



"De Oppresso Liber"

SPECIAL FORCES

"A Special Breed of Man"

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Billy M Smith
Memorial Chapter

From the Commandant of JFKSWCS

In April, the Special Warfare Center and School and the U.S. Army Special Forces Command hosted the 2009 Special Forces Symposium. The event gave us a chance to honor our forbears in special operations, to discuss where we are going and to update the force on changes to our training and organization at SWCS. During the past year, the changes at SWCS have been many. To begin with training, we now have the most challenging SF Qualification Course in the history of SF. We have reorganized the training phases to put language training up front, so that Soldiers can acquire language skills early. During the language-training phase, Soldiers also participate in intense physical conditioning that helps prepare them for success in later phases of the SFQC. The SFQC now includes the concept of the instructor ODA — an 18-series cadre team that stays with the students from start to finish — to allow the students to learn the team concept, to build esprit de corps and to allow the instructors to better mentor future ARSOF warriors. SF Assessment and Selection is now conducted by the Directorate of Special Operations Proponency, rather than by the 1st Special Warfare Training Group, to reinforce the mindset of assessing Soldiers instead of training them.

To further extend the use of assessment and selection, we are looking at the feasibility of conducting assessment and selection for officers and NCOs who have volunteered for training in Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations. Training for active and reserve-component CA and PSYOP Soldiers continues to take advantage of the latest lessons learned from current operations. The evolution of the culmination exercises for CA and PSYOP training evaluates students' interpersonal adaptability through interaction and negotiation in a cultural setting. Our courses are producing the best Soldiers in the field, with more than 95 percent of our instructors having combat experience. To ensure that we continue to reap the benefits of operational experience and lessons learned, once our cadre members serve their three-year tour at SWCS, they return to the force — there is no homesteading at SWCS. Throughout all our training, we are continuing to maximize the use of distributed learning technology. Distributed learning is part of the mission of our newly created Directorate of Special Operations Education, or DSOE, which also works to develop "lifelong learning" — the career-long education and professional development needed to produce proficient Soldiers and strategic leaders. DSOE has a separate Language and Culture Division to concentrate specifically on those two most critical ARSOF skills. Another important function of DSOE, some would argue its most important, is fulfilled by its new Division of Evaluation and Standards, which monitors and ensures the quality of instruction and student learning.

In another innovation, the U.S. Army Special Operations Command Futures Division has moved to SWCS to become the Army Special Operations Capabilities Integration Center. ARSOCIC provides the first ARSOF-specific, organic, force-development-and-design capability. It will allow SWCS to identify capability gaps, provide solutions and validate them through experimentation and exercises, following up on them by tracking their implementation.

While this list of changes may seem extensive, these are only the high spots, but change is a necessity if we are to remain competitive in our environment. Throughout all this change, our uncompromising imperative is that we continue to produce Soldiers of the highest caliber. From the comments at this year's symposium, our customers think our product is very good, but if we are to be our best, we can never stop working to improve.



Major General Thomas R. Csrnko
From Special Warfare Magazine

PRESENT MILITARY

I had the honor of being assigned as a Special Operations Command and Control Element liaison in Afghanistan. The CJSOTF-A mission is shared by 3rd and 7th Groups, US Special Forces (Green Beret"), who rotate into the mission each 7 months. There were very different approaches the two SF Groups took in prosecuting the mission they shared. 3rd group was in place when I arrived and their approach was to work very closely with host nation units and maximize non-kinetic opportunities like military training, MEDCAPS, and infrastructure projects.

