

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION

CONVENTION

SOP



SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CONVENTION SOP

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ARTICLE I

PURPOSE OF CONVENTION

1. To afford the Special Forces Association membership an opportunity to participate in an annual convention sponsored and hosted by an active chapter and conducted in accordance with the Article XI of the Constitution.
2. To afford all Chapter Officers or their designated representatives an opportunity to discuss both old and new business related to the Special Forces Association with the National Board of Officers.
3. To provide the general membership the opportunity to meet the National Board of Officers.
4. To provide a place for camaraderie within the Special Forces Association.

ARTICLE II

GENERAL

1. The basis of this document is to establish requirements and guidelines to be utilized by all chapters hosting the Special Forces Association conventions.
2. The Special Forces Association National Convention shall be held normally between June 1st and August 15th each year.
3. The Special Forces Association National Convention host chapter and site may be designated up to three years in advance.
4. The Special Forces Association National Convention will return to Fayetteville/Ft. Bragg area every fourth year.
5. As an exception, if a chapter submits a very strong bid to host a convention, the return to Fayetteville/Ft. Bragg every fourth year can be waived by the national board of officers.
6. The Special Forces Association National Convention may be held in an area two years consecutively; however, this would be an exception to the general rule of a different location each year and requires approval from the national board of officers.
7. Registrations fees paid for all or specific events should be inclusive of all costs associated with a specific event. For example, when a member pays for the hospitality room, the amount charged should include all benefits of the event.
8. Eligibility to attend Conventions is limited to current members of the Special Forces Association, their guests, active duty Special Forces soldiers, and special guests invited by the host chapter or

National Headquarters.

Although difficult for a chapter to verify unequivocally membership status, the individual registering must provide a membership number on the application. The host chapter will make every reasonable effort to screen attendees.

9. Conventions should not be a moneymaking operation. The goal should be to break even. By keeping costs down it will enable more members to attend. Members have the right to attend and should not be precluded from attending due to high registration costs.

ARTICLE III

CONVENTION BIDS

1. Chapters bidding to host the Special Forces Association National Convention must meet the following requirements:

a. Have permanent chapter status as outlined in the Special Forces Constitution, Article IX (Chapters).

b. The aspirant chapter must have sufficient funds on hand to defray initial costs and expenses of hosting the convention. (Suggested minimum funds of \$5,000.00).

c. Prepare a brief, but explicit bid in writing and present it to the Special Forces Association National board of officers prior to, but not later than, the first day of the national convention in progress. It is recommended that bids be submitted 90 days prior to the convention so that the National officers may determine if the bid meets all requirements for presentation to the membership.

d. A cost analysis must be submitted with the convention bid and should include all expected expenditures. (Example): Travel expenses for special guests (Catherine Bank or other designated VIP guest as appropriate), cost of meals per person estimated number of attendees, cost of entertainment per event, cost of transportation to events, costs for picnic, banquet, reception and hospitality rooms per person number of attendees. We recommend that a minimum figure of 800 attendees be used in estimating the number of attendees. These cost figures give you the cost of tickets per person.

2. Bids submitted by chapters meeting the criteria as outlined above will be acted upon in accordance with the Special Forces Association Constitution, Article IX, section IV, sub-paragraph I and the convention SOP.

3. The chapter selected to host the Special Forces Association National Convention will be informed at the convention two years prior to. Selection will be determined by vote at that convention. This decision will be confirmed in writing to the selected chapter by the national president.

4. The announcement of the chapter selected will be made at the last business meeting of the convention in progress.

5. Chapters desiring to host the Special Forces Association national convention may assist their efforts

with a display booth containing, but not limited to, a copy of the convention written bid, literature, and pictures.

The display booth will be in accordance and coordination with the host chapter of the convention in progress.

6. Net profits derived from the Special Forces Association National Convention will be shared equally, a 50/50 split, with the Special Forces Association national headquarters and the host chapter. Disbursements of this split will be distributed within ninety (90) days (or sooner) of convention termination and reported by National to the membership in the Drop and be direct message to the Chapter Presidents.

