



SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

VOLUME 15, ISSUE 4 • APRIL 2024



Saluting CSM (R) Ramon Rodriguez

SFQC Graduation — Class 335

*From The Viking Battalion Norwegian American
Ski Troopers in World War II, Chapter One*

"Howard R. Bergen"

**Update Your SFA
Teamhouse Profile:
Step by Step Instructions**



SENTINEL

VOLUME 15, ISSUE 4 • APRIL 2024

From the Editor



US ARMY
OPS COMMAND



US ARMY
JFK SWCS



1ST SF COMMAND



1ST SF GROUP



3RD SF GROUP



5TH SF GROUP



7TH SF GROUP



10TH SF GROUP



19TH SF GROUP



20TH SF GROUP



8TH SF GROUP



11TH SF GROUP



12TH SF GROUP

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FRONT COVER: Special Forces candidates assigned to the U.S. Army JFK Special Warfare Center and School move through a swamp during the final phase of field training known as Robin Sage near Hoffman, North Carolina. (U.S. Army photo by K. Kassens)



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How Miller
Sentinel Editor

We turn inward to begin this issue. We salute a former Chapter 78 President, Ranger Hall of Famer, one of the most decorated soldiers in the Vietnam War, and a nominee for the Medal of Honor. Ramon Rodriguez retired after 23 years of service as a Command Sergeant Major. There is way too much to his story to cover in one issue of the *Sentinel*. We have a short article about his career in and after the U.S. Army. This is coupled with a video interview, which you will be able to see on our website. We are trying

to preserve the memories of our members to add to their biographies.

Chapter member John Stryker Meyer describes the Q-Course graduation ceremony for Class 335. He and our new Chapter 78 President, Aaron Brandenburg, attended and helped co-host with Chapter 1-18 a barbecue two days earlier at the Chapter 1-18 campus.

Member James Lockhart describes using a hidden talent to outsmart his Chinese-speaking Nung interpreter. He surprised himself by how a seemingly insignificant piece of knowledge turned out to be so useful.

Next, I review *The Viking Battalion: Norwegian American Ski Troopers in World War II*, a surprising book about the very special 99th Battalion, formed in WWII, whose history is intertwined with SF's forerunners. They were called the Viking Battalion because they were purposely composed of Norwegian Americans and Norwegian nationals. They had every bit as dazzling a record of excellence as does SF... From fighting with the Rangers in the breakout from Normandy to eventually joining with the Americans from the Devil's Brigade in the 474th Regiment. Of the three self-described editors, Erik Brun is the son of a "99er," Olaf Minge was a "99er," and Kyle Ward is a military historian.

Please take the opportunity to read an excerpt from the book, starting on page 8. It is from the 1945 writings of "99er" Howard "Bus" Bergen. Included is the 99th's important action at the Battle of the Bulge and the battles leading up to it.

Our continuing VP James McLanahan presented to our outgoing President Greg Horton a framed thank you, expressing the chapter's appreciation of his two years of hard work as Chapter 78 President.

Aaron Brandenburg has reminded us in "From the President" how important and beneficial it is for all members to properly register with the Special Forces Association's national "Teamhouse" website. So, Debra Holm has put together directions to help you succeed at that. They are graphic, detailed, and hopefully easy to follow by all. If you are reading this on the internet, you should be able to succeed. If you run into snags, there is lots of help available.

You are also welcome to see Rick Carter's pictures of the February Chapter 78 meeting.

Enjoy. ❖

How Miller
Sentinel Editor

From the President | April 2024



Aaron Brandenburg
President SFA Ch. 78

Enhancing Security and Connection: The Importance of Updating Your Profile on the Special Forces Association's Teamhouse Website

In an era dominated by technological advancements and an ever-evolving digital landscape, maintaining a secure online presence is paramount. This holds especially true for organizations like the Special Forces Association (SFA), where security isn't just a matter of personal convenience but a crucial element for safeguarding sensitive information and fostering a stronger community. In this article, we'll delve into the reasons why updating your profile on the secured website of the Special Forces Association is not just a recommendation but a responsibility. It is equally important to note that the intent of the SFA Teamhouse is to keep us organically connected.

If you cannot recall your login credentials, please note that your username corresponds to the email address associated with your SFA Teamhouse account. To initiate the password recovery process, log in using your username and select the "forgot password" option. Subsequently, you will receive a temporary password via email to access your account. Should you encounter difficulties, don't hesitate to reach out to a chapter or national administrator for prompt assistance.

Ensuring Accurate Information: One of the primary reasons to update your profile is to ensure that the information held by the SFA is accurate and up to date. Personal details such as contact information, service history, and qualifications may change over time. Having the most current information allows the association to communicate effectively with its members, facilitating timely updates, event invitations, and important announcements.

Enhanced Security Measures: Cybersecurity threats are an ever-present concern in today's digital age. Regularly updating your profile helps the SFA implement and maintain robust security measures. By frequently refreshing passwords, verifying contact details, and reviewing account activity, members contribute to the overall cybersecurity of the association, reducing the risk of unauthorized access and potential breaches.

Streamlining Communication: Effective communication is the lifeblood of any organization, and the SFA is no exception. Updating your profile ensures that the association can reach you through your preferred channels promptly. Whether it's sharing critical updates,

coordinating events, or disseminating essential information, having accurate contact details facilitates seamless communication and strengthens the sense of community among members.

Facilitating Emergency Response: In times of crisis or emergencies, having the most current and accurate information is essential. Whether it's a natural disaster, a security concern, or any other unforeseen event, the SFA needs to be able to reach its members promptly. Regularly updating your profile ensures that the association can swiftly disseminate crucial information and aid when needed.

Customizing Member Experiences: The SFA aims to cater to the diverse needs and preferences of its members. By updating your profile, you contribute to a more personalized experience within the association. This may include tailored event invitations, relevant news updates, or specialized resources based on your unique background and interests. A dynamic and well-maintained profile enhances your overall engagement and satisfaction as a member.

Demonstrating Commitment to the Association: Taking the time to update your profile reflects your commitment to the SFA and its mission. It showcases a sense of responsibility and pride in being part of a community dedicated to excellence. Active participation in maintaining your profile is a tangible way of expressing support for the association's values and goals.

Promoting Trust and Transparency: Trust is a cornerstone of any successful organization, and transparency is integral to building and maintaining that trust. By updating your profile regularly, you contribute to a transparent and accountable community. This fosters a sense of trust among members and reinforces the association's commitment to keeping information secure and accurate.

In conclusion, updating your profile on the Teamhouse webpage is not merely a routine task; it is a crucial step towards fostering a secure, connected, and well-informed community. By prioritizing the accuracy of your information, you actively contribute to the association's cybersecurity efforts, strengthen communication channels, and demonstrate your unwavering commitment to the shared values of the Special Forces community. In the digital age, where the importance of secure online interactions cannot be overstated, taking a few moments to update your profile is a small but impactful way to support the organization and fellow members. ❖

Step-by-step instructions for updating your Teamhouse profile are included in this issue on page 18 and also on our website at <https://www.specialforces78.com/teamhouse-member-profile-instructions/>.

Aaron Brandenburg
President
Special Forces Association Chapter 78



SFA Chapter 78 Meeting

Date: April 20, 2024
Time: Breakfast – 0800 • Meeting – 0830
Location: Courtyard by Marriott
5865 Katella Ave, Room A, Cypress, CA 90630

Saluting CSM (R) Ramon Rodriguez



By How Miller

Were you to meet Ramon Rodriguez, as I did as a member of Special Forces Association Chapter 78, you would have no idea that he was one of the most highly decorated soldiers during the Vietnam War. This is not to say he looks any less than that; it's more that he has moved past it and is still eager to help out any way he can. He energetically works as President and Chairman of American Veterans Assistance Group (AVAG), a Southern California charity that continues to help veterans in many ways, including providing affordable housing.

When I asked him to be a guinea pig and be my first video interviewee for the Chapter 78 website, he readily agreed. That led me to research him a little more deeply, and it was eye-opening to learn of his many exploits. Besides his many decorations and badges, he is an inductee in the Ranger Hall of Fame, California Veteran of the Year, past Chapter 78 president, a lifelong worker to help veterans, and has been recommended for the Medal of Honor.

He grew up near Long Beach and attended Banning High School in Wilmington. While there, he found himself in front of a judge who remembered his previous appearances. The judge strongly "suggested" to Ramon that he would be better off in the U.S. Army. With Ramon's consent, he helped smooth that transition. It could be that the judge saw something in Ramon that he himself was overlooking.

Embracing this turn of events, Ramon volunteered for airborne training. After graduation, he was assigned to different airborne units, starting with the 101st Airborne Division. He reenlisted to join the 82nd Airborne Infantry Division at (then) Fort Bragg. When he was 24 years old, he was reassigned to the 101st Airborne Division, this time in Vietnam. He soon far exceeded expectations and ended up earning three Silver Stars in a 34-day period in different locations, along with many other decorations for bravery and excellent service in a combat zone during his 37 months in Vietnam.

Part of that time was spent with Special Forces. A soldier he had previously served with recommended him to the CO of the 5th SFG (A). Ramon accepted his invitation and eventually found himself at the MACV Recondo School, where he instructed soldiers from various units in Long Range Patrol tactics. This involved operating on real patrols, where a lot of action ended up happening.

In his later career, he attended Ranger School and was the Distinguished Honor Graduate of his class. Still later, with the 7th SFG (A), he set up a ranger school in Honduras, initially graduating only 18 out of a large class who became the core of their nation's ranger training. He also served as Battalion Intelligence Sergeant for the 75th Rangers at Ft. Lewis, Washington.

These were some of the reasons he was inducted into the Ranger Hall of Fame in 2008 while serving as Chapter 78 President. On their website, there is a very detailed recounting of Ramon's awards, badges, duty

assignments, and accomplishments since his army retirement in 1983 after 23 years of service. It is a worthwhile read. Go to <https://www.moore.army.mil/infantry/artb/RHOF/index.html> and scroll down to 2008.

He also proceeded up the ranks and became a Command Sergeant Major, the rank he had at his retirement. Among Ramon's more distinguished medals, he received 3 Silver Stars, 5 Purple Hearts, 3 Bronze Stars (1 with V for Valor), 2 ARCOM's (one with V), along with his badges: CIB, Jumpmaster, Scuba Diver 1st Class, Halo Master, Air Assault, Jungle Expert, Pathfinder, Ranger Tab, and the Special Forces Tab, among others.

Ramon retired to Southern California, saying he had great choices of locations around the world, but nothing matched here.

Ramon recently had the privilege to walk in the Hollywood Christmas parade, accompanying the Grand Marshal, Green Beret, Ranger, and recent Medal of Honor recipient COL (Ret.) Paris Davis.

As of this writing, 46th CA District Congressman Lou Correa is about to introduce in Congress a recommendation for Ramon to be awarded the Medal of Honor he has waited so long for since his first recommendation in 1982. There is high hope that the people involved will have the proper combination of skills and luck to make it happen. Ramon is one of six Hispanic candidates that are still in limbo.

Ramon said he would be very happy to receive the award, but only in honor of all those who contributed.

We recently taped a video interview with Ramon. Please visit the home page of our Chapter 78 website and scroll down to watch the video interview of Ramon recorded in February. ❖



Col (ret.) Paris Davis, Medal of Honor recipient, and Ramon Rodriguez at the Hollywood Christmas Parade, November 2023.

