



TIP OF THE SPEAR

**2011
imagery
year in review**



USSOCOM

Approximately 60,000 Special Operations Forces

12,000 + deployed

79 countries

24/7



Photo illustration by Jennifer Miller



“The American people will expect us to be prepared for every contingency, to answer every call to arms, to venture where other forces cannot, and to win every fight no matter how tough or how long.”

Adm. Bill H. McRaven, USSOCOM commander



U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



Special Forces Soldiers with Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group, (Airborne) are hoisted into a CV-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft during Emerald Warrior 2011 at Cannon AFB, N.M., March 1. Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. DeNoris Mickle.

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Tip of the Spear



Thomas Jefferson Award Winner

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(Cover) A Special Forces Soldier in support of Special Operations Task Force - East maneuvers through a building to clear it of hostile threats. The operation took place to disrupt insurgent networks in the Sayed-Abad district, Wardak Province, Afghanistan, July 18. Photo by Army Sgt. Justin P. Morelli.

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U.S. Army Special Operations Command



USSOCCOM Images of 2011



A Special Forces sniper runs through a high stress event during the USASOC Sniper Competition at Fort Bragg, N.C. Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Thaddius S. Dawkins II.



USSOCOM Images of 2011



Romanian and Norwegian special operations forces conduct fast rope familiarization training with Sailors from U.S. Navy Special Warfare Unit 2 from an MH-47 Chinook helicopter with the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) in Romania, Sept. 14. Jackal Stone is an annual multinational special operations exercise designed to promote cooperation and interoperability between participating forces. This year nine nations participated in various locations throughout Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine. 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) courtesy photo.



A team leader for a U.S. Special Operations Cultural Support Team, hands out utensils during a women's shura held at a local compound in the village of Oshay, Uruzgan province, Afghanistan, May 4. With the support of U.S. Special Operations Forces, the CSTs and Female Treatment Teams work closely together in order to bring health education to women in the area, as well as give them a voice in the district. Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Kaily Brown.

Naval Special Operations Command



USSOCOM Images of 2011



A student in the third and final phase of Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) training is illuminated by a flare while shooting an M-4 automatic rifle on San Clemente Island, Calif., March 15. During the third phase of BUD/S, students receive training in small arms, demolitions, and tactics. Photo by Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Blake Midnight.



Students from Basic Crewman Training Class 68-1 participate in a swimmer surf passage exercise at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, Calif., Feb. 17. Surf passage is one of many physically demanding evolutions that are a part of Special Warfare Combat-Craft Crewman training. Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Kyle D. Gahlau.



USSOCOM Images of 2011



West Coast-based Navy SEALs and Air Force Pararescuemen leap from the ramp of an Air Force C-17 during free-fall parachute training over Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Jan. 21. The pararescuemen and SEALs parachuted to fulfill specialty-based sustainment training requirements. Photo by Marine Lance Cpl. Reece E. Lodder.



SEALs do a mock insertion by boat, July 16, during a capabilities exercise at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Virginia Beach, Va. Photo by Navy Chief Petty Officer Stan Travioli.

Air Force Special Operations Command



USSOCCOM Images of 2011



U.S. Soldiers assigned to Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group exit via rope from an Air Force CV-22 Osprey during Emerald Warrior 2011, March 1, at Cannon Air Force Base, N.M. Emerald Warrior is an annual two-week joint/combined tactical exercise sponsored by U.S. Special Operations Command to provide realistic training opportunities to conventional and Special Operations Forces. Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. DeNoris Mickle.



Combat Weatherman jumpers assigned to the 10th Combat Weather Squadron prepare to parachute into the skies over Florida, March 2, in support of Emerald Warrior 2011. Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Manuel J. Martinez.



USSOCCOM Images of 2011



Staff Sgt. Sarah Mrak loads a 105mm gun aboard an AC-130U Spooky during a training mission Feb. 3, at Hurlburt Field, Fla. Mrak is an AC-130U aerial gunner assigned to the 4th Special Operations Squadron. Photo Air Force Master Sgt. Jeremy T. Lock.



U.S. Air Force Honor Guard members carry retired Maj. Gen. John Alison to his final resting place as Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz look on Oct. 3, at Arlington National Cemetery, Va. Donley and Schwartz were present at the full-honors funeral to pay their respects to Alison, a World War II and Korean War hero, and his family. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Christopher Ruano.

Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command



USSOCCOM Images of 2011



Marines with U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, pack up their parachutes after conducting a High Altitude, High Opening jump at dusk as part of a Double-Bag Static-Line parachute course in Wendover, Utah, April 9 - 21. The course was taught by personnel from the 2nd MSOB paraloft and the Airborne Mobile Training Team, and is designed to give Marines a basic understanding of HAHO operations. Photo by Marine Cpl. Kyle McNally.



A Joint Terminal Attack Controller with U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command communicates with a Navy MH-60S helicopter during landing as part of Carrier Airwing Training conducted by the Naval Strike and Air Warfare Center aboard Naval Air Station Fallon, Nev., April 5. During the exercise, MARSOC JTACs practiced their critical skills and renewed their currencies and qualifications. Photo by Marine Cpl. Kyle McNally.



A jumpmaster with U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, conducts a freefall jump during a Double-Bag Static-Line parachute course in Wendover, Utah, April 9 - 21. Photo by Marine Cpl. Kyle McNally.



A Marine with 3rd Marine Special Operations Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, gives a "thumbs up" to indicate his oxygen mask is working during a class for a Double-Bag Static-Line parachute course in Wendover, Utah, April 9 - 21. Photo by Marine Cpl. Kyle McNally.



USSOCOM Images of 2011

Japan - Tsunami relief



USSOCOM Images of 2011



Air Force Tech. Sgt. Ray Decker, 320th Special Tactics Squadron, prepares his rucksack prior to boarding an MC-130P Combat Shadow, Yokota Air Base, Japan, March 16. Members of the 320th STS, stationed out of Kadena Air Base, Japan, deployed to Sendai Airport to help clear the runway and make it ready for fixed-wing aircraft traffic.

