



SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 11 • NOVEMBER 2021



Detachment (A) Berlin Special Forces

A Thumbnail Look at
Detachment (A) Berlin Brigade

JFK Visits Fort Bragg
12 October 1961

**So Cal Based Non-Profit
Housing Afghan Refugee Families**

SF Unit Adopted by Nez Perce Tribe



SENTINEL

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 11 • NOVEMBER 2021



US ARMY SPECIAL OPS COMMAND



US ARMY JFK SWCS



1ST SF COMMAND



1ST SF GROUP



3RD SF GROUP



5TH SF GROUP



7TH SF GROUP



10TH SF GROUP



19TH SF GROUP



20TH SF GROUP



8TH SF GROUP



11TH SF GROUP



12TH SF GROUP

IN THIS ISSUE:

President's Page.....	1
SFA Con 2021	2
Southern California Based Affordable Community Living Housing Afghan Refugee Families.....	3
JFK Visits Fort Bragg — 12 October 1961	4
Detachment (A) Berlin Special Forces 1956-1984 A Thumbnail Look at Detachment(A) Berlin Brigade ...	6
Special Forces Unit Adopted by Nez Perce Tribe	10
November Chapter Meeting — SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER COL Patrick Nelson.....	14

FRONT COVER: The “Missing Man” table at the closing banquet for the 2021 SFA Convention in Las Vegas. SFA Chapter 78 Member Robert Crebbs performed the MIA/POW presentation. (Photo by Chapter 78 member Rick Carter)



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CHAPTER OFFICERS:

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Vice President Don Gonneville Susan Weeks	Chaplain Richard Simonian
Secretary Gary Macnamara	Sentinel Editor How Miller
Treasurer Richard Simonian	Immediate Past President John Stryker Meyer
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From the Editor



How Miller
Sentinel Editor

Wow! What a convention. From all the presentations and events, meeting old and new friends, and co-hosting duties, I was super-charged. We even got to include the special SFACon edition of the *Sentinel* in each attendee's gift package, and our Chapter 78 webmaster, *Sentinel* graphic artist, and now honorary SFA member, Debra Holm was in attendance. John Joyce, the SFACon director, and the bevy of Chapter 51 members put in lots of hours making this a great success. Chapter 78 members were able to help out in roles that were already well organized.

In this month's *Sentinel*, read about a small non-profit based in Southern California, Affordable Community Living, which is partnering with other entities to add to the number of our Afghan partners who are now being provided with housing, training, jobs and other services. They hope provide up to 300 affordable homes in the next 12 months, up from the 16 Afghan families that they are already helping.

Ray Ambrozak has written about the preparations for, and execution of, President Kennedy's famous 1961 visit to Ft. Bragg, where he made the Green Beret the official headgear of SF. There was much more involved than is generally known, including an impressive and significant PSYOPS component.

We have an introduction to a little known secret SF detachment in Cold War Berlin, referred to cryptically as Detachment(A) and called by its members Det-A (pronounced det A). They even have their own website, Detachment-A.org, with articles and videos. Det-A teammate, Bob Charest, was one who took the initiative to make sure their story is not lost to history — a peril of secretive organizations like SF and the CIA.

Greg Walker describes how the Nez Perce bestowed a great honor on one of our SF National Guard units. Company A, 1/19th Special Forces Group (ABN) is the only U.S. Army unit to be formally recognized, and adopted as Warrior Brothers, by the very patriotic Nez Perce.

And, here is a link with smart advice to those transitioning from the military, and SF in particular, and links to lots of effective free help to get your career going, or improving it.:

https://www.military.com/veteran-jobs/career-advice/5-bald-faced-lies-military-members-tell-about-networking.html?ESRC=eb_210923.nl ♦

How Miller, *Sentinel* Editor



Chapter 51 President, and SFA Con Director, John Joyce managed to evade cameras over the convention weekend. He is pictured above presenting convention planning news at the August 2021 Chapter meeting.

From the President & Vice President | November 2021



Bruce Long, President SFA Chap. 78

WHAT A YEAR! And it's almost over. Between the introduction of the COVID-19, seventy-seven days in the hospital, and the Special Forces Association convention in Las Vegas, I'll sure be glad when this year is over.

Our next BIG event will be our annual Christmas party on December 4th 2021. Our guest speaker will be Alec Bierbauer. Alec was our guest speaker for our May meeting, where he enlightened us on the first generation of drones used in Afghanistan. Alec is also the author of *Never Mind We'll Do It Ourselves*.

I will also be awarding the "Order of Saint Maurice" to one deserving Chapter individual at the Christmas party.

I'll be covering the Christmas party in a separate invitation email, and at our Chapter meeting on November 20th.

November 20 Chapter Meeting: Our webmaster Debra Holm will be making a presentation on the new SFA National website, better known as Teamhouse.specialforces.org. She will also be presenting the new Chapter 78 website.

Additionally, I would like to have an open discussion on a new President for 2022-23.

Our special guest speaker will be COL Patrick Nelson. COL Nelson has served in numerous Special Operation positions throughout his career, including twenty-four months as an ODA Commander 726 in Central and South America. COL Nelson also served with the Ranger Regiment as an NCO for five years, 1991 to 1996, prior to his commissioning in 2020.

Currently COL Nelson is attending the United States Army War College — which tells me he's on a fast track for his first star.

I will now be followed by Don Gonneville Vice President of our Chapter. Don was able to attend the SFA convention in Las Vegas in its entirety. As I was only able to attend the banquet due to health reasons.

