

# STEEL RAIN

3RD BATTALION, 157TH FIELD ARTILLERY

## Boots on Ground. *Finally!*

*Across the ocean and onto the sandy life*

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli

### CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait

- If you really need a coffee from Starbucks, you could probably just go downtown and find one, or you could join the thousands of Soldiers who deploy to Iraq and stop at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

The war has lasted long enough to bring a few American comforts to the Middle East like Starbucks, and the USO helps add to some of the luxuries Soldiers may take for granted while living in the States.

It's nowhere near a five-star resort, but there are a few basic amenities that make life a little more tolerable while living in the barren lands of Kuwait.

More than 60 male Soldiers were assigned to each tent. Males live in tight quarters but females have it pretty easy in their tent.

Less than five percent of the battal-

ion of more than 400 Soldiers is female, so they have much more space to themselves.

I feel fortunate to have more than a few inches between the cots, said Warrant Officer Stephanie Mann, who explained that space was a luxury the males don't have.

While in Kuwait, Soldiers continue training to fully prepare them for their mission in Iraq.

Soldiers conduct weapons training, First Aid, drivers training and numerous other tasks that help prepare them physically and mentally for the months ahead.

During their downtime, Soldiers went to Starbucks, the MWR movie tent, Education Center, USO, call center, internet cafe or the gym.

The heat gave Soldiers inspiration to find indoor activities.

Adjusting to the weather in Kuwait is a challenge in itself.

The unit arrived just in time for nearly a week of sandstorms.

Although the heat was intense, many Soldiers covered themselves even more to shield the sand from getting into their eyes, mouth, nose and ears by wearing neck gators and sunglasses that look almost like swim-



Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery conduct Mine Resistance Armor Protected Egress Assistant Training to prepare them in case of a rollover in a training village at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, July 3. The entire battalion will conduct MRAP Egress Assistance Training prior to deploying forward to Iraq.

mer's goggles.

The time in Kuwait allows Soldiers to acclimate, adjust to the time-zone change and get their minds right for the missions in Iraq that lie ahead.



Upon arrival to Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Soldiers unload a truck-load of bags. Soldiers sift through the piles for their bags and moved into their tents.



Already carrying his ruck sack and assault pack, 1st Lt. Steve Travnicek reaches for his duffle bag to carry to his tent.

# From the Battalion Leadership:

## Battalion Commander:

Lt. Col Al Morris



Even as we finish our training and begin our Relief in Place with the units here at Camp Ramadi, our mission has begun to change. We began by picking up the mission of running the Camp from the 81st Brigade Combat Team headquarters a few weeks ago and have assumed the role of Base Defense, Personnel Security Detail, and Quick Reaction Force from 1st Battalion, 158th Field Artillery. We continue to evaluate the way we conduct operations and make improvements and adapt to the ever-changing political environment. This has caused us some growing pains as we have shifted personnel to best accommodate skill sets to what needs to get done. I am proud of how well everyone has stepped up to their assignments, throughout the train-up, and sometimes harsh weather conditions. Through it all, they have remained enthusiastic, and ready to get going with the mission and do their jobs. It's no wonder we have earned a reputation that has become our motto: Eager for Duty!



## Battalion Command Sergeant Major:

Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Koob



As the Soldiers get settled in, I want to pass along some of the things Ramadi has to offer.

The Soldiers' rooms are in good condition, generally free of the sand that blows around during the storms, and most importantly, are air conditioned. The dining facility (DFAC) serves four meals a day, to include a midnight meal to accommodate those working night shift. Everyone has their own opinion about the food, but there is a wide variety, all you can eat, and a desert bar that can be dangerous to those who have to work hard to keep their weight down. The main gym is world-class. There are weight machines for everyone and enough cardiovascular machines to ensure everyone has the opportunity to pull a muscle. We have medical professionals at every level to treat both battle and non-battle related injuries. We have mental health and combat stress services available 24/7.

I am sure that I have missed some of the services available, but I will hit them up in future issues.



## Chaplain's Corner: *Refiner's Fire*

Chaplain (1st Lt.) William Ferris, Battalion Chaplain

Ramadi, the city, in Arabic means "dry place." Ramadan, the month of fasting, in Arabic means "to be burning hot so that the ground is dry." But these words do not have to be negative terms.

The heat of Ramadan is said to be like a burning that cleanses us of our impurities in our souls. This is similar to the Judeo-Christian idea of the "Refiner's Fire" that God uses trials and temptations, sufferings and setbacks, to refine us, cleanse us and mold us into the people He has designed us to be.

