

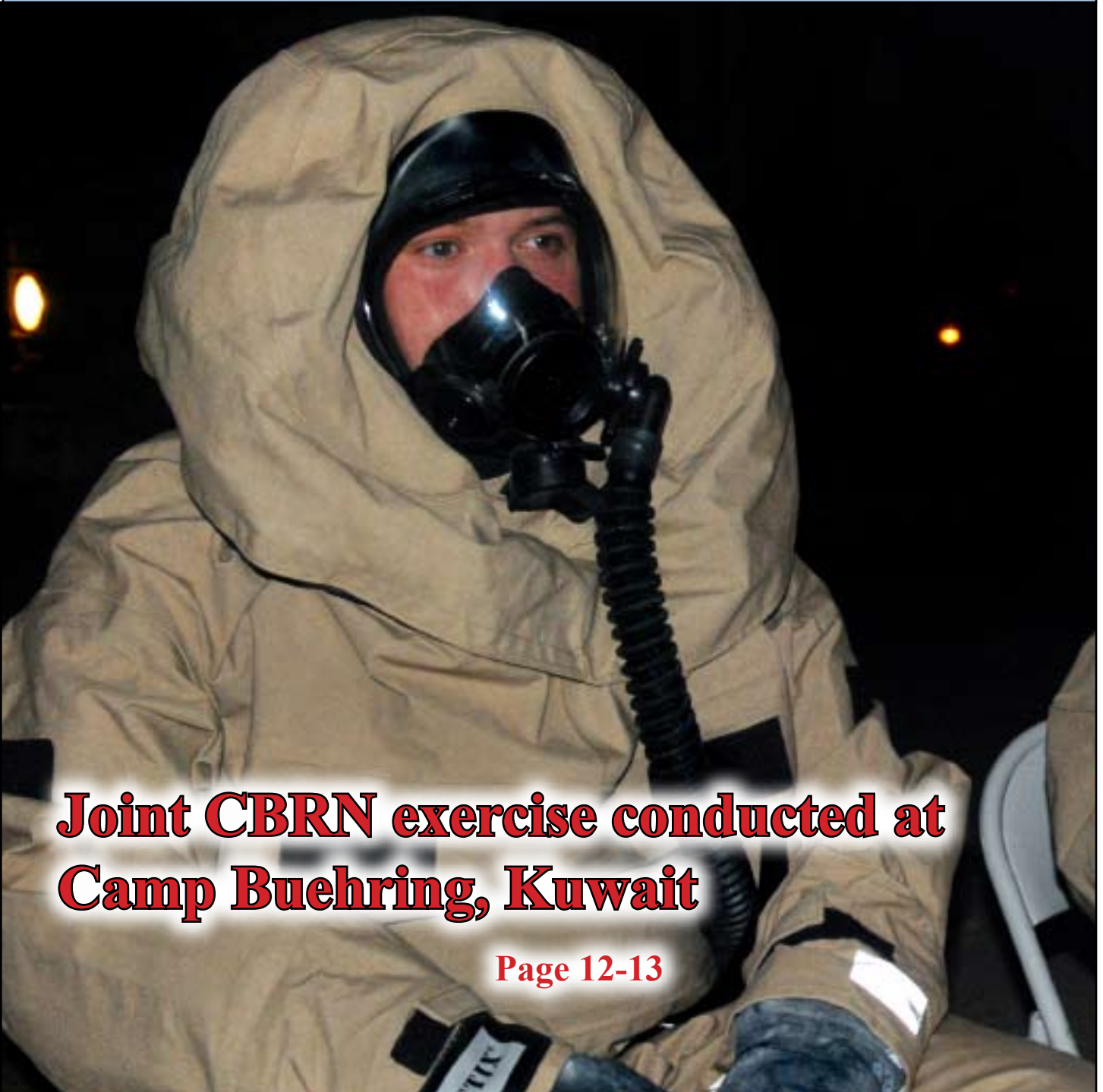
115th Fires Brigade



Cowboy Thunder

Volume 1 Issue 2

August 2009



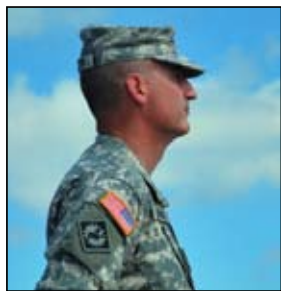
**Joint CBRN exercise conducted at
Camp Buehring, Kuwait**

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Commanders' Comments

Howdy from Cowboy 6

The men and women of this command stand ready and on mission. They are taking care of service members in this theater of operations, securing vital equipment and facilities and providing force protection within our area of responsibility. Our mission has expanded beyond our expectations, we have over 3,000 service members from the Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Regular Army, Navy and Coast Guard,



Col. Richard C. Knowlton

under the command of the brigade, performing their missions in challenging environments.

Some of the milestones that we have reached in this short time on mission are:

Over 14,000 vehicles searched.

Over 100,000 personnel searched.

Service members operating in five countries.

Over 1,000,000 miles driven on mission.

Your service members are performing exceptionally well in their missions and I am very proud of their service. I would encourage all of you at home to stay engaged with them and let them know how proud we all are of their service and keep them in your hearts and prayers.

