



Task Force 2-5 "Bobcats"

Newsletter



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Update from Afghanistan

Aloha from Tarin Kowt, Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan! Amazingly ALL of our equipment is now inside FOB Ripley, FOB Anaconda, or at the Rear CP in Kandahar! It only took two months to arrive. Things have changed drastically in the past month. In all locations, Bobcat Soldiers are working hard to improve their living space. Everyone has a large tent and increased space. Tier-three tents are complete at FOB Ripley and we are arranging for the materials at FOB Anaconda. The Bobcat SHANTY TOWN is torn down and we are inside the new accommodations. There are problems right now with power distribution so not all of the tents have lights or A/C due to insufficient power or broken generators... always something to work on! More generators are scheduled to arrive soon and we will resolve the power issues. The past month has been interesting and challenging. Despite all of the hardship and confusion, the one constant has been the Bobcat spirit... they are physically and mentally tough, ready for whatever mission is assigned.

We still maintain five locations in Afghanistan. Rear CP operations continue to improve in Kandahar. 3rd Platoon, Bushmasters remain in Kabul but will be relieved by 2nd Platoon in the near future to conduct Coalition Forces Command (CFC-A) security missions. B Co is doing a great job with this mission and it will become increasingly important as we approach the National Elections. 3rd Platoon C Company remains in Dey Rawoud to work with Special Operations personnel and Afghan National Army Forces. Recent activity in their area of operations has been handled extremely well with no casualties to Bobcats or SOF. The Taliban have not been so lucky and even were bold enough to come to the FOB hours after an engagement to seek medical treatment for their wounds... obviously with a different story... we treated them and also provided them a ride to the nearest detainment facility. The remainder of Cobra is on a mission now with a TBD return to FOB Ripley. Quickstrike at Khas Uruzgan continues to occupy FOB Anaconda. Recently they have had increased levels of ACM/Taliban activity that resulted in one destroyed HMMWV and the only injury was a perforated ear drum. Bushmasters are currently conducting operations out of FOB Ripley in Tarin Kowt. Recent successes in cache recovery decreased the number and type of weapons/munitions available to the ACM/Taliban. Enemy activity has increased slightly in the past two weeks. That means that there have been an increased number of incidents. It does not mean that we are in any more danger than before and it does not mean that they enemy is effective in his attacks. Remember that your Soldiers are professionals... they are disciplined, well trained, and well lead. They are doing a superb job here in difficult and austere environment.

Task Force Bobcat continues to work hard, 7 days a week, and untold hours per day. Be proud of them, I know I am! Afghanistan remains a dangerous place. We are not taking undue risk but constantly face the realities of a developing Afghanistan. I am confident in our Soldier's abilities. Their determination, dedication, courage, and their character are simply amazing. 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.

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

WOW time is flying!!! Aloha to the entire Viper family. This has been a month of many moves as most of you already know. I would first like to say farewell to 1SG Holloway who is now the OPS SGM, farewell to SFC IZZy who is now a PSG in C Company, and farewell to CPT Gohlach who is now the RD Commander. Most importantly, I would like to welcome 1SG Keith, the former Cobra 1SG. He is now the new HHC 1SG. With all that said, I would like to give the different sections and Platoons in HHC an opportunity to add some refreshing comments.

Mechanics

Talk about busy! Task Force 2-5 now has tripled the vehicles it normally has and maintains them with only four mechanics on loan from brigade. PFC Colquitt is temporarily on duty with C Company at a remote firebase in Dey Rawud. He is the primary mechanic for the C Company vehicles. This leaves PFC Earman, PFC Christopher, and SPC Adams to share tools at FOB Ripley to keep the 100 vehicle fleet rolling on missions around Tarin Kowt. Fortunately, 3-7 FA has their mechanic back from a mission to help out.