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



Don Gonneville
Chapter 78 Vice-President

The SFA convention in Las Vegas consisted of four days of nonstop activities, laboriously planned and expertly executed by Chapter 51 and cosponsored by Chapter 78. It was an opportunity for Special Forces soldiers and veterans to meet old friends and make new ones in a relaxed and patriotic environment. The busy schedule consisted of many interesting symposiums, special events, and off-site activities, all of which were well attended. The hub of the weekend was the main hospitality room where attendees gathered all day long between events.

Symposiums — Topics included historical activities covering much of Special Forces' involvement over the last 80 years, from Jedburgh history through our most recent involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Special Events and Activities — These included the Butler Purple Heart race, with a pool deck picnic and party following the race, a Death Valley motorcycle ride, a Valley of Fire tour, an Outlet Shopping Mall tour, a Mob Museum tour, and a golf tournament at Nellis Air Force Base.

The SFA staff presented detailed briefings and training on the new software and website, Teamhouse Online. This revolutionary software will give all members and chapters the opportunity to completely integrate the management of information and communications within the chapters, and between the chapters and the Association.

The closing banquet was spectacular. It was an appropriate ending to what was perhaps the most successful convention in Special Forces history. The event as a whole reminded all participants of the important role that they played in our nation's history since the founding of Special Forces.



LOOK WHO'S READING THE SENTINEL

War Reporter Alex Quade sees Gold Star Widow Casey Rodgers and daughter Madison off, after SFACON — with *Sentinels* and a special event poster signed by ODA-726 teammates. (See more coverage in next month's December issue!)



SFACON

OCTOBER 22- 25th, 2021

By How Miller

Because of publication deadlines, and the fact that the entire *Sentinel* staff was in Las Vegas for the convention/s, both enjoying and co-hosting with Chapter 51, we will provide you with just a short taste of the SFACON this month. The December issue will include more extensive coverage.

At registration, attendees were treated to a printed copy of the *Sentinel*, a complete convention program, T-shirt, and challenge coin. On Day One, there was an opportunity to mix with the SOAR members who were finishing up on the same day we were beginning. We will have an article on SOAR next month by Greg Walker.

Here we have pictures exemplifying various categories of the many people and activities, from vendors, promoters and service providers, to presenters, outside activities, honorees, and the closing dinner. The huge hospitality suite and open bar was a focal point for meeting with friends, old and new. Much was learned and many good times had. ♦



The Hospitality/Vendor Room was a great place to connect with old friends, make new friends, and to check out the offerings on display at the booths of the wide variety of vendors at the convention.



The Pool Deck Picnic/Party held at the M Hotel after the Butler Purple Heart Race — guests enjoyed a delicious lunch and had an opportunity to hear MOH Melvin Morris speak.



Left to right, Wade Ishimoto, Mike Taylor, John Stryker Meyer, Dennis DeRosia, Alex Quade — just a sampling of the excellent presenters who covered many topics of interest to the SF community.



Monday evening's SFA Banquet closed out the event with award presentations, and keynote speaker Former Acting Secretary of Defense COL Chris Miller (R), followed with live music and dancing.



Southern California Based Affordable Community Living Housing Afghan Refugee Families

By John Stryker Meyer

When the Afghanistan withdrawal of U.S. forces and allies unfolded into an embarrassing international story in August, a small non-profit in Southern California went into action to address a pressing need for the Afghan families that worked with U.S. forces — low-cost housing in the U.S.

One of the first things the non-profit Affordable Community Living (ACL) did was to hire a multi-lingual Afghan interpreter who served with several Green Beret A Teams and other governmental agencies in the Central Asian country for more than 14 years during the protracted 20-year war.

At the time this issue of the *Sentinel* went to press, ACL was working to place 16 Afghan refugee families into manufactured homes in California, according to ACL spokesman John Yeandle, a Marine Corps veteran.

In addition, ACL is arranging job training, cultural awareness training, as well as attending to indigenous dietary considerations for them. ACL will also provide basic-skill jobs for the refugees. “We will have jobs for them,” he added.

“Our goal is to provide 300 homes for these families over the next 12 months,” Yeandle said. “Many of these people have put their lives on the line for the U.S. effort in Afghanistan, and no one should be left behind.”

However, ACL can’t do it alone. They have begun working to create a coalition of non-profits to address the financial challenge of paying for manufactured homes that cost \$40,000 each and are placed in ACL communities in Ridgecrest, Mojave, Barstow, Needles, and Borrego Springs, along with three in Arizona. After providing housing, the Afghan refugees will only have to pay a reduced rate of \$200-\$300 per month space rental. At its quarterly Board of Directors meeting in September 2021, “ACL pledged \$50,000 toward seed money and a space-rental rate reduction for those who settle into those communities,” Yeandle said.

“In the weeks and months ahead, we’ll need help in moving forward with this effort,” he said. “ACL will be working with Santiago Communities Inc. during this time frame and are hoping other non-profits will join in this effort. I’m looking forward to speaking with anyone willing to help us,” Yeandle added.

His e-mail address is: jyeandle@affordablecommunityliving.com. ❖



Above left, a brother and sister whose families were recently placed into housing at Santiago Ridgecrest Estates, in Ridgecrest, California.

Ridgecrest is situated in the Indian Wells Valley between the high country of the Sierra Nevada range and the deep desert of Death Valley. Residents of Santiago Ridgecrest Estates enjoy a clean, safe, family atmosphere with large grassy areas and close proximity to stores, banks, motels, schools, museums, parks and the China Lake Naval Base.

JFK Visits Fort Bragg

12 October 1961



President John F. Kennedy was welcomed by the Pope Air Force Base commander and LTG Thomas J. H. Trapnell, the Third U.S. Army commanding general.

By Maj. Ray Ambrozak, U.S. Army (Ret.)

