



THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SENTINEL

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Presidents Page

USASOC Red, Black Ball Presents
First Major General Singlaub Award

MAT (Mobile Advisory Team)

5th SFG(A) Beret Flash
Changeover Ceremony

IN MEMORIAM — James L. Weldon





Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Chapter 78 long time member Jim Weldon passed away on February 10, 2016 in Corpus Christi, Texas. Jim moved to be closer to his family about six years ago leaving many friends behind in the chapter. Before his move home, he was very active in our chapter and helped organize meetings and arrange for breakfast at the VFW and was known to help cook when necessary.

Jim Weldon was in the Special Forces Medical Class 300 – F – 1, class 101 at Brook Army Medical Center, completing that phase of training in May 1966. He made many friends in his class including John Padgett and Michael Fairlie to whom he remained close throughout his life.

Jim pursued a career and retired as a supervisor of Boeing Aircraft Corporation in Long Beach, California. Prior to his retirement he invited several members of the chapter to include Terry Cagnolatti on a tour of the facility. Mark Miller and Jim spent many afternoons together discussing the days of their tour in Vietnam. Jim was a golfer and played a round with 'Tiger' Woods father on several occasions on Orange County courses.

Special Forces Camp A-433 in IV Corps Vietnam was home to Jim for a year where he provided medical care to team members, the LLDB, and indigenous soldiers both while in camp and on combat operations. Since he was in the swampy delta he spent many days on boats patrolling and transporting the indigenous soldiers. A-433 was visited by actress LTC (honorary) Martha Ray and Jim toured her around the camp and related several funny stories to chapter members she told him.

On Tuesday, February 16, 2016 Jim Weldon was interred at the Costal Bend State Veterans Cemetery, Corpus Christi, Texas with full military honors provided by the V.F.W.

Jim is survived by his wife Linda and his children. ♦

Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor



Jim with a very happy dog, "Elliot," standing next to the commo bunker in camp A-433

IN THIS ISSUE:

Presidents Page.....	1
USASOC Red, Black Ball Presents	
First Major General Singlaub Award	2
MAT (Mobile Advisory Team)	3
5th SFG(A) Beret Flash Changeover Ceremony.....	5
IN MEMORIAM — James L. Weldon	6

COVER PHOTO: Retired MG John K. Singlaub, former Office of Strategic Services officer and founding member of the Central Intelligence Agency, gets his Special Forces tab pinned on his chest by LT GEN Kenneth Tovo, U.S. Army Special Operations Command commander, during a special ceremony held at the 2016 USASOC Red and Black Ball, Feb. 20, 2016. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Kyle Fisch/Released, USASOC Public Affairs)

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THE PRESIDENTS PAGE



Bruce Long
President SFA 78

PRESIDENTS COLUMN MARCH 2016

Our business and Chapter meeting was conducted at **Richard Simonian's** office located in the city of Orange. Richard is also the new Chapter treasurer, a position he has held before. Breakfast was provided by Panera Bread compliments of Richard.

Our business meeting started at 0900 hrs and was followed by our regular Chapter meeting at 1000 hrs. A total number of fifteen members attended.

The Chapter membership unanimously agreed to have our next Chapter meeting at the *Planes of Fame* museum located at the Chino Airport. It was also agreed we would have our April meeting on the last Saturday of the month, which is the 30th, so that the Chapter membership and family members could attend the annual *Planes of Fame Air Show*.

Additional information will follow at a later time.

I spoke with Scott Jones, General Manager for the Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club, and it was agreed that we could start our Chapter meeting / Christmas party at 1600 hrs. This year's Christmas Dinner / Party is already reserved for December 17, 2016. Dinner is always at 1800 hrs followed by the boat parade at 1900 hrs, which last until 1930 hrs. Entertainment will be provided by Jaxx & Jacobson and will follow the Boat Parade. A flyer along with their bio will be sent out to all Chapter members.

The CSUF ROTC Military Obstacle Course will holding the opening ceremony on April 22nd. The time has not been set, but it will be in the A.M. As soon as it's confirmed, I will put out the word. I really would like to see a big turnout of Chapter members for this event, so please mark you calendars. Dress for this event will SFA Chapter 78 black polo shirts, dark slacks with bloused jump boots (*just kidding*) and berets.

