



TIP OF THE SPEAR



**CALM IN THE CHAOS: COMBAT CONTROLLER
STUDENTS UNDER PRESSURE IN TACTICS EXERCISE**

U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLA., OCTOBER 2016



U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



Calm in Chaos: Combat Controller students under pressure ... 32

Tip of the Spear

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(Cover) A 352nd Battlefield Airmen Training Squadron Combat Control School student radios to a simulated aircraft during a tactics field training exercise at Camp Mackall, N.C., Aug. 3. The 352nd BATS, or Combat Control School, is the home of a 13-week course that provides initial Combat Controller qualifications. The training includes, small unit tactics, land navigation, communications, assault zones, physical training demolitions, fire support and field operations including parachuting. At the completion of this course, each graduate is awarded their scarlet beret and CCT flash. Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Ryan Conroy.



Thomas Jefferson
Award Winner

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SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND – EUROPE

Jackal Stone 2016 strengthens ties in Georgia



U.S. Special Operations Soldiers head toward their objective during Jackal Stone 2016 in Tblisi, Georgia, Aug. 15. Jackal Stone 2016 is a bilateral Georgian, U.S. counter terrorism and crisis management exercise. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Marcus Fichtl.

***By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Marcus Fichtl
U.S. Special Operations Command Europe***

U.S. Special Forces Soldiers and forces from the State Security Services of Georgia participated in exercise Jackal Stone 2016, in Tblisi, Georgia, during the first two weeks of August.

The exercise was designed to stress and build interoperability between U.S. and Georgian counter terrorism forces and interagency partners while providing mission command nodes the opportunity to exercise their systems. The exercise challenged the participants with counter terrorism scenarios at both the tactical and operational level throughout the country of Georgia.

“This is an exercise that is simulating our response to a terrorist case in a foreign country,” said Nicholas Berliner, chargé d’affaires, U.S. Embassy in Georgia. “The exercise enhances our ability to respond jointly to international security challenges.”

Special Operations Forces under Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) and mission command elements of U.S. European Command along with their Georgian counterparts were the primary participants in Jackal Stone 16. They worked together on the ground

through field missions and at the operational and strategic level via computer simulation.

“The Georgian forces, their planners, their commanders and their soldiers have shown nothing but trust and loyalty throughout the entire process,” said Maj. Ned Marsh, exercise planner, SOCEUR. “It has been an exercise of hard work and commitment.”

Jackal Stone 16 allowed Georgia to build up its own internal systems and capabilities.

“It was very important to see how the U.S. agencies cooperated, how an order comes from the top and then is executed at the lowest level,” said Irakli Chimakadze, director Georgian Counter Terrorism Center. “We will definitely emulate the U.S. planning and execution if a future crisis emerges.”

A culmination of a year’s worth of hard work and even more years of American and Georgian friendship, Jackal Stone strengthened the ties and capabilities of both partner nations.

“Jackal Stone 2016 was a year in planning, it involved hundreds of people and a very substantial commitment of both time and resources, but we feel it was a very good choice to do it here in Georgia and feel confident that this will be very beneficial to all concerned,” said Berliner.



(Left) Two U.S. Special Operations Soldiers call back to headquarters after securing an objective during Jackal Stone 2016 in Tblisi, Georgia, Aug. 15. (Above) U.S. and Georgian special operations Soldiers assault an objective during Jackal Stone 2016 in Tblisi, Georgia, Aug. 15. Photos by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Will Patterson.



352ND SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING



An MC-130J Commando II performs a Maritime Craft Aerial Delivery System drop over the Little Belt Strait in Denmark Sept. 27. After the Rigid-hulled Inflatable Boats were deployed, U.S. Navy Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen followed to set up the equipment. Finally, a third aircraft off loaded U.S. Air Force and Danish air commandos at the drop zone. Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Justine Rho.

352 SOW delivers combat power anytime, anyplace, anywhere

*By Senior Airman Justine Rho
352 Special Operations Wing Public Affairs*

Pre-flight briefs, heavy cargo loads, drop zone statistics, personnel guidance, aircraft and equipment inspections – a few of the many crucial steps it took Airmen from the 352d Special Operations Wing to execute a Maritime Craft Aerial Delivery System (MCADS) drop Sept. 27.

As part of the combined, joint force exercise Night Hawk, these Airmen worked alongside Danish air commandos and a U.S. Navy Special Warfare Combatant-craft unit to perform two MCADS drops, bundle deployments and air commando jumps over Little Belt

Strait in Denmark.

“A lot of work goes into a drop like this, but we routinely work with partner nations in order to hone our ability to work together in an operational environment and build on the relationships we have developed over years,” said Maj. Andrew Pickering, 352 SOW MC-130J Commando II pilot and mission commander.

Mission planning, that began weeks prior, led up to successful cargo loads on Stuttgart Air Base, Germany. Loadmasters and crew chiefs of an MC-130J Commando II, assigned to the 67th Special Operations Squadron, worked with Navy crewmen to load two rigid inflatable boats and a bundle onto the aircraft. The RHIBs were strategically

loaded, inspected and re-inspected in preparation for the MCADS drop the following day.

“The MCADS requires a different type of coordination between the crew and users as far as how it’s executed compared to a standard heavy equipment drop,” said U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Christopher Jones, 67th Special Operations Squadron loadmaster.

Tech. Sgt Adam Phelan, 752d Special Operations Group MC-130J Commando II loadmaster evaluator, explained how the MCADS mission poses unique challenges.

“It’s challenging because it’s a combination airdrop, heavy equipment in conjunction with personnel, utilizing a 20,000 pound boat that fills the cargo compartment,” said Phelan. “The MCADS is a specialized airdrop load, which requires experienced and trained loadmasters to ‘be on their game’ to deploy, load, rig, and execute the mission set. It is a very rewarding airdrop to accomplish.”

The MCADS increases Special Operation Forces’ capabilities.



A Rigid-hulled Inflatable Boat is loaded onto an MC-130J Commando II in preparation for a Maritime Craft Aerial Delivery drop Sept. 26, at Stuttgart Air Base, Germany. Two of three MC-130J Commando IIs from the 67th Special Operations Squadron were loaded for MCADS drops in participation with the 2016 Night Hawk exercise. Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Justine Rho.



Danish air commandos perform a static-line jump from a U.S. Air Force MC-130J Commando II assigned to the 67th Special Operations Squadron, over the Little Belt Strait in Denmark Sept. 27. Airmen from RAF Mildenhall, England, and U.S. Navy Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen worked with allied forces during the 2016 Night Hawk exercise testing joint force capabilities. Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Justine Rho.

“Specifically it allows aerial delivery of naval SOF insertion and extraction for underway visit, board, search and seizure, maritime interdiction, and support for direct action missions among other capabilities,” explained Phelan. “The 752nd Special Operations Group is ready to execute the MCADS mission in a joint environment to deliver combat power anywhere it is required and trains its aircrews to a high standard in order to deliver results; anytime, anywhere.”

U.S. Navy SEALs followed the MCADS and bundle drop to setup the equipment post hitting the water. After the RHIBs are operational, Danish air commandos performed a static line drop followed by military free-fall from Air Force air commandos.

The exercise tested the capabilities of each unit and demanded attention to detail from all aspects. The service members’ hard work was well worth the effort.

“This exercise allowed our Airmen and their Danish counterparts to practice drops with the MCADS in a controlled environment to enhance our ability to work together and ensure we are successful in a real-world scenario,” said Pickering. “This type of training is invaluable and only adds to our ability to provide combat air power in a variety of locations and scenarios.”



NSW participates in multinational JTAC training

*By U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Margie Rodriguez
Naval Special Warfare Group 2 Public Affairs*

U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Stephen Gaye remembered a particular day when he was flying over Afghanistan in 2011 after he received intelligence of a threat that warranted air support. The terrain was difficult, visibility was low and there were several threats in the area. The ground troops were operating in one of the most challenging set of circumstances. His mission was to ensure that the team on the ground made it through the valley, met with tribal leaders and returned safely.

Gaye was relying on the joint terminal attack controller

(JTAC), an air support specialist imbedded within the ground unit, to convey to him in the air what was needed to accomplish the mission.

That day the enemy forces felt threatened because of the forward presence in the area, but they did not attack, and everyone returned safely to home base.

Today, schools like the Netherlands Air Ground Operations School (NLD AGOS) in Arnhem, Netherlands heavily emphasize on JTAC training because of the positive impact it has on the battlefield.

“This JTAC is there to give the ground force commander advice on what to use, how to use it and makes sure it’s done in a safe and effective way,” said Dennis Schotmeijer, JTAC



Students from the Netherlands Air Ground Operations School complete a simulated joint terminal attack controller training evolution. The Netherlands is one of several partner nations that integrate the JTAC Memorandum of Agreement, which standardizes JTAC certification and qualification to allow JTACs to operate in joint environments. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Margie Rodriguez.

instructor and evaluator with the NLD AGOS.

The JTAC Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) standardizes JTAC certification and qualification to allow JTACs to operate in joint environments. Schotmeijer described Afghanistan as the perfect example of a joint setting in which the JTAC MOA was used successfully.

“I could talk to an American fighter pilot and we were on the same page,” said Schotmeijer. “It didn’t matter if the aviator was in the Navy or the Air Force either. We had the same procedures. That’s what the joint in JTAC means. We can work together with a lot of different nations and services and be able to integrate amongst each other.”

During a regular training day, the NLD AGOS’ JTAC instructors begin with an open forum discussion. They list the pros and cons of current progress within the class, decide what would fit in future classes, and what needs to be done for that day.

It was on one of these days that Schotmeijer introduced Gaye, an F-18 pilot and the fires officer attached to Naval Special Warfare, to the group. Gaye was invited to provide insight to the students on the NLD AGOS’ training, tactics and techniques.

Lt. Col. Gaico Hofstra, commander of NLD AGOS, supports the initiative to interchange instructors between partner nations.

