



SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

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

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“TANIA.....From Russia Without Love”

Fire-Hardened: OSS in World War II Burma

The Admiral’s Silver Lining

**President Trump Awards the Medal of Honor to
Army Ranger Sgt. Maj. Thomas Payne on 9-11-2020**

**Grandpa’s War Story Goes #Viral
A Sentinel Story Inspires a Documentary**



From the Editor



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Jim Morris
Sentinel Editor

Black Lives Known

I grew up in segregated Oklahoma. The first "integrated" school I attended was the University of Oklahoma. I put it in quotes because one of our 10,000 students was black, and in four years I never saw her.

My first real experience with black people was in the army. The first sergeant of my first unit, M" Company, 3d Tng. Regt., Fort Dix NJ, in 1960, 1SG Bradshaw," was black, and the best word to describe him was "impeccable".

We were short of officers, and I was two platoon leaders. One of my platoons was led by a black corporal, Greene, a veteran of the Triple Nickle. CPL Green was not a mental giant, but he was always prepared, always sharp, always on time, and basically a kind man. I probably had fifty IQ points on Greene, but honesty compels me to admit that when it came to soldiering he was the better man.

Our supply sergeant was a truckmaster whose wife had died, and he didn't want to go to Germany as single parent to a seventeen-year-old girl. So they made him a supply sergeant at Dix. Unfortunately he lacked the larceny gene without which no supply sergeant can survive, and shortly found himself in the hole for \$3,000 in 1960 bucks. He was a good guy and I didn't want to see him ruined, so I scrounged \$3,000 worth of blankets, sheets and pillow cases from the Air Force. While I was at it I got the entire cadre flight jackets and jet pilot's boots.

I didn't do this because or in spite of the fact he was black. He was one of my NCOs, in a jam that I could fix, so I fixed it.

All of a sudden the black NCOs had my back. The white NCOs thought it was great fun to see the newbie lieutenant screw up, but the black guys tipped me off, introduced me to Redd Foxx and Moms Mabley, and encouraged me to go to jump school.

When I went to SF there were very few blacks but the ones we had were terrific, except for one major I could have done without. Two of the best were SGM McKinney and 1LT Mitch Maples, who was briefly the S-4 of a B team I was briefly the S-1 of. A horrible coincidence was that both of these men lost teenage sons to drowning while I knew them.

Obviously I knew more black guys in the army than that, but I only knew a couple of black duds. I've only had a few close black friends in civilian life, but their lives matter. To me. A lot.

Cops, and former cops, that I know have another story. Their lives matter to me too.

I am dismayed that both the black community and the police community are circling the wagons and defensively blaming the other guys. Most of these dead black guys are from clean shoots, but not all. Most of the dead black people are not solid citizens. But some are. If the media gets it wrong, and in many cases they do, it's mostly from ignorance, not malice. Educate them. And if the officer has made a mistake, honestly or otherwise, fess up and face it. Blaming the other guy is not a defensible position for anybody. And it's no way to solve a public relations problem. ❖

Jim Morris, *Sentinel* Editor

From the President | October 2020



Bruce Long, President SFA Chap. 78

Our September Chapter meeting was held at the Artemis Defense Institute located in the city of Lake Forest, and was attended by nineteen Chapter members and three guests. We were given two safety briefings. The first one was by **Jim Duffy**, that also included expectations of the virtual training we were about to receive. Our second briefing was given by Ivan Snegirev, Chief Firearms Instructor for Artemis, and a current Force Recon Marine.

We were then broken down in two groups. One group was shown the proper shooting techniques and target acquisition. This also included moving targets at different distances.

The second group went directly to the VirTra 300 virtual reality scenarios. These scenarios are designed to make YOU the shooter, decide to shoot or not to shoot. Very realistic. After each shooter had completed his or her scenario, you received a critique, as your shots are recorded, and shown on the screen, hit or miss. The weapon used for this training was a GLOCK 17.

If anyone is interested in receiving a Carry Concealed Weapon (CCW) and live in Orange County this is the place to go. For more

information, check out their website; www.artemishq.com. You can also find them on facebook ([@ArtemisDefenseInstitute](https://www.facebook.com/ArtemisDefenseInstitute)).

We then had lunch which was catered by Panera Bakery, and a short Chapter meeting.

SPECIAL NOTE! This was **John (Tilt) Meyer's** last Chapter meeting as he and his wife Anna will be moving to Tennessee. John wishes to remain a member of our Chapter, which is GREAT! But, I told him to reach out to a local Chapter, and stay active. John will be missed, he provided a lot of insight, and support to the Chapter. Best of luck and, GOD BLESS.

Our next Chapter meeting will be October 3rd back at the Joint Forces Training Base in Los Alamitos — Breakfast at 0800, meeting at 0830 with a special presentation by John Joyce on the upcoming 2021 SFGA Conference. *If you plan to attend, please contact VP Don Gonneville at don@gonneville.com no later than Thursday, October 1st, midnight.*

SPECIAL NOTE! Our annual Christmas party is just around the corner. Mark your calendar for 12/06/20. See the Sign-Up Form below.

Please contact me directly if you have questions or concerns. Remember this is your Chapter. ❖

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

Special Forces Association Chapter 78 • Christmas Party 2020

Special Forces Association Chapter 78 will be having its annual Christmas Dinner Party on
Sunday, December 6th 2020 at 1500 hrs,
at the Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club located at 1601 Bayside in Corona del Mar, CA.

We are limited to 115 persons who can attend.

We need your confirmations to us if you are planning to attend no later than November 15th, 2020.

Please send the below listed confirmation to the address along with your check for \$40 per person payable to SFA Chapter 78.

_____ I will be attending the Chapter 78 Christmas Party

Chapter Member Attending: _____

Number of Guests (Including yourself): _____

\$40.00 X _____ = \$ _____

Please mail check for this amount made payable to: SFA 78.

Please mail to the Chapter Treasurer: SFA 78, C/O Santiago Communities, Attn: Liz Rios, P.O. Box 11927, Santa Ana, CA 92711

Shoot Out at the Artemis Corral



Mike Keele

By Mike Keele

LAKE FOREST, CA, September 11, 2020 — As always the training was superb, although bittersweet, as it was the final meeting for our past Chapter president, and author, John Meyer, who has pulled up tent stakes and is headed for Franklin, Tennessee. “Tilt” will be establishing an outpost there with another Chapter member, Retired Major General Jack Singlaub. When Jack was Chief SOG in

1968, Tilt was sneaking around “Over the Fence”, the title of one of his books, on missions out of FOB-1 and CCN, in Danang. He will be sorely missed.

Back to the shooting lesson. Each year, I have written an article declaring that year’s firearms instruction was the best I have ever received, and this includes both Military and Law Enforcement, although both of those were fifty years ago. Yes, yes, we did have smokeless powder in those days, but it was blasted through revolver barrels, not the hi-tech Glocks we use today.

Artemis does not use live fire ammunition in their Glocks, but lazer shot markers, and CO2 cartridges to work the action and simulate recoil.

Each year has brought refinements in the teaching technique, and this year was a paradigm advance of magnum proportions. Our primary instructor was Ivan Snegirev, who debunked past teaching goals and methods, using well-chosen words, demonstrations and a lot of common sense in his delivery. It quickly became clear to this

septuagenarian, that stances of old are lethal to survival, grip and sighting techniques of just a year of two past are passé, and even us old fossils can fire tighter groups than we did in our prime.

Armed with our newly learned skills, we ambled to a room housing the “three hundred course,” so named because threats can come at you in ambushes from a three hundred degree range of screens surrounding the shooter, with only a 60 degree opening for follow-on shooters to observe the ongoing action.

New scenarios have been added to the format, and when the instructor said “who’s next”? I sprang forward with the enthusiasm of a trainee convinced he’s as alert as a bunny in a clover field. Humbling moments were to follow. In one scenario, a woman approaches a poorly lit ATM machine with only me (Captain America), to save her bacon. Up drives an SUV, from which alights a certifiable bad guy, who rushes the woman and commences, stabbing her, until something registers in my foggy old brain that I’m supposed to dispatch this miscreant. I manage to do so after firing a slew of bullets that went high, wide and elsewhere. As I stand there patting myself on the back, an unseen evil-doer in the SUV fired a fusillade of rounds that send me off to the hereafter.

The last example I made of myself, included confronting a clearly psychotic, young man doing some form of modern day dance, and babbling something at a distance of 25 feet. He was not displaying a weapon, until he began to walk slowly towards me, at which point he brandished a knife. He suddenly broke into a run, crossing in front of me from my right to my left. This kid covered the 25’ by the time I was able to get my gun up and fire about five shots. As he was passing by me, one bullet hit his left shoulder, and he cut my throat. The lesson here? Keep your adversary at a distance and be prepared to shoot. Your life depends on it, regardless of what the fake news says.

