Boston University Honors
CIA Officer William Buckley

On Friday, April 29, 2022, Boston University honored the late William Francis Buckley, BU Class of 1955, with induction into its U.S. Army ROTC Hall of Fame. Buckley, an Army combat veteran of Korea and Vietnam, was one of the CIA's most highly decorated officers. He died in the line of duty at the hands of Iranian-backed terrorists in 1985. According to the CIA's official account, Buckley "volunteered to serve as the CIA Station Chief in Lebanon following the 1983 Beirut Embassy bombing, the deadliest attack in CIA history. Underscoring his bravery, Bill took the assignment, acutely aware of Beirut's high threat environment." Islamic jihadists, acting at the behest of Iran, kidnapped Buckley in Beirut on March 16, 1984. They held Buckley captive for the next 444 days during which he was tortured and denied medical care, which ultimately caused his death in June 1985.

At the BU ceremony, Lieutenant Colonel Charles "Lee" Stewart (U.S. Army Special Forces, Retired) gave the induction speech. During LTC Stewart's military career, he volunteered for many dangerous and demanding assignments, including two tours in Vietnam and numerous classified missions for the CIA. Most importantly, LTC Stewart served with Bill Buckley in Beirut. In fact, LTC Stewart spoke on the telephone with Bill early in the morning on the day that Bill was kidnapped. Neither man knew that would be their last conversation together. LTC Stewart travelled to Boston from his retirement home in Arizona to provide remarks honoring his departed colleague and comrade.

In his speech, Stewart described Buckley as "a man of great discipline and courage who was willing to carry out any mission he was given. . . He had both command and logistics capabilities and was able to organize, equip, train, and employ counterterrorist units from scratch."

Stewart also noted Buckley's awards and decorations:

- During his military service from 1947 to 1965, Buckley earned two Silver Stars, the Soldier's Medal, the Bronze Star with "Valor" device, the Purple Heart with oak leaf cluster, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, The Combat Infantryman's Badge, and the Master Parachutist Badge, along with several service and campaign medals.

- For his service to the Central Intelligence Agency from 1965 to 1985, Buckley, a paramilitary officer, was awarded the Intelligence Star, the Distinguished Intelligence Cross, and the Exceptional Service Medal. Following his death, he was commemorated at a CIA memorial service where he was remembered with the 51st star on the CIA Memorial Wall in the main lobby to the headquarters building. He is buried in Section 59 of Arlington National Cemetery.

Buckley's sister, Maureen Moroney of Salem, MA, was a special guest of honor at the ceremony. BU Professors Joe Wippl and John Woodward, both retired CIA operations officers, were also in attendance, along with many veterans of U.S. Army Special Forces, including members of Chapter 54 of the Special Forces Association, based in New England, which is named in Buckley's honor.

Lieutenant Colonel Nathan Luecke, (U.S. Army), the BU Professor of Military Science, Colonel Richard Smudin (U.S. Army, Retired), the chair of the BU Army ROTC Alumni Board, and the BU Army ROTC cadre played instrumental roles in sponsoring and organizing the ceremony.