

# The Highlander

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## Highlanders aid Iraqi 'neighbors'

The streets were bustling with families coming back from the date fields, piled into pickup trucks and sharing the roads with the neighborhood cows, both making their way through the village traffic. The sounds of children playing and vehicle horns sounding could be heard in all directions and the aroma of cooking lamb and car exhaust filled the early afternoon air. Suddenly, the village was overcome with a different sound. The sounds of Lion 1-3 gun trucks were fast approaching. The mood of the village changed. As quickly as the Americans came, so did the Iraqi children. The Iraqi children ran to the American gun trucks with the same fervor and anticipation as American children would greet the neighborhood ice cream man. The 532nd Expeditionary Security Squadron Lion patrol with their Highlander combat medics had arrived.

The war has changed. Army Staff Sergeant Gregg O. Hutchinson of Sunnyside, Wash., the 1-161 Highlander Medic dismounted his gun truck and took only a few steps into the village when the inevitable summons came, "Get Doc up here!" This time, the call was not for an American soldier, but an injured Iraqi girl. SSG Hutchinson, a.k.a. "Hutch", ran to the rear of the column and was met by a group of Iraqi children holding a young girl. Hutch reached into his medic bag which he had filled with every conceivable first aid item he could think of anticipating these events. Hutch applied an antibiotic cream to the affected area, wrapped it and gave over the tube. Through the Iraqi interpreter, Hutch gave the older brother instructions on the medicines use. The siblings quickly ran off for fear of getting the valuable cream snatched away before they could get home. Hutch was approached again by another child and then another, and another. This drill was repeated throughout the afternoon, taking away the hurt and replacing them with smiles on the future of Iraq.

The 532nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron is responsible for the perimeter security in and around the villages and farms that surround Joint Base Balad. In addition to the daily security patrols, the 532nd ESFS gathers intelligence by con-



1Lt. James Sims, 1-161 Inf. Medical Operations Officer, from Vancouver, Wash., pulls security during a recent Medical Civil Action Program mission in a village outside Joint Base Balad. (Photo & story by Capt. Mike Vincent)

tacting local citizens. In an effort to provide additional medical help to both the security patrols and the local Iraqi community; the 532nd ESFS chose to augment their patrols with experienced combat medics from Task Force 1-161 Infantry. The Task Force 1-161 Infantry "Highlanders" is one of the largest tenant units on JBB and has many veteran Soldiers, to include veteran medics from their last deployment in 2004.

"We did MEDCAP (Medical Civil Action Program) missions back in 2004," Sergeant Hutchinson explained. "We set up in a school or vacant lot and did what we could with what we had. Today, we are supposed to step back and let the Iraqis take over. But, in many cases, they still don't have the resources available to take care of the people. So, we try to assist in any small way we are able to."

Hutchinson is a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom II and is a certified paramedic with Sunnyside Fire Department (continued on pg. 4)

## Highlander 6 sends -

LTC Greg Allen

Hey Muldoons, 70 days and counting Hooah! We are nearing the end of our successful deployment, but it definitely isn't over. You guys have conducted over 850 missions traveling 956,116 miles across some of the most treacherous areas in Iraq without incident. We've conducted missions to just about every FOB in Iraq. Most battalions can't say that. Additionally, our medics have conducted over 150 mounted/dismounted patrols around JBB providing excellent medical care for local Iraqi citizens. The Blacksheep Platoon from Bonecrusher Company is conducting daily patrols in and around Mosul. But as I've stated before, I'm not amazed at your performance, I expected it.

As NCOs and junior officers, you've demonstrated that you have provided the necessary leadership to make this the best SECFOR Battalion in the entire Iraqi Theater of Operations and that's just not my opinion. We recently received the results of the 3rd ESC IG inspection for all convoy battalions in Iraq and 3rd Platoon, Abu Company came out rated as the best platoon in the entire country. Our other platoon that was inspected came in a close third. There were 16 platoons from 8 different Battalions that were inspected across Iraq, we finished 1st and 3rd. You have proven that you are the most disciplined Battalion in the 3rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command. Your performance speaks for itself.

