



SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

VOLUME 15, ISSUE 2 • FEBRUARY 2024

Leadership Lessons from the Evolution of the Army Rangers

A HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE

ou Une Mémoire de l'Holocauste

Chapter 78 Celebrates Christmas



SENTINEL

VOLUME 15, ISSUE 2 • FEBRUARY 2024

From the Editor



US ARMY SPECIAL OPS COMMAND



US ARMY JFK SWCS



1ST SF COMMAND



1ST SF GROUP



3RD SF GROUP



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7TH SF GROUP



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FRONT COVER: A Ranger instructor explains to the company of Rangers the technical instructions of repelling from the 50 ft. rock to his left in Dahlonega, Georgia, during the Mountain Phase of the Ranger training. (U.S. Air Force photo/Master Sgt. Cecilio Ricardo) (released)



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How Miller
Sentinel Editor

We begin this *Sentinel* with a Letter to the Editor by relatives of Green Beret-turned-Sandanista David Baez. It was sent to author Greg Walker to both confirm the accuracy of Greg's *Sentinel* articles and to express profound thanks for what his efforts have meant to his family.

A remarkable former Green Beret, among other things, James R. Webb has written *Innovators Who Changed the World*. My review of this delightful and informative book describes his many subjects and their common threads. Please be sure to read his biography at the end of his Chapter 4 on the U.S. Army Rangers, which follows my review.

Featured from "Innovators" is the story of the origins and history of America's U.S. Army Rangers, from the French and Indian War through World War II. Included is a breakdown of today's Ranger School and how they teach infantry tactics, perseverance, flexibility, and most of all, leadership. As with other innovators, the most successful candidates are those that inspire others to push themselves and buy into the unit's mission.

Next, our frequent contributor, Marc Yablonka, shares, in "Holocaust Memories," a short history of his family's dangerous dealings with the Nazis in France, some of the many perilous circumstances they endured, and some of the people who took great risks to help them. This is a poignant reminder of the evils that SF fights around the world.

And please enjoy pictures from our Christmas Party at the Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club in Newport Beach, CA, and the swearing-in of our new and returning chapter officers. Our keynote speaker, on loan from SFA Chapter 4-24, Chris Sorenson, told us about his and others' activities at the beginning of the U.S. response to the 9/11 attacks. We also had the privilege of a visit by our distinguished guest, one of the SF Originals, Vahan Sipantzi. The meeting was a "thank you" and "goodbye" to our outgoing president, Greg Horton, and an introduction to our new president, Aaron Brandenburg, a GWOT veteran.

We have been able to share a lot of interesting and informative articles with you because of the many people who have submitted materials to us. Please help us preserve the record of what you have done by letting us know your story. And please visit our website at <https://www.specialforces78.com/> to see past issues of the *Sentinel* and loads of other fascinating material like blogs and videos.

How Miller
Sentinel Editor

From the President | February 2024



Aaron Brandenburg
President SFA Ch. 78

Dear Members of Chapter 78,

It is a privilege to address you as your newly elected Chapter President. As we come together to reflect on the outstanding achievements and enduring camaraderie that characterize Chapter 78, we bid farewell to our outgoing President, Greg Horton. Under his guidance, our chapter has epitomized the principles of excellence, service, and brotherhood that define the Special Forces community.

In looking back at the past year, I am inspired by the collective strength and resilience displayed by each member of our chapter. Your unwavering commitment to our shared values has not only sustained our legacy but has also propelled us to new heights. Together, we have confronted challenges head-on, demonstrated courage in adversity, and forged bonds that transcend the ordinary.

The success of our chapter is a testament to the dedication and professionalism of each member. Whether in the field or within our local community, your service reflects the highest standards of the Special Forces tradition—we are truly "The Quiet Professionals." It is through your individual and collective efforts that Chapter 78 continues to thrive, leaving a lasting impact in our communities and the Special Forces Association as a whole.

As we look ahead, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to excellence. As members of the Chapter, we bear the responsibility of upholding the values of our elite force and supporting one another in our endeavors. I encourage each of you to actively participate in chapter activities, share your experiences, and contribute to the continued success of our community.

In the coming year, let us build upon the foundation of camaraderie and mutual respect that has defined Chapter 78. Together, we can face the challenges ahead with the same determination and unity that have characterized our chapter throughout its history.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each member for your service, dedication, and sacrifice. Your contributions are the driving force behind our chapter's strength, and I am confident that our collective efforts will lead to even greater accomplishments in the future.

Thank you for being an integral part of Chapter 78. May our bonds of brotherhood continue to grow stronger, and may we always honor the legacy of the Special Forces community.

Sincerely,
Aaron Brandenburg
President
Special Forces Association Chapter 78



SFA Chapter 78 Monthly Meetings

Chapter 78 meets on the
third Saturday of the month*

Time: Breakfast – 0800 • Meeting – 0830

NOTE:
Beginning in February, we will be meeting
in a new location to be announced.

**The annual Christmas Party may
deviate from this standard.*



2024 Meeting Schedule

January 20
February 17
March 16
April 20
May 18
June 15
July 20
August 17
September 21
October 19
November 16
December (to be announced)

Letter to the Editor

From: Gregory Walker
 Sent: Wednesday, January 3, 2024 9:32:45 AM
 Subject: David Baez

Just received the below from David Arturo Baez's relative—reference my series in the *Sentinel* on Baez, his life and his death in Honduras.

Some years back I heard from David's now adult son who likewise now lives in the States. He, too, expressed similar thoughts and recollections about his dad.

A Defector In Place—Parts 1 – 3

<https://www.specialforces78.com/a-defector-in-place-the-strange-and-terrible-saga-of-a-green-beret-sandinista-part-one/>

<https://www.specialforces78.com/a-defector-in-place-the-strange-and-terrible-saga-of-a-green-beret-sandinista-part-two/>

<https://www.specialforces78.com/a-defector-in-place-the-strange-and-terrible-saga-of-a-green-beret-sandinista-part-three/>

I must thank Jim Morris, who years ago as my editor in New York saw me signed for my *Springblade* series of which Book 3 (*Stiletto*) became the place holder for the Baez story that I'd learned about while stationed in Panama with 3/7 SFGA. I could never have imagined decades later that I'd have the opportunity to fully investigate the true story of David Baez and then to present it in such an appropriate forum as the *Sentinel*. Thank you, Jim!

And all those who knew Baez at 3/7 and, in some cases, encountered him again during clandestine AST missions in NIC when he was in the uniform of a Sandinista officer. Even then, Baez—who could have had those operators arrested as soon as he recognized them—did not compromise his SF brethren... their recollections, help, and friendship with David Arturo brought his story to life and accurately so.

Most important—his family and extended family today have reached a degree of closure and remember him with fondness, love, and respect.

"No fallen comrade left behind."



Good Evening, Greg,

Thank you for your reply.

Your piece was, indeed, accurate. I most appreciate your depiction of my uncle as a man who had a vendetta against Somoza, as opposed to being a Sandinista true believer. I think he would have joined almost any movement that helped him towards his

revenge. His mother, my mamita, as we called her, used to say that when he was a very little boy, he was already vowing to kill Somoza.