As most of you know the 2016 SFA convention will be held in Jacksonville, Florida. One of the big events will be *Operation Green Beret Hero* honoring Green Beret Medal of Honor Recipients, and is listed in the current *DROP* magazine. I suggested that the Chapter make a contribution to help defray their costs for attending the convention. I recommended that the Chapter make a donation. After a short discussion, a unanimous vote was taken and passed. Therefore, the Chapter will make a donation of \$1,200 making the Chapter a Platinum Donor.

Jim Duffy and I will be attending the June 12 -19 June convention.

Jim Duffy also commented that this is probably one the best organized conventions and will be well attended. I highly recommended to the Chapter member present, and also to those who read my column, to try and attend.

I reminded all chapter members of the upcoming 5th Group Change of Flash ceremony to be held on March 23rd at Ft Campbell, KY. Flyers have sent out to all Chapter members.

Obituary — Sad to advise the passing of **Jim Weldon**, a 5th Group SF Medic who served in Vietnam and was one of the early SFA Chapter members. Flowers in the name of Chapter 78 were sent to the Coastal Bend State Veteran's Cemetery in Corpus Christi, Texas. Services were held on February 16, 2016.

Jim Duffy has been having his share of medical issues and has undergone several procedures over the last couple of months, and he will continue to do so. Jim's a tough "old bird" and is the mainstay of the Chapter.

Dave Thomas LTC (Ret) is finally home after a three month stay in the hospital. Dave is the owner of 'Special Forces Gear' (check out his website at specialforces.com) and has been a big supporter of our Chapter, and is a Chapter member. Dave has donated countless T-shirts to our Christmas parties and special events over the years. Hang in there Dave!

The Chapter also voted on supplying pocket size UCMJ books to twenty-six CSUF ROTC graduating cadets for 2016.

Ed Barrett, our official ROTC awards coordinator for the different universities throughout Southern CA, passed out a signup list for the upcoming ROTC graduations. **Don Deatherage**, our new VP, will be reviewing the possibility of obtaining additional awards for graduating cadets who are considering a career in Special Forces.

A couple of weeks ago I sent out an email to all Chapter members that was forwarded to me by **John Joyce**, our outgoing Treasurer. That email contained information on helping any and all Chapter members who may be having trouble with their VA claims, disabilities, or who may be considering appeal process. In case you missed it, here's the information again.

<https://www.facebook.com/hillandponton/pst/976857429056240>

As usual, please feel free to contact me. ♦

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

USASOC RED, BLACK BALL PRESENTS FIRST MAJOR GENERAL SINGLAUB AWARD

By Sgt. Kyle Fisch, USASOC Public Affairs, www.army.mil ([http://www.army.mil/article/162881/USASOC Red Black Ball presents first Maj Gen Singlaub Award](http://www.army.mil/article/162881/USASOC_Red_Black_Ball_presents_first_Maj_Gen_Singlaub_Award)), February 24, 2016.

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — An award created in honor and recognition of retired U.S. Army Major General John K. Singlaub's courageous actions on and off the battlefield as well as his significant contributions to U.S. Army Special Operations Forces, was presented to a deserving operator during the U.S. Army Special Operations Command Red and Black Ball, on February 20, 2016.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 George A. Valdez, a team sergeant with 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne), was recognized as the first recipient of the award during the inaugural presentation ceremony.

"Valdez distinguished himself during six combat and two operational deployments spanning Iraq, Afghanistan, El Salvador, and other locations. During his most recent deployment to Afghanistan, Valdez successfully led his Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha through more than 15 firefights and the disarming of 82 IED's (Improvised Explosive Devices) without the loss of a single Soldier," Horton said.

This award will be presented annually to deserving recipients who exemplify the Army Special Operations Forces Next traits, the ARSOF promise, and demonstrate an unwavering commitment to bettering ARSOF.

