

November 18th, 2011.

After completing the second of our back to back sorties, Chief and I landed back at Romeo this morning. Here we were finally given the opportunity to prise ourselves out of the cockpit and stretch our legs while the ground crews got busy, preparing our aircraft for our stint on ground alert.

It was good to finally see FARP Romeo in the daylight, the place was a hive of activity, with a constant flow of vehicles and helicopters in and out of the FARP. The place was dusty as hell, and the sand blew everywhere, a nightmare no doubt for the ground crews here. Rayan Castle loomed large over us, it's thick walls manned by Marine sentries keeping a constant lookout on the surrounding area.

Ground alert meant spending the day at Romeo, waiting for an urgent mission request to come in. This also meant catching up on sleep, checking in with the ground crews on the progress on our aircraft and generally waiting around for something to happen.

After about 6 hours it finally did.

A Major at Romeo brought us orders, they were brief and to the point. We were to get airborne immediately, proceed to the mountains north of Rafsanjan (where we went after those Uragan MLRS systems) and make contact with a team from 1st Recon. These marines have eyes on Iranian artillery reinforcements moving through a valley towards Kerman.

We were given a callsign to contact - 'Ghost 4-2', a frequency - 'green' and a position on a map, but not much more than that to go on.

Our aircraft have been loaded with a flexible mix of firepower, Chief is carrying GBU-12 and Mavericks, I will be hauling 4 GBU-12s and 4 MK-20s.

We had very little additional intelligence or threat assessment to work with, all we know is that the HAWK at Kerman IAP is reported as being back online and there are still a number of SA-6s in the Kerman area as well. We have no information on any SHORAD present with the target.

And so, with little real information, and a newly issued map and kneeboard, Chief and I stepped to our aircraft. Starting them up we completed all our checks and punched in the waypoints we'd been given. Given the all clear by the ground crew, the wheel chocks were removed and everyone stood clear.

I sat in my cockpit and watched as Chief throttled up his mighty Pegasus engine in front of me, my aircraft buffeting slightly from his exhaust in the cramped confines of the FARP, he then slipped his brakes and rocketed off down the road ahead.

I will be close behind him.

