



# Tip OF THE Spear

United States Special Operations Command  
MacDill Air Force Base, Florida

June 2022

## International SOF capabilities demonstration wows Tampa Bay



# United States Special Operations Command



Photo by U.S. Air Force  
Staff Sgt. Alexander Cook.

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## Tip of the Spear

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Commander, USSOCOM**

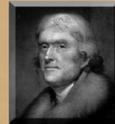
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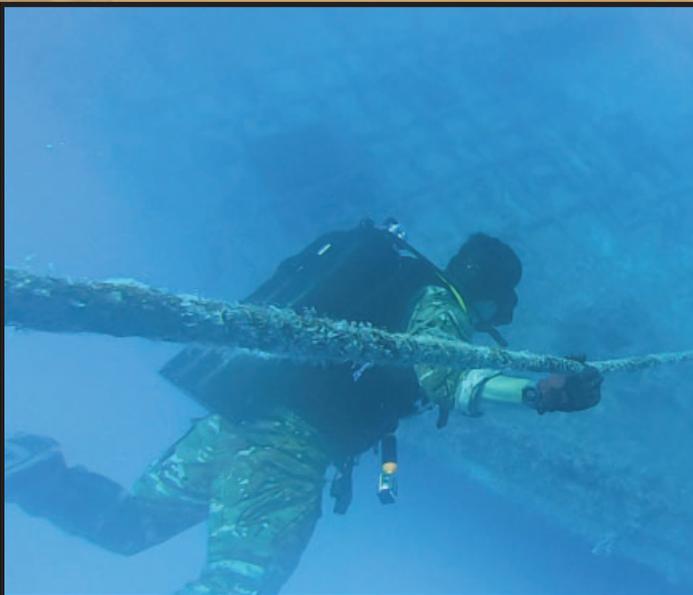
### Thomas Jefferson Award Winner

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*(Cover) International Special Operations Forces assault their target during a capabilities demonstration in Tampa Bay, Fla., May 18, 2022. The demo was in conjunction to the Special Operations Forces Industry Conference which is the annual conference for both industry and defense leaders across the global special operations community where conference attendees had an opportunity to learn, network, and collaborate on new initiatives and capabilities needed for SOF professionals to campaign in support of integrated defense. Ten partner nations took part in the demo to include Canada, Czech Republic, Jordan, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Lithuania, Netherlands, Slovakia, and Singapore. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Alexander Cook.*

# The Quiet Professionals

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# U.S. Special Operations Command - Africa



## USAFRICOM Special Operations

# Forces train alongside partners in Benin

*Courtesy Story*

*Special Operations Command Africa*

Special Operations Command Africa forces concluded a Joint Combined Exercise Training in Oussa, Benin March 16, 2022. The team partnered with members of the Benin 1st Commando Parachute Battalion to hone special operations skills.

Mutual military exchanges such as these signify the strong and enduring partnership between the two nations and shared objective for security cooperation in West Africa. U.S. forces are committed to working alongside their Beninese counterparts as they counter violent extremist threats within their borders.

The JCET program's primary purpose is to provide special operations units specific training that can only be accomplished in friendly foreign countries. JCETs often enhance U.S. relationships with partner nations by

developing and maintaining critical military-to-military connections and improving joint and allied readiness and interoperability.

These engagements are part of a series of U.S. engagements with the Beninese military that provide opportunities for units to work together, learn from each other, build interoperability, and strengthen relationships. Benin participated in previous Flintlock exercises with other allied and African partner nations. Flintlock is the premier special operations exercise in Africa with 30 participating nations.

“Collaborating with our partner nations is essential to enhance relations moving forward and to address the threat of global instability,” said the U.S. Charge d’Affaires Stephanie Arnold. “This pressing threat requires multinational cooperation to deliver impactful results.”

U.S. Africa Command and special operations forces are committed to mutually beneficial engagements with partners.



*A soldier from the 1st Commando Parachute Battalion covers his sector of fire during squad movement training in Ouassa, Benin, March 8, 2022. We train alongside our partners to learn from each other and share lessons learned. Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jael Laborn.*

*A U.S. Army Green Beret, assigned to Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha (SFOD-A) 3212, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) discusses contact drills and squad movement techniques with Beninese soldiers from the 1st Commando Parachute Battalion in Ouassa, Benin, March 8, 2022. U.S. engagement comes with mutual benefit, upholds international norms, and treats partners as equals. Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jael Laborn.*



*U.S. Army soldiers assigned to 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) instruct Ghanaian soldiers assigned to the 64th Infantry Regiment on close quarters battle techniques during a joint combined exchange training in Asutsuare, Ghana March 8, 2022. Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Duncan C. Bevan.*



# U.S. Special Operations Command - Africa



## Special Operations Command Africa forces conducted a joint combined exercise training in Ghana

*Courtesy Story*  
*Special Operations Command Africa*

Special Operations Command Africa forces concluded a joint combined exercise training in Bundase, Ghana in March. The team partnered with members of the Ghanaian 64th Infantry Regiment to hone special operations skills.

Mutual military exchanges demonstrate the collaborative partnership between the two nations and shared objective to enhance security in West Africa. U.S. forces remain committed to their partnership with Ghana as they defend against incoming threats from violent extremists.

The JCET program's primary purpose is to provide special operations units specific training that can only be accomplished in friendly foreign countries. JCETs often enhance U.S. relationships with partner nations by developing and maintaining critical military-to-military connections and improving joint and allied readiness and interoperability.

The U.S. forces' engagement with Ghana extended beyond traditional military exchanges. In addition to the JCET, the Civil Military Support Element coordinated humanitarian assistance operations for four days in Bole, Ghana. The CMSE's support provided \$30,000 worth of medical supplies, healthcare and antivenim to local Ghanaian clinics and communities.

These engagements are part of a series of U.S. engagements with the Ghanaian military that provide opportunities for units to work together, learn from each other, build interoperability, and strengthen relationships. Ghana participated in previous Flintlock exercises with other allied and African partner nations to include the 2022 exercise. Ghana will also be serving as the host nation of next year's 2023 Flintlock exercise. Flintlock is the premier special operations exercise in Africa with 30 participating nations.

U.S. Africa Command and special operations forces are committed to mutually beneficial engagements with partners.



*U.S. Army soldier assigned to 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) practice firing at night during a joint combined exchange training in Bundase, Ghana March 3, 2022. JCETs enhance U.S. relationships with partner nations by developing and maintaining critical military-to-military connections and improving joint and allied readiness and interoperability. Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Duncan C. Bevan.*

# U.S. Special Operations Command - Europe



## Trojan Footprint 22 tests inter- operability, increases allied partnership

*By U.S. Army Pfc. Kirsti Brooksby  
U.S. Special Operations Command Europe*

Trojan Footprint 22 is the most significant exercise of the year for Special Operations Command Europe, and in 2022 it is especially historic, as it is now the largest SOF exercise in Europe to date. This year's iteration ran from May 2 – 13 with more than 3,300 participants from 30 nations taking part in joint training across Southeastern Europe, the Baltics and the Black Sea Region.

U.S. Special Operations Forces proactively trained with and learned from NATO allies and European partners from the high north all the way to the Adriatic Sea to demonstrate their collective military readiness to deploy and respond to any crisis that may

arise.

