

Below is the full text of an anonymous letter whose author (or authors) claims to be a Green Berets trainer (or trainers). NPR has redacted name, rank and unit of individuals cited in the letter to protect their privacy.

To our fellow Active Duty and Veteran Green Berets,

Our Regiment has a cancer, and it is destroying the SF legacy, its capability, and its credibility.

SWCS has devolved into a cesspool of toxic, exploitive, biased and self-serving senior Officers who are bolstered by submissive, sycophantic, and just-as-culpable enlisted leaders. They have doggedly succeeded in two things; furthering their careers, and ensuring that Special Forces more prolific, but dangerously less capable than ever before. Shameless and immodest careerism has, in no uncertain terms, effectively destroyed our ability to assess, train, and prepare students, or to identify those students that pose very real risk to Operational Detachments. I cannot stress how systematic and severe the effects on the force will be if the standards, recently implemented here in the Special Forces Qualification Course, remain in place.

We consistently and concretely identify dozens of graduates every year who are incapable of ever being 'value-added' to ODA's yet are pushed forward to you. THAT NUMBER IS SET TO RISE DRAMATICALLY in the very near future. To clarify, we instructors recognize that none of us graduating the Q-Course were fully competent Green Berets when we first arrived to our teams. We are also acutely aware that senior generations derisively judging their juniors is a tradition as old as humanity. So this address is not being written because 'cherries are so much more cherry than we were when we were cherries'. We do not expect them to be assets yet, we only expect that they possess the basic qualities necessary to become assets. I am asking for 20 minutes of your time because many students graduating the Q-course now do not possess those qualities and, from this moment forward, determining if ANY students possess them is not possible. The actions of SWCS leadership have created a new era of Special Forces that are; increasingly incapable of actualizing SOF attributes; markedly and demonstrably weaker; and quantifiably projecting measurable risk and liability onto the teammates with which they serve. Before this paradigm shift, cadre due diligence was capable of some risk mitigation in these aspects. We could, did, and often still do reach back to teams and prepare them for those [inevitable] outliers that slip through the course unimpeded due to cronysim, nepotism, or malfeasance. But the recent systematic dismissal of course standards and continuous violation of regulations at the Training Group and SWCS echelons makes student failure nigh impossible. Assessing, Identifying, and mitigating prolonged individual performance has historically been a cornerstone of the pipeline. That has been provably replaced with willful mediocrity. This climate has been empowered by a feckless, selfish, and recreant command ideology, set into motion by [name redacted], and actualized by MG Sonntag, [name redacted], and [name redacted].

In the last 24 months, Commanders and/or Sergeants Major at the Group and SWCS level have systematically removed numerous fundamental SF standards, lowered and undermined the grading metrics for others, all while simultaneously ensuring that a gagged cadre population was expressly prohibited from holding students accountable for their academic, physical, and character performance. Obviously, this concerns those of us whom are returning to Group. We have an understandably vested interest in developing the best new teammates we possibly can, for we will be serving alongside them. The issue is that career-focused leaders, far removed from team life, have no 'skin in the game' and thus do not concern themselves with the problems inherent in employing subpar soldiers in a no-fail environment: where individual limitation creates team-wide catastrophe, often with international repercussions. Their responsibilities involve ensuring that yearly graduation quotas are met and that political agendas are enforced. They do not concern themselves with ensuring that students are capable of surviving the rigors of combat, and in all fairness they shouldn't. That is the cadre's mantle to bear. Ignorance of their interference in this endeavor might be forgivable, but they have been told by the operational force numerous times what issues these policies would create, and chose career progression instead. As you will read, this moral cowardice started in the preceding command, and is shared by every current Commander and Sergeant Major at the Group and SWCS level. When one of our cadre addressed these concerns (with examples) directly to the SWCS leadership in an open forum [name redacted] response was verbatim:

“We push some of these issues forward [to the Regiment] because we believe that the Groups can succeed in fixing those problem graduates when they arrive. That is an amount of risk we willingly accept, because after all it's much easier to get a tab removed at Group if he doesn't pan out, than to risk relieving what's basically a fully qualified student who might have been able to fix himself and become a solid Green Beret.”

