



THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SENTINEL

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 2 • FEBRUARY 2019



Holocaust Survivor, Green Beret Legend
January 2019 Chapter 78 Meeting Presentation:
Wade Ishimoto, the Real Deal



SENTINEL

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COVER: Richard Simonian, an original member of the 10th SF Group, and Wade Ishimoto, a founding member of SFOD-D, who was the guest speaker at Chapter 78's January meeting. He gave a riveting presentation on Operation Eagle Claw as a member of Delta Force to rescue the 52 American hostages in Iran. (Photo by Lonny Holmes)

This cover also includes the **new Chapter 78 challenge coin** — designed by Chapter member John Joyce. LTC Frank J. Dallas is Special Forces Association Decade #1



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From the Editor



Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor

Chapter member **John Joyce** has redesigned our chapter coin since the 20th Anniversary Coin was made to be used for only one year. The new coin has a unique and very distinctive design and also has the name of our chapter namesake, LTC Frank J. Dallas on the reverse side. LTC Frank J. Dallas is Special Forces Association Decade #1. Chapter members may acquire the new coin at chapter meetings or by going online to John's website. You can view the

new Chapter 78 Coin on the cover of this edition of the Sentinel. He has also designed a "car badge" of the SFA Flash and all the proceeds of the sale of this will be donated to SFA National.

Please note the special Cops Corner story in this issue by **Brad Welker** who compares death benefits of U.S. Military Killed in Action to that of California Law Enforcement Officers killed in the line of duty. Again, as we all know, the pay and benefits even in death are better in civilian life than the military which is the reason we support organizations who support our fallen Green Berets. For example, the Chapter 78 "Shooters Cup" was started to raise funds to support the Green Beret Foundation. **Aaron Anderson** started the GBF to help support our wounded Green Berets after his experience as a severely wounded SF Soldier that required prolonged hospitalization in Walter Reed Medical Center where he learned of some of the limitations of care provided by the military. ❖

Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor



Current Special Forces Group Coin Set, Series 2, by John Joyce of Excalibur (www.xclibr.com).



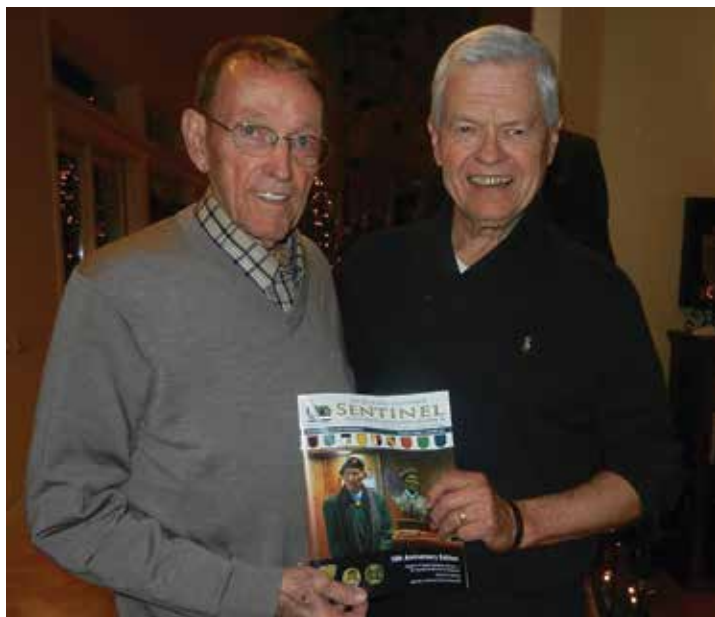
John Stryker Meyer
President SFA 78

Gentlemen,

I bring you good news and bad news. Being ever so PC in this year of 2019, I start with the good. On January 5 I had the honor of attending Chapter 75's New Year bash in Poway, where that chapter's namesake, Col. (R) Roger H.C. Donlon and his wife Norma were once again the spotlight of the night at the spacious home of Col.(R) Lee Jacobs and his family. During the night, the Donlons handed out MOH Quote books

