



SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 1 • JANUARY 2020

HAPPY
NEW YEAR!
2020



Chapter 78 2019 Christmas Party

The Rescorla Presentation

“Get Ready!”

1st Group

ANNOUNCEMENT: The Alex Quade Special Forces Scholarship



SENTINEL

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 1 • JANUARY 2020

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FRONT COVER: Celebration Wave — Army Sgt. 1st Class Shelby Bixler, a member of the Black Daggers, the U.S. Army Special Operations Command's parachute demonstration team, parachutes through the air with an American Flag at Fort Stewart, Ga., Nov. 20, 2019, during Marne Week, a celebration of the 3rd Infantry Division. Photo by Army Spc. Jordyn Worshek



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CHAPTER OFFICERS:

President	Coordinator of ROTC Program
Bruce Long	Ed Barrett
Vice President	Chaplain
Don Gonneville	Richard Simonian
Susan Weeks	Sentinel Editor
Secretary	Jim Morris
Gary Macnamara	Immediate Past President
Treasurer	John Stryker Meyer
Richard Simonian	
Sergeant At Arms/ Quartermaster	
Mark Miller	



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From the Editor



Jim Morris
Sentinel Editor

Chapter 78 meant a lot to me before I ever went to a meeting. For the past ten years my wife was ill and I couldn't be away from the house for more than three or four hours. Kenn Miller and I have been friends for years, and he urged me to join the chapter. I always begged off on the grounds I couldn't go to meetings. Tilt Meyer was an old friend too. I hadn't known him as long as I've known Kenn, but almost.

They never let me forget I was welcome here. They gave me a coin, and I carried it for years before joining the chapter.

For the past three years Myrna was bedridden, and I was more housebound than ever. Then she was gone. I was in shock, and, as it turns out, not only is there grief, but a lot of administrative work involved in a loved one's death. But I could move around and I knew where I was welcome.

Even after all this time, when a Vietnam veteran meets a civilian there is a membrane between them. You have to ask, is there still this distance? You have to ask, am I going to be understood or respected by this person? And you have to ask, do I respect this person, or is he or she just another flaky wannabe, or someone still harboring a grudge against the "baby killers"?

None of that here. Howard Miller gave me a ride to my first meeting. I'd never seen him before and it was like I'd known him all my life. Same with the next guy I talked to, which, oddly enough, was Mark Miller. Before this Kenn was the only Miller I knew and I'd always called him "Miller." Now this causes great confusion.

I'd only been to three meetings when we elected new officers and Lonny stepped down from the *Sentinel*. My civilian jobs have always been some variation on the theme of writer/editor, and in SF I had edited both *The Liberator* of the 1st Group on Okinawa and The Green Beret of the 5th Group in Vietnam, so I kind of had to step up.

One of the advantages of being in the service, and especially SF is that you meet a lot of great people. One of the greatest soldiers I ever met was Rick Rescorla, hero of both the Ia Drang, and 9/11. It was my privilege to help in an effort to get him recognition for what he did on 9/11 and that culminated in his widow, Susan, receiving the Presidential Citizens Medal for him on November 7, this year. That presentation is my first story for the *Sentinel*.

The second is an old piece I did after a class on death and dying a few years back. An exercise in that class was to write a description of your own passing, and I used that as the basis for a short story I called "Get Ready!". I've showed it to a few old paratroopers

Continued on page 13

The President's Corner | January 2020



Bruce Long, President SFA 78

Greeting, Chapter Members, and Happy New Year! Can you believe it? It's another year gone by; 2020 sure has a nice ring to it.

For all of you who attended our annual Christmas Party on December 1st, at the Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club in Corona Del Mar, thank you for your support.

I think all who attended will agree that our guest speaker, Steve Lieberman knocked it out of the park, with his personal

thoughts on patriotism and what it means to all of us. We had a great DJ in James Griffey, who did a superb job at reasonable cost.

As most of you know, there's been a "Change of Command". I've agreed to be President (again). We also have two new Vice Presidents, **Don Gonneville, LTC (Ret.)**, and **Susan Weeks**, honorary chapter member. Our chapter Secretary, **Gary Macnamara**, Treasurer, **Richard Simonian**, and Sergeant-at-Arms, **Mark Miller**, remain the same. Our new *Sentinel* Editor is **Jim Morris**, who has a huge background in journalism.

Some of you may not know, but **Mark Miller** was in the hospital, having a kidney removed, and was unable to fulfill his duties at the Christmas Party. Mark is on the mend, and will attend our January 11th 2020 chapter meeting at the Embassy Suites in Anaheim.

I want to thank the outgoing chapter officers, **John "Tilt" Meyer**, President, **Don Deatherage**, Vice President, **Brad Welker**, second Vice President, and especially **Lonny Holmes**, outgoing *Sentinel* editor, for a job well done. A big tip of the beret to you, Lonny, for ten years of dedicated service.

