

ONLINE VERSION



TIP OF THE SPEAR

**SOF Weather Warriors
Leap Frogs honored by President
Operation One Voice**

U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLA., JANUARY 2006

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Special Operations Weather: Forecasting from the front lines

Staff Sgt. Jody Ball keeps a lookout while Tech. Sgt. Rick Rhode takes a cloud cover reading during a Special Operations Weather Team exercise near Hurlburt Field, Fla. Both Special Operations Weathermen are members of the 10th Combat Weather Squadron at Hurlburt. Photo by Chief Master Sgt. Gary Emery. See Page 18.



Tip of the Spear

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Front Cover: Capt. Don Garrett leads Tech. Sgt. Rick Rhode, left, and Staff Sgt. Jody Ball during a Special Operations Weather Team exercise near Hurlburt Field, Fla. Special Operations Weathermen are highly-trained Battlefield Airmen who operate in hostile or denied territory with special operators from all Services. They provide weather data and forecasts combatant commanders need to plan and execute missions. Photo by Chief Master Sgt. Gary Emery.

Highlights



Special Tactics Airmen train on submarine *USS Alabama*

*during a joint exercise on the Pacific
Ocean, page 6*

U.S. Navy Leap Frogs meet with President George W. Bush

in the White House, page 20



Operation One Voice

*raises money for fallen SOF warrior's
children, page 26*

Iraqi girls' school receives supplies

Iraqi security forces and the 401st Civil Affairs Battalion deliver pens, pencils and hope.

Multinational Force-Iraq

The Ninewa Middle School for Girls in the Al-Faisaliya neighborhood in Mosul accepted school necessities from Operation Iraqi Children.

Soldiers from the 401st Civil Affairs Battalion handed out supplies to teachers from the Ninewa Middle School. Prearranged by the Department of Education and Mr. Mohammed S. HajRamathan, Provincial Council Chairman for Education, five classrooms with about 150 children received school supplies.

Iraqi security forces, along with the 401st CAB, provided for the delivery of the supplies. Each child in the classroom received a kit containing pencils, folders, rulers, an eraser and other items needed to help them with their studies.

The smiles on their faces showed the excitement, said the CA education team leader. "The kids were very excited to get the supplies, and the mission was a great success."

Operation Iraqi Children was co-founded by actor Gary Sinise and author Laura Hillenbrand in March 2004.



A 401st Civil Affairs Battalion Staff Sergeant helps carry school supplies into the Ninewa Middle School. Photo by Spc Clydell Kinchen.

The organization collects and ships school supplies and toys to Iraq, which are then distributed to the children by American service members. Sinise said this project not only helps the Iraqi children with needed materials, it boosts the morale of the troops who pass out the items.

"It's a great way to support the troops," he said. "Every time they see a smiling face of a child who gets their first Beanie Baby or receive school supplies they never had before, it's a very good day for everyone."

The genesis for Operation Iraqi Children came from a visit Sinise made to Iraq with the United Service Organizations in November 2003. He witnessed how poorly the Iraqi schools were equipped when he visited an elementary school where three children were sharing one pencil, he said.

The visit to the school also made him realize the tremendous morale boost the troops receive helping the kids, he said. "I saw a wonderful camaraderie between the Iraqis and Americans, and I wanted to support our troops in their effort to continue to build these relationships. It's all real stuff, and I saw it first hand and wanted to support that feeling. I saw what it did to the troops, the smiles on their faces, and how it made them feel to be at that school that day."



A student smiles for the camera after receiving new school supplies donated by Operation Iraqi Children. Photo by Master Sgt. Michael Best.

CJTF-HOA Civil Affairs counters terrorism with medical treatment

By Senior Airman Jason Piatek

More than 1,200 villagers were treated when the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa Civil Affairs team, in conjunction with the Ethiopian government, conducted a medical civil assistance project in Gode, Ethiopia.

During the three-day clinic, CJTF-HOA members treated the sick, who came from six villages surrounding Gode.

“We treated everything from minor injuries such as cuts to severe long-term injuries,” said a CA medic. “I treated one individual who had knee problems several years ago and now has to walk on his hands, dragging himself to get around.”

“You try to help out as many as you can,” said CJTF-HOA civic action team NCOIC. “A lot of things they have problems with, they realize are problems, but they just don’t have the money to get it taken care of. You’d love to hand over your paycheck, and if that would solve the problem here, we’d all do it.”

Some of the medics treated types of injuries they have never encountered before.

“I’ve seen injuries and illnesses in the late stages you’d never see in the states,” the medic said. “It’s the kind of stuff you usually only see in medical books.”

In order to be prepared to give the best possible treatment during the MEDCAP, the CA team studied the surrounding area to find the common diseases and illnesses.

“We saw a lot of farming accidents and sexually transmitted diseases,” he said. “Also, there’s several pumps for getting water out of the river, and they use donkey carts to get water. It seems every week you’ll see a crocodile bite or some of their animals getting snatched by a ‘croc.’”

Some of the people treated during the first day returned for follow-up treatment. One such villager, Abshiro Ahmed, is a science teacher at the Gode Primary

School. She was treated for a severely infected forearm laceration.

“The infection was in my hand for several days,” Ahmed said. “The medics cleaned it and gave me medication. I haven’t been able to sleep for the past few nights, but last night after the treatment, I slept.”

Ahmed’s experience is just one example of the immediate effect a MEDCAP can have on villagers.

“Our main goal is to impact lives,” the NCOIC said. “That woman’s life was greatly impacted. That makes me feel better; there were quite a few like that.”

CJTF-HOA members hope that message is passed on to future generations. “The children are the ones we’re going to make the biggest impact on,” the medic said. “The task force’s effort to fight terrorism is going to be won through the children. If you have children growing up with memories of the help we’ve given them, they’re going to be less likely to pick up a weapon.”

If the smiles seen at the MEDCAP are used as the measuring stick, the task force is steadily winning the hearts and minds of future generations, according to the NCOIC.

“That’s my favorite part — seeing the children laugh, visiting with them and making them feel better,” the NCOIC said.



A Civil Affairs medic looks inside the mouth of a local child with the help of a light in Gode, Ethiopia. Military medical personnel from Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa participated in a three-day medical civic assistance program providing aide to more than 2,000 Ethiopians. Photo by Staff Sgt. Stephen Schester.



Airmen with the 22nd and 23rd Special Tactics Squadrons launch an inflatable boat from the USS Alabama into the Pacific Ocean during an exercise. The exercise tested special operations infiltration and rescue tactics. The joint effort also tested the capabilities of the Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines specially modified to carry SOF forces. The submarines are converted from ballistic missile submarines to guided-missile submarines with new capabilities. Photo by Master Chief Petty Officer Daniel Niclas.

Special Tactics Airmen train on submarine *USS Alabama*

*By Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Howlet
Submarine Group Nine Public Affairs*

A U.S. fighter pilot has been shot down. He is injured and behind enemy lines. But he has established communications and is evading the enemy. Time is a critical factor. He needs to be rescued, and he needs to be rescued now.

Submerged off the coast lies 19,000 tons of stealth in the form of a submarine. The Ohio-class Trident ballistic missile submarine is being converted to carry smaller Tomahawk missiles. It has storage and operational equipment to support up to 60 Special Operations Forces.

The sub is a joint platform that caters to all Services' special operators. And if all else fails, it has 156 Tomahawk missiles at its disposal.

A team of operators from an Air Force special tactics squadron is stationed nearby. They receive word their unique services are needed.

The team includes Pararescuemen, who are trained emergency medical technicians capable of infiltrating any environment or combat zone to rescue personnel. They'll be joined by their Combat Controller teammates, air traffic controllers who jump in before all other friendly forces to control air power and fuse command and control for clandestine missions. Add their comrades, Special

Operations Weathermen, and an Special Tactics Squadron makes a versatile team.

On this mission the STS operators had to fly out on a Navy search and recovery helicopter to meet the submarine. They descend to the slippery deck by rope. The Airmen go below with their gear to set up for the rescue mission.

The submarine dives and moves closer to the shoreline where it surfaces. The STS team pulls all their gear, inflatable boat, and engines through a hatch, inflate their boats and zoom to the shore. The plan calls for recovering the downed pilot, treating his injuries and speeding back out to sea for a rendezvous with the sub.

