

WOLFHOUND REFLECTIONS V

We're moving right along with our tales of the people and events which have made, and continue to make, the Wolfhounds such a unique organization.

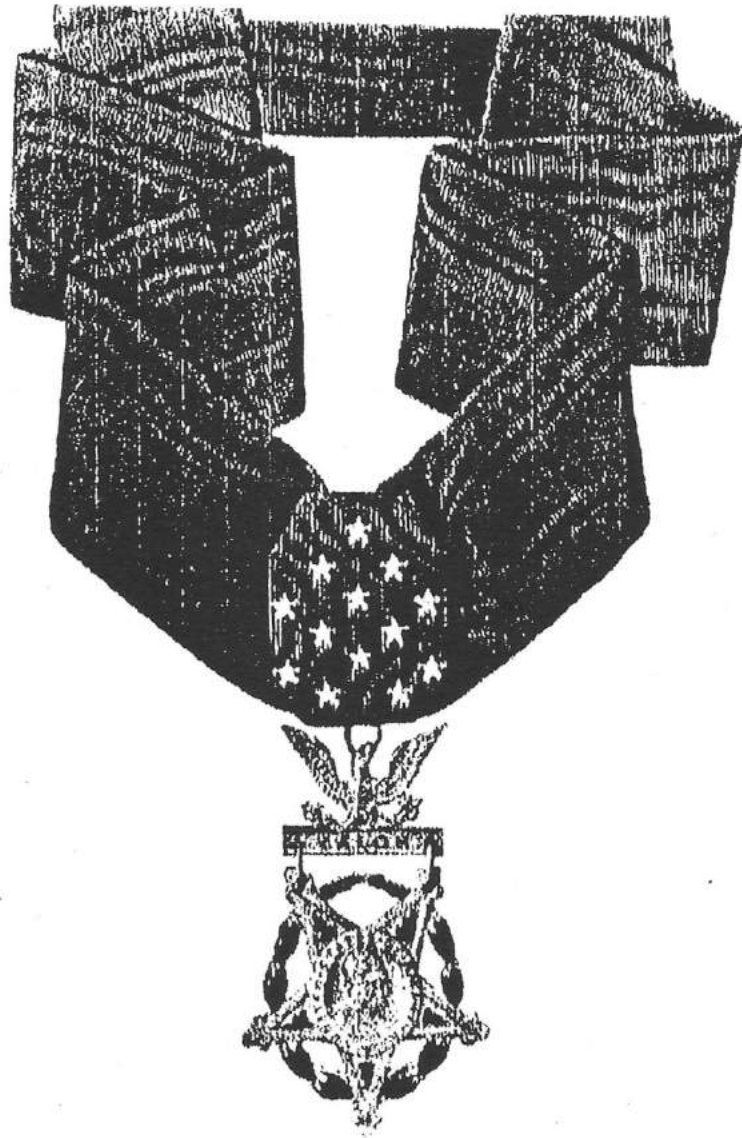
Just back from Sinai after a six month "holiday" with the Second Battalion is SSG Rob Stewart.. a big help in the past and sure to be one again. He has already breathed life into what appeared on the surface to be a boring, humdrum tour. We're proud of the Battalion's record there!

We're also grateful to SGT Ralph Strickland, First Battalion's chaplain's assistant, for his help.

We've been hearing from a few more Wolfhounds... and have already used some of their stories. The history of the regiment is downright fascinating, especially when you get down to the individual level. And speaking of individuals, say a prayer for that great Wolfhound Colonel Lewis Millett... he's a bit under the weather.

If you have any reflections you'd like to share with other Wolfhounds, send 'em along. We'll try to publish them.

Hugh O'Reilly
Honorary Regimental Sergeant Major
February 1997



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

CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS

In our haste to complete "Reflections III" we failed to get the complete story on Sandbag Castle, where Benito Martinez earned the Medal of Honor in the Korean War.

We've received additional information on the magnificent stand from George Langdale, a Second Battalion Wolfhound.

That battle at Sandbag earned A Company: 1 Medal of Honor, 4 Silver Stars, 25 Purple Hearts and (in Langdale's words), "... a few Bronze Stars."

The Second Platoon of A Company was led by 1LT Chandler who, after a 3 month stay in the hospital in Japan, turned down an assignment plus a promotion to rejoin his platoon. Chandler thus was able to train new Wolfhounds who fought so heroically and successfully at Sandbag Castle for 93 days.

Langdale also pointed out that Republic of Korea Corporal Lee Yong Suk, the heroic warrior who became a quadruple amputee at Sandbag Castle, was a member of Wolfhound Company C. In "Reflections III" he was mentioned as a member of Company A. Company C had been holding Sandbag until relieved by Company A.

