



Pro Patria Press



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*Newsletter of the 31st Infantry Regiment Association
Karl Lowe, Editor*

Reunion 2008



Celebrating our Regiment's ninety-second anniversary, our next reunion will be held August 21-24 2008 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, San Pedro, California. Our reunion coordinator is Louis Dominguez (C/6-31st Infantry-1967-69). Lou has already done a great job in planning ahead and coordinating the event with the city but there is lots more to do. If you live in the greater Los Angeles area, please call him (310-547-4145 or 310-780-5359 or email louisca5@sbcglobal.net and offer your help. Organizing a reunion is hard work and doing it alone is harder still so don't just "let George do it", join Lou in making this event a great time in the warm California sun.

Welcome Home 4th Battalion



On 20 Nov 2007, LTG Sam Wetzel, Vin Zike, and Jack Considine attended the Welcome Home Ceremony for the 4/31 Polar Bears and the other units of the 2nd BCT, 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, NY. Sam Reports:

"It was a very moving experience for all of us. Some wounded Polar Bears were brought up from Walter Reed Hospital and one from the Fort Sam Houston Burn unit was there and we were able to talk to many Polar Bears at a Reception afterward. Awards of the Silver Star and Bronze Star with V device were announced during the Ceremony. Fallen soldiers and our two missing soldiers were listed in the Program and honored as well. 4/31 lost 20 KIA, 2 still MIA and many wounded, including Bn Cdr LTC Mike Infanti (3 times). The troops called him an IED magnet or some such name. Mike told me that he will need an operation on his back and on one knee. The 2nd Brigade Combat Team Commander, Colonel Mike Kershaw told me that the Polar Bears did an outstanding job in combat in Iraq and we could be proud of all of them." Mike Infanti gave up command of the 4-31st on 10 December. The regimental association presented him a replica of a silver cup from the Shanghai Bowl in honor of his service.

On another note, COL Steve Townsend, former commander of the 4-31st at Ft Drum and in Afghanistan, recently commanded the 3rd Brigade Combat Team 2nd Infantry Division at Ft Lewis, Washington and in Iraq. His brigade served in Iraq for 15 months, and was used by LTG Odierno as his fire brigade, moving from Mosul in northern Iraq to reinforce Baghdad during the height of sectarian violence, then northwest to Baqubah and Diyala Province, relentlessly chasing al Qaeda elements up the Diyala River valley. Steve Brought his Brigade home to Ft Lewis in October and gave up command in November.

Finally, COL John Spiszer, another former commander of the 4-31st, is now commanding the 3rd Brigade Combat Team 1st Infantry Division at Ft Hood, Texas. His brigade is training at Ft Irwin, California in preparation for overseas deployment.

North Korea 1950

This is the sixteenth in our series on combat in Korea. In our previous edition, the last survivors from the Chosin Reservoir's east side had reached Marine lines at Hagaru-ri. The saga continues...

Attempting to maintain unit integrity, commanders re-formed the 1st Battalion 32nd Infantry and 3rd Battalion 31st Infantry, but exceptions had to be made to keep the companies reasonably balanced. The reconstituted RCT's rough composition was:

1st Battalion, commanded by Major Jones (S-3 1st Bn 32nd Inf), with:

- A Company, commanded by 1LT Smith (XO, A Co 32nd Inf) with men from Headquarters and A Companies of the 1st Battalion 32nd Infantry and Headquarters Battery of the 57th Field Artillery Battalion.
- B Company, commanded by CPT Thacker (S-1, 57th FA Bn) with men from B Company 32nd Infantry, the 31st Infantry's Antitank/Mine Platoon, and C Company 13th Engr Battalion.
- C Company, commanded by CPT Dowell (1st Bn 32nd Inf) with men from C Company 32nd Infantry and Heavy Mortar Company 31st Infantry.

3rd Battalion, commanded by MAJ Carl Witte (S-2, 31st Inf), with:

- I Company, commanded by CPT George Rasula (Asst S-3, 31st Inf) with men from I Company 31st Infantry and Service Battery 57th Field Artillery Battalion.
- K Company, commanded by CPT Robert Kitz (CO, K Company 31st Inf) with men from K, M, and Headquarters Companies 31st Infantry. L Company, commanded by 1LT Robert Boyer with men from L Company 31st Infantry and a platoon from the 7th Signal Company. Lieutenant Boyer was killed on December 5 during an attack on the Hagaru-ri perimeter.



