



# TIP OF THE SPEAR



## AFSOC PARARESCUEMAN'S EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM EARNS AIR FORCE CROSS

7TH SPECIAL FORCES GROUP (AIRBORNE)  
TRAIN WITH GUATEMALAN  
GRUPO ESPECIAL DE INTERDICCIÓN Y RESCATE

A-10 PILOT RECEIVES  
THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS WITH VALOR  
FOR SAVING MARINE CORPS SPECIAL OPERATIONS TEAM

*U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLA., FEBRUARY 2015*





# U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



**AFSOC Pararescueman's extraordinary heroism in combat earns Air Force Cross ...24**

## Tip of the Spear

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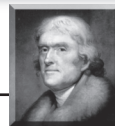
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*(Cover) Master Sgt. Ivan Ruiz, a pararescueman from the 56th Rescue Squadron, Royal Air Force Lakenheath, England, is photographed during his deployment to Afghanistan in 2013. Ruiz was awarded the Air Force Cross by Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James at Hurlburt Field, Fla., Dec. 17, 2014. Courtesy photo by Master Sgt. Ivan Ruiz. (Above) Ruiz earned the Air Force Cross while deployed with the 22nd Expeditionary Special Tactics Squadron and assigned to the 23rd STS at Hurlburt Field, Fla. The last six Air Force Crosses have all been awarded to AFSOC Special Tactics Airmen. Photo by Senior Airman Christopher Callaway.*



**Thomas Jefferson**  
**Award Winner**

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*U.S. Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) practice a variety of shooting techniques with their M4A1 rifles at the Panzer Range Complex in Boebligen, Germany, Jan. 23. Photo by Adam Sanders.*

# Special Operations assuming greater NATO responsibilities

*By Jim Garamone*

*DoD News, Defense Media Activity*

NATO is incorporating special operations into all aspects of its operations and training, the commander of NATO Special Operations Headquarters said, Jan. 28.

Air Force Lt. Gen. Marshall B. Webb told the National Defense Industries Association's Special Operations/Low-intensity Conflict Symposium that the organization is perfectly placed to capitalize on the multinational, multi-network response to threats.

"It's all about information sharing, it's about comprehensive collaboration and it's about partner and

allied trust," the general said.

## **NATO Special Operations**

NATO Special Operations Headquarters, formed in 2009, is the primary point of development, coordination and direction for all NATO Special Operations-related activities, in order to optimize employment of special operations forces, according to Webb's Air Force biography. Webb, the biography continued, is responsible for providing an operational command capability when directed by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

The special operations experience in Afghanistan drove the headquarters, and NATO special operators are still working to capture the lessons learned from



that “under fire” experience, Webb said.

### **Troubling Developments**

NATO is concerned about several developments, including Russia’s annexation of Crimea and its continuing actions in eastern Ukraine, he said.

At the same time “the south is on fire,” Webb said. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant poses serious problems for all NATO allies, but especially for Turkey, which shares a border with Syria. Foreign fighters have flocked to ISIL’s standards in Iraq and Syria and many come from Europe. The attacks in Paris and arrests in Belgium and other European countries point to the serious nature of the threat, Webb said.

“SOF is uniquely placed to address this,” Webb said. “As SOF, we tend to take an indirect approach. We can engage without being escalatory or aggressive. We tend to view things from an oblique angle, and we absolutely acknowledge that trust, information-sharing and interagency collaboration is crucial.”

The headquarters trains special operators from around the alliance to work together, Webb said. Alliance personnel understand how each nation conducts operations and the idea is that all special

operators can fall in on an understood framework. Webb said this is already paying dividends with special operations forces working not only in Europe, but Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia.

### **Improving Responsiveness**

Going forward the organization must demonstrate improved responsiveness and readiness for NATO forces to be able to respond to any threat, he said.

NATO special operators are active in reassuring NATO allies that border Russia, Webb said. “It needs to be preventative and it needs to be persistent,” he added.

The headquarters is also involved in increasing NATO responsiveness, Webb said. The alliance, he said, must respond in days or weeks, not weeks and months.

“Viewing the aggressive actions we see along the Eastern front,” he said, “you need a force that is in place that can receive and marshal forces ... going forward.”

NATO special operations forces need to be in front “to be able to look at this asymmetric, hybrid challenge that we’re up against, and be in place in case we’re ever called for to provide situational awareness that would be used for any NATO response,” Webb said.



*U.S. Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) qualify with their M4A1 rifles at Panzer Range Complex in Boebligen, Germany, Jan. 23. Photo by Adam Sanders.*





## SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND – EUROPE



*U.S. Special Operations Command Europe Commander Maj. Gen. Gregory J. Lengyel and soldiers from the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense look on as a Ukrainian soldier provides point of injury combat casualty care to a simulated casualty during an exercise, Dec. 4 in Kirovohrad, Ukraine. SOCEUR deployed a medical team to Western Ukraine in November to coach and mentor Ukrainian Ministry of Defense personnel on basic battlefield medical procedures, coaching and mentoring more than 300 Soldiers during six three-day classes over the course of 30 days. Courtesy photo.*

# Basic battlefield medical classes for Ukrainian MoD personnel concludes; more than 300 coached

*By U.S. Embassy Kyiv*

A Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR)

medical team that coached and mentored Ukrainian Ministry of Defense (MoD) personnel on basic battlefield medical procedures concluded a month-long





***A U.S. Army Special Forces medic and U.S. Navy Special Operations physician's assistant from U.S. Special Operations Command Europe demonstrate how to properly assess a casualty for injuries on the battlefield to a group of Ukrainian soldiers, Nov. 18, 2014, in Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine. SOCEUR deployed a medical team to Western Ukraine to coach and mentor Ukrainian Ministry of Defense personnel on basic battlefield medical procedures.***

deployment to Ukraine Dec. 19.

Arriving Nov.16, these medical professionals focused on tactical medicine, primarily point of injury care, teaching more than 300 Ukrainian soldiers from the 3rd and 8th Special Forces Regiments, in both Khmelnytskyi and Kirovohrad.

SOCEUR Commander Maj. Gen. Gregory J. Lengyel visited the Kirovohrad coaching site, Dec. 4, along with members of the Ukrainian MoD and U.S. Embassy representatives. His visit included remarks to a group of graduating soldiers.

"You, soldiers of the 3rd SF Regiment, are now part of the overall effort to have all MoD personnel coached and mentored in combat lifesaver skills (CLS). These past three weeks, my medical team has taught 270 soldiers. Other non-governmental organizations have trained many more," Lengyel said. "CLS is the basis of battlefield medical procedures. Where there is no doctor, where there is no surgeon, where there is no hospital, you have only each other to rely on in those first few decisive minutes."

The coaching and mentoring team deployed at the request of the Ukrainian government. It is part of a more comprehensive assistance package being developed after the review of feedback from joint military assessments conducted over the last several months. These identified a need for enhancing the individual medical capabilities of Ukrainian soldiers.

Additional deployments to continue this teaching program are planned, based on the success of the first iteration and at the Ukrainian MoD's request. United States Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt noted that "As Ukraine continues to defend itself against Russian aggression, the United States will continue to send advisory teams to help improve Ukrainian combat medical care and save

the lives of Ukrainian soldiers, in addition to the over \$118 million in security assistance we have committed."



***A Ukrainian Soldier bandages a simulated wound on a casualty as part of a U.S. Special Operations Command Europe Medical Coaching and Mentoring Mission in Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine, Nov. 20, 2014.***





**SOF AROUND THE WORLD - GUATEMALA**  
**SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND – SOUTH**

# **Kaibil, US Special Forces promote security through partnership**

*Story and photos by Army Staff Sgt. Osvaldo Equite  
SOC SOUTH Public Affairs*

Roughly a thousand years ago, the Mayan civilization thrived as they developed advances in writing, architecture, mathematical and astronomical studies throughout the Central American isthmus.

Within Central America, Guatemala is considered to be the heart of the Mayan world. The nation is the most populous of the Central American countries, and it is a popular travel destination for millions of people all over the world who want to visit and experience the beauty of the Mayan culture.

However, Guatemala's excessive crime and murder rates rank among the highest in the world and could threaten the nation's growing tourism industry.

According to a 2012 report from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, transnational organized crime in Guatemala comes at a price and is usually in the form of violence.

In the report, thousands of Guatemalans were asked what was the most important issue facing their country. It was no surprise that the public opinion poll in the report noted that crime beat out unemployment by a margin of 5-to-1.

It is a concern that Guatemalan government officials are facing head on with some of its most elite warriors known as the "Kaibils," Guatemala's Special Operations Force.

With illicit activities such as drug trafficking within its borders, Kaibils assigned to the "Grupo Especial de Interdicción y Rescate," or GEIR, train daily to defeat organized crime and ever-changing threats. The GEIR is considered to be Guatemala's top fighting force.

"In any country there is always a threat that endangers lives and property on a daily basis," said a Guatemalan colonel assigned to the GEIR, who for security reasons spoke with anonymity. "The threat [in Guatemala] is real — and organized crime like the cartels, terrorists or whatever it may be, endangers the people of our country."

The GEIR is charged to neutralize, prevent, and act



***A U.S. Special Forces Soldier assigned to 7th SF Group, oversees a group of Guatemalan Special Forces "Kaibils" as they conduct pistol marksmanship training, Jan. 28 in Poptun, Guatemala. The U.S. members advise and assist Kaibils assigned to the "Grupo Especial de Interdicción y Rescate," or GEIR, in an effort to build their military capacity. The 7th SF Group is based at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., and supports Special Operations Command South's theater security cooperation program.***

against any narcoterrorism threat in the country. With support from "Green Berets" assigned to the 7th SF Group, the mission of the GEIR is simple: Keep Guatemala safe for its people.

"With the training and support we receive from the U.S. soldiers, we continue to hone our techniques to counter narcotics trafficking," said the colonel. "As soldiers, we need to be united against those who threaten our livelihoods, and only by being united can we overcome the enemy and defend innocent lives so they may prosper."

