

BITTER SWEET

Proud - - proud that a fellow Wolfhound's towering tale of courage is preserved forever in the archives of the Congressional Record. Yet sad - - unforgettably sad that all that remains of a great Wolfhound is the inspiration his story provides.

First Sergeant Sam Solomon - - fierce competitor in football, gentle playmate of children, raging fury in combat. Victim of a sniper's bullet at the close of his finest day.

It was in the first stages of Attleboro in Vietnam, scene of the creation of so many Wolfhound legends that the man whom General Fred Weyand called one of his finest soldiers, met his end. On that day the burly Hawaiian, on his own, carried eight wounded Wolfhounds to safety through the flaming fury of enemy fire. Eight times he dashed to cover through dense brush - - each time with an injured comrade over his shoulder.

The sniper whose bullet found Sam after he had carried that eighth Wolfhound to safety will never know that he put an earthly end to a living legend.

A footnote: Just a fortnight before that day, First Sergeant Solomon had visited the Holy Family Home in Osaka.

APART - AND ABOVE

Among the distinguished unit citations earned by the Wolfhounds in Korea was one for the amphibious assault across the Han River in early March, 1950. The award was replete with fulsome praise.

Preceding the assault, every tank, mortar and artillery piece available lined the south bank of the Han, wheel to wheel. Just before dawn, the most awesome barrage of the war thundered down on the enemy. Leaping aboard assault boats, the Wolfhounds crossed the river, charged across the 700 yards of exposed beach and pressed their attack with such raging fury that the enemy fled in panic and disorder.

Without a pause, Wolfhounds forged ahead to their next objective. Successive enemy positions, now more formidably and fanatically defended, were battered and smashed by repeated onslaughts until they too were neutralized.

The language of the citation for the victory provides a true picture of the Wolfhounds on this, and every other occasion: "The 27th Infantry displayed such gallantry, determination and esprit de corps... as to set them apart and above other units..."

DON'T MOVE, LIEUTENANT!

Another Wolfhound whose name lives on is Lieutenant General Hugh A. Drum, after whom a fort in Watertown, New York is named. He got his baptism of fire as a young Lieutenant in the Battle of Bayan on Mindanao in the Philippines. This was in 1902 before the 27th earned the name Wolfhounds.

Drum must have been a sturdy young man. A sketch in the 1940 "Bark" Regimental yearbook, shows a rifleman standing on Lieutenant Drum's shoulders as he fires over a palisade built by troops of the Sultan of Bayan. The Sultan didn't beat the Drum slowly - - or any other way.



FREE RIDE

When the First Battalion of the Wolfhounds completed combined training with Japanese Defense Force units near Mt. Fuji in 1995, LTC. Fey, the First Battalion Commander, decided that it would be a good time to visit the Wolfhound Orphanage.

Problem: the Holy Family Home was several hundred miles away and travel expenses, like everything else in Japan at that time, were sky high.

But word gets around and it wasn't long before twenty-odd Wolfhounds were riding through the picturesque Japanese country-side on their way to the Orphanage aboard a plush bus. Cost of the trip was borne by Toyota executive Akio Saito.

Mr. Saito is yet another of the countless Japanese from all levels of society who have developed true warmth toward the Wolfhounds.

Deployment of the Wolfhounds to Sinai is not the first time for the 27th to visit that part of the world. In 1901, the Second and Third Battalions sailed through the Suez Canal on their way to Manila.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SGT. STRICKLAND

In the beginning God created man. But man lacked purpose, direction, and motivation. Man was out of control.

So God said, "It is not good that man be alone. I will put forth a new breed which will go out and lead man."

So God made Gimlets.

And God watched the Gimlets. And the Gimlets saw God. And God watched the Gimlets. And the Gimlets sat there. And God said, "This is boring."

So God rolled up His sleeves.

Then god created Dragons. He formed them from the dust of the earth. Thus, Dragons were created.

And God smiled.

The Dragons swooped, dove, and breathed fire upon the earth and scorched it. And man created fire trucks. And God marveled at this. And man killed the Dragons.

And God was starting to get a little ticked off.

Then God said, "I will create such a breed of highest caliber, toughest mettle, and strongest resolve that man will be in awe of it; and no weapon fashioned against it will succeed!"

Then the heavens parted, the earth shook, and before Him stood a WOLFHOUND! "Mission complete."

POT SHOT

Snow, ice, fierce wintry blasts; the kind of weather the Regiment was not to experience until some thirty-odd years later in the rocky reaches of North Korea. That was Siberia, where the name Wolfhound was earned and to which some day-dreaming clerk back in America sent summer khakis, which at least served the purpose of keeping everyone awake.

