



# THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SENTINEL

## SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

### The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 12 • DECEMBER 2017



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Guest Speaker: Major (Retired) Jeff Struecker

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# SENTINEL

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## From the Editor

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**COVER:** A P-51 Mustang in the parking lot of the Proud Bird Food Bazaar and Event Center, located on Aviation Blvd. in Los Angeles. Photo by Lonny Holmes, taken while attending the Southern California Gathering of Men event with other Chapter members in November.



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[specialforces78.com](http://specialforces78.com)  
and [sfa78cup.com](http://sfa78cup.com)



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Lonny Holmes  
Sentinel Editor

At the December Chapter 78 Christmas Dinner President Bruce Long will perform his last duties as leader of the chapter when he will oversee the swearing in and seating of the 2018 officers. Bruce Long as our chapter president has made considerable contributions to the chapter in the last four years and to SFA and A Company, 19th SFG(A). The most significant contribution of this presidency may be the establishment of close relations with A Company where the chapter has supported them both in garrison and in deployment.

President Long encouraged chapter members to assist in A Company in SF candidate selection, contributing funds for the construction of CSUF's obstacle course which they also use in the SF selection process and the strong support of deployed members by sending needed material goods. Bruce also established the annual dinner to honor the units members and a welcome home luncheon.

In Bruce's tenure chapter membership has continued to grow, which includes members from A Company, both officers and enlisted men, and established a designated NCO for close coordination with our chapter. In the four years of his presidency we have been fortunate to have many speakers from the unit discussing current training and deployments that has kept our members up to date on the units contribution in the current War on Terrorism.

SGM Long has represented the chapter each year at the SF Association's National Conference where he attended multiple meetings with other chapter officers and the national staff. Several times Bruce and his wife Geri also represented Chapter 78 at the Special Operation Association Reunion.

A "Tip of the Beret to SGM Bruce Long" for his hard work and dedication to SF and Chapter 78 as our president.

As Editor of the Sentinel I want to congratulate Debra Holm for her hard work and creativity on the production of the special November 2017 "Medal of Honor Sentinel." This was made more difficult because of the increased size and short time we had in the final production following all the MOH events in Washington, D.C. honoring Captain Gary M. Rose. A "Tip of the Beret to Debra Holm."

Lonny Holmes  
Sentinel Editor



Bruce Long





Bruce Long  
President SFA 78

The November Chapter meeting was held at the Prado Olympic Shooting Park located in the city of Chino, and just off the 71 Fwy. Artemis Defense Institute (ADI) hosted the event. Check out their website: [www.artemisdefenseinstitute.com](http://www.artemisdefenseinstitute.com)

We all enjoyed a variety of breakfast burritos, donuts, and coffee. A big thanks goes out to **Mike Keele** for putting it together.

Call to order for our Chapter meeting was at 0945 hrs. Our pledge of allegiance was given by Morgan Barrett, son of **Ed Barrett**. Morgan has just recently been discharged after serving ten years of active duty. Morgan served with the 173rd ABN Brigade and the 4th SYOPS. Morgan did two deployments to Afghanistan as an infantry squad leader, and plans on joining our Chapter. An application was provided. The invocation was given by **Richard Simonian**. Richard gave the Treasurer's report and after expenditures we have a balance of \$539 and change

**Len Fein's** wife Nancy passed on Thursday around 2100 hrs. Funeral arrangements are pending. The Chapter agreed to send flowers.

The Chapter also received a donation of \$1,000 from the VFW Post 9847 which will be closing their doors and merging with the Buena Park VFW Post. This donation was suggested by **Mark Miller** to the membership at one of their last meetings, a vote was taken and it was unanimous.

Mark is also a member of VFW Post 9847. Way to GO Mark!

Chapter minutes from our October meeting were read by our Secretary **Gary Macnamara**, and approved.

#### **Old Business:**

**Don Deatherage** will now be the official liaison between our webmasters and the Chapter.

It was unanimous by the Chapter members present that this month's *Sentinel* was the best ever, especially the article and photos prepared by **Lonny Holmes**, Editor of the *Sentinel*.

Several Chapter members attended the Southern California Gathering of Men (GOMSC) event held on November 10th at the Proud Bird Food Bazaar and Event Center in Los Angeles. Those present included myself, my wife Geri, **Mike Keele** and his wife Cora, **Tom Turney**, and **Lonny Holmes**.

