



3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division

February, 2013



Promotion
Pg. 2 Board

SPARTAN
MARINER Pg. 9

HUGS FOR
Soldiers Pg. 17

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Commander's Message

Col. Johnnie L. Johnson Jr.
3rd ABCT, 3rd ID Commander
Command Sgt. Maj. Brian D. Harrison
3rd ABCT, 3rd ID Command Sergeant Major

Greetings from Camp Buehring Kuwait!

The first month of 2013 is behind us and our Sledgehammer Soldiers look forward to reuniting with families and friends in the upcoming weeks! This is a great time for the Sledgehammer Brigade as we enter the final stretch of the deployment. We're almost there, but for the large majority, the mission isn't over yet. We'll spend the next few weeks welcoming and transitioning with our replacements who'll definitely continue to build upon the brigade's success.

January marked Command Sgt. Maj. Harrison's first full year as the bri-

gade's top noncommissioned officer and also marked my second year in command of the Sledgehammer Brigade. As we reflect over our time at Kelley Hill and Camp Buehring, we must say we couldn't be more proud of our Sledgehammer Soldiers. We're extremely humbled and grateful to be part of this magnificent team! What your Soldiers have accomplished is nothing less than amazing, and their efforts will always be part of the great Sledgehammer legacy!

As we close out this deployment, our Soldiers continue to excel both on land and at sea. The highlight of our training this month was Spartan Mariner which gave our Soldiers the unique opportunity to load vehicles on Army vessels and train in the Persian Gulf with other units in Kuwait. The training enhanced interoperability among the various units here and provided a once in a lifetime opportunity for all involved. You may be surprised to know

the Army actually has more sea vessels than the Navy! The Spartan Mariner exercise demonstrated the ability to rapidly transport vehicles for any possible contingency in the region.

In addition to training, we received a visit from some very special Marine Soldiers serving in Afghanistan. The 3rd Infantry Division Rock Band graced us with two excellent performances here in Kuwait. First, two band members performed in the dining facility, entertaining our Soldiers and the rest of the camp while they dined. That evening the band 'rocked out' during a concert, singing songs that many of us know and love! We greatly appreciate Maj. Gen. Abrams and the Marine Team in Af-

ghanistan for sending the band to play for us before we return.

Lastly, our Soldiers spent the month eagerly preparing for their return to Fort Benning. Soldiers are packing up boxes and sealing containers as they anticipate upcoming reunions with families and friends. We ask that as you anxiously wait for your loved one's return, remember operational security. Please don't post specific information to include flight times, contact information, or any other info you would



not want the enemy to know. Also, remember to stay in contact with your family readiness support assistant (FRSA). She'll provide you with the most updated information regarding redeployment. As always, we thank you for your continued support and look forward to seeing you soon!

Continue following the Sledgehammer Brigade at www.facebook.com/3hbct3id and www.youtube.com/3hbct3id for the latest updates.

God bless and take care!

Sledgehammer!

Hammer 6, Hammer 7

<https://twitter.com/jjhammer6>



“SLEDGEHAMMER”

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“Can Do!”

Lt. Col. Nelson G. Kraft
3rd ABCT, 3rd ID, 1-15 Commander
Command Sgt. Maj. Angel M. Ortiz Jr.
3rd ABCT, 3rd ID, 1-15 Command Sergeant Major

Greetings!

Welcome to February! Our time in Kuwait is coming to a close and as you all read this, some of our Soldiers have returned to their Families. Others are not far behind and in a short time, every one of our Soldiers will be home and reunited with their Families and friends. That being said, our mission is not over. In the coming weeks and months, our focus will shift from training in the desert of Kuwait to reestablishing normalcy in our lives. Throughout the deployment, our Families and friends have displayed an unwavering commitment to our Soldiers and now is the time for the CAN DO Battalion to show their appreciation for that support. If I could leave you with one word, it would be patience. It will take patience for all of us to adjust to the subtle changes that

may have occurred over the last nine months.

As we leave the training ranges of Kuwait and reflect on our time here, one has to be amazed at what the Soldiers of this battalion have accomplished. The great Soldiers of the CAN DO Battalion have trained in oppressive conditions, to the highest standards possible. We have executed countless ranges, field problems, and live fire exercises with superb precision. The Soldiers have trained diligently alongside our Kuwaiti counterparts, solidifying an already strong partnership. Our companies and platoons have stood ready to answer the nation's call with the utmost professionalism and confidence. Most impressive above all, is the fact that this was accomplished without an injury to any Soldier. A truly remarkable feat considering the staggering weather conditions we faced during the summer months. Our Soldiers have proven their care for each other and this mission. Now, our focus on our reintegration and reunion must be

faced with the same tenacity.

Command Sgt. Maj. Ortiz and I can tell you, there is a solid plan in place for the unit's reintegration process. From the time you are reunited at Lawson Army Airfield until we return from block leave, every measure will be taken to ensure our Families and Soldiers are afforded every resource necessary for a seamless transition. I know there are a lot of questions about the process, but our FRGs and Rear Detachment are working tirelessly to disseminate the necessary information. There are still some security concerns regarding our redeployment dates, but I can assure you, you will all be notified in a timely manner of your Soldier's return.

Again, Command Sgt. Maj. Ortiz and I are extremely proud of this organization. We will forever be thankful for the love and support our Families have shown during

this deployment. The hardships of being away have been lessened because of your commitment. Not only is our re-deployment and reintegration focused on our Soldiers, but on our Families. Remember to have patience; if we maintain our focus on our reintegration like we have on our deployment, I am confident the process will be completed in a timely manner. Then, we can focus on enjoying our leave period. Thank you again for all that you have done. We will see you all soon!

