



SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

VOLUME 16, ISSUE 5 • MAY 2025

MAJ (Ret.) Clyde J. Sincere, Jr.

1932-2025

Green Beret Original

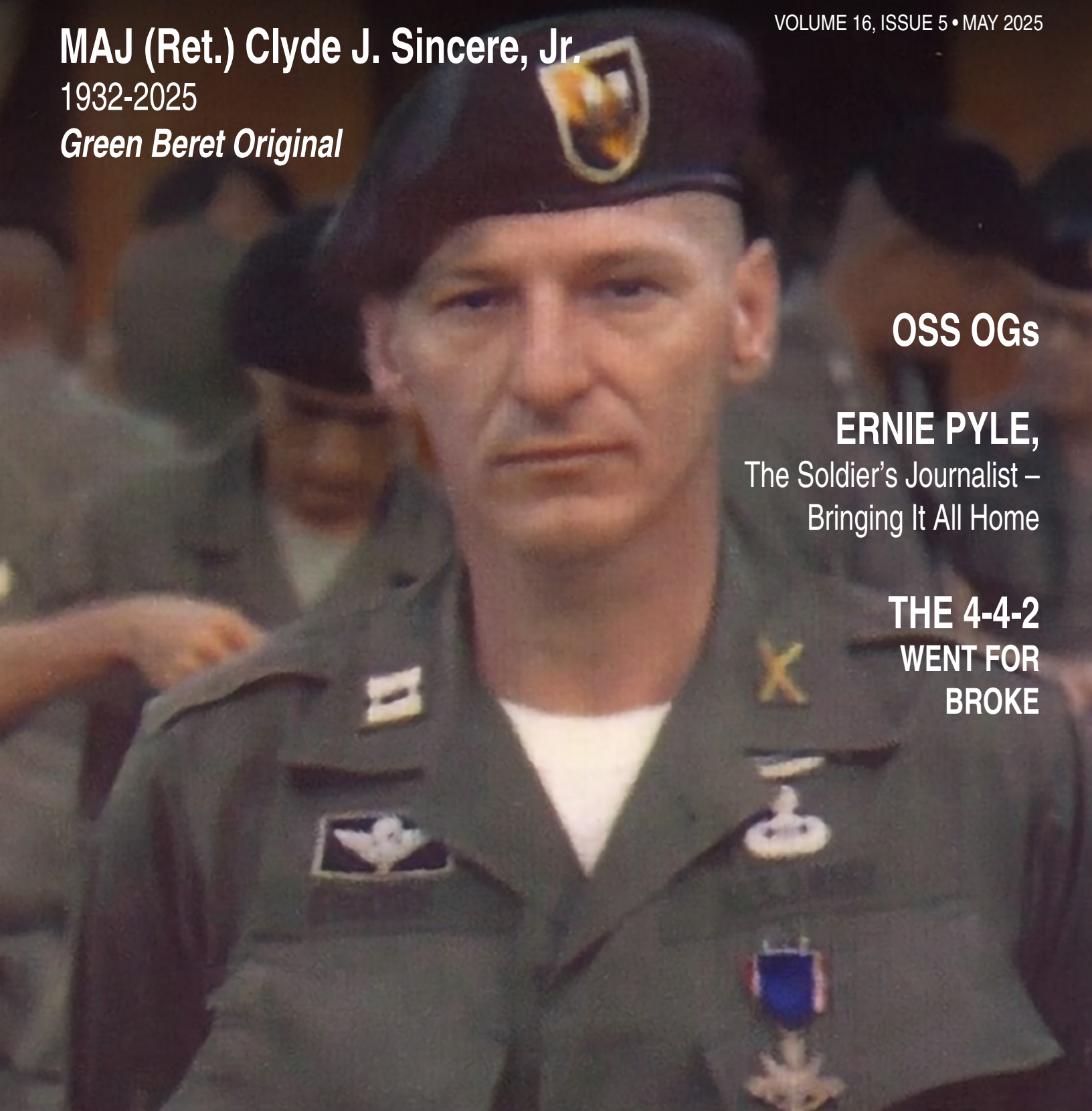
OSS OGs

ERNIE PYLE,

The Soldier's Journalist –
Bringing It All Home

THE 4-4-2

**WENT FOR
BROKE**





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FRONT COVER: In November 1966, while assigned to Company B, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), then Captain Clyde J. Sincere Jr. was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. He retired as a Major at the end of his 21-year career, enlisting in the U.S. Army at 17, first serving with airborne units before volunteering to become one of the original members of the newly formed U.S. Army Special Forces—earning his place among the first “Green Berets.” This issue honors MAJ Sincere, who passed away on March 17, 2025, on page 7. (Photo courtesy Ray Oden)

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The *Sentinel* is published monthly by Special Forces Association Chapter 78, Southern California — **art direction and design by Debra Holm, Dinwiddie Holm Graphics**. The views, opinions and articles printed in this issue do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Army or the United States Special Operations Command, the Special Forces Association, or Special Forces Association Chapter 78. Please address any comments to the editor at sfachapter78@gmail.com.



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7TH SF GROUP



10TH SF GROUP



19TH SF GROUP



20TH SF GROUP



8TH SF GROUP



11TH SF GROUP



12TH SF GROUP

From the Editor | May 2025



How Miller
Sentinel Editor

We start this busy *Sentinel* with a call from “Doc” Padgett for us to contribute to a follow-up survey on Agent Orange and its effects on us and our families, and an early “warning order” about SFACTION 2025, to be held alongside SOAR with a shared common Hospitality Room.

Then we go close to home in Southern California, covering the exploits of chapter member Jim Cragg during the Pacific Palisades fire, and the enormous pride he has

in what our U.S. Army does for people during disasters. He himself is contributing a very large effort to help as well, along with American Legion Post 283 (he is their most recent past president), along with many others. It started as a harrowing experience and is being replaced by a feeling of hope, which is what he is trying to accomplish, with more than half of the residents now saying they intend to stay and rebuild.

Despite the recent sad loss of his son Kevin, longtime Chapter Secretary Gary Macnamara stood up and was the guest speaker at the annual AVAG-sponsored Vietnam Veterans Day celebration at Brookhurst Community Center in Anaheim. Chapter President Aaron Brandenburg adds an inspiring tribute to Kevin.

Our cover photo is of a young Clyde Sincere. Debra Holm, with lots of help, pays tribute to one of the few remaining SF “Originals,” Clyde Sincere, who passed away on March 17, 2025. His lifetime of service, including combat heroism, a stint as SOA president, and continual mentorship, will be missed and long remembered.

Johann Hindert has written an enlightening book, *German Irregular Warfare*, about the noted contribution of the Germans to irregular warfare from our Revolutionary War, when the Hessian officer Johann Ewold wrote his authoritative and detailed analysis of the irregular warfare of the Americans, to the present. He tells of the influence of many German irregular warriors who later wrote about what they learned, including the oft-quoted Carl von Clausewitz and Otto Skorzeny, who led the raid to rescue Mussolini, and others.

What we know of the OSS is largely centered around the Jedburgh teams, usually three or so men who parachuted into enemy territory and helped organize, supply, and teach the Marquis. Many famous names came from them, such as Aaron Bank, who stood up the 10th SFG, and Jack Singlaub, who was a Chief SOG in Vietnam. But there were also the Operational Groups (OGs), who were significantly larger, typically 3 officers and around 100 enlisted soldiers who were able to provide an immediate punch and were to act as a cadre for a larger indigenous unit. In John Shaver III’s master’s thesis, *Office of the Strategic Services: Operational Groups in France During World War II, from July to October 1944*, he describes the OGs and gives accounts of six of the first teams deployed. Percy Red was the first, and its exploits are described in report form here. This document was brought to our attention by previous contributor Erik Brun, who wrote about the Viking Battalion.

I could not name one person in my generation who has not heard of war reporter Ernie Pyle and his hometown stories of men in combat in WWII. Our regular contributor, Marc Yablonka, tells what was so special about Ernie in a reprint from his 1995 *National Amvet Magazine* article.

Then, in “Go for Broke,” Marc tells of the most highly decorated WWII unit for its size and strength and the story behind it. The 442nd Regimental Combat Team was 6,000 men strong, almost entirely comprised of Japanese-American volunteers. They adopted as their motto a famous saying in Hawaii at the time: Go for Broke.