to everyone who made a donation towards the Donlon sculpture that was unveiled December 5 at the renaming of 7th SFG's Headquarters after the first MOH recipient of the Vietnam War. They acknowledged Chapter 78's \$500 donation that was made during the clandestine fund-raising campaign for the magnificent sculpture designed and crafted by Douwe Blumberg. Chapter 78 has a Blumberg sculpture of the SF Horse Soldier in our team room at Chapter Treasurer/Chaplain **Richard Simonian's** office in Orange. And, every Chapter 75 member went home carrying the January 2019 Sentinel which featured the good colonel and his loving bride of 50 plus years.

The other bit of good news is all plans are coming together for the Chapter 78 February 9 meeting where the guest speaker will be Yvette Benavidez Garcia, daughter of SF MOH Recipient Roy Benavidez. Chapter 78 member **Lee Martin** will fly down from Sprekels to explain how he was present, standing with the doctor who attempted to zip up the body bag containing Sgt. Roy Benavidez in May 1968, who had been bayoneted, shot, suffered shrapnel wounds and was covered with blood and mud. He couldn't speak. Near death, all he



Col. (R) Roger H.C. Donlon and Chapter 78 President John S. Meyer at Chapter 75's New Year party.

could do was spit. Lee was there. Chapter member **Hank Eylicio** and his talented wife Lena will pick up the Garcia family at LAX and accompany them to San Diego where Chapter 78 guest and frequent reader of the *Sentinel*, Ann Mills-Griffiths helped to arrange free passes to Sea World on Sunday for all parties.

For the bad news: On Thursday January, 24 I learned that long-time SOA Treasurer Pete Buscetto was on his death bed. I called his wife Terri, and she placed her cell phone up to his ear, where I asked Pete to secure an RON for future SF men and thanked him for his years of service to the SOA — from 2011 through 2018 — when his declining health necessitated Pete to resign from that elected position. Pete ran recon missions out of CCS and CCC, including at least one mission with SOG recon legend Joe Walker. Pete often talked about using his SF skills to make him a successful businessman, where he helped CompUSA earn \$2 billion in 1992 alone. Pete loved the 'Yards and helped George Clark and his team improve their accounting procedures more than 10 years ago.

Returning to good news, our March 9 speaker will be SF officer Mitch Utterback, who served with A/5/19. I met Mitch when he was the official SF liaison with the Bank family after Col. Bank reported for duty in the big LZ in the sky. He recently traveled to Iraq as a reporter/videographer, which provides some remarkable stories and surprising insights into Iraq.

If you plan to attend our February meeting, please e-mail VP **Don Deatherage** at: drdeathca@gmail.com. We need an exact headcount. Chapter 78's Special Deputy Assistant to the Treasurer, **Mike Keele**, will pick up fines from anyone who attends without a beret or Chapter 78 coin. We will have some unique raffle items. ❖

Meeting details:

Time: 8:30 a.m., February 9, Breakfast will be served.

Location: Embassy Suites
3100 East Frontera, Anaheim, CA 92807
(The SE Corner of Hwy 91 & Glassell St.)

John Stryker Meyer
President, SFA Chapter 78



Andrew Gabroy, of Grid 35, our SFA C-78 webmaster, and his wife Megumi are new parents of Lucas Ryōji.

Holocaust Survivor, Green Beret Legend



John Stryker Meyer

By John Stryker Meyer

Editor's Note — In September 2016, two months before the presidential election, Chapter 78 President John S. Meyer interviewed retired Green Beret legend Maj. Gen. Sidney Shachnow while he gathered more than 160 signatures of retired U.S. military generals, admirals and 14 MOH recipients endorsing then candidate Donald Trump for president.

Interviewed from his North Carolina home, Shachnow's passion and deep concern for America's future was evident. "I love this country...and yes, I worry about its future," he said in the September 2016 interview.

