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## **Annual Unit History**

*Due NLT 01 February each year for the previous calendar year.  
Refer to 28ID Military History Program SOP, dtd. 15 August 2008, for specific guidance.*

**For Calendar Year:** 2008

**Unit:** Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 109th  
Field Artillery Regiment

**Unit Address:** 747 West Main Street Plymouth, PA 18634-1817

**Unit POC:** SFC Charles Boyer, Readiness NCO

**Unit POC Phone Number:** (570)779-3221

### **I. Introduction or Forward** *(A brief account on the unit's origin and its accomplishments over the years and a statement about the current period covered)*

Alpha Battery 1<sup>st</sup> Bn 109<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery is located in Plymouth, PA. There Primary weapon is the 155 SP Howitzer. The elements unit was deployed ISO OEF from July 2002 thru March 2003. The entire unit was activated for OIF 2 Deployed to Kuwait and Qatar as ILO MP's from December 2003 thru March 2005.

### **II. Organization and Administration**

#### **A. Organization** *(Select the type of organization from the pull-down menu)*

Artillery

#### **B. Mission** *(A brief mission statement and the Mission Essential Task List)*

Conducts individual, staff, and collective training in order to provide a manned and trained line battery of the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn 109<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery ready to achieve IOC in FY2009.

A mission essential task list is often defined by a new commander and circulated throughout the command. This is a valuable document because it illustrates how the commander sees the mission in terms of priorities. For example:

- Conduct Deployment Activities
- Sustain the Force
- Conduct Command & Control of Operations
- Conduct Tactical Movement
- Conduct an Attack
- Conduct a Defense
- Conduct Area Security Operations
- Conduct Urban Operations

#### **C. Personnel**

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### **1. Commander and Staff** (Brief biographical sketches)

Commander: CPT Neil Aaron Ravitz. Cpt Ravitz was born in Pottsville, PA. He is a graduate of the United States Military Academy with a degree in System Engineering. CPT Ravitz commissioned in May 1999 as a Field Officer assigned to 3<sup>rd</sup> ACR, Ft. Carson, CO. He joined the PAARNG in May 2001 assigned to 1<sup>st</sup> Bn 109<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery. He deployed in support of OIF 2 from December 2003 thru February 2005. CPT Ravitz's awards and decorations include: Bronze Star Medal; Army Commendation Medal(w/2OLC); Army Achievement Medal(w/3 OLC); Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal (w/1OLC); National Defense Service Medal(w/bronze star); Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; Armed Forces Reserve Medal with "M" device; Army Service Ribbon; Overseas Service Ribbon; Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal; Gen Thomas J. Stewart Medal; and the MG Thomas White Medal. Cpt Ravitz assumed command of Alpha Btry in September 2006. Cpt Ravitz currently resides in Dresher, PA with his wife Stephanie and children.

First Sergeant: 1SG Albert Rivera. First Sergeant Rivera is a graduate of Campos High School, Puerto Rico. He is a graduate of numerous military education, leadership and qualification courses, to include: Primary Leadership Development Course; Basic Non Commissioned Officer Course; and Advance Non Commissioned Officer Course. 1SG Rivera's awards and decorations include: Meritorious Service Medal; Army Commendation Medal; Army Achievement Medal(w/4 OLC); Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal (w/5 OLC); National Defense Service Medal(w/Bronze Star); Armed Forces Reserve Medal with "M" device and Silver Hourglass; NCO Professional Development Ribbon (3); Army Service Ribbon; PA 20 Year Service Medal; Pennsylvania R & R Medal; Pennsylvania Service Ribbon; Gen Thomas J. Stewart Medal; and the MG Thomas R. White Medal. 1SG Rivera resides in Plains with his wife, Linda and children.

### **2. Medal of Honor Winners** (Brief biographical sketches, if available, and a brief account of the action or a copy of the citation) ( If none, enter "NONE")

None.

