



THE LIGHTHORSE TIMES

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Happy Holidays from Afghanistan

Task Force Lighthouse Families, Friends,

Knowing all too well the sinking feeling that the Holiday Season is winding to an end as we are faced with going back to school, work, and trying to keep that New Year's resolution for more than a day or two, I decided to compose an inspiring letter to let you know how well we are doing and how thankful we were for all the packages, presents, and Holiday spirit that made it to Afghanistan allowing us to enjoy a little piece of Christmas here on FOB Fenty.

All the Soldiers of TF Lighthouse are doing fantastic and I am amazed each day at how resourceful, flexible, and mission focused we can be. It is a true American trait to make the best out of tough situations and to find humor in the most miserable conditions. Everyone settled into their living spaces and quickly made their place look like home with Christmas lights, decorations and pictures of family and home.

Without getting too much into the details of what we do each day, I would like to tell you that in our first 30 days we have accomplished feats that the other units before us didn't do in their first six months or didn't do at all. Although I am never surprised at our ability to get the job done, I am fortunate and proud to be a part of such a great team.



CPT Scott places the 3RD ID Patch on one of his Soldiers.

You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, "I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along." . . . You must do the thing you think you cannot do."

Eleanor Roosevelt

Promotions:

- 2LT Mary Ford to 1LT
- 2LT Josh Taft to 1LT
- WO1 Sean Spears to CW2
- WO1 Greg Davis to CW2
- SGT Vincent Best to SSG
- SGT Arthur Flores JR to SSG
- CPL Candice Pepple to SGT
- PFC Dylan Jones to SPC
- PV2 Daine Hurley to PFC
- PV2 Timothy Panzer to PFC

Re-enlistments:

- Yane Gonzalez
- Ronald Perry
- Jeremy Zeh
- Richard Rodriguez
- Steven Rudy
- Robert Starowicz
- David Wyman
- Rudy Lee
- Melvin Johnson
- Andre Mcneil
- Nathan Becker
- Bryan Mills
- Luisvictor Luna
- Bernard Westover
- Angel Garayllera
- Mckinsey Mcqueen
- Steven Gonzalez
- Daniel Mccormick
- Angel Huertasrodriguez
- Daniel Velez
- Michael Wade
- Raymond Wilson
- Matthew Gagnon
- Kevin Collins
- Lee Gramling



CSM Lemke, CSM Stidley, and LTC von Eschenbach after the Transition of Authority, December 6, 2009.

"I am a soldier, I fight where I am told, and I win where I fight."

General George S. Patton



On the 16th of December, CSM Lemke and I awarded combat patches to those Soldiers on their first deployment. The tradition of the combat patch dates back to World War II when returning Soldiers wanted to keep their “combat” unit patches on their uniform and switched the patch from their left shoulder to their right. That day we “patched” quite a few Soldiers and I told them in my brief speech that they should be very proud of their patch as the many that have served in both the Lighthorse Squadron and the 3rd Infantry Division before them hold their patch in the highest regards and many fond memories are deeply linked to their combat units. Different times that week, I caught quite a few Soldiers glimpsing down at their right shoulder to look at their new patch.



Mountain Warrior Band plays Christmas music to the Soldiers while they do mail.

As the Christmas season passed, I witnessed the true meaning of the Holiday Season in the actions of our Soldiers as they served their country away from home like many before them have. Who can forget reading the story of General George Washington crossing the Delaware on December 25th, 1776, turning the tide of the war and rallying our fledgling Nation. It is hard on everyone to be away from home during Christmas and missing time with family, friends and our own Holiday traditions, but often in

life it is events and times like these that we realize how good we have it. My wish this season was that all the families understand and are proud of the fact that their loved ones are giving a gift of hope for a better future to people that have much less than us. Our nation’s military is founded on selfless service and unfailing perseverance. We serve so that others can celebrate the season according to their beliefs; so that our friends may gather and share in each other’s company without fear; and so that the people of Afghanistan may have the gift of hope and that someday they will know the promise of peace.



The nativity set outside the Chapel.

As we ring in the New Year, and set our goals for 2010, I ask that you support your Soldier and write and email them often and tell them how proud you are and how much you respect their service to our

Nation. Today’s Army is so great because we have young officers, NCOs, and Soldiers making it happen at their level because they are empowered by a sense of duty they have for a greater cause. We are the greatest military on the earth, not because we are the best educated and best equipped, which we are, but because our Soldiers are more than anything motivated by their faith, families, friends, and pride in their Nation.

Happy New Year!
LTC von Eschenbach
Lighthorse 6