



TIP OF THE SPEAR

Exercise Emerald Warrior

U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., April 2012



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Tip of the Spear



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(Cover) U.S. Air Force Special Operations Weather Teams participate in a training scenario from a CH-47 Chinook during Emerald Warrior, Hurlburt Field, Fla., March 7. The primary purpose of Emerald Warrior is to exercise special operations components in urban and irregular warfare settings to support combatant commanders in theater campaigns. Emerald Warrior leverages lessons from Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom and other historical lessons to provide better trained forces to combatant commanders. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Clay Lancaster.

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U.S & ROK Navy SEALs train to counteract threats on the high seas

Republic of Korea Navy SEALs from the Korean Naval Special Warfare Brigade assault the aft deck of the AOE-59 Hwachun – a Korean naval refueling vessel – in Jinhae Harbor, Republic of Korea, March 20, as part of Foal Eagle 2012 - a multinational, joint-service exercise focusing on tactical-based warfare throughout the peninsula of Korea. Both U.S. and ROK Navy SEALs fast-roped out of a MH-47 Chinook helicopter prior to boarding and conducted visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) training to demonstrate the interoperability between the two forces. Photo by Army Capt. Michael Odgers.

*By Army Sgt. Aaron Rognstad
SOCKOR Public Affairs*

Two days before a weather front sopped the southern tip of the peninsula, Navy SEALs from both the U.S. and the Republic of Korea teamed up to conduct visit, board, search and seizure drills on a Korean Navy ship in Jinhae Harbor.

Sailing in calm seas and flying in clear skies, the ROK Navy and U.S. Army provided support with the ROK Navy AOE-59, Hwachun – a refueling vessel – and U.S. MH-47 Chinook helicopters piloted and crewed by Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.

The SEALs, from Naval Special Warfare Group 1 out of Coronado, Calif., and the Korean Naval Special Brigade, began the evolution by performing fast-rope drills at a helicopter pad resting on top of a hill overlooking the harbor at Jinhae Naval Base.

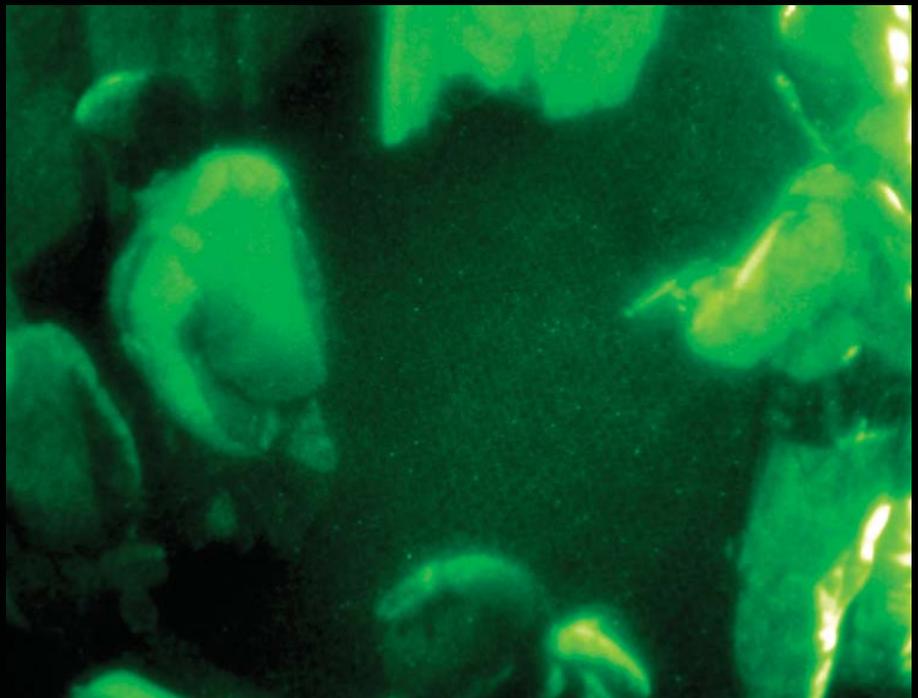
Fast-roping is a technique for descent from a helicopter by sliding down a thick-woven rope. It is the preferred method of rapid troop delivery from a helicopter platform.

“If we do it right, we can get 15 guys onto the ship in 30 seconds or less,” said “Mike”, a U.S. Navy SEAL, who wished to remain anonymous. “It’s all about speed and maintaining your distance between you and your buddy below you.”

Typically a 10-foot gap between troops is the norm when fast-roping, he added.

After the SEALs honed their skills on land, it was onto the primary drill in the harbor the following two days. By the light of day and in the black of night using night-vision goggles, teams of SEALs fast-roped onto the aft deck of the Hwachun and scattered in their respective squads to search the ships many rooms and quarters for mock “pirates” who were hiding down below the deck and on the bridge.

“When people think of pirates, they tend to think of Hollywood movies and Captain Hook – the stereotypical image of pirates in the 16 and 1700s – but the threat is very much still around, not so much off our (U.S.) shores, but definitely over here and especially off



Republic of Korea Navy SEALs from the Korean Naval Special Warfare Brigade hold two individuals acting as pirates at gunpoint as part of a visit, board, search and seizure drill onboard the AOE-59 Hwachun – a Korean naval refueling vessel – in Jinhae Harbor, Republic of Korea, March 20, 2012. Both U.S. and ROK Navy SEALs fast-roped out of a MH-47 Chinook helicopter prior to boarding and conducted the VBSS to demonstrate the interoperability between the two forces. The drill was part of Foal Eagle 2012 - a multinational, joint-service exercise focusing on tactical-based warfare throughout the peninsula of Korea. Photo by Army Sgt. Aaron Rognstad.

the coast of Somalia in the Arabian Sea,” said Chris, another U.S. SEAL, who also wished to remain anonymous. “But this type of training combats piracy and other forms of high-seas threats like drug runners and, of course, if North Korea ever tries to take a South Korean naval vessel.”

Events like the VBSS demonstrate the successful interoperability between the U.S. and ROK Special Forces and the continued coordination and cooperation between the two allies said a Lt. (senior grade) platoon leader from ROK SEAL Team 3.

“It’s critical to share tactics like this to make sure we’re on the same page and I hope to have similar training like this in the future,” Lee said.

NSWG 1 Commander Van Wennen, who was participating in his second Foal Eagle, couldn’t agree more.

“The VBSS has been the primary focus of the last two exercises,” he said. “We teach and learn from them – really a two-way street. We’ve had a long relationship with the ROK Naval Special Warfare community and we hope to sustain that relationship for a long time to come.”



Guyana Defense Force soldiers gather around a helicopter while receiving training on air assault techniques and procedures from Special Operations Forces assigned to the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne), March 3 near Camp Stephenson, outside Guyana's capital city of Georgetown. The training event is part of Exercise Fused Response 2012, a joint Guyana - U.S. military exchange between members of the Guyana Defense Force and U.S. military. This exercise is aimed at improving interoperability and increase capacity among the participating forces.

US, Guyana Defense Forces reinforce friendship, cement partnership during Exercise Fused Response

*Story and photo by Sgt. Taresha D. Neal
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

After a year of planning, members of the Guyana Defense Force and U.S. military came together to train and improve their interoperability, tactics, and training techniques during Exercise Fused Response 2012, held

March 1-9.

The intent of Fused Response, a U.S. Southern Command-sponsored exercise, was to build on the solid professional relationship between the two nations by improving military skills and practices to better respond to security challenges, such as transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking of humans, drugs, and other contraband.

As the executing agent for Exercise Fused Response, Special Operations Command South works with Special Operations Forces across the Caribbean, Central, and South America as part of its theater security cooperation program to establish and enhance partner nation capabilities.

The exercise lead planner, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Ron Ralls, who serves as a SOCSOUTH training and exercise officer, explained that the goal of the training event was to develop a better understanding of how the two countries' forces operate so they can share their practices and work together seamlessly.

"It increases our ability to work with each other," said Ralls. "It ensures that for any threat they [GDF and U.S. Forces] may go up against, they will be more efficient and better prepared."

The exercise also allowed both nations to increase their capabilities and encouraged the exchange of ideas and techniques, which are paramount to both nations.

"Acquiring that kind of knowledge is essential in meeting an increase of threats, which we face here in Guyana," said Col. Bruce Lovell, Colonel General Staff of GDF. "If ever we are called upon to counter or tackle any of those existing threats, we are better prepared by this type of training."

While GDF and U.S. Forces have trained together for the past four years in similar training events, this year's Exercise Fused Response was the largest joint exercise of its kind in the Western hemisphere, involving approximately 200 GDF soldiers and 350 U.S. personnel from all branches of service.

"We have been training and doing exercises with the Guyana Defense Force for many years, but this is the first time we have had an exercise of this scope with them," said Ralls.

Both nations' forces, at a staff and tactical level, gained valuable experience and training working together.

"It's been very collaborative. This is the first time we have had this type of exercise involving Special Operations Forces of the United States on such a grand scale," said Lovell.

In preparation for the exercise, GDF and U.S. Forces have been training routinely since January to hone and improve their military skill sets.

"It's been a great challenge to learn some of the training tactics and techniques," said Sgt. Maj. Cleveland O'Brien, Sergeant Major for the GDF Special Warfare School. "The U.S. has been professional, taking the time to come here and teach us, and we are grateful for everything they have taught us."

As a Team Sergeant with GDF's Special Warfare

School, Sgt. Benjamin Hooper said by working with U.S. Forces, it has allowed the GDF Special Forces to widen their knowledge and response to any mission they could receive in the future.

"We were exposed to a lot of training, so we've been able to learn and accumulate a lot of different tactics," said Hooper. "We got a clearer idea of how to conduct a mission, so in the event that something should happen in our own country, we know how to plan and execute the mission."

"We actually get better training working with [GDF] than they do learning from us," said U.S. Army Master Sgt. Gregory Tarancon, a noncommissioned officer-in-charge for the directorate of joint training and exercise for Special Operations Command South. "It's a great exchange and we learn something from them every time."

As with any exercise between two nations, there were some concerns and challenges. Along with the different levels and types of experience, GDF and U.S. Special Operations Forces had to adapt and train with each other's equipment.

Because the GDF and U.S. military operate using different weapons and communications systems, some modifications had to be made to ensure the interoperability aspects of these tactical exercises were met.

"We had to train them on our M4s [rifles], which were modified to shoot simulated rounds, as well as our radios so we could communicate during the exercise," said Tarancon.

