



SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 10 • OCTOBER 2023

Transforming the Terrible Secret of Suicide

Intelligence Ignored

From the Vietnam Veterans
for Factual History's
Indochina in the Year of the Dog – 1970:
Ambassador William E. Colby

Thailand CPR

VAHP Receives \$1 Million
Federal Funding

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SENTINEL

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 10 • OCTOBER 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

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FRONT COVER: Special Forces Soldiers from the U.S. Army's 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) conduct an AAR after Counter Improvised Explosive Device training at Panzer Local Training area near Stuttgart, Germany, June. 10, 2020. The CIED training was a 5-day course with both day and night time lanes with various types of simulated explosives and scenarios. (Photo by Sgt. Patrik Orcutt)



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How Miller
Sentinel Editor

Chapter member and author Greg Walker pens a heartfelt and important article about the struggle still to be faced by many returning veterans and remembers old friends.

Believe it or not, it is October again, and here is your final reminder and information for SOAR in Las Vegas.

Bob Baker's "Intelligence Ignored" is centered on the 1972 Easter Offensive, a push to grab as much land as possible before peace talks

by the NVA. Unfortunately, accurate predictions of the scope and timing of expected events were provided but not disseminated to the proper people. That mistake cost many lives due to a lack of preparation that could have been made.

A worthwhile, but impossible, task is that of doing a thorough book review about Steve Sherman et al's 14-book series, *Indochina in the Year of...*, so I selected one book as a shining example to review and include just one of the stellar articles. *1970 The Year of the Dog* covered most of when I was in Vietnam and Cambodia. Each absorbing article had a plethora of information critical to understanding what was going on in Indochina at that time. It turned out to be both scholarly and easy reading—a real wealth of knowledge.

A very brief summary of each of the rest of the series is included, along with a link where you can find the table of contents for each book along with a deal for the entire series.

"William E. Colby," by Lewis Sorley, is about one of the most effective men to tackle how to succeed in Vietnam. Bill was one of us, serving on a Jedburgh team in the OSS in WWII. That was a perfect prelude to helping the Vietnamese take charge of their country again through the pacification process. Many of us were contributors to that very successful effort, each in our own unique way. Bill went on to head the CIA for three years and got the Agency back on track with the recognition it deserved.

In "Thailand CPR," chapter member Bob Reed relates another fascinating on-the-ground account of his dental CAPs in Thailand. One might not think that a dentist would be likely to be called on to perform CPR, but for one fortunate soldier, it was one of many things Bob and others would be called upon to do to keep him alive.

We learn about our ever-expanding YouTube channel from Debra Holm, our honorary chapter member, master of our website and social media platforms, and graphic artist for the Sentinel. She also explains how to make the most of YouTube and how to subscribe to the channel.

Thanks in part to our local U.S. Representative, Lou Correa, the Veterans Housing Assistance Program has received a million-dollar grant from the federal government to help it accomplish its mission of helping veterans.

And please enjoy our chapter meeting pictures. ❖

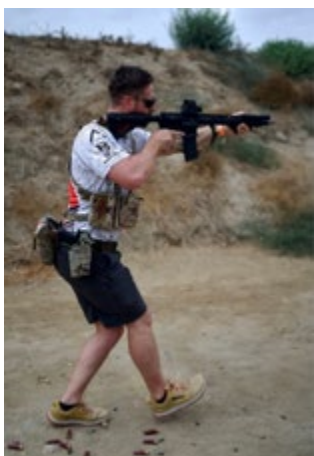
How Miller, Sentinel Editor

From the President | October 2023



Gregory Horton
President SFA Ch. 78

Well, this month we have a very exciting prospect, and that would be a chapter-sponsored shooting team. And who better to set this up than our VP, James McLanahan? Building on his Special Forces training, he has created a fantastic company called Primal Risk (<https://primalrisk.com>) and is taking the tactical world to a new level. The company provides training in practical defensive firearm use, urban and rural tactical leadership, emergency trauma courses, and survival training. Mobile training teams and train-the-trainer courses are available to law enforcement. Advanced concealed pistol techniques courses are available to civilians and professionals. Their mission is to “provide world-class training experiences to people who want control of their outcomes.”



Team Jersey in action! (Photo courtesy James McLanahan)

The team's first event is to take part in the Nevada Regional Tactical Games in Pahrump, Nevada, on September 2–3 (<https://www.thetacticalgames.com/event/the-tactical-games-nv-regional-2023/>). James already has great competition jerseys for the team competitors.

The very first Dining Out for C/1/19 SFG(A) will be held in September. It will be at the American Legion Post 283 and is shaping up to be an outstanding evening. The evening will consist of award and promotion ceremonies, dinner, a silent auction, retirement ceremonies, special guests, and a guest speaker. We will be represented by several of our Chapter members. I will have photos and an article to provide a snapshot of the event in my column next month.

Well, along with the good times, we sometimes have some very somber times. I received information from SGM Crebbs that Chapter 78 member Aloysius “Al” Watts has passed. Al was a charter member of the Chapter and had a long list of accomplishments. He was a former Commander of American Legion Post 295, the former Chairman of the Lew Millet MOH Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division, and a long-time member of the Chapter Honor Guard Team for the 82nd Airborne Association.

I have said this before, but I am amazed at the number of our SF brothers who are heavily involved with the community and our brother and sister organizations. Al is certainly a prime example of this giving by our veterans. Thank you for your involvement, Al, and rest in peace.



Al Watts, a charter member of Chapter 78, participating in an American Legion event and at the flag presentation ceremony for a fallen comrade. (Photos courtesy Gary Macnamara)



BG Ron Flynn at an awards ceremony. (Photo courtesy Bonnie Cooper)

In April, long-time Chapter member Brigadier General Ron Flynn succumbed to Alzheimer's. He was an outstanding Commander at Charlie Company, 12th Special Forces, when I was there. “El Ropo” was an outgoing, knowledgeable, and personable leader who deeply cared for his soldiers. DOL Sir!

Greg Horton SGM (Ret)
President
SFA Chapter 78

Our next Chapter meeting Saturday, October 21, 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 remaining 2023 dates:
November 18 • December 9

Transforming the Terrible Secret of Suicide

By Greg Walker (ret)
USA Special Forces



Mike Day with his K9, Herja. Photo from @mikeday5326/Instagram

I wrote this article some years ago and have rewritten it today in memory of my Brother, Friend, and fellow SOCOM Care Coalition co-worker, former U.S. Navy SEAL, Mike Day. Mike, severely wounded in 2007 during a raid, took his own life earlier this year. After recovering physically from his gunshot wounds he began working on the behavioral health side of the coin and became an amazing SOCOM Care Coalition case manager and advocate. In 2020, his book *Perfectly Wounded* was published and became an instant success. Somewhere along the way Mike's life again began to slip into the dark spiral of suicidal ideation and self-despair. His passing shocked our shared communities to their core. Mike's book, his story, is important and more relevant today in lieu of his passing. His death reminds us to be constantly vigilant regarding our own mental health and that of our Brothers and Sisters, our families, and our friends.

This paragraph from Mike's book reveals how his inner anguish and pain re-surfaced three years later but this time fatally. "...I fully believed I was thinking rationally, I know now that I was not. My irrational thoughts had started repeating themselves: the world would be better off without me. I don't care anymore, I just want out of here. I'm a horrible person. My future will just be filled with more of the same stress."

I have re-written and updated this article because Mike, this past March, was wrong. He was an amazing person; and we are not better off without him here. And his life and his story as recounted in *Perfectly Wounded* is now more than ever a "must read" for us all.

Because the darkness can resettle in.

Lest we forget - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZX3F2hvFhlc>



U.S. Navy photo by Mr. Oscar Sosa (Released)

In 1962, my grandfather on my father's side took his own life. This after murdering his estranged wife. His murder-suicide shook our immediate and extended families to the core. I was just eight years old and loved both deeply.

The aftershocks and ripples of that singular act were catastrophic for many, many years. My father, his oldest son, changed entirely as he grew older. His anger, fear, remorse, and self-hatred that came from the event consumed him. He isolated

—never explored counseling at any time although he could have afforded the best
—and died without meaningful resolution.

