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March 6, 2009

8th IA Div. assumes responsibility of COP 4



Photo by Sgt. Rodney Foliente

Soldiers representing different 8th IA Div. units stand together prior to the transfer of authority ceremony at COP 4 March 3.

SGT. RODNEY FOLIEN
2ND BCT, 4TH INF. DIV.



CAMP ECHO – The 8th Iraqi Army Division received responsibility for Combat Outpost 4 from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Warhorse Brigade during a transfer of authority ceremony at the outpost March 3.

The ceremony marked the 8th IA Div.'s increasing ability to maintain security in the Diwaniya Province without Coalition assistance, as shown recently during safe and successful provincial elections Jan. 31.

"The transition of Combat Outpost 4 is a very important event to Iraqis, showing that America and Iraq are following

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COP 4

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the terms of the Security Agreement, which was signed on Jan. 1," said Lt. Gen. Ali Salih Farhood Oothman, 8th IA Div. commander.

The combat outpost is very crucial to maintaining security and ensuring the insurgency, which destabilized the area in the past, is kept from doing the same again, continued Oothman.

"The 8th Division personnel are very proud and happy

to receive this site and consider it as a great achievement," said Oothman. "Our priority is to continue to improve the safety of the city as we move further into the reconstruction phase."

Oothman praised the efforts of U.S. and Coalition Forces "to help stabilize the area and train the Iraqi Army."

"Coalition forces have worked closely with the Iraqi Army. We have seen a dramatic improvement in the skill, effectiveness and professionalism of this unit. The people of this great province and country should be proud of the Iraqi Army and the fine Soldiers it has produced," said Lt. Col. Doug Cardinale, 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment commander. Cardinale's battalion operated out of COP 4, working with the ISF since September.

"I am confident that the 8th Iraqi Army Division, under the guidance of Lt. Gen. Oothman, can use this combat outpost as another effective tool in keeping Diwaniya as one of the safest provinces in all of Iraq," continued Cardinale. "You cannot build a strong country without ensuring it has a strong army. Iraq is building for the future and its proud Army is leading the way."

Transitions from CF to Iraqi control have been occurring throughout Iraq and will continue because Iraqi Security Forces are taking the lead in securing Iraq, said Cardinale.

"The 8th Iraqi Army has been operating independently for more than three years and was the first to provide a safe and secure environment to the Iraqi people," said Col. Butch Kievenaar, 2nd BCT commander. "It's been our privilege to partner with you and to continue to help in that development as you continue to move forward in securing Iraq."

"When Soldiers perform in battle together, they are bonded by something more than blood. And this brigade, with the 8th Iraqi Army – not only during this rotation but on previous rotations – have served together and formed a brotherhood. Rest assured, our brotherhood will remain strong and we will continue to always be there to support. While I don't think you will need it, we will always answer the call if you require us to be there," continued Kievenaar.

"This is not an end; this is a continuation of our mission and a continuation of our partnership, as we continue to move forward in securing Iraq," said Kievenaar. He expressed his confidence in the ISF to continue providing security for the Iraqi people, helping to lead them towards a brighter future.

Kievenaar concluded, "I believe you will see a lot of ceremonies like this turning over locations as (Iraqi) security forces continue to expand and take further control of the security situation across all of Iraq."



Photo by Sgt. Rodney Foliente

An Iraqi Soldier drapes his national flag over his uniform as he prepares to proudly raise it alongside another at the entrance to COP 4 after the transfer of authority ceremony March 3.

THE Mountain View

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Task Force 449



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USAID assists as Farmers Market nears completion

PFC. TYLER MAULDING
MND-C



CAMP VICTORY – The Central Euphrates Farmers Market is nearing completion after much hard work and cooperation between the U.S. Army, the United States Agency for International Development and four local Iraqi agricultural associations.

The market will provide a safe, centralized location in North Babil for local farmers and consumers, as well as an agricultural development center. Both locations are scheduled to be fully operational by May 1.

"This is a traditional agricultural area," said Tom Green, an agricultural advisor for USAID, here to oversee the construction and implementation of the market. "They have productive soil, irrigation infrastructure and it is intersected by major trade routes."

In late 2006, the need to organize farmers and develop a strategy to revitalize the area's agricultural production and marketing capacity was identified by Civil Affairs Teams at FOB Kalsu and the local agricultural associations, which represent about 4,000 farmers.

"The four agricultural associations are essentially tribes and are equally Sunni and Shia," said Green. "This was an area with a lot of sectarian violence. The fact that they are working together is quite a goal to have been achieved."

The U.S. Army was approached by the associations with concerns about selling their produce at distant markets due to security, road blocks, check points and the cost of transporting the goods.

"The associations told us,

'we would like a safe place to trade, this is an agricultural area, we are farmers, but we can't sell our produce in a market because of security issues,'" said Green.

"They worked with the Army and decided a wholesale market should be established."

USAID was brought in for their experience in similar projects around the world.

