



Tip OF THE Spear

United States Special Operations Command
MacDill Air Force Base, Florida

June 2020



**Special Tactics Airmen support
vital training, maintain
readiness through COVID-19**



United States Special Operations Command



**Special Tactics Airmen support vital training,
maintain readiness through COVID-19 ... 26**

Tip of the Spear

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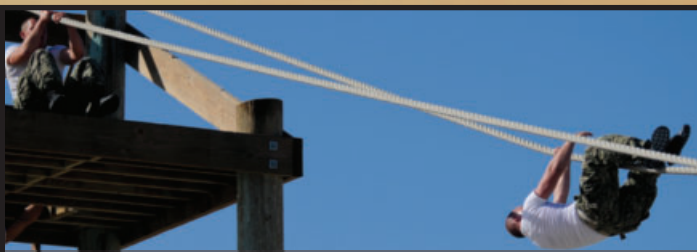
(Cover) U.S. Air Force Special Tactics operators infiltrate a simulated target from CV-22 Osprey tilt-rotator aircraft during operability training with the 14th Weapons Squadron at Eglin Range, Fla., April 22, 2020. This training helped improve readiness and interoperability between special operations assets. Special Tactics is a U.S. Special Operations Command's tactical air and ground integration force, and the Air Force's special operations ground force, leading global access, precision strike, personnel recovery and battlefield surgery operations on the battlefield. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Rose Gudex.

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U.S. Special Operations Command - Central



Lebanon, Jordan partner with US civil affairs amid global pandemic



A U.S. Special Operations Command Central's Civil Military Support Element partnered with the Lebanese Armed Forces Civil Military Coordination team and non-government organizations to distribute protective equipment throughout Lebanon, Mar. 26, 2020. The partners distributed 17,000 face masks and 120,000 gloves to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Courtesy photo.

*By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Steven Colvin
U.S. Special Operations Command Central*

COVID-19 has created a radically different set of problems for U.S. Special Operations Forces and their host nation partners across the globe. Already under considerable strain from hosting large numbers of refugees from Syria and facing mounting economic trouble, Lebanon and Jordan are confronting an invisible and insidious enemy - COVID-19.

However, the Lebanese and Jordanian militaries are confronting this invisible enemy hand-in-hand with their American SOF counterparts. U.S. Special Operations

Command Central has built and maintained strong partnerships with the Lebanese and Jordanian Armed Forces over a generation.

Civil affairs teams from the 96th CA Battalion, have deployed to Lebanon and Jordan since 2012, are in position to assist the Lebanese Civil-Military Cooperation Center and the Jordanian Civil-Military Coordination Center as they serve in an unfamiliar role supporting their civil institutions on the front line against the virus.

The CA teams have been working closely with their military partners, local governments and non-government organizations to alleviate impacts of the virus. Protective

equipment, purchased through CENTCOM's Foreign Humanitarian Assistance program, has been distributed to communities and first responders in need. The teams distributed the medical and sanitary supplies donated by NGOs to communities within Lebanon and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Throughout March and April, over 20,000 hygiene kits were distributed to school children along with 33,200 masks, 152,000 gloves, 11,200 bottles of hand sanitizer and 19,000 information cards to local clinics and medical centers to help prevent the spread of the virus.

“We highly appreciate the attitude of the local agencies and the American military teams to provide the municipality of Zarqa with quantities of protective and sterile materials in these difficult conditions facing the kingdom in the fight against the virus,” said Engineer Emad Al-Momani, the Mayor of Zarqa, Jordan. “The gesture has had a great impact on us and shows that the organization and the teams have a humanitarian dimension through these wonderful attitudes.”

In the first part of February, the U.S. civil military support element in Jordan partnered with the Jordanian Civil Military Coordination Center for a distribution of winter clothing in Safawi and Ruwayshid, Jordan – poor, under-represented regions near the Syrian and Iraqi borders.

The U.S. and Jordanian CA teams collaborated their efforts in order to present jackets and scarves to nearly 1200 students. The Jordanian CMCC planned and coordinated the distribution with the advice and assistance of the U.S. CMSE.

“This was the first time the CMCC took the lead on a combined operation,” said U.S. Army Capt. Jordan Legg, a team leader of Civil Affairs Team 614. “This project gave us a baseline as we focus on institutional development so that the CMCC may expand operations—both within Jordan and regionally.”

The groundwork for the collaboration on COVID-19 response was laid in the months and years leading to the current crisis. In collaboration with their military partners in both Jordan and Lebanon, teams have improved, refurbished and constructed clinics during the last decade under U.S. Central Command's Overseas Humanitarian Disaster and Civil Aid (OHDACA) program in underserved areas within both countries.

Recently in April, U.S. SOF collaborated with a NGO in Lebanon to provide advanced medical training to LAF soldiers. This helped set conditions for the LAF to provide support to the community as they enforce or advise on social distancing measures.

The CMSE and NGO partners assisted LAF leaders

to develop an organic medical capacity with their combat forces. The CMSE and the NGO provided training equipment for a Tactical Combat Casualty Care course at the Hamat Special Forces School. The graduates of the course also received their own individual first aid kits.

“The ongoing coordination between various U.S. SOF elements, the LAF, and local Lebanese NGOs demonstrates the continuous unity of effort amongst SOF elements to identify gaps in the Lebanese Armed Forces and build partner capacity,” said U.S. Army Capt. Sondra Settingington, team leader of CA Team 613.

The CA team's work complements the efforts of the U.S. State Department, which recently allocated \$13.3 million in new assistance for Lebanon and \$8 million for Jordan. The support is intended for humanitarian relief for COVID-19 response activities assisting vulnerable citizens and refugees.

These efforts, and the current COVID response, can only occur because of the strong partnership, trust, and mutual respect between U.S. SOF, partner military units; built over years of sustained civil-military engagement. SOCCENT's CA teams, with the support from the U.S. country teams in Lebanon and Jordan increase the capability of partners while advancing U.S. interests, achieving U.S. and partner goals to defeat threats within the civil component of the operational environment.



A U.S. Special Operations Command Central's Civil Military Support Elements in collaboration with host nation military civil affairs teams and non-government organizations provided a range of protective and sterile materials to the City of Zarqa, Jordan to combat the Corona Virus, Apr. 7, 2020. The NGO and the CMSE provided masks, gloves and hand sanitizer to the city of Zarqa in response to the global pandemic. Courtesy photo.

U.S. Special Operations Command - Europe



Stuttgart Nurse takes COVID-19 pandemic in stride

*By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Thomas Mort
U.S. Special Operations Command Europe*

International Nurses Day, May 12, has been a recognized event since 1954, with the week typically coinciding with Florence Nightingale's birthday on May 12, 1820. Here at U.S. Special Operations Command Europe, our medical staff has one nurse, Alicia Murphy, who has stayed busy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Murphy, who was born and raised in Texas, said she has always wanted to be a nurse.

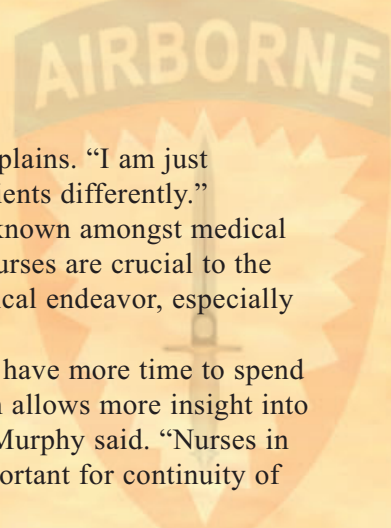
"My mom, grandma, aunts, and cousins are all nurses - it runs in the family," Murphy reveals.

Murphy attended the University of Miami and has been a nurse for almost 10 years. Prior to becoming a nurse, she was a stay at home mom and a U.S. Marine Corps spouse for over 20 years. Her family has lived in Okinawa, Hawaii, Florida, North Carolina, and now Germany.

"Alicia's contributions to the SOCEUR Community are above reproach," adds the Command Physician Assistant assigned to the SOCEUR Preservation of the



Alicia Murphy, the Nurse Case Manager assigned to U.S. Special Operations Command Europe, tries on a pair of personal protective equipment gloves, May 5, 2020. Murphy's role during COVID-19 has been to help coordinate care for those with symptoms and to track individuals in quarantine or isolation for new symptoms for themselves and their family members. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Thomas Mort.



Alicia Murphy, the Nurse Case Manager assigned to U.S. Special Operations Command Europe, prepares a blood pressure monitor, May 5, 2020. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Thomas Mort.

Force and Family (POTFF) program. “She has the ability to care for and guide almost anyone in need of care, and this has been quite apparent in our fight against COVID-19.”

Murphy is now the Nurse Case Manager assigned to the SOCEUR POTFF program. Murphy's experience within the Military Health System all started here in Stuttgart as an ambulatory care nurse at the Patch Health Clinic. Working with the military community and family members has been great, proclaims Murphy.

“The last few months have been interesting,” Murphy said.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, Murphy would see patients in person at the SOCEUR Surgeon’s office.

“Now everything is done through email or phone calls,” Murphy adds. “My role during COVID-19 has been to help coordinate care for those with symptoms and to track individuals in quarantine or isolation for new symptoms for themselves and family members.”

Murphy is always available to answer any questions and provide support for anyone who has the need.

“This is not much different than what I was doing

before,” Murphy explains. “I am just interacting with patients differently.”

It’s commonly known amongst medical professionals that nurses are crucial to the success of any medical endeavor, especially in the military.

“Nurses tend to have more time to spend with patients, which allows more insight into a patient’s needs,” Murphy said. “Nurses in the military are important for continuity of care.”

Murphy states that nurses are great at adapting to whatever comes their way.

“I think being a nurse during this historic time is no different than any other time,” adds Murphy. “You still care for the individual in the same way and help as much as possible.”