Months five, six and seven of a mission are often the hardest for service

members. Some are going home on leave and come back realizing they still have a long time left on mission.

Others still have a long time before they go on leave and are eagerly looking forward to a break. They are all settling into their missions and have reached a comfort level. As the hectic hustle and bustle of operations becomes normal, boredom can set in. I call this the Doldrums (no wind to carry you to your final destination, you seem to be just hanging and waiting for movement).

You can help us get through this challenging time by staying in touch, sending care packages, hometown papers or just a word from home. I would also ask that you stay engaged with your family and communities at home and this will in turn help those at home through the Doldrums as well.

Happy Trails

Cowboy 6 out.

Command Sgt. Maj. Comments

The Soldiers of the 115th Fires Brigade have remained vigilant and focused on the mission so far during the deployment. As we continue the mission, I have concerns about complacency and our service members' safety. As we hit our five month mark into the deployment and our one month mark after the brigade Transfer of Authority, we need to work hard to ensure complacency doesn't set in.

The Army, the brigade leadership, and most importantly, our families and friends depend on the NCO Corps, from Corporal to Command Sergeant Major, to enforce standards and make sure we don't take unnecessary risk. My biggest fear is that our service members may be severely injured, or something worse, for taking an unnecessary risk or doing something really dumb.

I recently attended the 1st Theater Support Command's (1st TSC) Quarterly Safety Council. I compared our safety record to the other brigades

under the 1st TSC along with the units that were here in theater the rotation before us. We have an outstanding safety record. We just passed one million miles traveled on land, and countless nautical miles sailed with the boats on the sea side of our mission.

We have had minimal safety issues. Congratulations to all of our Soldiers, Sailors, Coast Guardsmen and especially the NCO's and leaders. Keep up the good work. Let's prove the Cowboy Thunder way of doing business is the right way, the



Command Sgt. Maj. Kenton Franklin

safe way, and set the standard for others to emulate.

With the leave cycle beginning, I encourage our service members to keep safety in mind while traveling and when they get home or wherever they go on leave. Don't drink and drive, don't take unnecessary risk, and don't associate with people who display risky behavior. Whether you are here on a mission or at home, we need everyone to stay healthy. That includes keeping our Family members safe, happy and healthy.

I encourage all our Soldiers to remain in contact with their Folks at home, and for our Families and friends at home to stay engaged with the Family Readiness Groups. Family members; don't be afraid to ask for help if needed from our great Family Readiness Personnel.

We are about half way through our mobilization. This is the point where depression or other issues can set in. Let's take care of one another both at home and here in theater.

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115th Fires Brigade
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On the Cover:



1343rd CBRN Company Alabama Army National Guard and the 22 MEU recently performed a joint exercise at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. (photo by Spc. Matthew H. Oda)

The Cowboy Thunder is an authorized publication for and in the interest of the personnel of the 115th Fires Brigade and their Families. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of *The Cowboy Thunder* staff and not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, and the Department of the Army or the Army National Guard.

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Photos must be in either JPEG or TIFF format. Please include information identifying who is in the photo, what they're doing, why, when, where, and who took the photo.

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115th Fires Brigade

Cowboy Thunder

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**Power lifters, HHB
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Strength Training

Story and photos by
Spc. Matthew Oda

While at the gym at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, you might notice someone lifting a huge amount of weight. You stop and ask yourself if it's possible for you to accomplish such a feat someday. If strength is what you're looking for, then Chaplain Todd M. Wolf (Capt.), 115th Fires Brigade from the Wyoming National Guard might have the perfect solution for you.

Anyone who has seen Wolf will tell you he's a big guy. He's been working out for thirty years now and has developed many techniques and fine tuned the art of strength training and power lifting. He has consulted with Ernie Frantz, a professional power lifting coach on the fundamentals and finer points to strength training and power lifting at his gym. According to Wolf, Frantz has produced more international power lifting champions than any other power lifting coach in history.

"He had over 50 international world champs out of his gym at that point in time," said Wolf. "He took in homeless people and others and trained them to be power lifters. It was kind of a social outreach for him," he added.

Wolfs' strength training days begin with doing two warm-up sets of 15 repetitions each with light weight, followed by another set of three reps with a little heavier weight. Every set after that, he increases the weight and continues with single reps until he reaches the maximum amount of weight he can lift. He follows this routine for every exercise. His first exercise is the bench press, then dead lift and he finishes off with the leg press.

When he arrived in Kuwait and



Capt. Todd M. Wolf, Chaplain, 115th Fires Brigade, dead lifts 455 pounds in the gym at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Aug. 30. Wolf works out three to four times a week with several Soldiers from the unit.

started hitting the gym here, he was lifting by himself. It wasn't until others started seeing him do his program that they showed interest and started asking questions. As time went on, they started training with him and soon thereafter, he had a regular group lifting with him in the gym every time.

"I always lift! This is where I make my money, so to speak," said Wolf referring to his passion for the gym and strength training. "I just lift and people follow. I train them so they can be trainers," he added.

In the beginning, Wolf and his

group hit the weights four to five days a week. Now, they work out three to four times a week because everyone needed more time for recovery, including Chaplain Wolf.