I hope to make the next two years an exciting time. I will be sitting down with the staff and selected chapter members to set up a planning calendar, and hope to have it published in the February 2020 *Sentinel*.

As always feel free to contact me any time with your thought and ideas. The chapter is only as good as it's members. ♦

Bruce D. Long, SF, SGM (Ret.)
President, SFA Chapter 78
blong26774@gmail.com



Chapter 78 members were recognized for their hard work and support of the chapter at the December 1st Christmas Party. Pictured above left is Richard Simonian, Chapter Treasurer, Chaplain and Publisher of the *Sentinel*; above right, Gary Macnamara long-time Chapter Secretary; below left, Mike Keele was recognized his years of consistent hard work and dedication to the Chapter; below right, Don Deatherage, Chapter Vice President for six years..

Next Chapter Meeting

Planning to attend our January 11 meeting? If so please e-mail **VP Susan Weeks** at: Businesshelp.ca@gmail.com, no later than Thursday January 9, midnight. We need an exact headcount.

DATE: January 11, 2020

TIME: 8:30 a.m. Breakfast will be served.

LOCATION: Embassy Suites

ADDRESS: [3100 East Frontera, Anaheim, CA 92807](#)
(The SE Corner of Hwy 91 & Glassell St.)



THE RESCORLA PRESENTATION

By Jim Morris

Hero is a word much overused in today's society. Rick Rescorla was a true hero, all his life. He was a football (soccer) hero as a young man in his native Cornwall. He was a hero as commander of a company of paramilitary police in Northern Rhodesia, when he single-handedly killed a lion marauding a native village, and he will probably emerge as the greatest hero of the century for what he did on 9/11.

If not for his actions on September 11, 2001, the death toll of the World Trade Center attack would have been almost double. Rick was Chief of Security for Morgan Stanley, for both attacks on the WTC, and after the first he planned carefully, for he knew there would be another. He built a team, not just of Morgan Stanley employees, but of old friends who would do pretty much anything for him. Fred McBee, world record holder for the quadriplegic javelin throw, ("How far did you throw it, Fred?" "Suffice it to say I threw the sonofabitch, okay!") did internet research on terrorism for him. His oldest American friend, the late Dan Hill, a Muslim convert who spoke fluent Arabic, suited up in his Arab persona as Abdullah al-Amin and prowled the mosques in New York and New Jersey, finding out who was likely to do what, and reporting it to Rick, who passed it on to the WTC security office, and to the FBI, neither of whom seemed very interested. He and Dan worked out who would stage the attack, and how. They just didn't know when.

It was Dan who convinced Rick to come to America. They met in what was then Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia, where Rick was a policeman, after having been a London Bobbie, after a hitch in 22SAS. He later told me that London Bobbie was the most boring job he ever had. The man was made for action.

Dan showed up in Northern Rhodesia after having been a mercenary in Katanga, a job he had taken at the urging of some people in Virginia who thought it would be nice to have somebody inside that operation.

Knowing Northern Rhodesia was going to fold, and not wanting to go back to England, where his chances for advancement would be hindered by a working class background, he decided to emigrate. He considered Australia, Canada, and the US. Dan urged him to come to America, which had the world's best airborne, the best paid army, and a nice little war.

He was a hero again in the Battle of the Ia Drang as a platoon leader in 2/7 Cav. Actually he was a hero twice in that battle, though he only got one Silver Star. He was a hero when his company was attached to LTC Hal Moore's 1/7 Cav, and he was a hero again when he was sent back in to pull 2/7 out of the ambush they fell into leaving the Ia Drang. "Good, good, good, good, good! They'll come again tonight and we'll mop them up," was his quote from that action.

Rick and I became friends in the writing program at the University of Oklahoma, part of a coffee drinking group, every one of whom was at least two of the following, writer, veteran, or gimp. Fred McBee was among that group. My first wife introduced Rick to his first wife, and years later he and I collaborated on a screenplay about the life of Audie Murphy, the greatest hero of WWII, and later movie star.

We were both working in New York at the same time and made plans to get together many times, but it never happened. We were both working hundred hour weeks and every time we made a date one or the other of us would have to cancel.

When the tower came down I was watching from my sister's farm in Missouri. I called his number in the WTC, and, of course it did not go through. I called the hot line and was told he had survived. But later Dan called me and said, "Rescorla is gone." I told him the hotline said he was okay and he told me that was b.s. "He's gone."

Rick made two phone calls before he shepherded 2,700 Morgan Stanley employees down the stairs, and then died going back up to look for stragglers. He called Dan, saying, "Guys like us shouldn't die in bed. We should go out doing some great impossible deed."



