



# A Mile Wide and an Inch Deep



*The Powder River, Sheridan County, Wyo., July 1950*



## Soldiers give gifts, gain new friends

SOUTHERN IRAQ — There are a hundred miles or more separating many cities and towns in Wyoming. Sometimes, there are miles separating neighbors. Despite the anti-social disposition the distances imply, it's the neighborly concern shared by most Wyomingites that converts miles into meters.

For the Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery, converting the metric system used in Iraq and Kuwait into feet and miles can be disheartening.

**See GOOD WILL Pg 6**



2nd Lt. Christian Venhuizen/2-300th FA

**GOOD WILL** — Command Sgt. Maj. Troy Guimond, 2-300th Field Artillery, hands a box of goodies to an Iraqi child, Dec. 26.

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## *A time for a Christmas reflection*

SOUTHERN IRAQ -- Capt. Randy Sawyer, chaplain for the 2-300th Field Artillery, takes a moment to enjoy a holiday musical piece performed by parishioners of the chaplain's Christmas night service at a base in Iraq. The chaplain made the trip from Kuwait that afternoon. See Pages 8 and 9 for more holiday photos from the 2-300th in Iraq and Kuwait.

*"The Powder River, a mile wide and an inch deep, too thick to drink and too thin to plough."*

*- An old timer from Cowboys' past*

# Soldier in the Field:

What is your favorite chow hall food?



**Sgt. Jeffrey Backman, Headquarters:**  
Mongolian Grill.



**1st Sgt. Fawcett, A Battery:** T-bone steaks and shrimp with mashed potatoes, and gravy.



**Spc. Daniel Ingram, A Battery:** Cereal.



**Pfc. Lawrence Spradlin, A Battery:** I actually don't eat at the dining facility.



**Spc. Natalie Macadamia, A Company:** Ice cream.

## Notes from Powder River 6



**Lt. Col. Brian Nesvik**  
"Powder River 6"

First and foremost, I want to take the first part of my comments this month and address the incredible support we received from Wyoming over the Holidays. We received hundreds of packages and good wishes from all of you in Wyoming.

Your thoughts and contributions to our Soldiers is a true testament to the quality of the entire Powder River Team. I routinely brag about Wyoming, and the people who make up the greatest state in the union, and your efforts gave me more reasons to brag. On behalf of the battalion, I want to extend my sincere appreciation for your efforts to make the holidays easier for our Soldiers.

While we don't have a specific date to leave Kuwait, the Powder River Cowboys are hopeful that there are less than 90 days or so until their missions, goals and objectives here, in theater, are complete. We still have a very full plate, including finishing our end-of-tour administrative tasks and evaluations, processing awards and making sure our Soldiers are taken care of.

**See POWDER RIVER 6 Pg 3**

## Chaplain's Corner

One of the dangers we, as individuals and as a nation, face is being in the state of neutrality. That is to say, when important issues in life come along we do everything in our power to stay neutral on the subject.

The philosophy behind this is when someone wants to attack you, they will see that you aren't supporting the other side and so they will leave you alone. This was the condition the people of the Netherlands took during both World War I, and World War II.

The Dutch had not faced war since the days of Napoleon. When forced to fight or be conquered, they had no army, no real way to defend themselves, because they were in a state of neutrality. They believed that no one would attack them because of their position as a neutral nation. When Hitler's tanks began to roll across their borders to invade them, the Dutch had no way to stop the advance. As a result, the Netherlands was conquered by the Axis Powers.

The United States, on the other hand, tried to stay neutral for the longest time during World War II, but when it became clear that we had to either fight or be conquered, we chose to fight.

**See CHAPLAIN Pg 4**



**2-300th FA Chaplain**  
(Capt.) Randy Sawyer



## *Working on the Christmas holiday*



**KUWAIT-IRAQ BORDER** — Soldiers with Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2-300th Field Artillery, pose for a picture in front of a barricade wishing all a Merry Christmas. The Soldiers were at the border preparing for a Christmas Day mission into Iraq.

## POWDER RIVER 6 continued from Page 2

We are planning and executing the enormous task of preparing our replacement unit to take over our mission, and transferring authority to their leaders. Additionally, we will finalize our plans to merge back into our lives with our families and our plans to reintegrate with our Soldiers in the Rear Detachment. These plans include our first several drills which will begin approximately 60 days after our return.

Our first two drills will focus on the Yellow Ribbon Program and family reintegration, as well as closing out all loose ends from the deployment. All of this, and we still conduct our daily missions.

Hopefully, all of this planning and preparation for finishing up our deployment will make the time go by quickly for our Soldiers. I worry about our families back home, and the fact that a long and cold winter has not helped their time go by quite as fast. I am hopeful that our families can find comfort in being able to see the light at the end of the tunnel and that their last 90, or so days of this deployment will go by quickly.

Happy New Year to the Powder River Team!!! 2010 will be a great year marked by the return of the 2-300th from another mission completed in service to our state and nation.

