

'Keeping Tabs'

Issue 39, 27 October 08



27th Brigade Combat Team --- Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix VII

Forward Operating Base Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan



Troops deliver donations to Kabul orphanage

TAHAI MASKAN ORPHANAGE, KABUL (23 October 2008) – An Afghan boys orphanage received almost 5,000 pounds of school supplies, clothing, personal hygiene items and medical supplies last Thursday from New York National Guard troops serving in Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix (CJTF-Phoenix), Operation Enduring Freedom.

The donations come from the Soldiers' families, schools and civic groups back in New York who sent the items over to their service members to help them as they perform their support mission for the Afghan people and their government. More than 30 members of Bravo Company, Logistics Task Force (LTF-Bravo) convoyed in up-armored humvees and an

armored cargo truck from Camp Phoenix across town to the Tahai Maskan Orphanage in Kabul. The unit is comprised of mechanics who repair and maintain task force vehicles and equipment. They brought with them 15 pallet-size containers of donations to be distributed to the nearly 350 boys who live at the orphanage. The residents range in age from 7 to 17.

"Today we had a humanitarian mission out at an orphanage that we have been sponsoring," said Capt. Adam Richardson from Rochester. He commands Company B, 427th Brigade Support Battalion, LTF Bravo here. He has mechanics working at the Camp Phoenix shop as well as at forward sites all around Afghanistan.



SPC Gregory Dippel from Oswego hands out bags.



CWO4 Dan Clark from Utica with the orphanage facilitator.

“We had a great time, very successful,” said Capt. Richardson. “We gave the kids school supplies, clothing and toiletries that we have collected from family and friends at home. They have sent all of these packages and all to help the kids. We handed out bags to each kid. And we also have boxes of clothing that we gave to the facilitator of the orphanage so he could distribute them as well,” he added.

“This is part of our humanitarian aid,” said Chief Warrant Officer Dan Clark from Utica. “I am a member of the Masonic Fraternity. One of our Masons agreed to pay the shipping charges on anything that was going to be donated. So he ended up sending 273 boxes of clothing, school supplies – that’s the main stuff that came in,” he said. “They are a great group of kids,” said Chief Clark.

Chief Warrant Officer James Fiorilli also from Rochester has been overseeing efforts to make improvements at the orphanage through the Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP.) Projects were identified through meetings with the orphanage’s facilitator and then Afghan contractors were hired with U.S. funds. Chief Fiorilli and others made periodic trips to check progress. “We did a bunch of painting and plumbing projects, got their toilets working, showers for the boys,” he said.

One of those “kids” is Mohamed Amin, whose age is probably 16. He has lived at the orphanage for 2 years and studies religion, English and Arabic languages, geography and science. “I want to study in foreign countries like in the US or Europe,” said Mohammed, who likes to speak English to American visitors. He has big plans. “I want to serve my country and help address security problems,” he said.

“What we are trying to do here is elevate the healthcare standards of the children in this particular orphanage,” said Lt. Col. Martin Scott from Oceanside Long Island, from the Camp Phoenix Medical Clinic. Lt. Col. Scott and others suggested renovations to facilities and the orphanage clinic so that the children could receive better care. “Initially they didn’t have any running water. They didn’t have any toileting facilities that actually function,” he said. “As I toured right now I see major improvements. Now there are lights and electric fans and also functioning toileting facilities with running water and a sink -- an immense improvement.” Captain Richardson was pleased with his team’s work and with the way the support mission went. “At this point we will do another mission to go out with the incoming unit that replaces us,” he said. The next unit will then be given the chance to help further.

Keeping Tabs –

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