Photos by Staff Sgt. Samuel Morse



2

On March 11 a 9.0-magnitude earthquake and subsequent 33-foot tsunami created enormous damage to Japan. Combat controllers from the 353rd Special Operations Group at Sendai Airport controlled more than 250 aircraft participating in Operation Tomodachi. Those aircraft delivered more than 2.31 million pounds of humanitarian aid and more than 15,000 gallons of diesel and gasoline to fuel humanitarian convoys.



3

2) Airmen from the 320th Special Tactics Squadron exit an MC-130P Combat Shadow on their way to Sendai Airport March 16.

3) Senior Airman Steven Nizbet looks for trapped survivors March 16, at Sendai Airport, Japan. Nizbet is a pararescueman assigned to the 320th Special Tactics Squadron.



USSOCCOM Images of 2011



4) A combat controller with the 320th Special Tactics Squadron marshals an MC-130H Combat Talon II after landing at Sendai Airport March 16.

5) Air Force Staff Sgt. Chris Allen, 320th Special Tactics Squadron special operations weather team, checks the windspeed and temperature at Sendai Airport, Japan, March 16.

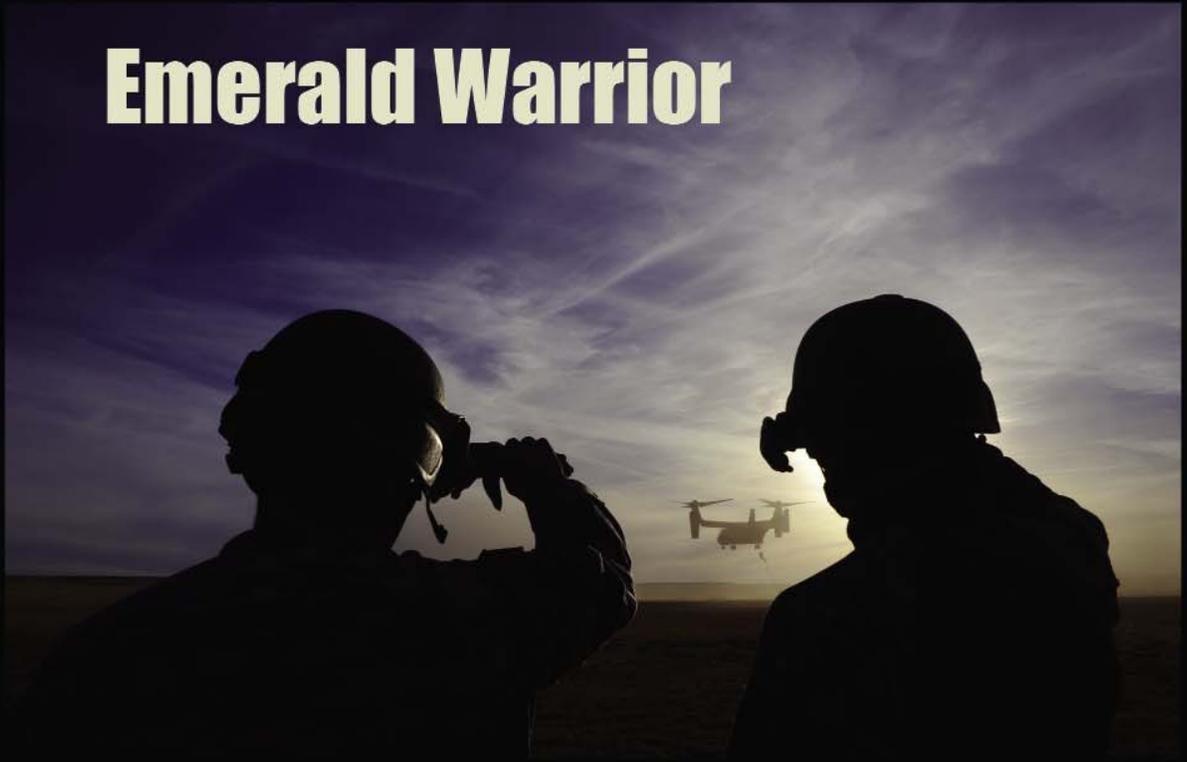


6) Airmen from the 320th Special Tactics Squadron assess debris on the runway at Sendai Airport, Japan, March 16.





Emerald Warrior



U.S. Soldiers assigned to Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group, watch an Air Force CV-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft during Emerald Warrior 2011 March 1, at Cannon Air Force Base, N.M. Emerald Warrior is an annual two-week joint/combined tactical exercise sponsored by U.S. Special Operations Command to provide realistic training opportunities to conventional and special operations forces. Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. DeNoris Mickle.



A French-speaking Special Forces NCO watches weapons marksmanship training for a member of a Malian counter-terrorism unit during Exercise Flintlock in March. Conducted by Special Operations Command Africa's JSOTF-TS, Flintlock is focused on military interoperability and capacity-building for U.S., partner nations and select units in northern and western Africa. Photo by JSOTF-TS Public Affairs.



Fuerzas Comando



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A Dominican Special Operations Sniper Team prepares for the Stalk event of Fuerzas Comando 2011, June 16th, at Shangallo Range, outside San Salvador. Fuerzas Comando, established in 2004, is a U.S. Southern Command-sponsored Special Forces skills competition and senior leader seminar which is conducted annually in Central and Southern America and the Caribbean.



Jackal Stone

An MH-47 from the 160th Special Operations Regiment (Airborne) hovers as Norwegian special operations forces clear the deck of ROS Midia (LSNS 283) as a part of Exercise Jackal Stone 2011, Sept. 14, in Romania. Jackal Stone is an annual multinational Special Operations exercise designed to promote cooperation and interoperability between participating forces, build functional capacity and enhance readiness. Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Kim McLendon.



USSOCOM Images of 2011



Army Master Sgt. Karim Mella (right), assigned to USSOCOM headquarters, displays the American flag loaned to him from the Post 911 Foundation atop of Mount Everest May 21. Mella is the first Dominican to climb Mount Everest. Courtesy photo.



Adm. Bill H. McRaven passes the U.S. Special Operations Command flag to former Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas H. Smith. McRaven assumed command from Adm. Eric T. Olson during a ceremony at the Davis Conference Center, MacDill Air Force, Fla., Aug. 8. McRaven became the ninth commander of USSOCOM. Photo by Mike Bottoms.



