



SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78
The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 9 • SEPTEMBER 2020



**SINGLAUB — Parachuting Into Prison:
Special Ops In China**

**El Salvador: Reconciliation
Old Enemies Make Friends**



SENTINEL

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 9 • SEPTEMBER 2020

From the Editor



US ARMY SPECIAL OPS COMMAND



US ARMY JFK SWCS



1ST SF COMMAND



1ST SF GROUP



3RD SF GROUP



5TH SF GROUP



7TH SF GROUP



10TH SF GROUP



19TH SF GROUP



20TH SF GROUP



11TH SF GROUP



12TH SF GROUP

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FRONT COVER: Medal of Honor recipient Staff Sgt. Ronald J. Shurer poses with his weapon in Gardez, Afghanistan, August 2006. As an Army medic, he was credited with saving the lives of his teammates during a 2008 battle in Afghanistan. Shurer lost his fight with cancer at the age of 41 on May 14, 2020. (U.S. Army)



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Jim Morris
Sentinel Editor

Three Stories

In 1965, in Oklahoma City, I caught a burglar coming through a back window in my home. When I entered the room he ran off. I had a Colt Commander .45, and thought if this happened again I might need it. But I didn't know what the local ground rules were. Not wanting to pay a lawyer to find out, I called the desk sergeant at the OCPD. This was his advice to me.

"Wull, sir, don't shoot 'im until he's fer enough in the winder that he will fall inside the house. Now, if he don't fall inside the house, poosh him through the winder before you call the officers. But if you cain't get him through the winder the officers will poosh him through fer you before they start their investigation."

Several years later I was having lunch, also in OKC, with my friend Lyle Miller. Lyle is a commercial artist, and had never owned or fired a pistol before this. He told me this story.

"My girlfriend called. A guy came by wanting to submit an estimate to mow and clean up her lawn. While he was making his estimate she looked out the back window, and he wasn't looking at the lawn; he was checking out the back of the house.

"I bought a .357 Magnum pistol and a box of ammo, and was sitting in the kitchen, reading Massad Ayoob's book on home defense, when he tried to break in. I shot him and he ran off, but the cops found him passed out in his car soon after I called it in.

"After the trial the judge called me and my attorney into chambers and said, "Young man, because of your poor marksmanship this scumbag is going to be on the street in four years. I want you to get in some range time."

A few years later a young lady friend, a photographer for the Arkansas Gazette in Little Rock, was leaving the paper's parking lot late at night. There had been a spate of rapes in the neighborhood, and she was followed out of the parking lot. Not being stupid she didn't go home. She went to the police station and asked for an escort home, which she got. Taking her to the door the officer said, "Ma'am, you ort to get some sort of little ol' .32 or sumpin' like that. You ping one off that old boy's hood he won't folla you home no more."

"She said, "Isn't that illegal."

He said, "Aw shucks, little lady. Ain't nobody gonna bother you over a thang like 'at."

Times have changed. ❖

Jim Morris
Sentinel Editor



Bruce Long, President SFA Chap. 78

Our August Chapter meeting was again held at the Fiddlers Green located at the Joint Training Base in the City of Los Alamitos. Before entering the Base all personnel had their temperature checked.

We had a total twenty-four Chapter members, with a surprise visit of our *Sentinel* editor **Jim Morris**, and three guests in attendance.

Our guest speaker and Chapter member was **Greg Horton** SGM, SF (Ret). Greg is also retired from LAPD, and retired

from the Orange County District Attorney's Office. Greg served with Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion 12th SFG with distinction until seriously injured during a night insertion with the South Korea Special Forces while on deployment.

Greg went on to serve with several Psyops units until his retirement from the 7th Psychological Warfare Battalion, located at Muffet Federal Airfield, just North of San Jose, CA. Greg discussed Law Enforcement problems and Military interaction. BLM was discussed, and most of us know, this is a MARXIST Organization. Excellent topic, well received, with lots of questions. Our current Secretary **Gary Macnamara** and Greg both attended the LAPD Police Academy together.

Great job Greg! Look forward to seeing more of you in the upcoming future.

Special Note: **Mark Miller** our Sergeant at Arms had twenty-five facemasks made up with Chapter 78 logo (see photos on page 8). We sold them at \$10 apiece, and were sold out in minutes. All monies went right back into the Chapter treasury. Mark plans on bringing more masks at our next Chapter meeting.

As most of you know the August 2020 SFA Convention has been canceled. However, the SFA President's meeting, along with other meetings were streamed via the internet.

I did attend the President's meeting and learned we again received the Golden Arrows Award for Excellence for the best newsletter for the *Sentinel*.

The SFA now has 10,233 members along with eighty-nine Chapters throughout the world. The Green Beret Gift Shop has relocated to the SFA HQ, and the museum will be relocated to a new location, to be determined. **Cliff Newman** is retiring in the next couple of months, and is being replaced by **Mike Goodrich**.

Next year's Convention is going to be in our back yard — LAS VEGAS! Take the time out and look at the website www.sfacon.com. Check out the information that was printed on the last two pages of the [August 2020 Sentinel](#).

