



KBC INSIDER



VOL. 2 – ISSUE 2

NEWSLETTER OF THE KABUL BASE CLUSTER

July 2011

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Combat Badges

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Promoted to Brig. Gen.

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Nebraska Guardsmen
Head Home

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VOL. 2 - ISSUE 2- July 2011

Task Force Yankee
Public Affairs Office

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Commander

Command Sgt. Maj. William Davidson

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Submissions are subject to editing.



ON THE COVER

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christopher Moore, the executive officer for the Validation Transition Team Afghanistan talks with an Afghan child during an Operation Outreach humanitarian aid drop at a school in Kabul. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Steven C. Eaton, Task Force Yankee)

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SOCIAL MEDIA

THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE LOGGING IN

The Internet has fundamentally changed the way the military communicates in the 21st century. Increasingly, individuals are looking to the web and social networking sites to communicate with family, friends and the world.

Social media is an excellent way to stay in touch with those you care about back home and to share with them your experiences. However, all military personnel have a responsibility to know the risks and rewards of using social media. Those who wear the military uniform must always remember to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times, and be cognizant of others on the web who wish to exploit the information you share and use it to cause harm.

Read the following DOs and DON'Ts to help protect yourself, your families and your fellow servicemembers.

DOs

- DO use social networking sites to communicate the military story; you are our best spokesperson.
- DO be cognizant of how you represent yourself; reconsider posting comments that reflect poorly on the organization.
- DO keep your tone professional.
- DO ensure content posted is appropriate to good order and discipline to the military.
- DO treat social media sites like the newspaper. If you don't want to see it in print, don't say it!
- DO protect classified, sensitive, or need-to-know information and report violations.
- DO remember violators of Operational Security (OPSEC) may be subject to UCMJ action.
- DO make it more difficult for an adversary to identify and exploit vulnerabilities.
- DO mitigate the risk of using social media by educating servicemembers, not by stopping the dialogue.



twitter

flickr

facebook

YouTube

Blogger

DON'Ts

- DON'T post inappropriate statements. Users have the right to voice their opinions. However, they do not have the right to post vulgar or obscene comments that degrade morale or unit cohesion.
- DON'T post distasteful photos or video that depict any form of obscenity.
- DON'T post sensitive or classified information that could compromise OPSEC. Release of this information could result in lost lives:
 - Policies, Rules of Engagement and Rules of Force
 - Vulnerabilities of defensive dispositions, capabilities of units, weapons systems
 - Doctrine for using various weapons
 - New weapons available, or are being employed
 - Unit strength, exact numbers or composition
 - Troop movements: dates, times and locations
- DON'T post any photos or videos that could compromise OPSEC: Entry Control Points, Vehicle Battle Damage, Sensitive Communication or Force Protection Equipment.
- DON'T post personally identifiable information: information to distinguish or track your identity, employment history, home address, exact school your kids go to.

AROUND THE KBC



1-181 heads home

Lt. Col. Anthony Couture, commander of the 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment, Massachusetts National Guard and Sgt. Maj. Jefferey Baillargeon case the colors of the historic battalion, officially marking the end of their tour of duty during a Transfer of Authority Ceremony at Camp Phoenix on July 6, 2011. The 181st transferred responsibility of their mission over to their Massachusetts National Guard sister battalion, the 1st Battalion, 182nd Infantry Regiment. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael Broughey, Task Force Powder Horn Public Affairs)

Joining the Guard

Brig Gen. John A. Hammond, commander of Task Force Yankee, 26th "Yankee" Brigade, Massachusetts National Guard, swears in Capt. Kimberly J. Dindial, an intelligence officer, into the Massachusetts Army National Guard July 8, 2011 on Camp Phoenix. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. James Lally, Task Force Yankee Public Affairs)