Twelve years ago, given the incredible training and real-world experience I had working with the U.S. Special Operations Command's Care Coalition as a Warrior Care provider and in lieu of nearly ten years on the street as a police officer with experience investigating suicides and attempted suicides...I investigated my grandfather's most terrible act.

I discovered no one else in the family had - to include my dad and his two brothers. And I discovered what we all thought was an accurate account was not. We had all lived our lives believing bad information, trauma generated recollections, and the masking of the event even having occurred (The Terrible Secret).

I learned the facts from reading the reports and asking questions, lots of questions, of those of our families still alive and willing to talk. I then shared the true story with everyone to include my father in a three-page letter.

The healing process began...for those who wanted to heal.

I was blessed to spend ten years working with our most seriously wounded, injured, ill, and suicidal. I was well educated along the way —and well trained. I was privileged to participate with equally skilled (many much more so) advocates and clinicians, police officers and hospital staffs, and family members of great courage, to successfully intervene in active suicidal situations.

We continue to lose between 35-40 Active Duty/National Guard/Reservists and Veterans a day to suicide. That is a body count we should be ashamed of. Too many trans-generational war fighters over the past 20 years of ongoing armed conflict. Fathers, sons, mothers, daughters, husbands, wives, grandchildren, friends, family...deceased by their own hands.

There are no memorial walls for those who take their own lives. The stigma of suicide ensures silence, shame, and secrecy. However, this cultural branding is changing. We know more about what takes our loved ones to the precipice of death by their own hands. And we are learning more to care for those left behind and to break the chain that suicide in a family or in a military unit can create unless challenged.

To kill the Most Terrible Secret you must expose it to the light of Love, Truth, and Self-Care. You must band together with like-minded warriors and fight the good fight.

And if the suicide is successful you then turn to those left behind, as I have, and self-educate, self-care, and seek professional counseling. Breaking the chain is possible - and important - as is re-learning to love the ones we have lost.

Because suicide is not painless.

MSG (ret) Leroy Petry, Medal of Honor, on the challenges of adversity and embracing one's life because "we only get one go-around here on earth and if we don't take care of it...it's not going to last." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZMXSr8S-nVQ>

Here are some of the exceptional resources in the war on military service-connected suicide that I have professionally worked for or with and with great success.

"No Fallen Comrade Left Behind"

Lines for Life Military Helpline

<https://www.linesforlife.org/mhl/>

Military One Source Confidential Counseling

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help>

The Mighty Oaks Veterans Warriors Programs

<https://www.mightyoaksprograms.org/>

The Green Beret Foundation

<https://www.greenberetfoundation.org/>

The Cedar Hills Hospital Military Program

<https://cedarhillshospital.com/treatment-services/the-military-program/>

Wounded Warrior Project

Veteran PTSD Treatment Support Resources

<https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/mental-wellness/veteran-ptsd-treatment-support-resources>

VA Military Crisis Line

<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg Walker is an honorably retired "Green Beret" and wounded warrior. Today he lives and writes from his home in Sisters, Oregon, with his service pup Tommy.



SOAR XLVII

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October 16–20, 2023

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SOAR, the SOA's reunion, is held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting, fostering an environment for camaraderie and fellowship to strengthen those friendships forged in battle and the opportunity to make new ones. Seminars, meetings and interactive workshops are offered keeping the membership up to date on programs, services, current events and other topics important to the membership. The 4-day event culminates with the annual banquet celebrating our members and honoring our fallen.

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ASP3C10 (Alpha-Sierra-Papa-Three-Charlie-One-Zero)

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Fri and Sat – \$99 + \$15.99 resort fee + tax per day

Register for SOAR at:

<https://form.jotform.com/SpecialOperationsAssociation/2023-soar-registration>

For the schedule of events, updates, and other information:

<https://specialoperations.org/soa/soar-xlvii/>



Intelligence Ignored

By W.R. (Bob) Baker

Originally published in Small Wars Journal, 02/01/2023

<https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/intelligence-ignored>

As the Easter Offensive of 1972 was the precursor to the signing of the Paris Peace Accords of 1973, there were two occasions where the United States could and should have moved against North Vietnam earlier but didn't.

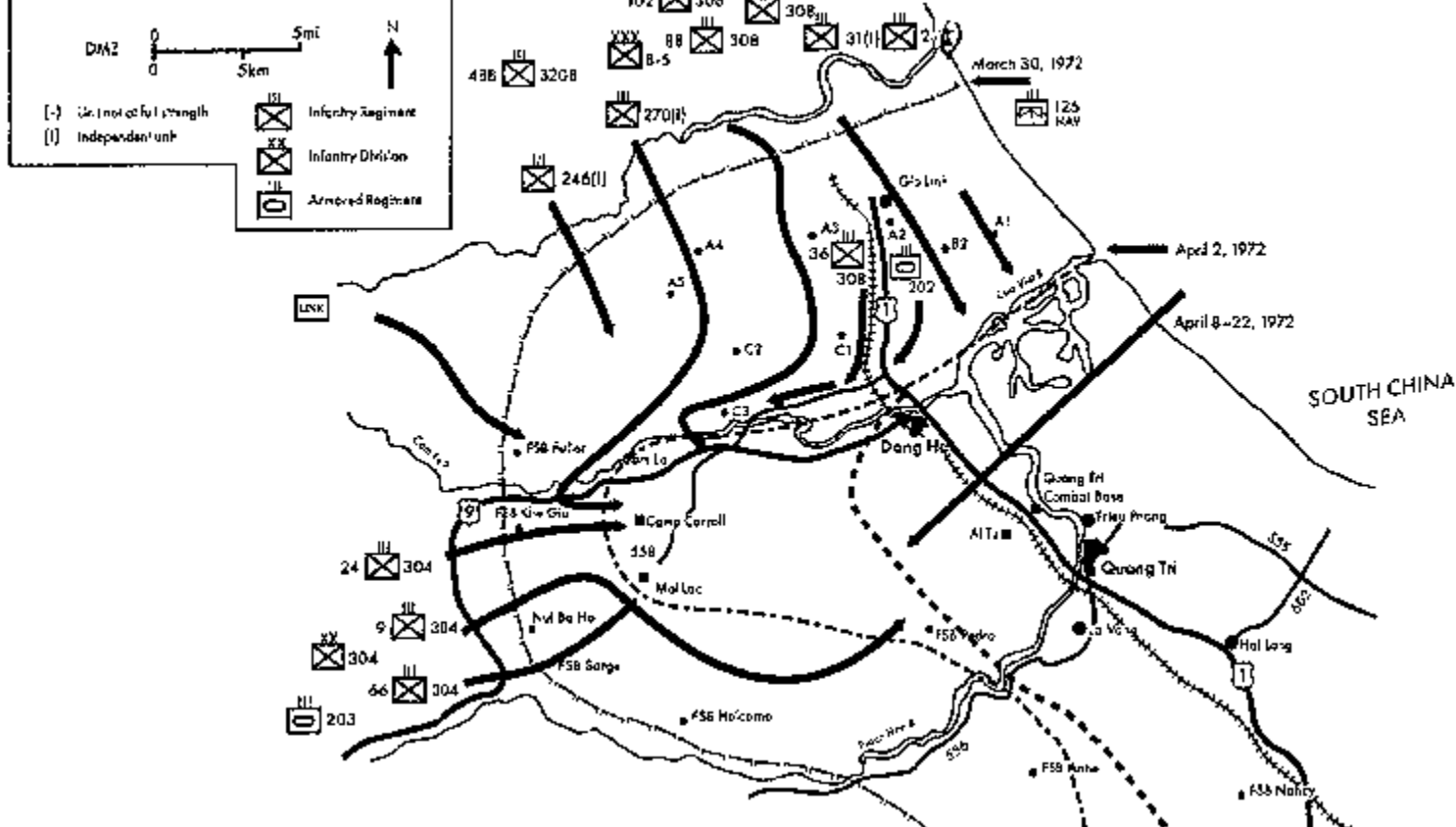
The first time occurred prior to the invasion of South Vietnam by the North Vietnamese Army (NVA), which began of March 30, 1972, was when William Stearman, a career Foreign Service member who went over to the National Security Council (NSC), put together a small sub rosa group before the Easter Offensive. This group was composed of NSA, CIA, and DIA members, as well as Dr. Steve Hosmer of RAND and Dr. Stearman. Using Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT)—the Hanoi newspapers—they had their first inkling of what was to be the Easter Offensive in the fall of 1971.

