



# 14<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL FREEDOM FIGHTERS OPEN

6 NOV 2020

BRIDGEMILL ATHLETIC CLUB (CANTON, GEORGIA)

## GOLF TOURNAMENT

The format is a 4-Person Scramble with a Shotgun Start at 10:30am. Go to [operationsanta.org/ffo/](http://operationsanta.org/ffo/) to register online (you may pay by Credit Card or Check). If you do not have a team, we will put you with one.

## EXTRA EVENTS

Since our mission is to raise as much money as possible for *Operation Santa*, we offer features that go way beyond 18 holes of really good golf and great fellowship. Listed below are some of the extra activities that are planned for this year.

- Chances to win *new cars* from Hennessy Honda of Woodstock for a Hole-in-One on all **four** Par 3 holes
- *Golf Ball Drop* – Balls are dropped on Hole 19 from a helicopter; closest ball to the Pin wins a prize weapon
- *Military and Public Safety vehicles* and equipment Displays
- *Free-fall demonstrations* throughout the day, including professional jumpers “swooping the pond” on 9.
- Raffles of *Sports and Military memorabilia* and nice prizes including a large *LED TV*
- *Veterans of many wars* will be on station to share fellowship, tell true war stories of victory, and provide updates on what is going on in the current theatres of operations

## ABOUT OPERATION SANTA

All proceeds from this event go to *Operation Santa Charities, Inc.*, an IRS-approved 501(c)(3) charitable corporation. This charity was started in 2003 by the members of VFW Post 12002 with the intent of using funds raised from private and corporate donors to provide support for Georgia-based troops fighting overseas. Since its creation, the charity has raised nearly \$350,000 and has spent that money making certain that those fighting for our freedoms know that we appreciate their sacrifices and are 100% behind them, their families, **and** their missions.

*Freedom Fighter's Open* is the charity's signature annual event. Each year, members of VFW Post 12002 and other volunteers purchase *targeted* Christmas gifts for the children of *all* Georgia-based troops deployed overseas. Since its inception, *Operation Santa* has touched the lives of over 5,000 children (630 in 2019 alone). *Operation Santa Charities, Inc.* is an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff and *Operation Santa* is staffed solely by volunteers.

## SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

**Signature Sponsor** (\$10,000): Name the tournament the '*YourCompanyName Freedom Fighters Open*' and get 3 Foursomes, your logo on the Goody Bags and all custom camouflage Pin Flags, and a framed Pin Flag Plaque

**Platinum** (\$2000): Includes 2 Foursomes, Hole Sponsorship, recognition at Awards Event, Dinner and Plaque

**Gold** (\$1500): Includes 2 Foursomes, recognition on Handouts and at Awards Event, Dinner and Plaque

**Silver** (\$1000): Includes 1 Foursome or Hole Sponsorship, recognition on Handouts and at Awards Event, Plaque

**Bronze** (\$750): Recognition on Handouts and at Awards Event

**Hole Sponsorship** (\$500): Custom sign advertising your company at the Tee and a custom display-quality, camouflage Pin Flag honoring all branches of the military and POWs and MIAs.

### *And You Get to Keep the Pin Flag*

**Food Sponsor** (\$2000): Covers drinks and food at the Turn and Finish – includes recognition at the Dinner

**Raffle Sponsor**: Provide products for the Raffles (sponsorship level based on the value of products or services offered)

## CONTACTS

For more information on the *Freedom Fighters Open* or *Operation Santa*; to register as an individual Golfer or a Team; or see pictures from previous events and meet this year's Guest-of-Honor, go to [operationsanta.org/ffo/](http://operationsanta.org/ffo/)

▷ Make all Checks payable to **VFW Post 12002** with **2020 FFO** in the Memo Line ◁

▷ Mail your Check to **Jim Davis** at **104 Lexington Place, Sandy Springs GA 30350** ◁

If you have any questions, contact **Jim Davis** at [davis1824@comcast.net](mailto:davis1824@comcast.net) or **770-235-4858**

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## THIS YEAR'S GUEST OF HONOR

### Chaplain (MAJ) Jeffery D. Struecker, (USA, Ret)



Jeffery Dean Struecker is an author, pastor, and former U.S. Army Ranger who was involved in the Battle of Mogadishu in 1993. He also participated in the 1989 invasion of Panama (Operation Just Cause) and in Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm. Struecker has co-authored five published books.

He enlisted in the Army in September 1987 at the age of 18 and served ten years in the 75th Ranger Regiment in positions ranging from Private to Platoon Sergeant. While serving in this unit, he competed in and won the David L. Grange Best Ranger Competition in 1996. He taught ROTC at the University of Louisville and was recognized in 1998 as the US Army ROTC Noncommissioned Officer of the Year.

In the 1993 Battle of Mogadishu, Struecker was a 24-year-old Sergeant and Squad Leader assigned to Task Force Ranger as a part of the 75th Ranger Regiment. He led the 3-vehicle convoy that returned, through intense fire, wounded Ranger Private Todd Blackburn to their base. In the film based on the battle, *Black Hawk Down*, Struecker is portrayed by Brian Van Holt.

After his enlisted service ended in April 2000, Struecker went on to graduate from seminary and was commissioned as a Chaplain. In this role, he served multiple tours in *Operation Enduring Freedom* in Afghanistan and *Operation Iraqi Freedom* in Iraq. His final military assignment was as a Chaplain with the Regimental Special Troops Battalion of the 75th Ranger Regiment. He retired from active military service at the end of January 2011.



SPC Isaac Gmazel and SSG Jeff Struecker winning the 1996 Best Ranger Competition at Fort Benning, Georgia.

His military awards include the Ranger Tab, Combat Infantryman's Badge, Pathfinder Badge, Master Parachutists Wings, Military Freefall Master Parachutist Wings, several foreign jump wings, and the Combat Action Badge. In addition to other academic honors, he was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. He also has several other earned and honorary degrees and is the lead pastor of **2 Cities Church** in Columbus, Georgia.

He is an award-winning author with five books in print. The most famous of these, based on his experiences in Mogadishu, is *The Road To Unafraid*. He and his wife, Dawn, live in Columbus, Georgia. They have five children and three grandchildren.

If the weather cooperates, Jeff will make his entrance via parachute in the opening ceremony of the Freedom Fighters Open, along with a jumper from Team Fastrax carrying the American Flag.

## *In Memoriam*

# **CHRISTIAN O. STEVENS**



Christian Owen Stevens served in the United States Army as an Infantry Officer. Christian was stationed with the prestigious 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, NC. During his time on active duty, Christian completed Airborne training at Fort Benning, Georgia, where he earned the Parachutist Badge. Christian also attended Army Ranger school at Fort Benning, earning the Ranger Tab. In 2001, Christian competed in the grueling Best Ranger competition, finishing second out of 44 teams.

During his service, Christian deployed with the 82nd Airborne to Kosovo, where he was awarded the Kosovo Campaign Medal as well as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Medal. Christian also earned the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal.

After leaving the military, Christian joined the William Cobb – General Raymond G. Davis Post No. 12002 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, where he served loyally in many capacities. He was an All-State Post Commander, All-American Post Commander, a Gold Legacy Life Member, and a Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Legislative Committee from 2016-2019.

On February 17, 2020, while performing a Nine-Way Diamond routine with Team Fastrax, Christian was unfortunately killed during a hard landing that was caused when he had to avoid another jumper.

Christian leaves behind his lovely wife Angel and his two beautiful daughters Riley and Charlie.