Specifically, he was defending the decision to graduate a student that had failed the final graduation SFPA (Special Forces Physical Assessment) five times on the 40-minute 5-mile run. He finally passed on the 6th attempt: coming in 12 seconds under time, and 4 attempts past the mandatory 1-year relief dictated by regulation. Over 100 of your current teammates heard this exchange during at SLC in 2016, and can bear witness. A senior E-9, with approximately 20 years in SF, unashamedly acknowledged that reducing, and then ignoring course standards is a perfectly acceptable philosophy to embrace in pursuit of graduation numbers. His response embodied everything that is wrong with SF leadership today. Standards are being drastically reduced, and they are being done so to achieve a very acute goal, one that does not benefit or enhance the force.

So here we are, the trainers, hoping to illuminate to you, the operational force, the severity of this issue. Below, we've illustrated a variety of truths to fully encompass the selfish and careerist

nature of the leadership that is injecting poison into the SF foundation. This does not capture everything, only the most recent events, and should sufficiently capture the essence of the systematically detrimental change and malfeasance occurring in the SFQC. Deducing their impact on the unit is easy to the operational soldier. Unfortunately it is not to Senior leaders. So, help us to affect change. This plea is on behalf of a clear majority of your brothers who have no real power to affect change on their own. Cadre hands are increasingly tied, and yet they are regularly, randomly castrated as scapegoats for a command that often confuses blind, knee-jerk reactions with due process. SF legitimacy is fading at the hands of self-serving careerism. Commanders truly want to be recognized and rewarded for the milestones they are achieving. Please accommodate them. Spread this message, publish it, share it online, go to the press, and send it to congress. If these "leaders" so desire the recognition for what they are doing, then let us ensure they receive all of it.

I completely understand that some of those reading up to this point may be skeptical. It sounds overly dramatic, tinged with emotion, and can easily be brushed off as the ranting of some scorned, disgruntled has-been who had a bad run-in with a senior leader too many times. Here are the facts, so you can make that decision for yourself. Every single one of you out there in Group knows a brother-in-arms or 2 doing time in SWCS, if you don't believe me, give any one of us a ring...

THE SPECIAL FORCES QUALIFICATION COURSE

We work in 1st SWTG(A) at USAJFKSWCS. There are currently about 900 GB's on the roster, and we account for and/or train every single one of the (roughly) 2200 students currently in the Q-course. As a refresher for those of you who have been away for a while, here is a breakdown of what were (key word) the major training requirements that students were *were* to pass to graduate each phase of the SFQC after getting selected.

- o CLT: Graduate to move into the pipeline
- o Special Forces Orientation Course (SFOC): Pass Phase 1
 - Pass Land Navigation
 - Pass Swim test
 - Pass 12-mile ruck march (55lbs dry in under 3 hours)

-Pass SFPA(57 push-ups, 66 sit-ups, 5-mile run in under 40 minutes, 1 rope climb w/25lbs vest)

o Small Unit Tactics (SUT)/SERE Pass phase 2

o MOS Pass phase 3

o ROBIN SAGE Pass phase 4

o LANGUAGE Pass phase 5

-Earn a 1+/1+ OPI in target language

-Pass graduation SFPA

o GRADUATE

Notes:

o The SFOC SFPA and the LANGUAGE SFPA are the only physical requirements enforced in the SFQC, as in they are the only PT events they can be relieved for.

o Failure of any 1 event on the SFPA is a recycle of that phase. Failure on any *retest* is by-regulation at least an automatic 1-year relief from the SFQC.

o Relief boards are held for all academic or attribute failures in all phases. Even if a relief is mandated by regulation, every instructor must justify why a student warrants relief or retention (e.g. 3x UXO failure, 6x late to formation, any SOF attribute violation, etc.). At the relief board, 15+ instructors and the Battalion Command team review every case, and debate what the punishment should be, and after everyone says their piece, the Battalion Commander makes his decision. Any appeals go directly to the Group Commander, and ALL NTR's go to the Group Commander.

o Keep in mind, the SFQC goal for graduating Special Forces Green Berets is 550 Active Duty Enlisted (ADE) every year. More importantly, the SFQC produces on-average between 400-470 ADE annually. This is...very important to say the least.

