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Foundation-stone ceremony marks agricultural revival

By **Sgt. 1st Class Tami Hillis**
4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.

FOB KALSU— Sealing off a cornerstone time capsule marked a new beginning for the farmers of north Babil Province.

Agriculture leaders, Iraqi provincial government officials, Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition forces participated in the Central Euphrates Farmers Market and Agricultural Center Foundation-Stone Ceremony in an open field just north of Forward Operating Base Kalsu Aug. 23.

Sealed in the time capsule was an official document with the signatures of approximately 15 key individuals who helped develop the vision of the farmers market, which is scheduled to be constructed by the end of the year.

“We are happy today to officially corner a stone in this project,” said Sheikh Kudair Ulawi Al-Jubori, chairman of the Central Euphrates Farmers Market and Agricultural Center Management Board. “This idea came up and it has expanded over time, and we are hoping this market will be a great project and meet the needs of the people.”

The vision for the \$2.8 million market is to provide a central location for farmers in north Babil Province to sell their produce.

“More than 10,000 farmers live in this area, but today, much of this area’s once fertile farmland lies unplanted and idle,” said Col. Thomas James, commander of 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. “There are several reasons for this: a lack of electricity and water, poor drainage, inadequate fertilizing and years of warfare.”

The leaders of the agriculture associations in Jiff Jaffa, al Haq, Muelha and Diyarrah visited Coalition forces



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Tami Hillis

An Agriculture Association leader signs a document that will be put in the foundation stone time capsule during the Central Euphrates Farmers Market and Agricultural Center Foundation-Stone Ceremony Aug. 23.

and members of the embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team based at FOB Kalsu in 2007 when security was more of an issue to discuss the farmers market project.

“They laid out their own reasons why a new farmers market needed to be built in this area,” said James. “At that time, the agriculture association leaders were simply looking for a place closer to home where they could come together under the protection of Iraqi Security Forces to sell their produce.”

Their primary goal then was to sell their produce in bulk from fully-loaded trucks to wholesale buyers from urban areas.

“But as we worked this issue and as the area’s security improved, the original vision of a market in an open field grew into a new vision of a permanent market

complex with support facilities,” he said.

“Several economic studies conducted recently by our Iraqi partners and the north Babil embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team confirm the existence of a wholesale farmers market in this area would do much to stimulate farm production and encourage reclamation of the lands that are now idle,” said James.

Local agriculture association leaders have recognized this fact for years, and they have long wanted to build and operate a new market in a prime location in this area to satisfy this need. Until recently, however, they were unable to secure the funds required for such a large project.

“Based on this requirement, Iraqi agriculture leaders, Coalition forces and the north Babil ePRT formed a partner-

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Cutting them off at the pass: IP checkpoints

By **SGT. DANIEL T. WEST**
41ST FB PAO



FOB DELTA— “A checkpoint is like a narrow pass,” said Lt. Col. Waleed, outgoing commander of Iraqi Police Checkpoint Four, near al-Kut. “If you close it off, you can halt anything bad trying to pass through.”

Iraqi Police operate six permanent checkpoints around the outskirts of al-Kut designed to halt fighters and the smuggling of weapons into and through the area from Iran, said Staff Sgt. Gabriel Holguin, 511th Military Police Company. The unit has responsibility for training Iraqi Police around al-Kut.

“The MPs have technology, training and experience,” said Waleed. “We definitely have benefited from our training with them.”

“We need more training, though,” he added. “We work shifts; and at least a third of those (who are) off-shift should be training.”

Soldiers of the 511th MP Co. train IPs in vehicle and personnel searches, usually at the request of the checkpoint com-

manders, said Holguin.

“All checkpoints in Iraq are important,” he said.

“The checkpoints in al-Kut are even more so because we are close to the Iranian border, and there seems to be a lot of Iranian influence in this area,” he added.

Specialist Matthew Buraczeski, 511th MP Co., praised the dedication of the IPs at the checkpoints.

“Most want to learn the techniques used by Coalition forces to better the checkpoints,” he said. “That has earned them a lot of respect from Coalition forces and local citizens.”

“The checkpoints are very effective,” said Holguin. “Even though they lack in basic supplies, such as traffic cones, spot lights, signs and speed bumps, the IPs still manage to enforce the standards set by their superiors to the best of their abilities.”



