



THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SENTINEL

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78
NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

THE LTC FRANK J. DALLAS CHAPTER

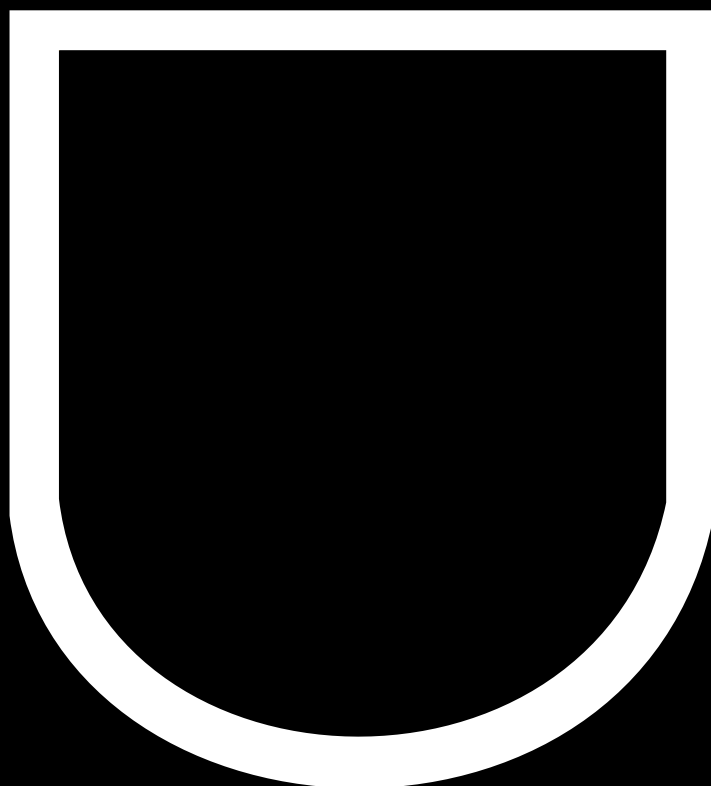
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APRIL 2016



ORIGINAL

NEW



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Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

5th Special Forces Group Returns to Vietnam Era Flash

Wednesday, March 23 marks a historically significant date for all Green Berets with the 5th Special Forces Group's return to the beret flash of the Vietnam era. This ceremony was held at Gabriel Field*, 5th SFG(A) Headquarters, Fort Campbell, Kentucky and was led by Group Commander, COL Kevin Leahy and attended by Chief of Staff of the Army GEN Mark Milley, MG Jack Singlaub and many 5th SFGA Vietnam era Green Berets. Brad Welker and John "Tilt" Meyer represented Chapter 78 and took several nice photographs.

MAJ John Padgett (retired) pens a story in this issue of the Sentinel on the "Flash Change Ceremony" and presents a historical background on the flash as well as the major participants of the day's event.

The original flash was black with a white border when the 5th SF Group was activated in 1961. When the group rotated to Vietnam in November 1964 they adopted the stripes and color combination of the 1st and 7th Special Forces Groups, which had rotated SF A-teams to Vietnam, but were felt by many Green Berets of the era to represent the Vietnam Flag as the background flash design. In 1985 under the direction of then group commander, COL James Guest 5th SF Group reverted to the original flash.

If you look closely at the photograph in this issue of GEN Milley and MG Singlaub during the cake cutting ceremony in this issue you will notice that GEN (4 star) Milley is wearing his original Green Beret from the time when he was an A-team commander with "Captain Bars." MG Singlaub is wearing GEN Milley's Beret with Four Stars, as suggested by GEN Milley.

MAJ John Padgett (retired) pens a story in this issue of the Sentinel on the "Flash Change Ceremony" and presents a historical background on the flash as well as the major participants of the day's event.

*Gabriel Field, Fort Campbell, KY is named in honor of SP5 James P. Gabriel a Green Beret who was killed in Vietnam in 1962. At Fort Bragg, NC, the Gabriel Demonstration Area was also named for this Special Forces hero and was where LTG then BG William P. Yarborough met with President John F. Kennedy on October 12, 1961, thus setting the stage for the President to authorize SF to wear the Green Beret. ♦

Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor

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COVER: 5th Special Forces Group officially changed the unit's beret flash back to the one utilized by 5th Group during the Vietnam War.

