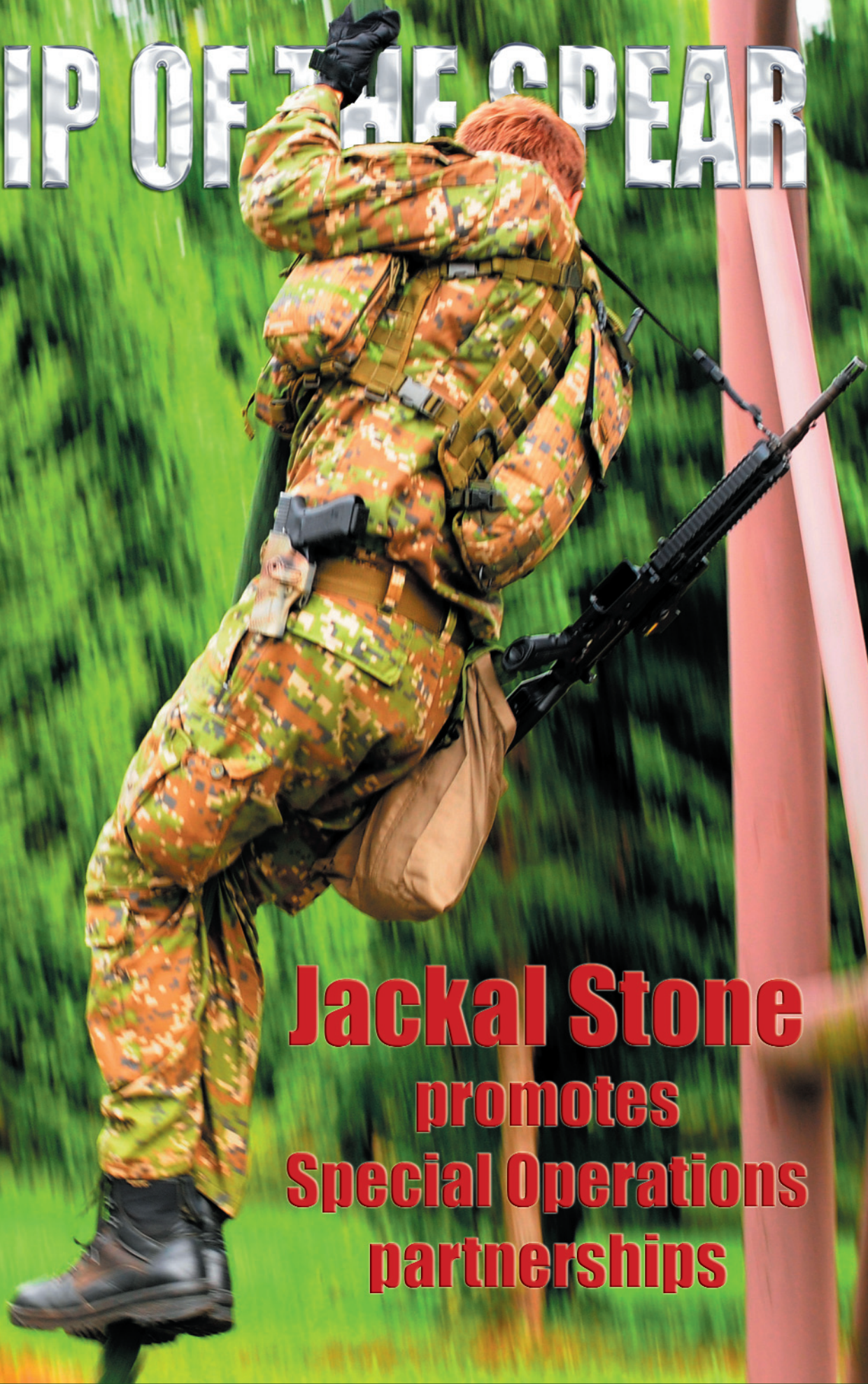


TIP OF THE SPEAR



Jackal Stone
promotes
Special Operations
partnerships

U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., October 2012



U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Jackal Stone takes place in Croatia ... 8



Tip of the Spear



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(Cover) A member of the Slovakian Armed Forces teaches fast-rope techniques in Delnice, Croatia, Sept. 14, during exercise Jackal Stone 2012. Jackal Stone is an annual joint Special Operations exercise designed to enhance capabilities and interoperability amongst the participating Special Operations Forces, as well as to build mutual respect while sharing various tactics, techniques and procedures. Photo by Senior Airman Jodi Martinez.

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SOCSOUTH, Jamaican partners participate in training exchange



Jamaican Army soldiers from the Jamaica Defense Force provide security as their fellow soldiers complete a scenario-based boat interdiction exercise with Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen members assigned to Special Boat Team 22, in support of Special Operations Command South, Sept. 25, along the coast of Port Royal, Jamaica. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Alex Licea.





SOF AROUND THE WORLD - JAMAICA SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND – SOUTH

*Story and photos
by Sgt. 1st Class Alex Licea
SOCSOUTH Public Affairs*

Located in the middle of the Caribbean Sea, Jamaica is surrounded by beautiful beaches and tropical weather making it a popular destination for tourists from all over the world.

However, the small island, like much of the region between North and South America, is a potential location for illicit traffickers to use as a transit point to move illegal drugs across the region and into the United States. It is a concern for many across the island nation who see this activity as a threat to their security.

So when Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen assigned to Special Boat Team Twenty-Two, in support of Special Operations Command South, and members of the Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School, better known as NAVSCIATTS, participated in a Joint Combined Exchange Training event in Jamaica during the month of September, members of the Jamaica Defense Forces, simply known as the JDF, welcomed the group of American Sailors.

The primary focus of this month-long JCET for the Stennis, Miss.- based special boat team and NAVSCIATTS personnel was to gain regional knowledge and improve their teaching abilities while training with members of the JDF.

JCETs also benefit U.S. Special Operations Forces because they allow SOF personnel to train in ally nations, like Jamaica, and hone their military tactics and skills in unfamiliar settings, while also improving bilateral relations and interoperability with other militaries.

For the JDF, this event also proved to be helpful. Although the JDF's size is small compared to other nations across the Western Hemisphere, its military continues to expand into a well-rounded force with multiple skill sets, regardless of branch of service, in an effort to deter illicit traffickers from its borders and waterways.

During this event, more than 20 Jamaican servicemembers, mostly from the Army and Coast Guard, saw this JCET as a great opportunity to train and enhance their maritime operations and boat maintenance skills with U.S. servicemembers.

"It is hard for the [Jamaican] Coast Guard to be tasked

to do everything and we can do some of these operations and take the load off of them," said a Jamaican Army officer, who serves as a troop commander. "We see ourselves in the future being able to do more operations and interdictions in the water."

As part of SOCSOUTH's Theater Security Cooperation program, these JCET programs enable partner nations to increase their capacity to conduct security operations. SOCSOUTH, based in Homestead, Fla., is responsible for all U.S. Special Operations activities in the Caribbean, Central and South America; it serves as a component for U.S. Southern Command.

For U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Timothy Piccin, who serves as the SOCSOUTH country officer for Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, this JCET is vital in the continued training of all U.S. Naval forces working in the region but also serves an essential piece for the development of the JDF, specifically, its maritime capabilities due to its geographically location.

"This program allows our [U.S.] forces to get excellent training in the region and it serves as a great benefit for our partner nations to increase their military capacity in a very unique platform where exchanging tactics and procedures benefit everyone involved," he said. "From boat maintenance procedures to tactical training, this event allows everyone to train and learn from each other."

During the first few days of the JCET, members assigned to NAVSCIATTS trained with their Jamaican counterparts on basic watercraft maintenance skills and procedures. The maintenance portion of the JCET ended with members of the JDF breaking down a boat engine piece by piece in order to learn standard boat engine components and putting it back together.

The final two weeks of the JCET focused more on military tactics using boats as SWCC personnel trained with their Jamaican partners on specialized techniques, such as Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure, a maritime boarding action designed to capture hostile vessels and high value targets onboard a watercraft. The U.S. Sailors also instructed members of the JDF on boat interdiction and extraction techniques, boat handling maneuvers on small tactical boats, long-range navigation and close-quarters defense.

For SWCC members assigned to Special Boat Team Twenty-Two, this JCET allowed them to learn new skills



Jamaican Army soldiers from the Jamaica Defense Force detain a boat and its operator during a scenario-based boat interdiction exercise with Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen members assigned to Special Boat Team Twenty-Two, in support of Special Operations Command South, Sept. 25 along the coast of Port Royal, Jamaica. The exercise is part of a four-week Joint Combined Exchange Training Event between members of the Jamaica Defense Force and Special Boat Team Twenty-Two, stationed in Stennis, Miss.

in a variety of different areas outside of their normal routine.

“This event is very important for us because it takes us away from our comfort zone and presents us with a different challenge,” said the U.S. Special Boat Operator Chief in charge of the JCET. “We typically operate in rivers so working with the JDF in the open ocean really put us in conditions we are not used to, but it helped us learn how to work in those environments.”

For the SWCC members, this JCET was also valuable because they built a strong partnership with members of the JDF.

“We have a great relationship with these guys, and we have learned a lot from them,” said the Special Boat Operator Chief. “From working out together to talking about our experiences, it has been great working with them.”

JDF members reflected those same sentiments

following a small closing ceremony where each participant received a certificate of training from their American counterparts.

“I wish the training was longer, but they covered a little bit of everything and it is now our job to not lose what we learned and stay current,” said the Jamaica troop commander. “It was really great working with Special Boat Team - Twenty Two, and I wish we could have this type of event twice a year. We clicked right away and it was really fun to be with them.”

Piccin hopes to replicate this experience with a similar event sometime next year.