Trojan Footprint 22 is the premier exercise of U.S. Special Operations Command Europe and the primary SOF certification event to assess the readiness and ability of SOF to counter threats. In addition to certification, the message that TFP presents is one of transatlantic solidarity. It demonstrates the security commitments of the participating nations to defense along NATO's eastern flank.

“One of our priorities is building resilience against adversary efforts to undermine democratic processes and values,” said Maj. Gen. David H. Tabor, Commander of Special Operations Command Europe. “This joint, combined training in Europe will continue to build and strengthen those relationships with our allies and partners, establishing a common sight-



*U.S. Airmen assigned to the 352nd Special Operations Wing and Croatian Airmen assigned to the 93rd Air Wing conduct forward area refueling training on 93rd Air Base Zemunik, Croatia during Exercise Trojan Footprint May 11, 2022. Trojan Footprint is the premier Special Operations Forces exercise in Europe that focuses on improving the ability of SOF to counter myriad threats, increases integration with conventional forces and enhances interoperability with our NATO allies and European partners. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Candin Muniz.*



picture for combat and peacekeeping missions abroad.”

The earliest known run of Trojan Footprint dates back to 2013. Prior to that, Exercise Jackal Stone served a similar purpose. Over the last decade, an evolution has taken place that has allowed for SOCEUR to meet the need of a multinational exercise at the kind of scale at which TFP is now operating.

“Trojan Footprint is a message. It’s a strategic message. And it’s an exercise built around that strategic message,” said Darek Coker, the lead exercise planner for TFP. “It’s very important to keep that in mind when planning and when a country comes into the exercise. Just by bringing their flag to the exercise, those countries are contributing to that message of transatlantic solidarity in more ways than they could possibly imagine.”

The nations participating in TFP included Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the U.K., and the U.S. Land, air, and sea operations for Trojan Footprint 22 took place in fifteen host nations along NATO’s eastern borders.

When developing the concept behind Trojan Footprint 22, Derek Coker explained that the planners drew up a scenario that

reflected how the current battle space has slowly progressed over recent years.

“It was designed to be a slow-boil - a low intensity conflict that can span years but creates constant pressure in various ways,” he said. “The adversary attacks certain nations’ ability to govern, creating internal dissonance and infighting that hacks away at the legitimacy of these governments, in essence trying to demonstrate that these nations are unable to govern themselves.”

In light of such a background, creating an environment in which SOF and conventional forces across multiple nations can learn from and instruct each other on best military practices and tactics accomplishes exactly what TFP is designed to accomplish: force multiplication and an incorruptible solidarity that is capable of standing up to said threat.

“Coming up with priorities, ensuring the training readiness of the command and making sure that the



**Members of the 27th Special Operations Wing watch a 310th Special Operations Squadron U-28A Draco aircraft prepare for takeoff at 93rd Air Base Zemunik, Croatia during Exercise Trojan Footprint May 10, 2022. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Candin Muniz.**

command is ready to go to war as a staff is the Exercises Directorate’s top priority,” Coker explained. “Making sure our allies and partners are equally ready is paramount, should conflict arise. Hence Trojan Footprint.”

To accomplish the shared objective of establishing standardized operational capabilities, a new asset to

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*Trojan Footprint is a message. It’s a strategic message. And it’s an exercise built around that strategic message.*

*— Darek Coker, lead exercise planner*

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this year’s improved and expanded TFP included a combined joint force headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany. Fifteen coalition partners participated in the crisis planning from three different NATO-secret locations, writing the orders

and accessing the minute details that are cumbersome and often taken for granted, but critical to ensuring exercise success.

The unprecedented presence of a Combined Joint Force Special Operations Command allowed the participating nations at HQ to establish a common operating picture and common intelligence picture in a way that has not been done before.

“Being able to command and control all SOF within the theater in a secure network and make sure the Operators on ground have a common understanding from one country to the next is a next-level capability,” Coker said. “That capability supports and reinforces the diplomatic and economic efforts happening simultaneously across the theater.”

For the planners behind the scenes both at headquarters and on ground, considering the scale of moving pieces and countries involved meant months of advanced planning and coordination. Derek

**Story continues on next page**

Leimeister, one of SOCEUR's chief logisticians, noted the rules within Europe and border-crossing requirements when it comes to American equipment.

"Moving potentially sensitive items such as ammunition demands paperwork and planning that is outlined and rehearsed well in advance to ensure it can cross the necessary borders," he said. "The reward that comes from watching troops and equipment successfully deployed, however, is unparalleled when working with exceptional partners."

A senior Civil Affairs planner with 10th Special Forces Group spoke to how successfully the exercise was carried out because of the capable partnership between allied logisticians.

"When you watch them work, you realize how incredibly professional and capable they are. Despite changes, weather problems, mechanical issues, and real-world requirements, they get the people and equipment where we need them," he observed. "Our tactical and HQ elements can rapidly set up, establish communications, and begin conducting their assigned missions. NATO is a capable and credible deterrent because of the incredibly talented and dedicated people who make up our allied military forces."

The two-week exercise increased the integration of SOF with conventional forces and highlighted the professional skill sets of land, air, and sea units to respond to hybrid threats through inconspicuous theatre entry and exit. As an exercise in coalition building, TFP 22 focused on cultivating trust and developing lasting relationships that will promote peace and stability throughout Europe.

"Special Operations Forces remain a pillar of international defense, and close coordination between SOF and conventional forces acts as a force multiplier, leveraging the discreet capabilities of SOF to enhance lethality and dominance on the battlefield," Maj. Gen. Tabor said. "SOF elements add capabilities, technology, and strength to conventional forces throughout Europe."

Capt. Kelly Butterfield of the United States Air Force 820th Base Defense Group Squadron and the on-ground officer for TFP operations in Croatia, described the opportunity to work with the Croatian and Bulgarian Special Operations Task Units as an honor.

"Being able to fully integrate with our SOF NATO partners bolsters our forces and strengthens our teams to guarantee mission success," he said.

While in Croatia, the 820th BDG participated in multiple missions led by the SOTU, including joint forcible entry training, during which they supplied their Military Working Dog Team communication assets and support by fire. Training also included airway and respiration management, ultrasound use, combat animal aid and tactical combat casualty care, led by the United States Air Force Special Operations Command Medical Security Cooperation, to increase force readiness.

A Bulgarian SOF operator who participated in the training emphasized that interoperability is not just a word that gets thrown around in these exercises; it can be the difference between life and death when working together as a coalition during conflict.

"Interoperability is a partnership quality that requires a lot of resources, combined effort and joint understanding of what the bigger picture is," he said. "We have to support each other in order to get better in every aspect of our job, as well as be similarly trained."

Further north, a SOF operator from Estonia who is a veteran TFP participant conducted multiple direct action raids with his team during TFP 22 against role players acting as separatist cell members. The goal of these drills was to gather intelligence that would enable further operations while working with U.S. SOF counterparts. Having seen all the TFP exercises that have taken place in Estonia in 2016, 2018, and now 2022, he reflected on how it has changed over the years and continues to fortify the bonds of the participants.

"For me and most of Estonian SOF, Exercise Trojan Footprint provides an excellent environment to practice and synchronize training goals from the Special Operations Task Unit level up to the highest international levels of command," the Estonian operator said. "At the same time all the positive challenges of a combined international exercise are present, starting from tactical interoperability in the field ranging up to the synchronized use of Standard Operating Procedures of different level national and international headquarters. We are with our friends, who will be here in the event of a real crisis."

