



# SPECIAL OPERATIONS ASSOCIATION

## AFTER ACTION REPORT



SOAR XLVIII OCTOBER 14-17, 2024  
The Orleans Hotel & Casino  
Las Vegas, Nevada

# MORTON SCHOLARSHIP FUND



Providing educational grants up to \$4000 per year for children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of SOA members.

**DEADLINE – 15 APRIL 2025**

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## **ELIGIBILITY**

Son, daughter, grandchild, or great-grandchild, natural or adopted, of an SOA member in “good standing”. Applications are also accepted from relatives of Special Operators who were KIA or MIA while serving with a Special Operations unit in combat.

High school graduates (or G.E.D.), under the age of 21 years at the time of application.

Application and detailed information is available on the SOA website.

Applications and supporting documents must be received by the Committee before the deadline.

Anyone interested in being a part of the Scholarship Committee as a reviewer, or needing additional information, contact the Scholarship Chair:

Vicki Padgett

702-335-3560, [vickichanpadgett@yahoo.com](mailto:vickichanpadgett@yahoo.com)

# SOAR XLIX EARLY WARNING ORDER

**When:** 13-16 October, 2025 (SOAR)

**Who:** SOA Members in good standing and their guests are eligible to register.

Direct questions about status to:

Jeremy Knabenshue, Membership Chairman

910-710-1822

[membership@specialoperations.org](mailto:membership@specialoperations.org).

**Where:** The Orleans Hotel and Casino  
4500 West Tropicana Avenue  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89103-5420

## **Orleans Hotel Room Reservations for SFACON 2025:**

Sun -Thur - \$51.00 plus \$21.00 + Tax per day

Fri - Sat \$101.00 plus \$21.00 + Tax per day

**Making your reservations online:** Go to [SFACON GROUP RATE ROOMS](#)

If you use this link, the Group Code discount is automatically applied.

**Making your reservations by telephone:** Call 800-675-3267 and reference group code: **SFAJ25C**

**Guests:** Guests are always welcome; however, sponsors must be in attendance when their guests arrive.

**SEE YOU AT SOAR XLIX**

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**2025 Annual dues are now due and payable.**

[Click here to pay now](https://specialoperations.org/soa/) or visit the SOA Website:

<https://specialoperations.org/soa/>

If you have a question on your status contact:

Jeremy Knabenshue, Membership Chairman

910-710-1822

[Membership@specialoperations.org](mailto:Membership@specialoperations.org)



# ATTENTION!

## SPECIAL OPERATIONS ASSOCIATION AND SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION TO HOST CONCURRENT REUNIONS

In October 2025, the SOA and SFA will host concurrent reunions at the Orleans Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas NV.

13 – 16 OCT – SOAR XLIX

14 – 17 OCT – SFA CONFERENCE

The two events will run concurrently and share a hospitality room.

Visit each organization's site often for more details:

[www.specialoperations.org](http://www.specialoperations.org)

[www.specialforcesassociation.org](http://www.specialforcesassociation.org)

SOA publications are delivered digitally via email, the SOA website, and social media; be sure to keep your contact information updated.

A limited, condensed version is mailed to SOA members who do not have access to the internet. If you receive a paper copy and need assistance, contact Marcus Whitt, [Secretary4SOA@gmail.com](mailto:Secretary4SOA@gmail.com).

## SOAR XLVIII MEDIA LINKS

Many thanks to Rich Benjamin for videoing the events and symposiums during SOAR XLVIII. The videos are available on the SOA Vimeo Library.



[POW/MIA SYMPOSIUM](#)

[AGENT ORAGE PRESENTATION](#)

[GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING](#)

[BANQUET OPENING AND AWARDS](#)

[GEN BOWRA'S SPEECH](#)

[TAPS](#)

[OPERATION TAILWIND SYMPOSIUM](#)

[RETURN TO VIETNAM](#)

SOAR XLVIII PHOTO ALBUMS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE SOA FLICKR LIBRARY

[GO TO SOA FLICKR LIBRARY](#)

## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE



President's Report SOAR XLVIII  
 October 14-17, 2024  
 The Orleans

What a week! In addition to marveling at the brilliant planning of our Reunion Team led by Phil Devon and Senior Staff Ronnie and Ray Frovarp, Bonnie Cooper, and the SOA Administrator, Linda Leavitt, I was awaiting breathlessly for the arrival of Xuan, Ken Bowra's RT teammate from CCN days. For months, Mike Eiland and Ken (both savvy State Department veterans) had been working the complicated visa process to ensure the safe arrival of Xuan and his wife from Saigon. Their hard work paid

off, and we were all relieved to see Xuan and his wife safely with us. Mission Accomplished!

From the first cup of coffee at registration to the last cocktail on Thursday night, SOAR means catching up with old friends. No less important than our US brothers in arms are our Vietnamese and other Indigenous brothers who suffered mightily following the unhappy ending to the war. What a good day to meet Xuan and catch up with the Kingbees.

Our GWOT contingent is growing, a testament to the enduring spirit of our community. Led by Rand Binford and Josh King, several meetings were held to discuss our GWOT veterans' increased leadership in the SOA. Our future is in good hands, and we can look forward to their continued contributions.

After several visits to the vendor area, I purchased raffle tickets, stopped by, chatted with our video historian, Dennis Cummings, and visited Ann Duff and her VA crew. Bruce Christensen and Jason Hardy are with us yearly, reminding us of our history with Steve Sherman.

Our programs were not only well-planned but also genuinely fascinating. The SOA Authors Table, led by Dan Thompson, continues to grow yearly, a testament to the increasing interest in our community's history and the engaging discussions it fosters. Tuesday night at SOAR is always John Russell night, and his selection of a fabulous show never fails to surprise. Thank you, John, for your continued dedication.

The CCS breakfast and prayer breakfast were well attended. Our longtime POW MIA friends, "The Three Amigos," Matt Kristoff, Steve Thompson, and Jack Kull, were in attendance (and received Presidents Awards), as were Ann Mills Griffith and representatives of Mission: POW-MIA.

Two outstanding programs from the Vietnam era were well received. Gold star Father Jim Moriarty and his crew produced Operation Tailwind, both as a video and panel discussion. We had the pleasure of welcoming Gary Michael Rose to Las Vegas. Captain Rose received the Medal of Honor in that infamous mission.

23 Aug 68 hero Larry Trimble traveled to Vietnam in 2024 with Bruce Christensen and Rob Graham. Larry's visits to Marble Mountain brought back memories.

## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Horace Boner and The Orleans prepared an SRO Liquor Tasting, followed by the Foundation Bowling event led by Doc Padgett, our Foundation Executive Director. The head of our Auxiliary, Vicki Padgett, was busy hosting a meeting with the ladies and operating the Foundation table.

Thursday before the Banquet hosts our annual Health and Fitness, produced by Doc Padgett and Ann Duff. Well done.

We toasted our serving soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines before our banquet, which The Orleans beautifully provided. And the final was our Banquet Speaker, MG (ret) Ken Bowra. Brilliant and to the point, also starring his teammate, Xuan.

All good things must come to an end. Thanks to every one of you, SOAR 2024 was a huge success! Mark down October 13, 2025, the first day of SOAR XLIX.

The next day, SFACON 2025 begins at The Orleans. Yes, the Special Operations Association and the Special Forces Association will have concurrent reunions at The Orleans in October 2025.

See You in Las Vegas!





# SEEKING BRIGHTLIGHT

## DID YOU MISS SOAR 2024 DUE TO CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND YOUR CONTROL?

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### Don't miss SOAR 2025!

Being with your fellow comrades in fellowship and comradery is not only important to you, but it is important to your fellow members.

Brightlight is 100% member funded and can cover some or all of the expenses to attend SOAR depending on individual needs.

If you, or someone you know, can benefit from the BrightLight program, contact me personally. All conversations are confidential.

Ron Owens, BrightLight Chairman

305-984-2186

adventure4u@aol.com

*“We sleep safely in our beds because rough men stand ready in the night to visit violence on those who would do us harm.”*

*—George Orwell*



# SOAR XLVIII



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# TAPS

The following are our brothers who have passed since the last TAPS, and those who departed earlier, but were not previously identified.

