



## DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

436th Contracting Squadron (AMC)

Date 29 June 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR: HQ AMC/A7K  
507 Symington Drive  
Scott AFB IL 62225

FROM: 436 Contracting Squadron  
639 Atlantic Street  
Dover AFB, DE 19902-5639

SUBJECT: After Action Report (AAR) Baghdad International Airport, AEF 5/6

1. This after action report is prepared in accordance with AFFARS Appendix CC, paragraph CC 502-4(a)(3). This deployment was in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.
2. The following information is provided:
  - a. Deployed Locations: Sather AB
  - b. Deployed CCO: MSgt Carmen Bowers
  - c. Duration of Deployment: 28 January 2007 – 5 June 2007
  - d. Total Actions & Dollars: 350+ actions/\$2.5M+ dollars
3. Summary of Mission: The 447<sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Group (AEG) provides base operating support for Sather Air Base, aerial port operations, aerial control, and command and control of the airport's military runway. The 447<sup>th</sup> AEG supports U.S. and coalition forces with airlift, supplies and delivery of these forces and materials within the area of operations. The airfield is a joint civilian-military airport, with a military ramp on one side and a civilian runway on the other that is used for civilian flight operations.
4. Site survey information concerning potential sources of supply:
  - a. US Embassy – N/A
  - b. Host Nation Support – N/A
  - c. Servicing US Military – Victory Regional Contracting Center-Iraq (RCC-I), Joint Contracting Command-Iraq (JCC-I), Army Corps of Engineers
    - i. LOGCAP (KBR). Sather AB is authorized to use LOGCAP services. ECES customer service, as directed by the ECES/CC, is responsible for direct

interface with KBR-including requests for new service, changes to service, customer complaints, etc. ECES must ensure services/changes are in the task order, coordinated with the LOGCAP support officer, and complete the appropriate paperwork. Sometimes this requires assistance (advice) from ECONS. We had a point of contact available for the LOGCAP ACO, but for most day to day operations KBR work that serviced Sather was handled by ECES customer service. ECES customer service communicated any issues with them for resolution – water deliveries, septic disposal, and trash pick up. The current tempo includes addition of more brigades to the area; all funding is prioritized with security and bed down being on the top of the priority list.

ii. Specific services provided by KBR at Sather to date are:

- Cleaning/restocking Cadillac latrine trailers and port-o-johns
- Potable water delivery
- Gray and black (septic) water removal
- Trash removal (dumpsters)

d. Sather AB is one of several military camps within the Victory Base Complex (VBC). We were not allowed to travel “outside the wire” to meet with vendors. There are large contractors such as Qatar International Trading (QIT), American Service Center (ASC), Solution Managers International (SMI), Trade Links, Global Freight and Golden Company located on the VBC that we were able to utilize for a lot of our requirements. The BX/PX and Bazaar were used for small commodities such as electronics and toner cartridges. There are also smaller sources within the VBC; remaining contractors live and work outside the VBC and other countries.

e. Material is in high demand around the VBC. The Army has a large number of construction projects, etc. going on at the same time as the Air Force. This causes shortages at times and definitely long lead times on materials. Especially asphalt, concrete and barriers.

## 5. Challenges Encountered with the Contracting process

- a. There were several instances that delayed deliveries and response times from the vendors. The VBC entry control points would close or roads would be shut down without notice. The only way that Contracting was notified was through vendors or the escorts. Also, curfews were in effect due to the high level of violence in Baghdad further restricting vendor access to the VBC and Sather AB. These curfews and the entry delays also resulted in very short working periods for a lot of vendors causing jobs to take longer than expected. Weather was also an issue at times. This rotation was during rainy season which delayed projects; it did dry up quickly so typically down time was only for 3-4 days. The summer months will most likely experience high winds and sand storms.
- b. There are, as to be expected, different standards/expectations in the quality of manufactured merchandise. This must be communicated with the customer. Quality of the items found in the local area may not be of high quality (i.e. furniture and rental equipment). For the most part, the items received met the needs of the Government but some customers have not come to the realization that this is a deployed environment and

