSHUA WILSON
Shaiba
Project Engineer
USACE HQ
Washington, D.C.



ROBERT PEEL
GRS HQ RM
Program Analyst
Galveston District



DANNY WYATT
GRS HQ
Incoming Safety Manager
Galveston District



**NAVY CHIEF
MICHA MAKUCH**
Operations NCO
Afghanistan



TOM MULLENHOUR
Engineer Tech
Diwaniyah
Louisville District
Twinsburg, OH

DEPARTING MEMBERS



DEE EDWARDS
GRS RM
Program Analyst
Mobile District



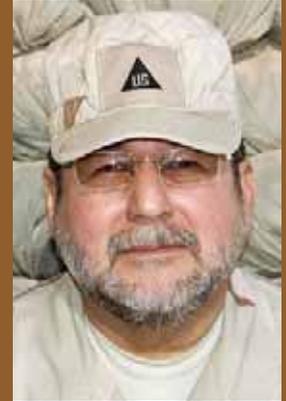
ERIC GILLESPIE
Adder Area Office
Construction Rep
Little Rock District



DENVER GILLESPIE
Adder Area Office
Construction Rep
Little Rock District



TOMMY NASON
Wasit Resident Office
Construction Rep
Huntsville Center
Home - Greenwood, MS



JOHN DE LOS SANTOS
Camp Echo - Qadisiyah
Resident Office
Construction Rep
Ft. Sam Houston, TX

Postcards from Iraq

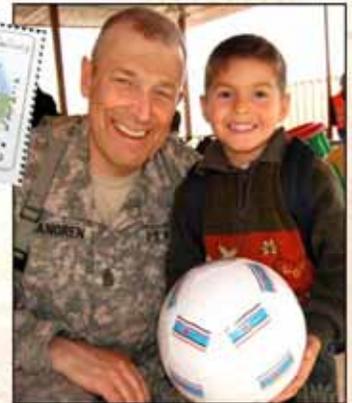
Destination Iraq

By Command Sgt. Maj. Michael L. Sangren

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

When I volunteered to come to Iraq with the US Army Corps of Engineers as a mobilized Army Reservist I was wondering what I would be doing. Being an Army Corps civilian, I knew my civilian job; however, I was coming to Iraq as a Command Sergeant Major. Stateside district offices have no enlisted soldiers; however, in Iraq, districts do have soldiers. So I was faced with the same question as many people who come to Iraq, What the heck am I getting into?

I began to see what I had gotten into as I started working as the CSM. In a military unit, I am the senior enlisted person, and the unit is predominately enlisted soldiers and my task is to take care of soldiers. However, here in Gulf Region South (GRS), only 25% of the district personnel are military, and of that only 30% are enlisted. So one might think, Oh Yea, easy job only a small handful of soldiers — this is going to be a piece of cake. It is far from a piece of cake but it is without a doubt the most exciting and important job I have had in 37 years of military service. What makes it exciting are the people in GRS. The civilians are all volunteers, who have nice comfortable jobs in the states, but have given up the comforts of home to come halfway around the world, into an environment totally unfamiliar to them. They are also the friendliest and outgoing group of people I've ever worked or lived with — always upbeat, and willing to help out with anything. They are also extremely professional and mission focused — we only have about 100 civilians and our workload is about 139 active projects so everybody has to do their job plus. The military is a minority here in GRS. With only about 32 assigned, they come from a wide variety of backgrounds — Active Duty, Reserve, Army, Air Force, and Navy — they're all here to support their country, many serving on their 2nd or 3rd war zone deployment. With a few exceptions, they're doing jobs that are only remotely related to their normal military functions. However, this has not slowed them down — they have learned from their predecessor and continue to support the mission in an exceptional manner. Every one in GRS, from the administrative assistants to the Commander, wants to be here — the spirit of cooperation is so thick I feel I could cut it, box it, and sell it on EBay. However, there are reminders that this is a combat zone, and a dangerous place. We work long hours and living quarters are tight, so I have made every one in GRS my soldier. To help relieve the stress, we do a lot of fun stuff — karaoke, BBQ's, volleyball, softball, ping



Saying hello to an Iraqi youngster during a school visit in February.



GRS hosted a visit by 5 and 6-year-old students from Nasiriyah and handed out toys, soccer balls, and school supplies.

pong, movie night on the patio, even cigar nights by the fire pit — to name only a few. Moreover, everybody pitches in to help wherever they can, with the end effect we become a family, away from our own families. We say goodbye a lot, and there is an occasional teary eye, but we also say hello and welcome to our newcomers, and it is truly heartfelt. I now know what a great assignment this has proved to be, and the old Army adage "Never Volunteer for Anything" could not be more wrong. We're overseeing a ton of meaningful and historical work, and some of the greatest people in the world are here on our team making a difference.



GRD CSM Richard Prater and GRS CSM Sangren view construction progress at a project near Nasiriyah.

Shaiba Location Command



About 350 local Iraqis are on the construction crew building the new \$38.9 million Shaiba Location Command in Basra. The project is scheduled to be completed this spring. (USACE photos by A. Al Bahrani)

Porterfield helps build Iraqi Army's capabilities

by John Connor

Mark Porterfield is headed back to Las Vegas after a six-month deployment to Iraq with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

At home, Porterfield is a U.S. Air Force civilian employee, serving with the 99th Civil Engineering Squadron at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada as their Hazardous Waste Program Manager. He has been a resident of Las Vegas for close to 40 years.

Porterfield served as a project engineer with USACE's Gulf Region South District, overseeing \$50 million in construction projects at the Iraqi Army's Shaiba facility located near Basra.

That work is part of the ongoing effort to enhance the capabilities of the Iraqi Army. It includes the new Shaiba Location Command (\$38 million), the Regional Command Battalion (\$12 million), and an Ammunition Supply Point (\$700,000).

Porterfield was proud to point out the Shaiba Location Command is scheduled to be completed later this spring. "The Iraqi contractor is making great progress." That project, where 1,000 Iraqi soldiers will be based, includes dozens of new structures including barracks, warehouses, a headquarters facility, fueling depot, ammunition supply point, a dining facility, bakery, ice plant, laundry, barber shop, medical clinic, and fire station. "The Shaiba Location Command will ensure Iraqi Army units operating in the area get the supplies they need so they can achieve

their primary mission of safeguarding local neighborhoods," Porterfield noted. "We're making a difference. It's great to see the pride local Iraqi construction workers exhibit every day at the job site. Of those I've talked to, they're obviously happy to be part of this effort and it's important work that will benefit Basra for years to come."

Porterfield says he came over because he wanted to help in the rebuilding efforts, experience construction in a wartime effort, and, not being prior military, in some way do his part.

"I've really enjoyed the interaction and true friends I've made including the Iraqi engineers who are part of our GRS staff and courageously visit those projects on their own every day unaccompanied," he said. "I'm sure we'll keep in contact long after I return home."

