



THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SENTINEL

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

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First Salute

SOG Hero, Humble Fearless

Major General Eldon Bargewell
at the Ranger Hall of Fame

In Memoriam:
Major General Eldon Bargewell



SENTINEL

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From the Editor

IN THIS ISSUE:

President's Page 1

Book Review: *VIETNAM BAO CHI: Warriors of Word and Film* by Marc Phillip Yablonka..... 2

First Salute 3

SOG Hero, Humble Fearless..... 4

Major General Eldon Bargewell at the Ranger Hall of Fame 9

In Memoriam: Major General Eldon Bargewell (Retired) 10

COVER: The President of SF Chapter 105, Greg Dyer, representing our chapter, presented the "First Salute" to 2nd Lt John F. Horoho, grandson of Chapter 78 namesake LTC Frank J. Dallas. Mr. Dyer then gave him a commemorative plaque and presented Chapter 78 Challenge Coins to him and his mother, Lieutenant General Patricia Horoho (daughter of LTC Dallas). The plaque was made and provided by Chapter member John Joyce of Excalibur Industries.



Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor

The untimely and tragic death of Major General Eldon Bargewell is a great loss to all members of the Special Forces Regiment and the United States Army. The major general was one of the few Green Berets who rose from the enlisted ranks while serving in MACV-SOG in the Viet Nam War to the distinguished rank of general officer later in his career. He represented the 'elite' of the special operations soldier through

his entire thirty-four years of military service. In this issue of the *Sentinel* Colonel Paul Longgear provides an inside look into Eldon Bargewell and the men who were inducted into the Ranger Hall of Fame with him. Chapter 78 President and former MACV-SOG Recon Team 1-0 John S. Meyer presents an emotional and personal look into the men who served with the MG, then SP/4 thru Staff Sergeant E-6 Bargewell during his tours in Viet Nam.

Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor



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John Stryker Meyer
President SFA 78

Gentlemen,

I'd like to welcome new member to SFA Chapter 78, **Patrick Kinsey**, and new honorary member **Susan Weeks** – who graced many of our meetings with her presence and quiet contributions behind the scenes over the last few years. SFA Headquarters confirmed Pat's transfer and is completing the paperwork on Susan, who holds a Federal Firearms License and has run in marathons with SFA Chapter 78 **John Creel**. I thank John for introducing us to Susan, who is in Israel as I write, where she just completed an intense combat training course with Massad. I've asked her to talk about that interesting trip, if she can. Patrick didn't waste any time by volunteering to help with one of our committees.

By the time this edition of our award-winning *Sentinel* rolls off of the press, Chapter member **Don Gonnevill**e will have completed the chapter's first bus trip to San Ysidro for a Border Patrol tour of the US/Mexico border — the same border where San Diego health officials reported on May 22 that another 1 million-plus gallons of raw sewage has again flowed from Mexico into the U.S. and west into the Pacific Ocean, necessitating warnings to surfers to stay out of the water. A tip of the beret to Don and to past-president **Bruce Long** for assisting Don with this project. Again, a tip of the beret to **Ed Barrett**, and several chapter members who have worked with him on chapter A&D with several college ROTC programs.

I want to make a special point about our June 8 guest speaker, **Jack Murphy**, who served several tours of duty in Central Asia with the Rangers, first, and then SF. As a co-founder of SOFREP, Jack revisited combat zones armed only with a BIC pen, pad and cell phone — which is quite an adjustment from being armed with state-of-the-art sniper weaponry or his trusty M4-A1. He's written many scoops, some of which have sparked strong protests from DoD.

Last, but not least my wife Anna and I will attend the 50th National League of POW/MIA Families annual meeting in Arlington on June 19-22. Prior speakers at Chapter 78 meetings, **Mike Taylor**, **Wade Ishimoto**, **Cliff Newman** and I are members of the joint SOA/SFA POW/MIA Committee. Mike has chaired this committee since 2013 as it has emerged as the leading veterans group supporting the League and the DPAA efforts to seek the fullest possible accounting for all Americans still missing in action Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War and for the repatriation of all recoverable remains. On Memorial Day, the SEA MIA count was 1,589. The slow pace in the field is both frustrating and painful. I'm hoping that sometime League CEO and Chairman of the Board Ann Mills-Griffiths will be our guest speaker. No American has been more dedicated to this sacred mission in 50 years than Ann.