Lt. Col. Thomas Stewart, commander of the 1st Battalion, 182nd Infantry Regiment, Task Force Americal, Massachusetts Army National Guard, and Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory Widberg, command sergeant major of the 182nd along with the rest of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 1st Battalion, 182nd Infantry Regiment render a salute while their battalion colors are raised for the first time in Afghanistan signifying the official beginning to their mission. The 182nd took authority from their Massachusetts National Guard sister battalion the 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment, Task Force Powder Horn, Massachusetts National Guard, during a Transfer of Authority Ceremony at Camp Phoenix on July 6, 2011. (Photo by 1st Lt. George G. Gay, 1st Battalion, 182nd Infantry Regiment, Task Force Americal)

Petraeus receives Canadian award

Gen. David H. Petraeus, (left) commander of the International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces Afghanistan, receives the Canadian Meritorious Service Cross from Gen. Walter Natynczyk, (right) the Canadian Forces Chief of Defence Staff. (Photo by Master Cpl. Rory Wilson, Canadian Forces)



Warrant Officer birthday

The oldest and youngest Warrant Officers on Camp Phoenix cut the Warrant Officer Corps birthday cake here on July 9, 2011. Chief Warrant Officer 4 James Girard (left) and Warrant Officer Jean-Pierre Louis (right) cut the cake signifying the past, present and future of the Warrant Officer Corps. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Steven C. Eaton, Task Force Yankee Public Affairs)



Members who recently completed the Unit Victim Advocate Training pose for a photo. The class was set up by the Task Force Yankee Sexual Assault Prevention Coordinator, 1st Lt. Kelly Souza, and the Task Force Yankee Equal Employment Coordinator, Sgt. 1st Class Gregg Yanchuck, to educate Unit Victim Advocates of the newest problems and solutions facing the military. (U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class John R. Fischer)



Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander of the International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces Afghanistan, poses for a picture with Lt. Col. Robert A. Dwan, Officer in Charge of the New Kabul Compound in Kabul, Afghanistan July 4, 2011. (Photo courtesy of Lt. Col. Robert Dwan, Task Force Yankee)

Badges earned under fire



Brig. Gen John A. Hammond, commander of Task Force Yankee, 26th "Yankee" Brigade, Massachusetts Army National Guard, poses for a picture with members of Company C, 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment, Massachusetts Army National Guard following an Award Ceremony at Camp Warrior on Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan July 13, 2011. Hammond presented more than 50 Combat Infantryman Badges to the members of Company C during the ceremony.

By Staff Sgt. James C. Lally, Task Force Yankee Public Affairs

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — More than 50 Massachusetts Army National Guardsmen were recognized for engaging insurgents in combat during their tour in Afghanistan at an Awards Ceremony at Camp Warrior on Bagram Airfield here July 13, 2011.

Brig. Gen John A. Hammond, commander of Task Force Yankee, 26th "Yankee" Brigade, Massachusetts Army National Guard, pinned the Combat Infantryman Badge (CIB) on the members of Company C, 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment, Massachusetts Army National Guard to personally show his appreciation for their service and sacrifice. Hammond is the commander of the unit's higher headquarters.

"Only a small percentage of people serve in our nation's military and an even smaller percentage of them ever serve in combat. Earning your Combat Infantryman Badge singles you out as one of them. I'm very proud to be here today to present these distinguished awards to you and I thank

you for your service to the 26th 'Yankee' Brigade, the Massachusetts Army National Guard and our country," said Hammond.

A recipient of the CIB must be personally present and under hostile fire while serving in an assigned infantry or Special Forces unit actively engaged in ground combat with the enemy.

One of the recipients was Sgt. Joshua Pickett. explaining what the award meant to him personally Pickett said, "It's an honor to receive such an award. It singles you out as having been an infantryman who's been in combat. It's a distinction most people don't get."

The proud leader of the Soldiers, Capt. Thomas Clark, commander, Company C, 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment, Massachusetts Army National Guard said, "It's an honor to be with these great Soldiers. More than 80 Soldiers from this company out of 126 have been awarded their CIB. They have done everything we've asked and more. It means

a lot that Brigadier General Hammond was here to congratulate them.”

