



Pro Patria Press

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Newsletter of the 31st Infantry Regiment Association

4th Battalion Soldiers Killed and Wounded in Iraq



As those who attended the reunion at Syracuse know, the 4th Battalion 31st Infantry departed Fort Drum in August for Iraq. It operates around Mahmudiyah, an especially tough town south of Baghdad. On September 19, **Specialist Bobby Callahan** (left) of Jamestown, NC was killed when the vehicle he was driving overturned. Callahan was a 22-year-old mortarman on his second tour in Iraq. He earned the Army Commendation Medal for Valor for helping to save medic Specialist Brandon Burke's life during a mortar attack at Abu Ghraib last May during his first tour in Iraq. Burke lost a leg in that attack and is still recovering at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, TX. On October 1, **PFC Satieon V. "T" Greenlee** (center) of Pendleton, SC was killed by a sniper while on patrol in Baghdad. He was a 24-year-old rifleman with A Company and leaves behind a wife and three sons at Ft Drum. On October 22, **Specialist Nicolas K. Rogers** (right) of Deltona, FL was killed in an outburst of small arms, mortar, and RPG fire on the patrol he accompanied. He was a 27-year-old medic attached to B Company and leaves behind a wife and daughter. Our prayers and best wishes go out to their families and comrades.

Five other Polar Bears are recovering from wounds at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC. **Lieutenant Scott Quilty** of A Company was wounded by an improvised explosive device during a dismounted patrol in Baghdad. He lost an arm below the elbow and a leg below the knee. **Sergeant Justin L. Young** is recovering from the loss of an eye. **PFC Alejandro H. Albarran** remains bed-ridden, recovering from a shattered hip and thigh. **PFC Paul S. Linkous** is recovering from three gunshot wounds that splintered one arm. **PFC Charles Lewis** is currently recovering in convalescent status. In September, **Lieutenant Colonel Mike Infanti**, the battalion commander, was wounded in the foot by an improvised explosive device on the road between Baghdad and Mahmudiyah. He remained on duty and was back on the same road the next day. Our country demands much of its small Army (just 496,000), the smallest wartime Army since the Philippine Insurrection over a century ago. 140,000 of them are serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, requiring units to return to combat with less than a full year in the US between tours. Since 2001, our 4th Battalion has already had four combat tours. The 10th Mountain Division with which it serves currently has one brigade serving in Iraq and a reinforced brigade and the division headquarters in Afghanistan.

Reunion 2007

Our next reunion, celebrating our regiment's 91st Anniversary, will take place at the Clarion Hotel



El Tropicano Riverwalk (110 Lexington Ave, San Antonio, TX, phone 201-223-9461) 23-26 Aug 2007. Room rate is \$99 plus tax. Includes continental breakfast and free parking. Check-in Thurs 23 Aug, tour Fort Sam Houston and the Alamo on 24 Aug, memorial service and banquet are on 25 Aug, and check-out 26 Aug. Our event coordinator is Chaplain Bill Burns (6-31st Infantry 1969-70). *Bill will need help in making this event the best ever, so if you live in or near San Antonio, please call him at 210-317-1924.*

Reunion 2006



Our 90th Anniversary Reunion at Syracuse was again a great success with about 200 members attending. Our thanks to Vin Zike and his great wife and Jackie for all the months of hard work they did in making it possible. Thanks also to the fine soldiers of the 4-31st Infantry who hosted us at Ft Drum and are now back in Iraq on the battalion's fourth combat tour (Afghanistan 2001, Iraq 2003-04, Iraq 2004-05, Iraq 2006-07). D/6-31st (Vietnam) again had the best attendance of any company (30). Any competition out there?

North Korea 1950

This is the eleventh in our series on combat in Korea. In our previous edition, Colonel McLean was shot and captured as the 1-32nd Infantry was withdrawing into the 3-31st infantry's perimeter.

When Major Hugh Robbins, the Regimental Adjutant, reached the inlet, he was shocked by the number of casualties and the scale of destruction. At the 3rd Battalion's battered CP, he found Lieutenant Colonel Reilly in good spirits, but physically incapacitated from his wounds. Captain Melville Adams, the S-4, was dying of his wounds. Lieutenant Paul Dill, M Company's Executive Officer, was dying, and so was Captain Hank Wamble, the Medical Company Commander. All around the CP were the bodies of dead GIs, KATUSAs, and Chinese, still lay where they fell.

