



# Task Force 2-5 Bobcats' Newsletter



## Task Force Bobcat,

*Mele Kalikimaka Meke Haouli Makahiki Hou!*

*I will start with a belated Christmas Greeting and Happy New Year to the entire Bobcat Ohana wherever you may be... think you know where we are. As I write this, we are just recovering from five days of rain/sleet/and snow across the province of Uruzgan. It has been an exercise in patience. We have had flooding of our accommodations, mud slurry pits to walk through and wet muddy clothing to contend with. Each time we started to feel sorry for ourselves, we would reflect on what the average Afghan family must endure and our situation did not seem nearly so desperate. We further realized that this is not as wet and cold as we have ever been and it too shall pass. About that time the clouds would part just long enough to catch a spectacular glimpse of the snow capped surrounding mountains, simply beautiful in a very strange way.*

*I know that everyone is excited to see 2005 arrive. It marks a very significant milestone... we will redeploy this year! Yee Haw! That said, I ask that everyone exercise optimistic caution however as we still have some very heavy lifting to do prior to our triumphant return to our loved ones. I remain impressed and awed by the individual and collective accomplishments of the Soldiers of Task Force Bobcat! My goal was always to command an Infantry Battalion and I have had the distinct honor to command the very best that the Army has to offer. Thanks for the love, prayers, and overt support during the last several difficult months. One shining example was the Christmas Stockings that arrived across the Task Force and mystically appeared to each and every Soldier on Christmas morning. Another example that stands out is the support from the FRGs whenever we have suffered casualties. Your compassion and sympathy is what the Army Family and Bobcat Ohana is all about. Thank You!*

*We are definitely making an impact on the Army of the future with a high re-enlistment rate. I know it would be easy to attribute the high numbers to the bonus money and stabilization for Stryker and Units of Action options that have been available but it is really something much more basic. 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!*

*Afghan winter is here as promised. We have already had double the precipitation that is average for the month of December. Not since before the Taliban has this part of Afghanistan seen so much rain and snow. The local Afghan's credit our presence with the change in weather as well as the change in their general condition across the country. Regardless it is a good sign for the future here. Temperatures are now dipping into the **MID to UPPER 20s** at night and only rising into 40-50's during the day. Yee Haw!*

*Updates from our **Six** outposts: The Rear CP in **Kandahar** continues to receive and push forward critical life support to include new MICH Helmets and cold weather boots. Team Battle (Bushmaster) is all together again at **FOB Ripley** for the first time since departing Ghazni in June 04. 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, A Co is now in the Afghan Capitol conducting the CFC-A QRF and Security mission. 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, C Co is still in **Dey Rawoud** to work with 7<sup>th</sup> Group SOF and Afghan National Army Forces. Team Cobra continued its progress in **Cehar Cineh** and has eliminated a number of Taliban in the AO. They remain at FOB Cobra. Team Quick Strike is in snowy **Khas Uruzgan** enjoying numerous successes with their initiatives across their AO. Team Battle (Bushmaster) is operating from FOB Ripley in **Tarin Kowt** and effectively expanding coalition influence into remote Nesh/Sha Wali Kot districts.*

*Hopefully everyone saw the press regarding the Satellite Honolulu Marathon! Bobcats from across the task force participated and did outstanding. It was a Soldier initiated, planned, resourced and operated event. It would have never been possible without the great efforts and sacrifice of every Soldier in every company across the Uruzgan Province.*



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*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 sacrifices have 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!*

*The Bobcat DFAC at FOB Ripley is our next priority for major construction. Bad weather has impacted a number of projects and we are struggling to heat all of our guard towers and ensure quality of life for every Soldier. This remains a constant battle in the harsh and austere environment of Afghanistan. Regardless of improvements, it is still not anything close to home. Mid-tour leave continues through the end of January 05 and at that point all Soldiers authorized to take mid-tour leave will have completed it. We will continue our 4-Day pass opportunities to Qatar until shut-down by the CJTF.*

*As we close out 2004 and enter 2005, please 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" Izqueirdo, 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.*

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





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## Viper Base,

On behalf of the company, the first sergeant and commander want to wish all family members a happy holiday season. I want all family members to know that although we are deployed in a very austere environment, the Soldiers had ham, prime rib, Cornish hen, duck, t-bones, and various pies for our holiday meal on 24 December. I know it is tough for families to be apart this holiday season, but please understand that what we are doing here in Afghanistan is making a difference to people who do not have that much to be thankful for. The Christmas season is about giving and we are working very hard to build a strong and stable government for the people of Afghanistan.



