



SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

VOLUME 15, ISSUE 1 • JANUARY 2024

SOAR 2023

THE SOA CELEBRATES 47 YEARS

EL SALVADOR—

**Black Aviator is Awarded
Posthumous POW Medal**

The Finger of God

**The Imposter
at House 22**



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SENTINEL

VOLUME 15, ISSUE 1 • JANUARY 2024

From the Editor



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FRONT COVER: Team Sergeant Roy Johnson cooking lunch under fire. (Photo courtesy Russell Mann)



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How Miller
Sentinel Editor

This issue begins with my review of Jim Morris' newly published trilogy of three books which includes the much-heralded *War Story* with tales of Vietnam, *The Devil's Secret Name*, describing Jim's globetrotting civilian war reporting, and *Fighting Men*, where he tells action stories that were told to him. Even if you have already read two of these books, it is a fantastic deal.

You then have an opportunity to help shape the design of the U.S. Congress-approved GWOT Memorial, which will be located adjacent to the

"The Wall." **Share your thoughts by January 31st** at GWOTMF.org/helpdesignhistory/. Hear from Michael "Rod" Rodriguez, a retired Green Beret GWOT 10 tour veteran who is now enthusiastically running the show: <https://youtu.be/xdnBkXwMyYI?si=RWQOaDjjTfXzfpxs>. But HURRY, the deadline has been extended for SFA members to give their input.

Frequent *Sentinel* contributor, retired Green Beret Greg Walker, reports on this year's gathering of SOG veterans and recon-related personnel at the Special Operators Association Reunion (SOAR) in Las Vegas. He tells of recognitions awarded, including one for the amazing Bonnie Cooper. Greg rather demurely neglected to mention that he gave a very well-received presentation, largely about El Salvador.

Then Greg tells of a success through diligence, resulting in the family of SPC Earnest Dawson receiving the posthumous POW Medal that was unable to be delivered to them in a timely manner due to a lack of contact information.

Russell Mann, a *Sentinel* reader and friend of fellow Khe Sanh vet Denis Chericone, has sent us some interesting material. In "The Finger of God," Russell relates events during the intense 77-day siege of the Khe Sanh Marine base and the much smaller SF FOB3, physically attached to it. He follows that with a poem that succinctly conveys a prevalent attitude during the siege.

Denis Chericone gives us another well-written tale about a REMF that took his braggadocio a bit too far. We all treasure the support we receive to accomplish the mission and, far too often, save our bacon. This does not fall under that category and leaves us with a feeling of satisfaction.

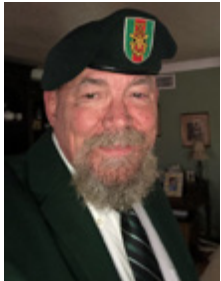
Medal of Honor recipient Paris Davis, retired Green Beret, served as the Grand Marshall of the Hollywood Christmas parade, followed by Rangers of the USARA and Green Berets of SFA Chapter 78.

Hamm Sally was chosen to present his experience at Khe Sanh to the City of Laguna Niguel's Veterans Day celebrants. Coverage is on the President's Page

And please enjoy Rick Carter's wonderful photos of our November chapter meeting.

How Miller, *Sentinel* Editor

From the President | January 2024



Gregory Horton
President SFA Ch. 78

As I said before, the November meeting was my final meeting (not counting the Christmas Party) with Chapter 78. I cannot tell you how thankful I am that the membership chose me to be the president. This has been a fantastic two years, and I have enjoyed working with some incredible people. This will go down as one of the finest things I have done in my life. To top it off, while writing this, I am looking forward to the Christmas Party and the brilliant array of speakers and individuals we have lined up. It is not often that you can line up such stellar people in one place.

Our November meeting was well attended, and we had some excellent member input. Len Fein had a couple of gifts for members that he handed out and then began his presentation. Len was formerly an executive for a major car manufacturer, along with his wife. Several years ago, Len and his wife went to Vietnam for a large international convention. Now, unbeknownst to his wife, Len was a history buff (particularly the Son Tay Raid), and he quietly retained a driver and a guide to take him and his wife to the site. Imagine Len's wife's surprise when he told her their itinerary, but being an adventurous person, she went along. After traipsing through the countryside, they finally reached the site, and it was incredible. Len began walking through the site and taking photos, and eventually he ran into a family who lived on the site. Len began an interaction with an elder and his interpreter and had an interesting conversation. But at some point, the interpreter began to get agitated and told Len that they had to leave now, and he moved to the car at a very brisk pace! As they drove down the

road, they observed an old M113A1 full of troops headed at breakneck speed towards the site. Len and his wife immediately ducked down in the back of the car and avoided detection. It appeared that someone had snatched them off to the local military officials. Whew! E & E was successful, and an international incident avoided. We enjoyed the pictures and had a good laugh at the close call!!!

Following Len's tale of excitement and intrigue, Joey Gatton, Deputy Commander of the US Army Ranger Association Southwest Region, gave an informative presentation for the membership. He discussed the Ranger Association involvement in the Hollywood Christmas Parade and the Command-Directed Medical Program to assist service members and first responders who have been exposed to toxic materials, Agent Orange, "Meth," and Fentanyl. It was an outstanding bit of information, and we will have him back to go into more detail about these organizations that help so many.

By the time my last column hits the press, the Chapter Christmas Party will be in the books. It looks to be a fantastic event, and so far, we have 67 people attending with an incredible lineup of speakers and honored guests. Look for a complete presentation in the next edition of the *Sentinel* by our new President, Aaron Brandenburg. There is no doubt in my mind that you will give him the same stellar support that you gave me.

The next meeting will be on January 20, 2024, at 0830 hours at Fiddler's Green, AFRC Los Alamitos.

Good Luck and Long Life!
Greg Horton SGM (Ret)
President
SFA Chapter 78

Chapter 78's Hammond Salley Special Guest Speaker at the City of Laguna Niguel Veterans Day Ceremony



At left, Major Hammond M. Salley, U.S. Army (Ret.) speaks to the audience at the City of Laguna Niguel 2023 Veterans Day Ceremony; center, Major Salley poses for a photo with the mayor and other city officials; right, fellow Chapter 78 member Mike Jameson with Major Salley after the ceremony. (Photos courtesy Mike Jameson)

The City of Laguna Niguel hosted its annual Veterans Day ceremony at the Sea Country Senior and Community Center on Saturday, November 11, 2023. The event's special guest speaker was Major Hammond M. Salley, U.S. Army (Ret.), a member of Chapter 78 and the Freedom Committee of Orange County. The Freedom Committee of Orange County (fc-oc.org) works to bring living history into classrooms by sharing veteran stories from all generations. Major Salley spoke about his service, focusing on his personal account of 1968's 77-day "Siege of Khe Sanh." The audience unanimously rose to its feet in a standing ovation at the end of his presentation.

