



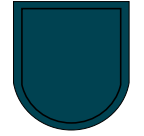
# THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SENTINEL

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 11 • NOVEMBER 2019



## 1ST SPECIAL FORCES GROUP



DE OPPRESSO LIBER!



1st Special Forces Group Reunion 2019

My American Flag

SOAR XLIII

11-13-1969 — SSGT Ron Ray and SFC Randy Suber MIA  
Col. Sully de Fontaine Interred at Arlington National Cemetery



# SENTINEL

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 11 • NOVEMBER 2019

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**COVER:** Colonel Owen Ray Commanding Officer 1st Special Forces Group and Colonel Leroy Barker Deputy Commanding Officer 1st Special Forces Group. Photo by Lonny Holmes



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**MISSION STATEMENT:** The Sentinel will provide interesting and meaningful information relative to the Special Forces experience — today, yesterday and tomorrow. Articles will be published that were written by knowledgeable authors who will provide objective and accurate accounts of real world experiences.

The Sentinel is published monthly by Special Forces Association Chapter 78, Southern California. The views, opinions and articles printed in this issue do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Army or the United States Special Operations Command, the Special Forces Association, or Special Forces Association Chapter 78. Please address any comments to the editor, "Sentinel" to [dhgraphics@earthlink.net](mailto:dhgraphics@earthlink.net).

## From the Editor



Lonny Holmes  
Sentinel Editor

The 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) kicked off a two week period of Special Operations reunions beginning on October 13 and ending on October 24 with the Special Operations Association (SOAR) banquet. What a great time to get together with old SF Group friends and make new acquaintances.

Chapter 78 member John Joyce was on the Board of Directors for the 1st SFGA reunion and he organized several events, starting with a golf tournament to get the ball rolling. One of the most interesting tours was the Threat Museum on Nellis Air Force Base to see and touch Russian military equipment to include MiG aircraft, Hind Helicopters, tanks, anti-aircraft missiles and various field artillery pieces. This museum had been classified secret until about a year ago and most airman on post, to include the gate guards, did not know it existed which made it difficult for several to find. There were no external signs visible.

The reunion had a 'fun' shoot and competition for 1st Group members and wives which included 9mm pistol and 5.56 AR weapons to choose from. Chapter member Brad Welker played a large part in organizing and staffing this event. The event was held at the Boulder Pistol and Rifle Club — SFA Chapter 51 member, Fred Horne sits on the board of directors of the range. The fun shoot and competition included transportation to the range, lunch, free ammunition and five range masters as safety officers — who volunteered their time. The participants shot just over 4,000 rounds of ammo!

One of the final tours was the Las Vegas MOB Museum. The museum's history goes all the way back to Al Capone and his 'mob' in Chicago, then looks at the New York criminals. I highly recommend visiting the museum next time you visit Las Vegas.

Excalibur Industries donated plaques to the top golfers and shooters and presented a beautiful SF plaque to Colonel Owen Ray, 1st SF Group Commanding Officer and Colonel Leroy Barker, Jr., 1st Group Deputy Commanding Officer for their participation in the reunion.

At the Special Operations Association Reunion, (SOAR) John and Brad set up the Excalibur booth in the vender's ballroom displaying car-badges, challenge coins and plaques.

Two weeks ago SFA Chapter 51 was awarded the 2021 Special Forces International Conference in Las Vegas and John Joyce is the Director. SFA C-78 is going to be a co-sponsor. His work as program director for the 1st SF reunion set a higher standard for future conferences in Las Vegas, which is probably the best venue in America for our meeting. Las Vegas has been voted the best venue for 25 years as the city to hold a conference!

A "Tip of the Beret" to John Joyce.

Lonny Holmes  
Sentinel Editor



# The President's Page | November 2019



John Stryker Meyer  
President SFA 78

## Chapter Members,

Thanks to chapter member **Tom Turney**, we will have a most-unique guest speaker for our November 9 meeting: author and CIA operative in Vietnam Frank Snapp, who penned *Decent Interval* in 1979 following eight years of service in Vietnam with the agency including five as an interrogator, agent debriefer and chief CIA strategy analyst in the Saigon embassy prior to the U.S.'s

day of infamy in Vietnam, April 30, 1975 – the day Saigon fell to the commies. I remember reading *Decent Interval* and slamming it to the floor, as I was angered/frustrated by what I read.

Snapp's courage to print this book came at an extreme cost: Every penny earned from sales of *Decent Interval* were turned over to the government following a Supreme Court decision in 1980 without allowing Snapp's attorneys to address the government's censure of him. To Snapp's credit, he then wrote *Irreparable Harm* documenting how the CIA and the government screwed him without having a hearing before the Supreme Court.

We'll have a second speaker, chapter member **John Joyce** will give us the first insights into his plans for SFA Reunion in Vegas 2021, with an unique Chapter 78 involvement.

Last, but not least, the Chapter 78 Board of Directors elections will be held at this meeting. Those elected will be sworn into office at the January 11 meeting.

As I write this note, I'm freshly returned from the Special Operations Association Reunion #43 held in Vegas where the "Rembrandt of Challenge Coins" chapter member **John Joyce** had a table set up for his ever-increasing collection of coins, plaques, display panels and collector bumper insignia. It was John's third major SF-related event in recent weeks, including appearances at the SFA Reunion in West Virginia and the 1st Special Forces Group reunion held the third week of October. A tip of the beret to John.

During the reunion family members of Chapter 78 member **Doug "The Frenchman" LeTourneau**, **Eldon Bargewell**, and **Sully de Fontaine** personally thanked me for the tribute paid to those men in recent editions of the *Sentinel* by editor **Lonny Holmes** after they passed away.

Speaking of the award-winning *Sentinel*, its editor of the past 10 years, **Lonny Holmes**, is ending his brilliant tenure as editor and chief on December 1, when the December issue of the *Sentinel* goes to press for the last time in 2019. In 2018, the SFA Board of Directors created a new category of journalism excellence for its annual newsletter awards ceremony, the Golden Arrows for Excellence in Newsletters, which the *Sentinel* captured in 2018 and again this year. Thus a special tip of the beret to Lonny and

to all of the many talented people who worked with him over the years, including Debra Holm, the talented graphic designer who puts together the final edited product.

Accomplished author and SF warrior, chapter member **Jim Morris** will put on the editor's hat for the *Sentinel* on December 1. Lonny and Jim will work together on the November and December issues, giving the veteran author insights into how the newsletter comes together once a month. Jim's editorship begins December 1 with the production of the January 2020 *Sentinel*. I thank Jim, who transferred into Chapter 78 earlier this year, for stepping up to the plate.

Planning to attend our November 9 meeting, please e-mail **VP Don Deatherage** at: [drdeathca@gmail.com](mailto:drdeathca@gmail.com), no later than Thursday November 7, midnight. We need an exact headcount. ♦

## Meeting details:

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

**Location:** Embassy Suites

**3100 East Frontera, Anaheim, CA 92807**

**(The SE Corner of Hwy 91 & Glassell St.)**

John Stryker Meyer  
President, SFA Chapter 78



# MY AMERICAN FLAG



Colonel John Gargus displays the signatures on his flag.

By Colonel John Gargus USAF (Ret)

I have an American flag that I carried with me on the Son Tay raid. It was signed by most of the participating raiders and by many former POWs. The names on this flag belong to the finest professional American soldiers who had the guts to come to the aid of their colleagues that suffered in captivity and to those who endured its inhumane hardships with enviable honor. This is the story of this flag.

I was born in Czechoslovakia. Because my mother was an American citizen by birth, I inherited a legal claim to US citizenship. All I needed to do was to establish residency anywhere in the USA before I reached my sixteenth birthday. (My story about coming to America was published in the [January 2019 issue of SENTINEL](#))

Once in the USA I reunited with my maternal grandmother in Ohio and resolved to take advantage of every opportunity that my new country offered to me. I learned English and worked my way through college. My original plans were to go into diplomatic service with the State Department. But my hopes for a diplomatic career were shattered during my sophomore year when a State Department visitor came to visit our political science department. He was surprised to meet me. He had served in Czechoslovakia. He knew my father and was in on the deception that got me out of that country. He was also there when the local authorities confiscated the US passports of my brother and sister. This act caused

the US Embassy to protest, but the protests were not followed up once they realized that their intervention was causing increased hardships for my family. He informed me that I would probably never get a clearance to work at the State Department because my immediate family remained behind the Iron Curtain.