7th Group's approach can be summed up in the words of one of their Operational Detachment Alpha team commanders, "We will be in a firefight every week." While I was there 3rd group lost no soldiers while 7th group lost 6. Both groups occupied the same ground and working with the same Afghan units and coalition forces, both are from Ft Bragg, both report to the same higher HQs; & yet each had a very different approach to prosecuting their part of the war. Following a 7th Group TIC I was sent into the Zerkoh valley to help investigate an SF soldier's death and accusations of civilian casualties. These two very different approaches in Afghanistan seemed to me to in conflict with each other. —Bill Ward (MorganDriver)

NPR Pentagon correspondent Tom Bowman, along with radio producer Graham Smith and photographer David Gilkey, have been in Afghanistan for weeks covering the U.S. military buildup that is part of the Obama administration's new strategy for the war against Taliban insurgents. This week, Bowman and company spent time in remote western Afghanistan with the Green Berets. The way these Army Special Forces troops work reveals much about the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan. They spend more time helping to rebuild villages than they do battling enemy fighters.

At a small Army outpost called Firebase Thomas, Green Berets pull on their body armor. Special Forces soldiers don't need to shave. So picture lumberjacks in uniform — they are all beards and bulk. They are armed with machine guns, grenade launchers and assault weapons.

Most of the team climbs aboard huge armored trucks. A few others hop on all-terrain vehicles. They rumble out of Firebase Thomas, named for another Green Beret killed in action near here.



A young boy from the village of Kuhak is treated by a U.S. Special Forces medic during an impromptu clinic held for villagers.

in remote western Afghanistan with the Green Berets.

On this day, they are touring Herat province's Zerkoh Valley, a 30-mile-long stretch of green that was once a Taliban stronghold.

It's not a combat mission. Instead, they're working their way to the end of the valley to check on projects to help local villagers, including a medical clinic they are expanding.

The unit is led by a Green Beret captain, a West Point graduate. For security reasons, he and other soldiers in the unit do not want their names in this report.

In the village of Azizabad, the captain points to a pair of low concrete buildings, just off the highway. Other Special Forces soldiers joke that the captain prefers building clinics to what they call "kinetic operations" — killing insurgents.

"We do the kinetic thing when we have to, but I'm not super worried about what other teams think of us. I think our performance speaks for itself and what we've done out here. I definitely think we're going in the right direction," the captain says.

The new clinic building will have a small lab for blood tests. And it will have a new birthing room. A doctor on duty says that when the clinic is completed, it will draw more doctors here. "It's really important for the people," he says.

Winning The Hearts And Minds?

The Green Berets say they've had success reaching out to the locals. But will winning the hearts and minds of the locals help win the war?

The Special Forces convoy bounces down a dirt road toward another construction project.

A minaret rises above fields. The mosque is 150 years old. Workers haul bricks and boards, part of a project to expand the mosque, paid for with money from American taxpayers.

A village elder overseeing the project stops to talk to the Green Berets and tells how the Americans helped him remove shrapnel from a wound he suffered two decades ago during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

Wheat fields stretch out on both sides of the mosque. It is a vital crop here and has played a role in relations between locals and the Taliban.

The Green Beret captain explains that there is a temporary truce between the local elders and the Taliban fighters in order to protect the wheat fields.

in remote western Afghanistan with the Green Berets.

"If something happens during a firefight, an insurgent shoots an RPG, I mean everything is so dry out here that these farmers will lose everything," the Special Forces captain says.

So, the insurgents stop the shooting to allow the villagers to harvest their crops. Perhaps that's the Taliban's plan for winning hearts and minds?

The Special Forces convoy departs Azizabad and heads farther south. To avoid roadside bombs, the Green Berets abandon the roads and cut across the desert.

The enemy is nearby, as evidenced by transmissions on the radio. It is the Taliban. They are watching the Americans.

"Hey, we're hearing some chatter on the radio," a soldier says.

"They're asking each other which direction we are going in. Those are the questions they are asking each other," a translator says.

The ATVs speed across the desert ahead of the convoy and disappear in a cloud of dust. The armored vehicles lumber behind, like elephants, until the next stop.

"There's always someone talking about getting us," the soldier adds.

The Green Berets stop at a school in need of repairs, near the village of Kuhak.

A group of elders crosses an open field, a long, bobbing line of turbans and robes. Their leader lashes out in a 20-minute tirade of complaints about the Afghan government.