In our online version of the *Sentinel*, we present from our May 2021 issue “Cambodian Incursion, 1970 — Part One.” As we reach the 55th anniversary of the “Cambodian Incursion,” we are sharing with our now-wider audience an article centered on my own experience. Our A camp, A325 Duc Hue, joined with A326 Tra Cu in a joint mission across the border into the Communist sanctuaries in Cambodia.

The results of the mission were to eliminate the NVA and Viet Cong that were left in the area, along with the destruction or repurposing of many tons of weapons, ammunition, and supplies buried in the area. The trio of articles were about our local mission, the overall efforts of allied ground and air units, and the Cambodian exploits of SF and CIA legend Billie Waugh.

Finally, we have pictures from our March chapter meeting.

Please keep sending us your stories to share with your fellow Green Berets and others. ❖

How Miller
Sentinel Editor



SFA Chapter 78 Monthly Meeting

May 17, 2025

Breakfast – 0800 • Meeting – 0830

Courtyard by Marriott

5865 Katella Ave, Room A, Cypress, CA 90630

**Next scheduled chapter meeting
June 21**

2025 Meeting Schedule

July 19 • August 16 •

September 20 • October 18 • November 15

December (to be announced)



THE SOA FOUNDATION'S AGENT ORANGE LEGACY PROJECT

Seeks Your Participation in Phase Two Surveys

Following the 2024 gathering of information pertaining to Agent Orange exposure among Special Operations and Special Forces Vietnam veterans, it has been demonstrated that SOA and SF VN veterans' experience rates of cancer greater than the general US adult population. These conclusions were presented at the Special Operations Association Reunion (SOAR) and published on the SOA and SOA Foundation websites and the [January 2025 Sentinel](#). It was further determined that the rate of potential pass-through to SF and SOA veterans' children and grandchildren was essentially the same as other VN vets.

Phase Two of the Special Operations Association Foundation Agent Orange Legacy Project seeks to determine what illnesses have been sustained by our children and grandchildren, to what extent specific generations are involved, the nature of the illnesses, and other data. Once received and analyzed, the data will be presented at the next SOAR, forwarded to the Veterans Administration to bolster the case for compensation to families, published, and shared with our project's attorney. The information should be useful to clinicians treating the families of our exposed SF and SOA veterans.

As with the previous study, all identifying information received by SOAF and representatives and/or our attorney will be kept absolutely confidential.

If you responded to the first survey, thank you, and please respond to this one. Even if you missed the first survey, your response to the second will be valuable. The survey will take five to ten minutes of your time. If Agent Orange has affected you or yours, please complete and return the survey. The survey will close August 1st, 2025, to allow for the analysis of data gathered.

With thanks,
John E. Padgett, PA-C Emeritus, PhD
MAJ, US Special Forces (Ret), DMOR
Exec Director, Special Operations Assn Foundation

Scan the QR code or take the Survey at
<https://form.jotform.com/250724045588158>

Scan Here



For Survey #2

Attention SFA Members!



SFACON 2025

14-17 OCT 2025

LAS VEGAS, NV

SFACON 2025 will be held from Tuesday, 14 October to Friday, 17 October 2025 at the Orleans Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, NV. For the first time, SFACON will be held concurrently with the Special Operations Association Reunion (SOAR). The two associations will share a hospitality room, vendor area, symposiums, and events. This includes raffles and fundraising events, with all proceeds going to the Association hosting the fundraiser.

Visit <https://www.specialforcesassociation.org/sfacon-2025/> for details and for registration.

American Legion Post 283 Becomes Ground Zero for Recovery After Palisades Fire



Palisades Volunteers: Ronald Reagan American Legion Post members in blue caps with the National Guard, LAPD, FEMA, etc. (Photo courtesy of Jim Cragg)



Jim plants a large flag by the National Guard “cleared” sign at his home. (Photo courtesy Rick Carter)

By How Miller

LTC (R) Jim Cragg is a retired Green Beret of the GWOT variety, serving since 1994. The first time I met him, at a Special Forces Association (SFA) Chapter 78 monthly meeting, he was everything you would expect, but that was not what was so remarkable. He was simultaneously the president of his Ronald Reagan Memorial American Legion Post 218, one of the largest and most active posts in the country. He would announce various exciting activities they were hosting and extended us all an invite. He also was the owner/operator of SOTECH, which designed and supplied improved combat devices to SOCOM and others.

At a Chapter 78 meeting, Jim showcased SOTECH's one-handed tourniquets, now essential in battle. He then teamed up with long-time friend Dana Vilander of VCT Training to provide “Stop the Bleed” training (<https://www.stopthebleed.org/training/>), offering hands-on experience with cutting-edge bleeding control methods. The advancements were impressive, even for us old 91B medics.

He was obviously a very busy and industrious individual. So when the Pacific Palisades fire was raging around his home and the Post, he did what he always does. He put his logic and his big heart to work to try to save his home and secure his family's safety, along with anyone else he could help. Fortunately, he had in his garage the only sample of an item he was toying with producing at his company.



At top, two photos illustrate the destruction in Jim's neighborhood; bottom left, a burned-out school across the street from the American Legion Post's building; bottom right, the destruction made its way all the way to the ocean along Pacific Coast Highway.. (Photo courtesy of How Miller and Rick Carter)

He had a few everyday garden oscillating sprinklers and some spray-hose-applied fire retardant. He connected the sprinklers to his garden hoses and threw them on the roof. He started the water and went on the roof to position them for the best results. Then he sprayed the outside of the house with fire retardant, paying attention to the undersides of the eaves, which is a common fire entry point.

After a while, he looked up again to check and noticed that he was becoming surrounded by the fire, so he left in his vehicle. He got as far as he could and left his car, but while on foot he decided he did not want to leave his car to burn. A neighbor showed up and started strongly advising people to turn around. One of the post members had begun directing people the wrong way down a one-way street, which worked superbly.

Meanwhile, Jim was growing increasingly concerned about his daughter Charley's safety. He managed to reach his wife, Susie, by phone, and she told him Charley was okay. A classmate's mother had picked up Charley and taken her to safety.

Now that he was able to calm down a bit, he went to the American Legion Post. Eventually Jim and a friend decided to try to go back to the house. When they arrived, there was no longer any water coming from the hoses. So his friend started passing buckets of water from the pool up to Jim on the roof. They were able to soak it well, and then they left.

The fires raged through another day, burning down Charley's school and many other homes and buildings. The winds complicated the situation by reaching up to 100 miles per hour, which is enough to blow a burning piece of wood straight through double-paned windows and start a fire from the inside.

When he ultimately returned, he found his home was saved, along with several around it. Some people claimed his efforts may have saved as many as twelve homes "downstream" from his.

When he went back to his American Legion Post, he noticed that the post was in fine shape, while the school across the street was gone, the church on the other side was gone, and several other nearby structures were lost. Within the next few days he saw that FEMA had set up a tent at a burned-up lot nearby. He approached them and said, "There's no sense in you being out here with no food, water, restrooms, phones, and electricity. Why don't you come to the post and set up shop there?" They appreciatively agreed, and now several other organizations have joined them, and it is now the central location for finding services.

There are setups for FEMA, the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACE), the National Guard, the Small Business Administration (making business, individual, and disaster loans), Habitat for Humanity, Union contractors, mental health counselors, and World Central Kitchen, among others.

In March the post also hosted a Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) event put on by the Emergency Network Los Angeles (ENLA). With participating agencies such as the American Red Cross, the Small Business Administration, the Salvation Army, World Central Kitchen, the event served as a one-stop hub to access assistance and support.

The local TV Channel NBC4 got wind of what was going on and interviewed him to help get the word out. Jim has even become something of an internet celebrity. A lot of dignitaries have shown up, and Jim talks with all he can. It's a lot of work sometimes. Here is a link to one TV interview: <https://youtu.be/dMVPkIfBFU?si=Wq-2ZHVjJrcVOEzM>.

The overriding message he has to share, along with the need to be prepared, is the tremendously dedicated work being done by our U.S. Army. The Corp of Engineers deals with getting the area back up and running. First, they deal with issues of toxicity, mostly metals and some other household goods. He showed us an electric vehicle that had been flipped over onto its roof so the big battery could be removed. The metals can be found soaked down in the top 6 inches of soil.

While the National Guard is securing the area, the Corp inspects all the sites, creates an action plan, marks trees for removal, and scrapes off those top 6 inches of soil and transports and processes it until it reaches its resting place at the Central Valley Kettleman Hills Facility.

He points out that the Corp provides their services free of charge and are the community's anchor in its time of need. Along with the diligent and polite protection offered by the Army National Guard, they are something each citizen should be proud of.

