



Operation RIO Update

10 October 2003

This ship in the desert is unloading imported gasoline for domestic Iraqi use at the terminal at Khawr Az Zubayr just north of Umm Qasr.

An update for all SWD employees and Operation RIO volunteers supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Mission Update: Oil production this week remained at about 1.9 million barrels per day. The electrical power situation continues to stabilize enabling us to improve refined product production. Unfortunately, we did suffer a few days production loss due to labor unrest at the Basra Refinery. The workers are returning to work and the Iraqi Oil Ministry has promised to address the workers pay concerns.

Ft. Bliss, TX, CRC Holiday Schedule: DEPLOYING PERSONNEL : Personnel **MUST** arrive at FT. Bliss, TX NLT 1700, on Sunday 23 Nov for Thanksgiving, 21 Dec for Christmas or 28 Dec for New Year's deployments respectively. Personnel will then process on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and fly on Thursday or later that week depending on the availability of military/contract air.

REDEPLOYING PERSONNEL : In order to assure being home for Thanksgiving, Christmas or New Year's redeploying personnel **MUST** arrive at Ft. Bliss, TX on Sunday/Monday the 23 or 24 Nov for Thanksgiving, Sunday/Monday 21 or 22 Dec for Christmas or Sunday/Monday 28 or 29 Dec for New Year's redeployment. Personnel arriving 25 Nov or later, 23 Dec or later, and 30 Jan or later will probably be spending the holiday at Ft. Bliss, TX.

NOTE: Once you arrive at Ft. Bliss CRC for processing you belong to Ft. Bliss CRC until released following completion of redeployment actions. If you arrive on the 25 Nov or later, 23 Dec or later, and/or the 30 Jan or later you will probably be spending the holiday at Ft. Bliss, TX. No redeployment actions will take place between Thursday and Sunday of the holiday week 27-30 Nov 03, 25-28 Dec 03 or 1-4 Jan 04. If you are a late arrival and told you have to spend the holiday at Ft. Bliss, you are not authorized travel at government expense from Ft Bliss to your home for the holiday and then return to Ft. Bliss following the holiday to complete redeployment processing. If the Commander of the CRC at Ft Bliss were to authorize you pass/leave to spend the holiday at home with subsequent return the following Monday for processing **the travel is at your own expense.**

SWD and USACE Project Delivery Team of the Year: The CESWF Field Force Engineering Team (FEST-A) has been selected to receive the USACE Project Delivery Team Excellence Award for this year! CONGRATULATIONS to the entire team and the Ft. Worth District. The official recognition and presentation of the award to the District will take place at the USACE PDT Conference Awards Dinner on 30 October in La Jolla, California!

Help Wanted: Several key jobs are opening soon for Task Force RIO. Included are: GS-14 Area Engineers, GS-12/13/14 Project Managers and GS-12/13 Project Engineers to work in Iraq, and a GS-12 Accountant to work in Dallas starting in early November. If you are interested and have your supervisor's concurrence, call Jim Barton at 214-767-2370 for more information and possible deployment dates. This is an excellent time to be part of a history making project that is benefiting the people of Iraq.

Deployments: 12-18 Oct: MAJ Lee Morrison, Southwestern Division; 19-25 Oct: Mary Ann Wentworth, Huntsville Center; Richard McPhillips, Hawaii District

Redeployments: COL Richard Jenkins, Mississippi Valley Division 14 Oct; Cheryl Hodge-Sneed, Fort Worth District, 14 Oct; CPT Robert Corrales, Tulsa District, 25 Oct; Tom Armstrong, Fort Worth District, 25 Oct; Ethan Luke, Europe District, 28 Oct.

A view from down range: Capt. Robert Kirkpatrick Jr.

by Wayne Stroupe

Working-experience in building and maintaining pipelines and petroleum facilities was the critical expertise Capt. Robert Kirkpatrick brought to Task Force Restore Iraqi Oil (RIO) during his deployment to Iraq.

