



A Mile Wide and an Inch Deep



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



Powder River skipper takes top brigade job



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

GUIDED TOUR — Lt. Col. Brian Nesvik, left, gives Maj. Gen. Ed Wright, Wyoming's adjutant general, a tour of Camp Virginia, Kuwait. Nesvik takes over as the 115th Fires Brigade Commander.

CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait — Lt. Col. Brian Nesvik, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery, will take command of the 115th Fires Brigade in June.

He replaces Col. Richard Knowlton, who will attend the U.S. Army War College.

"It's been a great honor to serve with the Powder River Team on two deployments," Nesvik said. "Leading the brigade through reintegration, refit and reset is a great opportunity that I'm looking forward to."

As the incoming Brigade Commander, Nesvik conducted a thorough selection process and named Ltc. Gregory Phipps as his replacement to command the 2-300th.

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Relief in place begins for Powder River Cowboys

CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait — The beginning to the end is almost over for the Powder River Cowboys of the 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery, as the Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 124th Infantry complete their training to take over the 2-300th's missions.

The 2-124th's main body began arriving in early March, providing the 2-300th Soldiers with the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. Training to take over the missions began as soon as the new battalion finished test firing their weapons. Plans remain to transfer authority over the missions to the 2-124th in late March.

"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:

If Lady Luck isn't with our plane, where would you prefer it go kaput?



Sgt. Faustino Hisquierdo, Headquarters: Awww shoot, Casper, Wyo.



Spc. Mark Reilly, C Battery: Ireland.



Spc. Jeffrey Wilson, C Battery: I hope it doesn't break down at all.



Spc. Tyrell Gullickson, C Battery: Right in the Cody area and you can send me home from there.



Sgt. Thomas Hemminger, Headquarters Battery: I want to go home and get to Wyoming, bypass Texas altogether.

Notes from Powder River 6



Lt. Col. Brian Nesvik
"Powder River 6"

This is our last deployed newsletter, which is, by all means, a good thing. The relief-in-place by our replacement unit, the 2nd Battalion, 124th Infantry, from the Florida National Guard, is in full swing. We are very encouraged by the Soldiers of the Florida

Guard, and our transition with them is going very well.

With this being our last newsletter, I would like to thank and congratulate 2nd Lt. Christian Venhuizen for the outstanding job he did in putting together "A Mile Wide and an Inch Deep." The newsletters that he put together over the past year were of the highest quality and were undoubtedly the best in the Brigade. 2nd Lt. Venhuizen's efforts ensured that everyone on the Powder River Team had the ability to keep informed on the activities and doings of the Powder River Cowboys. Great job Christian!!

See POWDER RIVER 6 Pg 3

Chaplain's Corner

Saying goodbye to Camp Virginia is going to be a bittersweet task. For several months, the men and women of the 115th have labored, trained, laughed, and cried together here. Friendships and bonds have been formed and strengthened. Lives have been touched and lives have been changed. It has been such a privilege for me to serve with the men and women here.

I know that some have been ready to say goodbye since we first arrived in July! I know, though, that we all will miss parts of this camp.

For me, I will miss seeing all the Soldiers getting ready for mission, the combat escort teams scrambling around, trying to get to the White Lot. I will miss participating in the command update briefs twice a week. I will miss the civilians who work at the USO, and the Morale Welfare and Recreation Center. I will miss the chow hall and the friendly service I received there each day. I will miss hearing Reveille, Retreat and Taps and the clear night sky with the stars gleaming brightly.

See CHAPLAIN Pg 5



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

2-300th Commanders and First Sergeants



CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait—The Powder River Cowboys commanders and first sergeants stand, from left, Maj. James Ezell, A Company; Capt. Glenn Nicholson, C Battery; Capt. Fred Nasredine, B Battery; Capt. Kevin Messamer, A Battery; Capt. Troy Wacaser, Headquarters Battery; Lt. Col. Brian Nesvik, battalion commander, Spc. Charles Leaver, guidon bearer; Command Sgt. Maj. Troy Guimond, battalion command sergeant major; 1st Sgt. Michael Warner, Headquarters Battery; 1st Sgt. Brian Fawcett, A Battery; 1st Sgt. Robert Butz, B Battery; 1st Sgt. Tim Metro, C Battery; and 1st Sgt. Mike Strasser, A Company.

