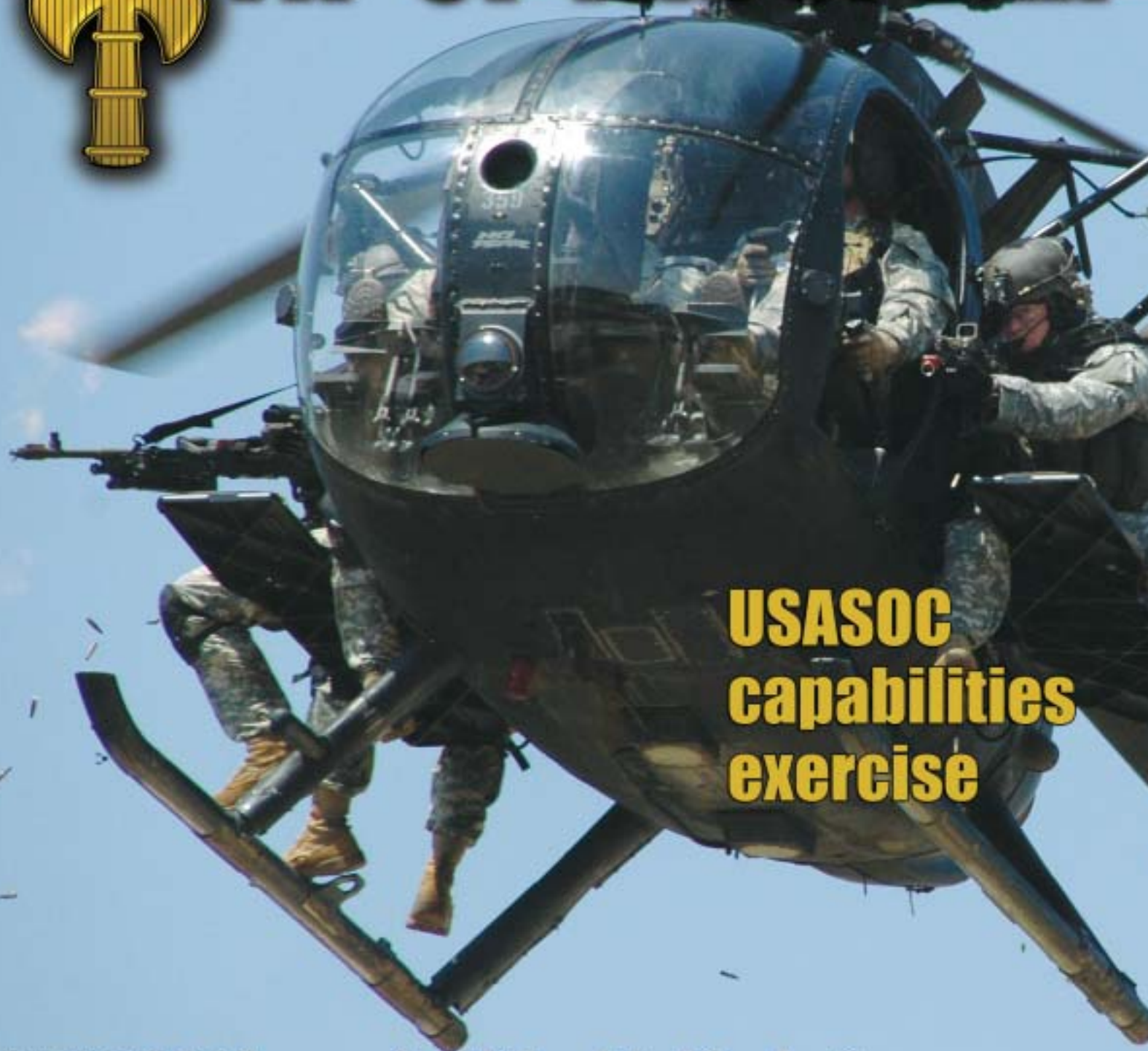




TIP OF THE SPEAR



USASOC capabilities exercise

- ♠ 7th SFG Soldier awarded Distinguished Service Cross
- ♠ OSS original Caesar Civitella receives Bull Simons Award
- ♠ USSOCOM holds International Special Operations Forces Week



**Civitella receives Bull Simons Award
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Tip of the Spear



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Front cover: Rangers ride aboard an MH-6 "Little Bird" before conducting an assault on a mock village during a capabilities exercise conducted by U.S. Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, N.C., May 1. The purpose of the CAPEX is to showcase USASOC's capabilities in a variety of different tactical exercises for people not familiar with the command. Photo by Mike Bottoms.

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Aldo, a Specialized Search Dog, rides in the back of a truck seemingly oblivious to the ordnance around him. SSDs are trained in explosives detection, but they only search when they are in their working harness, otherwise they ignore the scent of explosives. The SSDs can search up to 200 meters out on their own, which makes them an asset when searching for IEDs. They are used by Special Operations teams while on patrols and on objectives to search for IEDs and weapons caches. Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force - Afghanistan courtesy photo.

Specially trained search dogs help protect Special Operations Forces

By CJSOTF-A Public Affairs

The placid canine sits quietly in the back of the Humvee bouncing around the Afghan countryside. The truck stops, specialized equipment is mounted on the dog's body, and she goes to work. Without delay, there is action. Rapid movements and loud voices surround her, but she pays them no mind. She is busy working and focused on her task. Moments later, in the middle of a dusty courtyard, she finds what she was looking for, sits down and waits for her handler.

As if on cue, along he comes with chew toy in tow, eager to reward her for finding the weapons cache. Her name is Mara, and she is a Specialized Search Dog working in

Afghanistan. Both Mara and her trainer are attached to the Special Forces, and they both enjoy the duty.

For the last nine months, SSDs have been adding a layer of security and search capability to Special Forces teams operating in Afghanistan. The dogs are specially trained in independent ordnance detection. In other words, they do not need to be on a leash or led by a handler. They are not trained in aggression, and their sole focus is the discovery of ordnance, weapons caches and IEDs.

"The main benefit of having them on the team is the increase in combat effectiveness," said the Special Forces team sergeant. "They discover IEDs, weapons, ammunition and caches that would have otherwise been undiscovered and probably used to harm either Afghan citizens or Coalition

forces. The SSD teams are a great asset to have with you in the fight.”

Mara participates in a myriad of missions. Sometimes she is dismounted during movement to an objective to search in front of the convoy for the presence of IEDs. Other times, she searches buildings and the exterior of compounds for weapons caches.

“I love the look on the guys’ faces when she finds something,” her handler said. Insurgents often will bury weapons caches in the middle of a courtyard or field where the cache cannot be linked to any specific house. No matter where they hide contraband, Mara will find it.

She possesses abundant energy and knows when to use it.

“We have been in 25 to 30 firefights,” said her handler. “Her reaction is to run back to me because that’s what we have trained her to do.” Mara doesn’t mind firefights; she has been known to curl up in the backseat and sleep through them.

“I took her to every live-fire range, and we would play with her while we were there,” said her handler. “When a firefight happens, she thinks it’s a good time. She doesn’t think she is in danger; she doesn’t understand the gravity of it.”

“We do a lot of air assault operations, and she has gotten used to jumping into a helicopter. She is not nervous anymore because we make everything fun,” said her handler. “She knows once she gets into the helo, I’m going to give her a chew toy. We use a lot of positive reinforcement,” he said.

In the nine months since the SSDs began operations, they have participated in more than 1,700 missions, performed more than 2,200 searches and accomplished more than 207 finds, consisting of IEDs, unexploded ordnance and weapons caches.

“I look at it like this. One find could save one soldier’s life,” said one of the handlers stationed at Bagram Air Field.

The dogs are a very effective tool. They save the Special Forces teams a lot of time. In reality, it requires a large number of men and an inordinate amount of time to physically search every inch of a compound. An SSD can accomplish the same task in a fraction of that time because scents and odor can’t be hidden from a trained SSD.

“I remember on one mission Mara searched a compound and found a single AK-47 round. It truly amazed me and the rest of the team,” said the team sergeant commenting on Mara’s ability to find even the smallest piece of ordnance.

The SSDs’ success can be directly attributed to their rigorous training program. Military SSDs start training

when they are 1. Mara trained for eight months at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, and in Yuma, Ariz., with her handler before deploying to Afghanistan. Mara and her handler have been together from the beginning of her training, and they will stay together for the duration of her life or his enlistment.

How does a dog who lives in a compound with munitions around her all the time know when to work and when to play? According to her handler, Mara’s magic only happens when she is wearing her harness. Mara can lie on a can of ammunition for five hours surrounded by men wearing 210 rounds of ammunition and sticks of C4, but she will not react. However, once her harness is mounted, she goes to work. The harness essentially acts as an on/off switch.

Mara’s handler hopes to further increase the team’s effectiveness with advanced training after redeployment. “The dogs know how to search, so it’s time to add [gun] fire, explosions and additional stressors,” said her handler, who also wants to conduct more scenario-based training. He also wants to do more training with the SOF teams to familiarize them with the SSD’s capabilities. When we deploy, our SSD teams won’t always have to explain their capabilities; they can just get to work.

“It will make the asset more valuable and result in an immediate impact on the battlefield,” said the handler.

“Mara and (her handler) are great assets to any ODA, and we accomplish a lot of things that would have been much more difficult to accomplish in their absence,” said the team sergeant. Presently, not every SF team in Afghanistan has SSDs attached to their unit, but there are plans to assign at least one SSD and a handler to every team, according to a Coalition SSD handler stationed at Bagram.



Mara, a Specialized Search Dog, and her handler train at their firebase in southern Afghanistan. SSDs are trained in explosives detection; they can search up to 200 meters out on their own. They are used by Special Operations teams while on patrols and on objectives to search for IEDs and weapons caches. Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force - Afghanistan courtesy photo.

Paratroopers exit a CH-47 Chinook over Tamara Dropzone during Iguana Voladora 2008, a combined airborne operation in which jumpers represented 17 North, Central and South American countries near Tegucigalpa, Honduras, April 23. Courtesy photo.

United States, Central, South American Special Forces unite for exercise Iguana Voladora

By USASOC Public Affairs

Special operations soldiers from 17 countries took part in the 11th Annual Iguana Voladora (Flying Iguana) exercise, a combined airborne operation hosted by Honduran Special Forces April 22 to 24 near Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

“In times of peace and in times of crisis, our countries work together to promote peace and stability in Central and South America,” said Maj. Jim Correll, commander of 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) Soldiers in Honduras. “This type of high-intensity operation strengthens our ties as allies and friends by letting us perform a task we all use in the presence of our multinational peers.”

The soldiers jumped from two CH-47 Chinook helicopters at 1,200 feet. Soldiers from 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne), as well as members from Joint Task Force-Bravo from Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras, and U.S. Southern Command represented the United States.

Though the paratroopers traveled to Honduras from many nations, several mentioned that despite geographical differences, they had much in common as residents of Latin American countries and as special operations warriors.

“We all speak the same language, and the

commands we receive before exiting the aircraft are the same, just in Spanish,” said Costa Rican Special Police Lt. Albert Bustamante. “This is the third Iguana Voladora I’ve made it to, and each time there are more jumpers from more countries, but the ones who haven’t jumped with us before never have a problem. This might be because a lot of us were trained for airborne operations at Fort Benning.”

“When I heard about this jump, I immediately volunteered for it just to get the chance to meet other people who are like me but from other countries,” said Mexican Navy special operations Capt. Frederico Alberto Magana Ramos. “We’ve had a good, safe jump and an excellent learning experience, and I’m already looking forward to coming back next year.”

