

## WOLFHOUND REFLECTIONS IV

It's difficult to believe that the fourth "Reflections" has been printed. There's a great satisfaction in knowing that many of today's Wolfhounds have profited from the experience... and are prouder of the Regiment because of it.

Quite often the people "in the trenches" are not recognized for their behind-the-scene efforts because their work is more or less out of sight to the rest of us.

That's not going to be the case with Sergeant David Boudreau, a Second Battalion medic. Boudreau, who leaves the Wolfhounds next month (November, '96) has labored nights and weekends on his own time to make "Reflections" happen.

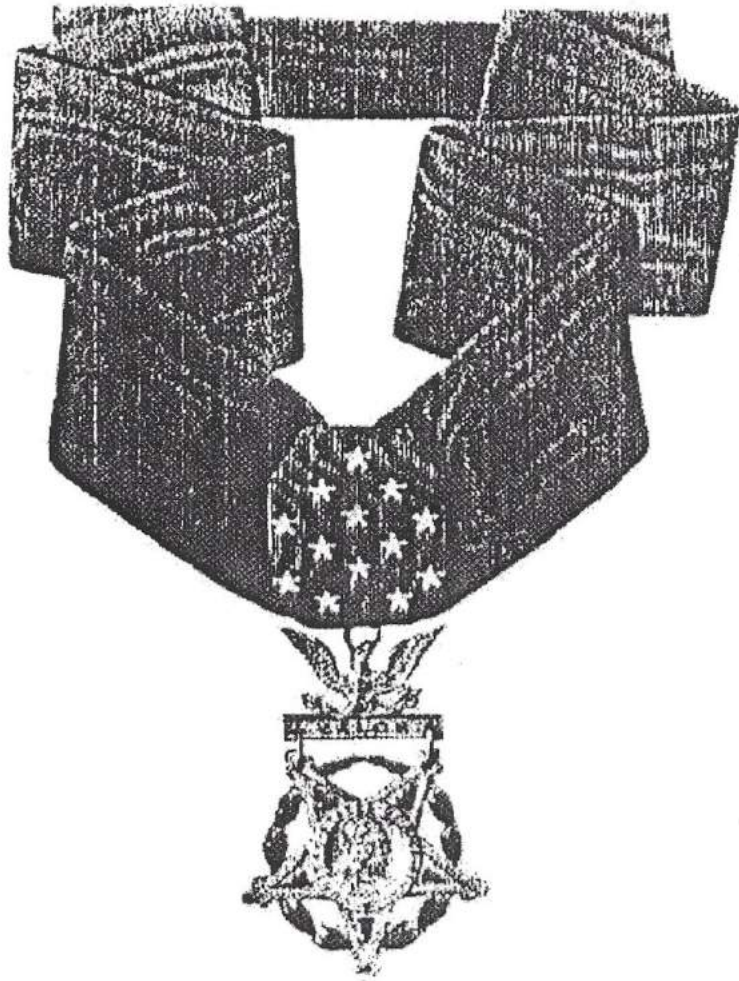
Typing, formatting, seeking help where and when he needed it. These and many other contributions have been made with what he has described as "joy."

His pride in wearing the Wolfhound crest has always been evident - obviously he feels that there's no such thing as a "former" Wolfhound.

Thanks, Sarge - - - and good luck!

Hugh F. O'Reilly  
Honorary Sergeant Major  
October 1996

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**MEDAL OF HONOR**

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# WOLFHOUND MEDALS OF HONOR

## PHILIPPINE INSURRECTION

1LT Charles G. Bickman

1LT George G. Shaw

## WORLD WAR II

CPT Charles W. Davis

SSG Raymond H. Cooley

## KOREAN WAR

\*CPL John W. Collier

\*CPT Reginald B. Desiderio

CPT Lewis L. Millett

\*2LT Jerome A. Sudut

\*CPL Benito Martinez

## VIETNAM WAR

SGT John F. Baker, Jr.