"The award recipient receives a rosewood plaque with a two-dimensional medallion bearing the raised likeness of MG. Singlaub, donated by the Special Operations Association, and a USASOC certificate recognizing him as this year's Major General Singlaub Award winner," said CAPT Kenneth T. Horton, USASOC DCS G-1 Personnel Operations Division. "In addition his name will be engraved on a command plaque displayed in the USASOC Headquarters building commemorating all future winners of the award."

Among his many accomplishments listed during the USASOC Ball, Valdez is described by Horton as a "dynamic, innovative, and adaptive leader that serves as an outstanding representative of the entire Army Special Operations Community."

Regarded as the most significant event of the night, the Singlaub Award presentation was extremely unique because it was presented by Singlaub himself who was 94 at the time of the presentation.

As COL Miguel A. Correa, Chief of Staff for USASOC, spoke about some of the characteristics of Singlaub's, saying he is "a very spry 94 years old because earlier this morning he challenged me to a push-up competition." Though it says a lot about his character, that is not what makes Singlaub such a remarkable leader and Soldier.

"MG Singlaub is a legend among SOF warriors, a forefather of the modern day Green Beret, and has had a long and distinguished ca-



Retired MG John K. Singlaub, former OSS officer and founding member of the CIA, presents the inaugural award named after himself to CW02 George A. Valdez, a Team Sergeant with 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne). Photo Credit: Sgt. Kyle Fisch, USASOC Public Affairs

reer and history in Special Operations. He served in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in WWII in both France and China," Correa added. "During the Korean War, he helped to create the Ranger Training Center at Fort Benning, GA, served with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and commanded an infantry battalion. In Vietnam, he commanded the military assistance command Vietnam-Studies and Observation Group (MACVSOG)."

It's events like parachuting into Nazi-Occupied France during World War II, on a mission to help organize and re-supply resistance elements behind enemy lines to fight back, while knowing that if captured, he was likely to be tortured and killed that are a true testament of his character, service, and his merit for the creation of this award in his honor.

"Every day the Luftwaffe would come and bomb us. So I sent a message complaining about this and got an answer back a day later saying 'according to you, you are receiving more air-attacks than the forces that landed in Normandy,' Singlaub said. "Which of course was true, because the forces that landed in Normandy, didn't land until the Luftwaffe had been driven in to where we were."

Despite his experiences in WWII, Singlaub still believes in the 'run towards the gunfire' mentality, saying: "Go to the sound of the cannon and solve the problem on the battlefield, don't worry about your career it'll take care of itself if you survive." ♦



MAT

(Mobile Advisory Team)



Gary Macnamara

By Gary L. Macnamara LTC, IN USAR (R)

Many of us are familiar with the war in Vietnam through books, magazines and movies. We have seen the special operations of the Green Berets, Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols (LRRP) and the conventional Army and United States Marine units. Some even have knowledge of the Military Advisory Command (MACV) Vietnam advisors. However, very few people are aware of the MACV Mobile Advisory Teams (MAT).

With the “Vietnamization” of the War in Vietnam a need was identified for advisory personnel to assist and support the local hamlet Provincial and District militias, also known as Regional Forces (RF) and Popular Forces (PF). The size of these militias could vary from squad to company size. In 1967, there were 108 American advisors. One year later there were 2,243 military advisors. Much of this growth came from the establishment of the Mobile Advisory Teams (MAT). In I Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ) the United States Marine Corps established a similar program called the “Combined Action Platoon” organized around an infantry squad.

In October-November 1968 the 1st Air Cavalry Division (Airmobile) redeployed from northern I CORPS to III CORPS with the Division Headquarters at Phouc Vinh, approximately 60 northwest of Saigon. While at Phouc Vinh, I was assigned to the 2nd BN 5th CAV as the BN S-2. I received orders to report to the Advisor’s School at Di An (Pronounced Zi An.) on 15 Jan 69 for further assignment to a Mobile Advisory Team. The Advisor Course lasted about 16 days and we had some Vietnamese language training, weapons training on some of the older United States weapons such as the BAR, the 1919A6 machine guns and Vietnamese organization. Upon graduation we were assigned to a MAT Team. The team consisted of a Team Commander (CAPT or 1ST LT), A Team XO (LT), Senior Team Sergeant (SSG or SFC), Weapons Sergeant (SGT) and a Team Medic (E-4/E-5) and a Vietnamese Interpreter.