Scouts

Scouts out- Just as the last newsletter, the majority of the scouts remains forward at Firebase Anaconda. They have been working with the A Company in support of voter registration. "We like coming to the villages to help out with the security and village assessments, but we really fulfill our mission at night when we conduct the numerous counter recon patrols around the firebase to keep the enemy away," says SFC Armendariez, the Scout Platoon Sergeant. The Sniper section has been busy as a security force to the Task Force Commander. "As soon as we recover from operations, we have to prepare for close security operations for the Task Force Commander's many trips to visit the governor, or checkout the town," claims PFC Grantham. On the days the commander stays at FOB Ripley, the scouts have been teaching classes on all the weapons and equipment and help the Operations Sergeant prepare for LTC Sellers next trip out the wire.

Cooks

SSG Michalski heads up the 16 man food service team that serves over 900 meals a day. "The only way it works is if we stay a tight team," says SGT Kelly, a shift leader. There are five cooks detached from the section currently. They are cooking for the forward deployed companies. The rest of the cooks work all day to prepare a hot breakfast and dinner. "It wouldn't be so bad if it wasn't a 100 degrees everyday, all day," claims PFC Amezola. "So far we don't hear anyone complaining. They know the alternative is MREs. They do get disappointed when the "Reefer Van" is broke and they have to drink hot juice or soda, but they know the deal

Mortars

Since leaving the Ghazni Province the 81mm Mortar Platoon has been conducting split section operations. Alpha Section, led by 1LT Olsen, is currently supporting A Company (ACO) at Firebase Anaconda. SSG Scott, the section sergeant for Alpha Section, is busy with the additional duty of "Provincial Voting Officer, as A Company conducts voter's registration missions far to the north. Bravo Section, led by SFC Kennair, has conducted mobile village assessments and security patrols in and around FOB Ripley. The mortar platoon has recently incorporated a few 60mm mortar men from the line companies and formed a Charlie Section to man the large 120mm mortars at the Special Forces Base in Dey Rawud. "It will be sometime until we conduct conventional operations like we trained on at PTA or JRTC," claims SFC Kennair. "But the men are enjoying the real missions and the new techniques of operating here in Afghanistan."

Commo

For the past three months the 2-5 commo shop has been keeping communications up and running, even as we traveled from Ghazni to our new home in Tarin Kowt. SPC George has been doing the computer automations that connect us with brigade and rest of the Army via networks. PFC Vachelli has been laying wire for field phones around our 4 mile FOB. Now I have to tell him to bury it so people will quit walking on it and breaking the connection. PFC Smith is working hard on our new VIA-SAT and TAC-SAT radios making sure we can talk the long distance that separate our units. The Soldiers who make the commo platoon successful on the other end are SGT Takawo, SGT Addis, SGT Watts, and



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SPC Toro down in the line companies working hard at keeping the same equipment operating on the battlefield. No sooner than they return from one mission, they repair the equipment that infantry Soldiers destroy and off they go again. It's actually fun to watch the men respond to the demands of the duty. Additionally, CPT Hurlburt is the pay officer for the Task Force and this keeps him busy enough to let us do what needs to be done.

AT

Late July/ early August was busy for the men of the Bobcat AT Platoon. With barely a days rest between missions, they've been sent out roaming the Afghan countryside doing their best to ensure the safety of whatever line company they are currently assigned to. Most recently, the entire platoon was tasked to C Company for a mission that sent us deep into a suspected Taliban fighter area. For ten days, AT gun trucks prowled in and around villages intimidating the Taliban and allowing the Afghan citizens the opportunity to register to vote in the national elections. While the days were long and the journey was especially grueling, the men held up very well and solidified their reputation as some of the finest Soldiers in the Battalion. As an additional note, 1LT Chris Gonzales has moved up to the company XO position, and 1LT Sloan has been appointed to fill his shoes as the new AT Platoon Leader.

