



# Tip OF THE Spear

United States Special Operations Command  
MacDill Air Force Base, Florida

August 2018



## CHAPMAN POSTHUMOUSLY RECEIVES MEDAL OF HONOR





# U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



**Chapman posthumously receives Medal of Honor ... 23**

## Tip of the Spear

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*(Cover) Technical Sgt. John A. Chapman, a Special Tactics Combat Controller, was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his extraordinary heroism in March 2002 while deployed in Afghanistan. His family accepted the Medal of Honor during a White House ceremony, August 22. Chapman distinguished himself on the battlefield through "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity," sacrificing his life to preserve those of his teammates. Chapman was part of a joint special operations reconnaissance team that came under overwhelming enemy fire during a heroic rescue attempt on Takur Ghar mountain, Afghanistan, on March 4, 2002. Courtesy photo illustration.*

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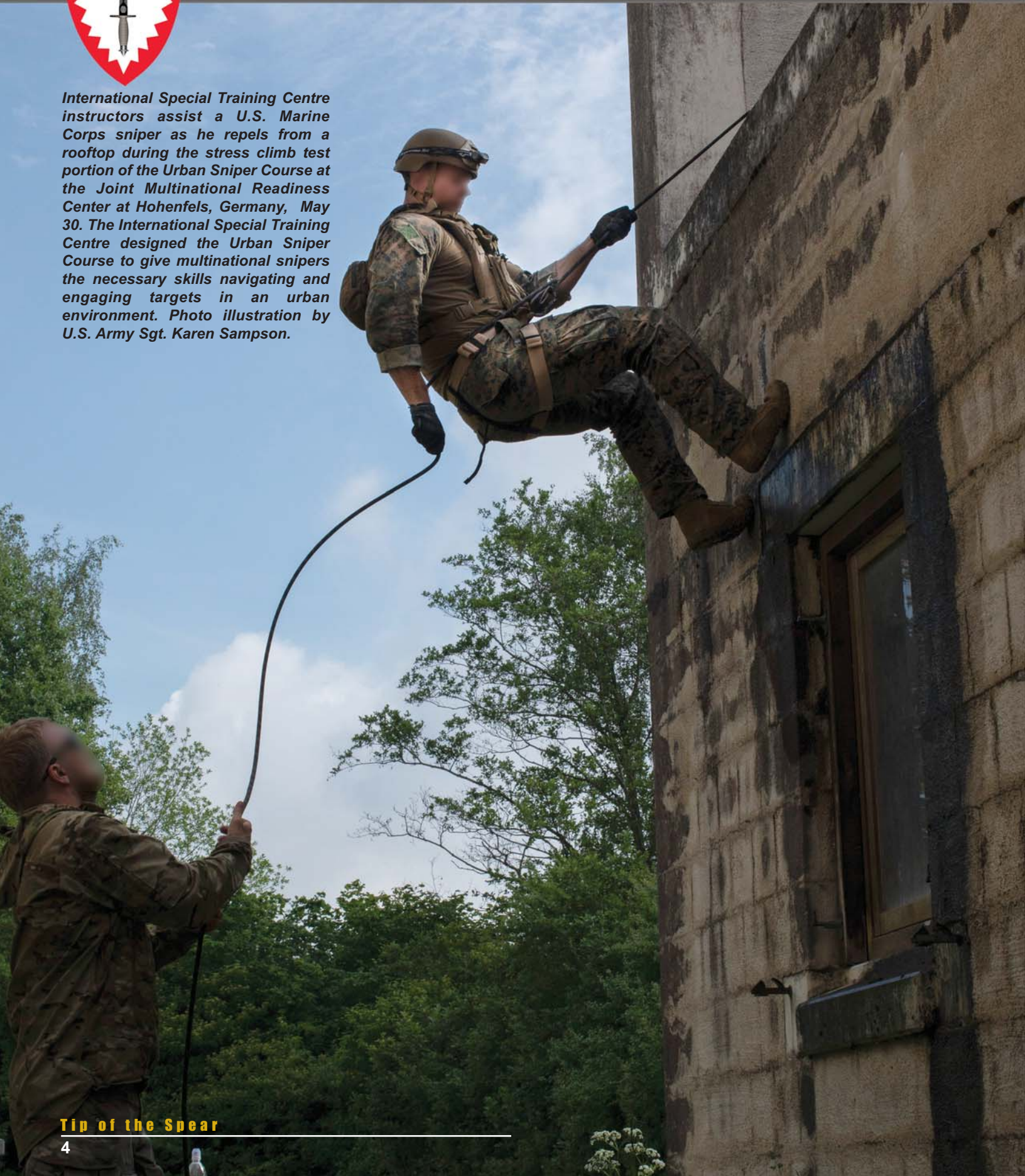
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**SOF AROUND THE WORLD**  
**SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND – EUROPE**

*International Special Training Centre instructors assist a U.S. Marine Corps sniper as he repels from a rooftop during the stress climb test portion of the Urban Sniper Course at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center at Hohenfels, Germany, May 30. The International Special Training Centre designed the Urban Sniper Course to give multinational snipers the necessary skills navigating and engaging targets in an urban environment. Photo illustration by U.S. Army Sgt. Karen Sampson.*



# NATO snipers train in urban terrain at Joint Multinational Readiness Center

By U.S. Army Sgt. Karen Sampson  
U.S. Special Operations Command Europe

Sniper teams from multiple NATO countries completed an Urban Sniper Course at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, May 27 – June 10.

Snipers attended from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Norway and the United States. This annual, two-week course is hosted by the International Special Training Centre.

Located in Pfullendorf, Germany, the ISTC is a U.S. armed forces-led education and training facility for tactical level, advanced and specialized training of multinational special operations forces and similar units. This training center employs the skills of multinational instructors and subject matter experts.

The course is designed to provide experienced snipers additional skills that focus on tactical movement and establishing shooting positions in urban terrain.

“ISTC’s special aspect is bringing the multinational sniper teams together to train,” said a U.S. ISTC instructor. “Seeing another country’s team plans and operations in the same environment is when the learning starts.”

Classes include evaluating urban terrain, shooting through window glass, as well as climbing and establishing hides in buildings.

“The urban sniper course instructs the use of urban infrastructure in their planning and tactical infiltration,” said the ISTC instructor.

The sniper teams participated in a live-fire range shooting targets through different types of glass set at various distances.

“It’s a rare opportunity to learn how shooting through types of glass can affect your shot trajectory,” said a sniper from the Netherlands. “We are learning to adjust fire to offset that deviation.”

Midway through the course the sniper teams



**A sniper fires through a glass target May 28, during the Urban Sniper Course at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center at Hohenfels, Germany. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Karen Sampson.**

participated in a stress shooting test. The timed, fast-paced test measured precision targeting under strenuous conditions.

“Hohenfels training area contributes greatly to the course allowing teams to use military operations on urban terrain sites equipped with realistic storefronts, households with furnishing and multilevel buildings,” said the instructor.

Next, the teams tested on infiltrating, engaging their target, and exfiltrating the city undetected.

“Within the urban environment, the most dangerous threat would be encountering another sniper,” said a sniper from the U.S. Marines.

The whole class agreed.

ISTC’s Urban Sniper Course teaches sniper teams to handle threats in an urban environment without being detected.

The course culminates with a field tactical exercise. Each team performed different missions over the three-night exercise, which included infiltrating a cityscape of complex obstacles while confronted with scenario driven events.



## SOF AROUND THE WORLD SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND – SOUTH



Colombia commandos present the Fuerzas Comando trophy during the FC18 closing ceremony, July 26, at the Instituto Superior Policial, Panama. Fuerzas Comando is a competition executed by Special Operations Command South that improves the training, readiness, interoperability, and capability of regional special operations forces. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Alexis Velez

# Colombia takes Fuerzas Comando trophy, 9th victory since 2004

*By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brian Ragin  
Special Operations Command South*

The skies of Panama briefly cleared up after what started off as a wet morning, and forecasted to rain day. After nine wet, hot and humid days in the jungles of Panama, Fuerzas Comando, the U.S. Southern Command-sponsored and Special Operations Command South executed competition, came to an end with a closing ceremony at the Instituto Superior Policial, Panama, July 26.

Distinguished visitors, which included senior

leadership from the 17 participating countries, gathered together to celebrate another successful competition.

The commanding general of Special Operations Command South U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Antonio Fletcher thanked the distinguished visitors, Minister Alexis Bethancourt Yau, Ministry of Public Security and the people of Panama for their hospitality and their welcomes.

“Before presenting the teams and top awards for this year’s competition,” said Fletcher. “I would like to recognize and congratulate everyone on the coordination, preparation, and execution of Fuerzas

Comando 18. “

For the fifth time since 2012 and ninth time overall, the team from the Republic of Colombia has won the coveted Fuerzas Comando trophy.

The U.S. team comprised of members assigned to the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne), placed second and Ecuador was third.

“The biggest winner in Fuerzas Comando is always the region,” said Fletcher. “The camaraderie, respect, trust and partnership strengthened during the competition means we continue expanding our level of interoperability and cooperation.”

In addition to the first three places, Brazil, Honduras, El Salvador, Chile, Jamaica, the hosting country Panama and Argentina were among the top 10 nations in Fuerzas Comando 18. Other countries that participated were Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Paraguay, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Trinidad and Tobago commandos were recognized for completing one of the events canceled due to weather conditions.

Teams in Fuerzas Comando 18 challenged each other in a friendly competition which promotes military-to-military relationships, increases interoperability, and improves regional security.

