



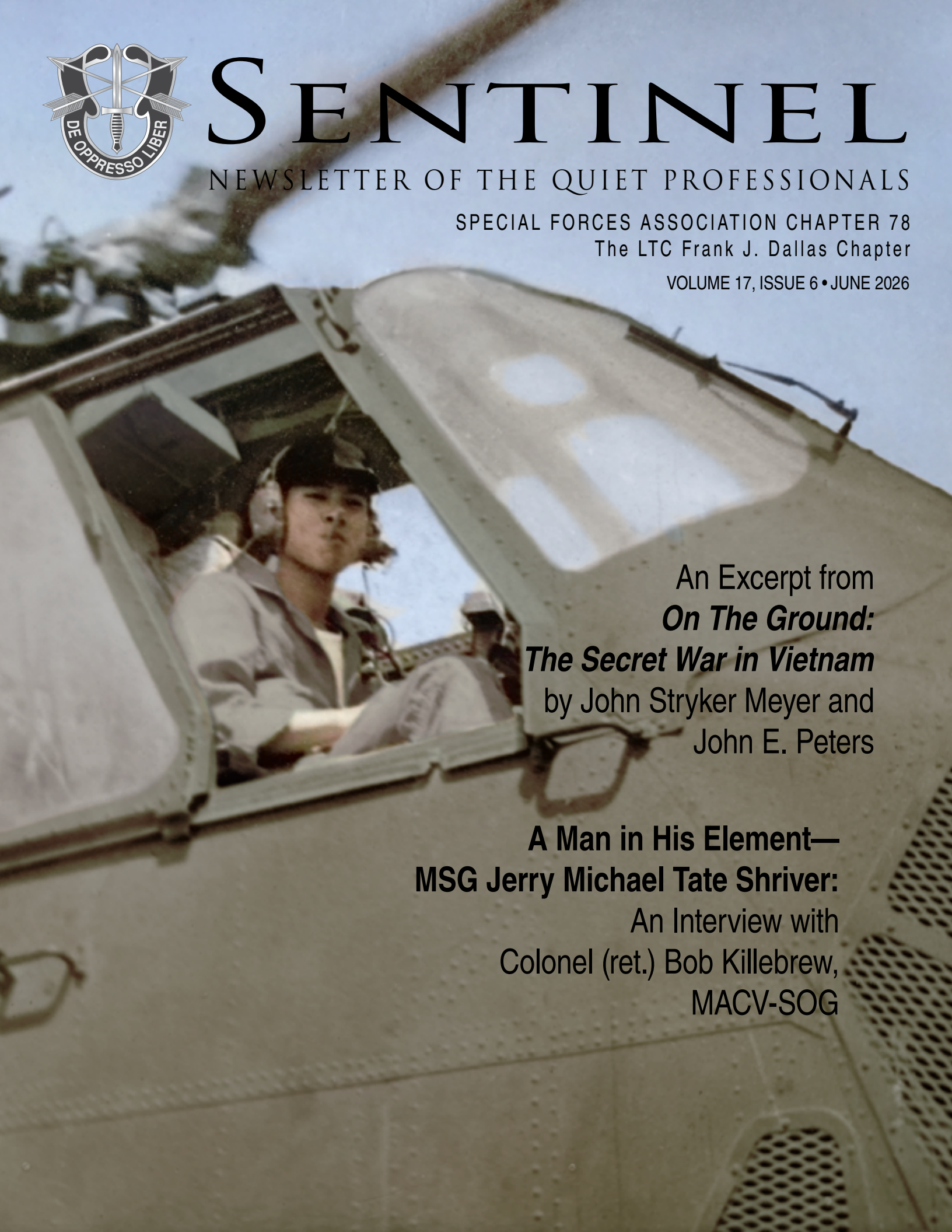
SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

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An Excerpt from
***On The Ground:
The Secret War in Vietnam***
by John Stryker Meyer and
John E. Peters

**A Man in His Element—
MSG Jerry Michael Tate Shriver:**
An Interview with
Colonel (ret.) Bob Killebrew,
MACV-SOG



IN THIS ISSUE:

From the President 1

From the Editor 2

SFA Chapter 88 Concludes Operation “Quiet Professionals” With Monument Dedication..... 2

An Excerpt from *On The Ground: The Secret War in Vietnam* by John Stryker Meyer and John E. Peters 3

A Man in His Element—MSG Jerry Michael Tate Shriver: An Interview with Colonel (ret.) Bob Killebrew, MACV-SOG..... 10

SFA Chapter 78 Out and About..... 14



FRONT COVER: South Vietnamese Kingbee Pilot, Capt Nguyen Quy An posed for this photo in 1968. Read the excerpt from *On The Ground: The Secret War in Vietnam* by John Stryker Meyer and John E. Peters beginning on [page 3](#) to learn about his selfless bravery on a day in June of that year. He was sent to extract RT Lion, which consisted of consisted of 1-0 Pat Watkins, 1-1 Lou “Jake Three Zero” DeSeta, 1-2 George Godwin, and seven Bru Montagnards, from the notorious Area of Operation Oscar 8. (Photo courtesy of Maj. Nguyen Quy An; with edits [colorized] by Debra Holm)

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From the President | June 2026



James McLanahan
President SFA Ch. 78

Ownership, Let's Keep Going

Here we are halfway through the year. So much has happened at home and abroad. Nationally, our military has shifted into high gear from a brief surgical strike in Venezuela to a conflict in Iran. Our chapter has been busy. We are making every effort to honor our past, support the current generation, and inspire future Green Berets.

A brief look at our calendar this year should show the outline of our efforts to steward the profession in this manner. And we are only halfway there. This year we will have hosted, ran, or attended: Time at the shooting range, a fundraiser with over 200 people from all over the country with special guest (and chapter member) Dick Thompson and GWOT-era commandos (Will Walker and Joseph Ivanov) doing a presentation on their tech company Onebrief, their efforts to get the French Resistance Monument established in Normandy. To which they graciously invited us to be VIP guests this year. The National Special Forces Association Conference was in Florida, hosted by 7th Group. That's not everything; it's just the highlights.

We use our monthly guest speakers, the *Sentinel*, and YouTube to preserve and share our history. Kudos to How Miller and Debra Holm for winning SFA Newsletter of the Year (again). We support active duty service members, like our new member joining us on the trip to Normandy. Who by the time of your reading this should have already jumped in France with other current and former Green Berets. We invite local ROTC Cadets to our events, the luncheon, and the Christmas Party and present the SFA Awards of Excellence to them at their award ceremony. We support the Sunburst Cadets with the same Outstanding Cadet award as the ROTC Cadets. And the year is only half over. It works because these members owned those action items. They made that happen.

Let's do some great work this second half of the year. I would love for us to go back to Iron Mike's and shoot. Let's also find more things to do. We have awards to present in the second half of the year; we have checks to present. And I know if/when a Green Beret is injured while training or something worse, this chapter will step up. Do we go to the beach, the mountains, or iFly Indoor Skydiving? Would you like to tour Anduril? Please send me and our VP Don Deatherage your ideas, your AAR comments, and your encouragement. We can put it together. We have a strong team and a good tailwind. The more people take ownership, the more we get done. ❖

De Oppresso Liber,
James McLanahan
President, SFA Chapter 78



SFA Chapter 78 Monthly Meeting

June 20, 2026

Breakfast – 0800 • Meeting – 0830

Courtyard by Marriott
5865 Katella Ave, Room A
Cypress, CA 90630

Please send RSVP by Monday, June 15 to
VP Don Deatherage @ drdeathca@gmail.com

Next month—July 18, 2026

Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos
The Pub at Fiddlers Green

2026 Meeting Schedule

July 18 • August 15
September 19 • October 17 • November 21
December (to be announced)

From the Editor | June 2026



How Miller
Sentinel Editor

We open this *Sentinel* with our cover shot of an amazingly ice-cool and selfless Vietnamese H34 King Bee pilot, **CPT An**, who would hover under fire to extract his SOG teams.