Not too long ago, I read an article about President Kennedy's visit to Ft. Bragg in October 1961. It was during this visit that JFK made the green beret the official headgear of Special Forces. This brought back a lot of memories from those days, which I thought I would share with members of the Special Operations community.

I was a 1st Lt. in the "other unit" that made up the Special Warfare Center, the 1st Psywar Battalion (Broadcast & Loud Speaker). It was shortly after returning from Laos (Operation White Star) that our Battalion Commander assigned me as Psywar Project officer for the presidential visit. Because the event was three months away, I thought there would be time for some leave, a little fishing, some golf maybe and working with my unit.

This was fanciful thinking on my part which became abundantly clear at the first planning conference chaired by Gen. Yarborough, commander of the Special Warfare Center. At that meeting and the many others that followed, the degree of effort and intensity that went into every detail carried the message that this was to be more than putting your best boot forward for the commander in chief. It was as if the viability of the Special Forces as a continuing part of the Army's ability to respond to a variety of national security threats was dependent on the success of the visit. President Kennedy, of course, was already invested in the Special Forces, so perhaps what they wanted was for this face-to-face experience to be an affirmation of the confidence he had in Special Forces.

What it all translated into was a full-time job for all the project officers and the focal point for most of Ft. Bragg's activities for the ensuing three months. The first major milestone of the project was a full-dress rehearsal of the entire show to be presented to members of the Department of Army and DOD staff, six weeks prior to the visit. By that time, preparations were well underway, such as dredging the lake at the site of the outdoor briefing and building the road that would be used by the vehicles carrying exhibits past the reviewing stands constructed for the demonstration.

If there was any doubt about the significance that was attached to this event, it was dispelled when the Pentagon entourage ascended the reviewing stand to watch the rehearsal. Ten stars twinkled in the sunlight that day as the five general officers surveyed what had been agonized over the previous six weeks. Their critique of what had been prepared at that point in the process had us going back to the drawing board to rework most of the presentation. It didn't put things back on square one, but we were not past square two. A second Pentagon review was scheduled and the time and effort of everyone involved was redoubled in order to meet that timeline with a product that would satisfy the purpose of the occasion. This was accomplished as so many things of this nature are in the military — hard work by dedicated people who want to do the very best they can for their organization and their country.

The big day finally arrived. Air Force One with President John F. Kennedy aboard roared into Pope Air Force Base. As the President deplaned our Battalion photographer took several pictures of him being greeted by commanders and dignitaries. Then the photographer was whisked away to the publications platoon in the Bn. Area. The plan was to demonstrate a battlefield quick reaction leaflet capability of the 1st Psywar Battalion (B&L) by taking a photo of his arrival, then several hours later dropping 5,000 leaflets on him with that picture on them.

After reviewing a full field layout of the 82nd Airborne on a runway at Pope AFB and briefings at the headquarters, the President was taken to the lake for the outdoor demonstrations. The presentation was conducted using a small convoy of tractors pulling trailers or lowboys with exhibits on them stopping briefly in front of the grandstand while a narrator briefed the exhibit. Everything went off as rehearsed without incident.

There were a few things that stand out in memory. A Special Forces A-team in full gear with weapons was mounted on a lowboy which stopped in front of the grandstand. The plan called for each team member to jump off the vehicle to the ground and stand there as his function was briefed. This must not have been made known to the



President Kennedy 'trooped the line of paratroopers; note the Honest John surface-to-surface nuclear-capable rockets, which can be seen behind the soldiers.



An SF ODA displayed its organic weaponry and communications equipment. Half of the ODA 'double-timed' alongside the trailer as it moved.



Left to right — President John F. Kennedy points out an eye-catching maneuver; Gen. Yarborough speaking with President Kennedy; the President shaking hands with paratroopers; Bell aircraft engineer Harold Graham salutes at the conclusion of his 'Rocket Belt' [Small Rocket Lift Device (SRLD)] demonstration.

Secret Service because when the first A-team member jumped off the lowboy, two agents moved quickly toward the President, one hand inside of their coat. They moved back just as quickly when it was obvious there was no danger to the President. As the A team was being driven away from the stands the narrator was saying the A team has the capability of organizing and training a guerrilla force of 500 personnel. As these words traveled across the water a resounding roar came echoing back from the "guerrilla force" that had been concealed behind trees and bushes on the opposite side of the lake. About a hundred plus 82nd Airborne soldiers in total camouflage had been installed there prior to the arrival of the President, and they leaped out of their hiding places (of the last hour and a half) brandishing weapons and shouting war cries.

Our portion of the demo was near the end. There were three exhibits, then a van with a mobile printing press in it. After watching hand-to-hand combat, soldiers moving swiftly down ropes of the rappelling walls and a slide for life, our loudspeaker team seemed tame. When the mobile radio broadcasting vehicles were in front of the grandstand, I noticed Gen. Yarborough was doing a lot of talking to the President. We had prepared briefing papers on each of our exhibits and it was apparent he was putting them to good use. A prototype of a leaflet rolling machine, which truly looked like a Rube Goldberg device, provided some excitement when it looked like it might tip over and fall off its trailer. Our final exhibit was the mobile printing press which, as the narrator would say, had the capability of printing one million leaflets in a 24-hour period. There was radio contact with two aircraft giving them a countdown to the time on target when the narrator would speak the line and bingo! There were thousands of leaflets streaming out of the aircraft forming a gigantic paper cloud above us.