Our annual Christmas Party is just around the corner, and will be held on December 16th at the Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club located in the city of Corona Del Mar. Maximum capacity for this event is 110 guests. There will be door prizes as usual, to include two free memberships to Front Sight Firearms Training Institute located in Nevada.

Our guest speaker will be **SGM Hank Eylicio** who will talk about A Company's recent deployment to Afghanistan. For those who

missed it, Hank's lovely wife Lena Eylicio was the recipient of the Martha Raye award for her contribution to the morale and welfare of the families while A Company was deployed.

Sonora High School JRROTC Cadets will post the Colors. They will be escorted by Senior Army Instructor LTC Hans Hunt and his wife Sabine.

**CSM Robert Crebbs** will do the POW / MIA presentation.

Zack King of JTACTICAL will be donating an AR for this fund raiser and will have the rifle on display during our upcoming Christmas party. Also hoping to have some custom knives by JTACTICAL for purchase.

In case of some of you don't know, the SFA National is a 501C-19 organization. Donations to the Chapter are tax deductible. If requested, I would be glad to send you the letter from SF National and the IRS. All you have to do is ask.

**Next Chapter meeting:** Effective January, 2018 the Chapter will start meeting on the 2nd Saturday of the month. Therefore, January 13th, 2018 will be the first Chapter meeting of the year under your new President **John (Tilt) Meyer**, and will be held at Richard Simonian's conference room. Breakfast/Business meeting, 0830 hours. Chapter meeting 1000 hours.

As your outgoing President for the last four years, I want to thank everyone for their support.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! ❖

Bruce D Long  
President, SFA Chapter 78  
SGM, SF (Ret) Hogan's Alley



SPC Isaac Gmazel and SSG Jeff Struecker upon winning the 1996 Best Ranger Competition at Fort Benning, Georgia. Now Chaplain Major (R) Jeff Struecker was the guest speaker at the GOMSC event attended by several Chapter members in November.

# Southern California Gathering of Men

Guest Speaker: Major (Retired) Jeff Struecker



Lonny Holmes

By Lonny Holmes

On Friday, November 10th at 6:30 am, Chapter 78 members Tom Turney, Mike Keele and wife Cora, John Stryker Meyer, Lonny Holmes, and Chapter President Bruce Long and wife Geri attended the Southern California Gathering of Men's (GOMSC) breakfast at the Proud Bird Food Bazaar and Event Center near the Los Angeles Airport featuring guest speaker Chaplain Major (R)

Jeff Struecker. GOMSC member Richard Simonian sponsored chapter members attending the early morning presentation by American Hero, Chaplain Struecker.

Jeff Struecker gave a detailed history of his growing up as a youth and becoming enlightened at the age of 13 and subsequently joined the U.S. Army in 1987, where he completed Jump and Ranger School and served ten years as an enlisted soldier in the 75th Ranger Regiment. Sergeant Struecker participated in his first combat in the Invasion of Panama-Operation Just Cause. Two years later he found action again in 1991 in Kuwait on Operation Desert Storm.

By 1993 Sergeant Struecker was a seasoned soldier, and he and his unit were deployed to Mogadishu, Somali to help support a U.N. Humanitarian - Peace Keeping Mission. His deployment turned into a major combat mission when the 75th Rangers and members of "Delta" were detailed to capture Mohamed Farrah Aidid the leader

of the warring faction. SGT Struecker was a major participant in the operation called "Black Hawk Down" in both the book and movie.

In 1996 Jeff Struecker and partner SPC Isaac Gmazel won the coveted Best Ranger Contest. After ten years of enlistment service he attended the South Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary earning a PhD and was commissioned as a Chaplain returning to the 75 Ranger Regiment. Captain then Major Struecker served multiple combat tours in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Retiring in 2011 he became the Lead Pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church in Columbus, Georgia, just outside of Fort Benning—home to the 75th Ranger Regiment.

Major (R) Struecker's awards and decorations include the CIB, Bronze Star for Valor & 2 OLC, Master Parachutist Wings, Master Military Free Fall Wings, Ranger Tab and Pathfinder Badge.

He has written five books and continues speaking around the U.S. providing insight into the military and his work as a chaplain.