PAVING THE WAY FOR THE FIRST FEMALE GREEN BERET

I hesitate to begin on this axis, but it warrants the most illumination. *To be clear*, this is in no way a commentary on the debate concerning the efficacy of women serving in Special Forces. The Regiment's attitude is clear, the debate is a heated one, and both sides of the aisle have documented numerous credible arguments. *That is a separate discussion entirely*. Regardless of one's opinion on the topic, a universally accepted truth recognized by all parties is that if women yearn to join the force, they should meet the same standards achieved by those men they wish to serve with. This is where no reasonable person disagrees. No one has said "If they want to join, give them a lower standard so they can join." Yet this is exactly where the current leadership has taken it upon themselves to inject an end state no one wants, to achieve personal endeavors that benefit no one. They have stated through continuous action and policy implementation that they do not want women to meet the standard. What they want, is to markedly lower the standards enough to ensure that any woman attempting this path will have absolutely no issue achieving it. They have said time and again that they want to maintain the standards, but have continuously lowered, and now eliminated them. Consider the time-line of events:

- o June 2015: SFOC has unanimous support at every level of command. Land nav, 12-mile, Swim, and SFPA all in full effect and standards are enforced. Historically all incoming command teams visit each phase of the course to get a capabilities brief. All sections spend time briefing.

- o July 2015: Incoming upper-echelon command teams conduct first walk through of 4th Battalion, 3 hours is spent with SFOC cadre determining the 'viability and value' of training provided there: A discussion never before tabled. No other phases are visited or brief.

- o February 2016: DoD Directive for SOF to integrate women into SOF is mandated down to the lowest levels.

- o July 2016: Incoming Group/SWCS command teams conduct first walk-through of 4th BN. Entire time is spent with SFOC cadre determining the 'viability and value' of training provided. No other phases brief.

- o August 2016: All phases are command directed to provide student critiques of training. Guidance from A Co 1SG is that they are for "leadership input".

- o January 2017: The first female attends SFAS. She is medically dropped during land nav (severe injury during prolonged rucking event).

- o January 2017: SFOC student critiques are requested at the SWCS command level, the first time in history.

o February 2017-forward: SWCS level command request only negative feedback critiques from SFOC.

o June 2017: Incoming SWCS command team conducts first walk-through of unit. No phases brief.

o July 2017: 13 SFOC students transported to hospital for training related injuries, five are admitted (injuries during SFOC range from 7-25). ALL SFQC units put on a safety stand-down to “reassess training”.

o July 2017: **MG Sonntag dismisses all SFOC testable events.** Students will take the physical tests, but they can no longer be relieved for them as they are considered diagnostics. Students can no longer fail SFOC except for Voluntarily Withdrawing or getting injured.

-SUT can only accommodate 120 students so company leadership introduces a point system for the above events to determine the top 120 students who will move forward from SFOC to SUT.

-MG Sonntag conducts an all-command-teams meeting to discuss the way ahead. The point system is disregarded. Instead, SUT is command directed to now accommodate 240 students. The typical SFOC class starts with 160-250 students, so this ensures all students that start SFOC can move on to SUT without issue now that there are no standards set in place to fail them.

o September 2017: All graded SFQC PT events including the SFPA, APFT, diagnostic APFT’s, and Diagnostic SFPA’s still banned from being conducted.

-Revision introduced that there will be ZERO graded physical events in the SFQC between the months of June and August.

o October 2017: Town hall meeting with cadre: [name redacted] assures every single cadre present that the standards are not going to be changed, and that the standards will not be lowered. Cadre bring up the issue that removing the gates in SFOC effectively eliminates all standards. He insist that those standards will be moved to language phase. Although there was massive outcry, some semblance of peace was restored when it was insisted that, although the gates had been moved to language and effectively cut the amount of graded events in half, the students would have to pass them AT LEAST ONCE in order to graduate the Q- course. "Standards did still exist."

o October 2017: A follow up Town hall meeting is called last minute: MG Sonntag used is face time with the cadre to repeat exactly what [name redacted] said in the previous town hall. He assured the cadre that standards would remain in place.

o November 2017: An ordeal occurs with students in language phase. They are forced to show up for an additional PT formation due to numerous absences (discussed below). After this, a command directive is put out across SWCS: there will no longer be remedial training or physical punishment for student infractions. Only counseling or UCMJ action is to be taken.

o November 2017: The culmination: ***It has just been announced that graduation for students will be held immediately after they graduate Robin Sage.*** Language phase is no longer a requirement for graduation. Aside from passing selection, there are LITERALLY no physical gates or standards required of students in order for them to graduate the Special Forces Qualification Course.