we have to work with what is available. Certain items have to be procured from the states due to compatibility concerns (i.e. computers, medical equipment, security related items, etc.). Constant reminders to the customers regarding quality, labor pool, electrical standards and shipping/customs procedures are a must. The biggest quality issue has been experienced with rental equipment such as forklifts, front end loaders, etc. There have been a number of occasions when the equipment was so old that it was not functional or it would break down after having it rented a few days. Most vendors were willing to fix or replace the items. However, it was necessary to keep track of down time in order to reduce the rental cost by the number of days we were without the item.

- c. Educate customers on contracting process, especially market research and sole source requirements. Contracting needs to put the market research onto the customer as much as possible in order to free up valuable time for CCO's to actually make purchases, etc. Extra emphasis from Contracting Chief should be routinely communicated to customers stating that funded requirements take priority. It is a must to have a good rapport with all customers, key customers being ECES/ELRS/EECS/Escorts/FM and TMO. An ongoing issue is brand name vs. sole source. Often customers think these are the same thing. It is important to continually train the customers on the difference; brand name is much easier justified than sole source. Most of the local contractors are able to obtain many familiar brands of products and are familiar with dealing in stateside purchases. A lot of the vendors we dealt with had Internet access as well.
- d. Sather AB is the only camp on the VBC that utilizes 110V 60 Hz power and American standard piping, since the base is still using WRM assets. Therefore, a majority of items are purchased from the states or if bought locally used in conjunction with a transformer. The drawdown from using 110V 60 Hz power has started. All new trailer purchases are coming in at 220V 50Hz. Sizing for plumbing pipes was an on going issue, local vendors would quote on the size required and when we got the product it was not the American standard sizing. After a number of failed attempts stateside purchases were required for pipes and fittings.
- e. Oversized items (i.e. furniture, HVAC, gym equipment) go through Charleston AFB and if within weight limits and space is available arrive at Sather via aircraft to Sather TMO, typically within 30 days or less depending on aircraft route. If Charleston determines that it cannot go via aircraft, typically hazardous items and extremely heavy items (i.e. safes, trailers, etc.) are re-routed and sent via cargo ship – this process takes 4 months for products to arrive. There are DHL and FedEx offices in Baghdad and they can also be used for shipments. The packages are delivered directly to the Sather TMO. However, these methods are usually quite costly. USPS is the primary shipping method for items less than 70 pounds. At the beginning of this rotation contracting was receiving all orders from the post office and TMO. We would inventory the shipment and contact the customer to pick up the items and sign the receiving reports. This did take up a large amount of time, especially with GPC orders. When the office went under JCC-I on 1 Mar 07 we began to make the transition to shipments coming directly to the customer versus contracting. There were still a number of outstanding orders that still came in that were ordered prior to the change but the shipments slowly decreased. Contracting now has more time for their job however; the disadvantage is that we now must be more vigilant with the customer to ensure that they provide a receiving report for each shipment they receive. This will take some training and some extra follow up on the part of contracting. The challenge with now working on Army requisitions was shipment of

the large items. If they had a stateside shipping point we were not aware of it and the customers did not know of one either. So for these orders we were mainly using FedEx and DHL, however, on some of the larger orders we would actually have it shipped through Charleston to our TMO and then coordinate pick up with the customer. However, this is not the ideal situation for shipment of Army requirements. This really needs to be addressed with the Camp Victory office again.