One example of the combat the Soldiers faced was during a patrol while assigned to a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Pirkowti Kalay, Paktika Province, Afghanistan. Members of Company C were called to reinforce another infantry unit that had come under attack. The Guardsmen responded to the attack and began receiving direct small arms fire that forced their machine gunners to seek cover while they positively identified enemy fighters before firing back. The Soldiers suppressed their fire, destroyed the enemy and secured the area so they could recover vehicles that were damaged during the attack.

1st Sgt. Richard D. Sheehan, 1st. Sgt., Company C, 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment, Massachusetts Army National Guard was a member of that patrol. Sheehan expressed his feelings toward the Soldiers of his unit saying, “It’s an honor and a privilege to serve with these Soldiers. They are the next generation of leaders.”

As a part of Task Force Yankee the 181st provided a secure environment so that other members of the Coalition Forces could partner with the Afghan people to reduce the capability and will of the insurgency, support the growth in capacity and capability of the Afghan National Security Forces, and facilitate improvements in governance and socio-economic development.



Below: Brig. Gen John A. Hammond, commander of Task Force Yankee, 26th “Yankee” Brigade, Massachusetts Army National Guard, pins the Combat Infantryman Badge on Billerica, Mass. resident Spc. Daniel P. Vitale, Company C, 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment, Massachusetts Army National Guard during an Award Ceremony at Camp Warrior on Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan July 13, 2011.



Deployed servicemembers become citizens



Forty eight servicemembers who were deployed to Afghanistan in the support of Operation Enduring Freedom were naturalized as United States citizens. Included in the servicemembers naturalized were Bronze Star and Purple Heart recipients. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Kelly Souza, Task Force Yankee Public Affairs)

Story courtesy of Combined Joint Task Force 1 Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan — On a day marking the 235th birthday of the United States, five Soldiers from the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, Task Force Falcon, took the Oath of Naturalization, becoming some of the nation's newest citizens during a ceremony July 4, 2011.

"You are representative of the values and diversity that make our country stronger," said U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Karl Eikenberry as he addressed 48 servicemembers from 25 countries. "The great patriots who founded our nation have a lot in common with you. Like them, you've fought to keep America safe, and you've served with distinction."

U.S. Army Pfc. Felipe Andrade, a pathfinder with Company F, Task Force Knighthawk, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, originally from Brazil and calls Monroe, N.Y., home, said he lived in the U.S. for 12 years, and although over that time he has come to

feel like an American, he now can truly call himself one. "There's no greater feeling than to be called an American," he said with a smile.

U.S. Army Spc. Jeridine Stewart, a communications specialist with Headquarters Support Company, Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th CAB, originally from Palau and calls Michigan home, has served in the U.S. Army for seven years, the Fourth of July reminds her the U.S. is a nation of immigrants who've come from all over the world. "I believe the U.S. is a melting pot of people of all races, all of who share the same freedoms," she said. "Now, I get to be a part of it."

Eikenberry, who will leave Afghanistan this summer, told the new citizens he is proud to call them American patriots.

"I want to thank each of you personally," Eikenberry said. "You are the real U.S. ambassadors here in Afghanistan."

Canadian training mission officially underway



(Photo by Master Cpl. Rory Wilson, Canadian Forces)

By Capt. Glen Parent, public affairs officer, Canadian Contribution Training Mission – Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan — Canadian Soldiers based in Kabul gathered at their main camp on May 28, 2011 to mark the official stand up of Operation Attention, the Canadian Forces commitment to training the Afghan National Army.

During a short parade and ceremony Lt. Gen. Marc Lessard, the commander of Canadian Expeditionary Force Command, thanked the Soldiers for volunteering to serve in Afghanistan and declared the new training force operational. “This mission is a continuation of our commitment to Afghanistan,” said Lessard. “We will perform this mission in true partnership with our Afghan brothers, our NATO allies, and especially our American friends.”

