



# SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

VOLUME 16, ISSUE 8 • AUGUST 2025

## AUGUST 23, 1968 THE ATTACK ON FOB 4/CCN: MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES ON SPECIAL FORCES' COSTLIEST NIGHT



## IN MEMORY OF OUR FALLEN



## IN THIS ISSUE:

From the Editor .....	1
Letters to the Editor .....	2
Gilbert Thad Gembacz — August 1, 1947 – July 8, 2025.....	3
SFA Con 2025, October 14-18, 2025 — Don't Delay, Register Today!.....	4
Help Honor Our Heroes—Support the Special Forces Monument.....	7
AUGUST 23, 1968, The Attack on FOB 4/CCN: Multiple Perspectives on Special Forces' Costliest Night .....	8
<i>EARTHQUAKE: Brigadier General Robert F. Titus, Fighter Pilot   Test Pilot   Leader</i> .....	12
SFA Chapter 78 June 2025 Meeting.....	17
SFA Chapter 78 Out and About.....	18



### FRONT COVER: In Memory of Our Fallen, August 23, 1968 attack on FOB-4/CCN—KILLED IN ACTION:

SSG Talmadge Horton Alphin, Jr.	MSG Rolf Ernst Rickmers
PFC William Henry Bric III	SP4 Anthony John Santana
SFC Tadeusz Marian Kepczyk	MSG Gilbert Arthur Secor
SFC Donald Ray Kerns	SGT Robert Joseph Uyesaka
SGT James Thomas Kickliter	SSG Howard Steven Varni
MSG Charles Raymond Norris	SFC Harold Robert Voorheis
SGM Richard Epps Pegram, Jr.	SFC Albert Marion Walter
1LT Paul Douglas Potter	SFC Donald Walter Welch

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# From the Editor | August 2025



How Miller  
Sentinel Editor

We remember the toughest day in SF history, 23 August 1968, when the NVA managed a surprise attack during a gathering of SOG troops for a promotion board at FOB 4 at Da Nang. It has been written about, for example, by John Stryker Meyer in *On the Ground*, and has been the subject of several podcasts, including John Stryker Meyer's *SOGCAST 005* with Larry Trimble of Spike Team Rattler, who was up on Marble Mountain. Recently there have been videos about the Viet Cong/

NVA side of things by Ken Boyd, SOG veteran and author of *Dawson's War*. Ken wrote the book under the pen name B.K. Marshall and now has a very interesting YouTube channel *@DawsonsWar*. We provide you with links to view all of these and build a strong picture of what happened for yourself. It is a fascinating look at a complicated battle, with new information to add to the mix.

William B. Scott wrote the book *Earthquake*, which was the callsign of an exceptional pilot, BG (ret.) Robert F. Titus, who spent a large amount of time flying bombing and ground support missions in Vietnam and elsewhere during a long military career. That was followed by civil service, and by the way, helped save a Mike Force team. He recklessly flew his F4 through clouds until he could locate the team and help out with napalm and directing other ordnance. Scott shares with us some of the stories from his book.

*Remembering Thad Gembacz*—the chapter mourns the passing of longtime member Gilbert Thad "The Judge" Gembacz, who died on July 8, 2025. Both within the chapter and in the world at large, Thad was widely respected for his integrity, generosity, and quiet service to others.

Only a couple of months remain before the dual and conjoined annual conventions of the Special Forces Association and Special Operators Association in October in Las Vegas. This issue provides an overview of the activities you can enjoy at the convention and those available at the Orleans, the location of the event.

We hope you will take a look at our June Chapter meeting photos and events that chapter members have participated in since the last issue.

For our *Sentinel* blog at [SpecialForces78.com](https://SpecialForces78.com), the "From the Archive" story this month features the recent republishing of Alex Quade's "Special Forces at War: A Deadly Firefight in Iraq" by *Soldier of Fortune* magazine. This story, published as "Special Forces Combat Outpost Pirelli," appeared in the March 2018 *Sentinel*.

Enjoy, and please keep sending us your stories to share with other Green Berets and supporters. ❖

How Miller  
Sentinel Editor



## SFA Chapter 78 Monthly Meeting

**August 16, 2025**

Breakfast – 0800 • Meeting – 0830

### We're meeting back at the base!

By popular request, we have obtained approval to go back to meeting at the Joint Forces Training Base!

**Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos**

The Pub at Fiddlers Green

4745 Yorktown Ave Bldg 19, Los Alamitos, CA 90720-5176

**Next scheduled chapter meeting  
September 20**

### 2025 Meeting Schedule

October 18 • November 15

December (to be announced)



Chapter VP James McLanahan at the Sunburst Youth Challenge Academy Graduation last June with Sunburst Youth Academy Foundation Board of Directors. From left to right, Sedric Hill, Marylou Vachet, Sunburst Youth Academy Program Director LTC Sarah Rambo, Justine Makoff, CEO of the Sunburst Youth Academy Foundation, the Foundation's CFO Jillian Scott, and Phillip Tingirides. More about the event on page 18.



# Letters to the Editor

**From Hammond Salley**  
Chapter 78 Member

**Subject: Ernie Pyle Picture**

**Editors Note:** Ham is referring to an image as it appeared in the May 2025 Sentinel print edition. Visit <https://www.specialforces78.com/ernie-pyle-the-soldiers-journalist/> to view the article posted on our website. If you prefer to view the pdf version of the print edition visit <https://www.specialforces78.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/0525-Sentinel-News.pdf>.

The article on Ernie Pyle has a picture of (May 2025 *Sentinel*, page 18) of sign depicting where he was killed on Ie Shima, a small island off of Okinawa. FYI, I've attached a picture of the new memorial I took in 1953 as part of a Boy Scout trip landing craft trip to Ie Shima in 1953. ♦



**From: Gregg Walker**  
Chapter 78 Member

**Editors Note:** Our longtime contributor to the Sentinel, Greg Walker, shares some news. Greg, in a longer email, attributes some of the credit to the Sentinel staff for publishing his article, which he says was of help in the process.

## Justice at last

To the Editor:

Earlier this week a jury in El Salvador, after 11 hours of deliberation, found three senior Salvadoran officers guilty of the planned 1982 assassination of four Dutch journalists in El Salvador. The news made national and international headlines. The ethical and moral courage of the victims' families, the investigators in Holland and at ICE, the judge and jury in El Salvador, and the Salvadoran journalists who daily risked harassment, imprisonment, voluntary exile, and ridicule by their own government cannot be praised enough.

"A five-member jury sentenced the defendants, now in their 80s or 90s, to 15 years in prison after an 11-hour session on the first day of the trial," attorney Pedro Cruz said outside the courthouse. "In a crime that shocked the world, Koos Koster, Jan Kuiper, Hans ter Laag, and Joop Willemsen were killed while filming a television documentary."