John “Tilt” Stryker Meyer, who co-authored with John E. Peters *On The Ground: The Secret War in Vietnam*, was a 1-0 (recon team leader), working for the Studies and Observation Group (SOG), whose job was to lead teams across the fence into Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam. In our first story, an excerpt from the book, CPT An,

flying a skeleton crew by choice, flew his King Bee H34 helicopter into exfiltrate RT Lion.

Tilt shares with us a portion of the first chapter from *On the Ground*, about a newly recruited and trained team of three Green Berets and seven Bru Montagnards called Recon Team (RT) Lion. This was their first mission, and it was to the target area known as Oscar 8 in Laos, northwest of the A Chau Valley, the most dangerous place that SOG covered, with no up-to-date intel and sure to be occupied by a really scary number of NVA troops.

In this great book can be found other SOG stories, including Chapters 7-9 about the costliest day in SF history, 23 August 1968. And it’s a good companion to his *Across the Fence*, another book about SOG and the hair-raising missions they executed.

We continue to highlight SOG with a piece about another SOG 1-0, who was a legend at the time he was serving, holding a record of 93 missions. Hanoi Hannah would occasionally make reference to him on her propaganda and music radio programs, even though none of the SOG troops could talk about the unit for 20 years.

In *“A Man in His Element—MSG Jerry Michael Tate Shriver,”* Chapter 78 member, author, and frequent contributor to the *Sentinel*, **Greg Walker** shares with us an interview he had with SOG veteran **COL (ret.) Bob Killebrew** discussing SOG and Jerry.

On their Hatchet Force, Bob was the Company XO and also the 1st Platoon Leader, with Jerry as his Platoon Sergeant.

Jerry knew his final mission was a suicide mission, asking a “Yard” that was not assigned to take care of his dog, Klaus.

Wrapping up the issue is “Out and About,” highlighting Chapter 78’s support of local ROTC programs through end-of-year award presentations recognizing outstanding graduates. Chapter leaders Gary Macnamara, James McLanahan, and Jim Cragg presented Awards of Excellence at UCLA and Cal State Fullerton, while Gary also represented the 82nd Airborne Division Association to present awards at the Santiago High School JROTC award ceremony in Garden Grove.

We thank our contributors for helping preserve these important stories. We hope you enjoy this issue of the *Sentinel* and encourage you to share it with others who value the legacy of Special Forces. ❖

How Miller, *Sentinel* Editor

SFA Chapter 88 Concludes Operation “Quiet Professionals” With Monument Dedication

After more than a year of planning and coordination, [Chapter 88 successfully dedicated and donated a new Special Forces memorial monument](#) to the Jacksonville National Cemetery on April 11, 2026.

The ceremony drew about 125 attendees to witness the unveiling of the 3-foot-high gray granite monument placed next to five other monuments on the Memorial Walk. The ceremony featured support from the U.S. Army 3rd Infantry Division Band from Fort Stewart, Georgia, who performed a medley of military music for arriving guests; an Honor Guard of soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center, who posted the colors; and remarks by Florida Lieutenant Governor and retired Special Forces veteran Jay Collins, who praised the chapter’s efforts to honor and remember Special Forces soldiers and veterans.

Thank you to all *Sentinel* readers who donated in support of this project.

At left, Lt. Gov. Jay Collins congratulates Chapter 88 President David Ware for the chapter’s efforts to honor and remember the Special Forces soldiers and veterans who served with SF units. (Photo by Mark Geil with [Mark Geil Photography](#) of Orange Park, FL)



An Excerpt from

On The Ground: The Secret War in Vietnam

by John Stryker Meyer and John E. Peters

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From Chapter One: "It's Your Time"

With Watkins, Godwin, and three Bru in the leading 1st Air Cav helicopter and DeSeta and four Bru trailing in the second, the team flew west at just 600 feet off the ground. They soon crossed the Tchepone River into Laos. They could see NVA troops scattering for cover as they passed over and watched as green tracer rounds tracked their flight. It's going to be a long day, Watkins thought to himself. A very long day.

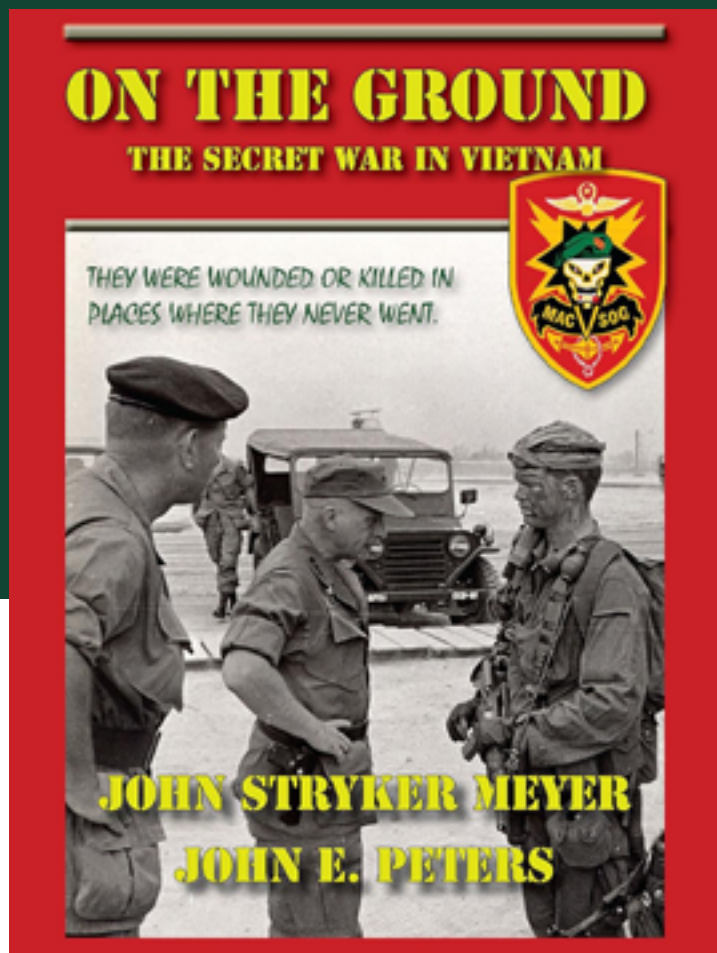
But then he smiled. DeSeta was wearing his communist "boonie hat," a black floppy thing with a bright red star on it. DeSeta had claimed it from a dead NVA soldier while he was with the 173rd and now wore it faithfully, like it was a good luck charm. What made Watkins smile was DeSeta's habit of having the red star face forward whenever he was on point and face to the rear when he was in the tail-gunner's slot. Lou DeSeta was definitely something.

Watkins was brought back to the business at hand when he got word they were approaching the LZ. He looked out and marveled at what he saw below him. Because Oscar-8 had been worked over so many times by B-52s and other bombers, it resembled nothing so much as a cratered moonscape. Trees were almost nonexistent and what cover there was tended to be low and sparse, the exception being the elephant grass, which could grow to heights of six to eight feet.

Based on what he could see, Watkins was not overly surprised to discover that the team was going to be dropped off on the rim of a substantial bomb crater. There was not a hell of a lot of choice, except perhaps for the size and depth of the things.