Jim's number one mission is to instill hope in his neighbors. According to recent figures the percentage of people that intend to stay has risen from 29% to over 60%, which brings a big smile to his face while keeps hoping to improve that.

Besides the Post offering a location for the steady stream of people showing up for services, it helps out wherever it can, providing needed transportation and food. And as a morale boost, they go around and raise flags at the lot of each veteran's home in the affected area. When we were at his house, he replaced the small flag that was displayed with a larger version, right beside his ACE sign declaring his site is toxicity free.

Jim recently retired from the US Army, after a career filled with innovation. He spent the last ten years with 10th SFG (A) and a lot of time with JSOC and SOCOM. He still is serving in a job at the Pentagon where Jim says he works on "visionary things."

Rick Carter and I met Jim at SOTECH on the way to the Palisades so he could pick up some useful items for the post. It was filled with the typical items one associates with making top-quality items, such as specialized backpacks, medical kits, and other kit bags. He has a laser cutter so he can achieve precise and smooth edges that are cauterized to prevent fraying. He also has a wall filled with Hollywood prop mockups of the weapons that he uses to fit the holsters and kit bags.

His office was a big surprise. He is an avid collector and has a chronological display of armor and weapons dating all the way back to the Greeks. That, along with his huge collection of model tanks, cavalry, and infantrymen, is quite impressive.



Jim Cragg invited FEMA and other groups offering assistance to fire victims to set up shop in the American Legions Post. The buildings surrounding the hall had been destroyed, and a tent had been set up in a burned out lot for them to operate. The Post is now a community hub for those seeking help. (Photos courtesy Rick Carter and How Miller)



Jim's collection of model tanks, cavalry, and infantrymen on display in is SOTECH office (Photo courtesy Rick Carter)

A final note that Jim would appreciate being mentioned. When he began his four-year stint as Post Commander he instituted many changes. One of which was to push forward the idea that organizations like TAL, VVA, VFW, and SFA can accomplish more by working together. It also builds more camaraderie between veterans. ❖

SFA Chapter 78's Gary Macnamara Guest Speaker at Vietnam Veterans Day Event

SFA Chapter 78's long-time secretary Gary Macnamara was the guest speaker at the American Veterans Assistance Group (AVAG) Vietnam Veterans Day luncheon. AVAG hosted their annual Vietnam Veterans Day celebration on March 28, 2025, at the Brookhurst Community Center in Anaheim, CA.

Congressman Rep. Lou Correa was present to thank all the veterans for their service and presented Vietnam veterans with challenge coins, certificates of recognition, and a Vietnam veteran pins.

Several Chapter 78 members were in attendance to hear Gary speak. If you weren't able to attend you can hear Gary's story on our YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/lgFjFd5zSiY?si=wWuurA3hbU0NvS7Z> ❖



LTC (Ret.) Gary L. Macnamara



Lani and Art Dolick



Mark Miller and Congressman Lou Correa



Richard Simonian and Mary Cruz

From SFA Chapter 78 President Aaron Brandenburg:

As many of you know from recent meetings, Gary Macnamara son, Kevin G. Macnamara, tragically passed away on February 21, 2025. His son truly embodied the Special Forces ethos throughout. Despite being paralyzed in an accident at a young age, he refused to let adversity define him. He went on to graduate from college and later from law school, overcoming countless challenges. His resilience and determination serve as an inspiring testament to his strength of character.

A funeral service for Kevin was held on March 25 at Saint Pius V Church in Buena Park, CA. Please join me in offering your support to Gary, his son, and the entire Macnamara family during this difficult time. Gary has expressed his heartfelt gratitude for the chapter's support thus far.

DOL.

In Memory of Major Clyde Joseph Sincere, Jr.

September 11, 1932 – March 17, 2025



By Debra Holm

On March 17, 2025, the Special Forces community lost one of its earliest and most dedicated members. Major (Ret.) Clyde Joseph Sincere, Jr., 92, passed away peacefully in Arizona, leaving behind a remarkable legacy of service, sacrifice, and brotherhood.

A Life of Service

Born in Coleman, Wisconsin, on September 11, 1932, Clyde was the eldest of 13 children. He enlisted in the U.S. Army at 17, beginning a 21-year military career, first serving with airborne units before volunteering to become one of the original members of the newly formed U.S. Army Special Forces—earning his place among the first “Green Berets.” Rising through the ranks from enlisted man to officer, he retired as a Major in 1971.

Major Sincere served in Special Forces units across Europe and Asia, including multiple tours in Vietnam with the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam – Studies and Observation Group (MACV-SOG).

His valor earned him numerous commendations, including two Purple Hearts and the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism during operations in November 1966. (Read the full citation for the Distinguished Service Cross at <https://valor.militarytimes.com/recipient/recipient-5316/>)

Continuing the Mission

After retiring from the Army, Clyde continued to serve, working from 1979 to 1996 with the Vinnell Corporation. While employed at Vinnell, he worked in Saudi Arabia, where he was involved in training the Saudi Arabian National Guard, and also spent time on assignments in California and Virginia.

Clyde joined the Special Forces Decade Association (now the Special Forces Association) after he retired in 1996. As a member of SFA Chapter 11, he played a role in the execution of the “1990 Annual SFA Convention,” which ran concurrently with the “50th Anniversary of U.S. Army Airborne” held in Washington, D.C. He served as chapter secretary from 1998 to 2004.

He was also a Life Member and President Emeritus of the Special Operations Association (SOA). Since the SOA’s establishment in 1977, he served for 37 consecutive years in key leadership, advocacy, and outreach positions within the SOA.

In 2018, he was inducted as a Distinguished Member of the Special Forces Regiment—an honor reflecting a lifetime of service, sacrifice, and leadership. (Read the full citation for his DMOR honor at https://www.swcs.mil/Portals/111/SINCERE_04MAY2018.pdf).

A Family Man

He is survived by Mary L. Sincere, his beloved wife of over 70 years; sons Jim, John, and Andrew; daughters-in-law Barbara, Vera, Su, and Lisa; 10 grandchildren; and 13 great-grandchildren. He is also survived by siblings Carl, Camille, Terry, Miriam, and Maureen. He was preceded in death by his parents, son Thomas, and siblings Mary Aline, Dick, Bill, Carol, Jim, Christine, and Maria.

Celebration of Life

A Celebration of Life was held on Monday, April 28, 2025, at Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church in Green Valley, Arizona. Burial at Arlington National Cemetery is pending. In lieu of flowers, donations in Clyde’s memory may be made to the Special Operations Association Scholarship Fund.

Remembering Clyde:

Tributes from Friends and Fellow Warriors

John Stryker Meyer: “I served with Clyde at FOB 1 Phu Bai. He was an officer who cared for his men.”

John “Doc” Padgett: “I did not have the good fortune to serve with Clyde Sincere, so I cannot add to the accounts of his courage and martial skills, though legendary. Instead, I got to know Clyde as a fellow member of the Special Operations Association (SOA).

“When I first learned of the SOA and joined up, Clyde was already an integral and formative member. Clyde had kept his finger on the pulse of the organization, even when not an officer or director of the SOA. He proudly accepted the title of “SOA President Emeritus” and was always recognized at the reunion’s closing banquet. Always ready to give advice or the benefit of experience, he was a trusted asset. One of the roles in which I remember Clyde the best was his position as “door guard” and dispenser of reunion gifts at the SOA reunion (SOAR) every year. Clyde kept an eye on the comings and goings of the attendees, as well as being certain that no one who was registered missed their gift. But woe to the miscreant who tried to snag more than he was due!

Bonnie Cooper: “Clyde was the 4th President of the SOA and shepherded it through its early growth and getting itself organized. He and a few of his friends were known as “the Utah Mafia” for their dominance with the SOA leadership.

“He attended every SOAR from number 1, in 1977, until 2022, when he had to cancel due to his wife Mary’s failing health. Clyde and I spoke just a few weeks before his death, and he never gave up the hope that he would attend at least one more SOAR. We talked about him making it next year for the 50th SOAR.

“He was a great communicator and was always calling old friends. He often lost his address book and would call me for help getting a needed phone number. He was nearly done writing his book on a Mike Force Blackjack mission he ran in November 1966. Clyde was a mentor at heart, and I’m so honored that I got to know him.”

