



TIP OF THE SPEAR

**Special Operations Task
Force-Southwest continues
to train Afghan special forces**

U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., October 2013



U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



Special Operations Task Force-Southwest continues to train Afghan security forces ... 14

Tip of the Spear



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(Cover) Afghan special forces continue to improve their ability to combat insurgents by training with U.S. Special Forces Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) in Washer district, Helmand province, Afghanistan, July 16. Photo by Spc. Juaquime Wright.

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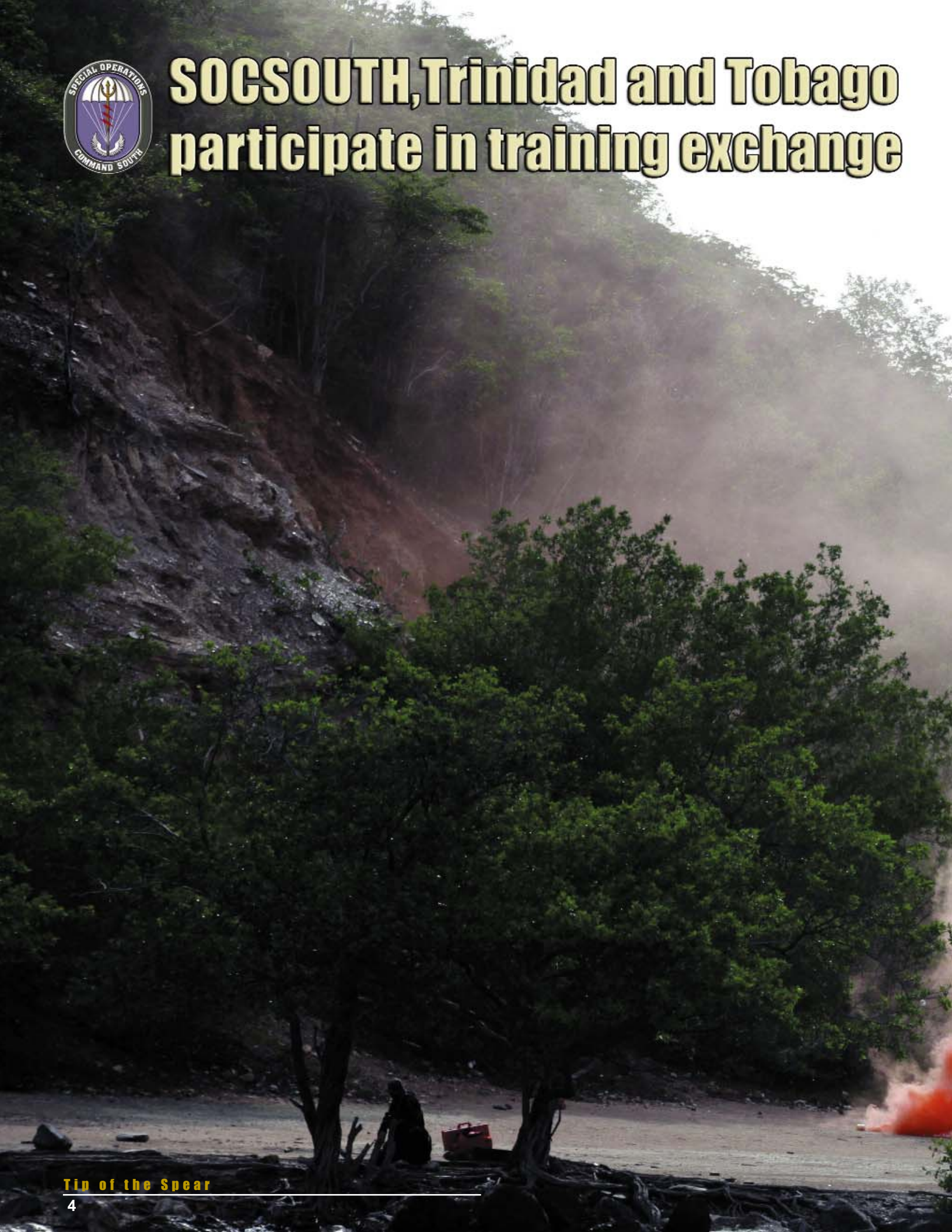
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SOC SOUTH, Trinidad and Tobago participate in training exchange



Trinidad and Tobago Defense Forces transport a simulated casualty to a medical facility as part of a culmination exercise, during a Joint Combined Exchange Training in Trinidad and Tobago July 26. JCETs are frequently conducted by SOCSOUTH throughout the Caribbean and Central and South America at the request of partner nations in order to enhance bilateral relations and interoperability through military-to-military contacts and are a valuable tool in the command's Theater Security Cooperation program. Photo by Spec. Michael A. Byars Jr.



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SOF AROUND THE WORLD - TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND – SOUTH



During a simulated raid on an enemy facility, a Trinidad and Tobago Defense Force member took on the role as an injured subject and had to be transported by a Zodiac boat to a nearby landing zone in order for a helicopter to evacuate him to a medical facility. Photo by Spec. Michael A. Byars Jr.

***By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Anthony Johnson
Special Correspondent to SOCSOUTH***

Renowned as a Caribbean vacation spot, the tiny island nation of Trinidad and Tobago is surrounded by stunning beaches and great weather all year around.

However, the island nation has been affected by the regional challenge of illicit trafficking over the past several years. It is a concern that government officials have acknowledged as a threat to security in the country.

With this threat in mind, Trinidad and Tobago officials welcomed an elite group of American Green Berets from the 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) as part of a four-week Joint Combined Exchange Training program during the month of July.

The month-long JCET allowed members of 20th Group to gain regional knowledge and improve their

coaching abilities while exchanging methods and maneuvers with members of Trinidad and Tobago's Special Naval Unit and Special Forces Operation Detachment.

JCETs also benefit U.S. Special Operations Forces because they allow SOF personnel to train in ally nations, like Trinidad and Tobago, and develop their military tactics and skills in unfamiliar settings, while also improving bilateral relations and interoperability with partner nation militaries.

JCETs are part of the Special Operations Command - South's Theater Security Cooperation program. The program enables partner nations to better protect their borders and increase their capacity to conduct Special Operations. SOCSOUTH is responsible for all U.S. Special Operations activities in the Caribbean, Central and South America, and serves as a component for U.S.

Special Operations Command and U.S. Southern Command.

This JCET also has some great significance because it was the first time in four years that a training event of this magnitude has been coordinated with the SNU, and the first time ever training with the SFOD.

“These guys were very receptive to what we trained; they showed genuine passion for their nation, and we are confident that they will continue to train hard and get better,” said a U.S. SOF team member.

During the JCET, they sharpened their military skills by conducting, combat casualty care, 100- and 200-meter swim tests, pistol and rifle shooting, small unit tactics training, and small movement groups training. The JCET concluded with a culmination exercise in the form of interdiction operations against simulated organized crime organizations and extremist elements.

According to the executive officer of the U.S. Special Operations Forces team, JCETs like this one

enable U.S. teams to hone their military tactics and skills in unfamiliar settings and help to increase the capabilities of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force to conduct operations countering transnational organized crime and deter illicit traffickers from Trinidad and Tobago borders and waterways.

“Working with the Americans motivated us to be on top of our game. We wanted to show them that we are just as passionate for our country as they are for theirs,” said a Trinidad and Tobago Special Naval Unit team member.

At the end of the month-long event, a small ceremony took place where Trinidadian and Tobagonian service members who took part in the training received a certificate of appreciation from their U.S. counterparts.

SOC SOUTH planners hope to continue a strong working relationship with their partners in the coming months and hold similar events in the near future.



Trinidad and Tobago Defense Forces raid a simulated enemy as part of a culmination exercise, during Joint Combined Exchange Training in Trinidad and Tobago July 26. Photo by Spec. Michael A. Byars Jr.



Multinational exercise Eager Lion 2013 takes place in Jordan



A CV-22 Osprey takes off over a platoon of Jordanian Armed Forces as part of Exercise Eager Lion 2013 – an annual, multinational exercise designed to strengthen military-to-military relationships and enhance security and stability in the region by responding to modern-day security scenarios. Photo by Army Sgt. Aaron Rognstad.





A soldier with the Iraqi Special Operations Forces engages a target as part of an amphibious assault simulation during Eager Lion at Aqaba, Jordan, June 12. Eager Lion is a U.S. Central Command-directed, irregular warfare-themed exercise focusing on missions the United States and its coalition partners might perform in support of global contingency operations. Photo by Army Sgt. Aaron Rognstad.



A U.S. Navy SEAL provides cover while two Zodiac fast boats with Soldiers from the U.S. Special Forces and the Jordanian Special Operations Forces come ashore in an amphibious assault drill as part of Exercise Eager Lion 2013. Photo by Army Sgt. Aaron Rognstad.



(Left) A Special Operations Forces member provides cover for a combined group of special operations soldiers from Jordan, Iraq and the U.S. as part of an amphibious assault simulation for Exercise Eager Lion 2013. Photo by Army Sgt. Aaron Rognstad. (Above) Soldiers from the Iraqi Special Operations Forces secure a perimeter while Lebanese Armed Forces soldiers unload from a CV-22 Osprey. Photo by Army Sgt. Aaron Rognstad. (Below) A Green Beret pins U.S. Army Airborne wings onto a Jordanian Armed Forces soldier following a friendship jump. Photo by Army Sgt. Zach Mott.