(<https://www.dutchnews.nl/2025/06/killers-of-dutch-journalists-in-el-salvador-convicted-at-last/>)

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/04/world/americas/el-salvador-kills-dutch-journalists-1982.html>)

And to you both, as well, regarding publication of my story on the Dutch murders—each helped bring Justice that much closer—<https://www.specialforces78.com/in-cold-blood-an-alleged-salvadoran-war-criminal-flouts-his-u-s-citizenship-to-avoid-justice/> ♦

**From Jodi Burns, CEO, Special Forces Charitable Trust**  
**Subject: An Important Update**



We're proud to announce that we are beginning to operate under a new name—Special Forces Trust. We're dropping the word "Charitable" as we step into a new era of strength, clarity, and momentum. You'll begin to see our new name, logo (displayed above) and visual identity reflected across our materials immediately.

We're also unveiling our new motto:

*"Trust the Trust: Built by Brotherhood, Powered by Purpose."*

It's a bold reflection of who we are—and who we serve.

This change doesn't alter our mission or our status as a nonprofit organization. It simply makes our message stronger and our presence clearer. Everything we do is still focused on standing beside Green Berets and their families with trust, purpose, and unwavering commitment.

Thanks to your generosity, we're off to a powerful start this year. We've already expanded support services under our Beyond the Battlefield program, grown our network of collaborators, and increased both awareness and access for the communities we serve. Your role in this progress cannot be overstated.

As we take this next step, we want you to know how deeply we value your partnership. You're not just part of our donor community—you are part of the legacy that allows us to grow, adapt, and serve more powerfully. We could not be more grateful.

We'll be reaching out with more soon, but in the meantime, thank you for trusting the Trust.

**[sffrust.org](https://sffrust.org)**

# Gilbert Thad Gembacz

August 1, 1947 – July 8, 2025



Special Forces Association Chapter 78 mourns the passing of long-time member Gilbert Thad “The Judge” Gembacz, who died on July 8, 2025. A retired U.S. Army Colonel and former U.S. Immigration Judge, Thad was widely respected for his integrity, generosity, and quiet service to others.

Thad’s military career spanned 30 years and included training with Special Forces, graduation from Infantry Officer Candidate School and Airborne School, and induction into the Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame. Following active duty, he served as a United States Immigration Judge from 1996 to 2008 and later taught asylum law at the National Judicial College and Southwestern Law School.

An active member of Chapter 78, Thad regularly volunteered at events and provided generous support for chapter initiatives, including serving as the major donor for the Special Forces Readiness Evaluation (SFRE) at CSU Fullerton’s Roy Lopez Army ROTC Obstacle Course.

Reflecting his ongoing generosity and compassion, just six days after the fall of Kabul in 2021, Thad met Nimo—now Project Manager of Refugee Housing for Affordable Community Living (ACL)—who spoke

at the August Chapter 78 meeting, describing the dangers our Afghan allies were facing. Deeply moved by Nimo’s account, Thad connected ACL with immigration attorneys, funded legal efforts and supplies, and advised on the immigration process to help bring Afghan families to safety. His guidance continues to influence ongoing efforts, including the process to secure entry for Nimo’s brother, who we are hoping will soon join the ACL Afghan refugee communities in Mojave and Needles as their resident electrician.

Though Thad later relocated to Arizona, he remained closely connected to Chapter 78 and was always warmly welcomed when he attended meetings during visits to Southern California.

Funeral mass and interment were held at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles on July 31, 2025. In lieu of flowers, please donate to the Wounded Warrior Project and Tunnel to Towers.

Thad’s wonderfully friendly face, as well as his loyalty, service, and generosity, will be deeply missed. The members of Chapter 78 extend their condolences to his wife, Camille, and his sister, Kayce Morton. ❖

# SFACON 2025



**OCTOBER,  
14-17, 2025**

**Orleans Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, NV**

*Don't Delay — Register Today!*

Well, it's that time again, the 2025 SFA Convention is right around the corner. That time of the year when we get to visit with old teammates and friends, time to reminisce about those who are no longer with us and tell tales about the old days when life was hard and so were we. This year we are back on some very dry land and returning to previously reconned territory. The Orleans Hotel is welcoming us again and promises a good time can and will be had by all.

The Special Operations Association (SOA) graciously agreed to co-host, co-coordinate, and cohabitate with us this year. So for the first time, SFACON will be held concurrently with the Special Operations Association Reunion (SOAR). SOAR will take place 13-16 October. 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.

## **Orleans Hotel & Casino**

4500 West Tropicana Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89103

### **ROOM RESERVATIONS**

**Group Rates with taxes and fees included:**

Sunday-Thursday: **\$82.48**

Friday-Saturday: **\$139.98**

Use the [link on SFA website](#) to make your reservations online (Group Code discount is automatically applied). Or, call 800-675-3267 to make hotel reservation and use reference group code: **SFAJ25C**. If calling, make sure they quote the rates shown above for our group)

**Reservations must be made on or before 9/12/2025 to ensure availability and group rate.**

**Visit [www.specialforcesassociation.org/sfacon-2025/](http://www.specialforcesassociation.org/sfacon-2025/)**



## SYMPOSIA & ACTIVITIES

This year's schedule is packed: informative symposia, memorable outings, and plenty of ways to connect with teammates. Here's a look at what's planned:

- ♦ **Symposia:** A strong lineup of presenters covering topics relevant to today's Special Forces community.
  - **COL (Ret.) Mark E. Mitchell**, a former U.S. Army Special Forces officer, was the first member of the U.S. Army to be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) since the Vietnam War. His story is intricately connected with the early phases of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, where he served as one of the original "Horse Soldiers."
  - **Delta Force veteran Glen "Nick" Nickel** will present the story of Operation Eagle Claw. Glen was tasked with the job of an assaulter in B-Squadron, tasked with eliminating the sentry inside the U.S. Embassy compound in Tehran. He also rendered aid to a severely burned loadmaster after the crash.
  - **SGM Charles "Chuck" Ritter (Ret.)** presents a visual overview of what the Global War on Terror (GWOT) looked like from the perspective of Special Forces units deep in the fight—and tie that back to what SF was doing in Vietnam and other places. His observation is that, at the core, the mission hasn't changed much. It may be a new era, with new technology, but Green Berets have been doing the same fundamental work for decades.
- ♦ **Tuesday Night:** Trip to a classic Vegas show.
- ♦ **Wednesday Night:** Bowling with the crew.
- ♦ **Thursday:** Scenic motorcycle ride through the countryside.
- ♦ **Thursday & Friday:** Silent auction featuring top-notch swag.

Visit the convention website, [www.specialforcesassociation.org/sfacon-2025/](http://www.specialforcesassociation.org/sfacon-2025/), for the latest updates—some sessions may shift as we confirm presenters and finalize timing.

## THE ORLEANS HOTEL & CASINO

A New Orleans-themed resort located just west of the Las Vegas Strip in Paradise, Nevada, the Orleans Hotel and Casino offers a blend of classic Vegas excitement with Southern charm. The 135,000-square-foot casino floor offers a wide array of gaming options, including slot machines, table games, a poker room, as well as a race and sports books.

