



Tip OF THE Spear

United States Special Operations Command
MacDill Air Force Base, Florida

February 2020



Special Tactics Airmen take part in Emerald Warrior



United States Special Operations Command



Special Tactics Airmen take part in exercise Emerald Warrior 20-1 ... 25

Tip of the Spear

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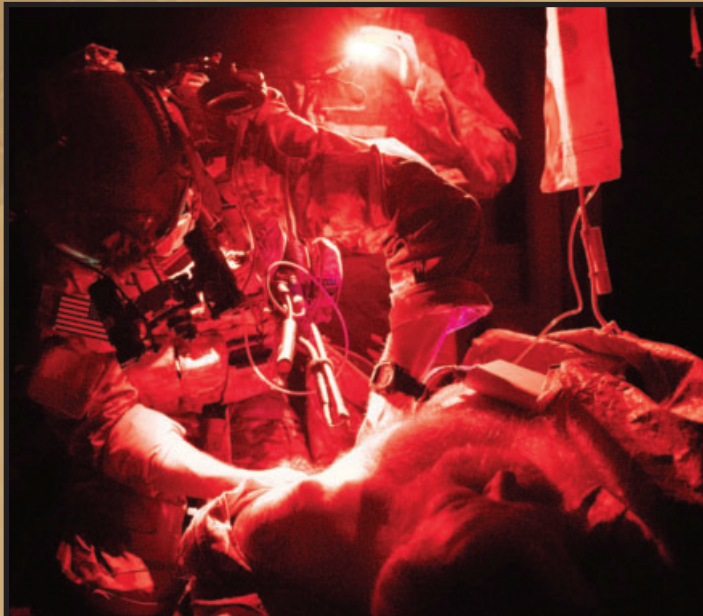
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(Cover) Special Tactics operators conduct cold weather snowmobile training during Emerald Warrior at Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center, Alpena, Mich., Jan. 22, 2020. Emerald Warrior 20-1 provides annual, realistic pre-deployment training encompassing multiple joint operating areas to prepare special operations forces, conventional force enablers, partner nations, and interagency elements to integrate with and execute full spectrum special operations in an arctic climate, sharpening U.S. forces' abilities to operate around the globe. Photo by U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Duncan Bevans.

The Quiet Professionals

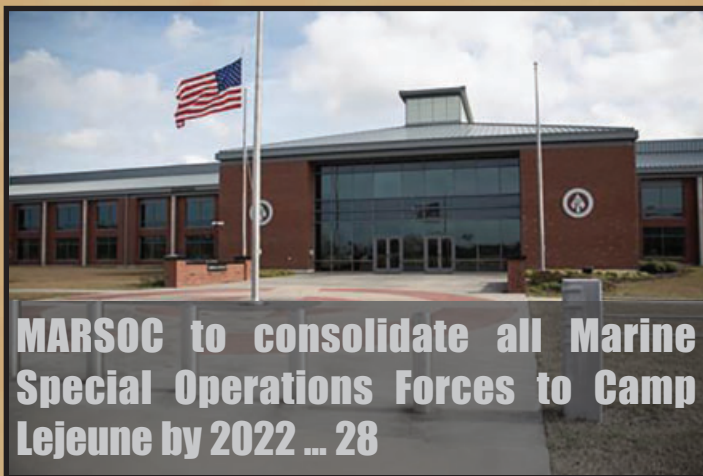
Highlights



Ranger medics save lives in combat ... 10



Navy EOD chief awarded Silver Star Medal for gallantry ... 20



MARSOC to consolidate all Marine Special Operations Forces to Camp Lejeune by 2022 ... 28

Departments

Theater Special Operations Commands

'To serve and protect' is not just a motto for one Soldier ... 4

Senegalese teach African partner forces casualty care at Flintlock 20 ... 6

U.S. Army Special Operations Command

Ranger Unit Ministry Teams conduct training, fellowship ... 8

Ranger medics save lives in combat ... 10

Ceremony recognizes valor, sacrifices of 7th Group Soldiers ... 15

A Cut Above: 75th Ranger Regimental CSM reflects on career spent leading the way ... 16

