First-Coast Arrow

Newsletter of the Special Forces Association Chapter 88, Northeast Florida -- MAY-JUN 2025, Vol 25-3

OFFICERS

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

Executive Vice President (XO)
Stephen A. Muskett
904-501-4590
pinnaclemarketer@gmail.com

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

Vice President Operations (S3)
Vacant

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

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

Membership
Dewey Walker (See Above)

Public Affairs & Newsletter
James Bullinger
334-701-5435
jbullinger@sw.rr.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dewey Walker, CSM (Ret)

Working to Promote and Serve the SF Community

Who is bored? As summer approaches, many of our "snowbird" friends are starting their journeys north along I-95. This is the perfect time to prepare for the warmer months ahead. It's important to service the SUV, uncover the swimming pool, fertilize the lawn, and ensure the air conditioning is ready. The grandkids are excited and can't wait to visit the beach and Disney World. My wife is also discussing an early summer cruise, which we look forward to. And I'm especially excited about the upcoming 101st Airborne Division Association Conference in Orlando and the SFA Conference in Las Vegas. Life is Great, especially when the plan comes together!

The upcoming Green Beret Charity Golf Tournament is a crucial fundraiser for our chapter. A significant amount of our money comes from donations and sponsorships from individuals and businesses. We encourage you to help reach out to your business contacts and anyone else you know to promote their attendance and support for the tournament. The funds raised are reinvested in our community. See page 4 for tournament information and our points of contact.

Recently, our membership has approved a $14,000-plus project to honor the Army Special Forces community by establishing a permanent memorial monument at the Jacksonville National Cemetery. The monument recognizes Special Forces warriors who made the ultimate sacrifice in action, historically and in future engagements. Their bravery and dedication are unparalleled; this initiative is our way of acknowledging and preserving their legacy. Padraic Mulvihill is our project officer, with William P. Rothrock as assistant project officer. The tentative dedication date is Memorial Day on May 25, 2026.

I encourage all members to attend our chapter meetings. They are not just about handling chapter business; but to share experiences and learn from each other. We enjoy engaging guest speakers and a new event called "Life of a Warrior." A designated member shares their service story, with tales that you typically only see in movies or read about in books. These personal stories inspire us and strengthen our bond as a community.

President's Message *Continued…*

President's Message *Continued…*

We proudly support the 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Florida ARNG) at Camp Blanding near Stark. Our chapter also organizes field trips, participates in veterans' initiatives, engages in community activities, awards college scholarships, supports charitable projects, and hosts military and family events. However, the primary reasons our members participate in chapter activities are to stay involved, take-on challenging tasks, and fellowship with Special Forces personnel. We understand and communicate in the language of SF and Special Ops.

In closing, I want to recognize and commend member Thomas "T-Bone" Jackson for serving as our new Sergeant at Arms. This position is essential for ensuring the smooth and efficient operation of the chapter.

De Oppresso Liber,
Dewey Walker
President

"T-Bone" Named New Sgt. at Arms

President Dewey Walker announced at the April 5 meeting **Thomas "T-Bone" Jackson** has volunteered to serve as the chapter's Sergeant-at-Arms. Much success to him.

Arnold Keynote Speaker for Jacksonville's National Vietnam War Veteran Observance

On March 27, the Jacksonville National Cemetery held an annual National Vietnam War Veterans Day Observance on its hollowed grounds. Chapter 88 member and retired Air Force ***Colonel John Arnold*** was honored to be the event keynote speaker. Arnold served 28 years in the military, to include flying C-130 aircraft in Vietnam during the war. During his post military career, he served as the acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict at the Pentagon. Arnold spoke about never forgetting the service, the courage and the sacrifices of our Vietnam Veterans and those who gave their lives. Above, Arnold (right) stands with fellow Chapter 88 member Padraic Mulvihill, who serves as the public information officer with the cemetery's support committee and was one of the volunteer event organizers.

Chapter Tours NFRTPO, Learns About Regional Transportation Efforts

On April 16, several Chapter 88 members participated in a presentation and tour of the **North Florida Regional Transportation Planning Organization** (TPO) facility in Jacksonville. Executive Director Jeff Sheffield greeted members and explained the mission of the North Florida TPO which is the independent regional transportation planning agency for Duval, Clay, Nassau and St. Johns counties. The NFTPO is one of 27 across Florida and their area of responsibility encompasses over 3,000 square miles and a population of nearly 1.7 million. They lead regional efforts in planning, funding and mobilizing resources to develop and maintain all forms of transportation systems. Pictured above are Director Jeff Sheffield with chapter members Willy Rothrock and Dewey Walker, not pictured is Padraic Mulvihill.