## DINING

The Orleans has a wide selection of dining venues:

- ♦ **Alder & Birch** — A contemporary steakhouse offering prime cuts and seafood.
- ♦ **Big Al's Oyster Bar** — Specializing in fresh seafood with a Cajun flair.
- ♦ **Ondori Asian Kitchen** — Serving a fusion of Chinese and Japanese cuisines.
- ♦ **Copper Whisk Café** — A casual spot for American comfort food.
- ♦ **TGI Fridays, Fuddruckers, Subway, and Sbarro** — Familiar chain options for quick bites.

For more about the Orleans Hotel & Casino, visit <https://orleans.boydgaming.com/>

**For those who are members of both the SFA and SOA, you ONLY need to register with one Association.**

THE SFACON website, [www.specialforcesassociation.org/sfacon-2025/](http://www.specialforcesassociation.org/sfacon-2025/), contains all SFACON details, an event list, and online registration, and also a mail-in registration form.

SFA members may attend the SOAR cocktail hour & banquet on Thursday, 16 Oct, by registering and paying a \$100 fee on the SOA website (registration form) at <https://specialoperations.org/soa/soar-xlix/>.

Those who do not like to register online may download and print the registration form, fill out, and mail to the SFA National Headquarters. (this form is also included in this issue of the Sentinel on page 6).



# SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE 2025

[www.specialforcesassociation.org/sfacon-2025/](http://www.specialforcesassociation.org/sfacon-2025/)

SFA# \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter # \_\_\_\_\_ If you are Chapter Officer, Position: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone# \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Full registration includes all days – hospitality room, lunch on Wed, and Banquet on Friday.</b>  <b>List member and guests for badges.</b> Members Name _____ Guest Name _____ Guest Name _____ Guest Name _____ Guest Name _____ Guest Name _____	<b>FULL REGISTRATION</b>	<b>TUE</b>	<b>WED</b>	<b>THR</b>	<b>FRI</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
	\$285	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	
To pay by check mail to -----> (make all check payable to the Special Forces Association)	Special Forces Association P.O. Box 41436 Fayetteville, NC 28309-1436					<b>Total</b>

**HOW MANY ARE ATTENDING FRIDAY BANQUET?**

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Card# \_\_\_\_\_ EXP DATE \_\_\_\_\_ CW CODE \_\_\_\_\_

Name as it appears on card \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address if different than above \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

Orleans Hotel & Casino: Reservations by telephone: Call 800-675-3267 and reference group code: SFAJ25C. Reservations must be made on or before 9/12/2025

**QUESTIONS? Contact the Registrar, Bonnie Cooper, (561) 543-9562 or [coop553@bellsouth.net](mailto:coop553@bellsouth.net)**



# Help Honor Our Heroes

## *Support the Special Forces Monument*



**SFA Chapter 88** (Northeast Florida) has an ambitious goal to raise **\$18,000** for a Special Forces monument for the Jacksonville National Cemetery. Donations are needed for the construction, delivery, installation and future maintenance of the monument; and fund the dedication ceremony—planned in conjunction with the 39th anniversary of the Special Forces Branch.

**Our goal** is to raise the money before **Dec. 31, 2025**. This allows us time to complete a contract, finance the down payment and balance, construct the monument, deliver and install it in time for the unveiling ceremony this next year.

This monument project is very important for honoring the service of the Army veterans interred in Jacksonville. It also serves as a remembrance for the families, loved ones, friends, comrades in arms and visitors to the National Cemetery.

On **Saturday, April 11, 2026**, the public and our Special Operations veterans are invited to join us for this significant and historical event. More information will be forthcoming in 2026.

**SFA Chapter 88** has partnered with **GoFundMe.Com** and donations are fast and easy at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/SFA88-SF-Monument-Fund> or scan the QR Code with your smartphone or tablet for direct access to the donation page.

GoFundMe offers many ways for credit and debt payments. Use the "*Enter Custom Tip*" link to adjust any tips you want to leave for GoFundMe.

Are you Old School? We accept checks made payable to "**SFA Chapter 88**," write "**SF Monument**" on the memo line. Mail checks to: SFA 88 Monument, 10539 Inverness Dr., Jacksonville, FL 32257. We are a 501 (c)(19) charity, Fed Tax EIN: 56- 6148492, and donations are tax-deductible.

Your support is so important to reach our goal on time and finish this important and lasting monument. Thank you for your consideration and donation.

For more information, contact Padraic Mulvihill, Monument Committee Chairman at (904) 534-0035 or email: [pem@axisp.com](mailto:pem@axisp.com)

Corporate sponsors welcome.



**Scan to Donate**

# AUGUST 23, 1968

## THE ATTACK ON FOB 4/CCN:

### MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES ON SPECIAL FORCES' COSTLIEST NIGHT

By How Miller

On the night of **23 August 1968**, US Army Special Forces suffered its most costly day ever at Forward Operating Base 4 (FOB4) next to Marble Mountain at Da Nang, South Vietnam. The VC and NVA after long planning, and utilizing their elite sapper units, undertook a large strike, to include FOB4. It seems the NVA were eager to strike at the home base of the unit that was causing such mayhem on the Ho Chi Minh trail, disrupting the transportation of men and materiel to the South.

We offer you access to different viewpoints of the action and its aftermath.

**John "Tilt" Stryker Meyer**, utilizing first-hand accounts, wrote in gripping detail about it in his book *On the Ground*. Chapter 7 is where he deals with the attack. Last month we featured a story from Tilt's book *Across the Fence*. His website is <https://sogchronicles.com/>

In Tilt's Chapter 7 from *On the Ground* he writes of many acts of bravery, starting with **PFC Bill Bric**, brother of Gold star chapter 78 member Steve Bric, immediately grabbing his gear and running towards his assigned position on the perimeter. In a nearby hooch, medic **SP4 Ron Jungling** just missed being shot while his roommate **SFC Rolf Rickmers** was killed instantly, and that was far from his only brush with death that night, as he tended to wounded while he continued to move around and provide firepower for the defense.

Meanwhile Spike Team (ST) **Rattler** was taking its turn providing security above on Marble Mountain. Assistant team leader **Larry Trimble** could only monitor the chaotic radio commo and watch



Ed Ames, ST Rattler One Zero, left front row, with RT Rattler at FOB 4 August 21, 1968, two days before the attack.

enemy and friendlies alike scurrying around, as wave after wave of NVA sappers penetrated the seaside camp while his team was also attacked by sappers who had silently climbed ropes to surprise them. The spike team quickly overwhelmed the attack, using grenades, AR 15s and M79 grenade launchers. Shortly thereafter they were also able to knock out an 82mm mortar that had been firing into FOB4.

Tilt continues to describe the frenetic actions of many of the men, including an unidentified Special Forces soldier and a 9 year-old orphan boy the troops called "**Spike**" who spent the night preparing and firing flare rounds from the mortar pit. This illumination was lifesaving by enabling the troops to see the enemy.