"If the government keep these people disappointed, I am 100 percent sure the people will turn back, and they won't be helping the government anymore," the elder says.

The Green Beret Captain assures the elder that help is on the way. But the conversation raises another question: Can Afghanistan govern itself?

David Gilkey/NPR

Afghan commandos throw bags of rice from the back of their truck during a humanitarian aid drop in the village of Kuhak, in Zerkoh Valley, western Afghanistan.

in remote western Afghanistan with the Green Berets.

"One of the things that he needs to understand is the government does care about you," the captain instructs his translator to tell the elder. "The government realizes that you have a security situation out here, and that is one of the reasons we come down here."

Where Are The Afghan Security Forces?

But the Afghan government is nowhere to be seen this day. A few Afghan army commandos stand watch. A few lounge in their truck. Another throws rocks at a plastic bottle while American medics tend to a long line of children and old men.

The Green Beret captain knows that Afghan soldiers must do more in order for the Americans to be able to leave. That's the mantra of the U.S. military: Put an Afghan face on this counterinsurgency.

One of the Green Berets scans the village, looking for that Afghan face — in this case, the Afghan National Police, or ANP.

"This is just the way it is. Have you guys seen one ANP truck out in Zerkoh now? Nothing. There is no lawful entity that's constantly around," he says.

While the Special Forces troops talk to the village elders, another Green Beret known as "Chief" drives his ATV into a field, drawing kids from the village behind him. Chief stops his vehicle and engages the children. He has three of his own back home in the United States.

"I'm trying to distract all the kids from messing with the crowds over there, so I figured I'd get out in the distance to try to give them pens and shoo them away," Chief explains. "But I ran out of pens. So many kids, so little time."

Off duty, Chief favors loud shirts and cigars. He's been assigned here, on and off, the past seven years.

Just two nights before, he was riding this same ATV on a very different mission. The Americans were out to capture a Taliban leader and bomb-maker named Mullah Faizullah. The Taliban operative tried to escape on a motorcycle.

Chief went after him but rolled his ATV. When Faizullah reached for his weapon, Chief jumped up and shot him dead.

in remote western Afghanistan with the Green Berets.

Here's the twist: After the Green Beret killed the Taliban bomb-maker, the U.S. military command in Kabul put out a news release giving credit to "Afghan soldiers."

The incident highlights the bigger problem: Afghan forces aren't taking the lead.

"Hopefully, one time or another, in a few years, maybe more, they'll be at a point where they can actually take care of this themselves, but we'll see, we'll see," one of the soldiers says.

The Green Berets get in their vehicles and head north across the desert, back to Firebase Thomas.



David Gilkey/NPR

At the end of the day, these soldiers say it is not enough to put an Afghan face on things.

U.S. Army Special Forces, also known as Green Berets, are working closely with locals in western Afghanistan to rebuild schools, expand health clinics and build a local police force that can protect the population. Here, children from the village of Kuhak chase after a Green Beret on an all-terrain vehicle.

As one U.S. commander said: It's about the Afghans getting their asses in gear.

NPR Pentagon correspondent Tom Bowman

radio producer Graham Smith and photographer David Gilkey



What Makes Special Forces Special

Since 9/11, there has been significant discussion on the need for America's conventional military forces to be more like Special Forces or "SOF Like"¹. I completely endorse this proposition, assuming it is not a knee-jerk reaction to our current conflicts but a conclusion drawn from our potential 21st century adversaries. There have been numerous forecasts describing our future environment- an environment without any peer or near-peer competitors, one in which our most likely threats will resort to an alternative to conventional military confrontation such as irregular warfare. Special Operations Forces are specifically trained and equipped to combat irregular warfare, so I can't argue with our military commanders when they propose the requirement for more small combat and advisory teams along the Special Forces model or that we need more troops who are culturally adept and comfortable working outside the conventional structures of the Army or Marine Corps. Joint Forces Command recently created a Joint Irregular Warfare Center, headed by a Special Forces officer, to guide their efforts in shifting general purpose force capabilities more towards a Special Operations Forces approach to fighting. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff reinforced the necessity for more SOF-like forces when he said, "The one requirement that jumps off the page is the requirement for all services to be SOF-like—to be netted, to be much more flexible, adaptive, faster, lethal, and precise"