Adm. Bill H. McRaven, commander U.S. Special Operations Command, passes the sword to Command Sgt. Major Chris Faris during a change of responsibility ceremony Sept. 27, at the command's headquarters on MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. Faris becomes USSOCOM's seventh Command Sgt. Major and replaced Sgt. Major Thomas H. Smith. Photo by Mike Bottoms.

People



USSOCOM Images of 2011



Navy Adm. Eric T. Olson, former commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, presents retired Army Maj. Gen. John K. Singlaub the Bull Simons Award May 18 for his lifetime Special Operations achievements. The Bull Simons Award recognizes demonstrated leadership excellence and those who embody the spirit, values, skills, and professionalism of the Special Operations Forces warrior. Photo by Mike Bottoms.



Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta (left) and Adm. Bill H. McRaven applaud Adm. Eric T. Olson during the U.S. Special Operations Command change of command ceremony held at the Davis Conference Center, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., Aug. 8. Olson, the first Navy SEAL to be promoted to three and later four-star rank, retired in August after 38 years of service to the nation. Photo by Mike Bottoms.



Air Force Staff Sgt. Robert Gutierrez, Special Tactics and Training Squadron combat controller, during a deployment to Afghanistan. Gutierrez was awarded the Air Force Cross during a ceremony at Hurlburt Field, Fla., Oct. 27, for displaying extraordinary heroism in combat. Courtesy photo.

People



USSOCOM Images of 2011



“Every human impulse would tell someone to turn away. Every Soldier is trained to seek cover. That’s what Sergeant Leroy Petry could have done. Instead, this wounded Ranger, this 28-year-old man who had his whole life ahead of him, this husband and father of four did something extraordinary -- he lunged forward toward the live grenade. He picked it up. He cocked his arm to throw it back. What compels such courage that leads a person to risk everything so that others might live?”

— President Barack H. Obama



1) President Obama and Army Sgt. 1st Class Leroy A. Petry make their way into the East Room for Petry’s Medal of Honor presentation ceremony at the White House, July 12. Photo by D. Myles Cullen.

2) Sgt. 1st Class Leroy A. Petry, at the reception which followed the Ranger’s homecoming parade in Santa Fe, N.M., Aug. 1. This was Petry’s first visit to Santa Fe since receiving the Medal of Honor. Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Michael R. Noggle.

Sgt. 1st Class Leroy A. Petry



3) Sgt. 1st Class Leroy A. Petry poses for a picture with New York City Police Department officers after a visit with New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, July 14. Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Michael R. Noggle.



4) Sgt. 1st Class Leroy Petry is recognized at halftime during the Dallas Cowboys and Buffalo Bills football game, Dallas, Texas, Nov. 13. Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Michael R. Noggle.

5) Sgt. 1st Class Leroy A. Petry, and Drew Dix, a fellow Medal of Honor recipient, wave to more than 5,000 New Mexico natives who attended the welcome home parade in Santa Fe, Aug. 1. Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Michael R. Noggle.



75th Ranger Regiment

AIRBORNE

U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



Special Forces Soldiers from across the U.S. Army Special Forces Command (Airborne) conduct a wreath-laying ceremony Nov. 17, to honor President John F. Kennedy's vision and support of the Special Forces Green Berets. Soldiers from each of the seven Special Forces Groups were involved in the ceremony to celebrate Kennedy and his patronage of the Green Berets. Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Tobias McCoy.

Green Berets honor President Kennedy in ceremony at Arlington

By USASOC Public Affairs

Three days after the death of President John F. Kennedy, Sgt. Maj. Francis Ruddy, a Special Forces soldier, laid his “Green Beret” upon the grave of the fallen president.

That was Nov. 25, 1963, and the event occurred at Arlington National Cemetery as Kennedy was laid to rest – 43 Green Berets by his side.

Nearly 50 years later, soldiers of the Green Berets gathered at Kennedy’s grave site Nov. 17, 2011, to once again honor the man who lauded the Army’s Special Forces.

Soldiers from each of the Army’s seven Special Forces groups stood silent alongside Kennedy’s grave site as Secretary of the Army, John McHugh, Brig. Gen. Edward M. Reeder Jr., commander of U.S. Army Special Forces Command, and Army 2nd Lt. Christopher Kennedy McKelvy, great nephew of the fallen President, laid a wreath at Kennedy’s grave in a ceremony to honor the fallen president’s commitment to the Special Forces soldier.

Following the symbolic event by Sgt. Maj. Ruddy, the Green Berets would honor Kennedy by laying a wreath at his grave annually. That tradition continued until the late 1980s.

“Our purpose today was to re-establish the tradition that began when a very special contingent of Green Berets was requested from the Kennedy family to perform the honor guard for President Kennedy’s funeral,” said the Special Forces commander, Reeder, during a luncheon following the ceremony. “Our intent is to honor Kennedy’s unparalleled advocacy of the Green Berets.”

The newly commissioned McKelvy, 24, said the ceremony was “truly a special experience.”

“It was an honor to be invited by the Green Berets to be here. They are great Americans and great heroes,” he said.

During Kennedy’s tenure as president, the



Special Forces Green Beret Soldiers from each of the Army’s seven Special Forces Groups stand silent watch during the wreath-laying ceremony at the grave of President John F. Kennedy, Nov. 17, at Arlington National Cemetery. The ceremony marked a time-honored tradition to honor Kennedy for his support and advocacy of the soldiers who would be known simply as “Green Berets.” Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy D. Crisp.

Special Forces regiment grew by seven Special Forces groups.

Not long after a visit to Fort Bragg in 1961 with then-Special Forces commander, Brig. Gen. William P. Yarborough, Kennedy authorized the Green Beret as the official headgear of the U.S. Army Special Forces.

Kennedy sent a message to Yarborough after the capabilities demonstration he received on the visit to Fort Bragg. The message in part read: “The challenge of this old but new form of operations is a real one and I know that you and the members of your Command will carry on for us and the free world in a manner which is both worthy and inspiring. I am sure that the Green Beret will be a mark of distinction in the trying times ahead.”



