

Highlander 6 sends:

Bone Crusher Medic Shows Skill

On a recent convoy, Cpl. Eric Whitney, a medic with 2nd Platoon, Bravo Company, found himself trying to save the life of a civilian contractor who was bleeding out.

Whitney's convoy had been traveling to an outlying camp when a roadside incident left one of the fuel tankers in his convoy damaged and on fire.

Whitney's vehicle, commanded by his squad leader Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Stansfield, was first on the scene and pulled up alongside the burning truck.

"We didn't think anybody survived," Whitney says.

"I thought the (driver) might be dead right off, just seeing the damage to the truck," Stansfield says.

As Whitney's vehicle backed off, Stansfield spotted a pair of feet on the other side of the truck; the driver had made it outside the vehicle.

By this time Whitney reached him, the driver was lying near

the median; Cpl. Efrén Morfin, a Soldier from the convoy's fire truck, had pulled the injured driver away from his burning tanker.

Whitney went to work, cutting off the driver's clothes and applying tourniquets and bandages. Drawing on eight years of training as a medic – and the help of the Soldiers around him – Whitney worked to control the driver's hemorrhaging and save his life.

"At first I wasn't sure why he was bleeding so bad," Whitney says. "He was actually on high blood pressure medicine which made it kind of tricky." Such medicine thins out a person's blood making it more difficult to control bleeding, he says.

Whitney's patient, a 42-year-old man from Fiji, spoke very good English and was able to answer questions and describe his pain level, which helped in his treatment, Whitney says.

As he worked, Whitney was helped by Soldiers around him who were certified combat lifesavers – not medics, but Soldiers trained to provide emergency treatment of battlefield injuries. Sgt. Joshua Defeyer, a truck commander; Spc. Anthony Livano, a gunner; and Sgt. Chad Jensen, a driver, all helped treat the driver while they waited for the medical evacuation helicopter to arrive.

"It's very critical to a medic to have CLS," Whitney says.

Whitney says much of what happened that night is a blur.

"That's where my men come into play," Whitney says, "They're my support. I don't worry about my security because I know they have it."

Whitney, a 36-year-old father of four from Spokane, Wash., joined the National Guard eight years ago as a medic. He first deployed to Iraq in 2004, serving at Forward Operating Base Prosperity, in Baghdad's Green Zone. This night however, was the first time he'd treated an injury like this, he says.

"There was times I thought he wasn't going to make it," Whitney says. "He was pretty beat up."

But Whitney's patient survived that night. He has since been flown back to Fiji, Whitney says.

Whitney credits much of his ability to

perform in this situation to his training. Prior to this deployment, many soldiers he trained with were paramedics in their civilian lives and brought their own experience to the table, he says.

But Whitney's calm demeanor may also have played a part in saving the driver's life.

"Eric's really, really calm," Stansfield says. "He doesn't really get rattled at all, which is a good thing in a medic." He says Whitney's ability to stay calm helped him to remain calm also.

Although he can be credited with saving the driver's life, Whitney says he isn't a hero

"I get to go home," Whitney says. "The real heroes are those that don't go home."



CPL Eric Whitney stands near vehicles at the convoy staging lane prior to leaving on a mission from Joint Base Balad.

Hooah Muldoons, holidays are over, get back to work...okay I'm joking, but in all honesty, time seems to be flying by. We've been here for two months, conducted nearly 300 missions and who knows what to expect in the months ahead. This is definitely an interesting time to be here in Iraq with our Presidential Inauguration in a couple of weeks and the Iraqi provincial elections at the end of the month. In addition, the new Security Agreement will not change our mission, but it will affect how we conduct some of our Tactics, Techniques & Procedures.

We're also at the beginning of the middle phase of our deployment. Between now and APR timeframe, complacency will begin to set in, so I caution everyone to stay alert, awake, and always remember to do the "right" thing. For all the great things we have done, it only takes a couple of Muldoons to screw up and be the black eye for the entire battalion, so I ask that you guys police up your own ranks and take care of your Ranger Buddy. This is also the beginning of our R&R, so please take this opportunity and go home and see your loved ones, or just take some time off to relax and get away from the burden of our mission. I need everyone to pace themselves because the road ahead will be long one.