The convoy commander during that Inspection wasn't an officer or a senior NCO, rather, it was an E6, SSG Nate Hoppe. I congratulate

(continued on pg. 2)

Nate, and all the other junior NCOs and Lieutenants who have proven day in and day out that you can be successful without being micromanaged by your leadership. We've trained hard and trained at the lowest level and you men and women have demonstrated that you have the discipline to do what's right and do what's right all the time. We may have lapses once in awhile with a few soldiers, but overall, your performance has been superb and I am extremely proud to serve with you.

With two months remaining, it's crunch time. It's the 4th QTR of the Super Bowl and we're ahead, but by no means is it time to coast. Now is the time that we step it up a notch and show everyone what we're truly capable of doing. The OPTEMPO isn't slowing and more mis-

sions will possibly come our way, so please continue to stress discipline to every single soldier, continue to train hard, and emphasize safety as your primary concern. I know everyone is thinking about going home, but we still have a job to do. When we're done, we'll go home. The aches and pains are still on the rise and I'm sure the "Boxing Smoker" didn't help, but with warm weather ahead of us, now is the time to get in the best shape possible.

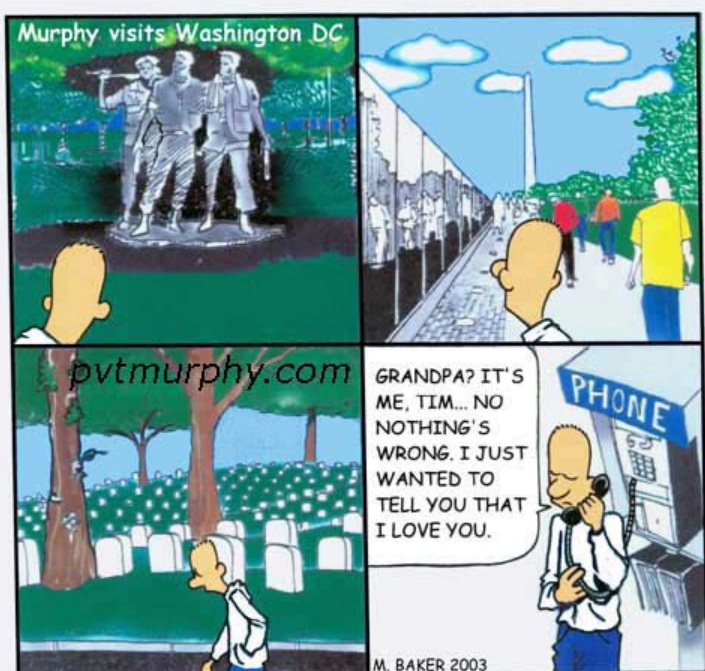
You Hooahs have truly made this a great battalion. I appreciate your efforts and I'll see you down range.

See ya down range  
Hooahs,

Highlander 6



## Pvt. Murphy's Law- Mark Baker



## Highlander 7 sends - CSM David Windom

**OK NCO's, time to earn our pay.** As our time here draws to an end there are some key areas we, as leaders, need to place our focus.

**Complacency kills.** I know, we've heard it over and over. The sad truth is that complacency does kill and its worst at this particular point in the mission. Soldiers have been gone from home a long time now; some of us are coming up on the one year mark in the next couple of weeks. As leaders, we need to truly pay attention to our Soldiers. Right now they're in the groove; they've done these missions dozens of times and could probably do them blindfolded. That's no reason to take shortcuts and skip critical controls such as PCI/PCC. Keep working and monitoring your crews. Troop the line and make those corrections. Remember, it's not what you expect, it's what you inspect.

The 1-161 was recently noted as the "best practice" battalion for highway operations and conduct of convoy security. We do it right and we do it right every time. That's because our NCOs are involved competent leaders. We've done a stellar job so far and it would be crushing to have an accident and someone hurt from something completely avoidable. Keep up the good work.

