

# Operation Outreach Afghanistan

HEALING HEARTS AND MINDS

FEBRUARY 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. Andy Gerlach**  
Chairman/President

**Capt. Brian Dreyer**  
Vice President

**Sgt. Chasity Oswald**  
Treasurer

**CW4 Todd Dressler**  
Secretary

**Capt. Regan Norgaard**  
Medical Liaison

**Lt. Col. Dave Gunderson**  
Chaplain Advisor

**Sgt. Mark Jensen**  
Logistics Advisor

**CW2 Clinton Store**  
IT Advisor

**Capt. Anthony Deiss/  
Capt. John Quinn**  
PAO Advisors

## CONTACT:

Facebook:  
[Operation Outreach Afghanistan](#)

Web:  
[www.opoutreach.org](http://www.opoutreach.org)

Email:  
[Op.outreach.afg@gmail.com](mailto:Op.outreach.afg@gmail.com)

## American generosity will keep Afghans warm

By Capt. John Quinn

CHAMTALLAH, Afghanistan — A group of U.S. Airmen, Soldiers and Sailors provided warm clothing to villagers in need while building confidence in their Afghan partners Jan. 17.

Members of Combined Joint Team 4 (CJ4), who mentor members of the Afghan National Army's Logistics Command in Kabul, combined two humanitarian deliveries with a normal site survey with Afghan Soldiers stationed at an ammunition supply point (ASP) in the suburbs west of Kabul.

"We're trying to build a working relationship with them (the ANA) to do some good," said Tech. Sgt. Nicholas Roberts, an Air Force member of CJ4, who refer to themselves as the "Catalina Team."

Roberts said Operation Outreach Afghanistan (OOA), an organization based on Camp Phoenix, pro-



Photo by Capt. John Quinn

**An Afghan Soldier distributes clothes and supplies provided by OOA to a family in Chamtallah as part of a joint humanitarian mission between the ANA and CJ4 Jan. 17.**

vided most of the donated clothes, shoes and toys — all wrapped in convenient bundles. He added they also distributed hand-made blankets col-

lected by Air Force Lt. Col. Joseph Hall, commander of 866th Air Expeditionary Squadron (AES) at Phoenix.

See **MENTORS** page 5

## TOTAL GIFTS AND DONATIONS FOR JANUARY

<b>GIFTS:</b>	<b>\$5,437.50</b>
<b>POSTAGE:</b>	<b>\$1,810.50</b>
<b>CASH/POGS:</b>	<b>\$1,319.00</b>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$8,567.00</b>

Total gifts and donations received since September 2011:

**\$43,042.24**



## Outreach Quick Facts

- OOA volunteers have participated in 50 meetings since March 2010.
- Volunteers have donated 2,608 man hours and collected more than \$104,367 in gifts.
- 150 volunteers have participated in 24 humanitarian missions.
- OOA active membership is 152.
- OOA has held 34 conex work days to organize humanitarian assistance gifts.
- More than 16,750 Afghans have benefited from OOA's humanitarian assistance and medical aid this year.
- 86 volunteers have earned the Military Outstanding Volunteer Award.



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**SCHOOL SUPPLIES  
NEEDED**



## OPERATION OUTREACH AFGHANISTAN

# Cavalry helps keep the cold out in wintertime

By 2nd Lt. Sean Polson and Capt. John Quinn

KABUL, Afghanistan – As the weather gets colder, members of the 1-134th Regiment Cavalry switch gears from mentoring their Afghan counterparts to help people survive the winter.

In order to keep warm, Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) put non-essential training on hold and focus on maintaining a secure environment. Afghan National Police continue to man checkpoints and their criminal investigation division (CID) remains very active hunting down insurgent and criminal activities.

As a result, members of the 1-134th changed their focus to use the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) and humanitarian aid missions to help while putting an Afghan face on efforts to provide for the local population in Kabul province.

Since Dec. 23, the 1-134th distributed \$58,800 in medical supplies during seven missions to various hospitals throughout the province of Kabul.



