



WOLF PACK NEWS LETTER

September 12, 2008

“Salam Walikim” from Kabul! This edition is likely the last edition of the Wolf Pack News Letter from Kabul. After a hectic transition period, Wolf Pack II has relinquished control to the soldiers of Wolf Pack III. Your humble correspondent should be departing Kabul around September 23, 2008.

We will out-process from theatre in Manus (as opposed to Kuwait) and fly from Manus to Ft. Riley. We will demobilize at Ft. Riley (the active duty officers with us will out-process at Ft. Riley and transition to their follow-on assignments). If all goes well, I anticipate being back in Dallas by October 5, 2008. Of course, the time line is not set in stone and can easily slip.

Or course, our URF teams are not returning complete, as we will re-deploy without LTC Walton. As we head for home, his absence is particularly painful and he continues to be missed.

RIP Complete—Wolf Pack III Takes the Reins

After in-processing through Camp Phoenix, Wolf Pack III started to train with the out-going Wolf Pack II soldiers. Specific training included drivers training and live-fire exercises.



The drivers training allowed the new Wolf Pack members to become familiar with typical situations in Kabul and the routes generally used by Wolf Pack II.



The water tanks above, by the way, are being transported on a cart being pulled by an individual Afghan—which gives a whole new meaning to the term a “hard day’s work.”

The live fire exercises covered both individual weapons and crew-served weapon systems (fired from the vehicles).



One crew learned the important lesson of refueling at the FOB before departure—by having to “borrow” fuel from another truck’s fuel cans.





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Golf on the Live-Fire Range

The live-fire range, however, was not work and no play. Several of the Wolf Pack II soldiers squeezed in a few practice drives. 1LT Newton tries his luck.



Yours truly tees off.



Need to work on the follow through!



CPT Smith shows off his form



I am not sure any of us is ready for the PGA Tour, but we did enjoy the break.

Last CMA

During the RIP, Phoenix sponsored a CMA. As with previous CMA's, Kandak A was tasked with providing security. The CMA was a great opportunity for the Wolf Pack III Team A soldiers to become familiar with A Kandak's security missions. It also provided a last opportunity for the Wolf Pack II Team A soldiers to work with the local Afghans.

As is usual, the Afghan children were initially cautious of the Americans. However, once they realized we were only taking pictures (and they

could see the pictures) they came out in droves.





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The CMA went very well, with over 300 families assisted.



Of course, there are separate areas for men (above) and women (below)





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Saying Good-Bye to Kandak A

The difficult part of the RIP (Relief In Place) was saying good-bye to the officers and soldiers of A Kandak and our interpreters. After working with them for some 9 months, they felt like family. While the kandak achieved much during our tenure, it was difficult leaving them.

The kandak's hard-working S-3 will continue to plan and execute the battalion operations



The Kandak commander (left) and Kandak XO (center) will continue to lead A Kandak on its future missions. As the ANSF in Kabul assume greater control of Kabul's security, A Kandak's mission will, no doubt, become more complex and more kinetic. Under their leadership, I

have no doubt the Kandak will continue to be successful.



Siefi, the Ass't S-3 (officially the kandak's Education officer), will also continue to plan the Kandak's operations. As we departed, Siefi was selected to attend Infantry Officer Basic Course (at Ft. Benning, GA). As part of the course, he is slated to attend a language course at Lackland AFB (in Texas) beginning in October. With any luck, I will see Siefi again in the near future.



My primary interpreter, Doc Eissa will also be greatly missed. Doc, like many interpreters, hopes to immigrate to the United States—so, inshalia, I may also get to see Doc again.

Lastly, and most difficult, was saying good-bye to the Afghan children.

Although their names are unknown to me, their smiles and eyes will always haunt me. In the end, it is their future that gave a great deal of purpose to our mission.



Final Mission—Ramp Ceremony at Bagram Air Base

After handing over the keys to the vehicles and our Afghan cell phones, we learned we had one more mission. Earlier this week two Marines and a Navy Corpsman were killed in a complex attack. As is custom, Bagram Air Base has a formal "Ramp Ceremony" when the remains are transported from Graves Registration to the transport aircraft.

All of the re-deploying Wolf Pack soldiers were detailed to attend the Ramp Ceremony. We were



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transported from Camp Phoenix to Bagram via CH-47 (cargo helicopter). Initially when we arrived and started rehearsing, several of us were assigned to the carry detail. The carry detail travels with the remains from Graves Registration to the flight line and carries the remains onto the waiting aircraft. However, as the rehearsals progressed, additional Marines arrived and took our places on the detail (which is as it should be considering that the deceased were Marines and a Navy Corpsman). We ended up being part of the VIP formation—forming the last portion of the cordon that the remains pass by before entering the aircraft.

The ceremony itself was very moving. It took place at 2400 (midnight) and involved a lone bag piper playing as the remains arrived on the flight line and were transported to the aircraft. One of the tunes played by the piper was the Marine Corp Hymn, which he played at a very slow cadence. The eerie juxtaposition of that slow cadence with the quick shuffle steps of the carry detail carrying the remains onto the aircraft is something I will never forget. Many of us had wanted to attend the Ramp Ceremony for LTC Walton, but were not permitted. Our attendance at this ceremony, therefore, not only honored the fallen Marines and Corpsman, but LTC Walton as well.

Oh, I have no pictures of the Ramp Ceremony, as any photography during the ceremony is strictly forbidden.

Thanks For Everyone's Support

While I know it is never over until it's over, I want to thank everyone for all their love and support over the past year. From Ft. Riley to Kabul and back, I could not have asked for more support and understanding. Whether sending Team A drink mix and granola bars for the entire deployment, providing the Tiki Hut over 500 cigars or helping put a new front lawn back on Briardale, everyone has been truly wonderful. Thank you to everyone!



Wolf Pack Team A with A Kandak's Battalion Staff, Company Commanders and Interpreters.