They found that North Vietnamese men who were previously exempted (both skilled and physically unfit, Chinese, and Montagnards who didn't speak Vietnamese) were all being conscripted in North Vietnam, they looked at seasonal weather patterns, and “communications shifts,” all of which brought them to the conclusion that the date of the invasion was to be somewhere around 10 days before it actually occurred, which was March 30th. This analysis was passed to Henry Kissinger's deputy, General Alexander Haig. “I wrongly passed this on to AI Haig who seems to have ignored it, since our generals were caught by surprise,” Stearman wrote.

The second occurrence happened shortly afterward.

DIA (the Defense Intelligence Agency) noticed a large increase in men, materiel, and new unit traffic headed south along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Sound, heat, urine, and vibration sensors were placed along the Trail to detect movement of troops and trucks. Colonel Peter Armstrong, USMC, wrote, “Our estimate was based on hard

Map 4: Inception of the Easter Offensive of 1972 from Laos and the DMZ



The North Vietnamese invasion of the South through the Demilitarized Zone and Laos. (Courtesy W.R. Baker)



Members of the South Vietnamese 20th Tank Regiment ride a captured North Vietnamese T59 tank south of Dong Ha during the Easter Offensive. (U.S. Army Center of Military History)

intelligence, and as the intelligence business is a very competitive one, I also enjoyed the fact the DIA was first on the street with the new estimate.”

The 571st Military Intelligence Detachment (the only US intelligence unit still operating in South Vietnam’s I Corps) however, never received anything from DIA, nor any reference to their estimate. COL Armstrong also wrote that, “South Vietnamese units, while well aware of the impending offensive, were not prepared for the enormity of the Communist’s thrust directly through the DMZ.” If they were so well aware, why did US Ambassador (to South Vietnam) Ellsworth Bunker, General Creighton Abrams (MACV commander), and Major General William E. Potts (his J-2, Intelligence officer) all leave the country and why did two ARVN regiments below the DMZ turn off their comms and hit the road to swap positions on the very morning of the Easter Offensive of 1972? None of which could possibly indicate any sign of “high levels of awareness” or warning.



PAVN 122mm artillery battery goes into action on the Kon Tum front. (Joel D. Meyerson, *Images of a Lengthy War*. Washington DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1986.)

Surprisingly, the full extent of the invasion only became evident four days later. President Nixon “insisted that it was impossible for the North Vietnamese to have assembled three divisions and support facilities without the Pentagon’s knowing about it. Laird, so the President made clear, had deliberately withheld the information.” Secretary Laird must not have remembered COL Armstrong’s briefing he received in January 1972.

The 571st knew something was going to happen from the information our agents were sending to us. This Human Intelligence allowed us to translate their information into exact locations and to correctly surmise their initial intentions—few headquarters (both in-country and out) listened until the NVA invasion began. For instance, one of the three NVA divisions was positioned west of Hue three weeks before one division entered South Vietnam from the Trail as another division and multiple independent regiments came south through the Demilitarized Zone early on March 30th.

Commanding Officer, 56th Regiment, 3rd ARVN Division-Message of Surrender

On April 3, 1972, Lieutenant Colonel Pham Van Dinh made the following broadcast over Radio Hanoi, less than 24 hours after he surrendered the 56th Regiment at Camp Carroll, Quang Tri Province to the North Vietnamese forces. His radio message was recorded at that time and subsequently translated into English:

I, Lieutenant Colonel Pham Van Dinh, 56th ARVN Infantry regiment commander have returned to the National Liberation Front forces. My regiment was stationed at Tan Lam (CARROLL) firebase. On 30 March 1972 my unit was receiving a heavy shelling from NLF forces. All of the other friendly forces which were operating around our area or were stationed near our firebase were destroyed one after another. If we continued to fight we would be without all of our logistical and combat support as well as medical evacuation. I was sure that my unit was going to have many casualties. Meanwhile most of the friendly forces and the rest of the 3rd ARVN Division were evacuated to places which were safer. They left us alone under strong pressure of the NLF forces.

Most of the troops of my unit in all ranks refused to fight anymore. I and Lt. Col. Vinh Phoy, who is my executive officer, also decided to refuse to fight anymore. In order to prevent further loss of life of my soldiers, I called for a meeting attended by all my unit commanders. At the meeting we decided to surrender to all of the NLF forces. We communicated this decision to the NLF at 1430 hours 2 April 1972 via PRC-25 radio.

After we left the firebase we were well treated by the NLF forces. The relationship between us and the NLF forces was getting closer and closer.

On this occasion, I advise you ARVN troops that you better return to the NLF, because the NLF fighting spirit is getting higher and higher than ever, and of course, the American Thieu gang is going to lose the war; the war the Americans called the Vietnamization war. They have been trying to use us against part of our own people’s patriots.

If the generals and admirals in and out of Vietnam had heeded our intelligence, things would certainly have been different. Ultimately, there would probably have been far fewer American and South Vietnamese casualties as the US slammed the door in helping South Vietnam withstand the communist North. ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

W.R. (Bob) Baker, an intelligence-trained analyst, was assigned to the 571st MI Detachment/525th MI Group in Da Nang, Vietnam, which was effectively the only intelligence unit still operating in I Corps during the Easter Offensive of 1972. His book *Break in the Chain—Intelligence Ignored* was written as the sole intelligence analyst in I Corps during the offensive, and has been reviewed by most of the US intelligence agencies and also endorsed by others who were also there during this period.



NVA Colonel Ba Ho Van Duyet (38th NVA Artillery Regiment), shaking hands with the surrendered 56th ARVN Regiment commander, Lieutenant Colonel Pham and his assistant regiment commander Lieutenant Colonel Vinh Phong, amid some 600 ARVN soldiers. It is suspected that this photo was taken by the revolutionary party. (<http://hothihongnhungdr.blogspot.com/2012/01/nguoi-trung-ta-quan-oi-sai-gon-phan.html>)

The South Vietnam government is also using us to continue the war that they feel can benefit them as individuals.

I think that your continued sacrifice at this time means nothing. Again, I ask you to not let the Thieu-American regime take advantage of your fighting potential. If they send you out to the field you must refuse the combat order. If they force you to go, then you must not fight the NLF. Instead, find out how to get in touch with the NLF forces in order for you to return to the people. Your action will effectively assist in ending the war quickly and also save your life.

My personal feeling is that the NLF forces are going to win the war. The NLF is ready all the time to welcome you back. The NLF is expecting you to return very soon.

Book Review

Indochina in the Year of the Dog – 1970 by Vietnam Veterans for Factual History (VVFH)

By How Miller

Former Green Beret Steve Sherman has helped many of us over the years locate teammates and others. He has, through his lifelong efforts, become the unofficial historian for Special Forces. His website, www.specialforcesbooks.com, can take you immediately to a search for the personnel at the locations where you served in Vietnam or lead you to many of his other websites, CDs, and publications.

Somewhere in the middle of all this, he decided to gather a history of our involvement in what the French called Indochina. He picked 1963, the year of the Cat, to collect stories and reporting that explained what was going on that year and why. The book was a resounding success and he and his team put together 14 books. I was able to procure a single book: *Indochina in the Year of the Dog – 1970*, because that was the year I spent most of my time in Vietnam and Cambodia.

This volume is packed with information, an in-depth look at the subjects, and historical background for you to get a greater understanding of what was going on. The scene was set with a piece from MACV Command History in "The Situation in 1970." Then we see the entire career of Norodom Sihanouk, starting as a young royal, through his various titles and loyalties, ending up as the father of the Cambodian king, and dying in Beijing in 2012. The author, Tan Dara Thach, had been a high-ranking officer in the Cambodian Army (FANK) until 1975.

That led logically to Lewis Sorley's "Cambodian Campaign", which my camp participated in, and how that success contributed to the maturation of the South Vietnamese Armed Forces and the entire pacification program. Later, Lewis tells of two entirely opposite efforts to bring citizens together in the rural pacification program, where they could once again be in charge of their own lives and deny the enemy a safe haven. First was Ambassador Komer, who made efforts but faced heavy criticism for promoting the idea of pacification but not actually accomplishing it. He was replaced by General Creighton Abrams, who brought in William Colby, a former OSS Jedburgh leader in France in WWII. Colby did most everything the right way, spending lots of time in the field listening to the Vietnamese farmers, for instance, and guiding his efforts toward helping them fulfill their dreams while defending themselves from the enemy. By the end of 1970, the pacification program was a resounding success.