“There is no doubt this exchange greatly benefits both the U.S. and JDF in order to learn new techniques to protect the region from the threat of transnational organized crime,” he said. “We hope to continue to work with our JDF partners and are planning to do this again next year.”



Jackal Stone promotes Special Operations partnerships




*By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service*

The scenario for the Jackal Stone 2012 Special Operations exercise taking place in Croatia reads like a Hollywood thriller.

A criminal gang infiltrated an industrial plant in

the fictional nation of Freedonia, stealing nuclear, biological and chemical material to pass to a terrorist organization. Commandos from U.S. Special Operations Command Europe teamed up with special police from Croatia's Interior Ministry to track down the perpetrators and recover the material.

The recovery – following an action-packed



U.S. and Croatian Special Operations Forces fast rope from an HH-60H Seahawk helicopter at a training base in Udbina, Croatia, Sept. 18, during Jackal Stone 2012. Jackal Stone is an annual joint Special Operations exercise designed to enhance capabilities and interoperability amongst the participating Special Operations Forces as well as to build mutual respect while sharing doctrinal concepts, training concepts and various tactics, techniques and procedures. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Tyler Placie.

mission – wasn't the end of the story. An analysis revealed that the insurgents behind the plot had tentacles extending deep into Freedonia. They had to be stopped.

Freedonia turned for help to the United Nations, which in turn, called on NATO to intervene with military forces. NATO declined, citing force

commitments in Afghanistan and elsewhere, but urged individual member nations to form a coalition.

Eleven nations stepped forward, with the United States taking the lead. U.S. and Romanian company commanders command two ground task forces, and a Norwegian is leading the maritime component.

“We formed this coalition, and now we are going

to take on the Freedomian insurgency problem,” Army Maj. Gen. Michael S. Repass, commander of Special Operations Command Europe, told American Forces Press Service by phone from Croatia.

That sets the stage for Jackal Stone, an annual multinational exercise designed to build special operations capabilities and improve interoperability among European partner nations.

The two-part exercise began earlier this month with a bilateral U.S.-Croatian counterterrorism exercise and expanded into a multinational, multi-echelon counterinsurgency scenario that continues until Sept. 25.

About 700 U.S. participants are on the ground, working alongside special operators and enabling forces from 10 partner nations as they apply capabilities many have honed together in Afghanistan.

“To the extent possible, Afghanistan has informed everything that we are doing during this exercise,” said Repass, who serves as Jackal Stone’s coalition commander.

About 60 role-players, many portraying insurgents, add realism to the scenario.

“This is a live exercise, full up,” Repass said. “We have role players, people who have taken on the personas of insurgents and are living those personas. And we have multiple sources of intelligence collecting on these personas in the operating environment.”

That includes many of the intelligence sources in use in Afghanistan, including human intelligence and imagery from intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft flying overhead, he said. Participants also conduct post-mission analyses, applying biometrics from a database created especially for the exercise, and exploiting intelligence from seized cell phones and computers.

“So we have a very sophisticated operation at the tactical level that will feed intelligence upward, creating a much more robust intelligence picture,” Repass said. “At the same time, we are getting

national-level Freedomian and international intelligence feeding into us, and we are pushing that down to the tactical units.”

While exercising as they would operate in a real-world scenario, the participants are improving their ability to work together as they apply what NATO calls “smart defense,” Repass said.

The basic premise is to leverage each other’s

capabilities to build stronger teams to serve in a coalition or NATO operation, he explained. “You provide tactical units up to your level of ability and your nation’s willingness to do so, and you team up with another capable partner,” he said.

Repass pointed to the International Security Assistance Force Special Operations structure in Afghanistan as a tangible demonstration of that

concept. Stood up about four years ago, it has grown to an estimated 2,000 operators from about 18 countries.

Jackal Stone is building on this capability, Repass said, strengthening participants’ collective ability to plan and execute combined and joint multinational operations with host-nation support from civil and governmental agencies.

That’s fundamental to realizing the vision of Navy Adm. Bill H. McRaven, the Special Operations Command commander, of a special operations force network, postured for global challenges.

While ensuring special operations have the equipment and technical ability to operate together, Repass said the exercise helps strengthen the relationships that underpin their operations.

“One of the fundamental truths of this whole endeavor is that you can’t build trust in a crisis. You have to have long relationships, and this is strictly done in the human domain,” he said.

“The more we develop these relationships, the better we will work together in the future,” Repass said. “The more capable and interoperable our militaries are, the better we will be as a community to achieve common goals of security, stability and peace.”

“One of the fundamental truths of this whole endeavor is that you can’t build trust in a crisis. You have to have long relationships, and this is strictly done in the human domain. The more we develop these relationships, the better we will work together in the future”

— Army Maj. Gen. Michael S. Repass,
commander of Special Operations
Command Europe



1) A U.S. Army Special Forces member discusses training points before boarding an HH-60H Seahawk helicopter to conduct fast rope training at a training base in Udbina, Croatia, Sept. 18. Courtesy photo.

2) A member of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic boards a CH-47 Chinook helicopter during helicopter entering and exiting training in Delnice, Croatia, Sept. 16. Photo by Senior Airman Jodi Martinez.

3) U.S., Slovakian and Croatian service members train on a CH-47 Chinook helicopter during Jackal Stone 2012 in Delnice, Croatia, Sept. 16, 2012. Photo by Senior Airman Jodi Martinez.

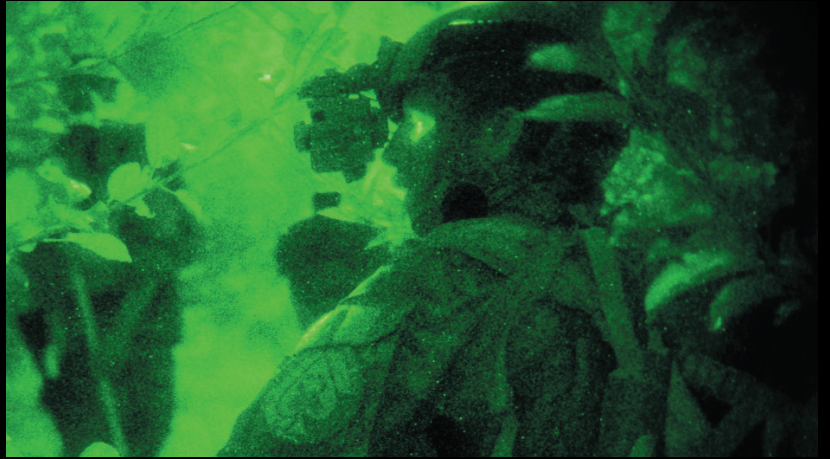
4) U.S. and Croatian soldiers fast rope from an HH-60H Seahawk Helicopter, at a training base in Udbina, Croatia, Sept. 18. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Tyler Placie.



Village clearing operations

Special Operations Command - Central

Afghan National Army Commandos, 6th Kandak, and Coalition Special Forces Soldiers board a CH-47 Chinook at Camp Morehead, Kabul province, Afghanistan, Aug. 15. The Commandos and Coalition Special Forces Soldiers conducted a clearing operation in Gadai village, Sayed Abad district, Wardak province. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Jesse B. Awalt.



A coalition forces member conceals his position during a clearing operation in Chak district, Wardak province, Afghanistan, July 31. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Jesse B. Awalt.



Afghan National Army Commandos from 5th Special Operations Kandak patrol through a field during a village clearing operation in Archi district, Kunduz province, Afghanistan, Sept. 10. Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Cassandra Thompson.



An Afghan National Army Commando from 5th Special Operations Kandak climbs the roof of a compound to set up a security watch during a village clearing operation in Archi district, Kunduz province, Afghanistan, Sept. 10. Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Cassandra Thompson.

AIRBORNE

U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



A Special Forces Operational Detachment A from 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) continues movement during a two-day competition that began on Sept. 11. The Green Berets totaled more than 40 miles beneath their feet with a minimum of 50 pounds on their backs. Photo by Army Pfc. Seth Plagenza.

Green Berets compete for 'Best ODA'

*By Army Staff Sgt. Barbara Ospina
5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) Public Affairs*

Approximately 24 men stood receiving a mission brief on what was to come. At this point there was no turning back; in less than 24 hours they would watch the sun rise, set, and rise again enduring a series of events designed to test their minds and bodies to the max, proving they exceed the Special Operations Forces' attributes.

Green Berets from the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), also known as The Legion, exited a CH-47 Chinook helicopter at approximately 10 a.m. on Sept. 11, 2012, and parachuted directly into a water drop zone marking the beginning of their 40-plus mile



A Special Forces Operational Detachment A from 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) dismounts a zodiac boat after they parachuted into water marking the beginning of a two-day competition. Photo by Pfc. Seth Plagenza.

journey.

Three Special Forces Operational Detachments (an 8-12 man team) representing the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Battalions participated in the competition to determine the “Best ODA” within the group. Each team was required to be team pure, meaning it had to be the team that trains and fights together, no additions or substitutions of team members.

The teams were timed at various stations to include a stress shoot, mortar emplacement, a mystery event (one-rope bridge), an obstacle course and a weapons pile test. Following each of these stations that test their knowledge and current training as a Green Beret, they would have to conduct a “commo shot,” to test their team's communication ability from a remote or hostile environment.

Although there were less than 10 overall events, each team conducted a movement in between. Each movement was all more than 10 miles with a 50-pound ruck sack on their back, their weapons and any additional food or water they may need throughout their mission. Little to no sleep throughout the nearly 36-hour competition added tremendous wear on the body and mind.

As the three detachments staggered into the last station, they were greeted by members of their units. Every man walked tall regardless of the pain in their backs and stood with a smile on their face as they knew they were finished.

