



WOLF PACK NEWS LETTER

August 15, 2008

Hello again from sunny (and hot) Kabul, Afghanistan. Sometime has passed since my last Newsletter, so I figured it was time to get the next edition out.

R&R July 8-24, 2008

Part of the reason for the delay in this edition is that I was on R&R from July 8-24, 2008. It was wonderful to see my family and friends and I had a great time. I would like to thank everyone who took time out of their busy schedules to share some of my R&R time.

Getting back to the states for R&R turned out to be a joint coalition effort. I arrived (via ground convoy) at KIA on July 3, 2008. I immediately learned that the flights to Bagram that day were cancelled.

Accordingly, I spent the night in KIA's transient tents. The next morning, July 4, 2008, I checked back in for the morning flight to Bagram. I was then informed that the morning flight was cancelled and no other flights to Bagram (fixed or rotary wing) were scheduled.

I informed my buddies at Wolf Pack of my dilemma and they immediately mounted a rescue effort. In about two hours they organized a ground convoy to Bagram (a convoy requires a minimum of 4 trucks each manned with three soldiers, so 12 volunteers had to be identified). They picked

me up at KIA and drove me to Bagram. Given that it was Friday and the 4th of July, I really appreciated the volunteers.

After getting to Bagram and "checking in" I was told that I would be on the 0500 flight to Kuwait the next morning. I had to report for that flight at 0100, so I did not get much sleep that night. At 0100, I (along with about 70 other soldiers heading to Kuwait for R&R) was told that the 0500 flight was cancelled. However, the USAF offered us the opportunity to fly to Qatar (with the promise that there were multiple flights from Qatar to Kuwait). About 50 of us decided to take the flight to Qatar. Of course, when we arrived in Qatar, we learned that there were rarely flights to Kuwait and that there was a long wait list to get on such a flight. However, in our group was an Australian officer who contacted the Australian Air Force. The Australian Air Force had a flight departing immediately for Kuwait—if we could make it across the vast Qatar air base to catch it. We (the traveling gang of 50 R&R soldiers) located a British bus depot nearby and asked if the Brits could take us to the Australian flight line. Only one 30-pax bus was available—so 50 of us (plus luggage) squeezed on and headed for the Australian C-130.

We piled on the Australian C-130 for the 90 plus minute flight to Kuwait. The temperature in Qatar (and in

the un-air conditioned C-130 was unbearable. But we were one step closer to getting home—so one really cared.



Upon arrival in Kuwait, we started the formal R&R travel process (booking on a civilian charter aircraft). After about 24-hours in Kuwait, I was on my way to Dallas (via Leipzig).

Both my parents and brother visited Dallas while I was home. Of course, both visits required celebratory dinners at Bob's Steak & Chop House. Considering that Bob's is a



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far cry from the Mess Hall here in Kabul, I was not sure I could make the adjustment. After all, Bob's has nice utensils and china and I had only used paper plates and plastic-ware for nearly a year. Fortunately, with the support of my family and Bob's wait staff, I was able to make the adjustment. Everyone had an excellent time.

Other family activities during our R&R included a two-day visit to Grapevine's Great Wolf Lodge and a visit to Eagle Point Lake. Everyone had a blast both at the water park and on the lake. I think that tubing on the lake was everyone's favorite activity



It was good to shed the body armor for two weeks. Of course, the time flew by and before I knew it, it was

time to get back on the "R&R Bird" and fly back to Afghanistan.

Like my other travels, my flight took me though Leipzig, Germany to Kuwait. After in processing into theatre in Kuwait, it was onto to Bagram on a USAF C-17 cargo plane.



The plane was very empty, which made the trip much more tolerable. It was also good to get out of Kuwait. When I landed there at 1900, it was still 119 degrees! At mid-day, it was over 130 degrees. At that temperature, it does not matter whether or not it is a dry heat—it is plain hot!

From Bagram, I was able to secure a seat on a USAF C-130 cargo plane to KIA (Kabul International Airport), where WolfPack picked me up later in the day.

Notice the web seating in the C-130—a very austere (but thankfully short) ride to KIA.



It was difficult to leave my family again—but everyone knew that my tour here was rapidly coming to a close, which helped ease the sorrow.

Convoy Escort to Kandahar

Just before my R&R was scheduled to begin, A Kandak was tasked by MOD to provide convoy security for an American convoy moving from Camp Phoenix to Kandahar. The tasking was in response to a request from CJTF-Phoenix for Afghan security for the convoy. The past few American convoys to Kandahar had been attacked and it was believed that adding ANA security to the mix would thwart enemy activity.

That A kandak was selected reflected the significant steps in training and readiness the kandak had made. The convoy to Kandahar would cover more than 500 KM each way—a significantly longer convoy than had ever been previously



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undertaken by either A Kandak or its mentors.

For us, the trip to Kandahar was uneventful—although the destruction from previous attacks was seemingly everywhere.



Back home safely.



In the end, our convoy was able to travel from Kabul to Kandahar without serious incident. Traveling for more than 10 hours a day (the civilian vehicles in our convoy slowed us tremendously) was exhausting. Also, it was much hotter in Kandahar than in Kabul—a fact I did not really believe until I arrived in Kandahar.

CMA & HA Drops

Since my return, we have executed several CMA (Combined Medical Assistance) or HA (Humanitarian Assistance) drops. A Kandak is assigned to secure the site, and we work with the Kandak to ensure the security plan is well developed and executed. The Kandak has done an excellent job securing the sites—resulting in no serious events during any of the missions. I will close this edition of the newsletter with some photos of the CMA and HA drops.





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