It's scenarios like these that require cooperation between the services. It also requires practice to iron out the wrinkles in the process. That's where the *USS Alabama* stepped up to provide a practice platform for the Air Force's 22nd and 23rd STSs from McChord Air Force Base, Wash., and Hurlburt Field, Fla., respectively.

The Airmen spent a week last month aboard the *Alabama* practicing various scenarios in which their services would be required. The Alabama is an Ohio-class fleet ballistic missile submarine and served as a surrogate for its brothers nearing completion of their conversions in the shipyards.

The goal of the exercises was to test concepts being worked into the new mission for the submarines, such as the rescue scenario.

Another test conducted was the first launch and recovery of an unmanned aerial vehicle from a submarine, said Navy Lt. Tyler Johnson, Submarine Squadron 9's attack weapons systems officer. He helped coordinate the exercise.

"We had four goals to this exercise," Johnson said. "The first goal was to further define the tactics, techniques and procedures for the SSGN program. Second, we wanted to prove and expand on our joint interoperability. We wanted to provide the Air Force with an opportunity to conduct amphibious training with a unique Naval resource.

"Also, we wanted to give the crew of *Alabama* an opportunity to conduct SOF training," he said.

Exercises went on day and night, offering different environments to challenge the Airmen and the *Alabama's* crew.

"This was a great opportunity for some of our younger troops to train with their joint counterparts and have an impact on the evolving (submarine) program," said Lt. Col. Mike Sneider, the 22nd's commander. "It was a challenging environment fast-roping onto the slippery decks and learning to maneuver on the submarine."

His teams also learned some appreciation for the

submariners' lives aboard the boat.

"One of the things we had to figure out was how to get our boats, engines and gear down the hatches and stowed on the submarine with such limited space," Sneider said.

The commander talked about lessons learned regarding the UAV launch and believes it has a future aboard the SSGN class.

"The UAV is definitely another SOF asset that can be launched from this platform. We were able to identify some areas of improvement, which was the whole reason we were there," he said.

His teams also benefited from the opportunity to learn from the submariners.

"The more we learn and are exposed to, the more effective we will be in different mission profiles," he said.

The *Alabama's* crew impressed the SOF operators with their professionalism.

"It takes a very professional and patient crew to work through the kinks in these brand-new tactics with us. Because of their outstanding professionalism, we were able to accomplish more than we had originally set up to do," Sneider said.



Airmen with the 22nd and 23rd Special Tactics Squadrons launch a Pointer unmanned aerial vehicle during an exercise aboard the USS Alabama. Photo by Master Chief Petty Officer Daniel Niclas.



The CV-22 Osprey lands. Department of Defense photo.

Osprey flies SOF into the future

By Senior Airman J.G.
Buzanowski
Air Force Print News

In addition to riding on the wings of Eagles, Falcons and Hawks, the Air Force will also fly with the Ospreys soon.

The CV-22 Osprey, that is.

The Air Force will buy 50 of the tilt-rotor aircraft for use by Air Force Special Operations Command.

The Osprey will first go through several developmental and operational test phases both at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., and Kirtland AFB, N.M. It should be ready for deployment by 2009, said Maj. Percy Dunagin, commander of Detachment 1 of the 18th Flight Test Squadron at Edwards.

The Osprey is a tilt-rotor aircraft that flies like a propeller airplane but takes off and lands like a helicopter. The first aircraft is now undergoing testing at Edwards. The second one arrived at the high desert base in late

October and the third is expected in February.

“The CV-22 has twice the speed and range of a helicopter but is able to operate from short fields. So it’s a unique combination that will augment the mission of Special Operations Forces,” Dunagin said. “Helicopters have an advantage and fixed-wing aircraft have an advantage. The CV-22 fills a gap between the two.”

The Marines fly the Osprey, too. The Air Force version includes a multi-mode radar system that allows it to fly in adverse weather and at night, the major said.

“It’s extremely important for Special Operations Forces to be able to complete their mission any place, any time. The CV-22 will be a key piece of equipment toward accomplishing that mission,” Dunagin said. “Testing is going well. The radar is a big success and the electronic warfare system is making great progress.”

Because of the increased flying range, the CV-22 — and the special

operations units that will use it — can operate farther from the front lines. This will leave them at less risk between missions, said Tech. Sgt. Chad Ackman, a flight engineer who is helping to put the Osprey through its paces.

The sergeant said the speed of the aircraft will also reduce workload and fatigue on aircrews and passengers.

“The instruments are all digital readouts, as opposed to the old analog ones,” he said. “So it’s one thing that makes the flight engineers’ job on board the aircraft a whole lot easier.”

As a pilot, Dunagin echoed those sentiments.

“Flying the CV-22 is an absolute thrill and we’re all impressed with its maneuverability and stability,” the major said. “On top of its mission capabilities, this is truly an amazing aircraft.”

“The special operations community will be really pleased with it,” he said.

USACAPOC (A) celebrates 15th anniversary

Continues to impact Global War on Terrorism

*Commentary by Tina Beller
USACAPOC (A) Public Affairs*

Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations have been a part of U.S. military operations since the formation of the Continental Army during the American Revolution. Leafleting and radio broadcasts were part of the engagement strategy during all major conflicts of the 20th Century and CA Soldiers were called upon to help restore order and rebuild war torn nations following World War II through the present day.

The more recent history of the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) began in October 1985, with the formation of the 1st Special Operations Command Augmentation Detachment. This unit of 30 Soldiers formed the nucleus evolving into the U.S. Army Reserve Special Operations Command. USARSOC had operational control of Army Reserve Special Operations Forces formed on December 1, 1989. The command included Army Reserve Special Forces, CA and Psychological Operations units.

Within days of activation as a major subordinate unit of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, Operation Just Cause in Panama thrust the command into action. USARSOC mobilized individual volunteer Reservists for duty in Panama and succeeding CA operation known as Promote Liberty.

Following Operation Promote Liberty, Operation Desert Shield required the new command to alert, mobilize, validate and send Soldiers to the Persian Gulf. In the midst of this activity, on Nov. 27, 1990, USARSOC was redesignated USACAPOC (A). On that date, the command gave up its progency for its Reserve Special Forces units and picked up responsibility for all active and Reserve Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations units. More than 2,650 Active and Reserve Component Soldiers from Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations units were deployed in support of Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm and Provide Comfort.

In Provide Comfort, USACAPOC (A) Soldiers were instrumental in the largest humanitarian assistance operation since the Berlin Airlift, providing relief to 500,000 Kurdish refugees in Turkey and Iraq.

During Operations Distant Haven, Pacific Haven, Safe Haven, and Somalia, USACAPOC (A) Soldiers supplied migrant camps with interpreters and produced print and broadcast news. In Operations Uphold Democracy and Maintain Democracy, CA worked in helping reestablish Haitian government ministries.

From Operation Joint Endeavor to Joint Guardian, CA coordinated efforts to restore Bosnia's infrastructure and maintain a secure environment in Kosovo. Additionally, informing and educating Bosnians of land-mine dangers is an ongoing PSYOP mission.

USACAPOC (A) Soldiers are involved worldwide in mine awareness and de-mining projects. PSYOP troops introduced a mine awareness comic book featuring super heroes in Central America similar to the one used in Bosnia.

Following the terrorist attacks on 9/11, CA and PSYOP Soldiers deployed almost immediately to begin their role in the Global War on Terrorism. First deployed to Afghanistan, and later Iraq, PSYOP Soldiers dropped tens of millions of leaflets and broadcast thousands of hours of radio programs to ensure the Afghan and Iraqi people knew the reason for the U.S. presence. The PSYOP effort also helped to pave the way for extensive assessments by CA Soldiers that led to reconstruction, humanitarian aid projects in those embattled countries, and more importantly free elections to forge a new democracy. The effort continues today to introduce the institutions of democracy with great success—both nations have taken their first steps toward self-rule.

Let us also remember, 23 USACAPOC Soldiers have made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation and the cause of freedom.



Psychological Operations drops leaflets on the villages of Shirin and Adam Khan, Afghanistan. Photo by Pfc. Leslie Angulo.

Iraqi commandos secure future

CJSOTF-AP Public Affairs

The 1st Commando Battalion, 1st Iraqi Special Operations Forces Brigade's Charlie Company deployed to Al Kut Dec. 2, to aid Iraqi army and police troops already in place with providing security for the general election.