Powder River!

## A Battery's first sergeant celebrating 20-year mark

IRAQ — The day after Christmas is the traditional day of shopping for deals and returning useless presents, but 20 years ago, Dec. 26, it was a day 1st Sgt. Brian Fawcett embarked on the road that eventually led to his caring for more than 100 Soldiers in a combat zone.

Now the Alcova, Wyo., resident serves as the first sergeant for A Battery, 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery, 115th Fires Brigade. It's a distinction he holds dear.

"Becoming a first sergeant is the highlight of my career," Fawcett said. "We have a great unit full of awesome Soldiers."

With 20 years of memories, the first sergeant worries more about his Soldiers' futures than his own.

"I am undecided," he said about the possibility of retirement. "I am trying not to make a decision while on deployment. I do, however, look forward to hunting with my son Tommy, and spending time camping,



**20 YEARS --** 1st Sgt. Brian Fawcett, left, Sgt. Glenn Worley, middle, and Command Sgt. Maj. Troy Guimond stand with the Wyoming state flag on the road to the Ziggurat at Ur, Iraq, Dec. 26, the 20th anniversary of the day Fawcett shipped off to basic training.

fishing and hiking with the family. If I stay in the Army I don't intend to change anything about the way I have approached it in the previous 20 years."

Fawcett started his career at Fort Sill, Okla., for basic training and advanced individual training. He graduated as a forward observer and entered active duty service with an assignment to the 4th Battalion, 11th Field Artillery, stationed at Fort Richardson, Alaska.

It was an assignment that he continued to reap the benefits of. In June 1990, not long after finishing the advanced course, Fawcett met his wife, Joy, in Anchorage. His marriage ranks at the top of the list of things that happened during the first 10 years of his military career.

During that same year, the first sergeant completed Army Airborne training, leading to 31 active duty jumps.

Those jumps include a five-jump day, fondly called a "UHHY blast", when all of the jumps are from a UH-1H helicopter. He ended the first half of his career and his active duty time by serving six months as a deep sea fishing boat pilot at the Seward Army Recreation Camp.

Along the way, Fawcett has made a number of friends, all of whom are among the high points of his last 10 years in service.

**See FIRST SERGEANT Pg 5**

## CHAPLAIN continued from Page 2

Those countries that did not prepare for war were either defeated, or badly damaged. Russia lost 20 million as a result of the war, while America lost 330,000.

Within six months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, we defeated Japan in the battle of Midway. Our nation served notice that it was no longer neutral and that we intended to defeat those who had attacked us.

In the Spiritual realm, the dangers of being neutral can be just as devastating. If you say you are a believer, but, in reality, you show no interest in the things of God, then really you are neutral toward Him. Thus, when you are tempted you easily fall for the temptation and are conquered by it.

The Bible says that if you sin, you are a slave to it. When it comes

to being a Christian, there is no room for being neutral; either you are a believer, and your actions show it, or you're not and your actions show that as well.

The Bible says that God will spit those who call themselves a believer, who are "lukewarm", from His mouth. So which one are you? Don't be neutral any longer; stand and fight the good fight of faith.



## FIRST SERGEANT continued from Page 4

The first sergeant notes his friendships with Capt. Dean Hunhoff, Sgt. 1st Class Fred Uhrich, and Sgt. 1st Class Eric Holloway, all with the Wyoming Army National Guard are just a few among many.

Also on the list of people he was glad to befriend is Command Sergeant Major Troy Guimond, the current command sergeant major deployed with the 2-300th Field Artillery. In fact, Fawcett helped Guimond harvest his first elk, a small bull, recalled the first sergeant, back in 2007.

"1st Sgt. Fawcett is not only one of the best noncommissioned officers that I have had the privilege to serve with, he is also a good friend. I would do anything for him and I know he would do the same for me," Guimond said. "It was a great elk hunt back in 2007. Not only because I got my first elk, but also because I got it with Brian."

The two noncommissioned officers first met in 1995, when Fawcett was serving as an Active Guard and Reserve administration NCO for Service Battery, 1st Battalion, 49th Field Artillery, in Lovell, Wyo. Fawcett recalls Guimond was the readiness NCO with A Battery, in Gillette, Wyo. The eventually became friends in 2000.

"This has been a long deployment. Sometimes what makes it bearable is the ability to spend it with good people like 1st Sgt. Fawcett. We are already talking about hunting trips when we return," the command sergeant major said. "It was my honor to spend a part of my day with Brian as he reached a milestone of 20 years of military service."

The secret to Fawcett's success is "keeping a positive attitude, looking for the good in people, and always trying to do your best and always keeping your 'house' in order, so no one has to re-do or do your work and tasks for you. Always be honest, with yourself and others." He noted the honesty policy sometimes has a bitter flavor.

Over the last 20 years, the first sergeant has had a taste of much of what life and the Army has to offer. Some of it OK.