Naval Special Warfare Command

Exercise Trident 20-2 ... 19

Navy EOD chief awarded Silver Star Medal for gallantry ... 20

Air Force Special Operations Command

Two pararescue Airmen receive Silver Star Medals for gallantry ... 22

Special Tactics Airmen take part in exercise Emerald Warrior 20-1 ... 25

Special Tactics operators simulate first extreme cold weather FARP with next generation fighters ... 26

Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command

MARSOC to consolidate all Marine Special Operations Forces to Camp Lejeune by 2022 ... 28

Special operations capabilities specialists train in advanced tactical skills to support SOF ... 30

USSOCOM commander highlights Marine Raider accomplishments at MARSOC's 14th Anniversary ... 32

Headquarters

SOF evaluates new equipment at Nevada Test and Training Range ... 34

USSOCOM volunteers read to Tinker Elementary students ... 36

Memorial

Fallen Heroes ... 39

U.S. Special Operations Command - South



'To serve and protect' is not just a motto for one Soldier

*By U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Alex Ramos
Special Operations Command South*

Very few people know what it means to serve their country, but U.S. Army Sgt. Jehud Presume serves his country two ways. He serves as a reserve noncommissioned officer in the Army assigned to headquarters and headquarters company, Special Operations Command South and as a police officer with the Miramar, Florida, Police Department.

"To me, serving is an absolute honor," said Presume. "Both in my community and my country. There is no better sentiment than being able to serve and protect the weak from being preyed on by the criminal element. I believe only those who have discovered the power of sincere and selfless contribution to humans experience life's most profound joys and true fulfillment."

Presume moved to Haiti with his family three months after being born. His parents wanted him to learn French and Haitian Creole. He moved back to the U.S. when he was 10-years-old and grew up in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

"My parents invariably taught me to be honest, to be selfless, and to touch people positively," said the 31-year-old.

Having deployed twice to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and once for humanitarian assistance to translate Haitian Creole, Presume is no stranger to conflict and has answered the call a few times throughout his life.

Sept. 3, 2019, was a little different.

"It was my first day back from coming off of military leave at SOCSOUTH. The first day, first police service call of the day," said Presume. "We rushed over with lights and sirens because the call came out as a heart attack in progress. When we arrived, the patient was lying on the ground outside of a gas station with no



U.S. Army Sgt. Jehud Presume, a reserve noncommissioned officer assigned to headquarters and headquarters company, Special Operations Command South, poses during Fuerzas Comando 2019 in Santiago, Chile. Presume served as a translator for team Haiti during the event. Courtesy photo.

shirt. My heart was racing because I know that every second counts, and we will make a difference whether he lives or dies. So while doing CPR, our on-scene investigation led us to believe it may be more than just a heart attack and drugs may be involved, so we moved from just normal CPR to the use of the AED (automated external defibrillator) to then administering the Narcan."

“Within five minutes, he was breathing and alert again. Seconds later, fire rescue showed up and took him and continued to stabilize him while taking him to the (Emergency Response),” he explained.

Reflecting on the moment, Presume described how he felt.

“As scary and heart racing as it is, you just go back to your training and experience,” he said.

On Oct. 2, 2019, he and three other officers received a lifesaving award for their quick reaction, effective response, and role at that moment.

“Getting this award meant a lot to me, but it was a team effort,” said Presume. “While I did CPR, other officers were taking the necessary steps to save this patient’s life.”

The award is an excellent recognition and a reminder to the converted Floridian of what it means to serve.