f. Government Purchase Card Issues

- i. Full Approving Official (AO) responsibilities fell under Contracting. FM was the alternate AO. GPC cardholders were required to reconcile transactions in the CARE system and log the actions in the local PIIN tracker (this tracker also utilized by FM for total available funding purposes).
  - ii. At the beginning of the deployment the GPC was utilized for approximately 75% of the purchase requests received in contracting, the majority were stateside buys with a few being from other countries via websites primarily. Anything over \$15K required a purchase order with the GPC being the payment method.
  - iii. On 1 Mar 07 the GPC program was suspended. ECONS was absorbed by the JCC-I at Camp Victory. The Air Force adapted the Army Field Ordering Officer (FOO) program to work within the regulations of Air Force FM. The Army would train FOOs and they would be given a lump sum of money each month to make purchases that were under \$2500 and reconcile their accounts monthly with Contracting. This procedure did not agree with AF regulations therefore it was adapted as follows – A representative from FM would act as the paying agent, the FOO would be the purchasing agent and a third party would be the receiving agent in the SF 44 process. This made it much easier for FM to account for all dollars spent. The customers were technically cleared at the end of each shopping trip. However, there was still a monthly clearance conducted by Contracting. FM set up firm “shopping” days each week and had deadlines for the customers to have their Fm 9’s complete (with quote) and planned the shopping trip the day prior. This allowed a planned time to be set up for each customer with requirements to meet at various vendor locations to perform the purchasing transactions. There are also vendors that will deliver to the customer directly and then they can complete the transaction at finance. This decentralized process took away all the small buys (\$2500 or less) from contracting allowing us to concentrate more on the larger dollar requirements and administration tasks. Any stateside requirements \$2500 or less were still bought through contracting via purchase order.
- g. Iraqi First Program - This program was implemented to ensure as many contract dollars as possible go to Iraqi owned firms. This program was not being fully enforced prior to this deployment at Sather AB. When this office went under the JCC-I and the GPC went away this became a main priority. The local policy was to award to an Iraqi company unless the cost was 30% or more over the non-Iraqi quote received. Customers were trained to obtain local quotes and attach to the PR document. If a local quote was not received proper justification was required. The concept of this program is to help rebuild

the local economy, however, it was often difficult to justify price fair and reasonable, especially for the larger dollar requirements. It is imperative to use the Rebuild Iraq website to post requirements to ensure adequate competition is received. Very often you would get 10 or more quotes that more than satisfied the requirement for competition, however the quotes come from vendors worldwide. When posting your RFP/RFQ a separate document is attached that requests business information to ensure that we are dealing with an Iraqi firm. RFP/RFQ documents were also posted on the local bid board in the office. Vendors regularly stopped by to view this board. The Rebuild Iraq website also had an option available to translate the RFP/RFQ documents and the Camp Victory also posted the Arabic version of the documents on their bid board. This is especially helpful in expanding the vendor pool with the smaller companies in the local area.

h. Security issues or concerns

i. VBC escort support is limited. All ECPs are considered dangerous by local contractors due to insurgent ambushes and firing on contractors. There is an escort OI (447 AEG OI 31-102) and the program is managed by ECES. ECES has ongoing construction projects beyond their ability to provide required escorts in a timely manner or at all. Escorts are also required for one time deliveries, payment pick ups, etc. by contractors – which are often unscheduled (a hard habit to break). Contractors are regularly complaining about 3 hour plus waiting times for arrival of escorts and for search pit clearance. Lack of escorts is potentially a government delay in completion of construction projects. The search pit process requires a search of all vehicles at the Sather AB ECP prior to entry to the base. For the delivery of concrete, asphalt, etc. the contractor is required to come to the search pit empty, once cleared they would leave with an escort and pick up the product and return to Sather AB. As long as the escort maintained visual control of the truck/driver the vehicles would be able to make multiple deliveries each day.

ii. Contracting was also kept in the loop regarding issues encountered by escorts. There were reports of various inappropriate behaviors on the part of contractors. The escort manager would do any required reports and let us know so we could inform the project manager of subject company so that they could take appropriate disciplinary action.

