

# **WOLFPACK NEWSLETTER**

## **JANUARY 7, 2008**

Hello everyone and Happy New Year! This is the second news letter from Camp Phoenix. After a few days of in-processing by Camp Phoenix, we began to in-process and transition with Wolf Pack I (we call ourselves Wolf Pack II to distinguish us from the group of soldiers we are replacing. The increase in mission tempo has forced me to take several days to put this issue together.

### **Camp Phoenix**

By most Forward Operating Base ("FOB") standards, Phoenix has all the creature comforts. However, a quick orientation via pictures will help visualize the FOB. In my last email, included photographs of the inside of my B-hut; below are pictures of my B-hut (my hut No. is N11—the number is on the right under the electrical box) and the "street" it is on (my hut is the last hut on the right).



The small Ford Ranger pick-up truck in the preceding photograph is the most common truck in the Afghan Army. We can use them on the FOB (to move heavy equipment, etc), but we do not take them off the FOB.

There are two "main" streets on the Camp. One street is primarily a pedestrian street and connects all the side streets along the b-huts and the Mess Hall (also called a DFAC). The following picture shows a portion of this main pedestrian street in the B-huts. Also visible on the left is a water point (with no potable water, KBR keeps these shelters filled with bottled water). Also, in the distance (and barely visible), is one of the many mountains that surround Kabul.



The other "street" is open to all tactical vehicles and runs along the inside of the FOB perimeter. Below is the main vehicle street (I am facing towards the PX and exit gate). The post office is in the foreground on the left.

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Next to my B-hut is the latrine/shower trailer (pictured below; my B-hut is visible on the right). In the cold weather, the location is not bad—as it is only a couple of steps between the B-hut and the trailer.



The inside of the trailer is very cramped, functional. We rarely have hot water in the morning (too many people trying to get hot showers over the entire FOB). However, there is usually hot water at night (not as big a rush) and there is also hot water in the morning if I am on an early mission (because I get up at 0415 to shower). The picture below shows the cramped facilities. More sinks are located beyond the door and the shower stalls (10 of them) are located beyond the sink room.



### **The Ministry of Defense (MOD)**

We have conducted several MCP's to the MOD. The MOD compound is where HSSB (Headquarters, Service & Support Brigade) is located. Kandak A (the unit that I mentor) is also headquartered at the MOD compound. MOD is adjacent to the Presidential Palace, which is where Kandak B is headquartered. Kandak C, the new Kandak to HSSB is still being created and does not yet have a home. However, for tactical reasons, it will not be located at MOD. Where in Kabul Kandak C will ultimately be headquartered remains unsettled. Kandak A is responsible for the physical security of the MOD compound, several other fixed sites in the city, and Kabul city in general. Accordingly, while Kandak A is headquartered at the MOD, it has soldiers stationed throughout Kabul.

Kandak A's Mess Hall is below—it is a large room with high ceilings. Food is only dispensed—not prepared—here. The building on the left is part of the MP Company's barracks (on this side) and Kandak A's staff headquarters (on the back side of the building).



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Above are Kandak A's staff offices/headquarters. Unfortunately, the Kandak A commander's office is not located here, but in another (more modern) building located on the other side of the compound. TV Hill (see subsequent photograph) is in the background of the photo below and the high roof of the A Kandak DFAC can be seen just beyond the staff offices/headquarters.



Food is prepared in a large kitchen facility and then transported (usually in a wheelbarrow) to the various unit Mess Halls—where the food is dispensed to the soldiers. As can be seen below, cooking is done in large pots over open wood burning fires. This facility, however, is scheduled to be replaced in the next couple of years with a new kitchen that will utilize gas or propane stoves.



In addition to the kitchen, most of the barracks lack central or electric heat and, therefore, use wood burning stoves to provide some heat. Accordingly, fire wood is a valuable resource to MOD and must be delivered to MOD and distributed. Not surprisingly, corruption and graft plague the distribution process (and not just for wood—but for any imaginable resource). Below is the weekly supply of wood being delivered to MOD.



The MOD is near some rugged foot hills, the closest aptly named "TV Hill" (because of all the TV transmitters located at the top). Some of the poorest people live in shanty towns built into the side of the hill (the poor are forced to live on the hillside because the steep slope offers no arable land).



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Well, I have stretched this newsletter out way too long. However, I hope that the picture provide a glimpse into the limited parts of Kabul and Afghanistan that I have ventured. Again, thanks to everyone for their love and support—especially the support and assistance provided to my family. I could not undertake this mission without the love and support of Jennifer, Francesca, and Lillia—and everyone’s support of them makes their sacrifice a little easier. Also, I would like to especially thank those of you who have sent “care packages” to me (both here and at Ft. Riley). I shared the various goodies with my team—all of which was appreciated.

Sincerely,

Brian A. Farlow