S1

The S1 section is busy as always. We have been spread out and stretched thin. However, as September starts we are back on track. CPL A returned from emergency leave and SGT Rigdon returned from R&R Leave last month. Currently, PFC Bamman is enjoying a little R&R time. PFC Lobos is now married to the KAF Mailroom. SGT Junk is doing his best to reenlist Soldiers. SGT Stafford has been the least busy of all of us, but that is a good thing. SSG Pepin is doing his best to stay clean, and stay on top of all the PAC actions. The Chaplain and Savusa are praying for our safety. We appreciate all the packages and letters from home.

S4

The S4 section recently lost the hard working 1LT Pedroza as he branch transferred Transportation Corps and moved to LTF 325. Jon's hard work and assistance is missed greatly and we wish him and Natalia the best of luck. SFC Lowery is still superbly accomplishing the immense task of pushing all the supplies and equipment out of Kandahar and SSG Gachet and SPC Signoreli are truly bringing it all together out here in Tarin Kowt. SPC Buckman's carpentry skills have been vital to the construction of FOB Ripley and the S4 section gained an outstanding addition with SPC Labarca as the PX clerk. Everyone is doing a great job and we all appreciate your letters and packages tremendously.

EXPERIENCE OF A LIFE TIME (TF 2-5 MEDIC PLATOON)

The Lifeline platoon is still going strong after a few months in Afghanistan. We are really making a difference with the people of Afghanistan. As medics, we have been given the opportunity to see many types of injuries and illnesses within the local Afghan communities. This deployment has given us an opportunity to grow professionally and reflect on our personal lives. We miss our families and friends back in the states. The chance of a life time, to see and experience all this country has to offer, has impacted this platoon in more ways than one.



As always the men miss everyone back home, and pray that you are all doing well. GOD Bless you all and thank you for all your letters and packages

*Sincerely,
Viper 6/Viper 7*



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Quickstrike Base

Im A is working hard to establish a functional district government in Khas Uruzgun. We are working side by side with key players of the Afghan community to improve the quality of life, the quality and availability of education, voter registration efforts, and the effectiveness of health care. The following is a tangible list of the initiatives we have started to improve Afghanistan. Im A is making a difference.

Since arriving in Khas Uruzgun, Im A has conducted three MEDCAPS in which our medics treated over 300 patients with ailments ranging from the common cold, to joint pain, to malnutrition. We have treated over ten critically wounded patients, of whom four have had life threatening injuries and were evacuated to Kandahar for further care. 1LT Moultrie, SSG Garcia, and the Im A medics are doing a tremendous job in improving the health of the Afghan people and are working hard to implement measures that will allow the continuation of care when we depart.

SSG Cagle and Doru Khan, the Municipal Mayor of Uruzgun, have taken the lead on improving the local bazaar. They have contracted for the construction of five trash bins with trash service, four latrines with hand washing stations, and have repaired three of the five bazaar wells. By 1 September, all projects are scheduled to be complete. Upon completion, SSG Cagle will expand his contracting influence. We plan on building another well in the nearby village of Shekrah and building a \$100,000 boy's school in the village of Hosayni – both projects are approved and awaiting construction. The school supplies and toys you all have sent continue to make an enormous difference in the lives of Afghan children. We also purchased and are handing out Afghan flags to local elders to promote patriotism. And again, we are working hard to lay the groundwork for this progress to continue when we return home.

SSG Scott has done a tremendous job working with Mohammad Abraham, the Khas Uruzgun UNAMA representative, in registering Afghan voters for the upcoming presidential elections. Although we didn't meet our goal of 32,000 registered voters, we did jump from 13,000 voters registered to 27,352 – an increase of over 100% in just one month. We will continue to work together to promote voter awareness and security of polling sites.

Progress in these three areas and the reconstruction effort as a whole, would not be possible without the security provided by our Im A Soldiers. Unfortunately, not all Afghans want progress and reconstruction. Within the past week, we have encountered our first tangible opposition in the form of four Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). An IED struck a patrol on the 17th of Aug disabling our TAC-P vehicle. Thankfully, the passengers of the vehicle were physically unharmed (with the exception of one passenger perforating his ear drum). By the grace of God, the other three detonations had negligible effects on our forces. Thank you for your prayers, this is proof that He is listening.