Members of 7th Group are under the operational control of Special Operations Command South, in Homestead, Fla., which is responsible for all special operations in the Caribbean, Central and South America in support of U.S. Southern Command. SOC SOUTH assists partner nations through training exchanges enabled by its theater security cooperation program.



Training programs, such as the one in Guatemala, empowers nations to train together in an ongoing effort to better protect national borders and increase the host nation's capacity to conduct special operations.

"The Kaibils are a very professional organization, and those selected for the GEIR are made up of a seasoned group of soldiers," said a U.S. Army SF medic assigned to the 7th SFG, who works daily with the GEIR. "They welcome us and know we are here to help."

No matter where they are stationed around the world, helping build military capacity and working with partner nation counterparts to deter security threats is something U.S. SF Soldiers do best. The mission in Guatemala isn't any different.

"By facilitating training and developing their subordinate leaders to work with their officers, we can enhance their abilities. Based on what we've seen here, the noncommissioned officers are completely capable of running their own training. It has almost become second nature to them," a 7th Group trainer added.

For the GEIR colonel and his men, who are considered to be the first responders to handle counter narcotics trafficking operations, training makes the difference between life and death.

"Training is extremely important and it needs to be

constant," said the colonel. "We have a saying here: 'it is better to have sweat hundreds of drops of water than to have bled one drop of blood,'" emphasizing how vital the training is for a quick reaction force unit like the GEIR.

On this day, the training is geared toward accuracy during a pistol marksmanship event.

As 7th SFG members look on from 50 meters away, the Kaibil's noncommissioned officers line up their troops as they yell: "Si avanzo...sígueme, Si me detengo...Apremiame, Si retrocedo...mátame. Kaibil!" The Kaibil motto meaning: "If I advance, follow me. If I stop, urge me on. If I retreat, kill me. Kaibil!"

Admiring the quickness and effectiveness of the Guatemalan special forces soldiers, the Americans look on as the GEIR NCOs carry out the training.

"They're all motivated and very capable," said a 7th SF Group communications NCO. "That's the reason they're here — they're grueling [and their effort pays off] in everything they do."

Training is around-the-clock. With so many missions, the unit requires constant mentoring and support to perfect their craft. The U.S. SF Operational Detachment Alpha, or ODA, team here provides the GEIR with mentorship on all aspects of military operations.

"Training them on operational processes and logistical training is one of the biggest objectives we concentrate on," said the SF medic.

Additionally, the ODA team is regularly working with GEIR members in close quarters combat, weapons familiarization, sniper techniques, medical care, and communications just to name a few — but is always focused on developing small group leaders because the Kaibil's mettle is tested daily.

"The only time we interrupt training is when we are called to do our job," said the colonel. "As Kaibils, we are always ready. For any mission, under any circumstances, day or night, we stand disciplined and willing to follow the orders of our commanders for the well-being of the Guatemalan people."

The Kaibils, who are based in the "Brigada de Fuerzas Especiales Kaibil" here, are either constantly engaged in training events or being ordered to help protect civilian lives due to their expertise in interdiction and rescue operations.

"I am proud of our soldiers and what they do to better our country," the colonel said. "The enemy should know that there is always a Kaibil standing by and willing to conserve the peace so that we may better our country, and our people can have a fruitful life."



**A Guatemalan special forces soldier known as "Kaibil," clears his weapon during pistol marksmanship training Jan. 28, in Poptun, Guatemala.**





*A member of U.S. Army Special Operations Forces communicates with the pilots of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter assigned to the 1-228th Aviation Regiment during hoist training at Lake Yojoa, Honduras, Jan. 22. The 1-228th Aviation Regiment partnered with U.S. Army Special Operations personnel to practice recovering live personnel. The overwater hoist training was held to ensure members of Joint Task Force-Bravo are planning and preparing for crisis and contingency response, as well as countering transnational organized crime, and counterterrorism operations.*

# US Army Special Ops conducts overwater hoist training with 1-228th Aviation Regiment in Honduras



*(Left) Two U.S. Army Special Operations members swim out to the middle of Lake Yojoa to wait for a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter to recover them. (Right) A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter hovers over U.S. Army Special Operations members during overwater hoist training at Lake Yojoa, Honduras.*







*(Top) U.S. Army Special Operations members monitor their teammates as members are hoisted out of Lake Yojoa. (Below) A medic from the 1-228th Aviation Regiment hoists a member of U.S. Army Special Operations Forces into a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter. (Right) A medic climbs into a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter after being lowered to retrieve a the U.S. Army Special Operations member from Lake Yojoa.*







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



*Maj. Gen. Ed Reeder, commander, Special Operations Joint Task Force and Command Sgt. Maj. Channing Bell of SOJTF-A, paid a special visit to the girls of the Afghanistan orphanage, Save the Children, located in Kabul. Reeder has helped support the orphanage through the commander's emergency response funds program which allows him to purchase items of need for the orphanage.*

# **Camp Integrity brings winter cheer to Afghanistan girl's orphanage**

*By LaDonna Davis  
SOJTF-A Public Affairs*

Nestled behind a large blue gate and concrete walls among the busy, dusty and littered streets of Kabul lies a sanctuary for young girls with no homes, and little to no family. This place provides a warm place for the girls to sleep during the cold Afghanistan winters, a place for the girls to play in a city ravaged by war, and it's a place for

the girls to learn in a country where women are often times denied the right to an education. It's an orphanage aptly called Save the Children, and its mission: To give abandoned or otherwise misplaced girls the opportunity to create a life for themselves.

Save the Children was founded in 2002 and, like many social institutions in Afghanistan, is reliant on the donations and goodwill of others to ensure its longevity. This is where the Special Operations Joint Task Force-



Afghanistan comes in. Maj. Gen. Ed Reeder, commander of SOJTF-A, has made it a personal mission of his to ensure the orphanage and the girls are taken care of and given an opportunity to thrive. As part of the Commander's Emergency Response Funding program, Reeder has been able to purchase computers for the girl's classrooms, upgrade the heating in the rooms the girls sleep and learn in, and provide necessities such as sheets, hot water, tables and pots and pans for the orphanage.

Recently, Reeder and volunteers from a military base located in Kabul visited the orphanage to provide the girls with career-oriented Barbie dolls, hygiene items, toys and candy- all donated by The Toy Industry Foundation, a U.S. based nonprofit organization, and Mattel Inc. toy company.

One-by-one, as the girls were given a Barbie doll their eyes would light up. For many, this was their first doll. Some of the girls anxiously opened the packaging, kissing their Barbie; others didn't even open the packaging, cherishing the gift as if it were their first and last. But, all the girls smiled and laughed as they played with the dolls, rearranging the dolls' accessories, clothes and hair.

Reeder says it's all about providing the girls a safe and secure place to learn. "It's about education for me, that's the most important thing," he said. "For an orphan girl in Afghanistan, life will be very hard. They don't have fathers to court a marriage for them, and once they turn 18 and can no longer stay at the orphanage, there's a chance they will end up being nothing more than a housewife to a man three or four times their age. That's why I want to make sure these girls are given every opportunity to get an education, go to college and build a life for themselves."

Reeder's sentiments echo those of the director of the orphanage, Dr. Sayid Reeza. As part of the girl's education curriculum, they are taught how to sew, how to do hair and nails, and how to work with a computer, skills that can help them get a job once they graduate. Additionally, many of the girls know up to five languages- Dari, Pashtu, English, Urdu and Arabic, a large feat for a country such as Afghanistan where the illiteracy rate is more than 75 percent and most people only speak the language of their tribe. The girls are also encouraged to go to college, a rarity in a society that frowns upon education for women.

Since the school has opened, 24 girls have gone to

college said Reeza, and another 81 girls have been reunited with their birth families.

"When I come to the school and I see the girls playing and laughing, that fulfills me," Reeza said.

The 80 young girls that currently live at the orphanage, ages four to 18, are already thinking about their future and what they want to be when they grow up. "A teacher, a pilot, a doctor, a journalist," they each say when Reeder asks them about their future plans.

In the future, Reeder would like to see the school equipped with video teleconference capabilities so the girls can get lessons from teachers in the U.S. He is also looking at getting new insulated windows for the school.

But, in the meantime, Reeder just wants each of the girls to concentrate on their studies.

"Education gives you the opportunity to do anything in life," Reeder said. "I encourage you all to study very hard, listen to your teachers, and life will present many opportunities to you."



**An Afghan girl proudly displays her new Barbie she received thanks to the donations from Mattel Inc. and The Toy Industry Foundation, a U.S. based nonprofit organization. Courtesy photo.**





## U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



*Dave Beishline (center in black), a U.S. Army Special Operations Command Flight Detachment pilot, poses for a group photo before one of his last flights before his retirement at Mackall Army Airfield, Dec. 10, 2014, as part of the 17th Annual Randy Oler Memorial Operation Toy Drop. Operation Toy Drop is the largest combined joint airborne operation in the world, where toys collected by military members are donated to the local community. Photo by Spc. Lalita Hazelett.*

# USASOC Flight Company farewell their most seasoned aviator

***Sgt. 1st Class Thaddius S. Dawkins II***  
***USASOC (A) Public Affairs***

After 47 years of continued service, the United States Army Special Operations Command Flight Company said farewell to their most seasoned aviator, Mr. David C. Beishline, a retired Chief Warrant Officer 5, during his Department of the Army civilian retirement ceremony at the company's hangar on Pope Army Airfield, Dec. 17, 2014.

"This is a bittersweet occasion for us," said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Curtis P. Adams, the UFC's company commander. "Everyone here is very happy and pleased to join him and celebrate his career and retirement from government service, but those of us who have been honored to work with Dave are sad to see him go."

The UFC's executive officer, Chief Warrant Officer 5 James A. Lindsay, echoed Adams' sentiments while discussing Beishline's impact on the UFC.

