

**General van den Heuvel, LtCol Klein Schaarsberg, distinguished visitors and guests, men and women of the 42d Battle Group, War Eagles,**

**Nearly 346 years ago, our ancestors gathered under similar circumstances on the isle of Manhattan, to transfer New Amsterdam from Dutch to British control. Taking a bit of license with the example and noting our ultimate independence from the British one hundred or so years later, it was really a transfer of New York from Dutch to American.**

**On that September day in 1664, there was likely no one in attendance who believed that patch of farmland bordering the Hudson River would grow to be one of the world's greatest cities. Today as we gather along the banks of the Tiri Rud, I can't tell you what Uruzgan Province will look like in 300 years, but I can tell you the work of the 42d Battle Group over the past four months, and by many of its members over the past four years, has made substantial and ever-**

**present change in the Province. From schools to security, the men and women of the Battle Group have given of their time, talent, and treasure to make this a better place. They can return home to Holland with great pride for their accomplishments. The citizens of the Netherlands are rightfully proud and appreciative of their efforts and their accomplishments.**

**We are particularly thankful to the men and women of the Battle Group for their unending assistance throughout the Handover/Takeover. We have sweat together and fortunately not bled together over the past month. The lessons you passed and the advice you provided has set us on the right path from the beginning. We are hopeful we can depart next summer with the same level of accomplishment with which you depart today.**

**To the men and women of the War Eagles, I simply say stay alert and be vigilant. Our work is with and for the people of Afghanistan, but there are those**

**who will attempt to sever that connection. We must greet the former with a smile and a hand shake and the latter with the tip of our sword. I have great confidence in our ability to do just that.**

**What a fine day to be a Soldier...and that much better to be a War Eagle.**