

The Highlander

Volume 1,
Issue 4
Dec. 5, 2008

1-161 Infantry assumes convoy escort mission

The 1st Battalion, 161st Infantry assumed responsibility for escorting convoys of supplies to forward operating bases from the Indiana Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 293rd Infantry at ceremony outside the battalion headquarters.

COL Therese O'Brien, commander of the 55th Sustainment Brigade, presided over the ceremony and said she looked forward to seeing the 1-161 Inf. in action: "I've heard great reports about your battalion and I implore you to continue to take the hard right as leaders."

The battalions continued a long-standing tradition of units as they move to and from combat theaters – uncasing and casing colors. To signify the completion of their mission, the 1-293rd rolled and cased their battalion colors and the 1-161st immediately uncased and unfurled their colors to show they stood ready to assume their new mission.

After assuming responsibility, LTC Greg Allen, 1-161 Inf.'s commander, said, "We've got some big shoes to fill; the 293rd Nightfighters have done a great job here, but we are up to the task."

Highlander 6 sends:

Hey Muldoons, definitely looks and smells like we're in Iraq! Hopefully I'll soon be able to say that "I think we're going home" but that's still a long time from now. So before we start focusing on going home, we need to stay focused on our mission at hand. We've been here a month and I can honestly say I've been impressed with every CLP I've been on. You guys are true warriors and definitely true professionals.

In just the short time that we've been here, we have conducted over 130 missions totaling over 130,000 miles without any accidents. We've had our share of IEDs and SAF, so be alert, it ain't safe out there. This is dangerous work, but you are all up to the task and have proven so already. I'll continue to stress speed, the wear of seat belts, and any other safety measures that will prevent any of us from getting injured.

I also want to stress that after heading out to FOBs like Normandy and Caldwell, that this is an extremely important mission. There's absolutely nothing sexy about this mission, but there are a lot of "hooahs" from the 25th ID that are depending on these logistical supplies and many of them don't have the luxuries of home that we have here on JBB. So when you're thinking this is a boring mission, think about the guys that live on Cobra or Gabe, or other black-out FOBs who don't have 24 hr access to the internet, the ability to call home, or head to a Taco Bell.

<see Highlander 6, pg 2>

Highlander 6:

Since I'm on the subject of JBB and the luxuries of home, we need to take advantage of this opportunity. There is absolutely no reason that all of us shouldn't be able to max our PT test by the time this deployment is over or be able to shoot expert on our assigned weapons given the resources we have on this base. If you want to take college courses, learn how to swim, or do whatever, get signed up now. Let's not waste our time watching movies and playing video games, we definitely have the chance of making us better soldiers, so let's do it.

As always, I'm proud of all you Muldoons and the Highlander Battalion, continue to keep up the good work, the motivation and hard charging attitudes. And finally, yes, I think we're going home...in 8 months! Hooah

OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL

Interested? Attend one of six briefings in the battalion headquarters conference room to find out more:

13 DEC, 1300 & 2100
14 DEC, 1300 & 2100
15 DEC, 1300 & 2100

- Phase 0 in country, DEC 2008 - JUL 2009
- Phase 1, Ft Meade, SD 10 - 25 JUL 2009

Requirements:

- Earn commission before age 41 + 364 days
- 60 qrtr hrs to start
- be able obtain Secret clearance
- 110 GT score
- Cdr recommendation



A humvee crew from C Co, engages targets with their M2, .50 caliber machine gun during familiarization fire at a range in Iraq.

Maine Troop Greeters show 'northern' hospitality

Patriotic citizens from Maine repeated a nearly two-decade-old tradition as they greeted soldiers from 1-161st Infantry and the 181st BSB during their recent stopover at Bangor International Airport.

The Maine Troop Greeters showed their 'northern' hospitality to these guardsmen just as they have all deploying servicemen and women since 1990. The group began in 1990 as U.S. troops deployed to support Operation Desert Shield and continued



through troop deployments to and from Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Bill Knight, a World War II veteran and the group's founder, said today's groups and celebrations are smaller because of security concerns – troop movements are not public and the group typically only gets an hour or two's notice making it difficult to assemble the large groups that greeted Desert Shield / Desert Storm veterans. Then, the greeters would advertise their events in the local newspaper and on local television stations and attract crowds of more than a thousand greeters and would often

include high school bands and American Legion color guards.

Since May of 2003, the MTGs have greeted nearly 3700 flights; 740,000 troops and even 150 military working dogs. During the troops stay at the airport, they are treated to free snacks and free use of 40 cell phones. Grateful troops and commanders have thanked the MTG by presenting them with letters, patches, flags, coins and certificates which now line the walls and even the ceiling in the group's 'hall of fame'.

Whether troops are heading to the fight or home from it, this die-hard cadre ensures they understand how much their sacrifice is appreciated by those at home.

