

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**Command Sergeant Major
Christopher R. Zets
U.S. Army, Retired**

Inducted June 7, 2019



Command Sergeant Major Christopher R. Zets was born in England, and entered the U.S. Army in April 1978 for direct assignment to Special Forces. Finishing the Special Forces Qualification Course in January 1979, he reported to the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) as a radio operator in the Group Signal Company and later on in Operational Detachment A-742 as the Senior Communications Sergeant.

In 1984, he was reassigned to ODA 794 in 3rd Bn., 7th SFG(A) in Panama, deploying numerous times throughout Central and South America training and advising key foreign special operations units. He returned to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in 1988 to serve as an instructor at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, with a follow-on assignment to 7th SFG(A) as the team sergeant on ODA 721. He returned to Panama in 1993 as the team sergeant for ODA 797 and later ODA 795, where he led deployments to Colombia, Peru, Suriname, Nicaragua and Chile. After promotion to Sergeant Major in 1997 and completion of the Sergeants Major Academy, he returned to the 7th SFG(A) with assignments as the Company Sergeant Major of Co. A, 2nd Bn., Company, Battalion Operations Sergeant Major and the Group Operations Sergeant Major, where he was a key participant in the planning and execution of the Colombian Counter-narcotics Initiative.

Upon his appointment to Command Sergeant Major in September 2001, Command Sgt. Maj. Zets was assigned to 3rd Bn., 3rd SFG(A) and deployed with his battalion to Nigeria, followed by combat deployments to both Afghanistan and Iraq. Upon his return from Iraq, he was assigned as the Command Sergeant Major, 1st Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) at Camp Mackall, North Carolina, overseeing the expansion and transition of the field portion of the SFQC. In October 2006, he assumed duties as the Group Command Sergeant Major for 7th SFG(A), where he completed two combat rotations to Afghanistan as the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan Command Sergeant Major. He retired in 2008 after more than 30 years of service.

Upon retirement, Command Sgt. Maj. Zets continued to serve the community as a contractor presenting instruction at several courses throughout the USAJFKSWCS, and coordinating pre-mission training and support for the SF Groups as they prepared to deploy. Additionally, Command Sgt. Maj. Zets is a life member of the Special Forces Association, and served on the national board of officers for two years. He was one of the original founders of the Green Beret Foundation and served on the board of directors for more than three years.

Command Sgt. Maj. Zets' military awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal with oak-leaf cluster, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal with oak-leaf cluster, the Meritorious Service Medal with five oak-leaf clusters, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Army Commendation Medal with three oak-leaf clusters, the Joint Service Achievement Medal, the Army Achievement Medal with four oak-leaf clusters, the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Expert Infantryman Badge and the Master Parachutist Badge.

He was awarded the parachutist badges of Colombia, Venezuela, Honduras, Australia and Canada. He is a recipient of the Bronze Phillip Neri Award, and served as the Honorary Sergeant Major of the Special Forces Regiment from 2013-2017.