



SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 2 • FEBRUARY 2023

HONORING OUR LEGACY — SF ORIGINALS

"If it's not written,
it didn't happen"

Lonny Holmes, Former SF Medic,
Commits to Printing SF History

"In Cold Blood"

— an alleged Salvadoran
war criminal flouts his U.S.
citizenship to avoid Justice

SFA Chapter 78
Christmas Party





SENTINEL

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 2 • FEBRUARY 2023

From the Editor



US ARMY SPECIAL OPS COMMAND



US ARMY JFK SWCS



1ST SF COMMAND



1ST SF GROUP



3RD SF GROUP



5TH SF GROUP



7TH SF GROUP



10TH SF GROUP



19TH SF GROUP



20TH SF GROUP



8TH SF GROUP



11TH SF GROUP



12TH SF GROUP

IN THIS ISSUE:

President's Page..... 1

"If it's not written, it didn't happen" Lonny Holmes, Former SF Medic, Commits to Printing SF History..... 2

Honoring Our Legacy 4

Sharing the Stories of the Originals 12

"In Cold Blood" — an alleged Salvadoran war criminal flouts his U.S. citizenship to avoid Justice 14

Warning Order — A-1/19 SFG Formal Dining Out and Reunion .. 20

Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Weimer selected as 17th Sergeant Major of the Army 21

SFA Chapter 78 Christmas Party..... 22

A Letter to the Ch. 78 President Greg Horton:
A few thoughts regarding Chapter 78's new advocacy team..... 25

SFA Chapter 78 2022 Awards and Special Presentations 26

FRONT COVER: SF Original COL (r) Vahan Sipantzi pins CPT bars on his grandson, 1LT Nathan Sipantzi. (Courtesy Zoe Sipantzi)



Please visit us at specialforces78.com

Follow us on Twitter @SFA_ch78

Subscribe to @sfachapter78 on YouTube



CHAPTER OFFICERS:

President Greg Horton	Coordinator of ROTC Program Ed Barrett
Vice President James McLanahan	Chaplain Si Rangel
Secretary Gary Macnamara	Sentinel Editor How Miller
Treasurer Richard Simonian	Immediate Past President Bruce Long
Sergeant At Arms/ Quartermaster Mark Miller	Project Officers Don Gonneville

Funding for the SFA Chapter 78 Sentinel is provided by

VETERANS AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM

A program of American Veterans Assistance Group



888-923-VETS (8387) • VeteransAffordableHousing.org

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.



How Miller
Sentinel Editor

Our Chapter 78 Member of the Year, Debra Holm, worked with Lonny Holmes for many years in helping the *Sentinel* become what it is today. She describes Lonny's dedication to "If it's not written down, it didn't happen," driving him to capture stories of SF for us and posterity. Of course, that wasn't all he did, and she captures some of the highlights of his life so far.

War reporter Alex Quade gives us a lot of interesting details about the "Originals" from the earliest years of the 10th SFG. She describes the events, highlighting them at the SFA National Convention in Colorado, how they interacted with each other, and their desire to pass what they can on to newer generations of SF. She also shared some stories she has been privy to from other "Originals" around the country and over the years, as well as how she has enjoyed the process.

"In Cold Blood" by Greg Walker brings another well-researched story about the tumultuous times that Central and South America endured, fighting off, with SF help, the communist insurgencies backed by Cuba and others. This report brings attention to a Salvadoran officer wanted by the Hague for allegedly planning and ordering the ambush assassination of a Dutch film crew in 1982 living comfortably in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Though his whereabouts were exposed through a photo on his daughter's Facebook page in 2018, he remains a free man.

CSM Michael Weimer of USASOC is another of many SF success stories. He has risen through the ranks to the top NCO position in the Army. He will take over that role of Sergeant Major of the Army when his predecessor, SMA Grinston, retires in August.

Due to earlier production deadlines, our annual Christmas Party at the Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club in Newport Beach actually took place after our January 2023 issue went to press. It was bittersweet, due to longtime Chapter President Bruce Long's passing. The sweet part included great speakers, great food, and the glow of Richard Simonian having been awarded the coveted St. Phillip Neri Award from the SFA. And hopefully we were able to comfort Bruce's widow, Geri, who attended with her daughter, Heather Kinnersley.

Our newest Chapter member, author Greg Walker, who served many years with the SOCOM Warrior Care Program, also sent an open "Letter to the President," outlining many sources of help for veterans in emotional stress. It has suggestions for Chapter 78's new Advocacy Team, as well as helpful information that we hope will be used by many outside our chapter. Please contact us at sfachapter78@gmail.com if you wish for more details from either Greg Walker or Greg Horton.

We close with Awards and Special Presentations which will have both new and familiar faces.

Enjoy. ❖

How Miller
Sentinel Editor

From the President | February 2023



Gregory Horton
President SFA Ch. 78

This sure has been a year of highs and lows. But we have persevered, and the 2022 Christmas party is under our belt! And what a great time it was. I want to personally thank Tasha, the staff, and Scott of the Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club for their help setting up our party! Bravo. Once again, the staff and chefs put together a fantastic feast and beautiful room for the festivities. Every year I rave about their food and this year was no exception. And to top it off, our DJ Sommer (<https://somfun4u.com/>) was fantastic. She kept us dancing right up to closing time.

We had a fantastic raffle, and I want to thank my wife and all the others that helped set up the gifts and table centerpieces. I sincerely wish to thank everyone who donated a gift. But we must mention Jim Duffy who went above and beyond the call of duty with his numerous donations of his personal memorabilia for the Chapter. It was a lot of fun, and I think everyone got something good (as opposed to a tie).

My wife advised me that when the wives and significant others were chatting, several of them said that they would like to have an organization that they could join to get together more than once a year. I would like to meet with the Board and discuss the formation of a Chapter 78 Women's Auxiliary. If anyone is aware of an organization, either in the SFA or other entity, please get a POC so we can pick their brains.

I would like to take this time to thank Dennis DeRosia for his steadfast support as Vice President of the Chapter. Without his help and sage advice, this would have been a tough first term as President for me. We weathered more than one crisis, including the loss of SGM Bruce Long, and, with Dennis and the rest of the Board, we ended the year strong. Thanks to you all for the great Chapter and the *Sentinel*, which is the finest magazine in the entire SFA.

Even though James McLanahan was not sworn in until the Christmas Party, he has been a blessing as the new Chapter Vice President. I will admit that getting speakers for the Chapter meetings and party can be a daunting task. This year, it was even more challenging. Our original speaker scheduled for the Christmas party came down with a horrific case of the flu and a high temperature the day before her travel and had to cancel. Cue Jim and his can-do attitude. He immediately made dozens of contacts and was able to get not one, but two outstanding speakers. The first John Blue is an outstanding motivational speaker and was a professional hockey player for ten



SFA Chapter Greg Horton, center, happily posed for a photo with the Christmas party speakers Steve Keesal, left, and John Blue, at right.

years. He is currently pastoring a church in Costa Mesa with his wife. The second speaker was Steve Keesal, who is a former Ranger with 1st Bn, 75th Rangers and served with the US Army Special Operations Command in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is currently on the Management Team of a major investment firm located in Los Angeles.

And finally, I would like to extend our congratulations to the Cal State Fullerton ROTC Honor Graduate, Cadet Mark Cuzzo. Job well done and we wish you all the best in your future career.

Good bye 2022 and Hello 2023.

Our next Chapter meeting Saturday, February 18, 2023

LOCATION: The Pub at Fiddlers Green
TIME: Breakfast – 0800 • Meeting – 0830
LOCATION: **The Pub at Fiddlers Green**
ADDRESS: 4745 Yorktown Ave Bldg 19
Los Alamitos, CA 90720-5176
(Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos)

Greg Horton SGM (Ret)
President
SFA Chapter 78

SFA Chapter Meeting Schedule

SFA Chapter 78 meetings are held on the 3rd Saturday of the month at the Joint Forces Training Base in Los Alamitos, California.

Mark your calendar for the following scheduled dates for 2023:

Feb 18 • Mar 18 • Apr 15 • May 20 • June 17 • July 15 • August 19

“If it’s not written, it didn’t happen”

Lonny Holmes, Former SF Medic, Commits to Printing SF History

By Debra Holm

If you enjoy reading the *Sentinel*, with its articles featuring various aspects of Army Special Forces history and topics of interest to the community, you really have one person to thank for that pleasure: Lonny Holmes.

The *Sentinel* was originally edited, designed, and published by Chapter member John Joyce from October 2010 to August 2011. Lonny Holmes, who at the time was Chapter President, made contributions to each issue. John’s business obligations forced him to stop his work on the *Sentinel*.

Lonny, who was still the Chapter president at the time, made the decision to become the *Sentinel’s* editor in February 2012. Having previously held positions as editor of the newsletter for the Association of Physician’s Assistants in Cardiovascular Surgery and on the editorial board of a few peer-reviewed journals, he continued with confidence. His confidence was well-founded because he had won accolades and recognition for his efforts in that field.

About Lonny Holmes

Louis (Lonny) Holmes was born in Los Angeles, California. Growing up in Southern California, he surfed the waves of the South Bay in the 1950s and 1960s. On weekends and summers, he spent time at his father’s ranch in the Anza Borrego Desert, where he developed a lifelong love of the natural world while observing the wide variety of plants and wildlife of the area.

After two years of college, Lonny enlisted in the United States Army. He completed the Q-course in 1964, becoming qualified as a SF medic 91B/18D, and continuing to maintain the MOS of 05B/18E.

Lonny was initially assigned to Company A, ODA 5, 3rd Special Forces Group as a junior medic. He was headed to Nigeria in 1966 when he received orders for reassignment to D Company, 1st Special Forces Group, Airborne, ODA 432, which deployed to Thailand in October 1966. While there, he began training at the SFOB. The mission was to build a base camp and begin counterinsurgency training of the Royal Thai Army Infantry, and one of Lonny’s jobs as senior medic was to train the RTA medics. He also held daily sick call and patrolled in the mountainous rain forest with the training companies.

In early 1967, the team redeployed to the SFOB in Lopburi to begin training the Queen’s Cobras Battalions, destined for action in South Vietnam. He also helped staff the HQ dispensary awaiting assignment to Jumpmaster school and the 8-week Special Forces Professional Course (recon), which he completed in the summer.

Later that year, he was assigned to ODA 4624 in North Central Thailand to start a counterinsurgency course for the Royal Thai Police.

After nearly two years of Thai mission training and deployment, he was reassigned to ODA 251, Company B, 5th Special Forces Group. Their SF A-Camp, Plei Djereng, was located in II Corps, due west of



Lonny Holmes going for the great shot of A Company, 19th SF. Taken during the a parachute jump in October 2015 (Courtesy Lonny Holmes).

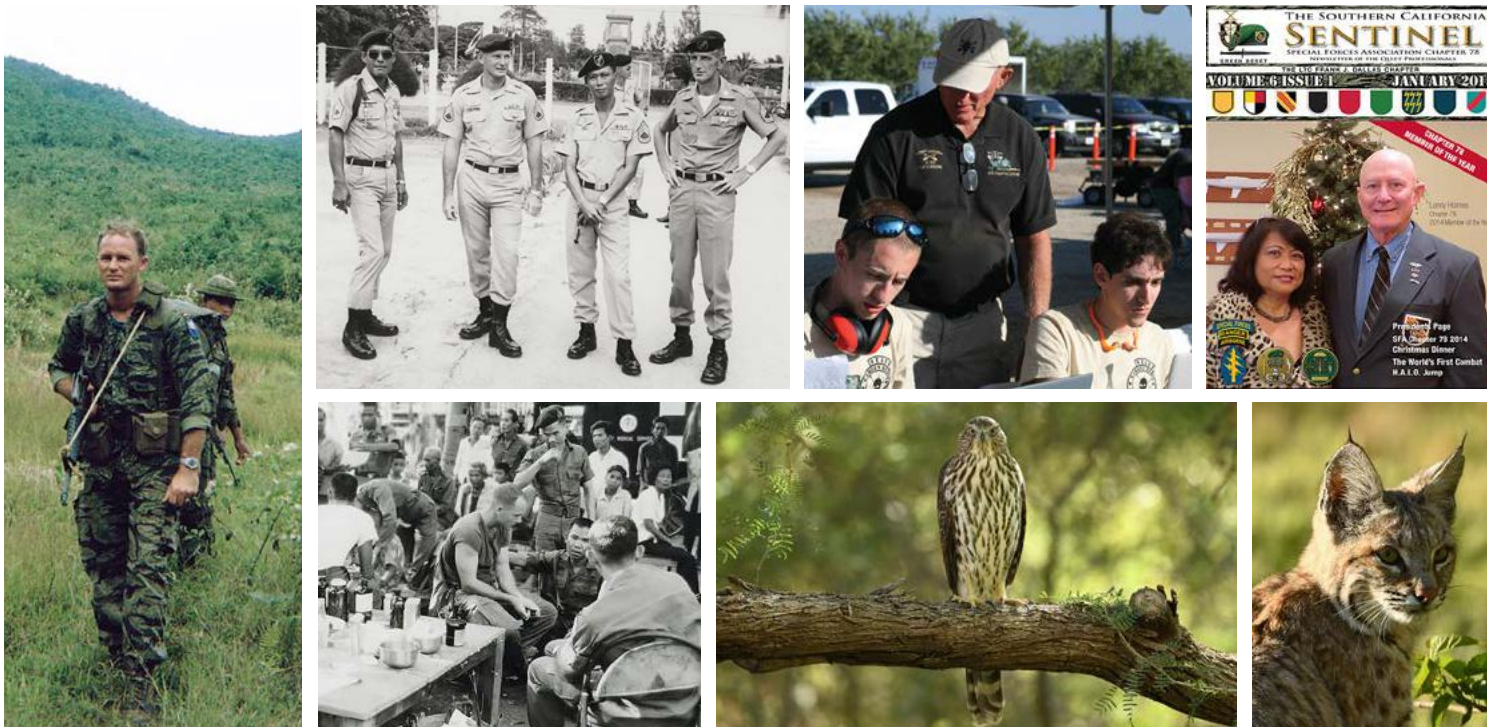
Pleiku, adjacent to the Laotian border. There he served as medical supervisor of the team, which included providing medical care to all members of the CIDG (5 companies), their families, and local villagers. In camp defense, he manned a .50 cal machine gun, and did combat patrols in our TAOR with the CIDG troops.

In late 1968, he was assigned to II Corps MIKE Force in Kontum as combat operation platoon leader and senior battalion medic. He ran combat missions with companies in Kontum, Pleiku and Bon Son provinces. At the end of this tour, he received the coveted Combat Infantry Badge.

Returning to Thailand, he was assigned to several ODAs working with the Royal Thai Border Police. One of the ODAs established a five-week advanced medical training school at the Royal Thai Police General Hospital. While on this assignment, he worked with and became friends with SF Medic Gary Rose, later serving as the best man at his wedding. When Gary Rose received the Medal of Honor in 2017, Lonny, along with John Stryker Meyer, attended the ceremony at the White House.

Following his discharge after serving as an SF medic for nearly seven years, he returned to Southern California. He attended the University of Southern California School of Medicine, graduating as a physician assistant. He joined the California National Guard, becoming 1SG of the 143T Evacuation Hospital. Lonny was promoted to warrant officer after completion of a surgical residency at Yale School of Medicine and Norwalk Hospital and was assigned back to the infantry.

In the feature film *City of Angels*, which starred Meg Ryan and Nick Cage, he was a technical advisor and had a small part. His work as the film’s advisor was acknowledged in the [Journal of the American Academy of Physician Assistants’ Fall 2017](#) issue for its contribution



From left, clockwise: Platoon Leader SSG Holmes, 1969 Kontum MIKE Force Company Operation at Bonson; Lonny, second from left, 1969 in Hua Hin, So. Thailand, part of an SF Honor guard for the King and Queen of Thailand; Lonny at the 2013 GBSC with the GRID 35 scoring team; the 2014 Member of the Year, Lonny and his wife, Nilda, on the cover of the January 2015 *Sentinel*; a Bobcat sat down in front of Lonny, remaining close for over a half hour; a juvenile Cooper's Hawk poses for Lonny's camera; 1966 SGT Lonny Holmes at center at Med Cap with Thai Special Forces. (Photos courtesy Lonny Holmes)

to the accurate portrayal of members of the profession in the media. He was interviewed by the History Channel for the Special Ops: Mike Force television special in 1999. He contributed to *The Green Berets, Weapons and Equipment* by Crowood Press that same year.

In 2008, Lonny retired. This gave him more time to pursue his passion for photography and the great outdoors, especially birds. He relocated from Southern California to Las Vegas, where he has established himself as one of the best nature photographers in the region, if not the best. Many mornings, Lonny would go trekking and take pictures in the adjacent Red Rock Canyon.

In 2014, he became a member of [iNaturalist](#), an international project launched by the California Academy of Sciences, and, in the United States, National Geographic. [Lonny has uploaded 25,512 observations \(photos\) to the database](#). Scientists seeking to understand and preserve nature use this database of all species, both flora and wildlife. Lonny's photos have appeared on websites ([HawkMountain.org](#) is an example) and in Nevada State Park literature and signage, such as the [Nevada Off-Road Naturalist Trail](#) and [Mt. Charleston](#) (also known as the Springs Mountains Nation Recreation Area).

Lonny and Chapter 78

Lonny became a member of Chapter 78 in 1992. He became President of the Chapter in 2010 and served until 2013. During his tenure as President, the Chapter was very active in their support of the Green Beret Foundation. The Chapter's famous and very successful [Green Beret Shooter's Cup](#) (GBSC) was held in 2011, 2012, and 2013. It was a massive project! Lonny and other Chapter members spent many hours manning booths at gun shows to raise funds for the GBSC as well as to promote the Chapter and raise awareness about the Green Berets.

As mentioned earlier, Lonny also took on the editor position for the *Sentinel* in the middle of his tenure as Chapter President. The *Sentinel* started out as a small, eight-page newsletter with occasional stories from members. Starting in January 2015, leading with the article "The World's First Combat H.A.L.O. Jump" by Mike Perry, every issue of the *Sentinel* contained at least one story that related to the history of Army SF in some way. Lonny worked day in and day out tracking down stories. He knew who had tales to tell, or he was tipped off, and his pursuit of those stories was relentless. He worked on getting one particular story for two years! Throughout the seven years he worked as editor, I often wondered where he found the energy to keep at it. But Lonny's enthusiasm and commitment were boundless. To this day, he still sends tips for stories for the *Sentinel*.

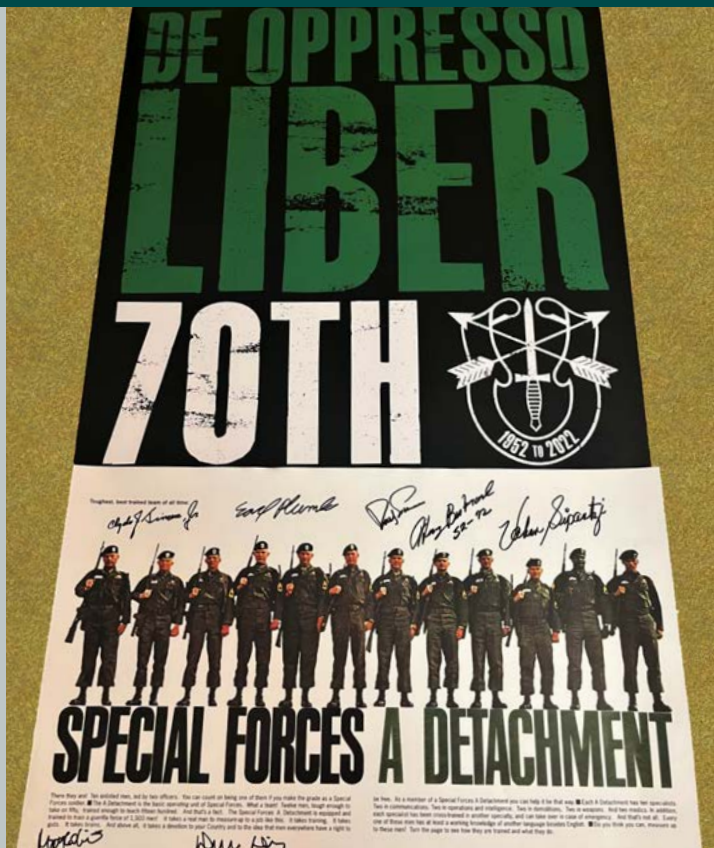
When Lonny stepped down as *Sentinel* editor at the end of 2019, he wrote:

"Members of the United States Intelligence Community have told me many times that if it's not written, it didn't happen. This must be one of the reasons that a huge majority of the documents of MACV-SOG in the Vietnam War were destroyed; plausible denial. When I began as Editor of the *Sentinel* eight years ago my goal was to print stories from Green Berets who fought, trained, and led soldiers in our conflict. Then I expanded this goal to include all those who supported and helped us in our contribution to carry our orders to defend the United States of America and the countries we supported."

He further stated that results of his efforts were "individual stories are not forgotten and numerous national awards for the SF Chapter 78."

Chapter 78 and the readers of the *Sentinel* owe Lonny Holmes a debt of gratitude. DOL! ❖

HONORING OUR LEGACY



Vintage ODA poster autographed for Alex Quade by SF Originals MAJ (ret) Clyde Sincere, SSG (ret) Richard Simonian, 1SG (ret) Henry Bertrand, COL (ret) Vahan Sipantzi and SF MOH Recipients MSG Earl Plumlee, SGM Matt Williams, and MAJ Drew Dix (Photo courtesy Alex Quade)



USASOC CG LTG Jon Braga introduces the Originals panel. (Photo courtesy SSG Travis Fontaine)



BG Gil Ferguson, DCG 1st SFC, speaks at SFACON. (Photo courtesy SSG Travis Fontaine)

By Alex Quade

War Reporter & Honorary SFA Natl. Lifetime Member

(Author's disclosure: MG Eldon Bargewell, Hon. Noel Koch, COL Sully de Fontaine, etc., began introducing this reporter to OSS & SF Originals, more than 15-year-ago. While this piece focuses on four Originals, a list at the end includes others who were a privilege to interview over the years. It's been an honor to spend time with, and learn from, these men and their families — many, who've become friends.)

Rockstars of the Regiment topped the marquee — packed the house — and turned Generals into gushing fanboys.

"I feel like a kid in a candy shop," LG Jon Braga, USASOC CG, said of the Special Forces Originals headlining SFACON 2022, in Colorado Springs, CO.

"Honored and humbled to be here... a remarkable legacy of 7-decades of unparalleled service," former CG USASOC, LG (ret) Ken Tovo, praised.

"It says a lot about the importance of this event that you've got the folks here you do: General Pat Roberson (MG Pat Roberson, DCG, USASOC), General Ken Tovo, General Braga, CWO Bob Davis, Command Warrant Officer, USASOC..." BG Gil Ferguson, DCG 1ST SF Command, raved. "Standing room only."

"I know I am just the warm-up act, and this is the real show, right here," LG Braga effused, by way of introducing the Originals Panel. "This is what inspired me to go into special operations... I never thought I'd get this opportunity to actually interact and listen to some of the actual Originals. Never even dreamt that, when I was a young adolescent reading all these war books, and stuff like that," he added.

The generals' idols — COL (ret) Vahan Sipantzi, MAJ (ret) Clyde Sincere, 1SG (ret) Henry Bertrand and former SSG Richard Simonian — did NOT disappoint. The four men in their 80's and 90's — kept the audience glued to their every word.

"Eventually, I found out it was a new organization. All he'd (the recruiter) said was, 'It's the 10th Group.' There was no indication of anything else," SF Original Henry Bertrand began. He'd been bused to the 82nd ABN Replacement Company at Ft. Bragg after completing jump school at Ft. Benning.

"I'm sitting around with my duffel bag, and we're waiting and waiting. I go outside, and there's this guy walking up and down the street, in front of the building. He said, 'Hey, are you Bertrand?' And I said, 'Yes, I am.' He says, 'Well, get in



Left to right, the SF Originals Panel — Henry Bertrand, Richard Simonian, Vahan Sipantzi, Clyde Sincere. (Photo courtesy Alex Quade)

the vehicle, and we'll take you over to Smoke Bomb Hill,'" **Henry Bertrand** explained. "Well, the vehicle was a sedan. And I'm thinking, *I'm a PFC — and they sent a sedan to pick me up... Man, this is my kind of organization!*"

SF Original Richard Simonian agreed.

"The Korean War was already going at that time. I didn't want to (get drafted to) go to Korea, so I volunteered to join the Army, and volunteered for Airborne and went to Ft. Ord. Two sergeants gave us a presentation about joining a unit that they could not tell me anything about. There was no names, no numbers. All they said was, *'We can guarantee you will be a Sergeant,'* so I raised my hand," **Richard** chuckled, *"Promised something good!"*

If the generals in the audience expected this to be the *de rigueur*, academic retelling of hallowed SF history — they were in for a slightly raucous surprise... which I got a sense of while chatting with the Originals prior to the panel...

"I don't know who that guy is — with the hair," **Original Vahan Sipantzi** pointed at the black-and-white photo in the convention poster.

"Well, we all get a little older," I laughed, thinking he was being coy.

"No — *that* guy in the photo — it's not me. Don't know who *that* guy is," **Vahan** stated.

"Ooops!" I smiled at an organizer's oversight. *(*He and his wife Ms. Zoe, kindly sent me the black and white photo from his scrapbook, you're seeing here, in the Sentinel.)*

"You know, it was an Army Circular basically stating, that a new unit was forming at Ft. Bragg — and *the losing unit cannot stop you, if the 10th Group accepts you,*" **Original Clyde Sincere** told me and the men seated next to him, as they quickly — *and competitively* — compared memories before the panel started. *(*Which you can see, in the photo below, of their animated interaction and facial expressions.)*

"If they accepted you, we ended up at Smoke Bomb Hill," one of them immediately chimed in.

"Any idea what all y'all were in for?" I asked them, before sneaking to the back of the full house.

"No, not at the time," Clyde Sincere replied. This sentiment — echoed throughout the official session.



Left to right, SF Originals Richard Simonian, Vahan Sipantzi, Clyde Sincere enjoy Alex Quade's quick questions. (Photo Courtesy Zeke Lloyd)



At left, framed photos of SF Original Henry Bertrand (Courtesy Alex Quade) At right, SF Original 1SG (r) Henry Bertrand answers Alex Quade's questions after Panel. (Courtesy Alex Quade)



Above, while chatting before the panel, SF Original COL (r) Vahan Sipantzi points out incorrect photo of him on the convention poster to Alex Quade — Alex asked him to send her a correct one. (Courtesy Zeke Lloyd)



At left, the correct black-and-white photo of SF Original Vahan Sipantzi, 1952. (Courtesy Vahan Sipantzi)

“They also taught (us) how to procure prostitutes – because they expected (we’d) possibly need that.”

Original and Chaplain, Vahan Sipantzi

At Smoke Bomb Hill, they told the audience, they could choose their MOS...

“They brought us into this classroom and asked us, basically, what we’d like to be in Special Forces. A 1LT was asking the questions,” **Original Henry Bertrand** explained. “He said, ‘Would you like to be an engineer?’ And I said, ‘Where’s that?’ He said, ‘That’s at Ft. Belvoir.’ Or, ‘Would you like to be a weapons man?’ And so on. ‘Would you like to be a medic?’ I said, ‘Where is that located?’ And he said, ‘San Antonio, Texas.’ I said, ‘I’ve never been to Texas before – I think I’ll become a medic.’”

“There was one orderly room, one barracks, and then, from then on, the detachment started forming,” **Original Clyde Sincere** said.

“In the beginning, it was a classroom environment,” **Clyde** shared with me earlier, “We listened to lectures on Unconventional Warfare from folks that had served in the OSS – Captains Jack Hemingway and Herbie Brucker. Jack, by the way, was the son of Ernest Hemingway. We used to query him a lot on his father.”



At top, Original Richard Simonian autographing. COL Aaron Bank's jump helmet next to him. (Courtesy Alex Quade) Below left, Richard Simonian talks with Convention Organizer LTC (r) John Kress. (Courtesy Alex Quade) Below right, SF Original Richard Simonian, before a parachute jump at Ft. Bragg in 1953. (Courtesy Richard Simonian)

“We used to ask him a lot about his Dad. Jack Hemingway and a few other guys were getting all the equipment that we needed — limpet mines from the Brits, Fairburn knives, and a variety of other things,” **Vahan** added.)

Training and language lessons began...

“The first thing we learned in German class was, ‘*Ich liebe dich!*’ (I love you),” **Original Richard Simonian** said.

“They also taught (us) how to procure prostitutes — because they expected (we’d) possibly need that,” Original and Chaplain, **Vahan Sipantzi** shared. “So yeah, well being a young Christian lad that, you know, was reading his Bible and kneeling at his bunk to say his prayers — I remember that. Not to mention the fact that I was engaged at the time.”

That wasn’t the only — unusual — skill they acquired...

“We learned to pick locks... some guys got in trouble with that, in town. We also learned to do forgeries. I forged my own discharge papers,” **Sipantzi**, the Man of God, confessed.

They didn’t always know what each other was doing, nor where...

“My Team Sergeant disappeared for 10 days. And I’m thinking, ‘Where did he go?’ **Original Henry Bertrand** said. “Well, I never knew, because he wouldn’t talk about it. Until I saw this magazine. And there he is, in a *Smoke Jumper outfit in Missoula, MT!* They sent a bunch of senior NCOs to go through that course. And, that’s how I found out about that.”

From the sky — to the sea...

“They took us to Little Creek, VA, and they put us on submarine called the USS Sealion for amphibious training. So, they would take us out in the submarine and they would blow that submarine noise, and we’d all get out of the submarine and jump into 12-man rafts and try to row ashore,” **Original Richard Simonian** explained — admitting they all kept falling into the water. “So, it took us 3-weeks to complete that training. But *those guys ate good in that submarine — I’ll tell you that! We traded Jump Wings for their Dolphins,*” he laughed.

They did not “eat good” — during mountain training with muleskinners...

“You had one duffel bag that you put in whatever you wanted the **muleskinners** (aka, mule-drivers, or muleteers) to bring in for you, that you didn’t have to pack in. So, I had 10 pounds of potatoes — because I loved raw potatoes. And we left those with the muleskinners,” **Original Vahan Sipantzi** began.

They were at Gannett Peak, WY, sleeping on the glacier, laced-up in their mummy bags...

“One of the guys woke up — he felt some sort of hot, unusual breath. It was a big bull moose looking down on him. I’m not sure if he used the sleeping bag again after that,” **Vahan** laughed.

As if the soiled fart-sack wasn’t tragedy enough — their prized potatoes were gone...

“The muleskinners never brought our bags up. And when we got back to where our bags were, we found they had slipped them open and taken out our stuff. The officers literally had to hold us back. Because whatever personal weapons that we carried — because we all carried one in those days, they trusted us with that — but, we had them out and we were ready for retribution,” **Chaplain Sipantzi** laughed.

Their fight mentality — honed during 4-hours a day of hand-to-hand combat skills...

(**Vahan** told me earlier just how intense that training was, after I shared with him about **MOH COL Roger Donlon** and **COL Aaron Bank’s** knife.

“He was showing me the Aaron Bank’s technique, or method of stealthily employing a knife between the rib cage to effect maximum damage. Is that a polite way of saying it?” I asked the Original (see “MOH Col. Roger Donlon’s Knife Lesson With Alex Quade” on *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5FUypaaCLig>).



At top, SF Original MAJ (r) Clyde Sincere points out his photo on poster to Alex Quade, while answering her questions before the panel. (Courtesy Alex Quade) At left, young SGT Clyde Sincere. (Courtesy 10th Group PAO) At right, Original MAJ (r) Clyde Sincere shares SF history with Alex Quade. (Courtesy Zeke Lloyd)

“Oh yeah, because I got stabbed that way. One of the guys — we were doing a 2-man kill — and he came over. I grabbed the guy and you know, put my knife into his ribs. And what you did is, you shove that in the kidneys, and then you dropped down on the handle — so in other words, it made an upward cut right through everything. And then we had a look over the top of the guy, and went right to the target, and he stabbed me in my leg. Yeah, so that’s one of the few times that I got stabbed,” **Vahan Sipantzi** said.)

“Wherever we went, they (instructors, former OSS) brought out a sign chalkboard. It said, ‘When in doubt, punt!’”

Translation — kick them in the groin.

*“The problem is, my future wife found out about that — and, so, it made it difficult sometimes to sleep at night, when things were not going well,” the **Original** chuckled.*

There were stories about sailing to Bremerhaven, Germany, on the USS Greely...

“Richard was a PFC, so we made him do KP the whole trip,” **Original Clyde Sincere** said.

(Years ago, when I’d interviewed Richard Simonian and the other Originals, I learned he “got them back for making him do KP duty onboard the ship — by running poker games and taking their money.”

“The poker was in Bad Tolz in the basement, Richard told me. “I ran a dice game where I cut Acey-deucey — cutting 5% on poker and making a lot of money. The wife of one of the guys losing his shirt — called the CO — who told me to stop, because he didn’t want to deal with wives calling him.”

Turns out, Richard — the future businessman — was also running pool tables on the 3rd floor of Tolz.)

There were stories about the train ride to “the Kaserne” (Hitler’s former SS Officer’s Academy)...

“It took 3-days to get there,” **Original Richard Simonian** said.

(In earlier interviews, I’d heard amusing stories of prostitutes in a train that was next to theirs, at one point in the journey — “They knew we were American soldiers, and called out to us through the windows.”)

There were stories about their time at the Kaserne...

“The local Germans were amused by us. The best times were spent drinking beer in the German Gasthaus. However, German beer took a toll on many of our men who could not, or chose not to remember that German beer alcohol content was much higher than in CONUS,” **Clyde Sincere** recalled.

(In my previous interviews, stories from the Kaserne ranged from bicycle races in the hallway on the 2nd floor — to classes on SMOE, surreptitious method of entry... from learning to

mine dams — to learning to drive or “re-route” locomotives, which were steam engines at the time, requiring teammates to shovel coal.)

And, there were stories about COL Aaron Bank, the Regiment’s legendary founder...

*“He was the judge, jury, prosecution and the defense,” **Original Henry Bertrand** discovered after driving violations in Germany...*

“I walked into COL’s office and reported to him. He said something like, ‘You put a bad name on the Group by getting us (the violation).’ I said, ‘I understand that, Sir. And it will not happen again. I guarantee you.’ He says, ‘Well, there’s got to be some type of punishment for what you’ve done.’ And I said, ‘Yes, Sir.’ I was a CPL at the time, and he says, ‘Tomorrow, you’re going to be a PFC — I’m reducing you one rank. I’m going to fine you — abolish half, or two-thirds of your pay for 6-months.’ And I’m thinking *Man, I’m not gonna make it.* So anyway, I said ‘Yes Sir,’ saluted and left,” **Henry Bertrand** explained.

“About a week later, **COL Bank** had a change of heart...

“‘Soldier, you’re the guy that drives. How’s it going these days,’ he said. ‘Very slowly, Sir,’ I said. ‘You know, the punishment that I gave you was a little harsh, I think. I’m going to restore your rank. But I’m still going to have to take your money.’ And

I said, ‘Yes, sir. I feel like I’m getting off easy. This will not happen again,’” **Henry Bertrand** shared.

Throughout their stories — a running theme...

“Freedom was the key word. It was your life,” Vahan Sipantzi stated.

The Originals said, they had a lot of freedom to do what they thought was needed, and there was a lot of trust — “Big Boy Rules” in today’s SF parlance.

*“Like, we all had personal weapons — there was a guy with a blowgun, whatever,” **Vahan** added.*

*“When we formed the 77th, we dressed however we felt we wanted to dress. It was our life on the line. We had that freedom,” **Clyde Sincere** said.*

Which is why, it almost became “The Ballad of the Maroon Berets”...

“I think it was Major Crow, the commander of I think, 22nd Detachment, who commanded a black unit in the Philippines during WW2. He’d read a book or something about the British wearing berets. ‘Hey, Sipantzi, why don’t you see what you can come up with,’ he said. So, myself and another guy went into town, and the only places that had berets were women’s shops. So, we got maroon berets,” **Vahan Sipantzi** explained.

Alas, the maroon beret was too bright in the field!

“So, that’s when we decided, ‘Well, OK, even though Marines — the green beret belongs to the Seaborne Commandos — we’ll go ahead



SF Originals' historical memorabilia. Aerial photo of the Kaserne, front. Various training photos in frame. (Courtesy Alex Quade)



SF Original Henry Bertrand's Green Beret, issued to him in Bad Tölz. The inside was embroidered with a dragon, as it was tradition to have one's name, unit, and design of choice embroidered on the inside of the beret. (Courtesy Alex Quade)

and wear green instead,” **Vahan Sipantzi** stated. “Like **Clyde** said, the attitude at that time was — we could care less what the 82nd or anybody else cared about, because we knew they didn’t like us anyway, we were a bunch of snake eaters.”

But the green beret was still against regulation...

“There was a photograph taken of four guys (wearing green berets). My Team Sergeant was there in that photograph, and everybody got chewed out about that. COL Bank was still there — the thing was illegal,” **Richard Simonian** remembered.

Just think...

Today’s Special Forces could’ve been known as “*The Maroon Berets*.”

So, what did the brass think of these entertaining Rockstars of the Regiment?...

“Very educational for me to see folks I’ve heard about. Most of those events I’d never heard about — think some kept under wraps for a while, which is probably good,” **DCG 1st SF Command and former 10SFG CDR, BG Gil Ferguson** said. “Being able to see the folks that really started it all... tremendous honor for me to be in The Formation in any way. But to be part of the 10th Special Forces Group and the lineage and the history — double honor,” **BG Ferguson** added.

USASOC CG LTG Jon Braga called them true pioneers of a concept that’s endured to this day...

“You have to understand that once you put that green beret on, that you actually wear it for life, whether you’re in service or out of service.”

Original Henry Bertrand

“We’ve only taken up the charge of the legacy that these four men and others started. Much has changed — but much is still the same,” **LTG Braga** said.

“As you’re trying to preserve your history over time, you want to always reflect back on your legacy,” **Conference Organizer, COL (ret) Chris Sorenson** told me. “Return to your roots, never forget from whence you came. Never forget from whence you came.”



Left to right, SF Original Henry Bertrand and his wife Linda talk with Alex Quade about life lessons. (Courtesy Zeke Lloyd)

They shared “the gut stuff” — life-lessons and take-aways for the next generation of SF...

Just like rockstars, the Originals signed autographs for their fans after the show — in this case, SF memorabilia for convention attendees. As they did, I asked them about “the gut stuff” — some of their life-lessons and take-aways for the next generation of SF.

“Well, what I learned in Special Forces, and the people that I met, helped me to do the things that I do in business. And it has made me very, very successful. And all credit goes to the Special Forces organization,” **Original Richard Simonian** said, as he sat next to COL Aaron Bank’s jump helmet, which had Bank’s signature inside.

“I learned never to give up. Fight and keep fighting until you die. Yeah,” he added.

“Thank you, Richard,” I said, turning to talk with his fellow Originals. (As I did, he told the photographer, “She will never give up — this lady.” Coming from him, I take that as a compliment.)

Original Henry Bertrand sat next to some of his black-and-white photos and his green beret, which had a dragon embroidered on the inside.

“When I came in as SF, I was a 19-year-old kid. I thought I knew everything. I didn’t know anything. SF taught me so many things: how to be a good soldier, how to be a good person, how to relate to my brothers in the service. To me, it was an ongoing experience my whole life.

You have to understand that once you put that green beret on, that you actually wear it for life, whether you’re in service or out of service,” **Henry Bertrand** said.

And — the importance of family...

Henry Bertrand keyed in on family...

“You have to remember, family for the SF soldier is very difficult, because you’re deployed, probably 8 or 9 months out of the year. And that has destroyed many families. I was married twice, before *this* beautiful lady showed up...” **Henry** looked at his wife, **Ms. Linda**.

So, I turned to her.

“He made the comment to me one day when I asked why he got a divorce. He said, ‘You have to realize my wives didn’t know where I was going when I left for work, whether I would be home, when I would come home. They had no knowledge of what I was doing when I came home, or where I had been. *They were in the dark all the time. How can you keep a marriage together when you walk out the door, and they don’t know if you’re ever coming back?*’ That was just something that hit me that was important,” **Ms. Linda Bertrand** shared.

“What’s your advice for this generation, and the next of SF spouses?” I asked her.

“You just have to keep in touch. Nowadays, you have a better way of keeping in touch. But you have to be strong, I think, as a wife — to know that man isn’t doing who-knows-what... there are things that aren’t important (for you) to know. (What you need to know is) that the thing he’s doing is very important to our country. And, you have to be very emotionally attached to your country, and believe in the military also,” **Ms. Linda** explained.

“Thank you, Ms. Linda,” I hugged her, “Your thoughts will help other spouses.”

Original Clyde Sincere also shared with me about family, and what Green Berets should consider...

“I have four sons. Three of them served in the military. And one was born here (Colorado Springs), before I retired. So he didn’t grow up in the military and he’s a businessmen today. But my 3rd son graduated from the Air Force Academy, and he was a fighter pilot for eight years and did his obligation,” **Clyde** began, as he sat next to various historical documents.

“When he got out, *I actually cried. I was so hurt that he had left the service* — because of my four sons I thought he was the smartest. So I approached him — and *he, with icicles in his eyes, he pointed at me and said, ‘You were never home!’*” **Clyde Sincere** admitted, looking sad.

His son became a stay-at-home Dad — homeschooling his children from grade school, until they went to college.

“So, when you come in SF, you have to be able to be ready for some away time from your family. And that could hurt, and I lived it. But yeah, that’s the downside,” **Clyde** said. “But I had such a great time. I had such great officers and NCOs.”

Speaking of the importance of family...

Good thing I’d caught up with **Original Vahan Sipantzi** earlier, and had him sign those posters.

Because, while I’d been following up with his three buddies, he’d snuck off down the road to nearby Ft. Carson, “Home of The Originals.” (*His wife, Ms. Zoe kindly shared the photos shown below.*)

There, **COL (ret) and Chaplain Vahan Sipantzi** pinned Captain’s bars on — and administered the Oath of Office to — his grandson, Nathan.

CPT Nathan Sipantzi’s father, Terri Sipantzi — was an A-team leader in the 10th Special Forces Group. The legacy of service — and the legacy of family — continues. ❖



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

War reporter and documentary filmmaker Alex Quade started her career at the White House during the Persian Gulf War. She’s worked in television covering global conflicts and hostile environments for CNN, FOX, CBS, HLN, APTN and CNNI out of Frankfurt and Berlin, Germany, New York and Atlanta (Alex Quade’s filmography is available at https://m.imdb.com/name/nm6102772/fullcredits?ref_=m_nmfm_1). She’s produced videos and reports for The New York Times; front page stories for The Washington Times, Military Times, and Small Wars Journal; and magazine cover features for National Guard, Communicator, and Dangerous Assignments. She’s the recipient of more than two dozen journalism awards. Among them: two national Edward R. Murrow Awards, the national Defense Media Award for her career covering special operations, an International Aerospace Media Award, group Emmy, Peabody and Columbia du-Pont Awards, and the Congressional Medal of Honor Society’s Excellence in Journalism Award “for her courageous reporting and honest news coverage.” For more info or to contact Alex: <http://alexquade.com/>

Reporter Alex Quade extends gratitude to everyone she quoted, and requested photos from. Special thanks: Zeke Lloyd, SSG Travis Fontaine, 10SFG PAO, COL Vahan & Ms. Zoe Sapantzi.



SF Original COL (r) Vahan Sipantzi administers Oath of Office to his grandson Nathan Sipantzi. (Courtesy Zoe Sipantzi)



SF Original COL (r) Vahan Sipantzi pins CPT bars on his grandson, 1LT Nathan Sipantzi. (Courtesy Zoe Sipantzi)

SHARING THE STORIES OF THE ORIGINALS

By Alex Quade

War Reporter & Honorary SFA Natl. Lifetime Member

THANK YOU — **Rylander Award Winner, The Hon. Noel Koch, former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense** — and various Distinguished Members of the Regiment — **MG Eldon Bargewell (RIP), former SFA & SOA Dir. Cliff Newman, OSS legend COL Sully de Fontaine (RIP), SF Originals MAJ Clyde Sincere, COL Vahan Sapantzi, as well as MOH COL Roger Donlon.** These gentlemen sent leads over the years on surviving Originals — and strongly encouraged me to do my “reporter thing” and track them down.

It’s been a privilege — and delightful challenge.

For instance, Original Arlen Sciallo worried about paperwork he signed in 1952...

“The whole thing was so clandestine — I don’t know how much of this I can reveal under perjury of law, Miss Alex,” he fretted.

“Oh, my goodness,” I replied, assuring him multiple times — that nearly 70-years had passed, and there was so much open-source material — he would not be violating his sworn oath.

“I’ve got it right here, Miss Alex — it’s an affidavit, State of North Carolina, County of Cumberland... that one Sciallo, Arlen G., Corporal, blah, blah, blah,” Arlen read to me the paper he signed.

“...Hereafter being warned of his rights under the Uniformed Code of Military Justice, Article 31, 5th Amendment of the Constitution of the United States... I have been informed that all discussions either public or private... That such disclosures are subject to lead to penalties within the meaning of the Espionage Laws of the United States as defined in Army Regulations 380-10. Furthermore, I will not reveal any information concerning the 10th or 77th Special Forces... that all of the above applies to me after discharge from the US Army,” Arlen stated.

I assured him again — he would not be arrested for sharing a little of his initial SF experiences in 1952, training at Fort Bragg.

“Well, you know what seemed to be, you could go into any bar in Fayetteville, and the cocktail waitresses, I guess we drank a lot of beer — anyway, the girls, the waitresses, they pretty much knew what was going on in Special Forces. So, whether guys were drinking and saying things they shouldn’t and what have you, I don’t know,” **Original Arlen Sciallo** admitted.

Interviews with some Originals included hand-written, snail-mail letters back and forth — different languages with others.

Some Lodge Act Soldiers occasionally fell into native tongues as they reminisced. I found, that if I started speaking German — luckily, *ich spreche ein bisschen Deutsch* — we’d get back on the same page.

For instance, **Original Walter Smith** from Poland, told me in German, as “Displaced Persons” they were given a choice...

“We could’ve gone to Airborne units like 82nd,” Smith said. “But I knew the ropes! Special Forces, and be on my way.”

“MSG Donnelly named me ‘Mickey Murphy’ because he couldn’t pronounce my Polish name,” he shared. His real name — *Wladyslaw Naumowicz* — was listed as “Walter Smith” in most records, but he goes by “Mickey”.

Mickey went to Camp Hale, CO, for mountain training... and also learned how to drive a locomotive during other training in NC. His teammates included **Originals Clyde Sincere** and **Tommy Tomlin**.

He laughed, recalling putting condoms filled with water in the beds of drunken teammates in the barracks. “Boy, they were mad when they woke up all wet!”

Many Originals sent their photos and documents (*some you can see here, in the Sentinel). Others sent lovely handwritten letters talking about their former SF Brothers — such as Original Ervin Harpole, aka “Dutch,” who talked about his friend “Frenchy,” Henryk Szarek:



SF Original Arlen Sciallo shared his photos with Alex Quade. At far left, Arlen stands next to the Special Warfare Memorial Statue at the USASOC Memorial Plaza. At right, Arlen as a young Green Beret. Below a stone in the Plaza honors the 10th SFG Originals. (Courtesy Alex Quade)



SF Original Ervin 'Dutch' Harpole sent Alex Quade photos and letters. Above left, the photo contains the notation: "French Marshal: ALPHONSE, JUIN Limousine (German Chauffeur). At right, Harpole in the spring of 1954. (Courtesy Alex Quade)

ME US ALGX: Spring 1954
Bas Yoly



SF Original Ervin 'Dutch' Harpole sent Alex Quade these photos of his friend SF Original Henryk 'Frenchy' Szarek, along with a note. (Courtesy Ervin Harpole)



SF Original Joe Brock, at right, at the 2018 Special Operations Association Reunion, after interview with Alex Quade, at left, in 2018. (Courtesy Alex Quade)

All the Originals I spoke with said, while they didn't know what they were in for, their first SF experiences made a lasting impression...

"They didn't do stupid things like fold their underwear into squares, all measured, and stuff like that! They was (sic) a lot different than the 82nd. I thought the 82nd was stupid. The senior NCOs in SF — I guess they made it somewhat different — because they were in the same barracks with you," **Original Joe Brock** said.

His experience on the ship to Germany also made an impression...

"Ms. Alex: As you know there were some very interesting members in the old SF far more experienced than members like myself. Here is one: Henryk Szarek. I think he arrived in Tölz in 54. He served in the Polish Army. Captured by Germany. Put to work as a barber for the Wehrmacht. Escaped and joined the French Foreign Legion. Served with the Legion in Indochina— now Vietnam. One of the few surviving members of Task Force 100. I believe he joined SF in Bragg in 53."

Original Tommy Tomlin explained more about "Displaced Persons"...

"In our early days and training, we had what we called 'Field Craft Classes,' that were normally conducted by our Lodge Bill personnel, our 'DPs'. We called them 'DPs' back then — because we were young and vulgar and nasty and ignorant. The ones that we had were recruited early, my goodness — some of them were quite up in years, in their 40's, 45, something like that," **Tommy** told me.

Many Originals wanted to discuss SF lineage...

"The architect of it, putting it all together was *not* COL Bank, he was one of the first ones that was called as a commander of the 10th Group — and he assisted and helped General McClure and Colonel Volckmann quite a bit. *To me*, the original architect of Special Forces would be **Major General Robert A. McClure**. A lesser voice, but did as much or more work, probably, was **COL Russell W. Volckmann**. In the Philippines, he refused to surrender and escaped capture to command US Army forces in the Philippines, in Luzon," **Original Tommy Tomlin** told me.

Each Original mentioned COL Aaron Bank...

"COL Bank was very good, and if you screwed up — like I did on several occasions — you had to face him to find out if you was (sic) going to be court martialed or not. You go before the Colonel, and he'd mildly chew you out for whatever you had done. We were always guilty, if we got up in front of him. We had done whatever. Anyway, if you could recite the *Special Forces Creed*, he'd turn us loose. 'Don't do it again, and don't come back,' he'd say," **Original Tommy Tomlin** shared.

"One time I went before him a second or third time, and he said, 'SGT Tomlin, you've been here before.' I said, 'Well, yeah, but...' He said, 'How can I correct that?' I said, 'Just send me to the field,'" he added.

"There was a lot of gambling, and I did not gamble, but one of the NCO's, he would borrow money from me, and then if he won, he would pay be back more than I loaned him. By the time I got to Germany, I guess I made about \$50-\$60," **Original Joe Brock** added, which was a lot of money back then.

SF was a good fit for Originals such as Ralph King, who yearned to do something new in the Army...

"The Colonel in my unit at Ft. Benning said, 'Why don't you find out what (the new SF organization) is all about.' And I said, 'Well I don't really care what it is all about, I just want to try it, since something different than I'd been learning down here (Ft. Benning) where you have the same old, every year. Same old squad training, same old platoon training, the same old company training — *I was ready to try anything new, and not the same old,*'" **Original Ralph King** shared with me.

In SF, rather than "same old," Ralph went to Smoke Jumper School in Montana in 1952. His first impression of the Kaserne in Germany was not "same old," either.

"It was barracks — all walled in. It used to be an SS Kaserne. And it had an underground tunnel that they (the SS) could use to go to the Bahnhof (the railroad station in town)... without being seen by the public. They had an underground there, with cell blocks — you might call them — to lock someone up," **Original Ralph King** explained.

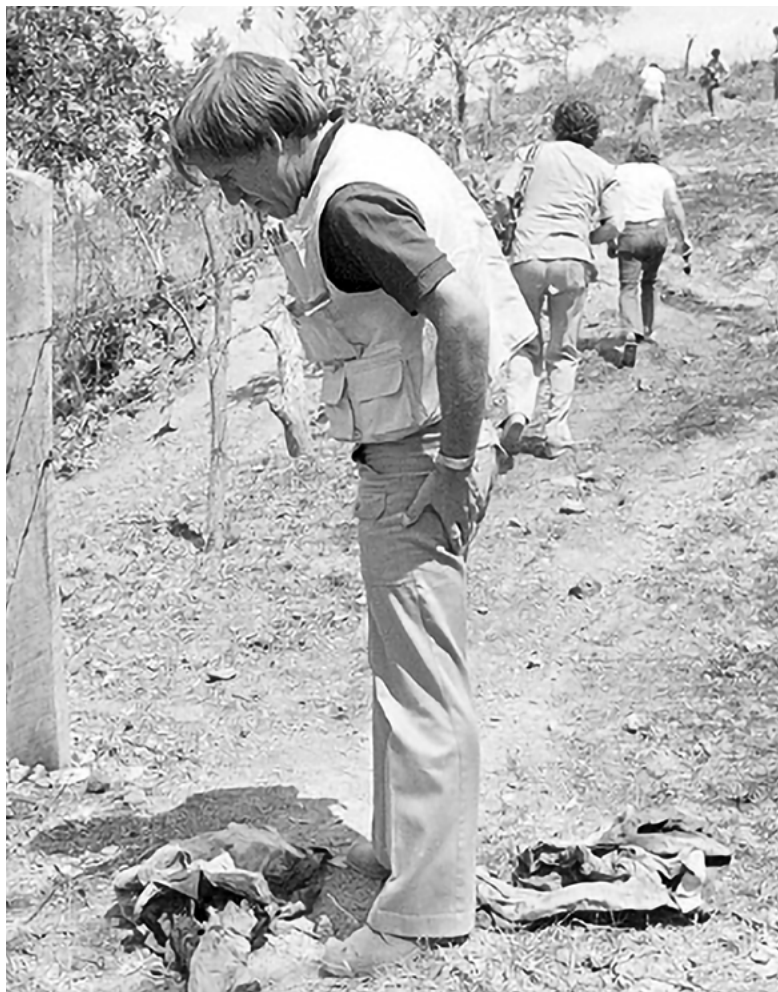
Each Original shared his amazing experiences, thoughts for this generation of SF, and advice for the next generation of SF. It was a privilege to speak with them, in what was for some, their final interview.

Thank You — Arlen Sciallo, Tommy Tomlin, Wladyslaw Naumowicz — aka Walter "Mickey" or "Murphy" Smith, Joe Brock, Ervin "Dutch" Harpole, Henryk "Frenchy" Szarek, Ralph King, Ben Linschoten, Larry McMillin, Othar Shalikashvili, Paul Vukovich, Chuck Darnell, George "Speedy" Gaspard, Reuben Mooradian, Teodor "Ted" Padalinski, Chuck "Slats" Petry, Henry Bertrand, Clyde Sincere, Vahan Sipantzi, Richard Simonian, and others.

I look forward to sharing more of our SF Originals' stories and lessons, ahead. ❖

“In Cold Blood”

— an alleged Salvadoran war criminal flouts his U.S. citizenship to avoid Justice



Reyes Mena was spotlighted in the Dutch the 2018 documentary "In Cold Blood" for his role in planning and ordering the 1982 ambush assassination of a Dutch film crew, an assassination carefully coordinated with Salvadoran intelligence officials in San Salvador. (Photo courtesy Greg Walker)



At left, from "In Cold Blood," ZEMBLA's documentary, is available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qY5tQ593g-k>

By Greg Walker (ret)
USA Special Forces

Prologue

“When we think of Nazi war crimes, we — rightly — stress such atrocities should never be allowed to occur again (although the Balkans, Rwanda, and Darfur we have, largely, failed). But we should also guard against those who have committed terrible crimes against humanity being allowed to escape unpunished, simply because it is hoped they might furnish some advantages to our cause.” — Damien Lewis, “The Nazi Hunters – The Ultra Secret SAS Unit and Hunt for Hitler’s War Criminals,” Quercus Editions, LTD 2015

Fat and sassy

Why is retired Salvadoran army officer, Colonel Mario Reyes Mena, living comfortably in Virginia even as Dutch prosecutors continue to petition the U.S. Government to extradite him to the Netherlands for trial at the Hague? And Salvadoran prosecutors have likewise requested Joe Biden’s administration to remand him to their country for trial there but with little headway to date.



Reyes Mena, posted to the Salvadoran embassy in Washington, DC, in 1986 as a military attaché, retired while in the United States and in 1987 was granted U.S. citizenship. This despite the U.S. Government knowing of his direct involvement in what is an international war crime. He was provided a comfortable, well-paying job with Fannie Mae in the DC area and except for a few minor traffic citations he has led, until 2018, a quiet life hidden away from Dutch investigators.

Until a Dutch film crew and journalist found him on his daughter’s Facebook page.

The McKay Memorandum

In a declassified 1982 U.S. State Department memorandum, then-USMC major John McKay, assigned to the U.S. embassy in San Salvador, rendered his professional findings after visiting both the ambush site and then the 4th Brigade headquarters.

McKay had received a phone call from a Salvadoran friend at the Salvadoran air force base near the capitol. "He told me something very bad had happened and that I might want to go out to the 4th Brigade." Upon hearing what was being reported the Marine officer, a decorated and wounded veteran of the war in Vietnam, asked for a Salvadoran helicopter to fly him to the location. By 0530 hours he was on the ground.

"I saw the bodies," McKay recalls. He then asked to speak with the 4th Brigade commander, Colonel Reyes Mena. I was told he was not available. I then asked to speak with Sergeant Bruce Hazelwood." Hazelwood, who had earlier been a trainer for the Atlacatl Battalion, likewise declined to meet with McKay. The Special Forces mobile training team was charged with training the second Salvadoran Immediate Reaction Battalion, the ATONAL. It was a platoon from this unit that Reyes Mena had used as his ambush team.

In contrast, within hours of viewing the bodies of the Dutch, brought to the 4th Brigade by error (they were to have been stripped naked and thrown into the Lempa River, according to the original plan), U.S. Special Forces soldier Sergeant Angel Chamizo called the U.S. MilGrp in San Salvador with his observations. His doing so was in concert with U.S. reporting policy for all American advisers, trainers, and MilGrp staff in El Salvador.

The Chamizo Statement

As the investigation into the murders moved forward a formal statement from Sergeant Chamizo was submitted for the record. The below is the English translation of that statement as originally submitted to the Dutch investigator.

"From Feb to May 82, I was one of the 23 US Mil advisors that was training the 600-man ATONAL-battalion in El Paraiso. I did not have any business with the 4th Inf Bat and hardly had any contact with them (sometimes in the mess).

"On March the 17th, I sat with some colleagues on the sidewalk of our barrack, when some Salvadoran officers excitedly called to us: 'finally success, a complete guerilla-patrol has been taken down by ambush, we must celebrate. The bodies lie in a truck outside of the camp. Have a look.' Out of curiosity, I went to see their success. It was pitch black outside. There was a guard at the truck. With a flashlight, I shone light on the naked (standard procedures) bodies. I remember to have seen 6 bodies, of which 4 physically, by facial character and skin color, did not resemble Salvadorans, the other 2 did.

"Their lethal wounds were by my strong impression (and I know what I'm talking about) not caused by 'close range shooting.'

"Back in the camp, I reported to a present officer of the comandancia that I doubted that all of them were 'muchachos.' Subsequently, they showed me the belongings that the patrol had taken with them. They had left the clothing at the scene (Duarte, then junta member, would



Chamizo began his military career as a helicopter door gunner in Vietnam. He concluded that career as a Special Forces medic and as one of the most highly thought of and respected "Green Berets" to have served in El Salvador. He would go on to work for the DEA in Latin America.

have found them, days after when he visited the place of the shooting with about 40 journalists. JWB) They showed me backpacks, photo camera's, a TV-camera, film rolls, medicine (i.e., boxes with anti-malaria pills, bought in Amsterdam, according to the label), TV-batteries and ID-cards (I did not read the names) and a M-16 rifle. I do not remember other items right now. I got convinced that at least a few journalists got killed. The Amsterdam-label let me believe that they were Dutch.

"Meanwhile, camp commander Col. Reyes Mena appeared, accompanied by a few officers.

"He took the ID-cards (turned out to be press cards afterwards, passports were left in hotel in San Salvador. JWB) with him and disappeared into his office, saying something like we will look into it.

"Subsequently, I went to my barrack, because I had an early shift next day and a heavy training program. I vaguely told my colleagues some things and mentioned the word stupidity.

"Later on (the day after the training) I heard that the 4 Caucasians were brought to sickbay after I took action (turned out to be 5, JWB).

"Early in the morning, the bodies were picked up by helicopter, to be taken in boxes to the capital. The dead had received military honors and were — they told me — treated with dignity.

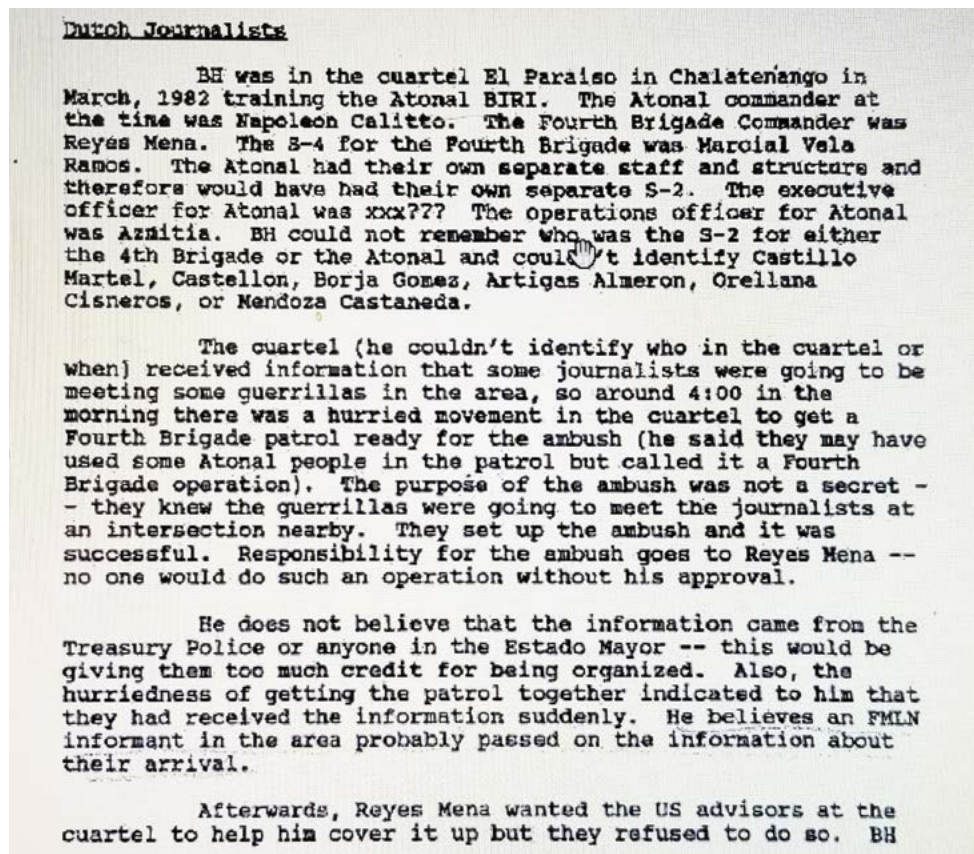
"In the late afternoon, I accidentally walked into the instruction room where the sergeant of the patrol and an officer gave a press conference. The blackboard still showed the ambush position of the patrol.

"Meanwhile at the camp, many realized — especially the officers- that they had made a mistake. The sergeant involved and some of his men were mocked already allegedly. I also heard that the comandancia had given them hell.

"I have also reported to my superiors, both from my own initiative, but also in reaction to questions asked."

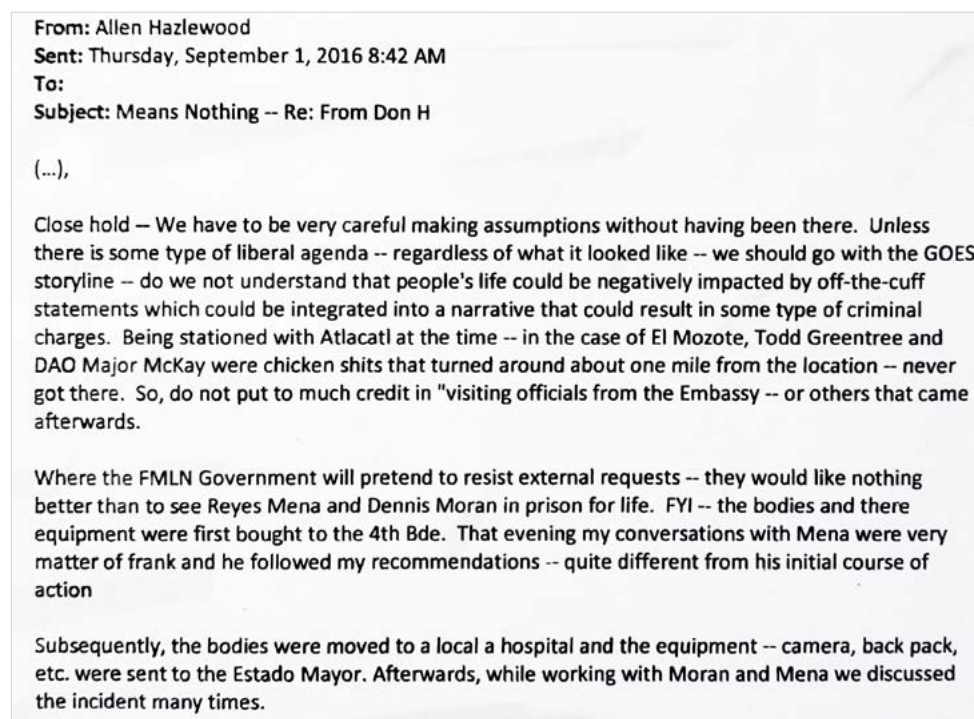
Conflicting accounts given by former DELTA operator Bruce Hazelwood

Also participating as a trainer for the ATONAL was Bruce Hazelwood. In 1992, Hazelwood agreed to be interviewed by UN investigators about the killing of the Dutch.



He would later deny ever having been interviewed as he, today, is a paid security consultant for the current Salvadoran president and self-reported to be living fulltime in El Salvador/Guatemala.

Even so, in an email sent to me in 2016, despite knowing the Dutch had contacted me through the ICE war crimes unit in Washington, DC, he offered this.



Now retired and living fulltime in El Salvador/Guatemala and working on behalf of El Salvador's self-identified "coolest dictator in the world," Nayib Bukeke, Hazelwood has been interviewed by Dutch investigators at least once. Although the former DELTA commando claims to have been represented by U.S. DOJ lawyers during his interview, inquiries and a FOIA submitted to the U.S. DOJ office in south Florida as well as the U.S. Special Operations Command in Tampa have either not been replied to or have (U.S. SOCOM) been discounted.

Why is alleged war criminal, Colonel Mario Reyes Mena, still in the United States?



The McKay Report

Major McKay's report was submitted to the U.S. State Department and is on record. Its finding is clear. The Dutch film team had been deliberately targeted by the ATONAL platoon under direct orders from Colonel Mario Reyes Mena.

The platoon was selected because most of the soldiers under the command of Reyes Mena at 4th Brigade were poorly trained, would not patrol more than 5 kilometers from the base, and were afraid to remain outside the base after dark. The original Salvadoran officer, a lieutenant, who had received the kill order as well as how the bodies were to have been disposed, was called away without Reyes Mena's knowledge. He was replaced by another lieutenant who only knew he'd be conducting an ambush and any bodies were to be brought to the base. His doing the latter is the only reason what occurred became known and promptly investigated by the U.S. Embassy/MilGrp.

2b OF THE ATONAL BATTALION WHILE ATTEMPTING TO ENTER GUERRILLA TERRITORY SURREPTITIOUSLY IN THE COMPANY OF GUIDES IDENTIFIED BY SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES AS GUERRILLAS. CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE RAISES POSSIBILITY THAT THE JOURNALISTS AND GUERRILLAS DIED IN AN AMBUSH RATHER THAN A CHANCE ENCOUNTER.

5. IN THE EARLY MORNING OF MARCH 18 INVESTIGATING OFFICERS VISITED THE ESTADO MAYOR TO ARRANGE THEIR TRIP TO CONFIDENTIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAK SA 02340 01 OF 02 190833Z

BATTALION HEADQUARTERS AT EL PARAISO. THE OFFICERS WERE INVITED TO MEET WITH DEFENSE MINISTER GARCIA, VICE PRESIDENT GUTIERREZ AND CHIEF OF STAFF FLORES LIMA IN GENERAL GARCIA'S OFFICE AT THE ADJACENT MINISTRY OF DEFENSE. AS THEY ENTERED, COL. FRANCISCO MORAN, DIRECTOR OF THE TREASURY POLICE, WAS JUST LEAVING. THE VICE PRESIDENT AND THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE ASSURED THE OFFICERS OF COMPLETE COOPERATION, EXPRESSING THEIR DESIRE TO CONDUCT A THOROUGH AND OPEN INVESTIGATION. GEN GUTIERREZ ASSIGNED MAJOR AVILA, HIS CASA PRESIDENCIAL

DECLASSIFI

3 ALSO NOTED THAT SUCH A PATROL WOULD RARELY BE OUT AFTER DARK.

18. THE 25-MAN PATROL INVOLVED IN THE PREVIOUS NIGHT'S INCIDENT FORMED UP TO BE INTERVIEWED. INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH NINE OF THE 25 SOLDIERS INVOLVED IN THE INCIDENT, INCLUDING SGT. MARCO CANIZALES ESPINOSA WHO WAS IN COMMAND, YIELDED A NEARLY UNIFORM VERSION OF THE PATROL AND FIREFIGHT. EVENTS AS DESCRIBED YARTEC WITH INFORMATION GATHERED AT THE SITE OF THE ENCOUNTER.

4 PAGE 01 SAK SA 02340 02 OF 02 190850Z
ACTION ARA-16

INFO OCT-00 ADS-00 INR-10 EUR-12 SS-10 CIAE-00 OODE-00
H-01 10-15 NSCE-00 NSAE-00 SSO-00 SY-05 HA-06
L-03 PH-09 PA-01 MCT-02 INRE-00 ANAE-00 ICAE-00
SYE-00 SP-02 SPRS-02 /094 W
-----063570 190915Z /10
O 190858Z MAR 82 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8590
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAK SALVADOR 2340
ALERT ARA 00B

11. ACCORDING TO COL. REYES MENA AND THE SERGEANT, INFORMATION "WAS RECEIVED" THAT GUERRILLAS WERE USING AN ABANDONED SETTLEMENT CALLED TASAJERA AS A RE-SUPPLY POINT FOR NEARBY ENCAMPMENTS. TASAJERA IS LOCATED IN GUERRILLA TERRITORY APPROXIMATELY SIX KM. FROM EL PARAISO HEADQUARTERS. THE FIREFIGHT TOOK PLACE APPROXIMATELY 300 METERS OFF THE DIRT ROAD LEADING TO TASAJERA. THE SERGEANT AND 24 MEN LEFT FOR TASAJERA AT 4:30 IN THE MORNING WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO PATROL THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY AND REMAIN THERE UNTIL DARK. ACCORDING TO THE SOLDIERS, AS THEY WERE PROCEEDING FROM TASAJERA TO THE ROAD WHERE A TRUCK FROM EL PARAISO WAS TO PICK THEM UP AT APPROXIMATELY 6:00 P.M., THEY RECEIVED FIRE FROM TWO HILLS APPROXIMATELY 400 METERS AWAY IN THEIR DIRECTION OF TRAVEL. THE SOLDIERS CONSISTENTLY REPORTED THAT AT THAT TIME THEY TOOK UP POSITIONS ON TWO ADJACENT HILLS TO RETURN FIRE, THAT THEY FIRED FROM 400 METERS AND DID NOT ADVANCE, THAT THEY HEARD FIRE FROM A FAL, AN M-16 AND A CARBINE, AND THAT GUERRILLAS LAUNCHED TWO G-3 GRENADES AT THEM. THEY SAID THAT THE FIREFIGHT LASTED BETWEEN ONE-HALF HOUR AND ONE HOUR, AND ESTIMATED THERE WERE BETWEEN 20 AND 35 GUERRILLAS. ACCORDING TO THE

CONFIDENTIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAK SA 02340 02 OF 02 190850Z

SOLDIERS, THE GUERRILLAS WITHDREW, AND AS THE SOLDIERS ADVANCED THEY FOUND THE DEAD AND RECOVERED

DECLASSIFI

5 THE WEAPONS, SEVERAL SOLDIERS REPORTING SEEING A GREEN MICROBUS, WHICH THEY LATER PRESUMED HAD JUST LEFT THE JOURNALISTS OFF, SPEED DOWN THE DIRT ROAD TOWARD CHALATENANGO AS SOON AS THE FIREFIGHT ERUPTED.

12. AN ON-SITE INVESTIGATION OF THE FIREFIGHT IN THE COMPANY OF THE COMMANDING SERGEANT REVEALED THAT SOLDIERS WERE INDEED DEPLOYED ON TWO HILLSIDES AT A MAXIMUM OF 250 METERS DISTANCE FROM WHERE THE JOURNALISTS AND GUERRILLAS DIED. NUMEROUS M-16 AND M-60 SHELL CASINGS INDICATE THAT SOLDIERS ADVANCED TOWARD THE LOCATION OF THE GUERRILLAS AND JOURNALISTS. ALTHOUGH HE MAINTAINS HE DID NOT KNOW THEY WERE OTHER THAN GUERRILLAS AT THE TIME, THE SERGEANT HIMSELF ALLEGED HE KILLED TWO OF THE JOURNALISTS AT A RANGE OF APPROXIMATELY 25 METERS, APPARENTLY AS THEY TRIED TO ESCAPE UP A SMALL RIVERBED. HE ALSO CLAIMED HE SAW THREE GUERRILLAS PASS THROUGH THEIR AREA AT 5:30 P.M., AT LEAST ONE HALF HOUR BEFORE THE FIREFIGHT, SAYING HE LET THEM GO BECAUSE THEY WERE PART OF AN ADVANCE GROUP. HE WAS UNABLE TO PINPOINT THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE RETURNING PATROL WHEN THEY ALLEGEDLY FIRST RECEIVED FIRE.

13. INVESTIGATING OFFICERS COULD FIND NO EVIDENCE OF EXTENSIVE GUERRILLA FIRE. APPROXIMATELY 30 M-16 SHELLS AND TWO M-1 CARBINE SHELLS WERE SCATTERED IN THE VICINITY FROM WHERE THE GUERRILLAS WERE ALLEGEDLY FIRING. THEY COULD FIND NO EVIDENCE THAT GUERRILLAS HAD FIRED G-3 GRENADES OR FALS. ON AN ADJACENT HILLSIDE FROM WHICH SOLDIERS ALLEGED THEY

CONFIDENTIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAK SA 02340 02 OF 02 190850Z

TOOK HEAVY FIRE, OFFICERS FOUND ONLY ONE UNFIRED M-16 ROUND. THE SOLDIERS INSISTED THAT THE GUERRILLAS HAD PICKED UP ALL OF THEIR SHELLS BEFORE LEAVING, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS ALMOST DARK.
HINTOR

1 Department of State TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL

AM: DB20147-0247

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAK SA 02340 01 OF 02 190833Z
CIIDM ARA-16

INFO OCT-00 ADS-00 INR-10 EUR-12 SS-10 CIAE-00 OODE-00
H-01 10-15 NSCE-00 NSAE-00 SSO-00 SY-05 HA-06
L-03 PH-09 PA-01 MCT-02 INRE-00 ANAE-00 ICAE-00
SYE-00 SP-02 SPRS-02 /094 W
-----063133 190841Z /10
O 190858Z MAR 82 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8597
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE NIACT IMMEDIATE 090

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAK SALVADOR 2340
ALERT ARA 00B

E. O. 12065: EDS 3/10/88
TAGS: PIXS, PINT, ES
SUBJ: (C) DEATHS OF FOUR DUTCH JOURNALISTS

1. (C-ENTIRE TEXT.)

2. ON MARCH 18 POLOFF AND ASS'T DATT INVESTIGATED THE DEATHS OF FOUR DUTCH JOURNALISTS KILLED ALONG WITH FOUR GUERRILLA SUSPECTS IN A FIREFIGHT WITH SOLDIERS OF THE ATONAL BATTALION, NEAR EL PARAISO, CHALATENANGO, THE EVENING OF MARCH 17. THE INVESTIGATION INCLUDED: EXAMINATION OF THE BODIES OF THE FOUR JOURNALISTS AND THE FOUR GUERRILLA SUSPECTS, REVIEW OF CAMERA EQUIPMENT AND OTHER POSSESSIONS OF THE JOURNALISTS, REVIEW OF THREE WEAPONS ALLEGEDLY CAPTURED FOLLOWING THE FIREFIGHT, INTERVIEWS WITH OFFICERS OF THE ATONAL BATTALION AND SOLDIERS INVOLVED IN THE COMBAT, AND A VISIT TO THE SITE WHERE THE FIREFIGHT OCCURRED. THE MISSION HAD FULL COOPERATION FROM THE ARMED FORCES OF EL SALVADOR THROUGHOUT THE INVESTIGATION. RSO AND PAO INVESTIGATED

CONFIDENTIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAK SA 02340 01 OF 02 190833Z

JOURNALISTS' ACTIVITIES IN SAN SALVADOR. THE FOLLOWING REPORT

Department of State IS/PIC/ACR/El Salvador, Sp. Date 9/3/93
 Excluded under E.O. 13526 (a) in full; (b) in part;
 portions withheld classification is controlled by ()
 low autoclassification () privacy () sensitivity ()
 not relevant to El Salvador ()

2a CONFIDENTIAL

IS THE EMBASSY'S BEST EFFORT TO DETERMINE WHAT ACTUALLY OCCURRED.

3. THE FOUR DEAD JOURNALISTS ARE (1) JACOBUS ANDRIES KOSTER, (2) JAK CORNELIS KUIPEN, (3) HANS LOUWISJ TER LAAG, AND (4) JOHANNES JAN WILLENSSEN. ALL DUTCH CITIZENS ACCORDING TO THEIR PASSPORTS. THE HIGH COMMAND INFORMED THE DUTCH CONSUL OF THE DEATHS ON THE MORNING OF MARCH 18. AS BACKGROUND, IT SHOULD BE REPORTED THAT THE TREASURY POLICE HAD INTERVIEWED THE FOUR JOURNALISTS ON THE MORNING OF MARCH 11, 1982, AFTER SOLDIERS FOUND THE NAME OF ONE OF THEM ON A DEAD GUERRILLA. IT WAS GENERALLY KNOWN THAT THE FOUR WERE MAKING A 16MM FILM SYMPATHETIC TO THE GUERRILLAS, SIMILAR TO ONE THEY MADE IN 1980.

ACCORDING TO RSO AND PAO INFORMATION, THE FOUR JOURNALISTS LEFT THE SAN SALVADOR HOTEL ALAMEDA AT 3:45 P.M. ON MARCH 17, SAYING THEY WOULD RETURN ON MARCH 20 OR 21 AFTER A TRIP TO TEGUCIGALPA.

4. AS A RESULT OF THEIR INVESTIGATION, REPORTING OFFICERS CONCLUDED THAT THE JOURNALISTS DIED OF MULTIPLE GUNSHOT WOUNDS RECEIVED DURING AN ENCOUNTER WITH SOLDIERS

ICE War Crimes Unit Shackled by the CIA?

The Human Rights Violators and War Crimes Center (HRVWCC) is the only government entity focused completely on investigating global atrocities and the perpetrators of human rights violations and war crimes. Initiated by HSI in 2008, the HRVWCC leverages the knowledge and expertise of a select group of special agents, attorneys, intelligence analysts, criminal research specialists and historians who are charged with preventing the United States from becoming a haven for individuals who engage in the commission of war crimes, genocide, torture, and other forms of serious human rights abuses from conflicts around the globe. The HRVWCC also brings together other DHS components and federal partners, to include the FBI and the Department of Justice, who work collaboratively alongside HSI to pursue human rights violators and war crimes investigations and prosecutions. With bona fide successes supporting this crucial concept, former ICE Director John Morton established the HRVWCC as a permanent ICE entity in October 2009.

The HRVWCC is led by HSI and comprises the following agencies and components:

- ICE Office of the Principal Legal Advisor, Human Rights Violator Law Division
- ICE Enforcement Removal Operations
- DHS U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
- DHS U.S. Customs and Border Protection
- The FBI's International Human Rights Unit
- The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs
- The U.S. Department of Justice's Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section and Office of Immigration Litigation
- U.S. Department of Defense U.S. Army Criminal Investigations Division Terrorism and Criminal Investigations Unit (TCIU)

The question remains as to why the Biden Administration with its very public commitment to Human Rights and aiding our allies who are pursuing alleged war criminals living here illegally or legally, as is Mario Reyes Mena per his U.S. citizenship, has yet to remand the colonel to the Dutch for trial?

Especially given his heavily redacted official biography when he was his native country's military attaché in Washington, DC.

Two in jail, and one still in the United States courtesy of the CIA?

In July of this year charges were filed against those Salvadoran soldiers alleged to have carried out this atrocity. The charges were filed in El Salvador. Just last month the sitting president of El Salvador forced the retirement of over 200 Salvadoran judges, age 60 and over. One of these was the judge assigned to hear the evidence against the soldiers in El Salvador, to include Mario Reyes Mena. In contrast, the female judge who ordered the arrest of Colonel Dennis Moran and General Jose Garcia, appears very much to be overseeing this case with the tacit approval of Bukele.



One must ask what biographical information was redacted and for what reasons?

Colonel Dennis Moran and General Jose Garcia remain confined to a military compound despite their formal pleas to be released. For some time now there has been discussions of a civil suit being filed in the United States against Mario Reyes Mena, who is reported to have engaged an attorney in El Salvador in preparation for the possible criminal trial there along with GRAL Garcia and Colonel Moran. In theory, should such a suit be filed it could reveal how and why Reyes Mena entered the United States and was granted citizenship. This is much like the civil suit filed by the Goldman Family against O.J. Simpson which found him responsible for the deaths of his former wife and the Goldman's son.

"Doe, who is using a fictitious name because of his secretive role, is the focus of an unusual Supreme Court case involving a little-known CIA program that relocates foreign agents. His case, which will be argued Tuesday, will hinge on how the court interprets a century-old case involving a bumbling spy hired by Abraham Lincoln.

"The CIA says Doe has no right to sue because the very existence of a suit would jeopardize national security. Attorneys and CIA critics say Doe's case could have wide repercussions."

<https://www.tampabay.com/archive/2005/01/10/spy-vs-cia-it-s-a-shot-in-the-dark/>

A source retired from the CIA has shared that Mario Reyes Mena was indeed granted citizenship under PL 110, although she/he would not disclose what “services” the Salvadoran officer provided his CIA paymasters during the war that would qualify him for PL 110’s graciousness. Should this source be correct it would explain why, since Reyes Mena came up on ICE’s radar screen in 2013, its agents have been unable to make headway in extradition or deportation actions against the colonel.

Still, should a civil trial be held in the United States, with its lower bar evidence wise for resolution and judgment, the whole ugly truth about yet another alleged murderer who has managed to flaunt justice with the help of Biden’s Central Intelligence Agency.

Still, the Dutch Prosecutor’s Office continues to patiently urge the U.S. GOV to extradite the alleged mastermind of the fatal ambush to the Netherlands where he would then face trial at the Hague.

SAN SALVADOR, July 16 (Reuters) — “Human rights organizations on Friday filed a criminal complaint against 25 El Salvadoran soldiers and an officer, accusing them of the murder of four Dutch journalists during the 1980s civil war that ravaged the Central American nation.

“The criminal complaint was filed in the municipality of Dulce Nombre de Maria and accused Colonel Mario Adalberto Reyes Mena of leading an ambush when he commanded the Fourth Infantry Brigade that led to the deaths of the journalists, who worked for Dutch television company IKON.”

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/salvadoran-soldiers-charged-with-deaths-four-dutch-reporters-1982-2021-07-16>

An international outcry for Justice

Jul 14, 2020, at 4:53am Post by Arjan Hut on Jul 14, 2020, at 4:53am

“This is a column that I wrote for radio/tv station Omrop Fryslân on 7-14-2020. It is about the murder of four Dutch journalists in El Salvador in 1982. The accused murderer is Colonel Mario Reyes Mena, who has fled to the USA and currently lives in Virginia. One of the journalists was Koos Koster, who went to school in Leeuwarden. There’s a poem in the pavement next to the school, written by one of his former classmates and it mentions the rain of bullets in El Salvador. In 2018, Mena was located in the USA by other Dutch journalists. He is still living in freedom and has not yet been extradited.”

The original column can be read and heard here: Wurden Arjan Hut Omrop Fryslân (<https://www.omropfryslan.nl/fy/njjs/976256/kollum-wurden>)

This is a rough translation:

Words

“A colleague / poet calls the poetry tableaux of Leeuwarden ‘tombstones’. And they look like that too, they are heavy concrete slabs with text. They lie gray in the sidewalk. Especially the gloomy stone of Jean Pierre Rawie next to the cemetery on the *Spanjaardslaan* has the character of a tomb monument. It smells like death there too.



“Next to the Beyers Naudé gymnasium is also a tableau. On this is a poem by Koos Hagen, *De Gelukkige Klas* (The Happy Classroom). ‘We were alphas, making noise/filling school newspapers and classrooms,’ it begins. Hagen attended this school and recalls memories of his classmates *H.* and *K.*

“*H.* was ill and died in bed. About *K.* the poet writes: ‘as before in every free hour/he fell through bullets in El Salvador.’

“*K.* was Koos Koster, journalist and specialist on the Cold War. He wrote as a correspondent about East-West relations and how they led to fear and oppression. In ‘82 he was covering the war in El Salvador with three colleagues of Dutch television. There, the people fought against a US-backed military regime. According to the regime, the Dutch camera crew was producing communist propaganda because they were also talking to the insurgents. The four journalists were lured into an ambush and shot dead.

“The war would rage on for another ten years. A special United Nations Commission investigated the killings and discovered that Colonel Mario Reyes Mena was responsible for the organizing and carrying out of the ambush and execution of the four journalists. The Colonel escaped to the United States.



“Only in September 2018, journalists from the Dutch TV program *Zembla* managed to track down the killer. He lives in Virginia, not far from Washington. They film and ring the doorbell at his place. The old warrior is angry and accuses the Dutch — almost thirty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union — of being part of the great communist conspiracy with their questions.” <https://jfk.boards.net/thread/607/murder-journalists-colonel-mario-reyes>

“The first time it was reported that our friends were being butchered there was a cry of horror. Then a hundred were butchered. But when a thousand were butchered and there was no end to the butchery, a blanket of silence spread.

“When evildoing comes like falling rain, nobody calls out ‘stop!’

*“When crimes begin to pile up they become invisible. When sufferings become unendurable the cries are no longer heard. The cries, too, fall like rain in summer.” Bertolt Brecht, *Selected Poems* ❖*



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg Walker is an honorably retired “Green Beret” with wartime service in El Salvador and later Iraq as a combat adviser. He is the co-founder, along with Colonel (ret) John McMullen, of the Veterans of Special Operations – El Salvador, the organization that in 1996 was successful in its ten-year political effort to see the war in El Salvador officially declared a U.S. military campaign to include combat awards and decorations.

“Remembering the Fallen at Arlington” — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3uy8Ey23Is&t=10s>

Mr. Walker is also a retired Oregon law enforcement officer. Today he lives and writes from his home in Sisters, Oregon, along with his service pup, Tommy.



End of Mission — ODA 912 was SOCCET Commander Gary Harrell's PSD during the first few months of their deployment in Iraq. Author Greg Walker (front, right) linked up with the detachment as it prepared to depart Baghdad International Airport for Kuwait and Camp Doha. One member of 912 went on to serve as an OGA para-military involved in the successful capture of Saddam Hussein. Credit: Author collection

WARNING ORDER —

1. SITUATION: A-1/19 SFG will host a **Formal Dining Out and Reunion.** All former members are encouraged to attend.

2. MISSION: A-1/19 SFG (ABN) alumni are invited to attend a Formal Dining Out at the downtown Tacoma Marriott on March 4th, 2023 from 1700-2100. We are looking forward to seeing everyone again!

Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Weimer selected as 17th Sergeant Major of the Army

By U.S. Army Public Affairs

December 12, 2022 • https://www.army.mil/article/262671/command_sgt_maj_michael_weimer_selected_as_17th_sergeant_major_of_the_army

WASHINGTON — Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. James C. McConville announced today that Command Sgt. Maj. Michael R. Weimer will serve as the 17th Sergeant Major of the Army. The announcement came during closing comments at the Army Profession Forum held in Alexandria, Virginia, Dec. 7-8, 2022.

“We have the greatest Army in the world because we have the greatest NCO Corps,” Gen. McConville said. “I’m proud to select Command Sgt. Maj. Weimer to lead that Corps.”

“When I joined the Army in 1993, I never would have thought I’d make it this far,” Weimer said. “It’s an absolute honor to be selected as the next Sergeant Major of the Army, and I’m looking forward to continuing to serve our incredible Soldiers and their families.”

Weimer will assume responsibility from Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston in August 2023. Until then, Weimer will continue to serve as the senior enlisted leader of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

“Right now, I want to make sure that the Soldiers and families at USASOC have what they need to take care of their people and sustain readiness,” he said. “I’m not looking ahead, just focusing on the task at hand.”



Command Sgt Maj Micheal R Weimer, the current senior enlisted leader of the United States Special Operation Command, selected to be the 17th Sergeant Major of the Army. (U.S. Army)

Grinston has previously said he plans on retiring at the end of the year.

Weimer joined the Army in 1993 and successfully completed Special Forces Assessment and Selection in 1994. He completed the Special Forces Weapons Sergeant Course and earned his Green Beret in 1996 and has served more than 20 years within Army Special Operations.

Weimer is a graduate of Norwich University, where he earned a B.S. in strategic studies and defense analysis. ❖

3. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

a. CHAIN OF COMMAND:

- i. MAJ Denny Frey, A-1/19 SFG Commander is hosting the event and can be reached at 1-801-750-4240

b. SPECIAL TASKS:

- i. Cost will be \$50/person and payment instructions are forthcoming. This does not include alcohol which is from a cash bar available at the event.
- ii. Hotel rooms need to be booked directly with the Marriott and there is not a group name due to too many unit members using the per diem rate.

c. UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT:

- i. Attire is dress blues for current military members (bow tie and low quarters).
- ii. Formal clothing is appropriate for retirees, former unit members and their guests.

d. TIME SCHEDULE:

- i. Official start time is 1700 hours.
- ii. More details to follow.

4. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

a. Regardless of your intent around attending, please assist in getting this information out to other former members of A-1/19 SFG through text, email, and social media accounts, especially The Buckley Boys Facebook account.

b. I will follow up this email with a text message to all former members I have numbers for.

**POC IS MATT CASTEEL
MATTHEW _ CASTEEL@BEAVERTON.K12.OR.US**

SFA Chapter 78 Christmas Party

December 10, 2022
Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club

Photos by Rick Carter and How Miller



Raffle prizes against the view of Newport Harbor.



Jim Duffy, above at right, generously donated a vast assortment of items.



The evening's speakers, above, Steve Keesal and, below, John Blue.



The men of Special Forces Association Chapter 78 — Seated in the front row, left to right, How Miller, Art Dolick, Richard Simonian. Standing in back, left to right, Greg Horton, Don Gonnevillle, Ham Salley, Dennis DeRosia, Bob Crebbs, Gary Macnamara, Jim Duffy



At left, Bob Crebbs stands next to the Missing Man table. Bob made the presentation at the event. Above, following the Missing Man ceremony, toast were made. At right, LTC James Duffy, ret., offers a toast.



Bob Crebbs and Gary Macnamara enjoy cocktails and happily pose for a photo during cocktail hour.

Left to right, Jim Duffy, Michael Wayne, Sharon Hancock, April McClure, Rebecca Hardman, and Lauretta Rustad.

Chapter photographer Rick Carter taking photos of the raffle items



Both event speakers, Steve Keesal and John Blue, made excellent, thought provoking presentations which captured the attention of the audience.



Clockwise, from upper left; How Miller, Lani Dolick, Greg Horton, Paulette Horton, Art Dolick, Si Rangel, Geri Long, Heather Kinnersley, Dave Thomas and Yani Thomas.



Laretta Rustad and Chris Rangel



Kathleen and Aaron Brandenburg



James McLanahan, Mel McLanahan, Steve Keesal



Dennis and Glo DeRosia



Don Gonnevill and Jen Martinez



Suzanne and Jim Lockhart



McKazlyn Sparrow, LTC Scott Sparrow, Gary Mcnamara



Susie Marusak and Jim Cragg



Richard Simonian and Alex Quade



Paulette Horton, Yani Thomas, Debra Holm



Glo DeRosia and Geri Long



Jack and Vicki Blau



DJ Sommer Cruz, of SomFun4u, set the tone for the evening with her choice of seasonal tunes that floated in the background. After the event program was complete, she pumped up the volume, launching into a playlist of music that had just about everyone on their feet!

A Letter to Ch. 78 President Greg Horton:

A few thoughts regarding Chapter 78's new advocacy team regarding behavioral health and substance dependency challenges for our members, all Generations, and those who may contact you/the team from the other chapters and, perhaps, the SOA.

While at the SOCOM Warrior Care Program —

<https://www.socom.mil/care-coalition>

We incorporated these two books from **Dr. Edward Tick**, founder of the Soldier's Heart Foundation:

[*War and the Soul: Healing Our Nation's Veterans from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*](#)

[*Warrior's Return: Restoring the Soul After War*](#)

Ed became a go-to guy for seminars and internal advise and assist benefiting our case loads and our advocate team at the time.

Soldier's Heart Facebook page —

<https://www.facebook.com/soldiersheartak/>

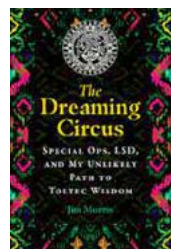
Care Coalition

Colonel (ret) Scott Heintz was my boss at the Care Coalition — and he is CC'd with this as his input to you/Chapter 78 would be invaluable. His bio is at this link and he is still involved with the Care Coalition, meaning we can get the most up to date, modern, working insights, references, sources, and referral information for our members to, for example, become enrolled in the Care Coalition if they are not already.

Colonel (ret) Scott Heintz at LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/scott-heintz-a883b112/>

Mike Brown is likewise CC'd as Mike is the lead in San Diego for CC, and he and I worked closely together on some of the toughest cases at the time — and he is likewise a Wounded Warrior (retired SEAL).



Other resources

Jim Morris is likewise a superb go-to for insight, input, and so on, as you well know.

Stu Seinberg, also CC'd, is my Veteran Service Officer here. VN Veteran (EOD Army), author, Georgetown trained attorney, and has been a VSO

for over 30 years — among the best in the business and that is no smoke. Stu may be available to provide COAs and additional help in locating other VSOs he knows around the country who are as good as he is (my humble opinion — those of us who have worked with, or battled with the VA know that a damn good VSO is what we need to navigate the system and to take the stress off of us while doing so).



John "Tilt" Meyer knows who the VA/CC advocates are who come to SOAR — and help file new claims and then bird-dog both old and new claims for our members in the SOA.

In short, your leadership in exploring such a team within Chapter 78, and offering services in an appropriate manner, has a wonderful cadre of folks available and open to helping us get this off the ground, guide it to success, keep it sustainable, and best of all — be of help to our Brothers, Sisters, and their families.

And we can visit onsite there in CA as you like...group meet on Zoom... and arrange at the various reunions (i.e. SOAR 2023, where we have reps from the VA/CC at our reunions/vendor room, to process VA 10-10 EZ forms on site and assign advocates to follow up on current cases and/or start new claims and then bird-dog them for our guys.

Finally, the current president of the MOH Society, retired **MSG Leroy Petry**, is a dear friend and was mentored in his MOH role by Colonel Donlon, none better.



Leroy is a huge proponent of what we are discussing — and we worked together on many cases while he was likewise with the Care Coalition. Leroy is on some of the most influential committees, USGOV and private sector/public sector organizations out there today to include finding housing/establishing VET Villages for our folks.

You might find his video message filmed during one of our trips to Alaska insightful, helpful, and as current today as it was then.

MSG Leroy Petry at Eilson AFB – Fairbanks, Alaska

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZMXSr8S-nVQ>

MOH Society Member Mental Health Interview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqoRiOCnKmc>

And from a personal as well as professional standpoint:

"Transforming The Terrible Secret Of Suicide" — By Greg Walker
<https://runningironreport.com/featured-guests/transforming-the-terrible-secret-of-suicide-by-greg-walker/>

"Losing the Last Greatest Battle: Why Military-Related Suicide Isn't Going Away" — By Greg Walker

<https://runningironreport.com/culture/losing-the-last-greatest-battle-why-military-related-suicide-isnt-going-away/>

Dehumanized

<https://runningironreport.com/culture/military-suicide-part-2-by-greg-walker/>

I trust this is helpful — and I look forward to being of service in this area.

Always respectfully

Greg Walker (ret)

USA Special Forces

Author/Journalist

SFA Chapter 78 2022 Awards and Special Presentations

Photos by Dennis DeRosia and Rick Carter



Dennis DeRosia, outgoing Chapter 78 Vice President, swears in James McLanahan, the incoming Vice President at the Chapter 78 Christmas party on December 10, 2022.



Honorary Chapter member Debra Holm was honored as Member of the Year for her work on the Sentinel, Chapter webmaster, social media manager, and SFA Teamhouse Chapter support.



Chapter 78 Officers — Richard Simonian (Treasurer), Greg Horton (President), Gary Macnamara (Secretary), Dennis DeRosia (Outgoing Vice President), James McLanahan (Vice President)