



Maine Army National Guard



1136th TC (SECFOR) FORCE PRO



From our lives here in Afghanistan; half way across the world back to our families.

Happy Holidays from the Commander

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have done a lot of planning and packing for our return trip over the past month. Thank you for the support you've shown your Soldier and your continued support of the 1136th! My thoughts are with all of you during this very difficult time. See you in 2011!!!

From the desk of the ISG

Christmas time is almost here, so to all of you Merry Christmas! As I reflect upon the celebration and traditions of Christmas I am reminded of how fortunate we are even here in Afghanistan. My Mother's father was in the Philippines, fighting the Japanese in 1944 during World War II. He did not have a Mess Hall to sit down and have a Christmas dinner. I am certain he did not have "shout outs" back home to friends and family. My father's father was in snow

covered fields and forest in France and Germany in 1944, fighting the Germans during World War II. I can imagine a hot cup of coffee would have been heaven. We might not be the "greatest generation", but we sure have sacrificed. I sometimes think about those who have fought before me and ask myself how important is it to worry about what is being served in the Mess Hall or what is or is not on the shelves in the PX or if the Internet will be fast. Looking back on my time in the Army, this is my fourth Christmas where I have not been in Maine to celebrate the holidays. I miss my family and the hustle and bustle of going to Company Christmas parties, family gatherings and ruthless Yankee swaps! Many thoughtful people have sent Christmas cards to each Soldier, decorations, miniature Christmas trees, goodies,

Special points of interest:

- *A Soldiers Story I*
- *A Soldiers Story II*
- *A Soldiers Story III The*



Happy Holidays and New Year! I hope your holiday season is filled with joy and know that we miss you all as much as you miss us. I am looking forward to seeing all of you soon after the New Year. I was pleased to see many of our Soldiers on the **Today Show** when they were here on Thanksgiving. I hope you were able to see them, too. I am sure you will be pleased to hear that we

Your Soldiers Rank and Name
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Or for your soldiers in
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***NOTE 15JAN11 FINAL MAIL**

Editor and Publisher
SFC Bethanie Mazzaro

*ISG continued...*and stockings. One day with my Hawaiian lei's on, I was having fun imagining a Christmas without snow and being in the tropics. I was dreaming of a Tropics Christmas. I would like to thank the Junior ROTC from Herman High School for the 40 plus boxes of goods. The time and effort to get sponsors, collect items, carefully wrap and label each

box was very impressive. The organization and skill was pretty evident by the layout of each box. As always the VFW from York Beach, Maine continues to support the unit with Salt Water Taffy and calling cards, thanks. The request for more calling cards was answered by the AUSA, Joshua Chamberlain Chapter and coordination done by

MSG Mike Welsh (ret.), thanks also goes to all of you for the support. Thanks to Emmanuel Bible Baptist for the toiletry items and the decorations. Also, I cannot forget to thank my co-workers from HRO who sent me many thoughtful items. Merry Christmas especially to my Wife Jenny, my Son Nate and my daughter Abbey back in Waterville,

Maine who support me. Please do not send packages to the unit after 15 January, thank you. God Bless!



A Soldier's Story I—"MOTIVATION" by SSG JAMES L.

MOTIVATION: *The condition of being eager to act or work; the act or process of giving someone a reason for doing something.*

Motivation means a lot of things to a lot of people. Whether you're on SOG, a mobile team, QRF or "just a fobbit"; everyone needs motivation to keep going after doing this for as long as we have. Everyone has different needs and different levels of motivation. After the holiday season, everyone is looking forward to being home in a few months, so the motivation level has risen. The holidays are, traditionally, the hardest time for deployed soldiers. Being away from your family and friends this time of year puts a strain on anyone. However, when you add the stress of being in a combat zone, it adds a few extra weights to the bar.

What you do everyday, getting up and doing what you have to, is motivation at work. One of the best quotes I've ever heard is "False motivation is better than no motivation". If you don't want to get up, if you don't want to go out on the road today, but you do because it's what you do, that's motivation. The motivation and professionalism of my fellow soldiers motivates me. The love and support of my family and everyone else back home motivates me. Knowing that I am carrying on a tradition of honor and respect motivates me. Think about it for a minute, I bet you'll find more motivators in your life than you thought.

"There's only two dates in time that they'll carve on your stone and everyone knows what they mean.

