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Team Borlaug gets hands dirty in Wasit

Sgt. Daniel T. West
41st Fires Bde. PAO



FOB DELTA— The team from the Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture of Texas A&M University continues to assist the Department of Defense in their efforts to improve agriculture in Iraq, especially as it applies to employment and income in the rural sector.

“Off hand, I’d say we’re at about one third of what the capacity could and should be, with good technology and restored infrastructure,” said Edwin Price, director of the Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture, Texas A&M University.

The state of agriculture in Wasit Province compares favorably to that of other Iraqi provinces, but room for improvement remains, said the leader of Team Borlaug Sept. 14, two weeks into the team’s provincial assessment.

“First and foremost, the problem is water,” he said, adding that the problem with the water is salinity, which leads to issues with salinity of the soil.

“It occurs elsewhere, but it’s more prevalent here,” he added. “The first thing farmers mention here is the salinity of the soil.”

It’s clearly an important issue, but it is too early in the assessment to propose a long term solution.

“Obviously, we can’t do it alone,” he said. “Rather, we are partnered with the Provincial Reconstruction team, the Department of Agriculture, USAID, the Department of Defense, the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture and other Iraqi partners.”

Water needs to be used more efficiently with technologies such as improved irrigation methods and lined



Courtesy photo

Members of Team Borlaug and Provincial Reconstruction Team Wasit speak with a farmer during a farm assessment south of al-Kut.

canals to prevent seepage into the soil, he said.

Price said he saw great potential for agriculture in Wasit Province.

“It shares a high rate of solar radiation with the rest of Iraq, something you don’t see in the rest of the world,” he said.

“With that and water, they could achieve world record levels of output, he said.

“They could set the standard internationally,” he added.

Leaders also need to step up in managerial capacities and resource use.

He also stressed the importance of Iraq’s youth to the future of Wasit agriculture, citing the impact of both formal education and extracurricular

activities such as 4H and programs like Future Farmers of America.

“I haven’t seen any problems that couldn’t solve themselves,” he said.

“There’s plenty of talent in the Iraqi people and should be ample capital,” he added.

At the conclusion of assessment, the team will provide a complete report available for military, civilian and Iraqi use, including the recommendations of the team for the province.

The previous four months of Team Borlaug’s tour were spent in Babil, Najaf and Karbala Provinces.

Upon completion of their tour, they will put together a comprehensive agricultural program for Multi-National Division – Center.

Soldier applies Quran memorization during Ramadan

MND-C PAO 

BAGHDAD – During the month of Ramadan, Muslims are called to read the entire Quran, which consists of 114 chapters, in a 30-day period. One Soldier serving in Iraq has learned to recite the book's 6,600 verses from memory.

"Ramadan is not just, oh yeah fast in Ramadan," said Cpl. Abdirahman Yusur. "You have to sit down and read the Quran, and you get more benefit from God (doing so). What we do in Ramadan, we do it for God."

Yusur is serving in Iraq as a force protection noncommissioned officer with the 2145th Garrison Support Unit, which oversees Camps Victory and Liberty. Yusur, who calls Nashville home, also works on badge applications, handles civilian contracts and collects material from amnesty boxes around bases.

He has also taught classes on Muslim culture to fellow deploying Soldiers.

He uses the experiences of his youth to educate Soldiers on customs and courtesies.

"I grew up in Somalia ... I grew up Muslim, and when I was three years old, I went to school to learn the Qur'an in Arabic and the Muslim culture," Yusur said. "In order for you to go to elementary school (in Somalia) or any school, you had to go through...the Quran."

From a very early age, teachers disciplined Yusur to repeat the verses for long hours each day. He read and reread specific chapters until the words would come out of his lips on their own. The teaching of the Quran continued throughout his school years as the faith became part of his character. Prayer defined his days, breaking the hours into five parts, while reciting the Quran became a large part of the process.

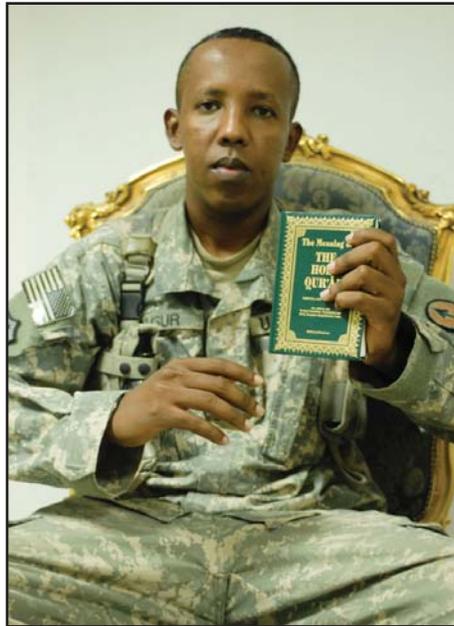


Photo by Staff Sgt. Michel Sauret

Corporal Abdirahman Yusur, of Nashville, Tenn., a force protection noncommissioned officer for the 2145th GSU, holds up the Quran, which he learned to recite by memory since the age of three when he was still living in Somalia.

