First-Coast Arrow

Newsletter of the Special Forces Association Chapter 88, Northeast Florida -- JAN-FEB 2026, Vol 26-1

OFFICERS

President (CO)
Dewey Walker
904-993-1211
sfa88@comcast.net

Executive Vice President (XO)
(Vacant)

Hon. Vice President (3/20 SFG)
Major Brian S. McDowell

Vice President Operations (S3)
David Ware
904-861-5062
WeerWare@comcast.net

Secretary Pro Tem (S1)
Thomas F Burke, Jr
703-203-7610
tburke2743@aol.com

Treasurer (CFO & S4)
Wade D. Carroll
904-868-3861
wdcarroll9@comcast.net

STAFF

Chaplain
Leland E. Stanford
904-287-0915
lelandestanford@gmail.com

Sergeant at Arms
Thomas Jackson
904-718-1530
TBone20SF@comcast.net

Judge Advocate & Inspector General
William P. Rothrock
706-662-9838
willyprothrock@gmail.com

Supply Sergeant (S4)
Chris Munoz
904-254-7147
wingforce@aol.com

JROTC Programs
John H. Page - Awards
904-465-0611
sgmjhpage@aol.com

Scott Eder – Scholarships
904-315-8204
scott.eder@edergrp.com

Public Affairs & Newsletter
James Bullinger
334-701-5435
jamesbullinger@outlook.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dewey Walker, CSM (Ret)

SFA Veterans Meeting Challenges

December invites us to reflect not only on the close of 2025, but on the extraordinary efforts our members have made for such an impactful year. From volunteering at events to supporting fundraising initiatives, each of you has helped strengthen our Chapter and advance our mission. Your dedication, whether through time, talent, resources or encouragement, has shaped our achievements and carried us through challenges. As we step into the new year, we do so with gratitude and excitement. Your Chapter command and staff are focused on new initiatives, but your continued involvement and spirit of camaraderie will ensure our success. Together, we will build on the foundation you've created and embrace the opportunities ahead.

The Special Forces Memorial monument is **our Chapter's legacy**—and it won't happen without us. The dedication is scheduled for this coming April 11, but we've only raised just over half the funds needed. Every member must step up: make your donation, ask your family and friends, and reach out to your contacts. The funding is out there—we just need to bring it in. **This is our project. Let's finish it together.** See more on page 2.

I want to take a moment to thank our officers, staff and committee members, and every one of you for the incredible efforts and teamwork you put into this past year. Because of your hard work, 2025 stands out as the most successful year in our chapter's history - - and that's something we should all be proud of. From the JROTC awards and scholarship program, to the annual Charity Golf tournament, to involvement in community ceremonies, and to support of the Veterans Day parade; you have made a difference. Looking ahead, we know the new year will bring its share of challenges. But with challenges come new opportunities, opportunities for us to grow, to lead, and to show what this chapter is capable of.

Since 2026 will be an election year, I'll be stepping aside after ten years in command and passing the flag on to the next generation. My hope is that many of you will step forward and take on leadership and staff roles, helping to guide our chapter into the future. We've built something special together. Let's keep that momentum going and make our chapter even stronger in the years ahead.

Here's to a Great Year!

De Oppresso Liber,
Dewey Walker
President

OPERATION: "QUIET PROFESSIONALS" - The Special Forces Monument Project

A Request for Assistance from One Green Beret to Fellow Green Berets, Their Families and Friends

Greetings! This request is for anyone who has yet to help with our Special Forces Monument project. Look around and you will note that we have recently completed some very important holidays where we give thanks for our blessings. Some of us even travel great distances by land and air to celebrate and be with our families, friends, and colleagues. This is certainly the season to be most generous and possibly make a far-reaching difference in our community and in the world.

As you may be aware, Chapter 88 has taken the lead for the construction and installation of a high-profile, long-lasting initiative to "Remember and honor the quiet professionals and their families: past, present and future." We are in the final stages of a unique SF memorial project being installed at the beautiful 526-acre Jacksonville National Cemetery located at 4083 Lannie Road. It is easily accessible from Interstate 95 via the newly constructed Gold Star Family Parkway. There are currently over 23,000 souls buried there: with 38 green berets interred in these sacred grounds.

