

NOTES FROM THE TROOPS

May 25, 2010 - Hey Jesse, I sent a email out the other day saying we had received your last box, and it lasted about 5 minutes. Wanted to thank you again, I'm truly envious, temps have shot into the 100s here and no relief in sight makes for poor fishing, but the workload has ramped up quite a bit. thanks again. Jeremy

July 26, 2010 - Hello everyone. The following letter covers patrols and time at the Company Outpost (COP) until we left. We are still conducting training (map reading, M16 qualification, mortar gunnery...), patrols and local leadership engagements with the Afghan National Army (ANA). There has been a few improvements in the way they operate but old habits die hard and we have limited time.



**Above left:* Afghanistan has some of the most memorable images of the moon that I've ever seen. **Above center:* A picture of me slowly losing my mind, listening to Russian and English all at the same time (taken by our turret gunner). **Above right:* Our gunner in the turret with his 40mm Grenade Machine Gun (GMG) while on check point over-watch.

We have been going on quite a few patrols lately. This is because our team has gone down to 4 members. After my team mates (All Latvian) went out on a joint patrol of Afghan National Army (ANA) and Americans without me I haven't missed a patrol. This is because "They" had to listen to Russian and American Army radio language at the same time and it drove them insane. This is something I have to do all the time while driving. I guess it was decided that my sanity was of a lesser priority (I must have missed that vote).



**Above left:* An example of "Good" roads for our patrol. **Above center:* An example of "Bad" roads for our patrol. **Above right:* Our team Commander during 50cal training.

I'm not saying I'm the coolest cucumber when it comes to radio communications. I hate talking on the radio and trying to decipher what my Latvian teammates want and what they are actually saying in English is never fun. One night we were in an over-watch position for a convoy of supplies and their military escorts. Through our night vision we were able to see they convoy coming north toward our vehicles. Within minutes they came under light attack by small arms (No-one was hurt and the convoy just moved through it w/out problem). The American portion of our over-watch were not able to see the convoy or enemy. I immediately reported the enemies general position and the convoys situation. Unfortunately, I was in a bad location (the driver's seat) to observe the situation, so I was depending on information from my teammates. They have a bad habit of telling me information to tell the Americans then continuing to on the radio talk in Russian. That's fine for when I talk over the radio but as soon as I stop transmitting the message, their constant talking drowns out the American response. After a few minutes of telling me what to transmit to the Americans then talking over whatever they replied I "Kinda" lost it. I reached over to the controls for the radio nets and rotated the dial to the Latvian channel. I then screamed "Clear the... ..net!!!" (there

were a few adjectives in there I left out). I was greeted by wonderful silence... too much silence. Feeling something had gone wrong, I felt the control box in the darkness and realized instead of switching the net control dial I had simply turned the dial to my headset volume up. I was still talking to the American Army! Not only that, I had screamed so loud my entire team had heard the me even if they were outside the HuMMV. Strangely enough none of the American's we were out with ever mentioned my little outburst and I was too embarrassed to bring it up. I eventually resorted to turning the Latvian radio off after I would transmit something, turning it back on when the Americans had finished speaking.



**Above left:* Low clouds rolling into the local mountains. **Above center:* ANA Commander speaking to local villagers (In summary; Don't start shooting at us and if you already are please stop!). *Above right:* While on security, our turret gunner throwing out pens (generously provided by many of you) from the above to passing school children.

The American Army Company we were working with before have been replaced by another company. I actually like these guys even better than the last ones. It still is annoying to have to ask for everything from radio to vehicle support that keeps us mission capable to a chicken leg and potatoes for a stew one of my teammates wanted to make on a whim.

