



# THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SENTINEL

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 2 • FEBRUARY 2018



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SFA Chapter 78 January 2018 Meeting

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Several Anecdotes Regarding Bru Montagnards at Khe Sanh, 1968

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If We Build It, They Will Come:  
Wyoming Green Beret Memorial

Chapter 78 Members Attend  
Sonora High School JROTC Ceremony





# SENTINEL

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**COVER:** CHAPTER 78 BOARD OF DIRECTORS. Mark Miller (Sergeant at Arms), Don Deatherage (Vice President), Richard Simonian (Treasurer & Chaplain), John Stryker Meyer (President), Gary Macnamara (Secretary), and Brad Welker (Vice President)



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## From the Editor



Lonny Holmes  
Sentinel Editor

### THE TET OFFENSIVE A HUGE AMERICAN VICTORY 50 YEARS AGO

The massive Vietnamese Lunar Holiday Tet Offensive of January 30, 1968 masterminded by North Vietnam's General Vo Nguyen Giap was a huge failure which resulted in a long delay in the north's plan to take over the southern half of Vietnam. Despite extensive planning and moving large numbers of the Peoples Army of Vietnam (PAVN) soldiers into the south to join the Viet Cong (VC) with their hope to cause a general uprising of the population to support their efforts (which failed to occur) American Soldiers rallied and crushed the enemy.

Again, as in many wars, the spirit of the American Fighting Man prevailed despite the simultaneous attacks on over a hundred cities, towns, military bases, 36 provincial capitals and the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. In the bloody fights that included Green Berets defending A-Camps, MACV-SOG members involvement and roving SF "Mike Force" Companies, the combined efforts of all allied soldiers defeated the communist offensive. In probably the bloodiest battle of the Tet Offensive, the U.S. Marines in a protracted and very tough street to street fight defeated the enemy at the Battle of Hue.

The communist forces were ruthless and took no prisoners, attempting to slaughter all in their path. The communists including both the V.C. and PAVN troops also attacked and killed numerous civilians, targeting city leaders, the educated and wealthy. In Hue alone they conducted mass executions massacring several thousands of civilians including doctors, dentists and educators.

The results of the Battles of the Tet Offensive speak of the resolve of the American Soldier: we won the battle for South Vietnam. In numbers alone it was estimated that the north's casualties resulted in approximately 35,000 to 50,000 KIA, WIA and captured. North Vietnam's defeat in the Tet Offensive cost them a huge loss in soldiers, equipment and to the Asian, a severe loss of face. The American Soldiers "will" prevailed!

American news media to this day believes we lost the war because of our defeat in the Tet Offensive. Nothing could be farther from the truth. All American Soldiers know we won the fight. The news media continues their spreading of the 'fake' news which began with their reporting on the war. The resulting loss of South Vietnam to the North in May 1975 was due to the spreading of the fake news and weak political leaders.

Lonny Holmes  
Sentinel Editor

David Stockwell, the author of *Tanks in the Wire*, and his recent book, *The Route 9 Problem* will attend the Chapter 78 meeting on Saturday, March 10 along with Paul R. Longgear, the SF Mike Force Company Commander at the Battle of Lang Vei who will speak at the meeting.

# The President's Page | February 2018



John Stryker Meyer  
President SFA 78

I don't know about the rest of you, but I must say that one of the most enjoyable parts of our first January chapter meeting was hanging out afterwards at Marie Callender's. One hour after the meeting ended, staff told us we had to clear out for afternoon customers. We moved out to the parking lot, where we jabberjawed for another 45 minutes.

Remember, I live in Oceanside surrounded by marines and sailors. Nothing personal, they're just not SF. Chapter member **Terry**

**Cognolatti** wrote me an e-mail that captures the essence of our Special Forces brotherhood. He wrote, "...my best memories in life are being a team member of ODA-563." I echo Terry's sentiments because to this day, I judge all men against those Green Berets I served with during our dirty little war in SEA. As we hung out together, we had the opportunity to get to know transfer member **Jeff Bosley** and his fascinating story, and to commiserate with **Len Fein, John Creel** and **Gary Macnamara** who are adjusting to life without their wives.

By the time the February edition of the Sentinel lands in the sweaty hands of chapter members, Past President **Bruce Long**, Treasurer/Chaplain **Richard Simonian**, myself and a hand full of members will have attended a BBQ lunch for the troops from SOD (North), who were scheduled to leave the warm confines of Southern California for not-so-warm Ft. Bragg, to begin pre-deployment training for a nine-month tour of duty outside CONUS courtesy of Uncle Sam's traveling service. The BBQ was held at The Pub at Fiddler's Green on Los Alamitos Base. During the months ahead, Chapter 78 liaison with A/5/19 **SGM Long** will give us updates on the deployment and we'll work with command elements to determine what things Chapter 78 can send to them in care packages to the AO.

Last month I asked members for suggestions for future meetings and activities for our chapter in the months ahead. An e-mail from member **Dennis R. DeRosia** struck a chord with me when he wrote that the SFA Mission Statement reads: "The Special Forces Association Serves as the Voice for the Special Forces Community; Perpetuates Special Forces Traditions and Brotherhood; Advances the Public Image of Special Forces and Promotes the General Welfare of the Special Forces Community."

Acting off of Dennis' suggestion, I've invited Vietnam veteran and long-time President of the Freedom Committee of Orange County Scott Williams to be our guest speaker for our next chapter meeting at 8:30 a.m. February 10 at Marie Callender's Restaurant and Bakery at 307 E. Katella Ave., Orange, CA. Among our chapter members who have joined the Freedom Committee are **Ham Salley, Bob McClain**, myself, and **Bruce Long** is thinking about joining too.

I've invited Scott because the Freedom Committee holds monthly brown-bag lunches in OC. More importantly, this time of the year, its secretary connects veterans with area high schools and middle schools where student teams of four or five meet with a veteran, interview him/her, write a report and record the interview. They write reports and a summary paper and impressions, which are presented to the veteran at a massive luncheon held annually at the Corona del Mar High School in Newport Beach. I've participated in three and was AWOL later in the year due to a funeral out of state. Chapter member **Mike Keele, Brad Welker** and **Lonny Holmes** have participated in several similar events in Rancho Cucamonga. We all know how bad public school history lessons are, if they even provide them to students. This committee gives us a chance to meet students and give them a few minutes of insightful history. You don't have to be an OC resident to join the committee. Scott is a dedicated veteran trying to get real history to today's youth. The challenge is daunting.

