



Task Force 2-5 Bobcats' Newsletter



Task Force Bobcat,

Aloha and Holiday Greetings from Oruzgan Province, Afghanistan! On 4 December 2004, two of our Bobcat Brothers will be laid to rest in their respective hometowns of Apple Valley, California and San Antonio, Texas. While we are still mourning the loss of two of our brothers, we must take comfort in the fact that they were men of great professionalism, character, conviction, and spirit. As with our previous fallen comrades, our thoughts and prayers are extended to the Fracker and Fleischer families in their time of grief. As we pause to remember these fine young men, contemplate their outstanding contributions to their Brother Bobcats, our Army and the United States of America. We are proud to call them our friends and brothers. 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 continued strength as they continue to recover and rehabilitate from their respective injuries.

Despite missions, difficult terrain, weather, and family separations, the Soldiers were able to celebrate Thanksgiving in grand style. All the holiday traditional food favorites and few new ones were provided by our outstanding cooks. We were especially thankful that all of our ATLAS systems were operational and providing free phone and internet connectivity to any location that our Soldiers required to connect with their loved ones. AFN satellite dishes provided plenty of football action to watch at each FOB. The holiday and life here is nothing like home but Soldiers can relax in some comfort when not executing missions.

It is beginning to look and feel a lot like winter here in Tarin Kowt. Temperatures are now dipping into the LOW 30s at night and only rising to mid 50s during the day. The temperatures promise to sink even lower over this month as we settle into the real Afghan Winter.

*Updates from our Six outposts: The Rear CP in **Kandahar** evolves with a number of personnel stepping up and filling-in while key leaders are on mid-tour leave. First Platoon, Battle Company are the last B Co PLT to man **Kabul** and will remain in place for Afghan Inauguration but soon after will be replaced by 1st PLT A Co in the Afghan Capitol. 2nd Platoon C Co is now in **Dey Rawoud** to work with new Special Operations personnel from 7th Group and Afghan National Army Forces. Team Cobra is steadily improving district conditions in **Cehar Cineh** and remains at FOB Cobra. Team Quick Strike in **Khas Uruzgan** is enjoying snow capped mountains surrounding FOB Anaconda. Schools and sports teams are having a positive effect on district populace. Team Bushmaster (Battle) is operating from FOB Ripley in **Tarin Kowt**. Recently returned from Nesh district, Battle continues to leverage district leaders to effectively support our operations.*



Mahalo. Your work to support the Bobcat Ohana on Oahu, the Main Land, and here in Afghanistan is an outstanding team effort. While none of us will be satisfied until we can spend our holidays with our loved ones, your thoughtfulness and sacrifice is making this time period much more enjoyable for everyone. Our thoughts and prayers will be with each of you during this season. Again, Mahalo!

The Bobcat TOC is nearly complete and is decorated for the season. The new hardstand dining facility may be complete by the 1st of the year... don't hold your breath! Until then, the canvas facility will most likely be the site of Christmas Dinner for FOB Ripley. Mid-tour leave continues and 4-Day pass opportunities continue to Qatar.



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

**Mele Kalikani MaKa... Aloha and Ahui Hou!,
Bobcat 6/Bobcat 7**



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Viper Base,

Aloha Viper Families and belated Happy Thanksgiving! As the Holiday season approaches, dreams of family gatherings, endless amounts of food, and loved ones fill all our Soldiers' heads. Thankfully, many of the Bobcats will have the chance to see their families over Thanksgiving or Christmas and some over the New Year. For those not able to make it home for the Holidays there are still many surprises and pleasant treats awaiting all.

First, I must say we are all deeply saddened by our third and fourth losses in the Task Force. All of us in the HHC "Vipers" extend our deepest sympathies and countless prayers to the families of CPL Jacob Fleisher and CPL Dale Fracker Jr. However, despite our losses, many were still able to find cheer on Thanksgiving. The cooking staff made a name for themselves once again with their astounding efforts. Their preparation began weeks in advance for what was most certainly their biggest test yet. Not only would they have to feed over one thousand Soldiers in four locations, but they would have the most important visitor to date. General Abizaid, the CENTCOM Commander, was scheduled to arrive and see the Soldiers on FOB Ripley Thanksgiving day. Unfortunately, General Abizaid could not make it due to unforeseeable bad weather, but that did not faze the cooks. They plodded on with their preparations and cooking, beginning before sunrise and working diligently through out the day and well into the night. The end result was something to marvel. From turkey, ham, Cornish hens, and seafood; to mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, vegetables, and stuffing; Soldiers walked away from the service line barely able to lift their overloaded trays. I was personal witness to several Soldiers skipping the desert line because they had no room for a slice of one of five or six different varieties of pies and cakes. Don't worry though; they were more than happy and welcome to return, once they made room on their plates. So, kudos goes out to the entire Task Force cooking staff. It was truly a combined effort of 2-5 IN, PRT, and National Guard cooks.