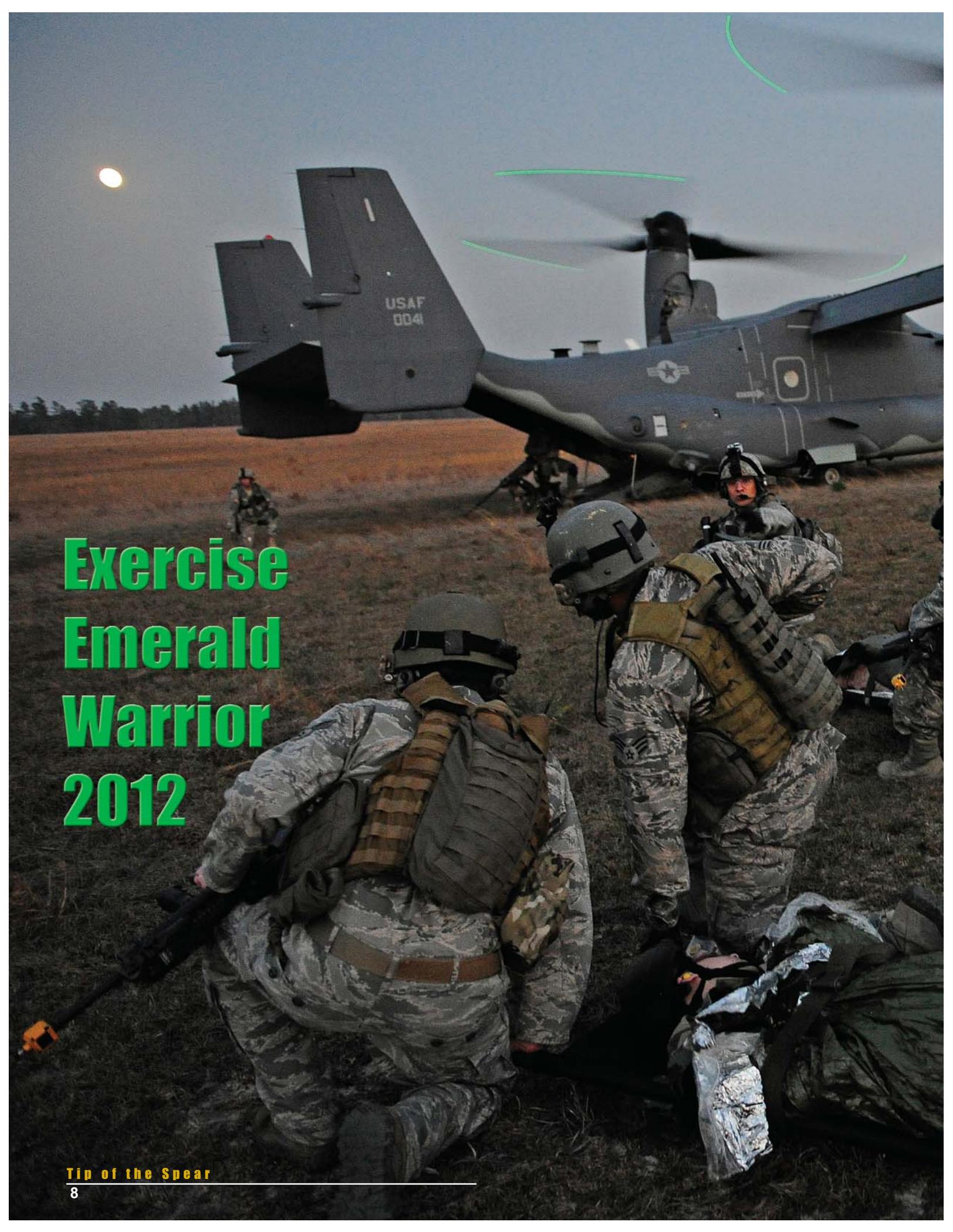
While addressing these challenges, Exercise Fused Response accomplished its main purpose, which was to improve the military relationships between the two partner nations.

Tarancon explained that the goal of the exercise, at the strategic level, was to be able to react to a common threat and bring the different military components together to enable them to work together as a Joint Task Force.

"From what I've been able to see, we are way better at it [working together] than we were prior to the exercise," he said.

From start to finish, GDF and U.S. Forces worked jointly throughout all phases of Exercise Fused Response, reinforcing the professional partnership while increasing the capabilities of both nations.

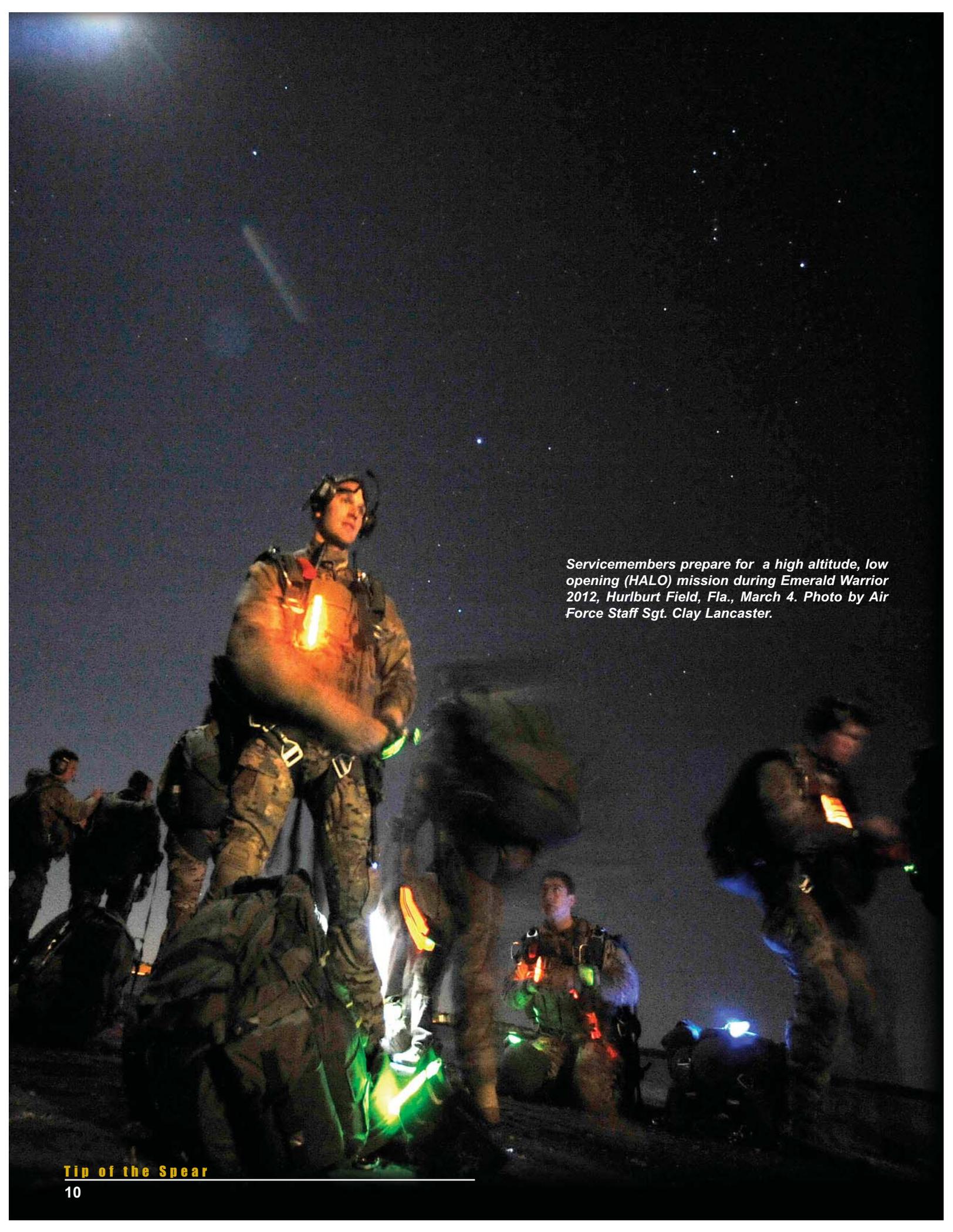
"It gives us a chance to validate ourselves and see where we are, what are our shortcomings," said Lovell. "It [Involvement] has always been conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect, which we hold dear."



Exercise Emerald Warrior 2012



U.S. Air Force Airmen wait to load a simulated aircraft crash victim onto a CV-22 Osprey aircraft during the Emerald Warrior exercise March 7, Hurlburt Field, Fla. The primary purpose of Emerald Warrior is to exercise special operations components in urban and irregular warfare settings to support combatant commanders in theater campaigns. Emerald Warrior leverages lessons from Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom and other historical lessons to provide better trained and ready forces to combatant commanders. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Larkin Sr.



Servicemembers prepare for a high altitude, low opening (HALO) mission during Emerald Warrior 2012, Hurlburt Field, Fla., March 4. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Clay Lancaster.

Emerald Warrior 2012 hones essential skills

*By Air Force Master Sgt. Larry W. Carpenter Jr.
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

More than 1,900 Special Operations Forces and support personnel descended on the Gulf Coast to participate in Exercise Emerald Warrior Feb. 28 through March 9.

Emerald Warrior is designed to provide irregular warfare training at the tactical and operational levels, with emphasis on intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; joint close air support, tactical airlift, counterinsurgency, urban operations, civilian casualty avoidance, patterns of life, information operations, language, and the complex battlefield integration of SOF, conventional forces, interagency and non-governmental organizations.

According to exercise director Air Force Col. Bruce Taylor, that is exactly what it does.

“Our big 5-meter target right now is pre-deployment training for Special Operations Forces, that’s both the air side and the ground side,” Taylor said. “These guys are getting ready to go to war. Some of these guys will be deploying out very shortly and we want to get them a taste of what they might see here in the coming months.”

The exercise operational area spanned three states and covered more than 1.5 million acres, which provided the participants something very similar to what they would face in a combat environment.

“A lot of exercises have a relatively small area of operations that they have to abide by, physical space...we’re not constrained so much by that,” Taylor said. “Most Emerald Warriors will operate in five or six Joint Operating Areas, that’s over 1.5 million acres, a lot of air space and the time to get there and the distance of

separation is a lot more realistic than a lot of other exercises can get.”

One of the biggest benefits of Emerald Warrior is that the geographic area in which it takes place provides several different terrain environments -- from triple canopy to desert to littoral areas -- for the participants to operate in.