Another theme explored is the anti-war movement, starting with Roger Canfield and Robert Turner writing about the incident at Kent State, including a surprising, in-depth look at how the shooting started. That was later followed by a detailed look by Roger at the many whose actions were in sync with what the Vietnamese Communists were trying to accomplish. Many of the activities were funded or subsidized by communist organizations. There are many familiar names, such as the Weather Underground, Black Panthers, Jane Fonda, Huey Newton, Noam Chomsky, and an alphabet soup of acronyms like COLIFAM and CPUSA, the americong, trips to communist countries, and broadcasts on Radio Hanoi.

Throw in some North Vietnamese spies like Pham Xuan An talking to reporters hanging around the bars in Saigon, waiting to be fed stories, and there was a lot going on to sour the American public on the war that we were actually winning.

Then we are treated to scintillating tales of SF raids. Operation Tailwind, by SOG veteran and author John Stryker Meyer, is about a highly successful raid deep into Laos to help a CIA operation get the enemy off their backs. The other, by Mike Bengé, tells of the Son Tay Raid to rescue American POWs from a prison fairly near Hanoi. Masterfully planned and executed, including a fallback adjustment even though the POWs had recently been moved elsewhere, resulted in other benefits. POWs were suddenly treated somewhat better, and morale improved because we had tried. In their own words, they knew they weren't forgotten.

Fred Benson worked in Laos from 1968 to 1974. In "Battle for Sam Neua Province," he relates a complicated but understandable history of Laos from the 1950s on (part 1 through 1965). He fills in so many details as to make sense of events leading to the SF Operation White Star and later SOG. The US wanted, at the very least, for the poorly equipped Laos to remain a functioning neutral buffer between Thailand and North Vietnam. Several attempts to help them accomplish that were foiled by the communists, and ultimately all parties ended up pretending that Laos actually was neutral, while both sides warred incessantly.

Indochina in the Year of..." Series by VVFH



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It wraps up with a plea for honest reporting of the war and an invitation to us (the participants) to be heard, acting as witnesses to what we actually experienced.

This is just the year 1970. There is a whole series of books from 1963 to 1975 with tons of eye-opening, scholarly content. You can find the table of contents for each book at <https://www.vvfh.org/index.php/books/e-bookstore/indochina-year-books>, and ways to purchase, including a fantastic deal for the whole printed set.

Each of the series' years is summarized here.

1963: *Our Pre-Sponse: A Supplement to the TTU-NARA Conference on Vietnam in the Year 1963* was the first of the series of Yellow Books, a series of books that covered each year in detail.

1964: *Indochina in the Year of the Dragon* was an eventful year with events like the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, the unraveling of the Geneva Accords, the Brinx Hotel Bombing, and much more.

1965: *Indochina in the Year of the Snake* volume covers the events of 1965, including Nguyen Cao Ky, the landing of the Marines, poison gas, Agent Orange, and many other issues.

1966: *Indochina in the Year of the Horse* covers the events of 1966, including the helicopter war, Hanoi's political war inside the United States, the battle of A Chau, and much more.

1967: *Indochina in the Year of the Goat* covers the events of 1967, including Westmoreland's myths, the Thirteenth Plenum, intelligence, missed opportunities, and much more.

1968: *Indochina in the Year of the Monkey* covers the events of the pivotal year of 1968, including the Tet Offensive, the battle in Hue and the massacre that occurred there, and much more.

1969: *Indochina in the Year of the Cock* covers the events of 1969, including Nixon's approach to the war, Hamburger Hill, and the involvement of North Korea and China in the war.

1970: *Indochina in the Year of the Dog* covers the events of 1970, including the Son Tay raid, the Cambodian campaign, Kent State, and much more.

1971: *Indochina in the Year of the Pig* covers the events of 1971, including Lam Son 719, the Pentagon Papers, graft and corruption, and the peace movement.

1972: *Indochina in the Year of the Rat* covers the events of the year 1972, including the Easter Offensive, An Loc, Linebacker I and II, and much more.

1973: *Indochina in the Year of the Water Buffalo* covers the events of 1973, including Operation Homecoming—the release of the POWs, Land to the Tiller, and the false peace of the treaty.

1974: *The Year of the Tiger* covers the events of 1974, including writers of the Republic of Vietnam, China's relationship with Laos, Hanoi strategic thinking, and more.

1975: *Indochina in the Year of the Cat* covers the events of the fateful year of 1975, when Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia fell under communist control and millions of people died.

1963–75: *Indochina in the Year of the Years 1963–1975 (Supplement)* covers topics spanning the entire period of American involvement in Vietnam, including topics they were unable to include in the individual yearbooks. ❖

Ambassador William E. Colby

By Lewis Sorley

Excerpted from *Indochina in the Year of the Dog—1970*, pages 77–86, with permission.

William Egan Colby was born into an Army family in 1920. He got off to a good start (when his father was stationed in China) at a school whose motto was: “Tientsin Grammar School, fight we must, or Tientsin Grammar School, bite the dust.”



William E. Colby (CIA)

Colby graduated from Princeton, served in the OSS during World War II (parachuting into German-held France and Norway to

assist partisans), graduated from Columbia University Law School after the war, then soon joined the newly-established CIA. Early postings in Italy and Sweden were followed by assignment to Vietnam, where he served as Deputy Station Chief, then Chief of Station, Saigon, during 1959-1962. He then became Chief of CIA's Far East Division before returning to Vietnam to soon become Deputy to the Commander, US Military Assistance Command, for CORDS (Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support).¹ That meant he was, with the rank of ambassador, in charge of U.S. support for South Vietnam's pacification program.

The COMUSACV then was General Creighton Abrams. Colby took over his new job from Robert Komer, who had been sacked by Abrams.

What they set about to prosecute was what they called “One War,” meaning not a war of “the big battalions,” as people had referred to the combat operations in the earlier years, contrasting them to an “other war” of pacification and so on. They said combat operations, pacification, and improvement of South Vietnam's armed forces were all equally important, and all had to progress together, or if not then the overall enterprise was not going to succeed.

As a consequence, the measure of merit changed dramatically from the “body count” of the Westmoreland years to “population secured.” And the “search and destroy” tactics prescribed by Westmoreland were now changed to “clear and hold” tactics, with the “hold” being provided increasingly by the South Vietnamese, and especially their Territorial Forces (Regional Forces and Popular Forces), as U.S. troops were progressively withdrawn.

With Colby's ascent to the top post in pacification support, the remarkable triumvirate of Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, General Abrams, and Colby—men of like character, integrity,

1. Under Colby the acronym was soon changed to stand for Civil Operations and Rural Development Support.

devotion to duty, and personal modesty—was in place and managing American forces and actions in Vietnam to good effect.

Abrams and Colby quickly established a bond of mutual trust and confidence. “Shortly after Komer left,” Colby remembered, “Abrams drew me aside. ‘You know, I think our relationship is going to be a good one,’ he told me. ‘I’ll make sure it is, General,’ I responded.” And, added Colby, “I was enormously impressed by his grasp of the political significance of the pacification program. Finally we had focused on the real war.”²

Unlike his predecessor, who stuck close to his Saigon villa, Colby was out and about. General William Rosson, then the Deputy Commander to Abrams, liked what he saw in Colby, a man who “was soft-spoken and—unlike Komer—spent a lot of his time in the field, so he didn’t have to rely on reports and knew what was going on.”³

“My evaluation of how strong the infrastructure was, and how strong the enemy was,” Colby confirmed, “was more learned by my frequent visits to the countryside and driving up the roads...than by reading the numbers in Saigon.”⁴

Ambassador Bunker, too, welcomed Colby’s appointment, citing “his ability to get things done, also his judgment, his analytical powers... his experience.”⁵ Said a colleague, contrasting the new man with his predecessor, “Komer was always trying to convince you pacification was working, but Colby was trying to make it work.”⁶ Noted a reporter, “Colby’s recipe for good conversation has two ingredients—his questions and your answers.”