Write a "LETTER TO THE EDITOR"

- story ideas
- announcements
- suggested changes, additions

highlander.pao@us.army.mil

Chaplain's Corner

After spending time in Yakima, Wisconsin, and Kuwait we have finally reached our destination. We are in Iraq! Now that we have moved into our Containerized Housing Units (CHU's or "chews") duffle bags have been unpacked, laundry facilities utilized, and most importantly, the chow hall frequented. Recently, we had a Thanksgiving meal complete with turkey, stuffing, and apple pie. We, too, like those at home had creative turkey meals gracing our plates in the days that followed.

The spiritual journey that many of us find ourselves on is not all that different than our geographical voyage. Like the various

landscapes we've seen, we see ourselves in a new light and are discovering personal reserves we might not have thought possible. In this place, resiliency is a crucial spiritual skill helpful in an environment that can be unknown and unpredictable. Those who are learning to trust their comrades and deepen their understanding of God will come away from this year with a broader understanding of the spiritual life.

May this holiday season be a time to reflect on the unique faith journey we each find ourselves on this year. Blessings to you all.

Peace,
CH (CPT) Hansen



Tools of the trade -- the gear of SPC William Wallace of Crazy Horse Company sits next to his vehicle during pre-combat checks before a combat logistics patrol.

Headlines from Home

From the Seattle Post-Intelligencer

- Gov. Gregoire criticized for allowing atheist display in Capitol; she and Atty. Gen. claim they have no choice
- 787 delayed again; first delivery Summer of 2010
- Seattle housing market continues slide; median home price down over 12% from this November of last year
- UW names Steve Sarkisian, former Trojans' offensive coordinator, as head football coach

From the Spokesman Review

- Democratic challenger John Driscoll wins recount over Rep. John Ahern for Spokane's 6th District seat
- State lawmakers considering reviving law requiring adult 'mentors' for hunters 14 and younger
- #5 Zags still undefeated in men's basketball, face Indiana on Dec. 6
- 6-1 Wazzu faces #24 Baylor on Dec. 6



Deposit Savings Program

- eligible now
- sign up at Finance
- earn 2.5% / quarter, 10% / year

"Make your money work as hard as you do"

Angry Tom's Book Review - MSG Tom Bigley

Pillars of the Earth

By Ken Follett

Pillars covers cathedral construction through a period in English history and weaves a fictional tale based in historical truth that paints a picture of the trials of everyday life in middle age England. Ken's use of historical fiction works well and he is a very competent character writer.

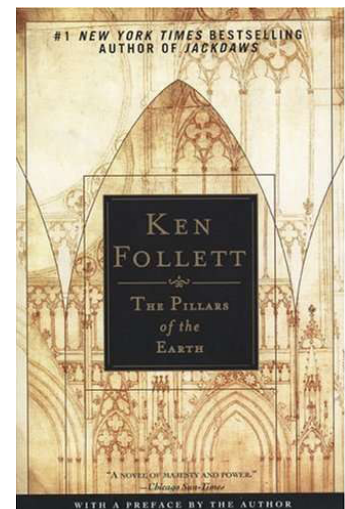
The main group of characters goes through several trials as do all families and they cover the spectrum of good and bad times. There are several interesting aspects of this, the evolution of cathedral construction was the most compelling personally due to my background in building.

Other aspects are the harsh reality of the times in the feudal Europe, not dissimilar to the reality in most of the world today outside of the western powers as starvation and lawlessness are real challenges of everyday life throughout the world today.

Another point made is the politics of religion also not dissimilar to today with large dominant

religions and the competition for position. Granted, this is fiction based in real life with scandals, deception, greed and all the other "sins" that surround us daily. I took away hope that doing what is right will triumph and in the end, a good lesson revealed.

The only detractor, some graphic descriptions went a bit over board and detracted from an otherwise quality book. 4.5 out of 5 stars highly recommended.





ABOVE: Then SPC Edward Neville, left, of Kennewick, Wash. and PFC Jason Wells of Pasco, Wash., both from D Co, check headspace and timing on their .50 caliber machine gun before a training mission at the Udari Range Complex, Kuwait. Neville was promoted to Corporal last week.

BELOW: SPC William Cloes of Bremerton, Wash., C Co, gives a thumbs up to his gunner as they bore sight the thermal sight on their .50 caliber machine gun while preparing for night familiarization fire in Iraq.



From the field -- Highlanders in action



ABOVE: 1-161 Inf. Company commanders, First Sergeants and guidon bearers stand in formation during the battalion's Transition of Authority ceremony last month.

RIGHT: SPC Michael Rooney of Eatonville, Wash. helps PFC Craig Williams of Atlanta, Ga., both from A Co, don his vest as they prepare to board their vehicle for a Combat Logistics Patrol.
BELOW: SSG Paul Pellegrino of Auburn, Wash., right, SFC Darryl Kaiser of Spokane, Wash. and SGT Cory Rueb of Federal Way, Wash., all from the Mortar Platoon, enjoy Thanksgiving dinner.



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