Congratulations to SGT Graniela, SPC Huntoon, SFC Armendariez, SPC Carver and their loving families on their July and August wedding anniversaries. I know they all wish they were home to celebrate the occasion.

As always, our source of strength is derived from the selfless love of our families and friends at home who have written us religiously since our departure. We have had a few problems getting mail out in return, but trust and know that we are making the effort to show our gratitude. We think of you daily, and those that have not already had the opportunity, eagerly await their upcoming leave. God bless you and keep you safe until we return.



Sincerely,
Quickstrike 6/Quickstrike 7



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Bushmaster Base

As of the end of the month, we have been in Afghanistan 120 days. Time is going by fast, but a year away from family and friends is still a long time. The men of B Company continue to conduct our mission to a high standard. By the time you read this letter all of the guys in the company will be moved into our new 10 man tents. The best part is that they have wooden floors and AC!!!! So now, we will be able to get some relief from the 110 degree temperature.

This month we have conducted two different missions away from Tarin Kowt. 1st Platoon and 2nd Platoon went north to a province called Gezab. The mission went well, and the men helped to register over 4,000 Afghans citizens for the elections in October. The other mission took 1st Platoon to Cehar Cineh. They were involved with helping to assist the Afghan citizens with registering to vote.

One of the most rewarding missions was a MEDCAP we conducted in Gezab in which we treated over 250 locals for various medical issues from gunshots, to basic colds and fevers. As you can see in the picture, SPC Battiste is helping an Afghan citizen during the MEDCAP in Gezab.

This month B Company has also located (some by luck) 4 different caches, one of which included 5 artillery pieces. So to say the least, the company is busy helping Afghanistan become a better and more secure place.

With all things considered, August has been a good month for B Company. Hope all is going good for the families and friends of B Company back in the states. I know many of you have already had the pleasure of spending time with your loved one. All Soldiers will get the opportunity to come home and spend some well deserved time away from Afghanistan. Hope all is well with the FRG, and thanks for the care packages you sent for 4th of July. Take care and thanks for all the love and support from everyone, it means a lot to the Soldiers of B Company.

News from 2nd Platoon:

Greetings from the Soldiers of 2nd Platoon. As the Commander mentioned we have been extremely busy so far, but especially in the past month as the election draws near. Our mission to Gezab was by far the most fun we have had during our time here. We are continuing to work for and with the Afghan citizens as seen in the picture of SSG Peters preparing to pay a local national who worked with us in recovering a cache. Even though we spent the entire time working, we were able to find time to relax as well. Luckily, the second largest river in Afghanistan has its source near the town of Gezab and its crystalline blue waters were too much to pass up.

As I type this the men are moving out of their one-man tents and into the tents with air conditioning. We have been looking forward to this since our arrival in Tarin Kowt and consider it to be a real treat. 2nd platoon has excelled at every mission it has been assigned. I am extremely proud to serve with all of them and know they enjoy helping the people of Afghanistan.

Thank you all so much for your support, it makes a huge difference in each Soldier's day.

Sincerely,

Bushmaster 6/ Bushmaster 7





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Cobra Base

Things here in Afghanistan are ever changing which makes this deployment very exciting. Recently, we welcomed 1st Platoon, C Company (1LT Foreman and SFC Winters) back from Kabul. They did a great job at the CFC-A Headquarters and represented the Task Force well. We had the entire company together for an entire day! Once 1st platoon came back, 3rd platoon (SFC McWhorter) departed to a place we call Dey Rawoud (DRW). They are working hand in hand with a Special Forces unit in the area. They are conducting base security and patrols in the local area. 2nd platoon (LT Crowley) remains at Tarin Kowt conducting missions with true motivation and to standard. Just yesterday 2nd platoon went on a Quick Reaction Force mission where they air assaulted onto an objective to escort a local Afghan convoy to its final destination.



