

(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 II 4TH BATTALION 31st INFANTRY 31 January 1970

LtC Skaer – "New Papa Bear"

The new Battalion Commander Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth L. Skaer (Spokane, Wash.), recently received the proud colors of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry from Lieutenant Colonel Cecil M. Henry (Rome, Ga.). LTC Henry has taken a position as senior advisor with the 5th ARVN Regiment of the 2nd ARVN Division.

LTC Skaer on taking command commented, "This is a fine battalion with an excellent record of achievement, and I am proud to become its commander. I will endeavor to carry on the great Polar Bear tradition as the leader of this outstanding fighting unit. I ask only for the support of everyone in the battalion."

LTC Skaer entered the Army in 1952 as an enlisted man and graduated from Officers' Candidate School in 1953.

He served with the 45th Infantry Division and the 3rd Infantry Division in Korea of 18 months. After being stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington, he began a three year tour of duty in Europe in 1958 with the 3rd Battalion (Mechanized), 51st Infantry ARB.

LTC Skaer graduated from the Career Officers' Advanced Course at Fort Benning, Georgia, in 1961. After an assignment at Fort Lewis, Washington, he attended the command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Before his next assignment in Thailand for a year, he graduated from Language School. Upon his return from Thailand, he became an instructor at the Command and General Staff College.

LTC Skaer was Deputy Commander of the Chu Lai defense Command until he assumed command of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry on December 27, 1969.

Lower level change of command

In a brief ceremony held on LZ Siberia, Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth L. Skaer (Spokane, Wash.) gave Lieutenant Armand M. Darrin (Selden, N.Y.) command of Charlie Company. The company's former commander, Captain John R. Thomas (Fort Washington, Pa.) is the now the battalion S-1 in Chu Lai.

Bravo finds cache!

While on a routine sweep of an area two miles northwest of LZ West Bravo Company of the 4th Bn., 31st Inf came across a tunnel entrance hidden in heavy foliage.

As the Infantrymen searched the tunnel complex, they uncovered a variety of equipment including an M-60 machine-gun with 400 rounds of ammunition, an AK47 rifle, and an M16 rifle. Another area of the complex contained thirty-nine 82mm mortar rounds and fourteen 60mm rounds with three large sealed boxes of mortar fuses and a 250 lb bomb.

Captain William Mercado (New York City), the battalion S-2, commented, "This find is in a heavily infiltrated section which we have been trying to clear. We have had several Chieu Hoi's from this area recently and the denial of this cache to the enemy will further establish our security there."

Delta takes seven

"Everybody's very happy about it," said CPT Thomas J. Lynch (Boston). "This is the kind of thing that makes our operations so infinitely worthwhile."

CPT Lynch relayed the mood of Delta Company following a cordon and search that snared five suspected VC guerillas and received two Hoi Chanh ralliers - one of them a girl of twenty who told the Americans of her long separation from her family.

Delta captured the suspected VC squad after the men ducked into a hootch as the point platoon passed. The company was operating inside hilly An Son Village, five miles northwest of LZ West. The Polar Bear unit searched the five and found a Chicom grenade and packs containing medical supplies, fishnet, hammocks, and NVA propaganda leaflets.

GRAPHIC ART: drawing of Vietnamese with this caption: "CHIEU HOI! CHA-CHA-CHA!"

"While we were securing the detainees a man and a woman stepped out of a hut," said CPT Lynch. "They said they wanted to "Chieu Hoi." The man handed me an AK-47 rifle and shook my hand."

The detainees and the two Hoi Chanshs were heli-lifted to LZ West. There the young woman gave an interesting account of her decision to defect. Her two older brothers had left the VC earlier this year and are now attending the Americal Division's Kit Carson Scout School in Chu Lai. Hearing of their good fortune, she made her choice.

"She wanted to be with her brothers," said Captain William Mercado of New York City, S-2 (Intelligence) Officer, who spoke with both Hoi Chanshs. "Apparently, they are the only family she has left."

The man who came with her is a 25 year-old VC.

"He's been trying to come over since last year," said CPT Mercado. "He wrote a letter to the district chief at Hiep Duc, offering to come in, but got no reply."

Hesitant when he received no answer, he stayed with his unit for another year, afraid American soldiers would shoot if he approached them.

re-up? see "Doc" pete - Reenlistment, January 1970

Reenlistment accomplished during the month of January 1970, with options and reassignment shown under each name, were as follows:

HHC: Career

1. GUTIERREZ, A. SGM Chu Lai

A Co: 1st term "RA"

1. WILSON, Charles, PFC 178th Avn Co - Chu Lai

B Co:

NONE

C Co:

1. BAKER, James E., PFC Co B 23rd S&T Bn Chu Lai

D CO: 1st Term "RA"

1. CHAPMAN, Steven, PFC 1st Avn Bde Long Binh

E Co: Career

1. MC DERMOTT, Robert, 1SG Chu Lai

RECAPITULATION: Objective- 4 Reenlistment- 3 +2 Percentage attained- 75%

malaria ain' t no big thing

(Skull & cross bones)

just ask your red blood cells.