This place and particularly, the coming month of Ramadan (August 22 - September 20) is an excellent opportunity for us all - Soldiers, spouses,

friends and family - to grow spiritually. Trees grow deeper and stronger roots in the dry months, and so should we. The spiritual disciplines of prayer and fasting are uniquely helpful in bringing us closer to God and His will for our lives. Let us all use this time in the dry places to grow deeper roots.

For our Soldiers, deeper roots can also include attending religious services and small groups. The memorial Chapel and Fellowship Hall here at Camp Ramadi offer a wide range of services for our Soldiers. We offer Muslim Jumu'ah, Jewish Shabbat and Havdalah, Catholic Mass, Protestant Communion, Contemporary Christian, Gospel and LDS services, as well as a Praise service with music provided by the Ugandan forces stationed here. For small group opportunities, we offer Men's, Women's, Gospel, LDS, Rap with the Chap and New Testament Challenge Bible studies, as

well as Orthodox Evening Song, Catholic Rosary and Benediction, Alcoholics Anonymous and choir/band practices for various services.



## *Refiner's Fire*

*Purify my heart  
Let me be as gold  
and precious silver  
Purify my heart  
Let me be as gold, pure gold*

*Refiner's fire  
My heart's one desire  
Is to be holy  
Set apart for You Lord  
I choose to be holy  
Set apart for You my Master  
Ready to do Your will*

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# From the Batteries:

## 188th Forward Support Company Based in Pueblo

Capt. Beth Soelzer, Company Commander  
1st. Sgt. Joseph Bishop, First Sergeant



Capt. Beth Soelzer

We are finally on the ground at beautiful Camp Ramadi and are glad to be able to start our mission.

The first few days on the ground consisted of getting to know the area, meeting the key personnel from the 120th Forward Support Company (the unit we are replacing) and observing daily operations.

It didn't take long for our mechanics to dive right into the tool boxes and start taking things apart and putting them back together. They were excited to start turning wrenches.

Our Convoy Security Platoon had their first mission only two days after being on ground. They are now run-

ning their own missions with a little oversight from the outgoing unit. Everyone is doing a great job.

The facilities are a lot nicer here than one would expect. We have a really nice gym, great Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) facility that has computers, phones, ping pong tables, movie room and a whole lot more. There is a lot to do on this post when, and if, we have any down time.

Some other MWR notes ...

1st Sgt. Bishop and Sgt. Bice took first place in the Horseshoe tournament on July 23! Great job guys!

We also challenged the 120th Forward Support Company to a softball game. The winner got to go home and the loser had to stay in country. *We* are still here ... Anyway, so far so good.

We would like to congratulate our Family Readiness Group leader, Megan Meggison, and husband, Spc. David Meggison. She gave birth to Wyatt, a healthy baby boy.

As always, thank you, families, for all your support from back home. You will never know how much it means to us.

Take care and stay safe.



Capt. Ashkan Angha

## Headquarters & Headquarters Battery Based in Colorado Springs

Capt. Ashkan Angha, Battery Commander  
1st Sgt. Ed Schwaigert, First Sergeant

Our Mayor Cell makes sure our tenants on the camp receive all the services they need. In addition, we perform audits on the contractors who work alongside us and provide some of the services on the camp. It's a job we take seriously because we have to provide force protection for the camp, thus allowing the joint operations to continue.

Our living quarters are good and everything here is air conditioned. The mess hall (dining facility) is very good and the Morale, Welfare and Recreation is they best I have seen in and around Iraq, as is the gym.

For the most part we have adjusted to the new life and getting the job done.

I'm proud of our Soldiers for doing such a historic mission. We hope to make Colorado's 169th Fires Brigade, the Colorado National Guard and all Coloradoans proud by giving our utmost effort in Al Anbar province.

As always, we thank you at home for your sacrifice and support.

HHB Family,

We have made it to our destination in Iraq. We are all excited to be here to learn our jobs, replace the current unit and accomplish our mission so we can go home.

HHB Soldiers have been very busy conducting Mayor Cell duties and base defense operations. Both missions are equally important and challenging for our unit. And, by the time you read this, we will be fully engaged in our activities, thanks to the assistance from the outgoing unit, 1st Battalion, 158th Field Artillery.