The entire ceremony is available for viewing on YouTube at:

<https://youtu.be/m4-37xH10dY?si=5iUN6IMfHoDp-AEi>

Book Review

The Guerrilla Trilogy by Jim Morris

By How Miller

Jim Morris, drawn to combat as a Green Beret, a war journalist for *Soldier of Fortune* and others, editor of a similar magazine called *Eagle*, author of several outstanding war-related books, and television network contributor, has combined three of his books in a new publication called *Guerrilla Trilogy*.

There is one thing that runs through them all: gripping, up-close action, told largely by the participants.

War Story is highly acclaimed and tells of his personal experiences as a Special Forces officer, centered around his three tours of duty in Vietnam, from which he was retired of wounds as a major. As in all his books, he tells us how it was, eloquently and without sugar coating it. He retells what he experienced working largely with the Montagnards in a variety of roles, including A team commander. Two of those closest to him were Kpa Doh (pronounced Pah Dough), his interpreter and right-hand man, and "Cowboy," who eagerly and expertly knew how to assemble the resources to accomplish almost anything. Both of them were brave and dedicated.

I had not previously read *The Devil's Secret Name*. As with the other two books, I was immediately drawn in. He retells mostly what he experienced as a civilian after Vietnam as a war reporter in conflicts all over the world. Jim tells it first person, as he lived it, some of it with his then-wife, Kat. He easily shares both his successes and failures, bringing us into a portion of each of the conflicts while describing enough of the bigger picture for us to feel like actual participants. He analyzed each conflict by Mao's summation of the three necessities of a successful guerrilla war: a broad base of support from the population, outside support, and secure areas from which to operate.

Interwoven, however, was his quest to share with the world the idea that the Soviet Union was in a Global War of Liberation, the symptoms being all the little wars of liberation from Asia through Africa to the Americas. Nowadays, the expression "playing whack a mole" would be included in the conversation.

When I asked Jim if we are playing the same game with Russia, he mentioned the shift of focus to how Xi Jinping, president of the largest remaining communist country, is taking a different tack. He is trying to enslave others through economic means such as toxic loans and monopolizing their natural resources.

He also pointed out that SF is needed now as much as ever.

In *Fighting Men*, he retells gritty stories that were told to him by the participants of some hairy exploits.

There's all kinds of action: Larry Dring, the Mike Force Lieutenant who, in the midst of a fierce fire-fight, met his future wife; Francis J. Kelley; Project Delta; the real "Operation Dumbo Drop"; and even a story by later Chief SOG, Jack Singlaub, from when he was transferred from his WWII European OSS assignment to Asia, training some Chinese, resupplying the OSS team advising Ho Chi Minh, and facilitating the release of over 400 American POWs from the Japanese in Hainan, China.

Along with a lifetime of advocating for the Montagnards, Jim also, in recent times, broke the mold by talking about his own use of psychedelic drugs after the service to self-treat his PTSD. The VA is now making strides in experimenting with supervised use of those drugs. He wrote about that in *The Dreaming Circus*.

You should get and read this trilogy. There is something in it for everybody. ❖



[The Guerrilla Trilogy](#)

By Jim Morris
Warriors Publishing Group
(November 7, 2023)
991 pages

Members of the Montagnard American community have expressed growing concern for family and community who remain in Vietnam.

MONTAGNARDS IN VIETNAM NEED ACCESSIBLE PATHS TO PERMANENT PROTECTION AND RESETTLEMENT IN THE U.S. CONGRESS HAS A CRUCIAL RESPONSIBILITY.

We call on Congress to oversee the resettlement of Montagnards and address religious persecution and arbitrary imprisonment in Vietnam.



TAKE ACTION: Urge Congress to Support the Montagnard Community

VISIT <https://cwsglobal.org/action-alerts/take-action-urge-congress-to-support-the-montagnard-community/>



HELP DESIGN HISTORY

GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM
MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

Michael "Rod" Rodriguez, pictured at right, a retired Green Beret with 10 tours in the sandbox, joined, and is now in charge of, the Global War on Terrorism Memorial Foundation (GWOTMF). Recent accomplishments of the team, with help from many other participants, have been U.S. Congressional authorization to place a memorial in the Reserve Area of the National Mall in Washington D.C. and a Congressionally approved prime location, near the Lincoln Memorial and adjacent to the Vietnam War Memorial (the Wall). They also authorized an architect/designer, 2020 AIA Gold Medal winner, Marlon Blackwell to be in charge of the design. Actual completion of the monument could be in the four-to-six year range. The memorial will be funded entirely by donations.

A very important part of the mission is to make sure that it reflects the desires of both the participants and their loved ones, along with the public. They want our input. Please tell them what you would like to see the memorial look like. There is an online survey found at [GWOTMF.org/helpdesignhistory/](https://www.gwotmf.org/helpdesignhistory/).

The cutoff for public participation is at the end of 2023. However, for the SFA, the deadline has now been extended to 31 January, 2024..

In a telephone interview, Rod told me of his hopes for the memorial. First, he wanted to memorialize the men and women who gave so much of themselves, especially the 45 people he personally knew who never came back. Next he wanted to portray the changing face of war. For example, so many people, dressed just like you, were working side by side with you. They could be contracted civilians or members of other government agencies, such as the CIA, the FBI, USAID and others. In fact, the first American KIA in Afghanistan was Mike Spann who, though he had previous military experience, was a CIA operative, dying while confronting an Al Qaeda prisoner uprising at Qala-i-Janghi prison near Mazar-i-Sharif early in the war. The ratio of military to civilians was about one to one, while in WWII very few civilians were in theatre.

At the same time, the percentage of the U.S. population that actively defends the country against its enemies has been gradually dropping since WWII (11%) to now where only 1 % of the population is needed to defend us. For Rod, that is a point of pride in how well we do our job with the training, technology, and support available now. Especially since Rod is part of a multi-generational military family, from his grandfather in WWII, his father in Vietnam, Rod and his wife in Afghanistan, and his son in Afghanistan with the 82nd airborne division patrolling the same turf Rod did.



Michael "Rod" Rodriguez

So one of his goals is to close the gap between civilians and those who protect them, through remembrance, healing and education.

During a network interview, Rod was asked for the first time if he thought we would win the war.

He had to pause and think for a moment and said that, to him, seeing girls going to school, kids playing in the streets, and citizens enjoying the fruits of freedom, he felt that we were winning the war for however long that would last.

I encourage you to see the seven-minute video of Rod emotionally and eloquently explaining the struggle so far and what his personal hopes are for the memorial at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eR-HB5Gpn794>

Remember to have your say before 1/31/2024 at
[GWOTMF.org/helpdesignhistory/](https://www.gwotmf.org/helpdesignhistory/)



SOAR 2023 — The SOA Celebrates 47 Years

By Greg Walker (ret)
USA Special Forces

This year's SOAR in Las Vegas was one of the best so far. Attendance was strong at the Orleans

Hotel and Casino, the traditional location for SOAR. The Orleans went all out to ensure everyone was comfortable, events were well serviced by the staff, and off-site events went off without a hitch.