The 2-5 Medics wish everyone a Happy Holidays from Afghanistan. They continue to provide outstanding medical care for Task Force Soldiers as well as emergency treatment for Afghan local nationals when necessary. They're busy as usual, but are still able to find time to relax and enjoy friends when they're not busy saving lives.

The S-1 section extends their greetings and belated Happy Thanksgiving. As of late there have been a few changes in the S-1, CPL Keith M. Chatelain, formerly the B Company training NCO, and SPC Gilbert Villalobos, formerly working in the S-1 at Kandahar Airfield as the Task Force Mail Clerk, are now working with us in Tarin Kowt S-1. SSG Pepin is on R&R Leave, and SGT Rigdon is on Emergency Leave. We also have a temporary addition to the S-1 family, PFC Bruce A. Downard augmenting us from the 556th PSB, 841st AG (Postal Company), he is currently learning the ins and outs of the S-1 shop and our plan is to send him back to his unit as a well rounded S-1 Clerk. With all that being said, CPL Michael J.B. Asuncion is the acting S-1 NCOIC and doing an outstanding job.

Scouts and Mortars have continued to excel while attached to Team Quickstrike. Always productive in their efforts, they have participated in numerous operations vital to finding and destroying a vast number of caches. When not busy ridding the countryside of dangerous weapons, they did have time for a filling Thanksgiving meal. All in all, the Scouts continue to work very hard under the best conditions and do so because of the great support provided by the family members and friends from back home.

Our elements of HHC at FOB Cobra continue to excel as well. Production is full bore on building up their base. In fact, Cobra has gone from tents in the dust to buildings with electricity and many of the creature comforts anyone should be able to enjoy. The Task Force Engineer has worked hard to ensure the Soldiers have what they need out there and there is no doubt things will continue to progress for the duration out there. The AT Platoon and Mortar Section would like to say hello and Happy Thanksgiving to all of the families and all wish everyone a Happy Holiday season.

Finally, from the company headquarters, I would like to wish CPT Gregory a good time on R&R. I know he's having a blast with his two new additions to the family as well as SPC Bender, our armorer who is back in Atlanta with his family. SPC Chris Hoover and SPC Richard Buckman continue to work hard each and every day, ensuring our Soldiers have what they need administratively and our supply team SSG Dave Richardson and SPC Mario Alvarez work diligently to ensure all of our Soldiers are equipped with what they need. From myself and 1SG Keith, we wish everyone the very best this Thanksgiving and thank you for all your kind thoughts and well wishes. Mahalo from the Vipers!

*Sincerely,
Viper 5/Viper 7*



Task Force 2-5 Bobcats' Newsletter



Quickstrike Base,

Happy Thanksgiving! The Soldiers of 11th AVN wish we could be home to celebrate what we are most thankful for – our families. We miss you but we will do our best to continue the Thanksgiving tradition despite the absence of a home-cooked meal. 1LT Mike Baskin, our new Company Executive Officer, and SSG Edwards, our Head Chef have prepared an exciting day. Starting with a turkey trot led by our special guest MAJ Beissel the day continues with a rematch between the leadership and Soldiers in touch-football. The Soldiers squeezed by with a shaky victory in our first game. SFC Armendariz, coach of the Company leadership, is determined not to let that happen again.

Keeping with the holiday theme, we received your Christmas gifts in the mail just last week. Upon receiving the gifts, we set up a Christmas tree in our meeting room, hung the stockings, and were tempted, but didn't open the gifts. Thank you for putting the time and effort into making Christmas and the Holiday Season as close to a normal experience for us as possible. Your gifts and the other amenities are improving the quality of life at FOB Anaconda daily. As most of you know, we now have morale phones and computers, hard stand tents with heat, and a chow hall. We are still waiting for gym equipment and hot showers but we anticipate they will arrive before Christmas.