"Technology and email," he said, noting advances in technology are a definite positive, but still with a cautious tone. "It allows us to get more done quicker and easier, yet I think we try to do too much and don't focus on the big picture training soldiers."

Some of it not so much.

"The kinder gentler Army is also disheartening, the same as in society, we worry too much about hurting people's feelings," he said. "True



NCO's take care of soldiers, everything falls in place if that happens."

Some of it good.

"The good thing I have seen in the past 20 years is more patriotism in society, and better equipment, and pay for Soldiers," Fawcett said.

Regardless of the holiday, personal or not, the first sergeant is on a mission. Christmas Day was no exception. He spent the day on a mission from Kuwait, into Iraq with his battery. He spent his 20-year-day on a reconnaissance mission with another 2-300th battery. That recon mission also included an opportunity to hand out gift boxes to Iraqi children – maybe the first highlight of his next 10 years.

## GOOD WILL continued from Page 1



2LT Christian Venhuizen/2-300th FA

**FROM WYOMING TO IRAQ -- A 2-300th Field Artillery Soldier passes a box to an Iraqi child, Dec. 26 during a reconnaissance mission to southern Iraq.**

Despite the long distances they often travel back home, the more than 7,000 miles, apx. 12,000 kilometers, between their snowy Wyoming stomping grounds and the sandy landscape of the Middle East is a whole new ravine.

That's where nearly 1,000 bridges come in -- "mailed in" would be appropriate.

Enter the people who sent somewhere around 1,000 care packages to

the Powder River Cowboys. The boxes were filled with candy, hard and soft, chewy and crunchy, chocolate and fruity. The boxes were filled with jerky, homemade and store bought, elk, deer, beef, and seasoned from traditional to teriyaki. The boxes had music, videos, books, games, playing cards, toiletries, and many, many cards and letters.

It seemed that since the Soldiers could not make it to Wyoming, Wyo-

ming would take over every available corner of Camp Virginia, one care package at a time.

It was enough to not only allow Wyoming Soldiers to have just one care package, but three. It was also enough to allow the Soldiers from other states serving as members of the 2-300th to partake to the same degree.

When all of the first sergeants finished handing out presents and they hung up their Santa hats and tallied just a few boxes remaining. Realizing that a dental crisis was in the making, the remaining boxes of candy and jerky were marked for distribution to the people the Soldiers call "neighbor."

On Christmas Day, the load of boxes, one command sergeant major, a chaplain with a Christmas tent full of parishioners awaiting, and a military reporter were loaded onto a convoy headed into Iraq. Between Camp Virginia and the Iraqi border, the boxes were opened, and mailing labels, holiday cards, letters and books were removed. Like back home in Wyoming, there was quite some distance required to visit.

The first few boxes were handed to the men at the fuel station just inside of Kuwait, a few more passed out to those who help the convoys before they roll into harm's way. The next few were handed to the guards outside of the base in southern Iraq. The remainder would wait a day.

Starting in the morning, the gun trucks rolled down the road. As so often the case, the children ran out from their dwellings and dusty play areas to chase the trucks for a trinket, or sweet snack.

**See SHARE Pg 7**



## SHARE continued from Page 6

Instead of rolling by, this time the trucks stopped. Security precautions taken, a few of the Soldiers made their way out of the vehicles to hand a few boxes to the outstretched arms of the clamoring youth.

Boys, girls, from young grade school ages to teenagers, they came. Some dressed in more traditional clothes for their region; others sported more western attire, including leather jackets.

The chaplain, always a sucker for a good deed, couldn't help but be one of the first to pass along a box or two, with the bonus gift of a smile on his face.

Any attempt to maintain the façade of an old cantankerous noncommissioned officer were nullified by those able to see the command sergeant major grinning as he passed the gifts from his truck. Of course the fun was quickly spent as the mission required the troops to move on.



2LT Christian Venhuizen/2-300th FA

**A CHAPLAIN'S KINDNESS** -- Capt. Randy Sawyer, chaplain for the 2-300th Field Artillery, hands a box of goodies to an Iraqi child, Dec. 26, during a reconnaissance mission. The chaplain was catching a ride to Kuwait following his Christmas sermon when he jumped at the opportunity to give.



2LT Christian Venhuizen/2-300th FA

**MOTHERLOAD** -- An Iraqi child has his arms full of boxes of goodies from the people of Wyoming, via the 2-300th Field Artillery, Dec. 26

With just a few boxes left, the crews inside the trucks stopped

at the required Iraqi checkpoints and passed along their well wishes and the goodies before making their way back into Kuwait.

There is no way to measure the affect the acts of good will had on the Iraqis or any of the others that received a little bit of Wyoming's generosity. Of course, the hope is that it adds another layer of positives to the relationships our Soldiers have with those they deal with. That in turn may make their missions a little safer for all Americans in the region.

