



THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SENTINEL

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 5 • MAY 2019



ST Idaho: Still MIA
51 Years Later

Chapter 78 Salutes
Vietnam Veterans

Updating Chapter 78's
Website



SENTINEL

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 5 • MAY 2019

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COVER: "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration" in N. San Diego County was held at the Army Navy Academy in Carlsbad, CA to accommodate a larger turnout of veterans, family members, area residents and to provide a landing zone for the Black Daggers USASOC parachute demonstration team – which drew a big audience of students on March 29, a day prior to the event. Photo by Ed Andrews, an Air Force Veteran.



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From the Editor



Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor

Colonel Sully H. de Fontaine a Distinguished Member of the Special Forces Regiment passed away on Monday, April 22, 2019 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Colonel de Fontaine, an active member of SFA Chapter 51, was the most outstanding officer and gentlemen I ever knew and continued to set the highest of standards well after his retirement. He was a member of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in World War II which was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal. For

further information please go to the following sites.

1. https://www.soc.mil/SWCS/RegimentalHonors/_pdf/sf_defontaine.pdf
2. <http://www.specialforcesassociation.org/about/sfa-history/>
3. SpecialForces78.com newsletters, *Sentinel* Volume 9, Issue 5, May 2018. The Congressional Gold Medal award story to the OSS.

Lonny Holmes, *Sentinel* Editor



Chapter 78's namesake, LTC Frank J. Dallas, one of the founding members of the Special Forces and a three war veteran, Green Beret Special Forces Association Decade Member Number 1. His grandson, John F. Horoho is to be commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant. The honor of the "First Salute" to him will be done April 27th by Green Beret Greg Dyer, SF Chapter 101, also representing Chapter 78. He will present 2nd Lt. Horoho with a Chapter 78 coin and special plaque with a photo of his grandfather. 2nd Lt Horoho's mother Patricia D. Horoho retired as a Lt. General and was the first female Surgeon General of the Army. A feature story and photo's will be in the June *Sentinel*.

Plaque designed and provided by SF Chapter 78 member John Joyce of Excalibur Industries.



John Stryker Meyer
President SFA 78

Gentlemen,

Our Chapter 78 members who live in Las Vegas were the first to report the sad news that **Col. Sully H. de Fontaine**, 92, passed away April 22. De Fontaine joined the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in 1943, parachuted behind enemy lines to participate in the liberation of France from Nazi occupation forces. He went on to serve as a Green Beret who specialized in Soviet intelligence,

escape and evasion tactics, and counter-guerilla warfare. He ran special operations in the Congo and Algeria, and fought under the aegis of the Military Assistance Command Vietnam—Studies and Observations Group (MACV-SOG) during Vietnam.

Fortunately, for Chapter 78, our senior member **MG Jack K. Singlaub** is doing well in Franklin, TN, as his 98th birthday approaches in July. I want to thank *Sentinel* Editor **Lonny Holmes** for going the extra yard in preparing the April edition featuring the multi-story package on Singlaub's historic Skyhook operation in February 1967 in Vietnam, tracking down the photos and sidebars, as well as staying in contact with Sully's wife in recent weeks.

This month's featured front page with the Black Daggers is part of our chapter's effort to support the call put out at the last SFA Reunion in El Paso: Special Forces recruitment efforts need support from SFA chapters. And, the point man for Southern California, outside of the LA area, is Chapter member **LTC John T. Bleigh**. He worked with the Black Daggers OIC CWO3 Chris Wilkerson, who also serves as Chap. 1-18 president, for the recent events in Carlsbad and LA. The Black Daggers are an outstanding example of special operations troops as recruiters continue the search for adequate, fit and qualified candidates for special operations duty. And, they keep moving. On Saturday April 20 they jumped into Ft. Sam Houston in San Antonio for another demonstration. For breakfast Wilkerson – who has numerous tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, swapped war stories with Chapter 78 member **Doug "The Frenchman" LeTourneau**.

The Black Daggers are due to return to So/Cal in September, with a planned jump into a San Diego Padres home baseball game. We'll have further discussions with John Bleigh and Chris Wilkerson about the exact date and the possible scheduling of other jumps in our area of operations. Watching the Black Daggers jump is a real kick because they use highly maneuverable civilian parachutes, where they can now jump into stadiums, and if necessary, can go straight down and still land lightly. Amazing.

Due to personal illnesses, Part 2 of Lee Martin's Loc Ninh story will appear in the next edition of the *Sentinel*.

For those planning to attend our May meeting, please e-mail **VP Don Deatherage** at: drdeathca@gmail.com. We need an exact

headcount, as Don explained at our last chapter meeting. Our guest speaker will be announced through e-mail.

