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The Warrior's Log

'Excellence, Innovation & Quality' for the Marines and Sailors of the 2nd Marine Logistics Group

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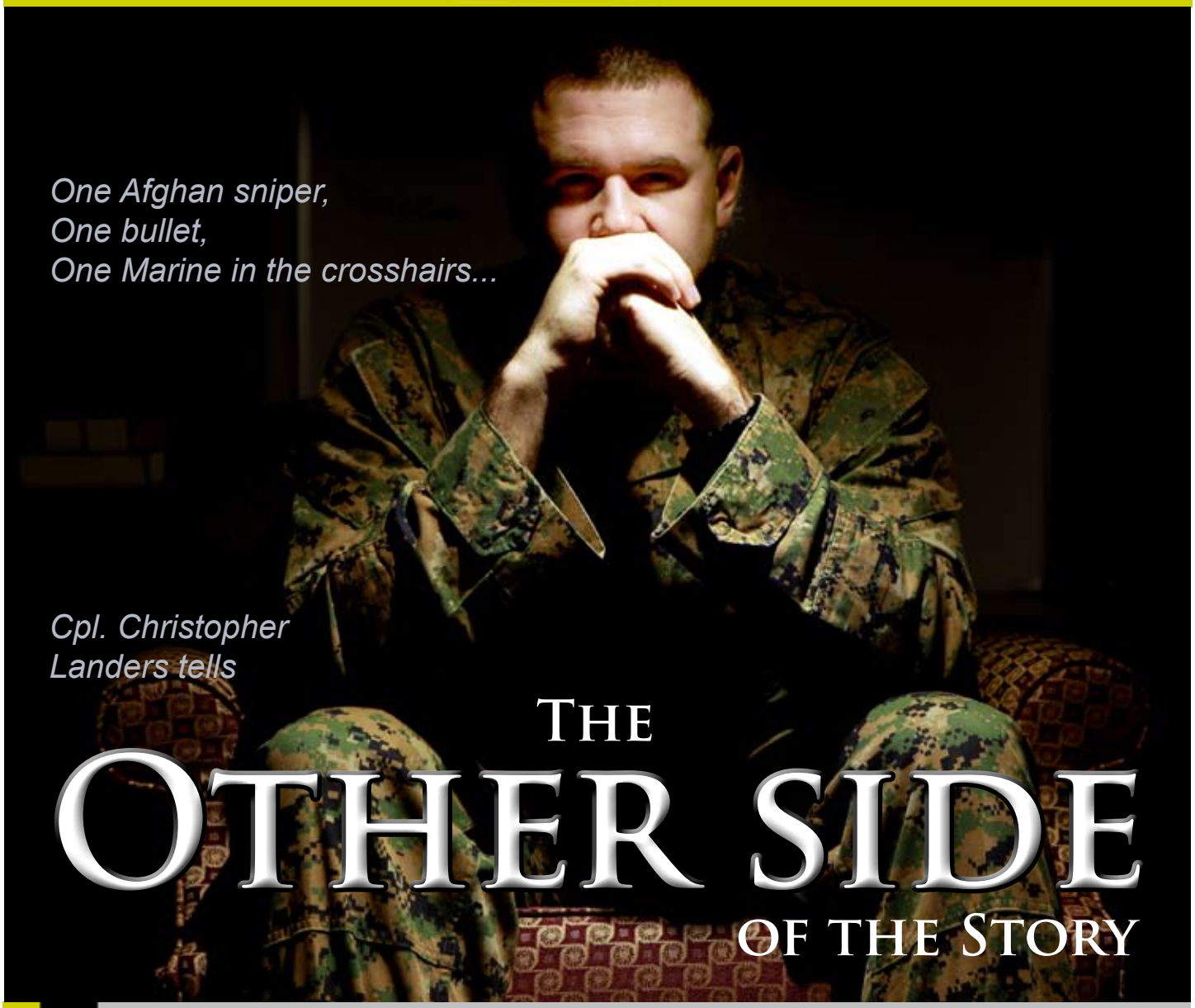

One Afghan sniper,
One bullet,
One Marine in the crosshairs...

Cpl. Christopher Landers tells

The Other Side of the Story

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SURVIVOR: 'Motor T' operator recounts brush with Afghan bullet

Pfc. Franklin E. Mercado
2nd MLG Public Affairs

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. – "The Marines from the other platoon were saying how calm it was. They usually got hit with small arms fire or mortars, but that day nothing happened …"

So began Cpl. Christopher Landers' account of a seemingly routine combat logistics patrol near Sangin, Afghanistan, in August 2010. He and his fellow motor transportation operators with Combat Logistics Battalion 2, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, made the trek to Forward Operating Base Nolay from their home base of Camp Leatherneck, and though strangely uneventful for a route notorious for enemy contact, the patrol went off without a hitch.

It is the trip back that remains on Landers' mind, quite literally, in the form of a two-inch scar across the top of his head.