President Donald J. Trump, joined by Susan Rescorla, presents the Presidential Citizens Medal posthumously to her husband Richard "Rick" C. Rescorla. (Official White House Photo by Tia Dufour)

Then he called his wife, Susan, and told her, "If something should happen to me, I want you to know you made my life."

Susan is the heroine of the rest of this story; she would not let his achievement die. She led lot of people, me included, in a campaign to get him the Presidential Medal of Freedom. She spoke and wrote, I wrote. Gen. Richard B. Meyers, USAF, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs pushed for it. His point man was LTC Randy Lee, who served as his speechwriter. The National Foundation for Patriotism got solidly behind it, under its president Nick Snider and its executive director Pat Stansbury. They organized the delegation for the presentation when it finally happened.

The Bush administration didn't want it, I think because they claimed no one could have predicted 9/11, and wouldn't call attention to the man who had. The Trump administration did. However they elected to award the Presidential Citizen's Medal. When I heard that I was incensed, because it's a lesser award. Estée Lauder has the PMOF, and whatever her contribution, it did not kill her.

Randy Lee convinced me I was wrong. Higher medal or not, the PMOF usually goes to celebrities, and the PCM goes to heroes. Dick Meadows, for instance, has it. Dick Meadows is better company for Rick than Estée Lauder.

So I bought a suit and tie and showed up at the White House on the 7th of November for the presentation.

It was a strange experience. The Secret Service, at first, didn't want to let me in, because the invitation was for Jim Morris and all my ID said my name was James. The agent who stopped me understood, but I had to wait while the name was corrected in the computer in about five check points. When the uniformed Secret Service guard gave me back the contents of my pockets after they were checked, he said, "Thank you, sir. Welcome to Wal-Mart." The ushers were military aides. I saw my first female lieutenant commander. I remarked to a woman Air Force captain, "I think you've maxed out



Clockwise from the top: Rick and Susan Rescorla; Randy Lee; Dan Hill and Rick Rescorla

your weird assignment quota." She smiled and said, "Got that right," and pointed me toward the next door to go through.

This was my first meeting with Randy Lee in person, and we sat together. McBee brought his entire family, wife Cathy, daughter Hadley (named for the first Mrs. Hemingway, a friend in Florida), son-in-law Hector Rivera, and grandsons Hector and Hudson. I hadn't seen the McBees since 1980, when Hadley was in a stroller. The room was full of Cav veterans and a high-speed delegation from FDNY, and another from Rick's OCS class, which also included the late Larry Dring, IICTZ Mike Force legend. I met Sam Fantino, Rick's RTO from Ia Drang, from whom he had borrowed a grenade to take out an NVA machinegun emplacement.

At the banquet afterward I sat next to Tony Nadal, who had been a company commander in 1/7 Cav. I told him we'd never met, but I had met the actor who played him, Jsu Garcia, on the set of *We Were Soldiers*. I introduced myself to Garcia because he wore a Special Forces combat patch. Tony had commanded the team preceding Roger Donlon's at Nam Dong. I told Tony that the team that replaced Donlon's was commanded by my son's godfather, Tom Kiernan.

Susan made heartfelt speeches about Rick at both the presentation and the banquet, Nick Snider and Pat Stansbury of the National Foundation for Patriotism, spoke at the banquet, as did Rick's son Trevor. ❖

Chapter 78 2019 Christmas Party



Mike Keele

By Mike Keele

So there we were, at a Christmas Party that was two years in the making. By the end of the evening, it was obvious that the usual contingent of cops had missed the show: no bullet holes had been fired into the ceiling. Conspicuous in their absence were Brad Welker, John Joyce, Terry Cagnoletti and Lonny Holmes, all of whom have moved on to greener pastures — if you'll accept the analogy, since all of them have homesteaded in Las Vegas, Nevada. Also missing was the outgoing president of Chapter 78, John "Tilt" Meyer, who had accepted a speaking engagement in a distant Eastern city.

Add to the aforementioned their spouses, and voila! The difference in attendance for previous years.

Most conspicuous in his presence, was the newly elected President of Chapter 78, Bruce Long, since the outgoing president had skipped town. Bruce is no stranger to the presidency, as he had four years under his belt as the prexy, with only a two year layoff before taking his current gig. Also new to the podium, but absent, was our new vice president, Don Gonneville, who replaces the outgoing Brad Welker; and honorary member, Susan Weeks, who is the second vice president (honorary). Among those who chose to step forward for another term in office, we have Richard Simonian, treasurer and Chaplain, Gary McNamara, secretary, and a host of others who occupy appointed positions.

