



SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 12 • DECEMBER 2021

**SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION
2021 CONVENTION
OCTOBER 22ND-25TH**



**PRESENTED BY:
SFA CHAPTERS 51 & 78**

SFA Con 2021 RECAP

The Last Bright Light
SOAR XLV

PROJECT DELTA
Part One

Chapter 78
SPECIAL
FUNDRAISER





SENTINEL

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 12 • DECEMBER 2021



US ARMY SPECIAL OPS COMMAND



US ARMY JFSC



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

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FRONT COVER: The Las Vegas skyline on the first evening of the SFA Convention as viewed from the Orleans — Friday, October 22. (Photo by Debra Holm, Sentinel art director and designer)



Please visit us at
specialforces78.com
and sfa78cup.com



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Funding for the SFA Chapter 78 Sentinel is provided by

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The *Sentinel* is published monthly by Special Forces Association Chapter 78, Southern California — art direction and design by Debra Holm, Dinwiddie Holm Graphics. The views, opinions and articles printed in this issue do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Army or the United States Special Operations Command the Special Forces Association or Special Forces Association Chapter 78. Please address any comments to the editor at sfachapter78@gmail.com.

From the Editor



How Miller
Sentinel Editor

What a convention! The *Sentinel* staff thoroughly enjoyed attending and helping out at SFA Con 2021.

If there was a word that would sum up the focus of this convention, it would be “support” — support for current members through mixing and learning together, support for the future of SF through lessons learned and improved communication like the new Teamhouse.SpecialForcesAssociation.org website, and urgent support for our Afghan allies.

Now we have had some time to put together a more detailed coverage of the event, co-sponsored by Chapters 51 and 78, though there was far too much going on to cover everything. Debra Holm has really outdone herself laying out this issue. She even took the cover background photo.

I wrote an overview and there are lots of pictures and info, contributed by a variety of people. Many people are saying that this was the best SFA convention they have ever attended. Big kudos to Convention Director, Chapter 51 President, John Joyce and many, many others.

The 2022 SFA Convention, hosted by SFA Chapter 4-24, will take place in Colorado Springs, CO. It will celebrate the 70th anniversary of U.S. Army Special Forces.

The opportunity to overlap the end of the SOAR meeting with the beginning day of SFACon was inspired. This enabled a lot of intermixing between special operators of all types.

Greg Walker, author of our recent El Salvador articles and more, tells us about the evolution of SOA and why this SOAR was special, giving us insight, both by and about, the late founding member Jim Butler. Several Chapter 78 members attended SOAR, including Gold Star member Jim Suber, who gave a very well received speech.

Jim Morris, previous editor of the *Sentinel*, shares from his book “Fighting Men.” Part one, in this issue, describes Project Delta, a lot like SOG but designed for in-country operations. Next month we’ll have a couple of related stories from the book about a mission which also involved a Mike Force.

Kenn Miller has two book reviews for us. One book is about the future of the police state in China. The other is about thoughts and memories of veterans from “the jungle” to “the sandbox,” compliments of a highly respected Ranger, Matt Eversmann

On the back cover, there is an opportunity to learn about and help our favorite, and outstanding, Afghan partner, Nimo. Maybe it will also stir you to help out in resettlement efforts in your local area.

And speaking of improving communications: the national cemeteries system has added 500,000 names to its online register, with searchable info on those interred. You will have an opportunity to add to information displayed about your friends and relatives lying there, for all to see: www.vlm.cem.va.gov/ ❖

How Miller
Sentinel Editor

From the President | December 2021



Bruce Long, President SFA Chap. 78

By the time you read this, we will be attending our annual Christmas party at the Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club located in the city of Corona del Mar, CA. SFA Chapter 78 has been holding this annual event at the Yacht Club for over 15 years.

The year 2021 has been a tough year for everyone, especially with COVID-19 hovering over all of us. Overall the Chapter has been very lucky, none of its membership has died from the virus.

In reflecting back through the year, here are a few things that were really memorable:

- Ham Salley's presentation on his time serving on an ODA during the siege of Khe Sanh,
- Alec Bierbauer's presentation on the early days of the covert use of drones in Afghanistan, and his years as a Clandestine Case Officer for the CIA. Alec also co-authored *Never Mind, We'll Do It Ourselves*, a book about his time with the CIA, which was published in 2021. Personally, I couldn't put the book down. An excellent read, I highly recommend it. Alec Bierbauer will be our guest speaker at our Chapter Christmas party for December 2021.
- Another great speaker was Annie Jacobsen, who wrote the book *First Platoon*. Annie has been our guest speaker in the past, and she, once again, made a fantastic presentation about the importance of making identification through electronic fingerprints, iris scans, facial images and cell swabs of DNA. This became known as biometric collection. The Pentagon called it "Identity Dominance." In *First Platoon* Annie focuses on one specific combat team of the 4/73rd Cavalry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division. This is another hard book to put down.
- Of course the really BIG event was the SFA Convention in October held in Las Vegas, NV. Our Chapter along with SFA Chapter 51 hosted the event. A total of over 900 members and guests attended from Friday 10/22 through Monday 10/25. For those of you who did attend, I'm sure you will agree it was the best convention ever held. I've attended numerous conventions over the years, both as a member, and as your President. The guest speakers and the banquet on Monday night were the best I've had at any convention I've ever attended.

Also of special note was our own Chapter member Dennis DeRosia's symposium on the latest medical training with the assistance of two active-duty 18D's from SWC.

John Joyce, President of Chapter 51, and Convention Director, was the driving force who really pulled it off. A "BIG Thank You" goes out to John for a job well done.

In closing, Merry Christmas and a very Happy New year to everyone who reads this.

Our next Chapter meeting will be held on January 22, 2022 at the Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, CA

Please RSVP to Don Gonneville at don@gonneville.com no later than January 20th, midnight, if you plan to attend our January Chapter meeting. We need an exact headcount.

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

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



At SOAR XLV, which was held in Las Vegas from Oct 18 through Oct 22 — Jim Suber Jr., Ch. 78 member Jim Suber, George Sternberg, a SOG recon veteran, and Ch. 78 member John Meyer. Jim Suber is a Gold Star family member and his brother Randolph Suber was one of SOA's Unreturned Heroes, 86 Special Operators and 46 Airmen lost behind enemy lines due to hostile fire, who were honored at the SOAR Memorial Breakfast.

To learn more about the origins of the Special Operations Association and the history of SOAR, and to see some photos from this years event, read Greg Walker's story that begins on [page 10](#) of this issue.



OCTOBER 22-25TH, 2021

SFACON RECAP

**The Special Forces Association
2021 National Convention**

By How Miller, Sentinel Editor

Photos by Dennis DeRosia, How Miller, and Debra Holm

The Orleans Hotel was ideally situated to provide attractions for all, there were outside events like the Butler Purple Heart Race at the M Hotel, followed by a picnic lunch party with guest speaker, MOH recipient Melvin Morris and his wife Mary. A Death Valley motorcycle ride, a tour of the Valley of Fire State Park, a Mob Museum tour, shopping trips, and a golf tournament were all enjoyed. Of course there were plenty of shows, fine food, and other things to do in town as well.

