

Note: Donated by Edward J. Beauchamp; minor typographical errors in the original were spell checked and corrected.
Polar Bear

Sea Lion
with rifle

**WEST
OF
WEST**

JULY 1970

PRO

4/31

PATRIA

HISTORY OF THE 4TH/31ST INFANTRY BATTALION

FEW UNITS IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY CAN EQUAL THE OUTSTANDING RECORD OF THE FOURTH BATTALION, THIRTY-FIRST INFANTRY. THE "POLAR BEARS" HAVE CONTRIBUTED FIFTY FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE NATION.

THE COAT OF ARMS SYMBOLIZES THE PRINCIPAL FEATURE OF THIS UNITS HISTORY. EMBLAZONED ON A FIELD OF BLUE STANDS A SEA LION, GRASPING IN ITS PAWS A RIFLE WITH A FIXED BAYONET. UNDER THE SHIELDS IS ENGRAVED THE MOTTO, "PRO PATRIA", AND ABOVE THE SHIELD STANDS A POLAR BEAR. THE SEA IS TAKEN FROM THE COAT OF ARMS OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS, WHILE THE POLAR BEAR SYMBOLIZES THE PART WE PLAYED IN SIBERIA.

THE 4TH/31ST WAS OFFICIALLY FORMED 13 AUGUST 1916, IN THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS. TWO YEARS LATER THE REGIMENT WAS GIVEN ITS FIRST MISSION WHEN IT WAS SENT TO SIBERIA TO KEEP THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAIL ROAD IN OPERATION. ON THIS ASSIGNMENT WE GAINED OUR FIRST BATTLE STREAMER AND THE NICKNAME, "POLAR BEARS". IN 1920 THE UNIT RETURNED TO THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS, SETTLING INTO THE ROUTINE OF NORMAL GARRISON DUTY.

THE YEARS ROLLED BY FOR THE "POLAR BEARS" UNTIL 1932 WHEN THEY WERE SENT TO SHANGHAI. ITS MISSION WAS TO PROTECT THE INTEREST OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE LIVES AND PROPERTY OF UNITED STATES CITIZENS THAT WERE IN GREAT DANGER FROM CHINESE AND JAPANESE UPRISINGS.

THE BATTALION RETURNED TO MANILA A FEW MONTHS LATER LITTLE KNOWING THAT IN NINE YEARS THEY WOULD BE IN MORTAL CONFLICT WITH THE ENEMY. WE WERE THE NUCLEUS OF A FORCE THROWN AGAINST THE JAPANESE INVASION OF THE PHILIPPINES. ON BATAAN THE UNIT FACED ITS SUPREME TEST, FIGHTING UNTIL IT WAS PRACTICALLY ANNIHILATED. WHEN IT WAS APPARENT THAT CAPTURE WAS INEVITABLE, THE COLORS AND BATTLE STREAMERS WERE DESTROYED.

IN JANUARY 1946, THE UNIT TOOK PART IN THE OCCUPATION OF KOREA. AFTER 2 1/2 YEARS OF SERVICE THE BATTALION WAS MOVED TO JAPAN TO TAKE PART IN THE OCCUPATION OF THAT COUNTRY. THIS TASK WAS ONLY TEMPORARY, AS THE UNIT WAS SENT BACK TO KOREA TO REPEL THE INVADING NORTH KOREANS. THE UNIT STORMED ASHORE AT INCHON, AND LATER AGAIN IN NORTH KOREA TO CUT OFF THE ENEMY SUPPLIES LINES. THEY FOUGHT LONG AND HARD DURING THE KOREAN CONFLICT AND HELPED ESTABLISH THE LINE WHERE IT NOW STANDS.

THE "POLAR BEARS" HAVE FOUGHT ROUND THE WORLD-MANILA, SIBERIA, SHANGHAI, JAPAN, KOREA, AND VIET NAM. THE 4TH/31ST, A UNIT OF TRADITION, GLORY AND FIGHTING MEN, IS ALWAYS READY TO ANSWER ITS COUNTRY'S CALL TO UPHOLD DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM, ANY PLACE ON EARTH.

"PRO PATRIA" ***"FOR OUR COUNTRY"**

CHARLIE COMPANY RECEIVES HOI CHANH

CHARLIE COMPANY 4/31, WHILE IN AN AREA NORTH WEST OF TAM KY, RECEIVED SEVEN VC HOI CHANHS AND TWO SKS RIFLES WHICH WERE TURNED OVER BY THE RALLIERS.

