



6/31st ~ Battalion Newsletter ~ June 2006

Summer is just around the corner and we hope that this edition of our newsletter finds you all healthy, happy and looking forward to the joys of the summer. There is nothing like a little warmth and sunshine to lift everyone's spirits.

The arduous task to identify and locate all the men of the 6/31st continues and we have been making great progress. The number of men identified on a Battalion level has exceeded 2550 men. With over 1300 located. The 'team' has expanded over the past few months; and the results reflect the enthusiasm these men have brought forth. Charlie Company has had amazing results with well over a hundred men being identified.

Company	Total	Deceased	KIA	Located	No Contact	Searching	Reunion '06		
							Yes	Maybe	No
Alpha	476	39	23	160	5	249	28	5	15
Bravo	322	24	23	97	0	178	1	0	5
Charlie	498	32	37	183	3	243	6	1	1
Delta	658	53	45	384	17	159	54	18	23
Echo	225	11	12	89	2	111	5	0	2
HHC	369	42	9	62	0	256	1	0	1
Unknown	7	0	0	2	0	5	0	0	0
Battalion	2555	201	149	977	27	1201	95	24	47

Once again we will ask you to search out those boxes of 'stuff' in the attic and closets and see if perhaps you can't find copies of orders, medals, awards... and if you do, send them in to us. It's not just your specific company information; those awards normally contain information for the other units and have helped us to identify many men. The complete list of men identified and their current status of searching or located can be viewed on the website <http://www.vietnam6bn31inf.com>. Information can be forwarded to any of the contacts listed at the end of this newsletter. Each one is dedicated to the effort of locating all the brothers and will take action and forward the information along for inclusion in the member list.

31st Regiment Association – The association has recently reconstructed its website and we invite you to visit the new site at <http://www.31stinfantry.org>. The regiment website is rich with history of the Polar Bear in action. Karl Lowe, Association Historian and Sr. Director has been writing a novel and recently made Chapter 17 – the 6/31st in Vietnam available for viewing. From what I have been told, it is a pretty accurate reflection of the time. There are some events which I have been told, have been recounted in a manner in which the gravity of the situation may seem discolored however, please keep in mind that there are innocents to protect; the family and loved ones of those involved that need not be exposed to all that actually happened.

There is now a 31st Infantry Quartermaster Store online at the 31st website – check it out! Here is where you can order your Polar Bear shirts, ball caps, jackets, decals, patches and other novelty items.

In addition to the changes at the 31st Regiment website there is a new section for the active duty 4/31st Fort Drum troops. A message board, and photo gallery is there so be sure and stop by to lend your support to our active duty brothers and sisters. In working with 1LT Chris Sanchez 4/31 Fort Drum – I learned something interesting... did you know the original Polar Bear is named George? Apparently George was named during the Siberian campaign although in Chris' words "I am not sure why exactly but George is actually a female polar bear...the females are a lot larger and more fierce. (Maybe it should be Georgina)" The 4/31 photo gallery has some great pictures of Fort Drum life and of course of "George".

2006 Reunion - Time is getting short for the annual 31st Regiment Association reunion in Syracuse, Fort Drum "Polar Bear Country". The deadline for reservations is **July 1**, so if you haven't yet sent in that registration form please do so today. Our personal goal this year was to see if we could get 200 men of the 6/31st to attend the reunion – as of this writing we are just about half way there.



Vin Zike, 31st Association Commander (Delta Co.) and his lovely wife, Jackie Morris-Hayes have done an outstanding job at coordinating the reunion. The main venue of the event is the Genesee Grand Hotel in Syracuse. Detail information regarding the reunion can be found on the websites <http://www.31stinfantry.org>. If you do not have website access and require the information please contact any of the persons listed at the end of this newsletter and we will get the information mailed to you.

An added feature is that you can now register on line and submit your payment via a secured credit card processing system. In order to register online please visit this link: http://31stinfantry.org/reunion_2006.htm

Additional Reunion Information: If you are interested in participating in one of the informal trips such as a Finger Lakes motorcycle tour, golf outing, outlet shopping, or the Turning Stone Casino (which has gambling and golf) on Thursday, August 3rd, please let Vin or his wife, Jackie know. You can put that information on your registration form, or email Jackie at jjmhayes@aol.com. They need to know this information well ahead of time.