The SOA has attempted to list our fallen as accurately as possible. Should any member have information about a deceased brother who has not been identified here, please contact a BOD member and the information will be published in our next report.

<b>MEMBER NAME</b>	<b>SOA#</b>	<b>DECEASED DATE</b>
ADAMS, Lloyd "Snake"	2608-G	26-Sep-24
AKRIDGE, William D.	3379-G	29-Nov-24
BERNARD, Newell W	1281-G	1-Jan-22
BRADDOCK, Jimmy L.	2389-A	11-Aug-24
CARTTER, Paul B.	3102-G	5-Aug-24
DAVIS, Howard B.	1724-G	5-Dec-24
DENISON, Gerald	1172-G	UNK
DESETA, Louis J.	2007-G	30-Sep-24
FARAGO, Julius Z.	118-G	28-Dec-20
FARR, Warner "Rocky"	1574-G	20-Nov-24
FARRELL, John G.	3216-G	UNK
FRANCO, Joseph R.	2569-G	8-Oct-24
GASTON, James	2862-A	26-Mar-21
GOTTFREDSON, Jacob L.	1732-G	23-Nov-23
HARRISON, James C.	1211-G	10-Dec-24
HASKEN, Hermann G.	1289-G	25-Dec-23
HOWELL, John M.	1219-G	11-Jun-24
HUNT, George W.	452-G	17-Nov-24
INGLES, John C.	3380-G	14-Oct-24
JOHNSON, Herchel D.	1811-G	23-Sep-24
KELLAND, Leo F.	2929-G	11-Jun-23
KING, Johnny J.	3182-G	12-Feb-23
KOCH, Bruce W.	1523-G	18-Jun-24
LINDSEY, Fred S.	2865-G	24-Nov-24
LUCERO, Louis A.	1876-G	UNK
LYONS, Ben	8-G	1-Sep-24

*We always give thanks to God for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; constantly keeping in mind your work of faith and labor of love and perseverance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father. Thessalonians 1:2-3*



# TAPS

<b>MEMBER NAME</b>	<b>SOA#</b>	<b>DECEASED DATE</b>
MADISON, James C.	1581-G	7-Nov-24
MALCOM, Ben S.	1457-G	30-Oct-23
MCCLAIN, James "Bonzai"	1096-G	27-Feb-19
MCMILLIN, Larry	2112-G	16-Aug-24
MONROE, Alton "Moose"	1981-G	9-Aug-24
MORALES, Edgar	2079-G	11-Nov-24
MOSIELLO, Albert H.	2675-G	6-Jan-24
MUIR, James G.	467-G	28-May-19
NADER, Walter E.	67-G	21-May-21
POTTER, Jon C.	1634-G	23-Oct-24
PRIDE, Kenneth	1127-G	2-Mar-24
PRUETT, Bobby	1765-G	1-Dec-24
RICE, Phillip W.	2525-G	12-Jul-24
RONALD, Brockelman	568-G	12-Apr-24
SCHOLES, Edson E.	1350-G	23-Oct-24
SIMON, Larry D.	1835-G	19-Aug-24
SIMPSON, Robert I.	380-G	10-Sep-22
SRESANG, Dim	843-H	9-Feb-22
THOMAS, Peter J.	3225-G	7-Aug-24
TO, Tan Quang	1048-G	15-Oct-24
TRAN, Khanh Kim	1379-G	UNK
UPTAGRAFFT, Wayne "Upty"	2065-G	5-Jul-23
WATSON, Tom W.	2208-G	1-Dec-04
WILSON, Thomas E.	595-G	6-Sep-24
WOOD, Phillip "Woody"	3132-G	17-Aug-24
WRIGHT, William E. "Bill"	2185-G	31-Aug-24

During the year, I am privileged to serve as the SOA Chaplain and call on the next of kin when an SOA Member passes; however, please know that I am here for you to call for other needs such as illness, spiritual advice, counseling, or anything else that comes to mind.

Please call me at any time.

God bless you all,

Dale Hanson, SOA Chaplain  
 (907) 747-6498  
 cdhanson@att.net

# HOSPITALITY





# HOSPITALITY





# JOINT SOA/SFA POW/MIA REPORT



On Wednesday, October 16, 2024, the Special Operation Association Reunion XLVIII (SOAR) hosted the Joint SOA/SFA POW/MIA Symposium in the Esplanade Room, Orlean’s Hotel, Las Vegas, NV with nearly 200 members, families and guests attending. Representatives from the National League of POW/MIA Families, Mission: POW-MIA, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) and Defense Intelligence Agency’s Stony Beach gave presentations for their respective organizations. After giving the initial welcoming introduction and administrative remarks, I acknowledged the Gold Start family members in attendance and introduced the members of the Joint SOA/SFA POW/MIA Committee.



The first speaker, Ms. Ann Mills Griffiths, Acting CEO of the League of Families provided insight into the League’s activities and concerns. During this past year she and a delegation from the League were TDY to Southeast Asia, where they met with several high-ranking leaders from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. She has been invited to Hanoi next spring to celebrate the reunification of Vietnam (50 -year anniversary of the Fall of Saigon). She expressed concerns that the proactive accounting efforts in Vietnam (and Vietnam War) appear to be waning, and opined there may only be a 5-year window to obtain firsthand witness testimony from Vietnam and Laotian veterans. Ms. Griffiths also expressed the importance of taking advantage of Vietnam’s recent approval of a Mobile Investigative Unit (MIU) to be headed by Stony Beach. The details to be worked out, with a planning session scheduled for January 2025 in Hanoi.

The following presentation was by Dave Huffman, CEO of MISSION: POW-MIA. Mr. Huffman gave a brief background of the origins of the organization, joking that they are “the youngsters” in the room, since they were only formed in February 2023. Since then, they have traveled over 40,000 miles and participated in 100 events in it’s public outreach/education program. He explained the Mission’s motto: S.E.A.R.C.H. - **Seeking** fullest possible accounting; **Engaging** entities to support the accounting mission; **Advocating** for the missing; **Research** and investigation; **Conducting** outreach and education; **Honoring** the missing and their families



Mr. Huffman provided a briefing with a slide presentation of the Mission’s recent TDY to Vietnam in June. The key objective was to visit Vietnamese military museums to examine captured artifacts. He stated that the museum officials were extremely responsive, opened displays and in some cases retrieved artifacts not on display for further investigation.



# JOINT SOA/SFA POWMIA REPORT

Many of the artifacts were displayed on screen during his presentation. At the HO Chi Minh Trail Museum outside Hanoi, the Mission delegation discovered the ID card of SFC John Robert Adams, a crew member on a UH-1C Huey with the 189<sup>th</sup> AHC, lost on Nov 8, 1967, on a SOG related mission in Laos. He is still unaccounted for, Ref No 0899. Mr. Huffman finished his presentation with a plea for any SOA/SFA members to consider returning any artifacts as they become important for continued coordination with the Vietnamese government. An example was when a Vietnam veteran in Virginia gave him an NVA/VC soldier's wallet he had. While on his TDY trip to Vietnam, Mr. Huffman passed the wallet on to the DPAA Vietnam Detachment, which, in turn, passed it on the Vietnamese. That gesture produced a captured American artifact.

The next presentation was by DPAA Director Mr. Kelly McKeague. Mr. McKeague prefaced his presentation by thanking all the organizations for the support and efforts to locate and bring home our unaccounted-for service members. He emphasized the important role these organizations and other partnership partners play in the accounting mission. He addressed the budget issues and that with the added funding (\$50M resulting in a 33% increase in the Vietnam War effort). Cancelled and new missions are now in the planning and executions stage. By the end of the week of Oct 14, 2024, 126 DPAA personnel will be deployed to Vietnam and Laos missions.