What's more important is the time that is known in that little dash there in between" Garth Brooks.

What will your dash be?

"People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing – that's why we recommend it daily" Zig Ziglar.



SSG Jim L. sings to motivate himself and others every Friday Night.

A Soldier's Story II—"Christmas." by SGT Michael S.

CHRISTMAS IS ALMOST UPON US! Here at the AIB, the home of Bear squad, the evidence of this season is beginning to appear. A Christmas Tree adorns one room, while Christmas cards and Holiday letters from friends and family are found throughout our humble abode. As we get ready for the coming of Christmas, the missions continue. Our 'runs for parts', or 'trips up north' ferrying passengers, continue to be the way of life for us. Not much has changed, and yet much has changed, (sorry Charles Dickens). The snow has returned to the lofty peaks of the Hindu Kush Mountains that ring the Kabul area. The temperature has definitely dropped. Colder now, but nothing like the temperatures at present back home in Maine. Our mission continues. Christmas approaches.

For many of us here in Kabul this will be the first Christmas away from home. That is the case for me. As I look at the Thomas Kinkadee paintings that adorn the Christmas cards from my family, I realize that this is the first year that I will not see the snow, the lights, the trees and decorations associated with Christmas in Maine. Yes it's true many of us are away from home for the first time during this Christmas season. It's also true

that communication is much better than in years past and anyone who wishes can make a phone call home, or send an e-mail. Apart, we are from our families, but not completely removed.

I'm going to shift gears here for a moment and tell a short and certainly true story about a song and it's meaning for me during this time of year.

THE SNOW WAS FALLING LIGHTLY, in contrast to the blowing and drifting of the previous night. The first light of the new day was starting to show through. It was a December morning in 2007, and I was headed north on the Maine Turnpike. I had been plowing all night, fighting the urge to go to sleep. On this trip around, the snow that had accumulated on the road was lighter and flew easily off the plow and wing, spreading evenly down the slopes on the side of the highway. I had a hot freshly brewed coffee to keep me company, along with the music of WPOR's morning show, broadcasting out of Portland. The scraping of the worn carbide cutting edges of my plow, competed with the radio for my ear. As I reached for my coffee, something on the radio caught

my attention. It was the spoken introduction by Gary Merrill, to Malinda Liberty's Maine Christmas Song. "There was a time when the roads were made of crushed rock and earth, and the only tracks through the whitest of snow, was that of footprints, paw prints, hoof prints, and the long, straight line of the sleigh..." I turned up the volume on the old Panasonic stereo. Moments later, Malinda's voice came in clear and crisp. *I love this song*, I thought to myself. "There's still meaning in the magic of Christmas, in the state where the Christmas trees grow..." Perfect timing! Just off to my right was a stand of Fur trees, Maine's Christmas trees. The snow still clung to the branches, weighing them down. "...Where neighbors still drop by, with cookies, breads and pies, and warm themselves beside the kitchen stove..." I sipped my coffee thinking of my good friend Reuben's old iron cook stove in his family's kitchen. A working stove that they used for warmth and cooking too. "...hanging wreaths upon your neighbor's door..." That weekend my family had hung some wreath's, made by

"Christmas" continued on page 6

**“Motorbooty pulls their weight”
—By SPC Michael S.**



PFC Felicia B pulls more than her weight in a repetition competition that incorporated both the bench press and deadlifting events. She won in her weight class as well as the overall women’s competition.

It’s that time of year again, The Holidays are upon us and the longing for home is greater than ever, but the spirits are still high and it’s business as usual around the shop. Even though the workload is still demanding some of the team have managed to get in a little extra fun time to go out and make their marks on the world. PFC Felicia B went out and made her debut in one of the local lifting competitions outdoing the expectations of her peers and herself taking the lifting world by storm with an impressive and devastating win amongst the female lifters. She is a force to be reckoned with and I’m sure we will be seeing a lot more of her in competitions to come! Also making some debuts in the television industry were SPC Johnathon D and SPC Michael S sneaking in the background and getting some air time on the *Good Morning America* during one of the local broadcasts. During the shoot the producer actually approached them by saying “you guys did great you looked like REAL Soldiers”.

