



Task Force 2-5 "Bobcats"

Newsletter



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Aloha from Ghazni, Afghanistan! Task Force Bobcat is firmly in control of our assigned Area of Operations (AO). We are currently spread across three locations in Afghanistan. Approximately 38 personnel control our rear command post (CP) at Bagram. Those Soldiers, NCOs, and Officers are the lifeline for our logistical support to the forward elements in Kabul and Ghazni. Charlie Company, Cobras, have a platoon conducting Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan (CFC-A) security missions in Kabul. Their mission is wide-ranging and extremely important in the Afghan



Capitol. In addition to CFC-A Headquarters security, this platoon interfaces with a variety of international forces assigned to the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) as well as a number of foreign embassies. The bulk of Task Force Bobcat is operating in and around Ghazni City and the sub-districts that make up Ghazni Province. Missions in Ghazni vary from Mobile Vehicle Checkpoints (MVCPs), Forward Operating Base (FOB) security, Route and Area Security, Reconnaissance Patrols of areas and villages, weapons/munitions cache seizure, recovery and destruction, Humanitarian/Medical Assistance, and Cordon / Search – Anti-Coalition Militia (ACM) detention operations.

Recently we had a Soldier wounded in a mine strike while on a combat patrol. As a result of the mine strike that Soldier lost a portion of his right leg below the knee. As the lead vehicle driver for his patrol, CPL De Leon set the example for his fellow Soldiers and was a key member of the Bushmaster Team. Unfortunately, CPL Jorge De Leon's vehicle struck an Anti-Tank Mine placed beneath the surface of the road. Fellow members of the patrol immediately secured the area and began medical treatment for those injured by the explosion. Jorge was quickly treated, stabilized, and evacuated by Medevac Helicopter to Salerno Firebase where he received more extensive treatment. He was then shipped to Bagram Air Field (BAF). At Bagram Air Field, CSM Frank Leota, 6th Marine Regiment, and 25th ID Leadership awarded CPL De Leon the Purple Heart and Combat Infantryman's Badge. CPL De Leon has since been evacuated to Landstuhl, and finally to Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, DC for rehabilitation and recovery.

All Soldiers in Task Force Bobcat are working hard, 7 days a week, and untold hours per day. Be proud of them. I am confident in their abilities, their determination, their dedication, their courage, and their character. We will succeed in our assigned missions in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) – Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). TF Bobcat IS making a real difference every day in Afghanistan and in our security at home.

I would also like to thank each of you all for your support and encouragement. You are a great strength to everyone here, and we deeply appreciate all you do on our behalf. God bless.

***Aloha and Ahui Hou!,
Bobcat 6/Bobcat 7***



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Viper Base

I hope all is well at home. Your Soldiers are doing a fine job here in Ghazni. The company completed its transition with JHC/2-87 IN BN, 10th MTN DIV and is in complete control of the mission. As part of the bigger picture, we are assigned the responsibility of assisting the Afghan people to establish a legitimate government and ensure that terrorists cannot use Afghanistan as a safe haven ever again. I know you all miss your husbands very much, but the mission we were ordered to do is very important for Afghanistan and the United States of America. Remember that in 1776, the United States had help from other countries in order to establish itself as a fledgling country.



As you all are aware of, JHC/2-5 IN BN supports all three-line companies and whatever missions the battalion commander dictates. Right now some of your husbands are working for the line company commanders. The rest of the company is spread out between Bagram Air Field and Ghazni supporting the needs of the battalion. Every Soldier is doing his part to ensure the line companies and the battalion headquarters has what it needs to conduct their missions.

I assure you that the Soldiers spirits are high and they understand why we are here. Every Soldier misses his family as much as his family misses them. I ask that all family members be strong for your brothers, husbands, and fathers so that he can concentrate on the mission at hand.

As far as quality of life goes, life is better than we expected. The base camp has showers, shoppette, and I am sure you already know that we have telephones and computers. There are a few quality of life services that are not twentieth century, but they are good enough to meet the needs of the Soldiers. I will let your husbands describe in detail what those services actually are.

Afghanistan is a very poor country. The minimum wage for workers here is \$3 a day. You can imagine what the quality of life for a basic Afghan is like. These people have known war for centuries and now most of them would like to live a peaceful life and raise a family. There is still a minority that refuses to believe the United States is here to help, but we are slowly but surely getting the message out and proving to the people that we are here to help. We are providing some basic services for people who live in the small villages around the area: wells, school supplies, school repair, soccer fields, etc... The important thing is that we are making a difference in the lives of the people in our area.