### **3. Others** (Winners of Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Bronze Star, and other) ( If none, enter "NONE")

SSG Latwinski - Bronze Star  
SSG Gundrum - Bronze Star  
2 CIB  
25 CAB

## **III. Major Accomplishments during the Year**

### **A. Operations**

Unit sustained Home Station operations while deploying numerous soldiers ISO OEF in Afghanistan.

### **B. Training and Exercises**

Members of the unit trained for deployment to OIF as members of Bravo Btry 1-109FA who deployed with the 56 Stryker Brigade Combat Team. Training focused on Field-Level Maintenance Driver Training of Stryker vehicle. Field-Level

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Maintenance New Equipment Training is designed to provide vehicle maintenance personnel the skills required to maintain both the automotive and digital components of the Stryker family of vehicles. Driver Training is focused on qualifying Stryker drivers and vehicle commanders. The focus for collective training was on tasks that support Conduct Area Security Operations (emphasizing cordon and search missions), executed at the squad and platoon level as well as training on the M777A1 at Camp Shelby, MS and Ft. Polk, LA.

## **C. Special Events**

### **1. Unit Day Ceremonies**

Unit participated in BN Train wreck Ceremony.

Unit conducted cannon salutes at the following:

Armed Forces Day Salute at City Island, Harrisburg, PA

28<sup>th</sup> ID Reunion Salute at Ft Indiantown Gap

10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ft Indiantown Gap Training Center Salute

Veterans Day Salute at Ft Indiantown Gap National Cemetery

### **2. Civil Actions (State active duty)**

None.

### **3. Permanent Changes of Station**

None.

### **4. Recruiting Initiatives**

Unit supports many community activities and high school events that build a great rapport with the community attributing to a 96% assigned strength.

### **5. Other (Include community activities, morale support activities, Christmas party, etc.)**

Unit family readiness Picnic.

## **IV. Special Equipment Fielding**

None.

## **V. Appendices**

### **A. Lineage and Honors Certificate**

Traditional Designation: Alpha Btry 1/109 FA

Historical Outline:

1775 May 17 Under an Act of the Connecticut Assembly, dated the second Thursday of May 1775, the 24 Regiment Connecticut Militia was created. Both Pennsylvania and Connecticut had claims on this act.

1775 October 17 Organized as the 24th Connecticut Regiment in the Wyoming Valley region. The 1st and 2nd Independent Westmoreland Companies (also known as the Wyoming Companies): constituted 23 Aug 1776 in the Continental army. Organized 21 Sep 1776 in the Wyoming Valley; consolidated 23 Jun 1778 as

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Captain Simon Spaulding's Wyoming Independent Company; disbanded 1 Jan 1781 at Fort Wyoming, Wilkes-Barre and personnel are reverted to the militia.

1780 April 3 Remaining men of the 24th Connecticut Regiment not in Federal service fighting the Indians are reorganized as 1st Company, 5th Connecticut Regiment.

1782 Dec 30 The Wyoming Valley region is awarded to Pennsylvania.

1787 November 13 Reorganized as Lt. Col. Hollenback's Battalion, Luzerne County Pennsylvania Militia.

1793 April 11 Redesignated 3rd Regiment Luzerne County Pennsylvania Militia.

1799 April 9 Redesignated 35th Regiment Pennsylvania Militia.

1813 May 5 Artillery Company, 35th Regiment in Federal Service. Manned shore batteries and supplied gunners for the fleet for naval battle of Lake Erie, September 10 for Commodore Perry's squadron of ships. This company was under the command of Captain Samuel Thomas. Because we had only one company in this war the regiment does not receive any battle credits. However, the unit did receive a Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Honor for their duty to the country and state.

1816 March 19 Redesignated 2nd Regiment Pennsylvania Militia.

1821 August 9/29 Reorganized as Wyoming Volunteer Battalion, Pennsylvania Militia, from volunteer companies of the 2nd Regiment, Pennsylvania Militia.