Iguana Voladora 2008 is the 11th multinational airborne operation hosted by Honduras, though the name has changed several times since the first one in 1997. The first was unnamed and only featured three countries, but it has since progressed to the large-scale operation it is today.

Representatives from Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and the United States participated in the operation.





Staff Sgt. Cameron Hystad, 320th Special Tactics Squadron, gives the final count for a static line jump of Royal Thai Air Force special forces aboard an MC-130P Combat Shadow. The 320th Special Tactics Squadron is a part of the 353rd Special Operations Group, located at Kadena Air Base, Japan. Photo by Master Sgt. Marilyn Holliday.

Thais, Americans join forces for Teak Torch exchange training

By Master Sgt. Marilyn Holliday

The language of friendship forged through many communication barriers as the Royal Thai Air Force and the U.S. Air Force joined together for exchange training at Udon Thani Air Base, Thailand.

Exercise Teak Torch brought to Udon Tahni about 130 members from the 353rd Special Operations Group, subordinate unit of Special Operations Command-Pacific, whose home station is Kadena Air Base, Japan.

“The joint combined exchange training events are designed to enhance U.S. military training and are conducted in many countries in the Pacific Command

area of responsibility each year,” said Lt. Col. Toby Wong, mission commander. “JCETs also enhance bilateral relations, contribute to regional stability and increase interoperability.”

Pararescuemen and combat controllers from both nations conducted friendship personnel airdrops from the group’s Combat Shadow MC-130P throughout the exercise.

Thai jumpers, many of whom had never jumped at night, and some who had never been a part of water survival airdrops, were a part of daily airdrops.

“The first time I left the plane it felt good and then strange to land in the water,” said Maj. Surapond Apitachapan, a Thai Special Operations Regiment

squadron leader. “Normally we jump twice a month. With this exercise, we jump every day and are able to correct our mistakes.”

Even though the two militaries speak different languages, there were no differences when it came time to exchange information and train together.

“When Americans want to tell us something, sometimes they must show us for us to understand,” Flight Sgt. First Class Nathaphun Junkeeree, a pararescueman from the Search and Rescue Division, said. “In the end, we all do the same job, even though we are from different places.”

Along with PJs, security forces and aircrew members were paired up for exchange training throughout the annual exercise.

“It’s a unique opportunity for us to demonstrate

our specialties and train with Thai forces,” Staff Sgt. Sarah Valdovinos, 353rd SOG security forces member, said. “It’s good to know that we can all work together.”

Emergency responders from both nations also exercised together and brought together medical, security and safety personnel.

The 353rd SOG, the Air Force’s only Special Operations Forces assigned to the Pacific region, is referred to as the Air Commandos of the Pacific. In addition to the Combat Shadow, the group also maintains and flies the MC-130H Combat Talon II.

The 353rd SOG is a 750-member organization. It is operationally aligned under SOCPAC.

The United States has participated in JCETs within the PACOM area of responsibility since 1984.

Air Commandos aid Bangladesh school

By Master Sgt. Marilyn Holliday

Adults and children alike were all smiles during a special delivery of school supplies at Eglal’s ABC School in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Members of the 353rd Special Operations Group, subordinate unit of Special Operations Command-Pacific, handed out school supplies to all 60 students as part of their community outreach program during Exercise Teak Buffalo, a joint combined exchange training event held in May at Bangladesh Air Force Base, Kurmitola.

“It’s important for us to give something back,” said Capt. Gretchen Holden, project officer for the school supply drive and operations officer for Teak Buffalo. “People at home station were more than willing to donate the necessary school supplies to make this event a success for the group.”

The school includes students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

“Our children come from poverty-level families,” Zahirun Nessa, head teacher, said. “If the children were not in school, they would be begging on the street.”

Nessa said the students are sponsored through monetary donations, and the school supply donation will defray costs necessary to provide the children with not only an education, but meals, uniforms, supplies and medical needs.

“It puts things into perspective,” said Capt. Darin Wheeler from the 1st Special Operations Squadron. “You can hear different stories of plights of different countries, but there’s no way to understand it without seeing it firsthand.”

In addition to community outreach, the 353rd SOG trained with the Bangladesh Air Force during joint combined exchange training in May.

“The exercise is important to both countries,” said Maj. Abe Friedman, mission commander. “Information exchange between both air and ground forces increases our knowledge of how each of us operates.”

Both nations participated in low-level navigation, night vision goggle, personnel and cargo airdrop and competency flight training.



Senior Master Sgt. Jerry Wilkerson, 353rd Special Operations Group, distributes school supplies to students at Eglal’s ABC School in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Members of the group delivered the supplies during Exercise Teak Buffalo, a joint combined training between the 353rd SOG and the Bangladesh Air Force. Photo by Master Sgt. Marilyn Holliday.

Ceremonies show solid JSOTF-P, AFP and Philippine government ties

Story and photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Katherine Sanchez, JSOTF-P Public Affairs

Three small dedication ceremonies held May 21 in the southern province of Sulu marked the closing of one community relations project and the opening of newly constructed buildings and a road to communities on the island of Jolo, in the southern Philippines.

The projects, which were a combined effort made in part by Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines, Armed Forces of the Philippines and Sulu government officials, included a new community center to the citizens of Barangay Tugas, Patikul, a new school in Barangay Tandu Patung, Maimbung, and a newly constructed road for the Barangay, Indanan community.

According to Col. William Coultrup, JSOTF-P commander, the role played by U.S. Forces was a small piece of a large effort by AFP and local government officials to bring these projects to fruition.

“We are playing a very small part in all of this, and that is to provide some of the resources and the supplies to build these great schools; it’s a total team effort between the local government, with our fellow partners in the AFP, and the U.S. Soldiers who are here working side by side with our counterparts,” Coultrup said.

“Even though we are Soldiers, the majority of our effort is designed to help develop communities and give people a chance for a better life and a better existence,” Coultrup added.

Community relations projects coordinated by JSOTF-P, AFP, the government of the Republic of the Philippines and volunteers are not a new concept in the southern Philippines. Medical Civil Action Programs deliver free medical and dental services to people living in remote areas, and Engineering Civil Action Programs assist the AFP and the government of the Republic of the Philippines in building roads, schools, community facilities and digging wells to provide clean water. Projects like these have been ongoing since the Philippine government invited the U.S. military in 2002.

Coultrup said new roads help the Filipino people improve their quality of life by bringing communities closer together and providing them with access to better education and health care, opening doors to new business opportunities and giving them the chance to set the conditions for



Col. William Coultrup, commander of Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines, and Sulu Governor Sakur Tan cut a ribbon signifying the official opening of the Tugas community center. The center was turned over to the Barangay Tugas, Patikul community at a small ceremony on the island of Jolo, Philippines. Following the opening of the community center, a new school was opened in Barangay Tandu Patung, Maimbung, and a newly constructed road was opened in Barangay, Indanan. JSOTF-P personnel and the Armed Forces Philippines, in conjunction with local government officials, routinely work side-by-side on community relations projects that help foster peace while improving living conditions in communities throughout the southern Philippines.

themselves and their fellow citizens to determine their own future.

“It allows the community to again connect with each other ... It allows you to get to schools, to hospitals, to the mosques and for business to come in. You are setting the condition to have these roads and make life much better for the people out here. This is just the start; it is up to you—it’s the people’s turn—you need to take advantage of it and learn from this. Bring in the business, work with the local police, work with the AFP and make this environment safe so your children can grow up in a better atmosphere,” Coultrup said.

Conditions on the island of Jolo, once plagued with violence, have improved through the shared vision of the government and citizens to have an island of peace and prosperity.

“In 2002 this place [southern Sulu] was considered very dangerous. Now you look at it and people are coming to visit—people want tourism here. It’s much safer now because of the efforts of not only the AFP, but also the local

government pushing very hard for a better life for the people,” Coultrup said.

Sulu Governor, Sakur Tan, a featured speaker at the dedications and a leader in the transformation of the area, said he will continue to work with JSOTF-P and the AFP on future projects.

“From the provincial government to the municipal government, we are supportive of the Armed Forces Philippines and supportive of the U.S. Forces in the province of Sulu. I am certain my optimism cannot be wrong,” Tan said.

Donation improves PNP capabilities

Story and Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Katherine Sanchez, JSOTF-P Public Affairs

Various types of force protection equipment recently donated to the Jolo Philippine National Police have helped increase PNP capabilities and further strengthen U.S.–Philippines ties.

Bullet-proof vests and additional force protection equipment, donated by police officers in New York and New Jersey and collected by New Jersey Detective Dan Faye, were turned over to PNP at a small ceremony April 26 on the island of Jolo.

According to Col. William Coultrup, commander of Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines, Faye and his fellow officers have played a key role in supporting the military in the Global War on Terrorism.

“Dan Faye has been a valuable friend of the military. Whether supporting training in New York and New Jersey or deploying to support operations in overseas locations, he continues to provide valuable support to Special Operations Forces,” Coultrup said.

Orlando Velasquez, Area Regional Security Officer, U.S. Embassy, Manila, said the donation is another demonstration of the commitment to assist the Philippine government and law enforcement colleagues of the PNP to combat crime and terrorism in the southern Philippines so they are better able to maintain peace and stability in their communities.

“The event clearly conveys our commitment to working with our Philippine colleagues,” Velasquez said. “Many of the officers had never tried on body armor, so it was a pleasure to assist them, organize and fit their new vests,” he added.

In addition to the vests, the Regional Security Office of the U.S. Embassy, Manila, also donated tactical gear such as flashlights, goggles, handcuffs, pouches and backpacks.

“Advising and assisting our AFP [Armed Forces

“They [U.S. military] are here to bring peace, not chaos, not disorder—we should be very grateful. This is a very fortunate time to be a leader here in the province of Sulu because of the assistance, help and aid from the U.S. government. With this I’m certain we cannot fail,” added Tan.

JSOTF-P personnel and the AFP, in conjunction with local government officials, routinely work side by side on community relations projects that help foster peace and stability while greatly improving living conditions in communities throughout the southern Philippines.

Philippines] counterparts along with humanitarian assistance and community outreach activities are the most visible parts of our mission here, but we’re also working very hard on capacity-building initiatives for the Philippine National Police,” Coultrup said.

“Interagency cooperation is extremely important, and this event is a great example of how effective we can be when we pool our resources. This relatively inexpensive equipment will go a long way in helping these officers to maintain peace and security and keep their communities safe,” Coultrup said.

