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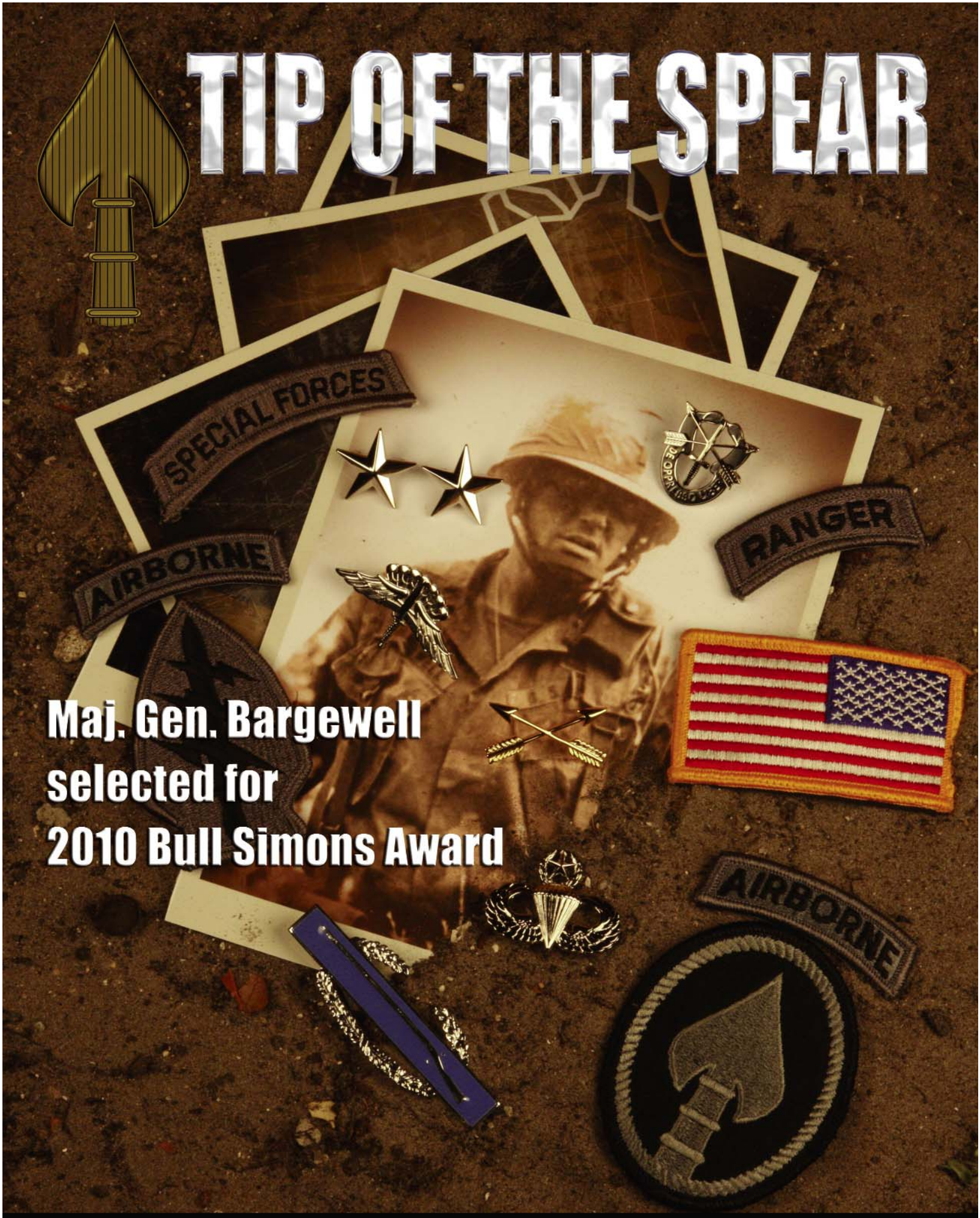


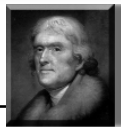
Maj. Gen. Bargewell selected for 2010 Bull Simons Award

U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., June 2010

U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Maj. Gen. Bargewell 2010 Bull Simons Award recipient
14

Tip of the Spear



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U.S. Special Forces train African counterparts in Mali

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Noggle
Special Operations Task Force-103 Public Affairs

As the temperature hits 120 degrees on a typical sunny afternoon May 13, in Mali's desert region, the Malians and Senegalese soldiers continue training harder than when the day started. U.S. Special Operations Forces from Special Operations Task Force – 103, who serve as trainers, feed off their African partner's motivation and continue with classes on small unit tactics, movements and convoy vehicle recovery drills.

Since mid-April, the U.S. SOF soldiers have trained with their African nation counterparts as part of Exercise Flintlock 10. The Special Forces exercise is focused on military interoperability and capacity-building and is part of an Africa Command-sponsored annual exercise program with partner nations in Northern and Western Africa. Flintlock 10, which includes participation of key European nations, is conducted by Special Operations Command Africa and designed to build relationships and develop capacity among security forces throughout the Trans-Saharan region of Africa.

"I am very grateful for us to receive this training," said the commander of the Malian Airborne company being trained. "We have soldiers from all over to discuss techniques and tactics and it has been very beneficial for us."

Over the last few weeks, the U.S. SOF advisors have focused training on close-quarter battle drills, battlefield medical treatment, and mission planning and movement – classes deemed necessary for the Malian and Senegalese soldiers to be able to conduct direct action raids on enemy targets.

"These are the kinds of techniques we can use against al-Qaeda," said the Malian captain. "They are moving fast. They are not staying in one place, they are always moving. These techniques will help us fight them."

According to one U.S. SOF soldier training the African soldiers, the focus of the training is to conduct direct-action missions, with a secondary emphasis on team mobility through desert terrain.

Malian soldiers conduct close-quarter battle drills with U.S. Special Operations Forces trainers during a military training engagement May 5, in Bamako, Mali, as part of Exercise Flintlock 10. The SOF exercise is focused on military interoperability and capacity-building and is part of an AFRICOM-sponsored annual exercise program with partner nations in Northern and Western Africa.

"The ultimate goal at the end is to have them run their own missions, from start to finish," he said.

While the Malians and Senegalese are eager to learn the techniques of the elite U.S. soldiers, they face a major challenge of not being able to fund equipment, supplies and vehicles which may effect them being able to sustain the training.

"They are eager to learn more everyday; the only question will be if they are able to maintain these skills once we leave," said a U.S. SOF soldier.

As training concludes for the day, the SOF trainers conduct a review with their African counterparts and explain what's planned for the coming days. When the Malians and Senegalese are released, they begin to sing and dance, knowing they did well for the day, but much more work lies ahead.

Night Stalkers add helicopters for training with Malians, Senegalese

By Kimberly Tiscione
160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment

Chinook helicopters from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) known as the "Night stalkers" added an aerial dimension to Exercise Flintlock 10 in Northern and Western Africa during the month of May.

The Special Operations Forces exercise, conducted by Special Operations Command Africa with participation of key European nations, focused on military interoperability and capacity-building with partner nations throughout the Trans-Saharan region of Africa.

"This was the first time Night Stalkers have participated in Exercise Flintlock," said the senior unit officer on-site. "Our Soldiers had the opportunity to work with military special operations forces from Africa, Europe and the United States, fly and work in an unfamiliar environment and experience the local culture."

The Night Stalker mission was unique in Flintlock 10 because the crews supported training events in multiple cities with a variety of special operations soldiers from host and partner nations.

Unlike their ground force counterparts who spent weeks with specific groups of soldiers, helicopter support lasted only a few days in each location. But the addition of rotary wing support for any period of time provided a rare opportunity for Malian and Senegalese special operations soldiers to incorporate helicopter operations in their training.

"The feedback we received about incorporating the helicopters into training at each location was extremely positive from host and partner nation personnel," the officer said. "You could see the host nation soldiers' confidence level increase and techniques adapt as they spent more time in and around the aircraft."

Senegal Special Forces soldiers conducted fast rope and ground assault operations out of the Chinook helicopters in Thies, Senegal. Marines from the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command incorporated the helicopters into ongoing training with the Senegalese soldiers.

This was the first time the Senegalese soldiers had conducted fast rope insertion techniques from a helicopter.

Malian special operations soldiers working with U.S. Special Forces in Bamako, Mali, practiced fast rope, ground assault and vertical extraction techniques from the aircraft.

For the majority of Night Stalkers, this was the first time they had worked with host nations military personnel.

"It was a great learning experience working with the soldiers from Mali and Senegal," said one of the crew members. "Working with our special operations ground forces at each location, we overcome language barriers to work together and learn from one another."

Approximately 1,200 European, African partner nations and U.S. personnel were involved in this year's event.

The senior Night Stalker said the unit is looking forward to opportunities to work alongside our sister nations in the future.

Malian soldiers conduct fast rope operations out of a MH-47 Chinook helicopter from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) Bamako, Mali, May 18. The military training engagement was part of Exercise Flintlock 10, a Special Operations Forces exercise focused on military interoperability and capacity-building with partner nations in Northern and Western Africa. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Marelise Wood.

Members of the Brazilian Marine Corps Special Operations Battalion (Tonelero) practice close quarters combat skills facilitated by U.S. Navy SEALs during a Joint Combined Exchange Training exercise at Batalhão de Operações Especiais de Fuzileiros Navais, Brazil. The training was facilitated by the U.S. Navy's amphibious assault expert SEALs, as well as the maritime mobility experts known as Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen. This bi-lateral training was the first time the U.S. had engaged with this unit in more than 25 years, and strengthens ties between the two nations.

NSW trains with elite Brazilian Unit

Story and photos by
Chief Petty Officer Kathryn Whittenberger
Naval Special Warfare Group 4 Public Affairs

Seven operators from Naval Special Warfare had the opportunity to work with the Brazilian Marine Corps Special Operations Battalion (Tonelero) from April 19 – May 13, in Batalhão de Operações Especiais de Fuzileiros Navais, Brazil. This was the first time the U.S. has work with this unit in more than 25 years.

"We requested this training to exchange tactics with special operations troops who have combat experience. The SEAL operators are the best choice to provide that training," said Brazilian Lt. Cmdr. Carlos Tunala, the Marine Corps Special Operations Battalion operations and logistics officer. "We focused on urban operations. My Marines are more prepared to conduct these operations now. Our only experience is in Haiti, which is not as complicated as Iraq or Afghanistan. With this training we can improve our operations in Haiti, as well as be more

prepared to host the World Cup and the Olympics."

This Joint Combined Exchange Training is part of a series requested by the Brazilian government. Topics covered included land warfare, close quarters combat, trauma medicine, over-the-beach missions, and movement through urban and rural environments. The course was taught by the U.S. Navy's amphibious assault expert SEALs, as well as the maritime mobility experts known as Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen.

"Brazil is one of U.S. Special Operations Command's priority countries, and we are privileged to be strengthening our relationship here," said Special Operations Liaison Officer Air Force Col. John Poast, who facilitates communication directly between SOCOM and the Brazilian military. "Exercises like this one provide an opportunity for tactics exchange and partner nation capacity building that is vital to maintaining security and stability on a global scale."

"Brazil is one of U.S. Special Operations Command's priority countries, and we are privileged to be strengthening our relationship here."
— Col. John Poast

The NSW Operators who traveled to Brazil for the training enjoyed the chance to work with the Tonelero.

"When we teach our guys, it's from scratch. There are no bad habits. For these guys, they already have their base tactics, so we could focus on the smaller things, like the differences and why do things a certain way," said a SWCC facilitator. "This was not as much 'this is the only way', but more, this is why we do it this way, and this is how. If they did it a better way, we took that on board as well. I was impressed that they were so keen to take our tactics on board because they are combat proven."

This exercise was one of many planned to focus on capacity building.

"This is a breach—we're breaching the door with our partners here," said the lead SEAL for coordinating NSW exercises in this region, who described some of the efforts that went along with the actual training.

This exercise fell under the Theater Security Cooperation Program, which is a partnership between the U.S. Department of State and Department of Defense to build rapport between the United States and partner nations. As part of that effort, NSW Seabees built a new 25-yard marksmanship range and upgraded the shoot house with an additional 6,800 square foot area to allow for more viewing areas for safety observers and more realistic training scenarios. "Naval Special Warfare wants to continue training alongside the Brazilian special forces, and we consider working alongside the Brazilians to improve their training facilities an investment in our partnership."

Although all the men, both Brazilian and American, put in long hours, it was well worth the effort to see what they accomplished.

"I found these guys particularly motivated and locked on to learning what we are putting out here," said a SEAL instructor. "I think our biggest success is that we've really exchanged some good skills, and it really surprised me how quickly we formed a sense of camaraderie and mutual respect."