The chaos continued far into the night. Gunships were called in to help, and when it was all over, 16 Green Berets and many indigenous lay dead, with 50 more wounded.

While the camp was being attacked, most of the action could be followed by the nightly security team up on Marble Mountain, as told by assistant team leader, Green Beret Larry Trimble. Tilt used Larry's input in the book as well as in one of his many episodes of



Click on the QR code below to listen to John Stryker Meyer's interview of Larry Trimble on SOGCast, or visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f--gfn5y4M0>. The SOGCast YouTube podcasts are sponsored by Jocko Willink. A full list of episodes is available at: [https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLj2W9J4Jh-DrWVUxB5rrk3Y-fr4bF\\_VH3N&si=7L9joFJFIfe2LPsn](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLj2W9J4Jh-DrWVUxB5rrk3Y-fr4bF_VH3N&si=7L9joFJFIfe2LPsn)



Scan to listen to the  
SOGCast interview



Scan to view the  
SOGCast playlist



his SOGCAST on YouTube. SOGCAST 005 features Larry Trimble, who describes in more detail what he and his troops were able to do as they realized the disaster unfolding at their feet. The SOGCAST gives a more detailed personal feel to what happened, including some lighthearted back and forth between the two old friends.

And the third point of view comes from the NVA themselves, in a 20 minute promotional video with maps and quotes, [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtGnwdbPE2E>] with SOG veteran **Ken Boyd** describing their actions and some of their overall strategy.

Altogether, they will give you a realistic picture of that devastating night. Subsequent to this the 6 FOBs were reorganized into 3 units: CCN(orth), CCC(entral), and CCS(outh).

The achievement of total surprise, and much damage to men, materiel, and morale was cause for NVA propaganda as well. It is quite telling to hear their side of the story.

**CPT Ken Boyle** arrived two days later with a Hatchet Force platoon from FOB1 at Mai Loc to help secure the area and do follow-up work. Ken went on years later to write books, including a “work of fiction” based on his SOG experience called *Dawson’s War*. Most he published under the Pseudonym B.K. Marshall. He also has done a number of

podcasts/videos about SOG. His YouTube channel can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/@DawsonsWar>.

Somewhat unique in the podcast world is his dramatic, clearly explained and illustrated account, based on information from the NVA. He leads us through the events starting with the years long goal of eliminating the “Nung Base” at what we called FOB4, Da Nang.

The plan included recons, prior practice, and prepositioning of troops and materiel. According to Ken, the distinction between Viet Cong and NVA is rather nebulous. They were all considered by themselves to part of the NVA (PAVN), or **People’s Army of Vietnam** being what they called themselves). Ken offers some insight into the question of whether the base was struck because the NVA considered it the base camp of SOG.

Continued on page 11

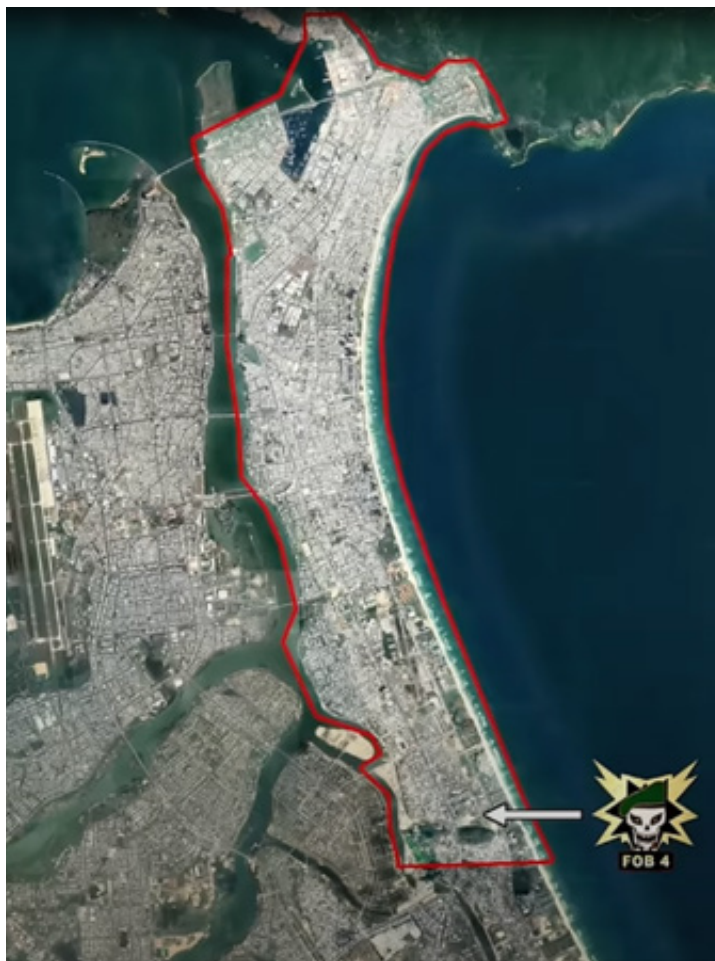


Ron Jungling with members of Hatchet Force prior to August 23, 1968 attack. All of the Nungs in this photo were killed during the attack.





FOB 4, which the NVA referred to as a "Nung commando base," is shown above in an aerial view taken several years after the attack. Because it was part of a much larger MACV-SOG Command and Control complex (map shown below left) located on the coast of the South China Sea near the Marble Mountains southeast of Da Nang, Vietnam, security was lax. The caves of Marble Mountain, which provided a safe place to launch the attack from and retreat to afterwards, were less than 100 meters away. The perimeter trenches and bunker (marked above in yellow), were not occupied at night. NVA intelligence noted that valuable targets were not protected. The combat forces (enclosed by the green box) were located in the east side of the compound and the logistics, communications, and headquarters (within the area indicated by the orange line) were located in a vulnerable location on the west end of the complex. (From @dawsonswar YouTube channel; " Viet Cong Account of the August 23, 1968 Attack on MACV-SOG" at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtGnwdbPE2E>)



Damage at FOB 4 after the attack (Photo courtesy Larry Trimble)



Remains of outhouse where NVA sappers died. (Photo courtesy Larry Trimble)



The General in charge of what was popularly known as the 20th brigade, Nguyen Van Tri, is quoted as saying they picked the target partly because it was so convenient to approach, and possibly infiltrate. The base was less than 100 yards from concealment at the base of Marble Mountain. His NVA/VC 20th Brigade had a bold plan which included 5 main sites of conflict. It was imperative that they keep the helicopters from the nearby Marble Mountain Air Facility on the ground, so he sent a contingent near there to bring continuous indirect fire. The outside security detachment on Marble Mountain needed to be eliminated. Reinforcements from the ocean side needed to be prevented. Indirect fire on FOB4 needed to come from varied locations, including one on the far side of Marble Mountain. And of course there were several objectives inside the camp, including USSF Green Berets, the Nungs, the POW compound, ammunition and other storage, and the TOC to target the leaders.