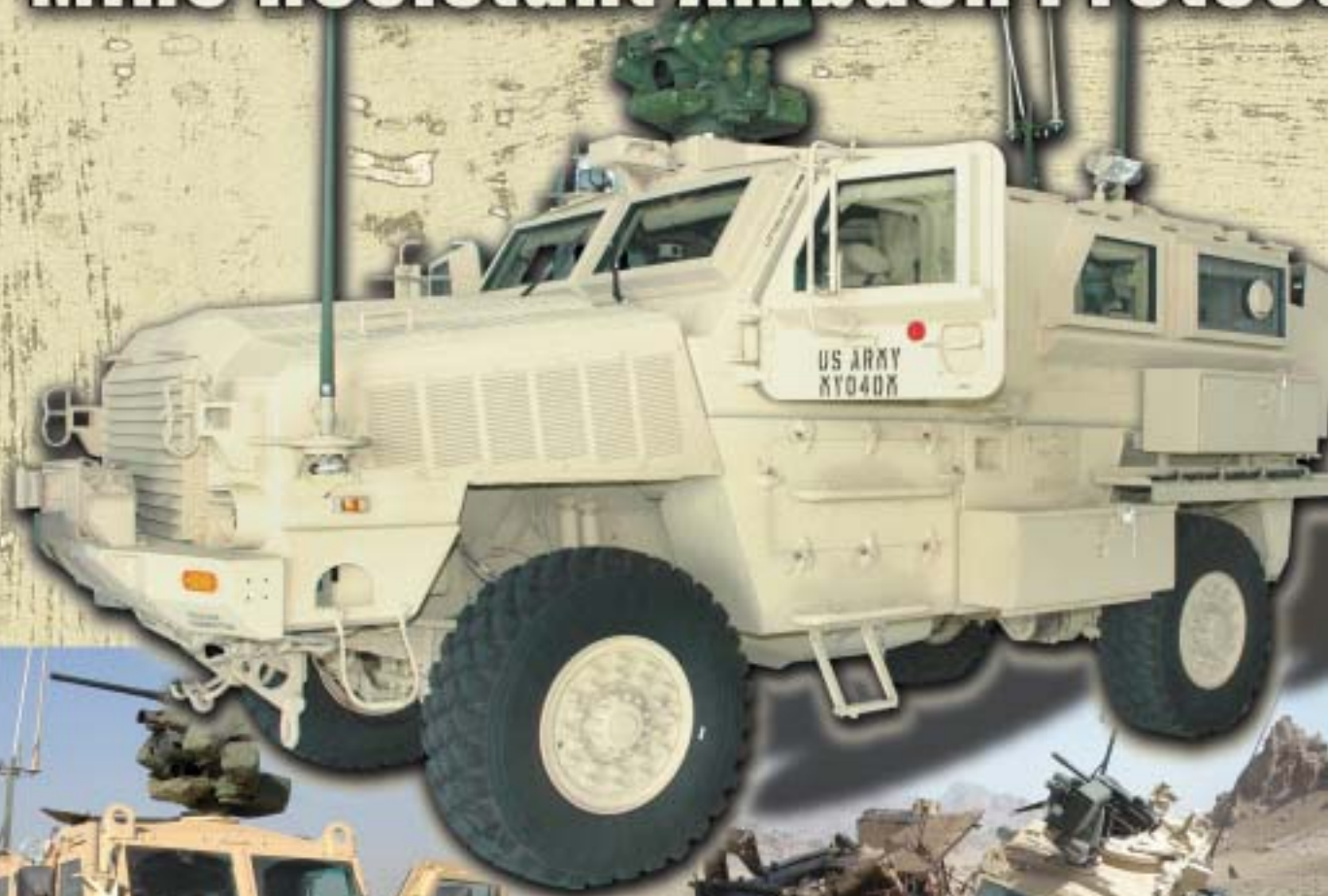
Embassy Manila security officials are in the process of coordinating an intensive training program with PNP in Jolo that will cover several aspects of law enforcement training, to include Basic Crime Scene Investigation, Police Ethics, Basic Supervision, Crime Scene Investigation and other related topics. A key portion of this training is Instructor Development, which will allow for the sustainability of the initiative.



Area Regional Security Officer, Orlando Velasquez, assists a Philippine National Police officer in donning a bullet-proof vest. Bullet-proof vests and other force protection equipment donated by New York and New Jersey police officers and collected by New Jersey Detective Dan Faye, were given to PNP at a small ceremony on the island of Jolo.

MIRAA

Mine Resistant Ambush Protection



Survivable Vehicle for the Warfighter

Protected Vehicle

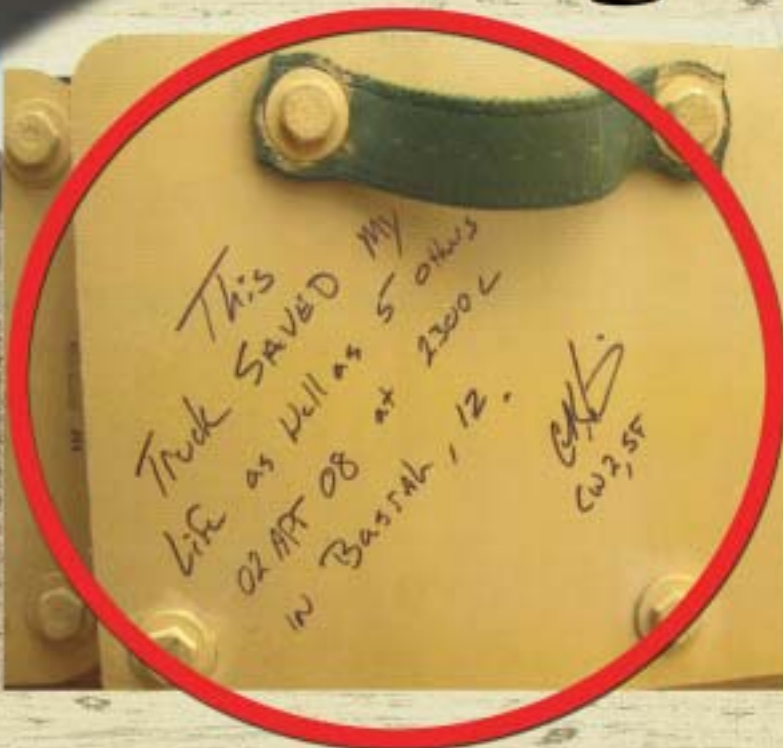
Configuration Type:	4x4
Operational Length:	266 in
Operational Width:	113 in
Operational Height:	134 in
Min Ground Clearance:	14.6 in
Max Speed:	65 mph
GVWR:	40,340 lbs
Payload (GVWR-GVW):	1,147 lbs
Max Slope:	60%
Center of Gravity (GVW Vertical):	56 in
Consumption Rate (Mi/Gal):	6.6



System Description: BAE CAT I USSOCOM Variant Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) is an armored, V-hull wheeled vehicle with an integrated spall liner, Remote Weapon Station (RWS) and C4I suite designed to increase survivability for personnel subjected to mine explosions, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and small arms fire.

"There is no failsafe measure that can prevent all loss of life and limb on this or any other battlefield. That is the brutal reality of war. But vehicles like MRAP, combined with the right tactics, techniques and procedures, provide the best protection available against these attacks."

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates
Jan. 18, 2008



2008

BULL SIMONS

Recipient



COLONEL ARTHUR D.
"BULL" SIMONS
1918 - 1979



Caesar Civitella

By Rick Green
USSOCOM History Office

The rich history and tradition of the Bull Simons Award was carried on as the Special Operations community honored Caesar Civitella with the 2008 Bull Simons Award recipient.

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

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

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

**Congressional Country Club,
Bethesda, Md. - Area F**





Office of Strategic Services, the first joint Special Operations organization.

Civitella traveled to the OSS training facility known as "Area F" at the Congressional Country Club in Bethesda, Md.

OSS antenna training

Civitella, 12 other enlisted men and two officers were assigned to a 15-man OSS Operational Group. Success behind the lines necessitated trust, respect and leadership within each OG. His OG trainers continually provided challenging opportunities, and shortly after, in early 1944, Civitella shipped out to North Africa for continued training and preparation.

Civitella's Operational Group initially supported Operation Dragoon, the Allied invasion of southern France Aug. 15, 1944. As part of Team Lafayette, he

made his first operational jump behind enemy lines to support the Maquis, or French resistance fighters. Lafayette's mission included conducting raids and ambushes against German forces. Team Lafayette, along with two other OGs, captured nearly 4,000 Axis soldiers in an astounding employment of psychological warfare against the finance section of a Nazi division in France.

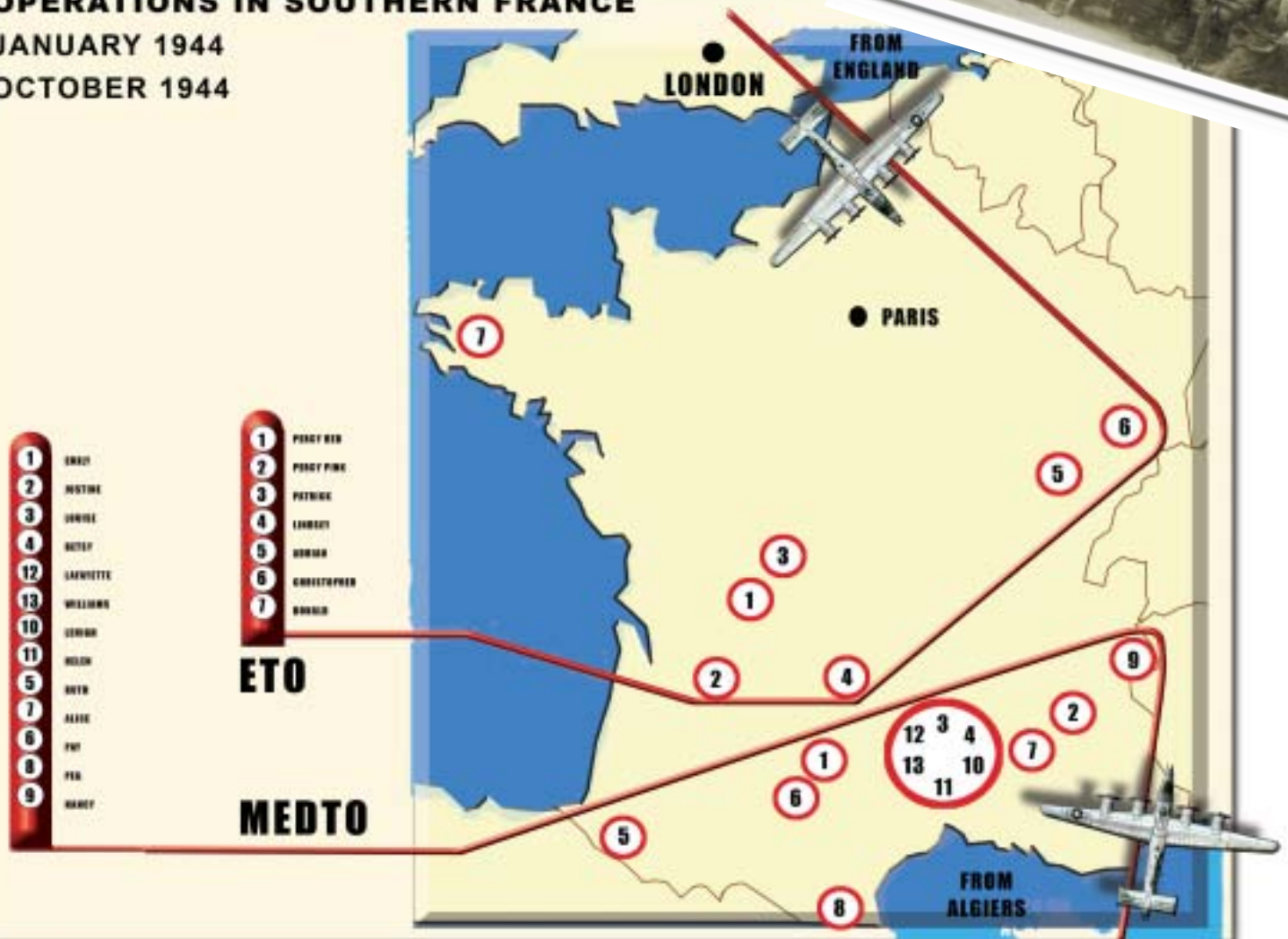
Following his mission in southern France, Civitella and his OG were sent to Italy. There he participated in 21 air operations as a "bundle-kicker" to resupply other OGs in Italy, for which he received the Air Medal. His second operational jump occurred in April 1945, as a member of Team Sewanee. Sewanee was intended to assist

OSS Operational Group with the Maquis



OPERATIONS IN SOUTHERN FRANCE

JANUARY 1944
OCTOBER 1944





Mussolini and Hitler

sled through the mountains, carrying gold to pay the people who held Mussolini. However, Team Sewanee arrived too late; Italian partisans had already killed Mussolini. For Civitella's missions in Italy he was awarded the Bronze Star.