Military and civilian nurses continue to serve leading roles to maintain military health and readiness and effect transformative changes occurring in military medicine now and in the future.

Nurses are contributing to the

Department of Defense efforts as part of the national COVID-19 pandemic response. Protecting service members, their families and the MHS workforce is the DoD’s top priority that nurses are delivering on while caring for patients as a final line of defense against COVID-19.

I think being a nurse during this historic time is no different than any other time. You still care for the individual in the same way and help as much as possible.

— *Alicia Murphy*



Alicia Murphy, the Nurse Case Manager assigned to U.S. Special Operations Command Europe, takes a break from patient phone calls, May 5, 2020. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Thomas Mort.

*U.S. Special Operations
Command - Europe*



352nd SOW conducts open ocean rescue training over the North Sea

A U.S. Air Force Special Tactics operator assigned to the 321st Special Tactics Squadron, 352nd Special Operations Wing executes a military free-fall into the North Sea, April 9, 2020. The event was part of a larger full mission profile that focused on air and sea readiness using the 352nd SOW's MC-130J Commando II and CV-22B Osprey. Courtesy photo.

**By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Pena
352d Special Operations Wing**

Members from the MC-130J Commando II assigned to the 67th Special Operations Squadron, CV-22B Osprey assigned to the 7th Special Operation Squadron, and Special Tactics Airmen from the 321st Special Tactics Squadron, conducted an airborne operation April 9, 2020, over the North Sea to test and evaluate three core mission sets; global access, precision strike, and personnel recovery.

“We simulated an unlucky jet scenario where an F-16 was shot down over the water,” said a U.S. Air Force Capt., 321st Special Tactics Squadron lead evaluator during the mission. “We then had to launch the alert force of pararescuemen, combat controllers and special reconnaissance personnel who were prepared to go jump into an area where they wouldn't otherwise have the ability to get into.”

The 352nd SOW is U.S. Special Operation Command Europe's aviation component and the only U.S. Air Force special operations unit in the European theater. Forward presence through SOCEUR enables collective efforts with NATO allies and partners to execute specialized airpower and air-ground integration.

“This scenario mirrors potential SOCEUR and European Command taskings. Special tactics provide global access, precision strike, and rescue capability, and the MC-130J and CV-22 Osprey provide the speed and long legs to get there and get our forces out expeditiously,” said the weapons and tactics chief.

During the training, members from the 352 SOW were given a notional task from the special operations task force and a limited strike window to suit up, equip the aircraft and provide overwater personnel recovery support to the downed pilot. But before the recovery team could be dispatched, the air space had to be safely cleared for movement.

“Embedded within the scenario was a notional precision strike mission accomplished by leveraging our joint terminal attack controllers (JTAC) to be able to eliminate any threats to the MC-130 or the CV-22 that would be going in to pick up the isolated person,” said the lead evaluator.

Training like this provides members with familiarity on the requirements and tools needed to best accomplish their mission essential tasks while simultaneously communicating between aircraft and teams on the ground to execute airborne operations in a potential threat environment.

Using the appropriate communication channels,

the command and control element delivered the MC-130J to employ boat packages and personnel into the negative 43 degrees North Sea, in order to recover the isolated personnel floating in the water.

“We employed our boats in the water first and then we conducted a military free-fall landing close to the boats. From there, the rescue element was able to get the boats relatively quickly and immediately begin treating the patient for hypothermia and additional injuries expected after an ejection,” said the weapons and tactics chief. “Once that was complete, we were able to launch a CV-22B Osprey, from the mission support site, to do a hoist of the recovery element out of the water with the isolated personnel and extract them,” he finished.

Special Tactics Airmen assigned to the 321 STS provide a rapidly-deployable force capable of establishing and providing positive control of air-to-ground interface during special operations or conventional missions. Through routine training with special tactics operators, the units can hone their airborne operations together in a controlled environment while maintaining readiness to deploy, train, and fight as one force.

“This was a very successful mission,” said the lead evaluator. “Having the dedicated personnel and equipment coupled with the appropriate level of training ensures our force is ready to deploy at a moment's notice, in the event, the geographical combatant commander or the Secretary of Defense orders us to go forward and execute.”



U.S. Air Force Special Tactics operators assigned to 321st Special Tactics Squadron, 352nd Special Operations Wing execute a military free-fall out of an MC-130J Commando II over the North Sea, April 9, 2020. The military free-fall was part of an exercise, which focused on air and sea readiness using the 352nd SOW's MC-130J Commando II and CV-22B Osprey. Courtesy photo.

U.S. Special Operations Command - Europe



352nd Special Operations Wing enhances readiness through mountainous terrain flight over Albania

U.S. Air Force personnel assigned to the 67th Special Operations Squadron, 352nd Special Operations Wing, based out of RAF Mildenhall, U.K., conduct a low-level, mountainous terrain flight in a MC-130J Commando II, May 23, 2020, over Albania. The event was part of the 352nd SOW's training mission to enhance readiness and maintain a ready and capable force. Through this type of training, SOF members remain postured to execute global response operations and support multiple NATO allies and partners in the Black Sea and Balkans region during the global COVID-19 crisis. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Aven Santiago.



U.S. Special Operations Command - Pacific



Yokota showcases adaptability, mission capability with Samurai Surge



Aircraft from the 36th Airlift Squadron, 459th Airlift Squadron and 21st Special Operations Squadron participate in the elephant walk portion of the Samurai Surge training exercise, May 21, 2020 at Yokota Air Base, Japan. The Samurai Surge event also served as a training opportunity for aircrews to fine tune their skill sets and better prepare themselves to respond to humanitarian aid and disaster relief scenarios throughout the Indo-Pacific region. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Juan Torres.

By Staff Sgt. Juan A. Torres
374th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Members of the 36th Airlift Squadron, 459th Airlift Squadron and the 21st Special Operations Squadron out of Yokota Air Base, Japan, came together to complete a 17 aircraft Samurai Surge training exercise, May 21, 2020.

The Samurai Surge exercise involved 17 aircraft for an

elephant walk and a C-130 formation flight. Of those 17, two were CV-22 Osprey aircraft from the 353rd Special Operations Group. This event showcased the 374th Airlift Wing's mission capability, adaptability and readiness to respond to disaster relief scenarios and contingency operations across Yokota's area of responsibility to maintain regional stability in the Indo-Pacific, even in the face of an ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to inclement weather the morning of the event, a previously scheduled larger formation flight was reduced and launched as a smaller C-130J formation and a low-cost, low-altitude airdrop portion of the exercise was cancelled in effort to ensure the safety of aircrew and individuals in the surrounding Tokyo metropolitan area.

“An elephant walk is a critical test for not only our aircrew, but our maintenance and airfield operations teams,” said Capt. Melinda Marlow, 36th AS C-130J pilot and scheduler. “It showcases our ability to launch multiple aircraft out of a large formation to execute an airdrop mission. To make that happen, our entire operation begins with our maintenance team that has to put in a ton of work to make sure our aircraft are ready to go out and make that mission happen.”

As a significantly larger-than-normal aircraft formation, a total of nine C-130J’s, two CV-22’s, three C-12 Hurons and three UH-1N Iroquois participated in the event.

“Seeing an elephant walk is great. Seeing our work in action, our ability to generate such a large formation and what it is capable of doing is just an amazing experience to be a part of,” added MSgt. David Arnold, 374th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron C-130J production superintendent. “This is proof that we can take our entire fleet to get them ready to execute any mission that comes down, putting our air power in action.”

This year, the exercise was conducted while under the restrictions of an ongoing pandemic, a situation that forced Airmen to rethink how these formations were planned, produced, and executed while following established guidelines and policies to prevent any potential exposure.

“COVID-19 has had a significant impact on how we go



Multiple C-130J Super Hercules aircraft with the 36th Airlift Squadron taxi on the flight line during the elephant walk portion of the Samurai Surge training exercise, May 21, 2020 at Yokota Air Base, Japan. Photo by Machiko Arita.

about our mission planning, but not so much when it comes to our execution of that mission,” said Marlow. “If anything, it has allowed us to practice utilizing some of the tools and resources we have but don’t get to utilize very often. While the [physical] distancing aspect is unique, that distance in planning is a very realistic hurdle we routinely face when planning our real-world missions to respond to things that arise in our area of responsibility.

“We had to plan our flights and coordinate every detail from separate locations but at the end of the day, that 17 aircraft formation we mobilized today is the same level of mobilization we would have achieved prior to COVID-19. The C-130J’s mobilized are capable of delivering two battalions of paratroopers or up to 360,000 lbs. of cargo anywhere in the Pacific and COVID-19 doesn’t change that.”



Three C-130J Super Hercules’ assigned to the 36th Airlift Squadron fly near Mt. Fuji, Japan May 11, 2020 during a pre-Samurai Surge training exercise. While COVID-19 has forced teams to maintain aircraft and mission plan in a physically distant manner, Yokota’s Samurai Surge serves as proof the pandemic has not altered the 374th Airlift Wing’s mission capability, adaptability and readiness to respond to the needs of the Indo-Pacific region. Photo by Yasuo Osakabe.

U.S. Army Special Operations Command

Medal of Honor recipient Staff

Sgt. Ronald J. Shurer II passes away



*By Jacob Connorfoertsch
Army Public Affairs*

On May 14, 2020, Army Staff Sgt. (Retired) Ronald J. Shurer II passed due to a lengthy illness. He was an American Hero, Medal of Honor Recipient, son, husband, and most important to him, a Father.

Ronald J. Shurer II was born in Fairbanks, Alaska, on Dec. 7, 1978. The son of airmen, Shurer lived in Illinois and Idaho before his family was stationed at McChord Air Force Base, Washington. Shurer attended Rogers High School in Puyallup, Washington, where he was a member of the swim team and participated in triathlons and cycling.

Following his high school graduation in 1997, Shurer attended Washington State University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in business economics. Later that year, he enrolled in a master's degree program at Washington State.

