



# Inside SWCS

The official newsletter of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy  
Special Warfare Center and School

August 16, 2010  
Issue 25, Volume 1

## “If I could put on a second lieutenant’s bar and do it all over again,



### SWCS Commanding General to retire after 36 years of military service

By Dave Chace  
USAJFKSWCS Public Affairs Office

After a 36-year career as an Army and Special Forces officer, Maj. Gen. Thomas R. Csrnko will retire from military service tomorrow during the change of command ceremony for the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School.

Csrnko’s military resume might double as a list of some of the most influential and vital command positions in the Army’s special-operations community, particularly over the last decade. This list has few surprises; by

the time he assumed command of the Center and School, Csrnko had commanded the Special Operations Command-Europe and the Army’s Special Forces Command, as well as spent two years at the American embassy in Kuwait after reporting a month before the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks in the United States.

“I hope there’s a reason why I came to SWCS from Special Forces Command, and not the other way around,” Csrnko said. “This is an incredible organization, and we do produce Special Forces Soldiers, but that’s just a small piece of the pie when you consider everything else that goes on here.”

Csrnko said he values the opportunity to bring his background in special-operations management and education into SWCS.

“You might not have to have served in SWCS before, but you have to bring that operational capability and understanding into this position,” he said.

Brig. Gen. Bennet S. Sacolick, who will assume command of the Center and School in tomorrow’s ceremony, fits that mold. As the SWCS Deputy Commanding General for the past two years and a veteran special-operations commander, Sacolick’s command priorities will include professionaliz-

ing the force and enabling proactive curriculum design and redesign.

“There’s always room to polish,” Csrnko said. “Hopefully, history remembers SWCS as an organization that embraced change and understood that in order to stay relevant, you have to accept what’s happening today and understand the changes that need to be put in place for tomorrow.”

Throughout Csrnko’s command, he’s seen enhancements made to not only the Center and School’s training courses, but also to those organizations that support those courses. The 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) has stepped up its ability to support civil affairs and military information support courses, and the Special Forces Qualification Course has been reorganized to maximize time spent on regional training and physical conditioning, reintroduce international students into the course, and implement the Instructor-ODA program throughout potential Special Forces Soldiers’ year-long (at minimum) training.

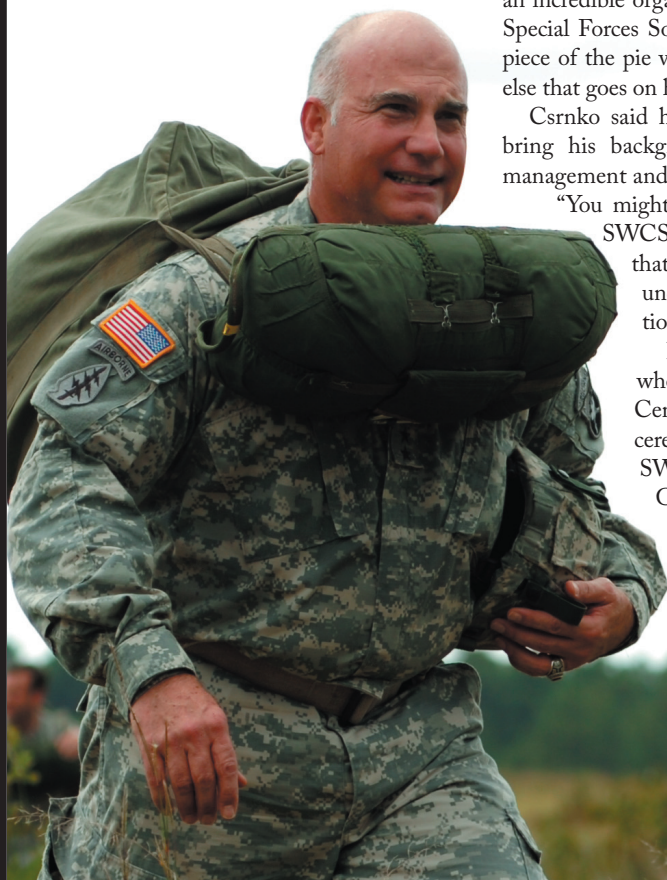
“We here in the Center and School will only remain current and relevant if we remain tied in with the operational force,” Csrnko said.

“The most significant improvement we’ve made is the relationship we’ve built with the Army’s special-operations units,” he said. “We listen to the operational force, and then adjust our training to meet their requirements.”