As a sidebar, Ann is working with Black Daggers OIC CW3 Chris Wilkerson, who also serves at Chapter 1-18 president, to see if they can parachute into one of the League's major events during its annual meeting. Standby to stand by.

For those planning to attend our June 8 meeting, please e-mail VP **Don Deatherage** at: drdeathca@gmail.com, no later than Wednesday June 6 midnight. We need an exact headcount. ❖

Meeting details:

Time: 8:30 a.m., June 8, 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



UCLA's recipient of this year's SFA Chapter 78 award, presented by Chapter 78 member Kenn Miller, was Cadet Steven Zuniga, who was unable to attend the event. Cadet Dennis Bromley, at left, was present to accept the award in his absence.

VIETNAM BAO CHI: Warriors of Word and Film by Marc Phillip Yablonka



Kenn Miller

By Kenn Miller

Perhaps the least known elite members of the US military in the Vietnam War were the soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and Coast Guard members who served as both warriors and reporters, often putting their lives on the line in order to gather and tell the story about what their fellow military members were doing in Vietnam. Among those in this book who may be fairly well

known are Dale Dye, John Del Vecchio, Jim Morris, and Marvin Wolf. They are among the elite of this elite because they were among the military journalists who had combat arms training and experience before becoming Bao Chi. But even the Bao Chi who had no such training and experience before they became military journalists were almost certain to learn and experience a lot of both the combat and the non-combat sides of the war. Through the eyes and ears, thoughts and memories of a broad and diverse assembly of former military journalists Marc Yablonka's *VIETNAM BAO CHI* gives us as wide and varied a picture of the American experience of the Vietnam War as any other single book of which I am aware.

The duties of military journalists in Vietnam were diverse and many. Perhaps the most important mission of the American military Bao Chi in Vietnam was to let the American people—and the military members serving in Vietnam—know what our service personnel were doing, from infantry combat, to logistics, to road building and building construction, to aircraft maintenance, to taking pediatric dentistry out to rural villages, and just about everything in between. Another important role the Bao Chi and other public personnel took very serious was to interview and photograph sailors, airmen, Marines, and Coast Guard members and see that these pictures and short interviews got to the service member's hometown news media.

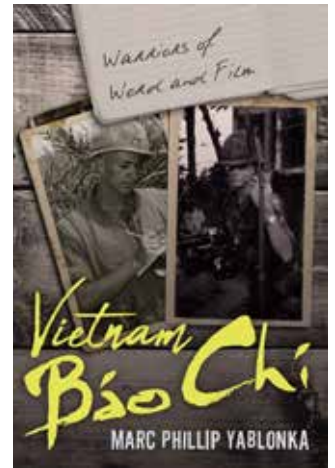
And then there was combat. Military journalists spent much of their time living with, covering, fighting alongside, and sharing danger with combat soldiers. Some of the men in this book had combat wounds before they became military journalists, and were wounded again as military journalists. Chapter 78 member Jim Morris, for example, had already suffered some legendary wounds before the 5th Special Forces Group made him the group's Public Information Officer and, as military journalist as well as a fighting Green Beret, he received yet another gunshot wound, one so serious it almost cost him his life, and did force him to take a medical retirement.

Theirs was a very dangerous job, and those who had that job has also to have a large battery of courage.

But one of the military journalists interviewed in this book raised an interesting question about the definition of a "combat soldier" when he comments about a signal corps soldier without a "combat arms" military occupational specialty high up on a telephone pole calmly stringing wire while under heavy enemy fire.

In some ways the American military Bao Chi in Vietnam were a privileged elite. They may be out on some miserable fire base, or out in the bush with the infantry, or flying in a helicopter or fixed wing aircraft, or on a river boat, or learning about life and logistic work in some large warehouse, and then be filming and shooting in the midst of hellish close in urban fighting in the streets of Hue, or off at some isolated Special Forces camp—but they would rarely be in any of those places for a very long time, and when they returned to the rear area, they would have plenty of work writing and developing photos, but then they would usually have at least a short break before being sent out again. Bao Chi military journalists were at least occasionally able to interview senior officers for the "bigger picture" and get a better understanding of what's going on than the mainstream of soldiers, sailors, air men, and Marines out there doing the hard and dangerous jobs. It seems that wherever they were and whatever unit they were covering, the Bao Chi considered themselves members of those units when with them.