I am reaching out to give you the opportunity to be a "stakeholder" and become a key-partner in this most worthy project. Our Chapter 88 team is in the final phase of financing this important memorial monument and I am requesting that you be generous in this season-of-giving. Please, if you are able, help us by making a donation. You can send a check made payable to: "Special Forces Association Chapter 88" with the note "SF Memorial Monument" on the memo line. Give or mail it to our chapter treasurer: SF Monument, 10539 Inverness Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32257. These donations are tax deductible and our Federal Tax ID is: 56-6148492.

I am humbly asking you to join-in and participate in person, along with a large contingent of dignitaries, fellow green berets, families and friends at the unveiling ceremony set for **Saturday, April 11** at 10 am in the Jacksonville National Cemetery.

Please contact me if you have any questions, call: (904) 534-0035 or email: pem@axisp.com.

De Oppresso Liber,
Padraic E. "Pat" Mulvihill,
SF Memorial Monument Project Chairman

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

INDIVIDUALS/FAMILIES

COL Reed Barrett, Ashburn, VA
John Arnold, Jacksonville, FL
James Bullinger, Saint Augustine, FL
Sean Healy, Unknown
Christobal Munoz, Saint Augustine, FL
Larry & Julie Taylor, Jacksonville, FL
Michael Bagley, Fleming Island, FL
Bruce Pastorini, Jacksonville, FL
Preston Bradford, East Greenwich, RI
Vernon Perry IV, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL
Sandy Darden, Starke, FL
Bonnie Cooper, Boynton Beach, FL
Ted Cooley & Ken Longino, Lawtey, FL
Edward Steiner, Campbell, CA
Dewey Walker, Jacksonville, FL
David Ware, Fernandina, FL
Wade Carroll, Jacksonville, FL
John H. Page, Callahan, FL
SFC Andrew Obeso, Monterey, CA
Jan Bullinger, Rio Linda, CA

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Chief James Faircloth, Callahan, FL
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Kyle Barrington, Woodbine, GA
Ed Beach, Quincy, FL
Padraic Mulvihill, Jacksonville, FL
COL Jason Psaltides, Davie, FL

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Jimmy Lewis, Long Beach, CA
James Hovda, Rice MN
Theresa Hicks, Unknown
Yamil Santiago, Fleming Island, FL
Gaylene Rose, Unknown
Peter Plumeri, Unknown
Justin Dean, Unknown
And to our Anonymous Donors

ORGANIZATIONS

Carl Smith and Group, Jacksonville Beach, FL
Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Saint Augustine
SFA Chapter 76 South Florida, Hollywood
National Sojourners Northeast Florida Chapter 435, Jacksonville
M.A. Steiner Construction Inc., Orangevale, CA
Perry-McCall Construction Inc., Jacksonville, FL

A Grand 2025 Veterans Day Indeed!

The City of Jacksonville held its annual Veterans Day Parade on Nov. 11 with Chapter 88 members participating and being in attendance. Each year the chapter has members walking or riding in the parade, along with Army National Guard SF Soldiers, to represent the Army's Special Forces branch. This year due to the prolonged government, support from our sister SF unit – the 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces (ARNG) from Camp Blanding – was cancelled. In past years this included 3 Army vehicles with ARNG SF Soldiers driving. This year the Jacksonville Fire Department provided vehicle support from the Search and Rescue Task Force with a F350 flatbed truck and driver. A special honor was bestowed on Chapter member ***Capt. Padraic "Pat" Mulvihill***. Jacksonville's Mayor Donna Deegan named Mulvihill as the Grand Marshal of the 2025 Veterans Day Parade during a pre-parade breakfast. Mulvihill helped to lead the hundreds of veterans and dozens of military units along the 1.1-mile route as thousands of people watched and cheered the parade. Afterwards, chapter members cooked and served up burgers, sausages and hotdogs for attendees.

Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan presents SFA88 member Pat Mulvihill with the 2025 Veterans Day Grand Marshal medallion.

Grand Marshal Mulvihill waves from a red Corvette as he leads the mile-long parade of veterans and military units.

Above, chapter members John Page and Joey Browning line the parade route to watch and cheer. Middle, member John Arnold rides shotgun in the Fire Task Force truck in the parade.

Right, SFA88 member Bruce Pastorini thanks Firefighter Steven Rohman with the Search and Rescue Task Force of the Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department for driving the support vehicle for the chapter's participation in the parade.

SFA88 Supports POW/MIA Golf Tourney

Recently, Chapter 88 helped sponsor the annual POW/MIA Memorial golf tournament held Nov. 17 at the Eagle Harbor Golf Course in Fleming Island, Fla.