ARTICLE IV

CONVENTION HOST REQUIREMENTS

1. The host chapter will establish or appoint a convention chairman, a convention treasurer, and such other committees needed to insure a successful convention. The name of these persons shall be made known to National with contact numbers and location during Convention.

a. The Convention chairman and treasurer will establish a convention fund account at a local banking firm under the name: SFA Convention fund XXXX. The fund will be established in such a manner that checks drawn upon the account would necessitate two signatures. This account will be maintained separate from all other Chapter accounts.

b. The SFA Convention fund account will be open to perusal by the SFA treasurer or other National officers appointed by the president.

c. The convention chairman is responsible for liaison coordination to National Headquarters as to the extent and update of activities planned.

d. Upon request, the convention chairman may use the assistance of National Headquarters and their assets, such as the Drop for publication of announcements, to promote the convention.

2. The convention will be a three to five day program, not to include registration and departure dates.

a. The convention agenda must bring in key speakers or guests to present presentations that will benefit and educate our active duty and retirees. (i.e. OASIS, VA, Active Commanders, etc)

b. The host chapter will request in writing through National one ODA from Special Forces Command for Faces of SF. *NOTE: Availability dependent on OPTEMPO.

3. The host chapter will furnish an agenda broken down into days and time of each day for each occurrence. (See Appendix I an II for examples).

4. The host chapter will publish a quarterly newsletter to be sent to National Headquarters for insertion into the Drop giving reports on the progress and/or any changes concerning the upcoming convention.

(Coordinate with the Drop coordinator on information and deadlines).

5. The host chapter will have a packet for each SFA conventioneer upon arrival. The packet will contain nametag, meal tickets, beverage tickets (there should be no ticket sales if registration contains hospitality room fees), strip maps, schedule of events, or any other items thought to be necessary by the host chapter.

6. The host chapter registration committee should be organized to speed up the flow of arriving conventioners. It is recommended that all packets be in alphabetical order in separate boxes with several booths for quick processing.

7. The host chapter will provide a bulletin board to be prominently located and its location publicized (i.e. in lobby with registration and hospitality room). The boards' main function will be to notify the membership of any changes to convention agenda and/or format and for posting of emergency messages. Personal messages may be posted on a space available basis.

8. The host chapter is responsible to provide the Association with a room suitable for holding meetings for approximately twelve persons and for the secure storage of Association property. Coordination of the use and security of this room will be coordinated through the Association Secretary/Administrator and host Chapter.

9. The host chapter will coordinate adequate rooms for the Special Forces Association Board of Officers and Administrator.

ARTICLE V

CONVENTION ADMINISTRATION

1. A checklist to insure against omission of details and maintaining continuity should be the first priority of the host chapter. A suggested checklist is Appendix III.

2. A list of facilities/activities and programs such as campgrounds, parks, pools, public facilities for families, various modes and methods of transportation, or any other items that may be of interest to families of conventioners. An approximate price list should be included.

3. Every convention should have its theme. The theme should herald the plans of the organization or Association. A theme also has a tendency to focus the entire workings of the convention toward that one goal for that year.

4. The convention theme will dictate the type of Guest Speaker (if appropriate) to be requested for the main banquet. A limit of one guest speaker or briefer should be the procedure or norm, although other guest speakers could be invited to attend workshops. Nothing can turn off a banquet crowd quicker than a long-winded speaker. The last night of the convention should be devoted to serious camaraderie and everyone should have a good time. Hospitality room/open bar for social hour before and after banquet shall be coordinated.

5. Upon receipt of registration monies, a letter of acknowledgement will be sent to the member stating that his registration fees have been received and a convention packet will be given on the day of arrival.
6. Name tags should be durable, readable at a distance, in good taste, and if possible, contain the convention theme.
7. The host chapter will insure enough time has been allotted to conduct the business of the Association during the time of the convention.
8. The master of ceremonies at any convention is a serious assignment. It is highly recommended that a rehearsal be conducted between the MC and the color guard to insure proper procedures and protocol are followed without complications. Activities should include:
 - a. Proper placement of flags is a must; always check and know it is correct,
 - b. Posting of Colors,
 - c. Playing of National Anthem,
 - d. Moment of silence for fallen comrades,
 - e. Playing of Ballad of Green Beret at end of Banquet, and
 - f. Retirement of Colors.
 - g. POW/MIA—Missing Man Table (review for proper display).

