



TIP OF THE SPEAR



**320TH STS AIRMEN
CONDUCT AMPHIBIOUS TRAINING**

U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLA., OCTOBER 2015



U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



**320th Special Tactics Airmen
conduct amphibious training ... 20**

Tip of the Spear



**Thomas Jefferson
Award Winner**

**Army Gen. Joseph Votel
Commander, USSOCOM**

**CSM Bill Thetford
Command Sergeant Major**

Army Col. Tom Davis
**Special Operations
Communication Office Director**

Mike Bottoms
Managing Editor

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Gunnery Sgt. Reina Barnett
Staff NCOIC
Command Information

Tech. Sgt. Angelita Lawrence
Staff Writer/Photographer

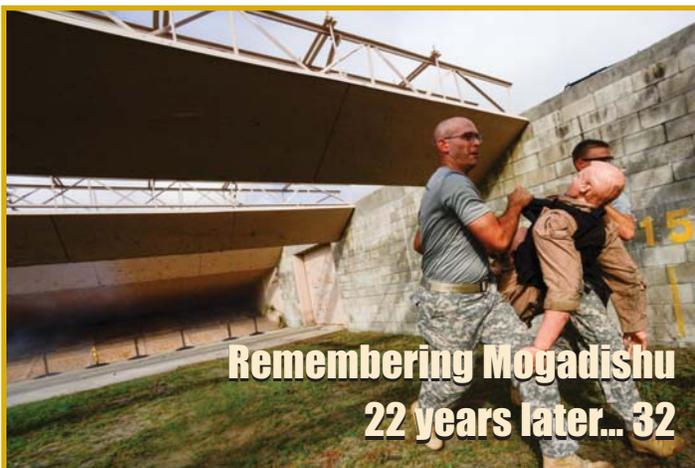
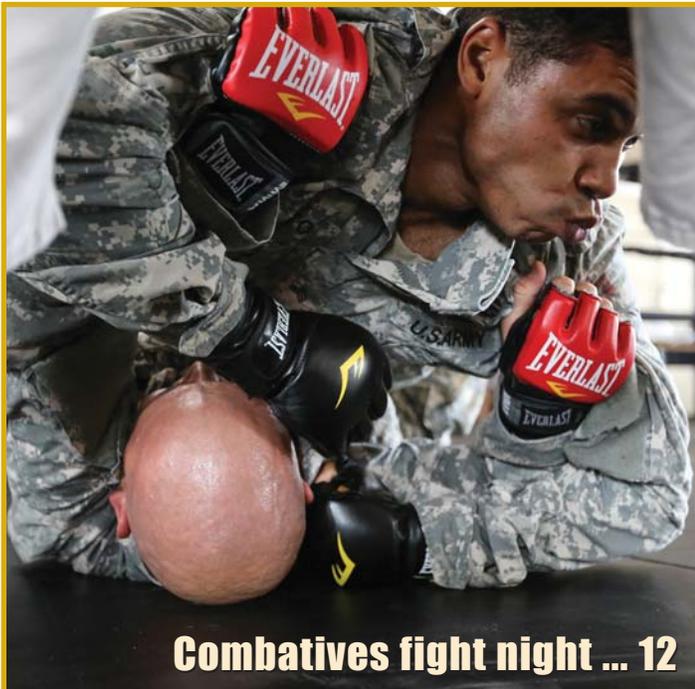
Army Staff Sgt. Mark Shrewsbury
Staff Writer/Photographer

Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Jayson Price
Staff Writer/Photographer

Tech. Sgt. Heather Kelly
Staff Writer/Photographer

(Cover) Airmen from the 320th Special Tactics Squadron, Kadena Air Base, Japan, perform a helo-casting jump out of a U.S. Air Force HH-60G Pave Hawk from the 33rd Rescue Squadron during an amphibious operations exercise Sept. 22, off the West Coast of Okinawa, Japan. Team members are qualified in non-standard methods of infiltration to include, static line, military freefall, and closed and open circuit diving. Photo by Senior Airman John Linzmeier.

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USSOCOM German liaison officers take part in record formation skydive

Seventy-one skydivers exit aircraft from a height of 5,400 meters (nearly 18,000 feet), on the way to setting a world record in formation jumping, by forming and breaking four formations above Klatovy, Czech Republic, Aug. 14. German Lt. Cols. Wolfgang "Wolly" Beyer, Special Operations Liaison Officer in USSOCOM J3-International, and Frank "Franky" Hoelzner, German Special Operations Forces Liaison Officer to U.S. Army Special Operations Command, were part of the world record team. Photo by Fabrice Bertrand.



Story on next page

By Mike Bottoms
USSOCOM Public Affairs

The challenge: 72 skydivers from an altitude of 5,000 meters exit from four aircraft, first building a joint formation and then making two changes. The skydivers call these formation changes, “sequences.”

Among the jumpers are German Army Lt. Cols. Wolfgang Beyer and Frank Hoelzner. Both are liaison officers assigned to USSOCOM with Beyer working in USSOCOM’s J3-International Directorate and Hoelzner with U.S. Army Special Operations Command. Beyer and Hoelzner come from the German Army Special Operations Forces.

Both men have a passion for skydiving and have a combined total of more than 11, 000 jumps.

“Skydiving is, next to our careers, our lives,” said Beyer.

“Record setting is not in our official core mission. We train for these record attempts during our free time,” said Hoelzner.

On Aug. 14, the team came together to attempt the record. The team consisted of military and civilian skydivers with the youngest 21 years old and the oldest 68.

Getting on the team is not easy.

“This is an invitational event only, and you must be

qualified, because the organizers want to be sure the record is made,” Beyer said.

Much practice and preparation is also needed to pull off such a difficult feat.

“We do a lot of planning on the ground before you get on the airplane;” said Beyer. “It’s like giant operations planning, you have an assigned seat on the plane, a special order for the exit, a special order in descending, assigned separation groups, parachute openings at assigned altitudes. This all must be planned and practiced before attempting the record because we all want to do it safely.”

After all the planning and training, the 72-man team broke the old German record of 55 jumpers and two formations.

“We delivered a clean performance,” said Hoelzner.

The following day 71, skydivers – one less due to an injury – executed three formations during the freefall. The team held each new formation almost ten seconds.

Their final jump had a remarkable three sequences and four different formations.

“We really surpassed ourselves,” Beyer said. “Four formations is world class. No other nation in the world has done this.”

Passing on his passion for skydiving as liaison officer to SOCOM, Beyer has given out 376 German jump wings to U.S. personnel while serving as a jumpmaster on Macdill Air Force Base, Florida.

The record-breaking skydiving team complete their fourth formation above Klatovy, Czech Republic, Aug. 14. Photo by Antje Grube.



German Lt. Cols. Wolfgang “Wolly” Beyer, (Left) Special Operations Liaison Officer, Headquarters USSOCOM J3-International, and Frank “Franky” Hoelzner, German Special Operations Forces Liaison Officer to U.S. Army Special Operations Command, enjoy the success of their formation record jump in Klatovy, Czech Republic, Aug. 14. Photo by Thomas Twardy.



AIRBORNE

U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



Rangers from the 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment salute as the National Anthem is sung during a ceremony recognizing the actions of their peers and the civilians who work with them during their most recent deployment on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, Sept. 11.

Ranger Battalion honors Rangers, civilians during Sept. 11 ceremony

*Story and photos by Army Sgt. Daniel Schroeder
5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

The 2nd Ranger Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment carries decades of history and tradition with each Ranger and civilian in its ranks.

The battalion continued this tradition by recognizing commendable acts by civilians and Rangers during an awards ceremony on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, September 11.

The 75th Ranger Regiment began this tradition in 1989 in recognition of the civilians who have served the Ranger

battalion with excellence and distinction.

“There is no higher honor than to recognize excellence,” said Lt. Col. Jay Bartholomees, commander, 2nd Ranger Battalion. “We honored the sacrifice so many have given in support of our country and those civilians within our organization who have dedicated their time to bettering the unit and Rangers.”

The ceremony started with the 2nd Ranger Battalion inducting four individuals as honorary members of the Battalion. These individuals included: Mark Steiner, Jeffrey Carroll, Danny VanGalder, and Melissa Miletich.

The contributions of the inductees included founding a



Rangers from the 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment recognize the actions of their peers and civilians who work with them during an induction and awards ceremony on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, Sept. 11.

scholarship for Rangers to continue their college education, optimizing the physical and mental conditioning of each service member, maintaining the vehicles for the battalion, and creating a memorial commemorating the contributions and sacrifices for the battalion.



Lt. Col. Jay Bartholomees, commander, 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, and Command Sgt. Maj. Bernard Folino, present Danny Vangalder with a plaque after inducting him into the Honorary Members of the 2nd Ranger Battalion during an induction and awards ceremony on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., Sept. 11. Vangalder was inducted due to his actions in overseeing the load-out and maintenance of the 2nd Ranger Battalion's vehicles.

According to Bartholomees, the inductees received a commemorative plaque and a brick in the 2/75th Ranger Regiment Memorial, forever honoring their dedication and sacrifice to the unit.

After recognizing the civilians' contributions, approximately 60 Rangers received awards for their actions during their most recent deployment to Afghanistan, including some Bronze Star Medal recipients.

The Rangers encountered fierce opposition during their deployment and their actions earned the 2nd Ranger Battalion its third Valorous Unit Award, the second highest unit award in the Army.

Rangers from the 2/75th Ranger Regiment have continuously supported the war on terrorism with numerous air assaults, raids, patrols and ambushes against anti-coalition forces. The ceremony also marked the continued dedication and service of the 2nd Ranger Battalion during the past 14 years of combat in Afghanistan.