That had followed on an introductory briefing on the pacification program as Colby characterized it soon after becoming Deputy to the COMUSMACV for CORDS. Said General Abrams at a subsequent staff meeting: “I think that [Colby’s briefing] was a splendid presentation. I think it comes out at a most opportune moment.”⁷

In early July 1968 Abrams had described the ultimate objective at a weekly staff meeting: “I think we probably all agree,” he said, “that in the end what they’ve [the South Vietnamese government] got to get done here is control of their own people and get them secure. The pacification effort is the ultimate effort which has to be made.”⁸

2. Lewis Sorley, *A Better War* (NY: Harcourt Brace, 1999), p. 70.

3. *Ibid.*, Rosson interview.

4. William E. Colby Deposition, in *Vietnam: A Documentary Collection: Westmoreland vs. CBS* (NY: Clearwater Publishing, 1985), p. 100. Microform.

5. Amb. Ellsworth Bunker, Oral History (unpublished transcript).

6. Tom McCoy, as quoted in Thomas Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets: Richard Helms and the CIA* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 182.

7. Lewis Sorley, ed., *Vietnam Chronicles: The Abrams Tapes, 1968-1972*, p. 55.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Later Colby recorded his admiration for Abrams and his grasp of the war and how it should be fought. “It wasn’t until...1968 that we really began to make progress in the real nature of the war there,” he observed. “The intervening years were just confusion and chaos.”

In the aftermath of Tet 1968 Colby was the architect of an Accelerated Pacification Campaign designed to restore the damage done by Tet in the countryside and take advantage of the more favorable situation existing there as a result of the enemy’s severe guerrilla force losses at Tet, but in an abrupt break with earlier practice the plan was not just foisted on the Vietnamese. Rather they were led to develop a viable plan of their own, an approach that gave them a much greater stake in the outcome.

Even John Paul Vann, a professional skeptic, was favorably impressed by the resulting plan. “I *greatly endorse* the direction that this presentation suggests that we go, and greatly applaud the effort that’s gone into recognizing the basic problems that have got to be countered,” he told Abrams and the other commanders.⁹

In late September 1968 Abrams assembled his commanders for an analysis of the broader implications of the war. The heart of the briefing was presented by Colby, who described an ominous current situation, one that saw the enemy trying to establish “Liberation Committees” throughout South Vietnam with what he called a “particular sense of urgency.” At this point the Hamlet Evaluation System (a periodic statistical compilation designed to reflect the current status of pacification), while admittedly imprecise, suggested that more than 46 percent of the population was under some degree of Viet Cong influence. Thus, said Colby, “in the event of a cease-fire, the enemy might claim political control of about one-half of the population of South Vietnam.”

Colby then turned to means of reversing this unsatisfactory situation. The Accelerated Pacification Campaign—of which he was the architect, although he did not say so—would seek to eliminate enemy base areas and the command centers of his political effort. A program

9. Sorley, *Vietnam Chronicles*, p. 51.



CIA Director William Colby points out Communist advances in Xuan Loc on a map of Vietnam in the Cabinet Room at the White House during a meeting of the NSC regarding the Communist advances in S. Vietnam, Washington, D.C., April 9, 1975. (CIA)

called *Phuong Hoang*—known as *Phoenix* in English and designed to neutralize the Viet Cong infrastructure—would serve as “an essential tool for this action.” A preemptive campaign would be targeted against those areas controlled by the Viet Cong, contested, or heavily infested by VC; its objective was to plant the government’s flag, saturate the areas with military forces, and purge the enemy’s underground shadow government. Territorial security, VCI [Viet Cong Infrastructure] neutralization, and supporting programs of self-help, self-defense, and self-government would thus constitute the counteroffensive.

This was, Colby made clear, a job for the Vietnamese, but one in which American forces could help by screening the pacification areas from enemy assaults and conducting spoiling operations against enemy forces. *Phoenix* was described by Colby as “a program of consolidating intelligence and exploitation efforts against these particularly key individuals [in the communist infrastructure].” It finally got off the ground, he said, in July 1968 when President Thieu signed a decree.

Having spent the past several months developing his approach, Colby now addressed his presentation most directly to Abrams. “I was not disappointed,” he said later. Abrams “listened intently, following each point with obvious understanding of the essentially political analysis I was giving.” At the end Abrams gave his full approval. When the Accelerated Pacification Campaign began on November 1, 1968, Abrams considered it the turning point at which the government “took the initiative in South Vietnam, the initiative in the larger sense of the total war.”

As 1968 neared an end, with the Accelerated Pacification Campaign designed by Colby roaring along, Abrams gave Colby some well-deserved recognition, saying at the weekly senior staff meeting that “this pacification program really bears no resemblance to what was going on last year—as far as results and so on.” And Abrams viewed this as the critical battlefield, cabling Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Earle Wheeler that in pacification “we are making our major effort; so is the enemy. In my judgment, what is required now is all out with all we have. The military machine runs best at full throttle. That’s about where we have it and where I intend to keep it.”

In mid-January 1969 Colby returned the compliment, telling a visiting Ambassador U. Alexis Johnson that “the main point is, as General Abrams tells us, it’s one war. You know, we used to talk about the ‘other’ war, but he’s made it into one war. I think the full strategy here is all of one piece. Pacification is very much a part of the considerations of the regular divisional units.” And, he added at the next staff meeting, “We’ve put the major emphasis over on the RF and PF [the South Vietnamese Regional Forces and Popular Forces].”

Colby identified South Vietnam’s Regional Forces and Popular Forces—components of the Territorial Forces whose mission was to remain in place in their home provinces and districts to provide local security—as key to gains in pacification. General Abrams had made their expansion and improvement his special concern, arranging that they get the modern weapons and other equipment that General Westmoreland had for so long denied them and sending out small military advisory teams to work with the RF companies and PF platoons.

Greatly expanded during these later years, Regional and Popular Forces eventually came to comprise half of South Vietnam’s total armed forces nationwide. “Gradually, in their outlook, deportment, and combat performance,” said Lieutenant General Ngo Quang Truong, “the RF and

PF troopers shed their paramilitary origins and increasingly became full-fledged soldiers.” So decidedly was this the case, Truong concluded, that “throughout the major period of the Vietnam conflict” the RF and PF were “aptly regarded as the mainstay of the war machinery.”¹⁰

Colby was, as were Ambassador Bunker and General Abrams, very admiring of how President Thieu was pushing pacification in all its manifestations. At a staff meeting in early February 1969 he described how during the past week Thieu had gone to each of the corps areas to review in depth what had been accomplished during 1968 and the plans for 1969. The President said he wanted to maintain the momentum, reported Colby, and put his major emphasis on early elections in all the villages in order to meet the VC liberation committee challenge. Plus, he “explained in some depth that he wanted the people of the country involved in the war by being invited to participate in their own decision making. He kept pounding this in on the various province and district chiefs, that they were not just to boss the people around, that they were to let the people make decisions and get involved in the whole problem.”¹¹

An important initiative in identifying and neutralizing the enemy’s covert infrastructure that was keeping the rural populace under control through terror and coercion was the *Phoenix* program.

General Abrams often stated his belief in the great value of good intelligence. Colby shared that outlook, and it was at the heart of the *Phoenix* program. “This was an attempt to regularize the intelligence coverage,” he emphasized, “decent interrogations, decent record-keeping, evidence, all that sort of thing, the whole structure of the struggle against the secret apparatus. This was *Phoenix*.”¹²

Critics of the war sought to characterize the *Phoenix* program as an assassination scheme. Colby stoutly insisted otherwise, including in testimony before Congressional committees. For one thing, enemy who had knowledge of the enemy infrastructure and its functioning were invaluable intelligence assets. The incentive was to capture them alive and exploit that knowledge, not bring in mute corpses. When Congressional committees sent their own investigators to Vietnam, they found confirmation of what Colby had told them. Of some 15,000 VCI [Viet Cong infrastructure] neutralized during 1968, 15 percent had been killed (many in conventional combat actions), 13 percent had rallied (come over to the government side), and 72 percent were captured.¹³

Colby and John Paul Vann celebrated Tet 1971 by driving across the Delta, from Can Tho to Cau Doc, unescorted, just the two of them on a couple of motorcycles. Vann was by that point, noted Colby,

10. *Territorial Forces* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1978), pp. 34, 127.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 122-123.