Other highlights from Mr. McKeague's presentation:

- Praised the SOA/SFA POW/MIA Committee for its work and advocacy
- Reiterated Vietnam War accounting is a "sacred mission"
- DPAA is working in 46 Countries
- Emphasized again that Vietnam War is DPAA's Number One operational priority, and it is the conflict "we know the most about"
- For FY 2025, in Vietnam, DPAA plans 15 recovery missions, 13 Investigative missions and one underwater mission
- 30% of the recovery missions will be unilateral Vietnamese.
- DPAA will be resuming full operations in Laos the week of Oct 14, 2024. He stated that due to a diplomatic impasse with Laos earlier this year, DPAA cancelled 9 recovery and 3 investigative missions
- For FY 2025, DPAA plans 15 recovery and 5 investigative missions in Laos and one survey and 2 partner missions in Cambodia.
- 

Mr. McKeague wrapped up his presentation stressing US senior leadership engagement with Vietnam reinforces the importance of the accounting mission, especially in the wake of last year's elevation of US-Vietnam relations to the Comprehensive-Strategic-Partnership level.

The final presentation was the case study on the ongoing recovery efforts for SFC Sam Padgett, lost April 10, 1968 (Ref No 1125). Unlike last year's case study, SFC Padgett is still unaccounted for. Mr. Matt Kristoff, DPAA Supervisory Research Analyst/Vietnam War Branch Chief (Honorary SOA Member), was introduced. He would manage case study presentation, introducing the members from DPAA and Stony Beach.

## JOINT SOA/SFA POWMIA REPORT

Mr. Kristoff emphasized this case is important for two reasons. First, The importance of SOA membership passing on any information/recollections they may have of a MIA/KIA loss incident. Second, The challenges inherent in the Vietnam War mission even with critical information.

In this regard, firsthand information from SOA member CSM(R) Pat Watkins was instrumental in putting DPAA on the right track in their search for SFC Padgett. As recounted by Mr. Kristoff, from 1993-1997, Joint Task-Full Accounting (DPAA predecessor)

executed three missions to the then recorded loss site and found nothing. At the 2012 SOAR, CSM Watkins, who was initially aboard the CH-34 (he was dropped off at a site just prior to the incident) and assisted in the recovery operations immediately after the crash, visited the DPAA table. During the conversation with DPAA staff and reviewing maps, he informed them that DPAA's record of loss location was in error. They were working the wrong hill! CSM Watkins proceeded to identify the correct location.



Of the five SOG 1-0s and two Vietnamese pilots on the CH-34 Kingbee aircraft, when it was shot down and crashed, only the two pilots survived. Due to the fire and extreme heat from the wreckage, the remains were burned beyond recognition. After policing the crash site and recovering what little remains existed, US officials initially felt they had recovered the remains of all five Americans. However, subsequent examination revealed that only four of the remains were human, the other was that of a pig on the aircraft. The lone American unidentified was SFC Padgett.

Prior to turning the presentation over to Dr. Rebecca Taylor, DPAA-HI's Supervisory Forensic Anthropologist for detailed description of the site and subsequent excavation and recovery efforts, Mr. Kristoff introduced Mr. Eric Phillips, Stony Beach (SB) Operations Chief (formerly assigned to Cambodia).



Mr. Phillips prefaced his remarks by advising the SB had little involvement in the SFC Padgett case. However, he would explain to the attendees the role SB plays in the larger Vietnam War accounting effort with DPAA. He stressed that SB is solely focused on the Vietnam War. Its priorities are pursuing live sighting reports, resolving last know alive cases and SF/SOG losses. He then touched upon the MIU discussed previously by Ms. Griffiths, adding that the MIU will augment current investigative mechanisms. Mr. Phillips will be among the SB team at the January meeting in Hanoi. Mr. Kristoff then reclaimed the floor and introduced Dr. Rebecca Taylor. With the new information provided by CSM Watkins, Dr. Taylor stated that from 2016-2019 DPAA executed 8 Joint Field Activities (JFA) to the new incident site. (Note: Dr. Taylor participated in at least one of the JFAs). Her briefing included an extensive, detailed power point slide show presentation detailing each of the JFAs progression of the excavations based on materials recovered.

# JOINT SOA/SFA POWMIA REPORT



She confirmed that based on the information CSM Watkins provided, that DPAA found much of the aircraft wreckage further confirming the loss site. At one point osseous material was recovered. However, to great disappointment for the teams, it was determined to be a pig bone. While disappointing, this reconfirmed the teams were working at the correct site. After 8 JFAs, DPAA determined that the teams had excavated the site to its full extent. The decision was made to close the site, but as Dr. Taylor stressed, this does not mean that DPAA has given up on recovering SFC Padgett.

In her final comments, Dr. Taylor described some of the cutting-edge technology the DPAA lab is pursuing to further enhance the ability to account for and identify recovered remains. She further stated that out of the IDs for 2024, 4 were first time Vietnam War IDs and there were 7 additional portions of previously IDed personnel.

The final speaker was MSG Ben Sievert, DPAA-HI Head of Expeditionary Support. He deploys on JFA missions and has first hand experience of the on ground activities during excavation/recovery operations. He described some of the actions and activities the teams do to prepare and conduct a JFA mission. MSG Sievert is an active SOA member.



Due to the length of the presentations (ending at 1215 hrs), there was insufficient time for a Question and Answer period. However, everyone was invited to visit the DPAA table in the Hospitality room.

Mr. Matt Kristoff provided me with the results of members taking the time to stop by and talk with the DPAA personnel.

- DPAA analysts/historians had individual conversations with 51+ people who provided new information on at least 7 different Vietnam War cases, plus one WWII case
- One of the veterans provided original wartime, annotated maps (done by a deceased SOG medic) with data markings of losses.
- DPAA analysts/historians provided individual members updates on approximately 6 different cases.
- DPAA analysts/historians interfaced extensively with SOA archivist Dennis Cummings on various issues and with Steve Sherman on others. Both were extremity helpful and supportive.

Finally, I wish to extend my personal thanks to the committee members, presenters and attendees for all your support in making this year's Joint SOA/SFA POW/MIA Symposium a success.

David Gordon,  
Chair, Joint SOA/SFA POW/MIA Committee

# AUTHORS READING & RAFFLE

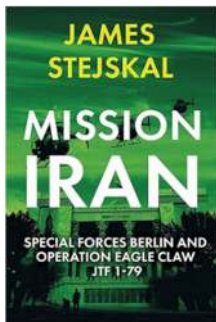


An eager and appreciative audience enjoyed an impressive array of nine (9) authors as they presented their books at SOAR 2024; each hearing the authentic voices of men who proudly served in SOG and other special operations.

Each author donated one of their books that was raffled off during the Reading. The raffle was FREE but you had to be present to win.

The outstanding presentations reflected the substantial efforts of these authors to recall, record and authenticate our SOG history as well as the time, energy and yes, money, spent to publish their books.

Look for their books on the SOA website, Amazon or your favorite bookstore:



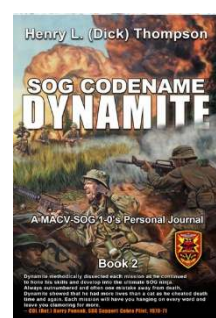
**James Stejskal**



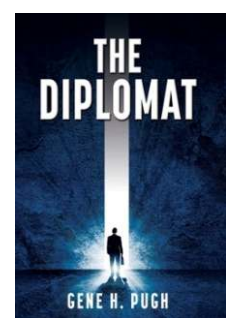
**Greg Walker**



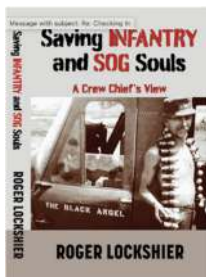
**Leigh Wade**



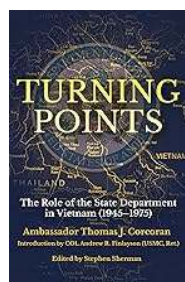
**Dick Thompson**



**Gene Pugh**



**Roger Lockshier**



**Steve Sherman**



**John "Tilt" Myer**



**Dale Hanson**

We thank the authors for participating in the Authors event and will continue to honor and celebrate their craft each year.

Dan Thompson, Moderator



# HEALTH AND WELFARE

## The Agent Orange Legacy Project



The SOA Foundation has partnered with researchers involved with investigation into Agent Orange (AO) exposure in VN veterans for the purpose of determining the extent of exposure, and the possible genetic damage to our children and grandchildren. SOA and SFA members were surveyed in August 2024.