As I was reading your piece, I kept matching dates to things I knew about him. For example, I remember being about 5 years old and seeing my dad comforting my crying mother because someone had called to tell them that Tio Arturo had been reported missing-in-action. That happened in the early eighties. In reference to his physical strength, my mom used to tell us that he could take hold of a standing pole with both hands and extend his whole body horizontally. Interestingly enough, my wife and I were looking through pictures and found one of a 1-year-old me sitting on a table and laughing. On the back was written, Ft. Sherman, '79. Either my uncle Arturo or his wife must have taken it.

The story of my mom's family is a sad one, as you know. She spent her whole life followed by the ghost of my grandfather, as she was 5 when he was murdered by Somoza. My mom died in 2001 of a massive brain tumor, then my uncle Adolfo, the eldest, committed suicide in his home outside of Chicago some time around 2008 or so. My grandmother died not long after that. I sat with my uncle Eduardo at her grave in Jinotepe and watched him cry, saying, "Me hacen tanta falta." I miss them so much. When he died, my sisters and I mourned not only him, but my mom and all of them all over again.

My dad was called home last September. Being 45 and yet feeling like an orphan, I loved reading your piece. It made me feel like they were all back and I could talk to them again for a little while.

Thank you.

God bless you,
 Francisco



David Arturo Baez

Book Review

Innovators Who Changed the World: Timeless Leadership Lessons From West Point, Green Berets, Sherlock Holmes, and Wall Street by James R. Webb

By How Miller

A Special Forces recruiter's dream is a PhD who can win a barfight. Dr. James R. "Jim" Webb might be just that man. On the way to becoming a Special Forces officer, he attended West Point and received top honors at his Ranger training class. Afterwards, he hit high marks in the business world, got his PhD, and became a professor.

In *Innovators Who Changed the World*, motivated by his own experiences, Jim tells us about some of the giants upon whose shoulders we all stand. A perfect example of that is the story of how Sylvanus Thayer took control of West Point and changed the way our young nation trained its officers, eventually having a positive effect on all of academia and setting the stage for our military to become the finest in the world.

A recurrent theme is how these innovators co-opted the students' participation in not only improving themselves but the entire organization. Jujitsu master Jigoro Kano is another example, who not only excelled at his craft but also improved it by combining techniques he learned from other self-defense disciplines. He also taught his students differently, having discussions near the end of each class about movements learned, why, and how best they might be used, and spurring more confidence and enthusiasm. His successes and persistence ultimately resulted in his newly devised Judo becoming accepted even at the Olympic level.

"Jumping" Jim Gavin, familiar to most Green Berets, was the right man at the right time. He was able to take the relatively new concept of light infantry, parachuting from aircraft behind enemy lines, and successfully cause chaos for the enemy. This made it easier for the rest of the military units to succeed.

One of the innovative concepts was the self-responsibility that each man carried. Landings were unpredictable, and any man might be called upon to lead small groups to fight their way to friendly troops or overtake the objective. Preparation for those contingencies helped build confidence and loyalty to completing the mission—something bigger than themselves. He used multiple approaches, including leading by example. He was the first man out the door on each combat jump. His personal recognition of even small successes was also confidence-building. The swagger of airborne troops is well earned, as they continue to follow Jumping Jim's precepts.

Featured in this issue, from New Hampshire's Robert Rogers' recruiting and training irregular troops for the French and Indian Wars to today's warriors whose mantra is "Rangers lead the way," the Rangers and their predecessor units have transformed traditional methods of combat into daring and successful special operations. You can read that chapter for yourself in this issue. (see page 4)

U.S. Army Special Forces (Green Berets) transformed warfare by combining Ranger type skills with psyop capabilities that can actually grow stability and capabilities of a partner force. Jim shows us how we started and evolved, becoming the premier outfit in the world.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, through his wildly popular Sherlock homes stories, was a transformational figure to police practices. Detective work was spurred to improvement, partly due to the high powered fan club members sharing his and their ideas in an enjoyable experience.

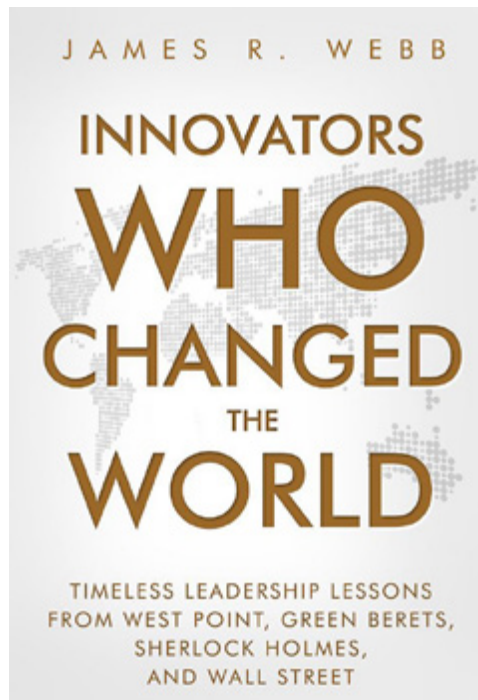
Soccer's Sir Alex Ferguson transformed his Manchester United football club to lasting success through knowing (and caring) about his people and ensuring the whole organization worked together to create success.

Jim, who later managed a \$6B investment fund, was working on Wall Street in 1987, on Black Monday. He points out how earlier, J. P. Morgan got disparate and competing investors to talk to each other and devise ways to rescue the finances of our nation. Among other topics, Jim also compares growth stock investors to value stock investors such as

Warren Buffett who famously said: "It is better to invest in a wonderful company at a fair price than a fair company at a wonderful price".

Throughout the book, Jim explains the difference between transformational leadership, (the skilled and persuasive idea men), and transactional leadership (the ones who follow those ideas and help lead others to make the ideas work). He stresses that both are imperative for a strategy to succeed.

Of the many ideas that we can each take from this book to improve our own lives, paramount is the approach of skilled and resourceful leaders to confidently and humbly grow both an idea, and the confidence and enthusiasm of the people who will carry it out. ❖



[*Innovators Who Changed the World: Timeless Leadership Lessons From West Point, Green Berets, Sherlock Holmes, and Wall Street*](#)

By James R. Webb
Breakthrough Strategy
(August 8, 2022)
208 pages

From *Innovators Who Changed the World: Timeless Leadership Lessons From West Point, Green Berets, Sherlock Holmes, and Wall Street*, Chapter 4:

Leadership Lessons from the Evolution of the Army Rangers



Major Robert Rogers of New Hampshire recruited and organized nine companies of American colonists. His purpose was to train them in ranger tactics to support the British in the French and Indian War. (Thomas Hart (publisher); Johann Martin Will (artist) — From the Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Public Domain)

By James R. Webb

Reprinted with permission from *Innovators Who Changed the World: Timeless Leadership Lessons From West Point, Green Berets, Sherlock Holmes, and Wall Street* by James R. Webb, pages 73–90, published by Breakthrough Strategy, August 8, 2022.

Available for purchase at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

Major Robert Rogers of New Hampshire recruited and organized nine companies of American colonists. His purpose was to train them in ranger tactics to support the British in the French and Indian War.

Our innovative leadership journey now takes us to explore the US Army Rangers. The Rangers teach us how to always stay one step ahead of our competitors, how to prepare for any eventuality, and how to be flexible in the face of an ever-changing environment.

Early on, Robert Rogers learned from the tactics of the American Indians as he developed ways and means to defeat British forces in the American Revolutionary War. John Mosby became the “Grey Ghost” of the American Civil War as he and his men seemed to disappear into nowhere. More recently, Darby’s Rangers managed to attack positions in World War II that were previously deemed impenetrable. Rangers are not afraid to adapt to ever-changing situations and the challenges they present.