A belated Merry Christmas to the PAC Family. This has been another fast month. There are just never enough hours in the day to keep up with the personnel readiness of the Soldiers in the Task Force. For more than half of the month CPL Asuncion ran the forward S-1 Shop and SPC Reynolds ran the Rear CP S-1 Shop. Both enlisted men did an outstanding job. But now that SSG Pepin and SGT Rigdon are back we can get back to business as normal. As you can see the PAC demonstrated our mental and physical toughness by completing the 26.2 Honolulu-Marathon in Afghanistan. Again, we want to say thank you to the families who have continued to provide unwavering support. We appreciate the care packages and letters.

First of all, I would like to introduce myself to the families of the S-2 section and the Task Force. I am CPT Shane Messner and took over in mid November as the Task Force S-2 for CPT Cole. I have been a part of the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division for over three years and now have the privilege to serve as a Bobcat. The Task Force S-2 shop has been very busy over the last month with our intelligence requirements in support of Task Force combat operations. The Soldiers in the section have done an outstanding job and are continuing to improve in our efforts. I want to wish all the families and friends a happy holiday season. All of you are in our thoughts and prayers. The support we have seen from the families has been great.

The S-3 section was extremely busy in December. While our operations have been very successful, we continue to plan for future exploitation of the hard work that your loved ones have done. Doing so in the future will be a little more difficult, as we will be sending CPT Chris Harvey off to Ranger School. We want to thank him for his excellent contribution to the "BOBCATS" and the fight against ACM here in Afghanistan; he will be sorely missed. Belated Happy Holidays and we will see you in the New Year.

CPT Pearson, SFC Lowery, SSG Gachet, SPC Labarca, and SPC Signorile of the S-4 section are continuing to work hard in keeping the FOBs stocked. SFC Lowery, who just returned from leave, is busy controlling the company supply sergeants at Kandahar. SSG Gachet, SPC Labarca, and SPC Signorile are continuing to refine FOB Ripley operations which include the internally-run PX. There are many happy Soldiers because of this! The S4 section wishes everyone a happy holiday season.

The commo platoon was very busy in December. The Task Force has moved into a new tactical operations center and the commo section had to set up internet and FM communications to ensure a seamless move from the old field TOC to the new hard stand TOC. CPT Hurlburt and the Task Force staff also planned and organized the first ever marathon in Afghanistan held at FOB Ripley. It was a really amazing event that had over 150 participants. The commo platoon would like to wish everyone a belated Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

The Task Force Cooks still find new ways to amaze the chain of command and the Soldiers in the Task Force. Their superb efforts have kept the morale of Soldiers at a high level. The Christmas meal was outstanding, just like the Thanksgiving meal. It was a huge success. Belated Merry Christmas to all and have a Happy New Year.



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With Christmas fast approaching, the Medics are very thankful to have such wonderful support from the FRG. At FOB Ripley, SSG Mendez and SGT Burk continue to provide top of the line medical care for the Task Force as well as Afghan local nationals. At FOB Anaconda, SSG Garcia is doing a great job supporting A Company. He also continues to speak with local health care providers to improve the health infrastructure in their province. SGT Davis has taken charge of the aid station at FOB Cobra and is doing a great job. On one occasion, C Company hosted a day where local nationals could come and receive health care. On this day alone, SGT Davis and his crew saw over 180 Afghans! See you soon and remember you will always be in our thoughts and prayers.



The pace remains rapid in the Support Platoon. Over the past few weeks, the platoon has continued to run daily flight line operations and rear command post logistical operations while supporting three company and Task Force level missions in the Oruzgan Province. Though the operational tempo will remain high as the New Year arrives, the Soldiers continue to meet the challenges of each new day. The platoon thanks everyone for their unending support and wishes all family and friends back home the very best during this holiday season.

The scout, anti-tank, and mortar platoons are continuing to do a great job supporting operations from FOBs Anaconda and Cobra. Their efforts have greatly enhanced the effectiveness of the operations the line companies have executed. The hard work and dedication to duty of these men is a great example of the pride and overwhelming respect they portray. All three platoons wish to thank the family members for their support and wish them a happy holiday season.