Ken explains and shows each of these as the tale unfolds. It is an unforgettable rendition seen from the enemy's eyes. The video is only 20 minutes long but feels like it contains far more information. If you want to skip directly to this video it is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtGnwdbPE2E>. ❖



Scan to view "Viet Cong Account of the August 23, 1968 Attack on MACV-SOG" on @DawsonsWar on YouTube.

## To read more on the attack of FOB 4, including first hand accounts:

"16 SF KIA, FOB 4/CCN, August 23, 1968" by John Stryker Meyer published in the August 2023 Sentinel; <https://www.specialforces78.com/16-sf-kias-august-23-1968-nva-through-the-wire-fob-4-ccn-2/>

"FOB4 Overrun on August 23, 1968: Prelude to Becoming the Commanding Officer of the MACV-SOG One Zero (1-0) School" by Travis Mills, published in the March 2018 Sentinel; <https://www.specialforces78.com/fob4-overrun-on-august-23-1968/>

"Attack on FOB 4: Worst Day in Army Special Forces History" by Stavros Atlamazoglou, most recently published in *Coffee or Die* magazine, it was originally published by *Sandboxx News*, September 29, 2021; <https://www.coffeeordie.com/article/fob-4-special-forces-vietnam>



To read the interview with Major General Nguyen Van Tri, visit <https://sknc.qdnd.vn/ky-niem-sau-sac/tran-danh-vang-doi-ngu-hanh-son-502553>. This was published in a Vietnamese publication, so you may need to utilize browser translation capabilities.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Howard "How" Miller

**Date and Unit Of Service:** March 67 to August 70; 5th SFG (A), A325 Duc Hue Sep 69 to Aug 70

**Military Schools Attended:** SFQC Medic, Vietnamese Language School.

**Highest Rank Obtained:** SGT

**Civilian Career:** Mainly outside sales representing top-of-the-line products.

**Additional Education:** UMASS Boston 3 years

**Why I Joined Special Forces?** So I could contribute with the abilities I thought I might have.

**My Favorite Story:** How we were receiving fire in Cambodia and I quickly took out a target with my M79 grenade launcher with a shot from the hip, right on target. The next shot was a hooch in the distance and, aiming carefully with the sight, I watched as my shot went sailing over the entire building.

**The Guys I Never Forgot:** Vietnamese and Cambodian CIDG, my A team, medical training class.

**The Best Thing to Happen to Me in the Service:** Joining SF  
**Additional Comments:** Becoming the editor of the Chapter 78 Sentinel has been quite a learning experience (first issue as editor was the January 2021 issue). Researching for stories has helped me place my combat experience in context with what others were doing at the same time. Back then most of us did not have a need to know. ❖

# EARTHQUAKE

## Brigadier General Robert F. Titus

**Fighter Pilot | Test Pilot | Leader**



### BG Robert F. 'EARTHQUAKE' Titus

6 Dec 1926 – 8 Sep 2024

Army Paratrooper—82nd Airborne



Korean War: F-51 Fighter Pilot—101 Missions



Test Pilot—Century Series & Zero Launch F-100



Nonstop Trans-Polar Flight—F-100 Fighter



Germany: Nuclear Alert – F-105 Fighter Pilot



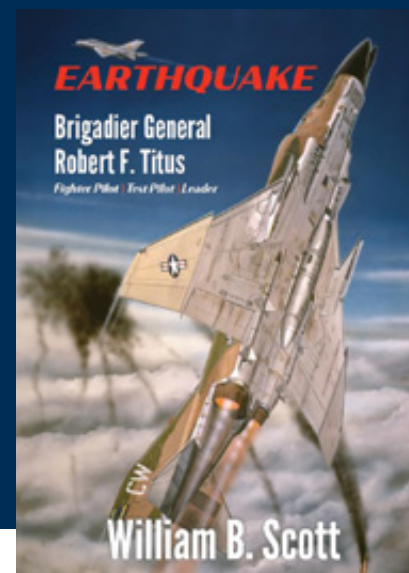
Vietnam: Cdr. Skoshi Tigers F-5C;  
> 350 Combat Missions



Vietnam: Cdr. 389th TFS — Three MiG-21 Kills;  
100 Combat Missions in F-4 Phantom



Program Officer – F-15 Eagle Fighter



By William B Scott

Special Forces and air-to-ground references excerpted from *EARTHQUAKE: Brigadier General Robert F. Titus — Fighter Pilot | Test Pilot | Leader*; North Slope Publications, March 24, 2024; VIETNAM—pages 75-77, 86, MG JOE ARBUCKLE ACCOUNT—pages 132-134, KOREA—pages 1-3 and 6-7; used with permission.

**Editor's note:** The brave pilots of both fixed and rotating wing aircraft that were so critical to Special Forces troops on the ground were amazing. Brigadier General Robert F. Titus was one who stood out among these men and went on to have a remarkable and impactful career, as noted in the book *Earthquake* (his nickname). The author shares this excerpt highlighting his close combat support.

### VIETNAM

In April 1966, the 4503rd Tactical Fighter Squadron (Provisional) at Bien Hoa was officially disbanded and the former test unit renamed the 10th Fighter Commando Squadron—which Titus would command—under the 3rd Fighter Wing. Combat missions were all flown by American pilots, while Vietnamese pilots were being trained at Williams AFB.

When Titus left the States, he led a flight of seven F-5Cs to Bien Hoa, refueling in the air several times en route.

"I stayed there [from May 1966 to January 1967] and flew some 300 combat missions—bombing the jungle and targets of opportunity; whatever we had to do," he said. A significant number of missions were tasked to provide close air support for ground troops.

One dicey mission rescued a MIKE FORCE team, a small unit surrounded by an enemy force. An American officer was calling for air-delivered ordnance or artillery to take out Viet Cong that were "danger close." However, the area was blanketed with clouds. Titus knew the patrol would never survive without air support—and that was his unit's primary mission. He carefully descended through the cloud deck, not knowing whether—as pilots wryly joke—"there were rocks in those clouds," and told the Special Forces commander to call when he heard the aircraft overhead.

The officer did so, Titus pulled the fighter into a 90-270-degree turn to ensure he was on the exact flight path he'd just flown outbound, but going the opposite direction, and ordered the ground commander to





10th Fighter Commando Squadron "Skoshi Tigers" F-5 Freedom Fighters at Bien Hoa. (Courtesy of the General Titus Family)

"pop smoke." "Earthquake" spotted the plume, adjusted his run-in track slightly, and dropped two cans of napalm precisely where the trapped soldier directed. The ensuing firestorm significantly dampened Viet Cong attackers' enthusiasm, allowing the patrol to escape. The F-5C was exposed to small arms fire, but Titus landed at Bien Hoa unscathed.