The first of the commandos departed in the late afternoon on a coalition C-130, eager to begin their missions in the Al Kut area.

"We are ready for any mission anywhere in Iraq," said a corporal who is a commando and veteran of previous operations with his battalion.

"I am sure we will do well. It will be good to help out for the elections. Good to help the people there," he said.

The commandos will help provide a more secure environment for the people of Iraq to enable them to get out and cast their ballots in Iraq's first general election on Dec. 15.

"This is a big thing for us," said the commander of Charlie Company. "We're working with other security forces to fight the bad guys and bring peace to Iraq," he

said.

Their missions generally consist of commandos working side-by-side with Iraqi regular army soldiers as well as Iraqi police in the area. The soldiers hope to not only secure the area, but make the residents feel safe. These U.S. SOF trained commandos will also be performing other missions which they constantly train for — missions which take the insurgents off the streets.

"I am happy we can go to help out," said the battalion's sergeant major. "We have lots of experience to bring anywhere in Iraq we are called."

"It is good for us to work with police, coalition forces and the Iraqi Army to provide security for the elections."

The soldiers know they are doing something to improve their country — something that has to be done to bring peace to their war-torn country.

"As a soldier, it is my job to go where I am told, but I know serving in the army gives me a chance to help Iraqis and help Iraq," the corporal said. "Everything we do is all about working together and helping people."



Soldiers from the Iraqi Army's Company C, 1st Commando Battalion, 1st Iraqi Special Operations Forces Brigade board a C-130 aircraft at Baghdad International Airport Dec. 2 en route to provide extra security in the Al Kut area in the weeks leading up to the Dec. 15 Iraqi general elections. Photo by SPC Chris Stump.

Iraqi security forces **vote early**

CJSOTF-AP Public Affairs

Thousands of Iraqi soldiers including Iraqi special forces trained by U.S. Special Operations forces voted Dec. 12, three days before the country's first general election to elect a Council of Representatives.

As Iraqi soldiers provide security for their countrymen during the national vote, the IECI provided advanced voting polls for them. While the ISF exercised their democratic right to vote, coalition forces augmented security across the country.

At the Kisik Military Training Base in northern Iraq, more than 1,500 Iraqi soldiers exercised their right to vote. The soldiers lined up around the voting site in large masses waiting for their turn to cast their ballot, thereby temporarily changing the color of their finger.

In conversations with their coalition counterparts, Iraqi soldiers said they believed their votes would be counted, and they would make a difference in their country.

There has been much progress made in informing the Iraqis about the opportunity and process of voting since the constitutional referendum held in October. Talk of the elections dominated soldier's casual conversation over the last week, with topics ranging from how the election process will work and if there will be an election every four years to whom is the favorite candidate.

One Iraqi army battalion commander, a Sunni who happens to be a former Republican Guard Officer, gave his soldiers a speech telling them to vote their conscience and keep their votes private.

"The overall atmosphere was not as jubilant as the soccer victory over Syria Sunday night, but the mood was definitely positive," said one coalition force soldier who



Iraqi soldiers prove they have voted by showing their ink stained fingers in the pre-election held in Iraq Dec. 12. CJSOTF-AP Public Affairs photo.

witnessed the voting.

The rest of the Iraqi populace went to the polls on Dec. 15 with a 70 percent turnout to elect a 230-seat Council of Representatives for a four year term. According to the IECI there are 307 political entities and 19 coalitions registered to participate in the election.

Facts about the Iraqi government since 2003

- Three decades of Ba'ath party rule ended in the spring of 2003 with the removal of Saddam Hussein.
- The Coalition Provisional Authority, led by the U.S. and Great Britain, governed from July 2003 until June 2004.
- On June 28, 2004, the CPA transferred power to an interim Iraqi government, two days ahead of schedule.
- On January 30, 2005, free national elections were held with more than 8 million Iraqis voting to select members of a 275-member Transitional National Assembly and 18 provincial councils.

- The TNA selected a president, Jalal Talabani, and two vice-presidents, former finance minister Adel Abdel Mahdi and outgoing interim President Ghazi al Yawar. In April, just minutes after being sworn into office, President Talabani named Ibrahim al-Ja'afari as interim Prime Minister, the highest cabinet post in the country's new democratic government.
- On Oct. 15, 9,852,291 voters cast ballots on a referendum to ratify a new constitution — 78.59 percent voted "yes", while 21.41 percent voted "no."
- On Dec. 15, Iraqi citizens voted on a referendum with a 70 percent turnout to elect a 230-person Council of Representatives to a four-year term.



Civil Affairs Soldiers serving with Special Operations Command-Pacific, talk with members of the Indonesian Armed Forces at the start of an Engineering Civic Action Project (ENCAP) at Nias Island, Indonesia on Dec. 7. The U.S. is partnering with the Indonesian government to rebuild portions of Nias Island that were destroyed during a March earthquake. This is the first time the U.S. military has participated in an ENCAP on Nias Island. U.S. Pacific Command has allocated \$1.3 million in humanitarian assistance funding for the projects, which are expected to take about four months to complete. SOCPAC photo.

U.S. and Indonesia launch **new** humanitarian projects in Nias

SOCPAC Public Affairs

The United States and Indonesia launched bilateral humanitarian assistance projects in Nias, Indonesia, on Dec 7. A joint effort between Special Operations Command-Pacific and the Indonesian Military, the new projects entail the construction of two schools and two bridges on the island of Nias, which was struck by a major earthquake in March 2005. These projects will be the first military-to-military operations between the two countries since the U.S. Government removed restrictions on defense cooperation with Indonesia last month.

In remarks delivered during the opening ceremony on Dec. 7, Paul

Berg, the Principal Officer at the U.S. Consulate in Medan, said that the United States values its friendship with Indonesia and appreciates the vital role that Indonesia has played in the security, stability, and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region. "These projects take important steps toward expanded cooperation between the two nations and are a tangible example of the sustained commitment to helping the people of Indonesia."

A small group of Civil Affairs Soldiers and Naval Construction Force Sailors, known as Seabees, partnered with a TNI Engineer Battalion stationed out of Makassar. The two militaries cooperated on the construction projects, which are

located in the southern part of the island and along the road network running north and south on the western side. PACOM has allocated \$1.3 million in humanitarian assistance funding for the projects, which are expected to take approximately four months to complete.

The construction projects provide an opportunity for the U.S. military and TNI to build on the humanitarian partnership achieved during the emergency relief operations that occurred after the December 2004 tsunami, symbolizing the long-standing military cooperation between the United States and Indonesia.

Exercise Balance Piston takes place in Republic of Philippines

By Mike Bottoms
USSOCOM Public Affairs

Joint exercise Balance Piston 06-1 with the Philippines and United States participating was conducted on the Zamboanga Peninsula.

“Exercise Balance Piston 06-1 opened in Zamboanga Del Sur on Nov. 3, 2005 and ended on Dec. 2, 2005,” said Lt. Col. Mark Zimmer, Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines public affairs officer.

Balance Piston is a month-long joint combined exchange training exercise designed to improve the interoperability and increase tactical proficiency between U.S. and Philippine armed forces.

Special Operations Command-Pacific sponsors the Joint/Combined Exchange Training (JCET) Exercise

specializing in small unit tactics. The 1st Special Forces Group and the Philippine army’s special operations command conduct the exercise.

A significant focus was placed on small unit tactics, basic rifle marksmanship, live fire exercises and field training exercises.

Zimmer also cited Sirawai, Zamboanga del Norte as a venue for the civic action program.

The Philippine armed forces from southern command and the U.S. Armed Forces from the joint special operations task force conducted the first ever medical civic action program at the elementary school in Sirawai.

“One thousand and thirty patients

were treated including 805 medical and 225 dental admissions and free prescription drugs were delivered as well as preventive care supplies,” Zimmer said.

“An engineering civic action program is being conducted at a hospital in Jolo while community relations projects were held in Pagadian City through a dedication ceremony at Lourdes water distribution site and delivery of humanitarian assistance supplies,” he said.

In Sulu, special operations troops are there to assist, advise, train and share information. Also, SOF were there to assess the preparation for civic action programs.



Special Forces and the Philippine Army’s Special Operations Command conduct a field exercise. SOCPAC photo.

