

Chapter 8 - Simply a Servant

Noah (Fall 2001, "Clear")

Challenge the spirit to a test,
Find light amidst the darkness,
Seek refuge in the storm,
Dare to be different;
BE Here Now (BHN)!
With discipline and focus,
I open the floodgates of my mind,
Hoist my conscience as a lightening rod,
Drawing in and accepting all ideas.
My education begins now.

Arnett Mace (UGA Provost)

Noah continues to have a profound impact on everyone he touched. He is a shining example to members of the university community... I take time each day to reflect on his impact while he was here. I think of his courage, his leadership and devotion to his country. I think of him each time I watch television, each time I read the news, and each time I hear someone say, "I am entitled." And yes, I think of him in Sanford Stadium.

After 9/11/01, all of our lives, slowly got back on track, but with the increased work load as captain of the cheerleaders, as a leader scholar, and cheerleading instructor and sometime assistant fence builder, during the fall of 2001, Noah was engaged in meeting the demands of a tightly packed schedule. However, instead of feeling overwhelmed, no matter the weather or conditions, Noah was sailing smoothly across the multi-faceted waters of UGA life. We didn't see him a whole lot, but when we did, he was strong and self-assured. Talk about focus! The terrorists had not put out his eyes, but rather opened them. We'd all read and discussed Osama bin Laden's statement, "In today's wars, there are no morals. We believe the worst thieves in the world today and the worst terrorists are the Americans. We do not have to differentiate between military or civilian. As far as we are concerned, they are all targets." That did it for Noah; our boy had spent enough time careening off in the wrong directions, wandering in the desert, and now that his world had changed so profoundly, he was determined to plot his course carefully to do his part to promote all that is great about America. Every mistake he had made became a tool he used to refine his perspective. The trials of his past quickly became shiny lessons that he used to hone his leadership skills. He was visibly stronger and more confident in his emerging value system, looking sharp; however, along with New York City and the rest of the country, the ashes were still smoldering.

Journal # 10

I am still thinking about September 11th. I cannot seem to get it off my mind. I have so many questions running through my head. Are we going to war? If so, how long will it last? Will the draft be reinstated? Is this war going to be fought in foreign lands or will it be fought here? I am a little frightened because I am 20 years old and will graduate before too long. I have only lived through one war. The Gulf War doesn't really seem to count because it affected very few

Americans' lives. Now, we already have 5,000 dead or missing (original estimates). It scares me that this war could be fought on our own ground. I feel compelled to serve my country at some point in my life. I have no idea right now in what way, but in whatever way occurs, I know I will be proud to aid in the defense of our safety and freedom. God Bless America!

Opening wide the windows of his soul, Noah put his palms together, turned his powerful search beams inward and outward, a watchful, vigilant, servant-leader, he sought the narrow door to his destiny. He understood that each step took him closer to his goal, and he knew there would be greater responsibility; yet, he carefully began to march forward, looking for the furrow in which to plant his considerable influence. He came home one weekend *without* his laundry and shared his ideas with his mom and dad. Framing his words carefully, he used his favorite quote of the time, *"If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem. Mom and Dad, I'm thinking about ROTC."*

Brian Nealey (GHS wrestler)

I remember when I was starting wrestling "cold turkey." If I ever had a question about a wrestling move, Noah would take the time to explain and work on it. About the war in Iraq, I think it was Noah's instinct, just as in wrestling, to counteract your opponent when acted upon. 9/11 struck a nerve with Noah, and Noah had to do something about it.

That weekend, Rick thought he had talked Noah away from ROTC with, "Son, you are going to contribute with your mind!" Lucy warned, "You're too far along in your studies. They'll never let you in. You'll be up against people who have been in ROTC since high school." Yet, we all wondered about all of our children because 9/11 *had* struck a nerve with all Americans. None of us could sleep well any more, as we all struggled with the sounds and images etched in our minds and hearts of firefighters, policeman, and EMT's rushing into the cataclysm of the world's greatest man-made disaster, covered with soot, exhausted from the heat and the sheer magnitude of the suffering. Juxtaposed with the horror were the snapshots of respect and honor from the make shift memorials and tributes that sprang up all around the world. Many Georgia Bulldogs kept seeing a giant American flag flying high as it streamed into Sanford Stadium, Old Glory held aloft in Noah's strong arms.

Hit by the same lightening, Americans came together as one, remembering the privilege it is to have been born in a country where freedom of thought is a right. All of us knew we were floating on the first wave of a paradigm shift. Our lives had forever changed, but none of us understood how deeply because the dust had not settled and we couldn't see what was coming. In high school and with his college friends, Noah had been the defender, the beast who could break up fights, always protecting the weak; he wasn't used to the role of witness. He had been fed democracy and brotherhood all his life and he'd grown to be an American Champion, proud to carry the banner of America; like many who had come before him, he was determined to head right to the center of the action.

Thomas Paine: December 1776 (from: *The Crisis*)

THESE are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain

too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated.

Although we didn't fully comprehend how profoundly heritage had resonated with him, like all Americans who trace their roots, Noah always understood that he comes from a long line of citizen-warriors who answered when Mother Liberty called and were proud to become the guardians of security, the kind of men who would not have let bin Laden get away with calling American troops "Paper Tigers." Noah had often talked about weapons with his ex-marine Dad and brother-in-law Bill who served in the 7th I.D., and he'd heard about Lucy's Clemson University college professor/grandfather, Pop Glenn, who died prematurely because he lost a lung during WWI, and of course, he'd talked to Clemson Tiger, Pop Pop about what it was like to cross the Atlantic with 20,000 soldiers on the *Queen Mary* and "live" in a foxhole in Alsace Lorraine, France during WWII. After the war, Pop Pop was actually stationed at Dacau, the notorious Nazi death camp to help provide security for the war crimes trials. Although he never met him, Noah had been curious about Rick's dad. Because Arthur Harris had polio as a child, he couldn't qualify for the infantry, but after Pearl Harbor, Grandfather Arthur stood up for America and took a desk job to provide support in the Army. Of course, Noah knew about Lucy's, Uncle Johnny who lost his life after first being torpedoed in the channel crossing and then killed by a mortar at Port St. Nazarre, France in the months following D-Day when he volunteered for a special mission. As a little boy, Noah relished each retelling of one of his Dad's missions in Viet Nam during which Rick had been miraculously shielded from the encircling spray of a machine gun in an ambush south of Da Nang. His Uncle Stu, the family genealogist, could spin tales about Pop Pop's great-great-great grandfather, Andrew Ellsworth Glenn who migrated from County Glenaron, Northern Ireland in 1776, just in time to become a colonial fighter in the Revolutionary War. Noah saw the brass plate dedicated to one of Rick's relatives, George Washington Green who served in the Gwinnett Artillery, 9th GA Bn. during the Civil War, and Rick's dear friend Doug Langston often wore his Ranger fatigues as he rocked Noah to sleep. We should have understood, yet, none of us got it; Noah had been imprinted with the super-intelligent courage of the millions who consciously chose to over ride the impulse of self-preservation and stand by country and community. Osama bin Laden's words were echoing ominously from every television, but we just saw our beautiful son, glowing with paternal love for America. All the history lessons came alive, and to Noah it was a time no different than the ones faced by George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Noah saw the smoking evidence that we had become engaged by war, and like Lincoln, he knew that it would test the endurance of our unity.

Uncle Po Po (Times Courier, 1/10/02)

It was a deed so terrible, that no true American will ever forget it.

Yet, all around him, Noah saw flags and "United We Stand" bumper stickers. Americans of good will were scrambling to demonstrate solidarity with the values that built this nation. In Ellijay, a spontaneous celebration of patriotism was brewing, a huge community-wide project with Mom, Dad, Uncle Popo and his GHS family right in the middle of it.

Al Summers (Times Courier, “Gilmer, New York Unity Day Big Success”, 1/17/02)

What started out as a show of concern by some Gilmer High School students for some students in New York City... blossomed into Gilmer County – New York City Unity Day, held in Ellijay on Friday, Jan. 11... Jim Glenn (Uncle Po Po), PTA vice-president for P.S. 140, and his daughter Sophie, a student at the school, along with New York City fire fighters Tom Ryan and Frank Sweeney, were in town to dedicate a flag to GHS. The flag is now part of American history, having been the one flying in front of Ryan’s and Sweeney’s fire station on September 11, 2001. The station, home to Engine 3, Ladder 12, Battalion 7, lost five firefighters on September 11... the exchange between the schools snowballed into the “flag’s proud journey” (from the fire station, to PS 140, to its final resting place enshrined in the GHS commons area) when a former school counselor turned New York City firefighter arranged obtaining the flag from Battalion 7... soon (Uncle Po Po, Cousin Sophie, Frank, and Tom) were winging their way to Georgia. Sweeney said, “The image I remember the most about that day is watching people jump to their deaths. I even saw two people holding hands. That’s tough to remember.” Both Sweeney and Ryan said, “This is a small town with a very big heart.” (At the flag retirement ceremony) Gilmer County Fire Chief, Gary Watkins led a solemn procession, flanked by the New York firemen.