With my original career plans shattered, I decided to continue with my Air Force ROTC training and fulfill the military service obligation that it entailed. Once on active duty in navigator training I applied for a regular commission. I was very pleasantly surprised when my application was accepted because with it came a Top Secret clearance which, I was led to believe, would be beyond my reach because of my family background.

The start of the war in Vietnam found me in a very comfortable setting as an AFROTC instructor at Texas A&M University. There I saw many Air Force officers who, upon completion of their engineering studies through AFIT, were sent to Vietnam to fly aircraft that were not of their own choosing. I had a good friend who had flown a C-130 from Hawaii on his prior assignment catching intelligence satellites returning from orbits in space. Together we decided that we would pick the aircraft we wanted to fly during our Vietnam tour. Then after we saw the Air Force film that featured ground to air rescue capability of the Fulton Recovery System\* we decided to curtail our ROTC tours and volunteered to go to Vietnam in that C-130 Combat Talon program. It turned out to be the best career decision I had ever made. My tour in Vietnam was very productive. As a refugee from Communism, who had lived under its oppressive rule for almost two years, I felt compassion for the Vietnamese people who were resisting the life style my family had to endure. Here was my opportunity to fight back. Our aircraft and our missions were highly classified. We had the capability to penetrate into the enemy territory without detection and carry out some amazing operations. I always felt that we were contributing greatly and successfully toward the war effort. I soon became a mission planner. This made me that much more involved in everything that our crews did and helped me to grow professionally in areas I had not previously envisioned.

Prior to my arrival to Vietnam I attended the AF Survival School at Fairchild AFB with other members of my crew. There I learned how it must be like to become a prisoner of war and how such fate would apply to me. School's instructors quickly focused on my accent and became convinced of my origins somewhere in Eastern Europe. They became very determined to break me. On the other hand I thought that I was too tough and too smart for them. But I must have given myself away by my facial reaction when two of them tried to speak with each other about my attitude in a very basic and poorly annunciated Russian. They placed me in a tight,

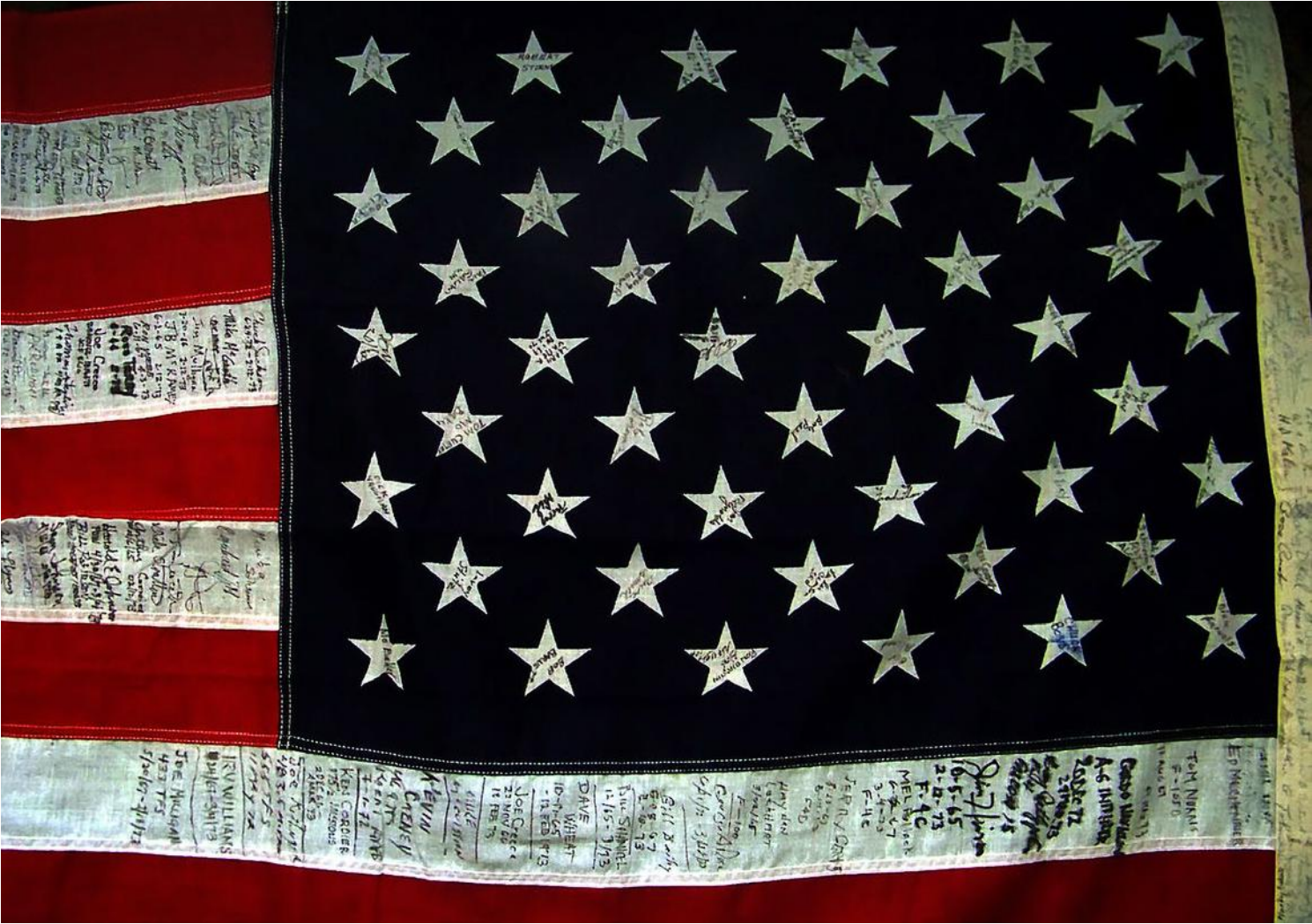


pie-slice box where I had to kneel down and lower my head just above the knees. I don't recall how long they kept me there, but the process was repeated five times in smaller and smaller boxes with the only rest and stretch out periods coming during repeated interrogations. Once, when I resisted squeezing my body into the box, they shoved the sliding door on the protruding soles of my feet causing long lasting bruise marks. But the greatest damage to my body came from the hemorrhoids I developed in that crouched position. They bled and got so bad that when I went to see a doctor on my first full day in Vietnam, he recommended sending me to a hospital in the Philippines. I would have none of that. We all trained as a crew and I could not just leave them after a few hours in the combat zone. The flight surgeon appreciated my crew loyalty and agreed to a long treatment. It took full three months before my body got back to normal.

The main lesson I learned at Fairchild was that I could never allow myself to be captured by the enemy. I convinced myself that I would not survive in captivity. I would certainly become a prized prisoner, one who had already been declared a traitor by their Communist comrades. My family would be dragged into some adverse propaganda scheme and be subjected to a new wave of

repression. I rationalized that since I would not survive my ordeal, it would be better not to even begin captivity that had so much adverse potential not just for my family in Czechoslovakia, but also for my own at home in Texas. Consequently I resolved that I would never surrender and if necessary, provoke the would-be captors with my 38 caliber pistol into killing me. That seemed simple enough, but the problem was that, if forced down, I would not be alone. There were eleven of us on each crew. All of us together did not have enough pistol power to ward off the enemy armed with AK-47s. Eventually the time would come to give up in order to save the lives of the crew. My private agenda in such a scenario would be counterproductive. I would not be a good companion to have around under those circumstances. But once I had a taste of our challenging special operations and became our unit's mission planner, I developed such confidence in our aircraft's capabilities and crew members' skills that I stopped concerning myself with those thoughts. I never shared my apprehensions about becoming a POW with anyone.

My post-Vietnam assignment was to Pope AFB where I became a Combat Talon instructor for new Vietnam bound crews. My specialty was the terrain following radar. With this new duty and my



Colonel Gargus' flag — Raider signatures are on white canvas border of the flag. Son Tay POW signatures are inside of the stars. White stripes have signatures of NAM/POWs.

mission planning experience in Vietnam I became a prime candidate for the Son Tay POW rescue mission.\*\* Believing that the USAF was developing something new that was going to involve our terrain following radar, I readily volunteered for whatever laid ahead. I was thrilled beyond description when I became a part of the small mission-planning group that was read in on the focus of the mission. I knew instantly that our aircraft could lead the necessary force into Son Tay without detection. During my Vietnam tour I flew into the Red River Valley and flight planned missions for other crews into the same part of North Vietnam. What a noble cause that would be to bring out some of those who suffered the unfortunate fate of a POW! As a soldier I couldn't ask for a better task. As an American with my background, I could perform no nobler duty for my country than this one.