GERMANY

US awards Bronze Star to Jordanian special forces officer, graduate of the Marshall Center

By Deacon Westervelt

George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies Public Affairs

The United States awarded the Bronze Star Medal to a Jordanian special forces officer and graduate of the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, Aug. 8.

Lt. Col. Sufian Al-Slaihat -- a graduate of the joint Defense Department/German Ministry of Defense-run Marshall Center Program on Terrorism and Security Studies -- received the award in April. He is only the second Jordanian to receive the U.S. award for "his exceptionally meritorious service in support of Operation Enduring Freedom from Aug. 8, 2012, to Feb. 3, 2013."

Al-Slaihat said the real reward for his efforts was recognizing cultural values in the work his team had done. "I was excited and talked to everyone about this award. As a Muslim who works for the U.S. in Afghanistan countering terrorism for the people, it's nice being appreciated for my work."

The Bronze Star Medal is the fourth-highest award in the U.S. Armed Forces. It is awarded to an individual who, while serving in the U.S. military or while serving with friendly foreign forces, engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the U.S. is not a hostile and aggressive party. The individual distinguishes him or herself by heroic or meritorious achievement while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States or while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force.

Al-Slaihat was the commander of the Jordanian special forces, serving under Special Operations Task Force-Southeast. He led 106 Jordanians under his



The United States awarded the Bronze Star Medal to Lt. Col. Sufian Al-Slaihat, a Jordanian special forces officer and a graduate of the joint Defense Department/German Ministry of Defense-run George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies Program on Terrorism and Security Studies. He is only the second Jordanian to receive the U.S. award for his exceptionally meritorious service in support of Operation Enduring Freedom from Aug. 8, 2012, to Feb. 3, 2013. He received the award in April. Photo by Karlheinz Wedhorn.

command, combined with the U.S. Armed Forces, and they covered 6,696 square miles of the Zabul province in Afghanistan promoting security, governance and development.

According to the award citation, his knowledge of village and tribal dynamics contributed to the trust building in areas historically hostile to coalition forces. His contribution in Afghanistan was “an overwhelming success to the Special Operations Task Force-Southeast mission.”

He commanded Jordanian special forces soldiers at two village stability platforms and a village stability staging area. According to a fact sheet, village stability operations are designed to integrate security, governance and development efforts in strategically important rural Afghan districts and villages that lack a strong government presence; VSO helps forward the establishment and growth of critical connections between the central Afghan government and the general public.

Al-Slaihat made critical changes to his detachment’s deployment operation cycle, allowing for extended time for personnel at each village stability platform. This increased daily operational focus on Afghan National Security Forces and local villagers, highlighting the shared cultural similarities at the village and district levels to promote understanding and stability.

Professor Nick Pratt, executive director of the Marshall Center’s Program on Terrorism and Security Studies, thought highly of his former student.

“Intelligence, honed military dexterity and great people skills allowed him to succeed,” Pratt said.

Al-Slaihat said he considers himself fortunate to attend the Combating Terrorism Language Program

and the PTSS before taking over the command in Afghanistan. Al-Slaihat credited part of his success in Afghanistan to these Marshall Center courses.

“In my opinion, every officer should take these two courses before they get stationed in Afghanistan,” Al-Slaihat said. “They open your mind about the culture, about the mistakes, what to improve... everything.

“They also have officers who are from other nations and even from Afghanistan who participate in

this course,” he said. “We start talking with them, speaking about the government, their people... they speak frankly. So, it is easy to get the information. Before I went to Afghanistan, I had the whole picture.”

“Al-Slaihat was one of the PTSS’ top participants. In small measurement what he learned in Garmisch-Partenkirchen allowed him to accomplish some remarkable missions in a much contested slice of Afghanistan,” Pratt added.

Al Slaihat said there was another key component to the success of mission there.

“If you don’t have Muslim troops with you, you won’t succeed. They know the culture; they can easily do your mission statement because they speak the same language with these

countries,” Al-Slaihat said. “One fight. One team.”

Al-Slaihat has had several commands to include commander in the Jordanian 101st Special Forces Battalion; company commander of the Jordanian Sky Marshal Counter Terrorism Unit; and commander of the Jordanian Counter Terrorism Training Center in Amman, Jordan; and the company commander of the 71st Maritime Counter Terrorism Unit in Aqaba, Jordan.

“If you don’t have Muslim troops with you, you won’t succeed. They know the culture; they can easily do your mission statement because they speak the same language with these countries. One fight. One team.”

— Lt. Col. Sufian Al-Slaihat





U.S. Special Forces promote stability in Helmand province, Afghanistan

*By Army Sgt. Kyle Wagoner
CJSOTF - Afghanistan Public Affairs*

Special Forces Soldiers with the 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), out of Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., assumed control and command of Special Operations Task Force-Southwest from the 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment in May 2013.

Since then, 1st SFG (A) have helped shape the future of Afghanistan during a critical turning point in the fight against insurgents in the Nimroz and Helmand provinces in Afghanistan.

The battalion has since advised and trained their partner Afghan security forces and set the conditions for Afghans to provide their own security, governance and development in the future.

“This is one of those special times in history,” said U.S. Army Lt. Col Joseph McGraw, battalion and task force commander. “This is a critical time for us as a coalition, for the international community, and for the Afghans

themselves. We’re going to see what the fruition of 12 years of labor here in country has achieved during our rotation. By the time we leave we’re really going to know what post-2014 is going to look like with Afghans in the lead.”

Presently the task force is comprised of service members from all four armed service components to include the National Guard. The task force works together to help build unity among Afghan tribal leaders while enhancing security in the area.

“We are truly a joint interagency organization here,” said McGraw. “We have a fantastic working relationship that forms the battle space. We came from all ends of the country and it has formed a really spectacular team.”

The task force, along with Task Force Helmand, a British brigade also in Helmand, form a very professional composite team that is SOTF-SW, the commander added.

Leaders in the battalion are proud of the work the Soldiers have accomplished during the deployment attributing their success to their pre-mission training and the Soldiers’ desire to succeed.



Afghan Special Forces continue to improve their ability to combat insurgents by training with U.S. Special Forces soldiers with the 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) in Washer district, Helmand province, Afghanistan, July 16. Photo by Spc. Juaquime Wright.

“I tell every Soldier they are in the best battalion within the Special Forces regiment and I firmly believe that,” said Command Sgt. Maj. James D. Napolet. “The people I work with in this battalion are motivated. They understand the mission, the commander’s intent and they are not afraid to go out and accomplish anything.

“The battalion’s mission isn’t to lead from the front during this deployment, but to help push Afghan forces to lead themselves and to unilaterally perform everything from training, mission planning and the execution of missions,” said Napolet.

Additionally the battalion has already changed over a base in the province to Afghan forces putting them in complete control of all security responsibilities and has plans to turn over another in the near future. They have also helped facilitate building multiple Afghan Local Police checkpoints and coordinated dozens of outreach programs providing villages with medical, veterinarian and agricultural support.

“Helmand is different than other provinces,” explained

Napolet. “Afghanistan is a very complex and dynamic environment and nothing in Helmand happens without tribal dynamics - the ultimate mission is stability.”

“Every day is a new obstacle, but for every problem we’ve come across we have 10 leaders coming together to solve the issue at hand,” said 1st Sgt. Wade Christiansen. “Every soldier in this battalion is focused on supporting the teams and each other.”

With most of their deployment over, members of the battalion, and its leaders, take great pride in their work and what they’ve already accomplished. Their dedication to promote stability throughout Afghanistan is a reflection of this remarkable unit and their partner agency forces.

“We are being asked to walk through one of the most complex environments on earth, but this is what we’re trained to do,” said McGraw. “Their families at home can be extremely proud of their Soldiers, their Green Berets, their Marines and their SEALs, because the work that these guys do is valorous and it’s honorable. I’m proud of each and everyone one of them.”



SOCAFRICA airborne operations in Grafenwoehr, Germany

Paratroopers assigned to Special Operations Command Africa conduct static line airborne operations from a U.S. Air Force C-130 Hercules over Hopfenohr Drop Zone at the 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Command's Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, Sept. 25. Photos by Markus Rauchenberger.



(Top) A Paratrooper exits a U.S. Air Force C-130 Hercules over Hopfenohr Drop Zone at the 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Command's Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, Sept. 25. (Bottom left) A paratrooper, lands on the drop zone Sept. 25. (Bottom right) U.S. Army Lt. Col. Charles M. Brown, Headquarters Commandant of Special Operations Command Africa, walks off the drop zone after conducting static line airborne operations Sept. 25.





U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



Cadet Brian Smith, an ROTC student attending North Carolina State University, watches for an enemy combatant after exiting a Black Hawk helicopter as part of a training exercise Aug. 3, near Enfield, N.C. Smith and six other ROTC cadets received mentorship and participated in a training mission with members of the North Carolina National Guard's B Company, 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne), out of Roanoke Rapids, N.C. Photo by Army Sgt. Mary Junell.

Among the guerrillas: Green Berets give cadets a tactical advantage

By Sgt. Lindley Bess

Courtesy of USASOC Public Affairs

On a rainy first weekend in August, in the muddy forests of Roanoke Rapids, N.C., two Operational Detachment Alpha teams ran an unconventional warfare training scenario while leading an even more unconventional guerrilla force: U.S. Army ROTC cadets from N.C. State University's Wolfpack Battalion.

