



# THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SENTINEL

## SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

### The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 12 • DECEMBER 2018



"The Frenchman" Honored by Blackhawks

"LEADER OF WARRIORS" —  
Memorial Service for MSG Dennis Rabe



# SENTINEL

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 12 • DECEMBER 2018

## From the Editor

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**COVER:** Cover artwork by Chapter 78 member John Joyce



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Funding for the SFA Chapter 78 Sentinel is provided by

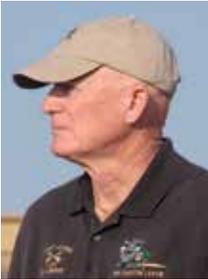
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**MISSION STATEMENT:** The *Sentinel* will provide interesting and meaningful information relative to the Special Forces experience — today, yesterday and tomorrow. Articles will be published that were written by knowledgeable authors who will provide objective and accurate accounts of real world experiences.

The *Sentinel* is published monthly by Special Forces Association Chapter 78, Southern California. The views, opinions and articles printed in this issue do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Army or the United States Special Operations Command, the Special Forces Association, or Special Forces Association Chapter 78. Please address any comments to the editor, "*Sentinel*" to [dhgraphics@earthlink.net](mailto:dhgraphics@earthlink.net).



Lonny Holmes  
Sentinel Editor

Following are letters received regarding the October 17, 2018 "Breakfast of Remembrance" held in honor of the sixteen MACV-SOG warriors lost during the attack on FOB-4/CCN on August 23, 1968. Visit [Specialforces78.com](http://Specialforces78.com) to read about this event in the November 2018 *Sentinel*.

From Cathy Bric De Cou:

What an amazing tribute to all those killed on 8-23-1968.

There is nothing in my life that has affected me more than Bill's sacrifice for our country and not a day goes by I don't think about him. I am so grateful Steve found you all years ago and it has developed into an amazing friendship.

Thanks you for all you did to put this unbelievable day together for us all! Thank you for your service to our country!!

I wish you and your families a Happy Thanksgiving. How Blessed we are to have finally met you all!

.....

From Bonnie Cooper:

I'm attaching the Special Forces Chapter 78 newsletter with the article about the Memorial Breakfast. I wrote the article but knew that I wouldn't be able to capture the amazing emotions from that morning. I hope you all agree that we met our goal of remembering each of the 16 men lost and honoring you, their Gold Star family members. The men who knew your loved one were honored to share their memories with you.

I don't know how many of you had the chance to look at the back rows of tables during the breakfast, but I did and was very moved by how many of the SOG veterans had tears in their eyes. It wasn't just the 16 men lost on August 23 that they were remembering, but every SOG brother they lost.

My single regret is that I wasn't able to spend more time with each of you but I was overwhelmed with work and sorting out last minute details. Please forgive me!

Those that stayed for the end of reunion banquet on Thursday night know that the SOA recognized my work on the breakfast by giving me a Honorary Life Time Membership. It's a very meaningful gift for me. I plan to continue my volunteer efforts with the Association and have already started working on the Special Operations Association Scholarship Fund.

I'm still gathering photos taken during the breakfast and will share them with you soon.

I've CC'd John S. Meyer (President) and Lonny Holmes (Sentinel Editor) of SFA Chapter 78. Most of you met them at the reunion and they've been instrumental in making sure the story of the men lost on August 23, 1968 is told. If you feel inclined, send them a thank you.

If you have any questions or need anything, please contact me. I was honored to meet all of you.



John Stryker Meyer  
President SFA 78

Gentlemen of Chapter 78,

Burp!! Excuse me, I ate too much food all day long on Thanksgiving Day. I hope everyone had an enjoyable, reflective Thanksgiving. I enjoyed our holiday while spending a few moments remembering my Thanksgiving 50 years ago when our six-man SOG recon team's mission was to find one of three missing NVA divisions in Cambodia. We found two of three and remain eternally grateful for having survived that mission thanks to the fearless

aviators of the Air Force's 20th SOS, the legendary Green Hornets.

Getting back to the future, Christmas awaits us, but before we dive into holiday cheer and celebration, I want to note that the next Chapter 78 meeting will be held at 8:30 a.m., December 8, in the Chapter Team Room in Richard Simonian's office at:

326 W. Katella Ave.  
Suite 4L  
Orange, CA 92867

When you turn off of W. Katella, go to the far end of the long parking lot, where you'll see 326 W. Katella and Suite 4L.