From my vantage, that of a career Special Operations Officer currently assigned as the Deputy Commanding General of the Army's John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, the organization charged with assessing, selecting and training the Army's Special Forces (Green Berets), I thought it would be helpful to describe the complexities associated with creating Special Forces Soldiers and the unique role they will play in the execution of American foreign policy both now and in the post-Iraq/Afghanistan environment. I chose Special Forces as a representative example of SOF because they are the largest single component assigned to the United States Special Operations Command.

One common denominator in the SOF community is the requirement to pass a challenging pre-selection screening process and/or qualification course. In order to attend our Special Forces Qualification Course, for example you must first pass a rigorous 19-day Assessment and Selection process where we evaluate three important qualities: Character,

¹ *SOF or Special Operation Forces describes forces of all services that are specifically organized, trained and equipped to conduct special operations. These forces are assigned the United States Special Operations Command of which the largest component is Army Special Forces, otherwise known as Green Berets.*

What Makes Special Forces Special

Commitment, and Intellect. Character goes to a candidate's moral and ethical foundation; commitment determines the soldier's level of physical and mental preparation, and intellect is indicative of their ability to conceptualize and solve complex problems.

Those few Soldiers who eventually become Green Berets have demonstrated the highest standards of discipline, dedication, integrity and professionalism. That is why approximately 73% of the young men who try out for the challenging year-long, Special Forces Qualification Course rarely make it past the first few months. We demand that each Special Forces Soldier master hundreds of tasks specific to his specialty, plus an array of advanced war-fighting skills that are critical for survival on today's complex battlefields. For example, our Special Forces Weapons Sergeants are trained to repair any known weapon, foreign or domestic, and are able to make it work properly in our indigenous partners hands. They are also trained to survey our battlefields, to identify the threats and to leverage the proportional force necessary to defeat the enemy, protect the team and accomplish the mission. Our Special Forces Engineers can precisely calculate and employ any type of explosives with the precision necessary to destroy enemy forces or structures without injuring their teammates who are usually in close proximity to the blast. Our Special Forces Communication Sergeants can design networks and establish communications with Air Force or Navy close air support aircraft, medical evacuation helicopters, higher headquarters, and adjacent military units both foreign and domestic. Our Special Forces Medics provide medical and trauma care to coalition troops, host-nation personnel, and enemy combatants. They can treat one patient with pneumonia, and perform a lifesaving field surgery the next, such as performing a tracheotomy or insert a chest tube into a casualty. When immediate medical evacuation is not possible, they have the skills to treat, and stabilize the wounded, keeping them alive until evacuation is possible. They also routinely establish local clinics where they offer free medical care to our indigenous partners and their families. Some consider our Medics provision of care as one of our most effective methods in building host nation rapport. And all of our Special Forces Soldiers have the mental discipline to perform their duties under any conditions, in any type of weather, in or out of enemy gunfire. They possess the physical strength to carry their 90 pounds of assigned individual gear into battle, and if required, carry their wounded teammates to safety, because we never leave our brothers behind.

If this was not enough, every single Green Beret learns a foreign language - hard languages like Russian, Chinese, Korean, or Arabic, and then demonstrates proficiency in this language before they graduate. But most importantly, Green Berets must demonstrate maturity, judgment, courage, initiative, self-confidence, and compassion beyond what we expect from members of any other profession.