Arrangements have been made with a day spa which is located right in between the two hotels. A nice treat for your spouse or yourself while at the reunion. There are several discounted treatments available for our group. It is the SpaZend day spa, located at 719 East Genesee Street, Syracuse. Their number is 315-424-3772 and their website is www.spazend.com.

News – It's been reported that Gary Spears (Delta Co) is doing well in his battle against leukemia. Gary is on a marrow donor registry list and we are all keeping him in our prayers that he will soon receive the transplant he needs. Gary hopes that he will be able to make the August reunion – cards and letters of encouragement can be sent to Gary at the following address: P O Box 24699, Indianapolis IN 46224 or email at gary.w.spears@us.army.mil

Rick Ollendorf (Alpha Co) and his lovely wife Joyce recently became grandparents again. Miss Geneva Belle Ollendorf entered this world on February 7, 2006 at 1:54 a.m. Geneva weighed in at 6lbs. 14 oz. and is 19 1/4" long. We hear she already has Grandpa wrapped around her little finger.

Dino (Arnulfo) Medina – (Bravo Co) was recently in a severe car accident, apparently a car pulled out of a side street in front of Dino, at the time of this writing was in the hospital with two broken legs and a broken arm. Cards can be sent to Dino at the following address: 926 E Ardmore Road, Phoenix AZ 85042.

Taps – Charles Perea -Recon Platoon, 6th Bn. 31st Infantry, 9th ID, passed away on Sunday, March 7th, 2006. Don Varenhorst shared this information with us - I spoke with Charlie on the phone shortly after our reunion this August. He was going to make the Syracuse reunion. "It's a sad day when something like this happens to a man that accompanied you in jungles, swamps, trails with trip wires, and death always near leaves us this quickly. Charlie was a good soldier and friend. I will miss him."

CSM – Dewey Creasey - HHC, 6th Bn, 31st Infantry, 9th ID, passed away on February 23rd, 2006. Sgt Floyd Bennett, Alpha Company reported that CSM Creasey was assigned to HHC when left for Vietnam with the original 6th Battalion troops from Ft. Lewis. He was the first Sgt. Major in Vietnam for the Battalion. CSM Creasey was remembered fondly by Sgt. Bennett.

Bill Lankford – Echo, 6th Bn, 31st Inf, 9th ID, we were informed by Ken Williamson that sadly Bill passed away in 2003. May all our brothers' rest in peace.

Thank You - Special thanks are extended to Dale (Deacon) Mills of Charlie Company, Noah Halfacre of Charlie Company, David Bledsoe, and Jerry Reynolds of HHC for their contributions to the search efforts. We appreciate your generosity.

Over time, many have contributed; it is through these contributions that we are able to continue the search efforts; we thank you all for your contributions. Also thank you to all that have ordered the cd's from Stan Hutchison "Songs from Vietnam". Each cd purchased funds one search for a man of the 6/31st.

Resources - We are hearing more requests from the men on how to go about getting their military records. The best method is writing to the records center in St. Louis – they will be able to send you copies of your DD-214, and your DD-60 (Officers) or DA-20 (enlisted men) which is your record of assignment. For those with internet access the records center request forms can be found at: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>. For others the NPRC mailing address is: National Personnel Records Center Military Personnel Records 9700 Page Avenue St. Louis, MO 63132-5100 Telephone 314-801-0800

The Vet Center can and will provide counseling for PTSD as well as many other problems. They can also provide counseling services for veterans' families. In addition, the Vet Center can help the veteran in applying for benefits from the VA and direct the veteran to other resources that he/she might otherwise not be aware. To find the Vet Center that is nearest you, go to the following site <http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?Flash=1>

For those of you in the New Jersey area – Michael Sapara – Alpha Co has provided us with information regarding his volunteer work at the New Jersey Vietnam Vets Memorial Foundation. The New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation is looking for all Vietnam Veterans and Vietnam Era Veterans in New Jersey for its Veterans Recognition Project. The Foundation has created an honor role of all those who served, and we want you to be a part of this project. Details can be found on their website: <http://www.njvvmf.org/>

Newsletter Distribution – This edition of the newsletter is being sent to only those confirmed addresses on file. The last distribution was in excess of 1600 copies and although we are pretty sure that it did reach most of the men of the 6/31st we feel it is not cost effective to send the letters out unless we have a confirmation of mailing address. So please be sure and keep your email/ mailing address current with us to continue receiving the newsletter.