Afterwards, the chapter received a letter of gratitude from retired Navy Capt. Sam K. Houston Jr., chairman of the board for the Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial, Inc. Houston wrote, "…I thank you for your generous Silver Sponsorship of $1,000 for the 7th Annual Golf Tournament benefitting the National POW/MIA Memorial & Museum." The funds raised will go towards the proposed POW/MIA Memorial and Museum at Cecil Field.

For our contribution, the chapter and our SFA logo was featured on the POW/MIA golf tournament website, on the club house banner, had two hole-signs on the course, and in the printed program.

Our handsome 4-man golf team placed 15 out of 30-plus teams, coming in at 7 under par. They tried hard (like woodpecker lips), but so many good teams were playing. Even though our team didn't place this time, they gave it their best effort and had a great time.

Pictured here (from left) are SFA 88 team members Jim Thomas, David Lee, David Ware and Chris McReady posing with one of the Chapter's sponsor signs. In addition, SFA88 member Pat Mulvihill served as a POW/MIA tournament volunteer.

Life of a Warrior Series

The November Warrior is retired Army Captain and State Department Foreign Service Officer **Thomas "Tom" F. Burke, Jr.**, our Chapter Secretary. He began his 21-year military career enlisting first in the U.S. Marine Corps from June 1965 to June 1969, including service in Vietnam. In June 1970, Burke enlisted in the Army with an additional deployment to Vietnam, first with the II Field Force, then with the MACV Advisory Team 87 in Xuan Loc. Later SGT Burke graduated from the Officer Candidate School with Class 01-73 in January 1973, receiving an Infantry officer commission. He served with various units at Fort Bliss, the 2nd Inf. Div. in Korea, and the 82nd Abn. Div.

In 1979, Burke joined Special Forces, serving in 5th SF Group, first as an S4 in the 3rd Bn., then commanding the group's Service Company, then as the Asst. Group S4. From 1983-1985, he was a SF Operation Officer with the U.S. Office of Military Cooperation in Somalia, finally retiring in November 1986. From 1986-1988 he worked as a reserve police officer in Ogden Utah, and then with Flameco Industries, an aircraft parts manufacturer, before joining the U.S. State Department.

In 1988 he began a 34-year career as a Foreign Service Officer, serving as a member of the Country Teams with the U.S. Embassies in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Sri Lanka, Belarus, Venezuela and India. In the United States, Burke served in several key DoS management positions overseeing administrative operations in South Central Asia and the Near East, and as the Executive Secretary for the Foreign Service Grievance Bureau. He retired from the Foreign Service in 2012. Afterwards, he served as the Director for Interagency Affairs/Training with the Operations Group at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, LA.

Burke has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Columbus College, GA, and a 2004 Master's degree in Strategic Studies from the Air War College, Maxwell AFB, AL. He has both military and civil service awards, some include the Dept. of the Army Meritorious Civilian Service Award, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Dept. of State superior and meritorious performance awards, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medals (3OLC), Marine Corps Combat Action Medal, Army Achievement Medals, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Army and USMC Good Conduct Medals, Vietnam Service Medal (3 Campaigns), Armed Force Reserve Medal, the Special Forces Tab, Expert Infantryman Badge and Master Parachutist Badge.

Today, Burke periodically works as an interagency consultant to DoD and as a motorcycle rider coach with the Harley-Davidson Riding Academy in Florida. He and his wife Sandra reside in Jacksonville.

Editor's Note: *Thank you to Tom Burke for providing this coverage from the December meeting.*

Life of a Warrior Series

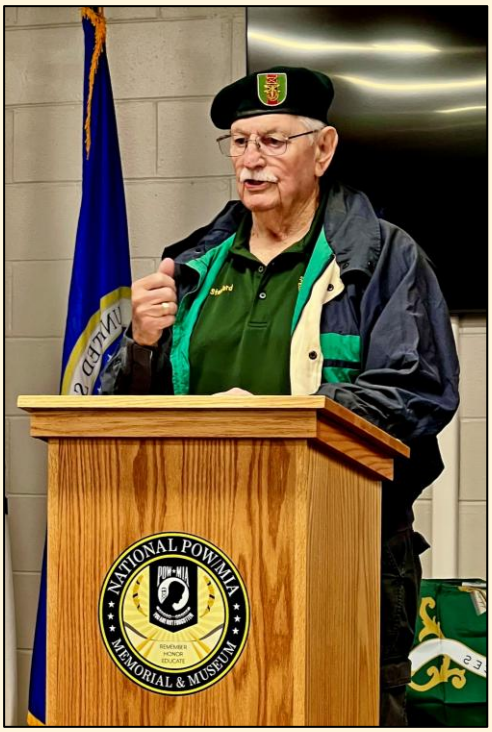
Meet December's warrior retired Army **Master Sgt. Leland E. Stanford III**, the Chapter's Chaplain. Joining the Special Forces Association in August 2005, he is a Legacy Life Member with two decades of membership.