(Right) Spc. Severe of HHB met with his father, Staff Sgt. Severe, while at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. His father happened to be in Kuwait while running convoy missions to and from Iraq. Sandstorms gave them a few extra days together.



## Alpha Battery Based in Longmont

Capt. Dom Tatti, Battery Commander  
1st Sgt. Eric Weis, First Sergeant



Capt. Dom Tatti

Alpha has completed our stay in Kuwait and is now making our mark in Camp Ramadi, Iraq.

It's now time to learn the lessons of the units past to understand

the ever-changing environment of our mission.

It is clear that we are ready to take

on the responsibility each of us selflessly undertook.

The training we conducted in Colorado, Texas and Kuwait is proving to be invaluable and worthy of our sacrifice.

The unit we are replacing has done an outstanding job of carrying the torch, and they are ready to pass the flame. Soon they will be home to their families in Oklahoma with a new sense of accomplishment and pride of a job well done.

Our Soldiers are looking forward to doing the same.

In the meantime, Apache is exploring our new surroundings around camp. We have a Subway, Post Exchange (it's actually called a Marine Corps Exchange, but many Soldiers still call it a Post Exchange), numerous local shops, an education center, a spacious gym, latrines with running

water and housing units with air conditioning.

The dining facility provides a wide selection of food with a desert bar - to offset the gym!

There is a Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) facility that provides phones, internet access, movies, books, ping-pong and video games.

We encourage our families and friends to continue sending letters and care packages from home.

In a computer world, an e-mail can be the most efficient, but an occasional hand-written letter adds a level of personal connection that remains unmatched.

Until our return, we remain steadfast in our pursuit and continue to serve with honor for our families and our nation.

Thank you again for serving with us!

## Bravo Battery Based in Aurora

Capt. David Wilcox, Battery Commander  
1st Sgt. Rodolfo Reyes, First Sergeant

Families of Bravo Battery,

My name is Capt. David Wilcox. I was appointed as the battery commander recently, and the previous commander, Capt. Jim Forester, was promoted to the S3 to conduct battalion-level operations. Capt. Forester sends his thanks to all of you for the support you provided while in command.

Since I have yet to meet the acquaintance of many of you back home, I'd like to take the time to introduce myself.

I have served in the military for 12 years and, before commissioning, was an enlisted Soldier in the Military Intelligence Corp. After completing Officer Candidate School, I served in the following positions: platoon leader for Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery; executive officer for the 188th Forward Support Company; and the senior logistics officer of 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery.

My beautiful wife, Stephanie Wilcox, and I are the proud parents of Tyler (age 9) and Jacob (age 2).

As many of you know, the battery has arrived at its final destination, Camp Ramadi, Iraq.

The Soldiers have prepared well for the mission in front of them, and they have easily taken to the tasks ahead. As a new commander, I could not be more pleased with the enthusiasm in which they perform their jobs.

Bravo has taken on a new name while here in Ramadi - Berserker. The name Bulldog and Banshee were already selected by our Marine bretheren, so Berserker sort of fell on our laps. The Berserker's will make their mark here and represent a battalion rich in history.

A couple of things to note as the Berserker family comes together.

Please keep the letters and care packages coming. Your troops appreciate the friendly reminders from back home.

It is an honor to serve as the new commander. I look forward to a year full of successful missions, high troop morale and a great network of family support.



Capt. David Wilcox



(Left) Camp Ramadi has vegetation such as palm trees. It's a nice change to see a little green among the endless sand.



# Independence Day in the Desert

*Celebrating an American holiday on foreign soil*

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli

**CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait** - Twenty-nine Soldiers of Colorado Army National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery decided to run for liberty ... and a free T-shirt.

The July 4 five-Kilometer fun-run course stretched along the few paved roads on the camp.

"There are hardly any paved roads [here]," said Warrant Officer Stephanie Mann of Colorado Springs, Colo. "Normally we walk on sand and rock, so running on pavement for the 5K was a great thing."

Luckily, dust storms did not hamper the early morning's activities. The surprisingly mild weather made it a great day for a run.

"It was light outside, and you could see (clearly)," said 1st Lt. Dana Wilkins of Colorado Springs, Colo., who was happy for a break from the sand storms and relieved at the 80 degrees Fahrenheit at the beginning of the run.

More than 200 personnel residing at Camp Buehring mustered at 6 a.m. for the run.

"I have an easier time breathing here [while running] than in Texas," said Mann. "The humidity makes the air thick

[in Texas] so it's hard to breath."