If you ever have the opportunity to hear him speak I suggest you do so for he is highly motivated and an entertaining American Hero. ❖



- 1 John Stryker Meyer, Chaplain, Major (R) Jeff Struecker, center, of the 75th Ranger Regiment in Mogadishu, Somali, and Mike Keele.
- 2 U.S. Army Retired, Major Chaplain Jeff Struecker of Black Hawk Down fame (movie and book) combat in Mogadishu, Somali was the guest speaker at the GOMSC event held at The Proud Bird Food Bazaar and Event Center in Los Angeles.
- 3 Bruce Long, Lonny Holmes and John Stryker Meyer at the GOMSC Major Jeff Struecker presentation.



# Chapter 78 Members Visit Front Sight Firearms Training Institute



Terry Cagnolatti

By Terry Cagnolatti

On April 13, 2017 my wife Juliette and I completed our first four day Defensive Handgun Course at Front Sight Fire Arms Training Institute ([www.frontsight.com](http://www.frontsight.com)) located in Pahrump, Nevada, approximately 40 miles west of Las Vegas.

We became members of Front Sight in 2016 with the information and help provided by

Chapter 78 member Jim Duffy.

Front Sight is a Self Defense Weapons Training Facility which offers classes such as Firearms Training with handgun, shotgun, rifle, and automatic weapons, along with empty hand and edged weapons courses. They also have an armory with qualified personnel that can repair your weapons. If you do not have your own weapon Front Sight is equipped to rent one to you for training. They also offer an obstacle course which has rope climbing and repelling, along with Children/Youth Courses, Martial Arts, Instructor Development classes along with a CCW Certification course to name a few.

Front Sight is located on 550 acres and presently has 25 ranges and is capable of training 1,000 students per day. It is currently adding an additional 25 new ranges which will allow them to train 2,000 students per day. In the near future they plan to add a luxury condominium resort with a pool, administration offices and an rv park with hookups and restaurants.

The instructors and training are world class. Many of the instructors have law enforcement and military backgrounds, however, Front Sight emphasizes that their instructors are not trained as drill sergeants. Besides providing excellent training their instructors are there to make your class a fun experience and to improve your personal skills under stress of moving through live fire training, simulating lethal encounters, along with drawing your weapon from a concealed holster all while enjoying the highest training and safety standards in the industry.

There is no down time while on the courses! You have classroom lectures, shooting drills, live fire tactical training, and reloading while firing your weapon throughout the day, not only firing at a single but also multiple targets. The instructors also trained the students how to clear the three main malfunctions of a semiautomatic weapon.

On October 16, 2017, Juliette and I went back to Front Sight and completed a Two Day Defensive Handgun course. Even though the two day course was not as grueling as the four day course we still benefited enormously and improved our safety and handgun skills. Juliette was especially grateful that the instructors helped with her trigger pull, sight alignment and proper stance. Her target



Juliette after checking her hits



Terry, Juliette and Jim Duffy at range #12

hits in the thoracic cavity and head shots on the targets improved greatly along with speed.

Juliette and I were amazed to learn after speaking with fellow students, the multiple states they came from and the distance they traveled to attend these courses. While walking through the parking lot we noticed a multitude of automobile license plates from more than a dozen states.

At the end of our last day the instructor asked how many students needed to get to the airport we noticed approximately 10 hands went up in the air. They were reminded to check their pockets for live rounds. That may cause a problem at the airport. Juliette and I had about a dozen live rounds in our cargo pockets when leaving the range to return home.

We met up with Jim Duffy at range 12, just to say hello and visit for a bit. Jim traveled to Front Sight from California with 16 members and co-owner Sandy Lieberman, of Artemis Defense Institute: Orange County Shooting Range ([www.artemisdefenseinstitute.com](http://www.artemisdefenseinstitute.com)). They were here for the Four Day Defensive Handgun class.

Juliette and I truly enjoyed our experience at Front Sight and plan on taking advantage of the many other training courses. ❖

# THE FORGOTTEN WARRIORS



## Updates on the Montagnards



Tom Turney

### Gerald C. Hickey Interview

Edited by Tom Turney

**NOTE:** Tom Turney edited this story from its original form with permission from the author who also requested not to be mentioned by name. The interview was conducted a number of years before Gerry Hickey's death. The original photographs have been lost.

Gerald Cannon Hickey (December 17, 1925 - November 10, 2010) was an anthropologist who worked in Southeast Asia, primarily Vietnam. From 1956 through 1973, he conducted ethnographic research sponsored by the Rand Corporation primarily focused on the Montagnards. Hickey traveled extensively in the Central Highlands and interacted with the Montagnards, perhaps more than any other American during the Vietnam War. The interview in this article was done by a former SF Officer who recognized the important work that Hickey had done during the Vietnam War. Our thanks to the interviewer who realized the importance of Hickey's work.