The last part of the demo was given to transportation R&D. They had two things that they wanted the President to see. One was an

amphibious truck which drove from the viewing stand down to the lake, then into the water, its oversized tires propelling it to the center of the lake. The narrator then began talking about the battlefield of the future and how the soldiers would cross the battlefield. As he spoke, a figure stepped out from a cab on the amphibian. He had some tanks on his back and a controlling device in each hand. When he fired up the unit there was a loud jet-like sound, and he was lifted into the air. As he moved out 15 ft. over the water, the jets of air created a huge spray behind him making him a flying silhouette moving across the water to the reviewing stand where he landed and delivered a salute to President Kennedy. The two people closest to jet packman as he came down to earth were the two Secret Service agents who must have been hoping this was the last surprise for the day.

With the demo concluded, President Kennedy and Gen. Yarborough climbed into a big Cadillac convertible with the top down and began to slowly drive away. Still coming down were the last of the leaflet cloud, and as luck would have it, several found their way into the convertible as it skirted the lake. I remember hoping that one of them was one of the 5,000 with his picture. And so, the commander in chief was leaving Ft. Bragg having made two significant accomplishments. The green beret was now official headgear of Special Forces and POTUS was taking home a leaflet printed by the 1st Psywar Battalion. (B&L) ❖

Editor's note: The accompanying photos are public domain courtesy the U.S. Army and the JFK Presidential Library. They can be viewed along with some excellent videos at https://arsof-history.org/articles/v14n2_jfk_fort_bragg_visit_page_1.html and https://www.jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKWHP/1961/Month%2010/Day%2012/JFKWHP-1961-10-12-D?image_identifier=JFKWHP-ST-A5-8-61.



Detachment (A) Berlin Special Forces 1956-1984

A Thumbnail Look at Detachment(A) Berlin Brigade

Compiled/Written by Bob Charest, Detachment(A)
Team 1 Scuba, Detachment(A) Team 3 Team Sergeant (1969-1972)
Detachment(A) Team 2, Detachment(A) Commo Chief (1973-1978)
(<https://www.detachment-a.org/2345-2/>)

Photos courtesy Bob Charest

In 1956, six modified Special Forces Operational "A" Detachments from the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) stationed in Bad Tölz were relocated to West Berlin as the 7781 Army Unit (also known as 39th SFOD) and embedded within HQ and HQ Co., 6th Infantry Regiment. Each team was composed of one Master Sergeant and five enlisted team members. The overall OIC was MAJ Maltese and his XO, CAPT Barton. After several moves in 1958 the unit found its final home at Andrews Barracks, West Berlin, assigned to HHC, US Army Garrison, Berlin, with its new name — Detachment "A" (DET-A). DET(A) was a clandestine unit constantly on high alert status 24 hours a day. In 1962 DET(A) was separated from the Garrison and became Detachment(A), Berlin Brigade, US Army Europe, which it remained until deactivation in 1984.

Detachment(A) was a unique and diversified, unconventional classified unit. With staff, the unit numbers were approximately 90 men. Detachment(A) encompassed all the Special Forces missions over its existence: unconventional warfare, stay behind, direct action, and anti-terrorist. For example when I arrived in 1969, they operated under the cell concept. Then in the late sixties transitioned to six, 12-man "A" teams, each having its own mission requiring different and multiple skill sets including scuba, HALO, etc.

A certain breed of troop were instrumental in Detachment(A)'s missions. They brought in depth knowledge of other nations, language capabilities and other much needed skills and knowledge essential to Detachment(A). Some of these men were products of the Lodge Act, and many of these troops still had families behind the Iron Curtain. Men like Peter Astalos who served in the Romanian and German

armies during World War II; Martin Urich who participated in the largest tank battle of World War II "Kursk", and many more.

In later years during the Cold War another breed of men were joining the Special Forces originating from all over Europe. Men such as MG Sidney Shachnow born in Kaunas, Lithuania, imprisoned for three years during World War II, joined Special Forces in 1962 and served for the next 32 years in Special Forces rising through the ranks to become a Two Star General. He was the Commander of Detachment(A) in the early 1970s. Hermann Adler, Team 3 Leader 71-72, was born in the Sudetenland, Czechoslovakia.

After MG Shachnow's departure from Detachment(A), his replacement was relieved of duty in front of our morning formation by the Berlin Brigade DBC. He was replaced along with several other key individuals who were not Special Forces qualified. Under their direction we were all put back in uniforms. Our Detachment(A) sign logo now had a big Airborne logo appended to it. We were assigned various duties to train the Infantry units of the Berlin Brigade, i.e., EIB training, Scout Swimmer, etc. Their NCO's looked to us as cadre.



Martin Urich in 1952 and on his 90th birthday.



MG Sidney Shachnow in an undated photo and in 2017.

These command changes had a detrimental impact on the unit and compromised DET(A)'s mission.

The unit then got a new commander. Colonel Stanley Olchovik, who was born in Czechoslovakia, was an accomplished linguist and had extensive Special Forces operational experience.

CSM Jeffrey Raker, another standout born in Germany, was also assigned to Detachment(A). He volunteered for Special Forces in 1963, and rose up to Command Sergeant Major. He served as the Sergeant Major of Detachment(A) from 1977-1981.

Colonel Olchovik and Sergeant Major Raker restored Detachment(A) to its primary classified missions. Under their leadership the unit was able to regroup and achieve 100% language qualification, and hone its unconventional warfare and special operations skills. They set up training with the Bundesgrenzschutz GSG9, SAS, and Special Berlin Police units. SGM Raker selected and trained Detachment(A) individuals who made the reconnaissance to Iran to plan Operation Eagle Claw – Iran Hostage Rescue Mission 1979.

He then selected the Detachment that was to rescue the hostages held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Operation Storm Cloud.

CSM Raker served over 30 years in the Army.

