



# SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 4 • APRIL 2022

## DEEP DIVE:

The U.S. Military Program to Arm  
Ukraine with Javelin Anti-tank Missiles

ACL Afghan Refugee  
Community Update

**SPECIALFORCES78.COM**  
Has a **New Look**

What is SF4Life?

## FALLEN SOLDIER

Colonel James "Nick" Rowe  
Part 1 - The Man in the Arena

**Ukraine-California Ties**  
Show Worth of National Guard Program



## From the Editor



How Miller  
Sentinel Editor

Well, you go to a meeting attended by several chapter SF National Guard members, many of whom have spent time deployed in Ukraine. Next thing you know Putin has invaded, and the very people our guys have been training succeed spectacularly. Bitter-sweet news.

First, we have coverage by our roving ambassador, Chapter 78's John Stryker Meyer, of the latest graduating Q-Course class. We co-sponsor a barbecue for those who will be graduating and donning their hard-won berets in another day or two. We also give

those who are California residents free lifetime memberships to the SFA for when they are ready to participate.

Then we have an update on the up-close-and-personal support ACL gives to our fellow Afghan fighters and their families. Kids on the way, in a safe environment, can be a wonderful thing. That, of course, brings up a whole new list of opportunities for us to help out. The chapter enjoyed having several of them at the chapter meeting last month and got to see how much they appreciate the help.

Jim Garramone wrote an article for DoD news about why there have been California National Guard troops going back and forth to Ukraine since 1993. He tells about how and why the program started there and in other former Soviet satellite countries. That the program is a success is self-evident. Most of those countries are now part of NATO, and Ukraine has proven they have taken the lessons and the benevolence of our way of life to heart. At press time they have not only stopped much of the Russian advances, inflicting heavy casualties, but they are in a counterattack phase.

Read more about the U.S. Special Forces role in training Ukrainian forces: <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/us-armys-green-berets-have-lasting-impact-on-fight-in-ukraine>

Slava Ukraine!

Jack Murphy of *Connecting Vets News* relates that since a couple of 3rd SFG ODA's showed how devastating the Javelin could be against an armor brigade in 2003, the missile has been a coveted weapon. It has helped the indomitable Ukrainian citizens and soldiers surprise most of the world with how they can stand up to one of the largest armies on the planet. Our Green Berets were not surprised, but are very proud of how the Ukrainians have utilized the tools at their disposal to the max.

Our Chapter 78 webmaster and *Sentinel* graphic artist, Debra Holm has been developing our improved chapter website in tandem with taking point on the SFA "Teamhouse" website. There are lots of opportunities on both sites to enhance your camaraderie with the SF community — opportunities to communicate with old and new friends, promote your own businesses, and ways to pitch in and help.

And, last but not least, Greg Walker shares the story of another remarkable Green Beret in Part 1 of "Fallen Soldier" about Colonel James "Nick" Rowe. As an SF Lieutenant, he was assigned to an isolated SF camp in the middle of VC country in South Vietnam's Mekong Delta. He was captured and held for five years as a POW in the south. He managed, finally, to escape and went on to found the SERE school. And this is just part of Nick's story.❖

How Miller, *Sentinel* Editor

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**FRONT COVER:** A U.S. Army soldier fires a Javelin antitank missile during Exercise Saber Guardian near Várpalota, Hungary, June 5, 2019. U.S. Army Europe and Romanian land forces lead Saber Guardian, which is designed to improve the integration of multinational combat operations. (Photo by Army Sgt. LaShic Patterson)



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US ARMY SPECIAL OPS COMMAND



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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

# From the President | April 2022



Gregory Horton  
President SFA Ch. 78

March has been another "Git Er Done!" month. We have all of the final ammo donations and I want to say "job well done" to all. We managed to come up with thousands of rounds for the Boy Scouts and they should all be able to qualify for this Merit Badge. In addition to the shooting, one of our active NG members, Joe Santa Lucia, volunteered to bring in his gear for a show and tell event for the boys. This was an excellent day of instruction, shooting, and education for the BSA!!! I was there taking photos and am planning on writing an article for the *Sentinel* outlining our

support. It was a beautiful day and there were 12 boys participating in the day's activities. The boys, and Scout leaders, really appreciated our members donations. It was a good day of safely handling, sighting in and firing in their quest for the Rifle Marksmanship Merit Badge.

As we have all watched the horrific events unfold in Ukraine, it is obvious that the humanitarian crisis is off the charts. Calls for humanitarian aid are flooding the airwaves and donation sites have popped up all over. Your Board decided to create a donation page and we included three current organizations that are all over the news (<https://www.specialforces78.com/support-ukraine/>). They are *Samaritan's Purse*, *Direct Relief*, and *Save our Allies*. We immediately realized that there were dozens more and it would be a never-ending job to update our page with additional NGO's. One of our members suggested that we include *Charity Navigator* so our members can check out any site that offers aid and we added that tool. We encourage our members to help with any charity they deem fit and have been verified as an efficient charity. The news has done specials on charities, and they had a nice article on Samaritan's Purse and the hospital they have started up and is running well. *Save Our Allies* has a proven track record in Afghanistan and is also up and running in the AO. And finally, we received an email from Doc Padgett about a relief agency that he is involved in. Doc sends...

"Many of you have asked me what Refugee Relief International, Inc (RRII) is doing to help the Ukrainians, and how you can help. Initially, I had to say that we were still assisting in the evacuation of Afghan and other allied personnel from Afghanistan and did not have the resources to assist in two crises at the same time. You'd think that they'd let us finish up one war before starting another! But we cannot sit idly by while Putin's war has created the largest refugee crisis since WWII. Therefore, a couple of weeks ago RRII sent a team of physicians into Ukraine who delivered humanitarian assistance and trained Ukrainian doctors in combat casualty management. I am bringing in another team that will train Ukrainian medics in combat trauma and the establishment of covert medical facilities. These medics will be the first point of care for refugees and wounded soldiers.

"You can help us by contributing to RRII at our web site [www.refugeerelief.org](http://www.refugeerelief.org). We are a 501 (c)(3) charity, so donations are tax deductible (as always, check with your tax professional). We are all volunteers, so donations go to support operations to the maximum extent.