iii. Multi-National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I) badging of the Local Nationals/Third Country Nationals (LN/TCN) and re-issue of the DoD Common Access Card (CAC) has been a continuing problem. Contractors shop around to see what privileges they can get from different contracting offices and it should be noted Sather AB is not the only one they are conducting business with. Sather contracting has the rights to issue the paperwork for contractors to have a CAC card. It was decided to restrict issuance of the CAC card unless you have a contract that requires them to have DFAC and PX privileges. Since the only service contract at Sather AB is the uniform pressing with Rose's Laundry there is no reason for Sather contracting to issue CAC cards. It is recommended to have contractors go to the contracting office in which they have a contract to get their cards re-issued as this office would be familiar with the contract requirements.

iv. Sather AB is more restrictive than the rest of the VBC. If an individual (LN/TCN) does not have a CAC, they must go to the search pit and be escorted throughout the

base. This obviously causes delays for contractors to come on base to work or deliver goods. To gain access to Sather a badge swap must occur, but they are still under escort, to include KBR personnel.

v. Due to security issues the Army can shut down gates without notice causing the contracting office to create memorandums on why certain contractors should be allowed to drive their vehicles onto the VBC or stage construction equipment on Sather. The exception to policy letter would be sent to BDOC at Camp Victory, typically it would show the driver's name, vehicle make, color and license number. The request would indicate the contract number and period that the contractor would require vehicle access and why it was required. Once the letter was dropped off it would take a minimum of 3 days to get the approval/disapproval, however at the end of this deployment it was taking longer than that for most requests. This of course could delay deliveries or start of a contract.

vi. The dining facility at Sather opened in Dec 06. Part of the security detail is augmented by TSgt and below. Contracting is required to perform this detail. Typically this is just once a month. The Top 3 also supplements this detail on Sundays to provide relief to squadrons. There is currently a fencing/gate project in the works that should alleviate this additional need for extra security details. At time of departure the notice to proceed had not yet been issued for this project.

6. Local transportation, billeting, and communication resource availability.

- a. We had a leased 7-pax SUV and GSA Ford F-150 pick up. This served our needs well. We were required to have a wingman whenever we left Sather AB for purchases, training at Victory office, etc. When ECONS was absorbed by JCC-I at Camp Victory 1 Mar 07 2 personnel were moved to Victory. Along with this and the decrease of pick up and deliveries made by contracting one vehicle was proposed to be turned in.
- b. We were billeted in Alaskan shelters, configured 8 per tent, with a bed and wall locker. However, a tent to trailer conversion is in progress and move in is to start mid- June 07. Total conversion expected to be complete around Oct 07.
- c. NIPR and SIPR access computers were adequate. NIPR printer/copier/digital sender is used by our office and other nearby offices use it as well. Unit has DSN fax capability only. The original database used for tracking was a CENTAF program. Upon going under JCC-I we were switched over to the ACTT-NG database that they utilized. There is a local POC available for install of the program and training. The database tracks all PRs from start to finish; CCO is required to input all data.
- d. The local cell phone network (IRAQNA) served as the secondary means of communication with our contractors. E-mail seemed to be the most useful in being sure we understood each other and the requirements. The cell phones worked well and on occasion lost reception in certain areas of the VBC. We have DSN capability, but no commercial fax. This did not hinder operations as we had DSN access for 800 numbers to the states. The IRAQNA phones utilized "scratch" cards that would be valid for ninety days with recharging of minutes required at the expiration of that time period or when minutes ran out. The amount of minutes loaded depended on your usage of the phone.

