

Operation Outreach Afghanistan

HEALING HEARTS AND MINDS

AUGUST 2011

OUR MISSION:

Operation Outreach Afghanistan (OOA) will empower the Afghan people through compassionate humanitarian assistance.

OOA is a volunteer organization. It is not affiliated or sponsored by the U.S. Department of Defense.

WHO WE ARE:

We are a group of deployed U.S. service members and civilians working to bring relief and aid to the Afghan people. We volunteer our "off-duty" time to help provide commonly needed items to those in need.

LEADERSHIP TEAM:

Lt. Col. George Harrington
Chairman/President

Staff Sgt. Holly Gilmore
Deputy Chairman

Capt. Tyler Field
Treasurer

Staff Sgt. Amy Barry
Secretary

Capt. Allison Bailey
Medical Treatment Advisor

Lt. James Holstein
Medical Supplies Advisor

Senior Master Sgt.
Shaun Crusha
Logistics Advisor

Chief Warrant Officer 2
Christopher Ramsey
IT Advisor

1st Lt. Kelly Souza
Public Affairs Advisor

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Goals for a Bright Future

By Spc. Steven C. Eaton
Task Force Yankee Public Affairs

KABUL, Afghanistan — U.S. Military members stationed on Camp Phoenix brought donated school supplies and clothing to children at a school in the Pol-E-Charki village, bringing sunshine to an already beautiful day in the Kabul Province, on June 25.

As part of Operation Outreach Afghanistan, servicemembers collect, sort and bag items donated from family members, friends and strangers in the United States. The items are then handed out to local Afghan children during humanitarian aid drops.

Operations such as this give servicemembers a chance to interact and directly impact the



Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christopher Moore, executive officer and combat advisor for the Validation Transition Team Afghanistan, hands a bag of school supplies to a young Afghan boy during an Operation Outreach Afghanistan humanitarian aid drop at a school in Pol-E-Charki Village.

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TOTAL GIFTS AND DONATIONS FOR JULY

GIFTS:	\$6,992.42
POSTAGE:	\$1,762.94
CASH/POGS:	\$749.51
TOTAL:	\$9,434.87

Total gifts and
donations received
since Sept. 2010:

\$86,416.85



Outreach Quick Facts

- OOA volunteers have participated in 64 meetings since March 2010.
- Volunteers have donated 2,907 man hours and collected more than \$135,702 in gifts.
- 241 volunteers have participated in 37 humanitarian missions.
- OOA active membership is 157.
- OOA has held 54 conex work days to organize humanitarian assistance gifts.
- More than 19,500 Afghans have benefited from OOA's humanitarian assistance and medical aid this year.
- 131 volunteers have earned the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Award.



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**SCHOOL SUPPLIES
NEEDED**

From the Chairman

To the Operation Outreach Family:

Your donations of time and goods have had a tremendous impact in the greater Kabul area. You've provided important support to thousands of Afghan children and others in need. I would like to thank all those at home who've provided school supplies and other needed items. As we approach the winter months, our needs will shift to winter items: clothing, coats, shoes and blankets. Please keep that in mind for future donations.

The Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen and civilians of Kabul are doing a great job of packaging those supplies and delivering them to appropriate audiences. We continue to expand our missions to include new schools, orphanages and organizations. We also have several personnel who provide opportunities to provide individual assistance to Afghan children in need of medical assistance.



I would like to take a moment to give my thanks to the Soldiers from Task Force Powderhorn, 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment, who recently departed the Theater upon completing their mission. Their leadership and dedication to the Outreach mission was invaluable. They were replaced by Task Force Americal, 1st Battalion, 182nd Infantry Regiment. These hard charging Soldiers have already stepped up to the plate providing both person-power and reach-back to the folks at home. A special thank you to the Friends of the 182nd Infantry for supporting their unit and Operation Outreach.

Of special note, we have reached out across national lines and are partnering with the Turkish Battle Group to provide humanitarian assistance during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. This multi-national effort is a first for Operation Outreach. My thanks to the Civil Military Affairs units at Camp Phoenix and especially Task Force Yankee for making this happen.

My tour in Afghanistan has been enriched by the opportunity to facilitate the activities of such great men and women of our Armed Forces to fulfill the mission of Operation Outreach. One of my initial goals was to facilitate at least ten humanitarian missions. I am very pleased to tell you that we surpassed that goal in four months!

Thanks to all who've made that happen.

George Harrington
Chairman / President
Operation Outreach

The following school supplies are desperately needed:

- Pens, pencils, crayons, markers
- Erasers, pencil sharpeners, children's scissors
- Small notebooks, children's books
- Glue sticks, small rulers, paper
- Small backpacks, games, small toys
- Loads of 2-gallon plastic freezer bags



**OPERATION OUTREACH
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Servicemembers prepare donations for Operation Outreach

Afghanistan

By Staff Sgt. James Lally

KABUL, Afghanistan — Servicemembers from the Kabul Base Cluster sorted and packaged donated items for Operation Outreach Afghanistan (OOA) on Camp Phoenix.

