



Special Forces Association

SFC Allen C. Johnson Memorial Chapter – LXXXIX (89)

Northern California • Southwestern Oregon • Northwestern Nevada

www.sfachapter89.com

Fall Newsletter–2011

“Reading of the Names” Memorial Service –Colfax, CA: (9/11/2011)

This Chapter is dedicated and named in honor of Sergeant First Class Allen C. Johnson from Los Molinos, California, his wife, children and parents. Allen was an SF Medic serving with the 7th Special Forces Group in Afghanistan, when he gave “The Last Full Measure of Devotion” on 26 April 2005. SFC Johnson was awarded the Bronze Star with “V” device for Valor for his heroic actions on that date.

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Ken Delfino & John Cleckner

“Reading of the Names” Memorial Service –Colfax, CA: (9/11/2011)

Eleven (11) chapter members were in Colfax, CA, in support of chapter member, the Honorable Mayor **Ken Delfino’s** patriotic labor of love. Those chapter members’ making the trip were: **Scott Masterson; John & Doris Cleckner; Jim & Jan Sorensen; Doug &**

Manuela Davenport; Jack & Becky Bowles and Jim & Marlie. The activities of that very special day are probably best described by Ken Delfino in his recent letter to the chapter membership:

To: The Green Berets of Special Forces Chapter 89 and their spouses:

Dear John, Doris, Scott, Jim, Jan, Becky, Jack, Manuela. Doug, Marlie and Jim,

First off...THANK YOU SO MUCH...for coming to Colfax and helping make our Memorial Service even more special. I am sorry that I was not here on Saturday to serve as a proper host for in spite of what had to be done on Sunday, I WOULD have found time to break bread with you and make sure you felt welcome in our small town.

I know we have less folks than Anderson, McKinleyville, Redding and Reno....not quite sure about Bella Vista and Montague though!

I’m sorry I was unable to spend more time with all y’all on Sunday during the event...it started and it seemed like, after all the planning, it ended too soon...and some of you left before I had a chance to thank you personally and say good-bye.

However, it did end exactly at 1345...when it was timed to end and by 1500, the lot looked as if nothing...NOTHING had taken place there that day!

A lot of that had to do with the fact that I had a TEAM of self-sufficient and confident people running their areas of operation. I put out a couple of logistic “fires”, but other than that, what you all saw was the result of some really terrific and DEDICATED people who BELIEVED in our project and the purpose of it...and who had INITIATIVE in making their jobs better that day.

While in Viet Nam, you were part of such teams and you know of which I speak...you all were known as “The Silent Professionals”this team...of which I am extremely proud... was mine... all working SILENTLY behind the scenes!!

Just as we all were reassigned after our deployments, the Soroptimists, Lionesses, Lions, sheriffs’ deputies, firefighters, cheerleaders, youth leaders and chamber members will go back to their respective organizations and work on their own club projects.

We’ll see and support each other as the COMMUNITY of Colfax does...the Lioness plant sales, the chamber’s Railroad Days, the Soroptimists’ e-Waste Day and See’s Candy sales, the Lions’ Crab Feed, the sheriffs’ golf tournament, the firefighters’ pancake breakfast and “Fill the Boot” day and our high school events.

While this came under the umbrella of our Kiwanis club, I am SO FORTUNATE to have had the opportunity to serve as mayor of this city on this day. As you all know, I never expected to be in this position, but what an unexpected surprise this turned out to be.

The great Lou Gehrig once said, “I am the luckiest man alive” after he discovered he had ALS but referring to the fact that he had been able to play baseball for as long as he did and be as successful as he was.

Well Lou, I respectfully ask that you step aside for I now wish to make that claim!

I am proud to know each of you and I look forward to seeing all y’all in November.

With respect,

Ken

Chapter 89 Activities and events for the last Quarter:



Da Mayor- Ken Delfino kicks things off.



Jim & Jan Sorensen looking calm & cool.