That night, he was in the Skoshi Tigers' small bar, when word came that somebody was at the door, asking to see him. There stood a sweaty, dirty Green Beret first lieutenant, his face smeared with camouflage grease paint. It was the commander of that trapped unit Titus had supported earlier in the day. The officer expressed great appreciation for the pilot's gutsy attack, noting that, if not for his intervention, everybody in that patrol would have been killed. He then presented Titus a bottle of champagne and invited him over to the MIKE FORCE compound.

The Bien Hoa-based outfit was a detachment of Mobile Strike Force Command, a highly effective Army Special Forces component that routinely conducted quick-reaction raids, reconnaissance, intelligence-gathering, and search and destroy patrols. Comprising a few Green Beret lieutenants, non-commissioned officers and Nung fighters, MIKE FORCE units were named after Special Forces Lieutenant Colonel Miguel de la Pena, who had commanded the first group in 1964. Typically, Nungs—people of Chinese descent—were recruited locally. Many were former French Foreign Legion troops, but others were criminals who had been released specifically to fight the Viet Cong.

Titus accepted the invitation, joining USAF Captain Mark Berent, an F-100 fighter pilot based at Bien Hoa, who had "spent much time with the Special Forces III Corps MIKE FORCE, including going on patrol with them in the Loc Ninh area," according to Berent's author website.

Another historically significant Skoshi Tigers mission occurred on July 9, 1966, in support of a complex Army operation designed to lure a sizable Viet Cong force into a trap. Commander of the 1st Infantry Division (*The Big Red One*), Major General William E. DePuy, had tasked Colonel Sidney Berry to organize an ostensibly vulnerable convoy as bait. Berry "chose the Minh Thanh Road/Route 245, which branched off Highway 13, as the best site for the operation," according to an official Army history.

Berry notified the local Vietnamese Province Chief of the convoy's destination, suspecting one of the chief's staff members was an enemy informant.

Designated Task Force Dragoon, the convoy moved out early in the morning, preceded by artillery and air strikes on suspected Viet Cong ambush positions. At 11:10 a.m., the Viet Cong attacked the string of vehicles—but were surprised to also encounter tanks and M113 armored personnel carriers. A vicious firefight erupted.

Titus and other Skoshi Tiger pilots joined F-100 Super Sabres and heavily armed gunships to provide blistering air support, dropping napalm and bombs, and making repeated strafing runs with 20-mm ammo. The battle was ferocious, both on the ground and in the air, requiring pilots to fly multiple sorties.

"I returned to [re-arm and] refuel," Titus recalled, "and went back several times. It was an hours-long operation."

The Viet Cong started withdrawing around 12:30 p.m. and attempted to organize a counterattack, which was quickly thwarted.

Twenty-five American soldiers were killed in what's known as the Battle of Minh Thanh Road. The outgunned Viet Cong regiment suffered massive losses: "238 killed...and a further 300 were believed to have been killed, but the bodies were removed," according to the Army's historical account.

That mission earned Titus his third Distinguished Flying Cross, this time with a "Combat V" symbol.

The award citation provides more details than the recipient does:

*"...to...Lieutenant Colonel Robert F. Titus...for heroism while participating in aerial flight as a pilot of the 10th Fighter Commando Squadron while participating in aerial flight near Route 13, Republic of Vietnam, on 9 July 1966. On that date, Colonel Titus demonstrated outstanding airmanship and courage in the highly successful accomplishment of a close air support mission under extremely hazardous conditions, including continuous exposure to intensive, hostile ground fire. Colonel Titus executed multiple bombing and strafing attacks on a Viet Cong force which had ambushed a friendly forces convoy. The close air support he provided disrupted the hostile offensive and denied the opportunity for pressing effective attacks on friendly personnel and equipment. The outstanding heroism and selfless devotion to duty displayed by Colonel Titus reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force."*

Characteristically, he dismisses the honor. “I’ve never been much on decorations,” he said. “Sometimes, they ignore [more deserving actions] where you had a hairy experience.” He noted that the value of such decorations was diminished by pilots receiving as many as three Silver Stars and numerous Air Medals for leading combat missions over North Vietnam’s “Route Pack VI”. Titus and other USAF, Navy and Marine Corps pilots flew—and often led—countless missions in that sector, but never received a medal.

The Marine Corps had just the opposite mentality, rarely handing out decorations for even unbelievably valiant combat accomplishments. Titus also made a point of saluting helicopter air crews for flying some of the most dangerous missions of the war—especially search and rescue efforts to retrieve downed pilots and ground forces in dire straits.

## POST-VIETNAM HEADQUARTERS ASSIGNMENT

During a post-Vietnam headquarters assignment, Titus fought long and hard to ensure the USAF’s next-generation F-15 Eagle fighter would be equipped with an internal 20-mm cannon. To underscore how critical a gun-equipped fighter is, when supporting ground troops, the book includes this account by US Army Maj. Gen. Joe Arbuckle (Ret.):

Although not available to [Titus] in 1973, an example of a gun-armed fighter having a major positive impact was related by retired Army Major General Joe Arbuckle, an advisor with a South Vietnamese unit, charged with calling in air strikes:

“On 30 Mar 72, the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) launched the largest offensive of the entire Vietnam War. Over 120,000 NVA troops assaulted across the border into South Vietnam on three major axes. They came with tanks, heavy artillery, anti-aircraft weapons, etc., and the assault lasted until Oct 72. The NVA was aided by the local Viet Cong in coordinated attacks against us.

“At that time, the only combat troops left on the ground were us [American] advisors. I was then detachment commander for Advisory Team 22, and we only had 55 advisors on the entire team spread across II Corps from Qui Nhon on the coast to Pleiku, Kontum, Tan Cahn, etc. near the Ho Chi Minh trail. We were soon operating with two- and three-man advisory teams attached to South Vietnamese units.



Awarding then-1st Lt. Joe Arbuckle (tall officer at far left) the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star. (Courtesy of the General Titus Family)

“The NVA hit our Corps with at least three divisions totaling over 50,000 troops. The ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) were surprised and overwhelmed; many of them dropped their weapons and ran. We were always concerned about the ARVN running and leaving us behind. Within the first three weeks of the assault, we lost nearly half of our team, mostly WIA’s (wounded in action), but some KIAs (killed in action), and three-fourths of the Corps territory.

“I immediately relinquished command and was sent to where the action was happening, to include...time on the ground at fire bases English, Crystal, Two Bits, etc., in Binh Dinh province, and finally to Phu Cat District. I directed hundreds of air strikes.... It was a wild time and we advisors were in remote areas fighting and existing with the ARVN. A PRC-25 radio was our lifeline for air support and evacuation. It is estimated our combined...efforts killed or wounded 20-40,000 NVA troops in II Corps, mostly due to airstrikes, during this period.

“Our advisor motto: ‘First in, last out.’”

Arbuckle vividly recalled one particular battle near Fire Base English. During the Easter Offensive outlined above, then-1st Lieutenant Arbuckle and another American advisor were flown to a hilltop overlooking a stream and large farm building surrounded by trees.