Another interesting aspect of our February 10 meeting will be the second introduction of a Gold Star family member who lost an SF Brother running a SOG mission out of CCN in November 1969. **Jim Suber** lives in Orange County. His brother, Randy Suber, was on RT Rattler in Laos when the NVA hammered the small recon team on November 13, 1969. I was stationed at CCN at the time, having just returned to RT Idaho in October. To give you a sense of how deadly the Laos AO was, RT Rattler was the second CCN team wiped out by the NVA in 10 days. RT Maryland, with One-Zero Gunther Wald was wiped out earlier in the month.

Thus Jim is the second SOG relative to join Chapter 78 as SFA HQ works up the official paperwork for him and **Steve Bric**, whom we reintroduced at our January meeting. Steve's SF Brother Bill Bric was KIA at FOB 4 Da Nang August 23, 1968.

Since our January meeting, Chapter VP **Brad Welker** has agreed to be the pointman for Sentinel Editor **Lonny Holmes** new column, *Cop Corner*. Essentially, today in America cops, law enforcement have become targets. In addition, over the Christmas weekend, a national newspaper reported that there were more than 750 crimes committed against U.S. Border Patrol agents across America.

Again, we're in the primary stages here, but I'd like to have our members who served in any form of law enforcement, including men like **Terry Cognolatti** who served many years in the LA DA's office, to go back to their prior law enforcement agencies with a simple message from Chap. 78:

"We know you're targeted by demented elements in society. Most men in Chapter 78 have been targets in wartime. We salute your service to our communities and country and openly support you. If we can help in any way, don't hesitate to call Chapter 78."

Continued on page 13



# SFA Chapter 78

## January 2018 Meeting



Mike Keele

By Mike Keele

Chapter 78's first meeting of the year was a whopper! It was our first meeting on our new weekend, the second Saturday of the month as opposed to the third Saturday. Using foresight, the planners asked for and got a commitment for attendance, and guess what!! Twenty-seven showed up at Marie Calendar's restaurant for breakfast prior to the meeting. Now that's a meeting. Normally, getting that many members together for a meeting requires a Christmas party and lots of door prizes.

First in line Saturday morning was John Stryker Meyer, the recently elected president of Chapter 78. His election platform was "get there fustest with the mostest," So objective one was under his belt and he followed it up with an apology for starting a minute or two late. Imagine! Those who were on time not having to wait for

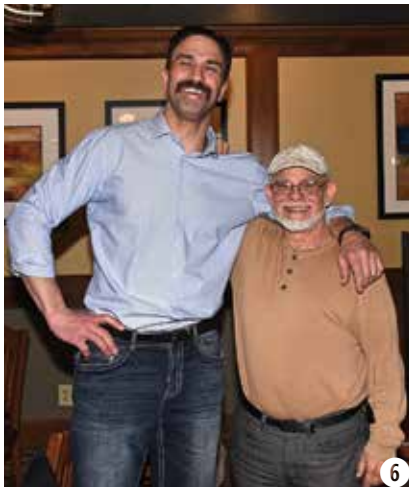
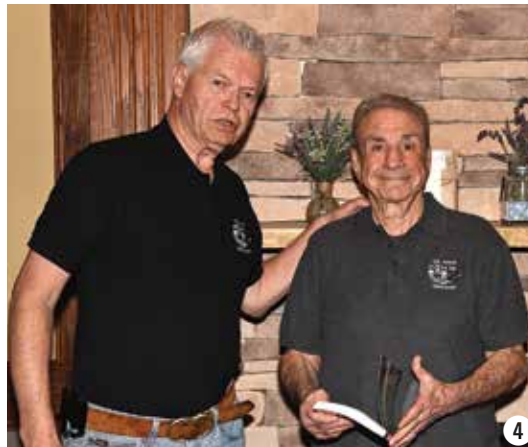
those who weren't. A second plank of his election promises neatly fulfilled. And when breakfast had been gobbled down quicker than a bucket of fish before—may I say—seals, the meeting ran like a well tuned Timex on a helicopter pilot's wrist. We had a new member show up, Jeff Bosley, a youngster, who works in the movie industry. Also present, was Steve Bric, our newest honorary member. He replaces Kenn Miller, who was bumped up to associate member last year. Steve Bric is the brother of Bill Bric, who was KIA on 23 Aug. '68 at FOB 4 in Da Nang. Steve, who was an Air Force weenie later, during Vietnam, is retired, like most of us. He was a business owner in his former life. Now he looks forward to congregating with solid people who do good things for others. I gave Steve a book written by Don Ray, who wrote a letter to Steve expressing his grief over Bill being Killed in Action. Don Ray is a private investigator.

Based on the attendance for this meeting and the enthusiastic talk that went on for about an hour after the meeting ended, we will likely be holding more meetings at Marie Calendars, since Treasurer, Richard Simonian's office will only seat about seventeen or eighteen comfortably. Among the things missed during the chaos of such a crowd were the usual book raffle and the donations for breakfast. But fret not, after a few life-fire drills, the operation will be functioning like an SF Trooper's Rolex. ♦



Judge, Colonel (R) Thad Gembacz giving the oath of office to Richard Simonian (Treasurer) and Don Deatherage (Vice President) who were unable to attend our Christmas Dinner and seating of the chapters 2018-2019 officers.





- ❶ President John Stryker Meyer welcoming new chapter member Jeff Bosley of 10th Group.
- ❷ President John Stryker Meyer with Steve Bric after chapter member voted him as a "Honorary Member." Steve is the brother of Bill Bric, KIA FOB 4 in Da Nang Aug. 23, 1968.
- ❸ John Stryker Meyer presenting past president Bruce Long a certificate for four years serving as chapter president.
- ❹ John Stryker Meyer presents Richard Simonian with the first printed copy of his new book *SOG Chronicles: Volume One*.

- ❺ Mike Keele collecting \$5 from members who forgot to bring their Green Beret. Next month, February, you must also have your challenge coin with you, or the fine will be \$5. So, no Green Beret *and* no Challenge Coin, the fine will be \$10.
- ❻ Jeff Bosley and Kenn Miller
- ❼ Gary Macnamara, John Meyer and John Creel
- ❽ Jeff Bosley and LTC (R) Dave Thomas. Note, Dave is six foot three inches or so!