The history of the Army Rangers dates back to the 1600s and the arrival of the first people to eventually be called Americans following their arrival from Europe.

These first explorers and settlers seeking the New World brought with them the ways of Europe. More specifically, they were primarily schooled in the European method of engaging in warfare. In Europe, conventional rather than irregular warfare became the standard with its planned set-pieces and large numbers of soldiers lined up in orderly rows on clear fields of battle.

Large-scale religious wars had evolved into large armies led by professional officers. The officers hailed from the aristocracy and served to lead a collection of mercenaries combined with those in the lower classes of society. Since it was difficult to replace a trained army, battles of maneuver on a large field became the norm. Both sides would maneuver to gain a decided advantage rather than engaging in an affair that resulted in large-scale casualties and attrition.

This contained and controlled style of warfare was primarily done in good weather in order for generals to be able to adequately control troop movement. Tactics such as raids and ambushes were frowned upon and considered ungentlemanly.

Enter the New World. While Europe contained well-established cities, fields that were well cultivated, and had a relatively short distance between towns and countries, America had the opposite. The terrain was both vast and varied. In some places the forests were so dense as to be unpassable. Explorers experienced wild animals such as bears and wolves while swatting mosquitoes and fending off rattlesnakes.

Initially, newcomers to America settled by the sea as a source of food and transportation as moving inland proved to provide too many hurdles as to be practical. Eventually, countries such as France, England, and Spain realized the potential of the vast resources offered in the New World—resources such as timber for building, fur from animals, and fish.

As the European population swelled, they inevitably ran into the previous occupants of the New World: Native Americans. It is estimated that more than a million Indians lived north of what is now Mexico, with almost a quarter of those residing along the eastern coast. While numerous tribes existed, the most powerful tribe in the area of the colonists was the Iroquois.

The Iroquois were a warrior people who focused on conquest and controlled much of the land between Canada and the Carolinas. They were fierce fighters and featured canoes built specifically for war. Other tribes often looked to them for guidance and permission and sent tribute to maintain peaceful relations.

The Indian was a hunter, so war was a natural part of their existence. It had not evolved into the gentlemanly wars fought by the aristocratic kings of Europe. Indians would avoid planned battles fought in the open and favored the surprise of raids and ambushes. Given the distances between tribes and settlements, a small band would travel many miles over rough terrain to conduct a surprise attack upon their enemy.

They would hide behind trees rather than standing out in the open, and only pop up to shoot their arrows when they had the advantage on a tactical level. They blended into their environment and made the best use of the weapons they had, intending to inflict the greatest harm while minimizing casualties. The ultimate test of this warrior was bravery in battle. Their defeated enemy would suffer enslavement, torture, and the taking of scalps.

There were very cruel days on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. While the American Indians practiced their brutal way of war, Europeans practiced a class system that was ruthless in its approach. Powerful Europeans were known to flog, torture, and enslave those in the lesser classes, especially those with differing religious beliefs. Both sides—Europeans and American Indians—approached the other with trepidation and distrust.

As the new settlers expanded, they conflicted with the American Indians who did not practice the concept of private land and ownership. For the American Indian, the only owner of the land was the tribe that could hold it by force. Land ownership beyond that was not practiced. Europeans intended to acquire and own land, and that hunger was answered with raids by American Indians. European settlers in remote areas became terrified as they found themselves in the middle of cultivating a field only to be attacked by those who felt they were intruding on their way of life.

As hatred between the two groups grew, the European settlers formed units of citizen-soldiers based on a longtime English model to drive off the menace. Eventually, permanent military units were formed with forts built to protect land acquired and settled on by European families. The tension between the two sides increased, exacerbated by the emotions of people being killed on both sides.

New Rules of Warfare

Given the new terrain, new conditions, and their new enemy, the newly arrived Europeans were forced to reconsider their methods of warfare and adopt many of the tactics being used against them by the American Indians. The European method of lining up in an orderly manner in the middle of a field did not work against their new foe. The techniques the American Indians had used and refined over many years were carefully studied and copied. These methods and corresponding tactics led to the tools and techniques used by the early American Ranger.

The term *ranger* has been associated with those who ranged far into England's dense and unexplored forests as early as the thirteenth century. The seventeenth century found the title being more frequently used in association with irregular military organizations such as the border rangers who guarded the harsh frontier border that England shared with Scotland.

In the *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith*, Captain Smith often speaks of his men “ranging” in various areas. In the first instance he uses this term, he reflected on his encounter with Indians who had set upon his small group to steal his tools around 1608 while he was in Virginia. Initially, the White settlers would trade steel tools for food as they were not yet self-sufficient. Over time, they produced more food on their own so there was less need to trade away their precious tools.

Yet, the Indians craved the European tools as something very beneficial and did not have the knowledge to make their own. Theft became a viable option to them, as did the kidnapping of people to exchange for these precious tools. Such acts often led to both animosity and heavy retaliation, with muskets deployed by the new Americans against the bow and arrow of the Indian. Naturally, muskets also became a craved-for item, and the technology of warfare escalated as the Indians exercised their expertise in raids to acquire more.

By 1670, Captain Benjamin Church formed, trained, and led a unit that utilized ranger tactics. It was deployed against the Indians in 1675 in a conflict known as King Philip's War. King Philip was the nickname of the chief of the Wampanoag peoples who was looking to force the English colonists from New England. These rangers were vital in helping the conflict result in a successful conclusion for the colonists.



John Smith (STC 22790, Houghton Library, Harvard University)



Captain Benjamin Church (public domain)

In 1756, Major Robert Rogers of New Hampshire recruited and organized nine companies of American colonists. His purpose was to train them in ranger tactics to support the British in the French and Indian War. These ranger tactics were derived from the techniques and operations used by frontiersmen at the time.

What was different was that Major Rogers incorporated them into the doctrine of a standing organized fighting force. These companies brought together frontiersmen, hunters, mixed bloods, and Indians to scout and raid for British forces. They were officially dubbed the Ranger Company of the New Hampshire Provincial Regiment. The unit was known for being well trained and conducting daring operations that included deep penetration well behind enemy lines.

While they were disbanded after the war in 1763, they left an indelible mark on the history and traditions of the American military and are often considered the first genuine ranger unit as their organization and tactics were absorbed and built upon by subsequent ranger-type units.

Of particular interest were the *Standing Rules of Rogers Rangers*. While those interested can find all twenty-seven of the standing rules on the ranger.org website, some of the more intriguing examples are these:

1. All Rangers are to be subject to the rules and articles of war; to appear at roll-call every evening, on their own parade, equipped, each with a firelock, sixty rounds of powder and ball, and a hatchet, at which time an officer from each company is to inspect the same, to see they are in order, so as to be ready on any emergency to march at a minute's warning; and before they are dismissed, the necessary guards are to be selected and scouts for the next day appointed.
2. Whenever you are ordered out to the enemy's forts or frontiers for discoveries, if your number be small, march in a single file, keeping at such distance from each other as to prevent one shot from killing two men, sending one man, or more, forward, and the like on each side, at the distance of twenty yards from the main body, if the ground you march over will admit of it, to give the signal to the officer of the approach of an enemy, and of their number.
3. If you march over marshes or soft ground, change your position, and march abreast of each other to prevent the enemy from tracking you (as they would do if you marched in a single file) till you get over such ground, and then resume your former order and march till it is quite dark before you encamp, which do, if possible, on a piece of ground which that may afford your sentries the advantage of seeing or hearing the enemy some considerable distance, keeping one-half of your whole party awake alternately through the night.
4. Sometime before you come to the place you would reconnoiter, make a stand, and send one or two men in whom you can confide, to look out the best ground for making your observations.
5. If you have the good fortune to take any prisoners, keep them separate, till they are examined, and in your return take a different route from that in which you went out, that you may the better discover any party in your rear, and have an opportunity, if their strength be superior to yours, to alter your course, or disperse, as circumstances may require.

