

Tip Spear

August 2023

**Remembering
Gen. Lindsay,
first USSOCOM
commander**



United States Special Operations Command



Remembering Gen. Lindsay, first USSOCOM commander ... 34

Tip of the Spear

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2022 Defense Media Merit Award Winner

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(Cover) Gen. James J. Lindsay, the first U.S. Special Operations commander, died Aug. 5, 2023 at the age of 90. He was a distinguished combat leader, recognized multiple times for his bravery and leadership on the battlefield, and earned our Nation's second highest honor for valor, the Distinguished Service Cross. He served this Nation for nearly 40 years and continued to mentor and advocate for the SOF and Airborne community long after his time in uniform. (Above) Vice President George Bush, left, talks to Major General James Lindsay during his visit to Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina in 1982. Courtesy Photo.

The Quiet Professionals

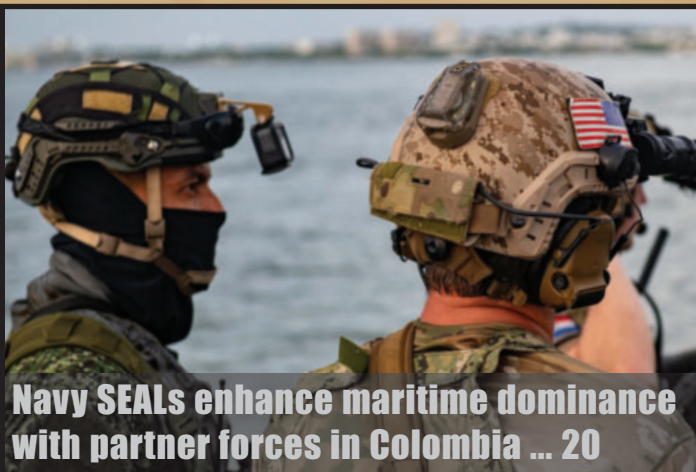
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U.S. Special Operations Command - Africa



SOCAFRICA holds change of command ceremony

Courtesy Story
Special Operations Command Africa

Navy Rear Adm. Ronald A. Foy assumed command of U.S. Special Operations Command Africa, July 21, from Navy Rear Adm. Milton J. Sands III, during a change of command ceremony at Kelley Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany. Foy becomes the 8th commander of SOCAFRICA since the

command's inception in 2008.

"The ceremony is symbolic," said Gen. Michael Langley, commander of U.S. Africa Command Commander. "It represents the continuity of operations and dedication of our mission. It allows us the moment in time to reflect ... recognizing our past accomplishments, but how we're preparing for the challenges of our future, and the challenges that lie ahead."



(From left to right) U.S. Marine Corps. Gen. Michael E. Langley, commander of U.S. Africa Command; U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Milton J. Sands III, outgoing commander of U.S. Special Operations Command Africa; U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Garric M. Banfield, senior enlisted leader of SOCAFRICA; and U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Ronald A. Foy, commander of SOCAFRICA listen to a speech during SOCAFRICA's change of command ceremony at Kelley Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany, July 21, 2023. Sands will go on to serve as the chief of staff of U.S. Special Operations Command in Tampa, Florida. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brandon Julson.



U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Milton J. Sands III, outgoing commander of U.S. Special Operations Command Africa, renders a salute to Navy Rear Adm. Ronald A. Foy, incoming commander of SOCAFRICA, during a change of command ceremony at Kelley Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany, July 21, 2023. Foy became the 8th commander of SOCAFRICA since its inception in 2008. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brandon Julson.

Foy comes to SOCAFRICA with a wide expertise in joint special operations. He has served senior roles in Naval Special Warfare Group, Joint Reconnaissance Task Force and the Joint Special Operations Command. His most recent assignments include serving as the deputy commander of the Naval Special Warfare Command and as the deputy director for global operations, J-39, J-3, Joint Staff.

“To the men and women and families of SOCAF, that is what this is really about – you’re phenomenal,” said Foy. “I’ve seen a lot over the last week, and I intend to see more. Thank you very much for the hospitality, the turnover and I look forward to getting to work with you.”

Sands assumed his command position on July 1, 2021. He will now be serving as the chief of staff for U.S. Special Operations Command under Army Gen. Bryan P. Fenton, commander of USSOCOM.

Fenton spoke of the accomplishments achieved across the area of responsibility under Sands’ leadership.

“It’s particularly a great day for SOCAFRICA,” said Fenton. “We get to stop and pause and reflect on the incredible achievements of this organization that have been done in the last couple [of] years under the stewardship of Jamie Sands, but also the legacy of SOCAFRICA has been a key part of this component for the past few years – better yet, we get to say ‘thank you’ to a great leader.”

Sands reflected on his time as the commander of

SOCAFRICA, and the talent demonstrated by the command during his tenure.

“I’d like to thank the men and women of SOCAF for all you do to support the mission,” said Sands. “Take care of one another and strengthen the connection across this command. It has been my honor and pleasure to serve with you.”

The primary responsibility of SOCAFRICA is to exercise operational control over theater-assigned or allocated Air Force, Army, Marine or Navy special operations forces conducting operations, exercises and theater security cooperation in the U.S. AFRICOM area of responsibility. Members assigned to SOCAFRICA conduct the full spectrum of SOF missions and closely works with component, interagency and partner nations to safeguard U.S. lives and interests in Africa.



U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Ronald A. Foy, incoming commander of U.S. Special Operations Command Africa, cuts a cake alongside U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Milton J. Sands III, outgoing commander of SOCAFRICA, during a reception following SOCAFRICA’s change of command ceremony at Kelley Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany, July 21, 2023. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brandon Julson.

U.S. Special Operations Command - Africa



US Special Operations Command Africa partners with Benin Forces in first civil affairs engagement



U.S. Army Capt. Stephanie DeRiso, 91st Civil Affairs Battalion Team Lead, gives remarks during a graduation ceremony for members that participated in a civil joint combined exchange training, July 17, 2023. The training covered civil engagement, civil reconnaissance, civil knowledge integration, and tactical combat casualty care skills that reinforce capabilities to build relationships within rural communities and reduce vulnerabilities to violent extremist organizations. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Amy Younger.

Courtesy Story Special Operations Command Africa

Special Operations Command Africa forces partnered with the Benin Armed Forces during the inaugural civil affairs joint combined exchange training that concluded July 20, 2023, in Cotonou, Benin. The U.S. Army's 91st Civil Affairs Battalion collaborated

with their Beninese partners to conduct this JCET and a separate medical civic action program engagement that immediately followed.

This engagement led by Capt. Stephanie DeRiso, is also the first time a woman has led a JCET in Benin. "Civil affairs is uniquely qualified...to work on that civil-military relationship and build those dynamics in a positive way for the local governments, the militaries,"



Benin Armed Forces Lt. Col. Jules Agbidi, Air Base Cana UN Peacekeeping Facility Commandant, gives closing remarks after a graduation ceremony for members that participated in a civil joint combined exchange training, July 17, 2023. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Amy Younger.

said DeRiso. “All these entities have to come together and essentially be able to listen to the people. We are uniquely capable of providing that liaison capability.”

The CA JCET focused on the key areas of civil engagement, civil reconnaissance, civil knowledge integration, and tactical combat casualty care. Civil affairs serves a critical role in our partnership development as military and tactical prowess alone are insufficient to effectively counter malign activity.

Implementing a whole-of-government, civic engagement approach is essential to directly address the root causes of instability within a community.

“The Beninese are a strong and capable partner who face head-on persistent threats from [violent extremist organizations] and criminal networks in the North,” said Lt. Col. Ian McConnell, commander of the Special Operations Task Force for North and West Africa. “It’s

The Beninese are a strong and capable partner who face head-on persistent threats from [violent extremist organizations] and criminal networks in the North. It’s civil-military engagements like the kind we have witnessed here that play such an important role in actually securing progress and creating space for social and government reach across Benin.

— Lt. Col. Ian McConnell

bond between the military and the citizens it pledges to defend and protect.

interoperability.

U.S. forces conducted four previous non-CA special operations JCETs in the last two years with the Beninese and participated in past Flintlock exercises, including 2023’s iteration with multiple African partner and allied forces. This recent JCET and MEDCAP serve to continue to expand the growing partnership with Benin in future security cooperation engagements.

civil-military engagements like the kind we have witnessed here that play such an important role in actually securing progress and creating space for social and government reach across Benin.”

In a separate engagement directly following the CA JCET, U.S. CA forces collaborated with Benin to host a MEDCAP in Cana, Benin. During this event, U.S. and Benin forces treated over 500 patients on a wide array of conditions to include malaria, bacterial and parasitic infections, wound care, and viral illnesses. The team also provided diagnostic care for underlying conditions to the surrounding community.

“By offering this basic medical care to the local population, we strive to deepen the ties between the local community and the Armed Forces of Benin,” said U.S. Ambassador to Benin Brian Shukan. “It is a gesture that reflects our unwavering commitment to fostering trust, bridging gaps, and solidifying the

JCETs are unique to special operations forces as they enable partnerships through the exchange of knowledge and training. JCETs serve to enhance U.S. relationships with partner nations by fostering and maintaining critical military-to-military connections and boosting joint and allied mission readiness and

U.S. Special Operations Command - Europe



US Special Forces conduct military free-fall airborne operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina

*By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Anthony Bryant
U.S. Special Operations Command Europe*

A Special Forces military free-fall detachment assigned to 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) performed airborne operations from June 21 – 24, 2023, to demonstrate military-to-military cooperation with the Armed Forces of Bosnia-Herzegovina (AFBiH).

U.S. special operations forces conduct military free-fall airborne operations when enemy air defense systems, terrain restrictions, or a politically sensitive environment prevent low-altitude infiltration or when mission needs require a clandestine insertion.

“We were able to bring [AFBiH Joint Terminal Attack Controllers] out onto the drop zone and show them what talking to an aircraft looks like while conducting a military free-fall operation,” said the Special Forces team sergeant. “Every step of the way, our [military free-fall] operations included aircraft communication between AFBiH JTACs and reconnaissance elements.”

CH-47 Chinook and UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters assigned to 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade at Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia, provided air support to the military free-fall detachment.

“We conducted one jump at 13,500 feet; the rest of our jumps were conducted at 10,000 feet above ground altitude,” the team sergeant continued. “We have the capability of exiting an aircraft as high as 30,000 feet above the ground with the ability to deploy our parachutes as low as 5,000 feet, allowing us to maximize airspace away from that drop zone thus masking my aircraft and protecting my jumpers.”

For the airborne operation, a drop zone safety officer (DZSO) party, composed of U.S. SOF personnel from Kosovo, monitored surface winds, marked the drop zone



A U.S. Army Green Beret with 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) parachutes during military free-fall operations in Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina, June 22, 2023. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Anthony Bryant.

indicating wind direction to descending parachutists, and eliminated ground hazards.

Military free-fall operations showcased U.S. Forces positioned around Europe coming together to participate in the engagement in Bosnia-Herzegovina highlighting the benefit of conducting bilateral airborne operations and maintaining military proficiencies while deployed, noted the detachment commander.

