



THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SENTINEL

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 10 • OCTOBER 2019



19th Special Forces Group
Change of Command Ceremony
Camp Williams National Guard Base
Butler Special Forces Facility

Operation Dewey Canyon —
Lieutenant General Stilwell's Command Pilot

Chapter 78 Christmas Party 2019



SENTINEL

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From the Editor

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COVER: CSM Jason Legler, Chapter 78 member John Joyce, and Colonel Leroy Barker at the 19th Special Forces Group Change of Command Ceremony which took place at Camp Williams National Guard Base located in Bluffdale, UT in the new Butler Special Forces Facility on September 14, 2019.



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Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor

John Joyce took Brad Welker and I plus a friend who owns a corporation that manufactures sound suppressors for rifles and pistols out for a morning on the Mojave Desert range. Wow, *note the photo below*. We had fun and shot several of the latest models of weapons utilized by members of special ops and several large police forces in the U.S. Several pistols, both in 9mm and .45 cal that were suppressed were so quiet

that... James Bond would beg for their use. We used both supersonic and subsonic ammunition, but the subsonic rounds along with the suppressor were truly quiet. Firing the large caliber suppressed rifles on full auto was a thrill for an old guy like me. All were deadly accurate on single shot, and right on target with a short auto burst! For us this was the kick-off to get ready for two Special Forces conferences to be held in Las Vegas, NV next month.

The 1st Special Forces Group Reunion which begins on October 13 will be held in the Plaza Hotel and Casino. Chapter 78 member John Joyce took the lead and has organized all the events that will include some of the highlights of Vegas with visits to the Mob Museum, a golf day and a fun pistol shoot and contest at a Boulder City range. He has also organized a trip to Nellis Air Force Base. The evening banquet will be on Thursday concluding the reunion. It is rumored that some members of the 1st Group command staff will be in attendance.

If five days of fun with the 1st SF Group isn't enough, the following week SOAR XLIII will begin on 21 October thru the 25th at the Orleans Hotel and Casino. For those who live outside of Nevada, which will be the majority of attendees, that's at least 13 days of SF reunion in Las Vegas, more than enough time to shop, party and attend some of the grand shows at the major casinos. Did I forget to mention gambling for those who play?

Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor



Lonny shooting a suppressed SCAR Heavy .308 on full automatic.



John Stryker Meyer
President SFA 78

Chapter Members,

All of a sudden, fall is upon us. Summer has come and gone. As I write, Christmas is exactly three months away.

Before we celebrate the birth of our Lord, there are some events of interest to chapter members. First, the 1st Special Forces Group will hold its reunion in Vegas from October 13-18. Many people forget that the 1st Grp. had a key role during the eight-year secret

war under the aegis of the Military Assistance Command Vietnam – Studies and Observations Group, or simply SOG. When I arrived at FOB 1 in Phu Bai in May 1968, the SF club house had large, appropriately yellow hand-crafted placards, cut out plywood in the enlarged shape of the 1st Grp. flash which honored the ODA's sent to FOB 1. They paid a heavy price fighting in the secret war. When I returned to CCN at the end of October 1969, RT Maryland went MIA, with three Green Berets presumed KIA. One of those SF KIAs was Don Shue, who came to CCN from 1st SF Grp., TDY.

The Special Operations Association Reunion will kick off in Vegas October 21 at The Orleans Hotel & Casino. This reunion will be a tough one as the SOA lost several SOG legends, including: **Col. Sully de Fontaine** — an OSS agent who parachuted into Europe during WWII, served several tours of duty in Vietnam with 5th Grp., and SOG; **MG Eldon A. Bargewell** — who began his SF career running recon at FOB 1, later at CCN where he earned a DSC before going on to spend nearly 40 years in the Army, including many years as the OIC for Delta; **Pete Buscetto**, SOA treasurer and CCS recon man; Chapter 78 member **Doug “The Frenchman” LeTourneau** —

FOB 1/CCN recon; **Merle Eckles**, CCS and A Camp duty; and **Tom Carrell** — the SOA Rider Director for several years.