It was men like these that made Detachment(A) what it was — a clandestine unit of Green Beret commandos on high alert 24 hours a day operating in the Cold War era.

Becoming a member of the unit required the potential candidate meet the highest of standards. Those standards were rigorously set and enforced. The slightest infractions were not tolerated. The members of this unit were selectively trained, language qualified SF soldiers, many former German and Eastern European immigrants who brought much needed culture, geographical and language skills to this assignment. They dressed in mostly civilian clothing purchased in both West and East Germany and carried if required, non-American flash documentation and identification. Their missions were always classified.

Physical training was wide-ranging and progressively intense.

For example, on Monday, it was the daily dozen plus a one-mile run. Tuesday, the same but a 2-mile run which progressed through Friday to a 5-mile run. Four times per month we performed a four-mile cross-country run through the Grunewald Forest. Another example, a month in Southern Germany where we trained for winter warfare, which consisted of both downhill and cross-country skiing



Hermann Adler, left, served as Team Leader in Detachment (A) from 1970-1974. Right, receiving his DMOR medallion from LTG Cleveland in 2014.



CSM Jeffrey Raker — Sergeant Major of Detachment (A) from 1977-1981



Delta Force Eagle Claw



Patch for Operation Storm Cloud — SFM Raker selected the Detachment that was to rescue hostages held in Iran at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Team 3, — D. Terens, B. Hussen, R. Grow, F. Bremer, W. Kaiser, R. Phunn, J. Pirome, J. Luethse, J. Gazdzik, C. Hunt



Scuba training in Bad Tölz, Germany

equivalent to extreme skiing. Specialized demolition training was a required skill for our various targets in Berlin. Some attended the CIA specialized demo course at Harvey Point, NC. We also conducted intense special internal demolitions by our demo personnel.

DET(A) participated in all the Flintlock exercises along with our sister unit 10th SFGP(ABN) located in Bad Tölz Germany in various ways sometimes as assets, Guerrilla Chief as well as participating in communication exercises. We would combine our Scuba training with 10th SFGP in Bad Tölz, Germany.

Each month, we conducted our airborne operations staging and flying out of Berlin Tempelhof AFB and jumping into Bad Tölz, Germany.

Some of the tools of the trade used were coal filled with C-3 for the earlier sabotage of the rail ring surrounding Berlin. One-shot cigarette-lighter guns also known as stingers, vials filled with metal shavings for destruction of turbines, noise suppressed weapons for elimination of specific targets. A myriad of weapons and vehicles were available. All of our scuba gear was German Dräger. This included a Dräger one-man portable decompression chamber.

Other tools included dual passports, or dual nationalities, GS ID cards for specific reasons. Diplomatic passports walk on water. IDs for exploring boarder areas in all sectors. Vehicles utilized included both US and German registration. We used German weapons, i.e., Walther MPK 9mm that fit in a briefcase.

Area studies were conducted to gain a solid understanding of the culture, languages, history, geographical data, and target acquisition.

The status of forces agreement with the four powers occupying West Berlin specified no elite forces. However, the allies the British,



Bob Charest, 1977 — an example of relaxed grooming.

Russians, and the U.S., etc., had their own elite forces.

We participated in NATO escape and evasion exercises and exclusive DET(A) city exercises in Berlin, which included dead drops, live drops, primary meetings, surveillance, and in-city communications. DET(A) had a city course that we taught to the 10th SFGP personnel as well as SEAL Team Two from Crete.

DET(A) knew that the KGB had us under constant surveillance and possessed dossiers on all of us. Part of our city training was against the Soviets surveillance of us.

Unit members wore civilian clothes, spoke fluent German, and grooming standards were relaxed, i.e., long hair.

During the mid 70s our mission was changed to anti-terrorist, sniper, and swat combat in cities. We were the Delta Force of Europe.

In 1978 DET(A) was tasked by the CIA to dig up several cache sites positioned throughout Berlin for stay behind operations and check the conditions of the equipment in them, i.e., weapons, demo, commo, medical, and to recommend replacements.

Detachment "A" was deactivated 1 October 1984 and the doors locked on 17 December 1984. ❖

Editor's note: Bob Charest, "the man who brought Detachment (A) in from the cold," first published this article in January 2012, which coincided with his launch of [Detachment-A.org](https://www.detachment-a.org). It is only one part of a wealth of information available there. Be sure to check it out.



About the Author

In 1961, Robert "Bob" Charest, after volunteering for and completing Commo School and SF Branch Training in December of 1962, pulled his first assignment with 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) (SFG(A)) in Okinawa. Sent TDY on a six month Mobile Training

Advisory mission in Vietnam in July 1963, he was assigned to A-432 stationed in the camp at Boun Beng of II Corps. The team was responsible for off-island training with the Jari Montagnards.

Transferring to 10th SFG(A) in Bad Tölz Germany, he served with B Company ODA-19 from 1964–1967. In 1967, he was chosen to lead a top-secret mission to Libya. After two solo trips into Libya to coordinate with the US Embassy, he and his team, disguised as Civilian Communications Contractors to Libya, visited all of the Libyan Army Bases from Tripoli to Benghazi. While there, he was approached by two Libyan Officials, one of whom was the Libyan Army Chief of Staff, informing him of "The Black Boots" movement, an underground effort within the military to overthrow King Idris', the King of Libya. The rebellion was led by a young man, named Muammar Muhammad al-Gaddafi. The officials then asked Charest to become a paid informant, to spy on the underground movement. He and his team aborted the mission and returned to Stuttgart. Although Charest briefed the higher headquarters in Stuttgart of the plot, nothing was done.

