

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**MAJOR
JOHN E. PADGETT**
U.S. Army, Retired

Inducted November 5, 2020



Major John E. Padgett was born in 1944, and served more than 28 years as a U.S. Army Special Forces Medic, and another decade as a Civil Affairs Physician Assistant and Public Health Team Leader.

He began his 38-year military career in 1965, completing Infantry and Airborne Training, after which, he volunteered for Special Forces. He graduated from the Sf medic Course in January 1967, and volunteered for service in Vietnam, deploying with 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne). Major Padgett served 42 months as a Medical Sergeant in combat, which he volunteered. While working in two A Camps, Maj. Padgett trained and led indigenous people in the field, as well as operating camp dispensaries.

When the camps close, he again volunteered for combat with the II Corps MIKE Force, where he instructed, medically treated the wounded and fought the enemy. In 1969, Maj. Padgett served in Thailand with the 46th Special Forces Company, once again training personnel and medically supporting the training of other forces.

His follow-on assignment - another one that he volunteered for was with the Military Assistance Command-Vietnam- Studies and Observations Group. He was assigned to SOG's Command and Control Central, the element responsible for cross-border operations deep behind enemy lines in Northern Cambodia and Southern Laos. In addition to overseeing the care of the wounded, he was also the medical NCOIC for two company-size Hatchet Forces, which were organized similar to the 5th SF Group Mike Forces.

His most harrowing SOG duty was flying MEDEVACS for three years in combat during the Vietnam War as a member of the Special Forces Regiment. He served for 14 months as a volunteer with MACV-SOG, the war's top-secret special operations task force. Major Padgett engaged in several operations behind enemy lines in southern Laos and northern Cambodia.

Additionally, Maj. Padgett flew MEDEVACs for wounded SOG personnel along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Thousands of enemy soldiers were posted along the trail and were armed with anti-aircraft guns, which made the MEDEVAC flights especially dangerous. On Sept. 13, 1970, Maj. Padgett volunteered to extract casualties from Laos. The helicopter could not land, so Maj. Padgett had another medic hold his legs at tailgate while he pulled three badly wounded men aboard, all while taking heavy small arms and RPG rocket fire. The helicopter was riddled with bullets and crash landed nearby. A second helicopter also crashed, while a third managed to extract the service members. Maj. Padgett was awarded the Air Medal of Valor for his actions on that day.

In his free time, Maj. Padgett provided medical assistance to lepers as well as to children in a local orphanage.

Major Padgett was awarded seven Bronze Stars (three with Valor Device) and five Army Commendation Medals for Valor.

Major Padgett retired from the Army and continued to help veterans, traveling around the world to help medically care for those who are oppressed.