USASOC change of command



Lt. Gen. Robert Wagner, the new commander of U.S. Army Special Operations Command, accepts the USASOC colors from U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker at Meadows Memorial Field, Fort Bragg, N.C., Dec. 6. Wagner assumed command from Lt. Gen. Philip Kensinger, Jr., who retired after 35 years of military service. Photo by Gillian Albro.

By Sgt. Joe Healy
USASOC Public Affairs Office

The U.S. Army Special Operations Command bids farewell to the commander who led its transformation to a 21st Century fighting force, and welcomed his successor.

Lt. Gen. Robert Wagner assumed command of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command from Lt. Gen. Philip Kensinger, Jr., in a formal ceremony at Meadows Memorial Field, Fort Bragg, N.C.

With clouds disappearing and the sun shining on the parade field, Kensinger said, “This ceremony here today is about the recognition of the Soldiers and civilians of this command. A command that is built from the bottom up.”

Kensinger assumed command of USASOC Aug. 29, 2002. Since then, 13,000 Soldiers have deployed in 85 different missions around the world.

The command experienced a faster operational tempo than any other time in the command’s history under Kensinger’s leadership, according to U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker.

“I choose this job as the final chapter in my Army story. Soldiers should go out with their boots on,” Kensinger remarked to approximately 300 audience members.

During his 15-minute address, Kensinger paid tribute to each of USASOC’s six major subordinate units.

The average Special Forces company has been deployed 21 out of the last 30 months. Within the last 12 months, Special Forces Soldiers have conducted operations in 42 countries. The U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special

Warfare Center and School increased its graduation rate from 400 to 750 graduates per year while improving its standards in topics such as foreign languages and cultural awareness. All three 75th Ranger Regiment battalions have deployed at least seven times since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Special operations aviators have flown 32,000 hours of combat missions with more than 50 percent of the missions flown at night since Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom began.

Kensinger also discussed USASOC’s transformation as he reflected on his command.

The creation of the USASOC Futures Center, Group Support Battalions for the Special Forces Groups, and Ranger Support Companies for the 75th Ranger Regiment will have lasting effects on the major subordinate units, Kensinger said.

“USASOC is a transformational example for the rest of the Army,” Schoomaker said.

“Commanding these 28,000 Soldiers is inspiring and unmatched,” Kensinger said.

Wagner said he is looking forward to commanding USASOC.

“Our profession is who we are,” Wagner said. “I will not forget we are a nation at war.”

Wagner is already familiar with USASOC, having served in six special operations assignments including tours with the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 75th Ranger Regiment, and commander of Special Operations Command-South.

“I would like to thank General Kensinger and his wife, Greta, for their time and generosity,” Wagner said.

Soldier and statesman retires

*By Sgt. Joe Healy
USASOC Public Affairs Office*

A great blend of Soldier and statesman will be his military legacy, said the Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker during a retirement ceremony at Fort Bragg, N.C., Dec. 6.

Lt. Gen. Philip Kensinger, Jr., the former commander of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, retired after 36 years of service during a ceremony held at the Colonel Aaron Bank Hall.

Kensinger was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, a Certificate of Retirement, and a certificate of appreciation signed by the President.

His wife received a Public Service Award and a certificate of appreciation.

Kensinger's military service began June 1966 when he reported to West Point as a 17-year-old cadet. His assignments included tours with the 3rd Armor Division, 3rd, 5th and 7th Special Forces Groups (Airborne) and the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

His general officer assignments included: commander, Special Operations Command-Central; deputy commanding general and chief of staff, USASOC, and commanding general, U.S. Army South.

Kensinger's awards and decorations include the

Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Joint Service Achievement Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Aviator Badge, the Army Staff Identification Badge, the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Expert Infantryman Badge, the Master Parachutist Badge, the Military Free Fall Parachutist Badge, the Special Operations Diver Badge, the Pathfinder Badge, the Air Assault Badge, the Ranger Tab and the Special Forces Tab.

His military career ended at USASOC after being in command for 40 of the 50 months since Sept. 11.

During Kensinger's command, USASOC transformed into a 21st Century fighting force the Army is now replicating.

His wife spearheaded the creation of the USASOC Family Resource Center, the Gold Star Family Dinner and Pin, and was instrumental in the hiring of 29 Family Readiness Group coordinators.

Both dedicated their lives to serving the Soldiers of the U.S. Army and USASOC.

"[My wife] and I want to thank everyone for all the great years," Kensinger said.



Lt. Gen. Philip Kensinger, Jr., outgoing commander of U.S. Army Special Operations Command, and Brig. Gen. Mark Phelan, deputy commander, begin Kensinger's final review of troops at the USASOC change of command Dec. 6. Photo by Walt Sokalski.

Father of Special Forces honored

By Sgt. Joe Healy
USASOC Public Affairs Office

The academic facility where today's elite Army Soldiers study was renamed in honor of a deceased Green Beret who is remembered as the father of Special Forces.

The Colonel Aaron Bank Hall was rededicated during a formal ceremony. The building, formerly known as the Special Operations Academic Facility, has 91 classrooms and 62 offices. Approximately 2,000 people occupy it daily. It is Fort Bragg's largest academic facility.

Bank died in April 2004 at the age of 101.

Battling solid winds and a steady rain, approximately 200 Soldiers, civilians and retired Green Berets braved the elements and were on hand to view the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"Colonel Bank was the pioneer of Special Operations," said retired Maj. Gen. John Singlaub. "Bank believed special operators were a brotherhood of men who were risk takers. They had confidence in themselves and in their chain of command."

Speaking to the audience in fluent English, French and German, Mrs. Katherine Bank, Bank's widow, thanked the many life-long friends in the audience. Her husband would have been very pleased, she said.

Both Singlaub and Bank served in the Office of Strategic Services during World War II. The OSS is considered the United States' first intelligence agency. Many of its members quietly created the U.S. Special Forces and Central Intelligence Agency during the 1950s.

Bank was fanatical about training, Singlaub remembered. "He believed Soldiers must have expert knowledge of their weapons systems — so much knowledge that firing the equipment should be 'second nature.' Then the Soldier could focus solely on the mission," Singlaub said.

The training at Bank Hall educates Soldiers in Special Forces, Psychological Operations and Civil



Maj. Gen. James Parker, commanding general, U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, and Mrs. Katherine Bank, the widow of Col. Aaron Bank unveil the bust at the opening ceremony at Fort Bragg. Photo by Paul Prince.

Affairs. Language courses there include French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic.

"President Kennedy once said, 'A nation reveals itself by the men it produces and the men it honors,'" said Maj. Gen. James Parker, commanding general, U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. "Today we remember a truly great man."

Parker listed Bank's military achievements: OSS member; first ever officer of the 10th Special Forces Group; responsible for the first Special Forces Training Doctrine; and named father of Special Forces by a congressional resolution.

Parker also said Bank would be proud to know Soldiers train with modern technology, such as computers and satellites, in the facility bearing his name.

Bank's military awards and decorations included: the Soldier's Medal, the Bronze Star with "V" device, the French Croix de Guerre and the British "Mention in Dispatches." Campaign medals included: the World War II European Theater and Asiatic-Pacific Theater Medal, the Korean Service Medal, the UN Service Medal, the World War II Victory Medal, the American Defense Service Medal, the Combat Infantryman Badge and Master Jump Wings.

Valor awards for 25 Army Rangers

USASOC Public Affairs

Army Rangers were presented valorous awards in recognition of actions while deployed in support of the Global War on Terrorism during a ceremony at Fort Benning, Ga.

“These men represent extraordinary heroism. They fought for each other, their families and to get the mission done,” said Lt. Col. John G. Castles, commander, 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment.

The Silver Star, awarded for gallantry in action, was presented to two Rangers for actions in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Capt. Christopher Molino was awarded the Silver Star while serving as the ground commander when his Soldiers were attacked. Molino was conducting combat operations when his element came under direct small arms and hand grenade fire from a determined enemy. His personal courage, tactical expertise and professional competence saved the lives of wounded Rangers.

Staff Sgt. David Edwards was awarded the Silver Star while serving as a squad leader. Edwards’ unit was conducting combat operations when his element came under an intense enemy attack. While under direct fire, his outstanding leadership, dedication to duty and commitment to excellence were fundamental in saving the life of a wounded Ranger and success of the task force.

The Soldier’s Medal was presented to Sgt. Mark Alperin while serving as a mortar platoon squad leader. This medal is awarded for personnel who distinguish themselves by heroism involving personal danger and voluntary risk of life, though no contact with the enemy was made.