U.S. Ambassador to Bosnia-Herzegovina Michael J. Murphy observed the detachment’s airborne operations from the drop zone.

The detachment commander also said that an intriguing aspect of the airborne operation was seeing how a U.S. Embassy country team, working alongside the U.S. Army, could achieve combined tactical training in-country.

Ambassador Murphy is supportive of the detachment and furthermore, U.S. SOF, he continued. Training events like military free-fall airborne operations demonstrate the United States’ rock-solid commitment to Bosnia-Herzegovina’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.



A U.S. Army Green Beret with 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) jumps from a CH-47 Chinook helicopter during military free-fall operations in Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina, June 21, 2023. U.S. Special Operations Forces conduct military free-fall airborne operations when enemy air defense systems, terrain restrictions, or a politically sensitive environment prevent low-altitude infiltration or when mission needs require a clandestine insertion. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Nicholas Moyte.

U.S. Special Operations Command - Korea



Republic of Korea Air Force, US Special Operations leaders reflect on decades-long alliance

*By U.S. Air Force Maj. Christopher Mesnard
Special Operations Command Korea*

Demonstrating the decades-long alliance between the Republic of Korea and U.S., Republic of Korea Air Force Gen. Sang-hwa Jung, chief of staff of the Air Force, welcomed Air Force Lt. Gen. Tony Bauernfeind, commander of Air Force Special Operations Command, back to the Korean Peninsula, July 13.

Bauernfeind, who previously served as the

commanding general of Special Operations Command Korea from April 2016-June 2019, made the visit as part of a multi-day theater circulation in the Indo-Pacific region.

During their meeting, Bauernfeind and Jung discussed the unique capabilities of each nation's Air and Space Forces, with special emphasis on the role and integration of special operations forces as a key advantage in times of competition and conflict.

"In the special operations community, we know our



Republic of Korea Air Force Gen. Sang-hwa Jung, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Tony Bauernfeind, Air Force Special Operations Command commander, discuss the unique training requirements associated with the conventional and special operations air power on the Korean Peninsula, July 13, 2023, at the ROKAF headquarters in the Republic of Korea. At 70 years old, the ROK-U.S. Alliance is one of the most enduring partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region and the two leaders took time to identify future opportunities that strengthen the relationship between the two nations. Photo by U.S. Air Force Maj. Christopher Mesnard.



U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Derek Lipson, right, Special Operations Command Korea commander, shares his perspective of the unique relationship between special operations forces and conventional air forces in Korea with Republic of Korea Air Force Lt. Gen. Ha Sik Park, left, Air Force Operations Command commander, and U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Tony Bauernfeind, center, Air Force Special Operations Command commander, during a meeting on July 13, 2023, at Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea. Photo by U.S. Air Force Maj. Christopher Mesnard.

people are our competitive advantage, underpinned by the enduring relationships we have around the world,” said Bauernfeind. “It is an absolute pleasure and honor to have served here in Korea and to be back again to see that the resolute friendship of the ROK-U.S. alliance is more vibrant than ever.”

Jung and Bauernfeind discussed topics ranging from special operations capabilities unique to each nation’s air forces, joint and combined integration in the region and globally, and the continued strengthening of the 70-year ROK-U.S. alliance.

In addition to meeting with the ROKAF top general officer, Bauernfeind also visited with the commander of the ROKAF Air Force Operations Command Lt. Gen. Ha Sik Park and the current SOCKOR commander, Brig. Gen. Derek Lipson.

“For 50 years, the U.S. Special Operations Command Korea has partnered with our ROK allies, a relationship we continue today and into the future,” said Lipson. “We take great pride in working with our ROK counterparts to enable their priorities here on the peninsula, in the region and globally.”

A common theme throughout the visit was a need to develop people capable of adapting to evolving technology, threats and opportunities.

“Our adversaries will not fight or compete in a way we consider regular or fair – it’s not advantageous for them to do so,” said Lipson. “We expect

adversaries who adapt, innovate, remain flexible and challenge us in non-traditional ways. This means we must maintain the proficiency to carry out our missions to create advantage and opportunity below the scale of armed conflict.”

Recently, AFSOC Air Commandos supported a forward area refueling point demonstration with ROKAF personnel in attendance to observe the capability that enables agile combat employment across a variety of austere and contested environments.

“The value of landing one of our MC-130Js or other aircraft on unimproved and improvised airstrips cannot be overstated,” said Bauernfeind. “When you have the ability to refuel and rearm air assets virtually anywhere there’s enough space to land, you complicate an adversary’s ability to decide where and what to strike past the point of effective decision making. With our allies, creating these kinds of options for leaders is the

SOF value proposition.”

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the ROK-U.S. Alliance and 50th anniversary since the establishment of SOCKOR.



Chief Master Sgt. Yoon, Republic of Korea Air Force, and U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Anthony Green, Air Force Special Operations Command command chief, pose for a photo at the ROKAF headquarters, Republic of Korea after discussing the enduring and strategic relationship between their two nations on July 13, 2023. Photo by U.S. Air Force Maj. Christopher Mesnard.

U.S. Special Operations Command - North



SOF in Exercise Arctic Edge 23

*By U.S. Air Force Major John Giaquinto
SOCNORTH Public Affairs*

Earlier this year, U.S. Special Operations troops deployed to the Arctic region, to include Greenland, as part of Exercise Arctic Edge 23.

“Realistic, iterative exercises like Arctic Edge 23 increase operational capability across the joint special operations community to better prepare the force for competition and conflict in the high north,” said Army Col. Matthew Tucker, commander Special Operations Command North. “This arctic-focused exercise provides us an opportunity to hone current capabilities

and test the next generation systems necessary to secure the homeland.”

Arctic Edge is a U.S. NORTHCOM Arctic-focused exercise and is part of the SECDEF-implemented Consolidated Strategic Opportunity-5. The U.S. is an Arctic nation with enduring relationships and security interests in the Arctic region, and a critical region for power projection and for homeland defense.

This exercise demonstrated U.S. military commitment to mutual strategic security interests in the Arctic region and provided opportunities to validate Arctic capabilities in defense of North America.

Operators train in unforgiving terrain Pituffik Space Base, Greenland to demonstrate operational capabilities that are critical for integrated deterrence and layered defense during Arctic Edge 23. Courtesy photo.





SOF train in austere environments to demonstrate their resiliency and advanced operational capabilities that are critical for integrated deterrence in the Pan-Arctic region. Courtesy photo.



(Above and below) U.S. Special Forces train in extreme cold weather environments, which allows them to assess their equipment and capabilities in defense of North America during Arctic Edge 23. Courtesy photo.



West Coast-based Naval Special Warfare operators practice ice climbing techniques during high-altitude, cold weather mountaineering training during Arctic Edge 23, near Chickaloon, Alaska. Arctic Edge 23 provides an opportunity to demonstrate the ability to deploy Naval Special Warfare operators to the Arctic and develop skills for operating in austere environments. Naval Special Warfare is the nation's elite maritime special operations force, uniquely positioned to extend the Fleet's reach and gain and maintain access for the Joint Force in competition and conflict. Courtesy photo.



US Navy SEALs, Australian Special Forces conclude Talisman Sabre 2023

*By U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Daniel Gaither
Naval Special Warfare Group ONE*

U.S. Naval Special Warfare forces, deployed in support of U.S. Special Operations Command Pacific, participated in Exercise Talisman Sabre, July 17-Aug. 3, where they worked alongside Australian special operations forces from the Army's 2nd Commando Regiment.

Talisman Sabre is a biennial exercise designed to advance a free and open Indo-Pacific by strengthening partnerships and interoperability among key allies. The spelling of the name — sabre vs. saber — reflects which country is leading the exercise: Talisman Sabre when Australia leads and Talisman Saber when the U.S. leads.

Members of NSW and Australian SOF spent several weeks training together in the lead up to Talisman Sabre, practicing scenarios designed to increase partnership, interoperability and crisis response capabilities.

“Our training with the Australian SOF members before the exercise prepared us for success by providing iteration training, which allowed us to work through issues and streamline our procedures,” said the NSW unit’s officer in charge. “The bilateral training we conducted during Talisman Sabre focused on integrating and exchanging maritime insertion methods and small unit tactics.”

As part of the exercise, operators from both countries practiced unique training scenarios in a multinational environment, that enhanced their abilities to respond together as part of a joint or combined force.

The NSW unit began Talisman Sabre conducting combined small arms fire, fast rope drills and close-quarter combat familiarization with their Australian counterparts in Sydney. Training later shifted to Queensland, where the combined forces executed both day and nighttime joint maritime insertion scenarios.

“During this collaboration with Australian SOF members, it reminded us of the critical importance of including face-to-face planning when operating with our



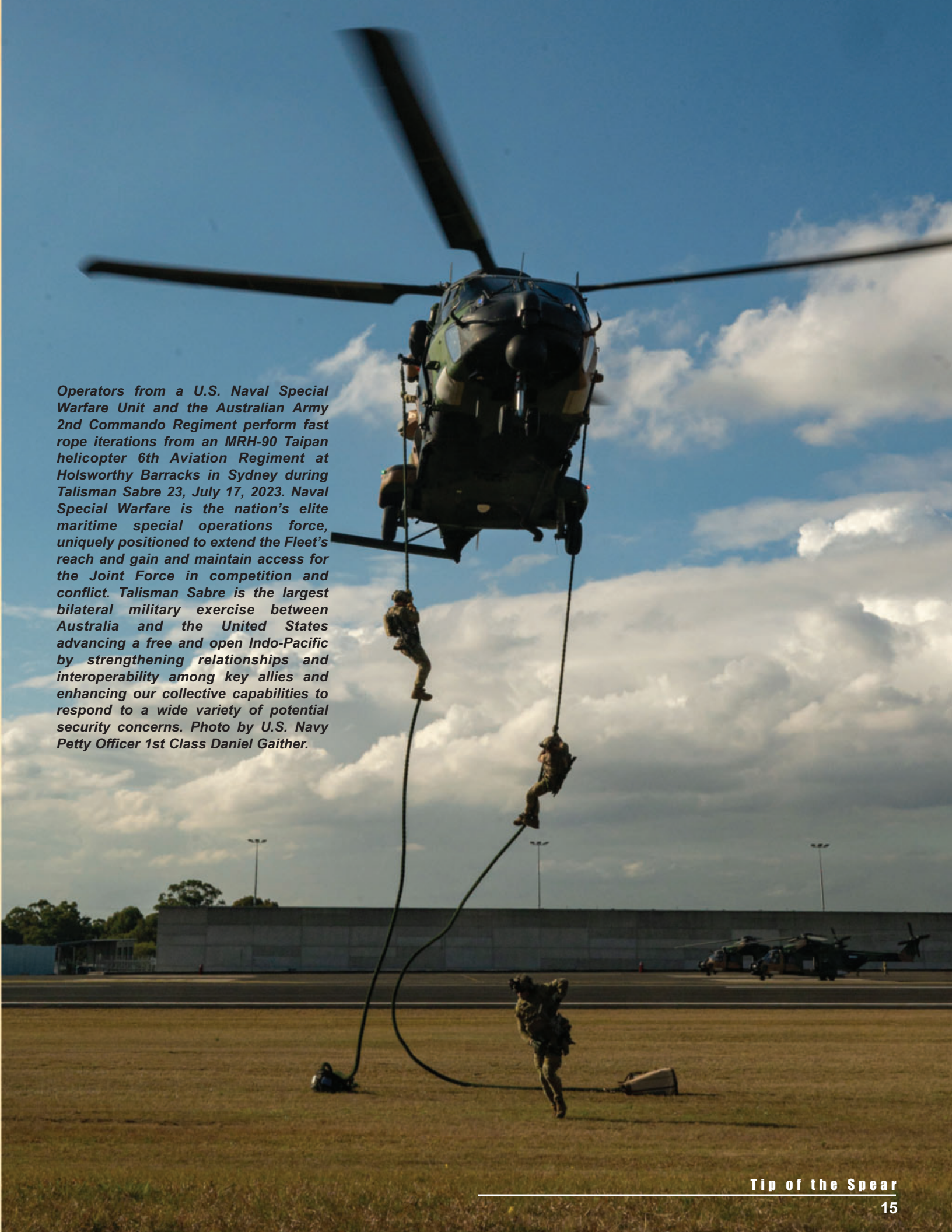
Operators from a U.S. Naval Special Warfare Unit shoot simulated targets while conducting close quarter combat training with the Australian Army 2nd Commando Regiment at Holsworthy Barracks in New South Wales. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Daniel Gaither.

allies,” said an operator with NSW. “Without a doubt, our work together has deepened relations and we are thankful for the warm welcome and hospitality from the host nation, Australia.”