Here in one action, two First Lieutenants, Fairfax Channing and Christian Gross, each earned the Distinguished Service Cross for "extraordinary heroism" while leading combat patrols. Charging through fire swept zones to force the retirement of the enemy, they combined to route his forces.

Edward Evans, a cook, also earned the DSC by demonstrating that he was as much at home with a rifle as he was with pots and pans. He perched on the roof of a shed and poured rapid fire into the flank of enemy attackers, single-handedly forcing them to give up the effort to outflank his detachment.

General Janin of the French contingent showered decorations on soldiers of the 27th Infantry, whom he praised as gallant warriors willing to risk life itself to accomplish their mission.

Many proud warriors of the 27th were awarded medals for "extraordinary gallantry."

THEY'LL REMEMBER THE WOLFHOUNDS

Perhaps the high point of peacetime training is the action at the Joint Readiness Training Center in Louisiana. Here, infantry battalions are tested over a period of days against what has been called the most sophisticated opposing force in the world.

These troops, facing one battalion after another, have not only developed tactics designed to frustrate the most well-trained of units, they have learned to anticipate maneuvers even before they occur to the minds of leaders being tested.

Both Wolfhound battalions faced these paragons of military superiority in 1996. And both battalions left there with memories their hosts would just as soon forget.

Lt. Col. Bernard S. Champoux, before assuming command of the First Battalion, had the opportunity to see them in action. His comments coupled with those of other observers both in and outside the Division tell the story:

“The invincible will of this proud battalion repeatedly defeated the most trained and sophisticated opposing force in the world.” - - Lt. Col. Champoux.

Grudging praise of Wolfhounds by members of the opposing force may be found on other pages.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Quad D at Schofield Barracks has been the home of the Wolfhounds for many years. There have been times when they have left for months - - even years - - but they have always returned.

Many men who have lived here have made history. Many of their deeds have been celebrated in the press and other media, more were untold outside the Regiment. One of the latter tales was that of Sergeant Charlie Fleek, whose name has become the official designation of the Quad where the Wolfhounds reside.

Throwing his body atop a grenade to save the lives of fellow Wolfhounds is a story that, to readers of these pages, is not unique. But think for a moment of SGT Fleek's thoughts that led him to that decision one day in Bing Duong, Vietnam.

The official language which awarded him the Nation's highest honor describes his "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity" but can words really reach the depth of understanding of his deed?

Try to join him in his thoughts on that day and remember that each micro-second seemed endless. Find it in your heart to remember that Fleek and Wolfhounds like him truly preserve "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

There are those in our society who loudly condemn every action of our government. Could they do so without men like Wolfhound Sergeant Fleek?

LIGHT NIGHT FIGHTERS

"Lightfighters" is one of the names they call the Wolfhounds these days. To soldiers that indicates a special breed of man, warriors who leap into action at a moments notice- - knowing they'll probably be outmanned and outgunned. But not out-spirited.

This calls for a special kind of professional warrior; a paladin who has developed the skills of his vocation to the highest degree - - whose actions and reactions have become instinctive. And there is an aura about these men; they know each other at once.

Example: following behind one of his company commanders, a tall, rangy Californian, the Wolfhound leader knew he was trailing such a man on a recent live fire exercise. Clouds and rain had isolated the valley between two rocky, forbidding ridges. Rocks, debris, fallen trees and scraggly underbrush made the going treacherous as they approached the assault position. Night vision instruments came into play as the area grew darker by the moment, yet the lanky Californian continued to move stealthily forward. Five, six times he tripped over the broken ground, yet no sound escaped his lips.

Then the assault. Machine guns, mortars and rifles all joined in the cacophony as laser beams played over the objective. The assault itself was successful - - but an even greater triumph was the confirmation that the company was being led by a true light fighter.

WE DID IT BEFORE AND...

Once again the reader must be cautioned not to regard Wolfhound accomplishments as routine and normal. This they may well be when compared with other feats of the 27th -- but it is well to remember that in the lexicon of the Wolfhounds "unusual" forms the beaten path.

Conferring battle honors on E Company and support units for action at Ipsok, Korea on 26-27 November, 1950, President Harry Truman's citation read in part "extraordinary heroism in combat against the enemy..."

Without an opportunity to reconnoiter the area, the Wolfhounds had been pulled from reserve to relieve the command post of a large United Nations penetration force.

To continue the President's citation, "this gallant force rose to the occasion against tremendous odds..., without thought of defeat or surrender, this heroic force stopped frenzied assault after assault until the enemy could no longer muster an attack..."

The Reds learned about the Wolfhounds the hard way...

COLD FEET?

One of the many legends concerning the manner in which the 27th Infantry earned the "Wolfhound" designation concerned a communication from Japanese General Itani and his verbal comments later.