“In closing, while today we may only have one champion, our region is the biggest winner,” said Fletcher.

Fuerzas Comando is scheduled to take place in the South American nation of Chile in the summer of 2019.



*Dominican Republic commandos observe a teammate while shooting his weapon in preparation for Fuerzas Comando 18 on a shooting range in Panama City, Panama, July 15. Fuerzas Comando is an annual multinational special operational forces skills competition sponsored by U.S. Southern Command and hosted this year by the Ministry of Public Security, Panama. Through friendly competition, this exercise promotes interoperability, military-to-military relationships, increases training knowledge, and improves regional security. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brian Ragin.*



*(Above) Commandos step off from the starting point of a 20-kilometer ruck march during Fuerzas Comando, July 17, at the Instituto Superior Policial, Panama. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brian Ragin.*

*(Left) A Colombian commando runs to the finish line after completing a range as part of Fuerzas Comando, July 18, at the Instituto Superior Policial, Panama. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brian Ragin.*



# **SOCSOUTH, regional partners conclude exercise Panamax 2018**

*By U.S. Army Maj. Cesar H. Santiago  
Special Operations Command South*

Special Operations Command South hosted military personnel from the partner countries of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago from July 30 – Aug. 10 as part of this year's Panamax in Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla.

Panamax is an annual U.S. Southern Command-sponsored multinational exercise focused on ensuring the security of the Panama Canal. The multinational exercise provides participating forces an opportunity to conduct security and stability operations, practice

interoperability, and increase collaboration and ability to plan and execute complex multinational operations.

During Panamax 2018, SOCSOUTH served as the headquarters location for the Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command. The CFSOCC facilitates the coordination, command and control, plans, and processes of several SOF formations while simultaneously synchronizing special operations with conventional forces.

The two-week long exercise began with an academic overview of the functions and roles of the staff in a joint and combined operational environment. The execution of the scenarios provided a chance for the CFSOCC staff personnel to establish and perform command and control processes at the special



*U.S. Navy Adm. Kurt W. Tidd, commander of U.S. Southern Command, and U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Antonio Fletcher, commander of Special Operations Command South, receive an operational update during Panamax 18 at U.S. Special Operations Command South, Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla., Aug 7. Panamax 18 is designed to develop and test participating nations' capabilities to respond to a wide variety of air, land, sea, space, and cyber missions as a unified force. Photo by U.S. Army Maj. Cesar H. Santiago.*



operations component level in a challenging simulated training that addresses the interoperability and readiness of emerging and enduring partners.

“The exercise scenarios provide nations the opportunity to improve interoperability and joint efforts to counter threats posed by violent and dangerous groups, provide humanitarian relief as necessary, and maintain free and unfettered access to the Panama Canal,” said U.S. Army, Col. Brian Greata, deputy commander, SOCSOUTH.

Panamax first began in 2003 with three countries, Chile, Panama and the United States, and originally focused solely on the maritime security of the Panama Canal. Since that time, the exercise has grown to become the region’s largest coalition command post exercise.

Dominican Republic Army Lt. Col. Jose Guerrero, a participant of Panamax for the second year in a row shares what he feels was most valuable to him during this year’s exercise.

“Learning to exchange knowledge in the planning of joint and combined operations, as well as to grow with the experience we provide to each country,” said Guerrero.

For Argentine Special Forces Lt. Col. Martin Stella, the training with partner nation’s was invaluable.

“My personal opinion was a very good exercise, we were able to understand how the strategic, operational and tactical levels work together in a multinational environment,” said Stella. “We know how our partner nations work and how the communication systems work in order to coordinate for the actions and effects in the operations environment.”

The Commanding General of Special Operations Command South U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Antonio Fletcher thanked each of the participants and nations represented, and presented a certificate of appreciation to the CFSOCC staff members during a closing ceremony.

“First I want to thank everyone for their

participation and all the hard work,” said Fletcher. “I was very impressed with all the products and the staff expertise. We are all better prepared after conducting this training and I look forward to working with all you in the future.”

“An important benefit of multinational exercises like Panamax is the professional and personal exchanges that strengthen our bonds across the region and foster long-lasting friendships and an understanding among the

partner nations, ultimately benefiting the security of the region,” said Fletcher.

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—U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Antonio Fletcher

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**Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command partner nations staff members conduct mission analysis during Panamx 18 at U.S. Special Operations Command South, Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla., Aug 6. Panamax provides unique simulated training opportunities, which incorporate scripted, event-driven scenarios, to provide the maximum opportunity to improve interoperability. Photo by U.S. Army Maj. Cesar H. Santiago.**



**SPECIAL OPERATIONS JOINT TASK FORCE- AFGHANISTAN/  
NATO SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMPONENT COMMAND**

*Afghan female tactical platoon members prepare to search a compound during a capability exercise near Kabul, Afghanistan, July 10. The female tactical platoon supports Afghan Special Security Forces during counterterrorism operations, specializing in the search, questioning and medical assistance of women and children. Photo by Martha Schaeffer.*



# Afghan female tactical platoon showcases skill, lethality, train for the fight

*By Martha Schaeffer  
NSOCC-A Public Affairs*

Female tactical platoon members participated in a capability exercise near Kabul, Afghanistan, July 10. The Female Tactical Platoon supports Afghan Special Security Forces during counterterrorism operations, specializing in the search, questioning and medical assistance of women and children.

“When I was little, I loved the Army and I wanted to join,” said a veteran female tactical platoon member. “I want to help. I

wanted to serve my country, and my people. I can do that through the FTP, and I can serve the females of Afghanistan also.”

The female tactical platoon operates in tandem with their male counterparts, assuming the same risks and dangers.

“Our purpose is to help our country, to support our family and our community of Afghanistan. People should have an open mind,” said a young Female Tactical Platoon member. “Women can leave their family for work. We are equal and we have a right to serve our country.”



*Afghan female tactical platoon members complete a 50-yard bear crawl during a physical assessment test, near Kabul, Afghanistan, May 13. The physical assessment is conducted twice a year to assess the women’s physical conditioning and includes a 3-mile run and a series of obstacles. The female tactical platoon supports Afghan Special Security Forces during counterterrorism operations, specializing in the search, questioning and medical assistance of women and children. Photo by Martha Schaeffer.*



# NAVSCIATTS expands Black Sea Initiative to overseas training

*By Angela Fry*  
*Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School*

In front of an audience that included Commander of Bulgarian Navy Rear Adm. Mitko Alexandrov Petev and U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria Eric Rubin, 15 Bulgarian defense force professionals graduated from the Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School's first mobile training team engagement in support of the Black Sea Initiative, held at Varna naval facilities, Bulgaria on Aug. 3.

This mobile iteration of NAVSCIATTS' Patrol Craft Officer Coastal Course was specifically tailored by the U.S. Naval Special Warfare Command to provide coastal patrol craft training in support of the Bulgarian Navy's recent receipt of 11-meter and seven-meter rigid-hull inflatable boats. In addition to providing personnel with the skills required to operate coastal crafts in a patrol setting, the Bulgarian iteration focused on increasing partner nation capabilities, interoperability and addressing regional threats.

In January of 2018, prior to the receipt of the coastal crafts and additional equipment, 34 Bulgarian defense forces trained in multiple courses of instruction at NAVSCIATTS' facilities on the John C. Stennis Space Center in Mississippi in conjunction with the inaugural iteration of the Black Sea Initiative, a semester that also included security force professionals from Poland. The primary instructors utilized for the PCO-C Bulgarian Mobile Training Teams were selected from the recent graduates of the Black Sea semester.

"You have demonstrated the value of NAVSCIATTS' concept of 'train-the-trainer,'" Rubin explained to the three prior NAVSCIATTS' graduates who were utilized as instructor-cadre during the two-week training initiative. "This approach will be critical going forward in this process."

With \$1.6 million in U.S. grant funding, Bulgaria will focus on three lines of effort: maritime training in coastal patrol settings and operational capabilities, training assistance from advanced militaries within the



***Bulgarian naval defense force professionals practice tactical formations on the Black Sea near Varna, Bulgaria with their newly-acquired seven-meter rigid hull inflatable boats. Approximately 15 personnel recently graduated from a Patrol Craft Officer - Coastal course mobile training team engagement sponsored by the Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School. Photo by Angela Fry.***

region and firsthand experience regarding how the U.S. military trains, operates and approaches problems; also known as Defense Institute Building.

"This is a particularly special day because Bulgaria is the first nation in the Black Sea region to receive these boats from the United States," stated the ambassador, who was sworn into the position in January of 2016. "These boats, along with the equipment and training that go with them, cost approximately \$2 million; and will enhance not only Bulgaria's maritime security and sovereignty, but also promote Black Sea and NATO collective security."

With a regional commitment at least into 2020, the intent of the Black Sea Initiative is to develop multi-lateral maritime domain awareness and strengthen regional cooperation by developing special operations forces within the region to meet NATO interoperability standards.

"The increasingly complex challenges and threats in the maritime domain from terrorism, piracy, weapons trafficking and illegal migration all require a

professional maritime force that is ready to respond to the depth and multitude of scenarios. Today's graduates will play an important role in enhancing Bulgaria's readiness and address such challenges," Rubin explained. "While we mark the end of the training today, we also look forward to NAVSCIATTS' Black Sea Initiative, which continues next year amid good participation from both NATO allies and Black Sea regional partners."

Rear Adm. Petev, a U.S. Naval War College graduate who was appointed Bulgarian navy commander in June of 2015, spoke to the audience that consisted of course graduates, two Naval Special Warfare combatant craft instructors, U.S. embassy staff, the NAVSCIATTS' command team of Cdr. John T. Green and Command Master Chief Jimmy Arevalo, local media and other Bulgarian navy delegates.