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THE PRESIDENTS PAGE



Bruce Long
President SFA 78

PRESIDENTS COLUMN APRIL 2016

Our Business Breakfast meeting was conducted at approximately 0830 hrs at Flo's Airport Café located right next to the Chino Airport. The food and service was excellent.

We then moved to the Planes of Fame museum, and conducted our Chapter meeting in a private conference room with real movie style seats.

Our regular Chapter meeting started at 0930 hrs and was completed at 1030 hrs.

The main topic of discussion was the upcoming dedication of the CSUF ROTC Military obstacle course on April 22, 2016 at 1000 hrs. The Chapter agreed that those who attend will wear Chapter polo shirts. **Richard Simonian** volunteered to purchase new polo shirts from his supplier. A list was prepared for those who plan to be in attendance, and has been forwarded.

It was also agreed that this dedication would be videotaped so that it can be added to our SFA Chapter web site. Details to be worked out with Richard Simonian and your president.

The upcoming Chino Air Show starts on April 29th. This event was discussed in detail, specifically the logistics for Chapter members, the agreement that family and guests would also be allowed to attend, and be able to drive onto the air field and park next to Richard's hanger. Our Chapter meeting will be abbreviated in the interest of family and guests, brunch will also be provided, compliments of Richard.

The details for the parking on April 30 will be covered in a separate email, and will be sent out by your President after further details can be formulated in writing.

The Chapter members in attendance were then given a private tour by the Planes of Fame museum staff. The tour lasted approximately two hours.

Lonny Holmes, our Sentinel Editor, took a lot of pictures which you will see in the pages of this month's Sentinel.

I believe that I speak for all of us in attendance that the tour was not only spectacular, but very informative. It should also be noted that the staff and the people who work on restoring the aircraft are all volunteers.

The Chapter also made a donation of \$250.00 to the Planes of Fame museum.

Next month in the Presidents Column, I hope to provide some insight in dealing with the VA to include some helpful information.

If you or anyone you know is having problems with obtaining benefits from VA and is tired of dealing with the bureaucracy, you might want to check out the below web site.

<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

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

APRIL 30, 2016

at the

Planes of Fame Air Museum

Chino Airport

7000 Merrill Ave., #17

Chino, CA 91710

*Parking instructions will be emailed
to Chapter members prior to the event date*





5TH SPECIAL FORCES GROUP (AIRBORNE) FLASH CHANGE



Major John Padgett

By Major John Padgett

It had been a long time coming. When it did, the day dawned gray, overcast and cold, as if to mark the solemnity of the event. After many years, the 5th SFG(A) was returning to the flash worn by the group's soldiers who served in Viet Nam. During the group's Viet Nam service, the Republic of Viet Nam (RVN) flag was worn on the flash in a diagonal fashion from top left of the black background to the bottom right. The group returned with its colors to the United States in March 1971 but the RVN flag was removed in January 1985, at the request of COL James Guest. The flash reverted to its pre-Viet Nam colors of black trimmed in white.

Some veterans of the 5th SFG(A) in Viet Nam were disappointed at the flag's removal from the flash. It was as if the Army did not recognize SF's Viet Nam service after the Communists overran the country in 1975, despite all of the American and indigenous lives lost and treasure invested. The current 5th Group commander, COL Kevin Leahy, didn't see it that way. Recognizing the value of tradition, and wanting to recognize the contributions of the Viet Nam SF soldiers, he received permission from his boss, LTG Tovo, USASOC, to return the RVN flag. The approval was received in two words; "Do it".

On 23 March 2016, in a ceremony at Gabriel Field, Ft. Campbell, KY, the 5th Group reinstated the Viet Nam era flash in order to acknowledge the group's history, contribution of the group's veterans, and the 785 SF soldiers KIA in that war. The addition of the RVN flag to the previous black flash trimmed in white also ties the group's Viet Nam history to its recent contributions in the Middle East and elsewhere.

The 5th SFG(A), minus deployed units, stood in formation on the field, while the group's commander and GEN Mark Milley, the Army Chief of Staff, himself a former A detachment commander, gave a brief review of the unit's history and accomplishments. A highlight was the arrival of MG John "Jack" Singlaub on the field in a mint VN era M151 jeep. MG Singlaub has a rich history in special operations, starting with the OSS Jedburg teams in WWII, through his command of Military Assistance Command Viet Nam, Special Operations Group (MACV/SOG). General Jack presented the new flashes to the 5th Group commander, who passed them on to assembled dignitaries.