Ray Oden: “MAJ (R) Sincere’s accomplishments and contributions to the Regiment rank him well above his peers and constituents. The way he lives can be summed up by his own words: *“As it regards working together” in SF and SOG—yes, and that is what it is all about – Fraternity/Brotherhood, etc.”* ♦



Clyde Sincere after a mission. (Photo courtesy Ray Oden)



Major (Ret.) Clyde Sincere and his wife, Mary, at SOAR XLI in 2017. (Photo courtesy Lonny Holmes)



Left, Major (Ret.) Clyde J. Sincere, Jr., center, LTC Joseph M. Sincere, and, at right, Joe’s father, LTC (Ret.) Clyde J. Sincere, III, on the occasion of Joseph M. Sincere, grandson of Maj. (Ret.) Clyde J. Sincere Jr., promotion to LTC on December 3, 2018 at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. (Photo courtesy Lonny Holmes)



Clyde Sincere and MG Vic Hugo at the OSS Congressional Gold Medal Ceremony, U.S. Congress, 2018. (Photo courtesy Ray Oden)



Richard Simonian and Major (Ret.) Clyde Sincere at the 10th Special Forces Group reunion celebration in 2017. Both served in 10th Group together in Bad Tölz, Germany in 1953-54. Richard was an E-4 and Clyde was an E-7. (Photo courtesy Lonny Holmes)



Major (Ret.) Clyde Sincere and Col. Roger Donlon, MOH—the crossed canes of two SF Giants at the 2017 SOAR—proving that two 85-year-old warriors still can have fun! (Photo courtesy Lonny Holmes)

Below: In 1959, Clyde was hand-picked with 26 SF Troopers from the 1st SFG (A) to travel TDY to the Philippines to participate as extras in the movie “Merrill’s Marauders” with Jeff Chandler and the film’s Military Advisor Lieutenant General Sam Wilson, (a veteran Marauder in WWII who was then a Lieutenant Colonel assigned as the XO of the 6th SFG (A). Clyde may be the second guy kneeling from the right. (Photo courtesy Ray Ogden)



OSS OGs



From left: Odd A. Anderson (Christopher Mission 3/4 Sept. 44 and RYPE), Ka O.C. Johansen (Percy Red July 31/ Aug. 1 1944 and RYPE), Leif Eide (Percy Red and China offensive operational to Hanoi French Indochina), Arne Herstad (Percy Red-China offensive). (Photo courtesy Rolf Herstad)

By JOHN W. SHAVER III, MAJ, USA

B.A., Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, Tennessee, 1979, *Office of the Strategic Services: Operational Groups in France During World War II, July-October 1944*; Chapter 3, pages 27–39, Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, Tennessee, 1979. Approved for public release; Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1993; distribution is unlimited.

Editors Note: From his thesis on the OSS, submitted for his Masters of Military Arts, Maj. John W Shaver III describes the formation of the OGs, where they were used, etc. The actions of 6 of the approximately 160 deployed OG teams are described in a report fashion, and we present the action of the first OG to deploy, team Percy Red. Read the full report at <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA273051.pdf>.

The American OSS and British SAE sent mostly three man “Jedberg” teams that notables such as Aaron Banks (who later stood up the 10th SF Group), Jack Singlaub (who was later a Chief SOG), and [others] served on or led. In contrast the Operational Groups (OGs) were typically 2-3 officers and 30 enlisted personnel and were designed to be the cadre of the Maquis teams. Both types of teams parachuted behind enemy lines in France and elsewhere, with the OGs obviously providing more additional muscle to the Maquis resistance movement from the get go. The two types of teams would sometimes work together.

CHAPTER THREE OPERATIONAL GROUP— PERCY RED

Background

Operational Group “Percy Red,” led by Captain William F. Larson and comprised of 18 men, was the first OG inserted by air drops into France on 31 July and 1 and 5 August 1944 in the Haute Vienne area in central France (see figure 1).¹ Its mission was to act as a highly-trained military cadre for the Marquis and assist them in the following tasks:

- repelling enemy attacks,
- organizing and carrying out attacks—especially on the Montauban/Brive/Limoges/Vierzon railway lines,
- organizing and carrying out attacks on the wolfram mines located at Puy-les-Vignes, near St. Leonard-de-Noblat and Vaulry near Cieux, and
- providing additional wire/telephone (W/T) communications between EMFFI and the Marquis.²

The Marquis in the areas was led by “Hamlet,” an organizer sent by SFHQ.³ There were approximately 5,000 Frenchmen under the control of the Marquis, some with military experience and some with many months of experience employing guerrilla tactics against the Germans. The Marquis were well-armed as a result of a large amount of weapons and ammunition dropped by the Allies since D-day.⁴

Prior to “Percy Red’s” arrival, the Marquis had carried out successful attacks against railroads, roads, telecommunications and had destroyed two bridges in the area. This prompted the Germans to seek out and attack the Marquis.⁵

The area was under the control of “Ellipse,” the code name for the French military delegate of the region. “Hamlet” was believed to be in contact with an SAS group in the vicinity, as well as two Jedburgh teams, “Hugh” and “Hamish.”⁶ The Jedburghs were assisting the Marquis in organizing their resistance and it was probable that the OGs would make contact with them.⁷

The OGs had one W/T set for each deploying section. They were instructed to use the W/T set from “Hamlet,” while in the Marquis area. If the group was on the move, then they would use their own W/T set and if they broke up, they were to use both W/T’s to contact SFHQ.⁸

Mission

Four planes took off for the Haute Vienne area in France on a beautiful moonlit night 31 July 1944. Only one plane found the drop zone, while the remaining planes

had to drop their personnel later (two planes the next night and one plane on 5 August). First Lieutenant Reider J. Grunseth was in the first plane to drop its load and his group was met on the ground by a reception committee organized by “Hamlet.”⁹

The air drop did not go very smoothly, with five personnel scattered 500 yards or further away from the drop zone. It took the group four hours to assemble, because of the precautions they took in answering signals. There was a garrison of 200 Germans about ten miles away and they were not sure whether or not the Germans were aware of the drop.¹⁰

The Marquis took the OGs to a farm for rest and to plan for their first mission. The terrain was rolling and wooded, ideal conditions for Marquis operations. The Marquis was very helpful to the group by supplying intelligence, transportation and assisting them in executing their missions.¹¹ The group was sent to block a national highway and railways and to destroy a wolfram mine near St. Leonard de Noblat. They were to harass the Germans at every opportunity, and with assistance from the Marquis, hinder the enemy’s advance with demolition or sabotage.¹²

Lieutenant Grunseth’s group remained at the farm house over the next several days and conducted reconnaissance of the area, while awaiting the arrival of the remaining plane loads, when the entire group of 18 men assembled, they moved to a new location between Sussac and La Crousillet.¹³

At Sussac they established their headquarters. The Marquis conducted many of their activities in this area. While here, Captain Larson received word that the Germans were going to attempt to open the railway with an armored train. The Marquis had kept it closed most of the time, south of Limoges.¹⁴ The group found the train the next morning and followed it, waiting for the proper time and place to attack. They planted demolitions ahead of it when it stopped at St. Germaine. The train traveled at about four or five miles an hour with 50 German soldiers on board and one of these positioned in front as a lookout to prevent sabotage. The lookout spotted some electric wires lying across the tracks where the demolitions had been planted and the train halted.¹⁵

Meanwhile, the OGs, who had about 40 men comprised of Marquis and several SAS men who had just joined the group, established an ambush along a wooded area adjacent to the tracks and spent the whole night waiting for the train. It was around 8:00 a.m. when the train stopped. The Germans placed sentries around the area. One sentry had the misfortune to discover one of the SAS men. A Marquis man stopped the SAS man from shooting the German, because the group agreed not to initiate the ambush until the demolitions exploded. This allowed the German to warn his comrades. The group returned fire after the Germans began firing their machine guns. The German fire was inaccurate because they could not get a fix on the ambush locations. All at once the Germans were startled when four OG personnel stood up and fired their Bren guns, thus distracting the Germans.¹⁶

The group blew up the track as they withdrew, yet the train was about ten meters away from the explosion and was not damaged. The group lost two SAS men captured and their leader, Captain Larson, killed by rifle fire. The Germans returned to Limoges.¹⁷

The captured SAS men when questioned by the Germans, informed them there were American and French troops in the area. According to First Lieutenant Grunseth, the group received information after the ambush that approximately 2000 Germans were retreating from Limoges.¹⁸

