



Task Force 2-5 Bobcat's Newsletter



Task Force Bobcat,

Aloha again from Oruzgan Province, Afghanistan! I want to start by calling your attention to the 25th Infantry Division (Light) Headquarters on Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. The Division Headquarters, Fernandez Hall, is named in honor of SP4c Daniel Fernandez, C Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment (Mech) at Chu Chi, Hau Nghia Province on 18 February 1966. During a voluntary mission to aide a wounded comrade, an intensive firefight ensued. During this mission, SP4c Fernandez sacrificed his own life to save the lives of four other comrades by diving onto a grenade that would have killed or injured the entire rescue party. This was the first Congressional Medal of Honor awarded to a 25th ID Soldier during the Vietnam War. Ultimately, 21 Division Soldiers would be awarded the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military decoration.

Not too many days ago, in a letter to the FRG, I detailed the tragic loss of SSG Brian S. Hobbs and CPL Kyle K. Fernandez, two of our Brother Bobcats. 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. They were men exactly like our forefathers of the 5th RCT in Korea and 5th Regiment from Vietnam! We plan to dedicate two buildings on FOB Ripley to their memory and we are working to accomplish the same in Kabul at CFC-A Headquarters.

One of my mentors, years ago, stated that "We are all in this together". The recent activities of the Rear Detachment and the collective FRGs to support the hurting Bobcat Ohana is commendable and proof that "We are indeed, all in this together". Thanks for the great efforts and work that each of you put forth to support the affected Ohanas. Your efforts have not gone unrecognized by the division's Rear Detachment Leadership as several individuals commented on how well the unit / FRG took care of affected families and conducted the difficult ceremonies and support activities associated with such a tragedy. Please continue your great support to the affected families and Soldiers. Mahalo!

Our efforts and sacrifice have not been for nothing... Freedom truly is not free, even when we are fighting to provide Freedom to others and helping others secure individual liberties for themselves.

Our last mission - Operation Outlaw took us back into Cehar Cineh to look for ACM, build relationships with the local government, survey medical and educational needs, and establish greater security. The mission was a great success. Any stories regarding us wading through non-descript, smelly liquid throughout the night is sheer fabrication... what was that stuff? This particular mission was truly a Task Force effort and netted numerous long term gains for our larger mission and destabilization of the Taliban.

FOB construction and mid-tour leave continues. Things are getting better every day! I remain humbled by the dedication and perseverance of our Bobcats! It has been my pleasure to be the Bobcat Commander for the past 28 months. I am extremely proud of the individual and unit level accomplishments. Our mission is noble and just. We will succeed!

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

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





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Viper Base

It's been a trying, but telling time for the Vipers and Task Force Bobcat. In a span of a few days, four Task Force Soldiers were injured while in contact with the enemy and an additional two gave their lives for freedom. HHC Viper SSG Brian Hobbs from Mesa, AZ, was killed in action in the Cehar Cineh District. Those wounded were Vipers- SPC Joey Banegas, SPC Jeffery Guerin, LT Drew Sloan, and SFC Helbert Izquierdo (although a C Co PSG, he spent one year as Support PSG and another year as the AT PSG). These are the brave men we honor in this issue for their sacrifice. The experience has certainly tested our Soldiers' mettle and all of our hearts go out to the families of those Soldiers killed and wounded in action. Through all of this the true spirit of the Bobcats has shone through.

Soldiers have bonded together to remember the better times they had with their brothers-in-arms and have vowed that their memories will live on through them forever. Rather than withdraw into the relative safety of the FOBs, the Vipers have declared their commitment to the mission we have come to do, making each and every one of us proud. Patrols continue to scour the countryside for the individuals responsible for the actions that took place. However, rather than ignore the peoples' needs out of frustration, we chose to embrace them. "Let's not confuse the good people here, with those bad actors that are working against us," were the words of wisdom LTC Sellers used to remind each of us there was a mission left to perform. The Vipers have responded in-turn, continuing to push projects for wells, schools, and trash disposal programs, among other reconstruction projects.

