



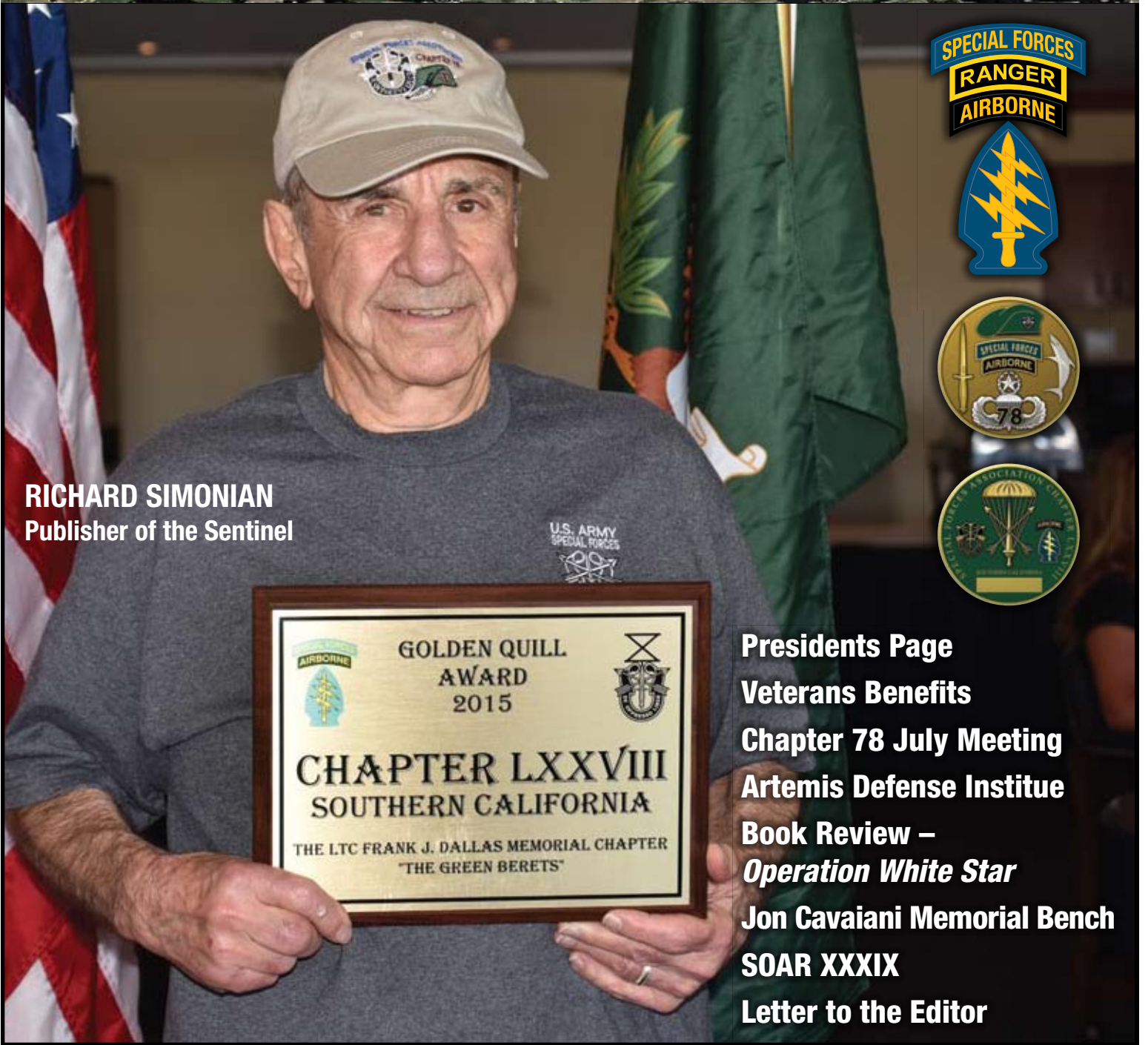
THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SENTINEL

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78
NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

THE LTC FRANK J. DALLAS CHAPTER

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 8

AUGUST 2015



RICHARD SIMONIAN
Publisher of the Sentinel

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- Veterans Benefits**
- Chapter 78 July Meeting**
- Artemis Defense Institute**
- Book Review –**
Operation White Star
- Jon Cavaiani Memorial Bench**
- SOAR XXXIX**
- Letter to the Editor**



Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

In John Joyce's article on applying for and acquiring Veterans Health Care benefits and disability in this issue, he discusses the "new way" to do this — **electronically!** Most of you know John recently had surgery and he used this time away from his corporation to do extensive research on the VA. In the past 5 years, the chapter

has experienced John's expert knowledge of computer operation and the internet with his work on creating the first issues of the *Hollywood Drop* and the *Sentinel*, as well as a huge amount of work on the three Green Beret Shooters Cup's.

