



United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School

INSIDE SWCS

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THE EVOLUTION OF USAJFKSWCS

By Angela E. Kershner

In its 58 years of existence, the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School has evolved from a small schoolhouse training Special Forces Soldiers into a thriving university producing and managing special operations warriors and educating tomorrow's Army SOF leaders.

Established as the Psychological Warfare Center in 1952, the school had a mission limited to "psychological warfare and special forces operations." The expansion of that focus began with the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and has continued since then.

"SWCS changes all the time, and it's based on the operational environment that our folks are operating in," said SWCS G3 Lt. Col. Charles Connett. "We have to be relevant to the force. We have to adapt, not just what we teach, but how we do it."

Vietnam presented a completely different wartime environment than Soldiers had previously encountered. The then U.S. Army Special Warfare Center (USASWC), adapted training to meet the new challenges. The Military Assistance Training Advisor (MATA) Course began at USASWC in 1962. The course, which prepared thousands of officers and NCOs from all branches of the military, as well as members of other government agencies, for advisory roles in Vietnam, focused on intensive language training and cultural familiarization. The use of native speakers of Vietnamese as instructors, in addition to SF Soldiers and Marines returning from Vietnam, provided a more intense and effective training regimen.

With the new emphasis on advising foreign militaries and bolstering their internal defense, USASWC was appropriately re-designated as the U.S.

"SWICK" HITS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information on receiving college credit for training, please visit the [Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System \(AARTS\)](#).

For more information on Col. Nick Rowe's time as a POW, read his book *Five Years to Freedom*.

MOTORCYCLE COURSE

SWCS is hosting an Experienced Rider Course this Saturday, Feb. 27, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Slots are currently available and will be given out on a first come, first served basis. Training is available to all service members, Civilians, and Family Members.

The course is designed for personnel that have approximately six months riding experience. The student must bring his or her motorcycle with proof of registration, insurance, and a permit or endorsement. The training will be held on the SWCS Motorcycle Range.

If interested, please contact Safety Manager Cathy Shank at cathleen.shank@us.army.mil.

OPERATION NEW DAWN

Effective Sep. 1, the war in Iraq will be called Operation New Dawn.

In a memo to Gen. David Petraeus, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said the name change is designed to coincide with “the change of mission for U.S. forces in Iraq.”

“Aligning the name change with the change of mission sends a strong signal that Operation Iraqi Freedom has ended and our forces are operating under a new mission,” Gates wrote. “It also presents opportunities to synchronize strategic communication initiatives, reinforce our commitment to honor the Security Agreement, and recognize our evolving relationship with the Government of Iraq.”

CORRECTION

Last week the date for the second assessment and selection for both Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations was incorrect. The next CAAS and POAS will begin Sunday, Feb. 28.

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Army Institute for Military Assistance (USAIMA). In 1971, the training capabilities of USAIMA broadened when the Civil Affairs School moved from Fort Gordon, Ga. Originally formed to support the Civil Affairs and Military Government Command (CAMG) during World War II, the Civil Affairs School trained Soldiers to help civilian populations recover from war and to assist in the set up of basic governance. The addition of these capabilities to the SOF community added a significant advantage.

“Everybody is tied together,” said Brig. Gen. Bennet Sacolick, deputy commanding general at SWCS. “They all complement each other.”

Constantly building on the experiences of SOF Soldiers and lessons learned in the field, the Directorate of Training and Doctrine (DOTD) has been invaluable as an in-house avenue for change. Improving and updating training produces Soldiers better prepared for what they may encounter. “The lessons that we’re learning today, we are adapting internally to address those requirements,” said Connett.

In 1982, Lt. Col. Nick Rowe was recalled to active duty to stand up the Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) Course at Camp Mackall. Rowe, a POW in Vietnam for more than five years, drew on his experiences and his eventual escape to build a course that would teach members of all branches of the military how to survive if separated from their unit, avoid capture and, if caught, survive, escape and return home with honor.

Re-designation as the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School in 1986 reflected all of the changes and entities that had shaped SWCS. As a center and school, SWCS has created a unique training and educational environment. “We are not solely training facilities, and we are not solely educators. What we do as an institution is try to meld them both,” said Lt. Col. Connett.

SWCS reaches far beyond the courses and facilities available to CA, PSYOP and SF Soldiers at Camp Mackall: the NCO Academy offers graduate-level learning to NCOs who possess those characteristics necessary to become leaders; the Joint Special Operations Medical Training Center is responsible for training all U.S. military SOF combat medical personnel including Rangers and Navy corpsmen; Special Forces Underwater Operations offers three courses in maritime operations and infiltration techniques; Military Free-Fall Parachute Operations transitions Soldiers from static-line airborne parachutists to MFF parachutists; the Directorate of Regional Studies teaches 17 languages and educates Soldiers in cultural affairs; and 3rd Battalion qualifies all CA/PSYOP Soldiers in the Army. Numerous other

state-of-the-art facilities and courses bolster this training including the Army Special Operations Digital Training Center, the Weapons Training Facility, and various intelligence courses.

“We manage the force. We train and educate the force,” said Connett. “In terms of experience, [today’s SWCS students] are getting more. We increase not only the quantity of the output, but the quality, too.”

SWCS will continue to adapt as the needs of SOF change. “We need to be a Special Operations center of excellence,” said Sacolick. “We are set up like an Army organization — we should be set up like a university. There’s value to that.”

Currently, the Army and the American Council on Education have teamed up to award college credit hours to military personnel for training. A Soldier graduating from the Special Forces Qualification Course needs only 10 additional credits to receive an Associate of Arts, said Sacolick. Plans are also in the works to offer the first master’s program at SWCS.

“We’ve got a lot of growing to do,” said Connett. “We’re always going to be changing.”

Look for next week’s story on two motivated Soldiers who defy the odds and motivate others.