The positives were more evident on our Soldiers, who, for a few hours were able to return to their Wyoming roots and values. For the gun truck crews, this was a change of pace. Besides simply pulling security, they were able to give a little of their home back to their new neighbors.

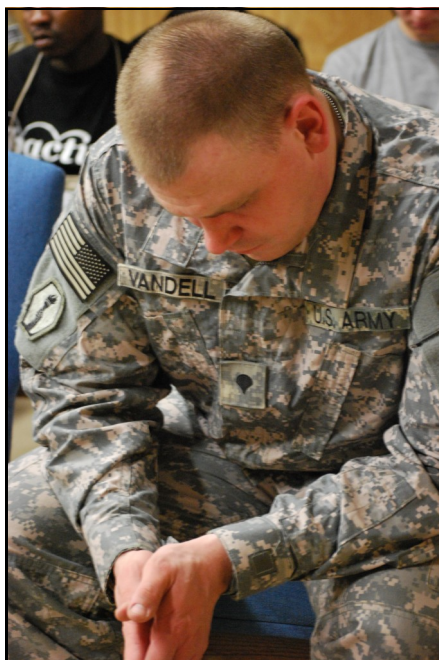
The bridges that began 12,000 kilometers in the snowy plains and mountains of Wyoming became a bridge to a brighter December for those on the trucks and maybe a bridge to a brighter New Year for all in harm's way.



# A festive 2-300th holiday season



CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait — The Soldiers of the 2-300th celebrate the winter holidays with around 1,000 gift boxes from Wyoming and elsewhere, and special activities. Top left, Sgt. Kate Penrose, A Company, wraps a holiday gift box sent by well wishers. Top right, Sgt. Glenn Worley, A Battery, passes gift boxes as they are offloaded from a bus to the batteries. Bottom left, 1st Sgt. Mike Warner, Headquarters Battery, hands out gift boxes with a little Christmas touch. Bottom middle, Spc. Elisha Vandell, chaplain's assistant for the 2-300th Field Artillery, bows his head in prayer during a Christmas service in southern Iraq. Bottom right, A Company 1st Sgt. Mike Strasser, arranges presents under the company's live Christmas tree. Photos by 2nd Lt. Christian Venhuizen, 2-300th FA





# Holiday pics from the home front



**BACKHOME, USA** — A request for photos from families celebrating the winter holidays turned up this group of youngsters.

In the top left photo are B Battery 1st Sgt. Robert Butz's children holding up blankets they got from a Soldier Support Group in Lander. From left to right is Courtney Butz, Cody Butz and David Butz. The little guy up front is Robert Butz Jr. (RJ).

The top right photo is of Emmersen and Brogen Hauf on New Year's Eve. Staff Sgt. Shawn Hauf's daughter and son.

The bottom left photo shows Brogen

Hauf sitting in his Bumbo chair playing with his new colorful rope ball on Christmas. While the middle right photo has Emmersen Hauf with her pink guitar that Santa left her Christmas morning.

In the bottom right is Madison Clancy, daughter of Staff Sgt. Michael Clancy, ringing in the New Year.



*A Mile Wide and an Inch Deep* is a publication of the public affairs office of the 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery Regiment. The publication is an authorized publication. The views and opinions expressed in *A Mile Wide and an Inch Deep* are not necessarily those of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Army. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the 2-300th Field Artillery public affairs officer. *A Mile Wide and an Inch Deep* is a monthly publication.

All contributions, questions, comments and suggestions should be submitted via e-mail to: christian.venhuizen@us.army.mil. All materials submitted will be screened for security, accuracy, policy, clarity and space.

Battalion Commander: Lt. Col. Brian Nesvik  
Public Affairs Officer: 2nd Lt. Christian Venhuizen

# Employers support 2-300th

CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait – When Sgt. Allen Price headed out on his second tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, he had only been in his job two years, hired right after his return from his first tour. Little did he know the level of support his employer, Emit Technologies, in Sheridan, Wyo., has for the military.

It began with allowing Price, a shop foreman for the company, time off for any military event that came up.

Price, a member of the Wyoming Army National Guard's Honor Guard, would regularly ask and receive time off to render military honors at funerals for local veterans, that's on top of his drills and training with Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery.

"They thought it was really great," he said. "They never hassled me about taking time off."

What he didn't expect was the extent Emit would go to make sure Price, his wife Jessica and their children were cared for when the sergeant deployed. First there was the send off party. Then a certificate for his wife to make sure the lawn was mowed, weeds were pulled and the snow was always shoveled. Emit then paid for a new egress window well and installation for their home.

## The impact of job stability on a Soldier

As National Guardsmen, the Soldiers deal with concerns their active duty counterparts don't often consider. Questions like "will I have a job when I return," or "will my boss still support me being in the Guard," after a deployment occur within the ranks.