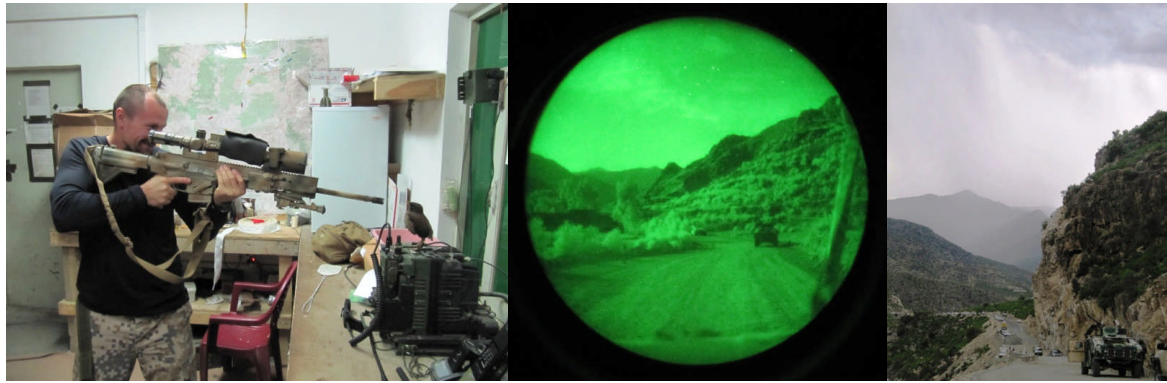
Recently I have become "Mr. Amazon.com", ordering tons of stuff for my teammates that would cost them two or three times as much in Europe. They all are trust worthy and have paid me. Unfortunately, while I'm ordering them stuff I tend to order myself things I don't need. Now Latvians from other teams have started approaching me. It's so nice to be needed... I guess.



**Above left:* Demonic red eyes; further proof the local bunnies are up to no good. **Above center:* Teams second in command posing with local shop owner. **Above right:* Oops, the American MRAP vehicle got stuck (we kinda laughed and filmed the entire process of them destroying a little of the Afghan road system, eventually freeing themselves).

The number of patrols we've gone on has doubled since my last letter. This is a good thing, because it makes the ANA a more stable presence in the area and lets the local government forces interact and coordinate. ANA efficiently working with ANBP (Afghan National Border Police) and ANP (Afghan Nation Police) is one of our higher goals. Each of these organizations has unique training, knowledge and abilities. In many situations without one of these organizations you can't even begin to plan an operation because of legal or social restrictions. Too often these agencies work alone and have only brief public interactions.

Again, I have failed to send pictures of school supplies and toys being handed out at the local schools we visit. Instead, I have another delightful story of confusion and frustration. It all started with a planned joint operation of an American platoon and a platoon of ANA including us (4 Latvian/American OMLT and 1 interpreter). The mission was to meet with local officials of a village east of us and watch over the surrounding area. Initially I was told the American platoon was going to hand out humanitarian aid so I wasn't planning on bring the toys and school supplies we had accumulated from anysoldier.com and others. I didn't necessarily want to give out our stockpile to this particular village. The last time we had been there we had received a delightful send off from the surrounding mountains in the way of 7.62mm small arms fire. In my opinion there were much friendlier places to share American good will with.



**Above left:* No, the bird was not shot and yes, we did have to clean the radio afterward. **Above center:* Local terrain through night vision. **Above right:* Usual scenery during operations.

The day of the operation our Latvian 1st Sergeant came to me saying the American platoon wasn't going to give out humanitarian aid so we should. Although I had misgivings I didn't say anything. My desire to get some pictures after the last fiasco at the girl's school got the better of me so I threw most of the supplies/toys I had into my marked duffle bag.

We made our way out to the local village without incident. I handed off my duffle bag of supplies to our Latvian 1st Sgt. and my camera to our interpreter (Taking photos can offend many Afghans, our interpreters have a much easier time of putting local people at ease). Afterward I returned to my driver's seat greatly anticipating the pictures of the Afghan Commander handing the supplies out to smiling children. These thoughts took my mind off the Russian and English languages talking simultaneously in my headset. I was brought back by the sound of someone knocking on my bullet resistant window. It was our interpreter. I opened the door and asked what was going on? He handed back my camera and began sincerely apologizing. I was told our 1st Sgt. had decided to give my bag with the supplies to the Afghan commander and let him go alone with the American officers to the meeting. The interpreter and the rest of the team realized this was a bad decision and I was not a happy camper. Our function is as mentors to the Afghan leadership and liaisons to the American army none of which could be done if all of us were performing security while the meeting went on across the river from us. On top of that the Afghan platoon leader in charge was known as not the sharpest marble if you catch my drift.