Bill Adair in Vietnam 1966-67

What Makes Special Forces Special

In order to appreciate why these qualities are so important, we need to put them in the context of our assigned mission which is to win the War of Terrorism. Recently, the Secretary of Defense, the Honorable Robert Gates said that “The most important military component in the War on Terror is not the fighting we do ourselves, but how well we enable our partners to defend and govern their own countries.” The true beauty of Special Forces is that we are a fighting force inherently designed to execute the Secretary of Defense’s guidance. In other words, Special Forces Soldiers are specifically trained and equipped to assist the indigenous security forces of troubled countries and to build their capacity to defeat terrorism before these conditions become a threat to our country. This has been a core task of Special Forces since our inception in 1952 and nobody does it better. However, in order to accomplish this task, we need access to these troubled countries, and this access requires a continued policy of Global Engagement - the strategic use of development, diplomacy, and defense to advance our political agenda in areas like economic prosperity and international cooperation.

As I alluded to earlier, the intelligence community agrees that our foreseeable future guarantees to be one of persistent conflict between third world countries, insurgencies and terrorist organizations, fueled by poverty, illiteracy, injustice, expanding Islamic extremism, as well as competition for energy, food, water, and other resources. Although our homeland has not been attacked recently, international terrorism is still spreading, and, similar to the Cold War, there will never be one decisive battle that will win the war and bring stability to the world. But I believe that a strategy of Global Engagement, employing Special Forces Soldiers, may be our best bet at winning this War. Terrorist organizations like the Taliban, Al-Qaida, Hamas, and Hezbollah must be defeated at the local, grass roots-level by a combination of development, diplomacy and defense, hence Global Engagement.

Green Berets are the United States’ only trained warrior-diplomats, the only force we have that intuitively understands the balance between diplomacy and force, and the only force that possesses the judgment to determine which actions are most appropriate in any given situation. We specialize in coaching, teaching, mentoring, motivating, and training local security forces, and we do this with the patience of a diplomat and in their native tongue. Special Forces

Soldiers understand that the key to success is through “the indirect approach” - working “by, with, and through” host-nation forces, because ultimately the most powerful message is one delivered by our partners to their own people. Additionally, it is the ability to instinctively understand the equilibrium between the two opposite notions of diplomacy and force that makes our Soldiers so remarkably valuable and quite possibly our best military solution to the War on Terror.

In Afghanistan, less than 8% of our overall force structure belongs to a Special Operations Task Force. In one recent 6-month rotation, these Special Operators conducted hundreds of operations, engaging and killing thousands of Taliban insurgents. However, what is most noteworthy is that they also medically treated more than 50,000 Afghans, delivered over 1.4 million pounds of aid, and established over 19 radio stations. They also distributed 8,000 radios, so the country’s populace can now listen to an Afghani voice of reason as opposed to the extremists’ ranting of anti-American, Taliban rhetoric. Granted, most of these activities were in conjunction with other United States government agencies, but Special Forces Soldiers were instrumental in both the planning and execution of these activities and are usually the first ones on the scene. It is not just food and radios, either; our Soldiers facilitate the construction of bridges, schools, clinics, wells, and other critical engineering projects in places where other government agencies would not dare to go without Green Berets by their side.

What Makes Special Forces Special

This effort is but one example of what is being duplicated around the world by other Special Forces Soldiers. As of March 2009, we have Special Forces Soldiers conducting various Global Engagement activities in 39 countries. Special Forces soldiers are not just training host-nation forces, but they are teaching their military personnel about democracy, human rights, freedom and dignity; while eating, sleeping, living, working, planning, and, if necessary, fighting with them. Our Soldiers, our warrior diplomats, are building a coalition of partner nations around the world to help share the burden of global stability.

We send our Special Forces Soldiers to the far corners of the world, working in their 12-man operational detachments, isolated and far removed from any support or protection, other than that provided by the forces they are training. Consider that responsibility - consider the trust required to train those who provide the blanket of security under which you live, work, and sleep. The men of the Green Beret live that reality every single day. This is the expectation that our country places upon our Special Forces Soldiers, and this is what them special.

