



# Media Release

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**25th Infantry Division (Light) &  
U.S. Army, Hawaii  
*America's Pacific Division***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **OPERATION SHOE FLY**

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, HI – 1st Sgt. James Thompson, a member of the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Aviation Brigade deployed to Afghanistan, sent the email bellow to his wife Jen on June 15.

Since the post has been receiving several calls from the community wanting to help Soldiers and the operations in which the Division is involved, we ask that you help us promote their initiative.

For the electronic version of the photo and logo, please email [simoesp@schofield.army.mil](mailto:simoesp@schofield.army.mil). The photo is a file photo.

If you have any questions, please contact the Public Affairs Office at (808) 655-4815.

## **OPERATION SHOE FLY**



Bringing the Hearts of America  
to the Soles of Afghanistan

Operation Shoe Fly  
B Co, 214th Aviation Regiment  
Bagram, Afghanistan  
APO AE 09354-9998

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# OPERATION SHOE FLY

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Pfc. Geoffrey Berg, a mortarman with 2-27 HHC, Mortar platoon, hands out gifts to children in the village of Tombei in the Paktika province of southeastern Afghanistan as part of Operation Wolfhound Reach. US Army photo by Spc. Len Cutler – 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

**From:** [Thomson, James H 1SG](#)

**To:** [Jen&Jim Thomson](#)

## Operation Shoe Fly

We landed our big, bad, and beautiful CH47D Chinook helicopter in the tight landing zone to drop off supplies to the handful of Soldiers who operate out of the remote FOB. They are always glad to hear the loud whup whup of the tandem rotor blades as the sound travels down the valley bouncing off the mountain walls until they see us crest a ridge inbound for landing. Also glad to see us are the hundreds of Afghani children from the adjoining village wearing huge smiles and waving frantically as they run towards the aircraft, stopping as the strong rotor wash hits their faces.

While the cargo was being unloaded from the ramp of the Chinook, I walked over to a small group of kids and handed out some hard candies, much to their delight. Just as I was about to walk back to the helicopter I noticed a little boy meanly grabbing a candy out of the hand of a little girl whose blue eyes had sparkled as she smiled a "thank you" just moments before when I had placed the candy in her palm. Though she initially seemed sad, the light faded from her blue eyes, she quickly accepted the boy's dominance and walked away with the other children. This is a facet of the Afghan life and culture that we find hard to accept and patiently work to change for the future.

After the mission was complete and back at our home base, I was sitting around with a group of Soldiers cleaning our hogs (M60D machine guns). I mentioned what I had witnessed earlier regarding the little girl with the bright blue eyes and one of the crew chiefs said, "You got to unwrap the candy first when you give it to the girls Top, that way they can pop it in their mouth right away before the boys can get to it."

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## OPERATION SHOE FLY

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It seems my Soldiers have already figured out a way to bring some joy, even if for only as long as it takes to eat a piece of candy, to the Afghani children, boys and girls alike. The conversation continued with concern for the children of this place as Coalition forces fight to rid the Taliban and other enemies of Afghanistan while bringing stability to the region so as to allow democracy to flourish, there are the children, the children with no shoes on their feet.

Just about every flight engineer and crew chief has noticed over the course of flying across this place called Afghanistan these past months that a large percentage of the children have no shoes to wear and of course, almost all of the girls are shoeless.

So my esteemed friends, in the spirit of America and minding the words of the infamous Steve Miller Band, I announce the beginning of Operation Shoe Fly in an effort to "shoe the children with no shoes on their feet." If you can collect the shoes, used or new, boys' and girls' (age 14 and under), and send them to me, my Soldiers and I will fly them out to the Afghani kids who so desperately need them.

Please send your shoes to:

Operation Shoe Fly  
B Co, 214<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment  
Bagram, Afghanistan  
APO AE 09354-9998

Another way to help is of course by getting the word out on Operation Shoe Fly. I would be most appreciative for any and all help in spreading the word on our endeavor. Thanks.

In addition to protecting the feet of these young innocent children, we might even win some hearts and minds among their parents and who knows where the shoes might take these kids. This place is on the dawn of a future, determining how bright it will be rests on the shoulders of these kids with no shoes on their feet. What say you?