**Above left:* Aid agency showing how to plant short corn before giving out seed to local farmers (Afghan National Army [ANA] and Afghan National Border Police [ANBP] provide security). **Above center:* Some cute kids (and yes, there are ugly kids), just a few that mobbed our vehicle during the corn distribution. **Above right:* Ruins are found all over this country its creepy and fascinating at the same time.

This unfortunately played out to be quite problematic as I heard over the radio the American commander repeatedly expressing his confusion at what the Afghan commander was doing. Later, when they were returning from across the river, the Americans took the lead. Without warning the Afghan commander decides to stop and start a conversation with a local villager. This halted everyone's movement, leaving the Americans exposed and vulnerable. After about two minutes playing the part of sniper bait, the American commander finally sent his interpreter to try to get the Afghan commander moving again. Five minutes later they were on the move again. All this I heard on the radio, relaying it to my Latvian teammates and glaring at our 1st Sgt. Thankfully, everyone made it back to the vehicles before they started shooting at us. It was the ANA that were targeted 1st (usually the Americans are the primary target). As I saw the little sand bursts in front of our HumMV "Oh that's what that looks like" went through my head. Immediately I asked our turret gunner for direction/distance of the fire and promptly reported it to the American platoon. They're vehicles were positioned around the bend and had no visual of the enemy... until the started getting fired at from a different mountainside.



**Above left:* Myself, the team sniper and two of the compound's local children who made out like bandits that day (Toys and school supplies from anysoldier.com). **Above center:* Our team ready to leave the COP for a different Vehicle Patrol Base north of here. **Above right:* Good bye to the COP and hello to permanent hearing damage (I forgot my earplugs and helicopters are very loud!).

To summarize, no one on our side was hurt and we moved out after the enemy had been suppressed. Some other good things that happened; the ANA didn't fire every round they had, ceasing fire when directed to and actually took cover properly (this could actually be considered a miracle on the level of the parting of the Red Sea), communication between us and the American platoon went quite well. The bad that came out of this day; no pictures... again, my duffle bag labeled with my name, unit and last four numbers of my social security number became a gift to some random local (with that much identification on it's obvious I didn't want it back), we got shot at, I grew a new ulcer I call 1st Sgt., the Afghan platoon leader's diagnosis as an idiot is understated.

Over the next weeks we began the sad task of preparing to leave the COP we had called home for the last three months. After a brief turnover with Staff Sergeant Lange's team we flew back to our main FOB. There, we rested and prepared to move to our "new" home, a Vehicle Patrol Base I had been stationed at my last tour.

My next letter should cover our new home at a Vehicle Patrol Base.

Take care,

SFC John Post,
Operational Mentoring Liaison Team III (OMLT III),
Company Mentor

Jan 9, 2010 - Hello again. I wanted to send a quick note to let you know your package arrived and to say Thank You. The snacks are awesome, and my guys are going to have to go on a diet once we get back. LOL. I have been trying to stay away from the goody basket lately. So far I have lost 26 pounds and I still have a good sized mid-section. :-) Things here are staying busy and from the news, I see where you are hiding from the cold. Here the temperature at night gets down to freezing, but during the day, well I think yesterday it was 64 degrees. I have never spent such a nice winter like this. I hope things are going well for you during this cold front; it does look like a break is on the way. I am hoping it doesn't snow here, they have no road crews to clear the roads and the MRAPS we drive are huge and these valley roads are dangerous even on good days. Well I apologize for this being so short but I have a meeting before too long and want to get this off to you beforehand. Thank You again for everything!! -Rob - SFC ROBERT MCALPIN

Jul 12, 2010 - Edward Martino@us.army.mil wrote:

Hi, I'm Sgt Edward Martino from the 512th Trans. Det. here at JBB,IRAQ. First i just want to thank you again for take a little bit of your time and put that package together i really appreciate what you do for me,us and everybody, i want you to know that you guys are the true heroes!! ;0) we just do our job ;0). Again thank you god bless you and your family.appreciate your support!!!! ;0).