Medal of Honor recipient, retired Master Sgt. Leroy Petry, was present to witness Rangers of his former unit receive recognition.

"Being able to come back here and see my old unit still earning valorous awards for the unit as a whole and individuals was great for me," said Petry. "It's amazing to see them keeping with the unit's lineage."



Ranger grad's personal story inspires future candidates

By Danielle Wallingsford Kirkland
Courtesy of USASOC Public Affairs

Speaking to a room full of infantry lieutenants Oct. 2, at the 2nd Battalion, 11th Infantry Regiment Headquarters, 2nd Lt. Michael Janowski hoped to motivate the recent Infantry Basic Officer Leaders Course graduates with his story of resiliency as they prepared to begin the Ranger Course, Oct. 4 at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Janowski, who earned his Ranger Tab with the historic 08-15 class, has a unique Ranger Course story. Not only did he graduate, he also beat cancer twice in the process.

"Hopefully, I can give you a new perspective today," Janowski said.

Janowski told the lieutenants that he began Ranger School July 21, 2014, but during the Ranger Training Assessment Course he began to have medical concerns.

"I didn't want to go to the hospital, because I didn't want to lose my Ranger slot. I was too naïve, too stubborn. So I went to Ranger School anyway," he said.

Janowski didn't tell the course medics about his medical concerns. Instead, he confided in a fellow student who happened to be a Special Forces medic.

"After a few days, he pulled me to the side and was like 'It's not getting better and I've had this idea of what it might be, but I didn't want to scare you. I think it's cancer. You should go to the medics,'" Janowski said.

That night, Janowski went to the medics and was rushed to the hospital where he learned that he had stage one testicular cancer.

He underwent surgery and returned to IBOLC the next day where he said he wanted to return to Ranger School.

Janowski waited two weeks to find out if the surgery worked.

"Those two weeks I was extremely fearful, not knowing the road ahead, and those are some of the feelings you are going to feel when you're at Ranger School. You're going to be afraid. You're not going to know what's next. You're not going to know if you're going to recycle," he said. "My fight with cancer was the best training I got for Ranger School."



2nd Lt. Michael Janowski, a Ranger graduate and cancer survivor, told recent IBOLC graduates and future Ranger students to attack every second of the Ranger Course as he shared his story, Oct. 2. Courtesy photo.

At the end of the two weeks, Janowski learned that the surgery worked and he was cancer free. He returned to the Ranger Course Sept. 5, just five weeks after his surgery.

"Everyone in this room, I guarantee, is better physically than I am," he said. "I'm not very big, not very strong and not very fast, but I went through Ranger School five weeks after cancer and made it through (Ranger Assessment Phase) week."

Janowski told the lieutenants that if they want their Tabs bad enough, they will get them.

"RAP week is too easy. Ranger School is too easy. You don't have to be a physical stud to get through. It's literally all mental," he said.

Janowski made it through RAP week and Darby Phase, but at the end of Darby, he took a blood test to make sure the cancer had not returned.

"During my eight hour pass, I got pulled aside and they told me the cancer is back. 'It has now spread to your lungs and your abdomen. It's now stage four,'" he said.

Janowski was medically dropped from the Ranger Course again.

"During that moment, sitting out at Peney Aid Station at Ranger School, which is an awful place, I sat out there and I

have never felt so low in my life. I have never felt so defeated,” he said. “I didn’t know which way the sky was; I just sat there and wondered how this could happen to me. I fought so hard,” he said.

Janowski said he began to question whether or not he would survive and became upset that he had to leave Ranger School once again.

“So, now I’ve wasted a bunch of time. I just got the hell beat out of me for no reason and I’m still losing. Trying to pick myself up after that was impossible,” he said.

Janowski went to his hometown for medical leave and spent three months going through chemotherapy.

“It was five hours a day of just sitting in a chair, getting poison pumped into your body. It doesn’t hurt in the moment, but those days as it goes on and on, it just beats you down,” he said.

During his treatment, Janowski said he lost all of his hair and watched himself physically deteriorate.

“Near the end of it, I was at the bottom of the stairs trying to get up and I couldn’t stand up. I couldn’t walk up the stairs. And there were moments when I was in Mountain Phase when I was sitting there at 3 a.m. on a long walk, looking up to the top of the mountain and thinking there’s no way I’m getting up this mountain. Then I thought back to those days where I sat at the bottom of the stairs,” Janowski said.

He told the lieutenants they will have moments in Ranger School when they feel like they can’t possibly complete the task at hand.

“I can tell you from my experience, the body will go forever. Your mind will shut off before your body does,” he said.

Janowski said every Ranger student should push themselves beyond their limits.

“Trust me, your body will not fail you. You’re going to feel like you have nothing left in the tank, but I’ve seen what it’s like to be on the edge of death when the chemo completely broke me down to where I couldn’t stand on my own two feet without somebody helping me, and the body still had more to give,” he said.

When Janowski finished his chemotherapy treatments, he began looking for alternative ways to serve his country, because he thought he would be medically discharged, but his desire to complete Ranger school was stronger than ever.

“I didn’t want to be older and telling my kids how to get through tough times and then look back at my own track record and realize that I let Ranger School get away to

realize that the cancer beat me,” he said.

Janowski returned to the 2nd Battalion, 11th Infantry Regiment and began IBOLC again.

“I came back two weeks after chemo and suffered through IBOLC,” he said. “Guys were trying to get me to do hill sprints and I thought I was going to have a heart attack. I was pathetic. Doing ten push ups was awful.”

Despite the difficulty, Janowski made it through IBOLC and prepared to return to Ranger School for the third time.

But on June 10, less than two weeks before the course was to begin, he received a phone call from his doctor who said the cancer had returned yet again.

“At this point, I’ve done surgery. I’ve done chemo. There’s nothing you can do for me. It’s just a time bomb. I’m going to die at some point,” Janowski said.

He went to his apartment that day and wept.

“I just sat there on the ground crying, so broken there was nothing anyone could have done for me,” he said.

Luckily, that test had a false positive. Janowski was still cancer free and he went to Ranger school June 21, as planned.

Janowski said his battle with cancer taught him to “attack,” because when you’re diagnosed with cancer there is no alternative, he said.

“I’ll go into chemo and I’ll sit in the chair all day. I’ll do whatever it takes. I’ll attack all day,” he said.

Janowski said Soldiers should have that attack mentality when they enter the Ranger Course.

“When you go to your PT test on Monday, don’t ever tell yourself it’s only 49 pushups. Hell no, get out there and be like ‘I’m going to do 1,000 pushups. I’m going to make this Ranger instructor count to a thousand because I know he is going to make my life hell for 62 days,’” he said. “Do not ever play defensive. Attack every second of Ranger School. Always maintain that aggressiveness and you’re going to crush it.”

Janowski said priorities should be “mission, men, me.”

“The mission comes first, then your fellow Rangers and you come last,” he said.

Janowski said he knew firsthand that even if the odds seem stacked against you can still be successful in the Ranger Course.

“I hope that my story can you give you that perspective. Just know that maybe it will be 62 days, maybe it will be 90, but it doesn’t matter. You’re going to get your tabs. You’re going to be successful as long as you want it,” he said.

AIRBORNE

U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



The Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) are well versed in adapting to the art of war and honed their hand-to-hand combat skills Sept. 3, at Torii Station, Japan, during Fight Night VI -- a battalion level Modern Army Combatives competition. USASOC photo.

Tip of the Spear

Violence of action: Special Forces battalion ready to fight

By *Richard L. Rzepka*
USAG Okinawa

Everyone has a plan until they get hit in the mouth. The old boxing adage is similar to the military's own version: No plan survives contact with the enemy.

The Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) are well versed in adapting to the art of war and honed their hand-to-hand combat skills Sept. 3, at Torii Station, Japan, during Fight Night VI -- a battalion level Modern Army Combatives competition.

"As a forward deployed Special Forces Battalion, we do all we can to stay sharp and focused on our warrior tasks," said Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Joshe Raetz. "Each of these Soldiers has spent weeks training for this event and will showcase their skills today."

Not only do the quarterly Fight Night events develop Soldiers' abilities to continue the mission under threat of bodily harm, but enhance camaraderie as well.

"These events are a great way to increase the technical and tactical proficiency of our Soldiers, while also improving the unit's esprit de corps and pride," said Raetz. "Conducting physical events under stress and duress makes these Soldiers combat ready."

From private to captain, 1st Battalion Soldiers used what they learned from the Modern Army Combatives Program to close the distance on their opponents. Modern Army Combatives began in 1995 with the 2nd Ranger Battalion and has since been adopted by units across the Army enterprise. Basic Combatives is one of the 40 Warrior Core Tasks of the Warrior Ethos initiative, according to Army officials.

"The benefit of combatives in garrison is being able to learn the skills to fight in a safe environment so when you are in combat you know what to do to defeat your enemies," said Sgt. Patrick Yates, winner of the lightweight division.

For others, stepping into the ring not only sharpens tactical skills, but brings a sense of unit pride.

"The best part is the unit cohesion and emphasizing the importance of the Army combatives program," said Sgt.

Willie Soto, who not only came away as the middleweight tournament winner, but fought in the heavyweight championship as a stand in. Soto's motivation and intensity in the ring brought the crowd of Soldiers and families to their feet.

The event galvanized the fighting spirit of the battalion and motivated its Soldiers to prove that they are the best. Many trained with Level II and Level III MACP trainers during the weeks prior to the competition to improve their techniques.

"[The tournament] enforces the fact that at the core of everyone's [Military Occupational Specialty], they are a Soldier and one day they may have to fight the enemies of our country," said 1st Sgt. Daniel Nisthal.



Two Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) compete in hand-to-hand combat skills Sept. 3, at Torii Station, Japan. USASOC photo.



NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND

Legalman promoted to honorary chief petty officer

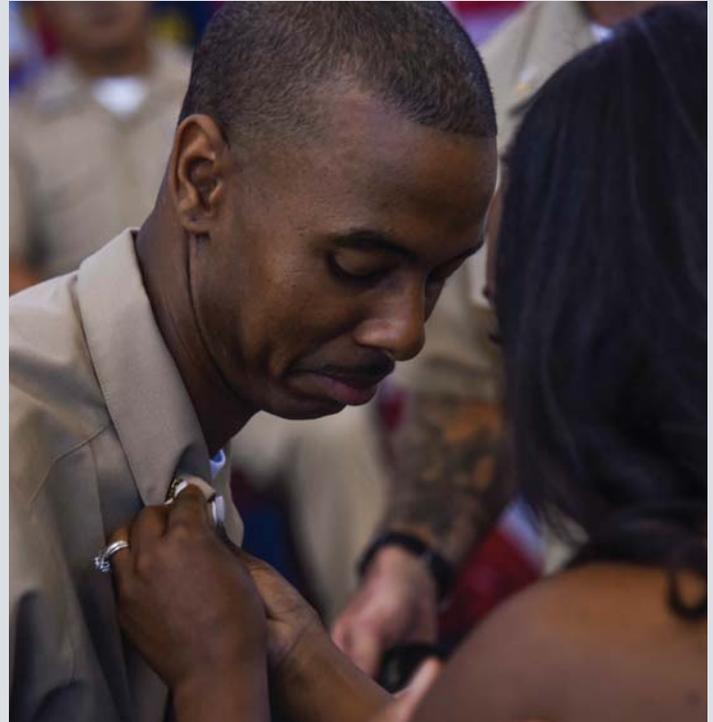
*By Petty Officer 2nd Class Paul Coover
Naval Special Warfare Command Public Affairs*

Aundra Howard sat in the first of 12 long rows of folding chairs, his Navy uniform meticulously pressed, family members sitting on his left and right. Among the hundreds of Sailors and family members filling the Naval Special Warfare Special Boat Team 12 Combat Craft Maintenance Facility building at Naval Air Station North Island, California, Howard was inconspicuous: a tall, young man who outwardly appeared not unlike many others in the building that morning. Officially, Howard had recently retired, and like other former service members in the crowd, he said he wanted to maintain a connection to the Navy after his service had ended. But Howard still had one piece of military business left to finish before he could call his Navy career complete.

At the Fiscal Year 2015 Chief Petty Officer Pinning for Naval Special Warfare's West Coast commands, about 50 men and women in new khaki uniforms stood at parade rest in neat ranks, poised to become members of the U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer Mess. After introductions of distinguished guests, remarks from speakers, and traditional words read about the significance of the step they were about to take, the chief selectees looked to Master Chief Navy Diver Michael Allison, the master of ceremonies, for their cue to move to the front of the formation. Allison began to speak.

"Before we begin pinning the FY-15 chief selectees," Allison said, "we'd like to recognize a very special occasion."

Aundra Howard was born in Memphis, Tennessee, and grew up surrounded by influences he had no intention of imitating. That doesn't mean he was always destined for Naval service. Instead, once he reached high school, Howard began making a life for himself in Memphis, working hard to earn good grades and position himself for the working world, even though that sometimes meant he was ostracized by those around him. He learned not to care. At 17, he moved into his own



Honorary Chief Legalman Aundra Howard is pinned by his wife during a chief petty officer pinning ceremony at Naval Air Station North Island, Calif. Howard was honorably retired from the Navy after 11 years of service after being diagnosed with cancer. Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Richard Miller.

apartment, bringing his brother and girlfriend with him, working at a movie theater to make ends meet. It was then he began to consider enlisting in the Army, realizing that the stability of a military job could provide for his family in ways jobs in the civilian world around him could not.

By chance, a Navy recruiter in his area took an interest in him first. Howard listened to what the recruiter had to say, and was headed to a United States Military Entrance Processing Station soon thereafter. He almost immediately became a standout Sailor.

Howard enlisted as an E-1 — the lowest rank in the military — but worked his way up to E-3 by the completion of basic training, based upon the strength of his performance at the Recruit Training Command. He

then headed to Virginia Beach, Virginia to complete the Navy's "A" school for operations specialists, where again he excelled. He picked up E-4 on his first attempt, and was an E-5 before he'd even finished two years of his enlistment. It was while stationed aboard the USS Vicksburg (CG 69) that things changed forever.

At first, it just felt like heartburn. He tried to shake it off, until the pain became so bad that he was almost completely incapacitated by it. He could hardly stand, let alone work. Even so, he wasn't expecting what came next.

After an underway with Vicksburg, Howard walked into a medical facility for an exam. The doctors found a tumor near his spine.

After surgery, Howard learned to walk again. Surgeons removed three vertebrae and inserted a rod in their place; nerve damage made completing even basic tasks difficult. Howard was moved to what is now the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, to heal. But Howard wanted to do more than simply be a patient.

He began working in the hospital's legal office, answering phones and filing paperwork.

"I wasn't doing much," he says. That didn't last long.

In Bethesda, Howard learned how to work as a legal professional. Unable to study for his operations specialist exam without access to Vicksburg's spaces, where secret material could be secured, he dove into life in the legal office -- work for which he discovered a natural aptitude. He ultimately decided to leave his job as an operations specialist to become a legalman, or LN.

Sitting in her office in Coronado, California, Lt. Kristin Seewald thinks back to her experience with Howard. More than anything, it's his reputation in the community that stands out to her. Before transferring to Naval Special Warfare Group 1, where she is a staff judge advocate, Seewald asked people close to her what they knew about the legalman she would be working with. As of June 2012, that happened to be Legalman First Class Aundra Howard.

When a co-worker described Howard's work ethic and abilities, she said, "What he described was what I saw in a chief."

"LN1 Howard was a phenomenal Sailor, and a phenomenal legalman," she said. "He was probably one of the best legalman I've been able to work with."

Howard's journey from Bethesda to Coronado wasn't

a smooth one, however. Howard left Maryland, attended to legalman "A" school, and was subsequently assigned to the USS Nimitz (CVN 68). Soon after, the cancer returned. By the time Howard arrived at NSWG-1, he had completed two intense surgeries and countless disappointments and setbacks. Those who know him say nothing -- not even the chemotherapy that doctors recommended after the second surgery failed to eliminate the cancer from Howard's body -- seemed to affect Howard's optimism or work ethic.

"He was the consummate professional," said Lt. Todd Hutchins, a staff judge advocate at NSWG-1. "Even while undergoing chemo therapy, he would come into work to get the job done."

Ultimately, the cancer proved too serious for Howard to continue his Naval service. He was medically retired on Aug. 28, 2015.

Without the Navy, Howard says, he wonders where he would be. He was able to learn valuable trades, to provide for his family, and perhaps most importantly, receive medical treatment to which he might not otherwise have had access.

"Ultimately, it saved my life," he said.

The Navy, in turn, benefitted from Howard's service.

"The special warfare community as well as the Navy legal community lost an incredible asset in LN1 Howard," Hutchins said.

As a parting show of appreciation, the NSWG-1 Chief's Mess rallied around Howard to bestow upon him the one honor he didn't have time to accomplish on his own.

On Aug. 26, two days before his medical retirement, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Mike Stephens affixed his signature to the document that would allow Howard to become an honorary chief.

On the stage in the Special Boat Team maintenance facility, with an enormous American flag as a backdrop, Howard stood rigidly straight as the NSWG-1 command master chief designated Howard an honorary chief petty officer. Howard smiled, his family surrounding him, flashes of cameras going off from all directions, chief selectees looking on.

Soon thereafter, Allison, the master of ceremonies, provided Howard with a brief retirement ceremony. It was years sooner than Howard would have liked, but as he walked toward his peers standing at attention and away from life in a Navy uniform, his salute was as proud as it had ever been.



West Indies to Naval Special Warfare Command: Master Chief Susan Garrow's path to success



Master Chief Navy Counselor Susan M. Garrow, age 5, poses for a photograph while living in Trinidad. Garrow lived in Trinidad until she was eight years old. Courtesy photo.

*Story by Petty Officer 3rd Class Richard Miller
Naval Special Warfare Command Public Affairs*

On the second floor of the Naval Special Warfare Command in Coronado, California, a small corner office plays a pivotal role in the lives of the command's Sailors. One by one they trickle in and out, seeking guidance from Master Chief Navy Counselor Susan Garrow on how to succeed in the Navy. Questions about advancement, career plans in the Navy and in the civilian

workforce afterward, and questions about navigating the sometimes turbulent waters of Navy life are common. The answers can be life changing for young Sailors. Providing useful information and advice is just business as usual for Garrow. She has watched the Navy evolve and change throughout her 24-year career, but if one thing has stayed consistent, it is her ability to succeed.

Garrow's story is far from average. Originally from the Caribbean island nation Trinidad and Tobago, Garrow says her upbringing helped prepare her for the difference in cultures she would later see when traveling with the Navy.

"There are certain things you expect when you go to a different country if you grew up outside the United States," Garrow said. "I don't expect everyone to speak English, so when I'm overseas, I want to learn the languages."

Garrow lived in Trinidad for the first eight years of her life. After moving to the states, her family rarely stayed in the same location for a long time. Garrow credits the constant moving with her ability to adjust to change, and the development of her strong work ethic.

"I'm always looking for that next level of responsibility," said Garrow. "I'm never satisfied with where I'm at. If there's a place to move up, I'm always looking for that."

Garrow instantly excelled after enlisting, but still faced her fair share of adversity early on in her career.

"There is an expectation of what you can do, no matter who you are," said Garrow. "It's human nature. You may believe that a woman can only do so much until another woman proves differently."