John has now successfully applied for and has been approved for both the Veterans Health Care program and Veterans Disability — two different programs. He has recently received his VA ID card and was granted a percentage of disability for active duty related injuries while assigned to the Ranger Battalion and then Special Forces Group. John was also selected by the VA for eligibility into their Veterans Health Care Program — providing ongoing care and treatment as would a private physician or civilian health care plan. This is a major step forward for all veterans!

Granted, many Vietnam era Veterans are not entirely computer literate. However, family members may be and can assist in their benefit application effort. The majority of veterans I have spoken with from the current conflicts are wizards on the modern forms of electronic communication and this should prove to be an easier path to garner benefits when VA facilities are not located close to their residence or travel is difficult. Electronic internet application may be, and possibly should be, used as a first choice for veterans.

In his article, John specifically describes his journey and the basic requirements, as well as providing a number of important VA website addresses. It appears that documentation for specific claims still remain a key point in being granted either disability or selected for Veterans Health Care. John was required to have a physical exam and provide an extensive personal medical history to a VA physician prior to a final determination by the screening board. However, the electronic application did eliminate a lot of time most of us spent at VA facilities waiting for exams or completing paperwork.

With all the difficulties within the VA system I may suggest that the way of the future is already here with regards to easing veteran's applications for disability and care.

"A Tip of the Beret" to John Joyce. ❖

Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor

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COVER PHOTO: Richard Simonion, publisher of SFA 78's Sentinel, which was awarded the Golden Quill Award at the 2015 SFA National Convention.

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THE PRESIDENTS PAGE

PRESIDENTS COLUMN AUGUST 2015



Bruce Long
President SFA 78

On July 11th at approximately 0830 hrs the Chapter conducted a breakfast/business meeting at the Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club located in Corona Del Mar, Ca. The breakfast was buffet style with the best sausages that I have ever tasted. Everyone present really enjoyed the breakfast. I must admit, the yacht club does a nice job. We arrived at 0815 hrs and

everything was all setup to include coffee ready to serve.

Over my second cup of coffee we discussed the coordination and logistics of our guest speaker Billy Waugh. Apparently Billy is going to drive from Florida to California, then onto Nevada in preparation of the annual SOAR convention. We also discussed his accommodations and I recommended that we make reservations at the billeting facility at the Los Alamitos Joint Training Base in the city of Los Alamitos, Ca. It appears that our biggest challenge is going to be the two (2) hour briefing that Billy would like to provide either before or after A Company's recognition night on October 17th. Also, if you haven't read Billy's book, *Hunting The Jackal*, I highly suggest you do so. I'm sure Billy will autograph your book.

We all agreed that due to the constraints in conducting a Green Beret Fund Raiser that this would no longer be pursued.

I then advised those present, that Ammo Brothers wants to start charging a storage fee for the five (5) XD 40's that they have in their inventory. After a lengthy discussion it was agreed that we would raffle the guns during our general chapter meeting and raffle tickets would sell for \$100.00 with the limit of one raffle ticket per chapter member.

The Chapter meeting started on time at 1000 hrs. The flag salute was led by **Tom Redfern**, Vice President of our Chapter, and followed by the invocation by **Richard Simonian**. The Secretary's minutes were accepted and approved along with the Treasurer's report showing we have more than \$8,700.00+ in our account.

Our guest speaker was Laura Dietz founder of the Iwo Jima Monument West Foundation. Laura says the project has made a big leap in moving forward as two Architects firms are in the bidding

process for the design & building of the monument. Laura is always looking for contributions along with volunteers.

I introduced a motion that the Chapter hold their meetings on the 3rd Saturday of the month rather than the 2nd Saturday of the month. This would allow Chapter members of A Company to attend. The motion was 2nd and carried. This change will go into effect immediately, starting next month (August).