Can Do!
Dragon 6 and 7



Promotion board goes “Back to the Basics”

Story and photos by
Sgt. Christopher Johnston
3rd ABCT, 3rd ID
Public Affairs NCOIC

Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division attended a promotion board during their deployment to Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Jan. 4. However this was not the standard promotion board most Soldiers attend, this board went “Back to the Basics”.

“Some of my Soldiers were having problems memorizing information. Some people are just not good at that, but just because they can’t memorize every rule and regulation, doesn’t mean they aren’t good Soldiers or leaders,” said 1-10 Field Artillery’s Command Sgt. Maj. Mark A. Aaron. “We have to find ways to take care of Soldiers. This type of promotion board can help some of those



Soldiers get past that stumbling block.”

The purpose of this board was to test Soldiers’ abilities to complete common tasks such as performing first aid, land navigation, radio communications, preventative maintenance, checks and services (PMCS) of a vehicle along with a standard Army promotion board.

Twenty Soldiers assigned to 1-10 FA participated in this month’s promotion board which began with each Soldier rotating through the six different common task stations. At each station Soldiers were given the task they were to perform, the conditions: what tools and assets they were provided, and the standard: the measures upon which they were graded.

“These are the common tasks Soldiers do on a daily basis but sometimes we don’t always do it by the book,” said Staff Sgt. Joshua Smith, an intelligence analyst assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, who sponsored his Soldier, Spc. Fisher Isaiah, also an intelligence analyst with HHB. “This board made my Soldier and myself look up the regulations and standards to make sure we knew exactly what is expect-

ed.”

After Soldiers completed the hands on portion of the board, they appeared in front of Aaron and the battalion’s first sergeants for a traditional promotion board where each Soldier recited the Non-commissioned Officers Creed and answered a series of questions on multiple subjects such as drill and ceremony, leadership and current events.

“This was my fourth time going to a promotion board, I enjoyed this board much better,” said Spc. Jose Alicea, a unit supply specialist, assigned to HHB, 1-10 FA. “With each task I completed my confidence level went up. When I actually got to the board portion, I was so

confident and I knew I did well.”

“My problems before was my language barrier,” explained Alicea whose native language is Spanish. “Between trying to translate and answer the questions, it was hard for me. This time I felt more relaxed and was able to

focus better.”

“For a lot of Soldiers it is not easy to just sit there and answer questions. This showed them that there is more to being a leader than just answering questions,” said Alpha Battery’s 1st Sgt. Collin Gomillia. “A leader



needs to know not only the rules and regulations, but how to properly execute tasks and the standards the Army has set.”

Aaron plans to continue this type of promotion board when his battalion returns from its deployment to Kuwait and hopes it is implemented into the brigade as well as the “Big Army”.

“One thing I wanted to do is achieve the total Soldier concept,” said Aaron. “This board gives us a better picture of these future leaders.”

The board was scored 60% on the proper execution of the common tasks and 40% on the board proceedings. Of the 20 Soldiers who attended the Back to the Basics Board, 12 received their promotable status.

“Remembering back to when I was a young Soldier I wanted to be challenged and that is what the Soldiers enjoyed with this board more than anything,” said Headquarters and Headquarters Battery’s 1st Sgt. Theodore Brock. “Soldiers want to be challenged and learn their jobs, and it is our responsibility to do that.”



Rock's Support

ROCK'S SUPPORT Maintains Training Proficiency, Transitions to Return

January provided ROCK'S SUPPORT the opportunity to conduct a variety of training and partnership activities prior to transitioning to re-deployment tasks. Signal Soldiers competed in the 3ABCT Signal Best by Test Competition. Soldiers battled for the title of Best Communications Section in the Brigade as they tested on skills ranging from filling radios to establishing connections with tactical satellites. The event concluded with a Signal Leader Professional Development trip to Camp Arifjan encouraging crosstalk among the battalion, brigade, and Army Central Command staffs.

In addition to individual skills, the battalion also devoted time to junior non-commissioned officer (NCO) professional development. ROCK 7, along with the battalion's senior NCO leadership, created a plan to evaluate Soldiers on the total Warrior Concept. This plan became the 1-10 FA Field Board. Each Soldier, preparing to go before the NCO promotion board, participated in the event. Soldiers demonstrated proficiency in a wide range of tasks from small arms knowledge, NBC skills, first aid/first responder treatment, and NCO knowledge. The Field Board convened in a tactical environment simulating conditions that many of these junior leaders could face in future engagements.

As our partnership with the Kuwaiti Land Forces Artillery Regiment (KLFAR) continued to flourish, KLFAR's commander extended an invitation to ROCK'S SUPPORT leadership to watch the KLF Commando Obstacle Course Competition. The event, held at the Commando Training Compound, displayed some of the most physi-



cally fit Soldiers from across the KLF. Each brigade within the KLF fielded a team of thirty Soldiers; the teams then completed a series of obstacles that stretched approximately 1.2 miles. Although spirited throughout the grueling course, the Kuwaiti Field Artillery Regiment placed second.

