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5 August 2003

**BRITISH TROOPS LEAD EFFORTS TO BRING
MORE FRESH WATER TO IRAQ**

British troops are winning the battle to repair severely damaged water pipes in Basrah.

In some parts of the city pipes have been left resembling fountains after being shot up by locals desperate for a drink or shower. The bursts have resulted in up to 350 litres of water per person per day being lost. Many pipes cross open sewerage streams and pose a significant health hazard.

A multi-national task force led by Captain Al Simpson from 521 Specialist Team Royal Engineers has spent two months co-coordinating the repair work. Fellow members of the team are Warrant Officer Douglas Smith of the Royal Signals (TA), who works for Scottish Water in civilian life, three US Army Civil Affairs officers and a Kuwaiti interpreter.

The Pipeline Repair Co-ordination Cell (PRCC), as it is known, is working in partnership with the Basrah Water Authority. The size of the task is not to be underestimated. WO2 Smith explains:

“In a large city in Scotland there might be two major pipe bursts a month. In Basrah there were up to thirty-three a week.”

The PRCC has been able to project manage US\$75,000 of repairs over a six week period using Basrah Water Authority engineers and locally acquired civilian plant and equipment. Captain Simpson believes his team has made a “massive difference” and “prevented a total collapse of the supply.”

The task will shortly be handed over to The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), but it will still take some years to complete the job.

“I would love to come out in two years time to see how it’s gone”, said Captain Simpson

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