

# Tip OF THE Spear



United States Special Operations Command  
MacDill Air Force Base, Florida

October 2017



## AIR COMMANDOS LAND A-10S ON ESTONIAN HIGHWAY





# U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



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on Estonian highway ... 6

## Tip of the Spear

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(Cover) Combat controllers with the 321st Special Tactics Squadron guide an A-10 Thunderbolt II pilot from Maryland Air National Guard's 104th Fighter Squadron to land at Jägala-Kärvete Highway, Aug. 10, in Jägala, Estonia. A small force of eight Special Tactics combat controllers from the 321st STS surveyed the two-lane highway, deconflicted airspace and exercised command and control on the ground and in the air to land A-10s on the highway. Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Ryan Conroy.

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# Exercise Noble Partner 17 strengthens ties between Georgian special ops, conventional forces

By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Aaron Duncan  
U.S. Special Operations Command Europe

Georgian special operations forces took part in Exercise Noble Partner 17 from July 30 to August 12, in Vaziani, Republic of Georgia, developing interoperability with conventional forces from not only their own military, but that of the U.S. and participating nations.

Noble Partner is an annual U.S. Army Europe-led exercise designed to support Georgia's integration into the NATO Response Force and allows multinational partners to work together in a realistic and challenging training event. Approximately 2800 troops from Georgia, Armenia, Germany, Slovenia, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the U.S. participated in the exercise in multiple locations across Georgia.

"In many ways, the exercise was a new way of

operating for GSOF," said a U.S. Special Forces advisor to GSOF.

U.S. Special Operations Command Europe played an advisory role with GSOF during the exercise in order to mentor the Georgian SOF on building interoperability with U.S. Georgian and other multinational conventional forces.

"SOCEUR's contribution was very helpful," said a GSOF officer involved in the planning of the exercise. "They helped us understand the capabilities and procedures that allowed us to integrate with multinational forces. They also served as a link to coordinate our activities."

In addition to SOCEUR, the GSOF also worked closely with the Georgia National Guard. The two have participated in the State Partnership Program, which pairs U.S. states with 22 European nations and 73 worldwide, since 1994.



A U.S. special operations soldier assigned to U.S. Special Operations Command Europe observes Georgian special operations forces train Georgian and Ukrainian infantrymen on room-clearing techniques Aug. 3, in Vaziani training area, Georgia during exercise Noble Partner 17. Noble Partner is an annual U.S. Army Europe-led exercise designed to support Georgia's integration into the NATO Response Force and allows multinational partners to work together in a realistic and challenging training event. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Aaron Duncan.

"Working with the GSOF was awesome," said U.S. Army Capt. Christopher Pulliam, the commander of the Georgia Army National Guard's Company H, (Long Range Surveillance), 121st Infantry Regiment (Airborne). "Our mission set requires that we work in small teams that gather specific intel in the area of operations. The GSOF understand this and can use our intel to create a better understanding of the situation on the ground and react accordingly."

Company H worked alongside GSOF conducting combined airborne operations and during the field exercise was assigned under their command, allowing GSOF to complete objectives through their coordinated efforts. With the Georgia Army National Guard conducting reconnaissance, GSOF was able to execute a raid on an enemy position.

Georgian SOF also worked with U.S. Air Force and Air National Guard as well during Noble Partner.

"This is the first time the Georgians have jumped from a C-130," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Donald Pallone, the vice air commander of the 165th Airlift Wing, Georgia Air National Guard. "They are learning from us and we are learning from them. This helps us build our interoperability and furthers the Georgia National Guard's [state] partnership with the Georgians."

GSOF also trained on calling for indirect fire working with the U.S. Air Force's 2nd Expeditionary Air Support Operations Squadron. This training provided them the ability to learn the same procedures as their conventional forces and U.S. forces and share these procedures throughout GSOF.

"The Georgian military was very motivated and eager to learn how to incorporate indirect fires control to enhance their combat capabilities," said U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Justin Tamayo, assigned to the 2nd Expeditionary Air Support Operations Squadron as a joint terminal attack controller. "We were able to train both the GSOF and conventional parties simultaneously and from the classes we taught we are confident that interoperability was strengthened amongst their military as well as with U.S. forces and partner nations."

GSOF also trained on their military assistance mission by training Georgian and Ukrainian conventional forces on the tactics and procedures of clearing rooms and passing through friendly defensive lines.

"To be able to accomplish its military assistance mission, GSOF must be able to teach classes and train other soldiers," said the U.S. Special Forces advisor to

GSOF. "Teaching and training is a skill that must be practiced. Noble Partner was a great opportunity for GSOF to build its military assistance skills while also improving the combat skills of Georgian and Ukrainian infantry."

The ability to plan the execution of training that involves both internal and multinational military forces is in itself a skill that has to be trained in order to enhance an organization's ability. Noble Partner provided the chance for GSOF staff to build upon their capability to conduct such training.

"This was a new experience for us," said a GSOF officer involved in the planning of the exercise. "It allowed us to develop how we will work with conventional and multinational forces in the future."

U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Mark Schwartz, the commander of SOCEUR, visited with GSOF leadership and observed soldiers participating in the exercise. During his visit, GSOF briefed Schwartz on upcoming exercise events and how GSOF plans to continue developing their interoperability with conventional forces.

"In the future, if GSOF and multinational forces have to work together, training together will allow us to understand how to work fluently with each other," said a team leader from the GSOF company conducting the training. "It will help us integrate our tactics with theirs and direct their efforts with ours."



A U.S. Army paratrooper assigned to the Georgia Army National Guard's Company H, 121st Infantry Regiment (Airborne) parachutes onto Vaziani Training Area, Georgia during a combined airborne operation with Republic of Georgia forces Aug. 4, as part of exercise Noble Partner 17. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Aaron Duncan.



SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND – EUROPE



*Two combat controllers with the 321st Special Tactics Squadron observe an A-10 Thunderbolt II taking off from Jägala-Kärvete Highway, Aug. 10, in Jägala, Estonia. A small force of eight Special Tactics combat controllers from the 321st STS surveyed the two-lane highway, deconflicted airspace, exercised command and control on the ground and in the air to land A-10s from Maryland Air National Guard's 104th Fighter Squadron on the highway. Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Ryan Conroy.*

# Air Commandos land Air National Guard A-10s on Estonian highway

*By Senior Airman Ryan Conroy  
24th Special Operations Wing Public Affairs*

A quiet, rural highway in northern Estonia transformed into a military runway Aug. 10 as combat controllers guided A-10C Thunderbolt IIs onto the 50-foot-wide freeway during a flying training deployment.

A small force of eight 321st Special Tactics Squadron combat controllers surveyed the two-lane highway, deconflicted airspace, and exercised command and control on the ground and in the air to land A-10s

from the Maryland Air National Guard's 104th Fighter Squadron on the Jägala-Kärvete Highway, Estonia.

"We wanted to showcase our ability to fight -- anytime, anywhere and regardless of the circumstances," said the 352nd Special Operations Wing mission commander and CCT team sergeant for the 321st STS, RAF Mildenhall, England. "This allows us to train to effectively deploy, and sustain professional forces in multilateral operations."

Combat controllers are trained special operations forces and certified Federal Aviation Administration air

traffic controllers. Their mission is to deploy undetected into hostile combat and austere environments to establish assault zones or airfields, while simultaneously conducting air traffic control, fire support, command and control and more.

"Landing on a highway is a unique capability of the A-10 as a fixed-wing aircraft," said Maj. Daniel Griffin, project officer for the 104th FS's deployment. "We showcased our ability to project combat airpower forward, either behind enemy lines or in austere locations with the support from our combat controllers on the ground."

The A-10's wide tires and high-mounted engines help avoid foreign object damage and allows the aircraft to land on many surfaces other aircraft cannot, explained Griffin.

Special Tactics is U.S. Special Operations Command's tactical air and ground integration force and the Air Force's special operations ground force enabling global access.

"Our team can open airfields in remote locations to allow follow-on forces strategic access," said the 352nd SOW mission commander. "This was an opportunity for us to show our NATO partners here that a small team of Airmen is able to project incredible airpower further to get after the enemy, when we're called upon to do so."

The flying training deployment is funded by the European Reassurance Initiative in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve. The Maryland Air National Guard is participating also as part of the State Partnership Program, a joint Department of Defense initiative that partners states with partner nations to improve the capabilities of partner nations and strengthen relationships to facilitate access and interoperability.



