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August 10, 2004

## REFUSING TO GIVE UP, V CORPS SAPPERS BRING SAMARRA GAS PIPELINE BACK TO LIFE

1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division Public Affairs Office Release

**TIKRIT, Iraq** – A sabotaged oil pipeline southwest of Samarra, Iraq was repaired recently thanks to efforts led by sappers from the 1st Platoon of V Corps' Charlie Company, 9th Engineer Battalion.

The project had been stalled for several days due to the inability to remove a bad section of natural gas pipe buried three meters in the ground. When 1st Lt. William Wyche and 1st platoon arrived on the site, the chief pipeline worker suggested that they simply bury the bad section of pipe and abandon the mission.

Not easily discouraged, the platoon made a repair assessment. After some consideration, they recommended to the pipeline officials that they simply cut the pipe into smaller pieces and lift each section out of the ground with a Small Emplacement Excavator – a Swiss Army knife of a piece of engineer equipment that is essentially a mini backhoe-scoop combination.

The chief pipeline worker agreed with both the assessment and the recommendation, and the platoon went to work immediately.

Due to the remote location, the platoon had to sling-load a SEE and repair pipes with a CH-47 Chinook helicopter and transport them to the worksite on the far side of the Tigris River. To get other personnel and equipment across, platoon Sgt. 1st Class Armando Cadena worked with local Iraqis to provide transport on a generally seaworthy, but somewhat small, civilian boat.

“Dealing with pipelines is not something we normally train on as combat engineers, but using problem-solving skills we developed as engineers helped us work through the issues to accomplish the mission,” Cadena said.

1st Platoon Soldiers established security at the project site and then assisted the pipeline workers in completing the mission. The damaged pipe was removed and other remaining debris was cleared from the hole. Once the new section of pipe was placed, the sections were welded together and wrapped with plastic tape to prevent rusting and corrosion. The sappers then used the SEE to fill the hole and cover the repaired pipe. The Iraqi oil pipeline workers were overjoyed that the repairs had been completed and the flow of natural gas through the pipeline was turned on once again.

1st platoon squad leader Sgt. Joshua Dillinger said, “It was a great feeling knowing that our work was having such a large impact on improving the lives of the Iraqi people”.

The results of this mission were extremely important for the flow of Iraq’s fuel. If this mission would not have been completed quickly, 100 vehicles transporting fuel would have been put on the road daily from Mosul to Baghdad to keep the much-needed fuel flowing.

