

# Tip OF THE Spear

United States Special Operations Command  
MacDill Air Force Base, Florida

December 2022

## CELEBRATING

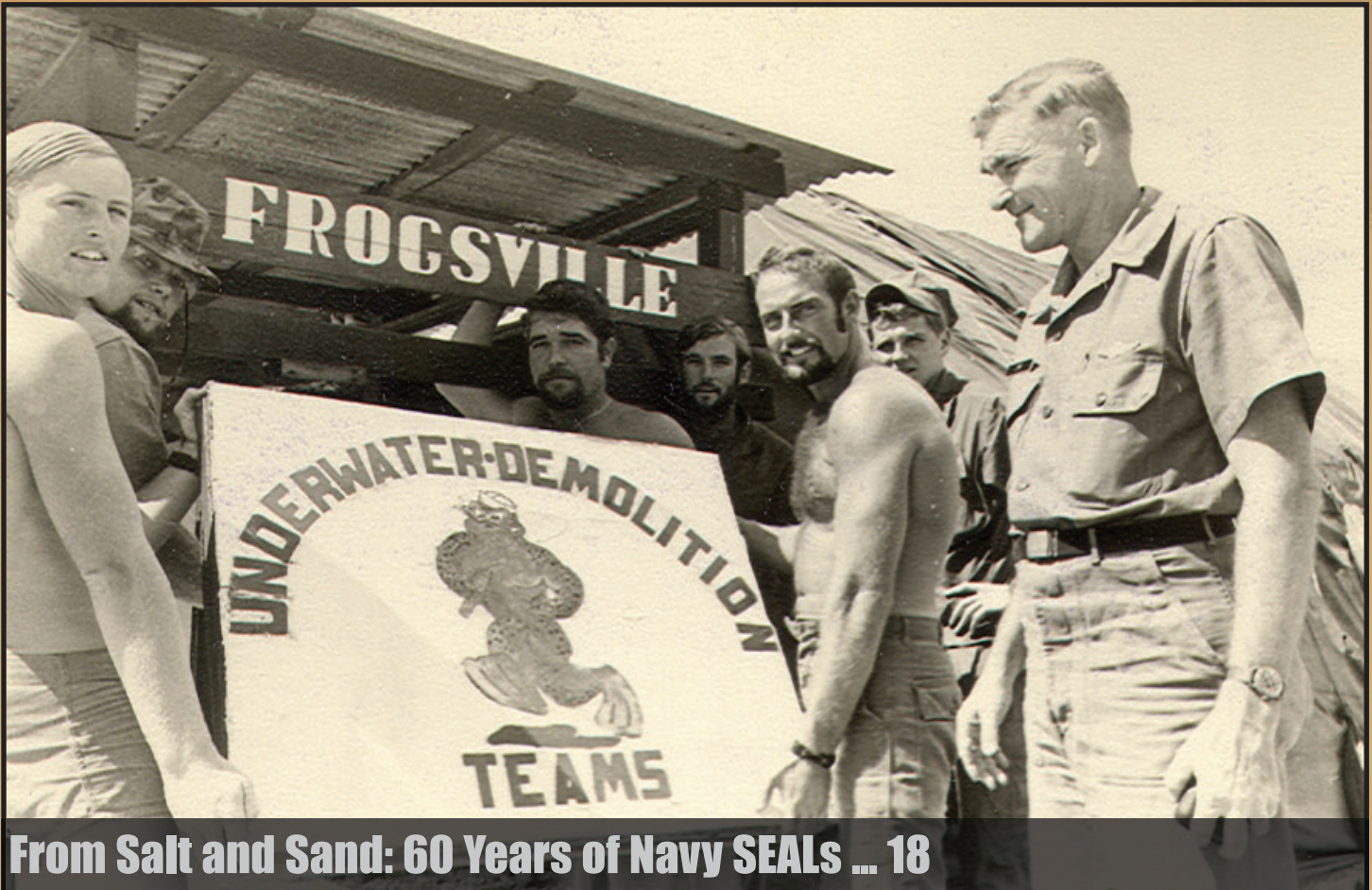


# 60

## YEARS OF THE NAVY SEAL TEAMS



# United States Special Operations Command



**From Salt and Sand: 60 Years of Navy SEALs ... 18**

## Tip of the Spear

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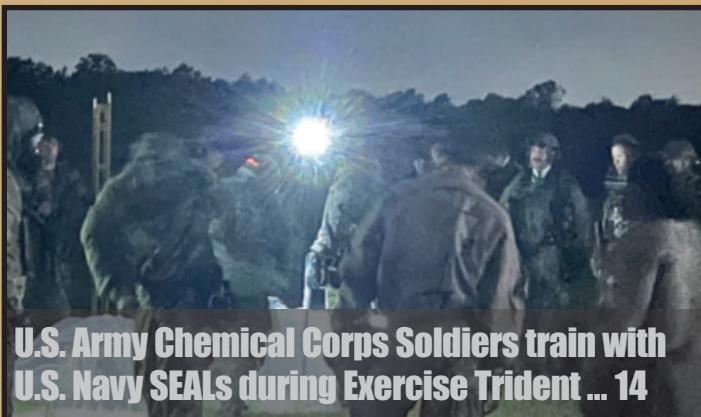
### Thomas Jefferson Award Winner

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*(Cover) Since 1962, Naval Special Warfare has been the nation's premier maritime special operations force – a highly reliable and lethal force – always ready to conduct full-spectrum operations, unilaterally or with partners, in support of national objectives, and uniquely positioned to extend the Fleet's reach, delivering all-domain options for Naval and joint force commanders. Naval Special Warfare Command courtesy graphic. (Above) The Naval Special Warfare community's history predates the establishment of the SEAL teams by twenty years. In August 1942, the Amphibious Scouts and Raiders (Joint) and the Special Mission Naval Demolition Unit were established at Amphibious Training Base Little Creek, Virginia, to perform specific missions during Operation Torch – the allied invasion of North Africa – in November 1942. Courtesy photo.*

# The Quiet Professionals

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# U.S. Special Operations Command - Africa



## U.S. Africa Command Special Operations Forces train alongside Tanzanian partners

*Courtesy Story  
Special Operations Command Africa*

Special Operations Command Africa forces concluded a civil affairs joint combined exchange training alongside the Tanzania Marine Special Forces in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, on Nov. 15, 2022.

The month-long training gave both the U.S. and Tanzania servicemembers the opportunity to develop and maintain critical military-to-military connections and improve joint and allied readiness and interoperability.

“This course is very crucial for our special forces because it enables us to be better prepared for various scenarios and upcoming duties,” said Tanzania Peoples Defence Forces Marine Special Forces Commander Lt. Col. Athumani Ghamunga. “It is also the opportunity to share experience and knowledge between our special forces.”

While joint exchanges between the two nations aren’t new, this exercise helped develop different capabilities and incorporate elements from the civil affairs unit.

“This was the first civil affairs focused JCET in Tanzania,” said U.S. Army Capt. Tyler Clarke, a civil affairs team lead. “The training focused on civil affairs and civil military operations to include civil reconnaissance, civil engagements, we discussed negotiations, mediations and tactical combat casualty care.”

The JCET program’s primary purpose is to provide partner-nation special operations units specific training to promote security and stability in Africa.



***U.S. Army Capt. Tyler Clarke, a civil affairs team lead with the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade, briefs Tanzanian Marine Special Forces on Operation Civil Torch during a joint combined exchange training in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Nov. 11, 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 Master Sgt. Nancy Kasberg.***

“Joint combined exchange training is the bridge and glue which binds together the relationship between Tanzania and the U.S.,” said Tanzania Peoples Defence Forces Brig. Gen. Iddi Nkambi.

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

*U.S. Army Sgt. Ibrahima Mkusa, left, a civil reconnaissance non-commissioned officer and Staff Sgt. Ciara Chico, special operations civil affairs medical sergeant with the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade evaluate Tanzanian Marine Special Forces conduct care under fire during a joint combined exchange training in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Nov. 10, 2022. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Nancy Kasberg.*



# U.S. Special Operations Command - Europe



## U.S. Special Operations Command conducts first-ever demonstration of the joint-air- to-surface standoff missile

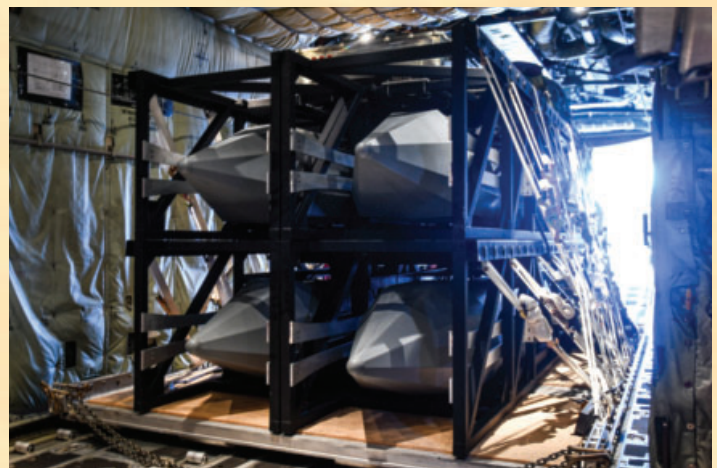
*By U.S. Army Capt. Margaret Collins DuTart  
U.S. Special Operations Command Europe*

As part of the U.S. European Command Operational Series ATREUS, U.S. Special Operations Command Europe conducted the first-ever demonstration of the palletized precision munition in the European Theater at Andoya Space Range on Nov. 9, 2022. This operational series is designed to bring NATO allies and partners together through training on capabilities throughout the theater.