# THE FORGOTTEN WARRIORS



## Updates on the Montagnards



Quảng Trị Province: Khe Sanh at lower left



Hammond Salley

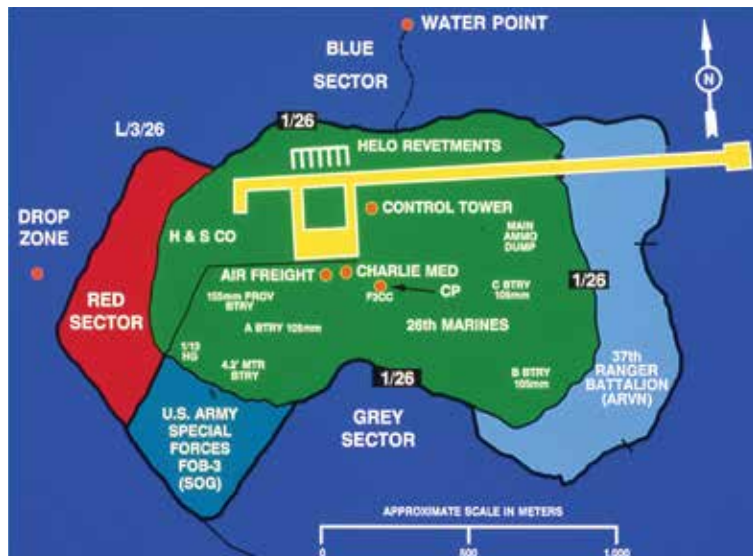
### Several Anecdotes Regarding Bru Montagnards at Khe Sanh, 1968

By Hammond Salley

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the TET Offensive and the siege of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, an obscure U.S. Marine Corps outpost in the NW corner of South Vietnam.

The Combat Base was occupied by approximately 5,000 men of the reinforced 26th Marine Regiment.

Located adjacent to the 26th Marines was Special Forces Forward Operating Base-3 (FOB-3), a sub-unit of Command and Control North (CCN), Military Assistance Command Vietnam Studies and Observations Group (MACV SOG). Its mission was mainly reconnaissance along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos. Recon teams were generally comprised of several Army Special Forces soldiers with a number of local Bru Montagnard mercenaries filling out the teams.



Khe Sanh Combat Base 1968 – FOB-3 Lower Left

**The Siege of Khe Sanh:** As part of the 'TET Offensive', the largest and most famous battle of the Vietnam War also began. By 20 January 1968, the Combat Base was completely surrounded and under siege by 20,000 North Vietnamese Army (NVA) regulars led by the same General Giap who, in 1954, defeated the French at Dien Bien Phu. Although the siege lasted 77 days, the Marines, with artillery and air support, stopped the NVA advance into South Vietnam.

**FOB-3:** A Special Forces fortress unto itself but separated from the Marine Combat Base by open space and lots of barbed wire. Everyone was living in bunkers dug into the defense perimeter. The underground Command bunker was built by Navy Seabees. During the siege, no patrols were permitted more than 100 meters outside the Combat Base perimeter.

I arrived at FOB-3 during the siege expecting to be assigned to Special Projects under Special Forces legend, Major George Quamo. However, as all normal operations were on hold, I was instead assigned as the S-2 for the FOB

### Khe Sanh Combat Base 1968

Special Forces  
Forward Operating  
Base – 3  
Upper left



Oblique arial photograph of the Khe Sanh Combat Base  
(United Press International by Kyoichi Sawada)





Bru families passing thru FOB-3 mine field



Bru families waiting for evacuation

**The Bru:** Montagnards or 'Highlanders', are the peoples of the Central Highlands of Vietnam. Although there are numerous tribes, the Bru are indigenous to Quảng Trị Province which borders on Laos and the DMZ. Many of the Bru supporting FOB-3 activities were from the local Khe Sanh area.

In general, the Bru demonstrated fierce loyalty to their FOB-3 American Teammates. They were brave, outstanding warriors and were held in high regard by all the Americans who worked with them.

The Bru loved to gamble. Poker games seemed to sprout up after each pay day. However, not all ended friendly. On one occasion, we heard a dull thump. Upon investigation, it turned out that there was a game in one of the Bru trench bunkers. Apparently, one sore loser left, returned and threw a hand grenade into the bunker killing all inside. A body was found on the wire the next morning. We assumed that it was the sore loser.

**The Guns of Co Roc Mountain:** Sharing the border with Vietnam and Laos and approximately six miles southwest of the Khe Sanh Combat Base was Co Roc Mountain. Lore has it that caves inside Co Roc had been used by various fighting forces for decades. Lore also has it that Major Quomo was credited with taking a patrol inside Co Roc sometime before the siege.

In 1968, the North Vietnamese placed at least two 122mm artillery pieces in a cave with openings on the East side facing Khe Sanh. These guns were virtually untouchable by either air strikes or Marine Corps artillery firing against the positions. When the NVA fired these guns, those at the Combat Base heard a low 'Thump, Thump' indicating that one had about four seconds to find any available hole in the ground.

There were several tall radio transmission towers on FOB-3 which I believe were used by the NVA as form of aiming points to shell the combat base.

**Bru Families and Co Roc Artillery:** Early mornings were generally shrouded with heavy fog which would wear off later. One day, as the fog wore off, we were surprised to see a large number of Bru

Continued on page 13



Top: Co Roc Mountain - SW of Khe Sanh; Center: Bru Montagnards in FOB-3 Trench Line; Bottom: FOB-3 Spike Team Preparing for Recon

# NVA Assault on Lang Vei



David Stockwell

By David Stockwell

Comrade Van Tien Dung had trouble concealing his frustration. The political directorate was breathing down his neck.

The chief of the NVA General Staff in Hanoi dispatched two trusted subordinates in early December 1967 to oversee combat operations east along Duong Chin or Route 9.