"My daddy would teach me prayer," he said. "I remember he used to take me in the morning... to the mosque to pray and make sure Allah and our culture and our religion would be something I would grow up (with)."

Yusur moved to the U.S. at age 15 with his mother, sister and two younger brothers. He joined the Army in 2006, at the age of 22, and has been deployed to Iraq since March. In addition to his native tongue of Somali and English, Yusur can also speak Arabic and Rodu, which is the language of Pakistan.

When he recites the Quran, it's always in Arabic, and Yusur said the words

come out both in a flow and a struggle as it takes a lot of mental determination to keep a mental grasp over that much information.

"It's both ... Every time I pray, I memorize. Each sura that I pray, I know for good, for sure," he said, but there are still some verses he will have to refer back to the Quran to relearn.

In memorizing the Quran, Yusur earned the title of "Hafiz" which distinguishes him among Muslims. Yusur looks at his efforts less as an achievement and more as a process and said memorizing the Quran is a far reach from actually knowing it.

"I would say it's something you never finish in your whole life, the Quran ... Every day you read the Quran and you listen Quran, you (hear a new) meaning every day, you (get) surprised, really surprised. You think you know pretty much everything ... but every day you sit down and you read it, and you go to Mosque and go to Imam who tells you (new) meanings in (a) different way."

Ramadan Quran Facts

Quran literally means "the recitation" in Arabic.

Recitation of the Quran is considered a fine art in the Muslim world.

The term Hafiz means "guardian," used by Muslims for people who have completely memorized the Quran.

The Quran is a compilation of Muhammed's teachings compiled into a book. The work was first completed 1,400 years ago.

THE Mountain View

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4th BCT, 1st Cavalry Division
4th BCT, 3rd Infantry Division
7th Sustainment Brigade
41st Fires Brigade
354th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
793rd Military Police Battalion
Division Special Troops Battalion, 10th Mtn. Div.
Task Force 49

Backpack safety is not just for kids anymore

SPC. TIFFANY EVANS
MND-C PAO



CAMP VICTORY— September is Backpack Safety America Month, established by the American Chiropractor Association. Soldiers won't see too many Batman backpacks and matching lunchboxes while walking along the forward operating bases in Iraq, but backs are still in danger.

Soldiers carry a lot of extra weight, whether on patrol wearing Interceptor Body Armor or an Improved Outer Tactical Vest with Modular Lightweight Load-carrying Equipment, or on air assault missions with a full rucksack or assault pack. All of this takes a toll on a Soldier's back and spine.

Fortunately, there are numerous ways to help keep your back healthy and pain-free. From exercise to the proper wear of military items, every Soldier can maintain a healthy back.

Use this trick to improve posture while sitting at a desk: Place a tennis ball between the middle of your back and your office chair. Your back muscles will help to hold the ball in place. This trick has benefits similar to acupuncture. It helps stimulate blood flow and physically releases contracted muscles and connective tissue.

According to Dr. Michael Cohen, a chiropractic acupuncturist, it also creates a central nervous system mediated analgesic effect, which loosens tight areas while sitting in the chair.

Proper lifting techniques are also important, particu-

larly when picking up rucksacks or protective vests. Never bend over; always squat down and use your legs to pick up the object.

Hunching forward while wearing a rucksack or ballistic vest will also cause damage to your lower back.

Rucksacks and the IOTV have a band that wraps around your waist to help hold the weight and keep your back straight. It may not look as cool as some Soldiers think they are, but it's imperative to wear the equipment properly to avoid injury.

Wear the MOLLE gear so that it equally disperses over your vest and doesn't place too much weight across one side and not the other.

Exercises can also help strengthen your back, spine and core, which will improve your ability to carry heavier loads.

Stretching is key, and working on your abdominal, back, gluteus and hamstring muscles can help.

A few good exercises are sit-ups, squats, reverse sit-ups, pelvic tilts, lunges and pushups. Yoga and Pilates are great exercises that also target these areas and work your core.

Practicing Yoga and Pilates, which are much more difficult than they look, twice a week will help strengthen your back and core, as well as stretch these muscles to increase flexibility.

Make a pledge this September to work on your posture, core strength and proper wear of your gear. Whether your backpack is a digital pattern or boasts an intimidating Spiderman, be sure you know how to protect your back.



Here are two easy ways to stay informed:

~NIPR~

Go: www.taskforcemountain.com
Click on "The Mountain View" icon on the right-hand column, then click on: "View more Mountain View Newsletters"

~SIPR~

Visit the TF Mountain portal:
<http://mountainportal.main.10mtn.army.smil.mil>
Hover over "News Links" bar and click on "The Mountain View"

Staff Section Round-up

Ask the IG: Bottles, bottles everywhere

• This first question has more to do with opinion than fact, but I believe we can do a better job of policing ourselves. If you were back at Fort Drum, Campbell, Stewart or elsewhere, would it be acceptable to leave your used water bottle or other trash just lying around? The short answer is no. It's not just because we are less lazy at our home stations; it's because we are more respectful of our own "home". We certainly aren't short trash cans around our work and living areas. I challenge you to pick up the trash, rather than walk by it. Don't expect someone else should pick up after you.