The roles and expectations of women in the Navy have changed drastically over the last few decades. Garrow has seen the first women allowed on ships, the first women allowed on subs, and the first female four-star admiral. Perceptions of women in leadership roles continued to evolve as Garrow's career progressed.



Master Chief Navy Counselor Susan M. Garrow poses for a photograph with a fellow Sailor after Recruit Training Command graduation in Orlando, Fla. Courtesy photo.

“By the time I hit my 10-year mark, I don’t think there was a question of who I was as an individual,” said Garrow. “I had been in 10 years and gotten to this point, so apparently I could do it.”

There are three female master chiefs at WARCOM, which is far from common.

“The first time I worked at a command that had a female master chief was during my eleventh year in the Navy,” said Garrow. “The next time I saw a female master chief at a command I worked at was here at Naval Special Warfare Command. Consider the odds that in my almost 24 years of service that I have only worked in two commands where there were master chiefs of my gender.”

Over time, the demographics of Navy leadership has diversified. Garrow says that a variety of different role models helps to motivate young Sailors of all backgrounds.

“Had I never seen a black female chief, I never would have thought I could become a chief petty officer,” said Garrow. “It wasn’t until I saw a black female master chief that it even became an attainable goal.”

Despite the Navy’s increasing diversity, Garrow admits there is still a long way to go.

“I don’t have any reason to believe that preconceived notions are going to go away,” said Garrow. “I still see them and hear about them, but it’s up to us to show that we can choose to live differently.”

Leaving behind preconceived notions and gender-related professional expectations is a work in progress, but Garrow’s career success as well as that of the other two female master chiefs at WARCOM shows how far the Navy has come. Garrow will retire at the end of her next enlistment, ending a career where she consistently exceeded others’ expectations and set higher ones for herself. Until she is piped ashore, Garrow will finish out her career doing what she knows best: using her experience to guide other Sailors beyond what’s expected of them and toward what they are truly capable of achieving.



Master Chief Navy Counselor Susan M. Garrow speaks to a Sailor in her office at Naval Special Warfare Command. Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Richard Miller.



An MC-130J and MC-130H crew drop a watercraft and supplies during an exercise Sept. 19, over the Pacific Ocean. This was the first time an MC-130J Commando II completed the Maritime Craft Aerial Delivery System airdrop in the Pacific. Photo by Airman 1st Class Alexa Ann Henderson.

Commando II, Combat Talon II complete MCADS drop together

*By Tech. Sgt. Kristine Dreyer
353rd Special Operations Group Public Affairs*

Two aircraft from the 353rd Special Operations Group completed a Maritime Craft Aerial Delivery System airdrop during an exercise Sept. 18, over the Pacific Ocean.

An MC-130H Combat Talon II and an MC-130J Commando II completed the MCADS drop in a dissimilar formation. This was the first time an MC-130J had completed this drop in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

“This was a great opportunity to showcase the 1st SOS and the 17th SOS coming together to complete the SOG mission,” said Capt. Timothy Stutz, 1st Special Operations Squadron, operations planner for the exercise. “Since this

involved two different aircraft in one formation, there were no written procedures on how to execute. This took months of coordination and planning and involved many players — not just the 353rd SOG.”

As the Air Force Special Operations unit in the Pacific, the 353 SOG is the only unit in the Pacific able to complete this airdrop. Until now, the Talon II was the lone aircraft to provide this capability.

“The Commando IIs are the future of special operations aviation in the Pacific,” said Capt. Lawrence Melnicoff, 1st Special Operations Squadron pilot and formation commander during the drop. “It’s important for us to pass on the job knowledge we have to make sure the mission continues to be executed to the Talon Standard.”



(Left) A team of MC-130 Combat Talon II loadmasters assigned to the 1st Special Operations Squadron stand ready to receive a load carrier approaching the aircraft Sept. 18, at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Alexander Riedel. (Above) A 17th Special Operations Squadron MC-130J Commando II loadmaster, guides the driver of a load carrier toward an MC-130J Commando II Sept. 18, at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Alexander Riedel. (Below) A KC-135 Stratotanker crew refuels an MC-130H Combat Talon II Sept. 19, over the Pacific Ocean. Photo by Airman 1st Class Alexa Ann Henderson.



This exercise allowed crews from the 1st SOS to pass on their skills to the 17th SOS and add another capability to the newest SOG aircraft, the MC-130J.

“As the only geographic location with two variants of the MC-130, it is essential that both units learn from each other and train together; this mission is the perfect example,” said Lt. Col. Matthew Bartlett, 17th Special Operations Squadron director of operations. “The interoperability exemplified in this exercise enables the 353rd to meet our mission taskings as a group, not as individual squadrons or aircraft types.”

As true professionals, the crews practiced the mission multiple times prior to the execution. From empty plane practices to loading practice, the crews went through every

possible issue that could arise, and it paid off.

“Weather became a factor during the drop,” said Capt. Stutz. “The sea states were too bad for the boats to drop, but we practiced for this possibility to occur, we were able to wait it out. Because of the information we gathered the day prior, the crews knew how long they could wait for the weather to pass.”

“I am extremely proud of the integration and teamwork between the Talon II and Commando II crews to make this mission happen,” said Col. William Freeman, 353rd Special Operations Group commander. “Our ability to execute this mission on either MC-130 aircraft exponentially expands the maritime intercept capabilities throughout the Pacific theater.”

320th STS Airmen conduct amphibious training

U.S. Air Force combat control Airmen from the 320th Special Tactics Squadron, Kadena Air Base, Japan, perform an open-circuit navigation dive during an amphibious operations exercise Sept. 22, off the West Coast of Okinawa, Japan. Courtesy photo.

**Story and photos by Senior Airman John Linzmeier
18th Wing Public Affairs**

Airmen from the 320th Special Tactics Squadron conducted an amphibious training operation along the West Coast of Okinawa Sept. 22 - 24 to refresh qualifications and retain proficiency in various special tactics skill sets.

The training included day and nighttime helo-casting in cohesion with HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter support from the 33rd Rescue Squadron, followed by open water navigation in combat rubber raiding crafts and an open circuit navigation dive.

“It’s important for us to conduct training that involves a variety of infiltration methods, as it allows us to be inserted into environments that may otherwise be unreachable, enabling us to bring our skill sets to bear anywhere we’re asked to,” said 1st Lt. Blaze Dunn, 320th STS special tactics officer.

The exercise participants are trained and equipped to conduct special operations tasks during high-risk combat or weather operations. Their ability to infiltrate and secure a location can lead to the recovery of personnel and equipment or enable a landing site for follow-on-forces to

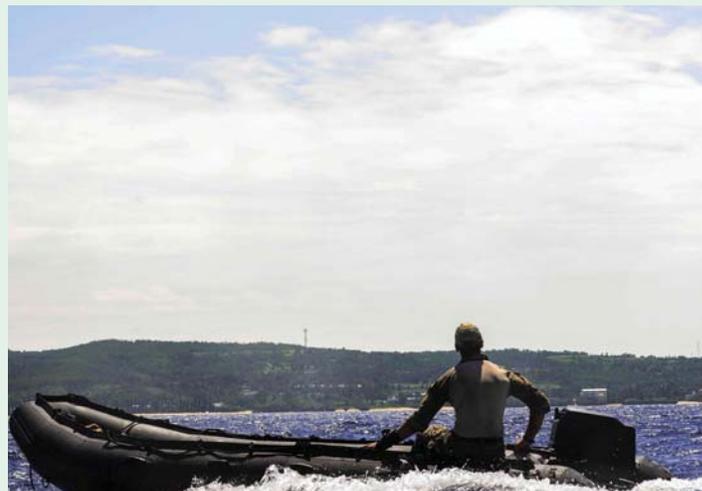
arrive during an emergency.

“A difficult mission can come from a lot of places in an area as big as the Pacific,” said Lt. Col. Edmund Loughran, 320th STS commander. “Be it combat related or even from Mother Nature, this training allows us to respond to a crisis from either one in short order.”

STS units can be comprised of combat control, pararescue, and special operations weather team Airmen. Each specialty brings a unique set of skills to the fight. Regardless of duty title, each Airman is expected to look out for one another.

“Teamwork is vital to the successful and safe completion of our missions,” said Dunn. “In the high-risk and quick moving environments our operators often find themselves, it is imperative each man on the team must trust that the man to his left and the man to his right will tow his end of the line.”

As the training concluded, team members went over the strong points that were executed with finesse and communicated improvements that could be implemented for the next operation. To make the most out of every mission, STS Airmen sharpen their skills frequently in order to support airpower throughout the full spectrum of mission sets U.S. Special Operations Command undertakes.



(Top left) Members of the 320th Special Tactics Squadron from Kadena Air Base, Japan, submerge into the ocean during an amphibious operations exercise Sept. 22, off the West Coast of Okinawa, Japan.

(Left) A combat controller from the 320th Special Tactics Squadron, Kadena Air Base, Japan, prepares to submerge during an amphibious operations exercise Sept. 22.

(Above) A combat controller from the 320th Special Tactics Squadron, Kadena Air Base, Japan, operates a combat rubber raiding craft during an amphibious operations exercise Sept. 22.





AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Staff Sgt. Leland Hastings, 919th Special Operations Security Forces Squadron, launches Raven-B, a four-by-four foot unmanned aerial system, into the skies above Camp Guernsey, Wyo., Aug. 4. The 919th SOSFS brought the UAS to demonstrate its capabilities to other security forces units involved in a large field training exercise at the camp. The Raven-B has the ability to take photos, video in day or night, and even designate locations via an infrared laser. It also provides coordinates, magnetic azimuths, and linear distances creating a bird's-eye view to topographical maps.



