

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**HONORABLE
MICHAEL G. VICKERS**

Inducted August 2010



The Honorable Michael G. Vickers was born in Burbank, Calif., on April 27, 1953. He enlisted in the Army under the Special Forces Enlistment Option in June 1973, completing the Airborne Course at Fort Benning in December 1973, and the Special Forces Qualification Course at Fort Bragg, N.C., in May 1974. Following graduation from SFQC, he was assigned to the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Devens, Mass., as a senior weapons sergeant on ODA 225 from June 1974 to December 1976. During this period he completed the Ranger Course, attended the German Army's Advanced Mountain Climbing Course in Mittenwald, Germany, the Special Forces Engineer/Demolitions Course, and the Special Atomic Demolitions Course. While at the 10th SF Group, he also served as a combatives instructor at the United States Military Academy, deployed on a Flintlock exercise, and received advanced urban unconventional warfare training with and conducted operational missions in support of Detachment A, Berlin Brigade.

In January 1978, following completion of the Czech language course at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, Calif., Vickers was assigned as a senior weapons sergeant on ODA 2, A Company, 1st Battalion, Special Forces Detachment Europe (Airborne) in Bad Tolz, Germany. In June 1978, as a staff sergeant, he completed the British Special Air Service's Counterterrorism Close Battle Course at Hereford, England. He was selected for Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Ga., and was commissioned in the Infantry in December 1978. Given his prior experience in Special Forces, he was selected by Infantry Branch for direct assignment with the 3rd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Gulick, Panama. He graduated from the Infantry Officer Basic Course, where he was awarded the Expert Infantryman Badge, and the Spanish language course at the Defense Language Institute. In April 1980, Vickers graduated from the Special Forces Officer Course as a Distinguished Honor Graduate, and completed the Military Free Fall Parachutist Course. He was promoted to first lieutenant in December 1980, to captain in September 1982, and selected to command a classified counterterrorism (CT) unit tasked with supporting CONPLAN 0300. Vickers commanded this unit for two years and deployed on intelligence missions to several Latin American countries. He deployed twice on operational CT missions and was also a key special-operations forces (SOF) planner for contingency operations against the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. Vickers left the Army in June 1983 to pursue a career with the Central Intelligence Agency.

During his time with the CIA, Vickers served as an operations officer in the Latin America Division, the International Activities Division (Special Operations Group) and the Near East and South Asia Division. He deployed to Grenada with SOF, established the CIA Station and performed operational missions for which he received an award from the Director of Central Intelligence for heroism under fire. In the aftermath of the Marine Barracks bombing in October 1983, he was selected for a special CT assignment in Lebanon.

In October 1984, Vickers was selected to be the agency's program officer and chief strategist for the Afghanistan Covert Action Program. He played a central role in reshaping U.S. strategy in Afghanistan.

In April 2007, President George W. Bush nominated Vickers as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities. In February 2009, President Barack Obama announced that Vickers would continue to serve in that position. He is the senior civilian adviser to the Secretary of Defense on the operational employment and capabilities of SOF, and also the senior civilian adviser on CT, irregular warfar, and special activities. Prior to this appointment, Vickers served as senior vice president at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. As a senior adviser to the Secretary of Defense, Vickers played a key role in the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, which led to the largest increase in SOF force structure in history.

Vickers received his B.A., with honors, from the University of Alabama. He also holds an MBA from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. Mr. Vickers is married to Melana Zyla Vickers, and has five daughters: Alexandra, Natasha, Sophia, Oksana and Kalyna.