12. William E. Colby, Oral History Interview. LBJ Library

13. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Vietnam: December 1969, A Staff Report*, p. 4. Preliminary results for the following year, through October, indicated “the percentage killed was almost double that in 1968.” *Ibid.* Through 31 July 1972, Mark Moyer established, a total of 81,740 VCI had been neutralized (26,369 killed, 33,358 captured, and 22,013 rallied). See *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey*, p. 236. Meanwhile the enemy, who were running a real assassination program aimed at innocent civilians, executed an estimated 36,725 through 1972. See Harry Summers, *Vietnam War Almanac*, p. 284.

very satisfied with the success achieved in the pacification program, “even to the extent of keeping his mouth shut once in a while, which was an extreme sacrifice for John.” The progress that had been achieved led Ambassador Bunker to observe, in a reporting cable to the President, that “pacification, like golf, becomes more difficult to improve the better it gets.”

In the autumn of 1971 Tom Barnes returned to Vietnam in the pacification program after an absence of three years. He told General Weyand, then the Deputy COMUSMACV, that he was struck by rural prosperity he found then, by the way the Territorial Forces had taken hold, and by the growing political and economic autonomy of the villages. “One of our greatest contributions to pacification,” he said, “has been the reestablishment of the village in its historic Vietnamese role of relative independence and self-sufficiency.”

These developments were not lost on the enemy, as revealed in a captured COSVN [Central Office for South Vietnam, an important enemy headquarters] Directive of October 1971. “During the past two years,” it read, “the U.S. and puppet [meaning South Vietnamese] focused their efforts on pacifying and encroaching upon rural areas, using the most barbarous schemes. They strengthened puppet forces, consolidated the puppet government, and established an outpost network and espionage and People’s Self-Defense Force organizations in many hamlets and villages. They provided more technical equipment for, and increased the mobility of, puppet forces, established blocking lines, and created a new defensive and oppressive system in densely populated rural areas. As a result, they caused many difficulties to and inflicted losses on friendly [Communist] forces.”¹⁴ That was a pretty good report card.

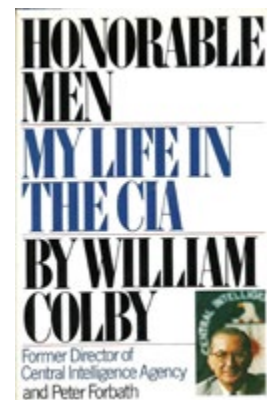
Colby, in sharp contrast to his predecessor Komer, proved insightful regarding military aspects of the war. When possible incursions into Cambodia were under consideration, Colby spoke up in support, emphasizing the importance of the enemy’s base areas and lines of communications across South Vietnam’s borders. “That’s the interminable part of this war,” he observed. “Unless you can solve that, you are here forever.” Abrams agreed. “No amount of bombing in North Vietnam is going to cause him to rethink his problem. But if we go in those base areas, he’s got to rethink the *whole* damn problem!”¹⁵

Additional confirmation of what had been accomplished by the South Vietnamese during the Bunker-Abrams-Colby years came from the enemy side. General Tran Van Tra admitted, as quoted in Olivier Todd’s splendid book *Cruel April*, that by the time of the cease-fire “our cadres and men were exhausted.” “All our units were in disarray, and we were suffering from a lack of manpower and a shortage of food and ammunition. So it was hard to stand up under enemy attacks. Sometimes we had to withdraw to let the enemy retake control of the population.”

Colby left Vietnam in June of 1971, drawn away by a family crisis. In 1973 he was appointed Director of Central Intelligence, a post he held for the next three years in one of the most difficult and contentious periods of CIA’s existence. Deciding that the Agency’s future viability

depended on reestablishing its credibility with the Congress, he shared with its oversight and investigating committees the most damaging evidence of past misdeeds from institutional files. That earned him the enmity of some old hands—including, of course, those involved in the wrongdoing—but the admiration and approval of others.

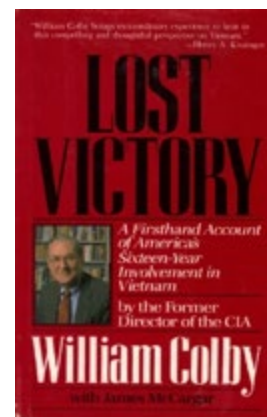
“To say the very least,” wrote Colby in a 1978 memoir entitled *Honorable Men: My Life in the CIA*, “most of the White House staff and, for that matter, much of the intelligence community, were unenthusiastic about what I was doing. Their preferred approach, bluntly put, would have been to stonewall, to disclose as little as they could get away with, and to cry havoc to the national security about what they couldn’t deny—in short, the exact opposite of mine.”¹⁶ The book’s jacket described its author as “one of the most controversial and visible of CIA Directors.”



Colby may have been troubled by his dilemma, but he had no doubt of the correct course of action. “By cooperating, by being as forthcoming as possible, we did get the chance to present the CIA’s case in the most favorable light, place its few abuses in the context of its greater accomplishments, minimize the sensationalism and so protect the Agency from a slew of crippling legislation that I am convinced the Congress might have enacted in the heat of hysteria.” And then there was also this: “As a matter of conscience, I was obliged to cooperate if I were to abide by my oath to support and defend the Constitution.”¹⁷

Hal Bean, a senior CIA officer, later recalled those difficult times and how Colby had handled them: “Even during the height of the excessive abuse he was subjected to by staff and members of Congress, he maintained a dignity and calm that few of us could have matched under the circumstances—and he did so with little or no support from those for whom he worked.”

In 1989 Colby published a second book, this one entitled *Lost Victory: A Firsthand Account of America’s Sixteen-Year Involvement in Vietnam*. In it he described how mistakes in the White House and the Pentagon, including support for the overthrow of South Vietnam’s President Ngo Dinh Diem, the decision to introduce massive U.S. ground forces into the war, and failure to develop a political strategy for rural Vietnam brought chaos to Vietnam and forfeited the support of the American people.



“Even today,” he noted in retrospect, “most Americans believe the cause was hopeless. In fact... South Vietnam defeated the communist guerrillas and threw back a massive North Vietnamese military assault in 1972, *after* a half million U.S. troops had already been withdrawn.”

14. Directive No. 01/CT 71, as quoted in Gareth Porter, ed., *Vietnam: The Definitive Documentation of Human Decisions*, 2 vol. (Stanfordville, NY: Coleman Enterprises, 1979), p. II:551.

15. Olivier Todd, *Cruel April: The Fall of Saigon* (NY: W. W. Norton, 1990), p. 79.

16. William Colby, *Honorable Men: My Life in the CIA* (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1978), p. 16.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 20.

Colby's book of course incensed anti-war elements whose contention was that nothing good was or could have been done in Vietnam, but it in fact constituted a balanced, reasonable, restrained account of the opportunities, accomplishments, and missed chances of a complicated war. In this it was very like the man himself, modest, insightful, and devoted to duty. Wrote journalist Zalin Grant, who had known Colby: "I considered him the most capable and effective American to serve in the Vietnam War."¹⁸

In Vietnam Ambassador William Colby, Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, and General Creighton Abrams fought as hard as they could for as long as they could with everything that was left to them to try to help South Vietnam win the war. Maybe others in Washington or elsewhere were interested in stalemate or disengagement or some other palliative solution, but these three men and the forces they led were striving for just one thing—victory, defined as a South Vietnam capable of defending itself and determining its own political, economic, and cultural future. In so doing, they by their actions defined stewardship—doing the best you can with what you have to work with, and doing it with selflessness, dignity, and integrity.