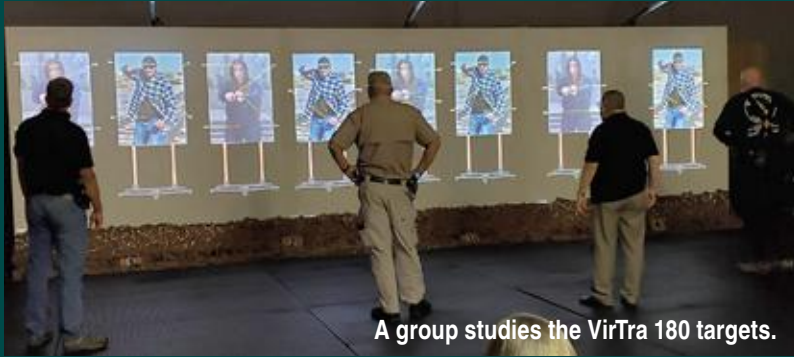
A simple solution to eliminate escalation of force is compliance with lawful commands given by Police Officers. A concept not understood by many of these knuckleheads!!! ❖



Mike Keele, AKA “Captain America”, in the “three hundred course” participating in the above mentioned ATM robbery scenario, the first of two scenarios he participated in during the training at the September Chapter meeting at Artemis Defense Institute in Lake Forest..

SFA Chapter 78 September 2020 Meeting

(Photos by How and Nancy Miller)



A group studies the VirTra 180 targets.



Irene Suber ready to fire in the VirTra 300 training.



A group observes.



Artemis instructor Scott recaps performance.



Gary Macnamara listens to feedback.



Left to right, back row: Ivan Snegirev, John Meyer, Jim Duffy, Steve Bric, Bruce Long, Greg Horton, Mike Keele, Dave Thomas, James Carter, How Miller Patrick Kinsey
Front row: Jim Morris, Debra Holm, Tom Turney, Johnny V



The business meeting



Jim Morris, Sentinel Editor

Fire-Hardened: O.S.S. in World War II Burma

By Edith Mirante

Jungle parachute drops, bridges in smithereens, supply depots raided, aircrews rescued, messages radioed from bamboo bashas (huts), the work of OSS Detachment 101.

When invaded by Japan in 1942 Burma was a British colony of remarkably varied terrain, resources and ethnicities. It became a strategic prize, the Japanese-occupied barrier to road and air supply routes from British India to the American-supported Chinese military of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. This region was the legendary “Terry and the Pirates” China Burma India (CBI) Theater of Flying Tigers, Hump Pilots and the Burma Road.

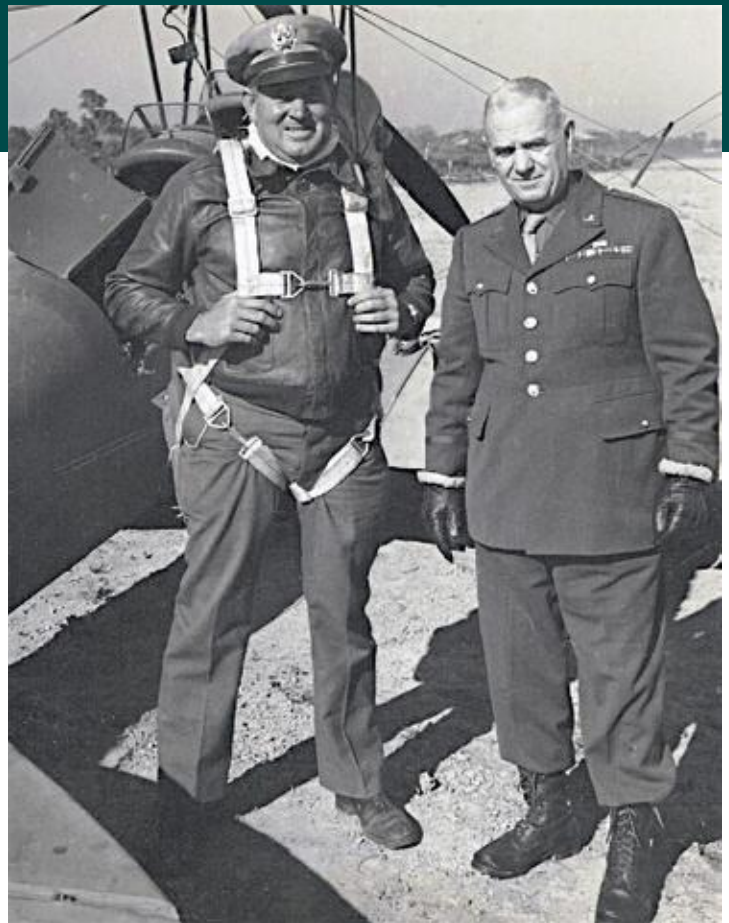
Early in 1942 CBI Commander LTG “Vinegar Joe” Stilwell was persuaded of the need for a specialized intelligence unit by BG “Wild Bill” Donovan, founding director of the Office of Strategic Services. Stilwell was a man of strong opinions, among them disapproval of guerrilla warfare and he was obsessed with deploying conventional Chinese infantry. But Donovan’s small, quickly adapting Detachment 101 would evolve into one of the war’s most formidable unconventional forces.

Stilwell and Donovan turned to massive, booming-voiced CPT Carl Eifler, a former customs officer in Hawaii who practiced jujitsu and yoga. As commanding officer Eifler recruited Detachment 101’s core officers in Hawaii: CPT John Coughlin, SGT Vincent Curl, medical officer CPT Archie Chun Ming and CPT Robert Aitken.

Coughlin brought in 1LT William Peers, who would later take command of 101 as a LTC (and command the 4th ID in Vietnam, and author the Peers Report on the My Lai massacre) and become its chronicler with his “Behind the Burma Road” (co-authored with 101 field operative Dean Brellis.) Eifler greeted Peers by stabbing a dagger into his desk, followed by an insightful overview of the entire Asian mainland political and military situation of the time.

Knowledge of Asia and specialized skills were crucial. Peers recalled 101’s original batch of 21 including “four infantry officers, two engineers, three radio technicians, a watchmaker, a court stenographer, a Korean patriot and an American who had been an advisor to Chiang Hsueh-liang, a powerful Chinese warlord.” In his memoir “American Guerrilla” 101 member Roger Hillsman recalled, “A brighter, more imaginative, unorthodox, and dedicated bunch of men and women you could never find.”

Det. 101 sought recruits from Burma Army personnel and refugees in India. Many Anglo-Burmese and Chinese-Burmese joined, contributing linguistic skills and experience in upcountry mining and logging enterprises. Volunteers of other Burma ethnic backgrounds



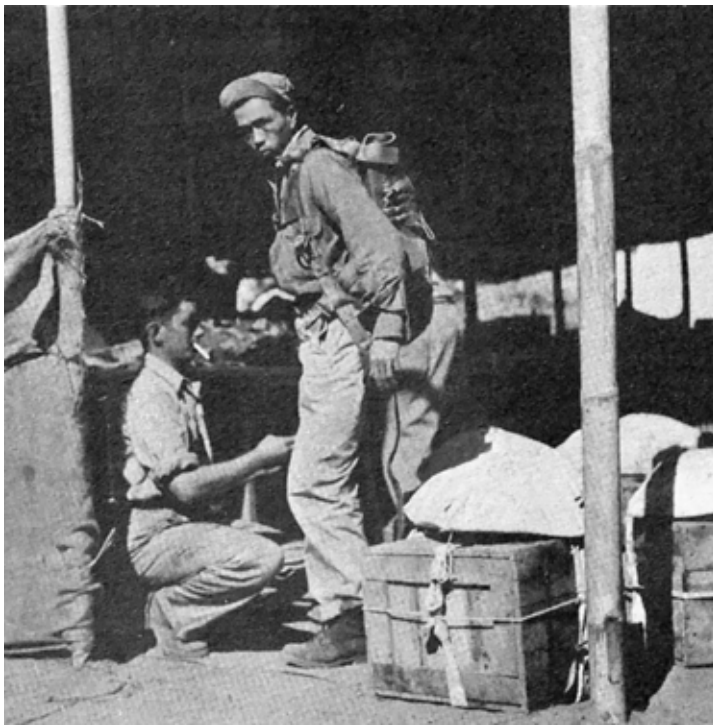
COL Eifler with visiting OSS GEN Donovan, 1943 (Photo courtesy Office of Strategic Services/US Army)

(Karen, Burman, Shan, Palaung/Ta’ang) signed up, as well as some Thais. Catholic missionaries Father MacAllindon (Scottish) and Father Stuart (Irish) added local knowledge and interpreting.