We then conducted the raffle for the six (6) XD 40's. James Light did NOT buy a raffle ticket, so I had him pull out the winning tickets, and as luck would have it, the first one he drew was mine. The next winning tickets were **Mark Miller**, **Chris Martin**, **Mike Keele**, **Ed Barrett** (he always wins something) and **Richard Simonian**.

I also sold memorabilia that I purchased (with Chapter money) while attending the SFA Convention. I still have SF Baseball caps, SF belt buckles, SF ceramic coasters, and SFA convention coins.

Starting next month our Sergeant of Arms **Mark Miller** will be fining Chapter members \$5.00 for NOT having your beret in your possession. ❖

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

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

August 15, 2015

at the

Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club

1601 Bayside Drive

Corona Del Mar, CA 92625

Business meeting at 0830 hrs.

General meeting at 1000 hrs

VETERANS BENEFITS



John Joyce

By John Joyce

I served on active duty with the US Army from 1984 through 1987. There were no major conflicts during this time and I had a fairly routine tour of duty with the First Special Forces Group. We did a lot of training and conducted a lot of Field Training Exercises (FTX's), as First Group had just

been reactivated in 1984.

Due to all the training I suffered a few injuries that I went on sick call to get fixed. As I have gotten older some of these injuries have gotten aggravated and I had no idea I was eligible for any type of Veterans assistance. One of my injuries required me to undergo a bilateral hip replacement at 52 years old. During my convalescence of more than a month I did extensive research on currently available veteran's benefits and was amazed at what was available. I had visited the VA several years ago and was told that I was ineligible for any services from them. What I did not know was that there was a distinct separation from VA Disability to VA Healthcare. At that time I was not available for VA Healthcare but I could have submitted for VA Disability. Once you are approved for any percentage of VA Disability (even at 0% service connected), then you will be approved for VA Healthcare.

I learned that the easiest way to file a disability claim was to utilize the online filing system at www.ebenefits.va.gov. I went online and filed a claim for several of the injuries I had while serving. Less than two weeks later I was called by the VA and scheduled for my first exam which was a hearing test. I filed the claim in December 2014 and the hearing test was in early February. I am still waiting on the disability rating for that test, and it is now July 2015. I later filed for several other injuries and had another exam for a shoulder injury within one month of filing.

What filing these claims did for me was put me into the VA system. They pulled my Service Medical Records (SMR's). I then noticed on the ebenefits website after a few months had listed some of my service connected injuries that I had gone on sick call for, but they were all listed at 0%. Subsequently I filed to have exams for these injuries with the VA to upgrade my ratings. Also, since now that I am in the system, even rated at 0%, I would now be eligible for VA Healthcare. I went online and applied for the new Veteran Health Benefit Card (VHIC), which allows you to get VA Healthcare. The

site is www.va.gov/healthbenefits/access/veteran_identification_card.asp. I used the easy online filing system and within three days was called by the VA saying I was approved for my card and VA healthcare.

Once authorized VA Healthcare, you can then register for it at www.myhealthvet.va.gov. There are a lot of benefits depending on the level of disability you have, you will be assigned a category of 1-6, with 1 having the highest benefits. Free healthcare, inoculations, and free prescriptions are some of the benefits. There are a lot more, the website outlines them all.

Another thing I discovered through my online research were a lot of other benefits available to veterans in every state. We are California based so I will focus here, but I encourage you to check your states benefits and see what you might be missing out on. The best site I found was www.myarmybenefits.us.army.com. Go to the website and search your state.

California just passed a law in 2014 that any veteran will be able to get a special California Driver's License starting in November that will be stamped with the word "VETERAN". California also has several types of Veterans personalized license plates. Being as I did not retire from the Army, I do not have any way of identifying myself as a veteran and do not carry my DD-214 around with me. There are a lot of benefits available to veterans at stores and other places that I had no way to access. Now I will.

Check out www.militarybenefits.info/military-and-veteran-discounts/ and www.rather-be-shopping.com/blog/2014/05/29/veteran-military-discounts/

Service Disabled Veterans with a 50% rating or more are eligible for discounted hunting and fishing licenses and lifetime California Parks Pass. There are numerous other benefits from Veterans homes to educational assistance for children.