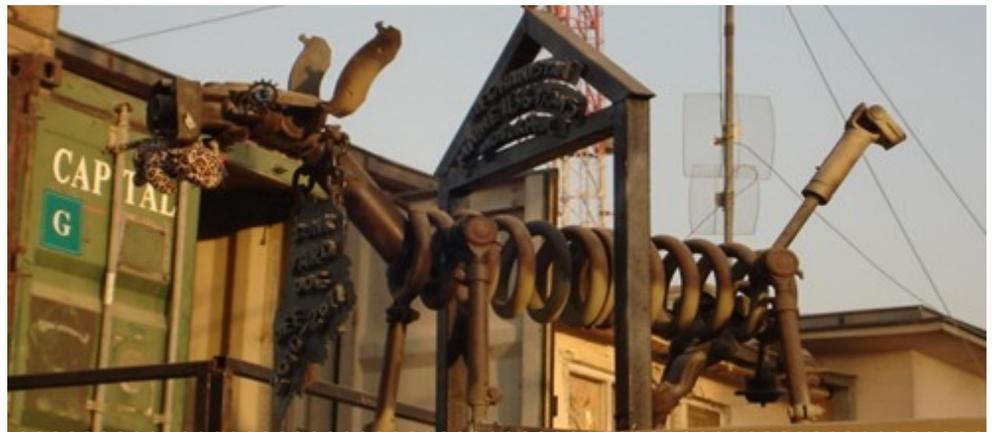
SPC Michael S was overheard as saying “Thank you ma’am we’ve been practicing”. It was a good uplift for the two as the last broadcast with the unit on Thanksgiving they were directing traffic at an accident in another location. The publicity hasn’t gone to their heads although SPC John D has been on the phone with his agent back home booking appearances at the local Wal-Mart.



Left to Right: SPC Michael S and SPC Johnathon D “looking like REAL soldiers.” I’m just saying.

We would also like to introduce the latest member to the team our new mascot J-D the brainchild of SGT Bill K and SPC Michael S he is a purebred HUMMV whose bite is worse than his bark making the meanest of local kittens cringe with fear. A welcome addition to the crew. In closing all of us here at the “Pool” would like to send out our warmest Christmas wishes to our loved ones back home and even though we can’t be with you we are there in spirit and will be expecting twice the presents next year.

Below: “Who let the dogs out...” “Woof! Woof, woof, woof!”



A Soldiers Story III—Homesick on the Holidays —By SPC Casey S.

With the close of fall and the immediate transition into winter, soldiers of the 1136th can’t help but feel the slightest bit of homesickness this time of year. The brisk nights remind us of the holiday season back home and all the little things most of us take for granted. Some of us fortunate enough to have this month’s block of leave, know we are all truly envious but wish you a very happy holiday season with your family and friends. Have an egg-nog or two for us back here!

Business lately at the JVB has been booming. With all the distinguished visitors wanting to come spend a few days during the holidays in Afghanistan, it makes our job a stressful one, a rewarding and prestigious one, but stressful. Last week, the soldiers of the JVB executed a 3 day mission with the Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, flawlessly. Honorable Gates is #1 in the Department of Defense and for most of us, will be our most important mission all year. Some of us are lucky enough to work personal security for an upcoming USO tour to the area for some amazing entertainers, and are looking forward to this unique opportunity to work for some of our heroes in the entertainment business. We watch individual augmentees and members of different branches arrive in theater long after the 1136 soldiers were here, and leave joyfully well before we depart. We continue mission and look forward to the journey back home to our friends and families. As Christmas will be just another day of work here for the 1136th soldiers, it will be just another milestone checked off of our calendars. Now, we have less than 3 month road back home.

Happy Holidays from the JVB!

1ST Platoon— By 1LT Nic P



Left to right: SSG Tim I, SPC Marcel R, (kneeling) SGT Derek P, SPC Joshua T, SGT Chris I, and hiding in the back SPC Jason P. The Boys of Bella standing around their Christmas Tree.

Family and Friends of 1st Platoon Another month bites the dust, and we're getting closer to you. With that said things aren't slowing down much over here. Between distinguished visitors and random taskings, your Soldiers continue to set the bar higher and higher for how things operate at this base. This month SFC Patrick P enjoyed some well earned R&R giving SSG John B and opportunity to step up to the plate and fill some big shoes, and SSG JoJo D to cover down for him. These two did a great job stepping up while continuing to accomplish the mission. SFC Patrick P, the Soldiers and I would like to wish you all the best Holiday Season possible, as we continue to pray for your safety I ask that you continue to do the same for us.