After the events of Sept. 11, 2001, Shurer was inspired to follow in the footsteps of his great-grandfather, grandfather and parents by serving in the U.S. armed forces.

Shurer entered the U.S. Army in 2002 and was assigned to the 601st Area Support Medical Company, 261st Area Medical Battalion, 44th Medical Command, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. In January 2004, he entered Special Forces selection and reported to the Special Forces Qualification Course in June. After donning his green beret, Shurer was assigned to the 3rd Special Forces Group in June 2006. Shurer deployed to Afghanistan from August 2006 to March 2007, and again from October 2007 to May 2008.

After separating from the Army in May 2009, Shurer was hired by the U.S. Secret Service and was stationed in Phoenix, Arizona, to investigate financial crimes, perform advance work and protect the president, vice president and high-level dignitaries. In May 2014 he moved to Washington, D.C., as part of the U.S. Secret Service Counter Assault Team, the tactical team that works to suppress, divert and



Army Staff Sgt. (Retired) Ronald J. Shurer II

neutralize any coordinated attack against the president of the United States.

Shurer's awards and decorations include the Medal of Honor, the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal with Bronze Clasp and two Loops, the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with two Bronze Service Stars, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon with Numeral "2," the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the NATO Medal, the Valorous Unit Award, the Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Parachutist Badge and the Special Forces Tab.

7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) receives a 60-year thank you

*By Army Sgt. L'Erin Wynn and Army Maj. Gerard Torres
7th Special Force Group (Airborne)*

“Our gratitude is due for all of your help towards Colombia’s efforts against narco-trafficking and terrorism and the utmost honor to the Soldiers of 7th Special Forces Group.”

A final word of thanks offered by Colombian Army Maj. Gen. Luis Navarro Jiménez, Commanding General of the Colombian Military Forces.

U.S. Army Col. John W. Sannes, Commander, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) and members of the command team hosted the Colombian Chief of Defense at Camp “Bull” Simons, March 6, 2020.

Gen. Navarro’s visit to 7th SFG(A) on Eglin Air Force Base, Florida served to recognize the unit’s contribution of service to the Colombian military and to the Colombian internal conflict with counter-insurgency efforts in their fight against guerilla and narco-trafficking organizations for nearly the last six decades.

The Red Empire has been engaging with Colombia for 58 years. With this engagement came the inception of the elite Lanceros — the first Colombian Special Operations Forces, one of many changes that helped turn the tide in stabilizing Colombia.

Navarro explained that he has partnered with 7th SFG(A) Soldiers his entire military career and felt an unsettled debt of gratitude to the organization. Now in a commanding position and on behalf of his country, his appreciation could be articulated.

Additionally, a campaign streamer, the “Commemorative Tie for Military Assistance and Cooperation in the Fight against Drug Trafficking and Terrorism,” was attached to the 7th SFG(A) colors.

As the citation reads, “It should be noted that with this distinctive, commemorative tie, it is intended to be part of the history of the units that transcend in time along with the heroic acts of their members and the contribution of the military units to the strengthening of our institutions, as well as those who with great commitment have historically assumed the challenge of defending the democracy, institutionality, the rule of law and freedoms, with the most absolute conviction, courage and loyalty. This task carries the professional stamp and talent of the most distinguished Soldiers, sailors and pilots gathered



Maj. Gen. Luis Navarro Jiménez, commanding general of the Colombian Military Forces awards Col. John W. Sannes, commander, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne), with the Colombian Distinguished Service Medal as well as the “La Medalla Militar” on Camp “Bull” Simons, Fla. March 6, 2020. Navarro’s visit to 7th SFG(A) served to recognize the unit’s contribution of service to the Colombian military and to the Colombian internal conflict with counter-insurgency efforts in their fight against guerilla and narco-trafficking organizations for nearly the last six decades. Photo by U.S. Army PFC Christopher Sanchez.

around the Commando banner.”

As his gesture of thanks, Navarro presented 7th SFG(A) with the “Fe En La Causa” (translated as ‘Faith in the Cause’) medal to demonstrate that U.S. Army Special Forces are the strategic partners of choice who are committed to endure what has been a 58-year struggle alongside willing partners.

Engagements with Colombia date back to 1962 when the seated commander conducted an assessment of the ongoing violence and fledgling insurgency. The assessment provided by the team led to the creation of a formidable fighting force by the initiation of mobile training teams focused on increasing lethality. Since that time, 7th SFG(A) has and continues to deploy countless operational detachments to build out Colombia’s security forces. 7th SFG(A) is directly responsible for building a Colombian Special Operations Force that broke the will of the guerilla movement known as the FARC-EP (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia—Ejército del Pueblo). Ultimately their efforts forced the FARC-EP to the negotiating table to end their struggle.

U.S. Army Special Operations Command



Lee airdrop advisor, rigger recounts struggles, triumphs of 35-year career

By Terrance Bell

U.S. Army Garrison Fort Lee Public Affairs

One could argue Cortez Frazier the Soldier was forged in the demanding 75th Ranger Regiment and its “all or nothing” culture.

Or, as a result of the persistent stress and weighty responsibility of being a parachute rigger.

Or, by victoriously fighting through a gauntlet of professional and institutional issues that could have devastated his psyche or damaged his career.

The common denominator through these experiences were the attitudes, beliefs and values – fairly consistent with those in the military – Frazier gained as a youngster while under the care of someone whose primary interests clearly rested with the well-being of others.

Those attributes were obvious at Fort Pickett April 22 when he executed his 850th – and final – parachute jump. Frazier is ending his Army career as a chief warrant officer 5 assigned here as the senior airdrop advisor and airdrop systems technician at the Quartermaster School’s Aerial Delivery and Field Services Department.

Largely avoiding the usual retirement sentiment following the jump, the 52-year-old Frazier instead offered another mentorship morsel to the initial entry Soldiers he has worked the past three years to protect.

“What you need to take from this is that you can be in this position,” he said, speaking on the drop zone to QM School parachute rigger students making culmination jumps. “You can be the first sergeant, you can be the commander, you can be a sergeant major, you can be a W5.... So, don’t limit yourself and make sure you strive to do your best.”

In light of his upbringing amongst 22 cousins and



Chief Warrant Officer 5 Cortez Frazier served as the senior airdrop advisor and airdrop systems technician for the Quartermaster School’s Aerial Delivery and Field Services Department. The first African American to hold the position, he is set to retire later this year after 35 years of service. Photo by Terrance Bell.

others in Talladega, Ala., Frazier’s positivity and hopefulness –even after 35 years of challenges, large and small – is at once comprehensible and remarkable. His cousin, retired Army Col. Gloria Blake, said the two were raised under economically depressed conditions by

their grandmother Minnie Scales, who, despite the hand she was dealt, embodied “Golden Rule” morals and principles.

“Cortez’ values started long before the military put them on a poster and said, ‘Army Values,’” said Blake, a former quartermaster and rigger who was among the first women to integrate the 82nd Airborne Division. “He was raised to say ‘Yes sir’ and ‘Yes ma’am,’ to stay quiet if an elder was speaking, to give to those who do not have and to always ask yourself how you would like to be treated. ... He had all of the attributes the Army needed to make it better. His way of taking care of family and others, his respect for his elders and his desire to be better made him the ideal candidate to be a Soldier.”

Blake said Scales also was the very antithesis of negativity, underachievement and hopelessness and taught her grandchildren to practice old-school resilience in a new-school world.

“I knew it would be hard for us because we were taught by the same person,” Blake said. “So I knew he would endure some of the same type pain and hardship I did as an African-American, but I also knew our grandmother taught us to not quit, to still smile, still show respect to the ones that mistreat you and reach for the stars.”

Frazier aimed for the galaxies when he joined the Army in 1985 as a rigger, but his sightlines were blurred by the ugly face of racial animus at his first assignment with the 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment at Fort Benning, Ga.

“It certainly wasn’t easy being assigned to a Ranger battalion,” he recalled. “I can count on both of my hands how many minorities were in the Ranger battalion, and then, I can count on one hand how many African Americans could hold their own. Yeah, you were by yourself, and there were pockets of separatism and boys clubs, so you had to be strong to handle that type of assignment.”

In the early 1980s, the Army was undergoing a major post-war transition and was refashioning its image to attract more minorities. It was working through a number of challenges to include improving race relations in many of its elite units.

Even at 17, Frazier had no illusions that discrimination could disappear simply with the signing of a policy letter. He knew donning Army fatigues did not necessarily remove the ignorance, prejudices, insensitivities and biases many Soldiers brought with them. Therefore, he was not astonished when he heard the n-word or when someone acted in an ignorant or insulting way. Case in point: several years ago, a senior

Soldier incredulously asked him what he was doing at the Military Freefall School.

“I’m here to go to school,” Frazier recalled replying to that Soldier. “He said, ‘No! What are you doing here? Black people don’t skydive.’”

Nevertheless, Frazier strove on, carrying the accepted burden of race without broadly antagonizing those who had issues with his. That is not to say he was passive.

“I think I survived by never compromising my values,” he explained. “I never allowed people to tell racial jokes (of any kind about any race), call me something other than my name or anything like that.”

Frazier said Ranger battalion experiences set the tone for the remainder of his career. There, he learned that discipline, physical fitness and a high level of expertise were incontestable, powerful arguments for respect and belonging – even if they did not move people to forget his skin color.

“Once you showed people you could perform, no one could touch you,” he said. “That’s what I took from the Ranger battalion.”

Frazier performed well afterward, gleaned much along the way as he opened himself up to new experiences and further enlightenment.

“If you learn to come out of your comfort zone, you learn there are some really good people in the world, and I’ve met some great people throughout the Army – of all colors,” he said. “You just have to be comfortable with learning new things. Once you do that, you’re like, ‘Oh, this is not as bad as I thought it was.’”

