

The Highlander

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Leyde should be spelled L-U-C-K-Y

He's been called Bruce Wayne, Lucky and The Million Dollar Baby. His name is Sgt. Wayne Leyde, and he has experienced what some could call a string of good luck over these last few years. When asked about it though, he responds: "Actually, I don't believe in luck. I think I'm thoroughly blessed."

Leyde, a Spartan team leader from Spokane and an investment banker, made the news in February when he purchased a winning lottery ticket after a chance stop at a convenience store. Leyde purchased a number of tickets and scratched a few of them right away, though none of them were winners.

Later that night however, just before bed, Leyde decided to scratch one last ticket. This one was a winner. The prize? One million dollars. "At that point, there was about three seconds of dead silence and then I exploded out of bed and had to go wake everybody up," Leyde says.

But Leyde's "luck" has extended beyond monetary gain.

Leyde, who is now on his third tour in Iraq, says he's had several close calls with the enemy. During his second deployment, which he describes as the toughest of his two previous deployments, Leyde personally experienced six improvised explosive device attacks on his vehicle.

One such attack came in July 2006 when he was part of an armored convoy near Iskan-dariyah, a city southwest of Baghdad. On this night, Leyde's convoy halted after the first tank in the convoy spotted a suspicious hole near the road.

Using a clearing method known as "recon by fire," the first tank shot into the hole to clear it of any possible threat.

When nothing happened, the hole was deemed clear. The first tank scooted to the left of the hole and Leyde's tank was told to follow. As his tank passed the hole, Leyde, who was filling in as the track commander, leaned over the edge of his turret with a spotlight to make sure the hole was actually clear.

"For some reason," Leyde says, "something hit me that said, 'this is probably the silliest thing you have ever done,' so I started to jerk back."

As Leyde jerked back, an IED exploded, blowing the spotlight out of his hands, ripping his glasses off his face and pushing him against the side of the tank. Leyde's tank, not badly damaged, rolled on.

Although his right ear bled for nearly an hour, Leyde says he experienced no hearing loss and no lasting injury.

Recently, Leyde was traveling north on a convoy when he discovered an IED before it

detonated. Moments before he saw the black square object sitting in the road, Leyde says there was a strange feeling in the truck.

"We had a gut feeling that something wasn't right ... It really up'd our situational awareness," Leyde says.

Leyde's vehicle slowed down, identified the threat and began backing away from the device, which was about 20 meters away when something exploded.

"The minute we threw our truck in reverse,"

Leyde says, "... they detonated it."

But the main charge didn't blow.

The blasting cap – the device used to set off the main charge – had been pulled free of the IED. When the insurgents detonated the bomb, the main charge sat unexploded.

Leyde expresses doubt the IED would have done much to his vehicle, he says it probably would have given everyone in the vehicle a headache.

Though Leyde says he doesn't believe in luck, Staff Sgt. Matthew Stayrook, a Spartan squad leader sees it a bit differently.

**SSG Matt Stayrook
Sqd Ldr, 1st Plt, D Co**

"I would have to say Sgt. Leyde is probably one of the luckiest guys I've met."

"I would have to say Sergeant Leyde is probably one of the luckiest guys I've met," Stayrook says, adding: "He's definitely the best scout we have in our company, and I'd roll with him any time."

Leyde says after he won the lottery he was given the option of getting out of the Army. He says he had made the decision to deploy before winning the lottery and decided to stick to it.

"I'm coming back, for the most part, for the guy on my left and right. That's the reason why I'm here," Leyde says.

"I don't think any amount of money would ever change my mind."



SGT Leyde talks with SGT Alex Snyder in the D Co motorpool at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Story by SGT Alex Snyder,
123rd Mobile Public Affairs Det.,
Arizona Army National Guard

Highlander 6 sends:

Hey Muldoons, another month has passed! As usual, you continue to do great things and people around here are noticing your efforts. Whether related to our safety record, lack of accidental discharges, EOF procedures, or our overall convoy mission, you guys have proven that you are the best battalion in the Theater. Keep it up, we still have six more months.

A big congratulations to the NCOs and Officers that played in the first ever Highlander Toilet Bowl as well as to all the Muldoons that participated in the JBB 12mile road march and 5K run earlier this month. Also, hats off to Abu Company for winning the Battalion's 3 on 3 Basketball tournament. These events may not seem like a big deal, but by participating, you guys are building a great team here in the 1-161st. We work hard together, we play hard together.

I also want to say a "Big Hello" to all our late deployers who have volunteered to come over here and be a part of our team. In all, we've gained about 30 new soldiers and officers that have joined our gun crews, our Company CPs, and battalion staff. Our OPTEMPO doesn't look like it will slow down anytime soon and with Hooahs going on leave, getting hurt, etc...you guys are a great addition. So again, thank you.