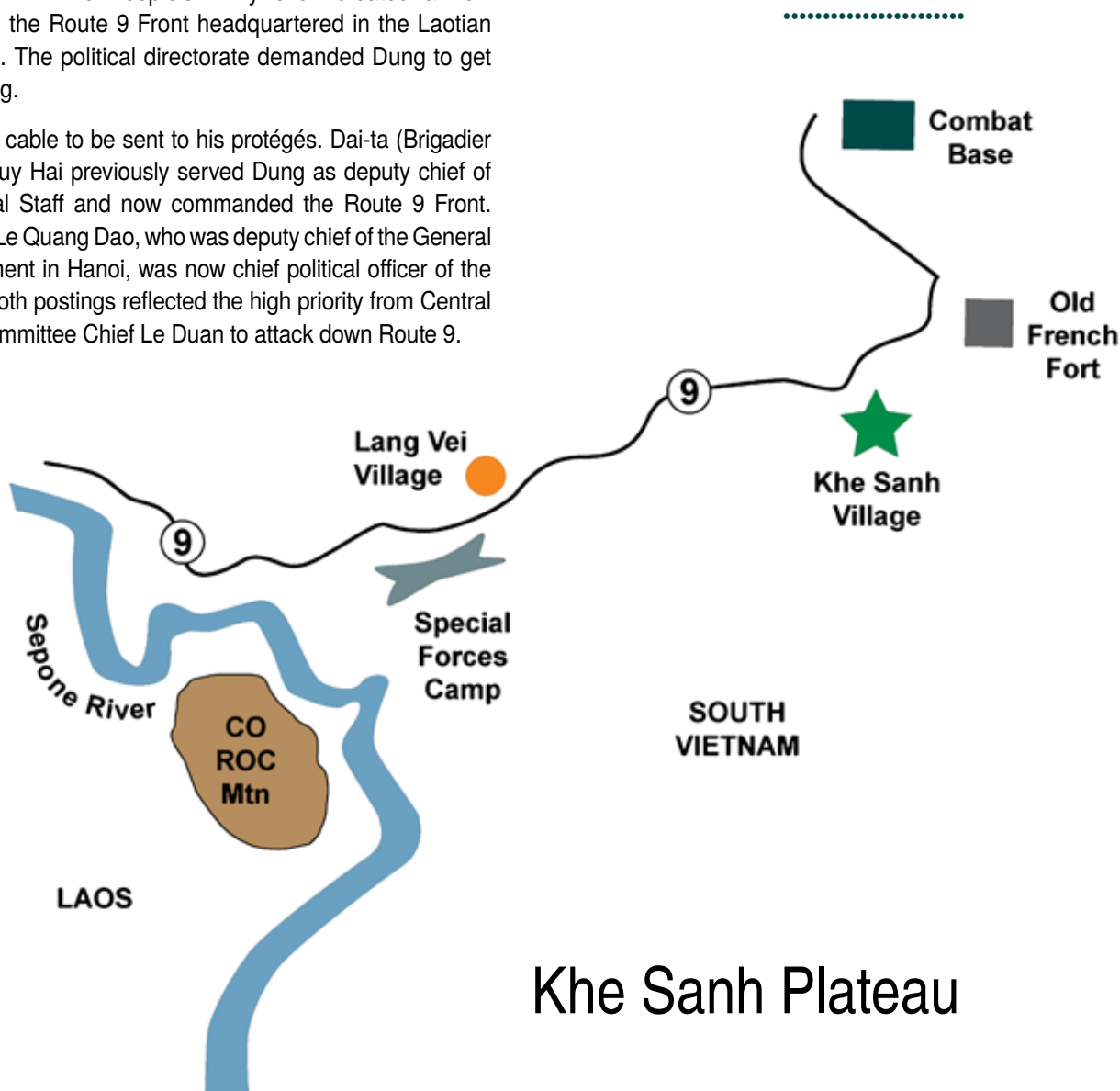
The People's Army even created a new campaign called the Route 9 Front headquartered in the Laotian village of Sat Lit. The political directorate demanded Dung to get the attack moving.

Dung signed the cable to be sent to his protégés. Dai-ta (Brigadier General) Tran Quy Hai previously served Dung as deputy chief of the NVA General Staff and now commanded the Route 9 Front. Likewise, Dai-ta Le Quang Dao, who was deputy chief of the General Political Department in Hanoi, was now chief political officer of the Route 9 Front. Both postings reflected the high priority from Central Military Party Committee Chief Le Duan to attack down Route 9.

The urgent cable dated February 2, 1968, was unambiguous. Comrade Dung wrote, "The Political Directorate is worried about the 'Route 9 problem.' What is the reason and what difficulties have you had that you have not strongly coordinated the attack to force the enemy forces to withdraw from Route 9 [to the east] to Tri-Thien, to create difficulties for Tri-Thien?"

Tri-Thien referred to two northern provinces in South Vietnam, Quang Tri and Thua Thien. The "Route 9 problem" was the Lang Vei Special Forces camp blocking the attack on the six-thousand-strong US Marine combat base at Khe Sanh and success at seizing Tri-Thien. Dung knew from experience how to motivate others. He had served as chief of staff to Dai-tuong (Senior General) Vo Nguyen Giap in 1954 during the masterful defeat of the French Army at Dien Bien Phu that hastened France's withdrawal from Vietnam. He was sure America also would withdraw with the loss of Khe Sanh.

But first, Lang Vei had to fall. Dai-tas Hai and Dao in their Route 9 Front headquarters in Laos passed along the order to the NVA 304th Division in the strongest terms to "attack the Lang Vei strong-point as soon as possible." Tanks aimed at Khe Sanh would now annihilate Lang Vei first.



## Khe Sanh Plateau



Grey, overcast daylight slipped into thick blackness over the isolated Lang Vei Special Forces camp deep in the boonies. US Army Sergeant Nick Fragos shrugged off the damp chill in the small concrete observation platform atop the command bunker and checked his wristwatch. It was after midnight. February 7, 1968, was young.

A trip flare burst into bright light on the southern perimeter, so suddenly the loud *pop* and *hiss* grabbed Fragos's attention. He stared at the sight. Two NVA soldiers were calmly clipping the camp's defensive wire bathed in the flat, white, trip-flare light. Behind them was an idling tank, its crew waiting patiently for the gap in the wire to be cut. The scene was riveting.

Time slowed for Fragos. The NVA tank commander popped out of his turret and shone a bright spotlight for a half-minute, quickly studying the camp's defenses. Behind him, Fragos saw another enemy tank waiting for its turn to move forward.

*Why don't they just roll over the wire?* Fragos thought. A moment later, they did.

The defenders closest to the enemy opened fire at the two fence cutters, killing them in a hail of bullets. Fragos watched the tank commander button his hatch and order his driver to bull over the perimeter fence. He heard the tank engines gun and saw the tracks lurch forward.

Fragos squeezed the handset of his field telephone and hollered the warning, "We have tanks in the wire!" It was forty-two minutes after midnight.

The battle for Lang Vei had begun.

.....

This terrifying and unprecedented enemy tank attack was the final and historic battle for Lang Vei, the small US Special Forces camp with an embattled past.

The camp began on July 6, 1962, when Master Sergeant Jacques Standing led his 10-man A-Team overland to an old French fort at Khe Sanh and called it home. The team's mission to watch the border with Laos included recruiting local Bru to guide them on long-range reconnaissance patrols "across the fence" to hunt for the communist enemy.

Twelve-man Special Forces A-Teams swapped out at Khe Sanh every six months until Captain Floyd James "Jim" Thompson's team arrived on New Year's Day 1964 from the pine woods of North Carolina.