Over the past two months, a 75-person Theatre Activation Team has prepared infrastructure and

communication systems for the mission in the Kabul area. In early May, an advance party of the headquarters for the Canadian Contribution Training Mission – Afghanistan (CCTM-A) arrived in Kabul to prepare for the arrival of Canadian Forces advisors. These advisors, who began arriving in late May, will make up the bulk of the 950 person mission.

Operation Attention is designed to assist the Afghan Army as it develops into a highly skilled, self-sustaining force that is able to assume full responsibility for security in Afghanistan. Twenty nine nations provide more than 2,600 advisors and trainers to the NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan, which is working to develop the Afghan National Security Forces, including Army, Police, Border Police and the Afghan National Army Air Corps. The Canadian Forces' mandate to contribute to NTM-A extends to the end of 2014.

TF Yankee's New Star

Col. John Hammond promoted to Brig. Gen.

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

KABUL, Afghanistan — Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander of the International Security Force and U.S. Forces Afghanistan, pinned Col. John A. Hammond, commander of Task Force Yankee, 26th “Yankee” Brigade, Massachusetts National Guard, to the rank of Brigadier General in a promotion ceremony outside the ISAF Headquarters building here on July 7, 2011.

“There are some promotions for a commissioned officer that mean more than others,” said Petraeus. “And being promoted from a Colonel to a flag officer is one of them,” he added.

As Petraeus prepares to leave Afghanistan to take command of the Central Intelligence Agency, he mentioned that Hammond will possibly be his last General Officer promotion. Hammond expressed his appreciation for Petraeus’s leadership saying, “As a battalion commander in Iraq in 2003, I was inspired by your leadership of the 101st and the Soldiers in that division, in the years that followed I observed how your vision shaped our strategy in two theaters, and tried my best to emulate your innovation and drive for mission success,” said Hammond.

The promotion also makes Hammond the first Massachusetts National Guard officer to be promoted to a general



Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces Afghanistan (left), pinned Col. John A. Hammond commander of Task Force Yankee, 26th “Yankee” Brigade, Massachusetts National Guard, to Brigadier General outside the ISAF Headquarters building here on July 7, 2011. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Steven C. Eaton, Task Force Yankee Public Affairs)

officer in a theater of combat since World War II, said Hammond.

The two commanders have crossed paths before. In 2003 during Operation Iraqi Freedom, a unit under the 101st Air Assault Division, commanded by then Maj. Gen. Petraeus, was attached to Hammond’s 211th Military Police Battalion in Fallujah, Iraq. They met for the first time during the Army War College Fellowship at Harvard University in 2007. Now, as Petraeus completes his last tour of duty as the senior commander in Afghanistan, Hammond serves with him again.

At the small ceremony under the trees in front of the headquarters for all Afghanistan operations, the newly promoted commander of Task Force Yankee presented Petraeus, a New Hampshire resident with a signed picture of the Stanley Cup Champion Boston Bruins as a token of his support for the team. Hammond also presented Petraeus with an antique compass as a symbol of his continued guidance to all the Soldiers he leads.

As the Task Force Yankee commander, Hammond is responsible for the security, life support, construction, contracting and counter-insurgency and humanitarian assistance activities for each of the 11 U.S. Bases of the Kabul Base Cluster (KBC) as well as special courts martial authority for Regional Command – Capital. Task Force Yankee has also built relationships with district police departments and KBC tenant units in order to synchronize internal and external security for KBC installations and movement corridors.

Currently, approximately 1,500 Soldiers from the Massachusetts Army National Guard are serving with Task Force Yankee in Afghanistan and another 1,200 Soldiers recently returned home from Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn.

