

# DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**MAJOR GENERAL  
JOSEPH C. LUTZ**

Inducted May 2009



Maj. Gen. Joseph C. Lutz was born in Indiana on April 17, 1933, and died in Florida on May 9, 1999. He was 66.

Maj. Gen. Lutz's military career extended over 35 years. His designation as the Distinguished Military Graduate of the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps program at St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wisconsin, in 1955 gave evidence to his later accomplishments. Commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Armor Branch, he commanded at all levels from platoon through regiment in the Armored Cavalry. After attending the Special Forces course, he served in two tours to Southeast Asia, including as detachment commander for A-341 Bu Dop. Other assignments included Commander, 1st Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 82d Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, and Commander, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fort Bliss, Texas.

Maj. Gen. Lutz was active in all aspects of military duties and staff positions. His sincere interest was evident when, as a Department of the Army Director, he developed policy and served as the Army's spokesman for equal opportunity, quality of life, women in the Army, drug and alcohol abuse, pay and compensation, safety and leadership. He also served as a representative of the Secretary of Defense in discharging our government's security assistance program in Greece. As a key negotiator in the US-Greek Joint Commission, he made good use of his quick wit and grasp of the facts, thereby improving relations with the Greek government and improving our hand in basing rights negotiations. Other assignments included Deputy Commanding General of VII Corps, U.S. Army Europe, and Chief of the Joint U.S. Military Aid Group in Greece.

Maj. Gen. Lutz volunteered to serve in Special Forces and again proved to be an impeccable leader and a key figure in bringing recognition to the military's Special Operations Forces. He served as Commanding General of the John F. Kennedy Center for Military Assistance and Commandant of the Institute for Military Assistance at Fort Bragg from 1980 until 1982. He also wore a third hat – Commander of the Joint Special Operations Command, the predecessor to the various Special Operations' CINCs. In 1982, Maj. Gen. Lutz signed the order activating the Army's 1st Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, the forerunner of the present-day U.S. Army Special Operations Command, and was its first Commanding General. Overssng all aspects of this organization, he integrated the Rangers and Task Force 160th into the new command. He saw his vision in action in 1983 with the invasion of Grenada - Operation Urgent Fury. He also influenced the approval of the Special Forces' branch insignia and designed the Special Forces tab. In the mid-1980s, Maj. Gen. Lutz was instrumental in the creation of a separate Special Forces career branch within the Army, putting it on par with the Infantry, Armor and Artillery among Army career fields.

In 1987, Gen. James J. Lindsay selected Maj. Gen. Lutz to serve as Chief of Staff of the newly created U.S. Special Operations Command at MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa, Florida. The command oversees all Special Operations Forces in the Army, Navy and Air Force. As COL Bank is often thought of as the father of Special Forces, Maj Gen. Lutz could be so considered the same for the modern Special Operations forces.

"The success that USSOCOM and the Special Operations community enjoy today would not have been as great without the inspirational leadership and foresight of Joe Lutz," said a statement from U.S. Special Operations Command. "He carried the message throughout the Department of Defense community that Special Operations are essential to national security policy and must be supported."

Since his retirement in 1990, Maj. Gen. Lutz remained active in military and community affairs, in Florida and here at Fort Bragg. He was a frequent guest speaker at civilian and military functions and was involved in Eagle Scout selections. He was a consultant with Sverdrup Inc., Chairman of the Special Operations Memorial Foundation, a member of the Special Forces Association, Special Operations Association, the JFK Special Warfare/Special Forces Branch Museum and Memorial Association and 82nd Airborne Division Association. As an Honorary Brigade Commander of the Phantom Airborne Brigade, a parachute organization for retired military and senior civilian personnel, Maj. Gen. Lutz, remained an active master parachutist.

He was married to Joyce who passed away in 2008 and was father to three daughters, Karla, Krista and Joan and several grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a daughter, Katherine (1960) and a son, John (1991).