6. Before you leave your encampment, send out small parties to scout round it, to see if there be any appearance or track of an enemy that might have been near you during the night.
7. When you stop for refreshment, chose some spring or rivulet if you can, and dispose your party so as not to be surprised, posting proper guards and sentries at a due distance, and let a small party waylay the path came in, lest the enemy should be pursuing.
8. If you have to pass by lakes, keep at some distance from the edge of the water, lest, in case of an ambuscade or an attack from the enemy, when in that situation, your retreat should be cut off.
9. If the enemy pursue your rear, take a circle till you come to your own tracks, and there form an ambush to receive them, and give them the first fire.
10. When you return from a scout, and come near our forts, avoid the usual roads, and avenues thereto, lest the enemy should have headed you, and lay in ambush to receive you, when almost exhausted with fatigues.

Major Rogers continually drilled these standing rules into those under his command, including the conduct of live-fire exercises, until they were ingrained enough for them to execute bold, coordinated movements. What is noteworthy is that the practice at the time for conventional army units was to settle down into a bivouac during the winter months-not so for the rangers. They would continue to move against the French and Indians through the use of winter gear such as snowshoes and sleds.

Perhaps his most famous raid was against the Abenaki Indians whereby he directed a force of 200 Rangers over 400 miles, by both boat and land over a period of two months, to penetrate deep into Indian territory to devastate the Abenaki tribe. The successful raid resulted in the tribe no longer being a threat.

Rangers in the American Revolution and Beyond

More than a decade later, the need for rangers rose again as the American colonists prepared for war against the British. Anticipating a revolutionary war, the Continental Congress raised companies of expert riflemen in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. These companies drew heavily upon the experience of the frontiersmen that had practiced ranger tactics.

Daniel Morgan had joined a company of rangers during the French and Indian War and soon became familiar with the tactics used by such a unit. At the outbreak of the Revolutionary war, Morgan was given a command that was named the Corps of Rangers by George Washington and considered by the British to be the most formidable force fielded by the colonies. Morgan was successful because of his use of tactics such as blocking roads to slow British movement and using snipers to eliminate enemy leadership and scouts.



Daniel Morgan (public domain)



Confederate Cavalry Colonel John S. Mosby and some of his men: Top row (left to right): Lee Herverson, Ben Palmer, John Puryear, Tom Booker, Norman Randolph, Frank Raham. Second row: Robert Blanks Parrott, John Troop, John W. Munson, John S. Mosby, Newell, Neely, Quarles. Third row: Walter Gosden, Harry T. Sinnott, Butler, Gentry.

At one point, Morgan's men dressed as Indians and used hit-and-run tactics to disrupt the British in New York and New Jersey. In addition, his riflemen were expert shots and used long rifles that could accurately shoot twice as far as the British muskets. Meanwhile, in Europe, future generals such as Napoleon continued to study how to maneuver large numbers of troops in large fields.

The American Civil War brought with it a variety of men who were well versed in ranger tactics. The most famous was John Mosby, who became known as the "Grey Ghost." Mosby initially joined as a private in the Confederate Army and soon found himself scouting and running raids under the leadership of the audacious cavalry commander JEB Stuart seeking to disrupt communications and the flow of supplies to Union troops at the front.

Once his talent was recognized, Mosby was given command of the 43rd Battalion Virginia Cavalry and eventually designated as partisan rangers operating in Northern Virginia. Partisan rangers operated very differently from the regular Confederate Army at the time. They lived scattered among the civilian population rather than in army camps and enjoyed sharing the spoils of war. Essentially citizens by day and soldiers by night.

Early successes included a raid that resulted in the capture of Union General Edwin Stoughton. While the general's unit was sleeping off a raucous party, Mosby's rangers slipped into his camp and captured the general along with over thirty of his men and around sixty horses.

It was reported that President Lincoln was less concerned with the capture of the young general than he was of losing that many horses, as horses were expensive and hard to acquire. This raid went far in improving the morale of the Confederacy, who were in the initial stages of food shortages.

Operating out of Middleburg, Virginia, Mosby's rangers became masters at conducting lightning-quick raids that struck well into the rear of the Union forces and then disappeared as Union forces sought to capture them. All the men under his command were expert horsemen and more than familiar with their area of operations.

Perhaps most interesting about Mosby is that following the end of the Civil War, he became friendly with and actively supported Ulysses S. Grant in his former foe's election as president of the United States. Even more intriguing because in the book the *Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant*, it was noted that in May 1864 Grant was traveling unguarded between Washington and his headquarters. Mosby missed capturing him by only a few minutes while on one of his frequent raids into Union territory.

World War II brought the capabilities of the Ranger battalions into full focus. In the European theater they became known as Darby's Rangers. In the Pacific they were called Merrill's Marauders. In the European theater, Generals George Marshall and Lucian Truscott determined that, with America's entry into the war, a unit be developed along the lines of the British commando model.



COL William Darby (U.S. Army)

The name “Ranger” was selected due to the long history of ranger activity in the United States, and also because the term *commando* belonged to the British. They chose Captain William Darby to lead the effort due to his outstanding reputation and experience with amphibious training. Darby carefully cultivated men from other American units stationed in Britain and subjected them to a strenuous weeding-out process.

The First Ranger Battalion was officially activated in Northern Ireland in June 1942. The unit then moved to the British Commando Training Center in Scotland, where over 500 men underwent more thorough training in commando tactics. Now a lieutenant colonel, Darby led his men to spearhead the invasion of North Africa by conducting a night landing in Algeria to seize two separate gun batteries and open the way for the First Infantry Division.

In Tunisia, Darby’s Rangers conducted successful behind-the-lines missions to capture prisoners and staged a twelve-mile night march across mountainous terrain to lead General Patton’s efforts to clear the El Guettar Pass in Tunisia. The location in central Tunisia was located where several roads from the south and the coast came together, making it tactically critical. They captured several hundred prisoners in the process.

After Tunisia, two more Ranger battalions were formed and trained by Darby’s first battalion. This combined unit then spearheaded the efforts to capture Sicily and created a jumping off point for the invasion of Italy. The elite unit was the first to land in the invasion of Italy near Salerno.

Colonel Darby now had 10,000 men under his command, and he led them through bitter winter mountain fighting near San Pietro, regrouped, then spearheaded a surprise night landing at the Port of Anzio. These types of operations are typical of those given to Ranger units—constant movement through tough terrain to capture critical positions.

On another front, the 2nd Ranger Battalion was given the task of leading the assault on Omaha Beach in Normandy on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Under the command of Lieutenant James Rudder, they assaulted the perpendicular cliffs of Pointe du Hoc as German machine guns battered their ascent for two days and nights. Their successful mission destroyed a well-placed gun battery that could have taken potshots at the invading military fleets.