Once on the ground, the 10-man team quickly formed up and, led by Watkins on point, moved smartly away from the open terrain around the crater and about 50 meters into the underbrush and elephant grass. As the team moved south into deeper cover, NVA anti-aircraft artillery opened up on the departing choppers.

Watkins made sure the tail gunner was concealing the team's tracks and then he made his first contact with Covey 265, the team's overhead air traffic controller and communications lifeline. Covey was there



for one reason and one reason alone, to protect the team and keep it alive. If a recon team had a god to which they directed prayers of supplication, Covey was it.

Unfortunately, communications with this airborne deity were immediately put into serious doubt, if not jeopardy, when Covey told Watkins they would have talk "in the clear" because he, Covey, did not have the encryption code book he needed for secure comms.

Jesus fucking Christ. Watkins needed a precise fix on where the team was located and this was definitely not the kind of information you wanted broadcast in the middle of Oscar-8, or anywhere else for that matter. But what could he do? The team had to know exactly where it was, especially if they had to call in air support. Watkins got the coordinates and relayed them to DeSeta, who marked their position on the map.

In an additional blow, Covey informed Watkins that one of the gunships had been shot down near Highway 92. Fortunately the crew, including two wounded, had managed to escape and had been picked up. Nonetheless, Covey was going to have to divert an A-1E Skyraider away from RT Lion in order to destroy what was left of the downed Huey. In short, God's eyes were being taken off the ball.

Realizing things were rapidly moving from bad to worse, Watkins instructed DeSeta to set out three claymore mines and get ready for possible enemy contact. He also informed everyone that the crater they had just left behind would be their first rally point should they get hit and separated. The young Bru looked scared and none too confident.

After what seemed a minor eternity, the team heard a large explosion about a kilometer-and-a-half away. Now, thought Watkins, we'll get some covering support. This made him feel a little better until Covey came back on the radio with the news that there was a minor problem. RT Lion had been inserted at the wrong location. One bomb crater looking pretty much like another, it seemed they had been mistakenly inserted very near the junction of Highways 92 and 922. Jesus, they were sitting at the pulsing heart of Oscar-8.

But not to worry, Covey said. He was busy talking to the aircrews about the possibility of coming back, picking up the team, and reinserting it at the right LZ. He suggested the team "hold tight," as if it might inadvertently wander off or relax into beach-party mode.

When the shit comes, it comes in buckets. As a thoroughly pissed Watkins was explaining the situation to an incredulous Godwin, DeSeta crawled over to tell them that Man-Loi, the tail gunner, had spotted beaucoup NVA swarming around the LZ. Watkins contacted Covey, informed him of the enemy activity developing around the team, and asked how long it would be before the choppers arrived to get them out. After making a pass over them, Covey helpfully confirmed there was indeed lots of enemy activity around RT Lion, but that all the helicopters were returning to base in order to drop off their wounded and refuel. Sit tight. The only things tight were Watkins' jaw and maybe an asshole or two among the teenage Bru.

With an enemy attack now almost inevitable, and night fast approaching, Watkins thought it best to try and move the team to higher ground. They needed every advantage, however slight that they could finagle, manufacture, or pray into existence. Sitting tight was not going to cut it.

The team pulled in their claymores and began a slow and dangerous trek toward what looked to be a slight rise in the ground. As they moved for 10 minutes and listened for 10, they could hear enemy voices on both sides of their line of march. The team was nearly surrounded. Like being threatened with a hanging, being surrounded has a marvelous way of focusing the mind and suddenly RT Lion moved with a much greater sense of stealth and caution. They managed to reach the rise undetected and secure a perimeter.

With the team settled in its RON (Remain Over Night), Watkins told DeSeta and Godwin he was not happy with doing nothing. He didn't like the idea of just sitting and waiting for the enemy to attack. So he decided to take two of the Bru and move forward to Highway 92, set up an observation post, and see what there was to see.

It is not recorded what Godwin or DeSeta thought about Watkins' idea, but he was the One-Zero and if he wanted to wander off into the night surrounded by enemy troops and take a little look-see at Highway 92, well, what could they say?

Before he moved out, however, Watkins checked their commo situation. Covey had retired for the evening and turned RT Lion's health and happiness over to Moonbeam, the mysterious phantom of the night who always seemed to be there when needed. When finally reached, Moonbeam assured RT Lion they were loud and clear and that in future commo checks all they need do was break squelch (key the mike without speaking) three times to indicate they were alive and well.



Sgt. George Godwin, left and Staff Sgt. Pat Watkins, at FOB 3, Khe Sanh prior to launching into Oscar 8 target in June 1968.

The last thing before moving out was to ensure everyone understood what the night's password was. Watkins didn't want to be hosed down returning to his own team. When the Bru going with him looked confused regarding the password Watkins decided it would be best if he took point, walking the lead position in the patrol.

The trio cautiously moved forward about 150 meters where they ran into Highway 92. They could hear voices and vehicle traffic. Then, their luck continuing its dismal descent, the sky cleared and a bright moon came out to cast an iridescent glow over everything.

Even though they had heard voices and vehicle noise, once they reached the road there was no traffic in sight so Watkins boldly stepped out onto the highway. Several One-Zeros quietly turned over in their graves as Watkins stood there in the moonlight looking around. He could see nothing, but he could hear lots of voices and activity on the opposite side of the road. He immediately melted back into the brush about 10 meters and set up an observation line, with Er about 30 meters to his right and Rong the same distance to his left. Er and Rong put out claymores facing up and down the road. If they needed to they would set them off and buy time as they made a run for it.

Watkins was nearly blinded when the first set of headlights rounded the bend not five minutes later. This was stark evidence of NVA confidence in the fact they owned the night, at least in Oscar-8. The first vehicle was soon followed by three trucks packed with supplies. They passed so close to Watkins he could clearly see the soldiers in the cabs, smoking and chatting. He could also make out the foliage that had been draped and fastened across the tops of the trucks to camouflage and conceal them from American aerial reconnaissance flights. The NVA were clearly confident in their control of Oscar-8.

In short order 10 more fully loaded trucks passed. Interspersed between them were dozens of soldiers and civilians pushing rickety bicycles piled high with everything imaginable, from live chickens to weapons and ammunition.

To Watkins' utter amazement, the next vehicle was a goddamn bulldozer, its blade up in the air, and an NVA soldier signaling directions with a flashlight. Watkins was barely over the bulldozer when along came two Russian T-34 tanks, their gun barrels facing aft, and their external fuel tanks mounted just as the manual said.

"Un-fucking-real," he whispered. This was going to make some REMF's (Rear Echelon Mother Fucker) day. Images of a special R&R (Rest & Relaxation) reward flight to Taipei played through his mind.

It took more than three hours for the NVA parade to pass. As the last of its rumblings grew faint, Watkins came out of his daze and looked around. He immediately saw Rong crawling toward him with a panicked look on his face. Watkins had been so mesmerized by all the traffic he had forgotten about young Bru team members, Er and Rong.

When Rong reached him he could barely talk. Not proficient in English under the very best of conditions, what he was now attempting to tell Watkins bordered on incoherent. Watkins calmed him down as best he could and made him start over. Rong said he'd been watching the road traffic, just like Watkins, and had been as taken with it as he was. While he was staring at all the vehicles passing by, a hand had reached out, and given his arm a shake. A Montagnard soldier, one of those the NVA had pressed into service, said, "It's your time for guard duty." Fortunately Rong was too stunned to do anything but nod his head and grunt a kind of acknowledgment. It was enough, however, and the

Montagnard moved off into the brush. Rong was badly rattled and of the definite opinion that the three of them ought to abandon Highway 92 and get back to the rest of the team as fast as possible. Watkins agreed.