Among the many duties of American military journalists was the job of escorting civilian journalists and occasional other prominent visitors. Among the civilian journalists their military counterparts were fortunate enough to know were the likes of Catherine Leroy, Eddie Adams, and Nick Ut. Some of the military journalist in this book continued into civilian journalism, and some went in other directions. But they did a difficult and also dangerous job with skill and dedication worthy of our admiration. *VIETNAM BAO CHI: Warriors of Word and Film* tells some of the most interesting stories of the war, told by people who were able to see it with a wide and unique perspective. ❖



VIETNAM BAO CHI: Warriors of Word and Film

By Marc Phillip Yablonka

Casemate Publishers,
291 pages



First Salute

The "First Salute" event in honor of the promotion of John F. Horoho to 2nd Lieutenant took place on April 27, 2019 at the home of Lieutenant General Horoho in Clifton, VA. 2LT Horoho is the grandson of 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.

The honor of the "First Salute" to him was done by Green Beret Greg Dyer, SF Chapter 105, also representing Chapter 78. He presented 2nd Lt. Horoho with a Chapter 78 coin and special plaque, designed and provided by SF Chapter 78 member John Joyce of Excalibur Industries. 2nd Lt Horoho's mother Patricia D. Horoho was the first female Surgeon General of the Army and retired as a Lt. General.



- 1 The "First Salute" event took place on April 27, 2019 at the home of Lieutenant General Horoho in Clifton, VA. They also visited the grave of LTC Frank J. Dallas in Arlington National Cemetery.
- 2 The president of SF Chapter 105, Greg Dyer represented us and presented a plaque from Chapter 78 — made by Chapter member John Joyce.
- 3 The president of SF Chapter 105, Greg Dyer presented Chapter 78 coins to 2LT John F. Horoho (grandson of LTC Frank J. Dallas) Horoho and his mother, LTG Patricia Dallas Horoho (previous Surgeon General of the Army and daughter of LTC Frank J. Dallas).
- 4 LTC Frank J. Dallas' grave in Arlington National Cemetery.
- 5 The plaque presented to 2LT Horoho on behalf of Chapter 78.



SOG Legend, Humble Fearless



John Stryker Meyer

By John Stryker Meyer

The year 1968 was the bloodiest in MACV-SOG's eight year history. More than a dozen SOG recon teams had been wiped out, disappeared forever or suffered horrific casualties such as ST Alabama in May of that year, when every team member was killed in action with the exception of One-Zero John Allen, out of FOB 1 in Phu Bai.

Into this maelstrom entered a quiet Specialist Fourth Class from Tacoma, Washington, who had completed his Special Forces training earlier in the year and volunteered for SOG. He arrived at Phu Bai in September 1968, where he was assigned to ST Michigan, which was based at the Mai Loc Launch Site. After FOB 3 was closed at Khe Sanh in June 1968, SOG brass assigned Maj. Clyde J. Sincere Jr., as the OIC for Mai Loc, which many of us called FOB 3.

My first memory of Eldon A. Bargewell stems from a two-hand-touch football game at FOB 1, Phu Bai. Our quarterback Spider Parks was getting rushed relentlessly by the other team and Spider asked for help. On the next play, the sturdy, quiet Spec. 4, pulled out of the line and delivered a crushing block to the rusher, giving Spider time to complete the pass. Needless to say, we were all impressed by his tenacity, some of which stemmed from playing high school football in Tacoma.

Bargewell returned to Mai Loc, where he was assigned as ST Michigan's One-One. Sgt. Charles Borg, a Silver Star recipient, was the One-Zero on that team for a short while, before he returned to Nebraska. Sgt. Chuck Willoughby took over as One-Zero, where Eldon ran his first SOG mission into Laos. At the end of November, Sincere sent Bargewell and Capt. Boyd to run a radio relay site at LZ Stud for a series of Italian Green/Eldest Son insertions into Laos. Italian Green/Eldest Son was enemy ammunition engineered by CISO staff to explode when detonated by enemy personnel. By that time, most SOG recon teams and Hatchet Forces were carrying Italian Green/Eldest Son ammo on missions across the fence and left it behind in enemy caches, or along well-traveled paths on the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

On November 30, the special operation took a horrific turn when a South Vietnamese Air Force H-34 "Kingbee" carrying rigged ammunition and seven Green Berets from FOB 1 and Mai Loc, was shot down by NVA gunners, killing everyone aboard the fat-

ed aircraft. Years later, Bargewell said, "I'll never forget that day." And, while Bargewell was on that assignment, his recon team ran a mission where the team's interpreter Careng was killed in action.