Here is what we've been doing for the past month. Our kids' sports league is coming along slowly but steadily. SSG Cagle contracted to build a sports complex, SPC Krambule designed our website (www.freewebs.com/A25INFKUSports), and our new 2nd Platoon Leader Nick Seidel is taking the lead in organizing the teams. We drew close to one-half million dollars in CERF funds and we have scheduled for the construction of a jailhouse, a district park, road improvements, school repairs, sports fields, and several wells. We recently returned from a mission in which working with the Afghan National Army, we confiscated three caches, conducted four MEDCAPs, and handed out several humanitarian aid supplies to the Afghan populace.



Soldiers from every platoon continue to battle the cold in order to accomplish whatever mission they are confronted with. Welcome to our newest Soldiers and wives, 2LT Nick Seidel and fiancée Danielle, 2LT Blake Schwartz and wife Alyssa, and SGT Anderson and wife Theresa. Congratulations to Christi and Jordan Kranich on the birth of their second child.

God bless you and keep you safe through the holiday season.

*Sincerely,
Quickstrike 6/Quickstrike 7*



Task Force 2-5 Bobcats' Newsletter



Battle Base,

News from the Commander:

Greetings to all B Company Family and Friends. The weather here at FOB Ripley is slowly changing, reaching the 40s at night and highs in the upper 70s during the day. As December gets closer, the temperature will continue to drop. As winter creeps closer and closer, we can expect temperatures to drop down into the low 30s. Big difference from the high's we had this summer.

Soldiers continue to go on leave through the Army's Rest and Relaxation program, seeing loved ones and spending a little time away. A new change of pace for the company has been the incorporation of passes to Qatar; a recreation resort for the Soldiers to "get away" for a few days. At Qatar they have a lot of activities available to allow them to take a break from "Army Life". During the beginning of the month, we had 1st platoon replace 2nd platoon in Kabul. Soon, we will no longer have the mission in Kabul and A Company will take over the 2nd week of December. So, starting the 2nd week of December we will once again have the whole company together here in Tarin Kowt.

Improvements continue at FOB Ripley, as there are now hot showers, a running track around the inside perimeter, gravel roads, and most importantly, as most of you have already found out, the addition of 15 phones and 15 computers for internet/ email access. Projects are in the works for a new Chow Hall facility and then the expansion of the gym. On another note, with Thanksgiving coming up, the preparations are ongoing to prepare a Thanksgiving meal for all Soldiers. A special meal has been flown in along with decorations for the current chow hall so we can celebrate Thanksgiving here at FOB Ripley. It will not compare to being at home with family and friends, but it will be nice to enjoy a good meal.

Since we have been here we have had some entertainment shows come to the FOB, on the 27th a band by the name of Little Big Town will be here to entertain the company for a couple of hours. Should be a nice change of pace for the Soldiers.

As we get ready to end our 7th month here in Afghanistan, the attitude of the company continues to impress me. We all look forward to when we get to redeploy home and enjoy the reunion with friends and family. Once again, I have to thank all of you involved with the FRG. We thank you for your support, and appreciate all that you are doing for us. Thanks to all of you who are involved.

From the 1SG:

Hola from the Soldiers of B Company. This is the first time I have been able to add anything to the FRG newsletter. I want to thank all of the spouses for the great support that you are giving to the company.

I just want to let you all know that your loved ones are doing a terrific job here in Afghanistan. Their spirit and morale are very high, and their work ethic is by far the best that I have seen in a long time. I'm blessed to be working along side such a fine fighting force of young Americans.

The living and working conditions are getting better every day. We have come a long way since last summer.

Adios and God be with you.

Sincerely,

Battle 6/ Battle 7





Task Force 2-5 Bobcats' Newsletter



Cobra Base,

We would like to start out first with expressing our condolence to the families of CPL Fleischer and CPL Fracker. On behalf of every Soldier in the Task Force and especially in C Company we are deeply saddened by the loss of two fellow comrades and pray for the families of these two great Soldiers. We also extend a speedy recovery to SGT Parinello. He is currently in Germany and will return as soon as he is medically cleared. All three Cobra Soldiers were returning from a patrol when their vehicle was struck by an IED in the road.