A Soldiers Story III— "It's What We Do" by SPC Michael G

Over the time that the 1136th has been occupying its post, the Sergeant of the Guard (SOG) squads have been operating their points twenty-four hours a day. The day and night shift squads have been hard at work processing

vehicles and pedestrians onto Camp Eggers, as well as enforcing the regulations that ensure the safety and security of its tenants. From their first days on ground, SOG has been working, learning and adapting. One of the most challenging aspects of the job is having a firm grasp on the rules and regulations, and how to apply them to real world situations. It's crucial for them to be able to explain, defend, and interpret policies at all times. Another exceedingly difficult task is enforcing the base's policies to both visiting personnel as well as tenants. Not everyone responds well when a relatively low ranking Sentry informs them that they are in violation of base policies. The Soldiers on the SOG have shown themselves to be extremely professional and proficient in carrying out their duties. While explaining to home what he does, SPC Michael G told his father "even though I have never done this before, I am no dummy". SOG has overcome these challenges, as well as more unique ones that arise such as drills as well as real-world situations. Multiple wide ranging drills have occurred during the 1136th's stay here in Kabul. The organization has been very successful. These drills have lead to success with real-world issues as well. SGM Kostal the NCOIC for the Base Support Group here at Camp Eggers had this to say, "SOG has been doing an awesome job. There have been no breaches in security, with thousands of people coming and going from camp every day. All the personnel on Camp Eggers have a significant amount of trust and appreciation for what the SOG is doing".



SPC Nicole BB towering over her peers.

With 12 hour shifts, and little time to one's self, it becomes important to find ways to have freedom, and relax. One of the ways they do this is the after shift debrief to identify issues that came up during the shift or as SPC Camilla C put it "(we) go to the de-brief where we engage in quarrels that are like sibling rivalries", Video games and sleep are the two big ways of distressing with the little bit of off time that we have. Every once and a while a Sentry will receive a Maintenance Day allowing them to catch up on personal matters or in some occasions support one of the Platoon's Convoy Escort Teams. SOG would like to express its best wishes to the families at home, and thank all of them for their patience and support. SOG would also like to wish for a great holiday season for all of the families and soldiers that are home on leave.



SSG Travis S is about to douse out the burning red pain with a pot of coffee. SPC Camilla C's red hot hair is probably hotter than that coffee.



NKC - Horseshoe

Hello family and friends of the 1136th Calais Detachment. Everything is going well for your soldiers. They continuously work hard, stay motivated, and do their best in everything they do to help our cause and the Afghan People. This past month as normal has been very busy. It began with something very special and interesting for all soldiers to experience. Many of you may not know but Afghan women are not treated equally to men in Afghanistan. We wanted to do something special for some of these women therefore, we held a special Bazaar, an "All woman's bazaar", for the people of NKC. The women brought in all sorts of hand-made clothing, jewelry, pottery, Christmas decorations, and other items to sell to NKC's residents. Many of these women have lost their husbands in the war and are now the sole providers for their families. It was a great opportunity and a success. All Soldiers enjoyed this and therefore, we will be continuing this periodically to help the poorest woman in Afghanistan.

As the month moved along we then had Thanksgiving. The dining facility was well decorated, it had lots of good traditional Thanksgiving food and it was a lot of fun. All teams made it a point to relieve one another so that the squads could eat as a Horseshoe family, something that is very difficult in our line of work. Soldiers shared stories, talked of family, and made the most of this special day. Major General Mc this month also made it a point to reward and visit all Third Country National and Local National employees on our team with certificates and pictures. It made these members of our team extremely happy, boosting moral throughout the ranks. He spoke to them expressing his extreme gratitude, ensuring them that their work has not gone unnoticed. He also told me that our unit was going to be voluntarily extended here at NKC because he loves his Force Pro and does not want us to leave. HAHA! I laughed and then told him that if that was the case he would first have to clear it

with the *General* back at home and she, being my wife, would probably disapprove. He laughed and told me we too would be greatly missed when we depart. All our soldiers are now getting ready to go through the hardest time of the year, Christmas. Only a few Soldiers will be able to attend the holidays at home with their families. Ensure during these special holidays that you send care packages, cards, and gifts to your soldiers. It will put a smile on their face and help them through these tough times. We, as leadership, will also do our part to ensure your Soldiers keep in touch with you. Remember that soon this will all come to an end and all of us will be back with you, in the best place on earth, the State of Maine.