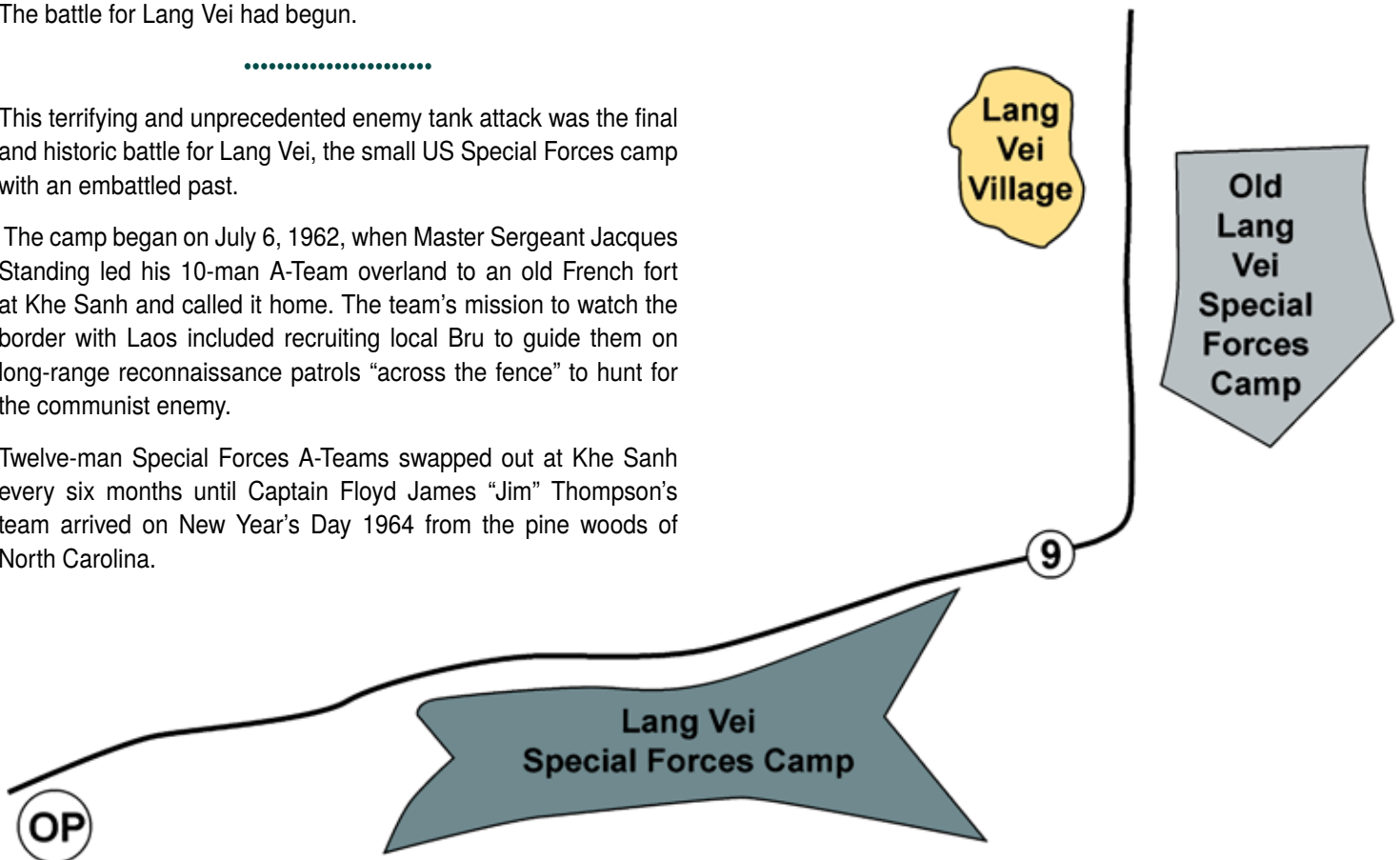
Thompson's mission, like his predecessors', was to keep an eye on the borders. Fifteen kilometers north was the demilitarized zone, or DMZ, a strip of unmanned land separating the two Vietnams. A few kilometers west lay the country of Laos.

March 26, 1964, was just another routine Thursday reconnaissance flight for Thompson along the Sepone River. He was a passenger in a light, fixed-wing L-19 Birdog airplane, piloted by US Air Force Captain Richard L. Whitesides, that was hit by small arms fire from the ground. The aircraft crashed somewhere in South Vietnam or just inside Laos. Thompson's men launched exhaustive patrols that combed the area but never located the crash site.

Thompson and Whitesides were declared missing-in-action, or MIA.

Two months later in May 1964, Captain Allan Imes's A-Team replaced the remainder of Thompson's team. Imes, too, was tasked with watching the borders but received the additional mission to learn Thompson's and Whitesides's fates. Imes's men attacked this new mission with fervor questioning hundreds of Montagnards throughout the region. Some reported seeing the airplane go down, but Imes and his A-Team never found where.

When Imes completed his six-month tour, he wrote in his after-action report that he and his team concluded Thompson and Whitesides could not have survived the airplane crash. Imes recommended their status be changed to killed-in-action or KIA. The



lack of remains and the inability to locate the crash site caused Pentagon officials, however, to keep Thompson and Whiteside MIA, a fateful pronouncement especially for Thompson who became America's longest held prisoner-of-war.

Immediately after the Gulf of Tonkin incidents in early August 1964, Imes was visited by General John K. Waters, commander of US Pacific Command. Waters told Imes America was at war and that his camp would be the first place the enemy would overrun. When that happens, Waters said, go to ground and conduct guerilla operations in the enemy's rear area.

That didn't happen. Teams continued their six-month rotations. A US Marine infantry battalion moved in on September 29, 1966, and promptly displaced A-101 led by Captain Paul C. "Church" Hutton and team sergeant Master Sergeant Edwin J. Waters Sr. Hutton re-established the camp near Lang Vei Village along Route 9 closer to Laos and had good relations with the Bru there. The marine presence would swell to 6,000 into the famed Khe Sanh Combat Base.

A mistaken bombing of Lang Vei Village on March 7, 1967, killed 125 Bru and wounded 400, a grievous error that the Viet Cong used to their deadly propaganda advantage. Infiltrators enabled the Viet Cong to overrun and destroy the camp on May 3, 1967, and kill most of the A-Team members, including Captain William A. Crenshaw and Lieutenant Leon Stallings. Survivors included Sergeant First Class William Steptoe and radio operator Private First Class William G. McMurry. McMurry would serve at the replacement Lang Vei camp where he was captured during the tank attack and imprisoned for 61 brutal months in North Vietnam.

Captain Dallas Cox's A-Team replaced Crenshaw's and established a second Lang Vei camp a half-mile closer to Laos on a hilltop with a commanding view of Route 9 and superior, interlocking fields of fire. US Navy Seabees from MCB-11 in Da Nang built the dog-boned shaped camp.