As the month progressed, training focus shifted to equipment accountability and redeployment. Batteries conducted blocks of instruction for Soldiers to return home with the skills required to combat a myriad of predictable challenges upon redeployment. Soldiers throughout the battalion attended briefings discussing entitlement updates, reintegration stressors, and legal concerns. The information provided to ROCK'S SUPPORT Soldiers ensured that they would be prepared to reintegrate and know when to seek assistance if needed. In addition to individual redeployment training, each unit scheduled container load out and customs inspections ensuring that equipment returned to Fort Benning without issue. As 1-10

FA's redeployment date approaches, units continue to complete property inventories and elements have begun transitioning into the transient living quarters prior to our replacements' arrival. ROCK'S SUPPORT Soldiers continue to set the standard for professionalism and discipline within the Sledgehammer Brigade as we prepare to transition with our follow-on unit. ROCK'S SUPPORT!

FEBRUARY 3, 1870

THE 15TH AMENDMENT
TO THE U.S. CONSTITUTION
WAS RATIFIED, GUARANTEE-
ING THE RIGHT OF CITIZENS
TO VOTE, REGARDLESS OF
RACE, COLOR, OR PREVIOUS
CONDITION OF SERVITUDE.

Cold Weather Checklist

Sports & Safety

- * Dress in thin, wicking layers.
- * Protect your hands and feet with warm, water resistant gloves and shoes.
- * Find out the temperature and wind chill before you go out.
- * Don't overdress; the more you sweat the colder you will get in the long run.
- * Make sure you wear something warm on your head.
- * Know the warning signs of frostbite and be able to recognize what it looks like in early stages.
- * Run into the wind when you start, so it can be at your back when you finish.
- * Stay hydrated.
- * Don't stay in your wet clothes after you have finished.



Vigilance & Honor

Lt. Col. Steven M. George
3rd ABCT, 3rd ID, BSTB Commander
Command Sgt. Maj. Scott E. Guillory
3rd ABCT, 3rd ID, BSTB Command Sergeant Major

Family Members and Friends of the Buffalo Battalion,
“Vigilance and Honor!”

The BSTB entered 2013 with enthusiasm and excitement as we remained ready to accomplish any mission assigned; continued to conduct training and social events with our partners; began preparations to receive our replacement unit; and most importantly, started to prepare our equipment for redeployment to Fort. Benning. Partnership with our Kuwaiti hosts remains our priority. This past month we continued to train with the 94th and 26th Mechanized Kuwaiti Brigades. Training continued to focus on skills that include basic and advanced rifle marksmanship, clearing a room, and cordoning off an urban area. In addition to the training, we conducted a dinner with our partners to

celebrate the success and accomplishments of our training events.

To maintain mission readiness, we conducted two unique gunneries and several small arms ranges to allow Buffalo Soldiers to showcase their unique skill sets as well as sustain our ability to conduct combat operations. The Buffalo Battalion took advantage of the opportunity to execute the first of many signal and Un-manned Aerial System gunneries. The gunneries allowed operators to hone and demonstrate their individual skills and abilities to provide reconnaissance and communications support to the Brigade.

Marking the beginning of our redeployment, we are in contact with our replacement unit and they are prepared and ready to arrive and take over our mission. Based on this, the battalion is shifting to redeployment activities such as safety classes to ensure we are prepared to drive and operate motor vehicles within the United States and inventories to account for all property to be signed over to the incoming unit or shipped home.

Morale of our BSTB Soldiers remains extremely high. The high level of morale is due to MWR programs, unit holiday activities, and support we receive here in Kuwait and from home. The Battalion continues to conduct trips to other camps that provide different amenities. Our Soldiers take advantage of the MWR sponsored trips off Camp Buehring to malls, art galleries, museums, and restaurants in Kuwait City. These trips allow our Soldiers to experience the Kuwaiti culture first hand.

The holiday seasons have allowed us to take full advantage of additional resiliency activities. We began the season with a Battalion Organization Day. The day was filled with competitive events from spades to tug of war. At the end of the day, “Hellraiser” rose out of the dust as Champions. On Christmas Day the Buffalo Command Group and staff took pleasure in serving the Soldiers a delicious holiday meal. Companies conducted their own internal holiday celebrations to increase morale and cohesiveness throughout the formation.

Our continued success and high morale is a reflection of the support we receive from the families, friends, and charity organizations at Fort Benning and across the United States. Your love and support allows us to continue to reach great heights. We extend our thanks, gratitude, and appreciation for the amazing support you provide to us both deployed and at Fort Benning. We are excited and look forward to reuniting with family and friends at Fort Benning in the near future. Until that day, remain safe, vigilant and honorable.

Vigilance & Honor

Buffalo 6 and 7



Soldiers set sail on the Persian Gulf

Story and photos by
Sgt. Christopher Johnston
3rd ABCT, 3rd ID
Public Affairs NCOIC



On the cold windy morning of Jan. 8, at the Kuwaiti Naval Base, Soldiers of the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division began a mission most had never performed before.

At 6 a.m. Sledgehammer Soldiers, along with Soldiers of the 47th Transportation Company and 316th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, began offloading 12 Bradley Fighting Vehicles, four Paladins and three support vehicles from flatbed trailers onto a loading ramp at the KNB.

The 47th Transportation Company transported the vehicles from Camp Buehring, Kuwait to the naval base a day prior to the mission. The vehicles were then driven onto the decks of four United States Army vessels of the 420th Movement Control Battalion in preparation of Operation Spartan Mariner.

“The purpose of this training mission is to enhance interoperability between adjacent units,” said 1st Lt. Anthony Rea, executive officer of Alpha Company 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd ABCT. “It gives us the opportunity to conduct training both logistically and tactically that

probably only occurs once in a lifetime for Army forces.”

The morning of Jan. 9, USAVs Churubusco, Five Forks, Maj. Gen. Robert Smalls and Maj. Gen. Charles P. Gross set sail on the Persian Gulf.

