



Pro Patria Press



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

BG Steve Townsend Promoted



Steve Townsend, who formerly commanded the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry at Ft Drum and took the battalion to Afghanistan just after 9-11-01 has been selected for promotion to major general. Steve just returned from another tour in Afghanistan and is now at the Pentagon where he heads the Joint Staff's Pakistan/Afghanistan Coordination Cell, an organization that ensures expertise developed and lessons learned during deployments to Afghanistan are transformed into capabilities supporting operations in the region. Heartfelt congratulations to you and your family, Steve. We're proud of you and look forward to your continued ascent up the ranks.



Reunion 2011



Our reunion at Columbus, GA was once again a great success, thanks to the superb organizational efforts of Colonel of the Regiment LTG (Ret) Sam Wetzel and his team. While the highlights are many, the one that most dearly touched the hearts of those attending was the dedication of our regimental memorial at the new National Infantry Museum. The memorial is an excellent representation of our regiment, its service since 1916, and the sacrifices of those who served under its proud colors. Thanks to all who contributed to its creation, an effort that reaches back many years and finally became a reality. Special thanks to Ron Corson, who made it happen.

Fund Drives

To avoid drawing down the Association Treasury, please join our fund drive to care for the Polar Bear memorial dedicated during our recent reunion at the National Infantry Museum at Fort Benning. Send your contribution to our Treasurer, Joe DeAngelis at 3035 El Rio Dr, Meridian, ID 83642. Many thanks.

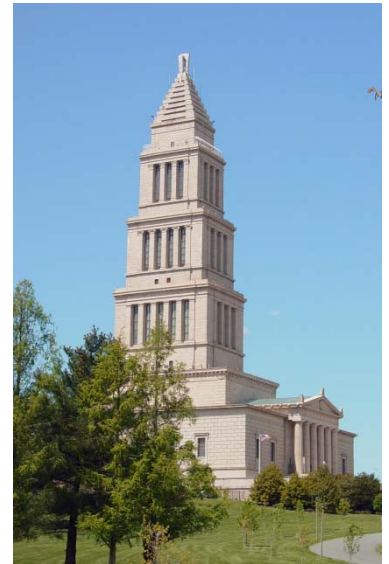
To support our 2012 reunion in the Washington, we solicited contributions from local businesses. The first came quickly. **Morgan Borszcz Consulting** of Arlington, VA contributed \$1500, sent by check to our Treasurer, Joe DeAngelis. The Chief Operating

Officer and VP of that firm is Michael Morgan, son of Bill Morgan who was Recon Platoon Leader and Assistant S-3 with the 6th Battalion in 1969-70. We're very grateful to Michael and his firm for their exceptional generosity.

Reunion 2012



In response to many requests, our next reunion will be 10-13 Aug 2012 at Washington D C. Our host hotel is the Westin at nearby Alexandria, VA, (400 Courthouse Square), phone 1-800-837-8461 for reservations. If you fly into Reagan National Airport, you won't have to rent a car. For a fare of only \$1.60, hop on DC Metro's yellow line train toward Huntington and get off at King Street Station, only two stops (7 minutes) away. At the station, there will be a Westin shuttle bus waiting to take you to the hotel, only 3 blocks away. The hotel is near the George Washington Masonic Memorial (picture at right), offering a panoramic view of DC from its little known observation deck. To visit the attractions in DC, return to the King St station and for a fare of just \$2.15, take Metro's yellow line train toward Fort Totten and get off at Archives Station, only 7 stops



(19 minutes) away. The Smithsonian Museums; WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam War Memorials; National Archives; Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, Washington Monument, the Capitol, and the White House are all nearby. More on the agenda in our next newsletter. I'll be your point of contact. Call me at 703-978-1076 if you have questions. Karl Lowe

Visit the **31st Infantry Association Web Site** www.31stinfantry.org and invite your buddies to join you in the **Association**. That is how we get information to all who fought in the many Polar Bears Wars. It also gives you the history of **YOUR REGIMENT** and other valuable information.