During the admiral's speech commemorating the end of this stage of the initiative and celebrating the capabilities of the newly-acquired force protection boats, he explained that the donation of the boats and training, both in the U.S. and in Bulgaria, are examples of the cooperation between the two countries regarding defense within the Black Sea region. He further explained that receipt of the tactical vessels give the Bulgarian Navy the ability to respond rapidly in the areas of acts of terrorism, interdiction, search and rescue operations and medical evacuations; all elements that will allow the Bulgarian armed forces to elevate its position within the area's special operations community.

"With Bulgaria's continued commitment to expand its naval capabilities and strengthen regional cohesiveness with future training initiatives, NAVSCIATTS looks forward to working with the partners of the Black Sea as we further regional cooperation and lay the groundwork for lasting global relationships," added Green, who has spent the majority of his military career as a U.S. Navy SEAL.

The next iteration of in-resident training at NAVSCIATTS in support of the Black Sea is scheduled to occur in January of 2019, consisting of NATO allies, to include a large contingency of Bulgarian defense force professionals. These forces will train in a multitude of courses to include: coastal craft training, maintenance courses, tactical communications and intel fusion courses.

Patrol Craft Officer Coastal Course is designed to provide selected military and law enforcement personnel with instruction in mission planning, craft operational checks, navigation using paper charts and onboard electronic navigational equipment, crew-served weapons, maritime interdiction operations and the transport of ground forces.

NAVSCIATTS is an international training center operating under U.S. Special Operations Command in support of foreign security assistance and geographic combatant commanders' theater security cooperation priorities. For more information about NAVSCIATTS and its courses, visit [www.socom.mil/navsoc/NAVSCIATTS/](http://www.socom.mil/navsoc/NAVSCIATTS/).



*Graduates of a recent Patrol Craft Officer - Coastal course mobile training team iteration pose with U.S. Ambassador Eric Rubin (center), Bulgarian Naval Commander Rear Adm. Mikto Petev (center right) and Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School Commanding Officer, Cdr. John Green, at naval facilities in Varna, Bulgaria. The two-week training engagement utilized prior NAVSCIATTS graduates from Bulgaria as instructor cadre in support of the international training center's Black Sea Initiative. Photo by Angela Fry.*



# Stretch of Louisiana highway dedicated to 7th Group hero

By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brian Ragin  
7th Special Forces Group (Airborne)

A stretch of highway was renamed in honor of Staff Sgt. Richard L. Vazquez with a dedication ceremony at DeSoto Parish Courthouse in Mansfield, Louisiana Aug. 6.

Vazquez, a Special Forces weapons sergeant, who was assigned to Company B, 3rd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne), was killed by a roadside bomb in Panjwai province, Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom on November 13, 2013.

Nearly five years after Vazquez’s passing, the groundwork for the highway name change started with a heartfelt request from Vazquez’s mother, Teresa Melton, and came to fruition with an intimate ceremony comprised of family, friends, and members from 7th SFG(A).

Louisiana District 23 Representative Kenny R. Cox, sponsored Louisiana House Bill 60 to get the highway renamed, helping it move through the house, senate, and ultimately to Gov. John B. Edwards.

“We are so very humbled that the Department of Transportation chose to honor my hero and son, Staff Sgt. Richard L. Vazquez,” said Teresa Melton, Gold Star mother of Vazquez. “Not a day goes by that we do not think about him, so it comforts our hearts when others remember him in this way.”

Now Louisiana Highway 175 from the town of Mansfield extending 12 miles to Interstate 49 carries the name “SSG Richard Lee Vazquez Memorial Highway.”

The ceremony was attended by many prominent community members including local religious leaders, law enforcement officials and the Mansfield City Mayor John H. Mayweather Sr.

The dedication ceremony kicked off with remarks from Mayweather.

“We are glad we could honor him [Vazquez] in this way,” said Mayweather. “We are grateful for all of you present at this ceremony.”

The ceremony also held a gift presentation to the Vazquez family including the Louisiana Veterans Honor



**Christine M. Vazquez, center, sister of U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Richard L. Vazquez, unveils the sign dedicated to her brother during a Memorial Highway Dedication Ceremony, Aug. 6, at DeSoto Parish Courthouse in Mansfield, La. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brian K. Ragin Jr.**

Medal and a congressional commendation.

“This act is a small token of our gratitude,” said Lt. Col. Edgar Jimenez, commander of 3rd Battalion, 7th SFG(A). “Families are going to drive through this stretch of highway; some out of curiosity are going to look-up Staff Sgt. Richard Vasquez with their device of choice. When they do that, his memory lives on.”

Vazquez’s sister, Christine, had the distinct privilege of unveiling the dedication sign.

“My family and I humbly stand here today, overwhelmingly honored and profoundly proud of our small town of family and friends,” said Christine Vazquez, sister of Staff Sgt. Vazquez. “To have our hometown of Mansfield, Louisiana remember our hero by dedicating this highway in his memory shows how much his sacrifice means to all of you as well.”

For the Vazquez family, the ceremony was a reminder that the residents have not forgotten their hometown hero.

“With the memorialization of Staff Sgt. Vazquez on the highway in Louisiana, his memory lives on in the Louisiana landscape, just as it lives on with the legacy of 7th Group. Events like this remind us of our mission, and whom we do it for,” said Jimenez.



**Gerard B. Williams, U.S. Army Special Operations Command operations chief administration support, retired July 2 after 64 years of combined military and civilian service. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Eli Velazquez.**

# More than 100 years civil service

**By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Eli Velazquez  
USASOC Public Affairs**

One hundred years of experience is invaluable to any organization’s ability to demonstrate success, even more so when you are referring to the U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

USASOC bid farewell to two civil servants that gave a combined time in service of more than 100 years. It was fitting that both retirement ceremonies took place around Independence Day.

Gerard B. Williams, operations chief administration support, retired July 2 after 64 years of combined military and civilian service to his country.

Sharon Smith, operations security specialist, retired July 3 with 40 years of civil service for the Army and USASOC.

Richard Holcomb, deputy to the commanding general, who officiated the ceremonies, asked the audience to imagine a pyramid. “This pyramid represents the American public. At the base of the pyramid you have most Americans who consider themselves patriotic,” Holcomb said.

“They pay their taxes on time, they stay within the speed limit, and they do the type of things you would expect

normal, law abiding Americans to do. But as you move your way up the pyramid and it narrows to an apex, you find Americans like these, giving their heart, soul, and talent to this nation.”

Williams, a retired sergeant major, enlisted into the Army in 1954 and retired in 1986. Williams said he couldn’t see himself doing anything else other than serving his country.

Seamlessly transitioning between military to civil service he said, he began his career with the 1st Special Operations Command, now USASOC.

“Don’t remember me as a hero, remember me as part of the family that is no longer here,” Williams said.

With more than six decades of service, Williams supported military operations in times of peace and war. His peers spoke about looking to him for his mentorship and leaning on him for his leadership and experience. Williams plans on dedicating his retirement to taking care of his wife and traveling.

Smith has been a loyal civil servant for four decades. Nicknamed “the disciplinarian” by her coworker of more than 20 years, Paul Tompkins expressed how much Smith will be missed.

“It’s going to take a little getting used to without having Sharon in the office. You’ve been a great civil servant. You served with honor and distinction, and you’ve been loyal to the core.” Tompkins said, adding, “I wish you well, and God speed. And on to the next chapter of your life.”

Smith departed by saying, “Thank you all for coming. I’ve enjoyed it. There have been ups and downs, but mostly ups. And now it’s time to pass the torch to you young ones, and I’m gone.”



**Sharon Smith, U.S. Army Special Operations Command security specialist, retired July 3 after 40 years of civilian service. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Eli Velazquez.**

**AIRBORNE**

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



*An Army Ranger conducts a simulated civilian evacuation during a capabilities exercise for local civilian leaders and active duty family members at Fort Bragg, N.C., June 12. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.*



# USASOC showcases its firepower during a capabilities exercise

*U.S. Army Special Operations Command conducted a capabilities exercise for select civilians to give a glimpse of its combat ability June 11 - 15 at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.*



*(Left) A Special Operations Soldier demonstrates camouflage techniques during a capabilities exercise at Fort Bragg, N.C., June 12.*

*(Above) An Army Ranger provides overwatch as additional Rangers air assault a mock village during a capabilities exercise at Fort Bragg, N.C., June 13.*

*(Bottom) Army Rangers provide overwatch during a capabilities exercise at Fort Bragg, N.C., June 11.*

*(Bottom left) Army Rangers onboard an MH-6 Little Bird helicopter prepare to air assault a mock village during a capabilities exercise at Fort Bragg, N.C., June 11.*

*Photos by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.*





## U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



*An Army Ranger takes aim at a notional enemy during the evacuation of participants at a capabilities demonstration on Fort Bragg, N.C., June 11. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Ryan Scranton.*



*(Left) An Army military working dog simulates an attack during a capabilities exercise for local civilian leaders at Fort Bragg, N.C., June 11. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.*

*(Above) Army Rangers assault through a mock village in front of local leaders and active duty family members during a capabilities demonstration at Fort Bragg, N.C., June 11. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Ryan Scranton.*



*(Above) An Army Ranger conducts a simulated raid during a capabilities exercise for local civilian leaders and active duty family members at Fort Bragg, N.C., June 15. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.*



