



# SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 6 • JUNE 2021

## **Cambodian Incursion, 1970 — Part Two**

**SFQC Class 325 Graduation**

**Planning for D-Day: A Letter From the War**

**"Hell On Wheels"**

**May 2021 Chapter Meeting Report:  
Guest Speaker Alec Bierbauer**





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VOLUME 12, ISSUE 6 • JUNE 2021



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:** A U.S. Army Bell UH-1D Huey helicopter prepares for a resupply mission for Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, during the operation "MacArthur" conducted 35 km south-west of Dak To, South Vietnam, between 10 and 16 December 1967. This is similar to the activity experienced by the 4th ID during the Cambodian invasion. (U.S. Army photo)



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## From the Editor



How Miller  
Sentinel Editor

Life seems to be improving, and Chapter 78 is getting back in the swing with very interesting meetings, which are getting back on a regular schedule. And the Sentinel is being read everywhere.

Both John "Tilt" Stryker Meyer and Alex Quade attended the most recent "Q" course graduation at Ft. Bragg. John wrote about it for this issue and Alex will talk about her conversations with some of the other graduates next month. Great representation for Chapter 78's

outreach efforts to the younger generation of Green Berets, including sponsoring the graduation barbecues and presentation of some "life" SFA memberships.

Alex Quade has also written a review of our May meeting speaker, Alec Bierbauer's, new book, which I am looking forward to reading. Alec's talk made me want to read the book.

Ham Salley shared a fascinating story, told by his dad, a probably underappreciated part of the DDay invasion. It includes avoiding a major "snafu", a great lesson in preplanning.

Ray Ambrozak tells about his recruiting efforts that led to a legendary occurrence at the "Funny Car" races.

And lastly, my much researched article — Cambodian Invasion, Part 2. Even though I was constrained by scarcity of records of SF and CIDG involvement, due in part to the nature of SF wanting to remain somewhat secret, I hope I have reasonably represented the efforts of SF during the "incursion". I am glad I set out on this quest because I was able to find out a lot of information and put the efforts of Duc Hue and Tra Cu ([see May issue](#)) into perspective in my own mind.

Now we need to summarize SOG involvement, especially CCS. Many of us will find next month's article to be surprising and interesting. ♦

How Miller  
Sentinel Editor

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# From the President | June 2021



Bruce Long, President SFA Chap. 78

Where to begin? As most of you know I ended up in the hospital just a couple of days prior to our annual December 5th 2020 Christmas party at the Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club. I remained in and out of the hospital until March 15th when I came home with a catheter and an IV bag containing antibiotics for a urinary tract infection (UTI). Bottom line, Duodenal Cancer. Prognosis, TBA.

The Chapter was very fortunate that **Don Gonneville** our Vice President, was able to step in and take over during my absence. Don not only did an

excellent job in my absence, but he improved the overall organization of the Chapter, all while working full time — twelve hour days, six days a week.

Our monthly Chapter meeting was held on May 8th at the usual place, the Fiddlers Green located at the Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, home of Charlie Company, 1st Battalion 19th SF Group (Abn). Our Chapter meeting attendance was thirty-seven Chapter members and guests.

**Alex Quade** provided us with a presentation about the SF Q-Course BBQ. She also recounted her recent reunion with members of 7th Group with whom she had been embedded in Afghanistan.

Alex then introduced our guest speaker, Alec Bierbauer, who served in the U.S. Army, and had a very successful career in Army Counterintelligence as a Special Agent. After retirement, Alec worked for the CIA in a very broad range of activities, to include clandestine services as a Case Officer. Alec has just released his first book titled *Never Mind We'll Do It Ourselves*. Alec shared with us an insight on the introduction of drones. Specifically, during the early days of our involvement in Afghanistan, and the fight against terrorism. I personally have already started reading his book.

**Special note:** **Richard Simonian** purchased forty of Alec's books, and everyone who attended the meeting received one for FREE.

The Chapter received \$3,000 donation from an anonymous Chapter member.

With regards to Chapter business, Debra Holm continues to make great strides on the updating of our website SpecialForces78.com.

The SFA Convention is just around the corner on October 22-25th 2021 in Las Vegas. This will be one large event, so I suggest you make your reservations early, and fill out the application which can be found in the latest DROP magazine or go on line at [www.sfacon.com](http://www.sfacon.com).

Our annual Christmas party is scheduled for 12/04/2021 at the Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club. Mark your calendars.

Our guest speaker for our June 19th meeting will be Annie Jacobsen. Annie has spoken at previous Chapter meetings and is highly respected. Annie's latest book, *First Platoon* (which I have already read) is a real eye opener on the current, and future identification of both bad guys, and good guys, through the use of biometrics. Annie's book centers on an Infantry platoon from the 82nd Airborne Division. This is NOT fiction.

The **next Chapter meeting** is scheduled for **Saturday, June 19th** at the Joint Forces Training Base in Los Alamitos. If you plan to attend, please email **VP Don Gonneville** at [don@gonneville.com](mailto:don@gonneville.com), no later than Thursday June 17th, midnight as we need an exact headcount.

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

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

## DON'T MISS THESE SFA CH. 78 HIGHLIGHTS AHEAD!



### In July's Sentinel:

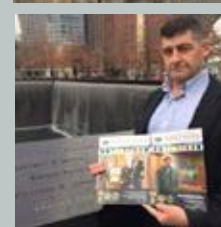
- ▶ The story of this SF ODA's heroic actions
- ▶ Why war reporter Alex Quade is scrubbing with a toothbrush.
- ▶ Also, Alex talks with the next generation of Green Berets.

## August Chapter Meeting Special Guest Speaker:

- ▶ **Mark your calendars and RSVP early for 21 AUG 2021!**

Alex brings her friend the former CMDR Asymmetric Warfare Group. He now directs the National Center for Urban Operations and is with the Council of Foreign Relations.

(Photos courtesy Alex Quade)





# SFQC Class 325 Graduation



John S. Meyer

By John Stryker Meyer

Two days before 206 men donned their green berets for the first time upon completion of the Special Forces Qualification Course, many of them attended a BBQ hosted by SFA Chapter 1-18 at its new campus in Fayetteville, N.C., and SFA Chapter 78, which sponsored a delicious BBQ prepared and served by Mission BBQ on the afternoon of April 27.