The amazing lineup of speakers began the first morning with Mitch Utterback talking about the origins of SF, focusing largely on the international nature of the Jedberg teams of the WWII OSS in a very relatable way.

Keith Rutledge talked about the new "Teamhouse" website, not only in a "how to" way, but also in a "these are the wonderful new things you can do with the website to help your chapter" manner.

Wade Ishimoto dialed us all into the birth of Delta Force, the fine details of the Iran Hostage Rescue Mission, and how it led to the robust counterterrorism force we have today.

Alex Quade was able to scramble to replace one of the planned speakers who was unable to attend. She brought then SF CPT Justin Sapp, detached to CIA Team Alpha, and "First Casualty" author Toby Harnden, who both talked about CIA and SF working together in the early days of the liberation of Afghanistan, and the events surrounding Mike Spann becoming the first KIA of the war at Qala i Jangi.

After Saturday's picnic Mike Taylor talked about the activities of the POW/MIA committee, the challenges overcome and those remaining. He talked about some successes, and included photos of on-the-ground operations.

Former Chapter 78 president and SFA roving ambassador, John Stryker Meyer enthusiastically finished up the day by relating some of his riveting stories about MACV-SOG. The room was packed and nobody wanted to leave.

Sunday afternoon started off with Chapter 78 member Dennis DeRosia, who put together a presentation on how it was to be a 91B (a roughly-Vietnam-era SF Medic) and how it is today to be an 18D (today's version). He talked about training as it was back in the 60s and early 70s, and for an update, he enlisted the help of two SWC sergeants, SFC Michael Jones and SFC Patrick Buckles, who do the training today at Ft. Bragg. The old timers (like me) were amazed at the advances made.

Lyle Kendrick then told about the Oral History Project and how they are trying to get a broad swath of SF experience recorded, especially from us old-timers who unfortunately may not be around a lot longer to tell their story. Contact LHendrick56@outlook.com for more info.

Then there was a chance for an intimate discussion with former Acting SEC/DEF Chris Miller, who would be our Keynote speaker

at the closing night banquet as well. He opened the session with “It’s nice to be home!” and the room instantly became comfortable.

Monday afternoon Jocko Willink (yes, a Navy Seal), creator and host of the top-rated Jocko Podcast (jockopodcast.com). His podcast, which is available free to all, contains a lot of Special Ops content. He has even written a series of empowering kid’s books on “the Way of the Warrior.” He talked about the SEALs, SF, the way he goes about life and how the most important quality, as with SF, is character.

Gus Taylor talked about such diverse theatres as Central America, Iran, Afghanistan and Vietnam. There was a lot of it spent on lessons learned and what we need to learn/relearn from Afghanistan and Vietnam. Discussed also, as was pervasive throughout all of the convention activities, was how to help our Afghan allies.

The final pre-banquet presentation was, for many, the most poignant moment of the convention. Alex Quade brought the part of SOTF-71 that rushed towards the Chinook that had been downed by missile fire in Afghanistan, to secure it and rescue any survivors. That led to a very significant battle that lasted days, involving many troops. The team each described parts of the incident, including securing and defending the KIAs and the confusion surrounding where a female reporter might have disappeared to. She (Alex and her cameraman) had actually been bumped from that flight and were safe elsewhere.

Then Alex calmly announced to all that the wife of the late pilot, Casey Rodgers, and their daughter, Madison, were sitting in the front row. The Gold Star widow got up and tearfully, and enthusiastically, thanked the team for their heroic efforts that day. There was not a dry eye in the place.

At all times one could find people meeting new and old friends at the huge Hospitality Suite which was ringed by the vendors, and

had a centrally located open bar. On the last night the vendors were gone, and we had our banquet right there, concluding with music and dancing.

The vendors ranged from those selling SF related merchandise, to both familiar and new authors. There were those promoting causes and services, and there was a booth with representatives of the VA offering help with benefits.

Finally, the banquet arrived and the “troops” were all decked out. The food was wonderful. There were thank you’s to John Joyce, the Director of this highly successful convention, the rest of his hard working Las Vegas Chapter 51, and co-hosting Chapter 78.

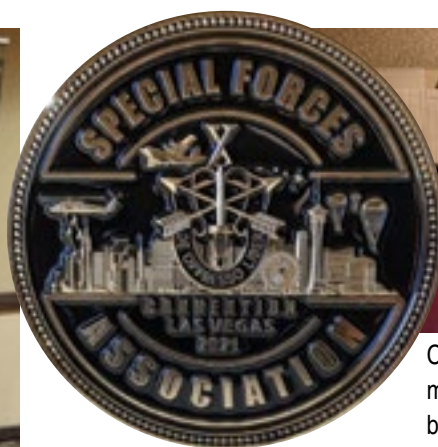
Chapter 78 Chaplain Richard Simonian gave the invocation, followed by Chapter 78 member Robert Crebbs, who made the moving MIA/POW presentation.

St. Philip Neri Awards were presented. LTC (R) Mike Taylor and SGM (R) Bradley J. Halling were Gold Medal awardees, and SGM (R) Phil Hanson was awarded the Silver Medal.

Mitch Utterback, our emcee, finally introduced our keynote speaker, retired Green Beret and former SEC/DEF, Chris Miller. He was both thoughtful and entertaining. The meeting wound towards a close with a video playing to an Irish tune and the “Ballad of the Green Beret.” All were silent as the roll call of members who passed during the last year played on the large screen.

The Benediction by John Padget and the passing of the flag to 2022 Colorado Springs Chapter 4-24 wrapped up the formal convention.

The DJ started playing and people danced and had a final chance to linger and mingle until next they meet. ♦



Ch. 51 member Brad Welker was one of the volunteers manning the registration desk. Attendees received this beautiful SFA Con challenge coin (left) designed by Ch. 51 President John Joyce (visit his site xclibr.com for custom challenge coins and more) in their registration packet.

Above, banners were strategically placed in the Orleans, greeting and directing convention attendees.

The hallway where registration took place proved to be a great place to meet up. At immediate right, Ch. 51 members Col Jason Clarke, Garrison Commander at Ft. Irwin, and John Alexander; at far right, Patrick Kinsey, Nimo, Richard Simonian, Steven Sosa, Ramon Rodriguez — all members of Ch. 78, with the exception of Sosa who is a member of Ch. 1-18.



THE HOSPITALITY/VENDOR ROOM

— the central meeting point for attendees to enjoy some liquid refreshments with old buddies, meet new friends, place bids on silent auction items, and to browse the wares of the vendors on site.