"Dave has provided outstanding support to





***Dave Beishline, a U.S. Army Special Operations Command Flight Detachment pilot, flies one of his last flights before retirement at Mackall Army Airfield Dec. 10, 2014, as part of the 17th Annual Randy Oler Memorial Operation Toy Drop. Photo by Spc. Lalita Hazelett.***

USASOC and USASOAC for 19 years,” he said. “As the UFC operations officer, he has faithfully served USASOC from the early years of the USASOC Flight Detachment (UFD) at Simmons Army Airfield, to a larger UFD as it moved to an upgraded hangar and facility at Simmons, to the robust UFC now at Pope Army Airfield. Over a two-decade period, he has been key to the unit’s success in managing aviation operations at three different facilities through growth and changes, and the upgrade and acquisition of 14 additional aircraft. He ensured the unit provided world-class professional service to all the Special Operations Forces at Fort Bragg.”

Prior to his time at the UFC, Beishline flew both fixed and rotary-wing aircraft all over the world and his dedication to the mission was a constant example to everyone around him.

“The character of Dave’s military service has been exemplary – from a Huey pilot in Vietnam, to a Black Hawk pilot in Operation Desert Storm, to a fixed-wing pilot in multiple units at Fort Bragg. His active duty career culminated after 28 years with his retirement from the Army as a CW5 Master Aviator,” Adams said. “After taking all of one month off, Dave started a new career as a Department of the Army civilian and, for the last 19 years, he’s been a cornerstone of the success in this unit.”

During his time with the UFC, Beishline totaled more than 7,300 hours of flight time as the pilot-in-command on both fixed and rotary-wing aircraft

without any incidents or accidents, and supported more than 175,000 static line and high-altitude low opening airborne operations.

Although those numbers are extremely impressive, Lindsay said it’s everything else Beishline did while at the UFC that will make the void even harder to fill.

“Dave’s contribution to the unit’s success is much greater than his performance as a pilot-in-command,” Lindsay explained. “He has supervised and managed the overall operation of more than 40,000 flying hours and over a half million static line and HALO jumps. His unique capacity to balance the robust demands as both a unit aviator and the flight operations officer has been spectacular. He’s been a mentor and positive role model to dozens of pilots and operations personnel and established a legacy of outstanding, professional, safety-first and highly responsive support for all of USASOC’s aviation operations.”



***David Beishline, a retired Chief Warrant Officer 5, speaks to the audience during his Department of the Army civilian retirement ceremony at the United States Army Special Operations Command Flight Company's (UFC) hangar Dec. 17, 2014. Beishline, who retired with more than 47 combined years of military and federal service, had been a cornerstone of the UFC's growth and success over the last 19 years. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Thaddius S. Dawkins.***





## U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



*A Soldier from 20th Special Forces Group, Army National Guard, performs a back roll entry into the water during training and re-certification at the U.S. Army Special Forces Underwater Operations School, June 22, 2014, in Key West, Fla. Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Adam Fischman.*

# Guard Special Forces: Powerful punch in small packages

*By Staff Sgt. Darron Salzer  
Army National Guard*

At any given moment there are small teams of elite Soldiers deployed around the world who are conducting operations that many may never hear of. The Soldiers, often referred to as Green Berets, are members of an Army-specific Special Operations Force and are considered by many to be among the best in the world when it comes to unconventional warfare and increasing the combat potential of partner forces.

Of the seven Special Forces groups within the Army, two are part of the Army National Guard: the 19th SFG and the 20th SFG.

Army Guard Soldiers from those units have been a

key part of the special operations forces capability during the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as around the world.

“Over the past 12 to 13 years, Guard Special Forces have not only provided additional force structure to special operations forces at large, but we’ve continued to prove that Guard [Special Forces] teams are on par with our active-component counterparts,” said Army Maj. Joseph Bauldry, deputy chief of the Special Operations Branch at the National Guard Bureau.

“Guard soldiers are often more experienced than our active-component counterparts,” Bauldry said, “in not only the current conflict, but also in the things we Special Forces previously did, such as conducting Joint Combined Exchange Training and Foreign



Internal Defense missions.”

Both are the kinds of missions Bauldry sees Special Forces returning to again.

“I see us revisiting the mission sets that predominated the 1980s and 1990s, as well as continuing to support contingency operations around the world. We will stay busy,” he said.

In addition to their training and combat experience, the Citizen Soldiers of the Army Guard Special Forces bring another capability to the table: the knowledge and experience they have gained from their civilian careers. Those skills strengthen their knowledge and abilities while in uniform.

Bauldry said prevalent careers among many Army Guard Special Forces Soldiers are local and federal law enforcement.

“U.S. Army Special Operations Command, or USASOC, has taken note of this capability that the active component just does not have,” he said. “USASOC is looking to the Guard to leverage this law enforcement knowledge and the latest techniques, which is often a critical component in fighting the seeds of insurgency and lawlessness in many nations.”

“Soldiers who are Guard members, that’s their full-time job, every day,” he said.

Despite any institutional differences, every Soldier must complete the Special Forces Qualification Course, or Q Course, before they can call themselves a Green Beret.

While Bauldry said training continues to evolve, it typically begins with small-unit tactics. That is followed by separate training in one of five military occupational specialty-specific training areas. Included among those areas is training for officers, weapons sergeants, engineering sergeants, medical sergeants, and communications sergeants.

“Soldiers then rejoin for an unconventional warfare culmination exercise, where they put together everything they’ve learned and work as small teams to complete the exercise,” he said.

Next, Soldiers go through the Special Forces training pipeline, consisting of survival, evasion, resistance, and escape -- or SERE -- training, and language training. “After successful completion of all of this training, Soldiers are awarded the Special Forces tab and can then don their Green Beret,” he said

The training doesn’t stop there. Bauldry said

Special Forces Soldiers can also go through high-altitude military parachuting, or military free fall school, and combat diver school -- just two out of a handful of schools -- depending upon what role the Soldier will have within the assigned unit.

That special training often requires constant recertification, a task that can be challenging for Army Guard Special Forces units.

“National Guard Special Forces members have to seek out those opportunities after they are done at work, on the weekends, or when they are tired,” said an Army Major with the Special Forces Underwater Operations School in Key West, Florida, “but they persevere through it, and that’s why I think there is a different level of dedication -- not better, not worse -- but there is a different level of dedication that National Guard members have in contributing to the defense of our nation.

“I know that it is hard for teams to get together, let alone to get extra time to do training and prepare to fight our nation’s battles, but they work really hard down here, and I would put them on par with any active-duty combat dive team.”

Being fully qualified is vital, and the balance between civilian jobs and maintaining competency in Special Forces skills is what makes the Guard unique.”

The constant training provides a team or unit the ability to effectively and efficiently do what Special Forces do best.

“We train specifically in skill sets that enable us to work with indigenous people and cultures around the world,” said an Army master sergeant, the operations sergeant with Company A, 3rd Battalion, 20th SFG (Airborne). “For us, operating as a small package with a powerful punch, it’s a cost-effective way to accomplish the needs of the nation in certain scenarios, instead of sending in a whole battalion. Basically, we are a force multiplier and that’s kind of our bread and butter in Special Forces.”

It’s a capability that lends itself to the atmosphere surrounding Special Forces around the world.

Bauldry encourages anyone interested to try out for the team.

“It’s a rewarding opportunity, and I would encourage all those who are interested to try out. We are always looking for strong candidates who are looking for a challenge and who want to get more out of their Guard experience,” he said.





## U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



*A special forces weapons sergeant with 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), fires a BGM-71 Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided, or TOW, missile, during a partnered training exercise with Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team "Bastogne," 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Dec. 9, 2014. Photo by Army Maj. Kamil Sztalkoper.*

# Legion, Bastogne conduct TOW missile familiarization training

*By Sgt. Justin Moeller  
5th SFG (A) Public Affair*

Green Berets with the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) teamed up with Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team "Bastogne," 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), to conduct TOW(Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided) missile training on Fort Campbell, Ky., Dec. 9, 2014, in an effort to familiarize themselves with the weapon system.

"The TOW weapon system is a crew-portable, heavy anti-tank weapon," said a Green Beret team sergeant with Company B, 3rd Battalion, 5th SFG (A). "It consists of a launcher and guided missile designed to complement shoulder-fired weapons."

Like any weapon system, the Soldiers who operate them need training like this to keep their skills sharp.

"The purpose of the TOW missile live-fire exercise was to validate our systems and provide our TOW gunners an opportunity to fire a live TOW," said Capt. John F. Yanikov with 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st BCT "Bastogne," 101st Airborne Division. "It was also a chance to train the 5th Special Forces Group Soldiers on how to employ the TOW; its capabilities and limitations; and how to fire the TOW."

With each missile fired and each target struck, the Soldiers began to see the benefits of this weapon being put into operation.

"The primary takeaway from this training is, of course, the emplacement and operation of the TOW missile weapon system," said the Green Beret. "The secondary takeaway is to understand and trust the high





level of expertise our conventional brothers have in each of their given military occupation specialties”

The 5th SFG (A) Soldiers do not have much experience with this weapon system but, with an ever changing battlefield, implementation of this weapon system may come.

“Due to the current conflicts in our area of responsibility, it has been determined that the BGM-71 TOW missile system would be a valuable asset,” said the Green Beret. “However, this weapon system is not organic to special operations forces, so we are capitalizing on conventional force capabilities.”

Training between SOF and conventional forces is an important key in winning future battles, which explained the Bastonge Soldiers’ eagerness to share their capabilities.

“It is significant because it allows for better interoperability between units,” explained Yanikov. “If we both understand how each other work in our respective missions - and how they overlap into the bigger picture - it allows both of us to achieve mission success.”

In hopes to find that success, the U.S. Army Special Operations Command is moving forward with a deliberate plan, ARSOF 2022, to ensure that the command can find, fix and finish tomorrow’s enemy as

well as recover and revitalize the force.

