



THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SENTINEL

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78
NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

THE LTC FRANK J. DALLAS CHAPTER

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 12

DECEMBER 2015



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The Story of SGM James O. Schmidt**

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SFA Chapter 78 Christmas Party 2015





Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

SGM JAMES O. SCHMIDT

The last Sergeant Major of 5th Special Forces Group

In the spring of 1942 James Schmidt spent an evening at the theater and viewed an exciting new movie, *Parachute Battalion*, starring Robert Preston and Nancy Kelly. *Parachute Battalion* is a movie about three men joining the "new parachute infantry" and beginning training at

Fort Benning, GA. This was a decisive moment in the life of Schmidt — he decided that *this* was what he wanted to do at his young age of 14. He enlisted in the army on June 19, 1942 and graduated from "jump school" in November 7 at the age of 15 years and one month.

The father of the American Airborne, Major General William C. Lee, Commander of all Airborne Infantry at the time of the film production and future commander of the 101st Airborne Division worked closely with the 1941 R.K.O. production of the movie *Parachute Battalion*, even serving as the double for the star, Robert Preston, during filming of dangerous scenes. The 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment at Fort Benning was filmed for scenes used in the movie.

Thus began the long Airborne and Special Forces career of SGM Schmidt that was to span three major wars and numerous combat engagements that is described by author Gene Williams in his story of the SGM in this issue of the Sentinel.

Following MSG Schmidt's tour in Laos in 1962 with Operation White Star in the jungles fighting the Communist Pathet Lao he returned briefly to Fort Bragg and the 7th Special Forces. Arriving in Vietnam in January 1964 where then SGM Schmidt was assigned to the 5th Special Forces Provisional Vietnam where he ultimately was Sergeant Major of all Special Forces in Vietnam. At this time the 5th Group Headquarters remained at Fort Bragg, NC. SGM Schmidt was the Command Sergeant Major of 5th Group Provisional until the final rotation of the remaining elements at Fort Bragg arrived in Vietnam in November of 1964, establishing 5th Special Forces Group, Vietnam, headquartered at Nha Trang.

SGM James O. Schmidt retired on February 21, 1965 after a very distinguished career. However he was not finished with serving his country in a time of need. Civilian, Jim Schmidt was then hired by Air America, the CIA's air force in Southeast Asia. Having been separated frequently from his wife, Peggy, in his military career, while working for three years with Air America he moved her to Bangkok while he lived in Saigon so they could be together on his days off. After sixty years of marriage they remain a close and happy couple. ♦

Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor

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COVER PHOTO: SGM James O. Schmidt receiving a medal in Viet Nam in December 1964.

Historical photos in this issue's story about SGM Schmidt were provided by the Schmidt family and contemporary photos were taken during the course of the interview by Lonny Holmes.

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Funding for publication and printing of the
Special Forces 78 Sentinel is provided by



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A program of American Veterans Assistance Group

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Sentinel Graphic Design by Debra Holm/Dinwiddie Holm Graphics

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 dhgraphics@earthlink.net.



THE PRESIDENTS PAGE



Bruce Long
President SFA 78

PRESIDENTS COLUMN December 2015

On 11/21/15 our Chapter breakfast/business meeting was held at the Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club located in Corona Del Mar.

Liz Eastin, Director of Development College of Health and Human Development for the California State University of Fullerton (CSUF) was asked by your President to give an update to the Chapter on the ROTC Military Obstacle Course.

Currently CSUF spends more than \$10,000 a year to transport the ROTC cadets to Camp Pendleton to train at their facilities, specifically their Obstacle Course.

Due to budget constraints, the cadets can only travel to Camp Pendleton once a year.

As of this date, \$175,000 has been donated towards the development of this project. With \$150,000 being pledged by the Lopez family. The Obstacle Course is to be named in the honor of Roy Lopez who graduated from the CSUF ROTC program and later died while in training. An older brother also completed the ROTC program and is a 1st Lieutenant, currently serving on active duty and is stationed at Ft. Erwin, CA.

Ground breaking for the Obstacle Course is to begin in mid-December of this year.