1. A display of silent auction items and conventioners relaxing and enjoying conversation.
2. Convention Director and Ch. 51 President John Joyce.
3. SFA President Kevin Harry.
4. Ch. 78 Aaron Brandenburg and his wife browse.
5. Left to right, Ch. 51 Lonny Holmes, Gordon Denniston, Casey Holmes and Lonnie's son John Holmes. Gordon's vendor table displayed his new book *"Mad Dog" Shriver*. [Click here](#) to be notified when it is available for purchase.
6. Thanh Duong Boyer, co-author of the award-winning book *Ground Kisser*.
7. Steve Sherman, unofficial historian of SF in RVN, author, and helper to the troops, with his wife. His 14 volume series *Indochina in the Year of...* is available for purchase at vvfh.org.
8. War Reporter Alex Quade introduces ODA-726 to her SF Medal of Honor friends, SFC Melvin Morris and his wife Mary. (Photo courtesy Alex Quade; Photo by JR Osorio)
9. How Miller and Chaplain Vahan Sipantzi met at the convention.
10. SOG Recon man, author and prior guest speaker at SFA Chapter 78 in 2019, Nick Brokhausen, right, was unveiling his latest book at the reunion, *Vagabonds: Tourists in the Heart of Darkness*. (Photo courtesy John Meyer)
11. Nimo, John Vislosky, John Meyer, Richard Simonian and Ramon Rodriguez. (Photo courtesy John Meyer)



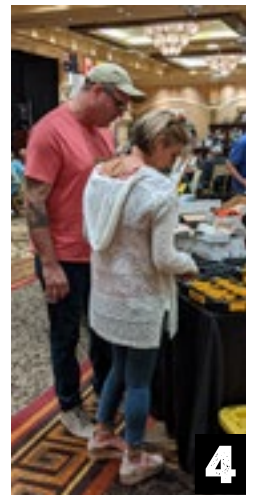
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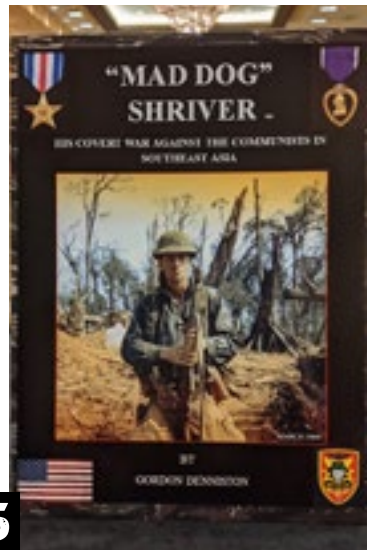
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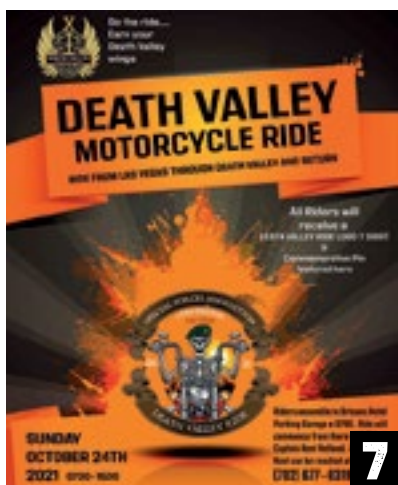

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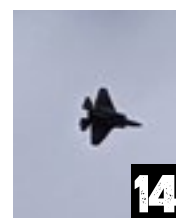
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EVENTS AND EXCURSIONS were schedule over the weekend. A wide variety of activities were scheduled each morning.

1. Runners checking into the Aaron Butler Memorial Purple Heart Race on Saturday morning.
2. Herbert Miller, a veteran runner, wearing his Green Beret, and an unidentified runner prior to the race.
3. Herbert Miller, wearing his official race shirt, very happy to have finished the race, and his wife Elaine back at the Orleans after the race.
4. The pool deck party at the M Resort followed the running race and was well attended.
5. SF MOH SFC Melvin Morris addresses the crowd at the M Resort with his wife Mary at his side.
6. Ch. 78 Rob Pugh and his family enjoying lunch.
7. There were no photos from Sunday's Death Valley Run — hard to do from a bike. The rider's were honored with a police escort to the highway at the start of their day.
8. Also on Sunday, the guided tour of the Valley of Fire offered a view of this beautiful state park and insight into the life there. (Photo by Lonny Holmes)
9. They were lucky to see longhorned sheep, a rare treat, on the way into the park and on the way out. (Photo by Lonny Holmes)
10. Monday's Mob museum tour provided an interactive journey through the birth of the Mob to the present. Pictured is a .38 caliber nickel-plated revolver believed to have been seized from Al Capone in a 1928 arrest. (Photo by Lonny Holmes)
11. The 1st place team at the SFA Con Golf Tournament: Al Moreno, Jason Orello, Pat Ford, Derek Carter
12. The 2nd place team posed for a photo on the course: Dwayne Bierly, Dan Wilke, Jenny Wilke, Floyd Holcomb
13. The 3rd place team: Tom Pay, Frank Medina, Carl Banks, Morris Bran
14. Golf tournament participants at Sunrise Vista Golf Course on Nellis AFB were treated to a non-stop airshow while on the course.


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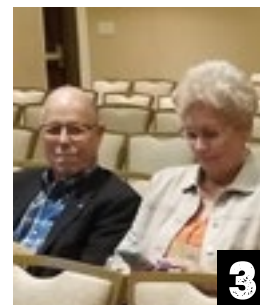
SYMPOSIUMS featuring incredible speakers and presentations were scheduled for each day of the convention.

1. Wade Ishimoto discusses Delta Force.
2. Mike Taylor talked about the POW/MIA Committee activities and challenges.
3. John Stryker Meyer held his audience spellbound with his riveting stories.
4. Alex Quade and Chapter 78 brought a last minute addition, SF Col Justin Sapp and author Toby Harnden.
5. Lyle Kendrick spoke of the SF Oral History Project that is working to record the stories of SF veterans .
6. Lots of people were lining up to have their photo taken with Jocko — including Ch. 78 members How Miller, John Meyer, Willink, and Patrick Kinsey.
7. Former Acting Secretary of Defense Chris Miller spoke informally on Sunday prior to appearing as the keynote speaker at the SFA Convention Banquet.



DENNIS DEROSIA'S SF MEDIC FORUM

1. Dennis DeRosia, center, with SFC Michael Jones, left, and SFC Patrick Buckles, right.
2. Dennis DeRosia speaking to the group. The items on the stage include Dennis' 1969 SF Medical Specialist Handbook, his medic kit, shirt, and a Merck Diagnosing Manual. *(Editors note: it's an eleventh edition, the same version I'd had and left at Duc Hue)*
3. Don and Nancy Gonnevillle arrived early.
4. Today's and yesterday's medics mixed after the presentation.
5. Don Deatherage consults the Merck Manual while in a discussion with Bob Crebbs.