“I was surprised at first that the Army actually had boats,” said Spc. Daniel Desisto, an infantryman assigned to Alpha Company, 1-15 IN, 3rd ABCT. “It was an honor to be part of this mission. I was told this is the first time Bradleys had seen the water in a very long time.”

The units’ training did not end once they were underway. Soldiers conducted radio communications, as well as man overboard and fire drills.



Chief Warrant Officer 2 Vernon Slaughter, vessel master of USAV Churubusco, explained that these vessels generally cruise at 12 knots even with six Bradleys, weighing over 150 tons, on board.

With three to six foot seas crashing over the side of the vessels, the flat bottomed Churubusco began to vigorously rock from side to side.

“It started out as a blast, for about the

first hour while we were docked, without getting hit by the waves,” laughed Desisto. “Once we got out to sea and the waves started hitting us, it was rough. A lot of us got seasick, but I was glad to be part of this mission. It is something I will never forget.”

The vessels sailed two hours out and returned, giving the Soldiers from the different units time to interact, cross train and bond.

“Because of coordination with supporting units, particularly the 47th Transportation Company, the execution portion of loading and unloading the vehicles went smoothly,”



said Rea.

The exercise demonstrated the ability to rapidly transport vehicles for any possible contingency in the region explained Rea.

“I think the Soldiers really got a feel for how big of a deal this training event was with so many people out and about to witness the execution portion,” said Rea. “It gave them something to be proud about.”

FEBRUARY 11, 1990

IN SOUTH AFRICA, NELSON MANDELA, AT AGE 71, WAS RELEASED FROM PRISON AFTER SERVING 27 YEARS OF A LIFE SENTENCE ON CHARGES OF ATTEMPTING TO OVERTHROW THE APARTHEID GOVERNMENT. IN APRIL 1994, HE WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT IN THE FIRST ALL-RACE ELECTIONS.



Support & Defend

Lt. Col. Monica L. Burnhauser
3rd ABCT, 3rd ID, 203rd BSB Commander
Command Sgt. Maj. Kent A. Galvin
3rd ABCT, 3rd ID, 203rd BSB Command Sergeant Major

Greetings to the Family and Friends of the Eagle Battalion!

This month brings us the last edition of the deployment newsletters and signifies the end of our mission abroad. Although our mission is coming to an end, we must not forget that it is not over yet. We are entering a very critical point of an upcoming relief in place and transfer of authority with our replacement unit, 4th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division. We are setting up the next unit for success by preparing continuity books, making certain the equipment we will be handing over is in excellent shape, and ensuring everything is dress right dress for the transfer of authority. This will allow our replacements time to get a foothold on operations throughout the camp.

The anticipation of reuniting with our loved ones is the driving force for our focus of mission readiness and accomplishment. Although our mission here never ceases, we still manage to properly account for all of our equipment, load connexes, and pack our bags for redeployment. Your Soldiers continue to amaze and impress us on a daily basis with their resolve, dedication, and patience.

In the month of January, four S-6 Soldiers participated in the Brigade Signal Gunnery Competition on Camp Buehring in order to facilitate team building, demonstrate proficiency and create esprit de corps within the brigade's signal community. It was a great opportunity for signal Soldiers to showcase their technical and tactical skills on communications equipment and prove just how important communications is to any organization.

Six Eagle Soldiers earned promotions this month. Congratulations Capt. Green (HHC) on her promotion to captain and 1st Sgt. Bryant (C Co) on his frocking to first sergeant. Congrats to Staff Sgt. Wage-

mann (HHC) for advancing to the next higher level of rank and responsibility as a non-commissioned officer. Sgt. Ciguenas (A Co) and Sgt. Moss (B Co) joined the NCO ranks and Spc. Pagala (HHC) advanced to the next rank. Congratulations to all - well deserved promotions.

I would also like to thank our Rear Detachment team as they continue to support us from afar. Capt. Sarah Micholick and her team back at Fort Benning are doing an exceptional job of taking care of families, equipment, training Soldiers, and preparing for our inevitable return.

Over the course of my tenure, I have yet to see a more seasoned and disciplined team. I am extremely proud of them and proud to be their commander. A big thank you goes out to our families and friends back home. Your support is absolutely essential to our success here. Knowing we have your love and admiration enables us to do our job here with a full heart and a smile on our

face. On behalf of the Eagle Team forward, we say thank you for all you have done and continue to do for us.

Lastly, please prepare and discuss plans for post deployment leave, housing arrangements, PCS or ETS considerations, etc. with your Soldier. Our leaders have been encouraging all members of the Eagle Battalion Family to prepare themselves for the challenges and the excitement of reintegration by having a plan in place to ensure that the homecoming is a memorable event.

Support and Defend!



Rock's Support

Lt. Col. James E. Willard
3rd ABCT, 3rd ID, 1-10 FA Commander
Command Sgt. Maj. Mark A. Aaron
3rd ABCT, 3rd ID, 1-10 FA Command Sergeant Major

As we begin, in earnest, our preparations to return home, the Rock's Support Battalion once again completes another month of tremendous accomplishment. The Soldiers not only began packing up equipment and preparing vehicles for transfer, but also participated in events such as Operation Spartan Mariner, continued our partnership with the Kuwaiti Artillery Regiment, and completed the live fire training for our attached High Mobility Army Rocket System Battery from Fort Lewis, Washington. Each day of this deployment has been marked by excellence and that performance continues as we draw closer to home.