Regimental History

Thanks to all who have contributed to enriching our regimental history with personal recollections. On a recent trip, I picked up a book whose cover, adorned with the patch of the 10th Mountain Division, caught my eye. It is entirely about the combat actions of our 4th Battalion in Iraq. Look for Charles W. Sasser's, None left Behind, The 10th Mountain Division and the Triangle of Death, (New York: St Martin's Press, 2009). Regardless of your era of service, in peace or war, please continue sending me accounts of what happened during your time in the 31st, along with any rosters, reports, or sets of orders you come across. They are very helpful and much appreciated. Please note my change of phone number and email address. Karl Lowe (5101 Portsmouth Rd, Fairfax, VA 22032, **phone (703) 978-1076 email karhlowe@gmail.com**).

Regrettably, we have only 8 pages of space per newsletter so there is much to pack into very few pages. In a departure from past efforts to concurrently describe the actions of the regiment in Korea and those of the 4th and 6th Battalions in Vietnam, this edition of the newsletter will focus only on Korea because the Battle of Pork Chop Hill in 1953 is one of the war's concluding battles and because the ranks of Korean War veterans are thinning. Their story should be told while they are still living. This is a tribute to their valor and sacrifices more than a half century ago.

Combat in Korea



This is the 31st in our series on combat in Korea. In the previous edition, the battle for Pork Chop Hill was just beginning. The saga continues... The most complete account of the Battle of Pork Chop Hill is from a 1956 book by that name written by S.L.A. Marshall, a famous Army historian. Much of what appears in the following account is drawn from his work.

Chinese attacks resumed on April 16, trying for three days to throw the 31st Infantry off of Pork Chop Hill, a place immortalized in a movie of the same name starring Gregory Peck as Lieutenant Joe Clemons. Clemons earned the Distinguished Service Cross in that action, leading the men of K Company to Herculean exertions in see-saw fighting to retake lost portions of the hill. The hill was originally defended by E Company, commanded by First Lieutenant Thomas V. Harrold. When the Chinese overran sections of the position, they were driven out in fighting at close quarters. Rifle butts, entrenching tools, and even bare hands came into play as men on both sides struggling to stay alive fought each other to the death. Companies K and L were thrown into the fight to regain control of lost portions of E Company's trench line. What follows is a paraphrased version of S.L. A. Marshall's account of K Company's role in the operation. Marshall was at the time an Operations Analyst for the Eighth Army.

Regiment knew little of what had occurred on Pork Chop Hill. They and 2d Battalion only knew that E Company's trench line had been overrun. What little information they had came from Lieutenant Harrold who had been unable to leave his bunker. Regiment recognized that the Chinese on the hill might soon be reinforced through the valley. K Company, less its detached weapons platoon, numbered 135 men commanded by Lieutenant Joseph G. Clemons, Jr. The men had spent a quiet night in a reserve position behind Hill 347. They had a late meal and a few hours sleep. At 0330, Clemons was ordered to move the company to an attack position behind Hill 200, just south of Pork Chop. The trucks were already on their way but K Company was ready when the convoy arrived. The men were loaded down with ammunition. Each rifleman had a full clip loaded, all ammo pouches full, and carried an extra bandolier. Each rifleman also carried three or more grenades. The six BARs in each platoon had twelve magazines per weapon. Each light machinegun crew carried five boxes of ammo. As recommended by Lieutenant Harrold, each platoon brought a flamethrower and a 3.5-inch rocket launcher.

When King unloaded from the trucks behind Hill 200, Lieutenant Colonel John N. Davis, the 3d Battalion Commander, was waiting with instructions. He suggested that Lieutenant Clemons attack Pork Chop's rear slope with two platoons abreast and one in reserve. The situation on the summit was not briefed to Clemons because Davis did not know what was up there. Clemons was left with the impression that the Chinese held the hill and his own men could fire without constraint. While K Company assaulted the rear, two platoons of L Company would attack up a ridge on Pork Chop's right side. This risked a cross-fire at the point where the converging forces would be in greatest danger from the Chinese.