POWDER RIVER 6 continued from Page 2

Here are a few of the accomplishments that the Powder River Cowboys can claim with pride as a result of their service in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom:

- More than 15,500 convoy security and personnel security missions successfully completed;
- More than 3.2 million miles driven (that's almost 8,650 trips from Cheyenne to Evanston);
- Integration of over 200 Soldiers from outside units into the battalion from at least 36 different states;
- More than 500,000 Department of Defense personnel moved and secured in Kuwait (more than the entire population of Wyoming);
- Secured more than 48,000 logistics trucks into Iraq (that many trucks lined up in a single line would stretch from Cheyenne to Evanston);
- Maintained accountability of over \$94 million

worth of military equipment;

- Maintained an operation readiness rate of 98-percent on over 170 tactical vehicles.

Provided command and control, communications support, logistical support, intelligence support, medical support and electronic warfare support for over 680 Soldiers operating in three different countries.

I am very proud of our Soldiers and all of those on the Powder River Team for the tremendous sacrifices they endured in honor of their state and nation. I thank each and every one of you for your contribution to all that the unit has accomplished. I also thank our veterans of the past who established the high standard of service we enjoy. We stand on their shoulders as we execute our missions today.

POWDER RIVER, LET'R BUCK!

A good listener doing his best for 2-300th Soldiers

CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait — An emphasis by the U.S. Army and by the Wyoming Army National Guard regarding maintaining good mental health amongst its Soldiers has one major's ears burning in the hot desert sun.

Maj. Leon Chamberlain is the mental health officer for the 115th Fires Brigade. He is the only mental health officer for the entire brigade stretching from the gulf ports of Kuwait into Iraq.



Maj. Leon Chamberlain

He's a familiar face at Camp Virginia, and the 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery, spending time with Soldiers, often just a quick chat, sometimes a longer one.

"You get to know the individuals," Chamberlain said.

He said many military mental health providers only see the Soldiers for the duration of the Soldiers' deployment, or for the remainder of the provider's deployment, stopping the treatment mid stream.

Since his patients are in the field, working up to 12 hours, or more a day, Chamberlain is out there with them.

"Walking up, talking to them, sitting down on the curb with them, working with them in the evening hours, before and after training," he said of his methods. "They knew that they could approach me, that there wasn't any mechanism to have to get permission to come to talk to me. There was an open door."

A consummate listener with a masters degree in social work, Chamberlain provides a relief valve, albeit he's one of one mental health professionals working in the brigade. That means he tries to make the most of his time when he's with the battalion.

"I think in a company (having a mental health officer) would probably work well," he said of the need for those in his profession. "But with limited assets, one is better than none."

A Major Promotion at A Company



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

CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait — A Company, 960th Brigade Support Battalion, commander Maj. James Ezell, is doused with the 960th's traditional mop bucket water following his promotion ceremony at Camp Virginia, Kuwait, March 2. A Company is attached to the 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery.



2-300th Battalion Staff Sections



CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait —The Powder River Cowboys senior members of the battalion staff sections, including communications, administration, intelligence, logistics, operations and medical, take time for a picture together with the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Brian Nesvik, and command sergeant major, Command Sgt. Maj. Troy Guimond.

CHAPLAIN continued from Page 2

Most of all, I will miss the chapel and the Soldiers who worshiped with me for these long months. There is something wonderful in being here, on this soil, in the part of the world where Jesus walked and ministered, and

died. Worshiping here, praising His name with His people, has been one of my greatest blessings.

God has truly sustained us here. He has gone before us, walked beside us, and will be ever with us as we leave here. He has watched over our loved ones at home. He will be with us when we reunite with our families. My prayer is that you will seek Him as you forge ahead in the next chapter of your lives. Isaiah 55:6 tells us, "Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near."

And so now, "The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace."

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

Just can't wait: Facebook well wishes from family and friends of the Powder River Cowboys

NOTE: Postngs were taken from the 2-300 Field Artillery Facebook wall. Messages were left intact. Only spelling errors were corrected.



Trisha Pepin

Jason we cant wait to have you home again.. Ashlyn cant wait to show u how good she can peddle her bike and all the cool stuff she has learned to do. And Hailey tells everyone that her daddy is coming home soon. she is so proud of you as we all are.. And Jayden sits and stares when she sees your face on the TV.. I cant... wait for u to come home and see all the new things she has learned.. We are so proud of you and love you more everyday.. Can't wait for u and all the guys to walk off that plane.. Glad all of you are coming home safe.

The kids and I are very much looking forward to Troy coming home. All last summer Isaac, Troy's second son talked about all the camping we will do when dad gets back! We are so proud of you honey and can't wait for you to come home to us!!! I'm so grateful for the technology we have these days, it helped so much to see and talk to Troy each day. I also want to give a BIG thanks to all our service men and women for their service and sacrifice. You have all served our country well, here's to a great homecoming!!!