2nd Lt. Sean Polson, of the 1-134<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, center, helps volunteers with CJ4 "Catalina" mentoring team load six large canvas tents onto trailers for a humanitarian mission to a refugee camp in west Kabul Jan. 28.

## INTERESTED IN JOINING OOA?

OOA holds full meetings every two weeks in the Camp Phoenix chapel — 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 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.



Members of 1-134th Cavalry, load food and supplies on Camp Phoenix for a mission to Police District 17 in northwest Kabul Jan. 19. From right, 1st Sgt. John Willis, of B Troop, hands Sgt. Nathaniel Chitwood, of HHT, a bag of flour as part of the effort to help 250 families during the humanitarian mission.

Members of the squadron purchased about 1,000 winterization kits from nearby Bagram Air Field to help residents cope with harsh conditions.

A winterization kit includes three bags of rice, two bags of beans, two bottles of cooking oil, five bags of flour, one bag of sugar, four small boxes of tea, a blanket, winter jacket, sweater, hat, pair of gloves, scarf, and a pair of socks for men, women and children, according to Army Sgt. Sean Delancey, a medic with 1-134.

Delancey said the squadron also provided 50 winterization kits to help injured Afghan veterans through the country's Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled.

"They gather up all the people who've been injured in the previous wars in Afghanistan and provide a Veterans Affairs Administration back in the U.S.," Delancey said.

To further coordinate efforts and empower local Afghan leaders, the 1-134th established a system for village elders and police officials to submit requests for further assistance through police mentor teams (PMT) and embedded training teams (ETT). The requests are collected by the Squadron's Civil Affairs section, which determines where items can be purchased through Afghan suppliers and distributed by members of the ANP and the Afghan National Army.

Delancey, who is assigned to a PMT, said members of the squadron work diligently to empower their Afghan partners in the ANSF. He added they recently conducted a combat lifesaver course to teach Afghan police officers basic first aid.

"We help them and mentor them when we can," Delancey said.

## Donation, Donations, Donations

The new OOA leadership team is MOST IN NEED OF SCHOOL SUPPLIES, but continues to accept shoes, clothes, blankets, children's books and first aid kits. Please mail your gifts to:

OOA - Brian Dreyer  
Task Force Rushmore  
Camp Phoenix



# Infantry builds trust, helps their neighbors

## *Securing the future through good works*

**By Spec. Michael Broughey**

CAMP PHOENIX, Afghanistan — Following the golden rule, members of the 1-181st Infantry Regiment have spent the past few months building relationships with local Afghan leaders to try to provide the most good for their neighbors.

More than a dozen members of the 1-181st walked the short distance to the village of Ud Khel, which borders the base to the south and east, in order to keep residents warm with jackets and blankets — collected through the OOA program — Jan. 18.

Ustad Bashir, an Ud Khel native and member of the local Afghan Youth Council, welcomed the Soldiers on the humanitarian aid mission outside his residence on the sunny, but brisk winter afternoon.

The mission empowers Bashir and shows good will among villagers, which could improve relations between Afghans and Americans and ensures the overall area is safe and secure for all.

Staff Sgt. Joseph Courchesne, a member of 1st Platoon who was patrol leader for the mission, said each of the 16 Soldiers carried a rucksack, which contained a total of 180 items of clothing, 40 winter blankets and some stuffed animals as well.

“There were about 200 people who came to us and then everything was gone,” Courchesne said, adding “We were invited by Bashir to come have kabobs for lunch the next time we came out to the village.”

Pvt. Douglas Nading, a rifleman from 1st Platoon, maintained perimeter security for the event. He quickly noticed the crowd of children who gathered in the alley when Soldiers began unloading their donations.

“All I could see was children,” Nading said.

Pfc. Carlos Tomazini, a rifleman from 1st Platoon who also maintained security, said the mission helped many of the villagers by providing warm clothes for the winter.



