

## COLONEL JAMES “Nick” ROWE US Army (Deceased)



COL Rowe's career was marked by unusually high levels of sacrifice and devotion to duty. A native of McAllen, Texas, Nick Rowe graduated from West Point in 1960 as a Second Lieutenant in Field Artillery. He completed Airborne and Ranger School in 1961 as well as the Field Artillery Basic Course at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. His first assignment was with the 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. During that assignment he attended the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California and studied Chinese Mandarin. He then returned to 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group.

On 29 October 1963, this Green Beret Lieutenant was captured by the Viet Cong during field operations in the Republic of Vietnam. He endured the next five years as a prisoner of war, being subjected to torture, solitary confinement, food deprivation, and medical neglect. He tried three times

to escape, only to be returned to more difficult and inhumane conditions. On his fourth attempt on 31 December 1968, he succeeded. He was being transported to his own execution when American gunships surprised his guards and MAJ Rowe (he had been promoted to both Captain and Major while in captivity) made his final dash for freedom. In the chaos, he escaped the Viet Cong patrol, was spotted from the air and identified as an American because of his beard and was rescued.

After his return from Vietnam, COL Rowe changed his branch from Artillery to Military Intelligence. He graduated from the MI Officer Advanced Course in 1971. He served with the Army General Staff, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, and later with the Adjutant General's office to work on the Army POW/MIA program, during which time he worked with Operation HOMECOMING, the project to bring home 591 American prisoners of war from North Vietnam. In 1972 he served with the Defense Intelligence Agency before resigning his commission in 1974. During his reserve status he was enrolled at the Command and General Staff College and served as an Instructor at the first US Army Area Intelligence School. It was also during this time that he did much of his writing.

COL Rowe was recalled to active duty in 1981 and promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. He returned to Fort Bragg, where he created the Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) Course for personnel serving in duty positions with a high risk of capture. Here he standardized the Army's survival instruction by providing a rigorous, realistic, yet safe training environment. COL Rowe then commanded the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Warfare Training Battalion at the John F. Kennedy Warfare Center and School. He returned to the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center for advanced language training en route to his final assignment as Ground Forces Director for the Joint US Military Advisory Group in the Philippines. On 21 April 1989, as he was being driven to the advisory group headquarters, his vehicle was ambushed and COL Rowe was killed by communist terrorists.



During his illustrious career COL Rowe earned the Silver Star for heroism, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star (1 Oak Leaf Cluster), Purple Heart (1 Oak Leaf Cluster), and numerous other American and foreign awards.

COL Rowe was inducted into the MI Hall of Fame in 1989 and, in 1991, Rowe Hall at Fort Huachuca was named in his honor. On 2 May 2014, DIA Director LTG Michael T. Flynn dedicated a building at the DIA Field Support Activity Rivanna Station Charlottesville, Virginia in honor of COL Rowe.

COL Rowe published a number of works during his life: "The Southeast Asia Survival Journal," published by the Department of the Air Force; and several books, The Judas Squad (1977), a novel about nuclear terror, and Five Years to Freedom (1971), which chronicled his experiences in captivity. He also co-authored The Washington Connection (1977) with Robin Moore and Lew Purdue.