Jim Wipf doing his thing.



"M&M's"- Manuela & Marlie looking good!

"Reading of the Names" Memorial Service (continued)



Doris Cleckner reading the names and John ringing the bell.



Chapter President Scott Masterson.



Doug Davenport reads and Scott rings...





Scott, Becky & Jack.



Becky and Jack Bowles.



Doug & Manuela Davenport with niece.

“Reading of the Names” Memorial Service (continued)



Manuela and Doug Davenport



Scott & Becky.

Membership Changes

The Chapter has had two new members join the chapter since the last newsletter, and one new member assigned by SFA national:

Dan Christensen actually became a chapter member a few months ago. He participated with the chapter even before officially becoming a member at the scholarship presentations at Los Molinos High School last June. Dan, his wife Shannon and their three children reside in the Redding, California area.

Before joining Special Forces, Dan had spent three (3) years with the Scout Platoon of the 2/508th PIR of the 82nd Abn Div. After the tour with the 82nd, Dan spent five (5) years with Special Forces. He participated in Operation Just Cause in Panama and is also a veteran of Operation Desert Storm.

Dan is a very talented artist currently working in the Redding area. One of his artistic creations is located in Anderson, CA at the "Walk of Fame".

Mike Lee officially became a chapter member on 31 August 2011. Mike resides and is employed in the McKinleyville, California area and was enticed to join the chapter by Jim Sorensen.

Like a number of other chapter members, Mike was a "commo" man. While assigned to Signal Company of the 7th SFGA, Mike spent most of his time initially coordinating and serving, with deployed teams in Central and South America. While serving in South America Mike was wounded and he was subsequently medically discharged.

A couple of years later Mike requested and passed a med board and reenlisted. However, he was not immediately reassigned to a Special Forces billet. In 1991 Mike was selected to attend the Defense Language Institute (DLI) in Monterey, California where he became proficient in Arabic. He was then assigned to the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion as a TST Team Sergeant where he spent a great deal of time in the Middle East. Mike retired from active duty as a First Sergeant.



Dan Christensen's Eagle at the "Veterans Walk of Fame"- Anderson, CA.

Like many of us, Dan and Mike have many interesting tales to tell... New and Younger guy tales. However, they are probably better shared in person as opposed to a public forum. Welcome to the Chapter.

Joseph M. Sobota is reported to be currently residing in the Mammoth Lakes, California area. No other information available. Notification was made via SFA channels. Mail contact (both snail & email) has been unsuccessful. Scott has not yet been successful via the CHP channels either.

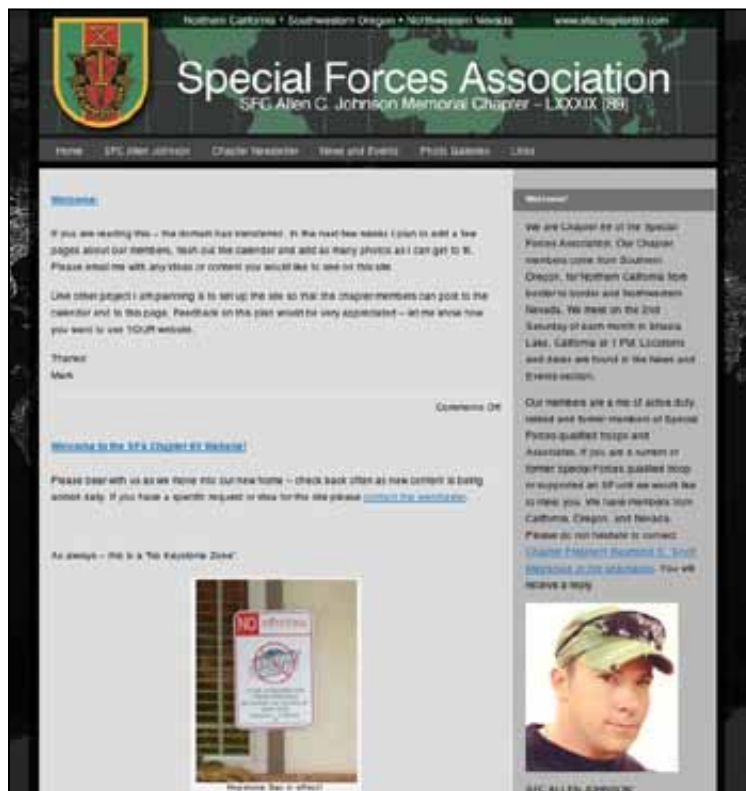
GM&B Meeting- (9/10/2011)

