



THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SENTINEL

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78
NEWSLETTER OF THE SILENT PROFESSIONALS

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 8

NOVEMBER 2010



In This Issue:

Presidents Column

SOG Vietnam with Tilt Meyer

Christmas Party Update

Editors Column





Please visit us at www.specialforces78.com

CHAPTER OFFICERS

President
Louis (Lonny) Holmes
D-6067

Vice President
Ramon Rodriguez
D-1978

Vice President,
Lost Commandos
Thai Van Tong
A-2527

Vice President, Nungs
John Du
A-3257

Secretary
Len Fein
M-9697

Director at Large
Brad Welker
M-2319

Director at Large
Sentinel Editor
John Joyce
M-11877

Director at Large
Lou Smith
D-6535

Treasurer
Richard Simonian
D-7920

Sergeant At Arms/
Quartermaster
Art Dolick
D-1765

Coordinator of
Special Events
Mark Miller
D-8296

Coordinator of
ROTC Program
Ed Barrett
M-11188

Chaplain
Rob Richmond
D-7306

Immediate Past
President
Terry Cagnolatti
M-9747

Asst. Secretary
Tom Redfern
D-7907

In This Issue:

- 3 Presidents Page
- 4 Chapter 78 Minutes
- 5 Christmas Party Update
- 6 Editors Page
- 7-8 SOG Vietnam with Tilt Meyer

The Sentinel is published monthly by Special Forces Association Chapter 78, Southern California. The views., opinions and articles printed in this issue do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Army or the United States Special Operations Command the Special Forces Association or Special Forces Association Chapter 78. Please address any comments to the editor, "Sentinel" to jjoyce@specops-intl.com



The Presidents Page



Lonny Holmes
President SFA 78

November 2010

Saturday November 13 is the last scheduled meeting for this year and is the last time we will be together prior to the Annual Chapter 78 Christmas Dinner on December 18 at the Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club in Newport Beach. Now is the time to reserve tickets for you and your family to the dinner and purchase tickets for the raffle/silent auction for the Colt Model 1903 Pocket Hammerless Pistol. Note, this is the model carried by United States General Officers from the 1940's until the replacement by the M15 General Officers pistol in the 1970's. The Office of Strategic Services (OSS,) issued the Model 1903 to its officers during World War Two. The winner of this pistol will own a nice piece of military history. We thank member Richard Simonian his donation of this pistol for our annual auction.

This years' Christmas Dinner may well be the best yet with many events currently in the planning stage, some of which include the awarding of the OSM's, and the pistol raffle/auction. We will also have a short presentation of the movie, 'Ripple Effect' in which several chapter members were military advisors, and introductions of Velvet Smith, the movies screen play writer/director and members of the cast. Richard Simonian is also sponsoring a guest singer who will perform during the evening.

For those members who have not attended this dinner, you will have the opportunity to join the chapter in viewing the Annual Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade that will begin at sundown. Our dining room has an excellent view of the parade.



MG John K. Singlaub is presented a Chapter 78 Coin with Chapter 78 members Lonny Holmes, Ed Barrett and Mark Miller

Len Fein is currently working on gathering the background information on several members of the chapter for The Order of Saint Maurice, level of Legionnaire. This is the National Infantry Association Award for outstanding members and it is our plan to present this award to deserving members at the Christmas Dinner.

Media Chairman Terry Cagnolatti and member John Joyce and President Lonny Holmes are working with Andrew Gabroy, a Network Engineer and Consultant of G35 to redesign our webpage. Our website has grown significantly in the last year and we need to address issues relating to the large content and how to organize it and locate each item by a table of contents. This new model will also allow us to update and add timely information easily.

Annual members it is now time to renew your membership. We will have the forms at the November meeting. The annual renewal fee is \$30.00. The website also has a renewal form which you can download and complete and sent in to Chapter 78 and we will process it and forward a copy with your check to SF National.





