



THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SENTINEL

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78
NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

THE LTC FRANK J. DALLAS CHAPTER

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JANUARY 2015



CHAPTER 78
MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Lonny Holmes
Chapter 78
2014 Member of the Year



Presidents Page
SFA Chapter 78 2014
Christmas Dinner
The World's First Combat
H.A.L.O. Jump



Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

The "New Year" brings the Chapter into the ending of its 17th year, counting our two year provisional status. Chapter 78 not only survives as an active chapter where some have not lasted, but is continuing to slowly grow. Most important however is our progress in setting goals and complet-

ing them; for example (1) continuing our tradition of having one of the best Christmas Dinners for family and friends, (2) supporting local ROTC Programs with the Annual Awards Ceremonies and more recently becoming actively involved with their academic teaching, (3) developing programs to raise funds for the GBF, such as the Green Beret Shooters Cup, and (4) developing and producing the best chapter newsletter on an annual basis.

Most recently we have developed a closer partnership with A Company, 19th SFGA, resulting in a number of their SF Soldiers joining our chapter. This partnership brings closer community ties and gives the chapter the opportunity to offer support to their unit.

Having achieved these goals over the past 17 years the chapter will look forward in the new year to both its expansion in membership, continuing support of local ROTC Programs such as at CSUF with **Gary McNamera's** lecture series and the new fund raising endeavors of **John Joyce** and **Aaron Anderson**. Despite being one of the smallest chapters we have succeeded and will continue to do so with good leadership and member support. Leadership and participation are the keys as well as new members who have previously demonstrated their desire to bring in new ideas and follow them to fruition. Both the Sentinel and the Green Beret Shooters Cup are examples of "new" ideas from new members.

Bruce Long and his Board of Directors are in the position to lead the chapter into its best and most productive years. Happy New Year to all. ❖

Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor



BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY & HEALTHY 2015!

IN THIS ISSUE:

Presidents Page.....	1
SFA Chapter 78 2014 Christmas Dinner	2
The World's First Combat H.A.L.O. Jump.....	3
Additional Christmas Dinner Photos	6

COVER PHOTO: Lonny Holmes, pictured with his wife Nilda, at the Chapter 78 Christmas Dinner where Lonny was recognized as the Chapter 78 2014 Member of the Year.

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THE PRESIDENTS PAGE



Bruce Long
President SFA 78

PRESIDENTS COLUMN JANUARY 2015

Another fantastic Christmas Dinner at the Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club.

We had a really good turnout of over one hundred people with only three no shows. But that was okay, as they had already paid to attend the Christmas party.

Our opening ceremony was the 'Posting of the Colors',

conducted by the Sonora High school JROTC, located in the city of La Habra. The Color guard was organized by **Fritz Saalman MSG (Ret)** who is an instructor for the JROTC, and is also a member of our chapter.

Mark Miller led us in the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the Invocation given by **Richard Simonian**. **Robert Crebbs CSM (Ret)** conducted the MIA-POW presentation. Thanks again for another job well done.

Our special guest was **Cliff Newman** who flew in from Fayetteville, NC along with his lovely wife Karen. Cliff is the current Director of Administration for the SFAHQ, and has been involved with the Special Forces community for more years than we or he would like to count. Cliff was even President of Chapter 12 once upon a time, and that had to be back in the 70s.

The buffet dinner, and the boat parade were, as usual excellent. I think the boat parade gets larger every year, and I believe everyone really enjoyed it.

Member of the Year Award went to **Lonny Holmes**, Editor & Chief of the Chapter's monthly newsletter, the Sentinel. Lonny spends a lot of personal time working on the Sentinel when he's not out in the desert chasing kangaroo rats. That's why the Sentinel was again voted by SFAHQ the number one newsletter (for the 2nd time) out of more than 90+ other SFA newsletters.

An Outstanding Service Award went to Debra Holm who does the graphic design / layout for the Sentinel. Debra has been assisting with the Sentinel for three years and it's her expertise that has made the Sentinel what it is today. Thanks again Debra.

Our guest speaker was **SGM Hank Eylicio** the current Sergeant Major for A Company 5th Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group

(ABN) and was accompanied by his lovely wife Lena. Also present were members of A company along with their wives and dates. Hank assures me that A Company, along with the activation of Special Operations Detachment North (SOD North), will be supporting Chapter 78 in our future endeavors.

Everyone who attended the Christmas party was given a FREE raffle ticket. Over 60 + gifts were handed out, that way over half of the attendees went home with a gift.

The big event of the evening was our silent auction for two (2) Springfield XD 40 Caliber pistols and two Life Memberships (valued at \$15,000.00) to Front Site, a tactical firearms training school and shooting range located in Nevada.