“Having the honor of serving my community is just another avenue to fulfill my calling. I am blessed to serve alongside some of the most amazing human beings I have ever encountered; both at Special Operations Command South and in police work. These men and women are truly unsung heroes,” said Presume. “They are all selfless, generous in spirit, and



U.S. Army Sgt. Jehud Presume (center), a reserve noncommissioned officer assigned to headquarters and headquarters company, Special Operations Command South, celebrates with Team Haiti after they completed the obstacle course during Fuerzas Comando 2019 in Santiago, Chile. Courtesy photo.

give back as much as possible while helping people. They all play a massive part in honor of serving both my country and community.”



U.S. Army Sgt. Jehud Presume (second from left to right), a reserve noncommissioned officer assigned to headquarters and headquarters company, Special Operations Command South, poses with his fellow officers after receiving a lifesaving award for their quick reaction, effective response, and role in responding to a crisis on Sept. 3, 2019. The award was given to the officers Oct. 2, 2019 in Miami, Fla. Courtesy photo.

U.S. Special Operations Command - Africa



Forces Armées Tchadiennes soldiers train in tactical combat casualty care from their Sénégalaise trainers near Kaedi, Mauritania, Feb. 19, 2020. This training teaches partner forces a variety of lifesaving skills in a realistic scenario, so that they are fully prepared to perform casualty care in a real situation. Flintlock is an annual, integrated military and law enforcement exercise that has strengthened key partner-nation forces throughout North and West Africa since 2005. Flintlock is U.S. Africa Command's premier and largest annual special operations forces exercise. Photo U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Caleb Barrieau.

Senegalese teach African partner forces casualty care at Flintlock 20

*By U.S. Army Sgt. Connor Douglas and Patrick Loch
U.S. Africa Command*

This year's Flintlock exercise, took place in host-country Mauritania with an outstation in Senegal, provided a training opportunity for Soldiers and military planners belonging to more than a dozen African countries. For the first time, two of those African countries – Morocco and Senegal – took on the role as trainers themselves, using experience and skills gleaned from past Flintlock exercises to enhance counterterrorism and regional cooperation for African soldiers in neighboring countries.

Soldiers with the Armed Forces of Senegal oversaw instruction to teach lifesaving skills to their African neighbors during the exercise Feb. 17-28.

“You can reduce so much the people who die in the field and maybe when we send him to another place with more capacity to control the bleeding, he can survive,” said one African special operations paramedic.

The instruction touched on a variety of lifesaving skills in a realistic scenario to make African forces fully prepared to perform casualty care in a real situation.

“We are always learning, and every time we come

here [Flintlock] we learn something new,” continued the paramedic. “And the things we learn here we apply it in our country and we're training every day and how to control the victims in the field with my team, we are always doing missions like this.”

During the combat care course soldiers learned critical skills to save lives during combat, such as applying tourniquets and wound packing to minimize blood loss

“We are always learning and every time we come here we learn something new,” said the paramedic. “And the things we learn here we apply it in our country and we're training every day.”

In addition to tactical combat casualty care, African forces with a shared interest in security in the Sahel refined their individual weapon skills, close quarters battle and mission planning. The two-week event builds upon the previous day's training, progressing to a culminating exercise Feb. 28.

Flintlock is an annual, integrated military and law enforcement exercise that has strengthened key partnership forces throughout North and West Africa since 2005. The event is U.S. Africa Command's premier and largest annual Special Operations Forces exercise, and designed to increase partner nations' capabilities and strengthen country to country relationships.

U.S. Army Special Operations Command Ranger Unit Ministry Teams conduct training, fellowship



By 75th Ranger Regiment Public Affairs

For the first time since the beginning of 9/11, every 75th Ranger Regiment chaplain and religious affairs specialist gathered together from January 17th to 24th for training, competition, and fellowship at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan.

Since October 19th, 2001, the 75th Ranger Regiment has had at least one battalion continuously deployed to combat. In that time, tens of thousands of Rangers have stood in harm's way, protecting our nation and national interests. Wherever you find deployed Rangers, you will find a Ranger chaplain and Ranger religious affairs specialist.

The demands of deployment and ministry have always limited the unit ministry teams' ability to conduct military training. The only solution was to bring the training to the deployed environment. On January 17th, 2020, UMTs of the 75th Ranger Regiment consolidated on Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan.