“I think this is a very good exercise, it’s one of the best exercises I’ve been involved in [during] my 27 years,” Taylor said. “Short of combat, I don’t think I’ve seen the combat environment replicated with this amount of realism and this amount of actual free-play. We do a pretty good job, I think, giving a dynamic environment to our training

audience, and I don’t know if there is another exercise anywhere that I’ve gone to that will give this level of fidelity in such a small time and space with so many different players.”

There were forces from every branch of the U.S. military involved in the exercise, as well as participants from partner nations, to include the United Kingdom and Poland. With most military action today involving coalition and partner nations, working on

these capabilities takes on even greater importance during an exercise like Emerald Warrior.

“What we want to do is allow partner nation participation at Emerald Warrior, that’s an important idea for SOCOM, and it’s actually an important idea in our national security; to use our coalition partner nation participants in exercises because that’s what we’re going to use in the real world,” Taylor said. “It builds trust in the international community, and it helps us prosecute the war more effectively, and it’s important that we get our coalition partners involved.”

Mike Brennan, Emerald Warrior Joint Exercise Control

“Our big 5-meter target right now is pre-deployment training for Special Operations Forces, that’s both the air side and the ground side. These guys are getting ready to go to war. Some of these guys will be deploying out very shortly and we want to get them a taste of what they might see here in the coming months.”

— Col. Bruce Taylor, exercise director

Group planner, added this was the second consecutive year all components of USSOCOM, as well as all branches of service within the Department of Defense, participated.

Over the course of the exercise, the skies above were filled with aircraft across the spectrum of Special Operations. The range of aircraft, from Marine Corps medium lift helicopters to Army attack helicopters to Air Force tilt rotor aircraft and Special Operations gunships, provided the ground forces something they seldom have in other training venues.

“One of the things that I think the ground component sees here is a huge volume of available air assets they just frankly can’t get in garrison or most any other exercise, especially for such an intense two-week training period,” Taylor said.

While the exercise was a success, Taylor stated it could not have been possible without help from a multitude of different agencies. An important part of the exercise is practicing the “fifth SOF truth” – “Most Special Operations require non-SOF support.”

“We rely on the good graces of a number of entities, both on base and off base, and in the Department of

Defense community to help us put this together. We can’t do it without the help of a lot of others,” said Taylor. “It goes to those SOF truths where you don’t just do it alone, you need the help from conventional forces, and we need help from entities across the spectrum.”

Brennan added, “Emerald Warrior is a SOF exercise that brings conventional assets to an irregular war scenario for integration.”

As the role of Special Operations Forces looks as if it will increase in the future, exercises such as Emerald Warrior will continue to play a significant role in the readiness of SOF.

“We need to be ready to prosecute the nations business on a moment’s notice; we need to be well trained, I believe we need to have an annual exercise [such as Emerald Warrior], at the least, in order to make sure we don’t lose those skills,” said Taylor. “A lot of what goes on at Emerald Warrior is perishable ... if we don’t continue to work with our joint partners and our coalition forces, [we] probably won’t get any better [at joint operations.] We need that continual contact with both our coalition partners and our joint partners.”



A U.S. Army Special Forces member gears up prior to jumping out of a C-130J Super Hercules during Emerald Warrior 2012, Hurlburt Field, Fla., March 3. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Jonathan Snyder.



(From top clockwise)

Soldiers fast rope from a CV-22 Osprey aircraft during Emerald Warrior, Hurlburt Field, Fla., Feb. 29. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Tony R. Ritter.

U.S. Navy boat gunners return fire during Emerald Warrior, Apalachicola River, Fla., March 6. Photo by Senior Airman Devin Doskey.

U.S. Navy Riverine security team member sets a perimeter during Emerald Warrior 2012, Apalachicola, Fla., March 3. Photo by Senior Airman Devin Doskey.

A U.S. Air Force combat rescue officer rides on a motorcycle at the Camp Shelby Auxiliary Field runway during the Emerald Warrior exercise March 3. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Charles Larkin Sr.

U.S. Army Special Forces soldiers practice high altitude low opening jumps out of a Royal Air Force C-130K during Emerald Warrior 2012, Hurlburt Field, Fla., March 4. Photo by Airman 1st Class Matthew J. Bruch.

AIRBORNE

U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



Admiral Bill H. McRaven, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, shakes the hand of a Ranger from the 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, who was awarded a Silver Star for gallantry during an awards ceremony at Hunter Army Air Field, March 16. 104 medals were presented to 80 Rangers for their bravery and heroism in combat operations in remote regions of Afghanistan where they disrupted and destroyed the enemy in 908 classified missions. Their actions resulted in 408 enemy killed and 1,695 detained, 386 of which were deemed high value individuals. 18 Rangers from the battalion were wounded, including two Rangers who paid the ultimate sacrifice with their lives.

Rangers awarded for sacrifice, valor and physical prowess

*Story and photo by Jennifer Hartwig
Hunter Army Airfield Public Affairs*

In a trio of ceremonies March 16, Rangers of 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment were honored for their sacrifice, acts of valor and their physical prowess.

The Staff Sgt. Jason S. Dahlke/Pfc. Eric W. Hario Combat Readiness Training Facility was dedicated to two life-long athletes who were killed Aug. 29, 2009, of wounds sustained when they were shot by enemy forces while

conducting combat operations in Paktika Province, Afghanistan. Staff Sgt. Dahlke, 29, and Pfc. Hario, 19, served together in 2nd Platoon, Company A, and were both known for their physical capabilities and natural athleticism.

“This building and the two men we honor here, I think, are a perfect match of providing a lasting tribute and an inspiration to others,” said Col. Michael Foster, 1/75 Ranger commander. “Amongst other skills, Rangers have always placed a premium on physical fitness – how appropriate,

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and unsurprising, that we name this facility in honor of Staff Sgt. Dahlke and Pfc. Hario; they were Rangers from the same squad; Rangers who worked out and did PT together; Rangers who fought, and ultimately died together; Rangers who were both notable athletes in their own right.”

The facility includes the latest in comprehensive physical training equipment, which, according to their commander, will help the Rangers better prepare for the requirements of missions Rangers face, from intense cold to intense heat, and in the harshest terrain on earth.

“As our knowledge of the specific requirements of fitness increase, so has our understanding of how best to prepare,” said Foster. “The days of pushups, sit ups, pulls ups and a run just don’t cut it anymore... Today, you’re much more likely to see Rangers in PT flipping tires, swinging kettle bells and executing burpees as you are anything else. This new Combat Readiness Training Facility provides us a state-of-the-art, all-weather location to conduct that training 24 hours a day.”

Present at the dedication were members of the Dahlke and Hario families, Adm.

Bill H. McRaven; commander of U.S. Special Operations Command; and Sgt. 1st Class Leroy Petry, a Ranger with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 75th Ranger Regiment, who is the second living Medal of Honor recipient from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In a ceremony later that day, two benches that are now part of the 1/75th Ranger Memorial were dedicated to Staff Sgt. Kevin Pape and Sgt. Maj. Jack Schmidt.

Pape was a Ranger with the 1/75th who was killed by enemy forces, Nov. 16, 2010, in Konar Province, Afghanistan; Sgt. Maj. Schmidt was a Ranger who was paralyzed during a training jump in 1975, and died four years later of a heart attack.

Pape’s wife, Amelia, and daughter, Anneka, now 5, and Schmidt’s daughter, Donna Schmidt Neal, and her husband, Barry, unveiled the benches.

In a Battalion Valorous Awards Ceremony, 80 Rangers

were honored for their acts in combat in the last two years. Among the awards given were 10 Silver Stars, the military’s third highest award for valor, 27 Bronze Stars with Valor and 16 Purple Hearts. According to Foster, the acts of these Rangers contributed in no small part to the battalion’s success in their last deployment, in which they conducted 900 missions and killed or captured more than 2,000 insurgents – yet none of the awardees seeks individual recognition.

“It feels good to be recognized, but it’s not really about individualism here – it’s about the collective group,” said

1st Sgt. Michael Eiermann, Company D, who was awarded the Silver Star for his actions May 19, 2010, when, during a coordinated attack involving multiple insurgent fighters and countless rounds of indirect fire, he entered a known minefield in order to extract two critically wounded Soldiers. “It’s an honor to stand with these Rangers every day.”

Two families were present to accept posthumous awards of

valor for their loved ones. Sgt. Martin Lugo, who was killed in combat operations Aug. 19, 2010, in Afghanistan, was awarded the Silver Star; and Sgt. Alessandro Plutino, who was killed in action Aug. 8, 2011, in Afghanistan, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor and the Army Commendation Medal.

“It is sometimes difficult to appreciate the magnitude of their individual accomplishments,” McRaven said before pinning the medals on the Rangers. “The men standing before me, most of them would say they were ‘doing their job.’ But 100 years from now, Rangers from 1/75th will be talking about this generation of Soldiers – they will be recounting your incredible missions, your unparalleled bravery and your unselfish acts of heroism. To say that your accomplishments have been historic is an understatement; your accomplishments have been legendary, and they will live on in every Ranger that passes through this battalion.”