The camp's centerpiece was a concrete underground tactical operations center (TOC) with a steel-I-beam supported roof that would prove crucial to Americans' survival when the tanks came on February 7, 1968. ❖

# US Army Special Forces Who Fought the Battle

## Special Forces Detachment A-101

**Captain Frank Cecil Willoughby**

commanding officer

**First Lieutenant Miles Wilkins**

executive officer

**Sergeant First Class William T. "Pappy" Craig**

team sergeant

**Sergeant First Class Kenneth Hanna**

senior weapons

**Sergeant First Class James William Holt**

senior medic

**Staff Sergeant Arthur Brooks**

weapons

**Staff Sergeant Emanuel Eugene Phillips**

senior communications

**Staff Sergeant Peter Tiroch**

intelligence

**Sergeant Nicholas I. Fragos**

medic

**Specialist Five Daniel R. Phillips**

engineer

**Specialist Four Franklin H. Doods**

communications

**Specialist Four William G. McMurry**

communications

## Mobile Strike (MIKE) Force Company 12 (Detachment A-113)

**First Lieutenant Paul Richard Longgear**

commanding officer

**Sergeant First Class Harvey Gordon Brande**

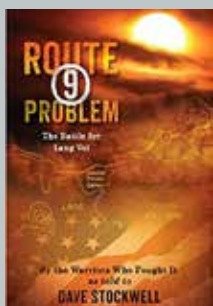
platoon leader (outgoing)

**Sergeant First Class Earl Frederick Burke Jr.**

platoon leader

**Sergeant First Class Charles Wesley Lindewald Jr.**

platoon leader



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David B. Stockwell is a retired US Army lieutenant colonel and author of *Route 9 Problem: The Battle for Lang Vei by the Warriors Who Fought It* and *Tanks in the Wire!: The First Use of Enemy Armor in Vietnam*. He and his wife, Sheryl, make their home in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.



**Staff Sergeant Dennis Leroy Thompson**  
platoon leader (incoming)  
**Sergeant John Early**  
platoon leader (outgoing)  
**Specialist Four James Leslie Moreland**  
medic

## Special Forces C-Team

**Lieutenant Colonel Daniel F. Schungel Sr.**  
commanding officer  
**Sergeant First Class Eugene Ashley Jr.**  
senior medic  
**Sergeant Richard H. Allen**  
medic  
**Specialist Four Joel Johnson**  
medic

## Army Engineer

**First Lieutenant Thomas E. Todd**  
engineer officer

## Evacuation Force Studies and Observations Group (SOG)

**Major George Quamo**  
special projects commanding officer  
**Command Sergeant Major Richard Epps Pegram Jr., FOB-3**  
command sergeant major  
**Master Sergeant Charles J. "Skip" Minnicks,**  
special projects non-commissioned officer in charge  
**Sergeant First Class Gilbert Secor,** member,  
Spike Team Pennsylvania  
**Sergeant First Class Robert L. Cavanaugh**  
leader, Spike Team Oklahoma  
**Staff Sergeant John J. Allen Jr.**  
team leader  
**Staff Sergeant Gary L. Seaburg**  
team member  
**Sergeant Richard D. Mullaney Jr.**  
team medic  
**Specialist Five William M. Harris**  
member, Spike Team Oklahoma  
**Specialist Four Thomas S. Earley**  
team member

## SOG Hatchet Force (from FOB-1)

**First Lieutenant Allan Foster "Chips" Fleming Jr.,**  
commanding officer  
**Sergeant First Class Sam Robison**  
platoon sergeant  
**Sergeant Stephen T. "Tim" Kirk Sr.**  
squad leader  
**Specialist Five Kenneth M. Cryan**  
squad leader

## Special Forces Team A-101



Frank Willoughby



Miles Wilkins



William Craig



James Holt



Emanuel Phillips



Arthur Brooks



Nickolas Fragos



Daniel Phillips



Frank Dooks



Kenneth Hanna



Peter Tiroch



William McMurry

## MIKE Force Company 12



Paul Longgear



Charles Lindewald



Earl Burke



Dennis Thompson



John Early



James Moreland

# IF WE BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME: Wyoming Green Beret Memorial

## SPECIAL FORCES MEMORIAL IN THE WEST

**Editor's Note:** The first memorial to Special Forces in the West is now more than a year old and had visitors from far and wide during the great lunar eclipse of 2017. War reporter Alex Quade (who was Master of Ceremonies and cut the ribbon for the grand opening of the SF Memorial), shares the history and experience of this special place, should you and your family decide to put it on your schedule to visit next August during the "Rocking The Winds" festival in Wyoming.



Alex Quade  
War Correspondent

By Alex Quade

CROWHEART, WY – Bikers in leathers, World War II veterans in wheelchairs, farmers with their children and dogs, joined battle-hardened Green Berets — who'd fought in El Salvador, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Colombia, Panama, Philippines, Cambodia, the Balkans and "a lot of little places that don't make the news" — in a field near the Wind River, surrounded by sage, Indian paintbrush, cottonwood

trees, choke cherry bushes and brown and red hills. They were there to dedicate the first memorial to U.S. Army Special Forces in Wyoming and Rocky Mountain region.

"We did not have a Special Forces memorial, so we built one," retired Chief Warrant Officer Brian Bewley, who grew up in California and served with 7th and 1st Special Forces Groups, said.

With the idea of, "If we build it, they will come," Bewley, and his family and friends, erected the sprawling memorial in a pasture at Grizzly Rock Ranch in rural Crowheart, formerly known as Burris.

And come, they did. Nearly 250 people attended the event, held in August, 2016.

"This memorial will allow those of us Special Forces veterans who live here, as well as those who may be traveling through the region, an outlet to memorialize those who have gone before us, served with us and those who are currently in the fight," Bewley, now CEO of Tactical Solutions International, Inc., said.

Retired Special Forces Maj. Caesar Jaime, who served with 7th



and 3rd Special Forces Groups, helped build it.

"This memorial is vital for the ability of Special Forces veterans in the area, and the rest of the West, to demonstrate and describe the history, missions and other Special Forces' peculiar information to their families, friends and other veterans," Jaime said.

The memorial includes a large, ceremonial archway and rock garden promenade to the main tribute area. Enclosed in a wood-gated circle, flags fly over a granite monument stone engraved with the "De Oppresso Liber" crest, which translated from Latin means "To Free The Oppressed" — the Special Forces motto. Below the crest is a quote from President John F. Kennedy, who first authorized the distinctive beret headgear specifically for Special Forces. It reads: "A symbol of excellence, a badge of courage, a mark of distinction in the fight for freedom."

Visitors may sit and contemplate the memorial, on a wooden bench, with the words, "Land of the Free, Because of the Brave," carved into it.