Mai Loc was shut down a short while later, and FOB 1 was shut down in January 1969. ST Michigan, ST Virginia and ST Idaho were among the teams transferred to FOB 4/CCN at Da Nang. ST Virginia One-One Doug "The Frenchman" LeTourneau was the last recon man to leave FOB 1, and locked the gate, before heading to Da Nang where he roomed with Bargewell. It was during this time that the first of many top-secret, spec ops missions throughout his career would become the foundation of Bargewell's legendary status within Special Forces — a legend hallowed within the halls of the spec ops world.

By March 1969, Bargewell was the One-Zero of RT Michigan. The casualty rates for SOG recon teams were the highest for any unit in Vietnam. Bargewell had built a reputation for being meticulous when preparing his team for a mission, and a fearless leader when on the ground, but he also possessed a biting wit and an absolute intolerance when it came to fools and REMFs, fools and REMFs being a redundancy to his way of thinking. The only thing that slowed him down was a dog bite, where the medics had to run him through a 14-day rabies protocol that prevented Bargewell from running missions. "Eldon was pissed at that time," said fellow One-Zero Clete "Babysan" Sinyard. "They were giving him those god-awful rabies shots in the stomach." LeTourneau added, "He was one very unhappy camper."

When that rabies protocol ended in March 1969 RT Michigan was assigned a mission in the target MA-14, which was northwest of the A Shau Valley, among a series of targets that centered along the east-west flowing river that went through the DMZ in Vietnam. With Don Sheppard as his One-One and Mike Moorehouse as his One-Two, Bargewell and RT Michigan's mission was simple: locate an NVA regimental headquarters and way station, pinpoint the base camp, and then call in a Hatchet Force from CCS led by Jerry "Mad Dog" Schriver, on temporary assignment to CCN.

Upon the team's early afternoon insertion, a fourth American on the team broke his arm jumping from the helicopter as the NVA peppered the team's LZ with mortar fire. Bargewell had one chopper return and evac the injured SF soldier. When the chopper left the LZ, the NVA mortars fell silent. Believing the entire team had left the target, the NVA soldiers returned to their regular duties along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. RT Michigan moved out toward what intel-



In attendance for the funeral services, front row, left to right - Cletis "Babysan" Sinyard, Bob Castillo, Tim Kirk, Doug "The Frenchman" LeTourneau. Second row - Mike Taylor, Scott Case, Rick Estes, Keith A. Larson. Back row(s) - Garry Robb, Ron Owens, Brant Bargewell, Logan Bargewell, David Maurer, Bob Little. Photo courtesy of Mike Taylor

ligence officers said was the regimental headquarters. After moving only 200 meters, the point man saw an old NVA bunker. Much to Bargewell's surprise, intelligence was accurate for a change.

The team crept up the hill and saw more empty bunkers. Bargewell saw one that appeared to have maps inside of it. This was virtually unheard of, a piece of incredibly good luck. Bargewell walked into the NVA headquarters and began grabbing maps, charts, log books, and assorted documents and stuffing them into his rucksack until it overflowed. It was a veritable gold mine of information on weapons caches, supply routes, communications sites and encryption codes. It was a Frommer's Guide to the Ho Chi Minh Trail: where to sleep, where to eat, where to refuel, where to find weapons and replenish munitions and underground hospitals. With this information in hand, the U.S. military could hurt the NVA.

RT Michigan continued its search. The team came into an area where the underbrush was cleared out a little and Bargewell saw an AK-47 leaning against a bunker with an NVA AK-47 vest lying nearby. He moved over to inspect them. He had always wanted a war souvenir so Bargewell put the vest over his head and handed the AK-47 to a Montagnard team member. The NVA vests held three AK-47 banana clip magazines in their front vertical pouches.

Wearing his newfound vest, Bargewell took three Montagnard team members and moved slowly up the hill, while Sheppard and Moorehouse remained behind and established a defensive perimeter with the rest of the Montagnards.

After moving up the mountain an additional 40 meters, Bargewell spotted five or six NVA soldiers sitting on a picnic table playing cards. Capturing a live NVA soldier would make this particular mission one for the record books. Bargewell and the three Montagnards crept toward them, until they were spotted by one of the NVA soldiers. The M-79 man fired a round above their heads, attempting to wound one and make him a POW, but the shot was too high.