Finally, the 1SG, XO, and myself want to thank the FRG and especially the leaders for the hard work and dedication in support of the Soldiers of HHC. Everything ya'll do makes a big difference in the quality of life and spiritual well being of all our Soldiers. We are both honored to lead these Soldiers and have tremendous respect for the job they do day in and day out. Hope you had a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. VIPERS!

Sincerely,  
Viper 5/Viper 7



# Task Force 2-5 Bobcats' Newsletter



## Quickstrike Base,

TM A said goodbye to a pillar for the company and welcomed a new one over the past month. 1SG Bill Forro, after three years as the First Sergeant for Alpha Company and four company commanders, advanced to the JHC 1SG position, where he will run the operations for the Task Force from Kandahar. TM A thanks him for all of his service over the past few years and looks forward to working with him throughout the rest of the deployment. We would also like to say a big Thank You and give a hug to Vicki Forro for all of her support the last three years. TM A welcomes 1SG Ifrain Zavala (formerly from the 2-35 Cacti) as well as wife Dalia, and daughter Jaclyn, as the new Quickstrike 7. The month also saw CPT Andy Brosnan go on leave, with 1LT Mike Baskin, Executive Officer (XO), and 1SG Zavala serving as the command leadership at FOB Anaconda.

With so much to be thankful for TM A celebrated Christmas in style. A special Christmas meal of turkey, ham, stuffing, corn-on-the-cob, sweet potatoes and a bunch more, as well as cake, pecan, pumpkin, and apple pie were flown in from Kandahar. The mess team prepared two separate sit down meals so all of the company could sit down together. In keeping with the Army tradition, all of the officers on the camp took their place at the serving line to serve Soldiers for dinner.

The final list for promotion to Sergeant First Class, E-7, was posted during the month of December as well. TM A is very pleased to congratulate SSG (P) Willie Jones (AT section), SSG (P) Troy Cagle (Engineers), SSG (P) Brian Hughes (Scouts), SSG (P) Richard Baker (2<sup>nd</sup> platoon), and SSG Michael Pacheco (1<sup>st</sup> platoon) for making the list.

Notable improvements to FOB Anaconda took place over the past month, including repainting of the operations center as well as hardening of all living huts, which put a wooden roof as well as a tent top on all structures. All living tents have heat as well.

TM A also welcomed the Maintenance Service Team (MST) from the 325 FSB for two weeks. The MST, led by LT Ron Brosius, repaired and serviced all of TM A's vehicles, to include replacing an engine- no small feat without the equipment available at Kandahar. The team also repaired weapons and electronic devices.

Several TM A members were also able to participate in the satellite run of the Honolulu Marathon on Dec. 12, held at FOB Ripley. Participants included 1LT Baskin, 1SG Forro, SGT Shaun Craft, SPC Brian Green, and PFC Cody Burch. All finished the marathon, and LT Baskin was able to finish first in 3 hours, 12 minutes, and 16 seconds.

As always, we appreciate the packages and letters that you continue to send. Your hard work and love keeps us going everyday. We look forward to seeing you soon.



Sincerely,  
Quickstrike 6/Quickstrike 7



# Task Force 2-5 Bobcats' Newsletter



## *Battle Base,*

*Season's Greetings to all B Company Family and Friends. It is beginning to look a lot like Christmas here at FOB Ripley (Not Really). The mountains in the distance are snow capped, the Company TOC and some of the Soldiers tents had assortments of Christmas decorations in place hanging from the walls and rafters of our tents. The Chaplain's band visited the FOB to play and sing Christmas songs for the Soldiers. It is hard to believe that Christmas came so fast for us. For most of the Soldiers, Christmas sprinted right past and if it wasn't for the decorations, it would have been just another day here in Afghanistan. The Chow Hall did have an outstanding spread of food for Christmas day.*

*The pace in country has not slowed down for B Company at all. We have conducted several missions in December. One of the best missions was to the Nesh District. We went there for one day to check on some projects that we had started and to start some new projects. Some of the projects we started on the trip were two schools, one which will hold about 300 kids; the other will hold about 150. Both of those schools should be complete by the end of March. We also contracted for three drinking wells and two irrigation wells for some of the villages in Nesh. We checked on an irrigation well that we had contracted during our last mission to Nesh. It was rewarding to see the results from that one well. It was pumping out a lot of water, and the locals dug irrigation ditches to water a bunch of fields that they were going to now plant wheat in. It was nice to see that what we are doing over here is making a difference for the locals.*