Debra Holm, the Chapter website coordinator gave us an update on the Chapter website. She also handed out a short form to the attending members to fill out and return. We really would like more member profiles and photos to be added to our website.

Our next Chapter meeting will be on September 11th a FRIDAY at 0900 hrs. The location, Artemis Defense Institute, 11 Spectrum Pointe Dr., Lake Forest, 92630. Lunch will be provided free of cost by the Chapter. Our meeting will be modified to allow for more TOT. Artemis is owned and operated by Steve and Sandy Lieberman. Some of you may remember Steve who was our guest speaker at our last Christmas party.

As usual, if you have questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to me. ❖

Bruce D. Long
President, SFA Chapter 78
SGM, SF (Ret)
De Oppresso Liber

September Chapter Meeting

Planning to attend our next Chapter meeting? If so please e-mail **VP Don Gonneville** at: don@gonneville.com, no later than Tuesday, September 8th, midnight. We need an exact headcount.

Please note that this meeting will be held on a Friday rather than the usual Saturday.

Lunch will be provided by the Chapter.

DATE: September 11, 2020

TIME: 09:00 hrs

LOCATION: Artemis Defense Institute

ADDRESS: [11 Spectrum Pointe Dr., Lake Forest, CA 92630](#)



EL SALVADOR: Reconciliation

Old Enemies Make Friends

“When you’re in war, the enemy is not a particular person. It is an image.”

By MSG Greg Walker USASF (Ret)

Many of my fellow law enforcement officers, currently serving or retired, have retreated into an understandable personal and cultural defensive posture. And so has the Black community, or so it seems.

I do not see how this can do anything but perpetuate continued miscommunication, unbridled rage, and further detract from the truly progressive, healing efforts of those on all sides regardless of color, race, or profession. For example, the work my friend and fellow veteran Riccardo Waites is doing at the helm of the Central Oregon Black Leadership Assembly.

COBLA's motto is “You. Me. We”.

It could just as easily be our motto in Special Forces. “De Oppresso Liber”.

There is a Toltec quote from Castaneda's ‘Don Juan’. ‘Nobody is doing anything to anybody’. Meaning everything that happens to us today is a direct result of something we, as individuals, have done in the past. (<https://medium.com/@thinkist./from-ancient-toltec-wisdom-the-four-agreements-that-will-change-your-life-1db085b46b2a>)

On June 25, 1993, I traveled to San Francisco, California, where I met with *Comandante* Gilberto Osorio, former explosives expert and urban guerrilla with the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front (FMLN). We shook hands and then sat down in front of 35 other former Salvadoran guerrillas at the Mission Cultural Center, a center Gilberto started upon his return from the war in his native country. Osorio and I had been introduced in April through a Newsweek reporter who ran a story about U.S. veterans of the war in El Salvador. Meeting Osorio was, in a strange way, like reuniting with an old friend.

Gilberto, in an article about our peace-making journey, said “I had my misgivings initially. But when you are in war, the enemy is not a particular person. It is an image.” In 1992, in a UN brokered peace accord, the ten-year civil war in El Salvador was ended. The FMLN, contrary to the North Vietnamese who demanded U.S. Special Forces units in Vietnam be the first to leave when that war ended, formally requested the “Green Berets” remain in-country. Why? Because over the course of the insurgency / counterinsurgency we had consistently reported, and in more than one instance stepped in, regarding human rights abuses and war crimes being carried out by the Salvadoran Army. The FMLN wanted Special Forces advisers to remain with the host country's military units to ensure such monitoring and reporting continued until the peace accord was fully implemented.

Osorio, a U.S. citizen who served in the Air Force during the Vietnam war, had returned to El Salvador at the onset of that war to fight as an



Comandante Gilberto Osorio with author during peace-making journey to San Francisco's Mission Cultural Center on June 25, 1993. (Photo courtesy Greg Walker)

urban guerrilla in San Salvador. He stayed and fought for a decade. “When I was in El Salvador, my mother was constantly visited by the FBI,” he told Susan Ferriss of the *San Francisco Examiner* after our presentation. He went on to point out the FMLN, working in collaboration with the Veterans of Special Operations – El Salvador (VSO-ES), an organization I co-founded in Bend, Oregon, in 1989, was committed to peace-making and that important act had to first begin with the veterans of the war from both sides. “In a time of reconciliation,” he offered, “[why] hold back?”

The same thought process applies to what is occurring now in America. All of us need to self-assess what we can do to promote reconciliation on all levels of our society. “...everything that happens to us today is a direct result of something we, as individuals, have done in the past.”

On June 19th my wife, Carol, and I participated in an event organized by Riccardo Waites and COBLA in Bend, Oregon. Along with nearly 300 other people we marched up Pilot Butte, a mile-long winding climb where at the top one can see the beauty of the Cascades in all their splendor. Waites had learned that in the 1920s the butte had been used by the Ku Klux Klan to burn crosses. These meant to intimidate not only the black population, but those of the Catholic faith, as well. Waites' intent was to “take back the Butte” on “Juneteenth”, the holiday first celebrated in Texas, where on that date in 1865, in the aftermath of the Civil War, slaves were declared free under the terms of the 1862 Emancipation Proclamation.