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*Interoperability is a partnership quality that requires a lot of resources, combined effort and joint understanding of what the bigger picture is.*

— Bulgarian SOF operator

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*U.S. Airmen assigned to the 352nd Special Operations Wing and Croatian Airmen assigned to the 93rd Air Wing conduct forward area refueling training on 93rd Air Base Zemunik, Croatia during Exercise Trojan Footprint May 11, 2022. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Candin Muniz.*

# U.S. Special Operations Command - North



## U.S. SOF train with partners in Mexico and Belize during Tradewinds 2022

By U.S. Army Maj. Daisy Bueno  
*Special Operations Command North*

Tradewinds, a U.S. Southern Command Caribbean-focused exercise, took place May 7-20 in the countries of Mexico and Belize with 22 participating nations. This year was distinctive as Tradewinds spanned across two Geographical Combatant Commands and required coordination across unified campaign plan boundaries. Mexico and Belize were the co-hosts with Mexico hosting the maritime-phase events and Belize hosting the land phase. Belize as a co-host is unique as it is a Central

American country that is also a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Mexico as a co-host is additionally unique because it is in U.S. Northern Command's area of responsibility.

"Tradewinds is a great opportunity to have U.S. SOF train with so many partners in an exercise of this size," said a SOCNORTH exercise planner. "The exchange of expertise and training tactics are crucial in improving interoperability and effectively executing future maritime and land operations."

In Belize, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) Green Berets advised and mentored the joint multinational land



*7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) conduct riverine operations during its culmination exercise for Tradewinds 2022 with Mexico and partner countries at Four Mile Lagoon located between Mexico and Belize, May 17. Tradewinds provides the opportunity for U.S. SOF to train with Mexico and participating nations to improve interoperability and effectively execute future maritime operations. Photo by U.S. Army Maj. Daisy Bueno.*

component forces throughout the exercise to include operational planning and guiding in staff roles. Training tasks included: small unit tactics, land navigation, camouflage and concealment, survival, medical, and marksmanship. We also conducted airborne, rappelling, dive, and hoist operations.

Their culminating exercise consisted of a foot patrol, leading to an assault and raid on an objective, combat casualty care, and a medical evacuation via helicopter.

Additionally, the Belize Defence Force (BDF) held a Jungle Certification Course, with participants from 7th SFG (A) and multiple partner countries. The four-week jungle warfare course challenged the students physically and mentally on their abilities to maneuver, lead and survive in extreme conditions, preparing them for future environments they may encounter. Successful completion of the course resulted in graduates becoming basic-level jungle instructor certified by the BDF.

In Bacalar Lagoon and Chetumal, Mexico, Green Berets with 7th SFG (A) conducted boat familiarization, swim tests, combat water survival tests and capsizing drills for all riverine participants prior to the commencement of maritime training. After ensuring all participants were prepared for the rigors of maritime operations, they moved on to open water patrolling and interdiction in Chetumal Bay, Helocast Operations in Bacalar Lagoon, riverine patrolling, interdiction, and rope bridge river crossing in Rio Hondo with partner forces.

Participants put all the skills learned over the previous two weeks for a culminating exercise that included air support to interdict two vessels, whereby participants established blocking positions to board the vessels and conduct the interdiction in the Rio Hondo between Mexico and Belize.

“We don’t always have the same weather or terrain in the U.S. that we may encounter in other countries,” said a 7th SFG (A) team sergeant. “Tradewinds gives us real world experience in a foreign country, plus the cultural and language exposure.”

Throughout Tradewinds, U.S. Civil Affairs teams from 98th Civil Affairs Battalion trained with SEMAR (Mexican Marinas) and the BDF on civil engagements, civil reconnaissance, project planning and civic action events.

In Ladyville, Belize, a civil affairs team worked with partner forces to restore a city center building. The restoration included project planning, maintenance, lawn care, and painting of the local basketball court

“The 3-day civic action event developed the partnership between the local population in Ladyville, the Belizean Defense Force, and U.S. SOF, which shows the importance of civil affairs and what it can do for a community,” said a U.S. Civil Affairs team leader.



***Secretariat de Mexico (SEMAR) provides aerial support while 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) conducts open water interdiction training with Mexico and partner countries in Chetumal Bay, Mexico, during exercise Tradewinds 2022, May 15. Tradewinds provides the opportunity for U.S. SOF to train with Mexico and participating nations to improve interoperability and effectively execute future maritime operations. Photo by U.S. Army Maj. Daisy Bueno.***

The U.S. Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations teams in Sacxán, Mexico, conducted several classes leading up to their culminating exercise. Topics covered during their training included: civil information management, planning and project coordination, loudspeaker operations, and medical training. The culminating exercise consisted of the teams observing civil engagements where Mexican Marines practiced their interview skills with the town mayor and local community leaders.

“For one of our civic actions, we helped clean up their volleyball court and now community members come out at night to play because they feel safer and trust was built within the community,” said a U.S. Civil Affairs team member.

This was the first time, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations training took place in Tradewinds.

This year was the 37th iteration of Tradewinds, which provided participating nations opportunities to conduct joint, combined, and interagency training focused on increasing regional cooperation.

SOF involvement in exercises like Tradewinds, enhances regional security and stability while fostering relationships, ensuring U.S. SOF is the partner of choice.

# U.S. Special Operations Command - Pacific



## 1st SFG (A) Green Berets train with Royal Thai Army's 2nd Special Forces Regiment

*Green Berets with 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), and soldiers of the Royal Thai Army 2nd Special Forces Regiment cross a body of water for maritime operation training, March 14-18, 2022. This training was part of a joint combined exchange training, a bilateral exercise that includes training on maritime operations, small unit tactics, jungle survival, tactical combat casualty care, and a jungle-based force-on-force exercise. U.S. Army courtesy photo.*





# U.S. Army Special Operations Command

## 10th SFG(A) Operators execute undersea operations around South Florida



*Special Forces Operators assigned to 2nd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), carry a simulated stinger missile on shore near Key West, Florida, during a three-week dive requalification May 6, 2022. Combat divers performed a closed-circuit dive to rehearse undersea wartime operations. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Anthony Bryant.*

**By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Anthony Bryant**  
**10th Special Forces Group (Airborne)**

One thousand meters from the shore, Combat Divers assigned to 2nd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), approach the beach beneath undulations of waves. This was only one of several training missions conducted by 10th SFG(A) Green Berets as part of a dive requalification held near Key West, Florida, from April 24 - May 15, 2022.

A rebreather is used for this mission because the

apparatus produces little to no air bubbles—essential in remaining cloaked by the sea. One-by-one, the Operators emerge from the water on the insular shelf, careful to not be seen. In tow, a simulated Stinger missile is brought ashore. The air defense system is ready to be deployed.

“We’re training [in Key West] to validate as a dive team at the battalion level,” said a Special Forces team leader with 2nd Bn., 10th SFG(A). “We chose Key West, Florida, because SFUWO (Special Forces Underwater Operations School) is here.”



***Special Forces Operators assigned to 2nd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), transport a simulated stinger missile underwater near Key West, Florida, May 6, 2022. Combat divers performed a closed-circuit dive to rehearse undersea wartime operations during a three-week dive requalification. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Anthony Bryant.***

The Combat Diver Qualification Course, taught at SFUWO, is where Green Berets learn surface and

subsurface waterborne infiltration methods.