"At first we were working out almost five days a week," said 1st Sgt. Paul Webster, Headquarters Battery, 115th. "But as the weeks went on, my body and my joints just couldn't take it so I needed more time to recover. Even the young ones needed more time," the 48-year-old Webster added.

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The ages of the workout crew, from HHB 115th, range from their early 20's to late 40's. Webster, the oldest of the group, can dead lift 315 pounds. Wolf, 44, has bench pressed 500 pounds and leg presses 1,425 pounds. On his last deployment he maxed out the leg press at 2,000 pounds. The 27-year-old 1st Lt. Cole Kelly, assistant intelligence officer, can dead lift 335 pounds. Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christopher Peterson, 39, targeting officer, can dead lift 455 pounds. The 22-year-old unit administrator, Spc. Trevor Birch, can leg press 1,300 pounds.

Most of the group working out with Wolf set goals for themselves and strived to reach them as soon as possible. It never dawned on them just how fast those goals would be reached.

"Chief Peterson jumped in and his goal was to bench 315 by the time we head back to the states in April," said Wolf. "Last week was the sixth week he's been lifting with me and he did 325 pounds," he said smiling.

When he's not in the desert, Wolf works out back in the states with his wife, Michelle. They've been married seven years and have eight children between them. Michelle, according to Wolf, sometimes works out more than he does and on occasion pushes him to go to the gym.

"My wife is a lifter too! I'm very proud of her," said Wolf. "She runs about an hour at a time then hits the gym 45 minutes a day, four to six days a week. She's incredible."

So if you're looking for spiritual, mental, and physical guidance, then look no further because Chaplain Wolf is the man to seek. He will not only lead you in the right direction, but he will go there with you as well. 🐾



Leg pressing 1,380 pounds, Chaplain Todd M. Wolf, Capt., 115th Fires Brigade works out in the gym at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Aug. 30. Wolf trains three to four times a week building power for massive feats of



Dead lifting 315 pounds with eye-popping strength, 1st Sgt. Paul Webster from Wyo., completes the exercise at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Aug. 30. Webster is one of several strength trainees that work out together from Headquarters, Headquarters Battery, 115th Fires Brigade.

BUCKING TRADITION

By 1st Lt. Christian Venhuizen
2nd Battalion, 300 Field Artillery

During World War I, Army officials directed units to design an identifying symbol that could be stenciled onto their equipment.

The order reached the Wyo. National Guard's E Battery, 3rd Battalion, 148th Field Artillery Regiment, 66th Field Artillery Brigade when it was on the front lines in France.

"At this time we were in intensive combat and my battery commander asked me how we could possibly comply with this request," Staff Sgt. George N. Ostrom, the battery supply sergeant and Sheridan, Wyo., cattle rancher wrote in 1973.

"My reply was [for him] to detail me to brigade HQ and this could be done," he said.

The rest is part of Wyo. lore: The battery commander dispatched Sergeant Ostrom to the rear where thoughts of home and the state's feisty frontier spirit inspired his design of a rider on a rough silhouette of a bucking horse.

The commander of the 66th Artillery Brigade was so taken by the concept that he nixed all other drawings and had all brigade equipment marked with the "Bucking Bronco."

State officials were equally enamored of the symbol when the Wyo. Guard returned home to the First Regiment Cavalry, which later became the 115th Cavalry.

Now known as the Bucking Horse and Rider, the symbol, after refinement by Sergeant Ostrom, would become the state's most recognized and treasured trademark. State officials actually copyrighted the mark in 1936.

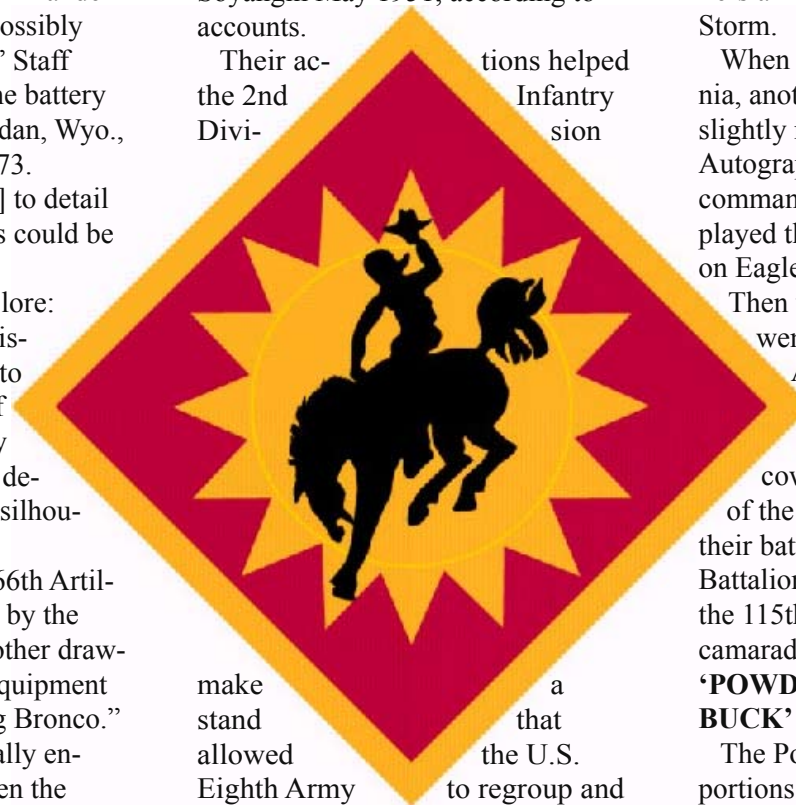
Today, it appears on every state license plate, on every University of Wyo. football helmet and on every howitzer and aircraft of the Wyo.