Overall, I couldn't be happier with your performance. As I stated before, I expected this from you all and none of you have disappointed any of the leadership in this battalion. We've had very few disciplinary actions, so great job on policing your own ranks. We still have a long way to go, so please remember to stress safety at all times, continue to train EOF procedures and follow and enforce the new Share the Road policies. We've driven close to 500,000 miles and conducted over 450 missions, so now is not the time to get complacent. We're all going home together.

Continue to "do the right thing", and we'll all be okay. Hooah

Highlander 6



Highlander 7 sends:

2009 has been officially declared "The Year of the NCO". Throughout the coming months we'll look at exactly what "The Year of the NCO" means to the Soldiers of the 1-161.

Who is the NCO?

NCOs inspire, mold, motivate and provide outstanding role models for junior enlisted and officers alike. New officers, fresh from officer basic and new enlistees fresh from basic training have vivid memories of the first NCOs that influenced their careers. Who can forget rolling onto a basic training post, getting off the bus and meeting that intimidating NCO in a round brown? Somewhere along the line, an NCO ushered us into military service.

NCOs, accomplished military professionals, provide the expertise that keeps the Army moving along. Their intimate knowledge of tactics and their ability to combine their military and civilian skills make them invaluable in combat and peacetime alike. NCOs have the well earned reputation for leading from the front, for taking the commander's

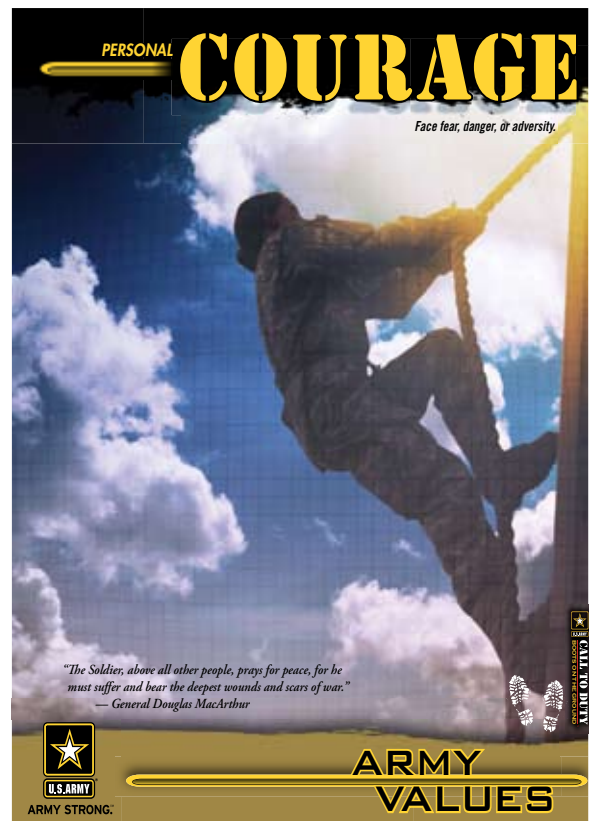
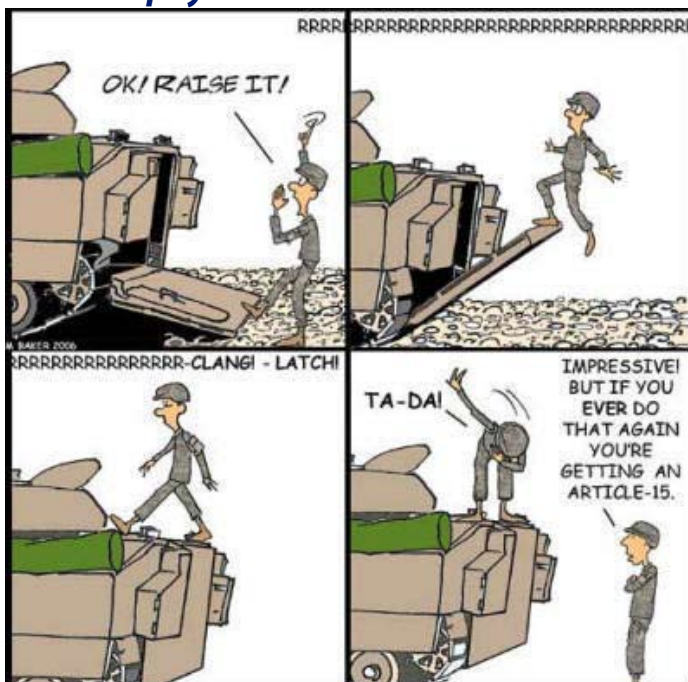
intent and executing the mission even in the absence of orders. The modern Army relies on the competence on proficiency on the NCO to lead the war fight at squad level. The NCO of today has tremendous skills and responsibility.