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. ❖

Meeting details:

Time: 8:30 a.m., May 11, 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



Army veteran director of the VA Regional Office in San Diego Patrick Prieb, left, greets a Vietnam veteran to the second Welcome Home event held on March 30 in Carlsbad, California for Vietnam Veterans, jointly sponsored by the Hospice of the North Coast, the Veterans Association of North (San Diego) County (VANC) and the VA. [Go to page 4](#) in this issue for the full story.



ST Idaho: Still MIA 51 Years Later



John Stryker Meyer

By John Stryker Meyer

Editor's Note: *With the National League of POW/MIA Families 50th annual meeting slated June 19-23 in Arlington, the Sentinel will print some stories that reflect on why the POW/MIA mission is sacrosanct to all Green Berets who fought in the Vietnam War and the brave, fearless airmen who died supporting them on the battlefield. This is one small story of one SOG recon team's history in the eight-year secret war.*

The fate of Green Berets Glen Oliver Lane and Robert Duval Owen and their small SOG reconnaissance team – ST Idaho, still haunt me to this day. We never met. But, our paths crossed only momentarily 51 years ago.

On May 20, 1968, I was among three young and green Green Berets who entered the top-secret war that was fought during the Vietnam War in Laos, Cambodia and N. Vietnam over eight years under the aegis of the Military Assistance Command Vietnam—Studies and Observations Group, or simply SOG.

The three of us had completed our in-country training in Nha Trang, South Vietnam. We received our top secret SOG briefing in Da Nang, which included signing government documents vowing not to discuss, write about, or photograph any aspect of SOG's mission for 20 years. We were told that if we violated that agreement, we would be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. We were to tell no one, parents, girlfriends, lovers, or friends about SOG.

On the morning of May 20, the South Vietnamese Air Force's 219th Special Operations Squadron flew us north from Da Nang to FOB 1 in Phu Bai, located 10 miles south of Hue on the east side of Highway 1, a short distance north of the Hue/Phu Bai Airport. The three of us exited the H-34 Sikorsky helicopter as a recon team—codenamed ST Idaho—boarded the nine-cylinder warbird, and headed west into one of the deadliest SOG target areas: the A Shau Valley.

Because the helicopter crew chief told us to hurriedly exit the chopper, we didn't pay much attention to the six men from ST Idaho who boarded it and headed west toward Laos and the A Shau Valley. Since 1965, three Green Beret A-Camps were driven from the valley by communist North Vietnam Army troops, as it was a vital artery where enemy soldiers and supplies from the north flowed into South Vietnam.

Had I been more observant, I would have seen the team leader, codenamed One-Zero, Glen Oliver Lane; his assistant team leader, codenamed One-One, Robert Duval Owen; and four tough, fearless South Vietnamese indigenous troops climb aboard the chopper through its only passenger door on the right side of the helicopter.

Since there was so much enemy activity in the A Shau Valley and down the Ho Chi Minh Trail, ST Idaho's mission was to find out what the enemy was up to and if any more future attacks were being planned—such as the Tet Offensive earlier in the year, where communist forces struck in surprise attacks across South Vietnam during the national holiday of Tet.

Shortly after I entered FOB 1, I met Staff Sgt. Robert J. "Spider" Parks, whom I first encountered while I was going through Special Forces Training Group in 1967 at Ft. Bragg, N.C.. Spider explained that he had been a member of ST Idaho, but he was unable to go on this mission because he had been recently promoted One-Zero of another recon team. Hence he was nervous about the safety and well being of his former team, where he has run several missions at the One-One.

The South Vietnamese aircrews—codenamed Kingbees—returned to FOB 1 and reported that ST Idaho had been inserted into the target area without incident and that they had received a "Team OK" from the radio operator on the team.

However, during the afternoon, Spider became concerned when he learned that ST Idaho had failed to make a commo check with the forward air controllers—codenamed Coveys—who flew over the target area twice during daylight hours.

By nightfall, all attention was on ST Idaho. Spider and several other spike team members were very concerned because there had been no commo from the team since the initial "Team OK." Covey hadn't been able to raise anyone all day. Covey flew an extra mission that night, but to no avail. The airborne command aircraft that flew over Southeast Asia 24 hours a day was also unable to raise ST Idaho during the night.

By early morning, the mood in camp was grave. Spider said ST Oregon had been selected to run a Bright Light mission into the Whiskey Five target to investigate what had happened to ST Idaho. Mike Tucker and George Sternberg were the veteran recon members of ST Oregon. Tucker was a no-nonsense One-Zero who had many missions under his belt. Sternberg had run several missions from FOB 3 at Khe Sanh during the highly publicized siege of the Marine base in early 1968.