National Guard.

The design mustered with the 115th Mechanized Cavalry for World War II. And it graced every 105mm self-propelled howitzer belonging to the 300th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, the 115th's next incarnation, when the unit mobilized for the Korean War.

The "Cowboy Cannoneers" were in the thick of fighting, inflicting "thousands of casualties" on waves of Chinese soldiers at the Battle of Soyangin May 1951, according to accounts.

Their actions helped the 2nd Infantry Division



make stand allowed Eighth Army to regroup and stop an enemy envelopment during a pivotal part of the war.

The 300th left the battlefield as one of the Korean War's most decorated artillery outfits, earning numerous unit citations, 12 Silver Stars, several Bronze Star Medals and 183 Purple Hearts.

But before it even reached Korea, the battalion unknowingly started a Wyo. Army Guard tradition that continues today.

It began with some soldierly mischief on the convoy to Fort Lewis,

Wash., the unit's post-mobilization training site.

Upon reaching the Montana border, unit members stole an "Entering Wyo." highway sign, complete with the bucking horse symbol, displaying it in the battalion area throughout their active duty tour.

The next Wyo. Army Guard unit to deploy overseas followed suit. The 1022nd Medical Company (Air Ambulance), however, legally procured the similar road marker it took to the Persian Gulf for Operation Desert Storm.

When the 1022nd went to Bosnia, another "Entering Wyo." sign, slightly modified, went with the unit. Autographed by state leaders and command staff, the company displayed the placard at its headquarters on Eagle Base in Tuzla, Bosnia.

Then when the Wyo. Army Guard went to Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan, highway signs went with them.

The placards marked the cowboys' claim to a piece of the new frontier. But it was their battle cry that marked the 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery and the 115th Field Artillery Brigade's camaraderie.

'POWDER RIVER, LET 'ER BUCK'

The Powder River winds through portions of northeast Wyo. and Montana, east of the majestic Big Horn Mountains.

As legend has it, "Powder River, let 'er buck" was an 1893 toast to the river's high waters by a Wyo. cattleman.

The state's early militiamen quickly adopted the battle cry but didn't confine its use to the battlefield.

Whenever Wyo. Soldiers faced overwhelming odds in the bars of Manila in the Philippines during

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the Spanish-American War, a cry of "Powder River," answered with "Let 'er buck," meant help was on the way.

The first formal military use of the phrase, however, dates back to the 115th Cavalry in 1924. In 1982, the Army granted the 49th Field Artillery permission to use "Powder River" as its motto.

The 49th is another link in the lineage that connects the First Cavalry to today's 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery (2-300th), which returned from northern Iraq, where unit members helped train the fledgling local police across three provinces.

"I admire them," said Capt. Dean Hunhoff of the Iraqi police he trained. "It's a war zone, and they get up every day, put their uniform on, go to work, get shot at, get blown up, their families are threatened, and yet they do it day-in and day-out."

"I tell my family and that I would fight and die for these guys," he said. "They have become great brothers."

An international observer said it was that attitude that enabled 'Wyo. Guardsmen to succeed where other Soldiers had failed.

"The Powder River guys are the first military unit that has come in here and said, 'We are not going to make them Americans.' They treated them as [friends] and didn't bully the Iraqis around, and that's one of the reasons they were so successful," said Richard Castrati, international police liaison officer in northern Iraq.

COWBOYS TAKE FLIGHT

Wyo.'s Guard traditions on the ground are only part of the story.

The Wyo. Guard saw a need for an Air Guard about a year before the Air National Guard celebrated its official federal birth.

The 187th Fighter Squadron took flight Aug. 10, 1946, giving those cowboys a whole new frontier to tame. And just like the artillery, infantry and cavalry, the new unit needed an insignia, and Wyo. already had one ready to go.

"The silhouetted bucking bronc, powerful and always dangerous, is representative of the mission of the unit," Air Force officials said in approving the emblem in 1953, just two years after the unit mobilized for the Korean War where eight of their pilots died in action.

"Riding the mustang is a bronc-rider, a rough and ready product of the West who tames the mustang to do the job required," it said. "The bronc-buster is likened to the fighter pilots of the squadron, who are always ready to fly their mounts to do the job required."

The logo used was not the same one Sgt. Ostrom originally drew, but one of the subsequent modifications the state of Wyo. also adopted.

The Wyo. Air Guard kept that insignia on its planes, equipment and even drew a big version of it on the floor of the hangar.

That was all good until acting Wyo.



Gov. Doc Rogers told the Wyo. Air Guard that it was the state's horse and the Wyo. Air Guard couldn't use it, or so the story goes.

The Wyo. Air Guard redrew its horse, flipped it around and angled it a bit to see all four legs in 1957.