In the Pacific Theater, Rangers continued to distinguish themselves. As a part of the invasion that retook the Philippines, the 6th Ranger Battalion actively conducted raids and ambushes behind the lines against the entrenched Japanese Army.

In one of the most daring raids in history, an element of this unit marched thirty miles behind enemy lines to rescue 500 victims of the brutal Bataan Death March. Carrying many of these emaciated prisoners on their backs back to friendly lines, they managed to evade two Japanese regiments who were intent on finding them and killing their former prisoners.

Also, in the Pacific Theater was a Ranger-type unit designated as the 5307 Composite Unit, but better known as Merrill’s Marauders, named after their commander, Brigadier General Frank Merrill. The president put out a request for volunteers for a dangerous and hazardous mission.

Nearly 3,000 soldiers responded without knowing the true purpose of the new unit. Their task was to conduct a long-range penetration mission well behind enemy lines in Burma. Walking over 1,000 miles through rugged terrain, the unit distinguished itself by cutting off Japanese communications and disrupting supply lines. Vastly outnumbered, they eventually captured the critical all-weather Myitkyina Airfield. The unit was eventually redesignated the 75th Infantry, which is the current designation of American Ranger units.

Ranger units have since distinguished themselves in the Korean War, Vietnam, the Middle East, Grenada, Panama, and are even heavily used to support Special Operations activities. For example, they were on the ramp and ready to support the later stages of the Iranian hostage rescue attempt, Operation Eagle Claw in 1980.



Merrill’s Marauders rest during a break along a jungle trail near Nhpum Ga. (U.S. Army)



From left to right, PFC Julius Cobb, Navy Gunner’s Mate Clarence Hall, British Army SGT Robert Hall, CPT Robert J. Duncan (in cart), and an unidentified Ranger pose with the carabao cart used to transport rescued POWs to Guimba on 31 January 1945. (U.S. Army)

Ranger School

Ranger School is probably the most physically and mentally challenging course that most military personnel encounter in their lifetime. Well, at least for those who volunteer for the most demanding sixty-two days of their lives, and soldiers must volunteer.

To be accepted into the school you had to be in top physical condition, mentally tough, and highly motivated to succeed. Even then, only about half of this elite group successfully make it through to graduate and receive the distinguished Ranger Tab. The school itself is conducted in three phases: the Benning Phase located at Camp Darby in Fort Benning, Georgia; the Mountain Phase located at Camp Merrill near Dahlonega, Georgia; and the Swamp Phase located at Camp Rudder on Eglin Air Force Base, Florida.

The first phase, the Benning Phase, covers the basics of operating efficiently at the squad level. An infantry squad typically has nine soldiers. This initial part of the training is also focused on ensuring that the Ranger candidate has the physical stamina, mental toughness, and leadership abilities to be successful in the course. The physical standard is to be able to do fifty-eight perfect pushups, sixty-nine perfect situps, six perfect pull-ups, run five miles in under forty minutes, and finish a twelve-mile march with a thirty-five-pound rucksack in less than three hours. The word *perfect* was used in the previous sentence as the grader will not give credit for, say, a pull-up unless the candidate went all the way to a dead hang and then placed their chin all the way over the bar.

A land navigation test is given whereby the candidate must navigate to different points on a course using only a map and compass. Part of the navigation course is completed in darkness without using a flashlight. Precise navigation becomes critical during later phases as squads and larger attacking elements must assault a target at a specific place and a specific time or fail the patrol.

In addition, the fundamentals of patrolling are taught to include reaction drills (such as reaction to ambushes, contact, or indirect fire) and how to prepare and give warning and operations orders as a patrol leader. A Ranger candidate's days are long and filled with repeated practice to firmly instill the fundamentals. Successful completion of this phase enables the Ranger candidate to move to the next phase.

The Mountain Phase starts with several days of military mountaineering training such as rappelling and climbing. The following two weeks are spent conducting raids, ambushes, and other patrolling missions over mountainous terrain. The harsh terrain provides an extreme challenge to the Ranger candidate as their stamina and commitment are stressed to extremes.

As a leader, the Ranger candidate is required to lead a group of tired and hungry soldiers over harsh terrain to their objective while maintaining strict military discipline, often in severe weather, while being harassed by a local aggressor force that is accustomed to the terrain.

Airborne qualified soldiers may find themselves parachuting into small drop zones on the side of a mountain, quickly assembling and organizing, and then moving off to accomplish their objective. Successful completion of this phase enables the Ranger candidate



Ranger students negotiate the rope climb obstacle at the Malvesti Confidence Course during the Benning Phase of Ranger training. (U.S. Army photo by Patrick A. Albright, Maneuver Center of Excellence and Fort Benning Public Affairs)



A ranger instructor explains to company of rangers the technical instructions of rappelling from the 50 ft rock to his left in Dahlonega, GA, during the Mountain Phase of training. (Photo by Master Sgt. Cecilio Ricardo, U.S. Army)



Candidates paddle assault boats along a waterway in Florida during the "swamp" phase of Ranger training. (U.S. Army photo by Patrick Albright Fort Moore Public Affairs Office)

to move to the next phase, which for airborne qualified soldiers meant parachuting into Eglin Air Force Base. Non-airborne qualified candidates endured a long bus ride.

The final operational phase of Ranger School is the Swamp Phase. After completing the Mountain Phase, Ranger candidates are thrown into an environment of waterborne operations such as small boat movements and stream crossings. They also live in the swamp for

the next few weeks and are trained to survive in a harsh environment that includes being constantly wet and sharing the ecosystem with poisonous reptiles and alligators. This is accomplished while constantly on the move conducting a variety of increasingly complex operations, having little time to sleep, and little to eat.

The endurance and mental toughness of each Ranger is thoroughly tested. Successful completion of this phase earns the Ranger a trip back to Fort Benning where they receive the coveted black-and-gold Ranger Tab that is worn above their unit patch on the left shoulder for the remainder of their service career.

I was fortunate in achieving the highest ratings in the class and being designated as the class Distinguished Honor Graduate. This came with a letter signed by a two-star general telling your commanding officer of the accomplishment—not a bad way to start a new job.

Innovative Leadership Lessons from Rangers

As tested by the Ranger School, the history of the Army Ranger has indicated an individual who is mentally tough, physically strong, and extremely motivated to ensure their given objective is met. The initial part of Ranger School is designed to provide the students with good habits and reinforce those habits with constant repetition.

This instruction is well designed, progressive, and sequential. Once a foundation is established, those habits are tested with a variety of continuous combat patrols that include little food or sleep.

As the Ranger student moves waist-deep through the murky swamps of Florida, often bordering on hypothermia with their shivering body keeping them awake, they come to know the very limits of their endurance. While tactical and technical competence is being built and embedded in the psyche of the Ranger student, so too are the leadership lessons that come with them.

At the beginning of the patrol, the appointed leader provides an operations order that details every aspect of the mission at hand. In this way, every Ranger student knows precisely what is expected of them. As missions become more complex, contingency planning becomes a key element as Rangers prepare for the inevitable changes and have the guidance to adapt accordingly.

Rangers are well known for quickly adapting to ever-changing mission priorities and tactical opportunities. Most operations do not come off exactly as planned, and the more complex the operation, the higher the risk of mitigating circumstances. Rangers are trained to anticipate and quickly adapt to this change. It has been said that in a period of rapid change, many tend to shirk responsibility. Rangers are taught the opposite—quickly identify the problem, step into the breach, and assume responsibility.

