

# The Highlander

Volume 2, Issue 3 Mar. 9, 2009



## Highlander 6 sends:

Hey Muldoons, can you believe it, we're at our half-way point! This is the crucial time in our deployment in terms of motivation, complacency, combat stress and discipline. I'm very proud of your overall performance, but now is not the time to let up. We've received all sorts of accolades for your professionalism from the 3rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command (ESC) Commanding General and CSM, the IG inspection team, KBR, other governmental agencies and from units that we have transported over the past several months.

February was a busy month. Trickster Co was re-missioned to provide Force Protection for some other high-speed hooahs, resulting in a higher OPTEMPO for everyone else. We ran escort missions to new bases including Warrior, Marez, Abu Ghraib, Prosperity and Talil; all without incident. That means your focus is right where it needs to be: Completing the mission, taking care of the men, and taking care of yourselves. As of today, we've safely conducted 532 missions, covering over 575,000 miles. Whether you're on a gun crew, working maintenance, or on staff providing the much needed support, you Hooahs are all to be commended. We have proven that we are the premiere convoy security battalion in theater, just remember though, we still have a long way to go.

Despite your outstanding performance, we need to ensure we continue to take care of each other, especially for some soldiers that may be having a harder time than others. We continue to receive Red Cross messages from home, so I know there is added stress to an already stressful environment. Don't be afraid to get help if you need it, because we all need a little assistance once in awhile. Also, let's not forget about our unsung heroes back home. Keep your families informed; call them or email as much as you can. They're going thru trying times just like we are.

Last thing, we have 10 soldiers that are training for the Sustainer Challenge, which is like a mini Best Ranger Competition. The event takes place in a couple of weeks. Units all over Iraq will be here to compete, so let's all get out and support our guys. If you see them training, feel free to join them in rucking, combatives, and physical fitness.

5 months and counting. Hooah



## Highlanders return to former battleground



Highlanders returned to an area of Baghdad near Forward Operating Base Prosperity February 6th as part of a mission to move combat vehicles north to FOB Warrior.

D Co, Spartans, escorted a convoy of vehicles from 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment as they moved to their new area of operation.

Part of the movement included Route Irish, a stretch of road very familiar to Highlander veterans of the battalion's first deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2004 and 2005.

"I haven't been here in a long time," Sgt. Tim Hollingsworth, a Spartan assistant convoy commander from Walla Walla, said. It's much quieter; a lot cleaner." Hollingsworth conducted foot patrols in an area a few miles away during that first deployment.

Loading the 2nd Bde. 1st Cav. Div. vehicles took place in an historic location – Crossed Sabres. It was here that Saddam Hussien raised a shotgun in celebration as he watched his army pass-in-review. The

wide-open, paved parade route was ideal for loading, but also provided an opportunity to tour the area.

After loading vehicles, the Spartans got word they would remain overnight and move their cargo the next day. The delay allowed them to see the Iraqi Army

Tomb of the Unknowns and stand in the same spot Saddam Hussein did nearly two decades ago.

"The last time I was here was ugly," said 1st Sgt. Andrew Manke.

Manke, a platoon sergeant on his first deployment, recalled a time when he escorted Soldiers from FOB Liberty to FOB Prosperity to relieve the site security team at a building in the Green Zone. As they approached an entry control point to the Green Zone, a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated. Manke said, "It was the worst thing I've ever seen."

However, this trip was far different. On the FOB, Soldiers confidently played football as contractors, government employees and other Soldiers casually walked the streets of FOB Prosperity.

**"The last time I was here was ugly."**

**1SG Andrew Manke  
First Sergeant, D Co**

## Highlander 7 sends:

Well Highlanders, we hit the halfway point. We've been safe so far and we've been incredibly successful and there's no reason to expect anything different from an outstanding organization such as ours. Six months ago some our Joes couldn't spell JJB and yet here we are conducting the major combat outside the wire operations from this post.

As I noted in the last installment of the Highlander, this is the year of the NCO. As I told General Craig R. McKinley the chief of the National Guard Bureau during his visit to D Co, this fight is truly being conducted by the NCO. The NCO is the one making those life and death decisions out on the ground on a nightly basis. Not only does this battalion have the finest NCOs, we are growing and training a new crop of high speed junior enlisted Soldiers full of pride and energy. It's the job of every NCO to train his replacement and to prepare himself to take on the duties of his superiors when needed.

