

# DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**COLONEL  
JERRY M. KING**

Inducted 20 September 2012



Colonel King enlisted in the US Army in the mid 1950's and attended Officer Candidate School in 1959. Assigned to 77th Special Forces Group (Airborne) (SFG(A)) as a SFOD-A commander and staff officer, he tenure, he developed a program of instruction in underwater swimming, small boat handling and amphibious operations. After graduating from the U.S. Army Language School, he rejoined the 7th SFG(A), testing and evaluating the techniques of the civilian "Smoke Jumpers." He then integrated Rough Terrain parachuting into the SF inventory of skills. In 1962, as part of the White Star MTT rotations, King and his ODA were deployed to Laos where they trained the first Ranger Company in the Laotian Army.

Following this deployment and completion of the Infantry Officer Advance Course, King was assigned to 1st SFG(A) where he pulled a six month TDY with ODA-234 to Vietnam in 1964. The team built the Special Forces Camp at Kannock in II Corps, and later, in July, quelled a Montagnard rebellion. Also on this tour, he demonstrated a sense for "danger close" when his ODA avoided entering a Viet Cong prepared horseshoe ambush, the first successful defeat of this type of ambush. Sensing the trap, King refused to let his team enter the kill zone, forcing the VC to spring the ambush too early. Additionally, his institution of mounting claymore mines on vehicles, thereby effectively deflecting convoy ambushes, was adopted by the Army as a standard practice for all units in Vietnam.

King, assigned stateside to Fort Gordon, Georgia in 1966, after first returning to 1st SFG(A) and serving in various positions, volunteered in 1967 to return to Vietnam, this time working with the 5th Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) Division. In this position, he achieved two major accomplishments: the lowest AWOL rate during Tet as compared to any other ARVN Division; and leading a combined ARVN and SF force to retake the captured Loc Ninh District Headquarters from the Viet Cong.

From 1968 to 1970, as the Chief, Doctrine, Literature and Advanced Studies of the Institute of Strategic and Stability Operations, Combat Developments Command, Fort Bragg, he was intensely involved in parachute development. He then attained battalion command with 1st SFG(A) in Okinawa. His conception and implementation of a disaster assistance program (DART) earned the 1st SFG(A) the Philippine Presidential unit citation.

King was then assigned as Chief of the Unconventional Warfare Division in the Joint Chiefs of Staff, becoming the U.S. Army Special Forces face of the Operation Eagle Claw. Involved from the beginning when the Iranian Embassy was taken over, he formulated and briefed three proposals for the Chairman's consideration. Following the Iran Raid, COL King stood up and commanded a unique classified unit for the Army. In this position, unhindered by much of the normal Army bureaucracy, King and a small group of skilled parachutists were able to enhance High Altitude High Opening (HAHO) parachuting techniques, equipment and methodologies. Upon leaving this command, Colonel King joined the United States Central Command, standing up and commanding the Special Operations Command, Central, the first stand alone SOC and subordinate unified Command. His close working relations with friendly countries and detailed war plans proved instrumental in the victory in the first Gulf War.

On August 1, 1987 Colonel King retired from active duty after serving his country for 32 years. His medals and honors include the Silver Star, Defense Superior Service Medal w/clusters, Legion of Merit w/clusters, Bronze Star w/V, Meritorious Service Medal w/clusters, Joint Commendation Medal, Air Medal w/V and 2 clusters, the Army Commendation Medal w/2 clusters, SF and Ranger Tabs, CIB, SCUBA and Master Parachutist Badges.

Immediately after retiring, Jerry King enrolled in the master's program at the University of South Florida. Upon graduation, he was admitted into the University of Florida Ph.D. program. He also served as VP for Chapter 40, Special Forces Association (SFA), and as VP and President for Command Chapter 60, SFA. Recently, Col. King worked as an educator in the Tampa area colleges, was elected to the Temple Terrace City Council and served as President of the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council and vice-chairman of the Hillsborough County Planning Commission. Additionally, he founded and plays in a bagpipe band which has become the official band of City of Temple Terrace, Florida.