“Having Lt. Cmdr. Gaye share his expertise affords us the opportunity to gain more knowledge and expand our perspective on our whole JTAC training,” said Hofstra. “Reflecting face-to-face with partner nations maintains the high standards and continuity within the program.”

Gaye was impressed with the JTAC MOA’s cohesiveness throughout the different nations and branches of service.

“To put things in perspective, a Navy F-18 pilot, a Belgian special forces member and a Dutch artilleryman took notes on the class for the day,” said Gaye. “When we debriefed, we all had exactly the same notes.”

The students at NLD AGOS learn basic weaponry, target matching, how to deconflict aircraft, and how to use the

A JTAC’s mission seems almost obvious, but it is not. This job requires a lot of experience and knowledge that’s outside the lane of the normal operator. Looking back at that day, one of many when I flew over Afghanistan, I am relieved that the JTAC on the ground knew what he was doing and made sure his guys had enough support to be able to operate safely. I was proud to be able to be a part of that.

— Lt. Cmdr. Stephen Gaye



Lt. Cmdr. Stephen Gaye, F-18 pilot and fires officer attached to Naval Special Warfare Command, debriefs students at the Netherlands Air Ground Operations School. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Margie Rodriguez.

correct briefing forms and brevities throughout the course of 13 weeks. The class is administered two times per year.

“A JTAC’s mission seems almost obvious,” said Gaye, “but it is not. This job requires a lot of experience and

knowledge that’s outside the lane of the normal operator. Looking back at that day, one of many when I flew over Afghanistan, I am relieved that the JTAC on the ground knew what he was doing and made sure his guys had enough support to be able to operate safely. I was proud to be able to be a part of that.”

The NLD AGOS is looking towards more simulation-style training while maintaining its high standards. Hofstra said the JTAC MOA and NATO standards will aid the Netherlands and several other partner nations with pressing forward with improving JTAC training.



SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND – PACIFIC

A deployed aircraft ground response element Airman with the 353rd Special Operations Support Squadron watches for any potential threats while protecting a simulated airfield during an exercise July 27, at Kadena Air Base, Japan. The DAGRE team is a special group of highly trained security forces Airmen that perform a wide range of Special Operations missions. Photo by Airman 1st Class Corey M. Pettis.



DAGRE Airmen in humanitarian aid, disaster relief exercise

*By Airman 1st Class Corey M. Pettis
18th Wing Public Affairs*

Sweat glistens on his face, his eyes peer back and forth, weapon at the ready and watching for any movement. As the old saying goes, practice like you play, because for deployed aircraft ground response element (DAGRE) Airmen, there's no room for anything but success.

Airman from the 353rd Special Operations Group participated in a training exercise at Kadena Air Base, Japan July 27; the scenario gave them the opportunity to practice humanitarian aid and disaster relief (HA/DR) operations.

"Building partnerships with foreign entities doesn't always involve the two nation's militaries, it can also come in the form of humanitarian aid," said Capt. Ceasar Baldemor, 353rd Special Operations Support Squadron DAGRE flight leader.

The purpose of this training exercise is to keep the DAGRE sharp and ready to tackle any situation they may find themselves in, wherever they are deployed to complete the mission.

"In one way or another, we're always training for a HA/DR mission," said Baldemor. "For the DAGRE flight, our core mission is security because we make sure the aircraft gets off the ground safely and that special tactics can perform their critical mission."

When things kick off in the Pacific, the phones at the 353rd SOG are some of the first to ring.

DAGRE personnel can be tasked to operations such as providing fly-away security, flight deck denial, pararescue and combat control team escort, airfield security and personnel recovery operations.

"This evening, we wanted to test all of these mission capabilities over a 24-hour period," said Baldemor.

During this exercise, the DAGRE team was responding to a crisis in a fictional country where the local population was desperately trying to be evacuated, portrayed by volunteers from the 18th Force Support Squadron.

"I was a local refugee who needed to be evacuated and as time went on, we became impatient and started to get anxious about getting on the aircraft," said Senior Airman

Andres Cervantes, 18th FSS out-bound technician who played the role of a refugee. "It was fun, full of action and rough, but it's all good as long as we made it real for [the DAGRE team] and they got the training they needed."

The team used a training area with a burned out plane, normally used for fire training, as an aircraft waiting to load up refugees.

After securing the airfield and setting up security, the team encountered their first refugees. They expertly defused the restless refugees, then searched and escorted them to the aircraft.

They then responded to a situation of being outnumbered by a large group of people wanting to get on the plane. They promptly calmed the crowd down and restored order.

Once order was restored, the DAGRE members were attacked from two sides by members of the 18th Security Forces Squadron, simulating enemy resistance. Swiftly and accurately, they returned fire, taking out the enemy while protecting the group of refugees.

Afterward, the area was cleared of any additional threats and the remaining refugees were loaded onto the aircraft.

As the sun sank below the tree line and darkness fell upon them, night vision goggles were pulled out and turned on; under the green glow of NVGs, the team was ready for the next part of the mission – an important person was missing and it was their job to recover him.

Slipping under the cloak of night, the team made their way through the jungle, down the road and off a beaten path.

They found their man, who had simulated injuries. They provided essential first aid and took him safely back to the extraction point.

Once back, the team was ambushed, this time at night and from the cover of the surrounding trees.

"They performed very well considering we threw numerous complex [exercise] injects at them," said Baldemor. "We wanted to see how they would setup security over a wide area, such as an airfield, with only a small number of people, how they would execute effective crowd control measures when there is panic and desperation in the air, and finally, how well they are going to work as a team to get the mission done."



Combined Special Operations Forces conduct fast-rope training with U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Regiment forces with Special Operations Command South on July 21, during Chilean exercise Southern Star held in Antofagasta, Chile. Two MH-60 Blackhawks provided combined forces an insertion platform during simulated training scenarios. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Osvaldo Equite.



US, Chile SOF partner during exercise Southern Star

*By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Osvaldo Equite
Special Operations Command South*

Multinational Special Operations Forces from Chile and the U.S. completed exercise Southern Star on July 28, amid Antofagasta, Chile's arid desert plains and mountain sights along the Pacific coastline.

The Chilean led exercise, commonly known as Estrella Austral in Spanish, is a capacity-building exercise that culminates months of training between Special Operations Command South assigned forces and their Chilean counterparts to enhance interoperability and build relationships among both countries' militaries.

Training included subject matter expert exchanges and combined training exchanges in mountaineering, airborne operations, medical training, logistical and air support, weapons, and close quarters combat integration to name a few.

This year, Southern Star 2016 set the stage for forces to integrate in a combined joint environment at the operational and tactical level during a 10-day simulated scenario in one of the world's driest deserts.

"Militaries need to train constantly to maintain operational capacity," said Chilean army commander, Gen. Humberto Oviedo. That is why

a fictitious scenario was developed where SOF forces can share their expertise, their experiences, their techniques, and most importantly, get to know each other and build rapport, he added.

"Partnership is the foundation of our participation in Southern Star," added U.S. Army Col. Reginald Bostick, SOCSOUTH deputy commander. Through partnerships like this, SOF share best practices, and communicate better with each other to develop lasting relationships that support peace, security and stability in the region.

About 130 U.S. Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors and Marines assigned to SOCSOUTH integrated with their counterparts to exchange capabilities and experiences unique to SOF. One U.S. Air Force MC-130J and two U.S. Army MH-60 Blackhawk aircraft provided transportation support and additional training opportunities for exercise participants.

"This exercise not only demonstrates the relationship we have with Chile and demonstrates the best of our capabilities, but it sets the stage for future partnerships," said Bostick.

The Chilean Defense Minister, José Antonio Gómez, and the U.S. Ambassador to Chile, Michael Hammer, were among the many senior officials that visited exercise locations and met with exercise participants.



U.S. and Trinidad and Tobago naval special operations forces move toward a training objective Sept. 27, in the Gulf of Paria, Trinidad and Tobago, during a culmination exercise that ended two weeks of training between both countries. The culmination exercise involved boarding a maritime vessel at sea and was observed by leaders from both countries. Photo by U.S. Army Maj. Cesar Santiago.

SOF partnership converges in Caribbean Trinidad and Tobago

*By U.S. Army Maj. Cesar H. Santiago
Special Operations Command South*

U.S. Special Operations Forces with Special Operations Command South trained with Trinidad and Tobago Defense Forces (TTDF), Police Services and their coast guard as part of a Joint Combined Exchange Training exercise focused on maneuver warfare, marksmanship, counter terrorism, tactical military techniques and maritime operations from Sept. 20-27, throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

The training increases USSOF's proficiency in the areas of mentorship, instruction and advisory roles, and

improves cultural and regional understanding and trust between American and Trinidadian and Tobagonian elite forces.

"Training exchanges are important to SOF forces – host nation and ours alike," said U.S. Army Master Sgt. Leo Skinner, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne). "JCETs assist in confirming the validity and credibility of our special operators while fostering enduring relationships that offers greater synchronization for future training opportunities."

SOC SOUTH, in coordination with the U.S. Embassy in Trinidad and Tobago and the TTDF, routinely collaborate to provide opportunities for USSOF to train

and test their interoperability and abilities to build effective teams and form long-lasting partnerships with partner nation forces.

JCETs allow American special operations units to train and hone their military tactics and skills in unfamiliar settings while also improving bilateral relations and shared goals in support of U.S. Southern Command throughout the training process of both partner nations.

“The training opens the doors for relationships that will benefit all parties involved, while exposing them to cultural nuances that develop critical thinking skills and force adaptability to be implemented into planning and training,” said Skinner, the country’s SOCSOUTH special operations forces liaison officer.

For that reason, SOCSOUTH planners together with TTDF, which are an important leader in defense and security in the Caribbean, coordinated the training to be in urban, rural, and littoral areas. The training validated the commitment of both partner nations to improve their respective SOF unit’s overall mission readiness and has a positive impact on partner nation security forces.