7. Evaluation of any Host Nation Support Agreement or comparable understanding, Status of Forces Agreements, if applicable, and the impact of these agreements upon contingency contracting within the area.
  - a. Although no formal agreements exist, information sharing (vendors, pricing, etc.) is extremely beneficial with JCC, RCC, PARC, REDHORSE, and the other contracting offices in the AOR (Balad, Ali and Kirkuk). Sharing information, not necessarily working each others' or combining requirements, prevented each of the procurement offices from competing for resources (i.e. aggregate, concrete, asphalt, etc.). Our office and the JCC-I office agreed to utilize the JCC-I BPA for trailer purchases. Each contracting office that uses the BPA must agree to be the ACO for the order. It would also be helpful to have a listing of BPA's and IDIQs from the Camp Victory office that we could utilize.
  - b. The Sather contracting office has existing BPA's for lumber, gravel, barriers and concrete. The least used is the lumber BPA; with the inception of the FOO program customers are taking care of smaller orders themselves. Larger orders typically came over with items on them that were not on the BPA so purchase orders would be done. The main issue with the BPA's was the price lists. It was difficult to get revised lists from some contractors and past BPA calls were filled at prices that were not on the price list. It was always wise to verify the price before award of a call to be sure the price had not changed.
  - c. The Sather contracting office has existing IDIQ contracts for asphalt work, fencing and concrete work. These are used regularly and are competed among 2 contractors per IDIQ. The office at Camp Victory has attempted to utilize the fencing IDIQ, which is fine, but they utilize PD2 at this office and no one else in the AOR does. In order to use the Sather IDIQs they will need to work the orders manually in order to maintain the DO numbering system that is in place.
8. Adequacy of facilities, equipment, and other support provided by the deployed commander and the OPLAN under which the deployment was conducted. Specific modifications required for future deployment plans to this or other locations.
  - a. The facilities were adequate upon arrival. Offices, break room and conference room are converted carports with an HVAC system. There is no emergency lighting in the facility.
  - b. Adequate phone service and computer systems were available in the office. Commercial fax capabilities do not exist. However, we really do not require this having the ability to scan and e-mail documents. The contracting office has a web page with some helpful documents for customer training. This page needs to be updated to include FOO training, vendor list, etc. that will be helpful to customers and potentially alleviate some of the extra questions that the office regularly gets.
9. Any specific problems that could be anticipated to support an extended exercise or contingency operation at this location.

- a. Sather AB will be here for awhile (3-5 year plan) according to Wing leadership. Port-a-john to Cadillac latrine conversion has taken place. The tent to trailer conversion for living quarters is currently under way.
  - b. Contractor badging, as discussed earlier, can have a significant impact on a contractor's ability to perform. It is imperative the CCO seek out the latest badging process and ensure offerors have the ability and opportunity to understand and comply with the rules of engagement before award of a contract. This also applies to escort and search procedures. As rotations occur rules have a tendency to change.
  - c. Training was conducted with resource advisors at the beginning of the rotation. We educated our customers on supplying suggested sources that deliver to APO addresses for stateside purchases. We also teamed with finance to talk about the Form 9 process and the FOO program. The main issue was getting the customer to understand and provide an Iraqi quote under the Iraqi First program. Another bad habit of the customer was just providing a website address without a POC, verification that a PO was accepted and obtaining applicable shipping charges. A number of customers felt that this was not their job. Due to the large workload contracting could not afford to do market research on every PR – when valid quotes were attached to the PR the ordering process went much faster. Also, the office chief requested that all “HOT” requirements be brought to our attention immediately so we could get a head start on the process.
  - d. Deliveries are poor, but not necessarily the contractor's fault. Dealing with sealift, Army convoys, snipers shooting at drivers coming in/out of the VBC entry control points make deliveries extremely difficult and time consuming. Although some contractors try to pad the delivery dates as well as the CCOs doing the same, late deliveries are the norm. Customers do not understand this and get frustrated. It is part of life in Baghdad that customers must constantly be reminded of on a regular basis. Customer education is key.
  - e. Construction contracts are on going, both existing and new requirements. There is currently a small pool of vendors with construction contracts and work is started on each project based upon customer priority and/or material availability. We utilize the Rebuilding Iraq web page to post our solicitations that are not covered by an IDIQ. CE is by far our largest customer. The main issue with 4 month rotations is that one rotation will design the project and then another rotation will be the one's who execute the work. This leads to a large number of modifications, some changes are justified, some are more a result of different needs/desires than the team who designed the project. The CE rotation happens 2-3 weeks before contracting, this is very helpful as far as continuity in what is going on with contracts – this time allows for a more seamless transition.
  - f. An interpreter was not utilized at Sather AB. Most of the companies that we dealt with were English speaking. It was also put into our construction contracts to have an English speaking project manager on site, which makes day to day operations go much more smoothly. E-mail was utilized quite a bit to transmit changes, policy, etc. This allowed for better understanding between both parties of the requirements.
10. Special personnel requirements (rank, gender, skill level, etc.), contingency kit requirements, or individual clothing and equipment requirements to meet mission demands in this area.
- a. With the merge with JCC-I the contracting office at Sather went from 4 Air Force to 2 Air Force and 1 Army. The workload shifted from strictly Sather AB requirements to a