The NVA troops jumped straight up in the air like scalded cats and ran into a nearby bunker. Believing he could still capture a live one, Bargewell pursued the NVA into the bunker with Contua following close on his heels. As they descended into the bunker, Bargewell realized that it was an enormous underground complex. Nonetheless, he continued the chase. "I remember Eldon telling me that when they got inside the underground complex, there was a firefight where Eldon killed an NVA officer and ran out of bullets for his CAR-15," said LeTourneau. "He saw an AK-47, picked it up and continued firing at the enemy until he saw that one NVA soldier jump into a large hole, or something like that. Regardless, Eldon went after him."

He jumped into a large hole in the wall inside the complex pursuing the enemy soldier when another NVA soldier fired a three- or four-round burst from his AK-47 at Bargewell. One of the rounds hit an AK-47 magazine in the vest that Bargewell was wearing. The round's impact stopped Bargewell dead in his tracks and knocked him backwards, as though he had been hit with a baseball bat. For a few moments, Bargewell thought he was dead. But then he realized that he was thinking and, if he was thinking, he must still be alive, albeit in a great deal of pain.

Contua fired an M-79 round into the hole. He heard it smack bone and flesh, but the round hadn't traveled far enough to arm itself and detonate. Regardless, firing that round gave Bargewell and Contua enough time to regroup, move out of the bunker and return to RT Michigan's secured perimeter. Embarrassed by his overzealousness, Bargewell didn't tell Sheppard or Moorehouse what had happened.

Sheppard called Covey to get the CCS Hatchet Force inserted into the bunker complex and to extract RT Michigan out of the area of operations and back to CCN headquarters to review the intelligence scope the recon team had pulled off. Covey said there were delays, so Bargewell returned to the command bunker that he had stumbled into earlier. He opened a map tube and found a map of the entire trail system within that portion of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. This was by far the best piece of enemy intelligence he had seen in recent memory. As RT Michigan searched deeper into the command bunker they found tons of equipment, weapons, munitions, maps, surveying equipment, medical kits and vast caches of supplies. Everyone on the team was given something to carry back to the LZ and to CCN.

As the team finally headed toward their LZ, Bargewell carried the map case and his souvenir AK-47, still wearing his NVA vest. The team made contact with the NVA caretaker force left behind to guard the bunker complex, but RT Michigan made short work of the NVA REMFs.

RT Michigan was extracted and taken back to the Camp Eagle launch site where Sincere was there to greet them. Sincere asked if they had captured an NVA soldier because Sheppard had told Covey rider Ben "Indian" Nelson that Bargewell was chasing NVA soldiers into one of the bunkers. With no NVA soldier to show for his efforts, Bargewell still didn't tell anyone at the launch site what had happened.

Once back at CCN, Bargewell made his way to the hootch and to LeTourneau, still having told no one about the incident he and Contua had experienced in the cave. He had a kind of dazed look on his face as he told the Frenchman he'd been shot square in the chest. Bargewell took off the NVA vest and removed one of the AK-47 magazines. "It was an amazing moment in time," said LeTourneau. "The round that had stopped him dead in his tracks and knocked him on his ass was stuck between the rounds in the magazine vest. When he took the vest off, he pulled up his T-shirt and we saw the huge bruise on his chest, from the impact of that round." As they inspected the fully-loaded NVA banana magazine, he gently shook the magazine, the bullet fell onto his bed. Bargewell and LeTourneau just stared at it. "Bargewell, you're one lucky son-of-a-bitch," said LeTourneau.

A few minutes later, Bargewell walked over to our hootch, the RT Idaho team room, where Lynne M. Black Jr., and I were discussing a future mission into northern Laos, above the MA targets. Lynne con-



From left: Eldest son Brant Bargewell, SFA Chapter 78 member Doug "The Frenchman" LeTourneau, Clete "Babysan" Sinyard, David Maurer and youngest son Logan Bargewell.

gratulated Bargewell on his team's amazing intelligence coup and bringing back so many NVA documents. Then he told us about the cave and getting shot. Lynne and I were stunned by Bargewell's story — Lynne had been knocked unconscious during his October 5, 1968 mission into the A Shau Valley, so he was all the more impressed by the fact that Bargewell was alive and well, albeit severely bruised in the chest. "If it hadn't been for that vest, I would've been KIA," he told us. With a little gallows humor in mind, Black asked Bargewell if he thought he was dead at that moment in time. Without missing a beat, Bargewell got that slight smile and added: "Yeah, there was that moment where I thought I was dead. But, I realized that I was thinking. Therefore, if I'm thinking, I must still be alive!" He left for a shower leaving Black and I in a state of amazement.