American variable time fuzed artillery fire was blasting the top of the hill. Davis told Clemons, "Tell me when you're ready to go and I'll have it lifted." Clemons got his platoon leaders together and said, "Hit the hill hard and get to the top as fast as you can go. Success depends on speed. We must close before daylight." They moved out with 2d Platoon on the right, 1st on the left, and 3d in reserve. The lead platoons walked in column for 400 yards down the road to the assault line at the foot of Pork Chop. From there, it was only 170 yards to the nearest fighting bunkers but the trek uphill was very steep, the slope was rocky and cratered, and it was the darkest hour of the night.

By the time the 2d Platoon reached the lower side of the five-layered concertina wire that circled the hill, SFC Walter Kuzmick felt that the too-brisk start had been a mistake. His legs felt like rubber. His men, panting hard, tugged at rocks and shrubs to assist them up the slope. The more heavily burdened men straggled, separating the heavier weapons from the riflemen they were intended to support. Despite his sense of foreboding, Kuzmick yelled, "Keep going! Make it Snappy!" The men in front found gaps in the wire barricade cut by shellfire. They slipped through, following Kuzmick onto the hill. In the dark he didn't notice that the heavy weapons carriers had quit moving, dropped their burdens, and lay down next to the wire. For the next hour, he would be too busy to notice their absence.

Enemy artillery and mortars responded to the attack but dropped harmlessly into the valley, nearly 100 yards behind the line of departure. Because the barbed wire confronting the 1st Platoon was still intact, men lay across the bands, allowing others to use them as a bridge. Though the company completed the climb without incident so far, it had taken them 29 minutes to travel the 170 yards from the assault line to the top. Chinese artillery hit them immediately when they topped the rise. They fired for 10 minutes, then lifted for 10 minutes, a routine they continued throughout the fight.

The first man to enter the bunker line, Corporal William H. Bridges, saw two Chinese rise from among the rocks and fire directly down at 1st Platoon with submachineguns. He yelled a warning and dove into the trench. The burst cut down five men behind him. Private Rudolph Gordon reached the trench at almost the same moment. Turning left, the two men headed for the second bunker down the line. Three grenades came at him from behind its far wall. They all fell short. Gordon and Bridges grenaded back. Protected by the bunker, the Chinese grenadiers made poor targets, exposing their heads and shoulders just long enough to heave a grenade.

As more 1st Platoon men reached the trench, two squads tried to form up on either side of the first bunker, though in the narrow trench they were vulnerable. To protect the platoon, Corporal Arsenio Correa jumped onto the parapet with his light machinegun and fired two boxes of ammo at the bunker door, only 25 yards away. Enemy grenadiers focused their attention on him, but he was safely beyond their range. Taking advantage of the diversion, SFC Lewis J. Hankey, Corporal Wilfred Volk, and Private Pak Song crawled along the parapet to within 5 yards of the bunker. From there, they threw ten grenades over the wall and the Chinese answered with their own. The attack silenced the Chinese, but in the exchange, Pak was hit in the head by the same explosion that shattered Hankey's leg. Volk treated them where they fell and then helped them to safety behind the bunker while he rejoined the fight.

Kuzmick's men encountered their first fire as they neared the chow bunker, some yards downhill from the main trench. Fortunately, the fire was high and did no harm. On reaching the main trench, Kuzmick kept his squads moving abreast, intending to mop up the ditch while securing the ground on both sides as he swept toward the former E Company Command Post. He took the precaution because it was still dark and he worried that if he moved his troops in column in the trench the Chinese might come in behind them and cut them off.

On the outer wing, Sergeant Rollin Johnson's squad became strung out as some men sought cover to escape the fire sweeping across the slope. Lieutenant Robert S. Cook accompanied Johnson to help control the maneuver toward the CP. Walking along the rampart with Private Edgar P. Bordelon, he got some distance ahead. At the first bunker, he encountered one of E Company's KATUSAs who had survived the night by hugging the sandbag revetment. The three advanced another 15 yards to a point where Cook could see the CP bunker's door. He saw no activity. Bordelon fired a few rounds at it with his carbine. A voice from inside pleaded, "Hold your fire! We're GIs." Wanting to see more, Cook did not instantly warn the skirmishers behind him that there might be GIs in the bunkers ahead.

