

26 November 2010

Operation Touch of Home,

I want to personally take the time to write and thank you all for taking the time to send care packages to my Soldiers of 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, 116<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company! I can't tell you how happy it makes my Soldiers to see the support we get from our Nation and people like you.

First let me tell you a little about what we do here. The people in Afghanistan are nice for the most part. The majority of them agree with us being here and I believe is a good thing that will help them in the future. The kids are nice and very poor! They're always asking for the same 3 things, water, pens and money. For the most part we always give them water and many of people like you have sent a few packages of pens that we normally pass out to them in like 5 minutes after receiving them. For some reason they love black pens, don't ask me why. Even after you give them something they still want more and when any of my Soldiers give them one thing the kids fight over it. I try my best to always give to the youngest ones but the big kids act like bullies, but understand that it is in their culture for grown-ups to intervene when kids act badly. ALL ELDERS are respected regardless if they are related to the child or not.


We wake up anywhere between 4 and 6 am (depending on what time we are going on mission). We do personal hygiene (shave, brush teeth, etc.) and then we get dressed. Then we go through an extensive "MISSION BRIEF", this entails everything that has to do with our mission that day. This could range from just visiting a Police Station and mentoring their leaders to the more serious mission, such as looking for the enemy and attempt to detain or destroy them! So far we have gotten in quite a few scary situations but I have to tell you that I have the BEST 40 SOLDIERS this Army has ever seen and we have been able to walk away from every situation with very minimal injuries or damage to our equipment. Our normal day can run up to 18 hrs long and we have had some days where we work for 48-96 hours straight. It does get tiring after a while but we always find time to relax and sleep for a while to replenish our needs and get ready to go back out on mission.

Afghanistan is a very poor country. The weather, for the most part is about the same as in California and with mountains and hills as high as you can imagine. Most traveling done by the local population is done by horse or donkeys (which are also used to transport cargo) and the majority of the people here are farmers who grow their own food. One of the biggest reasons we are here is to help them develop economically and prosper as we have in the United States. So, as you see, this place is very interesting in every possible way, but in the end, we are here to do our jobs and help these people to prosper and live in a free democratic world. I have a lot of pictures and my Soldiers do also but we can't post most of them because it could jeopardize our mission here. I'm sure SPC Donny Eckhart will share his pictures with his family and hopefully with all of you when we get back home.

When it comes to you guys and gals, I will tell you that nothing makes any Soldier happier than to read your cards and get those little snacks you all sent. Even after a "scary day" on mission, they can come back to see a box of snacks sent by complete strangers to them and their faces light up with smiles. It's the best feeling I can experience as a leader, after any "bad day" with my Soldiers. Once again, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for bringing a little joy to my Soldiers when they need it the most. ☺

I want to wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and once again THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART for taking the time to show your support for us. I ask one little thing, that you continue to support the deployed troops and most important, continue to pray for us here while we defend our Nation's best interest! I can only hope one day I get to meet you all and shake your hand personally for what you have done for us, but for now I send you a big hug from all my Soldiers in the platoon!

Sincerely,



SFC RICHARD M. FOSTER  
Platoon Sergeant