

From the President | January 2026



James McLanahan
President SFA Ch. 78

Happy New Year, Chapter 78 members! As we step into 2026, I am honored to serve as your new Chapter President. I am continually inspired by this group's dedication to each other and to our Special Forces community, and I approach this role with great optimism for our chapter's future. We have a lot to be proud of from the past year and even more to look forward to in the year ahead.

One of my personal highlights of 2025 was our [Second Annual Valor Luncheon](#) fundraiser in April. We were honored to host Marine

Corps Veteran Tony Viggiani, who recalled the battle for which he was awarded the Navy Cross. Thanks to the hard work of our volunteers and the generosity of everyone who attended, we not only strengthened our Chapter's operating budget but also raised enough to donate \$9,000 each to the Sunburst Youth Challenge Academy and to a fund supporting Afghan commandos and their families. These contributions are making a real difference. Sunburst empowers at-risk youth to turn their lives around, and our donation to the Afghan community is helping our former allies build new lives after the war. It was truly a proud moment to see Chapter 78 come together in force for these worthy causes. Credit here is due to Johann Hindert, my lovely wife Melanie, with strong support from Debra Holm and the staff from [On the Greens Catering and Events](#) (looking at you Sandra Llanes). Thanks!

Later in the year, Chapter 78 was well-represented at the [Special Forces Association National Convention](#) in Las Vegas. This gathering of the Special Forces brotherhood (held jointly with the Special Operations Association's reunion) was a great time (the first one I have been able to attend). There were great speakers and presentations the whole week. It was inspiring to see our chapter actively participating in this national event and upholding the Special Forces traditions of camaraderie and esprit de corps.

Looking ahead, let's build on our momentum by increasing opportunities for camaraderie, charity, and remembrance. In addition to our regular meetings and luncheons, we hope to organize more special activities for our members in 2026. For example, we are exploring:

- A chapter trip to Normandy, France, in June to commemorate the D-Day anniversary and pay tribute to those who came before us— Special thanks to Tom Turney for spearheading this effort.
- Regular "Range Day" outings where members and families can practice marksmanship and enjoy fellowship in a relaxed setting
- A group ski trip during the winter months to strengthen our bonds in a fun, family-friendly environment
- Continuing signature gatherings like our annual Valor Luncheon and other fundraisers that support both our chapter and deserving causes

One event I am particularly excited about is our upcoming Valor Luncheon on the 19th of April. This year, we are honored to have one of our own Chapter members, [Henry "Dick" Thompson](#), as the keynote speaker. Dick is a highly decorated Green Beret and a MACV-SOG veteran whose exploits during the Vietnam War are too big for a Hollywood movie. His firsthand stories and insights will make this luncheon an unforgettable experience. It's not every day we get to hear directly from one of our own in front of the big audiences as we have had at the luncheon. I encourage all of you to attend and invite friends. Having a Chapter 78 member as the keynote speaker is a testament to the caliber of people in our ranks, and it will be a proud moment for us all.

I look forward to working with each of you to make these plans a reality. I invite every member to get involved, whether by coming out to our events, volunteering for projects, or simply sharing your ideas on what you'd like to see from the chapter. Together, we will continue to strengthen our community and support fellow Green Berets; that's how we make Chapter 78 an integral part of the Special Forces family. Thank you for your trust and support. Let's make 2026 even better than last year. ❖

De Oppresso Liber,
James McLanahan
President, SFA Chapter 78



SFA Chapter 78 Monthly Meeting

January 17, 2026

Breakfast – 0800 • Meeting – 0830

Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos

The Pub at Fiddlers Green
4745 Yorktown Ave Bldg 19,
Los Alamitos, CA 90720-5176

Next month—February 21, 2026

Iron Mike's in Yorba Linda, CA

2026 Meeting Schedule

February 21 • March 21 • April 19 (Valor Luncheon)
May 16 • June 20 • July 18 • August 15
September 19 • October 17 • November 21
December (to be announced)