The SOA Riders attended in force and held a Riders BBQ at a local member's home. Everyone was well fed. The Riders founder Larry Trimble (RT ASP) was honored with a special presentation just prior to our meal that evening.

This year's silent raffle organized by John Vislosky was our most successful to date. Items donated for the raffle included donations from Smith & Wesson, and beautifully handcrafted SOG custom knives from knifemakers Alan Blade and Greg Covington. According to Vislosky this year's interest in the raffle resulted in the most SOA scholarship income raised in his memory.

Of the in-house events presented this year "Ghost Warriors of El Salvador," a tribute to the contributions of SOG veterans to the 10-year civil war in that Central American country, was very well attended and

received. Dedicated to the memory of Robert "Spider" Parks (RT Idaho), whose dedication to searching for and recovering still missing SOG soldiers in Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia is the cornerstone of the SOA. Parks' family was in attendance and appropriately honored as well.

The banquet this year was superb. Tenured members received their milestone SOA pins and special awards were presented to outstanding SOA members to include Ms. Bonnie Cooper, the hardest working gal in the Special Operations Association.

An early bird shoot was held off-site and was great fun for all who participated. Other events included the traditional SOA prayer breakfast, the CCS breakfast, our annual POW MIA Report, and Doc Padgett's 2023 Health and Welfare assessment. The hospitality room was a big hit and a wonderful opportunity to locate old friends and make new ones.

Kudos to the SOA Leadership team for a job well done!

To see more pictures of SOAR this year and the events themselves simply click on this link:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/147492853@N07/albums>

The SOA sends a special thank you to SFA Chapter 78 for its active support of SOAR this year. Especially to the staff at the *Sentinel* who provided space in successive issues to promote SOAR. ❖



The SOA Riders held a BBQ off-site, honoring founder Larry Trimble (far right, RT ASP, CCN).



Allen Jackson, son of former POW Jimmy Jackson, attended this year. He and his spouse were promoting his dad's new book, [Forest of Darkness](#). Jimmy, who recently passed away, served as an SF medic in Vietnam. He was captured and held prisoner along with then-captain Nick Rowe. Jackson would later play an important role at Fort Bragg in the medical arena, to include assisting C-Company (Ranger) and legendary martial artist Mike Echanis in his H2H program at Bragg and Little Creek, Virginia.



NOW and THEN—"Bru" Taylor (RTs North Carolina and Digger, CCN) above at SOAR and at right in Vietnam. Bru, considered by his peers to have been one of the best recon men in the business, was a favorite at SOAR. Taylor recently gave an in-depth interview on his experiences that is well worth watching/listening to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgZPO6G5Hlg>



Alongside fellow writer and Air Force Son Tay Raider John Gargus. The now-known pre-raid recon of Son Tay by a hand-selected CCN team led by One-Zero Dale Dehnke is being included in John's update to his book about the raid. Although the team's report did not confirm, it did suggest there was a good chance the POWs, or at least part of them, were still at the camp.



The SOA banquet is the highlight of SOAR. This year's tribute to our fallen comrades was especially moving—<https://vimeo.com/863336958>.

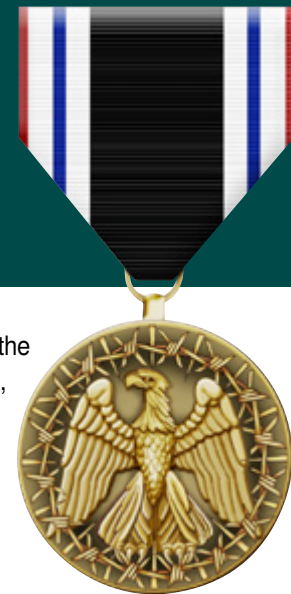


SOA member Randy Ford, at right, won a beautiful SOG-inspired recon knife at the silent raffle. Raffle organizer John Vislosky, left, went all out this year to engage donations from Smith & Wesson and craftsmen like Mr. Blade and bladesmith Greg Covington. The latter sold out all those SOG recon knives and their variations he'd handmade for SOAR 47.



The hardest working woman in the SOA—Ms. Bonnie Cooper. "Thank you, Bonnie!"

EL SALVADOR—Black Aviator is Awarded Posthumous POW Medal



By Greg Walker (ret)
USA Special Forces

It was in 1994 that I wrote my first story regarding the 1991 shootdown of LTC David Pickett's helicopter by Marxist guerrillas in El Salvador. Pickett's pilot was killed in the ensuing crash of the aircraft; LTC Pickett and his crew chief, SP4 Earnest Dawson, were captured and then executed by their captors.

"Yet surprisingly, the first warrants issued since the amnesty was declared unconstitutional are for former guerrillas.

"The US army helicopter was shot down by a Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) patrol in January 1991 in the San Miguel district in eastern El Salvador, as it was flying back to base in neighboring Honduras.

"The pilot, Daniel Scott, was killed in the crash, but two wounded soldiers—Lt Col David Pickett and Cpl Earnest Dawson—were shot dead after the guerrillas stole the cache of weapons onboard the helicopter, according to the Truth Commission."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/25/el-salvador-guerrilla-fighters-us-soldiers-helicopter-killings>

In 1996, the U.S. Congress authorized the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal acknowledging the war in El Salvador was a U.S. military campaign. In 1997, full combat awards and decorations were authorized for all those who served and fought during the eleven-year counterinsurgency (1981-1992). Where Pickett's posthumous Purple Heart and POW medal were ultimately authorized and his family presented with the awards, the recommendation for SP4 Dawson's seemed to have disappeared.

In May 2023, I spoke with Dawson's surviving sister, Lisa. She shared the family had been informed a posthumous POW award was in the system but they never heard anything else much less received the medal. A packet was pulled together and with a personal cover letter attached was sent to Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin. Shortly afterward I received an official letter from the Deputy Chief of Awards and Decorations stating in part the packet would be actioned.

On November 13, 2023, in response to my article "Burying the Dead with Dishonor—Part One," Richard Grell sent the following message to the *Sentinel*. "SP4 Dawson, according to DOA MEMO for COL John P. McMullen, J-33. SOD dated 15 JUL 99 was awarded the POW medal posthumously along with LTC Pickett; "2. On 14 Jun 99, the Secretary of the Army approved the posthumous award of the POW Medal to LTC Pickett and PFC Dawson. This determination was based on their being shot down, captured, and later killed by El Salvadoran Rebels (FMLN) on 2 Jan 91. As CWO Scott died from injuries he sustained in

the helicopter crash, he is not eligible for the POW Medal." signed by Bernard P. Gabriel, GS Chief, Military Awards Branch."

"Burying the Dead with Dishonor—Part One":

<https://www.specialforces78.com/burying-the-dead-with-dishonor-part-one/>

I recognized Richard's name as I'd followed his efforts to see an AFEM authorized for those who'd served in Honduras. But it was Mr. Grell's mention of Colonel John McMullen having been sent official documentation offering a posthumous POW medal had been authorized for both Pickett and Dawson that caught my attention. John and I had worked on the combat recognition effort together for years. Reading the notification, the awards had been authorized, engraved, and were being sent to McMullen put everything in focus.