Well that is all for now. The battalion is working on publishing this newsletter twice a month. I will keep you informed as much as I can. Lastly, I would like to thank all the wives for their support and hard work. Remember that we could not do our job without the love and support of our families!

*Sincerely,
Viper 6/Viper 7*



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Quick Strike Base

Team A is off to a good start. After a few short days at Bagram Air Field, we flew down to our new home in Ghazni Province, a two-football field size adobe walled compound, with all the amenities of home. We have showers (from a black bag with holes in it), running water (from a poured bottle), and electricity (when the generator is working). A Company along with our newest additions, a Battalion Mortar Section, Engineers, a Fire Support Element, a Battalion Mess Section, and the Battalion Scout Platoon (- Snipers) is adapting well to our new surroundings. In just three weeks, we have conducted over sixty missions to help improve the security within the Ghazni Province and the living conditions of the Afghan people. We have met with the town elder, for more than seven different villages, to discuss the needs of their community. Based on these discussions and our assessment of the village, we coordinated with internal and external agencies to address their concerns. Requests vary from building a well, to providing school supplies, to treating sick villagers and livestock. It is amazing to see that despite the vast disparities of our cultures, basic human needs remain constant and a smile is universal. We are gaining the trust of each villager as we help rebuild their community through providing humanitarian assistance and security. Again, I want to thank the A Company wives and families for your service to our country and this cause – having the opportunity to see it first hand I can assure you that our mission is worthwhile. When we drive through the impoverished towns along unimproved roads, children run from their houses to greet us with a thumbs-up and a broken English "thank you". The Soldiers of Tm A are in good spirits and are performing beyond my expectations. We appreciated hearing from everyone and are anxiously awaiting our second mail shipment.

I would like to thank all the wives for their support and hard work. Remember that we could not do our job without the love and support of our families! May God bless you and keep you safe until we return.



SGT Sanders & SPC Jeffrey taking a breather at 9600 feet

Sincerely,
Quickstrike 6/Quickstrike 7



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Bushmaster Base

I hope this finds you all in good spirits! We have been very busy for the past three weeks and there are no signs of our tempo slowing down. First off I wish to extend my sympathy to CPL De Leon's wife and family. To have that happen to one of our Soldiers in the first two weeks we were here was a blow to all of us. We have been getting almost daily updates on his condition and are told he is in good spirits. By the time you read this, he should be with his wife at Walter Reed hospital. The Soldiers of the company took it upon themselves to build a sign and name our maintenance tent in CPL De Leon name. Also, the members of 2nd Platoon were proud to be able to act on information given to us and we caught the individual along with four others who were responsible for placing the mine in the road. For CPL De Leon, our thoughts and prayers go out to him and his family.

Since we have been here, we have conducted over 65 patrols ranging from Village Assessments, Vehicle Check Points, MEDCAPs, to Raids, and Cordon and Search missions. (See LT. Pearson to help with what these missions are) When we conduct the village assessments, we enter the villages in our area and talk with the villagers and the village leader to find out what needs they have that we can help them with. Most of the time they ask for school supplies, a new well for water, and medical supplies. We help them out as much as we can, but we do not have a lot of the above-mentioned items to pass out to all to the different villages. If you feel inclined to help out, when you send care packages to your loved ones, you can include packs of pen and pencils; it will help us provide more assistance to the schools in our area. Many times when we go into the villages in order to we get them to tell us where the bad guys are, or, have them turn in the locations of stockpiles of munitions and weapons. The Soldiers of 1st platoon already had the enjoyment of hiking up some very steep and rough terrain to recover and destroy a cache of munitions that a local villager told us about. For most of the Soldiers, being over here is already a huge eye opener. The poverty level in the country is like no other most have seen, yet they go on living and doing the best they can with what they have for themselves and their families. I will wrap this letter up and I hope all is going well for everyone in Hawaii and/or the mainland. I have heard nothing but positive things about how the company FRG is working together to help CPL De Leon and his family, and working to support each other. Anything we can do to help, let me know. Also, let it be known, that all of your husbands and boyfriends are doing an outstanding job in a harsh environment and tough conditions. They make me proud to be able to serve with them. All of you, and our country should be proud of them as well.