With all that being said, we also have to turn some focus to getting home. There are dozens of key tasks and critical time hacks com-

ing in the next few weeks. As leaders, keep yourselves informed and pass that info on to your troops. If you don't know something, ask. Somebody will get you an answer. As key leaders we need to ensure that all the administrative tasks for our Soldiers are complete from awards to medical and redeployment packets. Supply actions may well bite us if we don't watch that lane as well. If you don't need something, look at turning it in. If it's personal and you want to get it home, mail it. Start streamlining now and make the process next month that much easier.

Lastly, pay attention to the standards. Lack of discipline first shows itself in the little things like haircuts and grooming, customs and courtesies, lack of attention to maintenance and weapons cleaning. We all hate the PT belt "battle sash" but the fact is, we still have to wear it in hours of darkness. For every Soldier I have to correct, there are three people who have failed, the Soldier, his battle buddy and his NCO. As we get closer to leaving, ensure we maintain the highest of standards.

The Soldiers of the 1-161 exceeds everybody in the 3rd ESC for safety, attention to detail and battle focus and I am proud of each and every one of you! Again, keep up the good work and lets all go home together.

Highlander 7 out.



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

### Faithfulness in Calling!

The stories of the Old Testament take on a new level of meaning when one spends time in the place where many of the events took place. Second to Israel, Iraq is the second most referenced region in the Old Testament, which are the Holy Scriptures of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Jonah, a prophet in the Old Testament, was called to go to Nineveh, a large metropolis in northern Iraq, to warn the citizens there of their wrong-doing. Jonah's initial response was something on the order of "No way, I'm not going there." And he promptly turned the other way and boarded a ship to sail far away from a place he did not want to go. During this turn-and-run escapade, Jonah was thrown overboard and swallowed by a large fish, sometimes referred to as a whale. After 3 days, he was spit out and given a second chance to fulfill the mission to which he had been called. This time Jonah went forward to Nineveh, proclaimed his message, and brought about great change in that city.

And so, like Jonah, we have been called to Iraq and in a short period of time we will be called from Iraq. It is in this to and fro, this coming and going, that our mettle is tested. Can I remain faithful when I am fatigued? Can I maintain attention to detail when the details have been done a hundred times over? Yes, it can be done, it can even be done successfully and with honor – "If anyone serves, they should do it with the strength God provides." - Peace to you all.

Contact task force chaplains at DSN 318-483-2351

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

## Highlanders' Hard Work = Hard Bodies

Two members of Task Force 1-161 competed in the Joint Base Balad Hard Body bodybuilding competition held on April 19th at the East MWR building. Both male and female competitors of varying weight classes gathered on stage to show their hard work to a panel of judges. The judges determined the winner by observing seven different poses performed by the contestants to allow them to demonstrate their body size, symmetry, definition and cut. The winners of each weight class were given each a medal and allowed to compete for the overall Hard Body championship.

The Highlander competitors were Capt. Robert Bryant of A Co, 181 Brigade Support Battalion from Auburn, Wash. and Sgt. Willie J. Johnson of Delta Company 1-161 from Seattle, Wash. The Highlander team joined the competition together; training together and supported each other throughout the event. Johnson explains how they agreed to compete in Hard Bodies.



Capt. Robert L. Bryant of A Co, 181 BSB puts his best foot forward and leads the way as the champion of the heavy weight class. (Photos & story by Capt. Mike Vincent)

"CPT Bryant and I ran into each other during the mobilization at Ft. McCoy. We found out that both of us enjoyed bodybuilding and made a pact. If there was a bodybuilding competition at JBB

that we would both support each other and enter the event. We saw the flyer for the April competition and we both decided to compete. We only had 29 days before the event, so we trained pretty hard."