Initially underfunded and undersupplied, 101 set up a headquarters and training base amid tea plantations at Nazia, Assam (Northeast India). Focusing on infiltration to gather intelligence, relay it by radio and stage ambushes behind Japanese lines, 101 forged a partnership with the Kachins. Indigenous people of Burma’s northern mountains, Kachins were (and are) resolutely independent but open to outside influences, including Christianity introduced by missionaries, and modern weapons distributed by 101.

The Kachins had a spear-point detente with the British and were actively anti the Japanese invaders and anti Chinese bandits. They would become very pro-American. Det. 101 cultivated a relationship with Kachin political figure Zing Htaw Naw who had already been conducting raids against the Japanese with “antique” rifles. Kachins trained with 101 but the training really came mostly from them.

Det. 101’s first infiltrations in 1943 were largely failures but were learned from. Pack trains marching through northern Burma with a dozen personnel “as secretly as a circus arriving in town” (Peers) changed to clandestine parachute jump infiltrations of three or four men and air-dropped supplies. In the far north Ft. Hertz, the last airstrip under British command (with the Kachin Levies) was also used by 101.



Kachin 101 operative readies for parachuting into Burma (Photo courtesy "Behind Japanese Lines" Richard Dunlop)



LT Vincent Curl of 101 with Kachin leader Zhing Htaw Naw (Photo courtesy "Behind Japanese Lines" Richard Dunlop)

Sabotage of railway lines was an early priority and 101 became fearsome bridge-exploders. Kachin 101 raiders struck Japanese camps and depots, demolishing supplies and even liberating rice for their own needs. Det. 101 depended completely on Kachins as guides, scouts and basic survival experts.

In soft Gurkha hats with peacock feathers as their only unit insignia, 101 agents by late 1943 were sending coded radio messages of Japanese positions and organizing a behind the lines guerrilla network. Completing a mission, Peers noted, 101 operatives returned "with rags on their backs and not a single complaint." This contrasts with the much larger, better-known long range units Merrill's Marauders (US) and Chindits (British) whose Burma war was a non-stop ordeal beset with low morale and bitter recriminations.

Det. 101 adapted to challenges of terrain, food and tropical diseases by learning from the indigenous Kachins. Tactics were influenced by Kachin hit and run abilities instead of Americans' inclination to stand and fight. Kachins contributed "punji" to our lexicon of asymmetrical warfare. I would write of a Kachin rebel camp five decades later, "Padang Hkawn bristled like a porcupine with punji stakes. Sharpened fire-hardened bamboo, sometimes poisoned with rotten pigs' liver or other substances, the stakes were thrust in the ground to pierce the feet and legs of advancing troops."

Weapons placed in Kachins' eager hands included Brens, Stens, sniper rifles and 60 or 81 mm. mortars. Det. 101 officers used silver rupee coins and opium as currency and traded tobacco or parachute cloth for sparkling rubies of dubious value. Det. 101 produced intelligence worth its weight in any of those commodities when a photo among the possessions of a captured Japanese pilot revealed how the enemy disguised their airfields.

As the Hump Pilots of the Air Transport Command braved relentless Japanese fighter interference, perilous weather and Himalayan peaks, 101 became their emergency support system, organizing village-to-village rescues of over 400 downed Allied crew members as well as civilian passengers.

Det. 101 gave ATC pilots jungle survival training and warned them of Japanese deception radio stations. In return 101 received a number of hand-me-down aircraft from ATC, including a flimsy Gipsy Moth biplane piloted on daring missions by the behemoth Eifler himself.

Det. 101's intelligence gathering web stretched from the snowy frontier of Tibet to Mandalay in central Burma. Hundreds of Kachin guerrillas with commanders including Zhing Htaw Naw harassed the Japanese in operations codenamed Forward, Pat and Knothead.



OSS Detachment 101 shoulder sleeve insignia of the Jingpaw (left) and Kachin (right) Rangers and OSS China-Burma-India Headquarters patch (center). (Photo courtesy Army Heritage Museum Collection)

In addition to field operatives from Burma many American 101 officers were stationed in country, some for nearly two years. A few behaved abusively or lacked understanding of regional ethnic power dynamics but most treated the indigenous people with enormous respect and deservedly won the egalitarian loyalty of the Kachins.

Eventually 101 operations expanded to Arakan on Burma's southwest coast. Eifler personally conducted a successful boat rescue of a B-24 crew from life rafts in the Bay of Bengal. But luck ran out when Eifler ran an Arakan team insertion from a submarine with landing craft. Returning to the sub Eifler suffered a severe concussion. And the team was quickly discovered and executed.

Chronic pain and erratic behavior from his head injury would cause Eifler to be relieved of command and replaced by Peers in December 1943. Eifler was posted to Washington DC and given the very Eifleresque desk job of planning the kidnapping of a Nazi atomic scientist.

Det. 101 coordinated with other British and American units in Burma. As Shelford Bidwell put it in "The Chindit War" the OSS was "the American equivalent of the British Special Operations Executive." SOE ran highly effective units throughout Burma, including Dah Force on the northern border with China and the Kachin and Chin Levies. Det. 101 commander Saw Judson (Karen ethnic) worked with MG Orde Wingate's Chindit Long Range Penetration Groups among the Kachins and Dah Force, then was transferred to 101.

Stilwell's plan to retake northern Burma in 1944 included a new role for 101, whose Kachin guerrillas would support large scale infantry deployment. Under the combined British and American V Force, 101 was to aid the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) — better known as Merrill's Marauders, the quintessential WWII "misfit unit" — on the push toward a Japanese-occupied airfield outside the Kachin town of Myitkyina.

Burmese 101 radio operator Agent Maung surveilled the airfield. Kachins of 101 provided guides and elephant transport and blocked Japanese river resupply. In their most infantry role 101's guerrillas guarded flanks of the Marauders' advance. Det. 101 Kachin scout Nau led the way (on horseback due to a snakebite) for Marauders and 150th Regiment Chinese 50th Division to seize the airfield. A terrible siege of Myitkyina town ensued.

In August 1944 the combat and disease decimated Marauders were disbanded after existing for less than a year. Some ex-Marauders like 20-year-old Tom Chamales joined 101. He spoke Kachin, having spent some of his childhood years among them while his father supervised the construction of a dam in Kachin country. Chamales would later write a novel based on his experiences, "Never So Few" which became a very Rat Pack movie with Sinatra in the lead (my personal CBI film preference is Samuel Fuller's harrowing 1962 "Merrill's Marauders").



101 Battalion Commanders MAJ Lazum Tang and LT Joe Lazarsky, 1945. (Photo courtesy USASOC ARSOF History)

Under Peers' command 101 was not "so few" anymore with guerrilla strength over 10,000 and was in demand to support more conventional operations that had the Japanese on the run in north, central and eastern Burma. Peers noted, "There was very little going on with the combat units in Burma in which, directly or indirectly, 101 was not involved."

East of Bhamo near the China border MAJ Lazum Tang (Kachin) and MAJ Peter Joost (Yale grad) ran a guerrilla force of 2,000+. They and other elite high kill rate Kachin teams supported an Allied advance retaking Bhamo in December 1944. 101 then set up base in Bhamo with its own light aircraft and, always innovative, even used a helicopter once to insert an agent in Shan State.

Det. 101's Kachin raiders helped retake Lashio, a Shan State town, allowing the Allies to link the Ledo and Burma Roads, opening a land route from India to China at last.

Stilwell was out as CBI Commander in October 1944. His replacement LTG Daniel Sultan expected 101 to fight like infantry against about 5,000 remaining Japanese troops in Shan State. But 101 did it their way with raids which, despite 101's heaviest losses of the war, closed off Japanese escape routes to Thailand. The Kachins, Karens, Gurkhas, Shans, Americans and Chinese who fought in that final 101 mission earned a 1946 Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation as "Kachin Rangers."

Detachment 101 was deactivated in July 1945. By Peers' accounting 101 had killed 5,428 ("known") enemy and captured 75 with fewer than 300 of its own personnel killed, captured or MIA. Another impressive statistic, given many air insertions under hazardous conditions: "Total casualties from parachute jumps: 0."

American 101 officers mostly redeployed from Burma to China. Post-war, some OSS personnel, among them young MAJ Jack Singlaub, blended into the new Central Intelligence Agency. The legacy of 101 would deeply influence US Special Forces and their future strategic alliances with local guerrillas. As a 2007 US Army Airborne and Special Operations Museum exhibit put it, "Detachment 101 most closely mirrors the mission and capability of today's Special Forces Group."