919th security forces demonstrates unmanned aerial system capabilities

*Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Samuel King
919th Special Operations Wing*

A four-by-four foot unmanned aerial system soars almost noiselessly through the deep blue and white skies of Wyoming. To anyone on the ground, it looks like a soaring bird or if high enough just a dark speck in the Western sky.

That bird or unnoticed spot is actually being controlled by an Airman on the ground. It has the ability to take photos, video in day or night, and even designate locations via an infrared laser. It also provides coordinates, magnetic azimuths, and linear distances creating a bird's-eye view to topographical maps.

That unmanned aerial system is called RAVEN-B and the person controlling it is Staff Sgt. Leland Hastings, 919th Special Operations Security Forces Squadron, (SOSFS) one of only three reservists qualified to operate it.

The 919th SOSFS brought this relatively new technology to the August Reserve security forces field training exercise at Camp Guernsey, Wyoming, to demonstrate its capabilities and educate other units on the potential benefits of UASs.

“(With the UAS), the team on the ground can have real-time intelligence as opposed to information from a week or a month past,” said Hastings, a five-year reservist. “It allows them to see and assess the objective without ever putting them in harm’s way.”

For the exercise, the 919th not only demonstrated the capability of the Air Force Special Operations Command-owned UAS, but also used it to their advantage in their role as the opposition force against other reserve units. They monitored patrols and movements without ever leaving a secure hiding place.

Usually a two-person operation, Hastings controlled both pieces during this exercise.

“It is more difficult, but it can be done. Basically, it requires me to keep it within my line of sight,” said the civilian firefighter and Mobile, Alabama, native.

Control of the UAS is comprised of a laptop that tracks the speed, location, altitude and data received. The

controller, looks similar to a gaming device and manages all of the movements, cameras and other moving parts on the UAS.

Hastings and the other reservists along with 1st SOSFS active-duty Airmen attended the two-week small unmanned aerial system course through the 371st Special Operations Command Training Squadron at Hurlburt Field, Florida. Just like pilots, the controller must have a specific number of flights each year to remain qualified.

“This was a great opportunity to put more tools in our tool kit,” said Maj. Michael McGee, the 919th SOSFS commander about having his Airmen trained on controlling UASs.

“I remain insistent the 919th SOSFS remains relevant, viable, and on the cutting edge of conducting security work in austere environments. I think this is the future of AFSOC security forces.”

Hastings said he enjoys this unique aspect of Special Operations security forces and hopes other units recognize the benefits of the new technology available to them.

“Having this capability in your hip pocket ensures none of our Airmen ever have to walk into the unknown,” Hastings said.



Staff Sgt. Leland Hastings, 919th Special Operations Security Forces Squadron, controls the Raven-B, a four-by-four foot unmanned aerial system, via remote control at Camp Guernsey, Wyo., Aug. 4.

Special Tactics Memorial Ruck March

Special tactics Airmen bow their heads during a moment of prayer before the start of the 2015 Special Tactics Memorial Ruck March at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, Oct. 4. Twenty Air Commandos marched from Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, to Hurlburt Field, Fla, to honor their 19 fallen teammates. The march covered 812 miles with every Airman carrying a 50-pound ruck, ending at Hurlburt Field, Fla. The march is to bring awareness to the service and sacrifice of special tactics members and honors the memory of fallen comrades since 9/11. Photo by Senior Airman Taylor Curry.







Retired Lt. Col. Jack R. Christensen, a World War II Marine Raider, holds a handmade staff under his arm at the 2015 Marine Raider Reunion in San Antonio, Aug. 30. An active-duty Raider with U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command whittled the staff himself, and included an ornate Raider insignia from World War II, as well as the MARSOC insignia into the walking-stick's design. He donated the staff to the U.S. Marine Raider Association and Foundation to be used by a Raider in need of walking assistance.

MARSOC, World War II Raiders join together to celebrate Raider history

*Story and photos by Cpl. Steven Fox
MARSOC Public Affairs*

The U.S. Marine Raider Association and Foundation celebrated the history of the highly decorated, though short-lived, U.S. Marine Raider unit during its annual reunion held this year in San Antonio, Aug. 26-29.

Several surviving World War II Raiders, their families, and Raiders of U.S. Marine Corps Forces,

Special Operations Command, traveled far and wide to attend the reunion, which included trips to Lackland Air Force Base and The National Museum of the Pacific War. On the final night, those attending the reunion, including Maj. Gen. Joseph L. Osterman, commander, MARSOC, and Sgt. Maj. John W. Scott, the MARSOC senior enlisted advisor, assembled for a formal banquet and fond remembrances.

The U.S. Marine Corps formed the Marine Raider

Battalions during World War II, inspired by the British Commandos. Two Raider battalions were activated in February 1942. First and 2nd Raider Battalions specialized in conducting small-unit amphibious rubber boat insertions, light infantry warfare, and executing independent raids behind Japanese lines.

In an effort to create and populate the elite unit, scouts began searching for volunteers from throughout the Marine Corps. After being vetted, qualified individuals were hand-selected to start training.

One of the surviving Raiders, Kenneth “Mudhole” Merrill Sr., described his induction into the Raider community.

“I was in bootcamp and heard about them forming a catch-me-kill-me outfit, so I volunteered,” said Mudhole. “There were 11 of us, and we were interviewed by Jimmy Roosevelt, the president’s son, and out of the eleven I was the only one who was picked.”

The Raiders were involved in almost every major Pacific campaign from August 1942 to January 1944, earning seven Congressional Medals of Honor, 141 Navy Crosses and 330 Silver Star Medals for combat operations conducted in less than a year and a half’s time.

In early January 1944, the Marine Corps re-designated the Raider Battalions, and the Raiders, in their official capacity, were no more ...

... Until June of this year, when MARSOC re-designated its subordinate commands, integrating “Raider” into their titles.

“I was there when they made that happen,” said Mudhole. “It made me cry, actually, because of what it meant to me and the Raiders still alive. It means our legacy will live on for as long as there’s a United States.”

MARSOC Raider, and graduate of MARSOC’s first Individual Training Course iteration, Staff Sgt. Brandan Taylor, was one of the active-duty Marines who attended the reunion.

Taylor is undergoing physical therapy to treat injuries he sustained on active duty. He was in San Antonio at the Center for the Intrepid learning to walk and run with

exoskeletal orthosis leg braces when the director of the Raider Project invited him to the Raider reunion.

Taylor was asked to speak during the dinner. He spoke about how MARSOC has embraced the Marine Raider moniker, and about how hard the community had fought to officially adopt the Raider name.

“I never planned on speaking, but I felt I owed them an answer on how proud we are, as MARSOC Marines,

to earn the title of Marine Raider,” explained Taylor. “I spoke to them about what an honor it is to carry their legacy on with the future generation of Raiders from MARSOC.”

Details for next year’s reunion are not yet solidified, but it will no doubt be a special one as MARSOC will celebrate its

10-year anniversary. The U.S. Marine Raider Association and Foundation plans to align the reunion with MARSOC’s planned events.

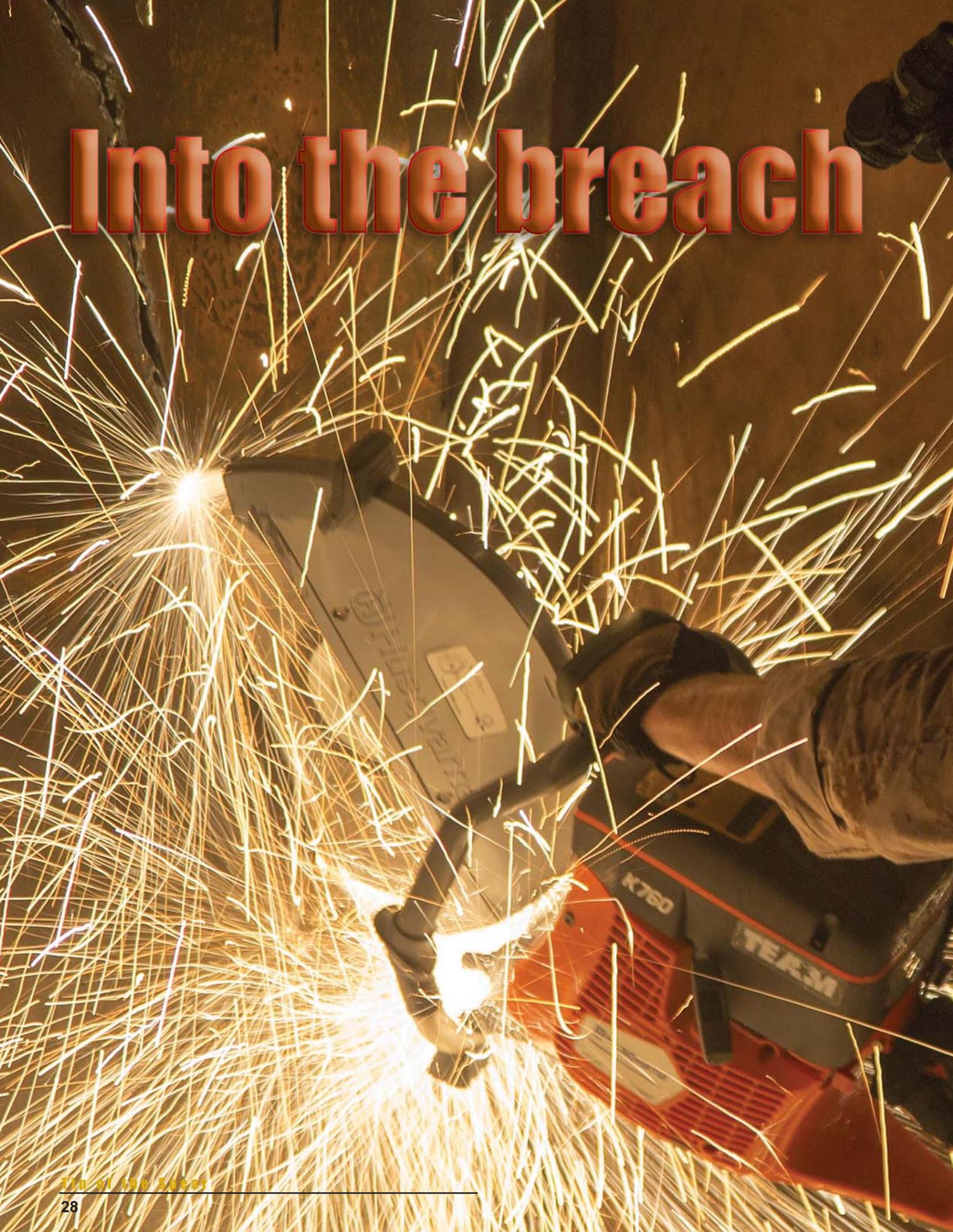
I was in bootcamp and heard about them forming a catch-me-kill-me outfit, so I volunteered. There were 11 of us, and we were interviewed by Jimmy Roosevelt, the president’s son, and out of the eleven I was the only one who was picked.