"We have talked to retail traders, wholesale traders, farmers and consumers and we ran the numbers," said Green. "We looked at the benefit of this market and we calculated that the farmers would get a twelve percent greater return than they had at other markets in the area, and a lot of that has to do with the cost of transportation."

The market is expected to employ 19 full time workers, 40 traders, 240 porters and 50 retail vendors.

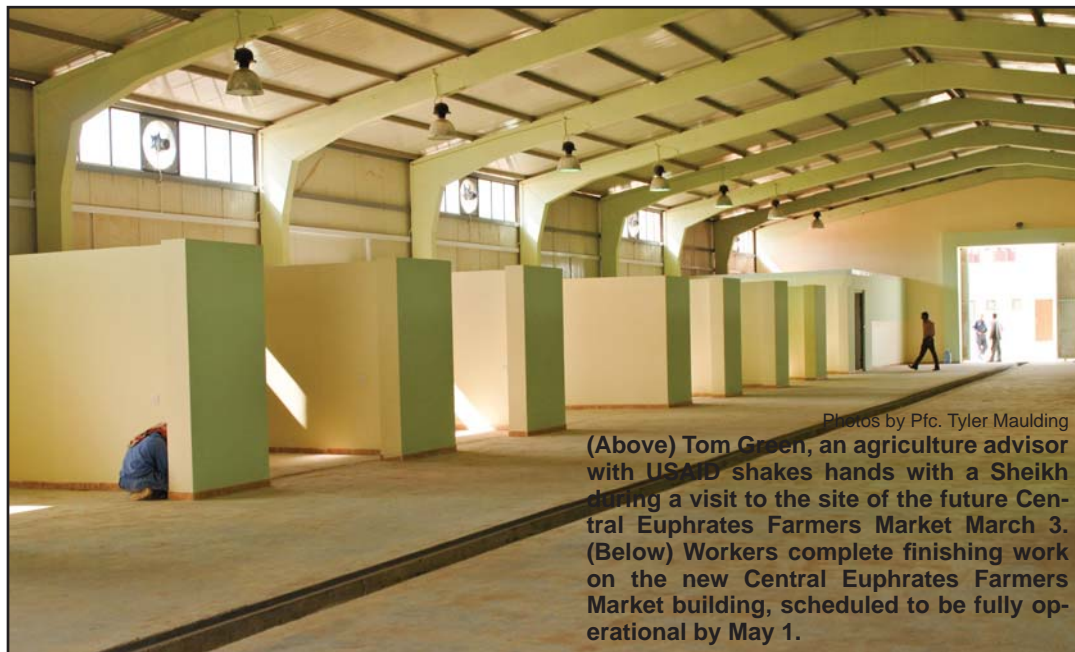
"The market will directly support 375 homes or about 2000 people," said Green. "An additional 4000 farmers would also benefit through direct sales of their produce."

"Market profits will be split between five entities," explains Green, "twenty percent will go to the CEFM and twenty percent will go to each of the four agricultural associations. The CEFM will use its money for business expenses while the four associations will use their cut for community and social projects within their communities."

"We are trying to encourage farmers to join an agriculture association that is recognized through the government of Iraq so once

we leave they have access to resources that can help them help themselves," said Staff Sgt. Maynard Anken, a Civil Affairs specialist, B Comp., 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion who visits the market several times a week monitoring progress, "I think a lot of the local people have very high hopes for the market."

"Sheikhs will own and operate the CEFM. They are all very personally invested in the market," said Green. "Their images and reputations are on the line, they simply can't let this fail."



Photos by Pfc. Tyler Maulding
(Above) Tom Green, an agriculture advisor with USAID shakes hands with a Sheikh during a visit to the site of the future Central Euphrates Farmers Market March 3.
(Below) Workers complete finishing work on the new Central Euphrates Farmers Market building, scheduled to be fully operational by May 1.

Staff Section Round-up

IG Corner: *Being a good sponsor*

Have you ever heard of a Soldier or Civilian stating that he or she had a great sponsor? That they received a Welcome Letter from their Battalion Commander, Command Sergeant Major, or Director? That they were mailed an Army Community Service Welcome Package and possibly unit patches for 10th Mountain Division? That their sponsor personally mailed them a letter, called them, or emailed them?

Do you know how that sponsor knew what to do? It may be that they had a good sponsor, a bad sponsor, or maybe even no sponsor at all one time in their military career and they wanted to make someone's transition to Fort Drum a little easier. But, it might be because their battalion has a unit SOP based on Army Regulation 600-8-8, The Total Army Sponsorship Program. The basic elements of a Sponsorship Program are the Welcome Letter, ACS Relocation Services, Reception, Orientation, and In-processing. AR 600-8-8 provides other guidance on how to be a Good Sponsor, such as:

1. Sponsors represent the first impression of a new assignment for an incoming Soldier or civilian employee. Only those individuals who can represent the gaining unit or activity in a positive manner will be selected as sponsors.
2. The sponsor selected will be in a grade equal to or higher than the incoming Soldier or civilian employee, when practical.
3. The sponsor should be of the same gender, marital status, and military career field or occupational series as the incoming Soldier or civilian employee, when feasible.
4. The sponsor will normally not be the person being replaced by the incoming Soldier or civilian employee or within 60 days of PCS.
5. Sponsors will be given reasonable duty time and administrative support (such as access to the Defense Switched

Network (DSN) telephone system) to perform their sponsorship duties.