The majority of the month was spent performing maintenance on the fleet of equipment remaining for the follow-on unit. Every vehicle and weapon received significant attention to ensure it is in the best possible condition prior to transferring this mission to a sis-

ter artillery battalion. Our Soldiers' hard work and dedication ensures that our replacements are immediately capable of performing the mission requirements in this challenging environment. Not only did our Soldiers continue to exceed the standard, but were recognized by the ARCENT Inspector General as being the battalion with the best maintenance program in theater; a well deserved compliment that accurately reflects our Soldiers' efforts.

Rock's Support Soldiers also prepared individual and home station equipment. Each battery conducted meticulous inventories of all equipment to ensure accountability and serviceability prior to its shipment to home station. Our Soldiers were in high spirits as they took the time to layout equipment for Customs inspections and repack containers for shipment.

Earlier this month the Raging Bulls of Bravo Battery participated in Operation Spartan Mariner, demonstrating the unit's ability to conduct maritime movement in the Persian Gulf. Bravo prepared and loaded a platoon of Paladin Howitzers to participate in this waterborne exercise that ended by projecting combat power onto Bubiyan Island, an island in the northern Gulf area. The exercise was a joint exercise that included U.S. Naval Com-

mand and our Kuwaiti partners. Bravo Battery did a phenomenal job loading their equipment and maintenance team onto the landing ship that sailed across the gulf; definitely a first for the battalion.

The Soldiers of Charlie Battery, 5-3 FA completed their final live fires this month, as they to prepare to transition their mission and return home. It has been a pleasure to serve with this fine artillery unit and an honor to once again have a Charlie Battery in the Rock's Support formation. We wish all of the Scorpions a safe trip home and hope they truly enjoy rekindling those relationships placed on hold for the last nine months.

In regards to our redeployment, Command Sgt. Maj. Aaron and I want reemphasize the need to stay in touch with Family Readiness Groups and our Family Readiness Support Assistant, Mrs. Stacy Gray. As we begin to redeploy the FRGs and FRSA will be integral in the information flow to families and friends concerning the return of their loved one. Stacy and the FRGs will utilize the e-Army messaging system to notify families of flight information and the arrival of our Soldiers. This is

a terrific system, but is only as good as the information provided to Mrs. Gray. If you want to be contacted in a timely manner of your Soldiers return, ensure that you have provided Mrs. Gray with accurate e-mail and phone information, so you will receive an automated notification of flight information. Your cooperation in this effort is greatly appreciated.

Again, I must say how proud we are to serve with such a tremendous group of Soldiers. We are all looking forward to a safe return home to our families. Thanks you all for your tremendous support throughout this deployment!

Lt. Col. Ed Willard and Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Aaron

"Rock's Support"



Tips For Home Safety While Vacationing

1 Show some caution when you talk about your trip. Your blog isn't the best place to announce that you'll be away from home for a month. Being aware of who's around when you discuss your trip in restaurants and even at work isn't a bad idea either. Make sure that your children are discreet, too. No one is saying that you should be suspicious of everyone you meet, but even a chance remark has the potential to lead to unintended and unfortunate consequences. The less information you put out there, the less likely it is to reach the wrong ears and eyes.

2 When you're leaving for more than a couple of days, call your local post office to stop mail delivery until you get back. They can hold mail from three to 30 days. In many locations, you can even submit a stop mail request online. Just enter your address and stop and start dates. This is a free feature courtesy of your friendly United States Postal Service.

3 Disconnecting the power to some of your electronics, like your desktop computer, coffee pot and television can save you money while you're gone and eliminate the worry that you've accidentally left them on by mistake. Turning off your garage door is also an effective way to keep thieves from opening it with a universal remote. Oh, and don't leave a portable GPS in your car when you use long-term parking at the airport. It'll alert thieves that you're not home and give them a convenient map to your house.

4 This seems so obvious, but hey, it's easy to forget. If you keep a window unlocked to allow the cat easy access, or never bother to turn the deadbolt on the kitchen door, now's the time to clean up your act. Locking your home makes it less attractive to opportunistic burglars. If you don't make it easy, there's a better chance that when you get home, your house will be in the same condition as when you left it.

5 A pile of yellowing newspapers on the doorstep is a movie cliché for a home that's unoccupied. Stopping the newspaper when you leave town for a while is an easy detail to forget and one that will make you a sure target. If you're still reading newsprint, make sure you stop service when you leave on vacation.

6 An occupied home looks lived in. Lights go on and off, and cars come and go. When you're away, everything stops. To help create the illusion that the residence is still occupied, invest in timers that turn on the interior lights for a few hours every evening. If you can get a neighbor to take out your garbage and put the cans back after the garbage pickup, it's another way to send the message that everything is proceeding normally at your house.

7 Even if you stop newspaper delivery and mail service, there are still some gotchas that can make it obvious that you're not

around. How about those fliers that peddlers leave on your doorknob, or those periodic yellow page book deliveries? Because you can't plan for every contingency, have someone in the area check your house periodically. Whether it's a neighbor or relative, nothing beats having a person check the premises every day or two while you're gone. Hey, while they're there, they can water the petunias.

8 Installing a home security system or even just exterior lights that run on timers is a good way to ramp up security around the old homestead and make your house safer whether you're around or not. One of the nice things about these features is that they're working when you're awake, asleep, on vacation or hosting an outdoor barbecue. They fade into the background as far as you're concerned, but still make your property less attractive to opportunistic thieves.

