



James McLanahan
President SFA Ch. 78

Normandy and American Patriotism

I wish I could have taken my grandparents to Normandy. They would have loved it immediately.

At home, we are surrounded by noise about America: her flaws, her failures, and the mistakes we have made. Some of that criticism is fair. I carry my own feelings about policy decisions in Afghanistan that still trouble me. But Normandy reminded me that the scars

of a nation do not erase its greatness.

Tom Turney and I first talked about going while discussing places to visit. He found [Walk Among Heroes](#), Jeff Wells' nonprofit that brings World War II veterans and their families back to the battlefields and monuments of Europe. What we found there was more than history. It was reverence.

Everywhere we went, American flags flew. People stopped our World War II veterans to shake their hands, take photos, ask for autographs, or simply say thank you. The moment I will never forget was watching French schoolchildren line up to kiss and thank 102-year-old Jack Boeki, a veteran who escaped the Nazis, was aided by the French Resistance, joined the U.S. Army, and returned at Utah Beach.

The people of Normandy have not forgotten. They remember occupation. They remember liberation. They remember what young Americans did on beaches like Omaha and cliffs like Pointe du Hoc.

I wish every American could see that gratitude. We would come home quieter, prouder, and more grateful for the country we inherited and for the ones who fought in that great and terrible conflict to save the world. ❖

De Oppresso Liber,

James McLanahan

President, SFA Chapter 78



Check out our short video entitled "2026 Valor Luncheon with Dick Thompson" about our recent Valor Luncheon. If you missed the event, this will give you a taste what it was like. Join us next year! You can view it on our YouTube channel @SFAchapter78 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J1ApK-4z6Os>).



SFA Chapter 78 Monthly Meeting

July 18, 2026

Breakfast – 0800 • Meeting – 0830

Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos
The Pub at Fiddlers Green
4745 Yorktown Ave Bldg 19,
Los Alamitos, CA 90720-5176

Please send RSVP by Monday, July 13 to
VP Don Deatherage @ drdeathca@gmail.com

Next month—August 15, 2026

Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos
The Pub at Fiddlers Green

2026 Meeting Schedule

August 15 • September 19
October 17 • November 21
December (to be announced)