Riccardo, a Navy submariner who later provided logistical support to the West Coast SEAL Teams, possesses the drive, determination,

and personal charisma needed to bring “You, Me, We” together to peacefully accomplish his mission. And yes, this old Special Forces war horse, at 67, was there from start to finish although I must admit my wife, along with Riccardo, beat me to the top!

Those of us who have worn or today wear the green beret will likewise recognize June 19th as a special day in our history. On June 19, 1952, Colonel Aaron Bank established the 10th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

“You...Me...We” – “De Oppresso Liber” – “To Free Those Oppressed”

Together, on June 19, 2020, 300 Americans peacefully took back the Butte.

Twenty-seven years earlier, on June 25, 1993, former guerrilla commander Gilberto Osorio and I came together and clasped hands inside the Mission Cultural Center in San Francisco, California. The Examiner quotes me at that moment saying, “Any war does not truly come to a close until the combatants clasp hands after putting down their weapons.” I then returned a captured FMLN battle flag to him, a symbolic gesture that brought the audience to its feet.

“I take this with extreme honor,” replied Osorio as the audience applauded.

We each signed the flag and it has long since been on display in the FMLN war museum in Perquin, El Salvador, near where the banner was captured.

After the ceremony I was asked to meet with one of the guerrillas, a female *comandante* also now living in San Francisco. We sat together at the back of the room as everyone else mingled and told the inevitable war stories veterans do regardless of sides. In her mid-40s then, Comandante “E” is perhaps 5’2 and 105 pounds. She introduced herself and shared a bit of her background. The daughter of a Salvadoran Air Force officer, a colonel, she had broken with the “ricos” and joined the FMLN as a fighter. She had been captured, tortured, and was only released because of her family ties.

At one point she gently took my hand and said “I originally came here to denounce you. You represented terrible things and memories for me. Many, many of my *compas*’, or “buddies”, died because of the American military. I wanted to scream at you! How dare you come here! But then I saw your eyes and heard your voice, your words. You gave us respect as fighters. You returned our flag. You came here, to the Mission District, alone. Among your enemies.

“I could not denounce you. You came here in peace. I accept that and I accept you.”

You...Me...We.

If you and I want to change the Future we must change ourselves in the Now. Change is often wildly kinetic and often painful. But it is what we must experience to grow, mature, and to create a “New Normal” in ourselves and then in the world we live in. Toltec shaman Carlos Castaneda said this of war, “In a world where death is the hunter, my friend, there is no time for regrets or doubts. There is only time for decisions.”

Many of us in Special Forces have realized that split-second decision-making process.



Author (left) with Navy veteran and Riccardo Waites, founder/president of the Central Oregon Black Leaders Assembly after “taking back the Butte” on Juneteenth of this year in Bend, Oregon. You. Me. We. (Photo courtesy Greg Walker)



Peacemakers — Memorial stone at Arlington National Cemetery. “In sacred memory...” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3uy-8Ey23ls> (Photo courtesy Greg Walker)

Castaneda also offers, “We hardly ever realize that we can cut anything out of our lives, anytime, in the blink of an eye.” Meaning we can leave hatred behind us, fear that others do not like us, being judgmental, hurtful, unkind, or without empathy. It is our choice and we can make it in a split second.

“I could not denounce you. You came here in peace. I accept that and I accept you.” ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg Walker served with Special Forces from 1980 until his retirement in 2005.

His service includes assignments with the 10th, 7th, and 19th Groups. Greg’s awards and decorations include the Washington National Guard’s Legion of Merit, the Special Forces Tab, and two awards of the Combat Infantryman Badge (El Salvador and Operation Iraqi Freedom). From 2009 until 2013, Walker worked for the SOCOM Care Coalition as a Care Recovery Coordinator. He cared for our most seriously injured, wounded, or ill SOF warriors with traumatic amputation, severe burn, severe PTSD / TBI injuries or terminal illnesses.

He and his wife, Carol, have four children. Two of those are Marines with multiple combat tours, now safely back in the civilian world. He is the author of [At the Hurricane’s Eye — U.S. Special Operations from Vietnam to Desert Storm](#), Ivy Books, 1994. Greg now, fully retired, lives and writes from his home in Sisters, Oregon.

SINGLAUB— PARACHUTING INTO PRISON: Special Ops in China

By Jim Morris

Editor's Note: *World War II had jolted America into a frenzied mobilization by the time ROTC Cadet Jack Singlaub graduated from UCLA in 1942. Just over a year later, having displayed exceptional leadership skills with small teams in Commando ROTC exercises at Fort Benning, Georgia, he was offered the chance to volunteer for unspecified "hazardous duty behind enemy lines." Singlaub accepted and found himself joining the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). He was assigned to a Jedburgh team, a three-man commando unit that heavily influenced evolution of the present-day Special Forces A-Team concept.*

Singlaub's Jedburgh team ultimately parachuted well behind German lines into southern France, to help the local resistance prepare for the soon-to-come D-Day invasion of Normandy. The adventures of young 1st Lieutenant Singlaub and his battalion-sized force of maquis irregulars were chronicled by Jim Morris in the August 2020 issue of the Sentinel. (see "SINGLAUB: The Jedburgh Mission" page 2.)