As the future Green Berets walked onto Chapter 1-18's grounds, they were greeted by SFA National President Kevin Harry, Chapter 1-18 President Chris Wilkerson, SFA Chapter 78 Past-President John S. Meyer and a few other volunteers who handed out SFA business cards, showed them where the cold drinks were and announced that the BBQ would commence shortly.

Past SFA Executive Director Cliff Newman, who served two tours of duty in Vietnam with MACV-SOG and was on the first HALO combat jump into Laos said, "I always get a kick out of meeting our new, young Green Berets. They're amazing young men."

After short introductory speeches by Harry and Wilkerson, the future Green Berets were pointed to the chow line where an outstanding BBQ was served by Mission BBQ staff.

During the BBQ feast, Chapter 1-18 Vice President T.C. Rupert told the *Sentinel*, "Thank you for sponsoring the BBQ, Chapter 78 saved our members a lot of extra work and thus allowed all of us to enjoy spending time with the men who will don their green berets for the first time" on April 29. Chapter 1-18 Treasurer Alan Shumate added, "I know the new Green Berets really enjoyed... the great meal that SFA Chapter 78 provided for them. Well done ... and thanks for supporting our SF Regiment."

Following the BBQ Kevin Harry announced that at the graduation on Thursday April 29 a hand full of graduates would receive lifetime membership credentials for the SFA – which included eight donated by Chapter 78, represented by Meyer.

On the morning of April 29, in a large Air Force hangar on Pope Air Force Base, the formal graduation of 206 newly-minted Green Berets was conducted in a closed ceremony held under strict COVID virus restrictions and guidelines by the 4th Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) from the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. No photographs of the event were allowed during the ceremony.



Following the successful BBQ, the current SFA Chapter 1-18 Board of Directors gathered for a photo op with SFA Chapter 78 Past President John S. Meyer, at center. From left: SFA Chapter 1-18 Secretary Andre Battiste, President Chris Wilkerson, Vice President TC Rupert and Treasurer Alan Shumate. Each officer and several Chapter 1-18 volunteers thanked Chapter 78 for sponsoring the BBQ. The April 29 graduation ceremony was held at Pope AFB due to on-going COVID virus restrictions. (this photo and all others courtesy John S. Meyer)

Afterwards, Harry and Meyer presented eight Southern California graduates with lifetime memberships to the SFA as part of a national campaign to increase membership within the ranks of the SFA which has chapters around the world. "On behalf of SFA Chapter 78, it's an honor to present each of you with your new SFA Lifetime Membership cards and a personal SOG challenge coin from myself," said Meyer.

During the three-day stint leading up to the graduation, Harry and Meyer met with SF recruiters on Ft. Bragg, staff and students from the Second Battalion of the Special Forces Training Headquarters, a networking BBQ sponsored by SF recruiters and visited the Special Forces Command Headquarters on Ft. Bragg, where the U.S. Army Special Operations Command Memorial Wall contains the name of every SF casualty from the Korean and Vietnam wars. Also in sight is the Green Beret monument and across the campus, is a statue of MACV-SOG Legend Dick Meadows, depicted holding a CAR-15 while in Vietnam. Meadows held the record of capturing 12 enemy POWs while serving in SOG, was later promoted to Captain where he served as CCN Recon Company Commander and worked under-cover in Beirut prior to Operation Eagle Claw in 1980. ♦





- ❶ Two days prior to the graduation, SFA Chapter 78 co-sponsored a BBQ for the graduates at the new SFA Chapter 1-18 campus in Fayetteville, NC. Chapter 78 funded the BBQ.
- ❷ Future Green Berets and SFQC staff members go through the chow line prepared by Mission BBQ. The food received rave reviews.
- ❸ SFA National President Kevin Harry speaks to recent graduates and visitors before the BBQ lunch was served by Mission BBQ.
- ❹ SFA Chapter 1-18 President Chris Wilkerson welcomes graduates to the recently opened SFA Chapter 1-18 campus..
- ❺ SFA Chapter 78 Past-President John S. Meyer hands one of the Lifetime SFA Membership cards to one of the eight newly-minted Green Berets following their graduation ceremony at Pope AFB on April 29.
- ❻ Former Chapter 78 member and founder of Excalibur Industries, John Joyce, left, stands with Bob Hash, owner of favorite SF bar/restaurant Charlie Mikes, Robert Hash.

- ❷ Following the graduation ceremony, several of us visited the Army Special Operations Command base on Ft. Bragg. While there we saw the Green Beret statue inscribed with President John F. Kennedy's observation of our beret: "(A) symbol of excellence — badge of courage— mark of distinction in the fight for freedom."
- ❸ At the other end of the quadrant is a statue of Richard Meadows, SOG legend whose recon team captured more than a dozen NVA prisoners on missions across the fence in Laos and Cambodia. He was later promoted to Captain of CCN Recon Company in Da Nang in 1969.
- ❹ The Memorial Wall outside the headquarters building.
- ❺ Among the names posted many MACV-SOG Green Berets killed in action: Maj. Samuel K. Tooney III, SSG William M. Copley, MSG Glen O. Lane — former One-Zero ST Idaho, MSG Jerry "Mad Dog" Shriver, SFC Ricardo G. David, SFC Jonny C. Calhoun, SSG Richard A. Fitts, CPT Raymond C. Stacks and Maj. Donald G. Carr, to name a few.



# PLANNING FOR D-DAY:

## A Letter from the War

My father, Col. Henry M. Salley served 30 years in the Army Corps of Engineers. General Hap Arnold personally sent him to England in July 1942 to build airfields and associated billets, depots, hospitals, etc. for the 8th and 9th Army Air Forces. He did not return home until October 1945. He watched the first bombing raid over Europe take off and the last raid to return. By the end of WWII in Europe, he was responsible for the repair and maintenance of over 80 airfields. Pilots helped win the war, but couldn't have done it without the Corps of Engineers.

A year ago, I got around to reading all the letters between my mother and father during WWII. My mother's letters were lengthy, but my father's were short because of censoring and V-Mail limitations. In one of the V-Mails he mentioned that he had survived a bad experience which he would tell her about after the war was over. In a later letter, he explained the situation. Turns out it involved D-Day.

Below is an extract from Col. Salley's letter to my mother about his D-Day experience.