After a one year hiatus, the Christmas Party was back at the Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club, in Newport Beach. A slight twist this year was the time and date for the fandango. This year marked the first time the party was held on a Sunday, December 1st, beginning at three in the afternoon. This, in an effort to avoid some of the Newport Beach holiday season traffic. There must have been some magic in this plan, as all the registered guests had arrived early — except one octogenarian chapter member, who meandered in right at the appointed time, just after Bruce Long had announced his name. And eighty-four people turned to look at Richard Simonian, hands in pockets and wondering "why is everybody looking at me."

With that, Richard strolled to his assigned seat, and Bruce called the party to order for formal doin's. The posting of the Colors was exquisitely conducted by the Junior ROTC from Sonora High School in La Habra.

Our guest speaker, Steve Lieberman, who is a lawyer and also an honorary member of the chapter, gave what may well be the most dynamic speech we have ever had at a Christmas Party. In



all likelihood, the content of his talk has been lost to the future, because Steve spoke extemporaneously, without pause or hesitation, for more than twenty minutes. Those of us with CRS disease could only applaud and wish we had set our cell phones to record the moment. Also taking a few minutes to update us on her current projects was Alex Quade, another chapter honorary. Alex is a journalist who has gone on location as an embedded reporter with Special Operations units for several years. Seems she's at it again.

Everyone who came through the door was given a raffle ticket, and Chapter associate member Kenn Miller drew the winning numbers. More than half of the attendees received something, with those whose numbers were called early having the most to choose from. A tip o' the elves cap to President Bruce, who rounded up all the goodies.

When Bruce announced that the chow line was open, the tables were deserted post-haste, with only a few being guilty of elbowing their way into line. Just the same, the serving process went quickly and this year, as every year, the chefs at the Bahia Corinthian out-did themselves. My favorite items, if you disqualify desserts, remain the prime rib, au gratin potatoes and steamed vegetables. I'm sure that the chicken, fish and medallions of beef were good, but when you're trying to save extra space for dessert, ya gotta skimp somewhere.

This year marked another first for our Christmas bash, a DJ. Dancing seems to be high on the list for the young-at-heart women we marry, including my gum-chewing, teenie-bopper bride, Cora, who can't wait for the music to start. Turns out that James, the DJ, was the provider of things musical at our wedding a year or two ago. Ain't parties grand. ❖



- ❶ Jim Duffy et al close the joint down.
- ❷ LTC Hans Hunt (Ret) along with the Sonora High School JROTC Cadets.
- ❸ Patrick and Myra Kinsey coordinating seating.
- ❹ Left to right, JROTC Cadets, LTC Hans Hunt (Ret) Senior Army Instructor Sonora High School. Angie Chun, SFC Phil Chun A/5/19, SFC Jonathan Garcia

- A/5/19, CPT Steve Lieberman CA State Militia and guest speaker, SFC Rob Pugh former member of A/5/19, John Creel, served with the 10th SF in the 1950s, LTC Jim Duffy (Ret), MSG Kriss Boodaghian former member of A/5/19.
- ❺ Sonora High School JROTC cadets prepare to post colors.
- ❻ The table for the fallen.



- ❶ CPT Steve Lieberman, CA State Militia, and the main guest speaker
- ❷ Alex Quade
- ❸ Bruce Long, Chapter 78 President again, and Geri Long
- ❹ Robert Pugh, Richard Simonian and Tammie Burns
- ❺ Mark and Lisa Newhall

- ❻ Jim Duffy and Sandra Coleman
- ❼ Gary Macnamara
- ❽ Greg and Jaye Creel
- ❾ Aaron and Kathy Brandenburg
- ❿ Bob and Arlene Crebbs
- ⓫ Ed and Diane Barrett
- ⓬ Susan Weeks

- ⓭ John Creel and Denis Paez
- ⓮ Dennis and Gloria de Rosia
- ⓯ Burt and Joanne Rodriguez with Jerry and Regina Romiti
- ⓰ SFC Jonathan Garcia, A/5/19, and wife Angelica
- ⓱ SFC Phil Chun, A/5/19



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18 Dan and Heather Kinnerly with Dale Long, Chase and Jill Elliott

19 Tina Long, Dale Long's wife

20 Sonora JROTC, left to right Jone Hiduchi, Erick Lopez, Levi Enriquez and Juliana Dy

21 Brian and Dawn Opp

22 Kristapoor Boodagian and Tiffany

23 Don and Sharon Prentice

24 James and Susan Light

25 Barry and Jan Estell

26 Chapter 78 member and Senior Army JROTC instructor LTC Hans Hunt and wife Sabrina

27 Mike and Cora Keele

28 Kenn Miller

29 DeeJay James Griffey and Susana Rodriguez

30 Debra Holm, designer of the *Sentinel*.

31 Jim Duffy

32 How and Nancy Miller.

33 First Sergeant (Ret) Gregory Horton and wife Paulette.

34 Hammond Salley, at left with Jim Morris, *Sentinel* Editor.

“Get Ready!”