I would like to offer just one last thought on the uniqueness of Special Forces; one characteristic that resonates above all others; Special Forces is a family business. Our Soldiers develop powerful relationships with the men on their teams. This bond drives them to train harder, fight harder, and go further than they ever would have on their own. They are born into the family that begins during the Special Forces Qualification Course and continues long after retirement. This fraternity is inclusive of our wives and our children, as well as the wives and children of our fallen. In many respects, it is also inclusive of our indigenous partners that we train with and their families also.



5th SF Group HQ Nha Trang Vietnam 1966-67

Our future may produce more challenges than Special Operations Forces alone can effectively respond, hence the critical requirement for more SOF or SOF-like forces. However, despite the doomsday forecast we see in the media, the United States remains the most prosperous; power nation in the World and with this greatness comes responsibility. Many Americans believe that our continued engagement in the affairs of our foreign partners is counterproductive. However, our security and prosperity, as well as, the safety of our families and our homeland are inextricably linked to the international community who consistently turn to the United States for their own security guarantees. Right or wrong, the mantle of leadership has been thrust upon us and there is no other nation more trusted, more suitable, or more capable to assume that role than the United States. It is also in our best interest to serve as the guardians of democracy, while protecting trade, promoting finance, and maintaining our own access throughout the world. This all translates into a sustained and continuous process of Global Engagement and nobody in any military does this better than the United States Special Forces.

FROM THE CHAPTER CHAPLAIN

Isn't It Strange?

Isn't it strange how a 20 dollar bill seems like such a large amount when you donate it to church,
but such a small amount when you go shopping?

Isn't it strange how 2 hours seem so long when you're at church,
and how short they seem when you're watching a good movie?

Isn't it strange that you can't find a word to say when you're praying,
but you have no trouble thinking what to talk about with a friend?

Isn't it strange how difficult and boring it is to read one chapter of the Bible,
but how easy it is to read 100 pages of a popular novel?

Isn't it strange how everyone wants front-row-tickets to concerts or games,
but they do whatever is possible to sit at the last row in Church?

Isn't it strange how we need to know about an event for Church 2-3 weeks before the day so we can include it in our agenda, but
we can adjust it for other events in the last minute?

Isn't it strange how difficult it is to learn a fact about God to share it with others,
but how easy it is to learn, understand, extend and repeat gossip?

Isn't it strange how we believe everything that magazines and newspapers say,
but we question the words in the Bible?

Isn't it strange how everyone wants a place in Heaven,
but they don't want to believe, do, or say anything to get there?

Isn't it strange how we send jokes in e-mails and they are forwarded right away,
but when we are going to send messages about God, we think about it twice before we share it with others?

Author Unknown

Every one of us understands the word authority as we have all served the highest authority of our land . . . the President of the **United States . . . the Commander and Chief of our Armed Forces . . . it is all about authority, isn't it? We have all been trained** to understand authority. As your Chaplain let me say that I serve an even higher authority . . . the same authority that former Presidents Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush and other Presidents of the United States in times past, and now our current President, Barack Obama now serves under, even though he may not know it. The authority of God . . . THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY. After we breathe our last breath, He is the ONE who will decide where we spend eternity.

Let me say to you *IT IS NOT STRANGE* that the world was impacted by the movie by Mel Gibson, THE PASSION OF CHRIST. "Why?", you may ask . . . because God was giving every one of an opportunity to have this TRUTH before us day and night so that "none will perish" . . .

For someone reading this today, this may be the only day you will hear anything about faith in God and His son, Jesus Christ before the day you die. I encourage you to honor our Heavenly Father for the gift He sent us in His Son. Only you and God know what is in your heart . . . perhaps today you need to take a fresh look at what and WHO you believe in.