The United States and Australia have a long history of global partnership and security cooperation dating back over 100 years, from World War I and II, and every significant conflict since.

U.S. Naval Special Warfare is the nation’s elite maritime special operations force, uniquely positioned to extend the fleet’s reach. Integral to this capability is a forward-deployed posture and continuous engagement with partner and ally forces, heightening mutual interoperability and regional expertise.

Talisman Sabre 23 had more than 30,000 military participants from Australia, the U.S., Canada, Fiji, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and the United Kingdom.

A U.S. Navy MRH-90 Taipan helicopter is suspended in the air, its main rotor blades blurred from motion. Two soldiers are rappelling down from the helicopter's side using thick ropes. On the ground, another soldier is visible, managing the ropes. The scene takes place on a grassy airfield with a large hangar and other aircraft in the background under a blue sky with scattered clouds.

Operators from a U.S. Naval Special Warfare Unit and the Australian Army 2nd Commando Regiment perform fast rope iterations from an MRH-90 Taipan helicopter 6th Aviation Regiment at Holsworthy Barracks in Sydney during Talisman Sabre 23, July 17, 2023. Naval Special Warfare is the nation's elite maritime special operations force, uniquely positioned to extend the Fleet's reach and gain and maintain access for the Joint Force in competition and conflict. Talisman Sabre is the largest bilateral military exercise between Australia and the United States advancing a free and open Indo-Pacific by strengthening relationships and interoperability among key allies and enhancing our collective capabilities to respond to a wide variety of potential security concerns. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Daniel Gaither.

U.S. Special Operations Command - Pacific



US Navy SEALs, Indonesian Navy's KOPASKA conclude joint combined exchange training



Members of Indonesian Komando Pasukan Katak and U.S. Naval Special Warfare operators train and prepare during joint combined exchange training event in the vicinity of Jakarta, Indonesia, June 5-30, 2023. This training is designed to advance regional security and ensure effective responses to regional crises by bringing together a robust multinational force to address shared goals and security commitments in the Indo-Pacific. Photo by U.S. Army Cpl. Domyque Arthur.

Courtesy Story *Naval Special Warfare Group ONE*

Naval Special Warfare forces deployed in support of U.S. Special Operations Command Pacific concluded a joint combined training exercise with Indonesian Navy's Komando Pasukan Katak (KOPASKA) on June 27. The four-week exchange built upon the two forces' long-standing relationships

and cooperation within the Indo-Pacific region.

"Through rigorous military training and joint exercises, the U.S. and Indonesian forces forge a powerful partnership that amplifies our operational capabilities," said the senior U.S. team leader. "By exchanging expertise and refining our skills, we strengthen our readiness and enhance our ability to tackle complex challenges as a united front."

The exercise began with classroom training,



Members of Indonesian Komando Pasukan Katak and U.S. Naval Special Warfare operators train and prepare during joint combined exchange training event in the vicinity of Jakarta, Indonesia, June 5-30, 2023. Photo by U.S. Army Cpl. Domyque Arthur.

followed by tactical training with weapons, close-quarter combat drills, tactical combat casualty care, explosive breaching, and over-the-beach operations.

“The immersive military training between the U.S. and Indonesian forces builds a solid foundation of expertise and mutual understanding,” said the senior U.S. team lead. “By engaging in realistic scenarios and honing our skills together, we deepen our tactical proficiency, empowering us to respond swiftly and decisively in the face of evolving threats.”

The realistic scenarios served as a capstone to the forces’ engagement and included combat diving operations, underwater navigation, and small boat tactics. Personnel from U.S. Naval Special Warfare and Indonesian Navy’s Komando Pasukan Katak (KOPASKA) also exchanged cultural history, traditions, and customs.

“As we engaged in immersive training and cultural exchange, the bonds between the U.S. and Indonesian military grew deeper,” said the senior U.S. team lead. “From embracing Indonesian traditions to sharing our own heritage, we fostered enduring

friendships that strengthen our commitment to collaboration and unity in pursuit of a safer world.”

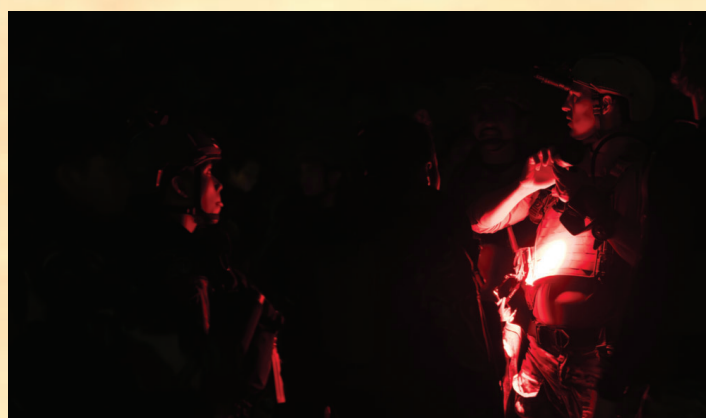
U.S. Special Operations Forces provide a flexible response to contingencies in the Indo-Pacific. Integral to this capability is a forward-deployed posture and continuous engagement with partner and ally forces, heightening mutual interoperability and regional expertise.

“Our enduring alliance with Indonesia is grounded in a shared vision of regional stability and progress,” said the senior U.S. team lead. “By fortifying our U.S.-Indonesian defense partnership, we promote prosperity and peace, bolstering the foundations for a secure and prosperous future for both our nations and the wider community.”

Indonesia and the United States share a vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific region, including a commitment to freedom of navigation and overflight and other lawful uses of the sea.

U.S. Naval Special Warfare is the nation’s elite maritime special operations force, uniquely positioned to extend the Fleet’s reach and gain and maintain access for the Joint Force in competition and conflict.

Our enduring alliance with Indonesia is grounded in a shared vision of regional stability and progress. By fortifying our U.S.-Indonesian defense partnership, we promote prosperity and peace, bolstering the foundations for a secure and prosperous future for both our nations and the wider community.



Members of Indonesian Komando Pasukan Katak and U.S. Naval Special Warfare operators train and prepare during a joint combined exchange training event in the vicinity of Jakarta, Indonesia, June 5, 2023. Photo by U.S. Army Cpl. Domyque Arthur.

U.S. Special Operations Command - South



JTACs from the US, Chile, Spain rehearse CAS during Southern Star 23

By U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Clayton Wear
Special Operations Command South

Joint Terminal Attack Controllers from the United States, Chile and Spain trained together on the NATO standard for close-air-support, July 24, east of Antofagasta, Chile, during exercise Southern Star 23.

Exercise Southern Star 23 is a Chilean-led, full-scale special operations, joint and combined employment exercise that included training on tactical maneuvers, collaboration and decision-making during crisis scenarios.

One of the first proficiency events of the exercise provided an opportunity for JTACs to rehearse their call-for-fire procedures following the NATO standards with an AC-130J Ghost rider gunship from the 73rd Special Operations Squadron, 1st Special Operations Wing, Hurlburt Field, Florida.

“JTACs are a vital asset to any commander needing to integrate fast, effective and safe fire support to their ground elements,” said a Army Sgt. 1st Class and JTAC instructor with the 7th Special Forces Group. “They maintain a high level of proficiency in both surface and air-to-ground joint fire support.”

The importance of partner forces knowing the NATO standard played a role during the exercise.

“Maintaining a high standard of training proficiency allows countries under the agreement to employ each other’s air power to support combat operations, which solidifies us as a more lethal force,” said the JTAC instructor. “Through this exercise, we all gained a better understanding of the 12-step process in the CAS execution template. Additionally, instructing our partners on the AC-130J call-for-fire was not only beneficial training for all of us, but it was



A Joint Terminal Attack Controller from Spain sights in a scope on a range outside Antofagasta, Chile, during exercise Southern Star 23, July 24, 2023. Exercise Southern Star 23 is a Chilean led full-scale Special Operations, Joint, and Combined Employment Exercise. The training consists of staff planning, tactical maneuvers and collaboration among SOUTHCOM components’ staff, Chilean Armed Forces and interagency partners during stabilization scenario which facilitates the opportunity for participants to execute and assess the staff’s ability to plan, coordinate and execute command and control, logistical support, and decision-making processes in a crisis scenario. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Clayton Wear.

also a great time.”

As a job requirement, the JTAC instructor not only served as a liaison for ground-to-air communication but also between partner forces.

“Language capability allows Green Berets to better communicate with our partners in South America, allowing us to share different tactics, techniques and procedures, as well as sharing the differences in our cultures,” said the JTAC instructor. “Our goal is to always remain the partner of choice within our [area of responsibility].”

During the exercise, the language barrier between air-to-ground operations was identified.

“Coming into this exercise, I knew that there was the possibility of a language barrier; however, that did not hinder any of our operations whatsoever,” said Air Force Capt. Kyle Steely, a weapons systems officer instructor with the 73rd SOS. “If there was any confusion from the ground party or from us, we would both ask our questions and then move forward.”

Use of the AC-130J during Southern Star 23 proved beneficial for forces on the ground.

“My role is to be the primary communicator to the ground party,” said Steely. “This position allows me to help build a better battlefield picture from our eyes in the sky to the ground party which increases their situational awareness. I’m also communicating what I am seeing to the rest of the aircraft and allowing the aircraft commander to make decisions on what we should be doing moving forward.”

An AC-130J crew can provide overwatch for long periods of time, allowing them to support friendly ground forces with close-air-support when needed.