The Marquis were not equipped sufficiently to stop the German withdrawal. The OGs went to St. Leonard to blow a bridge the Germans would have to cross. En route, the group spotted about 200 Germans guarding a wolfram mine just outside of St. Leonard. Fortunately, the bridge was located inside the city and was guarded by French civilians.¹⁹

The OGs and Jedburgh team “Lee,” which had joined the group, arranged for the French guards and their families to depart the town.²⁰ Since there were no Germans in the town, the group moved in and began placing demolitions on the bridge.²¹

The bridge was constructed with railway ties, which made it extremely difficult to place the demolitions on it. The job took about an hour and a half and they were not disturbed by any German patrols from the garrison located about a mile away. The bridge was blown on 13 August with no casualties to the French occupants. The Marquis delayed the withdrawal of the 2000 Germans blocking the road out of Limoges, when they received word about the bridge in St. Leonard.²²

The group departed St. Leonard after the demolition. Then a group of 200 Germans from the garrison near St. Leonard moved into the town and warned the civilians they would burn the whole town if the bridge were blown again.²³

The OGs began to plan how they would take the German garrison at Limoges. They coordinated for, and received confirmation they would receive air support for their attack against the garrison. Twenty-four



One of the Norwegian OGs in Scotland. (Photo courtesy Rolf Herstad)



The “Playmate” was the plane that the first five men on Percy Red jumped from on the first night July 31/Aug 1, 1944. Playmate, S# 42-63980, was one of the oldest b-24s in Carpetbagger operations. (Photo courtesy Ben Parnell via Rolf Herstad)

hours prior to the attack, the German general at Limoges wanted to discuss terms of a surrender for his forces, while the Allies were discussing terms, the German garrison received orders to withdraw. When the general returned to the garrison, he was arrested by the Gestapo and fighting broke out among the German defenders. Later, when the firing had stopped, the resistance group entered the town and met with German Captain Stoll, who explained what happened inside the garrison. The general had issued orders to surrender when he was arrested and taken away by the Gestapo in a large convoy. Captain Stoll stated he remained to carry out the general's orders.²⁴

The German convoy had escaped by a road left unguarded. The OGs feared that the remaining Germans in Limoges might attempt another breakout, so they destroyed the national highway about 35

kilometers south of the city. The group, with assistance from the local population, spent the next three days building an anti-tank ditch across the highway. They mined the surrounding terrain, cut down its trees and booby-trapped them with mines. The side roads were booby-trapped and a railroad bridge on a separate road was destroyed to block passage. This also prevented reinforcements coming from the south to assist the Germans at Limoges.²⁵

After completion of this work, “Hamlet” and the OGs arrived at Limoges and arrived in time to celebrate the town's Liberation. The Germans had departed north for LeBlanc. Upon learning this, the OGs determined they should go west to Chazelle and hinder the Germans trying to escape northeast from Bordeaux. During this action, the Germans recaptured Chateauroux, east of LeBlanc, from the Marquis.²⁶



Arne I. Herstad, taken in May of 1944, two weeks before transfer to the operational center Harrington from Scotland—approximately a week before D-day. (Photo courtesy Rolf Herstad)

The OGs found the Marquis at Chazelle bitter, yet they were still welcomed on their arrival. The Marquis had never received any supplies, which accounted for why they felt the way they did. What supplies they had were obtained through containers dropped erroneously in their area. The group stayed there for two days attempting to locate the Germans.

The intelligence from the Marquis was inaccurate, and every lead led to a dead end.²⁷

On 27 August the group moved west to a new area, La Rochefoucauld, where the Marquis provided better intelligence. It appeared the Germans were holding Angoulême, southwest of La Rochefoucauld, as the key pivot for all troops leaving the Bordeaux area and southwest France in general, once the information was confirmed, team “Lee,” SAS and OG “Percy Red” decided to set their own ambushes along national highway 10. Additionally, the group requested bombardment along this road from Angoulême to Ruffec. The group observed a large number of Germans, including horse-drawn artillery. However, the surrounding terrain was too flat to allow an attack on the Germans. Therefore, the group went further south and found better terrain along the highway to conduct operations, while waiting, many trucks passed by marked with the “Red Cross.”²⁸

On 31 August the group split in two with the OGs and Captain Charles E. Brown III, leader of team “Lee” establishing their own ambush at 2100 hours along national highway 10 below the first crossroads south of La Chignolle. The group waited patiently until a ten-truck troop convoy with troops packed like sardines in the back came along. They fired upon the entire convoy. In the confusion, unknown to the OGs, a group of Germans, about 500 meters away with machine guns, opened fire on the ambush site. The group had to withdraw immediately, but surprisingly they took no casualties.²⁹

The group decided to pursue the Germans toward LeBlanc, arriving 3 September. The Germans were strong in the area and a small group occupied a nearby chateau. The OGs attacked the chateau and found eight Germans with a machine gun. They killed two and captured the other six, all wounded (two later died). The Germans had not posted any guards, making it fairly easy for them to be captured.³⁰

After this incident, the OGs received information that 300 German trucks would be moving on the national highway. They decided to try another ambush. They conducted reconnaissance of the area and found a good site in the woods and awaited the arrival of the convoy. However, the group was forced to withdraw from their positions, when about two companies of Germans searched through the woods on both sides of the road prior to the convoy passing. The group returned to LeBlanc and began preparations for their next mission.³¹

The next day the men located a small German garrison in a nearby town. They attempted to coordinate an attack with the local Marquis. Prior to the attack, an American plane flew overhead, and the group signaled him to strafe the Germans. The Germans returned fire, knocking out the right engine, and the plane crashed. The group was between the plane crash and the Germans. A small group of Germans crossed an open field in the direction of the crash. The OGs set up firing positions with a Bren gun and small arms. All the Germans were killed or wounded; however, there were more Germans in the vicinity and they were much closer to the crash site. The Germans could move under cover, while the OGs and their party had to approach across a relatively open field. Reluctantly, the group withdrew to the east about five miles.³²

On 6 September, the group left LeBlanc where the OG “Percy Red” team linked up with OG “Patrick,” commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Obolensky at the Chateau de Verneuil in the Forêt de Lancosne, twelve kilometers southeast of Mézières. OG “Patrick” was working on the highway, so OG “Percy Red” joined them and worked alternate (ambush) shifts. OG “Percy Red” received orders from London to continue working with LTC Obolensky, so “Hamlet” departed for London.³³

During the entire operation, both OG teams had lost a lot of weight and their food was not enough to sustain them. The group was exhausted and LTC Obolensky told them to rest when “Percy Red” received orders to return to England. The group went to LeBlanc where they caught a C-47 back to London on the morning of 10 September.³⁴ ❖

Endnotes

1. The members of Group Percy Red were as follows: Captain William F. Larson, Inf., code name “*Leander*,” (the leader, killed in action 11 August 1944 by a grenade), Captain (then 1st Lieutenant) Reider J. Grunseth, Inf., code name “*Gerbert*” (2nd in command, slightly injured in action on 1 September 1944 suffering a dislocated left shoulder during a withdrawal from German forces), S/Sgt John Halvorsen, S/Sgt Knut Joa, T/3 Fred Johnson, Col Olaf Aanonsen, Cpl Kai O. C. Johanson (slightly injured in action on 2 August 1944 during parachute drop, when he suffered a severe knee sprain in his right leg, incapacitated for three days and limped for about a week and a half), Cpl Karl Larsen, T/5 Sverre Aanonsen, T/5 Olav Bide, T/5 Arne Herstad, T/5 Louis D. Brie, T/5 Marinus D. Myrland,

second W/T operator, code name “Mateo,” T/5 Alk Paulson, T/5 Oddberg Stiansen, T/5 Otto Twingley, Pfc Delphis Bonin (slightly injured in action on 7 August 1944 suffering a broken left shoulder when a car in which he was traveling turned over; and a broken right wrist on 14 August when he jumped from a truck because of a German ambush; he received aid only from the medical sergeant of the group), PVT Leif Eide, first W/T operator, code name “Edgar.” John Mendelsohn, *Covert Warfare: Other OSS Teams, Volume 5, 18 Volumes*, (New York: Garland Publishing Company, 1988), (Volume 4-A), Jan.-Jun. 44, p. 22; *OSS/London: Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch War Diaries* (Microfilm, Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1985), Volume 13, Jan.-Dec. 44, Casualties, p. 3, 17-19.