His exceptional performance and dedication to duty were contributing factors in saving a Ranger and the task force’s success.

Bronze Stars for Valor were awarded to 11 Rangers. Awardees were: Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Bristow, Sgt. Jeremiah Dagele, Capt. John Detto, Sgt. Ian Hunter, 1st Lt. Ryan Kelly, Spc. Casey Loose, Staff Sgt. Joseph



Sgt. Webster Slavens receives congratulations from Gen. Peter Schoomaker, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, who presented Slavens with the Bronze Star for Valor during a combat awards ceremony at Fort Benning, Ga. Photo by Staff Sgt. Brad Bartucca.

Lynch, 1st Sgt. Edward Noland, Staff Sgt. Michael Rach, Sgt. Webster Slavens, and Staff Sgt. Jared Van Aalst.

“It is my privilege to have served with the caliber of men such as those in my unit,” Loose said.

Detto, the battalion physician’s assistant, echoed the sentiments of teamwork and skill during the mission he and five of his medics, including Loose, received valorous awards. He said his men used their battlefield knowledge to aid wounded Soldiers.

“We would not have made it off of this objective and saved the injured men without the entire force fighting together,” Detto said.

Sixteen Rangers received the Army Commendation Medal for Valor, awarded for a valorous act distinguished by heroism, meritorious achievement or meritorious service.

Gen. Peter Schoomaker, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, attended the ceremony and presented the Rangers with their medals.

“I am glad I could be here to recognize great heroes,” Schoomaker said. “I’m proud of your service. I am proud of what you do and what you represent. You are living the Ranger Creed and Warrior Ethos.”

Special Operations Weather:

By Chief Master Sgt. Gary Emery
AFSOC Public Affairs

Slashing through Burmese jungles with General Orde Wingate's Chindits; hunkering down far above the demilitarized zone in North Vietnam; infiltrating into Northern Iraq to ensure the success of a thousand-man airborne jump — not your average day at the office for most weather forecasters.

But those missions and many more have been business as usual since 1942 for Air Force Special Operations Weather Teams (SOWT) assigned to the 10th Combat Weather Squadron, now located at Hurlburt Field, Fla. The battle-trained meteorologists of Special Operations Weather have been at the tip of the spear for more than 60 years, deploying with other special operators from every branch of the armed forces to provide combatant commanders with the weather data and analysis they need to plan and execute missions at the tactical, operational and strategic levels of war.



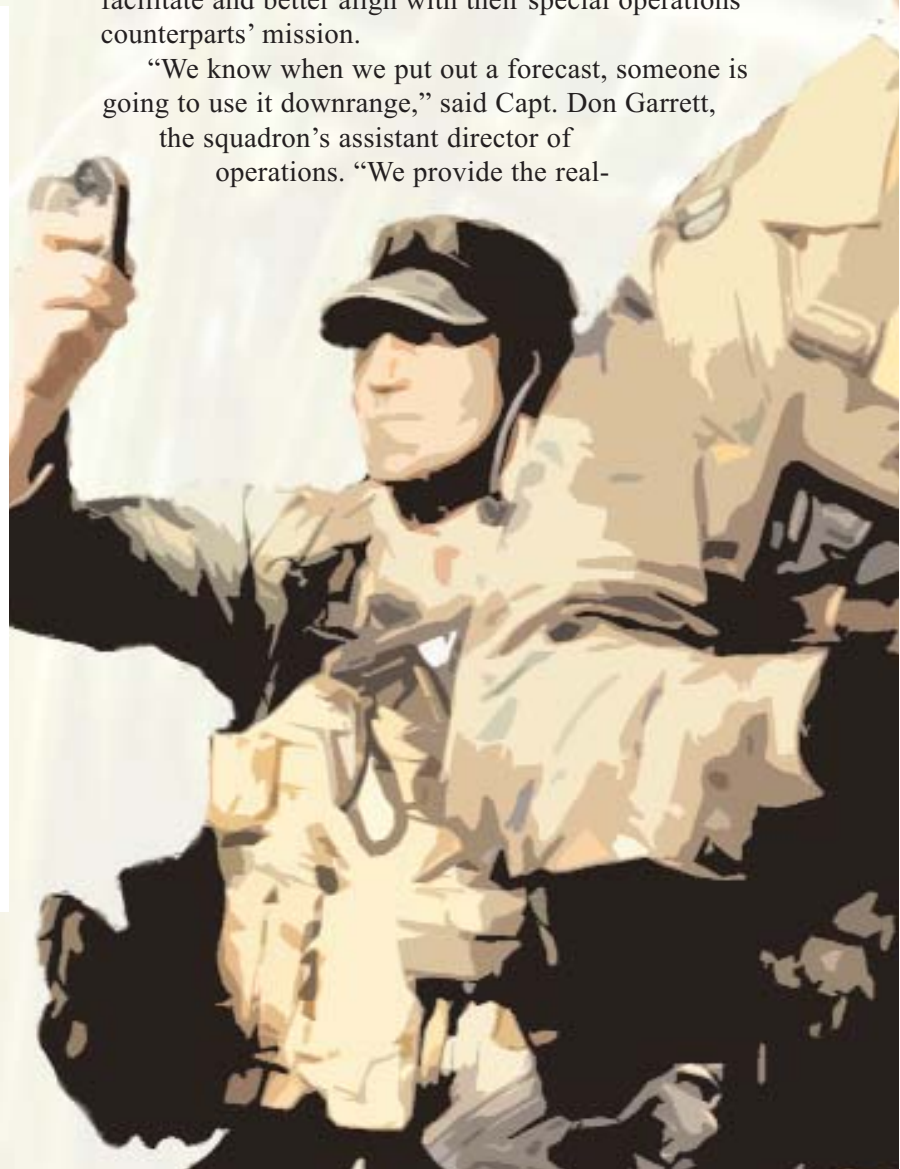
Staff Sgt. Jody Ball, 10th Weather Squadron, releases a weather balloon during a Special Operations Weather Team exercise near Hurlburt Field, Fla. Photo by Chief Master Sgt. Gary Emery.

Elite members of the Air Force Battlefield Airman program, Special Operations Weathermen receive specialized training far beyond other meteorologists, said Maj. Don Shannon, 10th CWS director of operations. "Our guys have first gone through the normal weather training and served in an operational weather squadron before they can volunteer for SOWT," he said.

"We typically work with special operations forces from the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, but because of the unique capability we provide, we also work with special operations teams from the other Services," Shannon said. "Because of the types of individuals we team with, we undergo much of the specialized training they do so we can keep up with them in the field."

SOWT members are jump qualified and many have also received training in freefall parachuting, air assault, Ranger school, combat diving and more, the major said. Some team members have received specialized training in winter warfare tactics, including downhill and cross country skiing, snowshoeing and avalanche forecasting to facilitate and better align with their special operations counterparts' mission.

"We know when we put out a forecast, someone is going to use it downrange," said Capt. Don Garrett, the squadron's assistant director of operations. "We provide the real-



Forecasting from the front lines

time, eyes-on, ground truth about conditions that can critically impact the mission.

“That’s why this is a total volunteer outfit,” he said. “We’re all willing to give it 100 percent every day.”

Major Shannon agrees that the people are what make the SOWT unique.

“These people have great attitudes, they’re tough guys who get it done no matter how rough it gets,” he said. “There aren’t a lot of us, so we all know each other and know how to work as a

team.” In fact, there are very few SOWT operators in the DoD.

They are currently listed on the Global Military Force Policy Low-Density, High-Demand asset list.

There are roughly 100 SOWT operators in the Air Force,

Shannon said,

including 20-25 officers. The majority are assigned to the 10th CWS, but



Capt. Don Garrett, left, and Staff Sgt. Jody Ball keep a sharp eye out for enemy forces during a Special Operations Weather Team exercise near Hurlburt Field, Fla. Photo by Chief Master Sgt. Gary Emery.

others serve with AFSOC Special Tactics units in the United States and overseas.

A “typical” SOWT mission was performed by Staff Sgt. Dave Mack, who infiltrated into Iraq with an Army Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha team during the early stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Tasked with collecting weather data, the team endured sandstorms that buried them in their sleeping bags.

They survived 12 missile attacks, one of which destroyed their HMMWV, and endured almost continuous small-arms attack. At one point, Mack provided 36-continuous hours of weather observations so aircraft could evacuate seriously wounded Soldiers from Baghdad. He also performed security and weapons details with the other team members.