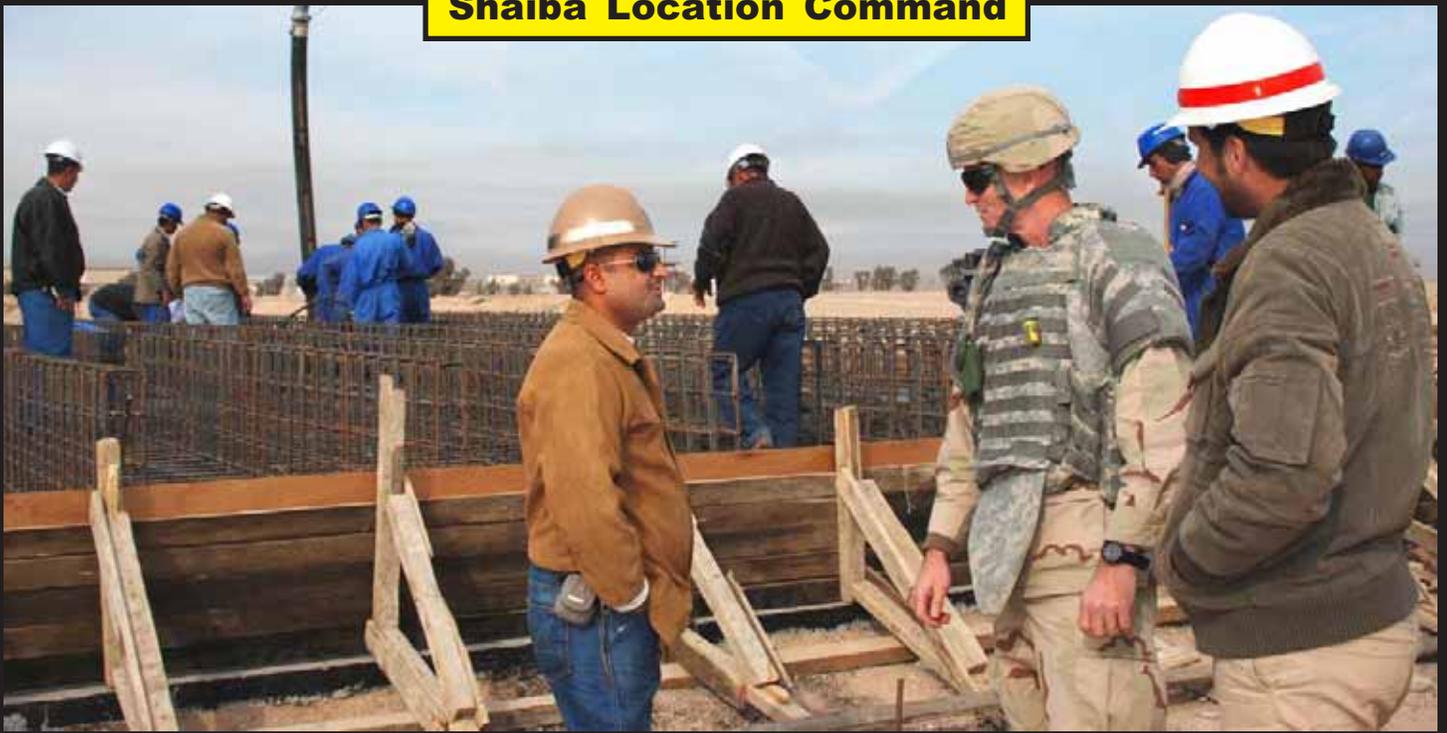


GRS Project Engineer Mark Porterfield visits Dar Al-Amal, a hearing-impaired school in Basra to hand out toys.

Porterfield said one of the highlights of his tour was visiting a school in Basra for hearing-impaired children. "It touched your heart. We met with the children and handed out stuffed animals and soccer balls. My GRS co-workers plan to sort of adopt the school and help out in different ways," he said. "Visiting that school gave each of us a first-hand glimpse of why we're all working so hard on this historic mission."

Porterfield is returning to his wife of nearly 20 years and two teenage sons, 16 and 13.

Shaiba Location Command



Project Engineer Mark Porterfield checks construction progress at the new \$38 million Shaiba Location Command.



Local Iraqi construction workers place concrete for a water storage tank at the new \$38 million Iraqi Army Shaiba Location Command facility being build near Basra.



Smiles everywhere at Dar Al-Amal school for hearing-impaired students as USACE personnel stop by.

Basra Regional Courthouse opens



Ribbon cutting

Iraqi Judiciary Commission Chairman Medhatt Al Mahmoud, Iraqi Ministry of Transportation Amir Abduljabbar, Basra Governor Mohamad El Wa'eli, Basra Chief Justice Laith Abdul Sammad cut the ceremonial ribbon opening the 11,000-sq.-meter Basra Regional Courthouse Feb. 26. (USACE photo by A. Al Bahrani)

Basra's new courthouse bolsters Iraq's rule of law

By A. Al Bahrani

BASRA, Iraq – Iraqi officials hosted a ribbon cutting of its new \$10.9 million 11,000-sq.-meter two-story regional courthouse Feb. 26.

“Opening this facility is an important step,” said Iraqi Judiciary Commission Chairman Medhatt Al Mahmoud. “We had just 500 judges in Iraq in 2003, and now we have about 1500 judges. Our judicial system has made significant progress in the past four years,” he continued.

“Judicial independence is critical to a stable social structure. The rule of law is a prerequisite for political stability, economic development and public confidence in public institutions,” he added.

Among the hundreds of people attending the event were Basra Governor Mohamad El Wa'eli, Multi-National Division – South East Commander Maj. Gen. Andy Salmon, Basra Chief Justice Laith Abdul Sammad, Iraqi Security Forces, other Coalition members and local media.

Basra Governor Mohamad El Wa'eli said, “We are gathered here today to open an important project that will significantly establish the rule of law not only in Basra Province, but in Iraq.

This facility will play a very critical role in achieving justice and equality for our Iraqi society.”

Judge Laith said. “This magnificent project could not have been completed without the support of the U.S. Government and specifically the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.”

The courthouse includes four main 90-sq.-meter courtrooms, three 50-sq.-meter courtrooms, and 248 smaller offices for judges, judge deputies, and administrative personnel. It includes a 1600-sq. meter witness protection facility, two cafeterias, five elevators, and six small kiosks for food vendors.

USACE Construction representative Keith Adams pointed out, “The contractor, Al Dayer United Construction, is from Basra, and I know first hand the extra work, effort, and love, he put into the courthouse. He wanted to build a structure that would stand for generations. His crew made many sacrifices, and took great risks to themselves and their families because they believed in what they were doing,” he added.

“Seeing the Basra community so excited about their new courthouse, and knowing I played a small part touches my heart in a big way. It's times like this that make our job so worthwhile,” Adams concluded.

Basra Regional Courthouse opens



Basra's new Regional Courthouse officially opened during a ribbon cutting ceremony Feb. 26. Shown above are Engineer Al (Basra Deputy Area Engineer), Construction Rep. Keith Adams, Maj. "Coach" Wright (Basra Area Office Ops Officer), Dr. Thair Khamees (Manager at Al Dayer United Construction) and Maj. Fred Owens (Basra PRT Engineer).



Basra Governor Mohamad El Wa'eli addresses attendees at the Feb. 26 opening ceremony for Basra's new Regional Courthouse. (USACE photos by A. Al Bahrani)

New Diwaniyah girls high school



Shakir Ne'ma abid-own (Director General of Education for Diwaniyah Province, far right) and Provincial Reconstruction Team lead Michael Klecheski (center, blue shirt and blue tie) were among those officiating at the opening ceremony Feb. 26 for a new \$1.2 million Secondary School for Girls in Diwaniyah. (USACE photos by Alicia Embrey)

Diwaniyah opens new Secondary School for Girls

By Alicia Embrey

DIWANIYAH, Iraq.— Female students in Diwaniyah have something to celebrate thanks to the unveiling of a new secondary school for girls.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at the Al Irshad Secondary School for Girls Feb. 26 to celebrate the completion of the new \$1.2 million facility.