The Soldiers from B Company, 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) – a unit of the North

Carolina National Guard and based out of Roanoke Rapids – led a select group of seven cadets through fields and forests on a three-day exercise capping almost one year of mentorship with the group of future officers.

This partnership began in October 2012 when B Company's Capt. Matt Ratnesar recruited some of the Wolfpack's cadets to operate as the guerrilla force for a unit training operation, aptly named "Operation Jump Street." These cadets experienced the full extent of this operation which began with planning and rehearsals and culminated in traveling to a remote location via UH-60 Black Hawks, using land navigation techniques to

maneuver through wooded terrain, breaching two objectives and rescuing a role-playing hostage from some role-playing bad guys.

“This operation gives us the experience and the knowledge of employing some of these tactics and see things written on paper, then actually implement it in real time,” said Cadet George Sendelbach from the Wolfpack Battalion. “We got to see the planning phase, the train-up phase, and the culmination” over a course of four training periods.

For the cadets, this training goes beyond the parameters of what they ordinarily get to learn. But for the Special Forces Soldiers, this was practice for their primary mission as instructors and partners to foreign forces. While the majority of the nation’s Special Forces units serve on active-duty, the North Carolina National Guard is home to two separate Special Forces companies, which both fill their drill weekend and annual two-week training events with exercises to sharpen their skills in order to be a ready, reliable, responsive and relevant military force for the nation and the state of North Carolina.

Operation Jump Street operated in an unconventional warfare setting “where we go into a denied environment where there is a partisan or guerrilla force, link up with them and train them to make them more capable to someday overthrow a hostile government,” explained Maj. Rick Trimble, the B Company commander who oversaw the training.

Another side of the U.S. Army Special Forces mission is the conduct of foreign internal defense, where a host government requests the Special Forces to come in to help raise the capability of its own forces.

“What foreign internal defense and unconventional warfare have in common is that there is a partner force involved; a non-U.S. force that is at a certain skill level that we are going to try and make better,” Trimble said.

For the Special Forces Soldiers, this culmination began the night of Aug. 2 with ODA 2324 conducting a military free-fall and ODA 2325 conducting airborne static-line jumps in order to “infiltrate” the mock foreign country in the forests of northern North Carolina and southern Virginia. From there, the soldiers continued their infiltration by boat, identified target sites, built trust and understanding with their partner guerilla force and sent reports up to their higher headquarters.

As the mission continued into the guerrilla force’s tactical movements and actions on their objectives, the

cadets within the guerrilla force got some hands-on experience rehearsing important tactical skills, including basic squad- and platoon-level combat and close-quarter battle operations, as well as first aid, enemy prisoner-of-war searches and advanced intelligence techniques like target exploitation.

An additional core mission for North Carolina National Guard Special Forces units is that of providing defense support to civil authorities in times of need or crisis such as a natural disaster or civil disturbance. And while Operation Jump Street focused on core Special Forces missions that can only be conducted in foreign environments, the ODAs’ Soldiers said any training event is an opportunity to sharpen their team’s movement and communication skills.

The cadets – who cannot be considered to join the Army’s Special Forces Regiment until they’ve served a few years as lieutenants in another Army branch – also gained some valuable experience that will help them succeed in any military position.

“If we’re working with ROTC cadets, we’re going to train them in small-unit tactics, land navigation, things that they need to know to be successful as cadets to earn their commission,” Trimble said.

“It’s building a good relationship between [the Special Forces and N.C. State ROTC] because the cadets get the opportunity to come out here and learn from the best in the Army,” Sendelbach said.



Green Berets based out of Roanoke Rapids, N.C. spent the day training seven ROTC cadets from North Carolina State University in order to teach the future officers about the U.S. Army unconventional-warfare mission and refine their own Special Forces skills of training and mentoring an outside group. Photo by Army Sgt. Mary Junell.



U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Tail Number 756 connects veterans 46 years apart

*By Army Maj. Emily Potter
USASOAC Public Affairs*

Aviators from different generations, backgrounds, and experiences forged an unbreakable bond through tail number 756.

When veterans who shared the same aircraft in conflicts decades apart met for the first time this summer, they knew the technology and equipment available, as well as the public attitudes towards their service could not compare. The one thing they shared, however, was their dedication as Chinook crew members on tail number 756, and the pride they took in their aircraft and the crew they served with.

Around 10 years ago, Robert Bartlett started looking for the aircraft he flew on in Vietnam. Bartlett was the flight engineer aboard tail number 756, which he named “Flower Power” to counter the atmosphere of civil unrest and negative attitudes towards the war. He didn’t realize that his search, and the aircraft itself, would forge a bond connecting Army Aviators 46 years apart.

While assigned to the 1st Air Cavalry Division based out of An Khe in Vietnam, Bartlett flew in “Flower Power” during missions in the Bong Son Plains and Chu Lai regions. Missions flown included combat air assaults, cargo and personnel transport, and sling load operations. One significant mission Bartlett recalls is the Battle of Khe Sanh, where tail number 756 took troops and ammunition in to Marines on the ground while cornered by the enemy.

Through his research, Bartlett learned that tail number 756, the A model CH-47 Chinook he flew on in 1967, was modified to a D model in 1985, and was now a G model MH-47 belonging to Company B, 3rd Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne).

Sgt. 1st Class Eduardo Santiago brought the aircraft to Hunter Army Airfield, Ga. in 2005 when it became part of the fleet belonging to 3rd Bn., 160th SOAR (A). Like Bartlett, Santiago chose the name for tail number 756 because “I’m keeping the same traditions with the

aircraft the guys before me did. Every aircraft has a different personality. You give it a name for a reason, it has meaning.” Santiago named the helicopter “Chaos” because according to Santiago, when he wasn’t around, issues always came up and no one else could fly the aircraft.

As the Flight Engineer aboard “Chaos” for seven years, Santiago deployed multiple times to Afghanistan. He claims during one rotation tail number 756 flew for 75 days in a row with only two days off. “It’s the pride of the fleet. It was flying day in and day out with no issues,” he boasted of the aircraft.

When Bartlett learned he would be traveling to the East Coast for a Vietnam Helicopter Crew Member Association reunion in June, he contacted the unit and tried to arrange a visit to see his former aircraft. “I received a call that night from Maj. Partridge, in Afghanistan. It blew my socks off.”

For Maj. Tyler Partridge, company commander for B Co., 3rd Bn., 160th SOAR (A), he felt the visit would be “a rare opportunity for active duty crewmembers to interact with one of their peers who had combat experience in one of their aircraft, had performed similar missions with less advanced equipment, and was willing to share his unique perspective on service in the military.”

While Bartlett wanted to reunite with the aircraft he flew in Vietnam, he also had a compelling message to share with the current Soldiers aboard tail number 756; a message about the friendships and bonds he made with fellow crewmembers, and how he coped with the memories and feelings from his combat experiences.

Bartlett, accompanied by two other veteran crewmembers of tail number 756, Wade Kane and William Hughes, visited about two dozen current crewmembers from B Co., 3rd Bn., 160th SOAR (A) this past summer.

Santiago said, “I had never seen a picture of him, but he walked straight to me, and recognized me. We shared something. The essence of the aircraft was the same.”

Current flight engineers of tail number 756, Staff

Sgts. Joshua Stuart and Colin Ravenscraft, coordinated the day's itinerary, to include a tour of the hangar and aircraft. Hughes recalls, "As I stepped into the rear of the helicopter and smelled the fuel and fluids, it was like I walked back 44 years. It was unbelievable."

The veterans of tail number 756 exchanged stories throughout the day, comparing and contrasting their personal combat experiences. The Vietnam veterans were impressed with the physical changes to the aircraft. "She's been maintained, upgraded. Has all types of equipment we never would have thought of- larger fuel tanks, navigation apps," admired Bartlett.

Partridge said it gave them a different perspective as well, realizing how lucky they are to crew on an aircraft with such advanced weaponry and comprehensive training.

More significantly, Bartlett said he was "proud of the work those guys do. I'm proud of the crews and maintainers over the years."

Partridge echoed this sentiment, adding "that we are still flying airframes that have been in service since 1966 is a testament to the skill and commitment of the H-47 Helicopter Repairmen who have demonstrated so much

pride and ownership in maintaining their aircraft throughout the years."

The lingering lessons Bartlett imparted to the Soldiers in B Co. were to cherish the time spent making memories and strong relationships with fellow crewmembers, being proud of their accomplishments and service to the nation and seeking assistance early and often when coping with the stresses of combat.

For Partridge, "linking Vietnam veterans up with the very airframe they flew in combat more than 45 years ago was an awesome experience for both the veterans and my crew chiefs."

In a fitting tribute, the current crew rebadged tail number 756 with her original title, "Flower Power". Written beneath "Flower Power" on the aircraft they added their own moniker, "Deadly Nightshade". This flower is in reference to the Regiment's nickname, "Night Stalkers," because of the unit's capability to strike undetected during hours of darkness and its unprecedented combat successes.

Bartlett ended the visit praising the Soldiers, saying "their hospitality and professionalism has made up for the past 46 years."



Current Night Stalkers Staff Sgt. Colin Ravenscraft (far left) and Sgt. Sean Allen (far right) stand in front of Flower Power with Vietnam veterans (left to right) William Hughes, James Oliver, Robert Bartlett and Wade Kane. Courtesy photo.