The results suggest that AO exposed veterans can pass genetic mutations caused by AO to their descendants, ***so we must therefore alert our community and other veterans to the possibility and increase awareness and the need for precautions.***

The SOA Foundation plans to develop a database for the children and grandchildren affected by AO and use this to advocate for our descendants. The Foundation will update this cause as information becomes available.

While not currently obtainable, VA compensation could be available for those descendants who can show a link to parental or grandparental exposure to AO and subsequent cancer. This remains to be determined, and more research is needed.

The presentation was in a symposium that included speakers Attorney Tom Carpenter, a researcher on the effects of AO on the progeny of VN veterans, and RADM (Ret) Ann Duff, representing the Veterans Administration.

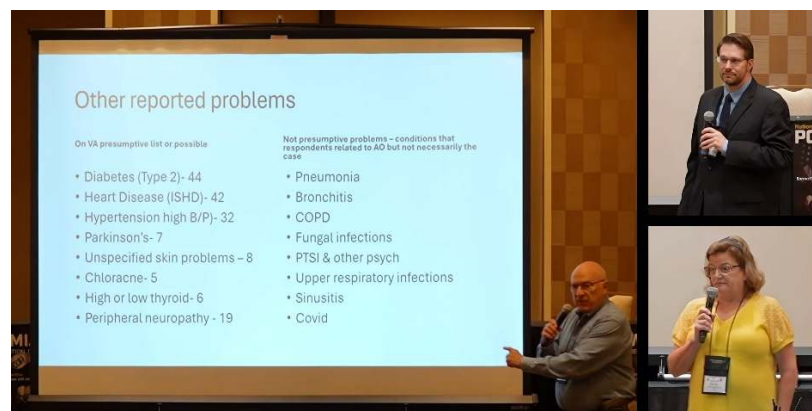
The slide presentation can be accessed at [soafoundation.net](http://soafoundation.net), or [view the video presentation here](#).

For more information on the Project, visit the SOA Foundation website or contact:

John "Doc" Padgett, SOA Foundation Executive Director

702-499-8155

[bacsi10@yahoo.com](mailto:bacsi10@yahoo.com)





# COCKTAIL HOUR





# SOAR XLVIII BANQUET



President Godshall

President Doug Godshall, for the fourth year, served as Master of Ceremonies. The banquet started with the posting of the colors by DAV Chapter 12 from Henderson, NV, followed by the singing of the National Anthem by Debra Sinyard. SOA Chaplain Dale Hanson gave the invocation, and Jack Kull provided a presentation on the Missing Man table.



After the traditional round of toasts, the SOA tradition of "Passing the Mantle" took place when

John J. Gargus (Son Tay Raider) and John "Tilt" Meyer, representing the oldest members, passed a photo of a coin that was carried on the Ho Chi Minh trail, to Benjamin Sievert, representing the youngest member.

After awarding the 45-year tenure pins, Doug, assisted by Linda Leavitt, recognized several members for their contributions to the SOA. Outgoing board members Alfonso "RT" Rivero and Richard "Duffy" Jensen were presented with beautifully carved eagles in thanks for their years of service as members of the SOA Board of Directors.



Duffy Jensen & RT Rivero



Ken Bowra & Len Fein

MG(ret) Kenneth Bowra and Len Fein received the Generous Donor Award for their donations to the Special Operations Association and Special Operations Association Foundation.

Outgoing SOA Quarter Master Bob Daniels, his wife Karen, and daughter Juli Connor received the President's Award for their years of work managing the SOA QM Store.

Also receiving President's Awards were the "three Amigos" from the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), Matt Kristoff, Jack Kull, and Steve Thompson, for their years of work in pursuit of the fullest possible accounting for our unaccounted-for brothers.



# SOAR XLVIII BANQUET



Jack Kull &amp; Matt Kristoff

Ivan Davis

Others receiving the President's Awards were Ivan Davis for his seven years of work as the SOA Registrar, RT Rivero for stepping in as acting Secretary on the Board of Directors when sitting Secretary Duffy Jensen faced a health crisis, and Ken Bowra for his service to the Special Operations Association and Special Operations Association Foundation.

After the awards ceremony, it was time to enjoy another delicious buffet provided by the Orleans catering team.



Dinner was followed by our guest speaker, MG(ret) Ken Bowra, who was joined by Xuan Van Vu, who was assigned with Ken to RT Idaho at CCN in 1971. The two men were reunited after Xuan was located during the Team Gambler trip to Vietnam. Savage Game owner Rob Graham and Bruce Christensen contributed to the efforts to locate Xuan Vu. The emotional story of Ken and Xuan reunion culminated with Ken presenting Xuan the Green Beret he wore when Commanding General of Special Forces Command.

WATCH THE BANQUET VIDEOS HERE - [OPENING & AWARDS](#) & [MG BOWRA](#)

# SOAR XLVIII BANQUET

## 45-YEAR TENURE PIN CEREMONY



SOA members (l-r) John Barrett, Larry Trimble, Roland Meder and Mike Vermillion achieved 45-year tenure as members of the Special Operations Association in 2024. They were presented longevity pins during the SOAR XLVIII Banquet.

### CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL SOA MEMBERS ACHIEVING 45-YEAR TENURE IN 2024

Barrett, John Patrick  
 Bennett, Martin T.  
 Belletire Jr., Frank L.  
 Camacho, Fred A.  
 Cavallero Jr., Joseph  
 Farago, Julius Z.  
 Jennings, Henry D.  
 Mann, Russel S.  
 Mendoza, Charlie

Meder, Roland S.  
 Montez, Alfred  
 Newman, John R.  
 Ryder, David F.  
 Sarkovics, Jerry  
 Steffler, Charles R.  
 Trimble, Larry  
 Vermillion, Michael J.



# BANQUET





# THE AWAKENING AT THE WYNN, LAS VEGAS

The Awakening event show at the Wynn Hotel & Resort was one of the most exciting and intriguing events ever attended by our SOA members. This event show was unequivocally a premier event with numerous acrobatic and theatrical performances, complete with unforgettable characters, costumes, choreography, original music, and a compelling story. Our members were totally awestruck by every thrilling moment of this production, from soaring aerialists and bounding acrobats to the comedic moments that brought a lighthearted balance to Awakening's gripping tale.

At the heart of this mythic adventure, a hero must confront the forces of Light and Darkness in a quest to save the world, and in doing so encounters a fascinating assortment of characters — including oversized, fantastical creatures that captivate with their graceful, life-like movements. The show was performed on a 60-foot, 360-degree prismatic stage, that undulates by moving or being shaped like waves, displaying a smooth rising-and-falling or side-to-side motion, and it expands as the characters move with ease.



Coordination for attendance and ticket discounting was made possible by Ms. Jacinta Jose, Theatre Manager and Ticket Sales coordinator (See inset photo). The SOA extends our heartfelt appreciation to Ms. Jose for her undying assistance in making our visit a wholly and totally unforgettable experience. SOA members' comments were such that "The Awakening was one of the best shows ever attended by our organization."

Our members had complete unobstructed seating. All SOA group seats were such that all members were able to be seated next to everyone in their respective parties. Again, the SOA Entertainment Committee were overwhelmingly complimented on all aspects of the show, from arrangement, to transportation, to show closing and return to the Orleans Hotel. Members are highly encouraged to submit to the Entertainment Committee event(s) of their desired choice, keeping in mind that all desired events must be available on Tuesday evenings of all SOAR reunions; cost effective, and can be enjoyed by all.

Please submit all questions, suggestions and/or comments to John Russell (949) 698-4616, or to [Johnr7940@gmail.com](mailto:Johnr7940@gmail.com)

John Russell, Entertainment Chair  
 Judith Russell, Co-chair  
 Janet McGovern, Co-chair  
 Marian Bargewell, Temporary Co-Chair



## CCS BREAKFAST

Roughly 70 people attended this year's Southern Brotherhood Memorial breakfast consisting of Recon team, Hatchet/Reaction Forces, Aviators, interested SOA members, friends, and families. Also attending were Nancy Furbish, Sheerill Woodbury, and Christine Hoskin widows of aviators Tyler, Woody and Don.