U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



The newly dedicated De Oppresso Liber statue passes in front of the Empire State Building as it makes its way down 5th Avenue as part of the New York City Veterans Day Parade Nov. 11. Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Andrew Jacob.



Special Forces ‘Horse Soldier’ statue dedicated near Ground Zero

*By Maj. Brandon Bissell
5th Special Forces Group (A) Public Affairs*

More than 10 years ago, Capt. Will Summers, a former Special Forces team sergeant for the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), linked up and operated with members of the Afghan Northern Alliance just weeks after the 9/11 attacks.

A decade later Special Operations Forces from that mission met at the Winter Garden Hall in Two World Financial Center near Ground Zero as Vice President Joseph Biden, standing before the Ground Zero flag, spoke to the audience assembled for the dedication of a larger

than life bronze statue depicting those same Green Berets.

It was this location where members of Task Force Dagger; a joint Special Operations team consisting mostly of Green Berets from the 5th SFG (A), aircrew members from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne), and Air Force combat controllers; gathered with the vice president and various New York business leaders and veteran support groups as they unveiled and dedicated an 18-foot statue, entitled De Oppresso Liber.

De Oppresso Liber, which in Latin means ‘to liberate the oppressed’, depicts a Special Forces Green Beret on horseback leading the invasion into Afghanistan in the weeks that followed the World Trade Center attacks. It

captures the iconic image of adaptability, skill, and courage that characterized the mission and quality of U.S. Army SF Soldiers.

As the nation's first responders overseas, the Green Berets of the 5th SFG (A) were given the mission to hunt down those responsible for the 9/11 attacks and bring them to justice.

The SF teams faced enormous operational challenges and were required to rapidly adapt 21st century combat technologies and tactics into age old Central Asian models of guerrilla and tribal warfare as they partnered with the Afghan tribes of the Northern Alliance.

Needing suitable transportation to navigate the difficult mountainous terrain of Northern Afghanistan, the Special Forces Operational Detachments – Alpha, or A-teams, were provided horses by the Afghan tribes they were supporting. The Green Berets readily accepted this superior form of mobility and proceeded to assist and advise the Northern Alliance fighters from horseback, similar to the cavalry days of old.

Coordinating military operations while on horseback with local tribal warlords, the Green Berets accomplished in weeks what many thought would take months, if not years; defeating the Taliban and pushing surviving members of al-Qaeda into the mountains of Pakistan. Soon thereafter, the Green Berets would adopt the familiar title of Horse Soldiers.

In honor of the victims of the 9/11 attacks each Green Beret A-Team carried with them pieces of steel recovered from the rubble that was the World Trade Center. At the site where each A-team completed their mission they respectively buried a piece of the World Trade Center steel and a properly folded American flag.

As the first unit to invade Afghanistan and take the fight to those responsible, the burial ceremonies in Afghanistan would forever bond the Green Berets of the 5th SFG (A) to the New York City first responders. It was a bond formed from an understanding and an ability to relate to those first responders who risked their lives to go to the aid of others, those who ran toward the World Trade Center, not away, those who were climbing up stairwells, not down them.

So it was only fitting that on this Veterans Day, traveling down the middle of New York's famous 5th Ave., the De Oppresso Liber statue and more than 50 'Horse Soldiers' and their family members followed directly behind the New York Police and Fire Departments and the

Port Authority Police Department contingents representing the members of those organizations killed in the World Trade Center attacks.

Lt. Gen. John Mulholland, commander of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command and former commander of Task Force Dagger, reminded those present during the dedication ceremony later that evening that this statue is not just a memorial for the Horse Soldiers. This statue is for all those who shared the common bond and responsibility to protect America's homeland – whether it was in New York City, Washington D.C., Shanksville, Pa., or overseas.

Now, a decade later and due to the tireless efforts of many, a statue, designed and sculpted by Douwe Blumberg, found a home near Ground Zero in New York City.

The Two World Financial Center will serve as a temporary home for the statue. It will eventually relocate to a site overlooking the 9/11 Memorial and Ground Zero; a fitting, final resting place for the Horse Soldier Memorial Statue.



Vice President Joseph Biden and his wife, Dr. Jill Biden, lay a wreath in front of the De Oppresso Liber statue during the dedication and unveiling ceremony for the statue at the Winter Garden Hall in Two World Financial Center near Ground Zero, Nov. 11. Members of Task Force Dagger; a Special Operations team made up Green Berets from 5th SFG (A), aircrew members from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne), and combat controllers from Air Force Special Operations Command; joined the Vice President and business leaders and veterans support organizations to unveil the statue. Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika.



SEALs muster, celebrate nearly 50 years of service

By Petty Officer 2nd Class
Meranda Keller
NSW Group 2 Public Affairs

The National Navy UDT-SEAL Museum hosted its annual Veterans Day ceremony and Muster XXVI aboard Fort Pierce, Fla., Nov. 12-13.

The two-day event honored SEALs past and present. The Muster featured several events including a 5k run, U.S. Navy Leap Frogs jump, a memorial ceremony in honor of Veterans Day and a live capabilities demonstration conducted by East Coast-based Navy SEALs featuring military working dogs and a demolitions demonstration.

The Veterans Day ceremony also celebrated the approaching 50th anniversary in 2012, of the commission of the first two SEAL teams by President John F. Kennedy. The ceremony also included remarks from Rear Adm. Sean Pybus, U.S. Naval Special Warfare Command commander, and

former presidential candidate H. Ross Perot.

“Freedom is a privilege,” Perot said. “Freedom is fragile, and you can lose it in a minute. You are the guardians at the gates of freedom.

“What you do for our country makes all the difference in the world in the lives of every citizen,”

said Perot while addressing the many retired and active duty members in the crowd. “Your service and sacrifices have given us the freedom we have today.”

