

Tip of the Spear



**Adm. Frank "Mitch" Bradley assumes
command of U.S. Special Operations
Command from Gen. Bryan Fenton**

United States Special Operations Command



Adm. Frank “Mitch” Bradley assumes command of U.S. Special Operations Command from Gen. Bryan Fenton ... 30

Tip of the Spear

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(Cover) U.S. Air Force Gen. Dan C. Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, passes the colors to U.S. Navy Adm. Frank “Mitch” Bradley, incoming commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, during a change of command ceremony in Tampa, Florida, October 3, 2025. USSOCOM develops and employs the world’s finest SOF to serve as a key enabler for the joint force, deterring aggression and when necessary, fighting to win. (Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Cutler Brice)

The Quiet Professionals

Highlights



A Ranger's guide to bluffing the enemy while outnumbered: The story of Lt. Robert Edlin ... 18



Kentucky Air Guard special tactics flexes maritime skill in Caribbean for Emerald Warrior ... 26



Grenada at dawn: Command and chaos ... 34

Departments

Theater Special Operations Commands

Tunisian SOF delegation visits Fort Bragg, strengthens U.S.-Tunisia partnership ... 4

U.S. and Tanzanian Special Forces strengthen partnership through joint training in Tanzania ... 6

Strengthening partnerships: U.S., Gabonese Agence National des Parcs Nationaux complete JCET ... 8

U.S. Army Special Operations Command

Lt. Gen. Jonathan Braga relinquishes USASOC command ... 11

USASOC identifies Soldiers who perished in aviation mishap ... 12

10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) enhances CBRN capabilities in preparation for semi-annual certification exercise ... 14

Joint teamwork forged at Sage Eagle 25-4 ... 16

A Ranger's guide to bluffing the enemy while outnumbered: The story of Lt. Robert Edlin ... 18

Naval Special Warfare Command

Naval Special Warfare participates in Titans of the Sea Presidential Review ... 22

Air Force Special Operations Command

Fallen Air Commandos remembered at 9/11 Memorial and Museum ... 24

Kentucky Air Guard special tactics flexes maritime skill in Caribbean for Emerald Warrior ... 26

Marine Forces Special Operations Command

Para Bellum Horizon 2025 ... 28

Headquarters

Adm. Frank "Mitch" Bradley assumes command of U.S. Special Operations Command from Gen. Bryan Fenton ... 30

USSOCOM hosts a Change of Responsibility ... 32

Grenada at dawn: Command and chaos ... 34

Igniting Innovation: How the Joint Special Operations University call for special operations papers is shaping the future, advancing the SOF warrior mind ... 36

Special Operations Command headquarters command run ... 38

U.S. Special Operations Command - Africa



Tunisian SOF delegation visits Fort Bragg, strengthens U.S.-Tunisia partnership

Courtesy Story

Special Operations Command Africa

Members of Tunisia's Special Operations Forces (SOF) recently visited Fort Bragg, North Carolina, marking an important milestone in the growing partnership between Tunisia and the United States. Sponsored by Special Operations Command Africa (SOCAFRICA), the visit focused on exchanging knowledge, sharing best practices, and fostering collaboration to support Tunisia's ongoing efforts to enhance its SOF capabilities and modernize military operations.

During their time at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, the Tunisian delegation engaged in-depth discussions on training methodologies, leadership development, and operational planning. Central to these conversations was the doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities framework, which both nations explored as a tool for structured force modernization.

"This visit highlighted the enduring value of the U.S.-Tunisian partnership and the mutual benefits of collaboration," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Cesar N. Feliciano, SOCAFRICA international cooperation and engagements. "It was an opportunity to learn from each other, strengthening the capabilities of both special operations forces."

The visit highlighted Tunisia's commitment to modernizing its SOF capabilities, including efforts to refine training programs and improve operational efficiency. Noncommissioned officer (NCO) leadership was a key topic of discussion, with both delegations exchanging insights on how professional NCOs contribute to effective training and operational success. The dialogue underscored the shared belief in the critical



U.S. Army Green Berets assigned to 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) speak with Tunisian Army special operations Soldiers at Camp Mackall, North Carolina, Sept. 23, 2025. Their discussion centered on future joint combined exchange training opportunities designed to strengthen interoperability and enhance operational readiness. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Edgar Martinez)

role of NCOs as leaders and standard-bearers within their respective forces.

"This exchange has been a collaborative and enriching experience," said Tunisian Army Senior Col. Wajdi Zorgani, commander of the 2nd Special Forces Training Center. "The insights gained here will help us continue to develop our SOF capabilities, and we look forward to applying these lessons in ways that reflect our unique needs and priorities."

The visit concluded with a shared commitment to continued collaboration and mutual growth. As Tunisia expands its SOF capabilities, this engagement stands as a demonstration to the strength of the U.S.-Tunisia partnership and their shared vision of fostering innovation, adaptability, and excellence in military operations.



U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Kirk Brinker, then Deputy Commanding General of U.S. Army Special Operations Command, speaks with Tunisian Army Senior Col. Wajdi Zorgani, commander of the 2nd Special Forces Training Center, during a visit at USASOC Headquarters on Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Sept. 23, 2025. The visit highlighted ongoing cooperation and strengthened ties between U.S. and Tunisian special operations forces, demonstrating their shared commitment to professional collaboration and readiness. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Edgar Martinez)

U.S. Special Operations Command - Africa



U.S. and Tanzanian Special Forces strengthen partnership through joint training in Tanzania

*Story by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Amber
Litteral
Special Operations Command Africa*

Green Berets with U.S. Army 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) and members of the Tanzanian 93rd Special Forces Battalion recently completed a joint combined exchange training (JCET) in

Tanzania, sharpening operational skills while reinforcing the strong security partnership between the U.S. military and the Tanzanian Peoples' Defense Force (TPDF).

The two-month JCET featured scenario-based exercises designed to mirror real-world operational environments. The program sharpened technical proficiency, bolstered cross-unit coordination and strengthened cohesion.



U.S. 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) Green Berets assist members of the Tanzanian 93rd Special Forces Battalion during mountaineering training at a joint combined exchange training in Lake Chala, Tanzania, Aug. 20, 2025. The training enhanced Special Operations Command Africa and Tanzania People's Defense Force's readiness, leadership and technical skills through practical application of joint tactics essential to countering shared threats. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Amber Litteral)



A U.S. 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) Green Beret rappels during mountaineering training at a joint combined exchange raining with 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) in Lake Chala, Tanzania, Aug. 18, 2025. The training enhanced Special Operations Command Africa and Tanzania People's Defense Force's readiness, leadership and technical skills through practical application of joint tactics essential to countering shared threats. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Amber Litteral)

Participating in this JCET exposed us to realistic mission scenarios and sharpened our ability to coordinate across units. The repetition and joint integration improved our cohesion and communication, leaving us better prepared for future missions.

“Participating in this JCET exposed us to realistic mission scenarios and sharpened our ability to coordinate across units,” said the U.S. Special Forces team senior enlisted leader. “The repetition and joint integration improved our cohesion and communication, leaving us better prepared for future missions.”

Adapting to Tanzania’s terrain and resource limitations presented challenges that pushed the team to innovate. Working across language and procedural differences also required flexibility and quick problem-solving.

“Overcoming these challenges strengthened our ability to solve problems in real-time and enhanced our cross-cultural communication,” the team leader noted. “It gave us confidence in operating effectively under uncertain conditions.”

The exchange also provided valuable insights into the region’s security dynamics. Exposure to the complexity and diversity of the Tanzanian environment highlighted the importance of adaptability and leveraging each other’s expertise.

Through advanced training in small-unit tactics, marksmanship, leadership development, and integrated operations, both U.S. 3rd SFG (A) operators and Tanzanian 93rd SFB members emerged better prepared for combined missions.

“Training side by side allows us to align tactics, techniques, and procedures,” the team leader added. “It fosters trust and interoperability that directly enhance readiness for future operations.”

The JCET underscored the importance of enduring partnerships in addressing evolving security threats. By investing in collaboration, the U.S. and Tanzania continue to build resilient, capable forces prepared to maintain stability across the region.



A U.S. 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) Green Beret demonstrates pulley system techniques during mountaineering training at a joint combined exchange training in Lake Chala, Tanzania, Aug. 19, 2025. This JCET bolstered the operational readiness and capabilities of both forces, fostering independence and strengthening their partnership. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Amber Litteral)

A full-page background image showing a soldier in camouflage gear running towards the camera. He is carrying a simulated patient (a mannequin) in his arms. The background is a blurred natural setting with trees and a path.