The breakfast was led off with a prayer. After fellowship and breakfast, we remembered and paid tribute to our fallen comrades. Alex Saunders read the names of the CCS fallen Skip Cantwell read the names of the 20th. SOS fallen and Don Haase read the names of the 195th., 155th., 189th., 240th., AHC and the 219th AVN CO. fallen

At the end of the breakfast, a toast written by Bob Bost was read. " May the sound of their swords beating on their shields forever reverberate in our hearts. And may their memories reside in the halls of Valhalla with the warriors of old."

We then formed up for a group photo of the attending veterans.

Don Haase





# SOA PRAYER BREAKFAST



It has been an honor and privilege to serve as the Chaplain of the SOA and to be a part of our second prayer breakfast.

With these trying times for our nation and the uncertainty of the world as a whole, more than ever, we need to use this powerful resource of prayer to God.

In our nation's most trying times, our people have gone to Him, and he has given us the wisdom, character, guidance, strength, and resources to see us through. God has never

failed his people.

While the overall numbers of our attendance at SOAR were consistent with previous years, the attendance for the Prayer Breakfast more than doubled. I am so grateful for the 53 members and guests that attended and look forward to next year. Until that time I will be praying for our SOA brothers and our nation.

During the year, I have the sad task of calling on the next of kin when one of our members pass; however, please know that I am here for you to call for other needs - illness, spiritual advice, counselling, or other needs you may have.

Please call me at any time.

God bless you all,

Dale Hanson, SOA Chaplain  
 907-747-6498  
[cdhanson@att.net](mailto:cdhanson@att.net)





## LIQUOR TASTING

Forty-eight (48) SOA members and guests were treated to a Flecha Azul Tequila tasting.

Garrett Bosch of WES Brands presented the intriguing history of the Azul Flecha Tequila product line including Tequila Blanco, Tequila Reposado and Tequila Añejo describing the characteristics and blending of each. As Mr Bosch discussed each Tequila, the assembled members tasted each.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Mr Bosch announced that he had brought a Tequila Añejo Cristalino box querying how the group should dispose of it.

In typical Special Operator fashion, our own Auctioneer supreme, SOA member Kenneth Tromp, stepped forward and proposed that we auction the empty box.

After a brief auction, \$250 was raised which was promptly donated to the SOAF Widow Fund. Thank you Kenneth Tromp!



The empty box was later found to contain a single flask of the Tequila Añejo Cristalino. As Mr Bosch had “over planned” in product, several bottles of the several tequilas were removed to the open bar for consumption by those in attendance.

The gathered group thoroughly enjoyed the different Tequila products and look forward to next year’s liquor tasting event.



# GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING



President Godshall

President Godshall called the General Membership Meeting to order at 1330 Wednesday, 16 October 2024. George Sternberg, Sergeant at Arms, confirmed a quorum was present.

Committee Chairmen presented their respective reports. These reports can be found in the meeting minutes as follows.

President Godshall and Membership Chairman, Joe Wilson presented Tenure pins to those members registered for SOAR. .

John “Tilt” Meyers was recognized as the best membership recruiter in the past year. Although the Membership Committee encourages all SOA members to recruit, Tilt has gone beyond the call of duty as he travels around the country and talks on his blog. Again, thank you, Tilt.



Tilt Meyer and Joe Wilson

Marcus Whitt, Rick Freeman and Jim Shorten were sworn into office.

President Godshall closed the meeting with Good of the Order matters and adjourned the meeting at 1440 PDT.

### 25-26 SOA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



L-R, Secretary, Marcus Whitt, Director Dave Gordon, Vice President Josh King, Director Don Hasse, President, Doug Godshall, Treasurer Phil Devon, Director Rick Freeman and Director Jim Shorten.

[WATCH THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING VIDEO HERE](#)

# SOAR XLVIII GMM MINUTES

## SOAR GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

16 OCTOBER 2024

- |       |  |                    |
|-------|--|--------------------|
| I.    | Call to Order 1335 PDT   | President Godshall |
| II.   | Recognition, Sergeants-At-Arms-George Sternberg, Robert Taylor, Tim Schaff   | President Godshall |
| III.  | Pledge of Allegiance   | President Godshall |
| IV.   | Opening Prayer/Moment of Silence for our Fallen, MIAs and POWs   | Chaplin Hanson     |
| V.    | Roll Call-SOA Board of Officers/Directors<br>President Godshall, Treasurer Devon, Vice President King, Secretary Jenson, Director Haase, Director Gordon, Director Whitt, Director Rivero-we have a quorum of the Board  | Director Rivero    |
| VI.   | SOA Special Staff Members Present<br>Ray Frovarp, Joe Wilson, Horace Boner, John Russell, John "Doc" Padgett, Tilt Meyer, Rand Binford, Ivan Davis   | President Godshall |
| VII.  | Credentials Report/Announcement of GM Present, and if a quorum is present<br>General Members present, 102; others present 7. A quorum is present.  |                    |
| VIII. | General Member's Approval of GMM Agenda<br>President Godshall called for a motion to approve the agenda; motion made seconded, and motion carried.   | President Godshall |
| IX.   | Business Meeting   |                    |
| A.    | Regular Business   |                    |
| 1.    | Approve SOAR XLVII GMM Meeting minutes<br>(SOAR XLVIII PRP) President Godshall asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous GMM (19 Oct 2023). Motion was made and seconded and all present voted AYE.  | President Godshall |
| 2.    | Financial Report (See AAR Report)  | Treasurer Devon    |
| a.    | SOAF is a 501(c)(3) corporation. The SOAF is very healthy with \$30,000 to the positive and \$82,000 in the bank.  |                    |
| b.    | The SOA is a 501(c)(19) corporation. Currently running a profit of \$62,000 as of 1/30/2024 but this is misleading as we have none of the income/expenses for SOAR 2024. We may experience a \$20,000 loss this year but that is acceptable and sustainable. Our balance sheet shows \$664,000 with a liability of \$19,000. The \$19,000 is our Scholarship Funds and represents funds that go to our Scholarship Winners. Non-restricted funds total \$515,000. We will have an audit as requested by the Board due to issues happening in another organization.   |                    |
| c.    | SOAF Report<br>Been very busy this year assisting our membership. Transferred funds to the Scholarship Fund. The SOAFAC (Special Operations Association Foundation Auxiliary Committee created the Widows Fund. There is information on this program on the back table. \$500 grant for the widow when her spouse passes to get her through the initial trauma. See additional information in 2024 AAR.  | Doc Padgett        |
| d.    | SOA Riders Report<br>Asked all Riders in attendance to stand and be recognized. It's the first time in many years to have the two SOA Members that are responsible for creating the Riders: Doyle Creed and Larry Trimble. Both Doyle and Larry started the Riders to focus on raising funds for our Bright Light program and to remember those service members that are still unaccounted for. The Riders had their annual ride June 5-8, 2024. It was hosted by Rider Tom Cunningham in Concord, NH. Tom led us on rides through the mountains and along the coast. Great Rides!! During our Friday night raffle, we raised over \$1,700 for Bright Light. Our next ride will be held on June 4-7, 2025, and will be hosted by Stacy Buscetto in Ormond Beach, FL. | Director Whitt     |
| e.    | Warrior Family Fund<br>Provides \$500 stipends for those in need. Presently we have \$3,800 in our account. We have assisted 3 members in need.  | Horace Boner       |