Following the successful completion of his mission in France, he volunteered in December 1944 for reassignment in Asia. He departed soon thereafter for training on Catalina Island, and from there deployed to the China-Burma-India Theatre.

The little town of Bhamo sits astride the headwaters of the Irawaddy River, which runs southward out of the mountains along Burma's Chinese border to parallel the famed Burma Road through Mandalay and on to the jungled delta around Rangoon.

United States Army Captain Jack Singlaub got there the hard way, arriving with his OSS company in Calcutta after transiting the Pacific from southern California by ship. From the Indian port they moved onto the upper Assam Valley, in what is now Bangladesh. After being assigned to OSS Detachment 101, a command and control unit commanded by Colonel Ray Peers, they moved on to Bhamo.

Colonel Peers, later to become commanding general of the 4th Division in Vietnam and chairman of the Peers Commission to investigate the My Lai massacre, told Singlaub that he would have to hold for a few weeks on his permanent orders to join another OSS detachment over the mountains in Kunming, China. Not one to sit on his hands until his mission priority allowed him and his assortment of commando troops to fly over the hump into China, Singlaub heard that his CO, Col. Peers, planned to move some of his assets from a place called Dinjan, in the upper Assam Valley, to Bhamo in Burma.

"I volunteered to run a series of convoys up the Burma Road with this equipment, to occupy my guys while we were waiting to get over



Singlaub, center, and his jedburgh team prior to secretly parachuting into occupied France to organize resistance against the Germans.

the hump." Singlaub recalled. "So we took that on, and drove the Ledo Road up to Bhamo in Burma."

But typically, just when Singlaub thought his unit would have to hang around and wait, they were told to get up and go.

"Then, strangely enough, we flew back from Bhamo to Chabua and then flew on over the hump to Kunming," Singlaub said. "I had been put in charge of a combined company in California... It was made up of a lot of OSS types. So I had Army, Navy and Air Corps officers. And I had Army, Navy and Marine Corps enlisted. And I had male and female civilians. Processing these people was really something, because each service had its own peculiarities.

"When we got to Kunming, I did some Chinese language training, and then went down to Poseh and trained some Chinese guerrillas for operations against the Japanese," he said.

Chinese guerrillas weren't the only troops being trained by the OSS in Indochina. This brought Singlaub into contact with Viet Minh forces under the command of an insurgent leader named Ho Chi Minh.

"By this time I had my team, and we had a weapons man, a medic and my radio operator, and an executive officer. We had about five, all Americans. We were to take a team into what later became North Vietnam. My mission," Singlaub recalled, "was to blow the railroad and a road between Hanoi and the town of Langson.

"The road and the railroad were on opposite sides of this gorge. It was a very deep gorge and the railroad was an easy one to cut because it had a lot of curved rails and a limited number of culverts.

"The road was more difficult," Singlaub said, "but again it was very steep in several places and it had culverts. I was able to spot the culverts and compute my charges. And I found out where my drop zone was going to be. We were to take in some Vietnamese with us when we went.

"When I went on flights in a C-47 to make a reconnaissance of my targets, as well as my drop zone and so on, I carried along supplies to drop to the [OSS] team that was advising Ho Chi Minh. So I would fly over Ho Chi Minh's headquarters at a place called Tuyen Quang. Mike Holland was one of the guys who was in with Ho Chi Minh, and a Major Thomas. I didn't know the others."

Twenty years later Ho's troops would be fighting and killing U.S. servicemen, but he was more of an unknown quantity at the time, and certainly still conducive to providing at least limited support to



Above, Singlaub in the OSS compound in Kunming, China

In the photo at left, Major Singlaub (right) turning his back on a Japanese lieutenant with whom he refused to negotiate, demanding to see the colonel in charge of 10,000 Japanese marines holding Hainan Island.

U.S. and European interests. Singlaub remembers the Ho Chi Minh of Japanese occupation days as a man who “had a lot of ability to get people to work with him. He continued to promise that they were going to attack the Japanese. They didn’t do as much attacking of the Japanese as we would have liked. But at that time the Vietnamese that I worked with — and they had run intelligence nets — said that they recognized the need for continuing help from the West, and they expected the French to return.

“They wanted to be able to teach Vietnamese in their schools,” Singlaub said, “and they wanted some concessions from their colonial rulers. But they did not want to give up contact with the West. They said they would prefer that the Americans would come in and take over that role, but recognized that that was not likely.

“But they did not have that absolute hatred and intransigent position that they later took. That’s a long story, and a very complicated and involved story: how that developed.”

As it turned out, though, Singlaub’s mission to blow the road and the rail line was never carried out. There was a temporary postponement in July because of conflicting mission priorities, and then it was permanently scrubbed by an event that surprised everyone.