C-47 transport planes were taking the most seriously wounded out of Hagaru-ri's air strip as quickly as possible. Units could not keep track of who was being evacuated because they were under constant attack on the perimeter and because the wounded entered the Marine perimeter for the next five days and did not go through their own units. Tanks were sent to try and reach stalled vehicles but could not make it. They did bring back more wounded stragglers.

When news of the disaster at Chosin reached HQ X Corps at Hungnam, new orders were soon to follow. On December 3, Operations Order 28, HQ 7th Inf Div, directed the 31st RCT to assemble in the Hamhung Area. Operations Order Number 29, issued the following day, directed the 31st Infantry to reorganize and form the division reserve in the vicinity of Hamhung. In response, the 1st Battalion was ordered to move by truck to vicinity of Pukchong. Headquarters and Service elements moved by motor and rail from Hungnam to Hamhung. The 1st Battalion left Untaek at 4:20 PM on December 4 and reached Pukchong at 11:45 the next morning. There, they were ordered to proceed immediately to Hamhung. At the time, the 2nd Battalion was still bottled up at Koto-ri and the 3rd Battalion's survivors were under constant attack holding a section of the Marine perimeter at Hagaru-ri. It would be another week before all surviving elements of 31st Infantry could be reunited at Hamhung.

On December 7, All Army troops at Hagaru-ri, except those in the 31st Infantry's Tank Company, were reorganized to form a single provisional battalion of four companies. The Tank Company was attached to the 5th Marine Regiment, while the Provisional Battalion was attached to the 7th Marine Regiment. It was assigned responsibility for protecting the regiment's left flank in its attack to Koto-ri. After breaking through Chinese lines around Hagaru-ri, two companies composed mostly of men from the 31st Infantry were sent out to screen farther east, securing high ground out to 1000 yards from the road. That afternoon, a strong enemy roadblock was encountered about 4 miles south of Hagaru-ri. Two composite companies, composed mostly of men from the



32nd Infantry and 57th Field Artillery, overran the enemy positions. That night, the security screen was pulled back to within 100 yards of the road to avoid becoming cut off from the main body of Marines advancing along the road. The Chinese attacked the column twice during the night of December 7-8, destroying the trucks carrying the Provisional Battalion's CP. Both attacks were repulsed, but with substantial losses to the Provisional Battalion. All members of the CP had been killed or wounded.

History of the Army

In the beginning, God created the Heavens, the Earth, and the Infantry.

And God looked upon the Infantry, saw that it was good, and said unto them, "Thou art my chosen children. Take thou dominion over the Earth; over the fish of the Sea, the birds of the Air, and all key terrain."

And as a mark of His favor the Lord placed in the hands of the Infantry sacred relics: the Light Anti-Armor Weapon, the Claymore, and the Machine Gun. Likewise gaveth the Lord unto the Infantry the Rucksack of Repentance, the Radio of Redemption, the Rifle of Rectitude. Lastly, unto the Infantry, and most divine of all, the Lord gaveth the Holy Hand Grenade and Bayonet. For the Infantry's sustenance the Lord declared "Four shall be thy food groups: Coffee, Tobacco, C-Rats, and Alcohol. Shun all other unclean food and drink." And the Infantry dwelt happily in the land.

As time passed, the Infantry cried out to their God saying "Lord, help us, for we are weary." And God smiled upon the Infantry, for they were blessed. Then the Lord took the fattest and laziest of men and set them upon beasts of burden. And these He called Cavalry. And as the Cavalry became fatter, lazier and heavier they became known as Armor. And the Lord looked down upon the Armor and saw that it was mediocre. The Lord then said "Oh, well. Thou canst not win them all. To the Armor the Lord said "Quiche shall be thy food, and bottled water thy drink. Touch not the sacred chow of the Infantry."

And the Infantry and the Armor dwelt in the land therein. And time passed and the Infantry cried out again unto their Lord saying, "Lord help us, for we are weary."

And God smiled again upon the Infantry, for they were his chosen. Then God took those of the Armor with butts like baseplates and breath like sulfur and these He made Artillery. But God saw that the Artillery, too, was mediocre and said unto Himself, "Oh well, garbage in; garbage out." Unto the Artillery He said "The big guns shall atone in part for thy diminutive other stature. Tryest thou not to hurt thyselfes." To the Infantry the Lord said "When the night is darkest these shall light the way...more or less. When the approach is most open these shall, occasionally - with luck, confound the enemy's sight. When thou callest for fire support these shall - eventually - provide it with high explosive and cluster munitions." Though the Lord cautioned the Infantry to never, never, trust an artilleryman equipped with Tacfire.