1834 February 22 Redesignated Wyoming Volunteer Regiment, Pennsylvania Militia.

1846 December 6 Members of the Wyoming Artillerists combined with Wyoming Yagers leave for the Mexican War. Mustered into Federal service at Pittsburgh on December 15, as Company I, 1st Pennsylvania Volunteers Regiment, December 31. Mustered out in Pittsburgh 20 July 1848.

1861 April 22-24 The Wyoming Volunteer Regiment becomes 8th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment (PVI). The Wyoming Dragoons, Jackson Rifles, Luzerne Guard, Wyoming Artillerists and Wyoming Yagers become Companies C, D, E, F, and G respectively of the new Regiment, which is transferred to Chambersburg and then Harrisburg for Federal service for 90 day service.

1861 July 29 Mustered out at Harrisburg.

1862 October 18 The 8th Regiment is reorganizes as 143rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment (PVI), for 3 years of service. Left Camp Luzerne to Washington D.C., and is attached to the 1st Brigade, Defenses of Washington, north of Potomac.

1863 February 17 Left Washington. Attached to 2nd Brigade, 3rd Division, 1st Army Corps until December 1863. Fought in the battle of Chancellorsville and Gettysburg.

1863 July 1-3 At Gettysburg, the 143rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Regiment was under the command of Col. Edmund Lovell Dana and assisted by Lt. Col. John Dunn Musser. There were 465 troops present for duty, companies A thru K. The 143rd was part of the Bucktail Brigade under the command of Col. Roy Stone. This Brigade and regiments in it became known as the "Bogus Bucktails" Because Col. Stone who helped started the original Bucktail Regiment earlier in the war started this brigade which consisted of the 143rd, 149th, and 150th Pennsylvania Volunteer Regiments. At Gettysburg, the regiment has two monuments honoring the men that fought under the regiment. Also at Gettysburg, Sergeant James M. Rutter of Company C would receive this unit's first Medal of Honor for his actions on July 1.

1864 March Served in the First Brigade, 3rd Division, 1st Corps. In June serve in the 3rd Brigade, 4th Division, 5th Corps. Fought in the Battle of the Wilderness, Spottsylvania, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg. Transferred to the 1st Brigade, 1st Division, 5th Corp to September 1864.

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1864 May 6 First Sergeant Patrick De Lacy of Company A would receive the Medal of Honor for his actions at the Battle of the Wilderness on May 6. It would be the 2nd Medal of Honor that the 143rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry would Receive.

1865 Served in various skirmishes, raids, and guarding of Confederate prisoners.

1865 June 12 Mustered out at Hart Island, New York Harbor.

1870 September It was in this year that the name of militia was dropped and we became by law the "National Guard of Pennsylvania."

1871 January 11 Reorganized and redesignated as the 15th Infantry Regiment, Pennsylvania National Guard (PNG).

1873 November 28 Consolidated with the 17th Regiment and redesignated 9th Regiment.

1873-1898 Various strikes, presidential inaugural events, parades, and reunion events for the next few decades.

1876 January 26 Organized as Company K, 12th Infantry stationed at Towanda. Later would become Battery A, 109th Field Artillery Battalion in 1947.

1898 May 11 Mustered into Federal service at Mount Gretna, Pennsylvania as the 9th PVI. It did not serve outside the continental United States. Mustered out of Federal service 29 Oct 1898.

1899 Reorganized from January 24 to March 6. 3rd Battalion organized by transfer of four companies, 7th Regiment (organized in 1898) to our regiment on June 23.

1916 June 3 National Defense Act Passed. On June 19, the Pennsylvania National Guard is called into service, but this regiment is not included.

1916 June Most of the Pennsylvania National Guard was called into service to prevent further aggression as Mexican irregular forces cross into the United States. Before they left for home, the commander Colonel Miner announced that the unit would become a Field Artillery Regiment to stay on the Mexican Border.

1916 August 16 Reorganized as the 3rd Field Artillery Regiment, PNG.

1916 September 8 Mustered into Federal service at Mt. Gretna for service on the Mexican Border. Served on Border patrol duty. Mustered out of Federal Service on 23-27 March 1917 at Wilkes-Barre, PA.