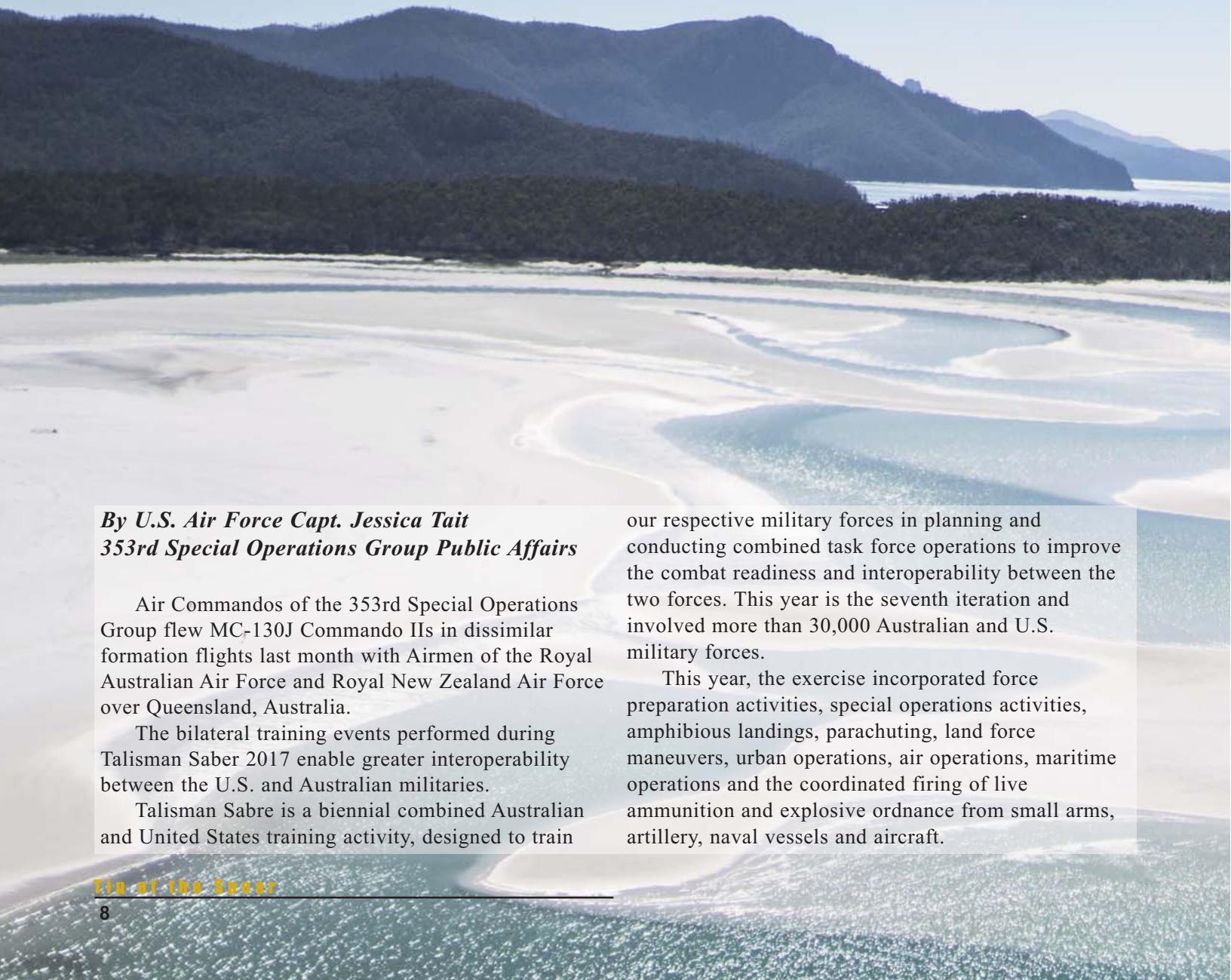
*A combat controller with the 321st Special Tactics Squadron looks through binoculars before landing A-10 Thunderbolt IIs on Jägala-Kärvete Highway, Aug. 10, in Jägala, Estonia. Photo by Senior Airman Ryan Conroy.*



*A U.S. Air Force A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft with the Maryland Air National Guard's 104th Fighter Squadron takes off on Jägala-Kärvete Highway, Aug. 10, in Jägala, Estonia. Photo by Senior Airman Ryan Conroy.*



# Air Commandos fly in dissimilar formation at Talisman Saber 2017



**By U.S. Air Force Capt. Jessica Tait  
353rd Special Operations Group Public Affairs**

Air Commandos of the 353rd Special Operations Group flew MC-130J Commando IIs in dissimilar formation flights last month with Airmen of the Royal Australian Air Force and Royal New Zealand Air Force over Queensland, Australia.

The bilateral training events performed during Talisman Saber 2017 enable greater interoperability between the U.S. and Australian militaries.

Talisman Sabre is a biennial combined Australian and United States training activity, designed to train

our respective military forces in planning and conducting combined task force operations to improve the combat readiness and interoperability between the two forces. This year is the seventh iteration and involved more than 30,000 Australian and U.S. military forces.

This year, the exercise incorporated force preparation activities, special operations activities, amphibious landings, parachuting, land force maneuvers, urban operations, air operations, maritime operations and the coordinated firing of live ammunition and explosive ordnance from small arms, artillery, naval vessels and aircraft.

A U.S. Air Force 17th Special Operations Squadron MC-130J Commando II flies in dissimilar formation with a No. 37 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force C-130J Hercules July 19, over Queensland, Australia. Talisman Saber 2017 provided the opportunity at further developing interoperability with counterparts from the RAAF through daily airborne operations to include low-level formation work, forward air refueling point, and personnel and cargo airdrops. Photo by U.S. Air Force Capt. Jessica Tait.





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

Anne Galegor, a representative of the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, helps a U.S. service member with Joint Task Force - Leeward Islands fill up water jugs for a local woman at water distribution site in St. Maarten, Sept. 15. The task force is a U.S. military unit composed of Marines, Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen, and represents U.S. Southern Command's primary response to Hurricane Irma. Photo by U.S. Army Capt. Trisha Black.



# SOCSOUTH deploys team in support of response efforts in the Caribbean

By Maj. Cesar H. Santiago  
Special Operations Command

A Special Operations Command South situational assessment team departed Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, Sept. 9, 2017, in support of Joint Task Force -- Leeward Islands' aid response to areas affected by Hurricane Irma in the eastern Caribbean Sea.

At the direction of U.S. Southern Command's commander, SOCSOUTH members provided situational awareness to military forces and other U.S. government agencies, and facilitated the formation of JTF-LI, while supporting the island of St. Martin's government in determining resident needs.

The team, comprised of U.S. special operations forces members, provided unique military occupational specialty skill sets needed in initial response and recovery efforts.

"The team's response was essential in preparing the launch of disaster relief efforts," said U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Collin P. Green, SOCSOUTH commander. "They quickly established the initial command and control point, communications systems, and began assessing on-the-ground conditions in an environment with limited or no infrastructure or basic services."

SOCSOUTH's response team, together with U.S. State Department and Air Force Special Operations Command members, coordinated the evacuation of hundreds of American citizens off the island. Up to now, JTF-LI has helped evacuate more than 2,000 citizens from the affected area.

Additionally, the team assessed infrastructure, airfields, and sea ports to facilitate the movement of assets to bolster response capabilities.

"Initial actions upon arrival by the logistics team rapidly turned into coordinating efforts as logistical integrators," said U.S. Army Maj. Javier Pla, SOCSOUTH's logistics operational division chief, who served as the senior logistician for USSOUTHCOM. "We assisted the interagency partners and local authorities to synchronize our support in an environment of constraints in the most effective and expeditious way

possible."

"Right now our efforts are focused on supporting the task force and, through our rapid response team, quickly providing the necessary assistance to those affected," said Pla, who is continually planning sustainment distribution around the clock. "This logistical coordination is needed to save lives and reduce human suffering in areas devastated by the hurricane."

"Our members are always ready to bring unique capabilities to assist partner nation governments," said SOCSOUTH's commander.

SOCSOUTH is responsible for all USSOF activities in the Caribbean, and Central and South America and serves as a component for U.S. Special Operations Command and USSOUTHCOM.

USSOUTHCOM created JTF-LI, an organization composed of about 300 Airmen, Marines, Sailors, and Soldiers to provide aid to the people of St. Martin at the request of the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance.



Hurricane relief personnel, including service members with Joint Task Force - Leeward Islands, disembark from a U.S. Air Force C-130 at Princess Juliana International Airport in St. Maarten, Sept. 15. Photo by U.S. Army Capt. Trisha Black.



## U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



Claire Russell, age 7, stands in front of her parents and brothers for a portrait on Fort Meade, Maryland, Aug. 16. The Russell family launched the Forever Fierce Foundation in November 2015. The foundation aims to increase funding towards research for the more than 20 forms of childhood cancer. Photo by Sgt. Jeremy Bennett.

# Forever fierce: A child beats cancer

By Sgt. Jeremy Bennett

1st Special Forces Command (Airborne)

That Thursday night was just like any other, until it wasn't.

The Russell family had been on edge for nearly two weeks, and now, they had the news no family could prepare for. At four years old, Claire Russell was about to begin the fight of her life against a tough opponent -- a rare form of childhood cancer called Ewing's sarcoma.

It all started in April 2014, during a flight from Baltimore to Seattle. Claire was on her way to her cousin's wedding, with the ever-important role of flower girl. The first couple of hours of travel went smoothly enough, but a sudden excruciating pain woke Claire from her nap.

"She looked at me with panic in her eyes and was

just crying," said Claire's mother, Michelle.

On May 8, Michelle's worst fear was confirmed. The back pain her daughter had recently mentioned wasn't just the result of her love for gymnastics. There was a tumor.

It would be another two full weeks before Claire was given an official diagnosis at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. That time was extremely difficult on the Russell family, but Claire's father proved to be a source of calm that everybody needed.

"I wanted to go through the steps before I really believed it was cancer," explained U.S. Army Staff Sgt. David Russell, a multimedia noncommissioned officer for the Army Multimedia and Visual Information Directorate. "What that allowed me to do was remain calm and try to be there for my family."

When the doctors came back with the results, the

Russells began to learn all they could about the disease Claire faced. According to the Mayo Clinic, Ewing's sarcoma affects approximately 200 children and young adults in the United States each year. The disease forms in or around the soft tissue of the bone, such as cartilage or nerves.