Speakers included the Shakir Ne'ma abid-own (Director General of Education for Diwaniyah Province), Diwaniyah Provincial Reconstruction Team lead Michael Klecheski and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Diwaniyah-Najaf Resident Office officer in charge Lt. Col. Dwight Davies.

Shakir thanked everyone involved with the project for their efforts saying it was quite an achievement. "We need more schools like this because most lack such good construction," he added.

Klecheski pointed out that "in Iraq, in the United States, in every society that I know of, education is among the things people value most for their children. And so, we come here today to celebrate the opening of a new school. We celebrate a school in whose classrooms and hallways young women will be able to develop into productive members of the new Iraq that is growing around us all."

The new 12-classroom multi-level school includes a laboratory, library, storage rooms, and administrative buildings for 360 students. Iraqi contractor Al-Kahlaa Company began the project in December 2007 and employed 50 local men on his crew.

"Construction of this new school was itself a reflection of that new Iraq," Klecheski continued. "It took courage and determination to bring it to completion, especially on the part of those Iraqis who did the work, oversaw it, and brought us to this day. The United States of America is proud to have played its part in

financing the project, in working closely with the Iraqi engineers and builders, and in seeing it through to its completion. May this school always stand as a symbol of partnership between our countries," he added.

Lt. Col. Davies said, "We are making a difference – you can see it in the smiles of the local residents who are diligently working everyday to provide a brighter future for their children and grandchildren. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its partners are building strong today to help Iraq move forward for tomorrow."

Lt. Col. Davies' USACE team is currently overseeing 23 other construction valued at nearly \$70 million including police stations, schools, roads, electrical distribution, and new medical facilities.



Iraqi students and teachers were among those participating in a ribbon cutting ceremony for a new Secondary School for Girls in Diwaniyah Feb. 26.

New Diwaniyah girls high school



Students participating in a ribbon cutting ceremony Feb. 26 in Diwaniyah all wore a badge that said, "Secondary School for Brilliant Girls" for the new \$1.2 million facility that was officially opened.

Basra Children's Hospital



GRD's Richard Hancock and Col. Peter Mattes



Ken Bright and Lt. Col. David Berczek

Basra Children's Hospital Working Group met March 11-12 at the Basra Area Office with Dr. Ahmed Hamza in charge of the agenda. The \$165.6 million project is approaching the transition phase when Iraqi Ministry of Health staff will start moving in, a soft opening is scheduled for this fall, and it will be fully operational next year. This project will provide the only state-of-the-art pediatric specialist hospital in Iraq and will serve as not only a tertiary care center focused on childhood cancers, but will also become a training facility capable of improving and expanding the training of health professionals throughout Iraq. The project demonstrates how partnering efforts are making a big difference with Project Hope providing over \$30 million for medical

staff training and medical equipment, United Nations Development Fund through a grant from the Government of Spain for \$22 million, and \$9.8 million from the Iraqi Ministry of Health. Components of the project include a 172,000-sq-ft. two-story children's hospital, mechanical and electrical plants, a staff dormitory, medical waste treatment plant, oxygen generation plant, autoclave building, medical supply warehouse, back-up generators, roads/parking, and landscaping on the 13-acre site. Among the 8,000 pieces of equipment will be a high energy linear accelerator, computerized tomography, ultrasound, and fluoroscopy units. Once in full operation, it will employ in excess of 1,000 professionals and supporting staff.

DEPARTING MEMBERS



SGT DANIELLE COLSON
Supply NCO
Washington, D.C.
Hometown - Cobb, GA



COLLEEN HICKEY
Dhi Qar
Resident Engineer
San Francisco District



**NAVY SENIOR CHIEF
JOE CHRISTIAN**
Operations NCO
USS Farragut (DDG-99)
Mayport, FL



TOM EIDSON
E&C Chief
Savannah District



JASON JOSEPH
IT Specialist
43rd Signal Battalion
Heidelberg, Germany

Postcards from Iraq

Iraq duty — many great memories

By Vicky Cummings, Administrative Asst.
Gulf Region Division South District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



I am very proud to be on the US Army Corp of Engineers Gulf Region South team in Iraq. I've enjoyed meeting and working with a wonderfully diverse and multi-talented group of people. Having been given such an opportunity and to be deployed with my husband, Jerry, will always be a happy, unique memory that I feel extremely fortunate to have shared with him. After all, not everyone can say they've worked in Iraq and Afghanistan with their spouse.

The Iraqi people that I've had the pleasure of working with are extremely kind and humble — each longing to fulfill dreams, provide a better life for their children, and live in peace. Iraqis are working side-by-side with our USACE staff helping rebuild this war-torn country. They're learning construction processes, developing safety plans, and gaining other important skills making them more marketable and productive.

In this vast world, some people are more fortunate than others, as are some countries in which we are born, but hearts and hands working together can make things change. We are all created human and all have the same basic needs in life.

I have several fond memories of my time in Iraq. Two in particular touched my heart. Our visit to the sacred 4000 year old Ziggurat, home of Prophet Abraham, in the ancient City of Ur. Sharing this opportunity with Jerry, walking together on the land deemed the Cradle of Civilization, was the chance of a lifetime, a spiritual delight that not many Americans will ever experience.

My second fond memory was the day school children from the Nasiriyah Mama Suna Primary school came to visit our GRS HQ Compound. Seeing sweet smiles beaming on innocence little faces and watching the wonder in their eyes while they tasted "American style" foods was so much fun. These children and the generations to come are the future hope for a more prosperous country. A country filled with freedom, education and peace.

There are so many good-hearted USACE people who are willing to unselfishly face personal and cultural challenges, dedicated to working together in the spirit of true humanity. I wish the best to all those USACE employees who remain and those who are to come. Stay safe and enjoy the journey.



Vicky & Jerry Cummings see the Ziggurat in the ancient city of Ur,



Vicky Cummings visits with students from Nasiriyah.

**GRS PRT Engineers
exchange ideas**



PRT engineers from Iraq's nine southern provinces participate in their first quarterly conference March 3-5.



Forat Area Office OIC LTC John Osborn



Muthanna PRT Deputy Team Lead Adel Fadel



Dhi Qar PRT
Deputy Team Lead Ted Lyng



LTC William Burruss, 555th Engineer
Brigade's Civil Capacity Construction Sector



Najaf PRT Engineer
CPT Dan Elliott

GRS PRT Engineers exchange ideas



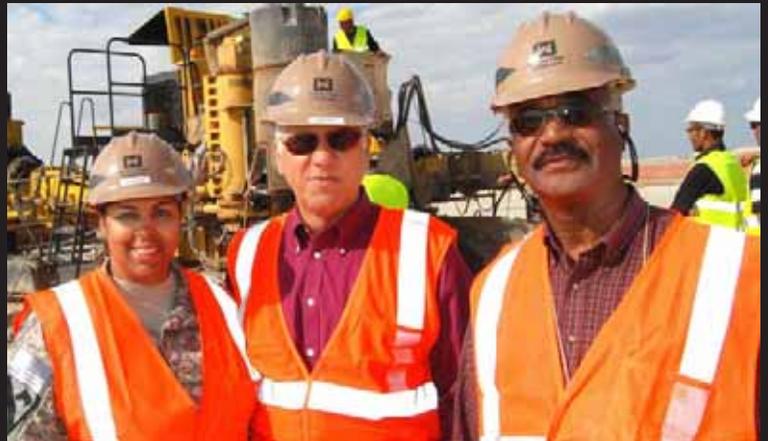
**Basra PRT Engineer
MAJ Fred Owens**



GRS HQ hosted the first quarterly conference of PRT Engineers from Iraq's nine southern provinces March 3-5. All attending had an opportunity to interact, exchange ideas, and discuss ways to better meet their mission. They visited the Dhi Qar PRT training facility at Camp Mittica near Tallil Air Base where Dr. Michael Bunning gave them a tour of a state-of-the-art mobile surgical suite donated by the Italian government where Iraqi doctors get training including cleft palate and cleft lip operations during "Smile Train." They also viewed the \$58.5 million Combat Aviation Brigade Beddown project where concrete is being placed round-the-clock for 75 acres of contingency airfield parking for rotary and medium-load fixed wing aircraft.