From the Advisor’s School I was assigned as the MAT Team Leader for MAT III-15. I was assigned to III Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ) to Binh Long Province. Binh Long Province was on the Cambodian Border just north of the “Parrot’s Beak” and the “Angel’s Wing”. There were two other MAT teams assigned to Binh Long Province. From my experience as a BN S-2, I knew that there were three main infiltration routes going right through the Province following the N/S route 13 from Cambodia. The Provincial Capitol was An Loc and the other major center was Loc Ninh. MSG Roy Benavides would be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions in 1967 near the Special Forces Camp at Loc Ninh. To the extreme south of the Province was the quiet town of Chon Thanh.

We did not have too many camps, only three small compounds that I can remember. I had one assignment outside Loc Ninh



A Regional Forces (RF) platoon receives training on an M60 machine gun from Mobile Advisory Team (MAT) personnel.
(Texas Tech University Vietnam Virtual Archive)

where we had no compound within which to lay our heads. We were advising a Popular Force squad. One of their missions was to provide security for the village square while the villagers watched the Government of Vietnam television program. This particular squad was very good and often made contact with local VC forces. On one night the VC tried to booby trap a house but I called in mortars from the Los Ninh Special Forces camp and the enemy fled. I blew the 4.2" mortar round, upon which they had been working, in place. It would have been devastating if we had occupied that house. Later I found out that there was a 10,000 piaster reward on our heads for any American advisor.

At the village level MAT teams could also provide real time and updated intelligence to assist in rating village security. The Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) was probably one of the major weaknesses in the entire advisory effort. Once a village was deemed secure, the HES rating rarely changed. Since many Province and District advisors were on six to eight month tours, how could they report that their villages were less secure on their watch? It might reflect poorly on an efficiency report. On the other hand, as a MAT team leader, I had to deal with the denial. LTC Corson, USMC, wrote a fine book on this subject called *The Betrayal*.

Since we were advisors, we attempted to get the Vietnamese logistics system to work for the supported units. Many things could be had in Vietnam for a price and logistics was part of that trade. Our team bartered, traded and appropriated what we needed to supply our mission and our counterparts. The 1st Air CAV Division had a logistics base at Quan Loi and we were frequent visitors to their logistic sites, in uniforms with no names and no insignia. We scrounged food, ammunition, claymore mines and whatever else we needed to accomplish the mission.

One of my assignments was to Village 5, one of the most northernmost outposts still in Vietnam before one reached Cambodia. My immediate superior was the District Advisor at Loc Ninh, MAJ Pena, AD (that is right Air Defense). I advised the Major that I would be outside US artillery range should I need help. I was informed that the Vietnamese artillery would shoot for me. Despite my best efforts I was unable to convince him that it was unsafe not to have US artillery in support. There are certain times when you play "you bet your bars" and this was one of them. I went to the Province Senior Advisor, Richard Parkinson, and voiced my concerns. Fortunately he agreed with me and the 1st CAV moved a battery of 105 mm howitzers to Loc Ninh.

On the first night in Village 5 with a Regional Force company in their small compound, we were attacked with a 107 MM rocket from NVA/VC forces. The rocket exploded in a tree in front of the old French rubber plantation overseer's house and a number of Vietnamese were wounded. The RF "company" had their families with them and our first task was to med-evac the wounded soldiers and family members from a landing zone in the town square. My team Sergeant provided security on the other side of the town square. Three days later I had 10,000 sandbags filled and two bunkers with steel planking in the overhead. I also had chain link