Emily M. Larson-Wacaser



Kylee Kauf

Shawn, you have no idea how proud we are of you and the all the sacrifices that you have made for your family and your country!! For the past year we have only imagined what it will be like when we see you and are able to give you a hug and kiss and in a few weeks our imaginations will become reality. Emmersen is counting down the pieces of candy she has left in her jar until you are home. You can see the sparkle in her face when she talks about it. Brogen is waiting patiently to meet his Daddy for the first time since he was 2 wks. old. You and your fellow soldiers are our HEROS!!!! We will be waiting with open arms. We love you!



James M. Keating

Thanks for your service Troops, we support you and are praying for you!

Brandon, we cant wait to have you home in our arms again. We love you and miss you. We are so proud of you and everyone else over there. Caiden and Sissy cant wait to go on the boat and Bryson can wait to be able to see his daddy and not just for 2 weeks. We are so glad you all are coming home safe.

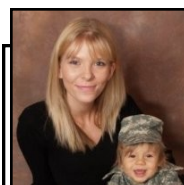


Melissa Asst

Zach we have missed you so much but are so proud of you. It won't be long now and we will be so thankful to have you home safe. Thank you to all the soldiers for all you do for us we pray for safe travels back home. Your always in our thoughts and prayers.



Shirley Chesbro



Brittni Songy

Shawn, we can't wait for you to be home. Wyatt misses daddy very much. I can't wait to go to Disney World. All the soldiers, I am very proud of everything you have done and you should be as well. It takes a strong person to leave their loved ones behind and go do their duty to Country. We will see you all very soon. Have a safe trip back home. Powder River Let'r Buck!!

1st Sergeant Strasser your family is very excited to see you step off the plane in Casper, especially a little 5 year old boy!! He has missed his daddy and he is ready to go fishing, camping and hunting with him. I am very proud of you along with all the soldiers that have served. Please be safe and we will see you all very soon. Powder River Cowboys Let'r



Stacey Strasser

Zach, we are so proud of you... words just can't describe just how



Danita Jerry

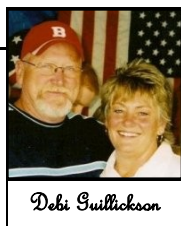
proud we are. We cannot wait until you are back home with us again. Cam can't wait to have his Daddy back home. He has missed you so much, and I know you too will pick right back up where you left off; you'll be two peas in a pod. It will be so wonderful to be a complete family again and just have fun! We love you so incredibly much. To all the soldiers; Wyoming is proud of all you've done and continue to do. We can't wait to see you all again!! safe travels :)

Just can't wait: Facebook well wishes from family and friends of the Powder River Cowboys cont'd



Pat Badwound

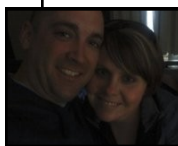
I am very glad that there are people like all of you. I'm especially proud of my son, Tim Badwound and especially grateful that he has remained safe. We will see all of you soon. Thank you very much for all you've done.



Debi Guiltickson

Wayne & I are very much looking forward to Tyrell coming home. Having access to e-mail, facebook and the phone calls has helped us alot. Tyrell, we are all very proud of you and cant wait for you to come home!!!!!! We are also very proud of all the service men and women for their service and sacrifice. Cant wait to see you ALL come home!!!!!!

We can't wait for you to come home Michael. Madison misses her daddy. We are proud of each of you and wish you a safe return home!

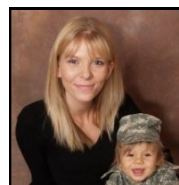


Mindy Clancy

We are so excited to have Matt Tetzlaff home Jayden has learned a lot and little Miss Helen has grown so much she will have so many new things to show daddy as well! we are hopefully taking a few trips! we cant wait to have all our friends home too! Uncle Will , Uncle Tim , Uncle Dugan , Uncle Jeff and every one else ...we love so much over there but really just to have the coolest part of the National Guard back on home ground! POWDER RIVER LET'ER BUCK WOO HOO THE BOYS ARE COMING HOME!!



Jessica Tetzlaff



Baillni Songy

Congratulations to all of you! You stayed strong and did your jobs well. We can't wait for you to come home. Stay safe and see you soon! Little dude and I love you Shawn!