Photo by Sgt. Daniel T. West

Staff Sergeant Gabriel Holguin, an El Paso, Texas native assigned to the 511th MP Co., explains vehicle search techniques to IPs at IP Checkpoint Four near al-Kut Aug. 18. The unit has responsibility for training IPs around al-Kut.



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THE Mountain View

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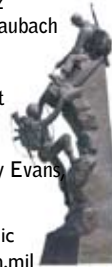
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REVIVAL

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ship to seek a solution,” said James.

This partnership between Iraqi citizens and Coalition forces made the foundation-stone ceremony possible.

Furthermore, the vision expanded to include an agricultural center for research and education. The center, the Central Euphrates Farmers Market and Agricultural Center, will provide local farmers a place to learn about modern agricultural practices.

“We soon realized that a modern wholesale market requires space, vehicular accessibility and room for expansion; and this site, selected by the agriculture associations, meets all those requirements,” said James. “Here, just west of the Baghdad Highway, the main corridor that connects Basra with Baghdad and Mosul, the market will become critical in stimulating agricultural growth for years to come.”

When construction is complete, the facility will be owned, operated and maintained by the four agriculture associations from Jiff Jaffa, al Haq, Muelha

and Diyahrah; they had the original vision, said James.

The four associations also agreed to buy the land for the complex, which they have done to become certified nongovernmental organizations. The organization will form a management board to manage and operate the complex.

“With this project, we have seen local leaders come together with Coalition forces, with the ePRT and with government officials to address the real need of the people,” said James. “And when this market and agricultural center complex is completed, it will benefit all of the citizens of this area. The building of this facility will stimulate economic activity in a peaceful and secure environment that has been created by the Iraqi Security Forces and civilian leaders who were tired of violence and insecurity.”

The ceremony finished at the foundation stone where leaders placed the signed document and took part in the ritual of taking a trowel-full of cement and pouring in on top of the document.

A tile was then placed at the top of the foundation stone, and it was sealed, marking a new beginning.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Tami Hillis
(Left) Dr. Fouad, an agricultural economist with the north Babil Province agriculture team, and George Stickels, embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team agriculture adviser, place the signed document in a plastic envelop, which was placed in the foundation stone time capsule Aug. 23.

What would Chuck Norris do? *Take this class*

Spc. SOPHIA R. LOPEZ
MND-C

CAMP VICTORY— In the U.S., Rapsody Johnson is a competitive kickboxer who started using kickboxing as a sort of therapy after returning from Iraq in 2003. Johnson, an Army reservist with a psychological operations training unit in Ohio, serves here this time as a civilian and continues to use kickboxing as her release.

“It’s a great way for people to relieve stress and get a workout at the same time,” said Johnson, of Delaware. Johnson works as a psychological operations planner and target advisor for Lincoln Group.

The kickboxing classes came around as a result of people asking to join Johnson during her personal training sessions at the fitness center.

“It kind of snowballed from there,” she said.

The Morale, Welfare and Recreation representative then asked her to hold classes, which take place every Monday through Saturday from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Paul R. Smith Fitness Center.

“It’s something I really enjoy a lot. So, now I teach it six days a week,” she said.

The class combines three different styles of kickboxing: Muay Thai, American style and European style.

“In American style kickboxing, you are only allowed to use your fists and feet to kick above the hip,” Johnson said.

In European kickboxing, hits and kicks below the hips

are allowed, but unlike Muay Thai kickboxing, elbows and knees may not be used to strike the opponent.

“My most memorable moment is my first fight,” said Johnson, a veteran of 16 fights, with a 14-2 record. “That’s when I fell in love with it.”

However, to Johnson, the most fulfilling aspect of teaching kickboxing is the success of her students. One student continued to practice back in the U.S., fought and won an amateur world title.

Participants in Johnson’s class here aren’t as involved in the competition. The focus here is health – both physical and mental.

“Kickboxing is good for cardiovascular (fitness), but a lot of people also gain self-confidence from the classes because they are doing a lot of things most people don’t get to do, said Sgt. James Singleton, of Mesquite, Texas, motor sergeant, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 18th Military Police Brigade.