Don Gonneville, a new member to the Chapter was high bidder for one of the XD 40's, and **Chris Martin**, also a Chapter member was the other high bidder for not only the Springfield XD 40, but also for the Front Site Life Membership. Way to GO Chris!

MSG Kris Boodaghian of A/5/19 was high bidder for the other Front Site Life Membership. I know this will get some use, as I know Kris is also a graduate of the Special Forces Sniper Course conducted at FT Bragg.

Overall, as your President, I thought everything went smoothly with only a few minor glitches. I've already made reservations for next year, so mark your calendar for December 19th, 2015, same time and place. Hope to see all of you there.

I want to say a special thanks to **John Joyce**, our Chapter Treasurer for all of his help with this event. Without it, there wouldn't have been a Christmas Dinner.

Happy New Year! ❖

Bruce D Long
President
SGM, SF (Ret)
SFA Chapter 78

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

January 10th, 2015
at the American Legion Post 291
in Newport Beach

Business meeting at 0830 hrs.
General meeting at 1000 hrs

SFA CHAPTER 78 CHRISTMAS DINNER 2014

December 20, 2014 • Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club



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9

1 Mr. & Mrs. Richard Simonian

2 Lonny Holmes, Chapter 78 Member of the Year and SGM Elycio of A Company, 19th SFGA

3 Cliff Newman, Executive Director of SFA National, and wife Karen

4 SF C-78 Chapter President SGM (Retired) Bruce Long leading the Christmas Dinner Ceremony

5 MSG Fritz Saalman and Sonora High School JROTC Color Guard Participants, Cadets Marshall and Apodaca

6 CSM (Retired) Robert Crebbs presenting the POW - MIA Ceremony

7 Members of A Company 19th Special Forces Group

8 LTC (Retired) Gary MacNamara

9 John "Tilt" Stryker Meyer and Cliff Newman



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14



16



17



18



19



20

10 Tom Redfern and Mike Keele hard at work at the registration desk

11 John Creel and wife Ingrid

12 Brad Welker

13 Kim Holmes and SGM Ramon Rodriguez

14 Andrew Gabroy and Megumi Nakajima

15 John Joyce and wife Ozielly

16 The Ladies! Geri, Nilda and Cora

17 LTC (Retired) Jim Duffy

18 Mr. & Mrs. Kenn Miller

19 LTC (Retired) Breslow and wife Alice

20 Mr. & Mrs Chris Martin

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS ON PAGE 6 (BACK COVER)

THE WORLD'S FIRST COMBAT H.A.L.O. JUMP

By Mike Perry

28 November 1970

2 A.M.

18,000 Feet Over Laos

The ramp of the C-130 began to drop. The sound of wind and engines howling in the black Laotian night greeted the six men of S.O.G.'s Recon Team Florida as they moved to the edge. All of their recent training, over a month's worth, brought them to this moment. Team leader, or One- Zero Staff Sergeant Cliff Newman, Sergeant First Class Sammy Hernandez, and Sergeant First Class Melvin Hill made up three of the six. The others were two Montagnards and a South Vietnamese Army officer. As they stood there, all saw the vast expanse of sky stained with dark gray clouds and knew they'd be jumping into rain. It didn't matter. The time was now.

"Go!" came the command. With that, they stepped off and plunged into the darkness. The Americans more than the others realized they were making history. The first H.A.L.O. jump ever made in combat was under way.

H.A.L.O., or High Altitude Low Opening, was discovered in 1957 as a means to quickly insert Special Forces teams into a combat zone as secretly as possible. The object was to exit above 10,000 feet, freefall to between 1000 and 2000 feet, deploy the parachute and steer to the landing zone. Many may think that all the years in Vietnam gave ample opportunity to try such a thing, yet only now, as the war was winding down, did the brass see a credible opportunity to attempt it.

The mission called for RT Florida to drop into Laos right on top of the enemy, link up in the jungle and tap into a

communications wire used by the North Vietnamese Army. If successful, much valuable intelligence awaited. If not, and the team could remain undiscovered, it still would prove HALO's viability. Either way, time was pressing because their first try had been scrubbed due to the enemy somehow getting hold of information telling of the location, date of drop, and even names of the team members. Confident now there were no such leaks, they at last had received the go ahead. And as the team plummeted through the night stung by hundred mile an hour raindrops, they focused only on the task at hand... to reach the ground safely and find each other in this dreadful weather.

Pulling their rip cords at 1500 feet, the speed of rain slowed and they glided silently among gusting currents until they reached what they assumed was the drop zone. Some managed to hit and roll on the ground, while others snagged in trees. Unbuckling their harnesses, they immediately activated homing devices and tried to locate each other, but were too far apart. Miles in some cases. They decided to carry on and form into four elements. Hernandez and Hill were by themselves and would act independently, Newman located a Montagnard and so did the South Vietnamese officer. As the rain kept pelting them, they started on their way through the jungle toward an area they would search for the telephone line. All were uninjured, but they came down nearly six miles from their intended drop zone.