*As we fly through the Christmas and New Year, our thoughts always turn towards family and friends, and we greatly appreciate all the support the Company has received from back home. The stockings that the FRG sent were delivered by Santa on Christmas night. The Soldiers enjoyed getting those, and thanks once again to all the members of the FRG who have worked countless hours helping with the morale of the Company, and helping each other out back in Hawaii. I can not thank all those involved with the FRG enough for all they have done.*

*As we get closer and closer to our year mark of being in Afghanistan, we hear more and more talk about redeployment. We all look forward to when we are reunited with family and friends and end our tour over here. I know all who read this are looking forward to that homecoming.*

*Once again, the Company is doing a great job, and we hope that everyone had a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I know you look forward to next year when you can spend Christmas and New Years with your loved ones.*



*SGT Carey standing guard in Nesh during the sunrise*

*Sincerely,  
Battle 6/Battle 7*



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## Cobra Base,

Events with Team Cobra remain in constant motion. There is never a dull moment and the men are constantly busy accomplishing all tasks to a very high standard. December has been a very busy month for Team Cobra. We are continuing to build Cobra Base and it is looking very good. We now have a new TOC that is made of concrete, where the company offices are, as well as the communications room. There is also a brand new gym and aid station made of concrete that have really brought Cobra Base to life. We also have a phone and an internet center so we can continue to keep in touch with friends and loved ones. It has been a big morale booster! 3<sup>rd</sup> platoon and the AT platoon conducted operations that made national news. They did a great job and the mission was a success. For the rest of December, 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and the AT platoon have continued to conduct many missions ranging from security patrols to village assessments and medical aid missions. So far, we linked up with the district leadership of the towns and identified 15 projects that range from water wells to small schools in order to help out the government, people and the economy. 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon remains in Deh Rawod with the Special Forces detachment. They are doing a phenomenal job for the Task Force conducting daily patrols and providing force protection for FOB Tycz. The entire Cobra Team has done a great job on every mission and the men are motivated and excited about what is still to come.

We have had a few new additions to the Company leadership:  
SFC Fabre (1<sup>st</sup> Platoon PSG), SFC Thompson (2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon PSG), and 1LT Womack (AT Platoon Leader). Also, some additions to the Soldier ranks: PVT Gilkison (2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon), SGT Reddish (2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon), SGT Sullivan (2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon), and SPC Dayadantes (81mm Mortars). They are all new to our family and their impact has already strengthened the team.

We have had a few Cobras become very proud fathers this month. SSG Feldt (3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon) is the proud father of a baby girl, 1LT Moultrie (Task Force Physician Assistant) had a baby girl, and SPC Franco (AT Platoon) also had a baby girl. 1LT Moultrie and SPC Franco are on leave this month enjoying a much needed break and quality time with their wives and newborns. 1LT Foreman is also on leave as I write this letter and should be a new father before he returns. Congratulations to all the families.



The Soldiers here at Cobra Base have received lots of packages and letters and we can't thank you all enough for your support and dedication. Here is a picture of many of the packages that came in just before Christmas. As the holidays approach and we reflect, we are reminded of the many sacrifices that have been made in this company by the Soldiers and their families. We also remember the ultimate price that has been paid by four of our friends and brothers-in-arms. They were great friends, fathers, brothers, and sons. They will live on in our hearts forever. Please continue to pray for all of the Soldiers and their families. May all of you have a wonderful holiday season and a Belated Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Sincerely,  
Cobra 6/Cobra 7



# Task Force 2-5 Bobcats' Newsletter



## WarDog Base,

*I hope your holidays are going well. I know this time of year is difficult when families are apart, but I hope you were able to find some joy with the family and friend that are near you. Thanks to all of you who worked so hard on the Christmas stockings that were sent to the Soldiers. It helped us get into the holiday mood.*

*On December 4th we stuck to the tradition in the Field Artillery and held a Saint Barbara celebration. Although no awards were given out this year it was good to take our minds off of the daily routine and cut loose a little bit. We invited Redlegs from all over the Forward Operating Base to include the fire supporters, Q-36 Radar section from the California National Guard, and the Air Defense Artillery. About sixty Redlegs in all attended the event. The Dining Facility cooked up some steaks for us and several Soldiers took the initiative and decorated the mess tent with Christmas lights and decorations. For many Soldiers this was their first Saint Barbara celebration and dining in, and everyone had a good time. We look forward to putting together an event that includes wives when we return.*