We had an outstanding mission planning team. We planned for every eventuality and trained repetitiously, devising safe maneuvers for our odd flight formations. Once the MIG cap with the Wild Weasels, F-4s and the Navy from the Gulf of Tonkin got incorporated into the overall plan, we knew that the safety of the low flying helicopters and the A-1Es of the raiding force was assured. The F-105, Wild Weasels and the F-4s would draw the AAA and SAM fire and insure that the MIGs would stay on the ground. Our two C-130s had the capability to take care of themselves. My only concern for the C-130s was the possibility that someone from the MIG cap could get shot down and require a Fulton recovery. That would call for one of the C-130s to drop a recovery kit and then return for a pick up. Should this occur in a hostile environment, in an area with AAA and small arms coverage, the low and slow flying C-130 on a predictable course to intercept the balloon supported lift line would be in serious trouble. But then how many North Vietnamese would know that we had such a capability? And how much could

they see at night? I felt that we still had the element of surprise on our side and pull it off just like we used to do it in demonstrations and in training. That, however, would not be true if the downed crew needed assistance from the A-1Es. Their fire suppression would pinpoint the area our C-130 would have to fly through.

I prepared myself even for this unlikely turn of events. As a soldier, I want to have a US flag at my funeral. So I went to the BX at Eglin and bought a 3x5 flag that I would take with me on the mission. As on my prior tour in Vietnam, I again never shared my apprehensions about becoming a POW with anyone. When the time came to get dressed for the raid, I wrapped the flag around my chest and flew with it around me. In this way I was assured that if my end would come, be it suddenly, or during evasion, I would have the Old Glory on my body.

I still have this flag. It has become one of my most prized possessions. I took it off my body after landing at Udorn and started collecting signatures of my fellow raiders on its white canvas border. Then while I lived in Austin, Texas, former Son Tay POW Dick Dutton invited me to their NAM-POW reunion. There I began collecting signatures of Son Tay POWs in the white stars of my flag. Later I began soliciting signatures from all former POWs. My quest for them is not yet completed. My family agreed to donate this flag to the Maine Military Museum in South Portland, Maine after I join the ranks of all my raid colleagues who predeceased me. ♦

**\*Editors Note:** To learn about Fulton recovery, also known as STARS, read Col. Gargus' article *STARS — Surface to Air Recovery System* in the [April 2019 Sentinel](#).

**\*\*Read Col. Gargus' article *Air Operations for the Son Tay Raid* in the [November 2016 Sentinel](#).**







Above and at far left, Col. John Gargus and wife Anita at the 2019 NAM/POW Reunion in Portland, Maine. They suited up for the customary flight suit welcome party and also attended the formal banquet. The reunion was held at the Maine Military Museum, which has more Vietnam POW memorabilia than any other in the nation. The Gargus family has decided that Col. Gargus' Son Tay raid flag will go on display here once he is gone.

At immediate left, the unofficial Son Tay Raider patch that Col. Gargus wears on the back of a jacket depicts a mushroom with the acronym "KITD-FOHS" — referring to the raid's extreme secrecy. It means "Kept In The Dark—Fed On Horse S---."

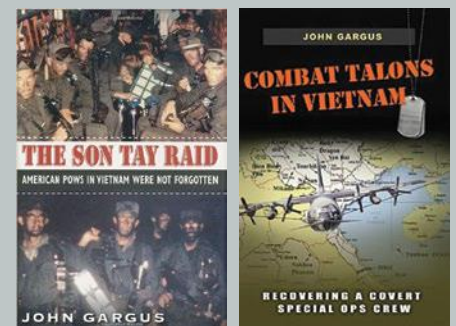
## About the Author

John Gargus was born in Czechoslovakia from where he escaped at the age of fifteen when the Communists pulled the country behind the Iron Curtain. He was commissioned through AFROTC in 1956 and made the USAF his career. He served in the Military Airlift Command as a navigator, then as an instructor in AFROTC.

He went to Vietnam as a member of Special Operations and served in that field of operations for seven years in various units at home and in Europe. He participated in the air operations planning for the Son Tay POW rescue and then flew as the lead navigator of one of the MC-130s that led the raiders to Son Tay, for which he was awarded the Silver Star.

His non-flying assignments included Deputy Base Command at Zaragoza Air Base in Spain and at Hurlburt Field in Florida and a tour as Assistant Commandant of the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California.

He retired in 1983 after serving as the Chief of USAF's Mission to Colombia, having accrued more than 6,100 flight hours, including 381 combat hours in Southeast Asia. In 2003 he was inducted into the Air Commando Hall of Fame. He has authored two books, *The Son Tay Raid: American POWs in Vietnam Were Not Forgotten*, published in 2007, and *Combat Talons in Vietnam: Recovering a Covert Special Ops Crew*, published in 2017. He has been married to Anita since 1958. The Garguses have one son and three daughters.







# SPECIAL OPERATIONS ASSOCIATION SOAR XLIII

43rd Anniversary • October 21-25, 2019 • Las Vegas, NV

Photos by Lonny Holmes



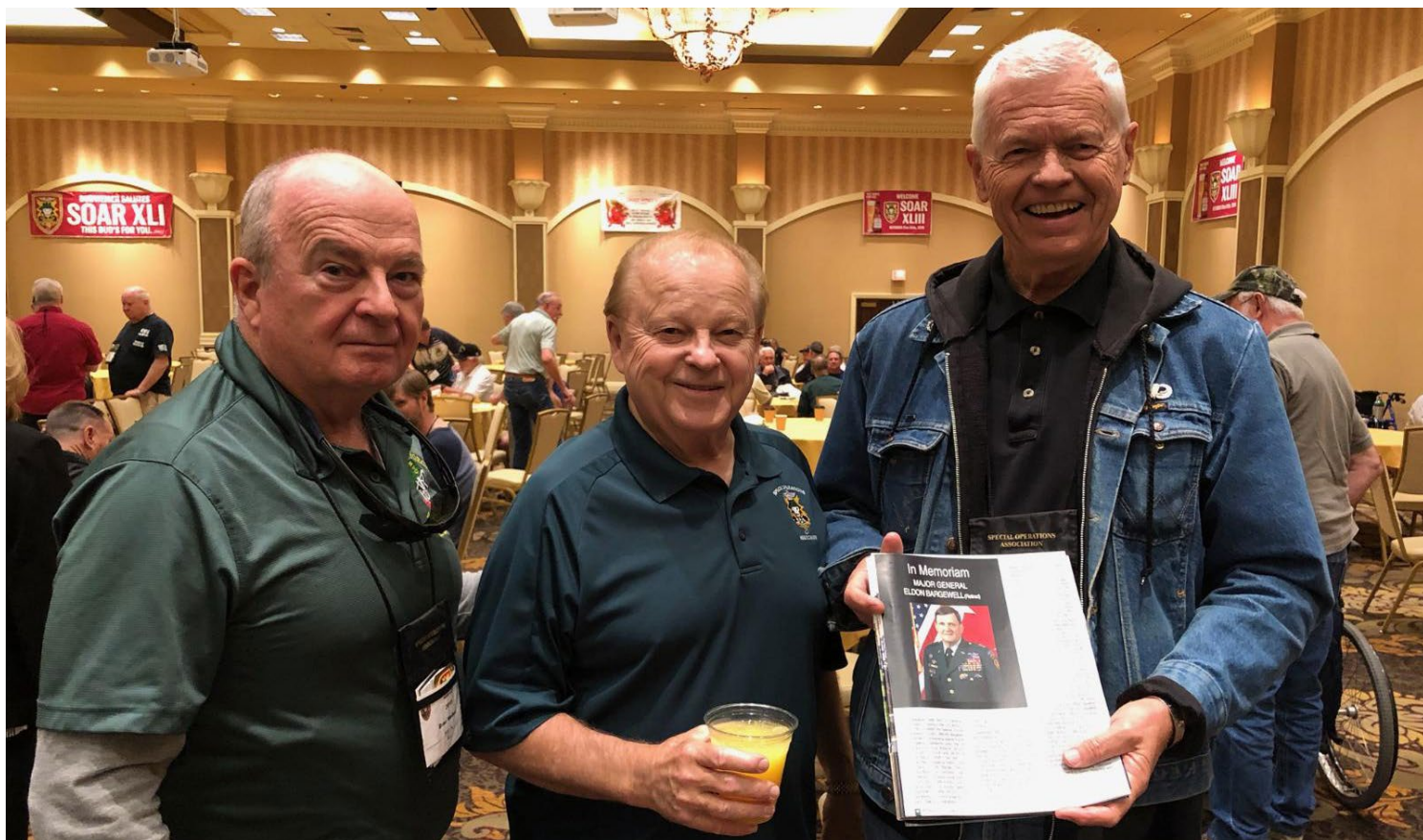
Lonny Holmes

By Lonny Holmes

The Special Operations Association held its annual reunion, SOAR, at the Orleans Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, NV, on October 21 thru 25 with a little less than 300 members. Attendance at the banquet was about 600 with family and friends. This year SOAR was interesting but not as exciting as previous years. The banquet was in honor of distinguished members Colonel Sully de Fontaine and Major General Eldon Bargewell who passed on this year.