John, still on active duty at the time, had either written or rewritten hundreds of award recommendations once the AFEM had been authorized. Two of these were Valor awards I had submitted to John for formal submission and which were ultimately authorized. The Army sent those awards to Colonel McMullen and he then sent them to me. My challenge then was to locate my two former teammates and get their medals to them.

Clearly John had received the awards for Pickett and Dawson. And clearly he'd been able to locate Pickett's family but not SP4 Dawson's. John recently passed away so I had no way of learning where the missing award might be. But, thanks to Richard Grell I was able to email the document he'd sent me along with what most likely had occurred to the Army Human Resources Command which was handling the inquiry.

"Requiem for a Friend":

<https://www.specialforces78.com/requiem-for-a-friend/>



Army Awards and Decorations' response was near immediate.

UNCLASSIFIED

Mr. Walker,

"We received email traffic requesting the POW medal for Earnest Dawson. We have confirmed Dawson's entitlement to the award and we can mail this medal set, but only need an address and POC to send it. Can you email this info to us, or give us a POC that can? We're available to talk and my contact info is below."

Wesley Tuchenhagen
CW4, AG
Policy Chief, Awards and Decorations Branch

Upon providing Chief Tuchenhagen with Lisa's contact information the next message from him, just two days before Thanksgiving, brought a multi-decade effort to its final and prayed for conclusion.

UNCLASSIFIED

"Happy Thanksgiving to everyone. Submitted the order now (TACOM # D3MM9553346FM) with the address listed below. It is to be expedited by TACOM. My pleasure to assist."

r/ Wes
Wesley Tuchenhagen
CW4, AG
Policy Chief, Awards and Decorations Branch

I called Lisa immediately with the news. She offered her sincere thanks to all involved and said she'd be calling her 81-year-old father with the long-awaited news. "He'll be so happy," she told me.

On November 20, 2023, thirty-two years after his combat-related captivity and death in El Salvador, SP4 Earnest Dawson has now been officially honored for his service and sacrifice. He becomes the only black service member to have been taken prisoner during our war in El Salvador.


SP4 Dawson was 20 years old at the time of his execution.

"No Fallen Comrade Left Behind." ❖




ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg Walker is an honorably retired "Green Beret" and U.S. Special Forces historian. Greg's awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Combat Infantryman Badge (x2), and the AFEM (x2). Today Walker lives and writes from his home in Sisters, Oregon, along with his service pup, Tommy.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. TOTAL ARMY PERSONNEL COMMAND
ALEXANDRIA, VA
22332-0471



SERVED
ATTENDING

TAPC-PDA-PO 15 JUL 1999

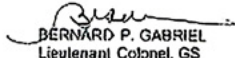
MEMORANDUM FOR COL JOHN P. McMULLEN, J-33, Special Operations
Division, RM 2C840, The Pentagon, Washington, D.C.
20318-3000

SUBJECT: Prisoner of War Medal - El Salvador


1. Reference your 30 Jul 97 memorandum to the Commander, U.S. Army Southern Command, Fort Clayton, Panama, requesting posthumous award of the Prisoner of War (POW) Medal to LTC David H. Pickett, CWO Daniel S. Scott, and PFC Earnest G. Dawson, Jr., who served in the Republic of El Salvador.
2. On 14 Jun 99, the Secretary of the Army approved the posthumous award of the POW Medal to LTC Pickett and PFC Dawson. This determination was based on their being shot down, captured and later killed by El Salvadoran Rebels (FMLN) on 2 Jan 91. As CWO Scott died from the injuries he sustained in the helicopter crash, he is not eligible for the POW Medal.
3. Enclosed are the engraved medals for presentation in an appropriate ceremony to the next of kin of LTC Pickett and PFC Dawson. Enclosed also is a fact sheet on the POW Medal. The POW Medal is a service medal and as such no Permanent Orders are issued to announce its approval. Consistent with tradition and Army regulation, awards and decorations are to be presented with an appropriate degree of formality or a fitting ceremony.
4. The National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, MO, has been asked to issue DD Forms 215 (Correction of DD Form 214) on LTC Pickett and PFC Dawson to add the POW Medal.
5. Should you have questions about this action, the points of contact are Mrs. Whitte, 325-9171 or Mr. Robertson, 325-4761.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

Encls
as



BERNARD P. GABRIEL
Lieutenant Colonel, GS
Chief, Military Awards Branch



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY HUMAN RESOURCES COMMAND
1600 SPEARHEAD DIVISION AVENUE, DEPARTMENT 480
FORT KNOX, KY 40122-5408

May 10, 2023

Soldier Programs and Services Division

Dear Mr. Walker:

Thank you for your recent letter to the Secretary of Defense regarding your desire for Specialist Earnest G. Dawson to be posthumously awarded the Prisoner of War Medal. Your letter was forwarded to this office, the proponent of the Army's awards program for review, and we are pleased to respond.

We understand and appreciate your attention to this matter. Please rest assured that we will thoroughly review the resources available to this office to determine the appropriate next steps.

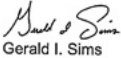
Please note, in accordance with the requirements of the Privacy Act of 1974, we are unable to provide personal information or pursue matters pertaining to a Veteran's service without written consent from the Veteran or the Veteran's primary next of kin. In this regard, we require a privacy release form signed by Specialist Dawson's primary next of kin for any further correspondence concerning his service.

The regulatory policy governing the Awards and Decorations Branch defines primary next of kin in the following order of precedence: surviving spouse (who has not since remarried); eldest surviving child (natural or adoptive); father or mother, unless legal exclusive (sole) custody was granted to a person by reason of a court decree or statutory provision; blood or adoptive relative who was granted legal custody of the person by a court decree or statutory provision; eldest surviving brother or sister; eldest surviving grandparent; eldest surviving grandchild.

If a living individual meets the above criteria, he or she may authorize you to receive updates regarding this matter on his or her behalf. For your convenience, we have enclosed a blank privacy release form.

Thank you for supporting Specialist Dawson's family in this matter.

Sincerely,



Gerald I. Sims
Deputy Chief, Soldier Programs
and Services Division

Enclosure

The Finger of God



A 500 pounder in front of my position. (Photo courtesy Russell Mann)

By Russell Mann

The air show going on over the trench line at the Khe Sanh Combat Base during the siege of 1968 was spectacular. For a little over 2 months the Air Force, the Navy, the Marine Corps, and the US Army filled the air with B-52s, fighters, bombers, cargo planes, helicopters, gunships, and observation planes. It was seldom you could look up and see an empty sky.