His second tour in Vietnam began in 1968, serving with B-56 Project (SIGMA) Military Assistance Command Vietnam – Studies and Operations Group (MACVSOG). Wounded on one of his missions, his actions were submitted for the award of the Silver Star. Thirty years later, Charest finally received the award, which had been downgraded to a Bronze Star with "V" device. There are still efforts to have the award reviewed and upgraded. Completing his tour in Vietnam, he attended German language training at DLIWC

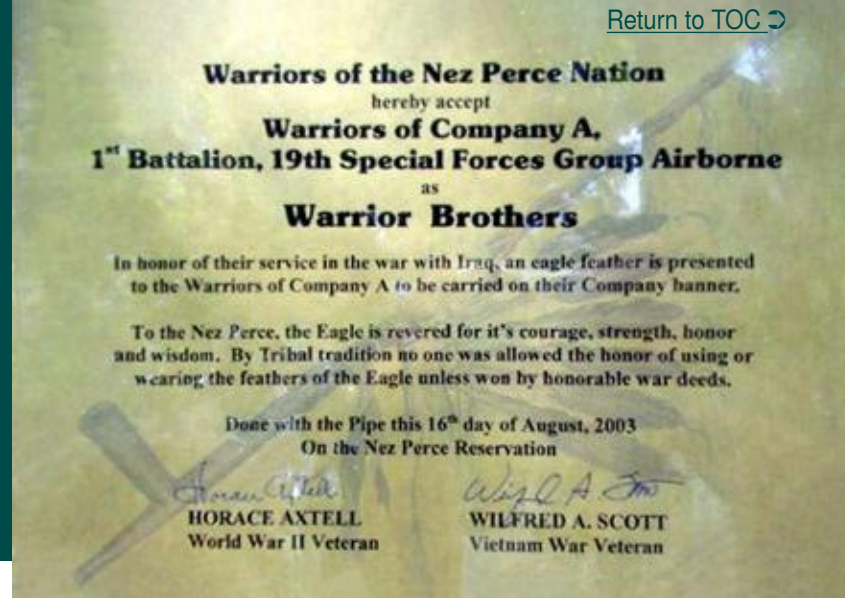
California. As he was also fluent in Russian, he was assigned to Detachment (A) Berlin, serving on Team One Scuba Team from 1969–1972. Returning to Southeast Asia, he was assigned to A Company, 46th SF CO in Thailand on ODA-33, where he was awarded the Soldiers Medal. When 46th SF Company closed, Charest returned to Detachment (A) Berlin, Germany, remaining from 1973–1978.

Retiring in 1981 from 10th SFG(A) in Fort Devens, Massachusetts, Robert Charest took a job with Vinnell Corporation in Saudi Arabia. A 1981 grenade accident in 1981 and evacuation back stateside ended his tour. Attending the University of New Hampshire, he received his Bachelor's degree. Two years later, he accepted a position as a Senior Instructor/ Advisor with the Commo Committee at the US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS). This job was followed by one with FEMA/MERS first as a Senior Operations Officer, then a GM-13 Security Manager.

Robert Charest, fully retired in 1992, but has remained active with the Special Forces community. He served as President of SFA Chapter 72, in Merrimack, NH for five years and sits on the Board of Officers for the Veteran's of Special Forces (VSF). He is a member of the Special Operations Association. A proud member of Detachment (A) Berlin, he has organized several well attended reunions for the unit. He also is a Life Member of the JFK Special Warfare Museum. His dedication has been instrumental in the inclusion of a Detachment (A) exhibit in the museum. Robert Charest is still involved with Scuba Diving, Skydiving and holds a 4th Degree Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do.

Awards and Decorations include: Soldiers Medal; 2 Bronze Stars with "V" for Valor; 4 Purple Hearts; Special Forces Diver badge; Mater Parachutist badge; CIB, German, Thai, Vietnamese and Chinese Jump Wings; HALO wings, Air Medal; Meritorious Service Medal; Army Commendation Medal (3 Awards).

Special Forces Unit Adopted by Nez Perce Tribe



By Greg Walker (ret), USA Special Forces

“Now you become part of the Nimiipuu people and we welcome you” — Spiritual leader Horace Axtell

“Each year, Nimiipuu (Nez Perce) people gather in a grassy field at the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site to honor their ancestors who were incarcerated here in 1877-78. The men, women, and children — led by Chief Red Heart at the time — were treated harshly. Conditions were so bad that a young boy died. More than 120 years later, the Red Heart Memorial began in 1998 and has happened every year until 2020, when it was cancelled because of the coronavirus pandemic. This year, Nimiipuu members of the Red Heart families gathered once again, this time in a private, socially-distant ceremony that included only Tribal members and representatives from the City of Vancouver and the National Park Service.

“In lieu of a public event, Confluence has partnered with organizers of the ceremony on this Red Heart Memorial Oral History Project to record this year’s event and gather oral history interviews from participants, with support from the National Nez Perce Historic Trail. A recording of the event will air on CVTV and be available at the Confluence Digital Library, where we will also keep the oral history recordings. We have collected the first set of those interviews into a special episode of the Confluence Story Gathering Podcast.”

<https://www.confluenceproject.org/library-post/the-RedHeart-ceremony-oral-history-collection/>

Video of Chief Red Heart Ceremony:

https://www.cvtv.org/vid_link/33376

Welcoming the Black Scarves - August 2003

SPALDING — Under the shade of cottonwood and locust trees rustling in a stiff breeze, the men of Company A, an airborne Army Special Forces unit fresh from Iraq, formed a circle with veterans from the Nez Perce Tribe.

Wilfred Scott, vice chairman of the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee, an elder and veteran himself, welcomed the 20 young men to Nez Perce Country and described the coming pipe ceremony.