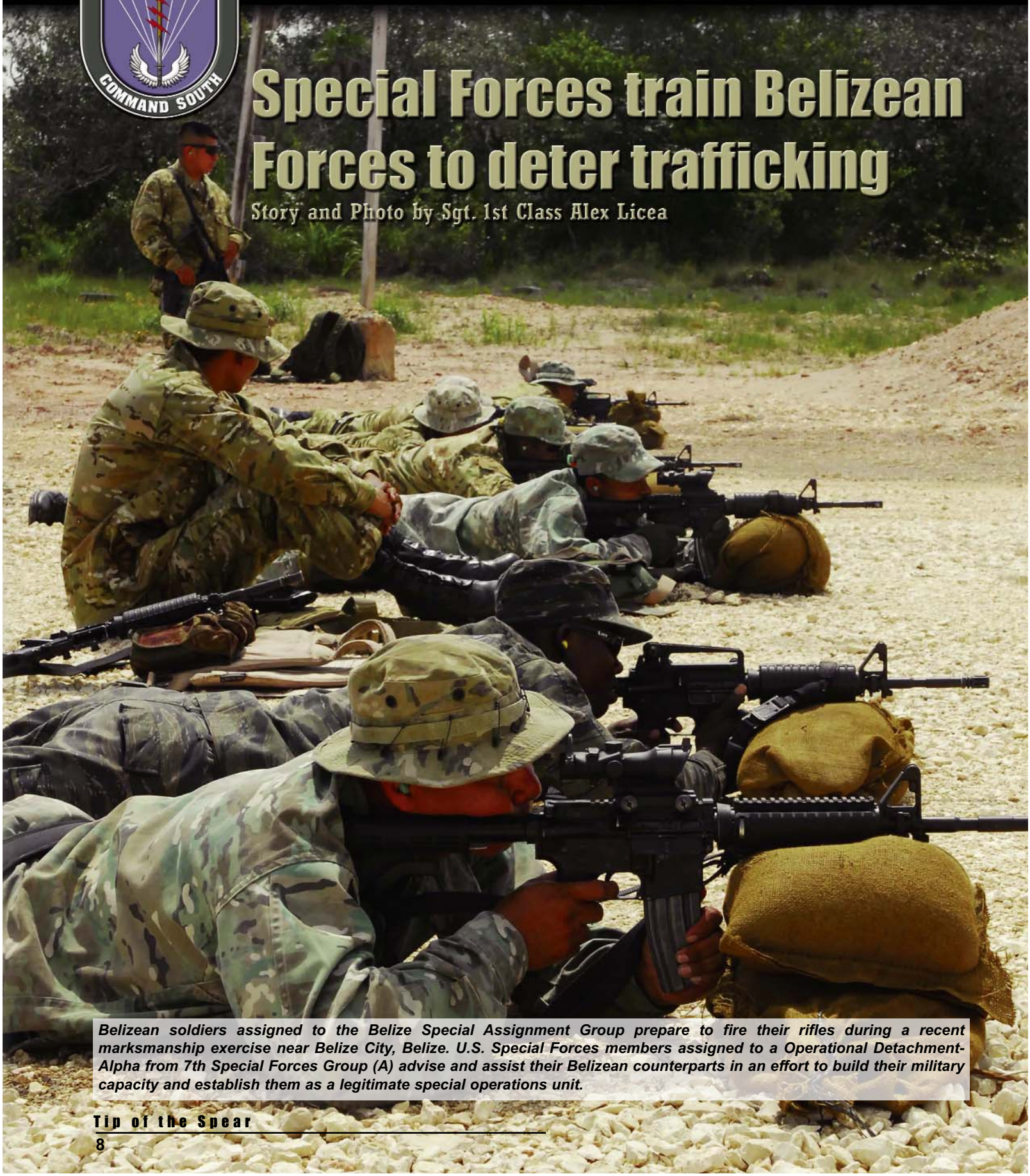
Although primarily a chance for the Brazilians to see how and why the United States Special Operators do things, this training was also a learning experience for the Americans.

"The main challenge was the language barrier, and learning how to train through an interpreter, but we worked through that," said another SWCC. "This was not a one-sided conversation. Their tactics definitely have their application, and I think if I had to fight in a jungle, this is the unit I would want to work with."

Members of the Brazilian Marine Corps Special Operations Battalion (Tonelero) listen as a U.S. Navy Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewman explains the maintenance procedures of an outboard motor during a Joint Combined Exchange Training exercise at 145 Batalhão de Operações Especiais de Fuzileiros Navais, Brazil.

Special Forces train Belizean Forces to deter trafficking

Story and Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Alex Licea



Belizean soldiers assigned to the Belize Special Assignment Group prepare to fire their rifles during a recent marksmanship exercise near Belize City, Belize. U.S. Special Forces members assigned to a Operational Detachment-Alpha from 7th Special Forces Group (A) advise and assist their Belizean counterparts in an effort to build their military capacity and establish them as a legitimate special operations unit.

Known for its beautiful coastlines and tropical weather, the Central American nation of Belize has been a destination for tourists all over the world.

However, past the luxury ocean front hotels comes a realization many people don't know. Concerns about drug trafficking throughout the tiny nation have increased as operatives use Belize as a launching pad for the illegal activity. The upsurge in the illegal transit operations can be traced along many of Belize's rural, remote areas, and vast ocean.

It's a problem acknowledged by both Belizean officials and their American counterparts who are working in partnership in an effort to deter illicit movement within Belize's borders.

For members of Operational Detachment-Alpha from the 7th Special Forces Group, the illicit trafficking is a predicament they understand well as the men advise and assist their Belizean Defence Force partners. The goal of these efforts is to build the BDF's military capacity in order to combat trafficking.

"Belize is a cruise destination, but it has also become a trafficking destination," said the SF officer-in-charge of the ODA. "Our goal is to build their collective capability, and get them operational in these remote areas to combat this problem."

Special Forces are training a special group of Belizean soldiers who are assigned to the Belize Special Assignment Group. Within Belize's military, they are considered the first responders to handle illicit activities.

This exchange is part of Special Operations Command South's theater security cooperation program. The program enables partner nations to better protect their borders and increase their capacity to conduct special operations. SOCSOUTH's program also helps partner nations improve their training facilities, such as weapons ranges, in order to increase their military capacity.

During the training, ODA personnel instruct their Belizean partners on a number of military skills, which include a range of advanced marksmanship, small unit tactics, first aid, and infantry maneuvers. All the training culminates in a field training exercise in which the American advisors employ practical scenarios into the training preparing the BSAG troops for a real-life situation.

"All of our training is based on real-world events in order to prepare them for unilateral operations," the SF officer said. "We are working on the fundamentals so they can learn all the different skill sets, and ultimately, they can train themselves."

Their efforts in Belize are transforming the BDF into a highly trained special operations unit. During a recent trip to a marksmanship range, Belizean non-commissioned officers took charge of the training and guided their soldiers on the proper procedures of marksmanship.

Although the American troops advised them on some aspects of the instruction, Belizean NCOs took the lead in the training. It's moments like this that make Belizean Cpl. Macario Salam proud to serve his country.

"I feel it is important that our American partners trust me to train these men, especially since we are using live ammunition," said Salam. "It is good that they let us train ourselves. They have confidence in us, and we are grateful for their training."

The accomplishments on the firing range came just days after the BSAG conducted a reconnaissance mission of a suspected trafficking route near the Belize-Guatemalan border, one of the first military operations of any kind along this remote, jungle area. This progress is a sign the SF men like to see.

"We are here to advise and assist, but they are beginning to professionalize themselves. They have great non-commissioned officers. They are professional soldiers, and many of them have trained in British and Belizean jungle schools," said the ODA SF team sergeant. "We have confidence in them; we have a positive relationship and know everyone by name. We have grown to respect their capabilities."

BSAG troops credit much of their success to the relationship that they have had with their American counterparts throughout the past few months.

"They (U.S. Troops) are like our brothers," said Salam, who has served in uniform for 11 years. "These men are veterans of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and their knowledge and experience have been very important for us to become better soldiers."

However, not everything comes easy, and many challenges plague military growth. Belizean soldiers feel that they can improve their capabilities with more resources.

"We are dedicated and will fight no matter the resources, but we need the support to be there so we can effectively combat trafficking," said Belizean Staff Sgt. Philip Coc.

Air Force Special Ops Weathermen enabling SOF in Afghanistan

By Senior Airman Elliott Spreitz
CJSOTF-A Public Affairs

A Special Operations Weatherman checks wind readings during a sandstorm during a Special Forces mission in Afghanistan. Air Force Special Operations Weathermen are the only career field in the Department of Defense that provides Special Operations Forces with meteorological data in support of SOF missions. Courtesy photo.

"We're being engaged by effective small-arms and RPG fire," yelled a Special Forces team leader in his radio back to the operations center. "Requesting close air support at this time," he continued.

But the dark sky above, laced with the promise of an impending storm, hooded the hostile territory and threatened the possibility of air support.

The Special Operations Weatherman embedded with the team carefully analyzed the weather data he collected and advised the commander and the combat controller there would be a small weather window of opportunity where close air support and airborne intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets could be synchronized.

These critical enablers are components of the Air Force's Special Tactics teams and are attached to Special Operations Forces elements for deployment.

In events where inclement weather and environmental conditions can impact military operations or the local populace, Special Operations weathermen provide on-scene data collection and mission enhancing forecasts. These Airmen possess highly technical skill sets combined with the latest military technology, enabling them to integrate environmental effects to ongoing operations and planning. This fusion of joint terminal attack controllers and special operations weatherman ensure the successful synchronization of air assets in complex battlefield conditions.

The weather career field roots began in 1917 originating as the U.S. Army Weather Service before being transferred in 1947 to the Air Force with the provision that the Air Force would still provide meteorological services to the Army.

SOWT were active in World War II to provide observations from deep inside enemy-held territory to advise bombing missions traveling hundreds of miles toward data-sparse objectives. In every conflict to this day, U.S. Air Force SOWT still provide data collection and weather forecasts for the Army, but it wasn't until May 5,

2008, the Air Force approved a new Air Force Specialty Code (known in the Army as a military occupational specialty) for Special Operations Weather. This ensured that the SOWT recruits were given a selection and assessment and a standardized training pipeline that parallels the Air Force Combat Controller plan.

The creation of the new position helps to serve as an opportunity for new recruits to join the career field, as they were drawn from conventional weather units previously. After completion of the two year pipeline, newly trained SOWTs become part of one of the smallest and most highly trained units in the Department of Defense and subsequently are the only Air Force weathermen trained and equipped to operate with Special Operations Forces "outside the wire."

More specifically, SOWTs support U.S. Special Forces, most of which are located in austere areas, including locations across Afghanistan, in support of the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force – Afghanistan.

They do this in a variety of different ways: The SOWTs are Air Force meteorologists trained and equipped to operate in hostile or denied territory to gather data and environmental intelligence in forward deployed locations in direct support of strategic and tactical objectives.

"They collect, analyze and integrate environmental intelligence," said Capt. Jonathan Sawtelle, the CJSOTF-A SOWT liaison officer.

Sawtelle works as a conduit for the SOWTs located at forward operating bases. These forward deployed SOWTs provide vital intelligence, which can directly affect air movement including close-air support, resupply, infiltration and exfiltration, and ISR platforms as well as ground movements for special and conventional forces.

"Weather can constrain MEDEVAC missions or force (MQ-1) Predators to be re-tasked," said Sawtelle.

SOWTs also assist in establishing some scientific data regarding climate, precipitation and more, especially in Afghanistan. Because of the limited resources in Afghanistan, forward deployed SOWTs, provide climate data in different areas of the country; data that would otherwise not be collected.

The information provided includes annual precipitation in certain areas, river speeds, depths and water temperatures, avalanche risk, wind readings and more.

"The terrain is so complex and there are little to no existing meteorological data on record," said Sawtelle, adding, "each valley has its own micro-climate, specific terrain features and agricultural resources."

SOWTs providing daily situational awareness to the CJSOTF-A commander including weather forecasts at times dictate the effectiveness of missions, both air and ground. Their job is to advise air and ground force commanders of timelines and impacts and enable them to mitigate or exploit the expected conditions.

One aspect of their duties, environmental reconnaissance, shows how SOWTs assist in maintaining operational success.

"We provide foresight to ground force commanders for any impact to mission," said a SOWT Airman at a FOB in Western Afghanistan. "While conveying impacts on future operations to a ground force commander goes a long way, providing alternative courses of action solidifies our place in any theater of war."

"I'm a pinpoint on a map, but I'm not just a team asset," said the Airman. "We present weather products to Coalition forces for the big picture of operations. We provide information on terrain and soil density, which determine the ability to support traffic ability of large vehicle movements."

Collection of this data paves the way for future operations by conventional and SOF elements.

SOWTs have a variety of resources at his disposal to include weather satellites, forecasting products and tools such as riverine kits, which measure temperature and speed of crucial crossing points. Also available for use is the RQ-11B Raven, an unmanned aircraft system with onboard electro-optical sensors, providing real-time reconnaissance with the ability to survey enemy activity and terrain from safe distances.

By using tools such as the above mentioned, SOWTs can provide information to SOF and non-SOF forces regarding the ability to ford rivers for troop movements on the ground.

"River data can mean the difference between a successful river crossing and a vehicle getting stuck," said Sawtelle.

"We're the only job in the Department of Defense that does what we do," said the Airman. "We paint a picture for moving through terrain, establishing landing zones, and by doing so, help provide mission success."

SOWTs are another facet supporting SOF; enabling mission success and continuing to provide tactical and strategic information to provide for the future success of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Peace and development: One animal at a time

By Western Mindanao Command and Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippine Public Affairs

In the rolling valleys and rugged terrain along the base of the Butig Mountains in the Southern Philippines, a small Philippine and U.S. medical team, in conjunction with students from Mindanao State University, improves the lives of residents by providing herd health treatments to their animals.

The small joint medical team uses a unique method to decrease safe havens for terrorist and lawless groups: one animal at a time.

Over a four day period, the Philippine and American soldiers and college student volunteers treated more than 450 farm animals. The effect is the improved health of the animals. The healthier the animal, the more they produce and are capable of work. Healthy and productive animals improve the lives of each family in this area.

"In order for economic prosperity to occur, there needs to be a secure environment for which development projects can mature," said Lt. Gen. Ben Dolorfino, Western Mindanao commander, Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Since 2002, 15 of 24 names of the Philippine most-wanted in Mindanao have either been captured or killed by Philippine Forces. Philippine forces have partnered with American forces to conduct training and aid projects. The training assist the Philippine military efforts in combat and the aid projects help to decrease local support of lawless groups.

"The Philippine and U.S. forces employ a comprehensive approach to secure an environment that encourages development. This approach, coupled with security and development, establish the dynamic to eliminate enemy safe havens and areas for recruitment," said Dolorfino, the joint commander of Philippine forces in Western Mindanao.

The four-day veterinarian civic action programs were held April 11 – 14 in five different barangays (neighborhoods) in Lanao Del Sur: Kapatagan, Mananayo, Matling, Picong and Masui.

At a Veterinarian Civic Action Program, a U.S. Army veterinarian injects a local farmer's horse with a basic treatment for parasite infections and vitamin deficiencies. This VETCAP comprised Armed Forces of the Philippines, U.S. military, Philippine Department of Agriculture, and barangays (neighborhoods) leadership was held in five different barangays in the more remote areas of central Mindanao. Courtesy photo.

"The Philippine Department of Agriculture, Armed Forces of the Philippines and Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines are doing a campaign of agricultural education," said Lt. Col. Stephen Goldsmith, JSOTF-P veterinarian. "In this situation we provide livestock with basic animal treatment for parasite problems, which are severe in the Philippines, and vitamins that help with vitamin deficiencies, which are related to nutritional deficiencies," he said.

Many residents of the barangay watched as the military veterinary team and students treated farm animals with medications for parasite control and provided vitamin treatments. "On behalf of the barangay, we are thankful that the Philippine and U.S. Armies are here and treating our

animals," said Acmad Malawai, spokesperson for the Mananayo barangay.

"It is important to have healthy animals because these animals help the farmers do all the work," Malawai said. With no local private veterinarians and few department of agricultural personnel, professional animal care is virtually non-existent in southern Mindanao, making the need for these services vital for the livelihood of the animals and success of the farmers, but also the community. The veterinarian team emphasized the importance of farmers learning to treat animals themselves, and steps they can take to have healthier, more productive livestock.

The AFP and U.S. veterinarians, SF medics, and students treated 473 farm animals over four days, including 116 goats, 125 pigs, 26 cows, 22 chickens, 17 caribou, five horses, and 149 dogs, improving the health of the livestock for farmers who depend on animals for their livelihood.

"We are giving two different parasite medications to treat intestinal worms and liver flukes that are common in the Philippines, as well as, external parasites like ticks, lice and mites," said Goldsmith. "These parasites suck a lot of blood and nutrients out of the animals, which prevent them from developing properly, affect their reproductive health, their growth, and productivity of their livestock."

Typical Filipino farmers have three to four animals and they can't afford the medications. For these farmers, they would have to form a co-operative and pool their resources.

"The people are happy to have a veterinarian here today because most of the animals have not been treated by a veterinarian," said Paterno Gonzales Jr., Assistance vice president for Agriculture Operations for Matling Industry. Gonzales has lived in Matling for 26 years.

While the VETCAP focus is on livestock, the Philippine and U.S. Army teams and students provide anti-rabies vaccinations to dogs and cats. For the Matling barangay, rabies impacted the residents directly. Gonzales mentioned that Matling suffered two fatalities last year. "Two small children were bitten by dogs that had rabies and died," he said.

Dr. Francisco Alivio, rabies coordinator of the Philippine Department of Health, said rabies continues to be a public problem in the Philippines. There are between 200 and 300 deaths per year from rabies and dogs remain the principal carrier of rabies. Majority of rabies victim are children less than 15 years old.

"Cases of rabies in children increased compared to last year," Alivio said. "Children are most vulnerable to rabies."

These efforts, with the support and assistance from the AFP and MSU, are part of the long-term strategy to develop viable socioeconomic atmospheres in communities throughout the islands of Mindanao.

"We are helping the health of the animals which helps the economic status of the people who own the animals," Goldsmith explained while injecting medicines into cows. "We also try to educate farmers to understand this is something they need to do on a regular basis for the overall health of their animals, and that they can do a lot of this themselves with the help of the Government of the Philippines Department of Agriculture and MSU College of Agriculture."

Once security is provided, the next step is helping individuals and local communities improve socioeconomic opportunities, which limit the terrorist and lawless groups influence among the residents.

"As part of a synchronized strategy to erode safe havens in Mindanao, the Philippine army works with government and nongovernment organizations to support education, medical and construction projects," said Philippine Army Col. Demy Tejares, Western Mindanao command assistant chief of staff for operations.

"Insurgency starts where good roads end," he continued. Tejares, who has served in the Philippine Army for 27 years and led troops in Basilan and Sulu, mentioned that where there are good roads, there is development, and development brings peace and harmony. In this case, healthy and productive farm animals metaphorically represent the road.

The secondary impacts of VETCAPs are more stability and less of a reason for the people to feel like they don't have any other options than to fight. The projects help give farmers an opportunity to make a living in their own area without having to move to another area to support themselves and their family. This provides them with an investment in their area and they feel part of the community.

"Overall, this program will help their economic stability as a family. If you have stable families, then you have stable communities," Goldsmith said.

VETCAPs are only one small, yet very important, part of AFP and JSOTF-P's integrated mission in the Philippines. AFP and JSOTF-P have combined efforts to assist with 40 construction projects, provide medical care to more over 4,000 Mindanao residents, and conduct more than 91 training events in 2010 alone.

Maj. Gen. Bargewell selected for 2010 Bull Simons Award

By Mike Bottoms
USSOCOM Public Affairs

Retired Army Maj. Gen. Eldon Bargewell received U.S. Special Operations Command's highest honor when he was awarded the 2010 Bull Simons Award in Tampa, Fla., June 16. This lifetime achievement award, named for Army Col. Arthur "Bull" Simons, honors the spirit, values, and skills of the unconventional warrior.

Bargewell's extensive career in special operations and his commitment to ensuring soldiers were properly trained prior to combat were instrumental in his selection for this award.

"Major General Eldon A. Bargewell's career of service is an amazing example of how one person, always learning and always leading, can profoundly impact both mission success and the people who are privileged to work with him," said Navy Admiral Eric T. Olson, commander, USSOCOM.

"He is the man you want planning the mission, the one you want close by, on your right or left during a firefight, and the one you can trust to tell the truth when its over."

Bargewell, a Hoquiam, Wash., native, enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1967 and completed the Special Forces Qualification Course in 1968. In September of that year, he was assigned to the Studies and Observation Group in Vietnam. During his two tours in SOG as a Non-Commissioned Officer Team Leader, Bargewell conducted more than 25 reconnaissance, direct action and team recovery missions into Cambodia, Laos and North Vietnam where he ultimately earned the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second highest award for valor.

> *"Waugh took me up in a helicopter to nine thousand feet and he threw me out."*
>
> *— Maj. Gen. Bargewell*

A year after leaving his recon company in Vietnam, Bargewell said he volunteered to return because he "was comfortable with their mission, and Billy Waugh was the recon company sergeant major."

Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Billy Waugh, a legend in his own right in the Special Operations community and author of the book "Hunting the Jackal," described Bargewell as a strong, decisive combat leader who carried a unique weapon in Vietnam.

"Bargewell was unique because he liked to carry an RPD, which is a Russian heavy machine gun, seven point six two, muzzle velocity of thirty-two hundred feet per second. It's an ass-kicker, and when that round hits you, you are dead," Waugh said.

The RPD is the weapon Bargewell used in the battle where he was credited with killing between 35 and 40 enemy, saving his platoon and earning the

Distinguished Service Cross. His affinity for Warsaw Pact weapons would continue throughout his career, culminating in his last combat tour in Iraq where he carried an AK-47.

The "Billy Waugh HALO School"

"I got scratched from the HALO (high-altitude, low-opening) school because I had a hole through my head and couple of other places," Bargewell said. "And later, I guess Billy Waugh felt sorry for me so he put me through the Billy Waugh 'special' HALO school."

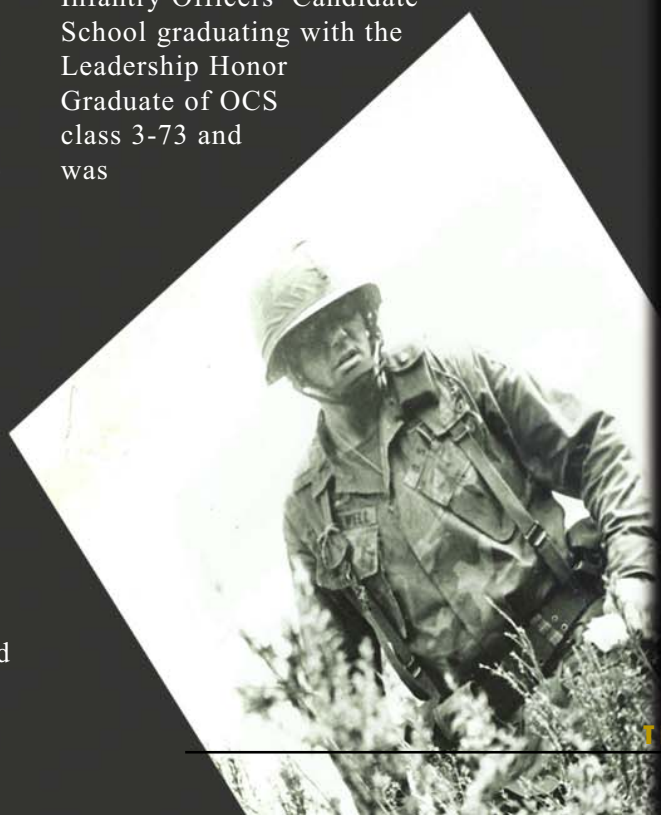
HALO is a unique skill and Waugh wanted to have more men qualified for so they could do combat jumps.

"Waugh took me up in a helicopter to nine thousand feet and he threw me out," Bargewell said. "I just flipped end over end. I never got stable once. I did have enough sense to pull before I hit the ground," he said. "I got up from the ground and Waugh jumped with me and landed right by me and chewed my rear end to no end.

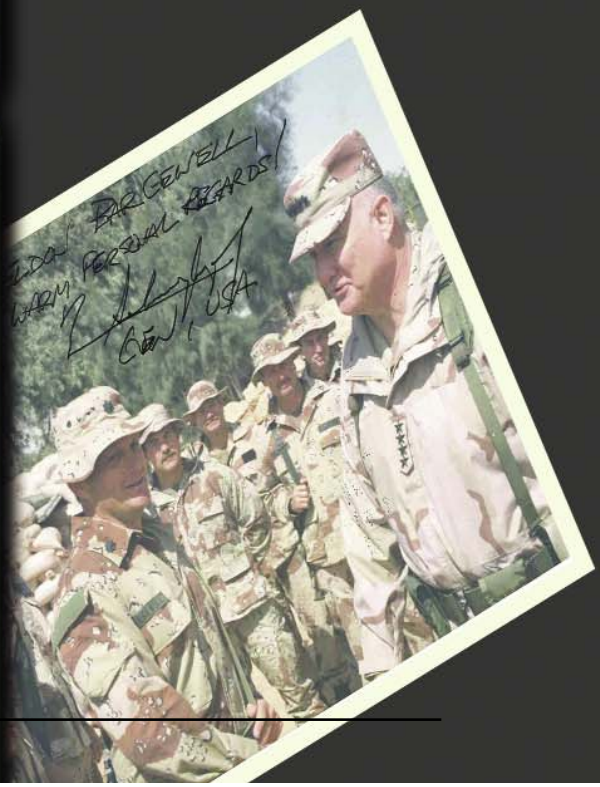
"He made me get down on the ground and made me show him a stable position and then he said 'ok we are going right back up.' We jumped again, and I got kind of halfway stable and it was a lot better. We got on the ground and he critiqued me again and we went up for a third jump. That jump was little better. Waugh then said ok you are HALO qualified."

The trainer

Shortly after returning from Vietnam in 1972, Bargewell attended Infantry Officers' Candidate School graduating with the Leadership Honor Graduate of OCS class 3-73 and was



commissioned in the Infantry in April 1973. His first assignment was with the Ranger Battalion at Ft. Lewis, Wash. His company commander at that time was Army Capt. Lawson Magruder, who would eventually earn the rank of lieutenant general.



Magruder marveled at Bargewell's Vietnam experience and his humility toward his experience.

"What was brought to bear by Eldon Bargewell early on at individual squad and platoon level was all that experience from Vietnam. The techniques and procedures he brought forged in combat were integrated into the SOPs of the company and battalion," said Magruder. "He never liked to talk about his experience; he just liked to bring the experience to the training environment and made the training as realistic as possible."

Bargewell's Vietnam experience drove him throughout his career to make sure any unit he led into combat would be well trained.

"My lack of training and preparation for what I did in Vietnam had significant impact on how I trained my team," Bargewell said. "We were young guys and we didn't know what we were doing and I learned the hard way on a lot of things. I knew if I ever had gone back to war I was not going to send my platoon

or recon team back into war unless I did everything I could possibly do to get them trained up."

Black Operations

Bargewell would move on to the next phase of his Special Operations career by being selected for the Special Mission Unit in the early 1980s.

"I remember my father at Fort Benning training up for the Special Mission Unit. I didn't understand what that unit was, but I remember him running a lot, doing PT, rucking, getting ready for selection and then one day he was gone," said Bargewell's son, Army Chief Warrant Officer Brandt Bargewell. "He came back and I can remember his feet were wrapped in bandages, bloodied and he couldn't walk very well and that was my memory from his selection into the Special Mission Unit."

Bargewell would stay with the Special Mission Unit participating in missions in Operations Just Cause and Desert Storm.

In 1998 he became the commanding general Special Operations Command – Europe in Stuttgart, Germany. During this time his primary focus was in Bosnia and Kosovo. During Operation Allied Force in the Balkans, Bargewell was the commander of the Joint Special Operations Task Force Noble Anvil, tasked with providing Combat Search and Rescue forces during the conflict in Serbia. His JSOTF was successful in rescuing two USAF pilots shot down and for conducting other special operations.

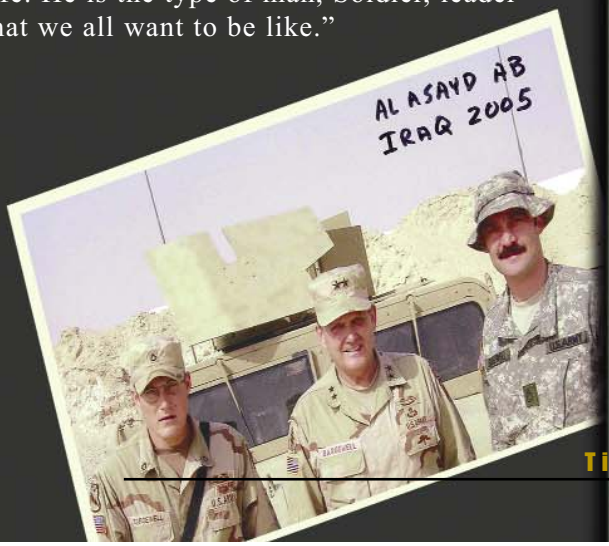
From 2000 to 2001, he served as the Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations, Stabilization Force Headquarters, Sarajevo, Bosnia. From 2001 to 2003, Bargewell was the Director of the Center for Special Operations, Plans, and Policy, U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill AFB, Fla. From 2003 to 2005, he was the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations at Allied Joint Force Command in Brunssum, Netherlands. His final assignment on active duty was as the Director of Strategic Operations at Headquarters Multi-National Force-Iraq in Baghdad, Iraq.

"His selfless sacrifice touched so many in just about every conflict since Vietnam,"

— Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Lawson Magruder III

Bargewell retired Jan. 1, 2007, after serving more than 39 years in the U.S. Army with more than 29 years in Special Operations.

"Leadership in combat starts a long time before the first shot is fired, and this is what General Bargewell really stands out at," said Army Maj. Gen. (Ret.) William Garrison. "He is probably the best trainer I have ever seen in my entire life. He is the type of man, Soldier, leader that we all want to be like."



Last Man Out

By Tom Neven
USSOCOM History Office

Staff Sgt. Eldon Bargewell

September 1971. Somewhere in Laos, in the northern part of the A Shau Valley. A team of U.S. Army Special Forces soldiers and indigenous Montagnard and Cambodian fighters, about 15 strong, sets down by helicopter at last light and quickly disappears into the jungle. Their objective: perform reconnaissance of Route 922, a major transit road that made up the Ho Chi Minh Trail from North Vietnam into South Vietnam. Their particular target is a road chokepoint codenamed Golf 5. Staff Sgt. Eldon Bargewell leads the team into the gathering darkness, knowing that the enemy is probably fully aware of their arrival.

The team is part of the Military Assistance Command Vietnam–Studies and Observation Group (MACV–SOG), a joint unconventional warfare command formed in January 1964 to advise, train, and support South Vietnamese forces in their fight against the communist regime in North Vietnam. MACV-SOG teams frequently operated in cross-border operations into Cambodia, North Vietnam, and, as with this mission, into Laos. This particular mission stands out, though, because before it would end the next day, Staff Sgt. Bargewell would engage in actions that led to his being awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, our nation's second-highest honor for valor in combat.

Bargewell had no illusions about what faced him that day. In fact, the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) had dedicated 80,000 soldiers to ferret out the special operations teams. The Ho Chi Minh trail was an important lifeline for NVA regulars and Viet Cong fighting in South Vietnam, and teams such as Bargewell's were a major headache for them. In fact, on an earlier mission Bargewell had captured a map of the entire Ho Chi Minh Trail complex, including waypoints and rest areas, providing American targeters with a rich intelligence source. (On that mission Bargewell survived an AK round that hit him in the chest but lodged in the NVA ammo pouches and magazines he wore there.)

"Route 922 was a hell of a target," said Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Billy Waugh, who served several tours with MACV-SOG. "We sent team after team into that target area and lost many men there."

"We'd been having a lot of trouble getting teams into landing zones without being shot up at the landing zone, having helicopters shot down" Bargewell said. "We felt that they knew where we were going to land before we got there."

Indeed, Waugh said, the NVA's

communications capability was every bit as good as the Americans', and they frequently intercepted our messages. "They knew he was there," he said of Bargewell, "so the chase was on."

Bargewell's team set up a small perimeter, perhaps 20 feet in diameter, and placed Claymore mines in front of them—not too far out, though, so the enemy could not sneak up and turn them around. Bargewell himself carried a formidable weapon: the RPD (Ruchnoy Pulemyot Degtyareva), a Soviet-bloc light machine-gun that fired a 7.62mm round at 3,200 feet per second at 650 rounds a minute. "It's an ass-kicker," Waugh said, "and when that round hits you, you're dead."

It was a good weapon to have for this fight.

"We knew they were probably going to attack us," Bargewell said. And just as first light was peeking through the foliage, the NVA fired two RPG–2 rockets into the small perimeter and opened up with AK–47s at the same time.

"Everyone was wounded," Bargewell said. A piece of a fragmented AK round hit the left side of his face and lodged beneath his right eye. Despite the wound, he quickly returned fire.

"I saw them coming through the jungle, about 20 feet away, 10 to 12 guys on line," he said. "I basically took them out."

The NVA tried again, from a different angle. "They were moving at a crouch, half-stepping but moving quickly towards us," Bargewell said. "They were firing over our heads. I was laying down low, firing from behind a log, and I took that second line out."

The NVA tried three more times to overrun the position and were repulsed each time by the team's fire, particularly the heavy, accurate fire from Bargewell's RPD. Because of his incredible firepower, the NVA concentrated their efforts on his position.

"We were in dire straits and about to be overrun," Bargewell said. "They needed to come with the helicopters and gunships and get us out of there."

The team moved to a predetermined pickup point, but the NVA pursued. As they moved to leave, Bargewell held his position, laying down protective fire. "He evacuated everyone but himself," Waugh said. "He wouldn't go out. He had the weapon that was saving the day."

> *"He evacuated everyone but himself. He wouldn't go out. He had the weapon that was saving the day."*
>
> *—Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Billy Waugh*

"They came on a final assault with about 60 guys," Bargewell said. "At that point I had about 400 or 500 rounds left out of my thousand rounds of ammo. I wound up breaking up their assault on the LZ."

The team called in supporting air strikes, and A–1E Skyraiders spent 45 minutes placing accurate fire between Bargewell's team and the pursuing NVA. Once at the landing zone, Bargewell refused medical treatment in order to defend the LZ and ensure the safe evacuation of his team. He was the last man out.

For his actions that day, Eldon Bargewell was awarded the Distinguish Service Cross in November 1971.

Epilogue: Staff Sgt. Bargewell was medevac'd to Da Nang, suffering serious internal bleeding from a severed artery in his nasal sinuses. After doctors stopped the bleeding, he was due to be further evacuated to a military hospital on Okinawa. Instead, he asked a visiting buddy to help him, and at 0100 a few days later, he snuck out of the hospital and went back to his MACV-SOG base, where he spent another five months in Vietnam.

SF team 'best of best' during Best Ranger Competition

By S.L. Standifird
Joint Hometown News Service

Master Sgt. Eric Ross (left) and Master Sgt. Eric Turk, representing the Army Special Forces Command, finish the last run as winners of the 2010 Best Ranger Competition at Fort Benning, Ga. Photo by Daren Reehl.

The 2010 David E. Grange Jr. Best Ranger Competition came to a close on the evening of May 9, when the last teams standing following the three-day event had crossed the finish line.

The winning team of Master Sgt.'s Eric Turk and Eric Ross, representing the U. S. Special Operations Command, raised their hands in celebration as they crossed the finish line.

"It feels pretty doggone good to be able to walk out with the trophy today," said Turk.

More than 40 two-man teams began the quest for the title of Best Ranger, but only 25 can say they were able to complete the ultimate Army competition.

"It's kind of like the Super Bowl, the World Series, the Daytona 500, and the World Cup for the Army and the Ranger community," said Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Smith, Ranger Training Brigade command sergeant major. "Just to finish it is saying a lot. These competitors are the best of the best."

The competition started with a four-mile buddy run, a 250-meter swim, and another three-mile run to their first obstacle course. Following the urban obstacle course, teams had to navigate their way across the camp to firing ranges to conduct a series of weapons skills events before moving out again on another buddy run. The day ended with a spot jump and concluded with an unknown distance foot march.

The grueling first day of events and more than 30 miles traveled eliminated nearly half of the competitors. Only 26 teams began the second day's events of completing Ranger skills stations that included rappelling, rope climbs, first aid, hand grenades and additional weapons skills challenges. The day ended with an overnight orienteering, or land navigation, course.

Competitors were in agreement that it was a relief to have made it past day one, and most were looking forward to the finish line after day three.

"It sucks, I'm not going to lie," said Staff Sgt. Keith Bach, representing 3rd Infantry Division.

"(The first day) was harder this year than last year," said Sgt. Michael Malchow, representing 75th Ranger Regiment. "We are getting stronger as we go on and hopefully we can get today over with and make up some ground as far as getting up there in the standings."

Day three began with the Darby Queen, an obstacle course laid out on a one-mile route. Upon completion of the course, teams constructed a poncho raft for use in the Helocast event. The Helocast event took the teams and their poncho raft over a pond and dropped them. Teams were required to utilize their poncho raft and swim to shore. The day finished with a water confidence test, canoe race, and the final buddy run to the finish line.

"Over the past three days the competitors covered more than sixty miles on foot for over sixty hours without sleep, and very little food intake," said Capt. John Vickery, project officer for Best Ranger. "All those teams that completed the competition are really, really good teams. They represented their units well."

Medal of recognition awarded to JSOTF – Philippines commander

By Lt. Steffani Cacho
Joint Special Operations Task Forces – Philippines

Senior Armed Forces of the Philippines leader presented a Philippine military medal June 18 to the commander of U.S. forces in the southern Philippines for his contributions that has brought stability and security to war torn areas of Basilan and Sulu.

The Western Mindanao Command Commander, Lt. Gen. Ben Dolorfino, AFP, presented the "Gawad sa Kaunlaran" Medal to Col. William Coultrup, United States Army, as fitting recognition for his contributions to community development, especially in war torn areas of Basilan and Sulu. The award recognized Coultrup's efforts during his stint as the commander of Joint Special Operations Task Forces-Philippines from September 2007 to July 2010, at a formal ceremony held at Camp Navarro.

For his part, Dolorfino reiterated his gratitude for the assistance extended by the JSOTF-P, through the leadership and command of Coultrup, to the mission of WMC to bring about conditions conducive to nation building and peace, progress, and prosperity in the Western Mindanao provinces. He emphasized that the "Gawad sa Kaunlaran" is an award given for acts that are geared towards development which has been the cornerstone of the relationship of the two military commands.

"Colonel Coultrup has earned the lasting admiration and gratitude not only from the Western Mindanao Command, but the Armed Forces of the Philippines as well," Dolorfino emphasized.

During his term, JSOTF-P provided medical supplies, school supplies, and construction materials which made way for the success of numerous civic action projects such as medical, dental, and veterinarian assistance and outreach and engineering projects to include renovation and construction of classrooms and school buildings and establishment of farm-to-market roads, all amounting to more than $28 million dollars.

"The award of the 'Gawad sa Kaunlaran' was given to Coultrup for his pursuits and infallible contributions to the socioeconomic and noncombat activities of the WMC, and the AFP as a whole," said Dolorfino.

Col. William Coultrup, left, commander, JSOTF-Philippines, receives a plaque of appreciation from Lt. Gen. Ben Dolorfino, commander of Western Mindanao Command, Armed Forces of the Philippines during an award ceremony June 18. Coultrup was awarded the plaque, along with the Gawad Sa Kaunlaran medal for his valuable services and support to the AFP mission, which benefited the people of the Philippines. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Joshua Scott.

In his remarks, Coultrup shared the honor he received with the men and women that he worked with, and the personnel of the AFP. He acknowledged the effort and dedication of both armed forces to help bring about peace and prosperity in areas that have been embroiled with strife and allow individuals and families to hope for a better future, while recognizing that more still needs to be done. He also emphasized how the concept of "Kapit Bisig," the framework of cooperation between the two nations, was a model for future efforts in all regions where terrorism exists.

"Confident in the relationships we (JSOTF-P and AFP) have forged and our collective achievements over the past three years, I challenge all of you to continue moving forward in this common cause leveraging the same innovation, ingenuity and initiative that has brought us to this historic moment. It has been my distinct pleasure to serve with you," said Coultrup.

7th SFG (A) family celebrates golden anniversary

By Staff Sgt. Joshua Johnson
7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) Public Affairs

Past and present members of the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) family joined to celebrate 50 years of storied history during a golf tournament and the 7th SFG(A) 50th Anniversary commemorative ball May 19-20 in Fayetteville, N.C.

7th SFG(A) Soldiers and family members dressed in their finest and attended the 7th SFG(A) 50th Anniversary formal honoring the 50 years of service and actions 7th SFG(A) Soldiers have performed in foreign conflicts and in allied nations across the globe. Attendees ranged from young sergeants straight from Special Forces selection to old retirees with enough stories to keep a table entertained all night.

Though members of the group operated under preceding units during conflicts in the early 20th century, the 7th SFG(A) was officially activated in 1960. In addition to deployments in South and Central America, some early 7th SFG(A) Soldiers conducted anti-insurgency and prisoner rescue operations in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. In 1970, members of 7th SFG(A) and other Special Forces groups raided a P.O.W. camp in Son Tay, North Vietnam. Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Joseph Lupyak, then 7th SFG(A) Green Beret, was one of those Soldiers.

"People never heard of a lot of our accomplishments," Lupyak said. He is one of the oldest living veterans of 7th Special Forces Group. "(Our men) were there because they loved what SF was all about. They were there because of a desire to do something great."

The Son Tay raid was the highest profile operation 7th SFG(A) conducted during the Vietnam conflict. Though no prisoners were found, the raiders' efforts were not in vain. After the raid, much of North Vietnam's foreign support diminished.

"After (we attacked), the enemy got so scared that all the outlying camps were closed down and they moved those guys out of those bad living conditions and cages and all that stuff into the Hanoi Hilton and the developed POW camps," Lupyak said. "They got better food and medical treatment. They were able to see one another and organize as a prisoner of war unit."

Command Sgt. Maj. (R) Joseph Callahan, then a junior Noncommissioned Officer, trains an El Salvadoran soldier in El Salvador in an undated photo. Courtesy photo.

Even as operations in Southeast Asia waned, 7th SFG(A) Soldiers continued operations in South and Central America through the years. In the early 1980s, 7th SFG(A) Soldiers trained South and Central American armies to fight Communist guerillas. One such mission took place in El Salvador, where 7th SFG(A) Soldiers trained El Salvadoran soldiers in special operations tactics.

Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Joseph Callahan was one of the Soldiers assigned to conduct the mission in El Salvador. As a young sergeant and one of 50 U.S. military advisers in that country, Callahan found himself in situations that didn't fit with what was then believed to be a low-intensity conflict against Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FLMN) rebels. Callahan said on one occasion, his team was moving to pick up two reconnaissance teams by helicopter when the situation erupted into an all-out battle.

"The teams were being pursued by approximately 100 guerillas," said Callahan. "One of the teams was short two people. The second team was carrying a guy. So we put the bird down between the recon elements and the FLMN."

Callahan was later awarded a Bronze Star with "V" device for his valorous actions. He sustained shrapnel and bullet wounds along with most of the quick reaction force he led.

"Fire was pretty heavy," said Callahan. "One of the other military advisors was wounded, the door gunner was wounded, the second door gunner was dead, the El Salvadoran pilot was shot, and the American pilot was shot, but we did make it back."

Callahan was among the many 7th SFG(A) Soldiers to participate in Operation Just Cause, a mission leading to the upheaval of Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega in late 1989. Green Berets from the 7th SFG(A) were charged with securing and rebuilding the country alongside other U.S. Special Operations and conventional forces. Col. Mark Gorton, then a 1st lieutenant and with 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, worked alongside 7th SFG(A) soldiers during conflict and stability phases.

"That was a very quick conflict," said Gorton, now the deputy commander of 7th SFG(A). "Initially we were hunting down high-value targets who the Panamanians didn't already turn in. After that, we transferred very quickly to nation building and keeping the peace and security. The Special Forces teams conducted foreign internal defense and reestablished the official government of Panama. Wherever I went during that operation, I saw Green Berets doing great things."

Gorton said working with the Special Forces in Panama inspired him, and as a result he attended the Special Forces officer selection course and later went on to command the same Operational Detachment Alpha he worked with in Panama years before.

In 1997 Gorton and a small team of 7th SFG(A) Soldiers were deployed as part of Operation Safe Border, a three-year operation which prevented war between Ecuador and Peru. The 7th SFG(A) intervened in the growing border dispute in 1995 to keep it from growing militarily before being defused diplomatically.

"We immediately stopped the fighting and drew-down both sides of the border," said Gorton. "Then we created a demilitarized zone and conducted patrols to prevent (the enemy) from building new fighting positions or moving weapons and ammunition in. The conflict was resolved before it evolved into all-out war because we were on the ground every day, keeping the peace and living next to both sides."

Gorton mentioned that in the years before the Global War on Terrorism, the group's sole focus was South and Central America, their designated area of operation. One key to stability in the region is stopping the flow of drugs through those countries. Colombia is historically one of the largest producers of illegal narcotics, yet the country has recently seen large jumps in stability and prosperity. Colombia and its armed forces received many years of attention from Brig. Gen. Sean Mulholland, who was first assigned to 7th SFG(A) as a team leader in the late 1980s.

"From what I've seen, the group's greatest accomplishment is the building of Colombian special operations forces from start to finish," said Mulholland. "The finish was operation Jaque (checkmate), where the Colombians rescued the three Americans. It's a big, bright example of the success of Seventh Special Forces Group's foreign internal defense."

Mulholland served as the 7th SFG(A) commander from December 2007 to May 2009, seeing the group through a deployment in Afghanistan. Mulholland is one of many 7th SFG(A) warriors who notes the distinct parallels between the problem in Afghanistan and Colombia; a narcotics trade-fueled insurgency that puts little stock in the well-being of the average citizen.

Col. James Kraft, the current commander of 7th Special Forces Group, said this type of mission requires a steady hand that balances nation building, training of partner forces and direct action operations. Like the Colombian special operations before them, the Afghan National Army Commandos are making strides toward a safe and secure Afghanistan.

"Our mission in Afghanistan is FID, period," Kraft said. "It's in our DNA to train foreign militaries because we've been doing it non-stop for 50 years. These aren't wars you can shoot your way out of."

The 7th SFG(A) is currently transitioning from deploying to Afghanistan after four consecutive tours, to a returned focus on South and Central America. The group will finish moving its headquarters to Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., before September 15, 2011. The new facility will have space for the family business' newest addition: 4th Battalion, 7th SFG(A).

Chief Warrant Officer Two Ricky Fowler received the Gen. Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award May 6. Gen. George Casey, the Army Chief of Staff, and Dr. Juan Montero from the General Douglas MacArthur Foundation, Norfolk, Va., presented the 2009 MacArthur Leadership Award to Fowler in front of his family and friends. Courtesy photo.

SF Warrant Officer receives Gen. MacArthur Award for leadership

By Maj. Karla S. Owen
10th Special Forces Group (A) Public Affairs

Leadership awards are not new to Special Forces. Created to operate in small teams of extremely skilled men, SF produces some of the most qualified leaders in today's Army. Chief Warrant Officer Two Ricky Fowler is no exception.

Fowler, a native of Louisville, Ky., was the only active-duty warrant officer recipient of the Gen. Douglas MacArthur Leadership award, an award that recognizes officers for the ideals in which Gen. MacArthur stood - duty, honor, country.

When asked about the award, Fowler tilted his head

to the side and in a quiet voice, replied, "I was honored to be included with the award winners that I met at the ceremony. The stories I heard … I don't believe I was even in the same category with these officers. Some of the winners have done incredible things under great adversity."

Fowler went on to say that he was proud to be there, but honestly felt his team made all of it possible.

A former non-commissioned officer himself, Fowler truly believes that the NCO corps is the backbone of the Army and why all of the winners were successful.

"We get credit for what our teams accomplish," he said. "We get the praise when everything goes as planned and we get the reprimand when things go off target!"

Fowler came into the Army as an infantryman shortly after graduating from Doss High School and first found duty in Panama after Operation Just Cause. He has since deployed to Kosovo, Lebanon, the Republic of Georgia, Iraq and Kurdistan.

Fowler is the only Soldier in his family to serve since his grandfather served in World War II.

He gives some of the credit for his military accomplishments to his grandfather. His grandfather was part of the D-Day invasion and Fowler was always given some 'ribbing' because he could not measure up to his grandfather's hardships during the war.

For example, Fowler was airborne qualified, but his grandfather jokingly told him he didn't know what airborne was until you jumped out with bullets flying.

After 10 years in the 'conventional' Army, Fowler decided it was time to begin a new path. He wanted to be a part of the quiet profession the Green Berets portrayed. Working in small groups with little or no supervision had appealed to him. It would be a long road, but he looked forward to the challenge.

"I've had a memorable career, but my friends who were killed jump out more than anything I've accomplished,"

— Chief Warrant Officer Two Ricky Fowler

Fowler believes his family is proud of him. His brothers are successful in their own right, but they have always stopped what they were doing to support his achievements.

On May 6, 2010, Gen. George W. Casey, the Army Chief of Staff, and Dr. Juan Montero from the General Douglas MacArthur Foundation, Norfolk, Va., presented the 2009 MacArthur Leadership Award to Fowler in front of his family and friends.

Later, when asked about his most memorable time during his career, he briefly reflected on all he has accomplished and some of his first operations, but then quietly considered all that he has lost.

Many awards have been placed upon his chest in recognition for his accomplishments over the years; to include the Bronze Star Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal, but Fowler reflected that the friends who have died over the years will always be the first thing etched in his mind.

"I've had a memorable career, but my friends who were killed jump out more than anything I've accomplished," he said. "By comparison, there is nothing I've done that is significant. Their passing, no matter how close we were, has a daily effect on me and my life."

Fowler was nominated for the leadership award because of his exceptional service throughout 2009 while assigned as an Assistant Detachment Commander for ODA 0222 and his most significant contribution came while serving as a member of the SF Liaison Element for Special Operations Task Force – North to the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq.

According to his leadership, Fowler's dedication helped achieve U.S. operational and strategic objectives in Iraq and he is considered to be a true American patriot.

5th SFG (A) formally designates Gabriel Field memorial site

By Laura LeBeau
USSOCOM History Office

James Gabriel (center) with buddies in Vietnam, shortly before his death in 1962. Photo courtesy of Billie Gabriel.

Since 1988, the parade field and memorial site at Fort Campbell, Ky., known as Gabriel Field, has held special meaning for Soldiers of the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), the families of fallen Soldiers and all who served with those fallen. The site was never officially dedicated, leaving Gabriel Field unprotected and susceptible to future development by the post's engineers. That changed, however, when members of the 5th SFG (A) hosted Gold Star families in a ceremony May 22, 2010, to honor fallen SOF Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen and to officially dedicate the parade field to Spc. 5 James P. Gabriel Jr., one of the first Special Forces Soldiers killed in Vietnam.

"Gabriel Field is deeply significant to us because it serves as a constant reminder of the price this unit has paid, and a reminder of the heavy toll borne by so many families, friends, and teammates," said Col. Joel Woodward, the deputy commander of 5th SFG (A).

The dedication perpetuates the legacy of Gabriel Field, which dates back to 1962 when the 5th SFG (A), then located at Fort Bragg, N.C., established the Gabriel demonstration area there to recognize the life and service of Gabriel following his death April 8, 1962, at the hands of Viet Cong guerrillas. The area was used throughout the 60s, 70s and 80s to highlight the capabilities of Special Forces but eventually fell to disrepair after years of disuse. The 5th Group moved from Fort Bragg to Fort Campbell June 10, 1988, bringing with it the field name and the memorialization of James Gabriel.

> *"Gabriel Field is deeply significant to us because it serves as a constant reminder of the price this unit has paid, and a reminder of the heavy toll borne by so many families, friends, and teammates."*
>
> *— Col. Joel Woodward*

Gabriel, a 24-year-old Green Beret assigned to the 1st SFG (A), was one of a four-man Special Forces advisory team conducting a two-week field training mission with about 35 South Vietnamese volunteers of the Civilian Irregular Defense Group in the remote village of An Chau, about seven miles from Da Nang, Vietnam. With him were Staff Sgt. Wayne Marchand and Sergeants Francis

Quinn and George Groom. According to reports, Viet Cong forces attacked Gabriel's team on the third night of the exercise, though it was quickly repulsed. Shortly after daybreak the next morning, however, the guerillas came back in earnest and with a numerically superior force, overpowered and overran Gabriel's position. Gabriel was shot three times in the chest and stomach while calling for reinforcements and continuing to fight.

According to a press release, a Vietnamese was reported as saying afterwards, "I saw Sergeant Gabriel phoning, shooting, and changing clips all at the same time. Three times he was wounded and knocked down. The third time he didn't get up."

A few minutes after 8 a.m., before he fell, Gabriel radioed his last message to the U.S. base at Da Nang: "Under heavy attack from all sides. Completely encircled by enemy. Ammunition expended. We are being overrun."

The U.S. team subsequently fell into enemy hands and was captured. Gabriel and Marchand were both critically wounded to the point of being unable to walk. Captured but uninjured, Quinn and Groom were forced to carry their wounded comrades along as their Viet Cong captors fled from the sounds of approaching U.S. helicopters. After a few miles of slogging north toward the mountains, the Viet Cong, fearing the two wounded were holding up their escape, ordered Quinn and Groom to leave their comrades behind. Within a short time after, Gabriel and Marchand were shot and killed by communist sympathizers charged with guarding them. Both Quinn and Groom were recovered and released May 1, 1962, allowing them to relay the events leading to the deaths of Gabriel and Marchand.

Now, 48 years later, Gabriel Field is pristine with sugar maple trees and memorials individually honoring Gabriel and 56 other fallen Soldiers from the 1st, 3rd, 5th, 10th and 20th SFGs, Sailors from the Navy SEALs and Airmen from Air Force Special Operations. Throughout the field are more trees--living memorials that honor those who have died in training accidents and operations in Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia.

"This memorial field is a reminder of times and of events and of people who shall live so long as we remember them, so long as we honor their service and honor their sacrifice," said the narrator during the ceremony's opening remarks.

The stone monument honoring Gabriel stands in the foreground of Gabriel Field. Upon it is the original plaque brought over from Fort Bragg; the lower plaque beneath it symbolizes the re-dedication at Fort Campbell, a fitting reflection of Woodward's closing remarks: "Our past and present remain connected here, and so too do our lives."

Col. Joel Woodward, (right) deputy commander of the 5th SFG (A), and Command Sgt. Maj. Channing Bell, stand beside the monument dedicated to Spc. 5 James Gabriel during a memorial ceremony May 22. Photo by Laura LeBeau.

The Ideal Green Beret

By Maj. James Gregory
Special Operations Command Europe Public Affairs

What makes an ideal Green Beret Soldier? Perhaps it has to do with fighting alongside native forces behind enemy lines. One might imagine that the ideal Green Beret would be an expert at survival, mountaineering and guerrilla tactics as well, especially today as the fight in Afghanistan continues. The Green Beret would certainly be able to speak several languages and be unafraid of the seemingly impossible challenges involved with operating in austere environments around the world.

If these qualities define the ideal Special Forces Soldier, then during 2009, the epitome of this Soldier within 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) could be found on Special Forces Operational Detachment – A 0116. One would also find the best enablers in 10th SFG (A) – mechanics, electronic maintenance technicians, riggers, food service specialists, and ammunition specialists – within the 1st Battalion Service Detachment.

During a short ceremony on June 28, 2010, Col. Sean Swindell, the 10th Special Forces Group commander, honored the 1st Battalion Soldiers with the Larry Thorne Award for being the best detachments in 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) throughout 2009. The award commemorates Special Forces legend Larry Thorne – a technically and tactically proficient warrior who was always on the offensive.

"He was a complex yet driven man who valorously fought oppression under three flags and didn't acknowledge the meaning of quit," said Swindell. "He earned the Finnish equivalent of the Medal of Honor and fought against the Russians in World War II under both Finland and Germany. After the war, he came to the United States where he joined the U.S. Army as a Lodge Act Soldier."

Thorne quickly made it into the U.S. Special Forces and in 1962, as a Captain, he led his detachment onto the highest mountain in Iran to recover the bodies and classified material from an American C-130 airplane that had crashed. It was a mission in which others had failed, but Thorne's unrelenting spirit led to its accomplishment.

Special Forces Soldiers, far right, assigned to Operational Detachment Alpha 0116, 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) stand in formation during an award ceremony in which the unit received the Larry Thorne Award presented each year by the 10th Special Forces Group (A) out of Fort Carson, Colo., to the best ODA in the command. The ceremony took place on June 28 at Panzer Barracks in Boblingen, Germany. Courtesy photo.

This mission initially formed his status as a U.S. Special Forces legend, but it was his deep strategic reconnaissance and interdiction exploits with Military Assistance Command, Vietnam Studies and Observation Group, also known as MACV-SOG, that solidified his legendary status. In 1965, his helicopter disappeared during a mission and he was declared missing-in-action. His remains were eventually recovered in 1999, but his legend as an ideal Green Beret never died.

SFODA 0116

The Special Forces detachment lived up to Thorne's legend during its engagements in Africa as well as during European partner nation military training and counter-insurgency operations in Afghanistan.

"The detachment performed complex Special Forces missions from Foreign Internal Defense in Africa and Afghanistan to Partnership Development in Europe," said Master Sgt. Rob Elliott, the detachment's former operations sergeant. "We operated within a great working environment, which led to an extremely cohesive and effective detachment."

It was in Afghanistan that the detachment really began to understand the complexities of foreign internal defense conducted in a combat environment. During its second deployment there, the team organized and then provided security for a massive shura in the Kapisa Province that included Department of Defense Agribusiness Development Teams, State Department and USAID experts to discuss pomegranate agriculture development. The meeting had strategic effects as the ADT provided training to Afghan locals about how to cultivate their fruit more productively, the State Department coordinated with a juice factory in Kabul that would purchase the pomegranates, and USAID set up export visas for growers to showcase their products in India. It provided an outlet for the growers to put their products back on the national and international markets – something that hadn't been done for the more than thirty years of conflict in Afghanistan.

Col. Sean Swindell, center, commander, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), out of Fort Carson, Colo., prepares to give a plaque in recognition of the Larry Thorne Award to the Service Detachment Commander from 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) as the best service detachment in the command. Command The ceremony was held on June 28 at Panzer Barracks in Boblingen, Germany. Courtesy photo.

"Kinetic operations show the enemy that we can hit them hard, but in the long run, they are of limited value. There has to be proof to the people that you're doing something for them, and it's the development and governance aspects of the mission that provide the proof," said the detachment's commander about their success in Afghanistan. "Our efforts improved security and more importantly, improved the lives of Afghans living in the Tagab Valley of the Kapisa Province."

1/10 SFG(A) Service Detachment

Successful special operations depend upon rock-solid enablers, and the Soldiers of the Service Detachment had an enormous impact disproportionate to their numbers on the battalion's overall combat readiness and effectiveness.

"This is one element that supported three combatant commanders," said Col. Swindell. "They supported SFODAs operating in isolated and austere environments providing vital support necessary to conduct not only combat operations, but also develop the capacity of NATO SOF and Afghan partners."

In Africa, the Service Detachment provided direct support to detachments conducting combined training events for host nation partners, which assisted the strategic goals of AFRICOM and national policy objectives. Within Europe, the Service Detachment's direct support of key yearly events, such as Jackal Stone, further enhanced strong relationships with European SOF partners. Finally, the Soldiers supported combat operations in Iraq as well as in Afghanistan, where the detachment supported Task Force-10 in a multinational combat environment.

"You hear me talking about being exceptionally enabled," said Col. Swindell as he spoke to one of the service detachment mechanics. "You've created that environment. I'm looking for mechanics that can fix everything in the motorpool and then whatever vehicle that you're working on, whether it be a Hilux in Africa, a Stryker in Iraq or an MRAP (Mine Resistant Ambush Protected) vehicle in Afghanistan."

Maintaining the Pressure

As Swindell and his command team addressed 1st Battalion following the ceremony, he charged the men to continue the legacy of Maj. Larry Thorne. He spoke of adaptability, self-discipline and of maintaining the offensive in everything that they did.

"Larry Thorne epitomizes what a Green Beret is and what we all need to become," concluded Col. Swindell. "He was self-disciplined and he's the model of what I expect from a Green Beret – something we all need to strive for."

NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND

SEALs jump from the ramp of a C-17 Globemaster III over Fort Pickett Maneuver Training Center, Va. The jump was part of joint training exercise with the 517th Airlift Squadron from Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. The training consisted of high altitude, high opening and high altitude, low opening jumps between 5,000 and 12,500 feet. Photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Ferguson.

SEALs, conventional Air Force conduct training at 12,500 feet

By Staff Sgt. Brian Ferguson
3rd Wing Public Affairs

In less than 10 seconds, they were gone.

Traveling toward earth at speeds of approximately 150 mph, the operators open their parachutes and slowly drift to the ground.

Once safely on land, they repack, board a C-17 Globemaster III and do it again.

This scenario happened four more times over a drop zone in Norfolk, Va., when 517th Airlift Squadron members from Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, participated in a training jump with members of SEAL Team 10.

"The biggest benefit of this training is the validation of our interoperability,"

— Capt. Adam Knox
C-17 aircraft commander

"The biggest benefit of this training is the validation of our interoperability," said Capt. Adam Knox, the C-17 pilot and aircraft commander. "We need to be able to operate jointly and this is one of the ways we train to do just that."

The training consisted of jumps between 5,000 and 12,500 feet. The SEALs jumped in two groups, each from different altitudes, but all were attempting to land inside the same 50-meter area on the ground.

SEALs are required to use a combination of specialized training, equipment, and tactics in completion of special operations missions worldwide. Their training keeps them up to speed and ready to go at a moment's notice.

"Having just returned from a deployment, we need to get the guys back in the air before we start our continuation training," said a Master Chief Petty Officer and SEAL. "We also have some new guys, just graduated from basic underwater demolition/SEAL training and we need to get them up to speed as well."

Names of SEAL members are not disclosed for security reasons.

The C-17 aircrew landed at Fort Pickett Maneuver Training Center, Va., to pick up the SEALs after each jump.

The 517th AS members were also able to train on some of their flying procedures such as assault landing zone operations and oxygen mask procedures.

"When you look at some of the operations that are going on around the world you realize that it is this type of training that makes a lot of those operations happen," Knox said. "This is good training, especially for combat."

The last jump of the day was one Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class' 33rd jump since joining the Navy. Prior to becoming a SEAL, he was an Air Force visual imagery and intrusion detection systems staff sergeant.

This was the first time he had worked with Airmen since he separated in 2008.

"This is my first time jumping out of a C-17," said the petty officer, one of the newer SEALs. "When you're on the ramp you're a little nervous, but once you jump you feel a falling sensation and then it's like you are flying."

"Jumping out of a C-17 is great," the Master Chief said. "The ramp is open and big, and the plane can get to altitude very quickly."

After training in Virginia was completed, the C-17 aircrew brought 12 SEALs back to Alaska to work as joint terminal attack controllers during Red Flag at Eielson AFB.

When the C-17 aircrew landed back at Elmendorf AFB, the six-person crew logged more than 20 hours in the air and 11 personnel drops, one of which took place over Eielson AFB.

Navy SEALs attend Black Heritage Championship Swim Meet

Story and photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Joseph Clark
Naval Special Warfare Group 2 Public Affairs

The East Coast-based Navy Sea, Air, Land (SEAL) and Special Warfare Combatant-Craft Crewman (SWCC) Scout Team, including three active duty SEAL operators, attended the 8th Annual National Black Heritage Championship Swim Meet May 28-31 in Cary, N.C.

The SEALs spoke with swimmers and coaches from all age groups about opportunities available in Naval Special Warfare Community and challenged the swimmers to a SEAL Fitness Challenge as part of their community outreach initiative.

"Our goal is to plant the seed with the younger athletes and build awareness of the career opportunities available within Naval Special Warfare," said retired Capt. Dave Morrison, an aquatics instructor and SEAL motivator based out of Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek, Va. "This is a community outreach program through which we aim to both grow and diversify our force."

Event organizers recognized retired SEAL Master Chief William Goines, the first African-American SEAL, as a pioneer of swimming during a community breakfast May 27.

"I had always wanted to be a SEAL," said Goines, who graduated from Underwater Demolition Team (UDT) training in 1956. "It was and continues to be hard work along with sheer determination that sets SEALs apart."

During a coaches dinner for the event, Capt. Phillip Howe, a Navy SEAL, delivered a few words on the important role coaches play in the lives of children and teenagers.

"Life presents challenges at every corner," said Howe. "Coaches, whether in athletics or professional life, are the ones who push us to overcome adversity and achieve our goals."

As the swimmers took to the pool May 29, the scout team maintained a vigilant posture at the pull-up bars, aiming to find swimmers up to the challenge.

An East Coast-based SEAL master chief, who manned the pull-up bars at the event for his second year, said the community outreach initiative is an important piece in maintaining the elite capabilities of the Naval Special Warfare community.

More than 700 athletes from throughout the nation participated in the meet.

Morrison said the event has continued to grow and is the ideal venue for getting their message out about SEAL/SWCC programs.

"We want to show them that success breeds success. We have three active duty SEALs available to talk to the swimmers about their careers and the challenges they overcame to get where they are today," said Morrison. "By spending time with the athletes, the SEALs not only create awareness about Naval Special Warfare, they show them with the right amount of determination, anyone can serve. The door is open to everyone."

And for the special operations community, diversity will continue to be imperative for the force of the future.

"There is still a lot of mystery surrounding the Naval Special Warfare community, but we are here to show the athletes that they have the opportunity to serve within an elite force," said Howe. "Diversity within the NSW community is essential for maintaining our operational advantage in the future."

A SEAL assists a swimmer with pull-ups in the SEAL fitness challenge during the 8th annual National Black Heritage Championship Swim Meet at Triangle Aquatics Center in Cary, N.C. Navy SEALs attended the event to speak with swimmers and coaches about opportunities available within the Navy special warfare community.

Keel for future USS Michael Murphy authenticated

From Defense Media Activity Anacostia

More than 50 Sailors, civilians and family members gathered June 18 at the General Dynamics-Bath Iron Works shipyard, Bath, Maine, to authenticate the keel of a U.S. Navy destroyer named for a Navy SEAL killed during Operation Enduring Freedom.

The keel authentication ceremony was designed to mark the beginning of construction of the future USS Michael Murphy (DDG 112), a destroyer named in honor of Navy SEAL Lt. Michael Murphy, who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions during Operation Red Wings in Afghanistan on June 28, 2005.

"There are no words," said Maureen Murphy, mother of Murphy. "I still can't get it through my head that a U.S. Navy ship is going to be named after my son. He would be honored. I hope to have a good rapport with the crew of the Michael Murphy. On the ship, it's going to be like one big family, and I would like to have a good relationship with the crew."

Ceremony guests of honor included Murphy's mother; father, Dan; and brother, John, who confirmed the destroyer's keel, the large beam around which the hull of a ship is constructed, was laid "straight and true." Ceremony attendees also included nearly 20 Navy SEALS.

The Murphy family signed a steel plate during the ceremony, which will later be affixed to the hull of the ship.

"We love everyone involved with the Michael Murphy," said Dan Murphy, father of Lt. Michael Murphy. "They have no idea how much they have touched us."

Cmdr. David Price, program manager, supervisor of Shipbuilding, Conversion and Repair said the vessel will serve as a testament to Murphy's character.

"This ship will transform from just plates of steel, miles of piping and cables and electronics, to a ship and crew, operating as one, imbued with the spirit of her namesake, and her sponsor," said Price.

"As the 62nd ship of the class, I believe DDG 112 will be the finest destroyer yet delivered," said Capt. Pete Lyle, DDG 51 class program manager within the Navy's Program Executive Office. "There couldn't be a more fitting tribute to Lt. Murphy's sacrifice."

Lt. Michael Murphy

DDG 51 class ships are multi-mission combatants designed to operate in multi-threat air, surface and subsurface threat environments. These destroyers are equipped with the Navy's Aegis Combat System, the world's foremost integrated naval weapon system, and provide outstanding combat capability and survivability characteristics while minimizing procurement and lifetime support costs due to the program's maturity.

TIME recognizes SOF Airman in top 100 of most influential people

Chief Master Sgt. Antonio Travis, named by editors of TIME magazine as one of the 100 most influential people in the world, conducts an interview for AF.mil and the Pentagon channel in New York City's famed Times Square May 4. Travis was selected as a hero for his efforts in response to the Haiti earthquake leading the largest single-runway operation in history, with his team using hand-held radios to control thousands of aircraft. Travis is the chief enlisted manager of the Air Force Special Operations Training Center at Hurlburt Field, Fla. Photo by Staff Sgt. Bennie J. Davis III.

By Maj. David Small
National Media Outreach Office

TIME magazine editors have named Chief Master Sgt. Antonio Travis to the 2010 TIME 100, the magazine's annual list of the 100 most influential people in the world for his efforts after the Haiti earthquake.

Travis was one of the first U.S. military members on the ground at the Toussaint L'Ouverture International Airport in Port au Prince, Haiti, only 30 hours after the earthquake and less than 12 hours after the nation's president requested U.S. assistance. The chief led a team of AFSOC special tactics Airmen from the 23rd, 21st and 123rd special tactics squadrons.

With his team of combat veterans, Travis led the largest single-runway operation in history, using hand-held

radios to control thousands of aircraft. Their air traffic control tower was a card table set up next to the airport's runway.

"Twenty-eight minutes after touchdown, we controlled the first air landing followed immediately by a departure, and we did not slow down for the next 12 days," said Travis, who hails from Nelson County, Ky.

After establishing control of the airfield there, his team orchestrated an orderly flow for incoming aircraft and dealt with the constraints of the inadequate airfield, which potentially could have limited relief operations. Facing 42 aircraft jammed into a parking ramp designed to accommodate 10 large planes, untangling the gridlock was the first of many seemingly insurmountable challenges necessary to facilitate the flood of inbound relief flights.

"The TIME 100 is not a list of the most powerful people in the world, it's not a list of the smartest people in the world, it's a list of the most influential people in the world."

— Rick Stengel
TIME's managing editor

In the dawn of the U.S. response to the Haitian crisis, Travis coordinated with Miami FAA officials via text messaging on his Blackberry. His ingenuity paid massive dividends as priority aircraft transited the small airport, delivering lifesaving water, food and medical supplies in support of the U.S. Agency for International Development-led international humanitarian effort.

From chaos, Travis established order as his combat controllers reduced a four-hour hold time in the air on day one to less than two hours on day two and less than 15 minutes by day three.

For 12 days, 24 hours a day, the airfield team ran the international airport in Port-au-Prince. Together with more than 200 other Airmen from Hurlburt Field, Fla., they tirelessly ensured the safe and effective control of more than 4,000 takeoffs and landings, an average of one aircraft operation every five minutes, and enabled the delivery of 4 million pounds of humanitarian relief to the people of Haiti.

Without computers or electricity, Travis and his team controlled as many as 250 aircraft a day, exceeding the normal capacity of the airfield by 1,400 percent without a single incident. By Jan. 25, his team was able to hand operations over to Air Force air traffic controllers with a portable control tower.

While directing the airfield operations, Travis also supervised a group of pararescuemen, or PJs, and medical technicians who augmented a search and rescue team from Virginia. These teams were credited with 13 technical rescues and 17 additional saves. Additionally, the special tactics Airmen he led surveyed nearly 100 sites for use as potential humanitarian relief supply delivery sites. His teams' technical expertise and unflagging commitment ultimately led to successful air deliveries by C-17 Globemaster IIIs of humanitarian aid including more than 150,000 bottles of water and 75,000 Meals Ready to Eat that was subsequently delivered to earthquake victims by helicopter.

Travis is the chief enlisted manager of the Air Force Special Operations Training Center at Hurlburt Field, Fla. He served seven and a half years in the Marine Corps before transferring into the Air Force as a combat controller in 1993.

As a senior combat controller, he has supported combat, combat support, humanitarian and search and rescue operations throughout the United States, Pacific and European theaters and many austere locations across the globe.

Travis is married to the former Andrea Lawrence of Bardstown, Ky. Their children are Brittany, 21; Amanda, 19; and Emily, 15.

TIME's full list and related tributes of all those honored appear in their May 10 issue.

The list, now in its seventh year, recognizes the activism, innovation and achievement of the world's most influential individuals

As TIME's managing editor Rick Stengel has said of the list in the past.

"The TIME 100 is not a list of the most powerful people in the world, it's not a list of the smartest people in the world, it's a list of the most influential people in the world. They're scientists, they're thinkers, they're philosophers, they're leaders, they're icons, they're artists, they're visionaries. People who are using their ideas, their visions, their actions to transform the world and have an effect on a multitude of people."

Combat Controllers receive Silver Stars, Bronze Stars with Valor

by Senior Airman Kirsten Wicker
62nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz and combat controllers from the 22nd Special Tactics Squadron applaud at a medal ceremony honoring the Airmen April 29, at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. General Schwartz visited the base to present 13 medals to include three Silver Stars, five Bronze Stars with Valor, three Bronze Stars, and two Purple Hearts on Airmen from the 22nd Special Tactics Squadron for their actions during various deployments to Afghanistan. Photo by Abner Guzman.

The Air Force chief of staff presented 13 medals to 11 combat controllers during a ceremony at the Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., April 29.

Gen. Norton Schwartz pinned three Silver Stars, five Bronze Stars with Valor, three Bronze Stars, and two Purple Hearts on Airmen from the 22nd Special Tactics Squadron for their actions during various deployments to Afghanistan. Two of the Silver Stars were presented to a single individual.

"It is truly a pleasure to be among these great Airmen," Schwartz said. "Integrity, service, and excellence are embodied in every heroic action we celebrate here today."

The ceremony recognized these "exceptional Airmen," as the general called them, who "accomplished enormous feats without very much fanfare or pageantry" alongside Army, Navy and Marine Corps Special Operations Forces.

"The families of these Airmen have forged them into men of uncommon valor," said Lt. Col. Bryan Cannady, 22nd STS commander. "It is my honor to serve beside them."

Two Silver Stars, the nation's third highest decoration for valor, were presented to Staff Sgt. Sean Harvell for his actions during multiple firefights with enemy forces in Afghanistan during spring and summer 2007.

In the first engagement, Harvell and his coalition unit were completing a reconnaissance patrol through heavily contested Taliban territory. The team was ambushed and engaged the enemy in a firefight for nearly 23 hours. In order to coordinate close-air support, Harvell deliberately exposed his position. Though surrounded by enemy fire, he continued to calmly direct air attacks, including a fighter strafing run within 45 feet of his own position

Shortly thereafter, Harvell's team was out on patrol when they saw an American helicopter go down. The team immediately began moving toward the crash site for recovery operations.

As the team was en route, they were attacked by an overwhelming Taliban force. Several rocket-propelled grenades impacted Harvell's vehicle and he was

wounded and knocked unconscious.

After coming to, he was able to engage the enemy with return fire and simultaneously direct deadly, danger-close air attacks on the insurgent force. Danger-close range is when friendly forces are within 600 meters of the target when calling for fire. His team's efforts allowed another special operations team to recover the remains of all servicemembers and sensitive equipment from the crash site.

"I feel privileged that my generation is able to serve our country in war," Harvell said. "Being a part of something bigger than yourself, depending on other guys and having them depend on you is an honor. Especially as a combat controller, people are depending on you (in order) to come home alive."

Almost two months later, Harvell and his Army Special Forces team became engaged in a savage eight-hour firefight with Taliban forces. The firefight took place after the team spent three days in a rolling firefight with the enemy before tracking them to a compound.

Harvell and his team laid siege to the compound, and he repeatedly exposed his position in order to engage the enemy. As reinforcements arrived, the team withdrew from the compound with Harvell providing cover fire for his teammates. Once out of the immediate danger area, he directed fighter aircraft and gunship engagement of the enemy with instant success.

"It's an honor that so many people have come out to recognize us," Harvell said. "I realize that General Schwartz is very busy, so for him to come out and personally recognize us is truly an honor. At the same time, I feel kind of guilty, because there are so many other guys out there doing the same thing every day."

Staff Sgt. Evan Jones was also honored during the ceremony. He received both a Silver Star and a Bronze Star with Valor for two separate incidents during a deployment to Afghanistan in 2008.

Jones received the Silver Star for his actions during a firefight with the enemy when his coalition special forces unit was ambushed during a combat reconnaissance mission.

The team was taking fire from two directions and Jones returned fire while orchestrating close-air support. Continually exposing himself to enemy fire in order to coordinate the destruction of enemy

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz pins the Silver Star on Staff Sgt. Sean Harvell during a medal ceremony April 29, at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. Two Silver Stars, the nation's third highest decoration for valor, were presented to Sergeant Harvell for his actions during multiple firefights with enemy forces in Afghanistan during spring and summer 2007. Photo by Abner Guzman.

fighting positions, Jones was injured when a rocket-propelled grenade exploded near his vehicle. He continued to direct air support as his team moved through the engagement area, fighting though a gauntlet of 20 enemy combat positions.

"Honestly, I was just doing my job," Jones said. "There are three hundred-plus combat controllers in the Air Force and all of us are just doing our jobs every day, and doing what we are trained to do."

After returning to the fire base, Jones coordinated an urgent medical evacuation for a wounded soldier, and directed an air strike against enemy forces preparing to ambush another friendly patrol.

"It's hard to be flawless in a wartime situation, and it's hard for me not to look back and critique my actions," he said. "When I look back and think about the improvements I want to make, it just forces me to train harder and make sure I'm more prepared next time. We had a casualty during this engagement, and several guys were wounded. I think we honor those guys by just continuing to do the best job we can every day."

In addition to Harvell and Jones, nine other combat controllers received commendations.

The following were presented awards:

Staff Sgt. Christopher Martin, of the 22nd STS,

Continued on next page

was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor for his deployment to Afghanistan summer 2008. During his deployment, he directed 22 air attacks, five strafing runs and the release of 8,000 pounds of ordnances during two days of fighting.

Senior Airman Mathew Matlock, of the 125th Special Tactics Squadron, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for his deployment to Afghanistan fall 2008 through spring 2009. During his deployment, Matlock conducted more than 35 mounted and dismounted combat patrols and 40 combat operations.

Staff Sgt. Simon Malson, of the 22nd STS, was awarded the Bronze Star with Valor for his deployment to Afghanistan during summer through winter 2008. During his deployment, Malson participated in 20 direct-fire engagements, 50 combat missions and controlled more than 100 aircraft flights resulting in more than 125 enemies killed in action.

Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Reiss, of the 22nd STS, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor for his deployment to Afghanistan summer to winter 2008. During his deployment, Reiss conducted more than 50 combat missions, and delivered air power in five direct-fire engagements, which led to 60 enemies killed.

Master Sgt. Jeffrey Guilmain, of the 22nd STS, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor for his deployment to Afghanistan summer through fall 2006. During his deployment, Guilmain was attached to an coalition forces unit where he conducted 20 mounted and dismounted patrols and controlled more than 50 aircraft to include the A-10 Thunderbolt II, B-1 Lancer and AC-130 Gunship.

Tech. Sgt. Christopher Keeler, of the 22nd STS, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for his deployment to Afghanistan summer to winter 2008. During his deployment, Keeler was attached to four separate special forces teams where he was the main joint terminal attack controller and was also a trainer to Afghanistan's 150 army special force commandos. While deployed, Keeler conducted 15 combat missions that lead to 15 insurgents killed.

Staff Sgt. Sean Mullins, of the 22nd STS, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for his deployment to Afghanistan summer to winter 2008. During Mullins deployment, he conducted more than 30 tactical missions, controlled more than 20 aircraft and facilitated the deployment of more than 5,000 pounds of ordnance that resulted in 50 enemies killed.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz pins the Silver Star on Staff Sgt. Evan Jones during a medal ceremony April 29, at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. Sergeant Jones received both a Silver Star and a Bronze Star with Valor for two separate incidents during a deployment to Afghanistan in 2008. Photo by Abner Guzman.

Tech. Sgt. Marc Tirres, of the 22nd STS, was presented the Purple Heart for injuries he suffered while responding to a well coordinated insurgent attack on Afghanistan National Government facilities in January 2010. During this mission, he assaulted up three stories to engage a well armed and barricaded enemy. Because of his actions, the entrenched force was destroyed within hours compared to previous terrorist attacks which took days to stop. Upon further clearing of the building an explosive device detonated causing shrapnel wounds to left side of face, arm, and leg as well as his left eye.

Tech. Sgt. Douglas Neville, of the 22nd STS, was presented the Purple Heart for injuries he suffered a large-scale mission to disrupt insurgent activity in the Helmand Province, Afghanistan, in January 2010. As enemy rounds grazed his position, Neville returned fire, emptying six magazines. Enemy snipers hit Neville twice. To escape the deadly fire, Neville had no choice but to jump 20 feet off of the building, severely fracturing his foot upon landing.

(Capt. Ali Kojak, 62nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs and Senior Airman David Salanitri, Air Force Special Operations Command Public Affairs, contributed to this article.)

Four Airmen receive Sijan award

By Tech. Sgt. Amaani Lyle
Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

The Air Force's 2009 Capt. Lance P. Sijan Award recipients were honored in a ceremony April 21 in the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes.

The Sijan Award annually recognizes four Airmen who demonstrate outstanding leadership abilities. Officer and enlisted honorees are chosen in senior and junior categories.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz served as host and speaker for the event honoring the recipients and their families. Gen. C. Robert Kehler, the commander of Air Force Space Command; Lt. Gen. Donald C. Wurster, the commander of Air Force Special Operations Command; and Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James A. Roy also attended.

General Schwartz stressed the importance of the award and its namesake to the Air Force.

"Truly, character is at the base of all this," Schwartz said. "It is the character of Lance Sijan and the character of these four wonderful Air Force leaders who we honor today. "Because of their character, our Air Force remains the reliable and trusted partner that we are for the other members of the joint team. That's what you represent, and it's something very special."

The general also noted the role family members play in supporting the Air Force mission.

"Clearly service in the nation's cloth is a team sport," he said to the spouses, children and other family members present. "We appreciate your contribution, your sacrifices to enable your spouse to accomplish those things for which they're recognized today."

The junior enlisted recipient is Staff Sgt. Gino Kahaunaele, who is assigned to Pope AFB, N.C. As a Special Operations Forces pararescueman, Sergeant Kahaunaele's heroism and bravery in the midst of direct and accurate enemy fire resulted in eight American lives being saved. With total disregard for his own safety, he sprinted into a hail of gunfire to drag a pinned-down, wounded teammate to safety where he used his advanced trauma medical skills to stabilize and save the operator's life. Additionally, Sergeant Kahaunaele led a combat search and rescue team through 45 combat sorties over the world's most hostile terrain.

Sergeant Kahaunaele shared his reaction to the award.

"There's really no fathoming this; it's incredible to be here," he said. "My teammates and I always said to ourselves, 'Just show up and be better than the enemy.'"

The senior enlisted recipient is Senior Master Sgt. Jesse Schraner, a vehicle operations superintendent assigned to Hurlburt Field, Fla. While deployed, he led 223 convoy missions in Iraq and Kuwait that safely transported 300,000 tons of supplies over 4 million miles, providing war-making and life-sustaining material to approximately 100,000 warfighters.

The junior officer recipient is Capt. Rachel Phillips, who is assigned to the Air Force Office of Special Investigations Det. 502 at Sembach Annex, Germany. She developed, planned and executed strategic-level counter-intelligence operations to neutralize hostile intelligence and terrorist groups.

The senior officer recipient is Lt. Col. Roger Sherman, who is assigned to Peterson Air Force Base, Colo. While deployed as an electronic warfare officer, Colonel Sherman led the 82nd Airborne Division's first electronic attack missions in Iraq against enemy forces.

The Lance P. Sijan award was first presented in 1981. It is named in honor of the first U.S. Air Force Academy graduate to receive the Medal of Honor. Captain Sijan was shot down over Vietnam Nov. 9, 1967, and evaded capture for 45 days despite severe injuries. He later died while in a North Vietnamese prisoner-of-war camp. He posthumously received the Medal of Honor for his heroism.

Lt. Col. Roger A. Sherman (from left), Capt. Thomas Phillips (accepting on behalf of his sister, Capt. Rachel Phillips), Senior Master Sgt. Jesse Schraner and Staff Sgt. Gino Kahaunaele pose with their respective 2009 Lance P. Sijan Leadership Awards following a ceremony April 21, in the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes. The annual award was created in 1981 to recognize four Airmen who demonstrate the highest qualities of leadership both in and out of uniform. Photo by Jim Varhegyi.

MSOR changes command

Story and photo by Cpl. Richard Blumenstein
MARSOC Public Affairs

Col. Dan R. Masur Jr. relinquished command of the U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, Marine Special Operations Regiment, to Col. Edward M. Jeffries Jr. during a change of command ceremony at the MARSOC headquarters building on May 27.

The MSOR provides tailored military combat-skills training and advisor support for identified foreign forces in order to enhance their tactical capabilities and to prepare the environment as directed by U.S. Special Operations Command as well as the capability to form the nucleus of a Joint Special Operations Task Force. Marines and Sailors of the MSOR train, advise, and assist friendly host nation forces - including naval and maritime military and paramilitary forces - to enable them to support their governments' internal security and stability, to counter subversion and to reduce the risk of violence from internal and external threats.

Masur arrived at MARSOC in the summer of 2007, as the assistant chief of staff G-8. On Nov. 18, 2008, Masur took command of the Marine Special Operations Advisor Group, which was later reorganized into the MSOR.

Although Masur has passed the reins as regimental commander, he will continue to serve with MARSOC in his next assignment as the assistant chief of staff G-3.

During the ceremony Masur thanked all in attendance and gave praise to the Marines and sailors of MARSOC.

"These Marines are awesome… They eat, breath and sleep the job without complaint," Masur said. "Their main focus is how we do the job better. I have never seen an organization like this, where they push the envelope every single day."

Jeffries, the new regimental commander, was assigned as the assistant chief of staff G-3 for 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, prior to assuming command of MSOR.

"This is an extremely humbling moment for me," Jeffries said at the ceremony's conclusion. "I am committed to doing the best I can in supporting this organization, and I'm so proud to be part of this organization. I will carry it to the next level.

"To the Marines, you have a superb reputation, and I look forward to working with each and every one of you to meet the challenges that lay ahead," Jeffries added.

Col. Dan R. Masur Jr. (right) transfers the colors of Marine Special Operations Regiment to Col. Edward M. Jeffries Jr. during a change of command ceremony at the MARSOC headquarters building on May 27, Camp Lejeune, N.C. The MSOR provides tailored military combat-skills training and advisor support for identified foreign forces in order to enhance their tactical capabilities and to prepare the environment as directed by USSOCOM as well as the capability to form the nucleus of a Joint Special Operations Task Force.

MARSOC stands up Intel Battalion

Story and photo by Cpl. Richard Blumenstein
MARSOC Public Affairs

U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command's Marine Special Operations Intelligence Battalion (MIB) officially activated during a ceremony on May 18, at the MARSOC headquarters building, Camp Lejeune, N.C..

The battalion was reorganized from a company in response to the ever-growing capabilities of MARSOC. The mission of the MIB is to train, sustain, maintain combat readiness, and provide intelligence support at all operational levels within MARSOC, and to support MARSOC training and operations worldwide with mission specific capabilities.

"The MARSOC Intelligence Battalion produces the direct support teams, SOTF (Special Operations Task Force) enhancements, and other capabilities as needed by the commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, and the Commander of U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command," said Col. Richard Anders, the commanding officer of Marine Special Operations Support Group. "These intelligence capabilities are integral elements of our operating forces and a critical ingredient of the Marine Special Operations' concept."

During the ceremony, Anders addressed all in attendance and gave a special thanks to Lt. Gen. Dennis J. Hejlik, the commanding officer of II Marine Expeditionary Force, and former commander of MARSOC.

"A special welcome and word of gratitude is in order for General Hejlik, who four years ago, planted the seeds of Marine Special Operations Intelligence," Anders said. "Sir, the fruit of your vision and labor, along with that of your team four years ago, is before you."

Lt. Col. Nicolas Vavich, the commander of the MIB, also spoke during the ceremony. Vavich talked about the achievements made by the intelligence Marines of MARSOC since the inception of the command, including their participation in the more than 28 deployments to 13 countries that MARSOC conducted last year.

"In my mind, special operations are really not about going after any target at the first available time. Special operations are about choosing the right target at the time and place of our choosing to shape and influence the battle space in today's really complex and multidimensional environments," Vavich said. "It is the exceptional Marines of Marine Intelligence Battalion, both east and west coast, who provide that capability to this component, and make MARSOC's contribution unique to the special operations community."

Lt. Col. Nicholas Vavich, the commanding officer of U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command's Marine Special Operations Intelligence Battalion (MIB), salutes the colors during a ceremony, which officially activated the battalion May 18, at the MARSOC headquarters building, Camp Lejeune, N.C. The battalion will train and provide intelligence to Marine Special Operations missions worldwide.

Headquarters officially opens Dagger Hall, Commando Center

Story and photo by Mike Bottoms
USSOCOM Public Affairs

U.S. Special Operations Command's headquarters has two new additions with the official opening of Dagger Hall and the Commando Center, April 5.

Adm. Eric T. Olson, commander of USSOCOM, James Cluck, acquisition executive and senior procurement executive for USSOCOM, and Brig. Gen. Mark Clark, director of operations for USSOCOM, hosted the ceremony opening the new buildings, which will house operations, intelligence and Special Operations Research, Development, & Acquisition Center.

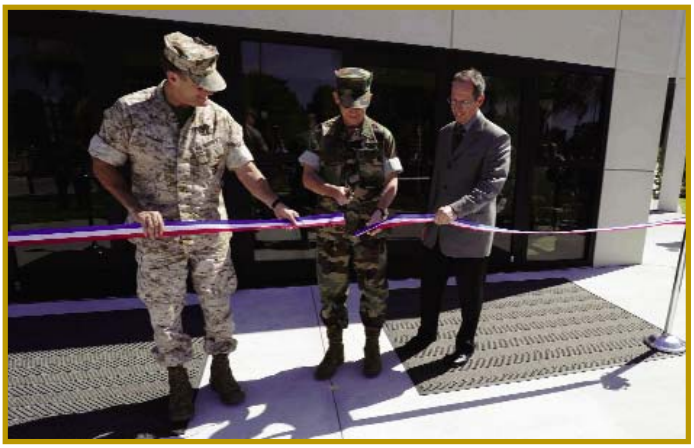
"This morning's event culminates significant planning, cooperation and hard work and serves as an outstanding testament to teamwork," Olson said. "With any project as large and complex as this, there are hundreds of individuals who play key roles and to those everyday men and women, I offer my sincere appreciation."

Dagger Hall is a 96,000 square-foot building and will house USSOCOM's Global Mission Support Center, a new battle bridge and will consolidate the Interagency Task Force.

"Dagger Hall will enable the headquarters new GMSC to more effectively coordinate operational issues that span the geographic combatant command boundaries," said Olson. "It will help merge USSOCOM's operational and service-like responsibilities and support the outstanding relationships that the regional working groups have developed with the theater special operations commands."

Commando Center is 110,000 square feet and the new home for the Special Operations Research, Development, & Acquisition Center which is composed of five program executive offices, the Special Operations Forces Integration Laboratory, and the Science and Technology Directorate.

"Commando Center will centrally locate hundreds of USSOCOM's acquisition professionals into the headquarters compound effectively consolidating these experts from various on- and off-base locations," said Olson. "Dagger Hall and Commando Center not only represent a construction project, but more importantly, they represent USSOCOM's continued focus on tomorrow's challenges."



Adm. Eric T. Olson, commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, cuts the ribbon for Dagger Hall and Commando Center as Acquisition and Senior Procurement Executive Mr. James Cluck, (right), and Director of Operations Brig. Gen. Mark Clark (left), look on during the opening ceremony of both buildings April 5. Dagger Hall will house the operations and intelligence directorates. Commando Center will serve the Special Operations Research, Development, & Acquisition Center.

Olson then described the knife to be used to cut the ribbon and officially open the buildings.

"I do have a special knife here today and it is a forty-year-old Randall knife, handmade in 1970 by W.D. 'Bo' Randall for a Special Forces operator named 'Dave,'" said Olson.

The admiral recounted that the knife did a 13-month tour in the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam – Studies and Observations Group in 1970. In the late 1970s it was part of a POW recovery effort in Korea. Dave retired in 1993, and the knife was re-sharpened, engraved and given to a SEAL 2001 as a gift. The SEAL took the knife with him in October 2001 to Operation Enduring Freedom. The knife has since gone on five deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan and Africa. Finally, the knife made it to the headquarters in 2009 and went out on another deployment to Afghanistan in April.

The storied knife easily cut the ribbon and opened a new era in the headquarters.

SPECIAL OPERATORS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES SERVING IN AND PREPARING FOR OPERATIONS ENDURING FREEDOM, IRAQI FREEDOM AND OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN.

Army Master Sgt.
Mark W. Coleman
1st Special Forces Group (Airborne)

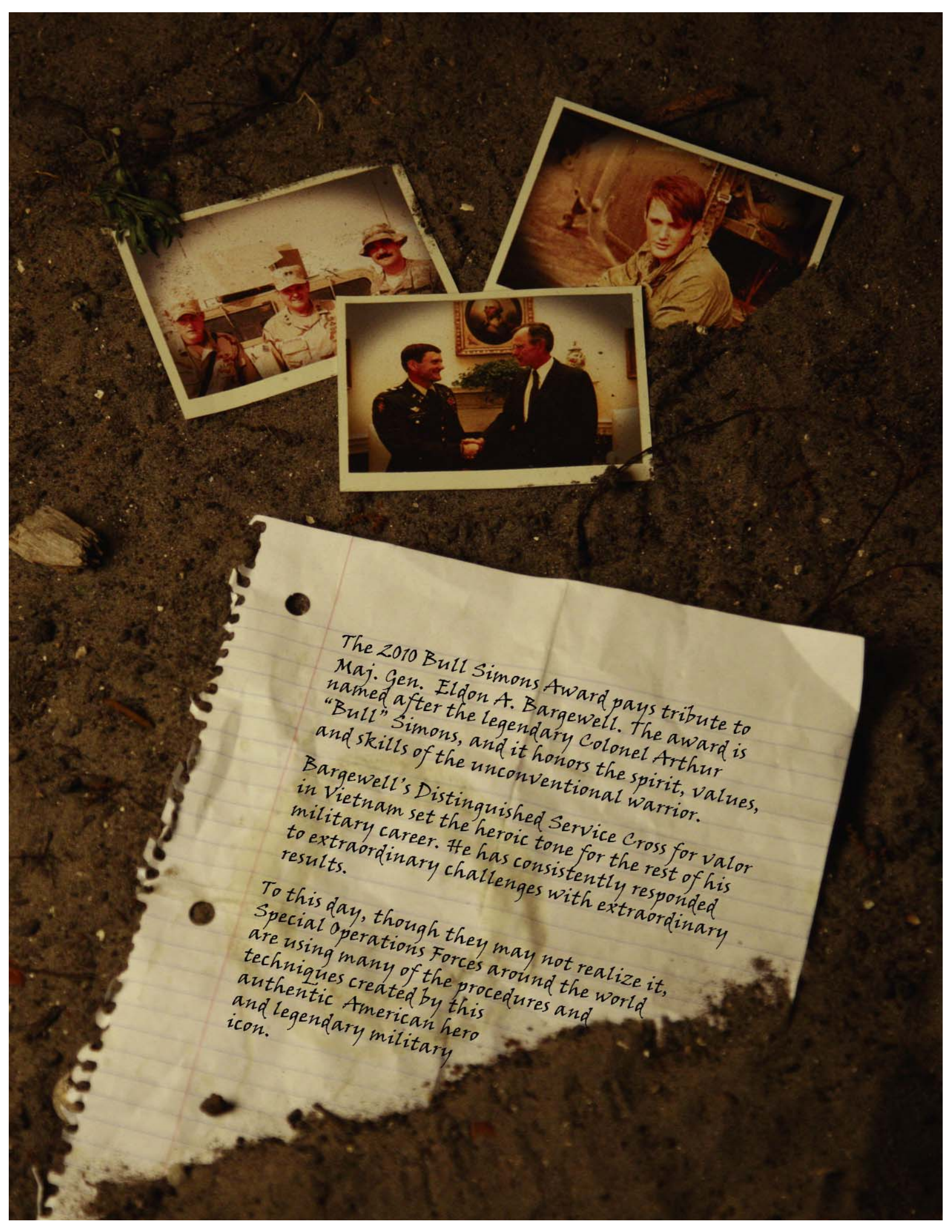
Army Capt.
Kyle A. Comfort
75th Ranger Regiment

Army Sgt.
Ronald Alan Kubik
75th Ranger Regiment

Army Sgt.
Jonathan Kellylee Peney
75th Ranger Regiment

Army Sgt.
Sgt. Jason Anthony Santora
75th Ranger Regiment

Editor's note: Honored are SOF who lost their lives since April's Tip of the Spear.



The 2010 Bull Simons Award pays tribute to Maj. Gen. Eldon A. Bargewell. The award is named after the legendary Colonel Arthur "Bull" Simons, and it honors the spirit, values, and skills of the unconventional warrior.

Bargewell's Distinguished Service Cross for valor in Vietnam set the heroic tone for the rest of his military career. He has consistently responded to extraordinary challenges with extraordinary results.

To this day, though they may not realize it, Special Operations Forces around the world are using many of the procedures and techniques created by this authentic American hero and legendary military icon.