“You get so much satisfaction from this mission,” Shannon said. “Everyone works together and you affect the mission at every stage, from planning to execution to redeployment.”

Staff Sgt. Jody Ball, a four-year veteran of Special Operations Weather, agrees. “The combination of the people and the mission is what makes this job so great,” he said. “I work with (Army) Rangers and Special Forces, pararescuemen, combat controllers — it’s an elite group.

“It’s much more than you can get working in a regular weather station,” he said. “It’s not your standard workday.”

Leap Frogs visit President Bush

*By JOC(SCW) Robert Feinberg,
Navy Parachute Team Public Affairs*

Members of the U.S. Navy Parachute Team the “Leap Frogs” visited with President George W. Bush while they were in the Washington, D.C., area to perform at the 30th Annual Marine Corps Marathon.

The visit was organized by the Assistant Director of Homeland Security, Fran Townsend. Townsend had the opportunity to do a tandem jump with the Leap Frogs and was so impressed with the team she arranged the presidential visit.

The president spoke with the NPT about some of his experiences and showed the team the Oval Office and Rose Garden. Team members also had their pictures taken with the president and received a presidential coin.

The visit was especially meaningful to Chief Petty Officer (SEAL) Larry Summerfield. “Wow, I was really impressed with the Commander-In-Chief’s candor and openness,” the San Antonio native said. “I was completely dumbfounded because of the fact that I was standing in the Oval Office and the fact that the commander-in-chief is also from (Texas).”

“Meeting with the President of the United States, Mr. George W. Bush, was the chance of a life time,” said Lt. (SEAL) Geoffrey Reeves, the NPT

officer-in-charge. “The Navy Parachute Team was privileged just to meet him, but then to receive a tour of the Oval Office and have him talk to us for 30 minutes was just incredible. His topics of conversation covered a broad spectrum, some of which had us all laughing. To hear his personal philosophies of his current position, and view points of particular topics made me personally glad to be serving in our military and under his command.”

Besides the presidential visit the Leap Frog team travels extensively and represents the United States and the Navy.

Petty Officer 1st Class (SEAL) Aries Lynch said, “Being a member of the Navy Parachute Team these last two years has been an incredible experience. Having the opportunity to represent the U.S. Navy across our Nation, is a huge honor. Some of the places we have been did not have an established military presence so we were representing all the armed services as well. Everyone I have met and performed for has been extremely supportive and generous not only to us but to all the members of the armed services. I’m proud to be a member of the team and look forward to another exciting year.”

Chief Petty Officer (SWCC) Jeffrey Smith said, “Being a part of the Navy Parachute Team for the past three years has been an experience I will never forget.

It has been one of the most challenging, and yet one of the most rewarding tours of duty I have had in the Navy. I am very proud to have represented the Navy and the Naval Special Warfare community all across the country. The response that we have received from people has been very supportive, and makes me proud and honored to serve our country every day.

The U.S. Navy Parachute Team is a 15-man unit comprised of U.S. Navy special warfare personnel. Each member comes to the team for a three years tour of duty.

The parachute team began in 1969 when Navy SEALs and Frogmen volunteered to perform at weekend air shows. The team was officially commissioned as the U.S. Navy Parachute Team "Leap Frogs" in 1974 by the Chief of Naval Operations and assigned the mission of demonstrating Navy special warfare excellence, while assisting in Navy recruiting efforts throughout the

United States.

A typical Leap Frogs performance consists of fourteen jumpers leaping out of an aircraft at an altitude of 12,500 feet. During free fall, jumpers reach speeds of 120 mph and can accelerate up to 180 mph by pulling their arms to their sides and straightening their legs into what is called a "track."

The jumpers open their parachutes at around 5,000 feet by releasing a smaller pilot chute which deploys their main blue-and-gold canopy. After deploying their chutes, the Leap Frogs fly their canopies together to build dramatic canopy-relative work formations.

The NPT performs aerial demonstrations at professional baseball games, football games, and air shows throughout the United States in support of the U. S. Navy, the Navy Recruiting Command, and the Naval Special Warfare community.



President George W. Bush poses for a photo with the U.S. Navy Parachute Team "Leap Frogs" outside the Oval Office. The Leap Frogs are comprised entirely of U.S. Navy SEALs and Special Warfare Combatant-Craft Crewmen. Photo by Paul Morse.

Air Commandos get 'hands on' training

By Master Sgt. Kevin Owen
16th SOW Public Affairs

Beaten, bloodied and loving it. It's the best way to describe the 20 Battlefield Airmen who went toe-to-toe in hand-to-hand combat at Hurlburt Field, Fla., in October.

Air commandos from Air Force Special Operations Command units around the world gathered at the 720th Special Tactics Group to learn from three of the Marines' best martial arts instructors.

"These techniques can save lives," said Master Gunnery Sgt. Shane Franklin, Marine Corps Martial Arts Program visiting lead instructor. "I also

can assure any commanding officer that his unit will benefit from its members completing this course. They will be more capable in any combat situation and more disciplined in their daily activities."

The MCMAP combines 10 separate forms of martial arts into a four-fighting discipline to sharpen the mind and body: unarmed combat, edged weapons, weapons of opportunity, and rifle and bayonet. The MCMAP is a blend of disciplines including judo, karate, jujitsu, and bayonet and knife-fighting techniques. The course enhanced the physical conditioning and self-defense tactics of Battlefield Airmen and support personnel, potentially saving their lives when deployed.

"The fighting styles these Airmen are learning here today give them more options than the use of deadly force," said Dr. (Col.) James Wright, 720th STG



A combat aviation advisor and an enlisted terminal attack controller subdue an attacker who attempted to disarm them. Working together, the two Battlefield Airmen use enhanced pain techniques to control the assailant without doing permanent harm. AFSOC photo.

ning from Marines

group surgeon. “In many situations, we are dealing with individuals who are not the enemy per se, but circumstances have created a confrontational situation.”

A lieutenant with a Special Operations Weather Team echoed Wright’s sentiment.

“I have put more tools in the box that might just keep my team and I safe,” he said.

The Marines have implemented a belt system for progression in martial arts aptitude going from tan, gray, green, brown, and black. Marines wear these belts as part of their utility uniform.

Upon completion of the course, 19 of the 20 air commandos qualified for green belt, a rank reserved for E-5 and above. The green belt rank also qualifies the air commandos to be close combat instructors. The graduating class included Combat Controllers, Special Operations



Air Commandos use teamwork in a 2-on-2 knife attack scenario to overcome and finish their last attacker. An Air Commando employs the only knife in the scenario while his teammate controls the enemy. AFSOC photo.

Weathermen, Combat Aviation Advisors, and special tactics officers. They will now be able to instruct other Airmen in close combat tactics and techniques.

(Capt. Tom Montgomery, AFSOC public affairs, contributed to this article)

Air Force SOF Medic of the Year

**By Staff Sgt. Mareshah Haynes
16th SOW Public Affairs**

An Airman from Hurlburt Field, Fla., recently earned the top Air Force special operations medic award.

Four hundred medics throughout Air Force Special Operations Command were nominated for the award.

Tech. Sgt. Jason Robbins, 16th Special Operations Support Squadron, was awarded the 2005 Mike Hollingsworth Special Operations Forces Medic of the Year award for his actions in combat missions during the past year. Robbins led the clinic/casualty evacuation for 300 people in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was also the senior SOF medic in operations near Syria.

While deployed and working with joint forces, Robbins excelled while working with his brothers in arms. He was hand selected by the Navy SEAL team leader to provide support on a naval aircraft, saved the lives of Marines, and employed special operations command initiatives in Western Iraq that kept 26 Soldiers alive.

The leadership at the 16th Operations Group recognizes the stellar work of Robbins as well.

“This exemplifies the caliber of medical personnel we have in our ops support medical flight,” said Col. Mark Alsid, 16th OG commander.

“Sergeant Robbins’ professionalism and exceptional skills clearly show that he is the best, and earns him the title ‘Air Force Special Operations Forces Medic of the Year.’”

SOF Predators:

Soon to prowl an AOR near you

1st Lt. Justin McVay
Nellis AFB Public Affairs

The 3rd Special Operations Squadron was activated at Nellis AFB, Nev., during a ceremony in October at the Red Flag auditorium.