I added up my veteran benefits and if I had filed for some of these benefits 25+ years ago I would have saved over \$125,000. There may be some veterans out there like me who were not aware of what was available to them and I hope this puts you on the right path. There are so many benefits available to veterans now and with a positive being put on it by the government now they seem a lot more helpful now. ❖

SFA CHAPTER 78 JULY 2015 MEETING



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- 1 John Stryker Meyer holding the 2015 Green Beret Foundation Award to SF Chapter 78.
- 2 Chris Martin wearing a Vietnam era vintage Green Beret with an original 5th SFGA Flash.
- 3 John Creel and Ed Barrett in conversation at SFA Chapter 78 breakfast meeting.
- 4 Chapter 78's Secretary Lee Martin hard at work.
- 5 Tom Redfern
- 6 Thad Gembacz
- 7 Kenn Miller and Mark Miller, Chapter 78's two of five "Recon Men".

ARTEMIS DEFENSE INSTITUTE



Terry Cagnolatti

By Terry Cagnolatti

On the morning of June 28, 2015, I sat down with Sandy Lieberman, co-owner of the Artemis Defense Institute (ADI), in the briefing room. Sandy stated that both she and Steven, Sandy's husband, are the owners of ADI. I spoke with Sandy regarding the history of their Institute. Sandy began

by telling me that she and Steven dreamed of opening their own business. However, not just any business. A business that incorporated both of their passions.

Steven, who has a law degree from Southwestern University School of Law, had a passion for firearms, and is a hunter. Both Steven and Sandy had a desire to train and educate others in the art of self-defense, along with the proper and safe use of firearms. After discussing and subsequently eliminating other types of business ideas, they choose to open ADI.

My first thought and question to Sandy was why the name Artemis? She stated that Artemis is the Greek Goddess of the hunt, and went on to say that they, Steven and Sandy, wanted to convey the idea of a female inclusive environment in the training of self-defense.

After extensive market research, Sandy and Steven traveled to Tempe, Arizona to view a demonstration of the VirTra Corporation's shooting simulators. They decided to purchase the VirTra 100 system, brought it home and set it up in their living room. They invited family and friends to come to their home to experience the sensation of a virtual reality shooting range, it was a huge success.

In December 2012, Steven and Sandy purchased the VirTra Systems 180 and 300. In February the following year they signed a lease at their present location, in Orange County, CA., where they set up all three systems, thus fulfilling their goal of a Virtual Reality Shooting Range. On March 1st, 2013, ADI had its "soft opening", inviting only friends and family. On April 5th, 2013, ADI had its Grand Opening to the public.

Sandy said that all three systems share the same capabilities, however they

employ each system for various types of training. Example, the VirTra 100 is a single flat screen used to train individuals who may have never fired a weapon. An individual is taught the basic fundamentals such as the safe handling of a weapon i.e., finger outside the trigger guard, all weapons are considered loaded, and never point a weapon at anything you do not want to destroy. Proper stance, grip, trigger pull, sight alignment, and target acquisition. The VirTra system 180 has three screens and gives more flexibility. Here the focus is more on techniques and tactics such as shooting while moving, shooting at moving targets, seeking cover while engaging a target. The VirTra system 300 has five screens that fully immerses the individual on a training platform which involves real-world scenarios. This is also known as a threat fire simulator. This system has sixty-five different scenarios which also has multiple branching options. There are literally hundreds of background sounds which can be played during the scenarios, such as helicopters, gun shots, breaking glass, barking dogs, people yelling and screaming, even birds chirping. To make it even more realistic this system has a capability of employing a device, which is optional, to be worn by the participant. This device has a jolt of 80,000 volts of electricity that is felt if the participant is shot during an engagement.

There are two types of weapons which a participant can use while on one of the three simulators. The Glock 22 which is a semiautomatic 40 caliber handgun or the AR-15 rifle. Both have embedded lasers which marks your hits and are fitted with a CO2 cartridge, to simulate the recoil when the weapon is fired.

Continued on page 6



Chapter member, Richard Simionian, owner of Santiago Communities, Santa Ana, CA, three of his executive officers at ADI.



