



SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 7 • JULY 2021

Cambodian Incursion, 1970 — Part Three CCS Trains Cambodians

Lessons Learned (The Hard Way)

**Special Forces Training Cambodian
Infantry Battalions in Vietnam**

Brotherhood Builds Over BBQ & Beer

D-Day Remembered on its 77th Anniversary

Beirut, Lebanon (1983)



SENTINEL

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 7 • JULY 2021

From the Editor



How Miller
Sentinel Editor

This issue is large and ranges from 1970 to 2021. This is the third consecutive issue focusing on the U.S. involvement in Cambodia in the 1970s, and the wrap-up involved several inputs.

We are fortunate that in the wake of all the MACV-SOG measures to maintain secrecy, including orders to destroy all mission records, we have books such as *Secret Green Beret Commandos in Cambodia* by LTC Fred S. Lindsey USA (Ret). It combines information gleaned from medals issued, more generalized periodic activity summaries, personal interviews, and his own first-hand experience as the commander of CCS, with interesting narrative. Fred was very generous in offering up the use of his materials.

It overlapped with part of SF legend Billy Waugh's own book, *Hunting the Jackal*, in which he describes his activities as NCOIC of the CCS "A-camp" at Ba Kev in Cambodia, as well as much of the rest of his long career in SF and CIA. It is a very interesting, easy read, and very informative, including his run-ins with both Osama Bin Laden and the terrorist called the Jackal, and his continuing interaction with SF after his retirement.

And, as if that wasn't enough, our guest speaker this month, Annie Jacobsen wrote a book called *Surprise, Kill, Vanish*, which is partly about Billy Waugh's exploits. Annie told me about her visit to Vietnam with Billy, as research for her book, a trip she very much enjoyed. I'm looking forward to reading Annie's new book *First Platoon*, which she described at the meeting.

Then, continuing with the involvement, we have a "lessons learned" perspective by Chapter 78 member, Jim Lockhart, about training soldiers for the Cambodian FANK in Vietnam, followed by Chapter 78 member Rick Carter's comments about his experience training the Cambodians.

This dovetails nicely with Jim Wiehe's interesting and well written article about the "training" mission by the 10th SF GRP in Lebanon, where they performed and adapted to a different set of chaotic and perilous conditions, with their own "lessons learned."

Our intrepid SF embedded-reporter-plus, Alex Quade gives an overall feel of the Q-Course graduation barbecue, sponsored by SFA Chapters 78 and 1-18, to add to "Tilt" Meyer's report in the last issue. She includes a collection of quotes and observations that highlight the feeling of brotherhood and the "SF for Life" attitude we Green Berets feel, along with describing the synergy of all the different efforts that go in to supporting the whole "Regiment."

Jack Williams, a past Sentinel contributor, sent a report about the wreath laying ceremony on the June 6th anniversary of D-Day held by the Friends of the WWII Memorial in Washington D.C.

Finally, Jack Singlaub, Chief SOG, will be celebrating his 100th birthday this month. ♦

How Miller, *Sentinel* Editor

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FRONT COVER: M113 ACAVs from Troop "C", 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry, 11th Armored Cavalry, return to Vietnam from Cambodia. (NARA photo 111-CCV-596-CC70439 by SP4 Truman J. Skiffington)



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From the President | July 2021



Bruce Long, President SFA Chap. 78

Wow! The year is almost half over. Where does all this time go? It seems the older you get; the faster time goes. Our Chapter meeting was held as usual at the Fiddler's Green JFTB in Los Alamitos. Our meeting started right at 0830 hrs, and was attended by thirty members and guests.

I reminded everyone of our flex chapter meetings based on Charlie Company's schedule. I'll be publishing our chapter meeting schedule for 2022 before the next chapter meeting on July 17th.

Our guests included Annie Jacobsen (guest speaker), **Alex Quade**, Glenn Weatherly, recent UCLA ROTC graduate 2Lt Alex Choy and his escort CPT Anderson, and Tom Turney's brother John who served with 5th Group 1971-74.

SFC Ken Atkins OPS NCOIC for Charlie Company gave a briefing on their upcoming training involving HALO and SCUBA. The Chapter has been invited to attend live fire exercises in August at Camp Roberts.

Gary Macnamara LTC, SF (Ret) gave a short briefing on a meeting he attended on June 1st involving National moving into the 21st century. As most of you know the Chapter donated \$10,000 to National to upgrade their software and website. We have over ninety-eight chapters throughout the world with a membership of over 10,000 members.

Our guest speaker Annie Jacobsen spoke about the release of her latest book *First Platoon* followed by a lively discussion involving biometrics. Most of you are probably not aware, but Annie is a contributing producer for the *Jack Ryan* NETFLIX series. All chapter members received a free copy of Annie's latest book.

Alex Quade provided a PowerPoint presentation on her visit to Arlington Cemetery during the Memorial Day weekend, and was assisted by Glenn Weatherly. Glenn works for Aaron Brandenburg, both are becoming members of our Chapter.

Charlie Gage was asked to speak about the latest development on the issue of CCW in LA County. It was pointed out to everyone present that as a private citizen, you DO NOT have qualified immunity, therefore, if you do obtain a CCW, it is strongly recommended that you obtain the necessary insurance. Two companies that provide this service are, USCCA and U.S. Law Shield. I personally have coverage with both companies. I also had coverage with NRA, but they have canceled coverage in California. I wonder why?

At the writing of this column, I received an email from **Tom Turney**, Artemis Defense Institute is offering LA County CCW training. They have a 2-day weekend class and a one day during the week —

class size 8. Steve told Tom if he could get eight members to sign up, they would schedule a private one-day class. If you have questions, contact Tom Turney at (310) 880 4440.

Our guest speaker for our July 17th meeting will be Frank Warren Snapp III. He is a journalist and former chief analyst of North Vietnamese strategy for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in Saigon during the Vietnam War. For five out of his eight years as a CIA officer, he worked as interrogator, agent debriefer, and chief strategy analyst in the United States Embassy, Saigon; he was awarded the Intelligence Medal of Merit.

Our July 17th meeting will be at the Eagle's Nest, 5660 Orangewood Ave, Cypress, 90630. Breakfast at 0800, meeting will start at 0830 (approx). Cost will be \$10 per person.

Any questions or concerns feel free to reach out to me. ❖

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



- ❶ Guest speaker Annie Jacobsen
- ❷ Glenn Weatherly was a guest of Alex Quade.
- ❸ Alex Quade reported on her visit to Arlington Cemetery during Memorial Day.
- ❹ ROTC graduate 2LT Alex Choy accepting a Chapter Coin from Chapter President Bruce Long.
- ❺ Charlie Gage reported on CCW issues.
- ❻ SFC Ken Atkins gave a briefing on Charlie Company training.

(Photos courtesy Dennis DeRosia)

Brotherhood Builds Over BBQ & Beer



At center, Ch. 51's John Joyce (hatless) joins Alex Quade and the new Green Berets for a photo. (Photo courtesy Alex Quade)



USASOC Deputy Sergeant Major Bruce Holmes, Alex Quade, and Ch. 1-18 President Chris Wilkerson (Photo courtesy Alex Quade)

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

Uniform of the day: flip flops, shorts, t-shirts.

Cover: baseball hats — mostly turned backward.

Hydration: beer — straight from the kegs.

Stemware: red plastic SOLO cups — known for being the iconic standard to play beer pong with.

Attitude/Posture: a relaxed afternoon party with your “bros” (pronounced: “brohz”).

Energy/Atmospherics: as though everyone let out a collective sigh after finishing a task — paired with excited anticipation to take on what's next.

More than two hundred new Q-Course Grads shared BBQ and beer with retired Green Berets (and one blonde pony-tailed war reporter gal), under the shade of tall North Carolina trees on a hot day, near Ft. Bragg.

I handed out SFA Chapter 78 *Sentinel* magazines to the “new guys” — which they thought were “cool” — and hung out chatting and laughing with them.

“Thanks for supporting SF and telling our story,” a couple of the guys said. I didn't ask for names, nor official interviews — just easy conversations about their near futures.

“If I tell ya, I'll have to kill ya,” one of them joked, as I rolled my eyes and the rest of the gaggle of guys I was with, laughed. No X-Rays amongst them; all prior service.

“I can't wait to get to my team,” “I still have to do SERE,” “I'm going to 1st Group,” “I wanted to go SF, because I knew some guys who were SF,” “We still have to do Language,” etc., were just a few of their comments.

They actually really listened when I shared about SFA and about Chapter 78, and the importance of the Brotherhood, now, as well as when they retire.

“It's cool to see all the benefits and different things being offered to us and our families,” one of them said, while another asked me for another *Sentinel*.

Earlier, one of the very few gentlemen wearing ACUs at the sprawling grounds of SFA Chapter 1-18, USASOC Deputy Sergeant Major Bruce Holmes congratulated the new Qualification Course Graduates.

“I salute and welcome you into the bond that will live forever, in what's known as the ‘SOF for Life’ concept,” Holmes said.

The former SOCEUR CSM and 3SFG CSM, Holmes is also a SFA Chapter 100, as well as Lifetime member. He stressed the importance of the Special Forces Association and how it relates into the “SOF for Life” concept.

“The relationship between the active duty force and Veteran alumni is synergistic in so many ways, working together in powerful voice on issues,” Holmes explained.

Those issues include alumni connection/peer-to-peer mentorship, uniformed and community outreach, education and transition assistance, SOF Affiliation with active connection post-military, and suicide prevention.

“Not tertiary — more importantly, a living, blended approach during active, transition and post-military service,” CSM Holmes clarified later, as I handed him and Chapter 1-18 President Chris Wilkerson *Sentinels*.

Wilkerson, who’s still active duty, smiled when he saw the cover of the *Sentinel* I gave him: a member of the USASOC Black Dagger Parachute Team jumping with an American Flag ([January 2020](#)).

“Know you’re still a Dagger,” I smiled back.

While we all took photos, CSM Holmes rounded out the list of issues active and retired Special Forces work together on as “SOF for Life”: crisis response and intervention mechanisms, including family members, recruiting (strategic messaging for active ARSOF ranks and alum fellowships).

I asked the other gentleman donned in ACUs there, CW5 J.P. Guidry, the Command Chief Warrant Officer of 1st Special Warfare Training Group (what many of us knew as “SWC”), what he’d like retired SF members to know about this graduating class of SF.

“The only thing I would say to the greater GB community is that they should all be very proud of these new graduating GBs — as they are as good, and likely better, than any before them,” Guidry said as I handed him a *Sentinel*.

“It’s a privilege to share BBQ and beer with these new Green Berets and SF Vets from the Ft. Bragg area. We look forward to spending more time with them while they’re in Language School and preparing for their SF Group assignments,” added Chapter 1-18 Treasurer Alan Shumate, a former SF COL.

As I was leaving, I pulled over and offered rides to a few stragglers in their flip-flops, who’d been walking down the long dirt road through the trees from the Chapter 1-18 compound out to the hardball where they’d parked their cars.

We still sat for a while in my air conditioned rental — talking about going downrange, MOH COL Bob Howard’s shrapnel hanging around my neck, the big portrait of COL Maggie Raye grinning in the team room, and this extended SF community they would now be a part of. I reiterated about the support available to them and their families, welcomed them into the Brotherhood again, and wished them the best.

“This BBQ was great,” one of the new guys said, and the others agreed. “Let them know — thank those guys for us,” another added, “Yeah,” the others piped in, about the Chapter 78 sponsored meal.

“It’s our Chapter’s way of supporting the national Special Forces Association, and because we want new members in our chapter who are from California. Even if we never see them until they get out of the service or retire,” SFA Chapter 78 President Bruce Long would tell me later.