ARTICLE VI

VENDORS CONCESSIONS

1. The following guidelines are established pertaining to vendors attending Special Forces Association Conventions.
 - a. The Host Chapter should require that each vendor provide certain information to them prior to the scheduled convention date. Minimum requirements are listed below:
 - (1) What products will they be selling?
 - (2) What are their prices?
 - (3) Have they operated a booth at a prior Special Forces Association Convention?
 - (4) Who manufactures/produces the items for sale?

(5) Are the items in good taste and not inflammatory against the Association, Special Forces or the Government?

b. The cost for vendor tables is determined by the Host Chapter. Host chapters should consider a discount price, or no cost, for non-profit vendors such as SFA Chapters, and the JFKSWC/SF Museum. (Coordinate with Museum to insure adequate numbers of tables are allocated). Host Chapters should require vendors to make full payment 30 days in advance of the convention. Payments must be made by cashier's check, money order or certified check. If a Host Chapter elects to accept a partial payment in advance the balance of the payment must be made in cash, (late payments by check have been returned unpaid.) Indicate date the vendor fees become non-refundable.

c. Vendor space availability is determined by the Host Chapter,

d. Although security may be provided by the hotel, the responsibility for security of vendor items falls to the individual vendor.

e. Chapters should initiate a contract with each vendor and all requirements shall be addressed including the responsibility for security,

f. National will maintain an information file on all vendors that participate in National conventions. However, the information held in these files must be provided by the Host Chapters. This file will be provided to Host or Bidding chapters upon requests.

2. Vendors shall not be taken for granted. It would be wise to observe for private causes or hidden agendas. Radical organizations may try to insinuate that their appearance at the convention means Association support of their cause.

3. All vendors will be furnished guidelines on setting up their tables based on Host Hotel criteria. Vendors in the past have caused damage to hotel property, i.e., hanging items on the walls, and posting signs on the walls. The Host Chapter has paid for this damage in the past. Non-compliance with the guidelines will result in forfeiture of both table space and table payments.

ARTICLE VII

RAFFLES

1. The chairman of the Memorial Building Fund is the coordinator for the annual raffle held in conjunction with the Annual convention. Tickets along with instructions are normally mailed to each member approximately three to four months prior to the convention.

2. Chapters to include the Host Chapter may conduct their own raffle/drawing with certain restraints. Sales can only take place at a vendor table or a Chapter sales table. Under no circumstance will persons walk around the hospitality room or other scheduled events soliciting.

3. All raffle ticket drawings will be conducted during the general membership meeting. Members need not be present to win for the Memorial Building Fund raffle.

ARTICLE VIII

EMERGENCY MEDICAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The following basic medical considerations should be planned:

a. As the Association grows older, so does the membership as a whole. A large number of senior members have health problems, i.e., heart and multiple serious conditions.

b. The convention is planned to have fun and enjoy old friendships with talk of the old days. In all the excitement, and with alcohol and high weather heat, the stage is set for a potential tragedy.

c. National recommends the following in planning:

(1) Request that registration forms ask for any special health needs for which the host chapter should be aware.

(2) Establish with the host hotel staff the need for assistance. All well-established hotels have medical plans, doctors and the phone numbers of local EMS and hospitals. These plans should be visibly posted, as well as, included in registration packet.

(3) At any planned picnics or parachute jumps arrange for an ambulance and EMT personnel.

(4) At the beginning of the convention, survey personnel attending for Doctors, PA's, and Medics who in time of emergency could be of assistance.

(5) All venues must be handicap accessible.

d. Association conventions have been growing with the times. We must have a plan to carry out the responsibilities of emergency medical assistance.

