



David M. Cooper

Founder, Verge

Executive Director, Lincoln Leadership

Command Master Chief of the Naval Special Warfare Development Group
(Retired)

Mr. Cooper was born and raised in Manheim, PA. In 1987 he graduated from Juniata College with a BS in Molecular Biology, and joined the U.S. Navy in that same year specifically to become a US Navy SEAL. During his 25-year career, Mr. Cooper spent nearly nineteen of those at the prestigious Naval Special Warfare Development Group.

Following BUD/S graduation in 1988, Mr. Cooper reported to SEAL Team 2 in Virginia Beach, VA, where he completed three deployments to include Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM. In 1993 Mr. Cooper was selected for the Naval Special Warfare Development Group. From 1994 to 2012, he completed dozens of deployments, both in and out of major theaters of war, to include such places as Haiti, Bosnia, Somalia, Yemen, Afghanistan and Iraq. He has led extensively in combat at the Team, Troop, Squadron and Command level, and has executed missions spanning the full gamut of Naval Special Warfare capabilities.

From September 2009 to September 2011, Mr. Cooper served as the Command Master Chief (the senior SEAL Operator and principal advisor to the Commanding Officer) of the Naval Special Warfare Development Group. He is one of only fourteen SEALs to ever hold this position. During his tenure, the Naval Special Warfare Development Group successfully executed some of the most significant Special Operations missions in the history of the U.S. Military. In a role that took him from the battlefield one minute to the interagency boardroom the next, Mr. Cooper's influence, interpersonal skills and leadership were instrumental to the unparalleled success of this elite unit.

Throughout his career, Mr. Cooper was known for "setting the tone" for the entire command through his active involvement in the professional and personal development of officers and enlisted SEALs. In this vein he has served as a mentor, coach and teacher to officer and enlisted SEALs on such diverse subjects as behavior-driven leadership, creating and leading high-performing teams, ethics and the application of Special Operations tactics, techniques and procedures to contingency operations across the globe.

For his distinguished service, Mr. Cooper was awarded numerous unit and personal awards, to include a Silver Star, 6 Bronze Stars with "V" devices, 2 Distinguished Meritorious Service Medal, 2 Meritorious Service Medals, 4 Presidential Unit Citations and numerous other joint and individual awards.

Mr. Cooper presently serves as Founder of Verge and Executive Director of Lincoln Leadership. He sits on the advisory board for the Milliman Risk Institute and is a recent graduate of the Stanford Ignite Program. Mr. Cooper is also a gifted keynote leadership speaker.