*(Right) An Army Special Forces sniper conducts a long-range marksmanship hands-on demonstration during a capabilities exercise at Fort Bragg, N.C., June 12. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.*



*An Army Ranger provides security for participant- evacuees during a capabilities demonstration at Fort Bragg, N.C., June 11. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Ryan Scranton.*



## NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND

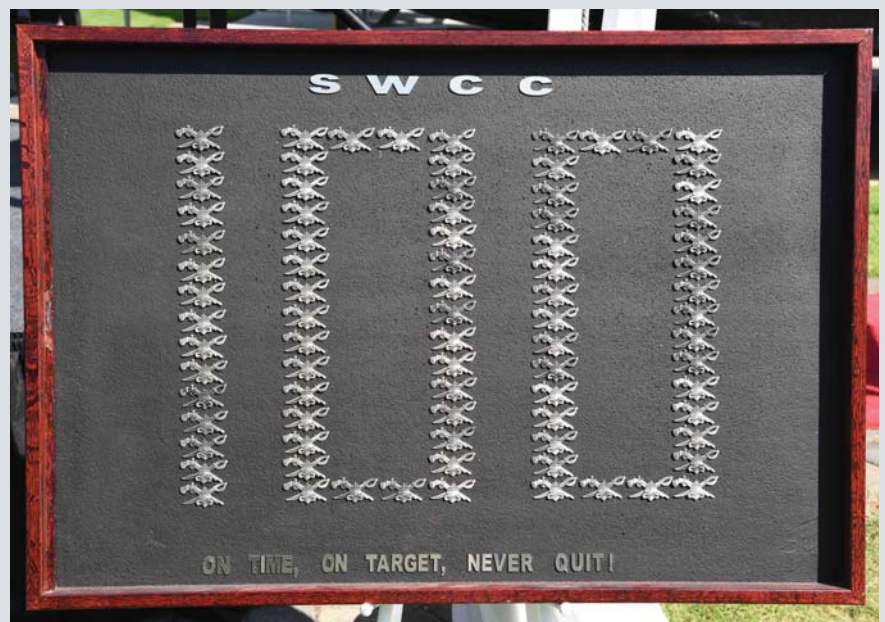
# SWCC reaches historic milestone graduating its 100th class

*Following a 37-week training course, the graduates will now join various Naval Special Warfare commands to begin their careers as special operations craft operators.*



*(Above) Cmdr. Matthew Russell, commanding officer of Special Boat Team 20 delivers a speech to recent graduates of Special Warfare Combatant-Craft Crewman Class 100, July 19. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Chanel Turner.*

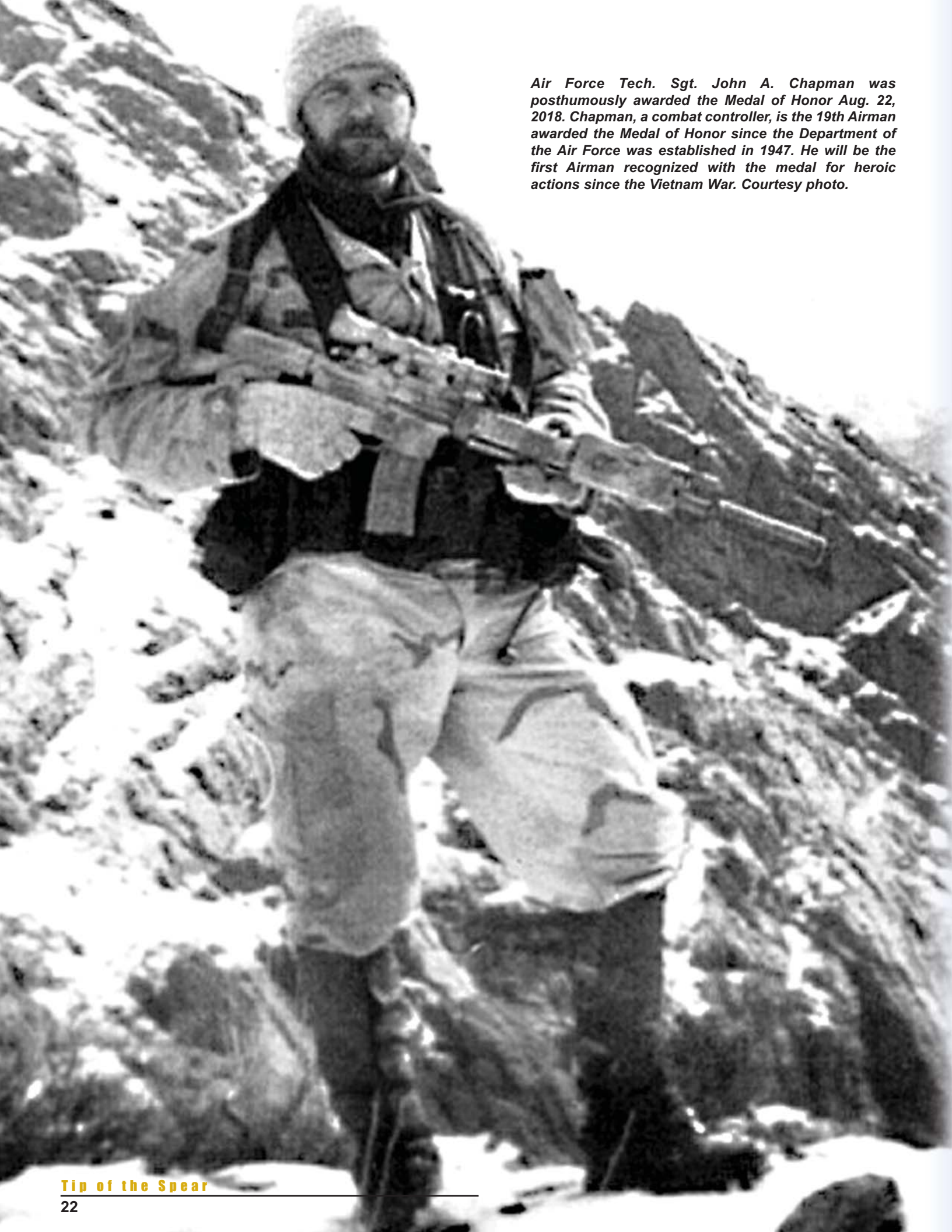
*(Right) A board displays Special Warfare Combatant-Craft Crewman basic warfare pins representing the students of Class 100 which graduated July 19. Photo by U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer Ace Rheaume.*



*A recent graduate of Special Warfare Combatant-Craft Crewman Class 100 displays the compass given to each SWCC graduate to signify the importance of navigation, both geographic and professional, that embodies the SWCC creed. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Will Gaskill.*



*Air Force Tech. Sgt. John A. Chapman was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor Aug. 22, 2018. Chapman, a combat controller, is the 19th Airman awarded the Medal of Honor since the Department of the Air Force was established in 1947. He will be the first Airman recognized with the medal for heroic actions since the Vietnam War. Courtesy photo.*



# Medal of Honor presented to Tech Sgt John Chapman's family



*By Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs*

On what would have been their 26th wedding anniversary, Tech. Sgt. John Chapman's widow, Valerie Nessel, accepted his Medal of Honor from President Donald Trump during a ceremony at the White House Aug. 22, 2018.

"We are gathered together this afternoon to pay tribute to a fallen warrior, a great warrior...and to award him with our nation's highest and most revered military honor," Trump said.

Fighting in the early morning hours through brisk air and deep snow, Chapman sacrificed his own life to preserve the lives of his teammates during the Battle of Taku Ghar, Afghanistan, on March 4, 2002.

"[John] would want to recognize the other men who lost their lives," Valerie said in a previous interview. "Even though he did something he was awarded the Medal of Honor for, he would not want the other guys to

be forgotten – they were part of the team together. I think he would say his Medal of Honor was not just for him, but for all of the guys who were lost."

Chapman was originally awarded the Air Force Cross for his actions; however, following a review of the Air Force Cross and Silver Star recipients directed by then-Secretary of Defense Ash Carter, Deborah James, then-Secretary of the Air Force, recommended Chapman's Air Force Cross be upgraded to the Medal of Honor.

"John was always selfless – it didn't just emerge at Taku Ghar – he had always been selfless and highly competent, and thank God for all those qualities," retired Air Force Col. Ken Rodriguez, Chapman's commander at the time of the battle, said in a previous interview. "He could have hunkered down in the bunker and waited for the (Quick Reaction Force) and (Combat Search and Rescue) team to come in, but he assessed the situation and selflessly gave his life for them."

Chapman enlisted in the Air Force Sept. 27, 1985, as

an information systems operator, but felt called to be part of Air Force special operations. In 1989, he cross-trained to become an Air Force combat controller.

According to friends and family, Chapman had a tendency to make the difficult look effortless and consistently sought new challenges. Dating back to his high school days, he made the varsity soccer squad as a freshman. In his high school yearbook, Chapman quoted these words: "Give of yourself before taking of someone



*Then Senior Airmen John Chapman. Courtesy photo.*

else."

Chapman looked for a new challenge, which he found in combat control. This special operations training is more than two years long and amongst the most rigorous in the U.S. military; only about one in 10 Airmen who start the program graduate. From months of intense training to multiple joint schools – including military scuba, Army static-line and freefall,

air traffic control, and combat control schools – Chapman is remembered as someone who could overcome any adversity.

"One remembers two types of students – the sharp ones and the really dull ones – and Chapman was in the sharp category," said Ron Childress, a former Combat Control School instructor. "During one of his first days at Combat Control School, I noticed a slight smirk on his face like [the training] was too simple for him...and it was."