**Babil Resident Office OIC Maj. Brent Bush
and Project Manager Joni Hibbard**



**Maysan PRT Engineer Maj. Melanie Duger (left),
Muthanna PRT Deputy Team Lead Adel Fadel,
Dhi Qar/Muthanna PRT Engineer Art Patterson**



**Wasit Resident Office OIC and
PRT Engineer Maj. David Fedroff.
E&C Deputy Maj. Curt Decker (right)**

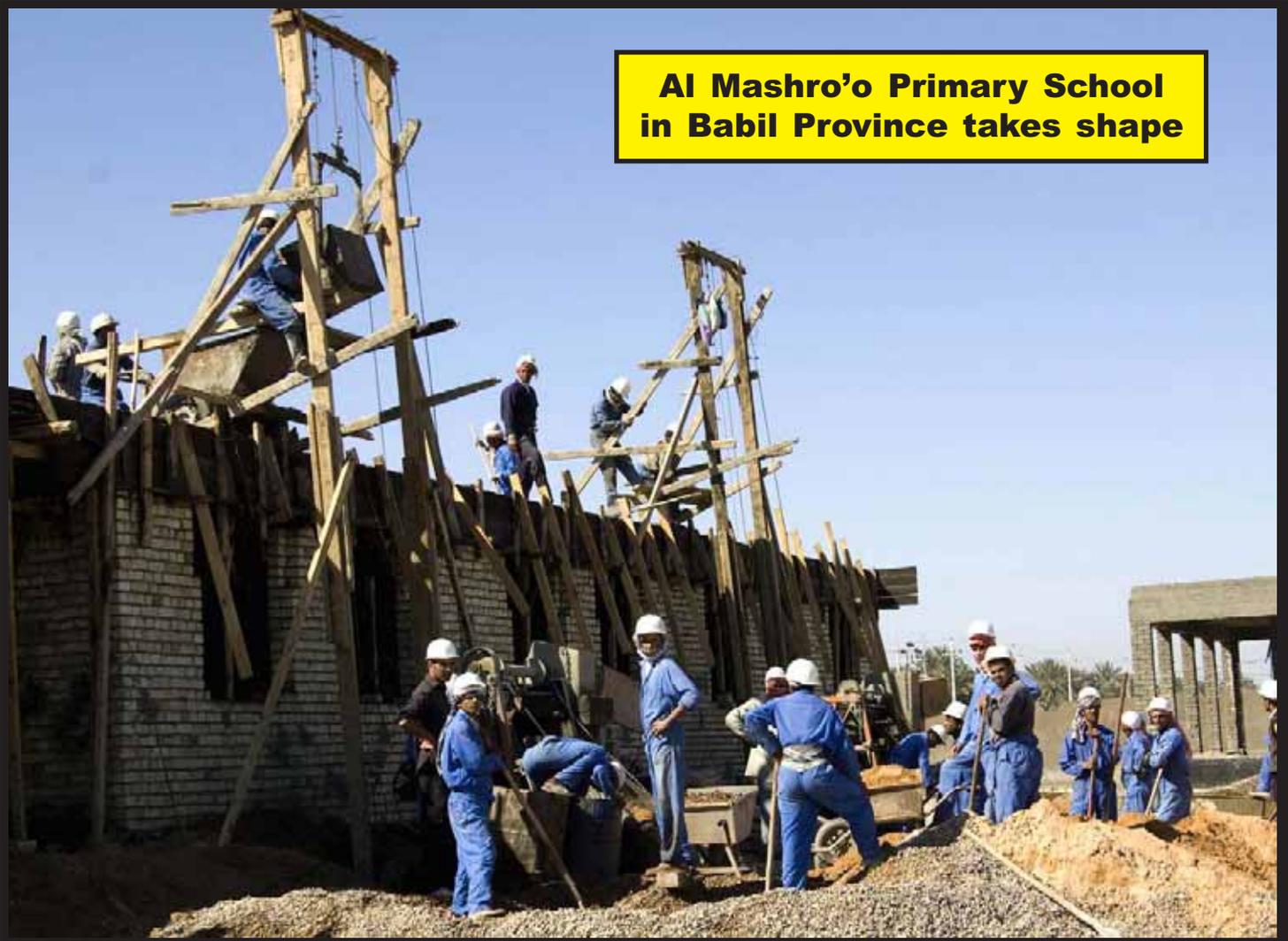


**Dhi Qar MILCON
Project Engineer Greg Croon**



**Karbala PRT Engineer Andy Ford,
Diwaniyah/Najaf Resident Office OIC
& Diwaniyah PRT Engineer
LTC Dwight Davies**

Al Mashro'o Primary School in Babil Province takes shape



The new \$970,000 Al Mashro'o primary school in Babil Province is taking shape and is scheduled to be completed this summer. Over 100 local Iraqis are on the construction crew. Apart from the classrooms, the project includes an administration wing, playground area, toilets, and walkways. Among those stopping by to check on progress were Lt. Col. John Osborn and Construction Rep. Victor Aquino. (USACE photos by Alicia Embrey)

Basra Border Patrol Maintenance Facility



Col. Aqeel Lafta (Deputy Commander) and Col. Tariq Jabar, Commander of the military vehicle/boat maintenance facility with the Iraqi 4th Regional Border Patrol Forces Command, talk to Construction Representative Gary Gatewood with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers about their newly-completed facility.

New maintenance facility for Border Patrol opens

By A. Al Bahrani

Gulf Region Division South District

BASRA, Iraq – Iraq’s Border Patrol forces in Basra are now able to more efficiently keep their vehicles and boats in top running order thanks to a new maintenance facility that was recently completed there.

Construction of the \$550,000 facility began last fall and was turned over Feb. 5.

“Now we have adequate space with the new three-bay modern structure to repair and provide routine service for our vehicles and boats,” said Iraqi Col. Aqeel Lafta, Deputy Commander of the new facility with the Iraqi 4th Regional Border Patrol Forces Command. “The old facility was small and crowded all the time. I have a staff of five officers and 50 Iraqi soldiers and technicians who work here and the new facility definitely enhances our capabilities,” he noted.

“Their new state-of-the-art structure allows them to efficiently maintain their vehicles and boats used to patrol and provide security along the Iraq/Iran border,” said Construction Representative Gary Gatewood with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers which oversaw the work. “Each bay has a compressed air line to power their pneumatic hand tools, and an exhaust vent line to prevent carbon monoxide build up allowing them to work in a safe environment when the bay doors are closed. They also have a battery room where they can store and recharge the vehicle batteries, data and communication outlets, spare parts storage room, tool room, air conditioning, a new 80 KVA generator, and a parking area for up to 20 vehicles.” The Iraqi contractor building the structure had 50 local Iraqis on his crew.