If you plan to attend, please e-mail me at: [idaHoonezero@sbcglobal.net](mailto:idaHoonezero@sbcglobal.net), or call me: 619-892-5983. Chapter 78's Special Executive Assistant to the Treasurer, **Mike Keele**, will pick up breakfast from Marie Callenders. We need an exact headcount.

Of special note, Chapter 78 member **Paul Longgear** will represent us at the Medal of Honor Dedication Ceremony in honor of Col. (R) **Roger H.C. Donlon** on December 5, at the 7th SFG Headquarters at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. Thank you Paul. He'll be driving from Georgia. This event will be the official naming of a barracks in honor of Col. Donlon — the first MOH recipient in the Vietnam War. In addition, there will be the unveiling of the Donlon sculpture, which Chapter 78 donated \$500 toward its production. Donlon was the captain of ODA-726, of C Company, 7th Group, assigned to the Nam Dong A Camp during his tour of duty in 1964. His book is *Beyond Nam Dong*.

Other notes: I attended the A&D ceremony of SOD N on November 18 at the unit's headquarters on the Joint Forces Training Base Alamos upon that unit's return from a 10-month tour of duty courtesy in Afghanistan. Chapter Member Maj. George A. Turney, of the CSMR, was present for the event as well as overseeing preparing the HQ for the return of SOD N personnel. Unit CSM Brian Beetham said the tour of duty was a successful support mission working with spec ops Afghanistan troops.

As we go into the Christmas season, please keep in mind our Chapter members who have lost loved ones in the last 13 months and to the families of the two chapter Gold Star Family members.

We're honored to have them in our ranks.

In January, we'll have Wade Ishimoto as our guest speaker, who is a Distinguished Senior Fellow with the Joint Special Operations University. He is a retired SF officer who served multiple tours of duty in Vietnam with 5th Group, including one with Mike Force. He is a charter member of Delta Force, where he served as its Intelligence Officer. He led the road-block team in the 1980 attempt to rescue 53 American hostages in Iran. His presentation on that mission is riveting. "Ihsi" is president of SFA Chapter 43, a VP with OASIS Group, Past President of the Japanese American Veterans Association, a life member of the National Counterintelligence Corps Association and the International Association of Chiefs of Police. I've had the honor of working with him as a member of the joint SOA/SFA POW/MIA Committee. He's made valuable contributions to that committee since its formation. ❖

John Stryker Meyer  
President, SFA Chapter 78



A seven year service award as the Sentinel's graphic designer was presented to Debra Holm at the November Chapter meeting. The award was created by John Joyce and the laughter courtesy Mike Keele.

# “The Frenchman” Honored by Blackhawks



John Stryker Meyer  
President SFA 78

By John Stryker Meyer

Chapter 78 member Doug “The Frenchman” LeTourneau was the only veteran in his original Class A uniform among 50 prior military service members honored during a Veterans Day tribute by the Chicago Blackhawks on the ice at its United Center hockey arena in Chicago.

“It was an honor to be there,” The Frenchman said. “The Chicago Blackhawks and their fans were amazing. They were on their feet during our portion of the program and when I rode the Great Zamboni (ice resurfacing machine) I had eye-to-eye contact with a lot of people and I could tell they really appreciated all of us, all of the veterans who served our country...it was an amazing night.”

The Frenchman was the only Special Forces veteran in attendance and the only man to appear in his Class A uniform, complete with freshly shined Cochran jump boots and his Green Beret with the 5th Special Forces Group flash. Many in the audience didn’t realize that the Purple Heart medal he earned on his first



Above, Doug “The Frenchman” LeTourneau poses with Tommy Hawk, the Chicago Blackhawk’s mascot.

SOG recon mission in 1968, when he was shot in the back four times by enemy soldiers, was presented to him in Tennessee on November 11, 2011.

The Frenchman’s trip to the Chicago event began at the Special Operations Association Reunion in Vegas, where an old friend asked The Frenchman: “Would you like to be honored at a Veterans Day event in Chicago?” Being a cattle showman who has driven across country for cattle shows over the last 15 years, his response was: “Sure. Just tell me where, what time and give me time to get my uniform in order and my boots polished.”