The meeting was conducted at the **Maravirov Team House**. As those GM&B meeting minutes have already been emailed to the membership, that meeting will not be elaborated upon herein.

Chapter Website:

The Chapter's website - <http://www.sfachapter89.com> - has been moved to its new, hopefully permanent home. The hosting and domain registration was paid for by **Skagen Designs** through the owners—**Henrik and Charlotte Jorst**—as part of their on-going support and sponsorship of the Chapter.

Please take a few moments to visit and "click around". **Mark King** is eager to hear your criticisms and suggestions. Email him at mark@4ktees.com - or just click "Contact the Webmaster" link on the website.



Chapter 89 Activities and events for the last Quarter:



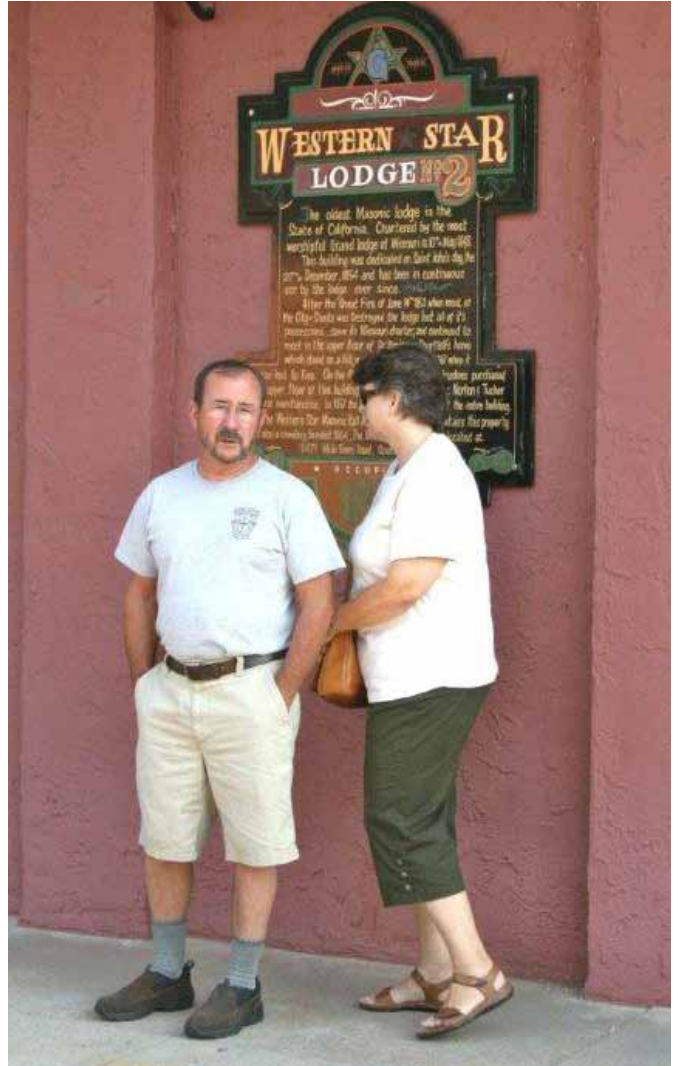
Jack, Bob & Becky 'manning' the Chapter's booth at Hot-Orama.



