

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 4
ROBERT E. PENNINGTON**
U.S. Army, Retired

Inducted November 5, 2020



Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Robert E. Pennington served in the United States Army for over thirty years, twenty-six of those years in the Special Forces Regiment. Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Pennington joined the Army in 1985 and graduated from the Special Forces Qualification Course in 1990 as a Weapons Sergeant and went on to serve with 5th Special Forces Group in Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He then went on to deploy in support of Operation DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM as part of the Coalition Forces to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi forces. He was assigned to ODA-576, Company A, 3rd Battalion serving on a Coalition Support Team, liaising with the 20th Saudi Arabian Mechanized Infantry along with the 6th Kuwaiti Tank Company. Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Pennington advised and trained his Coalition partners on small unit tactics, indirect fire and marksmanship. When ground combat operations started, Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Pennington's element spearheaded the assault with his coalition partners while under heavy attack.

From 1993 to 1996, Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Pennington was assigned to ODA-566 (Special Project's Team) and deployed into the Middle East and Africa on five Classified Joint Chiefs of Staff directed missions serving as the detachment's NCOIC of intelligence collection packets. These packets were used by Joint Special Operations Command and Central Command for their operational use. From 1996-99, Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Pennington, was assigned to Operational Test and Evaluation Command, Joint Combat Search and Rescue (JCSAR), Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada as the NCOIC for Special Operations Forces participating in joint rescue exercises, evaluating Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Personnel Recovery operations.

In 1999, Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Pennington graduated from the Warrant Officer Candidate School and then completed the Special Forces Warrant Officer Basic Course at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He spent the next eleven years assigned to Company C, 3rd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group.

In October of 2001, Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Pennington's ODA participated in the initial infiltration into northern Afghanistan, in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. As the first detachment on the ground in Afghanistan, Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Pennington and the men of ODA-595 conducted horse mounted combat operations by advising offensive Foreign Internal Defense, Terminal Guidance Operations and Unconventional Warfare under direct and imminent threat from hundreds of Taliban mounted and dismounted forces. Identified to President Bush as the "Horse Soldiers", Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Pennington and ODA-595 with Northern Alliance forces, were credited for the liberation of over 50 cities and villages, destroying over 200 enemy vehicles and bunkers, and killing or capturing over 5000 Taliban fighters during their campaign. After redeploying, Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Pennington advised Defense Advanced Research Project Agency on its simulated wartime depiction for the Battle of Mazar E Sharif, Afghanistan for which he played a key role as the Assistant Detachment Commander on ODA-595. This system approved by USASOC, CENTCOM, is still used today to enhance joint interagency development for future leaders throughout the Department of Defense. In 2004, Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Pennington was reassigned to ODA-593 and served as the Detachment Commander, deploying into Iraq in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM II. From 2005 to 2010, Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Pennington deployed in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM III, V, and VII, serving as a Company Operations Warrant and then Company Executive Officer. During his time with 5th Special Forces Group, Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Pennington deployed into countries of the Middle East, Northeast and Horn of Africa, and Southwestern Asia.

In 2010, Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Pennington was assigned to Special Forces Doctrine and Training Division, United States Army John F Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, Fort Bragg, North Carolina where he served as the Team Chief/Analyst and Subject Matter Expert for Advanced Special Operations Techniques, Preparation of the Environment and Unconventional Warfare manuals. In the fall of 2012, Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Pennington was reassigned to 1st Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (SWTG), Camp Mackall, where he served as the Senior Warrant Officer Advisor/Operations Warrant. In October 2014, Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Pennington was then selected by the 1st SWTG (A) Group Commander to stand up and command a company within 4th Battalion solely to train conventional forces in foreign weapons employment and range operations in order to support Security Force Assistance operations throughout the Africa Command and Southern Command Areas of Responsibilities.

After retirement, Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Pennington conducted numerous interviews and briefs, delivering words and information to military and civilian audiences, about the unique capabilities of Special Forces in the conduct of war and peacetime operations. He has been a consultant on films, several books and manuscripts and monographs for the Joint Special Operations University. Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Pennington participates in several fundraisers for charity organizations that support Special Forces personnel and their families. Among the many awards Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Pennington has received are the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal with Valor Device and two Oak Leaf Clusters, Defense Meritorious Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Meritorious Service Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, as well as Commendation, Achievement, service/campaign medals, the Combat Infantryman's Badge 2nd Award, Master Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, Special Forces Tab and several Foreign Parachutist Badges. Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret.) Pennington has been inducted into the Georgia Military Veteran's Hall of Fame.