Leaders accept responsibility for both their actions and the actions of those they lead. Bad habits such as procrastination and selfishness are quickly cast aside as Rangers focus on those they lead and the mission at hand.

By focusing on those you lead, you can learn from their areas of expertise, promote their achievements, and understand how to best lead the group to accomplish the mission. This is the best way to

make the right decisions under challenging circumstances. Those who wander into a situation unprepared, who fail to let those they lead know how they can contribute to success, and never bother to get to know the personalities and capabilities of those assigned to them, fail more often than not.

Equally important is that after completing Ranger School, the successful candidate knows substantially more about themselves. Socrates is quoted as saying, “To know thyself is the beginning of wisdom.” The Ranger student is certainly going through a phase whereby they experience extreme tests to better know their personal capabilities. They have been tested physically and mentally. They have endured weeks of starvation and sleep deprivation, were pushed toward their physical limits, and stressed—all while being evaluated by Ranger instructors who are brutal in their assessments.

Your inner character becomes readily apparent to yourself and those around you. The best teammates were those who made everyone around them better, instilled confidence, understood the value in everyone, and knew that success was often something that needed to be negotiated. Also, the best teammates were not always those with the highest rank—they were the ones who inspired others and had a bias toward responsible action. As a result of all of this, there is a sense of strong comradery among graduates of the program.

In the 75th Ranger Regiment, there is a high level of trust in your fellow soldiers knowing that they have successfully completed this intense training, more so than in most other military units. That level of trust and comradeship becomes especially valuable in times of extreme stress, such as an armed conflict.

The sense of trust and comradeship found in the 75th Ranger Regiment also spills over into how they behave as a group. In my time assigned there, there was a strong sense of not wanting to disgrace the regiment through any personal actions. One of the mantras of the unit I was with was that they would always leave a training area in better shape than when they first arrived—and they always did. A strong sense of pride was gained by being assigned to such an elite unit.

Another of the lessons to be found in Ranger School is the power of preparation. From the very beginning, Rangers are trained to give detailed warning orders and operations orders that provide every person under their command everything they need to know for the mission to be successful. This thought process includes contingency plans should obstacles to meeting the objective be encountered.

Once the verbal ideas are conveyed, key activities are practiced until near perfection. These steps provide everyone involved with a high sense of inclusiveness and confidence. Preparation for Ranger School itself often weeds out those who do not anticipate this lesson as only those with the highest degree of physical shape and motivation will likely graduate.

This intense preparation also helps when things seem out of control. As mentioned previously, the best-laid plans will undoubtedly take a few turns. When that happens, the leader must quickly assess what they can control and what they cannot control. Stop worrying about activities beyond your control and focus on what limited recourses are at your disposal toward a modified plan that will meet the objective.



After successful completion of Ranger training, graduates receive their Ranger tab during their graduation at Fort Benning, GA. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Steve Cortez)

Many boundaries are self-imposed, and it takes a degree of self-awareness, and a great deal of humility, to realize what is really outside your realm of control and move toward a successful outcome. You can make a real difference as a leader by taking the initiative, encouraging those around you, and getting their minds off what is not going according to plan.

In his book *Only the Paranoid Survive* (1996), Andy Grove describes a critical time at Intel where they were forced to acknowledge the realities of the marketplace. Intel had initially grown, thanks to the manufacture of memory chips for mainframe computers, but had also developed the first general purpose microprocessor for a digital watch. The microprocessor soon became the brains behind the personal computer.

While the company was an innovator in the memory chip market, the Japanese had begun to dump memory chips into the American market at below competitive prices. It was a tough decision for the leaders at Intel to abandon their long successful line of memory chips. They asked themselves what a new leadership team would do if faced with such a dilemma. The answer would be to get out of memory chips and focus on microprocessors.

As a show of solidarity and a change of direction, the team walked out of the boardroom, turned around, and walked back into the boardroom as a new team and immediately took steps to get out of memory chips and move full force into microprocessors.

Letting go of a product line in which you were the acknowledged leader for so long is tough, but the decision they made to know their internal capabilities and recognize the future was a sound one. They remain the dominant producers of microprocessors for personal computers. Intel also became one of the most valuable brand names in the world. ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR—Dr. Jim Webb, educated at West Point in engineering and leadership, served as a Ranger and Green Beret. He has received an MBA, an MS in Engineering, and a doctorate in innovation. His career has included working as an R&D engineer for Texas Instruments, two decades of consulting in strategy and innovation with Price Waterhouse, Deloitte, and Kearney, being the Chief Strategist of two global companies, and managing a \$6 billion pension fund. He is currently a Professor teaching strategy and innovation courses at Southern Methodist University.

He started practicing judo at a young age. He went on to win several national championships, as well as earning certification as an international referee and international coach. He served as the president of the US Judo Association, and is currently a director on the US Olympic Committee's National Governing Body. He holds eighth degree black belts in both judo and jujitsu.



Timeless Leadership
Episode 44—Innovators Who Changed the World with Jim Webb

Check out Dr. Webb's interview on the Timeless Leadership podcast, Episode 44 available at most major sources for podcasts.

Apple podcast: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/44-innovators-who-changed-the-world/id1561294951?i=1000579532578>

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/5mtHJtDg90GOZ7ZsecH9Cj>

A HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE

ou Une Mémoire de l'Holocauste

By Marc Phillip Yablonka

When I was 12, in the early 1960s, a couple years before the word “Vietnam” entered the American lexicon and psyche for our generation, our TV was flooded, thanks to me, with TV series about World War II. *Combat*, starring Jewish actor Vic Morrow (née Victor Morozoff), and *Gallant Men*, starring Ric Jason, were two of the shows I watched religiously. The great documentary series *Victory at Sea* was another. My late father, a veteran of the Army Air Corps, who served in the South Pacific during World War II, often watched them with me, but I cannot recall his words.

My late mother, on the other hand, as soon as I channel-flipped to watch one of these shows, would get up from the couch, walk into my folks’ bedroom, and quietly close the door. I never understood why until my father reminded me about the fact that the grandfather for whom I am named perished at Auschwitz. Today I understand more and am able to write about what my grandmother, mother, and aunt endured.

Because my mother was silent most of her life about what she and other members of my family went through, much of what I know, I learned from my typically talkative grandmother.

This, then, is what I know:

My Mother, Gabrielle, Aunt Madeleine, and their mother Esther, my grandmother, were, for a time, protected by Monsieur Charles Pacôme, a former Olympian and well-known Catholic lawyer in Lille, in the north of France.

If you’ve read or know of the book *The Diary of Anne Frank*, then you know how the three were protected. Ironically, Monsieur was so well known in Lille that he often entertained Nazi officers in his home.

One day, my semitic-looking Aunt Madeleine, then a young girl of 8, perhaps 9, was out playing on the road outside of Monsieur Pacôme’s house when a Gestapo officer driving down the road pulled over and began to question her. Monsieur, seeing this, ran outside and yelled at the Gestapo, “Qu’est-ce que tu fais en train de parler à ma fille?” (“What are you doing talking to my daughter?”). The Gestapo apologized and drove off.

This is what the Worldwide Web has taught me about Monsieur Pacôme:

“Charles Pacôme was particularly successful at the Olympics. After winning the silver medal in 1928, he added a gold medal in 1932, both in lightweight freestyle [wrestling]. His only other international medal came at the 1931 European Championship with a bronze in welterweight freestyle. He was a lawyer, but he also attended the conservatory in Lille and won several prizes as a violinist.”

