

Maj. (Retired) Roger Montgomery Pickett



Inducted September 14, 2005

December 19, 1949 - April 30, 2010

Test Officer
Airborne and Special Operations Test
Directorate
Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 1986-1989

C-17 Test Program
Airborne and Special Operations Test
Directorate
Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 1991-1993

Test Officer
Airborne and Special Operations Test
Directorate
Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 1997-2005

Born December 1949 in Kinston, North Carolina, Maj. (Retired) Roger Pickett entered the U.S. Army in October 1969. He completed jump school at Fort Benning, Georgia, in December 1969 and was in the final weeks of Special Forces medical training when he was selected and sent to OCS at Fort Benning which was completed in September 1970. After completing OCS and Special Forces training (March 1971), he was assigned to the 6th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He was assigned in various positions of responsibility, including A-Detachment Commander, Operations Officer and Company Commander. He went to the Republic of Vietnam TDY during 1971, 1972, and 1973, working with the C-130 SPECTRE gunships.

In 1973, Pickett was assigned to the 1st Special Forces Group in Okinawa where he was assigned as a scuba detachment commander and later as the 1st Battalion Operations Officer. Returning to the 5th Special Forces Group in 1975, Pickett commanded the Gabriel Demonstration detachment. He commanded the 5th Special Forces Group Headquarters Company for 18 months. In October 1978, he attended and successfully completed the

second selection class for 1st SFOD-Delta. He worked at Delta from 1978 through 1983 as a Troop Commander and as the Assistant Operations Officer.

Pickett assumed command of the Military Freefall School, USAJFKSWCS, in 1983. The school had been closed for 18 months due to a parachuting fatality. Tasked by then Brig. Gen. Joe Lutz, he rapidly reopened the school utilizing modern parachuting technology known as ram air parachutes and began training the students in the rudiments of freefall using a wind tunnel. The graduation rate went from 50% to more than 95% using modern parachute equipment and wind tunnel technology. His HALO Instructor number is #129.

Pickett was assigned as a Test Officer at the Airborne and Special Operations Test Directorate (ABNSOTD), Operational Test Command, from 1986 through his retirement from active duty in 1989. He made the first Military Tandem parachute jump with Sgt. Maj. Santos Matos as a passenger in 1980 with a ram air parachute "two person harness system" he made himself, which was three years ahead of the now popular commercial system. He conducted the Military Tandem Parachute test at ABNSOTD in 1987 for Special Forces. Pickett designed and built a drogue assisted static line parachute system and demonstrated it from 300 feet above ground level; a U.S. Air Force approved camera mount for C-130 and C-17 cargo troop doors to capture paratrooper exists on video; and a motorized torso dummy roller conveyer system. Also, while assigned to ABNSOTD, Pickett designed and personally jump tested a military freefall bundle system in response to an urgent mission need from a classified special operations detachment conducting combat operations in operation Enduring Freedom. This item has since been successfully used on numerous high altitude insertion operations throughout SW Asia. These achievements of Pickett while assigned to ABNSOTD are all recognized as "one of a kind" which could not otherwise have been done without his singular technical knowledge, skills, and personal determination.

During his military career, Pickett attended the following schools: HALO Jumpmaster School, SCUBA School, SERE School, Ranger School, and Command & General Staff College. He was also a commercial pilot with multi-engine instrument ratings and 4600+ accident free flying hours and more than 15,000 landings.

Pickett made 7,230 freefall parachute jumps until he made his final jump in May 2004. He had more than 72 hours of freefall time. His highest freefall parachute jump was made from 37,500 feet mean sea level. He held every rating in the United States Parachute Association including the coveted Instructor Examiner rating. He held the Master Parachute Rigger rating from the Federal Aviation Association.

After retirement from the Army, Pickett flew jump aircraft for two years. In 1991 he returned to ABNSOTD and worked for the C-17 Test Program. In 1993, he returned to USAJFKSWCS as a military freefall instructor. In 1997, he returned to ABNSOTD and served as a Test Officer until his retirement in 2005.

Pickett's awards and decorations include the Scuba Badge, Military Freefall Jumpmaster Badge, Special Forces Tab, Ranger Tab, Republic of Vietnam service medal, Meritorious Service Medal (3), and Army Commendation Medal (5).

Pickett resided in Raeford, North Carolina, where he continued his pursuit of restoring antique tractors until his passing, April 2010.