This is the state of the entire SFQC as it stands today. Students do not need to be able to pass a 2-mile run at an 80% standard. They do not need to pass a 5-mile run in under 40 minutes. They do not need to be able to pass a 12-mile ruck march in under 3 hours. They are not required to find ANY points during their land nav training and assessment. They do not need to be able to perform 8 pull-ups. They do not need to be able to perform 57 push-ups, or 66 sit-ups. They no longer need to be able to climb a 15 foot rope with weight on. Students are no longer administered any form of physical or administrative punishment. After passing a 19-ish day selection process, there are no physical barriers to earning the coveted Green Beret. These all were standards for EVERY Green Beret in modern history prior to this month. To say that standards have not been eliminated would be laughable, were it not so tragic.

MG Sonntag and [name redacted] have been transparent in their motivations. The moment they took command, their primary motivation for making changes to the SFQC was to acquire 'Multi-star Potential' on their OERs, They pursued this by, first, ensuring that the Q-course graduation rate was raised so they could lay claim to making the Q course more efficient and, second, ensuring that the standards were lowered so as to make certain that the first women able to pass selection would have the best possible chance of making it through the grueling 14 month (at it's quickest) pipeline practically unimpeded. Being able to say they graduated the first female Green Beret is a milestone no officer (devoid of principles, that is) can possibly pass up. SFOC had the strictest requirements and the highest attrition rate, almost entirely physical in nature. They practically did away with it. They placated cadre, and the force as a whole, with promises of enforcing those standards in language. They assured instructors and battalion leaders that the relief decisions at the board would be supported. But in 85% of all NTR's or 2 year relief appeals sent to them, they reversed the decision and put them back into training. They set the stage for mediocrity well before they made it official, pulling the rug out from under the force only once

all the pieces set in motion 2 years ago were finally in place. There is not a single operator at the battalion level or below in all of SF that thinks this move is a forward one for the Regiment. But those concerns fall on deaf ears.

Although spineless, cowards are smart. They have learned from Ranger School's previous ordeal. They won't have to defend (real or perceived, I have no first-hand knowledge of how the female ranger graduates were treated) accusations of "ad hoc" lowering of standards or preferential treatment for women who brave SF training. No, the standards will have been lowered well beforehand. All accusations of preferential treatment or double standards will fall by the wayside when these 'standards' set forth have already been deemed the "status quo" well before their arrival. The cruelty of the situation is that any woman with the fortitude to attempt this training would most definitely have wanted the standards to remain the same. It is reasonable to assume they would have wanted to test their metal against the historical standards and ensured they were every bit as capable as the men they aspire to serve next to. It is a point of pride to know you are every bit as capable as the best of the best, IF you can do it. But they have been robbed of the ability to earn that achievement. Knowing there are officially no physical barriers to earning the Green Beret cheapens the experience for everyone involved, including the population it is misguidedly meant to assist.

The fact of the matter is that the Q-course today is markedly, measurably easier to skate through (I do not use that term lightly) than ever before. As long as one shows up for training, there is virtually no way to fail this training. MG Sonntag said it best: "Once they've been selected, there is no reason they should fail a single portion of the Q-course."

He willfully disregards the vital failure rate the Q-course creates by identifying those that were never cut-out for Special Forces. A Green Beret is much more than just a person that can gut-out 19 days of suck. They are intelligent, responsible, mature, clever, work well with others, and capable of adapting to any situation. They embody the SOF attributes. And these attributes are nigh impossible to assess in a 19-day selection, but absolutely critical to discerning before going to a team.

IN PURSUIT OF NUMBERS

o Voluntary Withdrawals (VW). [name redacted] mandated immediately upon his arrival that EVERY SINGLE VW in the SFQC talk to him before attending the relief board. In every single case, his express goal was to talk the VW out of quitting. He had a roughly 90% success rate in this endeavor. Yes, there are roughly 15-20 students who have graduated in the last year alone, Green Berets, who have shown a COMPLETE lack of perseverance and have quit on their teammates during training, who are currently operating in real world environments. Those that were convinced to stay had their VW statements shredded and thrown in the trash. The TAC's

that owned them were directed to delete their VW SASs (documents that record student actions), and they did not go before a relief board. The only VWs that went before the relief board did so when [name redacted] was absent, and cadre were able to expedite the process.

