



# Inside SWCS

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## Keeping things civil

### Operation Certain Trust brings it all together for Army civil affairs students

In practically 100-degree North Carolina heat, civil affairs students conduct training at Camp Mackall by approaching and interacting with role-playing villagers. During these exercises, Soldiers hone their ability to communicate with and between "local" villagers in various states of satisfaction with America's presence near their home.

By Caroline Goins

USAJFKSWCS Public Affairs Office

**N**ot hostile fire, snipers nor aggressive and shifty diplomats can discourage civil affairs students from bringing hope to suffering Pinelanders during Operation Certain Trust at Camp Mackall.

Operation Certain Trust is the final week-long training exercise for aspiring civil affairs Soldiers, held four times a year at the fictitious post-conflict land of Pineland.

There are two phases of Operation Certain Trust. During the 36-hour tactical phase, students assist refugee groups and investigate poisoned water sources during scenarios based off U.S. operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the second phase, lasting three days, students survey Pineland's infrastructure and gauge the economic viability for local businesses.

The Civil Affairs Qualification Course is conducted at Fort Bragg by SWCS, which consistently changes its training scenarios to keep pace with the missions special operations Soldiers are conducting throughout the world.

To make the training as authentic as possible, Arabic-speaking role players act as Pineland citizens throughout the exercise. The future civil affairs Soldiers help these role-players effectively communicate between one another, often despite their different cultural norms and strong personalities.

"During a previous deployment with the 82nd Airborne Division, I observed civil affairs personnel and all the good work they do," said Capt. Derek Fitzpatrick, one of the students attending the course. "Civil affairs units allow for more creativity and free-thinking with issues that arise; more so than with more traditional military roles."

Civil Affairs is one of the few Army branches that does not accept newly commissioned officers. Instead, officers with experience in an Army basic branch must apply for a branch transfer; these applications are reviewed and selected by the Directorate of Special Operations Proponency at SWCS.

Following selection, civil affairs students attend 12 to 24 months of regional education. Next, students complete 17 weeks of civil affairs training to prepare for their final exercise, Operation Certain Trust. The civil affairs training includes language, regional and cultural awareness and negotiation training, said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Stewart, chief instructor for the qualification course.

"People think civil affairs Soldiers just hand out soccer balls, but it is so much more than even I realized before going into training," said Capt. Ally

Ruckdeschel, another student attending the course. "With the amount of detail and information we're absorbing, we're getting an education on all regions of the world. It's enlightening to see how individuals from all cultures can work together."

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**Capt. Ally Ruckdeschel**  
Civil Affairs Qualification Course student

Civil affairs Soldiers often operate in four-person teams enhancing both conventional and special-operations forces. Civil Affairs specialists help identify other critical needs of local citizens in crisis

situations. These specialists coordinate resources to support military operations, minimize civilian interference with military operations, facilitate humanitarian assistance activities and communicate with civilian aid agencies and organizations.

After training, the active-duty civil affairs Soldiers will join the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade at Fort Bragg, N.C., the Army's only active-duty civil affairs unit. In the past four years, the 95th has grown from one battalion into a whole brigade.

"In the last 20 years, the military has moved toward non-lethal operations, focusing on winning peoples' hearts and minds," said Capt. Christopher Haymon, another student. "One positive meeting with a local elder can prevent significant loss of life. I want to be part of that proactive stance."

# Advanced skills preparation drives ARSOF success

By Lt. Col. Bill Herbert

Commander, 2nd Battalion, 1st SWTG(A)

To remain the world's preeminent special operations advanced skills training center, we must remain flexible, agile and vigilant. We must self-examine our training methodology, techniques and technology and develop them for the future.



Herbert

Recognizing that the current operational tempo precludes robust preparations training for advanced skills courses, 2nd Battalion, 1st SWTG(A) is committed to working with units that send peers to our courses to set the conditions for success. The term "peer" recognizes that Soldiers who attend advanced skills courses are already operators in their respective fields.

To be successful, Soldiers should prepare themselves mentally and physically for all advanced skills training. Mental preparation is often overlooked by many people who have otherwise prepared well in all other areas. Physicals and personal affairs should be in order prior to attendance. When a peer arrives at a course, his or her mission is to successfully complete the course.

Alpha Co. conducts a variety of courses involving Special Forces intelligence and sensitive site exploitation. These courses are academically intensive and require peers to commit a large amount of time to research and study.

Bravo Co., at Yuma Proving Ground in Arizona, conducts military freefall parachutist and jumpmaster courses. Charlie Co., in Key West, Fla., conducts Special Forces dive courses such as the Combat Diver Qualification Course. These two units' courses are extremely physically and mentally demanding and require continuous preparation, whether while at one's home station or deployed.

Delta Co. conducts a variety of courses at Fort Bragg, N.C. including the Special Forces Sniper Course and the Special Operations Combatives Program. These courses are also demanding and require a significant commitment from the Soldier's unit for marksmanship preparation.

Through innovation and collaboration, we can overcome the challenges Soldiers face in preparation for advanced skills training and continue to provide the overwhelming capabilities our operational units need to defeat our enemies.



At 10 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 8, the Discovery Channel series "Surviving the Cut" will feature the Combat Diver Qualification Course, one of the SWCS courses taught at the Special Forces Underwater Operations School in Key West, Fla. Recorded throughout the Spring, this documentary highlights the physical and mental strength of some of the Army's most elite Soldiers.

## "SWCS Safe Ride" will help you get home in one piece

By Cathy Shank

USAJFKSWCS Safety Officer

Safe Ride is here! The safe ride program is designed to reduce alcohol-related incidents within the command. The SWCS



Shank

Safe Ride program is easy: if you need a safe ride around the local area at any time in the day or night, simply call (910) 432-2201.

The SWCS Staff Duty personnel will be on the other end of the phone with a list of transportation companies that would be glad to serve our Soldiers.

Be prepared to answer these following questions:

- What is your location?
- Your name and contact number?
- Do you want to pay for this ride up front? This means you'll be able to travel directly to your destination.
- If you don't want to pay for your ride,

"SWCS Safe Ride" will front the money for the trip. However, this means your cab will take a side trip to staff duty for payment.

Our promise to you is that your name will not be listed on any staff duty log. Your name and contact information will be provided to the Safety Office only. The Safety Office will ask you to repay the fund within 30 days of use.

There are numerous methods to prevent alcohol-related incidents, including:

- Don't drink.
- Don't drive if you'll be drinking.
- Use a designated driver.
- Plan a ride before you drink.
- SWCS Safe Ride.

All it takes is one alcohol-related incident to destroy your career, wreak havoc on your family life and cost you thousands of dollars. One fatality from an alcohol-related incident impacts our unit and the mission.

Make the right decision — Don't Drink and Drive! Call (910) 432-2201 for a Safe Ride.

## Upcoming Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
5	Labor Day	7	"Surviving the Cut" feat. Special Forces Underwater Operations School Discovery Channel 10 p.m.	"Tactical Arms TV" feat. Range 37 and select SWCS cadre Sportsman's Network 10 p.m.	10	Robin Sage begins
12	13	WOTTC Graduation Ceremony 11 a.m. JFK Auditorium	15	16	17	18
End of GPC Billing Cycle	20	21	22	Robin Sage ends	24	25