The two-week long JCET culminated with a series of challenging simulated training scenarios.

U.S. Army 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment MH-60 Blackhawk helicopters transported combined force members, while ground units provided security and Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard patrol vessels and high-speed boats provided maritime support during the culmination training exercise.

“The most significant benefit to the JCET is exposure to alternative training applications and use of specific skill sets. This training allows each group to evaluate specific practices and allows each group to analyze and evaluate whether or not adaptation occurs,” said Skinner.

In addition, TTDF’s Special Naval Unit along with members of Naval Special Warfare with SOCSOUTH exchanged best practices during a portion of the culminating exercise that involved boarding a maritime vessel located off the northwest coast of Trinidad and Tobago. The exercise allowed these units to refine tactics, techniques, and procedures during a simulated search and seizure mission using special team boats while integrating Army aviation assets.

“I think what the teams have been able to accomplish, the collaboration and the training that took place during the JCET not only help us to fulfill training



U.S. Army Special Operations Forces assigned to Special Operations Command South conduct training along side Trinidad and Tobago Defense Forces at Chacachacare Island, Trinidad and Tobago, Sept. 26. The training stressed the importance of planning and coordination with our partner nation and how that contributes to long term-benefits. Photo by U.S. Army Maj. Cesar Santiago.

requirements, but strengthen collective security efforts,” said a U.S. Naval Special Warfare officer.

The overall training also focused on mission planning and coordination and validated the effectiveness of the training received in areas of marksmanship, rappelling, fast-roping, and various tactical maneuvers – both on land and sea.

The culmination exercise was observed by SOCSOUTH and U.S. Southern Command senior military leadership, Trinidad and Tobago Defense Force and Coast Guard officials, civilian personnel from the embassy and Security Cooperation Office, and local news members.

SOCSOUTH plans, directs, and executes special operations missions throughout Central America, South America, and the Caribbean to achieve operational and strategic objectives in support of Commander, USSOUTHCOM.



U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

The America's Response Monument, also known as the Horse Soldier statue, sits in its final resting place at Liberty Park, adjacent to the 9/11 Memorial in New York City. Photo by U.S. Army Capt. Eric Hudson.



Special Ops Horse Soldier statue has new home watching over ground zero

*By U.S. Army Capt. Eric Hudson
160th SOAR (A) Public Affairs*

The “Horse Soldier” has a permanent home. De Oppress Liber, the 16-foot-tall bronze statue also known as the “Horse Soldier,” depicts a Special Operations Soldier in Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks, and commemorates the first time U.S. troops used horses in combat since 1942. The sculpture’s new home now watches over the Sept. 11 Memorial in New York City.

On Sept. 13, members of Task Force Dagger – a joint special operations team consisting of Green Berets from the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), aircrew members from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne), and Air Force Combat Controllers – gathered to commemorate the America’s Response statue and remember their actions in the wake of 9/11.

Vic McGowan, a spokesperson for the United War Veterans Council, said, “In mid-October 2001, as the nation watched from their living rooms and their couches, their board rooms, their offices and from the streets, members of Task Force Dagger rode through the mountains of Afghanistan and we were once again reminded of our great American spirit.”

It was a dangerous mission. Special Forces were on the ground in Afghanistan within weeks of the 9/11 attacks to begin the war against the Taliban. Despite all the high-tech gear at their disposal, it was the use of horses that proved pivotal in crossing the rugged terrain. The mounted troops became known as the “horse soldiers.”

U.S. Army Maj. Mark Nutch, who served as a ground commander for a group of Green Berets known as Operational Detachment Alpha 595, said the Special Operations Forces worked with Afghan tribes of the Northern Alliance to fight the Taliban.

“Together we were hunted by a common enemy,” he said.

U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. (Ret.) Calvin Markham, a special tactics combat controller, said, “We promised the Northern Alliance air power against the



The Pipes & Drums Of The Emerald Society of the New York City Police Department plays during the America’s Response Ceremony. The America’s Response Monument, also known as the Horse Soldier statue, sits in its final resting place at Liberty Park, adjacent to the 9/11 Memorial in New York City. The statue serves as a reminder of the bond formed between U.S. Special Operations Forces and the New York City first responders. Photo by U.S. Army Capt. Eric Hudson, 160th SOAR (A) Public Affairs.

Taliban, and we delivered with devastating effects.”

U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Baker served as a chinook crew member for Task Force Dagger.

“I was proud and scared,” he said. “We were doing things that had never been done before. I was a young 25-year-old. I was just thinking of the moment and getting the mission done.”

The “Horse Soldier” statue, which commemorates these actions, was previously located at Two World Financial Center in New York City.



U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Army officer earns Soldiers Medal for actions after Boston Marathon bombing

By Army News Service

U.S. Army Lt. Col. David P. Diamond, who provided aid to victims and assistance to Boston police in the immediate aftermath of the April 15, 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, has been awarded the Soldiers Medal for his actions that day.

It was Sen. John McCain who pinned the medal on Diamond's chest during a Capitol Hill ceremony Sept. 27. Among those in attendance were Secretary of the Army Eric K. Fanning, Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Mark A. Milley, and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel A. Dailey.

"This is really a reflection of my profession of arms, not of myself," Diamond said, after receiving the medal. He serves now as legislative affairs officer within the Office of the Secretary of Defense. "I come from great stock, and great training and great leadership. It's a culture, a family we have developed together. Those actions are really representative of what we all do in the military."

Back on April 15, 2013, Diamond was serving as a legislative affairs officer with U.S. Special Operations Command. He and his family were in Boston, so that he could run in the marathon. He said for that day, he'd set a personal goal for himself to run the race in less than four hours -- something he had never done before. He completed the race in 3 hours and 56 minutes.

After he crossed the finish line, he said, he waited for other runners to finish, and for results and awards to be given. He sat near the finish line to recover from the race.

"I just sat down on the side of the road to kind of collect myself, do some texting, find where my family was," he said. "That's when the bomb detonated."

Within five minutes of finishing the race, Diamond heard the first of two improvised explosive devices go off. He was but 50 yards from that explosion. There was a "VIP bridge" there that allowed certain spectators to cross the road and move into the bleachers that had been set up for them. It was that bridge, he said, that had shielded him from the first blast.

As a special operations Soldier with seven deployments



After receiving the Soldiers Medal, U.S. Army Lt. Col. David Diamond (second from left) poses with Secretary of the Army Eric Fanning (far left), Senator John McCain and Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Mark Milley (far right). Photo by John Martinez.

under his belt, Diamond has seen plenty of combat, he said. While the explosion he heard was unexpected in the context of a marathon inside the United States, the sound was familiar.

"I knew exactly what it was," he said. "I kind of centered myself. I knew I needed to get in there to investigate. I didn't know to what extent there was damage or injury. I just knew that detonation was not timely. And that certainly, it was reminiscent of what I'd heard before. And so when I got in there, I started assessing the situation. And based on the crowd fleeing, I knew it was something significant."

Diamond ran toward the sound of the explosion to see what he could do to be of assistance there, he said. When he arrived at the site of the first Improvised Explosive Device, the second IED exploded -- meters from where he was standing.

"I found somebody of authority, a police officer," he said. "I offered my assistance, and began to collaborate with what I thought the best course of action would be, which

was to secure the area and to begin to kind of deconstruct the finish line so that we could get medical personnel uninhibited access in there. In any medical site, you're looking to triage the injured."

According to a U.S. Army-provided narrative of the events that day, Diamond triaged the injured and identified 18 critical individuals with amputations. He also re-distributed the limited medical supplies on site, and confiscated police flex cuffs to use as tourniquets.

"We didn't have a robust supply of medical gear, so I went into the sporting goods store and grabbed some packing material, like T-shirts and socks and belts for tourniquets," Diamond said. "And then once I got out, I kind of distributed those amongst those who were helping, and kind of went from there."

At the scene, Diamond used his emergency medical technician training to render aid. He started with a woman whose lower left leg was badly injured with a portion of her tibia protruding from her knee. He packed her wound with a T-shirt and used a flex cuff as a tourniquet for her leg. Another woman nearby was complaining of extreme pain and the feeling of burning. After doing an assessment for bleeding and ensuring she had a clear airway, he used water and a piece of metal to remove the embedded debris from her abdomen.

After passing her off to a crew designated to evacuate her, he moved to a man suffering from losing both legs. The man's right leg was missing below the knee and his left leg was severed above the knee. Because he was in excruciating pain and losing a tremendous amount of blood, the responders assisting him had difficulty controlling him enough to apply the appropriate dressings and tourniquets. Diamond positioned his body weight on top of the man and controlled his arms so that the other responders could properly assist.

In the next 30 minutes, Diamond assisted seven other amputee victims, all missing parts of their legs, some with badly injured hands and multiple lacerations across their bodies. As with previous victims, Diamond helped apply packing materials and tourniquets to contain their injuries and prepared them for transport.

The last victim he assisted was an older gentleman, approximately in his 60s and weighing 180 pounds. Initially he was unresponsive, not breathing, and without a pulse. He suffered several lacerations to his feet, legs, and hands.

However, while bleeding profusely, these injuries did not appear to be life-threatening. Diamond instructed a responder to hold the gentleman's head so that his airway was as open as possible while another responder and Diamond alternated giving chest compressions and resuscitation breaths.

After approximately five minutes of sustained CPR, the patient began breathing and his heartbeat resumed. Diamond decided to assist with the evacuation of the man because of the critical nature of his situation. He grabbed a backboard to load the gentleman and prepared him for movement to an ambulance.

With limited personnel available, Diamond carried the feet side of the backboard solo while two others carried the top end. Diamond motivated the two volunteers as they ran 800 meters to the first available ambulance. Through their diligent efforts, they saved the man's life, averting a fourth casualty.

After helping take the man to the ambulance, Diamond

was pushed outside the security perimeter, and was unable to continue to offer assistance. Exhausted, and covered in blood, he departed the blast site to locate his family.