March Guest Speaker

During the March 1 meeting retired U.S. Navy ***Capt. Dale V. Raebel***, 86, addressed the chapter on his experiences as a Prisoner of War (POW) during the Vietnam War. Raebel, born in 1938 in Milbank, South Dakota, entered the Navy on May 18, 1961 as an aviation cadet and attended flight training at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla. He was commissioned an Ensign and designated as a Naval Aviator on Feb. 10, 1963 at NAS Corpus Christi in Texas. Eight years later, then Lt. Cmdr. Raebel was a rated as an A-7 Corsair II pilot with attack squadron VA-37 (Bulls) at NAS Cecil Field, Fla. His unit was assigned to the aircraft carrier USS Saratoga (CVA-60) in March 1971 in preparation for a combat tour to Vietnam. Raebel's unit aboard the Saratoga arrived on Yankee Station in May 1972. They would rack up nine consecutive months of combat operations, flying nearly 2,800 missions and dropping over 3,100 tons of ordnance. On one mission to bomb a North Vietnam harbor, Raebel earned the Distinguished Flying Cross for his actions (see sidebar) on July 31. Seventeen days later on Aug. 17, 1972, during another combat mission over North Vietnam, Raebel's Corsair was hit by shrapnel and he was forced to eject over enemy territory. Soon after, he was captured and taken prisoner. Raebel spoke about his experiences as a POW and the harsh treatment his capturers inflicted on him and others. He would endure and survive 225 days in captivity until his release during *Operation Homecoming* on March 29, 1973. He was flown home to recover from his injuries at the Jacksonville Naval Hospital. Then, Raebel went on to serve an additional 20-years, retiring from the Navy on March 1, 1993 after a distinguished 32-year career. The March 1 meeting marked Raebel's 32nd anniversary of his retirement from the Navy. Also attending were Raebel's guests, retired Navy Vice Admiral Carol Pottenger and husband Mike, a retired FBI agent. Thanks to member Pat Mulvihill for arranging the guest speaker for March.

Chapter 88 President Dewey Walker, right, presented a certificate of appreciation and a chapter coin to guest speaker retired Capt. Dale Raebel, USN, following his fascinating recount of his Vietnam prisoner of war experience.

The Distinguished Flying Cross

For heroism while participating in aerial flight as an A-7 Corsair II pilot attached to attack squadron VA-37 embarked on the USS Saratoga (CVA-60). On July 31, 1972, **Lt. Cmdr. Dale V. Raebel** was leader of a bomber element in a 29-plane coordinated attack against a major shipyard in Southeast Asia. Despite numerous surface-to-air missiles and intense anti-aircraft fire, he skillfully maneuvered his element to the optimum position from which to attack. He then led his element in a daring dive bombing run which placed all of the element's ordnance directly on target. Post strike photography revealed over 30 buildings, a dock, a slipway and numerous barges totally destroyed.

A Gathering of Green Berets

SFACON 2025

14-17 OCT 2025

LAS VEGAS, NV

Orleans Hotel & Casino

See Event Details on SFA Website

10th Annual GBC Golf Tourney is Here!

It's Time! The 10th annual golf fundraiser hosted by Chapter 88 is just over two-weeks away. Thanks to the leadership and efforts of ***Wade Carroll*** and ***Steve Meeks,*** it's going to be a grand day and a great event. The goal is 120 golfers, but this also means we need member support – both golfers and volunteers. Putting on a big tournament requires people to work many of the supporting roles before, during and after the golfers compete. Not a golfer? Please consider being a volunteer. It is a fun day with a great BBQ dinner. Proceeds from the tournament provide funds for our 501(c)(19) chapter administrative, charity and support services. We also need sponsors and silent auction item donations. To sign up as a golfer, a sponsor or to volunteer, visit the website or contact golf Chairman Wade Carroll at wdcarroll9@comcast.net or (904) 868-3861; or Steve Meeks at stephen_meeks@yahoo.com or (904) 669-1628.