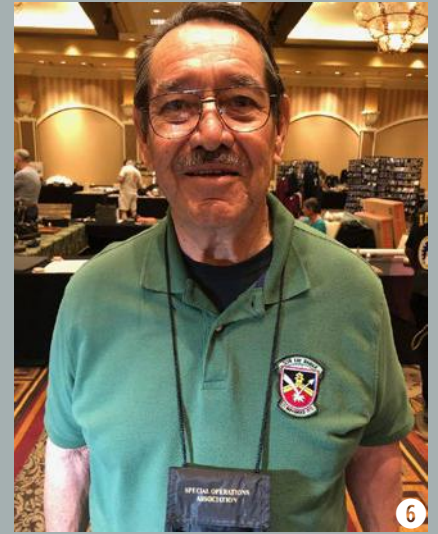
The highlight of the evening was the historical presentation on Colonel Sully de Fontaine by Special Operations Association President Emeritus, Major (R) Clyde Sincere, which was delivered with professional elegance. Secondly, Chapter 78 member John Joyce and his company Excalibur, had three tables in the vender's room and dominated the sales floor. A "Tip of the Beret" to John for a professional operation.

Chapter 78 members attending SOAR included President John "Tilt" Meyer, Past President Ramon Rodriguez, Ed Barrett, Lonny Holmes, and Brad Welker who worked with John Joyce at the vendor table. Ozzie Joyce and Nilda Holmes were dressed for a presidential ball and drew a lot of attention to our table. ♦



Left to right, Chapter 78 members Brad Welker and Ed Barret with Chapter 78 President John Stryker Meyer at the SOAR opening day reception. John is displaying the [June 2019 Sentinel](#) obituary for Major General Eldon Bargewell. The SOAR banquet was held in honor of MG Bargewell and also Col. Sully de Fontaine who both passed away earlier this year.

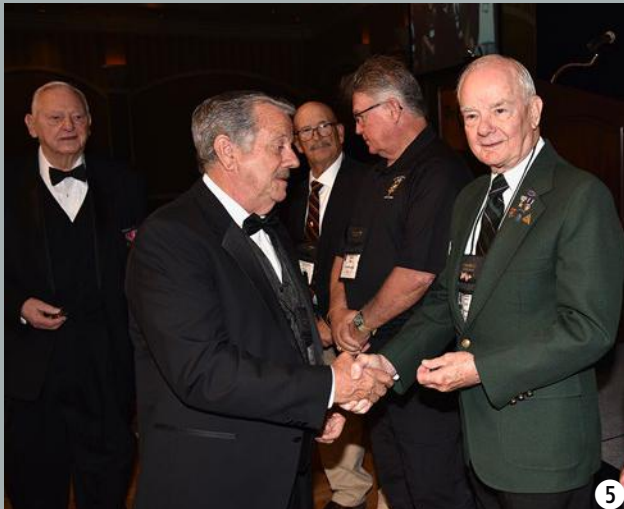




- ❶ Chapter 78 member John Joyce, Chapter 78 Past President Ramon Rodriguez and Chapter 78 Vice President Brad Welker
- ❷ Wade Ishimoto and Brad Welker
- ❸ Angelique de Fontaine, Ed Davis and Nilda Holmes
- ❹ John Joyce and Brad Welker at one of the Excalibur Industries tables.
- ❺ Brandi, the SOAR Bartender ...for how many years?

- ❻ Son Tay Raider John Rodriguez. Rodriguez was a member of the "Greenleaf" helicopter assault team.
- ❼ The color guard for the SOAR banquet.
- ❽ Nilda Holmes, Chapter 78 President and author John Stryker Meyer and Ozzie Joyce
- ❾ Chapter 78 member John Joyce and his wife Ozzie





- ❶ Nilda Holmes, Mike Stern and wife Sandy, James Salaga (back row), Angelique de Fontaine, Annette Salaga, Ed Davis.
- ❷ Special Operations Association President Emeritus Major (R) Clyde Sincere speaking on the life of Colonel Sully de Fontaine who recently passed on and was recently interred at Arlington National Cemetery.
- ❸ Clyde Sincere speaking about Col. Sully de Fontaine's heroic mission in Africa where he saved the lives of 238 missionaries and medical personnel from sure death. He holds a copy the *The Slaver's Wheel*, written by Jack Lawson with Sully de Fontaine, about this mission.
- ❹ Angelique de Fontaine, wife of Col. Sully de Fontaine
- ❺ Two War, Korea & Vietnam, Delta & MACV-SOG veteran Ed Davis receiving 40 year Special Operations Association Pin. SOA President Emeritus Clyde Sincere at far left. SOA President Rick Estes presenting pin.
- ❻ Special Operations Association 40 year pin recipients at the SOAR Banquet.



# 11-13-1969 —

## SSGT Ron Ray and SFC Randy Suber MIA: Decades Later an Chance Meeting Leads to Answers for Family



John Stryker Meyer

By John Stryker Meyer

In late October 1969, I returned to CCN, to RT Idaho where Lynne M. Black Jr., was the team leader (One-Zero). He assumed command of the team when I left in April and I found an improved SOG recon team with South Vietnamese men I utterly respected. The team was tighter, more experienced since it lost six men in May 1968. The bitter irony of SOG at that time: The team

had improved but the NVA had kicked up its efforts against SOG recon teams during the deadly, eight-year top secret war fought in Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam under the aegis of the Military Assistance Command Vietnam – Studies and Observations Group, or simply SOG.

That message was hammered home on November 3, 1969, when the three Green Berets assigned to RT Maryland were wiped out by NVA troops, possibly NVA sappers — the highly trained NVA recon hunter killer teams. With RT Maryland, the indigenous troops survived the attack, escaped and evaded east to the South Vietnam border where, sadly, one team member was killed by friendly fire. In 1968, during our pre-mission intel briefings, we were warned about NVA sapper teams trained to hunt and kill Americans — a feat for which they received a medal from communist leaders in Hanoi. On January 1, 1969, that rumor turned into cold fact when a CCN recon team had all of the Americans killed, while the indigenous troops managed to escape from Laos.

Just how rough the Prairie Fire AO had become is attested to by Mike Taylor, who served five years in Vietnam with SF. His first experience with the PF AO, was in the air and on the ground with RT Oregon in September 1969. Mike was being transferred from MACV-SOG Ground Studies Group (OP-35), to the SOG Launch Site in Nakhon Phanom, Thailand. The launch site was under the operational control of OP-35 but it was administratively assigned to CCN. When Mike was in Da Nang in-processing to CCN, he flew his first Visual Reconnaissance (VR) flight with a Covey over Laos to scope out the CCN AO. His previous recon experience had been in Cambodia.



Left, SSGT Ron Ray and, right, SFC Randy Suber. Both officially still listed as MIA after their team was attacked while on a reconnaissance mission about 15 miles inside Laos in Saravane Province. Both photos courtesy Bonnie Cooper.

His reaction to the PF AO: “I was blown away by the size and scope of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the number of NVA troops in the AO and the amount of Anti-Aircraft Artillery (AAA) that had been moved down from North Vietnam into the Prairie Fire AO. That night, at the CCN Club (not the Recon Club), I said to a friend, ‘I don’t know how you get people to run in that AO — it looked like New York City to me.’ I did not know the sorry excuse for a commander that CCN was cursed with at that time was standing behind me. He loudly proclaimed, ‘I am not having a coward at one of my launch sites.’ I replied, ‘It is not your launch site — it is OP-35’s launch site. I am not a coward and will go out with any team that will have me. Want to go with us?’ He said his duties wouldn’t permit that.”