In Memoriam to the Fallen Fire Fighters of Battalion 7 (GHS Commons Area)

Battalion Chief, Orio Palmer; Chief’s Aid, Steven Belson; Lt. Phillip Petti; Firefighter, Michael Mullan; Firefighter, Angel Juarbe

Jennifer Evans Parris (Ellijay, GA)

...In everything that we do in Ellijay I feel that Noah is near. My most favorite memory of Noah is when the Firefighters from 9/11 came to town and we had the beautiful service for them on the town square. Noah was there with his beautiful smile and he and I talked for awhile and as long as I live, I will always cherish that time we spent together. Noah you will never know what you mean to me-you are my HERO.

Ledger-Enquirer.com – June 26, 2005.

“He knew that for humanity to prosper, people need to be provided the kind of freedom... he’s been given all his life,” said his mother, Lucy Harris.

Mom – Emerging Servant

We all kept praying for all the brave young men and women who found themselves as part of the offensive that finally began on October 7, 2001. Surely it was going to be the fight of their lives. It was a tense time for everyone, and Noah redoubled his fearless personal inventory. He was determined to live up to his highest potential and become the kind of citizen-leader that the founders of our nation had envisioned. I remember batting ideas back and forth with Noah as he struggled to figure out what he was going to do with his life. When he found out that he would be interning in Washington during the summer of 2002, we had an inquiring discussion about his style of leadership. I remember his explanation of servant-leadership. *“I will be a bottom feeder; face to face, listening and believing in everyone.”* I remember asking him what that meant to him, and he said, *“It means I will never ask anyone to do something that I am unwilling to do myself. I’m going to work with my people.”*

The conversation meandered back through his list of career prospects, and when he wondered if he might be missing his golden opportunity with ROTC, I playfully said, “I thought you and Mark Needle (UGA Hairy Dog Mascot and good buddy) were going to California to become actors. Besides, the word is that as the mother of an only son, I could make it pretty tough for

you to get in.” He laughed and winked at me, *“You wouldn’t do that now would ya Momma? Try to steal my dream?”* I knew he was still fuming about 9/11 and the airwaves were crowded with cruel stories about al Qaeda and the Taliban. We were shocked when we learned that women were forced to cover themselves from head to toe with burkas, and that inhabitants of Afghanistan were sometimes subjected to witnessing the horror of the soccer stadium/execution arena. Publicly, women could be stoned to death for the capital offense of adultery, but also for singing, painting portraits, going outside, or asking for work. It was awful, but I thought Noah had abandoned the military idea because he had already started lining up his after college job with Gene Anderson at High Woods Properties. He thought it would be the perfect place to build his business acumen and his finances and start heading in the direction of politics. He loved his major, real estate, and earned high marks in most of the classes. It was no surprise Noah could see himself developing the mountains in the *right* way; he felt everyone could have a beautiful view while preserving and enhancing Mother Nature. Still, I was proud that he had considered the idea of swearing an oath to protect and defend his community. During sleepless nights I wondered, “How could I let him do that?” and the voice of my conscience was always the same, “How could I not do my part to empower him to stand up for this country, this community, and the friends he loved so well?”

Just a week after Christmas break, he came home to talk, *“Mom, Dad, sit down. I have something to tell you.”* He’d made his decision, and he wasn’t asking for advice. His career had become his country, and if they would have him, he was determined to learn everything he could about being an officer from the Bulldog ROTC program. His ashes had cooled into hard resolve, and like the phoenix, Noah was rising to defend the Constitution of the United States of America against any and all forces that threaten to destroy the grand principle of democracy. The invisible hand beckoned and pointed him in a new direction.

President George Bush - State of the Union 2008

As Franklin Roosevelt once reminded Americans, "Each age is a dream that is dying, or one that is coming to birth." And we live in the country where the biggest dreams are born. The abolition of slavery was only a dream -- until it was fulfilled. The liberation of Europe from fascism was only a dream -- until it was achieved. The fall of imperial communism was only a dream -- until, one day, it was accomplished. Our generation has dreams of its own, and we also go forward with confidence. The road of Providence is uneven and unpredictable -- yet we know where it leads: It leads to freedom.

After we adjusted to his firm determination to go Army, Rick and I were 110% behind him. We listened with amazement and pride as he told the story of how he walked across the UGA campus and asked how he would go about getting into ROTC. Good thing Rick had raised him to be persistent because they told him his chances were very slim. Perhaps spurred by leadership studies, or the desire to protect the innocence of his soccer team, or the caricature images of shouting crowds burning American flags, Saddam Hussein firing a gun off of an ornate balcony, Noah just kept coming back and knocking on the narrow door. With no experience, all he had on his side were volition and commitment. I asked him, “What did you say,” he laughed and flexed his broad shoulders, *“I told them, you know you want a piece of this.”* Colonel Diehl finally gave him an interview, and as he tells the story, they were trying to let him down gently because he

was just too close to graduation to get in. That's when he took his shot, "*Aw, come on! You know you can squeeze me in. What's it gonna take?*"

"Well, you'd have had to have accomplished something really big."

"*Uh, like what?*"

"Well, maybe like the scholar athlete or intern in Washington."

Noah said that's when he breathed a big, "*Phew,*" started laughing and said, "*I just completed arrangements to intern with the Honorable Nathan Deal this summer, and if you'll give me an application, I'll write on it that I was the 1999 Scholar Athlete of the State of Georgia. Will that do?*"

Georgia Sen. Saxby Chambliss (June 23, 2005, United States Congress)

Noah persisted until he was allowed to join the ROTC. You see, Noah believed passionately that there are no exemptions from the cost of freedom. A personal longing to promote liberty and help the Iraqi people who had long suffered under Saddam Hussein were a constant theme in Noah's letters home to his family and friends, but ever humble, Noah shrugged off the gravity of his commitment adopting the simple mantra, "I do what I can" in response to being called a hero. Noah's vision and passion to achieve a greater good for the people of Iraq is an excellent model for those who come after him to continue the fight against freedom's foes.

Although he would not officially start ROTC until the fall of 2002, from a carefully measured distance, his friends started to call him "Captain Sunshine." To them, Noah was the kind of person who was always trying to get people together, to sit down and "work things out." He was the guy who wanted to carry people to the proven channels that lead to higher ground and safety. As Grandma Geri would have said, his decision to go Army "threw them for a loop." Some of them actually told him they thought he had lost his mind. They just couldn't see their good buddy in the military, but Noah believed he was joining the effort to build a bridge over troubled waters, one that led to a more positive future for everyone. He believed so strongly in what he was doing, he was willing to overcome the fear in his own heart and possibly sacrifice his potential for ours. He started up the arm chair discussions again, because he knew the Big Dawg, Rick would be able to troubleshoot this new environment. Noah had always heard, "You don't know what you don't know." He was eager to learn, he was eager to serve, and he soon found out that he was not alone in his decision. There were others who answered the call.

Mark Henderson (Father of Lt. Ashley Henderson Hough, newspaper?)

Mark Henderson said his daughter chose military service after watching the 9/11 terrorist attacks on television at the Sigma Kappa sorority house (UGA), where she was a member. "She was very proud of her service, but you never would have thought she was in the military," Mark Henderson said. "Her sorority had all these Southern belles, and then she'd walk in (in camouflage) and face paint."

D.C. Baby! (Summer 2002)

The country had recovered from the initial shock of attack and America's rapid response. We had settled down to a steady simmer of righteous determination. Hamid Karzai had been chosen

by Afghanistan's Loya Jirga (leaders meeting) to lead his country into self-governance, and both the Taliban and bin Laden were on the run. For Noah, it was the culminating point of a momentous year for him and his country. He was standing at the threshold of a future of service to America, strongly committed to the military. To be headed for an internship in Washington, D.C. seemed miraculously appropriate. It was the first time he drove all by himself to a new apartment and unpacked all by himself 800 miles away. He was so excited when he called to say that he had gotten in; he was two blocks from the Capitol. When he went for his daily run, he ran through the monuments we see on news shots of Washington, and he regularly sat in the front row, listening to people he considered to be the heroes of America as they plotted America's course of action. It was total political emersion at an epic point in U.S. history, and Noah was enthralled to be participating; he watched C-SPAN as he plied his verbal skills all day, writing letters and answering phone calls from Georgia constituents. He had great admiration for Representative Deal's work ethic, "*He is all about doing the peoples' business. 24/7, he's at it and he never seeks attention or praise. It's awesome.*"

Noah ("On the National Mall")

No I. Remember always I am actively living God's plan for me. Everything is happening just exactly as God intends. Balance is the key. I try too hard often times which throws me off balance. Be the best I can be in each moment, accountable and balanced. Free! Lying on the ground nothing on my mind... Tell you this day is one of a kind....