“One of the biggest things that separates us is that we have so many crew members – it’s not just one guy flying the plane, talking on the radio, working a sensor, and employing weapons,” said Air Force Capt. John Stigall, an AC-130J aircraft commander with the 73rd SOS. “It’s a crew of eight who are all working together: one person is on the radio, one person is driving the sensor, one person is flying the plane, and others loading and employing the weapons, providing us a greater safety margin.”

The eight-person gunship crew ensures safety in the air and on the ground.

“The biggest thing that we want to minimize is any injury or harm to the guys on the ground, which at the end of the day, that’s our main priority,” said Steely. “So, first we make sure that we know all the different locations friendlies are located and where they’re moving, then if they encounter any threats, they can direct us to help solve the problem.”

In order to minimize injury to U.S., ally and partner nation ground forces, the NATO standard for CAS was applied during Southern Star 23.

“If everybody has the same foundation of knowledge and training, it makes doing what we’re doing right now even easier,” said Steely. “Ideally, this can transfer into the future where if we need to support



A Joint Terminal Attack Controller from Chile calls in an airstrike on a range outside Antofagasta, Chile, during exercise Southern Star 23, July 24, 2023. Exercise Southern Star 23 is a Chilean led full-scale Special Operations, Joint, and Combined Employment Exercise. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Clayton Wear.

them in a battlefield situation or combat situation, they already know how we operate and then they have all the correct terminology and procedures moving forward.”

As a member of the Chilean Air Force’s Special Operations, Capt. Felipe Campos, the JTAC Foxtrot Unit team leader with the 8th Squadron, mentioned the value gained through working with partner forces.

“The most valuable thing we gained through this exercise were the relationships and the trust we built among each other,” said Campos. “This was a great experience to share tactics, techniques and procedures so that we can all work with each other’s air power.”

The exercise also allowed Chilean special operation forces to call for support during simulated crisis scenarios.

“It was also great to share and rehearse the procedures to call in close-air-support with so many guys who have experience,” said Campos. “We even had the opportunity to work with aircraft like the AC-130J for the first time.”

“Even though we’ve worked together before, if any of these JTACs needed to control our aircraft it won’t be their first time,” said Marine Corps Sgt. Brian Bartholomew, recon team leader with Alpha Company, 4th Reconnaissance Battalion, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. “I hope that they got more familiarity and comfort in working with our units, and I hope everyone knows they can rely on us to work with them.”

U.S. Special Operations Command - South



Navy SEALs enhance maritime dominance with partner forces in Colombia

By Lt.j.g. Martin Carey

Naval Special Warfare Group Two

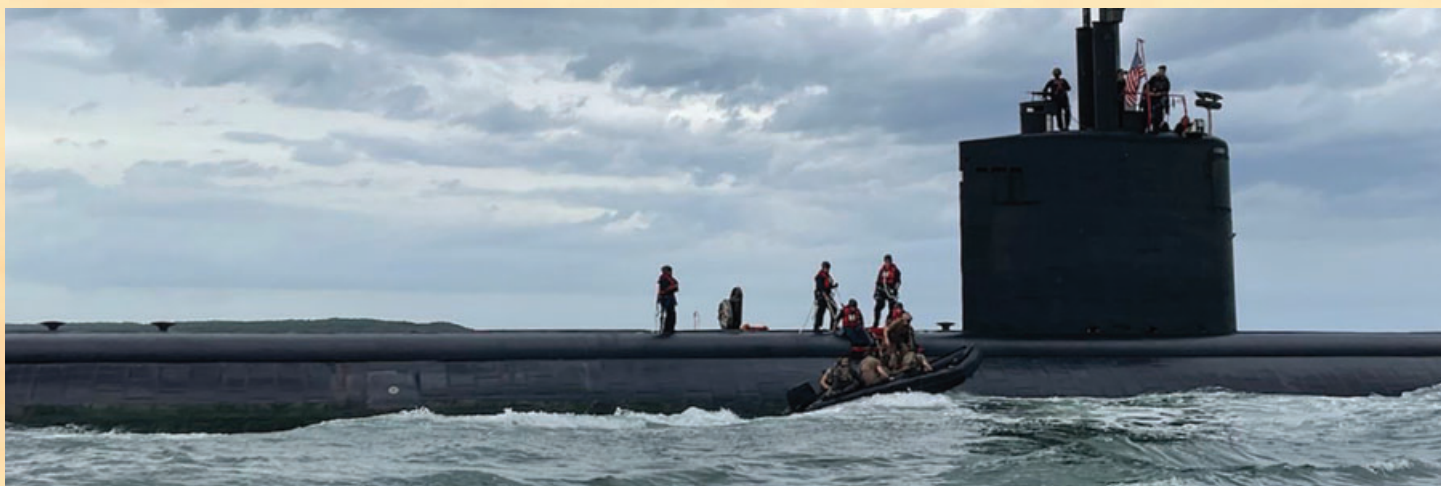
East-Coast based Naval Special Warfare operators (SEALs) showcased their capabilities and strengthened international partnerships during their participation in the multinational exercise UNITAS 64. As part of the exercise, SEALs trained alongside partner nation special operations forces in submarine operations, visit, board, search, and seizure, and close quarters combat, reaffirming the importance of collaboration in maritime defense strategies.

UNITAS, an annual joint exercise, brought together naval forces from 20 nations in Colombia to enhance interoperability and increase the collective capability to

respond to evolving maritime security challenges. The event kicked-off with an opening ceremony where Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro delivered remarks.

“When I assumed office as the 78th Secretary of the Navy in August of 2021, I made enhancing strategic partnerships one of our Department’s top enduring priorities,” said Del Toro. “Trust, proficiency, and interoperability are core tenets of our partnerships as we work together to advance our common interests in the Western Hemisphere, maintaining the stability and security necessary for economic prosperity.”

Naval Special Warfare’s involvement in UNITAS demonstrated the United States Navy’s commitment to maritime dominance and showcased the crucial role



East-coast based U.S. Naval Special Warfare operators (SEALs) and Colombian special operations personnel drive a combat rubber raiding craft alongside the Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Pasadena (SSN 752) during UNITAS 2023. Hosted this year by Colombia, UNITAS is the world’s longest-running maritime exercise bringing together multinational forces from 20 partner nations, training in joint maritime operations that enhance tactical proficiency and increase interoperability. Naval Special Warfare Group 2 produces, trains, supports, and deploys the world’s premier maritime special operations commandos to conduct full-spectrum operations and integrated deterrence that support national objectives. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Bill Carlisle.



East-coast based U.S. Naval Special Warfare operators (SEALs) and Colombian special operations personnel pull a combat rubber raiding craft aboard the Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Pasadena (SSN 752) during UNITAS 2023. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Bill Carlisle.

played by special operations forces in achieving this objective. Training alongside Colombian special operations forces, the SEALs practiced landing and launching combat rubber raiding craft boats onto the Los Angeles-Class attack submarine USS Pasadena's (SSN 752) stern deck, refining their tactical abilities in the operational domain.

"UNITAS provided a unique opportunity to work with SOCSOUTH aligned special operations forces in the region, to advance our skills and train toward contingency operations," said the SEAL commander on the ground overseeing the training. "Working alongside our partner nations adds another degree of interoperability, while demonstrating to our allies why we remain the partner of choice in the SOUTHCOM AOR, and sends a message of a united Western Hemisphere."

During UNITAS, the SEALs engaged in rigorous training exercises alongside Brazilian, Chilean, Colombian, Dominican, Ecuadorian, French, Paraguayan, and Peruvian special operations counterparts, exchanging best practices and tactics to strengthen their collective abilities. During CQC, the SEALs honed their skills in operating in confined spaces, a critical aspect of maritime special operations. The VBSS training focused on refining techniques for boarding and searching vessels, ensuring they are ready to protect international law and safeguard all nations' inherent right to freedom of the

seas.

Partnerships lie at the heart of the United States' national defense strategy, and NSW's engagement in UNITAS 64 exemplifies this principle. By working alongside partner nations, they fostered strong relationships, deepened mutual understanding, and improved operational effectiveness. This exercise served as a testament to the United States' commitment to maritime security and operating everywhere international law allows.

UNITAS, which is Latin for unity, united, or oneness, was conceived in 1959 when representatives at the first Inter-American Naval Conference in Panama agreed to conduct an annual maritime exercise with one another. Prior to UNITAS I in 1960, U.S. Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Arleigh Burke reviewed preparations for the multinational exercise. He commended planners for their progress, especially in building compatible communication systems among navies, and predicted that UNITAS would build strong relationships among sailors of the Western Hemisphere.

The Colombian navy hosted this year's UNITAS, which featured 26 warships/vessels, three submarines, 25 aircraft (fixed wing/helicopter), and approximately 7,000 people from 20 partner nations. Forces conducted operations off the coast of Cartagena, Colombia, and ashore in Covenas and Barranquilla, Colombia.

Naval Special Warfare Group 2 produces, trains, supports, and deploys the world's premier maritime special operations commandos to conduct full-spectrum operations and integrated deterrence that support national objectives. For more information, visit <https://www.nsw.navy.mil/>



East-coast based U.S. Naval Special Warfare operators (SEALs) and Colombian special operations personnel drive combat rubber raiding crafts in waters near Cartagena during UNITAS 2023. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Bill Carlisle.

U.S. Army Special Operations Command

Army Special Operations in the “Forgotten War”: Commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Korean Armistice



By Christopher E. Howard

U.S. Army Special Operations Command

When war unexpectedly erupted on the Korean Peninsula in 1950, the U.S. Army scrambled to recreate the special operations capabilities it had disbanded after World War II. Fortunately, the spirit of innovation and adaptability that characterized Army Special Operations Forces (ARSO) in WWII lived on through the veterans of that war and was harnessed to great effect during the Korean War. By the end of that conflict, seventy years ago this month, numerous ARSO units, institutions, and capabilities had been added to the Army's arsenal, many of which persist to this day.

The Korean War unfolded in five distinct phases, the first of which began when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) military, seeking to unite Korea under communist rule, invaded its southern neighbor, the Republic of Korea, on June 25, 1950. U.S.-led United Nations (UN) forces rushed to the defense of South Korea, forming a defensive perimeter in the southeast corner of the peninsula, around the port city of Pusan (now Busan). This critical location allowed the outnumbered U.S. forces and their partners to funnel reinforcements and materiel into the fight.

During the chaotic early days of the war, Army leaders, both in Washington, D.C. and in Korea, began rebuilding special operations capabilities that had been neglected since the end of WWII. In early July 1950, the General Headquarters (GHQ), U.S. Far East Command (FECOM), formed a provisional Raider Company to conduct commando-type operations behind enemy lines. The following month, the Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA) followed suit, establishing a Ranger Training Center at Kijang, near Pusan, to prepare a Ranger Company for missions similar to those carried out by the GHQ Raiders.

Meanwhile, FECOM faced a major humanitarian crisis



Brig Gen Robert A. McClure cements his reputation as the “Father of U.S. Army Special Warfare” during the Korean War. From his position as the Chief of psywar for the Army, he establishes the psywar Center and promoted the activation of the 10th Special Forces Group. U.S. Army Photo.

among Korean civilians who had fled to Pusan to escape advancing North Korean forces. In Sept. 1950, Gen. Douglas A. MacArthur, FECOM Commander, ordered his chief of Public Health and Welfare, Brig. Gen. Crawford F. Sams, to organize a 60-man Civil Affairs (CA) unit to address the immediate problem of disease within the refugee population. This was among the first CA efforts during the war. Many more would follow.

