

# DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**COMMAND SGT. MAJ.  
DANIEL L. PITZER**

Inducted September 2010



Command Sergeant Major Daniel L. Pitzer was born Nov. 23, 1930 in Fairview, WV. He joined the West Virginia National Guard in December 1947, and attended and graduated from the West Virginian Public Schools in 1950. During his first year of college, his National Guard unit was called to active duty and moved to Fort Benning, Ga. Staff Sgt. Pitzer joined the active Army, volunteering for airborne training. He received his airborne wings on his 21st birthday. His first assignment was to the XVIII Airborne Corps Artillery as a communications team leader, and later transferred to the 5th RCT in Korea. Following the end of the Korean Conflict, he was transferred to Otsu, Japan, where he was assigned to Headquarters, South West Command, the Infantry School at Fort Benning, the 3rd Armored Division Combat Command "A" in Kirchgöns, Germany, and finally to the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, N.C.

He volunteered for Special Forces in 1960 and served as a medic, heavy and light weapons sergeant and team leader on various A-teams during his 15-year military career. He arrived in the Republic of Vietnam in July of 1963. Four months later, while out on patrol with the Vietnamese Special Forces (LLDB), he was wounded and captured by the Viet Cong. He was held as a prisoner of war for four years, gaining release in 1967. One of his fellow POWs was Nick Rowe. On Nov. 11, 1967, after four years of torture and suffering from beri beri, malnutrition, malaria, hepatitis and having lost more than 85 lbs, he was returned to U.S. control.

Upon his return to the United States, he was hospitalized for eight months at Fort Bragg's Womack Army Hospital, and following his release he served in both the 6th Special Forces Group (A) and the 5th Special Forces Group(A). His follow-on assignment was as an instructor with the U.S. Army JFK Center for Military Assistance. He was promoted to sergeant major on April 20, 1972. During this period from 1969 to 1973, he traveled extensively for the Department of Defense speaking to various community groups about the plight of the American POW. He also assisted in the Operation Homecoming for the released POWs in 1973.

Medically retired in 1975, he continued working in the arena of POW affairs, focusing on getting an accounting of those still listed as missing in action. During this period, he assisted the U.S. Navy in the establishment and operation of their Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) Training Program in San Diego. From 1987 until his death in 1995, he served as an instructor with the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School's SERE course.

His decorations include: the Silver Star Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Legion of Merit, two Purple Heart Medals, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Prisoner of War Medal, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Korean Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal w/60 devices, United Nations Service Medal, Overseas Ribbon, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Master Parachutist Badge and Combat Infantry Badge.