Hammond mentioned his adoration for some of the units currently serving under his command saying, “1,500 troopers of the ‘Yankee’ Brigade are currently here in Afghanistan to include the two oldest Infantry units in our Army and 1,200 more who just returned from Iraq are back in Massachusetts. They are the reason I continue to serve, their selfless service

to our nation both motivates and inspires me to work harder each day to become a better leader,” said Hammond. The 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment and the 1st Battalion, 182nd Infantry Regiment, are two of the nation’s oldest infantry units and have served in every conflict since 1636 except Vietnam, added Hammond.

These units currently perform security for Provincial Reconstruction Teams throughout Afghanistan as well as base security at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Recently, the 181st was engaged in combat on April 2, 2011 when three suicide bombers and eight other insurgents armed with rifles, rocket propelled grenades and hand grenades attacked the main entry control point of Camp Phoenix. The Soldiers from the 181st repelled the attack killing several of the insurgents. Gen. Petraeus presented Soldiers from the 181st with a Bronze Star with Valor, two Purple Hearts for wounds received during the attack and one Army Commendation with Valor.

“I would also like to express my thanks and appreciation to the families of the ‘Yankee’ Brigade

Soldiers for their commitment to our country during 10 years of war,” said Hammond.

During the ceremony Hammond thanked all of the coalition commanders of the partner nations that he has been working with for their support saying, “I would also like to thank my coalition partners and friends. We have the commanders of the Mongolian Expedition, Bulgarian Forces, Jordanian Forces, Georgian Forces, Romanian Forces, Canadian Forces, French Contingent, and of course our representative from the Turkish Brigade and Regional Command Capital.”



Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander of International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces Afghanistan and Brig. Gen. John Hammond hold a signed photo of the Stanley Cup Champion Boston Bruins while posing for a picture with members of the 26th “Yankee” Brigade, Massachusetts Army National Guard. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Steven C. Eaton, Task Force Yankee Public Affairs)



Lt. Col. Thomas Rynders, commander of the 1st Squadron, 134th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Fury, Nebraska Army National Guard and Command Sgt. Maj. Marty Baker, command sergeant major of the 1st Squadron, 134th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Fury, Nebraska Army National Guard, case the battalion colors during an end of tour ceremony on Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan on July 12, 2011. Casing the colors officially marks the end of the deployment for Task Force Fury (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Steven C. Eaton Task Force Yankee Public Affairs)

Afghans take control of Kabul Security from Nebraska Guardsmen

By Spc. Steven C. Eaton, Task Force Yankee public Affairs

KABUL, Afghanistan — The 1st Squadron, 134th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Fury, Nebraska Army National Guard commemorated the end of their mission during an End of Tour Ceremony on Camp Phoenix here July 12, 2011.

Commander, Lt. Col. Thomas Rynders and Command Sgt. Maj. Marty Baker, the command sergeant major of the 134th cased the unit's regimental colors to signify the official completion of their tour in Afghanistan.

Although the troops of the 134th still have a long journey back home, they can rest easy knowing that they've done their part to ensure the success of the Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army in Kabul. The commander of the 134th's higher headquarters, Col. David Correll, 234 Infantry Brigade Combat Team said, "We know that Task Force Fury and their Afghan security partners have made much progress in bringing peace and stability to this area. We all know that work still remains to be done. Yet for the moment, we can all stand proud knowing that the members of Task Force Fury did their part," said Correll.

Unlike times in the past when a unit leaves and another comes in to take over the mission, the 134th leaves its mission solely in the hands of its Afghan counterparts. Successful transitions such as this are part of a plan presented by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and supported by the international community to begin transitioning full control of national security to the Afghan National Security Force beginning in the summer of 2011 and ending in 2014.

In the Kabul Province, the beginning of a successful transition is evident in the conclusion of the 134th's mission.

Massachusetts Command Team visits deployed Guardsmen

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

KABUL, Afghanistan — Members of the Massachusetts National Guard deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom had a very special visit on June 22, 2011. Brig. Gen. Joseph C. Carter, The Adjutant General of the Massachusetts National Guard, along with Command Sgt. Maj. David Costa, Command Sergeant Major of the Massachusetts National Guard, took time out of their schedules to visit with the deployed guardsmen.