Green Beret tops Ranger course

SFC Ramon R. Rodriguez pulled off an impressive "clean sweep" at the U.S. Army Ranger Course at Fort Benning, Ga. recently.

SFC Rodriguez, B Company 10th Special Forces Group, returned from Ft. Benning July 17 with the maximum number of awards that can be given to a Ranger student.

Among his awards are the William O. Darby Award, given by the Ranger Association to the distinguished honor graduate; the Association of the United States Army Award, for highest classroom score (SFC Rodriguez earned 1013 points); the Ranger Class

Guidon, given by the Ranger Committee to the best student; and a letter of commendation from the commanding officer of the infantry school.

Speaking of his experience, SFC Rodriguez said: "At times I felt I had lost my 'max,' but I found that I could still drive on.

Of the training at Ft. Benning, SFC Rodriguez had nothing but praise. "It was really outstanding," he said.

"They kept you in a state of confusion at all times to develop your leadership under trying conditions."



Ramon Rodriguez in Vietnam, 1967-1969

SFQC GRADUATION



CLASS 335

February 15, 2024

U.S. ARMY JOHN F. KENNEDY

SPECIAL WARFARE CENTER AND SCHOOL

— The Special Operations Center of Excellence —



Left, before the graduation ceremony, tables with 142 green berets and other awards to be presented to the outstanding class graduates. Right, following the graduation, guest speaker Lt. Gen. Jonathan P. Braga, USASOC Commanding General, took time to record a video promo for the Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) inside the USASOC Hangar, at Pope Army Airfield, N. Carolina where the event was held. Guests and family members of the 142 graduates of the Special Forces Qualification Course Class 335, attended the event hosted by the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. (Photos courtesy of John S. Meyer)



At right, SFA Chapter 78 President Aaron Brandenburg speaking at the pre-graduation BBQ. At Aaron's right, stands SFA Chapter 1-18 President Jeff Rinaldi. (Photo courtesy of John S. Meyer)



John Meyer with the SFQC graduating class at the pre-graduation BBQ. (Photo courtesy of John S. Meyer)

By Isaac Staats

On February 15 142 men donned their new Green Beret for the first time during a graduation ceremony held at the USASOC Hangar, Pope Army Airfield, N. Carolina with friends, family members and Special Forces veterans in the audience.

After they donned their berets, Special Forces veterans, active duty Green Berets and U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School staff raised a glass of wine to the newest members of America's elite warriors.

Guest speaker Lt. Gen. Jonathan P. Braga, USASOC Commanding General, welcomed the 142 Green Berets while thanking family members for their life-long support of the newly minted special warfare soldiers.

Among those 142 men were seven Southern California troops who were presented their new gold, metal life-time Special Forces Association membership plates by SFA Chap. 78 President Aaron Brandenburg.

Brandenburg made the presentations during a pre-graduation BBQ jointly sponsored by SFA Chapters 78 and 1-18—where the Mission BBQ luncheon was held on Chapter 1-18's ever-improving campus a short distance off of Interstate 95 in Fayetteville.

Brandenburg congratulated the new chapter members upon earning their berets and how entering the SFA will provide them opportunities to learn about Special Forces history and to share camaraderie with different generations of Green Berets.

Before the food was served SFA Chapter 1-18 President Jeff Rinaldi and Past President Chris Wilkerson welcomed the new troops into the SFA and encouraged any Special Forces soldier to visit the ever-improving campus for events or just to stop by the team room for a cold drink and a hot meal. After SFA National President Kevin Harry spoke to the troops, Brandenburg spoke to the gathering about his personal experience of learning first, about the SFA, and then about how joining the SFA provided him with opportunities that led to business and personal connections that he hadn't experienced before joining the national organization.

After lunch was served, some of the new chapter members hung around to speak with Brandenburg and Chapter 78 member John S. Meyer, who added: "Meeting these young men who will don the Green Beret that they earned, is a personally rewarding moment in time because it shows me that regardless of all the public rancor in America today by noisy anti-US personnel, our country still produces young men who are willing to serve it in America's finest special operations unit, the hallowed Green Berets..."

"Their stories of how they became motivated vary from reading books, viewing podcasts that discuss service to God and country in Special Forces to reading old editions of *Soldier of Fortune* magazines that printed stories about Green Berets serving in Vietnam, including MACV-SOG, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria to the Philippines. It was an honor to shake their hands and to hear their stories." ❖

THE CHINESE GOTCHA

Editors Note: This article is an expanded version of an account in James Lockhart's memoir *The Luckiest Guy in Vietnam*, published in by BookBaby in 2018



James Lockhart



By James Lockhart

Our camp, adjacent to the village of Long Hai, Vietnam, was in an area that some might have called “pacified.” We didn’t use that term because the Viet Cong, hiding in the nearby mountains, would periodically try some nasty trick—a few mortar rounds, a mine, some automatic weapons fire at a helicopter—but nothing we considered serious. And although we were a Special Forces unit, we needed a relatively quiet area to perform our then-secret mission: training infantry battalions for the newly expanding Cambodian Army. It was January 1971, and we were in full swing with the training.

Camp Long Hai was polyglot-based, with four languages being spoken. Of course, the U.S. Army personnel spoke English. The Cambodian soldier-trainees communicated in their native language, Khmer. (Some of the officers spoke French, but we won’t count

that.) The mercenaries in one of our 100-man security companies were local Vietnamese. Surprisingly, the fourth language was Chinese, spoken by the indigenous ethnic Chinese—known as Nungs—comprising our second security company. Adding spice to this mixture would be an Australian Army Training Team, which would soon augment our Special Forces trainers.

Although some of the U.S. personnel knew a smattering of Vietnamese, none of us could speak even rudimentary Khmer or Chinese. This included the two Special Forces sergeants who supervised the security companies. As a result, we were entirely dependent on interpreters to communicate with our Cambodian trainees and both security companies. Generally, the interpreters were well qualified, having had extensive experience with Special Forces units. However, we never knew when one of them had a deficiency until it was manifested in some embarrassing—but never tragic—manner.

I had been assigned as the operations officer for our unit, which consisted of about 100 U.S. personnel. We had been training the Cambodians for just over two months, and we were still ironing out the kinks in the new program. We were simultaneously training four battalions of 512 men each, so we always had 2,048 trainees in camp

at all times. My job was to schedule all of the training for each battalion, coordinate the training facilities, oversee the conduct of training, and recommend improvements to the overall program.

In addition, I had a responsibility that was not directly connected to training. In order to keep the local Viet Cong on their toes and from venturing too far from their mountain hideouts, we took some initiatives. First, we would fire mortars on known trails and streambeds at random times during the night to show that we were not passively waiting to be attacked. In that same vein, we formed a team from each security company to conduct nightly ambushes in the lower elevations of the mountains to discourage any nighttime movements by the VC. Although the security company teams did not work directly for me, I determined their ambush locations and the mortar fire targets for each night.

It was in light of my operational control of the ambush teams that I was assigned to correct a problem with their field techniques. Each night, the ambush teams would call back to the camp by radio to report their exact positions. We had one Vietnamese and one Chinese interpreter on duty to take the calls and translate the coordinates for the U.S. radio team to record. Somehow, the camp commander had learned that the ambush teams were reporting their locations in the clear, that is, without encoding them. This meant that if the local Viet Cong had radios—not an uncommon occurrence—they could intercept transmissions and determine where the ambush teams were located. This would not only reduce the teams’ effectiveness but also put them in real danger.

Luckily, I had had a previous tour in Vietnam in an Infantry division and was well acquainted with a solution: a simple substitution code. Without delving too deeply into map grid coordinates for pinpointing locations, they can be accurately represented by six digits using numerals 0 through 9. With a substitution code, a key is created in



Jim Lockhart in 1971 at Long Hai, Vietnam, where he put his four-word Chinese vocabulary to practical use. (Courtesy James Lockhart)

which each of the numerals in the coordinates is changed to a different number. So if the ambush teams had the key and so did our radio team, the encoded coordinates could be transmitted by radio without fear that the Viet Cong could understand them even if intercepted.

It worked like this:

Actual map coordinates: 4 3 2 6 5 0

Substitution code key:

For each of these numbers: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

Substitute these numbers: 0 7 4 1 2 3 9 6 8 5

Encoded coordinates: 1 4 7 3 2 5

Having set up a substitution code key, which would change periodically, I instructed the Vietnamese and Chinese interpreters on its use and directed them to teach it to their ambush teams. To make sure that the system was implemented, I had the Special Forces sergeant in charge of the Vietnamese security company, who had passable language skills, monitor the radio that night for compliance. I would verify that the Nung ambush team was using the code correctly.

That night, when the ambush teams were in place, I went with the Chinese interpreter to the radio bunker to monitor the Nungs' location report. As it was being received, he recorded it, consulted the code key, and wrote down the team's coordinates, which indicated that they were in the correct position. Then we left the bunker.

Outside, the interpreter was very surprised when I turned on him in a state of towering anger. I informed him that he was lying and that the ambush team had reported their location in the clear—without encoding it. At first, he denied it all but eventually admitted that I was correct. I explained that this was not only a serious tactical compromise of the ambush team but also a breach of trust with his employer. I also informed him that if any such transgression occurred again, I would march him to the Vietnamese Special Forces headquarters in our camp and enlist him in the Vietnamese Army, which would be a very disagreeable development for him.

To be fair, this individual had always been typical of the Nungs employed by Special Forces: capable and loyal. I treated the incident as a one-time lapse and not an ongoing concern. And after we came to an understanding about the use of the encoding systems, I had no hesitation about giving him my complete trust. In fact, we had several subsequent interactions, and his performance was impeccable.

How was this indiscretion unmasked by someone who didn't speak Chinese? It's complicated.

In high school, I played drums in the dance band. I had a complete drum set in my room and practiced there frequently. My favorite music genre was Dixieland, and that was the preferred type of LP album to play along with on my hi-fi—not stereo—record player. My favorite record was by the Rampart Street Paraders, and one of their songs was titled "Chinatown, My Chinatown," which was a variation of "Dixieland, My Dixieland." What made it into "Chinatown" was that the tempo at the beginning was counted off in Chinese. It sounded to me like "yit, yee, san, say," which was clearly "one, two, three, four." (Think Lawrence Welk.) Those words are still indelibly etched in my head from the repeated playing of that album.

In order to apply this imbedded memory to verify the ambush team's encoding, I had to construct the code key so that the encoded coordinates for that night would include as many of the first four digits as possible, which, of course, were the limits of my Chinese vocabulary. This is illustrated in the example above. When these digits didn't appear in the correct positions in the team's radio report, I knew that they had not used the code to encrypt their location.

I was, and still am, amazed at how a dormant bit of insignificant knowledge can surface at a time of need, serve an important purpose, and then fade back into obscurity. I never revealed my methodology to the hapless interpreter. ❖



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Lockhart enlisted in the Army in 1961 and was quickly promoted to sergeant. He volunteered for officer training and became an Infantry second lieutenant in July 1967. From March 1968 to February 1969 in Vietnam, as a lieutenant he led mortar and reconnaissance platoons and commanded an Infantry company. After completing airborne and Special Forces training he returned to Vietnam in late 1970.

In the next 18 months, as an operations officer, making significant contributions to the training of Cambodian Infantry battalions by Special Forces personnel. Subsequently, he served as an A-Team Leader, staff officer and company commander as well as Reserve Component advisor in Special Forces units before retiring as a major in 1982.



His awards include the Bronze Star Medal with V and two oak leaf clusters, Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster, Air Medal, Master Parachutist Badge, Combat Infantryman Badge, SCUBA Badge, Vietnamese Staff Service Medal and Cambodian National Defense Medal.