To assist with some of the more pressing job concerns, the Wyoming Army National Guard will send a career and jobs counselor, specialized in helping Soldiers build resumes, prepare for interviews and contacting potential employers to Kuwait. The effort is a short stint in the combat zone, but one with a potential to help Soldiers look for and begin new careers when they readjust to civilian life.

***'It's a big piece of mind knowing I don't have to worry about my family and it's pretty darn neat.'***

**- Sgt. Allen Price**

For those that have a job and want to keep their job volunteers with the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserves (ESGR) are available to the Soldiers via email or phone call while deployed, or in person before and after deployments.

Federal laws like the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act are implemented to prevent Soldiers from

losing their jobs or the benefits and salaries that come with them, but that doesn't always soothe the Soldier's concerns.

Worrying about a job can be disastrous for a Soldier in harm's way. Besides taking the Soldier's focus from an already dangerous mission, commanders are warned those concerns could fester into depression leading to anger or other self destructive behavior.

## Going way beyond support

When the family car was damaged in a hit-and-run accident, an Emit employee escorted Jessica Price to the body shop to make sure the repair estimate was correct.

**See EMPLOYERS Pg 11**



## EMPLOYERS continued from Page 10

"It shows they really do care about you and they care about their employees and you're going to want to do better for them," Price said of his loyalty to the company. "It's a big peace of mind knowing I don't have to worry about my family and it's pretty darn neat."

Emit not only fully supported all of the time off Price needed to train for the year-long mission, but the company sent its jet to Texas, where the Wyoming Army National Guardsman was training. The jet carried Price and a few other Headquarters Soldiers, at no cost to them, or the Army, on a round-trip journey back to Wyoming to see their families before heading to Kuwait.

"That was freaking awesome," Price said. "Originally they were talking about sending Jess and the kids down... It shows that they really do care and they understand what everyone is going through."

### Doing their part

Not all employers have a corporate jet, or can afford to do what Emit did for the Price family, sometimes because there are so many National Guardsmen and Reservists to take care of.

Spc. Chad Mitchell, of Lingle, Wyo., assigned to A Company, works for Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad in Douglas, Wyo. "They really support the military and they give me a percentage of my pay while over here," he said. Mitchell's salary working track maintenance for the railroad is greater than his military pay.

The company's efforts also extend to the traditional National Guard training cycle. Mitchell said

his boss, Charlie McCoy, helped him plan out a schedule that allowed him to attend drills and ensured his pay wasn't affected.

"When I first hired on with the company, they told me they support the military," he said, noting he has no concern that he will have a job when he returns home. "It's a super big relief, a really big relief that I can come back and jump into my job."

### Even government agencies have a role

Spc. Randy Starkey, of Lusk, Wyo., assigned to A Company, is a Wyoming Highway Patrolman when he isn't called to serve his nation. What his division has done speaks to the character of his fellow troopers.

"They've gone over and fixed fences at my house and help haul hay. They check in with my wife and kids all of the time," Starkey said. "They even offered to take them hunting because I wasn't home this year... It takes a lot of the worry and stress away."

That's while he's been in Kuwait. When he's home, the troopers take turns covering his shifts so he can attend weekend training drills with the National Guard.

His Highway Patrol Division Lieutenant, Nathan Hughes, has made the hay haul at least three times and is a regular fill-in for those weekend drills. Starkey said his captain, Willie Price, is also a big supporter of the Wyoming National Guard.

Starkey said the level of support may have something to do with empathy and patriotism. He said there are at least two in his Highway Patrol

division that have military backgrounds.

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department has also been a major supporter. The 2-300th's commander, Lt. Col. Brian Nesvik, is a Game and Fish game warden.

Personally, Game and Fish staff have helped Nesvik by hauling hay, loading 10 tons of it into his barn loft. That's including providing the colonel all the time needed to prepare for the deployment.

"I have been blessed to have a job that provides me the tools to protect two things I care about, Wyoming's wildlife and my country," Nesvik said. "Wyoming Game and Fish is nothing short of a model employer when it comes to supporting the military."

In Kuwait, the Game and Fish office provided several boxes of Wyoming Wildlife and Wildlife News periodicals, enough for all interested in the battalion.

That's on top of the Game and Fish Department, working with Nesvik, to provide hunter education training to all Soldiers interested throughout the 2-300th in Kuwait. The course was the first taught outside of the U.S. and the first in a combat zone.

"It's nothing short of amazing," Nesvik said. "To see, hear and experience for myself the support of our employers is humbling. I am keenly aware of the sacrifices all of our employers and families make for us to be able to defend our nation."



## A Battery

### BOHICA (Because of Honor I Choose Alpha)

From Capt. Kevin Messamer, commander, A Battery, and 2nd Lt. Tony Gerrell, platoon leader, A Battery

December is out 'a here and one more month is down in the books. We also have a new year to look forward to in 2010.

The year 2010 should be for most a good year, because we won't be spending the majority of it in the sand!