Following Combat Control School, Chapman served with the 1721st Combat Control Squadron at Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina, where he met Valerie in

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*Even though he did something he was awarded the Medal of Honor for, he would not want the other guys to be forgotten – they were part of the team together. I think he would say his Medal of Honor was not just for him, but for all of the guys who were lost.*

— Valerie Nessel

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***Air Force Tech. Sgt. John A. Chapman, a combat controller, was killed during a fierce battle against al-Qaida fighters in Takur Ghar, Afghanistan, March 4, 2002. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for “conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty.” Courtesy photo.***

1992. They had two daughters, who were the center of Chapman’s world even when he was away from home – which was common in special operations.

“He would come home from a long trip and immediately have on his father hat – feeding, bathing, reading and getting his girls ready for bed,” said Chief Master Sgt. Michael West, who served with Chapman through Combat Control School, a three-year tour in Okinawa, Japan, and at Pope AFB. “They were his life and he was proud of them. To the Air Force he was a great hero...what I saw was a great father.”

### **The Battle of Takur Ghar**

In conjunction with Operation Anaconda in March 2002, small reconnaissance teams were tasked to establish observation posts in strategic locations in Afghanistan, and when able, direct U.S. airpower to destroy enemy targets. The mountain of Takur Ghar was an ideal spot for such an observation post, with excellent visibility to key locations.

For Chapman and his joint special operations teammates, the mission on the night of March 3 was to establish a reconnaissance position on Takur Ghar and

report al-Qaida movement in the Sahi-Kowt area.

“This was a very high profile, no-fail job, and we picked John,” said retired Air Force Col. Ken Rodriguez, Chapman’s commander at the time. “In a very high-caliber career field, with the highest quality of men – even then – John stood out as our guy.”

During the initial insertion onto Afghanistan’s Takur Ghar mountaintop on March 4, the MH-47 Chinook helicopter carrying Chapman and the joint special operations reconnaissance team was ambushed. A rocket-propelled grenade struck the helicopter and bullets ripped through the fuselage. The blast ripped through the left side of the Chinook, throwing Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Neil Roberts off the ramp of the helicopter onto the enemy-infested mountaintop below.

The severely damaged aircraft was unable to return for Roberts, and performed a controlled crash landing a few miles from the mountaintop. Thus began the chain of events that led to unparalleled acts of valor by numerous joint special operations forces, the deaths of seven U.S. servicemen and now, 16 years later, the posthumous award of the Medal of Honor to Chapman.

Alone, against the elements and separated from his team with enemy personnel closing in, Roberts was in desperate need of support. The remaining joint special operations team members, fully aware of his precarious situation, immediately began planning a daring rescue attempt that included returning to the top of Takur Ghar where they had just taken heavy enemy fire.

As the team returned to Roberts’ last-known position, now on a second MH-47, the entrenched enemy forces immediately engaged the approaching helicopter with



***As a combat controller, Tech. Sgt. John A. Chapman was trained and equipped for immediate deployment into combat operations. Trained to infiltrate in combat and austere environments, he was an experienced static line and military free fall jumper, and combat diver. Courtesy photo.***



heavy fire.

The helicopter, although heavily damaged, was able to successfully offload the remaining special operations team members and return to base. Chapman, upon exiting the helicopter, immediately charged uphill through the snow toward enemy positions while under heavy fire from three directions.

### **Courageous Actions**

Once on the ground, the team assessed the situation and moved quickly to the high ground. The most prominent cover and concealment on the hilltop were a large rock and tree. As they approached the tree, Chapman received fire from two enemy personnel in a fortified position. He returned fire, charged the enemy position and took out the enemy combatants within.

Almost immediately, the team encountered machine gun fire from another fortified enemy position only 12 meters away. Chapman deliberately moved into the open to engage the new enemy position. As he engaged the enemy, he was struck by a burst of gunfire and became critically injured.

Chapman regained his faculties and continued to fight despite his severe wounds. He sustained a violent engagement with multiple enemy fighters for over an hour before paying the ultimate sacrifice. Due to his remarkably heroic actions, Chapman is credited with saving the lives of his teammates.

*Editor's note: Air Force Staff Sgt. Ryan Conroy contributed to this story. Chapman was posthumously promoted to Master Sergeant.*



**Valerie Nessel, the widow of Air Force Tech. Sgt. John A. Chapman, stands as the citation is read before receiving the Medal of Honor from President Donald J. Trump during a ceremony at the White House in Washington, D.C., Aug. 22, 2018. Photo by Wayne A. Clark.**



**Valerie Nessel, the spouse of U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. John Chapman, holds up the Medal of Honor after receiving it from President Donald J. Trump during a ceremony at the White House in Washington, D.C., Aug. 22, 2018. Chapman was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for actions on Takur Ghar mountain in Afghanistan on March 4, 2002. Chapman charged an enemy bunker through thigh-deep snow and killed all enemy occupants. Courageously moving from cover to assault a second machine gun bunker, he was injured by enemy fire. Despite severe wounds, he fought relentlessly, sustaining a violent engagement with multiple enemy personnel before making the ultimate sacrifice. With his last actions he saved the lives of his teammates. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Rusty Frank.**



**Attendees observe as President Donald J. Trump presents the Medal of Honor to Valerie Nessel, the widow of Air Force Tech. Sgt. John A. Chapman, during a ceremony at the White House in Washington, D.C., Aug. 22, 2018. Photo by Wayne A. Clark.**



## AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



Lt. Gen. Brad Webb, Air Force Special Operations Command commander, sits in the cockpit of an MH-53 J/M “Pave Low IV” special operations helicopter at the Warner Robins Museum of Aviation, Ga., May 29. Webb flew the tail number 70-1626 while commanding the 20th Special Operations Squadron at Hurlburt Field, Fla. Photo by Tommie Horton.

# Reunited: AFSOC commander visits museum, boards former helicopter

*By Tommie Horton  
Robins Air Force Base Public Affairs*

Lt. Gen. Brad Webb, Air Force Special Operations Command commander, was all smiles as he was recently reunited with a particularly distinctive MH-53 M “Pave Low IV” special operations helicopter at the Robins Air Force Base Museum of Aviation in Georgia.

On Aug. 11, 2008, then Col. Webb flew tail number 70-1626 as his Pave Low final flight from Hurlburt Field, Florida to Robins Air Force Base for retirement and preservation at the museum. Upon its delivery, he stated

that he planned to come back in the future to visit the aircraft that he piloted while serving as the 20th Special Operations Squadron commander.

“Sixteen twenty six was my command bird when I was squadron commander at the 20th,” said Webb. “I flew it during Bosnia operations including Secretary Ron Brown’s search and recovery.”

Brown was on an official trade mission when the Air Force CT-43 (a modified Boeing 737) he was traveling on with 34 other people crashed in Croatia. While attempting an instrument approach to Dubrovnik’s Cilipi airport on April 3, 1996, the airplane crashed into a mountainside.

In 1996 Webb flew it to the U.S. Embassy in Liberia during a noncombatant evacuation operation in which 2,126 people from 76 countries were evacuated from political unrest taking place in Monrovia, Liberia.

His piloting performance with the aircraft during Operation Assured Response contributed to him receiving the 1996 Cheney Award.

The tail number which accumulated over 11,586 aircraft hours during its 37 years of service also flew into Iraq on the opening night of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

During his recent visit to Robins, Webb was able to board the Pave Low despite the 88-foot-long helicopter being hoisted atop pylons 15-feet above the floor of the museum's Century of Flight hangar.

The Pave Low remains very much in the same condition as it was on Aug. 21, 2008, when it was towed to the museum after arriving at Robins just 10 days prior. It had flown its last combat missions in Iraq earlier the same year.

Besides the removal of a few classified items prior to the aircraft's arrival at the museum, everything else, including the paint and scratches, remain as it arrived.

"This is as close to the way it left operational service

as we can possibly have it," said Mike Rowland, Museum of Aviation curator. "From my perspective, that makes it perhaps the most significant aircraft at the museum."

Brig. Gen. Vince Becklund, AFSOC acting director of operations, who also served as the 20th SOS commander

just before the retirement of the MH-53 fleet, accompanied Webb in the cockpit of the aircraft that still smells of hydraulic fluid.

They sat inside for several minutes talking,

reminiscing and discussing the instruments and the way everything was configured. They were visibly delighted that 70-1626 was being so well preserved.

"We were very fortunate he was able to carve out time from his busy schedule to come and be reunited with his helicopter," said Rowland.

"We're really excited to be able to preserve the helicopter here because it has a great history, and we're preserving it as it retired," he added. "It's been 10 years now, and there are three other Pave Lows preserved in the southeast. They've suffered 10 years out in the elements, and we're very lucky to be able to have ours indoors where it looks the same as when it retired."

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*Sixteen twenty six was my command bird when I was squadron commander at the 20th. I flew it during Bosnia operations including Secretary Ron Brown's search and recovery.*

— Lt. Gen. Brad Webb

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Lt. Gen. Brad Webb, Air Force Special Operations Command commander (right) and Brig. Gen. Vince Becklund, AFSOC acting director of operations, sit in the cockpit of an MH-53 J/M "Pave Low IV" special operations helicopter at the Warner Robins Museum of Aviation, Ga., May 29. Webb and Becklund are both former commanders of the 20th Special Operations Squadron at Hurlburt Field, Fla. Photo by Tommie Horton.