Standing by in designated areas were 5th Group Viet Nam era veterans from the Special Forces Association and the Special Operations Association. At the word from the 5th Group's commander, the 5th SFG(A) Viet Nam veterans took the field to present the new,

yet old, flashes to the currently serving SF soldiers. It was a poignant and moving ceremony.

Following the ceremony, refreshments were served, giving veterans and currently serving soldiers a chance to meet and exchange experiences (read "war stories"). There were also reunions of SF veterans who had not seen each other for decades. Some veterans gave interviews to add their stories to the ongoing history of the 5th SFG(A).

As the morning drew to a close, SF soldiers new and old agreed to keep in touch, and it is fair to say that most felt a renewed connection and dedication.

Kudos to SF Assn Chapter 38 for helping make the ceremony a success, as well as for their hospitality and logistical support. Well done, Gentlemen. ♦

Major John Padgett

John Padgett was a Special Forces Medic and was assigned to Vietnam in April 1967 where he served on several A-teams, then on the II Corps Mobile Strike Force in Qui Nhon. In July of 1969 he rotated to Thailand serving on an A-team at Nong Takoo with the 46 SF Company. Returning to Vietnam in July 1970 where he was medical supervisor for SOA/CCC (MACV-SOG) in Kontum and then helped train and lead C and D Companies Exploitation Force.

Recalled to active duty in 2003 Major Padgett served as public health team chief for the 490th Civil Affairs Bn in Baghdad, Iraq. He retired after seven years active duty and 33 years reserves. John's awards include the Bronze Star w/V, five OLCs, ARCOM w/V three OLCs, Air Medal w/V, the Combat Medical Badge, the Military Order of Medical Merit, and the El Salvador Combat Star.

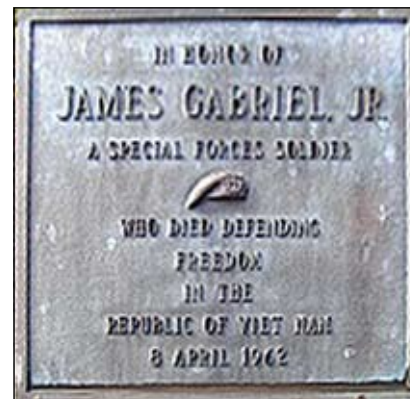
Following Vietnam John completed physician assistant training at the University of Washington. He holds a doctorate in Health Science and is the Emeritus Founding Professor, Touro University Nevada. Currently John is the Vice President, Refugee Relief International, Inc.



IMAGES FROM THE 5TH SPECIAL FORCES GROUP FLASH CHANGE CEREMONY



**23 March 2016
Gabriel Field
Ft. Campbell, KY**



What an incredible day it was to be a part of a ceremony for this fine organization. The Vietnam era beret flash was reinstated today in order to acknowledge the 5th SFG (A)'s history in the Vietnam War, the 785 Special Forces Soldiers that were lost in the conflict, and the countless contributions of the Group's Vietnam veterans. The Soldiers of the 5th Special Forces Group carry a heavy rucksack and since Vietnam, have been out on point. De Oppresso Liber!

General Mark A. Milley

(GEN Mark A. Milley, 2016, March 23, retrieved from <http://facebook.com>)