Meanwhile, Sergeant Norbert Huffman's squad was still struggling up the hill. The slope was an obstacle course of rock outcroppings and shell craters. Here and there were smoke-blackened tree stumps that looked like sitting men in the half-light. Kuzmick tried to regulate the advance of his center with the flankers, but it was impossible. Huffman got to within 12 yards of the rear of the CP bunker without ever seeing it. There was a prone Chinese with a light machinegun on the bunker roof. Huffman was still crawling forward when a cluster of five or six grenades, thrown from the far side of the bunker, landed on and around him. One blew off his right hand and fragments penetrated his skull, neck, and chest. As he lay wounded, the machinegunner fired a quick burst at him."

Cook had just jumped to the rampart, waving his arms toward Kuzmick's men and yelling, "Come on! Keep moving! We've got it made!" He still said nothing of the Americans in the CP. Near the bunker where Cook had found the KATUSA, a Chinese crawling along the rampart heaved a grenade. Another came from behind the CP. The two grenades exploded simultaneously between Cook and the KATUSA, shattering one of Cook's legs and hitting the Korean in the stomach and groin. Before anyone could fire, five Chinese jumped from behind the bunker and into the trench, disappearing among the debris. Private Thomas M. Dugan stopped to put a tourniquet on Huffman's stump. Seeing that he was unconscious and bleeding from numerous wounds, Dugan carried him back to the chow bunker where he could be treated by medics and evacuated to safety.

The men measured up to some tough standards. Although exhausted from their ascent up the slope, they had pressed on through an artillery barrage, advancing without hesitation to overrun a succession of enemy-held positions. Although nothing in their training could prepare them for what they encountered, they responded like professionals. No one had them that they would get within 20 feet of the enemy and still not see him.

Kuzmick dashed toward the CP bunker door, intending to grenade it. Just as he neared the door, Lieutenant Attridge of E Company looked out. His head was bandaged and his arm was cocked to throw a grenade. The sight of Attridge stopped Kuzmick cold. Clemons, right on his heels, was so astonished he just gaped. They had not been told about the any E Company wounded in the CP bunker. They thought E Company had been wiped out and they would find no live friends on the hill. Before a word was spoken, three rounds of artillery landed among them. Their source was never determined. Because the Chinese fire had lifted a few minutes before, the men concluded they were "shorts" from their own supporting batteries. One round exploded in the bunker door, giving Attridge his second head wound. The others fell about 25 yards behind Kuzmick, wounding three of his Koreans."

Until then the flankers had kept pressing despite their weariness. But the impression that their own guns had fired on them had a greater impact on their morale than the wounding of Cook and Huffman. Shock stopped their momentum in the worst possible moment. Kuzmick's men lay inert, bewildered and listless. For several minutes no one made an attempt to do anything. The flank as a whole never got going again. "In war, a resolute soul can bind the excited minds of many men in a kind of bloody mesmerism. One small accident can in a twinkling, snap that chain of force."

"Private Samuel K. Maxwell went alone into the CP bunker. There were five wounded men inside, one missing a leg. Attridge was still conscious. Lieutenant Harrold told Maxwell to return to the fight. He would look after his own men. The sun was edging over the horizon, bathing the scene in daylight's first rays. Private George Atkins, from the 2d Platoon's rear guard, brought news to Clemons. From a high knob, he had looked westward and had seen many Chinese moving toward the hill from the direction of Princeton OP. Clemons called on the radio. "Would the artillery plaster Princeton OP and drop a curtain of fire in the valley between Pork Chop and Hakkasol to choke off reinforcement? The answer was yes, but the requested fire never came."

A few of Kuzmick's men started moving down the trench. Before they could pass the CP bunker, they were stopped by automatic weapons fire coming from downhill on their right. The fire was from L Company, attacking up the ridge. Kuzmick's men tried to signal L Company to shut it off, but the fire was too intense to allow anyone to stand exposed. It subsided only after the Chinese bled L Company into silence. At this point, K Company lost all group initiative. Any energy that remained was channeled into personal effort. The attack carried on only where resolute individuals engaged in widely separated and almost unrelated actions.

