



A charity founded by JHQ residents over 3 years ago has grown from strength to strength gaining international recognition and support around the globe.

The Afghan Appeal Fund (AAF) started life during HQ ARRC's deployment to Kabul as part of ISAF IX in spring 2006.

Run entirely by a small devoted group of volunteers all with a British Armed Forces link, the aim was simple; to raise awareness of the plight of the people of Afghanistan, particularly the children, and generate money to help them.

Since the first project, an RMC based clothes collection for a women's prison in Kabul, the AAF has made huge

charitable strides into the Afghan provinces thanks to the generous donations and assistance from both military and civilian communities.

The Appeal's founder and president Lady Caroline Richards, wife of the Chief of the General Staff told *'the bulletin'* she is 'totally indebted by the energy and generosity of the many people who have helped or donated'.

Through the dedicated helpers' planning, dedication and diversity it has allowed the AAF to forge ahead with more challenging ventures across various locations in Afghanistan.

Schools

Whilst on deployment in 2006, members of HQ ARRC identified the need for refurbishing a tented school in Kabul. Within a year the money had been raised back in Rheindahlen and the project completed. This was followed up with the AAF funding a 6-classroom annexe to a primary school in the Wardak area, having raised the necessary £31,000. The foundations, outer walls and roof were built in 2007 and the final touches and the installation of equipment were carried out in 2008.

Unfortunately the local community have made a decision to temporarily close this girls' school under intense pressure from the Taliban. The school is being looked after and negotiations continue for it to re-open soon.

This year the AAF is involved with 3 schools in Afghanistan. The Bamyan school in an isolated and peaceful location in the centre of the country has been run until now as a community project in the village mosque. The new construction and management is being overseen by the Swedish Committee of Afghanistan in accordance with Ministry of Education guidelines.

In Nuristan close to the Pakistan border, the Taliban have recently taken control of the valley in which another AAF school stands. However, the dogged determination of the villagers to build the school will help the people of the village recover from the tragedy of war.

The third project in Nad-E-Ali district of Helmand was inspired by the successful establishment of a school in Musa Qaleh by soldiers of the 1 Rifles, in conjunction with the Afghan National Army and the town's residents. Coordinating the refurbishment of the 5 classrooms is Col Richard Winstanley, AAF trustee and former CO ARRC Support Battalion.

Fundraising and Donations

The AAF has been very fortunate with its passionate network of supporters, trustees and the one-woman admin team, Mel Bradley – wife of Major Simon Bradley Royal Engineers also formerly of HQ ARRC – without whom the fantastic goals would not have been achievable.

Their first charity event a dinner with Sandy and Eleanor Gall and the authoress Siba Shakib was organised by Col Sean Armstrong (former CO RSU) and since then the coffers of their fund continue to swell with high profile fund raising events such as:

Top Trump Cards - *'Fighting Units of the British Army'* the creation of JHQ's Dr John Ross. The success of the British version triggered the recently launched US army set, which is available in AAFES stores in America and the AAF receives worldwide royalties from sales of both these packs.

Bob Graham Round - a unique challenge, which originated in 1932 and involves running over 42 fells, spread over 72 miles in the Lake District, in less than 24 hours. Attempted by a 10-man British Army team from MOD Abbeywood, in March,





who despite succumbing to appalling weather conditions and injuries still managed to raise over £26,000.

My Daddy Is A Soldier and My Mummy Is A Soldier - welfare books by author Gerry Waters which are aimed at helping young forces children understand and cope with their parent's deployment. The continuous operational deployment generates regular sales with all profits donated to the fund.



Erach & Roshan Sadri Foundation (ERSF) - made grants totalling £22, 000 for the Bamyan school.

Pink Panthers - of Lashkar Gar a team comprised of 12 female officers from the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, and Army, broke the current World Record for the furthest distance run in 24 hrs by a team of women, raising £2,600.

Windsor School - in Rheindahlen have supported the charity by raising money throughout the past 3 years.

H Hirani - JHQ's 'Curry Guru' continuously cooks up heartwarming curries donating his time and skills to the appeal.

Red Ball Run 2009 - an off road motorcycle ride organised by Dr John Ross paralleled The Red Ball Express of August and September 1944. The 1,000 km route ferried supplies on 6,000 trucks from St Lo and Chartres east to the rapidly advancing Allied front line. John and his riders completed their ride in 3 and ½ days raising over £900 for the AAF.

Update

To date the Afghan Appeal Fund has raised £159, 000 of which £90,000 has been allocated to the latest school venture. If you would like to organise a fundraising event or get involved with the appeal click on www.afghanappealfund.org or donate at www.justgiving.com/afghanappealfund

More news on the AAF's latest fund raiser - JHQ Monopoly on the next page.