On Camp Phoenix, volunteers have been collecting donations for the organization. OOA is an organization located in Afghanistan made up of volunteers from the U.S. Military, International Security Assistance Force, NATO and several civilians that help children and families.

Army Lt. Col. George J. Harrington, Executive Officer, Task Force Yankee, Massachusetts Army National Guard, and Chairman and President for OOA on Camp Phoenix said, "Task Force Yankee works in partnership with OOA within the Kabul Base Cluster to provide humanitarian assistance for the Afghan people. This important work facilitates the Commander's counter insurgency philosophy. OOA is designed to facilitate donations from friends, family and others from the States, and repackage them into individual packets for distribution by Coalition and Afghan security forces. By providing such basic needs as school supplies, Task Force Yankee and OOA help the Afghan people learn to better trust Coalition and Afghan forces. Ultimately this reduces the ability of the insurgency to influence the local population," said Harrington.



Navy Lt. Denise L. Romeo, a Staff Judge Advocate with Combined Joint Task Force 435 oversees a collection table for Operation Outreach Afghanistan on Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan.



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Volunteers on Camp Phoenix hold meetings to collect, sort and distribute donations. One volunteer, Navy Lt. Denise L. Romeo, a Staff Judge Advocate with Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435 posted a message on a social networking site asking for plastic bags for OOA. The bags are used to individually package school supplies for Afghan children. Romeo described her efforts to obtain donations for outreach saying, "I put up a post on Facebook

asking for the plastic bags we use for school supplies and my family went out into the community and asked for donations."

OOA provides assistance to the Afghan people in the form of: non-perishable food, clothing, toys, school supplies and other household items. The majority of items are obtained via donations. One of the organization's goals is to empower the Afghan people through compassionate humanitarian assistance.



Servicemembers from the Kabul Base Cluster sort and package donated items for Operation Outreach Afghanistan (OOA) on Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Kabul is a city of about four million residents and about a third are school-aged. As a result, OOA is MOST IN NEED OF BASIC SCHOOL SUPPLIES, especially pencils, pens and notebooks. They will continue to accept shoes, clothes, blankets, children's books and first aid kits. Please mail your gifts to:

**OOA - George Harrington
26th Yankee Brigade
Camp Phoenix
APO, AE 09320**

Goal for a Bright Future

BEAUTIFUL DAY from page 1

citizens of Afghanistan. "It gives me tremendous personal satisfaction to interact and talk with the children," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christopher Moore, the executive officer and combat advisor with the Validation Transition Team Afghanistan and humanitarian aid drop facilitator with OOA.

The children at the school were excited to get a visit from the Americans. Smiles could be seen on the children as they filed out of the school. Receiving gifts, getting a break from their daily routine in the classroom and being able to practice their English are things that these children may never forget.

Programs like Operation Outreach and missions such as these are an essential part to forming relationships between coalition forces and the local populace and also helps build a stronger future for Afghanistan. "Interacting with the populace is key," said Moore. Something as simple to an average American child such as a pencil or a note book are things Afghan children hold in high regard, and



Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christopher Moore, the executive officer for the Validation Transition Training Team Afghanistan talks with an Afghan boy during an Operation Outreach Afghanistan humanitarian aid drop at a school in Pol-E-Charki Village, Kabul Afghanistan on June 25.



Servicemembers and Afghan children pose for a photo outside a school house in Pol-E-Charki Village, Kabul after the servicemembers conducted a humanitarian assistance meeting there.

the person who gives it to them is often never forgotten. "It's the right thing to do, any little thing we can do to support the populace is one step closer to achieving our goals," said Moore.

The principal of the school approached Moore and asked if he would mind speaking with one of the children.

As the small child approached Moore, he had a nervous look of anticipation. After a greeting in both Dari and English, the child thanked Moore speaking excellent English.

"One child I met spoke near perfect English and plans to be a doctor," said Moore. "That shows the hope the people have for the future," he added. The sight was both touching and valuable, to not only the child and the Chief, but also showed the possibilities for the future of the country.



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Servicemembers Awarded for Volunteering



INTERESTED IN JOINING OOA?

OOA holds full meetings every two weeks in the Camp Phoenix warehouse — Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. — and committees meet every other week to organize humanitarian assistance missions, hand-write thank you notes to donors, plan social events, coordinate medical missions and handle information technology issues.

Volunteers sort donations for future missions every Friday at 4 p.m. in the container yard in the northwest side of Camp Phoenix.

Servicemembers donating 80 hours of their time will be eligible for the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal.