“A lot of people are scared of fighting,” said Singleton. “They come into the class, and as time goes on, you see them progress, and you can tell by their reactions when they’re around other people, their attitude has completely changed. They have that self-esteem built up from something they’ve never done.”

“I would recommend this class to others not only for the training you get from it or the cardio, but it’s a self-esteem builder, and if a whole section came, it could be team builder,” he added.

Staff Section Round-up

Major Promotion Selection List



MANEUVER, FIRES, AND EFFECTS

Capt. Scott Swilley
4-3 ID (4-64 AR)

Capt. James Armstrong
HHC 10th MTN

Capt. Gabriel Downey
HHC 10th MTN

Capt. Brian Ferguson
HHC 10th MTN

Capt. Christopher Handy
HHC 10th MTN

Capt. Jonathan Zeppa
HHC 10th MTN

Capt. Marc Bailey
HHC 3-101 AA

Capt. Benjamin Bates
HHC 3-101 AA

Capt. Ryan Mayfield
HHC 3-101 AA

Capt. Thomas Goettke
3-101 AA (3-320 FA)

Capt. Michael Berriman
4-3 ID (4-64 AR)

Capt. David Simms
4-3 ID (4-64 AR)

Capt. Tommy Cribbs
4-3 ID (703 CSB)

Capt. Clint Cunningham
4-3 ID (4 STB)

Capt. John Garcia
4-3 ID (4 STB)

Capt. Matt Williams
4-3 ID (4 STB)

Capt. David Stewart
4-3 ID (3-7 IN)

Capt. Eric Tisland
4-3 ID (3-7 IN)

Capt. Don Makay
HHC 2-1 AD

Capt. Timothy Ferguson
2-1 AD (2-6 IN)

Capt. Augustine Gonzales
2-1 AD (2-6 IN)

Capt. Jonpaul Hart
2-1 AD (2-6 IN)

Capt. Richard Phillips
2-1 AD (2-6 IN)

Capt. Christian Garlitz
2-1 AD (4-27 FA)

Capt. Matthew Hustead
2-1 AD (4-27 FA)

Capt. Eduardo Rodriguez
2-1 AD (4-27 FA)

Capt. Eric Morton
2-1 AD (1-35 AR)

Capt. Andrew Slack
2-1 AD (1-35 AR)

Capt. Michael Persin
2-1 AD (1-35 AR)

Capt. Nicholas Schenck
2-1 AD (1-6 IN)

Capt. Tom Noble
2-1 AD (2-3-1 NPPT)

Capt. Hughe Charleswalters
HHC 4-1 CAV

Capt. Ernest Hill
4-1 CAV (2-7 IN)

Capt. Hames Zoizack
4-1 CAV (5-82 FA)

Capt. Eric Olsen
HHC 11 AVN TF 49

Capt. Matthew Frombach
TF 49 (4-3 AVN)

Capt. Ryan Kendall
TF 49 (4-3 AVN)

Capt. Arlin Wilsher
TF 49 (4-3 AVN)

Capt. Danielle Medaglia
TF 49 (3-158 AVN)

**OPERATIONS
SUPPORT**

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HHC 10th MTN

Capt. David Hansen
HHC 10th MTN

Capt. Paul Maher
HHC 10th MTN

Capt. Rachel Sarles
HHC 3-101 AA

Capt. John Agnello
4-3 ID (Rear Det 1-76 FA)

Capt. Donya Best
4-3 ID (4 STB)

Capt. Yancey Zinkon
4-3 ID (4 STB)

Capt. Jeffrey Essig
4-3 ID (1-76 FA)

Capt. Anthony Fields
HHC 41 FB

**FORCE
SUSTAINMENT**

Capt. Thomas Boland
3-101 AA (626 BSB)

Capt. Troy King
3-101 AA (626th BSB)

Capt. William Vick
3-101 AA (626th BSB)

Capt. Misti Frodyma
4-3 ID (703 CSB)

Capt. Kimberly Ferguson
2-1 AD (Rear Det)

Capt. Curtis Perkins
HHC 4-1 CAV

Capt. Carmelo Madera
41 FB (589 CSB)

Capt. Anthony Marante
HHC 10th MTN

Chaplain's Corner: A Reflection on the Pursuit of Happiness

One of our fundamental desires in life is happiness. Everyone wants to experience joy and a sense of fulfillment, resulting in happiness. Several years ago, advertisers would make the pitch, "Happiness is..." and then follow with a series of statements attempting to define happiness as something met by the use of their product. Certainly, most of us would agree that "Happiness is driving my own Corvette." Our imaginations can run wonderfully wild as we ponder how to answer this question. However, before we get too carried away making plans for the purchase of our new Corvette, it is good to approach this pursuit from the spiritual perspective as well.