- o [name redacted] communicated his ideology immediately to the cadre upon taking command. His visit to a June 2017 Special Operations Instructor Course is where he laid out his philosophy, and what he truly things instructors are meant to do:

- o “you are not here to assess students, they were assessed in selection, they are with you to train”

- o “If a student fails in the Q Course, it is because you are a failure as an instructor”

- o “There is no reason a student coming out of selection should fail any part of any phase of the SFQC”

Indeed, a student who fails the SFPA a total of 7 times, or recycles the 18C course 6 times, or is caught cheating 2 times, or attempts to blackmail instructors into passing him, or commits fratricide in a training environment (these are all actual examples), are all failures on the instructors part...with no exception.

- o The SWCS leadership tasked several individuals in 1st SWTG(A) with combing through every single student in the OT pool, who hadn't already left on orders, to assess who could be reinserted back into training immediately. To date, dozens of students who were only 2-3 months into 1 or 2 year relief sentences were brought back and reinserted into training where they had left off. They are ramping this operation up, and have identified as many as 1/3 of the students, who have been dropped, for immediately reinsertion into training.

- o During a command meeting (the same one that dismissed all physical standards in SFOC) [name redacted] directed that a 92% graduation rate is his newly implemented standard for the SFQC. To note, there has never been a command mandated pass rate before. There is now. All subordinate commanders were tasked with ensuring that the SFQC met these numbers. We have been told time and again by every other previous commander/csm that standards, and not numbers, are what matters. We knew these were lies because command always spoke to the contrary, but at least they were ATTEMPTING to placate us. Now the leadership is not even trying. 92% is the prime directive from current leadership, not the quality of graduates moving out to Group.

- o Another directive that came out of the above command meeting: students conducting training (IN ALL PHASES), will be carrying less weight during the summer months. The initial number

thrown around was 45LBS versus the standard 55LBS. [name redacted], truly a visionary, seems to think that students should learn that in combat it's ok to adjust mission requirements to the heat. What is more, we have a Commander who wants to ensure that we cadre don't know if students can handle THE BARE MINIMUM during higher temperatures. Instead, the teams will find out that a soldier can not tolerate the heat in the middle of Afghanistan or Iraq, when they collapse the first time they are faced with physical adversity. That is an inevitability, because students will not be seeing any physical adversity here in the SFQC.

- o As of July 2017, the incredibly risk-averse [name redacted] directed that all SFQC graded physical training cease. The stated reason was a series of 4 Heat related injuries during one SFPA, and 13 heat related hospital trips during one land-navigation iteration. While that sounds concerning, put in perspective these are below average numbers. Summer classes routinely see double and triple these numbers. This knee-jerk reaction by gutlessly risk-averse commanders has delayed or completely cancelled well over a dozen previously scheduled events that affect the training and qualification of well over a quarter of all the students in training.

- o A number of SFOC cadre identified over a dozen cached GPS devices along the SFOC Land Nav lanes, and identified several students violating integrity. This was brought before senior leadership. SFOC cadre wanted to address the issue, which would have meant numerous recycles and/or possible reliefs. In response to such a massive loss of trainees the CSM response was succinct: "I personally don't mind, I would actually kind of want these guys on my team, if you ain't cheating, you ain't trying". Regardless of your opinions on that sentiment, if you get caught cheating, you should deal with the consequences.

CADRE AS SCAPE GOATS

- o [name redacted] was reported multiple times by his students for conducting PT that was "too hard". He would routinely take the students on runs ranging between 6-12 miles, personally leading the way each time. The BN [name redacted] at the time, directed him to stop, not once asking him for an explanation or allowing him to defend his training regimen. He was later reported again, this time for making students do push-ups on concrete "while it was hot outside." Despite student complaints, no medical issues were identified or reported. He was reprimanded, without a single cadre being asked for an explanation, and based solely on student complaints. Regardless, he mitigated concerns and catered to the students, mandating that gloves be worn for follow on sessions. He also participated in all corrective training after that. He was shortly thereafter relieved of his position and reassigned to a different company. He, nor any other cadre, was given an opportunity to speak on his behalf. Students for the first time in SFQC history verifiably understood that by anonymously complaining to the command, they could get cadre fired, and would not have to endure "harder or perceived unnecessary training."