CHARLEY CO. ALSO DETAINED THREE VIET CONG SUSPECTS IN THE SAME ACTION. THE HOI CHANHS AND WEAPONS WERE EXTRACTED TO LZ WEST.

LATER THAT SAME AFTERNOON, WHILE ON A SWEEP OF THE AREA SOUTHWEST OF LZ PREP, CHARLIE CO. RECEIVED SIX MORE HOI CHANHS.

"THE RALLIERS BROUGHT THEIR FAMILIES ALSO, TO MAKE THE TOTAL TWENTY SEVEN," SGT. CONSTANTINE REPORTED.

Comic drawing of Beetle Bailey using a Coke and Pepsi cans attached to strings for communications. Beetle is saying, "I'M SORRY MY RADIO ISN'T WORKING!

OUR FRIENDS FROM COMMO ASK; "WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU CHANGED BATTERIES??? THEY'RE FREE YOU KNOW. "50% OF THE RADIO PROBLEMS COME FROM BAD BATTERIES!!!!!!"

LTC THOMAS A. BREEN, CO.
CPT. JOHN A. WILSON, EDITOR
SP/4 JAMES ALLEN LOGUE, IO

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EAGLE FLIGHTS ARE NUMBER ONE!

IN FIVE MINUTES YOU COULD BE ANY WHERE IN THE 4/31 AREA OF OPERATION. NO MORE HUMPING DAY AFTER DAY, IN THE HOT SUN WITH THAT RUCK ON YOUR BACK, TO CHECK OUT A PARTICULAR AREA. YOUR PROBABLY ASKING, HOW HAS IT BEEN WORKING OUT? REALLY WELL.

CHARLIE COMPANY TOOK THE FIRST EAGLE FLIGHT FROM LZ WEST TO CHECK OUT SUSPECTED ENEMY LOCATIONS. AS THEY NEARED THEIR LANDING ZONE GUNSHIPS FLYING SECURITY SPOTTED MOVEMENT AND FIRED INTO THE AREA.

THE 4/31 INF. BATTALION COMMANDER LTC THOMAS BREEN THEN SPOTTED TWO ENEMY BODIES," RELATED SP/4 MILTON BATES, "AND HE WANTED US TO SEARCH AND IDENTIFY THEM, WHILE LOOKING FOR THEM OUR POINT MAN SAW SOMETHING MOVING IN A SPIDER HOLE IN FRONT OF HIM. HE VERY CAUTIOUSLY QUERIED 'CHIEU HOI!" WITH NO RESULTS." A GRENADE WAS THROWN INTO THE ENEMY'S HIDING PLACE KILLING ONE VC.

ALPHA COMPANY 4/31 IS ALSO HAVING A LOT OF SUCCESS WORKING OFF LZ MELON. PFC BEN PERRY TELLS OF THE FIRST MISSION.

"OUR FIRST EAGLE FLIGHT WE HIT PAY DIRT. SCORING WITH TWO NVA KIAS AND CONFISCATING ONE AK-47. "

ALPHA WAS DROPPED RIGHT IN ON A HOOTCH. AS THEY MOVED UP ON IT 1LT. MATHEWS TOLD HIS POINT MAN TO CHECK IT OUT.

PFC PHILLIP UPCHURCH, POINTMAN SAW ONE VIETNAMESE MALE STANDING WITH HIS HANDS HELD ABOVE HIS HEAD SHOUTING 'CHIEU HOI'. WHEN PFC UPCHURCH AND HIS SLACK MAN GOT INTO THE HOOTCH FOUR OTHER NVA SOLDIERS POPPED OUT OF SPIDER HOLES PINNING DOWN UPCHURCH AND HIS SLACK MAN. UPCHURCH DID SOME OUTSTANDING SHOOTING, KILLING ONE OF THE ENEMY AND WAS ABLE TO RETURN TO SAFETY.

SP/5 HOWARD ELLIOTT, WALKING SIXTH, SPOTTED AN ENEMY SOLDIER DOWN THE TRAIL AND DROPPED HIM WITHOUT ANY TROUBLE.

AFTER THE INITIAL CONTACT, CPT. CROCKERT BROKE THE ELEMENT DOWN INTO THREE SEPARATE RECON UNITS RUNNING SWEEPS IN ALL DIRECTIONS. THEY UNCOVERED BLOODTRAILS, AN NVA RUCK AND AN AK-47 RIFLE.