Although the trip was short the Massachusetts command group took the time to visit the troops on bases throughout the Kabul Base Cluster and Afghanistan. Visiting Camp Phoenix, Bagram Air Base, Camp Eggers and Kandahar, the Massachusetts command team met with Soldiers for meals and meetings.

A town hall style meeting was held on Camp Phoenix with members of the Massachusetts National Guard's 26th "Yankee" Brigade and 1st Battalion of the 181st Infantry regiment. The meeting focused on issues currently facing the Massachusetts Guardsmen and their families, as well as issues that face the National Guard and Army as a whole. Issues ranging from the relocation of the Massachusetts National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters, jobs, benefits for veterans and what role the Massachusetts Guard was playing in relief efforts after a devastating tornado hit the western part of the state in June were addressed.

The command team also took the time to recognize the work being done by presenting selected Soldiers with the commander's coin to recognize excellent performance.

Overall the trip was a great success, the senior leaders took time to come visit and ensure the Massachusetts Soldiers that the state of the Massachusetts National Guard, home to the nation's oldest military units, was doing well and continuing to set the standard for others to follow.



Members of the Massachusetts Army National Guard, deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom on Camp Phoenix, received a special visit on June 22, 2011. Maj. Gen Joseph C. Carter, The Adjutant General of the Massachusetts National Guard and Command Sgt. Maj. David Costa, State Command Sergeant Major of the Massachusetts Army National Guard, visited the deployed Soldiers of the 26th "Yankee" Brigade and the 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment. Soldiers got a chance to ask the Massachusetts command team questions during a town hall style meeting.



Brig. Gen. Joseph C. Carter (right), Adjutant General of the Massachusetts National Guard, Col. John A. Hammond (center), commander of the 26th "Yankee" Brigade, Task Force Yankee, Massachusetts National Guard and Command Sgt. Maj. David Costa (left), Command Sergeant Major of the Massachusetts National Guard, look at the memorial in the Camp Phoenix dining facility dedicated to Massachusetts Army National Guard Soldiers Sgt. Robert J. Barrett, 21 of Fall River, Mass., 1st Battalion 101st Field Artillery; Spc. Dennis C. Poulin, 26 of Cumberland R.I., 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment and Pfc. Ethan L. Goncalo, 21 of Fall River, Mass., 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment, lost during deployment in Kabul. Carter and Costa were on a visit to Camp Phoenix to visit the deployed Massachusetts National Guard units.



Regional Support Command Capital changes hands

By Jon Connor
DCOM-Regional Support Public Affairs

KABUL, Afghanistan — He was the odd one, sort of. He was the one from the Air Force.

With that distinction compared to his Army peers, Air Force Col. Bob Wicks Jr. said goodbye to Regional Support Command-Capital and began looking forward to his next assignment as the deputy director for the Air Force International Training and Education Center, San Antonio, Texas.

Wicks talked about this assignment, an anomaly compared to the rest of his assignments, with candor during his farewell speech at Camp Phoenix's Patriot Square during the RSC-Capital change of command ceremony July 5, 2011.

"I didn't know what to expect ... I'm this lone Air Force guy," Wicks said, citing the word "trepidation" to describe his initial feeling upon taking command last August.

Prior to coming to RSC-Capital, Wicks was assigned to Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, as the director of Space Forces for Pacific Air Force.

Regardless, he quickly realized, whether Air Force or Army, that he and the other five Regional Support Command commanders, who report to Deputy Commander, Regional Support, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan/Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, had some things in common.

Wicks said all the RSCs needed to build capacity, capability and ultimately build a lasting security in Afghanistan. The RSC-Capital, specifically, is charged with building "something strong and lasting in Kabul," he said.

And that's exactly what he and his staff and command members did.