CPT Robert F. Foley

\*SGT Charles C. Fleek

\*CPT Riley L. Pitts

SSG Paul R. Lambers

**\*Posthumous award**

## THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY SEEM

A luau is a feast.  
A lau lau is a delicacy.  
An imu is a hole in the ground.  
And a rock is a rock...

Well, not always. Flo Rivera, the famed tunnel rat, is a man of many talents. One of which is preparing an imu for a luau.

Unfortunately, Vietnamese rocks couldn't stand the heat, so Rivera had to find another kitchen. He did. Whenever he led Wolfhound soldiers marching anywhere, he'd spot certain types of stones and order his men to pick them up and put them in their packs.

Puzzled by what they viewed as a weird form of punishment, the Wolfhounds obeyed. Soon the pile was large enough, and the imu was ready for the pig.

A few hours later the prized porker was finished and so were Wolfhound palates.

Rivera was happy to note that the food was so good that no one who had carried the stones asked what had made them so different.

It would have spoiled things if he told them that they were shattered memorials from a Vietnamese grave yard.

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The Osaka Maru, a Japanese freighter, full of the first Wolfhounds headed for Korea, rose and fell slightly next to the pier, awaiting the order to sail. It was early July and a humid day.

A Pepsi Cola truck driver with ambitions, we assume, for higher status in the company, spotted the soldiers lining the rails. It wasn't long until a Pepsi truck pulled up next to the ship, loaded with row on row of cases of soda.

In a twinkling, the Wolfhounds left the ship and were all over the truck like a swarm of bees. In another twinkling, they were gone - - - and so was the soda.

Wonder if the misguided entrepreneur lost his job?

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## ALL IN THE FAMILY

Coincidences and family relationships turn up constantly in the history of the Wolfhounds, but perhaps none more bizarre than that of Master Sergeant Alexandre Shabalin.

Born in Harbin, China, where his family had fled from the Bolsheviks in Siberia, he remembered events in Asia which at the time received little or no notice from the Western press.

Still fresh in his mind were the large Japanese troop movements through Harbin when he was in his teens. He remembered too, mile long convoys bearing wounded, returning from what the press referred to (on back pages) as "border incidents" between Russian and Japanese armies.

Shabalin and an older brother eventually obtained student passports from the government of Japanese puppet Emperor Pu Yi. They made it to Shanghai, and got US Visas for themselves.

Shabalin enlisted in the Army, fought in WWII and in Korea, and finally joined the Wolfhounds. His eyes popped when he heard that the Regiment's mascot was named Kolchak.

By a peculiar twist of fate, his father had been a Cossack Colonel serving under Admiral Kolchak, for whom the mascot is named!

## THE BEAR

Like any unusual group, the 27th Infantry Regiment has always attracted more than its share of unique characters. One Wolfhound who certainly fitted that description was First Sergeant Eddie "The Bear" Abella.

Abella, who entered the Army at age 16, was one of four brothers, all of whom served with the Wolfhounds. As his nickname implies he was big, outwardly gruff, and all Wolfhound.

The Bear's major claim to fame occurred on the night of April 21, 1951, when he was assigned to the Second Battalion. That night a fierce Chinese attack broke through the battalion line and attacked the Command Post.

Sergeant Abella organized a counterforce composed of clerks, cooks and drivers. During the night, he moved from man to man, urging them to stand firm.

In the morning, as the Chinese massed for a final attack, he directed a devastating fire on them, causing them to retreat in panic.

The Bear rose from PFC to Master Sergeant in one year, earning the respect and awe of all who knew him.

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Bubba says:

"Remember Pete Flub? Smart guy. Could always spot the Sergeant's mistakes... and made sure that everyone in the platoon knew about them too. That morning when the enemy came in on our flank and no one reacted in time to the Sergeant's orders... guess they'd lost confidence in him. Funny thing.... the only one who survived was Flub.

Wonder who he's picking on now?"

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## BEDTIME STORY

The fight for the Naktong River in the early days of the Korean Conflict was bitter, unceasing, and often chaotic. Men on both sides went far beyond whatever limits they had thought were theirs and when it was over, exhausted Wolfhounds moved about in the driving rain like zombies.