A June 1971 SOG Team Prepares For A Combat HALO Jump

After sunrise, a forward air controller entered the area and made contact. The overcast sky

was still pouring heavy rain and high winds swept through the jungle. Through it all, the men plodded on, determined to reach the wire,

"Only we exited at 17,000. I was first off the ramp and went into a rain storm about 5 seconds out. Didn't see a thing, including my altimeter, until I decided to pull at about 2500, luckily. We found out later the Air Force put us about 10 clicks off our designated DZ. Still get the old pucker factor on occasion."

Cliff Newman, Administrative Director,
Special Forces Association

HALO Combat Jumps (5 Total)

28 NOV 1970

Recon Team Florida

Command and Control North (CCN)

D/Z Laos

One-Zero SFC Melvin Hill

One-One SSG Cliff Newman

One-Two SSG Sammy Hernandez

2 SCU

1 ARVN

7 MAY 1971

Recon Team Manes

Task Force 1 Advisory Element (CCN)

D/Z RVN

One-Zero CPT Larry Manes

One-One SP/6 Noel Gast

One-Two SSG Robert Castillo

One-Three SGT John Trantanello

22 JUN 1971

Recon Team Waugh

Task Force 1 Advisory Element (CCN)

D/Z RVN

One-Zero SGM Billy Waugh

One-One SFC James Bath

One-Two SGT Jesse Campbell

One-Three SGT Madison Strohlein (MIA 22 JUN 1971)

10 AUG 1971

Recon Team Storter

Task Force 2 Advisory Element (CCC)

D/Z RVN

One-Zero CPT James Storter

One-One SFC Newman Ruff

One-Two SSG Millard Moye

One-Three SGT Michael Bentley

11 OCT 1971

Recon Team Washington

Task Force 2 Advisory Element (CCC)

D/Z RVN

One-Zero SSG Robert McNier (deceased)

One-One SGT Howard Sugar

One-Two SFC Richard Gross (deceased)

One-Three SGT Mark Gentry

One-Four MSG Charles Behler

5 SCU

moving over and down steep hills and through thick vegetation. At one point, Hernandez heard voices and later engines belonging to bulldozers working on a dirt road. Gunshots suddenly rang out. This was the NVA's method of saying they located an intruder. He crouched, ready to fire his weapon. No one approached him. He saw some NVA heading away from his position. He soon realized they were hunting not for him, but for something to eat.

The rest of the team experienced similar encounters. They heard voices or saw enemy troops, but remained undiscovered. The real enemy so far was the weather. The thick blanket of clouds precluded any extraction by air in case of an emergency. The wet chilled the men's bodies as they continued looking for their target, which seemed more and more nonexistent. Another three days passed. Nothing found. More patrols walked by within earshot, still unaware of RT Florida's presence. The team needed more time.

The brass had other plans.

On the fourth day, the weather cleared and lots of shooting echoed near each element. The NVA were having target practice, but apart from that, the enemy was oblivious to the fact the team was nearby. Nevertheless, fearing they might be pressing their luck, SOG headquarters decided that staying in the area would be too risky and ordered an immediate extraction.

They contacted the elements and directed them toward four landing zones, and soon HH -3 Jolly Green Giant helicopters from Thailand swooped in at treetop height and began lowering jungle penetrators, a heavy device designed to poke through thick canopies of trees and reach the ground. While each member was being pulled up, F-4 Phantoms and A-1 Skyraiders dove in around the teams dropping bombs and firing cannon to ward off any pursuit. Once all the men were aboard, the choppers applied full throttles and sped from the area.

Their journey took them to the Thai border base of Nakhon Phanom, which served as a U.S. Special Forces installation. The weary team debarked, stowed their gear and headed to be debriefed. In the questioning, no one understood why the line was never found. They had the intelligence nailed and were certain of results. Then it suddenly dawned on the planners. Someone somewhere had compromised them again. The most secretive unit in Southeast Asia had a mole running about with access at the highest levels. Until found, they knew every mission could be jeopardized. At this time though, finding him was beyond the abilities of the base and lay square at the feet of headquarters in Saigon.