TOP TEN COLLEGIATE STANDINGS

- 1. UCLA..... 14-0
- 2. Kentucky..... 14-0
- 3. S. Carolina..... 12-1
- 4. ST. Bonaventure.....12-0
- 5. N. Mexico State.....16-1
- 6. Jacksonville.....13-0
- 7. Houston.....12-2
- 8. Marquette.....13-1 (MARGRETTE was a typo).
- 9. N. Carolina.....12-3
- 10.N. Carolina State...13-1

a true love story: & graphics for valentines day

I was reading a history book in the 7th Grade when I first noticed her, and I suddenly felt a bit of childish passion. By the time I graduated from high school I had fallen in love.

She may be a little on the large size, but who cares? To me, she's the most beautiful thing on earth. I love her for many reasons and one of them is her compassion for others. She's always thinking of someone else. Always giving of herself. When I stop to think of the numerous people she has helped when they needed her I can't find the words to express myself.

No, she's not perfect by any means- but then, who is? All I care is that she tries hard to be just what I want her to be. How many others can say that? Not many. I know. I've been around.

She's gentle and kind, and gives with her heart. And, when I see anyone trying to take advantage of her, it makes my blood boil. I guess I'm just jealous. Haven't I the right to be? I'd never stand by and see anyone try to take her away from me. She's too precious; besides, she depends on me too much. I'll go on loving and protecting her to the day I die.

Of course, there are times when I tell her of things that are wrong. But, after I've told her, she always does her best to change them for me. I'm proud of her for that. I've only to let her know how I feel and be a little patient. No one can change things in a day, can they?

It's when I've been away for awhile that I miss her and realize how much I long to get back. What's that saying, "Absence makes the heart grow fonder"? When I near home, she's waiting there with outstretched arms to offer me all of the wonderful things I have never been able to find in this cockeyed world. I know I've been around.

Everywhere I've traveled I've made the comparison and could not find one who could compare. I never have; I never will. I'm convinced, after all these years.

When I go to sleep each night I rest peacefully knowing that she is there, belonging to me. And in my heart, I'll always keep her precious name - America. There's not another beauty like here in all of God's world. I know. I've been around. (AFPS)

West of West

LTC Kenneth Skaer	CO
PFC Gerald Lamb	PIO
SP4 P.I. Kostriken	Editor

This newsheet is published monthly by the 4/31 Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade APO 96374, as an authorized publication. Views and opinions herein do not necessarily represent those of the Department of the Army. AFPS material used.

The NBA standings for the Eastern Division and Western Division's 14 teams were not transcribed. The Eastern Division consisted of: New York; Baltimore; Philadelphia; Cincinnati; Boston; Detroit. The Western Division consisted of: Atlanta; Los Angeles; Chicago; San Francisco; Phoenix; San Diego; and Seattle. [In order of their current rankings]

Forces conduct joint sweep

Vietnamese Popular Force Units in Que Son District are progressing steadily toward increased responsibility in the pacification of the valley area northeast of LZ West.

With the insertion of a liaison team from the 4th Bn, 31st Inf into the district, the opportunity for joint operations with U.S. Infantry and PF's became possible. The Battalion's Recon Platoon and a platoon of PF's from Son Hoa Village recently worked together in smoothly conducted operations that demonstrate the effectiveness and compatibility of joint allied operations.

In a sweep of rugged Hill 441 north of LZ West, the forces combined to search for enemy fortifications, eliminate enemy supply sources and remove possible centers of enemy operations. The two forces set up ambushes together, conducted patrols and pulled guard jointly.

Second Lieutenant William K. Rapp (Glen Ellyn, Ill.), Recon Platoon Leader, remarked, "The PF's are very good to work with and they like working with us. they are dedicated fighters who don't turn and run from a firefight."

On one of their operations the combined forces took along a Hoi Chanh from the village who lead them to several enemy hiding places. He also identified VC occupants in several of the hooch areas the element swept through.

By working with them the Infantrymen learned to respect these people. They found that they do somethings differently from the Americans, but they learned much about the Vietnamese themselves.

"They are an aggressive, well-trained and disciplined group, and we are happy to be working with them," 2LT Rapp added.

shortThat's all!!!