Early the following morning, Bargewell reported to and briefed Lieutenant General Richard Stillwell, the top general for the I Corps area of South Vietnam on his mission and the planned Hatchet Force follow up. Stillwell told him that RT Michigan's mission was the single best intelligence gathering operation in recent months. He thanked Bargewell and assured him that, as soon as the Hatchet Force operation was concluded, a series of B-52 Arc Light sorties would be directed against targets garnered from the maps and intelligence reports that Bargewell had retrieved from the regimental bunker complex. And, there was one more oddity to the mission, according to LeTourneau: "Eldon had to turn over his souvenir AK-47 to the intel geeks because it had a plastic stock on it. None of us had ever seen one with a plastic stock before. And, believe it or not, that AK had printed on it manufactured by Mattel. We never heard another word about the AK-47. However, I did see the vest after Eldon's funeral. He kept that."

The following day Schriver's Hatchet Force was inserted into the bunker complex, where an NVA element of at least platoon strength encountered the CCS unit. The CCS Hatchet Force, combined with several tactical airstrikes, pushed back the lesser NVA forces and began collecting anything that wasn't nailed down. By the end of the day, the CCS Hatchet Force had collected enough supplies, maps, weapons and munitions to load 15 helicopters before finally

returning to CCN to celebrate one of the more successful Hatchet Force operations in SOG history at that point in time.

In one of the typical, disorienting, Vietnam War ironies, two days later, LeTourneau and Bargewell found themselves on their way to Hawaii to spend time with their wives. LeTourneau said, "We SOG recon men had that motto: 'For those who have fought for it, life has a special flavor the protected will never know.' Our flight to Hawaii was that quintessential moment, where we savored the joy of being alive because we had seen the elephant, as they say, we had fought for our lives and the lives of the men on our respective teams. And, it was the first time that he met his eldest son Brant, who was a month or two old at that time."

Bargewell continued running missions with RT Michigan until September, running more than 20 missions during his first tour of duty. He returned to CCN in February 1971, where he was assigned to RT Bushmaster as a One-One, with SSG David Robinson was the One-Zero. Bargewell ran one mission with RT Viper as a One-One, with One-Zero Charlie Jay, before returning to RT Bushmaster as the One-Zero. That tour of duty ended abruptly



Eldon wearing the vest.



Eldon in March 1969 a few days after being shot in the chest by NVA. Photo courtesy of Douglas "The Frenchman" LeTourneau



Three Bargewells in Iraq.



Eldon with Jack & Joan Singlaub at SOAR 2013

when that team was hit hard by the NVA attack on Sept. 27, 1971 in Laos. Even though he had been shot in the face, he continued giving his team covering suppression fire with his machine gun during key moments in the battle and upon extraction from that target. His courage and combat skills earned him the nation's second highest valor award, the Distinguished Service Cross.

In 1972, I received a call from Bargewell. He told me he was heading south on the N.J. Turnpike, heading to OCS at Ft. Benning, GA. We got together for a meal, a few war stories and updates on CCN, the incredible men we had served with and sadly, those we had lost during our combined times at FOB 1 and CCN.

Over time, we shared comms and eventually reconnected at the Special Operations Association Reunion in Vegas, where he was the guest speaker one year. In 2005, he was the director of strategic operations at the headquarters of the Multi-National Force in Iraq, his last assignment in nearly 40 years of service to our country. During an e-mail, I mentioned that my stepson had been WIA on August 20, 2005, south of the Green Zone. A few days later, I received an excited e-mail from Evan saying Maj. Gen. Eldon Bargewell had visited him in the hospital, where his care immediately improved, and his spirits were lifted by Bargewell.

At the last SOA Reunion, Bargewell reconnected with Evan. The retired two-star general we talked with and joked with, was essentially the same soldier I met at Phu Bai in the fall of 1968: humble, fearless and a true friend.

In 2010, I attended the SOFIC awards and decorations banquet in Tampa where Bargewell received the USSOCOM Bull Simons Award. A few days before that event, Bargewell had written a few friends about that pending banquet in typical, humble, self-effacing style:

"To all, I am still trying to verify thru multiple sources if this is true or not. :-)

"I say this because I could name dozens of former SF/SOF warriors that are more deserving than I am.

"In any event, the award represents many, many people that supported me during my career and made up for my lack of guidance and vision.