The training was intensive and time consuming for both competitors. Bryant said, "I worked out three times a day for an hour and a half each. I did chest presses, squats; arm curls and 20 minutes of cardio. I also took vitamins and whey protein powder to help me gain mass. I have done amateur bodybuilding competitions before and I knew what to expect and what is involved." Bryant continued. "Maintaining a strict diet is the toughest part. Our diets consisted of eating five times a day -- only fruit, chicken, green vegetables, salads and water. We did have one cheat day, Sundays; where we could eat anything we wanted."

Johnson added, "The diet is tough. Especially since being on mission all the time, you have to bring food with you. Our gun truck crew always had a cooler of fruits for me to snack on. But, in the chow halls, they put the junk food and fatty cakes right near the exit. The hardest part about the competition is maintaining your self discipline and learning how to eat properly."

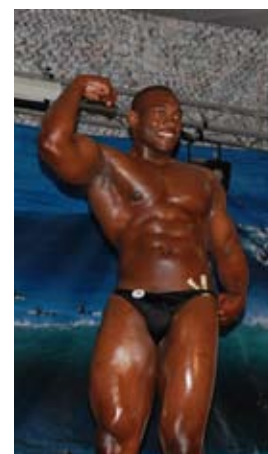
The Hard Bodies event lasted three and a half hours and involved approximately 20 competitors of varying weight classes. Each contestant was given 90 seconds for their individual routine. Then each contestant has to perform a set of required poses with all the competitors of their weight class. "I was so nervous up there and I couldn't relax," said Johnson. "But, Capt. Bryant was there to help me relax and stay focused. It's tough to do all that work and then get up there for three minutes and have someone tell you that you are not good enough." Johnson continued,

"But, what really helped, was that my whole company showed up to support me and started cheering me on. The guys in my company understood the work I put into this and how much it took to stand up their naked and be judged. Their support gave me confidence and made it fun."

Capt. Bryant won the heavy weight competition and Sgt. Johnson placed in his class. Both men intend to

compete again in the Hard Bodies event in July and both will continue to train and stay in shape. "This was a great team building event," Johnson said. "I suggest everyone enter in the competition. It forces you to push yourself and gain the experience of being judged. Besides, what is the worst thing that could happen... you get into shape?"

"Once you get up there and begin your routine and the people start cheering you on, it becomes a lot of fun" Bryant continued. "It was a great event, professional, well organized and fun. I think every competitor who steps up there to be judged is a winner."



Sgt. Willie J. Johnson from Spartan Coshows off his "guns" during the medium weight class individual event. It appears Johnson made a few bucks in the process.

## Neighbors (from pg. 1)

and the Sunnyside Police Department in Washington state. "We see very small villages around JBB, as compared to Baghdad. It seems the people who live in these villages live hand to mouth on a daily basis. We may be the only medical provider they will ever see while we are on patrol." Hutchinson continued. "It's the greatest job I have ever had in the military. We treat medical conditions that we would never see back home or even when treating soldiers here at JBB."

Sergeant First Class Chad B. Bennett of Rathdrum, Id., the chief medical NCO in 1-161 Infantry, explained how the program came about. "We went to a medical conference in December and got to know many of the key people in the OIF medical community. A doctor in Baghdad with the PRT (Provincial Reconstruction Team) we spoke with mentioned the Air Force mission around JBB and the need for medics. So, we contacted the 532nd ESFS and they said they would love to have us." Bennett continued. "We have executed over 150 missions since the beginning of April and our medics have treated over a hundred Iraqi patients."

This mission gives us the opportunity to reach out to the Iraqi community," said Sergeant Robert P. Mulrooney of Bellingham, Wash. "Often times, the villagers are turned away at the local hospital. So, we treat them on the scene. If it's more than we can provide we do our best to coordinate with 532nd Physicians Assistant, CPT Dart to recommend a

higher level to the nearest civilian hospital."