Once Claire knew the enemy, she did what any fighter would do; she built a team and prepared for victory. Fortunately for Claire, she didn't have to look very far to find the right people to lead her to success. Her family would be there for her, and she for them.

"Though she be but little, she is fierce." That's the motto around which the Russell family rallied as Claire began her treatment. The phrase, borrowed from Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream," captured Claire's spirit in a way that nothing else could. Though she only weighed 38 pounds, Claire fought with the ferocity of a 200-pound world heavyweight champion.

Sure, there were days when Claire was exhausted, unable to sing, dance, and bounce around as she loved to do, but her family believed she would come out on top.

"My family was there to support me," Claire said. "They distracted me from the pain and helped me get through everything."

In December, seven months into Claire's treatment, her older brother made a bold decision that showed just how much her family wanted to support her. At just 8 years old, Cohen declared that Christmas was on hold until Claire came home.

"It wouldn't be the same without Claire," Cohen said. "I wanted to wait until she came home."

The family wouldn't wait long as Claire made her triumphant return on Jan. 2, 2015.

Four months later, after just under a year of treatment, the news came that this family had been waiting so long to hear; Claire had delivered the knockout blow. On May 14, 2015, she was cancer free.

"I cried," David confessed. "I was so happy we went the route we did, and it saved her life."

The impact of Claire's fierce determination and hard-fought victory reaches far beyond her family. Finding inspiration from their daughter, David and Michelle have started the Forever Fierce Foundation.

"Our heart is really in research. I don't want these families to have to take their kid on this one last trip. I want there to be a cure like with all these other diseases we've cured. So our heart is really in research, and Claire's [heart] is too," says Michelle.

In the Johns Hopkins Hospital on Friday nights, the Forever Fierce Foundation is there, serving up tasty food and comforting families engaged in their own fights against cancer. Also there, helping alongside her parents, is a now 7-year-old cancer survivor who is full of life.

"I just really like getting to make those kids happy," Claire explained. "I get to see my friends, and tell them it will be okay."

The foundation seeks to increase the 4 percent of cancer research funding in the United States that goes toward combating childhood cancers. David and Michelle aspire to donate \$50,000-\$100,000 annually to that cause through their foundation.

Another part of the vision for Forever Fierce is that Claire might one day take the reins of the foundation. She's already happily racking up plenty of experience each Friday night in preparation for leading the foundation to greater heights.

If David and Michelle grow weary, they don't need to look any further than their own daughter for inspiration.

"I believe she has a purpose that is so big, and I think that she has already done more at seven than most people will do their whole life," Michelle said. "I'm so proud of her."

*Editor's note: Staff Sgt. David Russell was assigned to 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne).*



**Claire Russell looks away from a card game at Johns Hopkins Hospital on Aug. 16. Photo by Sgt. Jeremy Bennett.**



U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

# Pushed to new heights for a fallen comrade

By Staff Sgt. Thanh Pham  
7th Special Forces Group (Airborne)

An event that tests its competitors' strength, endurance, and sheer will, proves for the fourth year in a row why it takes an elite group of service members to stand any chance of winning. Fittingly, the annual event was created in honor of an elite Soldier, fallen El Paso hometown hero, Staff Sgt. Joshua M. Mills, 3rd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group.

Units across Fort Bliss selected their best five-person teams to represent them in the Joshua Mills Commando Competition. Across a 48-hour span, the teams completed events that tested their teamwork and introduced stress and fatigue.

The first event was the 'UBRR' or upper-body round robin, a physical fitness test commonly performed in the Special Forces community. Tasks consisted of 1-minute timed push-ups, sit-ups, and kip-ups, which is to kick the feet up to a pull-up bar.

Other events included pull-ups, dips, 20-foot rope climb, bench pressing 80-percent body weight, 4x25-meter shuttle sprint, and a five-mile run. Cadre modified the grading scale to evaluate each team's overall performance based on their member's individual scoring.

For day two, the El Paso heat played a factor with temperatures reaching the mid-90s as teams progressed. They began with the Leader Reaction Course, which is multiple timed events that test teamwork and problem solving skills. The teams are given minimal items that they must use to bridge and maneuver across obstacles, while having to get all personnel and equipment across before the clock expires.

They then moved to the Air Assault Obstacle Course, where they rushed to crawl, climb, jump, and dive across more than 12 different obstacles. Teams started in close intervals, so moving slowly or failing to properly perform obstacles resulted in other teams surpassing them.

Teams all expressed their admiration for Mills, and competing in his honor helped them push through adversity. "It truly is humbling and an honor to be able to compete in an event that pays tribute to a fallen comrade, especially one of the Special Forces community," said Chief Warrant



Soldiers of 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, climb up the net rope on the Air Assault obstacle course at Fort Bliss, Texas, Sep. 7, as part of a timed event. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Thanh L. Pham.

Officer 4 Dejuan Roberts, Joint Task Force North. "More importantly, I got the chance to sit down with his parents and let them know what it means to me."

Joshua's father, Mr. Tommy Mills, took time throughout the event to speak to the competitors and convey his gratitude for what they do. "It's an honor and I'm very appreciative of the great lengths these competitors and the Army go through to put on this event in memory of my son and other fallen service members," said Mr. Mills.

They are in fact facing the same challenges his son faced.

"In 2002, our son went through this very same air assault course prior to going into the military, as part of an ROTC program." He added, "we're proud of our son and always will be, but to see these young men and women go through the same thing, knowing they do missions everyday makes us proud of our nation as we get stronger and stronger."

The event hits home for Sgt. 1st Class Jesse Rodriguez, event non-commissioned officer in-charge with the Special Operations Recruiting Fort Bliss, who was also a member of 7th Special Forces Group.

"This should be a reminder, being a service member, especially in today's world is very demanding and all life is precious," said Rodriguez. "Not just because we're both Green Berets, but the family life he had and other things we

shared in common really hits home, and reminds me to always be grateful for things I have.”

Most found gratification in just completing the event; but one team set out with a higher goal. Since the conception of the Joshua Mills Competition, there had not been repeat winners, until now. The 204th Military Intelligence Battalion were the winners of the 2016 event, and they came back determined to defend their title.

“It’s humbling to be able to compete in an event like this,

and an honor to represent for my unit, to secure a win for the second year in a row,” said U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Matt Hattie, 204th Military Intelligence Battalion.

The competition concluded with many already looking forward to next year, vowing to return and outdo their recent performance. As the event grows, the story and memory of our fallen service members does too. The name of Joshua Mills will continue to be a representation of strength and honor here on Fort Bliss.

# 1st SFG (A) Soldiers march for physical, mental and spiritual health

*By Staff Sgt. Adam Munoz  
1st Special Forces Group (Airborne)*

The air was dense with a hazy smoke and vehicles were dusted in a light chalky ash from nearby forest fires when nearly 75 Soldiers from the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) began their road march for life with empty rucksacks.

In keeping with the Army's suicide prevention theme for the month of September, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st SFG (A) participated in a ruck for life road march September 8, on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, to bring awareness for the value of life and promote resiliency within its organization.

“We wanted to do something different than what has become the typical PowerPoint lecture on suicide prevention,” said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Apollo Stoewer, the HHC, 1st SFG (A)’s religious affairs specialist. “This gives us the chance to celebrate life’s challenges and recognize the need for resilience.”

After the first mile Soldiers placed a sandbag in their previously empty packs as the chaplain explained the symbolism of the weight all service members carry on their backs; that all pick up burdens along life’s path.

Shouldering the now heavier packs, the Soldiers carried their new burden another mile where they added yet another sandbag to their load. Stepping off with packs weighing close to 50 pounds, the Soldiers’ spirits were high and everyone was determined to finish.

“This is great, I see what the Chaplain did here,” said Spc. Joseph Monreal, a HHC, 1st SFG (A) human resources specialist. I’d much rather do this than sit through another

PowerPoint class.”

“Soldiers and their leaders appreciate something a little more out of the box,” said Chaplain (Maj.) Chris Rusack. “We designed this type of event to engage on a whole different level.”

“Nothing reinforces a positive message better than some good physical exertion and even a little pain,” Rusack said. “It’s not something they’re likely to soon forget.”

As the Soldiers marched through mile three they loaded pre-positioned stretchers with their collected weights and shared carrying their burdens. Rusack explained that some burdens should not be carried alone and can be made easier when shared with others.

“Bringing everyone together and working as a team and supporting each other is how we get through tough events in life, you can’t do it alone,” said Staff Sgt. Joshua Avila, a supply specialist with HHC, 1st SFG (A).



*Soldiers from the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) move along a trail with heavy packs during their ruck for life road march, Sep. 8, at Joint Base Lewis McChord, Wa. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Adam Munoz.*



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



*Soldiers from 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) escort a mock casualty to a 4th Infantry Division Combat Aviation Brigade CH-47 Chinook during a training exercise on Sept. 6, at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. Soldiers from 10th SFG (A) participated in a three-week training exercise in support of the U.S. Air Force Weapons School. The exercise is designed to enhance the interoperability of multiple air assets supporting Special Operations ground force maneuver. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Daniel Carter.*

# Special Forces train support Soldiers in complex fires, maneuvers

*By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jorden Weir  
10th Special Forces Group (Airborne)*

One of the five Special Operations Forces Truths is most special operations require non-SOF assistance, and in these uncertain and dangerous times that assistance includes joining the fight when necessary.

10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) demonstrated that truth by training members of their Group Support Battalion in complex joint fires and maneuver exercises at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, Aug. 27 to Sept. 09.