President Lyndon Johnson had told his Generals quite clearly, "I don't want no damn Din Bin Foo," referring to the terrible defeat the French had suffered at the hands of the Viet Minh in 1954 at Dien Bien Phu. Clearly, it was a similar situation. The Khe Sanh Base was in a valley surrounded by hills. Common military wisdom has always been to hold the high ground, but the high ground seldom has room for a large air-strip. The valley floor, in this case, did, so that is where our base was.

Khe Sanh was completely cut off. The North Vietnamese had assembled an attacking force of twenty to thirty-thousand infantry soldiers and held all the surrounding terrain, exactly the situation the French had been in.

Lang Vei, the closest American position had been quickly and decisively overrun by the advancing NVA. Highway 9, a two-lane dirt road, and the only land access to Khe Sanh had been cut off. Air was the only way into the base. All the beans, bullets, and bandages came by air.

In addition to being our only supply line, air power was also our strongest weapon. Historians have said of the battle, "It was the most concentrated application of aerial firepower in the history of warfare." On an average day, 350 tactical fighter-bombers, 60 B-52 bombers, and 30 light observation or reconnaissance aircraft operated in the skies near the base. 100,000 tons of bombs were dropped around the Khe Sanh base during the siege. To help you get your head around that, it is about the weight of a fully loaded nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, or you could think of it as almost half a million five hundred-pound bombs. It is the equivalent explosive force of three Hiroshima-size atomic bombs. Of course, it was spread out over 77 days and some few square miles. Nevertheless, that is a lot of bombs.

The North Vietnamese were getting their licks in too, pounding the base with artillery, rockets, and mortar fire. On multiple days, the incoming rounds numbered more than a thousand. The Khe Sanh base was only a half mile square, so that is an incoming artillery round for every 4 square feet on one day.

All this math is just to help you grasp the enormous number of explosions going off on and around the base. As you can appreciate, the soldiers on both sides dug trenches and bunkers as if their lives depended on it. A good bunker could protect you from a near miss, but nothing could save you from a direct hit. Everyone had a near miss story, the one that almost got them. A sense of fatalism prevailed



We were constantly improving bunkers.
(Photo courtesy Russell Mann)



TOC, FOB 3 command bunker with incoming artillery.
(Photo courtesy Russell Mann)

that could manifest in two primary ways. You could say “Fuck it!” and lose behavioral inhibitions because you were going to die anyway, or you could work hard and be nice to everyone because any moment could be your last and God, or maybe Mom, would care what kind of a person you had been. Forays above ground were kept to a minimum and always with a sense of where the nearest hole was.

The weather was a player in the battle. The monsoon overcast, rain, and fog favored the North Vietnamese Army with their five to one numerical superiority. The sunny days, however, belonged to the Americans because the Air Force came out to play and it was the NVA's turn to hide in a hole. When the sun came out and the incoming rounds began to taper off, we would creep outside by degrees, easing further and further from our sandbag caves, seeking the light like an emerging tulip in the spring. The longer the enemy artillery stayed silent, the further out we came, stripping off our soggy dirt-caked clothing, bathing our skin in the restorative tonic of sunshine.

It was on a sunny day, then, that my section of the battle line crept into the sun. Standing above ground, basking in the light, and waving to friends 50 yards away that we hadn't seen for a week.

The Air Force fighter/bombers were putting on a show. Fast Movers, we called them, and fast they were. They came in low from behind us, streaking across our lines and firing rockets into the enemy positions



Fast Mover shows proximity of air support. (Photo courtesy Russell Mann)

to our front. They would fire their rockets from well behind us, the jets would pull up as they crossed our lines and the rockets would continue their trajectory toward the North Vietnamese positions, exploding in a cascade of smoke and fire. It was spectacular to watch. The jets came in pointing, it seemed, right at us, growing larger and larger. Then the rockets would light up under their wings and flash over us as the planes pulled into a roaring vertical climb over our heads.

One young Marine, a little quicker off the mark than the rest of us, climbed out of his trench as the next wave of jets began their run behind us to capture this once in a lifetime image on his treasured Nikon camera, a souvenir from his last leave in Japan.

Nikon cameras, Sony reel-to-reel tape recorders, and Seiko watches were the treasures of the orient we collected. For our moms, Noritake dinner china, Mikimoto pearls, and Shiseido makeup were shipped home or tucked in our foot lockers awaiting our return as blooded warriors, bringing home tribute and booty.

If the Air Force had given us a little notice, we all would have been out there with our cameras, but as it was, only one young man was quick enough to capture this on film. He stood on top of a sandbag bunker facing the incoming jets as they screamed in from our rear. Getting, I am sure, spectacular footage as they came directly at us, wingtip to wingtip, trailing a plume of kerosene fumes. The rockets, hanging under the wings of the jet fighters, ignited and moved ahead of the jets leaving multiple trails of white smoke, stark against the blue sky.

We raised our fists and yelled triumphantly, “Kick some ass!”, “Get some!” in our joy at making the NVA cower in their holes as we had in ours.

One of the approaching rockets, due, perhaps, to some minor manufacturing defect, or maybe the finger of God, separated from the cluster of screaming rockets on a path of its own. It dropped well below the path of its partners. The last image our intrepid photographer captured was a head-on close-up of a 2.75-inch rocket with a high-explosive warhead. Apparently, he was too soft a target to set off the impact fuse in the rocket, because it didn't explode till it hit the ground behind him.

The call of “Medic! Medic!” went up. I was 50 yards away watching the airshow and had witnessed the errant rocket. I ran to his side to find him neatly decapitated and in no condition to benefit from my efforts.

There is a moment of dislocation that occurs when confronted with a headless body. Even though you can't save him, your mind craves a complete image. Where's the head? His head had apparently rotated to another plane of existence and left not a shred.

His nineteen-year-old body could not quite believe his death and made a few agonal attempts at breathing before he lay still. There is no stillness like the stillness of the recent dead. They look just as they did a moment before death, but have transitioned to an image of themselves, a sculpture bereft of breath. There is a slackness of the musculature that goes beyond the relaxation of sleep.

I don't know what happened to his camera. If it survived, it had a Pulitzer Prize winning image on the last frame.

Seemingly random events like this make you start thinking about Fate, Kismet, Destiny. What forces conspired to put this young man in the precise space and time that would also be occupied by a missile on the wrong course. It's hard to accept as a random event. The odds are too astronomical. If it wasn't random, is there a God? What cosmic scheme required this man's death? What did the funeral director do when his remains arrived home, perhaps gently suggest a nicely framed photo beside a closed casket?