The squadron will initially be located on Nellis but will eventually be moved to Creech AFB, Nev., about 40 miles to the northwest, in an effort to consolidate Predator operations.

“Standing up the 3rd SOS at Nellis and Creech serves numerous purposes, but two stand out as primary,” said Lt. Col. Gary McCollum, 3rd SOS commander. “First, locating the 3rd SOS at Creech eases the heavy personnel tempo burden carried by the 15th Reconnaissance Squadron. Second, the squadron will integrate early operations with the 15th, providing a way for Air Force Special Operations Command personnel to gain valuable Predator experience.”

The 3rd SOS will operate in support of Special Operations Command taskings, deploying aircraft, ground control stations, personnel and necessary support to Special Operations Forces.

“The 3rd Special Operations Squadron will take advantage of the outstanding work of employing unmanned aerial systems already accomplished by Air Combat Command,” said Col. Mark Alsid, commander of the 16th Operations Group, Hurlburt Field, Fla. “Then they will tailor the current employment of the Predator via specialized tactics, techniques and procedures to improve support of Special Operations Forces in their accomplishment of national objectives.”

Alsid said this activation will establish the habitual relationships and provide the persistent overhead coverage that has become vital to successful special operations.

At the time of activation, there are 20 active-duty Airmen assigned to the unit, which is projected to gain both Guard and Reserve positions within the next few years, growing to more than 400 within two years.

The unit is working in conjunction with the 15th RS until it acquires its own Predator aircraft and ground control stations in 2006.

Successful stand-up of unmanned aerial systems operations is currently an Air Force Special Operations Command priority, Alsid said. The vision for the 3rd SOS is to live up to AFSOC’s “Any time, any place” motto, he said.

FACT: The MQ-1 Predator is a medium-altitude, long-endurance, remotely piloted aircraft. The MQ-1’s primary mission is interdiction and conducting armed reconnaissance against critical, perishable targets. The basic crew for the Predator is one pilot and two sensor operators. They fly the aircraft from inside the ground control station via a C-Band line-of-sight data link or a Ku-Band satellite data link for beyond line-of-sight flight.

General Characteristics

Primary Function: Armed reconnaissance, airborne surveillance and target acquisition

Power Plant: Rotax 914 four cylinder engine

producing 101 horsepower

Length: 27 feet (8.22 meters)

Height: 6.9 feet (2.1 meters)

Weight: 1,130 pounds (512 kilograms) empty,

Wingspan: 48.7 feet (14.8 meters)

Speed: Cruise speed around 84 mph (70 knots), up to 135 mph

Range: up to 400 nautical miles (454 miles)

Ceiling: up to 25,000 feet (7,620 meters)

Fuel Capacity: 665 pounds (100 gallons)

Payload: 450 pounds (204 kilograms)

Initial operational capability: March 2005

Inventory: 570

Interview with **Brig. Gen. Hejlik**

By *Mike Bottoms*
USSOCOM Public Affairs

History will be made when the Marine Corps Special Operations Command is activated and becomes part of U.S. Special Operations Command. Picked to be the first commander of MARSOC is Brig. Gen. Dennis Hejlik.

A self-described “farm kid from Iowa,” Hejlik has joint experience and previously served as USSOCOM’s Chief of Staff.

MARSOC’s primary mission will be to organize, man, train and equip Marine Special Operations Forces to fight the Global War on Terrorism. The command will be comprised of 2,600 Marines and will be headquartered at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

The MARSOC subordinate elements will provide training to foreign militaries, conduct specified special operations missions like special reconnaissance, engage in direct action, provide intelligence support, coordinate supporting fires and provide logistical support to special operations task forces.

Why has it taken until now to stand up MARSOC and become part of USSOCOM?

Actually I would say it has not taken very long. SOCOM as a command is not even 20 years old and Marines have always worked with USSOCOM, just on an informal basis. Decisions made for the Marine Corps not joining USSOCOM 20 years ago made sense then as does us joining the command makes sense today.

What do you think is the driving force behind MARSOC being stood up?

Simply put, the dynamics of the world have changed.

The Cold War is long over and the Global War on Terrorism has caused us to rethink how we use our combat forces. Marines have capabilities easily adaptable to special operations and the eventual activation of MARSOC is a natural and necessary evolution to defeat today’s terrorists.

How is the change going to affect USSOCOM and the Marine Corps?



Brig. Gen. Dennis Hejlik during an interview. Courtesy photo.

We do not change for change’s sake. The change will be good for the country, good for SOCOM and good for the Marine Corps. This change is necessary. Parts of this change may be hard, culturally and otherwise, but people will adapt and SOCOM will be better for it.

What will the Marine Corps bring to USSOCOM?

First and foremost, well trained and fully combat capable Marines. MARSOC will not be made up of Marines just out of boot camp; rather MARSOC will have experienced Marines at the sergeant, staff sergeant or gunnery sergeant level. I think Marines have a natural aptitude towards special operations and we will make outstanding contributions to USSOCOM.

What do you consider the most positive aspect of becoming part of USSOCOM?

I think the way USSOCOM speedily equips its troops can be the most exciting aspect of being a Marine assigned to MARSOC. USSOCOM’s acquisition process is the best I’ve ever seen and I’ve witnessed how effective the acquisition process is first hand on the battlefield.

“The change will be good for the country, good for USSOCOM and good for the Marine Corps”

— Brig. Gen. Dennis Hejlik

Operation One Voice

raises funds for fallen SOF children

By Mike Bottoms
USSOCOM Public Affairs

Some of the harsh realities of today's Global War on Terrorism are that brave special operators will pay the ultimate price while serving their country and some of them will leave children behind. This is where Operation One Voice steps in and helps fill a painful void.

A group of 24 men and women ran a 600-mile relay from Duluth, Ga. to Tampa, Fla., in the name of Operation One Voice. Their goal is to honor Special Operations Forces and to raise much needed money for the children of fallen special operation warriors.

Operation One Voice raised \$65,000 for the children of fallen Special Operations Forces.

The money was donated to the Special Operations Warrior Foundation. Founded in 1980, the foundation is dedicated to providing college scholarships and educational counseling to the surviving children of special operations personnel who are killed in a training accident or operational mission. These services are provided throughout the United States, or overseas, depending upon where children reside.

Lt. Bill Stevens, a Duluth fireman and policeman created Operation One Voice in 2002. "We stepped up to help out, because they stepped up for us shortly after 9-11, and we'll do this as long as they're deployed," Stevens said.

The runners made up of civilian law enforcement and firefighters as well as Special Operations Command personnel began in Duluth and spent four days on the road traveling 600 miles to Tampa, concluding at the entrance gates of Busch Gardens on Veteran's Day.



Gen. Doug Brown, Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, center, poses with the Operation One Voice Special Operations Forces Run Team at the Special Forces Memorial on MacDill Air Force Base. Photo by Mike Bottoms.

Also running a portion of the way was widow Jennifer McCollum, whose husband Captain Dan McCollum died nearly four years ago.

"He was a co-pilot of a MC-130 that crashed in the mountains of Pakistan, January 9th of 2002," McCollum said. "I've come a long way, but I've still got a long way to go, but this is part of it for me. This is kind of giving back to where I've been and the road that I've been traveling on."

Gen. Doug Brown, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command met the runners at the Special

Operations Forces Memorial located on MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.

Stevens presented Brown with a Georgia state flag flown over Atlanta. Brown in return presented each runner with a USSOCOM commander's coin.

"Your kindness and generosity to the SOF community is just phenomenal," Brown said. "The men and women in my command sincerely appreciate all of your efforts in helping the children left behind."

"Your kindness and generosity to the SOF community is just phenomenal"
— Gen. Doug Brown

USSOCOM Care Coalition Web of Support — LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND



*Commentary by Jim Lorraine
USSOCOM Care Coalition*

Today our severely injured Special Operations Forces and their families have an unprecedented amount of support available from the government agencies, military services, units and countless benevolent organizations. Knowing where to turn for assistance in the midst of recovering from an injury or supporting a family member can be an overwhelming task.

SOF has the good fortune to operate in a tight knit community priding themselves on taking care of their unit/team/flight/platoon mate no matter the cost. When an injury occurs, almost always there is a teammate beside the casualty from point of injury through theater medical care and the flight home. Also, there is a member of the USSOCOM team by the patient's side. These unit teammates, medics and docs are the center of a SOF casualty's web of support ensuring the casualty is not alone as they make it through their most critical time.