Several history kiosks display photos and citations. One station acknowledges Special Forces Medal of Honor recipients. For example, the story of the first Medal of Honor for the war in Vietnam, bestowed upon Col. Roger L. Donlon, is on the wall. Another station pays tribute to Green Berets killed in action. There is also a message board where combat veterans may leave personal notes and mementos to their fallen brothers and their families.

Retired Special Forces Maj. Christopher Brewer, who served with 7th and 1st Special Forces Groups, encouraged all to read the stories on the kiosk walls.

"Remember the men who wrote these stories with their blood. They deserve that," Brewer said. "But understand that these are not merely tales to be told, they are a challenge to each of you who read these words: live a life worthy of their sacrifice. Stand for the ideals they represent."

The dedication ceremony began with skydiver Dan Paganini of Team Fastrax jumping with a giant American flag. Nine local World War II veterans were recognized. Native American drummers from Fort Washakie then shared their ceremonial gift with the audience. In turn, Bewley shared with drummers Gus Thayer and Brian Standing Rock, one of his metal Special Forces crossed ar-



rows pins. The crossed arrows mark Special Forces lineage; the pin was the branch insignia of the U.S. Army Indian Scouts, and later the 1st Special Service Force.

The Special Forces Creed was shared, which includes such lines as: "I will not fail those with whom I serve... I will never leave a fallen comrade... I will never surrender, though I am the last... I am a member of my Nation's chosen soldiery. I serve quietly, not seeking recognition or accolades. My goal is to succeed in my mission – and to live to succeed again."

Quotes and thoughts from Green Beret Medal of Honor recipients, Gary Beikirch, Drew Dix, Melvin Morris, Bennie Adkins and Col. Roger Donlon, who could not be in attendance - marked the unique bond of the Special Forces community.

"May this become a place where families may come, gather, and find comfort in knowing that there are those who care and will forever be grateful for the sacrifice made by their loved one," Medal of Honor recipient and Green Beret medic, Gary Beikirch, shared in a note from his hospital bed in New York before undergoing surgery for cancer.

"May this also become a place where all may come, reflect and then honor that sacrifice by re-committing ourselves to the values, freedoms, and truths that have made this country free - the truth of living one's life in service to something greater than oneself," Beikirch, who served with 5th Special Forces Group in Vietnam, stated in the note for the dedication.

Retired Special Forces Col. Paul Rosser, who served with 1st and 19th Special Forces Groups, and was a psychological operations task force commander in Iraq, spoke.

"This Special Forces Memorial recognizes Wyoming's contribution to the brotherhood of the 'Quiet Professionals,' sworn to uphold and defend our nation's freedom. It affords an opportunity to honor the fallen, remembering their commitment, duty, and sacrifice. Keeping the foundation of freedom firmly in place for future generations to build upon," Rosser said.

Rosser also reminded everyone to reach out to veterans in their community, to make sure they're alright.

Using a Ka-Bar knife, the ribbon was cut. A Veterans of Foreign Wars color guard from Dubois, WY, raised the American flag. It flew beside a POW/MIA Flag, as reveille played and everyone stood at attention.

Retired Special Forces Staff Sgt. Fazilath Qureshi, who served with 5th Special Forces Group in Saudi Arabia and Somalia, was part of the VFW color guard.

"It was an absolute honor to have been part of the memorial ceremony," Qureshi said.

The Special Forces anthem, "*The Ballad of The Green Berets*," played over the loud-

speaker as all in attendance walked quietly under the Ceremonial Memorial Arch and up the rock pathway to the stone monument. Next to the stone, a "Fallen Soldier Battlefield Cross" consisting of an inverted M4 rifle with dog tags hanging off it, combat boots, and the Green Beret with its Special Forces Group insignia patch.

Wild mule deer, antelope, rabbits, a golden eagle, and osprey made appearances around the perimeter fence, as Bewley, in dress blues, handed over a wreath made of Wyoming sage brush and prairie flowers, to place at the monument stone. Salutes were offered as a light wind blew. The mood was solemn, befitting of the "Quiet Professionals," some in dress blues, some in civilian attire.

"This memorial is a reminder. It challenges us; inspires us to live a life of honor and if necessary, to give our lives in service to those we love," Brewer said.

Along with the tribute there were shooting competitions and members of the Rock Springs, WY SWAT team demonstrated a hostage rescue and house breach.

"The demonstration was a sniper initiated, explosive entry hostage rescue," Brewer said.

Brewer, a former Special Forces commander, worked with counter-terrorism forces in Colombia, the Philippines and Afghanistan. He covered safety pre-checks with the SWAT team, then narrated the demonstration over the loudspeaker to give civilian attendees a taste of what elite units do downrange.

Grazing mule deer occasionally looked up behind the house until the 50-grain detonation cord in the door breaching charge went off. The deer leaped and bounded out of the field behind the house under assault, to the clapping and amusement of the onlookers.

Former Green Beret sniper, Sgt. First Class Andy Butler, who served with 10th Special Forces Group in Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq, gave lessons to attendees.



"I'm from Idaho, and I now have a place where my family and I can come and reflect on my service within Special Forces as well as to memorialize those who have given the ultimate sacrifice," Butler said. As his way of giving back to that community, Butler, now CEO of Advanced Accuracy Solutions LLC, brought his expertise and sniper rifles along.

For long gun enthusiasts, these included: the Accuracy International AX .338 Lapua, the DPMS G2 .308 with Surefire SOCOM II suppressor, and the Armalite Super SASS .308. Butler also shared the latest Kestrel 5700 with applied ballistics, mounted on a tactical tripod with Zeiss Spotter 45, and the Vectronix Terrapin Laser Range Finder. Butler's "students" (translation: this reporter) gained an appreciation of the full sniper experience of patiently focusing on a target (in this case, a tree on a hill), through the scope, while being bitten by fire ants.

The Special Forces Memorial event also included bands and barbecue, tandem skydives and camping, a motorcycle poker run, and the first female master blade smith, Audra Draper, displaying her knives and donating a blade for charity. The entire weekend's event benefitted the Green Beret Foundation.

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## ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY

With the idea to make each year of the Special Forces Memorial, a bigger event, in the lead up to the one year anniversary celebration this past summer, SF CWO Brian Bewley and Maj. Caesar Jaime invited members of the SOF brotherhood — eleven active duty and combat wounded Green Berets — to climb nearby Gannett Peak. At 13,804 feet, it is the highest point in Wyoming.

They called the climb, "Warriors In the Winds,"

Maj. Jaime was the Special Forces lead for the climb.

The climb took six days.

"The idea was to provide a sense of accomplishment to the disabled, while being mentored along the way by their brothers. Every participant told me, it was a 'life-changing' experience," Bewley said.