Hammond M. Salley, US Army, Infantry, (Ret)



Col. Henry M. Salley (courtesy Hammond Salley)

2 July 1945  
HQS U.K. Base Section, ETO  
Engineer Service  
APO 413, Postmaster, New York, NY

In addition to my other jobs, I had the responsibility of "Mounting" the airborne (glider) and parachute troops in my district for the Normandy landings. They were to be flown from a large number of Airfields in my District. By "Mounting" was meant preplanning all facilities for their housing and messing for the period they were moved onto the fields until they left. This meant a lot of work, as several thousand extra men had to be cared for several days on each field. Our airfields were not built to care for so many people. I used Engineer troops to set up temporary camps, messes, sanitary facilities, water supply, etc, and do all the housekeeping as well, and also to build enclosures around the camps and let no one in or out who had previously not been "briefed." And all this had to be done quickly so as not to draw attention to something unusual going on.

This "Mounting" part was easy, but when they also gave me the job of distributing the operational maps to the same people, I balked as I did not think I should be given that responsibility. It meant that I had the secrets of the invasion in my hands several days in advance, and I had enough to worry about already. Anyway, I got the job whether I wanted it or not, and set up the organization to handle it.

It was handled with precautions taken to insure that units were not given the wrong maps and sent somewhere else, and other security measures taken. All of this took just hard work and planning. We were all set. Maps were ready for distribution. We knew D-Day had to be within certain defined interval, but not the day or hour as that depended on weather conditions, etc. These maps could not be delivered too early, but just in time for the people who would use them to study and be "briefed" on what they were to do. Of course, the people who got the maps were "sealed in" their airfields and camps, until the mission left."

3. All working and housekeeping arrangements having previously been made and accommodations provided, the depot was sealed and in readiness for operation at 1000 hours, 20 May 1944. The first consignment of maps was drawn from the Marshalling Area Map Depot at Leicester, Depot "G", and arrived at this depot for processing at 1200 hours that date. Requisitions for forty four units of Battalion size, or smaller in the case of separate units or detachments, were processed along with three supplementary requisitions and the required 65,533 maps were in barracks bags and ready for delivery at 1000 hours, 23 May (Y-9). The actual working time during this interval was thirty six hours. After consultation with the S-2, 82nd Div, and the A-2, IXth TCG, surplus maps were returned to Depot "G" on Y-3. The depot was maintained sealed and under guard until D-5.

4. The summary of maps made available for the 82nd Div and IX TCG and those subsequently resealed and returned to Depot "G" are listed below:-

Map Series	No. of different Sheets of this Series	Total of Sheets Delivered to Units	Total of Sheets Returned to Depot G.
1 : 4,000,000	1	9	2
1 : 1,000,000	1	32	12
1 : 500,000	1	31	13
1 : 200,000	2	1086	123
1 : 250,000	1	288	71
1 : 100,000	4	32,432	3,186
1 : 50,000	22	12,525	1,868
1 : 25,000 (Topo)	18	10,379	1,014
Town Plans	7	313	68
Town Plan Books (Thru Way)	1	240	60
1 : 25,000 (Def)	40	4,876	445
Map Indices	9	374	95
Photo Maps	39	2,928	1,984
		65,533	8,924

5. Details of Operation were as follows:-

a. Copies in triplicate of the forty four unit requisitions in alphabetical coded form were received from the Map Distribution Section, OCE, along with a summary of totals for each sheet involved. One copy was to be delivered to the unit along with the maps, another copy to be signed by the unit officer receiving the maps and thereafter to be retained by Dist VIII, and the other copy to be used as a work sheet in processing at the depot. Two copies of the requisition forms in the "clear" and showing the map designation as printed on the sheets according to the grid layout were obtained on a classified status from the Engineer, 1st Army. Maps were received in rolls of fifty and twenty with the rolls marked in the alphabetical code. This code was in the form of a fraction with the numerator designating the map series and the denominator the particular sheet within that series. All depot personnel were instructed that this code must be protected and not marked on the map sheets themselves, but would be placed on the outside of new rolls. All code designations on opened roll waste material was to be carefully burned.

b. Personnel: The handling of the outside guard personnel, drawing of mess rations, fuel and operating supplies, and transportation of maps from the Leicester MAMD and to the receiving units were under Major G.F. Botsford. Two junior officers, with a 26-man Engr troop detail and assisted by a 22-man military police detachment were used for guard work. Vehicles with drivers, assistant drivers, and necessary guards in movements were drawn as needed from adjacent Engr units. Operations

Word was to come to me in code when to start delivery of maps. Everything was set and ready. We knew the invasion had to come soon or be postponed. That night I was tired out and went to bed, but at eleven o'clock I was awakened by the officer-of-the-day and the signal officer who said: "Maybe you can tell us what this teletype means". The teletype was from the airborne Army Headquarters and said: "For God's sake, who knows anything about Map Distribution" and had been sent to about everyone in England in the clear. Then I found out that the signal officer at our Headquarters received a message addressed to me in a code the code clerk could not decipher, at eleven o'clock that morning. Without saying anything to me, he had sent the message to London to be decoded, before delivery to me. That meant twelve hours delay since the Army were apparently asking for their maps. That delay could have been vital, and I was pretty sick about it.

My map distribution depot was 75 miles away and it took some little time to get a message through to them, and it was with some relief when my officer there, Maj. Botsford, said he had started delivering maps at noon. Of course, he talked to me in a code we had arranged. We had foreseen that some misstep like this could happen and we had arranged for the Army to send an intelligence officer, who was known to my officers, to the map depot to let them know when to start if other communication failed. When the Army couldn't reach me, they sent their man down and everything was all right. My man couldn't let me know, as they were too busy and thought I knew about it anyway.

The men who were to get the maps were getting them all right, but the higher headquarters didn't know it, so they were trying to reach

A part of an official report on map delivery. (courtesy Hammond Salley)

anybody they could to help them find their maps. It was a grand mix up and maybe looks a little funny from this distance, but it was no joking matter that night. Every map was delivered and things came off fine. It was a grand job on the part of my officers at the depot. I recommended them for the Bronze Star Medal, but they haven't gotten them yet. I have not given up hope for them as a lot of good cooks and mess officers have been given them since.