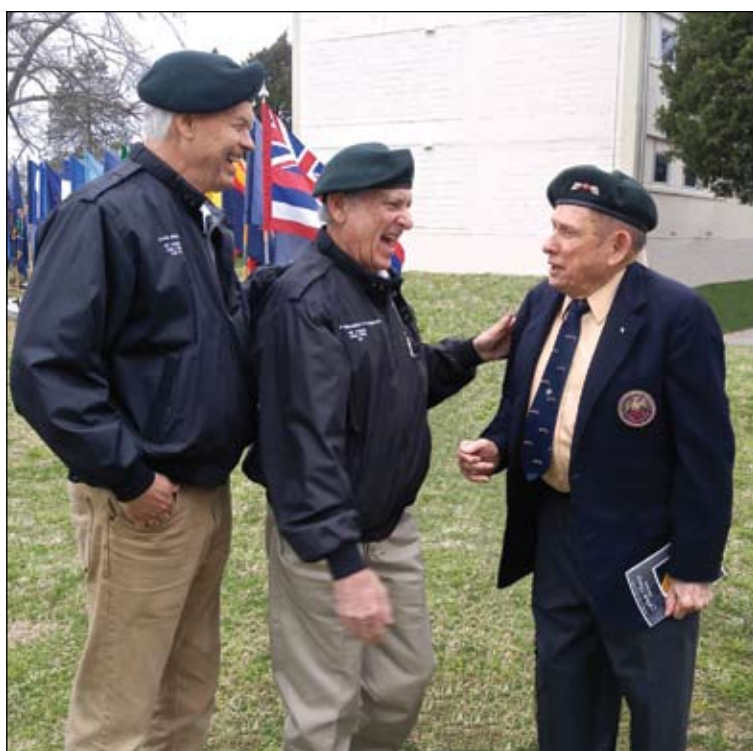


Top left and right, 5th Special Forces Group flash change ceremony at Fort Campbell.

Center right, retired MG John Singlaub arriving in Vietnam era M-151 Jeep where he was greeted by GEN Mark Milley, Army Chief of Staff.

Below left, MG Singlaub (wearing GEN Milley's four star beret) and GEN Milley, wearing his Captain's beret which he wore as an officer in 5th Special Forces Group, prepare to cut cake after the flash change ceremony. The 5th Special Forces Group Commander, COL Kevin Leahy is on the left. Photo by John Meyer

Below right, John "Tilt" Meyer and Doug Le Tourneau, his team mate from MACV-SOG, with MG Singlaub. Photo by Brad Welker





Chapter 78 Members Conduct Inspection Tour of Planes of Fame Air Museum



Mike Keele

By Mike Keele

Chapter 78's faithful used Saturday, March 19, to conduct an inspection tour of the Planes of Fame Air Museum at the Chino Airport. They were led by President Bruce Long and Vice President Don Deatherage. Among the faithful were Richard Simonian, who has a private pilots license, as does Deatherage. Lonny Holmes brought his trusty Nikon, which never misses a shot, but leaves Lonny out of most of the pictures.

Our arrival was anticipated and we were greeted by the museum's marketing director, Harry Geier, who handed us off to a team of docents who knew the intimate personal history of all these old war birds. One can almost see these men getting their education by stealthily slipping into the darkened hangers at night to listen as the old combatants tell and retell the stories of their youth. Dog fights, anti-aircraft fire, troop transport and med-evac missions.

Among the planes on display were a B-25 Mitchell Bomber, sixteen of which famously made a takeoff from the flight deck of the aircraft Carrier Hornet on April 18, 1942. Heavily laden with bombs and fuel, all sixteen aircraft successfully took off en route to Japan where all sixteen planes successfully dropped their bombs. This was America's first offensive strike of the war against Japan, and it was a huge morale booster for America and a huge shock to the Japanese, who had been told they were immune to American attack.

Many of the museum's exhibits are war birds from the WWII era, most of which (including their B-25, fly in air shows throughout the year). Among the most popular planes on display are the P-51 Mustangs, which were coincidentally built by the same manufacturer, North American Aviation, in Hawthorne, CA, where the B-25's were built. The Chapter faithful all gathered behind the wing of a gorgeous D-Model P-51 (see photo on page 10) which was all polished up for the up-coming air show at the airport next month.

For us, the most popular plane in the museum's collection had to be an unrestored C-47 like what many of the older members of the Chapter jumped from during their careers. This one is a model which has an enlarged cargo door, something none of the guys could remember having the pleasure of stepping through. The plane was open for inspection, and Richard Simonian took up a position in the door. Richard smiles a lot, but never with the broad grin he had that day. Richard confided that after his first jump, which he was convinced would kill him, his rump hurt. An examination of the painful portion of his derriere revealed a boot print which had been emplaced there when he briefly froze in the doorway.