Part of the ARSOF 2022 plan is: “The Army must achieve special operations forces and conventional force interdependence to lock in the advances of the last decade of conflict, more effectively counter future threats and shape the operational environment. The Army must establish a range of personnel, training, command and support relationships between SOF and CF.”

“The significance lies both at the tactical and the command level,” said the Green Beret. “At the tactical level, the Soldiers on the ground have the ability to refine their interoperability, learning from each other and refining tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) together. While at the command level, working toward interdependence is paramount in order to properly plan and resource training and operations.”

The TOW missile training was not the first, nor will it be the last time the legionnaires conduct training with their conventional force brethren.

“We conducted mortar training with conventional forces last month, and we plan to conduct all-terrain vehicle and communications training this upcoming January,” said the Green Beret. “But any time Soldiers from different units can conduct tactical training alongside each other, it is a great opportunity to trade SOPs and TTPs, and this makes everyone better.”





## NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND

# Anchored in service: A hero is remembered

*Courtesy of Naval Special Warfare Group TWO*

Most families have traits that are passed down through the generations. Often when people look at photos of their grandparents they can see where certain features came from. For better or worse it's usually Grandma or Grandpa who deserves thanks for some defining hallmark of appearance. When U.S. Navy Senior Chief Special Warfare Operator (SEAL) Jeremy Trump looks at photos of his late grandfather, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Chief Motor Machinist's Mate William Trump, however, it's not just a handsome jaw line that is reflected back. What he sees goes much deeper. Images of William Trump hold a legacy of service, sacrifice and honor. What others might see as heroism, the Trumps see as a family tradition that is anchored in service.

The legacy of service that has been passed down to Jeremy Trump is the same legacy that has led the USCG to christen its newest sentinel-class fast response cutter USCGC William Trump (WPC 1111), which was brought to life in a commissioning ceremony Jan. 24, 2015, at U.S. Coast Guard Sector Key West, Fla.

"This is a great honor for my family, we are humbled by it," said Jeremy Trump. "To have a ship named after somebody who you knew and grew up with is just a really, really, big thing and his presence still looms large here, no doubt."

William Trump served aboard a landing craft infantry vessel (LCI(L) 90) during World War II and participated in four amphibious assaults as a first class petty officer. He fought in the occupation of Tunisia June 1, 1943, the invasion of Sicily July 9, 1943, and the landings at Salerno, Italy, Sept. 9, 1943. His military service is best remembered for his heroism during the invasion of Normandy June 6, 1944.

William Trump's vessel was part of Flotilla 10, which carried about 200 troops into the Normandy invasion. The crew's mission was to get the soldiers safely onto the beaches of France. William Trump



***U.S. Navy Senior Chief Special Warfare Operator (SEAL) Jeremy Trump renders honors during the commissioning ceremony of the fast response cutter USCGC William Trump (WPC-1111), which is named for his late grandfather USCG Chief Motor's Machinist's Mate William Trump. William Trump was a Silver Star Medal recipient for his heroic actions on Omaha Beach during World War II. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Abe McNatt.***

volunteered to disembark his landing craft and head onto the beach to anchor a safety line for troops to follow.

During the D-Day landing the USCG lost four ships, more than any other time in a single day in the history of the service. Under severe enemy fire, William Trump waded onto the heavily mined beach, dragged an anchor and anchor line to shallow water and successfully secured the safety line. Because William Trump put himself in the line of fire to help others, he was awarded a Silver Star for his valor in action in the assault phase of the landing at Normandy.

William Trump joined the Coast Guard in 1942 at age 17 and retired as a chief petty officer in 1965. He passed away in 2009.

Jeremy Trump has followed in the steps of his grandfather's military service, joining the U.S. Navy in 1992. He has served in numerous overseas deployments including four in support of counternarcotic operations, and six combat missions, as well as various short-term



deployments to support the global war on terror.

“Being in a community where Silver Stars are hard to come by, and I’ve seen what it takes to get one, to get one on that day of days out there like that I just don’t think you could compare that to anything here today,” said Jeremy Trump. “So it’s a huge deal and he is one of the very few guys in the Coast Guard that has ever been decorated that highly for valor.”

The obvious conclusion to draw is that Jeremy Trump joined the Navy because he wanted to be a hero like his grandfather, but that wasn’t the case.

Despite being an American hero, the grandchildren of William Trump had no idea about their grandfather’s World War II service, according to William Trump, a grandson and namesake of William Trump. They didn’t know because they never remembered him talking about it. What the grandkids remember was his service after the military career was over. For the remainder of his life, William Trump was an active volunteer in the community. Some of the most impactful memories for the grandkids came during the countless hours spent with their grandfather delivering food to those in need.

The first member of the family to join the military and the oldest of eight brothers and 24 total grandchildren, Jeremy Trump said it wasn’t until after he decided to join the military when he started talking to his grandfather about his military service. As he talked to his grandfather about military service his bond with became

that much tighter. When he graduated Basic Underwater Demolition School (BUDS) and SEAL qualification training he had his grandfather pin on his trident.

“From a military perspective, I’m amazed that there could be a correlation drawn between Jeremy’s service and my grandfather’s,” said William Trump. “I think a lot of it was just those character attributes were innate in my grandfather and it was more of an osmosis type thing. When Jeremy went off to BUDS and someone asked me if I thought he could make it, I said ‘yes, unless they kill him because he won’t quit, I know him.’ And that was one of the things that came from our granddad, the tenacity. He just wouldn’t quit for anything.”

“Jeremy respected my dad hugely,” said Colette Eddy, the ship’s sponsor and William Trump’s daughter. “Those two became bonded with the military. Because Jeremy was the first military grandson to follow in my dad’s footsteps and choose a profession that was tough and not easy to get into they formed a unique and special bond.”

The reflections of honor and service that Jeremy Trump sees when looking at a photo of his grandfather will now be seen in the gleaming white hull of the USCGC William Trump by all the Coast Guardsmen who will serve aboard her. The ship will give new generations of service members a platform to serve from and weigh their own anchors in lives of service.



**U.S. Coast Guard plank owners run aboard to bring the ship to life during the commissioning ceremony of the fast response cutter USCGC William Trump (WPC-1111). William Trump was a Silver Star Medal recipient for his heroic actions on Omaha Beach during World War II, and the grandfather of U.S. Navy Senior Chief Special Warfare Operator (SEAL) Jeremy Trump. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Abe McNatt.**





## NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND

# Shaping a Legacy

*Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman Ferdinand “Ferdie” Santos grew up in a Navy family, enlisted at 24, deployed with U.S. Marines and has worked with NSW for more than a decade. He absorbed military culture and traditions at every step. Now he’s finding a way to honor military service in ways all his own.*

**By Petty Officer 2nd Class Paul Coover**  
**CNSWC Public Affairs**

Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman Ferdinand Santos is surrounded by a hobby that has become his craft. Hunched over a workbench in the back of an engineering shop aboard Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, power tools to his left and right, a pile of lumber just over his shoulder, Santos is busy finishing a ceremonial wooden paddle he’s making as a gift for a fellow Sailor. Many Sailors and civilians have received one of Santos’ pieces of fine woodworking as a gift when they departed Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command, where Santos works full-time as the medical information management specialist, to compliment his service in the Navy Reserve. Few understand what those gifts required of the man who made them.

Today, Santos is applying the final coat of polyurethane to this paddle’s finish. His brush strokes must be precise on this final coat, and Santos periodically turns the wood in his hands so the shine catches the shop’s fluorescent light from various angles. The elaborate detail of each of Santos’ pieces of art is a frequent topic of conversation among those who receive one of these gifts, but the process by which Santos arrives at the finished products is even more impressive than the products themselves. There might be four, five or eight coats applied to each piece, depending on how different woods take the polyurethane, and those coats come after a similarly-intensive sanding process, in which Santos transitions methodically from rough to fine grits as the wood takes shape. Even before the sanding begins, however, the edges of each design must be routed, and Santos cannot employ his router until the wood is cut to size. The cuts can only be made after Santos has planed the surfaces flat, which he can only do after he has clamped and then glued long, thin pieces of lumber together to create his preferred striated surface, a process he begins only after an extensive search for woods with unique grains gathered from all over the world.

Such a devotion to craft cannot come from personal work ethic alone; it has to be based in something greater. In Santos’ case, hundreds of hours spent crafting ornate works of art in San Diego began with a raw scrap of lumber from Ecuador.



**Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman Ferdie Santos displays a ceremonial paddle he made for a member of the Naval Special Warfare community. Santos frequently makes paddles and other mementos to mark retirements, the end of Sailors’ tours with NSW and other special occasions.**

And he still has the block of wood that started it all.

A cut of construction-grade 2”x4” sits on Santos’ desk in Coronado, unashamedly situated amidst his more recent, polished pieces of woodworking. The 2”x4”, originally hewn purely for utility and strength, now has a rudimentary sand and gloss to it, calling to mind a young man’s first efforts at craftsmanship – which is exactly what it is.

Santos picked it up from a scrap pile in 1993 while working with a team of Sailors and Marines in Ecuador. The U.S. service members had traveled to the South American country for a humanitarian deployment, and were building a school for young Ecuadorians. At the conclusion of the project, Santos salvaged a discarded, 8-inch long piece of 2”x4” to keep as a memento of his travels. After sanding away the splinters, he sketched the logo of the partner Ecuadorian military medical team into the wood’s surface with a government-issue, ballpoint pen, then passed the wood around for the other men and women on the deployment to sign. He sealed the inexpensive lumber to preserve the signatures, such that the block now has a surprising weight to it, a gravity that lends an otherwise unremarkable piece of



wood a sense of significance.

To Santos, the piece became a tangible symbol of a worthwhile deployment; it was a way of acknowledging his friends' small contributions to the United States military's long history of global service. He liked the feeling of crafting something personal in commemoration of that tradition. He still does.

Santos has since elevated himself from rudimentary whittler to craftsman, cutting and shaping by hand what others outsource to factory-level efficiency, holding fast to his belief that a custom gift, made with skill and care, honors the recipient in a way a pre-fabricated memento cannot.

