



WOLF PACK NEWS LETTER

May 9, 2008

Hello from Afghanistan! Let me take a brief opportunity to say Happy Mother's Day—as soon as the PX gets some Mother's Day cards (probably in July) I will send them out! I would also like to thank my friends and neighbors (and also the Parkside Home Owners Association) who are volunteering their time over the next few weekends to re-sod our yard. A special thanks for your support.

New Vehicles for Team C

It has been a busy few days since my last newsletter. Our Team C (Charlie) turned in their new up-armored and drew even newer MRAP's (Mine Resistant Ambush Protected) vehicles. The MRAP's are designed from the wheels up to protect the crew from mines and crew-served weapons fire. Accordingly, the MRAP's are much larger than the HUMVEE's and can carry a crew of 7 (a driver, vehicle commander, gunner and 4 soldiers in the back).



Team C drew 3 of the new MRAP's and spent a week at Bagram Air Field (BAF) getting trained on the new vehicles.



Above, MAJ Smiley of Team C poses with his new MRAP. While the MRAP is great, Team C did not get anymore soldiers with their new vehicles—meaning they have 10 soldiers for their 3 MRAP's. That means, on average, Team C has 3 soldiers pulling the maintenance load usually assigned to 7 soldiers.

While only Team C is scheduled to receive MRAP's, Team A benefitted from the MRAP issue by getting two of Team C's hand-me-down HUMVEE's. Prior to the MRAP issue, Team C had the newest HUMVEES (M1151A1's) while two of Team A's vehicles (including mine) were the older M1114's. We were able to turn-in our old M114 and get the newer M1151A1's. Also, because the MRAP's were "fully loaded" we were able to draw some of the communication and EW (Electronic Warfare) gear off of Team's C's old HUMVEE's. In the end, Team A wound up with three M1151A1's with the newer radios, electronic jammers and Blue Force Trackers.

While the MRAP's are definitely more survivable, their size

(remember we work in and around a very crowded city) and heavier maintenance requirements will likely preclude the entire Wolf Pack from getting the MRAP.

Continued CLS Training

After the parade delay (plus a day delay caused by my gunner engaging a taxi that rushed my vehicle), we got back to the business of training A Kandak. We spent much of the focused on basic soldier skills—including Combat Life Saver (CLS) training. As part of the CLS, we utilized "Randy"—a 185 lbs life-sized dummy—and conducted litter drills and vehicle extractions.

Below, an Afghan team of A Kandak soldiers and MP's race to complete the timed litter course.





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Above, A Kandak soldiers struggle to “save” Randy and extract him from a “damaged” HUMVEE (the driver’s door was jammed closed). Below, Randy is rescued as the gunner.



Above: Vehicle transport---one of the stations/obstacles on the litter course.

Even the American mentors got into the timed litter course. Team A finished second overall (losing only to the all star Afghan team). Below, Team B mentors finally reach the finish after dropping Randy twice and having to abandon the litter on the course.



Stuffed Animals for the MOD Kids



Thanks to everyone who gave stuffed animals to Jennifer. She was able to ship them to Team A and we took a break from the training to distribute the toys to the MOD children. I do not know if the kids can identify all the different characters, but from their reaction I can tell that they loved the toys even

if they cannot tell the difference between Elmo and Grover.





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From the Lost In Translation Department

Given the vast differences between Afghan culture and language and ours, errors in translation are bound to occur. Most errors that we see are in road-side business signs. For example there are “Carine” Rentals available new Camp Phoenix (we think they rent construction cranes). There is also the “Lucky Night” hotel along one of our routes (one is willing to guess what’s being offered there). However, one of the better was recently spotted on MOD (the “ARMY FAIRDEPARTMENT” vehicle below).



Of course, the joke could be us and the vehicle above might actually be the emergency response vehicle for the Afghan Fair Regulation Department.

Afghan driving continues to amaze us—especially their complete disregard for safety. Last week we saw three kids hitch a ride on the bumper of a passing truck. Holding on for dear life, they did not seem to understand that if they fell off they would likely be run over by the Afghan truck closely following their vehicle.



From the You Can’t Make This Stuff Up Department

During the past week, I lost my vehicle for a day due to an attack from an unlikely source—a cat. The attack did not turn out too well for the cat, but he did succeed in deadlining my vehicle for 24 hours. While we training at Bela Hissar, a large cat apparently crawled under my vehicle (HQ57) and into the radiator fan housing. He did not leave when we approached the HUMVEE and I started the vehicle—with predictable disastrous consequences for the cat. Of course, I had no idea the cat was there. He was not destroyed by the fan, but his body got completely wedged between the fan and the fan housing—preventing the fan from turning.

Without the fan turning, I got about halfway back to Phoenix when HQ57 suddenly and immediately seriously overheated. Coolant was pouring from the bottom of the truck (from the overflow—but we did not know that at the time). I halted on the route and HQ47 (the second truck in

our convoy) immediately hooked to our tow strap and towed HQ 57 into Phoenix (HQ 54 provided security and we were stopped for only about 1 minute).

We towed the truck right to the maintenance bay—and the mechanics, upon seeing a combat towed HUMVEE in their bay, immediately set upon the truck to diagnose the problem. Of course it took only second to find the cause—the cat!



The feline was so wedged in the fan housing that the radiator and oil cooler had to be removed in order to correct the problem (plus the jamming of the fan had burned out the fan clutch). Needless to say, I have been the victim of numerous cat- based pranks (from putting stuffed cats in my HUMVEE to zip-tying a cat tail to one of my radio antennas) since the attack.

Well that’s all from Kabul. I would like to thank everyone again for all their support.