“I was real proud of my dad,” said daughter Laura LeTourneau, who flew in for the event. “The last time I had seen him in his uniform was when he received his Purple Heart (on 11/11/11). “That was the first for me. I learned about the secret war he fought in as a Green Beret. On Veterans Day, the fans loved seeing a Green Beret among the veterans. It was a day I’ll never forget.” ❖

At left, Doug LeTourneau talking to General Townsend, the OIC for all U.S. Army training.

# "LEADER OF WARRIORS" —

## Memorial Service for MSG Dennis Rabe

By Alex Quade

*Sentinel* readers will remember 37-year-old SF Combat Diver Master Sergeant Dennis Rabe of Kankakee, IL, from the feature photos published earlier this year of his ODA deployed in Afghanistan: the "Merry Christmas" photo appeared in the January issue, and the second iconic photo appeared on the April cover of team members wearing Afghan robes presented to them by indigenous troops as a gesture of gratitude for the team's courage in battle. In both, Rabe's massive smile was evident.

At the 10th SFG memorial service this summer, the Group chaplain said, "It is my prayer that through this ceremony, and by the grace of God, he may begin to heal your broken heart as we mourn the loss of Dennis Rabe: a husband and father, a son and brother, a warrior and leader of warriors."

Rabe's former team sergeant, now CSM of the 10th SFG 2nd Battalion, spoke of their time in 7th SFG, when Rabe was ODA 7125's senior 18-Echo. Their ODA, part of TF-71 out of Kandahar Air Field, fought a bloody battle against waves of relentless Taliban and Al Qaeda. Outnumbered, they kept the onslaught away from a downed, burning Chinook, shot down by an enemy surface-to-air missile. The ODAs kept the enemy from reaching the fallen American, Canadian and British soldiers on board. The CSM heralded Rabe's bravery during that intense firefight.

The CSM also spoke of years of missions together at 7th SFG. Their close friendship continued at 10th SFG. He said he knew that he could always count on Rabe to be an example of senior leadership in Logar Province where ODA 0215 deployed in 2017.

Rabe's ODA 0215 team CPT Evan McGhee, gave a moving eulogy next. He shared about his team sergeant's great sense of humor, and how much he spoke of his family. Rabe told friends that he was retiring from SF to give his family more stability.



Master Sergeant Dennis R. Rabe

Rabe was looking forward to his family's new future.

The 10th SFG Chaplain concluded the service saying:

"It was an honor to be spend some time with the Rabe family: his beautiful wife Shea, and their children. I wish I could've known Dennis the way they knew him, and the impact he had on each one of them.

"Dennis exhibited the qualities of a leader, his outgoing personality inspired others to follow. His teammates trusted him, because they knew he 'had their back.' Dennis was a man who knew who he was, who led with confidence, who loved his family, his wife and his kids. He was a man who was willing to stand for what he believed was right. These are qualities that should inspire us to be better than we are."

The service concluded with the SF Prayer, The Ballad of the Green Berets, the spiritual Amazing Grace, Roll Call, Firing of the Volleys, Taps, and Final Honors.

MSG Rabe's awards and decorations include: the Combat Infantry Badge, Recruiting Badge, Senior Parachutist Badge, Special Operations Dive Supervisor Badge, three Bronze Stars, two Meritorious Service Medals, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal for Valor, three Army Commendation Medals, six Army Achievement Medals, six Army Good Conduct Medals, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, three NCO Professional Development Ribbons, Army Service Ribbon, four Overseas Service Ribbons and the Audie Murphy Award.

He is survived by his wife Shea, a son, a daughter, a stepson, mother and father and two grandparents, two sisters and a brother. He was buried in Ft. Jackson National Cemetery with full military honors. ❖

# COPS CORNER



## 1992 Riots – Hollenbeck Area on Brooklyn Avenue

By Gary L. Macnamara  
Lieutenant,  
Los Angeles Police Department (Ret.)

***Where were you during the 1992 Los Angeles riots?***

Gary Macnamara The trial of the one supervisor and three Los Angeles officers accused of unnecessarily beating Rodney King was approaching its conclusion. Then, Chief of Police, Darryl Francis Gates wanted the Department to be prepared for any possible civil unrest. Two supervisors from every geographic area in the city were ordered to Training Division. I was one of the supervisors selected for this training. Metropolitan Division conducted a biopsy of four civil disorders to determine how the Department could prepare and, if necessary mitigate any possible unrest. We examined the 1967 riots in Detroit, the Newark riots, the Liberty City riots in Florida and the previous 1965 Los Angeles riots. In all cases the main cause or trigger for the unrest was that the police had withdrawn and created a vacuum. Police management did not want to risk a confrontation with demonstrators/rioters. The differ-

ence between the groups was that when there were fires, this signaled the unofficial beginning for the riots, looting and civil unrest.

