

'Keeping Tabs'

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

Forward Operating Base Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan

Kabul Residents Celebrate New School Wing

KABUL, Afghanistan – Residents and students gathered on Saturday 17 May for a ribbon cutting ceremony of the newly constructed addition to the Tajwar Sultana School, located in the Koloah Pushtu area of downtown Kabul. The project began last November and now thousands of young girls in the city will be able to get an education -- something that was strictly forbidden under the former Taliban regime.

As part of the ceremony, students recited the Afghan national anthem and sang welcoming songs to their guests.

Representatives from Task Force Phoenix joined with Afghanistan's Ministry of Education Abdul Rasoul Amin, from the government body that oversees the development of schools around the country. The ministry estimates that more than 5.4 million children are now students in secondary schools, with 35% of them being female. This compares to five years ago, when statistics estimated approximately one million students, nearly all male. The ministry also estimates that 11 million Afghans are still illiterate.

"The ministry of education has worked very hard to make this day possible," said Lt. Col. Michael Hoblin, who spoke to the crowd in Dari on behalf of Task Force Phoenix. "They do this because they recognize that the children are our future."

The school was funded through the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP), one of the tools available to American forces here. Allotted by congress, the



Lt. Col. Michael Hoblin, Civil Military Affairs Officer for CJTF Phoenix joins with Afghan Minister of Education Abdul Rasoul Amin to cut the ribbon for the new wing of the Tajwar Girls School.

money allows the military to respond to the needs and issues of the local populace within their areas of operation. Commanders can construct wells, schools, and other civil projects. Local contractors offer bids and are then awarded contracts to complete the projects, thereby injecting money into the local economy.

Humanitarian Assistance



Afghan children receive packages of school supplies clothing, vitamins and other personal items during a Humanitarian Assistance operation at the Aschiana School near Kabul. SSG Frank Broncato from Buffalo helps distribute items that have mostly been shipped over by private American citizens to CJTF Phoenix. Such operations are routinely conducted weekly around Afghanistan and are done in cooperation with local leaders and the Afghan National Army and Police.

The view from here...



The crew of an M1151 Up armored humvee of an Embedded Training Team has paused to study the terrain while moving in convoy over a remote road. SFC Robert Marshall from the Watertown area usually provides over watch of his team mates from his gunner's position.

Keeping Tabs -

Is a weekly electronic newsletter produced by the HQ 27th BCT Public Affairs Section for family members and friends back home and is available on-line through the NYS Division of Military and Naval Affairs website at www.dmna.state.ny.us For more information contact the DMNA Public Affairs Office at (518) 786-4581.