# SOAR XLVIII GMM MINUTES

- f. Entertainment John Russell  
Gave an overview of Tuesday night’s event. Talked about the process of moving from the Orleans to the event site and how much coordination it takes.
- g. Membership Committee Joe Wilson  
Getting younger members since we are mostly older guys from the Vietnam era. At present, we have around 1500-1555 paid members. VP King is meeting with several GWOTs and is hoping that they will become involved in the leadership role of the SOA. All of us need to recruit new members. One of our members “stands out” regarding recruiting new members. I have asked several of our new members “where did you hear about us”? Their response is John “Tilt” Meyer. The membership committee recognized Tilt with a token of their appreciation for continually being the best recruiter for the SOA.
- h. President Godshall recognized two retiring board members: Duffy Jenson and RT Rivero. Additional recognition will take place at the Banquet.
- i. Tally Committee Ray Frovarp  
We had two board positions and the secretary position that were scheduled to be filled. 1,100 ballots were dispatched on 1 August 2024 with the deadline to return same ballots by 30 September 2024. On 1 October 2024 the accumulated ballots were tallied. Marcus Whitt received 136 votes for secretary; James Shorten received 123 votes for Director and Rick Freeman received 126 votes.
- j. Swearing in newly elected SOA Officers/Directors President Godshall  
Secretary – Marcus Whitt II  
Director – Rick Freeman  
Director – James Shorten
- k. Non-Valor Award Presentations  
Recognition, 20 Year SOA Members  
Recognition, 25 Year SOA Members  
Recognition, 30 Year SOA Members  
Recognition, 35 Year SOA Members  
Recognition, 40 Year SOA Members  
President Godshall and Membership Committee Chair Joe Wilson presented Tenure Pins to many of the eligible members registered for SOAR. The 45 Year SOA Tenure Pins will be awarded at the Banquet
- B. New Business
1. The SFA VP, Pete Tingstrom, gave some remarks regarding the assistance that was provided by many SOF benevolent organizations for Hurricane Helene victims. The SOAF gave \$10,000 to that effort. Also, he spoke about the SFA Cruise that was happening next week.
  2. Horace Boner announced the Liquor Tasting begins at 1630 today. Doc Padgett announced that the SOAF Bowling for Beer will begin at 1930 hrs. today.
  3. Rich Mallowney, SOA Fund Raising Chair talked about the various raffles that were going on here at SOAR. He also gave away a few items via a drawing in the GM meeting.
- X. Meeting Adjournment: 1445 PDT

Respectfully Submitted

Marcus Whitt II  
SOA Secretary

**Special Operations Association, Inc.**  
**Profit and Loss Comparison 2024 - 2023 - Cash Basis**

January - December 2024

	Jan - Dec 2024	Jan - Dec 2023
<b>Income</b>		
Contributions	58,992	165,055
Fund Raising	6,525	20,280
Interest Income	16,622	2,285
Membership Dues	23,330	21,920
Miscellaneous Income	1,589	800
Quarter Master Sales	32,663	33,836
Reunion Income	135,440	135,945
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 275,161</b>	<b>\$ 380,120</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
AAR Production/PRP Production	6,208	21,410
Administrative Expenses	47,204	37,887
Advertising/Promotional	0	7,680
Fund Raising Expenses	0	5,215
Jedburgh Award Expenses	463	840
Quarter Master Cost	26,485	25,569
Reunion Expense	161,851	144,700
Scholarship Expenses	36,076	16,000
Travel	2,552	13,331
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 280,839</b>	<b>\$ 272,632</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$ (5,678)</b>	<b>\$ 107,489</b>

**Special Operations Association, Inc.**

**Balance Sheet - Cash Basis**

As of December 31, 2024

	As of Dec 31, 2024	As of Dec 31, 2023
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
SOA Non-Restricted Accounts	\$ 401,929	\$ 401,000
SOA Restricted Accounts	\$ 167,773	\$ 160,614
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$ 569,702</b>	<b>\$ 561,614</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 569,702</b>	<b>\$ 561,614</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>		
<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 22,267</b>	<b>\$ 8,500</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Net Assets (Retained Earnings)	553,114	445,625
Net Income	(5,678)	107,489
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>\$ 547,435</b>	<b>\$ 553,114</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	<b>\$ 569,702</b>	<b>\$ 561,614</b>



**Special Operations Association Foundation, Inc.**  
**Statement of Activity 2024-2023 Comparison - Cash Basis**

January - December 2024

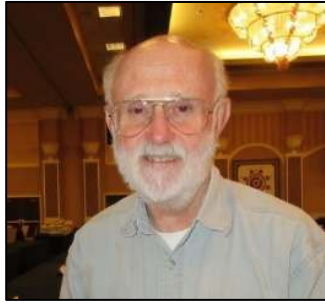
	Jan - Dec 2024	Jan - Dec 2023
<b>Revenue</b>		
Contributions Income	68,871	58,561
SOAFAC Revenue	2,465	2,260
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 71,336</b>	<b>\$ 60,821</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Bank Charges	161	46
Charitable Contributions	46,000	27,000
Legal & Professional Fees	500	600
Office Expenses	863	590
Other General and Admin Expenses	0	250
Quartermaster Inventory Expense	0	1,064
Reunion Expenses	0	315
SOAFAC Expenses	573	1,603
Travel	6,424	7,973
WEB Expenses	281	1,060
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 54,802</b>	<b>\$ 40,500</b>
<b>Net Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 16,534</b>	<b>\$ 20,321</b>
Interest Earned	4	4
<b>Net Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 16,537</b>	<b>\$ 20,324</b>

**Special Operations Association Foundation, Inc.**  
**Statement of Financial Position - Cash Basis**

As of December 31, 2024

	As of Dec 31, 2024	As of Dec 31, 2023
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Bank Accounts</b>		
SOA Foundation Checking BOA	31,225	15,261
SOA Foundation Savings	37,735	37,162
<b>Total Bank Accounts</b>	<b>\$ 68,960</b>	<b>\$ 52,422</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 68,960</b>	<b>\$ 52,422</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>		
<b>Liabilities</b>	0	0
<b>Equity</b>		
Retained Earnings	52,422	32,098
Net Revenue	16,537	20,324
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>\$ 68,960</b>	<b>\$ 52,422</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	<b>\$ 68,960</b>	<b>\$ 52,422</b>

# FUNDRAISING REPORT



Thank you to all of the vendors and members who donated items for the SOAR table raffle and those who volunteer throughout the year to make the SOA raffles a success.

I want to personally extend a special thank you to Andrew Gore of Smith and Wesson for their generous donation of weapons.

Smith & Wesson have been a vital resource for the SOA; their generous contribution is a testament to their support of our mission.

Proceeds from the 2024 raffles will fund the SOA Scholarship and Video History programs:.

AAR	\$5,375
PRP	\$1,150
Table Raffle	\$5,040
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11,565</b>

## CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THE WINNERS

TJ David Pollard	(AAR) Springfield Browning
Frank Moore	(PRP) Sig Sauer
Tom Laning	S&W Lever Action Rifle, 45 Colt
Duane Chilson	S&W Lever Action Rifle, 45 Magnum
Nancy Furbish	S&W M&P Etched Pistol
Ed Walcoff	S&W M&P Etched Pistol
John Trantanella	CAR-15 & Book

Ray Oden	Bowie Knife	Juli Conner	Freedom Quilt
Richard Chapman	Knife	Juli Conner	Valor Quilt
John Trantanella	Sunset Picture	Canyon Picture	Cathy Godshall
Larry Little	Book Vol 1	John Trantanella	Book Vol 2
Richard Chapman	Book Vol 3	Larry Little	Book Vol 4
Andrew Gore	Book Trio	Bob Strange	Helmet
Clete Sinyard	Bullet Glass	Clete Sinyard	Pop Smoke Basket

If you have any questions, feel free to call or email.

Respectfully Submitted  
 Rich Mallowney, Fundraising Chair  
 907-953-7185  
 n185rk@hotmail.com

John Vislosky, Resource Development  
 914-406-0316  
 jv4@aol.com

# TENURE PINS

The following SOA members were recognized for achieving benchmark tenure as members of the Special Operations Association at SOAR XLVIII. Longevity pins were awarded during the General Membership Meeting.

## 20-YEAR TENURE

Ronald Williams  
Alan Mullen



## 25-YEAR TENURE



Robert Morris, Richard Brittle, Joel McDaniel, Curtis Bodin, Paul Sawyer, JJ “Crash” Makool



# TENURE PINS

## 30-YEAR TENURE

Ward Dean  
Issac Camacho



## 35 YEAR TENURE

Nick Godano

## 40-YEAR TENURE

Marcus Whitt  
Rick Estes  
John Trantanella



# SOA NOMINATING COMMITTEE

**The SOA Nominating Committee is seeking interested General members to fill 3 positions on the Board of Directors for the 2025-2026 cycle. Positions are open for Vice President and two (2) Directors to serve three (3) year terms effective as of the 2025-26 SOAR XLIX General Membership Meeting.**

## **Eligibility:**

1. SOA Members competing for an open position must agree to serve as a Trustee on the Special Operations Association Foundation (SOAF).
2. In order to run for any Board position, a member must be a General member in good standing and have attended at least one (1) of the last three (3) SOARs, including the day before the General Membership Meeting, the General Membership Meeting, and the Banquet prior to competing for office.
3. Interested candidates should submit a digital picture and a short bio (no more than 150 words) before the deadline.
4. Deadline for submission 1 May 2025.
5. The SOAR XLIX Pre-Registration Packet (PRP) will contain the bio/photo data for each candidate.
6. Election results will be announced during the 2025 SOAR General Membership Meeting.