On day two, Veterans and

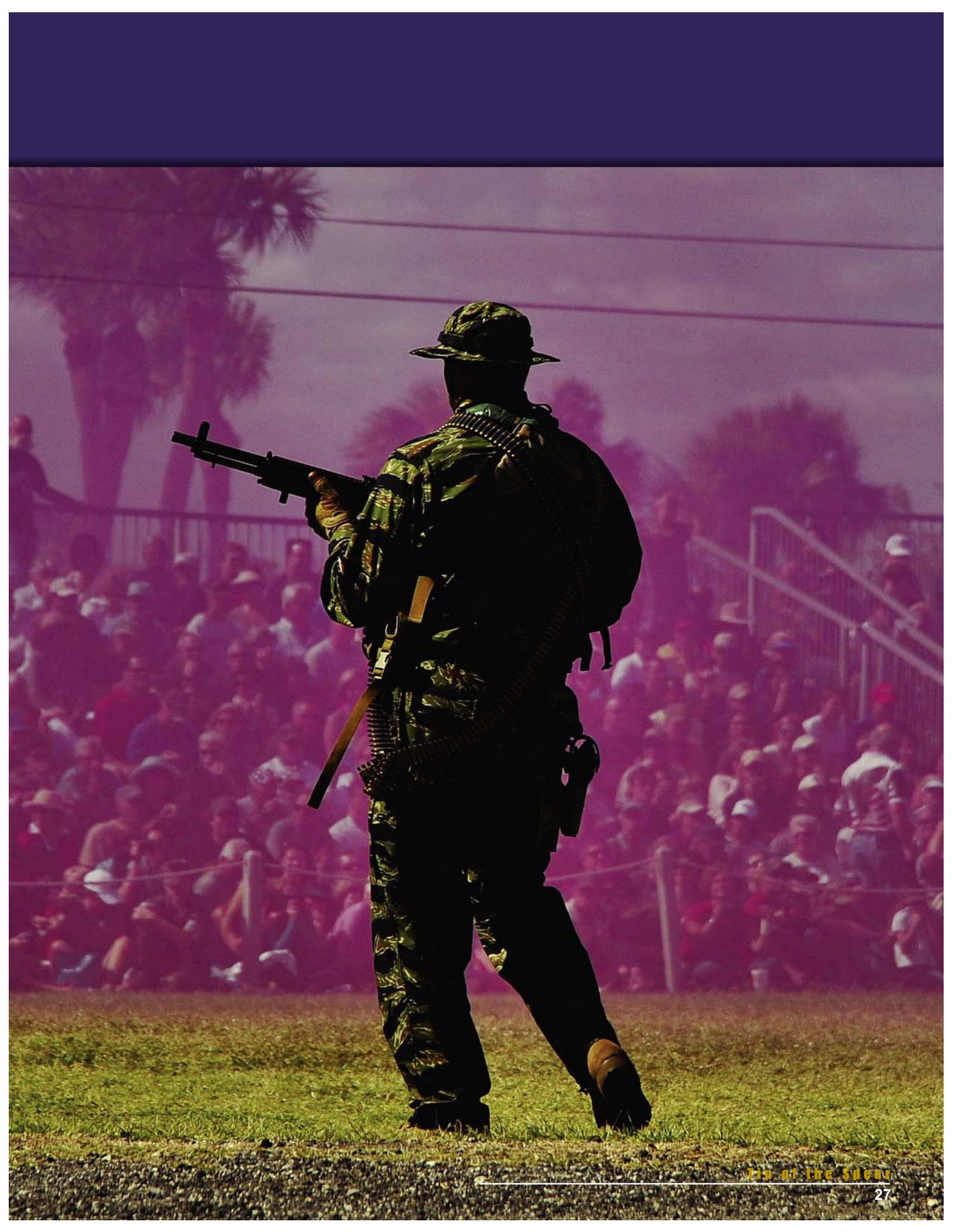
family members gathered on the beach at sunrise to honor 50 members of the Naval Special Warfare community, active duty and retired, who have passed since last year. Two SEAL team members delivered a wreath and the ashes of one of the fallen members to his final resting place at sea, in accordance with their last wishes.

The U.S. Navy SEAL “Leap Frogs” skydiving team conducted a demonstration after the UDT-SEAL memorial dedication ceremony.

*“Freedom is a privilege.
Freedom is fragile, and
you can lose it in a
minute. You are the
guardians at the gates of
freedom.”*

— H. Ross Perot







AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



Mission complete: Our fallen honored



Friends, family and co-workers show support by marching alongside 18 special tactics Airmen as they complete an 812-mile memorial march from Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, to Hurlburt Field, Fla. The Tim Davis Memorial March is conducted each year a special tactics Airman loses his life in defense of the country. Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Steven Pearsall.

Story on next page



AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

By Maj. Kristi Beckman
AFSOC Public Affairs

Courage, honor, allegiance and family are words that just scratch the surface of a unique group of people who spent 10 days honoring their fallen comrades in the best way they know how, through their own pain and sacrifice.

Fifteen Special Tactics Airmen for Air Force Special Operations Command, along with two of their Air Combat Command brethren, embarked on an 812-mile march from Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, to Hurlburt Field, Fla., in order to memorialize 17 who have have died in combat.

These combat controllers and pararescuemen each carried a 50-pound ruck sack and a baton engraved with the name of a fallen Airman.

The Tim Davis Memorial march only takes place if a special tactics Airman is lost during the year marked from October to September. This year, the 24th Special Tactics Squadron, at Pope Field, N.C., lost three Airmen in the CH-47 crash in Afghanistan, Aug. 6.

The march is named after Staff Sgt. Tim Davis who was killed in 2009 from an Improvised Explosive Device. His sister, Noel Davis, joined the team half-way through the march hoisting a 50-pound rucksack on her back.

"I love coming down and participating in the rucksack march," Noel said. "All these guys remind me of my brother in how they act and their sense of humor. I love being surrounded by them. I choose to wear the 50-lb ruck because Tim would expect no less. Tim and all the other amazing men who gave all will never be forgotten and Special Tactics just doesn't say that -- they mean it!"

The marchers traveled through Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. All along the route, they were greeted with tremendous support from school children, community members, veterans, police and firemen.

There were people in tears as the American flag passed and people in tears as they remember their lost loved one.

One of the marchers, Airman 1st Class Mike Thompson, combat controller from the 21st Special Tactics Squadron at Pope Field, said he didn't know the

men, but knew he wanted to be part of the march regardless.

"It's just important to me to show a lot of our families who have lost loved ones that we still remember those men," Thompson said. "I think it means a lot to them for us to be out here."

