



6/31st Newsletter November 2005, a time of Thanksgiving!

With the holiday season fast approaching, one can expect that all will be busy with families, holiday gatherings, shopping and of course decorating the home, yard and everything that stands still.

In amongst all that endless activity, it is at this time of the year, one is most likely to stop and reflect on the people who have been a part of their life and fondly remember that person. This year, as you sit at your holiday tables please take a moment and give thanks... for all the brothers of the 6/31st. Remember them for who they are, what you shared, and what they gave.

This November newsletter is being sent to all the men that we have located, who were members of the 6/31st. The Alpha team published its first company newsletter in September, feedback from that mailing prompted us to look at expanding the distribution to include all the brothers, and we thought what better time than during the holiday season to reach out and let our brothers know they are not forgotten, but *remembered!*

For those receiving the newsletter for the first time, there is a method to the madness... in contacting the guys, we have found a fair number do not have access to the internet and therefore, this is our way to keep extending our hand to you. Even if you don't have a computer, we know you; we remember you and we want to reunite with you! A great opportunity for that is the annual 31st Association reunion.

The Reunion 2006 campaign is underway with chairpersons from each company diligently gathering names, and contact information. Team members are gearing up for the letter writing and phone calls and we are hoping that the attendance will be outstanding at the 31st Regiment Association annual reunion in Syracuse, NY. The planned dates of the reunion are August 3-5 (Thursday-Saturday). An excerpt from the 31st Regiment newsletter is as follows:

"Our regiment's 90th Anniversary Reunion will be 3-5 August 2006 at the Genesee Grande Hotel in Syracuse, NY, bringing us back to the 4th Battalion's neighborhood so we can share our celebration with today's Polar Bears. Make your reservations by calling 800-365-4663 or online at www.geneseegrande.com / www.theparkviewhotel.com. (Handwritten on the newsletter: Reservation Code 0608PV31st.) These two hotels are close together in the heart of Syracuse with shuttle service between them. They also provide shuttle service to and from the airport. Remember to tell them you're with the 31st Infantry Regiment Reunion. More details will follow in our coming newsletters but this is one you won't want to miss."

Company chairpersons for reunion coordination are as follows: Alpha—Chuck McCammon, Bravo—still looking for a volunteer, Charlie—Dan Kelley/Bill McMullen, Delta—Jerry White, Echo—Don Varenhorst, and HHQ—David Bledsoe. In behind these men, stand a work force; ready, willing, and able to assist with all the contact, and administrative tasks.

Please mark the dates on those new 2006 calendars, and make an effort to attend; we would love to see you in Syracuse. The reunions are at a minimum fun, on a much deeper level they are a time to turn back the clock with memories; some pleasant thoughts, and most of all it is without a doubt one of the most rewarding, healing experiences you could imagine. Many men have at long last found closure. We all remember the bonds that were formed between us while we were in Vietnam, and it was truly remarkable

that, at the reunion, it took only a few seconds with our buddies to realize that that bond is still there, even after all these years.

The Alpha and Delta guys are the in the midst of a friendly little competition... seems a certain person who will forever be known as “the spy” decided to report back to the Delta team that the Alpha team was challenging their men to see if they could surpass Delta’s outstanding reunion attendance of 81 men. Needless to say, the Delta team has kicked their reunion campaign into high gear, determined to maintain their place as having the company with the most men attending the reunion for the third straight year.

It will take a huge effort in order to surpass the accomplishments of this group... not wanting to even think about possible defeat, Alpha then initiated another challenge to the men of Bravo, Charlie, Echo and HQ companies... to see who will have the greatest reunion attendance increase (percentage based increase) from the 2005 reunion. As of this writing Bravo Company does not have a reunion chair, the Alpha and Delta teams are attempting to fill this void as time permits. Jerry White and Co... please be advised, Bravo attendance will *NOT* count towards the Delta numbers... we may have to enlist the services of Jim McMahan to ‘audit’ the numbers, I understand he has experience in this after last years reunion.

The gauntlets have been tossed, the campaigns underway, and we are having a little fun with the race... the important thing here is that it doesn’t matter who wins... in participating we all win for we will have succeed in reuniting with our brothers, regardless of company affiliation.

The Alpha Company September newsletter included a few reunion reflections and once again Ken Steed has been gracious enough to share his thoughts with us...

Reunion Reflections By Ken Steed

“Not long ago I wrote about what attending the 31st Association had meant to me. By being able to attend new avenues have opened up to me and a deeper appreciation of my fellow brothers has happened.

Most of the attendees at the reunion were fellow Vietnam veterans. We also had the honor of having several Korean veterans and a handful of World War II veterans attending. But of all that were there, the ones that made me stand with pride to have among us were the three men who were survivors of the dreadful Bataan Death March. These three men can say that they went through hell on earth. We all sometimes think that we had things rough but these three know what rough means.

All of these men, I deeply appreciate, not only my fellow Vietnam vets but all of them that came before us. I felt very humbled in being able to shake their hand and to each I would like to say Thank You. These words are not near enough for the sacrifices these men made. With honor and pride I salute each and every one of them.”

Exciting Developments

In conjunction with the reunion 2006 campaign, we have been working on a 6/31st master list, which includes every man that served during Viet Nam with the 6/31st. Unfortunately, we know we are missing many names, and some of the names are incomplete... still that hasn’t deterred our efforts to find them all.

If you have internet access, the master list can be viewed at the website; www.vietnam6bn31inf.com. The master list should be available soon at the www.6thofthe31st.com website. The list is alphabetically sorted by name, with a primary and alternate company designation, years of service, platoon if known, and a status of whether or not that person has been located. A secondary sort tab lists the names sorted by primary company affiliation. The email addresses of contacted members are available if you should want

to contact your brothers. At last count (because it changes constantly) there were almost 2000 names included.

Due to the size of the list, it is impossible to include all the names here, please try and access one of the internet sites via a family member, friend or even at the public library and take a look at the list... you will be amazed! If you can provide us with additional information regarding the men, please contact us... every bit helps us in our endeavor to contact them. We also encourage you to fill in the missing details on your listing.

The www.6thofthe31st.com website is owned and managed by; Robert Stewart (Alpha's last Niner 1970) Chuck McCammon (Alpha/HQ 69/70) co-administers the site. The website has a wealth of photographs submitted by members representing all areas of the 6/31st, a message board/forum for posting comments, and scheduled chat sessions (Delta Co. Thursday evenings 9 EST, Alpha Co. Friday evenings 9 EST, and Battalion Chat on Sunday evenings at 8 EST).

Don't let the scheduled times limit you joining us at the chat, on any given night there will be guys from all companies in the chat session. And please don't think the chats are all war talk... you would be amazed at some of the topics of discussion; from weather reports around the county, to satellite dish internet connects, happenings in home towns, chili... a lot of laughs, some tears and general good fun... we must warn you though, it is addicting! It is amazing to see two guys type talk after 35 years, or for a family member to stop by and begin to understand what transpired years ago with their loved one, who is no longer with us.

The www.vietnam6bn31inf.com website was created as a venue that will compliment Robert's website. Although the content may be similar, we believe it presents a different view of the men of the 6/31st. The primary focus of this site is the reunion of all the brothers regardless if by telephone, mail, e-mail, site participation, or attending organized reunions.

During the 2005 Columbus, GA reunion, we were treated to a tour of the Infantry museum at Fort Benning. The museum director and curator expressed an interest in the photographs and memorabilia that have been gathered, and preserved digitally at the website. Robert Stewart, our own Alpha history guy, has engaged in conversations to provide the museum with digital copies of all the photographs. If you have photos, please consider getting in touch with Robert or Chuck and so that they can get copies of your photos up on the website to include in the submission to the museum. Please take the time to visit the www.6thofthe31st.com website and add comments to the photos... comments and identification of the men and events depicted is essential to preserving the history of the battalion. Robert is coordinating all efforts with the Infantry museum.

News notes

Congratulations to Delta's Vin Zike on his recent election to the position of the 31st Regiment Association Commander. Vin, we are all anxiously awaiting your contributions to the association, you have our full support!

Alpha Co., Mike (Doc) Manderscheid and his wife Marion are grandparents again... their daughter Jennifer and her husband Tim welcomed Ian Michael into the world. Word is little Ian likes to visit Gram and Gramps almost as much as they love having him visit!

Delta Co., Del Bumann and his wife Corrie are first time grandparents... their son Ryan and his wife Gina welcomed Charles Ryan Eugene Bumann (named after his Great Grandfather, his Dad & his other Great Grandfather) into the world on Oct. 13th at 8:18 AM. , 7 lb. 5 3/4 oz. 20 1/2". Del and Corrie made fast tracks to Virginia in "Alotta" to visit their latest pride and joy.

We are happy to pass along the information that the members of the 6/31st survived the tragedy of hurricane Katrina. Although some family members suffered loss/damage of their homes, all were safe and without injury which is most important.

Sadly we were informed that Alpha Co., Gary Groder passed on recently (July 2005). Our deepest sympathies are sent to his wife Donna, and family members.

Commodore Mann recently retired from active service September 2005. Congratulations and thanks are sent to Comm, for his service. Comm will continue to work with the military in a consulting role.

The Delta Dawgs recently answered a call for help; Johnny Hutcherson, a D-cavalry guy, contacted us for information regarding those wounded in the 09/26/1968 battle. Johnny still carried thoughts of the men from that day and was searching for information. His writings can be found by following the link on the www.vietnam6bn31inf.com website. Thanks Delta Dawgs for bringing closure to Hutch.

A few men or their family members have recently undergone some medical issues, so as to not invade privacy we will not mention names or conditions but ask that you keep all the men of the 6/31st and their family members in your thoughts and prayers for continued good health and speedy recoveries from health issues.

This newsletter contains mainly information from Alpha and Delta because at this time they are the active participants. We extend to all 6/31st men, an invitation to contact us with any information that they consider news worthy, we will be happy to include it in the next publication (expected January 2006, we are taking a holiday break). The newsletter is intended for **ALL**; please consider submitting something relevant to your company, please send your contributions to any of the contacts listed at the end of this newsletter.

If you wish to initiate contact with us (and we sincerely hope that you do), please use the contact information shown below... your correspondence will be directed to the appropriate person relative to your company assignments, and will be answered as quickly as possible. Bravo, Charlie, Echo and HHC... we need your help. The time and effort required is minimal, won't you please consider volunteering to be a contact person for your Company?



From the E-mail In Box

Anyone who is an 'internet' junkie will tell you that more often than not your e-mail in-box is filled with forwards... e-mails received that are worth sharing. Sometimes they are jokes, or heart warming notes, or inspirational thoughts. Recently I received this forward from Laddie and Cindi Halstead (Charlie Company) and I think the message is worth sharing here.

THE FINAL INSPECTION

~Author Unknown~

***The soldier stood and faced God, Which must always come to pass.
He hoped his shoes were shining, Just as brightly as his brass.***

***"Step forward now, you soldier, How shall I deal with you?
Have you always turned the other cheek? To My Church have you
been true?"***

***The soldier squared his shoulders and said, "No, Lord, I guess I ain't.
Because those of us who carry guns, Can't always be a saint.***

***I've had to work most Sundays, And at times my talk was tough.
And sometimes I've been violent, Because the world is awfully rough.***

***But, I never took a penny, That wasn't mine to keep...
Though I worked a lot of overtime, When the bills got just too steep.***

***And I never passed a cry for help, Though at times I shook with fear.
And sometimes, God, forgive me, I've wept unmanly tears.***

***I know I don't deserve a place, Among the people here.
They never wanted me around, Except to calm their fears.***

***If you've a place for me here, Lord, It needn't be so grand.
I never expected or had too much, But if you don't, I'll understand.***

***There was a silence all around the throne, Where the saints had
often trod.***

As the soldier waited quietly, For the judgment of his God.

***"Step forward now, you soldier, You've borne your burdens well.
Walk peacefully on Heaven's streets, You've done your time in Hell."***

We hope you have found this newsletter to be informative and even more we hope we have enticed you into thinking about the 2006 reunion... try and stop by the websites, and visit us!

Thank you to all who contributed to the creation of this newsletter; it is not the work of any one person, it is a collaboration of time, thoughts and creativity. A special thank you to the men that have provided the funding for this publication, without your contributions this would not be possible. We are indebted to you for your support.

***We send our warmest wishes for a wondrous
holiday season and happiest of new years to each
of you and your families. Happy Holidays!***



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Web Links

<http://www.31stinfantry.org>
<http://www.6thofthe31st.com>
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