New Members

Daniel D. Blackburn	(SGT, D/4 th Bn, Vietnam, 1969-70)	Portland, OR
Edward R. Bolton	(SGT, HHC/3 rd Bn, Japan & Korea, 1950)	Crawfordville, FL
Aaron E. Brooks	(SGT, HHC/4 th Bn, Ft Drum & Iraq, 2006-08)	Sackett's Harbor, NY
Robert K. Brown	(SGT, A/4 th Bn, Vietnam, 1967-68)	Nags Head, NC
Roger W. Cook	(SP4, B/2 nd Bn, Korea, 1969-70)	Donaldsonville, GA
SGM (Ret) Johnnie K. Davis	(CPL, H/2 nd Bn, Korea, 1953-54)	Columbus, GA
Charles E. Fishe	(SFC, HHC, B/6 th Bn, Vietnam, 1968-69)	Martinez, GA
Samuel Garced, Jr	(SGT, HHC/4 th Bn, Iraq, 2010-11)	Ft Drum, NY
LTC (Ret) Terry Hemminger	(MAJ, HHC/4 th Bn, Ft Sill, 1988-90)	Pine Mountain, GA
John Hogan	(PVT, C/6 th Bn, Vietnam, 1970)	Huntsville, AL
Alan McKeel	(SPC, B/4 th Bn, Ft Drum, 2011)	Ft Drum, NY
Harold J. McLaughlin, Jr.	(PFC, HHC/3 rd Bn Commo, Korea, 1956-57)	Gibsonia, PA
Eugene McLaurin	(PFC, A/4 th Bn, Ft Drum, 2011)	Evans Mills, NY
Drake Nelson	(PVT, B/4 th Bn, Ft Drum, 2011)	Ft Drum, NY
MAJ (Ret) James Quisenberry	(CPT, D/6 th Bn, Vietnam, 1968-69)	Louisville, KY
MSG (Ret) James P. Red	(SGT, B/2 nd Bn, Korea, 1965-73)	Albuquerque, NM
George S. Ryder	(SGT, E & C/4 th Bn, Vietnam, 1969-70)	Littleton, NH
CSM Billy F. Spears	(CSM 4 th Bn, Ft Drum, 1986-89)	Columbus, GA
MAJ (Ret) Eric Stinebring	(LT, B/6 th Bn, Ft Irwin, 1986-87)	Spofford, NH
James S. Swearingen	(LT, D/4 th Bn, Vietnam, 1971)	Des Moines, IA
Jack L Walker	(SGT, D/4 th Bn, Vietnam, 1969-70)	Nacogdoches, TX

New Associate Members

Joe M. Crescenz	(brother of Michael Crescenz-Medal of Honor-VN)	Fallowfield, PA
Mark S. Gavula	(father served with 31 st in Korea)	Louisville, KY
Randall Prater O'Brien	(grand nephew of Randall Prater C/6 th Bn VN)	Christiana, TN

Taps

We pay our respects to members of whose death we were notified since our last newsletter.

Kenneth Kessler	(PFC, C/1 st Bn, Korea, 1953)	Ocala, FL
Paul Konyha, Jr.	(LT, D/6 th Bn, 3 rd Plt Ldr, Vietnam, 1970)	Huntsville, AL
John E. Lock	(SGT, B/1 st Bn, Korea, 1950-51)	Tallassee, AL

Officers of the Association



Our current Association officers, elected at Columbus, are listed below. There are three changes. **Charlie Tapp** (pictured at right), who has given so unselfishly of his time and energy over the past two years, will complete his term as our commander in January and will be replaced by **Chuck McCammon** (pictured at left). Congratulations to both men for taking on the leadership of an organization that spans the ages from the Philippines in 1941 to Ft Drum today. Stepping into Chuck's current position as Vice Commander is **Bill Owen** and taking Bill's current role as Director for the Mid-Atlantic Region is **Ron Corson**, a former commander of the association. All others will continue to serve in their current positions for another term. We are fortunate to have such talented people to guide and shape the association.

