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August 18, 2004

V CORPS TASK FORCE JOINS BALAD OFFICIALS IN CREATION OF NEW COUNCIL BUILDING

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TIKRIT, Iraq — Soldiers from Bravo Company, Task Force 1-77 of and city officials from the area of Balad joined together in breaking ground last week on a major renovation project to raise a new city and district council building in the heart of downtown Balad.



PHOTO COURTESY 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION
Capt. Henry Delacruz, commander of Bravo Company, Task Force 1-77 Armor, breaks ground on a new Balad council building with Balad Mayor Fawsi and city officials.

The building, previously a Ba'ath party headquarters and social club, will offer enough space to permanently house the Balad city and district councils, as well as its associated committees and official offices and the local newspaper and radio station.

When complete the building will be the permanent home of the largest district council or "Quada" in the province.

The project, valued at \$99,600 and currently employing more than 60 local workers and artisans, is a major project that was brought to the city of Balad as the result of

cooperation between the task force, the 372nd Engineer Group and the Balad city council.

“This building will represent all the people of Balad and will be the center of our new democratic government,” stated Balad City Mayor Fawsi.

“We are so happy to transform this once symbol of evil to the new symbol of freedom,” beamed Balad resident Baquir Jaffer.

Prior to the groundbreaking the commander of Bravo Company, Capt. Henry Delacruz, addressed the assembled crowd.

“In this building, city representatives will be able to continue their work for the people of Balad . . . They will better coordinate and work together to improve the lives of the citizens of Balad. That is their mission,” Delacruz said.

After breaking ground, the project engineer and city council members gave Delacruz and some of his Soldiers a tour of the construction site. “It is great see a place like this being rebuilt for the benefit of so many,” said Sgt. 1st Class Henry Miglianti.

“You can see we are making a difference when you see projects like this begin, and the people just keep smiling,” added Sgt. Jeremy Jones.

Since March, Task Force 1-77, part of the corps' 1st Infantry Division, has invested more than \$2.6 million in civil-military operations in the area that focus on high-impact and high employment civil construction to assist people in the Balad area.