Sadly and conspicuously missing were examples of the helicopters that we used in Vietnam. In spite of being more than 50 years old, the Hueys are still in high demand all over the world, especially in war-torn countries. The Marines and the Vietnamese Air Force used the H-34, none of which was in evidence among the displays. There was an H-13 sitting forlorn and only partially restored. Even more dispirited looking was the airframe of an H-23 Raven. Not a graceful looking bird when it could fly, it now sits without an engine or rotor blades, abandoned amid piles of disparate parts. In its heyday, the H-23 was the primary training aircraft for fledgling Warrant Officers in the first phase of Army flight school. Now all that is history, but the memories live on. All the guys who went on the tour had fond stories of things like air support from piston driven birds dating from the post WWII period, and later inventions like jet fighters and attack aircraft which could take credit for saving all our butts at one time or another. ❖



Chapter 78 members with Richard Simonian "Standing In The Door" of a WWII C-47 aircraft that (*this one*) actually dropped paratroopers into Normandy France on "D Day" of WWII. Both Richard and Lonny Holmes have many parachute jumps from C-47's.

IMAGES FROM CHAPTER 78 AT PLANES OF FAME AIR MUSEUM, CHINO AIRPORT, CA

Photos by Lonny Holmes



- ❶ C-78 President Bruce Long and Richard Simonian
- ❷ Fleet of ten Ferrari's ready to take Chapter 78 members home after the tour of the Planes of Fame Air Museum... yeah right!
- ❸ American Packard V-12 12 cylinder aircraft engine
- ❹ B-25 bomber
- ❺ Mark Miller and Kenn Miller standing by a propeller of a US WWII B-25 Bomber



6



8



10



7



9



11

6 Stearman PT-17 Kaydet

7 This Howard Hughes movie poster is reminiscent of the movie poster that inspired SGM Schmidt (see the Sentinel December 2015 issue). If you look carefully, you can see the parachute with the pilot nearly standing on the wing.

8 Richard Simonian standing by a US WWII P-40 Fighter Plane. He helped re-build a P-40 in the 1950's.

9 US WWII B-17 4 Engine Bomber which actually bombed Germany and was used in two recent movies.

10 US WWII P-51 Mustang Fighter Plane (This one flies, and fast)

11 Thad Gembacz — only shot of him since he had to leave early.



A PROUD HERITAGE AND BRAIDED LINEAGE – A TANGLED LINEAGE



Kenn Miller

By Kenn Miller

Every first day of February, I quietly celebrate the 1 Feb 1969 birthday of the 75th Rangers. That's the day that the TO&E Long Range Patrol companies became lettered companies of the 75th Ranger Infantry Regiment. In what

seems to be an intended and egregious insult to Lurp/Rangers of the Vietnam War, the Fort Benning establishment cites either 1974 (when 1/75 and 2/75 were activated), or 1984 (when 3/75 and the Regimental Headquarters of the 75th Rangers were activated) as the beginning of the 75th Rangers. This is based on the nitpicking technicality that despite shared lineage, mottoes, battle honors, numerical designation, distinguishing unit insignia, and basic scroll design, the word "infantry" makes the 75th Ranger Infantry Regiment and the 75th Ranger Regiment totally different units. 1 February, 1969, is apparently forgotten by all except for the Lurps who were officially deemed Rangers that day.

I remember the day well, and one of the things that stands out in my memory is the fact that half the guys who gathered around the bulletin board outside the company TOC where the Department of Army orders changing our company from F Company, 58th Infantry (Airborne) (Long Range Patrol) to L Company, 75th Ranger Infantry were posted were puzzled by this new unit's lineage. Almost nobody knew that the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) was Merrill's Marauders, and when that was explained everyone wondered why we weren't given the lineage of the World War II Ranger Battalions and/or the numbered Ranger Infantry Companies of the Korean War. The Commo Platoon Sergeant, a highly respected former SF NCO, explained that the lineage of those units had been given to Special Forces, starting in the early 1950s, and continued as each new Special Forces Group came on line.

Here's an at least a somewhat accurate, though incomplete, history of SF lineage. I'm not an expert, and surely some SENTINEL reader can correct anything I've overlooked or that my sources got

wrong. Online information is scant and perhaps somewhat sketchy, even on US Army websites.

1st SFGA

2nd Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Regiment, 1st Special Service Force.