Mann, who hopes to run a marathon in the near future, said this run helps prepare her for the running she will do throughout the tour.

Laughing, Mann said, "This is my first 5K though, and I didn't come in last."

All the Soldiers who turned out had volunteered for the run. Since everyone was settling in, getting used to the new time zone and weather changes, it was a volunteer-only basis for the run.

In attendance were two father and son pairs, 1st Sgt. Joseph Bishop and son Pfc. Joey Bishop; and Sgt. 1st Class Michael Gonzales and son Sgt. Clayton Gonzales.

The 188th Forward Support Company had the best turn out in the entire battalion, and the 157th Field Artillery had the best showing in the entire camp.



Sgt. Clayton Gonzales (left) and Sgt. 1st Class Michael Gonzales volunteered for the July 4 run together.



1st Sgt. Joseph Bishop (left) and son Pfc. Joey Bishop stand together before the five-Kilometer run.



Sgt. Brian Goodburn displays the free T-shirt runners were presented for participation.



# 'Hot' takes on a whole new meaning

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli

**CAMP RAMADI, Iraq** - "We all knew it was going to be hot when we got to Kuwait, but we didn't expect the heat to literally smack us in the face once the bus doors opened."

Spc. Theodore Duncan of Longmont, Co., said he's never felt heat like this before, and he worked on furnaces in Colorado.

"It kind of reminds me of a furnace, but a furnace cools off after a while," Duncan said laughing.

"After 110 degrees, [Fahrenheit] it doesn't matter. It's just hot. It's not even hotter," said Sgt. John Burns of Pueblo, Colo.

Duncan tried conveying to family back home what exactly the heat felt like to him.

"I told [my wife] to lay down on a playground on a hot day and put your hair dryer on high and blow it in your face for about 12 hours," Duncan said with a smile.

Everyone here has an opinion about the heat. How could they not? It's hot for the majority of the day - every single day, and it is expected to get hotter in August.

"It's like walking on the surface of a grill," said Spc. Andrew Brule of Penrose, Colo., while adding, "You can take a normal T-shirt and change it to a shade darker because you are continually drenched in sweat."

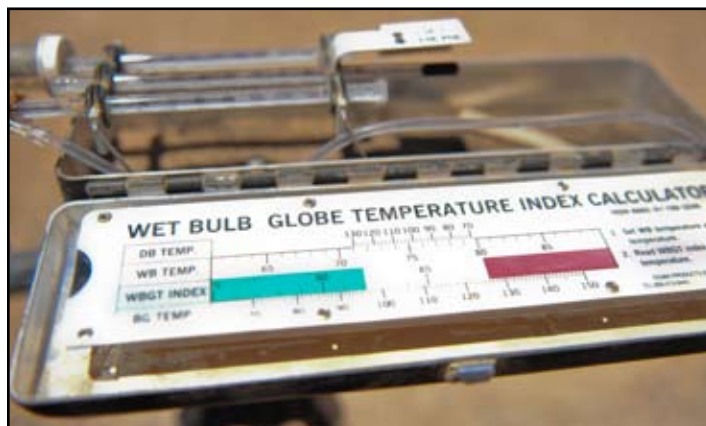
The Soldiers are required to perform their duties despite the heat. The war doesn't stop because of a little sweat.

"We *think* about doing things [tasks or even going to chow] and we are already coated in sweat," said Spc. Steve Ryan of Thornton, Colo.

When Soldiers hear their families and friends talk about the heat back home, they can't help but laugh. Texas' humidity was tough to deal with but 125 degrees Fahrenheit, whether it's dry heat or not, leaves the Soldiers coated in sweat and a soft layer of sand. It's an unpleasant combination but no one said living in the desert would be easy.