Stateside, Gen. J. Lawton Collins, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, initiated an effort that led to the creation of the Ranger Training Center (RTC) at Fort Benning, Georgia (known as Fort Moore since 2023), in Sept. 1950. The RTC immediately set about training Ranger Infantry Companies (Airborne), or RICAs, six of which deployed to Korea, beginning in Dec. 1950. Gen. Collins also created the psywar Division under the Army G-3, placing Brig. Gen. Robert A. McClure, a WWII psywar veteran, in charge of rebuilding the Army's neglected Psywar capability. The only active Army psywar

unit in the interwar period, the Tactical Information Detachment, arrived in Korea in Oct. 1950, and was soon redesignated as the 1st Loudspeaker and Leaflet (L&L) Company.

By that point, the war in Korea had entered its second phase, the UN counteroffensive, which began with a daring amphibious assault at Inchon, near the South Korean capital of Seoul, on Sept. 15, 1950. After liberating the capital, UN forces moved north of the 38th parallel, seizing Pyongyang, the North Korean capital. Continuing northward, UN forces neared the Yalu River, which separated North Korea from the People's Republic of China (PRC), within a month of the Inchon landings. A UN victory seemed within reach and, with it, unification of the Korean peninsula under a non-communist government.

However, hopes for an early end to the war were dashed in late Oct. 1950, when the Communist Chinese People's Liberation Army crossed the Yalu River into North Korea. With this, the war entered its third phase. The unanticipated Chinese Communist intervention prompted outnumbered UN forces to retreat below the 38th parallel and communist forces recaptured Seoul in early January 1951, bringing the war's third phase to an end.

Aided by newly arrived RICAs from Fort Benning, UN forces went back on the offensive in early 1951 with the goal of regaining control of Seoul and driving the combined communist forces of China and North Korea north of the 38th parallel. This constituted the fourth phase of the war, during which UN forces successfully reclaimed Seoul in April 1951.

Several key ARSOF milestones occurred during this period. First, the EUSA established a Guerrilla Command to train and coordinate the activities of North Korean anti-communist partisans. Second, Brig. Gen. McClure, took charge of the newly established Office of the Chief of Psychological Warfare (OCPW). Third, the Army established a Military Government School at Fort Gordon, Georgia (known as Fort Eisenhower since 2023), to train Civil Affairs soldiers. Then, in March 1951, the 2nd and 4th RICAs participated in the first-ever combat airborne assault by an Army Ranger unit (Operation TOMAHAWK).

As the front lines stabilized in the late spring of 1951, the war entered its fifth and final phase, which could best be characterized as a stalemate along the prewar border between North and South Korea, with limited territorial gains made by either side. This remained the case until July 27, 1953, when the UN Command, DPRK, and PRC signed an armistice at Panmunjom, South Korea, after two years of negotiation.

Army Special Operations continued to evolve during the final two years of the war. The small CA element created by Brig. Gen. Sams in 1950 grew into the Korea Civil Assistance Command. The tactically focused 1st L&L Company was joined in late 1951 by the 1st Radio



Col. (Ret.) Ralph Puckett, Jr. earns the Medal of Honor while serving as a 1st Lt. with the Eighth U.S. Army Rangers in Korea in Nov. 1950. U.S. Army Photo.

Broadcasting and Leaflet Group, a strategic psywar unit headquartered in Tokyo, Japan, that directly supported broadcasting operations on the peninsula. Back in the States, Brig. Gen. McClure and his OCPW staff took actions that led to the establishment of the Psychological Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina (known as Fort Liberty since 2023), in April 1952 as the Army's proponent for psywar and unconventional warfare (UW). Two months later, OCPW efforts to establish a permanent UW capability bore fruit with the activation of 10th Special Forces Group, commanded by Col. Aaron Bank. The first of 99 Special Forces-trained soldiers deployed to Korea in February 1953 as individual augmentees to the 8240th Army Unit (one of the various names for Eighth Army's longstanding guerrilla command).

The Korean War has been called the "Forgotten War," falling as it did between World War II and the Vietnam War. However, it was truly a foundational period for ARSOF. Starting with almost nothing, the Army rebuilt effective Ranger, unconventional warfare, psywar, and Civil Affairs capabilities over the course of the three-year conflict, adapting and evolving them as the situation demanded.

By the time the armistice was signed, the Army had its first man, train, and equip headquarters for unconventional warfare and psywar. Now known as the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, it has been in continuous operation since its founding in 1952. The U.S. Army Civil Affairs School that first opened at Fort Gordon in early 1951 was brought under the Special Warfare Center and School in 1971. Army Special Forces, first chartered in 1952, recently celebrated seventy-one years of uninterrupted service to the nation. Although all Korean War Ranger Companies were disbanded by war's end, the Ranger Training Center founded in 1950 continued on, first as the Ranger Training Command, and now as the Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade at Fort Moore, Georgia.

Naval Special Warfare Command

An enduring legacy: SEAL Team Three celebrates 40 Years



*By U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Chelsea Meiller
Naval Special Warfare Group One*

It's a bright, cloudless day. A gentle ocean breeze flows over the terrace as the crowd begins to take their seats. Officers, enlisted personnel, Gold Star family members and friends fill the seats on the Silver Strand Training Complex, the new home of West-Coast based Naval special warfare operators. Today, they gathered together to celebrate a very special occasion – the 40th anniversary of SEAL Team Three.

SEAL Team Three's 20th commanding officer gave the opening remarks and gave the plankowners – the founding members of the team – his thanks.

"We are all here today because of your bold leadership and spirit of innovation. We stand on the shoulders of giants," he said. "I am happy to report that the culture you established all those years ago is thriving in the troops behind you and the halls of Team Three."

Though SEAL Team Three was formally established in 1983, the history of the SEAL teams predates Team Three by more than 20 years. In his inaugural address in 1961, President John F. Kennedy quelled the fears of the nation facing a new-era of strife and conflict.

"Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty," Kennedy said. "This much we pledge--and more."

In January 1962, President Kennedy established the first SEAL Teams at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, California, and Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Virginia. The teams were comprised of warfighters from the Amphibious Scouts and Raiders (Joint) and Special Mission Naval Demolition Units, lending to the name "SEALs", which stands for "sea, air and land."

The establishment of the first SEAL teams paved the way for Team Three's commissioning in October 1983.



Lt. Cmdr. Jonny Kim, a former SEAL Team Three member and current NASA astronaut, speaks during SEAL Team Three's 40th anniversary commemoration ceremony at Silver Strand Training Complex. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Chelsea D. Meiller.

Though a path had been laid before them, the Team's impressive record speaks for itself.

Retired Adm. William McRaven, former commanding officer of SEAL Team Three and the ninth commander of United States Special Operations Command, spoke to Team Three's immense legacy and commitment to the country's safety and security in the post-9/11 landscape.

"Some of the first units into Afghanistan were SEAL Team Three," said McRaven. "Between 2002 and 2005, the teams deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, and the new hotspot – the Philippines. From the oil fields of the Al Faw peninsula to Fallujah, to Habbaniyah. From Zamboanga to the Horn of Africa, the operators of SEAL Team THREE

were everywhere, contributing to every single aspect of the war effort.”

The Team wasn’t just given those missions, though. From the onset, they had to work tirelessly to gather the resources and manpower needed to commission a team built for success. Retired Capt. Joe Quincannon, SEAL Team Three’s first commanding officer, touched on the challenges he faced while putting together a combat-ready team.

“When the Navy gave me the opportunity to commission the command, my first priority was getting the right senior enlisted on board,” he said. “I was focused on people who had proven themselves fighting in Vietnam. A giant step forward in attaining this goal was when Master Chief Gallagher agreed to become the command master chief. His combat experience, reputation and common-sense approach to problem solving were instrumental in helping me attain the goal I had for the command – which was to fight and win if called upon by the country.”

People were not the only resource needed though. Funding allocated to outfit the command was imbalanced. The warfighters needed weapons, personal protective equipment, night vision gear and more.

“The main problem was the imbalance between the operations and procurement funds” Quincannon said. “Simply put, I couldn’t use the operations funds to buy the equipment we needed.”

Eventually, Quincannon was able to procure exactly what the command needed to be successful. And it paid off – he volunteered his new team for deployment based on their outstanding training record, and they got to go.

Though it’s been decades since that first deployment, the fabric of SEAL Team Three remains the same. Woven into the command is an enduring legacy of selflessness, bravery and camaraderie.

“Our fallen brothers, those we will see on the other side, the never forgotten stewards will forever remind us - the duty bound - that we are the owners of our legacy,” said SEAL Team Three’s current Command Master Chief. “It is our charge to honor them by passing down our lessons learned from conflict to conflict. To honor their sacrifice by our deeds and ensure that their names will forever echo.”

Whether it is routine training or large celebratory ceremonies, SEAL Team Three’s permanent residents (fallen members) are woven into everything the team does. Each one has a command space dedicated to them, and each is spoken about and remembered. One of SEAL Team Three’s current special warfare operators spoke about the sense of duty and honor that comes with being a part of a command so steeped in Frogman history.



Retired Adm. William McRaven, former SEAL Team Three commanding officer and the ninth commander of United States Special Operations Command, speaks during SEAL Team Three’s 40th anniversary commemoration ceremony at Silver Strand Training Complex. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Chelsea D. Meiller.

“One of the first things we do as a ‘new guy’ on the team is give a presentation to our platoon about one of our fallen,” the operator said. “It really helps us all remember the immense legacy we are upholding. We’re just renters here. Our permanent residents – those are the owners. That brotherhood and sense of duty and connectedness is so deeply rooted here, and it’s a huge part of why we do what we do.”

As the current Frogmen of SEAL Team Three go forward into a new era of ever-evolving uncertainty, one thing has remained unchanged for the past four decades – the heart and tenacity of the men who choose to become United States Naval Special Warfare Operators.

“A part of me hopes you never have to experience the harsh ugliness and realities of war, but a more familiar part of me understands, that if called, you will gladly welcome it,” said Lt. Cmdr. Jonny Kim, a NASA astronaut and SEAL Team Three alumni. “And if that call comes, be swift, violent and lethal to our enemies. But never lose your way. You are the 1% of the 1% not because you do the hard things no one else can, but because you do the hard things no one else can while holding yourself and your teammates to a higher standard of judgment and accountability than our enemies.”

Since 1962, Naval Special Warfare has been the nation’s premier maritime special operations force – a highly reliable and lethal force –ready to conduct full-spectrum operations, unilaterally or with partners, in support of national objectives, and uniquely positioned to extend the Fleet’s reach, delivering all-domain options for naval and joint force commanders.

Naval Special Warfare Command



Naval Special Warfare Center welcomes new Command Master Chief; First SWCC to hold position

*By U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Sean Weir
Naval Special Warfare Command*

Naval Special Warfare Center welcomed Command Master Chief (SWCC) Joaquin Martinez as its newest command master chief, June 29, 2023.