Taylor then went down to the Recon Club where then-Sgt. Eldon Bargewell introduced him to Ron Ray, One-Zero of RT Oregon. “Ron said he never took ‘straphangers’, but if Randy Suber, the One-One on RT Oregon, would let me carry the radio I could go as the One-Two (radio operator). After a couple of days of Immediate Action (IA) drills all day and getting to know Ron and Randy through tennis, volleyball and beach time in the evenings, RT Oregon was inserted into Laos for a river watch of a ford on Route 23 over the Bang Xe Phai River. We were able to watch the ford for five days and reported quite a bit of NVA traffic on it, but Saigon never gave the OK to strike targets of opportunity. We were extracted without incident. It was a classic, successful recon mission.”

Continued on page 16

# 1st Special Forces Group Reunion 2019

Photos by Lonny Holmes



Brad Welker

By Brad Welker

A large group of former 1st Special Forces Group members gathered for a week in Las Vegas as part of the 2019 Group Reunion. The event was held in downtown Vegas at the Plaza Hotel.

Monday began with a Golf Tournament at Nellis Air Force Base, a motorcycle fun ride, and a trip to the Las Vegas shopping outlet.

Tuesday featured a tour of the Nellis Air Force museum followed by a presentation by veteran Special Forces LTC Mitch Utterbeck.

On Wednesday the veterans and several wives were delighted by a shooting event at the Boulder Pistol & Rifle Club, whose members generously donated use of the facility. They also provided a variety of high-end handguns and rifles for the event. The participants fired over 4,000 rounds during the AR-15 fun shoot and a Pistol Competition. And we were joined on the shooting range and competition by three members of 1st Special Forces Group, Airborne "Color Guard." They were awesome shooters to say the least!

Thursday was highlighted by a tour of the Las Vegas Mob Museum, known for exhibiting an extensive collection of mobster memorabilia.

The final event was a banquet featuring active members of the First Group as a color guard. Group Commander Colonel Owen Ray and Deputy Group Commander Leroy Barker addressed the group.

Chapter 78 member John Joyce, a former member of the 1st Group, contributed heavily to the success of the event by sponsoring many of the events. ❖



The 1st Special Forces Group Reunion kicked off five days of events with a golf tournament at the Sunrise Vista Golf Course on Nellis AFB.

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## DAY 1 - Golf Tournament



Ged Wilke won the Women's Golf Tournament.



Mike Sherlock, best hole winner.

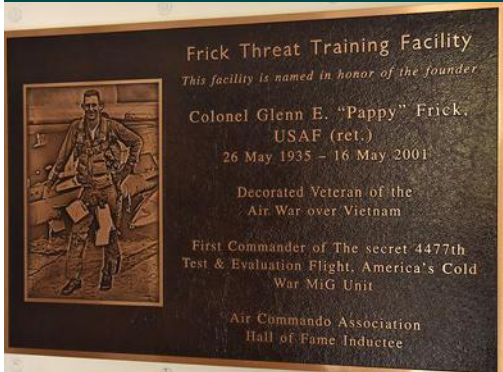


Dan Wilke took 3rd place in the Men's Golf Tournament.



Ike Camacho participated in the Men's Golf Tournament.

## DAY 2 - Nellis AFB Threat Museum



Mil Mi-24 "Hind" Russian gunship



The Nellis Air Force Base Threat Museum, just recently declassified, and is often referred to as the "Petting Zoo" since all visitors can touch and climb on all Soviet Military equipment to include generations of MiG aircraft and helicopters.



Russian infantry weapons display.



When we were touring the Threat Museum every few minutes a pair of fully armed U.S. Air Force fighter jets took off in pairs headed to the large desert training range. The runway was very close and the noise was deafening.



Chapter 78 member and 1st Special Forces Group and Ranger Regiment soldier John Joyce sitting in a Russian MiG 29.



Soviet SAM anti-aircraft rocket with MiG in background.



Left, a Soviet SAM anti-aircraft rocket with MiG in background. Above, John Joyce 'manning' a Russian 14.7mm Quad anti-aircraft gun.



## DAY 2 - Luncheon at Nellis AFB NCO Club



Green Beret LTC (R) Mitch Utterback, the keynote speaker at the 1st Special Forces Group Airborne luncheon at the Nellis Air Force Base NCO Club banquet hall after visiting the 'Threat Museum.' His presentation topic was entitled "Mission to Mosul: Returning to Iraq to keep a promise."



SF retired MSG William McLain and LTC Mitch Utterback on Nellis. The colonel served under McLain as an NCO, then was his team leader, company commander, then battalion commander after becoming an officer. They are still good friends.

## DAY 3 - Boulder Pistol & Rifle Club • Boulder City, NV



Top left, 1st SFGA Reunion pistol shooting competition: 5 men on the firing line, each gets 10 shots in 60 seconds (timed) at 15 yard targets. The women did the same competition. Yeah, the 10X ring is very small at 15 yards.

Top right, Chapter 78 Vice President Brad Welker grading the 15 yard timed pistol shooting competition targets.

Bottom left, 1st Special Forces Group, Airborne Reunion "shooting participants."





Women AR Rifle shooters' on the firing line. 2nd from left is Ged Wilke (who took first place in women's golf). Out of order the others are: Betty Amaker, Janet Ewald, Sue O'Brien and Susan Ethrington.



Ged Wilke shooting a 9mm semi-automatic pistol with Range Master observing.



Ready, aim, fire!



Range Master Bruce McCarroll who timed the 15 yard, 60 second pistol competition blowing the whistle to cease fire!



Bob Brown, Boulder Rifle & Pistol Club Chief Range Master and three out of four Range Masters who generously donated their time for the event.



Retired 1st SFGA CWO Dan Wilke won the 15 yard timed 10 shot pistol contest!



Chapter 78 member Lonny Holmes placed 3rd in the shooting competition.



SFA Chapter 51 and SFA Chapter 78 members at breakfast at the 50s Diner with Colonel Leroy Barker, Jr. DCO of 1st Special Forces Group, Airborne.



## DAY 4 - Mob Museum



The Mob Museum, officially known as the National Museum of Organized Crime and Law Enforcement, is located in Downtown Las Vegas in the building that housed the very first U.S. Post Office and Courthouse in Las Vegas.

Chapter 78 member Lonny Holmes appears to be the only suspect in this lineup!

This .38-caliber nickel-plated revolver believed to have been seized from Al Capone during a 1928 arrest in Miami.

## DAY 5 - 1st Special Forces Group Reunion Banquet



Reunion attendees were greeted with this 12 foot long Reunion banner provided by John Joyce of Excalibur Industries for the 1st SFG Reunion. Nearly one hundred fifty 1st Special Forces Group former members and family attended the banquet at the Las Vegas Plaza Hotel and Casino.



Green Beret and Viet Nam Historian Steve Sherman and wife



Leroy Barker Sr., Ryoko Barker (wife of Leroy Sr. and mother of Col. Barker) and Colonel Leroy Barker Jr, his son, the 1st SF Group DCO.



Jaime Gutiza and friend. Jamie served with the 1st SFGA in Okinawa and MACV-SOG in Viet Nam.



Dan Wilke, a retired Chief Warrant Officer from 1st SF and his wife Ged Wilke. Dan took 1st place in the Reunion's Pistol Competition and placed third in the Golf Tournament. Ged won 1st Place in the Women's in the Golf Tournament.





The 1st Special Forces Group, Airborne, Regimental Flag — note the large number of Battle Streamers.



1st Special Forces Group Color Guard at the reunion. Left to right, SFC Evan Berns, SSG Adam Brazil an 18D, and SSG Milos Drlic. They shot in the reunion Pistol Competition held at the Boulder City Pistol and Rifle Club and were beyond outstanding.



Colonel Owen Ray, Commander of 1st Special Forces Group speaking with his Color Guard, SFC Evan Burns, SSG Adam Brazil, and SSG Milos Drlic. Readers may notice all the Color Guard members are HALO qualified.



Colonel Ray and Colonel Barker "at attention" during the playing of the "Ballad of the Green Beret" at the end of the banquet. Note both colonel's are HALO qualified also.



At far left, Colonel Owen Ray, Commanding Officer 1st Special Forces Group Airborne was the Keynote Speaker at the reunion's banquet.

Right, Colonel Leroy Barker, Deputy Commanding Officer, 1st Special Forces Group, Airborne, speaking at the banquet. The colonel's father was in 1st Special Forces Group in Okinawa and Viet Nam.