For the month of December, we continued with our missions. We also continued with training by conducting ranges for bragging rights (highest average battery weapons qualification score) within the battalion for the Commander's Cup, a series of contests to build morale.

Also, we received countless, because we lost count, care packages from caring individuals, family, businesses, organizations, and school children. Thanks goes out to our first sergeant for rallying support for our Soldiers while he was home on leave in October. They hooked us up with care packages that filled our mail



2nd Lt. Christian Venhuizen/2-300th FA

**QUICK DISCUSSION** — Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan Gillespie, A Battery, talks to another Soldier on a weapons range in Kuwait, Dec. 15.

room to where walking around was a hard task to accomplish.

For some of our Soldiers, this was the first time that many have been away from home on an important holiday, such as Christmas and New Years. It was easy to walk through the tents at night or listen on as we waited to depart on a mission and hear where they were at this time last year.

For me, I was in Florida, on leave from Basic Officer Leadership Course, with my family soaking up the sunshine, fishing with Granddaddy and roping with Daddy.

Here's what some other Soldiers remembered about last Christmas:

"I was sitting at home, hanging with the fam," said Staff Sgt. David Kingman.

**See A BATTERY Pg 13**



2nd Lt. Christian Venhuizen/2-300th FA

**JUST MAKING SURE** — 2nd Lt. Charlton Cornell, A Battery, checks the weapons of Staff Sgt. Christopher Urman before entering a weapons range in Kuwait, Dec. 15.



## A BATTERY continued from Page 12

“Got drunk, hung with the family,” said Sgt. Daniel Lee.

“Spent time with daughters,” said Spc. Rubin Mendez.

“Getting ready to go to New Mexico,” said Spc. William T. Kirlin.

“Took the girlfriend out to dinner at the parent’s house,” said Spc. Andrew Keefe.

“Spent time in Wyoming with friends,” said Pfc. Johny Fosdick

“Spent time with wife and four kids,” said Spc. Jeffery Brooks.

“Spent time with family,” Spc. Eric Ardizzone.

“Spent quality time with loved ones,” Sgt. Warren Fry Daddy.

“Spent time with wife and kids,” said Sgt. Robert Morgan.

“Spent time with my new wife and our families,” said Pfc. Ross Roper.

The Christmas of 2009 and New Years of 2010



2nd Lt. Christian Venhuizen/2-300th FA

**STARE DOWN** — 1st Lt. Jason Ruff, A Battery, assists on a weapons range in Kuwait, Dec. 15.

will always be a memory that we will never forget, no matter if we want to, or not. We will also remember the Soldiers that stood beside us and kept us from going crazy with us being away from the family back home!

We are on the downward slope of this deployment and look forward for the next month’s newsletter and know that our time here is drawing to a close!

— 2nd Lt. Tony Gerrell

### Commander’s Note

By Capt. Kevin Messamer

I would like to personally thank all of you for the overwhelming support you provided us during the Christmas season. It was hard not to view Christmas as just another day in the desert, especially since our battery rolled on mission into Iraq again.

Your support through care packages, pictures, cards, and letters made the difference. We were also able to share some of the spoils with some less fortu-

nate Iraqi children along one of the routes we travel quite frequently.

Our replacement unit is now at the mobilization site and training to come relieve us!!! Before we know it, they will be on the ground and we will be training them on the intricacies of our mission and headed back to all of you.

Thank you again for everything you do to support our Soldiers and I look forward to seeing you all in a few months.

## B Battery



### The Double Digit Midgets

Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Lengerich, platoon sergeant, B Battery

As I write this, folks back home are bedded down and will awake to New Year's Eve Day. Trust me when I say this, we would all rather be spending New Year's Eve with you. Watching the ball in New York drop, spending time with friends and family, and spirits flowing... all will be missed. To quote a character from the old Charlton Heston movie *Mountain Men*, "I want some whiskey!" But this too will pass.

Things here are operating as normal, normal being constant change. Third Platoon operated sustainment missions in the beginning and is currently tasked with the Quick Reaction and Area Reaction Force missions.

First Squad, Third Platoon is still working as "filler elements" for the battery. Those young men have been called upon time and time again to fill in on short notice for sick and injured Soldiers, or for those that are gone on

R&R. First and Second platoons continue to plug away at the sustainment mission.

Planning here has switched gears a bit. Talk now is centering around redeployment. The packing list will be handed out soon, loading up footlockers for customs inspections is only a short time away.

Soldiers will begin mailing home, or offloading items procured during deployment to lighten their bags. All these things provide us a light at the end of the tunnel. Some Soldiers talked of post deployment plans and days off with new babies or new wives. Job hunting has begun for others.

Currently, we have fewer than 100 days left before we return home. Back in the day, Soldiers who reached that bench-



2nd Lt. Christian Venhuizen/2-300th FA

**DELIVERY** — Sgt. Jeffrey Milton, B Battery, delivers holiday packages.

mark on deployments were known as "double digit midgets." I guess that makes us all midgets.