I congratulate everyone that participated in events like the coveted Ping Pong tourney, the 5K swim, basketball and softball games and other activities that are held here on Joint Base Balad (JBB). As always, I encourage everyone to get involved. We have tons of talent and I'd like to showcase us as the premier battalion here in Iraq, whether it be conducting convoys, showing off our top maintenance program, or just our overall discipline, you guys have proven that we are the best and we need to maintain that attitude.

Last, I'd like to thank all the soldiers that had a chance to meet with the WAARNG Adjutant General, MG Lowenberg, and acting State Command Sergeant Major, CSM May. Your honesty, candor, professionalism, enthusiasm and positive attitudes were the highlight of his visit. He truly enjoyed his short time with you guys. Great job!

As always, I'm proud of all you Muldoons and the Highlander Battalion, let's keep it up! 7 months till wake up. Hooah.



Highlander 7 sends:

Happy New Year, Highlanders!

With 2008 being history, it's time to look forward into 2009. The next couple of months here will certainly prove to be interesting though they may also prove painful. Just exactly what the politicians have in mind with the new security agreement remains to be seen. We may get busier, we may not get busier. By the end of the month we'll have a new sitting president. How exactly that will affect us is also unknown. The one thing that remains truly constant is the dedication and professionalism of the Soldiers (and one Sailor) of the 1-161 Infantry.

Spring in Iraq brings with it mud and eventually the heat we've come to know and love. Let's relish the decent, if not downright cold, weather now since it's going to get toasty soon enough. We'll soon find ourselves talking about "the good old days" of January.

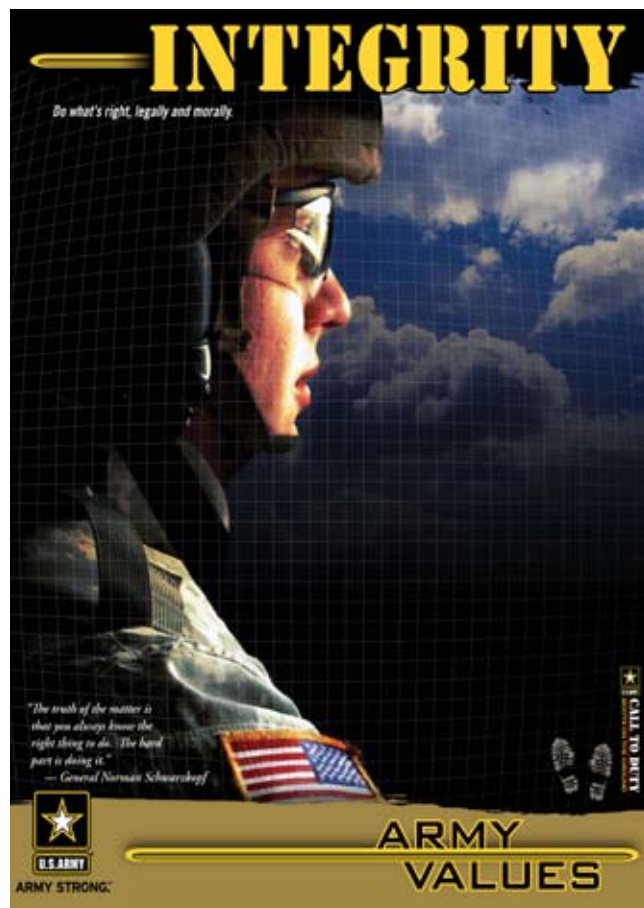
Another thing that spring brings is the season for us to begin R&R leaves. The battalion is looking at getting most everybody who wants to go out on leave out before June. Those who would prefer to save their leave will

probably get the opportunity to take a four day pass. In either case, it's a goal, something to look forward to and helps break up the time spent here. We're all looking forward to those two blissful weeks away from here, but keep in mind that things aren't always rosy for us on leave. The Chaplains and I will conduct re-integration and safety briefs for all Soldiers taking leave. The goal is to give you some pointers on making your vacation as trouble free as possible.