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— Adm. Bill H. McRaven, SOCOM commander

AIRBORNE



U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

SF hero memorialized at Ft. Bragg ceremony

*Story and photos Sgt. Katryn Tuton
50th Public Affairs Detachment*

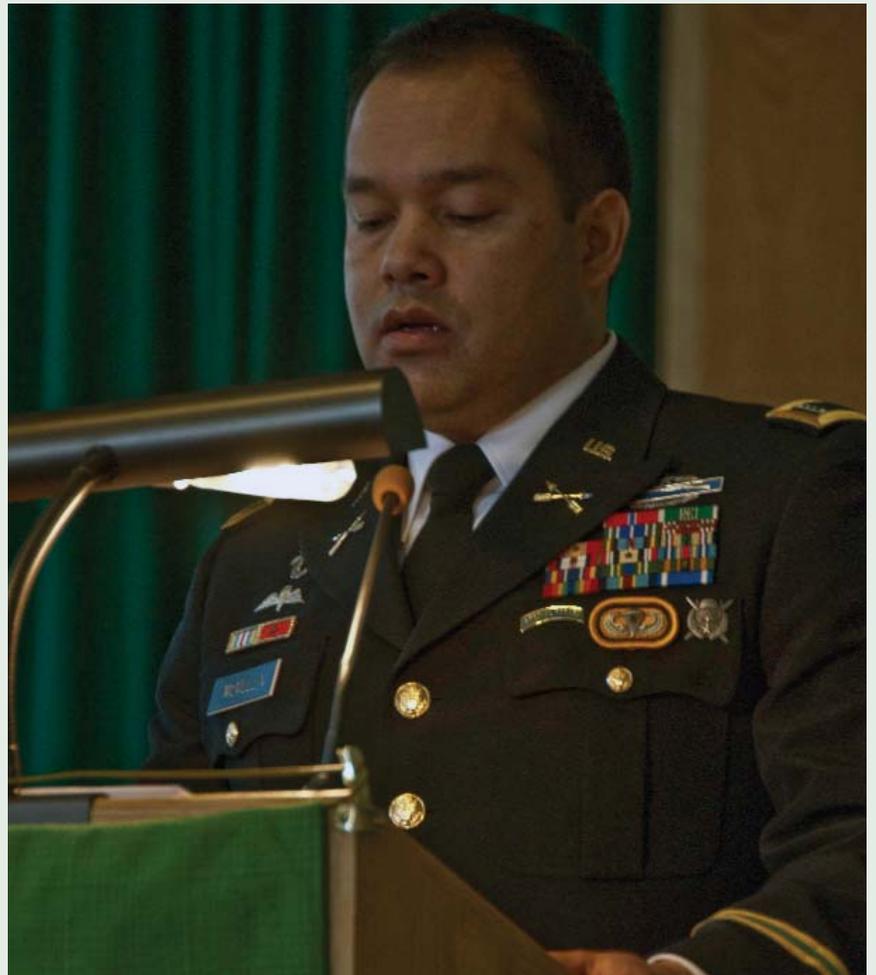
Hundreds of Green Berets volunteered for the mission. But after months of preparation on November 20, 1970, only 56 of them used the cover of darkness to infiltrate the North Vietnamese prison camp of Son Tay in an attempt to rescue 70 American prisoners of war more than 100 miles behind enemy lines. The raid was a tactical success, neutralizing hundreds of North Vietnamese soldiers with only two minor injuries received by American forces.

One of these men, the late, retired Sgt. Maj. Kenneth E. McMullin was memorialized by hundreds of fellow Green Berets, friends and family members in a ceremony at the John F. Kennedy Memorial Chapel on Fort Bragg, Jan. 31, to honor not only his role as one of the elite Son Tay Raiders, but for his 32 years of military service.

"I am truly humbled to have served with him," said Brig. Gen. Edward Reeder, U.S. Army Special Forces Command commanding general. "He embodied the spirit of Special Forces across decades of service."

In addition to Son Tay, McMullin served with 8th Special Forces Group in Panama, 5th SFG (A) in Vietnam, where he trained and led foreign personnel in airborne infantry combat operations, including the combat parachute jump into BuPrang in South Vietnam, and 46th Special Forces Company in the Kingdom of Thailand.

In 1974 he volunteered to serve as the operations sergeant major with 82nd Airborne Division on Fort



Chief Warrant Officer 3 Steven McMullin honors his father, the late Sgt. Maj. Kenneth McMullin (Ret.), at a memorial at Fort Bragg's John F. Kennedy Memorial Chapel Jan. 31. Steven McMullin's daughters, Laurel, 12, and Lily, 10, also spoke, reading a bible passage in memory of their grandfather.

Bragg. McMullin also became a member of the Saudi Arabia foreign internal defense mobile training team, spent four years with Operation Blue Light, the Army's first counter-terrorism unit, and became the operations and training sergeant major at the Joint Special

Operations Command.

He then participated in the planning and execution of Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada, before returning to Panama for five years. He returned to the United States in early 1990 as a company sergeant major for 1st Battalion, 7th SFG (A) and then command sergeant major of the activating 3rd Battalion, 3rd SFG (A) where he served as the rear command sergeant major during Operation Desert Storm. McMullin served as acting command sergeant major for 3rd Battalion, 3rd SFG (A) until his retirement in late 1992.

“You can’t ask for a better soldier,” said retired Sgt. Maj. Joe Lupyak, a life-long friend of McMullin’s and fellow Raider. “He was a soldier’s soldier. He was respected and admired. There are countless non-commissioned officers and officers that came up on (McMullin’s) knee.”

One of these officers is Maj. Gen. Charles Cleveland. Speaking during the ceremony, Cleveland recalled his time first as a detachment commander and later as a company commander with McMullin as his company sergeant major.

“With respect to the other sergeants major in the room, I realize how honored I was to have him as my first sergeant major,” Cleveland said. “He was the smartest man I’ve ever had the pleasure of serving with.”

“As everyone knows, my dad loved to read and never stopped learning his craft,” said his son, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Steven McMullin, assistant operations officer for 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group. “He filled his shelves with military history. But I know his prized books were about his friends, many of you here today... All of his books signed, all marked with favorite pages and passages. The names once redacted are penciled back in, to celebrate his friend’s achievements.”

As the ceremony came to a close, an endless line of those friends and comrades filed by the picture of McMullin at the front of the chapel, each Soldier stopping one last time to salute and say their goodbyes.

“They don’t make them like Kenny anymore,” said Lupyak. “He was a very likable individual, didn’t speak badly about anyone. He was a quiet presence. He had a good sense of humor and did his business. And he was respected because of his abilities.”

McMullin passed away on Christmas Day 2011 and was cremated in a ceremony held by his family in Hermosa Beach, Calif. His family plans on spreading his



Brig. Gen. Edward Reeder, commanding general for U.S. Army Special Forces Command, presents Patricia McMullin-Marcello with a flag in honor of her father, the late Sgt. Maj. Kenneth McMullin (Ret.), at a memorial in McMullin’s honor at Fort Bragg’s John F. Kennedy Memorial Chapel Jan. 31. The service for the Son Tay Raider, who passed away on Dec. 25, 2011, was attended by hundreds of fellow green berets, friends and family members.

ashes in the Pacific Ocean this summer.

His awards and decorations include the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star with “V” device and two oak leaf clusters, Purple Heart, Master Parachutist Badge, SCUBA Badge and HALO Jumpmaster Badge.

“We who had the privilege of serving with him know that he had plenty of medals pinned onto his jacket, but there were plenty more pinned to his soul on Christmas Day,” said Cleveland.



SF camp dedicated to fallen brother in Wardak province

*Story and photo by Master Sgt. Donald Sparks
SOCEUR Public Affairs*

A simple slab of white marble engraved with the Special Forces Prayer was quietly unveiled in a remote camp in Afghanistan to remember a fallen warrior and leader – not far from where he fell.

U.S. Army Special Forces Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) and Hungarian Special Operations Forces gathered to pay solemn tribute to Master Sgt. Danial “Slim” Adams as the SF camp was dedicated and named in his honor.

Addressing his men, some who fought with Slim on the day he fell in battle, Lt. Col. Isaac Peltier, 1-10 SFG (A) commander, spoke on Adams’ character and ethos as a Special Forces leader.

“Dan was a Green Beret; he was a warrior who lived to lead men in combat,” Peltier said. “He died doing what he loved.”

On Sept. 13, 2011, Adams, 35, of Portland, Ore., died in an intense firefight when insurgents ambushed his element with RPG, machine-gun and small-arms fire while the element was on patrol in Wardak province.

Adams joined the Army in 1995 as an infantryman and began his Special Forces career with the 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Bragg, N.C. as a Special Forces medic and served combat tours in Iraq and two in Afghanistan. While assigned to 1-10th, he was selected for promotion to master sergeant and given the responsibility for a Special Forces A-Team.

“When he came to 1st Battalion, 10th Group his reputation as life-saving medic preceded him,” Peltier said. “Slim took on his responsibility as a team sergeant with energy and passion. He prepared his men by training them rigorously for combat.”

On the day the team came under attack, Peltier mentioned how Adams led his team from the front before he was killed. He praised the other members of the team for having “fought like lions” and “heroically” to get to him and never leaving his side.



A U.S. Army Special Forces Soldier assigned to 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) stands near the memorial dedicated to Master Sgt. Danial ‘Slim’ Adams during a camp dedication ceremony in his honor at Wardak province, Afghanistan, held March 25. Adams was a SF team sergeant assigned to 1-10 SFG (A) when he was killed on Sept. 13, 2011, after insurgents ambushed his element while on patrol in Wardak province.

Peltier emphasized during the intimate gathering how the loss of a Special Forces A-team member impacts the morale of the team. He particularly highlighted the team sergeant as the nucleus of a SF A-Team; and in losing Adams, it “strikes the very heart of our force.”

“The team and the mission must go on and indeed it has,” Peltier said as he looked into the eyes of his men. “I know Slim would be proud of you guys for carrying on the mission in his absence. So today we dedicate this camp to him – Camp Adams as it shall hence forth be known, but perhaps our greatest tribute to Dan is to continue to bring the fight to the enemy, to uphold the high standards of the Green Berets and to care for and love our teammates and families.”

Peltier concluded his remarks thanking Adams for his sacrifice, service and for “being the quiet professional.”

Following a recital of the Special Forces Prayer by the Task Force 10 chaplain, the men who served and fought with Adams one by one touched the marble bearing his name – silently.



U.S. Army Col. Fran Beaudette, Commander of Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines (foreground), and Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Gilliland lay a wreath at the base of a memorial statue during a ceremony commemorating the crash of ‘Wild 42.’ Ten members of JSOTF-P died when their MH-47E Chinook helicopter went down in the Bohol Sea while returning from a mission in Basilan in 2002.

JSOTF-P memorializes ‘Wild 42’

*Story and photo by U.S. Air Force Maj. Darrick B. Lee
JSOTF - P Public Affairs*

Members of Joint Special Operations Task Force - Philippines held a ceremony Feb. 22, observing the 10th anniversary of an aircraft accident that claimed the lives of JSOTF-P service members serving in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines joined U.S. Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen at Camp Navarro in paying respects to Special Operations Aviators and Air Commandos who perished when their U.S. MH-47E Chinook helicopter, call sign Wild 42, went down in the Bohol Sea while returning from a mission in Basilan in 2002.

“Ten years ago today Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines was well underway, when tragedy struck our Nation again,” said U.S. Army Chaplain (Captain) Johnnie Elder, while leading a prayer. “Ten American warriors died, bringing the world-wide War on Terror casualty count to 32 that day. Let us bow our heads.”

An intense, multi-day search and rescue operation followed. First responders recovered remains of eight of the 10 service members a few miles off the southern coast of the Negros Islands.