CW5 J.P. Guidry – 1st Special Warfare Training Group, Ch.1-18 Treasurer Alan Shumate, Alex Quade, Ch. 1-18 President Chris Wilkerson, Ch. 78 former President John Meyer (Photo courtesy Alex Quade)

I dropped the new Green Berets off at their cars parked along the road. As I drove away in my rental car, I saw former SF COL Alan Shumate’s truck pulled over on the side of that busy country road.

I witnessed Shumate direct traffic around, and help a young couple with children change their flat tire in that sweltering late afternoon sun. The former SF COL’s simple act epitomizing that “SOF for Life” concept, USASOC Deputy CSM Holmes had shared with the new Green Berets, earlier.

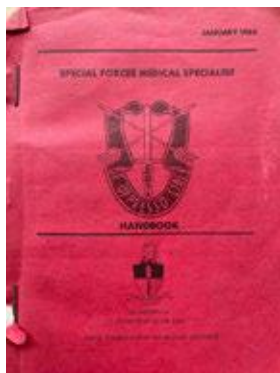
I pulled over, handed him extra water bottles I always carry, to give to the family. Having each other’s backs is what it’s all about in this community. And that... is what the SFA BBQ showed to the new Green Berets. ♦



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alex Quade, award-winning war reporter and 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.*”

Attention SFA Members!



MEDIC!

Hey Doc, a bunch of us are getting together during the SFACON in Las Vegas this fall. If you were a 91B/18D we would love to see you there. In preparation, we are gathering photo's from medical training, field dispensaries, etc.

As a 91B myself (70-79), I often felt I had a somewhat privileged position on the teams I was assigned to, and know that many other Medics felt the same way. Our goal with this gathering would be as follows:

- Promote comradery within the group
- Share stories of what impact being a medic had on our lives, both in and out of service
- Find out which of us used our SF medical training to transition into civilian medical positions
- Explore how we may be able to assist currently active duty 18D's transition into civilian medical fields
- Demonstrate the evolution of SF Medical Aidman training program from the 60's to current practices

Please send your photo's, and any stories that you wish to share, to Dennis DeRosia at dderosia@cox.net, so that we can compile them into a little presentation. More information on where and when we will be meeting at SFACON to come. ♦

From Karl Johnson, former Commander of A/5-19th SFG and Special Operations Detachment-North, from the CALSOF Enterprise (California Army National Guard):



"As always, thanks for CH78's continued support over the years! While SOD-N was deployed to Afghanistan in 2018, CSM Beetham and I flew this U.S. Flag in CH78's honor." ♦



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D-Day Remembered on its 77th Anniversary

By Gene Williams

The non-profit organization Friends of the WWII Memorial each year sponsors a wreath laying ceremony at the Atlantic pavilion side of the WWII Memorial on the Mall in Washington, D.C. on 6 June, D-Day. Various veteran groups lay wreaths in remembrance of the sacrifices made by our troops in this great endeavor.

This year the 82nd Airborne Association participated in the ceremony. Lieutenant Gene H. Williams of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne, who jumped into Normandy as a Pathfinder stick commander, KIA at Pretot 20 June 1944, was remembered. He was represented at the ceremony by his son Gene H Williams, Jr., former 5th SFG/MACV SOG. ♦

Gene Williams was SF at Ban Don III Corps for a year, then a year with MACV-SOG in as 1-0 of RT Delaware. His father, Lt. Gene H. Williams, was a 1st Lt Pathfinder on D-Day with the 82nd ABN Div and was KIA on Day 11.

Gene and his twin brother Jack, also a former SF 05B4S (commo for the young SF) who served in II Corps Vietnam on several border A-Teams including Ben Het, have been frequent contributors to the *Sentinel* over the years. To learn more about the Pathfinders, read Jack's article in the [April 2017 Sentinel](#). Also be sure to check out the [August 2019 Sentinel](#) for Gene and Jack's "D-Day 75th Anniversary — A Normandy Experience" which covered their return to Normandy for the anniversary celebration.



Lt. Gene H. Williams

In 2019, the inland town of Pretot dedicated a monument to Col. Louis Gonzaga Mendez and the 3/508th PIR for their attack and liberation of the town on 20 June 1944. As part of the ceremony a plaque was installed honoring Lt. Gene H. Williams, commander of Pathfinder stick "Chalk 18," who was KIA in that attack. The picture at right shows the monument, Jack and Gene Williams, and grandsons Lear and Patrick Williams with the mayor of Pretot.



The laying of the wreath dedicated to the 82nd Airborne Association with Sidney Wade, retired Air Force and reinactor; Gene Williams; Steve Dougherty (82nd Airborne Association); Mike Lonetto (Washington DC Chapter Chairman of the 82nd Airborne Association) Mike Lonetto was acting as Master of Ceremonies. LT Gene H. Williams was specifically mentioned in the introduction. Note the memorial display for Lt. Williams including many photos of combat in Normandy from Lt. Williams' camera. (Photo courtesy Gene Williams)



The ceremony's Color Guard — look at all those "Battle Streamers." (Photo courtesy Gene Williams)

Cambodian Incursion, 1970 — Part Three

CCS Trains Cambodians



How Miller

By How Miller

Last month I wrote about the overt operations that were carried out during the Cambodian Incursion of 1970. By some measures it was the most successful allied operation of the Vietnam War.

While President Nixon was accelerating an ongoing push to turn all combat activities back over to the South Vietnamese, it was clear that the odds of the South's survival would be greater if the NVA sanctuaries in Cambodia could be eliminated and their weapons and supplies destroyed. Much of the allied military was frustrated by having their hands tied and not being able to attack the NVA in Cambodia where they would launch military operations into the South and return to rest and rearm unhindered.

On March 18, 1970, the Cambodian government changed to one more friendly to the West. That gave Nixon the opportunity to strike. The U.S. and South Vietnamese Armies, Navies, Marines, and Air Forces all participated, in cooperation with the Cambodians. The NVA was temporarily displaced, huge amounts of weapons, ammo, and other supplies were captured, and the friendly government of Cambodia was saved from the communist attack.

What was left to discuss were the secret actions that weren't revealed for about thirty years.

Since early 1964, MACV-SOG had been secretly gathering intelligence "across the fence" in Cambodia, Laos, and North Vietnam and contributing to slowing down the flow of communist men and materials headed to South Vietnam. This was extremely dangerous work and a very high number of men — Green Berets, Seals, and commandos from the line units, and "support" people like helicopter crews, and fire support gunships and bombers, paid the ultimate price doing it.

SOG had three primary subunits: CCN(orth), CCC(entral), and CCS(outh). CCS was tasked mostly with recon and interdiction of the Ho Chi Minh and Sihanouk trails in eastern Cambodia. Their small teams of typically two Americans and about four indigenous men such as Montagnards, Nungs (Chinese), or Cambodians would be inserted, often by helicopter, to an LZ in the middle of enemy territory. Usually, their aim was to not be discovered and to gather intelligence or capture enemies for interrogation. They then would be extracted by helicopter. As time went on, the NVA got better at watching insertion LZ's and bringing teams under fire and bringing up reinforcements quickly. They even introduced teams that specialized in hunting SOG elements. Sometimes entire teams would

be killed or captured. Lots of teams had to be extracted under heavy fire, occasionally multiple times on the same day.

In his book, *Secret Green Beret Commandos in Cambodia*, CCS Commander, LTC Fred Lindsey, noticed that, by April, insertions were consistently difficult. While this was going on, he received reports of four locations where Cambodian Army (FANK) troops had been cut off from the rest of their army. He was hoping there might be an opportunity to support those troops and help them contribute to defeating the communists. He selected CPT Spoerry to do an aerial recon and try to make contact by dropping messages with instructions on how to connect with us. The captain made drops at two locations, one at Ba Kev, due west of Pleiku, and another a lot further south in territory that likely had more VC/NVA activity. Nothing was ever heard from the southern site, but at Ba Kev CPT Spoerry saw apparently emaciated troops lying alongside a rough airstrip, waving at him as if inviting him to land. This was a waystation the NVA had been using on their trip south, to the west of the Ho Chi Minh trail.

Based on this information, Lindsey set in motion a plan to try to turn the troops at Ba Kev into an effective fighting force-A Team style, while also helping their higher headquarters several kilometers to the west at LaBan Siek, with plans to turn helping that HQ over to the Vietnamese Special Forces.

This is something any Green Beret would be glad to do, but was quite out of character for the super-secret, get in and get out, SOG unit to undertake. He selected the experienced CPT Spoerry, who was fluent in French, which most of the Cambodian officers spoke, to be the Ba Kev team C.O. and sent for SGM Billy Waugh.

Billy, as he is often referred to, went on to have a long and heralded career even after he retired from SF, as is described in his book *Hunting the Jackal*, and highlighted in Annie Jacobsen's *Surprise, Kill, Vanish*, our guest speaker at Chapter 78's June meeting.

LTC Lindsey relates, "SGM William D. "Billy" Waugh had come from stateside hospitalization to the SOG Hqs sometime in January '70. After several months there, Waugh was personally selected by COL Schungle to be the 1SGT of the CCS Recon Company. He arrived at CCS in early March."

Waugh recalls, "I was aware that many at CCS did not like this, but I didn't have time to worry about it, because COL Dan Shungle had mentioned to me that Recon Company at CCS was in need of some prodding, and prod we did."

LTC Lindsey noted, "We already had a good 1SGT in Recon Company with MSG Joe Brock and Billy had no love for deskwork, so Brock remained 1SGT and in effect SGM Waugh became the 'Recon SGM' and that seemed to work well, as that was Waugh's forte. He gave a good boost to our recon retraining effort. In Recon, rank did not matter. Whoever was the most qualified, was in charge. Waugh was a warrior who spent very little time at the base camp.

He was well respected by the Recon Teams — he had flown Covey Rider on SOG recon missions before joining us. Waugh had a world of experience. He joined the Army and was with the 82nd Abn in early '51, then was in the Korean War and returned from there in Dec '52. He joined the SF at Bad Tolz in Germany in '54 and he entered Vietnam in 1962 “when the 5th SFG” first arrived in country. He made the rank of Sgt Maj in '69; and when he was in Okinawa in March '65, with TDY to 5th SFGA in RVN, he fought the NVA for the first time in the Battle of Bon Song where he was severely wounded and won the Silver Star. After long hospitalization, he went back to RVN in '67 assigned to CCN as MLS coordinator and Covey Rider where he participated in the disastrous raid on Oscar 8 in Laos that was aimed at killing NVA Defense Minister General Vo Nguyen Giap.

It was while Billy was checking on the training at the Long Thanh Training Camp near Saigon that Lindsey called Waugh to come to the office of OP35 commander (Lindsey's boss) with combat gear in hand. When he asked Billy if he was willing take on the task at Ba Kev, Billy replied that he would kill for that assignment. In fact, he later said that it was the most satisfying period of his SF career. At this point it was not clear whether the FANK at Ba Kev would actually be friendly, or if he would be walking into a trap.

Meanwhile Lindsey made preparations to set a blocking force to the north of Ba Kev under CPT Vincill. Lindsey's best recollection is that this all happened around April 26th, a few days before Nixon announced the “Incursion,” and a few days after the April 20th lifting of the ban on Tac Air in support of CCS missions. And though they were committing a large number of personnel to the Ba Kev operation, CCS still had to perform its normal functions. So, they borrowed teams from CCC and CCN to do the job.

Lindsey recalls, “Then we moved the 1st Exploit Company with CPT Jon Ross up near the border west of Pleiku in case we needed immediate strong reinforcements. Then we later inserted CPT Carl Vincill's 2nd Exploit Company into Cambodia to the NE of Ba Kev. They were to go into the area that had recently been scoured by an ARVN Division as part of the Allied invasion. Vincill's Exploit Force was to then act as a diversion and interdiction or blocking force; and capture prisoners, and be able to provide any reinforcement of Ba Kev if needed. We used the VNAF H-34s and the 187th AHC out of Camp Holloway for helicopter support for the Ba Kev and the Exploit Company missions.