PEOPLE WE KNOW

BY CPT. JOHN A. WILSON

I WAS JUST THINKING THE OTHER DAY ABOUT HOW MANY PEOPLE YOU SEE COME AND GO AROUND HERE IN A YEARS TIME. SOME OF THE RECENTLY DEPARTED 'POLAR BEARS' COME IMMEDIATELY TO MIND.

THE FIRST ONE I WILL MENTION IS MSG AUGUST K. GERBER. SGT. GERBER A LUMBERJACK FROM THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST, WAS THE SENIOR E-8 IN THE BATTALION, EVEN THOUGH HE BARELY HAD 15 YEARS IN THE SERVICE THIS MAN REALLY CONTRIBUTED 100% TO THE 'POLAR BEARS' DURING HIS YEAR HERE. IT WAS NOTHING UNCOMMON TO SEE THIS MAN WORKING 15 HRS A DAY IN THE BTOC, AND WHEN YOU WERE IN TROUBLE OUT IN THE FIELD, HIS VOICE OVER THAT RADIO, ASSURING YOU THAT YOU HAD GUNSHIPS OR AIR SUPPORT OR ARTY ON THE WAY, WAS LIKE AN ANGEL SPEAKING TO YOU.

GERBER DID THE BEST THAT HE COULD WHENEVER HE WAS NEEDED. ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION HE PUT ON HIS RUCKSACK AND WENT TO THE 'BUSH' TO HELP OUT, AND HE'S DODGED A FEW OF 'CHARLIE'S' BULLETS TOO.

I THINK THAT EVERYONE WHO KNEW MSG GERBER WILL AGREE THAT HE WAS AN INSPIRATION TO US ALL. LUCKY FOR ME, I'LL BE STATIONED WITH HIM AGAIN IN A COUPLE OF MONTHS AT FT. CARSON.

ANOTHER FORMER 'POLAR BEAR' OF NOTE, AND IF YOU EVER MET HIM, YOU'LL AGREE WITH EVERYTHING I SAY IS CPT. ARNOLD M. DARRIN. HERE'S A GUY WHO SPENT 10 1/2 MONTHS OUT IN THE FIELD, AND THATS UNCOMMON FOR AN OFFICER. IF ONE PHRASE EXPLAINS IT'S MORALE. HE INSPIRED EVEN THE WEAKEST SOLDIER TO GREAT HEIGHTS BY JUST BEING PART OF HIS TEAM. HE DID A LOT OF THINGS WRONG, OR THEY SEEMED SO BY THE REST OF US, BUT HIS COMPANY ALWAYS CAME OUT ON TOP OR NEAR THE TOP. I ALWAYS APPRECIATED WORKING WITH 'CHARGIN-CHARLIE.

CPT. DARRIN, A MASTER PARACHUTIST, IS A NATIVE OF LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK, AND WOULD YOU BELIEVE, HE'S BACK HOME FOR DUTY AS ADVISOR TO THE NEW YORK NATIONAL GUARD SO WATCH YOUR STEP IN NEW YORK.

WELL, IF I WROTE ABOUT ALL THE PEOPLE THAT I'VE SEEN COME AND GO, I'D MISS MY DEROS, SO JUST CATALOGUE THESE TWO IN YOUR MEMORY BANK AND I'LL TALK ABOUT SOME MORE 'POLAR BEAR' GREATS IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

A DOSE OF THEIR OWN MEDICINE

"DELTA COMPANY 4/31 WAS EXTRACTING TWO NVA PRISONER. THE BIRD TOOK FIRE," REPORTED ROGER CONN, FROM THE RELAY STATION ON LZ PREP, "I RECEIVED A REPORT FROM A HORNET PILOT THAT THE BIRD HAD TAKEN A FEW HITS. NOBODY WAS HURT WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE OF THE DETAINEES WHO HAD TAKEN ONE IN HIS FOOT.

RECON FINDS BOOBY TRAP FACTORY

PATROLLING SOUTHWEST OF LZ PREP RECON 4/31 FOUND A BOOBY TRAP FACTORY.

WHAT LOOKED LIKE A PEACEFUL VILLE AREA, TURNED OUT TO BE TWELVE HOOTCHES OF TERROR.

A SEARCH OF THE COMPLEX PRODUCED A 250LB BOMB, EXPLOSIVES, HOME MADE CHINESE COMMUNIST GRENADES, FUSES, BLASTING CAPS, A STOCKPILE OF TIN CANS, AND ANVILS.

LOOKING OVER THE FACTORY EACH ESTABLISHMENT DID IT'S OWN THING AS PART OF AN ASSEMBLY LINE.