101 Kachin Rangers and American officer south of Myitkyina 1944 (Photo courtesy US Army photo in Time Life WW2 CBI)



Kachin Independence Army soldiers in 1991 with punji sticks and explosive devices (Photo courtesy Edith Mirante)

Kachin warriors returned to their mountain realms wearing silver Burma Campaign badges and shoulder insignia designed for them very late in the game. Kachin, Karen, Chin and other veterans of Allied units would fend for themselves in an impoverished Burma isolated by a brutal dictator-

ship. In recent years efforts to assist them include the British group Help For Forgotten Allies. Peter Lutkin and other American 101 vets have funded agricultural programs and education in Kachin villages through Project Old Soldier and 101 Schools.

Continued on page 14

“TANIA..... FROM RUSSIA WITHOUT LOVE”



By J. David Truby

The world's finest female spy isn't the creation of Eric Ambler, Ian Fleming or John LeCarre. Or, if you guessed Mata Hari, you've not studied your espionage history very well. This very real woman spent five years in a most complex and dangerous pressure cooker assignment of truly international proportions, died before the age of 30 and is now buried in Cuba as a "heroine of the Revolution," thanks to Fidel.

Her name was Tamara Bunke; she worked her way up from bit parts as sexual bait for the East German intelligence service to being a full KGB master agent. She was also Che Guevara's lover as well as his KGB control, that role unknown to him. She is known throughout Latin America as Tania, is a true legend, and possibly the greatest female intelligence agent of modern times.

If you read all the post death stories and denials of her KGB, warfare, Che involvement as outlined in her Wikipedia site, you will be amazed to learn her true life. That's what we're telling here, thanks to my for-real sources.

Former CIA officer Victor Marchetti explains, "Tania was a lady espionage agent, and a good one. She was adept at propaganda, running an agent's network, could handle an automatic weapon as well as a man, was totally dedicated to destroying capitalism; she was a highly qualified KGB operative who fought and died like a true soldier."

In Third World revolutionary rhetoric she is remembered as a martyr for the Marxist cause. Throughout South and Central America, Tania is regarded as a true heroine of the people's revolution despite her known status as a Soviet agent. In Cuba, a number of schools, hospitals, workers' unions, and military units are named after this mysterious woman.

Daniel James, a scholar of Guevara's life and times, classes her as "the most outstanding spy of any gender, ... in a very difficult assignment involving difficult people in a difficult time."

James describes her, "Tania spoke in a husky voice, had soft eyes in a pretty, oval face, with a very full, female figure." One of her Bolivian journalist contacts later told authorities, "She had piercing blue-grey eyes that could either seduce you or pierce you. Her silky brown hair fell in waves over her shoulders Even in jungle fatigues, her breasts were alluring. Even though we knew she was an agent and a fighter, this was a very sexy woman."

The KGB first surfaced Tania in Cuba in 1963, working for the Cuban Secret Service, or so they thought. (John A. Minnery)

There was much more to this woman than physical charm. As James also said, "Bunke's intelligence role with the Cubans was very complex. She was spying for both the USSR and for Che, as well as on Che for the USSR. Her slightest slip would have created a massive problem between the Soviet Union and Cuba, a major breach in the Communist world at that time.

"That doesn't even factor in that she also had to contend with the American CIA as well as the intelligence services of the Latin countries in which she worked. Some of these foes were not only smart, but brutal as well. Somehow, this woman stayed ahead of all of her foes for a long while."

Haydee Tamara Bunke Bider served almost as many espionage masters as she had aliases and cover names. The British journalist Allan Weeks documents that the young revolutionary worked for the East German Ministry of State Security (MFS), the Stasi, the Soviet KGB, Czechoslovakian intelligence, and, of course, for Che, using at least twelve known covers.

Even before getting into agency, Tamara Bunke had a long record of association with Communist groups. In 1969, the official Cuban weekly magazine *BOHEMIA* noted that she had belonged to the East German Free Youth; the SED (East Germany's Communist Party); and had conducted revolutionary "missions to Moscow, Prague, and Vienna before coming to Latin America."

Leo Sauvage, a journalist with solid Latin experience and contacts, points out that of all members of Che's command, Tamara alone was a member of and orthodox Communist front, i.e., one loyal to Moscow. Daniel James, the scholar who edited the translations of Che's Bolivian diaries, called her, "the most extraordinary woman spy ever."

That's a rich broth of praise for just one female in a field in which woman had been subordinate operatives. Whatever her espionage accomplishments, she put her whole self into its service, almost as a birthright. She was born in Buenos Aires on 19 November 1937 to Professor Erich Otto Heinrich Bunke, a German agnostic, and his wife, a Polish Jewess named Esperanza Bider. The parents, both wealthy Communists, left Germany in 1935 to escape

the hated Nazis. In 1952, the family moved back to Germany, settling in Stalinstadt, East Berlin. Young Tamara studied Marxism at Humboldt University, from which she was recruited into espionage work for the state. This is how she first met Che Guevara.

He had arrived in East Germany in 1960 to arrange a \$16 million line of credit for Castro's Cuba. The MFS assigned their lovely 22 year old lady spy to the wavy-haired, handsome 32 year old Guevara, who was as well known for his sexual skirmishes as for the battlefield ones.

"He was so utterly charming that in addition to her assignments of spying on him, Tamara fell in love with Che," Daniel James writes. "Che was happily married to his second wife, Aleida March, who had fought at his side during the decisive last battles of the Cuban revolution. Yet, Tamara was a compatriota, spoke Spanish with a true Argentine accent, and was equally fluent in the Marxist idiom," he adds.

A defected German Communist agent, Gunther Maennel, told his western counterparts that he had personally assigned Tamara to "seduce Guevara, gain his confidence, stay with him, and report his thoughts and activities to her superiors. She was very fully figured and sensuous, as well as bright. As we were pouring millions into Cuba we wanted to know what its leaders were thinking and doing. She was our best choice. Tamara took this assignment literally to heart."

Her work drew excellent ratings, both with Che and the MFS. After Che's departure, she was recruited by Maennel for the Soviet KGB, the major league of espionage, where she learned their whole sphere of agent training.

Maennel noted, "I had recruited Tamara from the university. Her intelligence assignments before meeting Che were mostly sexual. Her function was to lure political and military male foreigners into sexually incriminating situations, where pictures would be taken, so we could extort sensitive intelligence. She was quite beautiful and most willing."

After serving as a sexual decoy, Tamara was given further training in espionage, then assigned other minor spying functions. Her dossier grew from her excellent assignment with Guevara, and she was given the full KGB spy schooling.

Maennel added, "I had selected Tamara Bunke for the KGB after personally assigning her to Guevara as our control agent, although he, of course, knew nothing of that. She was the best we had, and the KGB made her better. They wanted her to control Guevara."

Paranoid as ever, the KGB worried about cover for Bunke, afraid of a scandal because of his marriage. Thus, she was set up as official interpreter for the Cuban Ballet Nacional, which was visiting East Germany in 1961. She returned to Cuba with them carrying the status of an "official cultural guest" of the Castro government. She quickly made her position more formal.

"Che was repeatedly trying to get her to come to Havana, so the KGB gave her that assignment. As love struck as she, Che got her a job in the Ministry of Education, plus an

officership in the women's militia, a very rare thing for a non-Cuban," Maennel said, adding that Bunke's control officer at the KGB center at the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City rated the young female "an excellent agent ... doing a superb job with Guevara He suspects nothing."

Nobody but Bunke and her KGB superiors knew anything of this woman's truly complex assignment. Consider the following:

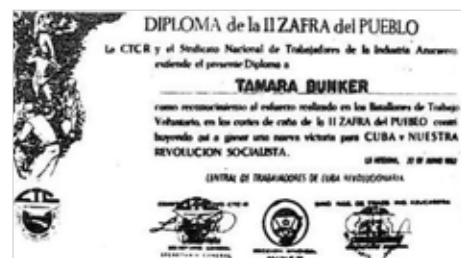
- She was a KGB agent assigned to spy on the leaders of a government friendly with and financially dependent upon the USSR.
- She was the passionate lover of Che Guevara, one of the most powerful and visible men in Cuba.



Tamara Bunke, age 19 in Berlin, 1958, learning her spycraft from KGB and Stasi tutors. (Bundesarchiv)



Tamara Bunke, aka Tania, carried this official Cuban ID card which covered her as an employee of their Ministry of Education. (U.S. Department of State Archives)



Tamara Bunke's official Cuban ID card which gave her full cover for her KGB assignments in Cuba, South America, etc. (U.S. Department of State Archives)

- Guevara was living with his wife and children in Havana, where Tamara Bunke also had her apartment. Hilda, Guevara's first wife, also lived in that city and was always looking to make trouble for her ex-mate.
- Che was constantly pressuring Bunke to make trips with him to export his brand of totally violent revolution. The Soviets had specifically warned Guevara and Castro against this policy.

