

Pro Patria Press

#51

July 2008

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

Reunion 2008

This is the last newsletter before our 2008 reunion. Celebrating our Regiment's ninety-second anniversary, the reunion will be held August 21-24 2008 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, San Pedro, California. Its coordinator is Louis Dominguez (C/6-31st Infantry-1967-69). Lou has done a great job in coordinating the event with the city but there will be more to do at the reunion. 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 so don't just "let George do it", join Lou in making this event a great time in the warm California sun.

Replacing the 31st Infantry's Honorary Command Sergeant Major

CSM George Hamill, our current Honorary Regimental Sergeant Major, is 82 and no longer able to travel. He asked that he be replaced, so we are seeking applicants for the position. The position is honorary and entails no specific duties but its holder will be encouraged to attend annual reunions and will be invited to participate in board meetings of the regimental association at annual reunions and ceremonial events of the 4th Battalion at Ft Drum, New York.

Qualifications for the position include service with the 31st Infantry or any of its successor battle groups or battalions and attaining the rank of master sergeant or higher before retiring from the Army. The candidate need not have reached his retirement grade while assigned to the 31st Infantry. If you are interested in serving in this capacity, please send your name, address (including email, if you have one), dates, location, and unit (company, battalion) of service with the 31st Infantry, and your highest rank and duty assignment at the time of your retirement to Karl Lowe, 5101 Portsmouth Rd, Fairfax, VA 22032 (email klowe@cox.net). I will collect the names of all applicants and forward them to the Command Sergeant Major of the 4th Battalion at Ft Drum, who will convene a selection committee. We will close the nominations on 30 September 2008 and should make a selection by the end of October. The person selected will serve a 3-year term, ending in 2011.

Reburial of Michael Crescenz

On May 12, Corporal Michael Crescenz, who won the Medal of Honor posthumously for his actions in November 1968 at Hiep Duc, Vietnam while serving with A Company 4th Battalion 31st Infantry, was reburied at Arlington National Cemetery. He had been buried near his home in Philadelphia, PA since his body's return from Vietnam in 1968. One of his fellow 4th Battalion soldiers, William "Doc" Stafford of East Hampton, NY, worked with the

Crescenz family, got the event publicized in Philadelphia, and contacted former members of the 4th Battalion to notify them of the reburial ceremony. Those attending included LTG (Ret) Sam Wetzel (Michael's former Battalion Commander and Honorary Colonel of the Regiment) and his wife Eilene from Columbus, GA; Jim Willard from Walla Walla, WA; Eddie Zuleger from Phoenix, AZ; Bob Barth from Charlotte, NC; and John Dolan from Silver Spring, MD. Karl Lowe (D/6-31st Inf) represented the 31st Infantry Regiment Association and presented regimental crests to two of Michael's brothers. Perhaps a hundred or so others, mostly from Philadelphia and nearby Camden, NJ, along with a large Vietnam Veteran's Motorcycle escort, attended as well.

Despite a cold, driving rain, the Old Guard (1st Battalion 3rd Infantry, the Army's ceremonial unit from Ft Myer, VA) did its usual outstanding work. Clad in traditional dress blues, they provided an escort detachment on white horses for the horse-drawn artillery caisson bearing Michael's casket. At the gravesite, their Honor Guard fired a rifle salute and played taps as razor-sharp pall bearers folded the burial flag. Philadelphia bagpipers in Scottish tartan kilts and blue blazers played Amazing Grace to close the ceremony. While every participant was drenched by the rain, all performed as if on a sunny day. The performance was a professional, fitting tribute to a young man who gave his life so that his comrades could live on.

After the ceremony, veterans of the 4th Battalion assembled at a restaurant to dry out over a long afternoon lunch and talk about their time together in Vietnam. It was the first time that some had seen each other since 1968 but their memories never faded.

Back to South Korea

This is the eighteenth in our series on combat in Korea. In our previous edition, the regiment was evacuated by sea from Hungnam, North Korea. The saga continues...

After its evacuation from Hungnam on December 15, the 31st Infantry reached Pusan four days later. The cold was unending, making life miserable in the damp encampment at Pusan and morale was low. Not only had UN forces been driven out of North Korea but the 31st Infantry had lost more than a third of those who had landed at Inchon just three months earlier. The regiment spent a dismal Christmas preparing to move. On December 26, they were trucked 80 miles north to Yongchon to rest, refit, and receive replacements. Since B Company, part of the 2nd Battalion, and nearly all of the 3rd Battalion had been destroyed in North Korea, men from the strongest companies were transferred to the battered remnants of others, leveling the distribution of combat experience as replacements were absorbed.