ARTICLE IX

AFTER ACTION REPORT

1. An after action report must be submitted to National Headquarters within 90 days of convention termination. No less than three copies of the report must be submitted.

2. Host Chapters of upcoming conventions may apply in writing to National Headquarters for a copy of an after action report to be utilized in convention planning.

3. A convention checklist is outlined in Appendix III along with footnotes. It is an invaluable aid in the preparation of the After Action Report.
4. Appendix IV contains a sample copy of an After Action Report to include minimum information, which must be contained therein.

ARTICLE X

GUESTS

There are two categories of guests that will be invited to the Special Forces convention: Guest speakers and Guest(s) of honor.

a. Guest Speaker: The utilization of a guest speaker is optional and up to the discretion of the Host Chapter. The convention normally will pay all expenses. See Article V (Convention Administration) for further policy.

b. Guest(s) of Honor:

(1) Commanding General of both Special Forces Command and J.F.K. Special Warfare Center and Schools. They are always invited to attend. Normally they provide their own transportation. Convention will pay for one night hotel room and banquet.

(2) Medal of Honor recipients, local dignitaries or persons that have distinguished themselves in various career fields may be invited at the discretion of Host Chapters. Normally the Convention will pay only for banquet costs of these guests.

(3) Honorary Colonel, Honorary Warrant Officer, and Honorary Command Sergeant Major of the 1st Special Forces Regiment. Normally, these guests pay their own way (travel, hotel, and registration).

c. The invitation to invite guests should be held to a minimum. Payment of expenses of these guests if significant will raise the cost of membership registration and may preclude some members from attending. Host Chapters must remember that persons attending from other chapters have both travel and hotel expenses to deal with.

Ronnie A. McCan
President
Special Forces Association

Melvin Smith
Secretary
Special Forces Association

APPENDIX I

SAMPLE CONVENTION AGENDA

SUNDAY	0800- 1000-2200	Early Bird Arrival Hospitality Room
MONDAY	0800-1800 0900-1100 0900-2400	Registration Chapter President/Rep and National Meeting Hospitality Room
TUESDAY	0800-1800 0730-0830 1300-1320 1330-1530 0900-2000 1730-1930 2000-2400 2000-2400	Registration Breakfast (cash basis) Transportation to Event Transportation Return to Hotel Hospitality Room Dinner (cash basis) Reception Cocktails/Dancing Clubroom Hospitality Room
WEDNESDAY	0730-0900 1100-1130 1200-1600 1600-1630 0900-2400	Breakfast (cash basis) Transportation to Picnic Picnic Transportation to Hotel Hospitality Room
THURSDAY	0730-0845 0730-1230 0730-1230 0900-1100 1230-1330 1330-1600 1000-1600 1800-1900 1900-2130 2130-0130	Breakfast (cash basis) Transportation and Golf Tournament Non-golfers, open time General Membership meeting Lunch (cash Basis) Open time Hospitality Room Cocktails, Banquet Room Banquet Cocktails and dancing to live band
FRIDAY	0700-1130	Hospitality Room and Farewell Breakfast

Notes:

1. Meetings, both Chapter Presidents and National Board of Officers and the General Membership meeting, will be scheduled in the morning hours (Coordinate times with National).
2. A final agenda will be submitted to National for approval before being published. Changes will be coordinated with National. Changes made during the Convention will be prominently displayed.

APPENDIX II

BANQUET AGENDA

1. Special interest should be emphasized on this gala affair; needs no explanation.
2. Seating at head table should be limited to the Host Chapter President and Lady, Guest Speaker and Lady, National President and Lady (both Presidents and Ladies if during election year), and Convention Chairman and Lady.
3. National Officers, Ladies and their guest should be seated at a table(s) adjacent to the head table. National will provide the host chapter with the number individuals to be seated with the National Board of Officers.
4. Other invited guests to be recognized, should be at tables adjacent to the head table. The Master of Ceremony should have a list of all VIP's, MOH recipients, Honorary Colonel, Honorary Warrant and Sergeant Major of the Regiment, Special Forces NCO and Soldier of the Year and others for recognition. National may assist in identifying guest to be recognized.

