

***U.S. Special Operations Command  
Parachute Team  
“The Para-Commandos”***



***2023-2024 Support Manual***



**UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND**  
**7701 TAMPA POINT BLVD**  
**TAMPA, FLORIDA 33621-5323**

Special Operations Command Parachute Team, “The Para-Commandos”

MEMORANDUM FOR: Para-Commando Show Sponsors

SUBJECT: Para-Commando Support Requirements

1. On behalf of the United States Special Operations Command’s (USSOCOM) Parachute Team, “The Para-Commandos,” thank you for requesting the Para-Commandos to perform at your event. Our participation is approved, and we will do everything we can to help make your event successful.
2. Our participation comes with some requirements you must fulfill to provide the type of first-class demonstration that you deserve. These requirements are detailed in this manual. Please read this manual thoroughly and complete the described requirements as soon as possible. As a reminder, the members of the Para-Commandos are fully deployable members of USSOCOM, and our support may be cancelled on short notice based on military mission requirements.
3. While at your event, we welcome the opportunity to perform multiple times per day. For air shows, we usually do a practice day/media event the day prior and may also do a night demonstration. For air shows only, we MAY be able to do a tandem skydive with a person nominated by you in conjunction with our practice day. We generally do not conduct tandems in conjunction with our regular show. The tandem must be coordinated well in advance. Details on our tandem program are included in this manual.
4. You can reach us at [Para-Commandos@socom.mil](mailto:Para-Commandos@socom.mil) or by phone at (813) 826-1580 or (813) 826-7714/7719 (office numbers) or (813) 352-2736 (cell phone).
5. We look forward to seeing you soon! Blue Skies!

*Tim Groves*

Timothy J. Groves  
Team Leader

**SHOW FEES:** The Para-Commandos do not have a show fee. All of our performances are free of charge. However, there is support you must provide. That is detailed below.

**LOCAL SHOWS:** For shows in the local Tampa area where we can reasonably arrive, perform, and return to MacDill Air Force Base in the same day, you must provide the team with all of the support listed in this manual, starting with the Paragraph marked "AIRCRAFT." You are also responsible for providing the team with unlimited water. Generally, we consider shows local if they are within a 100-mile radius of MacDill AFB, but other factors are also considered, such as the time of day of your event, route, traffic, and logistical issues associated with your event. The Team Leader makes the decision whether an overnight stay is required based on the safety of the Team.

**CIVILIAN SHOWS REQUIRING OVERNIGHT TRAVEL:** For shows requiring overnight travel, you are responsible for coordinating our logistical support. In general, the team will procure our own rental vehicles. However, in certain markets, you may be requested to provide two FULLY INSURED mini-vans or three full sized SUVs. Team lodging must be provided by the show sponsor. You must reserve and pay for up to ten hotel rooms beginning the night prior to our first performance and the night of our final performance. These rooms must be single occupancy, non-smoking rooms. They must all be at the same hotel and within 15 minutes driving time from your event when possible. Any deviation from these requirements must be coordinated in advance with the Team Leader.

**FOR GOVERNMENT SHOWS REQUIRING OVERNIGHT TRAVEL:** You are responsible to provide all logistical support as detailed above. However, comparable GSA vehicles are suitable substitutes for rental vehicles, and on-base lodging is acceptable.

**FOR AIR SHOWS:** We may perform up to two performances a day (three per day if we are doing a night show on rehearsal/media day). Our first performance is generally at the start of the show and our second performance should be immediately prior or shortly prior to the headline act. We need a minimum of one and a half hours from the time we land from our first jump until we board the aircraft for our second jump. We will need a minimum of 12 minutes for our first show which is typically a Solo Flag jumper followed by a mass formation (see below definition) and a minimum of 15 minutes for our second performance which is typically a full show (see below for definition).

**ADVANCE REPRESENTATIVE:** For shows requiring overnight travel, the team may send an advance representative to your location a day prior to the team's arrival. His role is to prepare for arrival of the team's main element and to assist you in any final coordination.