“We used RVN AF H-34 Kingbee helicopters for all our movements into Cambodia. At the on-set, we were still forbidden to use USAF planes or our Army choppers, since we were not officially supposed to have US troops in Cambodia. That did not change until President Nixon announced our invasion of Cambodia by our conventional units. We had the 24-hour Airborne C&C aircraft — a C-130 that was crammed full with communications equipment. It's ‘call-sign’ was Hillsboro (& Moonbeam at night). They were based out of NKP, Thailand to direct U.S. jet fighters or the Specter C-47 or C123 gunship for air support. They were on station 24 hours a day. Also, when we made the insert and if Waugh had run into trouble we were ready with our normal Green Hornet USAF gunships and lift squadrons for any extraction necessary. We also planned for the movement of other support units to back up several contingencies for the contact at Ba Kev.”

A Good Welcome After a Rough Start

Lindsey continues, “We planned to launch Waugh's team from our northern launch site at Duc Co that had been used previously for many team insertions on strictly intelligence gathering missions. We were not sure if the Cambodians were going to welcome us with open arms or start shooting at us, so we had all kinds of rescue teams cocked and ready to go in case we had to pull Waugh and his team out under fire. However, the team had a rough time getting to the launch site.”

Billy Waugh remembers going to Duc Co via Cam Ranh Bay in a C130 that got all shot up and barely made it. “Just before landing at Duc Co, to continue the insert that afternoon from Duc Co to Ba Kev, we were shot up in the C-130 Blackbird, with the Crew Chief being WIA, the hydraulics totaled in the C-130, and only by the skill of the pilot/co-pilot, the bird gained altitude, then flew to Cam Ranh Bay where the runway was foamed for a landing there. There were between 45 and 55 holes in the port wing of the C-130, and the horizontal stabilizer was just about shot off. This had to have been from a NVA 51 Caliber weapon just outside of the SF Camp at Duc Co. My team — the CCS Team, was removed from the C-130, then with a dozen MPs surrounding us, we were moved into a hangar there in Cam Ranh Bay, with heavy guards all around our group. About three hours later, probably at 1300, we were picked up by two H-34s, from the hangar in Cam Ranh Bay, then flown to Duc Co, where we landed, prepared with a last-minute briefing, then flown by H-34 to Ba Kev. We landed probably around 1500 (a guess on this), and made contact with Col. Lindsey.”

Lindsey: “Fortunately the team was welcomed with ‘open arms’ by a raggedy and desperate bunch of Cambodians. Waugh introduced himself [in his best rudimentary French], to the senior Cambodian Battalion Commander.”

Waugh gives a wonderful description of his meeting with LTC Um Savuth. “This man was in his mid-fifties, with a sharply lined, weathered face. He walked slowly, with the aid of a cane, and stood perhaps five feet, four inches tall. He had a deep scar near his hairline that looked suspiciously like it was caused by a gunshot wound. His skin was markedly yellowed, which told me the colonel was most likely suffering from jaundice caused by malaria.... he was armed with a Chinese pistol in a leather holster attached to a French pistol belt. His uniform, though worn, was clean. He held himself as tall as possible, and my first impression was that I had come across a furiously proud man. More than a thousand troops and their extended families lived in the vicinity of the compound. All contact with Phnom Penh ceased shortly after the ‘coup d'etat and his twice-weekly food supply drop ceased four weeks before our arrival.”

Waugh presented his credentials with a letter from Chief SOG and some gifts to include beer. They broke the ice with some warm Budweiser. Waugh notes, “After we dispensed with the formalities, Colonel Savuth looked at me with his yellowed, tired eyes and asked a simple question: ‘What can you do to protect us?’ I was ready for this. We knew our presence would spark the attention of the NVA, and the colonel did not wish the wrath of the NVA to descend on his unit. I had alerted the C-130 airborne CP, call sign Hillsboro, to our presence in the BaKev region. We were prepared to answer the colonel's question in an emphatic, spectacular way.



Cambodian Bn CO LTC Savuth
(Photo Courtesy of Fred Lindsey)



Cambodian Col Neaksam, Cmdr at La Ban Siek, with
ARVN COL Nghia (Photo Courtesy of Fred Lindsey)

"I turned to Colonel Savuth and pointed to the surrounding mountains. 'Pick a spot.' I told him. 'Somewhere at least four hundred meters away, where you would like to see a display of U.S. might.' Savuth pointed to the east, approximately eight hundred meters from the airstrip, to a wooded knoll. 'Do you see that?' he asked me. I related an approximate eight-digit grid coordinate to the USAF pilot flying with LTC Lindsey and requested a 'Sky Spot' — two 250 kilo high-explosive bombs — to be dropped on the coordinate of the knoll immediately.

"Within five minutes, two fighter aircraft far above, neither seen nor heard by the Cambodians, dropped their ordnance directly on the target. The bombs were not visible to any of us during their descent, so the explosion was a riotous surprise that took the breath away from the Cambodians, including Colonel Savuth. As the mountain erupted in flame and smoke, a huge roar rose from the soldiers. They stood along the airstrip and clapped, laughing uproariously and reliving the moment with those around them. I felt a wave of giddy relief flood over me. The USAF fighters that were used by our CCS FAC to put on that bombing demonstration were a part of our air cover for the insertion.

Waugh continues, "COL Savuth was impressed with this Combat Sky Spot. We moved (the team) into the camp and near the Colonel's shack there. Lindsey called me, during the hours of darkness, and was pissed that I did not come up on the radio. I must have been too beat to have heard the FAC bird, because I do not normally fail, in keeping Lima/Charlie Commo."

On getting the "all clear" from Waugh, LTC Lindsey flew in the next day and brought in another chopper with CPT Spoerry and an augmentation to the team and some basic supplies. He met Col. Savuth who had assembled his "motley crew" in parade formation. They had no standard uniform. Some wore boots, or tennis shoes or were barefoot. Very few wore helmets. Their weapons were generally obsolete and of

all kinds. Their motor pool included old vehicles from five different nations.

The team got to work immediately, improving the security posture, beginning recon and other infantry training. Ace commo man Melvin Hill arrived and got the whole camp 5 by 5 to CCS. They brought in a medical team, including doctors to improve the health of the troops and their dependents. During that visit one of the doctors told Billy that LTC Savuth was suffering so badly from three types of malaria that he would not survive many days without being medivaced for treatment. So after a full camp ceremony, transferring command to his subordinate, Major Thant, Savuth left for treatment.

Waugh described an early recon mission, during which a four-man team captured an NVA soldier alone on the trail. Each of the four were given the equivalent of \$20 reward in Cambodian Riels. That, along with how well the camp performed the next night in repelling an attack by two enemy mortar teams, raised the camp's morale sky high. The mission was moving towards its objective of acting as a hindrance to the NVA all the way to the Ho Chi Minh trail to the east.

CPT Vincill's blocking force found a large rice storage that they destroyed. A bivouac area of twenty-two large structures was destroyed and its large ammunitions cache was evacuated and sent to FANK forces at Ba Kev. Also, throughout the PB operations, "Pole Bean" items of defective ammunition, and demoralizing letters, diaries and small black radios were emplaced at various points. SOG Target Area 702, that was occupied by the PBO and several RTs during this period, had thirty-nine targets struck by 190 TAC AIR sorties. Results: five-hundred structures destroyed/damaged, seventy-three bunkers destroyed/damaged, and fifty-two secondary explosions.

This, of course attracted the attention and ire of the NVA. Eventually, higher ups were receiving so much info that the NVA intended to wipe the camp out, that a written offer was delivered in person by Vietnamese General Lon, the Vietnamese equivalent to Chief SOG, to LT Um Ari of the Ba Kev outpost in a meeting in II Corp HQ in Pleiku. The offer was made to convoy everyone in the camp across the border to South Vietnam, where their weapons would be collected. CCS was not keen on that idea, yet. So, training and operations continued until Savuth returned much healthier, and he agreed that he would continue operations as planned until Waugh and Spoerry told him it was time to go.

While the camp was active they were able to generate a tremendous amount of information and activity, along with the observations of the covering FACs, and many enemies and much materiel were destroyed as a result.

For example, Lindsey comments: "Once Ba Kev really got up and running, our CCS FAC's had more work than they could handle. CCS used ASA intercept reports to bomb VC/NVA transmitter sites at night, using the "Sky Spot". Pleiku had a "SKY SPOT" radar to control the aircraft. II DASCC plotted the location and the aircraft

was given a heading and speed to fly. “SKY SPOT” figured in all the variables and computed a release point for the aircraft. I recall one target, an NVA BN that was hit seven nights’ straight. On the eighth day, they had turned back north. This was probably one of our better operations that no one really knew about.

“Finally, the word was out: The NVA was set to march against Ba Kev and eliminate it from the earth, period. So SOG pulled the plug to actuate the evacuation, to move everything and everybody east along Route 19 into Duc CO SF Camp. MSG Robert N. “Pop” Taylor brought his RT to reinforce the Ba Kev crew about two weeks prior to the evacuation. Most of our USSF Ba Kev team were evacuated back to BMT on 23 and 24 of June.”

Lindsey never got to see the end phase of the operation, as it was time to go home and he had to prepare for the turnover of command. (He knew what was planned to happen, but was never told about the results until sometime later by COL Schungle back at the Pentagon.) In keeping with orders for our U.S. men to be out of Cambodia, SGM Waugh and a few other men withdrew to the Duc Co Launch Site on 30 June. Several days later, we don’t know the exact date, they were airborne in a H34 chopper to watch the whole evacuation from a H34 overhead.

Waugh’s heart-warming report follows, “This was billed by leaders of SOG (actually it was both the ARVN & American top brass in II Corp) as a humanitarian action, and a contingent of media arrived in Ba Kev to film the move of our fine Cambodian unit. The media was not informed of the circumstances leading up to the evacuation, and Colonel Savuth was told to brief his troops to remain silent regarding the presence and past presence of an American unit in their midst.... When the media assembled, we disappeared and Colonel Savuth took control. ...The trek began at first light”

The Cambodian Exodus H-34 choppers pulled out the last of Waugh’s team from Duc Co and they flew overhead. H-34s also helped evacuate “the lame and the old.”

Waugh described the scene as follows, “From my vantage point, this was the sight of a lifetime, a revision of the biblical Exodus story. Moving excruciatingly slowly, a long line of mankind and all his earthly possessions, spread out over more than five kilometers, trudged its way to a new life. The goats and cows fell behind, but they continued their slow and steady march east under the direction of several young Cambodian children — the children of our soldiers.

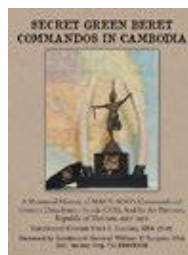
“Eleven hours after departure, at roughly 1700 hours, the convoy reached the border with South Vietnam. When we moved back to SF Camp Duc Co, with our Army, Vehicles, Weapons, dogs, goats, cows, more than thirty Russian, British, and other make trucks and tracked vehicles, with a convoy of about 2K people; a ton of air cover, and media everywhere, we did it without a problem, thanks to everyone involved, and a pretty high-priority backing by all in SOG.

“Colonel Savuth ordered the trucks unloaded and sent back along the column to collect stragglers. Hot rice and chicken were fed to these fine people, and the older ones showed their appreciation by touching us, placing their hands together, and smiling their beautiful toothless smiles.”

Lindsey adds, “They were placed initially in a temporary camp set up just outside the Duc Co CIDG camp. The next morning Billy and Col. Savuth went inside the Duc Co SF camp. They met ARVN General Lu Lon and some other VIPs. After the VIPs left, Savuth said his good-byes to Waugh. Billy presented Savuth with 20 cases of Budweiser.” Billy said, “I would never forget this mission or this man. The last known record of Colonel Savuth is from 1973. He is listed in the CIA Order of Battle as being a one-star general at the time.”