THE AREA AS WELL AS THE EXPLOSIVES WERE DESTROYED BY THE 'POLAR BEARS'.

OTHER COMBAT PATROLS IN THE SAME GENERAL AREA RESULTED IN ONE NVA KIA AND THE CAPTURE OF AN SKS.

drawing of a man contorting to get his head up his butt, with the following caption....

** NEW MEATS **

(NEED WE SAY ANYMORE.?)

MAILMAN JOHN PETERSON REMINDS US: WRITE 'FREE' ON MAIL GOING HOME.

THE MIDNIGHT RIDE OF BLUE GHOST BLACK

0001 HRS. JULY 24TH, BLUE BHOST BLACK REPORTED, "IT LOOKS LIKE SOME BODY DOWN THERE WANTS TO PLAY GAMES. I TOOK 30 CAL. ROUNDS, BUT I HAVE HIM SPOTTED."

CHARLIE BATTERY 3RD/82ND ARTILLERY WAS CALLED, AND BLUE GHOST ADJUSTED "WILSON PICKET" DIRECTLY IN ON THE AREA.

WHEN BLUE GHOST BLACK'S SPOTLIGHT WAS TURNED ON, C 3/82 WAS CREDITED WITH TWO KBAS AND ONE 30 CAL. MACHINE GUN WAS DESTROYED.

CIDG WORKS WITH DELTA COMPANY

DELTA COMPANY WORKING NEAR LZ PREP WAS AIDED BY A TEAM OF CIDG (CIVILIAN IRREGULAR DEFENSE GROUP)

SWEEPING ACROSS A SMALL HILL COVERED WITH HEAVY VEGETATION, THE 4/31 INFANTRY MEN UNCOVERED A LARGE RICE CACHE. FOUR THOUSAND POUNDS OF UNPOLISHED RICE WAS CONFISCATED FROM LARGE WOVEN BASKETS.

CHECKING OUT A VILLE, THE VILLAGERS REPORTED THAT NO VC OR NVA HAD BEEN IN THE AREA.

MOVING OUT ABOUT TWO HUNDRED METERS FROM THE VILLE, THE ALERT CIDG POINT MAN SPOTTED MOVEMENT. THE MOVEMENT TURNED OUT TO BE AN ENEMY AMBUSH. THE AMBUSH WAS RUINED AND THE ALLIES OPENED UP WITH A DEADLY VOLUME OF SMALL ARMS AND AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE KILLING FIVE VC AND CAPTURING TWO AK-47 RIFLES.

"BRAVE LITTLE BASTARDS," WAS CPT. PERSONS DESCRIPTION OF THE CIDG. "THEY REALLY DID AN OUTSTANDING JOB FOR US."

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS FOLLOW YOUR NOSE

IT WAS HOT AND ALPHA CO. 4/31 HAD BEEN WALKING FOR A LONG TIME WHEN CPT. CROCKERT GAVE THE COMMAND TO TAKE A BREAK. THE POINT ELEMENT DROPPED THEIR RUCKS AND MADE A QUICK SEARCH, TO SECURE THE IMMEDIATE AREA.

READY TO RELAX JOHN ROGERS DEVELOPED NOSE PROBLEMS.

"I SMELL SOMETHING BURNING," HE SAID. GATHERING A FEW FRIENDS, HE FOLLOWED HIS NOSE, TO A BAMBOO THICKET. "I STUCK MY HEAD UP UNDER SOME THICK STUFF. IN A CLEARING I COULD SEE A HOOTCH. NOBODY WAS AROUND BUT THERE WAS A POT ON THE FIRE."

"WE GOT THE REST OF THE COMPANY TO CORDON AS WE SEARCHED THE AREA. INSIDE THE HOOTCH WE FOUND 30 CAL. MACHINE GUN AMMO, AK-47 ROUNDS, AND A HOME MADE 60MM MORTAR TUBE."

THIS WAS ONLY ONE DAY, ALPHA BATTALION HAD SEVERAL, WORKING THE AREA NORTH OF LZ SIBERIA. FINDING OVER 5,000 LBS., OF RICE AND CORN.

"I FEEL WE HAVE HURT CHARLIE IN AMMUNITION AND FOOD SUPPLIES ALONG HIS INFILTRATION ROUTES," CPT. JAMES CROCKERT SAID."

PLAN FOR YOUR FUTURE!