“Overall it was challenging and a great team building event. Nothing brings a team together more than pushing each other to the limit both physically and mentally,” stated a team sergeant from one of the competing detachments. “It was also a good opportunity to view the strengths and limitations on the detachment so both can be improved in future training events.”

Standing at the end you heard numerous Soldiers ask “when will we know who won?” This was a testament to the full effort and endless perseverance the competitors put forth for their team to not win, but earn

the title of “Best ODA.”

Although each detachment demonstrated exceptional effort and completed in close standings, Green Berets from 2nd Battalion, 5th SFG (A) placed first in the overall competition.

According to Command Sgt. Maj. Dwayne Cox, the command sergeant major for the 5th SFG (A), this was the first year since 2001 that this type and magnitude of competition has taken place within the group.

“The last time this competition took place was on 9/11. We were in the heart of this competition when we were told that our country

had been attacked,” said Cox. “I found it fitting that we start the competition on September 11.”

“The last time this competition took place was on 9/11. We were in the heart of this competition when we were told that our country had been attacked. I found it fitting that we start the competition on September 11.”

— *Command Sgt. Maj. Dwayne Cox*



A Green Beret from the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) climbs down a rope ladder as part of an obstacle titled “the tough one” during a two-day competition designed to push their minds and bodies to the limits. Photo by Army Sgt. Kelly Fox.

AIRBORNE

U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



Keith Stansell, a former Northrop Grumman employee, talks to a group of Soldiers at Fort Bragg, N.C. Sept. 14, about his experience as a Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia captive. Courtesy photo.



Stansell recounts life as a captive

By Army Maj. Emily Potter
USASOC News Service

The U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command hosted Keith Stansell for a professional development session Sept. 14.

Stansell, a former Northrop Grumman employee, was captured and held hostage for 1,967 days by the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) of Colombia after his plane crashed in the jungle during a drug surveillance mission.

Stansell spoke to a large audience at Pope Auditorium about his time in captivity. He described his captors as a drug cartel guerilla force that held them as “human currency.” He was marched to hundreds of different camps through arduous conditions in the jungle, wearing boots with the fronts cut off because they were too small for his feet. In addition to internal injuries, broken ribs and a compressed spine from the plane crash, Stansell battled numerous ailments from the long treks through the jungle and conditions of the holding camps.

Despite the hardships, he managed to recount some aspects with a sense of humor. Immediately after the crash, as they pulled the pilot from the plane, Stansell said he jokingly asked how he looked, ignoring the guerilla fighters shooting at them. And although the captives lived off a meager diet of rice and beans for five and a half years, he said he still loves to eat rice and beans.

Throughout his captivity, Stansell never gave up hope

to come home. His wife, who was five months pregnant with twins at the time of his capture, is Colombian. He praised her resilience and said the uncertainties were harder for his family because every day he at least knew if he was alive.

Attendees related to different aspects of Stansell’s experience.

“It was an amazing story,” Chief Warrant Officer 5 Tracy Eby said. “How did he make it through over five years never knowing each day what he was going to wake up to? You always set a mark on the wall that you’re looking at to get through the day, such as chow at Ranger School. What kept him going?”

Maj. Peter Q. Burke was impressed with Stansell’s humility.

“After over five years, he downplayed the amount of time by saying he was the most junior captive there,” Burke said. “After two one year deployments, I cannot fathom being away from my family for that long. It really puts into perspective the sacrifices other people make.”

Stansell was awarded the Secretary of Defense Medal for the Defense of Freedom in 2009. The Defense of Freedom medal was established following the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks to symbolize the extraordinary fidelity and essential service of the civilian workforce who are an integral part of DoD and contribute to the preservation of national security.

MISO CSM earns Ranger Tab

**By Army Sgt. Gabrielle Phillip-Purvis
6th MISB (A) Public Affairs**

Command Sgt. Maj. Courtney S. Mabus of the 6th Military Information Support Battalion (Airborne) Fort Bragg, N.C., graduated the U.S. Army Ranger Course on Friday Aug. 24.

Mabus was one of 169 newly trained Ranger qualified Soldiers to graduate.

At the age of 40, Mabus is one of the oldest and highest ranking Soldiers to ever graduate what is widely considered as one of the toughest schools in the U.S. Army. So why now, at his age, and with almost 22 years of service, would a command sergeant major attend Ranger School?

“It was unfinished business,” said Mabus. “It would have been career regret if I had not had the opportunity to attend. What made me decide to go was watching the seats go unfilled month after month. Looking at the lack of Ranger qualified NCOs in our career field, the excuse of me being too old or too senior doesn’t feel right when we have slots being unfilled. I hoped that if I went, it would serve as an example and motivation to the junior Soldiers to attend as well. If I can do it at 40 years old, they can do it too.”

The Ranger course is 62 days long and consists of three grueling and challenging phases designed and developed to give each candidate elite tactical and leader skills. Focusing on patrolling, reconnaissance, ambushing, and raids, candidates are pushed to their limits while enduring physical and psychological stresses often found in combat.

Speaking about his experience while in the Ranger course, Mabus said one of the biggest challenges with all his years of experience was learning how to be a good follower.

“For me as a command sergeant major, it’s been a long time since I did basic Soldier tasks,” he said. “It’s been a long time since I had gotten to be a Soldier. The Ranger course allowed me to gain respect and admiration by my peers on performance. I had to carry my own weight and not rely on my rank or position. It was challenging from an age perspective keeping up with and motivating Soldiers half my age.”

His wife, Amber Mabus, his three sons Corey, Noah,



**Command Sgt. Maj.
Courtney S. Mabus**

and Caleb were in attendance during the graduation.

“You’re too old!” said Amber Mabus, when asked about her initial reaction to her husband wanting to attend Ranger school. “Then I saw how much work he put into getting ready for it.

“I don’t think that most people truly appreciate the gravity or the difficulty of the course; I know I didn’t. Graduation was the apex of an epic journey for Seth and his entire class. We were

relieved, proud and ecstatic at the same time!”

In speaking about what his graduation means to him and what he hopes it means to other Military Information Support Operations Soldiers, Mabus said it motivates more Soldiers and non-commissioned officers to lead from the front.

“I view myself as the primary trainer of the battalion and the standard bearer for the unit,” he said. “That’s more than a statement. That’s more than saying it. You have to be able to back that up with actions. If I can’t do what I’m asking my Soldiers to do, it’s impossible for me to lead from the front.”

“What made me decide to go was watching the seats go unfilled month after month. Looking at the lack of Ranger qualified NCOs in our career field, the excuse of me being too old or too senior doesn’t feel right when we have slots being unfilled. I hoped that if I went, it would serve as an example and motivation to the junior Soldiers to attend as well. If I can do it at 40 years old, they can do it too.”

— Command Sgt. Maj. Courtney S. Mabus

AIRBORNE

U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



A Military Free Fall Parachutist Course instructor (back) falls through the sky alongside an MFFPC student, teaching him to maintain proper body position and deploy his parachute at the appropriate time. The MFFPC is run by the Military Free Fall School at Yuma Proving Ground in Yuma, Ariz., and is part of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. Courtesy photo.

Special Forces ‘Q’ Course to incorporate military free-fall training

*By Maj. James Branch
1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne)*

In today’s global environment, areas of conflict are becoming increasingly difficult for military forces to access. Through advances in technology, tactics and training, potential adversaries are prepared to prevent unwanted forces’ physical presence, and the U.S. military must adapt to face these challenges.

A collective military free-fall, or MFF, capability throughout the Army’s Special Forces regiment will ensure the U.S. Army’s unconventional warfare force can effectively enter and perform within the operational areas of today and tomorrow.

Traditional forced-entry techniques such as low-altitude, static-line airborne operations have lost viability as a clandestine entry technique, especially in Special Operations missions where silence and accuracy are crucial to mission success. Discreet, low-visibility free-fall infiltration complements the mission and structure of a Special Forces operational detachment-alpha, or ODA.

As a 12-man unit armed with the cultural and tactical expertise to work alongside a partner force, one ODA is small enough to maintain its MFF qualification, and use the capability to enter a remote area where a larger, conventional Army presence would not be feasible, necessary or cost-effective.

As written in the Department of Defense’s Joint Operational Access Concept dated Jan. 17, 2012, “Operational access does not exist for its own sake, but rather serves our broader strategic goals. Joint forces must be able to project military force into any operational area ... This is not a new challenge, but it is one that U.S. joint forces have not been called upon to face in recent decades. That condition is likely to change, and may prove to be of critical importance in the coming years.”

To meet this challenge, the Special Forces Regiment has re-evaluated its training methodology to ensure its Soldiers have an expansive skill set to meet the demands of our current and future operational environment. This reevaluation has established that while Army Special Forces units do include select MFF-capable ODAs, the force lacks a

formal, wide-spread clandestine infiltration capability; such that would be available through regiment-wide military free-fall qualification.

To improve the U.S. Army Special Forces Command (Airborne) units' proficiency in MFF, the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School is prepared to incorporate military free-fall training into the Special Forces Qualification Course, or SFQC. This initiative will increase the regiment's collective forced-entry and global response capabilities.

This initiative will institutionalize MFF operations by investing in the Military Free-Fall School at Yuma Proving Ground in Yuma, Ariz., which is the U.S. Special Operations Command's proponent for military free fall.

The school is restructuring the Military Free Fall Parachutist Course, or MFFPC, so that it will offer sufficient annual training slots for all SFQC candidates while maintaining allocated slots for qualified Special Forces personnel already assigned to operational units. Beginning in February 2013, the MFFPC will transition from a four-week to a three-week course.

The first week will remain the same, consisting of vertical wind tunnel body stabilization training, MC-4 parachute packing and an introduction to MFF operations. The remaining two weeks will encompass a jump profile of three airborne operations per training iteration, totaling 30 MFF operations per course encompassing various conditions and equipment loads.

