

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP

A. Definitions:

1. Operations Unit(s)

a. The unit/project/operational team must be or have been composed of U.S. Armed Forces military personnel with a mission to conduct Special Operations while assigned to what this Association defines as a Unit specifically designated and tasked with conducting combat and other combat-related missions of an unconventional, covert and/or clandestine nature; or

b. On a routine basis provided direct combat support as part of the Operational Team performing Special Operations missions, aviation units providing insertion, extraction and direct fire support while in close proximity to enemy forces.

2. Membership

a. **General Member** - A person having the right to full participation in all of the proceeding's of this Association to include but not limited to the right to MAKE MOTIONS, DEBATE AND TO VOTE. General Members must meet the requirements of this Association as stated in Article IV, Section D 1 below and as specified for IRS Code 501(c) (19) organizations. Regardless of the provisions of Article IV, Section D 1 below, any General Member in good standing as of 28 September 2001 shall retain that category of membership.

b. **Associate Member** - A person who meets the requirements of this Association as required in Article IV, Section D 2 below and specified for IRS Code 501(c) (19). However, while Associate Members are welcome to attend meetings and to take part in the discussion when recognized by the presiding officer, THEY DO NOT HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF MAKING MOTIONS OR VOTING AT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS AND MAY NOT DO SO. However, they may be chairmen and/or members of committees and do have a right to vote on committee matters in committee meetings. Regardless of the provisions of Article IV, Section D 2 below, any Associate Member in good standing as of 28 September 2001 shall retain that category of membership.

c. **Non-Members** — The Special Operations Association recognizes those individuals who have devoted special attention and support by the Award of Operational Associate and Honorary Membership. Operational Associates and Honorary Members may participate in the Annual Reunions and attend member meetings but they DO NOT HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF MAKING MOTIONS, VOTING NOR MAY THEY ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE DISCUSSIONS DURING MEETINGS. However, Operational Associates and Honorary Members may serve on or chair a committee and do have a right to vote on committee matters in committee meetings.

B. Special Operations Units List

1. The Membership Committee shall prepare, for the approval or disapproval of the Board of Directors (BOD), a list of all units known to fall under the guidelines of Special Operations Units as defined by this Association in paragraph A 1 above. The units on this list will each be given starting and closing dates of eligibility. Units currently conducting operations will be identified as such and

given a closing date at the appropriate time. The Membership Committee will, as necessary, recommend additions or deletions to the Board of Directors for approval or disapproval.

2. No unit will be called a Special Operations Unit under the Association's definition unless approved by the Board of Directors. However, in the case of applicants who served in units meeting the Association's definition of Special Operations Unit that are still classified, a letter from the Commander of the United States Special Operations Command, or his designated representative, certifying that the applicant meets the Association's standards for the status for which he has applied will be required before the applicant may be accepted in that status.

C. Eligibility — Any person who meets the qualifications for membership under these Bylaws is eligible for membership. The Membership Committee may, however, refuse to approve the application of anyone whose membership the Committee believes would be detrimental to the Association's purposes, and will refuse to approve the application of anyone who submits false information or misrepresents information on his application for membership. In instances whereby an applicant is not able to find someone who can vouch for him, the burden is on the applicant to provide other evidence such as military orders, award citations, etc. and then be vetted not only by the membership committee but also the BOD.

D. Member Classes — Membership in this Association shall consist of two classes: General Member and Associate Member. These two classes shall be the voting and operational members of the organization. No other designation of any affiliate, associate, agent, guest, invitee, or other relationship to the Association, shall constitute a Member, and no persons, other than General Members and Associate Members, of any designation or relationship whatsoever to the association, shall enjoy the privileges and entitlements of membership, or shall be considered members.

1. **General Member** — General Membership is granted upon application and approval of the Membership Committee, to those persons who have requested General Member status and who can document that they are Veterans or members of a U.S. Armed Forces Special Operations Unit as defined by this Association, who has conducted Special Operations as an operational combat element or provided direct support to the operational combat element in an operational role within an assigned Area of Operations. The routine or normal duty of the applicant while at this assignment must have placed the applicant in direct threat/exposure to hostile fire. The applicant must supply adequate documentation to prove assignment to a Special Operations Unit that is recognized by this Association during that unit's period of eligibility and the fact that he was placed in direct threat/exposure to hostile fire. If adequate documentation is not available, one General Member in good standing must verify the credentials of the applicant from personal firsthand knowledge of the applicant while in this assignment. In those cases where a General Member is not available to vouch for the applicant, upon recommendation of the Membership Committee, based upon the documentation available; and on a case-by-case basis, may grant General Membership to the applicant. Further, General Members must meet the requirements of membership as specified in IRS Code 501(c) (19) All General Members enjoy full privilege and entitlements of a Member of the Association, including but not limited to attendance at all membership meetings, voting, the right to make motions and be heard in debate at all such meeting.