After retirement he worked for AT&T as a Technical Consultant and Account Executive. His last employment was 17 years with DeVry University as Associate Dean and Professor. He holds a bachelors degree in psychology and a masters degree in management. He published a memoir entitled *The Luckiest Guy in Vietnam* in 2018. James lives in southern California with Suzanne, his wife of over 35 years.

Book Review

The Viking Battalion: Norwegian American Ski Troopers in World War II edited by Olaf Minge, Kyle Ward, and Erik Brun

By How Miller

What link does the 99th Bn (Sep), “Viking Battalion” have to Special Forces? Actually, there is a lot.

Their training at Camp Hale, Colorado, at 9200 feet at the valley floor, had a lot of similarities to that of the First Special Service Force, the Canadian American outfit often called the Devil's Brigade. The 99th was attached to the Rangers in the breakout from the Normandy beachhead. They later became part of the new 474th Infantry Regiment that was created from the American veterans of the Devil's Brigade, including over 400 Darby's Rangers. All these outfits performed “normal” combat as well as special assignments, such as the Rangers scaling the cliffs at Pointe du Hoc on D-Day and the Devil's Brigade scaling the “impossible” cliffs at Monte Cassino in Italy. We could also mention that 80 men were recruited from the 99th to the OSS, where the founder of Special Forces, Aaron Bank, served and learned his techniques.

The 99th Bn (Sep) was born as an all-Norwegian outfit, either by birth or as American descendants. All had strong reasons to fight against the Nazis. Norway is a mountainous, cold environment that breeds strong, determined people and was under the occupation of the Nazis.

The book, *The Viking Battalion*, is an assemblage of accounts, mostly by its members. Erik Brun, son of one member, Christian M Brun, was inspired to honor all the members in cooperation with the other two self-described editors, Olaf Minge, grandson of CPT Raymond K. Minge, a doctor with the 99th, and historian Kyle Ward. There is an amazing amount of detail in these narratives. The stories, though they unavoidably contain some overlap, illuminate parts of the story that are not often told.

First is an overview, followed by roughly chronological accounts and some interesting vignettes. A couple of the multiply-covered events were the Battle of the Bulge and some well-known battles preceding it.

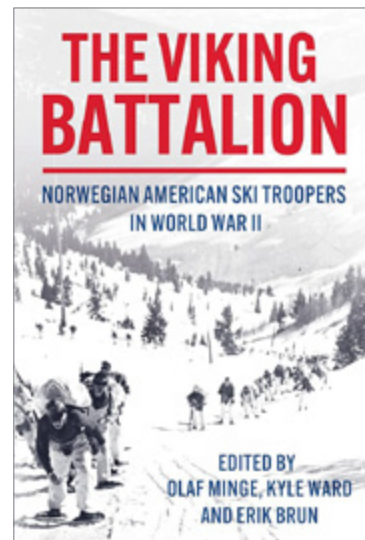
Besides the combat coverage, they include how they interacted with the civilians, from the mountains of Colorado through the U.K., to friendly French and Belgian towns, hostile German towns, and post-war Norway.

Also covered was how their training and other activities were highly publicized, at least at the local level. Clearly, this was a potential disinformation campaign to convince the German high command that they were planning to invade Norway. This likely had the positive effect of holding divisions of Nazis in place to defend against the supposed invasion. Part of the publicity was about how they excelled at all forms of competition and their being the subject of a field rations test

that proved the rations' worth. And during the war, Bradley was so impressed with them that he had 50 men reassigned to be security for the 1st Army HQ.

One of the highlights mentioned was the satisfaction of serving as Honor Guard for the return of King Haakon VII to Norway.

You can read part of Howard Bergen's 1945 account, written while the 99th was still stationed in Norway, with access to all the records. It is next, on Page 8❖



The Viking Battalion: Norwegian American Ski Troopers in World War II

Edited by Olaf Minge, Kyle Ward, and Erik Brun
Casemate
(July 31, 2023)
384 pages

From 474th Findings, 14 Feb 1945

Published once a week by the 474th Inf. Regt. in France—Vol 1, No. 3, 14 Feb. 1945

"REGIMENTAL SHOULDER PATCH APPROVED

Date of the deliver[sic] is unknown, but the 474th Regimental insignia has been approved by the War Department and is now being manufactured in France.

"One of the first problems of activating the regiment was that of a suitable shoulder insignia, one that could be proudly worn by all. Colonel Edwin A. Walker, former FSSF Commander, gave his ideas to the Regimental Draftsman, S/Sgt Stiles, who slaved away for hours sketching design after design before reaching this one. This was it.

"Immediately a final drawing was sent to the War Department officials for approval. The bright red background of the 1st Sp Sv Force American Indian Spearhead was with a Blue Viking ship with red and blue sail of the 99th Battalion and topped off by the black crimped ribbon of the Ranger Battalions. Thus combining the 3 unusual fighting units, one distinctive patch was created. A patch with a readymade history that will be hard to live up to, but is destined to make even greater history. Jerry quaked at the sight, surrendered when the red spearhead came into view, and ran from the Viking ship. What the hell will he do when we show up wearing a combination of all three?" ❖





AN EXCERPT FROM

THE VIKING BATTALION

NORWEGIAN AMERICAN SKI TROOPERS
IN WORLD WAR II

CHAPTER ONE: Howard R. Bergen

Edited by Olaf Minge, Kyle Ward, and Erik Brun
From *The Viking Battalion: Norwegian American Ski Troopers in World War*, Chapter 1, published by Casemate, July 31, 2023, pages 2-20, reprinted with permission.

Howard R. “Bus” Bergen was a private in the 99th Infantry Battalion (Separate) who wrote a historical account of the group’s formation and key events titled “History of the 99th Infantry Battalion, U.S. Army.” His writing was published in 1945 while the 99th was stationed in Norway at the end of World War II and was the official unit history that was provided as a souvenir for each soldier.

Acting as the editor and lead author to the official battalion history of World War II, Bergen left us with a clear and concise history of the 99th and World War II that remains to this day relevant and seminal. Bergen was on the 99th newspaper staff and it was common among World War II units to write their unit histories soon after the European campaign’s completion.

Writing in Norway with access to battalion records and fresh memories, he establishes the war as they knew it. This book is the starting point for historians, descendants, and amateur researchers to understand how the 99th leaders and veterans saw themselves.

He received five Campaign Stars recorded on his honorable discharge and was awarded a Bronze Star by the War Department in a letter dated September 23, 1947 for “exemplary conduct in ground combat against the armed enemy on or about 1 December, 1944 in the European Theatre of Operations.”

Bergen was born in Lakewood, Ohio on November 22, 1916. His mother was Bessie Johnson, born in Norway and arriving in Lakewood at the age of two with her family. He was called “Bus” for his entire life due to his large size at birth. He graduated from Lakewood High School and attended Cornell University. He worked for an advertising agency until enlisting in the Army.

Bergen married in September 1945 in the chapel at Smestad in Oslo, Norway. His wife had been working for the U.S. Embassy to the Norwegian government-in-exile in London during the Blitz and returned to Oslo with the embassy staff when the war ended.

Howard returned to Lakewood after the war and immediately went to work as a reporter for the Cleveland Press where he remained for 35 years until he retired. He was inducted into the Cleveland Journalism Hall of Fame in 1998, being recognized as a great writer and investigative reporter. He had three stories selected for a popular radio and television series called “The Big Story”—a crime drama which dramatized the true stories of real-life newspaper reporters.

Howard “Bus” Bergen died October 24, 1991.

Training for Combat¹

On the tenth day of July 1942, the 99th Infantry Battalion (Separate), a unit composed solely of Norwegians and Americans of direct Norwegian descent, was activated by War Department order at Camp Ripley, Minnesota. Under the command of Captain H. D. Hansen, a small cadre of enlisted men and officers began preparations to receive the incoming men needed to fill the ranks of this battalion. They came from far and near, from famous divisions and reception centers, seasoned soldiers and raw recruits, men who had traveled the far reaches of the earth and boys who had scarcely set foot out of the Norwegian settlements in the great Midwest. Day after day they piled out of truck, train, and motor car. Rapidly the companies, platoons, and squads filled with men of every age and description; the War Department order had been circulated in every camp and reception center in the country and eager volunteers flocked to the call.

The roster of the outfit was typically Scandinavian—Hansen, Johnsen, Petersen, Berg, Andersen, Grunseth, Amundsen, and on down the line, but the lives and experiences of these men were as varied as

1 Howard R. Bergen. *The History of the 99th Infantry Battalion (Separate)*. Oslo: Emil Moestue, 1946.

their names were similar. Many were ex-members of the escaped Norwegian Merchant Marine and victims of the ruthless Nazi submarine warfare; many had lived under German tyranny in their native land only to escape and join up to fight with the forces opposing it. All were commonly united in one great resolve: to help to free their country of its oppressor. This feeling was directly transmitted to the American Norwegians and helped to fuse them together into a vicious and capable combat organization.

Near the end of September, the battalion moved to Fort Snelling, Minnesota, where the training in basic subjects was continued and where one of the roughest features of training—constant and grueling speed marches—eliminated all but the physically fit from the ranks of the unit. Various Norwegian officers and dignitaries paid visits to the new, highly publicized organization and found it all that the newspapers said it was and more. The people of the Twin Cities, St. Paul and Minneapolis, opened their hearts to the men and many and constant were the invitations to social events, parties, and dinners.

The toughest training lay ahead. On December 17, 1942, the entire battalion moved from Fort Snelling to the top of the Continental Divide, 9,600 feet above sea level. There at the Mountain Training Center, Camp Hale, Colorado they had the “moon in their laps.” As the men of the 99th silently viewed the towering peaks, rocky ravines, and swirling snow, there came to their minds an idea of the things to come.

Warm, new, insulated barracks awaited the men although the camp itself was far from being completed upon arrival of the unit. The two-story barracks were especially constructed to house everyone comfortably in the extreme cold found at this altitude during winter months and the central heating system was highly effective. Showers, indoor latrines, and good beds completed the attractions and it was, as one man was heard to mutter at a later date, “Too damned bad that we couldn’t spend more time living in them.”



Sivart “Ron” Windh at a dance, while stationed at Fort Snelling, Minnesota. The photo captures the Scandinavian ethnic pride in Minnesota. Windh, a Swede in Company C, was later wounded in Belgium. He was recruited from his hospital by the Office of Strategic Service (OSS) for its Norwegian Operational Groups by some of his old 99th buddies. He jumped with Major William Colby’s team into Norway in 1945 in Operation Rype under the direction of Lt. Col. Gerhard Bolland. (Courtesy of the 99th Educational Foundation)

The array and weight of the equipment which was issued within the next few days was staggering to contemplate. Weight of the individual loads to be carried by each ski soldier ran as high as 70 to 97 pounds depending on the mission to be accomplished. Such weights as these necessitated the development of some entirely new techniques in loading, packing, and skiing, because the troops were shortly to embark upon an intensive program of training in the art of winter warfare. To give an indication of loads carried, and definitely needed in this rigorous climate, there is shown the list as given in the *Proposed Manual for Mountain Troops*, Chapter IV, Organizational Equipment:

<u>Load Carried on the Person:</u>	<u>In the Rucksack: (pack)</u>
<i>Pistol belt and pouches</i>	<i>PWhite over-pants and over mittens</i>
<i>Gas mask</i>	<i>Tent pegs</i>
<i>Rucksack</i>	<i>Rations **</i>
<u>On the Pack:</u>	<i>Sleeping pad</i>
<i>Rifle</i>	<i>Climbers (pocket) for</i>
<i>Bayonet</i>	<i>skis for steep slopes</i>
<i>Entrenching tool</i>	<i>Extra socks and pocket insoles</i>
<i>First Aid pk.</i>	<i>Tent (green, white, reversible</i>
<i>Emergency snowshoes*</i>	<i>mountain tent) ***</i>
<u>In the Parka:</u>	<i>Sleeping bag ****</i>
<i>Ski wax</i>	<i>Tent poles</i>
<i>Waterproof match box</i>	<i>Underwear and pocket thongs</i>
<i>Spare mittens</i>	<i>Canteen</i>
<i>Ski knife</i>	<i>1 Coleman gas stove *****</i>
<i>Goggles</i>	<i>Cooking Set *****</i>

* Each man carried three types: Emergency, bear paw, or trail.