• We've had some terrible dust storms of late, which left Soldiers wondering if we are authorized to wear anything to cover our nose and mouth? Yes, paragraph 5 (a) 2. Of the MNF-I uniform wear, appearance, conduct and standards states you may wear cravats, neckerchiefs or dust masks during dust/sandstorms. However, when worn, such items will compliment the color and/or patter of the uniform.

• In the last couple of weeks, we've had Soldier's ask if they are authorized to wear their sunglasses around their neck. Sunglasses no, ballistic glasses yes. Approved ballistic eyewear may be worn at all times, and retention straps are authorized for ballistic eyewear. When the glasses are not worn, they may be suspended around the neck from a retention strap. Sunglasses and ballistic eyewear are not to be worn on the brow or head. The wear of ballistic eyewear is covered in paragraph 5.e. (3) and sunglasses in paragraph 5. g. (7).

• I know leaders are getting to read the Mountain View, but are we ensuring our Soldiers are getting the same opportunity? A significant amount of work goes into publishing a daily paper, and we owe the folks who put it together to distribute it through the ranks. Additionally, there is a lot of information from numerous staff sections published on everyone's behalf. I challenge you to engage your Soldiers; get them to read the paper; and provide feedback through both the paper and TF mountain website.

Thanks, your IG team.

G-1 Corner: Green to Gold

Green to Gold is a program designed to allow qualified and inspired young enlisted Soldiers to return to college, receive their baccalaureate degree and earn a commission as an Army officer.

The program offers Soldiers two ways to earn a baccalaureate degree: Green to Gold Scholarship option or Active Duty option.

Enlisted members who meet the prerequisites can either apply for a two, three or four year scholarship or can participate in the Green to Gold program without applying for or earning a

scholarship.

Cadets otherwise eligible for Montgomery G.I. Bill benefits who enter the Reserve Officers' Training Corps through the Green to Gold program may use their Montgomery GI Bill benefits. They will also receive a monthly tax-free stipend; Sophomores receive \$300, Juniors receive \$350 and Seniors receive \$400.

For more information about the Army's Green to Gold Program, contact: Sgt. Aaron Shumaker, at DSN 485-3836 or email aaron.shumaker@iraq.centcom.mil.

1-76 FA wins softball championship

(Background) The softball team for the Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, celebrate their win following the softball championship game Sept. 14 at FOB Kalsu. **(Below)** HHB team members pose for a picture in between games. HHB defeated the 230th MP Co., which is attached to 4th BCT, in two straight games to capture the FOB Kalsu summer softball league title. HHB defeated the MPs 15-9 and 18-10 in the championship series.



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Tami Hillis

Headline Round-up

World News:

Asian stocks tumbled Sept. 18, following the declines on Wall Street as investors feared more companies could succumb to the global financial crisis that forced the U.S. to bail out troubled insurer American International Group Inc. Every regional benchmark fell deeply in the red.

Health News:

According to Dr. Maoshing Ni, doctor of Chinese medicine and anti-aging expert, there are five essential foods to help speed up weight loss. Millet, a form of whole grain which is non-glutinous, is easy to digest and has high amounts of fiber and B-complex vitamins. Asparagus is packed with folate, fiber, inulin (a carbohydrate that promotes healthy bacteria in the large intestine) and vitamins A, C and K. Pomegranates, the fruit not juice, have antioxidant properties, which can prevent cancer. Pine nuts, edible seeds of pine trees, help improve gastrointestinal tract and digestive functions. Green tea, an alternative to coffee, has less caffeine and contains antioxidants.

Science News:

Christian Rabeling, an evolutionary biology graduate student from the University of Texas in Austin, found the only known specimen of a newly-discovered species of a blind, subterranean ant in the Amazon rainforest. It was dubbed the "Ant from Mars" because no one had seen an ant like it. DNA taken from the ant's leg indicates that it belongs at the base of the ant evolutionary tree, meaning it is likely a descendant of one of the very first ants to evolve on Earth.

Odd News:

Authorities in Texas cleaning up after Hurricane Ike are searching for a tiger that escaped from an exotic pets center in Crystal Beach. Galveston County Judge Jim Yarbrough told reporters, "Turns out there's a tiger, and I understand he's hungry ... so we're staying away from him."

WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH A MILLION DOLLARS?



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michel Sauret

"Invest it and rebuild for my family after all we lost from Katrina; start a small business and let that money make more money," said Spc. Anthony Calhoun, of New Orleans, a personnel specialist for Division Special Troops Battalion, 10th Mountain Division.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michel Sauret

"Pay off the house and pay for my daughter's college. Then, sit back and relax with the rest of it," said Sgt. Tommy Blanderberg, of Dothan, Ala., human resources for Division Special Troops Battalion, 10th Mountain Division.

Quote of the Day

"Let the world go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans, born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage, and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed and to which we are committed today, at home and around the world!" – John F. Kennedy

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Solution to yesterday's puzzle:

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6	9	5	2	1	7	8	4	3
7	2	8	5	3	4	1	6	9
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ARABIC WORD OF THE DAY

North

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