The UN Command's situation was desperate. The 2nd, 7th, and 25th Infantry Divisions, 1st Cavalry Division, and 1st Marine Division had each lost the equivalent of a regiment while fighting their way out of North Korea's frozen highlands. Only the 24th Infantry Division and the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team came out reasonably intact. The newly-arrived Turkish Brigade had suffered losses that would cripple most units but the Turks bravely stayed in the fight. Few infantry regiments that fought their way back across the 38th parallel could muster more than two thirds of their original strength. Trucks, half-tracks, howitzers, and discarded personal equipment littered the withdrawal routes.

Adding to the gloom, Lieutenant General Walton Walker, Commander of the Eighth Army, was killed in a jeep accident as 1950 came to a close. A characteristically bitter Korean winter froze the ground to the consistency of rock, making it almost impossible to dig in and establish a line behind which the UN command could regain its strength. Taking full advantage of the situation, the Chinese swept through abandoned Pyongyang and continued southward. Overrunning a battalion of the British Commonwealth Division after a desperate fight, they swept across the Han and took Seoul on January 4, 1951. Regardless of their condition, there was no time for depleted units on either side to rest and refit.

The deeper the Chinese pushed into South Korea, the more they over-extended their supply lines. With ammunition and supplies carried by reluctant Korean porters and captured vehicles running on dwindling gas supplies across hundreds of miles of frozen, war-ravaged roads, the Chinese were running out of steam. Losses to combat and bitter cold had brought their units to near exhaustion. The North Korean Army was in even worse shape, having lost all of its heavy equipment and its most experienced leaders during the initial invasion of South Korea and the subsequent retreat to the Yalu.

The enemy's problems were invisible to the weary men of the UN Command. Rumors flew that the war was lost and the Eighth Army would soon be evacuated to Japan, leaving X Corps to cover its withdrawal. Bitter at the fate that had befallen their regiment in North Korea, the 31st Infantry's survivors were in no mood to be sacrificed. The regiment moved back to the front the day Seoul fell to the Chinese, arriving just behind the center of the UN line near Chechon. Infantrymen and engineers established defensive positions in depth along the road and rail lines between Tanyang and Chechon to protect X Corps' supply lines. On January 27, the 7th Division attempted a counterattack to help straighten the UN line, but heavy rains and muddy roads made progress impossible. It was becoming apparent, though, that the Chinese were at the end of their tether. UN aircraft hammered Chinese and North Korean supply routes daily and UN troops were proving much more resilient than anyone could have predicted.

Bill Dolphin

In our last edition, I erroneously reported that Bill Dolphin had earned the Silver Star at Triangle Hill in October 1952. His Silver Star and Purple Heart were instead earned when his patrol was ambushed in no man's land between US and Chinese lines and the patrol leader was killed. A grenade blew off part of Bill's right foot during the opening minutes of the encounter but he recovered the patrol's radio, called for support, and then destroyed the radio to keep it from falling into enemy hands. He continued fighting and rallying the patrol's survivors until a relief force reached the ambush site.

Taps

Otto H Benson
Wilburn Snyder

E Co (SFC 1950-51 Bronze Star, Korean War)
3rd Bn Med Det (PFC, 1941-42, WWII-Philippines)

Evans GA
Baytown, TX

Websites

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

Related sites include:

- 4th Bn 31st Inf: <http://www.drum.army.mil/sites/tenants/division/2BCT/4-31INF/>
- 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/>

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 Provencal 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

ADDRESS CORRECTIONS

We average from 30 to 50 newsletters returned every mailing. Each mailing takes a bunch of team work, time, and money. Karl Lowe completes the content. I assemble it, add additional information, like the Quartermaster form, the Membership Application form, and the back cover, print the labels, have the newsletter printed, apply the labels, and take it to the PO for the bulk shipping. Alice and Jack Considine provide updates in the membership list and any changes they get.

Since we really want to keep the mailing going to the right people, we need your help. Please take the time to check your address and get any changes to me.

Our mailings are quarterly (Jan, Apr, Jul, and Oct). If you spend part of a year at one address, and part at another, let me know so we can send the newsletter to the right location.

If you move, or know of a member who has, contact me and let me know. Here is my info:

Mail: Vincent Zike
21 Caskey Road
Glen Spey, NY 12737

Phone: 845-856-7703
email: vzike@challengecoin.com or
Quartermaster@31stinfantry.org

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

If you want one of the reproduction Shanghai Bowl Cups for the Reunion, order it from the Quartermaster now. We may not ship them to the Reunion in August with the rest of the Quartermaster Store items.

