



Task Force 2-5 Bobcats' Newsletter



Task Force Bobcat,

Aloha from Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan! The picture below was taken on 10 Feb 05 during a meeting of Task Force Bobcat and Provincial Leadership to discuss progress and future operations/initiatives across Uruzgan. Following the meeting, we treated the Provincial Leadership to an Afghan lunch of goat, chicken, rice, fried potatoes, and assorted vegetables and local fruits – Delicious! The meeting of the collective leaders was part of the last Task Force Commander's Conference. The conference was conducted at FOB Ripley and discussed our past successes and what is required over the next three months to a.) Continue our operational success, b.) Set the conditions for provincial elections scheduled for spring, c.) Receive and conduct relief in place operations with 2-504 PIR, and finally d.) Plan, resource and synchronize our redeployment to Schofield Barracks. We accomplished a lot in two days time.



From Left: CPT Gyles Gregory, CPT Chris Owen, CPT Josh Bookout, Governor Jan Mohammed Khan, LTC Terry Sellers, Hajji Aziz Khan, Police Chief Rozi Khan, Commander Mateiullah, CPT Andy Brosnan, Bazaar manager, CPT Shawn Kelly (Civil Affairs)

Despite climactic challenges with weather and terrain, the Bobcats are thriving and accomplishing assigned tasks to a very high standard. Leaders at every level are staying focused on the immediate mission while conducting future planning. The shortest route back to you remains staying focused on the mission here. Your continued patience and support is a key ingredient to our success.

MG Olson, 25th ID Commander and Commander, CJTF-76 visited all of the TF Bobcat Soldiers yesterday and spoke to TF Bobcat about our collective success and conducted re-enlistments at every FOB. MG Olson also promoted SSG (P) Arroyo to SFC at FOB Cobra. It was a great day to host the Division Commander and Sergeant Major with the Soldiers at every FOB. Our Soldiers know that the nation needs them now more than ever and they are stepping up and demonstrating their selfless commitment to that call. Congratulations to all those that have so willingly answered the call!





Task Force 2-5 Bobcats' Newsletter



Updates from our **Six** outposts: The Rear CP in **Kandahar** continues to receive and push forward critical life support and now is knee deep in resourcing 2-504 reception and TF Bobcat Redeployment. Due to weather complications two platoons of A Co are in the Afghan Capitol conducting the CFC-A QRF and Security mission. We completed the final platoon rotation with C Co in **Dey Rawoud**. They will work with 7th Group SOF and Afghan National Army Forces. Team Cobra, now joined by an ODA Team, continues to develop **Cehar Cineh** and **Osay**. Team Quick Strike remains knee deep in snow in **Khas Uruzgan and Chora**. Team Bushmaster (Battle) is operating from FOB Ripley in **Tarin Kowt and Nesh**.



CPT Goflich and Deb have the initial information regarding redeployment for the Task Force. As issues develop, continue to use the systems that have served us so well over the past several months. Reach out to the entire Bobcat Ohana and ensure that accurate rosters and information dissemination channels remain open and accurate. In this manner we will be able to rapidly share new developments and assist those that need it. Most of all, Maintain your focus! There is a lot of work yet to accomplish as we continue operations here across Uruzgan. Please continue your work to support the Bobcat Ohana on Oahu, the Main Land, and here in Afghanistan. Your thoughtfulness and sacrifice has made the time pass more quickly and made our separation much more bearable. Our thoughts and prayers remain with each of you during this time. Much Mahalo!

Remember the sacrifice of our Brother Bobcats. Keep them and their families in your thoughts and prayers. SSG Brian Hobbs, CPL Kyle Fernandez, CPL Dale Fracker, CPL Jacob Fleischer; all fine young men worthy of our praise and remembrance. Likewise, please do not forget all of our wounded comrades ... CPL Jorge DeLeon, 1LT Drew Sloan, SPC Jeffery Guerin, SPC Joey Banegas, SFC "IZ" Izquierdo, and SGT Zach Parinello. We wish them strength and courage as they continue to recover and rehabilitate from their respective injuries. As we contemplate their outstanding contributions to their Brother Bobcats, our Army and the United States of America, we will ensure the completion of the mission they started. We are proud to call them our friends and brothers.