By 1980, the unit had traded in the fighter mission for airlift ability and took hot iron and "branded" their horse. The brand is called "Wio" or "Flying Wio." It's a real brand designed by Lt. Col. John McCue, a former squadron commander.

Unfortunately, Colonel McCue and his family were killed in an aircraft accident before the brand took flight.

The cowboys, now flying under the 153rd Airlift Wing, are among just four units, all from the reserve component, that operate the Modular Airborne Fire Fighting system.

They've also flown in support of numerous airlift missions around the globe; from Vietnam in the 1960s to current operations in the war on terror.

And because the Wyo. Air Guard has been in the sky for so long, the Air Force transplanted a new batch of cowboys into the mix.

The 153rd is the host wing for an active associate squadron, the 30th Airlift Squadron. The 153rd maintains operational control, making it the first Air Guard unit in the nation to settle that frontier.

Active duty or Guard, they're still flying the Bucking Horse and Rider on every C-130 tail. The Air Guardsmen wear the unit patch and painted a big one on the hanger doors in Cheyenne.

The Wyo. Air Guard also flies the brown and gold colors of the University of Wyo., which has adopted "Powder River, let 'er buck" as the battle cry for its football team.

NEW FRONTIERS

Just as today's bucking horse has transformed to a more streamlined, high-speed version of Ostroms' stenciled World War I brand, the Wyo. Guard is transforming.

The bucking horse-branded howitzers shot for the last time in May as the 2-300th converts to the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, which will be painted with the Bucking Horse and Rider.

The 115th Field Artillery Brigade also maintained its unit patch when it transformed into the 115th Fires Brigade.

The Wyo. Air National Guard's fleet of eight C-130s will grow to 12, and new aircraft will be adorned with the bucking horse on a University of Wyo. brown and gold-ribboned tail.

These distinctive marks show the Wyo. Cowboy Guard saddled up and ready to ride. 🐾

Experiencing a Humvee Ride ‘First Hand’

Story by Chaplain (Capt.) Kelly J. Wasberg and Sgt. Corry J. Condon
1-151 Field Artillery

Camp Virginia, Kuwait-
Greetings to our loved ones and supporters back home. We just returned from a mission with one of our convoy teams. I was very impressed with how well our young Soldiers accept and accomplish their mission to provide safe travel to supply trucks and Army convoys. They do their job in a very professional manner which should make you proud.

While on mission there are opportunities to meet with local nationals who offer goods for sale at the various forward bases.

One of the Iraqi's goes by "Mike." He told me how he has been searching for his brother, who was a taxi driver, for two years. Mike worked as an interpreter. He fears his brother has been kidnapped based on his cooperation with the Americans. He smiles but I can see his sadness when he talks about his brother.

I talked to another dude who is trying to earn enough money to buy a wife. I asked him how much that would cost. He said maybe \$1,000 US, which isn't too bad until you read the fine print, the residuals, the mother-in-law clause, kids... enough said.

He said his father is rich, has two wives and two cars but his brother will get most of the inheritance. He also likes green Monster Energy Drinks.

On Friday I talked to an Iraqi who is relocating to Florida this month as he has been an interpreter and can no longer stay in his country for fear of being discovered. I wished him well.

As a way of relating to your Soldiers consider my description of a humvee ride. It would not be uncommon for the interior of the cab to reach 115-120 degrees. The AC will kick in and keep some air



Sgt. Corry J. Condon and Chaplain (Capt.) Kelly J. Wasberg 1-151 Field Artillery.

flowing so it will be tolerable.

To experience the ride "first hand," try the following exercise: affix a bike helmet to your head, tape a five pound weight to the top of it, put on some large sunglasses, find some cheap, full sized headphones and place them over your ears with the head band over the back of your neck. Now take a life jacket and attach several metal plates to the front, back and sides until it weighs about 40 pounds. Gingerly slip the apparatus over your shoulders. Put your helmet on first (steel plates).

You have two options to try experiencing a HUMVEE ride. The first is the smallest closet or pantry in your house and the other is the back seat of a 10 year old minivan.

Squeeze into the very back seat of the minivan (at night). Be sure to put a small refrigerator on the seat next to you to simulate equipment. Be sure to disable the dome light so that you must grasp a small, metal flashlight between your teeth. Exercise caution so that you do not drop your flashlight; if you do, you won't see it until the sun comes up.

If you choose the closet or pantry option, turn off all the lights in your house and close the blinds. Place a metal folding chair against the inside wall.

Employ a carpet scrap or rug (no thicker than an inch) to be used for "padding." Sit carefully while wearing the apparatus described above and have a friend position a four by six timber midway up your shin so that your feet land behind your knees. This simulates the crossbar in the back seat between your ankles and your knees.

Elevate the temperature of the room to at least 100 degrees. Fill the room with as much metal surface as possible.

Now reach over your left shoulder (with all your gear on) and find your shoulder seat belt strap. Stretch it over your chest to your right hip. Repeat for the waste seat belt. Do not let go until you hear the seat belt "click". You should begin to feel as if you are being strapped in for a typical roller

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coaster ride, only with less mobility.

