

# DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**COLONEL  
ROGER M. PEZZELLE**  
*U.S. Army, Retired (Posthumous)*

Inducted November 5, 2020



Colonel Roger M. Pezzelle joined the Army as a private in 1943, and advanced to Platoon Sergeant before graduating from Officer Candidate School in 1945. He served in the 473rd Infantry Regiment in Italy during World War II. He volunteered for Special Forces, following an assignment as Company Commander in the 505th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division.

Capt. Pezzelle was an original member of the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in 1952. Colonel Roger M. Pezzelle commanded an Operational Detachment A from 1952-1957 and also served as Assistant Group S3. During this period, Pezzelle, along with Capt. Herbert R. Rucker came up with the idea of adopting berets as a distinctive headgear for the new breed of Soldiers. Colonel Pezzelle was one of the original members to order a Green Beret and push for unique head wear for Special Forces. He worked with other members of the Regiment to find and order Green Berets. In 1955, Col. Pezzelle helped design the Trojan horse Badge worn on the Beret for 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne).

From 1961-1963, Col. Pezzelle was Chief Instructor in the Unconventional Warfare Department of the John F. Kennedy Center. He also served as a guerrilla warfare instructor, SF training officer and as the Director, Special Forces Doctrine and Combat Development.

In 1963, he was the Special Forces advisor assigned to the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Command, Thailand. Then-Maj. Pezzelle developed three camps where U.S. Special Forces trained Thai Special Forces in counterinsurgency. In 1966, Col. Pezzelle became Deputy Commanding Officer of 6th Special Forces Group, which was later designated as the 46th Special Forces Company (Airborne). The company conducted SF training at the Royal Thai Army Special warfare Center, and later trained Thai military and police units in counterinsurgency and founded the Thai Ranger School. In 1970, the United States Ambassador brought Col. Pezzelle to head the counterinsurgency office at the Embassy.

In 1973, he proposed the mission of the Joint Casualty Resolution Center, which was tasked with resolving missing and unaccounted for personnel from the Vietnam War.

Colonel Pezzelle's awards include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and the Expert Infantryman Badge.

Colonel Pezzelle was one of the earliest members of the Special Operations Association and was also a founding member of Chapter XI Special Forces Association.