

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**SERGEANT MAJOR
WILLIAM WAUGH**

Inducted 31 May 2007



Sergeant Major William “Billy” Waugh was born in Dec. 1929 in Bastrop, Texas. In 1945, upon meeting two local Marines who returned from fighting in World War II, the then 15-year old Waugh was inspired to enlist in the Marine Corps. Knowing that it was unlikely that he would be admitted in Texas because of his age, Waugh devised a plan to hitchhike to Los Angeles, where he believed a person had to be only 16 years old to enlist. He got as far as Las Cruces, N.M. before he was arrested for having no identification and refusing to give his name to a local police officer. SGM Waugh was later released, after securing enough money for a bus ticket back to Bastrop. Now committed to serving in the military once he finished school, he became an excellent student at Bastrop High, graduating in 1947 with a 4.0 grade point average.

SGM Waugh enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1948, completing basic training at Fort Ord, Calif., in August of that year. He was accepted into the U.S. Army Airborne School and became airborne-qualified in December 1948. In April 1951, SGM Waugh was assigned to the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team in Korea. Shortly after the end of the Korean War, SGM Waugh began training for Special Forces. He earned the Special Forces Tab and Green Beret in 1954, joining the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in Bad Toelz, Germany. Throughout his career, SGM Waugh served in a variety of assignments and units around the world including the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), Okinawa, with six deployments to Laos and Vietnam; Special Operations Group, Khe Sanh, South Vietnam; 3rd Mobile Guerrilla Force, 3rd Military Region, 5th Special Forces Group; Reconnaissance Company with, 25 reconnaissance teams working in the Laos and North Vietnam areas.

In 1965, SGM Waugh’s unit found itself engaged with enemy forces while participating in a commando raid on a North Vietnamese army encampment near Bong Son, Binh Dinh Province. He received numerous severe wounds to his head and legs and spent most of 1965 and 1966 recuperating at Walter Reed Army Hospital, eventually returning to duty with the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in 1966. At that time, he joined the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam Studies and Observations Group, or MACV-SOG. While working for SOG, SGM Waugh helped train Vietnamese and Cambodian forces in unconventional-warfare tactics directed primarily against the North Vietnamese army operating along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. SGM Waugh retired from active military duty Feb. 1, 1972.

SGM Waugh is one of the select few who made the first-ever combat HALO jumps in Southeast Asia. He also served 20-plus years after retirement with other government agencies in assignments in various locations around the world.

SGM Waugh’s awards include the Silver Star, the Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, and the Purple Heart (eight awards).

SGM Waugh and his wife, Lynn, reside in northwest Florida.