



# A Mile Wide and an Inch Deep



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



## 2-300th responds to Samoan tsunami

*Powder River Cowboys helping Soldiers deal with tragedy and find their families.*

CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait -- Soldiers from American Samoa and those who have relatives living in the U.S. territory when tsunami's pounded ashore, Sept. 30, were at the forefront of a push by 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery commanders and staff to reach loved ones back home.

**See RESPONSE Pg 4**



**Tech. Sgt. Cohen Young /U.S. Air Force**

**DESTRUCTION** -- A home's foundation sits on an angle in Pago Pago, American Samoa, on Oct. 1. The foundation collapsed as a result of a tsunami, causing structural damage to the island's villages, Sept. 30.

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## Hawaii's Soldiers receive a visit from their adjutant general



**A TWO-STAR VISIT** — Maj. Gen. Robert G.F. Lee, adjutant general for the Hawaii National Guard, speaks to his Soldiers that opted to extend their deployments with the Wyoming Army National Guard in Kuwait.

**2nd Lt. Christian Venhuizen/2-300th Field Artillery**

CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait -- Maj. Gen. Robert G.F. Lee, the adjutant general for the Hawaii National Guard, made the long haul from the Aloha State to Kuwait to visit his Soldiers, serving with the Wyoming Army National Guard.

"In this part of this world, change comes a bit slowly, but you all had a hand in changing the outlook of the Middle East," Lee said.

**See LEE Pg 4**

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

*- An old timer from Cowboys' past*

# Soldier in the Field:

## What's your ideal rest and recuperation?



**Spc. Christopher Irvine, A Battery:**  
I'd go home, see the family, spend time with my son.



**Spc. Brian Heffington:**  
I'd travel to different countries, take the European circuit.



**Sgt. Casey Green, A Battery:**  
I went home, back to Wyo, and saw the family.



**Spc. Daniel Rogoff, Headquarters:**  
Just going home and seeing my friends and my kids



**Spc. Elisha VanDell, Headquarters:** I want to see my sister in Saipan, along with the guys in the 100th Battalion.

## Notes from Powder River 6



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

The day this newsletter is published marks a significant day for all members of the Powder River Team. Our halfway point of this adventure is finally here. Everything from here on out, is on the back side of the hill. Twenty-six weeks complete; twenty-six weeks left. It's a great milestone for all of us to measure progress towards completing the mission our country and state asked us to do.

The Powder River Cowboys have successfully completed over 5,000 missions and driven over 500,000 miles. Completion of these missions is supported by our combat enablers, including mechanics who fixed hundreds of vehicles, our communications experts who prepared radios thousands of times, and our medics who supported our Soldiers on those 5,000 missions.

We have command and control personnel who diligently supported all of these missions. They executed detailed planning and mission tracking. We have logisticians who ensured our Soldiers had all of the equipment and supplies they needed to do what we asked them to do. Last, but certainly not least, I have a top notch battle staff who provided the necessary research, analysis and leadership to help all of us make good decisions.

The accomplishments our Powder River Cowboys have achieved, that are mentioned above, only cover what they have done in the past three to four months. When you consider the work all of them did to prepare and train for the deployment and all of the work they did in taking over this mission, the significance of this half-way mark is further emboldened.

**See POWDER RIVER 6 Pg 3**

## Notes from Powder River 7

Half way there, what a good feeling. While we have reached the half way point, we must still remember that our mission is not complete until we all come home.

We are in our third rotation of Soldiers going home for R&R leave. I have talked with many Soldiers about their leave experiences. One of the things I hear the most is how hard it was to leave loved ones again.

I know this is the case for them as I know it will be for me, but seeing loved ones again in my opinion is about building memories that will last a life time. I saw the pictures of the mule deer that 1st Sgt. Robert Butz shot with his son Cody. I sent him a note and told him that is a moment that will last their life times.

As Lt. Col. Nesvik mentioned in his column, some of our Soldiers were injured this month. Our thoughts and prayers are with Sgt. Jesse Williams, who is still in the hospital, and his family, especially his wife. We think of you every day.

While we have loved ones and dear friends that occupy our thoughts when we're not on a mission, we have many more supporters back home that do the same for us. We extend a special thank you to the friends, family members, and those whom we have not met yet for their continued support during this deployment. I would like recognize VFW Post 335, in Cranford, N.J. The post "adopted" our battalion for this deployment.

I mentioned this in an earlier newsletter, but feel it is worth mentioning again. In the words of one of our third country national contractors, "happiness is healthy." Happy trails to you.

Powder River, Let R Buck !