I also "Mounted" the airborne troops for the Arnhem show too and that was easy the second time. It was quite an experience to walk down the large line of planes waiting to take off, and talk to the parachutists and feel their tension, then see them climb into their transports and take off and know that many will be dead in a few hours. I watched one hundred planes leave on one field, filled with parachutists one morning, then drove a few miles to another field and watched the glider echelons leave. They were all scared to death, but surprising confident in themselves. ♦

Extracted by Hammond M. Salley, US Army, Infantry, (Ret) – 4/10/2020



# Cambodian Incursion, 1970 — Part Two



How Miller

By How Miller  
SGT, SF Medic at A325 Duc Hue

In last month's issue of the *Sentinel* ([available at SpecialForces78.com](https://www.SpecialForces78.com)), we described how, in the spring of 1970, President Nixon saw an opportunity to help save the newly friendly Cambodian government, while giving a hopefully crippling blow to the North Vietnamese. He was also trying to turn the war over to the South Vietnamese, and saw this as an opportunity for the ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) to accomplish missions on their own and boost their confidence.

Things happened in rapid succession once the Cambodian government lost patience with their constitutional monarch, Prince Sihanouk. On March 12, while the Prince was abroad for medical treatment, the Prime Minister, Lon Nol, gave the North Vietnamese an ultimatum to leave supposedly neutral Cambodia in 72 hours, and he also shut down their access to the heavily used port of Sihanoukville, cutting off a major communist supply route to South Vietnam.

The north was not going to give up the robust infrastructure they had spent years building up along the eastern parts of Cambodia, and felt that the ineffective Cambodian Army (FANK) were not capable of making them leave. So the North Vietnamese Army (NVA we called them), attacked and took over several provinces and armed, trained, and encouraged the communist insurgents, the Khmer Rouge. Meanwhile, on March 18, Lon Nol's government deposed Prince Sihanouk and gradually asked us for help.

The south Vietnamese helped him first. In March the ARVN made forays across the border into the southern regions and found caches of arms, which they destroyed. More and bolder ARVN operations led to joint missions with the Cambodian Army (FANK) to defend the capitol Phnom Penh from the NVA. There was also a cooperative effort to evacuate 35,000 ethnic Vietnamese to South Vietnam, spearheaded by Cambodian, U.S., and South Vietnamese navies, after a large number of civilians had been murdered.

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In a televised address on 30 April (U.S. time), Nixon announced the U.S. and the South Vietnamese would clear out the NVA sanctuaries along the border. On May 6, two days after four students died in the Kent State University protests, Nixon limited the U.S. troops to an incursion depth of 30 Km and a June 30 deadline to leave. The South Vietnamese were not constrained by those restrictions. Things heated up rapidly with 30,000 American troops and 50,000 South Vietnamese (ARVN, RF/PF's, CIDG, etc.) becoming involved, along with almost 10,000 air sorties being flown, and the U.S. and RVN Navies contributing significantly.



CIDG were trained as light infantry. This is a typical rest overnight setup, plus security, not shown. (photo courtesy How Miller)

Records of U.S. Special Forces involvement are not easy to find. But with the help of our unofficial SF historian, Steve Sherman, I found that there were numerous A-camps involved besides Duc Hue and Tra Cu, along with a surprising contribution from SOG's CCS. The CIDG were Special Forces trained, and advised, irregular troops.

## II Corps —

### Operation Binh Tay [Tame the West]

In the northern areas, west of Pleiku, two brigades of the U.S. 4th Infantry Division, including a unit borrowed from the 101st Airborne Division, deployed from Pleiku by trucks to just outside the Special Forces A-camp referred to as New Plei Djereng.

The SF Medic there, Rich Pellerin, recounted to me that a couple of very long convoys arrived, and it took more than a day to deploy them all by helicopter to "Base Area 702" to the west across the border. The terrain in that area was part of the mountainous Central Highlands, so a land assault did not make sense. As it turns out, the reason it took so long was the LZ's were so hot they were only able to "successfully" insert about 50 men the first day. Action was intense with several friendly losses, including both men and aircraft. The next morning the rest of them began inserting smoothly as the enemy had left during the night, according to Doug Milliken of the 4th ID. He wrote an interesting book *Testimony of the Protected*, partially about his recollections of that twelve day operation.

The ARVN 22nd Division was on the left flank of that operation from 5 to 25 May. As that operation was extended, a company of CIDG joined the ARVN. In that second stage the SF A-camp Duc Co was the base of operations. By the time June 30th rolled around, all



of B23's A-camps had participated in the effort under the control of either the 22nd or 23rd ARVN Divisions. They found large amounts of weapons, ammo, and rice, a good portion of which they destroyed in place. There are indications that this started so late because it was added at the last minute, due to the reassuring successes, especially from III Corps.