In the photograph (below left), the reader will notice that my squad had a fire extinguisher. I also had a United States Marine reservist who was a medic offer his services to our station. I arranged to have him assigned to my squad. We were deployed four-five deep in three vehicles. When dismounted I organized my squad into two fire teams with a sergeant in charge of each time. The Department Tactical Manual organized responding units into squads with no further breakdown. This made them unwieldy and exceeded the span of control for one squad leader.

I also carried binoculars and extra ammunition should the need arise to confront armed looters. At that time we had no “long” guns for counter-sniper fire.

Many will recall the brutal beating of Reginald Denny on Florence Avenue. His truck was stopped and he was dragged from his vehicle and brutally beaten with a fire extinguisher. The Lieutenant, who was the Incident Commander, ordered the officers not to intervene. He was fearful of a further confrontation with officers. He created the necessary vacuum and soon after the looting and fires started.

My squad was deployed to various areas of the city, where there was serious rioting, looting and major fires. The Los Angeles Fire Department was overwhelmed. The California Highway Patrol was assigned to provide security for the Los Angeles Fire Department and they did a great job. No firefighters lost their lives or suffered serious injury from looters.

Many of the Korean business owners guarded their property with private weapons. The Department did not have the personnel resources to adequately cover the entire city. On Day 2 or 3, the California Army National Guard was activated. Unfortunately the contingency ammunition that was previously stored in the armories had been centralized at Camp San Luis Obispo. There was quite a delay until they received ammunition. Some .45 caliber pistol ammunition was obtained from the local Sears store on Olympic Boulevard.

Continued on page 6



On foot patrol on Brooklyn Avenue. “Doc” was carrying the fire extinguisher.



Sergeant Saenz and I conferring on Brooklyn Avenue. I had the extra ammunition.

# November Chapter 78 Meeting Presentation: SOG Green Beret Jim Shorten (Jones) Addresses Chapter 78



Mike Keele

Jim Shorten (Jones) is among the most unique Special Forces soldiers to walk the face of the Earth. He not only served in the U.S. Navy prior to his Army Special Forces stint of duty, he heard how much fun the Para Rescue Jumpers were having in the Air Force, and he jumped ship (so to speak), for the privilege of jumping into freezing water, bailing off of a perfectly good—if not warm helicopter in raging winds to go play with his new-found Air Force buddies. In addition to this, he turned down a promotion to E-8 just to get there quicker.

Jim's second Vietnam tour with SF was an 18 month junket with MAC-V SOG, where he holed up at CCC in Kon Tum and bunked with the irrepressible John Plaster. He became the One-Zero for RT Delaware after a short stint as their One-One, and with his mastery of the Vietnamese language; Jim had unparalleled communications with the "little people."

Jim's most enduring memory of missions he ran deals with being on Bright Light mission out of Dak To to recover the crew of an F-4 Phantom. This led his team to a series of hills near Cambodia's border with Laos. Upon inserting into the AO, one thing was clear. He may not have known exactly where he was, but the enemy did, and there were a lot of them to complicate matters. In a very short period of time, they were told to prepare for extraction, or face staying there overnight, with about fifteen hundred of the enemy.

The Phantom was on a bombing run when it was hit by anti-aircraft fire at low altitude and bounced off the first of three hill tops, then plowed across a second hill top, and then augering into the top of a third hill. Shorten was close to the terminal point for the Phantom, but clearly not near enough to reach and inspect the wreckage with the enemy bearing down on them.

Everyone was assembled for the extraction. The One-One and two indigenous team members ascended the ladder far enough for everybody to be clipped in for the vertical ascent necessary to clear the jungle before the transition into horizontal flight without the extraction bird dragging the team through the trees. This portion of their escape went without a hitch, but as the second aircraft lowered slowly into position to pick up Jim and the rest of the team, he heard a loud "bang, bang." This proved not to be explosions from RPG's or grenades, but the ends of the rotor on the Huey smashing into a tree during its descent. With about a foot of each



Jim Shorten (Jones) during his presentation to Chapter 78 at its November Chapter meeting.

rotor blade now missing, the Huey dutifully lifted the remaining four men from the jungle and into a freezing wind for the forty minute flight back to Dak To.