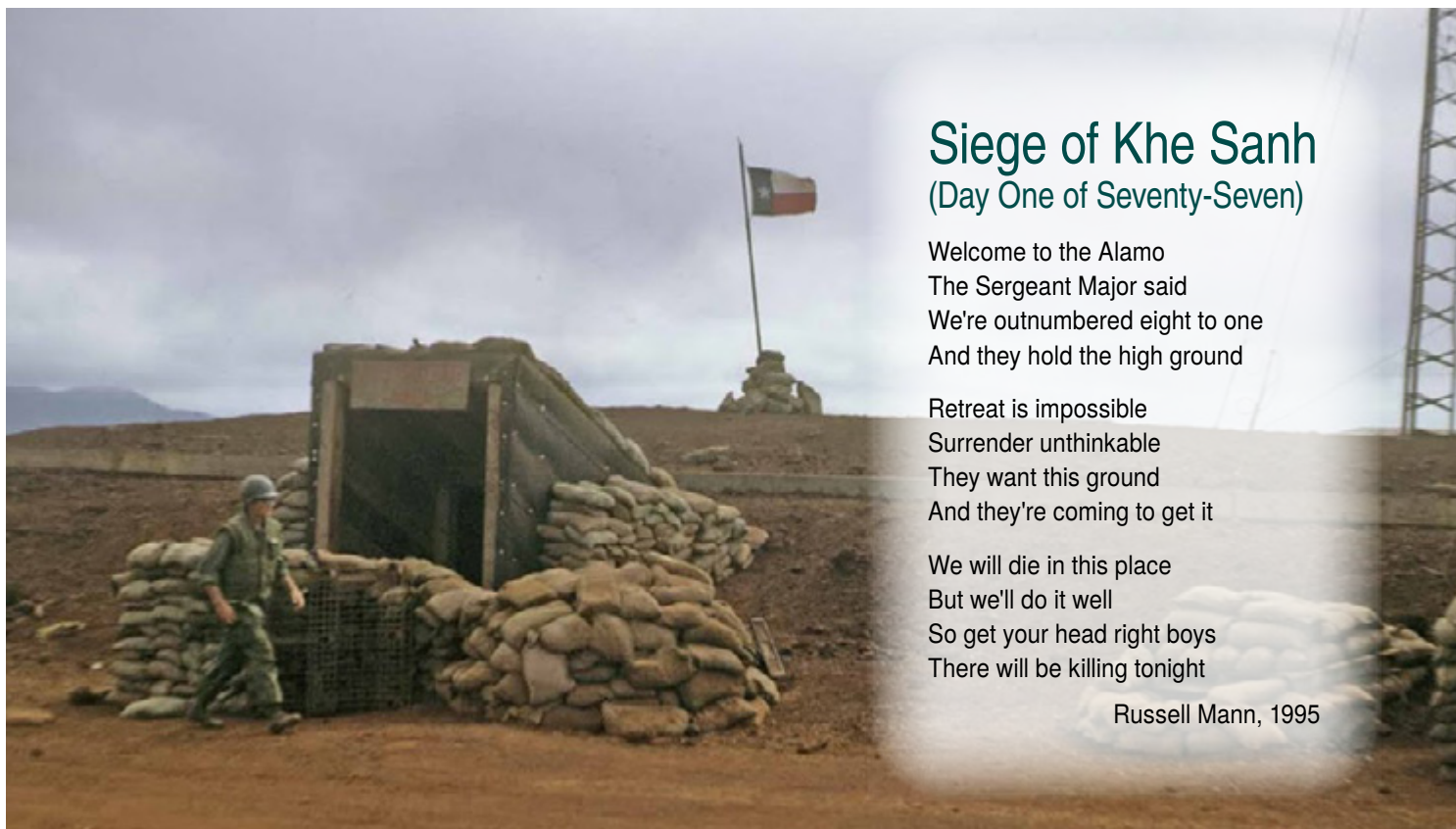
There was another soldier injured in this incident. He had been standing ten or fifteen feet away. He was lying unconscious and had a significant facial injury that impeded his ability to breathe. The headless guy was left to his own devices as I struggled to save another. His loosely attached pieces of face were occluding his airway. I performed my first (and, in retrospect, not my best) combat cricothyrotomy. If you are not medically literate, it means cutting a new hole in the

throat to breathe through. This procedure should never be taken lightly, there is a lot of important stuff you should avoid cutting that lies nearby. I had been trained in the procedure and had practiced on dummies and cadavers, but the pressure was on. The soldiers around me watched, mouths open, breath held. There was no sharp-eyed instructor to judge my performance, only Death awaiting his turn if I failed. There was little in the way of surgical niceties. Problems with infection could wait for another day. A stab wound was made with a Buck knife between the cartilage rings of the trachea. The blade was then twisted to pry an opening I could slip an airway into. Quickly, if not neatly, done. The stuttering heaving of his chest became smoother, and he was alive, his face obscured by bandages, when I loaded him into a Huey for evacuation.

I never found out what eventually happened to him, just as I never found out what happened to any of the casualties I treated, save one. But that is another story. ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Russell Mann's hometown is Redding CA. He joined the army in 1965 "after missing a first period English class one too many times." He was assigned to 1st Group after training as SF Medic. He went to Vietnam TDY to MACVSOG, arriving at Khe Sanh with his team in late January, 1968, just as the Tet Offensive and the 77-day siege began. He joined the Reserves in 1969, retiring in 1995. From 1969 until 1980 Russ worked in construction in the San Francisco Bay Area. He then successfully challenged the nursing licensing board and worked as an ER Nurse in Truckee, CA until 2015. Russ currently lives in Minden, NV.



Siege of Khe Sanh (Day One of Seventy-Seven)

Welcome to the Alamo
The Sergeant Major said
We're outnumbered eight to one
And they hold the high ground

Retreat is impossible
Surrender unthinkable
They want this ground
And they're coming to get it

We will die in this place
But we'll do it well
So get your head right boys
There will be killing tonight

Russell Mann, 1995

Alamo, shows the Lone Star flag flying on the command bunker shows the attitude of SF soldiers under siege. (Photo courtesy Russell Mann)



The Imposter at House 22

By Denis Chericone

Sergeant Sypher was a big man, a stout rectangle, and I was quick to see he used his size and imperious bearing to intimidate those he considered inconsequential. It was late February, and the days had grown ragged by the time he showed up. Upwards to two thousand rounds a day were keeping us low to the ground, and some of the guys were beginning to look over their shoulder more than they needed to. Sypher told us he had come up to take photos for the brass back in Da Nang. You know, hey, what's going on up at Khe Sanh these days?

Sypher was a stark contrast to the rest of us. Clean, confident, and acting as if he were in command of the known galaxy, he soon disappeared into his assigned hole, not to be seen very much for the next few days. Pitbull didn't know what to do with him. The guy was a *photographer*, for Chrissakes. He wasn't Special Forces qualified, but he wore a beret anyway. Someone told me he was in tight with some I Corps colonel. The boss told the sergeant-major to leave him alone. We forgot about him.

When he eventually showed up in the med bunker, walking slowly and holding a limp, I thought he'd been hit. I asked him what happened, but he was slow to respond, instead rolling up his pantleg to show a slightly swollen knee. Avoiding me, he sought Bob's attention. "It's an old football injury, doc, gives me trouble from time to time. Think I have to get a specialist to look at it. What do you think?" Telling Sypher to sit on a stretcher, Bob pulled up an old ammo case and sat down in front of him. He was all serious business as he probed, asked questions, had the guy flex, bend, and rotate the leg, foot, ankle, and calf up, down, and all around.

