

Major John E. Cleckner, Senior, US Army Special Forces, Retired

An American Hero Passes

John E. Cleckner passed away on Saturday, May 11, 2019 at Mercy Medical Center in Redding, California after a short illness. He was born in Warren, Ohio on December 12, 1937 to Edward and Ruth Cleckner. He had five sisters; Sharon (Frank) Gargasz, Nancy (Jon) Dawson, Melinda (Rich) Dunlap, Melody Santos (Philip) Robas, and two brothers; William (Michelle) Cleckner, and Raymond Cleckner. Of note, Raymond was a combat Marine who fought and died in 1968 in the Battle of Hue City in Vietnam.

John married Doris Saterstad on September 11, 1987 in Minden, Nevada. Together they shared eight children; John E. Cleckner II, Kelly Napier, Shawn Cleckner, (deceased), Troy Cleckner, (infant deceased), Troy Coonrod, Jerry Coonrod, Larry Coonrod and Jon Saterstad and have been blessed by 14 grandchildren; Jacob Cleckner, Aeil Cleckner, Crystal Cleckner, Joseph Cleckner, Caleb Cleckner, Eric Cleckner, John Michael Cleckner, Josh McCabe, Ryleigh McCabe, twins John Cooper McCabe and Charleigh McCabe and Blake Berry and several great-grandchildren.. He also leaves behind numerous beloved nieces and nephews.



Major Cleckner enlisted in the United States Army in July of 1957 and served for over 22 years in Special Forces (Green Beret.) After retiring from the Army, John continued his service through a multitude of veterans' service organizations that included authoring and coauthoring Local, State and Federal legislation, consulting on programs and projects that directly benefit veterans and their dependents, raising funds in excess of \$1,500,000.00 to support veterans, their dependents and communities as

well as civilian programs benefitting children and their families. John even returned to school at the age of 62 to obtain a degree as a Legal Assistant just so that he could provide help to veterans in need with their legal issues at no cost to the veteran.

During his life, John earned five college degrees; two of which were presented with honors.

Military Service Awards:

Major Cleckner earned the Combat Infantryman's Badge (CIB); Expert Infantryman's Badge (EIB); Special Forces TAB, Special Forces Combat Patch; American Master Parachutist Wings; Vietnamese Master Parachutist Wings; German Master Parachutist Wings; French Master Parachutist Wings; British Parachutist Wings; Vietnamese Ranger Badge; Soldier's Medal for Heroism; Bronze Star for Valor, Bronze Star Medal for Meritorious

Service 1st with Oak Leaf Cluster; Purple Heart Medal with Two Oak Leaf Clusters; Three Awards for Combat Wounds – Wounded Six times in Combat; Air Medal for Meritorious Achievement in Flight during Combat; Army Commendation Medal with 1st Oak Leaf Cluster for Meritorious Service; Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm for Heroism; Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Two Silver Stars – Two Awards for Heroism; Army Good Conduct Medal; National Defense Service Medal; Army Occupation Medal for Berlin; Germany, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal with Bronze Star; Armed Forces Reserve Medal with Hour Glass Vietnam Honor Medal; Vietnam Service Medal with Six Campaign Stars; Vietnam Campaign Medal; Expert Firing Badges M1, M14, M16 and 45 Pistol; Presidential Unit Citation; Army Meritorious Unit Citation; RVN Gallantry Cross Unit Citation; RVN Civic Action Honor Medal Unit Citation; Inducted into the Order of St. Philip Neri, Awarded the Saint Philip Neri Medal by Special Forces Association (Green Berets) for Outstanding Military Leadership for over 25 years in Special Forces and Valor in the Field of Battle; Inducted into the Ohio Military Hall of Fame for Valor; Awarded the Ohio Medal of Valor; Inducted into the Special Forces Hall of Fame, First Special Forces Regiment (Green Berets) Appointed a Distinguished Member of the Regiment (DMOR) by the Secretary of the Army; Inducted into the United States Army Officers Candidate School Hall of Fame (Class 1-66 USA Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia on the Occasion of the 75th Diamond Anniversary of the Infantry School with 250,000 Graduates) Alumni Class 2016 had 32 HOF inductee) USAOCSAA

Veteran Service Organizations: * Denotes Life Membership

Special Forces Association* (SFA) Chapter 89 Northern California, Northwest Nevada and Southwest Oregon; Military Order of the Purple Heart* (MOPH); Disabled American Veterans* (DAV); United States Airborne Association (CAL-Neva); American Veterans* (AM VETS); American Legion (AL); Military Officers Association of America (MOAA); Shasta County Veterans