We have another job as well,

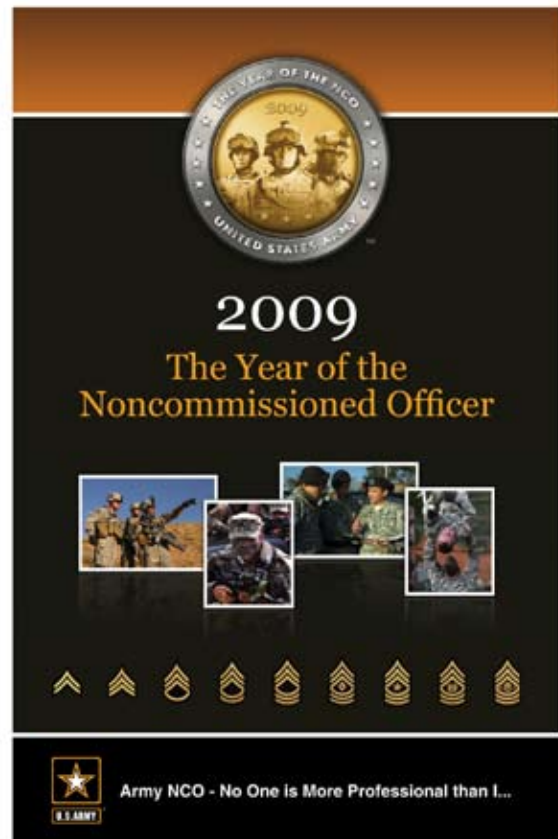
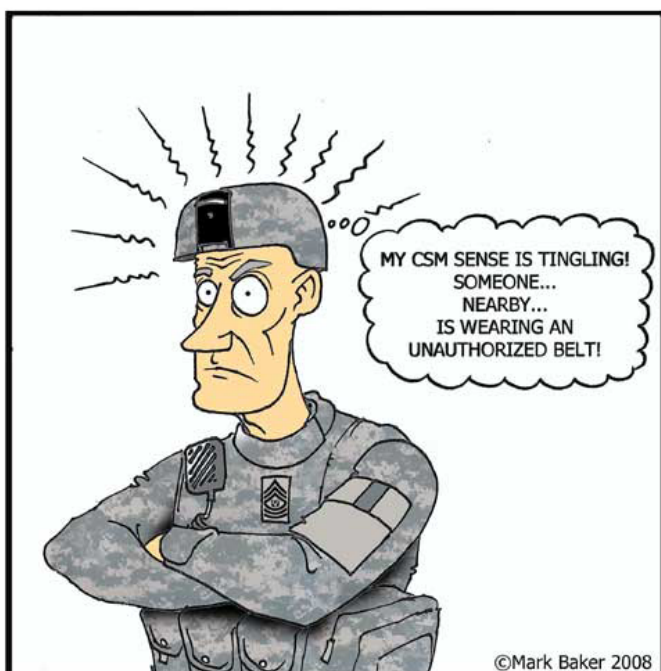
training the new officers. BG Adams once told me, the job of every platoon sergeant is to train his lieutenant to be a company commander and the job of every 1SG is to prepare that company commander for battalion command.

March is vehicle safety month here on JBB and we've already started addressing some of those issues with a review of ground guiding procedures and hand/arm/flashlight signals. A soldier was killed not long ago in Tallil in a forklift driving accident. The last thing any of us wants is to lose a comrade due to not understanding or ignoring safety rules. As I have told your 1SGs, if I have to make an on the spot correction, three people have failed, the Soldier, the battle buddy, and his leader. Every Soldier is responsible for making certain we conduct those basic things safely. We take enough chances with IEDs and such; we will not risk Soldiers to vehicle accident.

Again, great job Highlanders and "Let's be careful out there"

*Highlander 7, out.*

## Pvt. Murphy's Law- Mark Baker



## Angry Tom's Book Review - MSG Tom Bigley

### *Sea of Slaughter* By Farley Mowat

Some may have heard of Farley Mowat from the book *Never Cry Wolf* which was adapted into a movie by Disney studios. Farley is a prolific Canadian author and naturalist with a long list of published books about natural history relating to North America, mostly Canadian. *Sea of Slaughter* is a description of the animals of the north eastern part of the continent and their systematic destruction beginning in the 16th century.