B Company, 1st Ranger Infantry Battalion (merged into 75th Ranger Regiment lineage, 1986)

3rd SFGA

Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Battalion, 2nd Regiment, 1st Special Service Force

Headquarter and Headquarters Company, 3rd Ranger Infantry Battalion (merged into 75th Ranger Regiment lineage, 1986)

5th SFGA

Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Battalion, 3rd Regiment, 1st Special Service Force.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 5th Ranger Infantry Battalion (merged into 75th Ranger Regiment lineage, 1986)

10th SFGA

4th Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Regiment, 1st Special Service Force

A Company, 2nd Ranger Infantry Battalion (merged into 75th Ranger Regiment lineage, 1986)

77th and 7th SFGA

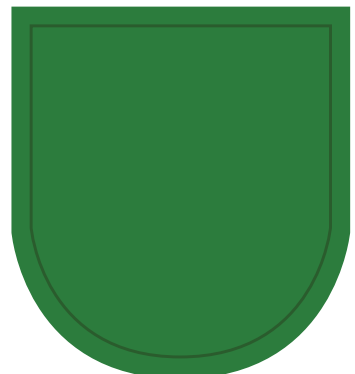
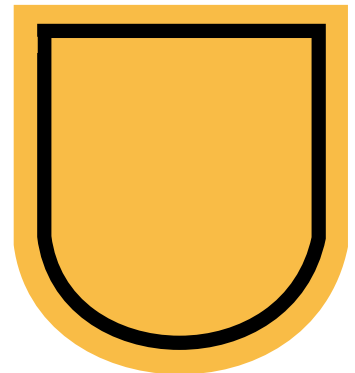
Here is where things really get strange. Among the units assigned to the 77th (and later, the 7th) Special Forces Group were:

1st Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Regiment, 1st Special Service Force

A Company, 1st Ranger Infantry Battalion (WWII)

1st Ranger Infantry Company (Korean War)

With the deactivation of the 7th Special Forces Group, the lineage including these units was apparently given to the 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Infantry when that battalion was activated, and then later returned to Special Forces.



It seems rather clear that despite obvious attempts to straighten things out, the lineage of Special Forces and the Rangers have been tangled, at least since the advent of US Army Special Forces in the early 1950s. Although there is plenty of overlap in mission, training, and personnel, the Special Forces and the Rangers are distinctly different units, with distinctive missions and cultures. The men of these units are very aware of both the similarities and the differences, while the Army's official guardians of lineage are somewhat more confused.

Lineage is an attempt at official history. Heritage goes deeper and is more inclusive. The Army has been extremely reluctant to officially validate the OSS roots of Special Forces on the technicality that the OSS was a civilian/military intelligence and special operations task force, not a recognized Army formation. Although the 1st Special Service Force's direct action combat mission was very close to that of the modern 75th Rangers, I've never encountered an Army Ranger who disputes the 1st Special Service Force's place in the formal lineage of the US Army Special Forces and the Canadian Army's Special Operations Regiment. The crossed arrows insignia; the spearhead shoulder patch; the fact that, American or Canadian, everyone in the unit was serving alongside foreign soldiers speak eloquently for the 1st Special Service Force's place in both the formal lineage and the heritage of US Army Special Forces. In 1983, both American and Canadian veterans of the 1st Special Service Force who had served more 120 days in the unit were awarded the US Army's new Special Forces tab.

Also awarded the Special Forces tab (in 1988) were veterans of the World War II 6th Army Special Reconnaissance Unit commonly known as the "Alamo Scouts." Most historically minded Vietnam War Lurp/Ranger veterans would gladly challenge any Special Forces claim to the Alamo Scouts, which was clearly a predecessor of the Long Range Reconnaissance and Long Range Patrol units from which the original 75th Ranger units were formed in 1969. At first glance — and at second and third glance — assigning the Alamo Scouts a place in the LRP/LRP/Ranger heritage makes sense. The Alamo Scouts were initially tasked with the two traditional Ranger tasks of recon and raids in the Southwest Pacific Theater. But in the liberation of the Philippines, the Alamo Scouts took on a Special Forces role in organizing, training, and leading local guerrilla forces against the Japanese that earned the unit a place in the Special Forces heritage. Though many of them had passed on and the survivors were old men unlikely to ever wear it on their shoulders, Alamo Scouts veterans were authorized the Special Forces tab in 1988. When it comes to recognizing the soldiers who contributed to their lineage and heritage with the award of a coveted cloth tab to mark their combat service, Special Forces is considerably more gracious than the Rangers. Although there are Army Regulations and plenty of precedent allowing for a heritage award of the Ranger tab for combat service, only a very few Lurp/Ranger Vietnam War

veterans who pulled political strings have benefited from those regulations and that precedent.