Take strength in the Bobcat Ohana! I deeply appreciate your individual and collective sacrifice. God bless.

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



Task Force 2-5 Bobcats' Newsletter



Viper Base,

Support Platoon

As the temperature drops, operations in the Task Force continue to heat up as part of a winter offensive designed to keep the enemy off balance and prevent it from regrouping during what might otherwise have been slow winter months here. The support platoon is right in the middle of these operations, supporting the companies through regular ring flights and numerous air assault missions. As operations continue afoot, their pace rapid, the platoon wants to take a moment to thank everyone at home for all their support during the holidays and ask that you maintain your focus along with us as we move into the final quarter of the deployment. Thanks again for all you do. We look forward to finishing strong together down the stretch.

Scout Platoon

Hello, I'm Lieutenant Joshua M. Lake in the past month I took over as the Scout Platoon Leader. I previously served with 1/503rd (AASLT) out of Camp Casey, Korea. I was an Anti-tank Platoon Leader there for twelve months. In the past month we went to Chora to assess some of the Humanitarian Aide projects we initiated there. They are almost done constructing the additional rooms for the school. The rooms should be ready by the start of the next school year which begins in March. We also checked on the park. The park is looking quite nice. It will have a great gazebo for outdoor activities. We all miss you very much, and look forward to seeing you soon.



AT Platoon

This winter season has been hot trotting in cold weather for the AT Platoon. Heading up vehicle patrols has kept our hands full, at least, when the sun has allowed. If anyone ever says it doesn't rain much in Afghanistan, they're wrong. Winter is a sort of monsoon season here. Maybe that's exaggerating the situation a little, but not by much. Soggy roads in early January kept us at bay and gave us more down time than usual. But eventually, blue skies prevailed, the ground dried up, and we were back in business. We even welcomed two new outstanding Soldiers to the platoon (SPC Serafini and PFC Gholz). This past month has presented some very exciting opportunities and rewarding missions. Recently, we partook in the first joint TF and Special Forces operation out of Cobra Base. It was a great success. Furthermore, our constant efforts through presence patrols and counter-reconnaissance have brought a great deal more security and stability to our region. The recent cooperation we have received from the Afghan Militia Force and the local officials has been both a valuable asset and a sure sign that what we're doing here is working. The people are really starting to take an active roll in changing this country for the better. Viewing AO Cobra as a snapshot of the whole OEF effort gives us a very encouraging picture. If Afghanistan is changing out here, it won't be long before peace and the seeds of prosperity blossom throughout this new democracy. Meanwhile, your Soldiers' spirits remain high. All of us are focused on finishing our job here, and looking forward to returning home, proud of all we've accomplished. Yet, without the wonderful support of our families back home as well as Americans across the nation (from whom we receive hundreds of letters and care packages a month) we would be hard pressed to fulfill our duties with so much pride and determination. Mahalo. We send our love.



The entire company continues to support every aspect of the Task Force's missions. Your husbands and loved ones are doing an outstanding job. The 1SG and I would like to thank all the family members of our VIPER Soldiers. It will not be long and we will be preparing to come home. Please keep your support coming.

Sincerely,
Viper 6/Viper 7



Task Force 2-5 Bobcats' Newsletter



Quickstrike Base,

The New Year has brought with it several new faces into A Company. I would like to welcome our new First Sergeant Ifrain Zavala and his wife Dalia into the Quick Strike family. 1LT Blake Schwartz and his wife Alyssa also joined us at the end of November. Blake is the new 3rd Platoon Leader. SPC Adams and his wife Kara joined 2nd Platoon in early January. With new faces we unfortunately must say goodbye to those who have left us. Thank you Vicky and Bill Forro for all that you have done for this company. For three years you have selflessly served the Soldiers and families of A Company. We truly appreciate it and we wish you the best of luck in the future. We will miss you. Bill has now taken over as the 2-5 IN, HHC 1SG.