The new military vehicle/boat maintenance facility for the Iraqi 4th Regional Border Patrol Forces Command in Basra is now open.

(USACE photos by A. Al Bahrani)



Col. Aqeel Lafta shows where two patrol boat engines are being serviced at their new facility.

Ziggurat Tour



Iraqi Engineers with the Adder Area Office along with GRS staff toured the Ziggurat and the ancient City of Ur March 8. Ur was the capital of Sumeria, one of the most active and prosperous cities in southern Mesopotamia, and the birthplace of the prophet Abraham.



Michelle Rebmann in one of the arched entryways at the home of the prophet Abraham which features 27 rooms, 3 staircases, and 5 courtyards. It was rebuilt in the 1990s on the original foundation.



David Weir



Ziggurat curator Daif shows how a door hinge in the ancient city of Ur worked.

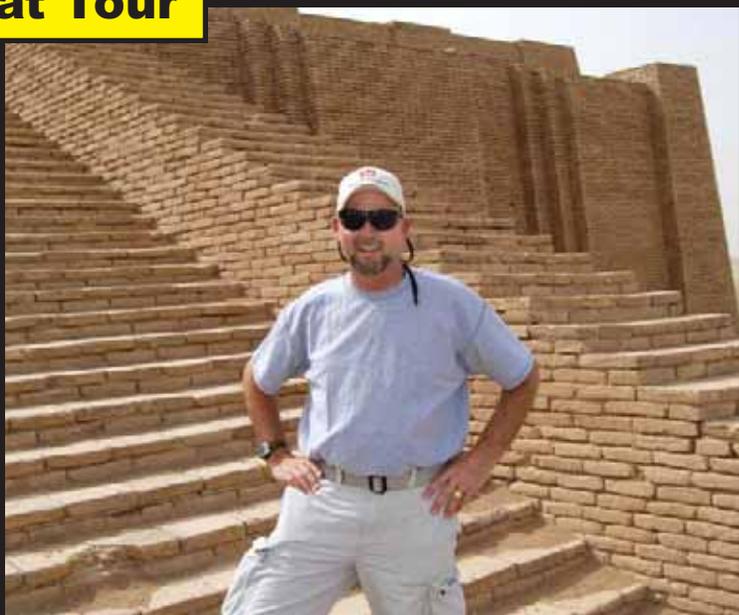


Colleen Hickey with two of the Iraqi engineers on her staff.

Ziggurat Tour



Viewing what some believe to be the oldest existing arch in the world are Linda Zamarocy, Michelle Rebmann, David Johnson, CSM Michael Sangren, Robert Peel, and David Weir.



Robert Peel on the steps at the Ziggurat of Ur. Iraq is known as the cradle of civilization where in 2000 B.C. Sumerians had already developed cuneiform writing and law codes.



Maj. Sinlan Morrow with some of her Iraqi staff.



Standing on top of King Shulgi's tomb at the ancient city of Ur near Tallil Air Base.



CSM Michael Sangren



Linda Zamarocy with the Ziggurat of Ur in the background.

New 132kV substation to soon go on line in Diwaniyah

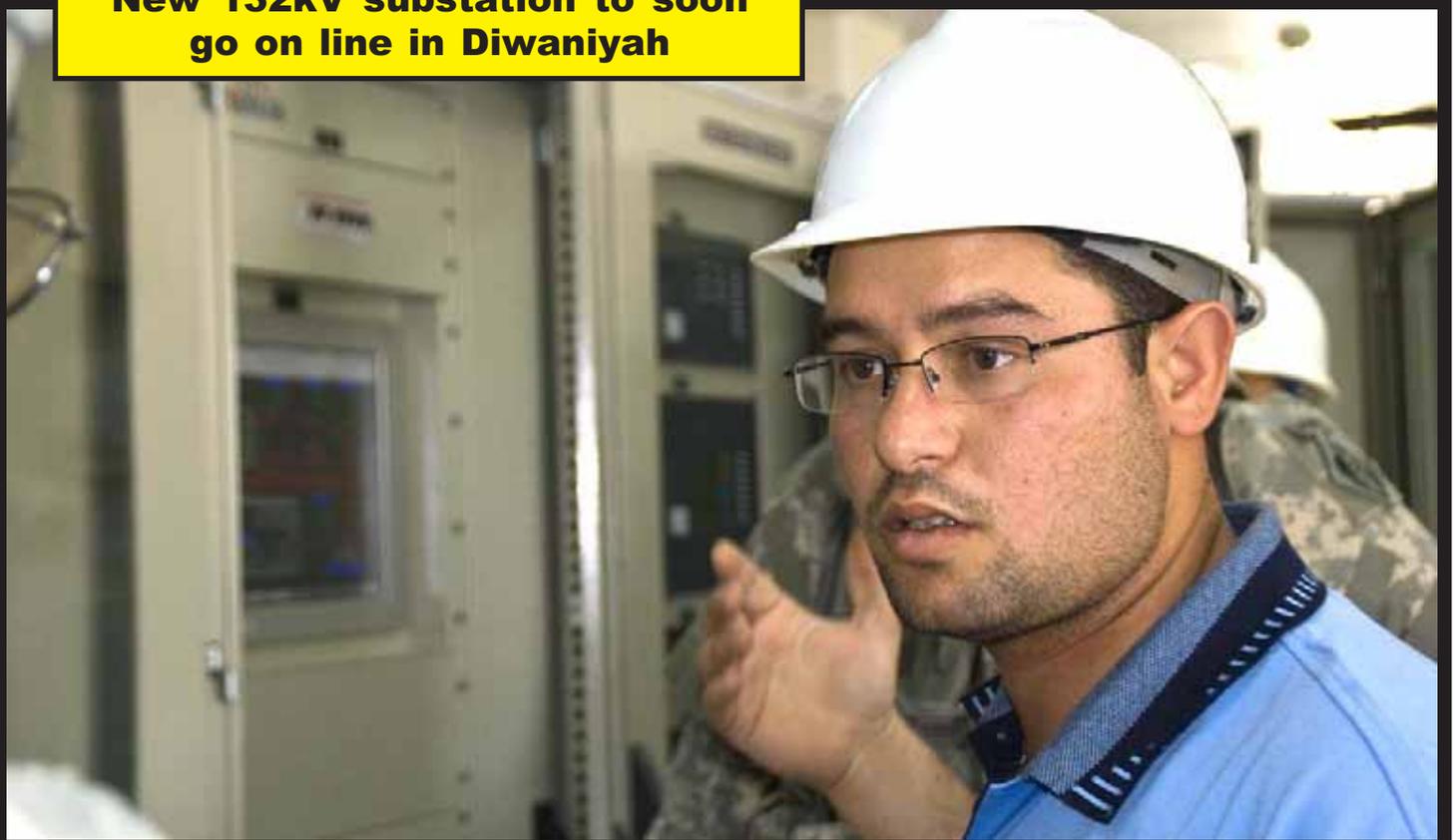


Iraqi contractor Pauwels International is completing the final phase of construction on the new \$24.5 million 132/33/11kV substation in Diwaniyah. Lt. Col. John Osborn along with Construction Representatives Earnie Mendenhall and Barry Campbell with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently visited the site to view the ongoing testing of the equipment during the commissioning phase of the project. According Mendenhall, nearly 400,000 residents in Diwaniyah will receive reliable electricity with the completion of the new substation. Construction of the substation began in April 2007 and is expected to be completed next month.