Let me leave you with this question today . . . *do you believe that God's plan for us is strange?*

Joshua 24:15 . . . "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Chaplain Mike Edwards

Chapter Calendar

Vet-to-Vet is at VA Spinal Injury Ward 1800 on August 26th
November 11th is the annual fundraiser at Dick's Last Resort
Labor Day at George's Sept 2



Bill Adair, Gene Pugh, Dave Kidd

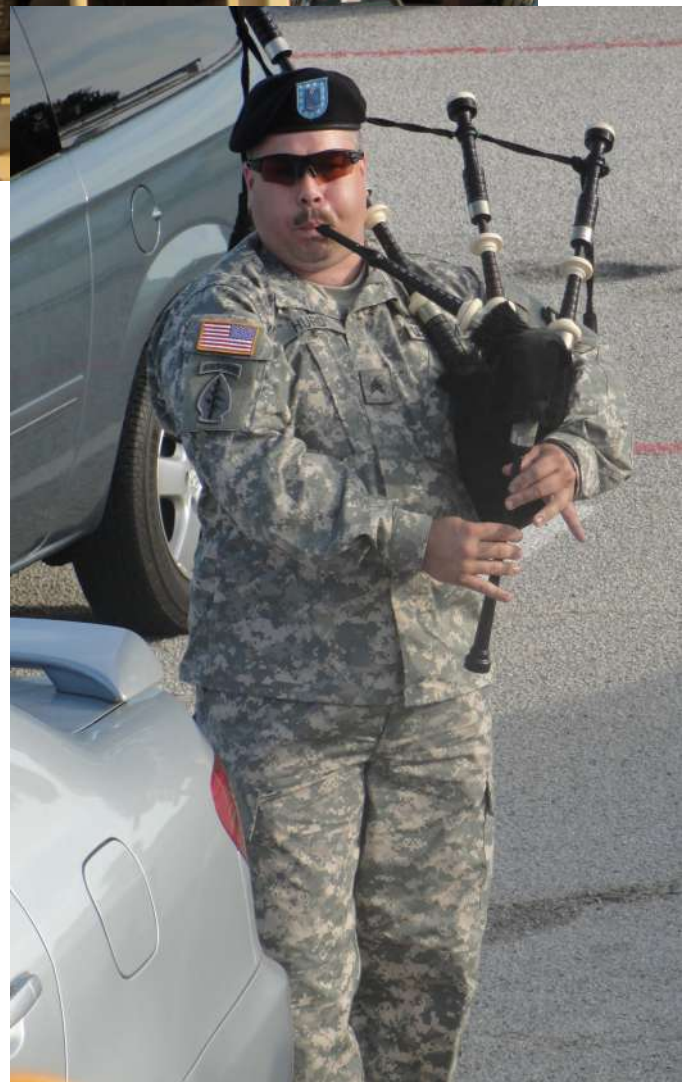


Jay Massey, Jerry Jochum



Linda Weston
Gene Pugh
Curtis Thompson
Bill Adair

"The Piper"





PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Greetings Ladies and Gentleman, as we enter the month of August, the heat has increased to the point that we will forgo any outside activities. Since we have moved our Fund raiser to November, We will hold our annual Labor Day get together the first weekend of September (Saturday, the 2nd). This year, instead of asking our good friend Ben Lyons to do the cooking, our President Emeritus, George Petrie has graciously consented to be the host. Please plan on bringing a covered dish. We can get together and car pool to Greenville. More in a forthcoming email..

I know I put out an email on one of our brothers, Tillman Cooper, who is laid up in the Dallas VA Community living center, B wing, room 114. Please drop by and visit, I know he would appreciate it, especially since he lost his son as well since being hospitalized. We also want to keep Al Auger and family in our prayers since the loss of his wife, Geri, on 27 July 2009.

Once again I would ask if you know someone that has dropped from the chapter, please do your best to re-recruit them. We are working close with National to get better communication and support from them to all chapters.

My heart-felt thanks to all of you that continue to support the vet-2-vet program, and welcome to those that have recently begun helping our regulars.

That's about it this month, so let's all try and stay safe out there.. De Oppresso Liber

Ron

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