160th SOAR (A) conducts historic flight formation over scenic Pacific Northwest

By Army Staff Sgt. Thaddius Dawkins II
USASOAC Public Affairs

Aircraft from 4th Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (A) participated in a historic flyover Sept. 13 with a B-25 Mitchell Bomber to celebrate the history and advancements in Army Aviation.

The historic flight formation, which began near Everett, Wash., included an MH-60M Blackhawk and MH-47G Chinook from 4th Battalion, and a B-25 Bomber; the same type of aircraft used by the Doolittle Raiders when they were called upon in the aftermath of the Pearl Harbor bombing in World War II.

The B-25 is a rare WWII aircraft. According to Army Maj. Gabriel M. Wolfe, commander of Company A., 4th Battalion, 160th SOAR (A) there are only six airworthy B-25s today and this was a first for this type of formation.

"In 2008, the Historic Flight Foundation gained possession of this B-25," said John T. Sessions, founder and chairman of the Historic Flight Foundation. "It was an airshow favorite in Europe for the previous 20 years."

"We had friends in England who made it ready for flight once we purchased it," he said while discussing the process of taking ownership of the historic aircraft. "Once it was ready, we flew it on the airshow circuit in England

and around the continent. Following those flights, we began our trip back here. After several stops and 32-hours of flight, we had made it back home."

"The Raiders trained in the northwest and we still use that same training area today," said Wolfe. "There is still a B-25 monument at the training area and markings painted on the runway for when the Raiders would practice take-offs and landings on a simulated [aircraft carrier] deck."

Along with sharing a training area, there are other strong similarities between the men who volunteered for the Doolittle Raiders and the Nightstalkers.

"They were excellent at long-range infiltration, and that has become a hallmark profile of the Nightstalkers," Wolfe explained. "The Raiders, like us, also focused on the Pacific-Asian region for their main area of operations."

Wolfe said the flight formation was important in order to ensure the battalion is continuing to build relationships with civic and volunteer organizations like the Heritage Flight Museum and the Historic Flight Foundation, because they are the ones documenting aviation history.

"We are a unit who makes history and someday organizations like these will be helping to keep the memory of what we've done, especially over the last decade, alive."







A window into the future

A new training facility is visible between several of the mountains that are part of the La Posta Mountain Warfare Training Facility. The shooting ranges at La Posta offer a wide variety of options for conducting realistic and relevant training for Naval Special Warfare commands.

***Story and photos by Petty Officer 3rd Class Paul Coover
NSW Public Affairs***

It is among the most symbolic images of military training: on an otherwise barren spot of earth, a young man with a gun takes aim at a target down range, pulls a trigger, and in so doing measures his effectiveness with a deadly weapon. The objective and the results are simple. Clean. Necessary.

The story of a military shooting range is the story of the land on which it sits - the way geographic contours collect bullets, the enormous empty spaces left undeveloped in case of stray rounds, remote locations that allow some of the more sensitive parts of military training to be conducted in relative privacy.

But beneath that more obvious narrative, the story of a shooting range is really the story of the people who work quietly to allow it to exist. Because you can't simply fire a weapon toward a mountain without knowing what the long-term environmental impact of that might be; you can't take aim at a target without knowing if a civilian neighborhood

lies behind it, just out of sight; you can't navigate through a kill house with a rifle without being sure that its walls are strong enough to allow your partner on the other side to remain safe. It takes people to make those checks, to sketch out maps, to build those walls.

Outside San Diego, a construction project at La Posta Mountain Warfare Training Facility is underway that will allow Naval Special Warfare to conduct several specific types of training its operators need to be effective around the world. An examination of the project is really an examination of what it takes to make that training possible, and why it matters. Because ultimately, a shooting range is a vision of the future.

A truck rolls steadily eastward, away from the Pacific and toward a small patch of land in the desert only a select group of Americans will ever see.

Few regions of the country offer such a study in contrasts as does this portion of Southern California. Highway 8, along which the truck moves, cuts through some of the most extreme landscapes the area has to offer, meandering from its origins near the sea through mountain passes to the east. It is not a glamorous road. Its design is utilitarian, offering 12

lanes of commuting space in some stretches and just four in others.

A little more than 40 miles east of Coronado, where NSW's headquarters is located, the highway veers dramatically to the south; the terrain is mountainous and rocky. Truth be told, it's at about this point that the drive becomes something of an exercise in patience. The next major city along the road is El Centro – roughly 70 miles away. It's a long, desolate stretch of dry earth and high winds.

Barry Francis makes this drive often.

His figure is a formidable one, strong not in the way of athletes but in the manner of construction workers and ranchers -- in the manner of the rare man for whom work remains a verb. Francis wears jeans and heavy leather boots, graying hair parted to one side, black sunglasses covering his eyes. One calloused hand rests atop the steering wheel in his government-owned, American-made truck. He steers it casually around highway corners, pointing out this landmark or that, until only empty land remains ahead of him.

Francis spent 30 years in the Navy as a gunner's mate, traveling the world and retiring as a command master chief before settling down for good in a suburb outside San Diego. He says he wanted to have the time to walk his kids to school, and for a time he did just that. He'd left the military life and had even begun a little contracting business to keep him busy; years growing up near Folsom, Calif., where manual labor is a way of life, turned him into something of a handyman. But he never knew anything as well as he knew weapons and ranges, and this knowledge followed him.

In 2007 he was working on a small concrete pour and his cell phone rang. The voice on the other end asked him if he was "the range guy." Francis said he supposed he was.

NSW was calling and asking him back into military service, this time as a civilian, and he took the job. Officially, he's the Naval Special Warfare Group 1 range director, meaning he is the man on the ground, ensuring multi-million dollar construction projects proceed according to plan, fixing any number of issues that invariably arise with projects of that size and scope. Unofficially, he's still the range guy.

Which is how he finds himself out on any number of these open roads in Southern California, driving from shooting range to shooting range, helping ensure Naval Special Warfare operators will continue to be able to fire as many hundreds of thousands of rounds as they need to in order to prepare for combat deployments around the world.

The diversity of landscape Francis encounters in this part of the country mirrors the skill the SEALs hope to hone in order to be able to operate in the water, from the air, and -- Francis' specialty -- on land. Southern California is as good a place as any in the country to learn to fight in all of these arenas. And the range Francis now approaches is a 1,100-

acre symbol of the training requirements that Naval Special Warfare continually evaluates and improves.

The location to which Francis now drives isn't exactly secret, but it's not well publicized, either. It's east of San Diego on Highway 8, but everything is east of San Diego on Highway 8. Beyond that, unless you happen to live within a very few miles of the range or are intimately involved with the U.S. Navy, you probably won't ever know it exists.

Francis steers his truck off the main thoroughfare, on to a sequence of anonymous roads and up to a gate that announces the range's entrance. Nearby, a simple red flag hangs quietly, lowered. Neighbors know that when the flag is raised, bullets are flying. Francis manually opens the lock to the facility and begins to slow climb into the heart of the property, which begins atop the mountain that guards its entrance.

Beyond the gate, the rest of the world falls away. Wind whistles through mountain passes and blows dry earth miles from its origin, permeating every crack and crevice of buildings and rendering traffic silent and invisible. Rattlesnakes native to the land can grow more than four feet long. Hawks make circular passes in the sky and retired SEALs who work the range appear and then vanish, navigating pickup trucks into and out of hidden valleys that reveal buildings with terraces and courtyards and uneven staircases.

This is Francis' domain.

The evolution of a military shooting range is, in theory, a model of efficiency.

The men who help run NSW's ranges adhere to what might be referred to as the three P's: proximity, primacy and privacy. Those tenets inform almost any decision NSW makes regarding live-fire training and that's how La Posta continues to be developed as well.

The proximity of a range to an operator's command allows him to train frequently without requiring him to leave family and friends any more than necessary. Primacy refers to NSW's access to the range - if too many personnel from outside the community have access to it, scheduling conflicts can cut down on training time. Privacy, of course, is the ability to train in secret, which cuts to the core of what it means to work in special operations.

Beyond the three P's, a range is created organically, borne of legitimate needs identified by operators and trainers. A trainer who notes that training could be bolstered with enhanced facilities would submit his recommendation for an improvement through a chain of command leading to Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command, where it would be reviewed and evaluated. In some cases, improvements to existing structures provide the most cost and time-effective means of meeting training requirements. In others - as was the case at La Posta - new ranges must be

built. The value of either option is determined by evaluating both price and functionality, but in every instance, the mission is the priority.

“We design our ranges,” says Paul Farr, NSW’s range operations manager, “based on training requirements.”

Really, the start of the process is that straightforward. If a new facility is required, money is requested through the U.S. Special Operations Command and ultimately considered by Congress. If it passes, a new military construction project, or MILCON, can begin. La Posta’s new facilities will consist of two separate MILCONs, such is the complexity of the undertaking.

From there, a facilities code handbook guides many of the decisions being made. The handbook lays out requirements for the construction of virtually any new structure in extraordinary detail. If a building will include offices, ergonomic guidelines determine the size of the cubicles that will be built.

“It makes it very easy,” Farr says of the book.