Once seated, remove your right boot as the chassis will heat up and make your little toe on your right foot feel as if it's on fire. Keep moving your feet to prevent them from growing numb should you have the need to get out of the vehicle (which you should never do) and won't do for at least five hours, even if you hydrate properly which you should do and if you do it properly you'll have a need to... get out of the vehicle too soon (which you should never do!) Ignore the pain in your knees altogether.

Plug your headphones in and tune your radio to a call-in show about relationships. The personnel in the truck have constant radio contact and will talk throughout the entire trip.

This will be punctuated by interruptions from the convoy leader who is giving warnings for all the trucks such as change lanes, directions and so forth.

To your immediate right is the left leg of a 20-something gunner. In their hands is a mounted .50 caliber machine gun. The gunner also manages a spot-light and other equipment. This is your protection.

And now a word about the air conditioning: your right elbow will

Since you're behind the other 150 trucks you'll crawl at about two mph until you can get in the gate and snake your way to another dusty, bumpy parking lot (with port-a-potties, which are a welcome site.

In the parking lot there is a sign that says: "Speed Limit 1 MPH"

"I remain in deep admiration of the young men and women who do this day in and day out," said Chaplain Kelly J. Wasberg.

be kept comfortably cool via a single vent (if you don't block it). It will cool approximately four cubic feet about 20 degrees to approximately 95 degrees.

So you get to the gate and there are 150 trucks ahead of you all chugging out diesel fumes. The fumes are a slight relief from the open country smells which, at first, remind you of a pastoral dairy farm but you soon learn that Iraq has scents you don't quite recognize.

which makes it possible to drive three times the speed limit and still re-main relatively safe while nearly going backwards.

All satire aside I remain in deep admiration of the young men and women who do this day in and day out. I truly enjoyed my time out with them and will go again as soon as I get caught up on some sleep. 🐾

"So if the Son sets you free you will be free indeed." John 8:36

R&R...Already?

We've reached that point in our deployment when Soldiers are heading home for their 15 days of R&R. I am aware of this fact (and sometimes a little bit envious) because twice a week I have the responsibility of presenting a brief for Camp Virginia Soldiers who are heading home.

Lately, I've been seeing more and more of our Wyo. National Guard Soldiers at these briefs. I usually start my brief by asking the following question. Out of those who have been deployed before, what is one thing you'd like to share with your fellow Soldiers about how to make the most out of your R&R? The number one answer so far has been, "Don't try to drink a year's worth of alcohol in two weeks!" A good

answer, and not even from a Chaplain!

Here are some other tips for Soldiers and Families about how to get the most from your 15 days:

- ◆ Communicate your expectations about how you'd like to spend your time... but remember to be flexible.
- ◆ Understand that everybody and their uncle will want to see your Soldier when they're home... plan for interruptions, but protect an ample amount of time for those who are most important to you.
- ◆ Do something special and unique with each one of your children.
- ◆ Expect things to be different; don't panic if things aren't like they used to be.
- ◆ Talk with each other about your experiences.

- ◆ Avoid the "Who had it Worse?" game.

There's one more thing I share at these briefs. When we were separated from friends and family we naturally reflect upon some of our past priorities and hopefully give some thought to our future priorities as well. Let this deployment be a time when you re-evaluate your life, your goals, and your priorities. Just because we're separated for a year doesn't mean we can't complete a year's worth of growth. My prayer is that each Soldier experiences growth in their personal life, their close relationships, and their faith in God.

**God Bless,
Chaplain (Capt.) Peterson**



All of you are already aware of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) program and the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) program. Recently the Army decided to merge these two separate programs into one new program called SHARP. This new program keeps our I.A.M. STRONG commitment to prevent sexual assaults before they occur.

Sexual Harassment and Assault Response and Prevention program

I.A.M. STRONG

I.A.M. STRONG is the commitment to combat sexual assaults by engaging all Soldiers in preventing sexual assaults before they occur.

As Soldiers and proud members of our Team, we are duty bound to Intervene, Act, and Motivate others to stop sexual assaults and the sexually offensive language and gestures that create an environment friendly to this abuse.

INTERVENE

When I recognize a threat to my fellow Soldiers, I will have the personal courage to **INTERVENE** and prevent Sexual Assault. I will condemn acts of Sexual Harassment. I will not abide obscene gestures, language or behavior. I am a Warrior and a member of a team. I will **INTERVENE**.

ACT

You are my brother, my sister, my fellow Soldier. It is my duty to stand up for you, no matter the time or place. I will take **ACTION**. I will do what's right. I will prevent Sexual Harassment and Assault. I will not tolerate sexually offensive behavior. I will **ACT**.

MOTIVATE

We are American Soldiers, **MOTIVATED** to keep our fellow Soldiers safe. It is our mission to prevent Sexual Harassment and Assault. We will denounce sexual misconduct. As Soldiers, we are all **MOTIVATED** to take action. We are strongest...together.

MSG Debra Griffin,
HHB, 115 FiB
Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC)
9720-7622 (24/7 contact line)

Forward Joint CBRN Training Helps Fight Global War on Terrorism

By 1st Lt. Benjamin G. Abbott
151 CBRN, 115th Fires Brigade

CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait—More than 50 members of the 151 CBRN BN, 1343rd CBRN Company, Alabama Army National Guard based out of Gadsden and Fort Payne and the 22 Marine Expedition Unit from Camp Lejeune, N.C., currently stationed at Camp Buehring Kuwait recently performed Joint (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear) CBRN response team exercise at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Sept. 3, 2009.