Additionally, some more changes include the leadership within the company the Cobra Company is sadden to say good bye to SFC Kaup, 1SG Keith, and LT Sloan. They will be working in HHC as S3 NCOIC, HHC 1SG, and AT Platoon leader respectively. A lot of knowledge and experience left with them and we will miss them dearly. We know they will all excel in their new arenas and do great things for the battalion. Currently, we have men like SSG Arroyo and SFC Mac who are stepping it up a notch and filling in the positions of greater responsibility. Along with farewells come hails, our new company 1SG is 1SG Chris Smith. 1SG Smith spent his platoon sergeant time with B Company and then went to the BN S3 shop for a spell before joining the Cobras. He comes from a fine background of military experience and we look forward to working with him.

In general, the Cobras are still braving the 120 degree days in the dust bowl of Tarin Kowt. The hottest days of this deployment will soon be over, something we are all looking forward to. Good news is that soon we will be much cooler because we have been helping build our new homes, which are large wooden floored buildings with tents thrown over the top of them. Sounds very Spartan, but they will have air conditioning and that will mean everything to us. It also means cold water because we can stuff water bottles in the cold air hose.

R&R started three weeks ago and some Soldiers such as SSG Delgado, SGT Bowling, SGT Petre, SPC Boyden, SPC Constantine, SPC Giorgenti, SSG Bridges, SGT Shively, PFC Jaramillo and a few others have been enjoying home or will soon be on their way. About every twenty days a new wave of Soldiers go home for leave to take a break from their mission in Afghanistan and see their families. No question, a well earned two weeks of rest.

Last week the Task Force hosted the Tropic Lightning Band. When the men heard a band was coming to Tarin Kowt to play at our FOB, all the men began spreading rumors that Metallica was playing. The performance was just as good the Tropic Lightning Band for putting on a great show in front of a tough crowd. As the band played, the cooks walked out with fifteen cases of non-alcoholic beer, which sent the crowd into frenzy! Overall, it was a fabulous time that reminded many Soldiers of their weekends back home.

In the future, word has it that C Company may be moving to another location. The men are excited by the recent news of relocating to another Firebase because the area we may go to has rarely been visited by Coalition Forces so there is a lot of work to be done in that region which will keep us busy for a long time. Whether or not we relocate will be determined soon enough, but in the meantime we continue to conduct missions around Tarin Kowt.

Until next time, know that the members of C Company are thinking of you all and expect many of us to be visiting home soon enough.

Sincerely,

Cobra 6/Cobra 7



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WarDog Base

For those of you who may not have heard, the WARDOG battery conducted its change of command ceremony on 11 AUG 04. CPT Eric Johnson is now working for Divarty and will soon take command of HHB/25th Division Artillery. I am CPT Mike Anders and I have been able to watch the WARDOGS from a short distance for the last year as I served as the Battalion Fire Support Officer for 2-5 "BOBCATS". This battery has a great reputation with the Bobcats and I am proud to serve as its commander.

We have been in Tarin Kowt now for almost two months and living conditions are steadily improving. The new air conditioned tents with wooden floors are constructed and we will move into them very soon. Soldiers are anxious to escape the heat and dust. Future plans include a new dining facility, a laundry facility, and buildings with office space. I have not been able to visit the Soldiers at Salerno yet, but I hear nothing but good things about them. 1LT Jesus and SFC Brown are doing a great job there working with 3/6 Marines and have been busy supporting them on missions.

Despite the current living conditions, your Soldiers are doing very well. Time is spent manning guard towers, howitzers, and training Soldiers on future positions in the sections. Unfortunately, we have been required to move two solid performing Soldiers, PV2 Harris and PV2 Morris, from A/3-7 FA to F/7 FA. FOX Battery is receiving their howitzers from Schofield Barracks soon and need more Soldiers to operate them.