What comes next is more complicated. Each range must be safe, which sounds at once simple and obvious. Though range safety officers supervise each range exercise, they cannot protect against every dangerous situation. So every range must be built to handle a negligent discharge in which a shooter pulls the trigger when his weapon is aimed above an outdoor range’s intended limit. Even a round from an M9 pistol can travel nearly 2,000 meters, which means all of that land must be protected and kept clear of people. If aircraft frequently fly overhead, someone must work to monitor flight paths and ensure no rounds are fired that could hit a plane or helicopter. Further, the definition of a range is broader than the popular conception of an open area with stationary targets at which to aim - for operators, dynamic targets and rooms with doors and angles mimic what they might see in a hostile environment and therefore can’t be ignored in training. On indoor ranges, and especially in kill houses, in which multiple shooters might be operating, walls must be of a precise thickness and designed to eliminate hazardous bullet fragmentation and ricochet.

And those are just the fundamentals. For every contingency there is a contingency, and men like Francis must carefully monitor each step of a construction project.

At one point during Francis’ walk-through on this day, he notices something amiss. On a wall across one range, he sees a thick piece of rubber that seems out of place. This is significant, because when a bullet passes through the material, the rubber expands and then shrinks back almost to its original dimensions so any shrapnel is caught between the steel wall and the rubber guard; the result is that bullet holes end up looking like pin pricks. It’s a critical safety mechanism for operators, and one that must be regularly evaluated. On this day, no maintenance is scheduled, but that



Barry Francis, right, the Naval Special Warfare Group One range director, discusses the construction of a new shooting range with a contractor at the La Posta Mountain Warfare Training Facility.

doesn’t mean Francis can ignore something that looks wrong.

He walks over and inspects the questionable piece, pushes and pulls it to test its functionality, and only after finding it satisfactory does he move on. Later, on the drive home, he remembers the incident as an example of how pieces fit together on a range, both literally and figuratively.

“Realistically,” he asks, “is that RSO going to lift that piece of rubber and check that it’s good to go? No, he’s not, and he shouldn’t be involved in that. That’s our job.”

On Barry Francis’ desk is a small, framed picture of a butterfly. Beneath the image are the words, “Know your enemy.”

Know this: Barry Francis does not hate butterflies. But the picture is a not-so-subtle reminder that building a range can be sensitive business, and even butterflies must be considered in the process. If fulfilling training requirements toward mission success is the ultimate goal of a range, butterflies can, in fact, present something of an issue. Not a problem, per se - an issue. The military, contrary to what many might believe, is quickly becoming one of the biggest and best protectors of natural resources in the country.

Just this year, several major media outlets ran stories about this exact phenomenon. National Public Radio ran a story titled, “Military quietly becoming a major environmental steward.” A Los Angeles Times article, “On Navy’s San Clemente Island, endangered species stage a comeback,” looked at a range off the coast of Southern California. The Washington Post picked up an Associated Press story and ran it under the headline, “Home on bombing range: Some endangered species thrive on military training ranges.” All three stories focused on the military’s unique

ability to preserve natural habitats for both plants and animals. Remember all that open space required of an outdoor range to ensure no one gets hit by a stray bullet? That regulation serves a second purpose: in keeping it free of development, it becomes one of the best existing guarantors of long-term stability for threatened species. Coupled with an increased awareness about specific environmental concerns (certain Marines at Camp Pendleton, for example, undergo training to help care for endangered tortoises there) surface danger zones, as the undeveloped areas are termed, remain flourishing, diverse landscapes.

La Posta is no exception. Here, wildfire is a primary concern. While naturally-occurring fire is an integral part of the ecosystem, man-made fire -- say, the kind that could be caused by a carelessly tossed cigarette or from a lack of understanding about the heat produced in weapons training -- could be disastrous. La Posta has held up its end of the environmental deal, working to both preserve delicate habitats and avoiding any major fires.

"If the next fire that burns down the county runs through here, that would be bad," Francis says, alluding to major San Diego wildfires in 2003 and 2007. "But not as bad as if the point of origin is here.

Despite the challenges of firing live ammunition during training, it is an irreplaceable part of an operator's development.

Randy Jackson, the Naval Special Warfare range programs manager, says nothing can replace shooting live ammunition for developing combat readiness.

"If you're using live rounds it changes the whole mindset of the training environment," he said. "Realistic live-fire training is invaluable for combat readiness."

The goal, he said, is for operators to get training as close to what they'll see in theater as possible.

"When you're in a combat environment," he said, "it's so second-nature that your instincts just kick in."

That's the goal for every mission. It's a lofty ambition, and not always possible on rapidly-changing battlefields. But the men who operate within a maze of safety regulations, environmental concerns, and budgetary constraints do their jobs so that when an NSW operator looks down the barrel of an M-4, he's thinking only about his target, and not about any of the myriad obstacles that might have otherwise prevented him from accomplishing his objective.

What begins with a recommendation for new training facilities from NSW operators becomes an evaluation of the training requirements themselves, which morphs into an examination of resources required, which turns into a request for improvements, which prompts an analysis of existing and forthcoming budgets, which spurs environmental research and land and facility requirements, which finally gives way to actual construction.

It's exhausting.

It's necessary.

The two MILCONs at La Posta are nearing completion. On the day Francis walks through, a young man named Joe Noriega is tightening bolts on a wall that will someday be able to absorb rounds from an M-4 without releasing so much as a single dangerous fragment of stray metal. Noriega is a civilian just like the laborers on any number of other jobs in San Diego county -- the difference is that he's building a structure that will have a lasting impact on the way his country wages war for years to come.

"It feels good," he says.

Behind the future, there are plans. Behind those plans, there are people.

We like to believe that the future is, as the saying goes, unwritten -- that men and women cannot shape it from where they now sit. And perhaps they cannot. But the story of a shooting range is really a story about what it means for a small team to work and turn the unpredictable into the predictable -- to control, to whatever degree is humanly possible, situations others previously dismissed as fate or chance.

At the heart of the story is the question of what it means to conduct special warfare around the world. It's a story about what is gained when a man with a gun is as prepared as he can possibly be to protect and defend the United States.

The future may be unwritten, yes, but in Naval Special Warfare offices around the country, men and women are working quietly to sketch its direction.



A Navy SEAL qualification training student practices room entry skills May 15 during an instructional block on close quarters combat.



AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



Master Sgt. Doug Neville, left, and Staff Sgt. Brian Wadtke, 22nd Special Tactics Squadron combat controllers, pose for a photo during a rest stop on the way to Camp Muir, July 20. Neville and Wadtke are the first Airmen to climb with the U.S. Air Force Seven Summits Team as part of their new “Climbing for Warriors” program.

Two combat controllers hike with USAF Seven Summits Team

**Story and photos by Air Force Staff Sgt. Jason Truskowski
62nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs**

For some, hiking and climbing for days, and sometimes months, through some of the harshest environments known to man, would seem like an arduous task.

Two Airmen from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., experienced just that as they summited Mount Rainier, Wash., July 19 - 22.

Staff Sgt. Brian Wadtke and Master Sgt. Doug Neville, combat controllers assigned to the 22nd Special Tactics Squadron, participated in the first trip of the U.S. Air Force Seven Summits Challenge, “Climbing for Warriors” project.

Maj. Rob Marshall, a CV-22 Osprey acceptance pilot, and Maj. Mark Uberuaga, an Air Command and Staff College student, are the co-founders of the team and are part-masterminds behind “Climbing for Warriors.”

“This new program is aimed at helping Airmen overcome

physical and mental challenges and to introduce them to the healing powers of the mountains,” Marshall said. “Whether they have been wounded in combat, sustained a work-related injury or are just battling seasonal depression and tough times, we want to teach them the coping skills that come from time in the high mountains.”

Wadtke went through numerous surgeries to repair his shoulder and nose after a combat incident and a routine training mission accident.

“This is a test to show myself I can still perform despite being injured,” he said.

Neville incurred numerous injuries while deployed to Southwest Asia and is unable to return to duty. He has served 19 years in the military and is only four months away from retirement.

“Getting back into a camaraderie-style atmosphere and being a part of the Seven Summits Team is awesome,” he said. “This team accomplished a lot and promotes everything

the Air Force stands for.”

Both Wadtke and Neville have undergone months of physical therapy and strength building exercises in an effort to regain their ability to serve in the military at peak performance.

“I speak for Doug and me, but we want to thank the 22nd STS medical staff, strength coach and physical therapist,” Wadtke said. “They are the reason we could both do this hike.”

Wadtke and Neville met up with the Seven Summits Team in Ashford, Wash., July 19. The evening began with a relaxed dinner and shared personal stories about troubling times in all of their lives and how they overcame or are currently overcoming those boundaries.

After collecting gear from a local Ashford, Wash., mountain guide outfitter, the team leader for the Mount Rainier summit, Uberuaga, and other team members instructed Wadtke and Neville how to do gear functional checks and properly stuff their packs for proper weight distribution and comfort.

The next day began early with breakfast and one final pack check before carpooling 20 miles to Paradise, Mount Rainier. Arriving at Paradise, the team registered for their summit and overnight accommodations at Camp Muir and marched with their packs, single-file, toward the visitor’s center.

Marshall, with his Seven Summits Challenge T-shirt, rallied the 12-man team and took a knee as he read one of his favorite inspirational quotes from an old tattered tan-colored book. Marshall carries the book with him on his trips to help inspire him and others as they face challenges on the mountains.