On a positive note, on September 20 the 50th POW/MIA Recognition Day was one of the most visible events in recent years, complete with USASOC Black Daggers, jumping into the Pentagon lawn during that service. POW/MIA Recognition Day events were held across the country, including more than 20 states posting tributes to the event which the National League of POW/MIA Families has endorsed and supported for decades, with the help of active veterans group. Sadly, as I write, 1,587 Americans remain listed as missing in action today from the Vietnam War in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam — both north and south. And, in Laos alone there are 50 Green Berets who died in the eight-year secret war, along with more than 120 fearless Army, Marine Corps and Air Force aviators who died supporting SOG operators and are among those 1,586 missing Americans. .

If you are planning to attend our October 12 meeting, please e-mail **VP Don Deatherage** at: drdeathca@gmail.com, no later than Thursday October 10, midnight. We need an exact headcount.

At the end of the year, Chapter elections will be held. We're looking for someone to run for president. ❖

Meeting details:

Time: 8:30 a.m., October 12, 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



19th Special Forces Group Change of Command Ceremony

Camp Williams National Guard Base Butler Special Forces Facility



John Joyce

By John Joyce

I recently made contact with an old friend, Jason Legler, who I found had just been promoted to the Command Sergeant Major's position with the 19th Special Forces Group. Jason was kind enough to invite me and my wife to the Change of Command Ceremony at the new Butler Special Forces Compound at Camp Williams National Guard Training Base, near Salt Lake City, Utah on September 14th, 2019.

We arrived in Salt Lake City and drove out to Camp Williams, located in the rolling foothills south of Salt Lake City. The Butler Special Forces Compound is the new Headquarters for the 19th Special Forces Group and this event was its first use. This new facility was named for SSG Aron Butler, a 19th Group soldier killed in Afghanistan while deployed with his Team. The facility is large and filled with offices, classrooms and a large indoor bay in which the ceremony took place.

As we arrived we saw hundreds of SF soldiers dressed in their duty uniforms. I saw numerous field grade officers and was told five General Officers were in attendance. We wandered around the new facility and took a few pictures. There is a painted collage of Aron Butler and a plaque dedicating the facility. There was a beautiful 19th Group carpet on the stair landing and wrought iron stair banisters that came complete with the Special Forces SSI.

I also saw Colonel Leroy Barker, 1st Group DCO, who served with my friend CSM Jason Legler at 1st Bn 1st Special Forces Group in Okinawa.

The ceremony commenced and was filled with appropriate pomp and circumstance. The outgoing CSM John C. Belford was honored and the new CSM Jason Legler was passed the Group Colors. Then the outgoing Group Commander Colonel Larry L. Henry was honored and he passed the colors on to the new Group Commander Colonel Paul S. Walters. All gave excellent short speeches with the final being delivered by the Utah Adjutant General.

The ceremony concluded with the Ballad of the Green Beret and the Army Song.

Our trip was short, but was a great opportunity to connect with old friends, see some new SF soldiers and see the future of the 19th Special Forces Group. ❖



CSM Jason Legler accepts the colors of 19th Group from outgoing CSM John C. Belford during the Change of Command Ceremony.



A painted collage, shown above, and, at right, a plaque commemorating the dedication of the new facility were on display. The facility was named in honor of 19th Group's SSG Aron Butler, who was killed while on deployment in Afghanistan.





Pictured above, CSM Legler and COL Barker, who served together at 1st Bn 1st Special Forces Group in Okinawa.

At right, Ozielly Joyce at the custom 19th Group carpet. The wrought iron banister's design included the Special Forces SSI (see inset).



