

Son Tay Raid Patch History

Udo,
Thank you for designing the patch for the Son Tay raiders.
Great work that should be recognized by all of us.
GBU,
John Gargus

Fisk, Wayne L,
STR Patch

The history behind the Son Tay Raiders' patch. IVORY COAST Fall 2001
The article was provided by Wayne Fisk, "Apple 4" Pararescueman (PJ).

This is an account of the artist who designed what is now recognized as the Son Tay Raid (STR) logo. Master Sergeant Udo Fischer was a Pararescueman assigned to the 40th ARRS-the Jolly Green Squadron that provided the HH-53s and partial crews for the Raid. MSgt Fischer joined the Air Force in '51 and became a PJ in '53. Serving throughout the world at various assignments, he ended an illustrious military career as a Chief Master Sergeant in April 1983. His art is prized and displayed throughout PJ circles and in private collections. Udo is a legend throughout Para rescue and the USAF rescue community as a witty and jocular cartoonist whose drawing, sketches, and renditions of people and events grace the walls of countless squadrons and dens. He has always had the unique talent of capturing the subtlety of the moment. The STR shield design is typical of many of Udo's Air Force and air rescue logos: a shield-like centerpiece with scrolls above and below. Upon the shield, he sketches a white lightning bolt--symbolic of the swift-striking raider force falling out of a black night sky. The force penetrates the confines of a barbed wire and concertina Son Tay POW camp and assaults the very grounds on which communist brutality has so horribly extracted American blood. Then, just as swiftly as it arrived, it streaks upwards and outward without loss of American life or honor.

Immediately following the initial/original sketch, Udo begins anew, this time replacing the barbed and concertina wire with tall, yellow walls, thus embodying the colors-when combined with the red ground-of the North Vietnamese flag. However, to signify who was really in control of events that night, Udo encompasses the totality of the shield's depiction in the United States National Colors of red, white, and blue. Finally, he adds a green outline around the scrolls to represent the jungles of Southeast Asia in which the US Prisoners of War were held-and from which so many never departed and the rescue force - that covert, and camouflaged force of men and machines at one of the finest moments in military history. One bit of symbology that remains unknown are the seven white stars in the blue field below the top scroll. The stars were not a part of Udo's final product. Whoever added them was possibly making a reference to the seven types of USAF aircraft tasked to fly the mission: HH-3, HH-53, HC-130P, MC-130, A-1, F-4, and F-105. At this writing, the exact meanings of the stars are unknown. Perhaps they were added simply as fluff to spiffy the patch up. If this be the case, then perhaps it is time we assigned them specific significance.