6. Sponsors will prepare a welcome letter from the battalion commander (for officers), command sergeant major (for enlisted Soldiers), or commander or activity director (for civilian employees) and forward it to the incoming Soldier or civilian employee within 10 days of appointment as a sponsor.

7. The welcome letter must contain a work address and telephone number where the sponsor may be reached. Sponsors are encouraged, but not required, to include their home address and telephone number to facilitate contact.

8. The sponsor should telephone the incoming Soldier or civilian employee, if possible.

9. The sponsor will answer follow-up correspondence from the incoming Soldier or civilian employee within 10 working days of receipt of correspondence.

10. Sponsors of first-term Soldiers will develop a sense of responsibility for their fellow Soldiers in order to improve safety and reduce the likelihood and opportunity for sexual assault, misconduct, and suicide gestures/attempts during the Soldier's first year in the unit.

AR 608-8-8 provides for rewarding good sponsors and requires that sponsors will receive feedback on their performance. The effective sponsor should be recognized on the same basis as any other Soldier or civilian employee performing in an exemplary manner.

Let's take the time to make a favorable impression on 10th Mountain Division and even if you are not rewarded, you will have the satisfaction knowing that you helped out a fellow Soldier during a stressful time.

Thanks, Your IG Team

Obama's strategy - what do you think of it?

To let the CG and others know,
go to the Mountain Sound Off Blog at



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If you are interested
in taking part in a live
hometown interview
contact Sgt. Kris-
ten King at kristen.king@iraq.centcom.mil



Headline Round-up

Business News:

NEW YORK - Supertankers that once raced around the world to satisfy an unquenchable thirst for oil are now parked offshore, fully loaded, anchors down, their crews killing time. In the United States, vast storage farms for oil are almost out of room. As demand for crude has plummeted, the world suddenly finds itself awash in oil that has nowhere to go. It's been less than a year since oil prices hit record highs. But now producers and traders are struggling with the new reality: The world wants less oil, not more. And turning off the spigot is about as easy as turning around one of those tankers. So oil companies and investors are stashing crude, waiting for demand to rise and the bear market to end so they can turn a profit later. Traders have always played a game of store and sell, bringing oil to market when it can fetch the best price. They say this time is different because of how fast the bottom fell out of the oil market.

Sports News:

IRVING, Texas - The Dallas Cowboys released Terrell Owens on March 4, several outlets reported. The Dallas Morning News, ESPN and Fox all reported the news, citing unnamed team sources. The move rids the Cowboys of a big locker-room distraction but also leaves them to absorb a big hit on their salary cap. Owens will count about \$9 million against the cap.

Odd News:

DALLAS - Authorities say a 26-year-old passenger ran to the front of a taxiing plane, opened a door and slid down to the tarmac before being detained. American Airlines spokesman Tim Smith says the man — who was not injured — was among 87 passengers aboard Flight 1343 from Charlotte, N.C., to Dallas on March 3. Smith says the flight was uneventful until it landed at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport. Two ramp workers detained the man until airport police took him into custody. Workers removed the slide so the plane could continue to the gate. Smith says the flight arrived on time. An airport spokesman says the man was referred to a local hospital for psychological evaluation.

Quote of the Day

"The future can be anything we want it to be, providing we have faith and that we realize that peace, no less than war, required blood and sweat and tears."

- Charles F. Kettering

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For the
answer to
today's puzzle,
go to:



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AROUND THE COMMUNITY

Lions Den

March 7

10th Mountain Division Salsa Band @ 9 p.m.

Fishbowl Gym

March 27

Relay for Life HOPE Ceremony @ 8 p.m.

March 28

Cancer awareness 5K/10K walk run. Free t-shirt and continental breakfast. Race begins @ 7 a.m.

April 11

Pirate's Cove Run 5K/10K.

Registration begins @ 7 a.m., race begins @ 8 a.m.

T-shirts awarded to top finishers.

Slayer

March 7

Camp Slayer Fishing Tournament, Operation Catch Fish, at Slayer Lake @ noon. For details visit <https://corps.intranet.iraq.centcom.mil/Pages/Default.aspx>.

Victory

March 8

Lifting competition at Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith Physical Fitness Center. POC: MA2 Amber Mathwig, amber.mathwig@iraq.centcom.mil

March 9

Purim Megillah reading, Victory Chapel @ 8 p.m.

Liberty

March 14

Jacksonville River Run 15K at Z Lake. Registration begins @ 6 a.m. Contact Jeffrey Heise for more information, jeffrey.heise@iraq.centcom.mil.

Babylon Theater

March 6

Town Hall Meeting @ 1 p.m.

March 17

Fire Warden Class @ 1 p.m.

Fire Extinguisher Class @ 2 p.m.