Note from the Commander

The people of Columbus along with several business welcomed our 31st Inf. Regiment to our reunion at Columbus with the usual southern hospitality. COL Cornelson and his wife made welcome baskets for all who registered prior to the reunion. Many thanks to both of them. I want to thank all of the people who worked so hard behind the scenes to make this event happen and make everything go smoothly. Please start making plans to attend next year's reunion.

This was the 95th anniversary of the 31st Infantry. The reunion had 240 attendees with a good mix of veterans from World War II and subsequent eras. The brother of Michael J Crescenz, a 4th Battalion (Vietnam) Medal Of Honor recipient, was among those attending. We were able to add 34 new life members along with 25 annual members to our membership. I encourage everyone to contact anyone who has served or had a family member to join so they may keep up with future reunions and events of our great history. COL Karl Lowe does a great job in researching and writing our history and preparing our quarterly newsletter.

We saw the new Infantry Hall of Fame and walked down the Walk Of Fame and best of all, we were finally able to dedicate the 31st Inf. Regt Memorial. The dedication was held on Friday the 12th with LTG Wetzel as the speaker. Many tears were shed as the history was read and the events were told of the day Cpl Crescenz gave his life to protect

other soldiers. The events and pictures can be viewed by going to www.31stInfantryregiment.org. Many thanks to those who worked all phases of this project, especially to COL Ron Corson and Joe DeAngelis for their fund raising efforts.

I was able to attend the 4/31Ball that was held at the Commons Club at Fort Drum, NY on September 15th. While there, I was able to spend some time with our active duty Soldiers and go out with them for live fire training. A special thanks for the warm welcome I received and thanks to Col. Ryan and Cmd. Sgt. Major Dobbs for hosting the event. It makes me proud to be a part of a long history and the active duty people who serve and are protecting America. Thanks, Commander Charlie Tapp

Colonel of the Regiment

Lieutenant General (Retired) Wiint322@aol.com	Sam Wetzel (LTC, CDR 4-31 st Inf, 1968) 1425 Dartmouth Rd, Columbus, GA 31904	706-576-4204
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Officers

Commander: c-mccammon@31stinfantry.org	Chuck McCammon (SP4, A/6th Bn, VN, 1969-70) 307 S 90 th St, Mesa, AZ 85208	480-545-4383
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Adjutant: vzike@challengecoin.com	Vin Zike (SGT, D/6 th Bn, VN, 1968-69) 21 Caskey Road, Glen Spey, NY 12737	845-858-2030
Treasurer: 31stpolarbear@gmail.com	Joe De Angelis (SGT, C/6th Bn, Ft Lewis & VN, 1967-69) 3035 El Rio Dr, Meridian, ID 83642	208-631-8084
Membership Chairman: the31stira@yahoo.com	Jack Considine (CPL, B Co, Korea, 1951-52) 144 S River Rd, Tolland, CT 06084	860-875-9032
Quartermaster: sdalem@bellsouth.net	Dale Mills (SGT, C/6th Bn, VN, 1968-69) 6331 Dobson Rd, Macon, GA 31220	478-787-2679
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Midwest (MN, ND, SD, NE, IA, MO, KS, OK, TX, NM, CO) c631grunt@yahoo.com	Phil Harris (SP4, C/6th Bn, VN, 1968-69) 13081 N 99 th Dr, Sun City, AZ, 85351	360-607-2032
West (HI, AK, WA, OR, CA, NV, AZ, UT, ID, MT, WY) mrdpwilson@comcast.net	Dave Wilson (LT, C/6th Bn, VN, 1968-69) 18005 87th Ave E, Puyallup WA 98357	253-875-1901

Seeking Information

- Cindi Hogan (cindihogan@comcast.net) is looking for anyone who has a picture of **Daniel Francis Alvarado** who served with B Co, 2nd Bn, 31st Inf at Ft Ord. CA in 1976. He was killed in a car accident and she would like a picture of him as a keepsake.
- Gabriel Lee of Seoul Broadcasting Co (c/o Ted Barker tbarker@kwp.org) is looking for **Samuel Smith**, a native American who served with 3rd Platoon, E Company, 31st Infantry in Japan and Korea.