The Japanese requested the 27th to participate in pursuit of the Bolsheviks and the capture of the town of Blagoveschenski. The pursuit began by train, but was soon interrupted by the enemy blocking tunnels and burning bridges.

With the Japanese leading the way, the pursuit continued on foot. The pace was swift, and one by one the Japanese began to fall out. The Americans suffered severely from the cold during these forced halts as they were still dressed in khaki and just about had to keep moving or freeze.

At about 8:00 p.m. they passed through the Japanese command and the 27th arrived at its destination more than an hour ahead of the Japanese. All of the men were in excellent condition on arrival.

General Otani's communication read in part "I admire the astonishing rapidity of the operations..."

It is claimed by some that he later compared the speed of the soldiers to that of the Wolfhound.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT...

Horatio Alger heroes (men who vaulted over many obstacles to achieve success) would find that the Army boasts more than its share of tales of triumph over difficulty.

Take for example the late General John H. "Mike" Michaelis, first Wolfhound commander in Korea. "Mike's" career almost beggars description... which is probably why Hollywood never filmed a biography.

Michaelis enlisted as a private and sometime later earned an appointment to West Point from Fort Benning, Georgia. In World War II, he commanded the 502nd Airborne and later became Chief of Staff of the 101st Airborne Division at the age of 32.

When the German army struck Bastogne (the "Battle of the Bulge") he was in the hospital with wounds suffered in combat, but went AWOL to rejoin the 101st.

When the Wolfhounds landed in Korea during the first week of July 1950, Lieutenant Colonel Michaelis met them at the dock as their new commanding officer.

Seven months later he was a Brigadier General, fulfilling the prophesy of one of his sergeants: "He'll either be a dead colonel or a live general."

Michaelis completed his meteoric rise as a four star general.

CAN OPENERS?

Daylight... exhausted Wolfhounds rose cautiously from their foxholes at Barrio Munoz on Luzon to see the ground littered with still smoking metal and the occasional body of a soldier of the Imperial Japanese Army.

They had arrived the day before. Filipino scouts assured them that there were no enemy troops in the area, so they prepared defensive positions of a sort and relaxed.

That night they were assaulted by fifty-eight Japanese tanks!

A self-propelled 105, the only weapon capable of dealing with the tanks, was soon KO'd; meanwhile the Wolfhounds hastily contacted a nearby battery of 8 inch guns. Because the tanks were between them and the Wolfhounds, the eight inchers fired unfused shells at point blank ranges of 50 feet to 200 yards.

The huge projectiles turned tanks completely over, blasted turrets into smithereens and sometimes passed completely through tanks.

Daylight came and for 300 yards the landscape was covered with smoking debris.

STAND TALL

Every few months, there's a "pot luck" dinner at a home in Manoa, a hilly section of Honolulu. Built on several levels to conform to the hilly slopes, it's the home of Mr. and Mrs. Kent Keith.

Mr. Keith, in his early forties, has had an unusual career, to put it mildly. A Rhodes scholar and attorney, he has served in the cabinet of one of Hawaii's governors, been a vice president of a major corporation and president of a university.

Mrs. Keith is highly sought after as an interpreter by major Japanese news agencies and corporations.

Guests at these pot luck dinners are people of various occupations, but they all have one thing in common. Each family has adopted one or more children from the Holy Family Home.

To watch these families mingling in warmth and friendship, to see and hear the little boys and girls shouting, laughing, racing up and down stairs and through hallways, is an experience only a Wolfhound can feel fully.

For this small group, perhaps no more than twenty people, are not all of those in Hawaii with ties to the Wolfhound Orphanage. There are many more folks in the Islands and large numbers on the Mainland whose lives have been unalterably changed by the Wolfhounds.

What a heart-stirring emotion it is to know that each member of the Regiment has had a part, however small, in adding to the love given and received by so many people.

How many lives (including our own) have we altered?

TELL IT LIKE IT IS

Combat correspondents who have seen it all never hesitate to call a spade a spade. Here are excerpts from what a couple of them had to say about the Wolfhounds in Korea:

AT THE BOWLING ALLEY

“In the ten day all-out battle for Taegu, the Wolfhounds of the 27th chewed up three enemy divisions and knocked out at least thirty tanks.”

“They mangled the Communists so severely...”

“The 27th as a team is batting 1,000.”

“The talented 27th Infantry Regiment is an outfit of superb combat soldiers who have already built up an almost legendary reputation in the Korean fighting.”

(Frank Conniff, Hearst correspondent)

COMPANY COMMANDER TO REPLACEMENTS

“I sure as hell need you. You’re coming into a good company - the Commanding General sent congratulations to the whole unit just yesterday. You saw that trail with all the dead Chinese beside their holes. We charged that hill seven times yesterday and beat off three counterattacks with our last load of ammo. We took it and we held it.”