After conferring briefly with Lieutenant Colonel Reilly and learning that he was the senior surviving officer, Lieutenant Colonel Don C. Faith assumed command of the 31st RCT. He spent the rest of the morning locating units of the 3rd Battalion and organizing a perimeter. The 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry under Major Harvey Storms remained on the east ridge. Faith's own 1st Battalion 32nd Infantry under Major Crosby Miller, filled in around the 3rd Battalion's flanks. The RCT's heavy mortars, howitzers, and anti-aircraft guns were arrayed in the center. Major Bob Tolly commanded the artillery, but only four of his howitzers remained operable.

Major Robbins, acting as the Task Force executive officer, supervised the redistribution of supplies to units around the perimeter. Around 3:00 PM, an air drop by C-119s provided emergency supplies, but the results were not satisfying. Some landed outside the perimeter and were lost to the Chinese. One parachute failed to open, sending its cargo hurtling down like a meteor, killing a KATUSA. Missing was ammunition for the 40mm Dusters, a particularly effective weapon that was running perilously low. The ammunition landed instead at Hudong-ni where the tank company destroyed it because it had no 40mm weapons.



That afternoon, Brigadier General Henry I. Hodes, Assistant Division Commander of the 7th Infantry Division, flew into the RCT's perimeter to see for himself what was happening. PFC Ed Reeves, who had found refuge at the Battalion CP the night his company was overrun, remembers hearing Lieutenant Colonel Reilly arguing with Hodes, who had just ordered him and Lieutenant Colonel Embree, commander of the 57th FA Battalion, loaded aboard his helicopter for evacuation to Hagaru-ri. Reilly said he couldn't abandon his men and claimed that his wounds wouldn't keep him from doing anything he needed to do. Hodes knew that neither battalion commander could function effectively since neither could even stand, much less walk. He gave Reilly and Embree no choice, ordering the few able-bodied men near the CP to put them on his helicopter without further delay.

Meanwhile, Captain Drake was trying again to get his Tank Company past the hairpin turn at Hill 1221 to break through to the RCT's main body at the inlet. He took 12 tanks, a mortar, and a scratch force of less than a company, assembled from Headquarters and Service Companies and a platoon from the 13th Engineer Battalion. Again, the tanks were unable to get traction on the slippery mountainside and the troops on foot came under such heavy fire that they could make no headway. About 20 were killed or wounded. In frustration, Chaplain Martin C. Hoehn, accompanying the assault force, grabbed a Thompson sub-machinegun and fired magazine after magazine, each time asking God for forgiveness. Because high mountains blocked line-of-sight radio transmissions, there was no communication between the RCT's main body at the inlet and the elements at Hudong-ni, only four miles away. A coordinated assault by the tank-infantry



force from Hudong-ni and infantry from the inlet might have stood a chance, but by itself, the Hudong-ni force had too few infantrymen to overcome Chinese dominance on the hills above the hairpin.

Just before midnight on November 29, the Chinese renewed their attack on the inlet, striking the sector held by A and B Companies of the 32nd Infantry. The attack was repulsed with heavy losses after about an hour. The Chinese later made a second try, striking A Company 32nd Infantry from the south. Preceded by a mortar attack, the Chinese overran a platoon that included a heavy machinegun and a 75mm recoilless rifle. The latter was destroyed by mortar fire, killing

its crew. After a sharp firefight, the Chinese overran the heavy machinegun position, capturing its crew and several other men before withdrawing. Throughout the night, Chinese raiding parties penetrated the perimeter, intent on knocking out the 15th AAA's quad .50 caliber and 40mm guns that had proven so devastating.

