

Obama to send 30,000 troops to Afghanistan

North Carolina units likely to leave soon for Global War on Terror

Laura Smith
News Editor

On Dec. 1 President Barack Obama gave the speech many had been anticipating since his inauguration — the final decision on what is to be done with the situation in Afghanistan.

After the events of Sept. 11, 2001, the United States launched a war on terrorism against al-Qaida just a month after the initial attacks. Now, a little more than eight years later, 30,000 additional American troops will be sent back to the country in an attempt to finish the job.

Among those troops will be several units from North Carolina, who are expected to receive deployment papers within the next few weeks.

For the Marines at Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, N.C., deployment orders may come as soon as this week, according to Master Sgt. Keith A. Milks, spokesman for the Second Marine Expeditionary Force.

"We haven't received official word ... (but) we expect to be in the thousands," Milks said. "The units that will be selected will be the ones that haven't deployed in awhile...they been here the longest and have been through a long deployment program."

According to Sgt. Lisa Strickland, spokeswoman for Marine Corp Air Station in Cherry Point, N.C., marines will leave with the Marine Expeditionary Force after Jan. 1.

In addition to the influx of troops to Afghanistan, Obama also gave the American people a timeline of when the units in Iraq will exit.

According to his speech, all combat brigades will pull out by the end of next summer and all other troops will be gone by the end of 2011.

"That we are doing so is a testament to the character of the men and women in uniform," Obama said in his speech. "Thanks to their courage, grit and perseverance, we have given Iraqis a chance to shape their future, and we are successfully leaving Iraq to its people."

These decisions have been long-coming to the ears of American citizens, whether they agree with them or not.

"I'm not sure why we're so sure that sending 30,000 more troops is going to solve the problem," political science professor Rudy Zarzar said. "Philosophically it's a matter of principle. After all we know, we've been in Afghanistan now for eight years, and the only thing we've seen so far is more suffering for the Afghan people who have been seeing war after war almost the last 30 years."

Political science professor Jason Kirk said the decision to go to Afghanistan initially was the right move, but al-Qaida cells in Pakistan is what Americans should worry more about.

"The decision to go into Afghanistan in 2001 following the 9/11 attacks was the right

decision, but the United States made several mistakes for which we continue to pay a price," Kirk said. "Relying on Pakistan to secure the border between Afghanistan and the tribal areas of Pakistan was a serious error because it allowed senior al-Qaida and Afghan Taliban leaders to cross into Pakistan. Now, Pakistan has its own Taliban problem, and this is a far more serious threat to regional and international security than what happens in Afghanistan."

Senior Emily Speers' brother, Harry, is currently in Iraq serving as a platoon leader. Having a sibling in a Middle Eastern conflict is hard, but necessary she said.

"I feel like Afghanistan is still a threat because of the instability of the region in general," she said. "I think it's a responsibility to stabilize the region in general. It's a miserable feeling (to have a loved one fighting), but if we're looking at the big picture, which is national security ... if that's a solution then go for it."

Senior Catherine Melendez' father, Victor, is currently stationed in Afghanistan as a Major in the Army. Victor has been in the Army for 22 years and this is his first deployment, which he voluntarily took.

Melendez said she is proud of her father and supports Obama's decision to send more troops.

"Although this war has been going on for a long time, we have to finish what we've started,"

Troop commitment to Afghan War

Currently, 43 nations, including the United States, have troops in the NATO-led force in Afghanistan; additional U.S. troops are also serving.

Top contributors

NATO-ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) troops; total: 71,028*

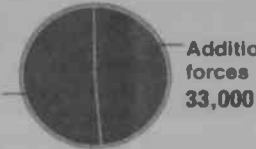
U.S.	34,800
U.K.	9,000
Germany	4,365
France	3,095
Canada	2,830
Italy	2,795
Netherlands	2,160
Poland	1,910
Australia	1,350
Spain	1,000
Turkey	720
Denmark	690
31 other nations	6,313

*As of Oct. 22, 2009 **As of Nov. 30, 2009

U.S. troops

Total: 67,800

With NATO-ISAF forces 34,800



Troop deaths

Total: 1,531**



Source: NATO-ISAF, iCasualties.c
Graphic: Judy Treible © 2009 M

Melendez said. "The men and women that are over there are doing everything they can to keep us safe and help stabilize the nation. It was really hard on our family when he broke the news, but I support him 100 percent. His devotion and sacrifice now will ensure a more peaceful and safe future for my kids and generations to come. We are so blessed to have a military that so willingly ventures off to foreign nations to protect our

freedom."

Obama's plan is to turn over responsibility to Afghan forces and begin to take American forces out of Afghanistan in July 2011.

"The overarching mission ... is to ensure a secure and safe environment in which the Afghan people can live free of oppression and terror," Milks said. "We want to give the Afghan people a safe and secure future."

Readership program expands online

Caitlin O'Donnell
Reporter

Students at schools in Indiana, Missouri and Pennsylvania, now have a new way to get their daily news.

Recently, USA Today introduced an initiative within its Collegiate Readership Program that provides a free e-Edition of its newspaper for students, faculty and staff at select colleges. These online papers are identical to the print version and often include exclusive content aimed at the individual school.

In 2002, Elon University joined the Collegiate Readership Program, which provides 400 newspapers a day, including USA Today, The New York Times and the Greensboro News & Record to the McEwen School of Communications.

"We wanted to make it easier for students to stay on top of the news in their world," said Paul Parsons, dean of the School of Communications.