The new year also brought with it new weather. Since I returned from leave on the 21st of December it has snowed almost constantly. It is definitely beautiful but it has slowed our operational pace considerably, as the roads are very difficult to travel. Despite the weather, we managed to execute a mission to the Chora district in which we followed up on a village park and elementary school addition project that the Scouts initiated, trained the Chora Police force, and distributed several radios, blankets and snow shovels to help celebrate the Muslim holiday Eid.

The slowing pace means more time inside the wire, but we are staying busy with training events and leadership development classes. We have made big strides on the Khas Uruzgun sports league. Over 500 people have now visited the web site (www.freewebs.com/kusports) and pledged their support. We look forward to the spring weather when we can use the donated equipment to practice with the kids. At the end of this month, 2nd Platoon will replace 1st Platoon in Kabul. The guys in second platoon look forward to the change of pace. Our mission in Kabul is a fairly relaxing six week guard cycle in which Soldiers get some well deserved down time.

The men of 1st Platoon will be surprised and pleased with the progress that we have made at the FOB. When they return, we will have hot showers, a laundry facility, gym, internet with web cams, satellite television, and all the comforts of home – except of course the most important, you. But believe it or not, we are already beginning to plan for our redeployment. Stay safe and God Bless you until we return. - Andy and Ifrain



Sincerely,
Quickstrike 6/Quickstrike 7



Task Force 2-5 Bobcats' Newsletter



Battle Base,

Aloha friends and family of B Company, 2-5 Infantry. We hope you've all celebrated the New Year with all the customary jazz associated with the holiday. The weather has been a tad bit nippy, to say the least. Nonetheless, Battle Company plows ahead and conducted numerous missions throughout the month of January. An important mission that was recently conducted was a wheat seed distribution in the district of Nesh. 183 bags of wheat seed were dropped off in Nesh with the intent to encourage local farmers to grow wheat rather than opium. Wheat seed distribution is a small, but critical step towards making a dent in Afghanistan's drug trade.



At this very moment, the Afghans are celebrating the holiday of Eid Qurban--our equivalent of Christmas. Lasting for several days, depending on the moon cycle, Eid Qurban is an important holiday for Afghanistan. In an effort to maintain a U.S. presence in the area and promote inter-cultural awareness, Battle Company has been sending out several patrols into the neighboring villages. It is quite a warming sight to see young Afghani children, boys and girls alike, waving at U.S. troops during missions. Among these young children are the leaders of Afghanistan for generations to come; that they are receptive of coalition forces bodes well for the future of Afghanistan.



As we near the end of a long deployment, the men are anxious and in high spirits. Everyone is looking forward to returning home to love ones, but we still have a mission to carry out here in Afghanistan. The operation tempo of Battle Company has not waned in the least, and it looks like February will be a busy month. This is fine with the troops, as time tends to fly when they are busy.

The days of sweltering heat and sandstorms have vanished, making room for days of cold winds and snow. It has been a remarkable transformation, and it has left an impression on the troops here at FOB Ripley. Change is inevitable, and Afghanistan herself has been no exception. Every day, we ask ourselves, "Are we making a difference here?" We all know, however, that the answer to this question cannot be given in the immediate future. Indeed, the consequences of our actions here will be seen not by us, but by our children. Nevertheless, we continue to do our jobs to the best of our abilities knowing that we are at the very least giving Afghanistan something common to every culture: respect.