Shachnow, a 40-year Army veteran who spent 32 of those years with U.S. Army Special Forces – the Green Berets, said he took the "unprecedented" step to get the Trump support letter written and circulated publicly because "I feel we're obligated to speak up at this time...historically, I've felt that we're soldiers and that we should keep our nose out of politics...you don't get yourself politically involved."

"Today (2016), however, we have two candidates who can affect our country for a generation or more, with the balance on the Supreme Court and rebuilding our military being major issues to our national security."

Holocaust Survivor

Shachnow's compelling life story began during WWII where he was imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp in his native city of Kovno, Lithuania from age 7 to 10. Only five percent of the people incarcerated in the Kovno concentration camp survived the war.

He and his family endured a 2,000-mile, six-month trek across war-torn Europe to eventually land in Salem, Mass. "That trip is etched in my mind and the fabric of my being today, the quest to be free, to live in America, not under the thumb of a Hitler or a communist tyrant like Stalin who killed more than 50 million of the people who lived in Russia."

As a Green Beret he was assigned to the ultra-top-secret Detachment "A" – classified designation: 39th Special Forces Detachment beginning in 1956 through 1984, when it was called the Physical Security Support Element, Berlin – classified designation: 410th Special Forces Detachment. Shachnow participated in clandestine missions behind enemy lines and later commanded secret mission conducted by Green Berets from Det A and the 410th.

One of his favorite stories while serving in Det A as a young major, stems from an unauthorized mission that he and a few non-commissioned officers took into the subterranean network of under-



ground tunnels, sewers, etc. in an effort to get the upper hand on East German police. "We were told the subterranean system was off limits, but I decided in my infinite wisdom that we'd go down there anyway...it was like a desert in that there were no points of reference. We ended up using the Hansel and Gretel method of keeping track of where we had been."

The unauthorized mission brought them into East Germany, but it also brought Shachnow before the top commanding general for West Germany the next day, where he was reprimanded for the mission. The reprimand didn't slow down his service to our country nor his promotions.

Maj. Gen. "Shachnow was the classic Special Forces officer," said (Ret.) Chief Warrant Officer James Stejskal, who served two tours of duty with Det A and is the author of the highly respected, first major book on Det A, *Special Forces Berlin: Clandestine Cold War Operations of the US Army's Elite, 1956-1990*.

Top Secret Cold War Command

Stejskal said the Det A missions were "classic OSS (the WWII Office of Strategic Services – the predecessor to the CIA) Jedburgh missions, run deep behind enemy lines. Keep in mind, at that time during the Cold War, there were only a handful of us stationed in West Berlin surrounded by more than a million Russian and communist East German military and police in the Warsaw Pact, on a wartime footing...

"Regarding General Shachnow, there are two different sorts of officers, there are those who are the West Point model, they're all about themselves and their careers. Sidney came up through

Continued on page 5

COPS CORNER



Brad Welker

Death Benefits — Law Enforcement vs. Military

By Brad Welker

During a recent Chapter 78 meeting a member made a motion that we make a financial donation to the survivor's of two recently murdered California Law Enforcement Officers (LEO). As a retired California LEO I support such efforts. However, I feel strongly that KIA and severely injured Green Berets are equally deserving of charitable donations.

The motion was tabled and I was tasked with investigating the relative amount of the available benefits.

I searched the Internet for official documentation of available benefits. I searched for Federal benefits for both categories. I limited my search for LEO benefits to California.

Federal Benefits to LEO

- 34USC Subtitle 1, Chapter 101, Subchapter XI: Public Safety Officers' Death Benefits

“that a public safety officer has died as the direct and proximate result of a personal injury sustained in the line of duty The Bureau (of Justice Assistance) shall pay a benefit of \$250,00” (Tax Free)

California State Benefits to LEO

- \$290,000 paid at the rate of \$840 a week to spouse and children (tax Free)
- Spouse receives 50% of fallen officer's salary for life (tax free)
- Children receive no fee of any kind for education at any California State University
- Existing health benefits are also continued