Stanford's military service began when he initially joined the California National Guard as a teenager while in high school. After graduation from high school, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps, attending Boot Camp and advanced individual training in 1956-57, then transferring east to Naval Air Station Jacksonville to train as an aviation ordnance man. He then served at the Marine Corps Air Station in El Toro, CA, until he was discharged in 1958.

Returning to Florida, Stanford later joined the Army National Guard to serve with the 20th Special Forces Group. He served in a variety of operational detachment positions, raising up through the ranks as a Light Weapons Sgt., then Heavy Weapons Sgt., then team Intelligence Sgt., to leading as a Team Sergeant until his retirement in 1980. His awards include the Army and Marine Corps Good Conduct Medals, Special Forces Tab, Master Parachutist Badge, and Army Recruiter Badge.

In civilian life, Stanford graduated from Florida State College, Jacksonville in 1960 with an Associates of Art degree in Fire Science. Then he joined the Jacksonville Fire Rescue Department, going on to serve for 36-years until retiring in 1996. Then Stanford began another career working for Brink's Armored Car Service for 20 more years.

He and his wife Betty reside in St. Johns, Florida.



Chapter Meetings are held on the first Saturday of the month at 10 a.m. in the *Chapel of the High-Speed Pass,* 6112 POW-MIA Parkway on *Cecil Field.*

JAN 3 – FEB 7 – MAR 7

3/20th SFG Reunion Time!

Saturday, February 21, 12 noon to 5 pm

American Legion Post 26 (Same as last year)
2207 W. Baker Street, Plant City, FL

Cost: $25 per person. Make checks payable to "Chris Bell" – with "Reunion" memo line. Mail to: Chris Bell, 1111 Jungle Ave. North, St. Petersburg, FL 33710-4327 For Info: Chris (727) 244-1016 or Darryl (813) 833-4035 Please RSVP before Feb 13.

We are looking forward to seeing each of you and don't hesitate to reach out if you have any ideas or questions. Food, Drink, War Stories and more!

GREEN BERET CHARITY

GOLF TOURNAMENT

May 8, 2026
Eagle Landing Golf Course
at Oakleaf Plantation
Orange Park, FL

For Golfer and Sponsor Info:
David Ware
weerware@comcast.net (904) 861-5062
Or Wade Carroll
wdcarroll9@comcast.net (904) 868-3861

To Register Online:
Scan the QR Code
or go to:
greenberetcharitygolf.com

Remembering our Veterans with Wreaths Across America

The annual **Wreaths Across America Day** was held on Saturday, Dec. 13, 2025 at the Jacksonville National Cemetery. Christmas wreaths were placed by the headstones of some 23,000 veteran graves by family members and an army of volunteers.

Our member Padraic "Pat" Mulvihill, who is on the volunteer support staff of the cemetery, helped with organizing the event.

During the opening ceremony, the keynote speech was delivered Army Lt. Col. Patrick Heffernan, the outgoing commander of the 3rd Bn., 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Camp Blanding.

"When we look upon these wreaths, let them remind us that courage is not only found on a battlefield. It is found in the quiet moments of choosing to live, to serve, to remember, and to hope." Heffernan said, "Thank you for being here. Thank you for honoring our heroes. Thank you for keeping their stories alive."

"May God bless our Gold Star families, our service members, past and present, and the United States of America," Heffernan concluded.

Several Chapter 88 members attended to help place wreaths, including visits to the graves of 38 Special Forces veterans.

Chapter 88 plans to return on April 11 for the unveiling of a new Special Forces Memorial Monument in the cemetery. Mark your calendar for the 10am dedication ceremony.