By 1962, Che was campaigning to export his revolutionary rhetoric into some real field action. Castro agreed, over the Soviet objections, and Che took Tamara Bunke to Nicaragua to help him train a revolutionary army. When these troops headed for the real fighting, Guevara and Bunke went in with them, together. She saw her first combat as a guerrilla fighter in the Frente Unitario Nicaraguense. The mission was urban terrorism — stealing weapons and conducting harassment sniping at civil authorities on the streets of Managua. She was under hostile fire for the first time in her life, and the KGB was less than pleased.

They had ordered her to accompany Guevara simply to gather intelligence, to act as his babysitter. They had no idea she would go roaring into full scale guerrilla combat.

“Her Soviet bosses were horrified. They knew the propaganda the CIA would make of the capture or death of a KGB agent. They ordered her out of the field. The Soviets were also getting disenchanted with Che's advocacy of violent revolution. They preferred the more subtle political/economic/nationalistic brand of revolution,” James reports.

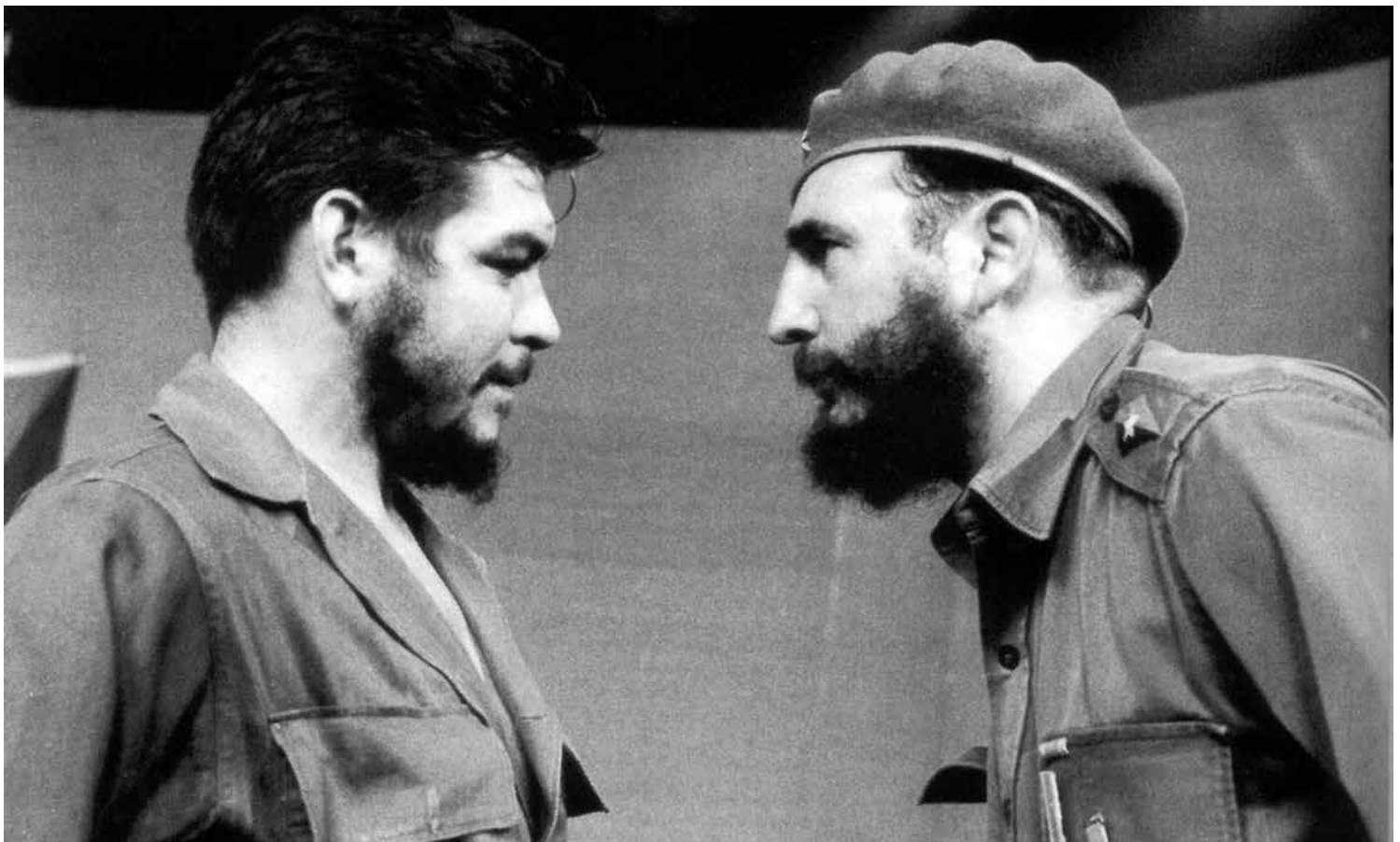
According to James, “Moscow and Che had fallen out over what the Soviets felt was his mismanagement of the Cuban economy ... for which they had to foot the bill ... and over a widening range of theoretical questions.”

In 1965, when Che openly attacked the Soviet diplomatic policies his position became untenable. Partially because of his own difficulties with him and with Soviet pressure, Fidel Castro “banished” his old comrade from power in Cuba. Guevara resumed his life's work of making revolution abroad, first in Africa, then to Bolivia. It was on this assignment that Bunke got her final orders — stop Guevara.

As the British commentator, Nigel Jones, explained, “When it came to violence Che was Cuba's Charles Manson, though he far outdid Manson in bloodbath.”

Through her control officers, Bunke was issued specific, personal orders not to even remotely expose herself to any further combat hazards. Secondly, she was specifically ordered to stop Guevara from continuing his active participation in armed revolution advocacy in Latin America. She joined Che in Bolivia in 1964, with KGB cover as his liaison with local rebels. While he then gave her the now famous code name “Tania,” her real master, of course, was the KGB.

“Che depended on her very much,” Maennel reported. “He was interested in setting the entire continent aflame with revolution, and Bolivia was only a part of his plan. He was all over South America, leaving his woman ‘Tania’ to handle Bolivia.”



While most photos of Che and Fidel show them smiling and laughing, this one is perhaps more accurate of their separate political goals. E.g., Fidel greatly feared Che as a hugely popular and major political rival. It is much of the reason he sent Che on revolutionary jobs in other nations. (Saijces Chalmers)

As her cover job, Tania worked as a secretary in the Bolivian Press Service office. She stole a number of press passes and arranged for false passports for the rebels, which served Che well as he easily moved in and out of various South American countries. Rene Capriles Farfan is one journalist who knew Tania from her press office days. He recalls, “She was using the alias of Laura Bauer and told me she was a German student studying in Bolivia. She was alert and very intelligent. She was inclined to the Bohemian, though, living in a rundown flat and sleeping on a floor mat. She went to a few parties, drank a little, and loved folk music. She never discussed politics, though.”

Tamara Bunke’s other journalistic achievements included working for the magazine *ESTO ES*, as well as freelancing for several small newspapers. She also taught German in a private school, and did research work in antique native ceramics and ethnology at the Universidad Mayor de San Andres in La Paz. She told fellow students she was an Argentine citizen whose parents were German and that she had visited Cuba, Mexico, and Venezuela. She was described by teachers as “friendly, quiet, very pretty, obviously well educated and quite well-traveled.”

In 1966, Che told her to obtain a legal Bolivian passport, so she seduced and married an obscure Bolivian student. After the wedding weekend, she had the KGB pack him off to “study” in Bulgaria on a “state scholarship” for the honeymoon. The strange marriage was consummated only as another spy mission. The real lovers, Che and his Tania, celebrated her new freedom to travel with the legal passports gained from her “exiled” Bolivian husband.

Using this legal passport instead of her Havana-forged one, she freely joined Che on his travels into Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil. She also maintained her liaison with the Bolivian Communists under his command.

“Above all this, she was being run from the enormous KGB complex in the Soviet embassy in Mexico City, their central spy headquarters for Latin America,” the late Philip Agee, a former CIA field agent and case officer in Latin America had told me.

Because of her travels, Tania quit her press job and took a part-time spot with a La Paz radio station. She became an Ann Landers of Bolivian radio, answering letters from the lovelorn and others seeking advice. According to Agee, “Her answers must have sounded a bit odd. What she was really doing was circulating coded messages to and from Guevara and his rebels. It was his idea, but she had the poise and guts to pull it off on the government station.”