*SF Interviewer: How did you get involved with FULRO (Front Unifié de Lutte des Races Opprimées or the United Front for the Liberation of Oppressed Peoples) in the uprising in Ban Me Thuot in late 1964?*

Hickey: I had met most of the leadership of FULRO as part of my ethnographic studies. Paul Nur, Nay Luett and Y Bham Enuol were friends from my earlier research. Perhaps it was natural that I was asked to participate in the negotiations in Ban Me Thuot. I had watched the evolution of Bajaraka movement whose name was derived from the key letters in Bahnar, Jarai, Rhade and Koho - the primary highland tribes. FULRO was essentially the Bajaraka movement expanded to include the Cham and Khmer Krom.

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*What actually happened in Ban Me Thuot?*

There were a number of uprisings by the ethnic tribesmen in the Central Highlands. As part of the CIDG program directed by American Special Forces the armed tribesmen had been trained to fight the Viet Cong. However, some of the armed tribesmen thought that it was an opportune time to get rid of the Vietnamese, whom they viewed as interlopers on their lands. A number of Special

Forces camps were taken over by the tribesmen. The Americans were usually placed under house arrest, and their Vietnamese Special Forces counterpart were often killed. By September 20, 1964, there were about 3,000 CIDG in revolt, and they had marched on Ban Me Thuot.

*What was the importance of Ban Me Thuot?*

Ban Me Thuot was the Rhade capital and the second major city in the highlands. It was located on a high plateau. It had a long history of French occupation, along with plantations, schools, cultural facilities and other urban amenities. The French influence was still profound.

*What brought the crisis to a head?*

The insurgents captured Colonel John (Fritz) Freund, who was the deputy senior adviser of ARVN II Corps, and held him hostage at Buon Sar Pa. The FULRO situation had rapidly gotten out of hand.

*What was the Vietnamese response?*

The Vietnamese wanted to intervene massively and teach the insurgents a lesson. Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed. But, you have to understand the view of the Vietnamese government. The government was fighting a growing insurgency against the Viet Cong, which was aided by the North Vietnamese. At the same time, the government knew that it could only hold the highlands with the cooperation of the Montagnards but those same Montagnards had legitimate grievances against the government.

*What happened next?*

Rand Corporation had met with Ambassador Maxwell Taylor and General Westmoreland, and I was asked to go to Ban Me Thuot. I landed there in a Caribou aircraft and met with the province senior adviser. Later, general officers of the ARVN and the U.S. Army joined us. My recommendations were that the FULRO insurgents had some legitimate land/property issues and that negotiation was the preferred tactic. Through negotiations, the Montagnards were given more representation in the government, and the revolt ended. However, issues of land ownership continued throughout the duration of the war.

*Why did those issues continue?*

Many tribesmen practiced swidden (also called "slash-and-burn") agriculture. Under this farming system, a plot of land will be used



until it can no longer nourish a crop. Then, a new plot will be tilled while the old plot regenerates over a period of years. This meant that the tribesmen claimed huge parcels of land that were not under effective cultivation. Yet, the Vietnamese government looked upon this as wasteful and claimed that the regenerating land did not belong to any particular tribe. Another aspect to the problem was that the topsoil tended to be thin with a clay-laterite base. Land ownership under these conditions was no simple issue.

*FULRO as an insurgency had to be supported by an outside power. Who was that power?*

Obviously, it was Cambodia. The Khmer Kron (Khmer Kampuchea Kron, an armed group of Cambodians from the South Vietnamese delta) had a vested interest in keeping the Vietnamese off balance. We tend to forget that Cambodia once controlled large parts of Vietnam including most of the Mekong Delta (which its inhabitants—the Cham—are called Champa). Les Kassem, a lieutenant colonel in the Cambodian army, tends to be associated closely with FULRO. He was a Cambodian Cham (and Muslim) who was a bearded rebel at Buon Sar Pa during the FULRO uprising, whom I met again in 1970 in a restaurant in Phnom Penh while dining with other FULRO leaders. As we talked, Les Kossem said, “Please give my regards to Colonel Freund.” He admitted to me that he had been sent to Buon Sar Pa to direct FULRO operations.