Scan Here for Golf Registration

Meeks a Winner at 69th Azalea Amateur

Congratulations to chapter member ***Steve Meeks*** for his 1st place win as the 4th Flight champion during the *69th Azalea Amateur Golf Tournament*. Meeks played 3-rounds of golf between March 14 to 16 at the Palatka Golf Club in Palatka, Fla. He surpassed 15 other golfers in his flight, beating the 2nd place golfer by 8 strokes, to strut away with a $500 prize. Meeks, a co-planner for the Green Beret Charity Golf Tourney on May 16, says he looks forward to welcoming golfers to our annual fundraiser event. Above, Palatka Mens Golf Association President Keith Fleetwood presented Meeks with his 1st place framed trophy.

CRAIG Funeral Home • Crematory • Memorial Park

IBP

Koala Insulation of

RISE UP LEGAL

THANK YOU GOLF SPONSORS!

A special thanks to our current sponsors. We appreciate your generosity and support!

Primary sponsor Mr. ***Jim Owens*** of Rome, Ga., longtime supporter

Putting Contest and Hole sponsor ***Koala Insulation*** of Jacksonville

Putting Contest sponsor ***Meeks Enterprises LLC*** of St. Augustine

Longest Drive sponsor ***Installed Building Products (IBP)*** of Jacksonville

Hole sponsor ***Craig Funeral Home & Crematory*** of St. Augustine

Hole sponsor ***COL Reed Barrett,*** retired Army

Hole sponsor ***Rise Up Legal*** of Jacksonville Beach

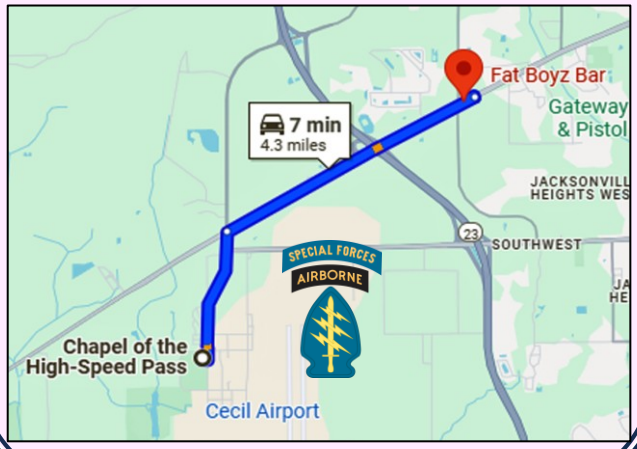
Hole sponsor ***Thor's Hammer***

Mulvihill Recognized for Service

On March 1, Chapter President Dewey Walker presented **Padraic "Pat" Mulvihill** with a special certificate of recognition and appreciation for his recent selection and honor of being awarded with the Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion from the Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation. Mulvihill, a longtime chapter member, was one of six honorees to receive the national award in 2025. Walker thanked Mulvihill for his years of service and contributions to Chapter 88. (See Mar/Apr 2025 edition of the First Coast Arrow for award story)

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*.



Its Back to Benning Again

On March 3, 2025, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth directed the Army to rename *Fort Moore* in Georgia, back to *Fort Benning*, but this time after a World War I veteran. Camp Benning was first named in 1918 after Brig. Gen. Henry L. Benning, a Confederacy general during the Civil War, then later became Fort Benning in 1922. During President Biden's administration, the Army was directed to change the name of all installations named after Civil War Confederate veterans.

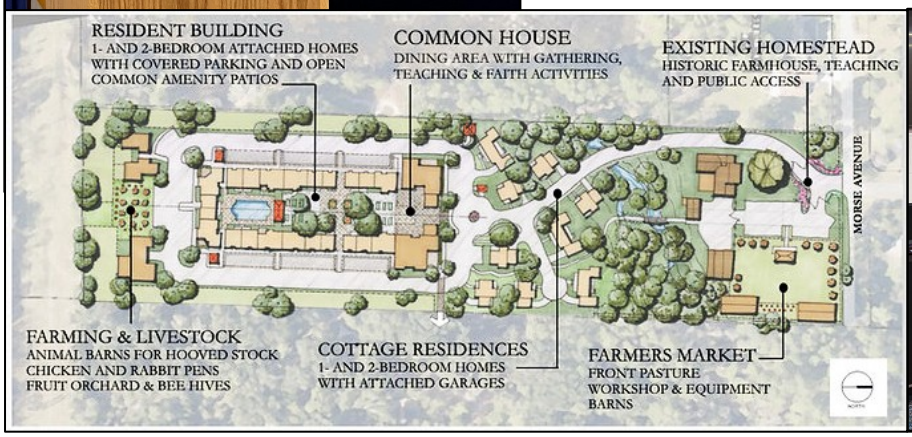
In 2023, the base near Columbus was changed to Fort Moore after Lt. Gen. Hal Moore and his wife Julie. The Moore's are well known from the book, "We Were Soldiers Once... and Young" by Joseph Galloway. Lt. Col. Moore is know for his combat battalion leadership during the Vietnam War, and Julia for her efforts to get the military to develop a more humane war casualty notification system for families. Secretary Hegseth reinstated the name Benning, his second such reversal directive after the renaming of Fort Bragg in February.