(USACE photos by Alicia Embrey)



New 132kV substation to soon go on line in Diwaniyah



Construction Representative Earnie Mendenhall



After two years of construction, a new \$24.5 million 132/33/11kV substation in Diwaniyah will go on line next month. The crew is in the commissioning phase conducting various tests to ensure everything is working properly. (USACE photos by Alicia Embrey)



Al Noor PHC taking shape in Nihyah, Diwaniyah Province



The new \$413,426 Al Noor Primary Healthcare Center includes a physicians' office with adjoining exam room, two nurse stations, a pharmacy, a mother and childcare treatment room, vaccination room and health education department. "The facility will provide needed medical care for about 10,000 residents in the Al Noor village/Al Sumer neighborhood of Nahiyah," said Construction Representative Barry Campbell with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (shown in the photo above). Construction of the 3,552-sq.-ft. clinic began in August, is currently 50% finished, and is scheduled to be completed by this summer. About 40 local Iraqis are on the construction crew.

Shatt Al Arab Stadium donation

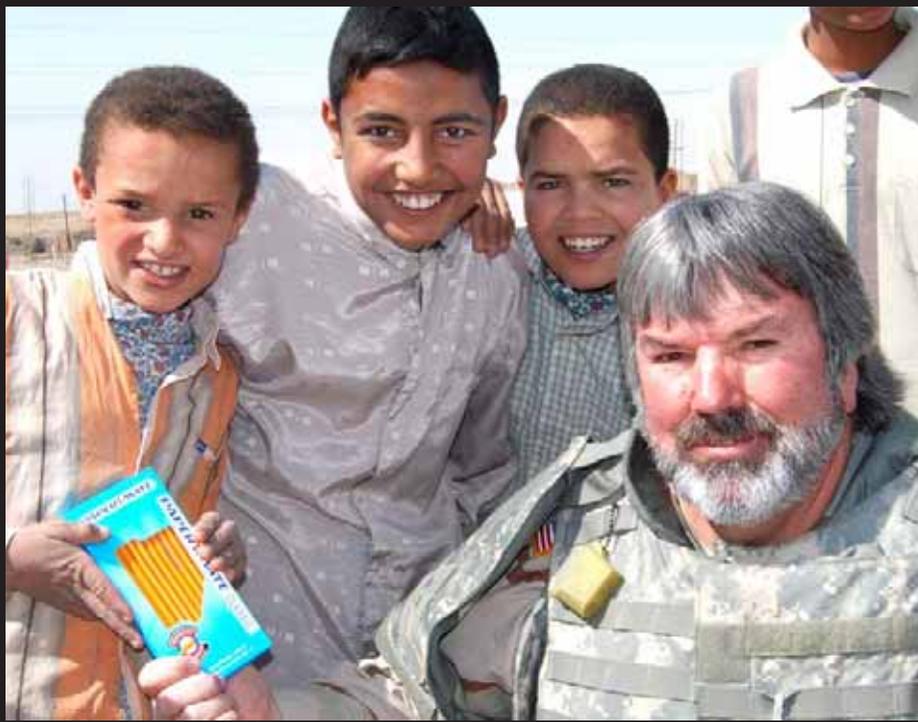


The \$300,000 renovation of the Shatt Al Arab Stadium in Basra's Al Tanoma neighborhood is nearing completion. That work includes a new rubberized outdoor surface, new bleachers, new stadium lights, sun shades, new locker rooms, showers, and two restrooms. Aegis Reconstruction civil affairs representatives visited the facility March 15 to donate shoes, boxing equipment, karate training equipment, team sports uniforms, and soccer balls. Al Ashar, a weekly local newspaper in Basra, reported on the presentation. They also interviewed Lt. Col. "Bear" Ramirez, Basra Area Office OIC with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who talked about the variety of projects USACE is overseeing in southern Iraq. "These projects include primary healthcare clinics, substations, water treatment facilities, courthouses, police stations, roads and bridges." He told the reporter, "Our projects are being constructed in partnership with local governmental officials, the DGs, and the Governor. Basra neighborhoods appreciate what we're doing." He praised Aegis for their interest in helping the community. (USACE photos by A. Al Bahrani)