Darlene Brownell
Lytle

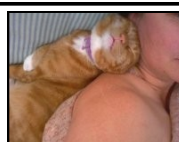
Let'er Buck!! We can't wait for everyone to come home to Wyoming! Be safe and come home soon!! :o)



Alycia Roberts

Congratulations to my new SSG! You worked hard for it and it was well deserved. I can't wait until you get home DJ! I know Mataya is more than ready to have daddy back. This next year is going to be packed with fun and adventure. You better be ready! I already have plenty of nights out planned. Hopefully we'll be able to have our honeymoon at some point as well (I'm shooting for before our 5th anniversary in October).

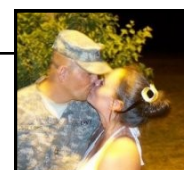
To all of 2/300 HHB: Job well done and keep the good work up at home. I'll miss drilling with everyone of you. You have truly made the last 6 years worth remembering!



Melissa Asit

Welcome back you all, Can not wait till we see you soon, See you soon Buddy, Have a safe trip home to you all. And A BIG THANK YOU for all that you guys, gals have done. Thank You.

We can't wait for you to come home Joshua. The kids and I miss you so much. Can't wait to get back being a complete family...and try out our new home town! We are proud of each of you service men and woman...and wish you all a safe return home!! See you ALL SOON!! God Bless!

Kim Kotunok
Phillips

i love you, olson. i am proud of you for your hard work and sacrifices. thank you for staying strong. anxiously awaiting you at home xo your wife xo To all the soldiers: I thank God for your safety and wish you happiness together again with your families.

Jennifer Wadsworth
Ohan

Come home safely into our warm hugs, and happy smiles. We are so Proud of all of you.



Tanya Kolsen

I cannot wait for all of you to return home, it has been a long hard road but we made it! love you Sgt Galvin



Cary Galvin

Counting down the days like it were Christmas! Can't wait to see you Bryan. Be safe and I'm so proud of each and everyone of you!



Christi Taylor

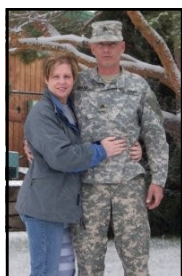


2-300th Soldiers of the Deployment



CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait — Sgt. Celeste Kivalu, left, of Hilo, Hawaii, with A Company, is the 2-300th Field Artillery Battalion's Noncommissioned Officer of the Deployment. Spc. Mark White, with A Battery, is the 2-300th Field Artillery Battalion's Soldier of the Deployment. Both Soldiers receive the Army Achievement Medal, pinned on by battalion commander Lt. Col. Brian Nesvik for being the top Soldiers of the second half of the deployment before their overall victories. The Soldiers competed against their peers from other batteries in the battalion.

Just can't wait: Facebook well wishes from family and friends of the Powder River Cowboys cont'd



Colleta Shane

You have done Wyoming proud, now time to come home. We can't wait until everyone is home with their loved ones. See you SOON!!!

LET ER BUCK!!! Just get home soon, we are so proud of your sacrifice, we in Wyoming will always be in your debt.



Debbi Gullickson

We are so proud and looking forward to our son coming home We love you Sgt Glick! To all of our men and women who keep America safe "We Thank you and we are proud of you"



Jill Hicks

Wanted to send some love to my hubby Mark from Amy and our baby girl Charlotte. I miss you with all my heart and we can't wait for you to come home. I'll be here waiting...



Amy Ehlman



Chris Ellis-Warner

Job well done POWDER RIVER COWBOYS! Now it's time to come home to all the loved ones and friends anxiously awaiting your return. GODSPEED home! 1SG - the boys (small & large) are awaiting your return as much as I am!

Bravo receives applause for top Cup finish



FIELD STRIP — Staff Sgt. William Duda, of A Battery, pieces together an M249 Squad Automatic Weapon during a weapons knowledge competition for the Commander's Cup.

CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait — Drenched in sweat, Soldiers quickly shuffled into the 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery's area of operations. They dropped their 30 pounds of equipment as they were swarmed by their buddies.

The five-mile ruck march around the inner perimeter of Camp Virginia was one of the final events of the battalion's Commander's Cup competition. Designed to help keep Soldiers focused and boost morale, the competition stretched over several months.

B Battery won the Cup, which includes a special challenge coin commemorating their accomplishment.

"The commanders, first sergeants, command sergeant major and I wanted to do something to help Soldiers focus their energies during a time when morale tends to dip," Lt. Col. Brian Nesvik, battalion commander, said. "I want to congratulate Capt. Fred Nasredine and the Soldiers of B Battery for their victory. I also want to congratulate Capt. Glen Nicholson, of C Battery, and Command Sgt. Maj. Troy Guimond for taking the lead in organizing this huge task."

To win, units competed in events ranging from cribbage to golf skills to pushing an up-armored humvee across the battalion area. Team sports like volleyball and softball and individual events like roping and a five kilometer run were also included.