In the 3rd Battalion CP, PFC Don Mayville had been sitting for hours on a tile floor that had a fire under it while he operated an SCR 608 Radio. He could only communicate with the 57th Field Artillery Battalion. Weary from three nights with little sleep, he got permission from Lieutenant Jules "Rocky" Rybolt, the Battalion Communications Officer, to lay down on the floor to catch a few minutes rest. Just as Mayville lay down, a burst of fire passed through the CP's outer wall, hitting in Rybolt the forehead. He called out to his friend, Lieutenant Bob Boyer, standing about 10 feet away on the other side of the room, "Bob, I'm hit" and slumped to the floor, dead.

New Members

Our association grows through the efforts of its members. Please do your part by helping to bring in those who served with you. We're very pleased to welcome the following new members:

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|----------------------------|--|--------------------|
| CWO (Ret) Jerry N Bishop | I Co (CPL, Japan & Korea 1950-51) | Marshall, TX |
| Daniel W Ezso | E/6th Bn (SP5, Vietnam, 1967-69) | Valley Village, CA |
| MAJ (Ret) George B Lavezzi | A/6th Bn (CPT, Vietnam, 1969-70) | New York, NY |
| Thomas A Medford, Jr | A/5th Bn (CPT, Ft Benning, 1971-73) | Bowie, MD |
| William J Russell | HHC (SGT, Korea, 1953-54) | Pound Pond, ME |
| Kristen L Sharpe | A/4th Bn (SPC, Ft Drum, 1996-97) | Ventura, CA |
| Virginia A McConnell | Associate (C J McConnell, Bataan) | Troy, ID |

Taps

We're sad to report the following members' deaths. They were our comrades and friends:

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|---------------------|---|------------------|
| Thomas A Batts | B Co (CPL, Japan, Korea 1949-50) | Rocky Mount, NC |
| Robert S Gebele | L Co (PFC, Korea 1951-52) | Dayton, OH |
| James R Russell | G Co (SGT, Japan, Korea 1950-51) | Shelbyville, TN |
| Gary Spears | D/6th Bn (SP4, Vietnam 1968-69) | Indianapolis, IN |
| Richard C Waite, Sr | A Co (PFC, Korea 1951-52) | Sierra Vista, AZ |

Websites



Thanks to the great work of Mary Doyon and Chuck McCammon, our website has lots of new material. We've posted several new items from our regimental history, including **Chapter 15** (Korea after the Armistice—1953-1987), the first installment of **Chapter 17** (4th Battalion's service at Ft Devens and Tay Ninh—1965-67), and an updated version of **Chapter 18** (6th Battalion's Service at Ft Lewis, Vietnam, and Cambodia). You'll also find lots of new pictures in the photo gallery, including an impressive batch from Camp Crawford, Japan sent by Joe Harper's

niece, Joyce. Joe, a member of the 3rd Battalion's Commo Platoon, was killed at the Chosin Reservoir. Please check it all out and sign our guest book at www.31stinfantry.org to let us know what you think.

Related sites include:

- 6th Bn 31st Inf: www.6thofthe31st.zzn.com and www.vietnam6bn31inf.com

- 7th Infantry Division: www.7th-inf-div-assn.com.
- 9th Infantry Division: www.9thinfdivsociety.org.
- 23rd Infantry “Americal” Division: www.americal.org.
- 196th Light Infantry Brigade: www.196th.org.
- Karen Smith’s tribute to the 31st Inf: <http://31rct.tripod.com/>

Help for the 4th Battalion



Before departing for Iraq, the 4th Battalion decided it wanted to sponsor schools near where it would be stationed. On September 12, the Joint Advanced Warfighting Program, a division of the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) in Alexandria, Virginia, helped the battalion get its project underway by shipping it over 400 pounds of school supplies. Another shipment is being collected with the collaboration of other IDA divisions and T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria. The program’s goals are shown below:

Task Force Polar Bear, 4-31st Infantry, has three goals:

1. To provide children who live in the areas patrolled by Task Force Polar Bear with the materials they need at school to make a safer and stronger Iraq.
2. To provide opportunities for cultural exchanges through photos and letters between students in the US and Iraq to promote greater understanding and awareness
3. To provide humanitarian assistance to needy Iraqis during winter months

If you’re interested in helping or would like more information, please contact Dr Amy Henninger (ahenning@ida.org) or Brian Williams (bwilliams@ida.org).