U.S. Congressman Nathan Deal (Congressional Record, June 29, 2005)

...I first met Noah several years ago when he served as an intern in my Washington office. I had been told that he was someone special, and after meeting him, I certainly knew that to be true... To be a friend to people from all walks of life, to excel in everything he undertook, to dare to dream big dreams takes someone special... His courage, his self-discipline, and his compassion should be a standard for us all...

A happy side effect of the internship was that he spent time renewing his family ties. Due to the tight schedule challenges of his high school and collegiate years, Noah hadn't seen many of his northern relatives since he was a kid. In addition to visiting with Uncle Po Po and Aunt Kathy in NYC, he traveled to Delaware to hang out with Aunt Betsy and Uncle Stu in Newark. His cousin Katy remembers that they stayed up talking all night long, just like old friends. From what we've been told, every other spare minute, he spent with his other Aunt Kathy, Uncle Bucky, and Brian out at "the farm" in Oakton, VA.

Cousin Brian (Washington, D.C., best friends during Noah's internship with the Honorable Nathan Deal, Summer 2002)

I got close with Noah in 1996 when my grandmother fell ill. I went to Georgia a few times to see her and while there spent a lot of time with Noah. We slept in the family room and would stay up all night giggling and laughing and talking about nonsense. I was 21 and he was 16. I didn't have a younger sibling growing up and I imagined that this is what it felt like. It was great... and Noah was a great younger brother to have.

Over the next few years our contact diminished so I was a little unsure when I found out he was coming to live in DC for the summer. Last time I saw him he was a goofy, skinny teenager with an afro top and grunge clothing... I planned to meet him and my parents out for dinner in Georgetown. I called my mom to confirm plans and I asked how Noah was. Her only response

was, "Just wait until you see him." Well, I was floored. I walked into the restaurant and was confused as to why this *massive*, military looking gentleman was sitting with my parents. It was only when he lifted his hazel eyes that I realized, my little brother had become a tough looking man! He was very intimidating and I wasn't sure if we would have the same type of relationship. Well, throughout dinner it became apparent that he was the same kind hearted compassionate soul, with the goofy sense of humor I had loved so much.

As we sat there, another thing became apparent as well. This kid could eat! He finished his meal, part of mine, part of my mother's and ordered some more. Noah spent many, many nights at my apartment with me and I always had to be sure I had food. Usually it was never enough, but luckily I lived next to a convenience store, so we were there quite often to feed this beast!! One morning we woke up to go to brunch and on the way there he had to stop and get a Slim Fast shake because he was so hungry he couldn't wait. Mind you he had half a large pizza around 2am after we went to a huge Mexican dinner.

That first night we had dinner, we planned for him to stay with me and I would show him a bit of downtown. He was a couple weeks shy of his 21st birthday but... All of my friends immediately loved him and he was so fun to have around. He was so innocent and green, and coming from the mountains of Georgia; he was amazed by the city life, but fit quite well into it. One thing I loved about Noah was that whenever I took him anywhere, he didn't need any hand holding. He was always pleasant, accepting, and upbeat to any and all of my friends who came from various backgrounds and upbringings.

Noah and I both had a love for New York City... so one weekend we flew up there together. He didn't have a walkman so I offered to share an earpiece with him. There we were, 30,000 feet above the ground, still giggling and laughing like kids, each with a small headphone in one ear. At first we had the flight attendant in stitches, but soon she realized we were far too much to handle and she quickly left us alone... Noah spent most of his time with me and my friends... It was wonderful.

Allen Fox of Gainesville, GA

Noah was someone that you are blessed to come across once in a lifetime. While I only spent a summer with him in Washington interning for Congressman Nathan Deal, he made a lasting impact on my life...such an energetic personality...welcoming to everyone he came across...wise beyond his years...I can remember his words about serving something greater than yourself.

Rick and I didn't hear from him much because he was so busy, and he was stretching his wings out in the big, wide world, bouncing his ideas off of everyone who would listen. He had opened new doors and avenues of possibility of what life has to offer someone who is young and willing to work hard. I thought the city high life might have made him regret his decision about military service; maybe his experiences might have turned him back toward "suit and tie" leadership rather than his "bottom feeding." However, he came back even more determined than ever to fulfill his leadership through ILA, through his fraternity, and through ROTC.

Noah (From his 2page daily affirmation, Fall Semester 2002)

...I accept that there will always be an ideal to guide me, yet it will not make me anxious or impatient because I know that I am perfect in this present moment. Through empowerment and humility, I am one with my path and my higher Self. I let go of all ego agendas that attempt to control my destiny. I fly the path of life effortlessly and confidently to my true destination. I have

perfect, unconditional faith in God. I will make the world a better place. I am full of energy, vitality, happiness, and have a positive attitude from the moment I wake up until I fall asleep.

As the UGA cheer department only offered three years of eligibility, Noah was no longer a cheerleader. Before 9/11, he had planned to focus on ILA, to graduate on time, to sleep until 7am, and to go to games and sit in the student section as a civilian for the sheer fun of it. Noah went to the games, but his new schedule was even more packed than ever and he conceded that he would have to add an extra semester to squeeze in the requirements of his new mission. Of course, we continued the 5am wake up calls, but there was a noticeable change. When I dialed his number, he answered on the first ring and was usually already up and cooking; our conversations were filled with winsome good cheer. He'd answer the phone on the first ring, "Wazzup Mama?"

"You are my sunshine, my only sunshine. You make me happy when skies are gray!"

"Hang on, I'm making my green tea. I'm gonna catch a few quiet moments of meditation before P.T."

"I'm so proud of you."

"I do what I can. Hey, do you know what I did with my black suit? I'm setting up some extra visits to Highwoods."

"I'll check with your dad."

"YMETM, Baby."

Then, he'd head off to training, class, jobs, real estate internships, and volunteer work. If he had any spare time left over, he'd go work out at a full contact gym which was all right as long as he covered his poor nose. His heart was leading him, brimming with passion and full of purpose, and he loved every minute of ROTC because each moment spent made him feel more prepared. He'd call and report, *"I'm learning how to march, and I volunteered to serve on the honor guard, so I'll get a lot of practice. It's pretty cool. Find that nice suit yet?"*

Frank Farrell (Highwoods Properties)

We spent an afternoon driving properties when Noah interned at Highwoods (with mentor, Gene Anderson). That evening I told my wife about Noah and what an impressive young man he was. Being the son of a career soldier, I was very interested in Noah's decision to serve his country in her hour of need.

Kym (Rick's daughter, Noah's older half-sister)

I remember the night like it was yesterday. Noah called mid week and mentioned that he would be spending a day shadowing/interning at a company in Atlanta on Monday and wondered if he could spend the night on Sunday. He came down early on Sunday and hung out with the family. We ate dinner and he played with the girls, *Connect 4* with Alyssa and some wrestling/tickling with Hailey. Since it was a school night, the girls went to bed and Noah and I stayed up talking. We ended up in a pile of stuffed animals on Hailey's twin bed with our heads at opposite ends,

continuing to talk for hours. Life, our purpose, relationships, family, work, and more... I remember when it got really late we decided it was a good idea to get some sleep, especially since he wanted to make a good impression the next day. He told me that he was so glad that we were part of each other's lives and that he was sorry we hadn't grown up together. We hugged and I remember telling him that even though we didn't have the bond of growing up in the same house, "You will *always* be my little brother. We have the rest of our lives together." I went to bed that night thinking that I was so lucky to have Noah as my brother. The next morning he was up early and I had to help him with his tie. Something happened to one of his contacts, and he ended up having to wear his glasses and he wasn't thrilled about it. But, he looked great, was confident. I sent him on his way with a bagel and some juice.

James Linck (Real Estate, "Recalling the Life of Lt. Noah Harris" by Mary Kay Mitchell, NPR archives)
Noah always had a smile on his face. He was an optimist, always on to the next thing.