This joint training exercise gave the Soldiers a chance to experience and use new equipment for detecting and containing hazardous materials.

“This evening’s training was a joint exercise to get Marines and the Army working together in a chemical environment,” said Marine Chief Warrant Officer Steven Dancer, the CBRN defense officer for the MEU and native of New Egypt, N.J. “It’s a chance for the [Soldiers] to see new gear that they have not been exposed to yet.”

The service members worked as a five-man team, walking in green hazardous material suits around a training area, scouting for faint chemical traces in cracks and corners of a suspected contaminated building with handheld devices.

“My team is part of the initial entry team,” said Lance Cpl. Jose D. Figueroa, a communication technician with Headquarters and Support Company, Battalion Landing Team, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 22nd MEU and native of San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico. “We went downrange to do the initial site survey and analyzed certain points for the sampling team.”

Dancer said the training gives Marines a chance to interact with another service and to share experiences.



1343rd CBRN trains with sensors that monitor the air and help them determine what chemical agents are present during joint training with the 22nd MEU at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Sept. 3. (photo by Master Sgt. David W. Largent)

“Any hazardous material can be used as a weapon, and we need to be prepared to work with that material to

eliminate the hazard and save lives,” said Dancer.

The different training teams went through the contamination scenario wearing a bulky suit. Many of the same qualities that make the suits impervious to chemicals make them equally impervious to clear communication.

“You’re encapsulated, you have a mask on your face and you’re trying to get a thought through to someone else,” said Dancer. “It can be frustrating when you’re talking through two layers of plastic.”

The muffled voices soon developed into slow annunciated words with hand and arm signals as they overcame the difficulties of communication.

“Communication was a little rough, but I think it was an adapt-and-overcome situation,” said National Guard Sgt. Erik S. Arnold, a team leader with Security Force Area Reaction Force and native of Huntsville, Ala.

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Preparing for the mission, Cpl. Joshua J. Machado, operations NCO, Combat Logistics Battalion, 22nd MEU, briefs Lance Cpl. Kurtzman, Lance Cpl. Barrify and Cpl. Holtsclaw about the location of a leaking canister during joint training between the 22nd MEU and 1343rd Chemical Co., 151st CBRN, 115th Fires Brigade at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Sept. 3. (photo by Master Sgt. David W. Largent)

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“We would have to say things more than once and tap each other on the shoulder.”

“It is not often that we are afforded the opportunity to train jointly with the Marines,” said Lt. Col. Alan B. Naugher, commander, 151 CBRN Battalion. “We have learned some great techniques from the 22nd MEU that we will integrate into our Standard Operating Procedures. I am really proud of how well our Soldiers and Marines quickly jelled together as one CBRN team. CBRN Soldiers play a very important part in fighting the global war on terrorism. I hope that our Soldiers and Marines are never called on to utilize our skills but I am quite sure that because of the readiness exercise performed in the Training Village at Camp Buehring we are ready.”

At the end of the training the Marines and Soldiers had lessons to build on and experience they could take back to their commands to make them more effective at protecting fellow service members.



Chemical sensors, oxygen tanks and other equipment are ready for team members during CBRN training. (photo by Master Sgt. David W. Largent)



CBRN team members are decontaminated during joint training. (photo by Spc. Matthew H. Oda)



Team members clean the area around the previously leaking canister to start the decontamination process. (photo by Master Sgt. David W. Largent)



1343rd Chemical Co., 151st CBRN, 115th Fires Brigade and Marines from the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit are decontaminated during joint training. The water is contained in a tub to prevent further contamination as the service members and equipment are decontaminated. (photo by Spc. Matthew H. Oda)

Seeing more than Sand; It's about the People You Meet

Story and photo by
Sgt. Robert D Walden

Sgt. Lassiter S. Quintana is a Soldier working on the Personal Security Detail (PSD) with the 3-157 Field Artillery, Colo. National Guard. He has been in the military for about five years and has worked in Field Artillery as a Multi Launch Rocket System Crewman (MLRS) for about three years. Before that, he worked as a Mechanized Infantryman.

Quintana and his wife, Katie, have a 6-year-old son named Morgan. When he isn't working as a Soldier, he works as a mason for a small company out of Longmont Colo.

"We do all kinds of masonry throughout Colo. and into Wyo.; stone, block and concrete," Quintana explained as he pointed out the different buildings around Camp Ramadi and how his company at home would have done a much better job.

The 3-157 FA spent the months leading up to the mobilization training their artillerymen for the non-standard mission they would conduct in Iraq.

"We spent three months in Colo. training on Basic Warrior Tasks and other generic things that every Soldier here needs to know," said Quintana. "Then we went to Texas for mobilization training where we were assigned our specific tasks and given training on what each person was going to do," he said.

"It's been an interesting change," Quintana said referring to the transition from being an artilleryman to an infantryman. "A lot of the guys, including myself, were excited about it. It was something different than what we do every drill," he continued. "Doing this is pretty fun and exciting, but I would rather work with the MLRS because that's what I



Sgt. Lassiter S. Quintana

chose to do in the Army, and went to school for."