Before too long, our replacements will be on ground and things will be ramping up as we train those who will replace us and we'll show them the ropes. Slowly, Soldiers will be moved from missions and the waiting game will begin. We will wait for the

process to unfold and the long flight to Fort Hood to begin. At Fort Hood, we will out-process, turn in some gear and load back onto the plane bound for Wyoming.

Christmas has past and 2010 is here. Soon we will be home. To our loved ones we say thank you for all you have done for us this past holiday season and we will see you soon.





## Wardog Bite

Capt. Glenn Nicholson, commander, C Battery

Happy New Year and hello again from Camp Virginia. Another month has passed and it seems the days continue to pass in rapid succession. It's 2010 already. It seems as though Y2K was just yesterday.

December was another busy month for the Wardogs. Convoy missions continue at a steady rate. The battery has traveled over 400,000 accident-free miles, an impressive feat considering the operating environment.

Charlie Battery has escorted over 20,000 tons of food and supplies and more than 15 million gallons of fuel to Iraq. The Soldiers continue to impress, on a daily basis, with their professionalism and devotion to duty.

Now that the calendar says 2010, there is a new buzz in the air that our days in theater are growing very short.

Many Charlie Battery Soldiers will move to new location on the Camp. This is an effort to make room for the relieving unit. Although Soldiers will give up a tent they have called home for the last several months; this move signifies a major

step towards wrapping up our mission.

Overall, the mission has remained fairly stable, however there are some changes in the theater that will pose a challenge for us all. I am confident Charlie Battery will continue to persevere with the same "can do spirit" witnessed over the



Photo Courtesy of C Battery

**SUPPLY RANGERS** — Pictured, seated in the foreground, are Staff Sgt. John Mickelson, 1st Lt. Robert Lejeune; in the bed seated is Spc. Tyrell Gullickson; standing is Sgt. Joseph Mock.

first of half of the deployment.

We all embraced Christmas in the Sand Box. No Christmas tree in the command post, but several Soldiers decorated their living quarters. Some even went so far as to decorate the interior of their military vehicles.

**See C BATTERY Pg 16**

## C BATTERY continued from Page 15



Photo Courtesy of C Battery

**GREEN GRASS, REALLY! — Camels graze the green grass found in the desert following sporadic rain showers in the winter months.**

Although the Christmas decorations were somewhat sparse, the volume of packages sent from home was simply amazing. For several days in a row the mail call looked like a UPS delivery to a toy store. Charlie Battery received enough care packages for each Soldier to have at least three apiece.

At one point, 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Tim Metro had a large shipping container full of Christmas care packages. 1st Sgt. Metro and Sgt. 1st Class Spencer Jolley played Santa Claus, delivering a package to each Soldier on Christmas Day.

The outpouring of support from all that sent packages was simply overwhelming. Thank you!

Charlie Battery continues to explore many off duty activities. Physical training continues to be a popular pursuit; probably something to do with the New Year and resolutions. Never the less, many Soldiers looked more “buffed” since arriving in theater.

The USO continues to be a popular hangout. Video games and gaming are a common off duty pursuit. However, the video football games grow quite intense.

The Commander’s Cup competition is in full swing. Over the past month, Charlie Battery has competed in volleyball, 3-on-3 basketball, poker, and a 5K fun run. The Wardogs have not won a single event...that is okay, this competition is a marathon not a sprint.

The weather is very pleasant, highs in the 70’s and lows in the 50’s, with a rain shower here and there just enough to settle the dust. The landscape is still dominated by sand, however in low spots there is green tinge of grass/weeds. Amazing what a little water can do for the environment. Whatever is growing the camels seem to enjoy.

Once again, have a happy New Year. See you soon.





## Notes from Alpha Company, 960th Brigade Support Battalion

1st Sgt. Mike Strasser, first sergeant, A Company

Although no snow, Santa still found his way to the doorsteps of all our Soldiers. With all the support from family and friends back home, we received hundreds of care packages – ensuring each Soldier would not be without.

The month started out with a gift of a live pine tree to remind us of home. 1st Sgt. Santa Strasser gathered his elves to decorate the tree and wrap the many approximately 400 care packages that were sent from the wonderful supporters of the Alpha Company Soldiers. Christmas Day brought a *chilly* 75 degrees, with Soldiers gathering around for a large Christmas Feast – a barbeque at the softball field and had a wonderful time.

December was another busy month for Alpha Company. Here in Kuwait, we have now traveled over 600,000 miles on the Kuwaiti highway, doing great things for our fellow Soldiers.

It is hard to believe that we are only a couple months from coming home.

Speaking of coming home, we were able to bring all of the Third Platoon Soldiers and move them back on to Camp Virginia to bring all of Alpha Company together. This has made it more comfortable for all of our Soldiers to be together for the rest of our time in Kuwait.