For having come from sweats, jeans, and khaki beginnings, Noah was suddenly always polished when out in public; and with ROTC, he had to maintain so much gear. He slowly began to trade his t-shirts for his new look. One weekend, he came home so that his dad could help him get organized for his first field exercise. That's when it really hit me that he was actually going into the army. His transition from civilian to warrior happened so quickly that I always had in the back of mind that it was just a dream, and I might wake up kind of like I hoped about 9/11.

Sean Kirk

In the spring of 2003, I was a graduate student in the MBA program at Terry. I soon discovered that my sometimes weight lifting partner at the Ramsey center was also one of my students (as I was a graduate assistant). Noah struck me as a young man of great integrity. He stood out amongst his peers. When Noah informed me that he was in the military and approaching graduation, I was touched by his determination and desire to serve. I gave him my contact information and promised him a job when he got out of the Army.

When he showed me what he looked like turned out in all his gear, I felt my heart beat with joy because, his new suit of clothes fit him just right. I knew I had lost my son to his destiny the next weekend when he went on maneuvers. It was 40 degrees and rainy and they were up in the mountains not too far from home. I worried with every rain drop the wind drove against my roof because I knew that he was out there in it. When he got back, I was giggling to myself when I asked, "Well, what do you think of the Army now?" He answered, "*It's awesome Mom. I had so much fun.*"

"How did you sleep in that weather?"

"We really didn't have time for that."

"Oh. Well, how did you keep warm and dry?"

"It was so cool. I found a tree pretty nearly perpendicular to the ground, and I leaned up against it and stuck my head down inside my poncho. Kind of made a tent. It was great. I loved it."

Todd South (Red and Black, June 23, 2005)

In the classroom, athletics, ROTC, and his fraternity he set an example for others to follow. "I've

never seen anyone able to bring people together so well,” said Matt Redman a friend and former ROTC cadet with Noah. “He could turn individuals into a team and a team into a group of friends.”

From then on, I started thinking of his military experience as Noah’s magical, leadership destiny tour. He'd found an outlet for his energetic philanthropic spirit, and he was always surrounded by an entourage of jaunty, jubilant friends. He would send home pictures of him and his new ROTC buddies shaving each others’ heads, painting green and black camo on their faces for a Ranger Challenge event, or spit and polished and looking “hot” in their dress greens. They called each other by last name, Harris, Cave, Davis, Knight, Pittam, Henderson, and Redmond. In all of the pictures they just looked like the best of the best of the best. After the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, Noah and his friends began to prepare for officer's basic training, and by the end of the semester, he was counting the days until National Leadership Camp. He was a little nervous about what to expect, but he couldn’t wait!

1Lt. Andrew Artis (Charleston, SC)

I met Noah on the plane to Ft. Lewis for Advanced Camp... What first struck me about Noah was how genuine he was and motivated to do well. We swapped advice and our game plan on how to accomplish the tasks ahead of us. I was pretty nervous about what we were about to commit ourselves to, but his confidence was reassuring. We ended up in the same regiment and he excelled, setting an example for all of us. I remember seeing him at graduation as the honor graduate for the Regiment.

When he got to the Fort, it took him a couple of days to qualify for the opportunity to stand in line for the phone. Noah said we wouldn’t hear from him much because if he had to choose between talking on the phone and eating, food was going to win. He chuckled, “*Feel free to send lots of food bars and protein just in case I get hungry. I think this is going to be good for me.*”

Noah (Letter from Ft. Lewis)

Dear Mom and Dad,

It is 3:15 am the first night and I am on fire watch. I have to wake everyone else up at 4 and the day begins. In such situations, I find it best to leave my mind and thought out of it. No judgment passed, Just Do It! Some repetition on some positives is good, and a lot of prayer helps. This is a great experience for me. I have always wanted to be tougher. Well, here is my chance. The first thing I must let go of is my attachment to sleep and comfort. That is something I have wanted to be done with for a long time. This is my opportunity.

I must admit, I was a little nervous yesterday, kind of like going to wrestling camp that first time in sixth grade. That was because I was passing judgment and having expectations (i.e. – not being in the present moment - Be Here Now, BHN). Another improvement I wish to keep working on. I am thankful for the nervous energy, which I am to overcome. It is a little reminder of how good I have it at home, also a challenge for me to overcome.

The members of the cadre here really want us to learn and benefit from living out here. I am very motivated to learn as much as I can. I want to get in the habit of being an early riser and not “needing” lots of sleep to function. Also, I am learning that my opinion of a task and how I feel about it are irrelevant; it is all a matter of doing the task diligently and to the best of my ability with a positive attitude.

Dad, I am glad I brought your book; I feel it is relevant to the situation I am in now. By the way! Happy Father's Day! I am so grateful I have parents like y'all. I have been blessed, truly blessed; for that I am thankful. This camp is a blessing and God continues to put blessings in my life each moment. I noticed it before, but never realized how much of the pain and suffering that people go through is their own creation. They allow themselves to be susceptible to their own negativity. It is a conscious choice. It is all in the head.

It is now 15:45 pm – to continue my letter of this morning. I am about to go to chow and finish my second day. 30 to go. I miss you and love you. YMETM and 13 Hugs. With all my love, Noah

Homemade Scrapbook Birthday card from Mom and Dad - to Noah at Ft. Lewis:

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to the Greatest JOY of a Mom and Dad's Life. We are so glad you are having a wonderful time. Like Dad says, you've got to follow your bliss.

SON, The moment you were born (high noon June) was the beginning of something wonder-for-us, YOUR LIFE! Before that moment, we were just wayward travelers, floating along the lazy River of Experience. Your birth was like a ray of dazzling sunlight splitting a wall of fog and clouds. Literally, you gave our lives MEANING!

You brought numbers – June 25 and #27 Forever!

You brought words – Crossface, Garlic Fart, Night Train, Doughnuts, DAWG, Cupie, and LEADERSHIP!

You brought emotions – joy, patience, pride, and boundless love.

You bring poetry – *“Follow the path, not from duct to cheek, but from knife through the heart.”*

You bring surprises – Crayfish, 335 P.T., ROTC, the Dean's List, being tossed in the air, your career choice! But, it is so important that you are captivated by your job; it's got to be something that your eyes, ears, body, heart, mind, and soul can get into. Money can always be made on the side, but your 100,000 hours (average work life) can never be bought back. We think you've got a winner!

You are beyond a doubt, a TRUE GENTLEMAN and a Champion! We know you are out there representing for Harris Road, and we shore gone celebrate when you get home!

All our love, Lucy and Rick

You are my hero... WAMH, Dad

P.S. We heard from this nice Lady, Marty Horn (Terry College/UGA); she was calling you because her son Tre is joining ROTC, and she wanted reassurance from you. Dad talked to her and answered her questions; and then she went off on what a special person you are. It is such a blessing to be your parent (We try not to let it go to our heads; but if we had buttons on our shirts, they'd be popping off because our hearts are swelling with joy – BGG “By the Grace of God”). Moms

Out of a group of about 600 cadet officers from around the country, including West Point, North Georgia, and other military academies, Noah was selected to be the COT (Commander of Troops) on graduation day. He was the *one* who marched the regiment of troops by the commanding officers of the base. My sweet little flower child had come so far in such a short period of time. I no longer expected or wanted him to wash out. I stood back and got ready to cheer, just like in 10th grade when he picked up the fumble and ran for the goal line. Noah had a clear shot on his true destiny and he went for it in his IDWIC way. When we asked him how it was possible that he could have done so well, he said, *“Well, I had to make above a certain score on each test, from P.T. to the rifle range, and my platoon won a lot of events. I think they liked me asking a lot of questions. There was a lot of stuff I didn’t know, so I had to ask about everything. Maybe they liked my can opener.”*

1LT. Graham Genrich (Amherst, NY)

As Noah and I went through National Advanced Leadership Camp together we always talked about what we wanted to do once we were commissioned as officers. Our minds changed, but by the time we graduated, he knew what he wanted - and I remember him saying to me with a smile, *“Leading troops into battle Genrich, how awesome does that sound?”*

Noah After Ft Lewis 2003 Fall semester:

I am a warrior and I will live as such. I answer to my higher power and a higher purpose. NALC camp challenged me and what I have realized is that I like to be challenged. I think I am improved in character and integrity. Doing the right thing. Doing something with a positive attitude that no one else will do or wants to do. Be upstanding. A gentleman is equal to all emergencies, makes no man aware of his obscurities. Honor and morals. Think Atticus Finch and Dale Carnegie’s book. Sincerely care about other people. Honor is my touchstone. I am a man who holds honor sacred and with whom virtue is a safe posture. Speak ill of no man; don’t brag. Eliminate “I” from vocabulary.