## 11-13-1969 — SSGT Ron Ray and SFC Randy Suber MIA continued

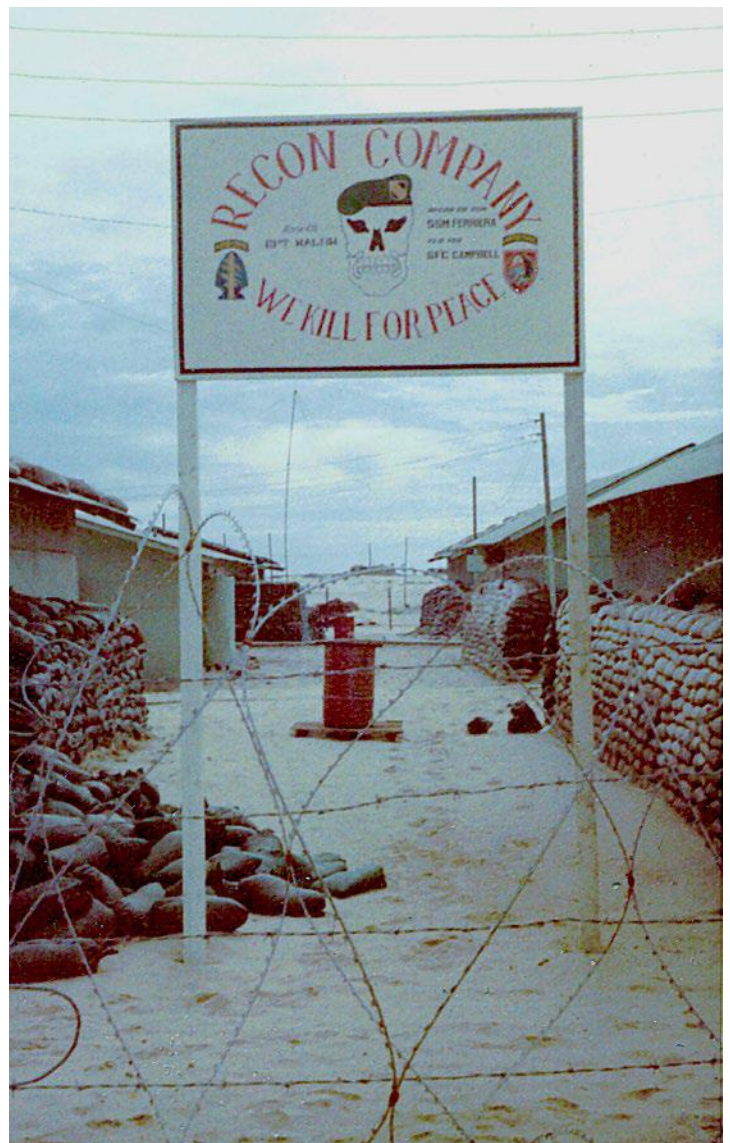
A week later, Taylor and RT Oregon were inserted into the A Shau Valley for an area recon. Midday on the second day, it became apparent they had trackers with dogs on the team's trail and there were troop units maneuvering in the area. Ron Ray, quite rightly, got the team to a good, defensible LZ, declared a Tactical Emergency and requested an extraction. We took ground fire on the way out; everyone lived to run another day. Shortly after that mission, and taking the time to see, smell and feel the PF AO while on the ground with a respected CCN recon team, Taylor was shipped to his new duty station at NKP in Thailand.

During September and October Ron Ray and Randy Suber had also earned the respect of RT Idaho One-Zero Lynne M. Black Jr., who wrote to the Suber family in December 2018: "I knew Ray and Suber very well and had a lot of respect for all the men on RT Oregon." He went on to say that RTs Oregon and Idaho "were the most active, ran more missions that any other team at CCN." During September RT Oregon and RT Idaho had "trained up, become proficient, on the equipment" to conduct a joint radio direction finding (RDF) mission to interdict truck convoys along the Ho Chi Minh Trail....each of us flew visual recons selecting insertion and extraction points. We were ready to go when Oregon got assigned the 13 November mission."

On November 13, CCN was rocked with the bad news of RT Oregon having five of six men killed by NVA in Laos. "I'll never forget that day as long as I live," said Dan Thompson, an experienced SOG recon man who ran missions with RT Rhode Island and was flying as the Covey Rider for the insertion of RT Oregon. "It was one of those typical days in SOG, in the Prairie Fire AO," Thompson said. "We were supposed to insert the team earlier in the day, but the insertion kept getting pushed back due to weather issues over the target area and getting asset coordination in place....we did a double insert. On the first LZ, the choppers went in on a dummy insertion, placing one of those "Nightingale" devices on the ground, which exploded in a sequential order making it sound like a firefight, with the chopper leaving the LZ, hoping to make it appear to the enemy the team left the LZ. We inserted RT Oregon on the second LZ, a long finger of mountain, high up about 15 miles inside Saravane Province in Laos. To be honest, I was a little nervous about the LZ because the vegetation was not jungle canopy, it was thin. But, the team went in, gave us a Team OK. We kept all assets nearby the target until we all got low on fuel and had to return to South Vietnam to refuel.

"Much to my absolute horror, no more than five minutes after the choppers and Covey headed east, we received the first radio beeper and call declaring a Prairie Fire Emergency, around 1600 hours. I was sick to my stomach," Thompson said.

According to the top secret After Action Report, the six-man RT Oregon team was hit by NVA at approximately 1600 hours, attacking first from the west, with AK-47s blazing. Then NVA soldiers attacked from the northwest and southwest. During those initial fusillades of withering enemy gunfire, RT Oregon indigenous team member Vai



CCN Recon gate

was gunned down. During those adrenalin-pumping milliseconds, team members Nha and Thanh were killed when a claymore mine in one of their rucksacks exploded, killing them instantly.

Nguyen Van Bon, the only RT Oregon team member to survive the attack, later told debriefers, that as Ray returned fire he was felled by enemy gunfire while Suber was trying to make radio contact with any aircraft in the area. Efforts on his URC-10 ultra-high frequency emergency radio failed to make contact, Bon said. He observed Ray fall to the ground, groan and "become silent." He shook the young staff sergeant, but Ray was unresponsive, his chest was covered with blood. Bon said he turned to Suber's position when he noticed four enemy soldiers advancing toward the young sergeant. Suber picked up his weapon, pointed it toward the enemy only to experience weapon failure. He was instantly struck by enemy fire. Bon fired upon those enemy soldiers and called Suber's name several times. Bon later told S-2 staff and polygraph experts that the brave Green Beret from Missouri neither moved nor answered his calls.

Bon then escaped from the deadly battle site by running down hill and into the darkened jungle to escape enemy soldiers. During the



subsequent time, he heard sporadic shots fired and shouting to the north and west throughout the following day, according to the findings by the MIA Board of Proceedings conducted November 29, chaired by CCN Executive Officer Bill Angel, Capt. Robert Blatherwick Jr., and Capt. Michael D. O'Byrne. Also, during that time, Air Force personnel picked up at least five beepers alerts from an URC-10, which they assumed was a ploy by the NVA to draw in another team.

On November 14, RT Idaho was ready to conduct a Bright Light into the area where RT Oregon had fatal contact with the overwhelming numerically superior NVA force. A few days later, RT Idaho One-Zero Lynne M. Black Jr., later wrote, "The entire AO was still very hot ... overrun with the enemy. Because of that we had to do a one-day in and out mission. If we had attempted to stay overnight on the ground we would have been lost as well. The insertion chopper landed us directly at the coordinates where we began a spiral outward search pattern. We found absolutely no trace of Oregon, not even shell casings indicating a battle...."

"Randy Suber and Ron Ray were my friends. During the war, I didn't make friends with other teams, let alone the guys on my team. Many times I watched teams depart for a mission never to return or come back all shot up. Each of us believed we were immortal ... it would never happen to us. To this day I miss those guys. They were willing, even excited to go anywhere, anytime day or night....I know from personal experience it's difficult to lose a brother to war."

Taylor's reaction: "Ron Ray and Randy Suber epitomized the Quiet Professionals we all aspired to be. They were damn good recon men. Their loss is a testament to the number and skill of the adversaries we faced in the Prairie Fire AO. By 1969, we had been doing the same thing, the same way for so long, it truly had become almost 'Mission Impossible.' The fact the guys continued the mission for three more years speaks volumes about the valor and courage of the SOG recon man."