After extensive discussion and questions presented to Liz Eastin and the liability issue, it was finally put to rest by **Thad Gembacz** (Ret Federal Judge) and **Ed Barrett** (licensed CA attorney). **Richard Simonian** then proposed that the Chapter make a pledge of \$2,500 and that the Chapter members contribute the balance. A motion was made and carried, with a unanimous vote.

The Chapter meeting started at 1000 hrs. and it became quite evident that this meeting was well attended, as we had twenty two members in attendance.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by our Sergeant of Arms **Mark Miller** and the Invocation was given by **Richard Simonian**, with a special prayer going out to **Jim Duffy** who is currently in the hospital in Las Vegas, NV.

Your President then asked for tax deductible pledges from the membership present, and the following financial pledges were made:

Richard Simonian (AVAG)	\$500.00
Ed Barrett	\$200.00
Bruce Long	\$400.00
Manny Gonzales	\$100.00
Mike Keele	\$400.00
Thad Gembacz	\$200.00
Don Gonneville	\$200.00
Dave Erickson	\$100.00
Don Deatherage	\$100.00
Kenn Miller	\$100.00
John Creel	\$200.00
Mark Miller	\$100.00
Lee Martin	\$100.00
Terry Cagnolatti	\$200.00

Guest: **Dave Erickson** former 1st group SSG 18D is becoming a Life member of our Chapter. All of the members present, introduced themselves and shared their military background with Dave. Dave gave a quick overview of his SF training and assignment. His last deployment was to Northern Iraq where his ODA worked with the Kurds. Dave got off active duty in October of this year and is now working for Bank of America.

New Chapter Officers were nominated and approved by the general membership and will be sworn in at the upcoming Christmas party by COL Mike Wise:

President, Bruce D Long (2nd term)
Vice President, Don Deatherage
Secretary, Gary Macnamara
Treasurer, Richard Simonian

The Chapter meeting was adjourned at 1230 hrs.

Any questions please feel free to contact me. ♦

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

TRACKING DOWN A HERO;



The story of SGM James O. Schmidt



Gene Williams



Jack Williams

By Gene Williams and Jack Williams

In early June 2014 my wife and I boarded a flight from Washington DC to Seattle. Sitting on the aisle seat next to her was a huge white-haired older gentleman talking to a small dog. This was going to be an interesting flight, I thought. Little did I know just how interesting that flight would become.

After about two hours I noticed parachute wings tattooed on his right forearm. I leaned over and said "Airborne," and began a conversation. Quietly he mentioned that he was a WWII (504th Parachute Infantry Regiment), Korea, Laos and Vietnam veteran. In other words he was there on the ground for the entire history of US Airborne in its finest hours, on virtually every battlefield.

He was traveling with a daughter from the Charlottesville, Virginia area to Anchorage where another daughter owned a couple of lodges along the Iditarod trail. By the time we landed I had gotten the gist of his service in the course of our extended conversation. As chance would have it, he had told the outlines of his life story to one of the few Americans who understood it in its entirety.

As we deplaned I asked his name; he said "Schmidt," emphasizing that the family was Danish origin not German. I silently committed myself to learning more about who he was obtaining the details of his apparently astonishing odyssey.

After a group discussion of what I knew of the remarkable history of this man, Lonny Holmes and Jack Williams enlisted for the search. Using the internet we rapidly discovered that he was likely James O. Schmidt, Special Forces SGM retired

holder of 3 CIB's (one of 325 men so honored), 2 Silver Stars and many other decorations. His recounting of his service record was confirmed from numerous sites. Furthermore, he had been an early member of Special Forces Association (1987) but was believed to have died and was so reported in *The Drop* a few years ago. His story was true!! And his record was even more remarkable than his quiet account revealed. Not only was he SF in Laos and Vietnam, he had fought and survived Inchon, the Chosin Reservoir battle and retreat in Korea, and had jumped in Sicily and Salerno with the 504th in WWII.