The Lord is my guide and all that I am is a blessing from the Lord. It is okay to have fun, but only when the work is done.

Stephanie Mull

I have always asked myself what actually determines the essence of a man or woman... I too have felt that we all truly have a higher purpose in life and Noah knew this. He made the ultimate sacrifice and gave of himself. We should all take a leap of faith and do more for those around us, for those less fortunate, and for our country. Noah, you will never know the lives that have been touched.

Noah started his last semester in college self-assured in every area of his life. He was the executive officer of Bulldog ROTC, had control of his academics, was making good money building fences, and had moved into a new apartment complex. He was completely fit and operating at peak performance. No matter where he went, his servant leadership and love of humanity just seemed to expand.

Ben Bryant (Fort Drum, NY)

Noah and I went to UGA together and actually joined ROTC at the same time. He and I did the Ranger Challenge Team together, were in the same Regiment at Advanced Camp, and kept in touch through training and while he was overseas. Noah is an inspiration! He had an approach to life unlike any other. I

am a LT at 10th Mountain Division now, and I keep a set of Noah's dog tags in my vehicle, each time I hear them, I feel his presence and think of our times together. He taught me some lessons in life that have made me a better man, and a better soldier

Frog (Franklin Davenport - 1955 Georgia All State Football, GHS Football Hall of Fame, Gilmer School Board Member for many years, at the #27 jersey retirement ceremony)

Lucy, the last time I saw Noah was in 2003. I was trying to crank my weed eater, and I just couldn't do it. So, I walked across the highway to the gas station. Noah was there getting gas. Noah said, "*Hey Frog what' cha doing with that weed eater?*" I told him I was tryin' to get it crunk. So Noah said, "*Well, hand it over and let me see it. Maybe, I can do it.*" And he did; and then he asked me, "*What you gonna do now that it's cranked?*" I told him, 'I'm gonna weed eat my yard.' And Noah said, "*I think I'll take care of that for you.*" He mowed my yard, and that's the God's truth.

Rick and I were privileged to witness Noah's branch ceremony, during which each of the cadets all across the country finds out for which branch of the Army he or she has been selected. When they called out "Harris," we held our breath because there was no guarantee that the Army would give him what he wanted. When Noah heard the word "infantry," his face exploded with relief and exhilaration. It seemed like it just couldn't get any better.

Noah (ROTC, email "Hey Momma")

I maxed out the pt test 80 p.u.. (push up) 87 s.u.(sit up) and 12:26 2 mi. I still need Pop Pop's e-mail. I love you. Have a grrrrreat day. "It is only when I am afraid that I know I am courageous. Those who know no fear know not courage." Original quote - Noah Harris, YMETM

P.S. I know you always say before I can find the love I yearn for from the woman I desire, I must be the man that woman would desire. I will probably always step in puddles I have already stepped in, but I think I am really working on it. I will let go and let God answer all my questions while I sleep.

His only complaint was, try as he might, he just couldn't find his partner or for that matter even a nice woman to take out to dinner. He had always loved the company of women, but he had always told everyone he dated that he had a lot to do before he could get serious. He had long since recovered from the one that broke his heart, and I'll always pray the hearts he broke have recovered. He'd had so many wonderful girl friends, but now he'd hit a dry spell. When he would fuss about it, I told him, "Remember, you are only looking for one. The rest is practice." He sighed, "*I know, but it sure would be nice to find her.*" He'd wistfully folded this verse from *The Rubaiyat* by Omar Khayam:

Here with a loaf of bread beneath the bough,
A flask of wine, a book of verse – and thou,
Beside me singing in the wilderness –
and wilderness is paradise enough...

Noah (untitled)

*Who you are and how you look, I don't know.
Where you're from and where you're going I'm not sure.
Underneath the starry sky, you may sit as the wind blows.
I'm wishing on those same stars that our paths will cross,*

*When that day will come, God only knows.
I don't know you, but I am in love with you.
I haven't seen you, but I know you are beautiful.
Your voice I have not heard, but it is music to my ears.
I'll spend my days in search of you,
I'll spend my nights imagining your face,
Those arms of yours that I will call home,
Those eyes of yours that I so often will roam.
I know you're out there somewhere,
Maybe we've even met and I didn't recognize you.
But until we are together, until you're in my arms,
I'll spend my days searching, and when I find you, I'll be home.*

In early October, Noah told his dad that he had “...met someone to date.” I remember thinking I'd never heard that phrase before. Noah tried to make it sound casual, but over the next few weeks when he'd call and we'd ask about Ashley, he was either giddy or anxious. One time, she suddenly stopped returning his calls and it flipped his lid a little, so I suggested he go visit her. I thought it was odd when he said, “*I'm really busy, and I don't want to seem like a stalker.*” The next thing I knew, he was giggling like a little kid because after he had left her ten phone messages on her phone, he found out she had lost her phone, the only place she had his number. When she finally found it and heard all of his messages, she called him and they had a good laugh; he was sincerely relieved and she thought it was so cute. It's funny that they had never met because they had crossed tracks quite a few times at UGA. I still laugh when I think of how Noah described her over the phone in his best Bostonian accent (a la the movie *Good Will Hunting*), “*She's beautiful, she's funny, and she's wicked smart.*” After the one phone snafu, from what I understand, once they got together, they were never far apart.

Jennifer Kynerd Grayson

My first remembrance of Noah was when Ashley brought him over to our family's annual oyster roast. He was such a gentleman & I could tell that he was special. I saw how Ashley looked at him and right then & there I knew he was a wonderful man. I even remember Mr. Horace saying that Noah had stolen Ashley's heart! I saw how Ashley's eyes lit up around him. He fit right in at the oyster roast having a good time with everyone...on my wedding day...I got ready with my bridesmaids at my parents' house. Noah & Ashley came over to just hang out until the wedding. They were outside dancing around having a good time. I then remember at my wedding he wore his uniform. I was honored that a soldier in uniform was at my wedding...He gleamed that day....I was not sure if it was his pride of serving his country & getting to wear his dress uniform or the fact that he had Ashley on his side! I now know it was both!

Noah (“To Ashley”)

*Let's make this trip together,
A journey so fond.
No matter the weather,
We can strengthen our bond.
So much to live for,
A death sentence we keep.
Let's search for more,
Before we take the long sleep.*

*Let's share this beautiful fervor,
For it is all we possess.
To live as if regret were never.
Believe, let go, live in happiness.*

True happiness is finding your woman and your purpose in life in one year. He made it look so easy, but his mom and dad knew that just like the wrestling championship, it came as a result of years of struggle, loss, loneliness, and painful self-evaluation. He learned from experience that a miracle is an event that you pay for with blood, sweat, and tears; for despite his many successes, the boy had spent the first two years at UGA dealing with homesickness, and the next two on a quest to conquer feelings of loneliness and uncertainty about his career choice and future lifestyle. Suddenly, all the pieces seemed to fall in place and he had it all. Noah was truly happy! He lived the hero's lifestyle, and with his joyful exuberance for life shining from his heart, he never looked back.

Noah (11-29-03, soon to commission)

On this day the revolution began, the revolution of myself. I have seen the truth and am walking to it with head held high. I am defined. I am no longer ruled by emotion or fear. I am open to the universe and intuition. I am all that I want to be and more. I am self-reliant, courageous, and base no decision upon others' opinions. I believe in myself and have complete faith. I am the man standing strong on the edge of the precipice. I am a servant for God and country. In my servitude, I am truly free. The courage of my spirit will drive me when I lead from the front. I have guts. Guts will be a large part of my success, the gusto to stand up when no one else will. Christ said, "It will be done unto you as you believe." My way is the way of the warrior and I exemplify loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. I am organized and precise in thought and planning. I am focused and concentrate on conscious control of attention. The warrior is in a state of being manifested best through piety and sacrifice. All else is in the hands of God. Death before Dishonor. IDBIQ (I die before I quit).

Rick (The Commissioning Ceremony)

This was not the kind of morning I had anticipated. We stopped by Noah's apartment to help him with his dress uniform before the swearing-in ceremony, and I figured with the training he had received he would be "spit and polish" ready. He let us in his apartment which we had not seen, and we walked through the living room to his bedroom. One look and I knew that if any of his commanding officers were to get a look at his room, they'd probably put him in the brig. It was so messy and I said, "Noah, how are you going to do this?" but I thought, "Well, maybe the Army will help him get his laundry straight." Since there were no washer and dryer in this apartment, Noah had developed a unique system for dealing with the amount of dirty athletic clothes he generated daily. He'd hang them on chairs, lamps, door knobs, and bedposts so that they wouldn't ferment before he had a chance to wash them.