Eagle Soldiers Sore in CrossFit Competition

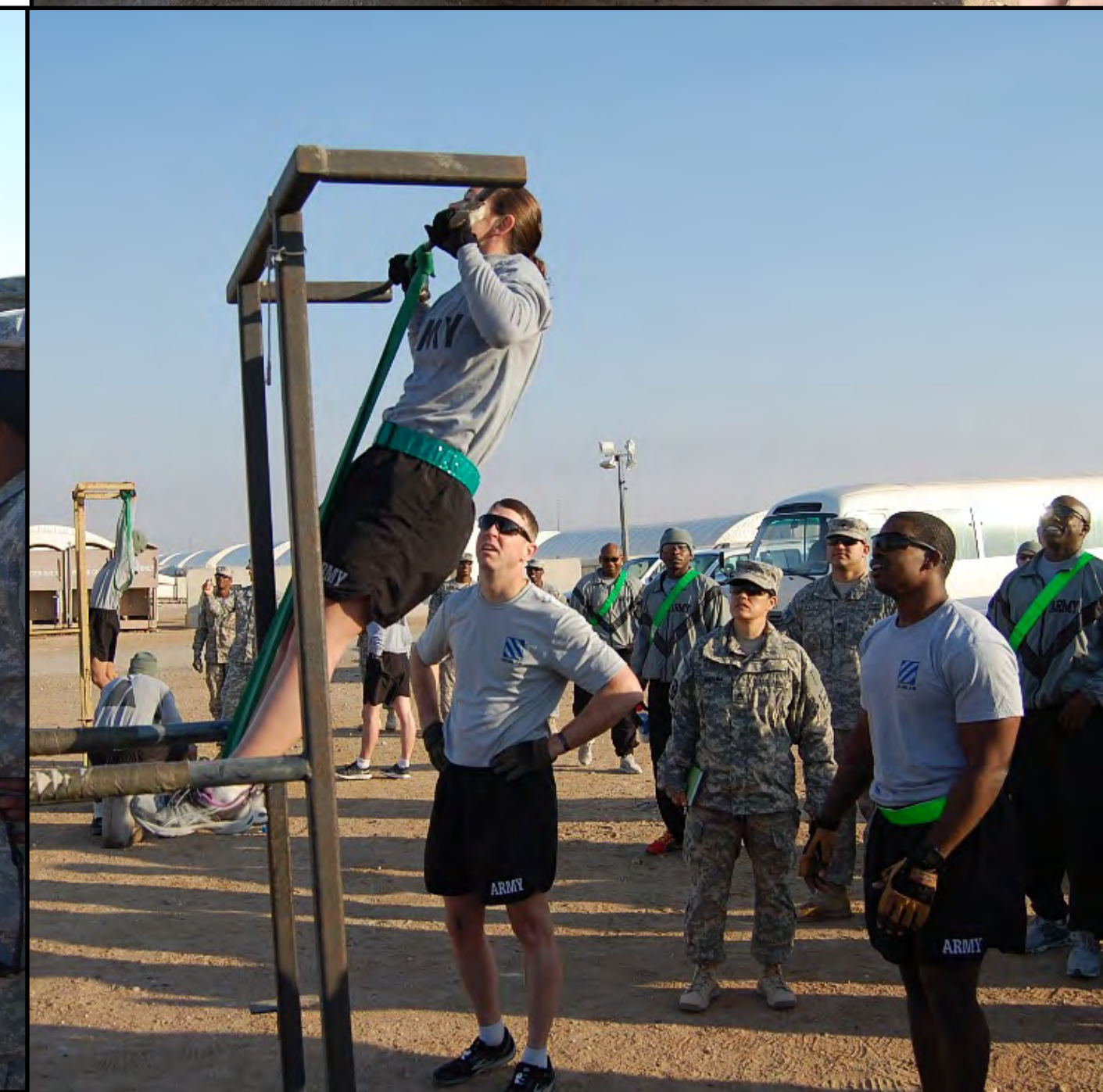
Story by Capt. Garrick I Guicko
203rd, 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID
Battalion Communications OIC
Public Affairs Representative

203rd Brigade Support Battalion held a Battalion CrossFit Competition on Camp Buehring, Kuwait, in order to promote esprit de corps and friendly competition within the bat-

talion and to evaluate each of the participants' ability and skill level to complete various exercises. Each company provided two four-man teams to compete in the eight different events. Events included a combined effort for each team; rowing for 1917 meters, 160 pull-ups, 160

kettle bell swings, 203 air squats, 140 burpees, 33 tire flips, 160 box jumps, and a farmers walk (sprint) to the finish line. In the end, the team from Headquarters and Headquarters Company consisting of Sgt. Murphy, Sgt. Davis, Cpl. Rankin, and Spc. Tanis had the fastest overall time and now hold the title of the Eagle Battalion's "Best CrossFit Team". Each of the team members from HHC received an Army Achievement Medal

from the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Burnhauser.



Hugs welcome Redeploying Sledge- hammer Soldiers

Story and by
Capt. Joseph Bush
1-15 IN, 3rd ABCT, 3rd ID
Unit Public Affairs Representative

Soldiers returning home from extended deployments are often greeted by an empty barracks room with minimum necessities.

“It was like where’s the welcome,” recalled Kathy Orcutt, Chief Executive Officer and founder of Hugs For Our Soldiers. “You could see it in his face, when he opened that door to his barracks room with nothing there. It broke my heart.”

Orcutt ‘adopted’ the soldier assigned to the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division during Operation Iraqi Freedom V, and has continued supporting Sledgehammer soldiers since.

Hugs for Our Soldiers, is a nonprofit organization started in Duluth, Ga., dedicated to supporting soldiers at home and



abroad. The group has since relocated to Vonore, Tenn., and has grown nationwide with a majority of their volunteers in Tennessee, Georgia and Florida.