Chappel	3 Feb E Co;	Dahmer	3 Feb E Co;	Kiely	3 Feb E Co
Zeman	3 Feb E Co;	Zimmerman	6 Feb HHC;	Gayler	7 Feb HHC
Cuneo	8 Feb HHC;	Hillman	8 Feb HHC;	Wilson	8 Feb A
Bates	11 Feb HHC;	Hayward	15 Feb A;	Milburn	16 Feb A
Timblin	17 Feb D;	Pauley	23 Feb E;	McCoullough	27 Feb HHC

AWARDS PRESENTED in January

NAME	CO	AWARDS	NAME	CO	AWARD
1LT JUAN GONZALES	HHC	BS	SP4 DAVID PROELLOCHS	C	ACM
SGT RICHARD VITTM	D	BS	SP4 GARY STANLEY	C	ACM
1SG JAMES CAMPBELL	D	BS	SP4 JOHN WALTHAUSEN	C	ACM
SSG BURKS ROBERT	D	BS	SP4 GARRY WALTERS	C	ACM
SGT DAVID WARDELL	C	BS	SP4 CHARLES CHACONAS	D	ACM
SGT DAVID ROLLAND	D	BS	SP4 LARRY W. HORSLEY	D	ACM
SGT CLARENCE ROSE	C	BS	SP4 TERRY A. KUHNNAU	D	ACM
SGT EDDIE B. TTLE	B	BS	SP4 ROBERT MARSHALL	D	ACM
SGT ULYSSES CUTTER	B	BS	SP4 JAMES MUMEY	D	ACM
SGT DAVID SCHIED	A	BS"V" (1ST OAK)	SP4 RALPH PALMER	D	ACM
SGT PAUL MC GRATH	A	BS	SP4 HOBART ROBERTS	D	ACM
1LT CHARLES ?. ALLEN	E	BS"V"	SP4 JERRY RODENBERG	D	ACM
CPT BARRY BRANDON	E	BS	SP4 DANIEL L. HAGE	E	ACM
SP4 GLENN H. WHITE	A	BS"V"	SP4 WILLIAM F. JACKSON	E	ACM
SGT MAURICE BEAUREGARD	B	BS	SP4 RICHARD MARSHALL	E	ACM
SGT WILLIAM MABTHE	A	BS (1ST OAK)	SP4 GEORGE RIDDER	E	ACM
SP4 JOHN ANSLEY	A	BS	SP5 STEVEN SCOTT	E	ACM
SGT THOMAS NOTO	C	BS	SP4 LEE M. TRENT	E	ACM
SGT BILLY SAYE	C	BS&SS	SGT RICHARD GASTONE	C	ACM"V" (1ST OAK)
SP4 TOM GARY	C	BS	SGT DAVID ROLLAND	D	ACM"V"
SGT CRAIG SURPRISE	E	BS	SGT JOHN MARQUE	A	PH
SGT JERRY BALCH	D	BS	PFC CHARLES E. BEABOUT	A	PH
SGT GERALD BLANCHARD	E	BS	PFC WILLIAM L. FENTER	A	PH
SGT JOSEPH ST. ANGELO	B	BS	2LT EARLE FRANKS	E	PH
SGT PABLO GUZMAN	B	BS	SSM ANTONIO GUTIERREZ	HHC	AM (2ND AWARD)
SGT JUAN CLASS	C	BS	SP4 CHARLEI FRIERSON	B	ACM
SP4 NOLAN PERIN	C	BS	SP4 TOMMY OANCASTER	B	ACM
SSG KENNETH NEWMAN	D	BS	SP4 SPRUEL J. NORRIS	B	ACM
SP4 FRED C. MARTIN	D	BS	SP4 LYLE REULE	B	ACM
SP4 RICHARD HUSMAN	HHC	ACM	SP4 JAMES N. RICKABAUGH	B	ACM
SP4 LAWRENCE LOCKE	HHC	ACM	SP4 NOEL E. ROE	B	ACM
SP5 JESSIE J. MILLER	HHC	ACM	SGT TARELTON E. SCOTT	B	ACM
SP5 DALE B. ROBERSON	HHC	ACM	SP4 JAMES ALEXANDER	C	ACM
PFC JACK BYARS	A	ACM	SP4 RICHARD BRADY	C	ACM
SP5 WILLIAM L. DAHMER	A	ACM	SP4 ROLAND COLLINS	C	ACM
SP4 FRANK M. KERR	A	ACM	SP4 ROBERT FLOWERS	C	ACM
SP4 JOHN H. MARTRINEZ	A	ACM	SP4 PHILLIP MILES	C	ACM
SP4 JAMES E. CLARK	B	ACM	SP4 LARRY O'REAR	C	ACM