"The regimental religious support training helped sustain the chaplains and religious support personnel in their demanding role of caring for the soul of the 75th Ranger Regiment," Maj. Erik Alfsen, 75th Ranger Regiment Regimental chaplain, said. "Our goal as a UMT is to invest in our people and cultivate our community and for us to care for our people, we've got to take better care of our UMTs."

The three-day training incorporated a number of seminars covering topics such as moral injury, resource management, marriage and family programs, coaching as a model for ministry, pastoral identity, self-care, professional development, and operational religious support. In addition to lectures and discussions, UMTs participated in a challenging timed competition, involving medical trauma lanes, stress shoots, sermon preparation, emergency counseling, and a variety of other physical events.

Col. Keith Croom, U.S. Army Special Operations Command chaplain, served as one of the keynote speakers



During the two-hour Best Ranger Unit Ministry Team Competition at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan ranger religious affairs specialists had to navigate through a medical trauma lane. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Nathan Lipscomb.

and senior mentors for the event.

"Clarity of your identity is vital to authenticity in your ministry," said Croom, as he encouraged UMTs to have a clear understanding of themselves and their calling.

"This was the most meaningful training opportunity I've had as a 56M," Staff Sgt. Nathaniel Steadman, religious affairs specialist with 2nd Ranger Battalion said. "I was able to discover new ways to communicate, and new ways to care for the amazing people we serve. But it goes even deeper than that. I walked away with a better sense of how to care for myself and my family."

Col. Todd S. Brown, commander of the 75th Ranger Regiment, summed up the importance of this event for the organization's unit ministry teams.

"There is no doubt that our UMTs have the pulse of the regiment. Our commanders look to them for open and honest feedback. Our chaplains and religious affairs specialists are a crucial part of the culture of resiliency we foster in the 75th Ranger Regiment," Brown said. "They have been able to sustain the moral, spiritual, and relational health of our Rangers for nearly 20 years of continuous combat. Their ability to recognize issues and advise the commander is key. Our Ranger UMT's keep the pulse of the regiment."

A Ranger religious affairs specialist conducts a rope climb during the two-hour Best Ranger Unit Ministry Team Competition at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Nathan Lipscomb.



U.S. Army Special Operations Command

Ranger medics save lives in combat



“I will never leave a fallen comrade ...” fifth stanza of the Ranger Creed.

By 75th Ranger Regiment Public Affairs

On a hot, dark night in Wardak province, Afghanistan last summer, a special operations Ranger raid force conducted a helicopter insertion, beginning what would become a historical night. The routine Ranger task of capturing or killing high value enemy targets would tonight include cutting edge lifesaving procedures never done in combat, with the stakes of life or death hanging in the balance.

While clearing through the objective, the assault force began receiving accurate Ak-47, machine gun, and other small arms fire from multiple enemy fighters near the target compound.

The Ranger assault force returned fire on the enemy positions, using their M4 carbines and squad automatic weapons along with shoulder fired rockets and grenade projectiles.

As the assault force maneuvered on a shooter who barricaded himself into a fighting position, they were rocked by a large explosion near the breach of the target compound. When the debris landed and the dust settled, three Rangers were wounded in action and the fight for their lives began.

Leading that fight were two Ranger combat medics, Staff Sgt. Charles Bowen and Sgt. Ty Able, from Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment. They saved six lives that night.

As the explosions and bullets riddled the area around Bowen and Able, they made careful calculations and risked their own lives for their brothers. Maneuvering within meters of the barricaded enemy shooter, they surged to evacuate the wounded from the midst of the battle raging around them.

Bowen and Able quickly assessed the two wounded casualties and directed advanced Ranger first responders certified teammates, the 75th Ranger

Regiment’s equivalent to Emergency Medical Technicians, on how to continue medical treatment.