Photo of SGM James O. Schmidt during interview by the Williams brothers. Photo by Lonny Holmes

We tracked down the daughter in Alaska, Katherine DeHoop and asked her to front for a request to interview the SGM. The proposal went dormant. He didn't much like publicity. Then after a year shortly after Memorial Day 2015 Katherine gave us a phone number and said her father had consented to meet us. Lonny and Jack flew into Washington and on a Saturday in late July we drove down to Barbourville, Virginia and talked for three hours with the SGM and his charming wife of 60 years Peggy. Here is his story.



SGM Schmidt after combat jump into Sicily in WWII.

The SGM was a native of northern California. He turned 14 years old in the fall of 1941 and he was big for his age, 200 lbs, 6' tall, Danish origin. As the great depression era had been hard on his family he developed a strong independent streak at an early age. So he left home to join the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and was assigned to a CCC camp in southeastern North Carolina.

Then Pearl Harbor made the CCC irrelevant. As America geared up for total war, in January 1942 his CCC group was disbanded. He chose to enlist in the army and opted to join the new airborne unit. He recounted that this decision came after seeing a movie entitled *Parachute Battalion* starring Nancy Kelly, who he recalled as being one of the most beautiful women ever.

Well, there is no denying the power of a "training film" with beautiful movie stars on a 14 year old. In any case, that femme fatale heroine did the US a favor when she influenced Schmidt to enlist in the paratroops. *(By the way, to this day SGM Schmidt believes the female heroine of the movie to have been Veronica Lake, another beautiful star of the period. But the advantage to the information age is that today such things can be checked....)*

When he was assigned to the 504th PIR at Ft. Bragg he was all of 14 years. He had lied about his age in the baldest faced manner, and the Army bought the story because of his size. After training, in June 1943 the 504th sailed for North Africa and was based near Tunis, which had fallen to the British and to General Patton shortly before.

Then in July 1943 he jumped with the 504th into Sicily. The unit was scattered but he landed with his mortar platoon relatively intact. During a German counter-attack he was wounded in the hand but helped repel the German armor. He recalls the resupply flights coming in the following night some of which were shot up by the American fleet as they passed inland.



Clockwise from left:

Left: SGM Schmidt at left. Photo during World War II. Note CIB, so after Combat Jump into Sicily.

Above: SGM Schmidt's FATHER circa World War II

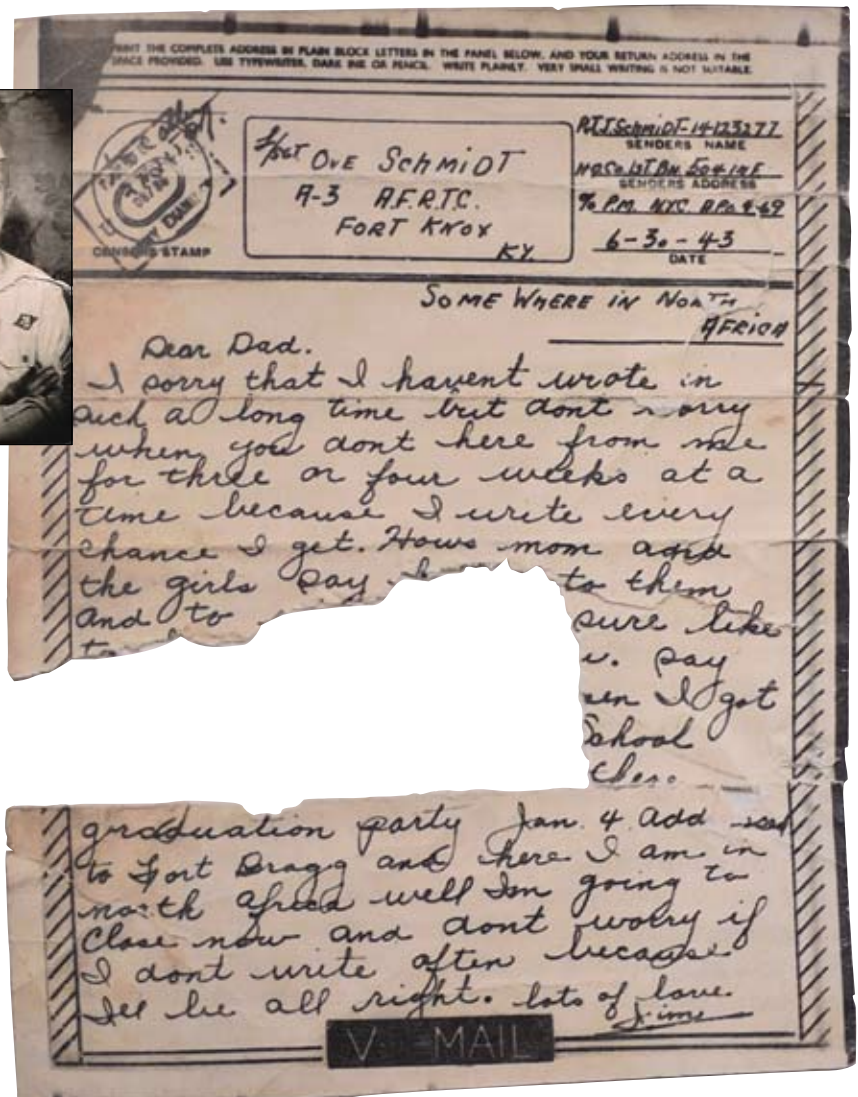
Right: Letter to SGM Schmidt's father from North Africa while staging for Combat Jump into Sicily. SGM Schmidt was in HQ Company, 1st Bn 504 Parachute Infantry Regiment.



