

# DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**MASTER SERGEANT  
ROBERT CHAREST**

Inducted 5 April 2012



In 1961, Robert "Bob" Charest, after volunteering for and completing Commo School and SF Branch Training in December of 1962, pulled his first assignment was with 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne)(SFG(A)) in Okinawa. Sent TDY on a six month Mobile Training Advisory mission in Vietnam in July 1963, he was assigned to A-432 stationed in the camp at Boun Beng of II Corps. The team was responsible for off-island training with the Jari Montagnards.

Robert Charest transferred to 10th SFG(A) in Bad Toelz Germany, serving with B Company ODA-19 from 1964 through 1967. In 1967, he was chosen to lead a top-secret mission to Libya. After two solo trips into Libya to coordinate with the US Embassy, he and his team, disguised as Civilian Communications Contractors to Libya, visited all of the Libyan Army Bases from Tripoli to Benghazi. While there, he was approached by two Libyan Officials, one of whom was the Libyan Army Chief of Staff, informing him of "The Black Boots" movement, an underground effort within the military to overthrow King Idris', the King of Libya. The rebellion was led by a young man, named Muammar Muhammad al-Gaddafi. After the officials then asked Charest to become a paid informant, to spy on the underground movement, he and his team aborted the mission and returned to Stuttgart. Although Charest briefed the higher headquarters in Stuttgart of the plot, nothing was done.

In 1968, Charest began his second tour in Vietnam, this time serving with B-56 Project (SIGMA) Military Assistance Command Vietnam – Studies and Operations Group (MACVSOG). For one of his missions where he was wounded, his actions were submitted for the award of the Silver Star. Thirty years later, Charest finally received the award, although it had been downgraded to a Bronze Star with "V" device. Efforts continued to have the award reviewed and upgraded, and in July of 2021, he was finally awarded his Silver Star. Completing his tour in Vietnam, he attended German language training at DLIWC California. As he was also fluent in Russian, he was assigned to Detachment (A) Berlin, serving on Team One Scuba Team from 1969 to 1972. Returning to Southeast Asia, he was assigned to A Company, 46th SF CO in Thailand on ODA-33. Here he was awarded the Soldiers Medal. When 46th SF Company closed, Charest returned to Detachment (A) Berlin, Germany, remaining in station for five years, from 1973-1978.

In late 1978, returning stateside and retiring in 1981 from 10th SFG(A) in Fort Devens, Massachusetts, Robert Charest took a job with Vinnell Corporation in Saudi Arabia; however, a grenade accident in 1981 and evacuation back stateside ended his tour. Attending the University of New Hampshire, he received his Bachelor's degree. Two years later, he accepted a position as a Senior Instructor/ Advisor with the Commo Committee at the US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS). This job was followed by one with FEMA/MERS first as a Senior Operations Officer, then a GM-13 Security Manager.

Robert Charest, although fully retired in 1992, has remained active with the Special Forces community. He served as President of Chapter 72, Special Forces Association in Merrimack, NH for five years and sits on the Board of Officers for the Veteran's of Special Forces (VSF). He is a live member of the Special Operations Association. A proud member of Detachment (A) Berlin, he has organized several well attended reunions for the unit, the most recent held just prior to his induction as DMOR. He also is a Life Member of the JFK Special Warfare Museum. His dedication has been instrumental in the inclusion of a Detachment (A) exhibit in the museum. Robert Charest is still involved with Scuba Diving, Skydiving and holds a 4th Degree Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do.

Awards and Decorations include: Silver Star, Soldiers Medal; Bronze Star with "V" for Valor; Purple Hearts (4 awards); Special Forces Diver badge; Mater Parachutist badge; CIB, German, Thai, Vietnamese and Chinese Jump Wings; HALO wings, Air Medal; Meritorious Service Medal; Army Commendation Medal (3 Awards);