The base is now named after **Corporal Fred G. Benning**, an Infantryman who served in the Machine-Gun Company of the 16th Inf. Regt., 1st Div., American Expeditionary Force. The Army awarded Cpl. Benning the Distinguished Service Cross for his extraordinary heroism in action on Oct. 9, 1918, south of Exermont, France,. After the enemy killed his platoon commander and wounded two senior non-commissioned officers, Benning took command of the surviving 20 men of his platoon, and courageously led them through heavy hostile fire to their assigned objective in support of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. After returning home, Benning continued his selfless service and became mayor of Neligh, Nebraska. He died on May 17, 1974.

Hegseth's directive stated, "As we rename Fort Benning, I further direct the Army to honor the legacy of Lt. Gen. Harold (Hal) Moore's storied military service and Mrs. Julia (Julie) Moore's family and casualty notification advocacy in a manner that celebrates their significant contributions to the local community and the Army."

April Guest Speaker

The April 5 meeting featured **Joanne Hickox**, the founder and executive director of *Seniors on a Mission*. Hickox spoke on the recent work of developing a new senior living community in the west area of Jacksonville called G3 Village. The village is for age 55+ senior adults of moderate-income and provides safe living spaces to age gracefully in a residential community. G3 Village has an organic farm component to it for growing produce and raising animals for true farm-to-table healthier eating and community sustainment. Hickox and her team are fundraising to obtain land, build and offer rental units. For more information, contact Joanne at Info@SeniorsonaMission.org or (904) 509-4784. Thanks to member Willy Rothrock for arranging the April speaker. Below, President Dewey Walker presents Joanne Hickox with a chapter certificate of appreciation.



Life of a Warrior Series

Taking a Page from History

President Dewey Walker implemented a new program this year to help members learn more about the people in our chapter. The presenter for March was slipped to April, but it was well worth the wait. Meet retired **Sgt. Maj. John Henry Page**, who also runs the chapter's JROTC awards program. A native of Callahan, Florida, Page enlisted in the Florida National Guard with Co. C., 20th SFG(A) at Camp Blanding on Aug. 25, 1965. After initial Infantry and airborne training, PFC Page attended the SF qualification course at Fort Bragg, graduating in March 1967. Afterwards, Page was called to active duty for a year-long combat tour in Vietnam, serving as a rifleman and mortarman with the 2nd Bn., 502nd Inf. Regt., 101st Abn. Div., from March 1967 to March 1968. Then Page volunteered to serve another tour as a light weapons leader with 5th SFG at FOB-2 in Command and Control North with the Military Assistance Command until October 1968. Page earned the Combat Infantryman Badge along with the Vietnam Service Medal with 5 service stars, Vietnam Campaign Medal with 60 device, Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation with Palm, Vietnam Civil Actions Medal Unit Citation and a Meritorious Unit Commendation. From October 1968 to October 1984, Page served tours with Co. C and Co. A of the 3rd Bn., 20th SFG in multiple positions from radio team chief, to Intel. Sgt., to Detachment Ops Sgt., to Co. A Sgt. Maj. In 1984, MSG Page returned to active duty with the 82nd Abn. Div. as an operations and training NCO. Promoted to Sgt. Maj. in July 1986, he served as the senior ARNG enlisted advisor with the Western Command in Hawaii, then the senior operations and training NCO with First US Army, then served as the senior ARNG enlisted advisor to the Army's Special Operations Command (Fort Bragg) and U.S. Army Europe until returning home to Florida in July 1997. Then Page served 8 and half more years as the 3rd Bn. Operations NCO with the 20th SFG at Camp Blanding until retiring on Dec. 31, 2005. He accumulated over 40 years of active and Guard service, including 28 active years. He is married to Shelia and they reside in Callahan.

Chapter Presents Annual JROTC Awards to Area High Schools

John Page and ***Scott Eder*** lead our chapter efforts to support high school Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) programs in the greater Jacksonville area. Here are some of the recent award presentations.