Many of the CCS Ba Kev team went right to the hospital to recover from malaria. “At the end of the CCS Ba Kev operation, all of the evacuated Cambodian troops from the two Ba Kev Bns and Brigade Hqs units were re-equipped and retrained at Pleiku before being transported back to their capitol of Phnom Penh. We do not know the details of what happened to them after that. We do know that the training that our Ba Kev team conducted for Col. Savuth’s Bn was very well received. A number of our own Cambodian SCU elected to join the Cambodian army, many as officers. Exactly how many Cambodian soldiers received the subsequent MACV SF training, we learned about some forty plus years later with the research for this book. Little did we know that the FANK training would eventually cover 78 Cambodian Battalions! So, CCS can take credit for starting that ball rolling!”

Check out the FANK training in Jim Lockhart’s article in the following pages, which shows that other efforts to teach the FANK were hampered by the Mike Force method of training, followed by Rick Carter’s comments on working on the training team after it was refined. ♦



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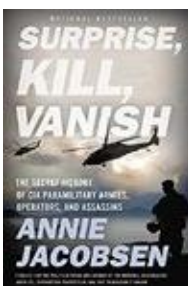
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Lessons Learned (The Hard Way) —

Special Forces Training Cambodian Infantry Battalions in Vietnam

How unconventional warriors had to rethink their training, experience and doctrine to accomplish a mission and the surprising results

By James A. Lockhart

Author's note: *The 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) performed many and varied missions in Vietnam. This article will examine a very small part of its vast scope. It is intended to describe only those aspects of the A Camps and MIKE Forces that directly related to the FANK program. No attempt will be made to include the history of the FANK program except as it applies to the topic of this article.*

The small southeast Asian country of Cambodia has had a history of struggle for control and/or influence by both internal and external forces throughout its history, especially in the period 1970-1975. Over the centuries Japan, France, United States, Vietnam (north and south) and the United Nations all played major roles in contending to exert power there. Internally, the monarchists, anti-monarchists, republicans and communists vied for political and military control of the country. This article will address a little-known connection between U.S. Special Forces and the Cambodian (Khmer) Army during the early 1970s.

In the late 1960s, Khmer Head of State, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, allowed the North Vietnamese military to establish bases in and move supplies through Cambodia to support the war in South Vietnam. Later the mercurial monarch-turned-politician reversed himself and tried to use diplomacy to reduce the Viet Cong and North Vietnam presence in his country. However, the Khmer parliament and prime minister General Lon Nol deposed Sihanouk on 18 March 1970, during his absence from the country.

After the coup, among other initiatives, the United States committed to provide training to the mostly ineffective Khmer Army. The agreement, crafted in the Spring of 1970, was to train Infantry battalions for the newly designated army: FANK (Forces Armees Nationales Khmeres). Because the Cooper-Church Amendment forbade U.S. forces from operating in Cambodia, the decision was made to conduct the training in Vietnam by the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne).

This was a natural choice for several reasons. First, one of Special Forces stated mission was to train indigenous government forces in counterinsurgency warfare. Second, due to the Vietnamization program, Special Forces A Camps were being converted to Vietnamese ranger camps, freeing SF personnel for other duties. Then, as



This is a Long Hai shoulder scroll which shows one of the many designations by which the former B-36 was known. (Photo courtesy James Lockhart)

discussed below, facilities were available to support large contingents of Khmer trainees.

Like many Army professionals at that time, despite Vietnamization, I thought the war was going to go on forever. In the Fall of 1970, I was returning for my second tour after having completed the Special Forces Officer Course and my hope was to be assigned to the 5th Group. During my first tour, I had led mortar and reconnaissance platoons and commanded a rifle company, all as a lieutenant in a leg (non-airborne) division. I had been a training officer at an Army Advanced Infantry Training center and on the General Staff at the Armor Training Center at Fort Knox. I had been a Signal Corps NCO for five years and attended NCO Academy and OCS. I had training written all over me.

Luckily, I was assigned to the 5th Group and during my interview with the assistant adjutant I expressed my interest in the "Projects" such as SOG. These legendary units have been celebrated and chronicled ever since, and, at that time, with my extensive reconnaissance experience, I felt I could make a contribution to those missions. Unfortunately, the assistant adjutant informed me that the Projects were being phased out due to Vietnamization and no officer slots were open. However, there was an on-going mission that would be perfect for me.

I arrived at detachment B-36 in Long Hai, Phouc Tuy Province, on 10 October 1970. It was a B Team capable of controlling and supporting four A Teams. The mission of B-36 previously was to serve as the III Corps Mobile Strike Force or MIKE Force. It was the quick reaction force for U.S. units and A Camps in trouble; it also perform independent operations as needed. However, since the composition of the III Corps MIKE Force was mostly ethnic Cambodians, most of it had been sent to Cambodia after the coup to bolster FANK, vacating the four-battalion-capacity camp at Long Hai.

I was assigned to SFOD A-361 which then consisted of one senior NCO and ten junior NCOs. The team was busily engaged in training a battalion that had arrived at Long Hai sometime after the Sihanouk coup. They were not part of the "official" training agreement and are never referenced as part of the FANK training program. Like the

training of the CIDG forces in the A Camps, A-361 had wide discretion in evaluating the battalion's capabilities and devising and executing a training program for it.

It didn't take long to discover that this battalion was a group of bandits who had volunteered to join FANK only to obtain modern weapons and new equipment. They benefited by being reequipped and FANK benefited by easily filling a quota in the new training program. Their reluctance to follow the lessons presented by A-361 indicated that they were combat veterans with their own proven methods. My previous experience with the army officers in Korea, Japan and Vietnam indicated that the leaders of this group were part of a private militia rather than professional soldiers. The battalion commander, although having a good sense of humor, did not hide his vicious administration of discipline.

When this group of brigands was finally shipped by the Air Force to Phnom Penh, we received news that was unsettling. First, the 5th Group would be returning to the U.S. and deactivated in early March 1971, while we would continue the FANK program under a new command, the USARV Individual Training Group (UITG). Next, the authentic FANK battalions would begin to arrive shortly, giving us little time to prepare. The plan was for B-36's four allocated FANK battalions to arrive at one-week intervals, train for 12 weeks and be replaced by new battalions when they were flown back to Cambodia. This would ensure that we always had 2,048 FANK troops in training at all times.

The good news was that throughout the duration of this program, we would serve in official SF MOSs, wear the Green Beret (with a new flash, photo below) and retain jump status.

A-361 was selected to train the first official FANK battalion in the new program. Special Forces doctrine at that time specified that an A Team would recruit, train, and advise a battalion in unconventional warfare (against an established government) or conventional warfare (supporting an established government). FANK's mission at the time was to expel the Vietnamese communists illegally occupying Khmer territory.

Unlike the complete flexibility afforded the A Teams in CIDG camps for creating a viable force, the FANK program came with guidelines — some strictly political and some seemingly arbitrary. The most restrictive was that the duration for the Program of Instruction (POI) for a battalion was 12 weeks.

The POI also loosely specified timeframes for a few topics of instruction, leaving the A Team some discretion.

And for reasons we did not understand, the FANK battalions were reconfigured to conform to the MIKE Force Table of Organization and Equipment (TO&E) of 512 men. We knew that the standard Khmer organization was larger, closely fol-



The UITG beret flash was adopted after the 5th Group left Vietnam. It is a representation of the Republic of Cambodian flag. (Photo courtesy James Lockhart)

lowed the French model and had excessive staff and support at the battalion level. So we also knew that there was some discomfort for them to be reorganized into smaller, light infantry battalions.

We received the first authentic FANK battalion at the Vung Tau Airfield on 4 November 1970. Vung Tau was an in-country R&R center located across an unnamed bay from Long Hai; we could see the lights of the city at night. It was also the logistic center for the 1st Australian Task Force, the dominant allied presence in Long Hai's home province of Phouc Tuy. The 1ATF would make significant contributions to our mission by providing convoy security.

The first two weeks of the POI began with issue of weapons, ammunition, uniforms and other supplies. Then we immediately began M-16 weapons familiarization and basic tactics training in the empty rice paddies surrounding the Long Hai camp. The POI called for a field training exercise (FTX) in the third week of training. We had identified a relatively enemy-free area near the village of Xuyen Moc, about 40 kilometers northeast of Long Hai. Xuyen Moc had a small ARVN outpost where we could set up a radio relay team through which the A Teams on an FTX could communicate with Long Hai.

In the short-notice period to prepare for the first FANK battalion, B-36, A-361 and whoever authored the POI, failed to notice a crucial flaw in the training plan. Taking a 512-man unit of raw recruits with only two weeks of training to the field in a (hopefully) pacified area was not a well-thought-out idea. Predictably, this oversight resulted in an embarrassing fiasco.

The first convoy from Long Hai to the FTX area began in orderly fashion. It was met near Nui Dat by Armored Personnel Carriers (M113s) and tanks from the 1 AFT. Australian helicopters covered our movement to the training area.

It was at the drop-off point near Xuyen Moc that the situation began to unravel. The FANK leaders were having trouble assembling their men into their assigned units and moving them into dispersed areas. The NCOs from A-361 were active beyond their "advisor" roles to prevent the trainees from congregating in dangerous clumps of targets.

Eventually we moved to an open area suitable to establish a battalion perimeter for the night. Guided by A-361's NCO, each company established positions and sent out listening posts to detect any enemy approaching the perimeter. The FANK battalion headquarters and the U.S. contingent set up in the center of the perimeter. The B-36 commander had decided to accompany us to observe this first battalion's performance in the field.

In my first tour in Vietnam, I had frequently spent nights in the center of an Infantry perimeter and usually slept well, but I remained attuned to any changes in the tactical situation. On this first night in the field, sometime after dark, I awoke as an ominous event began to unfold.

M-16 fire broke out near the northern edge of the perimeter and I was immediately on my feet. The shooting began to spread around the perimeter like wildfire (pun intended). Soon all the rifleman and M-79 gunners on the perimeter were firing at maximum rate without restraint into the darkness. It was like the mad minutes we used periodically in the U.S. Infantry and, while definitely mad, it went on for many, many minutes.

The SF cadre was unable to push the FANK leaders to stop the debacle and I was having the same problem in motivating the battalion commander. I radioed to the relay operator at Xuyen Moc to alert the standby helicopter at Long Hai for an immediate night resupply mission with an entire battalion's basic load of ammunition. As we spoke, he could hear the incessant small-arms fire and the louder booms as the nearby mortar crews joined the festivities. He used the same frequency to contact Long Hai and I heard him excitedly report that we were in heavy enemy contact. It took some convincing to make him understand the sad truth of the situation.

The two SF cadre medics set up an aid station to treat the wounded until they could be evacuated. Most of the wounds resulted from M-79 rounds exploding in the few trees at the edges of the perimeter or poorly thrown hand grenades. One of the casualties had been on the observation post that had initiated the panic when they claimed they observed suspicious people on a trail. As the four OP men ran back to the perimeter in fear, this individual tripped and fell into a slight depression. Before he could recover, his platoon was firing with everything they had and he endured an entire basic load of ammunition being fired over his head. He was brought to the aid station in an understandably nervous exhaustion state. A medic shined a flashlight into one eye and there was no response so he earned a place on the first group to be evacuated on the helicopter as it returned to Long Hai for more ammunition. To the embarrassment of the medic, it was later revealed that the man had a glass eye. However, everyone agreed that he deserved a spot on the helo.

The resupply was a success and the remainder of the FTX was abbreviated, tightly controlled and not particularly productive.