### **Family's Pain and Uncertainty**

With the demise of RT Oregon, the pain and suffering of Suber's family began. It's a bitter story that has unfolded hundreds of times during the secret war, where due to its top secret nature families could only be told minimal details about the loss of their Green Beret. Awards and decorations for valor in Laos were worded to say: "For valor in South Vietnam."

A few days after November 13, 1969, the United States Army notified Suber's mother at their home in Ballwin, Missouri that Randy Suber was listed as Missing-In-Action in Laos. They provided a brief written report (five or six sentences) indicating that the six-man reconnaissance team (RT Oregon led by "1-0" SSG Ron Ray and "1-1" SGT Randy Suber) was "attacked and overrun by a numerically superior enemy force" around 1600 hours about 15 miles inside Laos in Saravane Province. The report stated that three of the four indigenous team members were killed, and that both Ray and Suber were hit and unresponsive. The surviving team member, Nguyen Van Bon, was rescued several days later.

That was it for any official information to the Suber family for many years.

Given the Army's apparent "mistrust" of reports from indigenous teammates, the family was skeptical about that sad, brief report. It was suggested more than once by the DoD that the surviving team member could have been a double-agent. In one of Randy's early letters, he described his team as including indigenous men "... all are ex-NVA regulars. In fact, my Zero-One (Indigenous counterpart team leader) was a captain in the R20 Battalion in last year's (1968) Tet Offensive ... They are good soldiers ... [but what] worries me ... they quit one army once before ..."

No one else was home with Mrs. Suber that fateful day. It must have been devastating for her, but she was incredibly tough. Ironically, she had just returned from the post office that day to mail seven pairs of Levi Strauss blue jeans to Randy for his indigenous teammates — per his special request in his last letter home dated October 26, 1969.

Jim, Randy's younger brother, was 11 years old. Jim's sister was three years older than Randy, who was 22. She was married to an Army captain and lived in Indianapolis. The oldest Suber brother, was away for his first year of college. Perhaps because of Jim's age and the tremendous uncertainty, Suber's parents waited to tell Jim of Randy's status for many months. Jim, a sharp, curious boy knew something wasn't right, but had little idea of the gravity of the situation, other than the extended absence of letters from Nam. Their hope, naturally, was that Randy would "turn up" before his scheduled tour ended, and they kept everything quiet from everyone in their community.

When Dad eventually told Jim, he explained that MIA didn't necessarily mean KIA. They held on for many years to the possibility that he was a POW — especially up until 1973. Of course, there was zero evidence, but they knew it was possible — especially for SF men — as manifested by Nick Rowe. Another sad memory, though, was some time before 1973, the DoD encouraged the Suber family (undoubtedly all MIA families) to send a special care package addressed to Randy at a specific prison in North Vietnam. "So, Mom sent a package — including woolen socks that she had knitted," said Jim Suber. "The package was returned several months later with everything except those socks. Can you imagine the North Vietnamese soldier who opened the package, swiped the socks, and returned the package?!"

Strange as it must sound, the Suber family was extremely well-equipped for Randy's situation. First, it was a military family. Their father was a lieutenant colonel in United States Air Force and was the commanding recruiter for Missouri and Illinois at the time Randy enlisted in the Army — a family irony. Mrs. Suber came from a long line of distinguished career military men — including an admiral who captained the largest ship sunk in World War I and an uncle who was second in command for the Pacific Campaign in World War II. He signed the formal Japanese document of surrender. She was beyond upset that Randy enlisted in the United States Army (October 26, 1967) and later volunteered for Vietnam. The biggest source of strength for the Suber family was its deep-rooted spiritual faith. Fifty years later, Jim Suber says their faith undoubtedly pulled their family through its tragic loss and years of bitter uncertainty and official silence.



According to Jim Suber, that bitter uncertainty was heightened when the family first learned many years later about “The Secret War.” “Naturally, we knew nothing about MACV-SOG,” Jim said. “Two big questions mystified us. What was Randy doing that was so cloaked in secrecy? Why hadn’t we ever heard from anyone that served with him? The answers to those questions drove me to learn as much as possible over the last, gee, fifty years.”

Suber’s parents dutifully attended almost every annual meeting for The National League of POW/MIA Families in Arlington, VA. They supported and deeply appreciated the government’s efforts, but, understandably, eventually became frustrated. Both passed on 16-plus years ago. “How surprised they would be to know that the DoD has conducted two extensive recovery operations at Site LA-00373; in October-December 2014 and March-April 2015 in efforts to locate the remains of Suber and Ray.

“The first meaningful breakthrough came once there were some books written by SOG men, published twenty plus years later. Their descriptions of SOG’s operation and missions helped immensely. One of those first books came from MACV-SOG soldier, the late Harve Saal, who was assigned to FOB 1, 3 and 4 in 1967-68. I connected with him through The Drop in 1989 just as he was completing a four-volume, 1,000 page history of MACV-SOG (“SOG – MACV Studies and Observations Group – Behind Enemy Lines” published in 1990). It was not easy to read, but his information, at least, opened our eyes and definitely explained why no fellow SOG men had contacted us. Harve answered those two questions, and showed tremendous compassion to the Suber family along the way. That really helped all of us — especially my parents. Sadly, Harve passed on from lung cancer a few years later.

“Numerous books started appearing about MACV-SOG, and I read as many as I could find. Many of them were extremely well-written, and all of them helped in some way. My favorites included *To Bear Any Burden*” by Al Santoli (1985), *SOG: The Secret Wars of America’s Commandos in Vietnam* by John Plaster (1997), and *SOG: A Photo History of the Secret Wars*—also by John Plaster (2000), John Stryker Meyer’s *Across the Fence* (2011), Lynne M. Black Jr.’s *Whisky Tango Foxtrot* (2011), Meyer’s *SOG Chronicles – Volume I* (2018), *The Dying Place* by David Maurer, and *We Few* by Nick Brokhausen (2018).

“While none of those books provided specific stories about Ron Ray or Randy Suber (other than the after-action report), they gave bigger context to Randy’s comments in a letter dated September 1, 1969. ‘CCN took a beating last week. Six people were killed in action and ten were seriously wounded ... it’s bad here as 26 have died in last three months ... My closest friend was killed two days ago ... I was in a different target area at the time, but listened to it on the radio.’ He also added, ‘On my last target I was put in for the Bronze with Valor. I guess that is supposed to make me forget and drive on.’ That had to be on his first mission. In a letter a few days later, he added, ‘I can’t tell you much about the mission ... one thing for sure: I am in an extremely hot and dangerous assignment.’ ”

The major breakthrough for Jim Suber came 49 years later in January 2018. “I unexpectedly met John Stryker Meyer (“Tilt”) at the DPAA family update meeting in San Diego. He certainly knew

Ron Ray and Randy Suber, and promised to introduce me to more who knew them even better. That, indeed, is exactly what he did. Soon, John connected me to, first, Mike Taylor, who ran on two missions with Ron and Randy (a trail watch along the Xe Bang Phai River); second, Dan Thompson, the covey rider for the LZ insertion on the November 13th mission; and, third, Lynne Black, the team leader for RT Idaho that was prepped to Bright Light and returned to the last known coordinates for RT Oregon a few days later. Each of these men have provided first-hand accounts of RT Oregon and that fateful day on November 13, 1969. Honestly, how do you get much closer than that on a case that is now 50 years old??? What an absolute blessing!

“It’s been an honor to meet all the men of MACV-SOG over the last two years. Connecting with them has, beyond a doubt, answered those two questions — and revealed the incredible valor and patriotism of the men of SOG! My parents would be so pleased to know of these connections and of the incredible heroism demonstrated by MACV-SOG. My wife and children have been incredibly supportive of me — especially our son, James Randolph Suber, who has discovered even more information about the men of SOG and the incredible valor of every SOG recon man through his extraordinary research skills. Throughout the journey, Randy’s example has set a standard that almost always feels way too high, but has absolutely made me a better person along the way.” ♦

## From the desk of Fred Horne:



In this photo shared with Lonny Holmes, living legend Fred Horne is flanked by security in Israel at the Israel-Jordan border.



# *DECENT INTERVAL: An Insider's Account of Saigon's Indecent End Told by the CIA's Chief Strategy Analyst in Vietnam* by Frank Snepp



Kenn Miller

By Kenn Miller

Former CIA strategy analyst Frank Snepp's *DECENT INTERVAL* is surely one of *the* most controversial books — if not the most controversial book — to come out of America's war in Vietnam. Snepp served two tours as a CIA strategy analyst in Saigon and other spots in Vietnam before and during the last days of America's involvement in Vietnam.