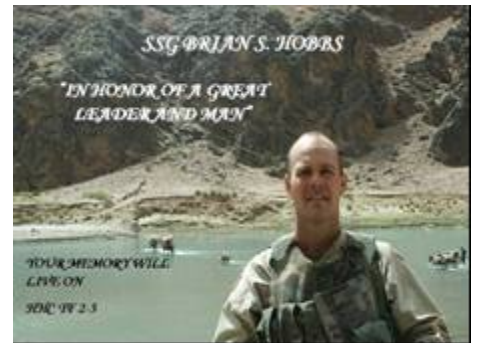
The Scouts and Mortars continue to perform superbly at Anaconda. The Mortar Platoon Leader, LT Bryon Olsen, left the HHC Family to become the B Company XO. In the meantime, SSG Nathan Scott is running the show out at Anaconda and doing a fine job. The Scouts have been given a big responsibility working in the Chora District to improve the living conditions and develop the local government in the area, but it's one they're ready to tackle. "You get the feeling that you're accomplishing something good for the people of this country," says LT Huston. "It's amazing to see how the people warm up to your presence, to the point where they welcome you because they know you're trying to improve their situation," responded SSG Timothy Johns, a Scout Section Leader, when asked what he enjoyed most about working in that district.

The AT Platoon and the second 81mm Mortar Section out at Cobra are busy as usual, but doing well. "We're definitely working hard out here, but I'm glad because it really makes time fly by out here," says SFC Shawn Kennair, the Mortar Platoon Sergeant. His feelings were seconded by SPC Tod Lanki, who said, "we're out working patrols just about every day, but each day that flies by brings me that much closer to BBQs back on those Hawaiian beaches." SPC Lanki was our grilling expert back when we deployed to West Point, so I can attest to how good the food is at those BBQs.

At Forward Operating Base (FOB) Ripley in Tarin Kowt, spirits remain high and days filled with activity. The S-1 section is busy moving people on and off leave. They have done an outstanding job getting people back with their friends and families. CPL Michael Asuncion summed it up best saying, "All the hard work is well worth it. When you see the smiles on peoples' faces and hear how much they enjoyed leave, you know you're doing something good for the Task Force." The S-2 and S-3 sections are also busy focusing the Task Force's efforts. "I'm glad we're getting to focus the companies' efforts in reconstruction; that way we can ensure the neediest are getting the attention they deserve. It really just gives me a warm, fuzzy feeling," says Major Beissel, the Task Force S-3. Last, but not least, the S-4 section continues to push the crucial supplies that all the Bobcats need. The Vipers also welcome the new S-4, LT Drew Pearson, coming hot off being the Rear Detachment Commander; and wish CPT Ed Kennedy good luck in his new job as a Battle Captain. LT Pearson's incoming words summarized the work ethic of the S-4 shop. "If it takes an hour of extra work to make sure our guys are taken care of, then were going to run that extra mile for them."

Finally, myself, First Sergeant Keith, and LT Chris Gonzalez, the XO, would like to thank you all for your love and support. Please keep all of the BOBCATS in your thoughts and hearts, especially our fallen comrades.

Sincerely,
Viper 6/Viper 7





Task Force 2-5 Bobcat's Newsletter



Quickstrike Base

Half-way home - the light at the end of the tunnel is finally in sight. Even the tunnel itself has become a shade lighter as our enemies in Khas Uruzgun and Chora have decided to take a breather, allowing us to focus our efforts on the elections and other events. A Company Soldiers and attachments continue to impress me as they selflessly sacrifice the wonderful comforts of home to help the less fortunate. Here is what we've done since I last wrote:

1LT Ben Kirby, SFC Mario Miramontez, and 1LT Barry Huston led their platoons in an effort to secure fifteen polling sites in the Khas Uruzgun and Chora Districts. With the exception of a small skirmish in the village of Margunday, a missing bridge (destroyed to hinder voter turnout), and a light snow fall, election-day went off without a hitch and Afghans came out in droves to elect their new president. Feel proud that your loved one played an instrumental role in the nascent of a new democracy.