"Thanks, and please keep us in your prayers.  
Doc & Vicki Padgett"



Range safety brief.



Traditional Canon Salute start.



Final instructions prior to firing.



Nice group for the first relay!



Joe Santa Lucia and his equipment display. The boys loved putting on the gear. Thanks again to all the members that donated ammo to this great cause.



We held our March meeting, and obviously the Ukrainian war is on all of our minds. What I didn't know was the tremendous impact that the California National Guard had on the training and readiness of the Ukrainian Military. The *US Department of Defense News* had an excellent article titled, "Ukraine-California Ties Show Worth of National Guard Program" (reprinted in this issue of the *Sentinel* on page 4). I put a PowerPoint presentation together to brief the membership and we had a great round table discussion. Hats off to all the troops that had a hand in the training of the Ukrainian military. Job well done and I hope it pays off dividends as the Russians are driven out.

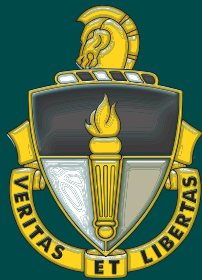
Our member Jim Cragg has sent us some very interesting proposals that the Board will be discussing and presenting to the membership. More to come!!!

## April Chapter Meeting

The next meeting will be **April 16, 2022**  
at the Fiddler's Green, JFTB Los Alamitos  
Breakfast 0800 and the meeting will start at 0830.

Greg Horton SGM (Ret)  
President  
SFA Chapter 78





# SFQC GRADUATION

## CLASS 328

February 17, 2022



**4<sup>TH</sup> BATTALION, 1<sup>ST</sup> SPECIAL WARFARE TRAINING GROUP (AIRBORNE)**  
**U.S. ARMY JOHN F. KENNEDY SPECIAL WARFARE CENTER AND SCHOOL**

**The Special Operations Center of Excellence**

On February 15, members of Special Forces Qualification Course Class #328 gathered for a BBQ funded by SFA Chapter 78, held at SFA Chapter 1-18 campus outside Ft. Bragg, NC. The BBQ was held two days before 198 soldiers donned their berets for the first time as certified Special Forces troops.



SFA National President Kevin Harry, right, standing on box, addresses the graduates, SFQC staff and members of SFA Chapter 1-18. To his left is SFA Chapter 1-18 President Chris Wilkerson and John Stryker Meyer, representing SFA Chapter 78. (Photo courtesy of Ron Owens)



SFA Chapter 78 representative John Stryker Meyer shakes the hand of one of 12 newly minted Green Berets from Southern California given SFA Life memberships to Chapter 78, courtesy of the chapter, during a short ceremony prior to the BBQ luncheon. (Photo Courtesy of Ron Owens)



SFA Chapter 78 Member John Stryker Meyer addresses the young Green Berets who will be assigned to the 5th Special Forces Group at Ft. Campbell, KY upon completion of their language training. Meyer, who served in the 5th SFG during the Vietnam War was a guest speaker during the first official meeting between 5th SFG staff and the newly minted Green Beret soldiers held at Aaron Bank Hall on Ft. Bragg, NC. (Photo courtesy John S. Meyer)



At left, John Stryker Meyer stands with newly commissioned Green Beret Sgt. B. Weaver moments after he donned his 20th SFG beret for the first time.

Three years ago, Weaver's aunt reached out to Meyer, asking if he'd talk to the young soldier about becoming a Green Beret. Meyer called Weaver, sent him a copy of his book *Across The Fence*, and a few copies of SFA Chapter 78's award-winning newsletter the *Sentinel* and some on-line navigation training courses. In January 2021, they shook hands for the first time and had breakfast outside Ft. Bragg, a few days before Weaver entered the Special Forces Qualification Course.

On Feb. 16, one night before graduation, Weaver bought Meyer dinner at a local steak house.



Meyer with fellow SOG Recon troop Ron Owens at the BBQ. Meyer and Owens met in SF Training Group in 1967, served in 5th SFG and were detached to the Military Assistance Command Vietnam – Studies and Observations Group, where both ran recon missions across the fence into Laos, Cambodia and N. Vietnam. After more than 50 years of service to his country, Owens will wrap up a secondary career in the Robin Sage Training program for Special Forces Candidates.

# ACL Afghan Refugee Community Update

By Debra Holm

ACL's work continues, with Afghan refugees continuing to be brought into the communities of Mojave and Ridgecrest. The community members have been very grateful for the donations and the support they have received.

*The biggest news?* Three babies are on the way in the next four months! This means there is a need for donations of baby supplies. The items on the list at right are basic supplies. Gift cards would also be a great help — community members can be taken to the local Target or Walmart to purchase items specific to their needs, for instance baby furniture specific to the space available in their home.

Community members have been hard at work making repairs and improvements to homes and community grounds. Project Manager Nimo's wife Nadia accompanies the children to school daily as their translator. Nadia is also working to teach the community women English. She also acts as the distribution manager for items donated to the community. ♦

## BABY SUPPLIES NEEDED

*GIFT CARDS* (VISA, Target, Walmart) will enable mothers to identify and purchase specific items for their babies. They can be sent to:

ACL Afghan Housing, Niamatullah Aslami, 3264 Rossetta Ave., House #71, Mojave, CA 93501

- Bottles and Nipples
- Bottle Brushes
- Bibs
- Burp Cloths
- Pacifiers
- Baby Thermometers
- Receiving Blankets
- Crib Sheets
- Crib Blankets
- Diapers
- Baby Wipes
- Diaper Bags
- Diaper Cream
- Diaper Pail Liners
- Soft Towels or Hooded Baby Towels
- Baby Hairbrush
- Baby Clothes (onesies, undershirts, blanket sleepers, sweaters or jackets, rompers, socks or booties, hats and caps, no-scratch mittens)

A full list of community needs and contact information is available at:  
<https://www.specialforces78.com/acl-afghan-refugee-housing-project/>



At left, community members at work preparing the ground for artificial turf. Right, the finished green lawns add lively color and beautify the neighborhood.