REQUIEM

Quiet, self-effacing, retired First Sergeant John Chan was laid to rest on January 10, 1997, surrounded by family, friends and ... in keeping with his last request, Wolfhounds. Mascot Kolchak X was there as well.

His all volunteer Wolfhound Honor Guard was led by First Sergeant Anthony Osborne. Also present was First Battalion commander Bernard Champoux, who had ordered the arrangement when he heard of Chan's wishes. In keeping with the sentiment of the Regiment, CSM Nathaniel Washington personally handled the coordinated military participation.

Among the mourners was retired First Sergeant Floro Rivera, famed "tunnel rat" of the Vietnam conflict. A heroic soldier himself, Rivera had difficulty restraining his tears.

Through several tours with the 27th in peace and in war, John Chan was always known and respected by the men of the Regiment. In Vietnam, he earned the admiration of the natives of the country as well as of the Wolfhounds by training and going into combat with the Nung mercenaries.

Just a few days before Chan's death, Wolfhound Medal of Honor holder MG Robert Foley said that he had never forgotten the advice the 1SG gave him years ago... "complete the mission and take care of the men."

No account of his life would be complete without mentioning his major motivation... love of country... or more simply, patriotism.

Rest in peace, John

GENERAL CONGRATULATIONS

Taken from an E-mail sent to LTC Gregory J. Lynch upon return from the Sinai

FROM: Maher, John J., Major General, Commanding General, 25th Infantry Division

TO: Lynch, G. LTC(P)

Outstanding performance, Greg, by you and your soldiers!

JJM

FROM: Lieutenant General William Steele, Commanding General, U.S. Army Pacific

TO: Major General John J. Maher, Commanding General, 25th Infantry Division

John: Please pass on my congratulations for a job well done.

FROM: General Reimer, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army

TO: Lt. General Steele, CDR, USARPAC

1. Please extend my congratulations to the officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers of Task Force 2-27 Infantry who supported the MFO during their recent deployment to the Sinai desert. Their outstanding performance during the past six months clearly demonstrated that America's Army is the world's best and that the soldiers of the entire Task Force 2-27 were trained and ready to support the goals and objectives of our great nation.
 2. The continued success of the MFO and the pivotal role it plays in the delicate Mideast peace process can be linked directly to the successes enjoyed by Task Force 2-27 Infantry. We have once again reaffirmed that "Soldiers are our credentials."
 3. Congratulations on a job well done!
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BOMBS AWAY!

Ever since Pearl Harbor day (Dec. 7, 1941) there have been stories about what happened at Schofield Barracks. It may be that some of the newer stories are factual... just long forgotten details suddenly remembered. Or they may be the products of active, fertile minds.

This one comes with respectable provenance, the Schofield Barracks Museum. Of course, even that institution's very careful authentication can have an off day, but its still a great story.

The tale is actually about the 65th Engineers, but it qualifies for inclusion here because companies of that outstanding unit have been integral parts of the "Fire Brigade" more than once.

At any rate, many people have believed for years that the Japanese dropped one or more bombs on Schofield. Not true. Some did drop next door on Wheeler Field.

What did fall on Schofield was one five-inch shell, courtesy of the Navy. It pierced the roof of Company B, 65th Engineers and landed in a barrel of flour.

Fortunately, it was a dud.

However, James Jones' story in "From Here to Eternity" about D Quad being strafed was true. Jones was a Second Battalion Wolfhound.

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The Wolfhounds first arrived at Schofield Barracks in January 1921 and a month or so later became part of the new Hawaiian Division. Some twenty years later, that Division was split to form the 24th and 25th Divisions.

THEY'RE ALL WOLFHOUSES

The twists and turns of Army unit designations lead quite often to mistakes and misunderstandings concerning the history and lineage of companies, battalions and regiments, including the 27th.

For example, the present (1997) 27th Infantry Regiment (The Wolfhounds) were activated, according to official Army records, in 1901. But there are records of a 27th Infantry Regiment as far back as The War of 1812. Wolfhound Archives contain stirring accounts of battles between the hostiles (Indian tribes) and the 27th at that time.

In another "leap of lineage" A Company of our 2nd Battalion is credited with four Medal of Honor holders, two of whom are, at this writing, living. One, who earned the Medal in Vietnam, is Major General Robert F. Foley, who currently commands the Military District of Washington. The other is Colonel (Retired) Lewis L. Millett, who earned the Medal in Korea.

At the time he earned the Medal of Honor, Colonel Millett commanded E Company, whose lineage and honors have been assumed by A Company. That is true too of Medal of Honor recipient Captain Reginald B. Desiderio, who commanded E Company immediately preceding Colonel Millett.

The other Medal holder is Staff Sergeant John F. Baker, who earned the honor during the same battle as Foley.

One company, 2 wars, 3 battles, 4 Medals of Honor.

WOLFHOUSES!