Following several improvised explosive devise strikes just a few miles after departing friendly lines, the Haverhill, Mass., native was in the process of informing another Marine of a wounded comrade's status when a loud, sharp crack pierced the air. Rendered senseless for a few moments, Landers suspected he himself just fell victim to yet another IED. As the initial shock wore off, however, he realized this attack was a lot more personal than the randomness of explosives or mortars.

Photo by Pfc. Franklin E. Mercado

Cpl. Christopher J. Landers a motor transportation operator with Combat Logistics Battalion 2, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, poses for a photo aboard Camp Lejeune, N.C., Jan. 26, 2011. Landers was injured when an insurgent's round struck his head, entering and exiting through his Kevlar helmet.

A well-aimed gunshot to the head always is.

"We were maybe five to six miles out and already had hit two or three improvised explosive devices," he said. "At one point we heard one of the Marines was under one of the immobilized vehicles, and I thought to myself, 'that's not good,' so I drove up and started helping in any way I could."

Landers did what he could to assist the situation. He helped corpsmen tend to wounds, carried injured Marines to the casualty evacuation helicopter and offered to help sweep for mines in order for the bird to land.

"One of my buddies was injured in the blast, but he was okay so I went to let our other friend know he was okay," he said. "After I climbed up on the vehicle, that's when it happened."

He described what he thought was another IED explosion, something he experienced firsthand on a previous deployment to Afghanistan.

"I've been in situations where vehicles would stray off the tracks or continue a sweep and would hit another IED, and that's what the sound reminded me of," explained Landers.

The alleged blast knocked Landers off the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected All Terrain Vehicle to the ground. After the shock wore off, he quickly realized his initial assessment of the incident was incorrect.

An enemy combatant's bullet had pierced the right side of Landers' kevlar helmet, grazed the top of his head, and then exited the left side.

"I felt blood dripping down my

> "AS EVERYONE SAW ME, THEY TURNED AROUND TO LOOK FOR A SHOOTER..."

BLOTTER

31 Jan. 2011 - A Marine with 2nd Maintenance Bn. was observed as he failed to obey a stop sign. A subsequent investigation of the individual revealed him to be in possession of a pipe and six bags of spice, which were seized as evidence. The Marine was apprehended, processed and released to a unit representative.

28 Jan. 2011 - A Marine with 2nd Maintanence Bn. was observed as he approached the gate with an altered temporary pass issued pass belonging to his wife. A record check revealed him to be driving on Kentucky and North Carolina state suspension.

Photos courtesy of Cpl. Christopher Landers

(Top) A Navy corpsman tends to wounds suffered by Cpl. Christopher Landers after a sniper's bullet pierced his Kevlar helmet and cut an approximate two inch gash across the top of his head. (Left) Landers' wound, mended by staples. Landers was deployed to Afghsnistan with Combat Logistics Battalion 2, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, in support of International Security Assistance Forces.

head," Landers recalled. "As everyone saw me, they turned around to look for a shooter, my sergeant yelled out 'sniper' so we took cover."

Not only did they have to stay alert of the sniper and small arms fire, they also had to avoid being struck by mortars. Landers remained conscious and coherent as docs tended to his wounds.

After the scene was secured, Landers himself was air lifted to Camp Bastion, adjacent to Camp Leatherneck, where he received immediate medical care. Shortly thereafter, he began his whirlwind trip back to the U.S., which included stops at Bagram Air Base and Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, before arriving at The National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.

After spending approximately two weeks in Bethesda, Landers made his return to Massachusetts to further recover in the company of friends and family.

Landers since returned to duty aboard Camp Lejeune, N.C., and currently works in the operations section within Combat Logistics Regiment 2 headquarters. He recalls the events often; each time thoughtfully analyzing everything that was in play that day back in the summer of 2010.

On top of the "what ifs," he made sure to note his new appreciation for training and weapons.

"I definitely respect training a lot more, it's not that I didn't think they were important before, but I've never seen how important it was firsthand," said Landers. "When I saw a rifle for the first time after being back, I had a lot more respect for it. The guy who shot me chose me out of everyone else. The attack was a lot more intimate than an IED or (indirect fire). The rifle made it personal, and I have a whole new respect for the damage they can cause."

He also credited the corpsmen who were on the scene throughout the ordeal. Amid the chaos, their calm, collected and professional manner undoubtedly saved lives.

"Just the way they took care of me and responded to the situation made me respect them that much more," said Landers.

It was respect that drew Landers to the Corps in the first place during middle school. It is the history, he said, that drew him in and now, he is very much a part of it.

Though on the cusp of complete recovery, Landers still feels the effects from that summer day in 2010. Due to the resulting

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Warrior - of the - Week

Corporal Christopher Landers

Job: Motor Transportation Operator

Hometown: Haverhill, Mass.

Q: What is your favorite part about your job in the Marine Corps?

A: "Just about every unit utilizes us in one way or another. We stay busy."

Q: What is your favorite MRE?

A: "Beef Stew."

Q: Do you have and hero? Why?

A: "My father. He is exactly what I want to be.

Q: What sports team do you root for?

A: "New England Patriots."