**AIRCRAFT:** Although we attempt to assist you, it is your responsibility to locate, provide, and if it is a civilian aircraft, pay for a safe, suitable aircraft to be used as our jump platform. The Para-Commandos can jump from aircraft as small as a Cessna 182 and as large as a C-17, providing it is safe to jump and flown by a properly rated pilot. The aircraft may be military or civilian and either fixed or rotary wing. If you coordinate for a military aircraft, you may be responsible for providing logistical support for both the aircrew and the aircraft. These requirements are in addition to the SOCOM Para-Commandos support and must be coordinated with the unit providing the aircraft.

**TEAM ROOM / BRIEFING ROOM / LOCKABLE STORAGE ROOM (Multiple jump/multiple days only):** The team travels with considerable equipment and does daily pre- and post-jump briefings. You must provide a secure room at the show site where we can brief and store our equipment.

**LIAISON:** You must assign someone to be our liaison. This person must be empowered to make decisions and must be available and dedicated to the team throughout the event. If you are the event coordinator, we recommend you assign someone who works with you as our liaison.

**NARRATION:** All of our demonstrations are usually narrated by a Para-Commando. You must provide an adequate public address system that is capable of broadcasting to the entire audience. The microphone must be in a location that provides an unobstructed view of the entire drop zone and the aircraft. For sporting events, the narrator cannot be in the press box and must be on the field. The system must support the ability to play music tracks and a cordless microphone is preferred. **NOTE:** The narration is a key part of our performance and enables us to educate the U.S. public about SOCOM. Time on the microphone is one of our requirements, which we waive in only very limited instances. Additionally, in select cases, the team may provide a script for the show announcer to read during our performance.

**LANDING AREA:** As a general rule, we require a minimum of a 50 yard long by 50 yard wide landing area. We can sometimes jump in smaller areas and sometimes will need larger areas. Landing areas are driven by spectator and team safety and take into account obstacles, wind direction and speed, aircraft type, crowd position, etc. You must submit an aerial photo with requested landing area no later than 60 days prior to your event. The photo of the landing area must have either a physical address or a latitude/longitude coordinate on it. For Air Shows, please submit the entire crowd line, both tarmac and grass as our landing area. It allows us more flexibility in the different shows we can do. During our show you must ensure the landing area is well marked and secured by adequate crowd control measures to ensure the safety of both the team and the spectators. The team leader has final say on size of the landing area. No vehicle movement or unauthorized personnel are allowed in the landing area during a performance.

**PARACHUTE RECOVERY:** You must provide an individual with a dedicated vehicle to recover a jettisoned main parachute should one of the jumpers have a parachute malfunction during the show. The dedicated liaison may double as dedicated parachute recovery.

**PARKING:** We require a parking pass per vehicle (total varies by show) and the parking area must be within 100 yards of the landing area to facilitate moving our equipment.

**SPECTATOR INTERACTION:** For some events we require a dedicated autograph area. Two tables and ten chairs in the general vicinity of our landing area for the team to hand out brochures and sign autographs works perfectly.

**MEDICAL SUPPORT:** An emergency response vehicle with a paramedic or emergency medical technician must be on location or on alert nearby. If the medical technician is not on site, the sponsor must provide a direct phone number to the pre-alerted medical element.

**WATER HAZARDS:** If there is a significant body of water near the landing area, a rescue boat with crew must be available to recover any jumpers who land there, either accidentally or as a pre-planned alternate landing site. The Team Leader will inform you if you need to coordinate for this coverage based on his assessment of the landing area from your aerial photo. If water recovery is needed, you can usually coordinate with the local police to provide this coverage.

**SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS:** The Para-Commandos will attempt to attend your social functions, if invited. If you would like the team to attend your gathering, please inform us of the date, time, location and appropriate attire, as well as any special requests associated with the engagement at least 7 days prior to the event. Attendance at the social must be at no charge unless the cost of the event includes a meal which is within the per diem rate of the area.