"The mountains are such a great place for Vets to go when they come back from overseas. I want more guys to know that mountaineering is wonderful outlet," Josh Jespersen said.

After putting away their climbing gear, the warriors then conducted the live-fire demonstration, to kick off the "Rocking The Winds" event, which will be a hallmark at the Special Forces Memorial annually. More than 150-people were thrilled to watch the simulated Direct Action assault

on a Time Sensitive Target, supported by a helicopter and gun trucks.

In addition, five music bands played over the four day weekend, and Master Jumper Dan Paganini and another buddy from Team Fastrax offered tandem skydives during the lunar eclipse, which was visible over the ranch.

Organizers say, the event went well, despite the fact that their road was washed out, forcing attendees to drive through neighboring pastures after a 12-mile re-route to the venue. Welcome to Wyoming — just part of the adventure of the Special Forces Memorial (they hope to have the road fixed by 2018's event).

The Special Forces Memorial is open to the public and accessible during good weather, which for Wyoming means the non-winter months. Bewley and his fellow combat veterans are already planning a larger tribute event to Special Forces at the Memorial in 2018. It will be Aug. 24-26, 2018, and will continue to raise money for SOF charities such as the Green Beret Foundation.

They'll also reach out to the Special Forces Groups to invite Green Berets for the *2018 Warriors In The Winds Climb*, which will lead up to the Special Forces Memorial event. ♦

(For more info on the Warriors In The Winds climb: [www.tsi-hamtc.com](http://www.tsi-hamtc.com))

(More info on the Rocking The Winds 2018 Special Forces Memorial event will be posted on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RockingTheWindsFoundationFundraiserEvent/>)

**(Editor's Note:** Award-winning war reporter Alex Quade covers U.S. Special Operations Forces on combat missions downrange. Hachette Books will publish Quade's first book on Special Forces in 2019. For more information: [www.alexquade.com](http://www.alexquade.com)).





## No More Forgotten Warriors continued

women, children and old men on the road outside our perimeter wire. As these were family members of our Bru fighters, we brought them inside the wire and arranged for evacuation to a safer area at Cam Lo via Chinook helicopters. As the helicopters landed on FOB-3, the guns in Co Roc opened up attempting to knock them out. The Bru families were quickly loaded during the shelling while the Chinooks remained on the ground. This cycle recurred a number of times as each morning we found more Bru families outside our wire. We surmised that the NVA were herding them to FOB-3 with the express intent of trying to destroy the rescue helicopters. Fortunately, although there were some minor casualties, no helicopters were hit.

These guns continued to fire even after the siege was lifted. There was an unfortunate incident where a number of Bru were being assembled for movement out of the Combat Base when we heard the 'Thump, Thump'. The group was out in the open and as there with no place for cover, everyone hit the ground. The rounds landed close and several of the Bru were killed.

The Khe Sanh Combat Base was closed by July 1968. FOB-3 personnel were reassigned to various other locations. ❖

*Anyone wishing to submit an article describing their experiences with the Montagnards should contact Tom Turney at [turney@newcap.com](mailto:turney@newcap.com).*

*Anyone wishing to make a tax deductible donation to Save The Montagnard People can be made by mailing a check payable to STMP, Inc. 3802 Highlands Ln, Asheboro, NC 27205 or at their website [www.montagnards.org/donations](http://www.montagnards.org/donations) to save the montagnards.*



John Joyce, Bad Welker and Lonny Holmes having lunch after a little shoot'in in the desert. The Pioneer Saloon is one hundred and fifteen years old and has the best Ghost Burgers in Clark County-Las Vegas, NV. They hung a man out side after he shot someone in the bar in the early 1900's.

## Presidents Page continued

One final note: I want to thank Chapter 78 Officers VP **Don Deatherage**, VP **Brad Welker**, Treasurer/Chaplain **Richard Simonian**, Past President **Bruce Long** and Sentinel Editor **Lonny Holmes** for the many hours of extra work they've put in for our little chapter over the last month, always answering my calls for help/assistance.

Remember, our special guest for our March 10 meeting will be SF Col. (ret.) Paul Longgear, of Lang Vei fame. Paul and his wife Patti are driving from Georgia for the occasion. Please reach out to any fellow veteran, service member or JROTC cadet who might be interested in attending the event. Standby for details.

Last, but not least, remember our meetings will occur on the 2nd Saturday of the month, at 8:30 a.m. The second meeting will be held on February 10 at Marie Callender's Restaurant & Bakery, 307 E. Katella Ave. Please contact me or Chapter Secretary **Gary McNamara** to confirm your attendance or that you can't attend.

AIRBORNE!! ❖

John Stryker Meyer  
President, SFA Chapter 78

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maj. Hammond Salley, USA (Ret), attended the University of Florida where he received an Army ROTC commission in the Infantry. During the next 21 years in the Army he enjoyed assignments throughout the United States, Germany and two tours in Vietnam. Hammond has served in Armored, Airborne and Mechanized Infantry Divisions as well as in Special Operations units. He wears the Airborne, Ranger and Special Forces tabs. He is also one of the very few Army officers privileged to wear a Navy Presidential Citation for his association with the 26th Marine Regiment during the siege of Khe Sanh, Vietnam in 1968. Hammond retired from the Army in 1984 and started a 20 year career as an aerospace analyst / project manager for McDonnell Douglas / Boeing. He was on the C-17 troop / cargo aircraft design team. His later focus was on development of future defense related projects for Boeing's 'Phantom Works'.

## Chapter 78 Members Attend Sonora High School JROTC Ceremony



Chapter 78 members Hamm Salley and Lt. Hans Hunt are both members of the Los Alamitos Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). Once a year the Chapter supports 18 High School JROTC units at a recognition dinner for their Senior Military Instructors and their outstanding Cadets and families. We also make donations to help selected units. The JROTC unit at Sonora High School was one of our selections. The unit is led by Lt. Hans Hunt (Ret) as the Senior Army Instructor and very ably assisted by MSG Fritz Saalmann (Ret), also member of Chapter 78.

On January 18, Hamm Salley represented the Los Alamitos Chapter of MOAA and presented a donation to Lt. Hans Hunt for the Sonora High School JROTC unit at an outdoor ceremony in front of some of his JROTC cadets. The gentleman in the blue shirt is Dr. Adam Bailey, the school principal who is very supportive of the program.

Photo at top: the presentation of the donation to Lt. Hans Hunt and members of the Sonora High School JROTC unit. Photo bottom left: Chapter 78 members Lt. Hans Hunt, Hamm Salley, and MSG Fritz Saalmann (Ret).