

# From the President | August 2026



James McLanahan  
President SFA Ch. 78

## A Place at the Table

I was lucky that a friend suggested I join the SFA. I had no plans of ever going to meetings for Ex-Special Forces guys. It seemed to me that after the Army gave me my 214, there was nothing more to do, and I would just be reliving my glory days. I also mistakenly thought it was just a drinking club, and I had already drunk enough for two lifetimes. My buddy let me know I was wrong, and just meeting the guys at the chapter was probably worth the price of admission.

Much to my surprise (I am sometimes a little stubborn and can be a slow learner because of it), he was right. My friend doesn't usually speak up unless he is pretty sure he's right. But like I said, slow learner. The first meeting I went to, I was expecting to get the new guy treatment and have to spend the next few months proving myself, as I had always had to do over the course of my career. I was wrong about that one too. Instead of having to earn a place at the table, one had been prepared for me. And I was welcomed with open arms by legends from our community who were so humble that they had questions for me about my war and how it had differed from theirs. They offered me to join them in Chapter endeavors, and I quickly discovered that even though the mission the Army gave me had ended, I could choose to accept another one: steward the profession I had loved. We could help Green Berets from the past, present, and future. And together we can get a lot done. Our chapter does tend to punch a bit above its weight, but many Chapters across the country do. I am glad to be a part of it. I feel like I get a lot more than I give.

Before I forget, the one who recommended I join the SFA was MSG (Retired) Earl Plumlee, Medal of Honor. He did the chapter a huge favor the first time we ran the luncheon, and I know his contribution was felt by the audience. Not everyone has a friend telling them to visit their local chapter, and oh, by the way, how about you pick up a shovel? We have work to do.

To the Green Berets who are currently serving and who are recently retired, you should know you have a place at the table, and if you want, work to do. We will be here when you're ready. ♦

*De Oppresso Liber,*  
James McLanahan  
President, SFA Chapter 78



New Chapter member James McLanahan was welcomed in December 2019 by then-Chapter President John Stryker Meyer.



## SFA Chapter 78 Monthly Meeting

### August 15, 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, August 10 to  
VP Don Deatherage @ [drdeathca@gmail.com](mailto:drdeathca@gmail.com)

### Next month—September 19, 2026

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

## 2026 Meeting Schedule

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