I appreciate your generous package. My platoon was pretty uplifted by its arrival. All is well here and morale, though wavering at times, is pretty high. Through the sprint-stagnation pace of the deployment, we make it through by hanging together. No matter how tough it may be, we all know that our peers are going through it and together, we will all come out on the other side. Spending time on a lake in Idaho sounds awesome. Though I am not from Idaho, and have never been there come to think of it, it still probably is far better than Northern Afghanistan, and we are all pretty motivated to return home to the states. Thanks again for your support. - -1LT Alexander Kline

June 27, 2010 - I had a great time on leave. It was nice to see all of my family and friends again, and to get a break from being over here. Congress passed a law in March that troops wouldn't have to use their leave for RnR from war zones, so I didn't even get charged for any of the days I was gone. I think that we only use Manas for units entering or leaving the country, but not for leave.

Golf clubs and balls would definitely come in handy around here, they would help pass some of the downtime for the guys if you had any extras. Glad to hear the weather has changed for the better there, hopefully the fishing will be good when you get a chance to get out on the lake. - SFC Darren Horton

Jul 15, 2010 - I received 2 packages from you today! One was the box full of golf balls, and the other had snacks in it. Thank you so much for everything. The snacks are disappearing like hotcakes and the golf balls will definitely come in handy! Things are still going well, still safe so far. Hope you are enjoying your summer in Idaho! Take care and have a great day! - SFC Darren Horton

Jun 15, 2010 - Yeah the guys would love any kind of magazine they could get. Just at the very top put to the soldiers and c/o my name. That way they will be given to all the guys not just me. Yeah we are all guys the army still does that with combat arms but who knows for how much longer. There are females doing route clearance missions which I personally don't agree with. I was in Panama back in 1994 for the first election after Noriaga was arrested. While we were there we did the Jungle training which was a good time. We used to swim across the canal for PT one time we got to see David Hasselhoff. Yeah I guess you figured out what we do here lol. I've been nursing a shoulder injury I think they are gonna send me to Germany for a little while to get an MRI and possibly surgery but we'll see. I slipped off a dozer and fell into a minefield. They think I tore my rotator cuff it hurts all the time but since I won't sit on the sidelines I will work hard and suffer all night for my troubles. Oh well I guess that's my penance for taking care of my guys.

Later: No I didn't have shoulder surgery I am on my way back to Bagram now I am waiting on a flight there. I don't have a complete tear so they say I can do my Physical Therapy and recovery there. HA that's a joke they are just sending me back because they are so short handed and they need bodies. I guess that's my cross to bare. I will hopefully be back there tomorrow they have been bouncing us off flights because we are not priority enough. Whatever it's a mini vacation I guess I should be happy but I won't be able to relax until I get back to my guys. But Germany is very beautiful.

Even Later:The shoulder is a slow and painful but it is healing I hope. I go for a reevaluation tomorrow and hopefully they let me stay because I go home on leave next week. If you want to send a package you can either send it to me or to the soldiers of me they will appreciate that a lot. It has been pretty hot here and I think it has been as high as 120 but it is way hotter down south than it is up here. Well gotta run keep your head down and your sunscreen on. - Tom

July 31, 2010 - It would be an honor to get bits and pieces of home from the real people of our great nation.

A little bit more about what I do out here might help. Like Dr. Frosolone, I care for Marines. I am a Psychiatrist with over 24 years of active duty in the Navy. I started as a carrier jet Naval Aviator, did some really neat things to include graduate school in Systems Engineering and then, as my aircraft was retired (ES-3A) I transitioned to the medical field after 15 years as a line officer.

My current assignment has me helping Marines and others at what we call a "Combat Stress Clinic". We care for a large population and it can become hectic. I have also been very heavily involved in caring for those Marines and Soldiers with concussions (mTBI injuries). I think I've made a difference in the lives of several young men and given them the right medicine and care to keep on doing what they do best, being Marines. (If you hear folks saying we don't care for the concussions out here, you can tell them, "Bunk!" for me.)