He let Er take point as they tried to maneuver themselves out of the tight fix they were in. The sun was about to come up and they could hear voices all around them. They could even smell food and coffee being prepared. Making an exit unseen was going to take some serious doing.

As luck would have it, Er took a slightly different track than the one Watkins had taken and he stumbled into a 37mm anti-aircraft position almost immediately. The crew was sitting behind a stack of ammo crates around a small fire, cooking rice and talking. Before Watkins could tell Er to bluff his way past, the 16-year old, NVA-loathing kid opened up with his CAR-15 on full automatic. As if this wasn't bad enough, he failed to hit a single enemy soldier, so Watkins quickly tossed two grenades into the breakfast circle while Er reloaded and Rong opened fire.

Watkins shouted for them to follow him as he took point and went crashing off through the thin vegetation toward their RON site. Despite the noise they were making, they could hear NVA troops hollering at each other and sounding the general alarm. All unholy hell was about to break loose.

As they approached the RON site in the near dawn Watkins heard DeSeta demand the password. He responded and asked if DeSeta had made contact with Moonbeam. "Affirmative," DeSeta replied.



Lou "Jake Three Zero" DeSeta, behind a .50 caliber heavy machine gun at FOB 3, with two members of RT Lion

“Then tell them we’re declaring a Prairie Fire Emergency and we want out of here ASAP.” While DeSeta radioed the distress call to Moonbeam, Watkins and Rong quickly buried three M-14 “toe-popper” anti-personnel mines behind them and then moved forward to join the rest of RT Lion.

The Prairie Fire Emergency was the fabled and ultimate “force multiplier” that gave SOG its astounding kill ratio of hundreds and at times thousands to one. If a team was not overrun and wiped out in the first few minutes of contact, the enemy knew with dead certainty there was going to be hell to pay. A rain of bombs and fire was headed their way and there was nothing they could do to stop it.

Moonbeam came back with the word that two F-4 Phantom jets were on station and armed with 500-pound bombs. They were asking to be directed to any “hard” targets that needed attention. “Tell them we have a 37mm position and storage area they can work,” Watkins said to DeSeta.

Watkins then asked Godwin if he had the exact coordinates for the team’s location. With 500-pound ordnance about to fall out of the sky, being exact was a matter of life or death. Godwin assured him they were right where he had marked them.

While the team’s position was being passed to Moonbeam, Watkins took the opportunity to deliver a pep talk to the Bru, who were looking a little green around the gills. He told them they had traveled far and trained hard for this day, and now the gods were about to reward them with an opportunity to kill beaucoup NVA, those lousy bastards who had burned their villages and raped their women. By the end, he was pretty worked up himself. All he needed was a chalk board and he could have been Knute Rockne. The Bru looked better, if not impressed.

Godwin interrupted Watkins’ speech to tell him Moonbeam had passed the team’s location to the fast movers and they planned to deploy their ordnance using the Sky Spot method. This meant that owing to the heavy anti-aircraft activity they were being forced to release their ordnance at high altitude, which was to say out of sight.

For a team on the ground, the real translation of Sky Spot was, “We’ll be way up here in the sky moving very fast and hoping to hell we hit the spot, and that the spot we hit is not you or something you cherish.” Sky Spot wasn’t exactly Russian roulette, but the difference between the two was debatable.

With bombs on the way, Watkins directed the team into a crater and told the Bru to keep their heads down. In the distance they could hear long bursts of AK-47 fire coming from Highway 92. This meant the NVA were not sure where the team was and were conducting a “reconnaissance by fire,” which consisted of massacring the underbrush with automatic weapons fire to either a) force the team to reveal itself by returning fire or b) kill or wound the team members where they hid. Inelegant, but effective, and they were getting closer.

Watkins was wondering what had happened to the F-4s when there was a series of furious explosions. Each one lifted the team off the ground and bounced it around like being tossed around in a skillet. One minute it was relatively quiet and the next it was like the end of the world. Dust and smoke blotted out the morning light.



Almost immediately, a series of secondary explosions began to erupt. Watkins raised himself into a crouch several times, thinking he could begin to move away from the crater, only to be blasted back down. Moonbeam reported that even the Phantoms could see the secondary explosions. It was obviously a successful strike. But it still left RT Lion on the ground and in jeopardy.

Just when he was needed most, however, Covey 265, a Cessna O-2 flown by Captain Gregg Hartness, came on the radio to say he was about 15 minutes out and would soon be over their position. He’d been monitoring the team’s radio frequency all the way up from Da Nang and was fully aware of the urgency of the situation. He would try and locate an LZ and have extraction assets on the way as soon as possible.

Hartness was as good as his word. Once he was on station, and had pinpointed the team’s location, he dropped down to 1,000 feet and began making passes looking for an area where choppers could either set down or hover while the team boarded them. At 1,000 feet the slow moving O-2 looked as vulnerable as a low-flying goose. Not surprisingly, he drew both small arms and 12.7mm anti-aircraft fire. Watkins watched in amazement and admiration as Covey 265 made repeated low and slow passes, green tracers arcing up toward him all the while. He had to be taking hits.

Finally Covey reported he had located a useable LZ about 500 meters away. Now all the team had to do was reach it. Covey gave them the direction in which to move and the team started making its way through the elephant grass. Every few minutes they would give

Covey a “shiny,” or a brief mirror flash, to let him know their progress and so he could make any needed corrections to their line of march. With it being June, it was already hot even this early in the morning and the ground felt like cement under their boots.

Suddenly DeSeta signaled for the team to halt and told Watkins the tail-gunner had sighted NVA troops behind them. Watkins told him to set out a claymore with a four-minute delay-fuse attached. In addition, Watkins told DeSeta to place a white phosphorous grenade in front of the claymore. This was a neat little trick Watkins had learned from Medal of Honor recipient Fred Zabisoski. The idea was that when the claymore detonated, it not only cut a murderous swath through enemy troops up to 50 meters away, but the flash and bang of the phosphorous made the NVA think they had been hit with a marker rocket fired by a FAC (Forward Air Control, or Covey) aircraft. Hopefully this would make the advancing NVA believe they were about to become the targets of an airstrike, which naturally would make them have second thoughts about remaining in the area. At the very least, it would give the recon team valuable minutes while the enemy tried to figure out what it was up against. Four minutes later the claymore went off and the air was filled with white phosphorous smoke and the cries of wounded NVA.

Moving as quickly and as silently as they could through the elephant grass, RT Lion finally made it to the LZ and took up a defensive position in one of the larger craters. Watkins quickly counted heads and pointed where he wanted each team member to go. He peeked over the crater’s rim, took a good look around, and decided he’d been in better places. What he could see was not encouraging, but what he could hear was music to his ears. It was the low, growling roar of approaching A-1E Skyraiders.

With 2,700 horsepower to call on, a Skyraider’s reciprocal engine was one of the most powerful ever placed in a single-engine aircraft. A lumbering Skyraider could carry a massive payload of bombs, rockets, mines, and flares. Moreover, it could deliver them all on a dime. It was the answer to every team’s prayer when it came to close air support. It was also the most terrifying weapons system the NVA faced when they took on a recon team. When the Skyraiders arrived on station, the enemy body count skyrocketed.