In the confusion of combat, a North Korean company had become separated from other North Korean units and actually found itself behind American lines. Shrouded by darkness and rainfall, the Red troops were blindly seeking their way north to rejoin their comrades.

Their route took them right through the Wolfhound Second Battalion and its vehicles, including tanks. They probably assumed that the bodies they passed were those of men killed in the fighting.

Someone stepped on Captain Millett's stomach. Shocked, he awoke - - - but before he could shout, Lt. Otomo slapped a hand over his mouth. The two quietly agreed that they could take no action immediately without endangering other Wolfhounds.

When the last enemy soldier passed, they awakened the rest of the Wolfhounds. Tracers from 50 caliber machine guns mounted on trucks lit up the rice paddies where the North Koreans threw themselves, and almost the entire Red company was destroyed.

Not long after that incident, and actually on the same day that E Company's historic bayonet charge took place, Lt. Otomo lost his life when his jeep ran over a cowflop concealing a land mine. You win some...

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## BELL FOR THE CACTI

There are many facets to the saga of the Wolfhounds - - - and because the primary function of the Regiment is to protect the interests of our country, other reflections often take a back seat.

But it is difficult to forget people like Henry "Hanalei" Bell. Hanalei may well have been the greatest halfback the 25th Division has ever produced.

If the reader will recall, there was a traditional, and heated, rivalry between the Wolfhounds and the 35th Infantry "Cacti." Bell's actions in one game fanned that contention into a white-hot heat that almost led to an explosion.

After a series of successful runs, the elusive Bell took the ball on an off-tackle play that roused Cacti fans to fury. After throwing off several tackles, he scampered through the entire remainder of the 35th team and, waving good-bye, he ran the final 30 yards backward.

He was signed by an American Football League team and after one season with the Washington Redskins, injuries cut short a career that seemed to be destined for greatness.

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William J. Newton hitchhiked a ride from New York to California, then worked his way to Yokohama on an Army transport. He then jumped ship and two more hitchhikes took him to Pusan and then Taegu in Korea. He then tried to join the Wolfhounds, but failed the Army physical.

His comment: "I'm saner than the psychiatrist who examined me."

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## CAUGHT WITH THEIR PANTS DOWN

This is a tale which begs to be told, no matter what the details.

After the battle on the Naktong River in Korea, the Second Battalion waited and waited for the chow truck. Finally it was discovered that the truck had been ambushed and only one Wolfhound escaped.

Battalion Commander Murch was furious. He sent E Company in search of the ambushers.

Moving ahead of the troops were Captain Merchant (the S-2), Captain Millett, and a Sergeant whose name escapes us. The weary Wolfhounds, trudging through a forested area, came upon a bubbling stream. They stopped for a rest.

Totally unaware that they were being watched by enemy soldiers a short distance away, the three moved apart and did what came naturally.

The Sergeant plunged his face in the stream, and the two Captains began to relieve themselves. The enemy opened fire, missed completely, and ran off. They must have been laughing.

The three Wolfhounds must have seen humor in the situation too - - they emptied the magazines of their 45's at the fleeing enemy - - and they missed too!

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Sometimes the press (AP in this case) presents unintended favors to soldiers. A lady, member of a "dry" organization, rustled up enough support to halt the Army's practice in Korea of serving two cans of beer a day to troops in reserve.

A few days later, AP carried a letter from a Wolfhound thanking the lady. He told her that without her help he would never have known the pleasure that could be found through a distilled liquid obtained from potatoes.

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## **CHANGING THE WORLD... WOLFHOUND STYLE**

The opening of the renewed Regimental Room brought so many thoughts to mind that it is difficult to relate all of them.

Nostalgia was so visible on the faces of old Wolfhounds. Pride and a new understanding fled across the faces of the current members of the Regiment. A deeper respect was in the eyes and manner of civilian guests. And a touch of envy among members of other units was difficult to conceal.

One could actually feel all these thoughts - - and more - - swirling about him.