NEW COMMANDERS continued from Page 1

"Lt. Col. Phipps commanded a 150-Soldier detachment of the battalion on its last deployment," Nesvik said, noting Phipps' long ties to the battalion.

"Greg is a leader of the highest caliber who has proven his abilities as a combat commander. He is an expert field artilleryman, an innovative thinker and committed to the Army Values," Nesvik said. "The Powder River Cowboys will be in good hands under his command."

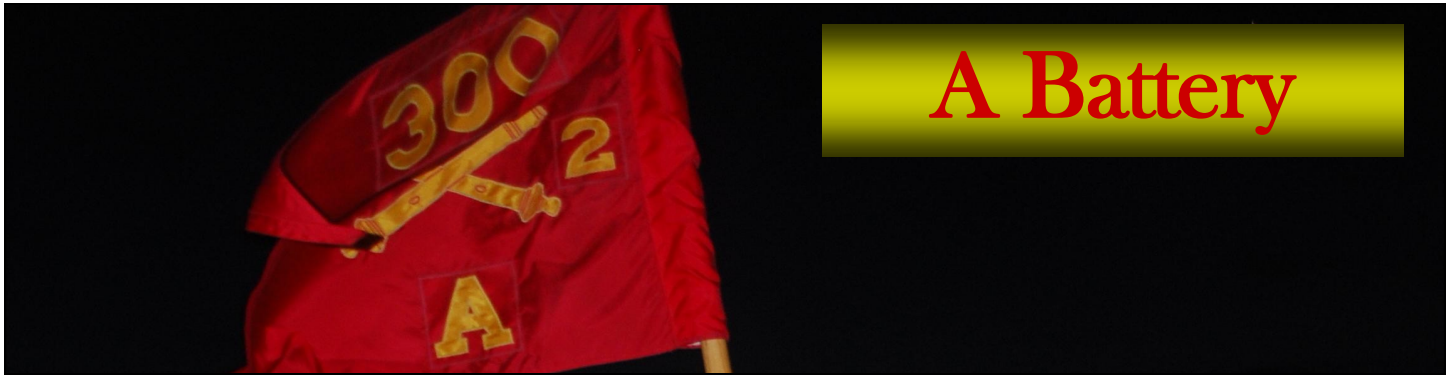
Phipps is in the process of selecting commanders for the newly projected vacancies within the battalion.

Nesvik also named Lt. Col. Jason Kaul to command the 960th Brigade Support Battalion, headquartered in Casper, Wyo.



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

POWDER RIVER COMMANDERS — Lt. Col. Brian Nesvik, left, selected as the 115th Fires Brigade commander, stands with Col. Greg Porter, center, Wyoming Army National Guard Chief of Staff, and Lt. Col. Gregory Phipps, selected by Nesvik as the next 2-300th Field Artillery Battalion commander, at Fort Hood, Texas, June 2009.



BOHICA (Because of Honor I Choose Alpha)

From Capt. Kevin Messamer, commander, A Battery

I can proudly say this is the last newsletter that you will receive from Alpha Battery while deployed. Everywhere I go, Soldiers are excited and energized to complete the training of our replacements and be able to return to our loved ones. We have had good interaction with the Soldiers of Delta Company, of the 2nd Battalion, 124th Infantry Regiment, and look forward to handing the mission over to them.

As you can see by the images, we endured some difficult weather throughout our training with them, but they are professionals and will do an outstanding job with this mission.

You should be proud of your Soldiers, as I am, to have taken several of the most difficult missions that face the U.S. armed forces today, and performed well above expectation. We had our bumps in the road, and had to say goodbye to a few of our brothers-in-arms, but look forward to re-uniting with them when we return to Wyoming.

Many Soldiers are nervous about what the future holds such as employment, school, reintegrating with family and friends and many other unknowns. However, they are looking forward to taking care of things from the United States rather than a world away.

Some Soldiers had avenues open up since we've been deployed; for example two of our Soldiers, Spc. Jeremiah Eaton and Sgt. Nathan Harvey, have formed a



COURTESY A BATTERY

NASTY WEATHER — Soldiers from A Battery prepare for missions during a dust storm in Kuwait.

band that now has a contract and a fan base covering Wyoming and several neighboring states. The sounds of “Kevlar Cowboy” and “Please Send Me a Beer” can often be heard when hanging out around the tents as they relax and think up new tunes. Spc. Eaton, singer and songwriter, jokes that his first country music song, “Kevlar Cowboy”, was an instant hit and has already become more popular than any of the rock music he sang for years.