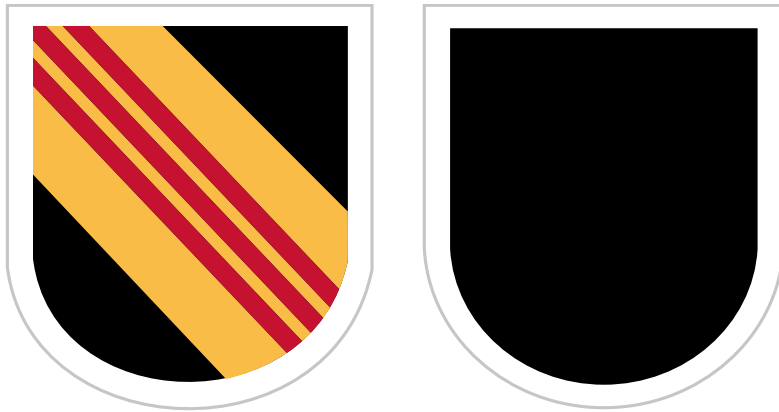
fence deployed around the building to detonate any RPG rounds. We also had another unpleasant surprise. Nominally my counterpart had 100 men in his company, but despite my effort and my team Sergeant's efforts we could not come up with a count over 60. My counterpart was collecting the pay for 100 men and only had 60 on site. This type of corruption was not uncommon.

Despite the recent attack and the shortage of men in the perimeter, we coordinated for some local patrols and made contact with the US unit in the area, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR), then commanded by COL Patton (General George Patton's son). The 11th ACR made major contact with an enemy force just north and west of our position. The area was comprised of rubber plantations so visibility was good and we could maneuver. Unfortunately if we destroyed any rubber trees, we had to reimburse the French plantation. My counter-fire on our first night must have cost the US government some money for rubber trees but the 36 rounds of artillery also resulted in blood trails. A few days after this attack I was able to arrange a MEDCAP and food distribution for the villagers. The 11 ACR provided medics to examine the villagers and left-over "mermited" food was distributed to the villagers. If one wants to develop rapport, just feed their children. I never worried about betrayal from the villagers.

In March 1969 while I was on R&R in Thailand, MAT III-13 "borrowed" my interpreter, Tony Nguyen. Tony was the best interpreter in the province. The next morning I planned to get Tony back. Unfortunately tragedy struck. We saw tracers and heard gunfire coming from the south near Chon Thanh. Tony and four members of the team were on site. We saw Cobra helicopters fire suppressive fire. The radio transmissions were not very encouraging. There weren't any. A reaction force was ordered to the compound but never made it. We later learned that both LTs, one sergeant and Tony were killed, when gasoline bombs were thrown into their bunker. For some reason their counterpart had sold them out. Our teams were pulled in to the Province compound but redeployed after two weeks. My next assignment was to an RF company on a bridge between Loc Ninh and An Loc. Each morning a road clearing operations was conducted to make sure the road had not been booby-trapped. Often our team got their mail thrown out the window of a "Bird Dog" aircraft. As dangerous as this assignment was I was able to call in defensive artillery concentrations very close to our positions. Somehow we survived this and other assignments.

Since we lived with the Vietnamese and literally worked beside them we developed some good relationships. The War was much more personal for us. We were "Co Van My" – American advisors. In the mornings I would conduct a walk around the small compound to see if there were any breeches in the fire. There was a little Vietnamese boy named Moui, who would take my hand or I would put him on my shoulders as I made my rounds. I often wonder what ever happened to him. When one separates out the politics, it is about people and their desire to be free. Upon reflection this was part of my motivation for joining Special Forces. Our motto says it all, "*De oppresso Liber.*"

To the officers and men of MAT III-13, I dedicate this article. ♦



5TH SFG(A) BERET FLASH CHANGEVER CEREMONY

5th SFG (A) Public Affairs Office (2015). 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) to conduct Beret Flash Changeover Ceremony [Press release] Retrieved from <http://www.sfa19.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/5th-Flash-Ceremony.pdf>

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. – The 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) will conduct a Beret Flash Changeover Ceremony on Wednesday, March 23, 2016 at Fort Campbell, Ky.

Returning to the Vietnam beret flash, worn by the 5th SFG(A) between 1964 and 1985, acknowledges the Group's extensive history in the Vietnam War, the first large scale combat employment of U.S. Army Special Forces.