A View of our Base Camp from a hill over looking the town we live in, Qal-a-Jaws. Picture from SSG Hessler

*Sincerely,
Bushmaster 6/ Bushmaster 7*



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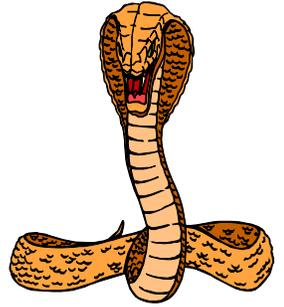


Cobra Base

100% of Charlie Company Cobras landed on the ground on May 8th, 2004. Since some of the 10th Mountain was still here we took the opportunity to conduct area familiarization with them. The very next day 10th Mountain took our Soldiers around the Ghazni area. We saw some of the roads we frequently travel on and towns we will visit while we are here. Since then, TF 2-5 has assumed the reigns of the mission and we are doing a great job. On a day-to-day basis we assess towns to see what type of humanitarian aide they might need. Some ask for something as large as a school and others ask for something as vital as a well for water. Our task is to accommodate as many towns as possible. This is a very important and huge task to accomplish. The US Army has a very strict budget and all the towns need something.

Perhaps the most notable difference worth mentioning is the huge culture shock. The Afghan people live a very impoverished lifestyle. They get the most out of everything; nothing is wasted or thrown away. Moreover, Afghans love to drive these very tall flatbed trucks complete with a large open-air cage around the back. They resemble large cattle trucks. Not only do they love to drive these behemoths, they must absolutely love to decorate them with everything and anything they can get a hold of. The Afghans love flair. These so-called "Jingle trucks" are decked out with multi-colored lights, beads that hang down almost to the ground, and wrought iron depictions of butterflies, elephants, or camels. Lights are affixed to the interior and covered with colored glass, which leads to an eerie glow of red, green, or blue being cast throughout the entire cab. Jingle trucks are a veritable oasis of color in a country dominated by the muted shades of adobe brown. They are the essence of flair and also something that seems uniquely Afghan.

As far as our living conditions, we are pleased to say the consensus in our FOB (Forward Operating Base) is accommodating for the most particular of infantrymen. Believe it or not your sons and husbands living conditions rival some of the homes and apartments they lived at back in Hawaii. Even though Cobra Base may not be Best Western, I still can testify that we have it pretty good around here. For example, everyone has their own cot, and not a roof, but a tent over their head. The kitchen is more than capable of serving food that rivals some of the cafeterias and chow halls on any army base. Furthermore, the battalion has provided an MWR tent that is filled with DVD players, games, TVs, books and magazines. There is also a small outdoor weight room, a volleyball court and a 50 yard football field encompassed by a small track so don't be surprised if we come back bigger, faster, and stronger!



Cobra Birthdays in May:

SGT Coan 5 May
SPC Fernandez 9 May
SGT Kost 10 May
PFC Lehman 11 May
SPC Reed 14 May
PFC Hotz 19 May
SPC Biggs 21 May
PV2 Blalock 22 May
SSG Esafe 27 May
PFC Johnson 29 May
PFC Cook 30 May

Recommended Cobra Promotions in June:

CPL Hultman
PFC Bonovich

Baby Cobras expecting:

SSG Rodrigues
PFC Quasada

From the Commander:

Cobra wives, I wanted to say that I know the separation of families and love ones is a difficult one to accept, but it is a necessity to complete the mission at hand. Keep your heads up and we will be home before you know it.

If you have any questions or concerns, please bring them up through the Chain of Concern. I am confident we can help. If you have ideas, please share them as well. We look forward to seeing you again.

Sincerely,
Cobra 6/Cobra 7



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WarDog Base

We arrived in Ghazni via Chinook Helicopters on 06 May after a very successful airlift of all six howitzers and all of the battery personnel. After arriving, we moved into our tents and started pulling guard duty for the TF HQ compound! What a way to get started!

After the remainder of the main body got here, we started a major construction effort, with the battery constructing our living tents and building two howitzer firing positions. A few weeks and 100,000 sandbags later, we're almost done.

The Soldiers rotate between guard duty, crew drill training, and "Howitzer Quick Reaction Force" every few days. We recently sent two howitzer sections, led by SSG Wasilewski and SSG Vargas, the FDC, led by 1LT Jesus and SSG Lambert, and the Battery HQ, led by SSG Phillips, out on an extended patrol to provide artillery fires for an infantry company. Everyone learned a lot—to include just how bad dust storms in Afghanistan can get—and performed superbly. Everyone is motivated and ready to perform whatever mission is handed to them, day or night!

I'd like to congratulate Amanda and SPC Wyman on the birth of their fourth child, Tyler Damien Wyman. The youngest of the Wyman clan (he is #4) came into the world at a whopping 8.6 lbs, and misses his Dad already. Additionally, congratulations go out to the soon-to-be promoted (01 June) SSG Bostic, our chemical and 'catch all' NCO.