Together on ST Oregon, both men respected each other's prowess in the field so much that they rotated One-Zero duty with strong results. They were among the first to photograph NVA bulldozers cutting swaths through the triple canopy jungle to expand the Ho Chi Minh Trail Complex. They photographed NVA tanks, including one shot where the NVA star was visible, prior to the NVA hitting and over-running the Lang Vei A-Camp west of Khe Sanh earlier in the year.

On one mission, they had captured an NVA POW and were flying back to FOB 1 in a Kingbee when one of the team members discovered that the POW was a woman. Sternberg and the team member holding the POW were so startled that they loosened their grip momentarily. The woman bolted from the H-34 and jumped to her death.

For the Bright Light, former Idaho team member and medic Stephen Perry was added to their team. Tucker opted to take one Vietnamese team member from ST Idaho, Ha, on the mission. Ha was highly respected by the veteran SF men. He was fearless in the field, but more importantly, he could provide insight into ST Idaho's tactics.

Spider explained that a Bright Light team went in armed to the teeth, carrying weapons, ammunition, hand grenades, bandages, body bags and maybe one canteen of water. No food. Bright Lights were the most dangerous of all missions, designed to go in to find and recover downed pilots, lost or injured SF team members, or to bring back the bodies of SF troops or fliers killed in action.

On most Bright Light missions, there were plenty of NVA waiting. Tucker and Sternberg rounded out their Bright Light team with the best indigenous team members from ST Oregon. Spider was designated to fly in the "chase" Kingbee—a chopper that had a medic or extra SF personnel on board. If the lead Kingbee went down, the chase ship was designated to rescue them.

ST Oregon was inserted on the same landing zone where ST Idaho had been inserted two days earlier in hopes of finding clues as to what happened to it. They knew full well that a lack of comms from a team in the field usually meant it was in deep trouble, deep in enemy-held territory, with no immediate relief from conventional ground forces, artillery, or tank support.

ST Oregon was on the ground a short while before it encountered numerous NVA troops, some armed with American weapons, firing Colt CAR-15s and throwing M-26 hand grenades. The team retreated into a huge bomb crater as the NVA closed in on them, close enough to throw hand grenades into the crater. Fortunately, Air Force A-1 Skyraiders arrived and began making gun runs so close to the team's perimeter in the bomb crater, the men of ST Oregon could count the bolts in the single-engine propeller-driven war plane as exploding rounds from it killed NVA soldiers charging the team. The rounds were so close to the team, they covered the team members with dirt, wood chips, stones, and leaves.

During the intense firefight, one Vietnamese was killed, all of the Americans—Sternberg, Tucker, and Perry—were wounded from shrapnel and/or bullet wounds. One hand grenade literally tore Sternberg's jungle boot off of his foot. The indigenous soldier, Ha, suffered 94 separate wounds, while Perry was the most seriously

injured American on that Bright Light mission. They were rescued by two heroic Kingbee crews who pulled out the heavily wounded team. Upon extraction, an AK-47 round tore through the thin wall of the H-34 and struck a battery Sternberg was carrying in his vest. The impact of that round lifted Sternberg out of his seat, slammed him to the floor amid the hydraulic fluids that were leaking inside the helicopter, breaking two ribs. The URC-10 battery was a life-saver for Sternberg.

The final count: One KIA, every American and indigenous troop wounded. Dozens, if not several hundred NVA were killed. Hopes to find clues as to the whereabouts of ST Idaho were dashed. Tucker and Sternberg told S-2 debriefers that they had found what appeared to be a trail in the grass that went away from the LZ, which ST Idaho may have used. That was the only possible clue they found.

Getting hit with M-26 grenade fragments and CAR-15 gunfire meant ST Idaho had either been wiped out or captured.

Because enemy activity in that target remained highly visible, and due to the extreme casualties that ST Oregon took in its valiant attempt to find ST Idaho, no further attempts were made to find the lost team.

Thus the question hung heavy in the air and in the minds of every recon man at FOB 1: What happened to ST Idaho?

The fate of ST Idaho

Lane was an experienced, highly regarded One-Zero. He had served in Korea, saw heavy combat there, and since taking over ST Idaho, had run several successful missions before the ill-fated May 20th mission. Owen also was an experienced Green Beret. On May 1, 1968, he hitch-hiked from his home and family in North Carolina to the in-processing office at Ft. Lewis, WA, where many soldiers departed for Vietnam or other Southeast Asia Assignments. He sent the money he saved by hitch-hiking home to his wife. Because he was a combat-proven Green Beret, he skipped the in-country training, went straight to C&C, was assigned to FOB 1, and replaced Parks as the One-One on ST Idaho. Within 20 days Owen left home, kissed his daughter good bye, promised his daughter he'd be home for her next birthday and went missing in action, now presumed to be killed in action.