*You were back in Ban Me Thuot during Tet of 1968. What happened there?*

On January 27, 1968, I went to Ban Me Thuot in conjunction with a land survey project that Rand Corporation was working on. The following day was Sunday and we went to the village of Buon Kram, about 20 kilometers away on Route 21B, where I joined an end-of-harvest celebration. The mood was festive and rice wine was plentiful. The next day, Monday, January 29, I returned to Buon Kram and the mood was somber. The village chief explained that the NVA were to the south and seemed to be on the march. Montagnard scouts reported that the NVA planned to attack Ban Me Thuot on Tuesday, January 30. I was with Mike Bengé, a USAID worker at the time, and we decided to return to Ban Me Thuot.

*Then what?*

The MACV (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam) officers thought that the NVA would honor the Tet truce and that there was no need to worry. I went to Special Forces Detachment B-23, and they were feverishly digging defenses and preparing for battle. I decided to stay with them when they told me that they had intelligence that an NVA regiment would attack that night.

*You were also present during the 1972 assault by the NVA when they were trying to take Pleiku and Kontum. What happened?*

The American military operation was phasing out, but much of what the military had been doing was taken over by the State Department. John Paul Vann was the CORDS (Civil Opera-

tions and Revolutionary Development Support) senior adviser for II Corps, after retiring from the Army, and he began to manage the war in the highlands. He tended to rely on B-52 strikes so much that his nickname was “Arclight John.” Of course, the movements of regiments of NVA and subsequent bombing created refugee nightmares. There were thousands of displaced Montagnards and casualties that couldn’t be easily treated in a mass casualty environment. By 1972 my Rand Corporation studies were largely set aside and I was mostly working on relief missions.

*You were personally funding some of these relief missions. Why was that?*

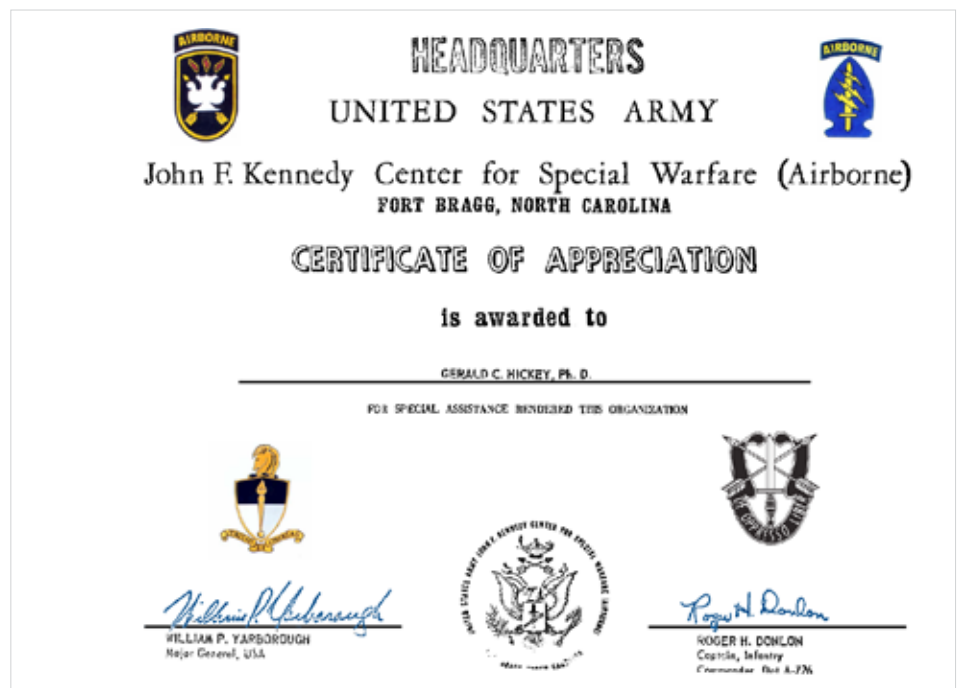
It’s difficult to describe the chaos that was being created. We had refugees without food, shelter and water. Often there would be a requirement to move these people to a new location, but there wouldn’t be any transportation. If I could pay ARVN soldiers to deliver water to some of the refugees, I did it. I found quite often that many ARVN soldiers hadn’t been paid in months.

*What was happening?*

As the war progressed, the Army was attempting to uproot entire populations and resettle them. Major General William Peers, commander of the 4th Infantry Division, at one point relocated over 800 Jarai. Even though each family was given 7,000 piasters, this money was soon lost to Vietnamese contractors who would provide lumber for house construction in an area where there was no wood otherwise. This sort of thing happened constantly. The goal was to move Jarai off their lands to create free-fire zones. Earlier, there was a plan to move 8,000 tribesmen to a new area, a project that eventually failed.

