

New Water Drilling Rig



Arrives In Djibouti

by Jerord Wilson

Drilling, supply and support equipment are prepared to leave base camp.

It wasn't so much of a prayer being answered, as it was a positive conclusion when an eagerly awaited and long-anticipated new well drilling rig arrived at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti to be used by the 1132nd Engineer Detachment.

The North Carolina Army unit, working as part of the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, accepted the rig and performed pre-maintenance checks to identify any mechanical problems with the system

and prepare the equipment for the difficult conditions it will face in Djibouti, a very small country located in eastern Africa.

In the past, well drilling equipment took a long time to set-up and, because of the thick geological structure of the rock formations in Djibouti, the equipment was subjected to severe Djibouti maintenance problems. These problems delayed the creation of much-needed wells because repair parts had to be ordered

from the United States.

The capabilities and composition of the new equipment is very impressive, according to members of the detachment. The new rig travels with two large trucks to support water and filtration during operations; 80,000 pounds of pressure can be exerted, and the drill can reach depths of more than 2,000 feet. It's capable of using a 6- or 12-inch roller-cone blue steel drill bit that's designed to drill through the toughest geological formations in Djibouti. The new drilling truck is manufactured by the Laibe Corp., Indianapolis.

Brandon Pickerel, a member of the Laibe Corp., went to Camp Lemonier for several weeks to help train and familiarize members of the 1132nd on the new rig. And the next weeks were challenging to the new crew and the new equipment, says Pickerel. Temperatures in Djibouti had begun to reach 100 degrees F by mid-morning and continued to rise during the next few weeks. The increase in temperatures had some effects on the operation of the equipment when the team began its first water well site. The crew operating the new machine had to take precautions for the effects of the heat on the equipment and on them as operators.

Previously, the equipment used by the 1132nd took about a week just for set-up before drilling could begin. The new drilling equipment can be set-up and drilling can commence at a site within one day. To drill 100 feet with the old drilling rig would take a considerable amount of time based on soil composition. With the new drilling rig however, 100 feet can be drilled within five hours even in the toughest Djiboutian soil, increasing the number of wells that can be drilled at locations throughout Djibouti. **ND**



The Versa-Drill V-2000NG is inspected prior to field operation.

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