About Command Sergeant Major Jason R. Legler

Command Sergeant Major (CSM) Jason R. Legler was born in Medford, Oregon. He enlisted in the Oregon Army National Guard on 13 December 1988 as an Indirect fire Infantryman. In 1993 CSM Legler joined active duty where he held assignments in the 1st Infantry Division and 82nd Airborne Division. In 1998 he qualified as an 18B at the Special Forces Qualification Course and subsequently served 6 years with 1st Battalion 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), where he has served in various positions including company SGM, Battalion Operations SGM and Group Operations SGM. CSM Legler has also served with the Utah Army National Guard as the Branch Chief for the Warrior Leader Course, and the Deputy Commandant for the 1st Battalion, 640th Regional Training Institute.

CSM Legler's military education includes the Primary Noncommissioned Officers Course, Basic Noncommissioned Officers Course,

Special Forces Weapons and Intelligence Qualifications Courses, USASOC Jump Master Course, SFARTAETC, Senior Leader Course, and Sergeants Major Academy.

CSM Legler's awards include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Operation Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal, the Joint Service Achievement Medal, Philippines Republic Presidential Unit Citation, the Korean Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service and Expeditionary Medals, and the Armed Forces Service Medal along with other awards. He was also awarded the Expert Infantryman's Badge, the Senior Parachutists Badge, the Air Assault Badge, the Special Forces and Ranger Tab's and multiple foreign Parachutist wings. CSM Legler's operational Iraq.

CSM Legler has been married for 9 years to his wife Lisa. They have five children and reside in Herriman, UT.

OPERATION DEWEY CANYON

Lieutenant General Stilwell's Command Pilot



Lonny Holmes

By Lonny Holmes

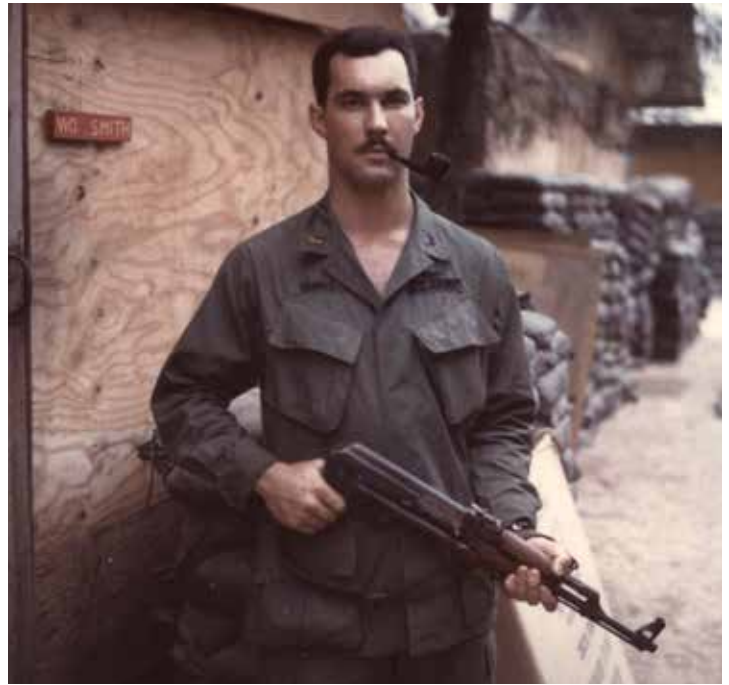
Chief Warrant Officer Gordon Denniston returned to Viet Nam in 1969 for a second tour as a combat helicopter pilot. During the interim he had been an Instrument Flight Instructor at Fort Rucker teaching young student pilots how to fly the Army helicopters. After arrival at his company's base camp in RVN he reported to his aviation commanding officer for his assignment. His new CO

looking at the medals on his uniform and his personnel records found a highly decorated "gunship" pilot. He said that he was sure glad to see this experienced gunship pilot, and suggested a further assignment to fly gunships again. Denniston's first tour of flying missions for MACV-SOG out of FOB 2 in Kontum into Laos was exciting but he remembered a huge attrition rate in that assignment. Gordon not desiring such an exhilarating tour again requested that he would be happy flying the mail up and down Highway #1. "Well that is not going to happen Warrant Officer Denniston," stated his new CO. As his commander further reviewed Denniston's background and qualifications he then discovered that Denniston fitted a greater need. The commander knew he must provide the 24th Corps Commander Richard G. Stilwell with a pilot who was not only an instructor but also had an instrument rating to fly in bad weather.