An impressive part of the work is his non-judgmental approach to the information which characterizes much of contemporary writing on the subject, with the exception of criticizing the Canadian and U.S. government efforts of conservation with assertions that they are just lip service and bent to easily to needs of the fishing and hunting industries. This position earned him a ban in the U.S. and Canada for a period after its initial publication, sort of a *Red Badge of Courage* in the environmental activist circles, though it has since been lifted.



The first copy I was able to find was from a used book search and in hard copy some years ago. This is one of the few books I read almost cover to cover in one sitting as the revelations of each chapter built a picture of the destruction of the fauna in such detail. Researching the whaling ship logs, the first ships to exploit the new world, gives a unique look at what the area was like prior to the influx of modern Europeans to the North East U.S. and the Canadian Maritime Provinces.

The information in this book is startling to say the least: large herds of Eastern Elk, Eastern Bison, and reports of "White Bears" (polar bears) on the coast of New England and as far south as Maryland just to mention a few. *Sea of Slaughter* is the only book I know that describes these scenes in such detail with passages taken directly from the ships logs. Very interesting and sad as the end state is a long list of extinctions and an overall reduction of across the board.

The book is not all bad news and does talk about successful conservation and reintroduction of species in some areas in both the U.S. and Canada. One of the most well-written and the most informative book on this subject I have read.





## Chaplain's Corner - CH (CPT) Kelly Hansen

Spiritual fitness is not all that different than physical, emotional, and mental fitness. A 2-mile run can be a difficult feat for those who only train one mile at a time. However, for a marathon runner, two miles is often considered just the warm up. It is similar with spiritual fitness.

When challenges arise, a robust spiritual life can provide a deep calm and a sense of being grounded amidst the storm. Having an inner place to access when stress and conflict abound is an invaluable benefit of religious practices. However, like physical fitness, in order to gain any value, spiritual fitness must also be cultivated on a regular basis.

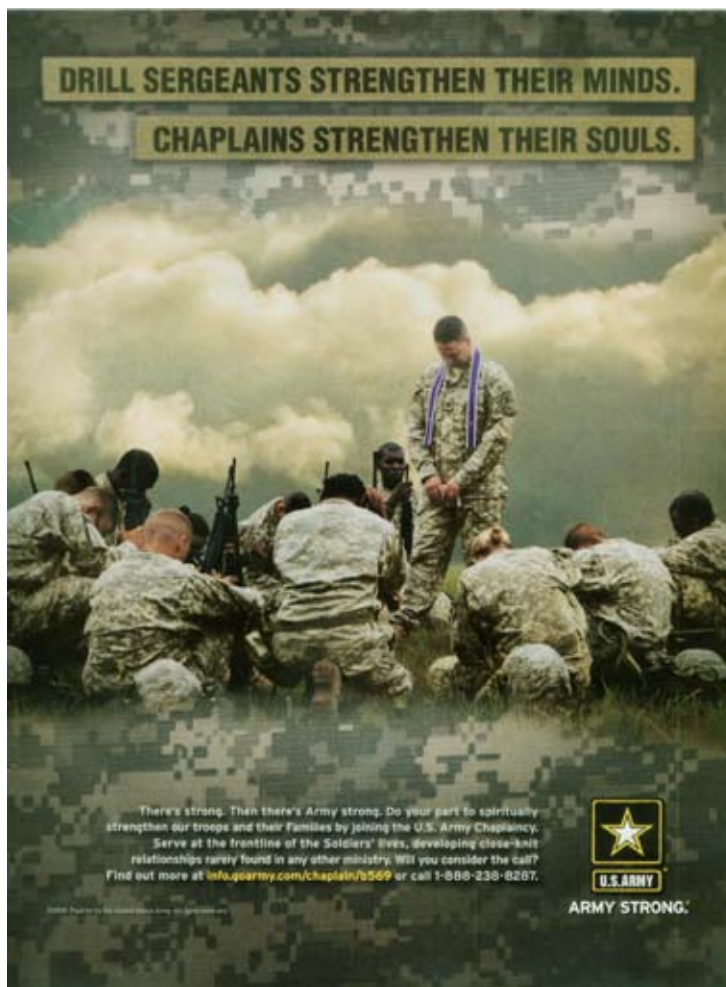
Fortunately, this can include all kinds of habits such as praying, meditating, singing, experiencing nature, receiving sacraments and the participation in a religious community. How hearty is your spiritual fitness? Take some time this month to examine your spiritual fitness routine and make any adjustments.