Federal Military Benefits

- Death Gratuity of \$100,000
- Death Pension dependent upon time of service and rank with the provision that the next of kin's "countable income is

below a yearly limit set by law” — current limit for a spouse with no children is set at \$9,078, other mitigating factors such as children make the upper limit \$17,833

- May be eligible for Tricare
- Basic Housing allowance or remain in government housing limit of 365 days
- GI life insurance up to \$400,000 (amount previously selected by service member)

California State Benefits to Military

- Dependent children may receive waiver of mandatory college fees
- There may be some other fee waivers for dependents, however fees may be raised when personal income is calculated

All of this information came from online data and serves only as a baseline — there may be more benefits available, which can be verified by contacting the appropriate agency. It does appear that a fallen LEO is afforded substantially more benefits that a fallen SF soldier.

Despite the fact that I am a retired LEO, I recommend that we follow the Charter of our Chapter and limit any charitable donations to members of the Regiment. ❖

Cops Corner carries stories related to or about law enforcement. Anyone interested in publishing a story about their experiences is encouraged to contact Chapter 78 Vice President Brad Welker at wbwelker@gmail.com.

Wade Ishimoto, the Real Deal



Mike Keele

By Mike Keele

Only rarely does one have the opportunity to meet a genuine star of the Special Operations trade like Wade Ishimoto, and the occasion was sparked by Wade's acceptance of an invitation by Chapter 78 President John Stryker Meyer, to speak at our January 2019 meeting. Having worked assignments from alpha/numeric SF projects in Vietnam through SOG, his special talents have hunted the intelligence trail from the back rooms of Saigon to Cambodia and Laos. But, Wade brushed over his Vietnam exploits in order to get to the headline maker of all time: Operation Eagle Claw, concocted after the Embassy takeover by Iranian students on 4 November, 1979. The actual mission commenced on 24 April, 1980.

Before that, SFOD-Delta had to be conceived, organized, staffed and trained. For that operation, Mr. Ishimoto was in on the ground floor in 1977-78. He cited from memory the conceivers, the organizers, the politicians, the horses and the wranglers. After the standard unconventional organization and train-up period, all this herd of prime horseflesh needed was a mission that fit their training and capabilities, and sadly, Eagle Claw was not what they had in mind. Still, a job is a job, and a soldier's job is to say "Yes Sir! Can do, Sir!" Thus, when a hoard of screaming, shouting Iranian fundamentalists took over the U.S. Embassy in Tehran (for the second time in 1979), Col. Charlie Beckwith's newly organized band of unconventional's won the hostage rescue job hands down, since no other organization could compete.

This is where the talented men step to the front and do really creative things, knowing first of all that complex plans are the bane of success. Wade confided that he didn't give the operation, tasked with rescuing 52 American hostages from the U.S. Embassy compound in Tehran, much chance of being a success, mainly because of the operational complexities necessitated by the long haul from jumping off bases and refueling requirements for the C130's and eight Sea Stallion helicopters.

Ishimoto explained that leading up to the Embassy takeover, the U.S. Military had been drawn down to the point that Special Ops forces in the Army was between four and eight thousand men, compared with the 65,000 men and women on the payroll today. No war gaming solutions had been conceived for situations like



Wade Ishimoto, guest speaker at Chapter 78's January meeting. Photo by Rick Carter, Chapter 78 member

Tehran, and the equipment inventory was in worse shape than was the scarcity of personnel situation. And ironically, Delta was still going through evaluations, including the International Validation Exercise which occurred on November 4, 1979. Nobody was ready, and nobody had dealt with anything like this before in the U.S., so a lot of ideas had to be considered and rejected which wouldn't have seen the drawing board a few years later.

Planning considerations ranged from what helicopters would be used, to where to set up the staging FOB in the Iranian desert. Two bad choices, such as the CH53-D twin engine helicopter and placing the FOB on a dirt road in the desert, proved fatal to the project. The dirt road led to unwanted civilian traffic, which led to Disaster Number 1.