During the ceremony, U.S. Army Col. Fran Beaudette, commander of JSOTF-P, and the JSOTF-P Senior Enlisted Advisor, Command Sergeant Major Frank Gilliland, laid a wreath at the base of a memorial plaque. A bell rang as each of the names of the fallen was recited.

Lost were: U.S. Army Maj. Curtis D. Feistner; Army Capt. Bartt D. Owens; Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jody L. Egnor; Army Staff Sgt. James P. Dorrity; Army Staff Sgt. Kerry W. Frith; Army Staff Sgt. Bruce A. Rushforth Jr.; Army Sgt. Jeremy D. Foshee; Spec. Thomas F. Allison; Air Force Master Sgt. William L. McDaniel II and Air Force Staff Sgt. Juan M. Ridout.

“Ten years ago, the lives of 10 families changed forever,” said Beaudette as he addressed the crowd, which included a joint formation of U.S. and Philippine forces. “Take time to think about these 10 names and those hundreds of thousands of Americans and Filipinos before them who led them home and accomplished their missions, as we’ll accomplish ours.”

U.S. Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines was established to support the Armed Forces of the Philippines in its fight against trans-national terrorism. Since its inception, 17 U.S. service members have died while advising and assisting Philippine forces with efforts to secure peace and stability in the Mindanao Region.



NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND



Members of the East Coast SEAL and Special Warfare Combat Crewman Scout Team met with prospective National Football League players at the Eastern Regional NFL Combine in Baltimore, Md., Feb. 11. The SEAL and SWCC Scout Team has a professional partnership with the NFL to target a qualified and diverse group of athletes for the U.S. Navy's Special Warfare programs.

SEALs and SWCCs meet with prospective players at NFL combine

*Story and photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class William Parker
Naval Special Warfare Group 2 Public Affairs*

Members of the East Coast SEAL and Special Warfare Combat Crewman Scout Team met with prospective National Football League players at the Eastern Regional NFL Combine in Baltimore, Md., Feb. 11.

The U.S. Navy has formed a mutual partnership with the NFL to raise career opportunity awareness about the U.S. Navy and its Special Warfare programs for potential non-selected NFL draftees.

“Unfortunately, not all the players will get a chance to enter the 2012 NFL draft,” said Master Chief Petty Officer (SEAL) Shawn Johnson. “The SEAL and SWCC programs offer these guys other potential opportunities that they may not have thought about before.”

At the conclusion of each of the offensive and defensive tryout sessions, the team of Navy SEALs and SWCCs presented a brief on Special Warfare programs, and spoke about the linkages between special warfare operators and professional athletes.

“They make sacrifices, they work in a team oriented environment, they know how to push themselves and train towards a goal,” said Johnson. “They’re characteristics we look for in SEAL & SWCC candidates.”

The SEAL and SWCC Scout Team discussed how a football player’s background correlates with the characteristics and values of potential SEAL candidates.

“Our partnership with the SEAL and SWCC Scout Team is a great thing,” said Stephen Austin, the NFL Director of Operations for the NFL League Office in New York. “It’s implanting a thought that may enable these players to commit to an even higher goal”

SEALs help train Olympic Sailing Team

*Story and photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class John Lamb
Navy SEAL and SWCC Scout Team Public Affairs*

Navy SEALs put 38 men and women from the United States Olympic Sailing team through an afternoon and morning of cold, gritty SEAL-candidate training at Memorial Park near the Olympic Training Center, Colorado Springs, Colo., March 10-11.

The SEAL and SWCC Scout Team, at the request of Olympic Training Center staff and U.S. sailing Coach Kenneth Andreassen, led the sailors through two sessions of grueling exercises with heavy logs and calisthenics in the frigid cold Colorado wind with the object of sharpening the team's mental edge leading up to the 2012 Summer Olympics in London.

The day began with an education in mental toughness from the SEALs, who taught them how SEALs use goal setting, visualization, and anxiety-suppressing breathing techniques to condition their minds for tough situations. They spoke of their personal trials, failures and accomplishments in Basic Underwater Demolition SEAL training and told the team to prepare themselves for a BUD/S-like test of their willpower. Then the sailing team ran a mile to Memorial Park to warm up for a bonding experience they would never forget.

The men and women endured countless push-ups, performed teamwork exercises, lifted heavy logs, immersed themselves in a frigid nearby lake, and rolled in dirt until they were filthy from head to toe. Then they did it again and again until they were exhausted and had to dig deep down inside themselves to persevere.

"I think today was fantastic," said Andreassen. "It was phenomenal and it really taught us some good lessons. When things get tough, we have to keep on going. You have to put yourself in tough situations because if you can manage that, you can manage anything."

Andreassen knew working with the SEALs would be special, but he never knew his sailors would be pushed so far.

"I pictured a tough day but it was tougher than I expected," Andreassen said. "Our guys and girls are going to look back on this and know they have more confidence



Members of the U.S. Olympic sailing team carry a 220-pound log during Navy SEAL "mental toughness" training near the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., March 9. The sailing team, which will represent the United States in the 2012 Summer Olympics in London, participated in team building exercises and learned how to be more mentally tough from Navy SEALs assigned to the Navy SEAL and Special Warfare Combatant-Craft Crewman Scout Team in San Diego.

and they can face the tougher conditions."

Amanda Clark, skipper, said learning mental toughness techniques, such as goal setting, would go a long way in competing against the world's best sailing teams.

"I think everything in goal setting rings true," Clark said. "It's race to race, tack to tack. It's not looking at something as big as the Olympics because it is so long that it can distract us from achieving our goals."

Meanwhile, the SEALs at Naval Special Warfare have had the satisfaction of watching the athletes be successful and spread their message of SEAL career awareness to high-performance athletes.

"We'll be watching them," said one SEAL, "and hope they get medals for the United States."



A 522nd Special Operations Squadron MC-130J Commando II aircraft, flies over the skies of New Mexico Jan. 4. The 522 SOS is stationed at Cannon Air Force Base, N.M., and the MC-130J provides in-flight refueling, infiltration/exfiltration and aerial delivery resupply of Special Operations Forces. Photo by Senior Airman James Bell.

MC-130J name change promotes modern missions, preserves heritage

*By Ashley M. Wright
AFSOC Public Affairs*

Officials announced a popular name change for the MC130J AT Hurlburt Field, Fla., March 9, that honors the Air Commando legacy and capitalizes on the versatility of the aircraft.

“Air Force Special Operations Command MC-130Js will be equipped to fly various missions and will be called Commando II,” said Lt. Gen. Eric Fiel, the AFSOC commander, in the memorandum requesting the change. “This name best reflects the multi-mission role of the aircraft and the units that will fly them.”

The Commando II flies low-visibility, low-level air refueling missions for special operations helicopters and tilt-rotor aircraft, and infiltration, exfiltration and resupply of Special Operations Forces by airdrop or airland, including politically sensitive or hostile territories, according to the official Air Force fact sheet.

The aircraft’s popular name previously was Combat Shadow II. Alternate names considered included Combat Knife and Combat Arrow. A popular name, according to the joint service Air Force Instruction 16-401(I), “characterizes aerospace vehicle missions and aid communications and media references.”

The process for requesting the name change began in September 2011, said Don Purvis, an AFSOC logistics management specialist. The memorandum from the AFSOC commander was sent to the asset identification flight at Air Force Material Command headquarters. From that point, a review was conducted by several agencies, including the Air Force Judge Advocate General and Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs.

“This is one of the first name changes we approved,” said Keven Corbeil, a Defense Department popular name control point in the flight. “I think ‘Commando’ had historical (significance for AFSOC).”



The MC-130J, formerly called the Combat Shadow II, is now known as the Commando II, is marshaled into place at Cannon Air Force Base, N.M., Sept. 29, 2011. Photo by Airman 1st Class Xavier Lockley.

In addition to reflecting the current missions of AFSOC, the name change honors the legacy of the C-46, the original Commando. According to the AFSOC commander’s memorandum, the new name “embodies the broader lineage of Special Operations Forces aircraft.”

The C-46 was used extensively during the Cold War and Korean War by various government agencies, said Herb Mason, the AFSOC historian. It doubled the payload and range of the C-47, which it replaced.

Just like its descendent, the original Commando performed a variety of missions. The C-46 was most famous for its operations in the Far East. The Commando was a workhorse in ‘flying the hump’ over the Himalayan Mountains, transporting desperately needed supplies from bases in India and Burma to troops in China. A variety of transports had been employed in the effort, but only the C-46 was able to handle the adverse conditions, according to an executive staff summary sheet for the popular name change request.

Commando II replaces the aging special operations forces fleet of 37 MC-130E and P tankers. The first aircraft arrived at Cannon Air Force Base, N.M., Sept. 29, 2011.



Special Tactics Airmen redeploy back home, receive one-on-one injury rehabilitation

*By Staff Sgt. David Salanitri
U.S. Air Forces Central Public Affairs*

Recently, a squadron of special tactics Airmen returned to the U.S. after serving a deployment rotation in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

During their rotation in Afghanistan, more than 60 percent of the squadron received a combat related injury, yet 100 percent of the time, they kept pressure on the enemy.

The squadron of 80 to 90 Airmen has been submitted for more than 200 awards and decorations, to include the Silver Star.

During their deployment, the Airmen brought a dynamic capability to the battle space. With that capability comes a challenge -- maintaining healthy operators.

“We value the man more than we value the hardware,” said Lt. Col. Chris Larkin, 23rd Special Tactics Squadron, Hurlburt Field, Fla. “The human being is the only weapons system we don’t have a maintenance system for. Airframes like the C-130, F-35, F-22 -- they all have maintenance systems in place. What we’re creating for our operators is a maintenance program.”

What Larkin is referring to is a dynamic program currently in the test phases at the 23rd STS. The program includes preparing air commandos for the rigors of battle, yet treating the human body as if it’s going through a marathon and not a sprint. Their goal is to build an Airman who can stay healthy and perform well for their entire career and not just for a few years.

The men of the expeditionary special tactics



Capt. Danielle Schnitker, 23rd Special Tactics Squadron physical therapist, stretches the back muscles of a combat controller assigned to the 23rd STS. Schnitker mainly works on combat-related injuries providing daily physical therapy to help with recovery, lower injury rates and ensure Airmen are deployment ready. Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Steven Pearsall.

squadron that Larkin commanded in Afghanistan shouldered a heavy responsibility -- linking the battlefield with decisive air power.

“We bring airpower to the fight,” said Larkin. “Our combat controllers, TACPs (Tactical Air Control Party), PJs (Pararescuemen) and SOWT (Special Operations Weather Team) bring the air-to-ground integration for the SOF (Special Operations Forces) on the battlefield.