“We were in this little jungle town and some people came in and said that a big bomb had been dropped on Japan, and the war was going to be over.” recalled Singlaub, who at the time expressed disbelief. “We didn’t know what they were talking about. Then eventually we were told that our mission was canceled and they were sending a plane to pick me up. A day or so later a plane came in and flew us back to Kunming. And then they said that the States had dropped an atom bomb on Japan.”

Everyone figured a Japanese surrender was at hand. But many

problems remained, chief among them the thousands of U.S. prisoners in Japanese camps and the fear that they might not live long enough to see repatriation, especially if the Japanese decided to take out their frustrations of defeat on the POWs. And if the Japanese already had mistreated the prisoners, it would be to the advantage of the vanquished to simply execute the POWs and hide the bodies. It was decided that the OSS should undertake operations aimed at freeing the POWs as soon as possible.

“They asked if I would lead a team to go into Hainan Island, where they thought they had some prisoners,” Singlaub said. “There were other teams being brought back from other parts of China, where they had been fighting against the Japanese. Teams were to be sent to Hainan Island, Taiwan, Mukden, Peking, Shantung, Shanghai and Korea.

“I elected to jump my force because we didn’t have an airfield. Besides, with the team that went to Taiwan, the Japanese just put a pistol to their faces and said to get back on the airplane,” he said.

“I recruited my team— took some of my same team members and added to them. We parachuted into this area where we assumed the camp was. In the two days I was given to get ready for this, that was an important part of it — to analyze photos and try to see where the camp was. I finally was convinced of the exact buildings, from the air photos, and I selected a drop zone. We flew from Kunming one night, over the Gulf of Tonkin, right on the deck, just 50 feet off the ocean, made landfall — I recognized it from the studies — turned right, flew along the coast until I could see the camp and my selected drop zone.

“So we went in and I picked out my heading and told the pilot to let us out at 600 feet.

“We parachuted into this area, which was within sight of the buildings we thought were where the POWs were. The aircraft was supposed to make another pass and drop our equipment but ... I don't know if he was trying to get lower and look and see if we were all right, but he dropped the supplies at an altitude that was too low for the parachutes to open.

“So my radio was about two meters wide by 50 meters long. The bundle just exploded and ruined a lot of the other supplies we were taking in there as well. So we were without a radio.”

That wasn't the worst of it. By early August 1945, many of the Japanese had seen the writing on the wall and were talking of surrender. But unfortunately for Singlaub, the 10,000 Japanese on Hainan Island — big, strapping Hokkaido Marines who had been winning all their battles down in the Pacific — had not heard that the war was about to end.

“They weren't very kind to us for the first 36 hours,” Singlaub said “They policed us up and put us in a guardhouse. But I wouldn't talk to the captain that was commanding the camp. I said I wanted to talk to his colonel.

“We heard him on this telephone because he had to yell loud. I had a Nisei and a Chinese with me as interpreters, as part of the nine-man force. The Japanese captain said, ‘But Colonel, he won't talk to me. He insists on talking to you. The major insists on talking to you.’ I was actually a captain, but for that jump the intelligence people convinced my team and me that I should wear major's leaves. So I was a brevet major.

“And it was a good thing, because there is such a big distinction between company and field grade officers in the Japanese Army. As a major I wouldn't deign to speak to this captain.

“ ‘But Colonel, he insists that Japan is going to surrender!’ ‘But Colonel, they jumped in broad daylight!’ We could only hear one end of the conversation, but we could tell roughly what it was.

“So I had a very, very nervous night, without any communications; in fact, locked up in the guardhouse. I had insisted that I wanted to see the commander of the Allied prisoners, and that I wanted to see the colonel who was commanding this area.

“The next day they finally took us over where I met with the Japanese commander. I told him that I absolutely insisted on seeing the Allied officers in the camp. He apparently had gotten the word by this time that the Japanese were about to surrender. So I told him that I was commandeering all the food on the island, and that, after Allied needs were met, he would have the next priority. All the transportation I was commandeering, all the communications. And I wanted a liaison officer assigned to me immediately, but that the first order of business was to talk to the prisoners

“So they were brought to an Australian colonel, the senior officer, and a Dutch lieutenant commander.” Singlaub recalled. “It was quite a reunion. Very emotional, as you can imagine.

“I moved the Japanese to the side, set these guys down, after shaking their hands, and found out what their real problems were. They went back to their quarters. So then I issued some ultimatums to the Japanese, as to what was going to be done specifically.



Brevet Major John Singlaub, fourth from left, tours Japanese prison compound with OSS rescue team on their second day on Hainan Island, just east of the Gulf of Tonkin.



A group of Australian officers poses after their release from a Japanese POW camp on Hainan Island. They were rescued by an OSS team headed by John Singlaub.

“That operation, I suppose, was one of the most satisfying that you could have. Not only providing freedom to almost 400 prisoners of war, but we had the job of bringing them up-to-date on what had happened since they had been captured. They were captured by the Japanese very early in the Pacific war — in February of 1942 — on a small island in what is now Indonesia, which at that time was the Netherlands East Indies. They had been very badly treated by the Japanese. They had been physically abused. They had been put on this island of Hainan in the most inhospitable part of the island, and when the monsoons hit, the water would not only come through the roof, but through the walls.