The MH53-D Sea Stallion helicopters were lageder onboard the aircraft carrier Nimitz, cruising in the Indian Ocean. With no mid-air refueling capability, the '53's range made another issue critical. The political climate of that time precluded using airfields in a friendly nation, 'cause there weren't none. This required a refueling tanker to precede the task force to the FOB. This tanker was subsequently struck by a Sea Stallion which was departing from the FOB in a sand storm, after the operation was scrubbed.

Ishimoto reported that the helicopter pilots lacked recent combat experience having seen no combat since the Vietnam war. The number of pilot candidates to train for the mission was inadequate and the train-up period for the aviators was inadequate for the task; and the aircraft were mechanically inadequate. Eight Sea Stallion's were deemed necessary to conduct the mission, with a minimum of five required to carry it out. Two aircraft reported mechanical problems en route to the FOB, and a third aircraft was declared mechanically unfit upon arrival at the FOB. Planning



SGM (R) Past Chapter 78 President Ramon Rodriguez, Wade Ishimoto, and Chapter 78 Secretary LTC (R) Gary Macnamara. Photo by Rick Carter

called for three extra helos to fill in if mechanical problems or combat losses occurred during the rescue. Therefore, the mission was doomed before Delta got off the ground.

Ishimoto showed a diagram of the Embassy compound, including a large, flat field perfect for landing the choppers and picking up the hostages, but somebody in planning decided the field had been mined and he would not let the operation go forward utilizing that field. The alternative required the helos to drop off the teams to

blown up when it refused to stop when fired upon with small arms. That lit up the night reeal good. The next vehicle to blunder into the party? A bus with forty-odd occupants. And that, folks is why you don't use an area of desert with a road going through it for the launch point for a clandestine operation.

This story could go on for many pages, but it is best told by Wade himself, a distinguished member of the Special Forces Regiment. If you ever have the opportunity to see him speak in person, don't pass it up. ❖

be picked up by trucks some 50 miles from the Embassy and for the aircraft to lager in at a rural location until the hostages had been gathered for pick up and transport to the now commandeered Manzariyah air base where C-141's would land to pick everybody up. What could possibly go wrong!

Ishimoto said that after the initial C130 landed beside the road, and before the helicopters arrived, his small security team deployed to their assigned position out from the rear of the C130, to ward off any unwanted civilian traffic entering the area. The first intruder? A fuel truck, transporting several thousand gallons of fuel, which had to be

Holocaust Survivor, Green Beret Hero continued

the system, survived unreal dangers, both from the Nazis and the Soviets, he took that knowledge and turned it into a successful career where he never forgot his men, his mission and he respected his men, listened to them and let them do their jobs.”

Shachnow was the commanding general of the Berlin Brigade when the Berlin Wall – which the communists began building in 1961, began to get torn down on November 9, 1989 and where he had a clarion moment in his life.

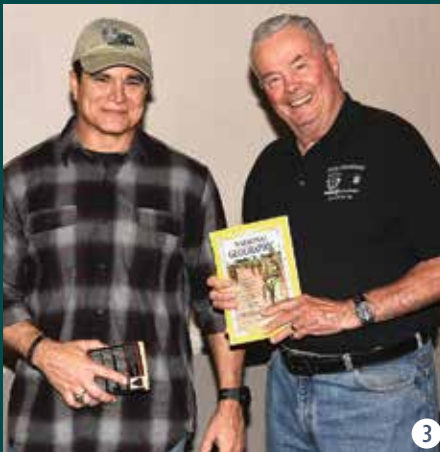
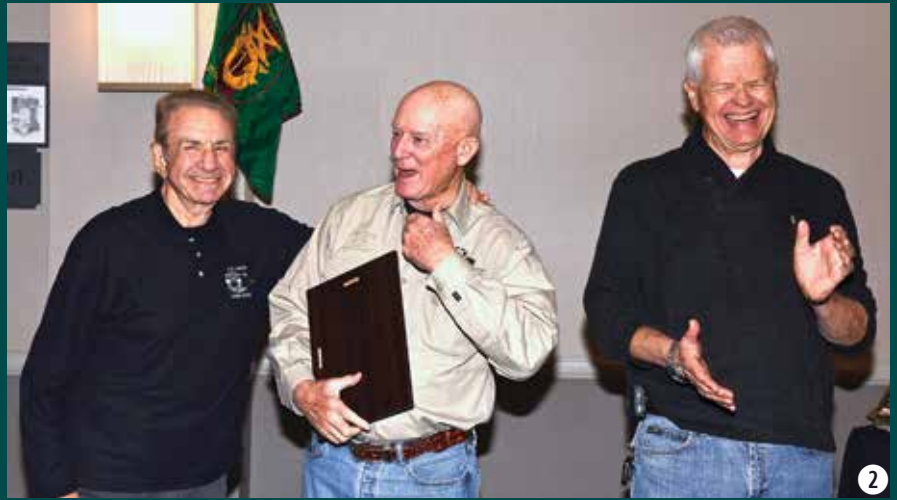
He was sitting with his Russian counterpart from the Soviet Army and senior KGB officers, “I’ll never forget it,” Shachnow said. “There was a moment when they were laughing and I asked what was so funny.”