The exercise replicated combat by integrating special operations forces ground maneuvers, Army surface fire assets, and joint air assets.

Partnering with Special Forces Joint Tactical Attack Controllers as well as the Nellis Air Force Base Weapons School and Soldiers from 4th Infantry Division out of Colorado, Soldiers from GSB practiced complex day and night missions. The service members enhanced their skills in live fire stress shoots, convoy live fires, evaluating casualties, airborne operations, radio communication, calling for medical evacuations

from Chinook helicopters and directing fire from A-10 Warthog fighter jets onto targets.

The exercise was designed to enhance the interoperability of multiple air assets supporting special operations ground force maneuver.

It was, for most GSB soldiers, an unprecedented chance to train in combat tasks well-outside of their normal duties.

"We entered all training with focus and an open mind, and that helped me learn," said Spc. Bernard Pratt, a motor transport operator assigned to the Sustainment and Distribution Company, GSB. "Everyone did a great job of executing."

The joint training afforded the young team leaders lots of practice at adjusting their plans to meet conditions.

"We had to get good at shifting jobs every day," said Sgt. Paul Coello, a noncommissioned officer assigned to GSB Maintenance Company.

Coello said being able to adapt as the lanes switched around, to shift fire when the JTACs needed them to, and reacting accordingly to unforeseen circumstances, on the ground or in the air, was critical

to their success.

"It was our first time doing something like this since I've been at Group," said 2nd Lt. Nicholas Brock, the officer in charge of GSB's training, "It was good to have our [NCO's] actually coordinate with the JTACs and the pilots out there and learn to communicate effectively through all different levels, and to be able to get trigger time at the range every day for three weeks added to the value."

This sentiment was echoed by Lt. Col. Jonathan Beck, the GSB commander.

"The value that this training has for these Soldiers can't be overstated," said Beck.

Beck explained that, because this training included Air Force fighter jets, special operators, and Chinook helicopters, Soldiers were able to see, firsthand and in real time, what effects they were having on the battlefield.

Beck said the training was not something every Soldier in the Army gets.

"Battle is chaotic," Beck said. "You don't want your first time managing the chaos to be during your first actual firefight."



**Soldiers from 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) sweep a mock city for enemy Soldiers during a joint air-to-ground integration-training exercise at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., on Sept. 6. Soldiers from 10th SFG (A) participated in a three-week training exercise in support of the U.S. Air Force Weapons School. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jorden M. Weir.**



## NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND

# NAVSCIATTS holds change of command ceremony on Stennis

By Angela Fry

*Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School*

The Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School held a change of command ceremony on Aug. 4, at the international training center's headquarters on the John C. Stennis Space Center in Mississippi.

Cmdr. Clay Pendergrass, who assumed command of NAVSCIATTS on July 9, 2015, formally relinquished command to Cmdr. John T. Green in front of family, friends, and the staffs of Naval Special Warfare Group 4, the Security Cooperation schoolhouse, Special Boat Team 22, the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, Naval Education and Training Security Assistance Field

Activity, and NASA Stennis Space Center representatives.

In emotional remarks to family, friends and the NAVSCIATTS staff, Pendergrass spoke of how his two years at the Naval Special Warfare command has impacted his career. "I have always felt more at home amongst sheepdogs," he stated. "Those who choose to guard the flock."

"This command is a different command. It is unique and it will change you," expressed Pendergrass, a 28-year U.S. Navy veteran who has spent the majority of his service as a SEAL. "It is the only command in the entire U.S. Department of Defense that is not focused on training American forces."

"We solely focus on building our partners so they can carry more of the burden, to man their own walls, to fight



**Cmdr. Clay Pendergrass salutes in Navy tradition as he departs a formal change of command ceremony at the Navy Small Craft Instruction Technical Training School on the John C. Stennis Space Center in Mississippi. Pendergrass, who assumed command of NAVSCIATTS in July, 2015, relinquished command of the international training center to Cmdr. John Green on Aug. 4, in front of family, the staffs of NAVSCIATTS, Special Boat Team 22, Naval Special Warfare Group 4 and NASA. Photo by Angela Fry.**

their own battles,” Pendergrass continued. “This is good for America. This is training more partner sheepdogs, which translates into more sheepdogs in the fight. Every American regardless of political stripes wants more of that.”

Capt. J.R. Anderson, commodore of NSWG 4, provided words of encouragement to the two commanders and reiterated the importance of the NAVSCIATTS mission and its staff to the more than 150 in attendance.

“I have sometimes heard that command is the single achievement of an officer’s career,” Anderson said in remarks addressed to those in attendance. “It is the ultimate vote of confidence by one’s superior officers; a job of immense personal satisfaction and of unrelenting pressure. But what every successful commanding officer fully understands is the responsibility, authority and accountability that goes with the privilege of being addressed as ‘C.O.’ or ‘skipper’; the privilege of command,” the Group 4 leader expressed in honor of the outgoing commander.

“Commander Pendergrass’ innovative way of bringing new ideas to fruition enabled NAVSCIATTS to become the Security Force Assistance front-runner for the entire U.S. Special Operations Command enterprise and he has proven to be an outstanding example of the kind of leadership that this awesome force needs today and will continue to need as we operate in the future against our near-peer adversaries,” he continued. “He has forged an even stronger bond of total force unity and capability here at NAVSCIATTS.”

During Pendergrass’ more than two years at NAVSCIATTS, his leadership has solidified the center’s position in foreign internal defense, maritime security force assistance and security cooperation in the efforts to coordinate U.S. Special Operations Command and theater special operations command security force assistance priorities.

Over the past two years, the facility has trained almost 2,000 international military and law enforcement agency personnel from approximately 80 partner nations via in residence courses of instruction and mobile training teams in the areas of waterborne operations, maintenance, human rights, rule of law, and instructor development under his leadership. Pendergrass, who has served on both East and West coast SEAL teams, is credited with expanding NAVSCIATTS to a global training center, resulting in the addition of 14 new countries including Uzbekistan, Madagascar, Nepal, Serbia, Rwanda, France, Greece, Malta and Denmark.

The Louisiana native is also credited with initiating the schoolhouse’s Partner Nation Instructor Program that paved

the way for foreign guest instructors to be assigned to NAVSCIATTS, with the first PNI arriving in May of 2016. This PNI, a native of Colombia, successfully became the first PNI in U.S. military training centers to earn the U.S. Navy designation as master training specialist.

Pendergrass’ next order of assignment will be working in Security Force Assistance for USSOCOM in Tampa, Florida. He was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for his tour at NAVSCIATTS that included responsibility for approximately 100 military and civilian personnel at a command that offers 20 courses with an average of almost 1,000 personnel graduating from resident and mobile training events annually.

The incoming commander expressed his excitement regarding his assumption of command and NAVSCIATTS’ future direction. “Nicole and I have a motto for our family and it is just one simple word: together. This word is the foundation of our family tree and is our call to action as a family,” Green stated. “When you think of the motto of this command, there is more than a little serendipity. For our guests here, the motto of the command is ‘mas fuertes juntos’ or ‘stronger together.’ This is our call to action as a command.”

A native of Los Angeles, Green commissioned into the Navy after completing Naval ROTC at Harvard as a National Merit Scholar. During his distinguished career, he completed Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training with class 228 and served on multiple deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq and completed a duty assignment with the Joint Special Operations Command, where he directed kinetic strikes and operations in support of national missions. He completed studies for a Master of Public Administration at Harvard and is proficient in several foreign languages, to include Arabic, French, Latin, ancient Greek and Sanskrit.

NAVSCIATTS is a security cooperation schoolhouse operating under USSOCOM in support of foreign security assistance and geographic combatant commands’ theater security cooperation priorities. The facility trains and educates international special operations forces, SOF-like forces and SOF enablers across the tactical, operational and strategic spectrums through in resident and mobile training team courses of instruction, including operations, repairs, sustainment of craft, communications, weapons, small unit tactics, range safety, unmanned aircraft systems and intel fusion operations. Since 1963, almost 12,000 students from 110 partner nations have completed training at NAVSCIATTS. Courses are offered in English and Spanish or in other languages through the use of translators.



## AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



*Kentucky Air National Guardsmen conduct water rescue missions in Port Arthur, Texas, Aug. 30, in the wake of Hurricane Harvey. The Airmen, assigned to the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, are patrolling the area in motorboats, looking for people who are trapped in their homes or on rooftops because of the massive flooding. Once the residents are safely in the boats, the Airmen provide any necessary medical care and transport them to the nearest shelter. Courtesy U.S. Air National Guard photo.*

# Special Tactics Airmen save lives in Hurricane Harvey aftermath

*By U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Ryan Conroy  
24th Special Operations Wing Public Affairs*

To assist in rescue efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, 38 Special Tactics Airmen were deployed to Southeast Texas to provide critical disaster relief.

Special Tactics Airmen with the 123rd and 125th Air National Guard Special Tactics Squadrons exercised

their personnel rescue and global access capabilities to provide critical relief to those stranded by Hurricane Harvey. The 123rd deployed from Louisville, Kentucky, and the 125th from Portland, Oregon.

"It's like the Nile formed in neighborhoods throughout the Houston area – we're talking 4-6 feet of standing water stranding people who can't swim, families with children and drivers who are unaware of the depth of water on the roads," said Maj. Aaron

Zamora, director of operations with the 123rd STS.