TOP: Left to Right: SPC Andrew O, SPC Joseph Mc, SGT Jeffrey T, SPC Kristopher W, SSG Christopher G, and SPC Jacob M
 BOTTOM: Left to Right: SGT Timothy P, SPC Wade W, SPC Randy B, SPC Derek D, SPC Mitch R, SPC Steven P & SGT Jesse B



Thanksgiving Dinner at NKC

A Soldiers Story II cont from page 2
 my aunt, on our neighbor's door. A family Christmas tradition going back as long as I can remember. "...*That's the spirit of Maine, at Christmas time, from her mountains to her great Atlantic shore...*" Malinda continued to sing the next two verses of the song. When she had finished and the DJ's voice came back on, I was still lost in thought, driving more on reflex and muscle memory than anything. The first rays of sunshine were breaking through the darkness of winter and illuminating the freshly fallen snow. I was reaching the end of my run. Replacing the coffee cup in its holder I went about the task of turning the old plow truck around for the southern trip back to the shop. The Maine Christmas song still echoed in my mind. The sun was a promising sight, it meant the end of this storm and a chance to go home and take a shower. I almost never slept after working all night, in fact I was wide awake now, thinking of the preparations for Christmas just a few short days away. As I was passing over the Sabattus river that same stand of Fur Trees caught my attention. This time the sun was making the snow on them sparkle. God's decoration for the Christmas Trees. *I really love that song*, I thought, as I reached for my coffee.

Things will be a little different this year, no plowing and the only Christmas trees are the few that we all have put up around the camp. In the building that is used for many events also becomes the church every Sunday, a nice tall good looking and well decorated tree stands. There are lights too, on various buildings all around. Yeah, it's starting to look and feel a little like Christmas around here, but it just isn't home.

Fortunately, we all have our memories of Christmases past and the expectation of future celebrations with family and friends, and here, we have each other, our extended military family. We will certainly be trading stories and memories while we have our Christmas dinners, while we attend worship services and while we continue the mission of the 1136th, for the U.S. Army. Merry



A SOLDIERS POEM

'Twas the night before Christmas, he lived all alone,
 in a one bedroom house made of plaster and stone.
 I had come down the chimney with presents to give,
 and to see just who in this little house lived.
 As I looked all about, a strange sight I did see,
 No tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.
 No Stockings by mantle, just boots filled with sand,
 On the wall hung pictures of far distant lands.
 With medals and badges, awards of all kinds,
 A sobering thought came through my mind.
 For this house was different, it was dark and dreary,
 The home of a soldier, I could now see clearly.
 The soldier lay sleeping, silent, alone,
 Curled up on the floor in this one bedroom home.
 The face was so gentle, the room in such disorder,
 Not how I picture a United States Soldier.
 Was this the hero of whom I'd just read?
 Curled up on a poncho, the floor for a bed?
 I realized the families that I saw this night,
 owed their lives to these soldiers who were willing to fight.
 Soon round the world, the children would play,
 and grownups would celebrate a bright Christmas day.
 They all enjoyed freedom each month of the year,
 because of the soldiers, like the one lying here.
 I couldn't help wondering how many lay alone,
 on a cold Christmas Eve in a land far from home.
 The very thought brought a tear to my eye,
 I dropped to one knee and started to cry.
 The soldier awakened and I heard a rough voice,
 "Santa don't cry, for this life is my choice".
 I fight for freedom, I don't ask for more,
 My life is my God, my country, my corps."
 The soldier rolled over and drifted to sleep,
 I couldn't control it, I continued to weep.
 I kept watch for hours, so silent and still,
 as we both shivered from the cold night's chill.
 I didn't want to leave, on that cold, dark night,
 this guardian of honor, so willing to fight.
 Then the soldier rolled over, with a voice soft and pure,
 whispered, "Carry on Santa...., It's Christmas Day...., All is secure.
 One look at my watch, and I knew he was right,
 Merry Christmas my friend.... and to all a Good Night. ~ *Author Unknown*