Strengthening partnerships: U.S., Gabonese Agence National des Parcs Nationaux complete JCET

Members of Gabon's Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux (ANPN) treat a simulated patient as part of tactical combat casualty care training during a joint combined exchange training (JCET) near Akanda National Park, Gabon, Sept. 23, 2025. This JCET demonstrated the application of joint tactics and procedures with Gabon's ANPN, reinforcing operational independence while underscoring the shared commitment of both nations to regional stability. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Makensie Cooper)





U.S. Army Special Operations Command

Lt. Gen. Jonathan Braga

relinquishes USASOC command



Story by Jacqueline Hill

United States Army Special Operations Command

In an intimate ceremony, the U.S. Army Special Operations Command bid farewell to Lt. Gen. Jonathan Braga after four years serving as the commanding general as he relinquished command to Brig. Gen. Kirk Brinker outside the USASOC headquarters, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Sept. 24, 2025.

The relinquishing of command is a military tradition which allows the commander and his unit the opportunity to bid farewell. Braga was nominated by President Donald Trump to be the next commander of the Joint Special Operations Command, Sept. 5 and confirmed on Sept. 19.

Gen. Bryan P. Fenton, Special Operations Command commanding general, presided over the ceremony. "It's all about winning here at USASOC," said Fenton. "You do that because of a relentless focus on people as the number one priority, as a comparative and competitive advantage right at the heart of people being more important than hardware. That's how we win."

Fenton continued to speak on USASOC and the importance the command has played across the Army and the joint force over the past four years.

"The leader for this era has been Lt. Gen. Jon Braga," continued Fenton. "Now Jon will be the first to tell you, he didn't do it alone. He is part of a team of teams and all of them help uphold the USASOC reputation as a force without equal."

Addressing Braga's family, the enlisted members, the officers, and the civilians in the audience Fenton added, "Thanks for wearing that jersey alongside Jon day in and day out."

Following Fenton, Braga addressed the USASOC team. "How do you sum up the impact you've all had?" asked Braga. "How do I say thanks for everything you did? Every section, every director, CSC (Combatant Subordinate Command), CSU (Combatant Subordinate Unit) out there."



U.S. Army Special Operations Command Acting Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Kirk Brinker, gives a speech as USASOC bids farewell to Lt. Gen. Jonathan Braga after serving four years as its commanding general outside the USASOC headquarters, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Sept. 24, 2025. (U.S. Army photo by SSG Landon Carter)

To illustrate his thanks and the impact of the USASOC team, Braga gave a comparative example between the current USASOC team and the Rangers who stormed Normandy with Col. James Earl Rudder.

"Just as Col. Rudder would go on to lead the invasion off the beaches, just as the OSS and special service force worked behind enemy lines, we have been pathfinders," explained Braga. "You have been pathfinders, leading the way for the Army and the joint force at home and around the world."

"You've all added to the lineage of our nation, and I can't thank you enough," continued Braga. "Your efforts have left a legacy, you have left a jersey better than you found it carrying the extra blood, sweat, and stains of your efforts."

After completing the passing of the colors, Brig. Gen. Kirk Brinker closed out the ceremony.

"It is not lost on me at all the gravity, the privilege, to be the acting USASOC commander," said Brinker. "Looking at this formation, its talented people, its commitment to excellence, its imagination, it's an honor. And I look forward to serving with you and serving you."

U.S. Army Special Operations Command

USASOC identifies Soldiers who perished in aviation mishap



Story by Jacqueline Hill

United States Army Special Operations Command

Four Soldiers who perished in a Sept. 17, aircraft mishap while conducting routine flight training are identified. The cause of the mishap remains under investigation.

The deceased are:

U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer Three Andrew Cully, 35, from Sparta, Missouri
U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer Three Andrew Kraus, 39, from Sanibel, Florida
U.S. Army Sgt. Donavon Scott, 24, from Tacoma, Washington
U.S. Army Sgt. Jadalyn Good, 23, from Mount Vernon, Washington

“It is with the heaviest of hearts that we confirm the loss of four courageous Night Stalkers from the 4th Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) (Airborne), who tragically lost their lives on Sept. 17th during a training mission,” said Col. Stephen Smith, commander. “These exceptional warriors— Chief Warrant Officer Three Andrew Cully, Chief Warrant Officer Three Andrew Kraus, Sgt. Donavon Scott, and Sgt. Jadalyn Good—embodied the unwavering dedication, selflessness, and excellence that define the very spirit of the Army and Army Special Operations. Their sacrifice in service to our nation will forever be etched in our hearts and in the legacy of the Night Stalkers. These heroes were not only elite professionals but also cherished teammates, friends, and family members whose absence leaves an immeasurable void.”

Cully, 35, commissioned in May 2013 as a U.S. Army aviation officer from Missouri State University as a second lieutenant. He completed Flight School at Ft. Rucker, Alabama After his initial service as a commissioned officer,

he was then reappointed as an aviation warrant officer and served as a UH-60M (Blackhawk) Pilot. In 2022, he completed the UH-60M Instructor Pilot Course at Fort Rucker, Alabama. He has two operational deployments to the EUCOM theater in support of Operations Atlantic Resolve and Swift Response. In 2024, after being selected to serve in the 160th SOAR (Abn), he was assigned to C Company at Joint Base Lewis McChord, Washington. While assigned to C Company he supported multiple Continental United States (CONUS) and Outside Continental United States (OCONUS) training missions and deployed to the INDOPACOM theater.

His awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Korea Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Basic Army Aviator Badge, Parachutist Badge and Air Assault Badge.

Kraus, 39, served in the U. S. Marine Corps as a CH-46 (Sea Knight) maintainer from July 2008 until 2013. In 2017, he joined the U.S. Army and attended Warrant Officer Candidate School and flight school at Ft. Rucker, Alabama. He then served as an aeromedical evacuation pilot in command in Germany, performing real-world medical evacuation missions. In 2023, after being selected to serve in the 160th SOAR (A), he was assigned to C Company, where he supported multiple CONUS training missions and deployed in support of contingency response operations. He is a 2025 graduate of the Aviation Maintenance Test Pilot Course at Ft. Rucker, Alabama.

His awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Navy Achievement Medal second award, Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Armed Forces Service Medal, Overseas Service Ribbon, Navy Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Navy Unity Commendation, and Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation and Basic Aviation Badge.

Scott, 24, enlisted in the U.S. Army as a UH-60 Helicopter Repairer, 15T. After being selected to serve in the 160th SOAR, his first assignment was to D Company, 4th Battalion as a UH-60 Helicopter Maintainer. After completing the MH-60 (Blackhawk, Modified) Non-Rated Crewmember Course, he served as a MH-60 Crew Chief in C Company. While serving in C Company he earned Fully-Mission-Qualified status as a Crew Chief, accumulating over 776 flying hours. He has served on two support missions to Operation Inherent Resolve and a crisis response contingency operation.

His awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal - Campaign Star, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon and Combat Action Badge.

Good, 23, enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2021 as a UH-60 Helicopter Repairer, 15T. After being selected to serve in the 160th SOAR (A), she was then assigned to C Company where she served as a Helicopter Maintainer and in 2023 after graduating from the MH-60 Non-Rated Crewmember Course she served as a Crew Chief. While serving in C Company she achieved Basic-Mission-Qualified status,

accumulating over 730 flight hours. She was instrumental in the success of numerous CONUS and OCONUS training missions and a crisis response contingency operation.

Her awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Basic Parachutist Badge, Combat and Special Skill Badge Expert Marksmanship Qualification Badge and Basic Aviation Badge.

“As we mourn their loss, we stand united in honoring their memory and their extraordinary commitment to the mission. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families, loved ones, and the entire Night Stalker community during this profoundly difficult time,” said Smith.

The U.S. Army Special Operations Command extends its profound thanks to the professionalism and heroism of the many who assisted in the recovery of our fallen; the Thurston County Sheriff’s Office, the Griffin Fire Department, the McLane Black Lake Fire Department, the King County Sheriff’s Office, the Lacey Fire Department, the Olympia Fire Department, the Department of Natural Resources, the 2/75th Ranger Regiment, the 17th Special Tactics Squadron, the 22nd Special Tactics Squadron, the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), the I Corps and the Joint Base Lewis McChord, Washington.