Frazier was accepted into the Warrant Officer Cohort after nine years of service, and went on to serve his country during operations Just Cause in Panama and Desert Storm/Shield in Saudi Arabia, among several others.

Through it all, he earned a reputation as a solid, compassionate leader and straight shooter. That reputation was tested during his first tour here a decade ago as the deputy chief of ADFSD’s Instructional Division, when a parachute rigger died following an airborne operation at McLaney Drop Zone located in the post’s northern area. Frazier sadly informed an auditorium full of mostly rigger students who had witnessed the mishap that a fellow Soldier had died at the hospital and was no longer among their ranks.

“It was just mindboggling (to hear) the sounds and screams (of distress) I heard then,” said Frazier, visibly shaken at his own recollection.

Shortly after hearing the news, a handful of students expressed their fears, vowing to never jump again and signaling a desire to change their military occupational

skill. Transparency was necessary under those conditions, Frazier said, because leaders “needed to continue to motivate those Soldiers to move forward with their training.”

“In two weeks,” Frazier declared to the students, “we’re all going to go back up, and we’re all going to jump again with that same parachute – but on Fort Pickett.”

The ADFSD cadre were the first to jump at Fort Pickett (McLaney was closed because of the incident) as a way to inspire confidence in the students and their equipment. All of the students graduated, including those who initially wanted to end their training.

On one hand the incident laid bare the inherent dangers of airborne operations, said Frazier. On the other, it brought to light what is necessary to continue the mission.

“It goes back to those Ranger battalion days,” he said in retrospect. “No matter what the mission is, we have to continue to move forward.

... If you’re preparing for war and someone goes down, you cannot stop the war. You’ve got to motivate your people, get them back to the wire and continue to fight.”

Frazier, who investigated several deaths as an airdrop systems technician, admitted the student death was the most traumatizing of his career and that he is “taking care of it.”

He is “taking care of it” on another front as well, working hard in the areas of training and safety to prevent injury or loss of life.

“That’s why I work so hard as an airdrop systems technician, because you never want to hear those screams or talk to parents about losing their son or daughter,” he said.

Look no further than CW4 Kevin Sims, Frazier’s deputy, to affirm his superior’s work ethic. He said Frazier’s commitment to the profession was evident the minute he conveyed his expectations.

“When I arrived here and in-processed ... he gave me 62 items under my duties and responsibilities,” explained Sims, who has known Frazier 15 years. “My reaction was, ‘What in the world have I gotten myself in to?’... But I’ll tell you, I’ve never been challenged in my career to move to the next level than the way I’ve been challenged working with Mr. Frazier. Really, he was

grooming me for the next level.”

Like Sims, Staff Sgt. Jonathan Echavez, a rigger instructor, is part of a legion of Soldiers Frazier mentored throughout his career. Echavez first met the “chief” in 2012 as a student. With Frazier’s support and encouragement, he has declared he will one day walk in the chief’s shoes.

“He’s stepping out, but he has trained NCOs like me to take his place,” he said. “So, that’s why I’m here.”

Echavez was recently accepted to attend warrant officer school.

Retired 1st Sgt. Kyle Montgomery, chief of training at the QM School’s Automated Logistical Course – and pastor to Frazier and his wife of 32 years, Glenda – said Frazier is all about supporting people, especially the vulnerable.

“He’s an upfront guy, always honest, a champion of the underdog – that’s probably one of his greatest passions,” he said. “He can’t stand to see people

mistreated. That says a lot about his character to me.”

The sentiments from those who know Frazier do not surprise former Command Sgt. Maj. Mary Brown. She was assigned with Frazier four different times and has known him his entire career.

“He’s top notch at all he does,” said the 2014 retiree, who calls Frazier

“Little Brother.” “He’s a great friend, an awesome father and husband, and an awesome Soldier. He was someone I could depend upon, someone I could trust and someone who has always been in my corner, as I have been in his.”

Frazier escorted Brown to the aircraft for her last jump in 2013 at Pickett. Brown was present for Frazier’s last jump, as well.

Blake said her cousin’s sterling military record and the respect he garnered as a leader, father and husband is an immense source of pride for their family.

“I think he has made the Army a better place by continuing to embrace the values of his grandmother,” she said. “His accomplishment is something that will go down in our family history book – he is the first warrant officer, the first CW5, and he is the first of our family to reach a glorious 35 years in the military. We are all proud of him, and I am just so happy he took the leap of faith and joined the military some 35 years ago.”

*It goes back to those Ranger battalion days.
No matter what the mission is, we have to
continue to move forward. ... If you're
preparing for war and someone goes down,
you cannot stop the war. You've got to
motivate your people, get them back to the
wire and continue to fight.*

— Chief Warrant Officer 5 Cortez Frazier

75th Ranger Regiment announces permanent activation of Regimental Military Intelligence Battalion

By 75th Ranger Regiment Public Affairs

The 75th Ranger Regiment announces the permanent activation of the Regimental Military Intelligence Battalion

Effective June 16, 2020, the Regimental Military Intelligence Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment is officially activated and an enduring part of the 75th Ranger Regiment.

The Regimental Military Intelligence Battalion was provisionally activated on May 22, 2017 at Fort Benning, Georgia.

It was announced in October 2019, that the battalion would become a permanent part of the 75th Ranger Regiment.

“Within Sullivan’s Charter for the 75th Ranger Regiment, we continue to evolve as an ‘awesome force composed of skilled, dedicated Soldiers who can do things with their hands and weapons better than anyone,’” Lt. Col. Timothy Sikora, commander, Regimental Military Intelligence Battalion said.

“Today the intelligence and cyber Rangers remain at the top of their fields, able to do things with their tools that are rarely matched by their peers.”

“Each one of the RMIB Rangers earned their tan beret and scroll the same as every other military occupational specialty in the 75th Ranger Regiment formation,” Sikora added. “Everyone is a Ranger first.”

Whether it is unmanned aircraft systems operators, all-source analysts, geospatial analysts, human intelligence collectors, technical operations, electronic warfare or cyber analysts, RMIB Rangers make up the majority of Ranger-tabbed Soldiers in their specialties.

“In deployed and garrison environments, the RMIB adapts to meet the needs of the 75th Ranger Regiment,” Sikora said. “We are 75% towards our authorized fill and continue to actively recruit motivated Soldiers from all specialties to join our team.”

About the Regimental Military Intelligence Battalion

The battalion’s mission is to recruit, train, develop, and employ highly trained and specialized Rangers to conduct full spectrum intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, cyber, and electronic warfare operations in order to enhance the Regimental Commander’s situational awareness and inform his decision-making process. Presently, the RMIB consists of a headquarters detachment and two companies.

The staff and command group are embedded within the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment. It leads the Regiment’s recruitment and management of intelligence Rangers, synchronizes intelligence training and operations across the Regiment and with other special operations and conventional forces, and also provides intelligence support to the Regimental staff.

The Military Intelligence Company possesses a diverse mix of capabilities which include all-source analysts, geospatial analysts, human intelligence collectors,

counterintelligence agents, and unmanned aerial systems. This enables the company to conduct multi-discipline collection and production, expeditionary imagery collection and processing, exploitation, and dissemination of raw data, and all-source analysis, to further enable the Regiment’s training and operations.

The Cyber Electromagnetic Activities Company integrates and synchronizes cyber, electronic warfare, signals intelligence, and technical surveillance in support of the Regimental Commander’s objectives. The CEMA Company represents a new approach in line with the Army’s intent of fielding a modernized force capable of operations on any front. The multi-domain concept provides a non-linear approach where all events can occur across the environment at any time. CEMA places emphasis on innovation, technological advancement and electronic pursuit to support real time operations against any threat, digital or otherwise.

Rangers Lead the Way!

Each one of the RMIB Rangers earned their tan beret and scroll the same as every other military occupational specialty in the 75th Ranger Regiment formation. Everyone is a Ranger first.

— Lt. Col. Timothy Sikora

Naval Special Warfare Command



Safety, standards uncompromised as Naval Special Warfare Center restarts paused training phases

By U.S. Navy Lt. John J. Mike
Naval Special Warfare Center Public Affairs

“Hooyahs” and other screams of motivation pierced the crisp Coronado, Calif., air in the early hours of May 4, 2020 at Naval Special Warfare Center at Coronado, California. The compound’s normally serene night was now a raucous scene as nearly 180 SEAL candidates rushed to their set of Frogman flippers checkered in white paint across a field of blacktop that is the dreaded BUD/S 1st Phase Grinder.

Instructors amplified by megaphones, a light rain falling from hoses, and good, old-fashioned adrenaline fueled prospective special operators through the traditional predawn PT session that signifies the start of Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training.

For NSW Center, Class 342’s induction marked the resumption of training for three classes put on pause March 16 out of an abundance of caution due to COVID-19.

“We took a conservative approach to properly assess our student population and establish protocols in order to minimize risk to them during training,” said Capt. Bart Randall, commodore, NSW Center, which had nine classes continue training during the pause and delivered SEAL Qualification Training Class 336 to the Force, April 15.

The decision to restart BUD/S 1st and 2nd Phase, and Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewman (SWCC) Basic Crewman Selection was based on mitigation efforts put in place that follow CDC recommendations and DOD medical professional guidance, Randall said.

Instructors now wear facemasks, gloves, when necessary, and classes are seeing an increased emphasis on practicing social distancing to the greatest extent possible. This includes limiting the amount of students in a



A Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) instructor directs SEAL candidates participating in strength and conditioning training with logs at Naval Special Warfare Center in Coronado, Calif., May 18, 2020. To ensure the safety, health and well-being of its students, instructors and staff, NSW Center implemented COVID-19 mitigation efforts based on CDC recommendations and Department of Defense medical guidance. NSW Center provides initial and advanced training to the Sailors who make up the Navy’s SEAL and Special Boat Teams. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Anthony W. Walker.

classroom and putting methods in place during group training events, like class runs and swims, to ensure adequate physical separation.