Then as the last trickle of those who attended was going through the exit, another small ceremony took place. It was a presentation of a portrait of Wolfhound Medal of Honor winner Benito Martinez to the Regiment.

Led by Captain Esper K. Chandler who commanded A Company (First Battalion) on Sandbag Castle, seven or eight other members of that company were present.

This observer was so proud of those Texans, all Wolfhounds, who traveled thousands of miles at their expense to do honor to Corporal Benito Martinez.

His portrait will hold a place of honor in the Regimental Room.

SSG Malachowski and SFC Hornbrook did a great job and deserve credit for the results.

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## DEADLY TRIO

One Company, three Medals of Honor. That's the story of E Company (now A Company of the second Battalion) of the Wolfhounds.

First of the three was Major Charles Davis, who led a savage, overpowering charge against entrenched Japanese on "Galloping Hill." This action was on Guadalcanal, the first major scene of combat in WWII. Davis and the Wolfhounds swept away the Japanese, who were holding down American Marines, and enabled them to reach their objective.

In an unusual action, the Marines recommended the Wolfhound for the Medal.

Next in succession was Captain Reginald "Dusty" Desiderio. His rendezvous with glory came in November, 1950 in Korea.

The Wolfhounds, who had spearheaded the advance to the Yalu, were now grudgingly giving ground to hordes of Chinese who had just entered the war. The point of the rear guard action, the Wolfhounds, contested every inch of ground. Desiderio, wounded again and again, urged them on until near dawn when he finally expired.

The third Medal was earned by Captain Lewis Millett, who succeeded Desiderio in command of the company. Considered the outstanding infantry soldier in the US Army, Millett led E Company against the Chinese in Korea in the most complete bayonet charge since Cold Harbor in the Civil War.

## YOU DON'T KNOW...

Most tales about war detail hero's actions by individuals and units, tales retold again and again out of pride or similar emotions. But often human, touching events occur in those times that are forgotten or pushed aside by the memory of more dramatic actions.

So it is with the Wolfhounds - - but let us recapture one which happened on the day the Regiment departed on its road to glory in Korea.

On that day, the Wolfhounds crowded aboard antiquated Japanese railroad cars which were to carry them to a secret destination where they would embark for the "Land of the Morning Calm." So secret was this destination that even some of the regimental staff didn't know it.

After countless interminable hours, the train creaked and groaned to a halt at that hush-hush final stop - the railroad station for the port of Moji.

And standing there tearfully waiting, burdened with flowers and gifts, were half of the cabaret girls from Osaka.

How did they know? How did they pierce the veil of secrecy surrounding the move?

In their hesitant, broken English, one after another replied to that question in an effort to explain, "you don't know my heart."

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A heartwarming sidelight to the first days of the Korean war occurred at the Osaka railroad station as the Wolfhounds were boarding trains which would take them to the transports.

The Regiment was tremendously popular with the citizens of Osaka, and because of the stories in the press about the communist invasion of South Korea, there was little doubt of the Wolfhounds' destination in peoples' minds.

What many Wolfhounds who were there will never forget was the numbers of young men who tried to board the trains with them.

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## DOUGH SEE DOUGH ON KOJE DO

Koje-do is an island off the south coast of South Korea. During the war in that unhappy land (who in the world called it "The Land of the Morning Calm?") it was the site of a camp for prisoners of war.

Thousands of them.

Many of these prisoners were civilians - - - hard core, fanatic communists. Following the practice of communist regimes all over the world, these people had only one mission - - - to do everything in their power to destroy the legal government.

Obviously, these people were more dangerous than uniformed soldiers - they could merge with the rest of the population.

The most extreme, the most radical of these people were segregated from the other prisoners. Five or six thousand of them were housed in sub-camps away from their less rabid co-conspirators.

Cocky, determined to run things their way, these zealous anarchists soon had created an air of chaos. Armed with clubs, home made knives and spears, flying the North Korean flag from their barracks, they rioted and fought against their guards, injuring some severely.

