

From the President | December 2024



Aaron Brandenburg
President SFA Ch. 78

The Brotherhood of the Green Berets is more than just a slogan; it is a living legacy, woven through generations of Special Forces soldiers and their families. This bond, forged in the fires of intense training, deployments, and shared sacrifice, transcends time and individual experiences. It is a community built on the values of duty, honor, and commitment to one another, a bond that extends far beyond the battlefield. The wives of the Green Berets, often the unsung heroes, share in this journey in profound and meaningful

ways. For them, it's not just about supporting their husbands in their missions; it's about raising families, sharing in life's milestones, and forging deep friendships with other "team wives" who understand the unique challenges of life in the Special Forces.

Our wives often find ourselves living in a parallel world. The rhythm of life is punctuated by long deployments, uncertain homecomings, and the constant ebb and flow of military assignments. These challenges are not easily understood by those outside of the community, but within it, there is a sense of camaraderie and understanding that binds us together. Our wives raised our children side by side, not just as neighbors but as sisters in arms. They supported one another through births, birthdays, graduations, and sometimes grief. In those moments, they were more than just spouses—They were a community, a family. The challenges that they faced only made their bonds stronger, and the shared experiences of raising children in this environment fostered a unique sense of solidarity and trust. They understood each other's fears and joys in a way that only fellow military spouses can.

As GB's, we live lives filled with challenges that are hard for most people to imagine. Special Forces soldiers are trained to do things most will never have to do—working in the most hostile environments, engaging in high-risk missions, and enduring physical and emotional hardships that most of the world will never fully understand. But behind every Green Beret is a support system, a partner who carries the weight of the family's stability in their absence, who provides strength and resilience when their soldiers are away. Our wives knew that their role was as essential to the success of the mission as was our roles in combat. It's a bond that was not always visible but always present—one that helped us go into dangerous situations with confidence, knowing that our families were being cared for and supported.

When we come together, especially in a setting like the Global Gathering of Green Berets, that sense of camaraderie and shared experiences becomes even more profound. This gathering, hosted aboard the Carnival ship Paradise, was an extraordinary event that allowed us to connect not just as individuals, but as a collective family. It was an opportunity to come together, celebrate our shared history, and honor the sacrifices that have been made by so many over the years. For both young and seasoned families, it was a chance to create lasting memories and reaffirm the bonds that tie us all together.

The Global Gathering was not just an event; it was a celebration of what it means to be part of this incredible community. As we gathered on the ship, there was a profound sense of joy and excitement. For the newer generations of GB's, it was an opportunity to learn from those who had walked this path before them, to hear stories of sacrifice, resilience, and perseverance. For those of us who had been part of this community for many years, it was a chance to reconnect with old friends and forge new relationships with others who shared our experiences.

One of the most powerful aspects of this gathering was the way it brought together people from all walks of life and from all corners of the Special Forces community. The Global Gathering of Green Berets served as a powerful bridge between generations, bringing together both young families and weathered veterans to share experiences, wisdom, and camaraderie. By uniting soldiers and their families across different eras, the event fostered a sense of continuity and solidarity, ensuring that the legacy of the Green Berets remains strong for years to come. May it have been watching a comedy show or sitting on the Lido deck with old friends, we were all part of something bigger than ourselves. The event was a reminder that the Special Forces family extends far beyond the soldiers who wear the Green Beret. It includes our wives, children, and all those who support and sustain us.

A heartfelt thank you is due to the organizations and individuals who made this unique experience possible, namely Kevin Harry, Pete Tingstrom, Bonnie and Carlie, SFA and SFLI and lastly, a heartfelt thank you to the Carnival Cruise line and the staff. Of course, this event would not have been possible without the efforts of the countless volunteers and organizers who worked behind the scenes. Their tireless dedication to ensuring that every detail was perfect helped make the Global Gathering of Green Berets an unforgettable experience for all involved. From coordinating travel and accommodations to organizing activities and events, the team behind the gathering showed an extraordinary level of care and attention to detail.

The Global Gathering of Green Berets was more than just a convention; it was a celebration of our shared experiences, our shared values, and the unbreakable bonds that connect us. It was a reminder that the Special Forces community is not just a military unit affiliation—it is a family, and this family spans generations. It is a brotherhood that continues to thrive and grow, and an enduring testament to the strength, resilience, and dedication of those who serve, and those who support them.

In the end, the SFCON 2024 Gathering of the Green Berets was an enormous success and has raised the bar for future conventions to come. ❖

DOL

Aaron Brandenburg,

President Special Forces Association Chapter 78