U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer Three Andrew Cully



U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer Three Andrew Kraus



U.S. Army Sgt. Donavon Scott



U.S. Army Sgt. Jadalyn Good

U.S. Army Special Operations Command 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) enhances CBRN capabilities in preparation for semi-annual certification exercise



Story by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Liseth Espinel Cuervo

10th Special Forces Group (Airborne)

Soldiers with the 82nd Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Company, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), are refining their skills during the company certification process in preparation for the upcoming semi-annual CBRN certification exercise at Fort Carson, Colorado, Sept. 11, 2025.

CBRN training is essential for the responsiveness of special forces operations units, where members are constantly operating in high-risk and unpredictable environments. Reinforcing the Secretary of War, Pete Hegseth's message of how training is crucial to remain the strongest and most lethal force in the world.

"We are seeing commanders across the Army shift towards understanding that CBRN is a real threat and that many of the units out there are not prepared for it," said Capt. Dylan Tossavainen, commander of the 82nd CBRN Company, 10th SFG (A).

The training was designed to enhance operational readiness, deter the use of weapons of mass destruction, and strengthen Soldier lethality and survivability.

"In the 10th Special Forces Group, we are training our subject matter experts to exploit CBRN targets, understand threats so that we can keep everyone else safe, and we are looking at how the enemy is going to utilize CBRN agents on a potential battlefield," said Tossavainen. "CBRN is essential in large-scale combat

operations and can be something that causes a massive detriment to the mission."

During the scenario, the CBRN Soldiers assisted the casualties by removing their outer clothing and placing them into clearly marked, sealed containment bags to ensure safe disposal. This process helped eliminate external contamination. After the clothing removal, they medically evacuated them and guided them toward medical assistance.

The upcoming semi-annual certification exercise will assess the unit's readiness and capability to respond to and defend against CBRN threats in specific operational environments. The training focused not only on fundamental knowledge of CBRN agents, hazards, and protective measures, but also on advanced defense skills, including equipment detection, preventive measures, and thorough decontamination techniques.

"We conduct traditional CBRN tasks, which include decontamination of personnel or vehicles," said Staff Sgt. Gerardo Flores, CBRN operations noncommissioned officer in charge of the 82nd CBRN Co., 10th SFG (A). "We specialize in supporting the teams and conducting special operations in sensitive site exploitations. Additionally, we have capabilities to confirm or deny the presence of chemical warfare agents, biological warfare agents, and identify radiological isotopes."

The 10th SFG (A) CBRN teams train with realistic scenarios, simulating conventional enemy forces, to build a more lethal and prepared force capable of responding to any CBRN threats during today's operational environment.



Soldiers from the 82nd Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Company, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) train for their semi-annual certification exercise at Fort Carson, Colorado, Sept. 11, 2025. 10th SFG (A) reinforces its CBRN capabilities through constant training for semi-annual certification, enhancing mission readiness, Soldier lethality and survivability, and ensuring a rapid response to any CBRN threat. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Liseth Espinel)

U.S. Army Special Operations Command

Joint teamwork forged at Sage Eagle 25-4



*Story by U.S. Army Sgt. Andrew Geiser
3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne)*

Green Berets and supporting elements of 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) and Airmen from the Air National Guard security forces teamed up for Sage Eagle 25-4, a joint training exercise designed to enhance the services' interoperability and readiness. With a focus on small-unit tactics, joint mission planning, and advanced combat scenarios, the training aimed to better prepare special operations forces and the Air National Guard for real-world missions, that reinforce their ability to jointly operate in diverse operational environments.

Sage Eagle 25-4 commenced with weapons familiarization, pairing Soldiers and Airmen in a series of classes that built a foundational understanding of weapons handling and functions. Green Berets trained the Airmen on multiple weapons systems including the M320 Grenade Launcher Module and the M249 Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW). Weapons training culminated in an M4 rifle qualification range before transitioning into advanced tactical training. From dawn to dusk, Airmen repeatedly conducted realistic training simulations in small-unit tactics, including close quarters battle drills, ambushes, and raids, immersing them in the demanding tempo of special operations.



U.S. Air Force Airman Noah Walters, 193rd Special Operations Wing security forces (SFS) member with the Pennsylvania Air National Guard, fires an AT4 as an Army Green Beret assigned to 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) observes during exercise Sage Eagle 25-4 at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia, Aug. 21, 2025. Sage Eagle is a recurring battalion-sized unconventional warfare exercise that validates special forces members' ability to operate in uncertain environments while training and incorporating partner forces into an evolving contested environment. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Jennifer Healy)



U.S. Air Force Airman Noah Walters, left, and Senior Airman Natasha DeLa Cruz-Garcia, 193rd Special Operations Wing security forces (SFS) members with the Pennsylvania Air National Guard, wait to conduct M4 carbine drills during exercise Sage Eagle 25-4 at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia, Aug. 21, 2025. Sage Eagle is a recurring battalion-sized unconventional warfare exercise that validates special forces members' ability to operate in uncertain environments while training and incorporating partner forces into an evolving contested environment. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Jennifer Healy)

“I think it’s great to see the different ways that the Green Berets teach things, for example, room clearing,” said Airman 1st Class Leann Minnick, a security forces Airman assigned to the 193rd Special Operations Security Forces Squadron. “They taught us many ways to do it that I’m generally not trained to do, so I could bring that back to my unit.”

Following multiple days of weapons training, teams entered a five-day field environment, plagued with rugged terrain and dense vegetation, challenging even the most experienced Soldiers and Airmen. Limited access to supplies and the need for covert movements through rugged landscape added another layer of complexity to the training, requiring teams to adapt quickly or risk mission failure. Following days of training from the Army’s elite Special Forces, Airmen applied earlier-learned skills to plan and execute simulated raids and ambushes, evading a multitude of different enemy threats to complete the mission.

“They [Green Berets] are experts at detail, which is what it boils down to,” said Tech. Sgt. Jason Tartaglia,

a security forces Airman with the 166th Security Forces Squadron. “And that’s really what makes them so great. Just thinking outside the box or looking at something from a different angle makes a huge difference.”

Training culminated in a realistic joint forcible entry exercise, leveraging the unique skills of each service in a mission to capture a high value target. Soldiers breached the compound under simulated hostile fire, systematically clearing each floor of enemy threats, overcoming tight stairwell fighting positions, barricaded rooms, and simulated casualties on every level.

While Green Berets maneuvered throughout the compound, the Air National Guard security forces secured the exterior of the compound, facing unruly crowds and demonstrators that posed risks to the Airmen and Green Berets. Leveraging their training, the security forces mitigated all potential threats, enabling both services to seamlessly exfiltrate

Sage Eagle isn’t just tactical training; it’s a crucible for joint force integration. The exercise honed critical skills in cross-service communication, adaptive planning, and mission execution in complex environments. Participants gained instrumental insights, directly enhancing current operations and fortifying readiness for future challenges.

“This training pushed us to our limits, but that’s how we get better,” said Minnick. “When we walk away tired, dirty, and more capable than before—we know it was worth it.”

3rd Special Forces Group is a preeminent U.S. special operations force unit, providing purpose-built, self-sustaining special operations capabilities to address our Nation’s most difficult problems.



U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Miller Rebeles, 186th Air Refueling Wing security forces with the Mississippi Air National Guard, fires an M4 carbine during exercise Sage Eagle 25-4 at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia, Aug. 21, 2025. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Jennifer Healy)

U.S. Army Special Operations Command

A Ranger's guide to bluffing the enemy while outnumbered: The story of Lt. Robert Edlin



*Story by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Jorden Weir
75th Ranger Regiment*

On a damp still morning in September 1944, more than three months after D-Day and the “Impossible Mission” at Point du Hoc, Lt. Robert T. Edlin of 2nd Ranger Battalion stepped off into a live minefield near the city of Brest, France.

He wasn't ordered there. He wasn't backed by a company of men or the thunder of supporting artillery. He was accompanied by only three Rangers, staring

down a German stronghold manned by more than 800 Nazi soldiers.

What happened next defies reason. It was so audacious, so improbable, that it reads more like legend than history.

But to the Rangers of 2nd Battalion, 81 years later, it's more than legend. It's a legacy that has rippled across time and laid the foundation for courage wherever Rangers have been called to lead the way. It is the spirit of the Ranger Creed and the motto that defines them: *Sua Sponte*.