"Lt. Col. Diamond did all this without regard for his own personal safety," said McCain at the ceremony. "He brought stability and leadership to a scene of chaos. Historically, the

Boston Marathon is an event meant to celebrate the patriots of the Revolutionary War. To a new generation, it will also commemorate the courageous actions of the men and women who responded in a time of desperate need. In today's new world, the battlegrounds have changed, but the face of valor has not. We must continue to recognize those who pass that test and who answer that call without hesitation, without personal gain, and risk to their own personal safety."

Diamond said that his experiences and training as a Soldier were what helped him that day, to help others who had been injured in the two blasts.

"My training, my experiences in combat, my values I embrace as an Army leader, moved me back to the finish line to assist those that were injured, who needed help," he said. "I know, had it been my family, my friends, my colleagues that were injured, or myself, I'd have wanted the same kind of help. It's just those times, when you don't really think about your safety, you just think about the regard for others."

My training, my experiences in combat, my values I embrace as an Army leader, moved me back to the finish line to assist those that were injured, who needed help.

— Lt. Col. David P. Diamond



U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

'Expendable' WWII Merrill's Marauders live to their 100s

By *Jonnie Melillo Clasen*

Three Merrill's Marauders, 1944 survivors of the secret mission of almost 3,000 presidential volunteers who fought through the disease-ridden "forgotten theater" of World War II, the China-Burma-India Theater, have lived to the age of 101. Another made it to 100.

Living to be a centenarian is remarkable. What is even more remarkable is that those Infantry jungle fighters, who have been called everything from "misfits" to "magnificent," weren't even expected to survive.

"We were expendable," said Merrill's Marauder Sam V. Wilson, who turns 93 next month. The retired Army lieutenant general, still contributes to military publications, explained, "A plan existed on paper to get us into Burma, but no plan existed to get us out."

Yet those extraordinary volunteers achieved their final objective on May 17, 1944, of capturing north Burma's only all-weather Myitkyina airstrip by defeating the much larger elite 18th Japanese Imperial Guards Division in five major battles and 30 minor engagements.

Wilson said that when the remaining elements of the unit were disbanded on Aug. 10, 1944, in Burma, slightly more than 100 of the original Marauders remained.

Winston Churchill, British prime minister at the time, described Burma as "the most forbidding fighting country imaginable." Gen. George C. Marshall, then Army chief of staff, said the Burma mission "was one of the most difficult of the war." Marshall also said that mission against "large numbers of the enemy with few resources was unmatched in any theater."

"It was hard to keep going as we wore down, became debilitated and our numbers began to decrease," said Wilson recently from his home in Rice, Virginia. "These Soldiers, (who did) not even expect to survive, did survive by forcing themselves to take the next step. They were Infantrymen. They leaned forward and took one more step and then another. Taking that next step is what kept the outfit together to the bitter end."

Those steps turned into an almost 1,000-mile, history-making march through the enemy-held Himalayan foothills

into the jungles of Burma. With only what they could carry on their backs or pack on mules, the Marauders walked farther than any other WW II fighting force. They were the first American ground troops to fight the Japanese in Asia.

That three elderly Marauders from that "impossible mission" have reached 101 years old and a fourth lived to 100 is a testament to the Army's 1943 stipulation that all the Marauders "will be of a high state of physical ruggedness."

It was a Fort Benning "Bayonet and Saber" story a few weeks ago about the funeral of 101-year-old Marauder John M. Jones of Greenville, Tennessee, that prompted a reader, Brian Yamamoto, to share that another 101-year-old original Marauder, Thomas Tsubota, lives in Hawaii.

Tsubota, born in Honolulu in 1915, is now the oldest Merrill's Marauder and is also the only one of the Marauders' Japanese-American interpreters - or Nisei - who is still living.

When Japan bombed Pearl Harbor Dec. 7, 1941, Tsubota was on maneuvers with G Company of the Hawaii National Guard's 298th Infantry Regiment. Initially, Tsubota and the other men thought the firing was part of the maneuvers, but quickly learned it wasn't. Tsubota participated in the Dec. 8, 1941, capture of the first prisoner of war, Lt. Kazuo Sakamaki.

Later assigned to the 100th Infantry Battalion, Tsubota was selected for the Military Intelligence Service because his background included degrees from Japanese universities, and he had qualified for the 1932 Olympic Trials.

In 1943, Tsubota volunteered for a secret "dangerous and hazardous" mission and became one of 14 Nisei interpreters with Merrill's Marauders, nicknamed after their commander, Brig. Gen. Frank D. Merrill. The unit's official designation was the 5307th Composite Unit Provisional.

A third 101-year-old Marauder, who was about three months away from his 102nd birthday when he died Aug. 12, 2015, was Everett W. Stanke of Edgerton, Wisconsin. He joined the National Guard in 1931.

After transitioning to active duty in 1940, Stanke

served with the 128th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Division, in Australia and New Guinea before volunteering for President Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1943 call for a secret "dangerous and hazardous" mission.

That those three "expendable" Marauders - Jones, Tsubota and Stanke - survived that 1944 mission, went on to live productive civilian lives, and reached their 101st year is almost miraculous.

Merrill's Marauder and Nisei warrior Roy Matsumoto was only weeks away from turning 101 in 2014 when he died on the 70th Easter Sunday anniversary of the 2nd Battalion being rescued by the 1st and 3rd Battalions. They had been surrounded almost two weeks by the Japanese at the battle of Nhpum Ga.

Matsumoto, who played a pivotal role in that rescue, and his 2nd Battalion buddy, Vincent Melillo, had a long phone conversation about the fried chicken and bread airdropped to them following their rescue 70 years earlier at Nhpum Ga. Matsumoto died later that night. Melillo, Georgia's last original Merrill's Marauder, died at age 97 Christmas Eve 2015.

China-Burma-India veteran Ernest "Ernie" Hubacker, who turns 101 in October, is quick to point out that he is not a Marauder, even though he faithfully attended their reunions for years. He was part of Mars Task Force, which succeeded the Marauders in Burma.

Hubacker still takes part in military activities and went on a WW II Honor Flight to Washington, D.C., this year. A photo of him astride his horse as a young Cavalry soldier at Fort Reno, Oklahoma, hangs at Fort Benning's Fiddler's Green Bar.

"The Marauders weren't ordinary men," said Wilson. "They were a tough, hard-nosed group of men with a sensitive chip on their shoulders. They had an almost disdain for danger."

"Their secret was learning to take the next step," he emphasized. "That's all you have to do, except wipe your hands off from time to time so they won't be too slippery to hold your gun. Today's motivated and well-trained infantryman knows how to take that next step, which is a universal truth that has a timeless application to the infantry doughboy."

"Knowing we could always take one more step became a mantra - a theme - that has the same application to today's Marauders. The tiny handful of aging Marauders is still making it one step at a time. Some have reached, and others are still reaching, for that magic number of 100 years old."

The legacy of this tough group of volunteers is being carried forward by members of the 75th Ranger Regiment, whose crest is the Merrill's Marauder patch, which has never officially been authorized.

Records indicate that approximately 26 Merrill's Marauders are still living out of almost 3,000 who volunteered in 1943 from the jungles of Panama and Trinidad, Guadalcanal, New Guinea, New Georgia, Vella Lavella and the United States. Approximately 15 ethnic groups, including a Native American code talker, served in the unit.

The oldest volunteer in 1943, who had about 20 years on the younger Marauders, was Joseph Doyer, a World War I veteran of the Canadian Black Watch Highlanders. One of the youngest was Bob Eatman, who enlisted in the Army at age 14, and was still too young to be served a celebratory drink after returning to the United States.

Wilson was one of the Army's youngest lieutenants. At 16, he added two years to his age and walked seven miles through a nighttime thunderstorm to Farmville, Virginia, where he enlisted in the National Guard.

There was at least one reluctant volunteer. Quentin Waite, 95, had no intention of volunteering after surviving some of the South Pacific's brutal battles. But a buddy he looked after, who was always getting into trouble, told Waite he was going to volunteer. Waite then volunteered. His buddy didn't.

For the last several years, Waite has traveled from Michigan to support Ranger events at Fort Benning. He and Marauder James Richardson, 95, were at Fort Benning in July to see Marauder Bob Passanisi, 92, inducted into the Ranger Hall of Fame.

Waite and Passanisi will join three more Marauders, Edward Brown, Marcos Barelans and Gilbert Howland, plus Mars Task Force member, Marvin Boyenga, all in their 90s, for the 70th annual Merrill's Marauder reunion Aug. 25 to 28 in Philadelphia.

Attendance will be the smallest ever, caused in part by 16 Marauders making their final roll call during the last 12 months: John M. Jones, 101; Edson "Whitey" Keith Jr., 99; William S. Caprari, 99; Albert C. Robles, 97; Vincent Melillo, 97; Clarence Q. Branscomb, 97; Clinton Richard "C.R." Clough, 95; LaRue "Tom" E. Thompson, 95; Richard Murch, 94; Charles "Bob" Ketcham, 93; Gilbert Horn Sr., 92; Basil E. Pyle, 92; Henry F. Zaleski, 92; Dan Steve Whitlock, 92; Dan Gustav Hobahm, 92; and Irven Holliday, 90.



NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND



Vice Adm. Sean A. Pybus, deputy commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, addresses the audience at the graduation of SEAL Qualification Training, Class 315, at Naval Special Warfare Center, Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, Sept. 23. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Alex Miller.

Pybus: Everything we do is important

*By U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Timothy Black
Naval Special Warfare Public Affairs*

Vice Adm. Sean A. Pybus, deputy commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, addressed an audience of SEAL Qualification Training (SQT) graduates, their families and Naval Special Warfare community members at the Naval Special Warfare Center, Coronado California, Sept. 23.

Pybus, nearing the end of a distinguished 37 year career as a SEAL, graduated Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) training in December 1979 with Class 105. He has

served in multiple joint special operations duty assignments and is the highest ranking Navy SEAL serving today.