Special Tactics Airmen conducted a thorough assessment of airfields at Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base in Houston, Texas, to assess the conditions of the runways following the massive rains of the storm. The assessment opened the airfield as a central hub to provide relief to Houston.

Global access teams are trained and equipped to assess air strips and landing zones for fixed and rotary wing aircraft to land anywhere from a major airfield to austere, clandestine dirt strips in either permissive or hostile environments. Once the team assesses the airfield and determines feasibility to land air assets, they maintain the capability of opening it for air traffic, and controlling the air traffic as it arrives on station.

Following the assessment, the operations center immediately deployed ground-based, boat search and rescue teams to start coordinating with military and civil authorities who were conducting rescue operations.

"We hit the ground running, and immediately had to begin adapting," said the mission commander.

One of those adaptions was quickly learning how to leverage the power of social media.

In the Special Tactics operation center, the Special Tactics team utilizes the Android Tactical Assault Kit (ATAK) system, which is generally used to track battle forces during military missions. Intelligence analysts working remotely from Kentucky, Ohio and Florida, screen information found on social media platforms and smartphone applications and use their expertise to connect potential rescues with Special Tactics capabilities.

For instance, individuals in distress can update a phone application with their location and the situations they find themselves in. The intelligence team screens the information, applies a confidence level and sends the information to Special Tactics operators, real time, in the field.

"The area we're working in is completely inundated with hundreds, if not thousands, of requests for rescue," said Tech. Sgt. Brian Davis, intelligence analyst with the 123rd STS. "Since we're such a small team with a specialized skill set, we find the people who are most in need and look for people who need specialized rescue."

Davis recalled a certain post where an elderly couple was trapped in an attic due to flooding, which required the Special Tactics team to utilize confined space rescue techniques.

In addition to personnel recovery mission sets, the Airmen in the field are being tasked with exercising command and control by opening and coordinating helicopter landing zones for supplies and medical evacuations, said the mission commander.

As Hurricane Harvey began to dissolve and make landfall for its second time on Wednesday as a tropical storm, the Special Tactics teams redeployed east to where the storm expected to make landfall.

While the convoy drove, the intelligence team utilized live traffic cameras, and monitored the Texas Department of Travel website for flooded, underwater or impassable roads to make adjustments along their route of travel to reach their target.

"The team is currently right in the thick of the Port Arthur-Beaumont disaster areas, talking to circling Coast Guard and Air Force reconnaissance aircraft to get updates on the big picture," the mission commander said. "When we hit the ground, we went outside the box, started problem solving and realized we have all these different tools at our disposal to be more effective."

The number of rescues total is in the high 200s, but the STOC isn't worried about metrics, the mission commander said.

"We try not to get caught up in the numbers, and I told my team before we arrived that our mission is to go to Texas and do the most good by helping as many people as we can," the mission commander said.



**Master Sgt. Jamie Blevins and Tech. Sgt. Joshua Busch of the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron establish and control a helicopter landing zone in the parking lot of a library in Pasadena, Texas, on Aug. 29, to evacuate patients requiring medical care in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. Courtesy U.S. Air National Guard photo.**



AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

# Special Tactics trainees attend combat diving course

By Senior Airman Cody R. Miller

325th Fighter Wing

In a partnership with a local Naval outpost, the Air Force continues to train and strengthen the future of its special operators through a combat diving course that Airmen attend during their training.

Airmen attending the Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center go through dive training with the goal of enabling the safe, timely and effective training of qualified candidates for combined operations in support of national military strategy and national security.

Though they are not directly stationed with the 325th Fighter Wing, the dive school Airmen are supported through Tyndall Air Force Base administratively. Many of their personnel based issues are solved through Tyndall.

The schoolhouse, located in Naval Support Activity Panama City, Florida, was established to develop the 'whole' diver -- mind, body and heart, with the skills and confidence to successfully complete missions and integrate with all combat forces to offset adversaries in the undersea domain. Airmen are able to learn in the same institution that trains some of the Navy's best divers.



*U.S. Air Force diving students take the plunge for their first dive of the day at Naval Support Activity Panama City, Fla., Aug. 2. The Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center is the home of research, development, testing and evaluation on diving matters. Certification and training is conducted constantly to support the nation's military diving requirements.*

*Photo by Senior Airman Cody R. Miller.*

"This school is where Air Force Combat Dive School takes place," said Beau Wagner, Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center combat dive instructor. "The pararescue and combat controller trainees will come here for about 30 days of training. Upon completion of this course, they will be recognized as Special Operations Command combat divers. This means they can be attached to any team in the U.S. military and assist in combat and austere diving missions. This training is integral to maintaining the combat controller and pararescue skill sets."

The month that these Airmen are in the area is devoted to a rigorous set of training that includes pool diving as well as diving in the Gulf of Mexico. They learn equipment recovery and how to avoid hostiles compromising their dive gear while on missions. These classes lead to them becoming capable combat divers.

"Though the Air Force is not the leading branch in diving, the skills that our special operations Airmen have are often useful to other dive teams," Wagner said. "Air Force divers are often called to work with Navy SEALs, and we have to be able to keep up and know how to do what they do. We are often called upon to take part in body recovery operations, where we retrieve our fallen comrades to make sure they return home. Sometimes these bodies could unfortunately be at the bottom of a body of water and would require the diving experience we gain here."

The center trains personnel from all branches of the military and teaches qualified candidates for courses that produce U.S. Navy deep sea divers, Seabee underwater construction divers, joint service diving officers, explosive ordnance disposal officers, diving medical technicians, diving medical officers, U.S. Army Engineer divers, U.S. Marine Corps combatant divers, U.S. Coast Guard divers and U.S. Air Force pararescue operators and combat controllers.

"This is the job I chose, the career always stood out to me," said

Airman Xiaija Schuldis, Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center Air Force pararescue trainee. "I wanted to help people, and push myself mentally and physically. I grew up always being part of a team, and this job keeps that brotherhood mentality. My family and my team are a lot of my motivation. When you look around and everyone is aching from the training, you can't quit because your brother right next to you won't quit."

The school house's 23 certified diver life support systems, which include six hyperbaric recompression chambers and two diving simulation facilities capable to 300 feet. The school also contains an aquatics training facility, which is the second largest pool in the U.S., a submarine lock-out trunk and two 133-foot diving tenders for open-ocean diving support.

The instructors for the school are both active duty and civilian. The Airmen who are going through the school are predominantly combat controllers, pararescue and combat rescue officer trainees.



*Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center students consult with one another during a training exercise in the Gulf of Mexico, Aug. 15. Air Force combat rescue officers also go through the same training alongside their enlisted counterparts during this course. Photo by Senior Airman Cody R. Miller.*



## AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

# Ohio highway dedicated to Special Tactics pararescueman

By U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Katherine Holt

1st Special Operations Wing

Six miles of County Highway 121 near Greenville, Ohio was dedicated Aug. 14 in honor of Master Sgt. William L. McDaniel II, a Special Tactics pararescueman who was killed when the MH-47 Chinook helicopter he was in crashed in the Philippines Feb. 22, 2002.

"Sergeant McDaniel was living exactly what he trained to do," said Col. Michael Martin, commander of the 24th Special Operations Wing. "That is to be part of an assault force going into an island to rescue American hostages and counter the terrorism by Abu Sayyaf. It was a tragic loss."

McDaniel was part of a joint special operations team who were infiltrating an island in southern Philippines. The intent was to infiltrate four teams, establish a forward operating base, collect intelligence and successfully rescue two Americans being held hostage by the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group. After the fourth infiltration, the Army special operations helicopter crashed into the Sulu Sea. McDaniel, one of his Airmen, and eight U.S. Soldiers were on board the helicopter.

Nearly 13 years later, the ground work for the highway name change was started and came to fruition in the intimate ceremony with family, friends and Special Tactics Airmen past and present.

"It's certainly an emotional day," said Ohio State Rep. Keith Faber. "It is important that we recognize people, not just when they sacrifice themselves, but every time someone drives up and down this road, they will see this sign. I think it is important that everyone remembers."

Full of humility, McDaniel did not brag on his accomplishments. He was named 2001 Pararescueman of the Year, and his family had no idea.

"He never spoke of it, or boasted about it," said his mother, Sheila McDaniel. "He was very professional."

Not one for the spotlight, McDaniel's mother says he would probably laugh about the dedication.

"He was very humble. He would be tickled about it, but he wouldn't get a big bang out of it," she said. "He loved, more than anything, being a pararescueman."



**Family and friends of Master Sgt. William L. McDaniel II, unveil a highway sign during a ceremony dedicating a six-mile stretch of Highway 121 in honor of his namesake, in Greenville, Ohio, Aug. 14. McDaniel was part of a joint, special operations team who were infiltrating an island in southern Philippines when the MH-47 Chinook helicopter he was in crashed into the Sulu Sea Feb. 22, 2002. Photo by Wesley Farnsworth.**

"Bill McDaniel was a quiet professional," said Col. Jeffrey Staha, who was McDaniel's squadron commander in 2002. "He was a tremendous man. All he wanted to do was be a PJ and lead anyway he could. He would never want the attention drawn to himself, but to his teammate and squadron."

"Being in Air Force Special Operations Command and specifically in Special Tactics, we are a tight-knit and selfish community on relationships with family," Martin said. "To be able to share this with the mayors of Greenville and New Madison, the folks from both of those communities, the family friends, is our way to give back to them. They are the heartbeat of the nation ... and we are truly humbled to be a part of their life for a brief moment in time."

