



Task Force 2-5 "Bobcats" Newsletter



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Aloha from Tarin Kowt, Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan! Today, 9 Oct 04, is Afghan National Election Day. Right now, six hours into polling, things are going fairly smooth. We are experiencing about the level of activity that we expected. Voter turn-out is large and the Afghan people are taking the first democratic step in their country's long turbulent history. The Bobcats came into Uruzgan and conducted decisive combat operations alongside the 22nd MEU. They immediately followed up with smaller combat operations and operations to secure and stabilize what was essentially the Afghan Wild Wild West. Amazing results! Districts that had not conducted voter registration when we arrived turned in impressive results by the 20 August deadline. Today, registered voters across Uruzgan return to cast their votes at the polling sites in large numbers. Afghans are out because of the secure environment that Bobcats and our Coalition partners have provided. Today is a historic day. Bobcats can be justly proud of their individual and collective roles and contributions.



Updates from our **Six** outposts in "The Stan". The Rear CP in **Kandahar** continues to be our lifeline to the world. Second Platoon, Bushmasters remain in **Kabul** and have responded to numerous incidents recently as tension mounted inside the Afghan Capitol. 3rd Platoon C Co remains in **Dey Rawoud** to work with Special Operations personnel and Afghan National Army Forces. Great work by these Soldiers continues to endear themselves to our SOF partners. Not so much with the Taliban though! The remainder of Cobra is now in **Cehar Cineh** at Firebase Cobra. Cobra base has handled engagements in this area with extreme professionalism. Quickstrike at **Khas Uruzgan** continues to occupy Firebase Anaconda. Recent patrols netted success with two Taliban KIA and two WIAs that managed to escape capture. Patience pays off along with effective counter reconnaissance patrols. The Bushmasters continue to operate out of FOB Ripley in **Tarin Kowt**. Bushmasters have established successful relations with the Tarin Kowt AMF Commanders as well as with the District Chief and security forces in the Nesh District. Their operations are directly responsible for the destruction of several IEDs in Nesh and for security during polling set-up and execution.

This has been a long month with many difficult tasks. Afghanistan remains a dangerous place but there is improvement on a daily basis thanks to the efforts of the Bobcats! Effective training, good leadership, and individual discipline continue to enhance our success. No one is attempting to be a hero. We are simply addressing the challenges of a developing Afghanistan one challenge at a time. I remain confident in our Soldier's abilities. One and all Great Americans! We **WILL** succeed in our assigned missions in the Global War on Terrorism – Operation Enduring Freedom. TF Bobcat **IS** making a real difference every day here in Afghanistan and in our security at home.

We are approximately half way through the battalion for Soldier's mid-tour leave. Keep the faith. If your loved one has not been back yet, they are scheduled and will make it out for leave. I want to thank each of you all for your support and encouragement here and at home. We have had some difficult situations arise across the battalion and you have done a great job in helping the affected Soldiers and families. You are a great strength to each other and 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

Time has been flying by in Afghanistan. We have made tons of improvements to the all the HHC Soldiers' living areas. When we think about how quickly we have gone from sleeping in one man tents on the dusty ground to our air conditioned large tents; it seems like yesterday. I guess time is truly relative. We just received the Armed Forces Network (AFN) satellite set up and can now view news and sporting events. But the down side of just getting satellite TV is that most of the Task Force is deployed out to company Firebases and will have to wait to get their hook up. And, the same paradox at Kandahar has occurred here; fewer people means longer working hours and little time for TV. But, if I know a Soldiers way, they'll start forsaking PT to sneak in a little sports center. Especially as we move towards the chilly October mornings.