In fiscal year 2013, SWCS plans to host up to 358 Special Forces Soldiers through the MFFPC. By fiscal year 2015, with the addition of 18 MFF instructors and dedicated aircraft, the MFFPC will reach its optimal throughput of 1,026 MFF parachutists, including 766 Special Forces Soldiers. When fully manned and equipped, the Military Free Fall School will conduct 19 MFFPC classes each fiscal year with 54 students in each class.

Simultaneously, the MFFPC continues to evolve its program of instruction, or curriculum, to send the highest-quality MFF parachutists into the military's Special Operations forces. The course incorporates the use of body-armor carriers and modular integrated communications helmets as the baseline equipment load for all jumps. Instructors use this communications technology to interact with their MFFPC students while under canopy to foster proper canopy-control techniques. As a result, MFFPC graduates are capable of landing as a group on a designated point, fully prepared to execute follow-on missions.

The Special Forces Regiment's ability to train and sustain a MFF infiltration capability, which is critical to forced-entry operations, is not only completely possible, but can become the norm vice the exception. In addition to the vertical wind tunnel at Fort Bragg, a new vertical wind tunnel at the MFF School in Yuma is projected for completion in the fall of 2013. Furthermore, the latest technological advancements have been incorporated into MFF equipment, such as night-vision, high-glide canopies, on-demand oxygen systems, inter-team MFF communications and para-navigation equipment. Most importantly, 11 years of multiple MFF combat infiltrations by the operational force have left us with invaluable lessons, which have been incorporated into MFF training and procedures.

High-altitude, high-opening, known as HAHO, operations now encompass nearly 50 percent of the jumps conducted by students during the MFFPC.

As the MFF School transforms the MFFPC to meet the evolving needs of the operational force, the school's cadre will continue to conduct the Military Free Fall Jumpmaster Course, the Military Free Fall Advanced Tactical Infiltration Course and the Military Free Fall Instructor Course. All MFF courses are continually updated to ensure the safest and most relevant MFF tactics and techniques are addressed. Through innovation and a relentless desire to excel, the school is fully prepared to provide an overwhelming infiltration capability to the regiment, one required to gain entrance to tomorrow's areas of operation.

Tomorrow's battlefields will not reappear in a linear or predictable manner. Now is the time to build a collective MFF capability across the Army's Special Forces groups, so that all Soldiers wearing a green beret are more capable of clandestinely entering into denied territory. The SWCS MFF expansion will meet this need by providing the regiment with SFQC graduates who are ready to conduct military free-fall operations immediately upon reporting to their first ODA assignment.

The Special Forces Regiment, armed with a collective MFF capability, will maintain its ability to gain access to operational areas around the world and serve the United States as its premier unconventional warfare force.

The U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School is responsible for Special-Operations training, leader development, doctrine and proponentcy for the U.S. Army's Civil Affairs, Military Information Support Operations and Special Forces Soldiers.



Navy commissions USS Michael Murphy in Big Apple

By Petty Officer 2nd Class John Scorza
Naval Surfaces Forces Public Affairs

USS Michael Murphy (DDG 112), the Navy's newest guided-missile destroyer, was commissioned during a formal ceremony at Pier 88 in Manhattan, N.Y., Oct. 6.

The newest destroyer honors Lt. (SEAL) Michael P. Murphy, a New York native who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions during Operation Red Wings in Afghanistan, June 28, 2005.

Thousands of spectators, veterans and invited guests gathered in front of the ship to witness the ceremony, which included distinguished guests such as the Mayor of New York, the Honorable Michael Bloomberg; Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Adm. Jonathan Greenert and Adm. Bill McRaven, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command.

The Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Ray Mabus, delivered the principal address and spoke of the ship, her crew and her namesake's heroic actions.

"This ship honors the courage, service and sacrifice of Lt. Michael Murphy, his Red Wings brothers, fellow SEALs, special operators and service members around the world who answer the call of duty every day," said Mabus. "It is absolutely fitting that the *USS Michael Murphy* bears a SEAL trident on her crest because, much like Michael and every Navy SEAL who has earned the honor of wearing the trident, this ship is designed to counter threats from above and below the surface of the oceans, in the air and on land."

Greenert reflected on the ship's massive power and ability to protect our nation's freedom.

"*USS Michael Murphy*, the most flexible, lethal and multi-mission capable ship of its kind,

represents the backbone of our surface combatant fleet," Greenert said. "It is one of the best destroyers in the world. This ship will operate forward around the globe, assuring allies,



Lt. (SEAL) Michael P. Murphy

"It is absolutely fitting that the USS Michael Murphy bears a SEAL trident on her crest because, much like Michael and every Navy SEAL who has earned the honor of wearing the trident, this ship is designed to counter threats from above and below the surface of the oceans, in the air and on land."

— *The Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Ray Mabus*

projecting power and defending our nation. And, like its namesake, Lt. Michael Murphy, this ship will serve to protect, influence and win in an era of uncertainty."

At the conclusion of the remarks, Murphy's mother and ship's sponsor Maureen Murphy gave the order to, "man our ship and bring her to life."

The crew responded by saying "Aye, Aye, Ma'am," and began to double time up the brows to man the ship as

the Navy band played "Anchors Aweigh."

Crewmembers stood side by side, manning the rails as the ship's systems came online. Radars, weapon systems, and other parts of the ship began moving to symbolize her "coming to life."

Cmdr. Thomas E. Shultz, a native of El Cajon, Calif., is the commanding officer of the ship and will lead the crew of 279 officers and enlisted personnel. The 9,200-ton Michael Murphy was built by General Dynamics Bath Iron Works. The ship is the 62nd ship in the Arleigh Burke class of Navy destroyers and the last of its class. It is 509 feet in length, has a waterline beam of 59 feet, and has a navigational draft of 31 feet.

The commissioning was the culmination of a week-long celebration in New York City honoring the ship, her crew and the legacy of Lt. (SEAL) Michael P. Murphy. The ship will be homeported in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.



Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen candidates from Crewman Qualification Training Class 61 head to the Southern California off-shore Naval gunnery range for training. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Arcenio Gonzalez Jr.

Celebrating 50 Years of Surface Mobility

Navy SEALs and Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen reflect on the history of Naval Special Warfare's surface mobility capability from World War II to the present.

**By Petty Officer 2nd Class Dominique Canales
NSW Public Affairs**

While NSW celebrates 50 years of SEALs this year, another celebration is on the horizon. In 2013, NSW will celebrate 50 years of surface mobility history, honoring the men that helped pave the way for NSW's modern day sea and undersea capabilities. Surface mobility boats from as far back as the Vietnam era are prominently displayed at Council International Sport Military Field in Coronado, Calif., and diligently taken care of by the men who operated them. However, NSW's surface mobility roots date back further than Vietnam.

"Probably the most prominent or easily discernible root is that which reaches down to the old Patrol Torpedo boats of WW II, principally in the Pacific," said Capt. Todd Veazie, Commodore, Naval Special Warfare Group 4. "These warriors had incredibly capable, very fast, heavily armed craft and were legendary Sailors working against the Japanese in the Pacific."

PT boats or "devil boats" were primarily used to attack and sink Japanese ships. Armed with torpedoes and .50 caliber machine guns, they would engage Japanese ships, usually under the cover of night. These small and agile craft were also effective at laying mines and smoke screens, at sea rescue operations, destroying Japanese suicide boats and floating mines, as well as carrying out intelligence or raider operations. Later in the war, three PT boats were stripped and reloaded with weapons to serve as gunships. One of these converted gunships was captained by a young Lt. John F.

Kennedy, future 35th president of the United States.

"The Navy used PT and patrol craft fast (or swift) boats through Vietnam, when boat support units operated alongside SEALs for surface operations throughout the country," said Veazie. "In that time, many of their missions required them to have SEALs on the back of those boats and provided firepower, mobility and extraction capabilities to the SEALs that were then serving alongside them in Vietnam."

Boat Support Units were established in 1964. According to a history compiled by retired Master Chief Gunner's Mate (SWCC) Jim Gray, who converted to a Special Boat Operator after the establishment of the rate, the first BSU missions incorporated the Patrol Torpedo Fast Boat program in support of NSW operations. These missions were primarily used in conjunction with Underwater Demolition teams and SEAL units. Broken down into mobile support teams, they later utilized surface craft such as the medium SEAL support craft, light SEAL support craft and the heavy SEAL support raft, commonly known as the 'Mike boat.'

According to Larry "Doc" Hubbard, a combat medic who served within the SEAL Teams during Vietnam, during that time SEALs carried out most of their missions by boat. The drivers wore black berets, which became dangerous, because Viet Cong often targeted them, assuming they were SEALs.

"The Viet Cong had attributed the black berets to being SEALs," said Hubbard. "We arrived by boat, we left by boat, so [they thought] the SEALs must be the ones who beat us up. Just about every time we made a good hit, you could expect them to try and ambush the boats the next night. These guys would get shot up for something we did."

In 1967, a project to train members deploying with SEALs was launched. According to James Born, a Boatswain's Mate 3rd class assigned to MST 2 in 1967, Project Zulu provided Naval Support Group Pacific, SEAL Team 1 and BSU 1 personnel with a first generation, organic, tailored flotilla of fighting support craft.

"MST 2 was originally called 'Project Zulu,'" said Born. "The members were hand-selected and trained with SEAL Team 1 for six months before going into combat together. Every man was swimmer qualified, sent to marine engineman's school; survival, evasion, resistance and escape training; weapons school; and a host of additional SEAL training. This was the first time that the SEALs trained and allowed someone other than their own to go into combat with them."