Special Tactics Airmen hold true to a proud warrior heritage. Special Tactics Airman honor those who've gone before them – those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, and those who continue to serve and save lives.

"I felt like the dedication was a way he would be remembered for always," said McDaniel's mother. "Not that I would ever forget, but I want everyone else to remember him. When they drive down the road, they would say, 'Wow, that's Master Sergeant McDaniel.'"

# 15th SOS conducts joint training with US Army's 160th SOAR (A)

*By Airman 1st Class Joseph Pick  
1st Special Operations Wing*

Air Commandos with the 15th Special Operations Squadron and Soldiers with the U.S. Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) conducted a five-day bilateral training in Kentucky and Tennessee, July 10-14.

The bilateral training provided advanced tactical training for the two units by building up the two forces' relationship and preparing them to work together in future missions.

"This training presented us the opportunity to get together with different entities and practice our skills," said Maj. Sean Armstrong, a navigator with the 15th SOS. "The goal of any exercise is to integrate with all the organizations we're working with and get everybody on the same page, talking and planning together to ultimately get the mission done."

The two 15th SOS aircrews would take off each day during the golden sunset laid upon Smyrna and showcase their capabilities with the 160th SOAR for hours on end, proving their readiness to execute any mission at any time, any place.

Those aircrews, while operating the MC-130H Combat Talon II, performed air-to-air refueling with MH-60 Blackhawk and MH-47 Chinook helicopters, conducted forward area refueling of 160th SOAR aircraft, and loaded and transported AH-6 and MH-6 Little Bird helicopters for infiltration and exfiltration missions.

"These exercises work on getting us prepared for operations we may do downrange," said Staff Sgt. Jeremy Wolski, a loadmaster with the 15th SOS. "The Army, Navy and Marines don't generally use the same lingo, so coming to these exercise allows us to work together cohesively."

The week-long training concluded with a mission that ran from the evening until the break of dawn, testing the aircrews' ability to perform in low-visibility conditions only available during night operations.

The mission involved two MC-130H aircrews completing an infiltration and exfiltration mission of MH-6s as well as setting up a forward area refueling point to provide necessary fuel for AH-6, MH-6, MH-47 and MH-60 helicopters.

Hours later, when the Little Birds returned from their mission, an aircrew and Soldiers quickly secured both Little Birds on the MC-130 and flew them to Saber Army Airfield to conclude the mission.

The week-long training exercise gave the two units a capabilities baseline to build on for future operations.

"The chances of us working with the 160th SOAR downrange are high," Armstrong said. "When the flag goes up, they know who to call, we'll get it done."



*Aircrew with the 15th Special Operations Squadron train with Soldiers assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment during a bilateral training exercise at Saber Army Airfield, Tenn., July 11. Soldiers with the 160th SOAR loaded four AH-6 and MH-6 Little Bird helicopters into two 15th SOS MC-130H Combat Talon II's to increase consistency in tactics and procedures ensuring global readiness. The exercise provided advanced tactical training for 1st Special Operations Wing Air Commandos and joint special operations forces partners. Photo by Airman 1st Class Joseph Pick.*



## AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

*Air Force Emergency Medical Technicians put on their gas masks during the 'Commando Challenge' for the 27th Special Operations Medical Group's EMT Rodeo Aug. 9, at Melrose Air Force Range, New Mexico. Photo by Senior Airman Luke Kitterman.*



# Cannon hosts 10th EMT Rodeo

By Master Sgt. Manuel J. Martinez  
27th Special Operations Wing

Realistic and rigorous training builds muscle memory and composure during high stress situations. Last week, 21 teams of Air Force medics converged at Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico for the 2017 EMT Rodeo.

This year's EMT Rodeo is the 10th iteration of the event, and the teams got hands-on training with subject matter experts and forged bonds with fellow Air Force medics.

"This lets us all share our knowledge so that we don't have to experience a thousand different things, we can just learn from each other to be prepared for those scenarios that we might have not come across in our normal careers," said Senior Airman Jordan Dean, 633rd Medical Group emergency medical technician, stationed at Langley Air Force Base, Va.

The tools utilized to create these realistic environments are moulage, realistic injuries and wounds, man-hours and subject matter experts. Each situation requires participants to perform real-time assessments of the patients ranging from heart attack victims to performing care under fire including realistic gunfire and aggressors forcing them to react to a changing situation.

"The scenarios on base provide an opportunity to practice those skills you will use here in the local community," said Senior Master Sgt. Steven Yates, Air Force Special Operations Command aerospace medical functional manager. "It allows them to approach that patient and ask the right questions, utilizing their basic vital signs skills, patient assessment and taking the proper course of action. The medical scenarios at Melrose Air Force Range, New Mexico, are situations created from after action reports from deployed personnel."

The important feature of the scenarios is their ability to help medics think outside the box.

"Each scenario is built to be able to go different ways depending on the decisions the participants make," Yates said. "Healthcare is a very interesting and dynamic practice, it's called practice for a reason, and every patient is different."

The lasting effect of the EMT Rodeo is the cultivation of a culture of sharing experience among various generations of Airmen and ultimately ensuring readiness to perform the mission and develop stronger leaders.

"I was in their situation literally 10 years ago, and now I get to pass on this torch to these participants," Yates said.



*Air Force Emergency Medical Technicians rush to a simulated patient during the 27th Special Operations Medical Group's EMT Rodeo Aug. 9, at Melrose Air Force Range, New Mexico. Twenty-one teams from Air Force bases around the world visited MAFR and Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico, to participate in the EMT Rodeo, giving the technicians a wide assortment of scenarios to test their knowledge and training in the medical field. Photo by Senior Airman Luke Kitterman.*



## MARINE CORPS FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



**Maj. Gen. Carl E. Mundy III, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command commander, gives a condolence speech during a celebration of life ceremony at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Aug. 31. The ceremony honored the seven MARSOC service members lost July 10 in a KC-130T Hercules transport aircraft crash. The seven included Staff Sgts. Robert Cox and William Kundrat, Navy special amphibious reconnaissance corpsman, Petty Officer 1st Class Ryan Lohrey , and Sgts. Chad Jenson, Dietrich Schmieman, Joseph Murray and Talon Leach. Photo by Sgt. Salvador R. Moreno.**

# Seven fallen Raiders honored

**By U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Salvador R. Moreno  
MARSOC Public Affairs**

Marines, Sailors and family members gathered to remember and celebrate the lives of six critical skills operators and one Navy special amphibious reconnaissance corpsman from U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command during a celebration of life ceremony at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Aug. 31.

The seven Raiders, from 2nd Marine Raider Battalion, and nine Marine reservists from Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 452, were killed July 10 when their KC-130T Hercules transport

aircraft crashed in Leflore County, Miss. The aircraft was delivering the seven MARSOC Raiders to Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., for predeployment training.

The Marines and Sailors of 2nd MRB paid tribute to their fallen brothers in a solemn ceremony with fond memories shared for each of the men. The six Marines and Sailor were: Staff Sgt. Robert Cox, 28, from Hampstead, N.C., Staff Sgt. William Kundrat, 33, from Frederick, Md., Sgt. Chad Jenson, 25, from Redondo Beach, Calif., Sgt. Dietrich Schmieman, 26, from Richland, Wash., Sgt. Joseph Murray, 26, from Jacksonville, Fla., Sgt. Talon Leach, 27, from Fulton, Mo., and Petty Officer 1st Class Ryan Lohrey, 30,

from Middletown, Ind.

"Anytime you lose anyone, whether it's one person or whether it's 16, it's not easy," said 1st Sgt. Jordan Freeland, a 2nd MRB company first sergeant. "Any loss that we have is tough on everybody, not only the families but the unit itself and the guys they worked alongside on a day-to-day basis."

The service members have already been laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery and others closer to their hometowns. The celebration of life however, serves as a way for friends, family and fellow service members to remember the great things of each of their lives. One service member spoke on behalf of each of the fallen, recalling humorous memories, their many honorable qualities, and what set each man apart from others, commemorating the lives they lived.

MARSOC Commander, Maj. Gen. Carl E. Mundy III, offered his condolences to the families and his thoughts on honoring them and their sacrifices in the years ahead.

"I have witnessed some tremendous examples of resilience and strength because each of you modeled it with grace and dignity in the wake of this tragedy," said Mundy, as he addressed the families. "Their lives were sadly cut short, and there's nothing we can do about that, except to let their lives and the ways they lived them serve as an inspiration for all of us - to live as they did. They lived life full bore, with a sense of joy and meaning that only derives from service and sacrifice."

He continued to say the Marines and Sailor lived intentionally and fully, not safely or by avoiding hardships.

"Their lives were spent fulfilling a distinguished purpose, each a life well-lived," he said.

Army Gen. Raymond Thomas III, commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, Marine Gen. Glenn Walters, the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, Brig. Gen. Bradley James, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing commander, and Marine Lt. Gen. Joseph Osterman, deputy commander, USSOCOM, met with

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*Their lives were sadly cut short, and there's nothing we can do about that, except to let their lives and the ways they lived them serve as an inspiration for all of us - to live as they did. They lived life full bore, with a sense of joy and meaning that only derives from service and sacrifice.*

— Maj. Gen. Carl E. Mundy III

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the families and fellow teammates prior to the ceremony to express their sympathies.

"The Marines are going to respond how their leadership responds," said Freeland. "The biggest thing that enables us to push forward is that leadership aspect - to understand that we just went through a traumatic

piece but at the same time there is still work ahead of us."