Anyway, that morning, we are standing knee deep in the center of this mess trying to get him dressed for the swearing in ceremony. This was a major big deal, graduating from college, ROTC, and being commissioned as an officer. He was trying to put on his dress uniform, and as it turned out he only had one patent leather dress shoe. Lucy suggested, "We could polish up your regular black shoes. Who is going to notice anyway?" The look that he gave her was his classic, "Silly Mommy." Quickly, I realized that this was not "spit and polish" military time, but

the continuing saga of the packed schedule/dirty bedroom/disorganization time. I started checking and soon found that he was missing several of the emblems he was supposed to have on the lapels of his uniform. After a fast phone call, Noah informed us that his shoe was at Ashley's house. I cocked my head a little to the right and the corner of my mouth started doing the pre-Armageddon twitch. Time was getting very short.

Noah hauled out of there double time to get his shoe. As it turned out, the shoe had fallen into a laundry basket he had taken over to Ashley's apartment because she was helping him do some of his fermenting piles. Now that was a girl after my own heart, someone who loved Noah and his laundry piles but, "Could she cook?" I wondered. We hadn't even met her yet, but I'd had many conversations with him as the relationship developed and could tell she was special by his words. Noah and I had talked about most of his relationships throughout his life, but not in personal terms as I did not know most of his dates. We talked about relationships in general and how to look for someone with similar values and interests. Although relationships through high school and college were always fun for Noah, they often left him puzzled, amazed, and frequently bewildered. Welcome to the club! I was encouraged about their relationship when he told me they never stopped talking.

As Noah left, Lucy and I got in the truck and headed toward downtown Athens as the ceremony was in the chapel on North Campus. Because it was graduation day, we had to look around to find parking, but we eventually did. Lucy had her fingers crossed that Noah was going to make it on time; my Armageddon lip was still twitching. When we got there, he was nowhere in sight. Just as we were all about to get anxious about whether or not we should tell his commanding officer, he came sauntering up with both shoes and looking great except for the missing emblems. Major Porambo went to work on him and borrowed what was needed off a nearby cadet. Somehow, it all came together and by the seat of his pants, Noah was appropriately dressed on stage. The Armageddon twitch began to subside.

The four inductees looked awesome and as the program unfolded, everyone could feel the magnitude of the event. The church was old and full of history, musky smells, and creaky boards. The reverent protocol of the tradition seemed to echo the ages of troops who had come before. Anybody who has ever been there would probably agree that the place seemed filled with the presence of past guardians of liberty. When an officer is commissioned, his bars get pinned on him which Lucy and I were proud to do. Next, as Lucy's dad was an officer during World War II, Pop Pop had the honor of swearing him in.

The ceremonial tradition after an officer was sworn in, was for an NCO to give the officer his very first salute. After the first salute, the officer hands the person a silver dollar. Having served as a sergeant in the U.S. Marines during the Vietnam era, it was my privilege to give Noah his very first salute. Noah had come down the stairs and was standing in front of the stage and I walked down the center aisle until I stood in front of him, came to attention and saluted. Normally, an officer will give a quick and snappy salute, at which time the NCO drops his salute. For some reason I could not figure out at the time, Noah held the salute for a very long time. NCO's are supposed to hold the salute until the officer drops his arm. I knew he wasn't messing with me, but what I didn't realize was my daughter Kym was trying to get a shot of the two of us from behind me. He was watching her and waiting for her to get into position. She got one shot

off before I broke with tradition and lowered my arm first. We had a good laugh about it later when I apologized, but I also reminded him that I still outranked him as his dad.

The whole family was so proud. It was a real honor for Lucy, her dad, and I to be able to participate in the induction of our boy's commissioning. At the time, I was exceedingly optimistic about Noah's potential as an officer. In my military experience, I had some good and some not-so-good officers and I was going to continue to do what I could to help him learn about that aspect of leadership. All of his life, I taught Noah that the complete person manifested on all levels meaning physically strong, emotionally stable, mentally focused, and spiritually receptive. On the physical, Noah was an impressive beast. He was strong, healthy, and hungry; and he was a fierce opponent.

1LT Byron Wilson (Ft. Riley, KS)

...the first classmate I met before starting IOBC. We met at Ranger Joe's the day before we in-processed. It was an honor to train with you and I'll never forget what a tough guy you were and how well you performed, especially in combatives. You were a very well liked and respected peer.

Yet even with his good looks and charm, he was not egotistical. He had a gentle and even temperament. He was mentally focused and determined and he was especially responsible with regard to his personal self-development. Spiritually, he was receptive to Christ's light and intuition, and he embraced the miraculous, vowing to serve a purpose higher than himself. Even though he often had to have help with laundry issues, Noah truly was Captain America, my hero, my son, and my best friend.

Letter to Noah after he commissioned:

Son, when you were a little kid and we were fantasizing about what you might be, we saw many avenues: athletics, theater, teaching, business. In the end, your final choice of a career was a surprise when you made it, but now we couldn't be more proud if you were the president of the free world. And when you were talking about the various branches, we were trying to steer you toward finance, computers, signal corps, but now we are so happy that you have committed yourself to something you completely believe in. The infantry is where we now believe you'll be able to bring your many aptitudes, talents, and skills to the service of your country. And so, we light the candle for your career with great pride, knowing that the security and peace of America and the freedom of the whole world will be protected by you. You ARE an Army of ONE!!!!

Mom (She's beautiful, she's funny, she's wicked smart!)

We'd only been acquainted with Noah's mysterious new "real" girlfriend since the commissioning ceremony, but I instantly liked Ashley Case. I felt my heart flutter like a Mom's will because I could tell that he really *liked* her. I'd seen him with a lot of girls before, ones he *thought* he liked, but I could feel this was different and I hoped for the best. After he started his officer's training at Ft. Benning, whenever he came home, he brought her with him. I knew they were a perfect match because they just never stopped talking, sometimes seriously, often politically, constantly humorously, and completely lovingly. I heard them chattering as they got out of the little white car, chattering in the yard on a walk, chattering all through dinner, chattering while they headed back out to the car. This was the real thing, and it was just right, right from the beginning. When Rick said right in front of her, "Son she's a mall chick," she just burst out laughing and Noah swung her up over his head. She had been a gymnast, so they were sure to have fun together, but the kicker was the first, four-way, group-hug kiss, a very serious

tradition with Noah. Ashley jumped right into it without hesitation and turned it into hilarity. She has a way of twisting everything to its humorous side. However, she is also the kind of young person who studies and believes in the Constitution, so she completely supported his commitment to defend America because, like him, she wanted a safe, free world for the curly-headed babies they planned to have someday. Their relationship was a blessing of sweetness and light during a time of great change for both of them. In the aftermath of graduation festivities as Noah was packing for Ft. Benning, Saddam Hussein was roused out of his spider hole, and there was cause for hope. Noah and Ashley were stepping into the unknown world of military and career, but they had each other to help find the way.

Gloria (Ashley's mom), Noah's second Mom

Noah was totally honest about anything. Nothing was taboo with him. He was completely straightforward and interested in everything. He was tireless, and had a high energy level. That's why he loved Ashley; she could keep up with him, and as Lucy always says, "I'd vote for her for any office because she's a good, smart American." I remember one time, Ashley said, "Show my mom how you propose to me." He dropped to one knee and proposed in front of Horace and a whole party of people. He just was never embarrassed. Ashley loved that because she was the same way. Every Friday, he would bring his laundry up from IOBC at Fort Benning to do it with Ashley's help, but he made her so happy that I would do it because it gave them time to enjoy life.

Michael Lewis (Nashville, TN)

We went through Infantry Officer Basic Course and Airborne school together. He was a fine officer and more importantly a truly wonderful person. When things got really frustrating, and this happened often at Ft. Benning, Noah was always there to share a gripe and also a joke. And you always came away feeling a lot better after you talked to him.

Another thing Noah and Ashley had in common was they loved to go out to eat and try new items on the menu. Afterwards, they'd go out for an Atlanta night on the town, and they'd wind up at a famous pub in Buckhead, *The Red Door* because the owner, Steve was a Sig Ep. Tom, "the cop" was a true friend to Noah even loaning him an extra uniform jacket when Noah was cold on his last New Year's Eve.