His most memorable experience on the march is when they walked by a retirement home and the employees brought out retirees and veterans. He said just hearing some of their stories meant a lot to him.

Another marcher, Senior Airman Jordan Dehlbom, pararescueman with the 48th Rescue Squadron at Tucson Air Force Base, Ariz., said he cannot imagine what the families experience when they lose someone.

"I just hope that, whether the families are involved in this or not, the message gets to them some way that their loved one, their son, their husband, their brother, whatever he was, is not forgotten," Dehlbom said. "He is always remembered and every day somebody who worked with him, that knew him and even people who didn't know him, talk about him. He lives on through that memory."

The marchers made it home on Oct. 26 and were greeted by more than 300 family members, friends and comrades who marched the last 4.6 miles home to Hurlburt Field.

A ceremony was held to turn over the batons for display in the Special Tactics Training Squadron Hall of Heroes. Accepting the batons from each marcher was the commander of the STTS, Maj. Travis Woodworth, who said it is pretty "audacious" to march 812 miles.

"A lot of people will ask, 'why do they walk 812 miles,'" Woodworth said. "I guess a better question to ask is, 'why not?'"

Woodworth asked the audience to think about the men who marched every day for 10 days for four hours with a 50-pound rucksack.

"And as they're walking you'll hear, 'there went my toe-nail,' but they kept marching; you hear, 'hey, I think I'm walking on blood, but they kept marching; 'I think my knee just blew out;' 'I think I'm rubbing a hole in my back,'" Woodworth said. "But the answer they always said was, 'at least I feel that pain, at least I have that knee and I can patch that back.' That's what happened here today."

Lt. Gen. Eric Fiel, commander of AFSOC, captured the sacrifice born every day by Special Tactics Airmen and their families.

“To all the folks who are part of the special tactics team, past, present and future, to all the families, the nation has asked quite a bit of you guys over the last 10 years or so,” Fiel said. “You come back banged up, beat up. Some of you are on your 15th, 20th, 25th deployment and there is really no end in sight. We’re going to continue to ask a lot of you.”

Fiel told the families that the Special Tactics men could not do what they do for AFSOC without their support. He summed up that over the last 10 years the Special Tactics community has produced four Air Force Crosses, 26 Silver Stars, three Distinguished Flying Crosses, 200 bronze stars with valor device, 460 Bronze Star medals, 90 Purple Hearts, 90 wounded in action and 17 killed in action.

“To all the members of the special tactics team, I really appreciate all you do for us as a nation and I just say thank you,” Fiel said.

Fiel also thanked the supporters who were instrumental in motivating and bandaging the marchers along the way.

One of the supporters, Tech. Sgt. Sara Cabuag, 21st STS, knew three of the fallen Airmen. She was responsible for driving the support vehicles, making sure the men hit their specific times and locations and made sure they had all the supplies they needed during the march.

“I think the family members were very proud of the march and the marchers who poured their heart and soul into this mission,” Cabuag said. “It assures them that their loved one has not been forgotten and never will be.”

John Carney Jr., president of the Special Operations Warrior Foundation, said none of this could have been



Members of Team 3 pass through Flatonia, Texas, during the Tim Davis Memorial March Oct. 17. The march, which honors fallen Special Tactics Airmen, consists of six three-man teams and will span across five states before it ended at the Special Tactics Training Squadron, Hurlburt Field, Fla., Oct. 26. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Sharida Jackson.

accomplished without great patriots and Americans throughout the country who believe in what the team was doing and supported in every way they could.

Dehlbom remembers when Cub Scout Pack 221 from Madisonville, La., came out to support. He remembers one little boy in a stand-up wheelchair who was all smiles to see the marchers.

“He was an incredible inspiration for all of us,” Dehlbom said. “He was all gung-ho. He wanted to go the entire way with us to Florida and he was out there ripping it up. He went forward with us for probably about a mile and a half but you could tell he wanted to go farther. That’s what it’s all about. We will never give up no matter how difficult the situation.”



My Air Force friend, my Army protector

*By Maj Kristi Beckman
AFSOC Public Affairs*

Army Sergeant First Class Michael Jones travelled alongside Staff Sgt. Robert Gutierrez from Lackland Air Force Base, Texas to Hurlburt Field, Fla., as they marched 812 miles together with 16 other Airmen in memory of 17 fallen special tactics Airmen.

Jones, a 7th Special Forces Group Airborne medic, was invited to participate in the 2011 Tim Davis Memorial March as a colleague, but more than that, as a friend of the special tactics community. Two years ago he saved the life of Gutierrez, a combat controller, during a mission in Afghanistan.

Gutierrez was assigned to the same Army unit as Jones. As a combat controller Gutierrez said he has worked with Marine Special Operation Teams and Navy Special Warfare

Units, but he is usually assigned to the Army.

“We primarily handle the austere airfield control, airfield seizures and fire support, but right now we’re covering down on both ends downrange. We cover down as a Joint Terminal Attack Controller attached to Special Forces, Joint Special Operations Task Force teams and Coalition; as well as playing that role of communications, the air-to-ground link on the battlefield.”

The Air Force recognized the vital role the JTAC plays for the ground units. In his 2011 Vector, Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. Norton Schwartz, stated the Air Force increased JTAC support to 33 additional combat maneuver companies.

Jones echoes that support.

“It’s very important for an Army Special Forces unit to have a combat controller,” Jones said. “We bring the gun ammo and the Air Force brings the gun ammo and the bombs. If its close quarters, room-to-room, we’ve got that.



Staff Sgt. Robert Gutierrez, Air Force Cross recipient, poses with Sergeant First Class Mike Jones, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) medic. Jones saved Gutierrez' life twice during a 2009 mission in Afghanistan. Photo by Devon Ravine.

But if it's something we can't handle, the JTAC's got aircraft right at the end of his fingers. The CCTs are part of our family now and we would give our life for them."

Gutierrez said it's about the team and everyone relies on each other. He said the teamwork required in combat is huge.

"You have to depend on each other," Gutierrez said. "In reality, they are the only Americans that I know and at that point you're closer than family. You're in a foreign land fighting a foreign force in their hometown, on their ground and it's them against you."