*On December 12th, 2-5 IN hosted the Honolulu Marathon here at FOB Ripley. Around 200 Soldiers traveled here to participate in the race. Only a handful of Wardogs participated. Many wanted to, but couldn't due to tasking to support the event. SPC Diaz and SPC Ramirez were the only Wardogs to finish the 26.2 miles. Their reward was a one day all expense paid trip to Kandahar Airfield to enjoy a USO comedy show that featured many popular comedians to include Robin Williams.*

*Another baby was born this month. Joshua Zane Martinez was born on 6 December. I hope that Jessica is doing well and is enjoying having her husband home for R&R leave.*

*The leave plan continues to go as planned and by the middle of February all Soldiers will be back. The battery will be back to 100% strength so we can conduct section certifications prior to redeployment.*

*Despite being separated from our families during the holidays, we are trying to make the best of the holidays as we hope you are. We continue to conduct missions and support TF Bobcat at FOB Ripley and TF Steel at Kandahar Airfield as necessary while staying safe. We miss you all and look forward to being with you again.*



*Sincerely,*

*Wardog 6/Wardog 7*

## Task Force Fire Support Element,

*December has come and gone in what seems like record time. With the holiday season upon us we think of loved ones often while continuing to take the fight to the enemy. The Fire Support Element has been persistent honing our skills as we conducted missions and training in and around the FOBs. We have taken to the phrase "Getter done" and applied it all the missions in which we undertake. It is to the point that SPC Harvel has been attempting to fill every sentence with the phrase.*

*We wish you Happy Holidays and Happy Birthday to the following Soldiers born in the month of December: 1LT Bowman, SPC Workman, and SPC Matterson. We will see you in the New Year.*

*Sincerely,*

*FSE*





# Task Force 2-5 Bobcats' Newsletter



## Task Force Engineers "GET 'R'DUNN",

Merry Christmas! Winter is finally here, and our Sappers are cozy in their heated tents and multiple layers of winter-issued equipment. It hasn't snowed yet at two of our FOBs, but the rain and addition of cloudy days marked the change in season. 1<sup>st</sup> Squad is the only squad that has had snow, which I know SPC Wainright was excited about. 2<sup>nd</sup> Squad is not so lucky. However, the increased rains have made the desolate Oruzgan Bowl less dusty. SSG Hessler, SGT Smith, SGT Lyda, and I ran the Honolulu marathon in Tarin Kowt with SSG Hessler carrying the B Company guidon for 20 of the 26.2 miles. 3<sup>rd</sup> Squad's FOB is a little small to be running marathons, but they do have great scenery. Of course, since they finally received the headquarters TV, I don't think they notice the scenery unless on mission. Headquarters lack of a TV greatly increased the work habits of SPC Hibler, PFC Mitchell, and SPC Elmore, who have been doing a great job supervising local national workers and digging holes with the S/E. SFC Dockery has been leading by example in the gym ensuring that all the headquarters guys double their max bench! As much as we want to spend Christmas with our family and loved ones, we drive on knowing we have your love and support.



Sincerely,  
Castle 26/ Castle 27

## Task Force ADA,

Aloha to the friends and family of 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon. On December 4<sup>th</sup> the platoon leadership attended our own Saint Barbara's Day celebration with A/3-7 FA, which consisted of a great steak dinner and grog bowl ceremony. Even though it was freezing everyone had a good time. On December 12<sup>th</sup> we hosted the Honolulu Marathon where over 200 soldiers from around Afghanistan showed up to run. We helped by providing security outside the FOB and our very own SFC Gonzalez ran a couple laps. SSG Rogers, SPC Cooper and SPC Wiram helped out THT by augmenting their security force. It was a nice change for them to get out and do something different. On Christmas Eve General Schoemaker visited us to say hello to the Soldiers around the FOB.

We have a couple birthdays and an anniversary to celebrate in December. SPC Drayton celebrated his birthday on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, and SPC Cooper celebrated his birthday on December 31<sup>st</sup>. SGT Malone and his wife Natasha celebrated their anniversary on December 23<sup>rd</sup>.

All the Soldiers appreciate all the nice packages they've received during this month. We would like to wish everyone back home a belated Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



Sincerely,  
Old School 6/ Old School 7