The assignment was made, and Denniston was introduced to Lt. General Stilwell who requested him as his personal pilot for the remainder of his tour. Considering the options, Gordon figured this would be an easy tour with very little excitement or danger. At the time, he did not know that Lieutenant General Stilwell led from the front lines. Every day, from early morning until dark they were in the air flying from one hot spot to the next. It turned out to be more dangerous some days than flying SOG.

Operation Dewey Canyon was a major combat operation in 1969 involving the 9th Marine Regiment of the 3rd Marine Division from January 22 thru March 18, 1969 in the A Shau and Song Da Krong valleys of I Corps. Lt. General Stilwell commanded the 3rd Marine Division plus two other divisions in I Corps and flew to personally speak with the troops while in combat on a daily basis. Gordon flew all these missions and many were quite hazardous since the general insisted on meeting with commander and troops despite incoming fire.

Looking at the photo of CWO Denniston (upper right on this page) you will notice a rare and unusual AK-47 rifle. Gordon landed Lt. General Stilwell into one of the Marine Company areas on Operation Dewey Canyon where the general left the helicopter and toured the front lines speaking with the troops which left Denniston alone with the 'chopper. Observing a group of young and tired Marines, he went over and asked them if they would like an "ice



Above, CW2 Denniston with the AK-47 (USSR) captured in Laos.

Right, LTG Stilwell presented this photo to Denniston in appreciation for his service. It is inscribed with the message "CW2 Gordon Denniston, with deep appreciation for your outstanding performance as O'Reilly's Command Pilot. You are a real professional! Warm Regards, Richard G. Stilwell, LTG, XXIV Corps".



cold coke?" They looked at him and thought "are you kidding?!" The general's helicopter always carried an ice chest full of sodas and a cabinet full of sandwiches. So, Gordon distributed all of the food and drinks to the group of Marines who had been in the field for an extended period with no bathing facilities. They only had been eating C-rations and occasional food flown in by the division. Later they approached Gordon at his helicopter and asked if he would like the AK that is seen in the photo, and he immediately said "yes". It was a brand-new weapon and was still wrapped in the manufactures packaging when the Marines overran the massive supply depot of the NVA. The AK-47 is Russian-made folding stock which was an unusual design not often seen in South Viet Nam. A nice reward for providing a little food and drink to a small group of combat-tired U.S. Marines.

By the way, the pipe in the photo is a prop. CWO Denniston does not smoke. His mustache and spit-shined Cochran Jump Boots are another story. ❖

Editors Note: Check out this link shared by Gordon to an interesting video about Operation Dewey Canyon:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtSFp3PrM8Y>

Headline Speaker: Jim Morris

Photos by How Miller



Mike Keele

By Mike Keele

On September 13, 2019, Chapter 78's headline speaker was Chapter member Jim Morris, Green Beret, Purple Heart recipient (multiple times) maybe even enough times to qualify for the magnet-ass cluster, and retired Soldier of Fortune. He has written about five novels and a bunch of other books which start out essentially, "this is no sh*t!" Most of his action books were written about the playgrounds

and coffee stops in the vicinity of Cambodia, Laos, Lebanon, Africa and some other places his friend and admirer Donald Trump referred to as "third world sh"...holes (you get the idea).

Jim is no stranger to danger, and he tends to associate with those of the same ilk. His current project is trying to resurrect the effort to get a Congressional Medal for the late Rick Rescorla, a hero of the First Cavalry's battle in the Ia Drang Valley, and a more recent, more deadly battle in which Col. Rescorla saved 2700 lives, while sacrificing his own life.