The PSD is responsible for transporting people safely throughout southern Iraq. They use Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles (MRAPs) to conduct their missions. "We make a plan, and take those who need to go outside of the base wherever they need to go so that they can conduct their business," said Quintana.

"I like the MRAP because it has more armor than the HUMVEE and is designed to withstand blasts," explained Quintana.

"The best thing about my job is that we actually get to go out and see Iraq. We don't have to look over the fence to see what's around us," said Quintana. "We can, with Iraqi Police (IP) support, roll through the cities, get on the highways, and see people doing things in their daily lives. That to me is the best."

Due to the security agreement with Iraq, the IP accompany the U.S.

military while traveling in convoys through the cities. This gives the Soldiers conducting PSD missions more opportunity to work with the IPs.

"When we work with the Iraqi Police they are extremely nice," he said. "The last mission we went on they actually fed us at a little mini mall they were recruiting out of."

During his free time, Quintana watches movies in his room and chats with his Family through the internet.

"I talk to them at least once a week, sometimes three to four times a week depending on my workload and when they are around. I have to get a hold of them through the internet and sometimes that just isn't possible," he said. "I can call home, I just prefer not to go to the call centers. I would rather to get them online for privacy and more intimate discussion."

The Soldiers at Camp Ramadi live in fairly small apartments made by dividing a trailer into two or three rooms. There are usually two people per room.

"Inside my room, we set up a wall of solitude. He's got his side and I've got mine. Some people keep it open," Quintana said. "I wish we had a bathroom but we can't have everything."

Although it's difficult being away from home and Family, Quintana maintains a positive outlook on the yearlong deployment by focusing on everything he gets to experience.

"This is the first time I have been out of the U.S. People kept saying they are sorry I had to go. Well, I'm not sorry I had to go," exclaimed Quintana. "I signed up for the Army knowing that it was a possibility to come over here. I have no regrets about this and I get to see a foreign country, maybe not at the best of times, but I get to see it. I get to see the really nice people and that's the best thing about it." ❀

R&R Tips

Arrive early for your shuttle to ALSA.

- Proceed to Tent 5 upon arrival at LSA.
- The Gateway personnel will fully brief you on your itinerary, customs procedures and travel information.
- Be prepared to stay overnight at LSA in case you do not depart until the following day (i.e. bring toiletries, towel, travel pillow, travel blanket and extra clothing items). You will be staying in an air conditioned tent where linens and pillows are NOT provided if you have to stay overnight.
- There are multiple eateries (KFC, McDonalds, Pizza Hut, Subway, etc.) as well as a DFAC.
- There are two MWR tents and a USO tent for you to relax in while you wait to depart.
- There are two gyms for you to work out while you wait to depart.
- There is an exchange in case you need to purchase anything.
- Once you receive your travel itinerary, departure briefings and clear customs, you will wait in a holding tent for your bus to the airport. There are latrines, a coffee shop and a Pizza Hut at the holding area.
- Upon arrival to the U.S., you will receive a short detailed briefing by the Gateway personnel. They will tell you everything you need to know

about how and when to report back as well as what to do if you encounter an emergency on R&R.

- Don't worry if you arrive at the U.S. and your originally scheduled flight is for that night. You will not have to wait for that flight. There are agents that will direct you to the earliest flight, to your final destination airport, available for that day.
- Your R&R period will begin at midnight of the day you arrive at your final destination airport. (i.e. You arrive at Denver International Airport at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, so your leave begins the next day).

Military Courtesy

First Lt. Thompson and his platoon's newest NCO, Sgt. Jemison, were walking toward the orderly room one morning. As they turned the corner and approached the building, Pfc. Robertson walked out carrying a large box. Pfc. Robertson said, "Good morning, sir," and kept walking past the two. As his hands were occupied, he didn't salute.

But 1st Lt. Thompson saluted and replied with the unit motto, "First Tank!" After the Soldier passed, Sgt. Jemison asked the lieutenant why he saluted since the Soldier did not.

"He did by rendering the greeting of the day. If I had been carrying some-

thing and he wasn't, he would have saluted. It's a privilege, not a chore," said 1st Lt. Thompson. "It's just as important for me to return a salute as for a Soldier to render it."

From FM 7-21.13, pg. 4-3

Command Sgt. Major Comments

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As we reflect on the events of 9/11, I can't help but to be proud of our service members and their Families. The top one percent of the United States population serves in the military with dignity. They are among the most respected group of people around the world. I talked with an 18 year old Soldier yesterday from the 61st Chemical Company, a unit attached to the 115th. He was in the 5th grade when the planes flew into the towers and the Pentagon and felt it was important for him to serve his country.

Talking to him reminded me that we have a duty to our service members, our country and our Families and friends. We need to take care of each other, accomplish the mission, and continue to do the right things for the right reasons.

Every one of us, Families, friends and service members, have earned the right to be proud of what we are doing; answering our Nations calling.

We want your stories, photos, and ideas.

To submit please email us at:

115thFiB_PAO@Kuwait.swa.army.mil

**To view more photographs please visit our
Facebook page at:**

**<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Cheyenne-Wyoming/115th-Fires-Brigade/115980276368?ref=ts>
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