Csrnko said SWCS has proven to the operational force that it has the ability to adapt

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**Maj. Gen. Thomas R. Csrnko**  
USAJFKSWCS Outgoing Commanding General



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# Csrnko to retire, hand command to Sacolick Aug. 17

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its product to their needs in a very timely manner, in order to get certain capabilities into the force before the requirements



Csrnko

have a chance to change again.

"I can remember calling SWCS when I was commanding SOC-Europe,

and having a back-and-forth relationship, particularly from my perspective of working with NATO member nations' special operations," Csrnko said. "Later, as the USAFSC commander, we worked hard to ensure we could immediately incorporate SWCS when we identified deficiencies or were working on new ideas or concepts."

"The Center and School has always done this well, but not to the level of magnitude that it does today," Csrnko said of the Center and School's ability to adapt to special-operations units' requirements. "And I think that's only going to continue to be more dynamic over the years."

Csrnko's observations don't merely cover the Center and School's progress over his last two years of command. Like most within the special-operations community, Csrnko has been in and out of SWCS as both a student and staff member throughout his career. In 1985, then-Capt. Csrnko was assigned to the then-Special Warfare Center as its Inspector General. After commanding 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) then-Col. Csrnko spent a year at SWCS as the deputy commander and assistant commandant.

"If you go through our community and you have never been assigned to SWCS, in my opinion you've missed out on an important professional development opportunity; a chance to expand your depth of understanding in our business of Army special operations," he said.

The SWCS change of command ceremony, and Csrnko's retirement ceremony, will be held at 8:30 a.m. Aug. 17 on Fort Bragg's John F. Kennedy Plaza.

In retirement, Csrnko plans to stay engaged with the Army's special-operations community, particularly SWCS, and said he's available to offer advice and council along the way when and if it's appropriate.

"I think that's important," he said. "I have a responsibility to stay involved and give something back to the force."

## Picture of the Week



Staff Sgt. Henry Royer, an operations NCO with 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with "V" device Aug. 13 for actions taken during combat while deployed to Afghanistan as a member of a Special Forces team. Maj. Gen. Thomas R. Csrnko and Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Pettengill, the SWCS Commanding General and Command Sergeant Major, presented Royer with the award.

## SWCS key leaders will gather for new commander's guidance Aug. 17

By Lt. Col. Barry Jones

USAJFKSWCS G-3

Unless the back page of *Inside SWCS* is the first place you go for information, you likely already know that Brig. Gen. Bennet S. Sacolick



Jones

will assume command of SWCS on the morning of Tuesday, Aug. 17.

After taking command, our new commanding general will communicate his vision to leaders in our organization. Our leaders will then be charged with digesting his vision, conferring with their subordinates, and briefing Brig. Gen. Sacolick back at a later date in order to ensure proper understanding and implementation.

This is important because the leadership within SWCS must understand the commanding general's vision, philosophy, and his way ahead for our organization.

After the Aug. 17 change of command ceremony, at 1:30 p.m., key leaders and staff

members within our organization will gather in Kennedy Auditorium for this briefing. These leaders include, but are not limited to, all officers who are Major and above, all warrant officers who are Chief Warrant Officer 3 and above, all noncommissioned officers who are Master Sergeants, First Sergeants, and above, and all Department of the Army civilians who are GS-12 and above.

The audience is not limited; others are welcome to attend as deemed appropriate by individuals and their supervisors.

On Sept. 1, commanders and directorates will conduct a brief-back to Brig. Gen. Sacolick at Rowe Training Facility on Camp Mackall in order to demonstrate their understanding and present a basic implementation plan.

The standards for these briefs will be made clear in the initial Aug. 17 presentation.

Every member of our organization should learn about our incoming commander's vision, and communicate with their subordinates and leaders so that we can immediately begin moving toward our future.

## Upcoming Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
15	16	SWCS Change of Command Ceremony 8:30 a.m. John F. Kennedy Plaza	18	Regimental First Formation 4 p.m. JFK Plaza	SF Qualification Course Graduation 11 a.m. Crown Coliseum	21
22	23	24	Civil Affairs Senior Leaders Course Graduation JFK Auditorium	26	27	28
29	30	Special Forces Senior Leaders Course Graduation JFK Auditorium	SWCS Senior Leaders and Commanding General Brief-Back Rowe Training Facility Camp Mackall	2	Training Holiday	4