The command completed 300 construction projects and another 300 related projects, at a cost of \$300 million. This included security measures in and around Kabul such as the "Ring of Steel," six city checkpoints, and four Forward Operating Bases, and major enhancements to many police stations.

"The work you're doing is being recognized" by coalition leadership, and most of all, Afghans, he told his staff and other guests.

He then addressed the incoming commander, Army Col. Arthur Weeks III. Weeks recently arrived from the U.S. Naval War College.

"I know the mission will be successful here," Wicks said of Weeks, noting his dedication and professionalism that he has observed during their overlap time. "Art, I wish you the best of luck."

Wicks then concluded by thanking his staff, NTM-A senior leadership, and his deputy commander, Navy Cmdr. Hunter Haltom. "He had to play the bad cop," Wicks jokingly said of Haltom.

"Thank you so much. I am extremely proud of being your commander," Wicks said. "I was humbled and honored – especially during the surge. I will always look back at this time with pride."

Before the ceremony, Wicks was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, and the NATO Non-Article 5 medal.

The Bronze Star Medal is a U.S. Armed Forces individual military decoration that may be awarded for bravery, acts of merit, or meritorious service.

The reviewing officer, Brig. Gen. Tom Cosentino, deputy commander, Regional Support, spoke, referencing Wicks' uniqueness.

"You may not know, but Bob is the lone Air Force Officer of the six Regional Support Commanders. The rest are Army officers. This assignment was made before I got here so I do not know why Bob was assigned here, instead of Helmand or Bagram or Herat," Cosentino said. "But what I do know is that Bob has shown that any officer, of any service of one's security forces, can be the leader we all need him to be.

"He (Wicks) will soon be followed by five of his brothers, who like him, have poured their heart and soul into working with their Afghan and coalition partners to strengthen your security forces and to make Afghanistan the place you all want it to be," Cosentino said.

"Bob, your leadership of Capital has been spectacular. You have led Marines, Airmen, Soldiers and Sailors as well as coalition members – each committed to accomplishing a very important mission," Cosentino said. "I want to personally thank you and to let you know that I will miss your steadiness and your commitment to complete so much for all of us."

Cosentino then welcomed Weeks to RSC-Capital.

"Art, these are your partners, friends, and allies. Build on the trust and reputation that RSC Capital has established here. I know you'll do just as fine a job to make Kabul secure for its citizens," he said.

Representing NTM-A leadership was Maj. Gen. James Mallory III, deputy commanding general, NTM-A/CSTC.

Mallory told of the birth of NTM-A in November 2009, and subsequently DCOM-RS and its six RSCs. The commands were created "to help stabilize security and create conditions to transfer that security," he said.

That, coupled with an increase of 100,000 Army and Police personnel in the Afghan National Security Force and a 33-nation coalition force, manifested into the successes made in 2011.

Colonel Arthur Weeks III, new RSC-Capital commander, gave his remarks during the RSC-Capital change of command ceremony at Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan, July 5.

"Today that force is trained by Afghans who are in the lead," Mallory said. And the RSCs have a very important mission of housing, feeding Afghan recruits and the force, building security structures, and supporting the Regional Commands of the International Security Assistance Force.

"It's a huge undertaking," he said.

Weeks' career began in 1984 with the Massachusetts Army National Guard. He holds a bachelor's degree in English from Salem State College and a master's degree from the Naval War College.

His highest military awards include the Bronze Star Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal (five oak leaf clusters).

Regional Support Command-Capital is assigned to direct and coordinate all NTM-A/CSTC-A efforts in Kabul and the Province of Kabul to train, sustain, maintain and equip the ANSF in support of Regional Command-Capital and ANSF commanders.



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 Kabul. OOA's mission is to empower the Afghan people through compassionate humanitarian aid drops.

Making a difference in Afghanistan

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

KABUL, Afghanistan — Servicemembers 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, 2011. 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 with and directly impact the 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's faces 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 seemed to enjoy.