On a personal level, at that time, I was haunted by this question: If veteran Green Berets with Lane's and Owen's experience on a veteran recon team is wiped out, what will happen to a recon rookie like me?

The war waited for no one.

Spider became the new One-Zero for ST Idaho, Don Wolken became the One-One, and I became the One-Two radio operator while Nguyen Van Sau became the Vietnamese team leader, Zero-One. Sau was fearless, had three years experience in the secret war, and had been a simple farmer who hated communism and had seen firsthand the tyranny of it.

After going through an intense training regimen, which included pulling local night ambushes and patrols, ST Idaho ran its first mission east of the A Shau Valley, teaming with another FOB 1 recon

Continued on page 6

Chapter 78 Salutes Vietnam Veterans



John Stryker Meyer

By John Stryker Meyer

On March 30 four members of the Black Daggers, the U.S. Army Special Operations Command Parachute Demonstration Team participated in the second Welcome Home event for Vietnam Veterans that was jointly sponsored by the Hospice of the North Coast, the Veterans Association of North (San Diego) County (VANC) and the VA and attended by more than 450 veterans from

all wars. In true Special Forces fashion a few members of Special Forces Association Chapter 78 members quietly assisted in putting together the program.

The first “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration” in N. San Diego County was held at the VANC Resource Center in Oceanside in 2018. The venue was switched to the Army Navy Academy in Carlsbad, CA to accommodate a larger turnout of veterans, family members, area residents and to provide a landing zone for the Black Daggers USASOC parachute demonstration team – which drew a big audience of students on March 29, a day prior to the event, during a practice jump into the academy on its recently renovated and improved athletic complex that includes an artificial-turf multi-sport field.

“For us, it was an honor to participate in an event that salutes Vietnam veterans,” said CWO-3 Christopher Wilkerson, the commanding officer of the Black Dagger team that parachuted into Carlsbad. ASA Vietnam Veteran Ron Ferguson echoed the sad history of how many veterans were treated when they arrived home from Southeast Asia: “For me personally, I went straight to work when I came home. I talked to no one about my service in the Army because we all saw what happened to many returning veterans, some were spat upon, literally. Some were harassed, called baby killers and far worse....unlike World War Two veterans who came home to parades and open arms by America, we were shunned.

“Today’s event here, at the Army Navy Academy meant a great deal to many of the Vietnam veterans who attended today. And for me, it was a little extra special because my son is an alumnus of the academy and he served our country too. I want to thank everyone who participated and sponsored this event.”

Planning for the March 30 event began shortly after the 2018 inaugural “Welcome Home” program held at the VANC Resource Center on 1617 Mission Ave., Oceanside. Shelly Dew, the director

of philanthropy for Hospice of the North Coast – the lead sponsor in this operation, based in Carlsbad, ran point for the many meetings coordinating with VANC and VA officials, the Black Daggers and with Chapter 78 member Lt. Col John T. Bleigh, from the U.S. Army Recruitment office based in So/Cal. The first step was getting approval for the event United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration Commission. After working with Marc R. Henderson, a historian with the commission for the first event, moving forward to number two was relatively easy, as a critical part of this event was conducting interviews with Vietnam veterans the week prior to March 30 that will be placed with the Library of Congress.

There were untold number of meetings between Dew and Sharon Lutz of the hospice, Chuck Atkinson, VANC founder/president and VANC Executive Director Lori Boody, Ciena Faeth from the Veterans Benefits Administration, Cindy Butler from the Veterans Health Administration, working out all of the details from providing the red carpet for an official “red-carpet greeting” to arranging for a band, food, flags, seating and coordinating recruiting and working with dozens of volunteers for the event.

Around Christmas, Wilkerson confirmed that the Black Daggers were locked in for the March 30 event. A few weeks later, a new problem arose: there were no military aircraft available to carry the Black Daggers over the LZ. Enter LTC John T. Bleigh. He went to work, found the necessary funding for a private aircraft, got two more Black Dagger jumps scheduled for the LA Galaxy soccer on Sunday March 31, while arranging for the Black Daggers to appear a few local high schools in the LA area as part of the Army’s national recruitment effort.