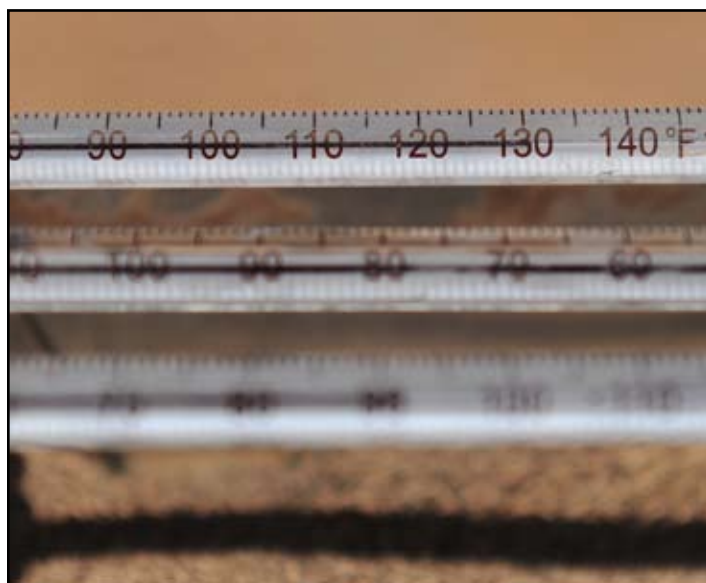
The thermometer should have topped out at 120 degrees Fahrenheit but actually shot past it and traveled back to -40 degrees. It is uncomfortably hot in Ramadi so everyone is thankful for the air conditioning in vehicles, offices and their rooms. (Photo by Sgt. Maj. Sergio Alvarez)



The wet bulb sits outside the battalion area. Thermometers are displayed throughout Ramadi; however, Soldiers don't always need the reminder how hot it really is.



Flag colors indicate the heat category, with black being the highest category known as "Heat Cat 5." Heat categories displayed by flag colors waving throughout all military installations, including Camp Ramadi, Iraq, remind Soldiers about their water consumption levels. Staying hydrated in the desert heat is essential.



The wet bulb displays three temperatures. The top temperature reads the heat from direct sunlight.



# By plane, helicopter, wheeled vehicle. We've arrived!

Story by Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli  
U.S. Army photos by Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli  
and Staff Sgt. Matt Lima

**ALI AL SALEEM AIR BASE, Kuwait-** There are a lot of moving pieces when it comes to transporting troops - no pun intended.

First and foremost, how is the weather? That's a great starting point. In Kuwait, when 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery arrived to Camp Buehring, they were hit with sandstorms. It's definitely a "no fly" day when there



Iraq-bound Soldiers board a C17 Air Force aircraft at Ali Al Saleem, Kuwait.

are sandstorms with strong winds and low visibility.

However, despite the many delays, hurrying up to meet new time requirements and waiting around when the time lines changed, the Soldiers remained as flexible as possible and learned to adjust to their "temporary" homes by getting a meal and catching a few hours sleep as they waited around.

When one group left Camp Buehring for Iraq, they were in for quite a delay. Their first flight was a near success. A "near success" is actually funny in that oh-so-frustrating kind of way. The troops boarded the aircraft, flew over Iraq but without landing, they turned back around for Kuwait. The weather was fine in Kuwait to fly but not good enough in Iraq to land.

Soldiers joked about it being the "test run" or "crawl phase" of the movement. Humor definitely pulls Soldiers through frustrating moments like this.

However, in due time all the Soldiers safely made their way from Kuwait to Iraq.

Currently, the Soldiers find themselves at home

at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, in Al Anbar province.

Staying in Kuwait for a few weeks, traveling to all their destinations by bus, military vehicles, fixed wing aircraft, helicopters and maintaining a positive attitude and a little bit of patience, the Soldiers are finally "home."



Soldiers arrive to Camp Ramadi by a U.S. Navy Sea Stallion helicopter.

## DVIDS IS HERE!

All released photos, stories and Steel Rain newsletters are posted on Digital Video & Imagery Distribution System (DVIDS) at [www.dvidshub.net](http://www.dvidshub.net).

This web site provides news, images, audio, video and publications from military operations around the world!

From this web site all friends, families, Soldiers and employers are able to create a free account so they may download products.

### You have options with DVIDS

- To subscribe via RSS go to ([http://dvidshub.net/unit\\_rss.php?unit\\_id=671](http://dvidshub.net/unit_rss.php?unit_id=671))
- To view a gallery of work from 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery go to (<http://www.dvidshub.net/units/3B-157FA>)

If you have questions about DVIDS, you may e-mail Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli at [liesl.marelli@us.army.mil](mailto:liesl.marelli@us.army.mil) or contact DVIDS at 1-877-DVIDS247. Thank you and we hope you enjoy seeing your Soldier in action!

**dvids**  
**NEWS**

**facebook**

## FANS OUT THERE?

Colorado's 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery now has an official page on Facebook. The Facebook page has photos, links to stories and imagery posted on DVIDS, updated information, and, with any luck, will also act as a forum for families and Soldiers to communicate.