Breakfast at Masonic Lodge:
John, Doris, Jim, Bob, Kathy,
Marlie, Scott, Shannon and
Dan ready for breakfast!



John Nieland and Col(Ret) Ed Basanez in Reno-August 2011



Breakfast at Masonic Lodge:
Bob anxiously awaiting breakfast while
Kathy attempts to restrain him.



Breakfast at Masonic Lodge: The Chapter "Breakfast Club".



GM&B Meeting: Pre-meeting relaxation mode: Marlie, Scott, Shilah, Kathy & Bob.



GM&B Meeting: Scott presents a special "gift" to John for his term as Chapter President.



GM&B Meeting:
John with the real gift- a commemorative SF mug.



GM&B Meeting: Jack, Mike and John catching up.

Upcoming Chapter Activities & Events:

SFA Annual Dues:

The SFA annual dues...soon be due!! The annual dues are payable between 1 October 2011 and 31 January 2012 without being late. According to Treasurer Bob ("Static") ... The sooner the better. "Static"

Veteran's Day Parade-Shasta Lake, CA

This annual event, now referred to as the Northern California Veteran's Parade is schedule for 5 November 2011. The parade begins at 1000 hours. Assembly time at the Maraviov Team House is prescribed as 0800 hours. Two chapter members have been selected to ride in open convertibles and represent two different wars. **Gary Maraviov** has been selected to represent the Viet Nam War and **Dan Christensen** has been selected to represent the Gulf War. The theme for the parade this year is: "God Bless America and the

likes to get that annual task out of the way as early as possible... Thus, he may then be able devote even more time to his greatest fall pleasure... raking leaves!

Warriors that have & are defending her Freedom"

Although not yet fully planned, there will no doubt be a gathering for victuals, libations and SF camaraderie post parade. We hope to have as many chapter members as possible join with us on this fun annual event. For those who might not be aware, both **John Cleckner** and **Bob Maraviov** are key consultants to the Lyons Club for this ever growing (both in size and prestige) Veteran's Day Celebration.

Annual Chapter Fund Raising Campaign:

At the time of this going to press, the annual fund raiser has not come together as a certainty. Scott has been aggressively beating the bushes to get that one special raffle prize to make this endeavor feasible and

attractive to ticket buyers. Although **Wes Fowler**, SKAGEN Designs, **Jim Wipf** & **Scott** have again pledged raffle prizes, that key prize has yet to be obtained

Leadership Team Meeting

This is scheduled for 14 January 2012... Location & time TBD.

SFA CH 89-GM&B meeting:

Scheduled for 11 February 2012... Location & time TBD.

Annual Chapter Christmas Gathering:

Although the location is yet TBD, this popular annual chapter activity is still scheduled for 17 December 2011. More information will follow.

SFA National News:

The SFA "Best Quarterly Newsletter Award":

The SFA "Best Quarterly Newsletter Award": During the summer the Chapter was notified that the Chapter Newsletter had again been selected for this award for 2011. A "Big tip of the Beret" to **Mark King**, creator of the publication and **SKAGEN Designs** for their ever generous publication support.



SFA Quarterly Newsletter Award -2011.

SFA Convention-2012:

Currently scheduled for 11 June—17 June 2012 in Fayetteville, NC. The convention HQs will be at the Doubletree Hotel...Full registration is set at \$135.00 per person...limited registration is also available.

Registration forms and schedule/itinerary are available on the SFA National website

10th SFGA- 60th Anniversary Reunion:

A recent posting on the SFA National website announced that the 10th SFGA will be celebrating its 60th Anniversary next year. The anniversary celebration of the original Special Forces Group will be held in Colorado Springs, CO, 13-16 June 2012. Yep, there is an overlap with the annual SFA Convention to be held in Fayetteville, NC in 2012. SFA Chapter 4-24 reports that although the celebration is still in the early planning stages, they are expecting between 1200-1500 10th "Groupers" to attend. For those 10th SFG Veteran's in the

Chapter, Don Bennett, Chapter President of 4-24 has written that the Chapter will be looking for donations made out to the chapter. ("Big Army does not allow Group to solicit or receive outside money"). Should anyone be interested in donating to the celebration of the original SF GP, it is a 501© organization. An email contact with Don Bennett has indicated that more info is soon to follow.