THE AULD WAY

SFC Ronnie Auld... nonpareil.

Nonpareil as a combat soldier in Vietnam, nonpareil as a mess sergeant, nonpareil as a football player,... nonpareil as a human being.

Tall, muscled, tough, gentle.

In the days before Vietnam, Ronnie was an All-Pacific tackle in the Armed Forces Football League. Seems like everytime you turn around another Wolfhound legend pops up, and he certainly is a great one.

Retired First Sergeant George Dizon tells us that when part or all of the company went out on a combat mission, Ronnie went along. His fellow Wolfhounds knew that when they got back, there'd be steak, pork chops or chicken with all the trimmings waiting for them.

Rumor has it that the feast would more than likely be washed down with a beer or two.

Once with no vehicle available, Ronnie raced 700 yards through gullies, rice paddies, and brush with a wounded Wolfhound on his back.

Try carrying 185 pounds on your back at breakneck speed!

In addition to and above all his admirable traits, the big Hawaiian, in his quiet, unassuming way, was a deeply religious man.

WOLFHOUND FIRSTS

First 25th Division troops into Korea and Vietnam

Colonel Lewis Millett founded the Recondo school

Wolfhounds initiated the idea of "Reflections" aimed at reminding members of their heritage

HOW DO THEY DO IT?

Major General (Retired) Lindeman, who commanded the Wolfhounds in the Philippines during WWII, remembered with special pride their overwhelming victory at Balate Pass on the island of Luzon.

To those who have, fortunately, never endured the sight, sound and smell of combat, a word of caution is advised. Out of hundreds of engagements fought by the Wolfhounds over the years, only the most outstanding ones will be found on these pages.

Only someone who knew and had a deep appreciation of Wolfhound capabilities would have even considered ordering the attack.

They faced the stiff resistance of six tough, combat hardened Japanese regiments plus the 10th Japanese Division Artillery, all in carefully prepared defensive positions atop a half mile series of rocky crags.

Outnumbered. Outnumbered greatly. Fighting through jungle and rain forest. Clawing their way up through jungle and rain forest. Clawing their way up through jungle 2,700 feet of almost impassable terrain. A furious hand-to-hand struggle took place as the outnumbered "Hounds tore the enemy soldiers out of their bunkers and won the day."

Call it pride, esprit de corps, elan or just Wolfhound spirit. Whatever its name, it's a fantastic fervor that lifts these men to unforgettable heights. Something always happens when the Wolfhounds are aroused. And each of them no different in appearance, attitude or habits than today's soldiers. What kind of men are these?

Pause for a moment. Think. Six regiments ensconced in stoutly constructed bunkers high above a vastly outnumbered force struggling fearlessly up into the massed weapons of their enemy.

WOLFHOUSES!

MORE ABOUT E COMPANY -- AND DESIDERIO

November 1950, Korea. Snow capped hills, 150,000 UN troops withdrawing before more than twice their number, jittery, many frostbitten, depressed.

Wolfhound E Company, cocky and determined, for a time stood between screaming, almost endless waves of the enemy and a UN debacle. Under Captain Desiderio, they dug in before darkness on a day and a night destined to make an indelible mark of glory in their history.

In the early hours before dawn, Red artillery poured thousands of rounds of shells on the hill. Then an estimated 5,000 savage enemy Chinese threw their previously unchecked power against those undaunted 220 Wolfhounds. Forty to one odds -- but these were Wolfhounds.

The chattering E Company machine guns began to pile the Reds in grotesque heaps; but their comrades vaulted over or trampled through the bodies. Desiderio crawled, leaped, slithered from foxhole to foxhole calling out, "hold on until daylight." Hit time and again, blood pouring from shoulder, thighs, back, knee, the indomitable Desiderio fought on, encouraging his troops until dawn began to brighten the eastern sky.

Only 72 out of the original 220 still fought back; a mortar shell landed above him, fragments piercing his back in a dozen places, fatally wounding him.

Fading visibly, he laid in the arms of his Executive Officer who salvaged what he could for his leader's solace, "It's daylight--- and we're still holding on, Captain."

WOLFHOUND!

PEARL HARBOR

Retired Colonel Robert L. Bereuter, whose highly interesting autobiography is available in the Regimental Archives, served in Second Battalion just prior to and following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Those enduring the current reduction in the manpower of the Army will be interested in learning that the Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Suggs' entire staff consisted of one man... Lt. Bereuter. He was the S-1,S-2,S-3,S-4 and Communications Officer.

His description of the events the morning of Pearl Harbor differs a bit from the Hollywood version as depicted in the film "From Here to Eternity", which was written about the Wolfhounds by a Wolfhound, James Jones. Bereuter found that men couldn't fire at strafing Japanese planes because supply sergeants didn't have the keys to the Arms Rooms. He ordered the immediate use of sledgehammers to rectify the situation.