The S1 and Commo shops really helped put on a special ceremony for the line companies. General Olson flew in to present the Combat Infantry Badge, Combat Medical Badge, and Wartime Service Shoulder Sleeve Insignia (Combat Patch) to all the Task Force Soldiers. SSG Pepin, CPL Asuncion, SPC George, and PFC Vachelli were quick to make final preparations on the orders and sound system, and then worked as awards bearers for the Commanding General and Division Command Sergeant Major as they presented the badges to the Soldiers. Due to the Battalion being dispersed over the whole province, a representative group of Soldiers were present for all the Task Force units to receive the 25th Infantry Combat Patch. General Olson was truly moved as he addressed the Bobcats in the remote dust of FOB Ripley. All Soldiers should be proud of this accomplishment. It can only occur through teamwork by the largest team in America. As Soldiers, we are less than one percent of the population defending millions of Americans. The awarding of these badges, and the privilege to wear the 25th Infantry Combat Patch, puts you in an even more elite percentage of Americans. For every job your loved ones do for our team, we are grateful and proud of them. You should be too.



Most recently, the weather has been interesting. If you can relate to winter in the western and northern mainland states; the dust storms have been like snowy brown blizzards. The blinding choking dust has coated everything and made many of us look 20 years older with dusty gray hair. It is like in the movies and it really does get everywhere from your ears to your underwear. Every meal has been a little gritty these past few days. You can definitely expect stories from your Soldier of the storms.

The Lifeline Platoon is still doing a wonderful job here in Afghanistan and really making a noticeable difference. SSG Mendez (Fat Ralph) is taking care of the Soldiers and ensuring they get their jobs done. SGT Burk has taken charge of the treatment team. The Battalion PA, 1LT Moultrie, along with SPC Severin are at Cobra while SSG Garcia, SGT Wittrock, SPC Hahn, and SPC Abitz are at Anaconda. Both teams are providing awesome medical support for their respective areas. SPC Lee, SPC Wistrom, and SPC McBride are holding down the fort with a platoon from C Company. SGT Perez, SGT Davis, SPC Stevenson, and CPL Anger are doing a great job here in Tarin Kowt. We have also welcomed SPC Warren (3-7 FA) and SPC McFarland (65th EN) into the Lifeline family. You should be proud of your Soldiers – they are stepping up and performing!





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Everyone else in Viper is also holding down the fort. With all that is going on, re-enlistment is still going great. Maybe some are due to the tax free bonuses and a trip to Kandahar; but your loved ones are continuing to pledge their commitment of service to Our Country and Defending Our Freedom. No doubt, that it is the wives and family members that truly make a Soldier great. Thanks to everyone for their continued dedication, and support that makes this possible.

**Sincerely,
Viper 6/Viper 7**

Quickstrike Base

"One day closer" – is a slogan written in rocks just under our northern observation post, courtesy of the 22 MEU prior to their departure in June. This captures the general feeling of Tm A as we head into our sixth month of this deployment; almost half way, but not quite. It seems to be the hardest time of the deployment, but we are hanging in there and we thank you for doing the same. Here is a quick update on progress and activity in the Khas Oruzgun and Chora Districts of Afghanistan.

1st platoon has been fortunate enough to have rotated two squads back for leave – seeing their faces upon return, I am thankful that everyone will have this opportunity. Construction has started on the Hosayni Valley School in which 1st platoon Soldiers received a welcoming parade of 500 people as they entered the village last month. SGT Bean was so impressed with the parade he recently reenlisted for 6 years.

2nd platoon (now back in Tarin Kowt guarding FOB Ripley) had an exciting month as well. SFC Price is acting as the Platoon Leader as 1LT John Kalaher has accepted an offer to join 1st Ranger Battalion in Savannah, Georgia. Best of luck John and Courtney, and thanks for your hard work. Despite the mundane assignment of daily guard, the Soldiers of 2nd platoon under the lead of SSG Carlson uncovered one of the larger caches we have found since being deployed. Policing up this ordnance will certainly make for a safer Afghanistan.

3rd platoon has finally joined us in Khas Oruzgun. Arriving in the first week of September, they immediately began patrolling, looking for the culprits of the recent attacks on our Firebase. SSG Ashcraft and his men had success last night in this effort, and under the lead of SFC Miramontez, 3rd platoon, will continue the hunt. SFC Miramontez has stepped up for Joe Wilson who has now assumed the role of C Company XO. Thank you Joe and Kim for your efforts, and we wish you well.