For RT Florida, that was a different mission for a

Static Line Combat Jumps (11 Total)

10 JUN 1968

Recon Team *Rattler*

Forward Observation Base #4 (CCN)

D/Z RVN

One-Zero SFC Bobby Richardson

One-One SP4 William Wilkinson

10 SCU

23 DEC 1969

Recon Team *Auger*

Command and Control South (CCS)

D/Z Cambodia

One-Zero SSG Frank Oppel (deceased)

One-One SGT Bob Graham

4 SCU

21 JAN 1970

Recon Team *Sickle*

Command and Control South (CCS)

D/Z Cambodia

One-Zero SGT John Gunnison

One-One SGT Kenneth Courage

One-Two SSG David Davidson (KIA-BNR 5 OCT 1970)

1 SCU

21 FEB 1970

Recon Team *Fork*

Command and Control South (CCS)

D/Z Cambodia

One-Zero SSG David Davidson (KIA-BNR 5 OCT 1970)

One-One SGT James (Ernie) Acre

2 SCU

23 AUG 1970

Recon Team *Montana*

Command and Control Central (CCC)

D/Z Laos

One-Zero SSG Michael Sheppard

One-One SSG Paul Boyd

One-Two SSG Harry Waddell

3 SCU

9 SEP 1970

Recon Team *Asp*

Command and Control North (CCN)

D/Z Laos

One-Zero CPT Garry Robb

One-One SFC Robert Ramsey

2 SCU

11 SEP 1970

Recon Team *Intruder*

Command and Control North (CCN)

D/Z Laos

One-Zero SFC Ted Hornung

One-One SSG James Klewicki

One-Two SSG Dwight Carnes

3 SCU

22 DEC 1970

Recon Team *Arizona*

Command and Control Central (CCC)

D/Z Laos

One-Zero SFC Newman Ruff

One-One SFC Kestutis Griskelis

One-Two 1LT Jake Barton

2 SCU

10 JAN 1971

Recon Team *Adder*

Task Force 1 Advisory Element (CCN)

D/Z RVN

One-Zero SFC Gerry Barker

One-One SP/5 Charles Busler (deceased)

4 SCU

29 MAY 1971

Recon Team *Kansas*

Task Force 1 Advisory Element (CCN)

D/Z RVN

One-Zero 1LT Loren Hagen (KIA 7 AUG 1971)

One-One SSG Tony Anderson

One-Two SSG George Cottrell (deceased)

2 SCU

18 AUG 1971

Recon Team *Maine*

Task Force 2 Advisory Element (CCC)

D/Z RVN

One-Zero SFC Howard Upchurch (deceased)

One-One SSG Robert McNier (deceased)

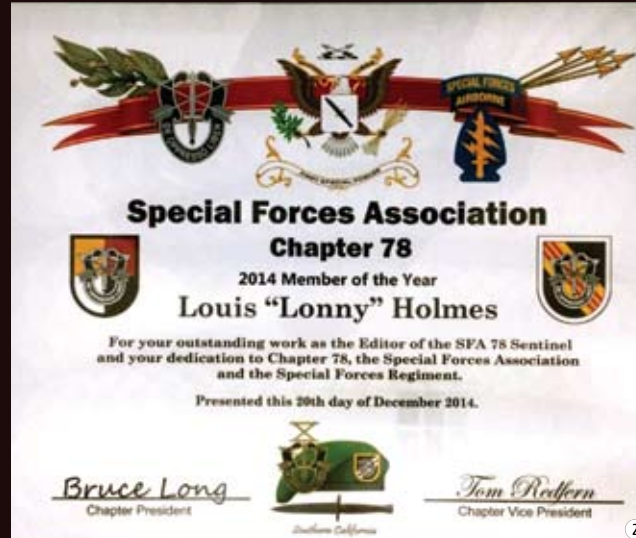
One-Two SGT John Shaughnessy

4 SCU

different kind of man. They had completed theirs. They left the briefing room, showered, had a beer and headed for a welcome sleep. They took consolation in knowing that even though they didn't find the wire, they had roamed around amid thousands of enemy without the slightest hint of detection. H.A.L.O. worked, and they were the first to show it did. Their efforts paved the way for future jumps during the war and beyond, whenever someone needed a quiet way to insert into the enemies backyard. ♦

Read more: <http://specialoperations.com/29014/worlds-first-combat-h-l-o-jump/#ixzz321sUiYw6>

SFA CHAPTER 78 CHRISTMAS DINNER 2014 CONTINUED



❶ Plaque awarded to Chapter 78 Member of the Year Lonny Holmes

❷ Certificate presented to Lonny Holmes as Member of the Year

❸ Debra Holm received this plaque in recognition for Outstanding Service for her work on the Sentinel for the past three years

❹ Thomas Tringali and Andrew Gabroy

❺ Bruce Long, Aaron Anderson and Cliff Newman

❻ Mark Miller, LTC (Retired) Breslow and CSM (Retired) Robert Crebbs

❼ Deanna Martin, left and her daughter on right. Ozielly Joyce in center with Springfield Pistol