LTC Patrick Heffernan, commander of the 3rd Bn., 20th SFG(A), presented the keynote speech during the welcome ceremony. (Photo by Fran Ruchalski/Special to Florida Times-Union)

John Page and LTC Patrick Heffernan prepare to lay a wreath on the grave of a Special Forces comrade, SFC Ted Edward Lee, who was interred in 2016 in Section 11 at Site 1221. (Photo by Fran Ruchalski/Special to Florida Times-Union)

SFA Chapter 88 members John Page, David Ware and Padraic Mulvihill join guest speaker LTC Patrick Heffernan (in uniform) for a photo. (Chapter Photo)

Editor's Note: *Congratulations to Colonel Patrick Heffernan on his recent promotion and best wishes for continued success in his next assignment.*

Did You Know?

The first Parachute badge was designed during World War II by Captain (later Lt. Gen.) William P. Yarborough of the 501st Parachute Battalion. A memorandum of record, written by Yarborough on April 22, 1941, tells the story of the birth of the Army's parachutist badge.

"On March 3, 1941, I was ordered to Washington to report to the Adjutant General for temporary duty in the Office of the Chief of Infantry. My mission was the procurement of a suitable parachutist badge with would meet with the approval both of the War Department and the Commanding Officer of the 501st Parachute Battalion. Major Miley (commander of the 501st), before my departure, gave me full authority to approve any design that I considered acceptable, and to do so in his name. The same authority was delegated to me in the name of the Chief of Infantry," Yarborough wrote.

"I drew the original sketch in the office of Lt. Col. Beuchner, G-3; a finished copy of my original sketch was prepared in the office of the Quartermaster General. Through the help of Mr. A.E. Dubois, in the Quartermaster General's office, 350 of the badges were procured from the Bailey, Banks & Biddle Company in Philadelphia and were in the hands of the commanding officer of the 501st Para. Bn. by March 14, 1941. This is believed to have been an all-time speed record for War Department Procurement. I personally took the correspondence relative to the badge's approval from one office to another until the transaction was complete. This operation took me one entire week, eight- hours a day," he wrote.

The Parachutist Badge was formally approved on March 10, 1941. Yarborough even applied for a patent to protect the design from unauthorized reproduction. On Feb. 2, 1943, Patent #134963 was granted for "A Parachutist's Badge" for a period of three and one-half years. The senior and master parachutist badges were authorized by Headquarters, Dept. of the Army in 1949 and were announced by Change 4 to Army Regulation 600-70, dated Jan. 24, 1950.

Source: Army Quartermaster Foundation
https://quartermasterfoundation.org/u-s-army-parachute-badge/

Badge Symbolism: The wings suggest flight and, together with the open parachute, symbolize individual proficiency and parachute qualifications.

Basic Parachutist: Awarded to any individual who has satisfactorily completed the prescribed proficiency tests while assigned or attached to an airborne unit or the Airborne Department of the Infantry School; or participated in at least one combat parachute jump.

Senior Parachutist: Participate in a minimum of 30 jumps to include 15 jumps with combat equipment; two-night jumps, one as jumpmaster; two mass tactical jumps; graduate from a Jumpmaster Course; and serve on jump status with an airborne unit for a total of at least 24 months.

Master Parachutist: Participate in 65 jumps to include 25 jumps with combat equipment; four-night jumps, one as a jumpmaster; five mass tactical jumps, graduate from a Jumpmaster Course; and serve on jump status with an airborne unit for a total of at least 36 months.

After the Monthly Meeting…

Come join members rallying for a post-meeting drink at ***Fat Boyz Bar*** located at 11137 Normandy Blvd, Jacksonville. From the Chapel of the High-Speed Pass, it's an easy 4.2 mile or 7-minute drive. Chapter 88 members receive free coffee.
Find "**Fat Boyz Bar**" on *Facebook*.

A Gathering of Green Berets

SFACON 2026

JUNE 8-11, 2026

Near Eglin AFB, Florida
Event Details Coming Soon

First-Coast Arrow is published bi-monthly by Chapter 88 and is an un-official publication of the Special Forces Association. The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Special Forces Association or the U.S. Department of War. If you have news, suggestions or ideas you think would be useful, email us at jamesbullinger@outlook.com.
SFA Chapter 88, P.O. Box 7452, Jacksonville, FL 32238

Newsletter Submission Deadlines 2026

- Mar-Apr = *Feb 15*
- May-Jun = *Apr 15*
- Jul-Aug = *Jun 15*
- Sep-Oct = *Aug 15*
- Nov-Dec = *Oct 15*