In 1971, the Navy restructured, renaming the Boat Support Units as Coastal River Squadrons and organized them under the newly established Naval Special Warfare Group 1. Although the name changed, the craft and Sailors assigned to the command continued to play a role in UDT and SEAL operations. After the war, the divisions of some squadrons remained deployable assets with craft and personnel deploying on Amphibious Assault Ships with UDTs and SEALs.

In October 1978, the name changed again to Special Boat Squadrons and their units were called special boat units. Mission tasking changed and their primary job was to support simulated ship attacks, UDT/SEAL support and the evaluation of special boat projects.

Fourteen years and three name changes later, the relationship between the surface mobility community and NSW had evolved and strengthened. However, the Sailors and SEALs assigned to the squadrons had to get used to operating in the blue water Navy.

"The boat units were a strange bird for reporting SEALs and surface personnel alike," said Phil Garn, who served as an officer in the SBUs for six years. "Despite three major wars of waterborne insertion and extraction, the emphasis on air and submarine operations became the glamour ops for the generation of SEALs after Vietnam.

According to Garn, SEAL officers assigned to the units had to work with Sailors from the surface Navy, an entirely different culture and with the complicated and sometimes antiquated equipment that came with the surface mobility craft supplied by the Navy.

"It was a huge step," said Garn. "Then there were many issues at the time with fleet Sailors who were not as physically fit or as cohesive as [the SEAL's] closed loop enlisted men who were used to independent command and action."

In 1987, SBUs deployed to the Persian Gulf supporting Operation Earnest Will and continued to operate in the Gulf to

curtail Iranian maritime terrorism against oil tankers in the northern Persian Gulf until 1989.

According to Chuck Chaldeckas, NSW Range manager and former SEAL, this deployment was also referred to as the "Tanker Wars."

"Basically the Tanker Wars were a development courtesy of the Iran-Iraq war, where Iran threatened to cut off oil supplies to the U.S.," said Chaldeckas.

SEALs and SBUs escorted oil tankers from Iraq to Kuwait, launching from barges called Mobile Sea Bases, which were floating in the Persian Gulf.

While the SBU's and NSW partnership was a success during this operation, lessons learned proved that NSW's evolving mission could no longer be supported by the current craft within the SBU inventory. Capitalizing on this, several initiatives were launched in 1989, including a new Special Operations Craft. These efforts resulted in the testing and use of high-speed boats and 24 to 30 foot rigid-hulled inflatable boats which were successfully used in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

"We did an experiment with seven different types of RHIBS in order to replace the steel hulled and fiberglass hulled personnel light craft that were on the ships at the time," said Chaldeckas. "[The craft] were just too difficult to maintain. When we got the RHIBs, they were a lot less costly to maintain; it was a lot easier to replace different portions of the boats. The engines also didn't wear out nearly as quickly because it was pushing a lot smaller craft."

NSW involvement in real world conflicts provided lessons learned and leadership soon realized that they were losing their trained Sailors and subject matter experts from SBU's to the fleet. They began developing a closed loop career path for the crewmen. In 1990, the first Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewman class was convened. This closed loop training for enlisted Sailors combined aspects from both SEAL training with boat driving navigational skills needed by the NSW community. By 1994, it became official that an active duty Sailor could make a career as a SWCC, and in 2001, the Navy and NSW made the Special Boat Operator rating official.

It wasn't until 2002 when NSW established Naval Special Warfare Group 4, that the surface mobility community was restricted and renamed Special Boat Teams. Today, SEALs, SWCCs and the boats they operate from form a smooth operating team capable of high-stakes missions executed with surprise, speed, and violence of action. This combination of operators and high speed craft form the blueprint of maritime mission success.



AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

'We who dare'

*23rd Special Tactics Squadron Airmen
conduct combat casualty training exercise*



A Pararescueman assigned to the 23 Special Tactics Squadron provides rear cover for an extraction team during an exercise on Eglin Range, Fla., Aug. 21. The pararescueman was participating in a scenario where his team had to respond to a simulated improvised explosive device explosion and transport the injured to safety.

***Story and photos by Air Force Staff Sgt. John Bainter
1st Special Operations Wing Public Affairs***

The sound of gunfire rings out as simulation rounds whiz through the air and paint splatters against the side of a building.

Gravel crunches beneath the feet of a rescue team as they shout out commands and lower an injured combat casualty from a rooftop.

This setting served as the backdrop for a combat casualty training exercise on the Eglin Range, Fla., Aug. 14. This exercise is part of a series required for 23rd Special Tactics Squadron Airmen to achieve their upgrade training goals.



According to Tech. Sgt. Ryan Hall, a pararescueman of 23rd STS, the general focus of the training helped develop the squadron's organic personnel recovery capability while integrating a joint service environment.

According to the squadron's factsheet, the 23rd STS is a unit that trains, equips and employs combat control, pararescue and support personnel in response to Presidential/Secretary of Defense taskings. The squadron's primary task is to integrate, synchronize and/or control the elements of air and space power in the objective area.

The unit performs austere airfield control, terminal attack control, personnel rescue and recovery, assault zone assessment, battlefield trauma care, direct action and special reconnaissance.

1) Air Force Staff Sgt. William Collier, an aerial gunner with 4th Special Operations Squadron, gets moulage applied to his face on Eglin Range, Fla., Aug. 21. Collier was a simulated casualty as part of a tactical readiness specialist training exercise.

2) Pararescuemen with 23rd Special Tactics Squadron administer Self Aid Buddy Care to a patient injured in a simulated improvised explosive device explosion on Eglin Range, Fla., Aug. 21. The pararescuemen were removing casualties from a building where a simulated improvised explosive device went off during training.

3) Pararescuemen from 23rd Special Tactics Squadron drag a simulated combat casualty on a litter during a tactical readiness training exercise on Eglin Range, Fla., Aug. 21. The pararescuemen performed several exercises to meet training requirements to become tactical readiness specialists.





AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Special Tactics Airmen earn valor medals

*By Rachel Arroyo
AFSOC Public Affairs*

When the critical moment came there was courage. There was courage from an Airman who moved into the line of fire to retrieve bodies of fallen Afghan commandos.

One Airman risked sniper fire to call in air support and another Airman continued to fight despite shrapnel wounds from a hand grenade.

Three Air Force Special Operations Command combat controllers from the 21st Special Tactics Squadron were recognized for actions in deployed locations during a medals ceremony at Pope Field, N.C., Sept. 25.

Capt. Blake Luttrell earned the Silver Star. Staff Sgt. Daniel Resendez earned the Bronze Star with Valor, and Staff Sgt. Jordan Killam received the Purple Heart.

“These decorations were earned years in advance through long physical, mental and technical training pipelines; across experiences from previous deployments and from lessons passed on by the men who bore the standards before you,” said Lt. Gen. Eric Fiel, the AFSOC commander.

Luttrell was presented the Silver Star, the nation’s third highest combat military decoration, for gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States in Mazar-e Sharif, Afghanistan, January 2012.

When his clearing operation team came under intense fire from insurgents in a cave compound, two Afghan commandos were shot. Luttrell recovered the casualties while directing air power against the enemy.

After a medical evacuation, the team medic was critically wounded while protecting his teammates and women and children near the enemy stronghold.

Luttrell responded by throwing a smoke grenade into the caves the enemy was firing from. He moved in front of the cave to pull the medic to a location where another medevac helicopter landed to extract the medic from the fight.



(Left to right) Lt. Gen. Eric Fiel, commander of Air Force Special Operations Command; Capt. Blake Luttrell, Silver Star recipient; Staff Sgt. Jordan Killam, Purple Heart recipient; Staff Sgt. Daniel Resendez, Bronze Star with Valor recipient; and Chief Master Sgt. William Turner, command chief of Air Force Special Operations Command; stop for a photo at the closing of the award ceremony Sept. 25. Photo by Adam Luther.

Resendez received the Bronze Star with Valor, the nation’s fourth highest combat military decoration, for heroism in action against an enemy of the U.S. in Nuristan province, Afghanistan, May 2011.

As the joint terminal attack controller for an Army Special Forces and Afghan commando team, Resendez controlled close air support to eliminate insurgents firing on the clearing operation.

Resendez controlled the release of a 500-pound bomb in response to heavy mortar, machine gun, sniper and small-arms fire.

Resendez exposed himself to sniper fire, which missed his head by two feet, to gain target information crucial to destroying an enemy position. He controlled danger-close strafing runs on the enemy and marked an extraction zone for coalition wounded and casualties.

Killam was presented the Purple Heart, the nation's oldest military authorization, for shrapnel wounds incurred from an enemy hand grenade.

Though these quiet professionals may shirk the limelight, there is value in recognizing these men up front, special tactics leaders said. Medals ceremonies not only recognize courageous actions but provide an example for the younger generation of special tactics Airmen.

They also provide an opportunity for families to see what their son, father or nephew do on a routine basis.

“Our men signed up to do the mission,” said Col. Robert Armfield, the 24th Special Operations Wing commander. “They love to do the mission and go downrange. But the families here are their real source of strength, and we thank them for coming.”

Female Staff Sgt. earns Bronze Star

*By Senior Airman Melanie Holochwost
AFSOC Public Affairs*

In 1920, they were allowed to vote. In 1948, they were allowed to serve. And now, a select few female service members are finally getting the opportunity to enable Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan.

Political as it may be, Staff Sgt. Jamie Fremgen, 11th Intelligence Squadron analyst, proved it's not only possible, but necessary.

"On my first deployment to Afghanistan, I saw the girls on the Cultural Support Team in action, and I immediately wanted to be a part of it," she said. "For the last five years I wanted to do something more. Contribute more. I wanted to make a significant difference ... I knew being involved in this program would give me that rare opportunity."

But there was a small problem. The program was for female Army soldiers only.