Chapter Member Birth Date & Wedding Anniversaries:

Note that the dates are now reconfigured and included to insure that the newsletter is received (when possible) before the anniversaries.

Wedding Anniversaries

13 October.....John & Kelly Cleckner
17 November.....Mike & Carrie Walker
6 December.....Bob & Kathy Maraviov

Birthdays

OCTOBER

22ndManuela Davenport
25thJim Wipf
26thMike Walker
30thMarlie Byrd

NOVEMBER

1stJan Sorensen
3rdSue Holmes

DECEMBER

4thKathy Maraviov
12thJohn Cleckner, Sr.
15thJack Bowles

Chapter Member's "Happenings & Other News":

Chapter member **John Nieland** (Iowa) visited Reno, NV in mid August. John, a long term friend of **Jim Wipf**, joined with a group of other 5/81st FA Bn (Abn)-8th ID -(Abn) and 101st DivArty Veterans in their annual "Godfather's Gathering". Included in, and heading these annual gatherings was **Colonel (ret) Edward S. Basanez'** (The "Godfather") who was the group's Battalion Commander, DivArty Commander and then the Chief of Staff- 101st Airborne Division.

Casey Jones, son in law of **Bob & Kathy Maraviov**, and the husband of Tracy, is back in the Navy. He is currently at Fort Bragg, NC attending pre-deployment training before being deployed to Afghanistan.

Da Mayor, **Ken Delfino**, who apparently does not have enough things to do either, is off on another of his jaunts to WW-II European battle fields.. Ken will be escorting two former Marines (Viet Nam era) to Normandy and other WW-II battlefields in France and Belgium during 5-13 October 2011.

"Deuce" Cleckner and family have relocated to Keesler AFB, in Biloxi, MS. "Deuce" who is soon to be promoted to major, is scheduled for another deployment in January 2012.

Mike Walker was recently back in the area for a month visit. Mike continues to do his thing over in the sand dunes of the mid east. He's hoping to return to this area after the first of the year for another brief visit.

Mark & Sally King, in addition to maintaining "day jobs" and continually volunteering to take on more for others, are continuing to operate their after hour's company: 4ktees.com. Check it out!

John Cleckner has reported that on September 20 2011, Shasta County California was designated a Purple Heart County. According to John's report, Shasta County is the ONLY County in America with this title/designation and honor. Great work... John!!

Back in the Day:



John Cleckner with his "boys"- John Jr., John Sr., and Shawn.



Jim Sorensen has provided an interesting segment, both photo and story, from his personal memoirs, for this quarter's Chapter Newsletter. Many thanks, Jim.

- War Zone D -

For many years, War Zone D was a sanctuary for the Viet Minh, Viet Cong and NVA in turn. In the '60s, it was used as a staging area for the numerous attacks on Saigon, to include that of the 1968 Tet Offensive. Post-Tet, The III Corps Mike Force spent a lot of time there, mainly on reconnaissance in force (the politically correct term for "search and destroy") and bomb damage assessment missions. In early 1970, we found a large cache, the largest of the war to date, consisting of 165 tons of arms, ammunition, medical supplies, food and other supplies and equipment. The materiel we captured was undoubtedly meant for a spring offensive against Saigon and environs.

Rang Rang is located in War Zone D on a tributary of the Dong Nai River, which in turn is tributary to the Song Be. It was the site of an emergency landing field built by the Japanese during World War II. We used the site for an FOB on three separate occasions.