“We knew the enemy was in those trees,” he said. “I contacted a FAC (Forward Air Controller), who called in several F-4s. I directed airstrikes on enemy positions...but each time the F-4s pulled up, after dropping their bombs, a .51-caliber anti-aircraft gun would start shooting at them. I couldn’t spot that [enemy] gun.”

The F-4s called “Winchester”—no remaining ordnance—and announced they were departing.

“I told the FAC to have the F-4s make a gun run on the farmhouse. The FAC came back, ‘No cannons on F-4s!’ I couldn’t believe it!

Fortuitously, a Navy or Marine Vought A-7 Corsair checked in with the FAC. Arbuckle directed the pilot where to drop several bombs, while searching with binoculars for that deadly .51-caliber AA gun.

“I finally spotted it next to the building in the middle of a dry rice paddy,” he said. “But it was in a covered ‘spider hole’. The cover would be moved, and the gun would fire at the [fighters] when they pulled up. Then the cover would drop back down. I saw the muzzle flashes; that gave them away.”

The A-7 had expended all of its bombs but had a 20-mm cannon. Arbuckle directed the pilot to strafe the hidden gun site, but his rounds missed on the first run. A quick correction call and the A-7’s second gun pass “stitched right across the spider hole. No response from the gun after that.”

An ARVN interpreter later told Arbuckle that the .51-caliber gun was in place to protect the building, which housed an NVA headquarters consisting of 20-40 people.

“That’s an example where a cannon made a believer of me!” Arbuckle asserted.

For his professional, highly effective direction of air assets to eliminate a major NVA facility, Arbuckle was awarded the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star, one of two he received.



## KOREA

Earlier, during the Korean War, Titus flew F-51 “Mustangs” and F-86 “Sabres”. Most F-51 missions were air-to-ground, and the Mustang’s oil cooler was vulnerable to small-arms fire.

- Early 1952  
K-46 — Hoengsong Airfield  
South Korea

It was to be another routine combat sortie north of the Demilitarized Zone that divided Korea, searching for railroads, trains and trucks hauling materiel to enemy troops at the Front. The mission: interdict whatever was moving ammunition, guns, food, etc. to Chinese and North Korean troops. That meant bombing and strafing targets designated by mission planners, as well as targets-of-opportunity.

The force of U.S. Air Force hunters consisted of three North American Aviation F-51 Mustang fighters carrying one 500-pound bomb under each wing and a full load of linked .50-caliber ammunition. Armed with six .50-caliber Browning machine guns, the single-engine, long-range Mustang was one of America’s primary fighter aircraft rushed to Korea, immediately after the North invaded. Later, when jet-powered North American F-86 Sabres arrived, the F-51 reverted to a full-time fighter-bomber role.

First Lieutenant Robert F. Titus had flown numerous combat missions in Korea, and always brought his fighter back to K-46, a 3,000-foot gravel and dirt airstrip carved from a riverbed. His aircraft had collected a few holes from anti-aircraft and small-arms fire on previous missions, but nothing serious.

That run of good luck was about to end.

After bombing and strafing enemy transports and rail lines in North Korea, the three-ship flight was southbound, returning to base. Titus noted his fighter’s engine temperature was climbing rapidly. The Mustang’s cooling system had taken small-arms hits and fluid was streaming behind the aircraft. It was only a matter of time, before the big piston-driven Allison engine would overheat and seize up.

“My feet were getting hot” and the altimeter was unwinding smartly. Not waiting for the 12-cylinder powerplant and massive four-blade propellor to suddenly freeze, Titus jettisoned the canopy, stood on the seat and “went over the side,” he recalls. The horizontal stabilizer whacked the inside of one ankle, “but it didn’t break anything. It was a minor wound and I didn’t bother with it.

“What was interesting, nobody saw me [bail out]. There were only three of us [in the flight]. The other two guys saw the airplane crash, but didn’t see me get out.”

The pilot immediately pulled his ripcord and checked the parachute canopy blossoming overhead. Then he hit the ground—hard. “I was much lower than I thought. I might have been as low as a hundred feet. Maybe higher, but it was pretty low.”

About any other pilot would have broken an ankle or leg, bailing out so close to terra firma. But Titus was no typical Air Force pilot. At the end of World War II, he’d been trained as a paratrooper and had made numerous jumps as a member of the U.S. Army’s elite 82nd Airborne Division. More about that later...

A quick self-assessment confirmed he had no major injuries. “My immediate concern was, ‘Where the Hell am I?’” he said. “I’m somewhat concerned, obviously, wondering what I’m going to do. First up: What are my resources, my assets?”

The downed pilot didn’t have long to wait for a bit of high-velocity direction. “I see these guys coming toward me, and they’re wearing quilted pajamas. So, I pull my pistol and go *bang, bang* and they go *brrrrrrrrt!*”

*Oh shit, this is not good. I’m gonna buy it now!*

Titus’s standard-issue Colt 1911 .45-caliber semiautomatic was no match for Chinese troops armed with full-auto machine guns. He took off, firing on the run, and dove into a bomb crater. Peeking over the rim confirmed that enemy soldiers were closing on his position. As luck would have it, he’d parachuted into the Demilitarized Zone, a stretch of disputed territory near the 38th Parallel, which separated allied and enemy forces.

To avoid being shot or captured, “I figured I’d better hunker down.” But those enemy troops had spotted him and were approaching—fast.

“Then I hear an American voice: ‘Keep your head down and crawl this way.’ I was just north of some friendly positions—an area dotted with Marine [Corps] bunkers. They laid down suppressing fire,” driving away the bad guys, while Titus crawled to the bunker.

The grounded pilot was now miles from his air base, prompting a question: “What the Hell do I do now?” A Marine pointed to a road, “and next thing I knew, I was hitching a ride south on the MSR.” That Main Supply Road was the primary north-south link between troops on the front lines and rear-area supply depots. Trucks routinely traveled it, hauling rations, ammunition “and whatever the troops needed.



First Lieutenant Titus and his F-51 Mustang “No Sweat” in South Korea. [K-46 — Hoengsong Airfield, 1952]. (Courtesy of the General Titus Family)





"Earthquake" Titus and the F-51 he flew on the final official USAF Mustang flight. (Courtesy of the General Titus Family)

They used to haul them right through our base," Titus remembered. "We would trade things [with drivers], like whiskey for guns. We had whiskey, they had guns; we wanted guns."

- Titus claims the numerous close air support and interdiction missions he flew in the Mustang were fairly routine. Obviously, one was considered exceptional, because it warranted a Distinguished Flying Cross, one of four he eventually earned in combat. On March 3, 1952, near Sohui-ri, he led a flight of three F-51s down through dense clouds to attack an enemy position. Ultimately, according to the DFC award citation, "Lieutenant Titus personally destroyed two heavy mortar positions, two bunkers and an ammunition dump."