Many adversaries threaten America's national security, and Pybus believes those threats will keep the SEALs employed for the foreseeable future.

"Special Operations Forces are only doing what is strategically important to the nation, and you must understand where you are in that dynamic. There is lot of work which is the good news; the bad news is there is lots of work."

Pybus congratulated the new SEALs on their

achievement and spoke to them about the way ahead.

“This is your day and each of you have spent over a year to get here,” said Pybus. “It is the world’s toughest military training both mentally and physically.”

“I love coming down here,” said Pybus. “It is a chance for those who have served to come back and reconnect with our friends, family and to regenerate and recharge. We have been training frogmen since World War II, and this is the result.”

Those first generation frogmen hold a special place with Pybus as he believes they paved the way for the highest quality operators that we have today.

“You take good kids from high school and college and then mix in some saltwater and sand, make it hot and cold, and make sure they are completely committed to what they’re about to enter into,” said Pybus. “There was about 200 people that thought they wanted to be a team guy and joined the Navy and pursued this route, and these men are the end result right here.”

In his speech to the new warriors, he made a promise to their wives and loved ones that “We will keep their treasures safe,” but with his promise came a few demands.

“As you cross the quarterdeck of your next command, you owe us several things,” said Pybus. “You owe us to continue your development. Listen, learn, strive, lead, you have to commit to it. You will make mistakes, but I am living proof that you can make a lot of mistakes and still hang around.”

Humility was a watch-word during his speech to remind the graduates of the SEAL ethos.

“Admiral Szymanski owns you guys and you are now his weapons platform,” said Pybus. “You belong to us, and if something happens to you, it is really hard to replace you. There are not many frogmen, and that is why I am pleading seriously about this, so take care of yourselves and remember our ethos.”

Pybus remarked on a conversation he had with the Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command, Rear Adm. Tim Szymanski, the night before the ceremony.

“We should stay and work in the shadows, but the admiral said, ‘Today there aren’t any shadows, so we need to create our own.’ It is about keeping your profile as low as

Today there aren’t any shadows, so we need to create our own. It is about keeping your profile as low as possible, so we can preserve all our options for the future, but we have to keep the moral high ground and we depend on all of you to do that.

— Vice Adm. Sean Pybus



Vice Adm. Sean A. Pybus, deputy commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, takes off his trident to pin on a graduate of SEAL Qualification Training, class 315, at Naval Special Warfare Center at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado. The 30-year-old student is one of the oldest Sailors to pass SEAL Qualification Training. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Alex Miller.

possible, so we can preserve all our options for the future, but we have to keep the moral high ground and we depend on all of you to do that.”

Being a BUD/S candidate and then a career SEAL, Pybus has come full circle. He requested the SEALs, who will serve 10 to 15 years, come back to the Center and give back to the community that made them what they are today.

“That is probably the most important thing we do and that is our foundation, as this is where it starts for us. Come back to teach, train, mentor and stay connected with the men here because your classmates and instructors know you best.”

The SEAL training pipeline consists of eight weeks of preparation conducted at Recruit Training Command Great Lakes. Then, after a three-week orientation at the Center, the infamous 21-week BUD/S training begins. After that, students complete 22 weeks of SEAL SQT and nine weeks of advanced training. Altogether, it takes at least 63 weeks to train and qualify an entry-level SEAL operator.



NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND

Sidelines to the front lines

*By U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Timothy Black
NSW Public Affairs*

With a smile, a friendly hand-shake, and a warm welcome into the chaplain's office, I sit down for a two-hour long interview with the new force chaplain of Naval Special Warfare (NSW) Command. His approach to the military, as a 6' 2" tall, Navy captain, is that he is a chaplain first and foremost; "The pay grade is just that, a pay grade," he says as he points to the cross above his "full bird" insignia, "This is who I am."

Cory Cathcart, was not interested in the ministry growing up in primarily St. Joseph, Missouri, where he was born. It took many life-changing events to eventually get him involved with the ministry.

Living in a small town, Cathcart's large aspirations were directing him outside St. Joseph's city limits.

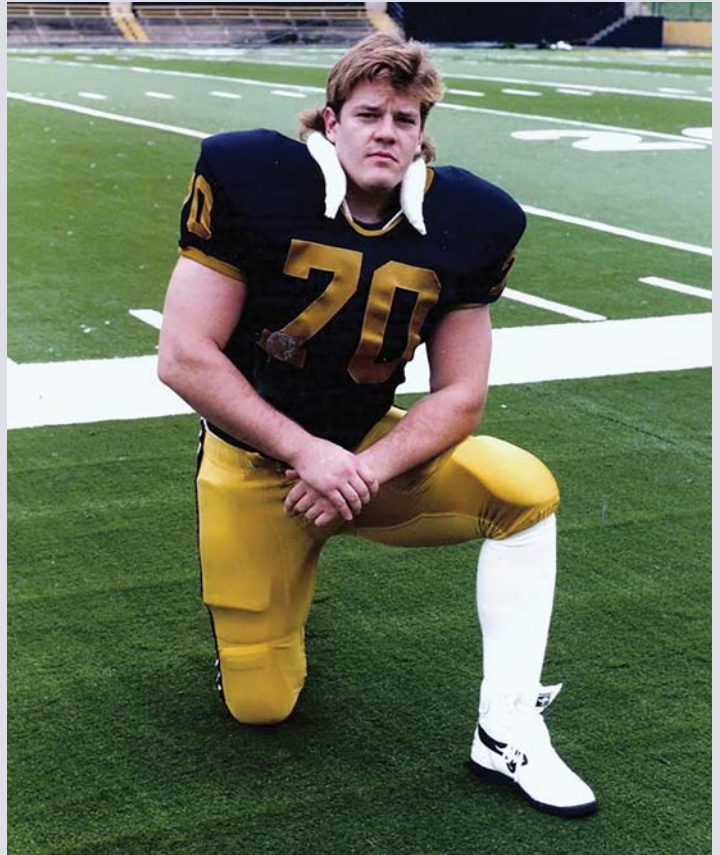
"Most of the people I went to school with didn't think about going to college back in those days," Cathcart said. "When people graduated high school from [St. Joseph], they would immediately get a job, get married, and have a family. Nothing wrong with that, but that wasn't for me, my goal was to make it out and see what was beyond those city limits."

Cathcart, also lived in Huntington Beach, California where he attended Southern California Military Academy. His family had moved back and forth on several occasions finally settling in the Midwest.

Football became the vehicle, passion and source for Cathcart to leave town for good. Being from a small town he walked-on to a Division I football team and ended up getting a scholarship to the University of Missouri-Columbia as a student-athlete, and he eventually became a starter. He graduated college in 1987, with a dual major in general studies and human environmental sciences.

"Growing up and moving back and forth, it forced me to be around a lot of different cultures and expressions of faith," said Cathcart. "I was exposed early to people from many different countries and backgrounds, to include my family."

After the college career that had high highs and low lows, Cathcart strived to play for the National Football League, attending the combine and tryouts for several



Early days at the "Zoo" also known as Mizzou, prior to the 1985 Texas Longhorns game. Courtesy photo.

teams to include Dallas, Miami and ended up at the New York Giant's camp, during which time he had a position coach by the name of Bill Belichick.

"Being a former walk-on and eventual starter I was no stranger to adversity, naysayers or making it the hard way, so I realized that the NFL would be no different. I made it through the initial cuts, but got cut before the regular season," said Cathcart. "I was all washed up with a broken body, worn mind, and no direction at about 23 years of age, and then after my short-lived NFL career that ended up taking a toll on my body and passion for playing, I ended up working in my degree field in gerontology."

While working at the long-term care facilities, Cathcart unwittingly spent a lot of time working with patients battling cancer. It was this period in his life, the drastic change of pace from student-athlete, to NFL

tryouts, and everything that goes with it, to people battling for their lives on a constant basis that created many unanswered questions Cathcart sought to answer, first for others but ultimately for himself.

“I was a fish out of water in many ways,” said Cathcart. “I spent much of my early life training for one sole purpose which was going to battle every weekend with my teammates and inflicting as much punishment on opponents as possible.”

Then, all of the sudden, it was all over.

“I was a very different person back in those days,” Cathcart said. “In retrospect, getting cut perhaps was a great blessing in disguise; it perhaps saved my life.”

All of those things that Cathcart thought were important at that time were completely stripped away from him, and he began from square one, again.

“My friends and teammates, the ones that knew me back in those days, thought I had lost my mind because I ended up taking night courses at seminary,” said Cathcart. It was only a year later, he ended up going full-time.

With the growing desire to find answers for him and the many patients that he had deathbed conversations with, Cathcart felt the call toward ministry. This call to the ministry, combined with a family history of military service, made for the making of a Navy chaplain.

“My Grandfather was a warrant officer from Scotland, who was in a group called the “Black Watch,” also known as “the Ladies from Hell” due to the fact they wore kilts into battle,” said Cathcart.

His Grandfather served in WWI and was severely injured in several battles during trench warfare, said Cathcart.

Then there was Cathcart’s father who was an Australian kid who grew up on Bondi Beach, New South Wales.

“My Father was a wild kid who ran away from home at an early age and went to sea at 12 years of age into the Merchant Marines and then when he was 18, crossed

over into the Australian Navy,” said Cathcart.

“Ironically, both my grandfather and father ended up in the ministry for a period in their lives.”

There was always both a military influence and a ministry influence. Though it was never encouraged to go in, both backgrounds were always there.

“As a kid, I had zero interest in ministry or the church, I simply had no interest in it,” said Cathcart. “In fact, the ministers in the local churches seemed rather stiff, cold and not much fun to be around, coupled with the fact that I knew they wouldn’t approve of my life and the way I was living it at that time, the whole thing seemed mutually exclusive.”

On a couple of occasions, Cathcart did go to church in college.