** Mountain rations: One box carries rations for you for four days or four men for one day.

*** This mountain tent is carried by one man in this two-man load. The other man carries the Coleman gas stove.

**** Sleeping bag: Two-piece which can be rolled up just as neatly into perhaps an equally small roll as the ordinary two-blanket roll of the regular infantry. It has been used on windswept mountaintops in temperatures of from 30 to 40 degrees below zero, and in blizzards. Men and officers swear by it as the last word in keeping warm and snug.

***** Gas stove: Part of two-man load mentioned above.

***** Cooking set: Another part of the two-man load.

In addition to all of this must be added a pair of skis and two ski poles.

The weight carried by the automatic rifleman was some 97 pounds including his ammunition. Yet even with this tremendous load the men managed exceedingly well thanks to a harness-like device, far excelling the harness of the regular infantry, which distributed the weight on the backs and hips instead of on the shoulders alone.

Training, begun in mid-winter, lasted straight through until August 1943. During the entire period the unit was in the field living, eating, sleeping, and training a minimum of three days and nights weekly.

The social life of the men reached a new and hitherto unheard of low—it was a constant, grueling round of work, work, work. It was the kind of stuff that many had read about but never experienced. The men made records of speed and endurance, but the publicity raves echoed a bit hollow in their ears. The back-breaking, lung-burning climbs, the bitter, numbing cold, the continual grind of training all served to diminish the glamor associated by newspapers and magazines with the unit. But through the long training, hardship, and work, there flared up within each man a pride of unit; a comradeship which is seldom found in units composed of men with dissimilar backgrounds; a certain intangible something which is the prime requisite of all first-class combat units—the firm and unshakable belief that his unit is the “best damned outfit in the armed forces!”

Much of the training carried out by the unit was experimental in nature, testing various types of equipment thrown in its direction by the War Department. Some innovations were made by members of the battalion, discoveries which met with the enthusiastic approval of the government. First was a mount made for a heavy machine gun from two skis—a mount from which the gun could be placed into immediate action, and second, a three-ski sled for litter bearers.

Among other things during this period the battalion undertook a 50-mile cross-country test march, a march which required four days to complete. All rations and most of the heavier equipment were manhandled with the aid of four-dog teams which helped in pulling the freight sleds. The men wore either snowshoes or skis, depending upon their function in the mission. Many of the mortars were broken down into three-man loads hand-carried while climbing steep, icy trails or skirting deep precipices. For the entire first two days of the trek across desolate, snowclad mountains, the man faced a continual uphill grind to the very top of the Continental Divide and thence on down the other side. In certain places they reached altitudes of over 12,000 feet above sea level.

Frequent “breaks” had to be made to enable the men to catch their breath as heavy loads, the rarified atmosphere, and intense cold made breathing almost impossible. At times it was necessary to stop every 10 minutes. At night, the men found the water in their canteens frozen solid. After cooking a meal on their stoves and hastily eating it before it froze in the pan, they stacked their skis, pitched their tent in a hole dug in the snow, and wearing their clothes, including ski-boots, inside their sleeping bags to keep from freezing solid, they dropped off into sound sleep. The speed and endurance records made on missions of this sort live today in the annals of the Mountain Training Center.

When spring came to Camp Hale, one full month after its arrival in all other parts of the country, skis and snowshoes were put away and straight mountain climbing was put on the schedule. Once more the adaptable members of the battalion proved their mettle and new laurels were added. In June of 1943 many men volunteered for a strategic force of men who were to undergo paratroop and commando training prior to the then considered inevitable invasion of Norway. The battalion was given preference, and many old comrades and officers left to form the nucleus of the new special striking force of warmakers extraordinary.

It was in June, too, that Lt. Colonel R. G. Turner took over the command of the 99th Battalion. Major Harold D. Hansen, having done an excellent job of organizing, training, and initiating the unit, was

made executive officer and continued to perform capably in his new position. He had long since endeared himself in the hearts of his men because of his rugged, understanding qualities and because he was a born leader for this type of force.

In preparation for movement overseas, the battalion moved from Camp Hale to Camp Shanks in New York on August 24, 1943. Arriving after a tedious cross-country trip on August 27 the men immediately went into the routine of drawing new equipment, receiving shots for every known disease, and sweating out passes to the big city. For many men who hailed from New York and its environs this was an excellent chance to see their families for perhaps the last time. For those less lucky it was a chance to partake of a social life which would be unknown to them for a long time to come. The men took full advantage of this opportunity before embarking on their great adventure.

The fifth day of September found the battalion aboard the stout ship *SS Mexico* and bound for parts guessed at, but unknown. Outside of being rather rough and very tedious, the passage was comparatively uneventful. A number of “alerts” kept the gun crews on their toes but outside of the warning “Submarines in the direct vicinity,” the convoy had no trouble. Time was spent in reading, playing cards, or watching the sleek, swift destroyer escort continually maneuvering about in search of enemy U-boats.

The 99th arrived in Scotland on September 16 and immediately boarded the train which was to take them to their new camp in England. After 16 hours by rail the unit arrived at Perham Downs Camp, Tidworth area, Wiltshire, England. This area is well known as an old and famous training ground for British soldiers. The camp was centrally located between Salisbury and Andover. Both of these ancient and charming English towns offered much in the way of entertainment, study, and relaxation for the training-weary soldier. Accommodations were excellent with permanent barracks of stone, baths, recreation rooms, and NAAFI. The terrain surrounding the camp was highly suitable for the type of training which the unit was now to undergo, and almost immediately upon arrival another strenuous program was begun. Now it was straight infantry training, long hikes, tactical problems, weapons, lectures, classes, week-long bivouacs on the cold, wet ground of England, and of course, numerous inspections. Specialized training was included also, such as the actual firing of the rocket launcher and throwing of fragmentation and assault grenades. One hundred and ten men were sent to St. Agnes, Cornwall, for practical training and firing of the .30- and .50-caliber machine guns. There were actual mortar exercises. Beside this, 26 men attended a combat swimming course in London with all except two qualifying as instructors.

It was here at Perham Downs that 300 members of the 99th underwent one of the roughest phases of their rugged careers. A ration test, as the name implies, is a test by which the War Department determines the actual quality of a new ration by its effect upon men undergoing the conditions which they will undoubtedly meet in combat; it is the final and by far the most important endorsement. The battalion was picked to test the new ration, which is now, by all standards, the most heavily used and popular combat issuance in the American armed

forces today.² In Dartmoor forest the men marched an average of 20 miles a day, every day for 15 straight days. In continual rain and with full field packs, they marched across some of the roughest and most desolate country in the British Isles. They carried all of their possessions on their backs and at night they slept in an area which resembled an artificial lake more than a bivouac area. Each morning the soldiers were weighed individually, and an accurate check was made daily on their physical condition. The rain failed to dampen their spirits as after a few days it became the normal thing. At last the grind was finished and after a final check-up by doctors, government experts, and SOS officers the men were allowed to return to Tidworth for a well-deserved rest. This contribution was highly commended by the War Department and another notch was cut in the 99th's Hall of Fame.

In the middle of January 1944, the battalion moved from Tidworth by rail to Wales. There, in Nissen huts, the men were to spend the remainder of their time and training in the British Isles. The campsite was beautiful—situated on the spacious park in front of the castle, it lay beside the Glanusk River surrounded on all sides by the Welsh mountains.

Though picturesque and inspiring to the artistic eye, the mountains were a marked source of irritation and discomfort to the men in the training that followed. Day after day, night after night, almost every peak and crest of each mountain was scaled and maneuvered upon by the battalion. It was here that the men first maneuvered with tanks, with live ammunition on field exercises, and entered into competition with forces of the British Home Guard on combat courses. The vigorous training endured prior to the competitive maneuvers really paid off and the record of the 99th was further enhanced in the eyes of the Welsh people by its marked proficiency in these contests.

In the latter part of April, the battalion was accorded the singular honor of furnishing the select group which was to guard invasion plans at First U.S. Army Headquarters then located in Bristol. Fifty-two men were especially picked for this task and they soon gained praise from the highest officers at the headquarters for their smart appearance and their efficiency. They were commonly mis-named "The Swedish Guard."

On the first day of May the remainder of the battalion left Glanusk Park for a camp at Ludlow near Hereford in England. Here for more than a month training continued, but through it all there was the general feeling that "something big was up this time." On June 10, hot on the heels of the invasion in France, the 99th was alerted for immediate movement. The battalion arrived the same afternoon at Uffculme and now they really "sweated it out" for a few days until the movement to Plymouth for embarkation was ordered. After donning their impregnated, gas-proof clothing and eating their last good meal for a long time, the men of the 99th left the shores of England on June 17.

The crossing was rough, and life was anything but pleasant aboard flat-bottomed LCIs. Due to bad weather they were unable to land as scheduled and were forced to lay offshore for a few days until it

was considered possible to land. Meanwhile the first taste of real war came with the first boom of artillery in the near distance and the sight of dogfights overhead. Finally, on June 21, the 99th landed on the bleak, shell-torn shores of Omaha Beach in France.

Under Fire

The first night in France was spent in Transit Area number three, approximately 3 miles inland. All about the bivouac area was strewn the wreckage of war and in the distance the sky was constantly aglow with the reflection of a terrific artillery barrage. The men were dispersed tactically and slit-trenches were dug with a gusto never found in the previous "dry-runs." K-rations—the inevitable—were produced. As night fell the men crawled into their holes for the first night on the soil of France.

On the following day the battalion was transported by truck to Colombières and attached to the Provisional Ranger Group, First U.S. Army. The next few days were spent in re-checking equipment and ammunition and in listening to occasional talks on battle experiences by various unit commanders. On June 29, the unit moved to St. Joseph on the Cherbourg Peninsula and the following day entered Cherbourg. Here for the next nine days the unit was attached to the Fourth Port Headquarters and helped secure the city. After Cherbourg had been secured the unit helped guard various military installations against possible sabotage from bypassed German troops or regular saboteurs.

Moving to a new location, Hau de Haut,³ 8 miles south of Cherbourg, the 99th in conjunction with the Second and Fifth Ranger Battalions and the 759th Light Tank Battalion patrolled the area of Cherbourg Peninsula between Cherbourg and Valognes from the 8th through the 25th of July. In addition, the security patrols also checked the area for enemy materials, ammunition, casualties, and bypassed enemy personnel.