In October 1943 he went into Salerno; his battalion of the 504th jumped onto US lines to hold a German counter-attack while others were sent into the beachhead by landing craft. In the meantime, however, his mother had been informed of his wound in Sicily. She wrote an angry letter to President Roosevelt informing him that she didn't mind that her husband was in the Army... but it was a bit much that her "15 year old son was fighting in Europe, lying wounded and untended in a Sicily field" (mothers will do this kind of thing you know).

The long arm of the "Ma" started the wheels of U. S. Army rolling in their ponderous way until at last the great hand of the bureaucracy reached down and plucked Schmidt from the front lines north of Naples. Shortly before he turned 16 he was booted out of the Army because of his age and sent home aboard ship.

Well, that wasn't going to be the end of it. Now 16, upon arriving back in the US Schmidt took a discharge bonus and three weeks off. Then in December 1943, he joined the Navy, went through training and went to sea in a destroyer, only to suffer a similar fate six months later when news of his age caught up with him. So at the age of 16, Schmidt was not only an airborne combat veteran, but had also earned the unique distinction of having been kicked out of both the Army and Navy ... surely a rare record.



Having been excluded from further WWII combat, he signed on with the Merchant Marine where he served on an ammo resupply ship sailing the Atlantic amidst the U-boat menace for the remainder of the war in the European Theater. Finally, he reenlisted on June 3, 1946, which was 8 months after his 18 birthday, following his release from the Merchant Marine. He was awarded the rank of Sgt E-5 and was assigned to the 508th PIR in Germany that same month. He returned with that regiment to the USA when it was demobilized in the fall of 1946.

He was then sent to the 187th PIR in Japan where he remained until the outbreak of the Korean War.

In the summer 1950 as North Korean Army surged south to the Pusan perimeter, the Army pulled every NCO in Japan they could get their hands on to put into the fray. He was assigned to the 31st Infantry Regiment ("the Polar Bears") of the 7th Infantry Division where he trained South Korean troops attached to the regiment. His regiment was then committed to combat during the Inchon landing. After weeks in the line, his division was assigned to the X Corp.

In October 1950 as MacArthur led the United Nations forces north of the 38th parallel to the Yalu, the 7th ID was landed at Iwon in North Korea as part of the X Corp invasion which included the Marines. The U.N. forces spread out to chase remnants of the North Koreans northward, 7th Division advancing to the east of the Chosin Reservoir, Marines to the west. With the rear area command out of touch with the front but demanding "full pursuit," the 31st Regiment moved out as part of what became "Task Force Faith," unaware of the huge Chinese Army infiltration in front of them.