Without breaking stride, he gently lowered Sypher's leg to the ground and confirmed the guy's earlier assumption, "Yeah, you better get that looked at before things get worse. Kid, fill out a casualty tag for this man. He can go out on the first available." Smiling, Bob added, "You'll be ready for the big game in no time." I was stunned, but I suspected something else was going on. Bob told Sypher to get his shit together and get ready to get out of Dodge. As he headed for the stairs, I yelled, "Hey!" while waving the casualty tag back and forth. He grabbed it and, with a rubbery smirk, headed up the stairs.

Bob anticipated my question. "I don't know; you want that guy around? I don't. I heard about him. It's best for all concerned to give him what he wants." It was easy to agree with him. There was no need to take it further.

That night brought a vicious on-five-two attack, which squeezed its way between the mortar barrages and continued through the next day. It got bad. We hunkered in the med bunker until someone ran in,

yelling about casualties. Bob was already up the steps as I grabbed my medkit off the wall. Whitey was right behind me. When I reached the top of the stairs, I saw Bob headed for our helipad. Delmer and Butch were lying inert on the now twisted-up aluminum grating as smoke swirled around them. When I reached them, Whitey and I helped Bob put Delmer over his shoulder, and then I hoisted Butch over Whitey's. A blast knocked all of us to the ground, our casualties sprawling into the muck. Then Louie and Captain Crowman reached us and helped get us down into the bunker. Thank Christ, 'cause we were floundering.

Working furiously to stabilize their injuries, we got Butch and Delmer squared away. The injured men had been blessed. The vital aspects of their injuries were easy to reach, but had to be constantly irrigated. The tumble into the mud was a mother and made things difficult. I flooded their wounds almost continually as Bob and Whitey worked, and thankfully, they hadn't lost more blood than they could afford.

A SOG helo came in, and Bob told me to escort them down to Da Nang. He wanted to make sure someone kept a watchful eye on their bleeding. Multiple vessels had been tied off in both men, and the possibility of renewed hemorrhaging would have put them in critical danger. I grabbed my stuff, and we loaded them up.

As we flew in the chilly air over the mountains, I couldn't stop marveling about still being alive. It happened every time you walked away—the wonder over what should have been. When the blast knocked us down, I thought that was it—the sudden stop, the dead end, the waiting wall—but it missed us and kept going, a gratifying fluke.

I waited at the hospital until the docs told me both men were out of danger and would recover. They wouldn't let me visit as they were on the critical list, and one of the docs said they wouldn't be coming back any time soon. A win, finally. It was getting late by that time, and there was only one option left for me: House 22. I *really* wanted to get hammered.

As I made my way out of the hospital, I asked a nurse if there was someplace I could shower. She smiled, amused by my dirt. She pointed me in the right direction and said I could also get a clean pair of fatigues at the showers. Then, relieved, I smiled a big "thank you" and headed off. I knew I must have stunk the paint off the walls because whenever I stopped moving, even for a moment, people began staring. Yeah, guilty! I'm that smell. As I made my way down the corridor, I tried remembering how long it had been since I'd showered. I was greasy, stained, covered in dry blood, and seriously in need of a hose down, and when I finally reached the shower, I realized I'd been accumulating grit, grime, and gruesome for over five weeks. Get me to the water!

After cleaning up, which took a while, I headed for the door, and when I reached outside, I immediately became confused. Near dark, things were catching up to me. I saw a bench by the entrance and sat down hard. I was shaking. I kept seeing the open space between myself and the stricken men and suddenly remembered how I'd hesitated for a moment before I made the dash. I realized I *always* hesitated when explosions were in the way. Whitey had zoomed past, which startled me, and I kind of latched on to his wake. I still goggled over none of us getting wasted. Sitting there for a long moment, I saw two Special Forces men leave the hospital. I walked over, introduced myself, and they gave me a ride to House 22. I was grateful.

Da Nang was overwhelming as we drove through its noisy and crowded streets. A large city, the air held rough fragrances, almost edible—well, at least some of them. This big city was nearly as intimidating as the barrages. I began to feel uncomfortable, exposed, vulnerable. My ride asked the usual questions about Khe Sanh and confessed they knew nothing of the particulars. I was discovering that not many people did. For most, it was the battle best left unexplained and found only in nightmares. I didn't add much. When they dropped me off, they both waved, one saying "Pleasure", the other saying "Pain". Then they laughed heartily and drove off. I stood there feeling slightly foolish as they were swallowed up by the city.

I used my super-duper secret agent card issued to all SOG guys to gain entrance. It was SOG's rough-and-tumble palace of rapturous indulgences, and everybody knew anything goes. A large and very old French colonial mansion, it served decent Vietnamese food and had a surprisingly accommodating bar, card tables, a television, and bedrooms on the second floor for those needing companionship. I'd only been there once before and hadn't had time to linger. But this time, ah, this time I wasn't going anywhere, even if the Golden Chariot itself pulled up.

As I walked by the lounging area, I stopped and saw a bunch of guys watching a show on the TV. It looked pretty cool—an outer space show. One guy had funny ears. I laughed when one of the good guy's rayguns made someone disappear. Somebody yelled, "Man, give us some of those!" It was starting to crowd up. I took a seat near the end of the bar, and when I was about to order, someone wrapped me up in a playful choke hold. I only jumped a little. "Hell, they let *anybody* in here." I turned to see Wes, one of our Spike team guys from the FOB. We laughed. He'd been in Da Nang extending his tour and had just finished dealing with the paperwork. We ordered double bourbons, which we promptly sucked back. Wes was smiling. "Ahh, I see we have some serious work to do."

I told him about Delmer and Butch, and he was relieved, very relieved that they had survived. He knew both men and told me some wild stories about them. Special Forces guys always had good tales, whether they were about work or play, although the ones about play were a lot more interesting. We toasted them and realized we were both hungry. Wes told me he'd be back in a minute and disappeared. I kept drinking. He was a good man, *extremely* reliable, and had helped the medics on more than one occasion carry wounded through the heat. Known as *Knifeman* around camp because he packed lots of them, he'd shown me his collection once when we'd been trapped in his hole by a huge barrage. Exotic, but deadly. He certainly knew what they were for, and he even had names for them.

The one he called *Slim* resided right behind his neck and hung between his shoulder blades. In one deceptively graceful motion, he had reached behind his neck and levered *Slim* into the opposite wall of the bunker.

It had been a casual move, you know, like he was going to smooth down his hair or something. He also had three other knives lurking elsewhere on his body, all within striking distance. I was impressed. We became friends by trying to survive. He'd grown up a lonely kid, one parent a drunk, the other working all the time. He'd latched on to an uncle's World War Two bayonet in grade school and began slicing through his boredom.