Community children hard at work being kids. They enjoy the playground equipment at the parks and can be found there regularly.





# Ukraine-California Ties Show Worth of National Guard Program

The California Army National Guard's 115th Regional Support Group took part in the opening ceremonies of Rapid Trident 2019 at the International Peacekeeping Security Centre (IPSC) near Yavoriv, Ukraine, Sept. 16, 2019. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Amanda H. Johnson)

By Jim Garamone

DoD News, March, 18, 2022, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2971781/ukraine-california-ties-show-worth-of-national-guard-program/>

When Russia invaded Ukraine with more than 150,000 troops Feb. 24, most people — especially Russian President Vladimir Putin — expected a Russian cakewalk.

The men and women of the California National Guard knew better.

The California National Guard has had a close working relationship with the Ukraine military and the Ukraine National Guard since 1993.

California Guardsmen have taught the Ukrainian military, trained with them, shared successes and failures with them and just become good friends over the past 29 years.

All this is helping now that the country is under attack.

This came about as part of the National Guard's State Partnership Program.

First a little history. Following the collapse of czarist Russia in 1917, Ukraine was independent until 1920 when Russian communists conquered the country. It became part of the Soviet Union from 1920 to 1991. The three most notable aspects of Soviet rule were two Moscow-induced famines in the 1920s and 1930s that killed an estimated 8 million Ukrainians, and World War II, that killed another 8 million.

In 1991, the Soviet Union dissolved, and Ukraine declared its independence. The Cold War was over.

The people of Ukraine were of two minds — some wanted to stay aligned with Russia, while most Ukrainians wanted to reach out to the West.

Jump to 1993 when Ukraine became a charter member of the U.S. National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program along with Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Each country was paired with a state, and Ukraine paired with California.

The program was based on an American suggestion to [NATO](#), and it began as an effort to help former Soviet and Warsaw Pact

nations reform their militaries along Western lines, National Guard Bureau officials said on background. The program had many objectives including helping the nations become more interoperable with NATO forces, help the partners become more transparent in military affairs and, perhaps most important, helping the nations know how a military works in a democracy.

While the program started in Europe, it expanded, first to U.S. Southern Command and then to the rest of the combatant commands. In U.S. Africa Command, some of the state partnerships pre-date the establishment of the command itself.

Today, there are 93 nations partnered with Guard organizations from all 50 states, three territories and the District of Columbia.

U.S. officials believed that pairing with state National Guards made more sense than pairing with active-duty forces, said the National Guard official. First, the militaries in these countries had missions more closely aligned with National Guard forces than those of the active duty. These militaries could be called upon to assist in disasters and humanitarian crises, just like National Guard personnel help in hurricane relief, forest fires, tornadoes, even snowstorms. The partner militaries often worked closely with law enforcement in a way that mirrored how National Guard troops on state missions sometimes do.

Officials also felt National Guard units were more stable — meaning the personnel didn't get reassigned every three years. Members of the state guards could stay in place for an entire career. This allowed the state and the partner military personal to bond in a personal way, the official said. "When you pick up the phone to call, you know the person on the other end of the line," he said.

Trust among military members developed with many partner service members coming to military schools in the United States.

But it was more. Trust was also furthered when partner militaries deployed with U.S. formations to the Balkans. Trust was further cemented when partners fought alongside U.S. service members in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Since the program started, there have been many instances where officers grew up together — they met as lieutenants and captains and followed each other up the ranks.

When California Adjutant General Army Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin joined the California National Guard in 1984, he and his wife hosted a Ukrainian family in California for training under the program.

Those contacts survived the ups and downs of politics in Europe and the United States, he said.

When Russia invaded Ukraine in late February, most pundits believed the Ukrainian military was not up to the task. "Because we work closely with the Ukrainian army, we always thought that the West underestimated them, and the National Guard of Ukraine also," he said in a recent interview. "We knew that they had radically improved their ability to do kind of Western style military decision making. I have been impressed though, with their ability at the national level, to work through some of the challenges we thought they still had in terms of logistics and command control."

The Ukrainians have also demonstrated interagency cooperation. "I think the best story is with their Air Force," the general said. "Our fighter pilots have been telling everyone for years that the Ukrainian Air Force is pretty good. And in the meantime, a lot of other people in the West were pooh-poohing them."

"Well, the proof is in the pudding," he continued. "Their Air Force is a lot better than everyone thought except for the California Air National Guard who knew that these guys were pretty good."

The air over Ukraine is still contested, more than three weeks after the invasion began.

Baldwin said the effort to train the Ukrainian military is really a team effort. California Guardsmen worked alongside NATO trainers and trainers from the active-duty forces — especially after Russia first invaded Ukraine in 2014 and illegally annexed Crimea.

Ukraine's government turned decisively to the West, and the training took on new importance. Ukrainians were very receptive. Prior to 2014, the California Guard would send a few dozen trainers at a time to Ukraine. After the Russian invasion, this commitment numbered in the hundreds and training accelerated.

This is more than simply teaching infantry tactics, Baldwin said, although Ukrainian soldiers demonstrated the ability to move, shoot and move.

In training areas in Ukraine and California, the Army Guard and Air Guard in California worked to develop Ukrainian capabilities. If they didn't have the capability, Baldwin worked with National Guard units around the United States to make sure Ukrainian service members got the training they needed.

It was more than small unit tactics, he said. The Guardsmen worked in logistics and sustainment — the lifeblood of any military. They worked to establish and build a Ukrainian NCO corps. They helped train staff officers and in defending against and launching cyber operations.

Guardsmen even worked in the headquarters of the Ukrainian military to establish command and control procedures and help build a Joint Operations Center modeled on what the United States military would have. Guardsmen helped them "reorganize the way that their staffs are organized at the General Staff and at the Ministry of Defense," he said. "We even imbedded (Ukrainian) staff officers as members of our staff."



U.S. Army Maj. Gen. David Baldwin, left, adjutant general of the California National Guard; Volodymyr Zelenskyy, president of Ukraine, and California Lt. Gov. Eleni Kounalakis, Sept. 2, 2021. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Duane Ramos)

Baldwin went to Ukraine in November 2021 and discussed with Ukrainian military leaders the disturbing build-up of Russian troops on Ukraine's borders. "At the time, they kind of knew that it was coming, but they didn't want to believe it," he said. "It wasn't until January that the most senior Ukrainian leaders started [to] recognize that this could be a possibility."