### III Corps —

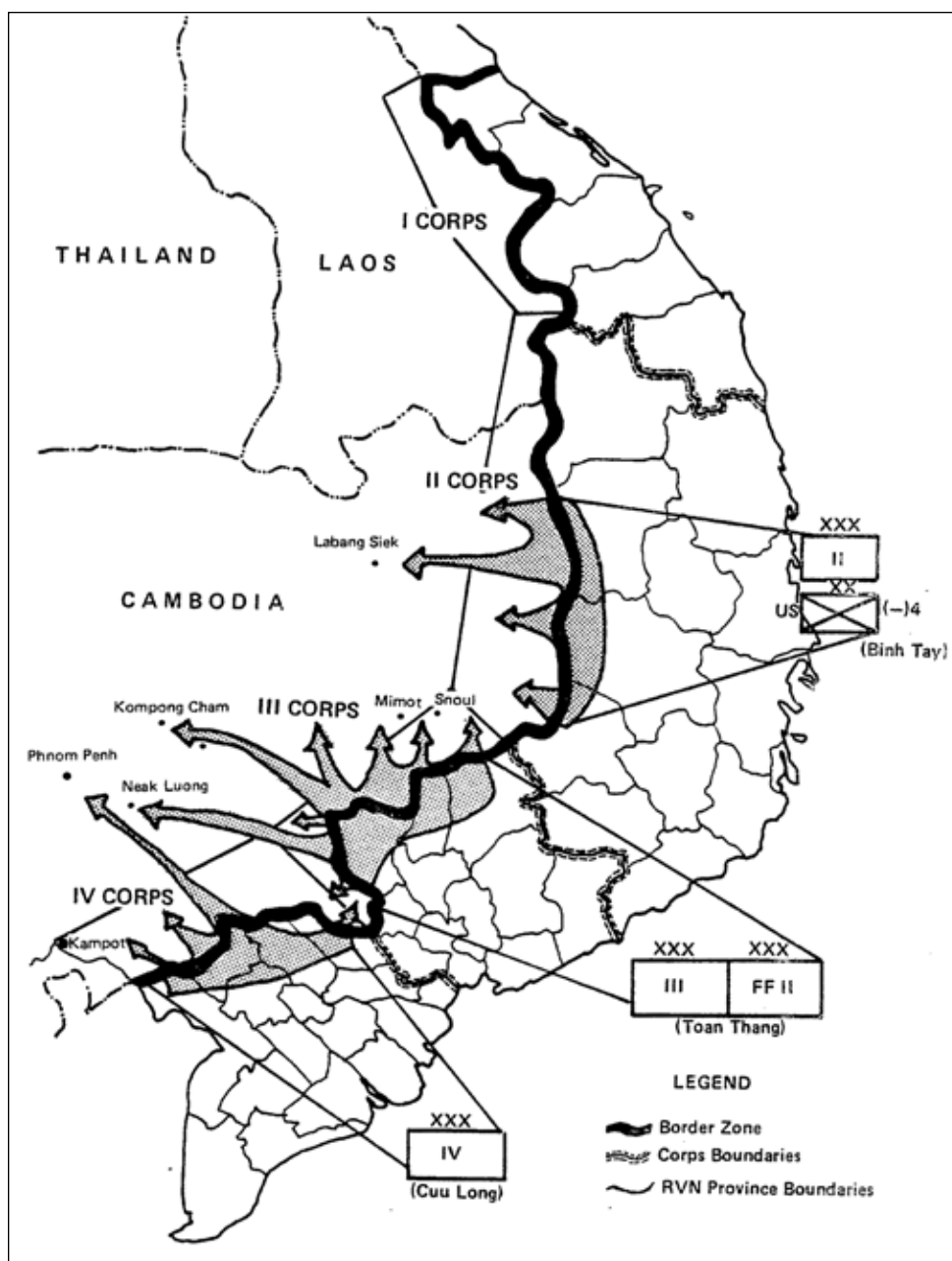
#### Operation Thuan Tang [Total Victory]

Further south, in III corps, as one got nearer to Saigon, the number and size of the NVA “Base Camps” got bigger and more numerous. The Fishhook and the Angels Wing/Parrots Beak stand out due to how close they were from the southern capital, Saigon — 50 and 40 miles respectively.

Near the Fishhook was also the suspected location of COSVN, the supposed southern military and political command center for all NVA and VC activity. When Nixon declared in his “Incursion” announcement that COSVN would be found and destroyed, it was a poorly chosen objective. Besides there being no huge concentrated infrastructure associated with it, the personnel had left shortly after Sihanouk was deposed, several weeks earlier. In fact an earlier ARVN operation, in April, had surrounded the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, but with the aid of the NVA they were able to escape that night and make their way northwest, deeper into Cambodia and back under the protection of the north.

What was found, as predicted, was a prodigious amount of weapons and supplies. The enemy put up fierce resistance at first. That was because the overall strategy of the north was to delay as much as possible and avoid large unit confrontations, which they were likely to lose, due to the overwhelming air power we had.

The incursion in this area was heavier and started earlier. On 1 May the U.S. 1st Cavalry Division and 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment were joined by the ARVN 1st Armored Cavalry Regiment and 3rd Airborne Brigade in attacking north, into the Fishhook and the area around Snoul, Cambodia. Though the NVA had begun moving two days prior, resistance was heavy at first near Snoul. In fact it was the heaviest of their whole campaign. When the enemy finally disengaged, the “Cav” found a two square mile complex southwest of Snoul that was so big they called it “the City”. It was one of the two biggest base areas discovered, with a hospital, truck repair yard and a huge amount of weapons, ammo, and food. Though the NVA may have taken the best weapons, they clearly left the bulk of their supply. There was so much that large quantities had to be destroyed in place.



Major Areas of Operation for the Combined Incursion (US Army)

A little to the west, on May 6, the 1st and 2nd brigades of the U.S. 25th Infantry Division struck north to Memot. The 2nd Brigade was joined by a CIDG contingent from Thien Ngon A323. The CIDG returned to camp by May 27 due to what was felt to be a lack of support from the 25th ID, though they were given responsibility for a firebase on June 8. Thien Ngon and Katum camps became bases of operation for an ARVN Airborne Brigade and all friendly units in Cambodia.

On 7 May, two battalions of the 3rd brigade of the U.S. 9th Infantry Division attacked through the Dog's Face, northwest of Tay Ninh, near Svay Rieng, while Bu Dop and Ton Le Chon A-camps received indirect fire and ground contact with up to company size forces. On 6 May, the 2nd brigade of the U.S. 1st Cavalry Division crossed northwest of Bu Dop. They were accompanied by CIDG from the Loc Ninh Special Forces A-Camp. Here they found the other big prize. They called it Rock Island East, for the famous armory west



11th ACR Engineers clear trail of mines in Cambodia.(DoD)

of Chicago. One of the most striking finds was 6.5 million rounds of anti-aircraft ammunition, along with 500,000 rifle rounds and thousands of rockets. They found so many supplies that they constructed a pioneer road to transport most of it back across the border. On 9 May Loc Ninh A331 even discovered a cache in their own AO with 250 bikes, 3 AA guns, and 5 tons of rice.

As mentioned last month, my camp Duc Hue A325 and our sister camp just to our east Tra Cu A326 conducted a joint operation in the Angels Wing/Parrots Beak area called Ba Thu, south of what is now Chantrea. This was after the ARVN had swept through at the end of April with a pincer movement and continued west to help the Cambodian FANK. We had time, after our significant initial exchanges with the VC/NVA, to explore and discover many caches of weapons and ammo. We even had to blow up a lot of TNT and mines as there

was no reasonable way of transporting them back across the border, even though we stayed until late June. Apparently all of Hau Nghia and Long An provinces were being supplied from there. Also, during May the turnovers of Song Be B34 and Duc Phong A343 to the Regional Forces (RF) were nevertheless completed, as planned. And on June 13, at Ben Soi around 0400 a platoon of sappers managed to enter, and did a lot of damage before being ousted from the camp. Four CIDG were KIA and many injured.