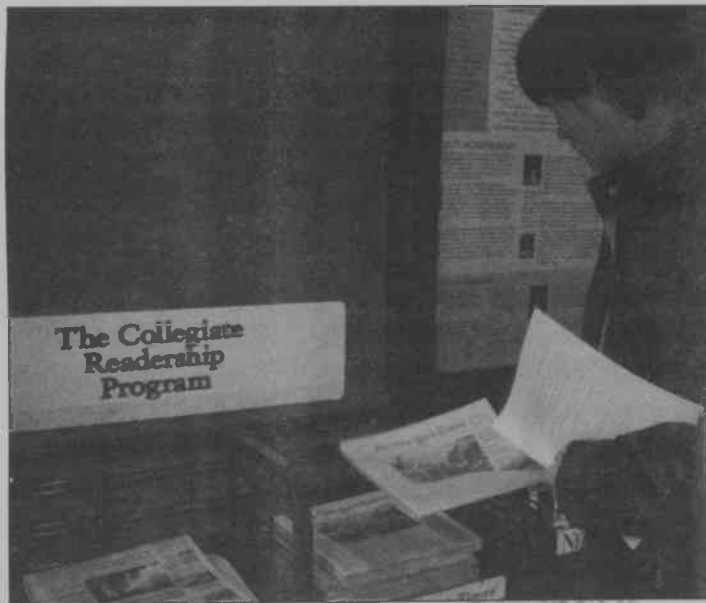
So far, the school has been unable to gain access to the e-Edition because USA Today is still finalizing the program for mass subscribers, Parsons said.

Though he counts immediacy of news and lower distribution costs as advantages for online newspapers, Parsons said the program still requires further development.

"The newspaper industry has not yet developed a financial model that works in an online world," Parsons said. "Newspapers, historically, have been profitable through a combination of subscriptions and advertising. But people don't want to pay for online information."

Communications professor Anthony Hatcher, faculty advisor for Elon's chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, echoed this sentiment.

"Younger people didn't grow up with newspapers and don't miss them, and many



Senior Matt Moroughan picks up a copy of The New York Times, which is available because of The Collegiate Readership Program. The program also allows some papers, like USA Today, to launch online editions specifically for colleges.

older people are migrating to the Web," he said. "Advertising revenue is dropping for print and doesn't pay adequately for online, so I'm not sure what the solution is."

Both Hatcher and Parsons agree the shift to online is inevitable.

Though many papers will be unable to match the expediency of news provided online, Hatcher said the future bodes convergence rather than a total shift of media sources.

"I think the future will be some combination of handheld devices and perhaps a community paper on print," he said. "Newspapers that are relentlessly local and serve a community need will likely survive. Many other mid-size dailies may die, or go strictly online."

Though today's students are more connected than ever to online forms of media, many still enjoy the benefits only print newspapers can provide.

"I wouldn't read a paperless edition of the USA Today," freshman journalism major

Rachel Southmayd said. "I like the Today because it's easy to read and easy to follow and I wouldn't like having to jump around online."

Though Southmayd said she understands media will shift in the coming years, she said the basics of news will never change.

"Traditional skills, like good writing and news gathering, will be as important as ever," she said.

Parsons said he believes it's incredibly important for students to have access to daily news, in any form.

"We need to keep encouraging students, especially in the School of Communications, to not get so wrapped up in their own social worlds that they aren't paying attention and investing themselves in the issues of the day," Parsons said. "And that means first knowing and understanding the issues of the day that the news media provide."

Rain prompts flooding issues across campus

Rachel Southmayd
Reporter

It's said that when it rains, it pours, and that couldn't be more true at Elon University this semester.

From September to November, 40 of 91 days included some amount of rain, and precipitation totals were 40 percent above they normal for this time of year.

In fact, nearly 13 inches of rain fell on Burlington during this three-month period.

All the rain has left Elon's campus a muddy mess, turning brick walkways into rivers, green lawns into soggy marshes and rain boots into fashion staples.

Traditionally, tropical storms could be to blame for this type of Southern weather, but what was left of Tropical Storm Ida, which washed over Elon in mid-November, was the only tropical disturbance to affect mainland North Carolina.

The National Weather Service said the effects of El Niño are to blame for the high levels of precipitation across the South. This trend is supposed to continue through January 2010.

El Niño is an irregularly warm Pacific current that affects oceanic and atmospheric temperature and activity across the world.

Tom Flood, superintendent of landscaping and grounds, said the wet weather has been so excessive that the ground that is completely saturated and has notably affected the Elon landscaping.

"The rain has significantly slowed down our fall work, especially leaf removal," Flood said. "This is especially a problem before important campus-wide events like open

house or football games."

Elon hosted five football games this fall and it poured for two of them. It also rained through the majority of Family Weekend.

Sophomore Jessica Scales said excessive rain makes her pick up her car keys rather than walk, and she avoids going far away.

"I just use closer resources. Instead of walking to Colonnades for dinner, I'll just go to Harden. Or instead of studying in the library, I'll study in the hall or in the Area Office," Scales said.

She also said that while it seems like it has rained the same number of days as last year the amount has definitely increased.

"It rains a lot harder this year, causing massive puddles," Scales said.

The excessive amounts of rain have prompted flooding on many sidewalks and paths across campus, most notably around Moseley Center.

"Over time, sidewalks tend to settle and the surrounding soil areas raise up and the constant rains shows this," Flood said.

He said many campus sidewalks need repair and are waiting for funding.

But Flood said he prefers too much rain to not enough.

"It has slowed us down a lot, but in this business the weather is a constant factor," he said. "Like the old poem, 'Whether the weather is hot, / Or whether the weather is not, / Whatever the weather, / We'll weather the weather, / Whether we want to or not.'"

So far, December isn't offering any relief from rainy conditions. As of Dec. 5, 1.72 inches of rain had fallen, 400 percent more than the typical average for this time.