The U.S. flag and Air Force flag were held up for group shots and everyone on the team smiled bright as a volunteer took the group’s photo. Those passing by stopped and tried to figure out what was going on.

“We are an unofficial Air Force climbing team and are embarking on our first trip in a new program for wounded warriors,” said Marshall.

With trekking poles in hand, Wadtke and Neville joined the hiking line headed toward Camp Muir. The trek to Camp Muir took roughly six hours with the team taking 10-minute comfort breaks each hour to eat snacks, hydrate and make clothing adjustments.

Maj. Grayden Muller, a helicopter pilot from the 6th Special Operations Squadron at Hurlburt Field, Fla., taught pressure breathing, the proper way to walk on snow and trail etiquette at each of the predetermined stops.

Arriving at the Muir Snow Field, the pace turned almost into a crawl as the elevation steepened drastically. Team members were carrying 40 to 50 pound packs depending on what they were required to carry. Every step forward was planned and executed carefully. Overall, the trek up was slow, but steady as the team traveled the 4.5 miles with a total elevation gain of 4,680 feet.

Staff Sgt. Savanna Wadtke, a member of the 627th Force Support Squadron commander’s support staff, joined her husband on the hike up to Camp Muir.

“This is something that my husband has had on his ‘bucket list’ and he wanted me to join him for moral and inspirational support,” she said. “I felt proud of him because he had that huge pack and even with his injury he kept on going. It was great to see him overcome those obstacles.”

The entire team made it to Camp Muir just before dinner time and began setting up tents at the snow covered camp July 21. The team recovered from their previous day’s arduous hike and various team members taught Wadtke and Neville self-arrest techniques (stopping yourself if you fall on snow/ice), crampon skills and crevasse travel/rescue.

At midnight July 22, the team hit the moon lit snow with headlamps and required gear as they made the final push to the 14,411-foot summit. They returned from Camp Muir to Ashford, Wash., July 23.



Master Sgt. Doug Neville, 22nd Special Tactics Squadron combat controller, leads the climb through the Muir Snow Field, July 20. The U.S. Air Force Seven Summits Team took four days to summit Mount Rainier.



Historic World War II Marine Raiders visit MARSOC headquarters

*By Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Robert Storm
MARSOC Public Affairs*

Passengers disembarked from buses, heading toward the lobby of U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command Headquarters. The few surviving Marine Raiders, accompanied by their friends and families, mingled with MARSOC active duty Marines as they made their way into the building's auditorium. Despite the appearance of this commonplace event, the occasion was far from ordinary. The day marked an important moment in the history of MARSOC. Marine Raiders, the precursor to U.S. Special Forces and present day MARSOC, met with Critical Skill Operators and Special Operations Officers to share in their heritage.

The U.S. Marine Raider Association and Foundation organized the annual Raider Reunion in the coastal Carolina area, Aug. 14 - 17, with MARSOC providing a one-day exposition at its compound. Guests also participated in three other events consisting of a social gathering in downtown Wilmington, a fish fry aboard the USS North Carolina and a banquet, of which Gen. James F. Amos, Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, was the guest of honor.

While at MARSOC Headquarters, Marines provided the former Raiders with insight into U.S. Marine Corps Special Operations. The Raiders also received clarification on MARSOC's structure and functionality, encompassing all its components. Multi-purpose canine handlers and communications specialists exhibited their capabilities, and offered background information on their roles in MARSOC.

After the exhibit, the Raiders gathered at the front of the auditorium and engaged MARSOC personnel in a question-and-answer session. During the session, Marines and Sailors received a firsthand account of the Raiders' experiences and history.

"There were many, many exciting things that happened -- Many that should be forgotten, and will be forgotten," said Pat Almond, 4th Battalion, Headquarters Company, Delta Company and Quebec Company. "But,



Former Marine Raiders gathered at U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command Headquarters for the annual Raider Reunion, Aug. 15. MARSOC invited the surviving Raiders, accompanied by their families, to Camp Lejeune for an inside look at the unit and its Special Operations capabilities. The Raiders were precursors to the development of U.S. Special Operations and MARSOC embraces their rich heritage. Photo by Lance Cpl. Steven Fox.

they were one of the finest groups of men ever assembled."

A correlation was drawn between MARSOC and the Marine Raiders when MARSOC was first being developed. Retired Marine Colonel James Jiles Kyser IV, former Director of the Marine Air Ground Task Force, Special Operations Section, at Headquarters Marine Corps, played a major role in the conception of Detachment 1, which later became MARSOC.

“We all considered the Raiders to be our ancestors, so to speak, in the reconnaissance community, and in the Special Operations community,” said Kyser. “To us, it was an obvious connection to the Marine Raiders of World War II. And, when we put together the logo for Det 1, we made sure that the Raider patch was on there, because we wanted that lineage to live on through Det 1.”

The lineage that MARSOC would come to exemplify began when the U.S. Marine Corps created two Marine Raider battalions during World War II, as America’s answer to the British Commandos. The 1st and 2nd battalions possessed capabilities of conducting conventional amphibious light infantry warfare, and performing independent raids behind Japanese lines.

Raider units were comprised of volunteers who were only inducted into the units after a screening process. Due to the heavy combat the battalions were experiencing while fighting the Japanese in the Pacific, the Raiders wanted only the most willing and capable men available.

Joseph Hoitt, who served in the 1st and 2nd Raider Battalions with Headquarters Company, and Hotel Company, said, “From the very beginning, when I had heard of December the 7th, and the Japanese bombing Pearl Harbor, I had a desire to do everything I could to fight the Japanese and help teach them not to trouble with the United States -- That they were not in the same league as we were.”

Hoitt explained he joined the Marine Corps so he could serve his country and engage the Japanese in combat. When he deployed to the Pacific, Hoitt received the opportunity to become a Raider, which he saw as the finest unit the Marines had to offer.

“I went overseas in a replacement battalion and they called for volunteers to join the Raiders to fill casualties that occurred in Bougainville,” said Hoitt. Hoitt said he sought out the recruitment roster, and signed it immediately.

The Raiders utilized small teams of men to more effectively combat gorilla warfare and conduct raids behind enemy lines. This appealed to former Raider Chuck Meachum, 3rd Battalion, Kilo Company, who applied his team effort experiences he received playing high school sports, to team effort in a combat zone, he said.

“Suddenly, I could say I could be a part of a unit that I have some feeling for -- could get around, rather than

this humungous Marine Corps that I really couldn’t visualize,” said Meachum. “I said, ‘that sounds good for this country boy.’ I was all for it.”

“You really only knew your buddies on the left and right-hand side of you,” said Meachum.

He went on to say each Marine was willing to give his life for the other, thus, creating an unshakable camaraderie.

Herold Berg, 1st Battalion, Bravo Company, explained that it was very important to avoid focusing on all the death they saw.

“We’ve seen a lot of our friends killed -- Seen a lot of them badly injured,” said Berg. “That’s one of the reasons we get together. I think it’s very important to stay busy.”

Since there are only a small amount of Raiders left, the surviving former Marines look to MARSOC to carry on their legacy, said Meachum.

“If we’re going to continue on, we have to somehow meld with someone,” he said. “And the MARSOC boys are well trained, and great Marines. I’d feel an honor if we melded with the MARSOC folks.”

The Marine Raiders disbanded in February, 1942. Though the elite unit only existed for two years, those former Marines and Sailors have forever immortalized themselves in American history for their distinguished service, and their invaluable contribution to U.S. Special Operations.



Maj. Gen. Mark A. Clark (center), MARSOC commander, talks with a World War II Marine Raider aboard the USS North Carolina. Photo by Lance Cpl. Steven Fox.



U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - HEADQUARTERS

USSOCOM Logistics Soldier honored by 75th Ranger Regiment

*By Marine Corps Master Sgt. F. B. Zimmerman
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

An active-duty member of U.S. Special Operations Command's logistics directorate was recently honored by his previous command by naming him to an elite group of members who have helped carve the unit's prestigious history.

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Billy Frazier Jr., the USSOCOM property management officer, was named a distinguished member of the 75th Ranger Regiment during a July 23 ceremony at Fort Benning, Ga., which was part of the Ranger Rendezvous.

Soldiers are named as distinguished members of the 75th Ranger Regiment for their outstanding accomplishments while assigned to the unit.

Frazier first served with the Regiment in 1994 as a company supply sergeant with Bravo Company, 3rd Ranger Battalion, after completing initial Ranger training. While there, he deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in support of operation Uphold Democracy. Frazier stayed in the regiment, serving with Headquarters, Headquarters Company, as the company supply sergeant from 1996 to 1997, until his selection to attend Warrant Officer Candidate School.

Fast forward to 2008, and Frazier was back on his old stomping grounds with the regiment, this time serving as the regimental property book officer as a chief warrant officer 4. He served there until February 2013, and it was during that time he played a key role in shaping the logistics future of the unit, earning him the distinguished member honors.

Frazier and his team changed the way supply kept the logistics train moving, ensuring the warfighters of the regiment had the proper equipment and were always ready for the next mission.

"We looked at a lot of things from an operational perspective – made sure logistics tied into the operational picture," Frazier said. "Back in the day we were more in a training environment, where now we are in an operational environment. We have to make sure the systems are able



Chief Warrant Officer 5 Billy Frazier Jr. and his wife, Katina, pose for a photo after the ceremony where he was named a distinguished member of the 75th Ranger Regiment. Courtesy photo.

to support that, but are just as flexible and efficient so when we get guys back, we get them through the reset process, training process, op-alert and then back into the fight."