#### IV Corps —

##### Operation Cuu Long [Mekong]

On May 9 the ARVN 9th and 21st Infantry Divisions, along with the ARVN 4th Armored Brigade and their 1st Marine Brigade began assaulting up the north side of the Mekong River. They were aided by 100 South Vietnamese Navy and 30 U.S. Navy boats and went up the river to Pre Veng.

On May 16 the FANK and the ARVN retook Kampong Cham, northeast of Phnom Penh, helping considerably the defense of the capital, Phnom Penh.

There was different activity reported in IV Corps. The ARVN had apparently performed quite well under COL Tri in the Parrots Beak and the Angels Wing, sweeping through and continuing on towards Phnom Penh to help the FANK, however, there was no collateral operation by any large American ground unit from IV Corps, just the continued vigorous activity by the Navy.

There was frequent and intense activity against SF A camps, and enemy resistance to operations. Though there were significant caches found, they were in smaller batches, and VC/NVA activity appears to have been significantly higher there in the Delta, according to the reports. In the other Corps areas enemy activities were cur-

tailed inside Vietnam during the incursion, due to the NVA trying to subdue the FANK as well as save themselves.

Among the camps: A403, A413, A414, A415, A431, A432, A442, B41, B42 all were involved. For example: on May 1, A413 and 414 discovered a grenade manufacturing facility and destroyed it. On May 9, A432 initiated a heliborne assault against a known VC stronghold. The enemy withdrew after a 3-hour engagement.

On May 10, B41 Moc Hoa came under indirect fire, the results included 4 Green Berets wounded. On the same day a prisoner led A432 to 49 cached weapons.

Between 17 and 24 May, B42, A403, A432, A442, "149", A415, A431 were all involved. On May 17 to 18 an A402 force was inserted and became surrounded. They were soon joined by elements from A431





ARVN on m113s in Cambodia. (DoD)

and A432 and defeated the enemy. They subsequently found caches. Again on May 20, A402 and A403 were engaged by the enemy and ultimately found more cached materials.

There were numerous incidents similar to these right up through 23 June at Cai Cai. The last 2 USASF left Cambodia after an unsuccessful night ambush, and arrived at a firebase at 0945, June 30.

Our camp, Duc Hue was preparing the CIDG to become Vietnamese Rangers when I left. The camp was officially turned over in November. By 1 August I was on THE Freedom Bird, heading for civilian life. I was discharged from the army at Ft. Lewis, WA that same day.

A lot of this information became public knowledge fairly soon after it happened. Behind the scenes, however, MACV-SOG's southern component, CCS, at that time had prime responsibility for recon and interdiction of the Ho Chi Minh trail in Cambodia, in the operational area then called Salem House, which continued unabated during this time. It turns out that besides their spectacular recon and interdiction successes, they took advantage of a different opportunity to help out the Cambodians. But...that's another story. Next month we will hear more about that.

This 2-part article is not meant to be a historical treatise; it is just meant to convey the level of activity that Special Forces and the CIDG contributed to the Cambodian Incursion. A lot of this information, and more, can be found on [Wikipedia](#), but was also derived from many other sources, including Steve Sherman's CD rom. ❖

## RECOMMENDED READING

### About Special Forces participation:

*A Command History of Special Forces Participation in the CIDG Program (1961-1971)* (CD ROM) from Steve Sherman:  
<https://www.specialforcesbooks.com/SFHistCD.htm>

### About ARVN and U.S. line unit participation:

A large pdf published by the U.S. Department of the Army, written by ARVN Brig. Gen. Tran Dinh Tho, who participated in and wrote in great detail about the various operations:  
<https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA324718.pdf>

# “HELL ON WHEELS”



A Short Story by Maj. Ray Ambrozak, US Army (Ret)

“What the hell have you been doing?” The question was being put to me by a LTC at Infantry Branch, who had just thumbed through my records. It was late 1971. I was just coming out of my third tour in Vietnam by way of Medevac for malaria. He was of course referring to the fact that I was an infantry officer who had spent most of his career in Psychological Operations (PSYOP) units which he explained would not compete well with my Infantry contemporaries.

My orders at the time were sending me to the 2nd Armored Division, Ft. Hood, Texas. The LTC advised, that it was absolutely necessary that I have staff duty with troops at the 2nd Armored Division if there was to be any opportunity to salvage what was a flagging career.

When I arrived in the 2nd Armored Division, I was surprised how warm the welcome was. This made me optimistic about getting into a Mechanized Infantry Battalion - which was what the LTC at Infantry Branch had told me was my last best hope at the next promotion board. My optimism proved to be unfounded. The Division G-1 told me that they had looked at my records and saw I was the perfect candidate for a special mission that the division had just been given. He listened to my protests as I explained why I didn't want anything special. I had done special and it did not do me any good. He invited me to return the next day, at which time I met the Division Chief of Staff who painted a picture of how well suited I was for the job about which the division was in a quandary. He proved to be as patient as the G-1 had been as I vented about my need to get staff duty with troops to which he answered that I should return to the headquarters the following day.

On my third day in the Division, I was escorted by the aide into the office of the Commanding General of the 2nd Armored Division. As the door closed behind the aide, the C.G. announced in a manner that did not invite conversation on my part, “You are going to be my Unit of Choice officer”. Without allowing time for that to sink in, he launched into an explanation of how the Army was to become an “all volunteer” force. The new Unit of Choice (UOC) program was designed to support filling out the Army's personnel needs. The

UOC allowed a recruit to select a unit that he would be assigned to upon entering the service. To assist him in making that decision, major active units were to establish their own recruiting programs. This was the task that the C.G. was directing me to take on because he felt my previous PSYOP assignments made me uniquely qualified. He said he was sensitive to my wanting to be in a mechanized infantry battalion to get staff duty with troops, so he made a proposal. He would have me assigned as the Assistant G-1 with UOC as my only duty, for six months. In that time, I was to establish the Division's program to include all necessary memorandum SOP's selecting Division recruiters to work in Recruiting Main Stations throughout the country, create and manage a budget to cover all operations. After six months, he said he would put me in any battalion I wanted. When he asked is six months was enough time, I told him he could start looking for my replacement in three months.

Thus, began an intense year (yes, one year) of the use of Psychological Operations directed toward the civilian population. I knew the heart of the program was going to be the division recruiters that we sent into the field to work with the regular recruiters. They would have two target audiences – the civilian recruit and the recruiters they were to work with - face-to-face communicators.