ALEX QUADE: SOTF-71 ODA-726 Q&A

1. Alex Quade introduced SOTF-71 ODA 726. Each member of the group related pieces of the story before and after the 2007 loss of the Flipper-75 crew.
2. After being introduced to the audience by Alex, Gold Star Widow Casey Rodgers (center) speaks, with daughter Madison at her side. (Photo courtesy Alex Quade, by Shawn Flint Blair)
3. Sec Def Chris Miller snuck into the presentation and afterwards thanked Alex for her continuing coverage of Afghanistan conflict and aid to allies left behind. (Photo courtesy Alex Quade, by Shawn Flint Blair)
4. After the presentation, the group gathered for a photo.
5. Left to right, Ch. 78 Richard Simonian, Nimo, Sec Def Chris Miller, and Alex Quade. (Photo courtesy Alex Quade, by Shawn Flint Blair)



THE SFA BANQUET was held in the Orleans ballroom, which had been the location of the Hospitality Room for the previous days.

1. Master of Ceremonies LTC (R) Mitch Utterback delivering the welcome message at the start of the evening's program.
2. The Invocation performed by Chapter 78 Chaplain Richard Simonian. (Photo courtesy John Meyer)
3. The Missing Man table (which appeared on the cover of the [November Sentinel](#)). Robert Crebbs delivered the traditional POW/MIA presentation. (Photo by Rick Carter)
4. The audience standing for toasts.
5. There was a standing ovation after Bruce Long presented Niamatullah, known as Nimo, with his Lifetime SFA membership card. In 2002 at age 14, Nimo started working for the US Army in Afghanistan as a local translator. During 14-year service with the US Special Forces, he worked with over twenty SF teams and received more than twelve letters of commendation from CO's.
6. SFA President Kevin Harry, left, along with past SFA President Cliff Newman, right, presented a St. Philip Neri Gold Medal Award to LTC (R) Mike Taylor. (Photo courtesy John Meyer)
7. SFA President Kevin Harry presented a St. Philip Neri Silver Medal Award to SGM (R) Phil Hanson, who was accompanied to the stage by his wife.



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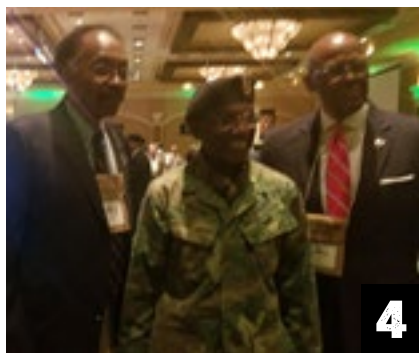
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1. SFA Con Banquet Keynote Speaker, Christopher C. Miller, former Acting Secretary of Defense, center, paused with SFA National Board of Directors, from left, Secretary, J.D. Campbell, SFA President Kevin Harry, Director of External Communications, Doug Livermore, and Executive Director, Mike Goodrich. (Photo courtesy John Meyer)
2. Newly-minted SFA Chapter 78 life-time member Nimo, seated at left, relaxing before dinner with Ch. 78 Vice President Don Gonneville and his wife, Nancy.
3. SFC Michael Jones, left, joined Ch. 78 Dennis DeRosia and his wife Glo at the banquet.
4. Ch. 90 Cecil Greene, center, takes a moment to pose for a photo with old friends. Cecil and his wife volunteered at the convention's golf tournament earlier that day. As seasoned golf tournament volunteers at Ch. 90's bi-annual tournaments, they were able to supply Debra Holm and her husband, also volunteers, with much appreciated tips.
5. The opportunity to dance the night away was provided, complete with a live band and DJ after the banquet
6. Left to right, Geri Long, Ch. 78 President Bruce Long, Bob Crebbs and Richard Simonian shared a table up front.



Above, Debra Holm, Chapter 78 *Sentinel* art director and designer, with Lonny Holmes, who as editor of the *Sentinel* set the publication on the path it is still traveling today. At right, Debra's husband Darrell Holm who attended and volunteered at the convention.



From Debra: After over 9.5 years of working on the *Sentinel*, this was the first SFA Convention that I've attended. What an experience! How exciting it was to finally meet some of the people whose stories have appeared in the *Sentinel*.

After some time away from the excitement of the event, what stands out most for me is the brotherhood of the membership. The convention had the feeling of a family reunion of sorts. The brotherhood in action is something I've observed in Chapter 78, and I can see it extends further than I imagined. It was truly a gift to both me and to my husband to meet so many truly exceptional people.



The Last Bright Light — SOAR XLV

By Greg Walker (ret)
USA Special Forces

"You have never lived until you have almost died. For those who have fought for it, Life has a special flavor the protected shall never know."

Special Operations Association motto

History of the Special Operations Association and SOAR

The early SOA composed only of recon team personnel and the personnel who worked for MACVSOG and supported their missions. Our association would encompass all four services as well as certain government entities to include the chopper pilots who flew for us, the Air Force personnel who directed and supported us, as well as the few Marines and Naval personnel that worked in SOG as well as in our operations.

We had a special kind of brotherhood... We would have given our lives for each other and in some cases, we did. I did not want to lose those relationships that I had, and we have not to this day.

Due to the highly classified nature of our SOG unit, we were not allowed to converse with others about our missions, not even to other Green Berets, and we found that we were the only ones on this planet who understood what each other have gone through. The SOA offered a way to preserve these relationships.

At our first reunion we had thirteen men get together at the Fort Devens Rod and Gun Club. The stories were great and the camaraderie was back between all of us. At this meeting on Christmas Eve, 1971 we reaffirmed our commitment to each other and knew that, regardless of where life took us, we would always be there for each other. It was this moment that I recognized the value of an "official" Special Operations Association to both the men and to the family of those lost. I felt the need to set up the SOA in order to obtain coverage for our unique veteran concerns and to take care of "Our Guys." The Special Operations Association established a secure line of communication that was needed for me and my men.

We all agreed that we would make an effort to get together at least every five years regardless of where we were in the world. From that moment on, each and every one of us knew that we had friends

closer than brothers, and should the need arise all we had to do was declare a PRAIRIEFIRE EMERGENCY and a BRITELIGHT would launch immediately. These relationships are still in place today.

The second reunion grew to twenty-eight men who flew in from all over the world. Thus, the memo of our reunion continued to pass by word-of-mouth. As men sent me contact info to each of them I started building the telephone tree; then in 1976 I incorporated the SOA as a charitable organization and shortly after we became a national organization. The only membership criteria were to be SOG personnel, or SOG support activities personnel and we had the men on board who could attest to who were SOG and not.

All of these men that I contacted were to try and locate other people who were either C&C Recon or supported our activities. At first it was to be a One-Zero organization, with projects/plans and directions dictated by One-Zeros. During the course of the next 10 years other C&C/SOG personnel directly contacted me and were interested in joining the organization.