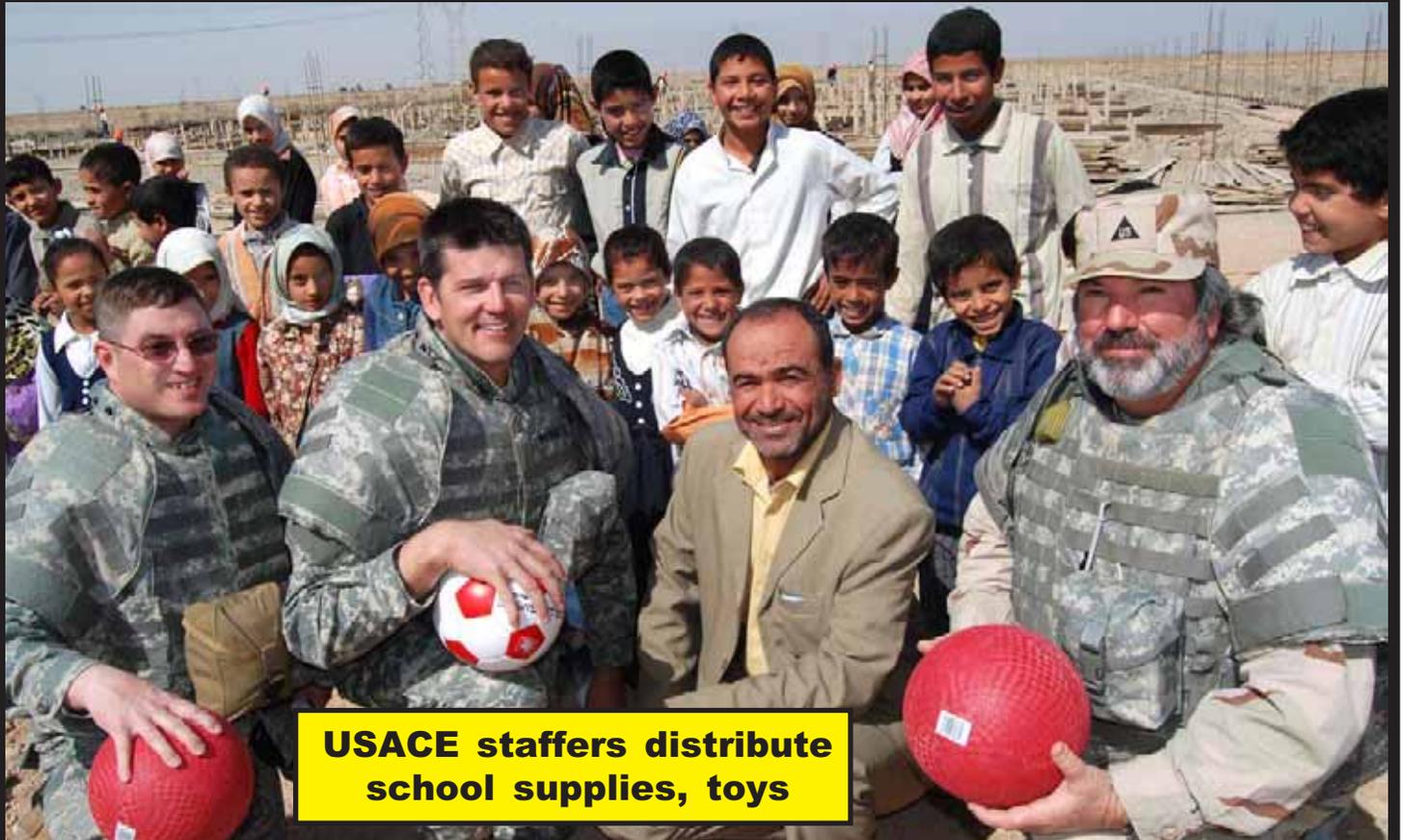
Umm Qasr new pier



About 2700 tons of steel was delivered this month by ship as work is getting underway on the \$53 million Umm Qasr pier and seawall project. This is the first Foreign Military Sales project between Iraq and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It will provide a state-of-the-art berthing facility for the Iraqi Navy and will support patrol vessels responsible for securing a vital port infrastructure and seaways in Iraq's territorial waters. Visiting the site March 13 were Lt. Col. David Berczek, Joanne Milo, LTJg Daniel Gutierrez, Matthew Miller and Clayton Waller.



GRS Construction Representative Tommy Greenfield



USACE staffers distribute school supplies, toys

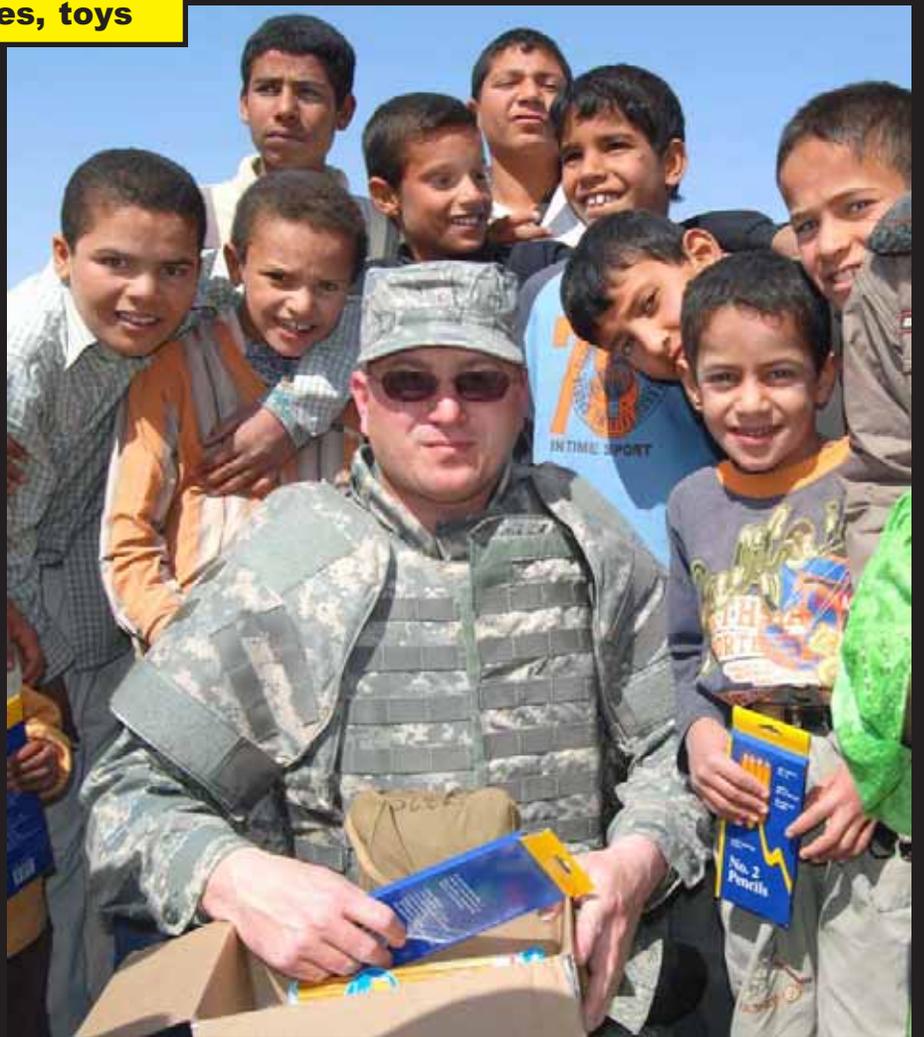
Because of the generosity of individuals and groups in America, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is doing more than just overseeing the construction of essential service projects in Iraq. "We're going out in the community distributing school supplies, clothing, and toys to some very grateful Iraqis," said Construction Representative Tommy Greenfield from Gulf Region South District in Tallil. Those interested in supporting the effort are asked to mail clothes, shoes (any size), school supplies, and toys to the following address: USACE GRS, Toys/Donation Closet, COB Adder, Tallil, Iraq AE 09331. "It touches your heart when you're out there seeing their smiles," said Greenfield who deployed from the USACE Little Rock District. His fellow stateside em-

ployees have sent a number of packages filled with donated items. In addition, church, school and community groups near his home have stepped forward as well. "They all want to help and their outpouring of support has been heart-warming and much appreciated," he noted. "We're making a difference." He along with Air Force Master Sgt. Robert Spencer and Engineer Greg Werncke visited a rural six-classroom school in Al-Muthanna Province March 18 where over 120 students age 6-12 are enrolled. School Headmaster Salem Jaheel pointed out a modern 8-classroom facility is scheduled to open there in September (seen in background). "We're very grateful for what the United States is doing for us," the headmaster said.

USACE staffers distribute school supplies, toys



An Iraqi mud school's first grade entryway does not provide much headroom for Greg Werncke and headmaster Salem Jaheel.