The 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division is among the most deployed brigade combat teams in the Army, and is preparing to return from their sixth deployment since 9/11, a nine-month deployment to Kuwait in support of Third Army and Central Command.

This year Hugs for Our Soldiers wanted to go the extra mile and have something in the barracks rooms for the single soldiers of the Sledgehammer Brigade. From the start of the deployment, the volunteer organization has been raising funds to put together welcome home bags filled with food. Bags include soup, fruit cups, popcorn as well as giant Hershey bars. They also made hygiene bags with toothbrushes, soap and other various items needed to help sustain the soldiers as they transition back to Fort Benning. They tried to go beyond just the basics and also get bed sheets and towels for the returning troops.

“It’s nice to have a fresh towel,” Orcutt said. “One that doesn’t have sand in it.”

Hugs for Our Soldiers started gathering money in September during the Duluth Fall Festival, with help from the 1-15 IN rear detachment. Soldiers from the Can Do Battalion went to Duluth to march in the parade and work a booth provided by the charity group. Local children had a chance to interact with soldiers and try on some helmets.

“Their eyes just twinkled when they looked up at these soldiers,” said Orcutt.

Additional funds came from Hugs volunteers sitting at the only intersection in Vonore with flyers and buckets asking for donations from passing motorists.

The gathering of supplies was not without its own perils. Orcutt said they had to go to a Black Friday sale to get the towels. She and the volunteers arrived at the store early to gather around the towels, but then other shoppers began surrounding them. She thought they were going to get trampled trying to get the 300 towels. Then in

an act of selfless generosity, the shoppers began helping Hugs for Our Soldiers load up the towels they needed before helping themselves.

In January, Orcutt and several volunteers made the trip from her home in Tennessee to Fort Benning, Ga., to start building the bags. They meet up with Kathy Kraft, the 1-15 IN Family Readiness Group leader, at the battalion headquarters to fill up the bags with the help of the rear detachment soldiers. Over the course of four hours, they built 214 bags for the battalion’s single soldiers who would be returning. After they finished the gifts, Orcutt said they heard that the two other organizations supporting the rest of the brigade were struggling to provide gifts for each returning soldier.



“It broke our hearts,” said Orcutt.

With the help of a few soldiers, like Spc. Lucas Wessel and his wife, who stayed until 8 p.m., they were able to assemble 360 additional bags. Orcutt regrets they could not have given more, but at least every single soldier in 3rd Brigade will receive something special when returning from deployment.

In addition to the barracks warming gifts, 6th graders from Heritage Middle School in Tennessee are making welcome home signs. Orcutt plans to hang them above the soldiers’ beds to create a warm welcome home for them as they return to the barracks.

“I loved every minute of it and would not trade it for anything,” said Orcutt. “That’s our mission, taking care of troops and making them feel welcome when they come home.”

For more information on Hugs for Our Soldiers visit their website at www.hugsforoursoldiers.org.



Buffalo Soldiers Charge Ahead With Training

The Buffalo Battalion charged into the New Year with dynamic events that highlighted our partnership efforts, unique skills, and resiliency activities. We remained focused and steadfast on the goal to build a lasting partnership with our Kuwaiti partners and remain tactically and technically proficient in our combat skill sets, ready to defend freedom whenever we are called.

Tactical exchanges and Key Leader Events with the 94th and the 26th Kuwaiti Mechanize Brigades remain a strong focus for the Buffalo Battalion. We have begun the last of nine three-week cycles of tactical exchanges for the 94th Brigade. We took the time to host a social dinner with our 94th BDE counter parts. The dinner took place at the Burj Al Hamam restaurant in Kuwait City. The 94th and 3rd Brigade Commanders were extremely pleased





with the event. As we began to plan our partnership transfer with 1-4 BSTB, our counterparts are planning a soccer match between the Soldiers of 3BSTB and 94th Brigade and a final feast consisting of traditional Arabic cuisine.

We are conducting combined planning with the 26th BDE in order to develop a platoon leader course in order to share techniques, tactics and procedures on how to coach and mentor junior leaders. We

will continue to conduct exchanges and key leader events until 1/ 4 BSTB has taken the lead.

The Buffalo Battalion charged into the new year with specialty gunneries, small arms ranges, and safety classes. We exploded into the new year with a Signal Gunnery. The Battalion established three teams that performed in a first-rate manner by sweeping the competition. The three Buffalo teams put their signal prowess to the test by competing in tasks like setting

up a HCLOS, and installing FM communications in a HUMVEE to conduct a radio check. The rest of the Brigade stood watch as the Buffalo Battalion took first, second, and third place in the first annual Signal Gunnery.

Simultaneously, we conducted the Brigade's first ever Un-Manned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Gunnery. The skilled Raptor Soldiers tested their equipment and them-

selves as they flew the Shadows through the night. They demonstrated their ability to navigate across the battlefield from the air, identify enemy vehicles and formations, and mark targets using their laser designators for rotary wing aircraft missiles. The gunnery validated the vehicle crew's ability to maneuver the UAV on the battlefield to enhance the Brigade's ability to gather important information as well as close with and destroy the enemy.

We took full advantage of the last week of live fire events by conducting our final qualifications prior to the ranges shutting down. Each company qualified their Soldiers on their individual weapons one last time prior to redeployment. The Engineers conducted a demolition range in which they qualified all of

their Sappers on the use of basic demolition.