## MARINE CORPS FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

*U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Carl E. Mundy III, right, passes the Marine Corps colors to Maj. Gen. Daniel D. Yoo during the MARSOC change of command ceremony, Aug. 10, at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Janessa K. Pon.*



# Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Yoo assumes the command of MARSOC Raiders

*Maj. Gen. Daniel D. Yoo assumes command of the Marine Raiders after a tour leading all U.S. special operations forces in the Indo-Pacific region. He is the first Marine to command a theater special operations command and the first MARSOC commander with a previous tour with the organization.*



*(Above) U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Carl E. Mundy III, right, congratulates Maj. Gen. Daniel D. Yoo during the MARSOC change of command ceremony, Aug. 10, at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Janessa K. Pon.*



*U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Daniel D. Yoo, incoming commander of U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, speaks at the MARSOC change of command ceremony Aug. 10, at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Janessa K. Pon.*



*Lt. Gen. Carl E. Mundy III, commander of U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Central Command, addresses the crowd after relinquishing command of U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, Aug. 10, at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Janessa K. Pon.*



*A Marine with 1st Marine Raider Battalion participates in horsemanship training as a part of the Special Operations Forces Horsemanship Course at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, Calif., June 20. The purpose of the advanced horsemanship course is to teach SOF personnel the necessary skills to enable them to ride horses, load pack animals, and maintain animals for military applications in remote and dangerous environments. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. William Chockey.*

## Raiders ride in Special Operations Forces Horsemanship Course 1-18

*Courtesy Story*

*U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command*

Marines with 1st Marine Raider Battalion, and Soldiers with U.S. Army Special Operations Command completed Special Operations Forces Horsemanship Course 1-18 at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, California, June 21.

The course was a 15-day program that trained its participants on packing capabilities, including how to utilize equine animals in a clandestine environment to

pack out mission critical gear.

In the first three days of the course, the students are taught how to handle and properly pack gear onto mules. Immediately following, the students start to learn the basics of horsemanship that they then hone throughout the remainder of the course. As soon as they are comfortable riding, mules are added into the equation and the participants learn to lead a string of mules while riding up and down arduous terrain, according to Staff Sgt. Sloan Seiler, SOF horsemanship instructor, MCMWTC, Bridgeport, California.

“If you look at all of the operations and conflicts that America’s armed forces have been in, there’s always

been arduous terrain at some point for operational sets,” Seiler said. “By using these animals and teaching this skillset, our students are able to learn something that they can take in and utilize in-country if need be.”

According to the assistant operations and training officer of 1st Marine Raiders Support Battalion, the ability to operate in austere environments is a necessity, especially when taking the needs of special operations forces into consideration.

“This course offers a lot of great benefits and trains our Marines and soldiers how to think and operate in very rugged environments where traditional ground lines of communication don’t exist,” the assistant operations and training officer said. “With a string of mules and horses, the participants of this training now know how to move a team’s equipment over pretty rough terrain at a rapid pace while reserving their individual strength to carry on the mission, which is vital when considering the places that we are looking to operate in the world.”

This iteration of the SOF Horsemanship Course was also modified to integrate air delivery using the 152nd Airlift Wing, Reno, Nevada, allowing the students of SOF Horsemanship 1-18 to receive unique training on how to break down an airdrop and apply their newfound packing skills to load up their mules.

“The 152nd Airlift Wing flew three missions for us, dropping a variety of different types of bundles that we could then pick up and pack out with the mules,” the assistant operations and training officer said. “MWTWC was very cooperative in helping us to design and modify the course to fit our peculiar needs.”

Many of the operators that took part in this course will be returning to MCMWTWC for Training Readiness Exercise 2, which is the culminating exercise that these operators go through. They will utilize the skills learned in SOF Horsemanship to operate using unconventional methods through rough terrain and continue to support the missions tasked out to them during that exercise.

“We’ll be looking to incorporate this training into

several of the scenarios that we have planned for TRX 2, namely supporting a special operations team in an unconventional warfare environment where there won’t

be a lot of roads and traditional means of resupply,” said the assistant operations and training officer.

According to Seiler, the SOF Horsemanship course was the first time that many of its participants had dealt with equine animals, let alone ridden or packed them.

“We’re taking the students out of their comfort zone when we put them with a 1,000 pound animal with a mind of its own that can determine if it wants to be

there or not,” Seiler said. “When you do that, each individual has to become a leader. I truly believe in this course and what it does and the skillset that it gives our operators and support personnel.”

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— Staff Sgt. Sloan Seiler

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**A Critical Skills Operator with 1st Marine Raider Battalion watches over a group of mules as a part of Special Operations Forces Horsemanship Course at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, Calif., June 19. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. William Chockey.**



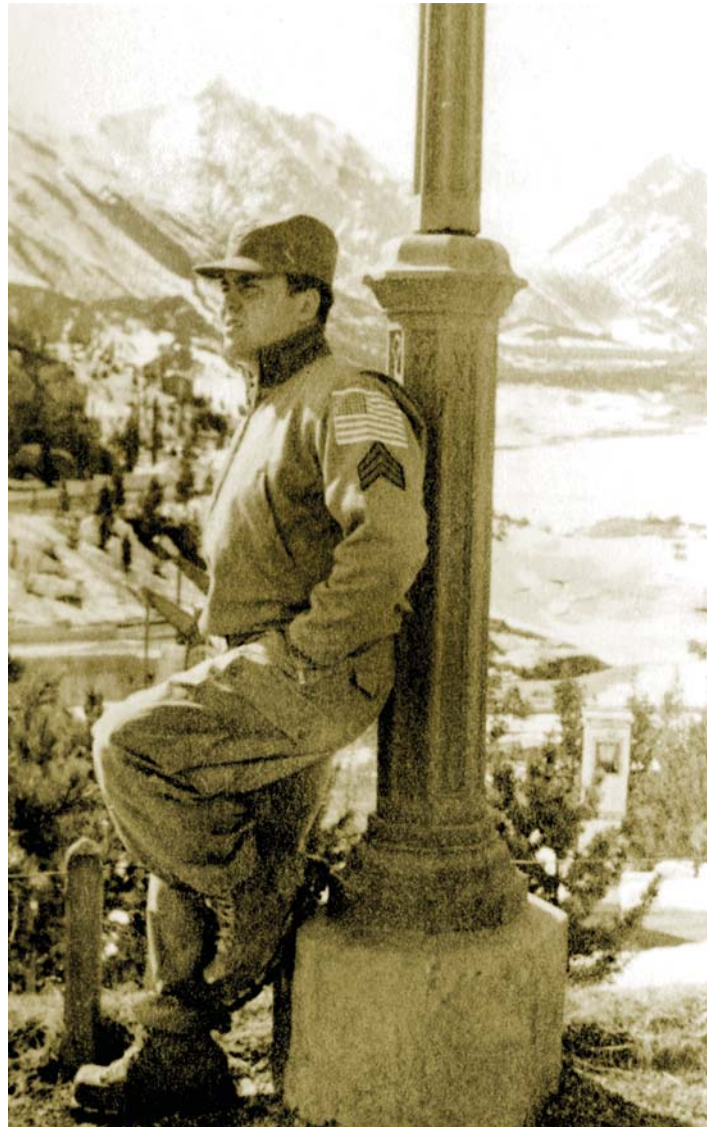
# OSS plank holder, special operations legend buried at Arlington

*By Rick Green*  
*USSOCOM History Office*

*Editor's note: Caesar Civitella, along with his wife Ramona, were laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery July 19, 2018. He died Oct. 25, 2017 at the age of 94. Civitella received USSOCOM's Bull Simons Award, the command's highest honor for lifetime achievement in special operations in 2008. He also received the French Legion of Honor in 2016 which is the highest decoration offered by the French government for his help in liberating France during World War II. The following is a summary of his extraordinary special operations career.*

Civitella was born Aug. 21, 1923, in Philadelphia, Pa. The son of Italian immigrants, Civitella never knew his father, who died two months before he was born. His mother raised both him and his sister until he was afforded the opportunity to attend Girard College at age 6. Civitella graduated from Girard College in 1941 at age 17. Girard provided him with "the best of everything," and its academics, athletics and structure set Civitella on his path to success. He attributed his health and longevity to the life lessons imparted to him at Girard College.

In June 1941, Civitella enrolled in the Pennsylvania Maritime Academy, living full-time on a Coast Guard cutter. However, the sinking of so many merchant ships after America's entry into World War II convinced him to pursue another vocation. Following employment with the Ford Motor Company in Chester, Pennsylvania, Civitella answered his nation's call and joined the Army in February 1943. After completing basic training, and, ironically, because of Maritime Academy experience, he was assigned to the Amphibious Engineers at Cape Cod, Massachusetts. While serving as a crew member on the commanding officer's yacht, the crew decided to take the yacht "out for a little spin" one Sunday morning without permission. Facing court-martial or transfer, Civitella chose the latter, thus beginning his relationship with airborne and special operations forces.