The reunion was for the Brotherhood. First, I inducted our dear friend Martha Raye as an honorary member into the SOA. Then I invited the driving forces for *The League of Families*, as I heard that *The League* was being stonewalled by the Carter Administration and was not receiving any support from the VFW and the American Legion. I allowed their driving forces to address the SOA attendees about the total lack of support for the POW/MIA issue and after they were done we decided to support them in their endeavors. **In 1979 the SOA became the first Veterans Group to formally support the League of Families.** In 1980 with the help of General Jack Singlaub, MACVSOG and its missions appeared for the first time in a documented history of the Vietnam War.

The specific and primary purposes for setting up the Special Operations Association:

The goal of the SOA is to unite fraternally all veterans, retired and active duty, who are now or have conducted Special Operations deep in hostile enemy territory, or have been assigned to the United States or foreign military units which conducted such operations; (This was our definition for membership at this time as we could not use the name MACVSOG as it was still classified.)

1. To unite fraternally all war veterans who are now conducting or supporting classified “Special Operations” deep in hostile enemy territory or have been assigned to the United States or foreign military units which conducted such operations.
2. To perpetuate the Special Operations esprit de corps.
3. To commemorate fittingly the memory of those who have given their lives in defense of the Free World.

Therefore in 1981 we started the “*Special Operations Scholarship Fund*.” Each scholarship would be given in the name of one of our killed or missing in action. We present these scholarships annually and read a brief bio of the circumstances of the KIA or MIA member’s last mission.

1. To educate its members and the citizens of the USA in the proper development of Special Operations and to keep them abreast of new developments in the field of Special Operations as is consistent with security regulations.
2. To create and compile communication networks for Members
3. Our organization would primarily support “qualified” membership; To help those who needed it, to get on their feet on the ground and become integral parts of US Society.
4. To encourage every member of the association toward a closer personal relationship and a friendly spirit of mutual cooperation
5. To foster and promote general welfare and prosperity of the members and to improve by all lawful means their status and condition.
6. To be a source of inspiration for all Special Operations personnel.

General Jack Singlaub gave me the greatest compliment when he approached me at one of our reunions with a rhetorical question, **“Do you have any idea of how many men you saved just by setting this organization up?”** This is the very essence of why I established the Special Operations Association: to recognize our special veterans and their families.

I am honored to have founded an organization with such achievement.

Jim Butler, #001

Founder, Special Operations Association

A Life Well Lived

Jim Butler was born in Portland ME and summered on Little Sebago Lake before making the Monterey Peninsula his home. Even in his early life he was described as “larger than life” a “force of nature” and had an “infectious sense of humor.” Butler attended S. Portland High School, North Yarmouth Academy, and the University of Maine where he was President of his Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity. He loved competing in football, baseball, and ski team. In college, Butler joined ROTC and was commissioned U.S. Army officer as Infantry Captain.

During the Vietnam War, Butler served in the U.S. Army Special Forces (Green Berets) where he was assigned to MACVSOG. As team-leader and “One-Zero” for Combat and Control North (CCN) on Recon Team Python. Captain Butler led multiple missions and



Captain James E. Butler (Photo courtesy Lindsay Butler)

spent over five hundred hours behind enemy lines rescuing downed pilots, running POW/MIA search missions, and other covert activities in Laos and North Vietnam. Described by his friends as a “soldier’s soldier” his decorations include multiple Silver Stars, Bronze Stars, Purple Hearts, an Air medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Airborne tab, Ranger tab, and many other awards.

Butler was committed to his comrades-in-arms. His loyalty to his men alive, missing, and deceased inspired him to create the Special Operations Association (SOA) in 1976, a non-profit organization meant to connect the men of SOG, aid in their transition to the private sector, honor the memory of their fallen comrades and to award collegiate scholarships to the children of SOA members.

The SOA is active to this day and has grown to over 2,500 living members.

Jim was born with a gift of laughter and was always the life of the party. He was an intellectual and a voracious reader of history. He loved skiing, golfing, and fishing. But more than anything else Butler was a loving father who put his family first.

Jim will forever be in our hearts. He is survived by his wife Diane Butler and their three children

Captain James E. Butler is buried at Arlington National Cemetery, Washington DC, in Section 81, Grave 885.

SOAR XLV 2021 — A Reunion and a Recommitment to Friends, Families, and the Still Missing



Over two hundred members and their families attended the memorial banquet at SOAR this year. (Photo courtesy Greg Walker)



Above, Les Chapman (r), RT Python and SOA #002, offered his recollections of Jim Butler as an officer, a leader, a warrior, the founding of the SOA, and a friend. (Photo courtesy Greg Walker)



The author with CCN One-Zero and author of *The Dying Place*, Dave Maurer. (Photo courtesy Greg Walker)



Left, CCN One-Zero and former DELTA officer, Eldon Bargewell, was remembered with great affection, his loving family in the audience at this year's SOAR. (Photo courtesy Greg Walker)



Teammates — (left to right) Chapman, Prophet, Skinny Wilson, Braiser, John (Interp), Jim Butler (Photo courtesy Ms. Lindsay Butler)



“War is death. Veterans and survivors are saturated with it. They have stared down the barrel of a gun and viewed their own end. They have been agents of death for countless others... Vietnam veteran William Crasper wrote of “a continual falling of men obliterated in my eyes” and of the deaths of friends who “nurture themselves on me... I am also that dead.” — *War and the Soul*, Dr. Edward Tick (Photo courtesy Ms. Lindsay Butler)

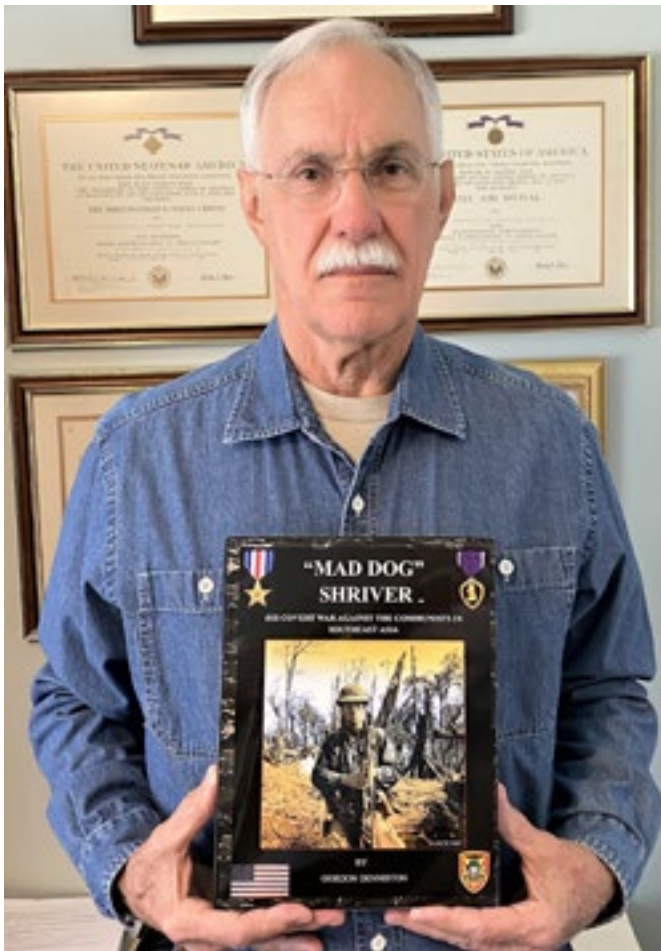
The SOA's Unreturned Heroes — the search continues.