The A-1Es arrived just as the team started taking incoming mortar fire. Godwin quickly calculated the coordinates for the mortar’s location and the information was passed on to Covey, who in turn relayed it to the A-1Es. A laconic, whistling voice came back down the line. “It’s crispy critter time, so ya’ll keep your heads down.”

Within seconds the area in front of the team exploded into flame, the deadly napalm coating everything in its erupting path. Flaming NVA soldiers ran briefly toward the team before falling to the ground in agonizing death throes, the hand grenades and ammunition they carried cooking off like firecrackers. The elephant grass was also on fire.

The napalm had definitely slowed the NVA advance, but it had not stopped it. Covey reported that the extraction choppers were five minutes out and the team needed to be ready to move fast.

Two gunships from the 7th Air Cav roared over the LZ. Watkins put out two bright orange marker panels and the gunships confirmed they had the team in sight. As they looped back to make their first strafing run, the gunships reported that a large enemy force was moving toward the LZ

and they were going to attempt to discourage it. As they made their run, pouring M-60 machine gun fire and 2.75 rockets into the enemy, RT Lion could see the air fill with green tracers hitting the helicopters. They were taking a real beating, but they hung in there and kept pouring fire down on the NVA. It was an incredible show of raw guts and determination.

Covey came on the radio to say the gunships had taken casualties and were leaking fuel, oil, hydraulic fluid and just about everything else, so they were being forced to head home, but the extraction slicks were on station. RT Lion looked around and could see its salvation coming toward them, nose on. Although they were flying at a good clip, it appeared as if they were moving at an agonizingly slow speed. As with the gunships before them, they were taking a horrendous amount of fire. One chopper was hit badly and began losing fuel. After a brief confab, the rescue package suddenly broke off their approach and headed back the way they had come, leaving nothing but smoke and RT Lion’s hopes for rescue behind.

When Watkins asked Covey what this meant in terms of time on the ground, all Hartness could do was say he’d contact the S-3 and ask for a new set of extraction assets ASAP. In the meantime, he promised to get more tactical air support over the team and do all he could to keep them alive. While Watkins appreciated the sentiments, this did not do much to raise his spirits. In his heart-of-hearts he felt the team’s position was very bad and likely to get much worse, and quickly. The NVA had literally thousands of men it could throw at the team, while the team had only so much ammunition and not much by way of cover.

What he told his team members, however, was there was going to be a slight delay and reminded them to keep vigilant and be ready for an attack. He didn’t have the heart to tell them was it could be hours before another rescue attempt was made. Their stay at Oscar-8 was far from over.

One of the Bru suddenly signaled that NVA troops were crawling toward the team through the elephant grass. The news was passed on to Covey who responded that he had two A-1Es standing by, one loaded with CBUs (Cluster Bomb Units) and the other with rockets. Both aircraft had their deadly 20mm cannons locked and loaded. Watkins told Covey to bring in the CBUs as fast as possible and to lay it down as close to the team as they could get.

In less than two minutes the team saw an A-1E appear in front of their position, its 20mm cannons roaring away. It flew so low they could see the pilot turn his head to locate the team as he released his ordnance. Unfortunately, some of the mini-bombs exploded so close to RT Lion that two Bru received light wounds. This was lamentable, but Watkins considered it one of the acceptable prices a recon team paid to keep from being overrun by a superior force.

As the A-1Es departed, a small group of NVA suddenly rose up out of the grass behind the team and charged into them, AK-47s blazing on full automatic. De Seta, his red Communist star facing forward, rose up and opened fire at near point-blank range. The Bru joined in as other groups of NVA popped up from the elephant grass and attempted assault after assault.

What followed was several hours of deadly cat-and-mouse with the mouse hunkered down in its little hole and the NVA cat making paw swipe after paw swipe in an attempt to claw it out or do it in. An ironic situation for a team named Lion to find itself in.

While RT Lion fended off attacks, Covey directed airstrike after airstrike at the NVA troops, the storage area, the anti-aircraft guns and anything else he could draw a bead on. Throughout the day, primary and secondary explosions followed one after another, as the strikes found their mark. Whatever the team's fate might turn out to be, the NVA were paying a hellacious price for messing with it.

With daylight, ammunition, and ideas fast running out, it was like a true message from God when Watkins heard Covey report that the South Vietnamese Air Force's 219th Special Operations Squadron had one of its legendary Kingbees en route. For once, Watkins's spirits actually rose. Not that he didn't love the living bejesus out of the 7th Air Cav, but the Vietnamese of the 219th had time, after time, after time proven themselves to be about the most daring, most imaginative, most aggressive, and all-around finest pilots on the face of the globe. If RT Lion had a chance in hell of getting out, a Kingbee pilot was the one who would find it and exploit it, no matter how slight that chance or how deadly the odds. That was simply what they were pledged and committed to doing, day after day.

More good news followed when Covey relayed that the lone Kingbee would be escorted by Marine gunships from HML-367, a bad-ass bunch of fliers that went by the code name "Scarface." Things were definitely going to rock and roll with them on station. Scarface enjoyed nothing more than kicking NVA ass and taking names, and then coming back around to kick more ass just for good measure, on general principle, and for the sheer fun of it.

Covey splashed a healthy dose of cold water on Watkins by reminding him it was very nearly dark and that despite all the bombs dropped, rockets fired, and gun runs made, the enemy was still pumping out an enormous amount of fire and still moving forward. Pulling RT Lion out of Oscar-8 was going to be as difficult and dangerous an extraction as could be imagined. And they would have just one chance to pull it off. If they muffed it, RT Lion would be spending the night and would most likely not see the next morning.

Sobering information indeed, but Watkins did not want to discourage his team, so he just gave them his best grin and said "Let's get ready to go."

In the distance, Watkins could hear the distinctive sound of the old nine-piston Sikorsky H-34 Kingbee chugging its way along, a steady base note to the higher whop whop whop of the Hueys. He squinted into the twilight and when he could finally make out their dim silhouettes, he flashed his strobe light through the barrel of an M-79 grenade launcher so as to mask it from enemy sight.

The helicopters acknowledged having RT Lion's mark and the Hueys immediately divided and made a split run, one raking the team's forward perimeter with rockets and machine gun fire and the other working its rear. It was a beautiful show.

Watkins yelled over the noise to blow all the claymores. By setting off all the claymores at once, he hoped to avoid having any uninvited NVA join the team. They went off in a deafening blast and blinding flash. The little mouse had roared.

As the Scarface duo looped around to make their second and final run, they confirmed there were dozens of dead and dying NVA scattered around within feet of the bomb crater. Unfortunately, they also saw more troops advancing. It was down to the short strokes.

As the Scarface gunships began their last pass, the Kingbee tucked itself in behind them and came roaring on. But rather than set down outside the crater and have the team come to him, as Watkins fully expected, the pilot pulled up and hovered over the crater. As the team looked up in disbelief, the old H-34 warbird began gently settling itself down toward the team like a mother hen about to cover her chicks. By the light of burning elephant grass, Watkins was able see into the Kingbee's cockpit and was startled to find the co-pilot's seat empty. In the pilot's seat, however, was his much-admired friend Captain An, a man who had saved Watkins's bacon on many other difficult occasions, but none quite like what he faced here at Oscar-8.

Capt. An lowered his Kingbee toward the team with a precision and steadiness that gave an entirely new meaning to the word cool. His face was smooth and calm, but there was steel in his eyes as he



Capt. An and his Kingbee. (Both above photos are courtesy of Maj. Nguyen Quy An)

worked both feet and hands to maneuver his chopper as close to RT Lion as he could. At one point Watkins could have sworn that An nodded to him as if in casual greeting. The whole scene bordered on the surrealistic, what with the LZ lit by a flickering brush-fire, the sounds of gunfire and explosions, the smell of cordite and burned human flesh, and this improbable savior hovering above.