When he returned, holding two large bowls of steaming rice soup, I suddenly felt my hunger. Real-fucking-food, simple, but to the point. I hadn't had a meal worthy of the name for as long as I hadn't showered. As we slurped up the soup, we took turns smiling at the world. I laughed and told Wes I'd been in Nam for a couple of months, and this was the first time I'd had Vietnamese food. He froze for a moment, retrieving a memory, and said, "Make that two of us." The place was getting noisier as I was dredging the lower depths of the bowl. Jeez, a friend, booze, and some grub. Both of us were feeling pretty good.

Then I heard a voice closer than an echo splashing out some bravado. It was holding forth about having to rescue guys up at Khe Sanh, rambling on about how the men there were in complete and total disorder and how he'd set them straight with some good old forceful determination. I nudged Wes and nodded in the direction of this voice. We both stopped eating. I leaned back from my stool and looked two stools down. It was my old comrade, Sergeant Sypher. He was thoroughly engrossed in telling his story, and his listener was almost as absorbed as he was.

Then, "They were a mess up there. Christ, if it hadn't been for me, they'd still be flopping in the mud. I even had to smack a couple of guys around to get them off their asses." Wes was now looking over my shoulder, and as I turned back to my bowl and drink, I realized both of us were beginning to find the fog. I may have been heading for the slush, but I could still place bullshit when I heard it. Wes was now staring hard at Sypher, who was oblivious to all but his listener and the stream of sewage gurgling out of his pipe.

Wes turned to me, "Is that asshole serious? Wasn't he up at the FOB a couple of days ago?" he asked, trying to put things together. I nodded, took a drink, leaned over to Sypher's friend, and bilged out, "Every word out of this dipshit's mouth is bullshit. When he was at Khe Sanh for a few days, he played a lot of Rabbit in the Hole."

When I resumed attending to my drink, I noticed Wes eyes suddenly go wide. They blinked once when I was yanked from my stool and thrown to the floor. Sypher was quickly standing over me. Things stopped. Silence moved in. Looking up, I started laughing as Sypher picked me up. I let out an "Oooh, you're so *strong!*"

As I said, he was a big guy, and I knew he could crack me like a nut, but I thought I was having fun. I started singing, "Oh, you're so full of shit you should wipe your butt a bit." He had me by the lapels and was swinging me around. I went limp and began flailing about like a ragdoll with a very stupid look on its mug. Guys started laughing, which made Sypher even more pissed off.

As we were in our third or fourth pirouette, he let go, and I sailed into a card table full of players. Cards, chips, drinks, and money filled the air. Guys backed away. Staggering to my feet, I tried to reorient myself.

Then Sypher grabbed me again and threw me to the floor hard. He followed with a kick to my stomach. I puked on his boot, then mumbled, "Three points!" and when I chucked again, he released me from his grip.

Then he moved backwards very slowly, his eyes locking down on his neck. When I followed his gaze, I saw the tip of *Slim* the dagger pressed to his carotid artery. A pregnant hush now owned the room. I could barely see Wes behind Sypher when I whispered, "Uh-oh." Then I heard Wes say, rather softly considering the circumstances, "Mom's waiting. You better skippy on home." And with that, he gave Sypher a shove with his boot toward the door. No one moved until Sypher was headed for the street. He didn't look back.

The noise returned. People moved. Wes helped me to my feet and then sat me in an easy chair, where I fell fast asleep. I awoke the next morning with Wes tugging me awake. "Kid, c'mon, we got a ride to the FOB." My head felt as if it had been in the path of an avalanche of cinder blocks. I fell back into the chair. Wes helped me up. I searched my pockets and found my little bottle of wake-up tablets. By the time we were over the mountains, the combination of frosty air and med magic had me almost good as new. Wes sat on the helo's seat netting honing Slim. We smiled at each other. The pain from being tossed around and kicked was talking to me, "Are we having fun yet?"

I groaned, but it wasn't that bad, simply a dull, throbbing reminder of someone else's bullshit. I never saw or heard about Sypher again, and whenever Wes was handling his knives, we always laughed.

Twenty-two hundred rounds were waiting for us when we got back. There wasn't much to do on days like that, so we hunkered in our holes, waiting for the sun to pull us out. We'd begun working on the road to survival. We were learning. There had been plenty of obstacles. We chased solutions. The one thing I can say about SF guys is they adapt quickly. At Khe Sanh, you had to. ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

From Denis Chericone's LinkedIn biography: "While in the military I was posted to a remote and very isolated U.S. Army Special Forces A camp, An Loc. While there I was in charge of a twelve bed jungle hospital where I treated everything from amputations to leprosy. I lived amongst the people of the area, the Gerai and Rhade Montagnards. This was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life."

Denis is a writer, a poet, and also a talented pianist.

Medal of Honor Recipient COL Paris Davis (ret.) Serves as the Grand Marshall of the 91st Hollywood Christmas Parade



For the first time in history, an American War hero, Colonel Paris D. Davis, served as the Grand Marshal of the *91st Anniversary of the Hollywood Christmas Parade Supporting Marine Toys for Tots*.

Members of the US Army Ranger Association (USARA) were joined for the first time by members of SFA Chapter 78, Rick Carter and Ramon Rodriguez, to march in the parade following the car which carried COL Davis. Included in the evening's festivities was a presentation of the US Army Ranger Association President's Award to Joey Gattton on the red carpet for his years of service with the USARA.

The USARA is currently working to put together a Ranger and NFL Flag Football game in 2024 and any Special Forces Association members are invited. More info to come, but if interested email Joey Gattton, USARA Deputy Regional Commander at joeyg@able.org. ❖



USARA members and Chapter 78 members, along with COL Davis, posed for a photo with recording artist Paula Abdul on the red carpet.



COL Davis shakes hands with Joey Gattton in recognition of his award.



SGM KC Yee, C Co 1/19th SFG attended with his wife and daughter.

SFA Chapter 78 November 2023 Chapter Meeting

Photos by Rick Carter



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1 Chapter President Greg Horton at the November 2023 SFA Chapter 78 meeting.

2 Chapter Vice President James McLanahan

3 Jim Cragg

4 Len Fein reported on the recent SOAR and spoke about a trip to Vietnam that included an exciting tour to the site of the Son Tay Raid.

5 Greg Horton presented a chapter coin to guest, Joey Gatton, Executive Director of the Association for Better Living and Education, and member of the USA Ranger Association.

6 & 7 Len presented Greg Horton with a 2003 Toyota Tacoma Repair manual for Greg's beloved truck.

8 & 9 Len unpacking a shirt and a hat autographed by "The Doctor" Valentino Rossi World Champion MotoGP racer which he presented to Moto enthusiast James McLanahan.

10 Don Gonneville and Richard Simonian

11 Dave Thomas and Ham Salley **12** How Miller and Joey Gatton

13 Joey Gatton and Gary Macnamara **14** Nimo and Ramon Rodriguez

15 Jim Duffy and Joey Gatton

16 The meeting attendees listening intently to Len Fein's presentation.

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