Two Columbia High School JROTC cadets were recognized with Special Forces Association awards in Lake City on April 2. Chapter member Padraic Mulvihill presented the SFA Award of Excellence medal to Cadet ***Alberto Basalo IV,*** and graduating senior Cadet ***Kiersten Parson***, the Tiger Battalion commander, received a chapter college scholarship award. Both cadets were nominated by their senior Army instructor retired Lt. Col. Austin Akers based on their demonstrated individual scholastic excellence, military proficiency, leadership and service to the battalion. Pictured right, Mulvihill reads the certificate of achievement as Basalo holds his Award of Excellence medal. Cadets Parson and Basalo beam wide smiles during a round of applauses.

Photos courtesy of Grace Montemor Raggins.

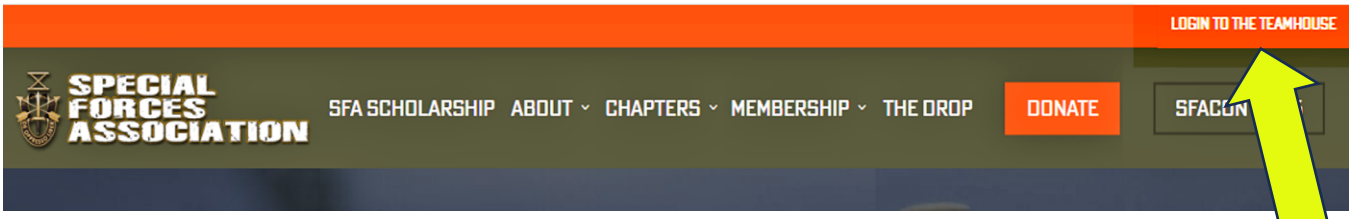
Pictured below left, Executive Vice President Steve Muskett represented the chapter on April 3 for the presentation of a scholarship award to Cadet Lt. Col. ***Trinity Wanamaker*** at Saint Augustine High School. Wanamaker, a graduating senior, was a four-year JROTC member and finished as the cadet commander of the Jacket Battalion. Wanamaker will attend Southeastern University in Jacksonville and plans to pursue an aviation management degree. She will be joining the Air Force ROTC program and has a dream of becoming a pilot. Cadet ***Dean Harrison*** received the SFA Award of Excellence.

Below right, chapter member John Arnold honored two JROTC cadets on April 4 at William Raines High School in Jacksonville. Arnold presented Cadet Capt. ***Justin Soto***, left, with the SFA Award of Excellence, and a $500 chapter scholarship to graduating Cadet ***Gabriel Butler***. Congratulations to all of these outstanding young leaders.

More JROTC presentations coming next FCA edition

SFA Opens 2025 Scholarships

SFA Member: Do you have a dependent child or grandchild heading to college? Applications for the Special Forces Association scholarship program will be accepted between June 1 to 30. Please review the SFA scholarship requirements and instructions on the SFA website and start working on your application now. The June 30 deadline will be here soon!



Help Needed! Update Your Member Profile and Personal Data

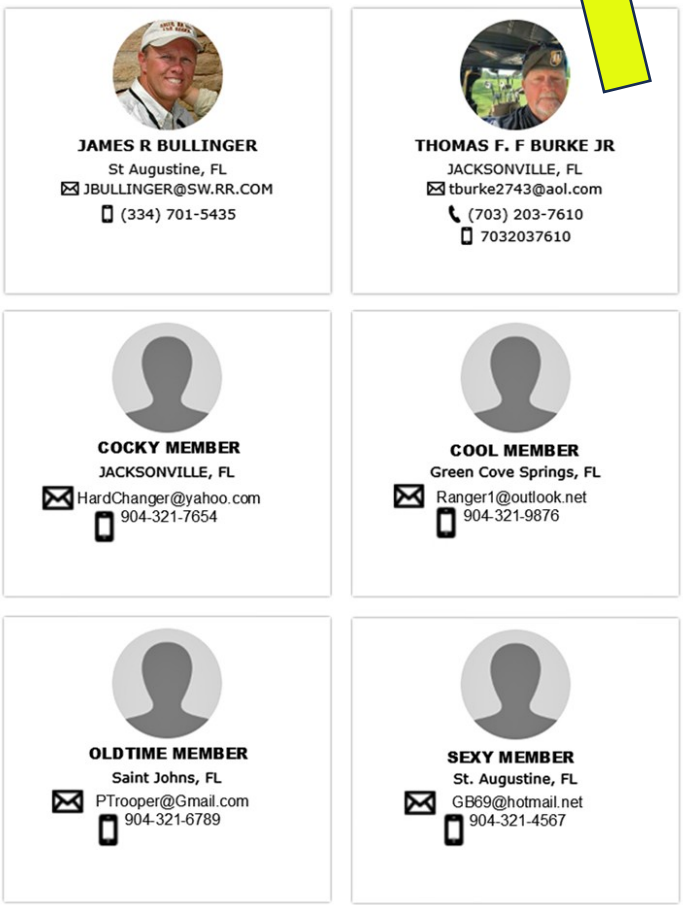
Don't Ghost Your Family, Buddies and the SF Community.