The nights before the jump, Chapter 78 and a private donor arranged informal dinners/gatherings with the Black Daggers, as well as working with VANC officials during the year leading up to the second successful “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration” in N. San Diego County. And, as part of the videotaping of Vietnam veterans, nearly 20 veterans were interviewed at the VANC Resource Center from March 25 through 30. Chapter 78, through member Mike Keele, presented unique, one-of-a-kind appreciation plaques to the four major sponsors of the event that were designed and produced by Chapter 78 member John Joyce’s company Excalibur Industries. ❖



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1 Vietnam War Veteran pins provided by the VA and the 50th Vietnam War Commemoration Commission lined up prior to be pinned onto Vietnam veterans.

2 From left, Ray Patchett, chairman of the Hospice of the North Coast Board of Directors and Master of Ceremonies Bob Lawrence, both Army veterans, proudly display the appreciation plaques from Chapter 78, designed by chapter member John Joyce of Excalibur Industries.

3 Plaques designed and produced by Chapter member John Joyce's Excaliber Industries were presented to the four major sponsors of the event.

4 From left: Lt. Col. John T. Bleigh, Army recruiting; Ron Ferguson, ASA Vietnam veteran — his son attended the Army Navy Academy; Tony; John S. Meyer; CWO-3 Chris Wilkerson, OIC for the Black Daggers; Shelly Dew, Director of Philanthropy Hospice of the North Coast; Sharon Lutz, Executive Director Hospice of the North Coast; Rachel Timmins, volunteer; Black Dagger members Zack and Steve.



5



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5 Chapter President John S. Meyer and wife Anna hold the Black Daggers commemorative thank you photo. This signed photo will be on display at the team room in Orange. Photo courtesy of Felipe Rivas/Hospice of the North Coast

6 From left, the San Diego County VA leadership team present: Rex Kern, Director of Cemeteries; Dr. Robert M. Smith, Director of the Medical Center/Clinics; and Patrick Prieb, Director of Benefits.

ST Idaho: Still MIA 51 Years Later continued

team for an area reconnaissance. In between the monsoon season and heavy rains, ST Idaho inserted Air Force sensors in the A Shau Valley and outside the old Khe Sanh compound.

By October, Wolken was the One-Zero. On Oct. 6, 1968, we inserted into a target area named E-4, with a secondary mission of looking for an NVA POW camp. Because Lane and the old ST Idaho were still fresh on our minds, the secondary became our primary mission in our minds. If there was any chance that we could find that camp, we wanted to do so.

However, the NVA had other plans. On Oct. 7, after we found a small knoll for high ground, the communist forces hit us with wave attacks and attempts to get inside our defensive perimeter. At one point, as I attempted to make radio contact with any aircraft in the area, NVA soldiers began stacking up the bodies of dead NVA soldiers we had killed on the hill's embankment in an effort to build a cadaver wall they could climb to gain a height advantage to shoot down toward us. A Kingbee pulled us out of E-4 at last light. When they did, I was down to my last magazine of ammo, my last hand grenade, and the radio battery was getting low.

Back in camp, we told Spider that we tried to find the NVA POW camp, but got cut short with the deadly firefight that lasted more than four hours.

The three of us again toasted Glen Lane, Robert Owen and the fearless indigenous troops who we assumed died that day in the A Shau Valley. None of those men would have surrendered to the brutal communists.

Today, the fate of Lane and Owen haunt me and other SOG soldiers as the federal government once again sets into motion a realignment of its efforts to address the compelling issue of bringing home the remains of U.S. service members who remain missing in action today from WWII, Korea, and Vietnam.

Under the new plan, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) was consolidated with three previous federal operations: the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO), the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), and the Air Force's Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio.

To date, in 2019, there are still 1,589 Americans from the Vietnam War, men and women who served in Laos, Cambodia, South and North Vietnam. Among that total 50 Green Berets, including Lane and Owen and approximately 250 airmen who were lost in Laos during the eight-year secret war in Vietnam remain missing in action, rotting in the highly acidic soil of Southeast Asia.

Vietnam veterans associations and organizations have publicly stressed their hope that through the reorganization of the DPAA, efforts to find and return Vietnam veterans will not be deemphasized. Hopefully, the remains of Lane and Owen will be found and returned to the United States for proper burial and closure.

Because time is running out on efforts to recover those 1,589 Americans, over the last five years the Special Operations Association and the Special Forces Association have formed a joint POW/MIA committee to work jointing with the National League of POW/MIA Families, DPAA and other agencies involved in this mission.

Last year, the SF SOG warrior and chairman of the joint SOA/SFA POW/MIA Committee returned to Laos on a joint mission with League officials, where he personally met NVA soldiers who were members of the SOG hunter killer teams, whose sole mission was to hunt down and destroy SOG recon teams.