Jul 22, 2010 - Thanks for the packages. CDR Frosolone is a good friend and trauma surgeon. His section is in a rather remote base (FOB Edinburgh) without much of anything there. Very much like camping for him. My location is at the major hub of operations (Camp Leatherneck), so I have it a bit easier & also a bit more crowded since I handle both the mental health issues & the concussion problem out here. We have microwaves & small refrigerators here. We have several large chow halls, so not many of use hot plates or grills. Although I have spotted several home-made grills used in some areas. CDR Frosolone has some microwaves as well, but he can tell you what he could really use. Neither of us treat the local children, but I suspect CDR Frosolone feels that everyone of his patients is a child, much as I do here at Leatherneck. I cannot speak for him as to golf supplies, but about the only thing you could work on out here is your sand game. Even that isn't good, since most of the sand is of a very fine, talc consistency. At Camp Leatherneck, we've got a lot of gravel that has been strewn everywhere as well. I'd be afraid of hitting someone or thing at this base. I've taken to just throwing a baseball w/ my Corpsmen as part of my relaxation. Thanks again for sending the items. We've been pushing it out to the FOBs & also to the "Wounded Warriors" that stay here after going through the base hospital and are awaiting clearance to return to their units. Everyone enjoys the chance to get a little something from "home". - George L. Cowan, MD, MS

Jul 10, 2010 - Hey Jesse thanks for everything. You really helped us get through a few of those tough times during this deployment. I can't say how much it meant, I don't have the words. Until we talk again SIR Hooah. - Mark

Assassin Update - Edition 6 - Jan 2010 - Published for the Sappers and families of Alpha Company, The best damn engineer company in the U.S. Army...

Alpha Company Sappers
ASSASSIN UPDATE

Operation Enduring Freedom X, FOB Connolly, Afghanistan Edition 6 - January 2010

CPT C.J. Scott Alpha Company Commander

To the Families and Loved Ones of Alpha Company, 24 January 2010

It is with a heavy heart that I say goodbye to both the families and Soldiers of the Assassins. I recognized early on, that this time with the Mountain Sappers would be the high-point of my professional career, and it exceeded those expectations. I could not have had a better group of men and women to serve with in this capacity.

Over the last 21 months, I have witnessed the best route clearance company in Iraq transform into a force capable improving Afghan security, governance and development. I have seen Soldiers become Non-commissioned Officers, and the molding of tomorrows next generation of officers. This Company tackled missions no one could have foreseen with bravado and professionalism.

I have no doubts or compunctions about the future of Alpha Company in Afghanistan. They will continue to set the standard and redeploy with honor. CPT Jim Iantelli and his wife Kerry have been close, family friends of ours for five years now. I could not leave this position so easily, were I not being replaced by such a capable and caring officer.

As many of you know, Chu and I recently received a double blessing in the form of twins. Carson and Brooklyn joined our family on the First of December, and 1SG Fredrickson ensured that I was able to take leave to meet them over the holidays. I feel incredibly fortunate for those two, though they are the lucky ones; having Chu as a mother.

I thank you for making Alpha Company the best engineer company in the greatest Army the world has ever seen. I thank you for the continued support of this company and of CPT Iantelli. Most importantly, I thank you for the time you allowed me to spend with your Soldier.

Very respectfully,

CPT C.J. Scott Assassin Update - Edition 6 - Jan 2010 - Published for the Sappers and families of Alpha Company, The best damn engineer company in the U.S. Army...

1SG R. Fredrickson Alpha Company First Sergeant

Friends and families of Alpha Company, 24 January 2010

Another month has quickly passed us by, and we are another month closer to returning to our loved ones in the United States. Even though we are on the downhill slope of the deployment, this doesn't mean things are any easier. We are still maintaining our focus in sector, while adding the additional tasks required to prepare for redeployment to Fort Carson, Colorado.

