

## DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**LIEUTENANT COLONEL  
MICHAEL A. SHEEHAN**  
*U.S. Army, ASD (SO/LIC)  
Posthumous*

Inducted April 26, 2024



Lieutenant Colonel Michael A. Sheehan commissioned from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1977 as an infantry officer. In 1979, he graduated from the Special Forces Officer Course and served as an operational detachment-alpha executive officer and detachment commander for 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in Panama. Sheehan held several overseas assignments, including the positions of mechanized company commander in Korea and a counterinsurgency advisor in El Salvador.

Sheehan served on the National Security Council, the United States Mission to the United Nations, and as director for International Programs under former President George H.W. Bush. He also served as the director of Global Issues under former President William J. Clinton. In between those two tours, he was the director for Political Affairs and Special Counselor to Ambassador Albright while also serving as special advisor to the Representative of the United Nations Secretary General.

Sheehan's military awards and decorations include the Special Forces Tab, Ranger Tab, Combat Infantryman Badge, Expert Infantry Badge, Senior Parachutist Badge, and Presidential Service Badge.

After retiring from the U.S. Army, Sheehan served in the Bureau of International Organizations and was appointed by President Clinton as Ambassador-at-Large for Counter Terrorism. The United States Senate later confirmed this State Department rank and status.

Ambassador Sheehan went back to international peacekeeping duty as the Assistant Secretary General of Mission Support in the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations and later served as deputy commissioner of counterterrorism for the New York Police Department.

Sheehan also founded the Lexington Security Group, an international consulting group for counterterrorism and security. Additionally, he served as an NBC News on-air terrorism analyst and a senior fellow on counterterrorism at both New York University Center for Law and Security and the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. At that time, he authored the book *Crush the Cell: How to Defeat Terrorism Without Terrorizing Ourselves*.

Sheehan was appointed as Assistant Secretary of Defense of Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict in 2011. While serving in this position, he established the Irregular Warfare Group and was awarded the Distinguished Public Service Award.

Posthumously, he was appointed as the Distinguished Chair in Strategy at the Modern War Institute.

He is survived by his widow, Sita Graham Vasan, who lives in Bethesda, Maryland, and has a son and a daughter.