“I do not recall us doing one like this for any group or any unit,” said Scott. “Many of us get pretty emotional doing these ceremonies.”

At that the tribal flag song was played and the Special Forces troops stood straight and rigid as the stars and stripes, tribal flags, an Army flag and the company banner were brought in.

The Nez Perce veterans befriended the unit and honored it with a pipe ceremony prior to the war. They also sent black scarves embroidered with the word Nimiipuu (Nez Perce for “The People”) and the Alpha Company insignia to the men, who wore them in Iraq.

The troops were also welcomed to the ceremony by Anthony Johnson, chairman of the tribe and a veteran of the Gulf War. He spoke of his return from war 10 years ago and how welcome the sight of trees and green grass was after months in the desert.

“We want to say welcome home and job well done,” said Johnson. “We are very glad that in a traditional way we didn’t have to do an empty-saddle ceremony in honor of a fallen comrade.”

Company commander Maj. Gregory Allen, dressed in desert fatigues, accepted the welcome and thanked the veterans for their prayers and blessing.

“This is very overwhelming to me,” he said. “I’m not a very emotional person.”

Allen introduced each of his men and described what their job was during the war. “It is pretty incredible all these guys are back alive and no one was injured. We can thank God for that and we can thank all of our training.”

Spiritual leader Horace Axtell then blessed the ceremony and he and others prepared pipes that circled the group of about 40 men three times. Each man and a few women raised the pipe to the sky and then to their lips to draw in the smoke.

“Now you become part of the Nimiipuu people and we welcome you,” Axtell said.

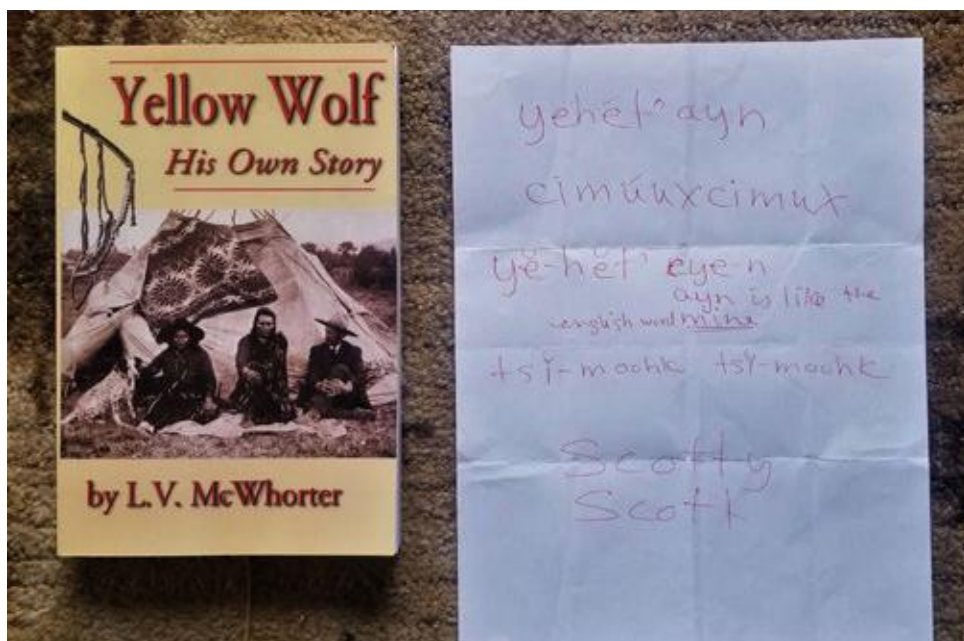
Following the smoking, gifts were exchanged before an eagle feather was passed around the circle. Each person who held the feather stood and told of their service and some of their experiences.



Opening ritual for the Chief Red Heart ceremony. The author was privileged to present the tribal colors at this year's gathering. (Photo courtesy Greg Walker)



The Renegade Drums provided traditional music for the ceremony. (Photo courtesy Greg Walker)



Only a Nez Perce Elder can bestow a tribal name. "Black Scarf" is the name given to the author. (Photo courtesy Greg Walker)

SFC Gregory Walker, who had formed a friendship through e-mails with Scott, said the tradition of Special Forces was born from the courage and tactics of Indian warriors in the 1700s.

"Your scarves and your prayers with them went over with us and brought us back safe today."

https://mtribune.com/northwest/passing-the-pipe-to-welcome-the-veterans/article_fc2a546b-2d73-542d-b331-31305ef65e85.html

What's in a name?

"Each name fulfills the purpose of revealing something about the character or temperament of the person or place. Names like these are still in use across America today. Some people receive more than one name, which reflects significant character changes during their lifetime. Legal names are given, but Native American names are earned." — <https://www.ethnictechnologies.com/blog/2018/10/2/native-american-naming-traditions>

"Native Americans inspire us to think about our names as allegory — with multiple dimensions. To remember that we are on a linear voyage in life, that we should be constantly changing and growing, that our identity consists in how we are seen and judged by others — by what we give, not by what we take. To remember that our names should remind us first of 'us', not 'me.' To remember that making the world a better place means not only helping others but also caring for nature so that our descendants will enjoy the same bounty we have. To remember that every human being has a sacred spiritual core."

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/whats-in-name/201107/names-and-identity-the-native-american-naming-tradition>

"...it would be an elder that would give you permission to receive a Niimiipuu name." — Ms. Angel Sobatta

"Greg,

"ta'c meeywi – good morning.



Wilfred Scott (L) and author at Vancouver Barracks during Chief Red Heart ceremony. (Photo courtesy Greg Walker)

"I remember this recognition of your troop. Wilfred Scott's e-mail I cannot find or else I would forward this to him.