Jim Shorten is nothing, if not dedicated to successfully completing his mission, and meeting with the crew of the surviving Phantom was very hard for him, as the Air Force pilots were waiting anxiously for good news which Jim did not have. This rode heavily on Jim's mind until 2002, when he mounted a self financed trip back to Cambodia to again search for and again be frustrated in his efforts to recover the remains of the two Air Force crew members of Cobra 84.

To read a greater in-depth account of that story and details of the amazing life of Jim Shorten (Jones), please read the seven part 2017 SOFREP article by Chapter 78 President John Stryker Meyer (<https://thenewsrep.com/96122/back-cambodia-mia-air-force-officers-rescue-mission-james-shorten/> — SOFREP is now NEWS-REP — this link will take you to the last of seven articles where you will find links to entire series). Jim is a remarkable man, and this space cannot do justice to all of his adventures and endeavors. Perhaps we can expect an episode of The SOG Chronicles on James H. Shorten (Jones) in the future. ❖

# SFA Chapter 78 November 2018 Meeting



- 1 The meeting's first speaker, Linda Cordoza, Medicare Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program Director for Orange County, CA.
- 2 Chapter members in agreement with President John S. Meyer.
- 3 SFA Chapter members who became law enforcement officers and supported Kim Holmes, who now has nearly four years in law enforcement in a Southern California department. (back row, L to R) Gary Macnamara, Kim Holmes, Mike Keele, and (front) Brad Welker.
- 4 Ed Barrett MACV-SOG FOB 2, and Brad Welker Recondo School in the "old days" of Vietnam.
- 5 *Sentinel* Editor and daughter, law enforcement officer Kim Holmes (Kim was a nurse prior to becoming a 'cop'). Lonny presented her with his "special" challenge coins — the Major General Singlaub and Colonel Sully De Fontaine coins.
- 6 John Joyce closing his Excalibur Industries table at the end of the meeting. His artistic SF plaques and car badges caught the eye of many attendees. (L to R) Brad Welker, John Joyce, Mike Keele and Chapter President John S. Meyer.

## Cops Corner continued

On Day 3, my squad was eating an early breakfast at Fourth Street and Soto Avenue. A citizen reported to us that looters had broken into the Tianguis Market and were stealing beer and putting it into the bed of a red pick-up truck. We took our three vehicles and attempted to stop the looters in the parking lot. They drove off at a high rate of speed and one person in the back of the pick-up started to throw cans of beer at our vehicle. We requested an air unit to assist with the pursuit. We pursued the vehicle into the City of Monterey Park. The driver made a sharp left turn and crashed into a brick wall. His passenger in the rear of the truck fell out and sustained a head wound. "Doc" got a chance to rip some bandages. Monterey Park police assisted us with the perimeter and we took three suspects into custody. Later I learned that they had been sentenced to three years in State Prison. That was a very expensive "beer run."

The riots continued for a number of days and the property loss was substantial. Approximately 54 people lost their lives in the riot. There was a lot of finger pointing and Chief Gates was blamed for the Department's unpreparedness; however, there was an abdication of leadership for senior members of the Department staff.

Only Assistant Chief Vernon remained loyal to the Chief. One of the other downsides associated with the riots was that the Chief of Police no longer had Civil Service protection. He now served at the will of the politicians. The lessons learned from the police corruption and scandals of the 1930s were forgotten.

Could the riots occur again? With the constant media assault on Police Departments, officers have gotten the message that they will be second guessed and offered up for political expediency. Even "first line" supervisors are reluctant to respond to "hot shots", high priority calls.

During the 1998 Los Angeles Laker celebration, a staff officer at the police command post opined, "Let them have their celebratory fires." There was a near riot and some looters broke windows of the local auto dealerships. I had the task of trying to explain to the auto dealers why the Department had not responded on a timely basis and prevented the damage to the show rooms. ❖

*Cops Corner* will continue to carry stories related to or about law enforcement. Anyone interested in publishing a story about their experiences is encouraged to contact Chapter 78 Vice President Brad Welker at [wbwelker@gmail.com](mailto:wbwelker@gmail.com).