

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**SERGEANT MAJOR
ARMANDO A. CANALES**

Inducted 1 November 2012



Armando A. Canales enlisted in the Army and completed Infantry Basic and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Carson, Colo., in November 1958. He was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division where he completed Airborne School in December 1958. In 1965, he deployed with the 82nd Airborne Division to the Dominican Republic, where he engaged in combat operations until termination of hostilities, and remained for an additional year to serve as instructor and interpreter to the Dominican Army.

He then volunteered for Special Forces training, graduating in 1966. He volunteered for service in Vietnam and was assigned to 5th Special Forces Group in 1968, where he was subsequently reassigned to the Combined Studies Division as a Provincial Reconnaissance Unit/Phoenix adviser in Kontum Province. Then-Sgt. 1st Class Canales distinguished himself by exceptionally heroic service as a PRU adviser, commanding a force of 200 Montagnards and participating in more than 50 combat operations against the Vietcong infrastructure. As a PRU adviser, he also provided valuable combat intelligence to the commanders of the 4th Infantry Division, Special Forces Detachment B-24 and the Military Assistance Command in Kontum Province. On numerous occasions, he participated in joint combat cordon- and-search operations with the Kontum Secret Police and Police Field Force. For his actions, Sgt. 1st Class Canales was awarded the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star by the Kontum Province chief.

His follow-on assignment was with the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) as an operations sergeant until 1975, when he was assigned to 10th SFG (A) in Europe. His initial assignment was in the battalion operation center. In this capacity, he was responsible for the planning, preparation, coordination and monitoring of a very broad scope of unconventional-warfare training projects conducted by 10 Special Forces detachments. He later formed and trained a Special Forces detachment specializing in urban unconventional warfare. He took his detachment to Hereford, England, where they honed their knowledge in urban guerilla tactics, training with the Special Air Service. Later, in Germany, they trained in Munich establishing "safe houses" and formulating plans for a potential stay-behind Special Forces mission. The detachment also trained with the Special Forces Berlin Detachment.

After serving in airborne units for 20 years, Master Sgt. Canales was assigned to an ROTC unit at Texas A&M University. In this assignment, he raised the enrollment of the freshman cadets and brought the rifle and orienteering teams to the highest competitive level in 10 years.

Sgt. Maj. Canales retired from the U.S. Army with 26 years of service on July 30, 1983. Upon retirement, he continued his education and earned degrees in law enforcement and sociology. He worked as a policy officer at the University of Texas at San Antonio and later taught JROTC at Burbank High School for 15 years. Sgt. Maj. (Retired) Canales continues to represent Special Forces and the San Antonio community as a member of the veteran's parade association and coordinator between the Disabled American Veterans, the Veterans Association and Special Forces Association Chapter XV. He has served as SFA Chapter XV vice president, secretary and has been serving as president for nine years.

Under his guidance, SFA Chapter XV has adopted a local Boy Scout troop and provides leadership, financial assistance and field craft and survival training. The chapter also provides Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets to homeless veterans and their families. More recent programs implemented under his leadership now include working with the Warriors and Family Assistance Center at Brooke Army Medical Center, and providing financial assistance as necessary. To date, the chapter has donated more than \$7,000 to this very worthwhile project. Through his guidance and leadership, SFA Chapter XV also provides monetary assistance to: Save the Montagnard People Project; several JROTC units; an orphanage in

the Philippines; the Battered Women's Shelter; the Food Bank of San Antonio; and the Boys and Girls Club of San Antonio and Boerne, Texas. In 2009, SFA Chapter XV was able to provide financial assistance to five Special Forces families suffering financial difficulties. As president, Canales organized three Southwest Mini Conventions, and Chapter 15 will host the 2013 SFA National Convention in San Antonio, Texas. He also works with the local Blind Veteran's Association.