Most all of the Soldiers I've been talking with have said that time seems to be flying and that's a good thing. If time seems to lag, then it's time to get involved. There are education resources available, volunteer programs and there's always more PT! A resourceful Soldier can always find things to do. That being said, let's not find things that will win a General Order #1 violation. The biggest thing is to be safe and smart and get the most out of the deployment. Think about it, we only have around seven months left!

Happy New Year!

Highlander 7, out!



Angry Tom's Book Review - MSG Tom Bigley

The Tree Collector: the Life and Explorations of David Douglas

By Ann Lindsay and Syd House

David Douglas; you should know him if you live in the Pacific Northwest. No? Sure you do; have ever seen a Pseudotsuga menziesii, that's the scientific name for the Douglas Fir. You can even find them on the east side of the mountains. As part of the forest and a commercial product, the Douglas Fir is world renowned and one of the most important trees in the Northwest. Though the great Douglas Fir forest is a mere fraction of what it once was, the book describes the forest, the first western discoverers and how they traveled to and through the region.

Douglas was an educated botanist from England. After a successful first trip to New York state, he was sent on a fact finding trip to the great Northwest not only for scientific purposes, but also political and commercial. At the time, the area was in dispute and the US and England were vying for property; the US

border would have been the Columbia River if England gotten its way as Fort Vancouver was in British territory, in current Vancouver, Washington.

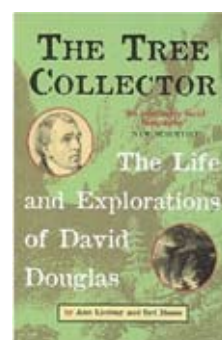
The book is very descriptive; with the use of many of Douglas's actual notes and letters, it gives a vivid description of the Northwest of the 1820s, the geography and inhabitants. His attention to detail and determination matched

or exceeded some of the other great discoverers and travelers of the Pacific Northwest to include Lewis and Clark from the famous US expedition and David Thompson the great Canadian explorer.

The book is a bit technical in the use of scientific plant names which makes it hard to follow and the author could have included the common names. Douglas accomplished much more than just dis-

covering his name sake; he catalogued and sent hundreds of plants back to England and in his time was a very famous and well respected botanist, even in his short life and untimely death.

Overall very informative and historical; a real true to life adventure in our back yard during the first days of discovery. If you're into historical truth about the Pacific Northwest, then this is a good read; if not you still might learn something; well most people would.



Chaplain's Corner

Highlanders, we live in interesting times! Stateside we've come through a year where the stock markets and the gas pumps were all over the map, history was made with the election of Barak Obama, and families at home spent the past week digging themselves out of record snowfall.

Overseas, we had our own interesting experiences transitioning into deployed life, moving four times in five months, and awaiting the full impact of local elections and security agreements on our mission.

New Year's Day is a pivot point that connects us between what has been with what will be. It is the in-between time to reflect on where you have come and what experiences have shaped you in the past year. As we begin 2009, take time to review the events, people, and places that have impacted your life. A thoughtful reflection on the past 365 days is the best foundation to envisioning a bright future with hopeful and realistic goals.