With her mind set on her newest goal, that small detail didn't stop this Airman.

Fremgen said she ignored any comment involving "no" or "you can't do that" and applied for the program anyway.

A few months later, she was accepted and went on to becoming the first enlisted Airman to deploy as a Cultural Support Team leader.

Fremgen's duties were vast and dynamic to success in Afghanistan. Her mission was to engage a nation's female and adolescent population when interaction with male service members could be deemed culturally inappropriate.

"Although my main job was to interact with the local females and children, I also protected them during hostile situations," Fremgen said. "And, hostile situations were common, especially during my first few months in country."

But Fremgen's mission wasn't just about being culturally sensitive, it was about results. Results were exactly what she got.

"On my first mission, I kept thinking to myself, 'Man, I really hope I don't let these guys down,'" she said. "But, I surprised myself (by enabling the mission) that day. Not only did that give me the confidence I needed, it made me want to go back. I felt like I helped. I felt like part of the team. I was officially hooked."

That first mission set the tone for the rest of her deployment.

In just six months, Fremgen enabled 32 direct action missions. She provided operational support to 98 females and



Lt. Gen. Eric Fiel, Air Force Special Operations Command commander, pins a Bronze Star on Staff Sgt. Jamie Fremgen, 11th Intelligence Squadron analyst, Sept. 24 at Hurlburt Field, Fla. Fremgen was the first enlisted Airman to deploy as a Cultural Support Team leader. Photo by Airman 1st Class Christopher Williams.

156 children.

For these efforts, she was awarded the Bronze Star Sept. 24 at Hurlburt Field, Fla., and was nominated for the Combat Action Medal.

Those who know Fremgen weren't surprised. At her current position as an intelligence analyst, Fremgen has been a hard worker from the get-go.

"Jamie is the most gung ho person I know," said her former commander, Col. Michael Stevenson, 361st Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Group. "Most Airmen who want to cross-train put in a package and go through the official process. Not Jamie. Without any technical school, formal training or outside help, she trained herself to be a full-motion video analyst. Now, she's one of the best."

Her mother, Patricia Walters, said her daughter has always been a strong-willed person who stood up and fought for what she believed in.

"She has always been protective," Walters said. "When she was just 4-years-old, she wanted to stand up to a fifth-grader who was bullying her older sister on the bus. She was a tough little girl, and still is. Seeing her receive the Bronze Star is one of my proudest moments as her mom."

Fremgen said she couldn't have done it alone.

"I was surrounded by countless heroes," she said. "It was such an honor to have been given the opportunity to work alongside them and be accepted as part of their team. They had given up so much of their lives and were extremely professional in helping me succeed."



MARINE CORPS FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



Gunnery Sgt. Joseph F. Lurz, a native of Baltimore, Md. was awarded Silver Star medal by retired Maj. Gen. Paul E. Lefebvre, former MARSOC Commander on Aug 24.

MARSOC Marine awarded Silver Star

*Story and photo by Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Robert Storm
MARSOC Public Affairs*

“I was exactly where I wanted to be, doing exactly what I wanted to do,” said Gunnery Sgt. Joseph F. Lurz, a native of Baltimore, Md..

Lurz was presented with the Silver Star medal, the nation’s third highest honor for combat valor, during the change of command ceremony for U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command, Aug. 24.

Lurz was assigned to 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion, based at Camp Pendleton, Calif., during combat operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom during the time of his award. While on his deployment to Helmand province in Afghanistan from July 2010 to April 2011, Lurz led his team and mentored the 7th Afghan Commando Kandak.

Throughout the duration of the deployment, Lurz and his team thwarted more than 100 enemy attacks, according to the Silver Star citation. He led his team into the heart of the insurgency and while under heavy volumes of insurgent machine gun and rocket propelled grenade fire, he directed the fires of his men and the commandos against the enemy’s most lethal positions neutralizing more than 100 insurgents

and countless improvised explosive devices.

“The conditions that I earned this award are not unique,” Lurz said. “Anybody on the team could’ve done it, all I did was manage the talent, they did all the work.”

During an enemy ambush, his team leader was wounded and evacuated. Lurz then took charge and seamlessly led his team into enemy strongholds. Throughout multiple attacks Lurz remained calm, communicating to higher echelons and simultaneously coordinating supporting fires, effectively suppressing numerous attacks. During a nighttime helicopter assault his aircraft came under heavy fire and upon landing Lurz directed the team and Afghan commandos into a defensible position. He directed an assault and attempted to extract the team. When the enemy maneuvered into ambush positions to prevent the extract, Lurz called for close air support and conducted a counterattack killing several insurgents and allowing the team to pull out under a heavy volume of fire.

“Because of operators like Gunnery Sgt. Lurz we’re building governance [in Afghanistan], we’re empowering the people to be able to make decisions for themselves and provide their own security,” said retired Maj. Gen. Paul E. Lefebvre, former MARSOC commander. “Most people don’t know how well that’s going, and that’s too bad.”

MARSOC participates in 6th annual Operation One Voice Honor Ride

*Story and photo by Marine Corps Sgt. Anthony Carter
MARSOC Public Affairs*

Marines from Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command took part in a bicycle ride from Little Creek, Va., to Lake Lanier Resort, Ga., Sept. 4-9 to honor fallen Special Forces operators.

“The concept behind Operation One Voice is pretty simple in that in the days following 9/11 firefighters and police officers handed off protecting our nation to our military troops, especially those at the tip of the spear. We are the 911 service to not only our local communities, but we will also be that for our SOF community.” said Lt. Bill Stevens, Duluth Police Department, Operation One Voice Volunteer Chief Executive Officer.

Operation One Voice sponsored the 6th annual ride. This year was to honor the first Navy Seal killed in Afghanistan, Petty Officer 1st Class Neil Roberts. The Naval Special Warfare, Group Two headquarters was the start of the event. The ride was 605 miles of grueling hills and weather. Sixteen riders, split into three groups, departed Little Creek for Fort Bragg, N.C., which was their first step. Each rider had their own bike ranging from regular road bikes to professional bikes being almost as expensive as a used car. Group one started each day, group two rode the most miles, and group three finished each day in the city in which they stayed. Day one would cover 180 miles for the groups.

“I was privileged to have had the opportunity to participate in the 2012 Operation One Voice Honor Ride that paid tribute to PO1 Neil Roberts. Benevolent organizations such as Operation One Voice and great Americans like Bill Stevens as well as the other police and firemen from Duluth, that made this event happen deserve a loud and thunderous HOOYA! Great ride, great support, great camaraderie, great cause - looking forward to next year,” said Master Chief Petty Officer Rob Keeley, Naval Special Warfare Group Two, Senior Enlisted Leader, Little Creek, Va.

The second and third day were the most exhausting for the riders in group two. Riders had to cover another 200 miles.

It is called a century when you ride 100 miles. Gunnery



Marines, Sailors, police, and Firefighters ride to honor fallen Special Operators in the 2012 Operation One Voice Honor Ride.

Sgt. Joshua Chmielewski, MARSOC 1ST Marine Special Operations Battalion, staff non commissioned officer in charge, West Coast Recruiting Screening, wanted to honor three operators he knew personally. He was determined to do three centuries for them, he felt honored to have completed these miles. Driven to push himself for a six-day period, he finished with a total of 365 miles.

“If I could paint a picture to remind everyone the why and how, it would be of the memory of a Georgia State trooper cycling way beyond his ability with a Navy Seal cyclist on one side and a MARSOC Marine on the other, both with hands on the trooper’s shoulders pushing him forward, no quitters here,” said Stevens.

MARSOC Commander, Major General Mark A. Clark, was the guest of honor for the Operation One Voice ride. He rode the last 30 miles of the ride.

Once the riders reached the city hall in Duluth, riders got off their bikes congratulating each other and shaking hands. The next morning more than 60 local riders joined in on the 23.2 miles to finish at the Lake Lanier resort pavilion.

During the last stretch the resort lined the path with crosses to honor fallen military service members, firefighters, and police officers who died on 9/11, service members who died overseas, and honored fallen Special Forces operators.

“As special operators, immediately following the attack we took the fight to them, letting them know they would not get away with this, and we would not forget,” said Clark in a speech.



Former British Soldier, Vietnam era Green Beret, pillar of Special Operations Forces Memorial presented Outstanding Civilian Service Medal

Geoff Barker (front) returning from a mission in Vietnam circa 1970. Barker received his second Outstanding Civilian Service Medal Sept. 10, for work supporting the Special Operations Memorial. Courtesy photo.

*By Mike Bottoms
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

Geoff Barker received his second Outstanding Civilian Service Medal in a ceremony Sept. 10, in the Donovan room at USSOCOM's headquarters, paying tribute to his work with the Special Operations Memorial Foundation from June 1997 to July 2012. Although the medal recognizes his work from the past 15 years, he has had a remarkable career for more than 50 years.

Born a British citizen in Leicester, England, Barker became interested in the military in high school and served in the Air Training Corps wanting to become a Spitfire pilot in the Royal Air Force. That dream did not pan out, however.

"I attended the RAF Aircrew selection center. After three days of mental and physical testing, I attended the exit-briefing when I was offered any job in the RAF except not for flying duties," Barker said. "I had recently lost two teeth playing Rugby football for my



Geoff Barker (far right) cradling a Sterling submachine gun in Cyprus in 1957 as part of the British '1 Para.' Courtesy photo.

school, resulting in a lisp when I spoke, thus disqualifying me for flying duties 'as I would never be understood over a radio.'"

Disappointed, he went home and visited an Army recruiting office and enlisted for 21 years with the Glider Pilot and Parachute Corps. However, Barker faced yet another set back.