Fifty years later, the governments of Vietnam and Laos have pledged to give unprecedented cooperation to all joint field recovery teams. One question for the veterans of FOB 1, will the remains of Lane and Owen be located and recovered in our lifetime? ❖



Jack and Gene Williams with CSM "Rock" Merritt (96 years old) of the 508 PIR who jumped into Normandy on D-Day June 6, 1944. They were attending a "Pathfinder" reunion prior to attending the 75th Reunion of D-Day in June in Normandy, France. Gene and Jack's father was a Pathfinder of the 508 PIR and jumped on D-Day (check out Jack's article about history the Pathfinder's on D-Day in the [April 2017 Sentinel](#)).



From Thad Gembacz: "Did any of you guys ever get this MRE? I'm pretty certain that I did not! Happy Easter!"

COPS CORNER



Brad Welker

By Brad Welker

Our April meeting featured a presentation by Mr. Michael Schwartz, Executive Director of the San Diego County Gun Owners, an organization founded to provide information about the 2nd Amendment of the Constitution. Mr. Schwartz spoke eloquently about the many challenges presented to gun owners in California. The charter of the organization is as follows; San Diego County

Gun Owners (SDCGO) is a political organization that focuses on expanding and restoring Second Amendment rights within San Diego County. SDCGO was formed due to an aggressive and successful legislation and regulatory effort to significantly limit or eliminate the firearms industry and the general ownership and use of firearms and the firearms industry in California at the municipal, county, and state level. SDCGO's solution is a local, non-partisan, volunteer group with full-time staff that endeavors to get the right people elected on local San Diego councils and boards:

Mr. Schwartz spoke at length about the difficulties presented for private citizen before they can obtain a concealed carry permit in any county in California. He offered that volunteers are needed to become active proponents of law and ordinances that protect the right of gun ownership by private citizens. The California Legislature currently has pending many bills that have the potential of eroding the 2nd Amendment rights of those residing in this state. Further information about the organization and other organizations that are being formed in other counties visit their website: <https://sandiegocountygunowners.com>. ❖

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.

Updating Chapter 78's Website



Terry Cagnolatti

By Terry Cagnolatti
Chapter 78 Web Coordinator

As of April 1, 2019 Chapter 78 hired Webmaster Scott Kindred replacing Andrew Gabroy. As we are all aware, Andrew has been the Chapter's Webmaster and Host for approximately the past nine years. Andrew had done an outstanding job in the building and hosting of the website.

However, with his recent marriage, change of job and the birth of his son, it has become difficult for Andrew to fulfill requests regarding continuous changes to the website.

Scott Kindred is a digital marketing communications and technology professional focusing on the strategy, design and delivery of website, social media, and search engine optimization (SEO). Scott is the Director of [SafeHouse Web](#) and has been serving the digital marketing needs of businesses and nonprofit organizations since 2007. Scott stated that he is also thankful to work with veteran-owned businesses and associations.

Scott Kindred's company SafeHouse Web, is based out of Hollister, California providing services to clients in Silicon Valley, San Francisco Bay Area and Las Vegas Metropolitan Area. Chapter 78 has also made a change regarding the host of the website. The new host, [DreamHost](#), came highly recommended by both Scott and Andrew Gabroy.

The transition has been going smoothly with the assistance of Andrew and should be completed shortly given that there are no unforeseen obstacles.

Examples of some recent changes, before Andrews departure, was a complete configuration of the Current Officer's page. ROTC Coordinator Ed Barrett and Vice President Don Deatherage, photos and bios were added. In addition to Chapter 78's 20th Anniversary Coin was posted on the [front page of the site](#). Another recent change was an addition of a [page titled TAPS](#), under the icon SFA78. This was added to honor our fallen brothers of Chapter 78. A photo of each passed member along with their bio can be viewed, along with the sound of TAPS playing in the background. (Lest We Forget).

A priority, once the transition has been completed, is to update the ROTC page. Photo's and bios of each Cadet again will be added to the page — something that has not been done since 2012. From 2013-2016 a printout of Ed Barrett's ROTC Roster was the only information regarding the awards printed on that page.