2. Mendelsohn, Volume 4-A, Jan.-Jun. 44, p. 23-24.

3. Hamlet was the code name for an SOE agent and organizer of the “Salesman” circuit (operation). Hamlet’s targets were the following:

Railways:

Lines at Vierzon

Bourges–St. Florentin

St. Florentin–Issoudun

Limoges—Le Palais

Saillat Chassenon—Rochechouart

Perigueux—Thivier

Perigueux—Mussidan

Lines converging on Bergerao Pierre Vuffiere—Uzerche

Roads

Perigueux: Route N 21 Perigueux – Beynac

Route N 139 Perigueux – Angouleme – Limoges

Limoges: Route N 141 Angouleme – Limoges/Aubusson

Route N 20 Chateauroux – Limoges – Uzerche

Telephones: Lines converging on Limoges and Chateauroux

Power lines at Eguzon

OSS/London, Volume 3, Apr.–Jun. 1944, Western Europe, p. 249-250.

4. Mendelsohn, Volume 4-A, Jan.-Jun. 44, p. 23.

5. Ibid.

6. Team “Hugh” was the first Jedburgh team dispatched to France from England. Its primary mission was to assist SAS in the establishment of their base, which would be reinforced by additional SAS troops from which raids were to be carried out on the German lines of communications. Mendelsohn, Volume 4, Apr.-Jun. 44, Jedburghs, p. 17-18. Jedburgh team “Hamish” was the fifth team dispatched to France. Its primary mission was to assist team “Hugh” in the organization of new resistance elements and the establishment of an SAS base. The team was to focus on forming separate groups of about 100-200 men. Mendelsohn, Volume 4, p. 46-47

7. Mendelsohn, Volume 4-A, p. 24.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., p. 26.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid., p. 27

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid

14. Ibid, p. 27-28

15. Ibid., p. 28

16. Ibid., p. 28-29

17. Ibid., official records state Captain Larson was killed by a grenade explosion, captain Grunseth reported this as the cause of death. However, Leif Eide was with Captain Larson in the ambush site and saw him killed by rifle fire. OSS/London, Volume 13 Jan.-Dec. 44, Casualties, p. 3; Record Group 226, G3 Reports 10-111 and HA, Entry 99, Folder 56, Box #13, G-3 Periodic Report No. 72; and Leif Eide, interview with the author, 12 March 1993.

18. Mendelsohn, Vol. 4-A, p. 29; and Vol. 4 Jedburghs, p. 692.

19. Mendelsohn, Vol. 4-A, p. 29

20. Jedburgh team “Lee” was the 23rd team dispatched along with an SAS group to France. Its mission was to work with “Salesman” in the Haute Vienne region. Mendelsohn, Volume 4, Jedburghs, p. 683.

21. Mendelsohn, Vol. 4-A, p. 30 and Vol. 4, p. 692-693

22. Ibid., and Record Group 226, G3 Reports 10-111, G-3 Periodic report No. 74.

23. Mendelsohn, Vol. 4-A, p. 30-31.

24. Ibid., p. 31; The total number of Germans under Captain Stoll taken as prisoners was 341 (12 officers, 65 German soldiers and 264 Russians in German uniforms). Mendelsohn, Vol. 4, Jedburghs, p. 693-696; Hilary Footlit, *France 1943-45*, (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1988), p. 101.

25. Mendelsohn, Vol. 4-A, p. 31 and Vol. 4 Jedburghs, p. 699

26. Mendelsohn, Vol. 4-A, p. 32 and Vol. 4, Jedburghs, p. 699

27. Mendelsohn, Vol 4-A, p. 32.

28. Ibid., and Vol. 4, p. 700.

29. Mendelsohn, Vol. 4-A, p. 32-33. The group learned the following day that Angouleme had been liberated and they had apparently attached the last convoy to leave the city. Mendelsohn, Vol. 4, p. 700-702.

30. The captured prisoners were a misfit group: one marine, one anti-aircraft man, and name infantry men. The group had observed that the Germans’ retreat was very well organized up front, but the rear guard was not organized at all. According to First Lieutenant Grunseth, the “prisoners had good stocks of cognac, cigarettes and other supplies. It seemed to be every man for himself.” Mendelsohn, Volume 4-A, p. 33 and Volume 4, p. 702-703.

31. Ibid., p. 34 and p. 703-704

32. The plane was destroyed by fire and there was no information of survivors. *Ibid.*, p. 34 and p. 704

33. OG “Patrick” was the fifth group dropped France, comprised of 25 men. Its mission will be discussed in Chapter 6 of this paper. *Ibid.*, p. 34-35 and p. 704-705

34. Mendelsohn, Vol. 4-A, p. 35

Book Review

German Irregular Warfare by Johann Hindert

By How Miller

Johann Hindert's book *German Irregular Warfare* tells you right up front what the conclusion of the book is: "German irregular warfare can offer strategic answers to contemporary security challenges." The reasons come from both the past and the present. The sources are the writings by the participants in those conflicts, augmented by a sprinkling of pure academics. There are both tales of bold operations and lessons from "How to" manuals as well as heady analyses of the types and uses of Irregular warfare.

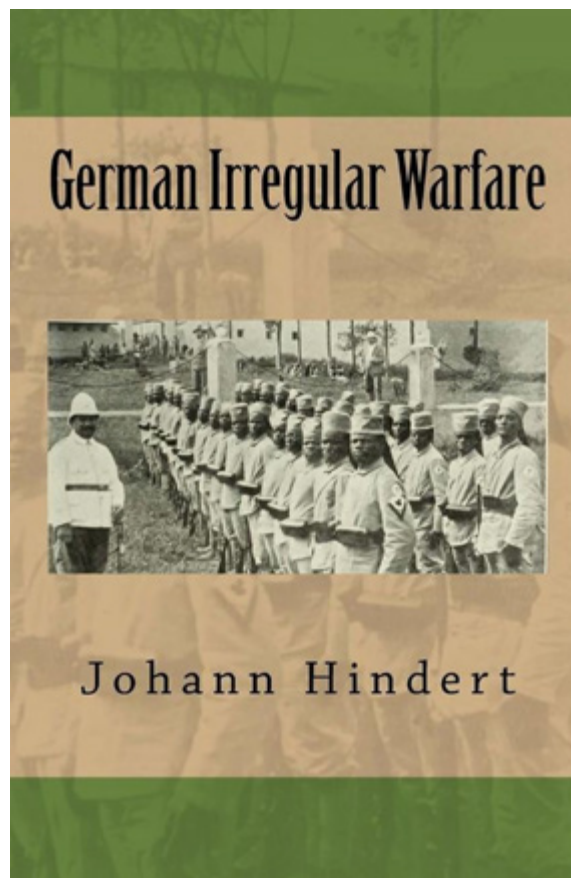
We start with Johann Ewald, a Hessian officer who served with the British from 1776 to 1783. He kept extensive diaries which he later used to write about the unconventional tactics used by the rebellious colonists, which they had learned while fighting against Native Americans, especially in the French and Indian wars. His observations and analyses were so thorough that a manual he wrote has remarkable similarities to that of Robert's Rangers. Johann wrote much more and served as a foundation for later analysts.

The author mentions the ironic fact that Gen. Washington sought the help of Baron von Steuben to teach his troops European style tactics and discipline since they were, as a group, so irregular.

Carl von Clausewitz was one who undoubtedly learned much from Ewald, being the historian that he was. He saw his first combat at 12 years of age fighting for the Prussians against the French. He later met his mentor, a senior Prussian officer, while studying at the Prussian War College from 1801 – 1803. He was an intellectual during his very successful military career. He even led a multinational army unit in the Balkans.

His book *On War* is even quoted by civilians (eg: War is an extension of politics.). He came up with his own theories on warfare and wrote in great detail about it. One might be surprised to know that part of his Book 6 is dedicated to irregular warfare. It includes how partisans can be used in conjunction with the main force army, such as he observed in Russia when the partisans wreaked havoc on Napoleon's rear echelon troops and the supply train, and even the retreating troops. He laid out a series of tenets such as dispersing forces, exploiting terrain, patience as a strategy, and so on.

Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck served in the German Army during WWI in German East Africa, in what is now Tanzania. To his north was British East Africa (now Kenya). Within the first few weeks of the war, the British attacked Dar es Salaam and von Lettow realized his outmanned and outgunned army had a challenge ahead. He turned his Schutztruppe army of German officers and NCOs and Askari native soldiers into a roving, partisan type force and harassed the British for the entirety of the war. Instead of the British being able to draw manpower from BEA to use elsewhere, they were forced to send many additional troops and ships to try to contain them. Only when the armistice was signed did von Lettow surrender as ordered. His memoirs told more of his continually reinventing the Schutztruppe to face new realities of the conflict.