Photo by 1st Sgt. David Parella

**Members of the 1-181<sup>st</sup> Infantry stuff as many blankets and clothes as they can into rucksacks on Camp Phoenix in preparation for a humanitarian mission on foot to Ud Khel Jan. 18.**

Bashir is also assisting the 1-181st with coordinating a construction project to clean the open sewers outside of a mosque in Ud Khel by working with local Afghan contractors.

On Feb. 1, members of 2nd Platoon returned to the village in vehicles for another humanitarian mission. They brought more supplies to the youth center and allowed Bashir to distribute them to the villagers in need.

Ud Khel is a village of about 10,000 people, mostly of Pashtun descent, with a growing number of small-business owners amongst a traditionally agricultural economy.



**Members of the 1-181<sup>st</sup> Infantry pass out clothes and blankets to grateful villagers and families who live in Ud Khel near Camp Phoenix Jan. 18.**

Photo by 1st Sgt. David Parella



**Spec. Norbert Borowski, a scout with the 1-181<sup>st</sup> Infantry, meets a group of children in Ud Khel as they patiently wait to receive donations Jan. 18.**



**OPERATION OUTREACH  
AFGHANISTAN**



# Joint mission helps build a better future

By Capt. John Quinn

CAMP PHOENIX, Afghanistan — A small group of OOA volunteers provided much needed humanitarian aid to the two villages in the nearby district of Deh Sabz Jan. 15 and 16.

After several weeks of planning and preparing, seven members from the 534th Survey & Design Detachment — of the 902nd Engineer Company in the 15th Engineer Battalion — traveled with Soldiers from the 1-134th Cavalry Regiment, which is also based on Camp Phoenix, to provide a variety of supplies to residents in need.

They first visited the village of Katachah Jan. 15 and volunteers were warmly received by elders, who said the village was in great need of supplies, according to Sgt. 1st Class Erich Stemmerding, of the 534th.

“The village elder claimed that this was the first HA (humanitarian assistance) drop that had ever been conducted in this village,” Stemmerding said.

While OOA volunteers provided flour, beans, rice, portable stoves with charcoal and cooking oil, winter clothing and blankets to village elders and members of Afghan National Police, who distributed the supplies to residents and families in the communities.

On Jan. 16, OOA volunteers visited the village of Desabz Kahas, which is also northeast of Kabul.

“These villages are very poor and have seen much suffering at the hands of the Taliban,” Stemmerding said, adding the existing community is comprised of the remnants of five villages, three of which were destroyed by Taliban forces.

Additionally, elders said many young children were forcibly to be trained as Taliban warriors, according to Stemmerding.

“The mission was a huge success not only for the local people to help them through the harsh winter, but also in the improvement of U.S. relations in a fairly neutral area where our military forces regularly patrol,” Stemmerding said.

Stemmerding is grateful for the help from Sgt. 1st Class Steven Brewer of Charlie Troop 1-134th, who took the lead part of the planning process and was a key to the overall success of the operation.



Photo courtesy of 902nd Engineers

**Residents appeared as soon as the first trucks entered the village of Katachah Jan. 15. The village elder worked with Afghan police to sort the supplies into separate piles to ensure there was an organized system to distribute the materials.**



Photo courtesy of 902nd Engineers

**OOA volunteers from the 1-134th Cavalry helped deliver approximately 11,000 pounds of supplies to the residents of Desabz Kahas in Deh Sabz police district Jan. 16.**



Photo courtesy of 902nd Engineers



**OPERATION OUTREACH  
AFGHANISTAN**



## OPERATION OUTREACH AFGHANISTAN

### MENTORS Continued from cover

“This is the biggest drop we’ve ever done,” Roberts said, adding they brought enough clothes for about 200 Afghan men, women and children or about 100 families.

U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. John Newman, who is a senior advisor to the ANA’s logistical command, said this mission was extremely successful. He added it helped people and strengthened the bond with ANA leaders like Col. Nooralam, executive officer of the security kandak (battalion).