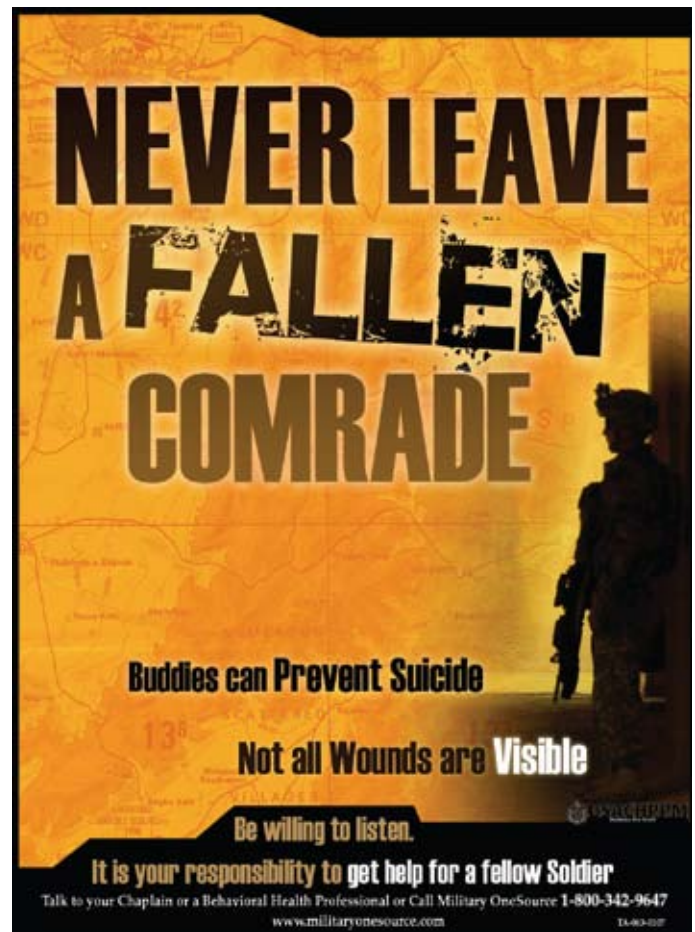
May the year ahead be one that challenges you to grow deeper in your faith and in your experience of the Divine. Have a Happy New Year and God Bless.

CH (CPT) Kelly Hansen

Contact task force chaplains at DSN 318-483-2351

or joe.hammie@iraq.centcom.mil
or kelly.hansen@iraq.centcom.mil

The Unit Ministry Team is located in the small building inside the fence south of battalion HQ



TAG, State Cmd Sgt Major Visit Highlanders



MG Lowenberg listens as SSG Christopher Williams of E Co gives an assessment of the battalion's pre-deployment training after a dinner meeting with Highlander soldiers.

The Highlanders got a late Christmas present as the state Adjutant General, MG Timothy Lowenberg, and the state Command Sergeant Major, CSM Kim May, visited the battalion at Joint Base Balad last week.

The AG and CSM answered tough questions about pre-deployment training and enlisted promotions. They explained that there are several factors influencing promotions including positions in the

state guard organization and federal law. Both emphasized that leaders from the battalion up through the state Joint Forces headquarters are trying to find solutions, but those solutions will not be quick.

MG Lowenberg requested detailed recommendations on how to improve pre-deployment training for follow-on units taking over the convoy security mission and said he will continue discussions with the First Army Commanding General and trainers to influence changes.

MG Lowenberg also talked about changes in the guard on a national and state level. First, the Chief of the National Guard is now a four-star general and has a direct line to the Secretary of Defense. At home, the state has started a new jobs program in conjunction with some unions

to help guard soldiers transition back to civilian life.

Both MG Lowenberg and CSM May expressed how proud they were of the Highlanders and the work they're doing.

"You are changing history; you are writing history!"

MG Timothy Lowenberg
Wash. State Adjutant General

MG Lowenberg said, "Not many people can do what you do . . . put your lives on hold and go to war." He added, "You are changing history; you are writing history."



CSM May answers a question about promotions after a breakfast meeting with Highlander staff officers, NCOs and enlisted soldiers.



ABOVE: The sun silhouettes a US Air Force C-17 as soldiers from D Co, in the shadows, prepare their vehicles for a convoy at Joint Base Balad.

BELOW: MG Timothy Lowenberg, Washington State Adjutant General, listens to SPC Mahamadou Moussa from E Co explain the gunner's controls in an Armored Security Vehicle during his recent visit with the Highlanders at Joint Base Balad.



From the field -- Highlanders in "action"

RIGHT: CPL Ben Ashworth of Spokane, Wash., a gunner from D Co, cleans up after a day of painting his company's mural. Ashworth said the project will take nearly 100 hours to complete.



BELOW: CSM Kim May, Washington State Command Sergeant Major, talks with Highlander soldiers from H Co in their motor-pool during his recent visit with the Adjutant General to Joint Base Balad.



Write a "LETTER TO THE EDITOR"

- story ideas - announcements
- suggested changes, additions

highlander.pao@us.army.mil

The Highlander is published semi-weekly as a command information resource for the soldiers of 1-161 Infantry.

Contact the editor at david.isaac@us.army.mil
or DSN 318-483-2388 / 2558