From July 25 to August 10, the battalion conducted night-firing exercises, field problems and training with the 759th Light Tank Battalion, then on August 11, set up a general defense of the town of Buais. On August 14 the unit became attached to the famous 2nd Armored Division and was assigned to Combat Command "B" of that division for a mission. However, this mission was canceled, and the unit was again thrown into Division Reserve. Until August 19 front-line training was given in the function of armored infantry by the 41st Armored Infantry and included demonstrations in roadblocks, proper use of artillery, and proper use of communications within an armored division.

On August 20 the 99th, still with Division Reserve, moved up to Tourevre and established roadblocks. Immediately upon completion of these blocks a heavy concentration of enemy artillery started to fall and continued intermittently throughout the entire night. The next day a mine accident killed two enlisted men and wounded one officer and 10 other enlisted men. The 22nd found the battalion once again on the move to Beit where roadblocks were once more set up, but this time the enemy was retreating and reorganizing and no organized resistance was encountered. However, the advance detail of the unit

2 This statement was made by the author and not verifiable at the time. It is a claim similar to many others that soldiers made to each other about their war experiences.

3 The author may have meant Hameau de Haut.

upon entering the town of Le Faily made contact with a fairly large force of Germans and was forced to withdraw for reserves. The town was captured by Division Reserve and over 150 prisoners were taken.

Movement was made to Cesseville on the following day where the inevitable roadblocks were established. Functioning for the time as armored infantry attached to the 2nd Armored Division, the 99th had more than its share of these ticklish assignments. During the night of August 24, 14 prisoners were captured. Despite heavy strafing and bombing attacks by enemy fighters and light bombers on the blocks, no casualties were suffered by the battalion and the men were commended on the increasing efficiency with which they conducted these new assignments. They had now undergone, however slightly, their initial “baptism of fire” and were emerging as seasoned and hardened fighters prepared to meet the vicious infighting yet to come.

Elbeuf

On August 25 the battalion was alerted for an attack on the woods immediately south of the town of Elbeuf with the final objective being the entire south side of the town. Despite heavy artillery fire from the north side of the Seine River and much small arms fire from the front and flanks, the 99th advanced rapidly and entered the town at 1600 hours. In the town itself there followed a furious round of house-to-house fighting. It was discovered that the German defenders had several medium tanks in the town and, because they were considered more than a match for infantry, a request for tank destroyers was immediately relayed back. The unit was informed that they could not arrive for at least two hours, so it pushed forward in the face of mortar, artillery, tank, and small arms fire to take the final objective—the town of Elbeuf—at 1635 hours.

The battalion command post was set up within the town with a rear command post and reserve on the high ground to the south of the town. A determined counterattack was launched by the enemy on the northwest section of the city but was driven off after hard fighting and with the help of the tank destroyers which had arrived to help stem the tank attack in the nick of time. At least four Nazi tanks were personally accounted for by the 99th before the TDs arrived.

On the morning of August 26, the command post was heavily shelled and destroyed, taking a heavy toll of officers. Among the injured was battalion commander Lt. Colonel R. G. Turner. The command of the battalion was then taken over by Major Harold D. Hansen who was at that time executive officer. At 1700 hours of the same day all organized small arms fire ceased; however, the Germans continued to throw in mortar and artillery fire from the north side of the Seine River. Eighty-six prisoners were taken by the 99th against a loss of nine officers wounded, seven enlisted men killed, and 41 wounded. At 1800 hours on the 26th the unit was relieved by the Canadians and went into bivouac at St. Croix de Martin.

Two days later the unit became attached to Combat Command A of the 2nd Armored Division for another attack on the morning of August 30. Six more objectives were taken with only negligible enemy resistance encountered. The final objective was the woods north of the town of Villers in orchies⁴ and on the evening of the same day the unit command post was established in that town and the final objective was

secured. On the same date the unit was relieved from attachment to the Second Armored Division and attached to the Seventh Armored Group, XIX Corps Reserve. The following day the 99th moved to Drucourt where it bivouacked and established local security.

Here, for a few days, the battalion rested while performing routine duties. Safe from artillery fire, eating warm food, and receiving replacements, many of the men had their first full night's sleep in many weeks. On September 6 the unit was again alerted and moved from La Glanerie to Mons, Belgium, with the mission of securing the city. Immediately upon arrival roadblocks were set up and the city patrolled. The following day the unit relieved the 16th Infantry Regiment of the 1st Division and continued patrolling in the vicinity of Mons.

On September 8 the 99th moved to Valenciennes in France for the purpose of securing the First Army sector against probable attack by an enemy pocket in the British sector to the north and west of Valenciennes. For the next four days the unit conducted motorized and foot patrols in the immediate vicinity of Mons and Valenciennes. Seventeen prisoners of war were taken during this period.

Canal Drive

On September 14, A and B Companies were attached to Combat Command “A” of the 2nd Armored Division for another mission. At the same time the remainder of the unit moved to a point 1½ miles west of Mechelen, Belgium. The following day C Company was attached to the 2nd Battalion of the 66th Armored Regiment and at 1700 hours moved up to secure Reckheim. Accompanying it in the attack were five light tanks and six medium tanks. In the face of intense mortar and artillery fire, the unit advanced doggedly to its objective. The tanks proved invaluable in neutralizing machine gun emplacements, strong points, and snipers. Meanwhile, A, B, and D Companies moved forward and crossed the Willems Vaart Canal to support the attack. They too met concentrated fire from numerous well-prepared positions and pillboxes but advanced swiftly to secure their objectives despite



The 99th was attached to 2nd Armored Division's Task Force Stokes in mid-September 1944. The battalion's riflemen rode tanks of the 66th Armored Regiment during the Canal Drive. Members of the Milissen family sit on the medical jeep, while Maria Kuypers and her dog Fikkie look on in the newly liberated village of Boorsheim (Boorseem) around September 17. (Courtesy Karsten Conaert, Mrs. Lisa Jansen collection)

4 The author may have meant Villers-en-Arthies.

the stubborn resistance. One officer and one enlisted man were killed during the night's operations and one officer and 14 enlisted men were wounded. Fourteen prisoners of war were taken.

After securing its positions the battalion once again moved into the attack. At 1700 hours, with B and C Companies leading, A Company in reserve, and D Company supporting the leading elements, the 99th kicked off. Light and medium tanks of the 66th Armored Regiment supported the attack and once more were indispensable in clearing up enemy strong points and other fortifications. The resistance encountered was bitter and determined but the attack was of the same caliber. It was here that an officer in the armored force was heard to say, "This is the only damned infantry outfit in the world that tanks have to worry about keeping up with." Again, the objectives were taken, and the battalion reorganized and held strong points to meet the never-failing counter-attack. Estimated casualties for this last attack by the 99th numbered 40 enlisted men. One hundred and eleven prisoners were taken.

Simultaneously, units of the 66th Armored Regiment continued to attack and secured their objectives in conjunction with the initial assault plan. With the forming of this line the assigned mission of the operation was completed and the 99th was released from assignment to the 2nd Armored Division. Immediately the 744th Light Tank Battalion was assigned to assist in establishing security of strong points. Casualties for the operations from September 16 through 18 for the 99th were one officer killed, two officers wounded, eight enlisted men killed, 75 enlisted men wounded, and 10 enlisted men missing. A later count located all the missing men. During this period 440 prisoners were taken.

From September 18 to 28 the battalion's front lines were reinforced by over 300 Belgian F.I.⁵ These men proved to be invaluable to the unit because of their work behind the enemy lines, sabotage, and information obtained by them through espionage activities. They also served as guards to handle the Nazi sympathizers and prisoners within their districts.

A strong enemy counterattack was reported to be forming to the battalion's direct front the morning of September 20. However, the concentrated and accurate fire of the unit's 81mm mortars, combined with artillery support on the right, and the British artillery on the left, discouraged the attack almost at the beginning and the enemy withdrew to the vicinity of Roermond. For the remainder of the time on the line activity was limited to patrol clashes and artillery fire.

The 99th was relieved by the 7th Armored Division and moved to the vicinity of Eupen in Belgium. On September 30 the unit moved to a bivouac area near Montzen where the men rested, ate hot food, and had entertainment "when it was available." Rain, falling almost incessantly on an area which was a sea of mud and water, made the encampment far from pleasant to the ordinary eye but to the tired men the place was perfect. During the rest period the companies maintained supply, tended and cleaned all equipment, fired new weapons, and adjusted weapons which had malfunctioned in the previous operation.

This life of safety and comparative ease was brought to an abrupt halt on October 12 when the battalion was attached to XIX Corps and moved into Germany near the town of Marienberg. Four days later

the unit moved up to Herzogenrath where it was attached to the 30th Infantry Division. On the same day it moved up to Würselen where the mission was to attack and close the gap between the XIX Corps and the VII Corps. The town of Würselen was located just outside Aachen and part of the mission was to close the Aachen-Cologne highway to prevent the Germans from escaping along this important road.

Würselen

The battle of Würselen was, and always will be, a nightmare to the members of the unit who participated in it and were lucky enough to come out of the affair alive. For nine days and nights in the face of a continual and accurate concentration of artillery, mortar, and point-blank tank fire, they attacked daily, were counterattacked and outnumbered, driven from their hard-won positions only to surge back and retake them. The enemy, fighting savagely to keep this last escape route open, threw everything in the book at the Americans during this showdown battle. The men were fighting side by side with other famous fighting units, the 30th Division, the 1st Division, and the 29th Division.

On the first day of the battle, October 16, the 99th moved up to the attack in the face of a murderous crossfire from well-fixed enemy positions. Concrete pillboxes, dug-in-tanks, and many foxholes on the commanding ground gave the enemy a tremendous advantage over the advancing force. In spite of this, the day's mission was accomplished and the objectives secured before nightfall. During the night and in the early morning positions were bombed and strafed by enemy planes. The next day the enemy counterattacked in strength, supported by tanks. Elements of the 99th were temporarily dislodged but succeeded in reorganizing quickly and re-took their original positions. Meanwhile the Germans massed their artillery and zeroed in on all positions, shelling them day and night without pause except when they were attacking. The largest force of enemy artillery in the entire sector attempted to blast open an escape route through the unit, but like their determined counterattacks, they were doomed to failure. Each night enemy fighter planes and light bombers dropping anti-personnel bombs and strafing the 99th's positions added to the din and uproar of bursting shells.

Contact was established with the 116th Infantry and the 18th Infantry Regiment on the following day. Once again, the enemy counterattacked viciously with more men and heavier tanks but this time there was no ground lost. Despite the fact that enemy tanks were firing point-blank into the foxholes they were repulsed with heavy losses. As the Germans withdrew their artillery again opened up, coupling its activity with night visits from the Luftwaffe.

During the entire operation food, water, and ammunition were extremely difficult to deliver to forward areas because of accurate enemy observation. Even during the hours of darkness men bringing up supplies were shelled with amazing accuracy. To the men lying in the cold, sticky mud of their foxholes under constant attack this was but another grim discomfort with which to cope. Sleep was virtually an impossibility during the nine days, and with the cold rain, incessant shelling, lack of food and water, and perpetual counterattacks, the growing tension was beginning to tell on the hardest of them.

For the next few days, slight advances were made, and combat patrols were successfully conducted. The original mission had been accomplished and the all-important gap had been closed—it remained closed.

5 It is assumed that the author means the Belgian resistance fighters.



Elements of Task Force Hansen arrived in Malmedy on December 17, 1944, relieving Lt. Col. Pergrin's 291st Engineer Battalion. Here markings on the two jeep trailers in the town square that read "1A 991" identify First U.S. Army's 99th Infantry Battalion, and the "D" on the right side confirms Company D, the heavy weapons company, with a M1917 water-cooled heavy machine gun mounted on the dashboard. The half-track to the left could belong to 526th Armored Infantry Battalion, also part of Task Force Hansen. (Courtesy of the Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum)

For nine full days the 99th had held in the face of the best in determined and desperate German attempts to break out of the Aachen trap. On October 24 at 1730 hours the 99th was formally relieved by elements of the 116th and 119th Infantry of the 30th Division.