The command finally determined that there was only one way to solve the problem - - - to bring on the Wolfhounds.

The 27th at first tried to exert discipline in a normal, military fashion. This was misinterpreted as fear of the big, bad Reds.

Finally one morning three or four thousand radicals charged the Wolfhounds with their home made weapons.

The Wolfhounds, forced into action, fixed bayonets and met the charge. There were dead radicals, wounded radicals - - - and subdued radicals.

## FUN IN THE SUN AND SAND

As has happened so often in the past, the Wolfhounds again find themselves in what might well be a crossroad in the march of history. The peacekeeping duty of the Second Battalion in Sinai can easily be compared to the Wolfhound show of force in Thailand just prior to the conflict in Viet Nam.

So despite the heat, despite the ever-present demands of their peacekeeping role, the men of the Second Battalion continue to hone their combat skills. The scout platoon for example, recently (September, '96) conducted a realistic, 36 hour scouting exercise.

They launched the effort with a night-time water-borne insertion. (Water-borne? In the Sinai? Thought it was a desert!)

This was quickly followed by an eight kilometer stroll in the sand and rock with a full combat load. The balmy temperature, rarely below one hundred degrees, added to the fun.

Feeling out the terrain to be traversed by the battalion, spotting likely manned obstacles, reporting information, etc. all accomplished stealthily and unobserved - - - these are the skills which must be constantly improved.

Once the exercise was completed, it was back to their task as peacekeepers. Like all Wolfhounds, they're getting better all the time.

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According to Lt. Colonel Lynch, it has not been unusual for 2nd Battalion Wolfhounds in Sinai to maneuver in the desert wearing full combat equipment including a flak vest under live fire conditions where the temperatures exceed 125 degrees.

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## GATHERING OF THE WARRIORS

The Wolfhounds were well represented at all functions of the 25th Infantry Division reunion during the last week of September '96. Scores of retired Wolfhounds marched with the depleted First and Second Battalions, some of whose members were in Guam and Sinai respectively.

Major Orlov and Colonel Millett led the First Battalion in the review and Captain Merlo led the Second. About a quarter of the First Battalion was on duty in Guam providing assistance to Kurd refugees.

Prior to the review, Major General Maher, the Division Commander, graciously invited Colonel Millett to troop the line with him.

The review itself was a tremendously stirring experience. It's safe to say that most Americans thrill to the sight of the troops and colors passing by to the beat of drums and martial music, but when those troops include present and retired Wolfhounds, your heart thumps like mad!

These soldiers of today would make you proud to meet them, to talk with them, to watch them perform their duty. It's no idle boast to claim that man for man, they have no equals in the world. And their quiet confidence is impressive.

And through it all, not to downgrade the rest of the Division which is superb, but the Wolfhounds stood tall - - the best of the best.

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A one hundred candle power searchlight was an important combat weapon for the Wolfhounds on several occasions in Korea.

The 1st Searchlight Company used these powerful instruments when the Wolfhounds requested their use to blind attacking Reds. On occasion, the lights would be bounced off low cloud formations and at other times were shone directly into the eyes of charging Communist troops.

## GO WITH THE FLO!

“Tunnel rats” of the Viet Nam war were a unique breed of men. It would not be possible to find braver men, for they not only performed their death defying feat once - - they performed it over and over again.

Major Orlov, current ('96) Executive Officer of the First Battalion, tried the experience once on Grenada. He says that only after the experience was over did the full impact of what he had done come over him.

The 25th Division's first tunnel rat, retired First Sergeant Flo Rivera, may well have been the greatest of them all. For one thing, his men never went underground without him... he never asked a man to attempt a job alone.

There are many other fascinating stories about his exploits, but at least up to now he's reluctant to talk about them. Frankly, the way he's been treated by the authors of two books about tunnel rats, we can't blame him.

But we'll keep trying.

Incidentally, he came out of one tunnel with a Russian flag, and has promised us a copy of a photo of him holding it.

Has there ever been a regiment, in this or any other army, which has had so many true legendary characters in its ranks?

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