Top: 31st Infantry Regiment ("the Polar Bears") of the 7th Infantry Division distinctive unit insignia

Left: SGM Schmidt, Korean War era

31st IR was further advanced and isolated from the 1st Marine Division by the frozen Chosin Reservoir when the storm broke. For three days Task Force Faith fought encirclement and tried to break out east of the Reservoir, but the 3,000 man task force was shattered and overrun. The survivors retreated across the ice to join the Marine column which then fought its way south from point to point ... the famous "attacking in another direction" march in the dead of winter.

During the retreat Schmidt broke his shoulder in a truck wreck during shelling and couldn't hold a weapon. Despite the wound, he led a desperate attack that captured a key hill on the flank of the march to Koto Ri and was awarded the Silver Star. He and the remains of the 31st IR and the 1st Marine Division fought their way back to the coast and were evacuated on 15 December 1950.

The SGM served in various airborne and armored units throughout the 50s. He said he had heard rumors about the formation of Special Forces and had tried to join in 1954 when the embryo SF



unit was being organized. But he was sent instead to various armored units being built up in the Ft. Hood area for deployment to Germany in the face of the Soviet threat.

Finally SGM could stand “straight leg” organizations no longer, and in 1961 he was accepted into Special Forces. Now Master Sergeant Schmidt was assigned to Headquarters & Hq Company 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) on 13 July 1961 for Special Forces Training. Upon completion he was assigned to Company B and then reassigned to C Company, 7th SFG(A). On 22 January 1962 he began mission training for Southeast Asia.

In the spring of 1962 MSG Schmidt was deployed to Laos and assigned to Field Training Team 45 commanded by CPT Gerald Kilburn, as the Team Sergeant. This “White Star Team” was located in the Pak Se area of Laos and as part of the “White Star” mission, was charged with raising local forces to confront the Communist Pathet Lao guerrillas.

When White Star Team 45 became operational it was split into two six man teams and 1st Lt Herbert Johnson and MSG Schmidt became the operational leaders of White Star MTT 48. MTT 48 SF team members recruited, organized, and trained two companies of Kha Montagnard tribesman. In the thick jungle they constructed a base camp, helicopter landing zone, known-distance rifle range, and later assumed control of three more companies of Kha indigenous soldiers. During the operation phase MSG Schmidt planned patrols and advised the Kha commanders.



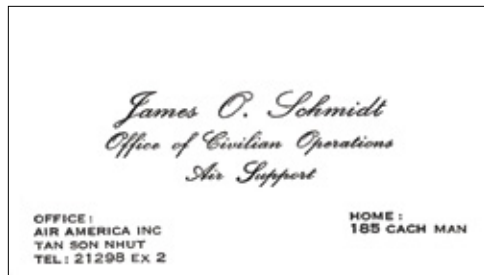
Clockwise, from top right:

Top right: A letter home from Laos

Top left: A dinner invitation to SGM Schmidt from the commanding officer of the Vietnamese Special Forces High Command, August 11, 1964

Bottom left: SGM Schmidt circa 1961

Bottom right: SGM Schmidt and wife circa 1956



Top: Business card after retiring from the U.S. Army Special Forces in January 1965; Center: SGM James O. Schmidt and wife. Note Airborne tattoos on right arm; Bottom : After the interview – It to rt, Gene Williams, SGM James O. Schmidt, Peggy Schmidt, Jack Williams. Photo by Lonny Holmes, August 2015

Of course as part of his SF duties, he also accompanied patrols to “advise and assist” the indigenous commanders. “On one occasion a patrol he was advising was ambushed by the Communist Pathet Lao Guerrillas and the Kha commander temporally lost control. MSG Schmidt exposed himself to the Pathet Lao weapons fire, silenced a machine-gun with a hand grenade and took control of the patrol and affected an orderly withdrawal.” Thus MSG James O. Schmidt was in combat in his third war. He was subsequently presented a Third Award of the Combat Infantry Badge for his actions in Laos, and was later awarded a second Silver Star.