“The first casualty yelled out ‘I’m hit, I’m hit!’ I looked at his leg and did not see any blood so I told him to go outside of the building and have someone evaluate his wounds,” Bowen said. “At the same time, the second casualty yelled out ‘Doc, I’m real messed up!’”

A Ranger, an Afghan partner force soldier, and Bowen made their way through the dusty corridor to the courtyard where they saw the second casualty laying on the ground. He was conscious but contorted in an alarming manner.

Without hesitation, Bowen identified the critically wounded casualty and rapidly pulled him behind the only nearby cover from the enemy gunfire, a small lump of earth no more than one meter high.

Through the chaos of the enemy fire, Bowen determined the second casualty was critically wounded and began crucial lifesaving interventions.

“We began dragging the second casualty toward a safer location through the corridor and out of the breach,” Bowen said. “After getting the casualty out of the breach, I began to treat him with the help of others around me.”

Bowen quickly placed a tourniquet on the man’s right arm and leg and a junctional tourniquet around his pelvis.

“I asked the second casualty if he could hear me and he responded with ‘Yeah, it really hurts, Doc,’” Bowen said.

Bowen cut off the man’s body armor to get a visual of his wounds, exposing a gaping hole on the right side of his chest.

“I went to my (medical) aid belt and pulled out a needle chest decompression, an intravenous kit and one gram of pre-drawn Tranexamic Acid (TXA, a medication for trauma patients that reduces death due

to bleeding),” Bowen said.

After checking his back for additional wounds, Bowen began an IV and administered the TXA and found that the man’s radial pulse was rapid and weak. After this find, Bowen felt the casualty’s chest and found that the left side was not inflating.

While Bowen performed lifesaving advanced resuscitation efforts on the man’s bleeding limbs, he directed Able and a Ranger assaulter to manage the critical chest wounds.

At this point, the casualty had received two units of cold stored whole blood, the stock every Ranger medic carries into combat with them.

Bowen and his team then hastily moved the casualty to the casualty collection point.

When they arrived, Bowen reassessed the man’s wounds while Able checked on the other two

casualties from the initial blast.

As this was occurring, the casualty collection point was taking effective enemy machine gun fire and even received a fragmentation grenade from as close as 15 meters away.

During the melee, the strike force platoon sergeant told Bowen there was yet another casualty.

Within a minute of this report, the new casualty came from the wood’s edge, stumbling in Bowen’s direction with blood gushing from a wound on the left side of his neck.

“As he fell into me with his multipurpose canine still attached to his belt, I told him to put pressure on the wound. He replied, ‘I’m trying!’” Bowen said.

With blood pouring from the neck of the new casualty, Bowen placed his middle finger into the hole in his neck to stop the bleeding.



A U.S. Army Ranger combat medic conducts routine medical training during 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment’s task force training August 2019. Ranger medics train throughout the year to be assault medics capable of bringing the fight to the enemy but also to save lives on the battlefield. The Ranger O-Low Titer protocol is practiced multiple times a year with the volunteers and medics to maintain a high level of medical proficiency. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Jaerett Engeseth.

Still applying pressure to the neck wound, Bowen established a second casualty collection point to manage the two critically wounded casualties (the second and third casualties). While under direct enemy fire, Bowen and Able assessed the neck wound while lying on the ground to avoid further harm to themselves and other casualties.

Bowen identified the massive hemorrhage in the neck of the new casualty, which was causing an obstructed airway. Laying in the dirt, under enemy fire directly hitting their position of cover and concealment, Bowen and Able performed an advanced surgical technique known as a cricothyroidotomy to allow the wounded Ranger to breathe.

A cricothyroidotomy is an incision made through a patient's skin and cricothyroid membrane to establish a patent airway during certain life-threatening situations.

"While we were taking both enemy machine gun and accurate mortar fire, I retrieved additional medical equipment to control the bleeding," Bowen added. "Once I had the bleeding under control, I made a pressure dressing over the entry wound of the left side of the neck."

