



Operation RIO Update

5 December 2003

Alan Dooley, TF-RIO Public Affairs Officer, Baghdad. The man behind many words. We appreciate your support. Army Corps of Engineers Photo.

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

Mission Update: Oil production remains around 2.1 million barrels per day. In light of recent security concerns, TF RIO provided a briefing to the CJTF-7 Commander, LTG Sanchez, highlighting issues and recommending a course of action. LTG Sanchez approved the recommendation which will result in a much improved security posture. Details are classified.

Help Wanted: GS-12/13 Information Technology Specialists, GS-12/13 Project Managers and Project Engineers, GS-11/12 Program Analysts, and GS-11/12 Contract Specialists are needed to support this historic mission. If you are interested and have supervisor approval, contact Jim Barton or Linda Ranallo at Southwestern Division.

Thanksgiving pictures from Northern Area Office.

Due to circumstances beyond their control, North Team RIO was forced inside the hallway of the Petroleum Building. Steaks were grilled and served.



Above left: Judy Scott, Cliff Dominey, Bill Grancy and Sam Parker waiting for dinner. Above right: Chris Morgan and Franke Johnson. Lower right: Cliff English and Franke Johnson give thanks. Photos by Mike McAleer.



More Thanksgiving photographs from Northern Project Office:



Above left: Bill Graney is always in a good humor. Above right: Cliff Dominey counting down days.

View From Down Range: Patsy Burgess

by Alan Dooley

South Atlantic Division Natural Disaster Emergency Preparedness Manager, Patsy Burgess, has returned home at the end of a four month tour of duty with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Task Force RIO (Restore Iraqi Oil) in Kuwait and Iraq.

Task Force RIO's mission is to help Iraq restore its capability to produce oil to prewar levels. This is especially important because more than 95 percent of the nation's foreign exchange comes from oil exports. Oil sales further, underlie the nation's entire economy and are essential to its future.

What convinced the 35 year civil servant and four year Corps worker to volunteer to go to Iraq?



"I wanted to do something different. I wanted to utilize my operational background – to see how the work of I do serves at the other end," she replied. Burgess, who before her Corps employment worked as a reserve mobilization specialist for the U.S. Army Reserve Command, got an ample opportunity to see the relationship between stateside planning and overseas execution. She first served at Camp Doha in Kuwait, and then played a key role in moving that element forward to Baghdad. While there, she wore a number of hats – serving variously as the battle captain, operations officer and head of administrative support.

Facilitating the work of those in the field was Burgess' primary goal. Reducing her task to a single phrase, she said, "I am here to take care of smart people so they can get their jobs done."

Burgess reflected on her experiences with the mission to free Iraq. "In retrospect, we didn't get it done in desert Storm. If we had, I think Kuwait and Iraq would look more alike.

She cited the contrasts between the two neighboring nations. "I was awed by the highway lights in Kuwait... the obvious wealth... the presence of American fast food restaurants like McDonalds, Fudruckers, Burger King and Taco Bell.

In contrast, she noted how badly the Iraqi people have been hurt, first by Saddam Hussein's dictatorial regime and now by terrorists and looters. "The money being spent to restore looting and rebuild sabotaged facilities could build many schools and hospitals," she noted.

Patsy Burgess also reported that she had a brand new appreciation for Sddiers. Speaking from her former job mobilizing reservists, "I knew Soldiers were special people. But now that I have seen them in Iraq I have a whole new level of appreciation for their sacrifices for their country. We are away from home with them, we share their meals and live in similar

circumstances. We don't appreciate what they give until we walk in their shoes – even for a shorter period of time than most of this will be here," she said firmly.

She also noted the difficulty the military encounters in the kinds of operations America is involved with in Iraq. "The Army has well-established doctrine in war, but this is a blend of military in a civilian controlled environment. This has evolved partly into a largely non-operational environment. That's tough for the Soldiers," she observed.

How would she advise someone else about going to Iraq?

"I've received several e-mails asking if I would do this again, and I have told each one I would," she said. In fact, I am coming back. There is a real opportunity to do something you can really be proud of here. Corps employees can make a difference," she said.

Burgess also observed that not all of the story is getting back to Americans. "The media tends to leave the impression that this is an all U.S. effort. People at home are surprised when I tell them that there are British, Polish, Italian and Spanish soldiers. There are troops from the Czech Republic and the Ukraine as well."

Of the Iraqi people, Patsy Burgess observed, "They are in a land of haves and have nots. It is beyond war damage. It is beyond just having it tough. They are victims of past injustices of all sorts," she said.

When asked to comment on what she felt the overall goal of the United States in Iraq should be, she noted that Task Force RIO commander, Brigadier General Robert Crear, had found just the right words. "He said we are not fixing Iraq, we are enabling. We are enabling the Iraqis to fix it for themselves." Pausing after she said that, Burgess drew an analogy: "It's sort of like the Habitat for Humanity. We are giving the Iraqi people the tools and their pride back. It's wonderful to watch what they are doing with this freedom to succeed.

Burgess' superb contribution to the success of the Task Force RIO's mission in postwar Iraq was recognized by award of the Army Civilian Superior Service Medal by Brigadier General Crear in a Baghdad ceremony before her November departure.

"HOOAH!!"

*ROBERT CREAR, BRIGADIER GENERAL
Commander,
Southwestern Division*