“This effort is meant to increase integration of both conventional and special operations forces from participating nations and enhance interoperability with our NATO allies and European partners,” Operation ATREUS lead Lt. Col. Lawrence Melnicoff said. “Routine engagements like those conducted throughout ATREUS training events enable effective responses for any contingency, as well as continuation of training, and increased readiness and collective defense.”

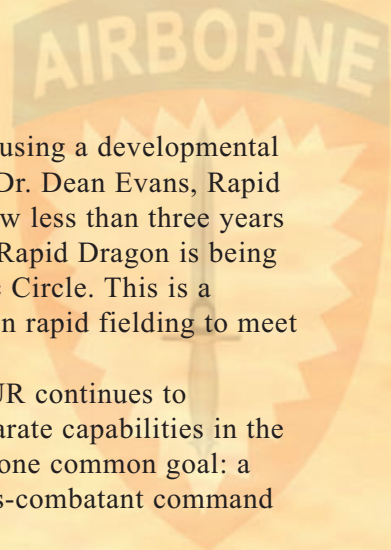
The ATREUS series began in April 2021 to identify and conduct training opportunities on capabilities found throughout Europe that enable response options for U.S. and NATO allies and partners. Previous ATREUS training events have focused on the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) capability with participation from Romania, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Latvia.

This week’s exercise is the seventh iteration of ATREUS in the European theater, but the first combined and joint effort with participation from ally



*Members of the Polish Air Force, U.S. Air Forces in Europe-Air Force Africa (USAFE-AF), and U.S. Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR), conduct palletized precision effects cargo training onto a Polish Air Force C-130 Hercules, November 8, 2022, in Powidz, Poland. This training is a continuation from previous iterations with U.S. Special Operations Command Europe. The U.S. and NATO allies and partners remain committed to collective defense and cooperative security throughout the European Theater. NATO allies and partners in Europe have had the palletized precision effects capability in their weapons inventory and have trained with U.S. experts since 2011. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brandon Julson.*

nations of Norway, Poland, Romania, and the United Kingdom, as well as U.S. Air Force Europe-Air Forces Africa, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Air Force Special Operations Command, U.S. Special Operations Command Pacific, and U.S. Naval Sea Systems Command.



“Participation from our allies is the cornerstone of ATREUS iterations. Poland, Romania, and the United Kingdom have been regular participants in the most recent ATREUS iterations throughout 2021 and 2022, but the global effort with our fellow geographic combatant commands makes this a historic demonstration of allied solidarity worldwide,” Melnicoff said.

In the most recent ATREUS iteration, SOCEUR has expanded on previous concepts with the integration of AFSOC supported Rapid Dragon program, led and developed by the Air Force Strategic Development Planning and Experimentation (SDPE) Office. The Rapid Dragon Palletized Effects System, capable of deploying long-range cruise missiles using standard airdrop procedures from a cargo aircraft like the MC-130J Commando II operated by the U.S. Air Force’s 67th Special Operations Squadron, 352d Special Operations Wing.

“The Rapid Dragon Experimentation Program is appropriately named, as it advanced rapidly from a

concept on paper to a live fire using a developmental prototype in 24 months,” said Dr. Dean Evans, Rapid Dragon program manager. “Now less than three years from the program’s inception, Rapid Dragon is being used by SOCEUR in the Arctic Circle. This is a testament to the team’s focus on rapid fielding to meet warfighter needs.”

Through ATREUS, SOCEUR continues to demonstrate the fusion of disparate capabilities in the theater in order to accomplish one common goal: a concept that has garnered cross-combatant command support.

“AFSOC’s comparative advantage is and always has been our human capital,” LT. Gen. Jim Slife, AFSOC commander said. “AFSOC’s greatest value to the joint force as well as allies and partners is when we find unconventional ways to deliver airpower. The future is going to be different than what we have experienced for the last 20 years, but one thing I’m certain of is AFSOC will be ready for whatever the future operation environment brings.”



*A Polish Air Force loadmaster, and personnel from U.S. Air Forces in Europe-Air Force Africa (USAFE-AF), and U.S. Special Operations Command Europe, help guide the palletized precision effects cargo onto a Polish Air Force C-130 Hercules, November 8, 2022, in Powidz, Poland. This training is a continuation from previous iterations with U.S. Special Operations Command Europe. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brandon Julson.*

# U.S. Special Operations Command - North



## U.S., Mexican Special Operations Forces strengthen partnership via multiple training events

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

Over the past year, Green Berets from 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) trained side-by-side with Mexican Special Operations Forces (MEXSOF) at Camp Bull Simons, Florida, and Alton, Virginia, in order to enhance interoperability and strengthen the partnership between U.S and Mexican SOF.

“Building a stronger relationship with a southern-bordering country like Mexico is extremely important in the defense of our homeland,” said a 7th SFG (A) Detachment Commander. “As we bolster their capabilities to defend their homeland through our continued engagements and experience, we are able to improve upon our language skills and learn about their culture and customs.”

The six-month training cycle included: fast rope

insertions, close-quarter combat, ballistic and mechanical breaching, medical training, convoy operations, marksmanship, urban operations, and mission planning.

7th SFG (A) Green Berets used the “train-the-trainer” concept with U.S. SOF and MEXSOF partnering together to strengthen their instructors and build comprehensive training.

“The U.S. has a very strong NCO Corps, but the MEXSOF rank structure is inherently different,” said a 7th SFG (A) Team Sergeant. “We are teaching a train-the-trainer concept where we work with their squad leaders, who are officers, and their senior NCOs who can return and train their forces back in Mexico.”

Although initial classes were taught by the Green Berets, MEXSOF members would then lead rehearsals and practical exercises, providing additional training for MEXSOF as instructors. This type of combined training is scheduled to continue in future training iterations, furthering U.S. and MEXSOF interoperability.



*Three Green Berets from 7th SFG(A) observe MEXSOF during a react to contact drill in Alton, Virginia. June 2, 2022. 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) courtesy photo.*



*(Above) Two MEXSOF members work together on a crew served weapon system at a known distance range in Alton, Virginia., June 9, 2022. 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) courtesy photo.*

*(Top Right) MEXSOF members breach a steel door with using a "quickie-saw" in order to gain entry. June 23, 2022. 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) courtesy photo.*

*(Right) A 7th SFG(A) Green Beret provides guidance during advanced pistol marksmanship in Alton, Virginia. June 16, 2022. 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) courtesy photo.*

*(Below) Mexican Special Operations Forces rehearse insertion techniques using a Fast Rope, an technique used for rapid deployment from helicopters like the MH-47 Chinook shown on Camp Bull Simons, Florida, July 26, 2022. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Matthew Griffith.*



# U.S. Special Operations Command - Pacific



## Japan-led Exercise Malabar 2022

*Sailors with U.S. Naval Special Warfare, Japan Maritime Self Defense Force Special Boarding Unit and the Indian Navy Marine Commando Force simulate treating a combat casualty while conducting a visit, board, search, and seizure drill Nov. 8 as part of Malabar 2022. Malabar 2022 is a Japan-led, surface, air, and subsurface multi-lateral field training exercise with the Indian Navy, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, Royal Australian Navy, and U.S. Navy as participants. Malabar 2022 enhances interoperability between Australian, Indian, Japanese and U.S. maritime forces, strengthening the critical partnerships, and demonstrates U.S. naval presence in the Indo-Pacific region. Photos by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Macadam Weissman.*







# U.S. Special Operations Command - Pacific



## Exercise Balance Piston 2022



Members of the Philippine National Police-Special Action Force and U.S. 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) conduct room clearing tactics during joint combined exchange training event Balance Piston at Camp Kanawan in Morong, Philippines, Nov. 11, 2022. Balance Piston is designed to advance regional security and ensure effective responses to regional crises by bringing together a robust multinational force to address shared goals and security commitments in the Indo-Pacific. A strong, forward-looking U.S.-Philippines defense alliance, rooted in history, helps foster a free and open Indo-Pacific region where all countries enjoy prosperity and peace. Photos by U.S. Army Sgt. Bradley Belché.



# U.S. Army Special Operations Command

## U.S. Army Chemical Corps Soldiers train with U.S. Navy SEALs during Exercise Trident



*By Walter Ham*

*20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological,  
Nuclear, Explosives Command*

U.S. Army Chemical Corps Soldiers trained with U.S. Navy SEALs during Exercise Trident at Joint Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Nov. 28 – Dec. 16.