He remained with the 7th SFG thru Mobile Field Training Team postings in Laos until reassigned to Vietnam. During the interview he was asked about some specific bars in Vientiane that were well known haunts of SF troopers during White Star. He denied knowing about them and said he didn’t frequent such places ... to which his beautiful wife Peggy sniffed and said that “*he probably has his picture still on the wall in all of them.*”

He was SGM of all scattered 7th Special Forces A Teams serving in Vietnam from December, 1963 until he transferred to the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) on 21 January 1964. He became CSM of 5th SFG Provisional from 1 June 1964 to 1 October 1964 when the entire 5th Group officially relocated to Vietnam. He departed Vietnam in January 1965 and returned to the 7th SFG at Ft. Bragg.

There, he tried mightily to get back into action; but the bureaucracy decided to sideline him as recruiter, and he opted to retire. But his retirement from SE Asia was in name only for a while. He spent a couple of years in Air America in Vietnam 1965-67 working to supply the forces of good before returning to the USA and resuming civilian life in Northern California.

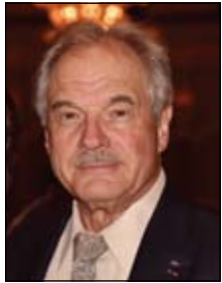
The story is an amazing one... from the time he was 14 to the present he represents the spirit of American Airborne. Sicily, Salerno, the frozen Chosin, White-Star, Vietnam: these names form a chain of historical military geography and a roll call of valor and commitment. He is the epitome of what Special Forces represents - a unique fighting man who has done his family, Special Forces, and his country proud. ♦

SGM JAMES O. SCHMIDT AWARDS AND DECORATIONS*

Silver Star	Army of Occupation Medal
with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster	with Germany & Japan Clasp
Bronze Star Medal	National Defense Service
with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters	Medal with one Bronze Star
Purple Heart Medal	Armed Forces
with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster	Expeditionary Medal
Air Medal	Combat Infantry Badge
with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster	3rd Award
Army Commendation Medal	Expert Badge with Rifle
with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters	Parachutist Badge-Master
Good Conduct Medal	Presidential Unit Citation
with 4 Loops	Republic of Vietnam Campaign
American Campaign Medal	Medal with 1960 Device
European-Africa-Middle Eastern	Republic of Vietnam Gallantry
Campaign Medal	Cross with Unit Palm Citation
World War II Victory Medal	

*From the records of National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Steve Sherman, Radex Press, SFA National Office and personal records of SGM Schmidt

HAPPY VETERANS DAY



Mike Keele

By Mike Keele

On Veterans Day, Chapter 78 President Bruce Long led a salty contingent of members to the Orange County Fairgrounds for what was billed as a veteran's job fair. Spearheading this assault on friendly territory was Rob Pugh, who demonstrated his youthful exuberance by being—get this—on time! The rest began dribbling in a half hour later, after Rob gave

the “all clear.” First of the tail draggers was Bruce Long, with Mike Keele close behind, hauling his president's ruck sack. In short (just had to say that) order, our Bac Si, Lee Martin, came wheeling in with a trailer load of fliers and newsletters promoting our local non-profit called American Veterans Assistance Group. Lee is the Executive Director of said group, and runs roughshod over some 600 member veterans in southern California. Next to arrive was Don Deatherage, fresh off a recon of the entire A-O, where he proceeded to gather intelligence from the other vendors present. Last to arrive were John Stryker Meyer, known as “Tilt” to one and all, and our newest puppy, Dave Erickson (another 18D), fresh out of active duty with the First Group at Ft. Lewis.

Our mission statement would sound something like: 1) recruit more new members, 2) locate needy vets who can be assisted by AVAG, 3) make contact with other benefits givers and veteran care providers to create a data base for future use by veterans in need, and last; meet a lot of very nice people. Mission accomplished!

We only recently learned of this event, which is now in its eighth year. Based on the happy faces, we will be back for year nine.

There was a free lunch, hot dogs, bottled water and chips. The party was promoted by veteransandlabor.com, and included such organizations as Ironworkers Union Local 416. The Sentinel spoke with Business Agent Richard Byrd, who sought—and got—permission from the National Union Headquarters to aggressively recruit veterans for their apprenticeship program. He conceived a “boot camp for vets,” which gives them a thumbnail sketch of the training regimen, schooling requirements and the type of work ironworkers do on a daily basis. So far the results of the recruitment program have been fruitful, and the boot camp is being evaluated as a permanent part of the training process.