In a fair and reasonable world, the Alamo Scouts would have an honored place in the heritage and lineage of both the Special Forces and the Rangers. And so, arguably, might the 1st Special Service Force. The World War II and Korean War Ranger and pre-1969 Lurp/Ranger lineage now rightfully belong to the 75th Ranger Regiment. In a fair and reasonable world, the most relevant World War II lineage and heritage for the Special Forces would come from the OSS — but the conventional Army has long quibbled against recognizing this lineage on the grounds that the OSS was a civilian/military intelligence and special operations task force, and not an Army formation.

Though today's Green Berets and Rangers are aware of the differences between the two organizations and their missions, the further back in the history of American military special operations we look, the more the lines between a Ranger and Special Forces heritage begin to blur.



The 75th Ranger Regiment tie sold by Medals of America has a little tag on the back saying that the 75th Ranger Infantry was established in 1756. That must be a reference to Rogers' Rangers, and it seems a bit fanciful. I'm what the Navy would call a "plank owner" of the 75th Ranger Regiment, and I'm only 68 years old. I remember the date not as 1756, but 1969.

Robert Rogers is often considered the father of American Rangers, despite the fact that he was loyal to the English crown in the Revolutionary War. The lineage and heritage of American Rangers and Special Forces gets more and more intimately braided the further back you look. The United

States was still a couple decades away back in 1756, and even a proud and loyal Ranger might well scoff at any claim to US Army lineage that goes back even a couple decades before the birth of the USA. But if the historical roots of American Rangers goes back to Rogers' Rangers, maybe the historical roots of Special Forces go back that far, too. Rogers' Rangers began as a small platoon-sized unit, and expanded to train and field 14 companies, including one company each of Mahican, Mohegun, and Pequot Indians that bear a distinct historical similarity to the Vietnam War CIDG program.

No matter what the official lineages may say, the US Army Rangers and the US Army Special Forces share a common heritage that goes back at least 250 years. Maybe Medals of America ought to also put those little "established 1756" tags on the back of the Special Forces ties they sell. It would reflect a proud history, and a lineage that is not so much tangled as it is braided.

As a graduate of the MACV Recondo School who is grateful for the help SF gave the Lurps and the original 75th Rangers, come next 1 February, I'm going to raise a toast and tip my tan beret to both the Rangers and the Special Forces. We go back a long time together. ❖



Chapter 78 members and a USA WWII P-51 Mustang Fighter Plane

Cadet Expresses Appreciation for Special Forces Association Award

From an email originally addressed to Gary Macnamara:

First and foremost, thank you for honoring me in receiving the prestigious Special Forces Association Award. As a future combat arms officer, it serves great esteem and recognition to my personal development. Although the conversation was short, your wisdom provides great insight on how Army leaders need to lead. If memory serves well, you said leaders need pay



USC Professor of Military Science LTC Chezem,
Cadet Kevin Lee and Gary Macnamara

less attention to the superficiality of what's on paper and concentrate on the welfare of your troops. As cliché as it is, it is a colossal theme that I see gets overlooked.

I plan on having the Army as a career. Along the road, I strive to earn my Ranger and Special Forces tab as one example of how to be leader. Honestly, I believe leadership is all based on intrinsic value and motivation. The fact of caring for your troops and working with others led to the most success in my experience. I am willing to accept failure as only a learning tool.

Once again, thank you for presenting the Special Forces Association Award to me. Hopefully, we can stay connected and I can gain more perspective on how to be a better leader. I recognize that there will a lot of adversity during my leadership role, however, I will tackle the predicaments to the best of my ability alongside with my future team. Thank you and have a wonderful day.

Very Respectfully,

Cadet Kevin Lee

President of PROGRESS - CSUDH Organization for Success and Mental Training

Trojan Battalion, Army Reserve Officer Training Corps
California State University, Dominguez Hills