U.S. Army 1st Lt. Robert T. Edlin, executive officer for Able Company, 2nd Ranger Battalion, poses for a photo during WWII. Edlin, nicknamed the Fool Lieutenant, orchestrated the surrender of more than 800 German soldiers during the Brittany campaign while patrolling with his four-man team of Rangers near the city of Brest, France on Sep. 9, 1944. (Date unknown; Photographer unknown)

THE FOOL LIEUTENANT

"[Edlin] was a platoon leader of the newly formed 2nd Ranger Battalion during WWII, which was commanded by the legendary Lt. Col. Jim Rudder," said Lt. Col. Ross Daly, commander of 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), and an avid military and Ranger historian, "so he knew joining up that he'd play a key role in the most dangerous fighting to come. They did their train-up in England, and six months later were on a boat headed for D-Day."

They called him the Fool Lieutenant.

"Edlin earned the nickname on the eve of D-Day," said Daly, "when his men noticed his calm, unshakable demeanor and said, 'That damn Fool Lieutenant ain't afraid of nothin'.'"

Unfortunately, "afraid of nothin'," is not the same as, "bulletproof," which Edlin learned at Omaha Beach, where he was shot twice while still on the Higgins boat, losing large chunks of his left calf and pieces of bone from his right tibia. As quickly as he had arrived, Edlin was evacuated on a troop carrier boat headed back to England. But that was far from the end.

Once back in Oxford, England, Edlin began furiously rehabbing his injuries, determined to get back to his Rangers.

"He not only declined a chance to return to the U.S.," said Command Sgt. Maj. David Archibeque, senior enlisted advisor for 2nd Ranger Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, "but he actually left the hospital early, much earlier than the doctors wanted him to, in order to rejoin 2nd Ranger Batt in Cherbourg [France]."

THE FABULOUS FOUR

As the new executive officer, Edlin formed a rhythm of personally inspecting Able Company's forward listening posts. It was during one of these that he and his first sergeant, Bill White, encountered sergeants Bill Dreher and Bill Courtney.

"They were frustrated with all the waiting around in foxholes," said Archibeque, "so the four men began patrolling no-man's land together, using continual reconnaissance patrols to keep the enemy off balance.

They became known as the "Fabulous Four". Edlin, Courtney, Dreher, and White, later replaced by Sgt. Warran Burmaster, were small enough to move unseen, deadly enough to punch above their weight, and over

time became one of the most decorated four-man patrols in U.S. Army history.

During the late summer of 1944, Edlin's patrol harassed enemy positions, killed and captured dozens of German soldiers, and specialized in knocking out fortified pillboxes. When the Rangers were tasked to

support the American advance into Brittany and silence four massive 280mm cannons at Brest, the Fabulous Four were at the forefront, bringing their lethal skillset to the fight.

Over the next two weeks they ran 17 patrols, most of which ended in gunfights.

It was business as usual for these seasoned Rangers. Until the day they came upon "The Fort."

THE PATROL

On Sept. 9, the Four were scouting approximately 11 miles north of the inner city when they came across a 50-acre German battery complex manned by more than 800 German soldiers. At the center was "The Fort," a three-story bunker housing the German command center and an observation post for the 280mm cannons. Fortified concrete pillboxes filled nearly all the surrounding land. Live minefields filled the rest.

Edlin's task that day was simple: spot enemy pillboxes, chart the minefields, and capture prisoners.

All went according to plan, until they came upon one minefield that looked different. Artillery barrages the past few weeks had peppered the once pristine landscape, destroying both earth and the mines contained within. This was where Courtney noticed a pattern of artillery craters that seemed to lead directly to the concrete pillbox. Suddenly a previously unknown and deadly barrier had a path of safety drawn right through it.

Reasoning that there would have been no time for the Nazi occupation to plant new mines in the craters, Courtney said, "I think I can see a way through." Then he took off towards the pillbox.

The others followed, moving swiftly and methodically from crater to crater, using the depth of the holes for both cover and concealment as they inched closer and closer, until they finally found themselves staring down the mouth of the bunker. Edlin had a decision to make.

They could sneak away right then and there, and in doing so could deliver a bounty of valuable intelligence to Rudder, who would undoubtedly use it to great effect in the fight to come.



Rangers resting Omaha Beach on D-Day. (Courtesy photo)

Or, they could attempt to take the pillbox, accepting two possible realities: one where success meant penetrating a denied area and creating a valuable window of opportunity for 2nd Ranger Battalion to move in and accomplish their mission ... and one where failure would bring the full wrath of 800 armed Nazis directly down on their heads.

How long he struggled with the decision is unknown. What is known is that Edlin eventually sent Burmaster back across to the edge of the minefield to act as a getaway man in case it all went south.

Then taking a deep breath ...

... They stormed the pillbox with speed and precision, rifles drawn. The enemy, caught completely off guard, never had a chance to recover, as three angry American Rangers took immediate control of the room, shouting orders in broken German, and forcing everyone's hands in the air.

They had done it. The foothold was secured.

But, having come this far, Edlin wondered if they could do more.

A short time later Rudder, who was commanding from their staging area, received a shocking radio message.

"Burmaster called back to report that they were currently guarding about 20 new prisoners and that the Fool Lieutenant was heading into The Fort to negotiate a surrender," said Daly.

INTO THE FORT

Edlin and Courtney, with an English-speaking German officer between them, made their way resolutely through the belly of the beast, walking by occupied bunkers and buildings, past countless potential threats around every corner and down every darkened alley, toward the beating heart of the compound. Amazingly, they stayed unnoticed the entire way.

A long tunnel led them into The Fort, and once inside they proceeded through the labyrinth within. Slowly, deliberately, they moved. From an underground infirmary, up some stairs, down a well-lit corridor, using the English-speaking German to talk down every person they encountered along the way. Finally, they came to an ornate wooden door.

They had arrived. Without further warning, Edlin flung the door open and rushed in. Courtney slammed the door behind them and posted up.

Edlin beelined directly to the commander, German Lt. Col. Martin Furst, and jammed the cold metal barrel of his gun in the man's face.

After disarming the Nazi commander, Edlin reportedly said, "Why don't you just surrender your fort and get this whole thing over with."

He told Furst the area was surrounded and that, even now, Rangers were infiltrating the garrison.

As far as bald-faced lies go, it wasn't bad.

“Furst opted to verify Edlin’s claim by making a phone call,” said Daly, “After which he hung up and told Edlin, “There are only three of you. You are my prisoners now.”

Edlin didn’t flinch. He didn’t hesitate. He did what only a Ranger would dare.

“Edlin grabbed a frag grenade, shoved it into Furst’s belly and said, “I’m ready to die. Are you?” said Archibeque, “Then he pulled the pin on the grenade and began to count.”

One ...

Two ...

That was as far as he got. Furst, now panicked, reportedly shouted, “Okay!” and Edlin promptly replaced the pin in his grenade. The Ranger’s bluff, if it was a bluff at all, worked.

Furst announced the surrender on the camp’s PA system, and, moments later, having never fired a single shot, the Rangers watched as a horde of men poured endlessly from buildings and passageways into the courtyard, stacked their weapons neatly to the side, and fell into a formation.

“It shouldn’t have worked,” said Daly. “By every measure of war it should have failed, with all four Rangers being either killed or captured on the spot. But it didn’t, and Edlin ended up pulling off one of the most impressive and unlikely surrenders in military history.”

SUA SPONTE

The Ranger motto is Sua Sponte, which means “Of their own accord.” It symbolizes not just the all-volunteer nature of an elite, direct action raid force, but also captures the Rangers’ spirit of disciplined initiative and a readiness to take immediate action in the absence of formal orders. Of recognizing and seizing opportunities to achieve the mission regardless of rank or title, and of displaying the audacity and decisiveness necessary to win the day, no matter the enemy.

When Edlin walked into the lion’s den that day 81 years ago, he wasn’t just fighting a war. He wasn’t just doing a patrol, or navigating a minefield, or even orchestrating an enemy surrender. He was forging a legacy, one of courage and unwavering dedication to his Rangers and the mission.

“It’s Rangers like [Edlin] that make 2nd Ranger Battalion, and the entire Regiment, what it is today,” said Archibeque. “Everything he did that day: never failing his comrades, energetically meeting the enemies of his country, displaying the intestinal fortitude to fight on to the Ranger

Objective and ultimately completing the mission, all of it ... Edlin embodied the spirit of the Ranger Creed before there even was one. He embodied Sua Sponte before we took it as our motto. He set the incredibly high standards that every Ranger today is measured against.”

The Fool Lieutenant showed that victory belongs not only to the strong, but to the bold. Not only to the many, but to the few with the courage to act Sua Sponte, of their own accord, even against unimaginable odds.

In short, he showed what it means to be a Ranger. Sua Sponte Rangers Lead The Way,



U.S. Army 1st Lt. Robert T. Edlin (top left), the executive officer for Able Company, 2nd Ranger Battalion, poses for a photo with Sgt.’s Warran Burmaster, William Dreher, and William Courtney, during WWII. Nicknamed “The Fabulous Four”, this four-man team of Rangers, led by Edlin, orchestrated the surrender of more than 800 German soldiers during the Brittany campaign while patrolling near the city of Brest, France on Sept. 9, 1944. (Date unknown; Photographer unknown)

Naval Special Warfare Command



Naval Special Warfare participates in Titans of the Sea Presidential Review

U.S. East Coast-based Naval Special Warfare Operators (SEALs) fire at opposing forces from an MH-60S Seahawk helicopter assigned to the "Dragonslayers" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 11 during the Titans of the Sea Presidential Review seapower demonstration Oct. 5, 2025. The Titans of the Sea Presidential Review is one of many events taking place throughout the country to showcase maritime capabilities as part of the U.S. Navy's 250th birthday. America is a maritime nation. For 250 years, America's Warfighting Navy has sailed the globe in defense of freedom. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Trey Hutcheson)





Air Force Special Operations Command



Fallen Air Commandos remembered at 9/11 Memorial and Museum

*By U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Natalie Fiorilli
Air Force Special Operations Command*

She didn't need to hear the words. When the cars pulled up to her father's house, Michelle Biegalski already knew why they were there.

"In that moment, you just know something is wrong," she said.

Four days after her fiancé left for deployment, she learned that he and his crew had been killed.

1st Lt. Justin Wilkens, a combat systems officer with the 34th Special Operations Squadron, died on board a U-28A Draco, call sign Ratchet 33, when it crashed near Djibouti, Africa, Feb. 18, 2012.

"I don't even think anyone could get the words out," she said. "I just remember wondering who else was on the plane and if their families had been notified. You start thinking about everyone else first, and then it hits you after everyone leaves."

For Rose Duval, the same news came less than a week into her son's deployment.

U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Scott Duffman, a pararescueman assigned to the 24th Special Tactics Squadron, was killed in Afghanistan, Feb. 17, 2007, when the MH-47 helicopter he was on lost power and crashed.

Survivors later told her that Duffman shielded others from the impact.

"He told everyone to get down, and he laid on top of them to take the brunt of the crash," Duval said.

The two women visited the 9/11 Memorial and Museum in New York City. They joined Air Force Special Operations Command leadership at a dedication ceremony for an installation honoring their loved ones and 39 other Air Commandos killed in combat during the war on terrorism.



Air Force Special Operations Command is partnering with the 9/11 Memorial and Museum in New York City to honor AFSOC members who died in combat during the Global War on Terror. Lt. Gen. Michael Conley, commander of Air Force Special Operations Command, along with Gold Star families, and museum staff dedicated the memorial on Sept 18, 2025. (Courtesy photo)

Displayed in a glass case, the wooden, octagon-shaped memorial displays engraved nameplates with the rank, name, unit, date and location of death for each fallen Airman.

AFSOC Commander Lt. Gen. Mike Conley said each name carries personal significance.

"Some of them are comrades in arms that I know the names and stories of," Conley said. "There's a few I'm honored to call my friends—people I've served with, people I know their families, and people I knew operationally throughout our assignments...It's a full-circle moment to see [the memorial] in the place where it all started."

After the ceremony, Biegalski and Duval joined their families in viewing the memorial.

Leaning closer to the case, they found the names of 1st Lt. Justin Wilkens and Tech. Sgt. Scott Duffman.

For Biegalski, seeing her late fiancé's name reassured her that he is still remembered.

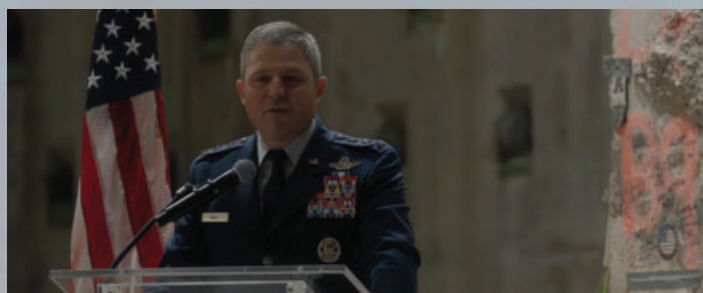
"I'm so happy he is still talked about," she said. "It's been so long that you don't often hear their names anymore. I don't even have words for how special it was to be here, of all places. He would have loved every second of it."

Rose Duval and her daughter, Wendy Duffman-Abbott, also noted the significance of seeing a son and brother's name honored.

"To see his name here in this extremely emotional and important place speaks volumes," Duval said. "The Airmen on the memorial were at the front to protect our nation because of what happened here. The parallel is unmistakable, and it's something you have to be here to feel."

Seeing the names also prompted the families to recall personal memories.

"He loved flying and was the kind of person that would look up in the sky any time a plane flew over," Biegalski said of Wilkens.



U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Mike Conley, commander of Air Force Special Operations Command, makes remarks during a dedication ceremony held at the 9/11 Memorial and Museum in New York City, Sept. 18, 2025. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Natalie Fiorilli)

Duval said Duffman had always wanted to be a part of Air Force Special Tactics.

"I remember he had once said that he knew he wanted to save lives and being Special Tactics was the most fun way he could do it," she said. "He always put others first."

Loaned by AFSOC, the memorial is expected to be on display at the 9/11 Memorial & Museum for the foreseeable future. The exhibit is located in the museum's East Triangle, on the east side of the North Tower footprint.



Rose Duval, left, mother of fallen U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Scott Duffman, Wendy Duffman, center, Duffman's sister, and Michelle Biegalski, right, fiancé of fallen U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Justin Wilkens, pose for a photo with an Air Force Special Operations Command installation at the 9/11 Memorial and Museum in New York City, Sept. 18, 2025. In partnership with the 9/11 Memorial and Museum, AFSOC held a dedication ceremony for the installation, which honors AFSOC members who died in combat during the war on terrorism. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Natalie Fiorilli)

Air Force Special Operations Command



Kentucky Air Guard special tactics flexes maritime skill in Caribbean for Emerald Warrior

By Dale Greer

123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

A squadron of special tactics Airmen from the Kentucky Air National Guard completed a grueling five-day exercise here Aug. 30, 2025, testing their ability to perform a broad spectrum of operations in a maritime environment while responding to an enemy threat.

The Airmen, including combat controllers, pararescuemen and special reconnaissance troops, operated from the island of St. Croix to conduct land, sea and air missions with fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft as part of exercise Emerald Warrior 25.2, according to the special tactics officer who served as lead planner.

“Our Airmen exercised their unique skillsets to parachute into contested territory, establish airfield operations, control aircraft, respond to search-and-rescue scenarios, manage notional medical evacuations, and conduct reconnaissance and targeting operations on a very tight timeline,” the officer said.

St. Croix and its neighboring islands provided an ideal training environment, he added.

“Operations in the Caribbean simulate many of the geographical features our forces may encounter when deployed around the globe,” he said. “Having to overcome the kinds of challenges presented here will make us a more lethal and effective force the next time we conduct littoral operations anywhere in the world.”

The St. Croix event was just one piece of Emerald Warrior, a large-scale special operations exercise staged in multiple locations by Air Force Special Operations Command to train special operations components, sister service, interagency and partner forces. The exercise simulates missions for a theater campaign to support combatant commanders operating in a volatile environment against strategic competitors.



A U.S. Air Force special tactics Airman from the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing prepares to jump into Henry E. Rohlsen Airport near Christiansted in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, Aug. 26, 2025 as part of Emerald Warrior 25.2, a large-scale special operations exercise being staged in multiple locations by Air Force Special Operations Command. The Airman, joined by 10 other combat controllers and pararescuemen, took control of the airfield to receive follow-on aircraft in support of simulated combat and contingency operations. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Phil Speck)

A key focus was agile combat employment, meant to advance the ability to project air power in complex, unfamiliar or contested environments while working from distributed locations with limited support, the officer said.

The exercise here, staged and executed by forces from the Louisville, Kentucky-based 123rd Airlift Wing, kicked off Aug. 26 when six special tactics Airmen parachuted into the Caribbean Sea with an inflatable boat, 3 miles off the shore of St. Croix, from a Kentucky Air Guard C-130J Super Hercules. Eleven

more combat controllers and pararescuemen then jumped directly into Henry E. Rohlsen Airport from the same aircraft, with both forces combining to take control of the airfield. Within minutes, the Airmen had cleared the runways, established perimeter security and implemented air traffic control, allowing the C-130 to land and offload crucial assets.

In another mission, spanning two days, a group of Airmen traveled 75 nautical miles by boat to conduct reconnaissance and targeting operations on a nearby island held by simulated enemy forces.

Two other scenarios tested the squadron's ability to conduct search-and-rescue operations and provide medical care in challenging environments.

In the first event, six pararescuemen and combat controllers were tasked with finding survivors floating in life rafts on the open ocean after their plane crashed at sea. Over the course of a 32-hour scenario, the Airmen located the victims while flying over the crash site in a C-130J, parachuted into the ocean with two inflatable boats, provided on-scene medical care, and controlled medical evacuations via helicopter hoist operations.

"This was a particularly demanding scenario designed to test both the rescue capabilities and the survival skills of our Airmen on the open ocean," the planner said.

Other training included exfil and infil operations on land and sea from UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, provided by the Mississippi Army National Guard's 185th Aviation Brigade; and a mass-casualty exercise involving civilians wounded by an industrial accident. In that event, Airmen were required to triage patients, provide battlefield medical care, and control their evacuation via Black Hawk helicopters from the Virgin Islands Air National Guard Station.

Such complex operations required coordination with numerous entities, the planner said, including the U.S. Coast Guard; the U.S. Virgin Islands Governor's Office, Police Department and Air National Guard; officials at Henry E. Rohlsen Airport; local marinas; and dozens of area businesses. The exercise also relied on essential capabilities provided by the squadron's combat mission support team, including radio technicians, diving gear specialists, parachute riggers, vehicle maintenance troops and administrative specialists.

"An exercise of this scope, which has been in the planning stage for over a year, would not have been successful without the combined efforts of everyone involved, from our combat support troops to the governor's office to local citizens who were so supportive of our efforts to ensure our nation's security," the officer said.

Special tactics Airmen from the Kentucky Air Guard are among the most highly trained military operators in the world. The unit's combat controllers, pararescuemen and special reconnaissance specialists are capable of deploying by land, sea or air into almost any environment for combat or humanitarian operations.

Mission sets include clandestine deployment into contested environments to establish and control austere airfield and assault-zone operations; environmental reconnaissance and tactical weather forecasting; battlefield trauma care; and personnel recovery operations, including casualty evacuation and combat search and rescue.

The unit's Airmen have been heavily employed in humanitarian-response operations over the years, including earthquake and hurricane recovery missions. They were among the first U.S. forces on the ground following a devastating earthquake that struck Haiti in 2010, directing initial C-17 airdrops of humanitarian aid and controlling a massive resupply effort that delivered 20,000 pounds of food, water and medicine.

Following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, special operators from the wing established and operated a helicopter landing zone on a highway overpass in New Orleans, helping evacuate nearly 12,000 citizens. In 2017, following Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, the unit deployed 18 personnel to the Houston area to rescue 336 citizens stranded by flood waters; and 23 Airmen to the Virgin Islands to provide air traffic control for 636 rescue aircraft, evacuating 1,286 U.S. citizens from the Dutch island of St. Maarten.



U.S. Air Force special tactics Airmen from the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Airlift Wing conduct fast rope operations from a Mississippi Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk on the island of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, Aug. 27, 2025 as part of Emerald Warrior 25.2, a large-scale special operations exercise staged in multiple locations by Air Force Special Operations Command. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Dale Greer)

Marine Forces Special Operations Command

Para Bellum Horizon 25



*Story by U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Salvador Flores Perez
Marine Forces, Special Operations Command*

Marine Forces Special Operations Command hosted service members from across the U.S. military and international partner forces for its annual Para Bellum Horizon wargame at MARFORSOC headquarters at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, August 19-21, 2025.

Para Bellum Horizon is a three-day, annual wargame in the MARFORSOC wargame series designed to test strategies, explore capabilities, and exploit gaps in strategies in simulated naval operations. This year among MARFORSOC, service members and representatives across the U.S. military and international partner forces including the United Kingdom and Australia, came together to collaborate and share ideas in preparation for future conflicts in the Indo-Pacific region.

The wargames started on Aug. 19 with comments from Maj. Gen. Peter D. Huntley, MARFORSOC commander, welcoming service members and representatives to MARFORSOC and the mission of the wargame.

“The challenge is that everyone is not necessarily integrated to the degree we need to be,” said Huntley. “We are here to start a forum through this wargame, and to address the rising threats in the Western Pacific.”

Attendees were assigned to one of two teams in a scenario where they had to notionally deploy their forces across an area of operation to discover exploits in each other’s capabilities in a kinetic environment.

A representative from the British Royal Marines attended Para Bellum Horizon and noticed how different it operated compared to other wargames they had participated in previously.

“The key difference is that this isn’t a traditional turn-based scenario but more adversarial with both sides taking more of an active role, which is good in identifying capability gaps,” said the representative from the British Royal Marines.

While MARFORSOC hosted and led the development and organization of Para Bellum Horizon, the wargame was a collaborative effort between MARFORSOC personnel and the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab’s wargaming division.

The MCWL supports the U.S. Marine Corps to test new concepts and strategies for wargames across the Marine Corps. With the MCWL’s assistance MARFORSOC was able to develop this year’s version of Para Bellum Horizon and the MCWL was able to learn new things about MARFORSOC and special operations along the way.

“This is the first wargame [the] MCWL and MARFORSOC have teamed up for,” said Dan Wisniewski, the wargame analyst lead for MCWL for Para Bellum Horizon. “Coming out to MARFORSOC’s facilities is great as it allows us to leverage that deep level of professionalism and focus MARFORSOC brings.”

While the main draw of Para Bellum Horizon was the wargaming, attendees took advantage of the in-person environment to learn about each other’s services and network among each other to work beyond Para Bellum Horizon and further develop coordination to develop future warfighting strategies and relationship building.

“This has been good to build a relationship for MARFORSOC and for us to get familiar with the organization, what they are doing, and what they want to know,” said Wisniewski. “As we go forward to develop more games, we can reach out to MARFORSOC since we have built those relationships and increased our knowledge.”

Para Bellum Horizon has allowed participants to engage in an open forum to allow not only interservice cooperation but international cooperation in order to learn how these organizations can better integrate with each other under a common goal.

“There needs to be multiple forums where we come together and we talk conceptually, and we start to synchronize our different efforts,” said Huntley. “The arc of history shows at some point there is going to be some form of conflict, hopefully as non-kinetic as possible, but we have to be ready for the worst-case scenario.”

MARSOC Wargame Para Bellum Horizon 2025

Support for Naval and SOF Operations
(PBH25 CNSO)

19 AUGUST 2025

U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Peter D. Huntley, commander, Marine Forces Special Operations Command, gives opening remarks to all participants during MARFORSOC's Para Bellum Horizon 25 at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, Aug. 19, 2025. Para Bellum Horizon is a three-day, annual wargame in the MARFORSOC wargame series designed to test U.S. and partner nation forces' strategies, explore capabilities, and strategies in simulated naval operations. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Salvador Flores Perez)

Headquarters - U.S. Special Operations Command

Adm. Frank “Mitch” Bradley assumes command of U.S. Special Operations Command from Gen. Bryan Fenton

Courtesy Story

U.S. Special Operations Command

U.S. Navy Adm. Frank “Mitch” Bradley assumed command of U.S. Special Operations Command from U.S. Army Gen. Bryan P. Fenton during a ceremony held Oct. 3, 2025, in Tampa, Florida.

U.S. Air Force Gen. Dan C. Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, presided over the ceremony. The event hosted senior defense leaders, international military partners, allies, U.S. special operations leaders, local community leaders and other distinguished guests.

“SOCOM is a unique organization. Forged from the OSS in World War II, your job is to connect people and to bring dilemmas to those who would do us harm,” said Caine. “Bryan [Fenton] strengthened those connections. Mitch Bradley’s charge is to expand them...ensuring SOCOM remains ready to go out into the darkness on land, in the air, on the sea, or in cyberspace to do our nation’s business.”

Fenton, who retired after 38 years of service to the nation, completed his final three years at the helm of the special operations enterprise. During his tenure, Fenton focused on the priorities of People, Win and Transform, and his leadership embodied the first SOF Truth: humans are more important than hardware.

“Serving as the SOCOM commander has been the highlight of my professional life...and you can count on me to continue carrying the torch on behalf of the special operations community,” said Fenton. “There is no better command team than Adm. Bradley and Command Sgt. Maj. Krogman to continue to accelerate the incredible work being done at the tip of the spear.”

Bradley, who previously served as the commander of the Joint Special Operations Command, now leads an



U.S. Air Force Gen. Dan C. Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, passes the colors to U.S. Navy Adm. Frank “Mitch” Bradley, incoming commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, during a change of command ceremony in Tampa, Florida, Oct. 3, 2025. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Staff Sgt. Cutler Brice)

organization of 70,000 personnel who enable special operations in more than 80 countries around the world.

“The men and women of SOCOM are the best of our sons and daughters. We must empower them with knowledge and imbue them with the grittiest form of abilities for the hardest missions,” said Bradley. “I thank you for the opportunity and the privilege to bear the pressure of commanding this unbelievable group of humans.”

USSOCOM develops and employs the world’s finest SOF to conduct global special operations and activities as part of the joint force, in concert with the U.S. government interagency, allies, and partners, to support persistent, networked, and distributed combatant command operations and campaigns against state and non-state actors, all to protect and advance U.S. policies and objectives.

U.S. Navy Adm. Frank "Mitch" Bradley, incoming commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, delivers remarks during the USSOCOM Change of Command Ceremony in Tampa, Florida, Oct. 3, 2025. USSOCOM develops and employs the world's finest SOF to serve as a key enabler for the joint force, deterring aggression and when necessary, fighting to win. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Staff Sgt. Cutler Brice)



Headquarters - U.S. Special Operations Command

USSOCOM hosts a Change of Responsibility

Story by Michael Bottoms
U.S. Special Operations Command

U.S. Special Operations Command held a change of responsibility ceremony, Sept. 5, 2025, at the Davis Conference Center, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida.

U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Andrew J. “AJ” Krogman assumed responsibility as the U.S. SOCOM command senior enlisted leader from U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Shane W. Shorter, who held the position for more than three years.

U.S. Army Gen. Bryan P. Fenton, commander of U.S. SOCOM, hosted the event and reflected on the importance of noncommissioned officer leadership.

“SOF [Special Operations Forces] NCOs are the manifestation of our first SOF Truth, humans are more important than hardware – and truly – they are SOF’s credentials,” said Fenton. “And as our credentials, they lead the largest part of the SOF enterprise, our enlisted force, and set the example through their decades of service, of competence, confidence and character.”

Shorter thanked senior leaders from across the joint force and international SOF allies who attended the ceremony.

“Special Operations Forces are known as pathfinders and trailblazers, but it takes courageous leaders like all of you to clear those paths,” said Shorter. “The way every senior officer in this enterprise empowers NCOs sets a gold standard not only for SOCOM but for the entire military and our partners across the globe.”

As he passed the colors, Shorter said he was confident about the future of the command.

“I can think of no one better suited to assume the responsibilities at the pinnacle of Special Operations NCO leadership, advising at the helm of a 70,000-person global enterprise, than Command Sgt. Maj. Krogman,” he said. “You exemplify the best of special operations leadership. SOCOM is incredibly fortunate to have you stepping into this vital role.”



U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Andrew J. “AJ” Krogman, command senior enlisted leader of U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM), addresses the audience during a change of responsibility ceremony at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, Sept. 5, 2025. U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Andrew J. “AJ” Krogman assumed responsibility as the command senior enlisted leader of U.S. SOCOM and the over 70,000 men and women in the Special Operations Forces enterprise. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Staff Sgt. Cutler Brice)

Fenton echoed that confidence, noting Krogman’s extensive special operations experience, including his role as the Joint Special Operations Command senior enlisted leader.

“Command Sgt. Maj. Krogman, you are known as a creator, innovator, out-of-the-box thinker, atypical and non-traditional,” said Fenton. “You are exactly what SOF needs.”

Krogman thanked Fenton for his support and described the transition as seamless and the mission ahead as urgent.

“The significance of U.S. SOCOM’s role today cannot be overstated. In an ever-changing global landscape, the need for special operations is more critical than ever – these are America’s elite warriors at the tip of the spear, ready to respond to any challenge with precision, agility and unwavering resolve,” said Krogman. “As we look to the future, the importance of special operations will only grow, and I am honored to be part of this vital mission. I am eager to work alongside each of you, to listen, to learn, and to lead with compassion and determination.”

U.S. Army Gen. Bryan P. Fenton, commander of U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM), passes the U.S. SOCOM colors to Command Sgt. Maj. Andrew J. "AJ" Krogman during a change of responsibility ceremony at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, Sept. 5, 2025. U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Andrew J. "AJ" Krogman assumed responsibility as the command senior enlisted leader of U.S. SOCOM and the over 70,000 men and women in the Special Operations Forces enterprise. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Marleah Miller)



Headquarters - U.S. Special Operations Command

Grenada at dawn: Command and chaos

Air Force Captain Jack Carkeet's cockpit view of Operation Urgent Fury

Story by Timothy Lawn
U.S. Special Operations Command

Sharply banking the lumbering aircraft, Air Force Captain John "Jack" Carkeet dives for a short, debris-strewn stretch of runway at Point Salines Airfield, Grenada. His "Bionic" EC-130 — an Airborne Battlefield Command, Control, and Communications (ABCCC) platform. Descending toward the contested airstrip, he brings the aircraft in fast and hard, tracer fire crisscrosses the airfield. Carkeet is under no illusions, he is risking his crew, passengers and aircraft as he has now been thrust from an assigned combat supporting role to the razor's edge of combat.

"Point Salines only had half a runway (lengthwise and widthwise)," said Carkeet; "So as soon as my Bird came to a stop, we quickly off-loaded the Special Mission Unit, spun the aircraft around, and got out of Dodge as fast as we could."

It is Oct. 25, 1983, just before dawn. The U.S. and a coalition of Caribbean allies launch Operation Urgent Fury, a surprise assault to seize the island of Grenada. The Joint Chiefs of Staff directed the mission to be commanded by Vice Adm. Joseph Metcalf III. Metcalf conceives the operation as a rapid, unconventional strike.

Objectives are bold: Rescue hundreds of American medical students, restore democratic



Air Force Captain John "Jack" Carkeet

governance and eliminate what Washington fears is a becoming a Soviet-backed Cuban strategic outpost in the Caribbean. Metcalf and his task force are provided less than four days to plan and execute the invasion.

For the invasion, Carkeet serves as lead pilot for his squadron, the 7th Airborne Battlefield Command, Control and Communications Squadron (Tactical Air Command), based at Keesler AFB, Mississippi.

His aircraft's interior bristles with wall maps, electronics, and communications equipment as it functions as the mission's nerve center. Aboard with Carkeet are the Deputy Commander of a Special Mission Unit (SMU), a U.S. Army colonel, along with a small team of special operators. Due to the length of the mission, coupled with the weight of the EC-130 on Take-off, a nighttime air-refueling is necessary.

Approaching Grenada, Carkeet realizes the original invasion plan begins unraveling as the lead C-130 TALON carrying the senior SMU commander and his special operators suffers a complete electrical failure. This, in turn, forces the aircraft and its SMU to abort their airborne assault onto Grenada.

As Carkeet's EC-130 crosses the coast and takes-up an orbit over Point Salines – he discovers communications are challenging, especially trying to sort out what is actually happening on the ground and who is in the lead. "Radio chatter was pure chaos," Carkeet recalls. "If there was ever the fog of war, Grenada was it."

Trying to cut the tension, he quips, "So, how's the war going? Can we go home yet?" A crewmember in the back of the aircraft fire back: "Captain Carkeet,

it's chaos. I don't know who's who, where's where, or what's going on!"

Humor fades. The deputy commander requests he and his team parachute in. Carkeet informs the colonel the EC-130 is not configured for airborne operations. Additionally, "We didn't know the real winds down low over on a very small island, and they could've drifted into the ocean," he recalled. "I told the colonel it was better to land at daylight."

So Carkeet gambles. He decides to conduct a combat assault, landing on a partially finished, enemy-contested runway—fully loaded with fuel, gear, and men.

"We landed so the SMU and their commander team got off," said Carkeet. "Then we spun the plane around, obtaining full power, short-field takeoff... We were so heavy it was like a carrier launch. After clearing the end of the runway, the aircraft sank down to just above the ocean—we skimmed along the top until we got enough airspeed to climb."

Once safely airborne, Carkeet

resumes his orbital command mission, relaying communications across the invasion force. His crew refuels in Barbados, then returns to the fight, again and again.

Operation Urgent Fury ends officially on Nov. 2, 1983, when President Ronald Reagan declares Grenada secure.

For Capt. Jack Carkeet and the men of the 7th ABCCC Squadron, their daring landing and takeoff—at the very front edge of the invasion—remain a defining moment.

"In the end, it was worthwhile," Carkeet reflected. "If we hadn't done it, the students would still be there on Grenada."



Urgent Fury mission plan

Igniting Innovation: How the Joint Special Operations University call for special operations papers is shaping the future, advancing the SOF warrior mind

Story By Beth DeGeorge

Joint Special Operations University Press

Ideas Wanted

An idea: the critical spark necessary to ignite groundbreaking theory, initiate the first steps toward a unique solution, or produce the keystone of a cutting-edge invention. In the best cases, an idea generates all three outcomes. In the summer of 1968, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD; now Department of War [DoW]) issued a call for competitive bids to build a computer network linking 16 Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)-sponsored universities and research centers across the nation. The resulting project would be known as ARPANET by late 1969—the experimental computer network and forerunner of the internet. This call for ideas and workable solutions, known as broad agency announcements (or BAAs), continues to be DARPA’s primary vehicle for funding basic and applied research and development (R&D) programs, the many results of which are considered nothing short of revolutionary—high-speed microelectronics, stealth and satellite technologies, unmanned vehicles, and a wide variety of new materials. That call continues: On the DARPA website today, in big letters, read the words: Ideas wanted.

Last year, Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) launched its own version of an idea incubator with its inaugural Academic Year (AY) 2025 Call for Special Operations Papers. As an institution dedicated to the intellectual and educational development of Special Operations Forces (SOF), an academic call for papers was a natural evolution for the university as a means to seek ideas bridging the gap between SOF education and SOF operations—in essence, the opportunity to grow and strengthen the vital link between theory and practice within the SOF enterprise.

JSOU received more than 40 submissions—and two ideas are already making a direct impact on real-world SOF operations.

Real-World Impact

One paper was written by Dr. Jaime “Jay” Macias, chief of staff and director of operations at JSOU. His paper proposes a special operations-peculiar government civilian education program that addresses how SOF can improve the execution of its service-like responsibilities. The proposal has already taken root.[iv]

“I’m pleased to share that the ideas presented in my paper have already begun to influence real change,” Macias said. “The command has acted by repurposing the civilian education program—transitioning it from the J1 [Manpower and Personnel Management at USSOCOM], who did an outstanding job initiating the effort, to JSOU, which is now positioned to apply a more structured and strategic approach, as part of their efforts to develop joint special operations forces leaders.” This shift, he continued, “marks a meaningful step toward aligning civilian education with the unique needs of the SOF enterprise, and it’s encouraging to see the conversation turning into tangible progress.”

Another AY2025 Call for special operations paper is also actively shaping SOF priorities. The SOF Enterprise Education Catalog, or SEEC—the Category 3 winning paper—was proposed by JSOU Director of Institutional Effectiveness Jeff “Eddie” Edwards.

“I am excited to report that a prototype of the SEEC was successfully created,” he said. “This is a limited user test and from it, we are acquiring lessons learned and design improvements. A version 1.0 is expected in the near future.”

The SEEC aims to inform SOF military and civilian personnel supporting U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) of existing educational opportunities through a network of DoD/DoW academic institutions and partner universities.

“We look forward to bringing on partners and sharing this tool with USSOCOM personnel to quickly find education meeting their needs,” Edwards said. “I believe we will also be able to perform valuable analysis to discover gaps and redundancies across the education network.”

A second winner from the inaugural year hoping to see real-world impact is Sgt. 1st Class Michael Seitz from Special Operations Command Central. His paper proposes a multidimensional SOF ethics scale. “I hope the paper encourages the ongoing discussions and research into SOF ethics,” he said. “I would love to see a SOF multidimensional ethics scale be created and provided to the force to supplement training and awareness on ethical dilemmas.”

The third winning paper, submitted by Maj. Harrison Zabell from Special Operations Command South, makes the case for reframing homeland defense. “My immediate hope is that leaders consider the argument,” said Zabell. “In the long term, I’d like to see an organizational design that is both efficient and effective. If my work sparks new [courses of action] or brainstorming for teammates, that’s success.”

The Future Is Now: The AY2026 Call

The inaugural program launched in 2025 cast a wide net to crowdsource thought leadership, critical analysis, and thoughtful solutions from a wide range of experts and practitioners, not just academics. The university worked in tandem with the JSOU Press to develop and execute a comprehensive program in alignment with command priorities as determined by the 2024 Special Operations Research Topics (SORT) booklet. The program accepted more than 40 papers, and the three winners and other high-scoring papers were recently published in the edited volume *Advancing the SOF Warrior Mind: Essays from the Academic Year 2025 JSOU Call for Special Operations Papers*.

Building on the success of its first year, this year’s Call for Special Operations Papers program is defined by a single, forward-looking theme: technology in SOF. Topics were carefully selected from the 2026 SORT booklet, a publication developed with input from across the SOF enterprise. Compelling topics underscore the program’s relevance to current and future challenges

and range from machine learning and artificial intelligence in targeting to the space-cyber-SOF-STRATCOM to the ethical, legal, and operational challenges of AI-driven warfare.

Expanded categories for submissions allow the program to broaden its reach. This includes:

- Category 1: Professional military education (PME) students and military practitioners
- Category 2: International allies and partners
- Category 3: Academic faculty and civilian scholars
- Category 4: Fiction, a unique and exciting new category open to all

Papers must be unclassified and cannot exceed 5,000 words; participants may submit in more than one category. All submissions will be sent to panel of subject matter experts culled from within JSOU and the wider USSOCOM enterprise for review and evaluation.

People—and Their Ideas—Are More Important than Hardware

The AY2026 JSOU Call for Special Operations Papers is an opportunity for individuals to influence SOF strategy, equipment, and operations. Ideas don’t just sit on a shelf; they are reviewed by top subject matter experts and have the potential for real-world application. Winning authors will be recognized by the USSOCOM Commander and the JSOU President. In addition, category winners and high-scoring submissions will be published by the JSOU Press, a valuable author

credential and a lasting contribution to the SOF knowledge base.

The call for papers offers a tangible platform for innovation, a conduit between academia and operations, and a way for all in the SOF enterprise to contribute to its future. Two past paper ideas have already been adopted and are influencing thinking within the SOF community: People, not equipment, have made the critical difference. Moving theoretical exercise to actionable resource, the program is a vehicle harnessing the collective intellect of the SOF community to ensure future readiness and strategic advantage. JSOU AY2026 Call for Special Operations Papers: Ideas wanted.

This year’s theme is technology in SOF, with submissions required to address one of 10 specific topics selected from the SORT booklet. The submission deadline is February 23, 2026. To learn more and submit, visit <https://jsou.edu/Press/CallForPapers>





Special Operations Command headquarters command run

Service members assigned to U.S. Special Operations Command gather following a command run at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, Oct. 1, 2025. The run emphasized unity, readiness, and the enduring commitment of the Special Operations Forces enterprise to meet evolving global challenges. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Staff Sgt. Cutler Brice)





U.S. Army Gen. Bryan P. Fenton, retiring commander of U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM), receives the U.S. SOCOM colors from Command Sgt. Maj. Andrew J. "AJ" Krogman during a change of command ceremony in Tampa, Florida, Oct. 3, 2025. Fenton retired after more than 38 years of service and relinquished command to U.S. Navy Adm. Frank "Mitch" Bradley. SOCOM has over 70,000 men and women in the Special Operations Forces enterprise. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Staff Sgt. Cutler Brice)