Belated Happy Thanksgiving to all the Cobra Families! It is hard to believe that November has come and gone. We are in the final preparation for our Thanksgiving Day activities at Cobra Base, and we have a lot to be thankful for...

This is the first newsletter I've written as the new commander. I want to introduce myself and let all of you know that I'm honored to serve as the commander of this fine company. It has been a fast and exciting first month for the company. If they are all like this, I'll really be ready to come home!

We had our first hot meal last week, and it was great! We now have our refrigeration van up and running, so we are able to store frozen meals. We expect to have a full Thanksgiving meal flown in tomorrow, so we can celebrate the holiday in true fashion – turkey, and all the sides.

There are improvements to Cobra Base everyday. We now have 10 out of 13 wooden tents up, a new TOC, the start to a new aid station, a working AFN Satellite TV, and new guard towers and observation posts. The construction upgrades are really improving the Soldiers morale and keeping us out of the dust. We are thankful for the awesome work of the vertical engineers that we have on Cobra Base. The engineers are from the 528th EN BN (H&V) from the Louisiana National Guard, led by SFC Hayes and SSG Gaines. These Soldiers have worked everyday to build us our new home. The work will continue and we hope to be done with all major construction by mid December.



The Cobra Team continues to conduct operations in our two Afghan Districts – Cehar Cineh and Osay. 2nd Platoon and our AT PLT spent the last part of October on an operation in the Cehar Cineh District and were able to meet with many of the local leaders in the District and provide much needed security to the area. 1st PLT, AT, the PA and medics, 2nd PLT, B Co, and a large group of attachments returned to the Cehar Cineh District the second week in November. The mission also allowed the BN Surgeon (MAJ Gibbs) and our PA (1LT Moultrie) to treat hundreds of locals with the medical team attached to us. Both missions to the Cehar Cineh District were a success and we have started the ground work for future projects in the District.

The last couple weeks of November we have focused our operations in the Osay District. The District Chief continues to be one of our strongest allies and has become a good friend to many of the Cobra Soldiers. We have started a large number of projects in the District to help improve the District Center and outlying villages. The Afghan people completed the Ramadan holiday in mid November with a large festival. The festival to mark the end of Ramadan is called Eid. Soldiers from 1st Platoon, the 1SG and myself walked through the festival one day and it reminded all of us of a county fair; there were tents everywhere with vendors selling food and trinkets, and party games being played all over. It was a sight to see!



The Soldiers of Team Cobra continue to impress us everyday. They are motivated and work hard at every mission. We are making a difference everyday.

The Cobra Team grew this past month with the inclusion of the entire Anti-Tank Platoon, led by SSG Rodriguez. They have been a great resource and are a valuable asset to the team.

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,
Cobra 6/Cobra 7



Task Force 2-5 Bobcats' Newsletter



WarDog Base,

The month of November has been good to us. Thank you all for all of the Halloween candy and goodies that we received. It didn't last too long.

The month was also very good to a few of our Wardog families. The Young family welcomed their daughter, Faith Emilia, on 5 November in Hawaii. SSG Young was able to get home on R&R leave in time to be there for the birth and help out Theresa. The Ladenburgers also welcomed their son, Bryan Xavier, on 12 November in Ohio. You should have seen the look of joy on SPC Ladenburger's face when he was told of the news while he was training on the firing point at Kandahar Airfield. I am glad that he was scheduled to depart on R&R just days after so he could be there to help and enjoy this time. I know Kristen is glad too. The Allison family is also expecting a baby in November in Missouri. I hope all is well with Patricia during this time. SGT Allison is home on leave as well and should return to us soon.



I am very glad that the leave program is going well. Some leaves have been pushed up a little allowing more Soldiers to be home for the holidays. We are also working the Qatar Pass program. This month SSG Hargrove, SGT Newsome, and SPC Rawls were the first to take advantage of this opportunity.

Early this month 1st and 5th sections conducted an air assault mission to support C/2-5 IN. Some of you may have seen the picture of SGT Davila and others from 1st section emplacing their howitzer on the U.S. Army website. It was taken while on that mission by a combat photographer. The mission went well and we all came back safely.

On our FOB we now have computer and phone access in the MWR facility. The dining facility is currently under construction. For the first time since we've deployed we have HOT showers and a laundry facility! No more hand washing our clothes. Daily life is improving constantly.

We continue to train and work as we normally do while at our Forward Operating Base. We miss you all and look forward to being with you again.