Scouts just returned from a four day mission to Chora where they are making progress in several different arenas. They have plans to build a civic center, refurbish an existing school, and believe it or not, plant grass seed and a flower bed for a park. Under the command of soon to be promoted 1LT Barry Huston and SFC Armendariz, the scouts are doing an excellent job in their new role.

SSG Jones has also joined us from TK acting as the AT section sergeant. Although we are having a few problems with maintenance, he and the men of the AT section have performed admirably on several mounted missions. The mortars, both 81mm and 60mm, have fired more rounds in defense of our Firebase than anyone else. Both with small arms and their mortar tubes, they continue to impress me with their efforts. SSG Scott is currently our main effort as we head into the Afghanistan elections. Working with Mohammad Abraham, the UNAMA representative, he is currently developing a plan to ensure security of the polling sites.

The cooks have found a way to make the same five dinner meals appealing and are working long hours to accommodate the Soldiers coming off patrols. Our medics have seen over 500 Afghan patients and we have just started an initiative to





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provide care at the local clinic every Thursday. The engineers have been the life and blood of the company this past month as they have detonated IEDs, built shelves and picnic benches, improved the maintenance bay, and best of all - built a new grill.

"One day closer." Thanks for the mail and all of your support. God bless you and be safe.

Sincerely,
Quickstrike 6/Quickstrike 7

Bushmaster Base

News from the Commander

First off, I would like to start off by saying that all of us in B Company are happy to hear the news that SGT De Leon is now back in Hawaii with his family. We all thank God that his recovery is moving along and he is continuing to go through his physical therapy at Tripler. His great personal courage and physical strength are with us in every endeavor and he and his family are and will always be with us.

The month of September flew by, and more and more of the company has been able to go home and visit family and friends on R&R. It is such a morale booster for the Soldiers to be able to leave this country and go relax with family and friends at the destination of their choice. The company will continue to send Soldiers home every month until all the company has been able to take their much deserved R&R.

The company has done an outstanding job in the Chora district. So far, they are responsible for assisting with medical supplies for the clinic. They helped to start building a park for the locals, assisted the locals in starting a public clean up plan for the local bazaar, and began the process of digging three wells for areas that were in dire need of assistance with water. All of this, while helping with base camp security here at FOB Ripley and maintaining local patrols in and around Tarin Kowt. Also, this last week, we switched out the platoon in Kabul, so now we have 1st and 3rd platoon here and 2nd in Kabul. It is hard work in Kabul, but the standards of living are much better, and the Soldiers enjoy those "perks".

The company continues to exceed my expectations in all aspects of this deployment. The Soldiers are excited about our new living conditions and even cooking out in their down time. Be proud of your family members that are over here, and understand they are helping to build a safer world by the mission they are undertaking here in Afghanistan.



News from 1st Platoon

Hello again, from the Soldiers of 1st Platoon. We haven't had an update since we left the Ghazni District back in June. Needless to say, we have had numerous missions that all resulted in new and different experiences for us. Most recently, we were able to be part of one of the most fulfilling missions we have yet to partake in, here in Afghanistan. We were lucky to be on the mission to Chora where we were able to see immediate improvements to their living conditions. The ability to walk into a village that has nothing, and leave, knowing that we made a positive, long lasting change in the lives of the children, gave us all a new sense of accomplishment.





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As for the Soldiers, they are doing great! We recently got the generators running, so now we have electricity and air conditioned tents. Our days of living and sleeping in the dirt appear to be well behind us. We stay busy with local patrols and providing base security. We are expecting things to get interesting in the immediate future with the upcoming elections. The Soldiers are excited to be in a country that will know its *first* presidential election in its' long history. The elections will prove to be a memorable moment in time for so many Afghan people, and we are honored and ready to provide the very security and opportunity to make this possible. Be proud of your Soldiers because their service here will be remembered throughout history. We wish all our family members and supporters the best of health. We will continue to conduct ourselves in the same professional and courageous manner that we know you all expect of us. God Bless and take care!
(1st Platoon)