Sincerely,
Battle 6/ Battle 7



Task Force 2-5 Bobcats' Newsletter



Cobra Base,

Hello again, family and friends! This has been an excellent month for Team Cobra. Cobra Base continues to make leaps and bounds in its accommodations. We now have a gym which rivals any health club. We received weight benches and many other pieces of fitness equipment. It certainly is helping us all get even more physically fit for our ever-closer return trip home. We also have four showers in operation. And they have hot water! For some, this will be the first hot shower in the five months we've been out here. We have also installed 3 new washer and dryers. It sure beats washing clothes in a bucket! There was a slight mishap this month, however, when a large 15 foot by 20 foot portion of one of our compounds' mud walls eroded to the point where it fell over with a loud, wet "thud"! It fell due to five days of cold, torrential downpours that turned our little dust bowl into a mud pit. You know what they say, if it's not one extreme, it's the other!

This month, 1st, 3rd, and Headquarters Platoons have been conducting multiple extended missions around our Area of Operation. We have brought medical assistance to many of our surrounding villages. The Police Force in our local town of Cehar Cineh has been provided uniforms, radios, and vehicles. We are helping to train them in order for them to better protect their own people. We have assessed many new Civil Affairs projects that we will fund in order to raise the quality of life for the Afghan people. There are multiple drinking wells and irrigation ditches being dug, a large school being built, and even a soccer field in the town directly outside Cobra Base. The members of 2nd Platoon continue to operate successfully from the De Rawoud region and are certainly making an impact there as well.

As each day passes here in Afghanistan, we count down the days until we return to our loved ones and much-missed island life. That day is fast approaching and we are beginning the lengthy and arduous process of packing up and coming home. We will certainly be leaving our replacements a base camp that is undoubtedly better than when we arrived. We will also leave them with an Area of Operations that is much healthier, prosperous, and, most of all, safer for both the Afghan people and Coalition Forces.

We miss you all more than any one letter or phone call can convey, and we can barely wait for the moment we step from the plane into the embrace of our loved ones and our beloved island.

God Bless You All and The United States Of America!

Sincerely,
Cobra 6/Cobra 7





Task Force 2-5 Bobcats' Newsletter



WarDog Base,

The Wardogs at TK kicked off the New Year Eve by firing two illumination rounds and continued the celebrations in the morning with a Barbecue courtesy of SGT Konken, PFC Hernandez and PFC Wright. SGT Dang, PFC Himes and our medic, Doc Warren received Army Commendation Medals from Bobcat 6, LTC Sellers, for their actions during Operation Asbury Park in the summer. SPC Gibbs and SPC Murphy joined the ranks of the Non Commissioned Officers when they were promoted to Sergeant. Also two Soldiers, PVT Suzuki and PVT Williams, were promoted to the rank of Private First Class. We rounded out the first week by conducting a Heavy Weapons range on the 4th.

Steel 6, LTC Neason, commander of 3-7 FA, paid Tarin Kowt a visit on 8 Jan. The Battery Executive Officer (XO), 1LT Jesus, and the Chief of Firing Battery, SFC (Smoke) Brown, both received the Army Commendation Medal (ARCOM) for their combat actions at Salerno FOB, while SPC Wyman, the Wardog Mechanic, received an ARCOM for his actions during Operation Asbury Park as well. Steel 6 also presented the Army Chief of Staff's Coin of Excellence to SGT Konken, our Senior Cook, for his outstanding support of the Wardog Battery. The Battery conducted a Soldier and NCO of the Month Board, which was won by SGT Schuerger, PFC Suzuki and SPC Huynh. For their efforts they were granted a 4-day pass to Qatar, which they will go to in February.

The Battery continued to make improvements at the Firing Point and the Gym at FOB Ripley during January. On 16 Jan we conducted a night fire range. Muslims began celebrating Eid Al-Adha holiday and concluded with none of the gunfire with which they celebrated Ramadan. On the 23rd of Jan, the Battery fired 20 rounds of High Explosive to calibrate our howitzers. A few of the Soldiers were able to accompany the Forward Observers as they spotted the rounds. The following day we received 4 inches of snow that resulted in some minor snowball skirmishes and the building of a few snow man.