SFA Chapter 78 Minutes For October 9th, 2010



GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Location: American Legion Post 295, Cypress CA

Called to Order: 10:00 AM by President Lonnie Holmes

Pledge of Allegiance: Robert Crebbs

Invocation: Richard Simonian

Members Present: Ed Barrett (M11188), Terry Cagnolatti (M-9747), Lonnie Holmes (D-6067), John Joyce (M-11877), Bruce Long (D-7464), Tom Redfern (D-7907), Ramon Rodriguez (D-1978), Richard Simonian (D-7920), Jim Weldon (D-8104), Brad Welker (M-2319), Jack Eckles, Robert Crebbs

Guest Attendees: Jean Ramos (Honorary Member)

Secretary's Report: Presented by Terry Cagnolatti, Motion to accept by Ramon Rodriguez, Seconded by Brad Welker Approved.

Treasurer's Report: Presented by Richard Simonian, This month there was \$290 in expenditures and the balance is \$1021.05. Motion to accept by Ramon Rodriguez, Seconded by Ed Barrett, Approved.

Old Business: The Christmas Party will be Sunday 12-18-10 at the Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club in Newport Beach (please see attached invitation for details). A Co. 19th SFG is planning to attend. Len Fein is coordinating this. Richard Simonian has a booked entertainment for the event; a singer named Andrea Miller. The Ripple Effect Cast and Crew are also attending.



SFA President Lonny Holmes

New Business: Brad Welker made a motion to make the cast and crew of the Ripple Effect honorary members of Chapter 78. Jack Eckles seconded. The Christmas Party will have a raffle to raise money for the Chapter. Richard Simonian has donated a .380 Officers Pistol as raffle prize.

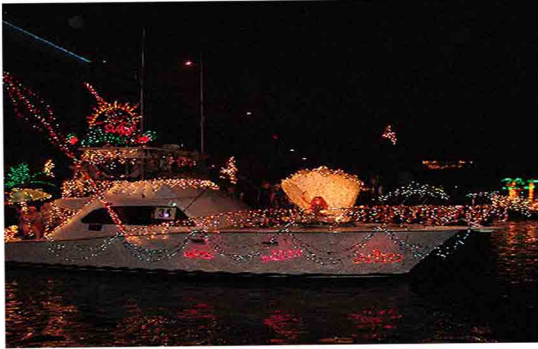
John Joyce is also actively seeking donors who want to contribute raffle prizes for the Chapter.

Lonny Holmes showed updated changes on the Chapter 78 website. Moving the website in a new direction was discussed. It was decided to utilize new web designers that work with John Joyce to redesign and reformat the web site into a more modern state. A motion was made to allocate \$200 to the new web design team's motion carried.

There were several concerns voiced over the lack of breakfast served at Legion Post 295 and the fact that Al Watts is no longer in charge. If Post 295 does not make some changes then Chapter 78 would consider moving its meeting location.

Jim Weldon announced he is retiring in December and moving to Corpus Christie, Texas.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:00 motion by Ramon Rodriguez, seconded by Ed Barrett.



Special Forces Association Chapter 78 Christmas Party

Hosted by Richard Simonian

**Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club
Newport Beach, CA
Saturday December 18th, 2010**

4:30 Pm

*Join Special Forces Association Chapter 78 for a night of fine dining, the Newport Harbor
Boat Parade, Raffle and Hosted Bar*

Please RSVP Prior to 11-31-10

detach here

SFA 78 Christmas Party **RSVP**

I will be attending the SFA 78 Christmas Party

Name: _____

Number Attending: _____

@ \$30 per guest: _____

**Please return this RSVP to
SFA 78
P.O. Box 11927
Santa Ana, CA 92711**

*** Make checks payable to SFA Chapter 78**



Editors Page:

I have added this column to our monthly newsletter and it is titled: Special Forces; Past, Present and Future. These articles will look at events or things surrounding Special Forces. This article deals with the history of Special Forces..



Hot extraction: MACV Recondo school Viet Nam 1968

Special Forces History

U.S. Army Special Forces (SF) are, along with psychological operations detachments and Rangers, the oldest of the post-World War II Army units in the current United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). Their distinctive uniform item is the green beret. Their main mission was to train and lead unconventional warfare (UW) forces, or a guerrilla force in an occupied nation that no one is allowed to know. U.S. Army Special Forces is the only U.S. Special Operations Force (SOF) trained to employ UW. The 10th Special Forces Group was the first deployed SF unit, intended to operate UW forces behind enemy lines in the event of a Warsaw Pact invasion of Western Europe. As the United States became involved in Southeast Asia, it was realized that specialists trained to lead guerrillas could also help defend against hostile guerrillas, so SF acquired the additional mission of Foreign Internal Defense (FID), working with Host Nation (HN) forces in a spectrum of counter-guerrilla activities from indirect support to combat command.

