

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**SERGEANT MAJOR
VLADIMIR JAKOVENKO**
U.S. Army, Retired

Inducted April 26, 2024



Sergeant Major Vladimir Jakovenko immigrated to the United States in November 1950 and enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1958. In 1959, Jakovenko left active duty and entered the U.S. Army Reserve. In 1961, Jakovenko became a U.S. citizen and returned to active duty in 1962.

Jakovenko served with the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg (now Fort Liberty), North Carolina. During this time, he completed Ranger School and deployed to the Dominican Republic.

In December 1965, he served with the 173rd Airborne Brigade in South Vietnam as a member of a Long-Range Reconnaissance Patrol until returning to the 82nd Airborne Division in December 1966.

In June 1968, Jakovenko graduated from the Special Forces Qualification Course and served with 6th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg. Later that year, Jakovenko was assigned to 5th Special Forces Group in the II Corps area of operation in South Vietnam.

From 1969 to 1971, Jakovenko served with the 6th Special Forces Group. Then a sergeant first class, Jakovenko was selected to participate in the Son Tay Raid, a clandestine mission to free American prisoners of war held in North Vietnam.

After his service in Vietnam, Jakovenko returned to 5th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg until 1980 when he would serve two years with the Army Reserve Officer's Training Corps program at the University of Guam.

After his time in ROTC, Jakovenko served as sergeant major for 1st Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group.

In 1985, Jakovenko was assigned to the Special Projects Support Activity at Fort Bragg. Retiring in 1990, he culminated his Army career as sergeant major for the U.S. Army Western Command Special Operations Detachment at Fort Shafter, Hawaii.

Jakovenko was inducted into the Ranger Hall of Fame at Fort Benning (now Fort Moore), Georgia, on Aug. 6, 2003. Jakovenko's significant awards and decorations include a Silver Star for his actions at Son Tay, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal (with "V" device and two oak leaf clusters), the Purple Heart, and an Army Commendation Medal (with "V" device).

Jakovenko currently resides in Stanton, Kentucky, with his wife, Sandy, and continues to support the Special Forces Regiment.