"One of the greatest subordinates and teachers I had as a young Lt. in the Ranger Bn was my Plt. Sgt. who made everything happen correctly. One day after I had given my orders/guidance to the Squad Leaders, I later overheard him giving his guidance to the Squad leaders. He started by saying- " Now what the LT. meant to say was -----".

"At first it sort of pissed me off but then I took a second and thought about it and realized our Plt. was doing so well because the Plt Sgt, SFC Smith, was interpreting my feeble guidance into something they could use to accomplish the mission. I have been so fortunate to work around great NCO's and Officers, as SFC Smith, throughout my career and from that time on I always, when given the time, would run my thoughts by my SGM or Team Sgts to see if it made any sense.

"I would be exaggerating if I said about half the time they agreed with me — the other half or more they looked at me like a hog looking at a wrist watch.

*Thanks.
V/r Eldon"*

America has lost a great soldier, a man who loved his country and served it with outstanding leadership skills seldom matched in U.S. military history. Of course, I'm biased. On April 29, when I learned of his death, I, like most others who served with him over the years, shed bitter tears of sorrow and will forever miss sitting around the hospitality room at the Special Operations Association Reunion this fall in Las Vegas talking about our times in America's secret war fought by SOG Green Berets. May he rest in eternal peace and grace. ❖

Editors Note: Funeral services for Major General Eldon A. Bargewell were held on May 9, 2019 at the First United Methodist Church of Eufaula, Alabama. Burial followed at Ft. Mitchell National Cemetery with military honors.



Major General Eldon Bargewell at the Ranger Hall of Fame



Col (R) Paul Longgear

By Paul Longgear

When a SPECOPS operator thinks of leadership, they immediately think of the three “M”s: MISSION, MEN and ME (myself). And when they think of the three “M”s, they very likely think of Eldon Bargewell.

Retired Major General Bargewell not only emphasized the mission, the men and then lastly, himself but he lived it at every rank. Staff Sergeant Bargewell was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for putting himself in harm’s way to protect his eight man reconnaissance team during a mission in Viet Nam. Because of his actions that day, all of the team made it out alive even though they were being overwhelmed by a much larger enemy force.

It was this type performance, on a regular basis throughout his 34 years of military service that caused him to be selected for induction into the prestigious US Army RANGER HALL OF FAME.

It was 27 July 2011 that brought me into the presence of this living legend. Eldon, myself and the other ten men being inducted that day, were in a holding room in the Infantry center at Fort Benning, Georgia. I was overawed to be in the company of these men and Eldon was the number one man in that group. He had started his career as a private, attended Officer Candidate School as a staff sergeant E-6 and eventually retired as a two star General.

In our class, there were also two Colonels, three Lieutenant Colonels, four Sergeants Major, and two First Sergeants. All of them had extensive combat experience in Special Operations.

The one thing that all of these men had in common was extraordinary performance in leadership positions during combat. Besides myself and Eldon, there was Donald Bowman, Gary Dolan, Steve England, Sean Kelly, Keith Nightingale, Luis Palacios, Jim Pickering, Bonifacio Romo, Robert Spencer and US Marine LTC Stan Wawrzyniak.

In our private conversations, we all agreed that Eldon was the man we would have most loved to serve under. He was a combat soldier’s combat soldier. At the graveside there was not a combat veteran that was not thanking God for combat leaders like Eldon Bargewell. ❖

In Memoriam: Major General Eldon Bargewell (Retired) continued

From 2000 to 2001, he served as the Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations, Stabilization Force Headquarters (SFOR), Sarajevo, Bosnia, responsible for operational actions against Persons Indicted for War Crimes. Returning stateside in 2001, for the next two years, MG Bargewell was the Director of the Center for Special Operations, Plans, and Policy, USSOCOM, Florida before being assigned as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations at Allied Joint Force Command (NATO) – Brunssum, Netherlands for the next two years. During this assignment, he also served as the CG for the Division size NATO RESPONSE FORCE and was the senior US Military Representative to the US Ambassador in the Netherlands. MG Bargewell’s final assignment on active duty was as the Director of Strategic Operations at HQ’s Multi-National Force-Iraq in Baghdad (2005-2006).

