

10-Apr-2008

To: Santa Ynez Valley "Support the Troops" Assc,

Thanks so much for the very considerate package that you sent my Marines and I...we have a need for everything in the package. Already the guys are arguing over who gets what, it's quite comical actually. And to answer your questions, yes, we do have children that would enjoy anything you can send. There is a village not more than a few hundred meters outside our COP (Combat Outpost), with many, many children. Routinely we patrol down there to ensure the village is safe and to talk with the elders. When we do venture to the village, Urmul, we take candy, clothes, and a variety of other humanitarian items for them to enjoy. I'm convinced they are the most grateful children in the world.

I don't know any other way to say thanks except through email, but that we will continue to make you all proud of what we are doing for these people. The world will be a better and much safer place once the Afghan National Army are in full stride. That is our role here in Afghanistan...me and a handful of Marines live and fight beside the ANA everyday. We enjoy their food and conversation over hot Chai tea, and train their soldiers and commanders to become a better, more competent military organization. They are great people the ANA, perhaps some of the best I've ever had the pleasure of serving beside, and they would rather themselves hurt than to see a friend in pain. We mentor then 24 hrs a day on all aspects of military life, and already they are an amazing fighting force.

Keep this nation's success in your prayers, just as you would keep us or your family in them. They only want to stop the terrorism that breeds across their lands and establish a peaceful nation without fear or reprisal from traveling down the road to next village. Just as us, their children are the future and the most prized possession in their eyes. It is for them that they have formed an alliance against terrorists, which the ANA refer to as Anti-Afghan Forces. For terrorism to most people in this country is not the way of the future, but rather the way to their demise.

Again, it is great to know that so many people support our role in Afghanistan and it is because of you all that we will press on away from our families and friends. Thank you very much for all you do, and we look forward to hearing back from you in the near future.

Lt xxxxx

BTW: I included a picture of our team...I am in the middle, (as you look at the picture) Sgt xxxx is to my right, Cpl xxxx to my immediate left, and Prince, my interpreter, to the far left--we call him Prince for obvious reasons, his real name is Najibullah. I hope you enjoy the pic, Cpl xxxx is the only member not present in the picture, he is not currently at camp with us. If you would like, I can send more.
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