The right to brush ones teeth was part of the personal hygiene class SSG Garcia and SPC Abitz taught to the third, fourth, and fifth graders of the local primary school. We volunteered our services after witnessing the meager success of the current adult generation. The hygiene classes, along with the medic's weekly clinic sick calls have made a tremendous impact on the Afghan population.

Now that the kids are healthy, we are beginning a soccer and volleyball league for the schools in the Khas Uruzgun District. Our goal is to build a sports complex, organize teams, practice, and order equipment this winter and start the season next spring. We had a humbling beginning as the Shazaman High School volleyball team beat us 15 to 3 and 15 to 6 – so we challenged them to a game of football.

Speaking of football, Jen Billiot, don't even think of beating your husband in a game of John Madden playstation football. Luckily for you, you might not have to he will be so sick of the game by the time we get home. We finally have TV and playstation in our MWR tent, and rumor has it we will be getting phones, internet and gym equipment soon. Life is getting better, but of course, it will never compare to home.

Congratulations to SGT TJ Iversen and wife Felicia for the birth of their new daughter and to SPC Chris Watts and his wife Rachel, for the birth of their new son.

Thanks for the mail, please keep it coming. We love you and miss you and cannot wait to see you. Please be safe until we return

Sincerely,

Quickstrike 6/Quickstrike 7





Task Force 2-5

Bobcat's Newsletter



Battle Base

This is from a letter I wrote to friends and family explaining what we are doing over here and what took place during the elections. Once again, after reading this, I hope you understand the great job your loved ones are doing and we are grateful for the sacrifices you are making at home to assist us in our mission.

As far as the future of this country, we just finished with the most important mission that I have been involved with in my military career. As I put out the order for the company and read the mission statement, it hit me that it was the most important mission statement I had written for an order.

It was truly a very unique time in my career to be able to be in command of a company for this mission. During this operation, I had my company spread out in four separate locations with a distance of over 150KM from me and my elements, plus one platoon in Kabul for security operations there. To look at the responsibility that was put upon my Soldiers is unreal. It is something that most people in the civilian world will never understand. I had junior leaders in my company, enlisted and officers, responsible for working with United Nations Representatives, Afghan National Army Soldiers, Afghan Militia Forces, Afghan Police Forces, and Afghan government officials all at the same time. This was all done with only one or two translators. A lot of drawings in the sand and hand and arm gestures were used to assist in the language barrier when a translator was not available. They were coordinating the security for the Afghan people to be able to get to and from the polling sites. All of this to prevent an "enemy" who's sole purpose was to disrupt the election in any way possible.

This mission for my Soldiers started the morning of the 7th when they left our base camp in Tarin Kowt by ground convoy to get to respective areas of responsibility. It started as soon as the convoys departed, and did not end until the filled out ballots were returned safely. In the areas that my company was responsible for, we had over 15,000 Afghans come to the sites and vote, this included over 1,000 females which is a huge accomplishment in our area of operation. For our Task Force area we had over 150,000. This was done with only "minor" disruptions caused by Taliban forces. In the district of Nesh, we had an IED set up during the night on a road leading to one of the polling sites the day before the elections. One of my engineers who has had limited training on how to deal with IEDs blew the IED in place to prevent it from killing anyone who may have driven over it. The morning of the elections, 9 October 2004, a 107mm rocket was located aimed at a polling site. It was disarmed and destroyed. The last event was a mine strike. It happened in the late afternoon on the day of the elections and it struck some Afghans returning home on a tractor after voting. Their tractor ran over a mine buried in the road. It happened about two kilometers from a polling site, but it did not cause any disruption in the voting process. Unfortunately, two civilians were killed in the blast and one wounded. My Soldiers assisted at the site to help the wounded, but had to quickly return to the polling sites they were at to continue with security in case the mine attack was a diversion. We felt it was done so far from the polling site to act as a diversion or out of desperation since they were not able to get any closer due to the security that was in place.

The atmosphere at all of the polling sites was almost festive, and the people for sure took great pride in what was happening. We saw car after car packed with people being brought in from locations that were not near polling sites, and tractors rumbled in pulling wagons loaded with people. At the site I was at, we had over 1,400 males come through and vote. At my site, I would swear that there are no females in this country. The females in Nesh had a separate location set up in a village at a courtyard of an old village elder. It was truly a once in a life time opportunity to have front row seats to the whole process. All of this was done with Soldiers whose average age runs from 18-25. Soldiers who just left high school a year ago, Soldiers who have never voted yet in a American election, and Soldiers who have been risking their lives since the day they set foot on the ground here. This is truly Amazing! For me, it is worth it. I will not speak for my Soldiers, but from their actions, I feel that most of them feel it is worth it, especially after being witness to the election process. That is a process we have been working towards since we got here, and it does not end now, nor will it end any time soon. Some contest the validity of the elections, but from what I have seen of this country, it is unreal that the elections took place at all.

Sincerely,
Battle 6/Battle 7



Task Force 2-5 Bobcat's Newsletter



Cobra Base

To say the least, this month has been the most testing time of our lives. On 14 October, 2004, two of our most beloved Soldiers, friends, and brothers in arms were killed by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) on the side of a road northwest of Cobra Base. Corporal Kyle Fernandez and Staff Sergeant Brian Hobbs were exceptional men, to say the least. They were two of the most caring, intelligent, thoughtful and inspiring people that have ever graced the ranks of Cobra Company. It was more than a pleasure to serve our country side by side with them: it was an honor. Every Soldier will carry a piece of their memory for the rest of our lives.

Even the most thoughtfully constructed words cannot express our sorrow to the families of these spectacular men. Both men were married with children. We wish that we could be in the states to console the families in person, but our mission here continues on, as it must. Your husbands and fathers were the best of the best in C Company. Kyle always did his best to keep other Soldiers' spirits high, even out at our distant Operating Base. He spoke of his wife and children daily and told us stories of how tough his children were. He was an unfailing source of morale for all Soldiers here. Brian was a mild-spoken, yet his leadership was felt strongly by anyone who encountered him. He always had a kind word and a piece of guidance for anyone who needed it. His wife and children were the source of all of his pride and spirituality.

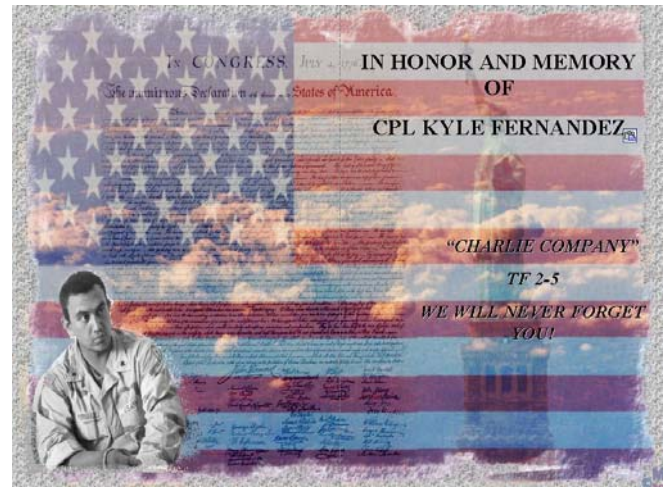
Specialist Joey Banegas, Specialist Jeffrey Guerin and Sergeant First Class Helbert Izquierdo were also injured in the attack. 1st Lieutenant Andrew Sloan was also injured in a different attack a week prior. Our prayers and constant thoughts are with them throughout the healing process. We can hardly wait until the day when we can rejoin our brothers on our beloved and deeply missed island home.

Our work here continues on, as it must. Currently, C Company is participating in an extended Task Force mission, returning to the area where we were attacked, in an effort to sway popular opinion there. Our actions will be ones of guarded professionalism. The memories of Kyle and Brian require no less. Both men had a fondness for the beautiful people of this country. A few evil people will not sway us from the course of justice.

Cobra Base continues to improve at a rapid pace. A team of National Guardsmen have flown in to build frames with wooden floors for our tents. We now have a Cafeteria tent, and there is even a rumor that we may have hot showers in a month or so!

The events of the past weeks have changed all of our lives forever. One positive aspect is that we have found a new inspiration to carry us through day to day activities. Rest assured that all precautions are being taken to protect your husbands and fathers. We are increasingly vigilant and have become closer to each other than we ever imagined.

We want to send our love to everyone at home and abroad. We miss you all and can hardly wait until we come home.



Sincerely,
Cobra 6/Cobra 7



Task Force 2-5 Bobcat's Newsletter



WarDog Base

October was one of the busier months for the Wardogs since arriving in country. Sections from both Kandahar Airfield and FOB Ripley in Tarin Kowt supported the Afghan National Election Process at the beginning of the month, with elections held on 9 October. The Afghans may have thought we were firing our howitzers to celebrate their elections that night, however, that was not the case as we fired illumination rounds to support of the patrols. The followers of the Muslim religion (which the majority of Afghans are) have begun to observe the holy month of Ramadan, which is a special time for inner reflection, devotion to God and spiritual revival.

At Tarin Kowt, the Wardogs continued to provide protection to the force with the howitzers and from the guard towers around the perimeter that I'm sure they have described to you by now. Another important additional duty we performed was to guard detained local nationals. They were well taken care of while in our custody, with food, shelter, and in some cases, medical care was provided. SFC Brown (Smoke) and the Battery Commander, 1st and 5th Howitzer Sections, along with some FDC personnel were air lifted to FOB Cobra to provide fire support for a Task Force Operation. It is expected that they will return to FOB Ripley in a few days. Some of us who remained at FOB Ripley attended a class given by Drug Enforcement Agency agents to make us aware of possible hazards which we may encounter while conducting searches of suspected ACM sites.

At Kandahar Airfield, 4th and 6th Howitzer Sections with their supporting HQ and FDC elements have been sharing the responsibilities of force protection with C Battery, 3-7 FA. In addition, they also have been tasked to provide security at FOB Tiger where the Engineers are working on a road that will connect Kandahar to Tarin Kowt.

Several major improvements have been made to FOB Ripley in Tarin Kowt. Large amounts of gravel have been laid on the trails to keep the notorious TK dust down. A small shower facility with hot running water has allowed us to start taking an occasional hot shower to clean up. And a small laundry facility has been opened which will allow us to put away the buckets, scrub brushes and washboards during the cold winter months.

We pass on our congratulations to SPC (P) Gibbs who passed the SGT/E-5 Promotion Board in October with a score of 148 out of a possible 150 points. Also, SPC (P) Allison will be promoted to Sergeant on 1 November following his appearance at the board in September where he also was selected as the Task Force Soldier of the Month. This month the Wardogs also welcomed 1LT Thomas Meares and 1LT Daniel Oglesby. 1LT Meares came to us from serving as a Fire Support Officer with Task Force 2-27 and 1LT Oglesby came to us from FOB Anaconda where he was serving as a Fire Support Officer with A Company.

October was a month of changes for the Wardogs but one thing that has not changed is how much we miss our family and friends back home. We thank you for your continued support. Special thanks from the 1SG for the post cards sent by Mrs. Ellie Lemler and the Family Support Group. They are proudly displayed at our Command Post for all the Wardogs to enjoy.

Sincerely,
Wardog 6/Wardog 7





Task Force 2-5 Bobcat's Newsletter



Task Force Fire Support Element

Early on the morning of 9 October, the streets and alleys of the Oruzgan Province were a buzz with people as they bustled safely to polling centers under the watchful eyes of TF Bobcat fire supporters. With little incident the free people of Afghanistan turned out in large numbers to cast their votes and speak their mind, on who will represent them as their first President to be elected by the people. Your husbands, sons, fathers and bothers have put their time, effort and lives on the line to allow people to vote freely. Every day we long to be home with our loved ones... but know that our efforts are worthy of the sacrifice.

All our Forward Observer teams and the Combat Observation Lasing Team with the Task Force elements continue to do an outstanding job in support of their platoon missions as part of post elections security. While not out on extended mission, the teams routinely run 2-3 operations a day including numerous weapons cache recoveries- making the country a safer place for its children. The pace is rigorous, but the men have more than stood up to the challenge. We thank everyone for your continued support of all deployed Soldiers, and the support you show our families at home.

Sincerely,
FSE

Task Force Engineers" GET 'RDUNN"

Another month has passed marking the midpoint in our tour in Afghanistan, and our Sappers are hanging in there. The focus for October was the Afghanistan Presidential Elections and the "GET 'RDUNN" platoon played an important role in ensuring the success of the elections in the Oruzgan Province. 1st Squad continues to build up their FOB in Khas Uruzgan with SSG Cagle leading the way. 2nd Squad remains at Tarin Kowt and enjoyed their first hot shower since Ghazni. Not withstanding, B Company Commander submitted SGT Petty for an award for his bravery and valor during the elections. SGT Wells handed over the reigns of 3rd Squad to SSG Batcham, the new addition to the 2nd Platoon. SSG Batcham has already picked up where SGT Wells left off building the in upgrading the FOB Cobra and supervising his squad's Sapper missions. SGT Kendrick joined the headquarters team in Tarin Kowt and has become a vital asset getting things done with his SFE. All in all, our Sappers have done a great job for the first half of the deployment and will continue the second half with the same passion, intensity, and professionalism that makes us all proud!

Sincerely,
Castle 26

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



Task Force 2-5 Bobcat's Newsletter



Task Force ADA

Aloha to the friends and family of 1st Platoon, A/1-62 ADA. October was a big month for our platoon, Task Force, and the country of Afghanistan. We were able to send two Avenger teams out (SSG Madison, SGT Hicks, SPC Briseno; SSG Shafer, SPC Thornton, and SPC Mieth) to assist in the security of polling sites for Afghanistan's presidential election on October 9th. The guys were happy to get out of guard duty for a few days and do something different. SFC Gonzalez ensured the guys were ready by running a range to ensure that our weapons functioned properly. Once the elections were over with we went back to our security duties on the guard towers.

Well, FOB Ripley finally has hot showers and a laundry service for everyone to use. The guys will be really happy that they don't have to do laundry by hand anymore. Over here, when you do laundry by hand, you're not really getting clothes clean; you're just dirtying the water. So everyone will definitely enjoy cleaner clothes. The guys on the towers have been enjoying hot showers for a little while, they've been boiling the water over a fire and pouring it in their "shower unit," but at least now they can enjoy a shower without scalding themselves. Slowly but surely our living conditions continue to improve.



Several couples celebrated their wedding anniversary in October. We would like to congratulate SPC Kevin Briseno and his wife Diana who celebrated their anniversary on October 2nd, SPC Andrew Miars and his wife Mary who celebrated their anniversary on October 27th, and SFC Gonzalez and his wife Brenda who celebrated their anniversary on October 29th.

We all hope everyone back home is doing well, we are all thinking of you. We appreciate everyone's support, whether it's through letters or packages.

*Sincerely,
Old School 10*