Soldiers from the 45th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) Company (Hazardous Response) are honing their lifesaving and mission-enabling skills with Naval Special Warfare Group 2.

Exercise Trident is a U.S. Special Operations Command-sponsored and Naval Special Operations Command-executed joint maritime certification and validation exercise.

The Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington-based 45th CBRN Company “Phoenix” is part of the 110th CBRN Battalion (Technical Escort), 48th Chemical Brigade and 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command, the U.S. Department of Defense’s premier all hazards formation.



*U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) specialists from the 45th CBRN Company (Hazardous Response) are honing their lifesaving and mission-enabling skills with U.S. Navy SEALs during Exercise Trident. The company’s 2nd Platoon “Black Sheep” provided CBRN planning, site assessment and decontamination for a SEAL team and a 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) MH-47 Chinook. Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Brandon Crisp and Staff Sgt. Jonathan Day.*



***U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) specialists from the 45th CBRN Company (Hazardous Response) are honing their lifesaving and mission-enabling skills with U.S. Navy SEALs during Exercise Trident. The company's 2nd Platoon "Black Sheep" provided CBRN planning, site assessment and decontamination for a SEAL team and a 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) MH-47 Chinook. Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Brandon Crisp and Staff Sgt. Jonathan Day.***

Soldiers and U.S. Army civilians from 20th CBRNE Command take on the world's most dangerous hazards in support of joint, interagency and allied operations.

U.S. Army Hazardous Response companies conduct CBRN reconnaissance, surveillance and decontamination operations with both conventional and special operations forces around the world and also provide support to civil authorities across the nation.

Capt. Shederick F. Mullgrav, the commander of the 45th CBRN Company (Hazardous Response), said Soldiers from the 2nd Platoon "Black Sheep" were selected to participate in Exercise Trident because they excelled during a validation exercise on Fort Hood, Texas, earlier in the year.

Mullgrav said the platoon provided CBRN planning, site assessment and decontamination for a SEAL team and a 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) MH-47 Chinook during Exercise Trident. The CBRN platoon simulated the challenges that a SEAL team could encounter and mitigated the effects to ensure the team can maintain

speed, intensity and violence of action.

"What's unique about this exercise is the joint environment in which the platoon operated in and the coordination which was required between Navy and Army forces to ensure mission success in a high tempo environment," said Mullgrav. "Trident 23-2 is a testament to the immense capability of the 45th CBRN Company to be able to operate at a superior level and meet the needs of the Naval Special Warfare Group."

Mullgrav, 1st Sgt. Brandon L. Trail and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jose L. Salinas coordinated and planned with many different joint commands in preparation for Exercise Trident.

"The company's capability to meet the needs of the Special Operations community further hones the proficiency of our CBRN tasks," said Mullgrav, who is from Riverdale, Georgia, and has deployed to Kuwait, Turkey and Afghanistan during his 10 years in the U.S. Army.



***U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) specialists from the 45th CBRN Company (Hazardous Response) are honing their lifesaving and mission-enabling skills with U.S. Navy SEALs during Exercise Trident. Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Brandon Crisp and Staff Sgt. Jonathan Day.***

# U.S. Army Special Operations Command

## 10th Special Forces Group

## (Airborne) Soars into Sage Eagle 22



*Green Berets from 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) exfil from their objective during the full mission profile portion of Sage Eagle 22 at White Sands Missile Range, N.M. on Sept. 23, 2022. Sage Eagle 22 is an unconventional warfare exercise testing Special Forces ability to operate in uncertain environments employing multiple assets to complete a mission. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Claudia Seal.*

*By U.S. Army Sgt. Claudia Seal  
10th Special Forces Group (Airborne)*

Operators and enablers from 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) joined conventional forces from the Army and Air Force to execute Sage Eagle 22 at White Sands Missile Range from Sept. 8-27, 2022.

Sage Eagle is a recurring, battalion sized, unconventional warfare exercise that tests Special

Forces' ability to operate in uncertain environments while training and incorporating conventional forces into an evolving contested environment to employ multiple assets and complete a mission.

“The Sage Eagle training environment replicates a complex, high threat, multi-domain and denied environment consisting of contested space, cyber and electric warfare,” said the officer-in-charge of Sage Eagle 22. “At the end of the day, the exercise enhances joint force lethality to defeat adversaries.”



**Green Berets from 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) shot different types of weapons as well as launch mortars and rockets during Sage Eagle 22 at White Sands Missile Range, N.M., on Sept. 15, 2022. Sage Eagle 22 is an unconventional warfare exercise testing Special Forces ability to operate in uncertain environments employing multiple assets to complete a mission. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Claudia Seal.**

The training replicated modern-day battlefield conditions consisting of infiltration platforms, ground mobility, special reconnaissance, weapons proficiency and close-quarter battle drills increasing interoperability.

The exercise kicked off with operators training and certifying Airmen from the 820th Base Defense Group of 93d Air Ground Operations Wing and Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 67th Armored Regiment and 4th Infantry Division.

“This has been a higher echelon of training we have never seen before,” said Tech Sgt. Dion Dolillo, a Security Forces Airman assigned to 820 BDG. “It’s been challenging but shows us a different side of the military we have not seen before.”

Airmen and Soldiers put the training they learned from the Green Berets to use while acting as oppositional forces during full mission profiles during the second week of the exercise. The FMP is a culminating event incorporating all the training from the exercise to complete final objective.

“We learned a lot of new things in a lot more detail,” added Airman 1st Class Kailyn McGovern, a Security Forces Airman assigned to 820 BDG. “We got the opportunity to actually apply the skills and see how we would react in real world combat situations.”

During full mission profiles, operators were put to the test in simulated battlefield conditions where they reacted to and broke contact, cleared rooms, conducted raids, provided convoy security, treated and evacuated casualties and reacted to improvised explosive devices.

“We have a lot of demand from various units that want to come and participate in the exercise and work with our Green Berets,” said Sage Eagle’s officer-in-charge. “We will continue these training rotations in order to prepare Special Operations Forces and the joint force to fight, survive and win in great power competitions.”



**Green Berets from 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) shot different types of weapons during Sage Eagle 22 at White Sands Missile Range, N.M., on Sept. 15, 2022. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Claudia Seal.**

# Naval Special Warfare Command

## From Salt and Sand: 60 Years of Navy SEALs



*By Petty Officer 1st Class Daniel Gaither  
Naval Special Warfare Group ONE*

SEAL Team 1 welcomed frogmen of the past and present to celebrate 60 years of rich SEAL history in a ceremony at Silver Strand Training Complex, Coronado, California, Oct. 29, 2022.

Retired and active operators, representing warfighters from every era of American combat since the Vietnam War, reunited with former teammates. Enlisted Sailors and officers alike stood united by the trident they had all earned and worn on their chests.

SEAL Team 1 Chaplain Lt. Cmdr. Aman Grant commemorated the nearby beach that had been the forging ground for America's most formidable warriors during his opening invocation.

"For 60 years, these American men, who loved the Constitution of our country, American men who had self-sacrifice twisted in their DNA, American men who lived to the beat of a different drum, American men who were both quiet yet deadly, loud and proud!" Grant pronounced powerfully. "For 60 years, these men were birthed into SEALs from this Pacific salt and Coronado sand."

Grant's sermon to 60 years of SEAL history received roaring applause from past and present SEALs, who shared memories of perseverance and being pushed to their limits just a few miles down the beach.

The Naval Special Warfare community's history predates the SEAL teams' establishment by twenty years. In August 1942, the Amphibious Scouts and Raiders (Joint) and the Special Mission Naval Demolition Unit were established at Amphibious Training Base Little Creek, Virginia, to perform specific missions during Operation Torch – the allied invasion of North Africa – in November 1942.

Soon after, the Cold War brought a new era of conflict and geopolitics, calling for a new type of warfighter.

In his 1961 inaugural address, President John F. Kennedy assured the world of America's resolve against the challenges



*Retired Rear Adm. Thomas "The Hulk" Richards, SEAL Team 1's 13th commanding officer, reflects on his 30-year naval career and the history of Naval Special Warfare during a ceremony celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Navy SEAL Teams at Silver Strand Training Complex. The 60th anniversary is a chance to celebrate Naval Special Warfare's rich history, heritage, and time-honored tradition of serving with humility. Naval Special Warfare is the nation's premier maritime special operations force, uniquely positioned to extend the fleet's reach and deliver all domain options for naval and joint force commands. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Daniel Gaither.*

it may soon face.

"Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty," said Kennedy. "This much we pledge--and more."

Less than one full year later, Kennedy established the first SEAL teams at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, California, and Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Virginia, in January 1962, pulling Sailors from preexisting underwater demolition teams. There was no celebration or ceremony to mark the occasion, only the quiet understanding the U.S. Navy needed an unconventional maritime warfare capability.

For the 60 original members of SEAL Team 1, also known as its plank owners, their mission was to conduct unconventional warfare, counter-guerrilla warfare, and

clandestine operations. They would soon face their first test in Vietnam.

Sixty years later, the operators of SEAL Team 1 stand upon the shoulders of those first 60.

Since the inception of the SEAL Teams, their operations have spanned the globe, participating in every major U.S. conflict. The geography and the capabilities may have changed, but not the type of person needed to meet the challenges.

“Our new kit is a bit upgraded, but I think you’ll recognize the traits of our young warriors are no different from our founders in January of 1962,” said Cmdr. Marty Timmons, SEAL Team 1’s 30th and current commanding officer.

The strength of the SEAL community derives from the individuals at the teams, and the dedication they have to each other, inside and out of the combat zone.

Celebrating the 60th anniversary of the SEAL Teams honors that dedication. Throughout months of planning, members at all levels used every group chat and contact distro list they could find to contact SEAL Team 1 alumni near and far to make the trip to Coronado.

The planning efforts resulted in an attendance of nearly 300 guests, including approximately 150 retired SEAL Team 1 alumni.

Current members of SEAL Team 1 greeted past teammates and their families. Connecting guests with the past, the team hosted static displays of new and old SEAL gear and uniforms, weapons displays, old underwater demolition handbooks, and photos and medals provided by some of the plank-owning members of SEAL Team 1.

It was an opportunity for retired operators to reminisce and share lessons with current operators, as people who had previously walked in their shoes and knew their journey well.

In his address to the crowd, Timmons thanked the former SEAL Team 1 members and their families for making the trip to celebrate the milestone. He also honored the Gold Star families of the SEALs who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Timmons gave special recognition to two plank owners in attendance, James Kinney, SEAL Team 1’s first executive officer, and Arthur Abbett, whom he thanked “for being the true pathfinders for our community.”

Timmons then introduced the ceremony’s guest of honor, retired Rear Adm. Thomas “The Hulk” Richards.

A SEAL legend for many in the crowd, Richards went to Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) after his commissioning in 1969 and completed training with Class 55 in April 1970. He was assigned to SEAL Team 1 and deployed to South Vietnam from August 1970 to February 1971, where he was wounded in a firefight with the Viet Cong and later awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star for his actions.

While Richards did not get a chance to deploy again to Vietnam after recovering from his wounds, the remainder of his 30-year career would cover all facets of Naval Special Warfare. He went on to serve several staff and command positions before returning to SEAL Team 1 as its 13th commanding officer from 1986 to 1988. Richards finished his service as the commander of Naval Special Warfare Command from 1996 to 1999, where he led the next generation of SEALs into the modern era.

Richards spoke on the shared trials the SEALs in attendance had overcome, the ever-widening scope of the Naval Special Warfare mission from when he joined to now, and how the lessons from those who had gone before still applied today.

“Commitment, focus, dedication, personal sacrifice, the ability to persevere under extreme duress, these characteristics are the reason why we are still here 60 years later as the premier special operations team that we are,” said Richards. “I have always said that the best attribute that we have as SEALs, and the best weapon we bring to the table or the fight, is that we are the best problem solvers across the Department of Defense. Period.”

The 60th anniversary concluded with a Star Ceremony to honor the recent passing of three SEAL Team 1 plank owners. It is a tradition that serves to honor the memory of the SEAL community’s founding members, remind current command members of the Naval Special Warfare legacy, and provide surviving families with a connection to the service of their loved ones.

Ronald Gauthier joined UDT-12 in 1961 and joined SEAL Team 1 in 1962, where he served until 1965. He continued to serve in the Naval Reserves from 1983 to 1999. His three daughters placed a star next to his name on the SEAL Team 1 plank owner plaque.

Peter Slempla enlisted in 1954, joining UDT-11 in 1957. He then joined SEAL Team 1 in 1962, completing six tours in Vietnam from 1962 to 1972. Slempla would become SEAL Team 1’s first command master chief and later serve as the team commander for the Leap Frogs. His brother-in-law placed a star on the SEAL Team 1 plank owner plaque next to his name.

Jack Perkins enlisted at 17 in 1948 and joined SEAL Team 1 in 1962 from his underwater demolition team. He served multiple tours in Vietnam and retired as a chief petty officer. His wife placed a star on the SEAL Team 1 plank owner plaque next to his name.

Since 1962, Naval Special Warfare has been the nation’s premier maritime special operations force – a highly reliable and lethal force – ready to conduct full-spectrum operations, unilaterally or with partners, in support of national objectives, and uniquely positioned to extend the Fleet’s reach, delivering all-domain options for naval and joint force commanders.

# Naval Special Warfare Command



## A legacy of command: Navy SEAL father-son duos celebrate Special Boat Team 22 change of command

*By Naval Special Warfare Command Public Affairs Office*

A family tradition of service was on full display at the recent Special Boat Team 22 (SBT-22) change of command ceremony onboard Stennis Space Center in Mississippi on Oct. 28. Cmdr. Jerry Weers relieved Cmdr. Brad Schoultz as the commanding officer of SBT-22, 2022. The event marked a unique happenstance in Naval Special Warfare history as both the incoming and outgoing commanding officers of the unit are sons of retired Navy SEAL captains who were also in attendance

at the ceremony.

Retired Capt. Bob Schoultz, the father of outgoing commanding officer Cmdr. Brad Schoultz, graduated with BUD/S class 83 in 1975 and served at Underwater Demolition Team 21, with the German Kampfschwimmers, SEAL Team 2, and NSW Development Group. Additionally, he commanded NSW Unit 8 in Panama and was the commodore of Naval Special Warfare Group 2 from 1998-2000. In 2005, he retired from his dedicated career of service.

When asked about the role his father's career played in his own decision to join the NSW community,



*Members of Special Boat Team 22 participate in a Special Operations Craft Riverine demonstration at the Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School. NAVSCIATTS trains and educates Foreign Security Forces and other international students on small craft strategy, operations, communications, weapons, maintenance and instructor development. Photo by U.S. Navy Seaman Richard Miller.*



***A member of Special Boat Team 22 acts as a spotter during a Special Operations Craft Riverine demonstration at the Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School. Photo by U.S. Navy Seaman Richard Miller.***

Schultz stated his father was “instrumental in me getting to where I’m at today.”

Almost two decades later, Schultz demonstrated commitment to advancing the community in his own way. During his time at SBT-22, Schultz was responsible for bringing a mindset of adaptation and evolution to the command. After studying how organizations change and adapt during his time at the Naval Postgraduate School, Schultz applied his academic findings and made it a priority to increase the unit’s capabilities once in command, stressing a mindset of modernization. Throughout his tenure at SBT-22, he worked to balance readiness while preparing his unit of special operators, combat support personnel and combatant craft to fight and win in future conflicts. Schultz discussed maintaining the strong foundation of SBT-22’s readiness while building in the mechanisms to adapt to shifting global threats. He said, “the longer you hold to a status quo the harder it will be to change.” The changes and policies instituted by Schultz during his tour increased the dynamic capabilities of an already flexible force.

The Schoultz family is not alone in their legacy of NSW service. Retired Capt. Jerry Weers, father of the new SBT-22 commanding officer, Cmdr. Jerry Weers, enlisted in 1975 and graduated with BUD/S class 85 as a seaman. He later earned a commission, climbing to the rank of captain before retirement. The elder Weers also served with the German Kampfschwimmers and

commanded SBT-20, SEAL Delivery Team (SDV) Team 1, NSW Unit 2, and NSWG4. He retired in 2006 after 31 years of dedicated service.

Of note, Cmdr. Weers, and his father served simultaneously for 11 years, from 1995 to 2006. “My dad never pushed being a SEAL on me, but he was absolutely preparing me,” said Cmdr. Weers. “We would dive, climb mountains, and work out together; my lifestyle was based on the Naval Special Warfare community.”

Reflecting on the lessons that he learned from his father, Weers stated that his dad taught him to be an empathetic leader and how to understand the impact that his decisions will have on others.

“My dad is a respected leader in the community. For my father and I, this is a family business,” said Weers. “He created a legacy to live up to.”

As he takes command of SBT-22, Weers is focused on creating the best and most professional boat detachment in the world. To face our nation’s current threats, he said that his team must be focused on creativity, innovation, and experimentation to continually gain the competitive advantage over our nation’s adversaries.

As the NSW community celebrates the 60th anniversary of the U.S. Navy SEAL teams this year, the community reflects on the considerable sacrifices and proud legacy of all NSW teammates, such as retired Capt. Schoultz and Weers, who blazed the path for today’s operators. SBT-22’s change of command illustrated the strong history and heritage of the NSW community and the powerful, and sometimes familial, influence one generation of operators has on the next.



***Members of Special Boat Team 22 help a teammate back onto a boat during a Special Operations Craft Riverine demonstration at the Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School. development. Photo by U.S. Navy Seaman Richard Miller.***

# Naval Special Warfare Command



## Naval Special Warfare Group 1 Medical Supply Program Manager receives DoD award

By Petty Officer 1st Class Chelsea Meiller  
Naval Special Warfare Group ONE Public Affairs

Retired Chief Storekeeper Steven Elliott received the 2022 Department of Defense (DoD) Outstanding Employee/Service Member Annual Disability Award for his work as Naval Special Warfare Group (NSWG) 1's medical supply program manager.

Each October, service members and civilian DoD employees are selected to receive this award for their outstanding contributions to the federal workforce.

"I am very proud of Steve. He is an invaluable member of the Naval Special Warfare Group 1 team,"

said Capt. David Abernathy, commander, NSWG-1. "Keeping our Sailors healthy and ready is our top priority, and his steadfast work ethic and dedication to his teammates allows us to do just that."

NSWG-1 mans, trains, equips, develops, deploys and sustains Naval special warfare forces in support of combatant commanders around the world. Elliott's dedication to duty helped NSWG-1 uphold their mission statement by improving operational readiness and capability.

Elliott, who has been NSWG-1's medical supply program manager since 2015, is responsible for a \$2.49 million annual budget and the maintenance of \$10

million in medical supplies and equipment. His experience in the collection and analysis of supply statistics, workload data, product reviews, and test and evaluation ensured NSWG-1 procured the highest quality products at the most cost-efficient price point to improve SEAL survivability in austere operations.

Through decades of combined active-duty military and DoD civilian employee service, Elliott reflected on what receiving the 42nd annual award means to him.

"I have had the opportunity to work with NSW on active duty and as a federal employee for 35 years," he said. "The people who I serve with today are like family. I enjoy what I do, and I love the service

members that are out there every day doing the work to keep our country free. I am honored to be part of this team and being given this award confirms my hard work and dedication to the Sailors I work with."

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The

U.S. Department of Labor uses the month, which is themed "Disability: Part of the Equity Equation" for 2022, to highlight the vital role disabled people play in making our nation's workforce diverse and inclusive.

At the virtual awards ceremony on Oct. 20, Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen H. Hicks spoke about the importance of utilizing diversity to strengthen the DoD.

"Today, we celebrate the core element of our

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*I am very proud of Steve. He is an invaluable member of the Naval Special Warfare Group 1 team. Keeping our Sailors healthy and ready is our top priority, and his steadfast work ethic and dedication to his teammates allows us to do just that.*

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— Capt. David Abernathy, commander, NSWG-1

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unmatched strength as a military and Department of Defense — our people,” said Hicks. “Maintaining that strength requires tapping into every reservoir of talents and skills that

America has to offer. That includes people with disabilities — who bring so much to this department through their talents, skills, education and motivation to serve.”

Elliott, who is one of 28 individual awardees, spoke about what the award means to him.

“I’m honored to be selected to represent all my brothers and sisters with disabilities,” he said. “Even

though we have disabilities, we can do anything we set our minds to. Hard work, dedication and perseverance has gotten every one of us to where we are today, and

this award solidifies that.”

Since 1962, Naval Special Warfare has been the nation’s premier maritime special operations force – a highly reliable and lethal force – always ready to conduct full-spectrum operations, unilaterally or with

partners, in support of national objectives, and uniquely positioned to extend the Fleet’s reach, delivering all-domain options for Naval and joint force commanders.

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*I’m honored to be selected to represent all my brothers and sisters with disabilities. Even though we have disabilities, we can do anything we set our minds to. Hard work, dedication and perseverance has gotten every one of us to where we are today, and this award solidifies that.*

— Retired Chief Storekeeper Steven Elliott

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**Retired Chief Storekeeper Steven Elliott, Naval Special Warfare Group 1’s medical supply program manager, poses for a photo in his office at the Silver Strand Training Complex. Elliott was one of 28 recipients of the 2022 Department of Defense (DoD) Outstanding Employee/Service Member Annual Disability Award. Naval Special Warfare is the nation’s premier maritime special operations force, uniquely positioned to extend the fleet’s reach and deliver all-domain options for naval and joint force commanders. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Chelsea D. Meiller.**

# Naval Special Warfare Command

## NSW operators train with the 160th Nightstalkers



*A West Coast-based Naval Special Warfare operator fast ropes from an MH-60 Blackhawk assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) "Night Stalkers" at Naval Outlying Landing Field Imperial Beach, California. Naval Special Warfare is the nation's premier maritime special operations force, uniquely positioned to extend the fleet's reach and deliver all-domain options for naval and joint force commanders. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Daniel Gaither.*





# Air Force Special Operations Command



## 73rd SOS Gunship crews awarded MacKay Trophy for 'most meritorious flight' of 2021

By U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Natalie Fiorilli  
1st Special Operations Wing Public Affairs

### Chaos.

In one word, that's how the U.S. Air Force AC-130J gunship crews of Shadow 77 and Shadow 78 described the scene of Kabul, Afghanistan, on Aug. 15, 2021.

"There were just cars and people everywhere trying to get on to the airfield," said 1st Lt. William Bachmann, copilot on board Shadow 78.

For the crews of Shadow 77 and 78, the mission to support the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan would go on to last nearly 30 hours combined - resulting in the evacuation of roughly 2,000 Americans.

Those members of the 73rd Special Operations Squadron were honored for their efforts as recipients of the 2021 MacKay Trophy during a ceremony at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, Dec. 7, 2022.

The trophy, which is administered by the Air Force and the National Aeronautic Association for the "most meritorious flight" of the year by an Air Force person or organization, was presented to the crew by U.S. Air Force Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Gen. David Allvin, alongside Greg Principato, NAA President.

"Shadow 77 and Shadow 78 - you own, now, a special place," said Allvin. "Your name is on the same board with the greats...there's not many that can say that. You earned your way onto that by being the best Airmen that you could when the nation called upon you."

### Not a matter of "if" but "when"

In the days and weeks leading up to Aug. 15, the gunship crews tracked the latest updates as Taliban

forces made advances throughout Afghanistan.

At the time, the members of the 73rd SOS at Hurlburt Field, were deployed to Al Dhafra Air Base in the United Arab Emirates.

The crews remained on standby to support the U.S. withdrawal.

"[We knew] it was going to happen at some point and that we were definitely going to be part of it," said Bachmann. "It was surreal."

On the morning of Aug. 15, the team assigned to Shadow 77 woke up to a notification telling them to report earlier than planned.

Capt. Lawrence Bria, aircraft commander of Shadow 77, said the crews had just enough time to quickly grab food, before heading to the gunship to get ready for takeoff.

"We didn't know how long the night was going to go," Bria said. "But, as we flew toward Afghanistan, we talked about how we were going to be there as long as we needed to be and as long as leadership would allow us to be there."

As the gunship approached Kabul, they could see celebratory gunfire from the Taliban, as well as fireworks in the distance.

Upon arrival, Shadow 77's initial mission was to provide overhead support as helicopter crews worked to evacuate the embassy and transport Americans to Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport.

Shortly after, Shadow 78 arrived on scene to assist in the evacuation efforts.

Ultimately, the crews on board Shadow 77 and Shadow 78 served as "eyes in the sky," Bria explained.

"We were there in case things went even worse and a threat came to the Americans, either at the embassy or

on the airfield, we would be there, ready for it,” he said.

A highly modified aircraft, the AC-130J is used to perform close air support, air interdiction and armed reconnaissance missions. Unique to this gunship in particular, the AC-130J features a precision strike package that includes 30mm and 105mm weapons.

Additionally, the gunship is equipped with non-lethal, overt lasers that can be used for crowd control and to deter violence.

This feature in particular became helpful as chaos broke out on the airfield, Bria noted.

“During the rush toward the airfield, we were able to use the spotlight to help friendly forces on the ground,” Bria explained. “If we saw anyone try to jump the fence or make a break for it on the runway, we used it to help ground forces to stop them.”

Their crowd dispersion efforts allowed eight U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III aircraft to land and take off from Hamid Karzai International Airport - carrying the Americans and Afghan refugees to safety.

In total, Shadow 77 and 78 executed a 29.8-hour mission - with Shadow 77 flying the longest unaugmented AC-130J flight to date at 15.7 hours.

And while the mission lasted longer than some may have expected, Bria said the crews simply fell back on their training to push through.

“At that point, your instincts just kick in to make

sure the Americans on the ground are safe, and you push your exhaustion and your stress and your worries to the side to get the mission done,” Bria said.

#### **Air Force history**

Each of the 18 crew members received a medallion to commemorate their selection for the prestigious award.

During the ceremony, Air Force Special Operations Deputy Commander, Maj. Gen. Matthew Davidson lauded the crews for their “relentless” commitment to the mission’s success.

“Shadow 77 and Shadow 78 have earned their spot on an incredible list of Airmen that are historic in our Air Force,” said Davidson. “America’s competitive advantages are these Airmen and those hundreds of thousands [of] others that are out there. No adversary will ever compete with the Airmen that the United States Air Force will put on the battlefield.”

Following the presentation, the trophy will return to its permanent display at the Smithsonian’s National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

For the crews of Shadow 77 and 78, the award serves as recognition for all of the forces involved in the mission, Bachmann said.

“I wish that we could give it to every crew that was out there,” he said. “Everyone that was involved should take pride in this trophy being awarded in recognition of that mission.”



*An AC-130J Ghost Rider. U.S. Air Force courtesy photo.*

# Air Force Special Operations Command



## MQ-9s demonstrate new capabilities in Emerald Flag

*By U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. James R. Wilson  
919th Special Operations Wing*

Air Force Special Operations Command's Remotely Piloted Aircraft enterprise participated in an Emerald Flag exercise on Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, Oct. 17-20 2022, using the large force event to demonstrate the Agile Combat Employment of MQ-9 Reaper aircraft anywhere in the world.

Emerald Flag is a multi-domain exercise conducted on the Eglin test and training range allowing the Joint Force to

connect air, land, sea, space and cyberspace for the advancement of complex weapons systems.

"One of the many benefits of our participation in Emerald Flag is that it provides established procedures for increased MQ-9 live training outside of the combat environment," said Corey, a major in the 2nd Special Operations Squadron and MQ-9 pilot.

Corey and other members of the 2nd SOS have a steady state commitment to support combat operations worldwide which often limits stateside training.



*An MQ-9 Reaper prepares for takeoff at a Forward Arming and Refueling Point at the Eglin range in northwest Florida Oct. 20, 2022. The MQ-9 demonstrated enhanced capabilities in support of the Air Force's Agile Combat Employment during the recent Emerald Flag exercise hosted at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. Photo by U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. James R. Wilson.*



**An Air Commando from the 26th Special Tactics Squadron at Cannon Air Force Base, N.M., provides oversight of an MC-130J aircraft on the Eglin range during Emerald Flag Oct. 19, 2022. The MC-130J aircraft was refueling an MQ-9 Reaper aircraft demonstrating the Air Force's Agile Combat Employment capability against potential adversaries. Photo by U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. James R. Wilson.**

In Emerald Flag, members of the Air Force Reserve's 2nd SOS and their active-duty counterparts in the 65th SOS integrated with MC-130H Combat Talon II aircraft and leveraged the wide range of capabilities presented by Mission Support Team specialists, both from Hurlburt, Field, Fla. The partnership focused largely on MQ-9 aircraft recovery operations. MST members set up security and provided a communications station on the "deployed" airfield in support of the Reaper for the exercise.

The MQ-9 aircraft currently employs a Launch and Recovery Element consisting of infrastructure and ground crews at forward operating locations for take off and landing operations. Emerald Flag offered a venue for AFSOC's Remotely Piloted Aircraft community to once again demonstrate its Satellite Communications Launch and Recovery capability.

"SATCOM Launch and Recovery allows the Mission

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*Emerald Flag was our opportunity to highlight how we are leveraging Agile Combat Employment into MQ-9 operations. We did this by using a small team, landing at a simulated forward operating base, refueling and continuing to fly the mission. All of this was accomplished with an extremely small footprint which opens up the possibility for using MQ-9s in places we could not reach previously.*

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Control Element to conduct ground operations, taxi, takeoff and land via satellite communications without the need for an Launch and Recovery Element," said Dakota, also a major in the 2nd SOS and MQ-9 pilot. "This capability significantly reduces logistics and airlift requirements when the asset is forward deployed."

To demonstrate its enhanced range and reduced footprint, the MQ-9 performed SLR at four separate airfields within 28 hours to include Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico, and three bases in the Florida Panhandle to include Eglin Air Force Base Field 6, Duke Field and Hurlburt Field.

Without SLR, this would not have been possible considering the infrastructure required when using a Launch and Recovery Element for MQ-9 operations.

The MQ-9s teamed with MC-130J aircraft, a small maintenance team, the MST and a small element of special tactics squadron members to secure Field 6 which was simulated as being behind enemy lines. In doing so, the MQ-9 Reapers demonstrated their ability to forward arm and refuel as part of the exercise.

"Emerald Flag was our opportunity to highlight how we are leveraging Agile Combat Employment into MQ-9 operations," said Dakota. "We did this by using a small team, landing at a simulated forward operating base, refueling and continuing to fly the mission. All of this was accomplished with an extremely small

footprint which opens up the possibility for using MQ-9s in places we could not reach previously."

Exercise officials emphasized the team approach with multifunctional Airmen utilized in Emerald Flag was key to their success.

"We are leading the enterprise in validating the MQ-9's Automatic Takeoff and Landing Capability and demonstrating its impact on the operational mission," said Dakota. "Exercises like Emerald Flag are invaluable and

provide unique opportunities for us to continue shaping the future of MQ-9 operations."

# Air Force Special Operations Command



## AFSOC receives final AC-130J



*An AC-130J Ghost rider taxis on the flightline following the AC-130J Ghost rider Dedication and Delivery Ceremony Nov. 2, 2022, at Bob Sikes Airport in Crestview, Florida. The ceremony marked the 31st and final AC-130J delivery to the U.S. Air Force. The AC-130J Ghost rider is a fifth-generation gunship that provides close air support, air interdiction and armed reconnaissance. Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Michael Charles.*

*By U.S. Air Force Capt. Alicia Premo  
Air Force Special Operations Command*

Air Force Special Operations Command received its 31st and final AC-130J Ghost rider, completing the command's transition from the legacy AC-130W, AC-130U and AC-130H fleets.

Following a commemoration ceremony at the Lockheed Martin Gunship Modification Facility in Crestview Nov. 2, the final AC-130J was delivered to the 27th Special Operations Wing at Cannon Air Force Base, N.M.

During the AC-130J Ghost rider Dedication and Delivery Ceremony, Lt. Col. Joe Allen, Gunship Program manager and narrator for the event, briefly discussed the history of nose art and how it became a common way of depicting the name of an airplane. He also explained how pilots would stencil names or call signs on their aircraft, providing a sense of connection and further a feeling of pride for themselves and the crew that kept the airplane flying.

"Aircraft #31 is no different [than previous World War II aircraft] and is being named in honor of Mr. Stan 'Sluggo' Siefke who was instrumental in the developments of the precision strike package prior to

cutting first metal on the MC-130W,” said Allen. “Sluggo’s impacts on Whiskey and Ghost rider have been nothing short of outstanding and we are honored to have him in attendance today.”

Lt. Gen. Jim Slife, AFSOC Commander, represented the command at the ceremony and spoke about his experience with acquiring and receiving the AC-130J.

Slife recalled that it had been “only a few years back,” when then Col. Slife working at the Pentagon for the Office of Secretary of Defense, began the messaging and formative language that initiated the program that he’s seeing come full circle.

“In the fall of 2009, the Secretary of Defense decided to recapitalize [the AC-130] with C-130Js to build the platforms we see behind us today,” said Slife.

He also spoke about seeing the first J model go into combat in the summer of 2019 while serving as the AFSOC commander.

“The airplane and its predecessors have exceeded all our expectations and kept more Americans alive than any other airplane on the battlefield,” said Slife.

“The future is going to be different than what we have experienced for the last 20 years, but one thing I’m certain of is this airplane will be relevant to whatever the future operating environment brings, so thank you all for delivering such a magnificent capability to today’s warfighters,” he said.

Capt. Katie Tiedemann, 73rd Special Operations Squadron Weapons Systems Officer, shared operational vignettes of the AC-130J during the event. She specifically shared her own experience deployed in Afghanistan when she supported Operation Allies Refuge.

“Over two weeks, my own crew, and two others, continued to employ our aircraft for countless hours, reopening the [Kabul] airport and evacuating 123,000 refugees,” said Tiedemann. “Much of the rest of the story you have seen and heard, but our two crews who flew during the evacuation will be recognized this fall with the MacKay trophy for accomplishing the most meritorious flight of the year.”

Following Capt. Tiedemann’s presentation, William Innes, Deputy Director for Acquisition, United States Special Operations Command, spoke about USSOCOM’s part in navigating the acquisitions process to get the weapons systems from industry to the warfighter.

“When we can see firsthand that it [the acquisition



**Attendees listen to remarks during the AC-130J Ghost rider Dedication and Delivery Ceremony Nov. 2, 2022, at Bob Sikes Airport in Crestview, Florida. The aircraft, which was the final one delivered of the 31 purchased by the U.S. Air Force, was nicknamed after Sluggo because of his instrumental work in the development of the aircraft’s precision strike package. Photo by Nick Denney.**

process] works, it delivers the best weapons system the nation can get, it is truly inspirational,” he said.

Vic Torla, Lockheed Martin Vice President of Special Operations Forces Global Logistics Support Services, expressed his gratitude for the partnership between Lockheed Martin and the Air Force.

“A great example of a government and industry partnership to stand up this facility,” said Torla. “A ten-year journey to deliver what is now 30 combat capable aircraft to Special Operations Command.”

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Gen. Slife along with aircrew stepped onto the new AC-130J and took off for Cannon Air Force Base, N.M., where the final AC-130J will become part of the 27th Special Operations Wing.

He concluded with his gratitude for all who contributed to making the AC-130J the success it is today.

“For the whole team today, for the team that maintained the airplane, that built the airplane, that acquired the airplane, that fly the airplane, that tested the airplane, thank you for what you’ve done.”

The AC-130J is a transport aircraft modified for special forces operations and has been used to support AFSOC in missions around the world. It is a fifth-generation gunship that can provide close air support, air interdiction and armed reconnaissance.

# Air Force Special Operations Command



## AFSOC conducts live-fire exercise with Rapid Dragon

*By 137th Special Operations Wing Public Affairs*

Two Air Force Special Operations Command wings partnered in a total force initiative to conduct the first live-fire demonstration of Rapid Dragon, a long-range palletized munitions system, in the U.S. European Command theater over Andøya Space Defense Range, Norway, Nov. 9, 2022.

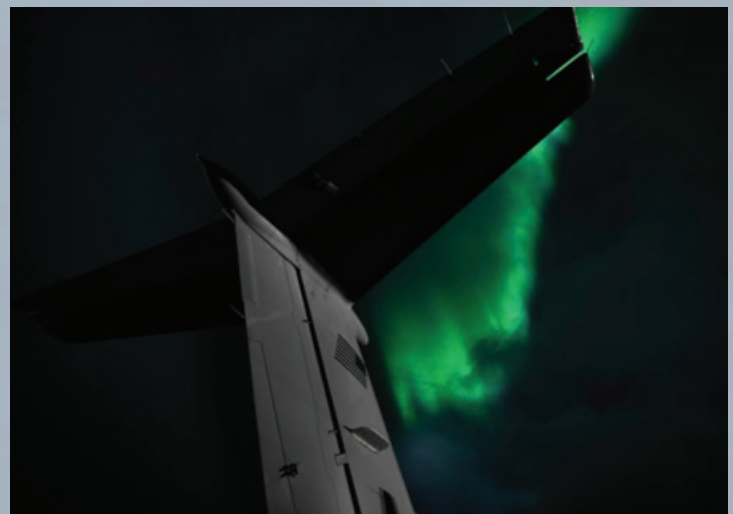
During U.S. Special Operations Command Europe exercise ATREUS 22-4, two MC-130J Commando II aircraft assigned to the 352d Special Operations Wing flew the Rapid Dragon package to a Royal Norwegian Air Force training range and deployed it over the Atlantic Ocean. An MC-12W assigned to the 137th SOW, Oklahoma Air National Guard, used its manned intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities to collect and disseminate information about the release.

This is the first time Rapid Dragon has been employed using cargo aircraft in the U.S. European Command theater, and precision munitions capabilities for medium-sized or larger cargo aircraft allows U.S. and NATO forces a flexible rapid response option.

“It’s really easily exportable to our partners and allies around the globe that may want to increase the utility of their air force,” said Lt. Gen. Jim Slife, AFSOC commander, during a recent Air and Space Force Association event. “When you look at partner capability, we have a lot of partners around the globe that don’t have heavy bomber-type platforms that would be traditional carriers of those types of munitions, but they’ve got plenty of C-130s proliferated around the world.”

More than 40 countries operate C-130 Hercules aircraft, but AFSOC has been the only U.S. Air Force combatant command to demonstrate this system.

“An MC-130J is the perfect aircraft for this



*The tail of a 137th Special Operations Wing MC-12W appears struck by the Aurora Borealis while participating in ATREUS 22-4 at Andøya Space Defense Range, Norway, Nov. 7, 2022. Two Air Force Special Operations Command wings partnered in a total force initiative to conduct the first live-fire demonstration of Rapid Dragon, a long-range palletized munitions system. Photo by U.S. Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Brigette Waltermire.*

capability because we can land and operate from a 3,000-foot highways and austere landing zones whereas a bomber cannot,” said Lt. Col. Valerie Knight, 352d SOW mission commander. “Additionally, a crew qualified to execute heavy equipment airdrop could employ this operationally. After the successful execution of this airdrop, we have now proven we can employ the same weapons system — creating a dilemma for our adversaries. As the only U.S. Air Force Special Operations Wing in Europe, this capability provides our allies, partners and the joint force an additional response option, strengthening our deterrence capabilities in USEUCOM.”

Developing relationships between allies and partners extended to the total force with the inclusion of



***A palletized effects system falls from the cargo hold of a 352d Special Operations Wing MC-130J Commando II during a live-fire demonstration for ATREUS 22-4 at Andøya Space Defense Range, Norway, Nov. 9, 2022. This is the first time Rapid Dragon, a precision effects capability for medium-sized or larger cargo aircraft that allows U.S. and NATO forces a flexible rapid response option, has been employed in the U.S. European Command theater. Photo by U.S. Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Brigette Waltermire.***

an Oklahoma Air National Guard MC-12W aircraft. Two Air Force pilots and a combat systems officer were part of the MC-12W aircrew to conduct the mission, with support from aircrew flight equipment and special operations communications Airmen.

“The 137th SOW actively seeks out exercises where we can demonstrate our unique capabilities and

create relationships with our partners — not just within AFSOC and the total force, but across a multi-national coalition,” said Maj. Murray Ludwig, a 137th SOW combat systems officer. “Thanks to the assistance of our Norwegian allies, our integration into this exercise has been seamless. We were able to demonstrate that our wing can provide top-tier ISR support and a wide array of sustainment capabilities for our joint partners.”

Members of the 137th Mission Sustainment Team also participated, conducting pre-deployment site surveys and airfield assessments. While it is not the first time the team has worked with coalition forces, it is the first time the MST has conducted their mission in a setting realistic to the austere environments they will operate in as they support global SOF operations.

“The multi-capable Airman concept allows us to become completely self-sufficient anywhere in the world,” Ludwig said. “The training our operations Airmen and Mission Sustainment Team are receiving here will be critically important to their future war-fighting potential.”

As AFSOC postures its forces for the future fight, developing unconventional, innovative capabilities to protect against near-peer adversaries is critical.

“This rapid roll on, roll off capability extends America’s ability to project firepower across the globe,” said Knight. “It doesn’t require any aircraft modifications, making it incredibly easy to employ any place, any time.”



***Members of the 137th Mission Sustainment Team look over a map as they conduct a site survey during ATREUS 22-4 at Andøya Space Defense Range, Norway, Nov. 8, 2022. Photo by U.S. Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Brigette Waltermire.***

# Marine Forces, Special Operations Command



## Critical Skills Operators exercise in Surabaya, Indonesia

*A U.S. Marine Corps critical skills operator holds security alongside Indonesian Komando Pasukan Katak forces while maneuvering towards an anchored ship during vessel board, search, and seizure training in Surabaya, Indonesia, Aug. 20, 2022. The combined VBSS event provided advanced training in boarding and clearing a ship with simulated enemy forces and hostages onboard. Through these engagements, U.S. special operations forces build our collective strength and interoperability alongside Indonesian forces, enabling teams to provide flexible responses to contingencies and supporting a strong U.S.-Indonesian partnership. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Luke Cohen.*



# Headquarters - U.S. Special Operations Command

## Headquarters hosts holiday party

Photos by U.S. Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Eric Alabiso.



Photo by Travis Simmons.



# Headquarters - U.S. Special Operations Command

## “There’s always a next act”

*Former Mob infiltrator and elite NBA Referee Bob Delaney follows a path helping people impacted by trauma – Leading to his new book on pandemic front-line health care workers, Heroes are Human*

By Bob Delaney

*The following article is contributed by the author. The views and opinions expressed are those of the author and do not represent the views of the Department of Defense or U.S. Special Operations Command. Further the appearance or discussion of any books or publications does not constitute or imply endorsement by the Department of Defense or U.S. Special Operations Command.*

“If you are what you do, then when you don’t, you aren’t.”

I often heard that phrase from Bob Moawad and his son Trevor – the late, great giants of mental conditioning for athletes and two of the most inspirational, intelligent men I have had the pleasure to call friends.

Their statement has always resonated with me. We all understand that identifying what we do is a major part of who we are. Yet regardless of your occupation, your title need not define you as a person – a human being, with core values, beliefs and relationships to sustain you, beyond whatever position you hold in life.

I prefer the word “transition” rather than “retirement” when talking about occupational endings. Retirement sounds final, while transition suggests an ongoing process leading to a new journey. That’s something I have done throughout my life: transitioning from law enforcement to serving a quarter century as an NBA referee to the league’s Vice President of Referee Operations/Director of Officials, to my outreach of more than 40 years helping first responders and the military – and now our front-line medical community – cope with the immense trauma they endure.

The late NBA Commissioner David Stern was a demanding boss, who would become a good friend and mentor. As David often told me, “There’s always a next act.” In a way, he was talking about transitions, too. And we can all learn from those words, regardless of our

chosen profession. Always be open to finding your next act in life, because it is never too late to find fulfillment and make a difference in the lives of others.

Back in the early 1970s, I was a New Jersey State Trooper who was tasked with an undercover assignment infiltrating the Mafia and that experience triggered a transition.

Experiences create change and pave the way for development, growth, resilience and wisdom. Living another life within a subculture of traditional organized crime changed my perspective. My morality changed from my days as a uniformed Trooper to my Mob associate alias of Bobby Covert, and for a time I began to think that some of the Goodfellas in my daily midst were actually good fellows.

Those three years living with a double identity were like being trapped inside a garbage dump – in time a stench will come over you. I shared that Sopranos-like life story in my book Covert, My Years Infiltrating the Mob, chronicling how Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder resulted from being two personas. And when I surfaced, the undercover life stayed with me, but the game I played from 10 years old through college began calling me back. Basketball has always been there for me. Hoops therapy allowed for a healing journey.

I could no longer play the game, so I started to referee. There are only three groups of people that get to put their feet on the basketball court: players, coaches and referees. Officiating allowed me to be back on the “floor.” It began with middle school games then high school and summer “pro-am” league games. Think of “pro-am” golf events – high-end talent sprinkled in with weekend hackers. I participated in summer leagues throughout New York City, Newark and the Jersey Shore Summer Pro League.

The game provided me with an inner peace. I became a student of trauma and learned how it impacts us. We tend to think of post-trauma as emotional and psychological, yet we have to be aware of the

physiological response as well. Basketball offered me a calmness within chaos. And it provided a much-needed transition.

My second book, *Surviving the Shadows: A Journey of Hope into Post Traumatic Stress* was born out of the parallel work I did during my basketball career. The post-trauma work I had been doing with law enforcement, firefighters, first responders evolved into sharing trauma education and awareness with our military troops throughout posts and bases in the United States, Iraq, Afghanistan, Asia, Europe and beyond. Each step along the journey created more opportunities for learning.

You see, traumatic events need to be fleshed out. But all too often we avoid that type of confrontation with painful experiences. It's a necessary step I like to call "carefrontation." Responding to trauma needs to flow from a position of caring – and seeking deeper knowledge of our emotions. Education and awareness programs work. We have done it with HIV/AIDS, alcohol, tobacco, and drugs – and we can do the same to better understand what I call "mind health" rather than the more medicalized term "mental health" – which can cause those in need of help to run the other way.

When people hear my undercover story at times the word "hero" is often used. Yet those who are told they are heroes shy away from that title because they know who they truly are: an ordinary person exposed to a situation that caused called for extraordinary action.

I know this all too well. Nobody saw me walking around my home at 2 a.m. with my gun out, pushing shower curtains back, thinking the Mob was out to get me. Anger, paranoia, hyper-vigilance, isolation are all symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress. However, it took me a long time to figure out that courage is not absent of fear; courage happens despite the fear a person may feel.

During the initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, I couldn't help but notice the "Heroes Work Here" signs in front of medical facilities. All I have learned regarding my own transitions helped me to understand that those in the fight against an invisible enemy did not feel heroic.

My new book, *Heroes Are Human-Lessons in Resilience, Courage and Wisdom from the COVID Front Lines*, grew from that knowledge. I found so many parallels to the military, law enforcement, firefighters, first responders to that of the healthcare community. They see what the rest of the world does not. The uniform of scrubs or lab coats make them feel invincible at times – similar to those in military uniforms. But the enormous trauma they face has taken a toll on many of them.

I have felt a strong pull to use my experiences with trauma to help our front-line workers deal with their own. That brings to mind a story that put my quest into perspective. It was Veterans Day eve in 2013 when NBA

Hall of Famer David Robinson and I were invited to meet with a Navy SEAL Team and their families outside of Washington, D.C.

The SEAL Team had recently returned from a deployment and it was an amazing reunion. The next morning, we were guests of Gen. Jeff Buchanan for the wreath laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. We then heard President Obama's speech in the cemetery's amphitheater and at one point he introduced Mr. Richard Overton, one the oldest living World War II Veterans at 106. Richard served and fought in the South Pacific. As the President continued, David and I made eye contact and without saying a word knew we wanted to meet this Great American. As soon as the ceremony concluded, David and I moved as fast as we used to running the NBA hardwood.

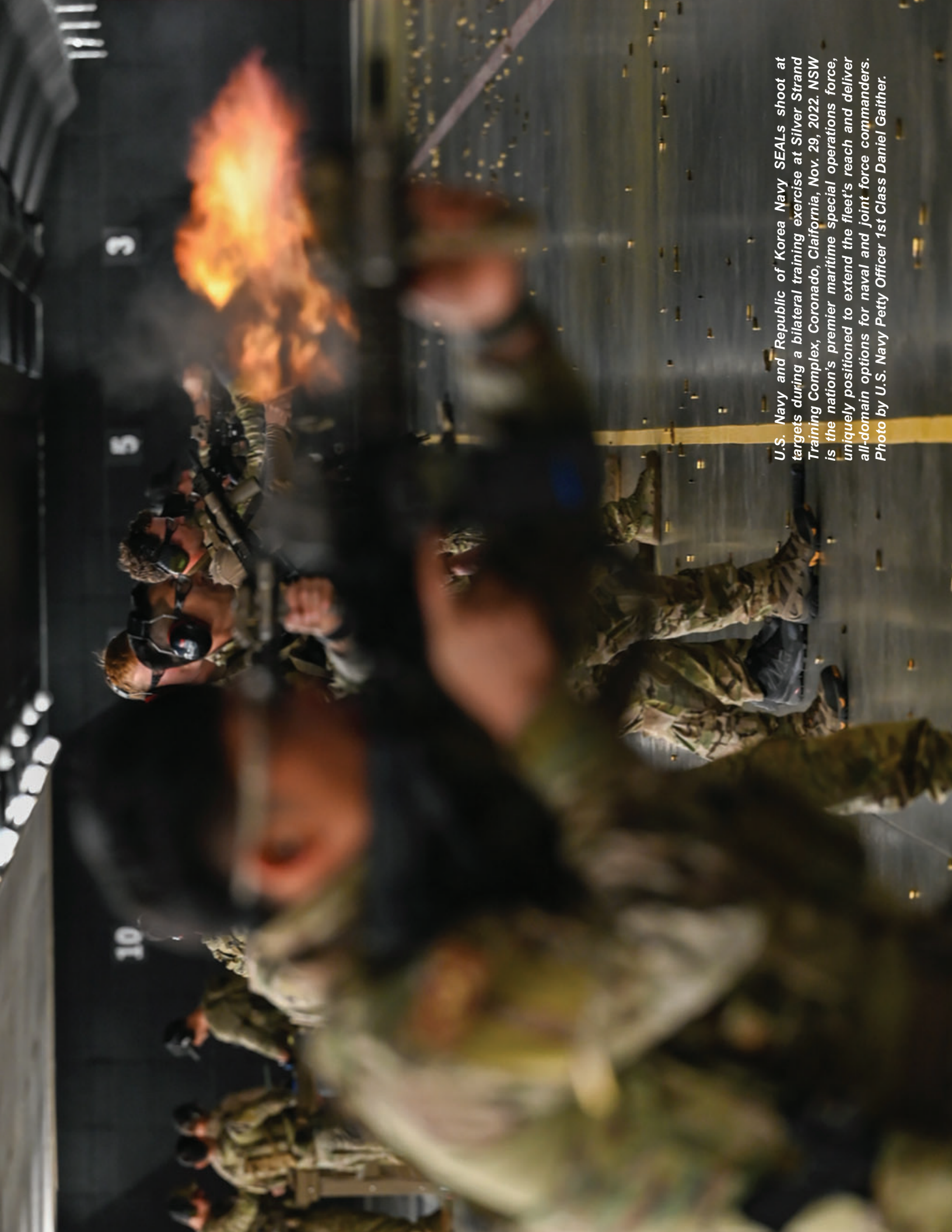
David spoke with Richard first and while I watched it struck me: Had I lived when this amazing man served, he and I would have drunk from different water fountains; we would have used different men's rooms. Yet he fought for me and my family and he fought for you and your family.

When it was my turn to be with him, I expressed my gratitude and probably a bit too much from his view. At one point, he squeezed my hand a little harder, pulled me closer and with a wink of an eye, whispered, "You know, I can still do more!"

Richard Overton passed away at 112 years, 230 days old in 2018. I look at that photo often and it is a reminder that I can do more – we all can do more.

We all have it within us to make a difference and find personal fulfillment apart from whatever title we may hold in life. Transitions create opportunities for the "next act" – a chance to alter our paths, while still moving forward to help make the world a better place.

*Bob Delaney is a respected international authority on leadership, resiliency, self-care and trauma awareness. He also serves as an NBA Cares Ambassador and Southeastern Conference Officiating Advisor. He has received numerous awards – including the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame Mannie Jackson Human Spirit Award, NBA Community Service Award, The U.S. Presidents Volunteer Service Award and the NCAA's highest honor, the Theodore Roosevelt Award. He has a B.S. in Criminology New Jersey City University, M.A. in Leadership St. Mary's College of California and is a Harvard Global Mental Health Trauma Recovery alumnus. He has authored three books with journalist Dave Scheiber, *Covert*, *Surviving the Shadows*, and now *Heroes are Human: Lessons in Resilience, Courage and Wisdom from the COVID Front Lines*, published in September by City Point Press, distributed by Simon & Schuster.*



*U.S. Navy and Republic of Korea Navy SEALs shoot at targets during a bilateral training exercise at Silver Strand Training Complex, Coronado, California, Nov. 29, 2022. NSW is the nation's premier maritime special operations force, uniquely positioned to extend the fleet's reach and deliver all-domain options for naval and joint force commanders. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Daniel Gaither.*