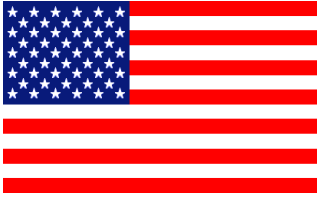


- > Sir,
- >
- > I received another care package from you last week. Thanks a lot for the
- > generosity and thoughtfulness from you, your family and the church members.
- >
- > There is not much I can do for you, but be thankful for that good deed and
- > will do my job to protect our nation's interests.
- >
- > Attached is a picture of a bat house on Camp Victory, Baghdad. It was
- > constructed many years ago. The bats sleep in the building during the days
- > and fly out to catch mosquitoes and bugs at night. It was a part of the
- > efforts to control mosquitoes in the area.
- >
- > I hope the kids will like the picture!
- >
- > Peter Vien





**COALITION JOINT CIVIL-MILITARY OPERATIONS TASK FORCE
GHAZNI PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM
GHAZNI, AFGHANISTAN**

19 November 2009

Christ's Church
C/o MAJ John Sutherland
941 South Dash Point Road
Federal Way, WA 98003
USA

Dear Members of the Christ's Church:

Thank you very much for the package that you sent to us at the Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Ghazni, Afghanistan. The package that you sent was very much appreciated because we are a long distance from anyplace that we can buy items that we need. We are located about 100 miles south of the capital city of Kabul and we are in the process of building a place for us to live near the city of Ghazni in the Ghazni Province. I have over 50 soldiers located here involved in the reconstruction activities for this province of Afghanistan and there are over 500 soldiers here involved in providing a stable & secure environment people of Afghanistan.

The weather here is pretty cold with snow staying from January through March. We are working with the people of the Ghazni Province to rebuild their communities and help them with a better life. Since we have been here we have been delivering blankets, school supplies, food, and other items that they can use right away. We are now working with the government ministries with plans to build roads, schools, and medical clinics. The people here are very friendly and we have developed a very good relationship with them and they know that we are here to help them. The Afghan people experienced over 20 years of war and they are not used to having a foreign military here that is trying to help them.

If you would like to send anything to us we would like to have people send schools supplies for the children. The people here are very poor and the schools don't have paper, pens, or any other schools supplies for the children. The children are very eager to learn and they really like it when they can have a pen to write with.

Sincerely,

STEVEN J. FORD
Lieutenant Colonel, Civil Affairs
Commander

Greetings from Afghanistan! Everything is going well this month for me in the Province of Ghazni, Afghanistan. My big milestone for the month was having my official grand opening of my Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) site. I had about three hundred people attend the [ceremony/ribbon cutting](#) including the US Ambassador, several Afghan Central Government Ministers, and many local government representatives. The idea of the Provincial Reconstruction Team is to have United States civilian and military personnel as well as Afghans to provide the security and reconstruction for the area. I now have a Ministry of the Interior Colonel who works for me as a Police & Security advisor. It is interesting having him live with us and having to translate all of our meetings. I also now have a United States Department of State Representative working for me and hopefully I will get a United States Agency for International Development representative who will be able to fund the large projects in the near future.

We have projects including wells, sanitation, rebuilding of a power plant, and building new schools. I am spending most of my time working with the Ghazni Governor and the police Chief to development a long term plan for the province and to make sure that it is a secure environment. We are also preparing for the election registration and elections coming up in the near future. Voter registration is very difficult for many reasons to include the fact that they have never tracked who was born and who has died. Most people here don't know how old they are or when they were born.

The weather is getting much warmer but the sand storms are getting very strong. I am hoping that because we are at 7200 feet that it won't get too hot. We are starting to see the nomadic "Kucci" tribes moving north along the paved ring road. I have seen more camels in the last two days than I ever thought that I would see. We still don't have email or showers but we should have both in the near future. Our living conditions are continuing to improve on a daily basis.