While U.S. forces brought the donations, Nooralam and his Soldiers loaded them into their pick-up trucks and distributed the clothing and blankets to the villages, which empowered the ANA and put “an Afghan face” on the mission, Newman said.

“They know where it’s coming from,” Newman said. “I was talking to the Afghan colonel and he said it’s very cold at night and when they use those blankets, they’ll think of us (the Americans).”

“He said ‘Allah is pleased,’” Newman recalled, adding they agreed the simple basis of both their faiths was helping those who are in the greatest need.

After returning to his base, Nooralam thanked the members of the Catalina Team.

Newman said the Catalina Team organized another humanitarian mission to drop 200 new blankets, clothing, school supplies – from Camp Eggers – and tents to help Afghans living in a refugee camp in west Kabul Jan. 28. He added they had visited the camp last year, but promised to return since the people had so little.

2nd Lt. Sean Polson, of the 1-134th Cavalry Regiment based at



Photo by Capt. John Quinn

**Afghan children gladly accepted hand-made blankets, which were sent to Lt. Col. Joseph Hall of the 866th AES by a small army of quilt makers, during CJ4’s humanitarian mission in Chamtallah Jan. 17.**

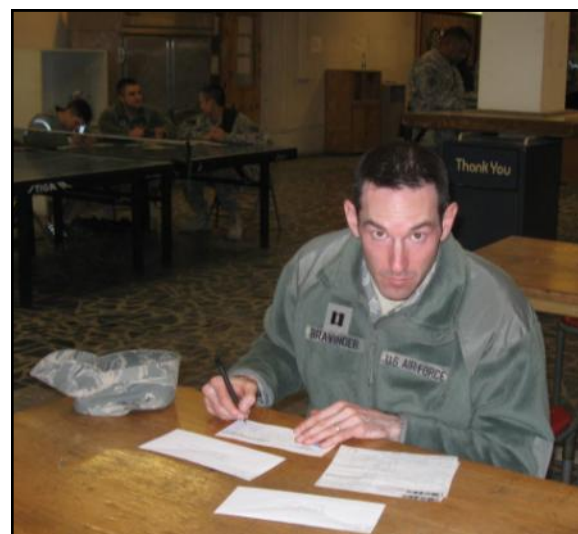
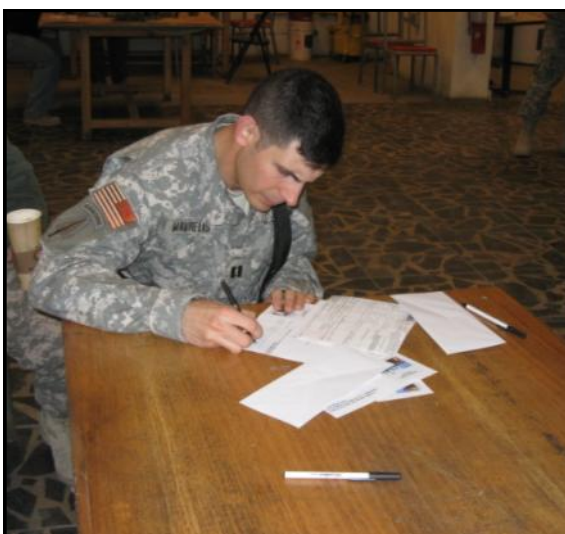
Phoenix, said his unit inherited 10 large canvas tents from their predecessors, the 1-101st Field Artillery, which left in November. He added provided six of the tents for the Catalina Team’s mission and will hold the remaining ones for another day.

“These open up to the size of a GP (general purpose) medium,” Polson said as six Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen lifted one tent at a time onto trailers Jan. 28.

While not all the tents have a complete set of poles, Polson, Roberts and Newman believed the Afghans at the refugee camp would put the materials to good use, even if they couldn’t guess what it will be.

“There’s a pretty big need out there,” Newman said.