As Watkins had experienced before, the action took on a dreamlike quality; sounds faded as if someone had turned down the volume; the air thickened; movement appeared to be in slow motion and the brain snapped individual frames that would never, ever be forgotten: looks of fear or pain on other faces; bodies being blasted backward; a piece of someone on the ground; a scrap of cloth; one's own hand clutching a weapon, or shaking wildly as it tries to execute some simple, well-rehearsed, but now impossibly difficult task. This is what war looks like when the mind is under stress.

Watkins could hear small-arms fire thumping into the Kingbee's body and he fully expected that at any moment it would either pull up and exit or come crashing down on them. But it did neither. It settled into a stationary hover; its front wheels placed delicately inside the crater. And there it sat, an unbelievable vision, a picture postcard of an old warrior taking a pounding but refusing to falter.

Watkins, DeSeta, and Godwin began heaving Bru into the chopper. Godwin followed. DeSeta, after taking an anxious look at his team leader, was next; his bright red star pointed over his right ear, as if he wasn't quite sure whether he wanted to be going or staying. Finally, in accordance with the time-honored rule and hallowed tradition, the One-Zero's feet were last to leave the killing-ground of Oscar-8.

With the door gunner and team pouring small-arms fire and M-79 rounds into the perimeter beyond its rim, the Kingbee lifted up and out of the crater. As a last defiant gesture, Watkins threw a red smoke grenade onto the LZ. This signal was universally understood by anyone who supported SOG recon; the team was out and the LZ was clear, so everyone could pound the living shit out of it.

But they were not home free, not yet at least. Anti-aircraft rounds were bursting around them like World War II ack-ack fire. Capt. An was dipping and juking in an effort to dodge the bursts and make himself harder to track. He still looked as calm, cool, and collected as if he was making a routine flight. For these guys, thought Watkins, maybe this was a routine flight.

When the Kingbee touched down at Khe Sanh, DeSeta, Godwin and the grinning door gunner walked around counting bullet holes, but soon gave up. There were too many, and besides it was just too unsettling to contemplate what might have been.

Watkins learned later that Capt. An had chosen to fly solo into Oscar-8 because he knew exactly how dangerous it was. He'd lost Kingbees there before and was determined not to risk more lives than necessary. He figured if his ship went down while trying to save RT Lion, it would just be him and the door gunner. To him it seemed a simple and perfectly logical decision; no big deal.

Incredibly, everyone who participated in the mission was alive and well. RT Lion was home, a seasoned veteran of Oscar-8.

It had been their time, after all.



Jocko Podcast 259: When the Call Comes, You Go. With South Vietnamese Kingbee Pilot, Capt Nguyen Quy An

On December 9, 2020, Jocko Willink and John Stryker Meyer interviewed Major Nguyen Quay An. Jocko began his interview by reciting from *On the Ground* a portion of the excerpt you have just read, which describes An's next-level heroism on that day in June of 1968 when he extracted RT Lion. He flew countless insanely dangerous missions in support of American and South Vietnamese SOG teams. Retiring as a Major in the Republic of Vietnam Air Force, he earned the U.S. Distinguished Flying Cross and Silver Star.

Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsllMa4n5rs> to listen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Stryker Meyer, a decorated Green Beret and highly respected military historian, is best known for his firsthand accounts of the clandestine operations conducted by Military Assistance Command, Vietnam – Studies and Observations Group (MACV-SOG) during the Vietnam War. John ran missions as the 1-0 and 1-2 of Spike Team Idaho from May 1968 – April 1969. As a veteran, author, and speaker, John has dedicated his post-service career to preserving the history and sacrifices of the elite warriors who fought in the shadows of the war. Thanks to the expiration of the 20-year secrecy agreement, he has authored *Across the Fence: The Secret War in Vietnam*, *On the Ground: The Secret War in Vietnam*, *SOG Chronicles* which reveal the stories about the secret ops that occurred across the fence in Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam.



A Man in His Element— MSG Jerry Michael Tate Shriver

An Interview with Colonel (ret.) Bob Killebrew, MACV-SOG

By Greg Walker (ret.)

Prologue

Bob Killebrew retired from the Army in 1997. He served two combat tours in Vietnam, commanded rifle companies in the 1st Infantry Division (Mech) and the 101st Airborne Division (AASLT), a battalion in the 82nd Airborne Division and a joint task force in Central America. After retirement he worked as a private consultant for defense industry and was a Visiting Fellow at the Center for a New American Security. He lives with his first wife, Pixie, in Newport News, Virginia.

Thanks to a fellow Citadel graduate of MG (ret.) Kenneth R. Bowra (MACV-SOG, CCN), Bob accepted Ken's invitation for me to interview him regarding his recollections and memories of his platoon sergeant, Jerry Shriver. A follow-on interview with Bob was conducted by another historian and is available on YouTube. I am proud to have served under MG Bowra at USASFC and SOCSOUTH among other more recent projects and efforts benefiting the U.S. SOF community-at-large.

Killebrew Interview—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcCEp3kOCi8&t=9s>

Jerry Shriver remains an Active Pursuit case for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). Per Mr. Sean Everett, DPAA PAO "MSG Shriver is still considered MIA, otherwise we would not be looking for him. If remains had been found that had been positively ID'd as him, his case would be considered solved and he would be considered Accounted For.

"To answer your questions about Active Pursuit, this means that the case has some kind of lead or leads that our researchers and analysts are able to follow. If we don't have any leads to pursue on a case, it goes into Deferred status."

DPAA confirmed they have located and identified a witness present at the battle in Cambodia where Shriver was lost. "DPAA has a named potential witness located in Vietnam whom we plan to interview. This interview will be conducted by personnel from DPAA's Detachment-2 in Hanoi, in conjunction with our Vietnamese partners with the Vietnam Office for Seeking Missing Persons (VNOSMP). While interviews of named witnesses are a high priority, due to their age and health concerns, those same factors affect scheduling. We do hope to accomplish this interview this year of 2025."

Shriver knew it was a suicide mission at that point and that he wasn't coming back. It was this knowledge that saw Jerry give his German Shepard, Klaus, to one of the 'Yards not going on the mission. "Take care of my boy," was all he said.

According to David Maurer, MACV-SOG CCN 1-0 and author of *The Dying Place*—"I remember well the night Jerry and I spent together. I told him about stories I'd heard about him and he'd tell me what was true and what wasn't. The thing is that you didn't have to make stuff up about him. He was a character, a loner, and a very brave guy. He was also in that select group of SOG guys who really did it right."

"I think Jerry, like others of us, got caught up in the war and couldn't stop. I would have continued to run missions, too, if it hadn't been for that idiot Covey rider who almost got us all killed as I documented in my first book. I cannot picture Jerry leaving the war and going back to the states. His end was about as good as one could expect - going down fighting."

Interview - Colonel (ret.) Bob Killebrew

"It has been nearly sixty years since Shriver and I were together, and my memory is hazy in spots about his final op which was a suicide mission for all that participated.

"I met him when I reported to CCS, and salty old LTC Tribue said something like "I'm going to assign you SFC Jerry Shriver, a Special Forces legend. He has been over here for three years and he knows everything there is to know about this business. Listen to him." Then he fixed his eye on me "But if you screw this up, lieutenant, it's your ass."

"Bill O'Rourke came in to be introduced and the whole deal almost went south when Tribue found out we'd known each other at Benning, but Bill assured him he could handle me. We walked out and he introduced me to Shriver, who saluted and said, "Good to meet you Sir," or something like that.