I don't know that War Zone D was any more ominous than anywhere else, but there were some things that made it seem so. Much of the zone was outside the artillery fans of supporting friendly units, although we had an ARVN 105 battery with us during Bull Run II, the last of our operations in the Rang Rang area. There was a lot of unexploded ordnance throughout the area — booby traps (from both sides), bombs, artillery shells, mines and so forth. I remember one place where there were little cluster bomb unit bomblets scattered all over the place, and it was common to see mortar rounds or improvised explosives hanging in the trees. Much of the zone had been sprayed with defoliants, which mostly just killed the tall trees and let light into the understory. The understory then grew thick, and visibility was low, although the spraying did sometimes expose the overhead booby traps.

In some places it would take all day to move the battalion five hundred meters or less unless we took to the trails. The maps were bad, sometimes a kilometer or more off. The terrain for the most part was gently rolling, and nearly devoid of prominent landmarks, but broken up by numerous gullies and gulches. Combine low visibility, relatively flat terrain and bad maps, and it was almost impossible to figure out a position without the help of a forward air controller or other aerial observer. From October until April, the place was damned dry. The only water was in the larger streams, save for stagnant pools in old bomb craters. We had to have water flown into us once, and had a near riot on our hands once the choppers set down the blivets, as our Cambodes had been without water for nearly two days.

The accompanying picture was taken in early 1970 a few kilometers southeast Rang Rang. We were preparing a resupply LZ, and this big tree was in the way. Normally, we would blow such trees down, but it was about five feet in diameter, and getting enough explosives together was a problem. Assuming we could have gotten the required C-4, there was also the problem of moving the troops far enough away to avoid injury or taking the time to dig in. So, the boys at the FOB flew out this old McCulloch 890 saw, and I went to work.

I had to fell the tree away from the clearing we proposed to use, and was aware of the possibility of something kicking back on me, so I planned an escape route. When the tree started to go, I moved back and to my right in what appeared to be a casual move, but it was anything but casual. Sure enough a smaller tree was struck, and it came right straight back, breaking over the stump of the tree I had just felled. My audience, consisting of much of my company let out a whoop, then began chattering and laughing. My interpreter told me I was really lucky, and that's what most of the chatter was about. Given the Cambodes were generally quite superstitious, I did nothing to discourage them. Being I was so "lucky" as demonstrated by avoiding the falling tree, I knew they would stick with me, as my luck would surely wear off on them. I can assure you that luck had nothing to do with it.

The first resupply birds were there on time, and before the dust settled from the felled tree. I can assure you that was good luck.



"Jungle Jim" Sorensen in War Zone D

Editor's Notes:

In consideration of the current untimely budgetary assaults being considered upon the Military, both active duty, retirees and other veterans, this following timely piece (albeit-timeless truth) is provided for contemplation, consideration and head scratching:

NATIONAL REVIEW ONLINE
September 21, 2011 | Jim Lacey

The Battle for Civilization

The Battle of Marathon, 2,500 years ago last week, isn't just ancient history.

Before dawn on Sept. 12, 490 b.c., 10,000 mostly Athenian hoplites formed for an assault on the Persian force assembled before them on the Marathon Plain, nearly 25 miles from Athens. At the sound of a single trumpet, the advance began. Eight men deep on the flanks and four deep in the center, the phalanx of bristling spear points and blazing shields began its slow, inexorable march toward the enemy.

Picking up the pace, first to a fast walk and then to a trot, the Athenian hoplites closed on their enemy at what must have appeared to the waiting Persians a dazzling pace. At 600 yards' distance the mass of men began to scream their fierce and nerve-shattering battle cry: Alleeeee!

Hastily, the Persian commanders aligned their troops. Men holding wicker shields went to the front as thousands of archers arrayed themselves behind them. The Persian army showed no panic. They were professional soldiers, victors of a hundred bloody battles. In another moment their archers would release, and tens of thousands of deadly bolts would fill the sky. Afterward, the waiting spearmen would advance to slaughter the shattered and decimated remnants of the Greek force.