After the end of the war in Europe, he returned to OSS headquarters in Washington, D.C., where he compiled OG after-action reports under Cmdr. John Ford, the famous movie director. Civitella left the Army in early 1946 and attended the University of Pennsylvania before re-enlisting again in 1947. After some counterintelligence training, he went to the 82nd Airborne Division, where he served as an intelligence NCO. Challenged by Col. (later Lt. Gen.) Thomas Trapnell, Civitella applied for and received a direct commission in 1951.

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

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

OG Team Spokane, who was working with the Italian resistance. He parachuted into the Italian Alps along the Swiss border, tasked to report on German activity, assist downed airmen, and prevent German scorched-earth activities. On top of these missions, Civitella's OG also attempted to capture the Italian Il Duce, Benito Mussolini. Civitella and his team traveled by horse and

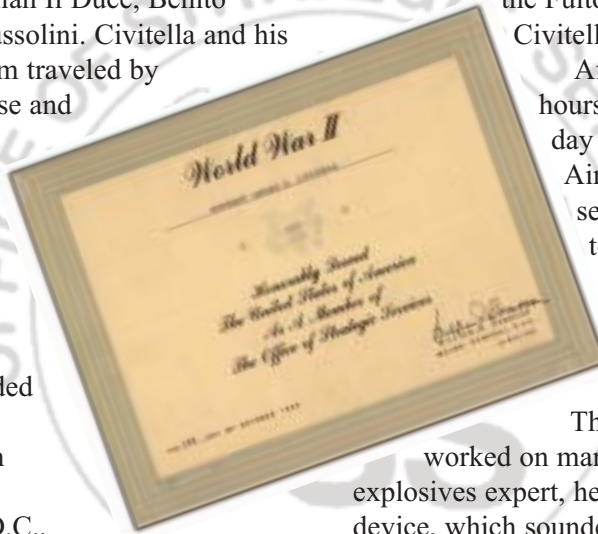
In 1958, Civitella returned from Europe and was eventually assigned to the combat development office of the Special Warfare Center and School, where he was involved in the development of Special Forces doctrine, equipment and techniques.

In January 1961, Civitella began the first of his three tours in Vietnam. He also worked on different insertion and extraction methods, including SCUBA, HALO and the famous Fulton "Skyhook" extraction system. Eighteen days before his retirement, Civitella was successfully "snatched-up" by a Caribou airplane using the Fulton Skyhook. On Aug. 31, 1964, Maj. Civitella retired from the Army.

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

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

In 1976, Civitella was assigned to the CIA's Plans



Caesar Civitella prepares for a parachute jump.



Maj. Caesar Civitella retiring from the Army

Branch as the liaison officer to the Pentagon for Special Operations. There, he became heavily involved in the development, validation and certification of the nation's first Emergency Response Force. During this period, he worked closely with the unit's first commander, Col. Charlie Beckwith, a past Bull Simons recipient.

The unit passed its last validation exercise on Nov. 4, 1979, the very same day the Iranian Hostage Crisis began in Tehran. Civitella provided key intelligence and support to Operation Eagle Claw, America's military response to the hostage crisis. He identified an operative for insertion into Iran who was responsible for

gathering intelligence as well as providing logistic support for a rescue attempt. Civitella also coordinated the insertion of Maj. Dick Meadows, another Bull Simons Award recipient, who supported Beckwith's task force in Iran.

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

In retirement, Civitella continues to stay involved in the special operations community through the OSS veterans' group and the Special Forces Association.

Civitella has been married to his wife, Mona, for 54 years, and they have a son, a daughter and several grandchildren.



BULL SIMONS



Award



History of Bull Simons Award



USSOCOM has presented the Bull Simons Award since 1990.

The 2008 Bull Simons Award winner is Caesar Civitella.

The award recognizes recipients who embody “the true spirit, values, and skills of a special operations warrior,” and Col. Arthur “Bull” Simons, whom the award is named after, is the epitome of these attributes.

A career Soldier, Simons led special operations in World War II and Vietnam. Born in New York City in 1918, Simons graduated from the University of Missouri in 1941 with a degree in journalism and served in the Pacific theater in World War II. He rose to company commander in the 6th Ranger Battalion and participated in several amphibious landings in the Philippines. On one noteworthy occasion, he and his men scaled a steep oceanside cliff under cover of darkness and overwhelmed a garrison of Japanese soldiers at the Suluan lighthouse.

Simons left the Army after World War II, but returned to duty in 1951. He completed the Special Forces Officers Qualification Course in 1958 and took command of a detachment in the 77th SF Group (Airborne). From 1961 to 1962, as head of the White Star Mobile Training Team, he served as the senior military advisor to the Royal Lao Army. His familiarity with the region would prove useful a few years later.

In 1965, Simons returned to Southeast Asia as a member of Military Assistance Command Vietnam’s Studies and Observations Group (MACV-SOG). Serving under then Col. Donald Blackburn, Simons commanded OP-35, one of three operational directorates within SOG. For approximately two years, he led OP-35 on an interdiction campaign against the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos and Cambodia. OP-35 interdicted the trail by inserting “hatchet” teams and reconnaissance teams. The hatchet teams, composed of Nung or Montagnard tribesmen led by a Special Forces NCO, conducted hit-and-run raids against NVA

units, and the recon teams ran long range patrols scouting the trail, but also “snatched” prisoners when the opportunity arose.

Simons left Vietnam in 1966, but returned four years later as the Deputy Commander of Joint Contingency Task Group Ivory Coast — the Son Tay Raiders. The task force, commanded by Air Force Brig. Gen. Leroy Manor, U.S. Air Force, was formed in the spring of 1970 after American intelligence had identified Son Tay Prison, near Hanoi, as a prisoner of war detention camp. After six months of planning and rehearsals, the task force deployed to Thailand Nov. 18.

Two nights later the task force flew into North Vietnam. The assault group, led by Capt. Dick Meadows, landed in the prison compound and killed about 50 NVA guards, but found the compound to be otherwise abandoned. Meanwhile, Simons had landed with the support group in an adjacent school compound, which was teeming with Russian and Chinese soldiers. Simons and his team killed or repelled hundreds of these soldiers, eliminating the principal threat to the assault group. The raiders executed the entire operation in 28 minutes, successfully faced an enemy force of approximately 350 men and left with only two injuries. Although the raid at Son Tay failed to accomplish its principal objective, it sent a clear message to North Vietnam, and the treatment of American prisoners improved somewhat thereafter.

Simons retired from the Army in 1971, but he was to conduct one more special mission. In 1979, Mr. H. Ross Perot asked Simons to rescue two of his employees; the Iranian revolutionary regime was holding them in a Tehran prison and was demanding a \$13 million ransom. In April of that year, Simons led a civilian rescue party into Iran and safely extracted the American hostages. Just one month later, Simons suffered a massive heart attack and died.

The previous award recipients are: Mr. H. Ross Perot, Gen. Edward “Shy” Meyer, the Honorable John Marsh Jr., Col. Aaron Bank, Lt. Gen. Samuel Wilson, Lt. Gen. Leroy Manor, the Honorable Sam Nunn, the Honorable William Cohen, Gen. James Lindsay, Maj. Gen. John Alison, Col. Charlie Beckwith, Brig Gen. Harry “Heinie” Aderholdt, Command Sgt. Maj. Ernest Tabata, Maj. Gen. Richard Scholtes, Maj. Richard “Dick” Meadows and Col. John Carney.



(Top) Caesar Civitella unveils the Bull Simons Award. (Right) Retired Maj. Gen. and Chairman of the Office of Strategic Services Society, Jack Singlaub, presents Civitella with an OSS Distinguished Service Medal. (Bottom) Adm. Eric T. Olson, commander of USSOCOM, and Civitella applaud during the Bull Simons ceremony. Photos by Mike Bottoms.



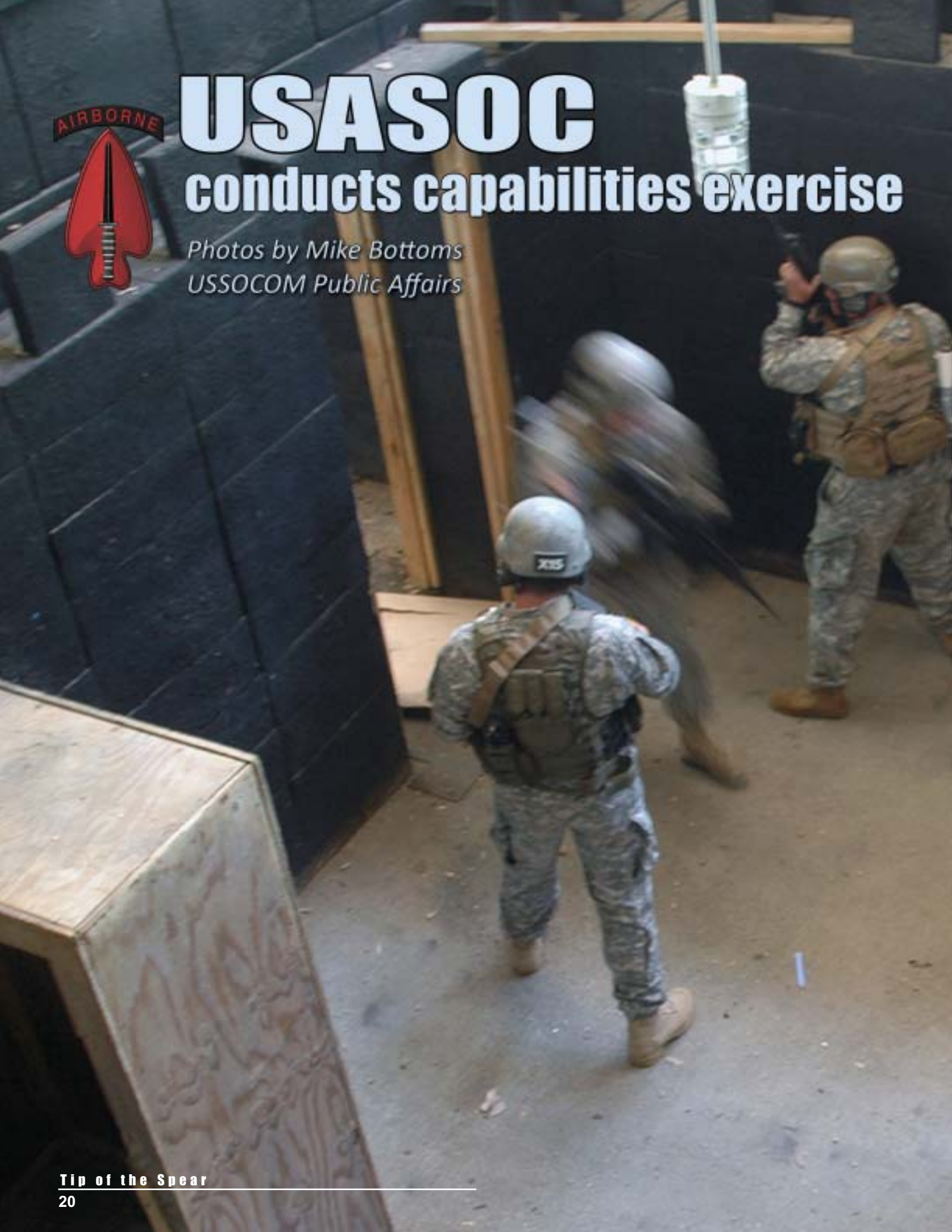
AIRBORNE



USASOC

conducts capabilities exercise

*Photos by Mike Bottoms
USSOCOM Public Affairs*



A Special Forces team clears a house room by room in a close-quarters-battle drill. Special Forces Soldiers showed their skills to the public during a Capabilities Exercise (CAPEX), May 1, at Fort Bragg, N.C. The purpose of a CAPEX is to showcase USASOC's capabilities in a variety of different tactical exercises for people not familiar with the command. The spectators have ringside seats to demonstrations by PSYOP and Civil Affairs, SOF helicopters, close-quarters-battle, fast roping, sniper demonstrations and a variety of weapon demonstrations.