Colby met an untimely death under suspicious circumstances, found dead in April 1996. While the official investigation was inconclusive, a further inquiry by Zalin Grant stated very simply: "This was a murder, not an accident."¹⁹

Colby was bade farewell in grand and moving funeral rites at Washington National Cathedral, then laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery. Eulogizing him in a later essay, senior CIA veteran Hal Ford wrote this: "All in all, Bill Colby was a person of integrity, not afraid to tackle tough problems others would duck, and certain that intelligence will remain an honorable and needed profession. Above all, he is to be remembered for his conviction that we Agency people are American citizens first and must be responsive to Constitutional demands more than to any self-created CIA code of separateness. We are all fortunate to have known this honorable colleague. He will be missed, but his integrity and broad vision will remain models for the rest of us intelligence officers and our successors."²⁰

Vietnam veteran and military historian Colonel Harry Summers added this succinct observation: "Colby won his war. Too bad his leaders did not have his backbone and strength of character to win their war as well."²¹

18. Zalin Grant's *War Tales*

19. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

20. Hal Ford, "Bill Colby Remembered: A Personal Recollection," *CIRA Newsletter* (Summer 1996), p. 20.

21. Harry Summers, "William Colby: He Won His War," *Army Times* (13 May 1996), p. 54.



Untold stories of MAC-V SOG. Vietnam. The Secret War.

Episode 037: Jim Suber – Brother of SOG MIA Recon Green Beret's Decades of Pain

Chapter 78 member John Stryker Meyer, call sign—Tilt, interviews fellow chapter member Jim Suber, brother of SFC Randy Suber. SFC Suber, One-One of RT Oregon, along with SSGT Ronald Ray, the One-Zero of the recon team, were declared MIA on November 13, 1969. Jim's story offers a perspective of SOG from the side of the families when a warrior went MIA.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lewis Sorley, a Vietnam veteran, is the author of *A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam* and biographies of Generals Creighton Abrams, Harold K. Johnson, and William Westmoreland.

Thailand CPR



Bob Reed in Thailand, at center, in approximately 1970.

By Capt. (ret.) Robert (Bob) Reed D.D.S.

In June of 1970, this fresh-faced transfer from the 7th Group arrived in Thailand to become the dentist for the 46th Special Forces Co. (Airborne). Before I left, I was told to call the Bangkok safe house as incoming personnel were sometimes skimmed off by other Thailand U.S. Army units. So I arrived and placed a call, which I remember because the phone system in Thailand made that more of a guessing game than a predictable event.

I spent the night at the safe house, was picked up in deuce and half by some SF guys, and we made our way about 60 miles to Lop Buri, our team headquarters north of Bangkok. I reported for duty to LTC. Paul Combs, my CO, checked into my clinic and was directed to live with others in a 4-room bungalow. My job was to take care of the Company, even though we had A teams spread all over Thailand. That meant I had to travel to the A teams either by air or rail to treat them on site rather than take them away for 3 days, one day back to Lop Buri, one day at Lop Buri, and one day back to their base of operations.

In September of 1970, I visited our A team at Nam Pung Dam, a site roughly 120 miles west of Nakhon Phanom (NKP), where we had a large Air Force base as well as an A Team. The A team at Nam Poong

Dam had a training facility built on a peninsula that extended into the lake. The camp was surrounded by water on three sides, and the fourth side was cleared in case of unwanted visits. The Team commander told me their training drop zone, a few kilometers away from the base, had had some sniper fire during training jumps, so it was decided to have the drop zone on the air strip, a short takeoff landing (STOL) strip at the end of the peninsula. The Communist Thai were pretty active in Northeast Thailand at that time. That weekend, a Labor Day Sunday in 1970, an H34 Air America helicopter was obtained, and we had SF personnel from nearby A Teams show up for pay jumps, me included. Since I was the guest of the Team, I was chosen to be first out of the helicopter. We took off, the jump master said go, and the guy across from me went first instead of me. I was OK with that. The helicopter made a loop over the lake, came over the drop zone, and I led the second stick out of the helicopter.

I landed about 10 feet from the lake, packed up my chute, and walked about 30–40 yards back to the marshalling area. When I arrived, I saw an SF Soldier lying on his back. He looked like a black soldier, and everyone was just standing around looking at him. I found out later that most of the 46 SFCo. troops came straight from the 5th Group and were used to seeing dead guys. I was not used to seeing dead

troopers. The Team Medic had been sent for but was not there yet, so I immediately knelt down next to this soldier, stripped off his parachute harness, and began CPR. Soon his color changed from black to white, his heart started beating, but I still had to do mouth-to-mouth. Soon the medic showed up, and he started breathing on his own. At that point, we prepared to get him to NKP on the Air America helicopter.

I was very happy we had saved this guy's life, the first time so far.

A little background is in order. This soldier went into the lake, still in his parachute, did not prepare for a water landing, and basically sank. There were two boats of Thai fishermen that were in the area to collect the parachutes of those jumpers who threw off their helmets and made a water landing, slipping out of their chutes into the water. The boats also picked up guys who needed help out of the water. I have no idea how long he was under the water, but I guess about 20 minutes as the fisherman dragged the chute with him behind it to the bank of the lake, and the water was warm. This creates a very low prognosis for survival and lack of brain damage. In fact, one of our guys shook off help from a boat and drowned that day. He was the first out of the helicopter instead of me.

On the way to NKP, we had the guy on oxygen, and the helicopter pilot had that thing bent over to go as fast as possible. The medic and I were next to the victim and saw he was turning blue. The oxygen tank was empty. So we saved his life again, #2 so far.

When we got to NKP, an Air Force jeep met us on the tarmac. The driver helped us get our victim in the back of the Jeep, and we headed to the hospital.

We got our victim into the ER, and two Air Force physicians, both Majors, were present. They asked me to get him undressed. So, I tore off his blouse, tore his pants, and took them off. Then the two Majors decided to do a tracheotomy, basically slitting his throat to put a tube in his larynx. They decided to do this despite the fact he had been breathing on his own for over an hour, but I am a lowly Captain watching two Air Force Majors in their hospital do their thing. The problem was they cut a vein, and he started bleeding into his lungs, and they didn't know how to intubate. Because of their incompe-

tence, our guy was drowning in his own blood, and I had to accept the fact that he probably wasn't going to survive. About this time, the Air America helicopter pilot told me he had to go, and so I left NKP thinking we had lost this guy after saving him twice.

After I left, an Air Force physician, this time a Captain, wandered into the ER officer's club to see what was going on. He immediately intubated our guy, saving his life for the third time.

When I got back to Lop Buri in a few days, Col. Combs called me into his office to thank me for what I did and to tell me our guy was in Udorn, in an Air Force hospital, and would be sent to Ft. Campbell, KY, when stable. Based on this information, I went to MACThai in Bangkok, called the Ft. Campbell Hospital, talked to the physician in charge of our guy, and was told he was there because he had a head injury due to a motor vehicle accident. I told him he was mistaken. He said, "How do you know?" I told him the whole story, and he said he was surprised that his history was so screwed up. He told me our guy was unconscious for a few days in Udorn. When he came to, a nurse was leaning over him. He reached up, grabbed her breast, scared her to death, and then they decided he was stable.

Ltc. Combs called me into his office a week or so later and told me he had received a phone call from the CO at NKP. The NKP CO told Col. Combs that the two Air Force Majors asked him to charge the Air Force Captain with an Article 15 for being in the hospital ER with alcohol on his breath. The NKP Col. told Col. Combs he told them to get the hell out of his office, telling them if it had not been for the SF dentist and the Air Force Captain, the victim would not have survived. End of story? Not quite!

I stayed in touch with this guy, telling him and his wife what happened on that day and speaking at least every few years. I attended the 50th SF reunion at Ft. Bragg in 2012. Since I was already going that way, I met with our guy and his wife in Nashville before going to Ft. Bragg the next day. They entertained me for the day, showing me the sights and brought me back to my hotel room. The guy said his goodbyes, we shook hands, and he left. His wife said thanks for saving my husband's life, gave me an unforgettable hug, and walked away. ❖



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert "Bob" Reed, DDS, is a longtime member of SFA Chapter 78.

He served as a dentist with the 7th SFG from 1969–1970 and the 46th SF Co. from 1970–1971.

While with the 46th SF Co., he developed a dental civic action program to work in the villages in Thailand where dental treatment and education regarding dental hygiene were provided. To learn more about this part of Dr. Reed's SF career, read his story from the [November 2022 Sentinel](#).

Dr. Reed went on to practice dentistry after separating from the military. Although he has retired from his practice, he serves on the board of the Kern County Dental Society.



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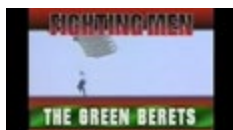


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• MACV-SOG



Recently added: “Jocko Podcast #401—Am I as Committed As I Should Be? ‘SOG Codename Dynamite,’

with Dick Thompson.” Listen to learn about Thompson's recently released *SOG Codename Dynamite: A MACV-SOG 1-0's Personal Journal*. Thompson's book provides readers with insights on the realities of war from his perspective, taken from first-hand experience as a One-Zero.

• More SF History

Recently added: Coffee or Die's “Who Are the Green Berets?” Coffee or Die is Black Rifle Coffee Company's news and culture magazine.

3 Featured Channels: Other YouTube channels with content that we think our viewers will enjoy.

Want to know more about subscribing?
Turn the page to learn more.

How to get the most out of YouTube.

Become a YouTube Account Holder and Subscribe to Chapter 78's YouTube Channel

STEP 1: Become a YouTube account holder.

The first step to becoming a subscriber to Chapter 78's YouTube channel is to establish a YouTube account.

You can definitely go to the YouTube website and watch videos without being an account holder. But becoming a YouTube account holder will enable you to get the most out of your experience with the platform.

The benefits of becoming a YouTube account holder

In addition to watching videos, with your YouTube account you will be able to:

Subscribe to channels: When you subscribe to a channel, you will be notified when the channel uploads new videos. This is a great way to keep up with your favorite channels and see their latest content.

Save videos to watch later: When you come across a video that you don't have time to view, you can save it to watch later.

Search video viewing history: Ever watch a video and want to watch all or part of it again later? With a YouTube account you will be able to look at your viewing history and easily find the video again.

Comment on video: YouTube account holders can comment on videos. This is a great way to interact with other users and share your thoughts on the videos you watch.

Participate in discussions: YouTube has many forums and communities where users can discuss a variety of topics. This is a great way to connect with other people who share your interests. The first step to becoming a subscriber to Chapter 78's YouTube channel is to establish an YouTube account.

Creating a YouTube account

1. Go to the YouTube website or open the YouTube app on your phone or tablet.
2. Click on the "Sign in" button. You can use your existing Google account (your Gmail account) to sign in to YouTube.
3. If you don't have a Google account, click on the "Create account" button.
4. Follow the instructions to create your account.

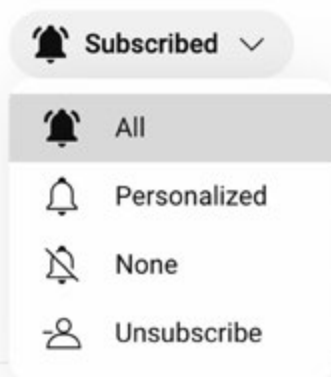
STEP 2: Subscribe to SFA Chapter 78's channel.

1. Sign in to your YouTube account.
2. Type "SFA Chapter 78" into the search bar at the top of the YouTube window and press Enter or Return.



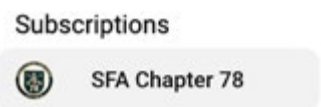
3. Click the "Subscribe" button, an oval button that is located in the upper-right area of the channel's home page, below the channel description, or below one of the channel's videos.

- After clicking the "Subscribe" button, the button label changes to "Subscribed." You can click the button and select "Unsubscribe" if you don't want to be subscribed to this channel anymore.



4. Click on the bell icon next to the "Subscribed" button to receive notifications about new videos uploaded to our channel. We would suggest selecting "All" as your selection preference for the Chapter's channel. To get more information about notification settings, visit the our website at the page referenced below.

After subscribing, you will find the channel on your list of subscriptions. When you want to check out updates to playlists, just click on the SFA Chapter 78 listing on this list to go directly to the channel. ❖



For more detailed directions visit
www.specialforces78.com/subscribe-to-sfchapter78-youtube.



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WWII veteran Howard Koch, SF Original Richard Simonian, Representative Lou Correa, World War II Veteran Jack Gutman, who served in Iwo Jima, and Jack's wife Mary Jo. Richard, Rep. Correa, and Jack hold the sign that represented the check for \$1 million dollars in funding presented to VAHP.

VAHP Receives \$1 Million Federal Funding

By Debra Holm

On August 21, 2023, in Anaheim, Rep. Lou Correa presented \$1 million in federal cash to the Veterans Affordable Housing Program (VAHP) for veterans' housing assistance. This money is part of the \$30 million package Rep. Correa got for local projects in his district in 2023. Correa teamed up with the American Veterans Assistance Group (AVAG) for this announcement.

AVAG currently provides low-income veterans throughout SoCal with mobile home options and financial support. For instance, the ceremony took place at the home of a veteran, which will be rehabilitated using some of the federal funding to replace the flooring and the roof of his mobile home. AVAG currently has over 600 veterans in 40 VAHP-related communities, where a strong support system for the veterans has been established. In the communities, AVAG provides referrals to career training and VA benefits, as well as programs such as food drives, furniture distribution, clothing donations, and recreation opportunities.

At the presentation, Rep. Correa said, "All gave some, and some made the ultimate sacrifice. Our veterans put their lives on the line for our freedom, and we need to uphold our moral duty to take care

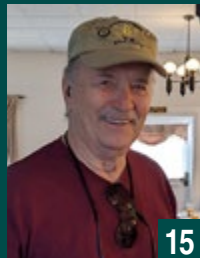
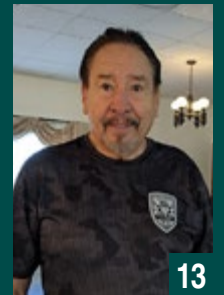
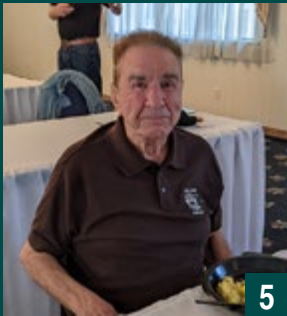
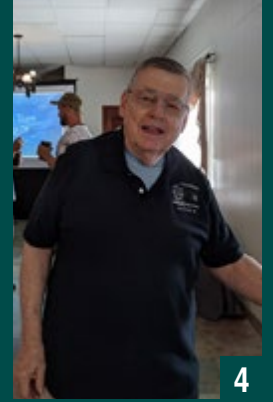
of them—and these funds from our government, which I was proud to bring home, will assure that our veterans have access to dignified housing," Rep. Correa said. "These are our tax dollars that we pay to the federal government being brought back to our community to serve our veterans—and I could not be prouder to have these funds go to help repair the homes that our veterans live in. Each of these men and women offered to make the ultimate sacrifice, and they deserve our support."

Ramon Rodriguez, AVAG Chairman of the Board, thanked Correa for the \$1 million. He said, "As a veteran, I'm honored to be involved with a veteran organization dedicated to helping our fellow veterans in need. Our goal is to thank and support our veterans by providing affordable housing options, rent assistance, home repairs, and other practical support. We are especially grateful to Congressman Correa for providing the opportunity to receive this grant of \$1 million, which will allow us to help many more veterans in need."



SFA Chapter 78 August 2023 Chapter Meeting

Photos by Debra Holm



1 New Chapter 78 member Taylor Walker is presented with a chapter coin by Chapter 78 President Greg Horton.

2 Chapter 78 Vice President James McLanahan made a presentation about Chapter 78's Shooting Team.

3 Gus Populus and James McLanahan

4 Chapter Secretary Gary Macnamara

5 Chapter Treasurer Richard Simonian

6 Mark Miller and Kenn Miller, left to right in the foreground, enjoy a discussion.

7 Left to right, Don Deatherage, Jim Morris, and Steve Bric

8 Bob Reed and Mike Jameson

9 Jim Suber **10** Bob Crebbs

11 Steve Bric **12** Erik Berg and Jim Lockhart

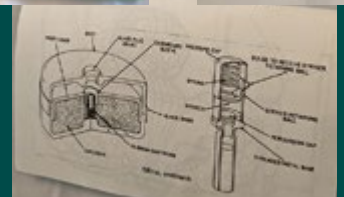
13 Ramon Rodriguez **14** Jim Duffy

15 Art Dolick **16** Art's wife Lani

17 James Bradley **18** Jim Cragg

19 Sal Sanders

20 From Art Dolick's collection, a "Special Forces Coloring Book," complete with an anti-tank mine diagram for the kiddies!



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