“There are great opportunities for more advanced dive training at SFUWO,” the team leader said. “We’re incorporating [the Jetboots Diver Propulsion System] on our dives to extend our range. With dive operations, we’re limited to about two kilometers of diving. With the Jetboots capability SFUWO provides, we can do [infiltrations] of up to seven or eight kilometers.”

To be validated, a dive team must perform six closed-circuit dives using a rebreather, one open-circuit search dive and an over the horizon inflatable boat move of at least 15 nautical miles.

“Open-circuit dives are good for anything at depth,” said a Special Forces team sergeant assigned to 2nd Bn., 10th SFG(A). “Any dive over 20 feet, you’re going to do open-circuit because you have the ability to go deeper with that type of system whereas, with closed-circuit dives, you’ll usually stay above 20 feet.”

On the open-circuit dive during the requalification, Combat Divers descended to a depth of about 100 feet to search the wrecked Cayman Salvage Master, a 187-foot-long minelayer inhabited by several goliath grouper and moray eels.

“Open water [training] is done at requalification locations,” the team sergeant said. “Training in a unique environment that’s a living, breathing ecosystem, where there’s marine life and more chances of things going wrong and being able to go through those emergency procedures is a lot more beneficial than training in the pool.”



***A Special Forces combat diver with 2nd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), descends to the Cayman Salvage Master wreck off the coast of Key West, Florida, May 5, 2022. Special Forces teams performed an open-circuit dive to validate search and recovery skills at a depth of about 100 feet as part of a three-week dive requalification. Courtesy photo.***

# U.S. Army Special Operations Command

## 7th Special Forces Group

### (Airborne) participates in Tradewinds 2022



*By U.S. Army Sgt. Ryan Jenkins  
7th Special Forces Group (Airborne)*

Twenty-three countries throughout the Caribbean and South America participated in Tradewinds 22, hosted by Belize and Mexico. The exercise took place May 7-20, 2022, in coordination and with support from U.S. Southern Command. Tradewinds 22 provided extensive partner-force training focused on enhancing regional collaboration, security, and stability.

7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) participated in Tradewinds providing their expertise to partner nation forces and strengthening existing friendly networks. Tradewinds served as a means to promote regional security

cooperation while also identifying strengths and areas for improvement between the partner forces.

To kick off the exercise, 7th SFG(A) Soldiers led partner nations in an airborne operation at Manatee Training Area, Belize. A U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster aircraft soared overhead with more than 30 combined force airborne qualified troops exiting the aircraft into the clear blue sky. Parachutes opened and all of the Soldiers floated to the ground to complete yet another successful jump.

After the static-line jumpers safely carried their parachutes off of the drop zone, the aircraft ascended to a much higher altitude to prepare for the high altitude, low opening jump. As the qualified HALO jumpers leapt from the plane, they were barely visible until their parachutes



*Teams from 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) conducted a joint airborne operation with partner nations during Exercise Tradewinds 2022 in Belize. Tradewinds is a U.S. Southern Command sponsored, combined, joint, Caribbean-focused training exercise held annually since 1984. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Ryan Jenkins.*



**Soldiers from 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) oversaw the planning and participated in the culminating event for Exercise Tradewinds 2022. This exercise was an opportunity for the units involved to combine all of the skills that they acquired and apply them to a realistic scenario. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Ryan Jenkins.**

burst through the clouds during their descent.

“Working together with this many partner nations gives us the chance to see what other forces do during the conduct of operations and training,” said Sgt. Maj. Robert Listau, of 7th SFG(A). “It’s a great chance to continue to build that bond and brotherhood across both military-to-military and military-to-law enforcement.”

Throughout the exercise, multiple situational training exercise lanes were set up to serve different purposes of training. The units from the partner-nation forces rotated through each station to enhance conventional force interoperability while also increasing our value as the partner of choice.

The culminating training event included a dismounted patrol, an assault on an objective, tactical combat casualty care, and an aerial medical evacuation. 7th SFG Green Berets donned their face paint, moved and “fought” alongside the partner force units while another team observed and noted the performance of the units. After the dust settled and the exercise was over, the units took note of their performance and celebrated the completion of the physically demanding, 14-day exercise.

“Tradewinds served as an invaluable opportunity to build interoperability amongst partners and enhanced collective security,” said the company commander for the

7th Group (A) teams participating in the exercise.

As these are our neighbors to the south, this 37th iteration of the Tradewinds exercise enables a coordinated response to any global challenge that we all face as a region. The United States is an enduring, committed partner with robust engagement in the region and by coming together, it allows our neighbors the ability to be ready and to rapidly respond to any challenge that arises.



**Teams from 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) conducted a joint airborne operation with partner nations during Exercise Tradewinds 2022 in Belize. Tradewinds is a U.S. Southern Command sponsored, combined, joint, Caribbean-focused training exercise held annually since 1984. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Ryan Jenkins.**

# Naval Special Warfare Command



## “More than just a job”

*By U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Benjamin Kittleson  
Naval Special Warfare Center*

The sun is still below the horizon as the ocean breeze blows on a chilly winter morning in San Diego, where the latest group of Navy Sea, Air and Land (SEAL) and Special Warfare Combatant-Craft Crewman (SWCC) hopefuls hit the soft sand for some morning physical training. Overseeing this training is an experienced instructor, alternately observing and motivating the class to stay focused.

“Listen up! Eat, sleep and train. That’s all you’re getting paid for!”

These are the three things Chief Petty Officer Joan Jennings, an instructor at Naval Special Warfare’s Basic Training Command (BTC), wants candidates thinking about as they start their day. It’s an important lesson she knows from years of special warfare assessment and selection: keep your goals in the now – and make them simple. This is how candidates travel the long, arduous road to join the Navy’s elite commando force. Humility helps.

“When you get down to the basics,” she said, “you joined to serve your country.”

BTC’s instructor cadre has a broad range of experience, talents and backgrounds. Many, like Jennings, have deployed to combat zones.

Jennings was embedded with Army infantry as a Navy second class petty officer deployed in a combat camera role to Bagdad in 2008. “There were moments



*Chief Petty Officer Joan Jennings supervises Navy Sea, Air and Land (SEAL) and Special Warfare Combatant-Craft Crewman (SWCC) candidates during swim training in the combat training tank on Naval Amphibious Base Coronado. Chief Jennings is an instructor at Naval Special Warfare Basic Training Command, a component of Naval Special Warfare Center. NSWCCEN provides initial assessment and selection and subsequent advanced training to the Sailors who make up the Navy’s SEAL and Special Boat communities. These communities support the NSW mission, providing maritime special operations forces to conduct full spectrum operations, unilaterally or with partners, to support national objectives. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Benjamin K. Kittleson.*

when I realized I was the only female in the FOB (forward operating base), but I didn’t think of myself as some sort of trailblazer. The whole time I was there, the idea of me being a girl never really crossed my mind because we were all there to do a job, to complete the mission. I wanted to be in it and document the fight.”

The mission of the instructor cadre seems simple: assess and select the next generation of Naval Special Warfare operators to go downrange. But it takes a lot of hard work and professional requirements to earn the title of instructor at one of the Navy’s most prestigious

training commands, and BTC needs more than just a qualified staff – proven leaders are critical to the success of the mission.

“As a Chief and an instructor, I’m able to mentor not just SEAL and SWCC candidates, not just men or women who want to be special operators or boat team members, but young Sailors,” said Jennings. “And I think it is important for the female candidates who come through here to see senior leadership within the instructor ranks.”

Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Erika Neal spent five years deploying and working in support of multiple SEAL teams on the Mobile Communications Team before successfully interviewing for an instructor position at BTC. But that was just the beginning.

“I’ve always held the mindset that says, ‘you have to earn your spot’,” said Neal. In anticipation of joining BTC, she participated in a familiarization program to prepare her for the challenges of being an instructor. “I ran the beach with a boat on my head, I carried the log, swam the laps – to be a part of the team, a part of the community. We’re expected to shoulder our share of the weight.”

Now she serves as an instructor for the Basic Crewman Training course, helping candidates learn the critical skillsets of the SWCC community, the Navy’s elite maritime mobility operators. She finds working as part of a professional cadre with different values and perspectives to be rewarding.

“It’s actually really cool how different we all are, because I think that with this little group that we have, it’s important that we all balance each other out,” Neal said. “When we’re going over ideas regarding training, we’re not all coming up with the same thing. Our individual personalities help us to work interdependently.”

The women of NSW share a deep sense of camaraderie as they work to deliver on mission.

“This is something I want to do. The idea of supporting women in special operations spoke to me,” said Lt. Cmdr. Erica Young, force integration officer for Naval Special Warfare Command. “You see, I didn’t want to simply have a job, but a career where I could build upon skill sets – where what I’m doing is rewarding and meaningful, and I’m giving back. That’s important to me, and I knew I could have that here.”

Young believes the tough daily regimen of training for the next generation of warriors is worth it not only for candidates, but for the women who have earned the title of instructor.

“It’s important to have these women here, regardless of whether there’s a female candidate coming through

or not,” she said. “Because it’s changing the outlook and mindset of the men, they’re seeing these women get the same respect as the other male instructors, even though they don’t have a SEAL or SWCC pin.”

Still, the focus remains on the candidates. Jennings said that what she concentrates on today, more than 20 years after she joined the Navy, has not changed all that much from the basics she tries to instill in the candidates today. “The people we train, both men and women, they’re so young and hungry. And no matter what job they pick, they’re thinking selflessly, and they’re committing to something bigger than themselves. We’re doing something we’re passionate about. And you have to be passionate about this – otherwise it’s just a job.”

Naval Special Warfare Center, located on Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, provides initial assessment and selection and subsequent advanced training to the Sailors who make up the Navy’s SEAL and Special Boat communities, a key asset of NSW. The NSW mission is to provide maritime special operations forces to conduct full-spectrum operations, unilaterally or with partners, to support national objectives. For more information on the NSW assessment, selection and training pathway, visit <https://www.sealswcc.com/>.



**Chief Petty Officer Joan Jennings, center, leads Navy Sea, Air and Land (SEAL) and Special Warfare Combatant-Craft Crewman (SWCC) candidates in stretching exercises to increase mobility onboard Naval Amphibious Base Coronado. Chief Jennings is an instructor at Naval Special Warfare Basic Training Command, a component of Naval Special Warfare Center. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Benjamin K. Kittleson.**

# Air Force Special Operations Command



## U.S. Special Operators established command and control at the Thailand cave rescue while the world watched

*By U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Erin Dorrance  
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

The world held its breath for 18 days in 2018 when the Wild Boar soccer team, consisting of 12 children and one adult, were stuck deep inside a maze of underwater caves in northern Thailand. The team had ventured into the cave at the start of the country's four-month monsoon season and heavy rains trapped them inside triggering one of the most unique international rescue efforts in history.

Four days after Thai authorities discovered the team could be trapped in the Tham Luang Nang Non cave system, a 32-person U.S. military team from Kadena Air Base, Japan, arrived on site with special tactics officers, combat controllers, pararescue divers, supply, logistics, communications, medical, public affairs, and other types of support for the rescue mission.

"Thailand requested our assistance," said U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Derek Anderson. "Seventeen hours after we got the call, we were on site with our very capable team to advise and assist the rescue mission."

The U.S. team arrived to a scene of chaos.

"There were so many media, it was hard to even walk past them to the cave," said Anderson. "There were several organizations there, all doing their own thing. Volunteers were showing up trying to help in any way they could."

"We brought order to the chaos," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Charles Hodges, who was the joint mission commander. "My first task was to figure out



*The U.S. military team set up a command and control tent in the jungle at the cave site, and used white boards to map out the tunnel. Courtesy photo.*

who was in charge and making decisions so we knew who would give us the go ahead. After that I worked with my team to determine the role that we would play."

Hodges worked with the Thai government to establish the chain of command, and enabled his team to stand up command and control on site.

"We set up a tent, brought in our white boards, and established accountability immediately," he said. "We also figured out what we needed and would put out the request, as well as fold in volunteers who had specific skill sets."

"One of the biggest requirements were for trained cave divers," said U.S. Air Force Capt. Mitch Torrel.

“There were Thai Navy SEALs and U.S. Air Force pararescue jumpers on site who held extensive experience in diving, confined spaces, and collapsed structures, but militaries around the world don’t train in cave diving because it is not an environment we typically would operate in.”

It was decided that the rescue mission would require niche cave divers who not only held the rare expertise, but also owned the specialized equipment.

Phone calls were made to the best of the best cave divers who flew in from around the globe to volunteer their unique hobby of cave diving.

The cave conditions were horrible, said Anderson. The cave had numerous chambers that weaved through narrow passageways and squeezes, requiring that divers navigate the confined underwater maze using a fixed line. The water was cold, turbulent, and near-zero visibility so you couldn’t see what was right in front of you despite the brightest head lamps divers wore.

The heavy current was what restricted dive operations because for a period, divers were unable to pass the “T-Junction” which was a small bottleneck area that was impassable under heavy current. While they waited for conditions to improve, Hodges’ team started working on lines of effort that included sending teams out to look for another possible cave entrance, securing pumps to displace the water from the cave, and to acquire survey equipment and ground radar to see what parts of the cave were flooded or dry.

Once the divers could start diving again, the race intensified to find the soccer team; no one knew if they were going to be dead or alive. Nine days after they had become stuck in the cave, the British divers found the team 2.5 miles from the cave entrance.

The world was shocked to see video footage of all 12 children and their soccer coach alive. The coach of the soccer team, Ekkapol Chantawong, taught his players how to meditate in order to conserve energy.

“That is when it got really complicated,” said Anderson. “They were all alive, the world was rejoicing, but all of us on site were laser-focused on how to rescue them all as conditions were deteriorating.

*They were all alive, the world was rejoicing, but all of us on site were laser-focused on how to rescue them all as conditions were deteriorating. They hadn’t eaten anything for 10 days, they were cold, and they were running out of oxygen. The rains were predicted to start any day and last for months, which would have flooded our man-made water diversions, and ultimately made our rescue plan unachievable.*

— Senior Master Sgt. Derek Anderson

They hadn’t eaten anything for 10 days, they were cold, and they were running out of oxygen. The rains were predicted to start any day and last for months, which would have flooded our man-made water diversions, and ultimately made our rescue plan unachievable.”

As the team brainstormed options, three became available: teach the boys to swim with the scuba gear, swim them out of the cave under heavy sedation, or leave them with supplies to wait until the water drains

away after the monsoon season end in four months. Meanwhile, divers and medical professionals stayed with the trapped soccer team delivering medicine and food to increase their strength.

While divers shuttled oxygen tanks back and forth to the soccer team, former Thai Navy SEAL Saman Gunan who had left the Navy but returned to volunteer at the rescue operation, ran out of oxygen on his way out of the cave. The death of

Gunan, a highly-trained diver, shook up everyone at the rescue site because it revealed the extreme dangers of the rescue mission.



**U.S. special operators tested mask fittings on Thai children volunteers to troubleshoot any potential mask-fit issues. Courtesy photo.**



*Divers check their gear before submerging into the cave. Courtesy photo.*

The divers said that diving out of the cave could be terrifying for experienced divers, let alone children who were not strong swimmers. Everyone began to lose hope, and some began to say that a rescue mission was impossible.

That is when Anderson asked, “What does impossible look like?”

From that conversation, the idea of sedating the children and their coach to swim them out of the cave was the main course of action that they focused on.

“The entire medical community opposed the sedation option, but it was the best option we had,” he said. “And we were lucky to find Dr. Harry, an Australian anesthesiologist who happened to also be a cave diver with 30 years of experience.”

The U.S. team highly recommended a rehearsal of concept drill, commonly called a ROC drill, which is a dry walk-through of a plan between a commander and their subordinates to ensure a shared understanding of a plan.

“We ran through the ROC drill three times, and we covered every detail we could think of,” said Anderson. “We figured out tank swaps, where everyone needed to be, and what everyone’s responsibilities were going to

be. We did a lot of trouble shooting, and tweaked the plan until we felt confident that we had the best possible plan available.”

The first rescue mission was executed on July 8, 2018. Divers accompanied each boy, guided by rope. The boys and their coach were heavily sedated with ketamine, Xanax, and atropine to keep them calm as the divers pulled them through the expansive cave system of twists and turns in narrow flooded passages, some only two feet wide. The water was muddy with low visibility and the currents were strong.

“The soccer team picked the order in which they would leave,” said Anderson. “They started with the kids that had to bike the farthest to get home.”

The international divers fitted each child with perfect-fitting masks and administered the sedation medicine. They then had the unfathomable task of putting unconscious heads under water with children’s hands tied behind their backs so they could swim them out of the cave.

Pararescuemen with the U.S. military team were stationed inside Chamber 3 which was about half way between the cave entrance and where the soccer team was stranded, said Torrel. They would perform a quick medical assessment, swap air tanks, and readminister sedation if necessary. The boys were then taken for one final short dive and handed over to the ropes team awaiting at Chamber 2. The team there had established a high-line system to transport the liter-bound boys safely across deep crevasses and deliver them to the



*An intricate rope pulley system was built to lift the soccer team in liters out of the cave. Courtesy photo.*

Thai military teams who carried them out of the cave.

On July 9, rescuers successfully got four boys out of the cave, and all of them were alive.

The mission impossible became mission possible.

“We were both shocked and ecstatic that it worked,”

said Anderson. “Now that we had a proof of concept, we debriefed and cleaned up the process with lessons learned. By the last day of the rescue, we were two to three hours faster per rescue than we were on the first day.”

By July 10, 18 days after the soccer team had gotten stuck in the cave, all 13 Wild Boar members were rescued. Many of the soccer players woke up in the hospital with no memory of the dive out of the cave.

A few hours after the final rescue trip, the pumps that were displacing millions of gallons of water failed.

And a few days later the cave was completely submerged and impassable for the next eight months.

It was by far the longest rescue mission for the U.S. team who said their rescue missions are usually no more than a day or two.

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*I was part of something never done in mankind before, and hopefully never done again. I was humbled to be part of such an amazing rescue mission.*

— Lt. Col. Charles Hodges

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“I was part of something never done in mankind before, and hopefully never done again,” said Hodges. “I was humbled to be part of such an amazing rescue mission.”

The U.S. team, along with the international team, has

been awarded and recognized at events around the world. Along with recognition, there have been a few documentaries filmed about the rescue to include National Geographic’s “The Rescue” which can be viewed on Disney Plus. SOCOM’s SOFcast also interviewed Anderson on Season 3, Episode 1 which can be heard on any podcast app.



Seven members of the Wild Boar soccer team met some of the U.S. Special Tactics team that assisted with the rescue mission. The reunion occurred at a celebration banquet in Bangkok, Thailand, in September of 2018. Courtesy photo.

# Air Force Special Operations Command



## Emerald Warrior 22.1 concludes for AFSOC, Czech Special Forces

*By U.S. Air Force 2nd Lt Cassandra Saphore  
Air Force Special Operations Command Public Affairs*

Air Force Special Operations Command wrapped up its 15th Emerald Warrior exercise that provided realistic and relevant training to prepare special operations forces, conventional forces and international partners for conflict in an evolving, strategic environment.

The EW 22.1 planning team applied lessons learned from real-world operations to train and ready forces to the joint force, while staying focused on security priorities laid out within the 2022 National Defense Strategy; specifically, pacing strategic competitors. Trained, credible forces and strong international partnerships are pivotal to this effort.

“In this year’s iteration, we improved our approach to command and control through the employment of the



*U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Gabriel Nicola, a loadmaster with the 9th Special Operations Squadron, 27th Special Operations Wing, Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico, and U.S Air Force Senior Airman Albert Washington, a direct support operator with the 9th SOS, 27th SOW, Cannon AFB, prepare for a static-line jump mission from an MC-130J Commando II during Emerald Warrior 22.1 over the Gulf of Mexico, May 4, 2022. Emerald Warrior is the largest joint special operations exercise involving U.S. Special Operations Command forces training to respond to various threats across the spectrum of conflict. Photo by U.S. Air Force SrA Harrison Winchell.*



***U.S. Air Force operators with the 492nd Special Operations Wing, Hurlburt Field, Florida, conduct a free-fall jump mission out of the back of an MC-130J Commando II assigned to the 27th Special Operations Wing, Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico, during an Emerald Warrior 22.1 free-fall mission over Eglin Range, Florida, May 4, 2022. Emerald Warrior is the largest joint special operations exercise involving U.S. Special Operations Command forces training to respond to various threats across the spectrum of conflict. Photo by U.S. Air Force SrA Harrison Winchell.***

Special Operations Task Group and Special Operations Task Unit,” said U.S. Air Force Col. Kevin Koenig, exercise director of Emerald Warrior. “This dispersion of leadership allowed for real-time, on-the-ground decision making and allowed commanders to perform operations quickly and more efficiently. We exercised our agile combat employment capabilities and focused additional training on non-kinetic skillsets to include public affairs and information operations. With our partner nations and sister services, our goal is to continue to deter adversaries, now and in the future, in all domains.”

The objective for this year’s EW was to gain and maintain an advantage on the battlefield and in the information environment, and grow kinetic and non-kinetic effects above and below the threshold of armed conflict from strategic competitors.

This annual exercise is an opportunity to further test and improve future approaches to AFSOC units like the mission sustainment teams. These MSTs established forward-operating bases by providing initial site security, receiving cargo and personnel, and setting up shelter.

“It was very impressive how the 1st SOW and 27th

SOW [from Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico] capabilities came together in order to forward stage our contingency locations during this exercise,” said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Travis Deutman, commander of the Emerald Warrior SOTG. “As these capabilities continue to progress, it’ll definitely be something that’ll be useful within AFSOC.”

In line with AFSOC’s Strategic Guidance, the exercise fuels on-going innovation and experimentation efforts within the command.

“The most important idea to understand about Emerald Warrior is that as AFSOC implements force generation, we’re building new concepts; the two biggest concepts being the SOTG command team and our MSTs,” said U.S. Air Force Col. Michael Haack, deputy director of operations for AFSOC. “These concepts combine to enable the force to do agile combat employment in a contested environment. We increased our agility; we pushed our decision making forward to the lowest level. These teams are trained and enabled, and ready to fight the fight in the contested and uncontested environment.”

In addition to introducing new command and control structure, the exercise continued as a forum of collaboration between the U.S. and its international partners and allies. This year, AFSOC hosted partners from the Czech Republic.

“We look forward to working with our partner nations and coalition forces from across SOF,” said Haack. “Emerald Warrior allows us to problem solve in an exercise environment, establish communication and build enduring relationships. Those relationships with our Czech partners and fellow SOF coalition forces are critical so we’re not meeting them for the first time down range.”



***A U.S. Air Force aircrew member and a member of the German Air Force prepare for a static-line jump mission from an MC-130J Commando II during Emerald Warrior 22.1 over the Gulf of Mexico, May 4, 2022. Photo by U.S. Air Force SrA Harrison Winchell.***

# *Air Force Special Operations Command*



## **Day and night, rain or shine: DAGREs fast rope into action**

*A U.S. Air Force 353rd Special Operations Support Squadron Deployed Aircraft Ground Response Element team member fast-ropes out of an HH-60G Pave Hawk at Kadena Air Base, Japan, May 16, 2022. This training allowed 353rd SOSS DAGRE team members to be certified in fast-rope infiltration methods. Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Stephen Pulter.*



# Marine Forces, Special Operations Command



## MARSOC bids farewell to Maj. Gen. James F. Glynn



Marine Forces Special Operations Command to Maj. Gen. Matthew G. Trollinger.

The senior officer in attendance was Gen. David H. Berger, 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps. Also in attendance was U.S. Army Gen. Richard D. Clarke, commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, previous commanders of MARSOC, and various dignitaries from the local government.

Presiding over the ceremony, Berger said, “There is a time when the right person comes in at exactly the right time and has the courage to look at what you [have to] do right now, but also where they have to be in the future, that has been Gen. Glynn and Denise.”

Glynn took the helm as MARSOC’s eighth commander on June 26, 2020, returning to MARSOC after previously serving as the commanding officer of the Marine Raider Training Center from 2011-2013.

“As I turn over the colors today,” continued Glynn. “Somebody asked what’s it like? Somewhere between excitement and pride is what I could describe, as you hold the flag and let go. Pride in knowing that that formation, in two-years’ time will not look like this. I couldn’t be more excited to hand this over and know that this place is going to be different. And by being different, it’s going to be better.”

Trollinger assumes command after serving his previous tour as the deputy director, Politico-Military Affairs (Middle East), J-5, Joint Staff, Washington, D.C.

“To the Marines and Sailors of the command, I’m just so grateful,” said Trollinger. “[I have] a lot of pride and humility to stand in front of this formation with you. As has been stated, we’re in a number of areas right now doing a number of different things in pursuit of our national security interests. And as Gen. Glynn mentioned, the command is doing great things moving us into the future and Nancy and I are tremendously proud to be back here and leading this

*Maj. Gen. James F. Glynn, outgoing Marine Forces Special Operations Command Commander, makes remarks during a change of command ceremony, at Camp Lejeune, N.C., May 23, 2022. The change of command ceremony represents the transition of command and responsibility of MARSOC from Maj. Gen. James F. Glynn to Maj. Gen. Matthew G. Trollinger. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Tia Nagle.*

*By U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Jesula Jeanlouis  
Marine Forces, Special Operations Command*

Marine Forces Special Operations Command hosted a change of command ceremony at Camp Lejeune, N.C., May 23, 2022. Maj. Gen. James F. Glynn relinquished his duties as the commander of

organization.”

As the MARSOC Commander, Trollinger will be responsible for manning, training, and equipping Marine Raiders for deployments in support of special operations missions across the globe. MARSOC

maintains a continuous deployed presence in the areas of operations for U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, U.S. Central Command and U.S. Africa Command.

“I believe that MARSOC has and will continue to play a critical role in your vision for the Marine Corps into the future and I do believe that when any of our components, whether be the [Air

Force] or Navy, Army or Marine Corps, are closest to their services, it makes us collectively better, and it makes SOCOM a better headquarters going forward.” said Clarke.

MARSOC is the Marine Corps service component of U.S. Special Operations Command and was activated Feb. 24, 2006. Since then, MARSOC has deployed continuously in support of special operations forces worldwide.

MARSOC’s current missions include counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, foreign internal defense, and preparation of the environment.

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*Pride in knowing that that formation, in two-years’ time will not look like this. I couldn’t be more excited to hand this over and know that this place is going to be different. And by being different, it’s going to be better.*

— Maj. Gen. James F. Glynn

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Sgt. Maj. Anthony J. Loftus, Marine Forces Special Operations Command Sgt. Maj., passes the organizational colors to Maj. Gen. James F. Glynn, outgoing MARSOC Commander, during a change of command ceremony, at Camp Lejeune, N.C., May 23, 2022. The change of command ceremony represents the transition of command and responsibility of MARSOC from Maj. Gen. James F. Glynn to Maj. Gen. Matthew G. Trollinger. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Tia Nagle.

# Headquarters - U.S. Special Operations Command Special Operations Forces - Civilian Leadership and Development Program visits Naval Special Warfare Command

*By Kevin Bilms  
Strategic Analyst - Office of the Assistant  
Secretary of Defense Special Operations &  
Low-Intensity Conflict*

Naval Special Warfare Command hosted a two-day visit for 18 civilian personnel selected to participate in the Special Operations Forces -Civilian Leadership and Development Program (SOF-CLDP).

Established in 2016 and managed by the U.S. Special Operations Command Manpower & Personnel Directorate, the SOF-CLDP is USSOCOM's flagship executive leadership development program designed to enhance the development of civilian personnel working within the SOF enterprise. This visit, along with visits to other Special Operations components, is intended to enhance civilian personnel's understanding of the uniformed Special Operations personnel they support and their civilian counterparts.

Mr. Thomas Schoenbeck, Executive Director of the Naval Special Warfare Command, welcomed attendees and set the tone for the visit by saying that "there is nothing [he] takes more seriously than civilian development." He immediately challenged the SOF-CLDP participants to "train more, see more, and grow more" during their visit and beyond.

Retired Navy SEAL Captain and Senior Advisor to the NSW Commander, Mr. John McTighe, kicked off the NSW command brief and overview with a further challenge to the SOF-CLDP members to give back to the Special Operations community and future military and civilian leaders. Briefings from the

NSW Women In SOF and NSW's Preservation of the Force and Families efforts further reinforced the importance of remembering who the SOF-CLDP members were there to serve. In Mr. McTighe's words, "if you don't focus on the family, you will lose the operator."

The SOF-CLDP members then received command briefings and hands-on experience on Navy SEAL Group ONE and the Special Warfare Combat Crewman (SWCC) School House. Guests witnessed firsthand the rigorous physical and mental training that makes a SEAL operator, as well as the sophisticated combat craft capabilities and expert proficiency demonstrated by all SWCC boatmen. Their visit included an exclusive cruise of the San Diego Bay, as well as tours of the state-of-the-art team facilities recently open and under construction to support SEAL Group ONE in Coronado, CA, which consists of SEAL Teams 1, 3, 5, and 7.

Members of the SOF-CLDP included personnel from the Office of the Secretary of Defense; U.S. Special Operations Command; U.S. Army Special Operations Command; Air Force Special Operations Command; Naval Special Warfare Command; Joint Special Operations Command; and the Theater Special Operations Commands supporting U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, U.S. European Command, U.S. Central Command, and U.S. Northern Command.

"I am continually impressed by the extremely high standards maintained by the NSW community, but also how much they value their military, civilian, and contractor personnel. And I think the entire program came away with that impression, as well," said SOF-CLDP program manager, Mr. Todd Small.



*Mr. McTighe gives commands to the CLDP standing boat crew to hold the Inflatable Boat Small (IBS) at the extended arm carry over their heads to simulate preparing for IBS surf passage training during the first phase of Basic Underwater Demolition SEAL (BUD/S) training. Courtesy photo.*

# Headquarters - U.S Special Operations Command International SOF capabilities demonstration wows Tampa Bay

By U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Erin Dorrance  
USSOCOM Public Affairs

Special Operations Forces invaded downtown Tampa May 18, 2022, to demonstrate SOF capabilities to a packed crowd of onlookers. The demo was in conjunction to the Special Operations Forces Industry Conference which is the annual conference for both industry and defense leaders across the global special operations community where conference attendees had an opportunity to learn, network, and collaborate on new initiatives and capabilities needed for SOF professionals to campaign in support of integrated defense.

The U.S. and ten partner nations took to the skies, water, and ground surrounding the Tampa Convention Center to demonstrate how U.S. and partner nation SOF teams work together using tactical combat interoperability. The following partner nations participated in the demonstration: Canada, Czech Republic, Jordan, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Lithuania,

Netherlands, Slovakia, and Singapore. The scenario was a hostage rescue mission. The international demonstration included a sub-surface infiltration, an insertion of personnel into key areas using helicopters and Zodiac boats, an MH-6 Little Bird helicopter insertion of a support by fire and sniper team to overwatch positions, an assault of the Starship Yacht via air and sea, an MH-60 helicopter inserted an assault force using the fast-rope technique, a ground assault force traveled along the bridge from Harbour Island and eliminated a checkpoint, an assault force attacked an enemy camp using two Special Operations Craft-Riverine boats, and a military free fall parachute team jumped from an MC-130 aircraft at 9,000 feet and landed in the water.

“This is a unique opportunity for us to publicly showcase international SOF partners working together,” said U.S. Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Steve Roderick who was one of the demonstration organizers. “We don’t usually have a chance to show the local community what we do, so this is really cool for us.”



*International Special Operations Forces prepare for an amphibious assault aboard a Special Operations Craft-Riverine during a capabilities demonstration in Tampa Bay, Fla., May 18, 2022. The demo was in conjunction to the Special Operations Forces Industry Conference which is the annual conference for both industry and defense leaders across the global special operations community where conference attendees had an opportunity to learn, network, and collaborate on new initiatives and capabilities needed for SOF professionals to campaign in support of integrated defense. Ten partner nations took part in the demo to include Canada, Czech Republic, Jordan, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Lithuania, Netherlands, Slovakia, and Singapore. Photo by U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Joshua Hastings.*

**Tip of the Spear**



*Top) An International Special Operations Forces Soldier rappels from the top of the Tampa Covention Center May 18, 2022. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Alexander Cook.*

*Left) Two International Special Operations Forces Soldiers run to their objective near the Tampa Covention Center May 18, 2022. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Alexander Cook.*

*Above) An International Special Operations Soldier fires his weapon toward the objective near the Tampa Covention Center May 18, 2022. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Alexander Cook.*



*Left) International Special Operations Forces Soldiers are extracted from Tampa Bay aboard an MH-60M Blackhawk helicopter May 18, 2022. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Alexander Cook.*

*Above) An International Special Operations Forces Soldier fires on his objective near the Tampa Convention Center May 18, 2022. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Alexander Cook.*

*Below) An MH-6 Little Bird helicopter transports International Special Operations Soldiers to the objective near the Tampa Convention Center May 18, 2022. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Alexander Cook.*





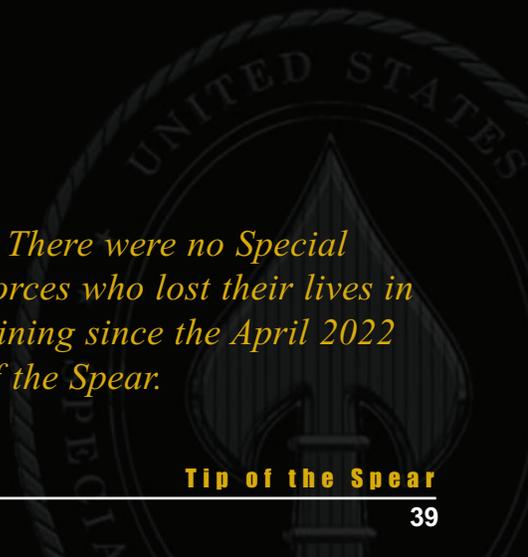
*Top) U.S. and international Special Operations Forces prepare for an amphibious assault aboard a Special Operations Craft-Riverine during a capabilities demonstration in Tampa Bay, Fla., May 18, 2022. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Alexander Cook.*

*Left) International Special Operations Forces are extracted from a ship by the Special Patrol Insertion/Extraction (SPIE) system during a capabilities demonstration in Tampa Bay, Fla., May 18, 2022. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Alexander Cook.*

*Above) International Special Operations Forces fast rope onto a ship during a capabilities demonstration in Tampa Bay, Fla., May 18, 2022. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Alexander Cook.*



GILBERT ALANIZ JR. PVT USA 840125    RALPH L. THOMPSON    WESLEY B. ALDRIDGE    ALAN C. BAY  
AND PVT USA 840125    SMO CDR USA 810126    SMO PVT USA 840527    SMO PVT USA 840527  
VANCEY    WILLIAM C. HAYES    ROBERT A. BRANNAN



*Editor's note: There were no Special Operations Forces who lost their lives in combat or training since the April 2022 issue of Tip of the Spear.*



*An MH-60M Blackhawk helicopter assaults a target during a capabilities demonstration in Tampa Bay, Fla., May 18, 2022. The demo was in conjunction to the Special Operations Forces Industry Conference, the annual conference for both industry and defense leaders across the global special operations community where conference attendees had an opportunity to learn, network, and collaborate on new initiatives and capabilities needed for SOF professionals to campaign in support of integrated defense. Ten partner nations took part in the demo to include Canada, Czech Republic, Jordan, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Lithuania, Netherlands, Slovakia, and Singapore. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Alexander Cook.*