



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

WEAPONS COMPANY
1ST BATTALION, 3D MARINES
3D MARINE DIVISION (REIN)
UNIT 44035
FPO AP 96607-4035

Dear Mayor Scharfenberger, Cindy Herrschaft, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Elks Club, the Emergency Management Team, Residents of Middletown Township, and Local Supporters,

Thank you so much for the care packages you sent to my platoon! I am deeply grateful for your tremendous show of support and incredible generosity. My Marines will certainly be ecstatic to receive the supplies and gifts you sent - every little item brightens the otherwise spartan conditions here in Afghanistan.

You'll be happy to hear that the Marines of 81mm Mortar Platoon, Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines are succeeding here in the Nawa District of Helmand Province. The area is very quiet as a result of their efforts, and the local Afghans are very friendly and supportive of our presence here. As you would expect, the people here do not have much - many are simple wheat farmers, live in simple mud-wall and thatch-roof compounds, and make less than \$500 a year. As a result, we give a lot of what we receive in the mail we give away to the Afghan people. School supplies, small candies, and small toys are all big hits with the children. The Afghan villagers here appreciate your generosity just as much as we do.

As for my Marines, they are in good spirits as we near the end of our deployment. They have worked hard - patrolling twelve hours a day with 80 pounds of gear in 20-degree cold and 100-degree heat - and deserve the break that awaits them. Conditions here are a little austere - most of us haven't showered in over 120 days, we do laundry in a tin wash basin, and we eat one of the same dozen or so meals ready-to-eat (MREs) everyday - so everything you send helps break the monotony, keeps us healthy and happy, and reminds of home. It is Christmas Day for us every time the mail convoy arrives!

I hope this letter finds you and your families doing well. Thank you again for everything you have done to support us - your greatest gift to us is knowing Americans back home are thinking of us and working hard to support us. Take care and God bless.

Semper Fidelis,
Nicholas R. Abbate
1st Lieutenant, USMC
81mm Mortar Platoon Commander