“It was my understanding that I could train to fly small spotter aircraft. In reality the Glider Pilot and Parachute Corps had long been disbanded and I had been enlisted into the Parachute Regiment,” said Barker. “After multiple weeks of mental and physical assessment, I was nominated for a commission through the War Office Selection Board, and then reapplying for the pre-para course after two years with a line regiment. I opted to remain enlisted and remain with the Paras. I became the radio operator for the ‘1 Para’ battalion commander controlling the battalion command net - despite the RAF claims that I could never be understood over a radio!”

In 1957, Barker was serving as a section commander with ‘1 Para’ in Cyprus fighting against the Greek terrorist organization *Ethniki Organosis Kypriou Agoniston* or the EOKA. During that campaign he was riding in a jeep and was hit by a command detonated mine in the Troodos Mountains of Cyprus. Wounded, Barker spent Christmas 1957 in an RAF hospital in Akrotiri, Cyprus.

“I returned to combat duty in Troodos, but was unable to continue ski patrols around Mount Olympus where we were safeguarding a critical radar station, and returned with 1 Para to the UK in 1958, assigned to the company headquarters,” said Barker. “While enlisted for 21 years there was always an option for discharge every three years. Company headquarters duty was not for me so I elected discharge.”

Barker emigrated to Canada, and tried to join its Army, but was turned down because of no vacancies. Determined to have a military career, Barker went south and joined the U.S. Army.

“I enlisted into the US Army, and again became a combat-qualified paratrooper and attended jump school at Fort Benning, Ga.,” said Barker. “Vietnam was going on and I was eager to go, but at Fort Bragg I was told the North Vietnamese had shot down a couple of ‘green-card’ (Barker was still a British citizen) carrying pilots, and there were accusations that the U.S. was using mercenaries to fight their war of aggression in Vietnam. As a green card carrying non-citizen, my chances of deploying to Vietnam were zero.”

Always one to persevere, Barker decided to try the very American tactic of calling a congressman to help him get to Vietnam.

“I had enlisted in San Antonio, Texas, and I discovered that my congressman was Henry B. Gonzalez who had chaired the President Kennedy assassination investigation,” said Barker. “My request for assistance in getting orders to Vietnam was immediate, and I was on my way within a month.”



Geoff Barker (second from left) in Ca Mau, Vietnam circa 1970. Courtesy photo.

Upon arriving in Vietnam, Barker requested an assignment with Special Forces, but was turned down.

“I was met with disdain, and told ‘I had made the system work to my advantage’ and the rear-echelon folks at Replacement Depot, Long Binh, assigned me to the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division,” said Barker.

Barker was selected to provide personal security and driver for the incoming new brigade commander, Brig. Gen. Salve H. Matheson.

“Despite being somewhat dubious about this assignment, I could not have asked for a better assignment,” said Barker. “Brig. Gen. Matheson had served in the original Band of Brothers as a lieutenant with Easy Company, 506th Parachute Infantry during World War II, and later as a colonel he commanded the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Bad Tolz, Germany. What a great officer.”

The brigade sergeant major was Sergeant Major Paul Huff, the first U.S. paratrooper to earn the Medal of Honor during World War II. “The reason we became buddies may have had something to do with me having the general’s Jeep, and him not having one,” Barker continued.

Matheson was reassigned to be the chief of intelligence of Military Assistance Command Vietnam-Forward in Da Nang. Matheson asked Barker to come with him which Barker did, but he was only there six weeks.

“Gen. Westmoreland (MACV commander) arrived to tell Brig. Gen. Matheson that he was needed back in the states,” Barker said. “Gen. Westmoreland asked me what I wanted to do and I said ‘I would head to Saigon

for reassignment to the 1st Brigade.' Everyone was happy with that, except that my intention was another shot at a Special Forces assignment."

After hitch-hiking a flight to Saigon, Barker headed to MACV personnel to see where he could go. He found an accommodating personnel sergeant and the sergeant checked his records and noticed Barker had conducted anti-terrorist missions in the Middle East with '1 Para.' This is where Barker's career makes another interesting turn.

"He (the personnel sergeant) asked me to stay where I was while he made a phone call. When he returned me he told me that he had an assignment that I could fill, but he could not tell me where I would be assigned, to whom I would be assigned, and what I would be doing," said Barker. "I admit he piqued my curiosity and I agreed to an interview. He then gave me a street corner to meet my contact in Saigon. In response to my question, he assured me that we were not on Candid Camera.

"I made contact at 0900 the following morning, and literally over a beer at 0915, I was briefed and accepted an assignment as a military assignee to the Central Intelligence Agency with the Provincial Reconnaissance Units. This was a classic Special Forces mission, recruiting, training, organizing, equipping, and leading indigenous forces in combat. I ran small unit operations; raids, ambushes, surveillance, intelligence collection, prisoner snatches and elimination of the Viet Cong infrastructure."

Initially a staff sergeant during his assignment with the PRU, Barker received a commission to 1st Lieutenant. After being commissioned he took over the PRU along the Demilitarized Zone in northern I Corps, and from there he was assigned as the Province Officer in Charge of Camau, a "no-man" province at the southernmost tip of in the Mekong Delta.

"A no-man province is where no other CIA assets are assigned, just the military assignee," Barker said. "Camau was where (then) Lieutenant Nick Rowe, Captain Rocky Versace, and Sergeant Daniel Pitzer were captured. Many times it seemed like I was just one day behind VC proselyting camps where I would find photos of Nick Rowe in captivity. Many years later at Fort Bragg I showed them to Nick Rowe after I had initiated his return to active duty process."

Barker became responsible for six provinces throughout Vietnam and was promoted to captain where his last assignment was to Can Tho, the regional headquarters for IV Corps as the chief of PRU for the entire Mekong Delta. At Can Tho he had a team of 16 people, primarily SEALs; three Special Forces



Adm. Bill H. McRaven, USSOCOM commander, shakes Geoff Barker's hand after McRaven presented him the Outstanding Civilian Service Medal Sept. 10, in the headquarters Donovan Room. Photo by Mike Bottoms.

personnel, and one USMC Force Recon gunnery sergeant who he had liberated from the DMZ.

"After being a 'bag-man' in Can Tho it was time to head back to the states where I was assigned to the 10th Special Forces Group," he said.

Barker would go through various Special Forces assignments until he retired in 1987. He then would take a job at the fledgling U.S. Special Operations Command, serving 19 years until he retired in 2007 as a Senior Operations Analyst with the Joint Operations Center.

While assigned to USSOCOM, Barker became involved with construction of the Special Operations Memorial.

"The Special Operations Memorial was conceived in 1995 by Dick Leandri who coordinated construction of the Ranger Memorial at Fort Benning, Ga.," said Barker. "He organized local business entrepreneurs and retired Special Operators to serve as board members because he felt USSOCOM needed their own memorial. After two years of raising funds and construction, the memorial was dedicated in May 1997 by Gen. Schoomaker (5th USSOCOM commander)."

The memorial is the only joint Special Operations Memorial in the United States. The walls contain the names of SOF Medal of Honor recipients and the names of Special Operations Forces killed in action or training. The memorial also lists SOF legacy names, friends of SOF and major contributors. Because of Sept. 11, and the ensuing wars, the memorial was expanded and changed into the shape of a spear mirroring the original Office of Strategic Services' crest. The memorial was rededicated on Dec. 7, 2007.

Today, Barker is instrumental in the maintenance of the USSOCOM Special Operations Forces Memorial Wall. He orders engravings of the names, and has personally installed more than 1,200 engravings to the memorial since 1997. Recently, he helped install the 24-carat gold leaf engraving of the USSOCOM logo to the outer wall of the memorial. Because of his extensive knowledge and experience with SOF, Barker

still provides guided tours to visiting dignitaries, organizations, and family members.

Barker's remarkable career and affection for SOF is self-evident. However, he humbly said "I consider it a privilege to help memorialize our fallen Special Operations warriors, and an honor to assist in maintaining a memorial that is worthy of displaying their names."



An aerial view of the Special Operations Memorial located at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. The memorial was dedicated in 1997 and remodeled in 2007. The memorial is the only joint Special Operations Memorial in the United States. The walls contain the names of Medal of Honor recipients and the names of Special Operations Forces killed in action or training. The memorial also lists SOF legacy names, friends of SOF and major contributors. Photo illustration by Mike Bottoms.



Special Operations Soldier breaks U.S. 24-hour running record

*By Marine Corps Master Sgt. F.B. Zimmerman
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

Less than two months after winning the 135-mile Badwater Ultramarathon in Death Valley, Calif., Army Master Sgt. Mike Morton traveled to Europe where he not only won the 24-hour world championship, but also shattered the U.S. record.

Morton, a U.S. Army Special Operations Command liaison officer, placed first in the individual category at the International Association of Ultrarunners Ninth Annual 24 Hour World and 18th European Championships on Sept. 8 to 9, 2012, in Katowice, Poland. He led the entire 24 hours and broke the U.S. record by running 172.457 miles. The old record was 165.705 miles ran by Scott Jurek in 2010.

Morton's record-breaking run helped the U.S. men's team place third in the team championship. The U.S. women's team placed first in the team competition, and American runner Connie Gardner took second place in the individual women's competition and also broke the U.S. women's 24-hour record by running 149.368 miles. A total of 254 athletes from 34 nations competed in this year's event.

The course route was a one-mile loop through a park and was designed to be a "good, fast course," according to Morton, whose goal for the last two years has been to break the U.S. record.

"Mike's performance was simply astounding," said Mike Spinnler, assistant U.S. team leader and Morton's "crew chief," in an e-mail. "I've been serving on the staffs of U.S. National Teams since 1992 and Mike's performance was without a doubt the individual greatest effort I have ever personally witnessed by a U.S. runner in international competition."