On the following day, 3rd Howitzer Section (SSG KT) along with some FDC and HQ personnel accompanied B Co, 2-5 IN on a combat patrol to the Nesh district. The worst enemy we encountered on this mission was the mud as it caked up on the howitzer. The 1SG accompanied some B Co personnel as they distributed 80 lb bags of wheat seed to local farming villages to give them an alternate crop to grow instead of opium poppies. It was evident that the locals were very grateful for our contributions.

Snow fell again on the 26th and some personnel from the Battery conducted a Video Tele Conference with family members the following day. We are beginning to see some light at the end of the tunnel as units from Iraq begin their movements back to Schofield Barracks and begin to make plans for our return movement. We thank you for your continued support and all of our Soldiers are looking forward to reuniting with our families in a couple of months.

Sincerely,
Wardog 6/Wardog 7





Task Force 2-5 Bobcats' Newsletter



Task Force Fire Support Element,

January marked a significant milestone in our deployment. We entered the New Year with even more enthusiasm than we left the last year with. We appreciate the outstanding support we continue to receive while we maintain our focus on the mission at hand. We have had numerous successes in the past month in which Fire Supporters have been directly involved.

Here are only a few: In part due to the hard work of the men of Cobra, a reported Taliban member turned himself in to Coalition Forces and through the "Allegiance Program" he has sworn to become a contributing member of society, the first person to enter this program in all of Afghanistan. Battle's Fire Supporters traveled with the company to the southern area of our province to distribute wheat seed to local farmers to replace the poppies they had planned on growing. The farmers and local people were ecstatic to have an opportunity to leave the drug business. Quickstrike's men have been hard at work developing their area while fighting the weather; there are no snow days in Khas Uruzgan.

Sincerely,
FSE

Task Force Engineers "GET 'R DUNN",

The changing of the year was not as exciting as we would have normally experienced, but the increased rainfall and snowfall set the tone for the beginning of 2005. 1st Squad has definitely had to deal with the snowfall, which has made it difficult to maneuver through the mountains of Khas Oruzgan. However, they continue to drive on with the support of care packages and winter issued boots. Instead of snow, 2nd Squad has had to deal with mud and is becoming very efficient at getting stuck and unstuck. When not out playing in the mud, 2nd Squad has been busy building stairs and latrines. 3rd Squad finally got the showers and laundry working in their FOB and are now "living like kings," as one Sapper pointed out. When not hanging out in the KBR hooch, Headquarters worked diligently on building the Task Force's FOB near Tarin Kowt. SPC McFarland continued to work at the Task Force Aid Station helping out the Forward Surgical Team (FST) and was praised by the FST surgeon as being "the best assistant that I have ever had." The New Year has already started off great with our Sappers driving on through rough weather and completing the mission, which couldn't be possible without your love, support, and patience!



Sincerely,
Castle 26/ Castle 27

Task Force ADA,

Aloha to the friends and family of 1st Platoon, A/1-62 ADA. Quality of life is slowly but steadily improving. The guard towers have installed pot belly stoves to keep their sleeping area warm. It requires a lot of maintenance but at least you are not freezing at night. Everybody has been sleeping on cots until now. Beds arrived and replaced the cots. Also, work has been started on building a new gym with state of the art equipment. It should be done in a few weeks. This will be a high morale booster since that is the only thing to do around here for most Soldiers.

Congratulations to SPC Thornton on being the first and only Soldier in 1st platoon, A/1-62 ADA to reenlist. He reenlisted 02 JAN 05 for 6 years. I hope everyone has enjoyed the holidays. We ate a very healthy Christmas dinner that had more food than we could eat. That was a real treat. We are getting close to coming home so we are starting to get prepared on our end. We all hope everyone is doing well and we will see you all soon.

Sincerely,
Old School 6/ Old School 7