Rob Pugh made contact with some lady deputies from the L.A. Sheriff's Recruitment Unit and mentioned that he was a contractor. Rob was attired in his sharpest cammo uniform, complete with SFC insignia and Beret. One of the deputies naively asked if he did tile work. Rob quietly pointed out that there are *other* kinds of contractors and besides, *he* wasn't inclined to get his hands dirty. A bit later, a sweet little old lady surged up to our table pushing her walker and wearing an “I'm a veteran” tag. She proudly informed this reporter that she had been a WAC during WWII, and had snagged herself a husband from a hospital ward she had worked in. “Been married sixty five years,” she said, but had to ask her blushing beau where she was stationed when they met. Another attendee, the ten year old grandson of a Chapter member, quietly approached Tilt, who was in a conversation with a visitor, and thanked him for his service. Then, without missing a beat, the lad asked him to autograph his dad's copy of Tilt's book, *Across the Fence*. Tilt naturally obliged, and broke out in a huge grin at the youngster's assertiveness. Yes, it was a Happy Veterans Day! ❖



Lee Martin (back), (left to right) Mike Keele, Bruce Long and Rob Pugh



“I want to be a Green Beret when I grow up.”
SFC Rob Pugh and 5 1/2 year old Logan

CHAPTER 78 VIEWS A/5/19TH SFG JUMP

By Mike Keele

Wild rides and wild birds — even a helicopter or two. On a cool, calm Saturday morning in October, Chapter 78's faithful gathered at the Joint Forces Training Facility in Las Alamitos, California, to watch apparently sane men jump out of perfectly functional helicopters, just for fun. They do it for more than fun actually; they get paid for this endeavor. Truth be told, most of them would jump without pay, but you should never turn down a paycheck. I was the sorcerer's apprentice, and had shrugged my shoulders in the task of hauling Lonny's cameras. It seems as if he has a camera and a lens for every occasion. So upon our arrival at the drop zone, I hitched up me britches and shouldered me load, while the sorcerer jovially hissed at me that the lenses alone were worth more than I'd ever make in my miserable life. Well, something like that, anyway. The jumpers were from A/5/19th SFG. About 70 of them sat or laid on the tarmac, waiting for the reassuring wop, wop, wop of the rotor blades, while the two Chinook helicopters sat off in the distance, silent in the morning dew. No one seemed concerned; these were veterans of the 'hurry up and wait' routine after years of service to their country.

Lonny is a story teller, and it was no surprise when I awoke from my reverie and found that the whole crowd of Green Berets were on their feet, listening raptly to Lonny as he told them of wars of old. He spent almost four year in various parts of Southeast Asia as a Green Beret Medic. "Aha," I said to meself, "this is an opportunity to enhance my apprenticeship." So, armed with the Master's camera, I began stealthily sneaking around the crowd, totally unseen by the enraptured. *Click, click, click. Sneak, sneak, sneak, click, click, click.* Finally, a word was barked out and everyone turned to checking their rigs. The 'Hooks roared to life and one lifted off, hovered for about eleven hours, and then parked itself, right back where it had spent the whole night. Some more hurrying and waiting, and finally it was decided that one aircraft would be used to make the jump. The other had a problem.

In little more than an hour, all 70 of the faithful had taken their place in the door – doors, actually, since the ailing bird was repaired, and the jump went off without a hitch. Lonny scurried around shooting here and there, eventually racking up some 400 photos. No drama, no injuries, no complaints. Then without a word or any fanfare, all 70 jumpers just disappeared. Dinner was scheduled for 1800 hrs, and the boys were off to collect their wives and gussie themselves up a bit.