Sincerely,

Bushmaster 6/ Bushmaster 7



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Cobra Base

Events with the C Company are in constant motion. There is never a dull moment and the men are constantly busy accomplishing all tasks to a very high standard. Since I last wrote, 1st platoon has returned from Kabul and has done a tremendous job at conducting a totally different type of mission set. They arrived at Tarin Kowt, conducted a few right seat rides with the other platoons, and went off on a 3 day patrol where they conducted several village assessments and route recons. 2nd platoon pushed forward and paved the way for the rest of the company by conducting a 10 day mission to establishing an entirely new Firebase (Cobra Base number II). For a period of time, 2nd platoon secured the base and conducted local patrols in nearby villages. A few days later, 1st platoon joined us and we really began to do great things for the people of Afghanistan. So far, we linked up with the district elders of the towns and have identified 10 projects that range from water wells to small schools in order to help out the government and the economy. 3rd platoon still remains at DRW with the Special Forces detachment. They too, are doing a phenomenal job for the Task Force. Each time we visit the Commander of the compound, he comments on how professional the men of third platoon act.



The changes of the Company leadership that were made last month are in full force. LT Wilson (Cobra XO), 1SG Smith (Cobra 1SG), SFC Izquierdo (2nd Platoon), LT Chapman (3rd Platoon), LT Collins (Company FSO), and SGT Parinello (Team Leader) are all new to our family, and their influence has greatly strengthened the Cobra team.

The biggest change to the Cobra Company has yet to occur and is most near and dear to my heart. On 15 October 2004, I will relinquish command to CPT Josh Bookout and his wife Beth. I am proud of this company and all we have done over the past 18 months I was in command. It all started at Makua Valley Company Combined Arms Live Fire in April of 2003 and ended with a tour in Afghanistan. I will always keep a watchful eye over the accomplishments the Company will complete in the future. I will miss the SOLDIERS dearly. With my change of command, there will also be a relief of responsibility of the FRG leadership. Lisa Keith is currently working hard with Shauna Smith to bring her up to speed on the rosters and platoon points of contacts. I ask that you give Shauna any type of assistance you have to offer. Shauna can be reached at 625-1323.



Once again, the men are fine and doing well. They miss their friends and families dearly and talk about you all the time. Keep up the letters, packages, and other gestures of your love. They really do brighten the men's' day and keep them motivated.

**Sincerely,
Cobra 6/Cobra 7**



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WarDog Base

Aloha WARDOG families. The month of September was good to us. Those of us at Tarin Kowt have spent our time supporting the "Bobcats" from the forward operating base and have conducted training to certify new section chiefs to cover for those who will take R&R leave soon. Our new certified chiefs are SGT Schuerger, SGT Jones, and SGT Zambrano. All three did very well and have proven themselves to be strong leaders.

We have also conducted Gunner training and weapons training to improve all Soldiers' proficiency on the howitzer and individual weapons. We will continue this training on a regular basis so that before we redeploy all Soldiers will be prepared for a battalion level Gunner certification where they will have the opportunity to earn their Gunner qualification badge.



On September 9, 2004 Major General Olson and Colonel Pedersen along with Command Sergeants Major Ashe and Dickie presented the Soldiers of Task Force 2-5 "Bobcats" their Wartime Service Shoulder Sleeve Insignia. The 25th Infantry Division has not issued its patch for service in combat since the war in Vietnam. You husbands will wear this patch with pride on their right shoulder for the rest of their time in the Army. SPC Warren, our medic, was awarded a Combat Field Medical Badge for his service to the Soldiers and local nationals. He has performed well and has gained a wealth of knowledge and experience.

The Soldiers serving with the Marines (4th and 6th sections, and FDC# 2) have moved yet again. During their time with the Marines they developed a strong reputation as they provided timely and accurate fires in support of operations. They now provide indirect fire support and conduct local patrols at Kandahar Airfield. I anticipate this to be a permanent move. There will be some personnel moves between Tarin Kowt and Kandahar, but they will be minimal.