NCOs are involved in the lives and well being of Soldiers; they monitor the pulse of the unit. They provide the connection between command and the individual Soldier. They are both the Soldier's advocate and disciplinarian. NCOs recognize that an important part of their job is caring and looking out for the welfare of Soldiers and their families.

The NCOs of the 1-161 represent the finest qualities of the NCO Corps; competent, professional, and dedicated to the unit, the mission and the wellbeing of their Soldiers. As I spend time with Soldiers on convoys and in the motor pools, I am constantly reminded of the NCO creed and how our NCOs have taken those words to heart becoming leaders of Soldiers and truly "The Backbone of the Army".

Highlander 7, out.

Pvt. Murphy's Law- Mark Baker



Angry Tom's Book Review - MSG Tom Bigley

Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons of Global Power

By Niall Ferguson

England over that past several centuries developed much of what we see in the modern world today. *Empire* discusses reasons how and why England dominated the world and its resulting demise. The British Empire, at its zenith, controlled more land than any other country in history. The major world systems, judicial and others, and the western world as we know it are a result of the British Empire.

Empire takes the reader through early periods of the fledgling Empire (15th and 16th centuries) in its effort to expand markets and culture, to the reaction to piracy, through the battle for Africa and the abolishment of slavery (1807), much earlier than the U.S. I might add. But there is a dark side to the Empire. It was often brutal as with the advent of the maxim machine gun and the

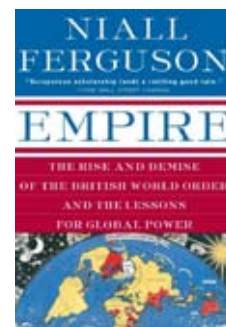
battle in Egypt portraying the clash between eras and the gun's deadly effects.

Never boring, even with historical references, Ferguson keeps the reader's interest with actual letters and documents from the period being described giving the reader the sense of living history. The author's opinions are informative and soundly based in facts and other historical accounts. Bring your

dictionary for this one, however, the book is littered with ten-dollar words in present and historical context.

The importance of the British Empire and its lasting effects on modern times cannot be understated; the borders of Iraq and the non-existence of a separate Kurdish state

are a few examples of her impact. The book lingers a bit with the development in India and skims over the development of North America, downplaying the U.S. role in WWII -- which is typically English. These are small critiques to an overall very educational, well thought out book, and I may be a typical American, as I think the U.S. won WWII, not England, but we are a remnant of the Empire.



Chaplain's Corner - CH (MAJ) Joe Hammiel

I miss my wife. I miss catching the fragrance of her hair when it is being blown by a calm summer breeze; I miss walking behind her and watching the gentle sway of her hips as she ascends the stairs; I miss the sound of laughter from the kids over some mutually shared joke; I miss the aroma of toast and fresh coffee on Sunday mornings when I'm not rushing around trying to get ready for work. I'm describing a snapshot of the intimacy I share with my wife and family – something that has developed over the years we've been together. But now we are half a world apart and I'm stuck here in a desert place, longing for the days when we can be reunited. Yet it is in the desert place like a desert wildflower rising from the

It was in the desert place that Moses 103 says that God revealed His ways to Israel as they wandered for 40 years in the wilderness. When Moses first encountered the Living God, he had to ask of Israel and tell them, 'The God of ask me, 'What is His name?' Then what words, Moses was asking God, "Who are in the desert, Moses had the privilege of before him. As Moses stood before God you look favorably on me, let me know more fully and continue to enjoy your favor." (Exodus 33:13) Moses wanted to go deeper in his relationship with God, and God would not disappoint him. "The LORD replied to Moses, I will indeed do what you have asked, for I look favorably on you and I know you by name." (Exodus 33:17)



sands after a spring rain.

learned intimacy with the living God– Psalm Moses, but only His deeds to the people of the wilderness. When Moses first encountered who He was. He said, "If I go to the people your ancestors has sent me to you, they will should I tell them?" (Exodus 3:13) In other you?" But after years of getting to know Him experiencing God like no other human being on Mount Sinai, he asked, "If it is true that your ways so that I may understand you

Just like Moses, it is in the context of this desert experience in Iraq that we have an opportunity to cultivate intimacy with the One who invites us to spend eternity with Him. The question is do we have eyes to see and ears to hear the invitation? Will this desert experience turn out to be just like any other ordinary year in our lives, or will it be a time when we really grow? The invitation has been given but the choice is ours. The poet, Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote,

*Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God,
But only he who sees takes off his shoes;
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.*

