

## U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army

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### U.S. ARMY EUROPE ENGINEERS BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, SECURITY, INFRASTRUCTURE IN IRAQ

By Capt. Stephen Barker  
18th Engineer Brigade

**CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq** -- This arid outpost lies just to the northwest of Tikrit, Iraq, the birthplace of Saddam Hussein and the northern marker of the infamous Sunni Triangle, an area that stretches from the center of Iraq toward its eastern border with Iran and is densely populated with Sunni Muslims.

It was here that the 18th Engineer Brigade, a U.S. Army Europe unit based in Heidelberg, Germany, under the command of Col. Matthew H. Russell, assumed authority for engineer operations in northern Iraq in May.

Lt. Col. Rodney S. Butler, chief of operations for the 18th, said the unit's primary mission here is to command and control the 326th Engineer Battalion from Fort Campbell, Ky., and the 94th Engineer Battalion from Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. Butler said that mission entails route clearance, construction, and an ongoing partnership with local Iraqi army engineers.

The partnership among the 326th, the 94th and Iraqi engineer units will



CAPT STEPHEN BARKER

Sgt. 1st Class David Sullivan, an engineer equipment supervisor from the 326th Engineer Battalion, Fort Campbell, Ky., trains Iraqi army engineers on the use of the U.S. Army's D7 armored bulldozer at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, June 26. The 326th is on duty in Iraq under the command and control of U.S. Army Europe's 18th Engineer Brigade.

augment their Iraqi counterparts' engineer skills and build Iraqi self-confidence and self-reliance, Butler said.

Route clearance is a dangerous yet necessary mission with two purposes, 18th Engineer officials say; it increases the safety of coalition forces' movement and keeps the roads safe for the Iraqi people.

The construction projects under the 18th's supervision include building sand berms around towns to provide a border of safety for local Iraqis, erecting traffic control points for Iraqi police, and constant road maintenance to minimize damage to coalition and Iraqi vehicles.

The 18th, two months into a 15-month deployment, has also engaged its staff sections to improve the condition of engineering in northern Iraq. Brigade officials said the unit's technical headquarters section has been surveying bridges and construction sites, as well as working with their civil-military operations experts to improve government and economic conditions in the area. Other staff sections have been busy servicing the personnel and supply needs of engineer units within Multi-National Division - North and tenant units on COB Speicher.

Russell recently welcomed his senior enlisted advisor, Command Sgt. Maj. David M. Clark, to the base.

The day after Clark arrived, he and Russell surveyed the state of engineering in the MND-N area on a five-day road trip, visiting engineers on coalition and Iraqi army installations in Mosul, Qayarah, and along the Syrian border.

Describing his goals over the next 12 months, Clark said developing a close relationship with the Iraqi army and the need to "keep pushing the ball down the field" in the effort to train Iraqi engineers while maintaining the operational tempo of construction projects and route clearance are vital missions for the unit.

Clark said whatever mission the brigade's Soldiers take on here, the impression they make on Iraq and its people will be the 18th's most valuable achievement.

"We need to leave a good legacy here by being a good example to the Iraqis and that means maintaining our professionalism at all times," he said.

*(Spc. Joseph McAtee of the U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs Office contributed to this report.)*



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