Even before this battalion returned to Long Hai, we knew that the second battalion to arrive (one week behind this first battalion in the POI) was scheduled to depart for its first FTX in three days—again after only two weeks of training. No one could reasonably expect a better outcome if that happened. So the commander of B-36 unilaterally canceled the upcoming FTX and asked for permission later. We immediately took a scalpel—actually a meat cleaver—to the



The author and a CIDG security company mercenary examine an unexploded 500 lb bomb in a Long Hai training area. Note his tiger fatigues and AK-47. (Photo courtesy James Lockhart)

POI in an effort to make meaningful revisions. With the pipeline full of new battalions there was massive pressure to devise an immediate, workable solution. It was like the proverbial repairing of an airplane in midflight.

Lesson 1: A can-do attitude rarely mitigates a bad plan; question the questionable.

This was the first—and hardest—of the three major lessons we learned in this program. The lesson was not so much that training raw recruits for only two weeks and then taking them on an FTX, even in a fairly pacified area, was a bad idea. The lesson was that we didn't critically examine the POI and see this obvious error and we failed to act on any misgivings we might have had. We were lucky that our oversight did not result in any serious casualties.

We had to scramble for a solution. Our main constraint was the 12-week limit on the training period, which in retrospect seemed too brief to turn new soldiers, including most of the leaders, into an effective fighting unit. Since we could not change the length of the POI, we decided to reallocate the available time into reasonable segments.

The most logical method to assign time periods for each level of training was to look to what had already proven successful: the U.S. Army model for Infantry training. We took each phase, from basic training to battalion field training and shrank them proportionally to fit within our 12-week limit. One example of a major change was to schedule a company-level FTX in week 8 and a battalion-level FTX in week eleven. It was far from ideal but it ensured that every skill would be addressed in training before being tested in a field environment. See Diagram 1 for the revised POI.

Corollary to lesson 1: Another important change to the POI was the formal scheduling of specialty skill such as medics and mortar crews. These came after everyone's basic training and mostly coincided with the times the riflemen were learning advanced infantry skills such as squad tactics.

Having done our best to maximize the available time, another issue arose due to a conflict between the revised POI and a cherished slice of SF doctrine. We were using the SF model practiced in the A Camps to train the CIDG: assign an A Team to a battalion and let it conduct all of the training. In applying this model to the FANK program, several problems surfaced that led to another lesson learned.

The first issue was that an A Team which was recruiting and training an A Camp battalion was normally time-constrained only by local conditions, so time could be allocated to focus on identified weak areas. Next, the team remained connected to the battalion during operations as "advisors" to the Vietnamese Army Special Forces team or as de facto leaders. Finally, the A Teams at B-36 were unevenly manned in terms of length of service, combat experience and cross training. All the team members were competent and qualified for their jobs, but some were simply better than others. One solution was to balance the teams' skills by moving some NCOs between teams.

While this highly unpopular solution was being planned, a better idea surfaced that would solve most of the issues. This concept would adapt our B Team organization to what had proven successful in the standard Army training doctrine.

REVISED PROGRAM OF INSTRUCTION												
SUBJECT BLOCK	WEEK OF TRAINING											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Basic Combat Training												
Squad Tactics												
Patrolling												
Platoon Tactics												
Company Tactics												
Company FTX												
Battalion Tactics												
Battalion FTX												
Recon Platoon Special Training												
Advanced Individual Training												
Machine Gun Crew												
Radio Operator												
60mm Mortar Crew												
81mm Mortar Crew												
Armorer (OJT)												

Diagram 1: Revised POI — Note the logical progression as each segment builds on the previous training. The first FTX has been moved from week 3 to week 8. Specific time frames have been established for specialized MOSs such as medics and mortar crews. (Courtesy James Lockhart)

We would take about half of the NCOs and officers from each A Team and create a fifth team in the camp called the Training Committee. These men would be the most senior, experienced and well-trained from each team. Each of them would be assigned in his specialty and would train every battalion in that specialty. In this way, every battalion would receive consistent, high-quality instruction and the instructor could develop and improve his techniques without having to think about teaching every skill in the battalion. Also, each battalion could be assessed in that specialty by the same set of eyes. If any changes were made to an area of the POI, only one or two NCOs in the Training Committee would need to be consulted and advised. A final advantage would be that the interpreters assigned to each instructor in the Training Committee could hone his language skills in only a small portion the POI. This was the configuration that every major training center in the U.S. Army employed, including the JFK Center at Fort Bragg.

The remaining officers and NCOs in the A Teams would continue to act as a permanent cadre during the training cycle in much the same ways drill sergeants performed in U.S. training centers. They would be responsible for administrative, logistical, health, discipline and leader evaluation tasks.

It was natural that some of the senior NCOs, especially those with MIKE Force and A Camp experience, resisted these changes. Some of the younger NCOs felt that the more freewheeling original A Camp concept was more suited to their vision of Special Forces. However, with the new POI, this reorganization was the most effective use of our limited and uneven resources. Despite the disagreements, everyone eventually embraced the concept and worked to make it a success.

Lesson 2: If your organizational structure isn't optimized for the mission, change it—immediately.

The third major lesson learned concerned the table of organization

and equipment of the FANK battalions. The standard FANK infantry battalion, as we understood it, was based on the French model: larger than our light infantry battalions and somewhat support heavy. As part of the original training agreement, the FANK battalions had to reduce their size and reconfigure to the U.S. Mike Force 512-man TO&E. See Diagram 2 on the following page.

Clearly, someone with MIKE Force experience had a leading hand in this decision.

One of the overall Special Forces missions (and the dominant one in Vietnam) was to train indigenous forces in counterinsurgency warfare. However, the war in Cambodia mostly would be fought against North Vietnamese, and later Khmer Rouge, forces arrayed in conventional formations and using conventional Infantry tactics. Therefore, the counter guerrilla-centric MIKE Force model was inappropriate.

The first issue we tackled was the organization. Like the original POI, the organization had been dictated by our higher headquarters. As we tried to accommodate the MIKE Force model, several problems became immediately apparent and the solutions affected the weaponry as well.

Beginning with the rifle platoons, a separate weapons squad was specified and armed with three older .30 caliber machineguns (M-1919A6). This created an extra squad for the platoon leader to control. Most U.S. Infantry units in Vietnam had one machinegun integral to each rifle squad, eliminating the weapons squad leader and giving the rifle squad leaders more flexibility in deploying his squad's firepower. This also reduced the platoon leader's span of control, allowing for a better focus on deploying his squads.

Next, the rifle companies each had a reconnaissance platoon and a mortar section with one 60mm mortar and one 81mm mortar in addition to the three rifle platoons. Again, this configuration increased the inexperienced company commanders' span of control. In U.S.

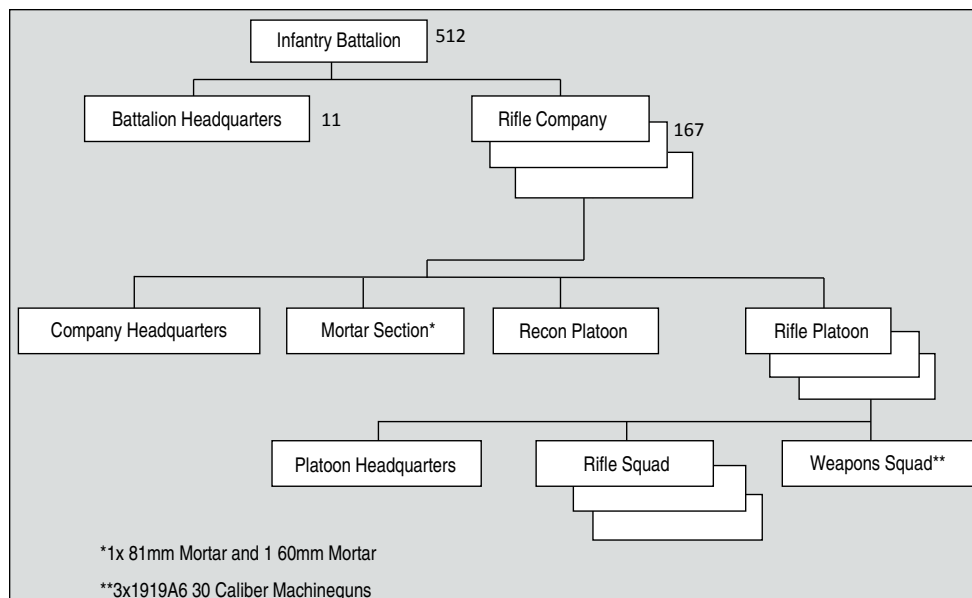


Diagram 2: Original FANK organization modeled after the MIKE Force organization. Note the excessive subordinate units in the Rifle Company. (Courtesy James Lockhart)

rifle companies there were no reconnaissance platoons and only one type of mortar was assigned. Having two calibers of mortars in one section made training and control much too difficult for the platoon and squad leaders and too complex for the crews.

As to the assets available to the battalion commander, there was no recon platoon and no mortars to influence the action. Again, considering U.S. Infantry organizations, a reorganization was clearly appropriate. The 81mm mortars were removed from the rifle companies and organized as a three-gun mortar platoon under the battalion commander. One of the recon platoons was reassigned to the battalion headquarters and the men from the two remaining companies' recon platoons were redistributed among the rifle companies. The effect of these changes was to reduce the company commanders' span of control and provide the battalion commander with the resources to perform his functions. With the MIKE Force configuration, the SF battalion commander, with access to tactical air support, helicopter gunships and sometimes high-quality artillery firepower, could do without reconnaissance and mortars.

Somewhere in the midst of these aggressive modification to the original FANK program, I was reassigned as the B-36 S-3 officer. I believe this was due to my direct exposure to the first FANK training battalion's issues and problems, my varied experience in a conventional Infantry division and my multiple assignments on Army training center staffs.

As the S-3, I recall briefing the FANK general in charge of training on this battalion reorganization we had crafted at Long Hai. When I finished, he asked for a handout reflecting the changes. As I complied, I thought, "Wow, with this simple act, we have reorganized the FANK infantry battalions." Our

512-man infantry battalion TO&E remained the FANK standard for the remainder of the conflict in Cambodia. See Diagram 3 for the Revised TO&E.

Lesson 3: Let the organizational structure be dictated by the mission, weapons and personnel capabilities; form follows function.

Lesson Summary: Don't let your comfort zone create a tunnel vision which limits the detection of and solutions to critical problems. Don't be "too Special Forces." To an accordion player, every song is a polka.

Conclusion

The details of the war in Cambodia are beyond the scope of this article but the final result is clear: FANK was soundly defeated

by the communist forces at a terrible loss of life. This occurred despite the individual Cambodian soldier's reputation as a courageous and tenacious fighter.

To most of us involved in the FANK training program, 12 weeks were woefully insufficient to successfully take a battalion from basic training to battalion maneuvers. Unlike the outcomes of lessons learned above, we were powerless to change that factor.

Most analysts lay the brunt of the debacle at the feet of the FANK senior leadership. Incompetence, corruption, nepotism, indifference and a hands-off attitude, while not all pervasive, were wide-spread enough to contribute to the defeat. One example was the reporting of non-existent soldiers and even entire units so higher commander could pocket the inflated payroll. Another was the tendency for some senior leaders to remain in Phnom Penh instead of commanding in the field.