Special Forces personnel qualify both in advanced military skills and the regional languages and cultures of defined parts of the world. While they have a Direct Action (DA) capability, other units, such as Rangers, are more focused on overt direct action raids conducted in uniform but potentially behind enemy lines. SF personnel have the training to carry out covert DA, and other missions, including clandestine SR. Other missions include peace operations, counter-proliferation, counter-drug advisory roles, and other strategic missions. As strategic resources, they report either to USSOCOM or to a regional Unified Command.

Their lineage dates back to include more than 200 years of unconventional warfare history, with notable predecessors including the Revolutionary War "Swamp Fox" Francis Marion, the WWII OSS Jedburgh Teams, OSS Detachment 101 in Burma, and the Alamo Scouts. Since their establishment in 1952, Special Forces soldiers have distinguished themselves in Vietnam (17 Medals of Honor), El Salvador, Panama, Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Philippines, and, in an FID role, Operation Enduring Freedom - Horn of Africa, which was transferred to Africa Command in 2008.

SF team members work closely together and rely on one another under isolated circumstances for long periods of time, both during extended deployments and in garrison. Because of this, they develop clannish relationships and long-standing personal ties. SF non-commissioned officers (NCO) often spend their entire careers in Special Forces, rotating among assignments to detachments, higher staff billets, liaison positions, and instructor duties at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS). Special Forces officers, on the other hand, historically spend a limited amount of time early in their careers assigned to SF detachments. They are then required to move to staff positions or to higher command echelons. With the creation of USSOCOM, SF commanders have risen to the highest ranks of U.S. Army command, including command of USSOCOM, the Chief of Staff of the United States Army, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.





John Stryker Meyer

Many people are familiar with the US Army Special Forces, however many of their exploits go unrecorded. John Stryker Meyer is one of an elite group of Green Beret, a member of the Studies and Observations Group during the Vietnam War. John has written several books on his experiences with this special unit.

SOG'S SECRET WAR: 1964-1972

The most secret unit of the Vietnam War, the Studies and Observation Group, formally began American-led operations against the Ho Chi Minh Trail in the Fall of 1964. Many of legendary Colonel Bull Simon's men had actually been involved in secret operations against the Communists since before 1961, when the genesis of the Vietnam War is officially recorded. The Green Berets who fought as part of SOG's OP 35, the Ground Studies Group, were the bravest men to ever wear the uniform.

The unit experienced an incredible casualty rate of exceeding 100 percent - meaning that at one time or another, every man serving in that unit was wounded at least once, with some having as many as eight Purple Heart medals. The heroic struggles of these men, both against a cruel and often inhuman enemy, and sadly, against an all too-often uncaring leadership, are herein documented for posterity. The veil of secrecy surrounding SOG and the war fought "across the fence" which was kept from the American public was formally lifted in April of 2001 at a quiet ceremony held at Ft. Bragg, N.C. when the unit was honored with the Presidential Unit Citation, America's highest unit decoration.

In *On The Ground: The Secret War in Vietnam*, authors John S. Meyer and John Peters write of the life and death struggles of young men in the green hell of Laotian, Cambodian, North and South Vietnamese jungles and history demands that their stories be recorded. The protected need to know.



Photo taken at CCN Feb or March 1969.
It's me and Al Mosiello, covey rider.

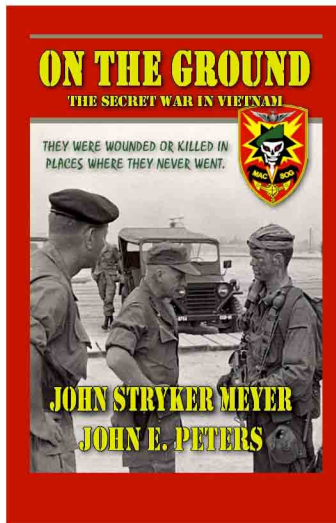
John Stryker 'Tilt' Meyer and John Peters ran top secret missions on separate reconnaissance teams assigned to MACV-SOG in 1968 operating out of FOB 1 in Phu Bai, South Vietnam: Meyer on Recon Team Idaho, Peters on Recon Team Rhode Island. They teamed up to write *On The Ground: The Secret War in Vietnam*.