No shocks for Shock Trauma Platoon

2nd Med. Bn. docs hit LZ Robin for field environment training operation

Pfc. Franklin E. Mercado
2nd MLG Public Affairs

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. – Sailors with 2nd Medical Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, participated in a three-day field exercise from Jan. 12 to Jan. 14 at Landing Zone Robin aboard Camp Lejeune, N.C.

The purpose of the exercise was to familiarize corpsman with their job in the field and other things they would encounter while on a patrol, which could include providing security, searching the area for improvised explosive devices in addition to tending to victims in a field environment.

The sailors with the battalion rotated in and out of the scenarios while being guided by senior enlisted sailors and commissioned officers.

"They need to be familiarized with their job on the front line," said Petty Officer 1st Class Jeffrey Ramirez, a hospitalman with 2nd Med Bn. "How they handle it here is a big part of their overall training."

With 90 percent of the sailors in the battalion being doctors and nurses, this training also served as their chance to work in the shock trauma platoon.

"These training exercises are crucial; you don't want one of the corpsmen having a reality shock while they're in Afghanistan," said Ramirez. "Working in a hospital is different from working in the field."

Another crucial part of the training was the Forward Resuscitative Surgical System.

The FRSS is a mobile unit capable of any surgical process needed on the battle field. "The FRSS takes us to a whole other level," said Ramirez. "It can go where nothing else can. We're able to do so much more with the FRSS, and we have no restrictions to our capabilities."

Photo by Pfc. Franklin E. Mercado

Corpsmen with 2nd Medical Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, lift a simulated casualty during a field exercise at Landing Zone Robin aboard Camp Lejeune, N.C., Jan. 28, 2011. The purpose of the exercise was to familiarize corpsman with their job in the field and other things they would encounter while on a patrol, which could include providing security, searching the area for improvised explosive devices in addition to tending to victims in a field environment.

As the exercise drew to a close, the battalion showed improvement, explained Ramirez.

"This is where you need to ask question and learn the things you're not good at quite yet, and these guys are doing all that," said Ramirez.

As Marines train hard to stay in the fight, sailors with 2nd Med Bn. are training to make sure they are at their side, ready to provide assistance in the field, whether it be medically or standing tall with their comrades in battle.

Devil docs keep devil dogs from burning up

Lance Cpl. Bruno J. Bego
2nd MLG Public Affairs

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. – Wherever Marines go, an equally formidable group of warriors known as Navy corpsmen are at their side; committed to maintaining their counterparts' health and saving their lives.

Corpsmen, with the Combined Aid Station, 2nd Marines Logistics Group (Forward), are responsible for making sure Marines and sailors within the unit are healthy and ready to deploy.

A large part of this task in ensuring medical records is up to date and complete.

"We have it set up like an assembly line so everyone has a task and a job they do," explained Petty Officer 1st Class Brian A. Carr, an independent duty corpsman with the CAS, 2nd MLG (FWD). "Once we get through the initial flood of patients, we have to go back and enter it all in the system to make sure we keep a record for future reference."

During their normal routine, the "docs" care for patients, and provide them with necessary shots and medicines to protect them from the life-threatning health hazards of Afghanistan.

Once the Group arrives in Afghanistan, new challenges may arise for the medical crew comprised of only 21 sailors.

"The biggest challenge, I think, will be a sailor in the desert among a sea of Marines, but the sailors I work with love working with Marines," Carr explained. "They are the perfect patients, they are more active than the general public, therefore they are healthier than our civilian counterparts."

"Plus, it's also a lot of fun to make fun of them as well," he joked.

High morale is an expectation, but in the long term the crew is looking forward to having a successful deployment.

"I expect to return with all the Marines and sailors of the unit, and I hope they have a good experience in Afghanistan," Carr said. "I have been told that it's not a job, it's an adventure."

With a year-long tour ahead, the sailors are ready to take care of any situation that may arise as they settle in Afghanistan's Helmand Province.

"Our main mission is to make sure our Marines and sailors are in good health and ready to accomplish the mission," said Seaman Apprentice Jeffrey C. Ford, a corpsman with the CAS, 2nd MLG (FWD).

Volunteer Effort

Sailors assist Onslow pregnancy center

Petty Officer 2nd Class Jimmey Gonzalez and Petty Officer 1st Class Barry B. Goode, both hospitalmen with Combat Logistics Regiment 27, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, pose for a photo aboard Camp Lejeune, N.C., Jan. 27, 2011. Gonzalez and Goode, along with fellow sailors, collected more than 3,000 diapers to donate to the local Onslow County Pregnancy Center. Sailors across the 2nd MLG donated the diapers from Jan. 12-26.

Photo by Lance Cpl. Bruno J. Bego

SURVIVOR,

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traumatic brain injury, he has trouble with his speech at times and is still defensive when he hears sounds similar to shots. Regardless, he and his new wife continue to keep their eyes on the future, taking it one day at a time. In true Marine fashion, however, the close brush with death has not deterred him from wanting to head back to the fight, for his fellow brothers in arms.

"I don't want to be that guy who watches his buddies come and go every deployment," explains Landers. "If they clear me to go again, I'd go."

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