No analyst has suggested that the Special Forces trainers did anything but perform at the highest standards within the constraints of

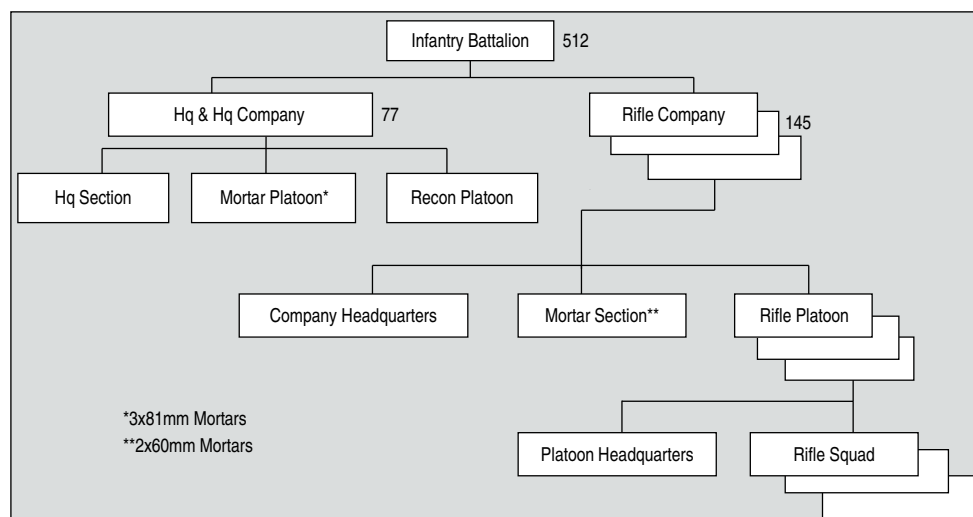
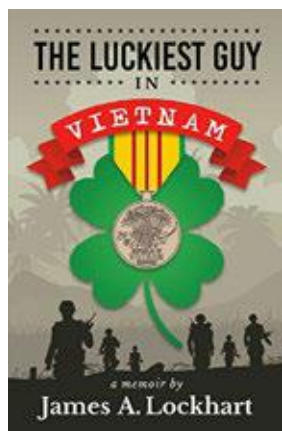


Diagram 3: Revised FANK organization reflecting U.S. Infantry structure. Note the simplified Rifle Company composition which reduced the commander's span of control. The battalion commander now has assets to meet his responsibilities. (Courtesy James Lockhart)



the FANK program. I take great pride in having been a part of a unit that maximized its resources, overcame misguided directives and prepared the FANK battalions, as if they were their own families, for their fateful missions.

The last word: It is ironic that the unconventional SF soldiers in the FANK program found that adapting the Army-standard, conventional TO&E and POI was, for them, unconventional.

For more previously unpublished accounts of the FANK training program, see [The Luckiest Guy in Vietnam](#) by James A. Lockhart on Amazon. ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Lockhart enlisted in the Army in 1961 and was quickly promoted to sergeant. He volunteered for officer training and became an Infantry second lieutenant in July 1967. From March 1968 to February 1969 in Vietnam, as a lieutenant he led mortar and reconnaissance platoons and commanded an Infantry company. After completing airborne and Special Forces training he returned to Vietnam in late 1970. In the next 18 months, as an operations officer, making significant contributions to the training of Cambodian Infantry battalions by Special Forces personnel. Subsequently, he served as an A-Team Leader, staff officer and company commander as well as Reserve Component advisor in



The author in the S-3 office. A large-scale map of the Xuyen Moc training area is behind him and piles of paperwork overflow on the desk. (Photo courtesy James Lockhart)

Special Forces units before retiring as a major in 1982. His awards include the Bronze Star Medal with V and two oak leaf clusters, Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster, Air Medal, Master Parachutist Badge, Combat Infantryman Badge, SCUBA Badge, Vietnamese Staff Service Medal and Cambodian National Defense Medal. After retirement he worked for AT&T as a Technical Consultant and Account Executive. His last employment was 17 years with DeVry University as Associate Dean and Professor. He holds a bachelors degree in psychology and a masters degree in management. James lives in southern California with Suzanne, his wife of over 35 years.

Chapter 78 member, Rick Carter was part of the FANK training effort near Bien Hoa, starting in May 1971, after the growing pains described by Jim Lockhart had produced results. He wore the same Cambodia crest on his beret.



(Photo courtesy Rick Carter)

From Rick:

How did Cambodia come into the equation in South Vietnam's fight for freedom? Upon arriving in Vietnam, and finding that I'd be working with Cambodian soldiers, and not South Vietnamese I wondered the same thing.

To me, the Cambodian soldiers were well disciplined. They had been working alongside Special Forces soldiers long before I arrived.

The photo (at left) is of a plaque I had made by a talented South Vietnamese craftsman. On it, I had a quote inscribed, a conversation between UPI's bureau chief correspondent Kate Webb and Gap Tooth at Phum Kasat during May 1971, the same month I arrived in Vietnam. The inscription reads:

But he sobered when we asked about the MIKE FORCES, the U.S. Green Beret trained Cambodian mercenary troops who are hardened veterans of Vietnam and now fight in Cambodia. "They are good," he said. "They use grenades and come right up to the bunker and throw them in." "They are well trained," he said respectfully. "They are good."

[Comments in LTC Lindsey's book — see "CCS Trains Cambodians" article — indicated these trainees may have lived up to the reputation of those original Mike Force troops who were battle-hardened before being sent to Phnom Penh shortly after the coup. — ed.]

BEIRUT, Lebanon (1983)

By Jim Wiehe

CW3 (Ret)

ODA 231 / 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne)

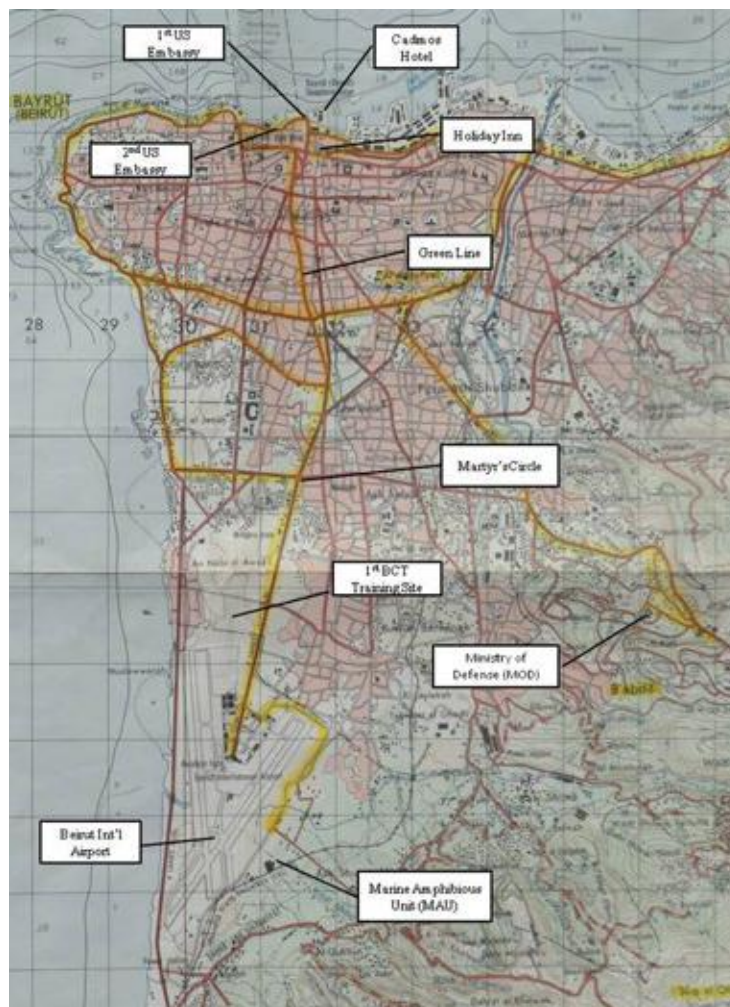
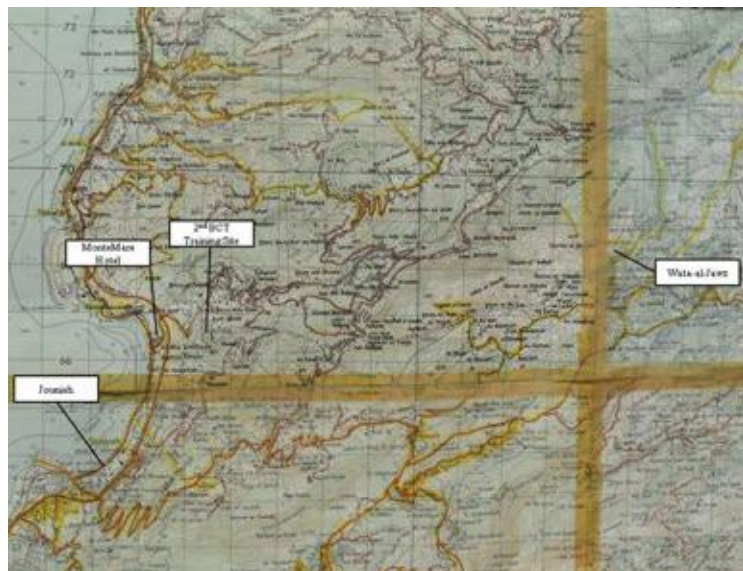
In the summer of 1983, a mini-war — a sideshow to the larger chaos inside of Lebanon erupted in the Chouf Mountains. The Syrians refused to remove their 30,000 troops stationed inside Lebanon; Israeli deployments depended on the Syrians, the fighting in the Chouf Mountains spilled over onto the streets of the Lebanese capital. The Militias owned street corners, neighborhoods, and competing criminal enterprises that dabbled in everything from smuggled goods to heroin and arms. Ownership of the street corner could change in the muzzle-flash of a close-quarter killing. A checkpoint belonging to a Sunni militia in the morning could have a photo of

the Ayatollah in front of the sandbags by evening. A militia that was anti-American one day could change its loyalties and suddenly change. A Druze militia, loyal to Progressive Socialist Party leader Walid Jumblatt, augmented security around the British Embassy and provided an invaluable and reliable ring of security surrounding the chancery where the British and American diplomats worked.¹

Checkpoints in Beirut were manned by pill poppers, hashish smokers, and psychopaths. A motorist who answered a question incorrectly, or who belonged to the wrong religion or militia, could be dragged out of his car, and shot point-blank in the head.²

In 1982 the United States proposed a Lebanese Army Modernization Program to be implemented in four phases. The first three phases entailed the organization of seven full-strength, multi-confessional army brigades, created from existing battalions. It was during these early three phases that MTT's from the 10th Special Forces Group (A) were sent to Beirut to perform a Foreign Internal Defense (FID) mission.

1. Fred Burton and Samuel M. Katz. *Beirut Rules, The Murder of a CIA Station Chief and Hezbollah's War Against America*, Penquin Random House, page. 91-92. 2018.
2. Ibid. Page 92.



Beirut City Maps depicting training area locations (click on maps to view larger images). (Courtesy James Wiehe)

10th Special Forces Group (A) in Beirut, Lebanon (1983)

From 11 March 1983 to 25 October 1985, the 10th Special Forces Group deployed seventeen separate Mobile Training Teams (MTT) into Lebanon.³ These teams performed a Foreign Internal Defense mission to advise and assist the Lebanese Army Training Centers. The MTT's and the Lebanese Army developed a training program for over 5,000 officers, NCOs, and Soldiers. The newly trained Officers and NCO's became the nucleus for follow-on MTTs and acted as interpreters and trainers. Training sites at Beirut and Adma provided basic training; Safra was used for unit training; Wata Al Jawz was used for unit combined arms live-fire, and Haef Jumayyid was used for urban live-fire training. Training programs for NCO combat leaders, basic training for over 900 LAF conscripts, long-range reconnaissance training for the Lebanese Rangers and advance unit training and maintenance for Mechanized Units were also conducted.⁴

10th Special Forces Group Deploys MTT's

Over the course of the years, there has been much speculation as to how the 10th Special Forces Group received the Lebanon missions and not the 5th Special Forces Group? As per my conversation with BG Potter, he stated that:

"1/10th Gp and Det A were resident EUCOM assets and their capabilities known by the EUCOM staff and that the Mediterranean to include Lebanon was within the EUCOM area of responsibility.⁵

On March 20, 1983, thus began the 10th Special Forces Group involvement with rebuilding and training the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). CW2 (Ret) Lou Pacelli, one of the original members of MTT #1, explained that:

"Instead of deploying as a Detachment, we were chosen as individuals to be put together as a composite team. We were ordered to report to the Commander's office and asked to volunteer for a classified assignment. We received a warning order to prepare for a mission to the Republic of Lebanon to train and assist them in small unit tactics. I immediately volunteered and was put into isolation at the 10th Group isolation area. The majority of the team was assigned to teach basic infantry tactics, both mounted and dismounted. I was placed in the Basic Training Committee. The Committee consisted of five members. The team was composed of personnel from all three companies in the battalion. Our team consisted of; the Team Sergeant, Master Sergeant Michael "Mick" Roberts and Sergeant Tom Greco from Charlie Company, Sergeant First Class Wayne John, Staff Sergeant Sam Joseph and myself from A Company. We were later joined in country by Staff Sergeant Larry Hoff."⁶

Isolation and mission prep was particularly challenging for all MTT's leaving Ft. Devens; lack of intel, no language training, and the promise of needed supplies on the training end. As was the case with all MTT's, members were chosen at higher, subject matter was assigned



MTT #1: (L-R) sitting: SGT Ryan, SSG Mc Daniel, SSG Hobbs, SFC Ellisen, SSG Mc Kenzie. Standing: 1Lt Jesmer, SSG Hicks, SSG Hurley, and SSG Davis. (Photo courtesy James Wiehe)

and rehearsed and normal POR activities, pre-mission medicals, and shots were updated along with new identification cards for junior enlisted personnel. All personnel in the grades E4/E5 were given the brevet rank of E-6, to include ID cards. Financial support was coordinated between SATMO and the 10th Gp Comptroller for individual payment and disbursement of advances. A request for 80% of the 179 days was requested, but only 55% was granted. Subsequent payments would be made after completion of travel vouchers while in country and mailed back to Ft. Devens, MA.

The Course of Instruction implemented by the Cadre Training MTT consisted of twenty-eight days. Actual training days of this block was limited to twenty-three days due to the Lebanese Army desire for a two-day break approximately half-way through the course and the required movement days to move the battalions from the bivouac site near the airport to the mountain training locations (Roumieh and Wata al Jawz) and back to the original bivouac sites. Additionally, the twenty-eighth day of the cycle was used for the final Inspection/Graduation Ceremony activities.

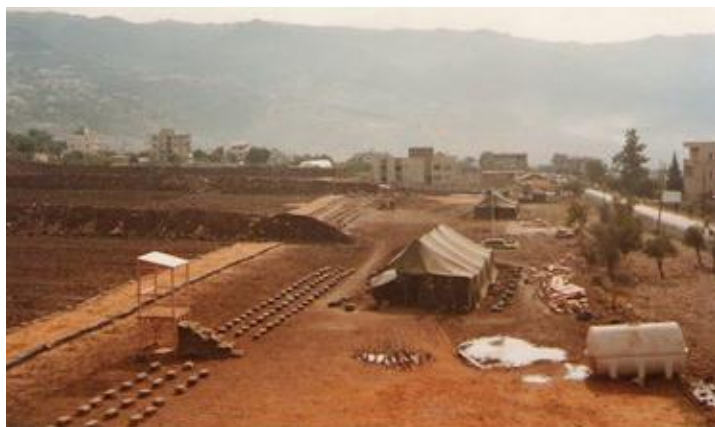
The first nine days of training were delegated to Individual Combat skills: bayonet fighting techniques, basic rifle marksmanship training, individual movement techniques, basic map reading, operation of the AN/PRC-77 and AN/VRC-46 radios and basic communications procedures, basic first aid, conditioning drills (physical training), individual combatives, land mines and basic demolitions. Additional instruction included: camouflage techniques, prisoner of war handling procedures, and throwing hand grenades. Subject areas were divided into three-day blocks. The three-line companies of each battalion were rotated through the three-day blocks

3. <https://www.soc.mil/USASFC/Groups/10th/history.html> (Note: Original AAR from MTT #1 reflects dates as 3/20/83 – 9/9/83 in their After Action Review. These dates are again reflected in the After Action Review from MTT #2.)

4. Ibid

5. Ibid

6. CW2 (Ret) Lou Pacelli notes provided, August 2020.



BRM Rifle ranges in Jounieh (Photo courtesy James Wiehe)

in a round-robin manner. Thus, on any given day, there were actually three different days of training until all companies were rotated through the entire nine days.

The next three days were devoted to squad level training and consisted of one day of squad organization and movement, squad offensive operations (movement to contact, hasty attack, fire, and movement), squad defensive operations (hasty and deliberate defense, withdrawals). Once the squad training was moved to the Wata al Jawz training area, a fourth day of training was added; a squad live-fire exercise for the squad leader to control. One of the break days was deleted to allow for the extra day of squad training.

A typical day began at 0500 hours followed by breakfast at 0530. Breakfast meals were made available at the hotel each day before departure. Departure time was 0600 to the various training sites. By 0630 training began and lasted until 1430 hours, with only minor breaks allotted. At this time, the Lebanese Forces being trained finished for the day and had their lunch. After lunch, the leadership of the battalion being trained would receive their overhead training (a reference to training to be conducted the next day). This activity ran from approximately 1530-1630 hours each day.

The seven days of advance training in the mountain training areas (Roumieh and Wata al Jawz) consisted of five days of platoon-level training and two days of company-level training. On Day #1 of the advance training, the platoons received instruction on platoon movement techniques (traveling, traveling over-watch, and bounding over-watch). Platoon defensive techniques were taught on the second day and included the same defensive operations that the squads had received earlier. The next two days were dedicated to patrolling operations and a night practical exercise. The last two days consisted of company-level offensive movement techniques and included a mechanized movement- to-contact operation for the mechanized battalions. The mounted movement was added only after this training had been moved to Wata al Jawz as there was no location to maneuver armored personnel carriers in the Roumieh training area. The last day was dedicated to the company-level live-fire exercise where all the weapons systems organic to the company were employed. Additionally, the 81mm mortar crews and the 106mm Recoilless Rifle crews were given six days of instruction prior to the live fire exercise. The weapons employed in the live-fire exercise consisted of mortars, recoilless rifles, .50cal heavy



SFC Scotty Deraps conducting BRM training. (Photo courtesy James Wiehe)

machine guns mounted on APCs, Mag 58 machine gun, M-60 machine guns, RPGs, and the individual rifle, either M-16 or G-3.

The last four days of the training were given to Urban Operations training. The soldiers were trained on individual skills during the first day of this training; rappelling, entering a building, stairwell, room clearing techniques, and booby traps. On Day #2, the squads and platoons were put through practical exercises in clearing entire buildings. On the third day, each company executed an attack and a defensive operation in a built-up area. Each company executed the attack portion twice and the defensive once. Again, the companies were rotated in a round-robin manner. On the final day of Urban Operations Training, the Lebanese soldiers received instruction on security activities in an urban area. This training focused on practical exercises in patrolling in an urban environment and check-point operations.

MTT Security

MTT#1 had developed and employed a security plan and an evacuation plan in and around the Cadmos Hotel grounds when they arrived. The plan included static positions established in individual rooms that overlooked the street side of the hotel and the area side facing the Mediterranean Sea. In addition, there was an inter-roving patrol that included all the hotel floors, the lobby, and an especially worrisome one, the basement. Contained within the hotel basement was a disco bar and parking area. The parking entrance was blocked by a dirt berm and concertina wire. The bar itself, was set in complete darkness and once you left the elevator or staircase, you were in virtual darkness.

Security of personnel while in-country was a constant and daily issue. Because of the various political factions and militias, it was extremely difficult, if not totally impossible, to identify anyone organization as making threats upon MTT personnel. Therefore, it was standard procedure to treat every area as a hostile environment. The only exception to this was the area in the vicinity of Wata al Jawz.

Personal security measures were stressed on a daily basis. Upon arrival in-country, a request was immediately forwarded to OMC for weapons and was repeated almost on a weekly basis. Finally, the MTI's received six M-16 rifles for use in vehicles and security at the hotel. Later, 9mm Browning Hi-power pistols were issued to each member of the MTT along with "Second Chance" body armor vests. Transportation to and from training sites was judged to be the

most vulnerable aspect to the cadre and to overcome that issue routes, times, vehicles, and personnel were varied in order to break up any sort of pattern that might otherwise have been exhibited. Also, except for several select instances, MTT personnel were required to travel everywhere using the buddy-system. The Lebanese G-2 also employed plainclothes personnel in and around the hotel on a continuous basis. The number of LAF guards and G-2 personnel was increased based on the threat situation and/or request of the MTT Team Chief.

In a phone conversation between myself and BG Dick Potter⁷, the then 10th SF Group Commander, he explained that "... there were several contentious issues that arose for 10th SFG(A) during their participation of providing MTT's to the Lebanese government...". BG Potter's main concern was lodging. An officer from the U.S. Army's Office of Military Cooperation (OMC) wanted the troops housed and billeted with the U.S. Marines at the Beirut Airport. COL Potter disagreed and refused the arrangement citing his authority as a Title 10 Commander who was responsible for the care, welfare, and well-being of the soldiers under his command. COL Potter met with General Lutz (SOCOM Cdr) in Beirut, Lebanon and he was apprised of the situation and why his refusal was in the best interest of his soldiers performing the mission. Each unit deployed had established an inner and outer ring of security as they were in multiple locations conducting the training. NOTE: COL Potter's logic, foresight, and resolve for the welfare of the soldiers who were deployed while he was 10th Group Commander proved to be the right decision. Had the MTT's been housed in the Marine Corps Barracks at the Beirut Airport as insisted upon arrival, the possibility of those team members being seriously injured or killed on October 23 would have been inevitable.

Lessons Learned

Problems arose and lessons were re-learned with each MTT iteration. Some of the most prevalent "lessons learned" that would plague each MTT were recurring and somehow could not be solved:

1. Transportation. This was a problem that never seemed to go away. The drivers (who had little to no training driving) who were assigned to drive and transport us to our training sites were constantly late or were "no-shows". Drivers were with us for a few days and then were reassigned elsewhere and a new driver would show up. Vehicle maintenance was almost non-existent, and vehicles were constantly breaking down.
2. French training. Up until our arrival, the Lebanese Officers & NCO's were being trained by the French. There was a clear lack
7. 8/5/2019: Phone conversation with BG Dick Potter and Jim Wiehe, RE#: 10th Special Forces Group (A) 1983 MTT's into Beirut, Lebanon. BG Potter served as Commander of 10th SFG(A) from Dec 1981 – July 1984.



Providing security at the U.S. Embassy at the request of the Ambassador were: SSG McAvoy, SFC Cooper, SFC Wiehe (seated), SSG Freidman, SFC Tabor, SFC Stockert, and SSG Shaw (Photo courtesy James Wiehe)



SFC Dick Cooper with his counterpart. (Photo courtesy James Wiehe)

- of participation by the Lebanese Officers and NCO's. It was recommended that the LAF's leadership style be patterned after the U.S. Army. A constant challenge and problem were the "aloof" manner of leadership practiced by the officers. The officers as a group did not like to set the example or get deeply involved in training to the degree practiced in the U.S. Army. They were conscientious of the position and stature, which required the careful application of criticism and instruction. Blunt and frank appraisals were rarely well-received. Officers, if required to perform the tasks with their soldiers, frequently became detractors from training and sometimes discipline problems.
3. Language training. No language training was received by any MTT entering the country. Although there were up to 22 Lebanese

officers and NCOs assigned as interpreters, communication problems still arose. All MTT members had to learn on the job (OJT) by doing their own research on the language or memorizing how and what was being translated. After a while, words, phrases, and commands, like those on my rifle ranges, were being picked up and rehearsed by us. There were several reasons for this: time before deployment and, as usual, lack of funds.