The latter fact would confirm a story my mother did tell me once about how he had played his violin for Nazi officers in his home. I can only wonder whether he did so while my family was being hidden inside his house at the very same time.

I wish to God that I had asked Monsieur Pacôme that question when I met him, his wife, and children in Lille in 1978. Far more important than that, though, was the fact that, before he died, I got the chance to tell him “Merci pour ma vie!” (“Thank you for my life!”).



At left, Manicha Komar, mother of Esther Korjenewski; above, Esther, and her husband, Maurice Korjenewski; Below, Charles Pacôme



But Monsieur Pacôme's bravery did not always keep my family safe. At a point when my grandfather was still with them, the four were rounded up and forced into a Vichy camp outside of Paris called Drancy. There were other Vichy camps, too, but my mother never enumerated on them.

I do know that at one point, they escaped from one of them. As they were escaping, a Nazi came walking briskly toward them. My mother and aunt started to dart away, but my grandfather, Maurice, told them, "Ne cours pas!" ("Don't run!").

They didn't. The Nazi passed them by.

Besides Monsieur Pacôme, my grandmother was, undoubtedly, the bravest person I have ever known. She showed her bravery countless times during World War II.

Once, when she was on a street car in Lille with my mother and aunt, a Nazi boarded and demanded to see all the passengers' papers. My grandmother had fortuitously obtained false identity papers for herself and her daughters, possibly through Monsieur Pacôme, but I can't be certain, with the very French name DuPont. But that alone would not have saved them from being arrested because, while my mother and aunt were born in Belgium, raised in France, and, therefore, spoke unaccented French fluently, my grandmother was born in Poland and had a thick, Eastern European accent. What was she to do?

On the spur of the moment, she whispered to her daughters, "Dites à l'officier que je suis muet et que vous devez parler pour moi." ("Tell the officer I am mute and that you have to speak for me."). Either my mother or aunt did, and they were safe—that time.

Later, when the three had left Lille and were hiding from the Nazis in a central France village called Arven, I don't know how it did, but it came to pass that, according to my grandmother, only the priest and a nun in the village's one Catholic church knew that they were

Jewish. For fear of being exposed, and in order to keep up appearances, my grandmother would go to Communion on a regular basis and partake of the Holy Wafer.

After my grandfather had been abducted by Nazis and shipped off to Auschwitz in a cattle car (a fact my parents sadly confirmed, along with the date of his death from dysentery, at the Belgian Holocaust Museum in Bruxelles in the 1980s), a couple of fellow Belgians who knew of my grandfather's being apprehended, approached my grandmother. They told her that for so many Francs, they could secure my grandfather's release from Auschwitz. My grandmother gladly paid them and hoped with all her heart to see my grandfather again.

She never did. The two thieves had simply absconded with her money. This occurred at a point in the war before the Nazis were rounding up women for the camps. My grandmother mustered the courage to go to the Gestapo and report the two for what they had done. For once in the history of the Third Reich, the Nazis did a good thing. They caught the two bandits, stood them up against a wall, and sent them on their journey to Hell.

Toward the end of the war, still running away from Nazis, my grandmother, mother, and aunt made it to Marseille. Their plan, their hope, their dream was to board a ship for England. They waited in line for hours on the given day of departure. Then escapees were finally allowed to board the ship. The line moved forward with them creeping closer and closer to the dock. Then, all at once, the gate to the dock was closed by a gendarme. Right in front of them!

"Pas plus de place à bord!" they were told. ("No more room aboard!").

They were extremely dejected and saddened as they walked away from the ship...until the next day, when they got word that the ship they were hoping would free them from tyranny and death was sunk off the coast of France by a German U-Boat, leaving all three to go on living the rest of their lives. ❖



ABOUT THE AUTHOR—Marc Phillip Yablonka is a Burbank-based author and military journalist. His work has been published in *Stars and Stripes*, *Army Times*, *Soldier of Fortune*, and many other publications. He is the author of *Tears Across the Mekong*, *Distant War: Recollections of Vietnam*, *Laos and Cambodia*, *Vietnam Báo Chí: Warriors of Word and Film*, and *Hot Mics and TV Lights: The American Forces Vietnam Network*.

At far left, Corporal Jerry Yablonka, US Army Air Corps Radioman, South Pacific Theatre during World War II; above left, the author's aunt, Madeleine, grandmother, Esther, and mother, Gabrielle after World War II; below left, the author's grandmother, Esther, father, Jerry, and mother, Gabrielle



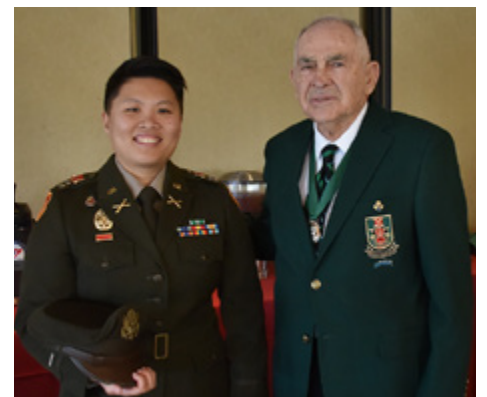
SFA Chapter 78 Christmas Party

December 9, 2023
Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club

Photos by Rick Carter, How Miller, and Debra Holm



Upon arrival, Christmas party attendees were greeted by the brilliant afternoon sun streaming from the clubhouse windows, and through them, the sight of the Newport Harbor. Jim Duffy donated several tables of shirts and hats for the event's raffle. He and his friends, pictured above, lower left, set up them up on the tables, along with items brought in by others as they arrived—left to right, Loretta, Roger, and Jewelretta Rustad, Michael Wayne, April McClure, Jerry and Regina Romiti, Jim Duffy, Sharon Hancock.



Cocktail hour was a great time to socialize. At left, SFA President Kevin Harry (left) meets Robert Casillas and his wife Jaclyn. Center, Lani Dolick, catches up with Suzanne Lockhart. At right, CPT Anli Boone met SF Original Vahan Sipantzi, SF COC retired.



Following the Pledge of Allegiance and Chapter President Greg Horton's welcoming introductory remarks, Chaplain Doreen Matsumoto (above left) of the American Veterans Assistance Group (AVAG) delivered the invocation. Chapter Secretary Gary Macnamara (above center) introduced the event's VIP guests: Green Beret Original Vahan Sipantzi, COL (ret.) Chris Sorenson, Bill Wenger, CPT Anli Boone FA UCI, and Kevin Harry, SFA President. Bob Crebbs (above right) performed the Missing Man ceremony.



Ladies and gentlemen, charge your glasses! Toasts to the Army, the Regiment, Chapter 78 (by president Greg Horton, shown above), to absent friends and fallen comrades, and last but not least, the ladies.

Keynote speaker COL (ret.) Chris Sorensen, made a presentation about the first special operations raid of Operation Enduring Freedom into Kandahar, Afghanistan. Objective Gecko included the execution of the longest air assault in history.