Frazier said one way they did that was by building three Ranger Issue Facilities (RIFs) – supply warehouses designed for Rangers and stocked with all the gear needed

for their training and deployments. The facilities replaced an old way of doing business – issuing gear out of shipping containers in the elements, whether raining or cold. The new facilities keep the Rangers from the elements, and give them a comfortable place to receive gear, which can often take hours.

“What we found is that we needed to build a facility Rangers could go to and be comfortable, because there’s a long wait time, but more importantly make sure they know that facility is there for them,” said Frazier, a soldier of 25 years. “It’s not a [Central Issue Facility], it’s shaped in particular for them and their mission, not only in garrison but also forward.

“The RIFs are a collaborative effort among all the logisticians in the regiment,” Frazier added. “I see that facility as one of the fundamental pieces of the regiment because it’s a cornerstone ... because it actually ensures that the individual Ranger, when he gets in that aircraft, he has all the necessary kit he needs to do his mission set.”

In addition to building the facilities, Frazier and his fellow logisticians took a look at the property books and ensured they were updated to reflect the gear Rangers currently need and use. He said that by doing so, it took pressure off of the company commanders who sign for the gear.

“We needed to figure out if we’re being efficient, if we were providing relief of pressure on the force,” Frazier said. “If you have a company commander coming off deployment that’s spending all his reset time doing inventories – are we really efficient? Is he counting widgets just to count widgets, or is he counting widgets that he actually needs?”

The solution Frazier and his staff came up with was taking items off the inventory that weren’t being used operationally. This took the responsibility of accounting for gear that wasn’t being used downrange off of commanders, whose property books now only included the gear they actually needed, as well as helping to mitigate losses. Frazier said this helped align P-11 assets – Special Operations Forces Equipment – and made authorizations visible in the service system, allowing

commanders to see all the gear they are authorized to have.

By reducing the table of organization and equipment, Frazier and his staff were able to take approximately 300 pieces of “rolling stock” off the books within a two-year period.

“Now company commanders, supply sergeants, platoon sergeants aren’t out there inventorying Humvees that they’ll never use in combat, just for the sake of inventorying,” Frazier said. “We shrunk the books down to the right size.”

While Frazier was honored by the recognition, he’s

also very humble, and repeatedly said this recognition wasn’t about him.

“I only did my job as a Ranger, but more importantly our logistical success over the past four-and-a-half years is due to the 75th Ranger Regiment’s leadership throughout, from the team leaders and above,” he said. “It was the support

of the regimental commander, regimental [command sergeant major], the regimental staff, battalion leadership, logisticians, and Rangers at all levels ... as well as our exceptional civilian counterparts within the team. Success also is directly tied to the superb support from higher such as the USASOC Headquarters, as well as the USSOCOM staff.

“It was an honor and a privilege to be part of the regiment, because every day I was able to go to work and look my heroes directly in the face. Those guys are doing a tremendous amount of work in the [area of responsibility], and they are modern-day heroes ... guys that have written our history in a lot of ways. Just to be a part of that was an honor and privilege.”

And while Frazier was honored to work with his heroes, he was even more honored for the respect shown to him when he was honored in his job as a logistician.

“Just to be on stage with [the fellow honorees at this year’s ceremony] was eye-watering to me because you have proven combat veterans that haven’t just done it once, twice or three times, they’ve done it 10, 11 or 12 times,” Frazier said. “So to be acknowledged in that forum and be part of that family ... it was very overwhelming.”

“Just to be on stage with [the fellow honorees at this year’s ceremony] was eye-watering to me because you have proven combat veterans that haven’t just done it once, twice or three times, they’ve done it 10, 11 or 12 times.”

— Chief Warrant Officer 5 Billy Frazier Jr.

USSOCOM marks 20th anniversary of the 'Mogadishu Mile'

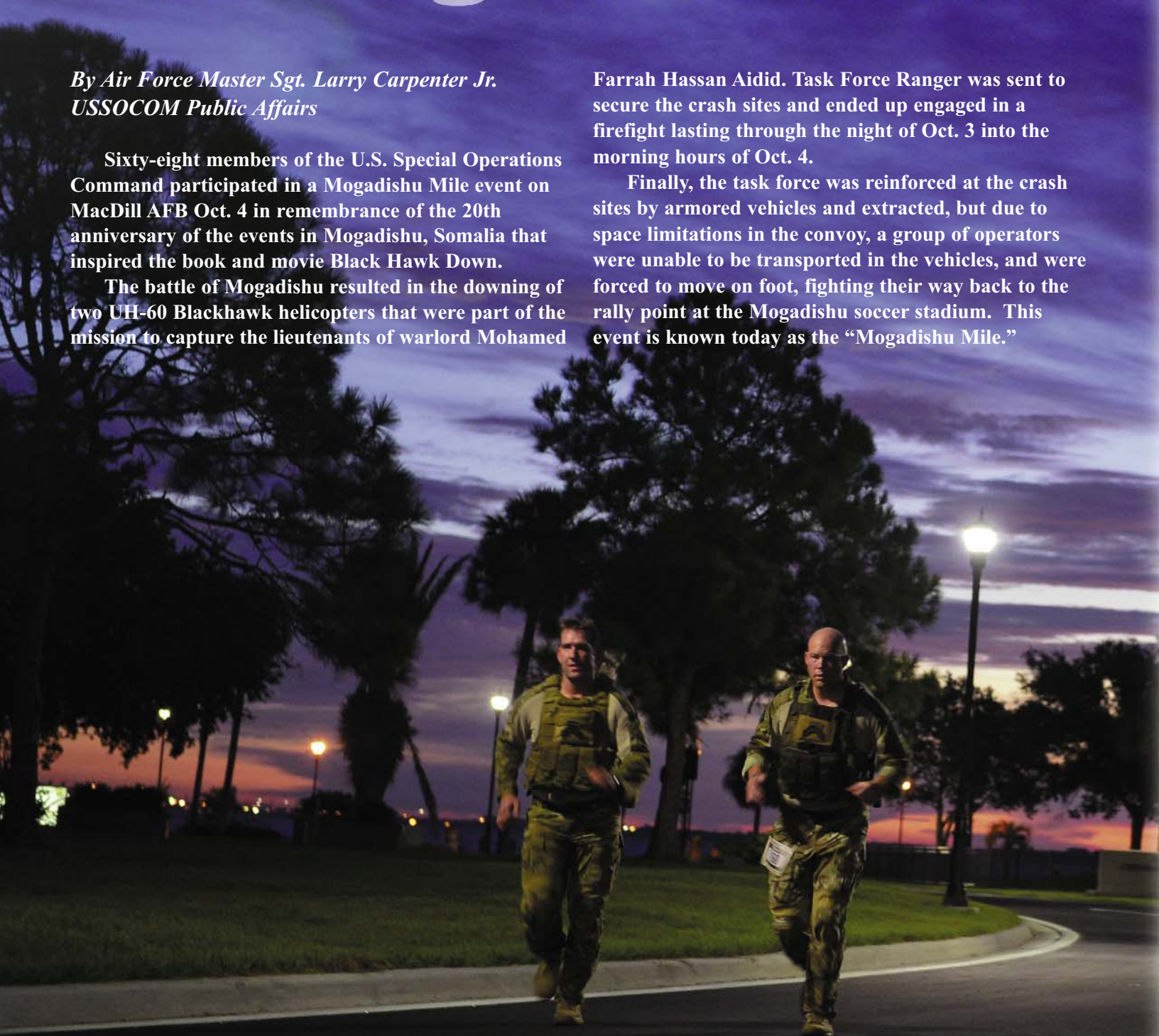
*By Air Force Master Sgt. Larry Carpenter Jr.
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

Sixty-eight members of the U.S. Special Operations Command participated in a Mogadishu Mile event on MacDill AFB Oct. 4 in remembrance of the 20th anniversary of the events in Mogadishu, Somalia that inspired the book and movie *Black Hawk Down*.

The battle of Mogadishu resulted in the downing of two UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters that were part of the mission to capture the lieutenants of warlord Mohamed

Farrah Hassan Aidid. Task Force Ranger was sent to secure the crash sites and ended up engaged in a firefight lasting through the night of Oct. 3 into the morning hours of Oct. 4.

Finally, the task force was reinforced at the crash sites by armored vehicles and extracted, but due to space limitations in the convoy, a group of operators were unable to be transported in the vehicles, and were forced to move on foot, fighting their way back to the rally point at the Mogadishu soccer stadium. This event is known today as the "Mogadishu Mile."



Sgt. 1st Class Kyle Margelofsky and Sgt. 1st Class Justin Scofield, assigned to U.S. Special Operations Command, participate in the Mogadishu Mile Run, MacDill AFB, Fla., on Oct. 4. The Mogadishu Mile Run was held in memory of the 20th anniversary of the men who lost their lives during the battle of Mogadishu in Somalia. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Angelita M. Lawrence.

The event concluded when members of the SOF community gathered at the Special Operations Forces memorial to honor the memories of Task Force Ranger in the battle of Mogadishu, in which 16 Special Operators and two additional U.S. service members on the convoy made the ultimate sacrifice, with an additional 80 wounded, and 1 aviator captured. It is estimated that Task Force Ranger inflicted 1,500 casualties on the enemy during this one engagement.