Research shows that many who attempt to define happiness only through material items still end up with an absence of fulfillment and an inner sense

of loss. We have all heard the surprising stories of an occasional millionaire who commits suicide. The notes they left behind often state that even amid their wealth, success and fame, life still seemed to be without meaning or happiness. This can serve as a warning to us. Without God, owning a great many things or having worldly success or fame does not satisfy the deeper cravings of the human heart.

In the final analysis, happiness will not be found in these things, nor can it be purchased. The Beatles said it well in their song, *Can't Buy Me Love*. For those of Faith, true happiness is the result of our spiritual development. Our inward journey toward God helps us to know and appreciate genuine happiness in this life as we grow in appreciation of God's love for us. As we continue this journey, we find that it

more often comes from a heart of charity, a heart that has learned to give and share, rather than gather and keep. It is this happiness that becomes a foretaste of the eternal happiness promised to us in Heaven, a place that has been called the Kingdom of Eternal Happiness.

The Army teaches us the importance of "selfless service," and our military history provides many instances of extraordinary heroism. If we keep this world in proper perspective, and cultivate our relationships with God, we will discover His promise of a happiness far beyond what we can imagine in this world, and we will learn that true joy is found in the fundamental maxim: it is better to give than to receive.

– Ch. (Maj.) Eric Albertson

Headline Round-up

Top News:

Jorge Thornton, 27, a U.S. defense contractor employed by Blackhawk Management, was arrested Aug. 24 at Fort Benning, Ga. and charged with sexually assaulting a woman at an American base in Iraq. On Aug. 12, a federal grand jury in Waco, Texas, indicted Thornton on a count of aggravated sexual abuse, accusing him of forcing sexual contact with a woman in Tal Afar in June.

World News:

Former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif withdrew his party from Pakistan's ruling coalition Aug. 25 and vowed to nominate a rival presidential candidate. This situation brings further uncertainty to Pakistan, which possesses nuclear weapons and is a key U.S. ally.

Sports News:

Houston Texan receiver, Harry Williams, will probably never play pro-football again after injuring his neck and spine in a preseason game against the Dallas Cowboys July 22. Williams had surgery Aug. 24 in Dallas to fuse and stabilize the cervical spine levels C-2 through C-4. He is expected to walk again.

U.S. News:

Nandi, a young female manta ray, is attracting many visitors to her new home at the Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta. She made her debut Aug. 25. The wingspan of an adult manta ray can grow to 20 feet or more and is the largest of all ray species.

Odd News:

In Helsinki, Finland, the Finnish spend their summer months participating in wacky contests. Events such as swamp soccer, wife-carrying and air guitar take place over the three summer months and have been known to attract up to 10,000 people to the Nordic country. To watch or join in. The games, which were originated at summer fairs or as village affairs, have prompted other nations to hold their own contests to select who will compete in Finland.

WHAT DID YOU DO ON LEAVE?



Photo by Pfc. Evan Loyd

"I started off by heading to San Diego and saw my mom and some of my friends. Then, I went to Iowa to see my dad. I did as much as I could with as little sleep as possible," said Cpl. Roxanne Finks, of San Diego, information system operations analyst, communications section, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.



Photo by Pfc. Evan Loyd

"I went back to Germany to my middle child's graduation. Then, I took my family to Edelweiss for the rest of my leave," said Sgt. 1st Class Donald Johnson, of Baumholder, Germany, a member of the command security detail, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.

Quote of the Day

"Keep your face always toward the sunshine, and shadows will fall behind you." – Walt Whitman

Submission by Chief Warrant Officer Jerry Martini

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from Sudoku Easy Presented by Will Shortz

Solution to yesterday's puzzle:

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ARABIC WORD OF THE DAY

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