Santos took the lessons he learned working on that first 2"x4" in Ecuador and began developing his skills in bonafide woodworking when he returned to the U.S. His first lessons came from Sailors who had experience working in military wood shops set up to accommodate day-to-day requirements for signs and individual awards. Then he began buying a few tools himself. He now has a full shop set up in his San Diego garage where he can produce multiple pieces of art each week.

Santos has spent long evenings after work sanding and polishing shadow boxes for retiring commanders and captains whose houses are full of military memorabilia accumulated over 20-year careers. He has put the same level of care into presents for Sailors leaving San Diego after their first tour of duty in the Navy.

"It's not just cool and fun," Santos says. "It's an honor."

Santos is a second-generation Sailor, and the foundation for his respect for military service came from his father, who enlisted in the U.S. Navy while living in the Philippines. Santos' father eventually earned American citizenship and was able to bring his family to San Diego before receiving a medical discharge from the Navy.

Known to his friends as "Ferdie," Santos was born at Balboa Hospital, the oldest of three children, and attended University High School (now Cathedral Catholic) and Mesa and Miramar Colleges before enlisting in the Navy himself in 1992, at age 24. He was inspired, he says, by his father's service and what it meant for the Santos family.

Santos had an interest in medicine and wanted to be a corpsman; high test scores on his aptitude tests ensured he could be just that. He deployed with U.S. Marines, attended advanced medical training courses and quickly rose through the ranks. He moved from active duty to a Reserve unit in 1999, and he has worked with NSW ever since, including a mobilization in 2007-2009. After a deployment to Pakistan -- during which he was promoted to chief petty officer -- he noticed Sailors buying paddles as gifts for teammates who

were retiring or transferring duty stations. He started asking around about making his own paddles, and his work as a craftsman officially began. He immediately set his work apart from factory-made gifts with his desire to create truly custom wood designs, focusing intensely on details like grain and color.

"Woods that are different or unique," he says, "you're not going to see that in the standard paddles."

That attention to detail goes back to his family's history in the Navy.

"Doing paddles helps me fulfill that tradition and culture," he says. Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Sarah Weaver, who works with Santos at WARCOT, has seen the impact Santos' work has on others. Looking for a gift that would connect her Naval service to her family in Indiana, she asked Santos to make a handmade, wooden mount for a ceremonial dive knife.

"He just drew something out," she says, "and I thought it was phenomenal."

It was quickly finished, and Weaver gave the gift to her father. He loved it.

"Ferdie is super upbeat, high energy," Weaver says. "He's always there to lend a giving hand. He's definitely a great leader."

Leaning even closer over the workbench in Coronado, Santos applies the final few strokes of polyurethane to his current project, then stands up straight to take in the finished product. The wood has a smooth, even gloss, and Santos is happy with the shine. He takes a thin blade and peels off the painters' tape he uses to cover the pins, coins and plaque he has inlaid into the paddle's face that commemorate the service member's contributions to NSW -- each paddle has a different arrangement of such insignia, according to the member's job, rank or even hobbies.

Once the blue tape has been peeled away, the paddle is ready to be presented. Santos smiles, holds up the gift and poses for a photo with his latest piece.

At a Small reception at Gator Beach, just outside Santos' office at WARCOT, Santos' handiwork features prominently in a more formal photo. A Sailor departing the command receives a plaque, in the shape of a surfboard, to symbolize a tour spent in San Diego. It's a traditional Navy going-away celebration, the kind of event that honors both service and community; the kind of event that prompted Santos to hone his craft in the first place, all those years ago.

The Sailor picks up the gift and gathers his family for a portrait with a memento that already has sentimental value to him. Santos isn't in the picture. Nearby, he looks on, quietly away from the spotlight, watching his work speak for him.





## AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



**Master Sgt. Ivan Ruiz, a pararescueman from the 56th Rescue Squadron, Royal Air Force Lakenheath, England, displays his Air Force Cross citation with Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James at the Freedom Hangar on Hurlburt Field, Fla., Dec. 17, 2014. Ruiz earned the Air Force Cross while deployed with the 22nd Expeditionary Special Tactics Squadron, and assigned to the 23rd STS at Hurlburt Field, Fla. The last six Air Force Crosses have all been awarded to AFSOC Special Tactics Airmen. Photo by Airman 1st Class Jeff Parkinson.**

# PJ's extraordinary heroism in battle earns an Air Force Cross

**By Maj. Craig Savage**  
**AFSOC Public Affairs**

Recognizing extraordinary heroism shown in combat, Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James presented the Air Force Cross to an Air Commando during a ceremony at Hurlburt Field, Fla., Dec. 17.

Master Sgt. Ivan Ruiz, a pararescueman deployed with the 22nd Expeditionary Special Tactics Squadron, was awarded the U.S. military's second highest

decoration for an Airman. He earned the medal for protecting and saving the lives of two wounded teammates while under heavy enemy fire at close range during combat operations in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, Dec. 10, 2013.

"We reserve the Air Force Cross for those special few who exhibit unequalled courage and bravery despite overwhelming odds, and that's exactly what (Ruiz) did," James said. "Today we are adding his name to an extremely small list of five additional Airmen, since



Sept. 11, 2001, who demonstrated this highest caliber of service and excellence.”

While moving through several compounds after infiltrating enemy territory with his special operations forces counterparts, Ruiz and two U.S. Army Special Forces teammates became separated from the main friendly element. They were immediately confronted

by four insurgents in a point-blank engagement. Ruiz and his teammates quickly killed the enemy, but suddenly became trapped in a courtyard by vicious and intense insurgent crossfire.

“I didn’t really think, I reacted,” Ruiz said. “Anytime something bad happens in my career, I just fall back on my training. It prepares us for what we can encounter when we are doing our work.

The two Soldiers were immediately wounded by the enemy’s barrage of heavy gunfire and grenades, rendering them immobile and exposed. According to the medal citation, Ruiz sprinted through the waves of gunfire with complete disregard for his own personal safety to defend his teammates in their exposed position.

Ruiz was forced to fight lying flat on the ground due to grenades exploding around him, some only 15 feet from his position. He continued to return fire at multiple enemy locations to prevent enemy fighters from maneuvering toward his teammates.

“I just wanted to make sure my guys didn’t get hurt any more than they already were,” Ruiz said. “I just wanted to do my job.”

Refusing to take cover or leave his wounded teammates exposed to potentially fatal shots, Ruiz continued to fight the enemy alone in the courtyard until reinforcements arrived. Once they did, he advanced again through a hail of gunfire, dragged his teammates to a nearby position of concealment and immediately administered life-saving trauma care. Due to the lack of light, Ruiz had to use night vision goggles to administer the care.

“It is not an understatement at all to say that you have made an indelible imprint on Air Force history,” James said to Ruiz prior to presenting the Air Force Cross medal.

Lt. Gen. Brad Heithold, the commander of Air Force Special Operations Command, opened the ceremony by addressing the Airmen and guests who packed the

venue’s seats and sidelines.

“This is what ‘right’ looks like,” he said. “This is when Air Commandos from all specialties come out and recognize the heroic deeds of one of our fellow Air Commandos.

This is a proud day for Air Force Special Operations Command and for the U.S. Air Force.”

Also in attendance were two of Ruiz’s Army Special Forces teammates on the mission, one of whom Ruiz saved in the courtyard that night.

“I have a great deal of respect for what (Ruiz) and guys like him bring to the fight,” the Soldier said. “It’s always good to know you have guys like that out there with you.”



**Master Sgt. Ivan Ruiz, a pararescueman from the 56th Rescue Squadron, Royal Air Force Lakenheath, England, smiles after being presented the Air Force Cross for extraordinary heroism in combat during a ceremony at the Freedom Hangar on Hurlburt Field, Fla., Dec. 17, 2014. Photo by Senior Airman Christopher Callaway.**

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*We reserve the Air Force Cross for those special few who exhibit unequalled courage and bravery despite overwhelming odds, and that’s exactly what (Ruiz) did.*

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*— Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James*

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## AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



# Air Commandos honored for bravery in Portraits in Courage ceremony

*By 1st Lt. Katrina Cheesman  
24th Special Operations Wing Public Affairs*

Four Air Force Special Operations Airmen, including three Special Tactics Airmen and a CV-22 Osprey special missions aviator, were recognized Feb. 4, in a Portraits in Courage ceremony in Washington, D.C.

The four Airmen were among 24 Airmen honored by the 17th Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James A. Cody in the ninth year of the recognition series, which highlights Airmen who exhibit incredible bravery on and off the battlefield.

"These tremendous Airmen represent a myriad of career fields of our Air Force ... Their feats of courage, for their teammates, our country, our partners, are amazing," CMSAF Cody said. "We are so blessed to have men and women like this, and their families, in our Air Force...you are why we are the world's best Air Force."

The four Air Commandos recognized at the ceremony were Master Sgt. Ivan Ruiz, Tech. Sgts. David Shea, Thomas Bauhs, and Matthew McKenna.

Master Sgt. Ivan Ruiz, a special tactics pararescueman, was the lone rescue specialist attached to an Army Special Forces team in Afghanistan during his eleventh tour. During an assault on a Taliban stronghold to clear weapons and IED caches, he and his teammates were caught in a crossfire in the middle of an open courtyard. When both his teammates fell, he refused to leave their side, providing cover fire despite intense fire and launched grenades. He eventually moved the two wounded teammates to relative safety to provide life-saving trauma care to them and other injured team members. He was then stationed at the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron, but is now at the 56th Rescue Squadron, RAF Lakenheath, U.K.

Tech Sgt. Thomas Bauhs, a combat controller at the 23 Special Tactics Squadron, was embedded with an



Army Special Forces unit in Afghanistan when he was ambushed by 50 insurgents. During a 12-hour fire fight, despite multiple injuries to his head, Bauhs continued to call in close air support and medical evacuation for injured teammates, return fire to the enemy and render aid to his injured ground commander. His calm demeanor despite traumatic brain injury saved the lives of his teammates and resulted in 11 enemies killed in action.

