

# From the Editor | January 2026



How Miller  
Sentinel Editor

Our newly elected Chapter President, James McLanahan, is taking over for Aaron Brandenburg as his term expires. James was Aaron's Vice President. Please check out James' first President's Letter, where he lays out some of his future plans for the chapter, confidently building on past successes.

LTC (r) Clint Norman, pictured on our cover, will be 100 years old on 23 February. Here's a tribute to him by SFA Chapter 55's Jack Damron, including Clint's illustrious SF career

and beyond, highlighting his exemplary service, including as CO of B52 in Vietnam, personally rescuing a wounded soldier and directing the safe extraction of his team, and helping plan the now-textbook Son Tay raid to rescue American POWs in North Vietnam. Happy 100th, Clint!

*Those Who Face Death*, which is the English translation of Peshmerga, was written by now-LTC (ret.) Marc Grdovic, who, along with his Battalion CO, then LTC Ken Tovo, are likely the only two people who were participants in the whole mission from beginning to end.

The mission, during the Allied invasion of Iraq in 2003, was to keep as many as possible of Saddam Hussein's army tied up in the North so they could not be used against the mainland offensive in the South. The two main Peshmerga factions, PUK and KDP, worked toward the common goal of eliminating Saddam's government, aided by Special Forces and others.

A significant obstacle needed to be overcome: eliminate Ansar el Islam, who were Islamic extremists allied with Al Qaeda, so the Peshmerga

would be able to use most of the troops involved in containing that hostile group in the fight to topple Saddam. That suspenseful and hugely successful effort was Operation Gothic Serpent.

Chargin" Charlie Beckwith. A human perspective from a "couple of guys" who worked for him—Irv Jacobs and Ben Rapaport. They say Charlie was destined to become a Special Forces legend, and they give highlights of the huge impact he had on Special Operations, such as his working with Colonel Tom Henry to co-form and activate Delta Force as a counter-terrorism unit. Operation Eagle Claw to rescue American hostages from the Iranians laid bare the necessity for dedicated specops assets and drastically better communications and interoperability between the military branches for these kinds of endeavors. This led to the highly successful joint command under USASOC and JSOC.

But they focus on the human side of Charlie, for example, his penchant for giving some people nicknames (Irv Jacobs became "Jake" and Ben Rapaport became "Rap") to his ability to convey meaning with a few short words, which mixed well with his focus on mission accomplishment and mixing new concepts with the tried and true.

Please feel free to check out the November meeting pics and description.

As you can tell, we use a lot of material contributed by SFA members. Please share with the Regiment by sending us your stories of being deployed with SF. ♦

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## SAVE THE DATE SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2026

### 3RD ANNUAL SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION VALOR LUNCHEON

#### FEATURING GUEST SPEAKER

U.S. ARMY LTC (RET.)  
HENRY "DICK" THOMPSON, PH.D.

Legendary MACV-SOG Veteran, Codename "Dynamite"  
Internationally recognized consultant, educator, speaker and author