If a worship service peaks your interest, here are some of the JBB offerings: Catholic, Protestant, Greek Orthodox, Seventh Day Adventist, LDS, Jewish and Islamic services -- all offered weekly. Contact the Chaplain or the look on the JBB website for a schedule. Peace, CH Hansen

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



## The Grid

	What' did you give for V-Day?	What did you get for V-Day?	What was the last book you read?	Who is your favorite musical artist?
 <b>SPC Mulkey</b> <i>Chap. Asst.</i> <i>HHC</i>	Nothing; it was just another day ...	for me & my wife.	World Without End	White Stripes
 <b>PFC Williams</b> <i>Gunner</i> <i>3rd Plt, A Co</i>	Wii	XBox 360	Broken Prey	Lil Wayne
 <b>Scott Fontaine</b> <i>Reporter</i> <i>The News Trib.</i>	Flowers	A card	Great War for Civilization	Miles Davis
 <b>SPC Hylla</b> <i>Gunner</i> <i>2nd Plt, D co</i>	Ring	Didn't get package yet	A book to my kids	Prince



**ABOVE:** Sgt. Ben Vost lands a heavy right hand in a morale-building spar against Sgt. Jeremy Bricker at Forward Operating Base Warrior near Kirkuk, Iraq. The Spartans from 2nd Platoon were finishing their remain-over-night before returning to Joint Base Balad.

**BELOW:** Spc. Paul Tornensis an Abu driver gives a thumbs up from the driver's hatch of his Armored Security Vehicle before departing Joint Base Balad, Iraq for FOB Warhorse.



## ***From the field -- Highlanders in "action"***

**RIGHT:** Fifteen Highlanders gained recognition at the monthly task force briefing and award ceremony at Joint Base Balad's Sustainer Theater for completing thirty or more missions. Most of the Soldiers are scouts who take the point on their nightly convoy security missions.



**BELOW:** Bonecrusher mechanics lower a Medium Tactical Vehicle transmission into a crate at Joint Base Balad before shipping to depot to be rebuilt.



**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:** Abu spouses and families take a break from stuffing Valentine's Day care packages.

**BELOW:** A young Abu supporter adds her creative touch to decorations for Valentine's Day care packages.



## ***From the field -- Highlanders in "action"***



**ABOVE:** Spartan Sgts. Joshua Diede and Willie Johnson share a laugh as Diede helps Johnson don his Gunner's Restraint System harness as they prepare for a convoy at Joint Base Balad.



**ABOVE:** Hustler Pfc. Joseph Crabb loads ammunition in the turret of his vehicle before departing Joint Base Balad for Scania.

**RIGHT:** Portraits of Highlanders hang at Spokane's Museum of Arts & Culture. The portraits taken by photographer Jed Conklin will remain on display until April 23rd when the MAC and Conklin will host a closing night reception. All Highlander families are invited. (Photo courtesy of Geary Lewis)





# Adventures in convoys, courtesy of *The Hustler*

"You see the lights up ahead? That's Scania," said Sgt. First Class Elwin Farnsworth to an obviously impatient and haggard crew. The long seven-hour drive to Scania was wearing on the Soldiers as they pulled into the gate in time to see the sun rise over the familiar T-walls that surround this fortified "truck stop".

Farnsworth, the Hotel Company convoy commander known as Hustler 21 is no stranger to the war in Iraq. A veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom II, he has seen his share combat and has seen the evolution of this conflict for the better.

"Back in 2004, the Iraqis seemed to be totally dependant on U.S. and coalition forces and the insurgency was out to kill the American soldiers. Now, you see more electricity and sewer improvements, the Iraqi police and army seemed to be better equipped and the whole infrastructure has improved," said Farnsworth.

"Iraq has so much potential. Iraq has all of the natural resources, the historical sites, warm weather and overall good natured people; I just hope they can get it together. It's the improvements in the quality of life for the Iraqi people I see that makes me feel better and reassures me that all of our sacrifice is worth it. It makes me proud to be here".