Air Force Capt. Laura J. Dart of Offutt, Neb. is the chief medical officer with the 532nd ESFS. "Our primary mission is security. The outside patrols conduct missions for terrain denial, making our presence known to insurgents and others who mean us harm," said Dart. "The patrol members visit with local residents and find out how their community is functioning. Along the way, we are able



SSG Gregg Hutchinson, an HHC, 1-161 medic from Sunnyside, Wash., examines and Iraqi girl's face and arms while her older brothers look on during a patrol near Joint Base Balad. (Photo by Capt. Mike Vincent)

to render care to the people we encounter." Dart continued. "Our Army combat medics have seen countless numbers of injuries. The medic's high level of medical knowledge combined with their vast experience with patrols and convoys outside the wire make them an immeasurable asset."

"Many times, we see the same people and treat them with an ongoing injury," said Specialist Bradley V. Peters of Sunnyside, Wash. "This allows us as Soldiers to build relationships and it makes the people feel

we are not here to harass them, but to help them and let them know we actually care." Peters continued. "With the work that we do, the insurgents may think twice about attacking us if we can provide medical care for their children. It may make that decision that much harder."

Over the past three months, SPC Peters and the airmen of the 532nd have adopted an Iraqi family and their four-year-old daughter who was a victim of severe oil burns as a result of a kitchen fire. The Highlander medics and the patrols of the 532nd have made frequent visits to the home with supplies, clothes and medicines to nurse the girl back to health. "The burn is almost completely healed and looks a thousand times better than it did when we first saw it," said Specialist Ryan C. Smith of Richland, Wash. "We try to see her as often as we can."

"It's more fulfilling to be out with the Iraqi people," said Mulrooney. "We have a great impact on the Iraqi people with this mission and I think we have opened their minds on who we are as American Soldiers."

Peters said, "I couldn't think of any thing better I could be doing with my life right now. It truly feels like we have made a difference here."

The teamwork and cooperation between the 532nd Lions and the TF 1-161 Highlanders is extraordinary. The daily eight to ten hour missions in temperatures in excess of a hundred degrees covering vast square miles of farmlands and villages exhibit true dedication to the mission and to the safety and security of Joint Base Balad and the Iraqi people that live in its shadow.



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**ABOVE:** Spec. Samantha Nourse goes for the spike against the Air Force during the Joint Base Balad Olympics. The Highlanders took the silver medal in the base-wide competition.

**BELOW:** LTC Allen "awards" Spec. John Roberts the Combat Action Badge. Spec. Max Anderson and Sgt. Nicholas Jamison also earned the CAB for their actions after an IED strike on their convoy.



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



**ABOVE:** Bonecrushers from 3rd Platoon pose for a photo before departing for their new mission near Mosul. The platoon will reunite with their company and the battalion before redeploying.

### ***Write a "LETTER TO THE EDITOR"***

- story ideas   - announcements
- suggested changes, additions

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

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



**LEFT:** Highlander medics and 532nd Expeditionary Security Squadron airmen patrol in village near Joint Base Balad as part of an ongoing joint Medical Civil Action Program to aid local Iraqis.

# Memorial Day 2009

WAR IS AN UGLY THING, BUT NOT THE UGLIEST OF THINGS. THE DECAYED AND DEGRADED STATE OF MORAL AND PATRIOTIC FEELING WHICH THINKS THAT NOTHING IS WORTH WAR IS MUCH WORSE. THE PERSON WHO HAS NOTHING FOR WHICH HE IS WILLING TO FIGHT, NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT THAN HIS OWN PERSONAL SAFETY, IS A MISERABLE CREATURE AND HAS NO CHANCE OF BEING FREE UNLESS MADE SO AND KEPT SO BY THE EXERTIONS OF BETTER MEN THAN HIMSELF.

JOHN STUART MILL 1806-1873



Sgt. Damien T. Ficek  
30 Dec 2004



Sgt. Jeffrey R. Shaver  
12 May 2004



Spec. Donald R. McCune  
5 Aug 2004



Spec. Jeremiah W. Schmunk  
8 Jul 2004

***Highlanders who gave the "last full measure of devotion" during the battalion's deployment to Iraq in 2004 - 2005.***

"It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us - that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion - that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain - that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom - and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

- President Abraham Lincoln, November 1863

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