



WOLF PACK NEWS LETTER

February 1, 2008

Hello everyone! I know that this edition of the news letter is going out a little late, but my extra duties and longer mentoring times have kept me away from the computer. The great news is that Wolf Pack's Team A has completed another week in Afghanistan. The weather this week was dry (no rain or snow) but, unfortunately, it was bitter cold. Highs were only in the teens and lows went down to -10 degrees. The cold made working outside sheer torture and also made gunning extremely difficult. All of Team A certainly enjoyed the hand warmers this past week.



As you can see for the picture, I spent part of the past week driving. With the hatch cover open, none of the seats in the HUMVEE are warm, but the driver's seat is the least cold.

ANA Live Fire—Continued

We continued to assist the ANA in conducting their weapons qualification. In an effort to spark some healthy competition between the companies of Kandak A, we

sponsored a competition on the last day of the range.



Every company (plus the battalion staff) put up their two best shooters and the winning company's soldiers received Leathermans and their pictures were posted in the DFAC (Mess Hall) as Kandak A's best marksmen.

As mentors, one of the unique opportunities we have is to encourage better treatment (or more equal treatment) of women. Kandak A has about 20 female soldiers. The women are generally perform clerical work and also search females at the physical security checkpoints operated by Kandak A. The women are all E-5's (sergeants) but they cannot be promoted and they are not allowed to wear their military uniform while on duty. Obviously, the leadership of Kandak A has not included these women in its military training. Since the women are Afghan soldiers, we "encouraged" the leadership to bring the female soldiers to the range and allow them to qualify. To assist in the encouragement, we

contacted Afghanistan's only female general (who has an office at MOD) and invited her to join us at the range.



The military boots issued to the females were terrible and, for many of the females, this was the first time that they were allowed to fire their weapons.



While this was a small step, nearly all of the women were very motivated to be included in the training and all indicated a strong



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desire to continue to be included. Obviously we intend to ensure that our Afghan unit includes its female soldiers as often as possible.



Gates of Kabul

Kandak A's mission also continued to expand—requiring us to visit the “Gates of Kabul.” These checkpoints, which are much farther outside the city that we usually travel, requires extensive travel through the province. While we appreciated the risk associates with extra travel, our inspection of the gates also allowed us to see parts of Kabul Province we had not yet visited.

We passed several cemeteries on our routes (there are no zoning rules, so there appears to be nothing restricting the size or placement of cemeteries).



There are no headstones, just large rocks. The colored flags are important; green signifies that the deceased was close to God or godly; black signifies a martyr; and red

One of the gates was actually set in one of the most scenic parts of Afghanistan I have yet seen (the west gate is pictured below).



One of the north gates was located above 7,200 feet!



Generally, the people were very nice. The living conditions in the rural parts of the Province, however, were very harsh.



Driving to the gates, however, was quite a challenge and often required us traversing some very crowded roads.





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There are no crosswalks and Afghans tend to simply walk out into traffic without looking. Below, these two Afghan men just walked out between vehicles in our convoy—I certain that the man on the right had no idea how difficult it was to stop our 15,000 lb vehicle.



The open stalls for meat are tolerable when the air temperature hovers around 30 degrees or less. I cannot imagine how the roads will smell in the summer.



I'll close with a few pictures of myself at Bela Hissar.



Berka's are still widely seen—even in Kabul. It still surprises me to see them so widely worn.

As part of a team photo and promotion ceremony, the Wolf Pack got together at Bela Hissar (the ancient fortress I previously visited). We found some UXO's (unexploded ordinance) and got to take some more pictures. Because the weather was warmer, an Afghan "car wash" was operating at the foot of Bela Hissar. The water is pumped from old wells and simply washes to shallow pools (where it freezes and is played on my children).



Thanks to everyone for their love and support.