SOA's Unreturned Heroes					
BIRCH, GERALD M.	LAO	ALMENDARE, SAMUEL	LAO	EVANS, WILLIAM A.	CAM
BROCKOFF, JOHN M.	LAO	BULLIVANT, ROBERT J.	LAO	MAX, MICHAEL F.	CAM
MOON, WALTER H.	LAO	ANDRACH, ROBERT	CAM	PEL, ROBERT F.	LAO
PARAS, RAYMOND F.	LAO	ADAMS, JOHN R.	LAO	MURPHY, BARRY D.	CAM
WALKER, KENNETH	SVN	BARTER, BRUCE R.	LAO	DAVIS, RICARDO G.	CAM
JACKSON, CARL E.	SVN	BECKER, RALPH W.	LAO	SEWELL, JERRY M.	LAO
ROTH, BILLIE L.	SVN	CLYDE, EUGENE L.	LAO	REISCH, BRUCE C.	LAO
GALLANT, HENRY J.	SVN	KURICK, JOSEPH S.	LAO	SHIFF, MARY J.	CAM
TAYLOR, FRED	SVN	MAYER, LARRY W.	LAO	RAMIREZ, ARMANDO	CAM
MAUFERRIS, OSCAR	LAO	BOURLON, LEE D.	SVN	MONTES, ARMANDO	SVN
BADOLATI, FRANK N.	SVN	BOURLON, LEE D.	SVN	BURNS, MICHAEL P.	LAO
ROBINSON, ERIC J.	SVN	CONROY, JAMES	LAO	NEAL, DENNIS P.	LAO
TERRY, RONALD T.	SVN	WHITE, CHARLES E.	CAM	JACOBSON, RONALD J.	LAO
TAYLOR, JAMES L.	SVN	PHILLIPS, DANIEL R.	SVN	KARL, BRUCE E.	LAO
OKTER, JAMES R.	LAO	CALHOUN, JOHNNY G.	SVN	CECIL, ALAN B.	LAO
LAFAYETTE, JOHN W.	LAO	HUTTON, CHARLES G.	LAO	HUNTLEY, JOHN H.	LAO
DEWIS, DONALD T.	SVN	LAWSON, KARL	SVN	STUBBS, WILLIAM W.	LAO
LAVIS, COLBERT L.	LAO	FRISSETT, SAMUEL J.	SVN	ALFORD, TERRY L.	SVN
TAYLOR, DANNY G.	SVN	ENSLANDER, LAWRENCE	SVN	CAVENDER, JIM R.	SVN
EDWARDS, RICHARD	LAO	KING, PAUL C.	LAO	FURR, JAMES R.	SVN
JONES, JAMES E.	LAO	CONWAY, GEORGE T.	SVN	WAKE, JOHN A.	SVN
WILLIAMS, EDDIE L.	LAO	CRITTON, LEBUE	SVN	HELMICH, DONALD R.	LAO
HUNT, WILLIAM B.	SVN	JENNE, ROBERT E.	SVN	RAY, RONALD E.	LAO
BOYD, RUSSELL F.	LAO	JACKSON, DANIEL E.	SVN	GIBBS, RICHARD B.	LAO
DWIS, RAY D.	LAO	PERNY, THOMAS	SVN	TUBBS, GLEN E.	SVN
SPARK, WILIE E.	LAO	ROBERTSON, JOHN H.	LAO	ANDERSON, GREGORY	LAO
BULANIS, DANIEL A.	LAO	LANE, GLEN D.	LAO	LEWIS, LEONARD C.	LAO
BURIA, DOMINGO R.S.	LAO	CHEN, ROBERT D.	LAO	PERNETT, WILLIAM D.	LAO
CARPENTER, HOWARD	LAO	WOLFE, WYNN	SVN	BARN, WILLIAM C.	LAO
SHALL, BURT JR.	SVN	FRANCIS, DELMAR R.	SVN	STYTON, WILLIAM C.	LAO
HALLBERG, ROGER C.	SVN	LAWRENCE, GREGORY	LAO	BOYLE, WILLIAM	LAO
STENHART, JACK	SVN	STEED, JAMES D., JR.	LAO	ALLEN, HENRY L.	LAO
WIKER, JESAL, WALTER F.	SVN	WYTER, ALBERT D.	LAO	BRASSFIELD, ANDREW	LAO
DEXTER, RONALD J.	SVN	HEWES, ROBERT D.	SVN	LITTLE, DANNY L.	SVN
BEYNDOR, LEO E.	LAO	BROOK, JAMES D.	SVN	WILSON, HARRY T.	LAO
		COFFEY, WILLIAM M.	LAO	WILSON, WILLIAM S.	LAO
		STUBBERGEN, GENE P.	CAM	BOOKOUT, CHARLES F.	LAO
		SCHROEDER, ROBERT F.	CAM	DAWSON, DAVID A.	LAO
		KROUSE, HAROLD, JR.	CAM		

OTHER SF UNRETURNED HEROES			
VERBAACE, HUBERT R.	SVN	VERBAACE, HUBERT R.	SVN
ROMABACK, KENNETH M.	SVN	LEWIS, THOMAS L.	SVN
TALLER, JAMES L.	SVN	BENNETT, HAROLD G.	SVN
DOUGLASS, EDWARD R.	SVN	EDMONSON, WILLIAM F.	SVN
CONWAY, JAMES B.	SVN	GEHR, STEPHEN J.	SVN
MULLER, MICHAEL	SVN	HARRIS, SHIRLEY W.	SVN
HARRIS, SHIRLEY W.	SVN	ROHMANN, GERALD F.	SVN

“We have a duty to our still missing Brothers to live, and to live well.”

— Mike Taylor
SOA/SFA/POW/MIA Chairman



Gordon Denniston with his just completed biography of Jerry "Mad Dog" Shriver. On display at SOAR this year, a number of us put in our pre-publication orders for this well-researched and illustrated tribute to one of SOG's most storied (and feared) warriors. (Photo courtesy G. Denniston)



At top, With SF Legend, Jim Phillips, 82 years young and a dear friend for many years. (Photo courtesy Greg Walker)
Below, RT Alaska and RT Python team patches. (Photo courtesy Greg Walker)

From the author:

My dad, now many years ago, introduced me to Jim Butler whom he was mentoring in the field of estate planning at Connecticut General Life Insurance in San Jose, California. In turn, Jim encouraged me to volunteer for Special Forces. After I had completed the "Q" Course it was Butler who brought me into the SOA (#318).