"My first job was to re-recruit my platoon, as they had quit the field on another lieutenant who shall remain nameless (and which makes me think that Shriver was new to the company too, as they would not have quit on him). Jerry was close to my interpreter, Y Plai Hdoc, who was the son of the headman from whence came "my" platoon. So we loaded up in one of our black jeeps (that suspiciously had other unit markings painted over), got an aviator kit bag with piasters in it, and drove off into the hinterlands with just Y Plai, Jerry (driving) and me in territory that the 4th Division later got in a big fight in.



The picture was taken by CPT Walter Marcantel on 4-23-69. The “yard” is Y Juh Nig and SGT Jamison is to his rear. Shriver, holding his UZI SMG, is on the right. Both SGT Jamison and Shriver were KIA. (Credit: CPT Walter Marcantel/provided to the author by his brother, Jerry Marcantel (documented).

“We got to the village, met the headman, handed money all around (most of the male ‘Yards were in uniform anyway, and there were a lot of M2 carbines showing) and went up the steps into one of the big, stilted log longhouses for a party. I don’t remember (or won’t say, anyway) much until the next morning when we got dressed, found our weapons, and wobbled back to CCS; the platoon trickled in over the next few days and I became a platoon leader with a platoon, and a brass bracelet that made me an honorary tribesman.

“I tell the story to point out how close he was to the ‘Yards. While I was the lieutenant and got due respect (I was, after all, the guy with the money), it was clear who got the hearty handshakes and the hugs. He knew everybody and was loved by all; watching him in the crowd was like watching a popular politician on the hustle. There were some happy incidents in the longhouse, and we’ll leave it at that. There was no doubt in my (inexperienced) mind that we were secure in the village.

“He did have a wicked sense of humor. In that long operation up north, we ended up sheltering (as planned) with a Marine outfit that had run out of food. We had occupied a portion of their perimeter on a foggy, miserable, and muddy ridge right on the border. After a day or so a couple of Marines came over scrounging chow. We offered them some of our rice and one of them said something like “You guys are all right, at least you don’t have to put up with those ***** officers.”

“A second later Shriver hopped out of the hole, pulled himself to attention, and said “If it’s okay with the Lieutenant, I’ll go check on the platoon.” I thought the Marines were going to have a stroke. We relaxed and all had a good laugh. But he did have a sense of humor.

“His deceased date, of course, is when he was officially declared KIA; he was killed in April 1969. In the immediate aftermath of Jerry’s death, we were all hoping that he would be remembered for the hero he was. I think—but am not sure, it has been a long time—that there was some kind of local memorial to him in our compound at Ban Me Thout. I am so pleased that he is not forgotten.

“CPT Walt Marcantel was one of the four lieutenants in our Hatchet company. As a 1LT he was with Jerry on that final, ill-fated mission into Cambodia (I missed being there by a simple coin toss). Gossip was that he died a few years later in a training accident.

“We did a number of hatchet force missions, but I can only remember some highlights. We did two or three “training” missions in the local area (training the Lieutenant) on one which I distinguished myself by stepping on a booby-trapped underwater bridge, which happily did not explode. Another that ended in a firefight over an NVA latrine with US propaganda leaflets stacked for toilet paper. We built an LZ on a mountaintop somewhere and blew up a hell of a lot of trees (that’s where the picture of Jerry was snapped). A few missions in Cambodia against caches of food and ammo that RTs found. One week-plus occupying a launch site (I think Tay Ninh) and stealing plywood from the 1st Cav when they all took to their bunkers during a rocket attack. The long op up north, which was the longest sustained fight I was ever in, and then my long mission after Jerry was killed.

“Bill O’Rourke was the company commander and another ‘war dog.’ He left the Army and went to work for the DEA. He showed up at Bragg one day years later and tried to convince me to retire and join him in ‘just like the old days’ drug interdiction in South America. He died a few years ago. I was the XO and 1st platoon leader; Shriver was my PSG. Greg Harrison was the 2nd platoon leader. He was killed in the op that killed Shriver. Walt survived that op and got a silver star for retrieving Greg’s body and, as I said, died after Vietnam in a training accident, or so I heard. The company 1SG, Tom Toomey, retired a CSM, became the honorary CSM of the 3rd Infantry Regiment. The last I heard he was in poor health. He and I are the only survivors of the original 1969 Company.

“The only time I am mentioned in John Plaster’s book is that Bill O’Rourke mentioned me being in reserve on that disastrous mission into the Hook when Shriver went missing. Bill’s memory was wrong, but understandably so. I was off on another mission.

“We had just gotten back from a CCN mission and Shriver and I flipped a coin to see who would take a few days off to go to Nha Trang. I won and I was in the air in one of those SVN Cessnas when I got the word to come back. We turned around in the air and flew back and got there just in time to see the C-130 with our Hatchet Company taking off in clouds of Highlands red dust. The order to deploy had come down so fast that Greg Harrelson took ‘my’ platoon.

“When I got back I suited up to go down and rejoin Bill but was given another platoon and some NCOs—did not know any of them—and sent on a completely hair-brained in-country mission to find an NVA division near the border in South Vietnam.

“We stayed in the field for about ten days, according to my fuzzy memory, moving around and having contact every day but never any major fight (one of our previous positions was mortared one night). I learned about Shriver’s fate—everybody’s fate—one night on the FM [tactical radio] from an RT on a hill across the border — we were happy to have somebody to talk to. We got out okay after ten days, though our exfil was fired on. That mission was my “gut check” on following orders when I was pretty sure the mission was poorly

planned—it was—and we were all going to get nailed. Based on who we were contacting, I retrospectively believed we were in the middle of a major NVA infiltration and they were just avoiding us.

“I found out after we got back that Greg, Shriver and almost all my ‘yards had been killed. Bill was in semi-shock, as he and Shriver were very close, and I completely understand how, after ten or fifteen years, he’d forgotten where I was. He got out of the Army and came to see us when I was a battalion commander at Bragg—in the DEA fighting the drug wars, long walrus mustache, on his third or fourth wife and on his way to Thailand. Bill was a natural warrior.

“The mission that killed Jerry was an abortion and should never have been executed. The nub of the plan was a B-52 strike on a major NVA headquarters. As I recall that strike was supposed to be the key for success on the UH-1s landing in the post-strike dust and smoke and grabbing bomb-dazed prisoners. As it happened, the B-52 strike was delayed, and their insertion was delayed after that, giving the NVA too much time to dust off, tap their magazines and get ready for us. And of course, we later learned that there was an NVA spy at MACV who was telegraphing SOG missions to their pals across the border; I do not know if this particular mission was betrayed, but anything big enough to involve B-52 strikes had a big staff signature. Made me permanently suspicious of complicated plans.

“Why did he keep running? He was addicted. At times he would tear up, and he once confided to me that he expected to be killed. Bill and I used to talk about it, but we decided in our senior-lieutenant wisdom that sending him out of the fight would have killed him, psychologically speaking. I still think it would have.

“Here’s the picture I’ve got of Shriver; this was during an op (location forgotten) and Jerry is in his usual field uniform — nondescript gray shirt too small for him and baggy green trousers. My memory is that it was an old NVA uniform, but I can’t swear to it. He was a man in his element.