*A critical skills operator with U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, hangs the dog tags for one of seven fallen service members onto 2d Marine Raider Battalion's soldier's cross display at a celebration of life ceremony at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Aug. 31. Each person who spoke on behalf of one of the fallen service members, hung their respective dog tags onto the cross, which will be displayed at 2d MRB's headquarters building. Photo by Sgt. Salvador R. Moreno.*



## MARINE CORPS FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

# MARSOC Marine retains title as Ultimate Tactical Athlete

**By U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Bryann Whitley  
Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command**

Sgt. Ethan Mawhinney, a Pittsburgh native and a Marine Air Ground Task Force planner with U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, successfully defended his championship title at the Marine Corps' third annual HITT Tactical Athlete Competition at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Aug. 28-31, 2017.

The competition brings together the top male and female Marines from each Marine Corps installation in a demanding competition of military functional fitness and to promote the advanced dynamics found in the High Intensity Tactical

Training program. The HITT program is comprised of seven foundational movements: squat, press, lunge, plank, rotate, pull and push for a full-body, functional workout.

Mawhinney participated in the first competition in 2015, only a few months after completing the HITT Level 1 Instructor Course. He was still new to the HITT program and didn't know what to expect when arriving at the competition. He attributed his sixth place finish to his lack of knowledge and proper preparation.

"I wasn't really prepared for what the competition consisted of," said Mawhinney. "I was still pretty new and didn't have the knowledge to really succeed in the competition yet."



**U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Ethan Mawhinney, a Marine Air Ground Task Force planner with U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, competes in an 880-meter Tactical Hill Climb during the Marine Corps third annual HITT Tactical Athlete Competition at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Aug. 28th through 31st. Mawhinney won this year's competition, successfully defending his title two years in a row as Male Division Champion at the 2017 competition. Courtesy photo by Marine Corps Community Services Camp Pendleton.**

Unsatisfied with the results, Mawhinney used his knowledge of the competition and HITT program to overhaul his workout routine and prepare for the 2016 competition. He did three-a-day workouts consisting of sprints and distance running along with HITT workouts, seeking to break himself down before building his body back up.

While some competitors only start preparing a few months prior to the event, Mawhinney starts preparing after a short break of one to two weeks following the previous competition. Around June, Mawhinney said he ramped up his workout routine and focused on workouts meant to get ready for the competition.

He took first place in 2016, proving his hard work had paid off. Despite the win, Mawhinney felt the pressure of a narrow point gap between his final standing and that of the second place finisher.

After the 2016 competition, Mawhinney checked into MARSOC where he leaned on the physical trainers at the MARSOC Performance and Resiliency (PERRES) program to help fine tune his workout program. The PERRES trainers helped him adjust his training to consist of more explosive workouts, emphasizing heavy lifting versus faster, light-weight lifting and calisthenics.

"I worked a lot on explosiveness - little things like short, 15-yard sprints, for training take-off speed," said Mawhinney.

His workouts also consisted of drills involving box jumps, modified explosive push-ups, and Olympic-style lifting. Mawhinney significantly trained his anaerobic threshold to increase his stamina for events. He stated that the typical human threshold tends to be around two minutes, but the events at the competition are around four to six minutes.

Because the scoring system is based off the time it takes to complete an event, Mawhinney said he didn't want to lose points by pacing himself throughout the events. Instead, he focused his energy into one daily workout after noticing an increase in injuries resulting from the intense frequency of workouts the previous year. His revamped program featured longer, more intense and harder workouts versus the shorter, easier ones from previous years. Mawhinney added in a second daily workout during the final stretch before the competition.

"The biggest thing we changed with this year's workouts was increasing his speed and power versus volume," said Alli Clauss, a MARSOC PERRES strength and conditioning coach. "Every workout we did had a point behind it."

Mawhinney came in 1st place again in this year's

competition, maintaining his title as Male Division Champion for the 2017 HITT Tactical Athlete Competition. Mawhinney represented Camp Lejeune against 16 male competitors; the female division featured 15 athletes.

"[Looking back at my performance] there wasn't any one thing that I thought I really wanted to work on," said Mawhinney after this year's competition. "I just want to get better at everything for next year."

Along with increasing physical fitness, Mawhinney said the competition and the discipline required to train for such an event really bring together some of the best and physically fit Marines. One of the biggest enjoyments for him was the atmosphere provided by those Marines. Mawhinney commented that for him it's not about lifting and working out to look good, but to be the best Marine he can be- an opportunity provided by the Tactical Athlete Competition.

"I've heard it said that we should work out for two reasons: to make ourselves better at killing the enemy and to make ourselves harder for the enemy to kill," said Mawhinney. "I think that really matches with what the HITT program does in having that tactical athlete mindset. You're lifting and running or whatever workout you choose - to make yourself better and this competition gives you an opportunity to work towards that goal - being harder to kill and better at killing."



*Sgt. Ethan Mawhinney, a Marine Air Ground Task Force planner with U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, successfully defended his championship title at the Marine Corps third annual HITT Tactical Athlete Competition at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Aug. 28th through 31st. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Bryann K. Whitley.*



## MARINE CORPS FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

# Rugged blood for rugged men: freeze-dried plasma saves SOF lives

By U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Bryann K. Whitley  
Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command

The life of a partner nation force member was saved last month through MARSOC's first operational use of freeze-dried plasma.

The foreign ally sustained life-threatening injuries during an operation in the U.S. Central Command area of operations, requiring battlefield trauma care made possible by MARSOC training and availability of the new product.

According to U.S. Navy Lt. Eric Green, force health protection officer, freeze-dried plasma is providing better medical care on the battlefield. Green is the study coordinator with MARSOC Health Services Support. He explained that freeze-dried plasma is a dehydrated version of plasma that replaces the clotting factors lost in blood. Typically, plasma is frozen and thawed over a period of 45 minutes, preventing quick use in a deployed setting.

Another disadvantage of traditional blood products for special operations is the need for additional equipment, such as refrigerators and electricity. This creates a higher target profile for special operations forces teams, and presents a logistical challenge for Navy corpsmen. Use of such equipment, as well as timely casualty evacuation options, is not always possible during SOF missions. FDP eliminates the need for this equipment and buys precious time for corpsmen to treat the injured before evacuation.

"I think it reassures Raiders that when they're in harm's way, they have a life-saving product in the medical bags of their very capable corpsmen," said Green.

With the need for freezing and refrigeration eliminated, FDP can sustain a wider range of temperatures and is therefore more stable and reliable than traditional plasma during military operations. The dehydrated state of the plasma allows for a shelf life of two years and is compatible with all blood types. Before MARSOC received approval to begin use of freeze-dried plasma, battlefield treatment options for



**Critical Skills Operators with U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command train with freeze-dried plasma during a Raven exercise at Camp Shelby Joint Force Training Center, Miss., May 1. CSOs go through a condensed version of FDP training to familiarize themselves with the product for use in the field. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Salvador R. Moreno.**

hemorrhaging – the leading cause of preventable death on the battlefield – were mainly limited to tourniquets and chemical clotting agents.

"It is stable in the field unlike whole blood or if we were to do fresh plasma or frozen plasma, so our guys can carry it with them in their resuscitative packs," said U.S. Navy Capt. Necia Williams, FDP primary principal

investigator and MARSOC force surgeon with MARSOC HSS. "They can quickly reconstitute it, infuse it to somebody and it buys time that is so critical."

According to U.S. Navy Lt. Aaron Conway, Marine Raider Regiment surgeon with MARSOC HSS, reconstitution happens within six minutes and patients start showing improvement in vital signs minutes later. The precious time bought using FDP allows medical personnel to transfer patients to a hospital where they can receive full medical care. Conway, MARSOC's FDP principal investigator, said during medical care, FDP's effects can be physically seen most in a patient when surgery and recovery is happening.

Since December 2016, every MARSOC special amphibious reconnaissance corpsman deploys with a supply of freeze-dried plasma and the experience to administer it. By October 2017, every MARSOC unit deployed will be outfitted with FDP.

Once the FDP has returned unused from a deployment it goes into quarantine and gets used during training exercises to prepare Navy corpsmen in its use. Corpsmen go through a rigorous academic and practical training process to prepare them for the field. They get practical experience before deploying and learn how to reconstitute and identify the indications to use FDP.

"We've trained with it, we've sourced it to our guys, and now we've actually got the combat wounded application of the product," said Conway. "I think it is a tip of the spear life-saving measure."

This life-saving measure is manufactured by French Centre de Transfusion Sanguine de Armees and used since 1994. They provide the U.S. with FDP while it is pending Food and Drug Administration approval and is under an Investigative New Drug protocol. Currently, the use of FDP has been allowed within U.S. Special Operations Command. MARSOC was the second service component within U.S. Special Operations Command to receive approval for use of freeze-dried plasma.

In 2010, U.S. Navy Adm. William H. McRaven, then-USSOCOM commander, learned that U.S. allied forces were using FDP successfully in Iraq and

Afghanistan. McRaven wanted it made available to U.S. forces, so he pushed his plan and helped expedite the

process between the White House and the FDA.

The main roadblock getting FDA approval was the historical spike of Hepatitis B after World War II, causing the stoppage of production and use by U.S. forces,

resulting in rigorous testing and changes to the original formula. Plasma donors now undergo more testing for infectious diseases to prevent similar events. Freeze-dried plasma is expected to receive FDA approval by 2020.