Instead of jumping to shut down the situation, both Bolivian government and American CIA officials saw this radio assignment as



Tania was in Bolivia as Che’s secretary, possibly “former” KGB control officer and probably paramour. (U.S. Department)



Tamara/Tania was welcomed to Cuba by Che and associates.



While in the field with Che in the summer of 1967, Tania took this picture of Che and their band of Bolivian communist guerrillas. (John A. Minnery)

a hysterical effort to bolster Che's dying cause and let it run to discredit and dishearten the rebel supporters within the city. This plan would force the rebels out of their hideout, Agee claims.

Another explanation was offered by Colonel John Waghelstein, former CO of the U.S. Milgroup in El Salvador, and of the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Ft. Bragg. Colonel Waghelstein told me that "Che established no alternative base camp to provide the guerrillas with safe shelter The base itself was too accessible as shown by the constant flow of visitors, journalists and Party members." When their camp was compromised by the U.S. trained Bolivian Rangers, the guerrillas were forced to become revolutionary nomads, carrying their weakening fight on the sparse jungle paths with them."

However, it is true that while popular support for the guerrillas was weakening, government counter-guerrilla measures were tightening. The Soviets apparently saw Guevara as a loser and attempted to cut their losses and create a depth of deniability in the region so that the local Communist party apparatus would not be dragged down by the defeat of Che's rebels; who were seen as Moscow's people. Tania was not instructed to actively scuttle the Guevara's operations.

According to undocumentable, but very reliable CIA records, the first alert of Tamara Bunke's true role with the guerrillas was given to the local Bolivian authorities by the CIA Station, La Paz, on 20 March 1967. She was described as "a propagandist and emissary for the rebels and may be the contact person for potential upper level recruits in the city." Later, CIA assets were able to pinpoint the Tania/Tamara connection and reported that she was the "principal axis between the rural guerrilla personnel and the urban support movement." Her cover name of Laura Gutierrez Bauer was leaked by either CIA or Bolivian officials to the local newspapers. This combination of intelligence and media pressure broke her cover and forced her to make her next move into the field.

Within the week, the Bolivian army had found Guevara's camp, either through Tania's carelessness or through her KGB operational plan.



Tania and Che in the field while being surrounded by Bolivian military. They split on separate courses, as she still thought she had cover...wrong! (John A. Minnery)

"She had an expensive Toyota jeep, very inconsistent with her student and part-time work cover. This had alerted us, and we tipped the Bolivian military. She drove this Jeep all over the place and openly was seen with rebels," Agee had told me.

"She violated guerrilla security by driving her well-known jeep right into their camp area to see Che. She left the vehicle there for several days, during which time the military searched it. They found her contact lists, a gross breach of security."

Carelessness or espionage game plan?

"Her cover was blown when the police found her list of contacts. So, she ceased being a spy and became simply an armed fugitive on the lam from their authorities," Agee explained.

"We were overseeing the operation," he continued. "The agent in charge was named Eduardo Gonzales, and it was simply a search and destroy mission from that point on. "We knew she was a KGB operative. Her La Paz cover story was pretty thin and very shaky. It wasn't hard to ID her positively, so we wanted her out of there ... But, not killed."

He explained that the Agency plan was to capture Tania in hopes that she could lead them to Guevara, whom they wanted badly. By 23 March, there was open fighting between the rebels and growing numbers of army troops circling the area. The possibility of betrayal was not lost on Che. His diary for that day reads, "Everything appears to indicate that Tania is spotted, whereby two years of good and patient work are lost."

His restraint disappeared when he spoke with her the next morning. According to an eyewitness, he really chewed out Tania for her carelessness, then started doublecross accusations. She fled in tears, real or staged.

Che Guevara and his KGB-agent lover were now trapped by the CIA-led Bolivian army, which was drawing the net tighter. At this point, the story comes to an ideological crossroad. Daniel James feels that Tamara Bunke had been faking her devotion to Che as part of her KGB assignment. When her Soviet bosses ordered her to stop Guevara at all costs, she knew betrayal was the only answer.

Philip Agee disagreed, saying, "They were both Marxists. They were very much in love. The situation is not inconsistent. She stayed with her man, yet fed intelligence to her bosses at the KGB, always hoping for the best. I think she felt she could stop the revolution and still save Che. She followed both her heart and her head."

The truth died with both of them in Bolivia in 1967.

They eluded the army through the Spring. Then, following a battle in June, Tania fell ill and was left in a village while Che and the main units moved on. James Daniels writes that there are reports that Tania was several months pregnant by Che at this time, which accounts for her poor condition.

"Survivors say they made love often and that she both appeared and acted pregnant those last months," Daniels wrote. "But, we'll never really know."

Her end was relatively merciful on 31 August 1967.

The sweltering tropical sun beat down on a small, isolated band of rebels, led by the Cuban Juan Acuna Nunez, a.k.a. “Jacquin,” as they stumbled through the jungles toward a river crossing. Bringing up the rear was a sick, possibly pregnant woman. Captain Mario Vargas of the Bolivian army had his 31-man patrol hidden for an ambush at the crossing. His scouts had spotted the eleven rebels an hour before.

Vargas recalls, “We fired when they were chest-high in the river. The woman was among the first to fall. I guess she was a conspicuous target because she wore a green and white striped blouse, while the others wore fatigues.”

Almo Ortiz, a Korean War vet who did contract jobs for the CIA throughout Latin America, and was at the ambush site, personally interviewed the only rebel to survive the ambush, Jose Castillo Chavez, a tough Bolivian Communist. This man, whose code name was Paco, was the last persona to talk with Tania.

Paco told Ortiz, “She could be a mean bitch and no one messed with her. Somebody gave her money and orders, somebody even higher than Che. The men were afraid of her and she used it.”

He said that Tania was ill, and wanted to surrender the rebel band, and had argued with Jacquin about contacting Che to pack it in also. According to Paco, Tania and Jacquin almost came to physical blows over the argument.

“This guerrillera Tania was both sick and pregnant, and was about at the end of her health,” Paco told his CIA captors. “But, I give her this, she had the discipline. She was true to what she believed and fought for it to the end when you killed her.”

The river current carried Tania’s body away during the brief fire-fight, giving rise to rumors that she’d escaped the ambush. Not so, reported both the Bolivians and the CIA liaison people. Then, a week later, her badly decomposed body was found down river. The identification was absolutely positive.

Soldiers found a packet of her unmailed letters, including one to her mother in Germany. The final lines read:

I am a child that wants to hide in some corner that is cozy and where no one can find me. I want to crawl away and hide. But where can I hide?

Those were the last words of this revolutionary and competent KGB agent. The man she loved and/or betrayed would die five weeks later in another military ambush by Bolivian Rangers, trained personally by U S Army Special Forces legend, Major Ralph “Pappy” Shelton.

“Che died a victim of his own miscalculations as well as the machinations of the Kremlin and its extraordinary agent, Tamara Bunke/Tania,” Daniel James claimed.

By October, there were only 17 men left with Che, and the Bolivian army’s 2nd Ranger Battalion, encirclement was drawing tighter. His determined rebels tried to break out on 8 October 1967. Philip Agee said of Guevara’s death, “There was nothing glamorous or dramatic about the end. Che was wounded in the leg and captured along with four men who chose to stay with their leader. Several of the others actually escaped.



Felix Rodriguez with captured Che and some Bolivian soldiers. Felix wanted to bring Che back to the US, but Bolivia’s president ordered Che to be shot dead on the spot and he was, on 9 Oct 1967. (U.S. State Department Archives)



Tamara Bunke’s corpse after recovery several days after she was killed by Bolivian troops while she was trying to cross a river. (U.S. State Department Archives)



Che’s corpse — Bolivian military and officials officially identify Che for publicity photo purposes. The officer is pointing out the bullet wounds in his chest as “proof” that he was not assassinated. (U.S. State Department Archives)

“They took Che to a nearby village, La Higueras, where a Bolivian officer and CIA agents Felix Ramos and Gustavo Villoldo interrogated him. A bit later, the order to kill him came down from La Paz, probably by way of the CIA headquarters in Langley. Around noon on the 9th, a Bolivian sergeant, Mario Teran, shot Guevara several times, killing him.”

Felix Ramos was the cover name of CIA legend Felix Rodriguez, who was posing as a Bolivian army officer, a role that fooled the journalists present. It was Rodriguez who handled communication between the site and Langley, and who later briefed President Johnson and other officials about the death of Guevara. Rodriguez gave the orders to shoot Guevara and told the Bolivians not to shoot him in the face so the wounds would appear to be combat related if necessary.

Rodriguez personally told Guevara his fate. Then, after his death, his hands were severed as evidence of his identity and death. Rodriguez also removed Guevara’s Rolex watch, which he still has to this day.