FURTHER YOUR EDUCATION, ADVANCE YOURSELF. CHOSE FROM SEVERAL RE-ENLISTMENT OPTIONS: (1) CONUS STATIONS OF YOUR CHOICE, (2) ARMY SCHOOLS, (3) VERB, PRESENT DUTY.

SEE YOUR CAREER COUNSELOR TODAY!

SFC HENRY [?SIC] BURET

***** STAY ARMY *****

"GOOD BYE CHARLIE"

drawing of headstone (RIP) with flower growing from grave.

COMPANY	ENEMY KIA	WEAPONS
ALPHA	2	3
BRAVO	2	1
CHARLIE	3	0
DELTA	4	3
RECON	5	4
JULY TOTAL	<u>16</u>	<u>11</u>

DELTA TALLIES VC KILLS

PATROLLING THE AREA WEST OF LZ PREP, DELTA CO. 4/31 WAS AMBUSHED BY TEN TO FIFTEEN VIET CONG.

"OUR POINT MAN IS PINNED DOWN ABOUT 45 FEET FROM THE ENEMY POSITION. I ESTIMATE THAT THERE IS ABOUT FIFTEEN OF THEM UP THERE," THE RTO REPORTED.

"THE PIG IS ON THE RICE PADDY DIKE, READY TO GO," THE SECOND PLT REPORTED.

SUPPRESSIVE FIRE WAS PUT DOWN AND THE POINT MAN WAS PULLED BACK TO SAFETY.

'STINGER' (HORNET'S GUNSHIPS) WAS CALLED AND THEY WORKED THE AREA OVER AS DELTA CO. LAID LOW.

LATER DELTA MOVED INTO THE AREA OF CONTACT FINDING FOUR VIET CONG BODIES AND BLOOD TRAILS.

A HELPING HAND

CHAPLAIN WILSON 4/31 196TH LIB RECENTLY RECEIVED TWO LARGE BOXES OF CLOTHING FROM THE PEOPLE OF THE ROANOKE VALLEY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, (ROANOKE VA.). CHAPLAIN WILSON TOOK THE CLOTHING TO TRING THAN'H QUANG, PASTOR OF THE VIET-AN-CHURCH, IN SON HOA.

THE SKY PILOT AND PASTOR QUANG VISITED OVER A CUP OF TEA AND A BOWL OF RICE.

PASTOR QUANG CAME FROM DANANG SIX YEARS GO TO THE CHURCH, BUILT TWELVE YEARS AGO BY THE FRENCH. WEEKLY ATTENDANCE IS AROUND ONE HUNDRED, THE ROLL SHOWS 307 MEMBERS.

OUR CHAPLAIN HAS BEEN WORKING ON OTHER PROJECTS. FOR EXAMPLE: 200 VIETNAMESE BIBLES ACQUIRED FREE FROM THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY ALLIANCE. WERE GIVEN TO PASTOR QUANG.

drawing of a church with "VIET-AN-CHURCH" banner on front fence.

ALPHA COMPANY RECEIVES BETTY CROCKERT'S HOMEMAKERS AWARD

ALPHA COMPANY 4/31 IS BUILDING ANOTHER FIRE SUPPORT BASE. LZ MELON (WEST OF WEST) HAS BEEN UNDER GOING HOME IMPROVEMENTS.

"A LOT OF HARD WORK GOES INTO BUILDING A NEW HOME," SFC LINN SAID, "AND BOY IS IT HOT ON TOP OF THIS HILL."

THE INFANTRYMEN WORKED STEADILY BUILDING BUNKERS, STRINGING WIRE AND RUNNING SECURITY SWEEPS ALONG WITH EAGLE FLIGHTS.

THE 26TH ENG. WERE HAVING A BLAST, CLEARING TREES AND OVER GROWTH OFF THE SOUTH WEST END OF THE HILL.

CHARLIE BATT. 3RD/82ND ARTILLERY ALONG WITH ECHO COMPANY MORTARS 4/31 WERE CONSTANTLY GIVING FIRE POWER DEMONSTRATIONS WHILE ZEROING THEIR GUNS.

SP/4 KENT GREEN SQUAD LEADER 3RD PLT. SAID, "WE GOT RIGHT DOWN TO BUSINESS. "THE SOONER WE GET THESE BUNKERS FINISHED AND THE WIRE STRUNG THE SAFER I'LL FEEL."

LIFE ON LZ MELON HAS BEEN A BUSY ONE, THE SUN IS HOT, BUT THE MEN OF ALPHA BATTALION ARE DOING A FINE JOB," SFC JAMES T. SMITH, FIRST SGT., REPORTED. *****