Johann Hindert

My friend Noah and I met in IOBC at Ft. Benning. Even though we were in different platoons, Noah made an impression on me. Noah's wonderful, fun-loving attitude and amazing athletic abilities could not help but be noticed by all. Before leaving for my home in Cincinnati and then on my tour in Korea, I had the opportunity to eat dinner with Noah a couple of times. The first time was in his apartment where we ate huge portions of fresh deer meat (courtesy of Major Toon) while Noah showed us a movie he had been in. We all had some good laughs about it before putting the Simpson's back on. The second time was for a Georgia Football game. Even a Michigan fan like myself would root for the Bulldogs in Noah's presence! Noah truly lived life to the fullest. His outgoing and upbeat personality couldn't help but influence those around him.

Rick - U.S. ARMY, 3rd ID

Noah was pumped about graduating from IOBC, but ironically, soon after the ceremony, things slowed down for him. There was no spot open at Fort Bragg, home of the 82nd, so he was in limbo, waiting. In all branches of the military, there are a percentage of troops in constant

rotation from unit to unit or on special assignments, and while they are in transition, they are assigned to a base support company and put to work. Their duties could be anything from weed-eating to picking up an officer at the base airport, and rank did not matter. Since he was new to military procedures, Noah realized too late that the older and experienced guys who were assigned to this unit never reported in so they didn't have to show up for these menial tasks. Since Noah never entertained thoughts about cheating or taking a short cut in his life, he was destined to put up with the aggravation, and the sergeants-in-charge loved to give as much grief as possible to the officers. If he were to pass this way again, I'm sure Noah would be entertaining some new thoughts on the matter.

He had recently completed the same jump school that Pop Pop went through during WWII and I went through as part of my recon training in the Marine Corps. He had really enjoyed the excitement of jumping out of a plane, but now he was in transition and he was feeling a little antsy. Working out, cooking, and minding his development were not enough to keep him from looking for his platoon and worrying that if he didn't get one soon, he would wind up being an executive officer sitting behind a desk somewhere. The way Noah was chomping at the bit to be a platoon leader, riding an office chair, even in Iraq, would have been a dreaded spectator sport for him. Noah and I had many career discussions which focused on finding his passion and never quitting until the desired objective was achieved. I knew my boy, and given a choice between paperwork and combat, he would choose combat every time. It was a good thing that he only reported Monday through Friday because on the weekends, Ashley did her best to keep him from worrying about anything.

More Gloria (Fort Benning/ Powder Springs Rendezvous)

Ashley and Noah were always on the go. They were gonna have a house in the mountains and a townhouse in Atlanta, and a horse farm out west. I remember looking at them and thinking, "Don't ever stop dreaming." Ashley always said he and his friends were so special because they weren't afraid of anything. All that year, when he would roll into Powder Springs on Friday evening to spend the weekend, he always had someone with him, someone who wouldn't have had a ride or any place to go. He was always sharing his room on the base with guys who were in transition. Ashley said, "Noah was more selfless than me. I helped him out with all the guys because I wanted to help him." Noah was her total package. He had it all.

After several months of what felt like purposeless days, an interesting turn of events landed Noah in the 3rd Infantry. While pumping iron at the gym, he met a 3rd I.D. Lt. who wanted to get into 82nd. This guy suggested a swap and informed Noah that officers could switch jobs prior to reaching their assignment with a single form letter. He called and we talked about the wisdom of going with a mobile unit as opposed to an airborne unit because his knees still hurt from his strenuous athletic career. After submitting the paper work, Noah became a member of the Sledge Hammer Brigade.

Captain Bradford Gaddy

Every leader is only as good as those who follow him. He knew this. He was unique and his reputation preceded him... muscle head, meat rack. But when he came, we soon knew he was a giant walking bear, but a gentle one. He was a big man, but he could be approached at any time. He had open ears, and he never let up!

Daniel B. Anton (Platoon Leader of Second Squad, Bayonet Company)

Noah, I remember back when you first got to 2-69 AR. Dave Forbes commented that it would be funny if you ended up coming to Bayonet so that you could “rule” me. They would kid me because I was the only one who really liked to lift weights, so of course, they enjoyed egging me on. You know how Dave could be, so he constantly said that to me until it honestly got annoying. I think I almost started to not like you even before I met you. Funny enough, it was Jason Zaruto who said, “Yeah, but watch if he comes to Bayonet, the two of you will end up becoming great friends and lifting buddies. Truer words have never been said. Your personality was so friendly and outgoing that it was impossible. Finally, I had someone to lift weights with and talk about fitness stuff. It was great having you as a brother in arms. As time went on we grew even closer and I considered you one of my best friends. We had so many good times together. I remember always being in a good mood when I was hanging with you...Of course, we had times when we would make fun of you for being a cheerleader, but I actually thought it was cool since you got to hang out with all those cute girls. Bro, I know you loved being a platoon leader...

After he signed the papers, he told us that the 3rd Infantry would be heading to Iraq right after Christmas. I knew he would see action, but for one reason or another, I didn't think it would happen this fast. It was not really a surprise when he called to say he had been assigned to a platoon because we often talked about the "charmed" life he lived with things always falling into place.

Major Bobby R. Toon

The first time I saw Noah was at our Battalion Hail and Farewell. It is a tradition for the other LTs to get the new guy's info card the battalion commander is going to read and make some “additions” to the bio. Usually they are pretty funny and in good spirit. When LTC Roggerman had Noah stand up and walk up in front of everyone, I saw a huge, no neck infantry LT that made LTC Roggerman look small, which is not easy. As he read Noah's bio, he said that Noah was Captain of his university cheerleading squad. Of course, we thought it was a joke and everyone laughed. During our initial meeting, I told him I thought the part about cheerleading was funny, to which Noah replied, “*That wasn't a joke sir!*”

From my perspective, Noah worked so hard to achieve something, the universe simply flowed with him and opened the next doors he needed. Impatience to always be moving forward is a characteristic he and I share so it was evident that this was another interlocking puzzle piece falling into place. Noah told us that one of the platoon leaders had been selected for special training and would have to give up his platoon. Consequently November 4, 2004, Lt. Noah Harris was about to become one of the youngest LT's to ever receive a platoon and he had to quickly prepare them for combat, a task that had not been done in this unit since Vietnam. Lucy and I celebrated with him as he said, “*You'll never guess what we're called. The Wolf Pack.*” Lucy said he'd growled as a Bobcat and barked as a Bulldog; it seemed right that now he was going to get to howl. After he got his platoon, we'd talk early in the morning sometimes, but most of the time, he was out in the field or training with the guys. He completely enjoyed getting to know his men, and he especially enjoyed sharpening his combative techniques with them.

SSG. Andrew T. Miller of 3rd platoon, Bayonet Co. 2-69 AR (Andrew and Brittany named their fourth child, Noah William Miller; he is watched over by siblings Marissa, Raevn, and Braiden)

We had just barely met Noah. He was brand new. We didn't know his background. So, he came

walking up when we were doing combatives. Sgt. Barr, who was my team leader at the time is level 3 combatives qualified which gives him the ability to train level 1, so he was instructing at the time. So we said, "Hey Sir, how's it going?" to Lt. Harris. He seemed willing, so we paired him and Sgt. Barr together and Noah rolled him up 3 times in a row. I remember he got Sgt. Barr in an arm bar pretty quick and Barr tapped out. Sgt. Barr has a humongous neck; you can't choke him out. I know; I tried. Noah was a good guy. When he got chewed out for something we did, he always said, "*It's o.k. I'm over it.*"

3rd ID song:

I'm just a dogfaced soldier
with a rifle on my shoulder,
And I eat raw meat for breakfast everyday.
So feed me ammunition,
Keep me in the 3rd division,
Your dogface soldier is A-okay.

MOM - November 19, 2004 (Never Forget!)

I enjoyed watching him grow by leaps and bounds, but no matter how tough he was becoming, it hit him hard when Marine Cpl. Bradley T. Arms, a fellow Sigma Phi Epsilon member was killed in a fire fight in Anbar Province, Iraq. Cpl. Arms was a reservist who left UGA when he was called up for duty. Because Bradley was much younger than Noah, they hadn't been close friends, but in many ways they had been and always will be brothers. Bradley was known for his commitment to his military purpose, the Sig Ep *Balanced Man Program*, his exuberant love of UGA, and his desire to help the children of Iraq.

Noah (3rd I.D. prayer)

Relax. Be in the moment. Let little things go. Focus. Who cares who is watching? Let go and let God. Have Faith. When it's time to work, work; when it's time to rest, rest. Be detached and disciplined. Give life your best shot. It's about giving, not receiving.

Noah (The Servant Leader)

"Hey Mom! I have a great idea for you and your kids. You know how your Octagon (affiliated with Optimist International) kids and your leadership guys are always getting involved and supporting people."