For the 2009 mission, Gutierrez was in charge of air cover for his Army unit. Calling Jones his battle buddy, Gutierrez said Jones was never far from his side. They got to know each other very well.

"On objective, I would be next to the Ground Forces Commander and Jones on every patrol," Gutierrez said. "I always knew where he was and he always knew where I was whether it was a combat reconnaissance patrol, key leader engagement or a direct action mission, I knew exactly where he was."

But during the night of that 2009 mission, it was a different story. Gutierrez' and Jones' unit entered a village at night on foot to track down a high-priority individual.

"It was the fog of war," Jones said. "Everything happened so fast. The team quickly became surrounded and the enemy had the tactical advantage because they were shooting at us from less than fifteen feet away on the rooftops."

Gutierrez was inside a building returning fire to the rooftops through an opening and suddenly got shot. Jones looked over and saw Gutierrez.

"He said, 'Mike!' and I looked and you could tell something was wrong," Jones said. "I ran over, grabbed him and pulled him inside and he spit out a mouth full of blood. Literally the first thought that came to my head was that he's got a baby girl coming in December."

Jones told Gutierrez to let him know once his breathing is hard. He took Gutierrez' kit and radio off but left his headset on as Gutierrez was still talking to aircraft. About 30 minutes into it he said he was having trouble catching his breath and Jones administered a needle decompression, which allowed the removal of fluid or air from the chest.

Then they had to move out of there. Gutierrez called in for an A-10 strafing run and while the team was running out of the building, Jones jumped on Gutierrez to cover him.

"He jumped on me when the rounds were going off,"

Gutierrez said. "He covered me with his own body to make sure I was ok, because I didn't have any armor on."

They ran about 1.5 kilometers to the landing zone for the medevac.

Jones said Gutierrez was talking to the gunships and the helicopters and calling in his own medevac. But once they got to the landing zone, Gutierrez told Jones he was having trouble breathing again and Jones had to give him another needle decompression.

Gutierrez said he felt confident that Jones would take good care of him.

"I completely trusted him," Gutierrez said. "I knew he was good and he knew what he was talking about. He was dedicated and loved his job. When someone loves their job that much and wants to do it that well, I had the utmost confidence in him."

Although Gutierrez was medevac'd out that night, the team continued the mission the next day. They were determined to get their man. That boosted Gutierrez' morale ten-fold as he lay in the hospital bed recovering.

"I was in Walter Reed when they told me," Gutierrez said. "It made my morale skyrocket because they went back out and got the number one guy we were looking for and they did an awesome job. Honestly, you're sitting in your bed and you've got five tubes coming out of your body, and you hear about this, you talk about being happy and wanting to get up and get out of there and carry on."

Resilience is why Gutierrez and Jones participated in the Memorial March and honoring the 17 fallen Airmen.

"We're the same," Jones said. "The guys that we've lost, they wouldn't want us to stop, they wouldn't want us to not keep going. If the same thing happened to me, I wouldn't want these guys to sit and think about it or anything like that. I would want them to keep going and just do their job."

Gutierrez thanks Jones every chance he gets for saving his life and although Gutierrez says Jones is probably tired of hearing it, Jones says he's not.

"Having Rob here and just being friends with him and his family, that's the most reward I can ever ask for," Jones said. "I get to see his daughter and know that she has her dad with her."

Gutierrez was awarded the Air Force Cross Oct. 27, the highest award the Air Force gives, for his actions during that mission which saved countless lives. He will be the first to tell you that he wouldn't have been able to accomplish that mission - or march to honor others - if it wasn't for Jones, who saved his life twice that night.



U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - HEADQUARTERS



Army Lt. Gen. David P. Fridovich, U. S. Special Operations Command deputy commander, gives his remarks during his retirement ceremony Nov. 14, at the Davis Conference Center, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. Fridovich retired as the senior Green Beret in the Army after more than 37 years of service.

Senior Green Beret of the Army retiring after 37 years of service

*Story and photos by Mike Bottoms
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

Army Lt. Gen. David P. Fridovich, U. S. Special Operations Command deputy commander retired Nov. 14, after more than 37 years of service in a ceremony at the

Davis Conference Center, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.

Presiding over the ceremony were retired Navy Adm. Eric T. Olson, former USSOCOM commander and the current commander, Navy Adm. Bill H. McRaven.

“If you measure a man’s professional contributions by those who show up to recognize his achievements then Dave you have had a great career because we have an

impressive audience today,” said McRaven. “His legacy as a Green Beret is unmatched - he is a leader in the Army culture that values great warriors and equally great thinkers.”

Fridovich graduated from Knox College in 1974 and was commissioned an infantry second lieutenant. After serving as a rifle and reconnaissance platoon leader, company executive officer, and light infantry company commander with the 172nd Light Infantry Brigade, Fort Richardson, Alaska, he was then assigned as an assistant professor of military science, Norwich University, where he trained the Mountain Cold Weather Cadre and Rescue Team.

“‘Frido’ is an Army officer, but his soul is in the multi-service, joint special operations community,” said Olson. “He is a strategic thinker who understands the importance of nuance and context, a strong leader, sets high standards and convinces people they can achieve them.”

In 1984, he completed the Special Forces Detachment Officer’s Qualification course and reported to the reactivated 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Lewis, Wash., where he served in the 3rd Battalion, commanding both an SF Operational Detachment Alpha and Bravo before becoming the battalion operations officer.

Subsequently, he served as the senior SF observer controller, and later chief, Special Operations Division, at the Joint Readiness Training Center. In 1995, he took command of the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) and the Special Operations Task Force-Haiti, where his command was involved with Operation Uphold Democracy, in support of the United Nations Mission in Haiti.

“He is a man of action, whose operational excellence in many of the most remote, complex places on earth earned him ungrudging respect of his teams, his bosses and his international colleagues,” Olson said. “He is an officer of ability and humanity – he gained the trust and cooperation, and even the affection of the people of every place he went.”

Later, Fridovich commanded the Combined/Joint Special Operations Task Force in Operation Joint Forge,

Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, from January through July 2000. He assumed command of the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) in August 2000. There, he led the Army Special Operations Task Force, Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines, Zamboanga, Republic of the Philippines from January through June 2002. In January of 2005, Fridovich assumed duties as commander, Special

Operations Command - Pacific. He subsequently assumed duties as the director, Center for Special Operations, U.S. Special Operations Command in 2007 and became the deputy commander in May 2010.

Fridovich closed his retirement ceremony by stating how important loyalty and trust is to an organization.

“When you invest in people and underwrite their

mistakes and you earn everyday their loyalty as best as you possibly can with your sincerity and your genuine nature — when you do that, you can’t but help make the organization better,” said Fridovich. “We are absolutely at our best when we understand and get the vision of the mission, and are not interested in who gets the credit.”

“When you invest in people and underwrite their mistakes and you earn everyday their loyalty as best as you possibly can with your sincerity and your genuine nature — when you do that, you can’t but help make the organization better.”

– Lt. Gen. David P. Fridovich



Navy Adm. Bill H. McRaven, (left) USSOCOM commander, and retired Navy Adm. Eric T. Olson, (right) former USSOCOM commander, applaud Army Lt. Gen. David P. Fridovich, U. S. Special Operations Command deputy commander, during his retirement ceremony Nov. 14, at the Davis Conference Center, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.



USSOCOM artist designs Vietnam Memorial and its surrounding grounds



Above is the etched mural of scenes from the fighting in Vietnam designed by USSOCOM artist Tim Lawn. Air Force planes fly overhead just above Army helicopters - Navy and Coast Guard ships and boats ply the seas and rivers - Marines and Soldiers doing battle - a Special Forces Soldier walks through tall grass. Below the artwork are 155 stars representing Hillsborough county's casualties in the Vietnam War. The mural is on three four-feet wide, six-feet-high granite panels and is located in Veterans Memorial Park near Tampa, Fla. Photo illustration by Tim Lawn.

Story on next page

By Mike Bottoms
USSOCOM Public Affairs

A new Vietnam Memorial was dedicated on Veterans Day in Hillsborough County near Tampa, Fla., and the expansive memorial and its surrounding grounds were based on concepts and sketches by USSOCOM artist Tim Lawn.

“I learned through a co-worker that Hillsborough County was going to build a Vietnam Memorial and I wanted to get involved,” Lawn said. “I met a gentleman named Bob Silmsler, who is the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Chair for the county, and we started the collaboration.”

There are 155 names from the Vietnam era with Hillsborough County, Fla., connections carved in stone on a six-foot-high wall in a park surrounded by sweeping live oaks. The wall sits at the center of a square brick plaza framed by two helicopters that flew in the war, a Huey and a Cobra attack helicopter.

On the back of the black wall is an etched mural of scenes from the fighting in Vietnam. Air Force planes fly overhead just above Army helicopters – Navy and Coast Guard ships and boats ply the seas and rivers – Marines and Soldiers doing battle – a Special Forces Soldier walking through tall grass. Below the artwork are 155 stars representing Hillsborough’s casualties in the Vietnam War.

From that first meeting Silmsler and Lawn hashed out ideas on how to create the memorial. The collaboration took a year-and-a-half until the memorial was dedicated Nov 11. Lawn described his emotions at the unveiling as having opening day jitters.

“I did a series of sketches for Bob until we both became comfortable with the design,” said Lawn. “Once the design was done, a specialized company etched it in stone – This was the nerve wracking part because taking a small drawing and blowing it up to fit on three four-foot-wide, six-foot-high panels is a very challenging problem – I was really pleased and relieved at the unveiling of the wall because I think we pulled it off.”

Silmsler had total confidence in Lawn’s ability and marveled at his talent and humility.

“Tim is an absolutely amazing artist and an extraordinary veteran,” Silmsler said. “He is also very humble. You can barely see his signature on the bottom right of the mural.”

Lawn, assigned to the Visual Information Center, has worked at USSOCOM for more than six years as an Army reservist and a civilian. While a reservist, Lawn deployed to Iraq and sketched combat scenes and the artwork he created for the Army can be found



Tim Lawn, an illustrator assigned to USSOCOM, stands in front of a Vietnam Memorial created based on his sketches. The wall is part of the new Vietnam Memorial located at Veterans Memorial Park near Tampa, Fla., and was dedicated Nov 11. Photo by Mike Bottoms.

at the U.S. Army Center for Military History in the journal entitled *Army Artists Look at the War on Terrorism*.

“I spent more than nine years in the Marine infantry before I got out and went to school at Ringling College of Art and Design,” said Lawn. “I have always enjoyed art growing up so I decided I wanted to create art as a career.”

Lawn graduated with a degree in Computer Graphics and Interactive Communications, but missed the military life and decided to join the Army reserves. It was during that time Lawn deployed to Iraq and created the extensive combat art collection.

“The deployment to Iraq was professionally the most rewarding,” said Lawn. “I got to be part of the military, which I really enjoy, and I got to sketch life around me.”

Today, Lawn serves as a civilian supporting the command by building briefings for Congress and creating a myriad of graphic products designed to convey the command’s message.

“I love coming to work everyday because of the caliber of people and the importance of the mission of SOCOM,” Lawn said. “True American patriots roam our hallways and I can’t think of a better place to work than that.”

The Vietnam Memorial can be found at 3602 North U.S. Highway 301, Tampa, Fla.



Army Sgt. 1st Class
Kristoffer B. Domeij
75th Ranger Regiment



Army Pvt. 1st Class
Christopher A. Horns
75th Ranger Regiment



Army 1st Lt.
Ashley White
Joint Special Operations
Task Force Cultural
Support Team

Editor's note: Honored are Special Operations Forces who lost their lives since October's Tip of the Spear.

Retired Navy Adm. Eric T. Olson, former USSOCOM commander, received the William J. Donovan Award from retired Army Maj. Gen. John Singlaub, chairman of The OSS Society, Oct. 15, in Washington, DC. The award marked its 50th anniversary with the first Donovan Award given to Allen Dulles in 1961. The OSS Society presents the William J. Donovan Award to an individual who has rendered distinguished service to the United States of America. The purpose of the award is to recognize someone who has exemplified the distinguishing features that characterized Maj. Gen. Donovan's lifetime of public service to the United States of America as a citizen and a Soldier. Courtesy photo.