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s Candidate School Alumni Association; The Retired Officers
 Association (TROA); Veterans Home of Northern California,
 Legislation Co-Author; Veterans Home of California, Redding,
 California Support Committee, Consultant; California 1st
 Congressional District Veterans Advisory Council (Shasta
 County California) Representative; Veterans Administration
 Northern California Health Care System, Redding Veterans
 Advisory Council (VAOPC) Representative, Redding, California
 Veterans Administration Out-Patient Clinic (RVAOPC), Co-
 Founder; Northern California Veterans Cemetery Legislation Co-
 Author, 1988-2001; Northern California Veterans Cemetery
 Association (CVCA), Co-Founder: Northern California Veterans
 Cemetery, Igo, California Support Committee, Co-Founder and
 Consultant; Northern California Veterans Cemetery, Igo;;
 California Monuments and Memorials Committee, 10+ years;
 Shasta County California Veterans Day Parade,
 Chairman/Consultant 30+ years; Shasta County/Redding,
 California Memorial Day Services, Chairman, 4 years; Redding,
 California Veterans Memorial Grove, Restoration, Chairman;
 Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA); Veterans of Foreign Wars
 (VFW); and Past Chairman of Victory Ensured Through Service

(V.E.T.S) which is a philanthropic veterans organization which supports veterans' hospitals and projects in California, Oregon, Washington and Arizona. To date, V.E.T.S has donated over \$1,500,000.00 to veterans.

Military Writings/Author with Published Credit, US Army:

Combat in Cities United States Army Infantry School & Combat in Cities Doctrine. Authored Doctrine and assisted in design of Berlin Combat in Cities Training Center, Berlin Brigade, 2/6 Infantry; Gardon Plot 82nd Airborne Division Combat Reaction Plan, Air Movement of Men and Equipment World Wide, Battalion Level, 82nd Airborne Division, 1/504; Berlin, Germany-American Sector Anti Terrorism Program Baader-Meinhof Gang, The Red Brigade (German Autumn) & Turkish Terrorist/Black September Berlin Brigade, 2/6 Infantry; Special Forces Operations & Intelligence Training Program (SF O&I School), a complete rewrite of the SF O&I Training Program, (SFTGA). Training Program for Special Forces Non Commissioned Officers, E-8 and E-9; United States Army Infantry School Operations & Intelligence Training Program Non Commissioned Officer Shake and Bake Course per request from United States Army Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia 1967

Honors:

California State Senate Resolution 2273 Honoring Major John E. Cleckner for..."his Service to Veterans, his Country and Community." – Military Officers Association of America's First ever President's Award for Meritorious Service to Veterans And Community – The Retired Officers Association Certificate of Merit for "Outstanding and Exceptional Service to Veterans and Community" – "American Citizen of the Year", Berlin, Germany 1973 – Shasta County Veterans Affiliated Council, "Veteran of the Year" 1991 – Vietnam Veterans Of America and Redding, California, "Outstanding Veteran and Civic Leader of the Year" 1993 – Commissioned a "Kentucky Colonel" to the Honorable

Order of Kentucky Colonels by Order of Kentucky Governor Louis B. Nunn for... "Service and Dedication to the Sons of Kentucky and the United States of America" – Letter of Commendation for... "Heroic Service in the Republic of Vietnam" and "Honoring the State of Ohio as a Son of Ohio" by Ohio Governor Bob Taft – Honored by the Ohio State Legislature for... "Valorous and Heroic Service during the Vietnam War"

Fraternal Organizations:

Master Mason, Blue Lodge; York Rite, *Royal Arch Mason, *Council of Cryptic Masons, *Illustrious Order of the Red Cross – "Knight of the Red Cross," *Order of Malta – "Knight of Malta," *Order of the Temple – "Knights Templar"; Shriners International, Noble in the Shrine; Legion of the Moose; Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, 25 Year Pin; Sons of Italy.

Community Organizations:

Founder/Author/Chairman, Special Olympics Program for Central North Carolina (Sandhills) Chairman 1st Three years with Honors from the Kennedy Family, Fayetteville Technical Institute and XVIII Airborne Corps, Fort Bragg, North Carolina; CO-Director, Boy Scout Operations, District 10, Central North Carolina, 11 years; Youth Activities Director, Fort Bragg, North Carolina Summer Camps, Dependent Youth Activities (DYA) 3 years; Coach, Dependent Youth Activities (DYA), Baseball, Basketball and Football, Berlin, Germany, Fort Bragg, North Carolina and Redding, 13 years.

Services:

Services for John E. Cleckner Sr. will be May 21st 2019 at Allen and Dahl Funeral Chapel 2655 Eureka Way Redding California 96001. The viewing will be at 9 a.m. services at 10 a.m. followed by the burial at Northern California Veteran Cemetery 11800 Gas Point Road Igo California 96047. There will

be a Celebration of life to follow the burial location to be announced.

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