“Several were dying each day by the time I got there. So we were able to give them not only freedom, but by feeding them about six meals a day, six small meals a day, we stopped the deaths by starvation. And we gave them vitamin B-1 injections and provided them with some essential medical care; although some still died after we got there.

“But then I had the problem of moving them from that location on the west side of the island down to the southern tip, where there was an adequate harbor and an airfield.

“I commandeered a train and was moving them down there when our train was ambushed and the engine was derailed. The rail was blown, but we were flying a home-made American flag on the train. The blue field was denim and the stripes were sheets with the wrong number of stars and the wrong number of stripes.



Capt. Singlaub is decorated at the OSS compound in Kunming for the success of his commando missions in France.

“But that train was never assaulted. That’s a good thing, because I only had four armed Americans on it. The rest were unarmed prisoners. We never did find out whether that ambush was the work of bandits or guerrillas.

“So we had to go through all of that to get ‘em down there. But eventually we moved them, either by rail or by boat. Some of them weren’t up to rail travel, so we had to move them by boat down to the other end of the island, where I proceeded to set up better hospital facilities.

“It was a better part of the island. There was fresh fruit available for them there. We took over some barracks that had belonged to the Japanese Air Force and made it into a hospital and barracks for the troops, until I could eventually bring in some Australian ships to evacuate the Australians and the Dutch up to Hong Kong.

“I found that there were some prisoners who had escaped and were presumed to be with the guerrillas in the interior of the island. Intelligence nets that I set up initially indicated that there had been some Americans who had been captured and killed by the Japanese.

“We produced evidence of this. One of the things that was given to me on my first entry into the camp was a packet of documentation of the atrocities committed against these people, and that evidence, which I personally held on to until I got out and personally turned it over to the British authorities in Hong Kong. It was used as the basic documentation to try some of the Japanese for war crimes after the war.

“I had the problem of locating where these escapees and evaders were ... Well, first of all I had the problem of not having any radio. It wasn’t until I got down to the southern end of the island and took over a big Japanese transmitter and sent back a message to Kunming, telling what had happened and where I was, that we made contact.

“Although we had had some signals that we were able to display on the drop zone, it was agreed that 24 hours after our drop, they would send a reconnaissance flight over the drop zone and photograph it. I had a series of signals to display by spreading out the reserve parachutes, which were white, in different patterns.

“Fortunately I was able to get my people — two guys — out of that guardhouse where we were and out to the drop zone to display that signal on the second day. On the first day the recce flight went over and there was nothing. They were quite worried in Kunming.

“Second day I was able to indicate that we were out of communication, but we were okay. We had a way of mutilating the panels slightly, if needed, to indicate we were under duress. The parachutes were displayed correctly, so they knew we were okay.

“When we boomed in with that big signal from the Japanese transmitter, they wouldn’t believe it was us, so we had to go through a lot of challenges to prove that we were, in fact, who we said we were.

“But I was able then to bring in a doctor on a plane, and I was able to then use that plane to fly over the island. I was able to throw in small bottles of Atabrine (anti-malarial) tablets. I was able to use small parachutes from our jump, the pilot chutes, to float these things down. I would throw them into large villages, with a note that said, ‘Take this to your leader. The Allies have landed a small force on the southern part of the island. The Japanese are in the process of surrendering. The war is over. We want to make contact with any Allied former prisoners or evaders. Any Allied personnel, send a message to the southern part of the island, town of Sanya.’

Two days later we got a message that came in answer to that, signed by an Australian major, indicating that he had a certain number of Australian and Dutch troops with him, plus a large number of Indians who had escaped also. These were members of the Hong Kong and Singapore Royal Artillery. They were Sikhs.

“The Japanese had tried to use them as troops; the Japanese had tried to form a Free India movement. But these people, when given an opportunity to serve, had headed for the hills. There were also some Americans.

“Several messages came in. One of them was signed by the Australian major, and another was from an American who was an evader and who was in the interior of the island with some friendly guerrillas.

“So I had the problem of getting in there as part of my problem of getting all Allied personnel out. I also had the problem of recontacting my exec. The only way I could get to my rear detachment was to parachute in.

“That’s when I made my first free fall. I used one of the emergency parachutes off one of the airplanes that flew in supplies. And I took

Continued on page 9



Kenn Miller

Reviewed by Kenn Miller

Some months ago the *Sentinel* ran a review of three of the worst and most obviously bogus Vietnam War books this reviewer had ever seen. Here is another three book review, but these three books are infinitely more worthy to be read. They are listed here in alphabetic order of book title:

[At the Dragon's Gate: With the OSS in the Far East](#) by Charles Fenn

[From OSS to Green Berets: The Birth of Special Forces](#) by Col. Aaron Bank, U.S.A., (Retired)

[Why Vietnam?: Prelude to America's Albatross](#) by Archimedes L.A. Patti
(At least one of those names should be very familiar to all *Sentinel* readers.)