"Horace Axtell is now passed on, and Scotty's (Wilfred) wife Bessie passed away a couple of months ago.

"To help us understand this, I'll need some clarification. When you wore the scarves in battle did you wear them on your head or neck?

"The elders may have said cimúuxcimux táqmaał or táqmaał cimúuxcimux

"cimúuxcimux – black

"qota táqmaał – head scarf/bandana, women wear the floral type, and men wear the plain colors.

"táqmaał – in general refers to hat.

"scarf – yehet'ayn. There is another word for scarf too that is slipping my mind, it has to do with wrapping around.

"Also, we do not refer to Scotty as a "shaman", he is one of our respected elders/leaders. And it would be an elder that would give you permission to receive a Niimiipuu name."

Angel Sobotta, Nez Perce Tribe, April 2, 2021

yehet'ayn cimúuxcimux — "Black Scarf"

"On April 24, 2021, I was both blessed and honored to sit with Nez Perce Elder Wilfred Scott as we attended the Chief Red Heart ceremony at Vancouver Barracks, Washington State. "Scott, one of the founding members of the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee in 1974, was lauded by Arthur Broncheau, the senior liaison for the executive committee, for his 'willing heart for everything that he does' involving tribal activities, local powwows and travels to historical Nez Perce sites in Montana and Idaho. He is a U.S. Navy veteran and has worked extensively with tribal veterans."

<https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2021/jan/01/scott-southern-named-the-nez-perce-tribe-elders-of/>



Author and his wife, Carol, with “Scotty” and his relatives during follow-on visit at the Nez Perce Reservation in north-central Idaho. (Photo courtesy Greg Walker)



We visited the Big Hole National Battlefield during our trek along the Nez Perce Trail in Idaho and Montana. (Photo courtesy Greg Walker)

Scotty and I had not seen each other since April 2003, when members of our Special Forces company attended the Nez Perce traditional warrior homecoming ceremony in Idaho. We enjoyed a warm reunion, and my wife and I were honored to be asked to sit beside Scotty as he presided over the event.

During the ceremony Scotty formally gave me my Nez Perce name, “yehe’t’ayn cimuxcimux”, or “Black Scarf.”

Several days later Carol and I visited with Scotty and several of his friends and relatives at the Nez Perce reservation in north-central Idaho. We presented him with a Pendleton blanket, returning the honor he bestowed upon me when in 2003 he gifted me his Spirit blanket during our welcome home and adoption ceremony.

We then visited the Big Hole Battleground and paid our respects to those Nez Perce who fell in battle during their attempt to escape the U.S. Army troops pursuing them as they made their way toward Canada.

Company A, 1/19th Special Forces Group (ABN) is the only U.S. Army unit to be formally recognized, and adopted as Warrior Brothers, by the Nez Perce. To this day an eagle feather flies from the company guidon at our headquarters in Buckley, Washington.

“De Oppresso Liber” ❖



Major Greg Allen graduated from West Point and retired as a full colonel. Greg served with the 2/75th Ranger Battalion, the 1st Special Forces Group and successfully completed the DELTA selection course prior to taking command of A Co – 1/19th. Upon entering Iraq, he assisted in the rescue of PFC Jessica Lynch, among other successful missions. (Credit: Author collection)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

An author and Special Forces historian, Greg Walker served with the 10th, 7th, and 19th Special Forces Groups (ABN). He retired in 2005. He is a Life member of the Special Operations and Special Forces Associations.

Today, Mr. Walker lives and writes from his home in Sisters, Oregon, along with his service pup, Tommy.

RSVP EARLY for 20 NOV 2021!

November Chapter Meeting

Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER COL Patrick Nelson

War Reporter Alex Quade brings her SF friend COL Pat Nelson as Chapter 78's very Special Guest Speaker on 20 NOV.

Colonel Pat Nelson is currently a student of the United States Army War College. He received his commission as an Infantry Officer from Lincoln University in 2000, and holds a Master of Sciences degree from the Defense Analysis Program, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA. Prior to his arrival at Carlisle Barracks, he was assigned to the 75th Ranger Regiment, where he served as the Deputy Commanding Officer for Operations and the DCO to JTF 20 (Afghanistan) in support of Operation Freedom Sentinel.

Previous non-command assignments include service as an Infantry Platoon Leader in A Co, 1/23 Infantry; Rifle Company XO, and Battalion S-5 in 2/75th RR (Afghanistan and Iraq); Group Assistant Operations Officer, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) (Afghanistan); Director for Doctrine, for SF Core Tasks, Special Warfare Command, Fort Bragg, NC; SOJTF-A RC North LNO, Mazir-e Shariff, Afghanistan; Battalion S-3, 3/7th Special Forces Group (Airborne); Secretary of the General Staff, 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) Fort Bragg, NC; Deputy G-3, 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) Fort Bragg, NC. Prior to commissioning, he served 5 years enlisted in C Co, 2/75th Ranger Regiment as an infantryman from 1991 to 1996.

COL Nelson has served and led in combat at every rank from 1LT, on. His command assignments include: 24 months as Commander, Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha 726, deploying to Ecuador, Paraguay, and Afghanistan; 12 months as Commander, B Company 3d Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group where he deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom; 24 months as commander, 2nd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne), where he deployed twice to Afghanistan in support of Operation Freedom Sentinel.

Editor's Note: COL Nelson graced the cover of May's Sentinel, with his ODA-726 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. Nelson's SOTF-71 CDR, COL Pat Mahaney (Ch.78's August speaker) holds him in the highest regard.



DON'T MISS THIS CH. 78 EVENT!

(Photos courtesy Alex Quade)