4. In-country training support. The training support received by the MTT was less than adequate. This included support in the construction of the ranges and the ability to provide the materials necessary for the construction of the training facilities. There were no training aides or training areas identified. This lack of understanding was prevalent in the LAF G-3 and G4 until a LAF COL was placed in charge of the AUT program for the Lebanese, the problem would not get resolved.
5. Passport processing. The passport processing for MTT #2 was not as nearly the administrative problem that it was for MTT #1. The Bn S-1 was aware of all the requirements and processed the forms promptly. However, the problems arose where individuals were unable to promptly acquire a birth certificate with a raised seal from their home state. By the 3rd MTT iteration, this problem did not exist.
6. S-2 support. Upon arrival in-country, there was insufficient intelligence being disseminated to the MTT's. Additionally, this intel was also not available during isolation and team train-up. After lengthy discussions with the OMC (Office of Military Cooperation) and specifically, the April American Embassy bombing, two security personnel were brought in from EUCOM. At this point, the MTT's began to receive daily updates through the OMB Security Officer.
7. Effects of weather on training. The heat during July – August made training for the ITT personnel very difficult, but not impossible. Extra effort was made to quickly identify and treat any heat-related injuries. The heat also made it next to impossible to train in the ITT airport areas all afternoon. You were exposed to the sun all day with no shade available. Training normally stopped at 14 hours due to the extreme heat. Conversely, the heat had little to effect on the ATT personnel training in the mountains. And the snow in the mountains in March – April made it impossible to recon many potential maneuver areas. The cool, rainy winters did not stop training, but it made a mess in the lowland areas.
8. During training. When the M113s arrived in-country, the transmissions were filled with shipping fluid and not the correct transmission fluid required. The shipping fluid needed to be drained and new transmission fluid added IAW the TM-10. The Lebanese did not know this and consequently burned out many transmissions.

Siege of the Cadmos Hotel

On August 29, 1983, all training of the Lebanese Armed Forces had ceased. Personnel who were transported to the training site near the airport were greeted by our interpreter, Mohammad Chukeir who quickly explained to us that the Mechanized Infantry Battalion in training had departed during the night after a message over a loud-speaker. The message told to the commander was “to defect with all men and equipment or your wives and children would be killed.”

It was immediately after this conversation that it began to rain down 155mm howitzer shells from the Chouf Mountains above us. The Druze militia and the Syrian gun positions had a “direct-lay” upon us. We took several rounds and made our way back to our vehicle and departed the training site. This would be the beginning of a 30-day siege for us at the Cadmos Hotel. We assumed a “static” role and training ceased.

There is very little written of this event and only “references” by the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* on September 1st and September 2nd.⁸ Even the Marine account of what happened in Eric Hammel's, *The Root*, notes that the U.S. Marines were called to evacuate us from the hotel due to safety concerns expressed by the attacking Druze militiamen. Robert Pugh, the U.S. Embassy Charge d'Affaires was summoned to the guard post at the embassy when a Druze Officer arrived (who was pro-American) and stated that “he was on an errand of mercy and had been ordered to attack the LAF unit bivouacked near the Cadmos Hotel that housed 70 U.S. Army Special Forces trainers and saw no reason to involve the American Marines, as he called the Green Berets and asked that they be removed.”⁹ Pugh notes on page 141-142 that: “Though there had been sufficient room, barely, for all the Special Forces trainers, the first contingent had opted to carry out its gear, and, to the amazement and ire of the Marines, their personal effects and souvenirs — including a man-sized teddy bear that took up one whole vehicle seat.”¹⁰ I have it on good authority that one of us “did indeed” take his teddy bear, but it was strapped on top of his rucksack and most likely mistaken for a full-sized rucksack.

On August 30th violence once again broke out in the city, this time along the Corniche and down from the newly relocated American Embassy. A Druze militia, loyal to the Progressive Socialist Party leader Walid Jumblatt, augmented security around the British Embassy. The militiamen, recognizable in their red berets and camouflage fatigues, provided an invaluable and reliable ring of deterrence surrounding the chancery where the British and American diplomats went to work each morning.¹¹

Ten thousand Lebanese soldiers, using tanks and helicopters, launched a three-pronged attack in West Beirut to try and flush out rebellious Druze and Shiite Moslem militiamen. Both the Moslem western sector of Beirut and the eastern Christian sector came under heavy-weapons bombardment. During the day, hundreds of Lebanese Army Forces were locked in fierce combat with the Druze militiamen who were entrenched in the 25-story Holiday Inn just blocks away from us.

The hotel was prepared for combat having an eight-foot berm surrounding and topped with concertina wire and a 106mm recoilless

8. *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, Sept 1, 1983, No. 243. Fierce battling engulfs Beirut and Sept 2, No. 244, 10,000 troops vs. Beirut militias.

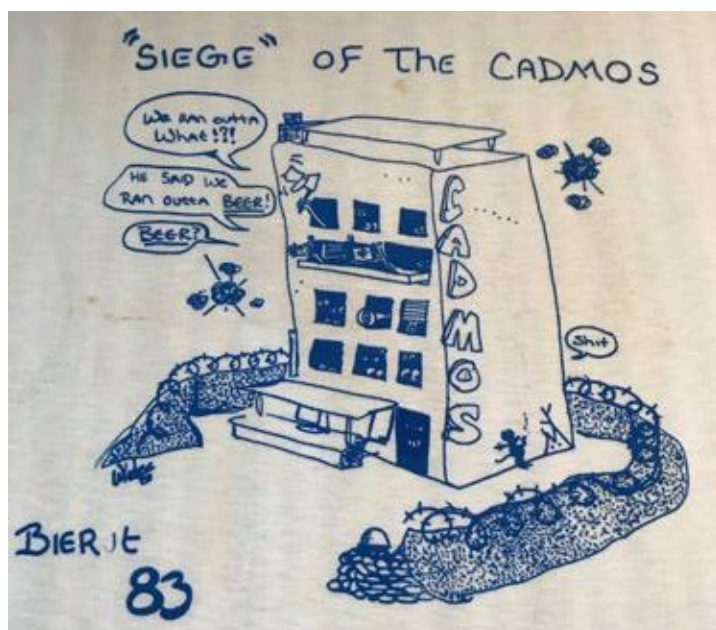
9. Eric Hammel, *The Root, The Marines in Beirut August 1982 – February 1984*. Pg138 – 142. Zenith Press. 1984.

10. Ibid, page 141-142.

11. Fred Burton and Samuel M. Katz. *The Murder of a CIA Station Chief and Hezbollah's War Against America*, Penquin Random House, 2018.



SSG's Henterly (with M16 and Emerling (pistol) reacting to sniper fire. (Photo courtesy James Wiehe)



T-shirt designed by SSG Doug Wheless upon our return home. (Photo courtesy James Wiehe)

rifle aimed out the main entryway. More importantly, the hotel had a fully stocked restaurant and bar; that is until the siege. As part of our "ring of security" while in-country, initially, there was a squad of Lebanese Army Forces situated in and around the base of our hotel. As the situation outside of the hotel and the surrounding area became more volatile, our security force was increased to a reinforced platoon size element with an accompanying M1A1 jeep with a 106 recoilless rifle. With nothing more than the underground entrance being filled with dirt and an outside dirt berm with concertina wire on top, the hotel became our Alamo. Also, on every floor of the hotel, and in strategic locations with vantage points, there were guard posts. These guard posts were manned with 2-hour shifts whenever we were in the hotel. (Note: After the 'siege' we were issued FN FAL 7.62 rifles along with our sidearms.) The street side of the hotel was our most vulnerable side. It was just yards away

from the civilians living across the street and well within shooting distance from snipers and rocket fire. Sniper fire from across the street of the hotel and an occasional RPG burst was the norm for the duration of the 30 days we were in the hotel.

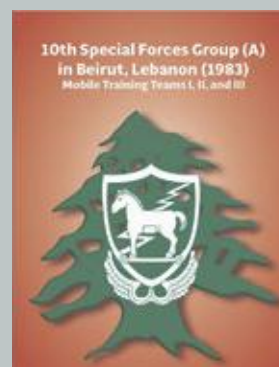
What happened next was an air-assault by a LAF rifle squad on the street directly in front of the bombed-out embassy who returned fire into the embassy with rifles and machine guns and made their way towards the Cadmos Hotel. Sometime near dusk, a vehicle convoy arrived to take all of us to the American Embassy. At the time, we were told that the ambassador (Bartholomew) had requested additional support for his Marine guards, not the other way around. There were not nearly enough vehicles to take all 70 of us, so a handful was selected to go and to take their individual kit and rucksacks along.

As we loaded up and began our departure, artillery air burst rounds exploded between us and the embassy down the street. As we headed towards the embassy, the air bursts continued to plague our movement. Simultaneously, as we maneuvered around the barriers in the street, we were suddenly dodging RPGs that were being fired from behind us. Luckily, the RPGs struck street barriers or fizzled and sparked down the Cornish like a roman candle being hand-held.

When we arrived at the embassy, we were issued 12-gauge shotguns and given a sector of responsibility as the Druze militia were now working their way through the city and being chased by the LAF. For the next two days, we continued to provide security until we were told that the Druze militiamen who were firing upon us were now seeking sanctuary in the embassy from the pursuing LAF. One can only shake his head.

When the shooting stopped, we were loaded back up and taken back to the hotel. On a side note, our team medic (SSG Doug Wheless) who was an amateurish artist created a t-shirt when we got back depicting the hotel siege.

After things quieted down a bit, we were moved to a quieter place along the Mediterranean coast further west to the coastal town of Jounieh. We had to start from scratch to establish a training area. ❖



Learn more about 10th Special Forces Group in Beirut.

Visit www.beirut1983.com to purchase Jim Wiehe's book on the subject.

You may also choose to make a donation to support copies of the book being donated to Special Forces units or individuals.

All profits will be donated to the Green Beret Foundation

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DON'T MISS THIS SFA CH. 78 EVENT!

AUGUST CHAPTER MEETING SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER

War Reporter Alex Quade brings her SF friend, COL Pat Mahaney (Ret), the Director and co-founder of the National Center for Urban Operations. Mahaney also currently serves as Senior Advisor at NSIN — the National Security Innovation Network — part of the Undersecretary of Defense's Defense Innovation Unit (DIU), as well as on the Council on Foreign Relations.

As a Green Beret, Mahaney served as Director for the Chief of Staff of the Army's Strategic Studies Group, did nine combat tours and extensive operational assignments worldwide — including multiple counter-narcoterrorist operations in Latin America. He commanded the U.S. Army's Asymmetric Warfare Group, a tactical Special Forces battalion and a Special Operations Task Force in Afghanistan. He also served in Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), and Special Operations Command in Afghanistan.

While on leave, Mahaney — an Honorary NYC Fire Department Battalion Chief — served alongside the FDNY at the World Trade Center during recovery operations in November 2001. He's a keynote speaker at the National 9/11 Memorial and Museum, received the NY State Conspicuous Service Cross and the Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

*By the way, COL Mahaney graced the cover of May's Sentinel, with his 7SFG men (and one female war reporter) from "that Chinook shutdown mission in Afghanistan," which Alex Quade has been sharing stories and photos of, at Ch. 78 meetings.

"That was an exceptionally tough fight during an intense campaign, and it is time the full story came out. America has a lot to be proud of about what happened that day and throughout that campaign. I'm very glad to see the Quiet Professionals are letting more people know what happened, and what we were (and are) capable of," Mahaney said, adding, "DE OPPRESSO LIBER."

DOL, indeed!



(Photos courtesy Alex Quade)

21 AUG 2021 — RSVP early!