Kirkpatrick was activated on Nov. 18, 2002, as part of the 416th Engineer Command, an Army Reserve unit that was the in-theater engineer organization. For the last 10 years, he worked as a chemical engineer with Peoples Energy in Chicago, Ill.

Arriving in Kuwait in December, Kirkpatrick was on the ground in Iraq on day five of the war. He worked a variety of engineering activities until he joined Task Force RIO in early June. He returned home on Oct. 3.

"I knew the mission and volunteered for RIO," Kirkpatrick said. His career experience turned out to be a big plus for Task Force RIO, even though there were some major differences. "I've never had to work on equipment in a war zone; never had to clear explosive ordnance from a work site; and we've never had major problems with looters."

For Task Force RIO, Kirkpatrick served as the operations officer and as a subject matter expert for the Southern Area Office. This diverse job took him all over southern Iraq.

"I jumped all over the place trying to see the big picture in the southern area. As the subject matter expert for pipelines and oil facilities, I got to troubleshoot a lot of problems. I was also the liaison to the multinational division of the coalition forces in southeastern Iraq," Kirkpatrick said.

Kirkpatrick's work experience gave him the ability to provide extremely useful insight and assistance with Task Force RIO's mission to reconstruct and repair the Iraqi oil production and distribution facilities.

"The Iraqi oil system is very complicated and very fragmented. Every part of the organization, the refineries, the distribution (trucks or pipelines), the gas companies, they are all separate companies. The personnel are so busy running their individual facilities; they don't worry about the total organization. As long as their part is working, 'no problem, no problem.' They don't understand how one set back or problem can affect the whole system."

There are also other problems, cultural and technological, that make the Iraqi oil organization hard to manage out in the field.

Just getting the Iraqi oil infrastructure up and running was a monumental task. Production went from zero during the war to over a million barrels a day by late September. The delay in full production can be placed largely on the oil facilities equipment.

"The Iraqi oil facilities are largely 1950s and 60s vintage. They have bought equipment from many different countries – U.S., German, French, Japanese and Russian, over the years," Kirkpatrick said.

"The big equipment problems were due to deterioration, lack of maintenance, age, and looting. Probably half of the problems were due to poor maintenance and the other half to looting and sabotage. There was very minor combat damage. We specifically avoided damage to Iraqi facilities and targeted only military targets."

Besides the language barrier, other problems were encountered in the Task Force RIO mission to get the Iraqi oil facilities up and going.

"Trying to figure out what the Iraqis had in oil infrastructure was a problem. They didn't have 'as built' drawings or plans. Each facility manager had his facility in his head. So you had



to find each guy, try to get him to trust you, and then try to have him tell you what he knew. As we build a database, we are understanding the system,” Kirkpatrick said.

Getting the Iraqis to trust Task Force RIO members and American forces was a challenge at first.

“The Iraqis were initially concerned that the U.S. was taking products. When there was a gas shortage, locals believed we were taking gas and LPG (liquefied petroleum gas). They saw trucks heading to Baghdad. They thought we were running empty to Baghdad, loading them up, and taking it to Kuwait. It was just the opposite – we were taking gas to Baghdad. They just saw the trucks,” Kirkpatrick said.

Kirkpatrick said his one-year activation and subsequent deployment had a major down side - separation from his family for such an extended length of time. But there were some positive aspects, including the big picture.

“The work was challenging and interesting and at times frustrating. It was great professional and work experience. Such a massive project is somewhat unwieldy and there are some unknowns. The push to get everything up and working made it very, very challenging.”

More vignettes: Check out the USACE web page for more vignettes and additional information about the Iraqi mission. Go to www.swd.usace.army.mil and click the Task Force RIO mission icon.

Back Issues of RIO Update: Have you missed an issue of RIO Update? Go to www.swd.usace.army.mil to view copies of all back issues. Ms. Angela Williams in SWD IM, has been very faithful in maintaining this web page.

"HOOAH!!"

*MICHAEL L. SCHULTZ, COLONEL, EN
Acting Commander,
Southwestern Division*