CIRCLE OF HISTORY

The broad sweep of history has brought about many coincidences in the almost century-old saga of the Wolfhounds. In 1918, the Wolfhounds joined the Japanese Army's 12th Division at Ussuri in Siberia, where they controlled the movement of supplies originally intended for the Tsarist government. The surrender of that government to Germany could have meant the loss of much valuable material to either the Germans or the Communists.

Coincidentally, over 75 years later, the Wolfhounds engaged in training exercises on Hokkaido with the Japanese Ground Forces... the men of the very same 12th Division.

POHAKULOA

Barren, wind swept, empty of any mind-stimulating influence once the sun disappeared behind the mountain.

Wolfhounds huddled in their Quonset huts playing cards, listening to radios, engaged in meaningless thoughts and conversations ... except for the one young lieutenant, searching, searching. "How can I become a good officer?"

Pacing restlessly, feigning concern, he slipped into a Quonset hut, quickly closed the door, swept his eyes over the nothingness, talking animatedly in low tones.

First Sergeant Chan: Platoon Sergeant Burroughs. Here, surely, lay wisdom.

Stepping casually, apparently aiming at including himself in the conversation, he quietly asked his question. Years later, it wasn't clear who had answered first, but they each echoed the other.

First, complete the mission. Secondly, take care of the troops.

This was the way. The two thoughts burned themselves indelibly into his mind, embedded themselves forever into his consciousness.

Months later and half a globe away in the jungles of Vietnam, he led other Wolfhounds, inspired by his loyalty and his magnificent courage, in a monumentally fierce charge which destroyed a strong enemy force surrounding a friendly unit. He was awarded the Medal of Honor.

Today?

Today he is Major General Robert F. Foley, Commander of the U.S. Military District of Washington, who proudly wears the Wolfhound crest on his uniform.

LANGUAGE LESSONS

The Wolfhounds are fighters, so their history is replete with tales of combat. But their life has not been all Sturm and Drang. There were light moments too...

Years ago, chain link gates were spaced along the fence of the same material surrounding Schofield Barracks. Placed there to receive extra traffic during times of stress, they received names which at the time seemed appropriate for any number of reasons

One such was called "Loud-n-foul", after old man "Loud-n-foul" who lived in a run down shack outside the fence. This was not his real name, nor was it the name of the gate. But the old man's language was loud and it was foul.

A pineapple worker by day, the colorful old gentleman added to his resources at night by providing steaks and okolehao for Wolfhound sergeants. Okaolehao (iron derriere) was --- and is --- a fiery Hawaiian beverage.

That's how he learned his English, such as it was. Wolfhound sergeants of those days were not known for either soft or gentlemanly diction.

Now we set the stage: the practice of bringing two orphans from Japan to visit their Wolfhound foster-fathers was in its infancy and there was great excitement at the old Honolulu Airport on the appointed day. The 25th Division Band blared martial airs, civic and governmental elite were surrounded by attentive hangers-on, curiosity seekers abounded.

The most harried individual in the area was the Wolfhound sergeant whose assignment was to see that all ran smoothly.

In the very center of this roiling mass was young Lieutenant "Not-his-name" whose penchant was to attach himself to people of influence. On his arm was the daughter of one of the prime movers at Schofield Barracks.

(continued)

Gesturing grandly, the young officer in his most pontifical manner ordered the sergeant to relate to the young lady the sequence of events which had led to the occasion.

Glancing about wildly, seeking a source, any source of relief, the sergeant spotted a potential savior... Mr. Loud-n-foul... and introduced him to the Lieutenant as a man after whom a gate at Schofield was named. Voice still tinged with awe, he announced that the young officer was a Wolfhound.

They were drawn to each other instantly. As the Lieutenant greeted the oldster with respect bordering on religious humility, Loud-n-foul bellowed "You ---- Wolfhound, you! Get the ---- lead out of your ---, suck in your ---- gut! Etc., etc., all in tones clearly audible over the noises of arriving and departing planes.

The sergeant, reveling in the catastrophic scene he left behind, slipped away to resume his duties.

TUMBLING TANK

Opinion is divided about the benefits of locating heavy armor within defensive positions. As A Company non-coms will testify, the presence of a Sherman tank within their position in Satae-ri valley in Korea in 1952 is still a topic of hilarious recollection among the veterans of the company.

This particular tank was positioned about 500 feet above Battalion Headquarters.

One morning, just before day break, A Company sergeants Rutledge and Langdale watched in horror as the tank's brakes failed during a maneuver to bring it down slope for maintenance.

They feel to this day that Headquarters Company Wolfhounds set some sort of Korean speed record racing out of latrines and other early morning convenience sites when they were shocked to see tons of steel hurtling end-over-end toward them.

Fortunately, no one was hurt.