The distribution of this newsletter is funded by your brothers; please consider the effort required to make this possible. It is our intention to keep this newsletter going however we will only do so as long we believe it is an effective means of reaching out to all the men of the 6/31st. Your feedback is needed to ensure that this newsletter continues, so please consider getting in touch, and for that matter sending along information that we can use in the next edition.

For those that do not have internet access perhaps you could ask a family member or visit your public library and visit these sites. I am sure you would be impressed with the information available and you would certainly enjoy the almost 4,000 photos and guestbook entries of the men you served with. These newsletters are a means to reach out to you but it is virtually impossible for us to convey all the data that is present on the websites.

Of Interest - New book release – John E. DeVore 6/31st Fort Lewis/Vietnam CO, Echo Company; CO, Bravo Company; Assistant Operations Officer; and Operations Officer has completed his book "Sitting in the Flames, Uncovering Fearlessness to Help Others". The book will be released for publication September 1, 2006 and will be available through BookSurge.com, Amazon.com and Borders.com.

This autobiography *Sitting in the Flames* was written to create influential action that can help close the widening gap between a very violent world with many sore spots and a vision for our globe that is non-violent and peaceful; where cultures are ethical and virtuous with plain lifestyles; and where leaders and leadership are spiritually-based and are genuinely committed to serve others. Creating *Sitting in the Flames* has been an experience in self-understanding, along with offering several doses of humbleness, after significant rewriting, revising, and editing, the very clear, central message of the book that evolved was that our fiery, personal Vietnam wars--our personal garbage, including the experiences of combat--has many seeds that can

eventually bear the fruits of compassion, along with the strength and courage to help others... John E. DeVore May 2006. Read more about John's book on the Book List page of the website as well as the books by Steve Maguire, George Mauldin and Karl Lowe.

Keith Nolan has also released a new book "House to House" which details the Cholon May 1968 battle, with details of 6/31, names and efforts of the men, along with sister Units. Russell (C Co) and Jones (B Co) were awarded the DSC's for action during this battle. Keith's other books also detail activities of the 6/31st and 4/31st.

More Echo Company news – Dan Ezso with the help of many of his brothers has put together a DVD of the 68/69 Echo Co. tour. Dan wants to make this DVD available to all his Echo brothers so if he hasn't contacted you yet... please get in touch with Dan. The DVD is offered to you at no cost... and something to remember your brothers-in-arms by. Also thanks to Al Bergeson and Ted Speroff (by way of Dan Ezso) there are an additional 200 Echo Co. photos posted in the galleries.

If you haven't been to the website lately we've received over 500 photos of Charlie Company from Bob Patterson Weber and Dale (Deacon) Mills. Dale is looking for some help in identifying the faces in the photos so if you recognize someone please leave a comment in the gallery. Also recently added are Delta Company albums from Del Bumann and Dennis Nester.

Hank Brake's new song, "Thank You", is in honor of our Armed Forces is destined to become an important song in the history of patriotism and the support of our troops. The song honors ALL veterans for their service to our country, past and present. Hank recorded this song to honor the memory of Hank's Uncle, 1Lt Kenneth Slaughter, killed in Vietnam in 1970. Proceeds from the sale of "Thank You" go to an organization, Operation First Response raising money to support the soldiers wounded while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. The song can be heard on the home page of <http://www.vietnam6bn31inf.com> or you can visit Hank's website: www.hankbrake.com we thank Hank for graciously giving his permission for us to use his song on our website.

Thank You by Hank Brake

We don't think about 'em that much 'Til we send 'em off to war
That's when we get behind 'em And show 'em our support
But we sometimes take for granted That they'll always be around
Each one of them a hero For defendin' this sacred ground
They keep us safe and they keep us free They make this country proud
From one American to another It's time they heard these words out loud
I wanna thank those men and women Inside the Legion Hall tonight
They were willing to do whatever it took Even layin' down their lives
On the land and sea and up in the air A tough job day in and day out
That's what being an American Soldier Is all about
Thank You, for the job you do so well You risk it all in freedom's name
And sometimes go through hell Thank You, for the sacrifices made
For the ones who never came back home The highest price was paid
It's about time we showed some gratitude Let me be the first in line to say Thank You

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Announcement: We've changed the look of the website and it may affect your bookmarks, please revisit the home page <http://www.vietnam6bn31inf.com> and find your favorite pages to bookmark with the changes. The guestbook, message board and chat room links are viewable in the top frame or in the page links at the bottom of each page. We understand there have been some issues with the new format and are working to ease the navigation of the site.



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