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YELLOWHAMMERING AFGHANISTAN

By Mike Tomberlin

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Packing in the packages

Posted by

Michael Tomberlin January 22, 2008 6:00 AM



Just some of the boxes I faced on my return.

I anticipated I would have a good bit of mail when I returned from leave.

Considering what I get in a normal week, it was understandable that after being away from Camp Vulcan for around three weeks would mean the packages were piling up.

Even so, what awaited me when I got back was astounding.

My office was crammed with boxes and letters. There was more in the conference room of the TOC. But the majority were put into one of the large shipping containers outside because there simply wasn't enough room to leave them inside.

It took me several days to open the boxes, remove the shipping labels and customs forms, consolidate where I could and then label them to put back into storage.

The majority were humanitarian assistance packages for the Afghans. What a perfect way to celebrate Christmas - by sending clothes, toys and bedding to those in need.

Not surprising, most of the boxes were from Chris and Cindy St. John of Operation Show Our Love and all the many people who support them financially but also help them pack and prepare the boxes for shipping.

By my last count, there were 32 boxes from OSOL, mostly clothes for men, women and children here. I can't thank you enough on behalf of those who will soon be receiving these items. They also included some stuff for the guys here.

Candy Lindsay of Miami contributed seven big

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boots. We plan to get them out right away because we know they are needed.

Another four boxes of toys and stuffed animals came from Scott Patterson of my former hometown of Andalusia, Ala. Scott said he received the items from AEC in Andalusia. Thanks to all who helped out.

Scott's weren't the only packages from my old hometown.

The Andalusia Star News sent the guys here at Camp Vulcan some great snacks, toiletries and magazines. Much appreciation to my hometown newspaper.

Beverly Moore's Andalusia Elementary School class sent us some great snacks as well along with some terrific cards made by the children. One of those cards meant a lot to me, so much, in fact that I plan on talking about it in a future blog post. Thanks, Ms. Moore and all the kids.

Speaking of kids, 11-year-old Mary Grace Burks and 8-year-old Sophie Burks of Montgomery sent boxes of toys for the Afghan children along with some special Christmas wishes for the troops. Thanks, girls.

Our old friend Brandi Scheffer of Perris, Cal., sent us boxes of snacks, DVDs, magazines, games and other terrific items. She has a knack for sending great care packages.

The same is true of Karen Gaspard of Metairie, La. Not only did she send us snacks, but she and her friends pitched in to ship us a card table and six folding chairs for our MWR room. To top it off, she covered our collective rear-ends by sending us Valentine's Day cards for our wives and significant others. Thanks a bundle, Karen.

Another old friend, Cynthia Andersen of Englewood, Colo., sent snacks for the soldiers and toys for the Afghan children.

Callie Valet of Tipton, Iowa, continued to support the Afghans with pens, paper, toys and candy.

Kurt and Debbie Hofschild of Pasadena, Md., sent more great packages with snacks, gloves, hats and other much-needed items for the Afghan children. There were even some items for the soldiers and our dogs. Thanks for your continued support.

The love from Maryland continued with Debbie Gunn of Pasadena sending snacks and stuffed animals and Wilma Clark of Bethesda sending us snacks and decorations along with other items.

Louise Hickey of Bessemer, Ala., sent lots of candy for us to hand out to the Afghan children.

Steve and Carol Tate of Pleasant Grove, Ala., sent us some books and games along with tasty rum cake.

Others sending some terrific care packages to the troops were Mt. Carmel Medical Center of Columbus, Ohio; Dennis Collins of Eureka Springs, Ark.; Delores Fiscalini of Novato, Cal.; and DavisDenny of Birmingham.

The great folks at GE Energy in Pensacola, Fla., sent another great package of all sorts of useful items such as books, games and decorations. They also included a bundle of Christmas cards for the soldiers, including one for me from my old friend Chris Chisum. Thanks to all.

In fact, nearly everyone who sent packages also sent Christmas cards and letters of support. There were many others who sent Christmas cards to me and the other soldiers - so many that I can't possibly thank you all by name. I wish I could. All of the support means so much to us all.

Many of you sent me e-mail addresses and I promise I will get around to thanking you all personally in the days ahead.

There was one letter of Christmas and New Years wishes that I will point out. Alabama Gov. Bob Riley addressed a letter to me but also sent one for me to post for all of the soldiers here at Camp Vulcan, which I have done.

Many of those who support us learned about us through AnySoldier.com. I can't say enough about that organization and the people who support it.

It's always overwhelming to see the support we get from home. It was even more so when I faced the dozens of boxes upon my return to Camp Vulcan. Once again, I stand in awe of your generosity and I can never thank you enough.

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