**Command Sgt. Maj. Troy Guimond**  
"Powder River 7"

## Wolf Pack



**IRAQ — The Soldiers of 1st Squad, 2nd Platoon, A Battery, 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery, 115th Fires Brigade, are, kneeling, from left, Pfc. Dustin Scott, Cpl. Randy Stevens and Pvt. Albert Duran. Standing, from left, are Staff Sgt. Joseph Jeppesen, Pfc. Charles Monk, Sgt. Lawrence Ekis, Sgt. Brett Buen, Pfc. Sean Redding, Sgt. John Wayne Mitchell, Spc. Brandon Miles, Spc. Eric Dirkes and Sgt. Christopher Atkins.**

## POWDER RIVER 6 continued from Page 2

I am very proud of what our Soldiers accomplished and look forward to finishing this mission strong and at a “high lope.”

On a different note, September also brought significant challenges. We were all reminded that our service on this mission comes with inherent risk. Three of our Soldiers from Alpha Battery were injured in southern Iraq when a civilian truck from a convoy we were securing collided with the injured Soldiers’ up-armored humvee.

The humvee commander, Sgt. Jesse Williams, and the gunner, Spc. Joshua Black, were severely injured. The driver, Pvt. Jason Erickson, received minor injuries and was returned to duty shortly after the accident. Sgt. Williams and Spc. Black were initially transported to a military medical facility in Balad, Iraq, and later moved to the United States. Spc. Black is recovering well in Fort Lewis, Wash., and Sgt. Williams is making progress towards recovery at Bethesda Naval Hospital, in Maryland.

Our hopes and prayers remain with Sgt. Williams and Spc. Black for their full and speedy recovery. We all think about both Soldiers and their families on a daily basis.

I will finish up this month, and the first half of our deployment, by thanking all of you for your continued support and contribution to our efforts here. We all appreciate the e-mails, Facebook postings, care packages, letters and, of course, your thoughts.

Considering the challenges all of us face, including our families and friends back home, our morale through this deployment has been a relatively steady and positive wave. I hope that this halfway point will help to breathe a second wind into all of us and help us overcome the adversities we face in our service to our nation.

Let’s use this momentum to keep our chins held high and finish this adventure in Powder River form.

Powder River, Let R Buck!

## RESPONSE continued from Page 1

Spc. Michael Ravida, with A Company, 960th Brigade Support Battalion, has close friends from Samoa. "Basically I'm just trying to keep in touch with them online. You know, instant messenger," he said. "I'm pretty confident that they're

OK right now, but their families, back in Samoa, that's who I'm worried about."

The battalion's personnel section worked with the Army, the Hawaii National Guard and the Red Cross to keep Soldiers informed about their families and

homes.

"We worked directly with the 115th Fires Brigade, and remained in contact with the American Red Cross in Kuwait to obtain websites and registry links so Soldiers could try to get a status of their loved ones," said Capt.

Matthew Berry, 2-300th personnel officer.

Berry said Soldiers will be sent on emergency leave once commercial flights are restored to American Samoa.

There are 13 Soldiers in the battalion that are from or have family in the territory.

## LEE continued from Page 1

The Soldiers Lee spoke with, Sept. 18, at Camp Virginia were a mix from the 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry (an Army Reserve unit), and National Guardsmen from the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. All of those Soldiers now

serve under the umbrella of the 115th Fires Brigade. Approximately 100 Soldiers are with the 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery.

"I commend you very much for staying over," Lee said. "I know it's not easy."

"Signing up a second time speaks volumes as to who you are as a Soldier, as a leader and as a patriot," said Command Chief Master Sgt. Denise Jelenski-Hall, the state command chief for the Hawaii National Guard.

Lee identified his plans for future shorter deployments for the Soldiers, possibly in areas currently supported around the Pacific.

The general identified a need for the deployed Soldiers to have time to reconnect with their families and with their civilian jobs. However, Lee said focusing on more time at home doesn't mean an end to their service. "I'm looking for a chance for our new Soldiers to deploy and for you Soldiers, the more experienced Soldiers, a much shorter mission."



2nd Lt. Christian Venhuizen/2-300th Field Artillery

**COMMAND VISIT --** (left) 1st Lt. Brian Ouimet, of Hawaii, assigned to B Battery, 2-300th Field Artillery, chats with Command Chief Master Sgt. Denise Jelenski-Hall, the Hawaii National Guard's State Command Chief Master Sergeant. (Below) Spc. Christopher Babila, of the Big Island, Hawaii, assigned to A Company, 960th Brigade Support Battalion, looks over a CD brought up by Jelenski-Hall and Maj. Gen. Robert G.F. Lee, Hawaii's adjutant general.