Mr. Snepp is an excellent writer, and despite all the difficulties of his job and his position, one who seems to have liked Vietnam and the Vietnamese people. Although *Sentinel* readers who fought in Vietnam might not consider a CIA strategy analyst stationed in Saigon to be in the middle of the war — but as a CIA strategy analyst, Snepp had problems and frustrations few combat soldiers were likely to encounter. For example, one of Snepp's duties was to try to get information from Nguyen Van Tai, who was considered to be one of the most important and high ranked NVA personnel to be captured. It was widely assumed that Nguyen Van Tai was full of secrets and insights, but he was very determined, devoted, and disciplined not to break. If I remember correctly, Snepp respected Nguyen Van Tai but did not think that he knew as much as the rest of those trying to break him did.

The North Vietnamese had offered to trade captured State Department officer Douglas Ramsey for Nguyen Van Tai, but the American officials refused the trade and allowed Ramsey to be imprisoned in a small bamboo cage for an extra year and half because CIA brass thought Tai was a more valuable prisoner than Ramsey was. After seven years of imprisonment, Ramsey was finally released in 1973, but not in a prisoner exchange for Tai.

Nguyen Van Tai remained recalcitrant and was not released. He held his mud until he was killed by his South Vietnamese captors just as NVA tanks were breaking through the presidential palace gates in 1975. It wasn't until a couple of years after the fall of Saigon that Mr. Ramsey was told that the extra final year and half

of severe captivity was due to the fact that a North Vietnamese officer named Nguyen Van Tai too tough to break.

*DECENT INTERVAL* is very much the story of the fall of Saigon and the disastrous failing of American plans and intentions to keep those to whom America had promised protection from the Communists. It is a record of blunders, lies, bureaucratic infighting, misconceptions, cultural misunderstandings, dishonesty, cupidity, and bad luck that led up to what is often called the "Fall of Saigon."

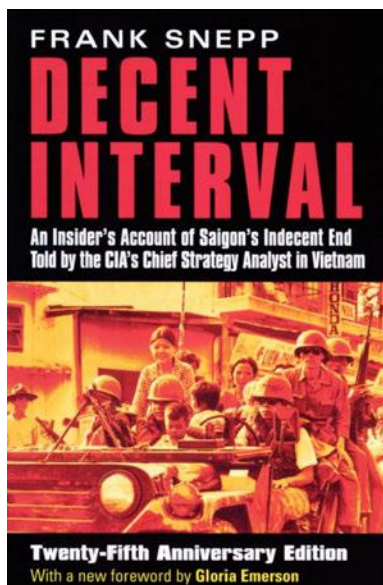
*DECENT INTERVAL* is an extremely important book, and Mr. Snepp did a thorough and diligent job of recording what happened. But I can not recommend *DECENT INTERVAL* as a pleasant read. The subject of the book is what some consider the saddest and most shameful national failure in American history. But if you have among your friends and family people who may still have some lingering respect for Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, reading *DECENT INTERVAL* will be an eye opener.

At least in theory, Americans tend to admire those who bravely tell truth to power. But people being people, and powerful people being powerfully protective of their power, truth tellers are often more likely to be targeted than they are to be praised. That was certainly the case of Frank Snepp and *DECENT INTERVAL*. The U.S. Constitution does not allow the government to censor books, but it does allow the federal government units the right to use lawsuits, and in a 1980 case the CIA took ownership of *DECENT INTERVAL*, and also — with what

seems to me a shocking offense against our First Amendment, the CIA was given the right to pre-censor other publications by Frank Snepp. I hope that at least that last censorious attack on the Constitution has been —and should be—deleted.

The unofficial motto of the Central Intelligence Agency is "*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*" (John 8:32)

Frank Snepp told truth to power, and was punished for it, but is also widely respected as a truth teller. ♦



***DECENT INTERVAL: An Insider's Account of Saigon's Indecent End Told by the CIA's Chief Strategy Analyst in Vietnam***

by Frank Snepp

616 pages

University Press of Kansas;

25 Anniversary edition

(November 13, 2002)



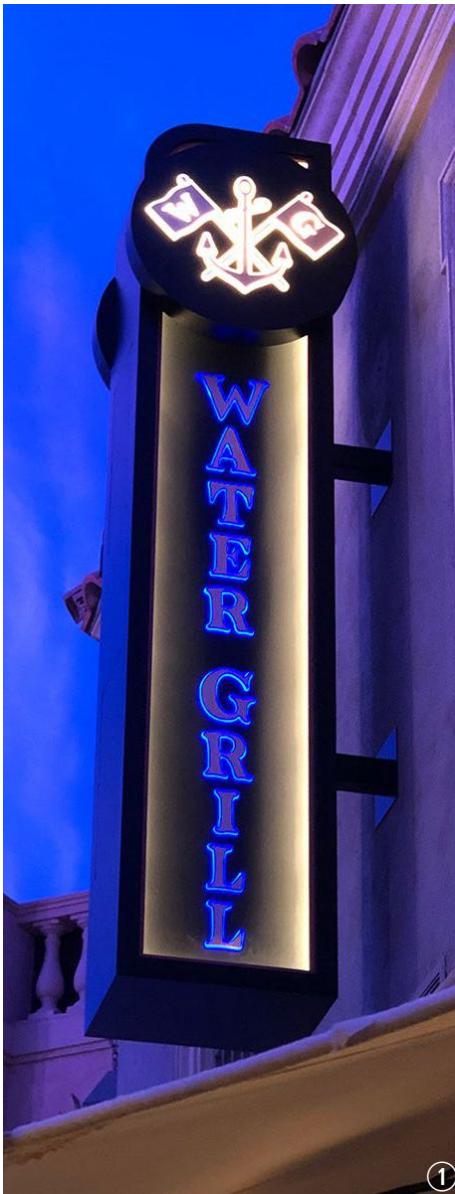
# Dinner at the Water Grill

By Lonny Holmes

A special dinner at the Water Grill in Las Vegas, NV, was to honor Special Forces Association Executive Director Cliff Newman's wife, Karen, on her birthday. The appetizers were fantastic and all dinner choices were quoted as fabulous by our group. Cocktails and wine were served. Karen was presented with a fine desert (see photo) by Water Grill and a few of us had room to order some of their special deserts. Those who attended to celebrate Karen's birthday included husband Cliff, Mike Taylor and wife Laura, Brad Welker, John Joyce, Nilda and Lonny Holmes and Karen's best friend Julie Wise from Napa Valley, CA.

When we were seated by Markus Ort, the senior manager, we were told that "cocktails were on the house." Much to our surprise, following the delightful deserts our waitress stated that the house "comped" our entire dinner.

Thank you Chapter 78 Member Tom Turney for making the reservations and Water Grill for the fine birthday dinner for Karen Newman and friends.



❶ The Water Grill located at the Forum Shops at Caesars.

❷ Left to right, John Stryker Meyer, Brad Welker, Cliff Newman, Mike Taylor, Lonny Holmes and John Joyce.

❸ Karen Newman with her special desert in honor of her birthday.

❹ Left to right, Julie Wise (Karen's best friend from Napa Valley), Nilda Holmes, Karen Newman and Laura Taylor.





- 1 Chapter President John Meyer and Ken Atkinson, OPNS SGT A Co. 19th SFG(A) who spoke about A Company's pending deployment.
- 2 Jim Light's guest Bob Acosta
- 3 John Meyer and Billy Hoopes who spoke on SF's underwater operations
- 4 Ken Atkinson presented John Meyer with a special A/5/10 SFG(A) challenge coin which they'd recently had made.

- 5 6 Obverse and reverse views of A/5/10 SFG(A)'s new challenge coin.
- 7 Kens working the crowd
- 8 Billy discussing SF's underwater operations in Germany in the 50s with the old timers.
- 9 Four Millers and one Morris.





## Rest In Peace Colonel Sully H. de Fontaine (Retired)

Col. Sully de Fontaine was laid to rest  
with full military honors  
at Arlington National Cemetery  
on October 19, 2019

Colonel Sully H. de Fontaine died on April 22, 2019  
at the age of 92. To learn more about Col. de Fontaine,  
please read the obituary that appeared  
in the [May 2019 Sentinel](#).



*"It doesn't take a hero to order men into battle. It takes a hero to be one of those men who goes into battle."*

— GENERAL H. NORMAN SCHWARZKOPF