By Jim Morris

The Jumpmaster stood in front of the tailgate wearing all his gear, boots, fatigues, helmet, T10 parachute in back and reserve in front. His rucksack was slung on a drop line under the reserve and an M16 was slung under the strap of the waistband. His hand was out in the Get Ready hand and arm signal, like a crossing guard signaling stop. Rawlins stirred on the red nylon seat and looked at Burks across the aisle. Burks looked scared. Rawlins wasn't scared, exactly, but he had a few butterflies in his gut and he needed to get them in formation. A jump was serious business, and a night combat equipment jump was serious business indeed. Every man on the plane carried about 90 pounds, including the two chutes and all his combat gear.

He'd been in the midst of a funny dream when the Jumpmaster yelled “Get Ready!” and held out his hand. He'd been old, in a hospital bed, more fucking tubes coming out of him than under a meatball on a plate of spaghetti. His whole family was softshoeing around in the room. He was dying and knew it. He was full of morphine, so the pain wasn't so bad. But it was just a dream.

He was nineteen and weighed 150 pounds, and he was about to make a night combat equipment jump on Yomitan Drop Zone on Okinawa. Both jump doors were open. It was cold and the wind roared like a tornado. You could smell the adrenalin. It sizzled, that adrenalin.

“Stand Up!” The Jumpmaster turned his hand over and lifted it from waist high. Rawlins reached across the aisle and took Burks hand

and they pulled each other to their feet. All the weight of his gear now hung off him. The minute he left the airplane that weight would disappear, and when he hit the ground he would lose sixty pounds of it. Goddamn how he wanted out of that airplane.

The doctor came in the room. It smelled of hospital, of antiseptic and God knows what all else, that hospital smell. Rawlins hated that smell. His daughter, Julia, looked down at him. She was about fifty now. Her mother was dead. His grandsons sat in chairs across the room. Rawlins breathed and it made a wheezing, choky sound. “Are you comfortable, Dad?” Julia said.

“I'm dyin’,” he said. “How the fuck comfortable is that?”

“Dad,” she said, and then she stopped. Rawlins didn't care. She'd always been bossy. She was the oldest of his kids, and she had bossed the others mercilessly, for all the good it did her, or them.

“How about a cigarette?”

“Dad,” she said, “you know you can't have a cigarette.”

“Yeah,” he said. “It might cut my life expectancy from thirty minutes to twenty-nine.”

He shifted again. “Hook Up!” Everybody in the cargo compartment except the Air Force loadmaster, who wore a backpack with a D-ring instead of a static line, reached up and hooked their static line to the anchor line cable.

“Check Static Lines!” Rawlins tugged his static line to see it wouldn't hop off the cable. Considering it had a sliding safety with a push-button release, that wasn't very likely. The roar of the engines and the roar of the wind made it impossible to hear the Jumpmaster's commands. Rawlins was roaring inside. His stomach did flip-flops. In a minute he was going to jump into the night one thousand feet above the shittiest drop zone in the Airborne, Yomitan, an old Japanese airstrip, crisscrossed with runways, plowed for vegetable gardening with concrete honey buckets full of human shit that the Okinawan



farmers used to fertilize their fields, and bounded on one side by the East China Sea, two sides by rock quarries, and the other side by an Army Security Agency antenna farm. It was a nine-second DZ.

That's how long they had to clear sixty guys out of the airplane and then they'd be in the air a minute before they landed, on the DZ, on the airstrip, in one of the fucking honey buckets, or like the XO, in a high wind, with his canopy caught in telephone lines, wind slamming him repeatedly against the side of a house.

That's if the chute opened. If it didn't you had nine seconds to fix whatever was wrong or you were dead. And for that danger you got an extra fifty-five dollars a month.

"Check Equipment!" Rawlins checked his own reserve, and the backpack of the man ahead of him. Nothing was wrong. There was very little that could be wrong, at least that you could see in the dim light of an airplane at night, with the lights all red, so as not to screw up your night vision.

"Are you comfortable, Mr. Rawlins?" asked the doctor. How old was this kid, twenty? He didn't look old enough to be a doctor. He didn't look old enough to be an army medic. "I'd be comfortable if I had a fuckin' cigarette," he said.

"Fraid not, Mr. Rawlins. With all this oxygen equipment this place would go up like a Bruce Willis movie."

"Well, at least you got a decent reason. My daughter says it's bad for my health." He started to laugh but it turned into a wracking wheeze and coughing fit. He raised his hand, as though it had a cigarette in it, reflexively trying to take a drag. The hand was old. It looked like a skeleton hand covered with something like a pepperoni pizza. It was about the worst looking hand he had ever seen.