For those families who relocated to their home states while we deployed, now is a great time to start finding a place to live again, in preparation for your Soldier's homecoming. A useful resource I would like to share with you is www.ahrn.com This is the website for the automated housing referral network, a very useful tool for those seeking to rent, buy, or sell real estate, and it is 100% free.

I am anticipating a fairly large turnover of personnel in the company within the first 4 to 6 months after we redeploy, which will also mean that we will be seeking fresh and new faces for key positions in the Family Support Group. If you are interested, please let me know. The commander and I will strongly consider all personnel who are interested in these key positions. Your support and contributions will continue to be greatly appreciated by all. Your Soldiers, as always, are doing great things here and accomplishing amazing things here in Afghanistan. There is not a single day that goes by that I am not constantly in awe at the personal and professional accomplishments of this fine assembly of Soldiers. They are truly the ones who deserve all the credit for everything that the Assassin Team has accomplished this year, and will continue to achieve until we all return home. Even though the patrol schedule is always busy, our Soldiers overall morale is great, and continues to improve.

Congratulations to SGT Quinones and SPC Rospert for their recent accomplishment of winning the FOB Connolly Noncommissioned Officer and Soldier of the month competition board. I am very pleased to announce that both of these outstanding Soldiers have recently been recommended for promotion to the next grade, and will be attending a promotion board soon.

I would like to bid a personal farewell to 1LT Collard, a true professional, and an outstanding young officer with a bright future ahead of him. And to CPT Scott, who will also be leaving us soon, you have made an impact on all Soldiers and leaders in the company. Thank you and Chu for your leadership and dedication to making this company the very best, in all respects. Welcome 1LT Streif and wife, Christin back to Team Assassin, and also welcome to CPT lanitelli and wife, Kerry, we look forward to working with you. Thank you all for your continued support and dedication to the Assassin Team. Until next month... Sappers Forward...

Rich Fredrickson "Assassin 7" Assassin Update - Edition 6 - Jan 2010 - Published for the Sappers and families of Alpha Company, The best damn engineer company in the U.S. Army...

ASSASSIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

CARE PACKAGES

If you would like to assist our Soldiers in keeping morale high, and helping them out, here is a list of some items that our Soldiers don't have easy access to: General Hygiene products such as, Body Wash, Soap, Shampoo, Shaving Cream, Razors, Q-Tips, Foot Powder, Lotion, Hand Sanitizer, Toothpaste, and Tooth Brushes. Snacks that Soldiers like to take on mission with them such as, sunflower seeds, pistachios, jolly ranchers, hard candy, chewing gum, beef jerky, candy bars, Drink powders such as Gatorade, lemonade, and Kool-Aid. If your Soldier drinks coffee, I am certain he/she would appreciate some of their favorite coffee as well. Soldiers would appreciate some general morale items such as Magazines, Books, Movies, and Video / Computer games as well. You know what your Soldiers like, I'm just telling you what is and isn't easily available here. If your Soldier uses Tobacco products, I'm sure they would appreciate your support in that area as well. As far as facilities, we have a barber, we have free laundry service (no need to send detergent), and we also have a great gym facility. The cooks in our dining facility are top-notch, and they keep us all very well fed.

CHILDCARE SERVICES

While our Soldiers are deployed, families will be able to use childcare for Caring Days, and Caring Saturdays. All children must be registered with Child and Youth Services. Below is a list of what families will be entitled to. You will have 16 hours per month for Caring Days, Caring Saturdays, and Friday Night Date Night. You will have 4, 4 hour blocks that can be used 1 block per week, or 1 block per day. Remember that when you use your 16 hours you are done for the month. NO hours will be carried over to the next month if not used. Location: South West Center Building 7790. Must fill out registration form 1 week prior to daycare request. Those families that are using daycare here on post, so you can continue working after your Soldier leaves are entitled to 20% of cost of daycare. You can go to www.mwrfortcarson.com Click on Child and Youth Services for more information on CYS.

Feb 23, 2010 - Got the last round of packages you sent, thanks again for your continued support. The female packages got placed in the communal area and I made sure they knew it was there. It is not there now so I am sure they took/needed most of what you sent. I didn't look to see what inside. The other packages were great too, I took a few odds and ends and left them out in the communal area also.