After remaining in reserve for a few days the unit moved to the vicinity of Henri-Chapelle, Belgium, for a well-earned rest. The final prisoner count for the period of October 16 to 24 was 105 enemy soldiers. Combat exhaustion constituted the major part of the casualties in this operation; however, there were five officers wounded, two officers killed, 26 enlisted men killed, 40 enlisted men wounded, and four missing.

The 99th Infantry Battalion (Separate) was billeted in the vicinity of Henri-Chapelle, Belgium, from November 1 to 25, 1944. During this period a training program was set up which included firing of weapons, conditioning marches, and training films. This time, due to inclement weather, the men were quartered in farmhouses and barns; steady rain, high winds, and the cold made it far from pleasant. Eating outdoors, most of the time the meal resolved itself into a race to eat the food before it was blown out of the mess kits. Deep mud and manure furnished an interesting mixture for the men to plod through whenever they left the smelly, damp confines in which they were housed. At night

the men huddled about the few stoves in the area and vainly tried to dry their shoes or warm themselves in the fire's feeble glow. A few lucky men were allotted passes to Liège or Paris, but the quota was small. All in all, it was definitely "nothing to write home about."

On November 25 the unit was delighted to move to Tilff, Belgium, with a mission to serve as reserve for the Army area against enemy airborne attack, infiltration tactics, and guerrilla warfare. One company was billeted in St. Hubert, Belgium, to guard two enemy ammunition dumps and main supply routes "X," "Y," and "Z." The rest of the battalion conducted foot and mechanized patrols over large areas and guarded vital installations. In many cases separate patrols were stationed and quartered far from the battalion command post and carried their own kitchen, medics, and supplies, each operating as individual units. Work was interesting, quarters usually good, and food plentiful—in short, it was a "good deal."

Ardennes

On the fateful day of December 17, 1944, the Ardennes offensive was launched. The battalion was alerted and proceeded immediately by truck from Tilff to Malmedy to check the advance of the onrushing German hordes in that sector. Task Force Hansen, consisting of the 526th Armored Infantry Battalion, B Company of the 825th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and the 99th Infantry Battalion (Separate), was formed for this mission. Malmedy was completely bereft of Allied forces on Sunday, December 17 except for approximately 60 engineer troops who had chosen to stay and attempt to hold the enemy until combat troops could be moved up.

Into the still, rainy darkness of this almost deserted town moved the 99th, immediately aware of the unfriendly attitude of the inhabitants. From darkened windows and doorways, the pro-Nazi population watched silently, smirking and secure in the knowledge that this mere handful of men could not stop the picked forces of the great von Rundstedt. Had they not been told that this was the turning point of the war? That this was the long-awaited knock-out blow of the disorganized, yet hitherto victorious, rabble that constituted the American armies in the field? Had not the gigantic successes achieved in the previous few hours more than assured them of their ultimate victory? And now a handful of soldiers arrive, uncertain even of the situation, to halt this mighty offensive.

Reconnaissance of all the likely approaches to the city was made at once and the battalion was placed in defense of the city—holding roadblocks and occupying the high ground around the city. The engineers had mined most of the approaches and felled trees across the road to halt the approaching enemy armor, yet these would have proven inconsequential without other support. Needless to say, they welcomed the arrival of the infantry with joy and relief. The first night was spent in digging-in and then crouching wide-eyed in the rain to await the then supposed inevitable attack.

The attack, however, did not immediately materialize and the following day was spent in improving defensive positions and conducting combat and reconnaissance patrols. Because of the congested roads, caused by evacuation of great quantities of materiel and personnel from threatened areas, the arrival of the 117th Infantry Regiment of the 30th Division was held up considerably, but finally came about at 1830 hours on the 18th and the defense of the town was supplemented and coordinated.

Prior to the arrival of reinforcements, minor patrol clashes had occurred. On December 18 at 1645 hours, three Germans with two American prisoners on the front of a jeep approached one of the roadblocks, evidently thinking that the town had already fallen. The jeep had been taken from the 106th Division, one of the units overrun in this vast surprise offensive. As they approached, one of the Americans leaped off the hood and shouted out that the jeep was full of Germans. Before the vehicle could be turned about it was captured and one of the Germans was killed trying to escape. The captured men were members of the 1st SS Division—the enemy had been identified. A few hours later a small enemy patrol was completely wiped out by outposts in a successful ambush. The dead were identified as members of the same SS division.

Later, during the same evening, one battalion of the 120th Infantry Regiment, of the 30th Division, came up to take positions with the 99th in the vicinity of Malmedy. Enemy parachutists were dropped ½ mile west of the town but were never contacted.

On the afternoon of December 19 the rest of the battalion withdrew ½ mile to the northwest of Malmedy while B Company remained in position. The company remaining in position fought off patrols and on the 20th changed positions with B Company of the 120th Regiment. The change was effected during the hours of darkness. B Company of the 99th dug in along the top of a railway embankment about 15 feet in height and covered a front of about 1,000 yards. Directly in front lay a broad field flanked by heavily wooded hills. The field covered an expanse of about 500 yards before it reached the trees and the approaches to it were deep draws in the mountains. The field of fire was excellent, and the entire position was ideal for defense. The riflemen and machine gunners were dug in at the top of the embankment and directly behind them were the light mortars of the weapons platoon protected by the embankment. Back along the edge of the town were heavy machine guns and anti-tank guns trained on the two underpasses which were dynamited, at a later date, to impair passage of enemy tanks attempting to break through. At the time of the initial attack each of the underpasses was covered by an anti-tank gun which was drawn up with its nose practically protruding through this breach in the battalion defenses.

All night the men shivered in their foxholes. An attack was imminent, and the order and information was issued to every man that there would be no retreat as the position could not be lost at any cost. At 0655 hours, on the morning of December 21, the enemy tried its sneak attack; however, the lead columns hit some of the unit's mines and outposts streamed back with the information of the coming attack. The unit did not have long to wait. Across the field streamed enemy tanks and infantrymen firing and shouting as they came. Captured American tanks and enemy tanks poured a heavy fire into unit positions and enemy machine guns opened up from prepared positions in the nearby woods. B Company cut loose with everything it had and the light caused by the flying and ricocheting tracers was enough to light up the surrounding terrain. Several times the enemy tanks and infantry surged to the very base of the embankment to be driven back with grenade and small arms fire. Soon one of the unit's TD guns, with its crew, was knocked out and the enemy tanks, growing bolder, moved back and forth within 20 feet of the embankment pouring point—blank cannon fire into the positions. Enemy machine gunners—paying an

awful price—advanced and set up positions directly in front and on the flanks and poured a concentrated fire upon the defenders. The attack was fanatical in its fury. With continual cries of “Surrender or die” the pride of Adolf Hitler died in front of the unit’s positions.

Meanwhile, the unit’s artillery opened up on the enemy rear with a terrific barrage and the light mortars took a terrible toll in front of the railroad tracks. Reluctantly the enemy withdrew, carrying as many of their dead and wounded as possible from the field and into the protection of the deep woods. During the action three prisoners were taken, two from the famous 11th Parachute Regiment, the other a member of the infamous 1st SS Division. Now the unit knew why the attack had been so fanatical. To take this important town the German High Command had thrown its very best into the gamble—they were good, but not good enough.

In the cold gray dawn the success of the defense of Malmedy by the 99th was counted in the twisted bodies lying in front of the embankment and in the smoking ruins of the tanks knocked out by the two remaining TD guns. The tired men rubbed their red-rimmed eyes, reloaded their guns, and waited for another attack; the German super-troops had many wounds to lick before they came out of the deep woods for another try at the town of Malmedy. The prisoners stated that they had Tiger and Panther tanks as well as much American equipment and that it was their mission to destroy the defending force, destroy the artillery positions, and capture the railroad crossing southeast of Malmedy.

The immediate return attack, however, did not materialize and the remainder of the morning was spent in bringing up ammunition and supplies. Foxholes were improved to resist the coming enemy artillery barrage and probable air attack. The same morning patrols were sent out to determine the damage inflicted upon the enemy and two jeeps and one armored car were retrieved from the field of battle. The flanks of the 99th were secured by patrol action and positions were once more stabilized. More American artillery was moved up plus anti-aircraft, armored units, and tank destroyers. One platoon of the 740th Medium Tank Battalion was attached to Task Force Hansen and remained in the battalion’s area. That night 30th Division Headquarters reported the possibility of an airborne attack and another sleepless night was spent on the alert. Meanwhile, enemy artillery incessantly shelled the unit’s positions, vainly endeavoring to zero in on the crest of the track and knock out defenses. American artillery answered and the night was alive with shellfire.

The next few days were spent in “sweating out” another enemy attack and dodging the heavy German artillery fire which fell steadily in and around the positions. Enemy air activity was fairly constant, and many dogfights took place overhead. It was during this time that due to poor information large formations of American medium bombers attacked the town of Malmedy on two occasions with devastating results. Many American casualties resulted, and the town was reduced to ruins. Snow had fallen and the cold was severe, adding to the suffering of the tired soldiers on the line.

Christmas Day was spent in frozen foxholes and Christmas dinner consisted of a K-ration. At the time it was impossible to bring up hot food and the report came down that Christmas dinner was being saved until the unit was relieved for a rest period. The strain was beginning to tell

on the men. Two weeks had already gone by without sleep, hot food, or being able to wash or shave and still no relief in sight. The Germans were still cutting deep into Belgium far behind unit lines and the information that trickled down to the line was vague and optimistic. Each night furious artillery duels took place over unit positions with American guns hurling as many as 3,000 rounds during the hours of darkness.

At 1600 hours on December 27, Company C kicked off on a commando raid on the enemy-held town of Hedamont.⁶ Prior to the surprise attack it was ably supported by an artillery concentration in conjunction with the operation. The attack was successful in as much as the opposing units were positively identified, their positions located, one prisoner taken, and at least 30 Germans killed.

On December 29, Company B raided the town of Otaimont. Supported by artillery and 81mm mortar fire, the men swept into the town with fixed bayonets only to find that the enemy had withdrawn. During the entry of the town a heavy concentration of enemy artillery and machine gun fire harassed the unit. Fortunately, the casualties were extremely light, and the men withdrew in good order, despite heavy Nebelwerfer fire “zeroed in” on the escape route.

From January 1 to 6, the 99th occupied front-line defense positions on the outskirts of Malmedy. Patrol action was common and enemy artillery and rocket fire fairly heavy. Enemy troops who had been wounded in the initial attack or during clashes often came into the lines to surrender because of the intense cold that persisted during this period. During the nights German combat troops dressed in white camouflage suits raided forward positions without success. These nuisance raids together with the cold of the foxholes served to exhaust the men more than did artillery fire or lack of warm food.

On the evening of January 6, the battalion was moved to the vicinity of Stavelot in another sector of the front and its old positions at Malmedy were taken over by elements of the 30th Division. The new positions were in a deep pine woods and the unit’s thin line was within shouting distance of German defenses. Combat patrols were continually on the move and clashes with enemy units were frequent. Nights were dark, the woods deep, and heavy snow made action exceedingly difficult on both sides despite the proximity of the positions. The enemy was well supplied with skis and other winter equipment and their sector was heavily fortified. The Jerries had heavy concentrations of Nebelwerfers, mortars, and artillery in direct support of defensive and offensive action. Despite this, the 99th took over offensive action and retained the initiative throughout this phase of the campaign.