[German Irregular Warfare](#)

By Johann Hindert

CreateSpace Publishing (June 1, 2015)

200 pages

Available in paperback

Otto Skorzeny, once dubbed "the most dangerous man in Europe", served in WWII's German Eastern and Western Fronts and astounding Special Missions. He led the commando raid, Operation Oak, that liberated Mussolini so that he could then command northern Italy and be a renewed strength, stubbornly resisting the Allies. This mission showed how a small group of well trained and minimally supplied men, could have a huge impact on the conflict. Skorzeny went on to write a lot about irregular warfare, including noting how the Russian partisans' assaults on the retreating Germans was so similar to what they did to Napoleon's men.

Freidrich von der Heydte who commanded a battalion in the massive airborne assault on Crete, wrote a theory on IW including the use of terror and using pseudo partisans and other psyops.

Col Hindert includes more sources which brings us right up to the book's 2015 publication, including Afghanistan, Iraq and the early incursions of the Russians in Ukraine. He makes his point about German contributions to IW and offers a path to learn more from these great German sources. ❖



ERNIE PYLE,

The Soldier's Journalist – Bringing It All Home

Ernie Pyle and sailors listen to war reports aboard USS Charles Carroll while enroute to Okinawa. (National Archives, 80-G-314410)



Ernie Pyle and PFC Urban Vachon rest by the roadside on the trail at Okinawa. (National Archives, 127-N-116846)

By Marc Yablonka

(This story originally ran in the summer 1995 issue of the National Amvet magazine)

From Anzio to Algeria, Sicily to Saipan, no war correspondent in history brought war from the foxholes to the folks back home like Ernie Pyle, whether filing from the cockpit of a B-29 Super Fortress or the mess hall of an aircraft carrier. As a Scripps-Howard Syndicate reporter, Pyle was the first to file “Home-towners”—so-called because the newspapers in the towns and cities of the GI's about whom he wrote always published his stories.

Pyle's dispatches truly captured the horrors of the Second World War.

“They say you never hear the shell that hits you,” he wrote from Tunisia in April 1943. “Fortunately, I don't know about that, but I do know that the closer they hit, the less time you have to hear them. Those landing within a hundred yards, you hear a second before they hit. The sound produces a special kind of horror inside you that is something more than fright. It's a confused form of desperation.”

At 42, almost twice the age of the soldiers whom he befriended and championed, Pyle was extremely thin, disheveled, and down to earth. He loved carousing and drinking with fellow journalists, according to his namesake, the late Richard Pyle, an Associated Press reporter who headed the AP's Saigon bureau for three years during the Vietnam War.



Ernie Pyle rests on the roadside with a Marine patrol. (National Archives, 127-N-116840)

"[He was] graceful about his beloved 'god-damned infantry' clogging through the mud, the bomber pilot buffeted by flak, the coxswain steering his landing craft toward the beach," said the AP's Pyle.

He could do so, according to biographer David Nichols ([Ernie's War: The Best of Ernie Pyle's World War II Dispatches](#) (New York: Random House, 1986)), because he didn't care as much about the news as he did about those making it. Added to that was the anonymous tone of previous war coverage that he avoided.

Pyle brought into American homes the crew of a crippled B-29 inching home after being hit by flak from Japanese fighters.

"Five fighters just butchered him. And there was nothing our boys could do about it. And yet he kept coming. How, nobody knows. Two of the crew were badly wounded. The horizontal stabilizers were shot away. The plane was riddled with holes. The pilot could control his plane only by using the motors...somehow, he made it home. He had to land without controls. He did wonderfully, but he didn't quite pull it off," Pyle wrote.

"The plane hit at the end of the runway. The engines came hurtling out, on fire. The wings flew off and the great fuselage broke into two and went careening across the ground. And yet every man came out of it alive, even the wounded ones."

Pyle, whose dispatches filled six books, was among the earliest reporters to write that, in addition to its horror, war has a humorous side. One such dispatch, filed from the Mariannas, tells of a GI using an outdoor commode.

"Suddenly he was startled...here he was caught with his pants down... and in front of him stood a Jap with a rifle," he wrote.

"Before anything could happen, the Jap laid the rifle on the ground in front of him and began salaaming up and down like a worshipper before an idol."

According to Pyle, the Japanese soldier had been searching for an American to surrender to and concluded that finding one on a toilet would be the easiest way to give himself up.

Pyle first reported on troops in the European Theatre. By the end of the war, however, he found himself reporting from the South Pacific on a part of the war he found difficult to understand. For one thing, he spent much of his time aboard Navy vessels where, when the action was nil, life was boring.

“Now we are far, far away from anything that was home or seemed like home. Five thousand miles away from America...twelve thousand miles from my friends fighting on the German border,” he wrote from Saipan in February 1945.

Before Pyle’s transfer to the Pacific Theatre, “so many people wanted so many things!” wrote David Nichols. “People on the street wanted his autograph. Helen Keller wanted to run her hands over his face. John Steinbeck wanted to talk. Wives and mothers wanted information about their husbands and sons. Lester Cowan wanted to confer about problems with his movie [The Story of GI Joe](#) (based on Pyle’s book [Here is Your War](#)).”

Pyle’s reaction was to retreat from the life the war had made for him.

“I feel sad because it has given me the big things of life, and taken away the precious little things,” he wrote from San Francisco during some well-deserved R & R (rest and recuperation) in January 1945.

“I like people ...and so it hurts me to have to shut off the phone calls in a hotel...turn letters over to a secretary...tell old friends that I can’t see them today—maybe tomorrow.”

Ernie Pyle died on April 18th, 1945, almost four months before the war’s end, on the tiny island of Ie Shima during the campaign for Okinawa.



“Lost a Buddy” sign stands. (U.S. Army Signal Corps)

After covering a US Marine advance, he later joined four GIs from the 77th Infantry Division in search of a command post site for the 305th Regiment. A Japanese sniper opened up on them, forcing them out of their Jeep, killing Pyle.

He was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart.

In a dispatch filed two months before his death, of the soldiers Pyle had come to know so well, he wrote, “Each one thinks his war is the worst and the most important war. And unquestionably it is...” ♦



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marc Yablonka is a military journalist and author. His work has appeared in the U.S. Military’s *Stars and Stripes*, *Army Times*, *Air Force Times*, *American Veteran*, *Vietnam* magazine, *Airways*, *Military Heritage*, *Soldier of Fortune* and many other publications. He is the author of *Distant War: Recollections of Vietnam*, *Laos and Cambodia*, *Tears Across the Mekong*, *Vietnam Bao Chi: Warriors of Word and Film*, and *Hot Mics and TV Lights: The American Forces Vietnam Network*.

Marc from 2001-2008 served as a Public Affairs Officer, CWO-2, with the 40th Infantry Division Support Brigade and Installation Support Group, California State Military Reserve, Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, California, where he wrote articles and took photographs in support of Soldiers who were mobilizing for and demobilizing from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

His work was published in *Soldiers*, official magazine of the United States Army, *Grizzly*, magazine of the California National Guard, the *Blade*, magazine of the 63rd Regional Readiness Command-U.S. Army Reserves, *Hawaii Army Weekly*, and *Army Magazine*, magazine of the Association of the U.S. Army.

Marc’s decorations include the California National Guard Medal of Merit, California National Guard Service Ribbon, and California National Guard Commendation Medal w/Oak Leaf. He also served two tours of duty with the Sar El Unit of the Israeli Defense Forces and holds the Master’s of Professional Writing degree earned from the University of Southern California.

THE 4-4-2 WENT FOR BROKE

EXECUTIVE ORDER

- - - - -

AUTHORIZING THE SECRETARY OF WAR TO PRESCRIBE MILITARY AREAS

WHEREAS the successful prosecution of the war requires every possible protection against espionage and against sabotage to national-defense material, national-defense premises, and national-defense utilities as defined in Section 4, Act of April 20, 1918, 40 Stat. 533, as amended by the Act of November 30, 1940, 54 Stat. 1220, and the Act of August 21, 1941, 55 Stat. 655 (U. S. C., Title 50, Sec. 104):

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, and Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, I hereby authorize and direct the Secretary of War, and the Military Commanders whom he may from time to time designate, whenever he or any designated Commander deems such action necessary or desirable, to prescribe military areas in such places and of such extent as he or the appropriate Military Commander may determine, from which any or all persons may be excluded, and with respect to which, the right of any person to enter, remain in, or leave shall be subject to whatever restrictions the Secretary of War or the appropriate Military

Issued by President Franklin Roosevelt on February 19, 1942, Executive Order 9066 authorized the Secretary of War to evacuate all persons deemed a threat to national security from the West Coast to "relocation centers" further inland. (Photo courtesy National Archives)

By Marc Yablonka

Originally published in the *National Amvet* magazine in 2003.