<http://www.thenational.ae/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20100223/FOREIGN/702229812/1002/foreign>

This is a link of something that happened near us in the past couple of days, we actually had an EOD team go out and try and collect evidence. All of us are still doing well, luckily for us most of the Violence is Afghan on Afghan. Anyways, Thanks again, sorry for the short reply but it has been a busy week. -
RUSSELL M. STREIF

Apr 23, 2010 - Thank you very much for everything this year. Please thank everyone from your community for their support as well. Everything which was sent was really appreciated. From drink mixes, to pocket knives, to golf clubs, to bedding, we could always count on something inside every single box you sent to lift our spirits from you and your community. As for the plaque you are getting and the flag pole, I feel humbled. To me, being in the Army is just another job. Not to take away from the honor, but is there anyway you can do the plaque for the Soldiers of Alpha Company and not to me alone. They are the doers, I am more of a facilitator as XO. They are the heroes you read about and the ones who deserve the honor. I was able to make it out on less than 10% of the missions they went on because of my duties while they were out on every one. Thank you so much for the honor.

The Afghan hat is still very commonly worn here. No matter if it is 120 degrees or 30 degrees, many Afghan males continue wearing these or turban like head wraps. I have seen Afghans wearing business suits wearing them and Afghans in what we call man jams which is their traditional clothing which looks like pajamas. I guess it is a hat for all occasions. I was told by the shop owner who I bought it from it was made here in Khogyani. I am not sure how much SSG MacNeil told you about himself, but he was wounded in action around August-September. He was serving as a Squad Leader on a night mission when a rocket propelled grenade struck the truck he was riding in. He spent 2-3 months recovering in Germany and in Texas before he returned to duty to be our night TOC NCO. He is a great Soldier and Leader and I know he is going on to bigger and better things in the Army. I will definitely let him know you send your regards.

All of Alpha Company sends their thanks. All of the support you have given us will not be forgotten. Over the next 4 weeks we will begin seeing our replacements and our guys will begin the journey back simultaneously to make room for them. We all definitely look forward to being on American Soil again and being with our families. I hope you all continue your outstanding support and ask if you ever need anything from me from donations to ideas of what to send, please email my civilian account at russell.streif@gmail.com.

Again, thank you for everything - Russell

Mar 22, 2010 - Got he packages you sent yesterday. I actually made it out on mission with one of the Platoons and was out for 3 days, the packages came in the day after I left. I gave out all the knives which were a hit with guys - as usual. I made them promise to send you a thank you email. Not sure how often they all get access to a computer, but I hope they do. We still have about a month and a half left here, but I want to thank you for all the support you have given me and the Soldiers here throughout the last 9 months. The moral boost you have provided us has been amazing. Everything you sent, from golf clubs and balls to knives to snacks and candy has gotten well used and whatever was left over will be passed along to the unit replacing us to enjoy. Some of the items you sent were even used to trade with the Afghans for souvenirs and sometimes food. If you would like to continue sending packages over, even after we leave, I have the contact info for my replacement. I don't expect to see him for at least another month, but I will go ahead and pass it to you. - 1LT Goodfellow, Paul

Jun 21, 2010 - We have a few soldiers out here to do supporting artillery fires for the bstb's if needed but I don't fall under CPT Goodfellow and yes that would be fine to send the magazines to me and ill put them in the mwr's around the fob we have 2 small ones wow that is a small town population 79 I came from a small town that I thought was small that had a population of 5,000 and yeah then my wifes church back home in Colorado has about 15,000 members and our current church in Tennessee has about 2,500 members so I went from an extra small town to a fairly large town and yes I am always online as much as I can be and try to reply back to emails as soon as possible I enjoy computers and games that stuff but ill let you go. - kristofer