Although we were fully engaged in training, the Battalion took time to conduct resiliency activities which included an Organizational Day, Christmas activities, Morale and Welfare trips, and camp performance events.

As the Kuwaiti sun rose on Dec. 22,



the Buffalo family enjoyed a leisurely jog around the camp. Dressed in our bells and whistles we sang Christmas carols and cadence. This marked the beginning of our organizational day. We were proud and thankful to Command Sgt.Maj. Frennier, the ARCENT CSM, for not only giving us a heartfelt speech; he also partook in running with us. The day was full of sweat, tears, and joy as the companies battled for the coveted commander's cup. All of the companies sent their gladiators into the field of battle. The competition was gruesomely fierce as the Soldiers and command used brains and brawn to compete in events like ping pong, spades, and tug of

war. Once the dust settled on the horizon the mighty Hellraisers stood victorious. This event was a great way to continue the holiday season. As the battalion enjoyed the festivities the Buffalo CSM ensured that the Buffalo family was taking care of each other by enforcing the theme, "Not on My Watch."

The Battalion transformed its footprint to represent the Holiday season. Soldiers decorated buildings and offices with the many ornaments sent from home. Companies engaged in games and parties to capture the spirit of the season. On Christmas day the Battalion leadership and staff took pleasure in recognizing all of the hard work performed by Soldiers across the Brigade by serving the holiday meal.

Martin Luther King Jr. believed that if you "Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step." As the Battalion took its first step into the drifting Kuwaiti sand it was hard to believe that this deployment would ever come to an end.

Over the course of our time in Kuwait, we have celebrated ten national holidays together as a family. We have grown to be the most trained, equipped, and agile Special Troops Battalion in the United States Army. As we transition into re-deployment activities we remained focused on the mission at hand. We remain overjoyed as we reminisce about all of the great accomplishments achieved by our Soldiers. We could not have accomplished as much as we have if it had not been for the unyielding support from the friends and families of the Buffalo battalion. As the Kuwaiti moon rises and the end of our deployment begins, we remain as always "Vigilant and Honorable".



3rd ABCT hosts National Prayer Breakfast observance

Written By: Chaplain (Maj.) Geoff Bailey
3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team Chaplain

Demonstrating a continued commitment to the overall well-being of Soldiers at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division hosted a camp-wide observance of the National Prayer Breakfast with Maj. Gen. Gary H. Cheek, Third Army/ARCENT deputy commander, as the guest speaker on Feb. 2.

Approximately 420 Soldiers from across Camp Buehring attended the event, held in Dining Facility 1. Attendees joined in prayer and lent their voices to familiar songs of spiritual significance.

Cheek posed the following question to attendees, “What do you do when you’re lost?” He then provided four examples of individuals who lost their bearings due to unforeseen circumstances or personally inflicted challenges which threatened their ability to continue mission.

Each individual entered their situation with pre-existing understandings, training, resources and coping skills. These skills and resources fall

into one of the five pillars of the Army’s Comprehensive Soldier Fitness (CSF) program of Physical, Emotional, Family, Social and Spiritual. Balanced development of each of these pillars is necessary for healthy resiliency which can weather any situation.

In the first example of a suicidal individual, Cheek cited the over development of the family pillar, at the expense of the others, as a contributing factor in the Soldier’s decision to attempt suicide.

In the second example, a wounded warrior wanted to personally build a house, but he placed far too much emphasis on development of the physical pillar of CSF. He lost his way when his legs were amputated following injury during deployment. This individual adopted a victimized approach to life whereby the loss of his legs was license to remain immobilized relying upon others for support and daily sustenance. Cheek challenged the individual to discover how he could not only build his own house, but own a construction company and make millions.

His third example was one of another wounded warrior. This warrior pledged to walk his daughter to school. He achieved his goal and walked his daughter to school, walking on newly acquired

prosthetic legs. He then set a goal of learning archery. Not long afterwards, he won several medals competing at indoor archery. That same wounded warrior successfully completed and passed the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) with no alternate events and subsequently graduated from the Warrior Leadership Course as his class’ distinguished honor graduate. This Soldier demonstrated a healthily balanced development of all five pillars of the CSF program.

As a result of his intentional development of all five pillars, he found strength and resilience from multiple pillars which empowered him to succeed and rebound from a traumatic event which could have been otherwise debilitating.

Cheek concluded by talking about the fourth example, one of a Ranger School student lost in the woods at Camp Darby. The student faced the challenge of figuring out where he was after realizing he lost his map somewhere in the brush and brambles of Fort Benning, Ga.

After painting the picture of a student facing failure and disorientation, he once again polled the room for answers to the question asked earlier, “What do you do when you’re lost?” He only received two responses.

One senior leader offered, “Pull out my GPS!” Cheek reminded us that GPS is prohibited in Ranger School and therefore not an option.

A chaplain responded, “Shoot a back azimuth?” Cheek, expecting a more spiritual response from the chaplain, asked if prayer was not a possibility. He then shared briefly how prayer was a vital component for him that day as he traipsed through the brambles of Fort Benning, following a back azimuth hoping to find his misplaced map.

Eventually, the Ranger student found his map, made promises to his source of spiritual strength, and pressed on realizing that a healthy approach to resiliency development is vital for true strength under the unforeseen circumstances which life often brings.

With this reminder of balanced development of all five pillars of the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program, Sledgehammer Soldiers are better prepared for the weeks and months ahead as the brigade redeploys, reintegrates into life with family and friends in the Fort Benning area, and witnesses a complete changeover of the leadership and many of the personnel. Cheek delivered the right message at the right time for a group heading into a time of transition and change.