**Sgt. Caesar Civitella is seen here in World War II. Civitella was part of a Office of Strategic Services operational group. Courtesy photo.**

After completing airborne training at Fort Benning, Georgia, Civitella reported for duty at Camp Mackall, North Carolina Just a week later, he was ordered to appear before screeners who tested his Italian fluency, and they also posed challenging questions. This began



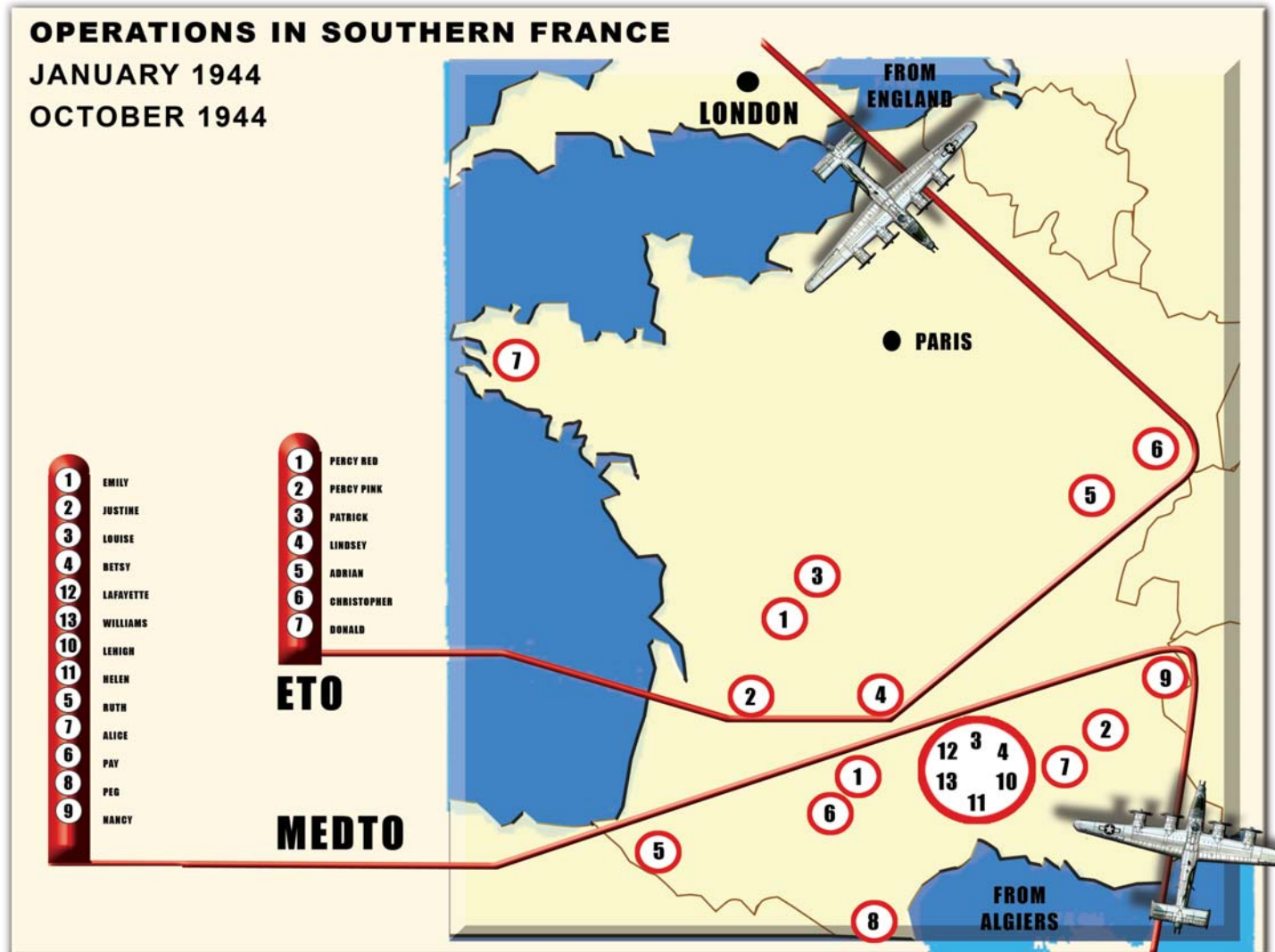
his career with the Office of Strategic Services, the first joint special operations organization.

Civitella traveled to the OSS training facility known as “Area F” at the Congressional Country Club in Bethesda, Md. There, Civitella, 12 other enlisted men and two officers were assigned to a 15-man OSS operational group. Success behind the lines necessitated trust, respect and leadership within each OG. His OG trainers continually provided challenging opportunities, and shortly after, in early 1944, Civitella shipped out to North Africa for continued training and preparation.

Civitella’s operational group initially supported Operation Dragoon, the Allied invasion of southern France Aug. 15, 1944. As part of Team Lafayette, he made his first operational jump behind enemy lines to support the Maquis, or French resistance fighters. Lafayette’s mission included conducting raids and

ambushes against German forces. Team Lafayette, along with two other OGs, captured nearly 4,000 Axis soldiers in an astounding employment of psychological warfare against the finance section of a Nazi division in France.

Following his mission in southern France, Civitella and his OG were sent to Italy. There he participated in 21 air operations as a “bundle-kicker” to resupply other OGs





## U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - HEADQUARTERS

in Italy, for which he received the Air Medal. His second operational jump occurred in April 1945, as a member of Team Sewanee. Sewanee was intended to assist OG Team Spokane, who was working with the Italian resistance. He parachuted into the Italian Alps along the Swiss border, tasked to report on German activity, assist downed airmen, and prevent German scorched-earth activities. On top of these missions, Civitella's OG also attempted to capture the Italian Il Duce, Benito Mussolini. Civitella and his team traveled by horse and sled through the mountains, carrying gold to pay the people who held Mussolini. However, Team Sewanee arrived too late; Italian partisans had already killed Mussolini. For Civitella's missions in Italy he was awarded the Bronze Star.

After the end of the war in Europe, he returned to OSS headquarters in Washington, D.C., where he compiled OG after-action reports under U.S. Navy Cmdr. John Ford, the famous movie director. Civitella left the Army in early 1946 and attended the University of Pennsylvania before reenlisting again in 1947. After some counterintelligence training, he went to the 82nd Airborne Division, where he served as an intelligence NCO. Challenged by then Army Col. Thomas Trapnell, Civitella applied for and received a direct commission in 1951. Trapnell would go on to become a lieutenant general.

The following year, 2nd Lt. Civitella was among the first men recruited into the new Special Forces program. He was initially assigned to the Special Forces Department within the Psychological Warfare Center. When creating Army Special Forces, Col. Aaron Bank, Civitella, and the other Special Forces pioneers relied heavily on their OSS experience.

He later left the school to help establish the 77th Special Forces Group — later the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) — and in 1955 he was assigned to the 10th SFG (A) in Bad Tölz, Germany.

In 1958, Civitella returned from Europe and was eventually assigned to the combat development office of the Special Warfare Center and School, where he was involved in the development of Special Forces doctrine, equipment and techniques.

In January 1961, Civitella began the first of his three tours in Vietnam. He also worked on different insertion



**Army Sgt. Caesar Civitella receiving the Bronze Star from Army Maj. Gen. William "Wild Bill" Donovan after World War II. Courtesy photo.**

and extraction methods, including SCUBA, HALO and the famous Fulton "Skyhook" extraction system. Eighteen days before his retirement, Civitella was successfully "snatched-up" by a Caribou airplane using the Fulton Skyhook. On Aug. 31, 1964, Maj. Civitella retired from the Army.

After a brief retirement of less than 24 hours, Civitella joined the CIA the next day and was assigned to the agency's Air Branch to support clandestine service air requirements. From 1967 to 1969 he served in Vietnam as the senior province officer in charge for Kien Phong province, supervising SOF and Vietnamese personnel.

Throughout his career, Civitella worked on many innovative projects. As an explosives expert, he developed a delayed explosive device, which sounded like a platoon or company-size force engaged in a firefight. Civitella used the device as a diversion technique, and it was also used in 1970 by Army Col. "Bull" Simons during the Son Tay POW rescue attempt in North Vietnam.

In 1976, Civitella was assigned to the CIA's Plans Branch as the liaison officer to the Pentagon for special operations. There, he became heavily involved in the development, validation and certification of the nation's first emergency response force. During this period, he worked closely with the unit's first commander, Army



Col. Charlie Beckwith, a past Bull Simons recipient.

The unit passed its last validation exercise on Nov. 4, 1979, the very same day the Iranian hostage crisis began in Tehran. Civitella provided key intelligence and support to Operation Eagle Claw, America's military response to the hostage crisis. He identified an operative for insertion into Iran who was responsible for gathering intelligence as well as providing logistic support for a rescue attempt. Civitella also coordinated the insertion of Army Maj. Dick Meadows, another Bull Simons Award recipient, who supported Beckwith's task force in Iran.

Civitella began his last assignment with the CIA on Feb. 1, 1981, as the interagency representative to U.S. Readiness Command and the newly established Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force, both based at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. There, Civitella coordinated the interagency operational, intelligence and training support for those two commands. On Jan. 1, 1983, the RDJTF became U.S. Central Command, and in 1987, USREDCOM was deactivated and replaced by U.S. Special Operations Command. Many of Civitella's exploits with the Agency remain classified, but when he retired on Aug. 31, 1983, he was awarded the Intelligence Medal of Merit for his work as "an extremely talented and gifted operations officer."

In retirement, Civitella continued to stay involved in



**Caesar Civitella received USSOCOM's Bull Simons Award on May 19, 2008. The award recognizes recipients who embody "the true spirit, values, and skills of a special operations warrior," and Col. Arthur "Bull" Simons, whom the award is named after, was the epitome of these attributes. Photo by Michael Bottoms.**

the special operations community through the OSS veterans' group and the Special Forces Association.

Civitella had been married to his wife, Ramona, for 63 years. She passed away Oct. 16, 2015. They had a son, Mark, a daughter Goia and several grandchildren.