Jun 24, 2010 - Hello again! Sorry it has been so long since I have written, I just got back from my leave dates back in the US on Tuesday. I was home for a total of 15 days, but was gone from my base in Afghanistan for 29 days due to all of the travelling that needed to be done. Everyone here is doing well and is still pretty motivated about doing our jobs over here. One of my guys is back home on their leave right now and the rest will be going throughout the summer. It

is always nice to get a little break from over here! The weather has been averaging about 105-110 degrees for the highs and we have been getting quite a few wind storms lately. That place in Idaho sounds like a great place to be! I didn't get the opportunity to get out on the lake while I was back home, but there will be plenty of time for that next year I hope. It was good to hear from you again, I hope everything is going well and you are enjoying your summer!
Take care
Darren

Jun 9, 2010 - Your letter helps more than you know. here everything is so surreal It keepsme grounded. I work back home in a city called Springfield the 3rd llargest city in MA and the home of basketball. I have been a police officer for 10 years and I love it. It is so fast pace there due to budget cuts and other political reasons we always seem to be short handed. Per capita we are number 21 on the list of deadliest cities in america. Im not proud of that but we are up from number 17 3 years ago. So we see pretty much everything when it comes to crime and human nature. If I told you some cop stories you wouldnt believe me. Im glad that we met you can relate to where I am right now. I was active duty for 4 years before going into the national guard. I have been in the Army for 17 years. I know what your thinking this guy must be a shitbag because he is only an E5 after that long. There are a few reasons why this is. When I was active duty jumping out of those perfectly good planes I had a bad jump and I had to have my shoulder replaced and fully reconstructed. I knew I could not quit with a good conscience so I figured I could train soldiers to survive and realize that just because you are down you are never out of the fight. The other reason is Im a pitbull when it comes to my guys and I tell it like I see it without the filter (most of the time). I have stood toe to toe with Officers and NCO's of varrious ranks and I have gained and lost rank but I was always respectfull and they respected me for that. I will not stand by and let anyone even from my own chain of command shit on my soldiers. I was the only PFC team leader when we went to Panama. I guess I either talk a good game or I do a good job because after a while they just say that Hervieux. Its funny because my guys call me HervGotti because I get away with so much stuff. Well look whos going on and on now?hehe. I ll talk to you soon. If you have any questions if its not opsec Ill tell ya. - Tom

Jun 8, 2010 - Let me start by saying thank you for thinking of us my soldiers and I greatly appreciate the goodies that you have sent us. Since Im one of the more seasond soldiers I have to take care of these kids to make sure they are all on track and doing the right thing. Let me tell you a little about myself. My name is Tom Hervieux (her-view). Im 37 years old and Im from MA. I am in the National Guard so in the civilian world I am a Police Officer when Im not fighting the Taliban Im fighting crime at home. I am married and we have 3 kids all boys. How about you? It must be nice to be able to spend half the year north and half south where Im from we call that being a "snow bird" because you are gone when the snow is there like the ducks. lol. We are stationed in Bagram and we have one of the most dangerous missions in Afghanistan. Do you want to hear about it? I only ask because not many people like that kind of thing. Well I ramble on don't I. I hope to hear from you soon. - SGT Tom Hervieux - Please call me Tom..

Apr 13, 2010 - Thanks for all of the time and energy you put into supporting us and the soldiers from the past. I am happy to say that your support has been a great blessing and my men and I appreciate it very much. Golf supplies is something I personally love, next to my girls at home I miss that second most. Ill take some pics of us hitting on our makeshift range. Thank You once again. - SFC Bowman

May 28, 2010 - Hows everything going @ home. Whats the weather like? believe it or not the sloppy joe sauce was a nice treat. I just wanted to send my thanks and a couple pictures of the guys your supporting. WE ARE ALL DOING WELL !!! Thank you and God bless. - Guy



May 24, 2010 - Hello, good to hear from you. Life here in Afghanistan is going fine. Hot as can be but cool off after set. Now that summer is here things are starting to heat up so we have up our security.

We have finally moved from the Tents to the Building with eight other roommates. The bays are about 12 X 12 so space is very tight. The good new is we have about 3 months left so looking forward to that.

I am sure you heard about the explosion in our area last week; well those were members from our team. We lost two Soldiers but all the others are fine.

Jason Himel