If you are interested or need additional information on serving on the SOA Board of Directors, contact the Chairman:

Rand Binford Chairman  
808-227-9890  
Rand\_Roy@hotmail.com

Josh King  
931-216-5484  
joshking78@gmail.com

# VIDEO HISTORY & ARCHIVE UPDATE

It was good to see everyone this year as we acknowledged the 60th anniversary of the beginning of SOG. We were able to record an additional nine interviews during the reunion. We now have a total of 190 interviews that have been recorded since the beginning of the Video History Project. If you have not been interviewed, please sign up at the Archive table during SOAR in October 2025.

The Studies and Observations Group is still the subject of great interest to Special Operations Forces today and the subject of many conversations both inside and outside the SOF community. As the SOA Archivist, I was recently contacted by a former member of the 10<sup>th</sup> SFG (A) who is asking for help determining whether anyone knows the origin of a patch that was designed back in the mid-1980s. The people who wore the patch are looking for information regarding who designed the patch. They believe that someone from ST/RT New York may have been involved and are looking for more information.

To give some background, part of the 10<sup>th</sup> SFG (A) moved away from conducting Unconventional Warfare (UW) operations when the Group Commander COL Richard Potter created the Strategic Intelligence Collection and Target Analysis (SICTA) mission. SICTA was an extension of the Special Forces Reconnaissance mission. The mission required Human Intelligence (HUMINT) collection and the timely and correct identification of Warsaw Pact weapons, troops and vehicles. The teams were trained to identify all variations of the vehicles to include identifying the command and control vehicles and their variations. They were also trained to determine the impact of these vehicles on the Forward Edge of the Battle Area (FEBA).



These SICTA units were used during the FLINTLOCK exercises and were deployed from England to West Germany, their mission to get behind enemy lines to report on troop and vehicle movement. It wasn't long before these teams realized several things. The behind the lines missions were the same type as their brothers before them had run in Vietnam as part of SOG. They also noticed that their life expectancy during these missions was likely to be very short and while the idea was for them to link up with advancing Allied units, it was more likely that they were on a "one-way mission". Within the scope of a worldwide conventional war it was an accepted, calculated risk to gain a strategic advantage against a formidable conventional enemy. This gave the teams some motivation to create a team patch and this is where the lineage of SOG is strong. The SICTA patch has a strong resemblance to the last version of the ST/RT New York Team patch. It may be that someone in 10<sup>th</sup> Group or someone from ST/RT New York influenced the design of the SICTA patch. If you have any information on the origin of the SICTA patch, please contact me.

Dennis Cummings  
SOA Archivist  
314-303-9156



# REGISTRAR ATTENDANCE REPORT

Over 500 SOA members and guests gathered in camaraderie and fellowship during the 48<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Special Operations Association celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the activation of MACV-SOG.

# ATTENDING	TYPE
199	General
17	Associate
3	Operational Associate
16	Honorary
9	Warrior's Widows
266	Guests
515	Total Attendees

I am deeply honored and grateful to receive the President's Award this year. This recognition is shared with the many dedicated volunteers whose hard work and commitment are the true key to ensuring registration runs smoothly year after year. Their efforts are invaluable and greatly appreciated, and I am proud to be part of such a devoted team.

Thank you to the registration volunteers, Robert "Swede" and Linda Ashton, John and Carrol Trantanella, Jean Thong, Ray and Ronnie Frovarp and Rick Howard.

May God bless those who wanted to but were not able to attend, and we pray their situation may improve this coming year, enabling them to join their brothers and sisters in arms for next year's reunion.

See you next year at SOAR 49!

Respectfully submitted,  
Ivan Davis, SOAR Registrar



Carol Trantanella & Rick Howard



Swede and Linda Ashton

# MEMBERSHIP



Tilt Meyer & Joe Wilson

In 2024, the Membership Committee welcomed fifty-one new members on behalf of the Board of Directors. Thirty-one cited various Middle Eastern countries as the locations where they were assigned with their qualifying units. Twenty-three were born during or after the Vietnam War. This is a definite change in membership from previous years and shows that the Special Operations Association is changing with the times.

Another change of the times is that younger members, the future of the SOA, are volunteering; two have volunteered to serve on the Membership Committee. They are Jeremy Knabenshue #3482-G, and his wife, Cassandra #3589-G. They are the first couple of what may become a future trend with the changes in warfare.

A highlight of the 2024 SOAR membership meeting was the presentation to John “Tilt” Meyers of an acknowledgment award for being the best membership recruiter in the past year.

Although the Membership Committee encourages all SOA members to recruit, Tilt goes above and beyond the call of duty as he travels around the country and talks on his blog. Again, thank you, Tilt.



Jeremy & Cassie Knaenshue

2024 SOA Membership  
 1172 General  
 140 Associate  
 21 Operational Associate  
 53 Honorary  
 27 Warriors Widows  
 1413 Total

Lastly, and with sorrow, the large group of Vietnam War veterans of the Association are dying at a faster rate. We are very thankful for their service to our Nation and miss them.

Respectfully

Joe Wilson, Membership Chairman

954-448-2981

[membership@specialoperations.org](mailto:membership@specialoperations.org)

## SOA FOUNDATION & AUXILIARY

The Special Operations Association Foundation (SOAF) enjoyed a successful participation in the 2024 SOAR. Our table in the exhibit hall was staffed primarily by volunteers from the SOAF Axillary Committee (SOAFAC), who oversaw the sale of Foundation T-shirts and golf shirts, as well as the raffle of items to benefit the Foundation. We had many people stop by the table to learn more about the Foundation and the SOAFAC, and some SOA members and guests donated to the Foundation and the SOAFAC Widows Fund. The Foundation raised approximately \$2,000 at SOAR this year, with the SOAFAC raising their own funds.

The Foundation's Executive Director Doc Padgett presented the results and conclusions of the Agent Orange Legacy Project survey, which was an effort to determine the effects of AO on our specific Special Operations and Special Forces Viet Nam veteran community, as well as any pass-through of genetic damage to our children and grandchildren. The presentation was in a symposium that included speakers Attorney Tom Carpenter, a researcher on the effects of AO on the progeny of VN veterans, and RADM (Ret) Ann Duff, representing the Veterans Administration. The slide presentation can be accessed at [soafoundation.net](http://soafoundation.net) and the SOA web site. The SOA BOD officers elected this year will also serve as Foundation Trustees, together with our Community Trustees.

Bowling for the Foundation was a big success, with prizes awarded for best male and female high scores, as well as a "bolo" for low score. Thank you to the Orleans Lanes staff for their continued support.

Thirty SOA members and guests participated raising \$240 for the Foundation to continue its mission.

Congratulations to Brent and Mani Lindeman for High Score and Phil and Joette Devon who won the raffle for the Orleans gift basket.

Brent and Mani Lindeman



Phil and Joette Devon



The Executive Director and the Board of Trustees wish to thank the members of the SOAFAC for their outstanding support during this year's SOAR.

John "Doc" Padgett, SOAF Executive Director  
702-499-8155  
bacsi10@yahoo.com



## SOA FOUNDATION & AUXILIARY

The Special Operations Association Foundation Auxiliary Committee had another successful annual meeting during SOAR. Our numbers have grown to include 37 women who attended!

The meeting began with an ice breaker led by Vanessa Sowell Skeeter. Last year the committee voiced a desire for a social event and Vanessa stepped up and donated her time and expertise to paint mugs that the participants could take home. All had a creative, challenging, wonderful time!

One of the goals of the SOAFAC is to provide emotional support to members of the SOA community. Over the past 10 months, the SOAFAC has reached out to 14 members who were either ill or newly widowed, through phone calls and cards. In addition, Joy Little has offered handmade pray/comfort shawls from her church to send out to those in need.