Chapter 78's goal is to keep our website current and an interesting read for the viewers. ❖

SFA Chapter 78 March 2019 Meeting

Cliff Newman's and HALO's First Combat Jump — What Could Possibly Go Wrong

Photos by Rick Carter



Mike Keele

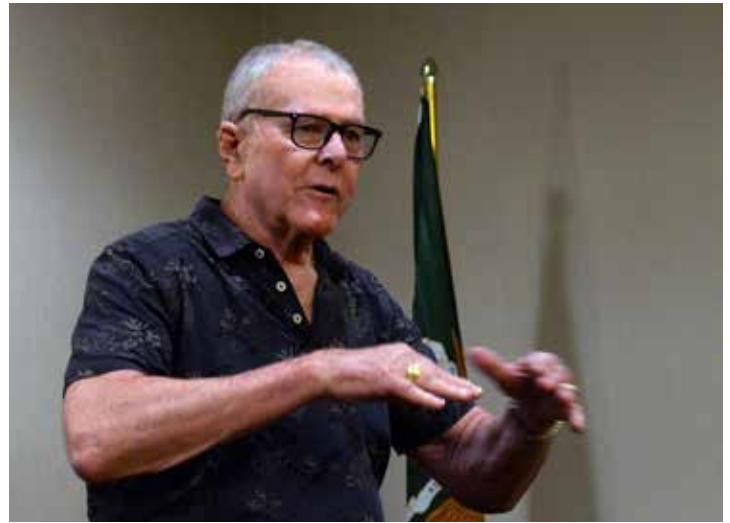
By Mike Keele

Chapter 78 had the distinct honor of hosting SFA Executive Director and SOG Recon Team Leader Cliff Newman and his lovely wife Karen at our April 13 meeting, held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Anaheim, Ca. Cliff said his mission was top secret, but he was willing to let us in on it, they were on vacation. Having spent the previous night in War Zone L.A., their mission plans called for

a breakfast stop at our meeting, then a continuing recon of sites for a new west coast FOB.

Cliff limited his story telling to just one episode of his three-year span of tours in Southeast Asia. He told us Billy Waugh, a well-known instigator of trouble, approached him with the idea of making the first ever HALO jump into combat. The task proved more complex than just strapping on a trusty old T-10, hooking up and bailing out the back door. One complication was that the team would be jumping into Laos, at night, with indigenous troops on the team, using parachutes. Cliff said there was a small problem with that parachute thing for the indig, because there wasn't even a word in the Montagnard language for "PARACHUTE."

Cliff related that the train-up period started with a flight to Okinawa for the initial jump school for some of the team. One member of the group, who had an oak leaf cluster on his collar, asked where



Cliff Newman describes making the first HALO jump into combat.

they hooked up their static lines? He was never seen again. Then, on their first jump from altitude, a Montagnard pulled the ripcord at 12,000 feet, and drifted out to sea, where he had to be picked up by a Marine Corps helicopter.

Then finally, after smoothing out the usual wrinkles of an unique, top-secret operation, they were off to CCN, where they waited, and waited, and waited for suitable weather. When the big day, er, night came, off to Laos they went. And at 17,000 feet, over enemy territory at oh-two-hundred hours, Cliff was the first one off the ramp. About five seconds later, he was also the first one to hit clouds and icy cold rain with zero visibility. Then, the sopping wet bag holding the newfangled, non-water-proof direction finder blocked his view of his altimeter.

But not to worry, there was sufficient light when he broke out of the clouds at about 2,000' AGL, so the biggest problem he faced with the landing was the tree that caught his parachute canopy. After dispatching with that problem (we call them issues, today), he secreted the 'chute and set out for higher ground, thinking he knew where he was. Once he had both feet solidly on terra firma, Cliff took out his new, top-secret transponder device didn't work, because it wasn't waterproof. There was a moment in time where



1 Chapter 78 President presents SFA Executive Director Cliff Newman with the newly designed Chapter 78 challenge coin.

2 Chapter members and guests listened intently to Cliff Newman's presentation left to right: Michael Schwartz, Jim Duffy, Karen Newman (Cliff Newman's wife), James Light, and Tony Pirone.

3 Michael Schwartz, Executive Director of the San Diego County Gun Owners spoke about the many challenges presented to gun owners in California.

Cliff felt terribly alone: he was deep inside Laos, alone, in the rain, in triple-canopy jungle, a transponder that didn't work and none of his teammates within sight.