Aaron Bank and Archimedes Patti were Army officers who had volunteered for the OSS, and both had served with the OSS behind enemy lines in Europe before being sent to China and on to Vietnam. Charles Fenn's familiarity with East Asia had won him a direct commission as a USMC officer, and he was then seconded to the OSS. All three men were in Vietnam shortly after the Japanese capitulation. Vietnam was then almost completely unknown to Americans, but it is likely that the OSS men were aware that Vietnam had a proud history of wars against intrusive Khmers, Chinese, Mongols, the French and each other, going back more than 2,000 years. The OSS also knew that Vietnamese guerrillas had rescued, protected, and assisted downed Allied airmen for most of the war. And it was no secret that Vietnam was determined to be done with French colonialism and the Japanese who, as part of their wartime expansion, had been using the pro-Axis French colonists to govern Vietnam under their orders.

Archimedes Patti was a soldier, scholar, natural diplomat, and historian. Charles Fenn was a moderately left-leaning former LIFE magazine journalist who had traveled widely in Asia, and had covered the fighting in Burma before investing himself in the war. Aaron Bank? Well, if you're reading the *Sentinel* you damn sure ought to know who Aaron Bank was!

Charles Fenn's memoir, *At the Dragon's Gate*, is the most fluently written of the books, and Fenn is also by far the most self-centered of these authors. Fenn was a fairly colorful travel writer. But his book drips with dropped names and reminiscences of comfortable leisure and gourmet meals, and it thereby lives up to the wartime jest that "OSS" stands for "Oh, so social!"

Vietnam is only part of Aaron Bank's memoir — which is by far the most military of the three books, and one of the best military memoirs I've ever read. There is OSS training; a fascinating Jedburgh mission in France; the preparation of an amazing and probably suicidal, deeply strategic, and eventually canceled direct action against

Hitler right in Adolf's own lair; and the beginnings of the U.S. Army Special Forces.

From OSS To Green Berets is a must read book.

And there is Archimedes Patti, author of the encyclopedic 612 page (small print) tome, with a vast index, and plentiful notes, *Why Vietnam?: Prelude To America's Albatross*.

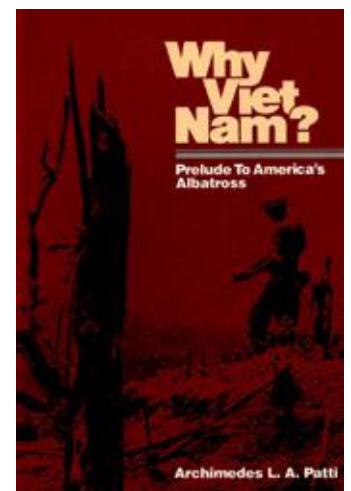
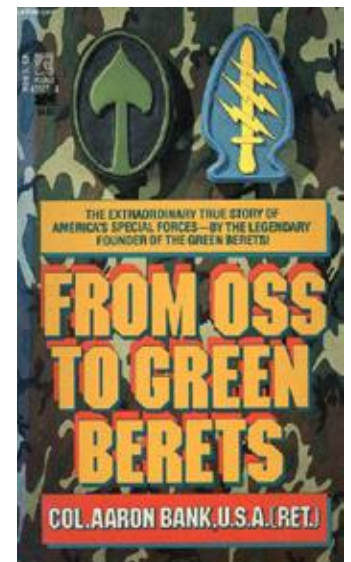
If you read every word of this book and remember two-thirds of what you read, you deserve a PhD from Autodidact University.

Why Vietnam is the authoritative history.

History is full of ironic turns and unexpected appearances.

One of the most unexpected appearance in this history is that of Julia McWilliams, later to be famous as television's French Chef, Julia Child. At 6'2", she was too tall for the WACs or the WAVEs, and so she found a job as an intelligence researcher, and was working at the OSS headquarters office in Kunming, China, during the time Bank, Fenn, and Patti were in Vietnam. Legend has it that she was in the pipeline between the OSS men in Hanoi and the top OSS tiers at Washington. But certain men on echelons above her did not take this tall, gawky, and extremely competent intelligence researcher seriously, and paid scant attention to the messages and field reports she passed on up to them. If true, this male chauvinism led to tragedy.

It seems that every Vietnamese that Americans in Vietnam at the time encountered (French being the common language) were delighted to have Americans around to deal with the French and Japanese, and were begging for American backing and advice about obtaining independence from the French, the unification of



their country and establishment of a national government, the Viet Minh containing both communist and nationalist elements and representatives of the various minority groups.

Of course, the strategic reason for seeking a special relationship with the USA was for American counterweight to China, France, and the possibility of Japan ever coming back. But there was more reason for asking for American help. The most prominent political figure in Vietnam at that time, and the most pro-American, was the man who had translations of the American Declaration of Independence made, and proudly had it translated back into English for Patti was a certain Ho Chi Minh. In the room at the time was Troung Chinh*, the Secretary General of the Communist Party and a fan of Mao Zedong. He stormed out of the room in a huff.

American and Vietnam relations seemed to be on a good heading, and on August 30, Ho sent his first letter to President Truman.

But on July 24, 1945, at the Potsdam Conference with Atlee, Churchill, and Stalin, Truman had already approved a military decision to divide Vietnam at the 16th Parallel. And in early September British, British Indian, and French troops started arriving in Vietnam. On September 24 Ho Chi Minh sent his second letter to President Truman. On Sep-

tember 30, Archimedes Patti and Ho Chi Minh met for the last time.

On October 1, 1945 the OSS was stood down, and Louis Mountbatten, 1st Earl of Burma, authorized British troops to assist the French in recovering their former colonial properties — an act that would have given Franklin Roosevelt a massive intracerebral hemorrhage if he hadn't already had one.

And the rest is history — a sad piece of history in which many members of SFA Chapter 78 played a part. As French must've said after getting their asses whipped at Dien Bien Phu, "C'est la guerre."

*Troung Chinh is the Vietnamese of "Long March," a name chosen to show admiration for Mao. After the defeat of the French in 1954, Troung Chinh outranked Ho, and was in charge of land reform — which he did Mao's murderous way. Ho was under soft house arrest, but walked away to Hanoi's radio station and announced the end of that land reform and apologized to the people, but was in no position to punish Troung Chinh who maintained his power in the party. English was one of the many languages Ho Chi Minh knew fluently, but he probably never heard the saying, "With friends like that, who needs enemies?" With Troung Chinh and various other ambitious communist ideologues he many time experienced that in his own life. ❖

Singlaub — Parachuting Into Prison continued

the reserve that was still intact and cut the old harness that I had jumped in with, tied knots in the risers above the connectors, so that I had a harness for my reserve, and then did a free fall out of a C-47.

"I had no idea how much altitude I should allow, but decided I would need five seconds to clear the airplane and pull the thing, so..."

"Add about 500 feet."

"Yeah, I computed this on the basis of the velocity of a free, falling body, and jumped from less than a thousand feet. When I got into free falling later on, I realized how silly that was. But anyway it was successful, and I got back in.

"Eventually we had to go back into the interior. That was an exciting thing because the Japanese controlled the perimeter of the island, in most cases. But in the interior there were three separate groups; you had pro-communist guerrillas and pro-nationalist guerrillas, and then you had just plain bandits. I still don't know who it was that ambushed our train. It may have been just bandits, but in any case we had to go through several territories.

"The Japanese would only take us so far, and then they said, 'Well, down that road there' — they called them all bandits — 'there are some bandits,' and we'd go down and cautiously display an American flag. They then would take us to the end of the area they controlled, and eventually we got in. We made arrangements to come out a few days later.

"So we brought out several truckloads of escapers and evaders.

"I must say, the Chinese Nationalist commander on the island gave us one of the finest Chinese meals I've ever had, in celebration of this great occasion. It was a 26-course dinner, as I recall.

"We evacuated the majority of the prisoners via destroyers. Later, when I reached Hong Kong, I was able to arrange for a hospital ship to come in and pick up the ones who were really in bad shape.

"I had great pressure from the Japanese. They wanted to surrender to me. They did not want to wait and surrender to the Chinese. But it was very clear in my instructions that I would not accept their surrender, and the Japanese just could not understand.

"They wanted to come and present their swords to me, rather than face surrender to the Chinese, whom they had not treated particularly well.

"By that time a group of logisticians from the China headquarters came in and relieved me. They were from the Services of Supply. They had the responsibility of staying there until the Chinese Army came.

"I then embarked the team on an Australian destroyer and sailed to Hong Kong. We happened to be there the night of the official surrender signing. By this time the majority of the ships of the British Navy has assembled in Hong Kong and they put on quite a fireworks display that night.

"That was about the second of September, I think, in '45.

"A few days later we flew back to Kunming and I released the team." ❖

SFA Chapter 78

August 2020 Meeting

(Photos by How and Nancy Miller)

- ❶ Chapter member Greg Horton spoke on current issues being faced by law enforcement.
- ❷ Chapter member Jim Duffy talks about next month's meeting at Artemis.
- ❸ Debra Holm, graphic designer for the *Sentinel*, presented a questionnaire for members to use for submitting their profile for the Chapter website.
- ❹ Guest Roland Ramirez, member of Chapter 118
- ❺ Chapter Sergeant-at-Arms Mark Miller displays the mask he designed and sold at the meeting for the benefit of the Chapter.
- ❻ Mark Miller's custom mask
- ❼ Chapter member How Miller models one of Miller's masks.
- ❽ Chapter Secretary Gary Macnamara, at left, and Chapter member Patrick Kinsey at right. Mike Jamison can be seen sitting behind them.
- ❾ Left to right, Jim Duffy, James Light, Roland Ramirez, and Richard Simonian
- ❿ Chapter member Mike Keele salutes the photographer.
- ⓫ Left to right, James McLanahan, who is going away for a while, Bob McClain — he's moving away, so this was his last Chapter meeting, and John Creel, who is currently up to 20 miles in his ongoing marathon training.
- ⓬ Chapter member Jim Suber and his son Jim Suber, Jr.
- ⓭ Chapter President Bruce Long and Vice President Don Gonnevill
- ⓮ Chapter members James Carter and Susan Weeks
- ⓯ Chapter member Jim Morris, Editor of the *Sentinel*
- ⓰ Chapter members socializing after the end of the meeting.