See A BATTERY Pg 7

A BATTERY continued from Page 10

We had the privilege to work with and learn from Soldiers in every walk of life and many different states on this deployment. It isn't very often that you find someone from Wyoming hanging out or living with Soldiers from large cities such as New York City, but every Soldier has been a tremendous part of our successes. We hope that those Soldiers will maintain communication with us and know they are always welcomed at our campfires.

In closing, I would like to thank all of you for your unwavering support throughout this deployment and tell you that we are truly grateful.

Words cannot describe how difficult it is to be away from your friends, family, and home for a year, but many times the heroes at home go unnoticed as well. For those wives, husbands, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, and true friends that helped us along the way and had to deal with the everyday trials at home while worrying about our safety and well being; I applaud you and hope someday everyone else will realize that this deployment was just as difficult on



COURTESY A BATTERY

A LOCAL FLAVOR — (Top) A Battery platoon leader 1st Lt. Jason Ruff, makes a new friend or two with a Bedouin in the area. (Bottom) Ruff wastes no time showing his complete satisfaction of tasting warm, frothy, camel's milk fresh from the critter.



you as it has been for us. God Bless you all!

— Capt. Kevin R. Messamer

B Battery

Relief In Place

Capt. Fred Nasredine, commander, B Battery

We started our journey in Kuwait with sand storms and unimaginable heat, and it looks like this ancient desert will send us on our way home with, you guessed it, more sand storms and heat!

However, that's old news, and the new buzz word is "RIP-TOA!" Relief in place and transfer of authority are music to a deployed Soldier's ears. Now that our

replacement unit is on the ground, our Soldiers are happy to finish passing on the torch.

Over the past few weeks, we conducted the RIP process, a fancy jargon for training the incoming unit on the mission, and then followed by the TOA. The Florida Seminoles are anxious to take the reins (we were in their shoes about nine months ago), but more importantly, we're oh so glad to hand it to them!



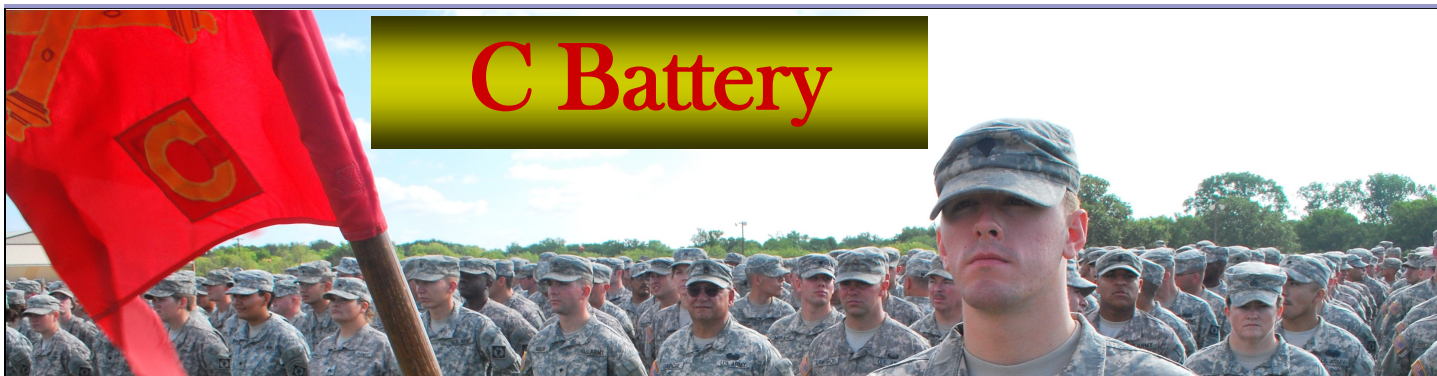
B BATTERY LEADERS — B Battery's leadership are, from left, 1st Lt. Victor Flores, 2nd Lt. Dylan Graham, 1st Lt. Casey Henry, 1st Lt. Brian Ouimet, Capt. Fred Nasredine, 1st Sgt. Robert Butz, Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Miller, Sgt. 1st Class Adam Ross, Sgt. 1st Class Flint Flesher, and Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Lengerich.

Bravo Battery Soldiers have performed magnificently over the last year. From the onset of the pre-deployment training at Camp Guernsey, Wyo., through Fort Hood, Texas, and over the last nine months of tough missions in Kuwait and Iraq, our Soldiers got the job done!

In a short time, many happy reunions will take place in the great state of Wyoming. The anticipation is palpable. You can see it in the Sol-

diers' eyes, in their smiles, and their attitudes. Despite the long hours of running missions and conducting training, everyone seems to be glad to go the extra mile to train our replacements.

I want to take this opportunity and thank all of you for the amazing support that you have provided us over this last year; sincerely, we could not have done it without you!



Wardog Bite

Capt. Glenn Nicholson, commander, C Battery

February has come and gone, and March is roaring in like a lion. Charlie Battery is training the unit replacing us.

In preparation, our soldiers moved into different tents, vacating their homes for the past eight months. The new accommodations are tighter than the old, but it is reminiscent of how we started this adventure at Fort Hood when we lived the same way, together as platoons.

Charlie Battery has in place an



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

CHARLIE BATTERY — The Soldiers of C Battery, 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery take time for a group photograph. The unit completed 400 missions, logging 536,000 miles.

aggressive plan to pass off all the lessons learned to our counter parts, setting them up for success when it comes time for us to return home.

We've put in many hours of hard work, but everyone sees the light at

the end of the tunnel. We are willing to make the extra effort to make sure we leave this place with the same level of success and high standards that we

have carried thus far.

Prior to our replacements arriving, our Soldiers had the opportunity to qualify with their assigned weapon. Also, Charlie Battery licensed, over the course of the deployment, more than 90 Soldiers to drive the Maxx Pro Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle. This is a significant achievement that required many hours and a lot of coordination and driving time to accomplish.

The Commander's Cup, a morale building contest between the batteries, wrapped up with Charlie Battery taking second place overall by a very slim margin. It was rather bittersweet coming in second, but our Soldiers really laid it all out on the line during the final field day.



AGAINST THE CLOCK — Spc. Mark Reily races to piece together a M 249 Squad Automatic Weapon after disassembling it. Competitions for the Commander's Cup involved Soldier skills both as a team and as an individual.

See CHARLIE Pg 10

CHARLIE continued from Page 13

Second Lt. Marcus Neiman, Staff Sgt. Zachary Haskins, and Sgt. Charles Eyler placed first, second, and third overall in the five mile rucksack march. Charlie Battery's slowest top-3 time was faster than the next fastest time in the battalion!

Charlie Battery also participated in the HMMWV (humvee) push, the litter race, and the M249 and M240B weapons disassembly and assembly. The HMMWV push was grueling, and involved six Soldiers pushing a 12,000 pound vehicle over 500 feet in the sandy ground. The litter race was tough as four Soldiers another Soldier strapped in a litter the sand. Pvt. Samuel Thomas was chosen as the person to be carried, weighing in at only 128 pounds, the lightest in the battery.

A few soldiers have already made their way home. Sgt. Joe Mock, our unit armorer has gone home early to be with his wife and daughter before his wife ships out to Army basic training. He did an amazing job keeping our weapons in good repair and helping out in the supply. We all wish him the best of luck, and thank him for his service. We also send our thoughts and well wishes to Spc. Brock Jolley and his family.

Charlie Battery transitioned to an alternative mission schedule. The change is refreshing for all as it much easier to maintain a regular sleep schedule. The mission and our responsibilities are rapidly winding to a close. Soldiers are upbeat and ready to transition to civilian life. The Power River Cowboys are ready to return to home.



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

DETERMINATION — 1st Sgt. Tim Metro, charges forward in an attempt to lasso “the steer” during a roping competition for the Commander’s Cup.



23 Days and Counting...

Maj. James Ezell, commander, A Company, 960th Brigade Support Battalion



A COMPANY — The Soldiers of A Company, 960th Brigade Support Battalion, attached to the 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery, pose for a group picture with the vehicles they used to provide an armed escort for troop transports through Kuwait.

Twenty-three days and counting, (from the time this was written) and Alpha Company, 960th Brigade Support Battalion, will be headed home to the great state of Wyoming!

It has been a year of up's and a year of some unique challenges, but we all set out to accomplish the mission at hand, and I'm proud to say that we were successful! Alpha Company collectively drove more than 800,000 miles, completed over 10,700 missions, and moved 500,000 Soldiers and civilians within the Kuwaiti Theater.

We couldn't have done it without the soldiers from Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, and our Inactive Ready Reserve Soldiers. They are and will always be a part of the Alpha Company's Wyoming family. I would

like to thank each and every one of them for their contributions, service, professionalism, and dedication with making the "Blackhorse Gateway Mission" a success!

We've all learned so much from the past year. I feel that we've all grown in our own way, and have not only become better people, but better soldiers. We worked together as a cohesive team to overcome some huge obstacles. In the end, we all bonded together with one common goal, to make sure we all come home safe.

We made some close friends along the way, not only in Kuwait, but back in the states as well. From all of us, we would like to thank Mrs. Maxine Russell from Hollywood, Calif.!

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COURTESY A COMPANY, 960TH BSB

FOURTH PLATOON — Fourth Platoon, A Company, 960th Brigade Support Battalion, was formed to take care of escorts between the Kuwait City International Airport and a military location. The unit is comprised primarily of Soldiers from the Pacific Rim, led by awyoming's 1st Lt. James Lyttle, platoon leader, and Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Plum.

She has been an amazing spirit for us since day one, as she has made sure that we have everything that we need and want with weekly care packages. Her son, Darren Russell, who lost his life in China, has been a motivational figure for the entire company. Thank you Maxine for everything that you have done, we'll never forget you or Darren! We'd also like to thank Karyn Palminteri (Miss. K), Kristina Tompkins, Derek Crockett, all the folks from Wyoming, and all the Soldiers families and friends that have supported us over the past year. THANK YOU!!

As commander, it has been an honor and a privilege serving with all the soldiers that make up Alpha Company, job well done everyone! Many thanks to 1st Sgt. Mike Strasser for his dedication, knowledge, leadership, and insight, awesome job! I would also like to thank Lt. Col. Brian Nesvik, Command Sgt. Maj. Troy Guimond, the 2-300th Field Artillery Battalion staff, and all of our brothers and sisters from the 960th BSB Command Cell. We're all excited, I mean REALLY excited to see our new friends from Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 124 Infantry, out of Florida, that will take over the Gateway mission. We wish them all the best!

We all look forward to returning home to family, friends and loved ones; looking out to see the mountains, blue skies, and breathing fresh air. There will be new exciting beginnings for some, joyful ecstatic reunions for all!

It's time to go home Alpha, 960th.... See you all soon!



Let'r Buck!

Capt. Troy Wacaser, commander, Headquarters Battery

This has been a bitter-sweet day as this is the last newsletter submission that I will write.

It has been a good year. We moved from our homes, families, and friends to Fort Hood (billed as the Great Place). There, we made new friends and strengthened the bonds that hold us together as Soldiers.

Then it was off to Kuwait, or as I like to call it, the Greater Place. We endured the heat, and sand, and rain, and cold.

I know it is hard to believe “the cold,” but I know I had a Soldier that would turn the heat on full when she walked into the office each day our temperature was below 85 degrees Fahrenheit.

Now we are getting ready to return home to our families and friends. We are challenged to stay focused on our mission despite thinking about what we need, or want to do when we get home.

Our replacement unit made its way here from Fort Hood and hit the ground running. They are ready and trained to take our mission and make it theirs.

See HEADQUARTERS Pg 14



SUPPLY — The Headquarters Battery Supply section includes, from left, Staff Sgt. Brent Peterman, supply sergeant; Sgt. Robert Disney, armorer; Capt. Troy Wacaser, battery commander; Spc. Bobby Gray, supply technician; Spc. Matthew Burns, supply specialist.

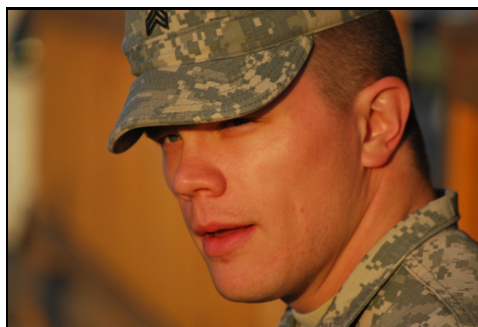
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It is a hard thing to RIP (relief in place) when we have to build relationships with our counterparts in order to teach them what they need to do, yet we know that these will be short lived as we head out the door.

To put the year to an end, all I have to say is I have the joy and privilege of working with the best Soldiers in the United States Army and I thank you for your support and care throughout this deployment.



BATTERY — Maintaining Headquarters Battery's administrative capabilities were left to the hands of 1st Sgt. Michael Warner, and administrative noncommissioned officers Sgts. Samuel Bloom and Amber Watkins. (Top) Warner salutes Capt. Troy Wacaser before handing over the formation. (Bottom left) Watkins on the firing line at a range in Kuwait and (center) Bloom before a battery formation. The three, along with Wacaser and battery executive officer 2nd Lt. Christian Venhuizen, assisted battalion staff sections with training and supplies to complete the mission. (Bottom left) Wacaser, left, pins a medal on 1st



Lt. Shawn Stenaas, the battalion's safety officer. (Bottom center) Communications section chief 1st Lt. Sean Storrud filled in on occasion as the battery commander.