Martinez, who most recently held the position of Deputy Force Master Chief at Naval Special Warfare Command, assumed the responsibilities as NSWCEN senior enlisted leader from CMDCM (SEAL) Neil Shaw.

Command master chiefs serve as command-level senior enlisted leaders and have a significant role in every aspect of command-wide readiness and mission accomplishment. They report directly to the commanding officer and work closely with the executive officer in the formulation and implementation of all policies concerning the morale, welfare, job satisfaction, discipline, utilization, and training of enlisted personnel. Additionally, they are directly responsible for the professional development of the command's Chiefs Mess.

"It is an absolute honor to be selected as the Naval Special Warfare Center Command Master Chief," said Martinez. "There have been many great SEAL Master Chiefs that paved the way for our process of selecting, assessing, and training our SEAL and SWCC operators. When I joined the Navy over thirty years ago, I could never have imagined that I would have been blessed with the opportunity to lead amongst our nation's finest warriors. It is humbling to follow the long list of many respected leaders and legends of NSW."

Martinez is a native of Ontario, California and a 1992 graduate of Chaffey High School. In September 1992, he enlisted in the Navy and attended boot camp at



Command Master Chief (SWCC) Joaquin Martinez.
Courtesy photo.

Naval Recruit Training Command, San Diego, Calif. He entered Special Warfare Combat Crewman (SWCC) training and graduated with Class 33 in August 2000.

"Prior to attending SWCC Training, I was a Boatswain's Mate in the Fleet. The experience provided me a foundation of leadership and a view of the Chiefs Mess that resonates with me to this day. The SWCC

community has matured over the years and continually evolved to meet the needs of Special Operations and the Navy. I've been fortunate to be a part of many key milestones that highlight how far we've come along," said Martinez. "I'm honored that I have been selected as the first Special Warfare Boat Operator [CMDM] from a pool of many talented SWCC and SEAL master chiefs. I feel it isn't so much about ME getting selected as the [CMDM], it's about how far the community has come and how much faith is being put into our SWCC leaders."

Martinez holds an AAS in Administrative Management from Excelsior College, a BS in Organizational Leadership, and a MS in Strategic Leadership with the University of Charleston, West Virginia. Additionally, he is a 2009 graduate of the Navy's Senior Enlisted Academy, Class 149 and a 2019 graduate of the Command Master Chief / Chief of the Boat course.

"Today, we witness a truly historical moment as SBCM Martinez paves the way as the first SWCC to rise to the revered position of Command Master Chief

at NSWCEN, forging a path of extraordinary accomplishment and inspiring a new era of possibilities for the entire NSW community," said Capt. Mark Burke, commodore of NSWCEN. "As we cultivate SEALs and SWCC at our command, it is crucial to have the SWCC perspective represented at the pinnacle of senior enlisted leadership. As he takes the position, we ensure that the invaluable insight and specialized expertise of SWCC are integrated into our decision-making, enriching the development and future success of our elite forces, and fostering an environment of excellence that resonates with every member."

Naval Special Warfare Center, located on Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, provides initial assessment and selection and subsequent advanced training to the Sailors who make up the Navy's SEAL and Special Boat communities, a key asset of NSW. The NSW mission is to provide maritime special operations forces to conduct full-spectrum operations, unilaterally or with partners, to support national objectives. For more information on the NSW assessment, selection, and training pathway, visit <https://www.sealswcc.com/>.



Special warfare combatant-craft crewmen (SWCC) transit Apra Harbor to refine tactics that integrate Naval Special Warfare with fleet operations. SWCC employ the special operations craft riverine, specifically designed for the clandestine insertion and extraction of U.S. Navy SEALs and other special operations forces along shallow waterways and open water environments. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Alex Smedegard.

Naval Special Warfare Command

Naval legend, original Naval commando honored at SEAL graduation



*By Lt. Teresa Meadows
Naval Special Warfare Center Public Affairs*

The indomitable spirit of Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Art Nicholas, one of the first naval commandos and a celebrated World War II veteran, was honored once again as Basic Training Command (BTC) paid tribute to him with a Trident presentation during the SEAL Qualification Training Class 355 graduation this week.

This remarkable recognition held immense significance as Nicholas, a member of the Scouts and Raiders, helped lay the foundation for Naval Special Warfare (NSW) before the Trident was a symbol of the Navy SEALs. After celebrating his 100th birthday in February, Art was unable to travel due to his age. However, his enduring legacy was recognized through the attendance of his devoted son, Jeff Nicholas, who traveled to Coronado to receive the Trident on his father's behalf, signifying his honorary status as a U.S. Navy SEAL.

The three-day long event commenced with the Knife Ceremony, a poignant tradition that symbolizes the passing of responsibility and authority from one generation of warriors to the next. Jeff, standing among the Navy SEAL candidates, embodied the proud legacy of his father, Art, as one of the original naval commandos who paved the way for the formation of NSW and the Navy SEALs.

Following the Knife Ceremony, the SQT Class 355 graduation dinner provided a momentous platform for graduating candidates and attendees to come together and pay their respects to BM1 Art Nicholas. As Jeff Nicholas spoke on his father's behalf, he shared stories that highlighted Art's unwavering dedication to his country and his instrumental role in shaping the history of NSW. The BTC quarterdeck was adorned with photographs capturing Art's heroic exploits, offering a visual testament to his extraordinary service. Admirals, officers, and fellow Navy SEALs joined in expressing their heartfelt gratitude and admiration for Art's selfless contributions. The collective appreciation and camaraderie in the room served as a testament to the



Jeff Nicholas poses with Capt. Timothy Sulick, the commanding officer for Naval Special Warfare Basic Training Command, during a SEAL Qualification Training graduation on Naval Amphibious Base Coronado. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Dylan Lavin.

profound impact Art Nicholas made on the lives of those he served alongside.

The highpoint of the week arrived with the SQT Class 355 graduation ceremony on June 30. Jeff Nicholas stood before the crowd to receive the Trident on behalf of his father. This ceremonial transfer of responsibility represented the legacy of BM1 Nicholas and his role as one of the original naval commandos. It signified Art's honorary status as a SEAL, symbolizing the enduring bond between past and present generations of warriors who embody the indomitable spirit of the Navy SEALs.

Addressing the audience, Capt. Timothy Sulick, commanding officer of BTC, recounted BM1 Nicholas' valorous actions during World War II and his principled contributions to the Navy.

"Art Nicholas embodies the essence of a true American hero, exemplifying the finest qualities of a Navy SEAL. As one of the original naval commandos, his legacy is etched in the fabric of NSW," Sulick stated with utmost reverence. "Today, as we honor him at this SQT graduation, we pay tribute to his extraordinary service and the timeless legacy he has left behind."

Navy SEAL military working dog retires

By U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Matthew Dickinson

Naval Special Warfare Group TWO

A combat assault dog named ‘Chief Hutch’ retired from military service at Joint Base Little Creek-Fort Story, June 24, 2023. Hutch, a Belgian Malinois trained to detect explosives and other dangerous materials, worked alongside naval special warfare operators for five years and deployed twice to East Africa.

At his final demonstration, he was tasked with apprehending a simulated opposing force during the exercise. As he would do if called upon during combat, he rushed the enemy and took him down, allowing his handler and teammates time to close distance and assess the situation. Hutch was retired in front of a crowd of current and former SEAL team members by Cmdr. Bryan Jennings.

“Military working dogs play a vital role supporting special warfare operations. These incredible animals are more than just companions; they are highly trained, intelligent, and fearless members of our teams,” said Jennings. “Their acute senses, unwavering loyalty, and unmatched detection capabilities make them critical assets in select missions.”

Hutch’s handler, a current Naval Special Warfare operator (SEAL), said that Hutch was a great dog and a

true hero. He said that Hutch was always willing to work and that he never backed down from a challenge.

“I poured my heart and soul into this position, and I love every minute of it. These dogs risk their lives and give us 110% every day,” said his handler. “I have developed a deep bond with Hutch that cannot be explained and my mission as a handler was to not only have Hutch as an asset to our team, but for him to be viewed as a teammate by other members of the platoon.”

Now retired from military service, Hutch will be adopted by his handler and transition to civilian life as a family dog. His handler said that he was “ecstatic” to be able to give Hutch a home after his service.

Naval Special Warfare Group 2 produces, trains, supports, and deploys the world’s premier maritime special operations commandos to conduct full-spectrum operations and integrated deterrence that support national objectives.



Chief Hutch



Chief Hutch, a combat assault dog assigned to SEAL Team Four, tackles a simulated opposing force personnel during a Naval Special Warfare Capabilities Exercise. Hutch, a Belgian Malinois trained to detect explosives and other dangerous materials, worked alongside Naval Special Warfare operators for five years and deployed twice to East Africa. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class John Owen.

Air Force Special Operations Command



Investing In Our Next Generation: Air Commandos partner with FWBHS football program to build expert teams

*By U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Miranda Mahoney
1st Special Operations Wing Public Affairs*

The Fort Walton Beach High School Vikings football team recently took part in a three-day Youth Athletic Camp in collaboration with the U.S. Air Force's Air Commandos at Hurlburt Field, Florida.

The camp, organized in partnership with Hurlburt Field's school liaison, Ms. Lacey Allen, and the Okaloosa County School District, was held on July 19, July 26, and August 2, 2023. The primary goal is to

invest into the next generation and enhance their teamwork skills while educating them about the Air Force Special Operations Command mission. The football camp also aimed to bridge the gap between the military and the local community by promoting teamwork and collaboration through various activities.

Col. Allison Black, 1st Special Operations Wing commander, stated that the team wanted to create an engaging experience that would have a long-lasting impact on the young athletes. She also emphasized that the skills they were reinforcing would help define their future success.



Air Commandos and members of the Fort Walton Beach High School Vikings football team pose for a photo during Air Commando Youth Athletic Camp at Hurlburt Field, Florida, July 19, 2023. For the three-day football camp, the team trained alongside U.S. Air Force Airmen performing formation runs, military drills and military tent building as an opportunity to better understand the 1st Special Operations Wing's mission. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Miranda Mahoney.



Members of the Fort Walton Beach High School Vikings football team go through a Basic Military Training-style exercise session during Air Commando Youth Athletic Camp at Hurlburt Field, Florida, July 19, 2023. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Miranda Mahoney.

The first day of the camp focused on Basic Military Training exercises led by our AFSOC Airmen who were former skilled Military Training Instructors, providing the students with a glimpse into the dedication and discipline required in the military. During this time, athletes completed a circuit workout including push-ups, weighted vest runs, tire flips and more.

On the second day, the football team joined the Air Commandos for a formation run, highlighting the importance of unity and teamwork. The athletes then participated in rigorous military-style drills in the sand and surf that tested their endurance and resilience.

During the final day of the camp, the Vikings learned how to build military tents with the 1st Special Operations Squadron's Mission Sustainment Team. They also engaged in a friendly competition, racing against the clock to set up their tents with precision, further strengthening their teamwork skills and attention to detail.

At the conclusion of the camp, Okaloosa School District superintendent Marcus Chambers and Col. Black presented each participant with 1st SOW patches and offered words of encouragement to the team members.