The body was flown to Vallegrande under the direction of Gustavo Villoldo. The body was identified and photographed by medical, military and CIA men, plus by two British journalists, Richard Gott and Christopher Roper. Despite press reports to the contrary, Guevara’s body was secretly buried in a desolate area near Vallegrande under Villoldo’s supervision. That burial site was not discovered until 1997. His remains were returned to Cuba and he was reburied officially with Fidel Castro leading the ceremony.

It was just the same for the body of Tamara Bunke, whose remains were buried secretly near the Valley Grande military base in Bolivia. However, somehow the KGB changed that and she was eventually buried in a vault of honor in Cuba amid great pomp and publicity with Fidel Castro doing the honors. While the KGB did not bring home its dead agents, even a female one who became a legend, they sometimes bent the rules when it suited their mission. ❖



Felix Rodriguez, the CIA legend who ran the op to capture/kill Che in semi-retirement, as insiders will tell you that nobody really fully retires from Agency duty. (CIA Public Information Office)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

J. David Truby is currently senior vice president of Great News Communicators.

A U.S. Army veteran, Truby was a combat intelligence NCO, psychological operations instructor, and later served as a civilian consultant and advisor. He was a trainer for the Bay of Pigs operation.

He is co-founder of the Indiana University (IUP) of PA's Journalism/Public Relations Department, was its first chairman and is now a Professor Emeritus. He also served as a field investigator for the U S House Select Committee on Assassinations for the JFK assassination.

Truby has written twelve books and co-authored five others. His reporting, photojournalism and writing have won eleven national awards.

Fire-Hardened: OSS in World War II Burma continued

In the remote corner of Southeast Asia where Burma (renamed Myanmar in 1989) borders China, World War II never really ended. As happens far too often with indigenous allies, after the superpowers of the time left Burma, ethnic conflict remained.

On my first trips to their land in the 1990s I met Kachin World War II veterans who fought for decades more in the Kachin Independence Army and new generations of rebel commandos, medics and videographers. I marched through bamboo forests and discussed tactics over deer antler wine in ridge top bashas. Throughout their ongoing struggle the Kachins have honored the alliance with Americans that drove invaders from their mountains and they continue to hope for our support and awareness in return as they fight on. ❖

FURTHER READING: Richard Dunlop of 101 wrote *Behind Japanese Lines*. Det. 101 vet Tom Moon penned a biography of Eifler, *The Deadliest Colonel*. Troy Sacquety’s recent histories include *The OSS in Burma*. Ian Fellowes-Gordon wrote two books about British-led Kachin Levies, *Amiable Assassins* and *The Battle for Naw Seng’s Kingdom*. British Special Operations in Burma are covered by soein-burma.wordpress.com — a fascinating, constantly updated website.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Edith Mirante is author of two books about Burma, *Burmese Looking Glass* and *Down the Rat Hole* and founded Project Maje www.projectmaje.org which distributes information on Burma (Myanmar) human rights and environmental issues. Global City Review published her recent essay on World War II artists, “[Drawing Soldiers in Burma.](#)”

The Admiral's Silver Lining

By Donald Collin

Tour boats ferry people out to the USS Arizona Memorial in Hawaii every thirty minutes. We just missed a ferry and had to wait thirty minutes. I went into a gift shop to kill time.

In the gift shop, I purchased a small book entitled, *Reflections on Pearl Harbor*, by Admiral Chester Nimitz.

Sunday, December 7th, 1941 — Admiral Chester Nimitz was attending a concert in Washington, DC. He was paged and told there was a phone call for him. When he answered the phone, it was President Franklin Roosevelt. He told Admiral Nimitz that he (Nimitz) would now be the Commander of the Pacific Fleet.

Admiral Nimitz flew to Hawaii to assume command of the Pacific Fleet. He landed at Pearl Harbor on Christmas Eve, 1941. There was such a spirit of despair, dejection and defeat—you would have thought the Japanese had already won the war.

On Christmas Day, 1941, Adm. Nimitz was given a boat tour of the destruction wrought on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese. Big sunken battleships and navy vessels cluttered the waters everywhere you looked. As the tour boat returned to dock, the young helmsman of the boat asked, "Well Admiral, what do you think after seeing all this destruction?"

Admiral Nimitz's reply shocked everyone within the sound of his voice. He said, "The Japanese made three of the biggest mistakes an attack force could ever make, or God was taking care of America. Which do you think it was?"

Shocked and surprised, the young helmsman asked, "What do mean?"

Nimitz explained, "Mistake number one: The Japanese attacked on Sunday morning. Nine out of every ten crewmen of those ships were ashore on leave. If those same ships had been lured to sea and sunk—we would have lost 38,000 men instead of 3,800.

"Mistake number two, when the Japanese saw all those battleships lined in a row, they got so carried away sinking battleships, they never once bombed our dry docks opposite those ships. If they had destroyed our dry docks, we would have had to tow every one of those ships to America to be repaired.

"As it is now, the ships are in shallow water and can be raised. One tug can pull them over to the dry docks, and we can have them repaired and at sea by the time we could have towed them to America. And I already have crews ashore anxious to man those ships.

"Mistake number three, every drop of fuel in the Pacific theater of war is in top-of-the-ground storage tanks five miles away over that hill. One attack plane could have strafed those tanks and destroyed our fuel supply.

"That's why I say the Japanese made three of the biggest mistakes an attack force could make or God was taking care of America."

I've never forgotten what I read in that little book. It is still an inspiration as I reflect upon it.



USS SHAW exploding during the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor 7 December 1941 (U.S. Navy [photo 80-G-16871], Naval Historical Center photo NH 86118 — National Archives and Records Administration NAID 520590)

In jest, I might suggest that because Admiral Nimitz was a Texan, born and raised in Fredericksburg, Texas — he was a born optimist.

But any way you look at it—Admiral Nimitz was able to see a silver lining in a situation and circumstance where everyone else saw only despair and defeatism.

President Roosevelt had chosen the right man for the job. We desperately needed a leader that could see silver linings in the midst of the clouds of dejection, despair and defeat.

There is a reason that our national motto is, IN GOD WE TRUST. ❖



U.S. Navy Fleet Admiral
Chester W. Nimitz

Don Collin sent this with a promo. We thought the story of the right-thinking admiral was worth passing along. And, in gratitude, we plug the product.

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SAGE: The Man They Called “Dagger” of the O.S.S by Colonel Jerry Sage



Kenn Miller

Reviewed by Kenn Miller

What we have here is a rare book that Chapter 17 may have given Chapter 78, or that some member of Chapter 78 may have left behind after a meeting. This may be a difficult book to find — but there is a copy presently on my desk that apparently belongs to our chapter. I hope that it is passed around Chapter members, because it a good read; because it deals with OSS selection, training, and operations; captive life in German POW camp Stalag Luft III, in Sagan, German, and the Great Escape(s) that became famous in books and a popular movie after the war.

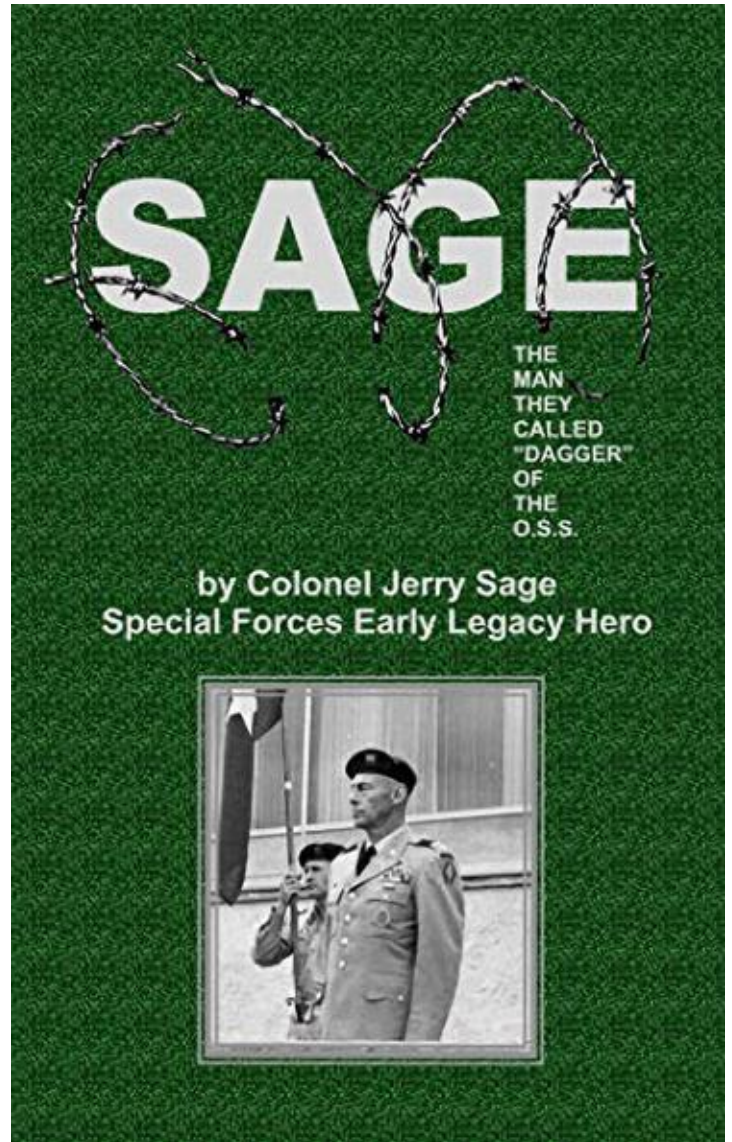
Reading the POW camp part of the book — the largest part of the book — is somewhat surprising. Colonel (then major) Sage was smart and lucky not to let himself be identified as an OSS agent when captured and passed himself of as a more conventional Airborne Infantry officer, because had he be known to be OSS, he almost certainly would have been tortured and killed. Instead, he was imprisoned with an interesting and resourceful bunch of Allied air force officers in conditions that seem to have been somewhat less arduous than a stereotypical image of imprisonment under the World War Two Germans. The Germans in charge of Luft III appear not to have been sadistic. But imprisonment is not a comfortable way to pass time, and the Jerry Sage and the allied officers imprisoned with him saw it their duty to escape — and though most of their many attempts to escape and evade being re-captured failed, the story of their efforts is fascinating and inspirational.