Author's note: In the early 1990s, I attended the conference of the Asia Society held in Los Angeles. Many prominent Asian Americans were featured guest speakers. Among them were broadcast journalists Connie Chung and Tritia Toyota, now a professor of communications at UCLA, then a local news anchor at KNBC in Burbank. Also in attendance was the late Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI), perhaps the most famous veteran of the US Army's 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Senator Inouye lost an arm during the battle of Colle Musatello Ridge near San Terenzo, Italy on April 21, 1945. I will never forget him ascending the podium to tell the story of how, enroute home to Hawaii after the war, he lay over in San Francisco. Badly needing a haircut, he walked into a barber shop in the city, wearing his Class A uniform, the sleeve to his missing arm pinned to his coat. The barber took one look at him and yelled, "Get outa here you dirty Jap!"

A couple years later, then a stringer for the L.A. bureau of the Reuters wire service, I was ordered to roll to Santa Monica Airport. Senator Bob Dole (R-KS) was flying in (on a FedEx Lear Jet!) to do the Jay Leno show at NBC in Burbank that night. Senator Dole regaled us newsies with quite a few stories at SMO that day. But the one I will never forget is the one he told us about being in the same US Army hospital in Italy as his good friend Danny Inouye. Dole told us that, as he awoke from his own anesthesia, he glanced over at a still very anesthetized Inouye. His eyes followed the tube flowing blood into his future fellow US Senator's body until they rested on the bag supplying the blood. On that bag were written the words, "Black Blood." As I documented that press conference in my book *Dispatches from My Father's War*, <https://www.amazon.com/Dispatches-Fathers-Marc-Phillip-Yablonka/dp/0692984593>, published in 2018 by War Stories Press, "The roots of prejudice still ran deep in the US Army."

Less than two months after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, every man, woman and child of Japanese ancestry living in the United States was relocated to a series of Internment camps-mainly in California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Arizona, Colorado and Arkansas. Many among the 127,000 Japanese Americans affected by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 were proud U.S. citizens. To supporters of the action, it made no difference; there was a war going on, they felt. Scoffing at the lack of any sabotage on the part of the Japanese-Americans, then California State Attorney General (later Supreme Court Justice) Earl Warren grimly declared, "They're just waiting for the zero hour to arrive."

It never did, of course. Meanwhile, for those interned, their desolate existence bordered on imprisonment. Forced to live in wooden barracks covered with tar paper, they shared communal bathrooms and were watched over 24 hours a day by military guards atop watch towers. Despite these conditions, many nonetheless started off their day saying the Pledge of Allegiance.



Nisei Japanese boys playing baseball at the Manzanar War Relocation Center. (Photo taken by Dorothea Lange for the War Relocation Authority, courtesy National Archives)

Finally, In March 1943, desperately needing to beef up the Armed Forces, the War Department put out a call for volunteers-to man a U.S. combat unit comprised chiefly of Japanese-Americans. Ten thousand answered it and, ultimately, 6,000 of them were enlisted in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, later to merge with the 100th Battalion in the European Theatre. Because most of the enlisted came from the place where the Second World War had begun for America, the new unit adopted the popular Hawaiian slogan which remains an American icon even today: “Go for Broke.”

“Everybody wanted to volunteer,” recalled Henry Ikemoto, a retired Los Angeles County probation officer, “We wanted to show that we wanted to fight, too.”

“You have to understand that period of time,” added James Mita, a Postal Service retiree. “Everybody was patriotic. We didn’t want to be left behind. If we were true Americans, we had to prove that we were as good as anybody else. When the military accepted me, when I was able to serve, I felt as though I was a whole American again.”

Ikemoto would soon get his chance, as would Mita. After training at Camp Shelby, Miss., the 442nd received its baptism under fire in the mountains of Suvereto, Italy, on June 26, 1944. Over the next 10 weeks, the fighting raged, with the Germans being pushed back, north of the Arno River. In the winter of that same year, the RCT was rerouted to northeastern France where, together with the 36th Infantry Division, it liberated the French towns of Bruyères, Belmont and Biffontaine in the Vosges Campaign. All told, the men of the “4-4-2,” as it came to be called, distinguished themselves in seven major campaigns in Italy and France.

Accounts of their heroics are well documented. In one action, they were called on to help breach the “German Gothic Line” at Mt. Folgorito, Italy, which had held up the Allies for six months. The 442nd broke through German defenses in 24 hours.

Assigned to Gen. Mark Clark’s U.S. 5th Army, the unit became the most highly decorated unit in the history of the U.S. Army for its size and length of service. It received 7 Presidential Unit Citations and 18,143 individual decorations for bravery, including 9,486 Purple Hearts, 21 Medals of Honor, 32 Distinguished Service Crosses, 588 Silver Stars and more than 4,000 Bronze Stars.



442nd Regimental Combat Team Staff Sgt. James Kawashima standing guard in Chambois, France in 1944. (Photo courtesy National Archives)

Though rarely given credit for doing so, they were the first to liberate Rome at the end of the war and the Nazi concentration camp at Dachau, Germany, in April 1945.

Edward Ichiyama’s recollection in *Japanese Eyes—American Heart*—a compilation done by the Hawaii Nikkei History Education Board—of marching into Dachau is particularly poignant:

“As we approached the vicinity of the snow-covered fields, we unexpectedly witnessed a gruesome and pitiful sight; hundreds and hundreds of emaciated, gaunt, malnourished people in black-and-white prison clothing. Their eyes were sunken and their cheeks hollow. They were living skeletons... many were sprawled on the snow-covered ground, unable to walk... we tried to help them, offering whatever food, clothing, water and medicine we had and words of kindness, comfort and compassion,”



President Harry Truman with members of the 442nd Central Postal Directory in 1946. (Photo courtesy National Archives).

The spirit of the 4-4-2's volunteerism came at a high price. It suffered more than 650 killed in the short time of its activation, and its missing in action were many. At the end of World War II, when he welcomed members of the 100th Battalion of the 442nd Central Postal Directory home, President Harry S. Truman told them, "You fought not only the enemy... You fought prejudice and won." Indeed, they had. ❖

GO FOR BROKE MEMORIAL

Located in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, California, commemorates Japanese Americans who served in the United States Army during World War II.

Main inscription

GO FOR BROKE – An American Story

Rising to the defense of their country, by the thousands they came – these young Japanese American soldiers from Hawaii, the states, America's concentration camps – to fight in Europe and the Pacific during World War II. Looked upon with suspicion, set apart and deprived of their constitutional rights, they nevertheless remained steadfast and served with indomitable spirit and uncommon valor, for theirs was a fight to prove loyalty. This legacy will serve as a sobering reminder that never again shall any group be denied liberty and the rights of citizenship.

—Ben H. Tamashiro

SFA Chapter 78 March 2025 Chapter Meeting

Photos by Rick Carter



Guest Speaker, CPT (ret.) James Tolley Peacemaker Coalition

1 Retired SF CPT James Tolley spoke about his 27-year military career beginning with the Air Force and ultimately leading to Army Special Forces. After retirement he was lead to the work he is now doing with the Peacemaker Coalition. This group's mission is to "leverage the power of storytelling through media to explore and enhance the dynamics of human interaction, fostering understanding, empathy, and positive relationships among diverse communities." He showed the group a few excellent examples of the film work his group has done. Learn more about their work at www.peacemakercoalition.com.

2 Jim Cragg shared the story of his experience during the Palisades Fire and how veterans are helping the community in the aftermath.

3 Chapter Treasurer Richard Simonian.

4 Left to right, Gary Macnamara, Travis Mayfield, Doreen Matsumoto, Marla and Wayne Ogelvie, and Lani Dolick.

5 Visitor Mark Oravitz organizer of the Newport Beach Classic Car Show.

6 Doreen Matsumoto and Jim Duffy

7 Jim Lockhart enjoys the latest Sentinel.

8 Left to right, Jim Cragg, Art Dolick, and Tom Turney

9 At right, Ham Salley shares a book with visitor Marine Corps Veteran Wayne Ogelvie.



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