APPENDIX III

CONVENTION CHECKLIST

1. ACCOMMODATIONS: Contact the hotel convention manager to establish a mutual agreement and to secure a **written confirmation** regarding the following:

- a. Total number of guest rooms required.
- b. Official dates of the convention.
- c. Number arriving prior to official opening.
- d. Peak day or evening.
- e. Date when members will start checking out.
- f. Date majority of group will depart.
- g. How will reservations be handled?
- h. Direct to hotel.

(1) Through convention bureau.

(2) Through Association sponsoring chapter.

- i. Number of courtesy rooms for Officers, speakers, special guests, and hospitality room.
- j. Sponsoring chapter provide the Association Administrator with registration form, reservation information and other necessary information for inclusion in the Drop magazine no later than 10 May.
- k. Registration packets provided by the sponsoring chapter convention registration committee.

2. HOTEL FUNCTION ROOMS: Provide the hotel staff a tentative day-by-day, time program and room requirements with estimate attendance.

3. MEETING REGISTRATION:

- a. Day-by-day program. Time, estimated attendance, each meeting and starting activity and closing.
- b. Room assignment.
- c. How to set up. Chairs and special tables.
- d. Speaker's table-for how many, floor level or raised.
- e. Reading stand, light and gavel.

- f. P.A. system. Number and type of microphones.
- g. Decoration, flags, banners or displays.
- h. National Anthem. Band or tape.
- i. Drinking water, coffee, etc. for speakers and members.
- j. Hotel should be able to provide complimentary coffee and beverages for Chapter presidents meeting.
- k. Ventilation, heat or air conditioning.
- l. Blackboards, easels, bulletin boards, etc.
- m. Projectors, movies, slides, screens, cameras, and operators.
- n. Messages, emergency calls; how will they be handled and who has responsibility?

4. FOOD FUNCTION:

- a. Arrange with hotel staff and caterer well in advance.
- b. Meals, attendance, time and location.
- c. Reception, attendance, time and location.
- d. Arrange for both wine and wine glasses to be placed on table for toasting.
- e. Menus and price. Arrange in advance of convention. Written confirmation.
- f. Guarantee on number attending made by the convention committee.
- g. Head table (if desired). Number of persons with name cards. Requirements for speakers, mikes, podium, flags, etc.
- h. Cocktail hour. Waiters, waitresses, bartenders, cash bar, etc.
- i. Entertainment? band, disc jockey, etc.

(1) Entertainment should not interfere with the ceremonies and meal during the banquet.

(2) Few people stay for entertainment or band (consider cost vs. benefit). Most are interested saying their farewells as they are leaving in the morning.

5. ENTERTAINMENT:

- a. For what occasion, room, date and time.
- b. Music, band or disc jockey. Phone numbers and names.
- c. Rehearsal, date time, place.
- d. Spotlights, amplifiers, P.A.

6. REGISTRATION:

- a. Prior to convention arrange with hotel staff.
- b. Number of stations at desk, packets prepared alphabetically.
- c. Personnel, dates and times.
- d. Equipment needed. Typewriters, computers, etc.
- e. Cash box available at desk, cashier, etc.
- f. All forms available on station (include membership forms).
- g. Rehearsals as necessary.
- h. Information booth. Number of personnel.
- i. Posters or blackboard for directions to Hospitality room, opening time, closing time, etc.
- j. Handling of monies, checks, etc. Committee person responsible.
- k. Badges, who is responsible, define duties and responsibilities.

7. SPEAKERS:

- a. Invitations if speakers are desired. Convention chairman & National Headquarters.
- b. Review speakers' needs. Back up speaker.
- c. Sponsor for speaker. Have all information available; time of arrival, room number, number of persons in party, time of departure, inspection of necessary equipment, transportation, schedule, etc.
- d. Arrange for briefing.