**WEATHER CONSIDERATIONS:** Weather conditions must be within the limitations of the Federal Aviation Administration regulations and our standard operating procedures. Winds cannot be excessive and differ depending on hazards in the area, direction, size of the landing area, turbulence, and many other factors. The Team Leader is responsible for the safety of both the team and the crowd and he will make the final Jump/No Jump decision, in consultation with the show sponsor.

**SMOKE:** For shows in the Tampa area, we will provide our own smoke and/or pyrotechnics. For shows outside the Tampa area, smoke is the responsibility of the show sponsor. For military shows, we require military issue, M18 RED Smoke, DODAC #G950. Generally, we require at least one case a day. It is your responsibility to acquire it, secure it, issue it, return it, and to dispose of the residue. It must be delivered to the jump aircraft and/or team room daily and the residue picked up at the same location at the conclusion of the day. For civilian shows, there is comparable civilian smoke that can be purchased. We will provide you quantities needed along with a vendor in your area. You will order the smoke, pay for it and issue it to us on our arrival. At the end of the show we will return any leftover smoke along with the residue for your disposition.

**Types of Demonstration Jumps:** The type of show we do depend on the event, time available, and the sponsor's needs.

**SOLO FLAG JUMPER FOLLOWED BY A MASS FORMATION (Flag/Mass Jump):** With the exception of sporting events, our shows generally start with one or two demonstrators deploying shortly after exiting the aircraft at a lower altitude (5,000' AGL and below), with trailing/circling aerobatic aircraft when available. After the main parachute opens, the jumper deploys a flag (usually the US Flag, the SOCOM Flag or the POW/MIA flag), and lands in the target area, often in conjunction with music such as the National Anthem. One to three minutes after the Solo Flag Jumper lands, the rest of the team simultaneously exits the aircraft and builds a free fall formation. At a pre-determined altitude, the team members separate, open their parachutes, and land in the target area. This show normally takes 10-12 minutes to perform. Our show time starts with the narrator taking the microphone 1-3 minutes prior to the solo jumper exiting the aircraft and ends after the last team member lands, waves to the crowd, and the Narrator wraps up his narration and passes the microphone back to the host. **NOTE:** For all shows we require a streamer pass over the landing area. During the streamer pass we fly over our landing area and throw colored paper streamers out of the aircraft from 2500 feet AGL. The purpose of the

streamer pass is to determine wind direction / speed and is generally 10-15 minutes before the show begins. Off-site streamer passes (e.g. golf tournaments) may also be conducted when flying over the landing area is not practical.

**FULL SHOW:** Our full show involves several different maneuvers and involves multiple jump passes during which we get out in smaller groups. Our full show typically lasts 15 minutes.

**LOW SHOW:** Our low show is done in the place of either the full or mass show when weather, altitude restrictions, or sponsor needs require us to exit at or below 5,000 feet AGL (2000 AGL is absolute minimum and several criteria must be met). We have several different variants of our low shows and will tailor our performance to fit the situation. Our low shows take 10 – 12 minutes to complete.

**SPECIAL DEMONSTRATIONS / STADIUM JUMPS:** These are for high visibility events such as professional or college sporting events where one of our other shows would not be suitable. The planning estimate for our stadium shows is six minutes and goes from the time our narrator takes the microphone and ends after all jumps are down, cleared off the field, and hands the microphone back to the MC. There are things we can do to shorten this, and we can discuss these in the weeks prior to the event. **NOTE:** We do NOT jump into stadiums while there are people on the playing surface. As a general rule, the playing field **MUST** be completely clear. We make small exceptions to this requirement such as color guards, national anthem singers, etc., and again these can be discussed in the weeks prior to the event.

**NIGHT JUMPS:** The Para-Commandos do have a night jump capability. Our night jumps include a short freefall followed by a canopy landing in the well-lit target area. All of our jumpers will be marked with high visibility strobe lights and/or night pyrotechnics. Ensure you let us know if any portion of our performance(s) is after sunset and before sunrise.