Many of the H Co soldiers hadn't

been to Scania before and had little idea what to expect. Scania is the half-way point from Kuwait to Baghdad and a key logistical hub in theater. This 24-hour operation in the middle of the Iraq desert is the lifeline of coalition forces. Its bustling military and contractor

waiting began. The lead scout, Sgt. Brodie Moberly and his crew moved to the head of the column and waited for the order to depart.

Moberly, a veteran of Afghanistan and two previous tours in Iraq volunteered for this tour. "I saw the flier in the armory back in Montana

success of the platoon mission.

The convoy moved out just after sunset on the long road back to Baghdad. Minutes later, a KBR driver started waving his hand and giving the thumbs down to signal that something was wrong. The tanker truck had broken down and needed a recovery vehicle for the truck and his tank trailer. Within minutes, three convoy security vehicles arrived at the scene and took up positions to protect the KBR recovery efforts. Not more than 25 minutes had elapsed when the convoy started pushing forward again. The training on recovery battle drills paid off. But now, it was dark and the high time for IEDs was fast approaching.

"Everything looks like an IED" said Moberly describing the hardest part of his job. "You always have to stay in the mindset that something will happen and, it may be cliché, but it's true, complacency kills". Farnsworth said, "In '04, it seemed the goal of the IED by the insurgency was to kill soldiers. Now, it seems they are designing IEDs to show the world that regardless of the superior technology of the Americans, they can still defeat our technology and really use them to make a political statement."

The IED is the primary weapon used by Anti-Iraqi Forces and is fast becoming the new weapon of the Taliban in Afghanistan; because it has been so effective in Iraq. For



*Sfc. Gordon Ross and Cpl. Celeste Ashworth, Hustler 21 trail crew, assist in recovering a tanker truck outside Scania.*

vehicle traffic with trucks as far as the eye could see would boggle the mind of even the most experienced of logisticians. Once the vehicles were parked, the crews headed for the temporary overnight tents for a daylight slumber and recovery for the trip home.

As dusk approached, the familiar sound of engines and pungent diesel exhaust filled the evening air. The convoy security vehicles took their places in the order of march and the

where I'm from and my buddies and I put together a squad to join the 1-161." Moberly had just come off active duty and wanted to try civilian life for a change. But, after a couple of years, decided to return to active duty and deploy with the task force.

"I always wanted to be a soldier ever since I was a little kid and I couldn't imagine doing anything else with my life." Upon his arrival in Iraq, he volunteered to be the lead scout for his platoon where he said he could have the most impact on the

Hustler 21 and his crew, they'd been lucky enough to be half way through this tour and not known the IED and its effectiveness. However, their luck was about to run out.

Suddenly, large explosion rocked the MRAP. Then one more and then another. "IED...IED!" sounded over the radio from the trail vehicle. The radio sprang to life with requests for situation reports and status of the convoy vehicles. Soon, the smell of diesel fuel filled the cab of the MRAP. "Do you smell that?" exclaimed Private First Class Kyle Hare, the young platoon medic from Moses Lake, Wash. "I don't think it's from us."

All of the convoy vehicles reported no damage and the convoy continued. It looked like Hustler 21 was fortunate with no damage or casualties reported and returned to base. But on arrival, they crew found that a tanker truck was not so lucky. The IED punched a hole in the side of the tanker. The driver was ok and everyone else made it back safe.

Earlier that evening, Moberly talked about what made him favor the military over civilian life. "In civilian life, there is nothing more to life than to serve your own needs. But life here is different. It gives me a sense of something higher than myself. Of being a part of something greater; whether it's defending my county or giving the Iraqis a better life; I can say I had a hand in that and that is what makes me proud, knowing that I can look in the mirror and say to myself that I made a difference in the world," said Moberly.

Farnsworth, who postponed retirement to deploy plans on returning to his construction business in Tacoma, Wash. and enjoying life with his wife Lori and four sons; Kyle, Aaron, Vincent and Kameron. Farnsworth doesn't plan on deploying again, but knows he can't let his fellow soldiers down if the call comes again.

Moberly, plans on returning to his Guard unit in Billings, Mont. and joining them for their year-long deployment to Afghanistan.



*Sfc. Elwin Farnsworth discusses the route to Scania with lead KBR controller Dennis Bos before departing Joint Base Balad.*

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