mix of Air Force and Army requirements throughout the VBC. It had been stated by higher Air Force management, prior to the merge, that the Army has “issues” with personnel below the rank of SSgt. However, the 7/8 rotation has a SrA and A1C acting as CCO’s – it will be interesting to discover how they have been treated throughout their deployment.

- b. As far as the Sather office is concerned 3 personnel seem to be able to handle the existing workload. The Army requirements fluctuate with the surge of troops at various times and their approval process for requirements is much lengthier than Air Force. At end of this rotation there was an Air Force bed down project as well as Army surge projects on going.

#### 11. Other issues

- a. Close outs typically fell to the bottom of the priority list. However, it is highly advisable to set aside an hour or two each week to work on these otherwise it will get out of control. A major issue was the item had been received and invoice processed through FM but no payment voucher was received. In this situation the final payment date was obtained from FM and noted in the file and close out was completed in the database. If the Sather contracting office ever goes away and is completely absorbed by Camp Victory all files (awards prior to the merge) will need to be manually reviewed and closed out if necessary. FY05 and forward were available in the office at Sather.
- b. Invoice issues – There are some vendors who would come to us, up to two years later, wanting payment and/or status on numerous invoices. Part of this was due to bad book keeping on their part and personnel changes. However, at times it seemed as though they were potentially trying to get paid again for invoices that were already paid. We worked closely with FM on this to verify payment dates, etc. There were also instances where we had no receiving report in file or a copy had just not been provided to FM. There were also issues of vendors stating that previous CCOs had agreed to do modifications and we would have to try and piece together the facts to determine if that was the case. As with any deployment the “regulars” become familiar with the rotational process and will come in to each new crew and try to pull one over on the new people. Vendor payments to local contractors were made via EFT via Shaw AFB or cash via local finance – most vendors took cash payment only due to lack of banking system in Iraq. Stateside vendors were paid through DFAS Limestone.
- c. The threat conditions at Sather at the beginning of this rotation were minimal. No direct fire from rockets/mortars. However, towards the end of the rotation the “aim” got better and direct hits were becoming more common. Essential for individuals to be up to speed on response procedures and not become complacent.
- d. The job at Sather requires a good working knowledge of construction contracts as this is the primary workload. A 7 level can easily fill this

requirement as well as a 5 level. Based upon the 2 person concept now in place at Sather I do not feel that a 3 level would be suitable for this office. If it was a larger office it would probably work. However, this environment requires a knowledge level high enough to work on your own and unfortunately there is not time to train someone from scratch in this situation.

- e. JCC-I changeover – this was a somewhat difficult changeover. The merge created a lot of moves to take place throughout the AOR. There was also some surprise especially on the FM side – I don't think the communication flow was very good in that regard. We were well briefed by the local office management as far as the timeline, etc. of the change. As far as work was concerned the Army definitely has a completely different idea on how to do things. As stated earlier an Army Major moved down to our office and briefed us on required forms, file set up, etc. Though I feel it was mostly the personalities of the existing Army crew at Camp Victory, micro-management was out in full force. This may have also been attributed to lack of experience as well. There was a lot of duplication, especially in regards to price fair and reasonableness. There also did not appear to be any consistency in regards to the review of PR packages, Army or Air Force, which makes it very difficult to teach the customers how to prepare a good PR package.

12. Please contact me by e-mail to answer any questions.

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