1917 July 16-19 Mustered into Federal service at West Pittston, PA.

1917 October 11 Redesignated the 109th Field Artillery Regiment. It was a horse drawn 75mm Artillery Unit that consisted of two battalions. The Regiment served in the 28th Division during World War I.

1918 August 17 World War I, in France. The Unit was in the Champagne defense sector. Was the first battalion in "Death Valley."

1918 September 19 was in the Lorraine defensive sector.

1918 September 26 was in the Meuse-Argonne offensive sector.

1918 October 30 was in the Ypres-Lys offensive sector.

1919 April 27 Left St. Nazaire, France

1919 May 15 Paraded with 28th Division in Philadelphia.

1919 May 17 Demobilized at Camp Dix, New Jersey.

1919 October 16 Reorganization as 3rd Pennsylvania Artillery.

1921 April 1 Redesignated 109th Field Artillery Regiment in June and Federally recognized on June 29. Headquarters is at Wilkes-Barre.

1941 February 17 Called to Federal Service as an element of the 28th Division, and members start training for possible war.

1942 February 17 Regiment was reorganized following the World War I and remained a regiment until 1942 when it was reorganized as the 109th Field Artillery Battalion at Camp Livingston, LA. Elements of regiment are broken up and reorganized as follows:

Headquarters, disbanded; Headquarters Battery is consolidates with Pioneer Company, 628th Tank Destroyer Battalion; 2nd Battalion is reorganized and

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redesignated 109th Field Artillery Battalion. The 1st Battalion is redesignated 2nd Battalion, 193rd Field Artillery Regiment and they then begin their own lineage.

1944 June Help liberate Paris and France after arriving in Normandy.

1944 December 16 During the Battle of the Bulge, the battalion played a highly significant role in upsetting the German High Command's timetable. After losing most of our 105mm Howitzers in battle, the battalion continued to fight as Infantry and earned the Distinguished Unit Citation. 1945 August. The unit marched down the streets of Paris with other units of the 28th Infantry Division in a victory celebration.

1945 August 25 The Headquarters of the Regiment is reconstituted on the inactive list and is now back in the PNG. Pioneer Co., 628th Tank Destroyer BN redesignated 22 July 1942 as the Reconnaissance Company, 28th TD Battalion is inactivated 14 Nov 1945 at Camp Myles Standish, MA. 109th FA Battalion is inactivated 30 October 1945 at Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

1946 December 17 The former 109th FA (less 1st Bn) is reorganized and redesignated in PNG as the 109th Field Artillery Battalion, an element of the 28th Infantry Division at Wilkes-Barre.

1950 September 5 The Battalion was called to active duty in September of 1950 during the Korean Crisis and served in Europe as a part of NATO forces.

1950 September 11 There was an early morning train wreck at Coshocton, Ohio, while enroute to the unit duty station at Camp Atterbury, Indiana when another train hit the troop transport train causing 33 of our soldiers to get killed. Every year we honor them in a short ceremony at the armory and at Boalsburg Military History Museum.

1953 July 27 109th FA Battalion is reorganized in PNGUS.

1954 June 15 Released from active Federal service and reverted to State control.

1959 June 1 Reorganized and redesignated as the 109th ART, a parent regiment of the CARS, to consist of the 1st and 2nd Howitzer Battalions, elements of the 28th Infantry Division.

1961 February 26-27 Susquehanna River Flood Control Duty.

1963 April 1 Brought a merger of the two battalions into a single unit once again. Minor reorganizations have taken place since. The one significant change was the motor vehicle towed 8" howitzer was now 8" self-propelled howitzers.

1968-1975 Various units were activated for the Vietnam Conflict. This unit was not activated. Though some saw service in other parts of the country such as guarding federal property.

1972 May 1 Redesignated as the 109th Field Artillery.

1972 June-1 July The Agnes Flood hits the Wyoming Valley and members are called to state duty. More than 13,000 National Guard soldiers help in the effort during the flood.