"Sound Off For Equipment Check!" What the hell was his number in the stick. Six, he was six. The count came from the back of the aircraft. "Fifteen okay!" There were four sticks of jumpers, two outboard and two inboard. Rawlins was number six in the right outboard stick. "Seven okay!" the guy behind him yelled and slapped Rawlins on the ass. He barely heard it over the engines and the wind. "Six okay!" Rawlins yelled and slapped the guy ahead of him on the ass.

The doctor was talking to Julia. "I'm afraid it won't be long now, Mrs. Janizewski. Your father's lungs are gone; his heart is gone. He's seventy-five and he's had a hard life. I don't know why he's alive now."

Julia gave a weak grin. "He's tough," she said. "He was a paratrooper."

The doctor said nothing. He didn't know the difference between a paratrooper and a dung beetle. Rawlins wheezed. It sounded like broken equipment. He didn't know how he was alive either, or why. He shoulda been dead how many times? Five that he could count, but here he was, expiring in this crappy-ass hospital.

"Stand In the Door!" The first man moved into the door. The whole stick moved forward a step, outside foot forward, all in a line. When the first man disappeared they'd start a shuffle forward that gathered speed like a freight train, all in step, all synchronized, like

they'd practiced so many times, to get clear of the airplane and land close together, ready to fight.

So much could go wrong. Rawlins remembered the time Burks had gone out, to the end of his static line, and just stopped. He hung flapping behind the aircraft. Everybody else, including Rawlins, jumped, and it's a wonder nobody hit him. The approved thing to do in a case like that was to put your hand on your helmet to show you were conscious. Then they'd cut your static line and you'd pull your reserve. If you were unconscious they'd fly around as long as they could and then foam the runway, which in theory you might survive, but more likely you'd be sanded to death in suds.

But Burks didn't do either of those things. He climbed hand over hand back into the aircraft. The loadmaster almost fainted when a hand came around the door from outside. That was some muscular Afro-American citizen.

The two boys got up and stood over Rawlins. Julie and the boys were looking down at him, two druggies and a real estate agent. He'd have been better off face down in a rice paddy. That would ... ah, fuck it, what's the diff? He'd had a life. He'd lived life like his ass was on fire. There was only one thing left to do. That was all the business he had left.

The light winked green, in the dark and the roaring aircraft. "Go!" the Jumpmaster shouted.

One guy disappeared from each door and the stick started stomping forward, weighted down with all that gear. He felt weak. He felt like he couldn't breathe. He didn't know how he could even stand up weighted down with all that shit. He shuffled forward. The guy ahead of him disappeared. Rawlins wheeled into the door and looked at the night. It was like he'd never seen it before. It was cold and blackness and that was all. He crouched, and grabbed the outside of the aircraft with both hands. He jumped up and out, into the night and the stars.

Every other jump he'd counted to four and felt the tug as the chute opened and deployed. But this time he just kept going. ❖



1st SPECIAL FORCES GROUP (AIRBORNE)

MENTON WEEK 2019



Green Berets from the 1st SFGA jump from a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter into the frigid American Lake on Joint-Base Lewis-McChord to swim one kilometer.



Lonny Holmes

By Lonny Holmes
A-432, 1st SFGA, 1966-67
All photos by Lonny Holmes

1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Joint Base Lewis-McChord held its annual Menton Week beginning on December 9, 2019, the celebration and remembrance of deactivation of the First Special Service Force during World War II. During this week individual and team competitive events

are held and special operations soldiers from foreign countries including Canada, Great Britain, Korea and Thailand, joined our Green Berets in the highly competitive events.

Chapter 78 member John Joyce was invited to attend, and was joined by chapter members Brad Welker, and Lonny Holmes. Upon arrival on Monday, December 9 we headed to Headquarters & Headquarters Company, 1st Special Forces Group, to meet with Commanding Officer CPT Takamura and First Sergeant Huston. Both were gracious hosts for the next three days.

Opening Ceremonies began at 10 a.m. in front of Group Headquarters, with Commanding Officer Colonel Owen Ray paying respects to the Fallen Teammates of 1st Group at 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) Memorial Plaza. Beginning at 11:30 Colonel Ray hosted the Gold Star Luncheon for invited guests. The buffet was excellent, and we had the opportunity to talk with Gold Star Families and members of the HQ Staff.

John Joyce presented a special plaque to HHC Commanding Officer CPT Takamura (see photograph) which he he hung in the entry hall to his office.