There is more to Jerry Sage’s book than POW life and escape attempts. There is a lot about the early days and development of US Army Special Forces after the war — and there is more. There is a moving tribute to Colonel Sage’s son, Captain Terry F. Sage, West Point class of 1963, who was killed in action in the counterattack to the Communist attack on Tan Son Nhut Airbase during the Tet Offensive.

And, of course, there is a history of Robin Sage. ❖

NOTE: According to Chapter 17’s President Bill Gunn, a copy of this book is now given to all Q Course participants. SFA Chapter 17 has updated the original book, published in 1985, with excerpts from Col. Sage’s O.S.S. file and other reference material. The CIA historians provided them with over 290 pages of recently unclassified information, and much has been added to this edition.

Profits from the sale of this book go to the continuing the support of the Western Carolina JROTC and ROTC programs, the support of Special Forces Q Course graduations, improving the broad support of all Special Forces who reside in Western North Carolina, taking care of those who need assistance and the Vet Smiles Program.



SAGE: The Man They Called “Dagger” of the O.S.S.

by Colonel Jerry Sage.

Published by
Special Forces Association,
The Jerry Sage Memorial Chapter,
Smoky Mountain Chapter XVII, Region 4,
PO Box 777,
Maggie Valley NC, 28751

This book is available for purchase from SFA Chapter 17 by contacting Bill Gunn, the Chapter president, at 828-400-0070 or wmgunn007@gmail.com. A Kindle version is available at [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com).

For information about this publication visit www.oldmp.com/sage/.

President Trump Awards the Medal of Honor to Army Ranger Sgt. Maj. Thomas “Patrick” Payne on September 11, 2020

OFFICIAL CITATION

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, March 3, 1863, has awarded in the name of Congress the Medal of Honor to Sergeant First Class Thomas P. Payne, United States Army.

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty:

Sergeant First Class Thomas P. Payne distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity, above and beyond the call of duty, on October 22, 2015, during a daring nighttime hostage rescue in Kirkuk Province, Iraq, in support of Operation INHERENT RESOLVE.

Sergeant Payne led a combined assault team charged with clearing one of two buildings known to house the hostages. With speed, audacity, and courage, he led his team as they quickly cleared the assigned building, liberating 38 hostages.

Upon hearing a request for additional assaulters to assist with clearing the other building, Sergeant Payne, on his own initiative, left his secured position, exposing himself to enemy fire as he bounded across the compound to the other building from which entrenched enemy forces were engaging his comrades. Sergeant Payne climbed a ladder to the building’s roof, which was partially engulfed in flames, and engaged enemy fighters below with grenades and small arms fire. He then moved back to ground level to engage the enemy forces through a breach hole in the west side of the building.

Knowing time was running out for the hostages trapped inside the burning building, Sergeant Payne moved to the main entrance, where heavy enemy fire had thwarted previous attempts to enter. He knowingly risked his own life by bravely entering the building under intense enemy fire, enduring smoke, heat, and flames to identify the armored door imprisoning the hostages.

Upon exiting, Sergeant Payne exchanged his rifle for bolt cutters, and again entered the building, ignoring the enemy rounds impacting the walls around him as he cut the locks on a complex locking mechanism. His courageous actions motivated the coalition assault team members to enter the breach and assist with cutting the locks. After exiting to catch his breath, he reentered the building to make the final lock cuts, freeing 37 hostages.

Sergeant Payne then facilitated the evacuation of the hostages, even though ordered to evacuate the collapsing building himself, which was now structurally unsound due to the fire. Sergeant Payne then reentered the burning building one last time to ensure



The President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, hosts the Medal of Honor award ceremony in honor of U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Thomas “Patrick” Payne at the White House, Washington, D.C., Sept. 11, 2020. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Zachery Perkins)

everyone had been evacuated. He consciously exposed himself to enemy automatic gunfire each time he entered the building.

His extraordinary heroism and selfless actions were key to liberating 75 hostages during a contested rescue mission that resulted in 20 enemies killed in action.

Sergeant First Class Payne’s gallantry under fire and uncommon valor are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the United States Special Operations Command, and the United States Army. ❖

TRACKING DOWN A HERO;

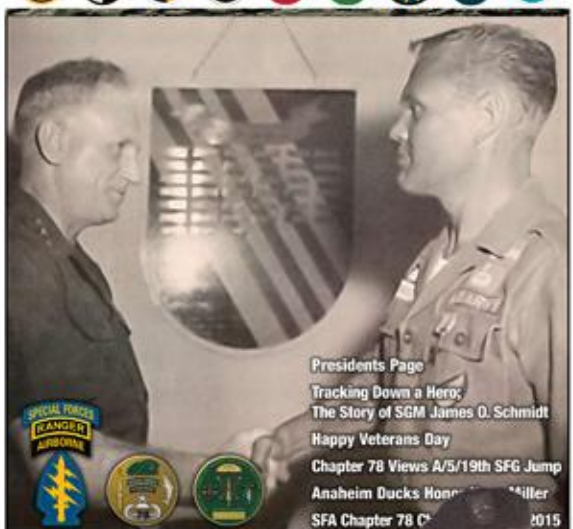
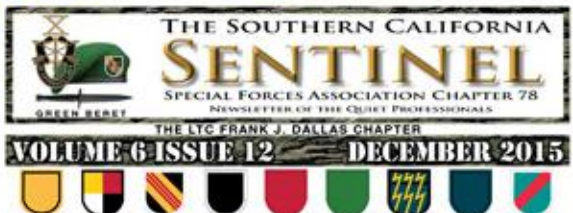
The story of SGM James O. Schmidt



holder of 3 CIB's (one of 325 men so honored, 2 Silver Stars and many other decorations. His accounting of his service record was confirmed from numerous sites. Furthermore, he had been an early member of Special Forces Association (1967) but was believed to have died and was so reported in The Drop a few years ago. His story was told. And his record was even more remarkable than his oral account revealed, not only was he SF in Laos and Vietnam, he had fought and survived action, the Chiem Reservoir battle and retreat in Korea, and had jumped in Sicily and Salerno with the 101st in 1942.

GRANDPA'S WAR STORY GOES #VIRAL

A Sentinel Story Inspires a Documentary



The extraordinary story of SGM James O. Schmidt begins in a movie theater in 1942 and ends thirty years later in Vietnam.

A chance meeting on a flight in 2014 led to Gene and Jack Williams' story in the [December 2015 Sentinel](#) — a story that went viral when his grandson posted a link to it on his Facebook account in 2018.

Be sure to watch it in November

Grandpa's War Story Goes #Viral, produced written and directed by Tim Gray, Founder, and President of the WWII Foundation and narrated by the actor Liev Schreiber, has been picked up by 122 Public Television markets across the country which includes 274 stations — that's 86 percent of the country.

The documentary will begin to be shown in November, 2020. To view channels broadcasting the documentary and schedules visit <https://www.aptonline.org/catalog/GRANDPA-S-WAR-STORY-GOES-VIRAL>.