“The general pointed out the personal irony for me then. I was a Holocaust survivor living in the villa that Hitler’s Finance Minister, General Fritz Reinhardt owned and which was Hermann Goering’s headquarters and I was having dinner with my Russian counterpart and senior KGB officers. The general said, ‘Here you are, a Jew. You were liberated by us, by the Russians (from the Kovno concentration camp). Now you are defending the Germans who had incarcerated you and committed atrocities against your people while you are getting ready to fight us, your new enemy.’ I’ll never forget that.”

Shachnow was a humble man during that interview, the classic Quiet Professional. For example in his book *Hope and Honor*, he wrote about having worked with communists to transition from a military seize footing in East Germany to an open society. When he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for his exceptionally meritorious leadership during that period of time from December 1989 to August 1991 from Army Gen. John M.D. Shalikashvili, Shachnow wrote: “I stood proudly as General Shalakashvili awarded me the Distinguished Service Medal...but, I was even more grateful for the next award,” when Shalikashvili presented the Army’s Outstanding Civilian Service Medal to his wife Arlene Shachnow for her devotion and care of military members in serving in Germany during those tumultuous years. ❖

MG (R) Sidney Shachnow will be buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery at 11 a.m. February 12 – President Abe Lincoln’s birthday, beginning with a service at Old Post Chapel, 204 Lee Ave., Fort Myer, VA 22211. The Special Forces Charitable Trust (SFCT) will hold a reception in honor of MG Shachnow immediately following the ceremony at the Fort Myer Officer’s Club—Patton Hall, 214 Jackson Ave., Fort Myer, VA 22211, Arlington National Cemetery.

SFA Chapter 78 January 2019 Meeting (Photos by Lonny Holmes and Mike Keele)



- 1 Thanks to the support of Richard Simonian, the publisher of the *Sentinel*, January's issue marked its tenth year of publication. Working behind the scenes on behalf of the Chapter, *Sentinel* editor Lonny Holmes arranged to surprise him with a custom plaque which included the cover graphics of the 10 Year Anniversary Issue.
- 2 Getting ready to present Richard with the 10 year plaque for publishing the SF Chapter 78 *Sentinel*.
- 3 Past Chapter 78 President Bruce Long and SFC Pirone of ODA 9614 talking about SF books and magazine stories.

- 4 Chapter President John S. Meyer presenting a plaque to Chase Elliott (son-in-law of Past President Bruce Long) of Direct Edge Media for constructing a sign for Company A, 19th SFG.
- 5 John S. Meyer speaking with Chapter founding Secretary Bob Crebbs, a Chapter member for 22 years.
- 6 John S. Meyer, Len Fine with football, Mark Miller and Kenn Miller. Len is getting SF signatures on the football.
- 7 Chapter member John Joyce's Excalibur products — presentation and raffle items at the January chapter meeting.