

# DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT

## SERGEANT MAJOR WALTER L. SHUMATE

Inducted 29 May 2008



SGM Walter L. Shumate was born in Pocahontas, Virginia on September 20, 1934. He began his military career in February 1952 as an Airborne Infantryman and was assigned to the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team (Rakassans), serving in the Korean War. He later served in the 11th Airborne Division (ABN DIV) (Germany), in the Pathfinder Platoon and as an Airborne / Jumpmaster School instructor. Next, he was assigned to the 82nd ABN DIV where he served as a Squad Leader in the 504th PIR. In January of 1962 he volunteered for Special Forces, completed the SFQC as a Light Weapons Sergeant and was assigned to SFOD-A 323, C co, 1st SFG (A), Okinawa. Between 1962 and 1964 he and his detachment deployed to Vietnam twice.

In 1963 SGM Shumate completed a dive course taught by a U.S. Navy Underwater Demolition Team and embarked on a program he would continue throughout much of his military career, teaching Combat Diver & Maritime Operations. In 1964 SGM Shumate completed HALO training in Okinawa prior to being assigned to the 7th SFG (A) at Ft. Bragg, NC, where he was subsequently attached to the Special Warfare Training Group in support of advanced infiltration training. During this period he was responsible for gaining the approval from the U.S. Navy to allow the Army to utilize their facilities in Key West, FL in support of SF dive training. SGM Shumate designed and implemented a program of instruction that became the nucleus of what is known today as the Special Forces Underwater Operations Course. In 1966 SGM Shumate returned to Vietnam where he served for a year as a Recon Team Leader in Project Delta. The following year he was reassigned to Ft. Bragg and served for over two years as an instructor on the HALO Committee. In 1969 SGM Shumate was assigned to the 46th Special Forces Company (A) in Thailand where he ran an Underwater Operations Course. In 1970 he returned to the Special Warfare Training Group and helped stand up a permanent SCUBA School in Key West, FL. In 1971 he returned to Vietnam and served a year in MACV SOG-CCC. In 1972 he was assigned to Okinawa and served 2.5 years as the Operations Sergeant of a SCUBA Team in the 1st SFG (A) and often ran a Combat Diver Course for the Group. In 1974 he returned to Ft. Bragg where he once again served as a Team Sergeant and later a Company SGM in 2/7th SFG (A). From 1977 to 1982 SGM Shumate served in 1st SFOD-D where he ran Selection & Training and also participated in Operation Eagle Claw, the attempt to rescue Americans taken hostage in the wake of the Iranian Revolution. SGM Shumate Retired in 1982 and continued to serve in Delta as a civilian until his death in 1993. In 1994 the Free Accent Dive Tower at the Special Forces Underwater Operations School was named in honor of SGM Shumate.

SGM Shumate's awards and decorations include: Defense Distinguished Service Medal; Legion of Merit; Bronze Star; Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm; Korean Campaign Medal with three Bronze Stars; United Nations Service Medal; Vietnamese Campaign Medal; Master Parachutist Badge; Combat Infantry & Expert Infantry Badges; Combat Diver Badge; Master Freefall Badge; and the Special Forces & Ranger Tabs

SGM Shumate is survived by his wife Helen, daughter Joanne, son Alan, and grandsons Samuel and Alex Shumate.