Monday evening Colonel Ray hosted a buffet dinner at the Regimental Mess Facility for invited guests, including HQ Staff, family and friends of 1st Group. Colonel Ray presented a September 11 Commemorative V-42 Knife to HQ, which had been given to him by LTG John F. Mulholland, Jr. Group CSM Daniel A. Orosco read a presentation speech written by the general. A number of vendors were also there, to include John Joyce with his challenge coins and car badges. The wives of 1st Group had a number of tables with excellent products reflecting Special Forces and 1st Group. I purchased a nice blanket with SF designs and logos and a 1st GP, 4th Battalion hat.

Following dinner I had the good fortune to meet Colonel Larry J. Redmon, Army Attache from the Embassy of the United States in Thailand. One of his many projects is to further the history of all SF activities in Thailand from our earliest deployments. He knew quite a bit about the teams I had served on there from 1966.

On Tuesday morning we toured Group and saw the Battalion HQ's and Companies speaking with a few Green Berets. In the afternoon we visited the 1st Group Gym. Any NFL football team would love to have such a huge and well appointed facility. To better train current Green Berets profes-



Left to right, 1SG Huston, John Joyce, Cpt Takamura and Lonny Holmes. Cpt Takamura holds the plaque presented to him by John.



The 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) Memorial Wall at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. It is inscribed with the names of all killed since 1957.



1st SFG(A) Fallen Heroes: A room adjacent to the 1st SFG(A) Regimental Mess Facility dedicated to the "Fallen Heroes" of 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) following 9-11.

sional trainers staff the gym, many of which have been with NFL teams in their careers. During the tour I met with 1st Group Major Cynthia Holuta, the Public Affairs Officer. She gently guided me on what photographs I could use to keep the story I would write within regulation security perimeters.

Wednesday included scheduled Airborne Operations and Range Firing for family and friends of 1st Group, rain, low clouds and cold. We decided not to go to the drop zone because of the weather, a good idea. Only the first drop was completed, we were told. We proceeded to the firing range. Many weapons from Glock Pistols to full automatic rifles were available to all who wanted to shoot! It sounded like a Viet Nam SF Camp under siege.

We had fun and our hosts were gracious. One of our biggest highlights was speaking with officers and NCO's of 1st Group. For chapter member John Joyce this was an eye opener. The base had totally changed since his days there in the mid 1980's. John has already been invited to return next summer. ❖



The 1st Group Gym — a huge top-of-the-line facility staffed by professional trainers.

Editor's Note: The history of The Vietnam War, as generally taught, in relation to what actually happened, is drivel. The civilian world seems determined to turn the war into something it was not, and these are fractals of that. Enjoy their being skewered by an expert skewerer.



Kenn Miller

By Kenn Miller

The first book I ever read about the Vietnam War was a book I read before I joined the Army — a book that I suspect most, or all, readers of the *Sentinel* have read long ago — Robin Moore's 1965 best-seller, *THE GREEN BERETS*. Since then I have read hundreds of books pertaining to the Vietnam War and/or military special operations. Looking over my book shelves with a *Sentinel* book review deadline looming closer than expected, my eyes landed on the three worst books about the Vietnam War I have. All three supposedly by Vietnam veterans, and none give off even the slightest whiff of authenticity; all three reek of bullshit. They are: *The Boy Who Picked The Bullets Up*; *Morning Glories Among The Peas*; and *Covert Warrior*, which is not the WEB Griffin novel of the same title.

THE BOY WHO PICKED THE BULLETS UP by someone going by Charles Nelson came out in 1981, and it got good blurbs and reviews by *The San Francisco Sentinel* (absolutely no relation to our *SENTINEL*), *The Village Voice*, and magazines of even worse repute. This is the only one of the three chosen books that doesn't pretend to be an honest memoir, not a piece of poorly done fiction. It is a novel and doesn't work too hard to make a reader believe it is the genuine memoir of a veteran. This is the great gay fantasy novel of the Vietnam War, and while the *Los Angeles Times* praised it as "Remarkably poignant, moving, and often funny," it is not poignant, not moving, nor is it funny. It is, however, poorly written, dull, unbelievable, and even the late Liberace would probably have found its sex scenes anything but exciting. I picked my used and battered copy from a dime book box outside a Pasadena book store. It was not worth a tenth of a dime.

MORNING GLORIES AMONG THE PEAS, by James D. Seddon, was sent to me years back by an old Army buddy who picked it up at the Pentagon book store, and knowing my liking of the ridiculous, promptly sent it to me. This book's cover calls it "A Vietnam Veteran's Story," but even now as I look at it, I can't help wondering