Tech. Sgt. David Shea, a CV-22 special missions aviator at the 8th Special Operations Squadron, was manning the tail gun during an attempted rescue of American citizens from a United Nations compound in Central Africa when the aircraft sustained heavy damage due to ground gunfire. Despite multiple systems failures, Shea helped maneuver the aircraft away from the ground attack but multiple members were heavily

wounded. While holding his teammate's arterial bleeding at bay and tending to four Army Special Forces members, he continued to identify system failures and ensured safe return of the aircraft and all personnel.

Tech. Sgt. Matthew McKenna, a combat controller from the 21st STS, was tasked to clear a known improvised explosives device facilitation ring, along with his Army Special Forces team in Afghanistan.

Immediately upon

entering the village, they experienced heavy contact from 60 well-armed fighters. Exposing himself to enemy fire multiple times during the 13-hour firefight, McKenna prevented a potentially catastrophic ambush, coordinated vital resupply air drops for ammunition and water and called in multiple precise airstrikes, contributing to 103 enemies killed in action and cleared IED caches.

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*These tremendous Airmen represent a myriad of career fields of our Air Force....Their feats of courage, for their teammates, our country, our partners, are amazing. We are so blessed to have men and women like this, and their families, in our Air Force...you are why we are the world's best Air Force.*

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*— Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James Cody*

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*Three of the four Air Force Special Operations Airmen honored in this year's Portraits in Courage pose in front of Arlington National Cemetery. Three Special Tactics Airmen and a CV-22 Osprey special missions operator were recognized for their acts of bravery above and beyond the call of duty. Courtesy photo.*





**AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND**

# Last MC-130H Talon II departs United Kingdom

*Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Stacia Zachary  
352nd Special Operations Wing Provisional*

The last MC-130H Combat Talon II departed Jan. 8, thus ending its tenure at the 7th Special Operations Squadron at RAF Mildenhall. The MC-130H, tail number 0195, is the last of its kind to leave the European theater. Its departure marks the final step of Special Operations Command Europe's transition from the Talon II to the CV-22 Osprey.

"This is a departure flight," said U.S. Air Force Col. Matthew Powell, Joint Special Operations Air Component – Europe vice commander. "It's a somber occasion. What you'll see today is a real quiet and respectful departure because we understand the mission will never be the

same as the 7th evolves into a new aircraft."

The MC-130H Talon II is part of a rich and enduring legacy that dates back to the Carpetbaggers from World War II. The B-24 Liberators, which operated out of RAF Harrington, were painted a non-glossy black to make them less visible to search lights – much like modern-day special operations forces which operate under the cover of darkness.

"Heritage is important – especially as the 7th SOS says goodbye to the Talon II and evolves into the CV-22 and its new capabilities," said Powell. "Special operations in Europe dates back not just to the Air Commandos tradition, but also to a Carpetbaggers tradition. It's absolutely fundamental to emphasize that we have a tradition of zero mission failure and we rise to the challenge. Our heritage recognizes that and as the 7th



*The aircrew prior to their departure flight Jan. 8, from RAF Mildenhall to Hurlburt Field, Fla. This is the last MC-130H Combat Talon II departure, thus ending its tenure at the 7th Special Operations Squadron at RAF Mildenhall. The MC-130H, tail number 0195, is the last of its kind to leave the European theater.*



***The final MC-130H Combat Talon II  
departs RAF Mildenhall for  
Hurlburt Field, Fla., Jan. 8.***



(SOS) transitions to the CV-22, it's clear that's our future, too."

The MC-130H Combat Talon II has participated in special operations missions ranging from air refueling of the military's vertical lift platforms; precision airdrop of personnel and equipment; and the execution of night, long-range, transportation and resupply of military forces across the globe.

One of the first major deployments for the 7th SOS was during 1995 was to the Middle East for Exercise Noble Rose. Two 7th SOS MC-130H Combat Talon IIs and two 67th Special Operations Squadron HC-130P/N Combat Shadows supported U.S. Army Special Forces and U.S. Navy SEAL forces from March 15 to April 4, 1995.

When Operation Joint Endeavor began, the 352nd SOG's mission expanded significantly during Operation Provide Promise. The severe flying weather in the Balkans during the winter months made the Combat Talon weapons system the ideal choice by planners to support the expanded Special Operations Command Implementation Force mission.

On Dec. 4, 1995, after receiving a deployment order from Special Operations Command Europe, two 7th SOS Combat Talon IIs departed RAF Mildenhall for Stuttgart, Germany, to onload the SOCEUR advance party and to proceed forward to Brindisi in Italy. A third Combat Talon was positioned there on Dec. 12, 1995. During December, the 7th SOS flew 215.8 hours and 77 sorties supporting

Operation Joint Endeavor. No aircraft losses or damages were incurred during the month-long operation, yet the threat from freedom fighters on the ground, and the severe weather restricting flight visibility, had posed a real threat to the safety of the crews. Since then, the Combat Talon II has participated in several operations to include Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

The Combat Talon II boasts an extensive electronic warfare suite that enables the aircrew to detect and avoid potential threats. If engaged, the system is designed to protect the aircraft from both radar and infrared-guided threats. The MC-130H is equipped with aerial refueling pods to provide in-flight refueling of special operations forces and combat search and rescue helicopters and vertical lift assets.

"There's no plane that can do what a Talon II can do," Powell said. "But in a few years I think the mission will evolve into other platforms. Right now, that's the CV-22."

The CV-22 Osprey, the premier tiltrotor aircraft, was built with many of the capabilities legacy special operations aircraft have.

The Combat Talon IIs from RAF Mildenhall will become part of the 15th Special Operations Squadron's mission at Hurlburt Field, Fla.

"The nice thing about this departure flight is these planes are not going to the boneyard," Powell said. "They're going back to Hurlburt Field where they'll continue to fly and make an impact for special operations. They still have a lot of life left in them."





## MARINE CORPS FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



*A Critical Skills Operator with Bravo Company, 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command, climbs a ladder to board a target vessel during Visit, Board, Search and Seizure training near Naval Base Coronado, Calif., Jan. 15.*

# MARSOC Marines fine-tune Visit, Board, Search and Seizure skills

*Story and photos by Sgt. Donovan Lee  
MARSOC Public Affairs*

Critical Skills Operators with Bravo Company, 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command, conducted Visit, Board, Search and Seizure training aboard U.S. Naval Base Coronado, Calif., Jan. 5-16.

VBSS is a mission set conducted by MARSOC during maritime interdiction, designed to capture enemy vessels. It is also used to combat terrorism, piracy and

smuggling.

“The overall end state is to demonstrate that as an expeditionary and scalable force, a Marine Special Operations Company, is capable of executing a VBSS mission in response to a potential crisis,” said the assistant operations chief for Bravo Co. “At the tactical level, the goal is to develop and fine tune the standard operating procedure a Marine Special Operations Team will utilize while conducting VBSS.”

Conducting operations at sea presented a whole new set of problems the MSOT’s had to overcome throughout



the training, said the assistant operations chief for Bravo Co. Maneuvering aboard a ship can disrupt communications and make command and control more difficult. Additionally, the confined spaces and sheer quantity of compartments on a ship extend the time required for a detailed search of personnel and illicit materials, he said.

Because of the difficulties, CSO's developed new skills while building upon old ones to become more strategically proficient.

"We had to learn a lot of advanced techniques, tactics and procedures, because it's not just close quarter's battle on a boat and we can't plan for all of the contingencies aboard a ship," said a CSO with Bravo Co.

At the end of the training, the CSO's walked away having gained advanced tactical and technical knowledge as well as valuable hands-on experience.

"We learned where the key spaces on a ship are to effectively take control of it," said a CSO with Bravo Co. "Each ship is different, but they all have similarities; we can use those similarities to apply the fundamentals to any ship we would have to interdict."



***Critical Skills Operators with Bravo Company, 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command, saw through a steel door during Visit, Board, Search and Seizure training near Naval Base Coronado, Calif., Jan. 15.***



***A Critical Skills Operator with Bravo Company, 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command, performs first aid on a simulated casualty during Visit, Board, Search and Seizure training near Naval Base Coronado, Calif., Jan. 15.***





# A-10C pilot awarded DFC with valor for heroism in combat for saving Marine Special Ops Team

By Airman 1st Class Ceaira Tinsley  
23d Wing Public Affairs

For one Moody Airman, what seemed to be a standard patrol mission from Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan Oct. 28, 2008, concluded with him receiving a Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor at Moody Air Force Base, Ga., Jan. 29.

Ultimately, the actions of U.S. Air Force Maj. Jeremiah “Bull” Parvin and his wingman, Capt. Aaron Cavasos, saved the lives of six Marines that day.

In recognition of his selfless and heroic actions, Maj. Gen. H.D. Pumbo Jr., Ninth Air Force commander, presented Parvin with the Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor.

The DFC is awarded to any officer or enlisted person of the Armed Forces of the United States who distinguished her or himself in actual combat in support of operations by heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight.

“This was not an easy situation for Major Parvin,” Pumbo said during the ceremony. “He made his way there in an expeditious way, and I will tell you after flying a number of different types of airplanes in the mountains of Afghanistan, it is not an easy environment to fly in. Those of you who have flown in Afghanistan know that it’s significantly challenging ... especially when the weather is not good. For me, it was the most challenging environment I have flown in during my Air Force career.

“That was the beginning of the bravery, the courage, the flight discipline and the real Airmanship that we’re going to recognize today. It’s what Airmen do to work their way into the fight in order to put fire down on the ground to support our men and women under fire. This is the bravery that we in the U.S. Air Force identify that it takes to get a Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor.”

Pumbo isn’t the only one who advocates Parvin as a hero. One Marine in the audience said he knows his team would have died that day if it wasn’t for the bravery of Parvin and Cavasos.