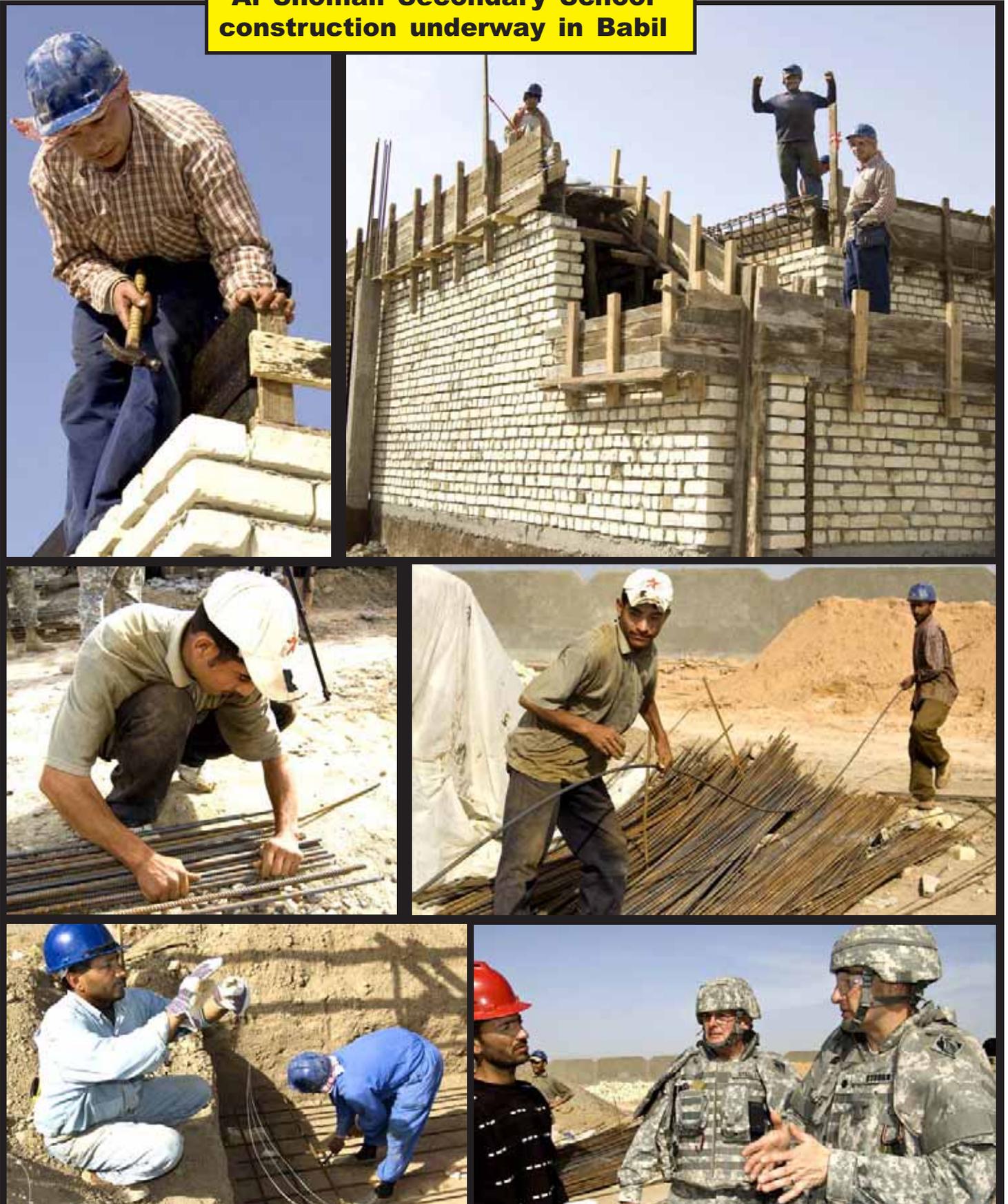


Air Force Master Sgt. Robert Spencer



Over 120 youngsters age 6-12 attend the tiny six-classroom mud Hilal Al Bajari School in Al-Muthanna Province. Engineer Greg Werncke tries one of the desks which are normally shared by 2 to 3 students at a time. The existing school has dirt floors, no electric lighting, fans, heat or air conditioning. A modern 8-classroom structure is scheduled to open there in September and School Headmaster Salem Jaheel says the community appreciates the quality facility the United States is providing.

**Al Shomali Secondary School
construction underway in Babil**



A new 12-classroom secondary school for students in the Al Shomali area in Babil Province is scheduled to open this summer. Secondary education is a six-year program. The first three years are the intermediate phase for students age 12-14. The final three years are designed to prepare students for the labor market or university study. The \$1.2 million project is being built by a local Iraqi contractor who has a crew of over 50 Iraqis, many from that community. Shown above checking on the construction progress March 11 were Lt. Col. John Osborn and Construction Representative "Dutch" Steele. (USACE photos by Alicia Embrey)

Basra Children's Hospital gets toys, \$10,000 in special delivery



Private pilot Robert Gannon participates in a news conference at Basra March 18 where he delivered a \$10,000 donation for the Basra Children's Hospital along with nine boxes of toys. His trip was coordinated through Project Hope. News media interviewing him included Reuters TV, Al Iraqiya TV, Sumaria TV, AP (TV and photographer), Al Massar TV, Al Arabiya TV, Al Hurra TV, Radio Al Marbid, and Radio Sawa. (USACE photo by A. Al Bahrani)

Private pilot delivers donation for Basra Children's Hospital

A private pilot in his Cessna 182 landed at Basra International Airport March 18 to present a \$10,000 check and nine boxes of toys for the Basra Children's Hospital.

Robert Gannon, a Vietnam veteran who served on a medevac helicopter, has visited 110 countries on humanitarian missions over the past eight years. He says that flying into Iraq and seeing the efforts being made to rebuild that country "is definitely one of the highlights of my life."

Dr. Muaead, representing the Basra Health Directorate, in accepting the \$10,000 check, said he and his staff sincerely appreciated Mr. Gannon's interest in helping the Iraqi people. "We recognize all those working on the Basra Children's Hospital project which is scheduled to open later this year."

Gannon pointed out it was the Associated General Contractors of Iowa which provided the funding. "Americans are caring people, and this group definitely wanted to reach out and help," he said. He also thanked Project Hope for its efforts in making the visit possible.

Also greeting Gannon at the airport was Lt. Col. Humberto Ramirez with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "This is another example of how partnering efforts are making a big difference in building Iraq's future," he said. "The \$165 million hospital will soon be a reality because a number of different groups are working together to make it happen. It's not just U.S. resources being invested here – the United Nations Development Fund is participating through a \$22 million grant from the Government of Spain, over \$9.8 million from the Iraqi Ministry of Health, and

Project Hope is providing over \$30 million for medical equipment and medical staff training."

USACE is overseeing the hospital's construction with hundreds of Iraqis on the various crews working there. Once open, the hospital will employ in excess of 1,000 professionals and supporting staff at full operation. It will be a pediatric referral center for all of Iraq with a focus on childhood cancers.

Following the news conference at the airport, Gannon traveled to the hospital and toured the ongoing construction at the facility. "I was extremely impressed with the workmanship and quality," he said. "I used to own a construction company. I know the business. That hospital could have been anywhere in the western world. The Iraqi engineers and various crews are all working hard, wanting to do their best. More Americans need to know what's happening here."

Gannon resides in San Diego where he owns both a commodity and an insurance business. He made one trip around the world flying west, and is now about half-way through making a global trip flying east. He says he normally is gone a month or two flying his plane, parks it, goes home and works for 2 to 3 months, and then returns. He's flown over all the oceans including an 18-hour 2200-nautical-mile leg from California to Hawaii, been to the North Pole and Antarctica, and all the continents.

"I have a special soft spot in my heart for children. I'm glad we were able to do some good today as all involved here move a step closer to offering Iraqi youngsters with serious health problems hope for a brighter tomorrow," he concluded.

Basra Children's Hospital gets toys, \$10,000 in special delivery



Private pilot Robert Gannon unloads nine boxes of toys from his Cessna 182 for the Basra Children's Hospital. He has visited 110 countries on humanitarian missions and says his trip to Iraq and seeing what is happening here is one of the highlights of his life.



Private pilot Robert Gannon presents a \$10,000 check for the Basra Children's Hospital to Dr. Muaead of the Basra Health Directorate.



After landing at Basra International Airport, private pilot Robert Gannon of San Diego viewed the ongoing construction at Basra Children's Hospital which is scheduled to open later this year. (USACE photos by A. Al Bahrani)



Lt. Col. "Bear" Ramirez (left), private pilot Robert Gannon, and Randall Lewis (GRS Basra Children's Hospital Resident Engineer) all participated in a news conference March 18 regarding a \$10,000 donation Gannon made in behalf of the Associated General Contractors of Iowa.



Dr. Muaead with the Basra Health Directorate and private pilot Robert Gannon discuss the nine boxes of toys and \$10,000 donation to help Iraqi children.