Jim instilled in me the importance of never leaving a fallen comrade behind. We bring our missing, our POWs, our dead home. He also knew firsthand how difficult it was returning to "the world" and then transitioning from warfighter to loving father, husband, and civilian. The SOA was his way of promoting both worthy and achievable objectives.

"My dad also made a point to teach me the importance of history and making sure that false history is corrected. Apparently this was one of his biggest goals." — Lindsay Butler, daughter

God bless and keep you, Captain Butler. Your legacy is secure. ❖

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.

Book Reviews

THE PERFECT POLICE STATE: An Undercover Odyssey into China's Terrifying Surveillance Dystopia of the Future by Geoffrey Cain

WALK IN MY COMBAT BOOTS by James Patterson and Matt Eversmann, First Sergeant, US Army (Ret.) with Chris Mooney



Kenn Miller

Reviews by Kenn Miller

THE PERFECT POLICE STATE: An Undercover Odyssey into China's Terrifying Surveillance Dystopia of the Future

Off and on during the history of human civilization China has led the world in innovation, science, size, culture, population, wealth, agriculture and engineering and damn near

everything. But China has also often led the world when it comes to fire, flood, famine, disease, corruption, tyranny, and bad government. It is important for us to remember that the Chinese Communist Party and the "Peoples' Republic" of China do not really represent the Chinese people — but they sure do all they can to control and dominate them.

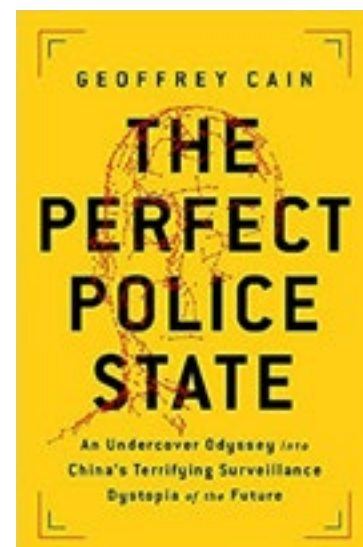
And that is what *The Perfect Police State* is about. The party and government leaders want just that — a perfect police state. When Chinese governments go full blown dictatorial, they tend to go after one of the minority groups. And now that China leads the world in surveillance technology, the current victims are the heavily Muslim,

Caucasian, Uyghur minority of the north western "Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region."

In China, "Autonomous Regions" are anything except autonomous. With brutal mass imprisonment and other horrors, reading this book is about as pleasant as watching movies about the holocaust of the European Jews. So I read it, and told you about it, and you don't have to read it. ❖

[THE PERFECT POLICE STATE: An Undercover Odyssey into China's Terrifying Surveillance Dystopia of the Future](#)

By Geoffrey Cain
PublicAffairs
(June 29, 2021)
304 pages



WALK IN MY COMBAT BOOTS

Get ready to read, and appreciate a book that is praised by Admiral William H. McRaven and General Stanley McChrystal — but also includes a blurb of praise by Bill Clinton.

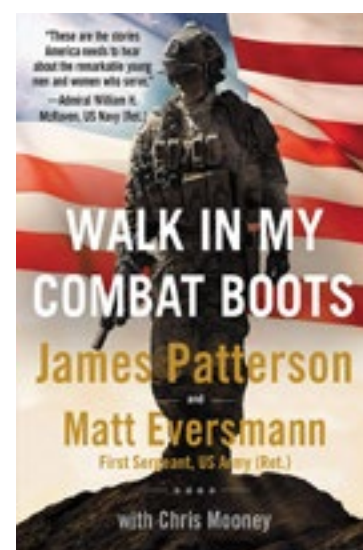
On my first glance of this book on the library shelf I assumed that it was the personal memoir of First Sergeant, U.S. Army (Ret.) Matt Eversmann. Shortly after the movie *Black Hawk Down* came out I spent some time in the field and in an airport with Matt Eversmann, and I was very impressed with him — an extremely intelligent, sensible, and down-right wise man who had a widely respected reputation in the Ranger Regiment even before his actions in Mogadishu.

But with this book, my respect and admiration expanded enormously. Instead of a personal military memoir, *Walk In My Combat Boots* is a book of memories and thoughts of various female and male Americans who served our country in war zones from Vietnam to Afghanistan and Iraq. ❖

This is one book that every veteran or military member should read. And civilians who really care about our service members and our country's military actions and experiences overseas can learn a lot from *Walk In My Combat Boots*. This book is a must read!

[Walk In My Combat Boots](#)

By James Patterson and Matt Eversmann,
with Chris Mooney
Little, Brown and Company;
1st edition (February 8, 2021)
416 pages





PROJECT DELTA

Det B-52 5th SFG ♦ RVN

Part 1 — Introduction

By Jim Morris

Excerpted from *Fighting Men*, Dell Books, 1993, pages 70-73

PROJECT DELTA

Project Delta, Special Forces Detachment B-52, one of the most highly decorated units in the Vietnam War, was organized in early 1964 under Captain William R. Richardson. Its mission was to provide strategic reconnaissance for MACV. Under the original concept there were no Americans on Delta's recon teams, and the earliest infiltrations were night static-line and High-Altitude-Low-Opening free-fall parachute jumps.

The concept of using only indigenous troops proved unworkable because of operational procedures adopted by the Vietnamese teams, odd habits such as sleeping on the trail where Charlie could find them, and the fanciful nature of some of their reports. It was only six months before American "advisors" started accompanying the patrols.

There were many refinements in Project Delta's operational techniques through the six years of its existence, but the project achieved its highest degree of perfection — and Delta was as close to perfection as anything in war ever is — under Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) Chuck Allen, who was with the project for two years and commanded it for six months. He is the man General William C. Westmoreland called "Big 'Un."

For a time MACV headquarters insisted that recon teams be commanded by officers, because they did not trust the quality of information received from the enlisted swine. This was an erroneous notion because, for one thing, Special Forces had, at least at that time, enlisted men with, on the average, higher IQs than their officers. And those young lieutenants were a whole lot more flighty than a seasoned SF NCO — which is not to say that the officers were dumb. SF was simply an organization of very bright, dedicated, and ballsy individuals.

In fact, intellectual requirements for Special Forces were exactly the same as those for OCS. The only different requirements were that you had to be able to swim to get into the Forces and you couldn't have a criminal record and get into OCS.

Of those officer recon-team leaders, incidentally, one of the few to work out was Bill Larabee, at the time of my outing with them a captain, Chuck Allen's operations officer.

Because of the success of Delta, Colonel Francis J. "Splash" Kelley formed Projects Sigma and Omega. There are various versions of how that came about. Chuck Allen says that Kelley wanted to use Delta in I Corps and formed Omega for II Corps and Sigma for II Corps. And, as it turned out, that is how they were generally deployed.