The Facebook page for the battalion is: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Fort-Hood-TX/3rd-Battalion-157th-Field-Artillery-Colorado-Army-National-Guard/219788830264?ref=nf>



(Left) Here's what it looks like on Facebook when browsing for the group!

# Authorized Personnel Only ... sort of

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli

**CAMP RAMADI, Iraq** - There are many places here where access is only available to authorized personnel. Among those authorized (at least temporarily) was a random visitor - a donkey!

"We heard about the donkey walking outside the wire all day [July 15], so it wasn't a huge surprise when I got a call on the radio that he was caught in the concertina wire," said Master Sgt. Mark Yoder, Mayor's Cell Noncommissioned Officer in Charge.

Yoder was told the donkey was in military custody after getting caught in the wire.

"What am I supposed to do with him?" Yoder asked.

He had the donkey brought to the Mayor's Cell Annex. Yoder added, while laughing, that it was his first executive decision.

"You see all these Marines [here]. They don't smile, but you tell them you have a donkey and they all want to come



The donkey relaxes at the Mayor's Cell Annex and enjoys being among those "authorized" to hang out in the area.

pet the donkey," Yoder said with a smile.

"I had troops [Soldiers, Marines and civilians] bringing apples and pears from the mess hall. They'd normally complain about the mile [they walk] to the mess hall but no one heard a word. It was just funny," Yoder said.

Yoder said that about seven months ago, another donkey wandered its way on camp, who now resides by one of the towers the Colorado Guardsmen operate.

"They named him Jack, and he started getting care packages. He was getting donkey treats," Yoder said. "All of a sudden our donkey had donkey treats, too."

"We had [the donkey] for a week. He's with the Marines now. The big joke was about the donkey eviction. We were going to take him out of the fence and let him go," said Yoder.

Instead, the Soldiers contacted a local sheik to see if he wanted it. Not only did the sheik not want it but the sheik offered the Soldier \$50 and two horses for the military to keep him, said Yoder laughing.

"That's the whole thing about this place," Yoder said. "Anything that isn't military - if it's kind of unusual and kind of fun - people go for it."

Soldiers are definitely getting their fair share of wildlife here. Besides Ar Ramadi being home to seven of nine of Iraq's poisonous snakes, there are also an assortment of critters like

lizards, mice, spiders, but most importantly, a highly adored Force Protection canine named Daisy, who works at one of the towers operated by Battery A.



The donkey maintained a pretty friendly posture with his visitors. He was showered with treats ranging from popcorn to apples to pears.



Force Protection canine, Daisy, greets two Battery A Soldiers at the tower they operate in Ramadi.



# Battle handoff underway. Relief is here!

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli

**CAMP RAMADI, Iraq** - In meetings at Fort Hood, Soldiers spoke often about the "RIP." The Army certainly is full of acronyms. Sometimes it seems like there are acronyms for acronyms.

A Relief in Place (RIP) happens when one unit moves in and one gets ready to move out. Third Battalion, 157th Field Artillery, Colorado Army National Guard is "ripping" with 1st Battalion, 158th Field Artillery, Oklahoma National Guard.

All counterparts prepare for the battle handoff. For example, Battery A, 158th Field Artillery meets up for a few weeks with Battery A supply sergeant, 157th FA. The 158th Soldier explains to the 157th Soldier what his/her day consists of, what kinds of



The Quick Reaction Force (QRF) is responsible for checking the perimeter of Camp Ramadi. Before going on a mission, the patrol leader briefs items such as the route, conducts roll call and details their mission at hand.



Sgt. Dave Fisher of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, works diligently adjusting to his new position as the Mayor's Cell administrator.

tasks he/she is in charge of, what his/her areas of responsibilities are, etc.

Sgt. Dave Fisher, a Headquarters and Headquarters Battery Soldier, 3-157th FA, who resides in Colorado Springs, Colo., said, "It's definitely a different mission than what I thought we might be involved in, but no less challenging."

Fisher, who serves as the Mayor's Cell Administrator for Deputy Mayor Capt. Ashkan Angha, is in charge of items such as interfacing with U.S. Military and contractors involving Camp Ramadi functions and services including life support, force protection and construction.

"Our predecessor unit at the Mayor's Cell did a great job here. They were excellent at passing on the necessary information for us to move in fairly seamlessly," Fisher said.

Everyone at Camp Ramdi is busy with the RIP, including the battalion communications shop run by 1st Lt. Jeff Wilson, the signal and electronic warfare officer.

"I have been able to talk to my counterpart [here in Iraq] since January and my role hasn't changed this whole time. I count my blessings everyday that I was able to train and now work the same mission I started with," said Wilson.

"The Relief in Place with 1st Battalion, 158th Field Artillery is going very well," said Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Al Morris.

"We set ourselves up for success by establishing relationships with them even before they deployed to Iraq, which have continued throughout our own train up in Colorado and while at mobilization station," he said.

"That allowed us to have regular dialogue and gain important insight into the mission and the reality of what was happening on the ground," Morris said.



Staff Sgt. Dan Gomez, a Quick Reaction Force Patrol Leader of Pueblo, Co., briefs the 158th and 157th Field Artillery QRF team during the Relief in Place. The units conduct a right- and left-seat ride. First, they watch the unit in place conducting the mission. After a few days, they take over and conduct the missions with the outgoing unit supervising.

## Smiles from *YOUR* Soldiers



Staff Sgt. Norman Clark



Sgt. Aaron Stone



Sgt. Coe Gates



Sgt. Vanessa &  
Cpl. Hector Lozano



Spc. Carlos Garcia

## FAMILY READINESS DATES

### Key dates for meetings:

August 15, September 19 and October 17

### Family Activities:

Happy Apple Farms September 26

### Neighborhood Hello's!

Julesburg: September 11

Longmont: September 15

Canon City/Gunnison: September 23 & 24

Colorado State Fair: August 28 - September 7

Arkansas Valley Fair: August 12 - 16

الف مبروك (Congrats!)

Staff Sgt. Brian Goodburn - Promotion

Capt. Dom Tatti - Promotion

Staff Sgt. Brian Carver and wife, Lauren Carver, are the proud mother and father of Finn Charles Rob-

ert Carver, born July 27. Carver had flown home on emergency leave for the birth.

Carver said, "I was only in Ramadi for 18 hours when the Red Cross message came through," while sitting in al Taqaddum, Iraq, awaiting his flight back home to be with his wife for the birth of their son.

## From the Rear Detachment

Third Battalion, 157th Field Artillery Rear Detachment just completed two weeks of rigorous annual training.

Taking inspiration from the Army-wide Year of the Noncommissioned Officer, the Rear Det turned to NCOs to plan, organize and implement an annual training geared toward NCO leadership and Soldier's Army Warrior Tasks (AWTs).

"This annual training was designed to put sergeants and lieutenants in charge. This was a small group so we wanted to develop small-group leaders," said Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Straight, acting first sergeant for Battery C.

The first week of annual training was dedicated to maintenance inside the Mobilization and Training Equipment Site 64 at Fort Carson, Colo. Mechanics from the 188th Forward Support Company mentored and supervised maintenance on all types of vehicles in order to train Soldiers and also to prepare vehicles for any state or federal missions that

might call upon the services of the Rear Det.

In the next week, the Rear Det moved into the field to conduct 48-hour Multiple Launch Rocket System "war" by simulating fire missions and running through battle drills. Directly following the exercise, the Rear Det moved on to AWTs designed to gain or maintain proficiency in moving, shooting and communicating.

"What we've done here is spark interest and loyalty," said Battery C Commander Capt. Chris Stutz.

"We've had a successful annual training where Soldiers from the [188th] FSC and C Battery got a chance to work together and be engaged by realistic and tough training," Stutz said.

Annual training was also enhanced by the culinary abilities of Sergeant 1st Class John Podhirny.

After 10 days of long hours and tough training, Podhirny transported his barbecue to the range and treated the entire assembly to a roast pig.

The barbecue for the troops helped bring to an end the two-week annual training.

## NEW TROOPS ASSIGNED!

Colorado's 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery would like to welcome aboard 10 Soldiers who stayed in Camp Ramadi to do a tour with our unit after their redeployed. *Please join us in welcoming these Soldiers to the Colorado team!*

Joining us from the 81st Heavy Brigade Combat Team are:

Spc. Jennifer Boone

Chief Warrant Officer Kevin Lang

Sgt. Telia Thompson

Maj. Joseph Zimmerman

Joining us from 1st Battalion, 158th Field Artillery are:

Sgt. Leon Hawkins

Staff Sgt. Phillip Miller

Spc. Joshua Martin

Spc. Gerald Negelein

Spc. Patrick Simpson

Sgt. Dennis Vanwagner