There are 83 members associated with Chapter 88 listed in the Teamhouse's Member Directory webpage on the Special Forces Association website. Of our listed members, only 7 profiles have a photograph and contain some biographical data. Unfortunately, the vast majority of our member profiles have limited, or out of date, or no personal contact methods (phone, text or email) or any personal military service or biographical information.

The Member Directory serves as a resource to help the National Headquarters, your Chapter and your family and friends to know you and to honor you; especially when you make your last jump from this life. On average, about 30 SFA members die every month. Recently Chapter 88 lost 3 members – McRae, Cunningham and Hebron – each were listed on the SFA directory; however, they had no personal information in their profiles. As a result, the Chapter had great difficulty in assisting the families with writing quality service obituaries for publication.

From the Special Forces Association homepage, log into the **Teamhouse** in the upper right corner. Once you reach the teamhouse homepage, click on the **Member Directory** tab. When you are in the directory, scroll to the **Search Criteria** box and click on the **Chapter** menu tab to find the "**Florida**" folder and then click on the **Ch. 88 The Green Beret NE Florida Ch (Jacksonville)** bar; then hit or press the "**Search**" button. A map will appear with chapter member profile listings just below the map. There will be 4 pages of Chapter 88 members, find your profile, click on it, then edit your content and save it.

To learn more on how to edit your profile, click on the **Training** tab on the Teamhouse menu bar. There is a step-by-step guide on changing any aspect of your Profile on the Teamhouse Overview webpage. There is a training video and downloadable reference documents. You can also set up the Teamhouse app on a computer device or on a mobile smart phone. If you need help, you can always call into the SFA headquarters and request assistance at (910) 485-5433.



Above, an example of how the Membership Directory page looks for Chapter 88. Only a small number of chapter members have edited their personal profiles with some quality information, adding current contact methods, and uploading a photo. For SFA members looking for old friends or a chapter to be affiliated with, the Directory helps to connect people. You can list a home phone (landline), a cell phone number and an email address. Please take about an hour and update your profile. Don't be a faceless head. Thank you!.

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION

Serves as the Voice for the Special Forces Community, Perpetuates the Traditions and Brotherhood; Advances the Public Image, and Promotes the General Welfare of the Soldiers, Families and Community.

Courtesy Photo by Debra Kilpatrick, Professional Photographer, Tampa

3rd Bn, 20th SFG(A) Rallies for Reunion

Past and present members of the 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group rallied for their annual reunion at the American Legion Post 26 in Plant City, Florida on Saturday, March 29. Over a hundred alumni came together for food, beverage and fellowship. Green berets ***Chris Bell*** and ***Darryl Schumacher*** served as reunion hosts, planning and executing the gathering, which included several Chapter 88 members in attendance. Pictured above are 69 bad-ass fighting Soldiers from the sky, fearless men you would not want to run into in a dark jungle at night. Can you spot the Chapter 88 members?

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SPECIAL FORCES

Welcome New Chapter Members

Brian Blauch

Milton Mandell

Happy Birthday

EST. 1775

250

U.S. ARMY

THIS WE'LL DEFEND

The United States Army was established on **June 14, 1775.**

Army Strong!

CARRY FORWARD 5K

Save the Date!

Saturday, Nov. 8, 2025

Wounded Warrior Project

Jacksonville National Headquarters, FL

SFA Chapter 88 is again sending a squad to join in this year's **Carry Forward 5K** Run/Hike fundraiser in November.

A Great Event for a Worthy Cause

More information coming in the July/August Newsletter.

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.*

MAY 3 -- JUN 7 -- No JULY

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 Defense. If you have news, suggestions or ideas you think would be useful, email us at jbullinger@sw.rr.com.
SFA Chapter 88, P.O. Box 7452, Jacksonville, FL 32238

Newsletter Submission Deadlines 2025

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