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

The Grid

	What's on your iPod?	What was the last thing you watched?	Who was the last person to mail / email you?	Drink you miss the most?
 CPL Truman TC (Scout) E Co, Mortars	Country & Rock	Revenge of the Nerds (on AFN)	My sister	Jack & Coke
 SPC Strok Gunner D Co	Rock, Techno, Contemporary Christian	Step Brothers (on laptop)	High school Spanish teacher	Double caramel latte
 MAJ Hammiel Chaplain HHC	Contemporary Christian, Nickel Creek	FSU vs. NC State basketball (on AFN)	My wife	Tim Hortons coffee
 SPC Reiker Medic HHC	Country	That '70s Show (on AFN)	My father	Beer



ABOVE: Pfc. Josh Venske of Fremont, Ind. looks to his Squad Leader, Sgt. Michael Shults of Spokane for advice while conducting Preventive Maintenance Checks and Service on his MRAP before a convoy from Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Both soldiers from the Mortar Platoon, E Co.

BELOW: Chaplain (MAJ) Joe Hammiel leads soldiers of 1st Platoon, E Co. in prayer before they depart Joint Base Balad, Iraq on a convoy security mission.



From the field -- Highlanders in “action”

RIGHT: Thirty Highlander sergeants recite the NCO Creed as they participate in an NCO induction ceremony hosted by the Fort Lewis based 555th Engineer Brigade at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.



BELOW: LTC Allen, Highlander 6, ‘awards’ a combat patch to newly promoted SFC Marvin Tucker, S-1 NCOIC, of Spokane as CSM David Windom and the battalion staff look on. The staff was the last group in the battalion to be awarded the combat patch or shoulder sleeve insignia - former wartime service.



Write a “LETTER TO THE EDITOR”

- story ideas - announcements
- suggested changes, additions

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*(All photos, illustrations and content by Highlander PAO,
unless otherwise noted)*



ABOVE: Highlander spouses and children are all smiles as they gather in the foyer of the Spokane Readiness Center during the January FRG meeting.

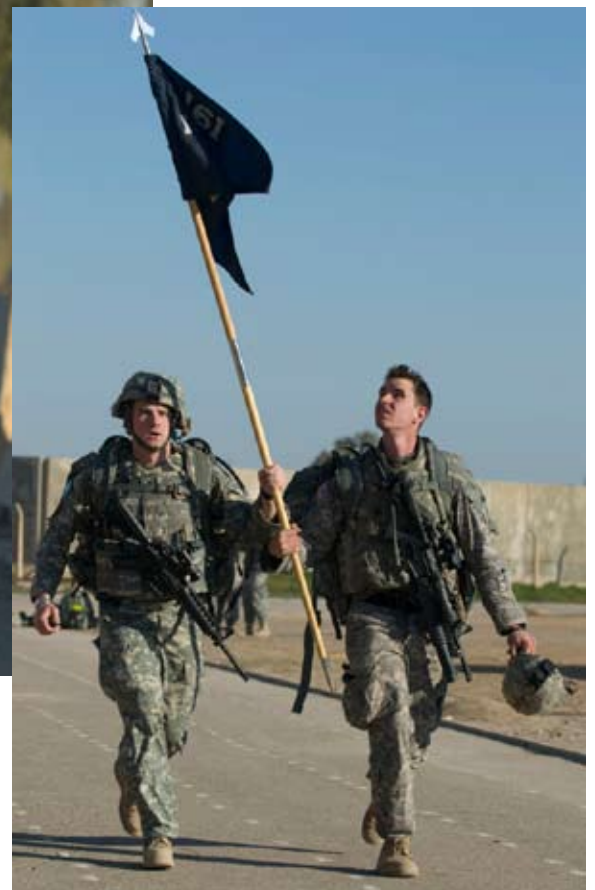
BELOW: SSG Tijay Morres from 1st Plt, E Co is a blur as he floats towards the basket during the battalion 3-on-3 basketball tournament hosted by Abu Co at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.



From the field -- Highlanders in “action”



LEFT, BELOW: Then 1LT David Redman, who was promoted to CPT Jan 28, and 2LT Clemente Fortuna near the finish line of a 12-mile road march sponsored by the 101st Airborne Division January 10th at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. CPT Redman and 2LT Fortuna finished first and second in the base-wide event. Both officers are from Abu Co.



RIGHT: Bone Crushers SGT Randy Robbins and SPC Anthony Livano carry their company guidon across the finish line of a 12-mile road march sponsored by the 101st Airborne Division January 10th at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Road march photos by SPC Brian A. Barbour, 123rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Arizona Army National Guard.



The Highlander officers and NCOs played the first Toilet Bowl at Joint Base Balad on January 31st.

After 20-minute quarters and three overtimes, the game was called with the score tied at 28.

The Highlanders plan on the game being an annual tradition and will play the 2010 Toilet Bowl in Washington.