o [name redacted] routinely physically prepared students getting ready to go to selection. He would constantly have students ruck, run, and do team oriented events to prepare them physically. During one such training event, a student went down as a heat casualty. The medics on standby gave him IV's, and moved him to Womack. Womack medical personnel failed to properly assess the patient, and gave him additional IV's, more than was necessary. The student ended up losing part of his foot due to Womack's error. Leadership, spearheaded BN [name redacted], [name redacted], and [name redacted], tried to fry [name redacted] for absolutely no reason other than to make someone take full blame for the incident. An incident, by the way, that is very common in training here. He did nothing wrong, and the ensuing IG complaint verified this. This did not stop the command from pursuing a GOMAR. This incident paved the way for a complete cessation of physical training in the Q-course.

o [name redacted] was administering routine PT one morning, on a Thursday before a 4-day weekend. During this particular formation roughly 1/3 of the students decided, for whatever reason, not to show up or at least call in during accountability. [name redacted], understandably, decided to address the issue. He decided to have another PT formation at 0600 on a Friday. This would not interfere with his class, as even though it was a four day, all of his students still had language class on that day. He also revoked *1* student's 4-day pass, as that student had been a repeat offender. Because of this, several students walked straight over to the SWCS HQ building (Bryant Hall), and complained to the highest echelon they could. [name redacted] was called into [name redacted]'s office immediately. His company and battalion leadership went as well. As a result of this meeting, [name redacted] was relieved of his position as [redacted]. During the entire meeting, [name redacted] did not point out a single 'actual' wrong-doing on [name redacted]'s part, only that 'several students had complained'. He also made it clear that, should this happen to other instructors, they would be fired as well. It can not be stressed enough, [name redacted] was exercising BASIC NCO professional development, well within Army regulation, and was fired for doing so.

o [name redacted] was newly placed as [redacted]. He immediately started a PT program in which he routinely worked out with his students. During one session conducted at Towle stadium, he was reported "yelling" at the students (again, while PT'ing WITH them). His use of foul language resulted in him being immediately fired and moved to [redacted]. This is not hyperbole. When brought before the BN leadership, he was not once given a chance to speak, or allowed to defend his actions, he was fired based solely on what was reported by 3rd party observers. None of whom identified themselves. [name redacted] told him he would have taken his tab if given the chance, and that he disgusted him. No students had complained, and other cadre in attendance attested that while cussing was present, no demonstrably unprofessional behavior was exhibited. Shortly after this, all remedial corrective training was banned in [redacted]. Cadre were instructed that they would be fired if caught punishing students through physical corrective training. Commanders used this incident to ensure that there would be a

complete lack of student accountability through corrective training. There are entire classes that have graduated who went through the entire Q-course having never undergone a single physical event for failing to follow instructions, lying to instructors, or a myriad of other attributes failures.

COMMAND FAVORITISM

o [name redacted] was a [redacted] trainee. He was first caught attempting to bribe an instructor with beer, and then later had a panic attack during an AAR while in the [redacted]. During his relief board counseling, he attempted to blackmail [redacted] cadre by telling them that if relieved and returned to his unit, he would have to annotate that he witnessed the instruction of secret/noforn course material to international students. This was a completely fabricated event, and later verified as untrue via internal investigation. He then went behind his TAC's back and, because he had a very good working relationship with his NG Group Commander, produced a memo directing his reclassification as [redacted]. Despite all of these acts, he was not relieved, but was given a recycle into the [redacted] course. He would fail the SFPA and retest twice before being graduated.

o "Desk-side boards" happen all the time. When the BN command team knows that a decision they are going to make involving a student will be highly unpopular amongst Cadre, they don't bring the student before the 'public' relief board (where all Cadre/TACs/Instructors offer points of view weight in on the decision). They set aside a time and the student privately sees the BC one-on-one, to receive a decision. These boards rarely involve enlisted students, and are almost entirely decisions to keep 4, 5, or 6 time academic or SFPA failures in training. These desk-side boards were used by previous commanders during training lulls where only 1 or 2 students were up for relief, but have currently become a go-to for unpopular decisions. They are now a tool to reduce the amount of students who would otherwise have become de-facto reliefs at the board.