(Main photo) An MH-47 from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) hovers while Soldiers from the 75th Ranger Regiment fast rope onto a building. (Top left) A sniper stands in his Ghillie prior to a sniper demonstration. (Left) Rangers ride aboard an MH-6 "Little Bird" before conducting an assault on a mock village. (Bottom left) A Special Forces team prepares to breach a house and conduct a close-quarters-battle drill. (Bottom) Soldiers from the 75th Ranger Regiment blow up a door before entering the building.





(Top right) A PSYOP Soldier stands next to a satellite communications display during the capabilities exercise. (Right) Special Forces fast rope before securing a perimeter around an exercise target. (Bottom right) Special Forces sprint and prepare to secure a four-story building. (Bottom) A team of Special Forces Soldiers enter and secure a building.



Special Forces Soldier receives second highest medal for heroism

By USASOC Public Affairs



A 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) Soldier was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross during a ceremony at Bank Hall, Fort Bragg, N.C., April 30 for valorous actions during Operation Enduring Freedom.

In his 20th year of military service, Master Sgt. Brendan O'Connor, formerly a senior medic on a 2nd Battalion, 7th SFG (A) Operational Detachment Alpha,

was presented the award while he stood before family, friends and fellow Soldiers.

“For the men who were with him that day, Master Sergeant O'Connor is a savior,” said Adm. Eric T. Olson, commander of United States Special Operations Command, who presented the award to O'Connor. “For all Americans, he is a hero, and for all members of Special Operations across the services, he is a source of enormous pride.”

O'Connor was instrumental in keeping his team alive during an intense battle with more than 250 Taliban fighters in southern Afghanistan on June 22, 2006. While making a temporary stop during a patrol, his team and their attached Afghan National Army soldiers were attacked from all sides with small-arms fire, heavy machine guns, rocket propelled grenades, recoilless rifles and mortars.

During the 17 1/2 hours of sustained combat that followed, O'Connor and his team fought off wave after wave of Taliban attackers from a group of small compounds, fighting for their lives against insurgents who were intent on killing or capturing the beleaguered defenders. Much of the combat was so close that the defenders of the compounds could hear cursing and taunting from the enemies who swarmed the perimeter.

After learning two Soldiers were wounded at another location, O'Connor removed his body armor and low-crawled under heavy machine-gun fire to treat and extract his wounded comrades. O'Connor then carried a wounded Soldier back to a safer area, again passing through intense fire. One teammate commented that as he was crawling, machine-gun fire “mowed the grass” around him.

“I don't think that what I did was particularly brave,” said O'Connor. “My friend needed help, and I had the



Master Sgt. Brendan O'Connor, 7th SFG (A), was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for valorous actions during Operation Enduring Freedom. The ceremony was led by Adm. Eric T. Olson, commander of United States Special Operations Command, at Bank Hall, Fort Bragg, N.C., April 30. Photo by Sgt. Daniel Love.

opportunity to help him, so I did. I think I'm lucky to get this sort of recognition; there are so many other Soldiers who do similarly brave things overseas and are happy with just a pat on the back when they get home.”

O'Connor is the second Soldier to be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for actions taken in Operation Enduring Freedom. The first was 5th Special Forces Group Soldier Maj. Mark Mitchell in 2003. Before Mitchell, there had been none since the Vietnam War. The Distinguished Service Cross is the second highest award for valor, surpassed only by the Medal of Honor.

“I've never been more honored, but this medal belongs to my whole team,” said O'Connor. “Every member was watching out for the other, inspiring each other, and for some, sacrificing for each other. We all fought hard, and it could just as easily be any one of them standing up here getting it pinned on; every one of them is a hero.”

Special Forces MIA given Silver Star

*By Staff Sgt. Andrew Kosterman
1st Special Forces Group (Airborne)*

The journey that began more than 41 years ago to recognize a Special Forces sergeant who went missing in the jungles of Vietnam came to a close April 19 with the presentation of the Green Beret's Silver Star to his mother.

Staff Sgt. Roger Hallberg was the point man March 24, 1967, on a mission deep behind enemy lines when a force estimated to be in the hundreds ambushed him and the men of Special Forces Detachment A-302. His actions that day saved the lives of other Americans and the indigenous force he was working with. Hallberg, who led a counterattack while the main element pulled back, was never heard from again. He was later listed as missing in action.

The awarding of the nation's third highest medal for valor "brings some resolution" to Anne Hallberg Holt, sister of the missing Green Beret. However, it does not bring closure to what happened to her brother.

The medal was presented to 88-year-old Doris Cobb

Hallberg, Roger's mother, by Maj. Gen. Thomas Csrnko, commander of the U.S. Army Special Forces Command. With clutching hands, she gripped the citation and medal case with her two family members in the shadow of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter George Cobb.

The ship is named after Roger Hallberg's grandfather, who, in 1896, rescued three sailors while keeping a lighthouse at California's Point Bonita.

George Cobb was awarded the Silver Lifesaving Medal for his heroism. It is the Coast Guard's equivalent to the Silver Star.

Holt said even though it was a "sad situation" that has linked the heroism of her grandfather and brother together, she is proud of their accomplishments.

Csrnko described the family as "amazing," and said Cobb and Hallberg "are cut from the same cloth."

Retired Capt. James Monaghan followed Csrnko. Monaghan served with Hallberg in Vietnam. During his speech, Monaghan described a combat rookie's typical reaction to an ambush and noted Hallberg was not that type of person.



Continued next page



Maj. Gen. Thomas Csrnko (left), commander of U.S. Army Special Forces Command, presents the Silver Star to Doris Hallberg, mother of Staff Sgt. Roger Hallberg, April 19 at Yerba Buena Island, Calif. Hallberg, a Special Forces Soldier who went missing in action during the Vietnam War. Accepting the award with Doris are Hallberg's siblings, Ann Hallberg Holt (far right) and Bruce Hallberg. The award was presented 41 years after Hallberg's disappearance. Photo by Staff Sgt. Andrew Kosterman.

“When the U.S. is at war, we can manufacture and purchase the best and most expensive weaponry in the world,” said Monaghan. “But, you can never purchase (Hallberg’s) courage.”

“Where is he?”

Hallberg’s family first received word of his status in 1967 while they were living in Venezuela. The head of the family, Lewis Hallberg, was stationed there while working for Chevron Corp. It was there the search for information regarding Hallberg’s incident began.

“As time went on, I hoped they would find him,” said Hallberg’s mother. “I kept thinking, ‘Where is he?’”

A few years later, the Hallberg’s moved back to the United States. In a quest that led the family to the North Vietnamese consulate in France decades ago, to Washington, D.C., the Hallberg’s carried on a search for information on their son’s disappearance.

The search for those who might be able to shed some light on the situation took a turn about five years ago when the Hallberg family met with John Throckmorton, a former Special Forces Soldier who served with Hallberg on that early spring day. In talking with the Hallbergs, Throckmorton realized the award recommendation he had submitted years before never made it through the system.

In a letter re-recommending Hallberg for the award, Throckmorton described the conditions Roger was last seen in.

“I witnessed (Staff Sgt.) Hallberg expose himself to this intense fire in an effort to coordinate an effective response. At least twice he ran through the maelstrom to deliver tactical information to (Capt.) Stewart. He then fought his way forward, returning to his troops in an effort to rally them and mount a coordinated response to the enemy. It looked as if he were running through a blizzard of confetti, which in fact was leaves, bits of bark and clumps of earth churned up by enemy fire,” wrote Throckmorton.

That was the last time Hallberg was seen alive.

His actions diverted the attention of two battalions of communists enough to create an opening his comrades could escape through. After a day

evading the enemy, the Americans and Vietnamese partisans were safely evacuated from the area by helicopter. Hallberg and his commander were placed on MIA status shortly after the mission.

Tough and Determined

Holt describes her brother as a “tough and determined” individual who could overcome anything he set his mind to. Hallberg started his career outdoors as an Eagle Scout and later went on to graduate from the University of Oregon with a degree in forestry.

It was his determination that led to his siblings’ mission to find out what happened to their brother.

With the help of Throckmorton, the family has been able to direct the Joint Prisoners of War and Missing in Action Accounting Command to the area where Hallberg was last seen.

In the search for Hallberg, Holt has become an advocate in spreading the word on prisoners of war and those missing in action. She has spoken publicly across the country about her brother in an effort to make people aware of POWs and MIAs.

“There is no closure for us,” said Holt. “We cannot give up. This chapter is not closed until everyone comes home.”

With the help of Throckmorton and JPAC, the Hallberg family may soon find word on the status of their brother and son. The Command has informed them that a mission will be searching the area Hallberg was last seen next year.



Staff Sgt. Roger Hallberg’s Silver Star and accompanying citation. Hallberg was declared missing in action after fighting in Vietnam, March 24, 1967. Photo by Staff Sgt. Andrew Kosterman.



Capt. Stewart Ware, Australian officer and primary jumpmaster, waves for the next lift of jumpers during the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) Australian jump at Fort Carson, Colo., April 29. Photo by Pfc. Henriq De Holleben.

10th SFG (Airborne) Soldiers receive Australian jump wings

*By Staff Sgt. Michael Noggle
10th SFG (Airborne) Public Affairs*

More than 150 Soldiers from the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) received a set of Australian jump wings at Fort Carson, Colo.

Australian officer Capt. Stewart Ware, Aerial Delivery and Field Services Department, Fort Lee, Va., was the primary jumpmaster conducting the airborne operation. “Any opportunity to work with a foreign nation should be grasped and made the most of,” Ware explained. “It’s a great opportunity to work individually with such a great group.”

For many of the participants, this was the first time they have been a part of a jump to receive their foreign wings. “The chance for novice jumpers to receive foreign jump wings is a major morale booster,” said Chief Warrant Officer Patrick Clark, primary jumpmaster. “This is a great opportunity for these jumpers to build confidence as we

prepare for deployment.”

Ware added, “There aren’t too many opportunities for American Soldiers to qualify for a foreign badge.”

Upon completion of the jump, all Soldiers stood in formation as the wings and a certificate were presented to each individual.

During a brief speech to the group, Ware mentioned that it was 90 years ago when American and Australian soldiers fought side by side for the first time in the Battle of Hamel.

He added, “This jump solidified and represented the relationship that the United States and Australia have had for many years.”

Clark later added that he hopes to make the foreign jump an annual event to give more 10th SFG(A) Soldiers the opportunity to earn Australian jump wings.

“I would certainly welcome that,” Ware said. “The opportunity to come to Colorado and work with 10th Special Forces Group has been a great opportunity.”