1974 February 3-5 Unit is on State Active Duty due to a trucker's strike.

1975 September 26-28 Unit is on State Active Duty due to Tropical Storm "Eloise."

1977 July-August 1 Members of the unit rush to help out the citizens of the 1977 Johnstown Flood, earning them a Governor's Unit Citation.

1979 March 6-7 Unit is on state active duty for OPERATION HIGH WATER.

1980s Members guarded Cuban prisoners at Ft. Indiantown Gap.

1983 December 14-15 Unit is on State Active Duty for OPERATION HIGH WATER II.

1987 March 24 Unit is on State Active Duty for a Toxic Cloud in Nanticoke, PA.

1996 January Members of this unit deployed to Bosnia for a nine month rotation for duty.

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1996 The governor of the state called a state of emergency and close down all major highways for several days. After the blizzard, the unit remained on duty do to a severe meltdown and flooding in the area.

1999 March 4 The Unit announced future participation in joint WARFIGHTER exercise in the U.S. Army's Grafenwoehr Training Area near Nuremberg, Germany for 3 weeks. For the first time ever, the Guard soldiers will team up with their counterparts from two active-duty divisions, as well as a higher level headquarters from the Fifth U.S. Corps.

1999 September 28 SPC John Paul Karpovich, HHB, becomes the first member of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard to be awarded the Soldier's Medal during peace time.

2000 Feb 1-16 Around 658 Guard soldiers from the state attend the WARFIGHTER in Germany representing the 28th Infantry Division.

2000 September Members of this unit fly out to Coshocton for the 50th anniversary of the Train Wreck ceremony where 33 of the unit's soldiers were killed.

2001 November 21 Gov. Mark Schweiker directed Pennsylvania National Guard soldiers to join State Police in a joint security mission at Pennsylvania's five nuclear facilities. Members of this unit volunteered for the duty.

2001 December Soldiers attend a WARFIGHTER at Ft. Stewart, GA with the 82nd Airborne and 3rd Infantry divisions under the control of the 18th Airborne Corps.

2002 January Soldier from again this unit attend another WARFIGHTER exercise at Ft. Stewart under the 18th Airborne Corps

2002 May 28-29 Unit is on State Active Duty for OPERATION ANGRY BEAR. During this emergency members guard houses and roadway that was washed away or damaged when a dam in the area of Bear Creek Township broke.

2002 July About 850 soldiers from the division, are mobilized to take over the Multinational Division-North (MND-North) head-quartered on "Eagle Base" in the Bosnian city of Tuzla for 270 days, under the SFOR 12 in October. The unit is mobilized for service in Europe under the 55th Brigade "Task Force Keystone", 28th Infantry Division. Charlie Battery, 109th Field Artillery located in Plymouth leaves in July of 2002 for Germany, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands as other European units are sent to the Persian Gulf area. Charlie Battery was in the third increment to be deployed for Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.

2003 January The unit receives brand new M109A6 Paladins, which are 155mm self-propelled howitzers which can shoot while on the move.

2003 March Charlie Battery, 109th FA returns from their 9 month turn of duty.

2003 December Members mobilize ISO OIF II

2005 February Members return from service in Kuwait, Qatar and Iraq

2007 December Members from the battery mobilize to serve in Afghanistan.

2008 September 28 soldiers mobilize with Btry B ISO OIF as part of the 56 Stryker BDE

2008 Members from the battery return from OEF in Afghanistan.

## **B. Unit Citations**

Presidential Unit Citation

Governors Unit Citation

## **C. Selected Orders (Include alert orders, mobilization orders, etc)**

Members of the unit were ordered to Active Federal Service in support of OIF on Sept 19, 2008.

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**D. Other.**

None .

**VI. Glossary** *(A list of words not commonly used, acronyms and their explanations)*

IOC - Initial Operational Capability

OIF - Operation Iraqi Freedom

OEF - Operation Enduring Freedom