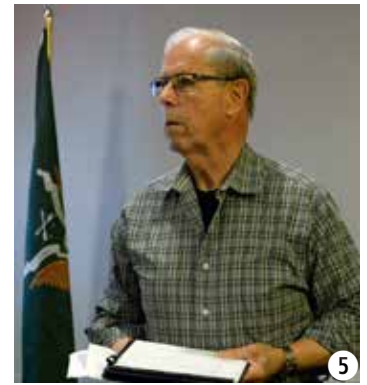
By chance, Cliff encountered one of the two indigenous team members later that day, and they hung out together for the next three days, while the rest of the team found its self spread over a six-mile arc, about six miles from where they thought they had been dropped. The good old Air Force lads had, as it was later learned, dropped the team over the wrong mountain range, thus, none of the maps that the team members carried were accurate. SOG SOP dictated that recon men only carry a small cutout from a map of the actual target area. So, Cliff and his team abided by the SOP but because they covered the wrong mountain range, the maps were also completely useless. But on that third day, covey flew through the area and determined what their actual dispositions were and the next day, they were extracted.

The mission was not a total SNAFU though, as some enemy dispositions were noted and their extraction was flawless. Upon reaching Da Nang, they were whisked away to SOG HQ in Saigon, where they were treated to a sumptuous midnight buffet. The mission was declared a success, if only because there were no casualties. Now what could you say went wrong? It was, after all, an airborne mission. After having the pleasure of Cliff sharing his story from the historic, first SF SOG combat jump, I came up with a suggested nickname for hard-working SFA Executive Director: Mr. Modesty. Like all SF speakers who have appeared before Chapter 78 over the years, they are all modest, truly quiet professionals and Cliff was the epitome of that model soldier. Some of the most interesting pieces of information about that mission emerged during the Q&A segment of the meeting.

As part of the modesty shtick, Cliff briefly mentioned that he has personally returned to Southeast Asia with DPAA officials in an attempt to find the remains of two CCN SOG Recon Team Intruder members and a 101st Airborne four-man helicopter crew that crashed and burned in Laos in Feb. 1971. Cliff was on the original Bright Light mission following the horrific, deadly crash. The Bright Light team found the six Americans, placed them in body bags and waited for an exfil in the morning. However, because the enemy attacked the Bright Light team with a well-coordinated attack, the Bright Light team regrettably left the bodies behind during the severe fighting and subsequent exfiltration.

Since then, Cliff has returned to Laos three times in an effort to pinpoint where the Americans went missing and, in typical style, said that if called again, he'd go back one more time. And, unbeknownst to the audience, Cliff said that without mentioning that he'd recently had knee replacement surgery.

And, one final SOG note of interest, Chapter Prez John Meyer pointed out that Cliff's beautiful wife Karen is the sister of SOG Recon soldier Dale Dehnke, who was KIA in Laos in May 1971. That reminder was another quiet fact that pointed out just how deadly the secret war during the Vietnam War was for the Green Berets on the ground and the airmen who supported them during the eight-year conflict that had the highest SF casualty rate in the war. ❖



- ④ David Bartash, who made a presentation about the Anaheim's annual Flag Day event.
- ⑤ Don Gonville
- ⑥ Chapter President John Meyer, Ron Heugel and Jim Duffy
- ⑦ John Meyer speaks before the group prior to the speaker presentations.
- ⑧ James Light speaking with Ed Barrett
- ⑨ Ron Heugel

In Memoriam

COLONEL SULLY H. DE FONTAINE (Retired)



Colonel Sully H. de Fontaine died at the age of 92 following a short illness on Monday April 22, 2019 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Sully H. de Fontaine was born in Brussels, Belgium to French parents and began his military career in 1943, trained by the British SOE and SAS he then joined the OSS. He parachuted into occupied France to escort shot down American crews to safety. He served with Belgium's military as an officer in the Korean War, then immigrated to the United States, enlisting in the army and subsequently becoming an officer. He began his U.S. Special Operations career with the 10th SFGA during the Hungarian uprising, then taught at the Special Warfare School in Fort Bragg. Returning to the 10th SFGA he led a rescue mission in the Congo, then served as an "observer" with French Paratroops in the Algerian War. Then Captain, he served three tours in Viet Nam, first commanding an A-Team, then a B-Team, and MACV-SOG, subsequently returning as director of a Special Investigation Branch of the CID. In 1973 as a LTC he returned to South East Asia as the Field Element

Commander of the Joint Casualty Recovery Center, a Special Operations effort.

Following retirement in 1976 his civilian career was as significant as his military.

During his service he was awarded over twenty American and Foreign decorations to include the Legion on Merit (w/OLC), Bronze Star with V, Purple Heart (W/OLC), MSM, Joint Service Commendation Medal with V, Air Medal with V, Combat Infantry Badge, Master Parachute Badge, British Air Service Parachute Badge. As a member of the OSS he was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 2018.

Colonel de Fontaine is survived by his wife Angelique of 48 years, son Christian and his wife Reneta and their son Andre.

Colonel de Fontaine will be buried with military honors at Arlington National Cemetery at a date to be determined. ❖