## Taking time to say thanks to those supporting us from afar



Photos by Capt. John Quinn

**From left, Army Capt. Landon Mavrelis, of the 1-181st Infantry Battalion, Navy Lt. Kristy Carpenter, of the Combined Joint Interagency Task Force (CJATF) 435, and Air Force Chaplain (Capt.) Jon Bravinder, of the 866th Air Expeditionary Squadron (AES), put pen to paper in Jan. 18 during one of the bi-monthly “thank you” subcommittee meetings. OOA members try to send a note to every person or group who donates supplies — whether it’s one box of blankets or one hundred crates of pencils — in support the humanitarian operations.**



# Talking trash: means to heat a home, stimulate an Afghan cottage industry

By Capt. Anthony Deiss

CAMP PHOENIX, Afghanistan – Members of OOA stationed here are getting environmentally conscious by initiating a waste-recycle pilot program, designed to provide a renewable heat source for Afghans living in the capital of Kabul.

The OOA volunteers took time to develop a “fuel donut” made from recycled materials, which burns like a briquette and provides an alternative heat source for Afghan families who live in homes without modern heating conveniences.

“This program is good for everybody – the Afghans, the environment and our camps,” said Army Capt. Robert Small, design engineer/environmental area manager for the 196th Maneuver Enhanced Brigade.

Using shredded paper and saw dust from the camp, the material is combined with water and ash and pressed into shape of a donut or roll. The donut can burn for about an hour, providing heat for warmth or cooking, and gives off few emissions.

“This is a fairly clean burning source and it’s sustainable. It gives the Afghans something to keep their homes warm, without releasing toxic fumes,” said Small of Sioux Falls, S.D. “The camps produce a lot of paper and construction waste, and it normally ends up in the landfills – this is a way we can keep it from going into the landfills, reuse it, and provide a product to Afghans who really need it.”

According to Small, other materials can be used such as grasses, leaves or anything that can be composted.

Initially conceived as a product to be made by the camp’s volunteer-outreach program and donated to Afghan families during humanitarian missions, Small and the outreach volunteers have higher aspira-



Photo by Capt. Anthony Deiss

**Chief Warrant Officer 2 Kent Frye, left, 902nd Engineer Company, and Sgt. John Shyne, 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, center, make a “fuel donut” using a press made from scrap lumber as Capt. Robert Small, 196th, provides stability to the press Jan. 29 at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan.**

tions for the fuel donut, and are looking at ways which will allow Afghans to make their own.

“The fuel donut is not a new concept. It has been used by humanitarian organizations in developing countries around the world, but it is fairly new to Afghanistan with only a few contractors developing them here,” said Small. “But from a volunteer standpoint, we not only want to provide these donuts to the Afghans, but provide them with the knowledge to make them.”

Using basic wood-building materials, OOA volunteers designed a prototype press and drying rack, which can be made by Afghans allowing them the means to create fuel donuts for their family, village or even as a source of income for themselves.

“When we started this program, we wanted to make it simple. The materials are from the scrap heap and the construction techniques for the equipment can be made with limited carpentry skills,” said Small. “Just about anybody can do this, and the whole family can get involved and produce enough fuel for themselves and maybe even have a micro-business to sell it.”

Once the program is fully developed for Camp Phoenix, Small hopes start-up programs can be initiated at other military installations throughout the Kabul Base Cluster, and the manufacturing process can be facilitated with surrounding villages.

In the long-term, Small hopes the program to be expanded to bases throughout the country and developed in rural areas.

“We’re trying to make this program sustainable for villages and refugee camps – with different recipes for different areas with whatever waste streams they have available,” said Small. “I hope the Afghans will realize that we are here really trying to help them and that we care about the environment and the people who really need the fuel to stay warm.”



Photo by Capt. John Quinn

**Members from the 902nd Engineer Company wash up after making a batch of “fuel donuts,” which were left to dry on a simple rack, at Camp Phoenix Jan. 29.**

## WANT TO HELP?

Anyone can make fuel donuts in the container yard. A team of OOA volunteers will be mixing up a new batch Friday at 4 p.m.