



LIGHTHORSE TIMES

US Army

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Happy Valentine's Day

I would like to dedicate this newsletter to all the supporting spouses back home who take care of all the duties on the "home front" while we do our Nations bidding here in Afghanistan. I realize and have said many times that it is my spouse and her support that allows me to serve our Nation and dedicate the required energy to being the best Commander possible for Task Force Lighthorse. She gives me great balance, perspective, humility, and most importantly, love and support. I consider our marriage of almost 17 years my greatest accomplishment as it is one of hard work, perseverance, mutual sacrifice, and of course, great joy. So on this Valentine's Day I would like to tell my wife, thank you and I love you very much.

Here at FOB Fenty, other than the reminder of some pink candy laying on our desks or the sight of CW2 Bill Stone from the Knights handing out Valentine's Candy (see pictures), February 14th was much like the 13th or the 15th. As I tried to unsuccessfully find something nice for my wife on an extremely slow internet connection, I wondered why every February, candy, flowers, and gifts are exchanged between loved ones. Who is Saint Valentine and why do we celebrate this holiday? So, like everyone else these days, I Googled "Valentine's Day" and read up on the many legends and stories about the origins of exchanging love notes and candy.

The legend that I think is pertinent for my message today is the one that contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Roman Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men — his crop of potential soldiers. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

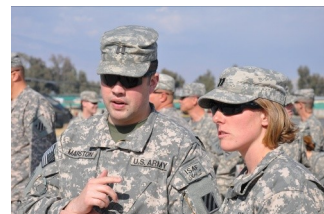
I sure am glad that practice hasn't lasted over the years. Although we often joke and say things like "If the Army wanted you to have a spouse, they would have issued you one", there is no doubt that our families and their support are extremely beneficial and a large part of helping us achieve our mission. Even though spouses don't wear a uniform, they serve their Nation much like their uniformed partner. I have seen countless times spouses assisting other family members in times of need, participating in the Family Readiness Groups, and engaging in their local military community all in the name of making things better for one another. Military spouses are both mom and dad to our children and pick up the slack in our homes while we are away. They are the true unsung heroes of this military and have my unending gratitude for their service to our Soldiers and this Nation.

Thank You and Happy Valentine's Day!!!!



Promotions:

SPC Fernando Pedrego to
SGT





Lighthouse News

Early in the morning on February 8th, TF Lighthouse conducted a MEDEVAC of a infantry Soldier that was seriously wounded from a mortar round that hit at one of the outlying bases. The amount of teamwork and bravery that it took to execute that mission in terrible weather in one of the most dangerous valleys in Afghanistan has been one of the most proud moments of my military career. We not only picked up the critically wounded Soldier on the battlefield but also flew him to the Combat Support Hospital in Bagram to get him the best care possible. The Soldier is doing well and is alive because of heroes that put their lives on the line to save his. CSM Lemke's email to Colonel Galli and CSM Stidley that night said it all and showed how proud he was to be the Task Force Command Sergeant Major.

Sir/CSM

"Today was one of the most humbling days of my 21 year adventure with the Army. Today we saved a life. The family of the Soldier that was snatched from the hands of death in the Pech Valley will never know. Rightfully so, it is not within our character to boast. They will never know that, we too, value their Son as if we were Family and so much more. We are him. We will never leave a fallen comrade. Thanking the enormous team involved in saving this Soldier would take a novel, so I will attempt to do it with brevity.

From Colonel to Private.....

The amount of blood, sweat, tears, and energy put into today's extremely high risk MEDEVAC mission would not fit into any earthly container. The heart of an American Soldier is the only thing big enough. I am honored to be part of the whole, for the whole will risk all for the part. We have come a long way from beginning of the formation of Task Force Lighthouse at Falcon Focus.

From the Commanders who deliberately agreed to trust their Troopers to the aircrews that wouldn't quit. From the NCO that busts his knuckles daily making sure our horses are fixed, fueled, and armed to the countless others that make sure the mission comes first, all the way down to the private on the radio.

7 for 1. Seven went into harm's way for one.

Nerve, guts, bravery, courage, gallantry, valor. Parts of the whole."

CSM Lemke

Lighthouse 7



Dustoff in their newly christened Stetsons



Valentine Shout-outs!

"To my loved ones back home (Evette, Adrian, Christian) Even if we don't get to talk every day it does not mean that you guys are not always on my mind and in my heart. Love and miss you always!!!" Rob

"Dear Love: I Love you, miss you!" RU

To my lovely wife Lulu this is Big Daddy Cardona, missing you every day and waiting for our day to reunite alongside our GROWN UP kids get the hint, I hope that you enjoy this day and know that I miss you and love you forever!!!

Allen & Ava,
I love and miss you so much. I can't wait to come home and be in your arms.
Love,
Candice

Pookie,
I love you and miss you bunches! Thanks for taking care of my babies and being such a tremendous, strong and supportive wife. Schnookums.