**TANDEM:** The SOCOM Para-Commandos have a Tandem Program and may be able to do a tandem jump in conjunction with your **air show**. If you want to pursue a Tandem in conjunction with your **air show**, you must enquire with the Para-Commandos on availability NLT 60 days prior to your event. Our ability to do tandems in conjunction with your **air show** is limited by both availability of properly qualified personnel and the type of aircraft we are jumping. If we have the right combo of aircraft and personnel, you must provide us with your nominee's name NLT 30 days prior to your show. We recommend you nominate someone who will help increase the attendance at your event, such as the local mayor, news anchor, etc. The nominee must be in good health and weigh less than **200lbs**. If your event is not an air show or we do not have the right combination of personnel and aircraft at your event, you may nominate a qualified person to tandem with us at another time and place.

**ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS:** We **REQUIRE** that you publicize the Para-Commandos participation in your event and include our information on your website, programs, at your media center, etc. Please ensure you call us by the appropriate name – SOCOM Para-Commandos! Not “Jump Team,” “Skydiving Team,” “Our Jumpers,” etc. Our job is to educate the public about the U.S. Special Operations Command and our name is a big part of that! We will assist you by providing you with press releases, fact sheets, photos, etc. Our Facebook (FB) page is [www.facebook.com/SOCOMParachuteTeam](http://www.facebook.com/SOCOMParachuteTeam). We use FB for advertising and cross-

promotion, so make sure to tag us in all your social media posts that reference our participation in your event. You can also use **#ParaCommandos**. Our Instagram page is **@socomparacommandos**. We will also schedule media engagements featuring our participation at your event. If you have a media contact list for your area, please share it with us. You know your media market best. At the end of each our shows, if appropriate and time permits, we will interface with spectators, take pictures, sign autographs, etc. For traveling shows, if there are any school visits or civic groups you would like team members to address please let us know 30 days out so we can make proper arrangements.

## SPONSOR CHECKLIST

NLT 60 DAYS PRIOR TO YOUR EVENT (Sooner is better) Submit properly filled out DD Form 2535 to [para-commandos@socom.mil](mailto:para-commandos@socom.mil) (instructions on filling out the form are on the Para-Commandos page under [www.socom.mil](http://www.socom.mil)).

- Submit aerial photo with Lat/Long or physical address with DZ location marked
- Submit request for single VIP tandem (air show media days ONLY)

NLT 45 DAYS PRIOR TO YOUR EVENT (Sooner is better!)

- Contact [para-commandos@socom.mil](mailto:para-commandos@socom.mil) for approval/disapproval status
- Make hotel reservations IAW guidance provided above
- For Air Shows ONLY – Coordinate(s) for Tandem, if applicable

NLT 30 DAYS PRIOR TO YOUR EVENT

- Ensure hotel rooms and rental vehicles are reserved, if applicable
- Coordinate for suitable jump aircraft
- Coordinate for smoke & smoke security
- Designate a liaison to the PCs
- Coordinate for Medical Coverage (Where will they be and how do we contact them?)
- Coordinate for Water Recovery (If required by Team Leader)
- Coordinate for Parachute Recovery (Can be Team Liaison)
- Coordinate for Sound System
- Coordinate for Smoke Security (If required)
- Coordinate for school visits or civic group presentations
- Nominate Tandem Candidate, if applicable

NLT 7 DAYS PRIOR TO YOUR EVENT

- Do telephonic walk through / talk through of your event with Para-Commando POC
- Provide a written detailed timeline of your event
- Provide list of social engagements, VIPS in attendance and special requests
- Ensure adequate landing area marking / crowd control plan is in place

NLT 1 DAY PRIOR TO YOUR EVENT

- Meet Advance Man or do final telephonic walk through / talk through
- Provide parking passes and credentials

EVENT DAY: Meet entire team at landing area at pre-coordinated time. At that time:

- Go over timeline
- Deliver smoke, flags, football and/or other items
- Water recovery must be in place with contact method (if required)
- Medic must be in place with contact method
- Parachute recovery liaison must be in place with contact method
- Landing Area must be marked with crowd control mechanisms in place
- Sound system must be in place
- Unlimited drinking water MUST be available at no cost