Born Jan. 19, 1946, John Stryker Meyer entered the Army Dec. 1, 1966. He completed basic training at Ft. Dix, N.J., advanced infantry training at Ft. Gordon, Ga., jump school at Ft. Benning, Ga., and graduated from the Special Forces Qualification Course in Dec. 1967. He arrived at FOB 1 Phu Bai in May 1968, where he joined Spike Team Idaho, which transferred to Command & Control North, CCN in Da Nang, January 1969. He remained on ST Idaho to the end of his tour of duty in late April, returned to the U.S. and was assigned to E Company in the 10th Special Forces Group at Ft. Devens, Mass. until October 1969, when he rejoined RT Idaho at CCN. That tour of duty ended suddenly in April 1970. He returned to the states, completed his college education at Trenton State College, where he was editor of The Signal school newspaper for two years, worked at the Trenton Times for 10 years, eight years at the San Diego Union and 15 years at the North County Times in Oceanside, California. Meyer, his wife Anna, and daughter Alaina live in Oceanside.

Contact John Stryker Meyer at: John@sogchronicles.com



Here's a photo of me and Lynne M. Black Jr.,
in Dec. 1969 at the Da Nang Hospital.



ON THE GROUND: The Secret War In Vietnam

By John Stryker "Tilt" Meyer and John Peters

Book Review by North County Times Staff Writer Gary Warth

"The secret war: Vet pens second book on covert campaigns in Laos, Cambodia, North Vietnam."

As the Vietnam War becomes a distant memory for many Americans, at least one local veteran is doing his part to tell people about another war they may have never even known.

J. Stryker Meyer, an Oceanside resident and North County Times columnist, is a former Green Beret who served two tours of duty with Special Forces, which fought covert operations in Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam during the years of the Vietnam War.

Meyer, 61, who was told he could not talk about his experience for 20 years, has now written about his experiences in two books published by RealWarStories.com: "Across the Fence" (2003) and, most recently, "On the Ground" (\$24.95). Both are subtitled "The Secret War in Vietnam." The cover of his newest book also states: "They were wounded or killed in places where they never went." The book, which includes several photos Meyer accumulated from friends over the years, has many first-person accounts of several chilling encounters with enemy forces in Laos.

"I never took pictures," he said. "We couldn't keep diaries, and we signed a document saying for 20 years, we would talk to no one about these missions. And that meant no pictures, no diaries. I was pretty much lame-brained and followed the rules. Fortunately, some friends of mine didn't."

As he set out to write the book, Meyer found he didn't need a diary. Narrow escapes, fiery gun battles and other encounters with the enemy were not memories easily forgotten, he found.

In the introduction to his book, Meyer revealed how shackled he sometimes is to the war his country would not acknowledge for years.

Describing a tranquil scene of his daughter practicing piano at home while he gazed at some wind-swept trees in the distance, Meyer wrote how the image triggered a flashback to North Vietnam.

"We made for a stand of trees about 100 meters away, although the thick vegetation made it agonizingly slow," he wrote. "My throat felt parched and tight from moving so quickly. I knew every second that ticked past decreased the odds of us getting out."

The flashback continued, and Meyer described seeing trees swept by the wind of approaching helicopters as he reloaded and emptied his rifle. His daughter's voice snapped him out of the flashback.

"We don't always know when or why, but these memories come back to us, reminders of what we did and who we were in another time," he wrote.

Although his memories are vivid, Meyer turned to his friend and former Green Beret John Peters for help, as he thought Peters could tell his own story better. Peters not only wrote his own chapter, but edited, rewrote and contributed so much to the book that he was given a co-author credit. Meyer said the new book reads more like a novel than his last book because of Peters.

"He's one of these scary-bright people," Meyer said about serving with Peters. "He was fearless."

The book is not a historical perspective of why America crossed the Vietnam border for a secret war. Rather, it's the story of the men who fought the war, often with the help of the Bru, members of the Montagnard tribe, whom Meyer described as "just four months out of the jungle and loincloths." The Bru were 14 to 18 years old, and, while not skilled in modern warfare, were an asset to the Americans because of their fierce hatred of the North Vietnamese, who had driven them off their ancestral lands.

For more of this review please go to:

<http://sogchronicles.com/PublicityReviews.html>