Sincerely,
Wardog 6/Wardog 7

Task Force Fire Support Element,

Thanksgiving will have come and gone by the time that this reaches you, but we would like to reiterate that we are all thankful of the time, energy, thoughts, and prayers that we have received from our loved ones and strangers back home. Your encouragement means worlds to us even though we are often too proud to tell as much.

Cool mornings and cold nights have begun to visit the FOBs of the Oruzgan Province. Task Force engineers and some National Guardsmen have made a great effort to ensure that we are prepared for the days of winter. FOB Cobra, the youngest of our FOBs, continues to improve structurally. The men of the C Company Fire Support Team work side by side with engineers and local workers to improve their "home."

Missions over the past month have been a great success. Not only have we had the ACM on the run, but the people have turned to the Afghan Government and Coalition forces to rid their towns and villages of the troublemakers. As the Task Force accomplishes its' missions here in AO Bobcat the COLT and all the Company teams have provided excellent fires coverage. Additionally, the Fire Support Teams have taken on the added responsibility of working intelligence sections. While we may not be using large quantities of our indirect fires we remain poised and continue to assist in all facets of the mission. Rest assured that we will continue to pursue the enemy and provide him no quarter.

Sincerely,
FSE



Task Force 2-5 Bobcats' Newsletter



Task Force Engineers "GET 'R DUNN",

Halloween and the Presidential Elections were the big events that have past since the last newsletter. Our focus for this past month has been conducting Sapper missions and preparing our FOBs for winter. 1st Squad finally has a solid roof over their heads and heat in the cold mountains of Khas Oruzgan. SSG Cagle stated that his firebase has the best food in theater, and everyone who has been there tends to agree. 2nd Squad remains at Tarin Kowt but has spent most of the month conducting major operations away from their firebase. SPC Wilson left for Kandahar to take classes on improving his GT score. SSG Batcham and 3rd squad remained in the Osay district focusing on improving their force protection. SGT Wells and SSG Batcham have gotten quite good at operating a Bobcat, which was used for filling HESCOs and moving equipment. SGT Kendrick left on well-deserved R&R leave. SPC Elmore joined the headquarters team here at Tarin Kowt and has already been put to work operating the SEE. SPC Hibler took over the class IV yard from SFC Dockery, who now has the freedom to help supervise the major projects on base. SPC McFarland returned from leave and has been gaining great experience working with the Forward Surgical Team (FST) that recently arrived at the firebase. All in all, our Sappers remain focused on completing the mission and making us all proud!

Sincerely,

Castle 26/ Castle 27

Task Force ADA,

Aloha to the friends and family of 1st Platoon! The month of November was another good month for us. We continue to man our guard towers and the JLENS camera, and once in awhile we send a few guys out on a mission with the Infantry. SSG Madison, SGT Hicks, and SPC Roy were sent out to support B and C Companies in an operation where we had the opportunity to sling load an Avenger. The operation went very well and the guys said they had a good time on the mission. The JLENS camera, manned by SSG Rogers and SPC Cooper, continues to be a valuable asset providing security, early warning, intelligence and artillery support to the Task Force. We are sad to lose SPC Miars, part of the JLENS team, who received orders for a new job and has been assigned to Fort Drum, New York. Even though their job isn't the most glamorous or exciting, they do an excellent job, and in my mind, are the silent heroes of the Task Force.

FOB Ripley still continues to make improvements. The newest, and probably the best addition in the guy's minds is the computer and phone center. The internet is incredibly fast and the phones are much clearer than the ones we were using previously. This is a great morale booster for the guys. We are currently getting ready for Thanksgiving. The cooks have a great meal planned out for everyone and we are all excited about how it is going to turn out. Even though we all can't be with our family during the holidays, I know I speak for all of us saying that we are all thankful for everyone's amazing support through this deployment. Know that you are all in our hearts and minds.

We have a birthday and anniversary to celebrate this month. SPC Jonathan Cinka celebrates his birthday the day after Thanksgiving, November 26th. SPC William Cooper and his wife Alisha celebrated their anniversary on November 23rd.

We would like to close by saying "Thank You" to all the families, friends, and loved ones of 1st Platoon for everything you do. Know that your respective Soldier continues to do his job above and beyond what is expected of him.



Sincerely,

Old School 6/ Old School 7