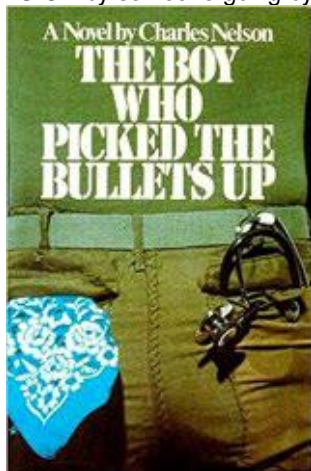
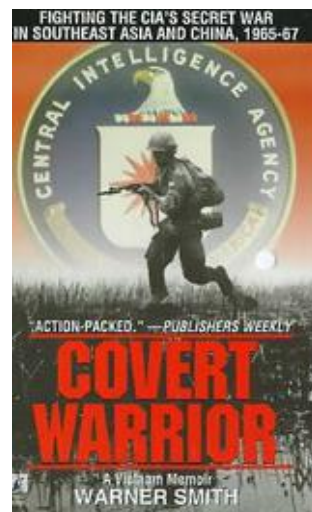
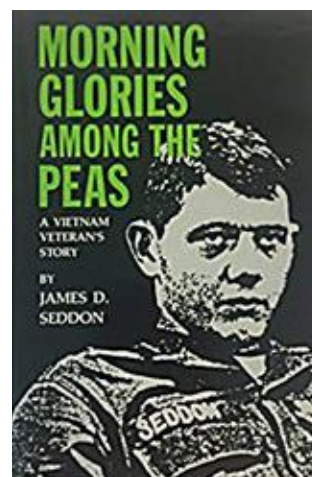
if some infantry grunt might have written it to mock the Air Force. But inside the book are a few photos of Mr. Seddon as a kid and as a USAF E-3 lounging in some rear echelon office. Seddon's job was supposedly to be some sort of highly elite aviation repairman who is constantly sent on mission after mission all over Southeast Asia repairing aircraft downed in enemy territory, right under the enemy's nose. Seddon sure did get around. In this book he is living in a world in which Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, and Da Nang are just a few minutes helicopter hop from each other. At least he doesn't claim to have flown around in aircraft that can break the speed of light.

COVERT WARRIOR is supposedly a "Vietnam Memoir" by a fellow named Warner Smith. This book came out in 1996, published by Pocket Books Military Nonfiction — and it is perhaps the most absurd of the three. *Publishers Weekly* cover blurb'd it as "Action-Packed." And it sure is action packed and actively packed with bullshit. This B-S book is a readable hoot, so unintentionally phony anyone with any knowledge at all of American military Special Operations is likely to laugh his or her pants wet, or to toss it out the window and hope the dogs defecate on it. Are you aware that the U.S. military was so lacking in Special Operations assets, it was necessary for the government to covertly conscript, highly train, and organize selected college boys into a super-duper secret elite unit called FRAM 16? In his preface, the author wrote, "To the rest of the world FRAM 16 did not exist. I believe that what we accomplished was sometimes incredible, but is still largely unknown by the American public and military. I have never read or heard any mention of our team, its missions, or results. But the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong knew who we were."

As Shakespeare's Sir John Falstaff, a character beloved for his lies, said,

"Lord, Lord, how this world is given to lying!"

All three are available on Amazon.com, if you need some expensive mulch for your garden. ❖





Chapter 78 President John Stryker Meyer welcomed new Chapter member James McLanahan.



Bruce Long presents outgoing Chapter president John Meyer with a plaque in appreciation of his service to the Chapter. Bruce Long will be Chapter President as of January 2020.

From the Editor continued

over the years, and none have failed to be moved by it, so I put it in this issue. I hope you like it.

In previous issues I've seen that Mike Keele has a flair for light hearted prose, something he no doubt learned from writing police reports, and asked him to do a story on the Christmas party. He done good.

As of this writing Lonny hasn't turned in his piece on the 1st Group reunion, but he's promised it for tomorrow, and, as a 1st Group alumnus, I'm looking forward to it.

ANNOUNCEMENT



THE ALEX QUADE SPECIAL FORCES SCHOLARSHIP

Any Special Forces Non-Commissioned Officer, veteran, or spouse, may apply for full scholarship for education in the financial services industry. No need to tap into your G.I. Bill. This scholarship is specifically for SF NCOs and spouses. This is Alex's way of giving back to the operators she worked with.

It's a full scholarship for distance learning to support a second career in financial services. There are no obligations, paybacks, or commitments, no strings. Active duty, veterans, spouses and widows are all welcome to apply.

To sign up please go to website
veterans.theamericancollege.edu.

So, here it is, my first *Sentinel* as editor. Putting it together has been a great experience, not least because of Debra, who makes it both fun and easy. Lonny left some big boots to fill. Out of ninety-some chapter newsletters the *Sentinel* is by far the best, and I hope it stays that way.

Thanks for the shot at that.

Jim Morris
Sentinel Editor



Photo by Sgt. Matthew McGregor/Canadian Forces Combat Camera



U.S. Army Photo by Paolo Bovo



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Justin W. Stafford



U.S. Army Photo by Pfc. Nathaniel Gayle, 22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment.