

(Copy from C 4/31st Inf. Bn. veteran James B. Simms with the assistance of Mike Crutcher a veteran of E & HHC, 1/5 Cav, 1969-70 1st Cav Div. May 2014.)

31st Regt. Polar Bear (image printed top left)

196th patch (image printed on top right)

"WEST OF WEST" (text printed between the two images).

VOL II NUMBER 1 4TH BATTALION 31st INFANTRY 05 January 1970

Win IT In Your Mind!

"It's a New Year but does it really make any difference, since I'm still in Vietnam?" Each of us asks himself. The answer is "Yes, it does!" True, we will face the same enemy, encounter still more booby traps, endure more extreme Vietnamese weather, and perhaps receive unfortunate news from home - but the difference is that we can each approach these obstacles in a new way and conquer them by "winning them first in our minds!"

The mind has a tendency to reproduce whatever has been placed in it. The mind is the key! The mind organizes its thoughts so that it takes a picture composed of these thoughts, i.e., if a soldier thinks, "Gosh, does that CO think I can hump that far? - I'm tired; I'll never make it!" Well, then the mind presents you with a picture of you being very tired and what results? - you tend to become just like you think and that hump becomes about unbearable. At this point is where some simple statements from the Bible can come to your rescue. For, remember, the mind forces a picture of what you put in it.

The Bible is full of mind rejuvenators, one has only to find what they are and put them in his mind. An excellent way to have these mind restorers available when you need them is to memorize a short sentence that somehow means a whole lot to you - place it in your mind and when an occasion arises when it is needed it is surprising how it comes to your rescue and restores not only your mental outlook but even your physical feeling. Here are a few examples of thoughts to feed your mind:

(1) When tired and running out of patience: Isa 40:31 "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings of eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint."

(2) When fearful: Ps 23:4 "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou are with me..."

(3) When worried: Philippians 4:7 "And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds...."

(4) When help is needed: John 15:7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, You will ask what you will and it shall be done unto you."

these, when said over and over in your mind when you have a particular need, fill your mind with that picture and help that picture become a reality. But each individual must find his own 'work rejuvenators"- the Bible is full of them!

Commander's comments

A commander receives numerous accolades for the accomplishment of his unit. This has been especially true to his battalion during the past six months. Believe me, I know who earned these words and symbols of praise. It is you the man in the ranks and the junior leaders that mean the difference between a mediocre and an outstanding unit. It was you who met the enemy and defeated him each time he became bold enough to challenge your title to the land and its people. It is you, the man with a rifle in his hands, that make an Army.

On my departure, I wish to acknowledge this fact to you and to offer my sincere thanks for a most difficult job well done. I will maintain a continuing interest in the Polar Bears and wish the best of luck to each of you.

Happy New Year!

penetration method shown

In broad daylight, two enemy soldiers crept through the perimeter wire at LZ West while 50 "Polar Bears" of the 4th Bn., 31st inf. watched.

The sappers took only 10 minutes to crawl through the concertina wire and neutralize the trip flares set out to warn of their approach. The watching "Polar Bears" responsible for defending the hill did nothing but look and listen.

The sapper teams made up of two Hoi Chanh- both experienced - is touring bases to give practical demonstrations of sapper techniques. The demonstrations begin with a short talk on sapper methods, then comes the demonstration.

Once inside the perimeter wire, the sappers begin to feel for trip wire. Following the wire to its source, they then either tie off the trip flare or disarm it. Within minutes they are ready to go to work inside the fire support base.

Talking with Major Roger Lee, Operations Officer, the sappers related that a unit will always recon the perimeter, making detailed maps of bunker locations and defenses, before actually trying to get inside.

Even if they think their recon activity has been detected, the sappers plans are so inflexible that they will still follow them using the same route of approach and point of penetration as covered in reconnaissance.

To go undetected will be more difficult for the sappers in the future. Two Hoi Chanh sappers, getting through the wire in the middle of the day are helping to prevent future sapper attacks against fire support bases. ***[Historian comment: The article did not mention that the Hoi Chanh sappers were blindfolded for these demonstrations].***

change of command

In a brief ceremony on LZ West on 27 December LTC Cecil M. Henry (Rome, GA.) turned over command of the 4th Bn., 31st Inf., to LTC Kenneth L. Skaer (Spokane, Wash.) LTC Henry is taking a position as senior advisor with the 5th ARVN Regiment of the 2nd ARVN Division.

CPT Jimmy Krsnak (Wagner, S.D.) has taken command of Headquarters and Headquarters Company from CPT Sheldon D. Hittleman (New York City). CPT Hittleman is now at the 196th Brigade.

On LZ Siberia, LTC Henry conducted a ceremony giving CPT John Wilson (Carterville, GA.) command of Alpha Company. Cpt James C. Mantell, Alpha's former CO, is now in charge of the battalion S-3 Section on LZ West.

Graphic art: MALARIA CAN KILL!! (drawing of skull and crossbones)

TAKE THOSE PILLS!!

graphic art: Drawing of the Americal (southern cross) patch.

battle lull routine

One of the unusual aspects of the Vietnam War is the inconsistency of enemy attempts to attack allied military installations. Enemy battle campaigns that sometimes last two or three months may suddenly stop and then once again begin six or eight months later.

This staggered type of enemy activity is generally referred to as battle lull and is a period of extreme caution because no one can accurately calculate when the enemy will resume offensive activity.

It's easy for a GI to rationalize that if "nothing has happened in three weeks, nothing should happen tonight."

Realistically and militarily, preparedness remains the paramount consideration.

To the "Grunt", the most important aspect of this preparedness is his weapon - a clean weapon.

Whether a soldier is a clerk or an Infantryman, he can't foresee the occasion when he may be called upon to protect his own life or the lives of his friends. It would be very unhealthy, for instance, for a soldier to give his weapon a detailed operational inspection after a ground attack had been launched by the enemy. Daily maintenance can avoid such embarrassment.

Flak jackets and steel helmets also play a very important role in a soldier's life - they can save it. A person would hardly consider walking through a driving rain storm without a hat and raincoat. Salvos from the NVA have been known to rain particles much heavier than water. Flak jackets and helmets provide excellent protection from these sudden storms.

Guard duty is a never-ending process. Night and day an alert soldier can save millions of dollars of equipment and prevent harm to hundreds of his fellow service men. Watching for the unusual and keeping in constant contact with the sergeant of the guard can prevent tragedy. The point is to keep distracting items away from you. That tune that's No. 1 on the radio this week may become no. 10 if a soldier's mind is on it rather than the perimeter he's guarding.

All these things are normal procedure when the enemy makes his presence known day after day; but they must remain normal routine even during so-called battle lulls. Unforeseen

attacks can occur at any time.

VOL II NUMBER 1 4TH BATTALION 31st INFANTRY 05 January 1970

AVDF-BBBCRE Reenlistments, December 1969

Company Reenlistment Personnel Battalion Reenlistment 31 Dec 69/am
NCO

Reenlistments accomplished during the month of December 1969, with option and reassignment shown after each name, area as follows:

HHC:

1. GRIFFITH, Winston E. Present duty assignment - Chu Lai - VRB-1-\$4,000.00
2. KRALICH, Joseph Present duty assignment - Chu Lai - VRB-1-\$10,000.00
3. ROSA, Francisco Present duty assignment - Chu Lai - VRB-1-\$3,000.00

A CO:

1. PALMERE, John M. Supply HQ& A Co 723 Maint Bn- Chu Lai
2. LAYFIELD, Bobby R. Motor Transport 23 S&T Bn, Chu Lai
3. DANLAU, Robert Motor Transport 23 S&T Bn, Chu Lai
4. HAMBY, Raymond S. HQ, 18 Engr Bde, Long Binh
5. CANALE, Louis 537 Personnel Services Center, Long Binh
6. MOYERS, Dennis G. HHC, 20 Engr Bde, Long Binh
7. NUNLEY, Wendell H. HHC, 4th Bn, 31st Inf, 196th Bde Light Vehicle Driver

B CO:

1. KERSSSEN, Joseph B. Supply HHC, 4th Bn, 31st Inf, 196th Bde, Chu Lai

C CO:

None

D Co:

1. RIZZO, Joseph HHC, 196th Inf Bde dy/w Message Center

E Co:

1. WEIIERT, Michael C. 735 MID Americal Division, Chu Lai
2. SHATELK, Donnie R. AERO Scout Co, 123 AVN, Chu Lai
3. GIBSON, Ronald 537 Personnel Services Center, Long Binh
4. MOON, William W. HHC, 18 Engr Bde, Long Binh

RECAPITULATION:	Objective	Reenlistments	Percentage attained
	4	16	400%
QUARTERLY	12	54	450%

two get \$14,000

In a ceremony held recently in the Americal Division Reenlistment Office LTC Cecil M. Henry, 4/31 commander, presented

LEROY W. PETERSON, SSG
Bn Reenlistment NCO
4th Bn, 31st Inf, 196th Bde
APO SF 96374

two "Polar Bears" a combined total of \$14,000 in re-enlistment bonuses.

SP6 Joseph M. Kralich (Newport, R.I.) received a \$10,000 bonus when he reenlisted for six years as a clinical medic with the battalion. **[Historian Note: Doc Kralich appeared in portions of the "Combat Medic" video host narrated by actor George C. Scott. Mr. Kralich has shared his hand-drawn diagram of LZ West]**

Receiving \$4,000 for an additional six years as a cook was SP6 Winston M. Griffith (Newport News, VA.).

"An additional dividend in reenlisting while in Vietnam is that the Bonus is tax free," commented SSG Leroy M. Peterson (New York City), Battalion Reenlistment NCO.

West of West

LTC Cecil M. Henry CO
SP4 William Crawford Reporter

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team goes to ville

As American efforts toward "Vietnamization" of the war continue and the Vietnamese people struggle to establish secure villages where they can build permanent homes, the "Polar Bears" are helping as much as possible wherever they can. The people of Son Hoa village, part of the Que Son District northwest of LZ West, recently asked for a liaison between the village and American Forces. "These men were chosen because they are well qualified in their field," said LTC Cecil M. Henry.

The head of the team, a specialist in fire direction control, is a mortarman, SGT John Du?ue (San Antonio, Tex.). If it is needed he will call in and adjust fire support from nearby bases for the Popular Forces providing local defense in the village.

SP4 Fred Martin (Omaha, Neb.), an Infantryman, will advise the people in establishing local security. Martin is also the RTO for the team.

Assisting the people in medical needs a Vietnamese nurse already visits the village twice a week - is a medic, SP5 David L. O'Neil (Earl Park, Ind.) The villagers have already turned an empty building into an aid station and SP5 O'Neil hopes to set up a regular sick call schedule and clinic when he has enough supplies.

SGT Du?ue remarked, "The village chief has been very helpful in getting us set up here and stops in several times a day to see how things are going and talk over problems."

A the team becomes established 4/31 will cooperate in combined operations with the PF's in the village. Three are several Chieu Hoi's among them who are familiar wit the area and know where the VC usually hide.

In the meantime the liaison team is trying to go as ethnic as possible and to become accepted by the people on an equal plane. Specialist Martin commented, "We are invited to eat at their houses by different villagers every day and I was surprised to find that the food is very good.

In the continuing effort by the American Soldier to encourage the people of Vietnam to establish themselves again, this team is providing an important step toward reaching that goal.

Sports:

ROSE BOWL USC 10 - MICHIGAN 3 COTTON BOWL TEXAS 21 - NOTRE DAME 17
 SUGAR BOWL MISSISSIPPI - ARKANSAS 22 PEACH BOWL W. VIRGINIA 14- S. CAROLINA 3
 ASTRO-BLUEBONNET BOWL HOUSTON 36 - AUBURN 7

The Top Twenty, with first place votes in parenthesis, won-lost records, including bowl games, and total points awarded on the basis of 20-18-16-14-12-10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1.

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|
| 1. Texas (36)11-0 | 910 | 11. Nebraska.....9-2 | 207 |
| 2. Penn State (7)11-0 | 820 | 12. Houston.....9-2 | 204 |
| 3. USC10-0-1 | 695 | 13. UCLA.....8-1-1 | 203 |
| 4. Ohio State.....8-1 | 659 | 14. Florida.....9-1-1 | 183 |
| 5. Notre Dame.....8-2-1 | 457 | 15. Tennessee.....9-2 | 88 |
| 6. Missouri.....9-2 | 236 | 16. Colorado.....8-3 | 70 |
| 7. Arkansas.....9-2 | 336 | 17. West Virginia...10-1 | 62 |
| 8. Mississippi.....8-3 | 317 | 18. Purdue.....8-2 | 46 |
| 9. Michigan.....8-3 | 301 | 19. Stanford.....7-2-1 | 25 |
| 10. Louisiana State. 9-1 | 28? | 20. Auburn.....8-3 | 17 |

Also receiving votes: Toledo11-3 17 Texas and Penn State each received two split first place votes worth 19 points each. Pacific Stars & Stripes Jan 5, 1970.

AWARDS PRESENTED IN DECEMBER 1969

<u>NAME</u>	<u>AWARD</u>	<u>CO</u>	<u>BO NUMBER</u>
1LT JAMES B. SIMMS	BS"V"	HHC	11316
SSG TONY H. BLANKENSHIP	BS"V"	E	11291
SP4 WILLIAM B. KING	BS"V"	B	11390
SP4 JEAN F. FLORES	BS"V"	B	11324
SGT JAMES E. DEESE	BS	C	11589
SGT RICHARD HAST	BS	C	11589
SGT OSCAR HAWKINS III	BS	C	11589
SGT ROBERT E. HERRMANN	BS	C	11589
SGT CHESTER PHILLIPS	BS	E	12544
SFC RAYMOND G. STICE	BS	HHC	12544
SGT JOHN E. ROAYAL	BS	C	11589
SGT WILLIAM F. SMITH	BS	C	11589
SGT TIMOTHY D. ROBINSON	BS	C	11589
SGT ROGER BROWN	BS	C	11589
SGT WAYNE E. BOYD	BS	B	11589
SGT DOUGLAS J. MONROE	BS	B	11589
SGT RICHARD HOBBS	BS	E	11589
SGT ALLEN PETTENGILL	BS	D	11589
SGT JACK RICHARDSON	BS	E	11589
SP5 GEORGE SWEAT	BS	HHC	11589
CPT THOMAS L. MURPHY	BS	HHC	
PFC LARRY D. MARTIN	BS	HHC	

AWARDS PRESENTED IN DECEMBER 1969

<u>NAME</u>	<u>AWARD</u>	<u>CO</u>	<u>BO NUMBER</u>
SFC RAYMOND G. STICE	ACM (1ST OAK LEAF)	HHC	
SP4 RICHARD D. JAY	ACM"V"	B	
SP4 CARL L. FLYNN	ACM"V"	E	
SP4 HOWARD C. SHEPHARD	ACM"V"	?	11394
SGT ULYSSES CUTTER	ACM"V"	?	11395
SP4 SHELDON PORTER	ACM"V"	B	12989
SP4 DONALD J. FOLMAR	ACM"V"	B	11396
SP4 FRANCIS P. MATES	ACM"V"	B	11322
SSG MAURICE ???AUR??ARD	ACM"V"	B	12692
SGT ORVIS O. ?A??H?	ACM"V"	B	12698
SP4 LARRY B. MACON	ACM"V"	HHC	12691
SFC RICHARD ?. SEARS	ACM	HHC	
SP4 PETER RA??NANO	ACM	C	11592
SP4 JOSEPH SANDERS	ACM	C	11592
SGT ??????ARD ?????S JR.	ACM	B	11592
SP4 JOHN ?ALR??IT	ACM	D	11592
SP4 ROBERT L. H????SY	ACM	E	11592
SP4 JOHN D???OUPS	ACM	C	11592
SP4 JOSEPH CURTIS	ACM	E	11592
SP5 AUGUSTINE ??UR?OS	ACM	HHC	11592
SP4 JOHN L????rBERRY	ACM	E	11592
SP4 THOMAS R??TTG?R	ACM	HHC	11592
SGT ROBERT M. SMITH	ACM	HHC	11592
SP4 ALAN T. TASAKA	PH	HHC	
SSG ???????????? ?????ARD	PH	B	
PFD OR??L L. JOHNSON	PH	B	

COMIC:

Retro of a WWII comic. A worn down RTO carrying an M-16 is asked by a Red Cross worker to join us. He is so very tired but seems pleased by the offer.