On the home front, we'd like to welcome the newest addition to the WARDOGS, a new baby boy for the Mira family! Congratulations!!!! On behalf of all WARDOGS, we wish you the very best.

Some of you have enjoyed having you Soldier home for two weeks of R&R leave. The first rotation of Soldiers on leave is just now returning and the next rotation is on its way home. Our plan is to allow everyone the time for leave. Please be patient though as leave dates may change by a few days due to flight schedules.

Thank you very much for the banner that many put their hand prints, notes, and signatures on. It is proudly displayed in the battery command post.

Sincerely,
Wardog 6/Wardog 7

Task Force Fire Support Element

This past month the Bobcat fire supporters have maintained a steady pace of overnight missions into the far reaches of the Province. With elections fast approaching, operations supporting Voter Registration have become a common occurrence. We have deployed throughout the Bobcat AO in support of the United Nations missions to allow every Afghan the opportunity to register to vote. To be present and integral in the birth of a free nation is a great feeling for all the Soldiers here in the FSE.

The teams have been doing an outstanding job in support of their companies and platoons- all should be commended. Companies continue to run missions daily including numerous weapons cache recoveries- with Forward Observer support on each of these explorations. The pace is rigorous, but we've more than stood up to the challenge and rest assured that our families, friends, and homelands are missed as we work to find time to write and call.

Sincerely,





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Task Force Engineers" GET 'R DUNN"

Another month has past and that means we are one month closer to coming home. We have finally settled in our new home of Tarin Kowt, Afghanistan. Some might call it a dusty wasteland, but we have made great strides taking charge of the area and making it livable. Our new living quarters are finished, and the biggest problem facing us is deciding who gets to use the power outlets. I think SGT Petty's DVD player might have priority in his tent.

SSG Cagle and his crew still support A Company and continue to build up their firebase which is located in the northeast corner of the providence. Additionally, 1st Squad has already helped out the local community by providing tents and school supplies to a village whose school burnt down. 2nd Squad seems to have a real knack for finding ammunition caches and has helped make the local area safer by removing them. 3rd Squad continues to provide the critically important camp security that keeps us all safe. That does not mean they don't have their stories. SPC Marshall and PVT Flippen will have a difficult time keeping quiet about their time spent with "special" units. Headquarters remains busy with SPC McFarland receiving valuable experience giving medical aid to wounded locals and PFC Mitchell gaining leadership experience supervising local workers in the class IV yard.

"ESSAYONS!" has summed up the efforts of our Sappers thus far. Everyone in the GET 'R DUNN platoon has put forth the time and energy needed to ensure the success of every mission. This, of course, would not be possible without your love, support, and care packages! We love you and cannot wait to see you again.

Sincerely,
Castle 26

Task Force ADA

This month has been relatively slower for us, which is a welcomed break. Currently we man two guard towers on the outskirts of the base. We should be sending our Avenger teams back out on missions in the near future. Our living conditions continue to improve here at FOB Ripley, slowly but surely. All the living quarters are finished and they are ready for everyone to start moving in. The only thing we're waiting for is electricity, but that doesn't matter too much when we've been living in the dirt. This month was also a big month for celebrations. We started our R & R leave and already have a couple of guys back. SFC Gonzalez and SGT Hicks came back with smiles on their faces. As they should, SFC Gonzalez and his wife Brenda gave birth to their son Ian Gonzalez on July 28th. He made it just in time to see his son born. SGT Hicks was recently married over his leave in Tennessee to his fiancé Casy Campbell. They will hold a formal celebration upon his return back from Afghanistan in Tennessee. SPC Miars and his wife Mary also had a child, Walker, on July 27th. My wife, Kathryn, and I celebrated our 1st Anniversary on the 9th of August. We want to thank all the families and friends for your continued support through the sending of packages, letters, and emails.

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