At the event to commemorate the 20th anniversary, 34 teams of two, or “Ranger Buddies,” gathered in the early morning hours for friendly competition. Teams first accomplished 18 push-ups before sprinting 200 meters to the firing range where they were required to engage four different targets, with each team member taking two shots at each. Participants then completed a 5K run to the SOF Memorial outside the USSOCOM headquarters.

“The purpose of the event was to get members of SOCOM to come together and pay tribute and remember those that were lost during the first Battle of Mogadishu, 3 to 4 October, 1993,” said Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Zirbel, Military Information Support Operations, Operations Non-Commissioned Officer and co-event organizer.” We wanted to challenge the participants with a good physical event, and then reflect on sacrifices made by our brothers-in-arms.”

The event was highlighted with some remarks from SOCOM Command Sgt. Maj. Chris Faris, a Special Operator who participated in the battle 20 years ago.

“As a veteran of this conflict, seeing everybody here, thank you so much for honoring our fallen, because that’s what this was all about,” said Faris.

Faris stated that Oct. 3 is always a hard day for him - a day that he remembers in honor of all the men that paid the last full measure a service member can.

“Thank you all for doing this, I’m very humbled, I’m very moved,” Faris said. “Last night we [Faris with his wife Lisa] walked up here to the SOF Memorial, where I had a chance to talk to all my friends up here on the wall. Everybody that fought, and gave that last full measure to the man on their left and their right, thank you for remembering them and never letting them ever, ever be forgotten.”

Having a veteran from Task Force Ranger on hand added a significant impact on this special event.

“Having such a highly respected leader such as CSM Faris volunteer his time to come speak at the Memorial, meant the world to those not only involved in the planning, but the participants as well,” said Zirbel. “His powerful words reinforced the intent of the event, which was to honor the fallen and never forget that we fight for the man or woman to our left and our right.”



Command Sgt. Major Chris Faris, Senior Enlisted Advisor to U.S. Special Operations Command, speaks during the Mogadishu Mile Run Ceremony, MacDill AFB, Fla., on Oct. 4. As a member of Task Force Ranger, CSM Farris recalled moments 20 years ago during the battle of Mogadishu in Somalia. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Angelita M. Lawrence.

The ceremony concluded with the reading of the names of the fallen in the Battle of Mogadishu:

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Donovan “Bull” Briley
 Staff Sgt. Daniel Busch
 Specialist James Cavaco
 Staff Sgt. William Cleveland
 Staff Sgt. Thomas Field
 Sgt. 1st Class Earl Fillmore
 Chief Warrant Officer 4 Raymond Frank
 Master Sgt. Gary Gordon – Medal of Honor recipient
 Sgt. Cornell Houston
 Sgt. Casey Joyce
 Pfc. Richard Kowalewski
 Pfc. James Martin Jr.
 Master Sgt. Tim Martin
 Sgt. Dominick Pilla
 Sgt. 1st Class Matt Rierson*
 Sgt. Lorenzo Ruiz
 Sgt. 1st Class Randy Shughart – Medal of Honor recipient
 Corporal Jamie Smith
 Chief Warrant Officer 3 Clifton “Elvis” Wolcott

*Killed in a mortar attack two days after the battle



U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - HEADQUARTERS



USSOCOM Command Sgt. Major Chris Faris addresses the inaugural graduating class of Joint Special Operations University's newest course entitled Joint Fundamentals. The Joint Fundamentals Course is open to E-6 Special Operators and enablers. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Angelita Lawrence

JSOU Enlisted Academy completes pilot Joint Fundamentals Course

*By Anna-Marie Wyant
Joint Special Operations University*

On Sept. 12, the Joint Special Operations University Enlisted Academy concluded the pilot for its newest course, Joint Fundamentals, with a graduation at the Davis Conference Center on base.

The Enlisted Academy originally focused on professional military education for E-8 and E-9 Special Operations Forces and enablers. Since then it has greatly expanded to include four separate SOF-focused courses: Joint Fundamentals, Enterprise Management, Joint Special Operations Forces Senior Enlisted Academy and the Summit Course. The Joint Fundamentals Course, which is open to E-6 special operators and enablers, is the first step of the new Career Education Program.

The initial idea for this program began in 2006, said

retired Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Smith, former command sergeant major for U.S. Special Operations Command.

"I realized that we needed to change our education in the SOF community," Smith said. "We came up with the curriculum for JSOFSEA as a solution to our problems based on a holistic educational requirement."

JSOFSEA, a six-month distance learning, two-month in-residence course, was the first step toward that requirement. During the JSOFSEA pilot, however, students expressed a need for some of this knowledge earlier in their careers. Retired Sgt. Maj. Kent Dolasky, former course director for Joint Fundamentals and former JSOFSEA commandant, said one Navy SEAL senior chief petty officer commented, "I wish I would have known this stuff 10 years ago," referring to the information he was learning in just the first day of the pilot.

Dolasky said it made sense to begin this educational program for E-6 operators because prior to reaching that grade, SOF should be focusing on their operational tasks.

“The E-6 level is where you become a ‘career operator’ or someone who could very well stick around for the long haul. This is the trigger point for career education,” Dolasky said.

The Joint Fundamentals Course curriculum includes lessons on creative thinking; communication; USSOCOM history, uniqueness, core operations and enterprise; cultural agility; ethical thinking; preservation of the force and family; and career education.

“The course prepares students to assume leadership roles at the tactical level, focusing on small-unit operations in SOF operating environments that include joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational actors,” Dolasky said.

Preservation of the Force and Families is one of the four lines of operation that Adm. William McRaven, USSOCOM commander, has outlined for the command. JSOU Enlisted Academy commandant Sgt. Maj. Steven Horsley said Joint Fundamentals, known as CEP-1, will be an eight-week distance learning course rather than in-residence to give the students more flexibility, thus reducing the stress on the force.

“We can distribute the products to the service members at home, where they can be with their families, work at their own pace, and still receive rigorous education,” Horsley said.

Smith said McRaven and Command Sgt. Maj. Chris Faris, USSOCOM command sergeant major, have been extremely supportive of the Enlisted Academy’s expansion from JSOFSEA to the Career Education Program.

“They have always been huge advocates of JSOFSEA and true believers of educating the force,” Smith said. “They wanted to build on that; they wanted to have that continuum.”

For the pilot, students were brought in-residence for the ability to give immediate, direct feedback to instructors and facilitators; the students also served as course evaluators. Dolasky said the pilot ran smoothly, and students remained engaged and interested.

“The students were extremely professional and mature,” Dolasky said. “Although we worried about overwhelming the students with too much information, they asked for more and delivered more interaction than we expected.”

During the eight-day pilot course, the students wrote nearly 1,200 discussion postings on Blackboard, the online

education platform JSOU uses for distance learning.

Dolasky said the students thought the subject matter was relevant and important to their jobs. The pilot proved to be a learning experience for both the students and the instructors. He said student feedback for the course was very positive.

“The students completely embraced the pilot course and begged to get their subordinates enrolled,” Dolasky said.

The students rated the course content as 4.8 on a 5-point scale, which according to JSOU survey data was off the charts scales for a pilot course.

The first iteration of the course is slated to begin in January and will be open to SOF and SOF enablers. Enrollment is limited to 100 students per iteration, and there will be five iterations per year. Spreading the word about the course can be a challenge; word-of-mouth recommendations tend to be the best way to provoke interest.

“Our best advocates are our students,” Horsley said.

Smith has watched the Enlisted Academy evolve since its inception, and he said he is proud of the way it has grown. He said making positive changes in the way enlisted SOF are educated is the highlight of his career. With former USSOCOM commander Adm. Eric Olson’s full support and the help of Dolasky and retired Sgt. Maj. Ken Wolf, Smith was able to create JSOFSEA, the first SOF-specific, multiservice enlisted PME, which has proven to be immensely successful.

“If there was ever a legacy I could be happy with and proud of for my own personal satisfaction, it’s that I saw that need, I pushed it, and I had an admiral that backed me up 100 percent,” Smith said.

As the Enlisted Academy expands, the original curriculum for JSOFSEA will also evolve. Smith, Dolasky and Horsley agree that these changes are in the right direction.

The Enlisted Academy will have one more pilot course before the program is complete: Enterprise Management, or CEP-2, which will begin in March. This course for E-7 operators and enablers will follow the eight-week distance learning model from CEP-1. As Dolasky focuses on the design and development of the Enterprise Management Course, retired Master Gunnery Sgt. Ronald Geiger is putting the final touches on the Joint Fundamentals course. Geiger, the newly appointed course director of Joint Fundamentals, assisted in course development and executed the pilot course as the lead instructor.





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3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne)



Army Staff Sgt. Timothy R. McGill
19th Special Forces Group (Airborne)



Army Staff Sgt. Liam J. Nevins
19th Special Forces Group (Airborne)



Army Sgt. Joshua J. Strickland
1st Special Forces Group (Airborne)

An MH-47G Chinook and an MH-60M Blackhawk from 4th Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) and a B-25 Bomber fly in formation during a historic flight over the scenic Pacific Northwest August 26. The aircraft were part of a flight to celebrate the history and advancements of Army Aviation. Photo by John M. Dibbs.