**OPERATION OUTREACH
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Making a Difference on Mother's Day

By 1st Lt. Kelly Souza

KABUL, Afghanistan — Servicemembers brought clothing and school supplies to the Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled in honor of Afghanistan's Mothers Day holiday on June 13. Spc. Bulger Limchao, a geospatial engineer and Spc. Kareem Olaniyi, a billeting specialist, both with Task Force Yankee's Department of Public Works section, volunteer for Operation Outreach Afghanistan (OOA).

A number of servicemembers on Camp Phoenix, like Limchao and Olaniyi volunteer in their spare time with OOA weekly to sort donations, write thank you notes, and occasionally get the chance to go outside the wire to drop off donations.

"It's just great to get out of the office and help out the local people," Spc. Limchao said. "It really makes you feel like you are a part of something bigger and I also feel like I am helping to win hearts and minds."



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Spc. Kareem Olaniyi meets with local Afghan children during an Operation Outreach Afghanistan donation drop.

During this trip, Limchao and Olaniyi were able to visit a school for widows in the downtown Kabul area and a poor neighborhood where local Afghans are planning on building a similar school.

OOA provides assistance to Afghan people in the form of non-perishable food, clothing, toys, school supplies and other household items. The majority of items are obtained via donations. One of the organization's goals is to empower the Afghan people through compassionate humanitarian assistance.



Left: Servicemembers help offload clothes and school supplies to be donated to local Afghans during an OOA drop. Right: Spc. Bulger Limchao, a geospatial specialist with the Department of Public Works, Task Force Yankee, greets an Afghan child with a fist bump on an Operation Outreach Afghanistan humanitarian drop.



OPERATION OUTREACH AFGHANISTAN

Time to Make the Donuts

By Spc Steven C. Eaton

KABUL, Afghanistan — When someone hears the word donut they often think of a glazed sugary treat you get with a coffee, or a small spare tire used in case of a flat. Servicemembers on Camp Phoenix have a new idea of what a donut is. Servicemembers from many units volunteer to make fuel donuts for local Afghans.

The donuts, which are made from shredded scraps of paper, are a healthier and more environmentally friendly way for Afghanistan citizens to heat their homes and cook their food. "Currently, trash gets burned for these two purposes, including tires," said 1st Lt. Vikram Mittal, a design engineer and environmental officer with the Department of Public Works on Camp Phoenix. "As a conse-



Above: 1st Lt. Vikram Mittal a design engineer and environmental officer with the Department of Public Works, Task Force Yankee, mixes water and shredded paper for fuel donuts. The paper and water are mixed then compressed and dried. The result is a fuel donut, which will be donated to local Afghans. The donuts are used for burning in order to heat homes and cook food.



Above Fuel Donuts drying out in the sun after being made, Once they are dry, fuel donuts like these will be boxed and send to local organizations such as orphanages and shelter to heat homes and cook food.

quence, Kabul currently ranks as the worst city world wide in terms of air quality," added Mittal.

Making donuts is easy and it's meant to be that way so any volunteer can come by and help out. The donuts are made by mixing shredded paper and water into a type of slurry compost. Then they are pressed in a PVC pipe to remove any water and dried. Removing the donut from the PVC is the hard part said Mittal. Once the donuts are dry they are boxed and sent to local organizations such as orphanages and shelters.

"It feels good to help out the local nationals," said Mittal. "Plus making the donuts is fun (and) it gets me out of the office," he added.

Chaplains Make Difference at School



Above: Soldiers who volunteer for Operation Outreach Afghanistan eat an Afghan dinner during a humanitarian drop at the Abdul Oasem School in Kabul. Below: Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Anderson meets with Afghan girls during a humanitarian drop.

By Sgt. Daryll Russell

KABUL, Afghanistan — On May 30, Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Anderson and I had the privilege of going on an operation outreach mission to Abdul Qasem School with the 1-134 Calvary. I honestly did not know what to expect with this mission. I have to admit I was a bit cynical. We hear about the insurgents killing coalition forces and their own people. We also hear constantly about IEDs and attacks around the country. It is very easy to get discouraged and wonder why we are here. However, the Outreach mission was a real eye opener. It gave us a chance to see Afghanistan in a different light. We got to hand out supplies to the local school children. It was an awesome feeling to see the children's eyes light up when we handed out the school supplies. We were able to give school supplies to children in a country that have very little. We were able to help out and there is no greater feeling than that. The sad part of it all is that there were many children that we had to turn away after we ran out of supplies. The demand far exceeds the supply. We also have the opportunity to be present for the ribbon cutting ceremony and eat an Afghan lunch with some of the school officials. I would recommend that everyone try to get on at least one outreach mission. You will find both an eye opening and humbling experience. We have to also thank our families and organization back home as if it were not for their donations these missions would not be possible. There is no shortage of need in this country. If we are truly going to be successful here, we must heal hearts and minds. We must also provide the children with the opportunity for education. Education will be the key to winning in Afghanistan.