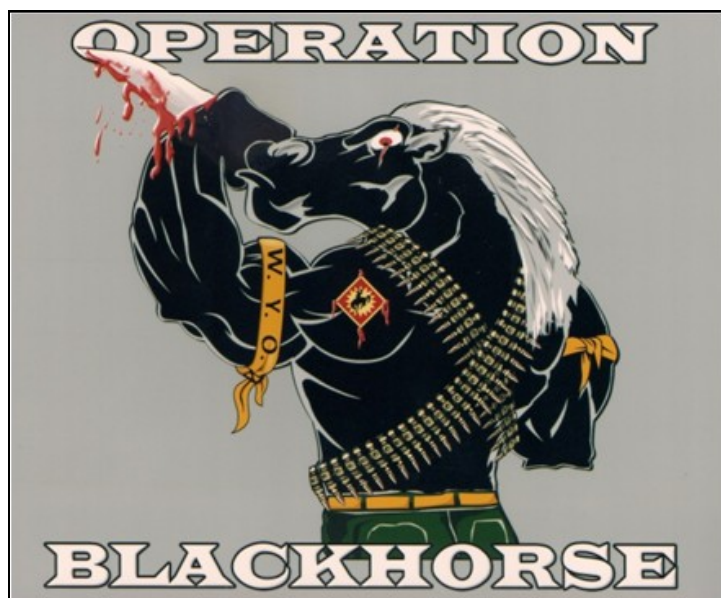
It has started off to be an exciting new year already.

Our replacements have reported to their mobilization station for their training to replace us over here in Kuwait.

On to a new year, it is 2010 and it is the Year Alpha Company Soldiers will return back home to our friends and family. With the new year, it is now the time that we make New Year's Resolutions, remember to keep your resolutions realistic and attainable.

The most common is to get healthy, but what do we all really want? The answer is easy, we want to make it home safely. So make resolutions that include your families and friends, for 2010 is a year of reuniting!

**See A COMPANY Pg 18**



New A Company logo

## A COMPANY continued from Page 17

### A Company Soldier of the Month



Spc. Willie Lee Turner was selected as Alpha Company's Soldier of the Month. Turner is an exceptional Soldier who works with little, or no supervision. All tasks provided to Turner are accomplished completely and thoroughly. Turner is assigned as a driver and bus truck commander. He is tasked with all pre and post mission responsibilities. As a driver he secures the vehicle and does appropriate preventative maintenance checks and services prior to travel. All discrepancies are annotated and forwarded up his chain of command. Turner maintains all documentation before, during and prior to mission. He has successfully navigated thousands of miles on a daily basis, transporting thousands of Soldiers without incident, or loss to government property. Turner's concern for safety is second to none. Turner navigated out of harm's way when he successfully avoided a tire which suddenly broke loose from a trailer only two car-lengths in front of him on the highway. Turner constantly identifies all hazards and unsafe acts on all missions he is part of.

### A Company NCO of the Month



Sgt. Provost has proved to be rock solid for his team as he was selected for Alpha Company's Non-Commissioned Officer of the Month. During mission time he can be seen conducting troop leading procedures and pre-combat checks. After missions, he trains and mentors his Soldiers. Provost has proved to be a great leader by not letting complacency change his leadership responsibilities. He has been complemented by Airport of Departure Command for enforcing safety standards on the flight line, which they say has been rare in the past. His pride in his role as an NCO has led to his team being one of the best in his platoon. His Soldiers display great Army values and he is a great role model for Soldiers and NCO's alike.







## Let'r Buck!

**Capt. Troy Wacaser, commander, Headquarters Battery**



**2nd Lt. Christian Venhuizen/2-300th FA**

**CHRISTMAS HAUL — Spc. Matthew Burns, Headquarters Battery, is excited to receive his Christmas packages sent by Wyoming supporters of the 2-300th FA.**

ing your well wishes only binds us tighter as Soldiers who serve to ensure a brighter future for us all.

We hope you have a wonderful start to this New Year and look forward to seeing you this spring.

Powder River, let'r buck!

As the commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery, 115th Fires Brigade, I would like to extend the appreciation of all of the Soldiers in our unit for the outpouring of support shown by the residents of Wyoming and throughout the U.S..

We were pleasantly swamped with care packages, holiday cards, well wishes and banners. Literally hundreds of packages, and probably 1,000 cards made their way to the Soldiers in our battery and I know the other batteries all have very similar stories to tell.

We received jerky, confections and all sorts of magazines, newspapers, books and more. Boxes were passed out to Soldiers to open just before Christmas. They lined up with smiles on their faces as each received no less than three boxes and 10 greeting cards.

The effort to pack these boxes with thoughtfulness and kindness inspires the same in us all. The best gift received was having a tangible showing of support for our service and sacrifices – knowing that we were not forgotten.

While we couldn't share our glad tidings with our brothers and sisters, moms and dads, husbands and wives, we were able to share it with each other. The bonds we formed while gone for so long help to create our own sense of family. Sharing