Also critical to mitigating the spread of COVID-19 is keeping SEAL and SWCC students in a “closed ecosystem,” said Randall.

This starts for most students when candidates enter the Navy at Recruit Training Command, where they are quarantined for two weeks prior to starting boot camp. The protective bubble carries over to NSW Prep, where

students transit to another part of Naval Station Great Lakes, Ill., for the two-month training phase. Those who qualify for the NSW Orientation phase in Coronado are then flown on military aircraft to a military base to protect students from outside exposure.

“I want our students, instructors and staff to have the safest environment possible,” said Randall.

As students continue through their respective pipelines at NSW Center, so do the mitigation policies. Classes perform daily COVID-19 screenings; get to-go meals from the base galley, eating only with their classmates; and sanitize their water bottles daily.

And how do these mitigation efforts impact NSW’s exceptionally high standards?

“We are not going to change the training we have established throughout history of NSW,” said Randall.

There is “total buy-in” on the importance of COVID-19 mitigation efforts from leadership down to the instructors standing on the berm, he said. “The instructors are a few steps back now, they can stand off 10 feet, and, trust me, the students have no problem hearing them.”

Training cadre members also understands the importance of maintaining standards.

“They know they are here to create their future

teammates. Our instructors will rotate from here right back to a SEAL platoon, and these young operators will be next to them in formation, downrange, defending our way of life,” said Randall.

Not compromising NSW Center’s high-caliber of training requires balancing risk to mission with risk to the Force.

The nature of many SEAL and SWCC training evolutions means students are going to be close to each other, Randall said. Physical proximity is not only needed for students to complete events. It is essential in developing tight bonds between classmates.

“The relationships developed is like that of a family member,” he said of SEAL and SWCC training. “They help you get to graduation and are later critical to the success of a SEAL or Special Boat Team.”

Still paramount is the health, safety and welfare of everyone involved in the training process, Randall emphasized.

“If any student shows signs of illness, we will pull them from training to be evaluated by medical professionals. We will take care of them and make sure they are healthy before getting them back in the fight,” Randall said.



SEAL candidates participate in a rock portage evolution during Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) training at Naval Special Warfare Center in Coronado, Calif., May 13, 2020. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Anthony W. Walker.

Naval Special Warfare Command



East Coast SEAL training

East coast based Navy SEALs form a defensive perimeter as an MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopter from the Nightdippers of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 5 takes off from Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Va., June 5, 2020. U.S. Navy SEALs engage in a continuous training cycle to improve and further specialize skills needed to conduct missions from sea, air and land. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer First Class Scott Fenaroli.



(Above) East coast based Navy SEALs load onto an MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopter from the Nightdippers of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 5 during training on Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Va., June 5, 2020.

(Right) Two MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopters from the Nightdippers of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 5 take off with east coast based Navy SEALs during training on Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story Va., June 5, 2020.

(Bottom) An east coast based Navy SEAL conducts reconnaissance from an MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopter from the Nightdippers of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 5 during training on Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Va., June 5, 2020.



Air Force Special Operations Command



Home at the hospital

*By U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Dylan M. Gentile
919th Special Operations Wing*

While most people go home after a long, grueling day at work, Kevin Kulow walks straight to his camper, a short distance from the emergency room where he faces a wide range of unexpected illnesses.

Kulow works as an ER physician in a Panama City hospital where COVID-19 patients are treated. He sacrifices his mattress and a warm meal with his loved-ones to avoid infecting his family if he inadvertently was exposed to the coronavirus at work.

“The support of my wife and children is critical to

what I do,” said Kulow, who also serves his country as a lieutenant colonel and experienced flight surgeon for the 919th Special Operations Medical Squadron at Duke Field, Florida. “My family has grown accustomed to me managing disasters.”

With a plethora of experience in both his military and civilian capacities, Kulow is no stranger to patient care in disasters.

“Personally, I’m used to wearing gas masks, powered air-purifying respirators, and other personal protective equipment,” said Kulow. “Austere medicine is right in my wheelhouse.”

Some of Kulow’s experience in austere medicine



Kevin Kulow, an emergency room physician, speaks with a patient in Panama City, Fla. Apr. 23, 2020. Kulow, who also serves as a lieutenant colonel and medic for the Air Force Reserve, works on rotational shifts and takes extra precautions at work and at home to keep from contracting COVID-19. Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Dylan Gentile.

comes from a deployment in support of the Afghanistan conflict. While there, he provided medical support for the forward operating location and treated combat casualties.

“When stuff hits the fan, he’s the guy you want with you,” said retired Lt. Col. Gary Benedetti, an orthopedic trauma surgeon, who deployed with Kulow in the past. “He really has a calling for this, it’s his thing.”

On top of his role as an ER doctor treating patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, Kulow has a respectable past. He served the public at moments when the nation needed him. He helped the local community during hurricane Michael and served as a field doctor during 9/11.

“We worked into the wee hours of the night setting up an expeditionary medical support system facility in a parking lot,” said Kulow, speaking of his time in New York City after Sept. 11. “We never saw a single patient, because there were no casualties to care for. Nobody was coming out of that rubble alive.”

Kulow expressed how he felt terrible because there was nothing he could do to help. He had extensive training to deal with casualty situations, and there was no one there for him to treat. The aftermath of Hurricane Michael is where he found that chance to put his skills to work.

“The tent city behind the hospital handled the walking wounded so we could focus on more serious cases in the emergency room,” said Kulow. “My training as a flight surgeon enabled me to identify who could be airlifted during the initial evacuation of [the remaining patients at] the hospital.”

Kulow’s Panama City apartment was destroyed by Hurricane Michael so he slept on an air mattress in an unfinished janitor’s closet in the hospital and used a poncho for a blanket. Eventually, he decided to vacate the closet and pull his camper into the hospital’s parking lot. He was unaware at the time that he would need to stay in it again for a completely different type of disaster.

“I initially stayed in the camper because there was no housing in the city that hadn’t been destroyed by Hurricane Michael,” said Kulow. “Then when this pandemic blew up, the camper was the best way to avoid spreading or contracting the virus because I wasn’t around anybody else.”

The natural disasters and countless medical emergencies Kulow experienced during his time in medicine have not scared him away. He continues to go to work every day to do his best to keep the community healthy.

“There are many medical staff members who have stepped up to care for those suffering from COVID-19,” said Benedetti. “I know Kulow does it without trepidation. There are those that do it because it is their job, and then there are those that do it because it’s their duty

and their calling, like Dr. Kulow.”

To learn more about how the 919th Special Operations Wing is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, check out the 919th SOW Facebook page or visit the “news” section at <https://www.919sow.afrc.af.mil/>

I know Kulow does it without trepidation. There are those that do it because it is their job, and then there are those that do it because it’s their duty and their calling, like Dr. Kulow.

— Lt. Col. Gary Benedetti



Kevin Kulow, an emergency room physician, dons his tool belt in the camper he stays in after working his hospital shifts, Apr. 23, 2020, in Panama City, Fla. Kulow, who is also a lieutenant colonel and flight surgeon in the Air Force Reserve’s 919th Special Operations Wing, began utilizing his camper as a living space after Hurricane Michael, and now uses it to distance himself from his family in case he was exposed to COVID-19 at work. Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Dylan Gentile.

Air Force Special Operations Command



Special Tactics Airmen support vital training, maintain readiness through COVID-19

By U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Alejandra Fontalvo
24th Special Operations Wing

Special Tactics Airmen from the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron filled in to conduct interoperability training with the 14th Weapons Squadron assigned to the U.S. Air Force Weapons School detachment at Hurlburt Field, Florida for a Special Operations Forces Exercise on April 22, 2020.

“The recent training event was done in conjunction with the 14th Weapons Squadron as part of their curriculum to produce Weapons Officers from various aircraft in [Air Force Special Operations Command].” said Maj. Blake Jones, director of operations for the 23rd STS. “Their scenarios and full mission profiles necessitate the role of ground forces as they train to conduct and support airfield seizures, non-combatant evacuations, hostage rescues and counter weapons of mass destruction operations. The 23rd STS picked up this great training opportunity after COVID-19 travel restrictions prevented other units from participating as planned.”

The exercise is a part of the 14th WPS’ demanding five and a half month syllabus exposing students to a wide range of joint special operations and combat air force capabilities. Being able to move forward with the training allowed the iteration of Weapons School students to stay on track with their training timeline.

“Our students require close interaction with skilled ground forces throughout their training to graduate them as the recognized experts in [Special Operations Forces] and [Combat Air Forces] integration,” said Lt. Col. Jacob Duff, 14th WPS director of operations. “Our planned training



U.S. Air Force Special Tactics operators spread out on a berm to provide security at the landing zone and observe their target during operability training with 14th Weapons Squadron air assets at Eglin Range, Fla., April 22, 2020. The training helped improve readiness and interoperability between special operations assets. Special Tactics combines the core skills of Special Operations Forces with the tactical integration of air power to find unique solutions for ground problems. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Rose Gudex.

partners, a different Special Tactics Squadron and multiple Army Special Forces units, were unable to travel to Hurlburt and the 23rd STS immediately stepped in to fill that gap. Without them, it would have been significantly more difficult to meet our training objectives and graduate the newest class of SOF Weapons Officers and enlisted Advanced Instructors.”

The SOFEX also provided a unique opportunity for local Special Tactics Airmen to conduct multifaceted training with a volume of aviation assets otherwise not easily replicated outside of a larger exercise.



An Air Force Special Tactics operator carries a patient on a stretcher to evacuate during an operability training scenario at Eglin Range, Fla., April 22, 2020. Special Tactics teams conduct personnel recovery missions, from rapid mission planning to technical rescue, treatment and exfiltration. With in-depth medical and rescue expertise, along with their deployment capabilities, ST Airmen are able to perform missions in the world's most remote areas. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Rose Gudex.

“Our recent participation allowed us to evaluate individual personnel and conduct training in mission planning, tilt-rotor assault, airfield seizure, landing zone establishment and control, terminal attack control, close quarters combat, personnel recovery and battlefield trauma care,” said Jones. “This was important because it gave many junior enlisted and junior officer [Special Tactics] personnel a crucial repetition mission planning with some of the best aviators in AFSOC as well as the opportunity to execute,

work through contingencies and lead in a high-fidelity scenario.”

The units not only trained on the necessary skill sets needed to conduct a wide-range of special operations missions, increase lethality and maintain joint warfighting capabilities, but they were also tested on their ability to plan complex missions amidst COVID-19 preventative measures.

“The combat capabilities we are tasked to provide are not changing, but the constraints are different now so we must adapt,” said Jones. “We are adapting how we train, but also adapting how we resource and plan that training over teleconferences and web-based planning applications.”

In addition to reducing in-person mission planning, Special Tactics Squadrons have implemented several techniques to maintain readiness while keeping health of operators at the forefront, including sanitizing equipment, using face coverings when needed, conducting internal evaluations on prioritization of missions, staffing smaller training groups and taking advantage of local training opportunities.

“Stopping all training is not a feasible course of action because the second and third order effects months down the line are far too costly in terms of readiness,” said Jones. “Our squadron commits and deploys personnel operationally year-round, so we focused on ensuring we are still on track to field combat ready forces on time.”

Special Tactics is U.S. Special Operations Command’s tactical air and ground integration force, and the Air Force’s special operations ground force, leading global access, precision strike, personnel recovery and battlefield surgery operations.



U.S. Air Force Special Tactics operators roll a patient to check for simulated bullet exit wounds during operability training at Eglin Range, Fla., April 22, 2020. Special Tactics is a U.S. Special Operations Command’s tactical air and ground integration force, and the Air Force’s special operations ground force, leading global access, precision strike, personnel recovery and battlefield surgery operations on the battlefield. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Rose Gudex.

Air Force Special Operations Command



AFRL, AFSOC launch palletized weapons from cargo plane



A CLEAVER 2-pack Pallet is deployed from MC-130J Aircraft. Courtesy photo.

By Whitney Wetsig
Air Force Research Laboratory Public Affairs

Through a partnership with the Air Force Research Laboratory, the Air Force Special Operations Command successfully released simulated palletized munitions, Jan. 28, 2020, from an MC-130J, a multi-mission, combat, transport and special operations tanker, in three airdrops at Dugway Proving Ground, Utah.

This successful Phase I operational demonstration represents a milestone in executing a palletized munitions airdrop, which refers to the delivery of a large volume of air-launched weapons at any given time.

In this case, munitions stacked upon wooden pallets, or Combat Expendable Platforms (CEPs), deployed via a roller system. AFSOC used an MC-130J Commando II since its cargo area supported the release of multiple, relatively large munitions using tried and proven procedures.

AFSOC aircrew released five CEPs rigged with six simulated munitions, the same mass as the actual weapons, including four Cargo Launch Expendable Air Vehicles with Extended Range (CLEAVERs) across a spectrum of low and high altitude airdrops. These long-range, high precision weapons destroy moving and non-moving targets.

“In the end, the demonstration accomplished all objectives,” said Jerry Provenza, the AFRL CLEAVER program manager. In the three airdrops, all five CEPs separated cleanly from the aircraft, and the munitions separated from the CEPs.

“This successful [demo] is evidence of our commitment to evolve innovative weapons concepts and enhance our partnership with AFSOC to meet the needs of the National Defense Strategy,” said Col. Garry Haase, the

director of AFRL’s Munitions Directorate. “CLEAVER represents a different approach to launching large numbers of long-range weapons, which will bring a new dynamic to the high-end fight.”

The employment of these weapons directly advances the Air Force palletized munition experimentation effort, an innovative concept in which a multi-engine platform carrying large quantities of network-enabled, semi-autonomous weapons accompanies remotely piloted aircraft and fighter jets in combat missions.

The CLEAVER, while first envisioned by AFRL’s Center for Rapid Innovation (CRI), is now led by program managers from AFRL’s Munitions Directorate (RW) at Eglin Air Force Base. Dr. Alok Das, AFRL senior scientist and CRI director, leads a rapid reaction team that provides solutions to the warfighter’s highest priority urgent needs.

Das explains that the CRI is “in the business of innovation” by developing non-traditional solutions that address operational challenges. After assembling the subject matter experts (SMEs) and forming a collaborative team, the CRI developed the prototype CLEAVER.

For this Phase I demonstration, an AFSOC 27 SOW MC-130J aircraft flew to the range from Hill Air Force Base, accompanied by an ANG 137 SOW MC-12 chase aircraft flying from Salt Lake City International Airport. This turbo prop plane with intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, made real-time observations, capturing photos and video during three airdrops.

In future demonstrations, AFSOC will release CLEAVER glider vehicles, powered vehicles, and full-up vehicles with optional warhead and terminal guidance. Provenza said RW will provide vehicles and SMEs in Phase II and beyond. He asserts that AFRL is committed to this strategic partnership with AFSOC.

'It's the dream job', SOST member awarded the Bronze Star Medal

*By U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Alejandra Fontalvo
24th Special Operations Wing*

Staff Sgt. Johnathan Randall, a Special Operations Surgical Team member assigned to the 720th Operational Support Squadron, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal during a ceremony at Hurlburt Field, Florida May 20, 2020.

As a surgical technician assigned to a six-member SOST, Randall received the decoration for his actions providing tactical medical expertise at thirty-five austere casualty collection points supporting United States, coalition, and partner nation forces while deployed to U.S. Central Command from January through June of 2019.

"Humbling," is the first word that comes to mind for Randall when receiving the decoration.

Although the rest of his team wasn't able to attend the ceremony, their impact and contributions have had a lasting effect.

"When I first got to the unit, the team I deployed with were receiving Bronze Stars and I always felt I was standing on the shoulders of giants," said Randall. "I was walking into a career field where the people are of such high caliber, doing things that were just unheard of in the medical field... to even stand beside them is a great feeling."

Among the achievements considered for the medal included delivering expert surgical care for 644 combat casualties, assisting in 16 damage control surgeries, 46 resuscitations and 70 advanced procedures at the most forward point of combat operations.

"I am extremely proud of Staff Sgt. Randall and his team for the amazing work they did in support of Operation Inherent Resolve," said Lt. Col. James Webb, SOST director. "Damage control resuscitation and surgery are challenging even in the most ideal situations, but to perform at such a high level in the most extreme environments, hours forward of the closest hospitals is a testament to the mental and physical fortitude of him and his team."

For Randall and his team there was one moment during the deployment that stood out. While staged forward during a counterattack that put the team in grave danger, his six-person team received, triaged, stabilized and evacuated 51 blast and gunshot wound casualties in the team's largest mass casualty event all while under the constant threat of small arms and mortar fire.

The SOST's efforts not only advanced battlefield objectives, but also helped strengthen the partnerships with foreign allies and coalition forces.

"We enable our allies to stay in the fight," said Randall. "They know they have that American team that's going to take care of them, we're moving with them and we would be right there. They appreciated us and we appreciate them... we built a bond."

SOST members are known for being dedicated to their craft, their team, their patients and the mission. When Randall entered the Air Force in 2012, he internalized that mentality with joining SOST as his end goal. Now reflecting on his first deployment, his outlook hasn't changed.

"You learn to work together, you love each other," said Randall. "It's surreal to be as effective as we are on a six-person team...It's the dream job."



Staff Sgt. Johnathan Randall, Special Operations Surgical Team member assigned to the 720th Operational Support Squadron, smiles during a ceremony after receiving the Bronze Star Medal at Hurlburt Field, Florida, May 20, 2020. Randall received the medal for his actions while deployed in 2019. Special Operations Surgical Teams' proximity to the fight and their ability to conduct high-level surgical operations in austere environments saves lives, builds relationships with the local populace and provides psychological stability for joint and allied forces combating the enemy. Courtesy photo.

Air Force Special Operations Command



Fail forward: Lessons learned from a career AF Special Tactics operator

*By a Special Tactics operator
24th Special Operations Wing*

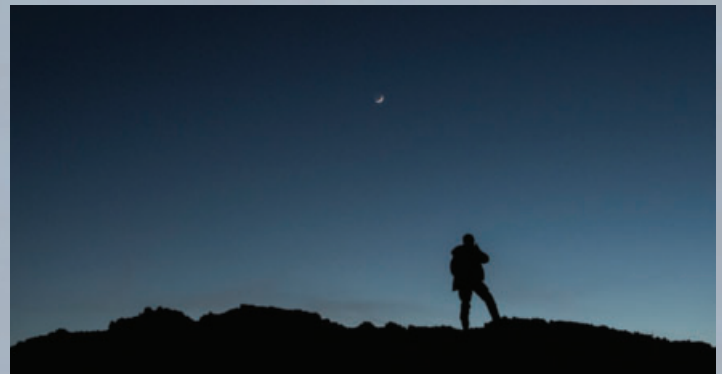
Editor's note: This commentary was written by a career Air Force Special Tactics operator and expresses his personal opinions based on his experiences.

In the Air Force Special Tactics community, we live our lives by certain immutable truths. You may have heard of them - "SOF forces cannot be mass produced", "Slow is smooth; smooth is fast", "Two is one; one is none."

To the initiated, these (and many more) are repeated so often that you learn to recite them without even blinking. They become part of your own self-talking training, in mission preparation and in combat. Almost like a mantra, you find yourself repeating these things to yourself. "Calm down - when we break the plane of the door, go opposite the guy in front of you. Watch your muzzle. Protect the team. Bleeding, airway, get them out. De-conflict fires from friendly positions. Sights, slack out, press. Be aggressive."

After nearly two decades in the Air Force, I have trained, tried and failed so many times that I've accumulated a near endless stream of consciousness that is simultaneously conscious and muscle memory. All of these lessons- hard learned and through both failure and victory- came to light during the After Action Report process. We commonly refer to the information gleaned in these sessions as "lessons learned". Get done with the mission, take care of weapons, sensitive items, and reset. Then, when everything is fresh in your mind, explore what was good, bad, ugly and perfect. Formalize those lessons and most importantly, don't allow the same mistakes you made last time.

I value that process. A saying I've gotten used to using is that "Our [standard operating procedures] are written in blood." Meaning- we have lost many, and we owe it to those men and women to make ourselves better, every single rep. I'd like to share my three "lessons learned". I won't claim to be an expert. What I can say, is that I wish someone would



A Special Tactics Airmen from the 21st Special Tactics Squadron prepares to conduct close air support with F-35 Lightning II during Emerald Warrior at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, January 21, 2020. Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Sandra Welch.

have taken me aside as a younger Airman and told me these things. If anything, I hope that my failures and missteps can help someone avoid my mistakes.

Failure is always an option.

While I understand the intent behind the cliché phrase, "Failure is not an option", it's simply false. I have failed many times in my career. I'll fail many more. I expect my team to fail. In training and unfortunately, in combat. I wish it was different. If it was, I would have friends back, less regrets, less "I wish that day didn't go like that" statements in my life.

In the end, you must try to avoid failure; but at the same time you have to accept and strive to train so close to your limit that sometimes you fall short. You must test and sometimes exceed your limits to know what your limits are. And sometimes you'll fail.

What's my lesson learned? How you lead through failure is far more valuable to me and my teams than a perfect run. How we deal with failure, with tragedy, with heartbreak and boredom and disillusionment and being unmotivated- in those times we find out what our mettle really is. If you're going to fail, make it count. Learn from it. Avoid that failure in the

future, and don't be afraid to fail. Always learn, always grow ... and always continue to push your limits for the better.

You can still be unique and part of a highly functioning team.

Air Force Special Tactics attracts the widest range of all personality types, hands down. We actually select out for individuals, capable of making individual decisions that further the mission of the team, the squadrons and entire organizations.

Tree hugging, slack lining, hackey sack playing 'hippies'. Death metal listening, big weight moving, aggressive hyper alpha males. Quiet graduates of Ivy League schools that have diverse stock portfolios. Ultra long distance runners. Powerlifters that hate cardio. Guys and gals that sold everything they own and lived in their van prior to joining and becoming part of the ST team. We value ALL of these personalities.

Often times, people have approached me and said, "I don't feel like I fit in" or even worse, "I'm not getting along with so and so- we are so different."

On my first deployment, I was in exactly such a scenario. I attended two weeks worth of training with a fellow operator; we just couldn't get along. It got heated multiple times. Months after the initial training, a very wise Team Leader of mine called me out when I was lamenting my interactions with that other operator.

He drew a small box, about 3 inches by 3 inches wide on a huge whiteboard. He then drew two dots, in opposing corners.

"So," he said, "You're these two dots. Couldn't be further apart. Diametrically opposed, yeah?"

I don't remember my exact response, but it was a pretty solid, "Exactly."

"That box you're both in contains all the people that have volunteered multiple times and have wanted nothing more than to support and defend the Constitution and have willingly accepted the possibility they might die doing so. Outside of this box, the entire 15 foot by 5 foot white board, represents the rest of humanity. You have more in common with this person you dislike for no good reason than you do with 99.9% of humanity. Maybe grow up."

What's my lesson learned? It's ok to be yourself and to be a valued member of Special Tactics. Whether it's as an operator, Combat Mission Support, a surgeon on a Special Operations Surgical Team, a First Sergeant, a chaplain- we all make the team of professionals we have today, together. We value and foster our differences. Embrace that and don't let a preconceived notion about someone else- or even worse, yourself- get in the way of what's important. The team. The mission.

Keep an even keel.

I was about six months out of completing my two plus

year training requirements to earn my beret. We were doing some training, but got the call that a Philippine sailor was gravely ill at sea, and I was going to be part of the rescue team to go get him. After multiple mid-air refuelings, I was hoisted from an HH-60 onto a moving super tanker, assessed and stabilized my patient, packaged him in a litter and we were both hoisted back up. I then cared for my patient until we transferred care to a waiting team in Ireland, about 4-5 more hours in the aircraft. My patient lived.

The sense of pride and accomplishment I had was undeniable. It was a lifetime of effort justified in one 24-hour period. The rescue was given an award that year.

Fast forward to 2015, somewhere in a combat environment.

In support of a huge operation, my team learned that a U.S. Army special forces soldier had been severely wounded by small arms fire. We immediately transferred him to the far-forward operating room- which was just a building close to the fighting- and the surgeons did everything they could do. Unfortunately, it was just one of those 'perfect' wounds that was unsurvivable.

My close friend and element leader and I knew what had to be done. We had to prepare this fallen soldier for his Angel Flight and it had to happen before his team came back. We placed the flag appropriately and did everything we could to honor him.

That event haunts me to this day. I can still feel that emotion and smell those smells when I think about it. I told the trauma surgeon at the time, "I think this one might have really done some damage. I'm not real sure how many more of those I got left." I have never been so devastated; the whole team took it very, very hard.

What's my lesson learned? This career- this life- holds the highest of highs and the lowest of lows. In order to be successful, you can't swing too hard in either direction, hubris and complacency lies on one end of the spectrum; inescapable darkness lies on the other end. It's not advisable to spend too much time at either end.

As it stands, I'm still learning now. While my team position has changed, so have I. Some pitfalls I can avoid thanks to a lifetime of "lessons learned", but the reality is, there are still more to learn. More importantly, the only way we can move forward as an entire enterprise is to share these lessons learned with one another and learn from each other. Good, bad, ugly, perfect.

There is no better job in the Department of Defense than Air Force Special Tactics, I firmly believe that.

But even if you find yourself in a different career, branch, command, profession- I hope that you're taking your own "lessons learned" and making yourself a better human, citizen, or member of your team.

"First There, That Others May Live."



Marine Forces, Special Operations Command



Marine Raiders conduct vehicle interdiction exercise during WTI 1-20

Marine Raiders with Marine Forces Special Operations Command give direct orders to a role player in support of a vehicle interdiction exercise during Weapons and Tactics Instructor course 1-20 at K9 Village in Yuma Proving Ground, Arizona, Oct. 8, 2019. WTI is a seven-week training event hosted by Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron One, which emphasizes operational integration of the six functions of Marine Corps aviation in support of a Marine Air Ground Task Force. WTI also provides standardized advanced tactical training and certification of unit instructor qualifications to support Marine aviation training and readiness, and assists in developing and employing aviation weapons and tactics. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Cody Rowe.



Headquarters - U.S. Special Operations Command

SOF community opens virtual Special Operations Forces Industry Conference

By Michael Bottoms
USSOCOM Office of Communication

The novel Coronavirus pandemic has forced industry, academia and the military to find innovative ways to collaborate. Concerns over large gatherings has forced the Special Operations Forces Industry Conference (SOFIC) to go virtual.

In pre-pandemic times industry vendors would set up displays and special operations demonstrations would attract large crowds to downtown Tampa, Florida, but rather than cancel, those leading the SOFIC converted the conference to a virtual format.

SOFIC will provide a virtual platform for U.S. Special Operations Command leadership to share emerging requirements, challenges, trends, and capability gaps, and for industry to respond by describing existing and emerging capabilities. This virtual format will enable critical conversations and collaboration as well as maintain existing and establish new networks and connections between the SOF Community and their traditional and non-traditional industry partners.

Going virtual gives an opportunity to reach a broader audience. Army Gen. Richard D. Clarke, commander of USSOCOM, began his keynote remarks to an online audience.

"As I can see, we have thousands of people signed up...And for every one of [them], there [are] a couple other people watching the screen," Clarke said, speaking at the first-ever virtual SOFIC.

Thanking the audience, Clarke iterated that he and those under his command look forward to collaborating with industry and academia. He is also looking forward to participants' feedback given the unusual circumstances under which 2020 SOFIC is taking place due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While Clarke lamented the inability for the more than



Gen. Richard D. Clarke, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, and Acquisition Executive James Smith, USSOCOM Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, visit SOFWERX in preparation for the virtual Special Operations Forces Industry Conference conducted around the world May 11-15, 2020. This virtual event will enable critical conversations and collaboration as well as maintaining new and existing networks and connections between the Special Operations Forces community and their traditional and non-traditional industry partners. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.

100 international special operations partners to take part in face-to-face meetings in Tampa, he did point out that the virtual meeting enabled the surprise participation of a distinguished guest speaker – The King of Jordan, His Majesty King Abdullah II.

Addressing the audience from his office in Amman, the Jordanian monarch said, "While countering the novel coronavirus and addressing its multifaceted impact is every country's priority, unfortunately other threats to global security remain very real. It is under these most difficult and uncertain circumstances that we must remain vigilant."

ISIS continues to conduct attacks in Iraq with increasing frequency, threatening the years of effort against the terrorist organization, Abdullah said. Foreign fighters, meanwhile, are taking advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic to conduct targeted recruiting campaigns via social media," he said.

"While foreign fighters continue to move from one combat zone to another with the proliferation of weapons, extremists will capitalize on the economic situation," Abdullah said. "Governments in turn will become more vulnerable, Abdullah added. As such, he said, "These realities mean we need to be ahead of the curve."

Abdullah called for "solid partnerships" that foster the precise exchange of capabilities and information. "In order to survive our challenges and thrive, we need desperately to work with each other," Abdullah said. "We need to seek better integration...that builds capacity, cooperation, and positive interdependence."

Clarke set the stage for his own keynote remarks with references to two historic events that predicated the

establishment and mission of SOFIC – the recent Victory in Europe Day anniversary of the 1945 fall of Nazi Germany during World War II and Operation Eagle Claw, the failed 1980 attempt to rescue U.S. hostages held in Iran. While

USSOCOM did not yet exist, he said, "special operators played a key role in Hitler's downfall. The Iran rescue mission, he added, made it clear to Congress and the nation that a unified partnership among the military services and industry was necessary."

"Stepping into today's [arena] of national security, there are still challenges that lie ahead," said Clarke. "Our national defense strategy,

written in 2017, recognized the national security threats. Before then, the nation girded itself from violent extremism, but not any near-peer threats.

"The national defense strategy is clear. We need to build a more lethal force, continue to build more allies and partners, and we have to reform to meet those threats," Clarke said.

While countering the novel coronavirus and addressing its multifaceted impact is every country's priority, unfortunately other threats to global security remain very real. It is under these most difficult and uncertain circumstances that we must remain vigilant.

— The King of Jordan, His Majesty King Abdullah II.



Gen. Richard D. Clarke, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, prepares for the virtual Special Operations Forces Industry Conference conducted around the world May 11-15, 2020. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.

Headquarters - U.S. Special Operations Command JSOU adapts, moves classrooms online during COVID-19 pandemic

By USSOCOM Office of Communication

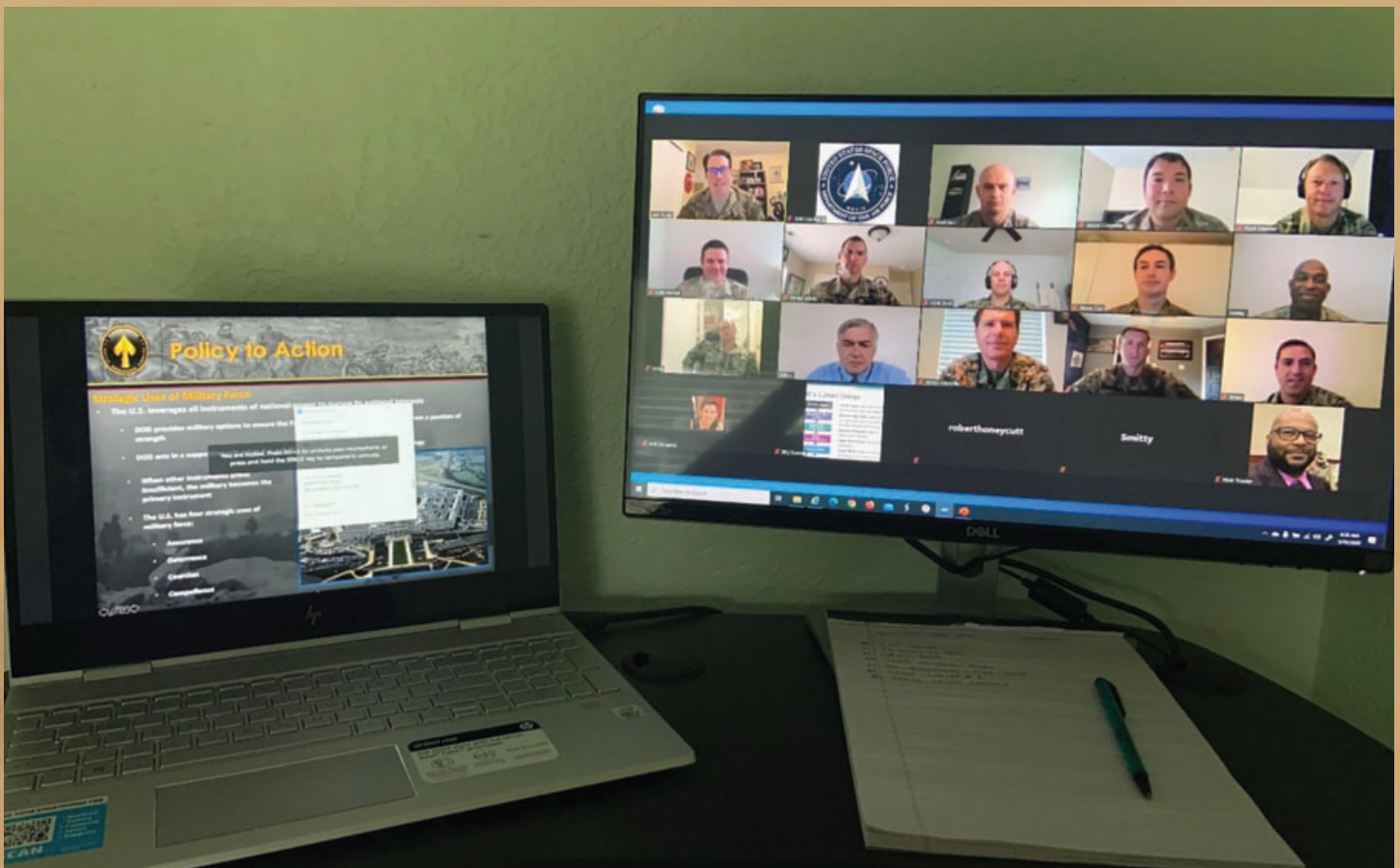
Special operations culture takes pride in being agile and adaptable to any challenging situation. The same is true for educating Special Operations Forces. Responding to the dynamic and limiting situation of COVID-19, U.S. Special Operations Command's (USSOCOM) Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) quickly converted several in-residence and hybrid courses to online classes.

The Joint Special Operations Forces Senior Enlisted Academy, JSOU's Summit course, the Joint SOF Pre-

Command Course and the Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) Team Experience were modified to include interactive online instruction, also known as distance learning, as travel restrictions prevented students from attending live and residency courses.

"JSOU instructors and staff quickly adapted these courses in a matter of weeks," said Col. Scott Guilbeault, vice president, JSOU. "Because of them and in spite of COVID-19, JSOU is still able to fulfill its mission."

In response, online enrollment in these and other distance learning courses has significantly increased.



"From the beginning of the teleworking period, JSOU has seen an increase in enrollment in three distance learning courses of almost 200 percent," said Lt. Col. Eric D'India, director, JSOU education department. "During that time more than 2000 students completed one or more distance learning courses.

"That's already 40 percent of the total number of students who completed distance learning courses in all of fiscal year 2019," added D'India.

Joint Special Operations Forces Senior Enlisted Academy (JSOFSEA)

Class 38B of the JSOFSEA, which began April 15, was the first course to be held in the new virtual format. JSOU faculty designed this course with scalable online and in-residence periods to provide an opportunity for in-person instruction while taking into account the changing COVID-19 situation.

"When the stop movement order was extended to 30 Jun, we adjusted and continued to build the course out online," said Sgt. Maj. Richard Horton, JSOFSEA course director, JSOU Enlisted Academy.

The course concludes June 12, but JSOU is already applying the lessons learned to the next JSOFSEA classes.

"While the format for our distance learning has not changed, new techniques learned during [the first virtual JSOFSEA class] have benefited our distance learning students," said Horton. "For example, some briefings have used a voice over function within presentations, which we are incorporating into some assignments."

SUMMIT Course

According to the JSOU course catalog, the Summit course educates SOF students for nominative-level leadership roles. Students learn mission-oriented leadership and strategic thinking skills to prepare them to effectively advise, lead, and mentor at the strategic leader level. Students also analyze and evaluate the impact strategic thinking, U.S. national policy, and global security has on USSOCOM.

"From notification of decision to [the] execute resident phase online, the Summit instructors had 10 days to prepare and adjust lesson content for a live online format. The goal was to have as much face to face interaction as possible while using asynchronous online tools to prepare for each daily session," said Mike Lundstrom, Summit Course director. "Transitioning

from regular distance learning to a modified resident phase was no easy task. What the Summit instructors were able to accomplish with only 10 days of preparation is truly remarkable."

The IT department's ability to obtain and implement our video conferencing platform was a critical factor to the Summit's success.

"We absolutely could not have done this without their help," added Lundstrom.

Virtual Joint SOF Pre-Command Course

JSOU hosted the first virtual Joint SOF Pre-Command Course during the last week of April. This iteration educated 22 incoming SOF commanders and command senior enlisted leaders as they prepared to assume command. These students were stationed around the world in places such as the United Kingdom and The Republic of Korea. JSOU successfully facilitated instruction, networking and discussions with senior SOF leaders including the USSOCOM leadership team.

"Given that some service pre-command courses were suspended due to COVID-19, this may be the only

formal pre-command education these leaders will receive prior to assuming command," said Rick Boyer, director, JSOU center for leadership and ethics.

TSOC Command Team Course

With only a four-week notice, JSOU transformed the Theater Special Operations Command Team Course from a residency course into a fully virtual classroom. The course educates and orients new TSOC officer and enlisted command leadership teams to the priorities and

challenges they will be facing in their new assignments.

"Using a combination of virtual classroom technologies, software and applications, course instructors were able to successfully connect with and educate command teams from Special Operations Commands-North, South, and Central to students in 11 time zones including Colorado and Afghanistan," said Boyer.

Face-to-Face Remains the Gold Standard

"The ability to have a residency portion has been the gold standard," said Horton. "I will say the proof of concept to conduct this virtually was a success, but in many situations face-to-face interaction between students and the instructors will continue to be the best educational environment."

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— Sgt. Maj. Richard Horton



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*U.S. Marine Corps
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Editor's note: Honored are those special operations forces who lost their lives in combat or training since the April 2020 issue of Tip of the Spear.

Special Warfare Combatant-Craft Crewman (SWCC) candidates from Basic Crewman Selection Class 111 begin "The Tour" at Naval Special Warfare Center in Coronado, Calif., June 1, 2020. The Tour is a 72-hour crucible event, which develops intelligent and highly-motivated candidates who will perform as a team under the most demanding and highly-motivated conditions. NSW Center provides initial and advanced training to the Sailors who make up the Navy's SEAL and Special Boat Teams. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Sean Furey.