Sandy Lieberman, co-owner of ADI and Terry Cagnolatti

BOOK REVIEW

Operation White Star by Richard O. Sutton



Kenn Miller

By Kenn Miller

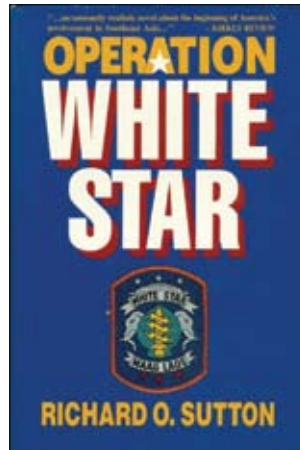
Operation White Star by Richard O. Sutton, Daring Books, 1990

This is going to be a short review because *OPERATION WHITE STAR* is so full of character, action, insights into SF history, and suspense, its delights are best left to the readers to discover on their own — and it will be available to SFA Chapter 78

members to read and enjoy and pass around for as long as the covers can still contain the pages.

The most engaging and accurate historical reading is often found not in non-fiction history tomes but rather in novels by people with an intimate acquaintance with the subject matter. I can think of no better example of this than Richard O. Sutton's novel, *OPERATION WHITE STAR*.

Like the central character of his novel, Richard O. Sutton was commissioned a 2nd lieutenant on graduation from West Point in the very early 1960s, and after Artillery Officers Basic Course, jump school, Ranger School, and the Special Forces Officers Course, he saw combat service in Laos with Operation White Star. After his initial military service, Sutton went to medical school, returned to active duty and served as a surgeon with 5th Special Forces Group in Vietnam at Bien Hoa, and then with Studies and Observation Group. After Vietnam, he established a civilian practice in orthopedic surgery in the civilian world, served in the Army reserve, and then went back on active duty as medical officer.



That's already an impressive resume, but then Sutton added to it by writing this splendid novel. Sadly, *OPERATION WHITE STAR* seems not to have been adequately promoted by its publisher, for it is not well known, even among dedicated readers of military literature. Maybe that's because this book is about Laos, not Vietnam, and while White Star is a fascinating and somewhat mysterious part of Special Forces history and heritage, it is not well known by the general reading public, even including those who read war novels.

The only faults this nitpicking critic could find in Operation White Star are very minor editorial errors. One of the characters is described as having served in Korea with the 173rd when it should have been the 187th. And a young E-4 commo man is described as an ex-hippie from San Francisco, which is rather strange since there may have been an ex-beatnik in the early 1960s, but the hippies didn't come around until later in the decade. With a book as good as *OPERATION WHITE STAR* inconsequential editorial oversights like that are best passed over without complaint — and blamed on the publisher, whether the publisher deserves the blame or not. I'm only

mentioning these errors because I know readers familiar with the Airborne and the 1960s are likely to notice them too. Just ignore them and drive on. This is a book you're going to read straight through and enjoy every minute. The White Star teams in Laos are an almost legendary part of SF history, and this novel brings that place and that era and those people to life.

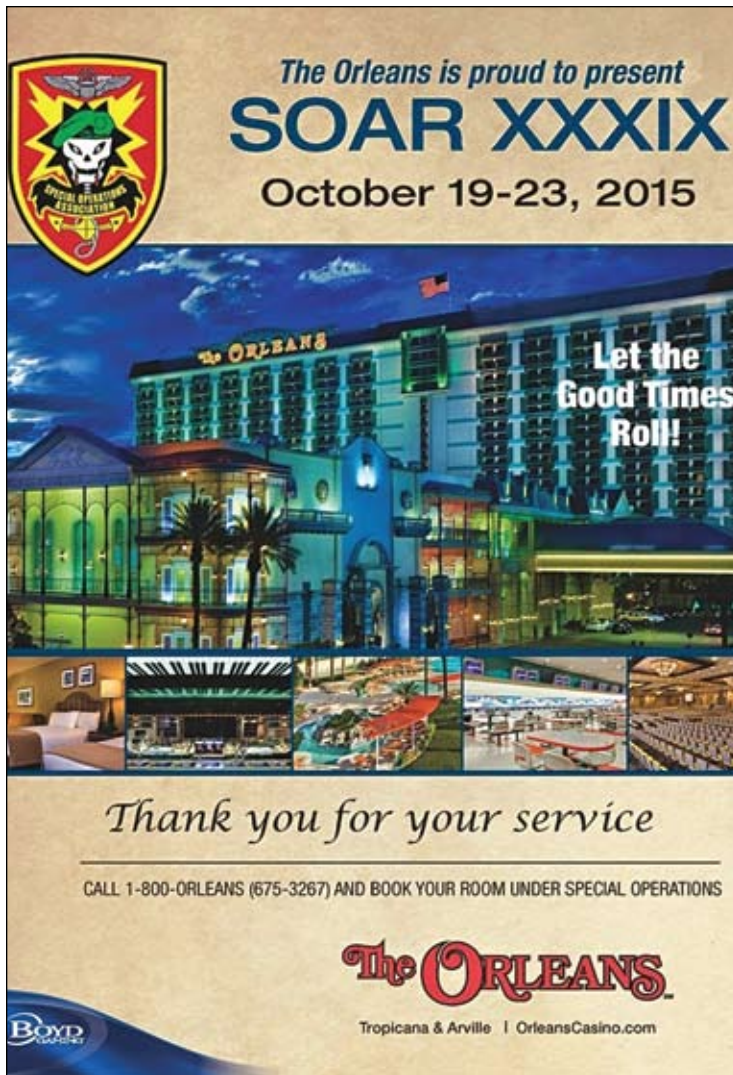
Read it and pass it around. *OPERATION WHITE STAR* wasn't the best seller it should have been — but at least Chapter 78 has a copy to be shared. ❖