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*“It was the first time in my life that I thought to myself ‘this is it we’re going to die, we’re not going to make it out of this. [If it wasn’t for him] I don’t think I’d be doing this interview right now. I’m certain that I wouldn’t have made it out. There is no way that we would have made it all of the way back to the base.”*

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*— Master Gunnery Sgt. Richard Wells, Marine Special Operations Team chief*

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“It was the first time in my life that I thought to myself ‘this is it we’re going to die, we’re not going to make it out of this,’” said U.S. Marine Corps Master Gunnery Sgt. Richard Wells, who was the Marine Special

Operations Team chief. “[If it wasn’t for him] I don’t think I’d be doing this interview right now. I’m certain that I wouldn’t have made it out. There is no way that we would have made it all of the way back to the base.”

Although many see Parvin’s actions as heroic, he said any of his counterparts would have done the same thing in his situation.

“Any of the guys we train with on a daily basis, given the same set of circumstances and information would do the exact same thing,” Parvin said. “That’s what we want to train guys to do. Whether it’s here or Davis-Monthan [AFB, Ariz.] we try to train them to a set standard: the same one that we used that day.”



Parvin may have thought the mission was just another day's work, but seven years later he still remembers all of the accounts of that day.

Then Captain Parvin and Lieutenant Cavasos, both A-10C pilots, were circling their area of responsibility when the air support operations center relayed a call for help. "We have troops in contact," chirped over the radio and the pilots raced to the coordinates provided. The pilots made contact with the joint terminal attack controller on the ground, call sign: HALO 11.

Parvin battled poor weather conditions during his 320-mile flight to their location.

As he thumbed through his maps, Parvin realized neither he nor his wingman had a map of where they were going. Although the odds were stacked against them, they used their experience to find the location. Upon arrival Parvin descended below a thick cloud cover and maneuvered through the mountainous terrain to reach the unit in need.

Once overhead, they determined a Marine Special Operations Team was being relentlessly assaulted and the enemy was closing in fast. After nearly two hours of close-quarters combat, the team was in dire need of support and there was no way for ground forces to reach them. There were also a number of Marines who sustained gunshot wounds and needed medical care.

"You get there and there's this huge excitement and adrenaline rush that you try to tamper down," Parvin said. "You hear gunshots in the background; you hear screams of urgency in their voices. You could just tell they need help and they need it now."

Parvin turned on the A-10C's overt exterior lights to divert enemy fire toward himself and away from the Marine unit. With the help of the JTAC, he was able to distinguish the friendlies from the enemies and provide close air support. While maneuvering in the mountainous terrain taking heavy surface-to-air fire, Parvin destroyed multiple enemy positions - some within 40 meters of U.S. forces. His actions gave the Marines enough time to retreat to safety.

The hour flight back to Bagram was silent as the exhaustion from the day's events set in.

"In 2008, we did the mission and we landed," said Parvin, a native of Rocky Mount, N.C. "It was counted as an everyday mission and we didn't think anything about it."

Parvin, now a major and the 75th Fighter Squadron director of operations, said it wasn't until six years later

that he realized this was no ordinary mission: It was something more. The ramifications of his actions didn't occur to him until talking with the Marines he helped that day.

"It was unbelievable to hear the ground guys' story," Parvin said. "Once I heard their [account of the events] and listened to the trials and tribulations they went through, I was like 'whoa.' I knew what we did was really important."

Now, with three deployments, 280 combat hours and 83 sorties, Parvin has had a lot of diverse experiences throughout his career.

"It feels great [because] we train with all services all the time," Parvin said. "It doesn't matter who's on the ground. We're going to work with them no matter what and no matter when. That's our job as A-10 guys to make sure they remain safe at all the times and to provide accurate firepower for them."

Cavasos, now stationed at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., was also awarded the DFC with Valor in a ceremony at Luke Jan. 16.



**U.S. Air Force Maj. Jeremiah 'Bull' Parvin, 75th Fighter Squadron director of operations, and U.S. Marine Corps Master Gunnery Sgt. Richard Wells, senior enlisted advisor of Marine Special Operations School, pose for a photo Jan. 29, at Moody Air Force Base, Ga. Parvin received the Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor for his heroic actions that saved the lives of Wells' team during a 2008 deployment to Afghanistan.**



## U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - HEADQUARTERS

# Planning with Partners

*By Gunnery Sgt. Reina Barnett  
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

Planners from U.S. Special Operations Command, U.S. Army Special Operations Command, 12 partner nations, and others from various organizations met Jan. 13 to 15 for one of four planning events in support of exercise SILENT QUEST 15-1.

SILENT QUEST is a USASOC tabletop exercise assessing concepts, capabilities, and capacities required to meet strategic and operational challenges Army Special Operations Forces can expect to encounter in 2020 and beyond. “The scenario uses a Special Operations-centric campaign characterized by a multi-year, small-footprint, scalable design, incorporating SOF, conventional force, joint, multinational, and interagency actions,” said Army Lt. Col. Gittipong Paruchabutr, SILENT QUEST plans officer for USASOC.

Regional stability is a key component of the exercise, which is focused on North Africa.

“There is lots of ungoverned space and myriad issues we are dealing with today that (the coalition is) familiar with, and our countries are already there,” said Matt Pascual, the Africa desk officer for the Euro-Africa Support Group, USSOCOM.

Army Lt. Gen. Charles Cleveland, USASOC commander, decided multi-national participation and perspectives would be a critical asset in the planning and execution of the exercise, Paruchabutr said. He added partner nation participation will help accurately reflect the future operating environment.

“Potentially shaping future USASOC doctrine and other initiatives are some of the benefits to our partner nations,” said Paruchabutr, “but most importantly, we



**Members of U.S. Special Operations Command's J-3 International office discuss the exercise scenario for SILENT QUEST 15-1, Jan. 13 to 15, in Tampa, Fla. SILENT QUEST is a USASOC tabletop exercise incorporating multinational viewpoints to meet strategic and operational challenges that Army Special Operations Forces can expect to encounter in 2020 and beyond. Photo by Tech Sgt. Angelita Lawrence.**

increase trust and interoperability between our countries.”

Danish Army Lt. Col. Lars Soerensen, an exchange officer at USSOCOM, agrees on the many assets these global partnerships create.

“When USASOC opened this up, we were excited because this is an opportunity to affect the process and bring in a broader perspective to how we can see warfighting in the 21st century,” Soerensen said. “We all have a different way of doing things. What is fascinating about USSOCOM is its global community, and in order to have the ability to act fast, we need to be global.”

Being able to plug into a global network is key for the foreign liaison officers and U.S. staff members. This particular exercise allows all participants to align their processes and procedures.



“It’s important at the first step to create a basic understanding of how to inter-operate throughout the world with our partners,” said Soerensen. “It can be difficult and time consuming to create partnerships and understanding later on.”

The proactive approach has helped create a common community and dialogue at USSOCOM, forging a stronger base of multinational forces.

This is the first time international partners have participated in the planning and execution of this exercise. “The biggest change we are making is in our perspective, from a U.S.-centric view of a problem set to a multinational view that includes our own as well as our partners’ national interests,” said Army Lt. Col.

Michael Davis, J-3 International desk officer.

“In order to strengthen and expand this global network, working alongside our partners anywhere in the world, we need to start with exercises like SILENT QUEST

so we are familiar with our partners’ interests, authorities, and policies before we conduct operations together.”

Bringing planners together at all levels of leadership makes all participants stakeholders -- reinforcing diversity, yet ensuring early on everyone is working toward common goals.

“The U.S. has certain ways of doing things, and our ways may be similar to how our partners do things, but there’s always a certain amount of collaboration and coordination that needs to take place to make sure we work together as seamlessly as possible,” Davis said.

Norwegian Army Lt. Col. Asbjorn Lysgaard, a foreign liaison officer, agrees different viewpoints increase the success of collaboration.

“From my perspective, the most important thing here is to have the broad coalition and partner nations present -- you’ll get broader, better perspectives on what our nations believe and think for the future,” Lysgaard said.

From a global perspective, many of the problems

faced today are interconnected. One of the goals of SILENT QUEST is to contain problems closest to their source, enabling host nations to deal with challenges at their level. This goal falls in line with the 2020 planning guidance of Army Maj. Gen James Linder, commander of Special Operations Command Africa.

When involving international partners, simple but important tasks like agreeing on definitions can be vital, as there is always the possibility of language barriers being present.

“You don’t want to send the wrong message to partner nations. Words such as kinetic strike and raid may have very different meanings to people,” Lysgaard said.

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*“From my perspective, the most important thing here is to have the broad coalition and partner nations present -- you’ll get broader, better perspectives on what our nations believe and think for the future.”*

— Norwegian Army Lt. Col. Asbjorn Lysgaard

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After bridging languages, the benefits created by these partnerships develop networks that contribute to interoperability.

“Integrating components together from the SOF enterprise involves many actors, and

building a cohesive plan incorporating other’s viewpoints is valuable,” said Pascual.

“We must consider the sensitivities and the cultural differences in order to have a unified team,” Pascual said. “In this venue, it’s important for our international partners and our U.S. planners to have an international approach from the genesis to the operational phase – especially since we all have real-world experiences and boots on the ground in these regions.”

SILENT QUEST brings together communities of interest and transforms them into communities of action by providing a unique opportunity. “Tabletop exercises like this help us keep our proficiency in planning, responding, and managing the resources we have,” Pascual said. “It’s important for planners to not only have the academics down, but also build relationships. These foreign liaison officers most often become senior members in their militaries.”

The capstone event for this exercise is a senior leader facilitated discussion hosted by Cleveland, taking place this spring.