“If one of our guys goes down and we can’t support a unit, the worst case scenario, the unit goes out and gets ambushed. The ground unit won’t have the ability to leverage air power in defense of their force.”

Something unique all Air Force Special Operators possess is the ability to push on with the mission. Staff Sgt. Colby Fisher, a combat controller, is no different.

Going into this deployment, Fisher had more than three years of training. It was that very training that prepared him for what he would face during a fire fight when he was shot and wounded.

“I knew what to expect when I got wounded,” said Fisher “When I got hit, I looked down and knew it wasn’t that big of a deal. I saw some bone fragments, but I pushed on.

“My first thought was to get out of the kill zone. Once I took cover and stopped the bleeding, my next thought was that we’re still being shot at. The guy I was training during that mission called in my nine-line (report process for medical evacuation). I requested to stay and work. My boss in charge said that if our aircraft got here first, I could work it to bring in fire, but if the MEDEVAC gets here before, I’m out. The MEDEVAC arrived first.”

Though Fisher was out of the ground fight with a

shattered tibia for the time being, he’s now fighting to get healthy enough to deploy again later this year.

“At first, I was curious as to what was going to take place,” said Fisher. “I had a good support network. Doctors were saying full recovery from the beginning. My unit had someone by my side all the way from the theater back to the States.”

Fisher is averaging 10 hours of rehab training each week with his squadron’s physical therapist. If Fisher wasn’t part of Air Force Special Operations Command, he may receive as little as one hour every two weeks, according to Larkin.

Sadly, it is doubtful that Fisher will be the last

Special Operator injured on the battlefield. However, Larkin and the leaders at Air Force Special Operations Command take preparation and recovery of their Airmen very seriously.

“We’re trying to prepare the SOF operator as best as humanly possible using all modern day technology to prepare them for the job and the combat environment.

“We have to maximize the force we have,” said Larkin. “We’re going to give them a long, healthy career. Hopefully injuries

will go down and recovery time will be reduced.”

Larkin talks about this topic with a passion. A telephone interview that was scheduled for 15 minutes ends at more than an hour.

“As a commander, I’m always concerned with the safety and health of my people,” said Larkin. “I know in my heart we are providing the best training and equipment. Each operator has been personally checked out before entering the theater and upon redeployment. My goal is to prepare them to do the job we ask them to do.”

“My first thought was to get out of the kill zone. Once I took cover and stopped the bleeding, my next thought was that we’re still being shot at. The guy I was training during that mission called in my nine-line (report process for medical evacuation). I requested to stay and work. My boss in charge said that if our aircraft got here first, I could work it to bring in fire, but if the MEDEVAC gets here before, I’m out. The MEDEVAC arrived first.”

— Staff Sgt. Colby Fisher, Combat Controller



MARSOC Marines get immersed in training



Marines participating in the Ranger Amphibious Assault Course in Key West Fla., March 19 through 30, learn how to right a capsized Zodiac. The Zodiac is a rigid hull inflatable boat that the students must become proficient in quickly putting together, piloting and righting if capsized. This training is part of the Marine Corps Special Operations Individual Training Course, which all students must complete before becoming a Critical Skills Operator. Throughout the course, the Marines carried a blue rubber training weapon with them at all times. Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Larry W. Carpenter Jr.





MARINE CORPS FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



Marines participating in the Ranger Amphibious Assault Course in Key West Fla., March 19 through 30, camouflage themselves using sand on the beach while performing beach reconnaissance. The Marines are trained to make their way to the beach from the water to perform a survey of the area to determine if it's a suitable location to bring in follow-on forces. They must use whatever material available to blend into their surroundings to avoid being detected. Throughout the course, the Marines carried a blue rubber training weapon with them at all times. Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Larry W. Carpenter Jr.

*By Air Force Master Sgt. Larry W. Carpenter Jr.
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

Sixty-nine Marines hit the beaches at the Ranger Amphibious Assault Course during the second phase of the Marine Corps Special Operations Command's Individual Training Course in Key West, Fla., March 19 - 30.

This is just one of the many courses these Marines must complete in order to become a Critical Skills Operator and join the ranks of the Marine Corps Special Operations Forces.

Ten years of land-locked warfare in Afghanistan and Iraq, MARSOC has not strayed from its amphibious roots, according to Staff Sgt. Chris Dowd, Marine Special Operations School Ranger Amphibious lead

instructor.

Capt. Stephen Detrinis, class 1-12 officer in charge of phase 2, stated that sustaining the Corps' amphibious doctrine directly ties to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. James F. Amos', priorities for the Corps, and getting back to this core mission is also important to SOF.

"[Hitting the beach utilizing Zodiacs] is just an insert technique, but it makes us more well rounded and more employable worldwide with some of the partnership forces we train with down range, and the skill is inline with our commandant's priorities," said Detrinis.

During this course, the students accomplished basic amphibious training with the Zodiac, a rigid hull inflatable boat. The Marines going through the course are also taught scout swimmer techniques, confined space maneuvers, and small craft operations, to include

beach reconnaissance type reporting.

The scout swimmer instruction taught the students how to maneuver without detection while operating under clandestine insertion, and some of the small craft operations skills included the ability for the students to right a capsized Zodiac, the ability to quickly put the Zodiac together and learning to navigate the craft as a team.

Each day the students were required to swim 2 km of open water in full gear and ruck-sack, using only their dive fins. To successfully pass this portion of training, they were required to complete the distance within one hour by the end of the two-week course. They also received classroom instruction on a variety of topics, to include nautical navigation, piloting, how to conduct surveys and how to conduct reconnaissance on a beach. After the classroom instruction, the students hit the water and put the learned techniques into action.

The course culminated in a final exercise where the students demonstrated their proficiency on all of the concepts taught.

“This is a very labor intensive block of training, not only for the students but also for the instructor staff,” said Dowd. “I just can’t get that out enough that these guys are working hard and they are putting out maximum effort at all times, both students and instructors.”

The training is difficult and consists of long days, and this is just one course in more than seven months of intensive training, but according to one student, “it’s a no-brainer” as to why he chose to try and become a Critical Skills Operator.

“I see this as being the next step in my progression,” said Staff Sgt. Richard Powell, ITC student. “I want to work with the most professional Marines that are out there, [and] this is where I believe to be the place where they are at.”

The instructors have high expectations for the students--they expect them to grasp the concepts in the classrooms and then have the wherewithal to apply these concepts in practical application exercises.

“I think it’s important for the Marines to grasp the concept initially and I think that’s where the structure in the classroom comes in, but it is the Individual Training Course, and they’re not going to hold your hand when you’re in a team, especially in combat,” Sgt. James Glendening, ITC student, said of the instructors. “So I

think it’s important they show you the ropes, but I think it’s also important that you can carry your own, to be an independent thinker.”

The skills these Marines learned during this portion of ITC provide a unique capability they will take back to their teams and provide another tool for the SOF community.

“Once all of this training is complete, these Marines will be basically trained in amphibious operations that give the SOF community an increased advantage,” Dowd said. “Right now, a lot of SOF units aren’t training for amphibious operations, but these guys will be trained and will be ready to conduct follow on training; to increase MARSOC’s ability to support SOF as a whole.”

The different skill sets that the students are taught in this course have a lineage in the Corps that dates back to the Marine Raiders during WWII, whose job it was to conduct amphibious light infantry warfare.

“When the Marine Corps established the Raiders, that’s what they were utilized for. The Raiders went ashore, prior to any amphibious operations, and conducted reconnaissance on the beach, which we teach the students here, and secured that beach for that follow on force,” Dowd said. “This course has the hallmark of the Raiders throughout.”



Marines participating in the Ranger Amphibious Assault Course in Key West Fla., March 19 - 30, learn the technique for maneuvering a Zodiac, a rigid hull inflatable boat, by working as a team. The instructor teaches the proper way to paddle the craft to ensure maximum effectiveness from the team. One person is placed in charge of calling out the cadence so that everyone is working in unison. Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Larry W. Carpenter Jr.



USSOCOM taking care of the Force and Families to the next level

*By Marine Corps Master Sgt. F.B. Zimmerman
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

After more than 10 years of combat operations, Special Operations servicemembers and their families are feeling the strains and pressures of multiple deployments and busy training schedules. To ensure everyone within the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has the resources available to them to deal with those stresses, a special task force has been launched.

The Preservation of the Force and Families Task Force (POTFF) was asked to identify problems and underlying symptoms, as well as highlight best practices of service specific and Special Operations Forces programs designed to support servicemembers and their families, stated Adm. Bill H. McRaven, USSOCOM commander, in a Jan. 9, 2012, message to the force and families. He stated the task force gathered information from more than 400 focus groups that consisted of more than 7,000 servicemembers and 1,000 spouses from 55 different units across the globe.

The task force was originally created by McRaven's predecessor, Adm. Eric Olson, and was called the Pressure on the Force and Families Task Force. The name change came about as the command realized it was more than just pressure on the force, according to USSOCOM Command Sgt. Maj. Chris Faris.

"Preservation of the Force and Families is a holistic look at education opportunities, training opportunities, pays and incentives, and all of these things that help keep the SOF Force intact within the Department of Defense and out on the battlefield on behalf of our Nation," Faris said.

One of the top issues the POTFF found, Faris said, was the amount of time SOF servicemembers were spending away from home, even when not deployed.

"That's what we classify as PERSTEMPO, or personnel tempo, and the real crux of the problem for the families is there is no predictability because of this PERSTEMPO issue," Faris said. "One of the quotes that came from the Pressure on the Force and Families Task Force was from a servicemember that stated, 'I can say no to everything, and I

can say yes to nothing,' in conversations with their spouse."

Faris said the command is going to help servicemembers gain some predictability in their schedules by creating "black space," a term coined during a visit to Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command. To create this "black space," USSOCOM is implementing a tool to help track all of a servicemember's time, as well as the commander putting out a policy on personnel tempo that will state a minimum amount of time for every servicemember to be at home.

"SOF consists of type-A-plus personalities that want to focus on the mission, that want to achieve the mission, that never want to say 'no' to anything," Faris said. "When the commander puts out his policy on PERSTEMPO, that's going to cause them to have to probably not train as much as they want to ... they're going to have to shoot a thousand less rounds in a shoot house, or something like that. They're not really going to want to do that, but we've got to save the force from itself and put these policies into place."