The first offensive action in the new positions took place on January 10. Enemy positions were attacked with marked success by the second platoon of A Company and many Germans were killed, wounded, or taken prisoner. Resisting violently with mortar and small arms fire, the enemy was driven from its positions and well-camouflaged foxholes. The attack was in the nature of a raid and after driving the enemy back the unit withdrew.

The second platoon of Company A again attacked the same sector, which the enemy had re-occupied, but with less success, the following day. Hand-to-hand fighting followed and the Americans were

6 Unclear what location Hedamont corresponds to currently.

pinned down by concentrations of enemy mortar, machine gun, and artillery fire. Almost surrounded, the platoon fought back savagely with grenades and bayonets until it had a chance to withdraw with only fairly heavy losses.

The following day elements of the 99th once more attacked in the same sector, Chevofosse, which, according to the prisoners, was strongly outposted and fortified to prevent patrols from infiltrating across the bridge into Thieux. Once again, through a hail of mortar and artillery fire, the Americans attacked and finally knocked out the enemy command post. Again, the Germans resisted fanatically from the comparative security of their well-dug-in positions but to no avail—with grenades and rifle fire they were driven from their holes to be killed or taken prisoner. On the same day, the 119th Infantry Regiment of the 30th Division attacked from the vicinity of Malmedy and across the unit's left front. The battalion supported the attack with heavy machine gun and 81 mm mortar fire. During the attack, the enemy heavily shelled unit positions, causing some casualties. The Germans knew the terrain which the unit was occupying, and their artillery was accurate; because the terrain was so heavily wooded enemy mortar and artillery fire was particularly devastating due to tree-bursts.

On January 15 the 517th Parachute Regiment, attacking on the unit's right front, and the 119th Regiment of the 30th Division, attacking on

the left front, finally squeezed the 99th out of the front line. Once again, the battalion supported the attack with mortar and heavy machine gun fire, and once again it sweated out the incoming barrage thrown by the desperate enemy. For the next few days, the battalion maintained its positions in this sector and conducted patrols to search out bypassed enemy units or missing men of the unit—both were found.

After 31 days of continuous fighting, living in snowy fox-holes at sub-zero temperatures, and being under unrelenting artillery fire and observation by the enemy, the tired, bearded men of the 99th were formally relieved from their frontline positions on January 18. The danger was over and the forces of von Rundstedt were being hammered back into Germany with appalling losses. Heavy losses had also been suffered by the battalion, but it had not once faltered in its given task; it had fulfilled the mission and had added further praise and glory to its already sterling record.

Then came Tilff and for three days the unit rested, ate hot food, and squeezed out an occasional cognac at the local bar. A bath and a shave were a treat to the men, and they made the most of the opportunity. On the morning of January 22, the battalion boarded a train for the long trip back to the coast of France. ❖



Thank You To Outgoing SFA Chapter 78 President Greg Horton

SFA Chapter 78 Vice President James McLanahan presented outgoing Chapter 78 President Greg Horton with this custom framed piece to express his and the chapter's appreciation for Greg's service over the last years. Thanks Greg for all of your hard work!



SFA TEAMHOUSE

teamhouse.specialforcesassociation.org

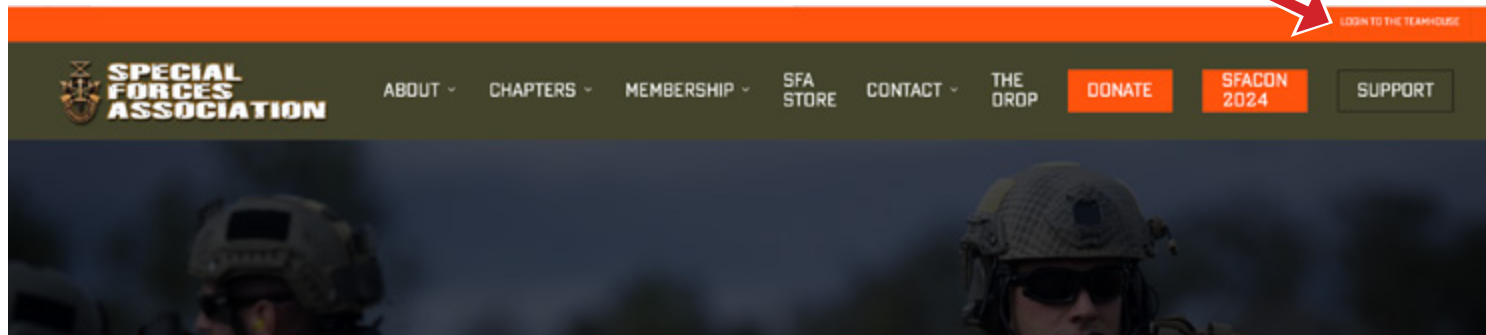
Update Your SFA Teamhouse Profile: Step-By-Step Instructions

This guide provides instructions on how to change your privacy setting and many other areas in the SFA Teamhouse, which can be found at <https://teamhouse.specialforcesassociation.org/>.

There is a also full video step-by-step video which covers every entry to make changes in Teamhouse and you can follow along. Play at: https://youtu.be/v1-UBgQ2_8c

NOTE: The SFA Teamhouse is a private encrypted site, our data is secure. Only SFA members have access to it. One must have to have a username and password to access the site. If you would like to learn more about the security and privacy go to: https://clubexpress.com/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=0&module_id=110508

- 1** Go to SpecialForcesAssociation.org and click on "LOGIN TO THE TEAMHOUSE" in the upper right corner of the screen.



- 2** In the **User Name** box enter the email address you have on file with the SFA.



Click on the **Forgot My Username/Password** if you need either of these items.

- 3** Once you are logged in you will see your name displayed in the upper right corner of the page. Click on the down arrow to access your **Profile** settings.



- 4** Click on **Profile**.



Note: The Username/Password information is sent to the email address on file with SFA National. *If you do not receive the email your e-mail is incorrect in the SFA National database. You must contact SFA National or your local/regional chapter administrator to update your e-mail address.*

Member Profile Dashboard:

After selecting "Profile" you will enter the "Member Profile" dashboard. This is where information critical to your participation in the SFA Teamhouse is to be entered.



5 Click on **Basic Member Information**.

6 Verify and update **Contact Information**

Contact Information

This page allows you to enter more contact information than was supplied in the Membership Application. Specify a Nickname to be used in correspondence. The Secondary Address can be used if you spend a significant part of the year living at another location. Use the Enable checkbox to activate this address in place of the Primary Address.

General Information

Member Number M-0000

Salutation [Select](#)

First Name

Middle Initial

Last Name

Gender Female Male

Birthday 01/01/01

Nickname

Sponsor

Mailing Name

Enter the name of this individual as you would prefer it to appear on mailing labels, or leave it blank and the system will automatically provide a suggested default.

Verify and update name, birthdate, nickname

Spouse Information

First Name

Last Name

Verify and update spouse name

Primary Address

Country [Show All](#)

Address 1

Address 2

City

State

Zip Code

Timezone [Show All](#)

The timezone was set based on your address. Please double check it to be sure it is correct.

Primary Phone

Verify and update physical address and primary phone number

Secondary Address

Use this address instead of the primary address

Country [Show All](#)

Address 1

Address 2

City

State

Zip Code

Timezone [Show All](#)

Primary Phone

Other Info

Mobile Phone

Fax

Email Address

Website

Newsletter I want a printed newsletter
 I will download the newsletter from the website

Verify and update cell phone number

Verify and update email address

Change to "I want a printed newsletter" to receive a hard copy of The Drop

Work Information

Business/Organization

Occupation/Title

Work Phone

Toll Free Phone

Add work information

Emergency Contact Information

Contact Name

Relationship

Phone Number

Email Address

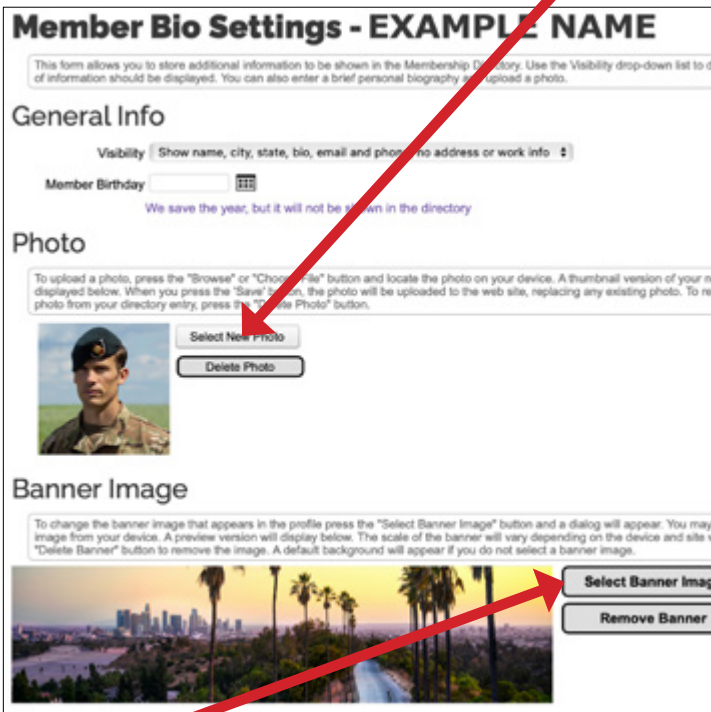
Add emergency contact information

7 Click on **Standard Member Directory**.



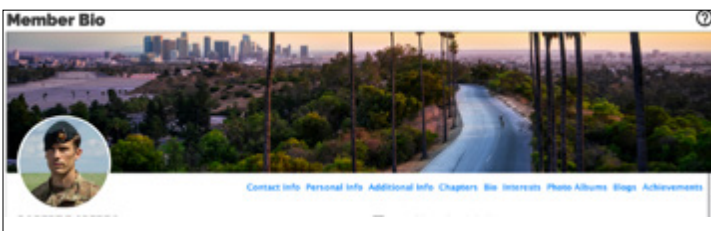
The settings in this panel allow you to store additional information to be shown in the Membership Directory and allow you to control the level of information that should be displayed.

9 **Photo:** Select and add a profile photo (past or present—your choice). This image will display in the Member Directory.



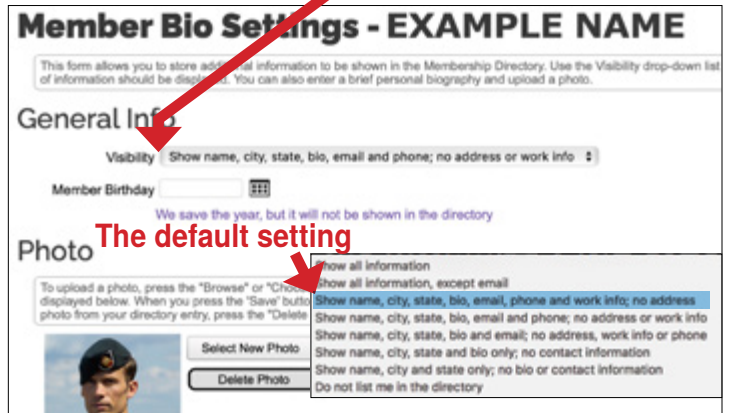
Banner Image: You may also select and add a banner image.