The web continues to expand as the injured member transitions through hospitalization in Landstuhl Army Hospital in Germany and on to Walter Reed Army Medical Center or Bethesda Naval Medical Center where the SOF member has liaison non-commissioned officers assigned to assist with the barrage of questions and concerns. These liaisons know the hospital environment, personalities and bureaucratic procedures. They know what works and what doesn't, where to stay and where to eat and even more importantly, where not to. They are a resource for your family and for your teammate who has been by your side from the beginning. The liaisons are also the guys who get you where you want to go — they speed your return to duty, negotiate to get you on an earlier flight home, or help get you to a hospital that meets your medical needs. Feedback received from many casualties and families who have transited the medical system back to the United States point out the liaisons are a point of light that can be trusted like a teammate.

Throughout the hospitalization there is always someone there to support the SOF member and their family. The web expands to include someone from the casualties group, battalion, team, squadron, or flight, who is keeping tabs on your progress and care. The joint service casualty offices work to meet the notification and travel needs of severely injured servicemembers. The SOF chain

of command uses casualty reports to ensure the location and condition of our casualties are known to the commanders.

Most of the hospitals have local and national benevolent organizations to help injured servicemembers in areas the government can not support. These organizations provide everything from backpacks and comfortable "hospital" clothes to transportation and lodging for families. In addition to the general benevolent organizations, there are great SOF centric organizations that provide resources and much needed support to casualties. Whether the casualty is a Ranger, SEAL, Special Forces, Civil Affairs, or Air Commando there are organizations whose mission is to support wounded SOF from hospitalization through transition to civilian life.

The USSOCOM Care Coalition is there too — lacing together this magnificent network of support. From the initial casualty report to the liaisons and their hand-off to another hospital in the United States, the USSOCOM Care Coalition is making the connections and ensuring the best is provided for the SOF Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines. We reach out to contact the injured and their families during hospitalization ensuring their needs are being met and to establish a relationship that will support them for life. What we provide is education, advocacy, and referral to government and non-government organizations resolving issues facing the servicemember and their families. Our past successes have included clearing up confusion with the Service casualty assistance office on what family member can travel to the casualty's bedside; educating and preparing for the medical or physical evaluation board; advocating for a member's retention when the process of an evaluation board was not followed correctly; and coordination with government and national benevolent organizations to meet the needs of the casualty and family.

All the pieces are in place to support our SOF warriors and their families. The USSOCOM Care Coalition is dedicated to cultivating this web of support throughout the world. The USSOCOM Care Coalition takes great pleasure in spearheading this enormous amount of support to ensure our SOF warrior and their families are **Never Left Behind!**

SF pioneer dies at age 93

By Sgt. Joe Healy

USASOC Public Affairs Office

Retired Army Lt. Gen. William Yarborough who is credited as one of the founders of U.S. Army Special Forces died Dec. 6 near his home in Southern Pines, N.C., at the age of 93.

Yarborough, a World War II veteran and Special Forces legend, died of natural causes.

Yarborough's life was spent building the unique capability of SF within the U.S. Army. As a young captain, he designed the airborne wings every American paratrooper proudly wears today. Later, he won approval from the President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, for the wear of the distinctive headgear of the SF Soldier — the Green Beret.

“The passing of General Yarborough marks a truly sad day for the entire Special Operations Community. He worked diligently to increase the professional and academic standards of the JFK School resulting in the development of courses that are still relevant today. His foresight was instrumental in the success of today's Special Operations Forces. Our heartfelt condolences go out to the entire Yarborough family,” said General Doug Brown, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command.

Born on May 12, 1912, in Seattle, Wash., Yarborough graduated from West Point in June 1936.

In 1940, he joined the newly formed 501st Parachute Battalion and was assigned to command Company C. Later, as Test Officer for the Provisional Parachute Group in 1941, he designed the paratrooper's boot, the paratrooper's uniform, and the parachutist's qualification badge.

In 1945, he was the Provost Marshal for U.S. Forces in Austria and the Vienna Area Command. There he organized the Four Power International Patrol of Russian, French, British and American military police.



Lt. Gen. William Yarborough (right) meets with President John F. Kennedy at Fort Bragg, N.C., Oct. 12, 1961. Yarborough is credited as one of the founders of U.S. Army Special Forces. Army photo.

In June 1961, Gen. Yarborough assumed command of what is now known as the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Center for Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg, N.C. The school trains elite Soldiers for counterinsurgency and irregular warfare situations worldwide.

Yarborough was a veteran of four combat jumps and received numerous military awards and decorations.

Yarborough's legacy continues today as each Soldier that graduates from the Special Forces Qualification Course is awarded the Yarborough Knife, the official U.S. Army Special Forces knife.

Capturing Dictator Manuel Noriega

By Gaea Levy
USSOCOM History Office

On December 20, 1989, as the 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment parachuted onto Torrijos/Tocumen Airport near Panama City, President Manuel Noriega was lounging at the Ceremi Military Recreation Center, just east of the airport. Shortly after 1 a.m., alerted by explosions and hundreds of Rangers parachuting onto the nearby airfield, Noriega, his female companion, and his security squad jumped into their vehicles and fled. As they sped away, they saw Rangers setting road blocks, and they turned down a side road, fleeing the area as Rangers fired shots at the vehicle.

Department of Defense assets had tracked Noriega to Colon on the afternoon of Dec. 19, but lost him when he returned to Panama City. On Dec. 20, Special Operations Forces began to raid Noriega's homes in order to eliminate possible hiding places. A \$1 million dollar bounty was offered in the hope someone would turn him in. In addition to SOF teams searching the residences of Noriega's close associates, U.S. military forces cordoned off the Cuban and Nicaraguan Embassies, denying two potential refuges.

On Dec. 24, Manuel Noriega contacted Monsignor Laboa, the Papal Nuncio, asking for asylum, and later that day, the erstwhile president was picked up in a Dairy Queen parking lot. That evening, Monsignor Laboa notified Maj. Gen. Marc Cisneros, commander of U.S. Army South, that Noriega was at the Nunciature of the Vatican Embassy in Panama.

U.S. troops surrounded the Nunciature — Task Force Gator M113s cordoned off the entire block and SOF manned the inner cordon. From Dec. 24 to Jan. 3, SOF and U.S. Southern Command leaders devised various strategies to put pressure on Laboa and Noriega to force the dictator to surrender. The U.S. leaders allowed thousands of anti-Noriega demonstrators to gather at the roadblocks and beat pots and pans. On Dec. 26, the 4th Psychological Operations Group set up loud speakers and blared rock and roll music at the Nunciature day and night. This irksome music was not intended to drive the opera-loving Noriega



DEA agents take President Manuel Noriega into custody aboard an MC-130 aircraft. He was flown to Miami, Fla. Department of Defense photo.

out but to prevent eavesdropping (from nearby hotels overlooking the grounds) on the negotiations taking place at the Nunciature's gate.

One of the principal architects of the strategy that forced Noriega to surrender was then Col. Paul Morgan. Some of the themes developed to force Noriega to surrender were to create dissent between people staying in the Nunciature; convince the Vatican to becoming a U.S. ally against Noriega; and phone calls from Noriega's mistress helping to convince him there was no other option but surrender.

On Jan. 3, Noriega agreed to surrender on the condition he could wear his PDF uniform. He left the Nunciature in his PDF uniform escorted by SOF Soldiers to a MH-60 helicopter and flown to Howard AFB, Panama. DEA agents took custody of him, "mirandized" him, and loaded him into a MC-130 aircraft for the flight to Miami.

The surrender of Noriega attests to how difficult "manhunting" can be. The U.S. military had significant advantages in this situation — large number of forces stationed in Panama, access to almost all of the country, and use of assets to track him and establish patterns. Even with these considerable advantages, the U.S. military did not know where Noriega was at H-Hour.



Somewhere over the Atlantic Ocean

A MH-47 Chinook, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, departs from the flight deck of the amphibious assault ship *USS Wasp* during the ship's deck landing qualification. The MH-47 special operations helicopter is a long distance, heavy-lift helicopter, which is equipped with aerial refueling capability, a fast-rope rappelling system and other upgrades of special operations-specific equipment. Photo by Airman Robbie Stirrup.