Ukrainian leaders then began talking about specific needs they would have if Russia invaded. "They came within a day or two of predicting when the invasion was going to come," he said. "But because of that partnership, and our ability to have frank discussions about what they needed in the 11th hour to get ready, I [hope] it very much helped them prepare, and to do so well in the opening hours of the invasion."

Baldwin said that within half an hour of the Russian invasion, he began getting calls from Ukrainian senior leaders. "The first calls were, 'Hey, we're under attack,' and then the calls through that night were 'Here's the help that we desperately need,'" he said.

The first calls were for more Stingers, Javelins and other anti-tank weapons, he said. "Within 24 hours, we had a pretty comprehensive list of all of their requirements for military equipment — both lethal and non-lethal," the general said.

The California Guard stood up their Joint Operations Center and they were seeing the same things their Ukrainians partners were posting in Kyiv. Baldwin passed the request to U.S. European Command and the Joint Staff in the Pentagon.

"Now there are a lot of formal liaison systems and mechanisms and ways to communicate," he said. "But the senior leaders still reach out when they have something urgent. That's just a product of our relationships. Because a lot of these guys that are generals at the top of their organizations, I've known for eight or 10 years. So, we have very close personal relationships, and they trust us because they know us." ♦



# DEEP DIVE:

## The U.S. Military Program to Arm Ukraine with Javelin Anti-tank Missiles

By Jack Murphy

Used with permission from *Connecting Vets News* posted on March 2, 2022, 7:00 am

<https://www.audacy.com/connectingvets/news/inside-the-deadly-javelin-anti-tank-program-in-ukraine>

In 2014, the Russian military annexed Crimea in a largely bloodless irregular warfare operation before they invaded and captured parts of Donbas in Eastern Ukraine. The United States military took immediate notice. Prior to the 2014 invasion, the Office of Defense Cooperation out of the U.S. Embassy was providing 5 million dollars in security assistance to the Ukrainian military. A few years later, that figure ballooned to over 350 million dollars.

The Javelin anti-tank missile program in Ukraine has its origins during this period. The fighting has not stopped in Eastern Ukrainian, with Russian-backed separatists in the self-declared Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics exchanging fire across the border of the disputed regions on a daily basis. With Russian T-72 tanks harassing Ukrainian positions, their military knocked on the door of the U.S. Embassy asking for one of America's most notorious anti-tank weapons.

The Javelin has been fielded to the U.S. Military since the mid-1990s however, it came to great notoriety during the 2003 invasion of Iraq when Green Berets from 3rd Special Forces Group pushed across the green line with Peshmerga fighters and engaged an enemy armor battalion. Over the course of several days, ODA 391 and ODA 392 called in airstrikes and fired a total of 19 Javelin missiles at enemy trucks, armored personnel carriers, and T-55 tanks.

Of the 19 missiles fired, 17 resulted in hits. Interestingly, although the manual states that the maximum effective range of the Javelin is 2,000 meters, all of the shots fired during what became known as the [Battle of Debecka Pass](#) were over 2,200 meters. The longest shot was 4,200 meters. The Green Berets demonstrated that a small unconventional force could take on an enemy armor unit with the proper mix of ground mobility vehicles, Javelin anti-tank missiles, and close air support.

By the time the Ukrainians were asking for the Javelin, Congress had already begun earmarking funds in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to help the Ukrainians counter Russia. NATO was also involved, and a number of different countries were taking responsibility for improving and modernizing the Ukrainian military.

Every U.S. Embassy has two military offices, the Defense Attache run by the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC), which can act as a type of storefront for countries to request and purchase military equipment. In other cases, such as in Ukraine where funds had already been allocated, ODC would facili-



A M98 Javelin Weapon System fired during range operations conducted at Grafenwoehr Training Area located near Rose Barracks, Germany. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. William Tanner)

tate the transfer of weapons and equipment. This office would oversee what used to be called 1207 programs paid for by the Department of Defense and the State Department, but are now consolidated under what is known as [Section 333](#), coming out of the Title 10 DOD budget.

ODC and NATO efforts to reform the Ukrainian military were largely successful, although the trainers felt they were struggling against a post-Soviet military culture, according to a U.S. Military official familiar with the programs. In order to encourage continued reforms, funding and weapons were disbursed in tranches, with each conditional on additional improvements. Some of these conditions were blown off by anxious Senators who wanted immediate military aid funneled into the country, the military official explained.

ODC turned over to the Ukrainian military night vision systems, humvees, and military radios, as well as specialized radar systems. But the request for Javelins was controversial amongst U.S. Military and NATO allies. "This begins a 15 month, 2 administration debate about if we can do this or will it provoke Putin," the U.S. Military official told Connecting vets.

Before moving on, it may be useful to explain exactly what the Javelin is.

The FGM-148 Javelin consists of two separate components, the reusable Command Launch Unit (CLU) and the launch tube that houses the missile itself. The CLU consists of a body with a day site, thermal sight, hand grips, battery compartment, firing mechanism, and the interface that actually attaches the CLU to the launch.



A Javelin missile leaves its launcher during the Battle of Debecka Pass. Photo courtesy of USASOC



To fire the Javelin, the user inserts a 5590 battery into the CLU to power it and places the launch tube to their side. The CLU is then turned upside down and connects the round interface connector at the top of the CLU to the metal hooks that receive it on the launch tube. Once locked in place, the entire system is rotated and hefted onto the soldier's shoulder. The forward end cap on the launch tube is removed and the lens cover on the CLU is lowered.

The Javelin can be fired from the sitting, kneeling, or standing position. With some difficulty, it can be fired from the prone position, but care must be taken to ensure the soldier's legs are clear of the backblast area which fans out at 60 degrees from the back of the launch tube when fired.

The soldier then looks into the CLU's viewfinder and begins to identify targets on the battlefield. With an official maximum range of 2,000 meters, the thermal sight on the system helps the soldier pick out targets at night as well as through smoke and haze. Once an enemy armored vehicle has been identified, four-track gates inside the viewfinder are positioned over the vehicle to lock on to it.

The default mode of the Javelin missile is to fire in top attack mode which strikes the top of the vehicle, but the soldier can select the direct fire mode if the target is under overhead cover or to shoot down enemy helicopters. Locked onto a target, with the appropriate mode selected, the soldier squeezes the trigger on the handgrip to fire the missile.

The launch motor pushes the missile out of the launch tube before the flight motor kicks in and the missile takes off into the sky above the battlefield en route to the target that the soldier locked on to. As a fire and forget weapon, the soldier can now load a new launch tube and search for additional targets.

Meanwhile, small wings are deployed from the missile while in flight to help with stabilization as the guidance section tracks the enemy armored vehicle on the ground and transmits flight information. The guidance head on the missile continues to track the enemy armor as it moves across the battlefield while the missile maintains altitude until the flight control wings cause it to angle downward towards the vehicle, striking from above where tanks and armored personnel carriers have the least armor.

The warhead on the missile has a precursor charge that detonates first to explode any reactive armor that the vehicle may be outfitted with before the main charges explode on impact, penetrating the hull of the vehicle.

The Javelin can be employed by a single soldier, but others will be needed to carry additional launch tubes, with each weighing about 35 pounds. These soldiers could be attached to an infantry unit to provide an anti-armor capability, but can work best when a number of Javelin teams are brought together to form an anti-tank hunter/killer team that can provide mutually supporting fires on the battlefield.

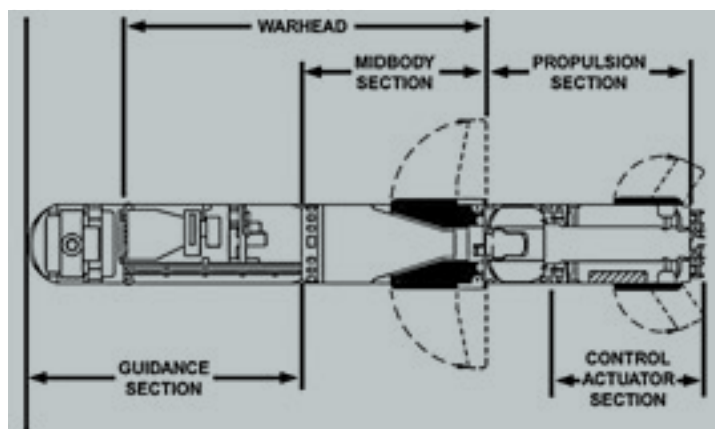
Trainees can be taught how to fire the Javelin using the Basic Skills Trainer which

consists of an inert Javelin system connected to a computer that transmits various scenarios into the CLU. Using this trainer, soldiers can be put through hundreds of different simulated scenarios where they have to rapidly load launch tubes, identify targets, lock on to them, fire, and then reload and reengage.

In 2015 and 2016, officials were still debating the merits of giving the Ukrainian military the Javelin for fears that it could provoke another Russian invasion. Bureaucrats argued amongst themselves as to how to mitigate the risk by engaging in games of semantics.

"Are we calling it lethal assistance or defensive assistance or defensive lethal assistance?" was the question being asked at the time the U.S. Military official said while shaking his head. From his point of view, it was an asinine debate as the Russians would know what a Javelin was regardless of what type of spin NATO and the Office of Defense Cooperation put on it.

A deal was worked out that they would call it defensive aid, with the prerequisite that the Ukrainians could only use it if fired upon first. Also, the weapon systems would be locked up in a secure facility, and only issued out to the military during an emergency. The Ukrainians shrugged off the conditions and dully agreed.



Javelin FGM-148 Missile components (U.S. Army, FM 3-22.37 "Javelin Medium Antiarmor Weapon System," Headquarters Department of the Army, Washington, DC, 23 January 2003)



This multiple exposure photo of the firing of a Javelin demonstrates the multiple stages the missile goes through after it is fired. (U.S. Army National Guard photo illustration by Spc. Jovi Prevot)

The first shipment of Javelins arrived in 2018, the weapons systems along with a training and sustainment block (called the Total Package Approach) totaling somewhere around 75 million dollars. "It takes like 18 months to get shit approved, then it spends six months on a boat," the U.S. Military official complained, saying that we are way behind in providing training in assistance when other countries go to Russia and request fighter jets or helicopters and get them in a couple of weeks.

But the first shipment did arrive, and initial training was conducted by a contractor from Lockheed before the training program was taken over by the [Security Assistance Training Management Organization \(SATMO\)](#). This little-known organization has Warrant Officers, Master Gunners, and others on staff specifically to train foreign partner forces. Working with the Ukrainian military for six years, SATMO delivered an additional 200,000 pounds of lethal military aid to Ukraine in late 2021.

As the Russians learned that Ukraine now had Javelins, their T-72 tanks in Donbas became less aggressive, and pulled further back from the frontlines, the U.S. military official said.

Eventually, the Multinational Training Group-Ukraine was established in the Western part of the country, where battalions and then entire brigades were trained by the U.S. Military on a quarterly basis. Part of that training also included learning how to use the Javelin.

The U.S. Military source that Connecting Vets spoke to stated that the intelligence community was concerned about Russian troops on Ukraine's borders starting in the summer of 2021 and that the Javelins themselves were likely taken out of the storage facility and issued to units that fall. With war breaking out in late February, initial reports indicate a weak Russian performance during the opening salvo of their campaign.

However, the numbers of tanks killed by Ukrainian soldiers, with the Javelin or other anti-tank weapons, are difficult to take seriously. Mostly appearing on social media, these numbers are likely to be

exaggerated by the Ukrainians and downplayed by the Russians. The usual fog of war makes it even more difficult to ascertain accurate numbers.

However, a U.S. Special Operations official monitoring the conflict in Ukraine told Connecting Vets that he had seen estimates of 280 Russian armored vehicles taken out by the Javelin as of this writing, out of 300 total missiles fired. ♦

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR** — Jack Murphy served in 3rd Ranger Battalion and 5th Special Forces Group, deploying to Afghanistan and Iraq as a sniper, gun team leader, and senior weapons sergeant on a military free fall team. Since graduating from Columbia University with a degree in political science in 2014, he has worked as an investigative journalist.

Murphy has reported on the ground from conflicts around the world getting smuggled into Syria with Kurdish guerrillas early on during the civil war, embedding with the Peshmerga during combat against ISIS in Iraq, and traveled from Manila to Tawi Tawi interviewing members of Philippine Special Operations Forces. He reports extensively on clandestine and covert operations.

Kenn Miller reviewed his memoir, [Murphy's Law](#) in 2019 in the [December 2019 Sentinel](#), which also featured an excerpt from the book. He has also written a series of action-adventure novels and had made numerous television appearances on national news outlets as a subject matter expert. His work has appeared on [Connecting Vets](#), [Stars and Stripes](#), and [Yahoo News](#). Additionally, he currently co-hosts the podcast [The Team House](#) (a "Featured Channel" on Chapter 78's YouTube channel and available at other major sources for podcasts).

Learn more about him at his website [jackmurphywrites.com](http://jackmurphywrites.com).

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# TEAMHOUSE

# WHAT IS SF4LIFE?

SF4Life is SFA — a family of over 10,500 Green Berets, with members in every state, across the nation, and in many countries throughout the world, as well as in almost every industry and career field.

How does SF4Life does work? As members become visible and active in the Teamhouse here are some examples:

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**Share your knowledge, interests, and support  
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# FALLEN SOLDIER

## Colonel James “Nick” Rowe Part 1 — The Man in the Arena

By Greg Walker (ret), Special Forces

Far too many U.S. military officers have been the targets of assassination over the last several decades. But few have attracted attention like the murder of Colonel James “Nick” Rowe. Rowe had accepted an assignment that many of his close friends felt was too dangerous for the former POW to consider, much less embrace as an overseas posting.

James “Nikki” Rowe was born in McAllen, Texas. He was one of three children although both his sister, Mary Alice, and elder brother, Richard, died at early ages from natural causes. It was Richard’s death during his last year at West Point that had the most profound effect on six-year old Nikki, who during the military funeral in McAllen told his grieving mother, “I’m not going to die. I’m going to do the things my brother wanted to do and never had the chance.”

Rowe graduated from West Point in 1960 as a second lieutenant in field artillery. Already a graduate of the Army Airborne and Ranger courses, Lt. Rowe went on to attend the field artillery Officers Basic Course at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. It was there Rowe became aware of a unit called Special Forces. “A recruiting team asked for volunteers to go to Special Forces,” recalls Susan Rowe, Nick’s second wife. “Nick was one of the six who were chosen out of all those who volunteered. He was always interested in doing something new, and the Green Berets were definitely new at that time.”

First sent to the Defense Language School in Monterey, California, Rowe studied Mandarin Chinese. While at DLI he was promoted to 1st Lieutenant. Finally arriving at Fort Bragg, where no Special Forces Officer Course had yet been developed, Rowe attended the Enlisted Special Forces Qualification Course. After graduation, he attended HALO school. In 1962 he served as assistant Group adjutant at the 7th Special Forces Group (ABN), then as an executive officer on a Special Forces A-team in 5th Group (A-23).

Special Forces operations were still in a stage of relative infancy when Rowe’s 5th Group detachment was deployed to Vietnam in 1963. American advisers could not call on U.S. jet and artillery support in the manner they would be able to by 1966. Nor could they count on American conventional force combat units to come to their aid when their isolated A-camps were attacked.



Nick Rowe as a West Point cadet in 1957. (Photo courtesy Greg Walker)

Sent to a remote camp 16 miles inside the Viet Cong controlled Mekong Delta, it was A-23’s responsibility to work with and train their Vietnamese Special Forces counterparts, the LLDB, in combat operations against the entrenched Viet Cong. Three months after landing at Tan Phu, Nick Rowe was captured along with Captain Humbert “Rocky” Versace and Special Forces medic, Sergeant Dan Pitzer. Their capture, on October 23, 1963, occurred after an intense firefight outside the wire at Tan Phu.

“I believe the VC knew we were with Special Forces within several days of our capture,” recalled Dan Pitzer. Rocky, Nick and I were picked up along with several LLDB people. There’s no doubt in my mind they told the VC who and what we were. But Special Forces, or SF, was so new to them [the Viet Cong] that it just didn’t mean



that much at the time. Dan Pitzer would spend four years as a POW along side Rowe in the U Minh Forest ("Forest of Darkness"). Pitzer, who would later join Rowe at the newly formed U.S. Army Survival, Escape, Resistance, Evasion (SERE) school at Fort Bragg, came to know Nick better than anyone.

"We got closer than brothers do during that time," Pitzer told me. "POWs come to rely on each other for everything, and in doing so they exchange things about themselves that no one else would ever hear about. When I went to visit Nick's parents after my release in 1968, I didn't need a map of McAllen or anyone's instructions on how to get around. Nick had told me everything about McAllen, it was as if it was my hometown, too."

During his five years as a POW, Rowe fought to sustain not only his own life and sanity but that of his fellow POWs, as well. Pitzer served to gauge each prisoner's mental and physical health, advis-

ing the young lieutenant as POWs rotated in and out of the jungle camp. Rocky Versace, fighting the VC's attempts to force him to betray his country to the bitter end, was finally executed along with "Green Beret" Ken Roraback (pictured at left) on September 25, 1965. Upon hearing of the executions Rowe began his own war against those holding him, supporting it with a cover story that did not mention his Special Forces background.

On December 31, 1968, after five years of imprisonment, his last year spent in total isolation, Nick Rowe made his fourth attempt at escape. He was successful. He later recounted



Special Forces Sergeant Ken Roraback was executed by the Viet Cong in the same camp Nick Rowe was being held at.



that the circumstances leading up to his rescue began with the revelation that he was indeed a Special Forces officer. The tip came from U.S. anti war protesters with ties to the North Vietnamese. When his true identity was learned of, a set of orders came down mandating he be turned over to a higher cadre than the regional level which he'd been held at until then. "At Zone there was no pretense of leniency and humanitarianism," he wrote in his autobiography. "There was a harsh, unyielding process of deliberately breaking a man. If a prisoner still refused to comply, it became tantamount to ordering his own execution."

On the day of his rescue, Rowe was being moved toward a transfer point by his Viet Cong guards. He was sure he was to be executed since he had no intention of caving in, although there was no execution order. Dan Pitzer supported Rowe's belief in this assumption. "After Rocky's execution we were told that it was not the policy of the Front to kill prisoners. Versace and Roraback were killed in retaliation for several VC killed in Danang. What they did tell us was they didn't have to ever let us go. That they could keep us forever."

A surprise air strike gave Rowe his chance at freedom. He disabled the single guard assigned to move him and managed to signal an attacking gunship using his now-bleached white mosquito netting. Still, almost "lit up" because he was wearing black pajamas, he became the object of the Airborne Commander's wishes to capture a live VC. Minutes later Nick Rowe was high above the Forest of Darkness, his promotion to major and a ticket back to the United States less than 20 minutes away.

Once on the ground, Rowe debriefed a combined force of Vietnamese Rangers and American advisers. He volunteered to fly back to the area he'd been held for five long years in, this to assist a combined assault force hoping to locate other POWs or recover any information about them that would help with future rescue operations.

Much later Rowe recalled it wasn't until he'd climbed into the Army jeep after his rescue that he realized with certainty he was finally a free man once again. He would tell those SERE students going through the course he was responsible for that in his role as a U.S. Army officer, "The minute I put this uniform on, it says I am expendable."

Once back home in Texas, now Major Rowe told a throng of reporters "I have already asked to be sent back to Vietnam. I feel the experience I have gained over the past five years will be very beneficial. I have gained a wealth of knowledge I could never have gained in any other manner."



At far left, Rowe recalled that it was not until he climbed into the Army jeep after his rescue that he realized he was finally free from his jungle prison.

At immediate left, Rowe during his first medical exam after his escape.

Rowe's request was denied. Instead, he found himself assigned to the Army General Staff Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence. He later worked on the Army's POW/MIA program. In 1974, he resigned his commission and ran for state office in Texas. He was badly beaten. Afterward, Susan recalled, he decided politics were not for him. Heavily in campaign debt, Rowe returned to a steadier form of income than his writing could provide. Affiliated with the 20th Special Forces Group (ABN), Rowe had been working occasionally as a consultant, lending his expertise and quick mind to a variety of projects. As U.S. special operations began to shift gears in 1981, he returned to active duty to develop a program for personnel who might be captured during the conduct of their missions.

Rowe's unique experiences, dynamic personality, and unshakable commitment to serve where his country most needed him now fit in perfectly with the Army's desire to reevaluate its position on survival, escape, resistance, and evasion, or SERE. He soon became a constant presence at Camp Mackall, the secluded and rough Special Forces training center that would come to host his SERE program.

After his arrival and hands-on effort to begin turning the tide against Communist revolutionaries seeking to topple the government of President Cory Aquino. On April 7, 1989, Colonel Nick Rowe wrote the following in a letter to Dan Pitzer. "I'm either Number 1 or Number 2 on their list at JUSMAG and have taken the actions available to me to make it more difficult for them...Their targeting instructions are for an officer, involved in the counter-insurgency effort. DAO and JUSMAG are ground zero. It is many things here, but not dull."

On April 21, 1989, Nick Rowe died at the hands of the Communist New People's Army. The story of his assassination to be presented in the May issue of the Sentinel in "Part II – Death in Quezon City."

### The evolution of a cutting edge for SERE

Alfred Clark "Al" Mar was born in the United States. He was the son of Chinese immigrants. Al served in the 11th Special Forces Group (ABN). In the late 1950s, Sergeant Mar volunteered to serve in Vietnam with a special project using all-Asian Special Forces soldiers. The project was run out of Okinawa where the 1st Special Forces Group (ABN) had a forward deployed battalion. After serving in the Army, Mar earned a mas-

ter's degree in industrial design from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California. His masters thesis was building and launching a working 2-man submarine. Upon graduating he went to work for an industrial design firm in Los Angeles in 1967, and upon moving to Lake Oswego, Oregon, he joined Gerber Legendary Knives as a designer. Mar was responsible for a number of innovative Gerber designs to include the Gerber Mark 1 boot knife. Leaving Gerber he established Al Mar Knives, becoming the first specialty cutlery designer in the United States to offer original, exceptionally high quality knives and other edged tools.

Al Mar died in 1992 from a brain aneurysm. His Color Guard was arranged for by myself as both a close friend and confidant of Al's and as a member of Company A, 1/19th Special Forces Group (ABN). Mar had supported the unit for some time and was an honorary member of our company.

When Al and Nick Rowe were collaborating on what would become the AMK SERE Folder I was privy to the discussions and prototypes being conducted and shared between the two "Green Berets." They became good friends along the way, with Al designing a limited edition Rowe Commemorative Knife to honor Rowe after the colonel's assassination in 1989. Fewer than 50 sets of this, the rarest of AMK's project knives, were made. I was asked to write the booklet that described Nick's life and accomplishments that went into the beautiful shadow box.

The Al Mar SERE folder was the first such knife accepted for use by Special Forces. Fifty unmarked knives with rubber grips were delivered to Colonel Rowe at SERE. The commercial version would feature Micarta grips and the AMK "chop" on the blades.



Nick Rowe turned to fellow "Green Beret" Al Mar to co-design and produce the now legendary AMK SERE folder.



Command Sgt. Maj.  
Daniel L. Pitzer

Dan Pitzer was born on November 23, 1930, in Fairview, West Virginia. He enlisted in the U.S. Army on December 10, 1947, leaving active duty on June 22, 1949, and then returned to active duty from November 6, 1949 to September 10, 1950.

He was again recalled to active duty on August 22, 1951, and served with the 2nd Medium Tank Battalion of the 1st Cavalry Division in Japan and South Korea until November 1960, followed by service with the 319th Artillery Regiment at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, from January to June 1961.

Sgt Pitzer next completed Special Forces training, and then served with the 5th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg from December 1961 to August 1963. He was then deployed to South Vietnam from August

1963, until he was captured by Viet Cong forces and taken as a Prisoner of War on October 29, 1963.

After spending 1,475 days in captivity in South Vietnam and Cambodia, MSG Pitzer was released on November 11, 1967. He was briefly hospitalized to recover from his injuries at Fort Bragg, and then served with the 6th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg from June 1968 to March 1971.

His final assignment was with the 5th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg from March 1971 until his retirement from the Army on June 19, 1975.

Dan Pitzer died on March 9, 1995, and was buried at Lafayette Memorial Park in Fayetteville, North Carolina.





The Crusader is 21st Century successor to the AMK SERE folder and is pictured here with the Nick Rowe memorial coin Al Mar designed and had produced for the limited edition Rowe Memorial set.

### The Anglesey Crusader

The Crusader from Anglesey Lite Tactical and Hunting Gear is, in my professional opinion after several months of carry and use, the fitting evolution of the concepts Nick Rowe and Al Mar explored in their pursuit of a sturdy, reliable, well constructed small knife for SERE applications.

First, it is a fixed blade knife. This means there is no locking system necessary and when unsheathed it is ready for use immediately. It also means the knife is quiet - there is no loud "click" of a locking system being engaged. This is a major plus if you are in an escape or evasion situation.

Second, the false edge is sharpened, and I mean sharpened. This provides for faster and deeper penetration whether used as a make-shift spear for hunting game or close quarters applications with an enemy.

The Crusader's grip panels are formed from Grolite (G-10). The steel is 440C, properly heat-treated and with the correct edge geometry for a knife designed for hard use and re-honing. The grip panels were co-designed by a veteran special operator with 12 years experience on the U.S. Secret Service Counter Assault Team, or "CAT".

A trainer version, or "Blue Knife", is made from the exact same materials as the Crusader is available and allows for realistic training. Anglesey takes a perfectly good Crusader and grinds down the edges. They then use blue blanks to do the grips and use blue Cerakote for the overall blade. It actually costs more to make the trainer than the Crusader, according to the maker.

A nicely thought-out thumb platform allows for swift indexing of the blade and its point during the draw. Sheathwork is Kydex and is very nicely formed and fitted to each blade.

As Al Mar pointed out to me time and time again during our visits — "Always remember that Form and Function go hand in hand. Of the two concepts, it is the latter which will determine whether or not you can trust your life to your "silent partner". Your knife is first and foremost a cutting tool. Treated with respect, given the proper care before, during, and after use, it will serve you well."

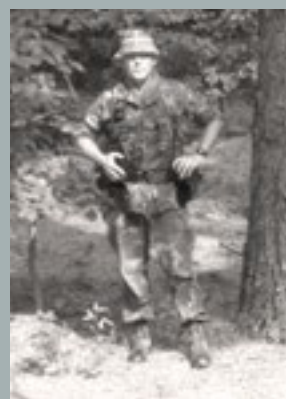
For more information and ordering you are invited to contact [angleseyknives.com](http://angleseyknives.com) ❖



Set #2 of the limited edition from Al Mar in honor of his friend, Nick Rowe.

*In the May 2022 Sentinel:*

## Part 2 — Death in Quezon City



Commenting on his role as a U.S. Army office, Rowe said, "The minute I put this uniform on, it says I'm expendable."

*"Colonel Rowe being a key official in the JUSMAG is a direct participant in the U.S.-designated "total war" counterinsurgency program in the Aquino regime. JUSMAG is responsible for the overall planning, supervision and implementation of U.S. military assistance and training, as well as giving clear support to AFP fascist military actions against revolutionary forces and the Filipino masses"* Rolly Kintanar, Chief of Staff, New People's Army, 22 April 1989

*"I'm either number 2 or number 3 on their list at JUSMAG and have take the action available to me to make it more difficult for them... Their targeting instructions are for an officer, involved in the counterinsurgency effort. DAO ad JUSMAG are ground zero. It is many things here, but not dull."* Colonel James Rowe, 7 April 1989

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg Walker honorably retired from Special Forces in 2005. His awards and decorations include the Special Forces Tab, the Combat Infantryman Badge (X2), and the Washington National Guard's Legion of Merit.

Invited by CSM (ret) Dan Ptizer and Ms. Susan Rowe to write "Fallen Soldier" in 1989, the story first appeared

in International Combat Arms that year. It would become a student handout at SERE as CSM Ptizer wanted the students to know who Nick Rowe was and why the SERE program came into being.

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



# SFA Chapter 78 March 2022 Chapter Meeting

Photos by Dennis DeRosia, How Miller, and Debra Holm



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1. Chapter President Greg Horton's presentation on the National Guard's involvement with training the Ukraine forces was well received and prompted much discussion.
2. Chapter members James Carter and Don Gonneville converse during breakfast.
3. Chapter members Mark Miller and Kenn Miller
4. In the foreground, Chapter member Mike Jamison
5. Chapter members Mark Miller, Kenn Miller, and Bruce Long listen intently to Greg Horton's presentation.
6. Left to right, Chapter members Don Deatherage, Bruce Long, and Steve Bric.
7. Chapter member Jim Cragg
8. Chapter member Sal Sanders and Nancy Miller
9. Chapter Secretary Gary Macnamara
10. Chapter member Tom Turney



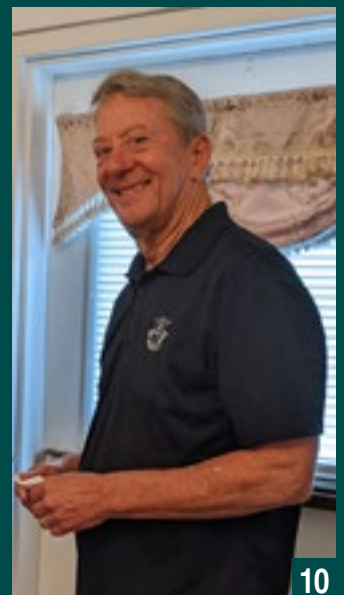
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