SECNAV names new guided-missile destroyer USS Michael Murphy

*By Petty Officer 2nd Class Kevin O'Brien
Office of the Secretary of the Navy, Public Affairs*

Secretary of the Navy Donald Winter announced May 7 in a ceremony in Lake Ronkonkoma, N.Y., the name of the newest Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer will be USS Michael Murphy. Designated as DDG 112, the name honors Lt. Michael Murphy, who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions during Operation Red Wing in Afghanistan June 28, 2005.

“Michael Murphy’s name, which will be forever synonymous with astonishing courage under fire, will now be associated with one of the U.S. Navy’s most technologically advanced, most powerful and most capable warships,” Winter said.

Michael Murphy’s hometown of Patchogue, N.Y., held a dedication ceremony memorializing a park bearing Murphy’s name. Michael P. Murphy Memorial Park contains a black granite wall dedicated to the men lost in Operation Red Wing with each member’s name inscribed. In the center of the memorial, a black granite stone is embedded into the floor of the plaza bearing the picture of Murphy and his Medal of Honor.

A Navy SEAL, Murphy led a four-man team tasked with finding a key Taliban leader in the mountainous terrain near Asadabad, Afghanistan, when they came under fire from a much larger enemy force with superior tactical position.

Mortally wounded while exposing himself to enemy fire, Murphy knowingly left his position of cover to get a clear signal in order to communicate with his headquarters. While being shot at repeatedly, Murphy calmly provided his unit’s location and requested immediate support for his element. He returned to his cover position to continue the fight until finally succumbing to his wounds.

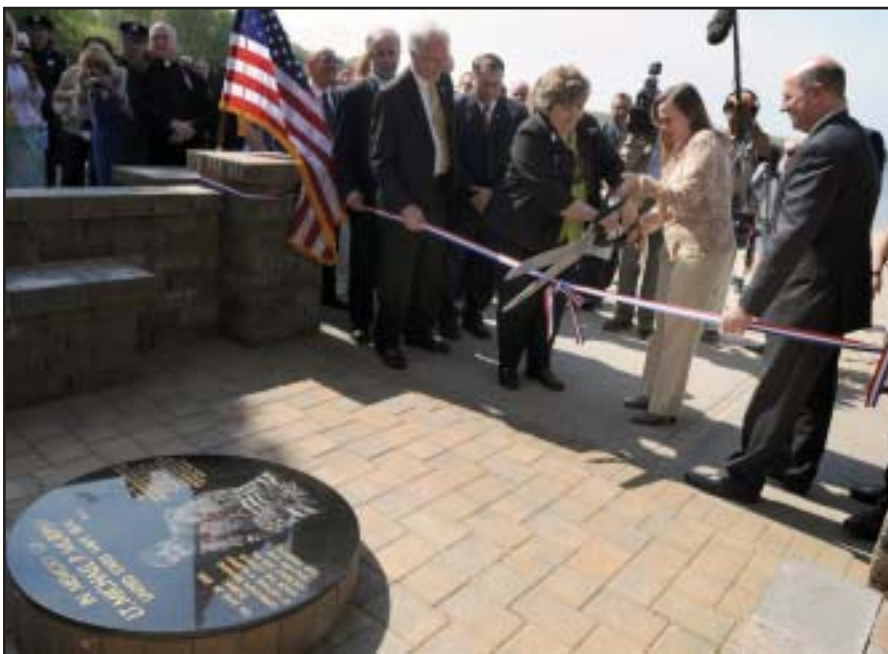
“Every Sailor who crosses the brow, every Sailor who hears the officer of the

deck announce the arrival of the commanding officer, and every Sailor who enters a foreign land representing our great nation will do so as an honored member of USS Michael Murphy,” Winter said.

USS Michael Murphy will be one of the U.S. Navy’s most advanced, state-of-the-art warships in the fleet. With the combination of Aegis, the vertical launching system, and advanced anti-submarine warfare system, advanced anti-aircraft missiles and Tomahawk cruise missiles, the Arleigh Burke-class continues the revolution at sea.

Utilizing a gas turbine propulsion system, USS Michael Murphy will be able to operate independently or as part of carrier strike groups, surface action groups, amphibious ready groups and underway replenishment groups.

USS Michael Murphy will be the 62nd Arleigh Burke-class destroyer. It is 509.5 feet in length, has a waterline beam of 59 feet, displaces approximately 9,200 tons, has a crew size of 323 (23 officers and 300 enlisted), and it will make speed in excess of 30 knots.



Maureen Murphy (right), the mother of Navy (SEAL) Lt. Michael Murphy, cuts the ribbon during a dedication ceremony for her son. Secretary of the Navy Dr. Donald Winter announced the name of the next guided-missile destroyer as USS Michael Murphy (DDG 112) during the ceremony. Maureen Murphy will be the ship’s sponsor. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Kevin O’Brien.



(Main photo) The multi-service high-speed vessel, Joint Venture (HSV-X1) is a 313-foot-long experimental craft and is a wave-piercing catamaran capable of 45 knots. Photo by Paul Farley. (Bottom right) Former crew members of the Joint Venture (HSV-X1) hold a framed certificate of the Meritorious Unit Commendation medal. The crew was recognized for providing support to Special Operations Forces and giving humanitarian assistance to countries throughout Southeast Asia. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Shauntae Hinkle.

Joint Venture Unit Commendation

*By Petty Officer 2nd Class Christopher Menzie
Naval Special Warfare Command Public Affairs*

The crew of an unusual, high-speed vessel used to support Special Operations Forces received the Meritorious Unit Commendation April 22 during a ceremony at Naval Special Warfare Command.

Joint Venture (HSV-X1) was praised for its mobility capabilities during experimental employment with Naval Special Warfare from June 12, 2005, to Aug. 30, 2006.

“It was certainly a well-deserved award for the crew,” said Capt. John Womer, an officer involved with the project. “They did a great job. It was a unique experiment for the Special Operations Forces, Navy and the Army in that personnel from all three elements worked together during the deployment.”

Joint Venture served as a mobile staging base for its military support missions, significantly improving access to Southeast Asia’s remote areas where there are few opportunities to establish protected bases.

“Joint Venture’s shallow draft and non-military appearance allowed it access to expansive and remote coastal regions,” said Cmdr. Thomas Shaw, the vessel’s commanding officer at the time. “The ship’s speed allowed it to provide rapid mobility and forward basing in an area that covers millions of square miles of ocean.”

The multipurpose Joint Venture is an aluminum-hull catamaran equipped to carry 325 passengers and travel up to 3,000 miles at speeds up to 40 knots. Its flight deck is used for refueling and re-arming helicopters, as well as the launching and recovery of rigid-hull inflatable boats. It can also carry any type of storage box needed and be reconfigured electronically for a variety of land and sea operations. Lastly, it can launch and recover unmanned aerial vehicles in support of joint maritime and ground Special Operations Forces.

“If you think of taking the operational elements of a land base and putting it aboard a ship, we could move this base anywhere and keep it in an area for as long as we needed,” Womer said.



SEAL 30th Annual SUPERFROG

*By Petty Officer 3rd Class Michelle Kapica
Naval Special Warfare Command Public Affairs*

Nearly 600 athletes battled it out in the surf, sand and on asphalt at the 30th Annual SUPERFROG triathlon and the first SUPERSEAL competition at Silver Strand State Beach in Coronado, Calif., April 6.

The goal of the two endurance races, open to the public, was to promote fitness and to raise money for the Naval Special Warfare Foundation, said Moki Martin, the race director. The foundation is a nonprofit organization that provides support for NSW servicemembers, past and present, and their families in times of need.

The SUPERFROG is a half-Ironman, circuit-style race composed of a 1.2 mile open-ocean swim followed by a 56 mile bike ride over flat pavement. The last event is a 13.1 mile run, largely through soft sand.

Navy SEALs are special warfare commandos whose training is weighted heavily toward running and swimming, making a triathlon perfect for a SEAL-inspired event. Athletes set off in groups, identified by different colored swimming caps. The participants wore an electronic chip around their ankle that logged their individual start and finish time.

The new SUPERSEAL event is a shorter, Olympic-distance event designed to attract athletes who would



rather not subject themselves to the rigors of SUPERFROG, said Martin. The first event was a 1.5 km swim in Silver Strand State Beach Bay, much calmer than the crashing ocean waves just meters away. This was followed by a flat 40 km bike ride and a 10 km run over solid pavement and dirt trails. Event planners intend to hold the SUPERSEAL again next year in conjunction with the SUPERFROG.

“I’m so proud it has got to this point because of all the hard work over the past 30 years,” said Martin, a retired SEAL. Martin founded the SUPERFROG in 1979 and competed in the first four races. Since then the event has evolved from just a handful of participants to the

Athletes race to the water to begin the swim leg of the first SUPERSEAL Triathlon at Silver Strand State Beach. SUPERSEAL is an Olympic-distance triathlon, consisting of a 1 mile bay swim, 24 mile bike ride and a 6 mile run. More than 350 people participated in the event, held in conjunction with the 30th Annual SUPERFROG. Both races are maintained by civilian volunteers and Naval Special Warfare. Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Michelle Kapica.

well-attended event it is today.

Capt. Roger Herbert, commander of NSW Center, presented ornamental detonator-box trophies to winners in various categories, a fitting tribute to Navy SEALs.

Philippe Krebs, from La Jolla, Calif., was the overall SUPERFROG winner in the male category with a race time of 4:18:06. Emily Finanger, 28, who traveled from Boulder, Colo., for the race, took first place in the women’s category with a race time of 4:37:41 – her second consecutive SUPERFROG win. Both champions were awarded decorative wooden paddles.

“It’s a really hard race,” said Finanger. “It’s always a challenge mentally because of the multiple loops. The Navy SEALs are tough people, and it’s really neat to be racing with that caliber of athlete.”

More than 220 athletes entered the SUPERFROG this year. All finishers earned a special 30th anniversary commemorative medal strung from a green ribbon. Almost 350 athletes entered the SUPERSEAL, each receiving a T-shirt marking the event.

The competitions attracted racers of all ages. “I do this every year if I can,” said Ray Hollenbeck, a retired SEAL and the most senior SUPERFROG participant. Hollenbeck tackled the bike leg of the race as part of a relay team. He was a contestant in the first SUPERFROG and was proud to be part of the ongoing tradition, he said.

Many athletes took part in the event to kick-start the upcoming triathlon season. Others just wanted to do something to give back to the military community.

“Any time I can do anything for the military, for me, that’s the number one thing,” said Monique Beauchamp, one of the SUPERSEAL participants. “I really like to support our armed services.”

Hundreds of people came out to support the SUPERFROG and SUPERSEAL events by either cheering on participants or volunteering to direct racers, hand out water, keep time or one of the many other important jobs behind the scenes.

“The race absolutely cannot happen without our volunteers,” said Lt. Cmdr. Eric Rehberg, the assistant race director. “We have had such incredible support, including the MarVista JROTC, Boy Scouts and Naval Special Warfare.”



Airmen of the Combined Joint Special Operations Air Command fly in MH-53 Pave Low tail number 68-10357 in March at an undisclosed location in Iraq. The MH-53 was retired after 38 years of service and was involved combat operations in Vietnam including the Son Tay raid. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael Blackwell II.