The R&R leave program is going well and Soldiers are returning to work clean and refreshed. It is a moral booster for the rest of us to hear about the good times they had back home. Our goal is to get all Soldiers eligible for leave home before the end of January. So far, so good. Thank you all for the packages we receive. It is always great to get mail and our heart rate increases when we see those golden mail bags come off of the aircraft.

**Sincerely,
Wardog 6/Wardog 7**

Task Force Fire Support Element

Since you have heard from the fire supporters we have been quite busy. A few more of us have been able to take leave and everyone can't wait for our fellow soldiers return. The soldiers tell us of the adventures they had on leave, and it is a little vacation for us all.

We are sad to say that 1LT Ryan Nacin has left us for a mission with B Battery in support of Task Force 2-27. Ryan has been an integral part of the Fire Support Element for the past year and a half. His professionalism and zeal to learn will be missed. We are however fortunate to have 1LT Jeremiah Collins replacing





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Ryan, JC is coming to us from C Battery and has jumped in to the job feet first at Firebase Cobra. Besides those changes, the Fisters remain in good spirits and miss everyone back home.

**Sincerely,
FSE**

Task Force Engineers" GET 'R DUNN"

September has been a busy month for the Sappers of the "GET 'R DUNN" platoon. Our sappers have been tasked with a wide variety of engineer missions, which includes mine detection, project and construction supervision, cache destruction, route clearance, carpentry, pulling guard, and fighting as Infantrymen. These tasks were, of course, executed with professionalism and to the highest standard, which makes me feel extremely fortunate to be a part of this platoon. While on a visit to 1st Squad in Khas Oruzgun, I was overcome with pride in SSG Cagle's squad and their work ethic. Not only do they conduct sapper missions, but they also manage to keep the Firebase operational by building fighting positions, tables, and numerous other quality of life amenities. SSG Hessler's squad has also been doing their part in building their Firebase, especially since SGT Stansbury is back in action. SGT Wilson in 3rd Squad did an outstanding job as acting squad leader while SGT Wells was on leave and led the way in occupying C Company's new Firebase. 3rd Squad is now experiencing the hardships previously faced by 1st Squad in moving to a new location, but I am confident that SGT Wells and his crew will soon have the nicest Firebase in the Oruzgun Province. Although we are busy, you are always in our thoughts and are the focus of our conversations when we are not talking about football, of course. Thank you for your support, prayers, and patience!

**Sincerely,
Castle 26**

Task Force ADA

Aloha to the friends and family of 1st Platoon, A/1-62 ADA. We are continuing to truck along and are surprised at how fast time is really moving. The base continues to make improvements; we now have a rock crushing machine that will make gravel, and within 2-3 weeks we will finally have internet capabilities, and more phones for everybody to use. This is a welcomed amenity for guys who have not been able to email friends and family within the last 4 months. There is a definite change in the weather this past month. The temperature has dropped, which is a welcomed break from the heat we've experienced since late June. It will be a shock to everyone when we start seeing temperatures in the mid 40's when December rolls around.

This month we had our combat patch ceremony where SPC Kevin Briseno represented ADA and received the combat patch from our Commanding General, MG Olson, represented in the picture. We also held a little cookout at one of the towers that we pull guard on. We cooked up some T-bone steaks, rice and drank near beer. It was a good time had by all and it was a nice break from the usual MRE for lunch.



All of the support that we continue to receive from family and friends is appreciated by every Soldier in 1st Platoon. Mail day is huge for everyone and they all look forward to receiving something, even if it's just a letter saying hello. We all hope that our respective loved ones are doing well. Thank you again for the continued support.



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**Sincerely,
Old School 10**

Task Force MI

The Soldiers of C Co. 125th MI BN are doing fine. We have been able to conduct several missions alongside the infantry platoons. We have also had many opportunities to interface with the local people. They are eager to support us in our missions. The Soldiers want to thank everyone at home for all their support during this deployment. .

**Sincerely,
Panther 22**