o [name redacted] failed to earn a 1+/1+ in his language during language phase. He was allowed to graduate with his class. He has stated numerous times that he has several friends working in Bryant Hall directly under MG Sontagg. MG Sontagg was the authority that allowed [name redacted] to walk across the stage having failed the 1+/1+ standard.

o [name redacted] was given an NTR for nearly a dozen infractions during his tenure in the SFQC. The one that got him an NTR involved lying to cadre multiple times in conjunction with failing to report and failing to follow instructions. Approximately 1 month after being given an NTR, he was reinserted into training.

o [name redacted] was given an ARSOF NTR for his performance during the [redacted] course. He talked directly with the BN leadership, and was given an audience with the Group

commander the next day (this process usually takes weeks). His ARSOF NTR was overturned, and he was allowed to attend CA selection the next class. He was attached to [redacted] so that he would not have to go through the normal process of moving to SPT BN and pursuing the CA application process there.

- o [name redacted] was given an ARSOF NTR for his VW during ROBIN SAGE. [name redacted] granted his appeal and gave him a 1-year relief from the SFQC. Instead of being out-processed and sent on assignment, he was kept in [redacted] to work in one of the battalion shops. He completed “110 hours of SOCEP training” in less than 1 month, and he was then immediately reinserted into training by [name redacted]. He VW’d again several days after returning to training.

- o [name redacted] was a VW out of ROBIN SAGE who quit on his team during training. He was brought before [name redacted] in a closed-door personal meeting for over an hour. After he exited, he had “decided” that he wanted to continue in the SFQC, and graduated the phase with his class.

- o [name redacted] has been in med hold for almost a year. All students are required to be administratively dropped if held out of training longer than 90 days.

- o [name redacted] was a 4 x SFPFA failure who was put up for relief. He was never able to pass the “1x 15’ rope climb with 25LBS weight vest”. He was “tested on the rope climb” by [name redacted]...on a Sunday...with no cadre present. He miraculously passed and graduated with the next class.

- o [name redacted] was given an NTR. [name redacted] reversed his decision to NTR [name redacted], who would go on to fail SUT. [name redacted] is currently in training. Not related, [name redacted] has family connections in SF which [name redacted] is aware of.

- o [name redacted] was the single source of several 4th Battalion investigations. He wrote anonymous emails, started IG complaints, or propagated rumors about virtually every single phase of the SFQC. His continual fabrications were verifiably false, and his numerous accusations resulted in several investigations that hampered operations for over a dozen cadre and battalion leadership. Literally every accusation he levied was proven inaccurate or untrue. But as a student, he was given complete top cover and left unimpeded to continue creating havoc, and was not held accountable for the numerous integrity violations he committed. He graduated with his peers.

- o [name redacted] was under investigation for a discrepancy in his clearance paperwork prior to entering the SFQC. He was brought before [name redacted] and told that if he did not rebut, he

would be given a LOR that would be locally filed, would disappear once he left the SFQC, and that he would be put back into training. Deciding he was undeniably innocent, he stated his intent to rebut. BN [name redacted], along with [name redacted], directed him to cut his 18-page rebuttal down to 2 pages. He was then given an LOR, but it was filed in his permanent record in his OMPF. Before company leadership changed hands, [name redacted] stated his personal intent to have [name redacted] removed from the SFQC.

Students right now have witnessed the above transgressions. They are friends of or know every single person in each of the above cases. Students are being shown, time and time again, that the standards can be fudged. That failure is not a big deal. That if they fail they will get special treatment, or they can know the right person, or they can just try again; sometimes as often as 6 times before getting it right. We try to enforce that this is not so, that in Group you often only have one shot. But we can't overcome the atmosphere of forgiveness and compliance that this place now breeds. The good students, through no fault of their own, don't get taught the importance of first-time success. The bad students, visibly increasing in number, embrace it and are bringing it to Group. We are trying, but the commanders have the authority, and they are abusing it.

This is the next generation of Special Forces. In just a few years, most of our regiment will be a product of this foundation. We will become a brotherhood of parasites: devoid of any real character, feeding off of the achievements those before us earned, and consuming the heritage as a whole. We can cure it, but it needs to happen now. We need to take back ownership of our profession.

Help us fix this mess. The Regiment's legacy depends on it.

A concerned Green Beret,

-DE OPPRESSO LIBER