The Widows Fund has grown thanks to a generous contribution from Cynthia and Dan Krutina who had over 300 SOAFAC coins designed and made, which they then donated to the Widows Fund. The coins are beautiful and commemorate the contribution women have made to the warriors. The coins are selling for \$15 a piece. (See image below) Anyone interested in purchasing a coin, please contact me.

We were honored with a generous donation by SGM John “Jake” Jakoveno who crafted 2 plaques commemorating the Son Tay Raid. These will be raffled at the SOAR 2025.

Please be sure to stop by the SOAF table to donate! See you all next year!

Vicki Chan-Padgett  
SOAFAC Chair  
702-325-3560  
[vickichanpadgett@yahoo.com](mailto:vickichanpadgett@yahoo.com)



# QUARTERMASTER REPORT



Bob Daniels , QM & Pam Whitt

It has been my honor and privilege to serve the SOA membership as the Quartermaster for the past three years; however, due family health issues, I had to resign following SOAR XLVIII and we had to close the online store.

I am pleased to announce that effective 1 January 2025, Linda Leavitt, SOA's Administrator, and her husband, Tom, will serve as SOA Quartermasters until a permanent solution can be found.

I thank them for stepping up to further serve the SOA membership and look forward to working with them to get the online store reopened. We appreciate everyone's patience during the transition.

The 2024 QM sales exceeded the two previous years with more than \$30,000 in sales. Director Marcus Whitt and I designed the 60th MACV-SOG Anniversary collectors coin as the 2024 XLVIII registration gift. An accompanying T Shirt was designed for sale at the store.

These revenues are vital to the success of our programs and allow the board to continue doing SOA business during the year.

Me, my wife Karen, and daughter Juli Connor, were honored during the banquet as recipients of the President's Award. We are truly humbled. We personally thank Bonnie Cooper, Ray and Rhonda Frovarp, John Joyce, Juli Conner, Marcus and Pamela Whitt and all the volunteers that made my job easier. I certainly could not have done all this on my own.

I have really enjoyed the position as QM and look forward to assisting Tom and Linda in the days ahead.

Prayers, Blessings to all  
Bob Daniels



SOA Quartermaster Bob Daniels, along with his wife, Karen, and daughter Juli Connor, were honored with the Presidents Award during the SOAR Banquet in recognition of their years of dedicated service managing the SOA Quartermaster store.

# FEE SCHEDULE & UPDATE MEMBER CONTACT

## SOA FEE SCHEDULE

ORDER REPLACEMENT CARDS	\$20	Life Member
	\$10	Annual Member
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL	\$30	If paid before January 31 (\$35 after January 31)
REINSTATE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP	\$25	Add fee if more than 12 months in arrears.

If you are applying for reinstatement or a change in status from annual to life, contact the Membership Committee in advance to verify status.

## UPDATE CONTACT INFORMATION

Indicate below the changes you would like to make to your member records. All information is confidential and will not be shared without prior consent.

SOA# \_\_\_\_\_ Date of change \_\_\_\_\_  
 First Name \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip + 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

## NEXT-OF-KIN CONTACT INFORMATION

Relationship to Member (wife, Son, Daughter, Brother, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
 First Name \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

This information can be processed online on the SOA website or mailed, USPS.

[Click here to pay membership dues online](#)

[Click here to update member contact information online](#)

Joe Wilson, Membership Chairman:  
 954 448-2981  
 membership@specialoperations.org

C/O Linda Leavitt, Administrator  
 6012 Aqua Blue Court  
 N. Las Vegas NV 89031-7208



# SOA RIDERS

2024 brought with it some very special events. First, an SOA Rider Challenge Coin was created to commemorate the beginning of this organization and remember the time, effort and love that our past Director Tom Carrell had for the Riders. The coin also recognizes the two SOA members that founded the Riders; Doyle Creed and Larry “The Gambler” Trimble.



Our annual Ride was hosted by SOG 10 Tom Cunningham in Concord, NH June 5-8, 2024. Ten Riders and their spouses participated in the two days of riding along the Atlantic and through the mountains with our last day as the Wreath Ceremony for The SOG Unaccounted For. Pictures left to right; Red Surgenor, Sue Surgenor, Stacy Buscetto, Sherry Collier, Bob Strange, Host Tom Cunningham, Marcus Whitt (kneeling), Pam Whitt, Mel Wick, John Welgos, Tom Collier, Kathy Hayduk, Paul Sawyer, Steve Hayduk.



# SOA RIDERS



The 2024 SOA Reunion saw nineteen of the Riders participate in the four day event; October 14-17, 2024 at the Orleans Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, NV. This was the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of SOG and was an outstanding event. Riders attending SOAR 2024 pictured left to right, front row; Marcus Whitt, Tom Collier, Larry Tremble, Doyle Creed, Randy Ford. Back row left to right; Red Surgenor, Bob Strange, Jeffery Stone, Mel Wick, Greg Walker, Skip Cantwell, Henderson Marriot, Paul Sawyer. Not pictured included Terry Curry, Duffy Jensen, Roland Meder, Bill Norden, Linn Wiebalck and John Welgos.

**Interested in joining the SOA Riders? Contact Marcus Whitt at [csmwhitt@att.net](mailto:csmwhitt@att.net).**



# SOA FACT SHEET

The Special Operations Association is incorporated in the State of Texas and approved by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) under the Internal Revenue Code 501 (c) (19), Veteran’s fraternal organization as exempt from federal income tax (EIN 74-2619854).

Membership in the SOA is open to veterans or members of a branch of the US Armed Forces Special Operations Community who have conducted Special Operations as a member of a combat element or provided direct support to the operational combat element within an assigned area of operations. Our members include combat veterans from all wars including WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Panama, Grenada, the Balkans, Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan, as well as those from our most recent conflicts in the global war on terrorism.

The purposes of this Corporation herein after referred to as the “Association,” are:

1. To perpetuate the esprit de corps of the Special Operations community; and
2. To unite fraternally veterans of all branches of the United States Armed Forces who, since the beginning of World War II, have conducted or supported “Special Operations;” and
3. To commemorate fittingly the memory of all those who have given their lives in defense of the Free World and to those who served in Special Operations units and are still unaccounted for as POW/MIA;
4. To promote patriotism throughout the communities of the country; and
5. To educate its members and the citizens of the United States in the proper development of Special Operations, and to keep abreast of new developments in the field of Special Operations as is consistent with security regulations; and
6. To encourage every member of the Association toward a closer personal relationship and a friendly spirit of mutual cooperation; and
7. To foster and promote the general welfare and prosperity of the Members, and to improve by all lawful means their status and condition; and
8. To be a source of inspiration for all Special Operations Units now and in the future.



The SOA communicates with the membership via the website, Pre-Reunion Packet (PRP), After-Action Report, (AAR), newsletters and email blasts.

The SOA annual General Membership Meeting has been scheduled 13-17 October 2025 during the conduct of SOAR XLIX at the Orleans Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas.

All members are encouraged to attend.

WEB SITE: [www.specialoperations.org](http://www.specialoperations.org)

Revised: 31 December 2024



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## YOU KNOW WHY YOU JOINED THE SOA

Why? To paraphrase the purposes of the SOA, because you like the idea of belonging to an organization that perpetuates the esprit de corps of the Special Operations community and unites fraternally all of us whether we are Veterans or on active duty.

Our membership is reflective of all branches of the armed forces - Army Green Berets/Night Stalkers/Rangers, Navy SEALs/SWCCs, USAF Air Commandos/FAC's, Marine Raiders/RECON, and the other specialized special operations units, the "tip of our Nation's spear".

### EVERYONE CAN BE AN SOA RECRUITER

- *Contact your comrades from the units/branch where you served:*
  - *Invite them to attend our annual reunion in October*
  - *Encourage them to apply for membership in the SOA.*
- *Represent the SOA at military functions, conventions, military gatherings, or meetings and distribute recruitment materials.*



We ask all SOA members to join us in recruiting new members, especially those with whom you served.

Contact me to discuss how you can help.

Jeremy Knabenshue, Membership Chairman  
membership@specialoperations.org  
Tel: 910-710-1822

**SpecialOperationsAssociation.org**





*The Orleans is proud to present*

# SOAR XLIX

October 13-17, 2025



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