JON CAVAIANI MEMORIAL BENCH INSTALLED

A bench has been installed at Livingston High School in Livingston, California in honor of Jon Cavaiani, who passed away on July 29, 2014. Jon was a member of the school's graduating class of 1962.

Fred and Barbara Lindenberg along with members of the Livingston High School staff worked with Affordable Markers to install a Memorial/tribute bench in place at LHS in time for the July LHS Reunion. ❖



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Letter to the Editor



Gordon Denniston

Lonny,

Thanks for sending the article by Bob Shaffer.

Bob's article provides amazing insight into a part of the Special Forces efforts that I was completely unaware of when I landed at Plei Djereng during 1966 and 1967. We used Plei Djereng to re-arm and refuel our HU-1C gunships. We also used it as a place to stand by until we were called on for another fire mission. When we flew along the border area to the West, we could see the smoke from the NVA camps in Cambodia. There were time when our rockets would "inadvertently" stray across the border into those NVA camps. At the time I was there working with the regular Army on normal missions, we were told not to fly into Cambodia but they never mentioned to me were not to shoot. I always hated to return from a mission with a load of ammunition so I would usually try to find something to shoot at before I landed.

What is truly sad is that we had to abandon the Montagnard people to the Communist.

Great article,
 Gordon Denniston

ARTEMIS DEFENSE INSTITUTE CONTINUED

ADI employs mostly part time instructors, all of them come from Law Enforcement, Military, or NRA Instructor community. They currently have twenty instructors who work with them. When asked if any police agencies use their facilities for training, Sandy stated that the Orange County Sheriff's Department train their patrol units along with LAPD surveillance teams. Law Enforcement personnel using live actors, conducted training sessions reenacting a school shooting scenario. Sandy also mentioned that SOCOM showed interest in there facility.

ADI offers a program, carry concealed weapon certification (CCW) training, to qualified individuals under California State Law. This program consists of live fire and is conducted at the Prado Olympic shooting park. The program was started at the encouragement of the Orange County Sherriff's department.

Artemis Defense Intuition is open to the public and invites groups and corporations for team building, workplace preparedness and holds events such as ladies night out, singles night, holiday shooting, etc. In May 2015, Special Forces Association Chapter 78,

held their monthly meeting at ADI, (see the cover page of June's issue of the Sentinel). Also, Chapter member, Richard Simionian, owner of Santiago Communities, Santa Ana, CA., sent eight of his executive officers to ADI for training.

Artemis Defense Institute has been featured in numerous media venues, including NBC, KCLA, Channel 9, KTLA, FOX 11, Tele-mundo, Orange County Register as well as nine to twelve local newspapers.

On a personal note, I spent thirty-seven (37) years in Law Enforcement (Retired) and have trained on several Virtual Reality Simulators. I must say that ADI was not only the most challenging but offered the most realistic and stressful scenarios that I have ever encountered. On behalf of Special Forces Chapter 78, I would like to thank Sandy and Steven Lieberman for giving me the opportunity to have had this interview. For more information regarding Artemis Defense Institute go to www.ArtemisDefenseInstitute.com. ❖