Dear editor:

Thinking back to my childhood in Aurora, my brother and I would fight for the last Coca Cola, Frosted Flakes, or the famous Chuck's Drive Inn BBQs.
We could care less about sharing with each other, we were simply inconsiderate and just a couple of selfish siblings. I would like to think our behavior growing up was not normal, but selfishness amongst siblings is probably more common than one would expect. I imagine most parents understand the relationship like my brother and me, and can recall a few stories of "bickering," as said by our mom.
While in our camp this evening, we were happy to see dinner arrive from Forward Operating Base (FOB) Justice. We all noticed the amount of rations (burritos) were limited. This happens sometimes and no one complains since we always appreciate hot chow.
Knowing that there are 28 hungry soldiers in our camp, 18 of which are infantry, I waited last to eat since I am an old officer. After all, the young soldiers' calorie consumption is much more important than mine... especially when we compare waistlines. When chow is limited, this tradition of officers eating last is as old as the US Army.
Back to my childhood again, I remember a particularly hot summer day in Aurora where I swam all afternoon in the "new" Parkview Pool, then departed to deliver the Lincoln newspaper to 20 homes bordered by J and M Street, 9th and 12th Street. This one hot day, coupled with all the activity, anyone could develop a great thirst. Parched, I just could not wait to get home where I knew there were several cold bottles of Coke in the refrigerator.
Once my paper carrier was empty, while peddling my green Coast-to-Coast bike, I raced for home with the expectation of a cold soda and good burn as the carbonation passed my throat. Walking in the door, I saw my older brother gloating and immediately knew all the soda was gone.
As I scooped up some rice and vegetables in our camp's eating area, I noticed that there was one burrito left. Unlike the old man writing this story, a young officer would think "ah... the soldiers left one for me" -- an appropriately innocent thought for a 23-year old lieutenant.
There are many things that civilians do not know about a team of soldiers living in Afghanistan. One of these many things is their remarkable care for each other. In our camp, I watch these fine young soldiers in utter amazement as they are so splendidly selfless. No one tells a soldier to take a plate of food to his battle buddy in a guard tower, it just happens like breathing. I watch how soldiers wrap the food for their partners to be sure it remains warm and not sprinkled with dust on the trip to security post. Details like the plastic flatware, salt, pepper, and cold drink are packaged like a gift at Christmas.
I often wonder about competitive and inconsiderate siblings and how their relationships turn out as they grow older -- distant or close? I am sure there have been many studies over years. Well, siblings are not soldiers in a strange country. However, in both groups the surroundings do influence how they treat each other. If only we could share this one evening of observing soldiers with young "bickering" siblings.
Going back to the last burrito in the pan -- the soldiers rarely take the last item in the pan, just in case one of their buddies is still hungry. What a neat profession in which to be a member.
Thank you for the online newspaper.
Monte Yoder

Gardez, AFG