And the Infantry, the Armor, and the Artillery dwelt in the land therein. Then the Artillery created the Air Defense Artillery; but quickly asked forgiveness. And time passed and the Infantry called out yet again unto their God, saying, "Lord help us, for we are weary."

Again the Lord looked with favor upon the Infantry. He took those of the Armor, Artillery and Air Defense Artillery who most liked to play in the mud and these he made Combat Engineers, and those who dwelt in darkness and spoke in riddles and these he made Military Intelligence, and those with thieving hearts and these He made Quartermasters, and of those who neither sowed nor reaped and were most fond of hammering square pegs into round holes He made Adjutants General. Of those who liked to tinker with good equipment until it broke He made the Ordnance Corps. Of those whose penchant was poison He made Cooks. Of those who ran around in

circles He made the Transportation Corps. Of the least articulate He made Signalers. Of the mindlessly doctrinaire and arrogant He reluctantly created Military Police and Inspectors General (though the Lord admitted, to Himself, that He was probably only providing employment to Satan's minions). Of those who dealt in controlled substances and whose minds had been destroyed by the same He made the Chemical Corps.

Yea, the Lord of All filled up the whole MTOE. And the Infantry, and the others, dwelt in the land therein. Time passed, but yet, again, the Infantry cried out unto their God, saying, "Lord, help us, for we are weary."

And the Heavens darkened, and the clouds gathered. The lightning spake and the Infantry abased themselves before their God, for they were sore afraid. And the Lord spoke with anger, asking, "How canst thou yet be weary? Have I not made the Armor and the Artillery to support thee? Have I not made of the detritus of the Earth Quartermasters and Adjutants and Signalers and Transporters and a host of others to assist thee? Verily, have I not even made Military Intelligence, although it were a contradiction in terms?"

Humbly the Infantry abased themselves again before their God, crying, "Lord, it is of these that we are weary." Amen.

August 2008 31st U.S. Infantry Regiment Association Reunion

Charlie Co. Louis Dominguez and his lovely wife Suzanne are our reunion coordinators and have released the following details:

Day One (Thursday 8/21/2008)

Arrival – All Day - Welcome Table at both hotels.

Hospitality room at Crowne Plaza

4 – 7 PM Dinner Harbor Cruise, **advance registration is required.**

Three Spirit Cruise ships have been reserved for this evening. The ships will cruise Los Angeles Harbor for approximately 2 hours. A Fiesta Dinner of shredded beef tacos, tostados, Chicken Taquitos, Refried Beans, Guacamole and Sour Cream, Chips and Salsa, Margaritas, soft drinks, and coffee is included in the \$40.00 per person price. There will be a cash bar available on board. 300 seats are available and must be reserved by July 21st. Both hotels are within easy walking distance to the docks.

Day Two (Friday 8/22/2008)

All Day - Welcome Table at both hotels.

Hospitality room at Crowne Plaza

8:00 – 9:30 – Continental breakfast

10:00 – 4:00 San Pedro Bus Tour

\$30.00 per person, advance registration is recommended. Bus boards from the hotel.

10:15 – 11:30 – Korean Bell and Ft. MacArthur Artillery Museum

11:45 – 12:45 Buffet lunch at Ft. MacArthur Community Center (formerly the officer's club)

Ft. MacArthur is now the housing center for the Los Angeles Air Force Base, part of Space and Missile Command.

1:00 – 2:15 – Lane Victory (a Victory ship that served in WWII, Korea and Vietnam)

2:30 – 3:30 Maritime Museum (Museum can also be visited via streetcar)

3:45 – return to hotels

Dinner — on your own, assistance will be available for small groups to make reservations at local restaurants in San Pedro

Day three (Saturday 8/23/2008)

All Day - Welcome Table at both hotels.

Hospitality room at Crowne Plaza

8:00 – 9:30 – Continental breakfast

9:30 – 10:00 – 31st Infantry Memorial Service

The family of Cpl Anzak, a local 4-31st Polar Bear who was killed in Baghdad, have been invited to attend

10:00 – 11:00 – 31st Infantry Association General Meeting
(everyone should plan to attend the service and general meeting)

Optional trips and tours for the remainder of the day such possibilities as:
Shopping trip to South Coast Plaza
Long Beach Aquarium and Shoreline Village
Hollywood and LA Tour

Formal Banquet – Crowne Plaza Hotel
(seating is limited to 300 guests, advance registration is recommended)
\$40.00 Banquet fee is per person, and includes sit down dinner, entertainment and dancing. Business casual to Formal dress is appropriate.