## Care packages and holiday season mailing instructions

Care packages, letters, and cards can be mailed directly to your Powder River Cowboys. Send it to:

*Name of Soldier*

*Battery (either HHB, A, B, C, Btry. or A Co.) 2-300th FA*

*APO AE 09327*

If you want to send it to a specific battery, mail it to the same address, but address it to the first sergeant:

A Battery, 1st Sgt. Brian Fawcett; B Battery, 1st Sgt. Robert Butz; C Battery, 1st Sgt. Tim Metro; A Company, Jacinto Garcia; Headquarters, 1st Sgt. Michael Warner.

Packages to the 2-300th as a whole should be sent to 1st Sgt. Warner, with Headquarters (HHB).

Please identify if the package is for the whole battalion.

It's also getting close to the holiday season. Those wanting to make sure their packages reach their loved ones before Christmas should mail them no later than mid-November.

Insurance for some packages may be a good idea and not over loading Soldiers with bulky items is also a plus. The cost of transporting excess items home is the Soldier's responsibility.

# Chaplain's Corner with Chaplain Randy Sawyer

"Dynamite King Dies" was the caption in the newspaper, referring to the man who invented dynamite. The only problem was Dr. Alfred Nobel was still alive.

What a shocker that would be to read about your own death!

Not many people have had to do that, but for Nobel, the part that really got him to thinking was the part of the obituary that described him as a "merchant of death."

***"We mean one thing,  
but someone else turns  
them into weapons of  
mass destruction."***

***-- Chaplain Sawyer***

Here this man had invented a product that was meant to aid mankind, but instead, to his horror, it was being used to create weapons of mass destruction. Of course, you know the rest of the story about how he reacted to all this and because of it we now have the Nobel Peace Prize.

It is the same way with words that we speak to one another. We mean one thing, but someone else turns them into weapons of mass destruction. There is an old saying I learned in school, which you have probably heard before, which says, "Sticks and stones may break my bones but names can never hurt me."

I have come to learn, from personal experience, that that is not true.

Years ago two plastic surgeons conducted a survey to see what effect facial disfigurements had on crime. The criteria they used to classify the disfigurement was if the subjects had big lips, noses, ears, and chins.

They interviewed 11,000 people in the general population and found that 10-percent had such disfigurements. Then they went to the state prison and did the same thing. They found that 60-percent of the prison population had such disfigurements. Out of that, 90-percent of the inmates reported that they had received heavy to moderate teasing and harassment while in school.

What we say to people really does make a difference on how they view themselves and how they view others.

The Apostle Peter says in 1 Peter 2:17 that we are to "honor all people." So when we speak to others, we must show proper respect towards them.



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

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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

## ***Hanging loose before a mission***



**KUWAIT --**  
Pfc. Jeffrey Richardson, of Gillette, Wyo., give the "hang loose," or "shaka" sign while helping to prepare his truck for a convoy escort mission, Sept. 15. Richardson is a part of A Battery, 2-300th Field Artillery, based at Camp Virginia, Kuwait.



## A Battery

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

From 1st Lt. Jason Ruff, platoon leader, A Battery,

As always, September was another month of firsts, but those firsts are finally starting to add up to some sort of strange normalcy.

It was the first time we said goodbye to a block of Soldiers headed out on rest and relaxation leave (that must mean there is a last block of leave).

As our Soldiers run out of fingers and toes to count the number of convoy escort missions they have done, for the first time they can pull from the kind of confidence that is backed by thousands and thousands of miles of experience.

Another first that we were all ready for was a day of sub 100 degree temperatures. Even as the temperatures finally subside and the desert gives us a moment of reprieve.



Photo Courtesy of A Battery

**GETTING READY — A Battery Soldiers prepare their gun trucks to head out on a mission.**



Photo Courtesy of A Battery

**MORE THAN A TRUCK FULL — A Battery Soldiers pose in front of a MaxxPro mine resistant ambush protected vehicle.**

There is still a steady pace of constants that are ever present in our lives. Training continued as Alpha rolled out to the Udari Range to send some lead down range with our crew-served weapons (larger machine guns) on multiple occasions.

We've also added in some weekly and monthly sustainment training to keep the team sharp, strong, and proficient in all of our Soldier tasks.

Along with the constant training is the constant support that keeps on rolling in from home. It's great to watch the mail and package cabinet fill up every night with love and encouragement from home.

As we plug in all of our firsts and our constants into the deployment equation we've come to know a few things. We know our missions. We'll continue to train in order to complete our missions to the best of our ability. We'll also continue to miss our homes, our families, and our friends.

As these firsts begin to turn into constants there is a sense that the sum of all will eventually lead us to mission completion and eventually a ticket back home.



## 100 Days, 1 Million Man-Miles, and 99-degree Temperatures...

Capt. Fred Nasredine, commander, B Battery



2nd Lt. Christian Venhuizen/2-300th Field Artillery

**GOOD LISTENER** — Spc. Gregory Calzada, of Rock Springs, Wyo., listens as his squad leader briefs the unit before a mission.

us will miss it? For those of you that will be chasing critters this fall please send us pictures!

In an effort to break the monotony of the daily grind, during the next few months we have plans for some morale and welfare activities, and some friendly sport competitions amongst the Powder River Cowboys. The question is which battery will rack the most points?

On a separate note, we have had some questions from back home as to whether online video chats are possible. The simple answer is that they are, and many of us are taking advantage of this medium. All you need on your end is a computer with an online service, a webcam, and a free download of your favorite outlet such as Windows Live <http://download.live.com/> or Skype [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com), just to name a couple.

On our end, if a Soldier does not have a personal computer, the battery has two laptops that we can issue to Soldiers for the purpose of video chatting with families. This is a wonderful way to keep in touch, give it a try!

Three very significant milestones for Bravo Battery Soldiers: over 100 days in country already behind us, one million man-miles (one mile per Soldier in the truck) driven on the Kuwaiti and Iraqi roadways, and cool 99-degrees Fahrenheit for daytime highs! Not to mention that, by the time you are reading this newsletter, we would have crossed the midpoint of this entire deployment!

Too many milestones, dates, and benchmarks to keep track of, but this is one Soldier's favorite hobby, keeping track of a wonderful reunion with families, friends and familiar things!

Since our weather is somewhat bland, in the sense that you can always count on heat and dust...we have started briefing our Wyoming weather, to keep things a bit more interesting. It is absolutely refreshing to see a forecast of rain and snow, and we can't wait till we see the "slick-in-spots" reports.

It's October, and that means it is hunting season...and the buzz around here is will it be an amazing season since most of



2nd Lt. Christian Venhuizen/2-300th Field Artillery

**BEFORE WE GO** — Sgt. Peter Brown, of Riverton, Wyo., with B Battery, takes in the mission brief before his convoy heads out on the road.



## Wardog Bite

**Capt. Glenn Nicholson, commander, C Battery**

Greetings families and friends of Charlie Battery. I hope you all are enjoying fall in the Rocky Mountains. In a planning meeting a few days past it was mentioned that there was a winter storm warning for the Big Horns. "Wonderful Wyoming".

Charlie Battery has seen a change in the season as well. Much cooler weather has been a welcomed change for us all. In fact, several mornings were quite cool, at least by our standards. Who would ever think 79-degrees Fahrenheit is cool.

Charlie Battery Soldiers are performing very well. To date we have completed over 180 convoy missions, driving over 65,000 miles. Each of you should be proud of the professionalism and commitment I see every day by the Soldiers of Charlie Battery.

We are approaching a major milestone for the deployment, October 15th marks the halfway point. The men and women of Charlie Battery will celebrate this milestone with a picnic in the sand.

It has been a busy month for new parents. Please congratulate the Hillshafers, Cottons, and the Wilhelms on the new additions to their families.

Although the months have been long, the Soldiers are faring very well. Our mail system is very efficient. Many of you are doing a great job keeping the Soldiers in your thoughts by sending letters and care packages. We all look forward to news and current events from home.

Although it is early October, it is not too early to mention Christmas. I am sure many of you desire to send packages. I ask that you send them early. Please recognize that every thing sent to theatre will have to be sent home at the Soldier's expense.

Soldiers are involved in all sorts of extra-curricular activities: participation in 5K fun runs, physical training, poker tournaments, video gaming, attending college classes, reading and sleeping. There a number of activities available to pass the time.

At the end of the month, Charlie Battery has a semi-annual physical training test which will the give the Soldiers the opportunity to earn some time off provided they outscore the battery commander. There has been quite a bit of interest in this challenge. I am rooting for the troops.

I would like to extend congratulations to newly promoted officers 1st Lt. Michael Kingman and 1st Lt. Steven Merkley. They have worked hard and truly deserve the promotion.

In closing life is as good as it can get in the desert. Charlie Battery continues to excel and meet all challenges head on with tenacity and zeal.