"These athletes are part of a team. They're committed! Their energy and enthusiasm is contagious," said Black. "Our hope is that this program will continue to grow, involving our local high school athletes from all

sports. Through this, they can experience the grit, determination, perseverance, and teamwork that it takes to be an Air Commando."

"The Okaloosa County School District is fortunate to have an amazing partnership with the Military installments in our community and with that comes the opportunity for experiences like this one," stated Chambers. "These athletes will remember this experience for the rest of their lives. They have gained so many valuable life skills in the sessions spent with the Air Commandos that will be used both on the field and off the field. We appreciate Col. Allison Black, Chief Master Sgt. Joey Meininger, and their troops, for the time and effort they poured into our student athletes this summer as it not only had a direct impact on them but will have a lasting impact on the friends they interact with."

The Fort Walton Beach High School Vikings football team left the camp with lasting memories and a deeper understanding of the power of teamwork and unity.

Col. Black and Mr. Chambers expressed that this was just the beginning of a deliberate effort to connect the base with the next generation of leaders and problem solvers in the community. The Hurlburt Field Community Engagement Council is actively exploring ways to engage meaningfully with the community.

For now, the bonds formed and lessons learned during the training camp are expected to empower these young athletes to overcome any challenges in the future, inspired by the spirit of the Air Commandos.



U.S. Air Force Col. Allison Black, 1st Special Operations Wing commander, helps the Fort Walton Beach High School Vikings football team build military tents during Air Commando Youth Athletic Camp at Hurlburt Field, Florida, Aug. 2, 2023. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Miranda Mahoney.

Marine Forces, Special Operations Command



USNA Midshipmen visit MARSOC



Midshipman 1st Class Charles Longacre, a Prescott, Arizona, native and senior at the U.S. Naval Academy, practices weapon clearing techniques during a Mark 19 40 mm grenade machine gun operations class with Marine Raiders from Marine Forces Special Operations Command on Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, July 26, 2023. While training with MARSOC, the midshipmen were able to experience the variety of tools and weapons employed by critical skills operators and special operations officers. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Henry Rodriguez.

***By U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Henry Rodriguez II
Marine Forces, Special Operations Command***

Midshipmen from the U.S. Naval Academy visited Marine Forces Special Operations Command on Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, July 24-Aug. 4, 2023.

The annual trip is part of the U.S. Naval Academy Marine Air-Ground Task Force program which gives midshipmen an opportunity to experience a broad view of what their service in the Marine Corps may look like. This visit aimed to give midshipmen a realistic insight into Marine Corps operations from the perspective of MARSOC.

Throughout the training, midshipmen were afforded the opportunity to learn from the same instructors that teach new critical skills operators, special operations officers, and

support staff, as well as gain exposure to weapons and tactics used by CSOs and SOOs in a deployed environment.

“We have been able to let them experience the Mark 19 grenade launcher, mortar emplacement, fire and maneuver concepts, the M240B machine gun, a variety of systems that our teams and companies utilize,” said Chief Warrant Officer 4 John Lucero, Marine Gunner, MARSOC.

The goal of the training is to show the midshipmen some of the options they have coming out of the Naval Academy, should they elect to commission into the Marine Corps.

“I came in wanting to go the aviation route, but this stuff, it’s different,” said Midshipman 3rd Class Diego Hernandez, a Temecula, Calif., native. “Working with the CSOs has changed my mind some, it’s made me want to go more to the ground combat side.”

For the CSOs and SOOs that make up the bulk of MARSOC’s operational force, the benefits extend beyond just honing their ability to teach.

“It’s always good to be able to tell more people about MARSOC and what we do,” said a CSO. “And who knows, maybe one day, one or two of these guys will go through the pipeline and contribute to the MARSOC mission.”



Midshipman 1st Class Samuel Murray, a Bay Village, Ohio, native and senior at the U.S. Naval Academy, fires a Mark 19 40 mm grenade machine gun under the coaching of a Marine Raider from Marine Forces Special Operations Command on Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, July 26, 2023. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Henry Rodriguez.

Marine Raider Regiment Language Program wins SOCOM award

*By U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Henry Rodriguez II
Marine Forces, Special Operations Command*

The Marine Raider Regiment's Language Program was awarded the 2023 U.S. Special Operations Command "Most Improved Language Program of the Year" award, July 18, 2023.

The MRR Language Program serves as an amplifier for the basic language training that Marine Raiders receive during their initial training. Throughout their service, Marine Raiders will work with the MRR Language Program on sustainment and advancement of their foreign language skills through courses, real-world training, and immersive interactions.

According to the U.S. SOCOM award, "The MRR Language Program demonstrated increased capacity and effectiveness in the areas language instruction, program management, and achievement of language proficiency goals."

The MRR Language Program and staff have put an emphasis on crafting engaging, operationally relevant training to enhance their students' abilities to effectively communicate and train with partner forces.

"We don't want language training to be boring," said Ed Walsh, MRR Foreign Language Program Manager. "I don't want our guys sitting in classrooms, I want them out doing what they're going to do on their missions down range. So, if they can learn to speak with our partners, use their language skills running ranges or call for fire, and understanding the culture of where they're going, it's extremely relevant."

The program also identifies gaps in training to work creative solutions. It arose that there was an operational need for French speakers that had not gone through the traditional language course during the critical skills operator training pipeline, nor the time to dedicate to the length of the basic course. The language program utilized that information to develop a new program that blends phone applications with face-to-face interactions to get a high level of fluency in a shorter period.

Additionally, the program has seen itself shift in



Marine Raider Regiment Language Program staff pose for a photo with the 2023 U.S. Special Operations Command "Most Improved Language Program of the Year" award. The MRR Language Program serves as an amplifier for the basic language training that Marine Raiders receive during their accession pipeline. Throughout their service, Marine Raiders will work with the MRR Language Program on sustainment and advancement of their foreign language skills through courses, real-world training, and immersive interactions. U.S. Marine Corps courtesy photo.

dialect use, in areas like the Middle East, in order to meet the more specific needs of the deployed force with more useful, regional languages.

"I have seen the language program at Marine Raider Regiment take a very focused, operational approach over the last year, and I am proud of the recognition of the hard work of our language team," said Col. Ed Norris, commanding officer of Marine Raider Regiment. "The ability for our Marines and Sailors to speak the right language and dialect of a partner nation military at many locations around the globe grows relationships at the speed of relevancy."

By implementing initiatives focused on the deployed language needs of the individual Marine Raider, the program has provided a more comprehensive set of skills for deploying units.

Headquarters - U.S. Special Operations Command

In memoriam

General James J. Lindsay — First USSOCOM Commander — (1932-2023)

By U.S. Army Special Operations Command History Office

The U.S. Special Operations Command honors the life and legacy of Gen. James J. Lindsay, who died Aug. 5, 2023 at the age of 90.

Lindsay had strong ties to Fort Liberty, N.C., formerly known as Fort Bragg, where he served multiple assignments with the 82nd Airborne Division, XVIII Airborne Corps, and in 77th Special Forces Group (SFG). He was the first commander of U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and was instrumental in the development of the Airborne and Special Operations Museum in Fayetteville, N.C.

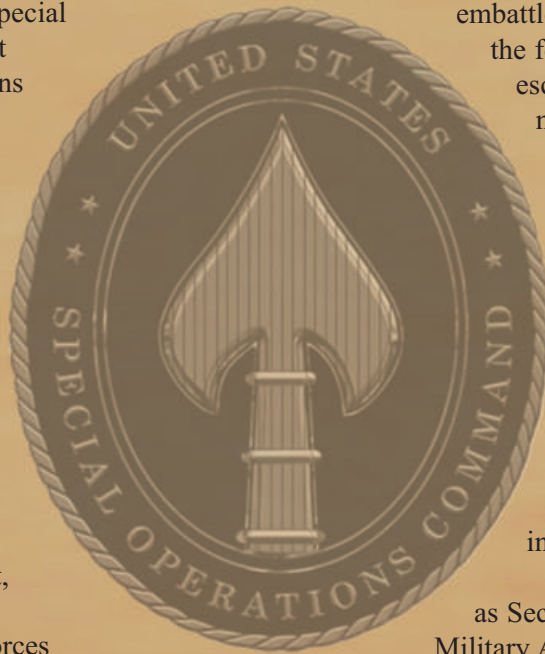
Lindsay, a Special Forces and Ranger-tabbed officer, had a distinguished career lasting more than 38 years. It began when he enlisted in the Army in 1952. He was commissioned as an Infantry Officer in 1953. His first assignment was as Platoon Leader for Company G, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, Fort Bragg in 1954, followed by two assignments with the 77th Special Forces Group.

After completing Russian language training at Monterey, California, he served in multiple Military Intelligence positions before returning to Fort Bragg and the Infantry in 1961 as Commander of Company B, 1st Airborne Battle Group, 503d Infantry, 82d Airborne Division. In 1964, then-Major Lindsay took the role as Battalion Advisor, Airborne Brigade, Military Assistance Command for his first tour in Vietnam. Lindsay deployed to Vietnam twice more as part of the 9th Infantry Division, earning the Distinguished Service Cross for heroism in 1968.

The citation, in part, reads: “After two days of tracking the enemy, Colonel Lindsay accompanied his battalion as

it was inserted by air into the flank of the communists. Immediately upon landing, his men were brought under extremely heavy automatic weapons and small arms fire from a nearby woodline. Moving from position to position under the hail of bullets, he directed his troops’ fire and, once fire superiority had been gained, led an assault into the hostile bunker complex which destroyed sixty of the fortifications and forced the enemy to withdraw. He then entered his helicopter and flew low over the embattled area to direct the encirclement of the foe. Noticing a group of Viet Cong escaping across a small canal which had not yet been sealed off, he stopped them with hand grenades and rifle fire. After returning to the ground, he exposed himself to the vicious enemy fusillade to coordinate return fire which repelled the enemy’s attempt to break the encirclement. While leading a sweep through the woodline early in the morning of 4 June, he surprised three Viet Cong whom he engaged and killed before they could inflict any casualties upon his men.”

From 1971 to 1973, Lindsay served as Secretary Joint Staff, United States Military Assistance Command Thailand/Joint United States Military Assistance Group Thailand, followed by three more assignments with the 82nd Airborne and his promotion to Brigadier General in 1976. From 1981-1983, he was Commanding General (CG) of the 82nd Airborne Division, before becoming the CG of the United States Army Infantry Center, Fort Benning, Georgia (recently redesignated Fort Moore). He would return to Fort Bragg from 1984-1986 as CG, XVIII Airborne Corps. He served as USSOCOM Commander from 1987 until his retirement in 1990. From this position, he advocated for Army Special Operations Forces and supported the establishment of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command as an Army Major Command in December 1989.





Headquarters - U.S. Special Operations Command

USSOCOM hosts countering weapons of mass destruction senior leader seminar



Navy Vice Admiral Collin Green, deputy commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, provides opening remarks during the annual countering weapons of mass destruction senior leader seminar at U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, July 19, 2023. With U.S. SOCOM as the coordinating authority for the DoD, Green supervises the command's J10, the CWMD directorate, to pull together DoD, U.S. interagency and international partners to address challenges or threats on behalf of the commander for U.S. SOCOM. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps GySgt. Demetrius Munnerlyn.