MG Bargewell’s military decorations include the Distinguished Service Cross, Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Army Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal (5), Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal for valor (3), Bronze Star Medal for service (3), Purple Heart (4), Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Army Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal for Valor, Army Commendation Medal for service, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal (2), Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal w/Bronze Arrowhead, Vietnam Service Medal (7), Southwest Asia Service Medal, Armed Forces Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, NATO Medal(3), NCO Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, GWOT Service Medal, Overseas Service Ribbon, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Kuwait Liberation Medal, Presidential Unit Citation (MACV SOG-VN), Joint Meritorious Unit Citation (2), Valorous Unit Award, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation, Republic of Vietnam Civil Actions Unit Citation, French Service Medal (Ex-Yugoslavia), Combat Infantry Badge, Master Parachutists Badge, Special Forces Tab, Ranger Tab, Military Free Fall Badge, Vietnamese HALO badge, Vietnamese, German, and Thai Parachute Badges. MG Bargewell is also the recipient of the Colonel Aaron Bank award (2007), the Greater DC SOF Old and Bold Mountain Man award (2009), and the USSOCOM Bull Simons Award (2010). He is a member of Infantry Officers Candidate Hall of Fame (1997) and an enlisted Honor Graduate Ranger School (1970). ❖

In Memoriam

MAJOR GENERAL ELDON BARGEWELL (Retired)



MG Bargewell was born in Tacoma, Washington. Enlisting in the U.S. Army in 1967, he completed the Special Forces Qualification Course in 1968. MG Bargewell has served in the following Special Forces and Special Operations units: the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) (SFG(A)); 6th SFG(A); 7th SFG(A); and 10th SFG(A); Co B (Ranger (RGR)) 75th INF (Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP)) Company; 2nd BN (Ranger) 75th INF; Military Assistance Command – Vietnam Studies and Operations Group Command Control North (MACV-SOG CCN); 1st Special Operations Forces Operational Detachment – Delta (SFOD-D); Special Operations Command-Europe (SOCEUR); Joint Special Operations Command

(JSOC); and US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM).

In September 1968, he was assigned to Reconnaissance Company, MACV-SOG CCN. During his two tours in SOG as a Non-Commissioned Officer Team Leader, Bargewell conducted over 25 recon, direct action and team recovery missions into Laos and North Viet Nam. During a cross-border mission on September 27, 1971 where his team was ambushed by a greater enemy force, his actions in saving his team and getting them to safety even though he was gravely wounded earned him the Distinguished Service Cross.

Shortly after returning from Vietnam in 1972, MG Bargewell attended Infantry

Officers' Candidate School (OCS) which he graduated as the Leadership Honor Graduate of OCS class 3-73 in April 1973. During his subsequent 33 years, he commanded special operations units from team to Special Operations Command level in Cambodia, Laos, North Viet Nam, the Middle East, El Salvador, Operation JUST CAUSE (Panama), DESERT STORM (Iraq), RESTORE DEMOCRACY and ALLIED FORCE (Bosnia/Kosovo); and as Director of Operations for Operations Restore Hope (Haiti), Enduring Freedom-NATO (Afghanistan) and Iraqi Freedom (Iraq).

His first assignment was with Co B (RGR) 75th INF (LRRP) at Ft. Lewis, Washington whose wartime mission was to provide reconnaissance teams in support of 7th Corp in the Fulda Gap area, Germany. MG Bargewell served in multiple assignments with the unit including as a Patrol Platoon Leader, acting Company Commander (Cmdr) followed by duty as a Rifle Platoon Leader and Executive Officer. He also served as the Aide-de-Camp to the Assistant Deputy Commander 9th Infantry Division (ID). Upon promotion to Captain he was assigned to the 3rd Brigade, 9th ID, where he served as S-3 Air and Rifle Company Cmdr in 2d Battalion, 47th Infantry. Following a brief assignment as Infantry Branch Representative at Ft. Benning, MG Bargewell was selected for assignment to 1st SFOD-D in 1981 where he served as Operations Officer, Squadron Executive Officer, Troop and Squadron Commander (twice), Deputy Commander, and finally, Cmdr. From 1993 to 1996 Bargewell was assigned to JSOC as the Director of Operations J-3. Upon selection to Brigadier General in 1998 he was assigned as the Commanding General, SOCEUR in Stuttgart, Germany with the mission to provide trained and equipped Army, Navy and Air Force Special Operations units for employment in Africa and Europe, especially Bosnia and Kosovo. While commanding the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) Noble Anvil during Operation ALLIED FORCE in Serbia, Bargewell provided Combat Search and Rescue forces. His JSOTF is credited with the rescues of two shot down USAF pilots as well as the conduct of several other operations.

Continued on page 9