These images will display in your Member Bio that displays for viewers that find you by searching using the Standard Member Directory.



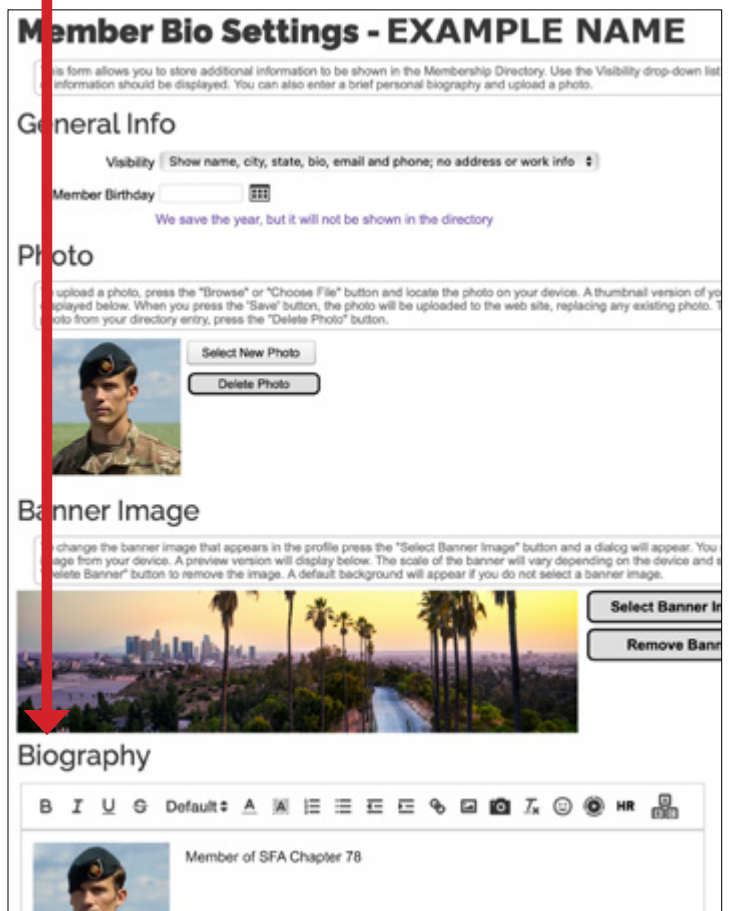
8 Under **General Info**, click on **Visibility**.

The default setting is pointed out below (highlighted in blue).



10 **Biography:** Write your biography (military story, assignments, awards, life after retiring, etc.) and perhaps add a photo you want to be remembered by.

Please do not skip this step—fellow members can learn more about your background AND this can be used by your spouse/chapter for "Taps" in *The Drop* magazine and your obituary by your family. You know your story best and how you would like to be remembered.



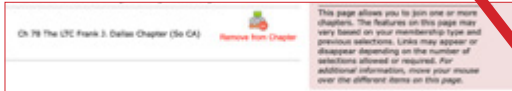
11 Additional Member Profile settings

User Name/Password:

Click to change your User Name or Password

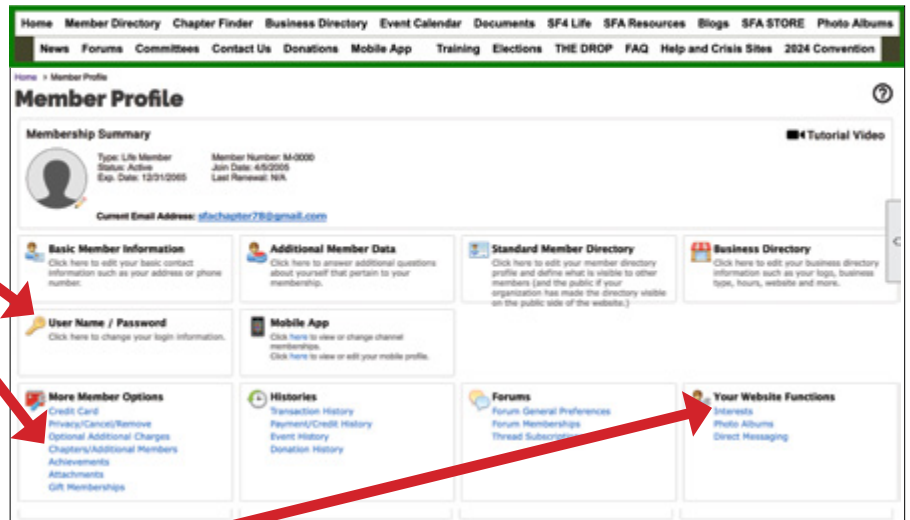
Chapters/Additional Members:

Click to change your Assigned Chapter.



After clicking to select this setting, the window pictured above will appear.

Click "Remove from Chapter." A "verify" button will display, then a list all the chapters by region will display. Select the Chapter you want, or you can click on "Chapter Finder" on the top menu to find the Chapter closest to you.



Interests:

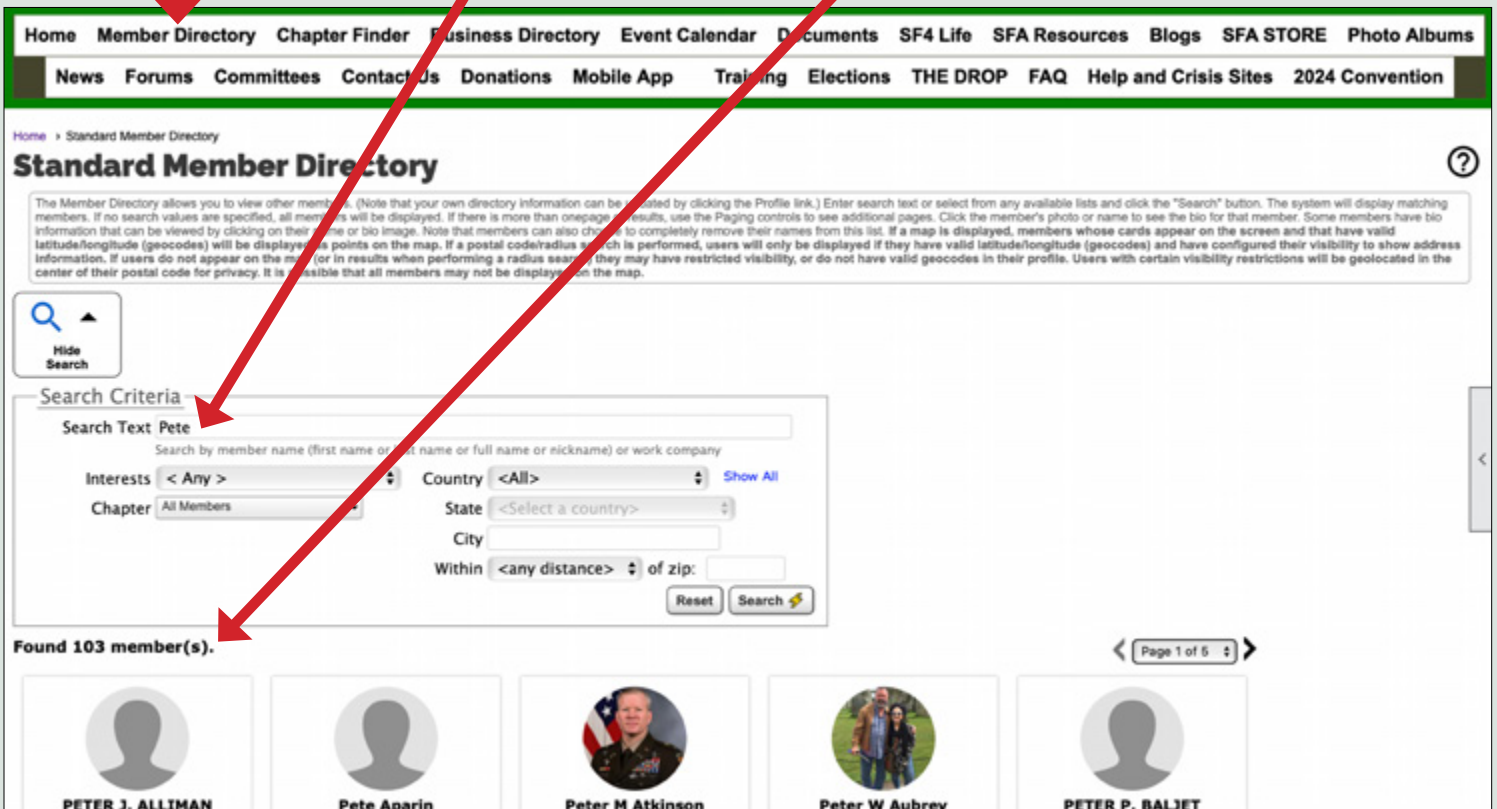
Click to add Interests. You'll be able to add SF Group Affiliation, MOS, Advanced Skills, whether you would like to mentor others, or need one, Chapter Officer (changes), and add Special Interests (hobbies like: motorcycles, fishing, sports, music, etc.). Be sure to click "Save" at the bottom after updating.

Using the Member Directory

1 Click on Member Directory

2 In "Search Text" enter the name you want to find.

3 The total number of members with that name will be displayed. Scroll through to find your person.

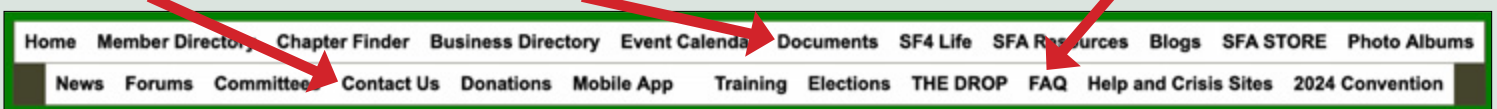


Getting Help

Contact us: National Leadership

Documents: Step-by-step assistance for Admins

FAQ: General Step-by-step assistance

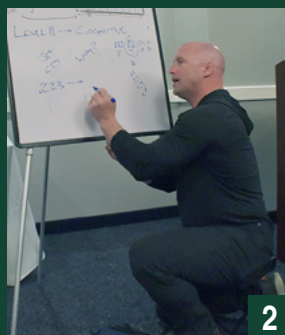


Guest Speaker, Dr. Brandon Orr

1 2 Guest speaker, Dr. Brandon Orr, spoke about the cognitive performance enhancement program he has been working on with the 7th SFG. Performance is measured using complex dynamic systems theory and dynamic cognition to improve performance capability and includes performance coaching and enhancement in speeded and dynamic cognition for advanced skills. **3** Dr. Orr's presentation resulted in many questions and lively discussions. **4** How Miller **5** Jim Lockhart **6** At left, Jim Cragg and James McLanahan. **7** Don Gonneville shared a story from his Vietnam War experience, involving picking up cash for the CIDG payroll and ending up spending a rainy night under a truck. **8** Left to right: American Veterans Assistance Group (AVAG) Chaplain Doreen Matsumoto, Bob Crebbs, and Mark Miller. Doreen, along with fellow AVAG member Mary Cruz, brought free goodies for chapter members to select from. **9** Jim Duffy and Gary Macnamara **10** James McLanahan presented to chapter members the plaque he designed for past president Greg Horton. He would later present it to Greg in appreciation for his service to the chapter. **11 12** Debra Holm shares with Art Dolick, unofficial chapter historian, a page from the April 22, 1970, *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, "The Fighting Heart of Dak Seang." **13** James Carter and Mark Miller **14** Sal Sanders **15** Taylor Walker and James McLanahan



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