AFSOC retires a legend, hero

*By Tech. Sgt. Dorian Chapman
CJSOTF – Arabian Peninsula Public Affairs*

It is a smell like no other—a pungent cocktail of hydraulic fluid, engine oil, exhaust and cordite—and it was immediately noticeable upon walking up the entrance ramp of the MH-53 helicopter. “Used,” would barely begin to describe the cavernous bowels of the machine. A myriad of gadgets and components, some of which dated back to the beginnings of rotary-wing aviation, were

stacked on the “pizza rack” just behind the left gunner’s position. Everything was covered in an oily film. A pale red droplet of fluid hung from a steel hydraulic line overhead, suspended for a moment before plummeting to the deck. Maybe Three-Five-Seven was crying that night, saddened like a prizefighter past his prime and staring down the barrel of retirement. After nearly 40 years of faithful military service, this helicopter had earned the right to shed a few tears. But as its mighty engines roared to life and the massive rotor blades began to turn, it was



evident this prizefighter had at least one bout left. And on that clear and starry night, Three-Five-Seven took to the Iraqi skies on one last mission, leading a formation of four MH-53s to do the job one last time.

“MH-53M Pave Low IV” is the latest Air Force designation assigned to the Sikorsky HH-53B helicopter first built in 1967 and dubbed the “Super Jolly Green Giant.” For decades, the airframe has been used by the U.S. military for everything from cargo and personnel transport to search and rescue operations. The U.S. Air Force now employs the aircraft exclusively as a Special Operations Forces weapon system currently based out of Hurlburt Field, Fla. The aircraft are currently deployed to

Iraq and assigned to the Combined Joint Special Operations Air Component under the command of Col. Greg Lengyel.

“All in all, the ’53 has performed admirably over the years, and we’ve done incredible things with it,” said Lt. Col. Shawn Henrie, 20th Expeditionary Special Operations Squadron commander and pilot on Three-Five-Seven’s final mission. “The sad truth of it is that it’s just too expensive to fly anymore. It’s sad, but it’s gotten so hard to maintain that it’s got to go.”

By Oct. 1, 2008, all Air Force MH-53s will be decommissioned. But on March 28, an aircraft of historical significance made its final flight before being

Continued next page

Tip of the Spear

retired to live as a showpiece at the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Ohio. That particular aircraft is tail number 80357, known to its flight crew simply as Three-Five-Seven – and if helicopters could speak, what a story Three-Five-Seven could tell after 40 years of military service.

“Three-Five-Seven was flown on the Son Tay prison raid in Vietnam,” explained Tech. Sgt. Vince DePersio, an MH-53 flight engineer and crew member on Three-Five-Seven’s final mission.

In November 1970, a massive operation was executed to extract prisoners of war from the Son Tay prison camp in Vietnam, deep within enemy territory. A total of 116 aircraft from seven air bases and three Navy carriers were utilized on the mission.

With Three-Five-Seven in the lead as “Apple 1,” 56 Special Forces members were flown to the Son Tay POW camp to extract an estimated 70 prisoners. Though planning and execution of the mission were nearly flawless, the operation yielded no POWs. U.S. forces would learn later the prisoners had been moved from the prison the preceding July.

Despite the lack of returned POWs, the Son Tay prison raid has never been considered a failure. In addition to demonstrating the capabilities of U.S. Special Forces, word of the attempted rescue spread among many prison camps, bolstering the hopes of captives and reassuring them U.S. forces were trying to bring them home.

Thirty-seven years and thousands of sorties later, Lengyel was appropriately and serendipitously in

command during Three-Five-Seven’s final flight. The colonel’s father, retired Lt. Col. Lauren Lengyel, was an RF-4C pilot who was shot down in 1967 and held captive as a prisoner of war until his release in 1973.

“I think it’s very significant that Colonel Lengyel was here in command when one of the Son Tay Raiders flew its last mission,” Henrie pointed out. “I think it’s pretty special.”

“The only way it would have been better is if I could have flown it,” Lengyel mused, proud of having been in command during the historical flight.

The mission was a success. Once again, Three-Five-Seven assisted Special Forces operators, this time resulting in the capture of nine suspected terrorists for their involvement in kidnapping, torture and murder, thus increasing the safety of the region.

After the mission, just before the sun rose over the desert horizon, the giant helicopter settled down in its parking spot, the mighty engines became silent, and the huge rotor blades slowly spun to a halt... all for the last time.

“Not too many aircraft have seen what she’s seen or survived what she’s survived,” said Master Sgt. Kevin James, MH-53 flight engineer and third man in the cockpit on Three-Five-Seven’s final mission, speaking of the aircraft’s four decades of service. “That’s a testament to the design, the crews who have flown her over the years and the helicopter itself.”

The Air Force Special Operations Command Pave Low program is far from just another helicopter unit. By



The MH-53 Pave Low, tail number 80357, stands ready with the Special Operations Air Component and the 20th Expeditionary Special Operations Squadron to conduct its final combat mission. The MH-53 80357 has been in commission since 1968 and has served on many combat missions, to include the Son Tay prisoner of war rescue attempt in Vietnam, Nov. 20, 1970. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael Blackwell II.



An aerial gunner fires a .50 caliber machine gun on an MH-53 *Pave Low*. The MH-53 *Pave Low* medium-lift helicopter is the largest, most powerful and technologically advanced helicopter in the Air Force inventory. *Pave Lows* have been involved in combat operations since Vietnam. AFSOC courtesy photo.

design, the aircraft requires the entire crew of six to operate as one. The long-term effects of that requirement surely must surpass anything the designers anticipated.

“The technical upgrades matched with the crew are what make the ’53 so efficient and effective,” said Henrie. “The crew is what really makes the airplane special, and by crew, I’m not just talking about the pilots.”

Every member aboard an MH-53 must have situational awareness at all times—each of their lives depends on it. Therefore, the senior crew member, known as the aircraft commander, is absolutely dependent on input from the junior crew member and everyone in between.

“They see things we just can’t see,” explained Capt. Nathan Davidson, MH-53 evaluator pilot and co-pilot on Three-Five-Seven’s final mission. “Everyone has input—every time.”

“We live together, we eat together, we depend on each other,” explained Chief Master Sgt. John DeSalle III, the MH-53 aerial gunner who manned the tail gun on Three-Five-Seven’s final flight. “It’s a closeness that other aircrews just don’t have.”

The “six-work-as-one” team concept of the MH-53 has created aircrews with a unique closeness. It is the same bond that connects all the ’53 crews and has created the “Pave Low community” of which these men are so proud to be a part.

“Whether you flew on a ’53 in Vietnam, or fly on a ’53 today, you’re part of that community,” DeSalle explained. “And it’s more than that; it’s a family.”

With the retirement of the MH-53 imminent, that family will soon be dispersing. Many ’53 crew members will cross-flow into other Air Force needs while others say they may simply retire... not unlike their Son Tay raider, Three-Five-Seven. Whatever the case may be, all of the crew members expressed great pride in having been selected to fly on Three-Five-Seven’s final mission.

“It’s something I’ll be able to tell my kids about,” said Master Sgt. Robert Strong, the aerial gunner who manned the left gun on Three-Five-Seven.

Just days after the final mission, Three-Five-Seven was dismantled, cleaned and prepared for its trip to the museum. With its massive rotor blades removed and many of its internal components stored for transport, Three-Five-Seven sat patiently for its ride back to the states.

“Three-Five-Seven is the representative of all the ’53s,” Lengyel said. “Any of the remaining ’53s would have been a good choice due to each of their rich histories,” he explained, “but Three-Five-Seven being the last surviving ’53 still flying that participated in a mission where someone earned the Air Force Cross makes it a great choice.”

The aircraft will be on display at the National Museum of the United States Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. There, Three-Five-Seven will spend its eternal retirement educating the masses on the history of the H-53. But more than that, Three-Five-Seven will stand as a monument for the individuals, past and present, who made the ’53s fly so high, work so hard and look so cool.

MARSOC's first Sgt. Maj. retires

By Lance Cpl. Stephen Benson
MARSOC Public Affairs

U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command's first sergeant major retired after a post and relief ceremony outside Building H-1 at Camp Lejeune, N.C., March 28.

Sgt. Maj. Matthew Ingram handed over his position as MARSOC sergeant major to Sgt. Maj. Robert Terry. The ceremony marked the conclusion of Ingram's 30 years of honorable service in the Marine Corps.

During the ceremony, Maj. Gen. Dennis Hejlik, commander of MARSOC, spoke of Ingram's dedication to his family, the Marine Corps and to MARSOC.

"There is no 'I' in MARSOC," said Hejlik. "It is a team, a family, and Sergeant Major Ingram has been a huge part of the family."

Terry is now the second sergeant major in MARSOC's short history, and he was grateful for what Ingram has done.

"I am real lucky stepping in behind Sergeant Major Ingram," said Terry. "He paved the way, and I have big shoes to fill."

Terry was the regimental sergeant major, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division. He brings the experience of being a former Force Reconnaissance Marine like many in MARSOC.

"Sergeant Major Terry is coming in, and he had a great reputation with the 6th Marines, and we are so thrilled he is aboard," said Hejlik. "We're honored to have him and we know that he will continue to take MARSOC forward as has Sergeant Major Ingram."

"This is an awesome organization, and I am excited to be here and ready to get busy," said Terry. "It's an honor to be here, and I am looking forward to serving alongside these Marines and Sailors."

Currently in its third year, MARSOC continues to grow in capacity and capability. According to Hejlik, Ingram has fostered the command's ability to grow and



Maj. Gen. Dennis Hejlik (center), commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, and Sgt. Maj. Robert Terry (left), sergeant major, MARSOC, present Sgt. Maj. Matthew Ingram the Legion of Merit medal upon his retirement from the Marine Corps after 30 years of honorable service. Ingram handed over his position as MARSOC sergeant major to Terry in a ceremony outside Building H-1 at Camp Lejeune, N.C., March 28. MARSOC photo.

operate simultaneously. Ingram has looked out for the good of all of MARSOC's Marines and Sailors by spearheading many initiatives geared toward improving the status of MARSOC personnel on the battlefield and on the home front.

"To be able to represent (MARSOC) Marines and advocate for them over the last two-plus years has been the greatest honor of my 30 years in service," said Ingram.

After receiving the Legion of Merit for outstanding work as MARSOC sergeant major, Ingram closed out the ceremony with a speech to the crowd gathered to honor him. He then turned toward the formation behind him and addressed the enlisted Marines and Sailors of MARSOC.

"I believe strongly in the Global War on Terrorism because they want to take away our way of life, and we are taking it to them over there so they don't bring it to us here," said Ingram. "So when I sit on my porch and take my cover and sergeant major chevrons off, just know that there was a guy who hit his knees every night and thanked God for warriors like you."

MARSOC prepares for fight in DCE

*By Lance Cpl. Stephen Benson
MARSOC Public Affairs*

Marines and Sailors with U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command coordinated with other U.S. Special Operations Command components and several agencies to conduct one of MARSOC's largest and most comprehensive deployment certification exercises.

According to Maj. Brian Fuller, operations officer, 1st Special Missions Training Branch, Marine Special Operations School, MARSOC, the MSOS sponsored the DCE with the purpose of certifying members of a Marine Special Operations Company from 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion in their core and supporting tasks prior to deployment. A team from the Marine Special Operations Advisor Group, MARSOC, also participated in the exercise. The MSOAG team trained the partner nation force, allowing the MSOC to conduct operations in a coalition environment.

In keeping with the SOF tradition, the DCE was designed so the Marines and Sailors would shoulder a lot of responsibility during the exercise.

"We're continuing to refine our bottom-up driven exercises," said Fuller. "We want our companies and teams to drive the missions, not a higher headquarters directing them to conduct missions."