One of the things I emphasized to our recruiters was to market the 2nd Armored Division name in any way they could. This resulted in special events taking place all the way from historic Boston on the east coast to raceways on the west coast. When an opportunity arose to connect our campaign to the sport of car racing, we were eager to do so, as it targeted our key demographic 18-25 year old males.

One of the events at car racing venues involves what is known as funny cars. The front of these machines lift off the surface as they fly down the track going 100mph traveling only on the rear tires. I was contacted by a funny car racer with an idea to build a 2/3 size fiberglass tank painted with 2nd Armored Division identification. The tank would appear at raceways where it could be coordinated with recruiting efforts in the area. Bob Perry, the race car entrepreneur, came to



Ft. Hood so we could discuss the details of what the tank would look like, as well as the details of the contract, which were tricky since the tank had not been built leaving a list of questions to be answered. When I told Bob that Patton called the 2nd Armored Division “Hell on Wheels”, we both agreed it would look great painted on the side. Bob suggested mounting titanium rear wheels which would contact the track, as the front came off the ground, causing a fireworks display. From that point forward, the negotiations seemed to go easier.

The inaugural run of the tank was at the Western Grand Nationals Race held in Ontario California. This race was to be featured on an upcoming ABC Wide World of Sports telecast. When I contacted the District Recruiting Command about the tank and the race, they were excited and ready to do all they could to make it a recruiting event to remember. There was an extensive static display including Armored Personnel Carriers, artillery, an Abrams tank and the “2nd Armored Division Hell on Wheels Tank”. There were two helicopters used in an aerial repelling demonstration on race day. When that day finally arrived, all of the parts seemed to know where they belonged and began to fall into place. All the things we could control were going well, except one thing we could not master— the weather — a light shower had wet the track enough to delay the beginning of the races. The delay provided me enough time to work up my courage to make

a request of the ABC director Roone Arledge. The ABC operations center was in a trailer near the staging area. Inside, there were four men expressing, in very colorful language, their disappointment about the unforeseen delay. At the earliest opportunity I introduced myself to Roone Arledge and asked him if the 2nd Armored Division tank would be shown in the telecast. His jaw was set when he answered that there were no guarantees, if anything at all would be shown from this day. My uniform was probably the only thing saving me from being tossed out of the trailer. Undaunted, I broached another question. “Mr. Arledge, if I can get the track dried off in the next twenty minutes or so will you put the tank in the telecast”? He had a smile on his face as he first shook his head, then nodded with a “you bet”. I told the chopper pilots to keep their engines running before I went to the trailer. As I exited, I gave them a thumbs up. The two choppers hovering ten feet off the deck, the length of the track, had it dry in minutes. There is little doubt that this was the only time a pair of U. S. Army choppers got a standing ovation from several thousand fans at a sports event. The second standing ovation came at the hands of the C.G. as we watched ole Hell on Wheels roar across the TV screen in his office, both of us feeling the “thrill of victory” avoiding “the agony of defeat”. ❖

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Raymond P. Ambrozak entered the Army in 1957 after finishing Industrial Engineering courses at Johns Hopkins University in Maryland. Commissioned as a 2LT Infantry officer after completing Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia in 1959, his first assignment was to the 1st Leaflet and Loudspeaker (L&L) Company at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

MAJ Ambrozak’s career included over ten years in PSYOP at the unit and theater levels long before either the branch or Regiment were formed. He planned and executed operations which involved extensive interface with foreign counterparts and every US governmental agency operating overseas.

In 1961 he deployed to Laos as part of US Special Forces mission known as OPERATION WHITE STAR. He was directly responsible for completion of a radio station dedicated to the King of Laos — airing the country’s first nationwide broadcast of a live event and designing and implementing a retraining program for Pathet Lao P.O.W.’s.

Assigned to the US Army Broadcasting and Visual Activity, Pacific (USABVAPAC), the forerunner of today’s 7th Psychological Operations Group (POG) from 1962 to 1965, MAJ Ambrozak served as commander of a mobile radio company and the PSYOP Staff Officer to a Joint Unconventional Warfare Task Force. He trained and assisted Republic of China (ROC) military personnel in Taiwan who engaged in PSYOP directed at the Communist People’s Republic of China (PRC).

In 1964, he deployed to Vietnam as part of a PSYOP Detachment assigned to MACVSOG. He played a key role in establishing and

putting on the air the Voice of Freedom radio station broadcasting to North Vietnam. He was managing station operations when the Gulf of Tonkin incident occurred.

In Vietnam, late 1965, shortly after assuming duties as S-3 6th PSYOP BN, the battalion headquarters was hit by a bomb blast totally destroying the building. Working through the turmoil of two re-locations and maintaining daily operations, MAJ Ambrozak was also directly involved with the activation of the 4th Psychological Operations Group (POG) in December 1967.

From 1967 to 1970 serving as a PSYOP Instructor at Fort Bragg’s Special Warfare School he taught PSYOP in every officer and enlisted course. He oversaw development and operation of the first PSYOP unit officer course and a course for PSYOP staff officers. He represented the Special Warfare Center as a guest speaker at the Marine Corps Staff College and the International Police Academy.

On March 15-16, 1971, as Direct Senior Advisor, Phu Nhon District, Pleiku Province, Republic of Vietnam, MAJ Ambrozak distinguished himself by gallantry in action and for which he was awarded the Silver Star for heroism. Additionally, he has been inducted as a Distinguished Member of the PSYOP Regiment, and has also been inducted in the USSOCOM Commando Hall of Fame.

MAJ Ambrozak retired from the Army in 1978. He worked Department of the Army civilian assignments at Fort Hood, Texas for 11 years.

Professionals like MAJ Ambrozak helped ensure that PSYOP became a core element of today’s US Army Special Operations.

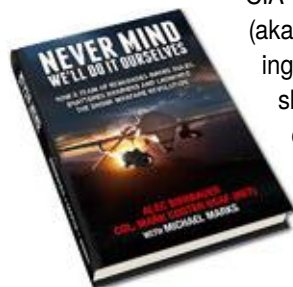
Be sure to read MAJ Ambrozak’s story “Operation Genie”, which appeared in the [March 2021 Sentinel](#).