6 pm Cocktails
7 pm Dinner
Entrée choice: Chicken Provencial or Salmon
Shanghai Bowl Ceremony

Day four (Sunday 8/24/2008)

Check out and Goodbyes

Optional Cruise

Stay one more night at the hotel and join in on a four day cruise on the Monarch of the Seas
See website for details or contact Louis for more information.

PLEASE NOTE: Reunion registration deadline is July 21, 2008. Registrations received after July 21 will be charged a late registration fee of \$50.00.

Hotel Information

(The Crowne Plaza is located downtown and will be the reunion headquarters, the Doubletree is located in the Cabrillo Marina. The hotels are approximately 2 miles apart and Louis plans to have shuttle service available between the two hotels)

Crowne Plaza Hotel – LA Harbor

601 S Palos Verdes Street, San Pedro CA 90731
310-519-8200, 310-547-0269 or 888-444-0401

Rooms are \$109.00 per night – Group Rate Code **31st Infantry Reunion**
Room rate is for single or double occupancy. Free parking

Doubletree Hotel San Pedro

2800 Via Cabrillo Marina, San Pedro CA 90731
310-514-3344

Rooms are \$110.00 per night – Group Rate Code **31st Infantry Reunion**
Room rate is for single or double occupancy. Free parking

Airport to Crown Plaza Hotel Transportation (Doubletree rates slightly more)

Los Angeles International Airport (LAX)

Distance: 20 MI North West to Hotel
Shuttle Charge (one way): \$15.00
Taxi Charge (one way): \$55.00
Time by taxi: 30 minutes

Long Beach Municipal Airport (LGB)

Distance: 14 MI North East to Hotel
Shuttle Charge (one way): \$15.00
Taxi Charge (one way): \$55.00
Time by taxi: 35 minutes

31st Infantry Regiment Association 2008 San Pedro, California Reunion Registration

(Registration fee of \$ 30.00 per person is required for all members and guests)

Name: _____

Guest: _____

Guest: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____

Email: _____

Phone Number home _____ work/cell _____

Co/Battalion of the 31st Inf _____ Where _____ When _____

Events (optional)

Port of Los Angeles Dinner Cruise – Thurs, 08/21 (*Limited seating, first come – first served*)

\$40.00 x _____ (# participants) \$ _____

San Pedro Military History Tour – Friday, 08/22 (*Tour costs are per person, and include bus transportation, tour fees, entry fees and lunch, advance registration is requested*)

\$30.00 x _____ (# participants) \$ _____

Banquet – Saturday Evening 08/23 (**Room limited to 300** Banquet fee is per person, and includes sit down dinner, entertainment and dancing. *Business casual to Formal dress is appropriate.*)

\$40.00 x _____ (# participants) \$ _____

Entrée choice: Chicken Provancial _____ Salmon _____

Reunion Registration (required)

\$30.00 x _____ (# participants) \$ _____

Registration Deadline is July 21, 2008 - late fee if mailed after 7/21 \$ 50.00

Total \$ _____

Make checks payable to: **31st Infantry Regiment Association**
Mail check and registration form to:

John Cornelson
31st Regiment Assn. Treasurer
3116 Chattahoochee Trace
Gainesville, GA 30506

Taps

Clyde Childress	C Co (Plt Ldr, May-Aug 1941, Philippines)	Tucson, AZ
Eli Ford	D/6 th Bn (Sp4, 3 rd Plt, Vietnam, 1968-69)	Cheraw, SC
Don C Rubottom	3 rd Bn (LTC Bn Cdr 1951-52, Korea)	Ridgecrest, CA
Albert Taylor	G Co (CPL 1941-42, Philippines)	Coleman, TX
Dominador Yacapin	D, HHC/6 th Bn (1LT Plt Ldr 1969-70, Vietnam)	El Cajon, CA

Websites

Please check out our website and sign our guest book at www.31stinfantry.org

Related sites include:

- 6th Bn 31st Inf: www.6thofthe31st.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/>

Note: Our membership form was omitted from this newsletter to make room for the reunion information.

31 Infantry Regiment Association
Vincent Zike, COL (Ret)
21 Caskey Road
Glen Spey, NY 12737

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED