



SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 5 • MAY 2023

Bringing The Wall That Heals

Ground Truth for
Commanders –
the Special Operations Forces
Integration Detachment

The Day I Met
Billy Waugh



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From the Editor



How Miller
Sentinel Editor

At press time, we are mourning the loss of our dear, long-time chapter member Mike Keele. Next month, we will tell you more about how he touched and supported us all.

Lew Chapman, my former A325 Duc Hue teammate, has put into words, drawn from his own experience, what many of us were thinking when we heard that Col. Paris Davis Medal of Honor paperwork had been “lost” twice. Neither Lew, as a black man, nor I, as a white man, observed racism while serving in SF. If a man was wearing a green beret with a flash on it, that was all I needed to know about his character. We didn’t

use derogatory terms for the Vietnamese (occasional VC and NVA excepted), Cambodians, or Montagnards. They were our comrades in arms, and many of us are alive because they protected us.

This is literally your last call to register for SFACON 2023, held in the last full week of May in Indianapolis. Quite a lineup of presenters will appear, including keynote speaker Scott Mann, author of the play *Last Out*, the book *Operation Pineapple Express*, and much more. Plenty of activities and camaraderie awaits you.

When our president, Greg Horton, said he was planning to read *Break in the Chain*, he was the logical choice to review the book by Bob Baker. The Easter offensive was one glaring example, among many he presents, of how dearly bought intel was not always seen in the right light and was wasted, to disastrous effect. Bob offers solutions, but August of 2021 shows those lessons still have not been fully learned.

It’s titled Regimental First Formation, and it’s a celebration of transformation, from struggling to become one of the finest soldiers on the planet to one who will be tasked with keeping us and democracy safe in the world. Two days after their last informal get-together at the barbecue, co-sponsored by Chapters 78 and 1-18, these men intensely swear to do what it takes to complete their assigned missions and “Don their Berets”. John Stryker Meyer once again represented Chapter 78.

The Wall That Heals, spreading the message and presence of “The Wall” far and wide throughout the country, is an instrument of healing, both for those whose friends and relatives participated in the Vietnam War, and the nation as a whole. Rick Carter and I went to observe and help in the assembly process on a muddy field in San Luis Obispo, CA. It was a treasured experience for both of us.

Greg Walker tells in detail how one of SF’s greatest skills was put to effective use during Operation Iraqi Freedom, forming bonds of trust with those who were initially resistant. The results of that were a zero-percent occurrence of blue-on-blue incidents. Greg had a ringside seat, helping to put the SOFID program together and successfully execute it. It was part of the continuing growth in acceptance by ground commanders of what SOF can bring to the table.

Along with losing our own member Mike Keele, we have also lost the legendary Billie Waugh and his one-time CO within a week. Jim Morris brings us a little flavor of what made Billy so special.

We close with pictures of our members at the March chapter meeting. ❖

How Miller
Sentinel Editor

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FRONT COVER: Volunteers in San Luis Obispo, California, carry a panel to be installed into The Wall That Heals, a three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. (Courtesy Rick Carter)




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From the President | May 2023



Gregory Horton
President SFA Ch. 78

Well, I got a wake up call this month. My wife had a close shave, almost getting scammed by one of the many Amazon fraudsters. I did not realize how prevalent this scam was. Long story short, we bought a bed that did not have all the parts. The company said send it back, and we tried to do that, but needed a return label. My wife went online to the Amazon site to get the number and called who she thought was the Help Desk. Luckily she was looking at her phone as it rang, because she noticed that the original number she dialed suddenly changed

to a different one. A “Service Rep” answered and asked how he could help. She explained what happened and asked for a shipping label and he asked about the refund. She explained how she had already received it from Amazon. Without missing a beat he told her that he could help make sure that she got the refund. He was fast talking her and then he tried to get her to download “AnyDesk” app so he could check the computer. AnyDesk is a tool used by real internet technicians to gain access to computers via landline and perform repairs. This went back and forth while she kept insisting she just wanted a shipping label. When he started asking for personal information, she finally said she was not going to give that and hung up. Lucky for us she didn’t fall for the scam because thousands of people do every year and over a billion dollars are lost throughout the world.

The Anatomy of a Scam: There is no demographic for a victim — they are young, old, black, white, hispanic, native american, male, female. It doesn’t matter because all you have to do is answer your phone or click on their bait. There are numerous scams, masquerading as Amazon, Norton Anti-Virus, Google tech, Microsoft support and many others. It is happening across the United States, Australia, and many other countries. They are only limited by the crook’s imagination. As I was researching this (it’s the 40 years being a COP in me) I was shocked to find that there is actually over a billion dollars lost every year worldwide. Most of the scam gangs are in India, and there is no real law enforcement entity that will handle this multi-jurisdictional criminal enterprise. It sure is not like TV where the hero springs into action to help a little old lady that lost \$10,000. But there are a couple of really interesting anti-scam groups out there and the one that I looked into is Scammer Payback. SP is run by a guy who goes by the name Perogi and is well known (and hated) by the crooks. I do not need to go into detail about the scams, because if you go to YouTube there are dozens

of videos of him destroying the scammers (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCC9EjyMN_hx5NdctLBx5X7w). It is well worth the time to watch because this threat is the real deal. Be careful as you cruise the internet or get those stupid emails telling you about your refund.

I want to give a brief shout out to Jim Lockhart who was the speaker for March’s meeting. He discussed his role in the training of the Cambodian Military during the 1970s. It always amazes me how a handful of dedicated men can do so much with so little except tons of that can-do attitude. Jim gave a great presentation with photos and slides along with many funny and interesting stories of what the day to day operations were like. Now mind you, his team did not train individual soldiers, nor fire teams, nor squads, nor companies. They trained Battalions. Yes, Battalions with an “S.” It was impressive and I thoroughly enjoyed the presentation. Kudos to Jim and the rest of his men that took on that momentous task. There is a reason we are called Special Forces.

We are in the planning stages for supporting the Sergeant Paul Ehline Memorial Ride and Shoot, May 13, 2023 at the Lytle Creek Firing line. The website is <https://paulehlineride.org/events/sergeant-paul-ehline-memorial-motorcycle-ride-2023/>. We will be setting up a couple of booths and would like to have our members with Companies or Foundations set up or provide a display.

Greg Horton SGM (Ret)
President
SFA Chapter 78

Our next Chapter meeting Saturday, May 20, 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)

Mark your calendar for the following scheduled dates for 2023:
May 20 • June 17 • July 15 • August 19 • September 16
October 21 • November 18 • December TBA

A Retired Green Beret Needs Your Help

Retired Army Special Forces soldier Brad Boyer is a current doctoral student with Grand Canyon University (GCU) pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy degree in General Psychology with an emphasis in Performance Psychology. He is in the process of writing a dissertation on “The Effect of Physical Exercise on Quality-of-Life for Disabled Veterans” and is in desperate need of people to participate in his study.

Please scan the QR code at left or visit <https://forms.gle/uMA1F1yZiQAbdS959> to learn about the qualifications to participate in this study and to find out what volunteering to participate entails. ❖



Was Race a Factor in Col. (Ret) Paris Davis' Almost 60-Year Wait to Receive the Medal of Honor?

By Lewis "Lew" Chapman

Special Forces Decade Member, Chapter 38

I am a 76-year-old former United States Army Special Forces – SF (Green Beret) soldier and an African American. Additionally, I am a Decade Member of the Special Forces Association (Chapter 38). I am writing to provide my experience and opinion as a former A-Team (A-325) Vietnam veteran in 1968 regarding Col. Davis receiving the Medal of Honor after nearly a 60 year wait.

I was recruited after successfully completing a two-hour written exam in 1967 by the Special Forces Training Group (Abn) at the John F. Kennedy Center for Special Warfare. I was having too much fun at college. I had just completed my airborne training at Fort Benning

in Georgia as a Squad Leader, and, as an Honor Graduate. Special Forces was the only reason I joined the Army. I had initially thought of joining the Air Force.

After seeing a billboard in my hometown of Providence, RI, that displayed a Special Forces A-Team with their spit-shined paratrooper boots and Green Berets and then asked, "ARE YOU MAN ENOUGH?" I was not sure, but I wanted to try (In those days, SF recruited you. You could not choose SF when enlisting). After jump school graduation, I was given orders to report to the Special Forces Training Group (Abn) at Fort Bragg. This was one of the happiest days of my young 20-year life, especially after my lack of effort at college.

During my training at the Special Forces Training Group (Abn) starting in August of 1967, I was surprised and impressed with the training staff. I was surprised at how cool and laid-back the instructors were. After all the yelling, hard-core instructions and push-ups given at jump school (airborne school), I was now on my first morning being quietly told that breakfast was being served if wanted, was just too cool. I was impressed by their professionalism as well. In my training class, there were more senior ranked soldiers than I. However, our instructors did not favor those soldiers and when they felt it necessary, they called them out. It was important to me to see that everybody, all trainees, were the same in Special Forces.



Lt. Col Martha "Maggie" Raye, honorary Green Beret, with SP4 Lewis Chapman, Jr., in front of the A-325's Team House. Nicknamed "Colonel Maggie" by the troops, she went out to border camps where no other "VIPs" would be allowed. (Photo courtesy Lew Chapman)

I arrived in Vietnam in August of 1968 and after an indoctrination and acclimatization course on Hon Tre Island off the coast of South Vietnam, I was assigned to an A-Team. A-325/Duc Hue, located in the III Corps area of South Vietnam in Hau Nghia Province, northwest of Saigon along the Cambodian border. Everyone that I came in contact with, from personnel of the 5th Special Forces Group (Abn) Headquarters in Nha Trang to the C-Team personnel at Bien Hoa and on to the B-Team personnel at Tay Ninh, were all welcoming and professionally cool.

While a member of my A-Team, race was not specifically discussed as I can recall. Our discussions and concerns were about the NVA across the Cambodian border that wanted to kill us. We however did discuss during one evening in the Team House, the relative differences of the U.S. and African countries' economic development. That discussion did not evolve to the point of being racist. Respect among teammates in SF is a given. Everyone on an A-Team knows what each member had to go through to earn that Green Beret. I left my A-Team in October of 1969 to return to college, feeling good about my teammates and Special Forces in general.

Reading the story of Col. (Ret) Paris Davis' Medal of Honor paperwork package being lost twice by the Army is disheartening and may also be discouraging to many. However, it is important to distinguish between the U.S. Army of those decades and the Army Special Forces. It was the U.S. Army's personnel that somehow lost Col. Davis' Medal of Honor paperwork package. It was Army Special Forces personnel and Col. Davis' teammates that persisted in getting new paperwork pushed forward.

The Army Special Forces, by the nature of its creation in 1952 by former members of the Army's WWII Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and their Special Operations teams named "Jedburghs," with the concept of Unconventional Warfare (UW), was not appreciated and or wanted by the Army. These former OSS men: McClure, Bank, Volkmann, Fertig, Blair, Waters, and McDowell persisted such that the Army Special Forces' UW concept survived and has grown to now being the Army's newest branch (by General Orders No. 35 in 1987). On top of this UW concept (no pun intended), being granted Presidential permission in 1961 to wear the Green Beret by President Kennedy was a bit too much for the "regular" Army.

The Army had disbanded and thought it had gotten rid of its special units after WWII; (the Rangers and the 1st Special Service Force — a U.S. and Canadian combined force). In the 1950s and '60s, Army Special Forces had therefore become an unwanted stepchild of the U.S. Army. This is not my opinion; it is the history of the Army Special Forces during those times.

Regardless of the bravery and heroism of the men of Special Forces, there were many in the "regular" Army that were not fans.

So, here we have in 1965 an African American Green Beret captain doing what Green Berets do when the going gets tough, gets his Medal of Honor paperwork lost not once, but twice! And yes, given the racial unrest in the U.S. during the 1960s, Col. Davis' race cannot be discarded in how this almost 60 year "cluster f__k" took place. What we do know for sure is that his Green Beret teammates and the 5th Special Forces Group (Abn) and Command did not leave him, alone, after almost 60 years. ❖



SFACON 2023 Indianapolis May 22–26

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- Festival Day & Downtown Indy Parade
- Indy 500 May 28th!

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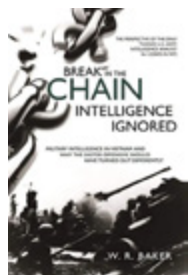
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SCAN ME

Book Review

Break in the Chain — Intelligence Ignored Military Intelligence in Vietnam and Why the Easter Offensive Should Have Turned Out Differently by W. R. “Bob” Baker



Break in the Chain — Intelligence Ignored Military Intelligence in Vietnam and Why the Easter Offensive Should Have Turned Out Differently

By W. R. “Bob” Baker
Casemate, Philadelphia (2021)
264 pages

By Greg Horton SGM (Ret)

The first thing I noticed is how the author began by describing his “Army Brat” upbringing and his family life providing a great personal touch. I enjoyed the highs and lows, trials, and tribulations of being the oldest of seven children as they moved to various bases and experienced the Army family lifestyle. He bounced around from Florida, to Alabama, to Germany and other places, learning many of life’s lessons. A very personal and enjoyable read, but then the letter from the Draft Board changed all that. Knowing that he would probably be drafted, Baker enlisted so he could pick his MOS.

I, like many of the readers, can identify with some of the stories that happened to him as he processed in. One of the funny moments (to me especially) was when the Marines entered the reception center and began picking people out. Then they yelled “*Welcome to the United States Marine Corps!*” I bet they were stupefied, because I had four of those “Draftees” in my USMC boot camp platoon and they were visibly shaken! And by the way, the Drill Instructors were really hard on them because all the rest of us volunteered!

Baker goes on to describe the rest of his training experiences and then entering the field of intelligence. He was in the first intelligence class to go to Ft. Huachuca, Arizona and describes the training that his class received. Upon completion of his training (graduating number one) and experiencing “The Barn” as his graduation exercise, he requested and was assigned to Vietnam. Now the “Meat and Potatoes” of the book begins.

When he arrived in Vietnam, Baker was initially placed with Headquarters (HQ), 525th Military Intelligence Group, located at the MACV Annex. He worked for the 1st Bn S-3 and goes on in the book to describe his day-to-day activities. Eventually he became a part of the 571st Military Intelligence Detachment and the book chronicles their activities. At this point the author begins to get in the nuts and bolts of the units in the area. One of the impressive things is the amount of research and footnotes provided to establish the various units, their locations, and their activities as the massive enemy offensive takes place during Easter 1972.

One of the recurring themes in this book is the failure of the commanders to heed intelligence provided by the personnel that worked at that for a living. One of his examples is the invasion of Laos in 1970.

“US Studies and Observations Group (SOG), however, repeatedly warned US Commanders not to go into Laos because they had been there and understood the depth of NVA strength in the area. Their warnings fell on deaf ears.” (Page 35)

When I read the author’s comments, I remembered that was something that I had heard before from a former SOG operator. I contacted “Ned” and he advised me that there were numerous times that they had “Actionable Intelligence” that was forwarded and never was acted on. There seems to be a number of these incidents that would back up the author’s claim. I recalled a conversation with a LRRP who elaborated on “Ned’s” assertions. “Don” told me that his team went out and gleaned constant intelligence, such as roads, POL points, vehicle storage and many other bits of intel. There were several times that this intelligence was not acted on. In fact, “Don” advised me that there were incidents where they were tasked to go back to a certain area and “verify” the intelligence they had provided, and felt that their intel people did not believe them. “Don” said that this was one of the most dangerous missions that they could go on, because the enemy knew that they had been there and were waiting for them to return.

Baker points out the numerous intelligence failures where the command neglected to act on information provided to them, especially by the 571st. If it was not so tragic, it would be comical. Baker relates how it was not until three days after the beginning of the Easter 1972 offensive that there was any concern in Saigon. This was in spite of the intelligence summaries they were receiving. Throughout the book, Baker uses countless examples of the chain of command ignoring or failing to pass on relevant and accurate intelligence that clearly indicated massing of troops and movement that would have enabled commanders to devise and execute plans to counter this massive offensive.

What is frustrating for me is the disregarding of intelligence, conflicting intelligence, viewing the intelligence with a jaundiced eye, or preconceived notions that Baker points out so well in this book. It would appear that our government has not learned a thing about intelligence, as we can see when asked about the chance of a Taliban takeover;

“No, it is not (possible). Because you have the Afghan troops have 300,000 well equipped, as well as any army in the world, and an Air Force against 75,000 Taliban. It is not inevitable.”

Baker Points out how this failure to use current and actionable intelligence took place and the pitfalls to avoid them in the future.

1. Avoid the “Stove Piping” which is deferring to a command hierarchy, and relying on one form of intelligence.
2. In the Easter Offensive of 1972, leaders were lulled into a kind of complacency by reports of the success of the Vietnamization effort.
3. Be careful not to be telling the generals or command what they want to hear.
4. Relying on one source of intelligence.

The bottom line is, if you want a well-sourced, intelligent book that is not afraid to broach serious subjects, then *Break in the Chain — Intelligence Ignored* is the one for you. Bob Baker lays out, in detail, the incredible intelligence failures in the war that are mind-boggling and, based on his vast experience, how to avoid them in the future. ❖

SFQC GRADUATION



CLASS 332

March 9, 2023



U.S. ARMY JOHN F. KENNEDY
SPECIAL WARFARE CENTER AND SCHOOL

The Special Operations Center of Excellence

Congratulations graduates! Welcome to the Regiment!

Chapter 78's John S. Meyer attended the Special Forces Qualification Course graduation held at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, on March 9, 2023. 176 soldiers assigned to the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School don their green berets for the first time during a Regimental First Formation at the ceremony and receive their certificates of graduation.

SFA Chapters 78 and 1-18 co-hosted a pre-graduation BBQ, held on the SFA Chapter 1-18 campus in Fayetteville two days before the graduation. Men from Southern California were given Life SFA memberships before this event, and they also received Chapter 78's distinctive metal membership cards. ❖



John S. Meyer met one of the nine new SFA Chapter 78 chapter members. The face of the new member is blacked out to protect his identity from facial recognition hackers. Regardless, he was one of nine men honored to receive their SFA life memberships. (Photo courtesy of Ron Owens)



The new green berets are lined up, waiting to be presented during the Regimental First Formation graduation of SFQC Class #332. (Photo courtesy of Ron Owens)



The high point of the graduation is when the command is given to SF graduates: "Don berets!" (Photo courtesy of Ron Owens)

Bringing The Wall That Heals

By How Miller

Bringing *The Wall That Heals* to people that are not likely to make the trip to the National Mall in Washington, D.C., is no simple thing. But for the last four years, veteran Vic Muschler and his crew, along with the help of local volunteers, have been able to smoothly make it happen. Great care is taken to handle the pieces of the wall with the respect that the men and women whose inscribed names they carry deserve.

The non-profit Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, the original sponsors of “The Wall” in Washington, D.C., decided years ago that more national and personal healing could be accomplished by building a portable three-quarter scale model and bringing it to welcoming sites across the country. It was entered into service on Veterans Day 1996.

Rick Carter, *Sentinel* photographer, suggested we drive north to San Luis Obispo to witness, participate in, and photograph the setup. We learned that first there is an agreement with a local sponsor, in this case initiated by the SLO County Veterans Service Officer Morgan Boyd, followed by lots of planning, to include procuring the use of a local site, donated here by the Madonna (Inn) family. Then, determining a mutually beneficial time for the event weekend, and recruiting the many volunteers required, largely provided by the local VVA Chapter 982. SLO County, Legacy Village wellness center, and the Central Coast Veterans Memorial Museum, all were major sponsors.

When the time arrives, the crew drives the meticulously protected cultured marble slabs in their dedicated van to the site. The crew then assembles the frame to securely accept the 140 panels. In this case, it was done amid a great deal of rain. The next day, volunteers arrive to carry the panels from the van to the frame, a hundred plus yards away, across the muddy field. Some of these volunteers have a very personal mission; they are there to carry the panel that their loved one’s name is on. Discovering this, I signed up for two panels.

Once the crew is assembled, Vic coaches the carriers on how to respectfully and securely carry each panel. Vic delivers his instructions with an air of authority that reminded me of being back in the army. His attention to detail and sense of purpose made the message well received.



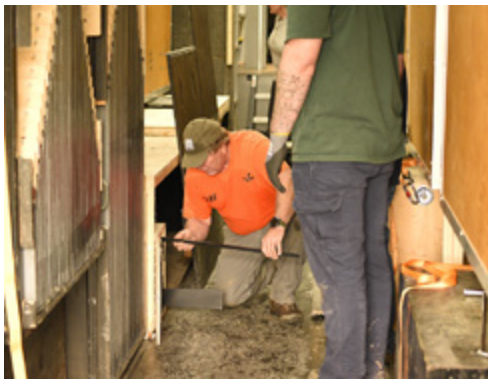
How Miller carrying panel 13west, which contained the name of his fellow SF Medic Stephen Spiers, KIA 3.10.70 on an operation with B52 Project Delta. (Photo by Rick Carter)

This wonderful and beautiful location in the ample field next to the famous Madonna Inn was uncharacteristically difficult due to the atmospheric rivers that have pelted California’s Central Coast, seemingly all year. The resulting muddy fields presented challenges to carrying and emplacing the panels, between the puddles, wet grass, and slippery mud. However, not one grumble was heard.

I personally helped carry panel 13west with my fellow SF Medic Steve Spiers’ name, and 22west with my Medford High School friend, Michael Mobilia’s, one of the Michaels for whom my first son is named. It was an honor and a privilege, and I felt it was a tiny thank you for the many years of life and freedom that they both helped ensure for us.

When the structure was completed the volunteers assembled at the apex for a group picture and broke for lunch. Some would return for the 5pm orientation for those who would participate in guarding the area during its 24 hours per day that it was open to the public, assisting visitors with finding which panel their loved ones were on, and escorting many of them. This is often the first time a young person has made a personal connection with their near ancestor.

Rick wanted to be sure to get photos of the wall lit up at night. Somewhere along the line the lights were switched from upward shining incandescent lights to overhead LED lighting. We were both



Vic Muschler and crew begin unpacking the 140 safely stowed panels. (Photo by How Miller)



San Luis Obispo Vietnam Veterans of America chapter securely and reverently carry a panel. (Photo by How Miller)



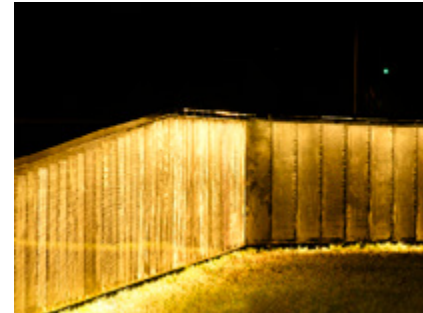
The volunteers gather, ready to begin the task of assembling the wall. (Photo by How Miller)



Mounting the panels starts from both ends, finishing in the middle. (Photo by How Miller)



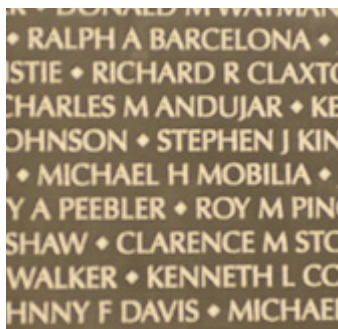
Fully assembled in the beautiful field next to the Madonna Inn. (Photo by How Miller)



LED lighting turns the wall gold for all night viewing. (Photo by How Miller)



In Memorium program allows veterans who succumbed to afflictions of the war to be memorialized digitally on TWTH website. (Photo by How Miller)



The panel with Michael Mobilia's name in daylight. (Photo by How Miller)



The panel with Stephen A Spiers' name glows golden in the evening lighting. (Photo by How Miller)

surprised when the wall took on a golden appearance, far different from the apparent black and white of daytime. The benefit of this is that the names are easier to read and somehow more poignant, while affording the visitor more privacy to absorb the experience.

Vic stressed to us that the wall itself and the other educational material they present, are a ground truth for newer generations, an opportunity to connect with ancestors, close relatives, and friends. It promotes that national and personal healing for ones that lived through those troubled times. He and his wife Lisa are proud to be devoting their time to this effort. Since 1996 The Wall That Heals has visited over 700 locations.

Vic also pointed out another mission that has been added to the wall itself: recognition of the many who have succumbed since the war to injuries and ailments due to the war, including PTS and suicides. There is a plaque honoring them, displayed as a horizontal tombstone, along with a plea for greater awareness and help for those still suffering. It is called "In Memory."

On their website <https://www.vvmf.org/The-Wall-That-Heals>, you can find an abundance of resources to help you visit from afar and participate in the healing process The Wall affords. There is the [Wall of Faces](#) with pictures of each person on the wall accompanied by bios and public-entered well wishes, thoughts and information. You can similarly enter info about the In Memory veterans, nominate others who should be included, and watch many informative videos, including a 50 minute clip about how the wall was brought about and continues to help us heal, shot in the same location in 2018.

There are many other efforts out there which contribute, and we applaud the many things that are done in behalf of veterans. The Wall That Heals will be appearing in May in Kyle TX, Great Bend KS, Rhinelander WI, and Mendota Heights MN. You can see the full 2023 schedule on [TWTH website](#). ❖

As of April 7, 2023, there were 1,579 Americans listed as MIA from the Vietnam War in Southeast Asia.

Ground Truth for Commanders – the Special Operations Forces Integration Detachment

By Greg Walker (ret)
USA Special Forces

“Ground Truth was simply being able to accurately and quickly tell a commander exactly where his units were and what they were doing...Colonel Kraus saw to it that every American and Coalition battalion had SF personnel attached as ground-truth assets. General Schwarzkopf’s staff could pinpoint exactly what was going on with his forces simply by making a call. It was a brilliant manner of utilizing Special Forces on the air-land battlefield, and the first time such a concept was implemented with the assistance of Special Forces.” — At the Hurricane’s Eye, Greg Walker, 1994

Ramp up to the ground war in Iraq

In the aftermath of Operation Desert Storm one of the lessons learned by U.S. and Coalition commanders was the importance of “ground truth” and how to best use Special Forces, in specific, to provide it.

The Special Operations Forces Integration Detachment, or SOFID, was developed as a concept to accomplish this in preparation for the next major conflict, to include the creation of a mobile early entry command post, or EECP. The EECP consisted of six heavy trucks, each fitted with a specially constructed pod featuring sophisticated communications equipment that linked the EECP to the war-fighting Command in the rear. In the case of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the EECP was subordinate to the Coalition Forces Land Component (CFLCC) Main located at Camp Doha, Kuwait.

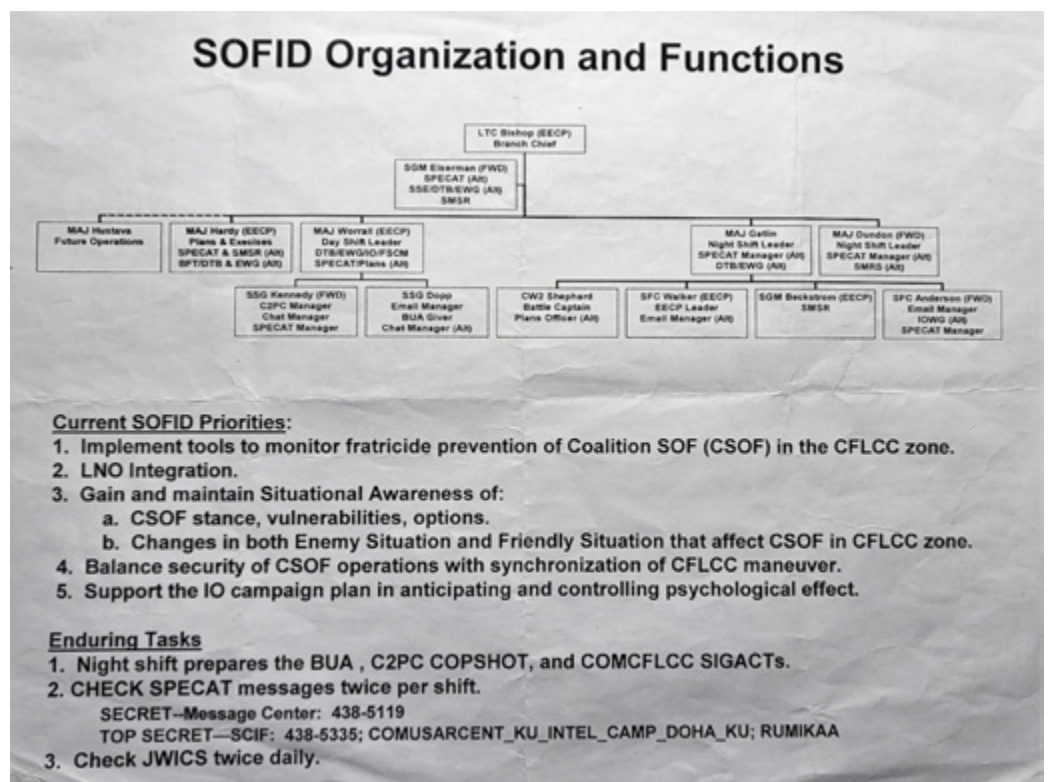
SOFID team members were responsible to daily update LTG David McKiernan and BG Webster at CFLCC Main on U.S. and Coalition SOF status and efforts to date. The SOCCENT LNO was likewise charged to keep BG Harrell in Qatar/MacDill AFB, Florida, abreast of all SOF activities taking place in the CFLCC Area of Operations as well as the CENTCOM AOR. This included integrating other SOF representatives with the other US and Coalition LNOs. This to ensure they knew and could report in real-time the status of SOF including combat operations in Afghanistan, Yemen, and the Horn of Africa.

The SOFID team was therefore selected for each member’s high attention to detail, coupled with an extensive knowledge of Special Operations.

SOFID Priorities

The primary tasks assigned and expected of the SOFID were these.

- Implement the Friendly Forces Combat Identification System to monitor fratricide prevention of Coalition SOF (CSOF) in the CFLCC battle space
- Gain and sustain real-time situational awareness of CSOF stance, vulnerabilities, and options
- Detect, confirm/deny, monitor and inform the CFLCC Commander of changes in both the enemy and friendly situation(s) across the battle space that could affect CSOF missions and units/teams to include preventing friendly fire to be used in those grid squares where CSOF was conducting operations
- Balance the security of CSOF operations through synchronization with CFLCC maneuvers in the battle space
- Provide support for the CFLCC Information Warfare (IO) campaign in Iraq. This in anticipation and controlling the intended psychological effect of the campaign



Enduring Tasks – New tools in the SOF toolbox

The SOFID operated within the 365-person battle staff at CFLCC Main and was co-located within steps of the war-fighting commander, LTG McKiernan, and his senior staff. Assigned 12-hour shifts, 7 days a week, the SOFID night shift was responsible for preparing the next morning's Battle Update Briefing (BUA), the C2PC COPSHOT, and COMCFLCC SIGACTs. These tasks ensured real-time evolutions and updates of Coalition and U.S. ground forces both inside Kuwait during the 2002 ramp up to the impending ground war, but likewise reported regarding ongoing CSOF preparations and operations in Jordan, Turkey, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Afghanistan.

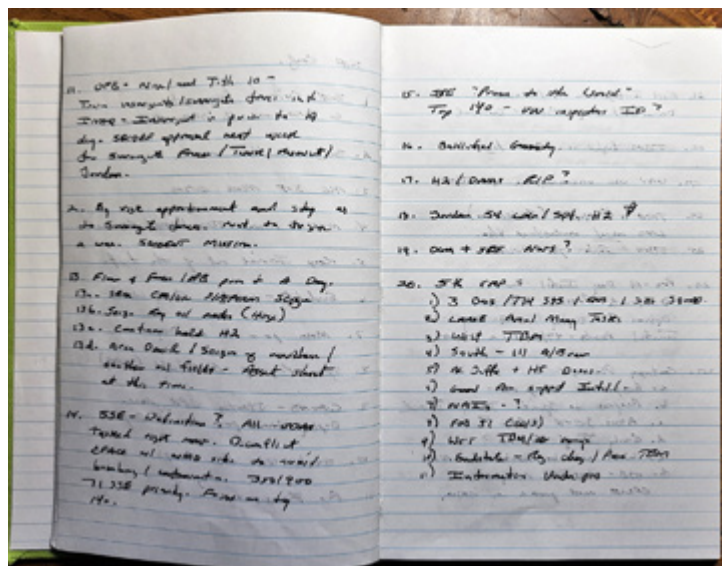
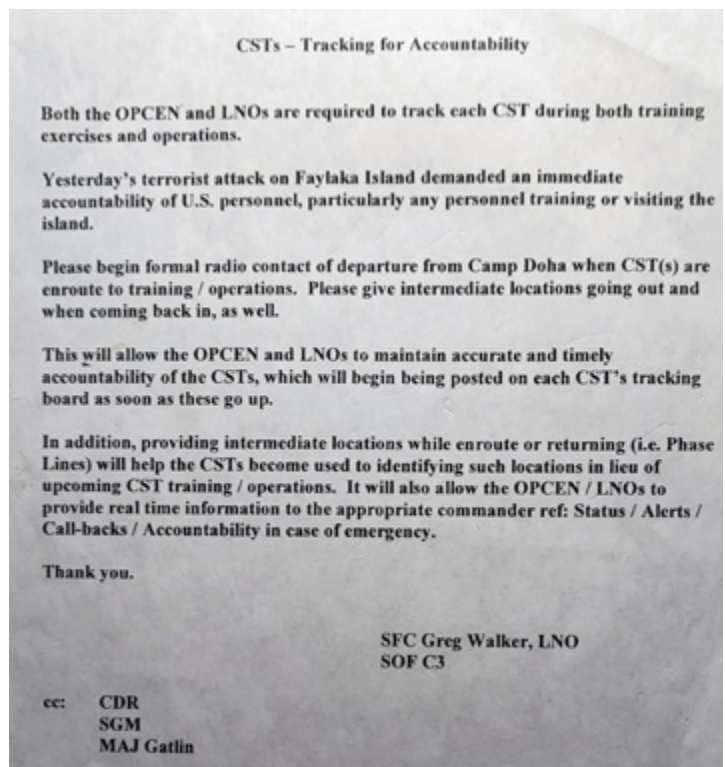
Likewise, aspects of the air campaign against Iraq, which began in mid-2002, were monitored via live feeds viewed in the command center at CFLCC Main were monitored and reported as was monitoring of individual U.S. SOF teams using Blue Force Tracking devices on their team vehicles. This was an especially critical tasking once U.S. SOF entered the ground war and began making their way toward Baghdad from the north, south, and west.

At the same time, due to terrorist as well as SCUD attacks in Kuwait, the SOFID began monitoring and reporting on such attacks where U.S. SOF conducting training offsite were concerned. For example, a terrorist attack on Faylaka Island, a site used by AOB 910 SF teams for multi-skill training, resulted in daily accountability reporting through the SOFID and for the situational awareness of the sponsoring SOF units as well as the seniormost commanders at CFLCC Main.

The key program in accomplishing this was the Common Operational Picture, or COP/C2PC. The C2PC, a Windows-based program developed for the U.S. military, allowed SOFID personnel to produce overlays and operational graphics for the war-fighting staff at CFLCC Main. It also provides a tactical data base of friendly and enemy unit locations as provided by multiple reconnaissance collection methods. This data base information can and was shared instantly with key conventional and SOF/CSOF commanders.

The SOFID also had access to highly classified live feeds coming in from the battlespace. This included air strikes throughout the CFLCC AOR as well as real time feeds coming from Task Force 20 operators as they conducted their WMD searches. Perhaps the most emotional as well as long-awaited operation was the rescue of PFC Jessica Lynch. Lynch, captured along with several others from her unit, became a theatre-wide topic as well as mission. Once located in an Iraqi hospital in the town of Nasiriyah a rescue mission involving elements of SF AOB 910, now forward deployed, elements of the 5th Special Forces Group, the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, and Task Force 20 was mounted.

The successful rescue of Lynch and the sad recovery of her deceased fellow soldiers from a mass grave on the hospital's grounds was sent in real time back to CFLCC Main and the SOFID. The feed was then downloaded to two secure laptop computers and then relayed to the Pentagon and White House, where the news of her rescue was announced to the nation. Afterward, the momentum of the ground war surged as U.S. forces learned of her treatment at the hands of her captors and of the murder of her friends. It was a stunning psychological boost for all.



From my C3 SOFID notebook: An example of just how much information/intelligence the SOFID had available and had to keep track of/process on a daily basis. (Author Collection)

Sensitive Site Exploitation (SSE) – The hunt for Saddam's WMD

In the ramp-up for the ground war there were two CSOF conferences held at Camp Doha/CFLCC Main. They were both chaired by General "Spider" Marks, who reported directly to LTG David McKiernan.

During the second conference the emphasis was on the upcoming hunt for weapons of mass destruction (WMD) alleged to be stockpiled in Iraq. A CIA briefer at this conference stated to his audience "You have 24-48 hours to find George Bush's 'smoking gun'", meaning if nothing of merit were found by then the reason for going to war in Iraq would be significantly undermined.

Committed to the hunt for WMD were 6 Special Forces battalions and 3 SEAL platoons. Also directly involved would be Task Force 20, a joint special mission force made up of DELTA (CAG) teams, SEAL Team 6 (DEVGRU). TF 20 was supported by elements from the Ranger Regiment, as well. TF 20 would launch its missions from a secure hanger area at Baghdad International Airport once the airport was successfully captured.

All U.S. Special Forces operational detachments regardless of which Group they belonged to would now be tasked with the SSE mission. It was estimated there were 350-900 potential locations to be searched, 71 of these listed as priority targets with 140 secondary “highly probable” locations throughout Iraq.

“Prove to the world”

The priority targets had been formally identified by the UN inspection teams who had previously traveled Iraq in search of just such sites. In late 2002, the SOFID had participated in internal exercises Lucky Warrior I and II. Scenarios were played out involving reported WMD

discoveries or suspected locations with U.S. SOF elements directed to these locations in real time. What became readily apparent was this. There were potentially more sites and spur-of-the-moment reports of possible discovered locations than there were SOF teams to exploit such sites.

In addition, CSOF overall was charged with communicating back to CFLCC Main as well as SOCCENT under General Gary Harrell, based out of Qatar, the discovery of any suspected WMD site to avoid the unintentional bombing/contamination of the site by Coalition forces.

Still, the overall mission remained the same. Remove all TBM (tactical ballistic missile) as swiftly as possible; locate and confirm all WMD. The removal of Saddam’s TBM threat was meant to ensure Israel did not enter the war should Iraq strike that country with a WMD munition.

Per directives from General Tommy Franks and President George W. Bush the TBM fight was Mission #1 and all SOFID team members as well as assigned liaison officers (LNOs) were reminded of this constantly.



Major General Eldon Bargewell and Major General Kenneth Bowra — both MACV SOG (CCN) veterans — helped set the right and left aiming stakes for a successful SOFID mission before and during Operation Iraqi Freedom. (Author collection)

After arriving in Kuwait and coming onboard with the SOFID in its earliest stage I contacted MG (ret) Ken Bowra and MG (ret) Eldon Bargewell. I provided both with a brief overview of what I’d gotten myself into. We were still adding team members to the SOFID and we were tasked to daily and in the evenings brief LTG McKiernan, MG Thurman, BGs Webster and Marks, as well as the overall battle staff and its captains (BUA). Major Gatlin, SF and previously a Navy SEAL, was the first SOF officer at the SOFID other than its OIC, LTC Bishop. The latter fresh in from Afghanistan where he helped plan Operation ANACONDA. Gatlin shared with me the BUA briefings allowed each briefer roughly 3-4 minutes to update the CMD Team — with questions from them or others on the battle staff able to ask questions if they had any. Having worked for GEN Bowra earlier in my career and knowing GEN Bargewell for many years by then I knew having some back channel guidance and direction from both Ken and Eldon was necessary.

They both responded and their input coming proved just the ticket for all of us on the SOFID as the campaign came together and then went operational.

Their guidance was this:

1. A GO’s time with you is counted in minutes — find out what McKiernan/Thurman/Webster/Marks are specifically looking for both in-country (KU) and in the CFLCC AOR and make those needs the priority for each BUA. Any additional will be asked for by them and can be provided “as needed” and in the appropriate venue.
2. You must be right. Do the homework and back-stop it. If you don’t know then say so and add you will pursue the answers they have asked for.
3. Trust in the SOFID is paramount. Create that trust with the team’s behavior, professionalism, abilities to deliver the Products needed, and above all else honesty. Accept full responsibility for the taskers required of you. We had, as well, the responsibility of going directly to a battle captain, day/night, and offering certain areas/grids could not be affected by air/ground operations by conventional forces (specifically Fires from air/ground assets). We would have SOF/CSOF teams in those grid squares conducting operations or possibly in the E&E or CSAR modes - which the battle captains (conventional officers) would not be aware of given the security classifications of such ops or “need to know”.
4. Time. Don’t waste the CFLCC CMD Team’s time. Know your job; know your subject matter; stay in your lane.

You can imagine the challenge for an E6/E7/E8 or SF major or WO like Dave Shephard when it came to creating that level of trust with conventional force officers whose own responsibilities and careers meant they had to trust us — and if necessary immediately stop a fire mission in a contested grid square “just because” SOF says so.

Thanks to Ken and Eldon’s sage input we were able to create the necessary model and those critical relationships — and we suffered no SOF/CSOF “blue on blue” because of it. ❖

“Recon Pull” – Communication must hold up!

With over 50 Special Forces operational detachments to monitor and track, first and foremost to mitigate the chances of conventional force “friendly fire” resulting in fratricide and/or mission failure, SOFID team members worked tirelessly 24/7 to make sure they were constantly aware of each team’s status and whereabouts.

During both SOF/CSOF conferences at Camp Doha it was made clear it would be SOF’s far-ranging mobile reconnaissance efforts in the west, south, and north, dubbed “Recon Pull”, that would determine an appropriate conventional force response. This became especially true when 26 possible WMD sites were located in Baghdad itself, a priority game-changer that saw SF ODAs re-tasked from their original missions in the west and south to heading for Baghdad to start the WMD hunt there.

Additional SOF missions included the Polish GROM and U.S. SEAL seizure of Iraq’s gas and oil platforms; the continued holding and expansion of the H2 launch site in western Iraq; and area denial/ the seizure of Iraq’s southern oil fields. SOF and CSOF assets were in short supply by this time and the 10th and 3rd Special Forces Groups’ fight in northern Iraq was proving fierce.

SOFID in Baghdad – Mobile reconnaissance, arms caches, VIP escort

Only two Special Forces NCOs were specifically chosen to accompany LTG McKiernan and his Early Entry Command Team to Baghdad. Sergeant Major John Beckstrom, with nearly 40 years in Special Forces possessed an exceptional knowledge of SOF operations and was highly respected by, among others, both LTG McKiernan and BG Webster.

The other was this author as I was the liaison officer (LNO) between SOCCENT and CFLCC Main and had overseen the set-up of the EECF Combined Effects function prior to the ground war. Once on the

ground SGM Beckstrom and I were tasked to locate and then secure the “SOF House” on what would become known as Camp Victory; and to conduct reconnaissance/escort duties into Baghdad for the emerging Civil Affairs, PSYOPs, Medical and VIP Presence that LTG McKiernan was establishing even as the fight for the city continued.

Significant reconnaissance and escort locations included:

- Iraqi military armories
- Saddam’s palace in the Green Zone – soon to become the Coalition Provisional Authority
- The Palestine – Sheraton Hotel complex
- Baghdad’s International Airport and its facilities
- Designated “locations of interest” as determined by the EECF



The author with Iraqi freedom fighters as they upload arms and ammunition from one of dozens of Iraqi military armories in Baghdad. (Author Collection)



SGM John Beckstrom (center, standing, CFLCC ID badge) was the team sergeant for ODA 912 before moving to the SOFID as its ranking NCO. A Vietnam veteran, John would receive his second award of the Combat Infantryman Badge during Operation Iraqi Freedom. (Author Collection)

Ground Truth – a key factor in Operation Iraqi Freedom and in future conflicts

“The one thing lacking on retired Gen. David D. McKiernan’s military biography is any mention of special operations forces.

“But while unstated, it doesn’t diminish his importance to the military’s elite troops, one of the nation’s top special operations soldiers said Wednesday.

“McKiernan was honored with the 2013 Association of Special Operations Professionals’ Man of the Year award during a luncheon on the final day of the group’s annual Special Operations Forces Symposium and Exposition, better known as SOFEX.

“Lt. Gen. John F. Mulholland Jr., deputy commander of U.S. Special Operations Command and last year’s Man of the Year award recipient, hailed McKiernan as a strong supporter of special operations forces...

“Mulholland [Commander, 5th Special Forces Group) said special operations forces were trying to find their place in the invasion and battling efforts by division and corps commanders to gain operational control of Green Berets and other special operations forces.

“There was a struggle there for us, to be honest,” Mulholland said.

Mulholland said he was one voice in a “sea of stars” but said McKiernan took the time to hear him out.

“And he sided with us,” Mulholland said. “He let us fight the SOF fight the way we knew we needed to fight it.”



As Baghdad was being secured General David McKiernan and General Tommy Franks congratulate each other at McKiernan’s early entry command post on Camp Victory. McKiernan’s support for SOF ensured this critical resource was used appropriately and to its maximum potential. (Author Collection)

“War is a political thing,” Mulholland added. “The political challenge and the pressures on senior leaders . are just intense. He put enormous trust and confidence in us.”

“McKiernan said while he wasn’t a part of the same “clan” as special operations forces, he recognized what the community brings to the fight.

“He said that leading up to the Iraq war, many generals wanted to control special operations forces, but he thought they would be better served creating chaos on their own with the support of conventional troops instead of vice versa.

“McKiernan said the war in Iraq marked the beginning of true cooperation between special operations and conventional forces.

“It worked amazingly well,” he said. “Now it’s taken for granted that’s how we’ll operate.”

<https://www.fayobserver.com/story/lifestyle/home-garden/2013/11/07/gen-david-d-mckiernan-lauded/22112496007/>



In Memoria

Rest in Peace, Warrior, Rest in Peace

This article is dedicated to the memory of CW2 David Shepard, Battle Captain, Special Operations Forces Integration Detachment. Chief Shepard was instrumental in seeing the SOFID mature and become what it was envisioned to be in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Chief Warrant Officer 2 (CW2) David R.

Shepard was a member of the Washington Army National Guard, Company A, 1st Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group (Airborne), located in Buckley, Washington.

Sadly, CW2 Shepard lost his life in a suicide car bombing while serving as a member of a Personal Security Detachment in Mosul, Iraq. At the time, CW2 Shepard was a Blackwater USA employee working for the U.S. Department of State. ❖



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg Walker served as CENTCOM/ SOCCENT Liaison officer to the CFLCC C-3 Special Operations Forces Integration Detachment (SOFID) from October 2002 to April 2003. He was recognized by award for volunteering to draft, staff, then supervise the execution of the Friendly Forces Combat

Identification System (CIS) for US/Coalition SOF as well as U.S./ Coalition conventional forces. The CIS was considered “a huge success during Operation Iraqi Freedom saving thousands of lives from possible blue-on-blue fratricide situations.” Today Greg lives and writes from his home in Sisters, Oregon, along with his service pup, Tommy, and is completing the biography of Ranger and Special Forces legend, Michael D. Echanis.

The Day I Met Billy Waugh

By Jim Morris

I was XO at Buon Beng. We had trained two companies of Jarai Strike Force for Plei Do Lim, the first camp north, where Billy was Team Sergeant and Harlow Stevens was CO.

We had sent their dependents to Ankhe the day before. The convoy taking them to Plei Do Lim was ambushed on the way in. Thirty-four women and kids were killed, and also Wally, our montagnard sergeant major. I had had dinner with him and his family in their little bamboo home the week before they were all killed. It was not a good day.

The bodies came back sling loaded under a huey, trip after trip, and Jarai women walked the main street of the camp, wailing and tearing their hair. I hopped on the chopper for the last load, to see for myself what had happened. Here's a description of that visit from my book *War Story*:

A three-quarter drove out from the main gate and came down to where we landed as the rotor slowly whined to a stop.

Behind that was a two and a half with the rest of the bodies. The three-quarter stopped on the green grass by the chopper and Harlow stepped out. Then the two and a half stopped and a detail got out to sling the last of the bodies.

"Hello, Harlow," I said. "How's it going?"

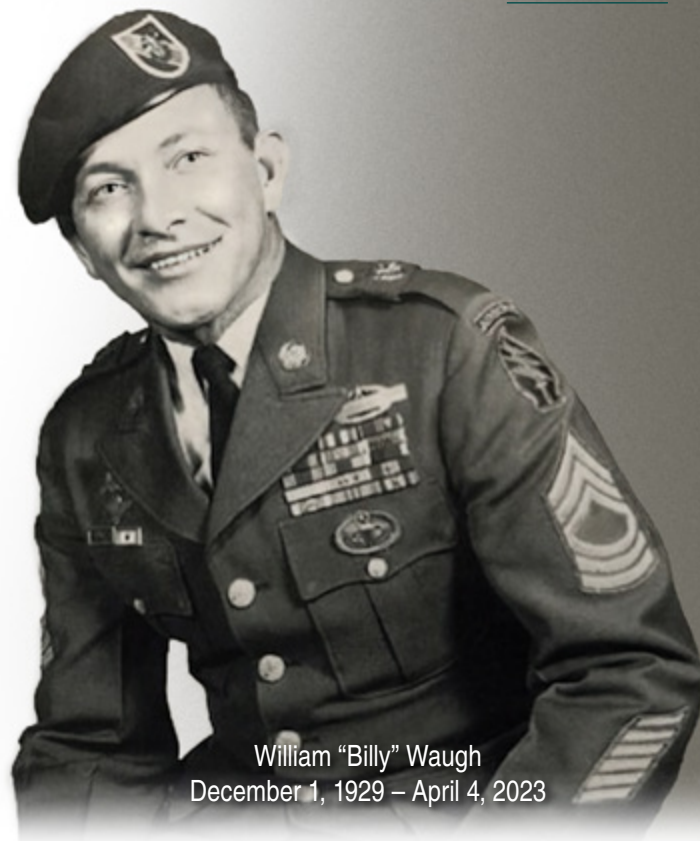
He gave me a sardonic grin. "It's been better."

Harlow is about my height, maybe six two, and weighs around two-twenty. He played college football somewhere on the west coast and the weight suits him. He's got a wild comic sense that finds some fun in almost anything. He was on the solemn side today, though.

We stood in a little knot beside the aircraft, he and I and the pilot and co-pilot of the chopper. The crew chief and door gunner looked into little holes on the other side of the aircraft.

Harlow's team sergeant, Billy Waugh, came over, smiling a happy smile. It always materialized during disaster. He seemed always to lean forward like a starter on the block. "Sir," he said to Harlow, "the second company's going out tomorrow, with or without orders. Their objective is to bring back thirty-four heads."

Harlow nodded. "That's inhuman and barbaric and brutal," he said. "But I can't do anything about it. I'm only an advisor. You did advise them not to do it, didn't you?"



William "Billy" Waugh
December 1, 1929 – April 4, 2023

Waugh smiled some more and said, "Oh, yes, sir. I advised them most strongly against it. You mind if I go along?"

"Better not," Harlow said. "You guys want to come with me? I'll show you the trucks we got off the ambush."

We got in the three-quarter. Harlow drove through the main gate. The pilot and I squeezed in the front seat beside him. Sergeant Waugh and the co-pilot were in the back. "You knew Wally got it on this ambush, didn't you Jim?"

"No!" I said. "I figured about his kids, but I didn't know about Wally."

"Yeah," he said, "he was wounded in four places from grenade fragments, and he was down but still firing. The Cong swarmed the truck and shot him to death with his own forty-five. His wife had her head blown off by a grenade and the two were killed by small arms fire."

"I don't get it," I said, shaking my head. "The Cong use terror, sure. But usually they have sense to use it selectively. They haven't accomplished anything with this but to get the Strike Force mad at them. Like that thirty-four heads deal Sergeant Waugh was talking about."

I only met with him a couple of times after that, at SFA or SOAR. But I kept track of him through the stories that circulated. I heard that he had convinced Mrs. Alexander to send him back to Vietnam with a bleeding duodenal ulcer. I heard that he had Bin Laden in his sights but couldn't get clearance to fire. I heard that he was on the ground in Afghanistan in his 70s, that he was still skydiving in his 70s. The man was a piece of work.

The last time I saw him was at SFA in the '80s. We talked about that ambush and Harlow Stevens. "God, I loved that man," he said. He and Harlow were cut from the same cloth. Billy died three days ago, and Harlow died last week. *De Oppresso Liber*. ❖

SFA Chapter 78 March 2023 Chapter Meeting

Photos by Rick Carter and Dennis DeRosia



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1 Chapter members were led in prayer by Richard Simonian at the beginning of the meeting.

2 Jim Lockhart was the meeting's speaker, discussing his role in the training of the Cambodian Military during the 1970s.

3 Gary Bric, former mayor of Burbank, California, attended as a guest of his brother Chapter member Steve Bric.

4 Chapter President Greg Horton

5 Steve Bric

6 Chapter member Erik Berg, left, and his guest James Bradley, CEO Allied Rescue Coalition, USCG veteran and US Senate candidate.

7 Dennis DeRosia

8 Don Deatherage

9 How Miller

10 Left to right, Mark Miller, Don Gonneville and Thad Gembacz

11 Chapter member Art Dolick greets Joan Sanders, wife of Chapter member Sal Sanders.

12 Lani Dolick, wife of Art, enjoys a conversation with Kenn Miller.

13 Jim Lockhart, Nimo, Richard Simonian and Ramon Rodriguez



13

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