Sadly, 1SG Ashley left the battery for Bagram Air Field on 18 May. Likely, he will head to Landstuhl, Germany and then to Walter Reed Medical Center for some testing and likely surgery for a long-standing injury that only got worse in country. He will be greatly missed by both the Soldiers and family members of the Battery, and I'd like to thank him for all he has done for the Wardogs for nearly the past two years.

I hope this finds everyone doing well. If you have any questions, please contact the Battery FRG leader, Carly Lemler.

Sincerely,
Wardog 6/Wardog 7

Task Force Fire Support Element

We have been diligently working on settling in and adapting to our new surroundings. Ghazni was our last stop on a long and strange journey. We traveled for what seemed like a week to arrive at our new home. Each stop we made seemed more alien to us than the last.

We are currently training hard to maintain our readiness. We have been afforded all the luxuries we could ask for. There are large-scale outdoor recreation facilities (Mountains), there are first class hydro spas (ice cold showers), and of course we have our world famous five star dining facilities (chow hall). Actually we are quite comfortable living here and are lucky to be able to experience some of the world's best scenery.

We are making a difference in the lives of many people. There are wells being built and schools popping up everywhere. Your husbands and friends are securing this country and giving these people something they have never had... hope. Make no mistake this mission is no cakewalk, but it is something you and your husbands can hold your heads high and say, "I did that."

Lastly, you would be happy to know your husbands are currently learning to do laundry the old fashioned way. They are using the bucket and scrub method. I hear it is the latest thing in Afghanistan. We look forward to seeing you all soon. God Bless.

Sincerely,
FSE





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Task Force Engineers" GET 'R' DUNN"

2nd Platoon, C Company, Sappers have hit the ground running in Afghanistan. Since the 6th of May, your Soldiers have been working hard to bring security to the country. As engineers, we have been called upon to execute a wide variety of missions. Some have been very familiar to us, and others, we are quickly learning.

The main base camp has ten telephones and ten computers that are open 21 hours a day. The Soldiers that are out in the company base camps make frequent trips to the main camp where they have priority in using these means of communication. Please let your FRG point of contact know if you haven't heard from your spouse since they arrived in country. SFC Dockery and I will make every effort to ensure that spouses are being contacted at least once every two weeks. Understand, however, that your Soldiers are extremely busy and may not be able to contact you as much as all of us would prefer.

Be assured that your loved ones are safe and in high spirits. The food is good, the living conditions are bearable, and above all, we are making a difference for the people of Afghanistan. While we may not have an answer for all your questions, do not hesitate to send your concerns through the FRG channels. We miss you all very much and look forward to returning home soon.

*Sincerely,
Castle 26*

Task Force ADA

Aloha from the members of 1st Platoon, Alpha Battery, 1-62 ADA. This marks the two-week mark of our deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. So far everyone has adjusted to the environment very well, especially now since we have the TV and Playstation 2 up and running. Right now we are still in the process of settling down in our area and slowly making improvements to our living area to make our experience here more tolerable. We finally have the whole tent to ourselves and are able to spread out and be a little more comfortable.

To recap the last couple of weeks, the flight over here was approximately 30 hours, with 5 stops before reaching our final destination one week after we departed Schofield Barracks. The Headquarters Base here at Ghazni is not as bad as we suspected. We have large tent for the platoon where we have a decent amount of living space and just recently set up an entertainment area where we enjoy movies and video games. We'll have an office space set up in the near future. We have shower facilities where we are allowed two showers a week; these can be taken on Tuesday, Thursday, or Saturday. I won't explain our toilet situation, but the good news is we are one week away from having a building where at least we'll have some privacy. The dining facility is decent and food isn't half bad. The best part, we believe, is the MWR building where we have access to ten computers and ten telephones, all of which are free and can be used throughout the day. For PT we have a dirt trail that goes around the base and a gym that has a few weights and machines. Know that everyone here sends their prayers and love for their respective loved one at home and we ask that you do the same for us.



*Sincerely,
Old School 10*

Task Force MI

The Soldiers of C Co. 125th MI BN arrived in Ghazni and are doing well. They are eager to support TF Bobcat in its mission. The phones and internet have been our escape to our families, and day-by-day we see key improvements to our base camp, making life more comfortable here. The Soldiers want to thank everyone at home for all their support during this deployment. ALOHA.

*Sincerely,
Panther 22*