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 as a pencil or a notebook are things Afghan children hold in high regard, and 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 principle 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.



Left: Lt. Col. William O'Brien, the Director of Public Works for the Kabul Base Cluster with Task Force Yankee, hands a bag of school supplies to an Afghan boy during an Operation Outreach Afghanistan humanitarian aid drop at a school in Kabul. Soldiers such as O'Brien and civilians volunteer in their off duty time with OOA to go on missions such as humanitarian aid drops, sorting donations and making fuel donuts.

Right: Servicemembers and Afghan children pose for a photo outside a school house in Kabul after the Servicemembers conducted a humanitarian aid drop at the school.





Army Command Sgt. Maj. Marvin L. Hill, International Security Assistance Force/U.S. Forces Afghanistan, passes the ISAF guidon to Gen. David H. Petraeus, outgoing ISAF Commander, during the ISAF Change of Command Ceremony held in Kabul, Afghanistan, July 18, 2011. Marine General John R. Allen (left) assumed command of ISAF/USFOR-A from General Petraeus.

ISAF Command changes hands

ISAF Headquarters Public Affairs

KABUL, Afghanistan – U.S. Marine Corps Gen. John R. Allen assumed command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from U.S. Army Gen. David H. Petraeus at a Change of Command Ceremony on July 18, 2011, attended by senior Afghan and NATO officials, including German Army Gen. Wolf Langheld, commander, Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum; Adm. Mike Mullen, U.S. chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff; and Marine Corps Gen. James N. Mattis, commander, U.S. Central Command.

Gen. Allen served as deputy commander, U.S. Central Command, from July 2008 to June 2011. From 2006 to 2008, he served as Deputy Commanding General, II Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), and Commanding General, 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, deploying to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom and serving as the Deputy Commanding General of Multinational Force - West (MNF-W) and II MEF (Forward) in the Al Anbar Province.

Among other distinguished highlights of his career, Gen. Allen was the first Marine Corps officer to serve

as Commandant of Midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy, served as a Marine Corps Fellow to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and was the first Marine Corps officer inducted as a Term Member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Gen. Allen was promoted to the rank of four-star general by Adm. Mullen prior to the change of command.

Addressing the audience on his vision for Afghanistan and the coalition, Gen. Allen said, "Throughout, we will keep our eyes on the horizon – the future of Afghanistan – a nation of free people at peace, governed under its constitution, pursuing economic enterprise and development, in a secure and stable environment free from the extremism and terrorism that has plagued this wonderful country and its people for more than a generation. In the end – together we will prevail."

Gen. Petraeus took command of ISAF in July 2010. He will retire from the military later this summer and become director of the Central Intelligence Agency.



Marine Corps Gen. John R. Allen accepts the International Security Assistance Force guidon from German Army Gen. Wolf Langheld, commander, Joint Force Command Brunssum, during the ISAF Change of Command Ceremony held in Kabul, Afghanistan July 18, 2011. General Allen assumed command of ISAF/ U.S. Forces Afghanistan from Army Gen. David H. Petraeus.



Army Gen. David H. Petraeus, the outgoing commander, International Security Assistance Force/U.S. Forces Afghanistan; Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; German Army Gen. Wolf Langheld, commander, Joint Force Command Brunssum; Marine Corps Gen. James N. Mattis, commander, U.S. Central Command; and Marine Corps Gen. John R. Allen, the new ISAF commander, pay respect during the posting of the colors during the ISAF Change of Command Ceremony held in Kabul, Afghanistan July 18, 2011

Women's Equality Day

August 26

I AM
where I am
BECAUSE OF
the

BRIDGES

that I
CROSSED.

SOJOURNER TRUTH
was a bridge.

HARRIET TUBMAN
was a bridge.

IDA B. WELLS
was a bridge.

MADAME C. J. WALKER
was a bridge.

FANNIE LOU HAMER
was a bridge.

Oprah Winfrey