

postcards
from **PISMO**

A stylized illustration of a postcard with a scalloped border and horizontal lines, positioned to the right of the word 'postcards'. Behind the word 'PISMO' is a faint, circular postmark with concentric circles.

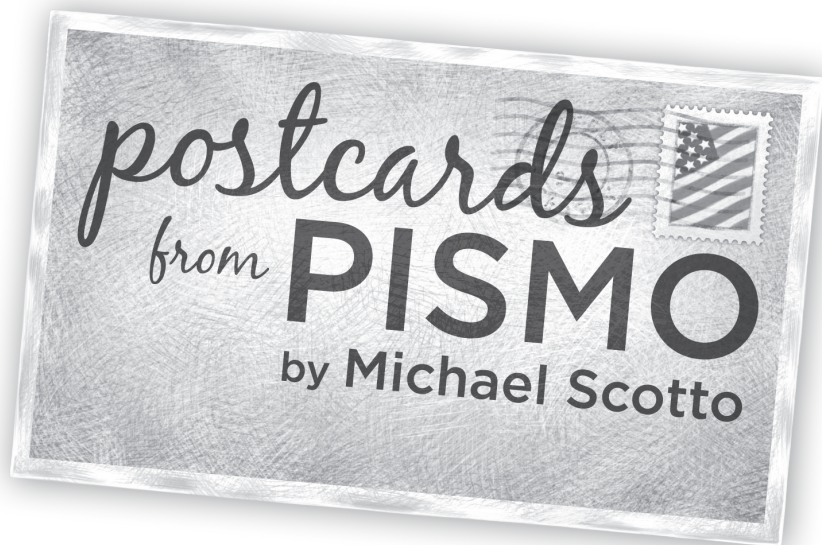
ALSO BY MICHAEL SCOTTO

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Beaver, Pennsylvania

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To all who serve, at home and abroad

May 16th

Dear Soldier,

I'll bet you weren't expecting a letter from me, were you? It would be pretty weird if you were, us being total strangers and all. I don't know you, and you don't know me. Since I am the one writing the letter, I'll start.

Hi! My name is Felix Maldonado. I am in fourth grade. I come from a town called Pismo Beach, California. Maybe you have heard of it. It is in the Central Coast part of California. The city nearby is San Luis Obispo.

I live with my dad, my mom, and my brother, Quin. Dad owns a shop near our house. He rents ATVs for people to ride on the beach. (That's short for "all-terrain vehicles," in case you didn't know.) Mom is a photographer. Quin is a senior in high school, but he graduates next month. I don't know what he'll be next.

This week, everyone in my class is writing to a soldier. I hope this letter gets to you in time for Memorial Day. Mrs. Seymour says that it takes two weeks for a letter to get all the way to Afghanistan. (She also wrote how to spell that on the board.) I asked why we don't just send emails instead, since they're a lot faster. She said that wasn't the point.

Either way, I am writing this letter to say thank you. Thank you for being so brave, and thank you for leaving your family to fight for our country. I don't think I could do something like that. I couldn't even go away to camp in Big Sur last summer, and that was only one hundred miles away. It's not even out of the state! I guess I'm just not very brave.

I'm not sure what else to say about myself. My favorite animal is a horse. I like reading comic books. I also like movies about sports, even though I am not good at sports. Do you ever get to watch movies in Afghanistan?

I know you are in a very dangerous place. And you're very busy, too. Mrs. Seymour told us that you won't have time to write back. But I hope you prove her wrong. To save you some time, I have a list of questions you could answer, besides the movie question. Here they are:

1. What is your name and where are you from?
2. How long have you been in the Army?
3. What do soldiers really do?
4. Is it true that you guys use a lot of swear words?
5. Do you ever get scared?

You do not have to write me back if you are too busy. This was my class project, not yours. But I would like it if you did. It would be cool to make a new friend. The return address on the envelope is for my school. School lets out next month, so if you do want to write, write back soon!

Please be safe,
Felix Maldonado, Room 17B

P.S. If soldiers really do swear a lot,
please do not swear if you write me
back. I don't think Mrs. Seymour will let
me read your letter if you do.

June 13th

Dear Lt. Greene,

You wrote me back! I can't believe it. I was hoping that you would. I don't know if you noticed, but I put a lot of work into my letter. Actually, I think I got a little carried away. The other kids' letters were one page, and mine was a whole two pages without even writing double-spaced. I'm pretty sure it was the longest thing I've ever written.

Seriously! I don't know how people lived before computers. There were a lot of folks walking around with sore hands from having to write everything, I'll bet.

It was really cool to get your letter. I've never gotten a letter from another country before, except for the Philippines. That's where my ancestors are from. I still have cousins there who send us a card every Christmas. But now I have gotten mail from America, the Philippines, and Afghanistan. Mrs. Seymour had me read the whole thing in