Another step being taken to assist the force and families is the development of inter-disciplinary teams and facilities – a one-stop-shop where counseling and medical, rehabilitative and psychological care is offered, according to Faris. This will make it easier for those seeking assistance to get the best help that's right for them.



Command Sgt. Maj. Chris Faris, U.S. Special Operations Command Senior Enlisted Advisor, and his wife, Lisa, tell their personal story to members of the Special Operations Forces Senior Enlisted Academy during a Preservation of the Force and Families briefing March 12 at the Joint Special Operations University. Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Larry W. Carpenter Jr.

“Not everyone is comfortable with talking with a chaplain ... they may be more comfortable talking with a social worker, or they may be more comfortable talking with a psychologist,” Faris said. “You need that one-stop shop where you can walk into the building, and if it's physical, you take care of your physical needs; if it's mental you take care of your mental needs; if it's both, you've got it all there.”

Faris said the idea for these centers came out of the POTFF best practices survey, and are already in use at some commands.

While having the facilities available is one thing, it's another to get SOF members to say they need the help, according to Faris. He said the stigma attached to admitting you need help was another issue brought up to the POTFF. In addition, many people believe they will lose their security clearance if they seek help, and Faris said that's not the case.

“The commander and I are hammering, and all the component commanders are doing a very good job at hammering, that there is no stigma attached to getting help,” Faris said. “You are more courageous for coming forward and getting the help before you do get in some sort of trouble. We're trying to convey to the force to get the help you need early, because if you don't, it will ultimately manifest itself in some sort of negative event that ties the chain of command's hands and forces disciplinary action.

“We have to make sure that everyone understands that the true coward is anyone that tries to talk you out of getting help. The true bravery is stepping forward and raising your hand and saying, ‘I'm having a problem.’ SOF is unique in that people perceive SOF members as having no weaknesses ... there are supposed to be no chinks in your armor. At the end of the day that's an absolute fallacy because no matter whether you're a type-A personality or a type-C personality, you're still a human being. A human being only has X amount of capacity for coping with the things that go on in their life, both at home and while deployed, which for some is nearing 11 years of war.”

Resilience – of both the warfighter and family – was another topic brought up during the initial POTFF study. Faris said to address the SOF member's resiliency, the Human Performance Program is in place. This program is run in consultation with sports trainers, and is designed to teach SOF members to be preventative in terms of injuries, and allows them to recover more quickly.

In terms of family resiliency, Faris said that is still being looked at. He said the programs for the servicemember are great, but the command is still looking at how it can provide

training for the families.

“A spouse or family can attend the same resiliency training that the servicemember does, but it's geared toward their need to be resilient in order to make the servicemember healthier,” Faris said. “As we enter into 11 years of war, what we're finding is the spouse out there is saying, ‘Hey, when he's gone, I've got my own issues. I want resiliency training for me. I don't want to be a cog in his wheel; I want my very own wheel.’”

“You don't marry someone in SOF without taking on a part of the mission yourself, and our families are strong ... they're very strong, but they have certain needs and certain requirements right now that we just are not fulfilling and we're going to address those the best that we can.”

Faris said the services all provide excellent support to the families and servicemembers, and USSOCOM will focus on building on those services to best support the command.

While those services may be out there, Faris said another big issue is communicating they exist and how to receive them. To help with communicating what's available, and to build a network of support, USSOCOM recently launched a Facebook page that will be a one-stop shop for the families.

“The intent of the Facebook page is; one, over-communication is a good thing; and then two, we owe the force updates on what we're doing in terms of Preservation of the Force and Families,” Faris said. “Part of the communication breakdown is -- and everybody in the military is guilty of this -- if you hand me a Family Readiness Group meeting flyer that I'm supposed to take home to my wife, it ends up in the inbox on my desk and I never take it. We can't rely upon the servicemember to be carrying home to the family the progress we're making, and this will be a place for the families to go and see where we're making progress, and we also expect to get some feedback.”

Faris doesn't see OPTEMPO slowing down for SOF units any time soon, but he thinks they can sustain the current pace if USSOCOM implements all the programs it wants to.

“The force has heard the commander, and ultimately, the force, I think, gained a degree of faith in the chain of command that we recognize the issues that are out there, that we're going to take action, and that we are going to hold leaders accountable for implementing the actions that the commander directs in the future,” Faris said. “They hear us talking the talk, and they're waiting to see us walk the walk on this. And if we can achieve the goals that the commander has outlined and that we want to achieve, then I think we can absolutely sustain the current OPTEMPO that the force has.”

An aerial photograph showing the wreckage of a military aircraft in a desert landscape. The wreckage is scattered across the sandy terrain, with some parts appearing to be twisted metal. The background shows a vast, flat desert under a clear sky.

Overview of the wreckage at the Desert One staging area in Iran.

USSOCOM marks 25th anniversary

By Mike Bottoms

USSOCOM Public Affairs

April 25, 1980, was a defining moment for Special Operations as the tragic news of the failed Desert One mission became known that day. President Jimmy Carter announced a secret rescue mission for the Iranian hostages had failed; eight American servicemen were dead and

several others were seriously injured.

The tragedy at Desert One and problems with the Grenada invasion and failure to fix the Special Operations joint mobility issues led Congress to pass the Nunn-Cohen Amendment into law October 1986. The law mandated the President create a unified combatant command for Special Operations with control over its own resources.

The U.S. Special Operations Command was formed April 16, 1987, with responsibility to organize, train and equip U.S. Special Operations Forces from the Army, Navy and Air Force.

Gen. James Lindsay became U.S. Special Operations Command's first commander and served as such from 1987 -1990.

Since Lindsay's command there have been eight subsequent commanders – Army Gen. Carl Stiner (1990 -1993), Army Gen. Wayne Downing (1990 – 1996), Army Gen. Henry Shelton (1996 – 1997), Army Gen. Peter Schoomaker 1997 – 2000, Air Force Gen. Charles Holland (2000 – 2003), Army Gen. Doug Brown (2003-2007), Adm. Eric Olson (2007 – 2011) and commanding today is Adm. Bill McRaven.

Today, USSOCOM has four components consisting of: Naval Special Warfare Command, activated April 16, 1987; U.S. Army Special Operations Command, activated, Dec. 1, 1989; Air Force Special Operations Command, activated May 22, 1990; and the most recent component, Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command, activated Feb. 24, 2006.

There have been six Medal of Honor recipients since USSOCOM was formed.

Army Master Sgt. Gary Gordon and Army Sgt. 1st Class Randall Shughart received the medal posthumously for their attempt to save a downed pilot in Somalia Oct. 3, 1993. Navy Lt. (SEAL) Michael Murphy received his medal posthumously for trying to save his team near Asadabad, Afghanistan June 28, 2005. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael Monsoor (SEAL) received the medal posthumously for diving on a grenade and saving his teammate's lives in Ar Ramadi, Iraq, Sept. 29, 2006. Army Staff Sgt. Robert Miller received the medal posthumously for his actions battling a numerically superior force in Konar Province, Afghanistan, Jan. 25, 2008. Last, Army Sgt. 1st Class Leroy Petry was presented the medal for brave actions in the Paktya Province, Afghanistan, May 26, 2008.

USSOCOM responsibilities have significantly evolved from its original train and equip mission of SOF to the lead combatant commander for planning, synchronizing, and, as directed, executing global operations against terrorist networks.

Today, the war against terrorism continues in Afghanistan. Osama Bin Laden was killed by a SOF team May 2, 2011.

Additionally, the SOF warrior is deployed to more than 95 countries, and spends 365 days each year contributing to the war against terrorism.

The first forces in most conflicts are typically

SOF and the last ones out are going to be SOF. USSOCOM is ideally suited for asymmetrical warfare and is organized to defeat the terrorist threat. The remarkable growth and maturation of Special Operations has been proven on the battlefield since the days of Desert One.

The following examples are significant Special Operations that have taken place since USSOCOM's activation in 1987. The Special Operations highlighted represent the entire spectrum of SOF unique abilities in military operations.

Operation Earnest Will – Persian Gulf

SOF's first tactical operation involved SEALs, Special Boat Units, and Army Special Operations aviators working together during Operation Earnest Will in September 1987.



Operation Just Cause – Panama

The Panama invasion occurred in December 1989. The Joint Special Operations Task Force was commanded by Maj. Gen. Wayne Downing. The task force's mission included the attack on the Panamanian Defense Headquarters and the rescue of American hostage Kurt Muse. The Muse rescue was the first successful hostage rescue since World War II. The 75th Ranger Regiment seized the Omar Torrijos International Airport, enabling the 82nd Airborne Division to enter Panama. The operation ended with Noriega surrendering to SOF and the country established a democratic government.



Operation Desert Storm – SCUD Hunters

Saddam Hussein was unable to battle in the air during Desert Storm because of coalition forces' air superiority. He decided to use SCUD missiles to attack Israel in January 1991. The Joint Special Operations Task Force was given the mission to stop the SCUD attacks on Israel. SOF teams went hundreds of miles inside western Iraq to destroy the SCUD infrastructure.



Operation Provide Comfort - Iraq

In February 1991, Operation Provide Comfort may be the best example of SOF's capability to deal with a large-scale disaster. Hundreds of thousands of Kurds fled to the mountains in northern Iraq and southeastern Turkey. MC-130E Combat Talons led other aircraft to drop emergency supplies for the Kurdish refugees. SOF helped build suitable refugee camps and worked with refugee leaders to organize and distribute the supplies. Civil Affairs units helped with medical assistance, food distribution and daily camp operations. SEALs and Special Boat Unit personnel provided security for the camps, and Psychological Operations units produced thousands of leaflets providing instructions on how to get help within the camps.



Operation Gothic Serpent - Somalia

SOF helicopters carrying special operators from Task Force Ranger at Mogadishu airport were given the mission to capture Somalia's Gen. Muhammad Farah Aideed and his lieutenants in October 1993. During the mission, two MH-60 Blackhawks were shot down forcing a rescue operation. The task force faced an overwhelming Somali mob that overran the crashed helicopter sites, creating a dire situation. Task Force Ranger experienced a total of 17 killed in action and 106 wounded. Army Master Sgt. Gary Gordon and Sgt. 1st Class Randall Shughart were posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for their actions in trying to save a downed helicopter crew.



Operation Uphold Democracy - Haiti

During Operation Uphold Democracy, SOF played a strategic role in securing peace within Haiti. On Oct. 15, 1993, patrol craft with SEALs aboard were used to board ships smuggling contraband into Haiti. President Bill Clinton was dissatisfied with the political oppression in Haiti in July 1994 and authorized an invasion plan. The



invasion was called off when former President Jimmy Carter, Sen. Sam Nunn and retired Gen. Colin Powell brokered a peace deal. SOF set up three forward operating bases with Operational Detachment-Alpha teams keeping law and order in the countryside. A psychological operations campaign using leaflets, radio broadcasts and airborne loudspeaker platforms encouraged cooperation with U.S. forces and avoided bloody conflicts with the former regime. With the assistance of non-governmental organizations, Civil Affairs units rebuilt infrastructure and restored electricity.

Operation Allied Force - Balkans

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization initiated Operation Allied Force March 24, 1999, to put an end to Serbia's violent repression of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. A 78-day bombing campaign eventually forced Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to withdraw his forces from Kosovo. The bombing strategy did not prevent Serbia from forcing an estimated 800,000 refugees out of the country, creating an enormous humanitarian crisis in neighboring Albania and Macedonia. SOF played a strategic role throughout the Balkans region with Civil Affairs units coordinating large-scale humanitarian relief efforts with U.S. governmental agencies and international relief organizations, arranging food, shelter and medical care for the refugee camps. SOF engaged in direct action and special reconnaissance missions, to include AC-130 gunships attacking Serbian positions. SOF also rescued the only two U.S. pilots downed during the war.



Operation Enduring Freedom - Afghanistan

Special Operations Forces achieved spectacular results during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Task Forces Dagger and K-Bar deployed into Afghanistan to prepare for operations in September 2001. Their mission was to conduct unconventional warfare with coalition forces to free Afghanistan from Taliban oppression and to no longer allow the area be a safe haven for terrorist organizations. Shortly after arriving, Army ODA teams augmented by Air Force Special Tactics



personnel and assisted by Afghani opposition forces, infiltrated contested areas. Subsequently, SOF elements coordinated Air Force and Navy attacks against enemy positions while working with coalition forces to arm, train and lead elements under extremely hazardous conditions. The effort led to the complete rout of Taliban and al Qaeda terrorist elements in Afghanistan within 49 days.

Operation Enduring Freedom - Philippines

Operation Enduring Freedom extended into the Philippines. Successful Special Operations began in February 2002, and were implemented on the island of Basilan where



terrorists from the Abu Sayyaf group had taken stronghold. SOF, teamed with their Filipino counterparts, identified Abu Sayyaf strongholds and established bases within their territory, forcing the terrorist group to scatter, thereby separating them from the population. This tactic allowed SOF and the Filipino forces to provide security and to determine what the local needs were. New wells were dug, schools built and hospitals were established so basic medical care needs now can be met throughout the region.

Operation Iraqi Freedom

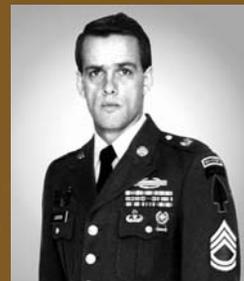
SOF were given key roles in Operation Iraqi Freedom which began on March 19, 2003, such as stopping the lighting of oil fields, preventing the Iraqi V Corps in the north from reinforcing



Baghdad; conducting special reconnaissance and direct action missions in western Iraq; supporting Combined Forces Land Component Command movement from the south toward Baghdad; and interdicting borders and lines of communication. Additional SOF operations included conducting airborne parachute assaults to seize key airfields; participating in efforts to kill or capture key personnel within the Iraqi regime; and seizing and protecting suspected sites where weapons of mass destruction were manufactured. SOF, with conventional forces, captured Saddam Hussein Dec. 13, 2003. Combat operations and Iraqi Freedom ended August 31, 2010. On Dec. 15, 2011, the Iraq War was declared over and the last U.S. troops left Iraq on Dec. 18, 2011.



**USSOCOM
Medal of Honor
recipients**



*Army Master Sgt.
Gary Gordon
Somalia*



*Army Sgt. 1st Class
Randall Shughart
Somalia*



*Navy Lt. (SEAL)
Michael Murphy
Afghanistan*



*Navy Petty Officer
2nd Class (SEAL)
Michael Monsoor
Iraq*



*Army Sgt. Staff Sgt.
Robert Miller
Afghanistan*



*Army Sgt. 1st Class
Leroy Petry
Afghanistan*



Army Sgt. Maj. Kent Dolasky, holding the blue bag, and his daughter, LilyAnn, pass out basic hygienic supplies such as toothbrushes, first aid kits, etc., to the local homeless in downtown Tampa, Fla., March 10. Dolasky and his family have been actively involved in caring for the homeless for more than a year.

Offering hope by the bucket

Joint Special Operations Forces Senior Enlisted Academy commandant helps the homeless

*Story and photo by Anna-Marie Wyant
Joint Special Operations University*

Once a week, Army Sgt. Maj. Kent Dolasky wakes up extra early to pack his kids' lunches and homework while his wife, Lana, cooks a bulk amount of scrambled eggs and pancakes. Dolasky brews a pot of coffee, then packs it in a thermos alongside large foil containers of the freshly-made pancakes and eggs, plus disposable plates, cups and forks, syrup, sugar and creamer. He puts these items in a box and heads out the door for work.

On the way to work, Dolasky stops in downtown Tampa. He sets the containers of food and thermos of coffee on his car. He then begins assembling plates of breakfast and pouring cups of coffee. Meanwhile, more than half a dozen homeless men and women gather around him, smiling and graciously accepting a warm

meal, hot beverage and friendly conversation. When stomachs are full and food is finished, Kent shakes hands, says goodbyes, gets back into his car and finishes his commute to work. He does this every Wednesday.

"I call this my most important meeting of the week," Dolasky said.

While balancing his busy schedule as the commandant of the Joint Special Operations Forces Senior Enlisted Academy, this Green Beret, husband, father and adjunct professor still makes time to be involved in his community. In an effort to help the homeless in Tampa, Dolasky began a volunteer organization in 2010 called Buckets of Hope. He said he got the idea when he saw a homeless man walking downtown in shorts and a T-shirt in near-freezing temperatures.

"I took a worn out kids' backpack that was earmarked for the trash bin and stuffed it full of snacks, socks and a

sweatshirt and dropped it to the neediest looking soul I could find,” he said.

Dolasky said he saw that man wearing the sweatshirt and carrying the backpack for a few months after that initial encounter. He said he delivered his first bucket filled with winter survival items on Thanksgiving 2010 thus, Buckets of Hope was born. Shortly thereafter, he was taking donations for food, blankets, ponchos, and other basic, useful items to fill more buckets to be distributed to the local homeless. Handing out buckets soon evolved; on cold mornings, Dolasky began bringing coffee for the homeless.

“I brought coffee every morning on my way to work for a year,” he said.

While the coffee warmed hands, Dolasky’s compassion and interaction filled a void the buckets could not fill. He said he notices how many people just walk past the homeless quickly without making eye contact, avoiding them like a plague.

“After working with the homeless for nearly a year-and-a-half, I have found that more important than handouts is simply the gift of time,” Dolasky said.

The sergeant major isn’t the only Dolasky involved in Buckets of Hope; his wife, son, and daughter are all involved in some way, whether it’s helping to pack buckets, make pancakes or hand out toiletries.

The Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce recognized Dolasky for his charitable efforts and named him the 2012 Army Military Citizen of the Year during a ceremony Feb. 15. Adm. Bill McRaven, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, congratulated Dolasky on his award.

“You can take pride in this impressive accomplishment that speaks to your dedication and professionalism,” McRaven wrote in a letter to Dolasky.

Dolasky’s citation from the Chamber of Commerce read: “His selfless service to his community and those less fortunate makes him the perfect recipient of this year’s Army Military Citizen Award.”

Dolasky was not only presented the award but was also treated to a free dinner for himself and a guest at the formal event. Without hesitation, Dolasky decided to invite Vincent, a homeless man he had befriended over the past year. To get Vincent the proper attire for the occasion, Dolasky requested the help of his co-workers, who were more than willing to lend a hand. Approximately the same height and build, then JSOU

Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Kimmich offered his best suit for Vincent to borrow for the evening. Dolasky said he has been truly grateful for the support and donations he has received for Buckets of Hope from his co-workers, family, friends, neighbors and local businesses.

Dolasky is working on other ways to help the homeless, including expanding Buckets of Hope to include a new effort called “Huffys for the Homeless,” which accepts and distributes donated bicycles. He said he also wants to help the homeless help themselves, such as aiding them in finding jobs, which would hopefully get them off the streets and into better environments. Shortly after attending the formal dinner with Dolasky, Vincent secured a part-time job. Dolasky said he is committed to the human aspect of giving hope more than the physical act of handing out buckets.

“What is important is that we take the time to recognize [the homeless], learn their names and where they are from, share a cup of coffee and a smile,” he said.

He recognized the positive impact fellow service members and special operators can have on their communities and thinks it’s important for them to be involved. He said while many people look to professional athletes or other celebrities to be role models, his peers should not underestimate their own abilities to make a difference.

“We should feel free to take on tough social issues in our communities - childhood obesity, domestic violence, illiteracy, drugs, alcohol abuse, gangs, et cetera,” he said. “The credibility, influence and legitimacy of a Special Operations Forces operator’s message to our communities trumps these [celebrities] who are being forced into a role model position.”

After receiving much recognition for his community service, Dolasky remains humble and keeps the focus on those in need, encouraging others to make the world a better place, one bucket, cup of coffee, or smile at a time.

“At the end of the day, I’d like to shed some light on these struggling souls and let others know that it is okay to help someone,” Dolasky said. “For me, it is not every man for himself; it is every man gives someone a sense of self. We don’t have to change the world - we just have to help one person change for the better.”





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

A photograph taken from the perspective of a load master inside a Chinook helicopter. The view is looking out through the side door at another MC-130E aircraft in flight. The MC-130E is silhouetted against a bright, colorful sky, likely during a sunset or sunrise, with streaks of orange and red light. The Chinook's rotor blades are visible in the foreground, and the interior structure of the helicopter is partially visible on the left. The overall scene captures a moment of aerial refueling during a military exercise.

A U.S. Air Force load master observes aboard an MC-130E aircraft as a CH-47 Chinook helicopter receives an aerial refueling during Emerald Warrior, above Duke Field, Fla., March 6. The primary purpose of Emerald Warrior is to exercise Special Operations components in urban and irregular warfare settings to support combatant commanders in theater campaigns. Emerald Warrior leverages lessons from Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom and other historical lessons to provide better trained and ready forces to combatant commanders. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Tony R. Ritter.