"That's what we do."

"How about adopting my platoon when we are in Iraq? You know, writing, sending cookies, and care packages?"

"Oh my gosh! That sounds awesome. I'm sure my kids will love it!" So I went into school the next day and asked some of my leaders of the Octagon Club. Joanna DeFoor, Melissa Powell and Lian Gabriel said they thought it sounded great and asked, "How many men in a platoon?" I responded, "Maybe five or six. I think we can handle it." Boy, was I surprised when I asked, "Son, how many guys in your platoon." Noah answered casually, "*I only have about 40 right now.*" I took a deep breath and said, "Yeah, Baby!" But my students were undaunted. Melissa Powell made an Adopt-A-Troop sign out of pictures Noah took of all the men; and we put it up

in the school and the project took off like a fighter jet. Driven by Noah's exuberant appreciation and the hometown desire to support their "boy," lots of students outside of the club were volunteering as well as teachers.

From OCTAGON to the Wolf Pack

Dear Wolf Pack,

We are students at GHS who are inspired and motivated and we have *your* back. Thank you so much for giving all of us the opportunity to touch your lives; it makes us feel connected with your noble effort to bring Freedom and Democracy to the world and to fight the War on Terror. From the pictures we now have displayed in our cafeteria for all to see, it is easy to see you men could have done anything with your lives. That makes your sacrifice even more special. You chose to serve and protect, and we realize we owe you our lives. God Bless YOU! By the way, did you know you guys are "handsome" "gorgeous" "hunks" and "hot"? We had to put the pictures behind glass to keep the ladies from kissing them. Our Wal-mart has donated lots of extra copies of your pictures to the cause, and you all adorn the lockers of many people who are dedicated to YOU! We are the Bobcats, but the members of the Wolf Pack are our GREAT AMERICAN HEROES. Wherever you go and no matter what you endure, we will be with you. We love our platoon, the ONE and only, WOLF PACK! PS – We are learning how to howl. Love, Haley (Ford), Amber (Mooney), Rosie (Lowry), Eddie (Sanford) and a whole lot of Bobcats

Adopt-A-Troop started to spread across the community of Ellijay to churches and civic organizations, and before we knew it people from all over the state were calling the school asking what they could do to help the platoon that was headed to Iraq. The UGA Cheerleaders got on board as well as ILA and Highwoods Properties. It just kept spreading even to folks who had no connection with Noah. When some of the Gilmer High School leadership students were collecting donations for postage and care packages, a nice gentleman, James Padgett took our information and his whole company got involved. Art Nieto of Dogtag City.com printed Wolf Pack dog tags so that the people involved would have a symbol they could wear, and the word just kept spreading. When Alyssa, Hailey, and Kym got involved, the Girls Scouts and Pulse Dance Academy got on board; the dots just kept connecting.

Noah - Hello Dr. Lankau,

It is great to hear from you. I apologize for taking so long to get back to you. We are extremely busy, trying to get everything packed and still continue training. I am thankful that I was part of the Leadership program. It prepared me more than I would have ever imagined. In the military I have received a lot of training on how to do things, but nothing on leadership. So, when I first took over my platoon (40 men), I was the leader with no one to tell me what to do. I had to be the one doing the telling.

That is where the leadership program's training stepped in. I had my leadership style and philosophy already developed. It guided my decision making as well. I found myself asking the question, "Is this decision consistent with my guidelines?" I didn't have my leadership philosophy written down. I am working on that right now. I highly recommend that for everyone entering the work world. It will keep you from getting caught off guard and keep you consistent in your leadership. One other thing I learned is, the best way to learn about leadership is to do it.

We'll be heading out in January, and probably will be gone for at the very least 14 months. I plan on taking good notes on leadership. I'll try to e-mail you some of my lessons learned from over there.

Thank you so much for your prayers. Please, also pray for my men. Send my best to your other half and family.

With respect, Noah

Noah Journal (December 28, 2004, 5 days until deployment)

I am excited and nervous. I am seeing the importance of detaching myself, being completely selfless. What I am doing is bigger than me. I am doing this for my country, my family, my men, and the citizens of the U.S. Character and principle are paramount. It is important for me to stay in the present moment. Think not of what's to come. Don't make conspiracies. Be my best in the moment and leave the rest up to God and have faith. I am a selfless, bodiless, timeless warrior. Today is a good day to die. Realize and let go. There are many watching over me. Be the man they will be proud to be watching over.

It all just happened so fast. I hardly had time to worry about the rapidly approaching January deployment. One day he was graduating from high school and, it seems, the next, our axis had shifted, and our sweet mountain child was headed to the other side of the world carrying a torch of freedom. Ashley had gotten a job as a pharmaceutical rep with a start-up company and had to leave for her training two days before Noah deployed. I'll never forget how they bravely blew kisses, YMETM'd, and fiercely smiled until she walked out of sight. Then, Noah turned to me with tears in his eyes and said, "Now, that was like a kick in the gut."

"Little Brother" David (Noah's cousin)

I sit in the cabin next to the creek that runs through our old "stomping" ground. In the stillness the memories come to me. I remember Saturday morning cartoons and MTV at Grandma's house, the cliff that we climbed off of Route 52, 4-wheeling through the forest, shooting BBs at water spiders, the giant yellow pillow we used to lie on together as we watched movies, the waterfall we used to slide down on the Cartecay, learning to drive on his lap in the Corolla, theatre class, crawling through the culvert under the drive way and playing in the creek, working in the yard, the glow-in-the-dark paint above the spot where I used to lie on his bedroom floor, the nightly conversations we would have about life, downtown Dahlongega where we bought matching yin-yang marble necklaces, how much he cried at Grandma's funeral, the first time he saw me play in a band, our last night out on the town in Athens, our trip to visit Robby in Florida, we listened to *Alice In Chains* – "Jar Of Flies" and I read his novel to him as he drove in the rain; and I remember the mountain parties. One time someone yelled, "Cops!" and without hesitation, Noah grabbed me by the back of my shirt and jumped off the back deck. Without breaking stride, he threw me over his shoulder, dashed through the forest, hurdled a barbed wire fence, and then ran half way around a lake before finally coming to rest in the bed of a pick-up truck. Some joke!

When Noah was about seventeen or eighteen years old he wrote a poem entitled "At Last." He called me one day to tell me of this poem of which he was very proud. He submitted it to poetry.com. He told me that there was something very special about the words that would be

revealed in time, and he made a point to express that it was my responsibility to remember this poem's existence. The night before Noah shipped out, I drove down to Benning for dinner with Rick, Lucy, and Noah. We went out to eat at a sports bar with a reputation for BBQ. Noah had a Newcastle to drink and something "manly" to eat, like ribs or steak. I didn't do much talking. I wanted to cherish these moments with Noah for what they were. I observed. I don't recall what was said; I don't recall anything about that meal except for the smile on his face. He was days away from facing war but light years away from the rest of us in that he understood who he was, why he was where he was, where he was going, and why it had to be that way. There was no fear in his heart, there was no doubt; there was only certainty and faith.

It grew dark and got late without my noticing and Noah needed time alone with his parents, so we all walked to the parking lot together. I remember we told each other we loved one another, we hugged, and then, Noah and I stopped time for a while and peered into one another's soul. I caught the glimmering street light in his eyes, but it was not alone. He had light pouring out of his eyes into mine, and every moment we had shared, every lesson we taught each other, and every state of being we experienced made sense. In this silence, all that had been said and everything that never was became understood. He knew and was telling me, no matter what happened, he was, is, and always will be a servant of light. We stared at each other for as long as we needed to understand, and then I left.

It took me almost three years to finish the song "Simply American." The name and the "hook" were inspired by Lucy's premise and the saying Noah became known for, "I do what I can." The final lyrics came one night when Noah reached across from the other side and reminded me. I had been sitting in my bedroom late at night, fiddling around on my guitar, when I had the impulse to go online and look for his poem. I had searched for it many times without success, and it has never been posted again, but that night when I opened the site, there was Noah's poem; and as I read, I understood that he knew all along how his life would play out.

Noah Harris ("At Last")

Far away places pull at my mind
Whispering softly, "Make much of time,"
Reminding me that while they will last,
My life too soon's a thing of the past.

Like the leaves living on a solemn oak tree,
The oak will remain, but the green is set free.
Each second that passes is one less to spend,
The clock will keep ticking long past my end.

Like a tumbleweed, I will ride on the wind,
For the mossy rock with death does not contend,
I pull up my roots, with no word walk away,
Die I shall, but not in this place and not on this day.