

May 5, 2008

### DO A GOOD DEED FOR OUR TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN

Okay, listen up. I have a job for you. Actually, it's not a job. It's a good deed. Lt. Frank Wilson, a member of the U.S. Marine Corps, is deployed in Afghanistan, helping root out the Taliban bad guys. He and his unit are out in the field for long stretches of time, enduring hardships that you and I can only imagine from the safety of our sofas. Lt. Wilson recently wrote and asked if we would consider supplying a list of items that he and his troops badly want and need.

Here is the list Lt. Wilson has requested: Toothbrushes and Crest Pro-Health toothpaste (best when servicemen and servicewomen get no fluoride from water), dental floss, Listerine Purple (with fluoride), acne face wash, sunscreen/aftershave hybrid lotions, AA battery-powered electric razors, eyedrops/nasal saline, vitamins, baby wipes, economy-brand black socks (like athletic socks; often Marines out in the field have no water for laundry and wear socks for days and then burn them with the garbage), food items that will not melt in harsh sunshine (granola bars/beef jerky/protein powders), spices and hot sauce for MREs (field rations), anything Chef Boyardee, Cliff Bars, Powerbars, sunflower seeds, tuna packages, 5-Hour Energy Vials (Low Caffeine Energy Boost at GNC) and sports magazines.

When I returned from Iraq a couple of years ago, I asked you to write the members of Georgia's 48th Brigade Combat Team stationed in the aptly named Triangle of Death. You responded with over 2,000 cards and letters. When I asked for prayers for little Abby Smith, the brave four-year-old battling cancer, I heard from Christians, Jews and Muslims, all with different religious philosophies, all supporting Abby and her family.

Now, I am asking you to help Frank Wilson and his troops. Not just you. Your church. Your civic club. Your school. Your workplace.

Lt. Wilson says that he and his gunnery sergeant will split the gifts evenly among the troops. He adds, "There are no doubts that many Americans are weary after five years of sustained combat in Iraq and nearly seven in Afghanistan. I just ask that you keep our service members in your prayers. God bless and Semper Fi." A lot of prayers and a little Chef Boyardee. I believe we can handle that.

Over the past few years, I have spoken to more civic clubs than I can count, including dang near every Rotary Club and Kiwanis Club in the towns where my column runs (and that is a lot of places), church groups, retired employees clubs, business groups and industry associations. I know for a fact that every group with whom I have visited in the state is doing great things for a variety of causes. I would hope they would take a moment to add Lt. Wilson's request to your checklist of worthy causes. I hear regularly from schoolteachers who want their students to establish communications with our troops overseas. Same with church groups looking for a project. Presto! Now, you have a name and a list of requested items. Besides, it isn't going to take you more than an hour to round up most of this stuff. It's not like I'm asking you to repave I-95 with a spatula. This is an easy job that will make you feel good all over.

Here is the address:  
1st Lt. Frank Wilson  
WPNS CO LAR PLT  
1/6  
UNIT 73145  
FPO AE O9510-3145

He didn't say so, but I'll bet he and his troops wouldn't mind getting a note or two from you, as well as the supplies they have requested. You can check your local U.S. Post Office on any particular requirements for mailing your materials to our troops. They have a few regulations regarding overseas mail, but nothing onerous.

This is not the time for a debate over the pros and cons of the war. We can do that on another occasion, if you don't mind. This is the time to show our young men and women of the military that we appreciate them and the sacrifices that they are making on our behalf.

Lt. Frank Wilson, USMC, thanks you. His troops thank you. I thank you too.