“How do the Chinese treat prisoners?” a soldier asked.

“Alpha Company doesn’t give them any,” the captain replied.

(Robert Vermillion, U.P. correspondent)

OLD SOLDIERS NEVER LIE

When President Harry Truman presented the Medal of Honor to Captain Lewis Millett, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Omar Bradley, had more than a routine interest in the occasion. So did the President.

General Bradley had commanded the First Battalion of the Wolfhounds in the 1930's.

The President, who had been an artilleryman in World War I, told Captain Millett, "I would much rather have the Medal of Honor than be President of the United States. I don't think many people will believe me, but it is true."

Old Soldiers...

"Russian Hill" in San Francisco is said to derive its name from a small contingent of Wolfhounds who settled there with the wives they brought back from Siberia in 1920.

WILL TO WIN

Of the many unsung Wolfhound heroes, one whose accomplishments often come to mind is Guy S. Meloy, now a retired major general.

Attleboro, a major battle in Vietnam, is an example. Chaos and confusion attempted to reign there, as they do in every conflict. But determination, courage and downright will to win played their part too.

Picture a young major, suddenly finding himself commanding rifle companies, most of whose commanders he had never met. Picture him too, coordinating almost continuous artillery fire, resupply of water, ammunition and medical materials, evacuation of dead and wounded and all this time directing helicopter gunships, close air support, etc.

Complicate your picture - - - some of those companies were facing each other with enemy in between.

Had enough? There's more, but already the tale approaches the point of unbelievable.

It happened.

Wolfhound!

OUT OF MANY, ONE

Wolfhound... the name conjures up a mystique envied by other fighting men, pride to the warriors who wear its crest and fear to those who must oppose it. To describe the components of that aura, or break it down into its definitive parts, defies the ability of the writer.

What is left, then, is to bring to mind the names of some of those who have created it.

Frank Baldwin, first commander and holder of two Medals of Honor; "Blackjack" Pershing, who led all American troops in Europe in W. W. I; Guy Meloy, hero and leader of eleven battalions at the same time in Vietnam's "Attleboro" as a major; Lewis Millett, leading (in Korea) the most complete bayonet charge since Cold Harbor in the Civil War; Omar Bradley of World War II fame; "Gunner." Cloninger, with eight Purple Hearts and two combat commissions - - W. W. II and Korea; "Mike" Michaelis, leader of the "fire Brigade" in Korea, who enlisted as a private and retired with four stars; George Dizon, a Wolfhound for thirteen years and role model for many Wolfhound First Sergeants, Lew Jenkins, lightweight boxing champion of the world; James Jones, the runaway best seller author of "From Here To Eternity;" the countless men who have kept the Orphanage tradition alive for half a century.

And many, many more.

CU CHI DAYS

Among the Vietnam reminiscences of First Sergeant George Dizon, B Company, Second Battalion:

"I remember when we took and secured Cu Chi for our base camp. The Second Battalion, under LTC Mooney, fought and scrapped for the first ten days to secure 750 yards - - that's 75 yards a day! Patches of jungle, graveyards, tiny hamlets and tunnels everywhere."

"Months after securing the Cu Chi site, we continued to be fired on periodically from tunnels we still hadn't found. Although no one got hit, it kept us on our toes. We'd all shout at the men firing back, 'Don't kill 'im! His replacement might be a better shot!'"

Sometimes it pays to miss...

Dizon, from Maui, was a Wolfhound off and on for 13 years.

Quad D at Schofield Barracks has been the home of the Wolfhounds since December, 1920 when the Regiment left Siberia, stopped off in Manila and then went on to Hawaii. W.W.II, then Korea and Vietnam, caused temporary departures, but the Wolfhounds always returned home.

“Wolfhound Reflections II” has finally reached the printer. It is a pleasure to turn out these booklets for several reasons - - the major one, of course, being able to contribute in a small way to the unique reputation of the Regiment.

This, like every other accomplishment, owes its existence to more than one person. Foremost among those who have made it possible are Lieutenant Colonels Curley and Champoux.

The work and advice of so many other Wolfhounds made the author’s effort an easy one - - SGT. Boudreau, SSG. Malachowski, SFC Hornbrook, CPL Fujitani, SPC Greenslade and LT. Moser. Special thanks go to that indefatigable CSM Washington.

Every man jack was a volunteer!

Then there were the contributions of MG (Ret) Meloy and retired 1SG Dizon and Wolfhounds like them.

The longer I look at all those names the more embarrassing it becomes to place mine at the end!

Hugh F. O’Reilly
Honorary Wolfhound Sergeant Major

Comments and contributions for future booklets should be sent to:

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