

Friends and Family of the Bobcats,

Greeting from Mosul, Iraq, the newest current home of the Bobcats. As most of you know by now, the battalion was rapidly redeployed from our initial base at Taji, Iraq to rejoin our brigade, 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team) two weeks ago. The call came while we were deployed to the Fallujah area of operations after insurgents in the Mosul area became more active. Your soldiers did a magnificent job in disengaging from combat operations in Fallujah, packing and preparing equipment, and then moving over 300 miles to join the brigade in its fight here. From alert to arrival, less than 36 hours passed including time to pack up all of our remaining equipment at Taji to permanently move north with the Lancer brigade.

Mosul is a city of complexities-there are a variety of cultures represented here and a growing economy that creates a busy hustle and bustle of daily life. Our 3rd Brigade counterparts spent nearly an entire year in this area so Strykers are nothing new to the people of this area. The insurgency here ebbs and flows. On 10-11 November, insurgent activity spiked causing senior leaders to make the decision to return 1-5 Infantry to the brigade. The soldiers, to a man, are happy to be back with the brigade. There is a sense of comfort serving with the units and soldiers we've trained with for over two years.

The Bobcats are now a combat tested battalion. Every unit has had direct and indirect fire contact and every soldier has performed with courage and commitment. We've been very fortunate in a very dangerous environment. We've suffered several costly casualties but fortunately no one from the battalion has died. Our casualties have been evacuated and continue to receive the best care possible. We look forward to their recovery and return to our ranks.

The last 7 weeks have been a whirlwind for the battalion. After arriving in Kuwait and conducting a very rapid transfer of authority with 1-23 IN we found ourselves conducting combat operations near Baghdad and then outside of Fallujah. Following a week of operations in support of Marines near Fallujah, we came north to Mosul where we've operated for the past ten days. The soldiers have settled into new routines and a new area of operation. Alpha Company has been detached from the battalion and operates in another area under the command of 2-14 Cavalry, the brigade's Reconnaissance, Surveillance, and Target Acquisition squadron. In return, we have the Archer Troop from 2-14 CAV under our command and control. While we miss A Company, they are performing magnificently for the Rattlesnake Squadron. We attempt to keep in contact with them as best we can, however, their mail, support, and contact is currently through 2-14 CAV; (we provide the same support for A Troop).

The Holidays are here. Thanksgiving meal included all the fixings here at FOB Marez. We transported dinners to our soldiers serving at one of our combat outposts near Mosul (C Company) and had the opportunity to talk with many of these young warriors. Their morale is high and they do a complex and dangerous task without complaint and with the knowledge that the cause is good and just. We serve alongside a number of newly trained Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). These young men are forming the basis for long term security in this country-they too demonstrate courage everyday facing a determined and crafty enemy.

The fight in Iraq continues daily and we awaken each morning understanding the importance of our mission. We miss home and family, especially during these Holiday times. However, your cards, letters, and emails remind us how much support we have and provide great comfort to the troops. Please keep the mail and emails coming-the soldiers really enjoy the information from home.

The coming weeks will bring the start of the managed leave program. Nearly all soldiers who are deployed for the full year will have the opportunity to take two weeks leave, not including travel time to the States. Our first leave personnel will depart for their leave in December. I know everyone would like to schedule leave in advance. Unfortunately, our allocations and mission will not always accommodate each individual's desires. Unit chains of command will manage leave

and ensure equity to the troops as best as possible. All leaves will be subject to the operational tempo at the time-its possible that in unusual circumstances we would have to postpone leaves due to mission requirements. I don't see this as likely, but it is possible.

Finally, a reminder about Operational Security-please keep any details you learn about operations private. Its critically important that our operational details remain tightly controlled-our enemy is an intelligent and 'plugged-in' foe. Emails and phone calls about what we're doing or specifics about what we've done can provide him information and aid his purpose. Don't give our enemy any advantage.

Your Bobcat soldiers continue to serve with courage and perseverance in the finest traditions of this great Regiment and Army. It remains an honor to fight at their side and to serve in their ranks. Thanks again for all your support and prayers.

Respectively,

Todd McCaffrey  
LTC, Infantry  
BOBCATS!