According to Fuller, MSOS and other subject matter experts collaborated on a script for the DCE that allowed elements from the MSOC to gather intelligence from many sources that would lead them to their next target. Intelligence from one operation linked the MSOC directly to their next operation. Instructors from the MSOS and various SMEs within MARSOC acted as observers/controllers during each of the operations. The MSOAG team and the MSOC were carefully evaluated, ensuring they met or surpassed SOF training standards set by USSOCOM.

A training priority of this DCE more prevalent than past DCEs was the involvement of outside forces and agencies. Outside agencies that participated in the DCE included U.S. Army Special Operations Command, Air Force Special Operations Command, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Nevada Air National Guard and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

"We tried to up the ante this time because if you're not moving forward, you are moving backward," said Fuller. "The big shift we made this time was the interoperability with interagency, as well as joint SOF and conventional forces."

According to Maj. Andrew Christian, branch head, 1st

SMTB, familiarization with different agencies is an important tool that will help increase efficiency when they get to the fight.

"This exercise reaps benefits for both MARSOC and those agencies that want to come out here and do some joint training," said Christian.

According to Fuller, the MSOS wanted to make sure the MSOC's first exposure to these agencies wasn't when they were in country.

"When you deploy overseas, you are immersed in that interagency and interoperability environment, and there are barriers to working with all those forces," said Fuller. "What we want to do with this exercise is expose our Marines and Sailors to those barriers and really allow them to find the capabilities and limitations of the forces they will work with in theater."

This was the DEA's first exercise with MARSOC. One of the DEA's operational elements is the foreign-deployed advisory support teams, also known as DEA FAST, which conduct counter-narcotics investigations in areas like Iraq and Afghanistan. When MSOC and DEA missions overlap, they can combine their resources to make an arrest or seizure. In this exercise, they conducted a mission on a time-sensitive target where DEA FAST provided information to the MSOC through the Joint Special Operations Task Force on a mutual target. The DEA believed this was a high value individual involved in drug trafficking, and the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force believed he was aiding enemy forces.

"Now you hit the terrorists on multiple levels," said Thomas Marble, DEA FAST agent, training liaison and reserve Marine lieutenant colonel. "You go after the shooters and the bombers, and you go after the source of money."



A Marine with the Marine Special Operations Advisor Group, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, keeps a watchful eye for suspicious activity while conducting security during a cordon and search of a village at Fort Irwin, Calif. MARSOC photo.



A Special Forces Soldier competes in the rifle category at the Joint Special Operations Command's Small Arms Championship held at Fort Bragg, N.C., April 27 through May 2. Photo by Mike Bottoms.

Joint Special Operations Command hosts 4th Small Arms Championship

By Mike Bottoms
USSOCOM Public Affairs

***“Speed is fine, but accuracy is final.”
Retired Marine Col. Jeff Cooper, legendary
marksman.***

More than 150 participants armed with a variety of weapons competed for the Joint Special Operations Command's Small Arms Championship at Range 66, Fort Bragg, N.C., April 27 through May 2.

“The idea behind the match is to promote marksmanship throughout the Department of Defense,” said Gunnery Sgt. Corey Nash, match

director. “The matches are for conventional as well as Special Operations Forces.”

Competitors at the championship came from a variety of units including Pennsylvania and Vermont Army National Guard, reservists from all services and Special Operations Forces.

“This championship match is different because it is truly joint with all services competing,” Nash said. “Also, besides the military categories, we have civilians from around the country who compete as well.”

The match is also unique because it is completely set up and managed by the enlisted men and women of JSOC. The week-long match had 12 competitions with both the rifle and pistol.



“Gunny Nash and his JSOC team have worked hard in setting up this match, and our biggest support has come from the Army Marksmanship Unit,” said JSOC Command Sgt. Maj. Jody Nancy. “Their mission is to raise the standard of marksmanship proficiency and combat readiness throughout the Army by sharing knowledge gained from competing in and winning national and international competitions.”

Nancy went on to explain why the small arms match and excellent marksmanship helps the warrior on the battlefield.

“SOCOM’s goal is to produce the most surgically lethal force in the world, and competition is a tool we use to refine the art of marksmanship,” Nancy said. “Seriousness about marksmanship is a part of the Special Operations warrior’s ethos.”

Among the winners were Army Staff Sgt. Jeremy Smith from 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, who finished first in pistol novice, second in the sniper, fourth in rifle and second overall.

“This competition brought me back to my grass roots,” said Smith, a Ranger for seven years. “Refreshing my basic shooting fundamentals will help in my future deployments.”

The Army National Guard did quite well in the competition, and Sgt. 1st Class Gregory Neiderhiser, Joint Force Headquarters, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, took the overall individual championship.

“I like competing in the rifle and pistol combined because it prepares me for combat,” said Neiderhiser. “I take what I learn in these competitions and pass on the knowledge to my troops.”

Cpl. Philip Fortenberry II from Fort Gillem, Ga., won the overall rifle and pistol novice category and thought the competition was a tough endeavor.

“The competition level was outstanding and very close,” Fortenberry said. “I didn’t keep up with the scores during the week and



A Special Forces Soldier competes in the pistol category at the Joint Special Operations Command’s Small Arms Championship held at Fort Bragg, N.C., April 27 through May 2. Photo by Mike Bottoms.

was really excited to learn I had won.”

At the awards banquet, Rear Adm. Robert Harward, JSOC deputy commanding general, emphasized the competition augments skills on the battlefield.

“This event is critical to advance our skills on the battlefield,” Harward said. “I want to thank all of you who participated in an important part of the Special Operations world – marksmanship.”



The Joint Special Operations Command’s Small Arms Championship Match Team Overall Champions were the Green Mountain Boys from the Vermont National Guard. Standing from left to right are Sgt. 1st Class Ralph Young, Staff Sgt. Michael Bougor, Rear Adm. Robert Harward, JSOC deputy commanding general, JSOC Command Sgt. Maj. Jody Nancy, Staff Sgt. Phillip Ladue, and Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Fagans. The competition was held at Fort Bragg, N.C., April 27 through May 2. Courtesy photo.



Master Sgt. Scott Cahill, USSOCOM, participates in USSOCOM's International Special Operations Forces Week opening ceremony at the Tampa Convention Center, May 19. The week-long event brought together current U.S. and international SOF leadership from more than 70 countries. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Lawn.

USSOCOM hosts International SOF Week



*By Master Sgt. Laura LeBeau
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

Special Operations Forces leaders from around the world gathered in Tampa, Fla., as U.S. Special Operations Command hosted International Special Operations Forces Week, May 19 through 23.

With the overall theme of “Global Challenges, Sovereign Solutions,” the week-long event brought together current U.S. and international SOF leadership from more than 70 countries. Also attending were retired senior SOF leadership, corporate leadership and representation from more than 300 private companies. The leaders attended ISOF Week to discuss issues of common interest, compare experiences and surface important issues, including future SOF equipment requirements. Events scheduled throughout the week included a senior SOF commanders’ media roundtable, a showcase of cutting edge military technology and equipment, various plenary sessions and a Special Operations Forces Industry Conference sponsored and hosted by the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce.

“This is an especially significant event as it allows us the valuable opportunity to build and nurture international SOF partnerships while discussing, comparing and developing solutions to combat terrorist networks,” said Adm. Eric T. Olson, commander of USSOCOM. “We are here to work together toward a common goal—defeating the terrorists and other criminals who threaten the safety and sovereignty of our countries.”

As guest speaker at the ISOF banquet, Defense Secretary Robert Gates addressed an estimated 1,000-plus military leaders, servicemembers and civilians. “The War on Terrorism has relied on, and will continue to rely on, the skill of our nation’s special operators for years to come – as well as the elite forces of many friends and partners. This is, after all, a war that more often than not will be fought within nations with which we are not at war,” Gates said. “Across the Middle East, and across the globe, special operators under many flags will continue their mission: to go where



Dr. Fatma Al-Sayegh from the United Arab Emirates presents her briefing entitled “Threats to the existing order within the Islamic World” during USSOCOM’s International Special Operations Forces Week at the Tampa Convention Center, Tampa, Fla., May 19 through 23. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Lawn.

others cannot or will not go; to partner with and train our friends to defend themselves; and to hunt down terrorists relentlessly and without reservation.”

At the conference, representatives from prominent local, national and international media got a unique opportunity to speak with senior SOF leaders from around the world and to see how Special Operations Forces support each other within the international community. During the Senior SOF Commanders’ Media Roundtable, military leaders

Continued next page

Tip of the Spear

representing Spain, Italy, the Philippines, South Korea, Poland, Colombia and Romania joined Olson and Michael Vickers, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities, in a question and answer session concerning the international special operations partnership and the efforts to combat global terrorism.

“In the war in which we find ourselves, our international partners are our most important strategic asset,” said Vickers, as he stressed the importance of international cooperation in combating global terrorism.

Various plenary sessions throughout the week focused on a range of topics concerning the global challenges of combating terrorism. Panel members from around the world discussed topics such as “Global Challenges” and the “Arab-Muslim Perspective of Terrorism.” Retired Army Col. Joseph Celeski moderated a panel of experts representing the United States, Poland and Colombia in a session titled “National Solutions.” Another session, “Future Challenges,” included Hekmat Karzai from Afghanistan speaking on “The New Terrorist,” Sebestyen Gorka of Hungary presenting “Self Declaring Groups,” and Dr. David Kilcullen from Australia addressing “Regional Approaches and Coordination.”

Another component of this year’s ISOF Week was the Special Operations Forces Industry Conference, hosted and sponsored by the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce. SOFIC provides leaders from the special operations community the forum to explain to private industry representatives future technological equipment requirements. Just as importantly, private industry leaders can showcase their most recent technological developments as possible solutions to current and future SOF challenges.

One of the highlights of ISOF Week came as SOCOM representatives showed the media some of its high-tech equipment, specially tailored for Special Operations. The



Defense Secretary Robert Gates addresses the audience during the Special Operations Command Mess Night dinner and reception at the convention center in Tampa, Fla., May 21. Photo by Cherie Cullen.

display included the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle; a C-130J known as Commando Solo, capable of transmitting radio and television signals to the ground below; the RHIB, or rigid-hull inflatable boat, that can be air-dropped from a C-130 or larger military aircraft; and the Special Operations Craft-Riverine, a high performance craft used for short-range insertion and extraction of SOF personnel.

Media experienced SOF equipment first-hand during orientation flights over the waters of Tampa Bay aboard the CV-22 Osprey. The distinctive characteristics of the Osprey allow it to take off and land like a helicopter, but to fly like an airplane, with increased speed and range over other rotary-wing aircraft.



A CV-22 takes off from the flightline at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., May 21, as part of a demonstration of Special Operations Forces to national and international media during USSOCOM’s International Special Operations Forces Week, May 19 through 23. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Victoria Meyer.

**SPECIAL OPERATORS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES
SERVING IN OPERATIONS ENDURING FREEDOM,
IRAQI FREEDOM AND
IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM
WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN**



**Army Staff Sgt.
Jason Brown
5th Special Forces Group**



**Army Staff Sgt.
Frank Gasper
10th Special Forces Group**



**Army Spc.
Christopher Gathercole
75th Ranger Regiment**



**Army Sgt. 1st Class
David McDowell
75th Ranger Regiment**



**Army Sgt. 1st Class
David Nunez
7th Special Forces Group**

Editor's note: Honored are SOF who have lost their lives since April's Tip of the Spear.

Combat Controllers

Combat controllers practice firing movements on the range at a forward-deployed location. Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeremy Lock.