"I am proud to announce that the 5th Special Forces Group will honor our history by officially changing the unit's beret flash back to the one utilized by 5th Group during the Vietnam War," said COL Kevin Leahy, commander of the 5th SFG(A). "The Group's 20 Congressional Medal of Honor and three Australian Victoria Cross recipients are a testament to the courage and honor of those trail blazers.

Returning the yellow and red stripes to the 5th Group flash honors the Group's history and all of the Special Forces Vietnam veterans who served under 5th Group, including over eight hundred 5th Group Soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice." Additionally, said COL Leahy, "This change simply returns stripes to our current flash, it takes nothing away. This change ties the history of the group

in Vietnam to our more recent history in the Gulf War, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq and the continuing battle against ISIL."

According to official Army records, in October, 1964, the 5th SFG(A) Commander, COL John H. Spears, petitioned the Department of the Army to officially approve a modified 5th SFG(A) flash with diagonal yellow and red stripes. These stripes were added to the black and white 5th SFG(A) flash to represent 1st and 7th Special Forces Groups, which sent teams to Vietnam in the early days of the conflict. Additionally, the yellow and red stripes were the same colors as the Republic of Vietnam flag and served to honor Group's commitment to its Vietnamese and Montagnard partners. The request was approved in December 1964.

An official time for the ceremony will be provided in a subsequent correspondence. If you have any questions regarding the ceremony please feel free to contact the 5th Special Forces Group's Public Affairs Office via email 5SFG_Flashchange@ahqb.soc.mil or the Special Forces Association Chapter 38 via email at secretary@sfa38.org.

The original 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) flash (left) consists of a black background with a 1/8" white border. The Vietnam-era flash adds a 3/4" yellow stripe of which contains three smaller red stripes spaced accordingly from the center of the thicker yellow stripe; the yellow being representative of the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) and the red for the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne). ❖



Mike Keele at L.A. Racing. He is a very fast driver in these Pro Cars.



Lonny Holmes going for the great shot of A Company, 19th SF. Taken during the last parachute jump.

IN MEMORIAM

JAMES L. WELDON

JUNE 17, 1941 – FEBRUARY 10, 2016



1st ROW
DUKE, M. S.
HAHN, R. L.
ZIMMERMAN, S. F.
HULL, W. F.
WOOD, J. F.
EVEE, K. G.
FAIRLIE, M. J.
DANIEL, D. E.

2nd ROW
JOHANSEN, R. B.
WRIGHT, G.
JACKETT, B.
MOYE, J. R.
PATTERSON, C. W., JR.
BLUMENSTEIN, R. R.
DREILING, R. N.
LITTLE, W. L.
RODRIGUEZ, F. X.



BARO, G. J., COLONEL
COMMANDANT

SPECIAL FORCES AIDMEN (AIDMEN)
100 - F + 1 CLASS 101
MEDICAL FIELD SERVICE SCHOOL
BROOKS ARMY MEDICAL CENTER
FORT SAM HOUSTON, TEXAS
MAY 1966

PHOTOGRAPH
BY: C. J. & G. J. W. L. W.
BY: J. L. W. L. W.



COL. F. A. SEAMAN
ASST. COMMANDANT

3rd ROW
BROWN, S. D.
PALMER, J. R.
JUD, S. A.
DAWKINS, B.
RAMSEY, J. D.
BOYLE, R. A.
COLYER, W. E.
AHLQUIST, J.
LITTON, D. O.

4th ROW
BOCK, R. L.
SAUER, J. M.
WELDON, J. L.
DUNLAP, C. E.
PADGETT, J. E.
JOHNSON, B. W.
GRAVES, S. L.
STARK
WINCHESTER, J.
FOOTE, S. D.

1 Maggie (Martha Ray) and Jim, December 1967 Camp A-433, South Vietnam

2 Jim standing near the backdoor of the Camp A-433 dispensary

3 Jim at the south perimeter of Camp A-433, in the background, on both sides, are machine gun bunkers

4 Fort Sam Class SF Medic Class, Jim Weldon fourth row, 3rd left