

# From the President | March 2026



James McLanahan  
President SFA Ch. 78

## Better With Friends

For the last two years, every March and April, the Chapter has been going into high gear for our annual fundraiser, which we have been calling the Valor Luncheon. It started when our friend Earl Plumlee added time to a trip he was already taking to California to be our first keynote speaker. I have been told he hit it out of the park. The other thing that happened that year was our Chapter VP (me at the time) had to go to Columbia with one of Earl's friends for work. That left the chapter with one less helper, and it was the guy, yours truly, who'd had the bright idea to do the thing in the first place. Luckily for the chapter, my wife is a great organizer, motivator, salesperson, and most of all, entertainer. So, Earl, Mel, Debra Holm, Johann, and Chapter 78 (with some help from their friends at AVAG and big help from the girls at Tennis Serves Others) created something great. They raised money not just for our operating budget but for the Afghan Commandos and Sunburst Youth Academy. All while I was on a work trip out of the country. Easy.

Much to my delight, my wife had delivered, just as I had promised the Chapter leadership she would. Of course, they were a little deflated when I returned, and they were stuck with me instead of her for the rest of our meetings. They made me promise not to make her mad so she would do it again. And she did. That year, we had more friends come. More friends invited more friends. We had Navy Cross recipient Tony Viggiani as our speaker. We almost filled the venue. This year, we will fill it.

Our keynote speaker for this year is MACV-SOG legend (and Chapter 78 member) Henry "Dick" Thompson. He has been making the rounds nationally, and if you haven't seen him on the Mike Force podcast, you should. This year, we have more chapter members than ever helping out. And it's great.

Lastly, friends of Chapter 78 have been donating exciting things to auction and raffle. This year, we have a tour of Catalina Island with Catalina Horseback, a custom Beaver cowboy hat from Bowman Hat Co., a custom surfboard from Wallin Surfboards, and one-on-one training with 7-time American Thai boxing champion Bryce Krause! I am sure we will get something special, as we always do, from The Heavy Machine. We have companies returning to sponsor tables. And people bring more friends and family every year. It's outstanding. And all it took to get the ball rolling was trusting friends while I was gone. Thanks to you, the momentum is compounding. We don't deserve you, but we are glad to have you. Let's go. ❖

*De Oppresso Liber,*  
James McLanahan  
President, SFA Chapter 78



## SFA Chapter 78 Monthly Meeting

### March 21, 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

### Guest Speaker: Joseph Ivanov

10th SFG veteran, One Brief Head of Growth/SOF, he spearheaded the Normandy French Resistance Monument project, which was dedicated during D-Day week 2022 in St. Marie du Mont next door to Sainte-Mère-Église (Featured in Fall 2020 *The Drop*).

Next meeting:  
Sunday, April 19, 2026  
**Valor Luncheon**  
On The Greens Catering  
and Conference Center  
(Navy Golf Course)

## 2026 Meeting Schedule

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