But the Persians had never before faced an army like this one. Athenian hoplites learned the art of war against other hoplites, and their kind of war was not decided by a hail of arrows. It was settled by a collision of wooden shields and deadly iron-tipped spears, wielded by heavily armored men. It was a horrible and terrifying confrontation of pushing, screaming, half-crazed men, who gouged, stabbed, and kicked at their opponents until one side could bear the agony no longer and broke. The victors would then launch a murderous pursuit of their defeated foes as the bloodlust propelled them forward.

This was the kind of war charging down on the Persians, and it arrived at almost incomprehensible speed, for at 200 yards' distance the Athenian trot became a sprint. Finally, the Persian archers let fly, but to no effect. Never having seen such a rapid advance, they mistimed their shots, and most of the arrows flew harmlessly over the charging hoplites. Hastily the archers reloaded, and the shield-bearers uneasily began inching backwards, as ten thousand metal-encased killers closed upon them.

In a shuddering instant, the hoplites smashed into the lightly protected Persians and convulsed their defensive line.

Then the killing began.

Before the battle was over, nearly 6,500 of Persia's elite, and until that day supposedly invincible, soldiers had perished. Athens' battlefield victory had cost it 192 citizen hoplites.

But the day was not won yet. To the Athenians' horror, those Persians who had escaped were sailing south — toward an undefended Athens. Although they were near the limits of human endurance, the Athenians hefted their heavy shields and formed in marching order. Racing against time, the exhausted hoplites force-marched the 25 miles to Athens. By the time the Persians arrived off Athens' western coast, awaiting them on the ridge overlooking the beach were thousands of Athenian hoplites ready to contest their landing. The Persians admitted defeat and sailed for home.

Almost unremarked in the memorials for the tenth anniversary of 9/11 was the 2,500th anniversary of the first time Western civilization came under assault from the East. (Many say the 2,500th anniversary was last year, but they forget to account for the year 0 — and I use the Athenian calendar, as Herodotus would have.) In the 2,500 years since the Battle of Marathon, the threat from the East has waxed and waned from one century to the next. In the years after the Industrial Revolution the West's increasing technological superiority caused many to believe the threat from the East had disappeared, or at least was so weakened as to be of little concern. In fact, during the Age of Imperialism the West felt itself strong enough to counterattack. But the Western offensive surge was but a brief interlude, and one much of the West has spent the past two generations in abject apology for.

If the 9/11 attacks demonstrated anything, it is that our collective repentance for imperialism did not bring forth a new era of peace. The threat from the East is diminished, but far from vanquished. Thankfully, between us and those who would do us harm stands the finest military force in the world. Unfortunately, as the budget battles heat up, many in Congress are placing America's military squarely in their crosshairs. They would do well to remember that, 2,500 years ago, Western civilization's continuing existence rested on a thin line of bronze-encased men "as hard as oak" who bravely went forward against overwhelming odds, to victory and never-ending glory. This nation's modern hoplites have followed that tradition for a decade of continuous conflict. Unfortunately, the threat continues. One must sincerely hope that our modern Solons possess the wisdom of the ancients, who would never consider putting away their armor and shields while the enemy remained at the gates.

— *Jim Lacey is professor of strategic studies at the Marine War College and the author of a new history of the Battle of Marathon, The First Clash.*

Quote of the Quarter:

"As our nation contemplates difficult budget decisions, I know that our leaders will remember that our people, our men and women in uniform, are our military, and that taking care of them and their families must be our paramount objective." (Gen David Petraeus, USA-Ret, at his recent retirement ceremony.)

May God... the Creator...the Great Spirit, or whomever you place your faith and trust look over and protect all the warriors, SF and others, yet serving in harm's way.

DE OPPRESSO LIBER and Fratres Aeterni

For the Chapter President
Jim Wipf (M-1645-L)
SFA Chapter 89 Secretary

This will be mailed as a "hard copy" to all Chapter members and to SFA National.

Mark Greco...Owner

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