Introducing the Gecko Ranger Dagger

COL Chris Sorensen presented the Chapter with a Gecko Ranger Dagger. Chapter 78 had previously donated funds to support the dagger project. The daggers, which are being produced in commemoration of Objective Gecko, are being made by a veteran unit member, feature all U.S. manufacturing and U.S. sourced materials. The design was inspired by the Unit logo's centerpiece, a stylized Roman short sword with a wide, double-edged blade. The finger guard is made from steel salvaged from the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk, an homage to the sovereign warship that served as a floating staging base for the mission. The aluminum handle is coated with silicon carbide grit to facilitate grip and is coated in Special Forces green to denote the ground component of the heliborne assault force. All participants of the raid will receive this dagger, which, in addition to including the image of a gecko, will also include the raider's mission callsign.



Richard Simonian and Ramon Rodriguez



Aaron and Kathleen Brandenburg



Vahan and Zoe Sipantzi



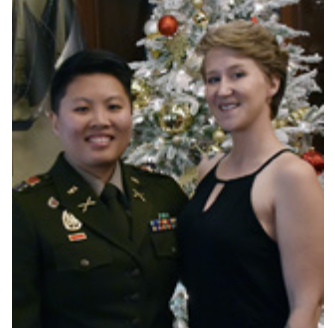
Sharon Hancock, Jim Duffy, and April McClure



Chris Sorenson and wife, Julie Collins



Chris Sorenson with Ahmadullah, Nimo, Bashir Amad, Masood Farzan and Richard Simonian



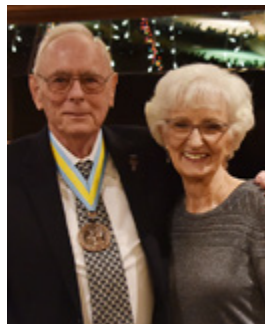
CPT Andi Boone and Seana Miller



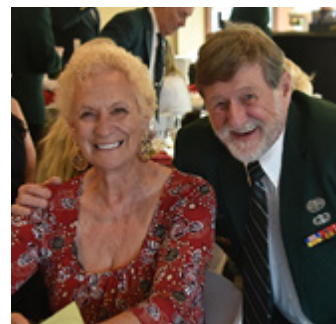
Gus and Patty Populus



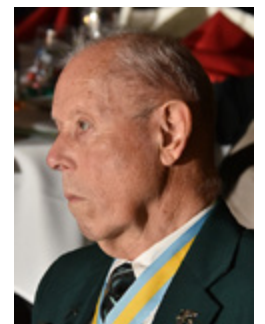
Art and Lani Dolick



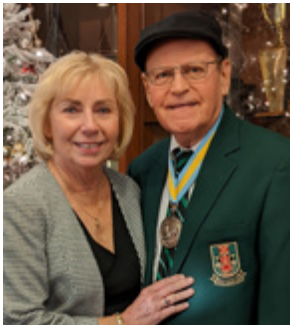
Ham and Linda Salley



Susan Weeks and How Miller



Don Gonnevill



Dennis and Glo DeRosia



Si and Chris Rangel



Mike and Christine Jameson



Bob and Arlene Crebbs



Rick Carter



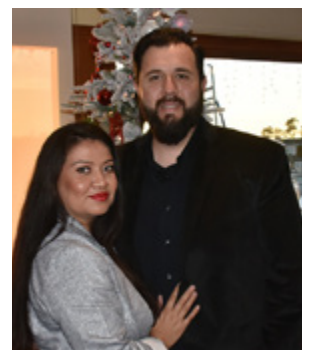
Jim and Suzanne Lockhart



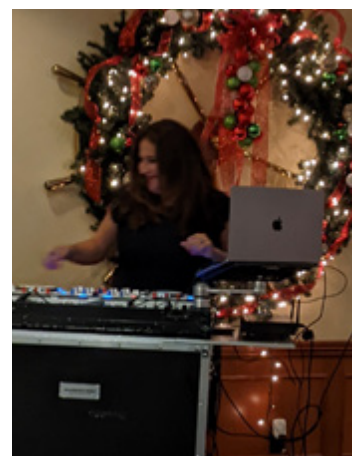
Erik and Jean Berg with Bill and Martha Reed



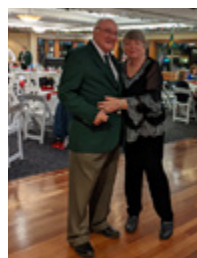
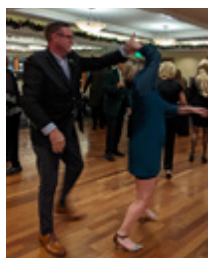
Cora Servia Keele and Geri Long



Lizbeth Rios and Norberto Villegas



Frank DiSalvo, pictured at left, provided tunes from the great American songbook during the dinner; Center, Greg Horton and Geri Long selected winning numbers for the raffle; at left, DJ Sommer Cruz, of SomFun4u, provided a wide selection of music designed to entice folks to the dance floor.



An Unforgettable Memory in the Combat Zone

By Vahan Sipantzi
Chaplain (COC) USA SF (ret.)

During my first six months in Vietnam (68-69), I was the Protestant Chaplain for the 101st Airborne Division Div-Arty. My partner, a Jesuit priest, and I were providing Chaplain coverage for 12 battalions of artillery belonging to the 101st and 24 Corps. We normally averaged at least 14 services a week flying or driving from firebase to firebase.

The 101st and 24th Corps, working in I Corps just outside of Hue, had firebases not only along the edge and floor of the A-Shau Valley, in the mountains between it and Camp Eagle, the 101st base camp, but in the barren hills further north around Camp Evans. Those hills around Camp Evans had no bushes, no trees, and NO WATER except what was brought in by choppers in large rubber blivets or “water buffalos” sling loaded under CH-47’s.

On a visit to one particular firebase in protective ring around Camp Evans with a battery of 105-102’s, a young black artillery man asked if he could be baptized. We talked about the meaning of baptism and what it would mean to him kneeling in the dirt before his fellow “red legs” to acknowledge his trust and belief in Jesus Christ. He said he was OK with that and we agreed to do it on my next visit.

Another hot humid day brought us back. The altar was the tail of his 105, the pews the sandbags that protected it, and the water of baptism, because of the shortage of water, the wine in my communion cup. For a Baptist Chaplain who was first baptized by sprinkling in



Vahan Sipantzi, at right, with long-time friend Richard Simonian, was the Guest of Honor at the 2023 Chapter Christmas party. Both are SF Originals.

a Presbyterian Church then immersed “in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” (3 times holding my breath) in the local Brethren Church, and who believed in and practiced “baptism by immersion”, baptizing this young soldier in the combat zone sprinkling him with communion wine was without a doubt one of the most memorable and meaningful experiences of my 34 years of service. It dawned on me as I’m writing this that Jesus turned water into wine. He no doubt turned that communion wine into water.

I pray that this young “red leg” made it through his 12 months deployment and stayed faithful to his commitment to be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ after his “freedom bird” lifted off Vietnamese soil. ❖

SFA Chapter 78 Swears in Chapter Officers for 2024-2025

Photos by Rick Carter



Outgoing Chapter 78 president Greg Horton swears in the newly elected president Aaron Brandenburg.



Chapter Secretary, Gary Macnamara, and Treasurer, Richard Simonian, are sworn in for the 2024-2025 term.



SFA Chapter 78 officers for 2024-2025. James McLanahan was unable to attend, so will be sworn in at the January meeting.



Debra Holm, left, and How Miller, joined *Sentinel* publisher Richard Simonian for a photo.



How Miller, left, *Sentinel* Editor, Debra Holm, center, *Sentinel* designer and Chapter webmaster/social media manager, and Rick Carter, *Sentinel* lead photographer, will continue their work on the publication.

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