Before the race began, Morton shared his game-plan with Spinnler – hit 50 miles between 6 hours and 5 minutes to 6:15, 100 miles in 13:11 to 13:30, and then hit 150 miles by the 21 hour mark.

"Those are good solid times that gave me enough time to still set the American record ... three hours to run 16



Army Master Sgt. Mike Morton, bib 262, begins his journey at the International Association of Ultrarunners 9th Annual 24 Hour World and 18th European Championships on Sept. 8 in Katowice, Poland. Morton, a U.S. Army Special Operations Command liaison officer, took first place and also broke the U.S. 24-hour record by running 172.457 miles. Courtesy photo.

miles," Morton said. "Barring an injury, I can cover 16 miles in 3 hours by sucking it up."

The first 50 miles was the worst, according to Morton, because he chose a pair of shoes he wouldn't normally wear since half of the route was on pavement and the other half was on paver stones.

"About two hours into it the ball of my foot started going numb," Morton said. "Since it was only a mile loop, on one lap I told [Spinnler] to get my other pair of shoes from my bag and I changed on the next lap."

It took Morton another 3 hours to feel like he was hitting his normal form.

"I didn't think I was going to hit my 50-mile mark because I felt like I was struggling," Morton said. "When I

went through 50 mile split, (Spinnler) said ‘The good news is you made your 50 mile mark, bad news is you made it by about 2 seconds.’”

Spinnler said Morton’s first 50-mile split time didn’t mean much to him – he wanted Morton to be conservative in the early parts of the race.

The second 50 miles were “uneventful,” according to Morton, and he sped up and was able to reach his 100 mile goal early, coming in at 13:10.

At about 2 a.m., Spinnler informed Morton that an Italian runner was making a move. He had passed Morton once already to gain a lap back, but was still two laps behind. Morton said the next time he saw the Italian, they chatted while running and his competitor was asking him questions just to gauge whether or not Morton was struggling. A short while later, Spinnler told Morton he thought the Italian was cracking – he had sat down the last time through the team area and wasn’t looking good.

“When he told me that, I was like ‘OK, I’m going to try to put a nail in the coffin,’ and I cranked out three laps ... He was the only guy that ever made a charge,” Morton said.

At the 20 hour mark, Spinnler told Morton he was running a pace that would break the U.S. record by six miles. When Morton hit the record, Spinnler urged him to keep pushing to make a statement and put the record so far out it will be safe for awhile.

Spinnler said both the individual first place and the U.S. record were in-hand in the last two hours, even if Morton had to walk, but Morton gave everything he had for the team.

“It was at that point he pushed himself into absolute agony to try and help the men’s team win a team medal,” Spinnler said. “The fact that he wrenched 172.45 miles out of his body was more an end result of his desire to help his teammates and country than seeking personal glory.”

A late push by the German and French teams pushed them to first and second place, respectively, and the U.S. men’s team finished in third.

While Morton broke the American record by nearly seven miles, he was just over 16 miles off the World Record of 188.590 miles by Greek runner Yiannis Kouros in 1997.

Morton said he doesn’t think that record will ever be broken. Spinnler said the World Record was never in play, but he wouldn’t rule out the possibility of Morton breaking it in the future.

With winning three 100 mile races, the Badwater Ultramarathon and now placing first in the World Championships and breaking the U.S. record, Morton

describes 2012 as his dream year.

“The icing on the cake is that I made the U.S. team and I got to [break the U.S. record] on a world stage,” he said.

Spinnler agreed this was a great year for Morton – one like he’s never seen.

“What he accomplished at the 100-mile-and-above distances in 2012 is nothing short of remarkable,” Spinnler said. “I’ve never seen anything by an American 100-

mile/24-hour runner equal what he achieved in 2012. It almost defies logic, a real testament to this incredible spirit that exists inside of Mike Morton.”

Now that he met his goal, Morton said he feels like he has a “blank canvas” in front of him, and can pick some 100 mile races and “have fun with it” for several months. Up next for Morton: the Javelina Jundred 100 in Arizona in October, the Ancient Oaks 100 here in Florida in December, and the Rocky Raccoon 100 mile trail race, where he hopes to break the American trail record of 12:44.

“What he accomplished at the 100-mile-and-above distances in 2012 is nothing short of remarkable. I’ve never seen anything by an American 100-mile/24-hour runner equal what he achieved in 2012. It almost defies logic, a real testament to this incredible spirit that exists inside of Mike Morton.”

— Mike Spinnler, assistant U.S. team leader



Army Master Sgt. Mike Morton, leads the pack of runners at the International Association of Ultrarunners 9th Annual 24 Hour World and 18th European Championships on Sept. 8 in Katowice, Poland. Courtesy photo.



Ugandan troops learn crowd-control tactics. Courtesy photo.

Training African Peacekeepers

The African Crisis Response Initiative in Senegal and Uganda

By Tom Neven

USSOCOM History & Research Office

In 1994, ethnic conflict between Hutus and Tutsis tore Rwanda asunder, resulting in the murder of perhaps one million or more Rwandans. Only after the extent of the massacres became a nightly news feature did the United States and United Nations commit forces for relief activities, but with only a limited U.N. mandate, the forces could only “observe” while Africans continued to slaughter each other.

The year after the Rwanda genocide, it appeared that Burundi was heading down the same road. As a result the Pentagon developed a concept of the U.S. airlifting one or

two African battalions into Burundi in the event of an outbreak of violence. In October 1995, that idea was refined into the idea of working with perhaps two African nations that could provide a quick-response force for up to 90 days anywhere on the continent, not just in Burundi. The staff papers resulting from the idea were the genesis of the African Crisis Response Force (ACRF).

For months the plan remained on the shelf until a late July 1996 coup in Burundi renewed the fears of violence in Africa. Following an interagency meeting in early August, Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Michael Byron, Vice Director of the Strategic Plans and Policy Directorate (J5), suggested taking the ACRF plan, accelerating the training of the African soldiers, and using the force in Burundi. Within days, Secretary of State Warren Christopher agreed.

Although many European and African leaders were cool to the idea, four nations—Ethiopia, Uganda, Ghana, and Senegal—expressed interest. On Oct. 5 1996, Secretary Christopher took advantage of a trip to Africa to announce formally the administration’s program.

The ACRF would deploy only in concert with the U.N. Security Council, Organization of African Unity, or other sub-regional body, and its role was limited to humanitarian relief and peacekeeping operations. The initial plan was modified from producing a standing force to a standing capability. In fact, there would be no standing force. For that reason, one of the earliest decisions of Ambassador Marshall F. McCallie, Department of State Special Coordinator for ACRF, was to change the name of the African Crisis Response Force to the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI).

The 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) was tasked with the bulk of ACRI training. Simply put, the ACRI sought to place responsibility for limited humanitarian relief and peacekeeping operations upon African nations. The program envisioned a five-year period during which select units from participating African nations would receive non-lethal equipment and periodic training from U.S. military personnel, primarily Army Special Forces, as well as from European countries with peacekeeping experience. African nations desiring to participate would have to meet certain criteria, such as having recent records of civilian control of the military and respect for human rights, as well as possessing a credible infantry unit (preferably a battalion) capable of being trained to U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations standards.

Senegal and Uganda were chosen for the initial ACRI training, scheduled for July to September 1997. Beginning in December 1996, the 3rd SFG (A) commander, Col. David E. McCracken, led the six-man pilot teams to those two countries. Those surveys uncovered a number of logistical, organizational, and training weaknesses that would need to be addressed during the ACRI process.

Meanwhile, 3rd SFG (A) trainers, led by Maj. William T. Hager, were busy developing the list of capabilities peacekeepers would need. He identified 11 core tasks required of U.N. peacekeepers, which included establishing and operating observation posts and checkpoints, employing a reaction force, negotiating with belligerents, establishing lodgements, and protecting the force. Those tasks then became the basis for development of the program of instruction, a 2,000-page document that included medical, Civil Affairs, and Psychological

Operations tasks in addition to basic soldier skills, small-unit tactics, and other peacekeeping tasks.

The 3rd SFG (A) plan for initial ACRI training called for approximately 60 mobile training team personnel to operate for 60 days in each country. The intensive training focused primarily on training African officers and NCOs who, in turn, would train their subordinates what U.S. planners referred to as the “train the trainer” concept.

By the end of September 1997, all Special Forces team members had returned from Senegal and Uganda. Maj. Dino D. Roth, the 3rd SFG (A) Operations Officer, summarized the ACRI training: “The ACRI program in Africa was extremely successful. ... Each Battalion was given a solid base on which to build their own [peacekeeping operations] sustainment training programs.”

The program held benefits for both the Americans and Africans. For example, U.S. Special Forces personnel gained intimate first-hand knowledge of the peoples, cultures, and countries for which they were responsible; valuable experience teaching in their target languages; working with private organizations; and deploying and redeploying overseas. On the other hand, Africans gained materially by receiving boots, uniforms, and eyeglasses; radios, generators, and computers; mine detectors and water purification units; and other items. More important, they gained professional training in areas from basic soldier skills to small-unit tactics to battalion staff operations. Simultaneously, African militaries had opportunities to rub shoulders with Special Forces members and to see them as role models who respected human rights and civilian authority.



Medical personnel from 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) conducted health clinics for soldiers and civilians during the African Crisis Response Initiative training. Courtesy photo.



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

The U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School is prepared to incorporate military free-fall training into the Special Forces Qualification Course. This initiative will increase the regiment's collective forced-entry and global response capabilities. A Military Free Fall Parachutist Course instructor (back) falls through the sky alongside an MFFPC student, teaching him to maintain proper body position and deploy his parachute at the appropriate time. The MFFPC is run by the Military Free Fall School at Yuma Proving Ground in Yuma, Ariz., and is part of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. Courtesy photo.