**(Clockwise) Soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Regiment known as "The Old Guard" render a 3-volley salute during the graveside service for Caesar Civitella, at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va., July 19. Joseph Palmerio comforts his wife, Goia, during the funeral for her father Caesar Civitella. A Soldier from the 3rd Infantry Regiment presents the U.S. flag to Goia Palmerio for her father's service. Photos by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.**





# Helicopter in unconventional warfare - grit, initiative, innovation

*A combat experience of Marine Capt. Robert Warren, World War II veteran and early Marine helicopter aviator in the Korean War.*

**By U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Timothy Lawn**  
*USSOCOM Office of Communication*

September 1951, three United States Marine Corps Sikorsky HRS/H-19 from Marine Helicopter Transport Squadron 161 carrying Marine rocket teams and their launcher, ammo and equipment from the 1st Marine Division fly low and nap-of-the-earth, they quickly rise over a jagged outcrop and settle on a small isolated windswept plateau. North Korean lines are just a couple hundred yards in front of the birds.

Piloting one of the helicopters is U.S. Marine Capt. Robert Warren. Warren is already a Distinguished Flying Cross recipient from World War II, earning his medal piloting a Grumman F6F Hellcat fighter at the battle of Okinawa and Saipan.

Warren and the other two helicopters loaded with Marines race into action. Each of the three helicopters has five to six combat ready Marines. In a matter of minutes, the lead helicopter closely hovers over the grassy plateau, underneath its belly is a sling-loaded 4.5 inch multi-barreled T-66 rocket launcher. With a quick snap the rocket launcher gently bounces in the field grass. Another team of Marines race to unload its rockets slung in a cargo net. As they unload and stack ammo a third crew race to the launch site eager to load, aim and fire the launcher. In the blink of an eye, 24-4.5 inch rockets scream from the launch tubes, arc into the air and blast unsuspecting and surprised North Korean targets. As quickly as they fire, they reload the launcher and ammo and leave.

"We got the hell out of there," Warren says with a grin as he describes the Marines reactions after blasting the North Koreans. "We grabbed the rocket launcher and our teams and ran, It was fun as hell."

They had to be fast, in a couple minutes, North Korean counter battery fire would quickly rain down blasting the

landing zone, but the Marines were already setting the launcher in a new pre-plotted location to delivery another blistering blow.

Remarkably, Warren and his fellow Marines had successfully conducted a vertical airmobile assault, set-up, fired a 24-barreled volley of rockets at enemy positions, retrieved all ammo, equipment and re-mounted to move to the

next of three pre-plotted firing points all before counterbattery fire could locate and destroy them.

"It was innovative; previously the Marines couldn't get the rockets close enough to fire, and get away safely," Warren said.

The launcher, though lightweight by artillery standards, is vehicle towed, in addition the mission required enough rockets to conduct three fire missions. Previously, the Marines hired Korean supply laborers called Cheegay Bearers. "They just could not handle it," Warren said.

Before the helicopters arrived, the Chugie Bearers literally had to manhandle and mule transport the ammo, food and equipment to the Marines through the steep and dangerous mountain passes of Korea.

Going from manually ported weapons and equipment to rapid vertical assault in Korea would become a game-changer for the conflict.

Warren's air assault artillery strike on North Korean positions was unheard of the year before. Warren and his fellow Marines had successfully used the helicopter in a vertical envelopment assault, and in this example, employ an



**U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Robert Warren.** *Courtesy photo.*



additional form of unconventional warfare by rapidly air deploying a vehicle-towed rocket artillery to assault enemy held positions.

Historically, the helicopter had proven its worth in WWII executing daring rescue and resupply operations, but as often happens during post war military draw downs funding becomes restricted and many in the military viewed the helicopter as a novelty.

The Marines did not view the helicopter as a novelty, in fact, they regarded the new rotorcraft as essential to future combat survival.

Lieutenant Gen. Roy S. Geiger, an early Marine aviator and aviation pioneer, witnessed the Bikini Atoll, atomic bomb tests in the Marshall Islands in 1946. After observing the blast he surmised that traditional methods of amphibious assaults made by forced beach landings could become obsolete.

Geiger recalled the mixed uses of the helicopter during World War II. And it's potential for speed, range and employment in amphibious warfare. He urged the Marine Corps to conduct a study proving the need to adopt the helicopter for use in naval amphibious operations.

In 1947, the Marines established Marine Helicopter Squadron 1 (HMX-1) at Quantico, Virginia. HMX-1 was the first established military rotary aviation school to study the capabilities and the practical applications of the helicopter in vertical envelopment.

In 1950, Warren would become one of the Marines earliest designated helicopter pilots.

After helicopter flight training, Warren shipped to Korea with the HMR-161. He conducted his first combat mission with the 1st Marine Division during Operation Windmill One.

“Windmill One was planned to see if we could completely resupply a Marine battalion right on the front lines by helicopter,” said Warren.

According to official Marine Corps history; Operation Windmill One employed all 15 of the Squadron's H-19 Helicopters, conducting more than 28 flights, delivering more than 19,000 pounds of critical combat supplies, evacuating more than 74 seriously wounded men. The operation conducted the first helicopter borne wartime mass resupply feat in two hours and 40 minutes logging more than 14 flight hours.

Warren's combat helicopter experiences in the Korean War would earn him his second Distinguished Flying Cross and two additional Air Medals. He would later go on to teach helicopter operations and vertical envelopment with the helicopter bible, Marine Corps Publication, PHIB – 31, Amphibious Operations, Employment of Helicopters, first published in 1948, at the Marine Corps Educational Center at Quantico from 1960 through 1964. It was the first published doctrine on the use of the helicopter for airmobile operations.

Warren retired a full-bird Colonel in 1969, after serving as a Marine aviator in WWII, Korea and Vietnam. He commanded both a helicopter and a swept wing jet attack squadron, and a Marine Air Group consisting of five flying squadrons.



*An artist rendering of Marines firing 4.5 inch multi-barreled T-66 rocket launcher carried by Sikorsky HRS/H-19 helicopter to the front line. Illustration by U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Timothy Lawn.*



# Big data and the future of war

*By Chasen Thoennes  
Defense Intelligence Agency*

The commanders of U.S. Special Operations Command and U.S. Strategic Command discussed the influence of data and technology on warfighting during the first day of the 2018 Department of Defense Intelligence Information System Worldwide Conference Aug. 13.

U.S. Army Gen. Raymond Thomas III, commander of Special Operations Command, discussed the role of data in special operations warfighting, the technological advances needed to maintain dominance on the battlefield, and the potential risks to that technology.

“The ability to effectively and quickly digest, analyze, and most importantly disseminate relevant and accurate information, determines the success or failure of current and future missions—it is mission critical business,” said Thomas. “We experience daily the effects of emerging information technologies in both positive and negative ways. On the positive side, we enjoy the advantages of new tools and services that help us cope with ever larger, more dynamic fields of data in which we operate. On the negative side, our adversaries benefit from the proliferation of advanced capabilities ... Most of our adversaries are also not burdened by bureaucratic and political challenges that thwart our ability to leverage emerging technology at the speed of change.”

According to Thomas, the recent development of social media and other internet-based sharing capabilities have exponentially increased the amount of publically available information, and may lead to a paradigm shift in how intelligence analysts do their job. Instead of focusing almost entirely on classified information, unclassified information should be the new starting point Thomas explained.

“The time has come to flip the current model on its head,” said Thomas. “The time has come to develop and field tools and tradecraft in analysis that will allow us to begin our effort by understanding what we can from data that is readily and cheaply available. Then we will take our findings and enrich it with information from our classified sensors, sources and methods to provide timely, accurate and actionable intelligence to our warfighters and decision makers.”

Thomas also noted the future potential of machine learning and artificial intelligence to improve and speed the



**Gen. Raymond A. Thomas III, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, discusses the value of open source intelligence during the 2018 Department of Defense Intelligence Information System Worldwide Conference. Photo by Brian Murphy.**

intelligence cycle by allowing analyst to focus less on the rote tasks of gathering and reading reports, and spend more time understanding the information.

U.S. Air Force Gen. John Hyten, commander of U.S. Strategic Command, explained the similarities between USSOCOM and USSTRATCOM, describing both as global warfighting commands and critically dependent on information and intelligence.

“If we don’t have intelligence information, all the capabilities [both commands have] are pretty much useless,” Hyten stated. “And when you talk about [Strategic Command’s] capabilities—especially the nuclear and space capabilities—if you don’t have the right information in the right place at the right time, that’s when potential adversaries could take a misstep and we could miss that step. And when you talk about nuclear missteps, that’s when the really bad day happens.”

The speed of technological advances and adversarial gains have caused Strategic Command to change the way it fights war and thinks about deterrence, explained Hyten.

“Success in the future is going to be when we apply capabilities through whatever domain we have to, through whatever means we have to, and we don’t care where it comes from or where it goes to as long as it dominates the adversary,” Hyten stated. “That will be the next step of greatness for the next great military in the world, and I believe that will be the United States of America. But in order for that to happen, we have to achieve that vision because we have adversaries who have stated similar things.”



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Christopher A. Celiz  
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Taylor J. Galvin  
160th Special Operations  
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**U.S. Army Sgt. Maj.  
Christopher Nelms  
U.S. Army Special  
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**U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class  
Reymund Transfiguracion  
1st Special Forces Group  
(Airborne)**

**Editor's note: Honored are special operations forces who lost their lives since June's Tip of the Spear.**



***A U.S. Army Special Forces Soldier, assigned to 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), lands on Sullivan Drop Zone after performing a military free fall jump during a training exercise on Fort Carson, Colo., Aug. 3. The training exercise was meant to test every ability of the Special Forces operators in conducting unconventional warfare operations. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Connor Mendez.***