A low-level mission searching for targets-of-opportunity also hardly qualified as "routine." The flight spotted several enemy bunkers dug into a ridge and immediately attacked. As pilot Bob Herman pulled off from a strafing run, he called, "There's another one at the top."



Brigadier General Robert F. Titus (USAF-Ret.) and "Earthquake" author Bill Scott signing books at the U.S. Air Force Academy, following an "Heritage Moment" event that honored Gen. Titus (25 April 2024). Each Class of 2024 AFA cadet received a copy of the book as he/she entered the Arnold Hall theater that day.

General Titus passed away a few months later on 8 Sept. 2024 and is interred at the USAF Academy cemetery. (Courtesy of the General Titus Family)

Titus was hosing a target lower down, glanced up and saw muzzle flashes from the bunker above him. "I put my pippin on it and gave it a good burst [of .50-caliber rounds]. It really was a little late for that. I needed to yank it and get the Hell out of there. I thought I was going to hit the ridge but didn't." Postflight, a crew chief pulled a tree branch and leaves from the F-51's oil-cooler inlet. Titus literally had flown through treetops along that ridge line.

In his twenties, the pilot had adopted a fatalistic attitude that would remain through a career fraught with such close calls. "I was never [concerned] after the fact," he explained. "I'm on the ground. I'm walking. I'm not worried about what might have been." ♦

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William B. (Bill) Scott is an author and consultant, following a 22-year career with *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, where he served as Rocky Mountain Bureau Chief and wrote more than 2,500 articles on aerospace, flight testing, and military operations. A graduate of the U.S. Air Force Test Pilot School and a licensed commercial pilot, he has logged 2,000 flight hours on 81 aircraft types and holds a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from California State University–Sacramento.

Bill has co-authored *Inside the Stealth Bomber: The B-2 Story* (nonfiction), *Space Wars: The First Six Hours of World War III* and its sequel *Counterspace: The Next Hours of World War III*. His solo-written novel *The Permit*, published in 2012, was inspired

by the tragic death of his eldest son. He has written three non-fiction books, *License to Kill: The Murder of Erik Scott* (released in 2020), *Combat Contrails: Vietnam* (released in 2021), and his most recent book *Earthquake: Brigadier General Robert F. Titus, Fighter Pilot | Test Pilot | Leader* was released in March, 2024. More about his work can be found at [www.williamsboscott.com](http://www.williamsboscott.com).

During his nine years in the U.S. Air Force, Bill flew classified nuclear-sampling missions, worked at the NSA on satellite communications security, and served as a test engineer on fighter and transport aircraft programs. He later managed flight test programs for General Dynamics, Falcon Jet, and Tracor Flight Systems.

Bill and his wife, Linda, live in Colorado. They have two grown sons, Erik and Kevin. Tragically, Erik was killed in July 2010 in a senseless and horrific incident that profoundly changed their lives. ♦

## SFA Chapter 78 June 21, 2025 Chapter Meeting

Photos by Debra Holm



## Guest Speaker, Aaron Maben Retired Green Beret and Cyber Security Specialist

**1** Aaron "Maximum" Maben, former teammate of VP James McLanahan, gave a two-part presentation. He is shown being presented a chapter coin by James.

In the first part, he shared his personal story of a period in which he battled with symptoms including constant fatigue, emotional withdrawal, irritability, and brain fog. He recounted how reading the first line of Chris Frueh, PhD's book *Operator Syndrome* sparked an "awakening," leading him to realize he wasn't alone and to seek treatment. His journey led him to the Honor Foundation, and Aaron shared lessons he learned there about the process of telling one's story with intention—a process that supports healing and leaves a legacy.

The second part of his talk, "KISS: Keep It Simple Security," walked the group through practical ways to protect personal identity online. His clear, hands-on approach — including live checks during the slideshow and suggestions for available tools— showed how simple security can be. Chapter members are still talking about it!

**2** Aaron was accompanied by his wife, Kathryn.

**3** Len Fein provided a status on Sergio Venegas' work on the Joint Forces Training Base.

**4** Richard Simonian

**5** Ramon Rodriguez

**6** Ham Salley

**7** Art Dolick

**8** Jim Lockhart

**9** Left to right, Johann Hindert, Mike Jameson, and Gary Macnamara.

**10** Left to right, Wayne Ogelvie, Marla Ogelvie, Travis Mayfield, Mark Miller, and Ramon Rodriguez.

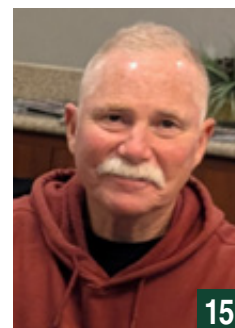
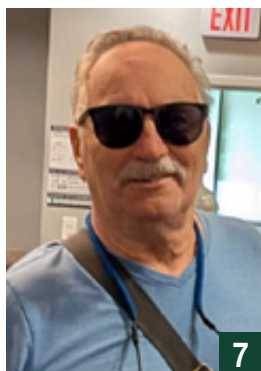
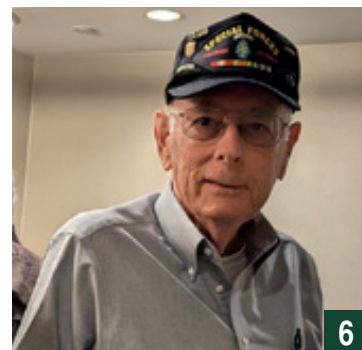
**11** Mark Griffin

**12** James Carter

**13** Doreen Matsumoto

**14** Jim Cragg

**15** Gus Populus





## SFA Chapter 78 Out and About

## Chapter 78 Salutes Sunburst Academy Class #35 Graduates

On June 20, 2025, Chapter 78 Vice President James McLanahan, chapter member Debra Holm, and Allie Lloyd of APEX Service Partners attended the Sunburst Youth Challenge Academy Class #35 graduation at Cottonwood Church in Los Alamitos. Congratulations to the 171 cadets who completed the 22-week residential program, including 15 who earned high school diplomas (pictured below, bottom left). Our chapter is proud to support Sunburst cadets, who have volunteered at several of our events. Prior to the ceremony, James presented the Distinguished Leadership, Education, and Training Award to Cadet Uriel Espinoza for his scholastic achievement and leadership. ❖



At left, Chapter 78 VP James McLanahan presents Cadet Uriel Espinoza, shown at right, with Chapter 78's award recognizing his distinguished scholastic achievement and leadership. (Photos by Debra Holm)



## Sacramento Welcomes Its Newest Paramedic/Firefighter, Logan Lopez

SFA Chapter 78 President Aaron Brandenburg pins the badge onto his son-in-law, former US Marine, Logan Lopez's uniform at his graduation from the Fire Academy. Graduating after months of extremely hard work, he is now a Paramedic/Firefighter for Sacramento Fire Department. Congratulations Logan! ❖



The family, left to right: Coulter Lopez, Logan Lopez, Ashley Lopez, Wade Lopez, Kathleen Brandenburg, Aaron Brandenburg

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