## U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - HEADQUARTERS



*U.S. Special Operations Command Parachute Team, Team Leader Keith Walter (center), and Army Staff Sgt. Micah Hitchcock (left), primary Para-Commando drop-zone safety officer, conduct relative work training with other team members at iFLY, Orlando, Fla. Oct. 28, 2014. The Para-Commandos are all active-duty military or Department of Defense civilians assigned to USSOCOM.*

# The Para-Commandos of USSOCOM

*Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Jayson Price  
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

An airplane carrying members of the U.S. Special Operations Command Parachute Team soared through the clear night sky, 3,500 feet above the brightly-lit Doak Campbell Stadium in Tallahassee, Fla., Oct. 18, 2014. More than 82,000 fans ready to see the Florida State Seminoles take on the Notre Dame Fighting Irish gradually became louder as three highly-skilled Para-Commandos clad in black and yellow flight suits silently exited their plane. Shortly after, the first

commando came into the crowd's view.

"At approximately 1,500 feet, I couldn't hear the ground crew from the radio on my chest anymore because I was flying over the stadium and [the cheering] was so loud," said Army Sgt. 1st Class Kyle Margelofsky, the noncommissioned officer for the USSOCOM's Parachute Team. "We had the American flag [flying with us], so they were obviously pumped up to see that coming in. At about 600 feet or so, I came into the stadium. I had the Florida state flag and once they saw that, they got loud again - lots of camera flashes."



The 13-year Army veteran spent his first 10 years as an Army Ranger before joining the Para-Commandos. Margelofsky's voice and mannerisms rarely show any sign of emotion or excitability, but his face began to register a smile – ever so slightly, “It was pretty intense to fly over [82,000] people, land on the 50-yard line, take the football out and present it to the referees. It's definitely something I will never forget and I'm definitely thankful for the opportunity to represent the command, the operators and all the support personnel of SOCOM in that way.”

Margelofsky is one of only two full-time team members. The rest of the team is comprised of DoD Civilian and active-duty military assigned to other jobs within USSOCOM who serve on the Para-Commandos as an additional duty.

“Jumping is just a way to get people's attention and then we educate the public about SOCOM,” said Keith Walter, the Para-Commandos' team leader. “Once we get their attention, we get on the microphone and tell them about the 69,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and DoD Civilians assigned to USSOCOM stationed around the nation, and deployed to an average of 85 countries around the world defending their freedom. We also conduct one-on-one interaction, especially during other events such as air shows.”

Walter and Margelofsky agree that jumping is the easy part, but what people don't see are the months of training and planning that go into each event; and the ground crew who have the vital role of ensuring the Commando's land safely, on time, and on target.

“The drop zone safety officer is on the ground,” said Army Staff Sgt. Micah Hitchcock, primary Para-Commando drop-zone safety officer. “He's responsible for the safety and mechanics of the jump from the ground. He's on a radio, talking to the pilot as well as

the jump team. He's also in charge of keeping everybody off the field, ensuring wind conditions are correct as well as any other variables on the ground.”

“They're jumping in usually blind,” adds Hitchcock. “They don't know any of the wind conditions and they don't know what's going on, on the field when they're up above 13,000 feet. That's my job – to be on the ground coordinating with them and whoever our host is.”

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*Jumping is just a way to get people's attention and then we educate the public about SOCOM. Once we get their attention, we get on the microphone and tell them about the 69,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and DoD civilians assigned to USSOCOM stationed around the nation, and deployed to an average of 85 countries around the world defending their freedom. We also conduct one-on-one interaction, especially during other events such as air shows.*

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*— Keith Walter, Para-Commandos' team leader*

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Marine Sgt. Corey Mackenzie has been with the Para-Commandos for about three months and is serving as a ground crew member. Although his only prior experience was limited to recreational jumping, he joined the team once he learned that it was open to USSOCOM personnel who wish

to volunteer.

“When I joined the team, the learning curve was near vertical,” said Mackenzie. “You have to catch on quick because it matters how you set up a drop-zone for these guys, making sure the wind-call is correct so they don't end up coming in sprinting. They have to hit a target that's pretty small and they rely on the ground crew to make correct wind calls, set up their gear correctly, and to ensure they have all the gear that they need. I basically assist whenever I can.”

One new experience for Mackenzie was accompanying the team during their monthly vertical wind-tunnel training, where they practice dive formations and other mid-air exercises.

“What stuck in my mind was watching the other experienced team members and just how easy it seemed for them – it kind of made me a little more comfortable,” said Mackenzie. “But when you get in [to the vertical wind-tunnel], it's a little bit of a different story and it motivates you to try and get as good as they are. And plus, with them watching, you don't want to mess up.”

*Story continued on next page*

**Tip of the Spear**



## U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - HEADQUARTERS

“They’ve got a professionalism that I have not seen in any sort of joint command billet before,” said Mackenzie. “They really believe safety is paramount. I’ve watched some of the civilians jump [non-team members] and they almost seem like cowboys, but I feel completely comfortable [with the Para-Commandos] and I trust the team when it comes to safety and also professionalism.”

“We do other things [in addition to skydiving] as well,” Hitchcock said. “We went to a children’s hospital and signed pictures and talked to kids and just tried to get some smiles out of them for the one time that we were there. I think we make a great impact within this community around here.”

“Everyone does an awesome job volunteering their

free time away from family and friends, supporting the command and educating the public on SOCOM,” said Walter. “Everyone else [besides Margelofsky] has a regular job within the command, but they’ve volunteered to train and perform demonstrations for the Headquarters.”

It’s a pretty busy train to be on, yet very rewarding as well,” said Margelofsky.

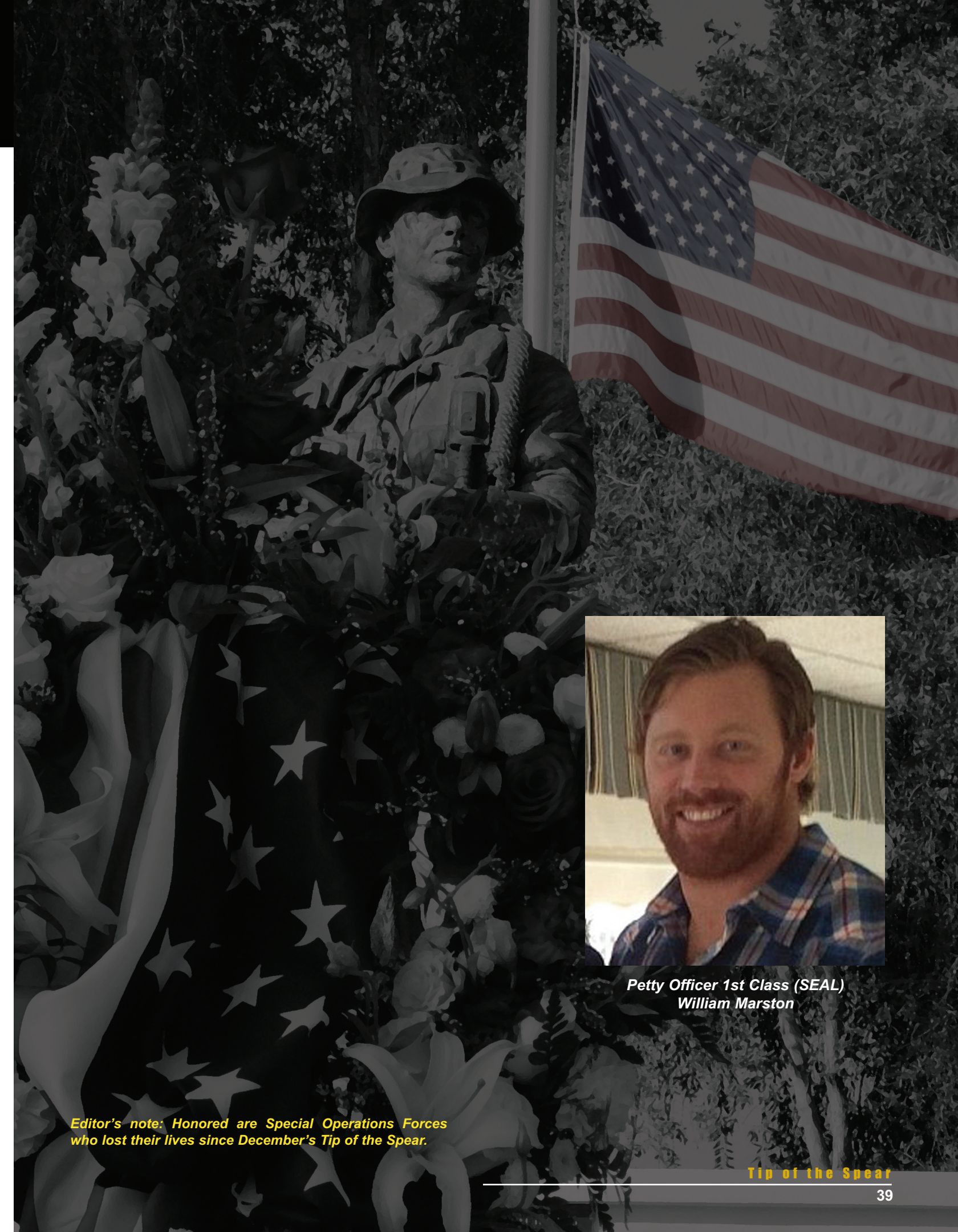
“We would like people to know who we represent,” he added. “We’re just the face of [the men and women] assigned to SOCOM. We have the distinct honor and the ability to represent them by showcasing one of the insertion techniques that someone who is operational within SOCOM learns to execute.”

More details on the team and a schedule of upcoming jumps can be found on the USSOCOM website [www.socom.mil](http://www.socom.mil).



**Marine Sgt. Corey Mackenzie, a ground crew member of the U.S. Special Operations Command Parachute Team, takes advice from an indoor skydiving coach at iFLY, Orlando, Fla., Oct. 28, 2014. This was the first time Mackenzie trained in a vertical wind-tunnel as he aspires to one day jump with the multi-service SOCOM team.**





*Petty Officer 1st Class (SEAL)  
William Marston*

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





Special tactics Airmen jump out of an MC-130H Talon II Jan. 7, at Hurlburt Field, Fla. The Airmen were from various special tactics career fields, including special operations weathermen, combat controllers, pararescuemen and tactical air control parties. Photo by Senior Airman Christopher Callaway.