*Wasn’t it unusual for an anthropologist to become involved in a war?*

I suppose that it was out of the ordinary, but my studies had caused me to become involved with the various tribesmen and they happened to be located in conflicted areas. There is one school of thought that we should just sit back and observe; however, that isn’t the right attitude. We wouldn’t let people become sick and die



if we watched them eating something poisonous. Perhaps my up-bringing had an effect on my behavior, but I know that I've always tried to do the right thing.

*After writing five books and numerous articles while in Vietnam, one would think that you would have been offered a faculty appointment at any number of prestigious universities, but your involvement in the war seem to have caused you difficulties with your academic colleagues.*

When I returned to the United States, I tried to get an appointment to the faculty of the University of Chicago. Despite the backing of the Anthropology Department chair, I wasn't wanted. The faculty in general appeared to feel that my work for the Rand Corporation and the Department of Defense had tainted me. I did receive some temporary appointments after Vietnam, but my record of publications should have earned me more. Although the temporary appointments weren't as well paying as a tenured faculty appointment, I was still able to pursue my anthropological studies and meet the leaders in my field. I was one of the subjects of a *Wall Street Journal* article on November 18, 1971, concerning "McCarthyism of the Left" which told about my efforts to save the Montagnards. Still, to many of my colleagues I had become a pariah. Unfortunately, that says more about my colleagues than me.

*Are you angry about that?*

No, I'm not. Academia as it exists today is not as rigorous as it was in the 1950s. Today, an anthropologist is held to a lesser standard, and scholarship isn't as highly valued as political correctness and fitting in. It was my good fortune to become educated by some very good teachers who were truly intelligent and inquisitive. Sadly, I don't think that it's the norm today.

*You've been criticized in the past for advancing the theory that an accommodation government could have worked and that the insurgency could have ended early. Do you still feel that way?*

I believe that history shows that early in the war, an accommodation with the National Liberation Front could have worked. We

must remember that the NLF wasn't all Communist, and that there were legitimate non-Communists who were against the Diem and later regimes. As the North Vietnamese presence in the South increased, there was less chance of a compromise. Remember too, that many areas of South Vietnam have refused collectivization. Many farmers in the delta have refused to surrender their property, so communism hasn't wholly taken root in the south.

*Looking back on your life, would you have done anything differently?*

No. I've met and interacted with the major personages of the Vietnam era. We haven't always agreed with each other, but I've had an impact I used to dine periodically with Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker. We had great conversations and I'm proud to have met him and most of the principal players of the Vietnam War. My only regret is that the tribesmen of the Central Highlands have suffered so much. They continue to suffer today as the ruling Vietnamese administer the highlands as an occupied military region. ❖

#### **Gerald Cannon Hickey: Major Books on the Montagnards**

***Sons of the Mountains: Ethnohistory of the Vietnamese Central Highlands to 1954*** – Yale University Press, 1982

***Free in the Forest: Ethnohistory of the Vietnamese Central Highlands, 1954 -1976*** – Yale University Press, 1982

***Village in Vietnam*** – Yale University Press, 1964

***Kingdom in the Morning Mist: Mayrena in the Highlands of Vietnam*** — University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988

***Shattered World: Adaptation and Survival among Vietnam's Highland Peoples during the Vietnam War*** — University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993

***Window on a War: An Anthropologist in the Vietnam Conflict*** — Texas Tech University Press, 2002

Books are available via internet sources and electronic versions from Steve Sherman (<http://www.specialforcesbooks.com/HickeyC.htm>).



## SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78 CHRISTMAS PARTY 2017



Special Forces Association Chapter 78 will be having its annual Christmas Dinner on Saturday December 16th, 2016 at the Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club in Newport Beach, CA. We are limited to 105 persons who can attend. We need your confirmations back to us if you are planning to attend no later than December 5th, 2017. This is a great event which includes an excellent buffet dinner; we will also have entertainment and a raffle for an assortment of prizes. 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.



Chapter Member Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Guests (including yourself): \_\_\_\_\_

\$30.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail check for this amount payable to SFA 78 to the Chapter Treasurer at:  
SFA Chapter 78 "Christmas Dinner"  
P. O. Box 11927, Santa Ana, CA 92711