*Critical skills operators with U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command simulate administering freeze-dried plasma to a role-playing casualty during a Raven predeployment exercise at Camp Shelby Joint Force Training Center, Miss., May 1. Phot by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Salvador R. Moreno.*



## U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - HEADQUARTERS



*Brandon Tseng commands an autonomous drone during the ThunderDrone Tech Expo at SOFWERX in Tampa, Fla., Sept. 5. The expo provided an opportunity for industry, national laboratories and academia to discuss and promote new and innovative drone technology with the special operations community. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.*

# SOFWERX hosts first ever ThunderDrone Tech Expo 2017

*By U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo  
USSOCOM Office of Communication*

The floor at the ThunderDrone Tech Expo buzzed with fully autonomous drones, virtual reality software, a flying explosive, and a robot turtle – science fiction transitioning to reality. ThunderDrone provided the first-ever test bed for USSOCOM with industry, academia and inter-agency participation collaborating on drone prototyping.

Hosted by SOFWERX, the exposition provided a week-long opportunity for industry, national laboratories and academia to discuss and promote new and innovative drone

technology with the special operations community, just as pioneers in World War I aviation, both military and civilian, raced to develop air superiority to defeat our World War I enemies.

Progressively, terrorist organizations are increasing their use of drones, sometimes modifying them with explosives, creating a new type of improvised explosive device. Other U.S. adversaries continue to develop their own unmanned aerial vehicle capabilities as well.

“I think there are a lot of threats and unknowns in the world today,” said Rickey White, a representative of drone developing company Flynoceros. “We don’t know what they

are or how to counteract them, and they're approaching rapidly."

The military isn't just standing by. By hosting events such as ThunderDrone, the first rapid prototyping event of its kind put on by SOFWERX, they are enabling the fusion of drone knowledge through collaboration to overcome emerging threats.

"Having so many different minds from their own niche, work toward solutions they think are important can only be more beneficial in the broad spectrum," said White.

U.S. Air Force Capt. Michael Ryan, an acquisition officer assigned to U.S. Special Operations Command, expressed hope the expo, with industry assistance, moves technology forward into something that can eventually reach the warfighter.

"There's an end goal," he told developers. "What can we do if we can put you together and get you to work together?"

Although many associate drones with airstrikes, the capabilities of the technology at the exposition served a wide range of fields, from ocean sea floor mapping to defensive ground equipment protecting deployed service members.

"We have the full spectrum here," Ryan said.

Importantly, warfighter participation was a key factor in

technical discovery for special operations forces applications. More than 100 warfighters and representatives developed and participated in the vignettes for the expo demonstration.

"Having warfighters included early and often to shape this event truly made it a great success," said Kelly Stratton-Feix, director, acquisition agility. "Warfighter participation and feedback makes for creative and ingenious ways of looking at these technologies."

However, like innovations in WWI aircraft between the Allied and the Central Powers, some advancements require further iterations to continue the development process. Like their predecessors, today's innovators will continue pushing forward in the form of future refinement workshops.

"We haven't defined what that will focus on, but it will focus on an area, and we hope to do it just like this one with all the lessons learned on this, and see what we can get," he said.

Prototyping events will continue through Nov. 1, where the "rodeo" will capstone the first series of events. Events will continue through June 2018 with continued opportunities for warfighters to participate and influence the direction of new and novel drone capabilities for SOF application.



**Military and civilian personnel attend the ThunderDrone Tech Expo at SOFWERX in Tampa, Fla., Sept. 5. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.**



## U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - HEADQUARTERS



*U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Scott Howell, vice commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, addresses the audience during the day-long Sovereign Challenge Fall Seminar in Washington, D.C., Sept. 25. USSOCOM hosted Sovereign Challenge to engage foreign military and national security policy leadership on shared strategic priorities. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.*

# USSOCOM hosts international Sovereign Challenge fall seminar

By U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo  
USSOCOM Office of Communication

United States Special Operations Command hosted the day-long Sovereign Challenge Fall Seminar entitled “Collective Approaches to Countering Islamist Extremism: Sources and Solutions.”

More than 64 participants from 47 countries, including 26 flag officers, as well as personnel from the Department of State, the National Counterterrorism Center, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Joint Staff, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense participated in the conference.

“Sovereignty continues to remain a tough challenge for all of us,” said U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Scott Howell, vice commander of U.S. Special Operations Command. “Violent extremism poses a threat to every nation,” he continued.

“Left unchecked and bolstered by this hyperconnected world, this brand of extremism will continue to manifest itself around the world.”

For more than 12 years, Sovereign Challenge has served as an avenue for discussing current issues regarding national sovereignty and security. This year’s focus on counterterrorism continued to fill that prescription.

Keynote speaker, Professor Niall Ferguson, a senior fellow of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, and the Center for European Studies at Harvard University, addressed the conference in a fireside chat format moderated by retired U.S. Ambassador Alberto Fernandez, president of Middle East Broadcasting Networks, to analyze strategies for global stability.

“I’m increasingly struck by the tension in the world today between networks and sovereign states,” Ferguson said.

“Most of history is the story of an interplay

between hierarchical structures, like sovereign states, and distributed networks,” he said. “And for most of history, the hierarchical structures have the upper hand.”

However, he explained that technological changes have empowered modern networks, similar to how the printing press empowered European non-state actors in the 16th and 17th centuries with ideas that “would simply have been snuffed out as heresy in any previous century.”

He went on to recommend engaging in competition to produce better schools and promoting education as a powerful means of countering extremism.

“If that is our strategy, then I think it has some prospect of success,” Ferguson concluded.

The keynote speaking engagement was followed by a panel discussion featuring Mark E. Mitchell, acting assistant secretary of defense for special operations and

low-intensity conflict for the Department of Defense; Daniel Kimmage, acting coordinator and special envoy, Global Engagement Center, Department of State; U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Mitchell Bradley, director of the Transregional Threats Coordination Cell, J5, Joint Staff; and Bassam Barabandi, political advisor to the (Syrian) High Negotiations Committee.

“We find this program to be a valuable means of maintaining strategic dialog with our partners and gaining context and gaining perspective on some of the hard problems we collectively must deal with,” Howell said.

Sovereign Challenge began in 2004 when USSOCOM invited a group of defense attachés from Washington, D.C., to Tampa, Florida, to discuss major issues of concern to their respective nations. Since then, conference participation has focused on accredited military, defense attachés and security-related diplomats from D.C.-based foreign embassies.

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*I'm increasingly struck by the tension in the world today between networks and sovereign states.*

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*— Professor Niall Ferguson*



## U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - HEADQUARTERS

# Gen. Votel's official portrait unveiled at USSOCOM headquarters

By USSOCOM Office of Communication

U.S. Special Operations Command unveiled the official portrait of U.S. Army Gen. Joseph L. Votel during a ceremony held at its headquarters on MacDill Air Force Base, in Tampa, Florida, Aug. 15.

Votel, who currently serves as the commander of U.S. Central Command, served as the USSOCOM commander from August 2014 to March 2016 and was the tenth commander to be responsible for ensuring the readiness of Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps special operations forces and synchronizing special operations planning.

The unveiling was hosted by the current and eleventh USSOCOM commander Army Gen. Raymond A. Thomas III and was attended by numerous senior leaders from across the USSOCOM enterprise as well as family and friends. During the event, Thomas commended Votel for his contributions to USSOCOM and for his handling of challenging issues during his time in command.

"It's important to take time to commemorate 20 months of extraordinary service here at the command by General Votel," Thomas said. "So it's my personal honor and privilege to recognize you today as the tenth commander of SOCOM, memorialized here forever with your portrait ... we are very proud of everything you accomplished during your historic stint here."

The portrait was commissioned by private donors to portrait and conceptual figurative painter Jonathan Linton. Linton's works have been featured in New York Magazine, Business Week and American Art Collector as well as national and international collections. The painting will find a permanent home in the halls of the USSOCOM headquarters where it will accompany the nine other



*U.S. Army Gen. Raymond A. Thomas III, commander U.S. Special Operations Command, right, U.S. Army Gen. Joseph L. Votel, commander U.S. Central Command, and his wife, Michelle, unveil Votel's official portrait commemorating him as the tenth commander of USSOCOM during a ceremony held at USSOCOM headquarters on MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., Aug. 15. Votel commanded USSOCOM from August 2014 to March 2016 when he became the USCENTCOM commander. Photo by U.S. Army Master Sgt. Timothy Lawn.*

portraits of former USSOCOM commanders.

"There is not a day that goes by that I don't think about the people, that I don't think about the events, I don't think about the activities that I had the opportunity to experience and the opportunities that were presented to me in this organization," Votel said. "I am very, very humbled to be included among the group of former commanders who have the opportunity to have their portrait displayed here in this illustrious headquarters with this great history."



**U.S. Army**  
**Staff Sgt. Bryan C. Black**  
**3rd Special Forces Group**  
**(Airborne)**



**U.S. Army**  
**Staff Sgt. Jeremiah W. Johnson**  
**3rd Special Forces Group**  
**(Airborne)**



**U.S. Army**  
**Sgt. La David Johnson**  
**3rd Special Forces Group**  
**(Airborne)**



**U.S. Army**  
**Staff Sgt. Emil Rivera-Lopez**  
**160th Special Operations Aviation**  
**Regiment (Airborne)**



**U.S. Army**  
**Staff Sgt. Dustin M. Wright**  
**3rd Special Forces Group**  
**(Airborne)**

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



CV-22 Osprey's from the 352d Special Operations Wing fly around southern England Aug. 31. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Philip Steiner.