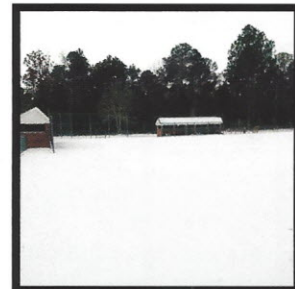




It was the morning of Wednesday, January 29, 2014, my first day with snow. How it truly feels like it was just yesterday, waking up 2 hours before the time of our designated morning wakeup that day at 9:00, a whole 3 hour sleep in! For us boys here at CMA, there is no greater gift than extra sleep. For me, though, that was beside the point. I was born and raised in Florida, and being a diehard Floridian who's never even done as much as experience snow at the age of 17, and soon to be 18 in another month (March 5th), I was not going to miss my first opportunity



to go and do all the things I've dreamed of doing as a kid watching Christmas movies like "Home Alone." "PT Sweat top and white T, check; PT sweat pants and socks, check; ACU uniform and boots, check." I told myself... I was ready. I didn't even dare look out the window on the way out of my barracks, purposely just so I could open the door and feel the cold burst of air, and what I then saw, my first winter wonderland. It was amazing! Everything covered in snow, no grass, no sidewalk; the trees and their branches blanketed all over with snow, it was a dream come true. I sprinted out and jumped in the area where my first year I hated the most, raking the leaves of my morning fallout, police call. I felt like a young schoolboy winning a lifetime pass to Disney World! Which to me was nothing living in Orlando, FL, where amusement parks are practically that of second nature. In this unknown land I made things I've always dreamed of experiencing like my first snow angel, writing my name in the snow, making stacks of snowballs to bombard on the first unlucky soul to step outside of his barracks, unexpectedly being greeted by my maniacal pleasure. It was funny to me because, not only was my entire week not the best, but I got sick the day before for the first time this year. Regardless, I let nothing stop me. Next thing I know, one of Delta's cadets (the company below mine, Charlie), Jerzy Misztal, came outside in his underwear where I opened fire! Running back in and grabbing two of his other company friends, all ran back out which became my first official snowball fight! There was nothing greater. Already 30 minutes had passed and by the time I even noticed, 15 people all outside engaged together throwing snowballs; and one coming to yell to the group of us "Alpha and Band are at the football field!" In a moment's notice everyone started running towards the football field together and within 5 minutes... A battalion snowball fight had begun. This was too great, nothing made a sick boy with a bad week feel better than experiencing his first snow day with the company of 50 guys together all teaming up and going against each other with a rain of snowballs. An hour had passed and everyone left to the 8:30 optional breakfast scheduled for that morning, which by the way, is the first breakfast I can honestly say I can remember... pancakes, sausages, and peaches. Any other optional breakfast I went to if you asked me what I had, I wouldn't have the slightest clue. The 2013-2014 school year, my senior year, is a time which I will never forget. It was the first time my mom, sister, and I had our first official Christmas together with a real Evergreen tree and a fully decorated home, and the year in which I, for the first time ever, experienced one of life's greatest wonders, my first day with snow." Amed Khalil of Winter Park, Florida