# May 2021 Chapter 78 Meeting Report

## SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER ALEC BIERBAUER: BIN LADEN IS ONLY PART OF HIS STORY... THE CIA TRIED TO BURY HIS BOOK



Alex Quade



By Alex Quade, War Reporter,  
Honorary SFA Natl. Lifetime Member

“BADASS...”

...*That's* the word I used to introduce my friend Alec Bierbauer to SFA Ch.78. Amongst “other things”, the former CIA Clandestine Service Case Officer conducted counterterrorism and counterintelligence operations globally.

Alec Bierbauer also successfully fought the CIA for nearly four years with his co-authors (aka, battle buddies) to release their best-selling book. [Never Mind, We'll Do It Ourselves](#) showcases a very “SF way” of thinking outside the box, unconventionally, working around the system to get the job done (*translation*: going rogue, breaking rules, shattering barriers, doing whatever it takes).

Those lucky enough to clear the long RSVP list, hung on every word Alec said, every story and insight he shared. Finding Osama bin Laden before 9/11 — who, his team dubbed, “The Man in White”. Sticking Hellfire Missiles onto DoD's experimental unmanned flying cameras — turning them into killing machines: et voilà! Launching the Global War on Terror's Predator drone program — for which ODAs and others downrange are thankful.

Alec provided critical context for what remains the tip of America's spear, to this day still delivering strikes like the one that resulted in the death of yet another enemy of freedom: Iran Quds Force Commander Qasem Soleimani. He also shared insights on how the intelligence and special operations communities will need to leverage technology to monitor and project force in non-permissive environments.

I asked Alec what he hoped Chapter 78 members took away from his presentation and will take away from his book.

“I think a really important message from the book is that no single entity or organization had the tech, authorities, expertise, or mis-



Alec Bierbauer, suit-wearing at left and downrange at right. (Courtesy Alec Bierbauer)



Left to right, Alex Quade, SFA Chapter 78 President Bruce Long, Alec Bierbauer, and Sharlene Bierbauer (Photo by How Miller)

sion to pull it off. That applies to the DC-based time as well as the Afghanistan and elsewhere time,” Alec said.

“My ‘suit-wearing’ time was dependent on out-of-the-box thinkers and the awesome staff actions — navigated creatively through the Pentagon, and other organizations — by the men and women doing thankless tasks, that were often as critical as the tactical engagements down range,” Alec added.

His “boots-wearing” time was almost always paired with some form of military special operator element.





Alec and his team's improvised Toyota-mounted weapon system in Afghanistan, built from recovered parts. (photo courtesy Alec Bierbauer)

"In the rare instance where we were not side by side, they were at least close by," Alec shared. "We brought some unique authorities with us, but it was the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the USSOCOM community that made our tactical and strategic engagements successful."

He also explained that while stove-piped, organizational approaches cannot be avoided when there are budgets on the line — Joint and Interagency approaches are critically important.

"There were many days where I couldn't tell you what rank someone was, what organization they represented, or if there were a civilian, military, or contractor. I just knew I needed them at the table, as the best person for the job."

Those lucky enough to attend the special meeting event, received a copy of *Never Mind, We'll Do It Ourselves*, courtesy of Chapter 78.

You're in for a helluva ride! I received an advance copy, signed by Alec, back in January. It's a helluva great story, and a helluva history documented! It's also received critical acclaim from GEN DAVID PETRAEUS (former Commander of the Surge in Iraq, US Central Command, US & Coalition Forces in Afghanistan, former Director of the CIA), ADM WILLIAM H. MCRAVEN, (former Commander U.S. Special Operations Command, as well as the Bin Laden Mission), and JOE GALLOWAY (legendary journalist and author).

Thank you, Chapter 78, for welcoming Alec Bierbauer and his wife, Sharlene!

"I enjoyed meeting the SF guys, it was truly humbling to attend the meeting and be a part of that," Sharlene shared with me ❖

### ▶ MARK YOUR CALENDARS & BE SURE TO RSVP EARLY ◀

Alec Bierbauer will share more exclusive insights and formerly classified stories — as special guest speaker for SFA Chapter 78's Christmas party — 04 Dec 2021.



The BAD (Big-Ass Dish) ten-meter parabolic Satellite antenna. (photo courtesy Alec Bierbauer)



Hellfire missiles hanging off a Predator inscribed with messages. (photo courtesy Alec Bierbauer)



The Man in White — a still image from a video view in which Alec and his team had provided first confirmed Osama bin Laden's presence at Tarnak Farms. (photo courtesy Alec Bierbauer)

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alex Quade, award-winning war reporter & documentary filmmaker, prefers flying under the radar downrange and letting her life's work speak for itself. Former Commanding General of USASFC, and SOCEUR, MG (ret.) Michael Repass describes Alex's work: "War correspondent Alex Quade is this generation's Joe Galloway, who tells intensely personal stories. Alex nails the essence of sacrifice found in America's Special Forces operators and their families. Alex Quade is the real deal. She's spent more time with Special Forces operators in combat zones and back home after deployments than any other reporter. Alex knows them and their families, and is uniquely qualified to tell their intensely-lived, extraordinary stories."



## SFA Chapter 78 May 2021 Chapter Meeting

Photos by Dennis DeRosia



- ❶ Guest speaker Alec Bierbauer spoke to the group about the beginnings of the drone program, the subject of his book *Never Mind We'll Do It Ourselves*.
- ❷ Left to right Chapter Secretary Gary Macnamara, Cal State Fullerton ROTC Cadet Hunter Alonzo and USC ROTC Cadet Jacob Crowley. Cadets Alonzo and Crowley were both presented with Chapter 78's ROTC Certificates of Excellence.
- ❸ Guest Ken Pioetter who 52 years ago was part of the Engineering unit that rebuilt the airfield at Duc Hue.
- ❹ Terry Payne, went through Dog Lab with How Miller.
- ❺ Richard Simonian updated the Chapter about current efforts in recruitment of new members.
- ❻ Welcome back Len Fein! Len's first meeting after a long absence.
- ❼ Alex Quade reported on the SFQC BBQ, hosted by Chapter 1-18 and sponsored by Chapter 78. She also spoke about her reunion with members of 7th Group with whom she had been embedded in Afghanistan (see the May Sentinel's [cover photo](#))
- ❽ Alec Bierbauer's presentation attracted a large number of attendees.