31st REGIMENT ASSOCIATION QUARTERMASTER STORE ORDER FORM

Please print clearly to avoid errors in your order

Name _____
 Mailing Address _____
 Email _____ Telephone # (_____) _____
 (in case we need to contact you about your order)

ITEM	PRICE	QTY	TOTAL
7th Div Order of the Bayonet Badge	\$ 8.00	X _____	= _____
Combat Infantry Badge (small)	\$ 3.00	X _____	= _____
Combat Infantry Badge (reg size)	\$ 4.50	X _____	= _____
Ball Cap w/31st Infantry Regiment and Polar Bear Patch embroidered on front			
Royal Blue	\$12.00	X _____	= _____
Infantry Blue	\$12.00	X _____	= _____
31 st Infantry Regiment Association Bumper Sticker w/campaigns	\$ 3.00	X _____	= _____
Window decal CIB	\$ 2.50	X _____	= _____
Window decal Korea Veteran & Proud	\$ 2.50	X _____	= _____
Decal of Polar Bear crest	\$ 3.00	X _____	= _____
Window decal Vietnam	\$ 2.50	X _____	= _____
Army Belt (Blue) & Buckle w/Polar Bear Crest	\$ 7.50	X _____	= _____
Dog Tag Key Ring w/Regimental Crest	\$ 5.00	X _____	= _____
Money Clip w/Polar Bear Crest	\$ 4.50	X _____	= _____
Polar Bear patch	\$ 4.00	X _____	= _____
7th Div shoulder patch	\$ 3.00	X _____	= _____
Lapel/Hat pin w/Polar Bear Crest	\$ 4.00	X _____	= _____
Lapel/Hat pin w/Bronze Star	\$ 3.00	X _____	= _____
Regimental Crest (facing set)	\$ 8.00	X _____	= _____
Lapel/Hat pin w/Silver Star	\$ 3.00	X _____	= _____
Shanghai Bowl cup	\$165.00	X _____	= _____
Tie clasp w/Polar Bear Crest	\$ 4.00	X _____	= _____
Lapel/Hat pin w/Purple Heart	\$ 3.00	X _____	= _____
Bola Tie w/Polar Bear Crest	\$ 9.00	X _____	= _____
Zippo Lighter w/Polar Bear Crest	\$14.00	X _____	= _____
Tee Shirt w/31st Infantry Regiment and Polar Bear Crest			
Size (circle one): S M L XL			
Light Blue	\$12.00	X _____	= _____
Navy Blue	\$12.00	X _____	= _____
Size: XXL			
Light Blue	\$15.00	X _____	= _____
Navy Blue	\$15.00	X _____	= _____
Polo/Golf shirt w/31st Infantry Regiment and Crest			
Size (circle one): S M L XL			
White	\$ 26.00	X _____	= _____
Navy Blue	\$ 26.00	X _____	= _____
Size: XXL			
White	\$ 29.00	X _____	= _____
Navy Blue	\$ 29.00	X _____	= _____

ORDER TOTALS - NUMBER OF ITEMS/ TOTAL COST: \$ _____

SHIPPING CHARGES - add to your order total SHIPPING: \$ _____
 under \$10.00 add \$ 2.50 over \$50.00 add \$ 8.00
 orders \$10.00-\$25.00 add \$ 4.50
 orders \$25.01-\$50.00 add \$ 6.00

CHECK ENCLOSED \$ _____

CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO: **31st INF REGIMENT ASSOCIATION**

Mail Order form and check to:

**Vin Zike
 21 Caskey Road
 Glen Spey, NY 12737**

Email questions to: vzike@challengecoin.com, or call 845-856-7703

Membership Application - 31st Infantry Regiment Association

first name	nickname	middle initial	last name
-------------------	-----------------	-----------------------	------------------

street address	city	state	zip code
-----------------------	-------------	--------------	-----------------

Home phone number	email address
--------------------------	----------------------

31st Inf unit (Plt, Co, Bn)	rank & duty position
------------------------------------	---------------------------------

rank when retired	Highest award earned
--------------------------	-----------------------------

Where did you serve with the 31st?	When?
Philippines _____	_____
Korea _____	_____
Japan _____	_____
Vietnam _____	_____
USA _____	_____

Membership desired:

Regular Membership	Associate Membership (family)
life member	associate life member (family) _____\$25
age 49 & under _____\$60	
age 50-59 _____\$45	
age 60 & over _____\$35	
annual member _____\$10	associate annual member (family) _____\$5
active duty member _____\$5	

Make check to **31st Inf Regt Assn** & mail to: **Jack Considine, 144 S River Rd, Tolland, CT 06084**

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED