

# TIP OF THE SPEAR



**Green Beret  
receives  
Medal of Honor**



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

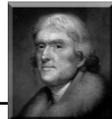


# U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



**Green Beret receives Medal of Honor posthumously .....12**

## Tip of the Spear



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*Cover: Staff Sgt. Robert J. Miller rides horseback through an Afghan village. Miller was killed Jan. 25, 2008 in Afghanistan while single-handedly holding off Taliban insurgents. At the expense of his life, Miller's actions allowed his team and 15 Afghan soldiers to fall back from a close-range ambush. Miller was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery that day in a ceremony at the White House where Miller's family received the medal from President Barack Obama Oct. 6. Courtesy photo.*

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**SOF AROUND THE WORLD - POLAND, LITHUANIA**  
**SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - EUROPE**

# **Jackal Stone 10 SOF exercise concludes in Poland, Lithuania**

*By Master Sgt. Donald Sparks  
SOCEUR Public Affairs*





Jackal Stone 10, a multinational special operations forces military exercise, concluded in Poland and Lithuania on Sept. 27, marking the third consecutive year of the capstone training event for U.S. Special Operations Command Europe.

More than 1,100 SOF members from Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Ukraine and the United States participated in the Sept. 13 – 27 exercise aimed at enhancing the capabilities and interoperability among the participating forces.

SOCEUR personnel provided key logistic, operational, medical, personnel, aviation and public affairs staff support to the host nations and four other countries participating in the exercise.

Col. Duke Christie, SOCEUR J-3 Operations, said the command conducted the Jackal Stone exercise with a counter-insurgency and ground-level developed intelligence scenario for the first time this year, simulating conditions in COIN environments such as Afghanistan.

“The lessons we learned in running this exercise will enable us to create an even better plan for training partner nation and U.S. Special Operations Forces to operate on the irregular but highly lethal battlefields in the future,” Christie said.

At the tactical level, SOF units conducted high-action fast rope insertion/exertion system training; naval visit, board, search and seizure training; helicopter aerial refueling; and both water drop and freefall parachute training to improve their skills.

But perhaps even more importantly, SOF operators perfected some of their lower profile skills too. For example, they worked to uncover clues from walk-in informants and conduct key leader engagements, also known as K.L.E.s, with role-players replicating local officials, as most of the intelligence information in the exercise was only available through contact with role-players who represented the local population.

Perfecting these myriad skills allowed them to better conduct more complex surgical direct-action and special reconnaissance missions, gain situational awareness of the enemy and thus determine the humanitarian needs of the populace to support the overall counterinsurgency operation.



## SOE AROUND THE WORLD - POLAND, LITHUANIA SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND – EUROPE

To communicate exercise objectives, both Poland and Lithuania invited distinguished members of their nation's leadership as well as prominent media members to witness the training and meet participants.

Poland's Minister of National Defence, Bogdan Klich, viewed a live demonstration of a direct action mission conducted by a Polish-led multinational Special Operations Task Group Sept. 20 in Poland. Afterward he took part in a news conference with Maj. Gen. Michael Repass, SOCEUR commander and exercise director, addressing questions from the Polish media.

On Sept. 21, Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė, Lithuanian Minister of National Defense Rasa Juknevičienė, U.S. Ambassador to Lithuania Anne E. Derse and Lithuanian Chief of Defense Maj. Gen. Arvydas Pocius were among distinguished guests who visited Jackal Stone participants in Lithuania, which also included a tour aboard the U.S.S. Mount Whitney, the flagship for the U.S. 6th Fleet.

Each year SOCEUR conducts Jackal Stone, the largest and most comprehensive annual SOF exercise within Europe, to provide Special Operations Forces the opportunity to train together and build mutual respect while sharing doctrinal and training concepts and various skill sets.

Christie said the exercise is critically important as part of SOCEUR's mission to develop SOF that meet NATO standards for interoperability, especially at the operational level, and this year's event provided a model to build upon for next year's Jackal Stone exercise.

"[Jackal Stone] is the best venue possible for capstone training of SOF in combined environments, in particular for advanced staff training in the [Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force]," Christie said. "Jackal Stone 11 should be even better, with further development of COIN operations as well as better role player and Information Operations support at all levels."

As for the benefits of partner nation SOF personnel who took part in the exercise, Christie shared comments from a conversation he had with an experienced allied nation SOF officer who played a critical role running current operations in the CJSOTF Joint Intelligence and Operations Center.

"This is the first U.S.-sponsored exercise I have been on where the Americans were not always out front," said the officer.

Another experienced professional observer noted as early



***A pararescueman from the 352nd Special Operations Group based at Royal Air Force Mildenhall, U.K., helps stabilize "patients" during a casualty evacuation scenario while at Exercise Jackal Stone 10. Jackal Stone 10, hosted by Poland and Lithuania, is an annual international special operations forces exercise and includes participants from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Croatia, Romania, Ukraine and the United States. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Marelise Wood.***

as day two of the field training exercise, "This CJSOTF could go to war and operate successfully right now."

Reflecting on the successes of this year's Jackal Stone 10 exercise, Christie was particularly proud of how the exercise participants will be able to take the skills they learned and apply them to present and future coalition operations.

"Jackal Stone 10 was a tremendous success not because SOCEUR sponsored it, but because all participating nations sent some of their very finest special operations and regular forces personnel to plan, coordinate, and conduct the exercise," Christie said, "and because our Polish and Lithuanian host countries displayed superb flexibility in every way while supporting the training flawlessly.

"This fully combined and integrated exercise is more than just the application of a training methodology; it actually forms a framework for future coalition SOF operations."



*Members of the Lithuanian, Polish, and U.S. Special Operation Forces utilize Rigid-hulled Inflatable Boats to conduct visit, board, search, and seizure training Sept. 15 in Klaipeda, Lithuania. Photo by Pfc. Christopher Calvert.*



*Lithuanian and Polish Naval Special Operations Forces divers perform underwater dive training at Plateliai Lake located in Plateliai, Lithuania during Jackal Stone 10. Photo by Pfc. Christopher Calvert.*



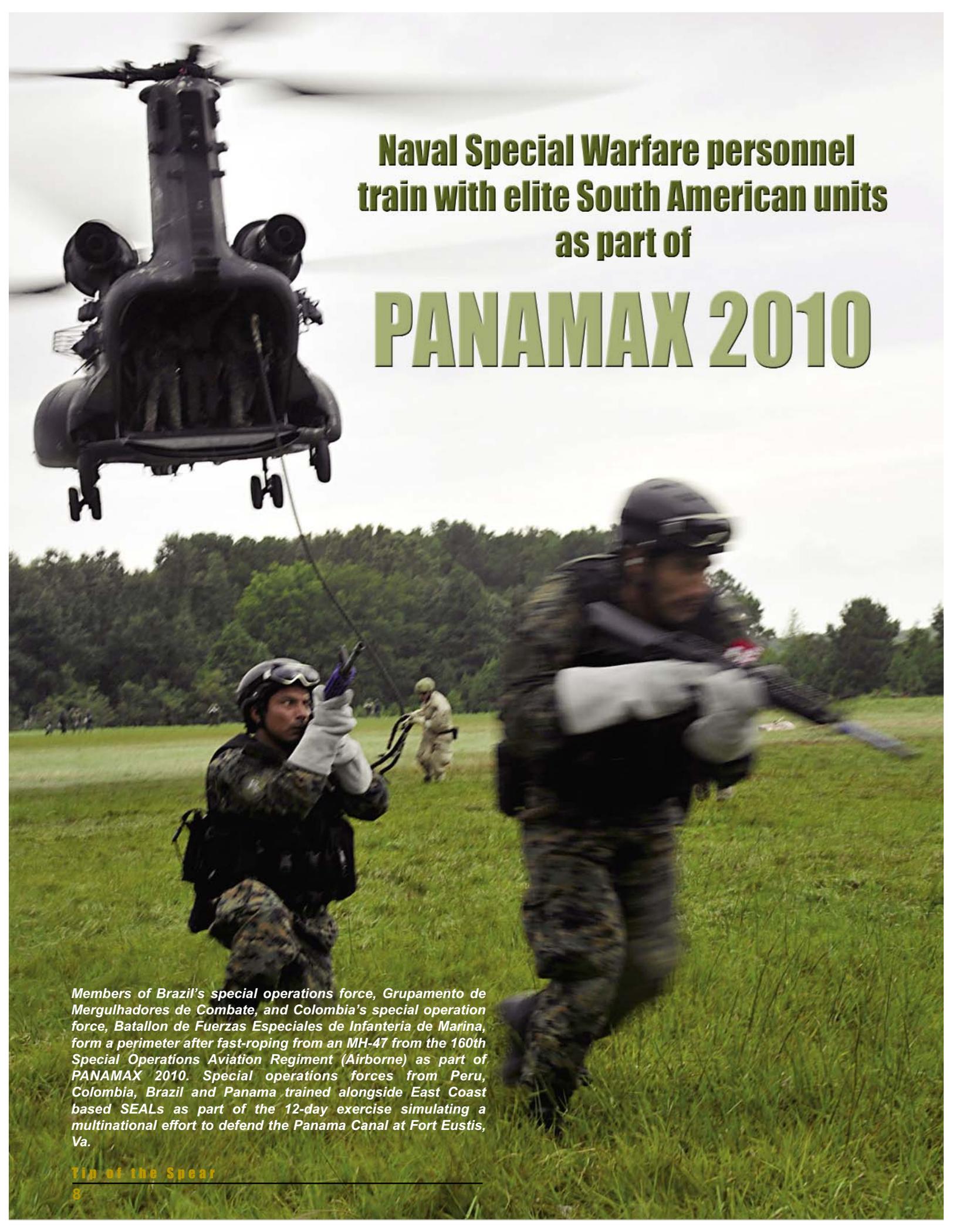
*Ukrainian Special Forces Soldiers use a fast rope insertion technique to assault and secure a building during a rehearsal for the opening exercise of Jackal Stone 10. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jason Cauley.*



*Two Croatian Special Forces members conduct a High Altitude - Low Opening jump at an altitude of approximately 9,000 feet from a MC-130H Talon II Sept. 12 at 21st Airbase in Swidwin, Poland. Photo by Staff Sgt. Shelia Sledge.*



*Special Operations Forces Soldiers from Poland, Lithuania, Croatia, Ukraine and the U.S. conduct a cordon and search operation during a night mission Sept. 25 near Drawskow Pomorskie, Poland. Photo by Staff Sgt. Brendan Stephens.*



**Naval Special Warfare personnel  
train with elite South American units  
as part of**

# PANAMAX 2010

*Members of Brazil's special operations force, Grupamento de Mergulhadores de Combate, and Colombia's special operation force, Batallon de Fuerzas Especiales de Infantería de Marina, form a perimeter after fast-roping from an MH-47 from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) as part of PANAMAX 2010. Special operations forces from Peru, Colombia, Brazil and Panama trained alongside East Coast based SEALs as part of the 12-day exercise simulating a multinational effort to defend the Panama Canal at Fort Eustis, Va.*

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

East Coast-based SEALs and Special Warfare Combatant Craft Crewman Operators trained closely with 25 personnel from four partner nation special operations forces from throughout South America August 16-30 as part of the U.S. Southern Command-sponsored exercise PANAMAX 2010 held in Panama and the United States.

The partner nations included Brazil's Grupamento de Mergulhadores de Combate, Colombia's Batallon de Fuerzas Especiales de Infanteria de Marina, Peru's Fuerza de Operaciones Especiales, Panama's National Sea and Air Service and National Police of Panama .

The exercise, which featured defense forces from 18 nations throughout the Americas, focuses on the security of the Panama Canal and Central American region while emphasizing interoperability of a multinational combined joint task force.

Naval Special Warfare's role during PANAMAX was to stand up a special operations task unit and conduct exercises simulating responses to real-world events while operating in a joint-warfare environment.

"Each nation has a strategic interest in protecting the Panama Canal," said the Naval Special Warfare Detachment South officer in charge. "This exercise gives a comprehensive view of the abilities of each of our partner nations and allows us to engage in very productive training at both the tactical and operational level."

The NSW personnel and partner forces worked closely in multiple scenarios, which required an established proficiency from each operator to incorporate a multitude of special tactics, including properly patrolling in urban environments, inserting and extracting by way of helicopter, and boarding vessels at sea.

"This exercise also gave the NSW personnel the unique opportunity to gain experience conducting foreign internal defense training, which is a real skill that will be applicable in many theaters and is difficult to replicate without working with partner nations in this capacity," said the NSW Detachment South officer in charge.

According to a lieutenant from Peru, this exercise presents a unique opportunity for multiple special operations forces to get together and communicate tactically and accomplish a common goal.

"This is a great platform for our men to work with highly professional forces and increase our proficiency at all levels," said the Peruvian lieutenant. "It has been a wonderful opportunity for each of us to work with the U.S. Navy SEALs, who we know are a highly skilled force, and to work to instill these same attributes into our troops."

And with professional growth, friendships and bonds between the participating forces are enhanced.

"It is great to get all of these nations together to complete this type of training," said a lieutenant from Colombia's special operations forces. "We not only gain in proficiency by working with each other, but we also build a camaraderie with each other, which is just as important in many cases."



***Members of Colombia's special operations force, Batallon de Fuerzas Especiales de Infanteria de Marina, practice boarding a ship near Newport News, Va., as part of PANAMAX 2010.***

# PANAMAX 2010



*(Top) Members of Peru's special operations force, Fuerza de Operaciones Especiales, fast-rope from an MH-60 helicopter from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) on to the flight deck of the USS Carr (FFG-52) as part of PANAMAX 2010. (Left) Members of Brazil's special operations force, Grupamento de Mergulhadores de Combate, and Colombia's special operation force, Batallon de Fuerzas Especiales de Infanteria de Marina, practice boarding a ship at Fort Eustis, Va., during PANAMAX 2010.*



*(Top) Members of the National Police of Panama and Colombia's special operation force, Batallon de Fuerzas Especiales de Infanteria de Marina, line up to take control of a training ship at Newport News, Va., during PANAMAX 2010. (Right) A member of the National Police of Panama stands guard as a SEAL questions a member of the national opposing force at Joint Expeditionary Base-Little Creek, Va., as part of PANAMAX 2010.*



# President Obama presents posthumous Medal of Honor to family of Green Beret

By Maj. Wes Ticer

USSOCOM Public Affairs

Special Forces Staff Sgt. Robert James Miller became part of U.S. history Oct. 6 as his parents, Phil and Maureen Miller, accepted his posthumous Medal of Honor from President Barack Obama during a ceremony at the White House.

President Obama spoke about the small number of people wearing the uniform, and an even smaller “fraction has earned the badges of our Special Operations Forces.”

“In the finest military the world has ever known, these warriors are the best of the best. In an era that prizes celebrity and status, they are ‘quiet professionals’ — never seeking the spotlight,” Obama said. “In a time of war, they have borne a burden far beyond their small numbers — training foreign militaries to stand on their own; bringing schools and medicine to remote villages; and taking to the terrorists and insurgents who plot against us.

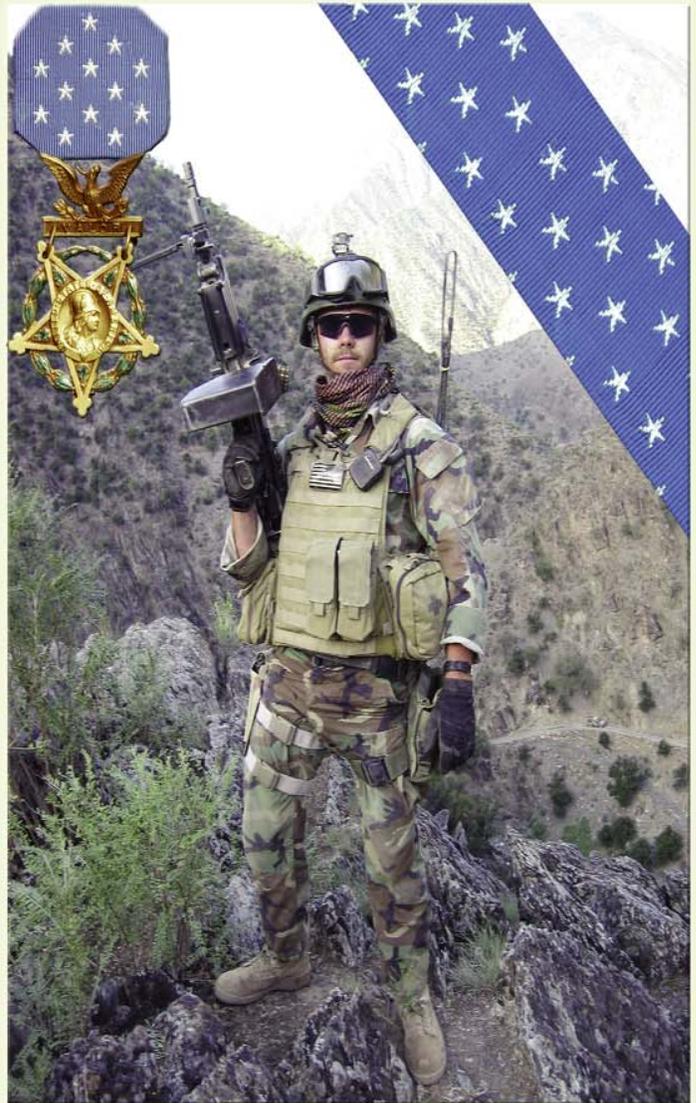
“Few Americans ever see their service, but all Americans are safer because of it. And our hearts swell with pride just hearing their names, including the legendary Green Berets.”

Miller became the first Green Beret to be awarded the Medal of Honor since the mid 1990s when two Special Forces Soldiers earned the highest military honor for their actions in Somalia. More than 100 friends and family attended the ceremony along with 100 people from the Special Operations community and the Department of the Army.

Miller was killed by insurgents in the Kunar province of Afghanistan Jan. 25, 2008, while on a mission to confirm or deny the presence of enemy fighters in the Gowardesh Valley in the eastern part of the country.

As a weapons sergeant for Operational Detachment Alpha 3312, Miller was the point man for a team of eight Special Forces Soldiers and 15 Afghan National Army soldiers as they came across a well-planned ambush.

As the ODA came under fire, Miller took the fight to the enemy. He had the weapon capable of inflicting the most devastating fire, but it was also a weapon without a suppressor. The muzzle flash from his weapon made him



*Staff Sgt. Robert J. Miller*

the most visible to the insurgents, but that did not stop him.

The whole mountain side opened up with enemy fire. The events that unfolded after that would make history. Miller’s mother said it was somewhat comforting that her 24-year-old son, who showed a great interest in military history from an early age, showed the acts of valor that led to his receiving the nation’s highest military honor.

## Early years

As an active youth, Miller was never seriously injured or broke any bones -- his own anyway. The rambunctious child kept his mother on her toes much more than her other seven children.

Miller was born in Harrisburg, Penn., in 1983. As a child, he was full of energy, constantly on the go and enjoyed learning new things, Mrs. Miller said. Even at an early age, Miller showed signs of drive and determination as he was walking by the time he was 7 months old. Shortly after that he was moving chairs around the house to explore things that were otherwise out of his reach.

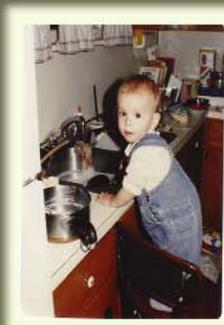
It was in that racially and ethnically diverse community where Miller gained an appreciation for other cultures, and he learned about the hardships faced by the Cambodian and Vietnamese refugees he played with as a child. That atmosphere helped him feel comfortable around people of various backgrounds, according to Mrs. Miller.

Also, his early experiences had an impact on how he viewed his own country as he would hear stories about what life was like in refugee camps.

"We would hear their stories about what they went through in relocation camps before they came here. I think that gave him an appreciation for the freedom, material wealth and opportunities that we have in the U.S.," Mrs. Miller said. "He knew there were people in the world who were worse off than we were."

His family moved to Wheaton, Ill., a suburb of Chicago, when Miller was 5 years old. He joined the Boy Scouts, where he achieved the level of Life Scout. He participated in baseball, basketball and track and played trumpet for his school's band, before later switching to tuba. He also excelled at gymnastics, becoming his high school team's co-captain as a junior, and helped propel the team to a fifth place finish in state-level competition as a senior.

In high school, Miller enjoyed reading. He was particularly fond of a quote in Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar"— "Cowards die many times before their deaths, the valiant never taste of death but once." At his suggestion, the quote was printed on the back of his gymnastics team's shirts.



Robert Miller at 1-year-old. Courtesy photo

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*"Cowards die many times before their deaths, the valiant never taste of death but once."*

*— Staff Sgt. Miller's favorite quote from high school*

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Miller was indignant about the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, his father said. A photo in his high school yearbook shows him participating in a candlelight vigil with other classmates. He had plans of applying to the U.S. Naval Academy, but his colorblindness kept him from attaining that goal.

After graduating from Wheaton North High School, Miller enrolled in the University of Iowa where he tried out for the gymnastics team. After realizing he would not be able to compete at that level, Miller began to look for other challenges.

## Valiant Soldier

When Miller decided to enlist in the Army in 2003, Mr. and Mrs. Miller said they were not surprised.

"He was always going to be a Soldier," Mrs. Miller said. Miller's family tree has lines of military service dating back to the Revolutionary War, she said. Mr. Miller was a German linguist in Berlin while a serving as a Soldier in the U.S. Army.

Miller often wore his father's old uniforms and pretended to be a Soldier himself, his mother said. He watched war movies and even read

"The Art of War" by Sun Tzu.

Also, the Millers were not surprised that he sought to join the Special Forces Candidate program, where newly enlisted Soldiers have the opportunity to attend Special Forces assessment and selection training without having



Robert Miller competing on the parallel bars for the Wheaton North High School gymnastics team. Courtesy photo.

first served in the general purpose forces.

He thrived on adventure and saw Special Forces as a way to challenge himself to be part of a group he considered to be the best of the best, Mr. Miller said. He graduated from Special Forces Qualification Course Sept. 26, 2004, and deployed to Afghanistan less than two years later.

As a result of his courage under fire during his seven-month deployment, Miller was awarded two Army Commendation Medals for Valor.

After his first deployment to Afghanistan, Miller opted to go to Ranger School rather than taking time off. His decision was in keeping with his desire to become the best at what he did, Mr. Miller said.

“He was pretty much excellent at everything he did,” said Chief Warrant Officer Joseph Wilson, assistant ODA 3312 commander. “He was one of those people you give any task to and it would be done at or above the standard every time.”

A Soldier with a knack for languages, he had become proficient in Pashto through self-study and interaction with indigenous forces and villagers. Miller had studied Latin and German while in high school and learned French through Special Forces language training.

His appreciation for culture and language earned him the respect of the villagers with whom he worked. He was even invited to a wedding, and during one mission, he was allowed to join in a game called Buzkashi, which is similar to polo.

### **The Ultimate Sacrifice**

Miller’s second deployment had him back in Afghanistan in late 2007. His return was met with high fives from the ANA soldiers he had worked with in his previous deployment.

ODA 3312 was given a mission to conduct a combat reconnaissance patrol in Gowardesh, an area where insurgents were suspected to be gaining confidence and strength. Fifteen ANA soldiers joined the ODA for the mission.

Upon arriving at the targeted location, Miller directed the ANA soldiers in establishing security for the vehicles on the mission. Once the insurgents were located by unmanned aerial vehicles, Miller engaged the enemy with his vehicle’s mounted MK19 grenade launcher, while providing positions to the joint terminal



*Dressed in traditional Afghan clothing as a sign of respect for the local culture, Staff Sgt. Robert J. Miller (second from right) and his teammates meet with villagers in Afghanistan. Miller took advantage of such opportunities to learn about culture and improve his proficiency in Pashto. Courtesy photo.*

air controller with the team.

Using information Miller provided, the JTAC was able to direct close-air support strikes to neutralize the enemy. After the initial contact and CAS strikes, the ODA commander directed the team to conduct a battle damage assessment.

Due to his ability to speak Pashto, Miller explained the ODA commander’s plan to the ANA soldiers accompanying the team of eight Special Forces Soldiers.

As the dismounted patrol moved through the mouth of the narrow valley toward the target area, an armed insurgent jumped out from behind a hidden position and fired his weapon while shouting “Allah Akbar.” Miller returned fire and killed the insurgent instantly.

Next, more than 100 insurgents opened fire with a flurry of machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades and AK-47s, most of which came from elevated and hardened fighting positions. The team was pinned down in a kill zone and in trouble.

Without hesitation, Miller bounded forward and engaged positions that were inflicting devastating, overwhelming fire on the Special Forces team and the ANA soldiers, the latter of which had broken formation and fled the kill zone.

Miller charged the positions posing the most immediate threat and neutralized them with his M249 Squad Automatic Weapon. With every flash from the muzzle of his weapon, Miller drew more attention to his position, allowing his team to maneuver into better fighting positions.

As he charged the enemy positions, Miller continued to shout out the “three Ds – distance, direction and description of the enemy,” said Master Sgt. Jim Lodyga, Miller’s team sergeant.

Though it was difficult to see Miller through all the smoke and dust, the team could still hear his weapon. Then, as President Obama stated during the White House ceremony, “Rob’s weapon fell silent.”

“Without a doubt, if Robby hadn’t taken the fight to the enemy, the insurgents could have walked us back to the river, and you would be looking at eight dead Special Forces Soldiers,” Lodyga said.

Why Miller bounded forward while telling others to bound back, “is something we’ll never know,” said Maj. Robert Cusick, Miller’s ODA commander. “In my personal opinion, he wanted to provide that extra fire power to allow his buddies to get out of the kill zone.”

Cusick was critically wounded during the firefight and had to be evacuated by a helicopter once the team had made the area safe enough for his extraction.

ODA 3312 stayed in Afghanistan for the remainder of its deployment, but Miller’s life — as much as his death — was still on their minds.

“For about three years we were on the team,” said Staff Sgt. Nicholas McGarry, ODA 3312 senior weapons sergeant. “We did everything together and lived right next to each other. (Miller’s death) affected everybody because he was so well liked.” McGarry said days before that mission, Miller told him he wanted people to remember him for what he did with his life rather than focusing on his death.

“Rob endures in the Afghans that he trained and he befriended,” Obama said. “In valleys and villages half a world away, they remember him — the American who spoke their language, who respected their culture and who helped them defend their country.”

“Rob Miller endures in the service of his teammates — his brothers in arms who served with him, bled with him and fought to bring him home. These soldiers embody the spirit that guides our troops in Afghanistan every day.”

Miller’s parents said they are extremely proud of their son’s accomplishments and consider the Medal of Honor a celebration of a fantastic, though brief, military career. At the same time, they recognize there are others who deserve

accolades for their actions in combat.

“We are proud and grateful that Rob showed such courage, but we know there are other parents who have dealt with loss, and there are others who have not received the recognition they deserve,” Mrs. Miller said.

“We believe voluntary service is honorable and necessary for the success of this country,” Mr. Miller said. “Rob was very patriotic and appreciated the freedoms we enjoy. He also knew they could be taken away.”

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*“Rob endures in the Afghans that he trained and he befriended. In valleys and villages half a world away, they remember him — the American who spoke their language, who respected their culture and who helped them defend their country.”*

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*— President Barack H. Obama*

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**President Barack Obama presents the Medal of Honor to the parents of Staff Sgt. Robert J. Miller, Philip and Maureen Miller, Oct. 6, during a ceremony at the White House. Miller received the honor for his heroic actions in Afghanistan on Jan. 25, 2008, after displaying immeasurable courage and uncommon valor, eventually sacrificing his life to save the lives of his Special Forces teammates and 15 Afghanistan National Army soldiers. Photo by D. Myles Cullen.**



**Army Staff Sgt. Robert Miller  
Medal of Honor  
Operation Enduring Freedom**



The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, March 3, 1863, has awarded, in the name of Congress, the Medal of Honor to

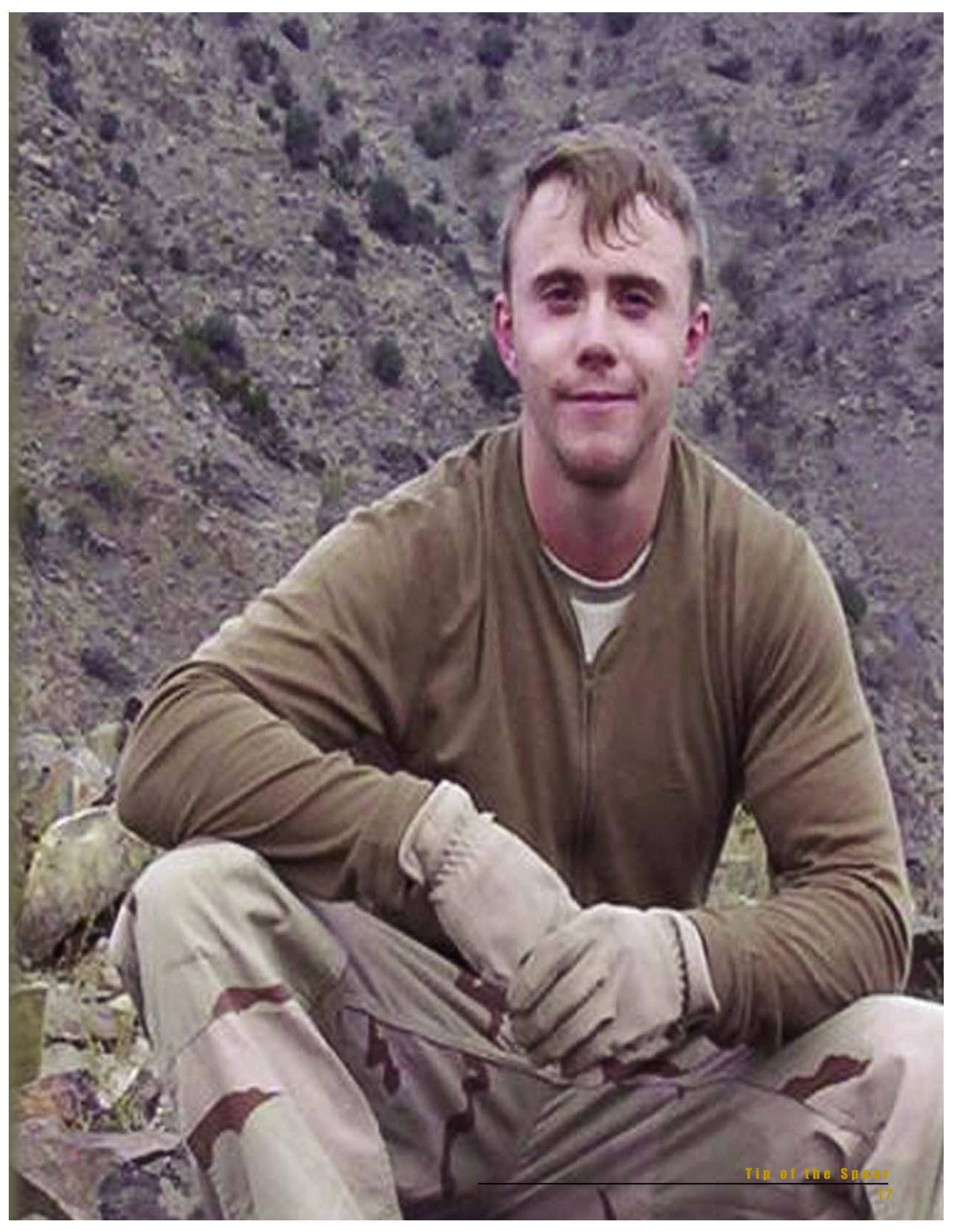
**Staff Sergeant Robert J. Miller  
UNITED STATES ARMY**

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life  
above and beyond the call of duty:

Staff Sergeant Robert J. Miller distinguished himself by extraordinary acts of heroism while serving as the Weapons Sergeant in Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha 3312, Special Operations Task Force-33, Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan during combat operations against an armed enemy in Konar Province, Afghanistan on January 25, 2008. While conducting a combat reconnaissance patrol through the Gowardesh Valley, Staff Sergeant Miller and his small element of U.S. and Afghan National Army soldiers engaged a force of 15 to 20 insurgents occupying prepared fighting positions. Staff Sergeant Miller initiated the assault by engaging the enemy positions with his vehicle's turret-mounted Mark-19 40 millimeter automatic grenade launcher while simultaneously providing detailed descriptions of the enemy positions to his command, enabling effective, accurate close air support. Following the engagement, Staff Sergeant Miller led a small squad forward to conduct a battle damage assessment. As the group neared the small, steep, narrow valley that the enemy had inhabited, a large, well-coordinated insurgent force initiated a near ambush, assaulting from elevated positions with ample cover.

Exposed and with little available cover, the patrol was totally vulnerable to enemy rocket propelled grenades and automatic weapon fire. As point man, Staff Sergeant Miller was at the front of the patrol, cut off from supporting elements, and less than 20 meters from enemy forces. Nonetheless, with total disregard for his own safety, he called for his men to quickly move back to covered positions as he charged the enemy over exposed ground and under overwhelming enemy fire in order to provide protective fire for his team. While maneuvering to engage the enemy, Staff Sergeant Miller was shot in his upper torso. Ignoring the wound, he continued to push the fight, moving to draw fire from over one hundred enemy fighters upon himself. He then again charged forward through an open area in order to allow his teammates to safely reach cover. After killing at least 10 insurgents, wounding dozens more, and repeatedly exposing himself to withering enemy fire while moving from position to position, Staff Sergeant Miller was mortally wounded by enemy fire. His extraordinary valor ultimately saved the lives of seven members of his own team and 15 Afghanistan National Army soldiers. Staff Sergeant Miller's heroism and selflessness above and beyond the call of duty, and at the cost of his own life, are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Army.

A website honoring Staff Sgt. Robert Miller can be found at <http://www.army.mil/medalofhonor/miller>.





Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, Secretary of the Army John McHugh, Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. George W. Casey Jr., and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston applaud Philip and Maureen Miller, who hold the Medal of Honor citation and a photo of their son Staff Sgt. Robert J. Miller, who was inducted into the Pentagon Hall of Heroes Oct. 7.

## Special Forces Medal of Honor recipient enshrined in Pentagon Hall of Heroes

Story and photos by J.D. Leipold  
Army News Service

The day after Staff Sgt. Robert J. Miller's Family accepted the posthumously-awarded Medal of Honor from President Barack Obama, the Special Operations noncommissioned officer was inducted into the

Pentagon's Hall of Heroes October 8, before a standing-room-only audience.

Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. George W. Casey Jr. spoke at the event, and said the Hall of Heroes was a place of honor that serves to remind all of the extraordinary sacrifices ordinary Americans have made for their country and for their comrades. The general

said approximately 3,400 individuals are named in the hall, and about 2,400 of those were Soldiers.

“Yesterday, Rob Miller became part of the history of our Army and of our country and today, he joins these heroes,” Casey said. “I’m humbled to be part of an Army that attracts and produces men and women like Staff Sgt. Rob Miller. Rob was by all accounts an extraordinary young man, a natural leader, a skilled Soldier and a dedicated friend ... he embodied the Army values and lived the warrior ethos.”

Miller, known as “Robby” to his Special Forces teammates, was killed Jan. 25, 2008 while fending off scores of Taliban fighters during a close-range ambush in the Konar Province of Afghanistan.

Though wounded, the 24-year-old continued to move forward, single-handedly killing 10 insurgents and wounding another two dozen. At the expense of his life, his actions allowed his unit and 15 Afghan soldiers to fall back from the kill zone and regroup.

Secretary of the Army John McHugh echoed Casey’s praise.

“He sacrificed his life to make a difference for his fellow Soldiers; he upheld the values he coveted most dearly in order to secure our nation’s future, with ideals of loyalty, duty, selfless service, honor and most of all, courage,” McHugh said. “To those who knew him best — his family, his friends, teachers, mentors, fellow Green Berets — Robert’s actions probably didn’t come as a surprise, it really was how he led his life day in and day out.”

Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates provided his own tribute to Miller.

“Even as he was winning the trust of the local people, Rob never stopped being a warrior, and that is why on that night in the rugged mountains of eastern Afghanistan — heavily outnumbered, mortally wounded — Rob charged ahead when he so easily could have taken cover,” Gates said. “That is why he put the lives of brothers in arms — Afghan and American — ahead of his own, and that is why they returned home and he did not.”

Gates also quoted one of Miller’s favorite lines from Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar:

“Cowards die many times before their deaths; the valiant never taste death but once,” Gates said. “Rob is

now known to history as one of those valiant ... his name ... his story, belong to the ages.”

Following the reading of the Medal of Honor citation, Gates, McHugh and Casey presented the citation with a framed photo of Miller on horseback in Afghanistan and the 13-star Medal of Honor flag to Miller’s parents, Philip and Maureen.

Philip Miller ended the ceremony telling the audience his son loved what he was doing, and he was unapologetically patriotic.

“He was proven and very good at what he was doing, and there’s no question that he was confident that he was fighting and serving for a good cause,” he said. “My wife and I believe he’s a great example of what

America’s youth can do and how well they can perform when they’re given the responsibility and opportunity to do so.”

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*“Rob was by all accounts an extraordinary young man, a natural leader, a skilled Soldier and a dedicated friend ... he embodied the Army values and lived the warrior ethos.”*

— *Chief of Staff of the Army  
Gen. George W. Casey Jr.*

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**Staff Sgt. Robert J. Miller’s Special Forces teammates listen to the Medal of Honor citation of their comrade during Miller’s induction into the Pentagon Hall of Heroes. Miller was killed Jan. 25, 2008, in Afghanistan while single-handedly holding off Taliban insurgents. At the expense of his life, Miller’s actions allowed his team and 15 Afghan soldiers to fall back from a close-range ambush.**

**AIRBORNE**

**U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND**



*Seven Soldiers from the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) were each awarded the Silver Star during a ceremony at the JFK Auditorium Aug. 16 for their valorous actions while deployed to Afghanistan in 2007-2008. Photo by Trisha Harris.*

## **7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) Soldiers receive Silver Stars**

*By Sgt. Tony Hawkins  
USASOC PAO*

Thunderous applause filled the John F. Kennedy Auditorium at Fort Bragg N.C., as seven Soldiers, decorated with the nation's third highest honor, took the stage at the conclusion of a 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) valor award ceremony Aug. 16.

The Soldiers were each awarded the Silver Star for heroic acts of valor displayed during the group's

deployment to Afghanistan from 2007-2008. One of the medals was posthumously awarded to Sgt. 1st Class David Nunez, which was presented to his brother, Spc. Rene Nunez of the 82nd Airborne Division.

"[These men] laid it all on the line and risked absolutely everything they care about in life for the sake of the mission at hand, and their partner and Afghan forces teammates on their left and right," said Col. James Kraft, 7th SFG (A) commander. "Ladies and gentlemen, that's true honor."

Lt. Gen. John F. Mulholland, commanding general of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, was the host of the ceremony. He spoke of the pride and honor he felt in leading the men and women of Army Special Operations.

“Every day in Iraq, Afghanistan and in other countries around the world, American Special Operations Soldiers routinely and consistently exhibit enormously powerful acts of valor and courage on the field of battle,” Mulholland said.

As each of the seven Soldiers took the stage to be presented with a medal, vignettes were read about the astonishing actions they took to stop the enemy and protect their comrades.

“When confronted with danger in the fog and friction of close combat, without hesitation you went to the sound of the guns,” Kraft said. “You took care of business first rather than taking care of yourself. Each of these Soldiers has a story to tell, but quite frankly, they’re too modest to tell it.”

Kraft spoke of the uncommon valor the men exhibited in the heat of battle, though he said words alone could not do them justice.

“Though, mere words cannot adequately express and describe one’s willingness, one’s decision to charge a numerically superior enemy force,” he said, “or to maneuver into the jaws of a sophisticated enemy ambush to recover his Afghan brothers. To continue forward at all cost when hit by enemy fire, or to continue to engage the enemy and protect the lives of his teammates, even when engulfed in flames.”

However, if you were to ask one of these Soldiers if they had done anything special, the typical response would be, “I was just doing my job.”

“I didn’t really think about doing it, I just did it,” said Staff Sgt. Mario A. Pinilla, a Special Forces communication sergeant with 1st Battalion, 7th SFG (A), referring to his actions on Aug. 20, 2008. “If I had to do it again, I definitely would.”

While conducting a combat reconnaissance patrol in the Khaz Oruzgan district of Afghanistan, his team, ODA 7134, was ambushed by anti-Afghan forces. During the ensuing firefight, Pinilla sprinted 75 meters across open terrain into incoming enemy fire to aid a wounded teammate, Staff Sgt. Daniel Gould, a SF engineer sergeant, who was pinned down. When Pinilla reached his teammate, he dove in front of him, providing his own

body as cover for his wounded comrade as he proceeded to suppress the enemy ambush line.

After 10 minutes of returning fire, Pinilla suffered two gunshot wounds and was critically wounded. His teammates fought to return him to safety, all the while Pinilla continued to return fire with his 9-mm Beretta handgun. Due to the severity of his wounds, he was evacuated from the battlefield and eventually to Walter Reed Army Medical Center where he began a slow recovery process.

“It’s about trusting the man to your left and right, and knowing that he will do the right thing and watch your back,” he said. “That’s what I was doing for him [Gould] and he did the same for me. I wouldn’t be here today if not for him.”

Gould said it was the closeness his team shared that enabled them to risk their lives for each other.

“When you have the camaraderie that we have, the actions become instantaneous,” Gould said. “The cohesion that is built within the team is key.”

It is that camaraderie and familiarity within the team that allows its members to perform such acts of heroism. Whether it was Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan Clouse running into the kill zone of an ambush, while he himself was wounded, to provide medical aid to a wounded teammate; or Sgt. 1st Class David Nunez remaining in a vehicle engulfed in flames in order to discard explosives and ammunition, to prevent secondary explosions and ensure others were not hurt or killed.

“Where on earth do we get men like these?” Kraft asked. “They’re here among us today. How fortunate, proud and humbled we are to be in the true company of heroes. We know full well the tremendous cost that comes with that kind of devotion, and we will never forget the sacrifice.”

The Silver Star recipients are:  
Staff Sgt. Daniel Gould  
Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan Clouse  
Sgt. 1st Class Antonio Gonzalez  
Sgt. 1st Class David Nunez (posthumously awarded)  
Sgt. 1st Class Mario A. Pinilla  
Master Sgt. Julio Bocanegra  
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Mark Roland



## U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

# Gen. Shelton honored in statue unveiling ceremony

*Story and photos by Sgt. Tony Hawkins  
USASOC PAO*

Servicemembers and civilians from all walks of life gathered Aug. 27 at the Airborne and Special Operations Museum here to celebrate the career and life of one of the U.S. Army's most respected veterans with a statue dedication ceremony.

Retired Gen. H. Hugh Shelton, who ended his military career of 38 years in 2001 after spending the last four years of it as the 14th chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, was honored in the ceremony with the unveiling of a bronze statue of himself.

"This is by far the most humbling experience that I have ever had, bar none," Shelton said. "Standing here in the shadow of this magnificent statue, there are only two words that come to mind: 'Wow,' and the other is 'thanks.'"

Shelton, a Special Forces veteran who served with the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in Vietnam, has also served as the commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, XVIII Airborne Corps and the U.S. Special Operations Command.

Shelton thanked all of the individuals involved with making the statue possible, though he expressed particular gratitude to H. Ross Perot, who was also in attendance.

"I don't think Ross has ever encountered a situation that he thought was too challenging or that he was afraid to tackle," Shelton said.

Perot, an avid supporter of the military and Army Special Operations, has previously donated the funds to erect statues of Army Special Forces veterans Col. Arthur "Bull" Simons and Maj. Dick Meadows at Fort Bragg, N.C.

As a long-time friend of Shelton, Perot said he felt something had to be done to remember his service. Reading an inscription from the book of Isaiah that is on the base of the statue, Perot commented on how it was reflective of Shelton's life.

"'Here am I, send me.' That's what he has done



**The statue of retired Gen. H. Hugh Shelton, 14th chairman of the joint chiefs of staff and Army Special Forces veteran, is unveiled by H. Ross Perot as Shelton (second from left) looks on during a dedication ceremony Aug. 27 at the Airborne and Special Operations Museum.**

through his entire career and since he's been retired," Perot said. "First to go, first to volunteer, first to take the risk and first to get the job done."

Tony Chavonne, mayor of Fayetteville, also spoke words of admiration to Shelton, who is a native of North Carolina.

“We’re humbled to be here this morning, joining you among some of our nation’s greatest heroes,” Chavonne said. “Heroes that wear the uniform, and heroes that don’t; those that are bound together by their love of this country and respect for the man whom we honor here today.”

Chavonne thanked Shelton for his “dedication to the betterment of our military forces, both in conflict and peacetime.”

“He’s a Soldier’s Soldier, and a role model for all of those who inspire to be leaders, no matter their walk of life,” he said. “Gen. Shelton’s entire life, from the tobacco fields of North Carolina, to being knighted by the Queen [of England] has been, and is, about leadership and about caring for people.”

As Perot and Chavonne unveiled the statue together, the audience erupted into a sea of applause.

“You know the only thing that would have made it better is if it didn’t look so much like me,” Shelton said jokingly. “It would have probably been prettier.”

He said although when most people look at the statue

they may only see a replica of him, he sees something much different.

“When I look at it, I am reminded of the millions of men and women in uniform who have served our nation, at home and abroad, during times of peace as well as war,” he said. “I am reminded of the thousands of great Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines, as well as members of the Coast Guard who have served alongside me during my 38 years of service; men and women whose motivation is unquestionable, whose devotion to duty is legendary, and whose selfless service was exemplary.”

Quoting a song very familiar with those in attendance, Perot summed up the entire purpose of the event.

“I’d like to remind you all here today, that the last line of the first verse of the Star Spangled Banner is a question,” Perot said. “‘O, say does that Star Spangled Banner yet wave, o’er the land of the free and the home of the brave?’ Believe me; as long as we have great patriots like Gen. Shelton, the answer to that question will be a resounding, ‘Yes!’”



*(From left to right) Lt. Gen. John F. Mulholland, USASOC commanding general; retired Gen. H. Hugh Shelton; H. Ross Perot; Tony Chavonne, Fayetteville mayor; and Lt. Gen. Frank Helmick, XVIII Airborne Corps commanding general, pose in front of the newly unveiled statue of Shelton after a ceremony Aug. 27 at the Airborne and Special Operations Museum, Fayetteville, N.C.*



## NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND



Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, center, poses for a photo with Class 284 at the Naval Special Warfare Center, Naval Amphibious Base Coronado in San Diego, Calif., Aug. 13. Photo by Cherie Cullen.

# Secretary of Defense Gates visits Marine, SEAL Training in San Diego

*By Jim Garamone  
American Forces Press Service*

A trip that started with presiding over the assumption of command for a four-star Marine Corps general ended with Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates presiding over a Marine Corps Recruit Depot graduation ceremony Aug. 13.

Gates also observed Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training.

The secretary presided Aug. 11 at the assumption of command for Marine Gen. James N. Mattis as the commander of U.S. Central Command. Two days later, the

secretary met servicemembers on the other end of the personnel pipeline, participating in the graduation of A Company, 1st Training Battalion, and of Sailors striving to be SEALs with Class 84.

In a news conference at the Marine base, Gates said it was important to him to visit these Marines and Sailors.

“They are all volunteers, and they volunteered at a time when the United States is at war,” he said.

And it is personal to him, the secretary added.

“I think going from being a university president to this job actually made it harder,” he said. “I spent four and a half years [at Texas A&M] watching 18- to 25-year-olds

walk around campus in flip-flops and shorts and T-shirts, wearing backpacks and having fun going to class,” he said. “And then in an instant, I was watching kids exactly the same age – 18 to 25 – in full body armor in Iraq and Afghanistan.”

He said the surge in Afghanistan is just now reaching its full force. The U.S. soon will have approximately 100,000 troops in Afghanistan, with allies deploying another 50,000. Casualties have risen in Afghanistan, and the secretary said it is no surprise.

“We knew if we became more aggressive in areas where the Taliban had ruled undisturbed ... casualties would be higher,” he said. “My hope is that we will see in Afghanistan what happened in Iraq -- that is, early in the surge, casualties rose as we were in the thick of the fight. Then, as we started having success, the casualties began to decline significantly. That’s my hope.”

Gates said that is another reason he is so impressed with the young men and women joining the military today: They know they are going into battle.

The recruits who graduated today will be the beneficiaries of savings that come about from his push to eliminate duplication of capabilities, a bloated and top-heavy hierarchy and unnecessary overhead in the Defense Department, Gates said.

“I want [the savings] to go to force structure, I want it to go into modernization and investments in future capabilities, and I’m especially concerned that we don’t have inadvertent consequences as this is implemented up and down the line,” he added.

Top leaders must study the situation and look at the second and third order of effects before implementing any changes, Gates explained.

“I want the maintenance guys to have the tools and equipment they need; I want trainers and recruiters to have what they need,” he said. “The whole purpose is really to slim down on overhead and bureaucracy and large staffs, and try to convert that from tail to tooth.”

The secretary said he has met with service leaders on the plan, and he is pleased with their proposals.

“I think the initial look is they are all taking this seriously. They are leaning forward,” he said.

The service secretaries and service chiefs are excited about the program, Gates added, because they get to reinvest any savings back in their services. Savings at defense agencies or at the combatant commands will go back to Gates for redistribution.

“I want to know what they are going to invest in,” he said. “For example, if I was able to give the Navy a billion dollars more a year, what is their highest priority: ship-building or what?”

The services have some very ambitious and aggressive plans, which Gates said look good.

Gates left the Recruit Depot and moved to North Island. On one end of the beach is the Hotel del Coronado, a world-class resort. At the other end is the Navy’s Special Operations Command, where sailors were in the midst of “Hell Week” at BUDs. The class started four weeks ago with 180 sailors: Now there are 67. During Hell Week, the sailors are stressed physically and mentally. They have timed runs, timed swims, countless exercises, small-boat exercises, little food and even less sleep.

The 67 remaining candidates were on the beach exercising with Zodiac boats when Gates walked over the sand dune. The young men were covered in sand from earlier exercises. The sailors gathered around the secretary, and he thanked them for volunteering to serve their nation, and for further volunteering to be a SEAL. Then the secretary said what all the Sailors wanted to hear: “Class 284, you are secured from Hell Week,” officially ending the grueling week.



**Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates shakes hands with Class 284 at the Naval Special Warfare Center, Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, in San Diego, Calif., Aug. 13. Photo by Cherie Cullen.**



## Class 58 rededicates bell at Naval Special Warfare Center

By Seaman Stephen Fields  
NSW Public Affairs

A few familiar faces visited the Naval Special Warfare Center Aug. 20 for a bell rededication ceremony in San Diego, Calif.

Members of Basic Underwater Demolition/Sea, Air and Land class 58 began their training in 1969 and graduated in 1970. Forty years later, class 58 returned to rededicate the bell they gave as a gift to the NSWCCEN.

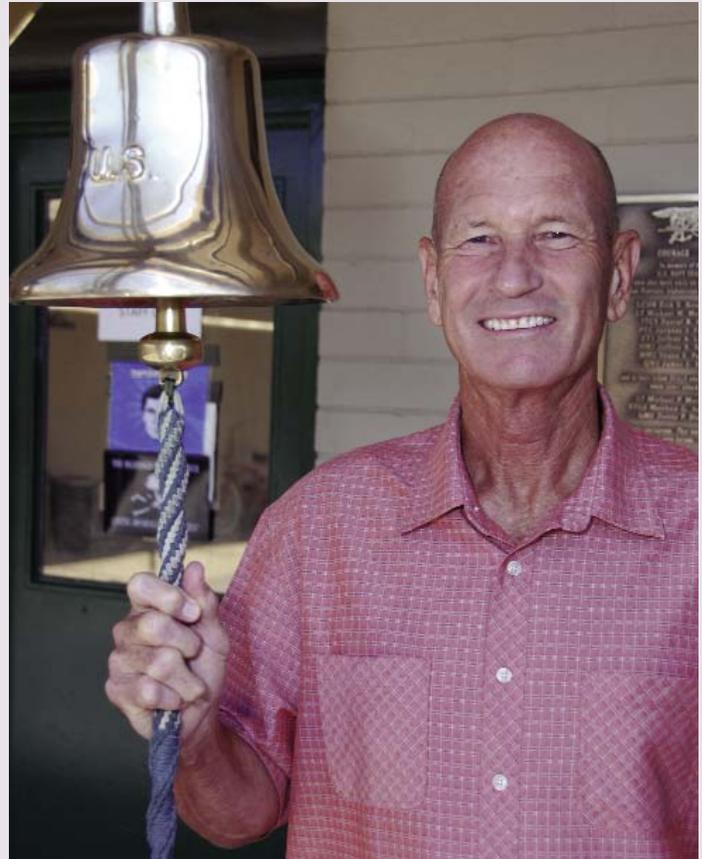
Class 58 was joined by retired SEAL Master Chief and “Survivor” contestant, Rudy Boesch. The class’s officer-in-charge, retired Capt. Stanley Antrim, brought the bell for the ceremony.

“We started our training on the bay side, the old [Underwater Demolition Team] training area,” Antrim said.

He said the NSWCCEN was under construction when class 58 began training, and upon building completion, the class moved across the street into the new facility before graduation.

“We were the first class to graduate from here,” he said. “We thought it was appropriate to present the new command with a new bell for the quarterdeck.”

The bell has been a symbol for BUD/S and the challenges training students endure to become SEALs. Retired Boatswain Master Chief Terry Moy was a first phase instructor at the time



**Retired Capt. Stanley Antrim poses with the new bell he and other members of Basic Underwater Demolition/Sea, Air and Land class 58 first dedicated to Naval Special Warfare Center in 1970. Antrim and other members of class 58 were present to rededicate the bell to NSWCCEN in a small ceremony held Aug. 20 on the first phase grinder, Coronado, Calif. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Kyle D. Gahlau.**

and originally owned the bell.

“It was a tug boat bell,” Moy said. “I gave this bell to the officer-in-charge of the class, Mr. Antrim. I said, ‘Here, donate this bell from your class, put your class number on it and we’ll hang it up here.’”

The ceremony provided an opportunity for the former UDT and SEAL members to reunite at the

site where most began their journey in the Naval Special Warfare community.

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*“We were the first class to graduate from here.... We thought it was appropriate to present the new command with a new bell for the quarterdeck.”*

— Retired Capt. Stanley Antrim

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# NAVSCIATTS, WHINSEC continue training partner-nation students

*By Chief Petty Officer Kathryn Whittenberger  
Naval Special Warfare Group 4 Public Affairs*

Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School and the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation conducted their fourth joint field training exercises July 17 – 23 at Stennis Space Center, Miss., as part of a training partnership designed to support U.N. peacekeeping operations, interdict drugs, respond to disasters, provide relief to those in need and ultimately to help save lives.

NAVSCIATTS students representing three countries and WHINSEC students representing eight countries took part in the week-long FTX, according to Cmdr. Bill Mahoney, commanding officer, NAVSCIATTS, which is specifically designed to take full advantage of the unique riverine training environment provided in and around the Pearl River within Naval Special Warfare Group 4's Western Maneuver Area joint training facility.

"WHINSEC does not have ready access to an effective riverine training environment in order to conduct their Counter Drug Operations Course," Mahoney said. "However, since the WMA provides access to some of the finest riverine and coastal training areas in the world, NAVSCIATTS and WHINSEC leadership agreed to work together so that we could enhance the skills and expertise of students from both of our organizations by executing training pertinent to the common challenges that we all face."

NAVSCIATTS and WHINSEC schoolhouses focus on training international students in maritime and ground-based operations respectively. Students from both schools, however, learn more than just tactics and operations as part of this special training alliance.

"A very important part of this training experience is to give students an opportunity to participate, exchange ideas and experiences, and otherwise collaborate with officers from other regional and non-regional partner nations," Mahoney said. "In so doing, the capacity for partners to sustain and build upon shared experiences dramatically increases."

The demand for maritime-focused training — especially

in riverine and littoral environments — is growing exponentially, Mahoney said. Combatant Commanders, Embassy Security Assistance Officers and Theater Special Operations Commands are increasingly looking for training opportunities like NAVSCIATTS to train their partner nations. The training is also closely aligned with the Navy's maritime strategy of increasing security and alliances in waterways across the world.

"We look forward to continuing this partnership with WHINSEC as we build vital partner nation skills, foster security cooperation, and build relationships," Mahoney said. "Building relationships with our U.S. partners such as WHINSEC, as well as with other partner nations, is the most important thing we do here at NAVSCIATTS. We are very serious about helping our partners build their maritime defense capabilities as that is what we do best."

The first joint FTX took place in March 2009, with the next FTX tentatively planned for March 2011, Mahoney said. A total of 74 international students took part in the most recent round of training.



**Students from various partner nations train during one of four past joint Field Training Exercises held at the Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School. Photo by R.J. Stratchko.**



# Combat controller one of 12 Outstanding Airmen

By Capt. Kristen Duncan  
AFSOC Public Affairs

An Air Force Special Operations Command staff sergeant was recently named one of the 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year for 2010.

Staff Sgt. Robert Gutierrez Jr. is a combat controller with the 21st Special Tactics Squadron, Pope Air Force Base, N.C. He has deployed numerous times in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, and most recently in 2009 served for three months in western Afghanistan before he was wounded in a harrowing battle with Taliban forces.

“[The bullet] curved around in my body, avoiding my heart,” said Gutierrez, who called himself the luckiest guy on earth.

The San Diego native performed heroically, killing the enemy at close range with his rifle and directing close air support strikes within 15 to 20 meters of his own position after being wounded in the chest by enemy gunfire.

“I was trying to tell the aircraft I was the only [Joint Terminal Attack Controller] on the ground, and I knew I only had three minutes before I was going to die,” Gutierrez said. “I’ve seen it before and knew I only had a couple of minutes. A flurry of thoughts were going through my mind.”

He said the first thought was of his pregnant wife and daughter. The second thought was on the three minutes he had to do something for his unit, before it was too late. The specially trained battlefield Airman said he had been preparing for that moment his whole life.

While a medic was working on him, Gutierrez said he called aircraft to the area for an immediate show of force. An F-16 did just that, knocking Taliban forces off the roofs nearby with the thrust of its engines. Struggling for breath, he removed his individual body armor and the medic treated him for a collapsed lung by inserting a six-inch long



**Staff Sgt. Robert Gutierrez Jr. keeps a watchful eye out for insurgents or threats to his operational detachment team. Gutierrez is a combat controller with the 21st Special Tactics Squadron, Pope Air Force Base, N.C. Courtesy photo.**

decompression needle in his chest. He continued to give targeting information to the pilots while taking enemy fire.

Preparing to be outmanned and outgunned, his Special Forces team conserved ammunition and managed to avoid the enemy's grenades and rocket-propelled grenades, which continued to get closer. Gutierrez said he briefed the ground commander on their options, and they decided to call for danger close airstrikes using A-10C aircraft, deployed from the 354th Fighter Squadron at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz.

“Thank God for the pilot,” he said. “He saved our lives. He came in perfectly on target.”

The airstrikes were so close they blew out both his eardrums, but they allowed the entire team to exit safely, using the last strafing run as a cover. Coordinating his own medical evacuation airlift, Gutierrez said he moved with his team one and a half kilometers to the pickup site, having to stop once for another chest decompression procedure.

With adrenaline finally slowing, he said he started losing consciousness at the pickup site. After Gutierrez lost five and a half pints of blood, a medic administered an intravenous line. Gutierrez said he had exceptional care overall. Now back at Pope, he said he feels significantly better, thanks to the medical staff and the Special Operations Command Care Coalition office.

“I’m grateful for how great our nation is, and to everyone — especially the Special Tactics community — who has invested in me,” Gutierrez said. “They’ve invested tons of money and time in me, and I’m a direct reflection of my leadership and the 21st Special Tactics Squadron and what we bring to the fight, and I’m very thankful for them. I’m a product of what I’ve been taught and a product of AFSOC.”

# Heat is on at Hurlburt Field

*By Airman 1st Class Joe McFadden  
1st Special Operations Wing Public Affairs*

On the same court where special operations Airmen conduct physical training, the Miami Heat, a National Basketball Association team, kicked off its preseason training camp at the Aderholt Fitness Center at Hurlburt Field, Fla., Sept. 28.

The week-long camp also marks the first time the team has taken training camp outside of Southern Florida in franchise history, as well as the first time some of the players have practiced under the same coach and team name.

“The only differences [of practicing here] are the choppers and airplanes outside and the military guys here,” said Chris Bosh, Heat forward, about practicing on a military installation. “But we’re big on the same things, like teamwork, and that’s part of the reason we’re here. We can learn from the military environment and bring discipline to an organization. I honor and respect them, and we wouldn’t be here without them.”

The Heat flew into Eglin Air Force Base the night of Sept. 27, and hundreds of Airmen, civilians and basketball fans-alike, greeted them.

“We had a long day, but coming into that reception was awesome,” said Dwyane Wade, Heat guard. “We’re thankful for them letting us be here and give us an opportunity to train side-by-side by some of the best people. It’s an honor and privilege to be here.”

Wade said his team was excited to be back on the basketball court and gain a new perspective into the work the men and women of the Air Force do every day.

“This is very important for us to get a better understanding of what really goes on and the very difficult and vital job that our military does for us,” he said. “We want to get out and show our appreciation, and we look forward to it.”

With the same focus on teamwork and drive, Miami Heat members cited the military’s drive for excellence as very similar to that of a professional basketball team.

“The military goes by a strong core and a strong base,” said LeBron James, Heat forward. “They have things in place like commitment, being in a tight-knit group and not letting any distractions get in front of their

game plan. Hopefully, we can implement that into our season.”

Apart from the twice-daily practice sessions at the Aderholt, the team will participate in a guided tour of the installation and visit with Hurlburt Airmen.

“It’s really humbling to be around these people,” James said. “The things they do for us allow us to have freedom. They put their lives on the line every day and night, and give us an opportunity to do what we love like playing the game of basketball, waking up every day and being free. I have much respect for them.”

The team requested the use of the fitness center and Soundside Lodging Sept. 15, and 1st Special Operations Wing leadership agreed to support the visit, at no extra costs to the base.

“We at Hurlburt Field have a proud tradition of excellence, sacrifice and commitment. Our world-class Airmen and facilities guarantee we can answer the call - any time, any place,” said Col. Michael Plehn, 1st SOW commander. “We know the Miami Heat share this same commitment to excellence. This is why we’re pleased to support their request to use our facilities for their 2010 training camp.”



**LeBron James, Miami Heat forward, right, prepares to dunk a basketball as fellow teammates Dwyane Wade, left, and Chris Bosh, center, watch during a preseason practice session at the Aderholt Fitness Center. Photo by Senior Airman Sheila deVera.**



# One step at a time: 8th SOS Airman recovering after crash

*By Capt. Lauren Johnson  
1st Special Operations Wing Public Affairs*

Staff Sgt. Chris Curtis wanted nothing more than to walk through the doors to the 8th Special Operations Squadron building.

His friends and colleagues cheered him on as he accomplished that goal Oct. 8; a feat that just a few months ago seemed nearly impossible.

Curtis was a flight engineer on an 8th SOS CV-22 Osprey that crashed in Zabul Province, Afghanistan, April 8, leaving him with significant blood loss and multiple fractures to his back, face, legs, left arm and pelvis.

Throughout the treatment and rehabilitation that followed, the hope to walk through the doors of his

squadron on his own accord again has been a driving force in his recovery.

“In my second or third week in (the surgical intensive care unit) I told my dad my ultimate goal was to get back to Hurlburt Field and walk through my squadron,” Curtis said.

The road to that milestone may have been shorter than many expected — six months to the day of the crash — but it hasn’t been easy.

After the crash, Sergeant Curtis was airlifted out of theater and ultimately transferred to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., where he spent nearly two weeks in intensive care before he remembers waking up to his parents at his bedside.

“I remember seeing my mom and my dad standing there,” he said. “It was a weird moment. I knew something



**Staff Sgt. Chris Curtis is greeted by 1st Special Operations Wing and 8th Special Operations Squadron leaders as he walks through the doors of the 8th SOS Oct. 8, at Hurlburt Field, Fla. Curtis was a flight engineer on a CV-22 Osprey that crashed in the Zabul Province of Afghanistan April 8, 2010, leaving him with significant blood loss and multiple fractures to his back, face, legs, left arm and pelvis. Photo by Senior Airman Sheila deVera.**

wasn't right."

He was breathing through a ventilator and couldn't eat or move from his bed. For several weeks he hardly slept, kept awake by pain and fever.

Longtime friend and fellow Airman, Tech. Sgt. Vincent DePersio, from the 1st Special Operations Support Squadron, stayed at the hospital to support Curtis and his family for the first month of treatment and bore witness to his friend's struggle.

"There wasn't much that wasn't broken in his body," DePersio said. "You battle that plus fever and infection, and that's a lot for the body to handle."

Curtis underwent 14 surgeries to treat his injuries and his legs and left arm bear dark scars from skin grafts and the insertion of pins and plates to rebuild his battered limbs.

Once he was stable, he began rehabilitation. Physical and occupational therapists led him in stretches to improve mobility and work his atrophied muscles. The pain, he said, was excruciating, and trying to grasp the situation stretched his mental fortitude.

"It was tough," Curtis said. "But at the same time you realize, I still have both my legs. I work out with guys every day who are missing a leg or an arm. I'm very fortunate, but it's still a fight to get better every day."

But, Curtis added, patients are never alone in that fight. He credits the community of wounded warriors — along with his family, friends and squadron — for providing support and encouragement throughout the recovery process.

"You look them in the face and you have an instant camaraderie," he said of his fellow patients. "We band together when a guy's had a bad day. You help each other out as much as you can."

One particular patient who inspired Curtis is his new friend, and fellow wounded warrior, Sen. Bob Dole.

Dole arrived at WRMC in July to recover from knee replacement surgery, and he and Curtis were assigned as physical therapy partners, working together on exercises, motivating each other and swapping battle stories.

Curtis said he and the senator, who was severely injured in World War II, bonded quickly.

"He knew and supported me in the right ways, and I

supported him back," Curtis said. "It was a good rivalry of who's getting better first."

The "rivals" have kept in touch and continue to encourage each other, though Curtis was recently transferred to the Center for the Intrepid, an advanced military rehabilitation facility at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio.

The Center for the Intrepid staff members will see Curtis through the remainder of his treatment, hopefully to a full recovery, which is proving to be a fulltime job. At the Center for the Intrepid, Curtis spends four to five hours a day in physical therapy.

"I count little victories every day," Curtis said. "Whether it's just getting up; the other day it was opening a door, doing not one but two laps on the track. It

doesn't have to be something amazing."

Curtis admits it felt amazing to be back home at his squadron. As evidenced by the support and encouragement at his homecoming, his friends and colleagues are impressed by his progress.

"We told him, 'take baby steps,' and next thing you know he's taking leaps and bounds!" DePersio said. "I really didn't think he'd be walking for a year."

Lt. Col. Shawn Cameron, the 8th SOS commander, has been monitoring his Airman's recuperation closely and was one of the first to shake his hand at the squadron.

"Sergeant Curtis' recovery is truly amazing," Cameron said. "His attitude and focus on his recovery have been unwavering, and there is no doubt in my mind that he's going to make a full recovery."

When he returns to the Center for the Intrepid, Curtis will focus on increasing his walking endurance and improving mobility in his left arm.

Throughout his treatment so far, one vision has remained at the forefront of Curtis' mind, keeping him motivated through the long hours, pain and frustration. With his first goal accomplished and only three surgeries remaining, Curtis is looking, optimistically, toward the future.

"My next goal is getting back in the aircraft," he said. "It's amazing what the human body can take and how it can come back together. I have to keep working and keep getting better."

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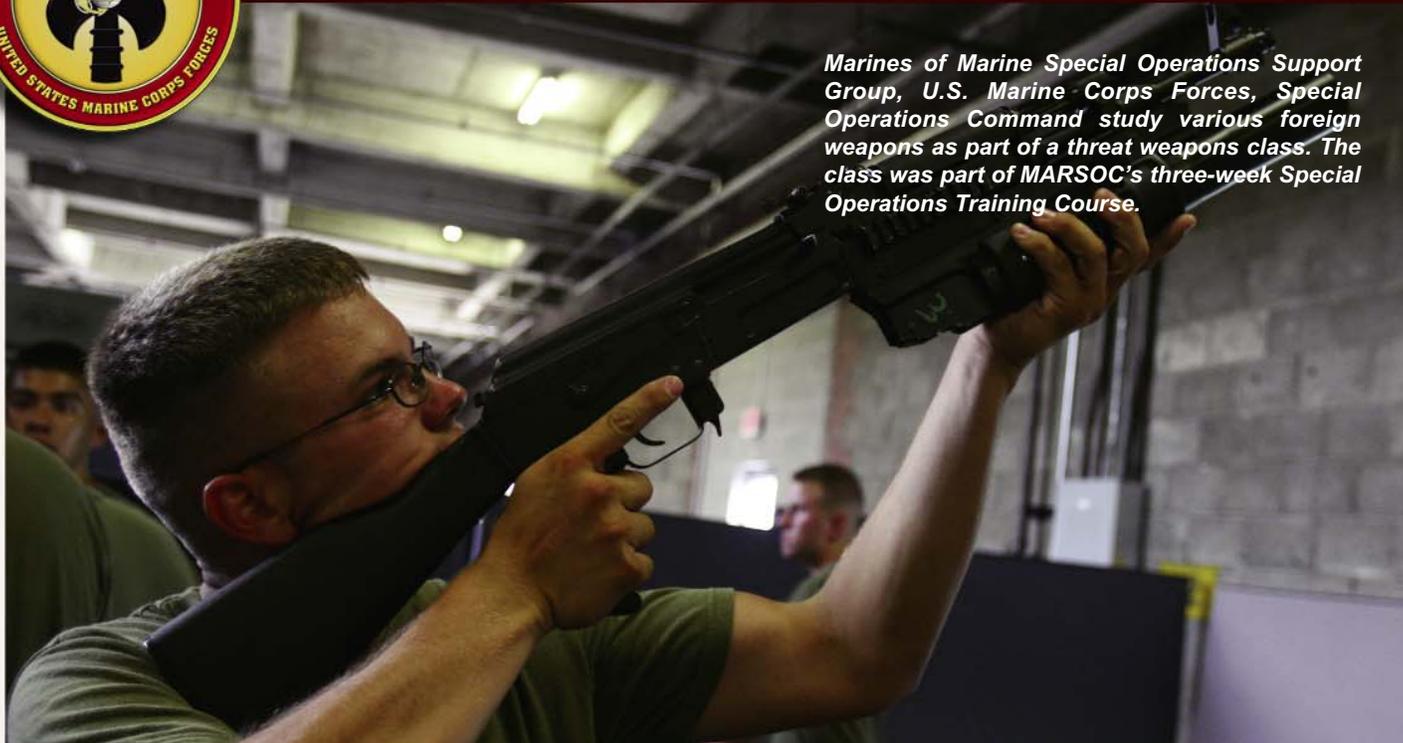
*"It's amazing what the human body can take and how it can come back together. I have to keep working and keep getting better."*

— Staff Sgt. Chris Curtis

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## MARINE CORPS FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



*Marines of Marine Special Operations Support Group, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command study various foreign weapons as part of a threat weapons class. The class was part of MARSOC's three-week Special Operations Training Course.*

# MARSOC Marines improve foreign weapons knowledge during SOTC

*Story and photo by Lance Cpl. Kyle McNally  
MARSOC Public Affairs*

Marines, Sailors and Soldiers with Marine Special Operations Support Group, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, recently improved their ability to identify, disable or employ foreign weapons systems during a Special Operations Training Course at Camp Lejeune, N.C. Students learned the characteristics of six foreign weapons, including the AK-47 assault rifle and the rocket-propelled grenade launcher.

“No matter what your job is, whether you turn a wrench or shoot a rifle, you will potentially come into contact with these weapons, either by enemy fire or by a cache site,” said Staff Sgt. Michael A. Ditto, the training chief for MSOSG and the instructor of the threat weapons class. “It’s imperative that everyone across the board have these basic skill sets.”

The class was part of the second Special Operations Training Course. MARSOC implemented the three-week

SOTC in April to give its support personnel a basic understanding of special operations.

Roughly 20 students learned the maximum effective ranges, rates of fire, and specifications of the weapons. They also practiced disassembling and reassembling each weapon, competing against one another to see who was fastest.

“I think this is a valuable opportunity for support Marines,” said Lance Cpl. Ryan Simpson, a supply administration clerk with MARSOC. “A lot of Marines don’t get this training. I think it’s a good idea to familiarize support Marines, so if the operators ever call on us to do anything to help, we’ll be good to go.”

MARSOC support personnel deploy with Marine Special Operations companies, which is why it is critical to have an understanding of basic special operations capabilities.

“MARSOC has a very different mission,” said Ditto, a MARSOC operator. “We have a very specific skill set that differs from conventional forces. When you’re attached to a special operations team, you need to have an understanding of special operations capabilities so you can be on par.”

# MARSOC implements new training

*By Lance Cpl. Kyle McNally  
Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command*

U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, implemented a new training course Sept. 15 at the Marine Special Operations School at Camp Lejeune, N.C. The three-week Assessment and Selection Preparation and Orientation Course will serve as the precursor to the roughly three-week Assessment and Selection Course and the seven-month Individual Training Course, with the purpose of preparing MARSOC Critical Skills Operator candidates for the challenges of A&S.

“We’re trying to improve the success rate in A&S,” said a MARSOC training specialist. “We looked at some things candidates were having problems with and created a program to improve each individual’s capabilities in those areas.”

The MSOS staff worked hand-in-hand with strength and conditioning coaches, physical therapists and nutritionists to create a three-week course designed to build candidates to their physical peaks by the time they reach A&S. Aside from the physical training, which includes running, swimming and hiking, the course incorporates a mix of classroom instruction and practical application of basic Marine Corps knowledge and MARSOC and Special Operations Forces fundamentals.

“The course is designed to enhance operator candidates’ physical capabilities, but also to prepare them mentally for A&S and to orient them to the roles and missions of MARSOC at the team member level,” said Col. James R. Parrington, commanding officer of MSOS. “Marines will get a chance to interact with seasoned MARSOC CSOs as well,” he said.

Perhaps the most important element of the course is the physical therapy training, said ASPOC’s section leader.

“We’ve identified trends that cause injuries or cause people to quit,” he said. “We’re going to teach these Marines proper nutrition, what supplements to take and what supplements not to take. We have physical therapists and strength and conditioning coaches who will teach them proper post-workout regeneration — how to warm up for physical training and how to cool down. I think we’ll see a reduction in the attrition rate because of this initiative.”

MARSOC CSO candidates are also encouraged to

complete a 10-week training regimen before they arrive at A&S. However, many lack the time and resources to prepare, often because of deployments and operational tempo.

“A lot of Marines don’t have the opportunity to complete the 10-week program because they’re fighting a war right now,” said John R. Miller, the deputy officer in charge of A&S. “They don’t get a chance to acclimate to this kind of environment. Less than 24 hours after they get to A&S, they’re conducting physical training. Now we have a chance to bring them here and get them acclimated first,” he said.

But Marines are still expected to show up in shape, said ASPOC’s section leader. “Do as much of the program as you can, and then come here,” he said. “Your chances of success will be greatly improved.”

MARSOC is always looking for better ways to select, prepare and train Marines who will be able to make critical decisions at critical times without hesitation while maintaining the physical fortitude to succeed. ASPOC will likely help better prepare Marines for the rigors of A&S and set the stage for their success as CSOs.



**Preparing U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command Critical Skills Operator candidates for the mental, physical and leadership challenges of Assessment and Selection is the principal goal of the newly-implemented Assessment and Selection Preparation and Orientation Course at Camp Lejeune, N.C. The first ASPOC class began Sept. 15. Photo by Cpl. Richard Blumenstein.**

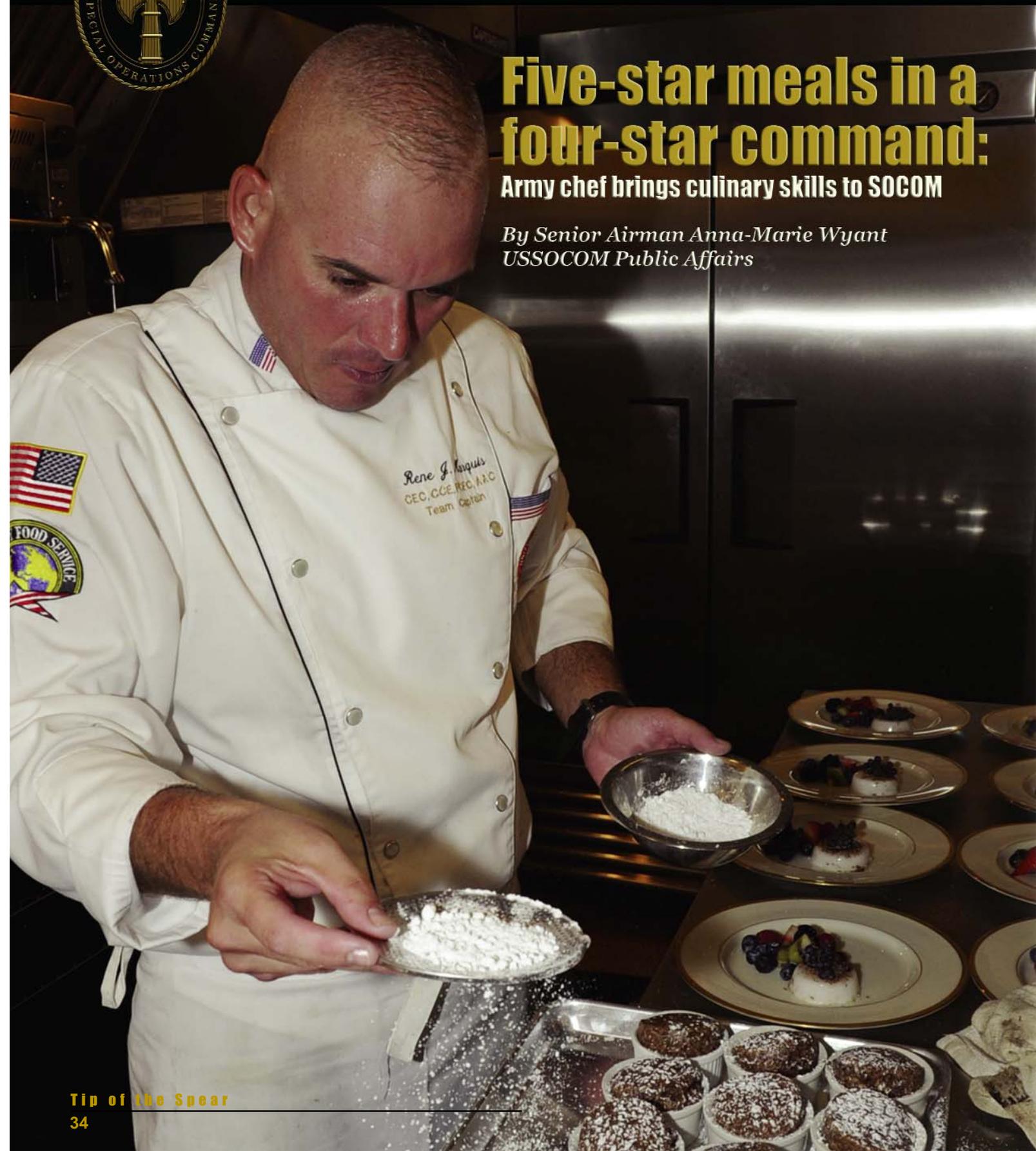


## U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - HEADQUARTERS

# Five-star meals in a four-star command:

Army chef brings culinary skills to SOCOM

*By Senior Airman Anna-Marie Wyant  
USSOCOM Public Affairs*



Sgt. 1st Class Rene J. Marquis precisely cuts an assortment of fruits into various shapes. He dusts raspberries, strawberries and blueberries gently with powdered sugar and places them elegantly on a small plate next to a fresh-baked quiche and the other fruits. This is a far cry from a typical office breakfast of bagels and doughnuts; Marquis has created a mini-gourmet meal.

For Marquis, this is just another day on the job. Marquis is the enlisted aide for the U.S. Special Operations Commander, and he regularly makes everyday food extraordinary by giving each meal a special touch.

“Every time I put food on a plate, for me, it’s a competition because the end result is when the plate comes back, I want it to be empty,” said Marquis, who has competed in numerous culinary challenges nationwide. “If the plate is empty, then I won because the food was good. Now if the plate comes back and it’s half-eaten, I have to ask myself why.”

Marquis has made quite a career for himself through his culinary talents. He said his love for the food industry began when he was in high school working as a dishwasher for a Chinese restaurant. He soon began cooking at that same restaurant, and later, he even helped open a couple of restaurants. Now an accomplished chef who has been featured on Dateline and noted in many desktop publications, Marquis admits he is no jack of all trades, but rather a master of one — or two.

“Hockey and cooking is all I’ve ever done; I don’t change tires on my car, I don’t change my oil... If it’s not hockey or cooking, it doesn’t strike my interest I guess,” said Marquis, who graduated from the Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, N.Y. in 1992.

It’s a good thing cooking does strike his interest. Marquis is certified as an executive chef, culinary educator, personal executive chef, culinary administrator and member of the American Academy of Chefs. He most recently won the 2010 Freedom Chef Challenge in Anaheim, Calif., Aug. 6, where he competed with Sgt. Matthew Flemister to represent the Army and compete against teams from the Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. Marquis also won the first Freedom Chef Challenge in 2008 when he competed alongside Sgt. Maj. David Turcotte.

At the challenge, he proved himself to be a culinary MacGyver. Marquis said one of the seven courses planned for the challenge was white chocolate bread pudding, but there was a major problem: no bread was available.

Glancing at the available ingredients, Marquis changed his dessert plan to chocolate cheesecake. He said he combined cream cheese, sugar, chocolate and vanilla into a mixing bowl, heated it on the stovetop and folded in some eggs. He then poured the mixture into a mini-loaf pan, baked it in the oven and placed it in the freezer to cool.

Marquis said he toasted Japanese breadcrumbs with cinnamon and brown sugar to make the crust and macerated raspberries to make a sauce. With just five minutes left in the competition, Marquis and Flemister plated the dessert for the judges, hoping for the best. Their hopes came true.

“One of the judges, who was a pastry chef, said that was probably the best cheesecake they’d ever had,” Marquis said with a smile. “And I thought, how could that be, you know, something that easy and that quick that I, in the heat of battle, put together.”

In addition to competing, Marquis regularly serves as a judge at culinary competitions and helps instruct aspiring chefs. He is currently coaching a cooking team from the Art Institute of Tampa.

“Whenever anybody asks me to help them with food, I absolutely volunteer because I know that no matter what I do for them or whatever I help them with, I will make them a better chef,” Marquis said.

He said he plans to continue competing, coaching and judging to continue learning and sharing his skills and knowledge. For his next competition, the Culinary World Cup, which will take place in Luxembourg in November, Marquis will compete as a member of the U.S Army Culinary Arts Team.

“I don’t consider myself a subject matter expert yet, but I’m working on it,” Marquis said of cooking. “You never stop learning.”



**Sgt. 1st Class Rene Marquis, left, and Sgt. Matthew Flemister hoist a trophy after winning the Freedom Chef Challenge at the 2010 American Culinary Federation in Anaheim, Calif., Aug. 3. Courtesy photo.**



# From Cabanatuan to Son Tay

By Maj. William D. Linn II  
10th Special Forces Group (Airborne)



“There are too many damn men in here!” The barrel-chested colonel’s voice boomed as he scanned the auditorium with penetrating eyes, a well-chewed cigar clenched in his teeth. “Listen up, gentlemen. I need some men for a hazardous mission that involves a long period away from home, and there won’t be any TDY. But I can promise that you will see combat, and chances are that some of you won’t be coming back. Anyone interested, report back here with your 201 file after lunch.”

It was August 1970, and for many men that was their first introduction to Col. Arthur “Bull” Simons. For days, word had passed that Col. Simons was looking for volunteers to participate in a classified mission. The auditorium was filled with almost 500 Green Berets as Col. Simons strode on stage. After the colonel’s short speech and the lunch hour passed, very few returned. Among those still interested was Galen Kittleson, a 46-year old master sergeant and veteran of three wars.

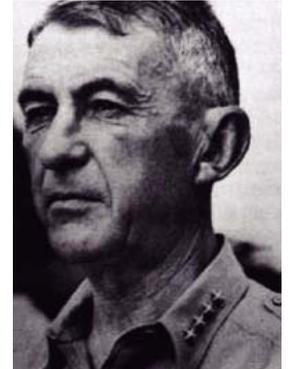
Eventually, Kittleson and those selected would participate in one of the most daring raids in Special Operations history, the attempted rescue of American POWs held in Son Tay Prison deep inside North Vietnam. It was also an example of continuity in special operations raiding carried from World War II to Vietnam.

For Bull Simons and Galen Kittleson, decades of service, preparation, and a twist of fate brought them to this crossroads. As a newly minted second lieutenant in 1940, Bull Simons served with the 6th Ranger Battalion, the creation of Maj. Gen. Walter Krueger, commanding general of the U.S. Sixth Army.

The 6th Ranger Battalion conducted the raid on the Japanese POW camp at Cabanatuan in the Philippines. This daring enterprise called for Rangers to strike deep behind Japanese lines, netting 512 allied prisoners from Cabanatuan camp. (Simons was off on another

mission at the time of the Cabanatuan raid.) That raid would not have been possible without the work of the Alamo Scouts, another Krueger creation named for his hometown of San Antonio, Texas. This specialized reconnaissance unit conducted 106 missions behind Japanese lines without losing a single man. Highly selective, the Alamo Scouts trained just 300 men in total during the war.

Among those Scouts at Cabanatuan was its



General Walter Krueger



Sgt. Galen Kittleson (kneeling, left) and members of the Alamo Scouts who participated in the Cabanatuan Raid, Jan. 30, 1945.

youngest member, 19-year-old Kittleson. Dressed as Philippine peasants, Kittleson and 12 other scouts conducted close target reconnaissance of the Cabanatuan prison. Crawling forward through the grass, they could see that both the open fields around the target and the sizeable enemy presence in the area were cause for concern.

With valuable information and sketches of the compound, Kittleson and his fellow scouts briefed the Rangers in a nearby village and led them to the objective on the night of January 30, 1945. With a combined force of Rangers, Alamo Scouts, and Philippine guerillas, they killed more than 500 Japanese during the action while liberating the allied prisoners, transporting them to friendly lines through 30 miles of jungle.

Despite not having Kittleson's raid experience, Col. Simons knew the type of man he wanted to bring with him to Son Tay, and Kittleson's pre-mission reconnaissance at Cabanatuan provided the model for preparation for Son Tay.

Simons interviewed each man personally, carefully screening each record. His questions were direct. Would the man volunteer without knowing the details of the mission? What was the extent of his combat experience? Could he be counted on? How many men had he killed in combat, and how close was the enemy? Such was the manner in which Col. Simons selected 100 volunteers for the Son Tay Raid, eventually taking just 56 on target.

From Fort Bragg, the raiders relocated to Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., under the strictest of secrecy. They built a full-scale model of the target for night rehearsals and then carefully disassembled it during daylight hours to avoid detection from Soviet satellites. The force conducted no less than 170 rehearsals, many including full live-fire and helicopter support, with each man knowing the exact steps he would take and the actions he was expected to perform. They procured special night sights and breaching equipment for the mission, items not then available in the Army inventory.

The force made their landings in the early morning hours of Nov. 21, 1970, but the only personnel on

target, to the deep regret of the raiders, were the enemy. Unbeknown to U.S. intelligence, the Vietnamese had relocated the prisoners from Son Tay a few weeks before the raid. Not a single man was lost from among the raiders, though there was a somber mood throughout the return flight.

The fact that the mission has "failed" in their eyes, after such meticulous preparation, was difficult to accept. But as at Cabanatuan, the audacity shown by the military and the government in underwriting the risk demonstrated the extent of American resolve and the value that Americans place on individual human life, foreign to the enemies we faced at the time.

*Editor's note: Maj. William Linn is the operations officer of 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Carson, Colo.*



**Col. Bull Simons and Master Sgt. Galen Kittleson at the awards ceremony following the Son Tay Raid.**



*A scene from U.S. Special Operations Memorial, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., honoring those killed in action in overseas contingency operations. Photo illustration by Mike Bottoms.*

CARLTON ALANZ JR PVT USA 830125	WESLEY B. MCDONALD PVT USA 800927	ALAN F. BOSTON PVT USA 810113
VANCE B. PVT USA 830812	ROBERT A. BRAMSHALL PVT USA 841118	ROBERT W. CAMPBELL PVT USA 890112

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



Air Force Senior Airman  
Mark Forester  
21st Special Tactics Squadron



Army Sgt. 1st Class  
Ronald A. Grider  
U.S. Army Special Operations Command



Army Sgt. 1st Class  
Calvin B. Harrison  
7th Special Forces Group (A)



Navy Lt. (SEAL)  
Brendan J. Looney  
SEAL Team 3



Army Sgt.  
Martin Anthony Lugo  
75th Ranger Regiment



Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer  
David McLendon  
SEAL Team 4



Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class (SEAL)  
Denis Miranda  
SEAL Team 4



Air Force Senior Airman  
Daniel R. Sanchez  
23rd Special Tactics Squadron



Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class (SEAL)  
Adam Smith  
SEAL Team 4



Navy Chief Petty Officer (SEAL)  
Collin T. Thomas  
Naval Special Warfare Group



Army Sgt. 1st Class  
Lance H. Vogeler  
75th Ranger Regiment



Army Spc.  
Christopher Shane Wright  
75th Ranger Regiment

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



**Army Staff Sgt. Robert Miller**  
**Medal of Honor**  
**Operation Enduring Freedom**