This dinner was the second annual appreciation party for A Company, put on by Chapter. 78, and hosted by Richard Simonian. The food was good but the camaraderie was great, and everybody left that night filled with good cheer, good food and stories told by good men. Little can be better than moments like these when the not so young are back in their youth, filled with glory and grace and the youngsters believed every word. Honest. ❖



ANAHEIM DUCKS HONOR KENN MILLER AT ANNUAL MILITARY APPRECIATION NIGHT

By Master Sergeant Wade Scott, Force Protection NCO
Special Operations Detachment-North

The Anaheim Ducks (National Hockey League Team) held their annual military appreciation night at the Honda Center in Anaheim this year on the November 11; an event which took place during the whole evening while the team played the Edmonton Oilers. The Anaheim Ducks present this event each year in conjunction with a volunteer organization called "Defending the Blue Line"

(DTBL). DTBL was founded by a retired first sergeant in Minnesota and their mission is to provide military kids (only) with cash grants (up to \$500.00 per child) as well as free equipment, access to training camps and tickets to pro hockey events. Defending the Base Line is another arm of this charity and has been created to support military children to aid in the cost of playing baseball.

This year's event was very unique, as it not only had representatives from all branches, but that it showcased the tradecraft and equipment of the Army Special Forces Community. The evening began with three Soldiers of Company A, 5th Battalion 19th Special Forces Group (Airborne), and one Soldier from Special Operations Detachment – North (Airborne) conducting an Australian style rappel from the ceiling of the Honda Center down to the ice surface. They were honored again while escorting the 9th Civil Support Team's CBRNE Talon IV Robot to its place at center ice for the first ever honorary puck drop by a robot. During the second period intermission, Company "A" Soldiers brought their Polaris MRZR vehicle onto the Ice with "Wild Wing"; the Duck's mascot riding on the back with an American Flag for their third ovation from the crowd that night!

The event that was the most true to the spirit of the evening, however, was when the Anaheim Ducks took time to honor Mr. Kenn Miller (SFA CH. 78) for his great service to his nation with a very unique award, constructed from Plexiglass from the boards of the rink which is engraved and imbedded into a hockey puck for a stand. A sold-out crowd rose to their feet in honor of Mr. Miller who served as the evening's ambassador for both Veterans Day and Remembrance Day for our northern brothers and sisters

About Kenn Miller

During 1967, 1968, and 1969, Kenn Miller served in Vietnam with all three of the Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol and Ranger units attached to the 101st Airborne. He is the author of the novel, *Tiger the LURP Dog*, and the second book of the *Six Silent Men* historical trilogy, and is a founding member of the 75th Ranger Regiment Association and an active associate member of Special Forces Association Chapter 78. After active duty in the US Army, he studied Chinese language at National Taiwan Normal University, Anthropology and Archaeology at National Taiwan University, and history and English literature at the University of Michigan. He and his wife, Sheila, live in San Gabriel, California, and have two grown children. Now semi-retired, he has worked as a teacher, editor, ghostwriter, and English/Mandarin interpreter and translator. He is enormously proud of having served his country in combat and feels most alive when in the company of his fellow veterans. ❖



Top: Kenn Miller received an award of recognition from the Ducks Hockey Team at their Military Appreciation Night, Nov. 11, Honda Center.

Bottom left: Soldiers from Company A, 5th Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group (Airborne) and Special Operations Detachment North (Airborne) conducting an Australian style rappel from the ceiling of the Honda Center.

Photos courtesy of the Anaheim Ducks. Visit ducks.nhl.com to view more of the event photos.





SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78 CHRISTMAS PARTY 2015

SATURDAY DECEMBER 19TH, 2015

BAHIA CORINTHIAN YACHT CLUB
NEWPORT BEACH, CA

Special Forces Association Chapter 78 will be having its annual Christmas Dinner on Saturday December 19th, 2015 at the Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club in Newport Beach, CA. We are limited to 105 persons who can attend and we need your confirmations back to us if you are planning to attend no later than 12/14/15. This is a great event which includes a great buffet dinner; we will also have entertainment, a raffle and the Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade will also make a pass by the Yacht Club for a great viewing experience.

Please send the confirmation form below to the address listed along with your check for \$30 per person.

_____ I will be attending the Chapter 78 Christmas Party

Chapter Member Attending: _____

Number of Guests (including yourself): _____

\$30.00 x _____ = _____

Please mail check for this amount payable to SFA 78
to the Chapter President at:
Bruce Long
19741 Long Branch Way
Corona, CA 92881