— *Kenneth “Mudhole” Merrill Sr.*



Kenneth “Mudhole” Merrill Sr., a Marine Raider during World War II, speaks with a U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command Raider after the 2015 Marine Raider Reunion at San Antonio, Aug. 30. The U.S. Marine Raider Association and Foundation host a reunion every year for the Marine Raiders of World War II and their families.

Into the breach





A Critical Skills Operator with U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command uses a saw to cut through a metal door to gain entry on a building during Marine Special Operations School's Master Breacher's Course, at Stone Bay, Camp Lejeune, N.C., Aug. 20. The Master Breacher course instructs Critical Skills Operators on how to overcome obstacles such as walls, fences and doors via a range of breaching methods including mechanical, ballistic, thermal and explosive. Photo by Marine Corps Sgt. Scott A. Achtemeier.



JSOU offers career changes

By Sgt. 1st Class Andrew E. Lankford (Ret.)

“Your war-fighting days are over.” Those were the words that shattered my future and plans within the special operations community; and as I faced this reality, I thought back to the events leading up to this moment.

In the summer of 2010, my vehicle hit a pressure plate improvised explosive device during a mounted patrol in Uruzgan, Afghanistan. My driver and I were airlifted for follow-on treatment for our injuries. I completed my treatment, recovered, and returned to the fight with even more motivation to conduct patrols than I had before I started the tour. By the time I finished that stint, I was more than ready to attend Special Forces Assessment and Selection, but the Army had other plans. Instead, I was given orders to teach at Airborne School.

Having already served with the Army’s Training and Doctrine Command as a drill sergeant, I found myself instructing at the 1/507th Parachute Infantry Regiment as a ‘Black Hat,’ teaching men and women from every military branch the basic fundamentals of airborne operations. I suppose the opportunity gave my body the chance to heal up and continue to rehabilitate -- which I took full advantage of.

In the fall of 2012, I finally attended SFAS. I did better than I expected, but I remember feeling my knee worsen on the final foot march at the end of the course. I finished the event -- running on sheer adrenaline, which drowned out the pain. My knee quickly filling with fluid, I could only thank the man who emplaced that pressure plate IED for his gifts that continued to haunt my life. Two weeks later, I was having another knee surgery -- this time, in Columbus, Georgia. Once again, I healed up and worked with my physical therapists until I felt strong, but it was premature. Regardless of my knee and other recurring medical issues, I extended my contract and moved to Fort Bragg to attend Special Forces Medical Sergeant training. I felt mentally ready; and I was physically ready, or so I thought, but it didn’t take long for things to worsen again.

“You need to start thinking about other options,” the Chief of Orthopedic Surgery at Fort Bragg said. With that news, I felt like the last nine years of my career had just exploded in front of me. The truth is that we all think we have a plan for getting out until we’re forced to put it into action. The unknown ... it’s a horrible feeling.

As the medical board process kicked off, I remember getting a business card from my Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officer. The business card was from the U.S. Special Operations Command’s Care Coalition, and I was told to give them a call. Of course, I put it in the growing pile of countless other pamphlets and papers that had recently been given to me, and thought no more about it.

Despite my lack of motivation, and with time, I called the number. Within a matter of days, I found myself sitting with a Care Coalition advocate in an office at USASOC Headquarters. “Where do you want to go next?” he asked. “I want to stay in the community,” I replied.

Weeks later, I packed up and moved to Tampa, Florida. There was an internship opportunity through Operation Warfighter available at Headquarters, USSOCOM, while my medical board continued its course. I took advantage of the opportunity and began networking for a potential job. While waiting in that familiar medical board limbo, I upgraded my security clearance and attended courses with Joint Special Operations University. One of the first courses I enrolled in was the Special Operations Forces Interagency Collaboration Course, where I began to understand how all of the different agencies meshed together with SOF as a whole. I didn’t even know what JSOU was, that it existed, or what it offered before coming to Tampa.

Having settled at USSOCOM, my supervisor and I were discussing college options one day when he decided to introduce me to Katie Carson, the JSOU education advisor, to view my academic options.

Special operators might be pleasantly surprised to know that a lot of the training they receive actually counts toward a degree. Having served in both SOF and the conventional Army, I was initially apprehensive about how many credits I



Sgt. 1st Class Andrew E. Lankford (Ret.)

would receive from different schools. With my transcripts in hand, Carson went to work. After calling the traditional schools I was interested in attending, Carson found that the schools were not recognizing the majority of college credits I already had ... only offering about 30 hours of transfer credit for almost 10 years of active federal service ... 24 semester hours of which I had earned with an online college.

It turns out; there are some better options available.

JSOU offers a course for E-6 service members called The Joint Fundamentals Course, or CEP-1. This course provides up to 15 semester hours of transfer credit at the end of eight-weeks, and E-7 service members have the same opportunity with The Enterprise Management Course.

Carson continued her research, and after another consult, I found myself enrolled with Norwich University, with 81 semester hours of transfer credit working toward a USSOCOM specifically designed degree: a Bachelor of Science in Strategic Studies and Defense Analysis. I had earned 15 of those credit hours with the CEP-1 course, and it was completely manageable.

The fact is, after serving on countless rotations overseas and conducting the rigorous training we do, who really wants to sit in a classroom for three or four years? You don't have to ... that's the point.

For those who want to get a degree knocked out and have it under your belt in a timely manner, JSOU has several alternatives you're probably not aware of. These programs are great, and I encourage SOF members to look into them. Here's what I've learned: start considering long-term options with education sooner rather than later, (I can't tell you how many operators I know that have 15 years in and begin to start thinking about college at that point in their careers). With the degree programs available at JSOU, you should be able to knock out a course here and there. Sometimes, you may find you're much closer to a degree than you originally thought you were. This is an attainable goal with reputable and accredited educational institutions that work well with the SOF community to fit our OPTEMPO needs. You can't knock out a course because of a deployment? ... Not an issue. You need to take a term off because of a SOF school? ... Not an issue. The schools that partner with JSOU work with the SOF community and these programs are designed specifically for us.

To date, I have transitioned out of the USSOCOM community and am actively pursuing a career within the interagency channels. I never would have had this opportunity had I not enrolled with JSOU and learned about these tailor-designed programs. Here I was planning on sitting in a classroom for at least three years to finish my degree. I

recommend you consider the JSOU enrollment programs and take the time to educate yourself on the opportunities waiting for you; they're yours for the taking, but you have to be proactive and pursue them.

To date, partnerships with Excelsior College, Norwich University, and the University of Charleston-West Virginia, all with various degree plans for SOF operators and enablers, allow many in the Special Operations community to receive anywhere from 45 to 60 credits with military experience alone.

"Our operators, E-6 to E-9, come here for professional military education, and the second and third order effects are that they're able to get college credits for the PME and this is in line with our commander's training and education guidance to encourage SOF NCOs to get their bachelor's degrees by the time their E-9s," said Katie Carson, the academic counseling center director.

Brian Bailey, an instructor at JSOU, who's been teaching the Joint Fundamentals Course, or CEP-1 for more than two years, said the course develops leadership for E-6s, and provides more relevancy to those SOF members than the traditional college environment would.

"These guys ... they're already operating in their career field and applying it to their current experiences," said Bailey.

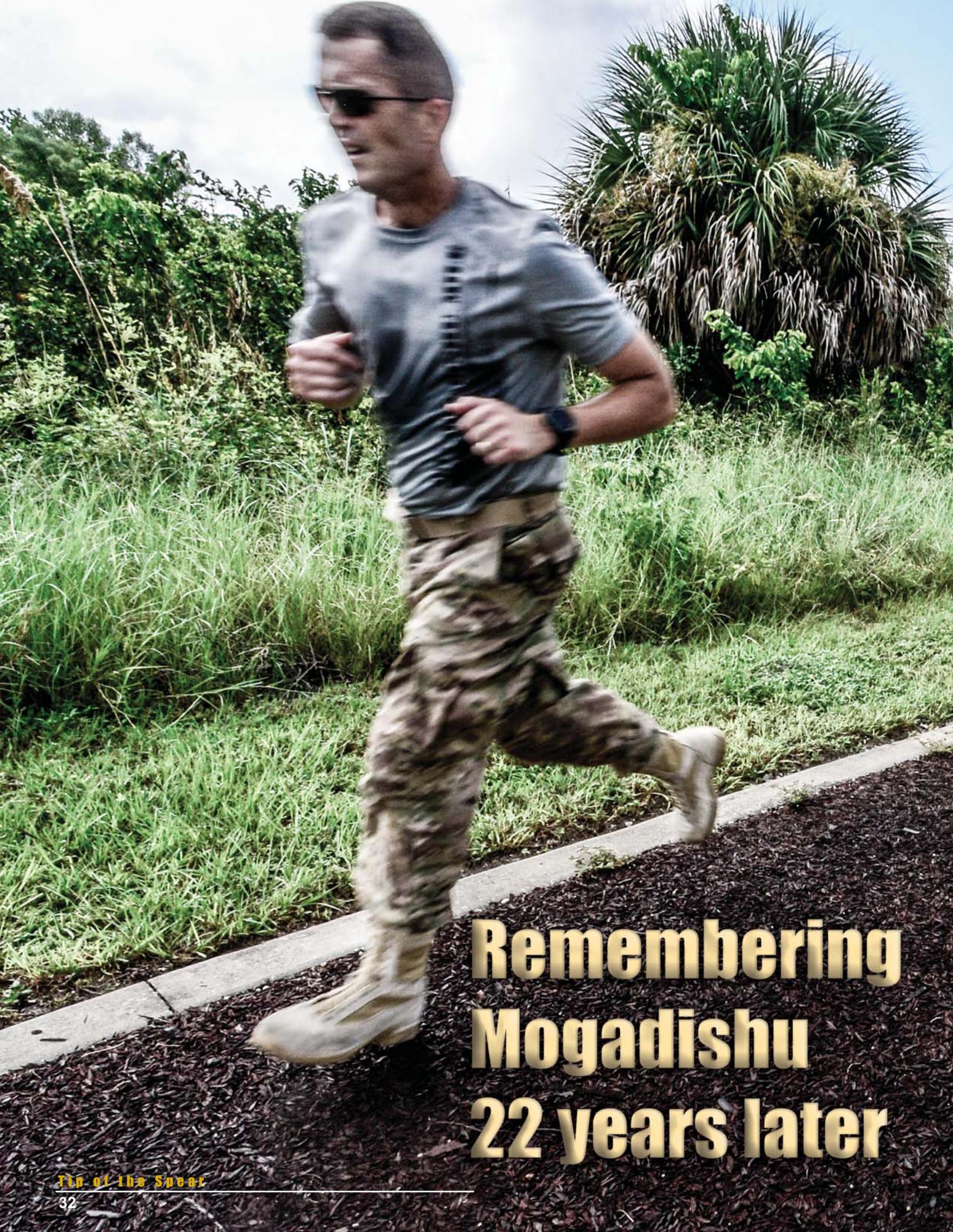
The Enterprise Management Course, CEP-2, is offered to E-7s, and provides students with a broader understanding of both traditional and SOF-specific organizational leadership and management concepts.

"The return on investment is much quicker here than at a traditional school with a standard degree program," said Army Sgt. Maj. Steven Horsley, commandant of JSOU's enlisted academy.

All three educational institutions currently offer undergraduate degrees, with the University of Charleston offering graduate level degrees for SOF personnel. All partner schools affiliated with JSOU have met the following benchmarks: they are regionally accredited, military-friendly, offer tuition rates within the tuition assistance cap, offer completely online programs, and have flexible admission requirements.

"It really takes a village," said Carson, who added that type of specific approach to education serves those in the SOF community extremely well.

Lankford's experience is a perfect illustration of the USSOCOM's "village" importance. This has never been more necessary than it in today's fast-paced and pressure-packed world.



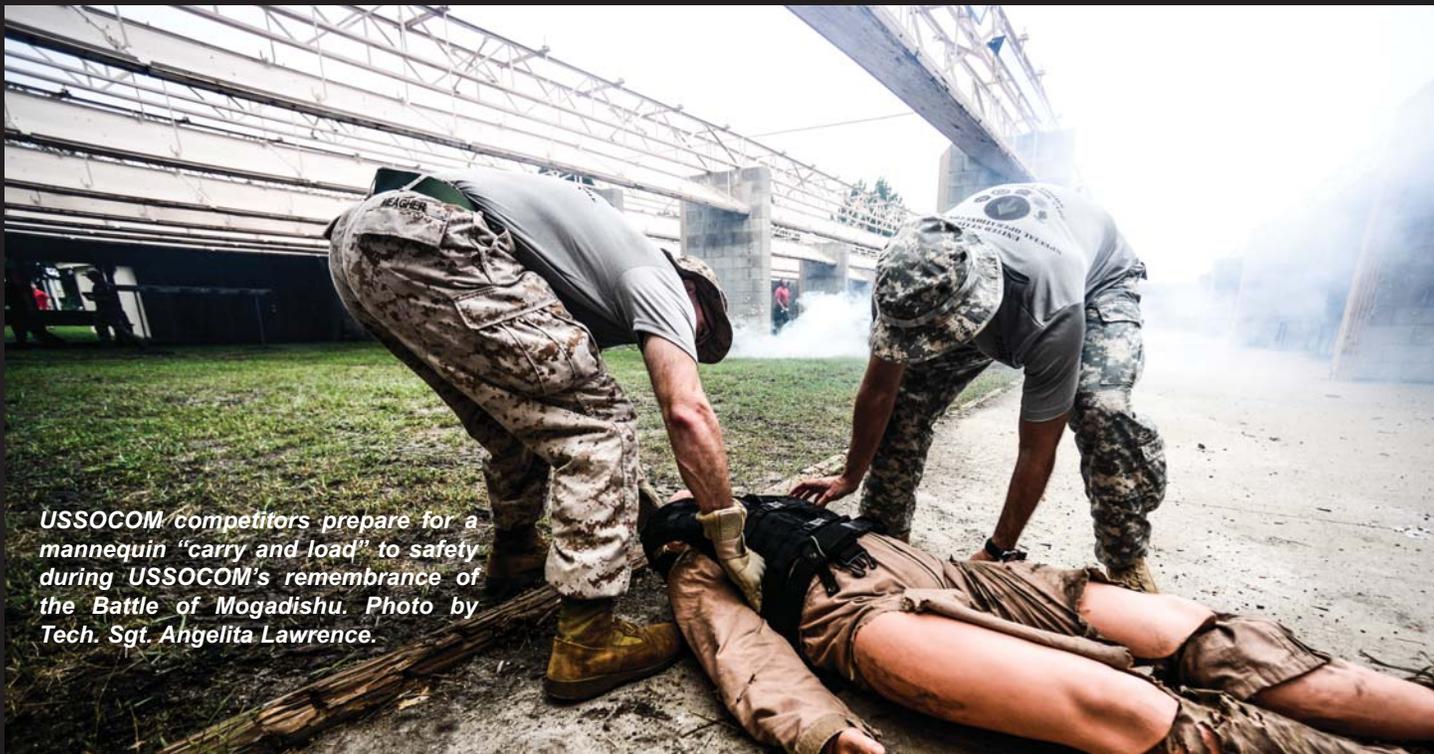
Remembering Mogadishu 22 years later



Runners compete in the 5K race during USSOCOM's remembrance of the Battle of Mogadishu. In the Special Operations community, the Mogadishu Mile is a symbol of dedication and perseverance. Twenty-one two-man teams participated in the competition that began at the small-arms range on base and ended at the SOF Memorial near the entrance of USSOCOM, Oct 2. The event started with the teams carrying a training mannequin on top of a stretcher, followed by a course of fire in a simulated urban environment, followed by yet another mannequin "carry and load" to safety. Once all teams completed this portion of the event, teams lined up and began the 5K race in boots and combat uniforms. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Angelita M. Lawrence

Story on next page

Tip of the Spear



USSOCOM competitors prepare for a mannequin “carry and load” to safety during USSOCOM’s remembrance of the Battle of Mogadishu. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Angellita Lawrence.

***By Gunnery Sgt. Reina Barnett
USSOCOM Public Affairs***

Men and women from United States Special Operations Command assembled in the early morning hours Oct. 2, marking the 22nd anniversary of the deadly encounter and battle that followed, on the streets of Mogadishu, Somalia.

Twenty-one two-man teams participated in the competition that began at the small-arms range on base and ended at the SOF Memorial near the entrance of USSOCOM. The event started with the teams carrying a training mannequin on top of a stretcher, followed by a course of fire in a simulated urban environment, followed by yet another mannequin “carry and load” to safety. Once all teams completed this portion of the event, teams lined up and began the 5K race in boots and combat uniforms.

In the special operations community, the Mogadishu Mile is a symbol of dedication and perseverance. Some participants were just beginning their military careers in 1993 and know the importance of remembering those who fought and those who fell.

“I was there, but a lot of these young men and women that are in uniform [today], weren’t even born yet, so to understand and recall and also recognize is important. Also, so this [generation] knows the feats and actions they’re taking today will be honored in the future as well,” said Army Col. John Vannoy, program executive officer for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, USSOCOM.

The Mogadishu Mile route ran here honored the men

who ran from a helicopter crash site to a rally point held by the 10th Mountain Division during the early morning battle more than two decades ago.

The U.S. sent Special Operations Forces into Somalia in 1993 to capture General Mohamed Farrah Hassan Aidid, a Somali military commander and faction leader. When two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters lowered Soldiers onto the ground, an unexpected attack by Somali forces spiraled into a street battle, where 18 Americans were killed and 68 others wounded.

Rocket propelled grenades brought down the two Black Hawk helicopters. Events on the ground escalated and fueled more fights, drawing larger, hostile crowds toward American soldiers and Special Forces troops already pinned down by gun fire. As U.S. Soldiers struggled to regain their balance under heavy gunfire, they engaged in a bloody battle spanning two days.

USSOCOM senior enlisted leader Command Sgt. Maj. William Thetford, who served as a team breacher, in Charlie Squadron in 1993, flew on one of the aircraft - Super 6-2.

Thetford was among several USSOCOM leaders supporting the participants as they neared the finish line.

Speaking of his experience in Mogadishu, Thetford recalled, “When times were incredibly tough, what got everyone through was the teamwork; the drive to stay together, to help each other out, and never give up.”

That same teamwork was evident throughout the race that honored the service and sacrifice of those that came before.



(Top left) USSOCOM competitors finish the mannequin “carry and load” to safety. (Top right) A shooter fires at his target during the small arms competition. (Bottom) Runners finish the competition by completing a 5K run. The events were part of USSOCOM’s remembrance of the Battle of Mogadishu, Oct 2, on MacDill Air Force Base. Photos by Tech. Sgt. Angelita Lawrence.



The lordly pilot and lowly saboteur

The AAF, OSS, and Project Campbell/Javaman



Christian E. Fearer
USSOCOM History & Research Office

On a spring morning in March 1944, Army Air Forces (AAF) Maj. James Rand traveled across the Potomac River from his Pentagon office to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) headquarters, located on Navy Hill, north of the Lincoln Memorial. He was scheduled to brief the OSS director William Donovan and his chief of Special Projects Lt. Cmdr. John Shaheen in the headquarters' film room. The subject of the briefing was the advancements made by the AAF to develop a radio-controlled guided bomb.

Rand came to the OSS armed with a film, and as the last frames flickered across the projection screen, a conversation led by Donovan began. He wondered whether radio-control technology could be adapted for use by the OSS, perhaps somehow as part of sabotage operations. By the discussion's end, Donovan tasked Shaheen to work with Rand in considering ways such technology could be adapted, an assignment both officers accepted enthusiastically.

Twenty-seven months had passed since the United States went to war with the Empire of Japan and Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany. The long campaign across the Pacific continued toward the Japanese mainland, while from England the Allies prepared for the long awaited invasion of Fortress Europe and the opening of the western front. With the war's outcome anything but certain, 1944 promised to be an important year, a time requiring as much creativity as force and determination.

One dilemma facing war planners and strategists was how to inflict serious damage against enemy-held harbors. A report published in April by the OSS described the "thousands of prime targets" that existed in "enemy-held harbors in Europe and along the miles of shore held by the Japanese in the Pacific and Indian Oceans." Such targets were heavily defended and attacking them was very difficult. Anti-aircraft fire provided protection from above while barrage balloons protected against lower-level strafing. Sea approaches were often guarded by naval batteries capable of keeping ships far from shore. There was also a considerable risk of underwater mines. What the Allies required was a "different mode of attack," one not "vulnerable to the usual instruments of detection and defense."

A week after their discussion, Shaheen and Rand returned to Donovan with an ambitious idea. "I recommended to General Donovan," recounted Shaheen,

"that we adapt radio and television to small disguised boats which could be used for demolition, incendiary, and reconnaissance purposes." What Shaheen proposed was a stand-off weapons platform that incorporated existent technology in innovative ways, especially television, which was still in its earliest stages of development. Donovan was intrigued by what he heard and met the following day with Rand's superior, Brig. Gen.

Harold McClelland, chief of the Air Communications Office. Donovan remarked to McClelland, "If the lordly pilot and the lowly saboteur would work more closely together a great deal of destruction not now being carried out would be made against the enemy." The two men agreed to a joint AAF-OSS initiative, which they codenamed Campbell.

The first step in Campbell's development was a test of the concept. Two weeks after launching the project, tests were conducted from Little Creek, Virginia, near Hampton. Radio-control technology was already used by the AAF on its target boats. The purpose of the Little Creek trials was to attempt navigation of those boats using television as opposed to line of sight. The equipment performed as intended, proving the concept of remotely controlled and navigated boats that could be loaded with explosives, driven into a denied harbor, and then detonated. The hope was that it would be available for shipment to the operational theaters within a month.

The enthusiasm to deploy Campbell was dampened by the Department of the Navy, which voiced its reservations through Rear Adm. W.S. DeLany, the deputy chief of staff for the commander in chief of the United States Fleet. DeLany, who would prove to be a point of near-constant frustration for the CAMPBELL project, requested the project be held from deployment until the Navy could operationally test a project of its own that incorporated "block" technology, the code commonly used for television.

All indications were that the Navy's hold would be temporary. In the meantime, efforts were taken to improve upon the Campbell concept, particularly regarding the explosives carried aboard the boats, which were converted into "missiles" as they were commonly called. Over several weeks beginning in early June, George A. Noddin of the



Lt. Cmdr. John Shaheen

Maryland Research Laboratories experimented with different explosive types and quantities, as well as means of detonation. He specifically focused on developing a system to destroy enemy ships.

On August 11, Noddin's work was ready for testing. A derelict ship, the San Pablo, was towed offshore from Pensacola, Florida. A 34-foot boat built by the Hacker Boat Company for military use and packed with 3,486 pounds of torpex was disguised as a Danish fishing vessel, complete with a mannequin at the helm. At 9:30 a.m., an AAF B-17 aircraft with television and radio-control equipment within, assumed control of the boat, which it remotely steered into the 5,000-ton San Pablo. A pinning device on the boat's bow attached to the hull of the ship, detonating primacord that served as a scuttling charge. The boat began to sink against the San Pablo's hull when, 30 seconds later, 14 depth charges exploded. The derelict heaved from the terrific explosion that tore the San Pablo in half. The ship sank within two minutes.

By early fall, the Navy had yet to release its hold on the project. Those involved with Campbell still believed it would be fielded in the near future and did not want to abandon a project with such promise and utility. With colder weather approaching, however, they required a base unaffected by a northern winter. Florida seemed promising.

Two locations in Florida were considered: Carrabelle, south of Tallahassee, and St. Petersburg. As Tampa Bay offered the largest closed bay on the coast with easy access to the Gulf of Mexico, the OSS decided to establish a base for its secret project along the water in St. Petersburg. Concerned about espionage, the base was given a cover as the Joint Army-Navy Air Rescue Base, where both services were supposedly testing Army rescue equipment. Nothing was to suggest the base was, in actuality, operated by the OSS.

By spring 1945, Campbell, which had been renamed Javaman, was being tested daily in and around Tampa Bay. AAF planes flew from Drew Field—where Tampa International Airport is now located—taking off every morning so that crews inside could train on guiding the boats using television and radio-controls. Over time, improvements were made to the equipment that lengthened the range. By season's end, they were capable of reliably controlling the Javaman boats from 85 miles away, with only one man in the back of the plane watching an image in a small television receiver and using remote controls to steer the boat and control its speed.

In mid-March, a year after the concept was born in Donovan's Washington headquarters, he and 10 others traveled to Tampa Bay to witness a demonstration of Javaman. Two 85-foot Army Rescue Boats boats—much larger than the original 34-foot Hacker crafts—were remotely navigated across the bay and into the narrow channels near downtown Tampa. The closest aircraft controlling the boats

was 45 miles away over the Gulf of Mexico. The test demonstrated the evolution of the program and was a testament not only to the contributions of the many technical experts, but the skill of the crews as well.

Despite the incessant training and success of such demonstrations, Javaman was facing additional hurdles to deployment. The Navy, which had originally requested that the program be held until it operationally tested a platform they were secretly developing, now objected based on authorities. DeLany argued that Javaman was not, in fact, a program approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, despite falling under the category of sabotage, which the OSS was authorized to carry out. Further, by spring 1945, the course of the war was limiting its utility. The Allies were closing in on defeating Hitler; as the Allies marched deeper into the European interior, Javaman became increasingly less useful. In the Pacific, Iwo Jima fell to the Marines by the end of March, and within weeks, American bombers were pounding Tokyo. Efforts were made to get Javaman into the war by way of China. Since the program's earliest days, planners noted how useful the platform could be in a place such as Japanese-occupied Hong Kong. Despite attempts by Maj. Gen. Albert Wedemeyer, commander of U.S. forces in China, Javaman never deployed from the United States.

The announcement of Japan's surrender in mid-August doomed Javaman. With no operational need, all work on the project was immediately suspended, pending contracts were cancelled, and the program was liquidated. The AAF did express an interest in continuing work on JAVAMAN as a missile and as a means of rescuing downed personnel, but the OSS's involvement was suspended. By mid-September, however, the growls of idling boat engines along the St. Petersburg waterfront and the loud buzz of the B-17s over Tampa Bay—the sounds of preparing a secret weapon for war—were replaced by the muffled sweep of brooms and clanking of metal garbage cans. Despite its promise and ingenuity, Javaman missed its war.



Javaman crew member working with the television camera mounted on the bow of a test boat.





**Army Capt.
James M. Ahn
1st Special Forces Group (Airborne)**



**Air Force Capt.
Matthew D. Roland
23rd Special Tactics Squadron**



**Air Force Staff Sgt.
Forrest B. Sibley
21st Special Tactics Squadron**



**Army Master Sgt.
Joshua L. Wheeler
Headquarters, U.S. Army Special Operations Command**

Editor's note: Honored are Special Operations Forces who lost their lives since August's Tip of the Spear.

Participants compete in the mannequin carry during USSOCOM's remembrance of the Battle of Mogadishu, Oct. 2, on MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. In the Special Operations community, the Mogadishu Mile is a symbol of dedication and perseverance. Twenty-one two-man teams participated in the competition that began at the small-arms range on base and ended at the SOF Memorial near the entrance of USSOCOM. The event started with the teams carrying a training mannequin on top of a stretcher, followed by a course of fire in a simulated urban environment, followed by yet another mannequin "carry and load" to safety. Once all teams completed this portion of the event, teams lined up and began the 5K race in boots and combat uniforms. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Angelita M. Lawrence.