8. MISCELLANEOUS:

- a. Decorations:

(1) Flags, banners, flowers, and other decoration. Comply with fire code. When to be placed and removed.

(2) Number of committee members.

b. Entertainment:

(1) Committee assigned duties and responsibilities.

(2) Planned.

(3) Confirm all details in writing, rehearsals, stage, lights, amplifiers, programs, master of ceremonies.

(4) Tours arranged brochures available, sign up tables, etc.

c. Guests:

(1) Dignitaries invited and acceptances received.

(2) Committee sponsors prepared for each guest.

(3) Briefed on escort duties.

(4) Transportation and lodging confirmed.

d. Publicity:

(1) Committees formed duties and responsibilities.

(2) Coordinate with National Vice-President for releases to press, TV, etc.

(3) Photographer assigned for banquet, General Membership meeting, luncheon, etc.

e. Sign checklist:

(1) Registration, Hospitality Room, Information, Membership Meeting, Chapter Presidents/Reps and National Officers meeting, No smoking, Special Events, etc. Who will make signs.

(2) Sign, design and cost.

(3) Committee assigned.

f. Programs and menus:

(1) Where printed and price.

(2) Proof copy.

(3) Delivery date and to whom.

(4) How to be distributed.

g. Convenience:

(1) Baby sitters.

(2) Movies.

(3) Beauty shops and hairdressers.

(4) Swimming pools.

h. Emergency:

(1) Medical.

(2) Red Cross.

(3) Telephone numbers.

APPENDIX IV
COMMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION

The following are comments made by members after previous conventions. These are provided for consideration and should not be construed as requirements placed on host chapters.

- a. Wine glasses at the banquet with the convention logo has become a tradition. Most are disappointed when they are not given.
- b. More open seating at banquet. In general, people decide whom they want to sit with (those they only get to see once a year) that means not necessarily sitting with their chapter.
- c. Coordinate with a photographer to take individual, couple or group picture at the banquet. This should be at no expense to the chapter. Individuals could purchase directly from the photographer.
- d. Coordinate with hotel to issue rooms to attendees in proximity to convention activities on the hotel premises.
- e. Hospitality room:
 - (1) If a fee is included for the hospitality as part of the convention registration fee, there should be no charges for drink, snacks, etc. provided in the hospitality room (what is the fee for if you have to pay \$4.00 per drink).
 - (2) Coffee and donuts each morning (before the bar opens).
 - (3) Keep in same location throughout convention.

APPENDIX V

SAMPLE CONVENTION AFTER ACTION REPORT

SUBJECT: After Action Report, Convention XXXX (Location: (name of city and state), (dates

TO:

Special Forces Association
Attn: President
PO Box 41436
Fayetteville, NC 28309-1436

FROM: Chapter ____
Special Forces Association.

1. TASK:

a. Proposal submitted on (date) and accepted by the Special Forces Association National Board of Officers for consideration at convention. Approved by the Membership at the General Membership meeting on (Date).

b. Theme:

2. ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

a. (Date) convention committee was formed (names of Chairman and members).

b. Committee function, ticket sales brochures, guest speaker, advertisement, entertainment, coordination with National Vice-President and Administrator, transportation, hotel accommodations, security, preparation of registration packets, printing of tickets, badges, etc., sales items, vendors, tour information, special arrangements for airport pick-ups, golf tournament, special fees.

c. Conduct of the convention.

(1) First day

(2) Second day

(3) Third day

(4) Fourth day

(5) Fifth Day

(6) Final day

3. LESSONS LEARNED AND PROBLEM AREAS:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

5. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

Beginning Balance of checking account # _____

Deposits

Registration Fees _____

Tickets _____

Retail Sales _____

Auctions _____

Disbursements (by check #, amount, who, why)

Check # _____ Who/Why _____

Check # _____ Who/Why _____

Check # _____ Who/Why _____

Check # _____ Who/Why _____

Check # _____ Who/Why _____

Check # _____ Who/Why _____

End of Convention balance Checking account # _____

Chapter President

Convention Chairman