Regards,
Steve
LTC Steven Ford

I did receive your box of school supplies and candy. Thank you very much for sending it. I still don't have email unless I have a chance to go back to Bagram. I am back at Bagram for a couple to attend some meetings. I forgot what it was like to take a shower! Everything is going well. The weather is getting warmer but the sand storms are getting worse. We have a lot of projects underway now and we are developing a really good relationship with the people. The beginning of the year was March 21st so the kids are back in school now. The kids here are really great and they are very anxious to learn. They really like getting the school supplies and to get a pen is a big deal. I will hopefully have email in the next month and I will send you pictures of the kids getting the school supplies.

Best Regards,
Steve
LTC Steven Ford

John Sutherland,

Thank you for the package and letter. It's hard to believe that I've got that many relatives in my family tree. Please accept my apologies for not shaking your hand perhaps someday we'll meet. I'm in a Mechanical Infantry Unit. We have 14 Bradleys, 5 Hummers, 5 LMTV's, 3 Mee3's, 1 M88. About 130 men (maybe you know that already). I'm the Senior mechanic. It's an E6 Position. I'm supposed to have the Master Sergeant slot as I've got more points and schools than he does. But, we call it the technician mafia that's where he's in. He's a full time guy so he's got connections. All in all he's a fair guy. We do have our disagreements. It's amazing how a deployment changes people and myself actually. Our battalion is hell bent on making irrational decisions. But they will pay dearly for that when those soldiers need to re-up. I expect about a 30-50% fallout of soldiers. Our morale isn't so good. Various reasons, some the combat stress, some home issues, some aren't sure. I'm sure in your position you see all of this.

A little about myself. My father is Gene Bucklin, mom Helen Bucklin. I have 2 sisters, 1 in Bozeman, an accountant, Laura Thomas, husband Brian, daughter Taylor. 1 in Casper WY, Sarah Comesiky, husband Frank. I am the only son and the youngest. Laura, 34, Sarah, 29, me 26. I have 3 sons, Austin, 6; Chandler 4; George 1 1/2.

My bride is Natalie, and we reside in Chinook, MT. I miss them so. It's hard to know they are growing up and I'm not there.

I got a Bacc. Degree in Diesel Technology, assoc. In Turbine (ground) and also Assoc. in Auto Tech. I finally got my student loans paid off. What a relief. Although, Natalie and I are still losing money. So this deployment is a major lifestyle change for us. But hopefully time will fly for me. I have to go against Grandpa Franks will, he told me once when I was young not to wish I was older as the years fly by soon enough. But years later here I am again wish this year by.

I'm sorry about the penmanship. I'm on line in a 5 ton wrecker waiting to head out w the QRF to recover and IED'ed vehicle. I'm on a recovery crew once a month every second week.

5 tons aren't the most hospitable things to write a letter in. But I owe you one and I've got a few minutes. Well, feel free to ask me anything you may want to know. I've got about 1500 pictures and I was right down in Smarma for the elections. I was the heavy QRF so I've got some cool pics. I got a couple of bullets and a lot of the propaganda (pamphlets, etc.)

Best of luck to your family and interests. Maybe someday we will meet.

SSG Charley W. Bucklin

Ps: let me know if you get this letter. A lot of my mail hasn't been getting to the states.



Christ's Church
941 South Dash Point Road
Federal Way, WA 98003

Dear Friends,

I want to thank you for the wonderful support you have provided my battalion this Holiday season. I also want to pass on our gratitude to the students of Des Moines Creek School. Your generosity, patriotism, and compassion have been truly inspirational to the leaders and Paratroopers of this battalion. Your altruism reminds us of the wondrous virtues of being Americans and just how important it is to protect our Liberty and way of life. The only gesture I can think of to reciprocate your kindness is to offer my sincerest gratitude and respect on behalf of the 900 Paratroopers of 2d Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

I wish you Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year. Best wishes in all of your endeavors. God bless you and your family.

Sincerely,

\\ORIGINALS SIGNED\\
VIET X. LUONG
Lieutenant Colonel
US Army, Commanding