2. **Associate Member** — Associate Membership is granted to any person applying for Associate Membership and approved by the Membership Committee. Applicant must be a Veteran

or member of a U.S. Armed Forces Special Operations Unit as defined by this Association, who supported the conduct of his unit's Special Operations in a non-operational direct support role. The Associate Member's routine or normal duty did not involve direct threat or exposure to hostile fire. The applicant must also supply adequate documentation to prove assignment to a Special Operations Unit that is recognized by the Association during that unit's period of eligibility, or one General Member in good standing must verify the credentials of the applicant from personal firsthand knowledge of the applicant while in this assignment. In those cases where a General Member is not available to vouch for the applicant, upon recommendation of the Membership Committee, based upon the documentation available, and on a case-by-case basis, may grant Associate Membership to the applicant. Further, Associate Members must meet the requirements of membership specified in IRS Code 501(c) (19). Exceptions to: All Associate Members enjoy full privilege and entitlements of a member of the association, including but not limited to chairing and/or serving on committees and voting therein, attendance at all membership meetings and the right to be heard and enter into discussion at all such meetings. However, Associate Members do not have the right to hold office, to object to any action of the Board of Directors, or to participate in and vote on the election of the Board of Directors or the right to make motions or vote on any motions at any membership meetings.

E. Non-Members - The Special Operations Association recognizes those individuals who have devoted special attention and support by the Award of Operational Associate and Honorary Membership. While Operational Associates and Honorary members may participate in the Annual Reunions and attend member meetings, they do not have the privilege of making motions, voting nor may they actively participate in the discussions during meetings. However, Operational Associate and Honorary Members may serve or chair a committee and do have the right to vote on committee matters in committee meetings.

1. **Operational Associate** - The Operational Associate is a DISTINCTION conferred on members of foreign military units and paramilitary personnel who served with U.S. Armed Forces Special Operations Units, as determined by this Association, in the role defined in the General Member category. However, the persons who have Operational Associate status in the Association are not "members" of the Association and do not enjoy any privileges or rights of a member, as the Operational Associate does not meet the requirements for membership as specified in IRS Code 501 (c)(19). Operational Associates are not entitled to make motions or vote in the business of the Special Operations Association. The Operational Associate distinction is created to recognize the courage and professional contributions made by those who meet its requirements, while working with units designated Special Operations Units by this Association. The application shall be submitted to the Membership Committee together with an abbreviated biography of the candidate. The Committee shall consider the application and make the determination of awarding or withholding the Operational Associate status.

2. **Honorary Member** - Honorary Membership status may be granted upon approval of the Board of Directors to a person who has contributed significantly to U.S. Armed Forces Special Operations and/or the Special Operations Association and who would add to the prestige of the Association. However, the persons who have Honorary Membership status in this Association are not "members" of the Association and do not enjoy any privileges or rights of a Member. Any Member may propose a candidate for Honorary Membership by written application citing specific examples wherein the candidate has contributed significantly to Special Operations and/or the SOA and how

the candidate would add to the prestige of the Association. The application be submitted to the Membership Committee together with an abbreviated biography of the candidate. The Committee shall consider the application and forward the application with the Membership Committee's recommendation to the Board of Directors for final action. Honorary Members may not offer motions or vote at Membership Meetings. Further, they do not have to meet the requirements of membership specified in IRS Code 501 (c)(19).

F. Application

1. **Application Form** - The Membership Committee shall prepare the Association's Membership Application Form for approval by the Board of Directors, that is to be used by those persons who desire to join the Association. At a minimum, the following information shall be required of all applicants:

- a. Applicant's full name, address, telephone number(s), E-mail address, Social Security Number and Service Number if the individual served in an approved unit prior to 1969.
- b. Class of membership for which the applicant is filing.
- c. The questions:
 - 1) Will you accept Associate Membership if you qualify for the classification of member, but do not otherwise meet the qualifications for General Member?
 - 2) If you do not qualify for membership as either a General Member or Associate Member, but may qualify for recognition by the Association as an Operational Associate, would you accept such recognition?
- d. Assignments the individual has had to be in military, DOD, or civilian organizations' that qualify the person for membership in the Association.
 - 1) Space for the name and membership number of at least one General Member who can attest to the applicant's assignments and duties;
 - 2) Membership and/or Operational Associate fees and when they are due and payable.
- e. Authority for release of information and records. This item must be signed by the applicant, indicating that the applicant provided the information on the application form voluntarily.

2. **Submission of Application** - The application is to be mailed to the Association's Membership Committee Chairman together with first-year dues, application fee and sufficient documentation to verify assignment to a Special Operations Unit. The application must be signed and dated. If a witness statement is included, it must be completely filled out, dated and signed. Upon receipt of a properly completed application together with dues, application fee and adequate supporting documentation, the Committee will verify the applicant's credentials and forward to the applicant a Membership Certificate and Membership Card.

NOTHING WRITTEN BELOW THIS LINE