But one of my old sergeant buddies told me that early in his tour Kelley was invited down to the Project for dinner. It was a spirited evening; the gentlemen of the Project were well known for their iron discipline and control in the field, and their lack of those qualities in garrison.

As rumor has it, during the course of the evening a master sergeant gave the new colonel a fat, wet kiss on the ear and murmured to him, "Don't ever die, you sweet motherfucker. Don't you even catch cold." It was not unusual for recon men to test an officer's cool in this fashion. Babysan Davidson, a legendary recon NCO, who looked like a demented twelve-year-old, once, at a similar party, kissed me on the ear and murmured, "Y'know, mother-fucker, I like you."

I was flattered; junior SF officers were middlin' arrogant, but the recon guys were superstars. According to the story I heard, though, Kelley was not so pleased, and organized his new recon projects the next day.

Under Allen, and thereafter, the core of the Project consisted of the recon section, with twelve teams of ten members each, usually four Americans and six Vietnamese Special Forces men, usually only six of whom were deployed at a time. The headquarters was SF Det B-52. Nominally, the Project was commanded by a Viet lieutenant colonel and Allen was his adviser. The reaction force was the Vietnamese 91st Airborne Ranger Battalion, an organization which had its good points and its not-so-good points. That was why there was also a platoon of Nungs — a Chinese tribe with a mercenary heritage — for bomb-damage assessment. The Nungs, you see, were trained, fed, paid, and led by Americans.

There was also a section of all-Vietnamese teams, known as Roadrunners, which ran the trails in VC and NVA uniforms.

Normally, the 281st Assault Helicopter Company was assigned in direct support. This was an extraordinary unit. Alert crews slept on the ships, ready to go pull a team out at a moment's notice. The gunships took off so heavily ammo-laden, they had to skip twice to get airborne and the slicks could inch down into a hole through which you'd swear a starling couldn't land.



Above, mortarmen from 91st Airborne Ranger Battalion break for lunch. (Photo courtesy *Soldier of Fortune*, August, 1981, page 23)

Left, Maj. Chuck Allen and SFC Gary Stedman of Delta Project (Photo courtesy *Soldier of Fortune*, September, 1981, page 51)



An early Roadrunner, member of all-Vietnamese teams in Project Delta which ran trails in VC and NVA uniforms. He carries Swedish "K" under his shirt and a grenade in the gourd. (Photo courtesy *Soldier of Fortune*, July, 1981, page 31)

There was also an Air Force FAC (Forward Air Control) team assigned, normally commanded by a USAF lieutenant colonel, and on one occasion there was a Marine Corps fighter wing assigned to the operational control of the Project, commanded by a major general. Probably the only instance in history of an Army major being in command of a Marine Corp major general.

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In March of 1964 Major Allen, who was my friend and former commanding officer, asked me, in my capacity as Information Officer of the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) to accompany Delta on an operation in I Corps, the northernmost area of South Vietnam.

The mission was to do preliminary reconnaissance for a later major operation by Marine and Army units.

Delta set up a Forward operational Base at Phu Bai, some tents and bunkers, a chopper pad, a zigzag trench, and some wire around the perimeter.

The idea was that I would see as much as I could and participate where possible. I couldn't go out with actual recon patrols — the teams were too tightly knit — but I could go with the reaction force, the 91st Airborne Ranger Battalion, and an attached Mobile Strike Force Company — the Mike Force — from Nha Trang. And I could fly in Chuck's Command and Control chopper on insertions and extractions. It was as much as an outsider could hope to see, and, in fact, before it was over I would apply and be accepted for transfer to Delta.

The first two stories in this series are rewrites of pieces I did for the *Green Beret*, the 5th Group's magazine. The first was originally written in the Delta FOB at Phu Bai; the second was written left-handed, in the 8th Field Hospital in Nha Trang. I've cleaned them and expanded a bit, and added some details that were classified at the time. The third story is an interview I did with Chuck for *Soldier of Fortune* in 1980. ♦

PART TWO : From *Fighting Men*, more about Project Delta, "A Reconnaissance Mission" and "With the Mike Force."

About the Author

Jim Morris joined 1st SFGA in 1962 for a thirty-month tour, which included two TDY trips to Vietnam. After a two year break, he went back on active duty for a PCS tour with 5th SFG (A), six months as the B Co S-5, and then was conscripted to serve as the Group's Public Information Officer (PIO). While with B-52 Project Delta on an operation in the Ashau Valley, he suffered a serious wound while trying to pull a Delta trooper to safety, which resulted in being medically retired. As a civilian war correspondent he covered various wars in Latin America, the Mideast, and again in Southeast Asia, eventually settling down to writing and editing, primarily but not exclusively about military affairs. He is the author of many books, including the classic memoir *WAR STORY*. Jim is a member of SFA Chapter 78 and is a former editor of the *Sentinel*.



SFA Chapter 78

SPECIAL FUNDRAISER

SFA Chapter 78 Raising Funds to Assist One of Its Members

By John Yeandle

Niamatullah (Nimo), started working for the US Army in Afghanistan as a local translator in 2002, he was 14 years old at the time. During his service with the US Special Forces, he worked with over twenty SF teams and received more than twelve letters of commendation from CO's.

In convoy Nimo always drove the lead truck, which was one reason he had multiple IEDs hits and usually was the first to be shot at. He suffered multiple gunshot wounds in his 14-year service as a Special Forces translator.

In 2008, a convoy in which Nimo was driving the lead truck was ambushed and during the attack his truck was hit with a Russian anti-tank weapon (SPG9). The round went through a K9, and Nimo's leg, which resulted in him losing his left leg below the knee.



This was the truck Nimo was driving after it was hit by a Russian anti-tank weapon (SPG9). Nimo sustained injuries that led to the amputation of his lower left leg.

The reason for this article — Nimo needs a new prosthetic. His current prosthetic leg is over three years old. When he received his prosthetic leg he weighed 250lb, his current weight is 210lb (*the prosthetic is built based on the person's weight +/- 20lb, anything above or below 20lb requires a new leg*). The current prosthetic doesn't fit him properly any longer and is causing blistering, scarring, back and joint pain.

Our goal is to raise \$40,000 for a new prosthetic leg for Nimo. Chapter 78 will match all donations.

All gifts are tax deductible. Amounts of \$5,000, \$1,000 and \$500 are preferred — donations of any amount are appreciated.

Please make checks payable to:

Special Forces Association Chapter 78.

Please note on check:

Nimo's Prosthetic Fund

Mail to:

SANTIAGO CORP
Attention: Liz Rios
PO Box 11927
Santa Ana, CA 92711,

As you may or may not know, Nimo, and those like him, receive NO benefits from the US government. Chapter 78 is asking you step up and help. Nimo was there when we needed him, now it's our turn.

Let's show Nimo how special US Special Forces are!

Contact us at SFAchapter78@gmail.com
www.specialforces78.com