**2nd Lt. Christian Venhuizen/2-300th Field Artillery**

**STARS AND STRIPES — Sgt. Brant Knight, C Battery, displays his U.S. flag before a mission. The flag traveled with his squad into Iraq as a patriotic keepsake.**



## Notes from Alpha Co.

**Capt. James Ezell, commander, A Co. ,  
and 1st Lt. James Lytle, platoon leader**

Hello again everyone! Great news... we are at the halfway point of our tour and everyone is pretty excited for reaching this milestone. We have driven more than 309,000 miles and performed 3,900 missions! That's a huge KUDOS to all the men and woman of A Co., 960th! Our other 960th brothers and sisters who are supporting the 2-300th batteries and the battalion maintenance section continue to do well too.

Our missions are going very well as we now have our routines down. Outside of missions, we try to stay busy. We have Soldiers that competed in 5K runs, a 10-miler, weight lifting competitions, and several other sporting events.

Again, we want to thank all those families, friends, and pen pals for their continued support, care packages, and kind words. We want to especially thank Mrs. Maxine Russell from Hollywood, Calif. She has been absolutely amazing as she sends us care packages and inspiring words every week.

The weather continues to improve slightly each day as we are seeing more days under the 100-degree mark. We all look forward to seeing some snow (except the Hawaii folks of course!) when we get home, but for now, keep all the pictures of beautiful Wyoming coming. It makes us home sick but does lift our spirits.

Our Hawaii, Guam, and Samoa Soldiers are awesome! They continue to be highly motivated and are always willing to do what it takes to make our mission run better.

We miss you all! Take care and look forward to sending you more news next month!

— Capt. Ezell

Aloha!! Fourth Platoon is finally back from transition leave. With all, but three from the platoon gone for the month of August, it is a welcome sight to have our Pacific island brothers and sisters back.

September has been a month of training in order to finally get started on our escort mission. We qualified our Soldiers on the pistol range, completed concealed firearms training and are qualified to drive on air fields. In addition Sgt. Derek Cutting, the overall winner of one of the body-building competitions, has provided fitness and nutrition tips to the entire platoon.

As a platoon we extend our thoughts and prayers to the friends and families of our American Samoan brothers as they deal with the stresses and losses placed on them by the recent tsunami.

— 1st Lt. Lytle



Photos Courtesy of A Company

**LEADERSHIP TEAM** — The senior non-commissioned officers and officers of A Co. are, in front, from left, 1st Lt. Amy Henry, Capt. Benjamin Josephson and 1st Lt. James Lytle. In the middle row are Capt. James Ezell, 1st Sgt. Michael Strasser and 1st Lt. Dexter Nakomoto. In back are Sgt. 1st Class Robert Hanlon, Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Plum, Sgt. 1st Class Julie Wilkes, 2nd Lt. Matthew Bullington and Sgt. 1st Class Francisco Garcia .



**SOME OF FOURTH PLATOON** — Pictured are members of 2nd and 3rd Squad as they prepare to start their shift. From left are Sgt. Joshua Badalucco, Sgt. Arthur Hirayama, Sgt. John Williams, Sgt. Derek Cutting, Staff Sgt. Arnold Denbeste, Staff Sgt. Frank Lessary, Staff Sgt. Rodney Alesna, Sgt. Abel Williams



## Let'r Buck!

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

The Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery have been doing the job that their country has asked them to do and more. They meet the standard set for them and most of the time they go above and beyond.

We will hit our halfway point on the 15th of October. This will mark a milestone for some and, for others, it is just the start.



**2nd Lt. Christian Venhuizen/2-300th Field Artillery**

**PROMOTIONS AND RENLISTMENT -- (Above) Spc. Cory Provstgaard takes the oath of reenlistment, administered by Capt. Troy Wacaser, commander of Headquarters Battery. Provstgaard is the first Soldier in Headquarters to reenlist during this tour to Kuwait and Iraq. (Below) Pfc. Huy Tran, right, salutes Capt. Wacaser following Tran's promotion from private (PV2) to private first class. Tran is among the Soldiers from Hawaii who extended their deployments.**



**2nd Lt. Christian Venhuizen/2-300th Field Artillery**

**OVER THERE -- Spc. David Vanderpool, of Basin, Wyo., left, and Sgt. Jason Peterson, both medics, reenact a sighting of some sort, taking the opportunity for a little jocularly during the deployment.**

We have had additions to our team from outside the state of Wyoming and they are proving to be a very valuable asset to the team.

We are still competing in all of the Morale Welfare and Recreation events on camp, and winning most of them. This gives our Soldiers a boost in their off time.

I feel it a privilege to serve with them and am humbled to be in the company of the greatest Soldiers and officers in the U.S. Army.