*By U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Marleah Miller
U.S. Special Operations Command*

U.S. Special Operations Command hosted the annual countering weapons of mass destruction senior leader seminar, July 19-20, a four-star forum focused on defining a Department of Defense integrated approach to deter state and non-state actors' use of weapons of mass destruction.

The Honorable Deborah Rosenblum, assistant secretary of defense for nuclear, chemical and biological defense programs, reinforced the way

forward on how to remain focused on implementing CWMD guidance contained in the 2022 National Defense Strategy during the seminar.

"My office has a broad mandate, and we are often at the tip of the spear, but we are ultimately in this together," said Rosenblum. "We're working with other like-minded, innovative and solution-oriented partners to make progress against the challenges that were identified. We will only be able to outpace our threats when we embrace innovation and think creatively about the problems."

With U.S. SOCOM the coordinating authority for the DoD, Navy Vice Admiral Collin Green, deputy



Leaders with the Department of Defense, U.S. interagency and international partners address challenges or threats during the annual countering weapons of mass destruction senior leader seminar at U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, July 19, 2023. During the seminar, combatant commands, U.S. government agencies and the CWMD community at large, planned, assessed and provided recommendations for various CWMD efforts and problems. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps GySgt. Demetrius Munnerlyn.

commander of U.S. SOCOM, supervises the command's J10, the CWMD directorate, to pull together DoD, U.S. interagency and international partners to address challenges or threats on behalf of the commander for U.S. SOCOM.

"I liken our responsibility to the 'canary in a coal mine' who warns the miners when it detects odorless carbon monoxide buildup in the mines," said Green. "We provide Department leadership advanced warning of increased risk to the force and mission from threats posed by weapons of mass destruction."

During the seminar, leaders from combatant commands, U.S. government agencies and the CWMD community at large, planned, assessed and provided recommendations for various CWMD efforts and problems.

"The CWMD SLS fosters collaboration, dialogue and senior leader situational awareness across the spectrum of WMD transregional challenges and threats impacting combatant commands," said Army Lt. Col. Chad Baker, the J10

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— Vice Adm. Collin Green

mission integration branch chief with U.S. SOCOM. "This year's CWMD SLS was unique because it was the first year the event focused on two threat actors as well as two CCMD's areas of responsibility."

Additionally, this year's seminar integrated the Five Eyes, an intelligence alliance between Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States.

"Bringing our FVEY partners into the planning process, early, gave us a better appreciation of their current CWMD capabilities, efforts and priorities," said Baker. "This enabled the planning team to develop vignettes and discussion topics that highlighted critical capacity and capability gaps across the DoD, interagency and our FVEY partners."

Past senior leadership seminars and engagements drove development for corrective action plans, favorable resourcing decisions, revised strategic guidance and increased integration among the IA, allies and international partners; however, this year yielded a different outcome.

"We are at a transition point for the CWMD community and it's our role as the 'canary' to call attention to the risks," said Green. "We need to hold ourselves accountable to guidance and direction and follow through on necessary corrective actions and proactive approaches to address the threat."



Members of the Five Eyes attend the annual countering weapons of mass destruction senior leader seminar at U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, July 19, 2023. The FVEYs is an intelligence alliance between Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps GySgt. Demetrius Munnerlyn.

Headquarters - U.S. Special Operations Command

Para-Commandos speak to students during Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Rising Stars Leadership Academy

*By U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Marleah Miller
U.S. Special Operations Command*

The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office invited members of US Special Operations Command's Para-Commandos, the only joint parachute demonstration team in the Department of Defense, located at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, to be keynote speakers, Aug. 4, during the HCSO Rising Stars Leadership Academy.

The HCSO Rising Stars Academy is an annual leadership academy for next year's high school seniors where students apply, write an essay about themselves, and are judged by their grades, accomplishments in high school and their community service. One student is then selected from each high school within Hillsborough County – 29 plus one extra to round out attendance to 30 students.

The Para-Commandos are members of and



Tim Groves, a former Green Beret and current team leader of the Para-Commandos, hands out Para-Commando coins to high school students during the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Rising Stars Academy, Aug. 4, 2023. The HCSO Rising Stars Academy is an annual leadership academy for next year's high school seniors where students apply, write an essay about themselves, and are judged by their grades, accomplishments in high school and their community service. One student is then selected from each high school within Hillsborough County – 29 plus one extra to round out attendance to 30 students. Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Marleah Miller.



Army Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Travers, NCO-in-charge of the Para-Commandos, explains to high school students how their parachutes operate during the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Rising Stars Academy, Aug. 4, 2023. Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Marleah Miller.

representative of today's special operations forces, comprised of active-duty special operators, such as Army Special Forces, Army Rangers, Navy SEALs, Air Force Combat Controllers and Marine Raiders.

Tim Groves, a former Green Beret and current team leader of the Para-Commandos, and Army Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Travers, NCO-in-charge of the Para-Commandos, shared their stories and the role education, leadership and community service had on their paths to success.

"The intent was to share the importance of education and leadership with the students while representing the special operations community and Special Operations Command," said Groves. "We were able to share our personal journey of navigating our career and the role educational and leadership development contributed throughout our career progression."

Groves and Travers started their presentation with a video showcasing the Para-Commandos in action – jumping out of planes, flying through the air before deploying their parachutes, and landing in stadiums and at other high-visibility events across the nation.

"After watching the highlight video and realizing the skydivers in the videos were literally standing in front of them – the students were hooked," said Master Sgt. Herb Saumell, deputy sheriff with the HCSO Community Outreach Division. "The students really enjoyed the presentation, which was obvious by the number of questions they asked afterward."

When their presentation was over, students raced to have their hand up first and ask questions ranging from the military training they received, the processes and

opportunities they encountered along their path to what their favorite jumps were.

"I believe the part of Tim's presentation that influenced the kids the most was when he outlined his personal experience and path to success, and how education and perseverance were key to meeting his goals," said Saumell. "His message was well-received."

Students finally had the opportunity at the end to approach the stage where they received Para-Commando bracelets and coins, asked more questions, took photos with Groves and Travers, and even got to try on a parachute the Para-Commandos use.

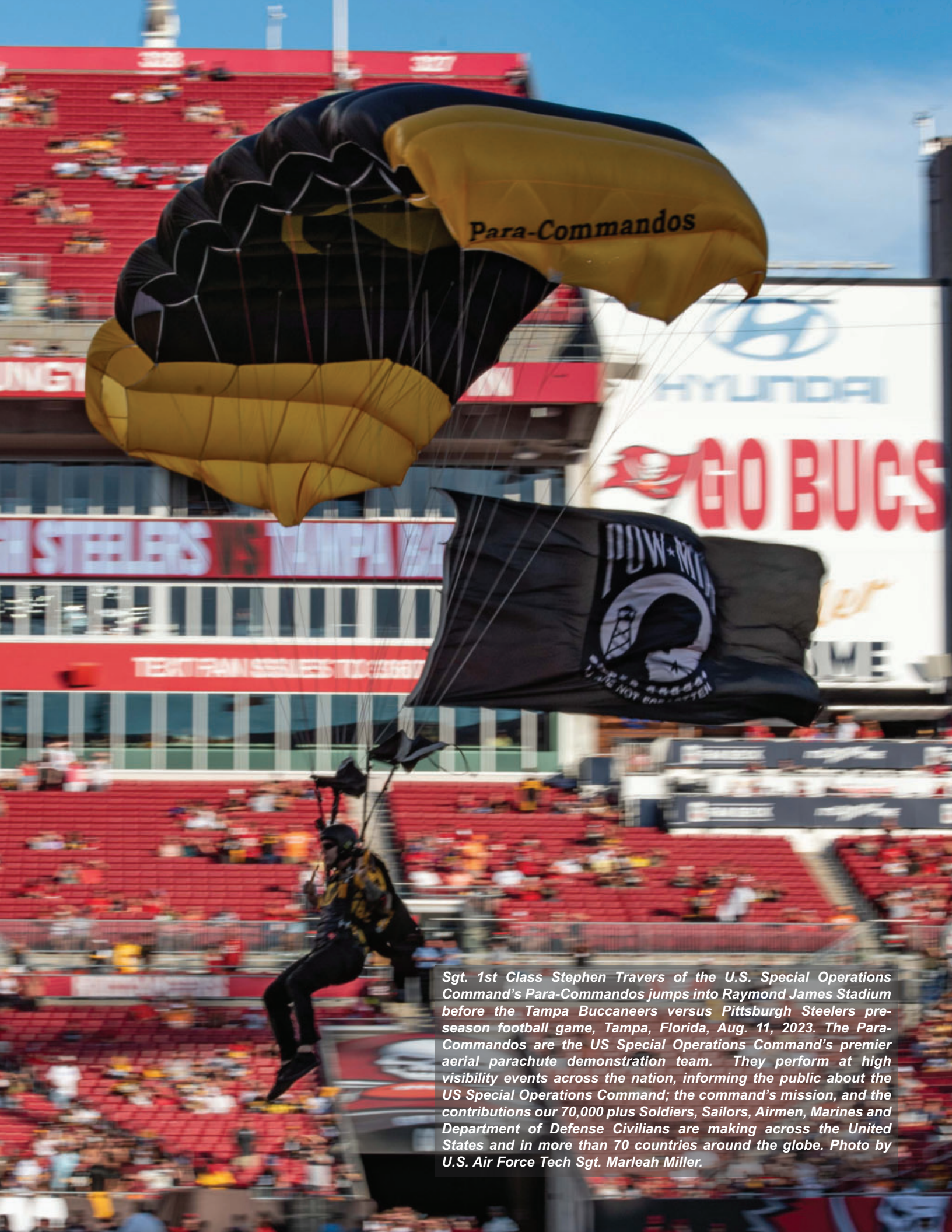
"This event was an amazing opportunity to interact with our local youth who are preparing to begin the next phase of education after high school," said Groves. "It was remarkable the level of interaction and interest the group had in military experiences, especially in special operations."

The Para-Commandos' mission is to inform the public about US9 SOCOM, the command's mission, and the contributions more than 70,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, Guardians and Department of Defense Civilians are making across the U.S. and in more than 70 countries around the globe.

"The continued success of our military depends on the future generation of young Americans," said Groves. "It was a pleasure to have this opportunity to interact with them."



Army Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Travers, NCO-in-charge of the Para-Commandos, explains to high school students how their parachutes operate during the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Rising Stars Academy, Aug. 4, 2023. Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Marleah Miller.



Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Travers of the U.S. Special Operations Command's Para-Commandos jumps into Raymond James Stadium before the Tampa Buccaneers versus Pittsburgh Steelers pre-season football game, Tampa, Florida, Aug. 11, 2023. The Para-Commandos are the US Special Operations Command's premier aerial parachute demonstration team. They perform at high visibility events across the nation, informing the public about the US Special Operations Command; the command's mission, and the contributions our 70,000 plus Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Department of Defense Civilians are making across the United States and in more than 70 countries around the globe. Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech Sgt. Marleah Miller.