Most people are aware of the Battle of the Ia Drang Valley, in which Rescorla participated on two battle fronts. First, at LZ X Ray, where his platoon of B Co. 2nd Bn, 7th Cavalry was choppered in to reinforce the already embattled 1st. Bn, 7th Cavalry, then, after three brutal days there, being extracted from that battle zone to be re-equipped, and was choppered into the next battle that same night as their extraction, in support of his own 2nd Bn, 7th Cavalry, which had stumbled onto more NVA than one Battalion could handle. Rescorla was a hero in both battles, providing superior leadership and courage while losing only a handful of men.

But according to Jim Morris, that is far from the end of the Rescorla story. By the late 1980's, Rescorla, like Morris, was a writer, and had become a security specialist for Dean Witter/Morgan Stanley. In cooperation with his good friend, Dan Hill, they wrote a security critique of the World Trade Center, where DW/MS was headquartered. While that exposé was largely ignored, Rescorla kept hammering at the DW/MS management. But the 1993 bombing of the World Trading Center parking garage brought validity to what Rescorla and Hill had raised concerns about.

In 1997, Rescorla was promoted to Director of Security at DW/MS, and he continued to pound

away at the intransigence of management regarding the lack of safety for Dean Witter employees in the WTC.

So it was no accident that on 11 September, 2001, Rescorla had already prepared the DW/MS employees on evacuation routes and procedures from their offices when the first airplane struck the WTC building next to his. Before the second plane struck their building, Rick Rescorla had ordered the DW/MS employees-against the Port Authority's direct instructions to remain at their desks — to follow the evacuation plans they had rehearsed beforehand. All but thirteen of more than twenty seven hundred MS employees got out alive.

Rescorla's death came as he would have wanted it, charging into the fire with a water bottle. He was last seen alive on the tenth floor of the WTC, going back upstairs, to look for injured and straggling Dean Witter/Morgan Stanley employees.

The job of a writer, Jim Morris will tell you, is to make readers aware of an injustice or some other cause, and to prepare you to end that injustice. Jim is just that sort of writer, and it goes clear through his core. He has risked his skin on many battle fronts to report the facts and right the wrongs he has taken to task. He is no desk jockey dilettante reporter. He has been in many of the world's hotspots of the war on terror. He was medically retired from the U. S. Army with the rank of Major, following a wound received in the A Shau Valley, on a mission he only undertook with a friend in FOB-1 in early 1968. He now lives a bucolic life in the Hollywood hills, reminiscing about the good old days as a reporter for Soldier of Fortune Magazine. ❖



Above, Meeting speaker, Major (retired) Jim Morris, soldier, author and world explorer. Bottom left, Special Forces LTC Bleigh, still on active duty. Right, John Creel and Richard Simonian, two 1950s members of 10th Special Forces Group, ABN, in Bad Tolz, Germany speaking of the "good old days."



Chapter 78

CHRISTMAS PARTY 2019

SUNDAY DECEMBER 1st 2019

1500 hrs

at the

BAHIA CORINTHIAN YACHT CLUB

1601 Bayside Dr., Corona del Mar, 92625

This year's event is hosted by Richard Simonian and will be held at the renowned BAHIA CORINTHIAN YACHT CLUB.

Although the annual boat parade will not be running on the evening of the event, this year's event *will* feature a DJ and a dance floor in the club's large banquet room.

COST

\$40.00 per person.

DRESS CODE:

Semi Formal, Chapter Members are encouraged to wear their SFA Blazers, Regimental tie, white shirt, dark slacks.

SPECIAL GUESTS:

A Company, 5th Battalion 19th Special Forces Group (ABN) Rear Detachment.
These personnel will attend, FREE of charge, but MUST be in CLASS A uniform.
Wives/Girlfriends are also included in the FREE admission.

Please mail your check payable to SFA Chapter 78 to the following address:

Santiago Communities Inc.
PO Box 11927 Santa Ana, CA 92711

You must have your checks mailed in *NO LATER THAN November 15th, 2019*, again, payable to SFA Chapter 78.
There will be no collection of monies at Chapter meetings, all checks MUST be mailed to the above address for accountability.

Questions, feel free to call, text, email me at; Bruce D Long (951) 317 4767 • blong26774@gmail.com