“A girlfriend at the time encouraged me to go, but it wasn’t a pleasant experience, and I didn’t go back many years later,” said Cathcart. “Ironically here I am an

ordained minister some thirty years later.”

“I care greatly about a relationship with Christ and its transformational power,” said Cathcart. “I believe others understand the distinction. I always tell people that God must have a great sense of humor because he called me to ministry, and if you knew me back then you would know just

As a kid, I had zero interest in ministry or the church, I simply had no interest in it. In fact, the ministers in the local churches seemed rather stiff, cold and not much fun to be around, coupled with the fact that I knew they wouldn’t approve of my life and the way I was living it at that time, the whole thing seemed mutually exclusive.

— Chaplain Cory Cathcart

how true that is.”

Cathcart was commissioned on March 13, 1993, and completed Basic Chaplains Course, in Newport, Rhode Island. Before coming to WARCOM, Cathcart worked at NSW Group 2, Group 4 and Development Group, where he completed five combat deployments during 2005 and 2008 with Group 2 and DEVGRU, and an additional four deployments at other commands.

“I am the Force Chaplain for Naval Special Warfare, and to be embedded in the NSW community, whether it is at WARCOM or with the teams, is something I hold near and dear to my heart,” said Cathcart.

Cathcart said he did not know what to expect when he first got to NSW, but his first two days at Group 2, set the pace for his new assignment.



NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND

“There were only myself on the East Coast and another chaplain on the West Coast at Group 1 and Group 2,” said Cathcart. “When I first arrived, two days later, the tragedy of Operation Red Wings happened, and that was my introduction to the SEAL teams.

“It was a very difficult time, not only for the community but everybody involved, but everybody jumped in, and our singular goal was to honor our fallen and take care of their loved ones and get back in the fight,” said Cathcart. “I see everything through that lense. Every day I think about it, the guys we lost from those days through today which is always in the back of my mind, every single day.”

Years later, Cathcart was at another NSW command when he received the news that more of his teammates went down on Extortion 17. On August 6, 2011, 31 special operators were lost when their CH-47 Chinook was shot down while on the way to reinforce a group of Army Rangers. This was the largest single incident loss of life for the NSW community.

“That day, a part of me went down as well. Only a

short time earlier we had spent our days together discussing hunting, family, life back in the world and many other things,” said Cathcart. “I got to know these warriors and the exceptional husbands, fathers, and sons that they were. At the end of that deployment, I was redeployed back home several days earlier than the main body due to rotation timeframe but still remember my last conversations with each of them, as I will the rest of my life.”

In many ways, the events of those days set the tone for how we at NSW have come to honor our fallen today and in the years to come.

“Time spent forward with the teams changed my perspective many ways. Their sacrifices, their families’ sacrifices, their level of commitment and talent but especially in realizing the life we are afforded back in the U.S.,” said Cathcart. “There have since been many films and books written in recent years, however; a film cannot capture the true essence of what they (SEALs) do. When you see it up close in person, it forever changes you. I have been around athletes my entire life and been around academics my entire life, and I’ve never seen anyone blend those two [better].”



Back inside the wire, U.S. Navy Capt. (Chaplain) Cory Cathcart (left) and U.S. Army chaplain assistant, Staff Sgt. Ian Takashige, in Kabul, Afghanistan 2012. Courtesy photo.

The chaplain operates under four pillars of providing, care, facilitate, and advise.

“Being back as the Force Chaplain has been a homecoming for my wife, daughter and me as we have reconnected with many of the guys, their wives and families, finally having the opportunity to share some of the conversations and experiences I had with their loved ones,” said Cathcart.

For Cathcart, knowing many of the men who died left a major impact on him, his life and ministry.

“Serving in this community is more than a calling to me; it is something that I hold sacred and believe I was called from an early age to do,” said Cathcart. “I do not know what tomorrow holds, but I know that for today, I am meant to be here.”

It takes a team to run the ministry for NSW and Cathcart believes that it was divine intervention that spared his life from an earlier age to be able to serve within the NSW community.

“As the force chaplain, I do those things, and supervise the 20 chaplains and (religious program specialists) that we have in NSW,” said Cathcart. “My role is not only to function as a chaplain to the staff here, but to screen, guide and shape the chaplains and RPs that join the community. I also maintain the relationships and the connections to all of the commanders within NSW to provide ministry.”

Maintaining command and control of 40 NSW chaplain personnel might seem daunting to some, but Cathcart has nothing but good things to say about his team.

“A leader from my vantage point is somebody that you would follow to hell and back without reservation — who bears the known and the unknown, and makes decisions that are the hard rights verses the easy wrongs, for the benefit of those they lead,” said Cathcart. “Someone who doesn’t care who gets the credit as long as those they lead are taken care of, and it’s making yourself accountable and responsible for others, recognizing your obligation to lead, and mentor them.”

Cathcart says that he has had the opportunity to work alongside many examples of these type of leaders in NSW and is always striving to model himself after them.

Cathcart demonstrated his leadership as a survivor and first responder during the 9/11 attacks on the Pentagon.

Cathcart reflects on the tragedy and the impact it had on his life.

“In moments such as those it’s funny how your prayers become very short, concise and to the point,” said Cathcart. “That day was a fundamental shift for me internally, not only in ministry and commitment but became the lenses which I see life through ever since.”

Cathcart says his best preparation for helping soldiers came not from seminary, officer training or football.

“It was working with people in the gerontology field, in a circumstance I didn’t want to be in, talking to people in a circumstance that they certainly didn’t want to be in either, as they were coming to the end of their lives,” Cathcart said. “In many ways, it was a blessing in disguise because it caused me to reevaluate where my life was going at that time and how I was living it. That’s where I saw death for the first time, an experience that prepared me for death many times after.”

Cathcart reflects on a Bible verse that he quoted during the Red Wings memorial service to the operators.

“Isaiah 48:10 says ‘I have refined you, but not as silver, I have tested you in the furnace of affliction,’ however, in this case, to come forth as pure gold, pure gold in the form of a naval trident,” said Cathcart.



U.S. Navy Capt. (Chaplain) Cory Cathcart. Courtesy photo.



AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

58th Special Operations Wing says goodbye to Talon II

By Jim Fisher

Kirtland Air Force Base Public Affairs

A mainstay aircraft at the 58th Special Operations Wing since its arrival in 1992, the MC-130H Combat Talon II is no more. The last Talon II, tail number 1699, departed for the 19th Special Operations Squadron at Hurlburt Field, Florida, Aug. 2. As the sun rose on the Kirtland flightline, it also set on an era for the 58th and its 550th Special Operations Squadron.

"It's extremely emotional," said U.S. Air Force Col. Doug Carroll, 58th Special Operations Wing vice commander, who was part of the crew tasked with delivering the aircraft to Hurlburt. "This is truly the end of an era."

The particular aircraft and aircraft type have been linked to Carroll's career since his arrival at the 58th in 1997 for initial qualification training. He also flew 1699, while it was assigned to RAF Mildenhall, England, during Operation Allied Force.

U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Richard Gunn, the Talon II program manager at the 58th Training Squadron and a Talon II evaluator pilot with the 550th, was also part of the delivery crew. He went through initial qualification training in the aircraft at Kirtland in 2006.

"It's one of the longest-standing programs here. We've been here for 23-plus years," Gunn said.

Gunn explained that the 550th's other two Talon II aircraft left in the last 60 days, and that graduate pilot training for pilots and combat systems officers on this airframe will now happen exclusively at Hurlburt. The "legacy" C-130 platforms have all been in the process of being phased out at Kirtland, with MC-130P Combat Shadows already gone and the HC-130P Combat Kings soon to depart, Gunn added.

The Air Force has transitioned to replacement weapon systems from the burgeoning fleet of C-130J models, already employed at the 58th under the 415th Special Operations Squadron (SOS). But the Talon II, with its unique precision navigation, terrain-following radar and self-protection measures, has yet to be replicated in a J-model setup, according to Gunn. The Talon is expected to be needed until at least 2025.

"We're the penetrating platform, the guys that go on the



MC-130H Talon II 1699 takes off from Kirtland Air Force Base and the 58th Special Operations Wing en route to Hurlburt Field, Fla., where it will be assigned to the 19th Special Operations Squadron. Photo by Todd Berenger.

other side of the battle line -- infiltration, exfiltration, helicopter refueling, combat search and rescue -- we can do, pretty much any mission that comes up," Gunn said.

As flight and maintenance crews prepared the aircraft for its departure, a stream of nostalgic Airmen visited 1699 one last time, sharing stories about its glorious service.

Retired Chief Master Sgt. Tom Baker, now a contract instructor for the 58th with Lockheed Martin, logged 2,100 hours in the Talon II as a loadmaster. Fellow loadmaster retired Senior Master Sgt. Duke Newton, also with Lockheed Martin, had more than 3,500 hours in the Talon II. Both remembered the aircraft, dubbed "Merlin's Magic," fondly. They recalled missions ranging from Operations Allied Force, to Enduring and Iraqi Freedom.

"It's sad," Baker said. "We've been together here since it came on line. It's bittersweet."

At Hurlburt, however, members of the 19th SOS were excited about the prospect of receiving the aircraft and continuing its legacy, according to U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. John Tharp, commander of the 19th SOS.

"The 19th SOS is proud to carry on the tradition of training MC-130H Talon II aircrew and providing combat ready forces to (Air Force Special Operations Command) operational squadrons. The Talon II has been a stalwart aircraft, with a range of capabilities and flexibility, it has endured for nearly 25 years as a key weapon system in special operations and we stand ready for the opportunity to train the next generation of Air Commandos."

Final surviving Doolittle Raider helps dedicate new exhibit

By Ciara Travis
AFSOC Public Affairs

Retired Air Force Lt. Col. Richard “Dick” Cole assisted in dedicating the newly remodeled Doolittle Raider’s exhibit July 30, at the U.S. Air Force Armament Museum on Eglin Air Force Base, Florida.

U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Brad Webb, commander of Air Force Special Operations Command, spoke at the ceremony and highlighted the importance of Cole and his history as one of the founding members of the 1st Air Commando Group.

“To say that I’m humbled and honored to even be in the same room with Lt. Col. Dick Cole is an understatement,” said Webb. “The legacy that these Airmen brought to the table is incredible. The Doolittle Raiders and AFSOC have a shared heritage – both comprised of Airmen that are audacious and willing to fly in tough and uncertain missions.”

Webb shared his delight in being associated with a group of people so admirable.

“It’s an incredible linkage – an incredible heritage, and I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart – thank you Lt. Col. Dick Cole for laying the foundation for which Air Force Special Operations Command was built,” said Webb.

Cole, 100, is the final surviving member of the Doolittle Raiders who completed America’s first air raid April 18, 1942, on the Japanese mainland after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Despite his age, Cole was able to say a few words at the ceremony.

“On behalf of myself and the 79 other Doolittle Raiders here in spirit, I would like to thank the sponsors and community members who made this event possible,” said Cole. “It’s an honor to be here.”

The Doolittle Raiders trained at the then Eglin Field, before loading 16 B-25s onto the aircraft carrier USS Hornet. After ditching their aircraft and successfully evading capture, Cole was escorted to safety by Chinese nationalists. He later returned to the China-Burma-India Theater to fly dangerous supply missions over the Himalaya Mountains until April 1943.

It was after that when Cole was asked to be one of the founding members of the 1st Air Commando Group as a pilot and engineering officer. He flew 200 soldiers into Burma as part of the 319th Special Operations Squadron, taking part in the first U.S. invasion into enemy territory and the first night time heavy glider assault landing.

When asked about Cole’s greatest legacy, Dennis Okerstrom, author of *Dick Cole’s War: Doolittle Raider, Hump Pilot, Air Commando*, responded that “despite his military achievements, I would have to say for Dick Cole, I think his greatest achievement would be the legacy built with his wife. He still carries her picture in his pocket wherever he goes.”

The event was sponsored by the U.S. Air Force Armament Museum, Beach Community Bank and the Doolittle Institute.

The exhibit is open to the public and located within the Air Force Armament Museum. The hours are Monday through Saturday 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. They are closed Sundays.



U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. (ret.) (2nd from the left) Richard “Dick” Cole poses for a photo with Air Force Special Operations Command leadership at the U.S. Air Force Armament Museum on Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., July 30. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Melanie Holochwost.



AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Enlisted aircrew members make move to the pilot seat

*By Tech Sgt. Samuel King
919th Special Operations Wing*

From the backseat to the front and from stripes to bars and beyond. That's the dual Air Force path a few 919th Special Operations Wing (SOW) officers took to achieve their life-long goal of flight.

For former loadmasters, U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Michael Black, U.S. Air Force Captains Kris Williams and Patrick Taylor, 919th Special Operations Group, each Airman's path to the pilot seat was slightly different. What was the same was the support they received with each step along the path and the open sky goal they reached by the end.

Here at the Reserve wing, an aircraft does not leave the ground without a loadmaster. For enlisted members, it is a guaranteed aircrew position, meaning if the Airmen complete the training, they will fly. The job description is right in the title... Master of the aircraft's load. The Airmen are responsible for properly loading, securing and

escorting all cargo and passengers on their aircraft.

The flight hours and hands-on operational experience gained by these Airmen became invaluable as they transitioned into their current front seat roles.

"As a young captain in charge of an aircraft, crew, formation and mission, it can be overwhelming," said Capt. Kris Williams, a 36-year-old Crestview native who began the pilot transition in 2007. "Had we not had that prior experience as aircrew members, it would've been much more difficult. It helps a lot understanding that crew concept."

For Taylor, from the 859th Special Operations Squadron, said without the loadmaster background he believes he wouldn't have been selected for pilot training.

But how is the transition made? Is there a clear path from the backseat to the front? According to Black, the process is ever-changing.

In the 18 years between the time the three officers began and completed the pilot transition, requirements, qualifications and processes all changed, sometimes

U.S. Air Force Capt. Pat Taylor, Maj. Michael Black and Capt. Kris Williams, 919th Special Operations Wing pilots, walk toward an aircraft on the Duke Field, Florida flightline. The reserve pilots began their career as enlisted loadmasters with the 919th SOW and were later selected to become an officer and pilot with the special operations unit. Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Samuel King.



radically. The decision however, ultimately came down to the officer board at Air Force Reserve Command. An Airman's selection package is put forth by the squadron and wing. Then the selectee waits for the results. Once chosen by the command, the stripes to bars transition truly begins.

The three officers agreed, to reach the transition point took tremendous focus to keep that flying goal in sight.

"As a loadmaster, after you meet your qualifications and find the rhythms of the job, you do find a comfort zone," said Taylor, who began the pilot transition in 2012 and now flies the C-146 Wolfhound. "You are so settled and that goal seems so far away. It takes a lot of determination to continue forward."

Taylor added it helped to have wingmen continuously pushing and checking up on his progress.

"A (previously transitioned) officer would drop off his ranks at my desk each time he moved up to motivate me," said the 33-year-old, 13-year veteran.

After being selected for officer training school (OTS) and pilot training, the next hurdle they encountered was the idea of basically beginning their military career over again.

To begin the transition, the first big step is essentially after four to six years in the Air Force, an Airman agrees to drop all rank and complete a form of basic military training again.

"We were all warned the hardest part would be starting over," said Black, a 22-year veteran, who followed his father and step-brother into the 919th SOW.

Along with having their ranks, experience and knowledge swept away in the training environment, the officers admitted they felt the added pressure of expectations from those wingmen that helped them reach that point.

"It was a self-imposed anxiety," said Black, 5th Special Operations Squadron. "The last thing I wanted to do was fail or let them down."

After OTS, each began approximately two years of pilot training and qualification. Being a reservist made the initial training slightly less stressful because the Airmen already knew where their next assignment was and what aircraft they would be flying.

"Having that knowledge alleviated the extra performance pressure to earn a specific aircraft type," said Black, now an evaluator pilot and combat aviation advisor.

As they progressed through their training, their view

and understanding of the operational flying mission grew.

"As a loadmaster, you have some awareness of the overall mission, but that's just a small part," said Williams, who served as a loadmaster for Black, as a pilot, in the MC-130P Shadow. "As a pilot, that mission and duty multiplies to include aircraft, aircrew, formations and much more. And if you are the aircraft commander for the mission you are responsible for it all."

All three acknowledged having that backseat knowledge and experience made them better pilots and aircraft commanders.

"It helps with control of the aircraft," said Black, who flew multiple C-130 models and now the C-145 Skytruck during his career with the 919th SOW. "Our situational awareness based on the understanding of what is happening in the back allows us to communicate better and provide a smoother flight for the aircrew."

Now as pilots and aircraft commanders, they are viewed as leaders. None of them had much experience in leadership as loadmasters, but what they did have was the vast experience of good and bad flights to draw upon.

"We had to develop those leadership traits quickly, because suddenly, we were the ones everyone turned to for decisions," said Williams, a 17-year veteran with the 711th Special Operations Wing. "As loadmasters, we saw the best and worst examples of aircraft leadership and communication. Now, those experiences factor into how we lead the mission."

The path to the sky is challenging for any enlisted Airman fresh from high school. Starting as enlisted, the three reservists agreed the long-term goal had to be the focus and remain a high priority in life or it will never be reached. They also added once that front seat goal was reached, they all agreed it was worth the struggle.

For a year, Taylor took 18 college credits, worked 30 hours a week as a loadmaster, spent 35 hours per week at a civilian job and also had family commitments on his journey to meet the officer qualifying requirements. He frequently told his spouse, "eventually, it will be worth it."

He said the same thing to her through many moves while completing OTS and pilot training. Finally, while looking for a permanent new home, he was able to say yes to her "dream home."

"At that moment, it all became worth it," he said.

On that same topic, Williams added he's asked often... would he do it all over again.

"Was it worth it? Yes. Was it hard? Yes? Would I do it all over again? In a heartbeat," he said.



AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



Combat Control School students assigned to the 352nd Battlefield Airman Training Squadron are ambushed at their drop-off point during a tactics field training exercise at Camp Mackall, N.C., Aug. 3. The field exercise is a culmination of tactics learned in the first year of the combat controller pipeline; which entails weapons handling, team leader procedures, patrol base operations, troop leading and small unit tactics under fire in one mission. Photo by Senior Airman Ryan Conroy.

Calm in the chaos: CCT students under pressure in tactics exercise

*By U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Ryan Conroy
24th Special Operations Wing*

Rumbling down a dirt road in a Medium Tactical Vehicle cargo truck, a team of special operators quietly awaits for chaos to ensue.

The truck grinds to a halt in an intersection in the forest. It's clear why in a second: a voice squawks over the radio that a roadside bomb rendered their truck useless.

As the group offloads, gunshots ring out, smoke bombs bounce into the circle of trainees and tear gas

leaves the Airmen choking. The team surges through the disorder to return fire and take cover in the tree line.

The ground combat team was not in battle: they were combat control students, enduring their tactics field training exercise at the Combat Control School (CCS), Aug. 3 at Camp Mackall, North Carolina.

The field exercise is a culmination of tactics learned in the first year of the combat controller (CCT) pipeline; which entails students weapons handling, team leader procedures, patrol base operations, troop leading and small unit tactics under fire in one mission.

"The Combat Control School curriculum is designed

to overwhelm a combat control student's senses - physically, mentally and emotionally," said U.S. Air Force Maj. Trent Joy, commander of the 352nd Battlefield Airmen Training Squadron. "We train the students to be resilient, to have fortitude and the ability to function in high-stress environments to execute combat control missions around the globe."

The CCS, or 352nd BATS, is the home of a 13-week course to provide CCT qualifications. The training includes physical training, small unit tactics, land navigation, communications, assault zones, demolitions, fire support and field operations including parachuting. At the completion of this course, each graduate is awarded the scarlet beret and CCT flash.

"The students learn to be a committed, hard-working quiet professional and team player fully initiated into special tactics and combat control missions," said the operations superintendent for the schoolhouse, a CCT by trade with several deployments and operational experience.

The field training exercise mission sounds simple enough: hike through the woods, evade capture, gather intelligence on a small village and setup a landing zone before extraction. But the instructors have their own plan: wreak havoc on the students.

The instructors have a plethora of career experience including several combat deployments and extensive training in CCT. Acting as opposing forces – riding on ATVs carrying MK249 light machinegun training weapons and camouflaging themselves in the terrain – waiting for the students to make a mistake. They plan and initiate the tactics field exercise up to six times a year.

"The training is as realistic as possible to show the students what they're up against in a combat environment," said Joy. "This means we're ambushing when they least expect it to disorient them and stress the students out. Lives and mission success often depend on a combat controller's ability to execute the mission in complete chaos."

The combat control hopefuls hike up and down the rolling North Carolina hills, signaling quietly to each other to get down, keep their eyes open and whatever they do...do not get caught.

As darkness unfolds on the wooded landscape, students navigate the path with night-optics devices. A kilometer away, instructors shoot flares into the night sky

to draw their pupils out into the open as they patrol a small training compound designed like an Afghan village. Donned in Afghan-native dress, they scour the brush and swamps looking for clues as to the team's whereabouts.

Their efforts are wasted, as the students radio in their mission as complete and communicate their extraction rendezvous point. But like the real-world situations these students will encounter, the mission is never over until you're home. Instructors track the students down to ambush them once more before they announce the end of the exercise.

The tactics field exercise is over, and now the real work begins: instructors evaluate each student's performance and leadership characteristics. At the end of the 13 months, only a few will earn the scarlet beret. On average, less than 50 percent of the students who walk into CCS will walk away with the title combat controller.

Although earning the scarlet beret is a proud moment in a combat controller's career, it is not the end of their rigorous training. After the combat control schoolhouse, CCTs continue their pipeline to fine-tune operational skills at the Special Tactics Training Squadron at Hurlburt Field, Florida – a 12-month program for newly assigned controllers, which provides mission-ready operators for the Air Force Special Operations Command.



A 352nd Battlefield Airmen Training Squadron Combat Control School student scans the woods as rear security for his unit during a tactics field training exercise at Camp Mackall, N.C., Aug. 3. Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Ryan Conroy.



MARINE CORPS FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

MARSOC veterinarian receives Army Veterinary Corps Exceptional Officer Service Award

*By Cpl. Ryan Mains
MARSOC Public Affairs*

U.S. Army Capt. Emily R. Bingham, force veterinarian with U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, was awarded the 2016 U.S. Army Veterinary Corps Exceptional Officer Service Award during a ceremony aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, July 29.

Bingham said she always wanted to work with animals and since serving the country was on the agenda as well, what better way was there to follow through with her passion other than to join the Army as a veterinarian.

“I volunteered at animal clinics prior to going to veterinary school and I was commissioned upon graduation,” said Bingham. “I graduated veterinary school in 2011 so the last five years I have been



Major Gen. Carl E. Mundy III and U.S. Army Capt. Emily R. Bingham pose for a photo during an award ceremony at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., July 29. Bingham received the 2016 U.S. Army Veterinary Corps Veterinary Services Officer Exceptional Service Award for serving as the MARSOC force veterinarian. Bingham is the third MARSOC veterinarian in a row to receive this award. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Ryan C. Mains.

practicing veterinary medicine. I have always been involved with animals though, becoming a veterinarian was always my end goal.”

Over the course of five years, Bingham has worked with military working dogs, and an array of other

animals. In March, 2009, Bingham was commissioned through the Health Professions Scholarship Program while attending Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine. She entered active duty in 2011, upon graduation, and earned the rank of captain. Professionally,

she got her start at Marine Corps Base Quantico in June, 2012. Then, in June, 2015, Bingham was selected to serve as the force veterinarian for MARSOC.

“My previous command helped me prepare for this by strengthening my veterinary medical skills through work with privately owned animals,” said Bingham. “They often have medical issues that don’t happen commonly in our military working dogs or multi-purpose canines so the exposure to these animals gave me a wide variety of patients. Coming here, there was a lot of pressure; it was a good, motivating pressure though.”

Within the first year of serving with MARSOC, Bingham has accomplished many things, such as facilitating medical training to over 200 critical skill operators and special amphibious reconnaissance Corpsmen as well as completing the MARSOC full-spectrum Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape course.

“She is always going above and beyond and that is exactly what MARSOC needs,” said the MARSOC Multi-purpose canine program manager.

Multi-purpose canines have a wide variety of missions such as detecting explosives, tracking personnel and providing an extra layer of protection to Marine Special Operations Teams. Regardless of the mission set, however, each one of the dogs needs to be checked periodically to ensure they are physically and medically ready. This is where Bingham’s job comes into play.

“Capt. Bingham has been a game changer in the MPC world here. She brings a lot of experience and leadership,” said the MARSOC MPC program manager. “Every time that we have asked, or had a question concerning something, she has always gone above and

Capt. Bingham has been a game changer in the MPC world here. She brings a lot of experience and leadership. Every time that we have asked, or had a question concerning something, she has always gone above and beyond while giving us the answer. If we had a dog that needed medical attention or we had a question about a dog, she would even come in on her day off.

beyond while giving us the answer. If we had a dog that needed medical attention or we had a question about a dog, she would even come in on her day off.”

With all the work that comes hand-in-hand with this job and all the dedication put into it, it is

understandable for Bingham to receive this award.

Bingham is the third consecutive force veterinarian to receive the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps Exceptional Officer Service Award while serving with MARSOC.



Major Gen. Carl E. Mundy III, commanding general of U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, speaks about U.S. Army Capt. Emily R. Bingham during an award ceremony at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., July 29. Bingham received the 2016 U.S. Army Veterinary Corps Veterinary Services Officer Exceptional Service Award for serving as the MARSOC force veterinarian. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Ryan C. Mains.

USSOCOM held a remembrance event for the Battle of Mogadishu honoring the men who died Oct. 3 and 4, 1993 in Somalia. In the special operations community, the Mogadishu Mile is a symbol of dedication and perseverance. Teams participated in the competition that combined memory exercise, a short run to the small-arms range, a shooting competition and ended with a 5k run in boots and combat uniforms to the Special Operations Forces Memorial.



MOGADISHU MILE

OCTOBER 3, 2016

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MATT DiPALMA





Sovereign Challenge Seminar focuses on migration, immigration

By USSOCOM Communication Office

U.S. Special Operations Command hosted a one-day seminar entitled “Migration and Immigration – Vulnerabilities and Opportunities,” in Washington D.C., Sept. 15.

The event provided a venue for 99 participants from 37 countries to build relationships, share national policies, positions and ideas related to immigration, as well as the capabilities to engage these challenges, which are often exacerbated as a nation comes out of conflict.

Opening session moderator Lt. Gen. (ret.) Terry Wolff, Deputy Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, underscored the staggering magnitude of the current migration crisis. “Over 21 million refugees have become a persistent global security challenge that requires an international approach including international organizations, NGOs, and the private sector.”

Gen. Raymond A. Thomas III, USSOCOM commander, noted that, “conflict-generated migration will happen as long as we continue to have conflicts. For us in Special Operations Forces, who are at the tip of the spear in military conflicts, we can and should help facilitate flow.”

The integration of refugees is also a key issue that needs to be addressed, Thomas said. He noted that it’s very important to look at the way some of our European partners have created best practices, but to also identify where there are challenges “with the quantity of people that either are going to be integrated [in]to our society... [or] are transient.”

Pulitzer Prize winning author, New York Times journalist, and keynote speaker Tom Friedman identified three massive phenomena – climate/population growth/biodiversity loss, technology, and digital globalization – that are themselves changing at exponential rates and also changing our world at nearly the same pace.

Friedman said many countries are now, “like caravan homes in a trailer park. They are built on no foundation and they have no basement. And the three accelerations



Sovereign Challenge attendees pose for an end of seminar photo marking the conclusion of another seminar hosted by U.S. Special Operations Command to address world-wide challenges. The seminar focused on immigration and migration and its complex opportunities and vulnerabilities. The seminar was held in Washington, D.C., Sept 15.

are like a tornado going through a trailer park. That’s what you’re seeing. And we’re just at the beginning of what could become a massive movement of people out of these countries.”

“Latin America,” Professor Yuri Gramajo of Uruguay explained, “is also under stress from the forces Mr. Friedman identified. In the last century it has changed from a net receiver of migrants to a net provider, with serious consequences for some states in the region.”

“In Central America, the rise of gangs involved in drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, money laundering, and violent crimes is eroding state authority,” Gramajo said.

Following National Defense University professor Dr. R. Kim Cragin’s analysis that Islamic State of Iraq and Levant’s defeat could disperse as many as 20,000 foreign fighters globally, Deputy Director for Interpol Washington Wayne Salzgeber identified a number of ways that the military, intelligence agencies, and law enforcement can work together to mitigate threats arising from violent extremists trying to shift their points of attack by embedding themselves within migratory flows.

Citing several examples in which suspects have been apprehended, Salzgeber said, “the best defense from the law enforcement perspective is to stay ahead of the threat by widely sharing information and intelligence both between our domestic agencies as well as among our foreign partners.”



U.S. Army
Staff Sgt. Avonye John Caxon Chisolm
75th Ranger Regiment



U.S. Army
Staff Sgt. Adam Samuel Thomas
10th Special Forces Group (Airborne)

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

A U.S. Air Force combat controller guides a MC-130J aircraft July 25, during a short-field landing training exercise in Antofagasta, Chile. The controller performed a high altitude low opening jump to set up the airfield for aircraft landing as part of the training. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Osvaldo Equite.