“Mad Dog Shriver”—A man in his element (Credit: COL Bob Killebrew)

“Shriver and the men I served with were professionals doing professional jobs. The guys who are the real heroes of Vietnam, in my humble opinion, are the drafted kids who didn’t want to go but went anyway, who wound up as line grunts in the unglamorous infantry divisions like the 4th or the 9th, who humped rucks for twelve months and who then went home to an uncaring, and sometimes hostile public. You see them now in the VFWs and American Legion halls and I wish the country really knew what heroes they are besides all that “thank you for your service” stuff.

“There’s no question that Jerry went down fighting. It’s my belief that the NVA never knew they killed Jerry. If they did they would have used it for propaganda”—Dave Maurer, 1-0, CCN, author of *The Dying Place*, and close friend of Jerry Shriver

“What would he advocate? My mind boggles at the thought of him alive today—I think, like Bill, he would have found peacetime stultifying. But he was a professional soldier and proud of it; I suspect he would say weapons proficiency, knowing your team, and good comms. Good professional advice.”

“On the knife,—Shriver had one of those early Gerber fighting knives—a long double-edged razor-sharp dagger before the Gerber people began putting a serrated edge on one side. There is a picture of him hanging upside down from his LBE. Sometime in our time together he gave it to me. It was a nice knife for stabbing people but impractical for anything else—the blade was too delicate and the knife was too light for chopping.

“It lived on my bookshelf for many years and I finally gave it to the Airborne/Special Ops Museum in Fayetteville.”

Note: During our communications, Bob learned the knife he donated in good faith to the museum was lost or stolen in roughly 2015. Communications with the museum curator confirmed the donation, acknowledged with COL Killebrew by the museum in their correspondence, is nowhere to be found. Additional inquiries with the Special Forces Museum at Fort Bragg and another national military museum revealed no evidence the knife was transferred to them or ever received by the Airborne/Special Ops Museum in Fayetteville. It is felt by museum personnel and



several above the board military artifact collectors the knife is likely in a private collector’s hands, who may or may not know it was stolen. The knife’s original serial number is 007457 (at left). The #2 reflects this being a version of Shriver’s knife as created by master bladesmith Greg Covington, who offers replica and special order knives to, among others, the Special Operations Association (SOA) at our annual reunion in Las Vegas (SOAR).

Aftermath – The Legend, the Myth, the Man

Some say Jerry Shriver survived the slaughter that day and simply made his way to safety and remained, quietly, in SE Asia. After all, he'd run 93 SOG missions, a record no one else came close to. If anyone could do it, they offer, it was "Mad Dog."

The evidence to date and many of Shriver's SOG brothers firmly believe he was wounded and then killed while attempting to flank an NVA machine gun position that was killing his platoon and friends.

DPAA, as noted, is determined not to leave "Mad Dog" Shriver behind if there is any chance of his being found, identified, and repatriated home. ❖



In 1974, the then Secretary of the Army gave Shriver a 'Presumptive Finding of Death' even though his remains have yet to be found. He was posthumously awarded a second Silver Star and promoted to Master Sergeant. His marker is present at the Fort Lawton Military Cemetery outside of Seattle, Washington. Upon visiting now some years ago the author paid his respects by leaving several items in Shriver's memory. (Credit: Author)



The author with former One-Zero Dave Maurer (r) at a past SOAR reunion. Maurer's book *The Dying Place* is one of the finest accounts of serving with SOG/CCN published to date. (Credit: Author)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mr. Walker is a retired Special Forces soldier (1980–2005) with service in El Salvador and Iraq. His military awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Combat Infantryman Badge (X2), the Special Forces Tab, and the Order of Saint Maurice. From 2009–2013, Greg served as a case manager and patient advocate with the [U.S. SOCOM Care Coalition](#) for our most seriously injured, wounded, or ill and their families.

Greg is a much published military historian on Special Forces and U.S. SOF. His work includes *At the Hurricane's Eye: U.S. Special Operations Forces from Vietnam to Desert Storm*, *SEAL with LCDR Michael Walsh*, and *Teammates: SEALs at War* with Chief Gunner's Mate Barry Enoch. Mr. Walker is a frequent contributor to the *Sentinel*, SFA Chapter 78's award winning monthly news publication—www.specialforces78.com.

In 2026, Mr. Walker is completing the family authorized biography of Michael D. Echanis, a Special Forces/Ranger legend and world class martial artist, a project that has taken sixteen years to fully research and document.

Greg lives and writes from his home in Sisters, Oregon, along with his service pup, Jasper. He is a Life Member of the SOA and SFA Associations.

DPAA in Active Pursuit

In recent communications with DPAA, it was learned the one expedition to Cambodia for 2025 was specifically to act on new information regarding Jerry Shriver and his possible remains. This information came from a former NVA soldier who'd fought in the battle and is today living in Hanoi. DPAA interviewed him, and it is his recollections they used to execute the return to the battlefield. According to Mr. Sean Everette, team lead for DPAA's Media Relations section, "It's too soon to say if the [2025 Cambodia mission](#) will lead to any identifications. Anything that was found was accessioned into our lab, and our scientists are still going over everything. We don't speak publicly on exactly what was found, as we don't want to get families' hopes up."

Before the expedition launched, I'd put Jerry Shriver's biographer, Gordon Denniston, in touch with DPAA. Mr. Denniston had shared with me he had map coordinate imagery that might better illustrate where Shriver may have entered the woodline after having been wounded. DPAA contacted Denniston and collected this information. "I know that our Vietnam War analysts received information from Gordon Denniston," Mr. Everette confirmed with me. "But I don't know that it has led to anything we didn't already know."

According to DPAA, both [Shriver](#) and [Sgt. William "Bill" W. Stubbs](#) remain in the Active Pursuit category at DPAA. Sgt. Stubbs, shown here receiving an award at CCC, was the One-One of RT California. He was killed on October 20, 1969, while on a mission in Laos (target area Sierra 7). He is still listed as missing in action because his body was never recovered or accounted for by the North Vietnamese.



Sergeant William W. Stubbs, 1-1, RT California, CCC

SFA Chapter 78 Presents Awards to JROTC and ROTC Cadets at Year End Ceremonies

Chapter 78 continues its support of local ROTC and JROTC programs by presenting awards to recognize exceptional members of JROTC and ROTC battalions.

On Friday, April 10, Gary Macnamara attended the U.S. Army-Junior ROTC program's annual Awards Ceremony at Santiago High School, located in Garden Grove, California, on behalf of the local 82nd Airborne Association chapter. The [JROTC program Cavaliers' Battalion](#) was established at Santiago High School in 1995. The Battalion has been designated as an Honor Unit with Distinction; this is the highest award an Army JROTC program can earn from Cadet Command. The battalion has maintained this designation since 2008.

The chapter awarded two members of local ROTC programs with our [ROTC Award of Excellence](#). The awards are presented each year to a senior ROTC cadet at local universities who is nominated by their program's professor of Military Science. Criteria for the award vary from university to college, but the award is open to both male and female cadets that maintain a high scholastic aptitude, score high on the military fitness test, excel at the institution's military science program, and, most importantly, exhibit those aspects of good judgment and leadership skills.

An Award of Excellence was presented on Wednesday, May 6, at UCLA by chapter vice president James McLanahan and member Jim Cragg.

On Friday, May 8, Gary Macnamara attended the awards ceremony at CSUF to present the Award of Excellence to CSUF Cadet Matthew Ampanyuth.

Top right, Gary Macnamara presents an award to Cavalier Battalion JROTC CDT Joan Cao.

Center right, Top right, Gary Macnamara presents an award to Cavalier Battalion JROTC C/2LT Luis Frias.

Bottom right, left to right, Jim Cragg, James McLanahan present the Award of Excellence to UCLA ROTC CDT Nicole Spencer



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