The Ranger with the neck wound was temporarily under control. However, the other previous casualty was bleeding out rapidly due to the multiple limb and chest wounds. With all the available whole blood units already administered to the casualties, Bowen and Able determined the critically wounded man would die from blood loss if they didn't take action. They would need to exercise the Ranger O-Low Titre protocol.

"ROLO is a novel protocol created in the 75th Ranger Regiment that is transforming how we treat battlefield casualties," said 75th Ranger Regiment Command Surgeon Lt. Col. Ryan Knight. "We now always have blood on the battlefield and do not rely on other IV fluids."

The ROLO Program allows one Soldier to transfer his or her blood to a wounded Soldier in just a few minutes on the battlefield. The program relies on relatively simple medical procedures and administrative tracking of a unit's universal donor (group O blood) volunteers, providing huge quantities

of whole blood when a situation requires it.

When called upon, a blood donor volunteer moves to the casualty and pulls out their issued blood donor pack. Either the unit's combat medic or a trained non-medical Ranger draws the blood from the volunteer. The volunteer then returns to combat and the blood is immediately administered to the casualty. The whole process takes about 10 minutes.

Bowen, Able, and an advanced Ranger first responder did this protocol three times, under direct enemy fire to save the lives of two critically wounded casualties.

"To provide this level of care, Bowen and Able, had to ignore their own survival instincts and concentrate on their patients. They displayed the highest levels of courage as they repeatedly placed their patients' survival above their own safety," Knight said. "They will say they were just doing what they are trained to do, and in some ways they are right."

"However, although we simulate incoming fire and force medics to treat in the prone position during training there is no way to accurately reflect the reality of combat," Knight added.

While the medics were conducting lifesaving medical treatment, the assault force was reengaged by the enemy from three buildings in the adjacent village approximately 80

meters away from the casualty collection point.

Due to the volume of direct fire, both Bowen and Able covered their patients with their bodies in order to prevent further injury or possibly even death.

"As all of the treatments and movements while under enemy fire were occurring, danger close fire missions with hellfire missiles, 30mm rounds, and 105mm rounds were being executed as close as 30 meters from our position," Bowen said. "As this was happening, Sgt. Able and I did our best to shield our casualties from harm and covered their ears during impact of the large munitions."

During nearly 30 minutes of sustained direct fire enemy contact, Bowen and Able facilitated the ROLO protocol once again, drawing two more units of fresh whole blood to aid in the treatment of both critically wounded casualties.

Even as two MH-47s came in for exfiltration, the

ROLO is a novel protocol created in the 75th Ranger Regiment that is transforming how we treat battlefield casualties. We now always have blood on the battlefield and do not rely on other IV fluids.

— Lt. Col. Ryan Knight, 75th Ranger Regiment Command Surgeon

assault force again came under heavy enemy fire. Able began to engage the enemy with small arms, providing the necessary cover for his teammates to load the casualties onto the helicopter. Once the casualties were loaded, Able then maneuvered to the aircraft for exfiltration. He continued firing at the enemy until the helicopter had taken off.

“Sgt. Able’s treatment of casualties, superb medical treatment recommendations, and overall calm demeanor while within accurate small arms and fragmentation grenade range, undoubtedly saved the lives of his fellow Rangers,” Cpt. Edmund J. Carazo, Bravo Company commander, 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment said. “His disregard for his own safety while performing lifesaving care is exemplary and serves as an example for all Rangers to follow.”

Bowen and Able treated a fatal hemorrhage, triaged two additional casualties, and successfully packaged the critically wounded in 13 minutes, before movement to the casualty collection point.

“Staff Sgt. Bowen’s actions during this operation are some of the most impressive feats I’ve ever witnessed,” Carazo said. “Not only did his actions save the lives of his fellow Rangers, but he performed a staggering display of technically superior field medicine while under fire for more than 90 minutes. His blatant disregard for his own safety was evident throughout.”

From the first explosion that wounded three Rangers until the casualties were evacuated to the next level of medical care, was approximately two hours.

Two hours under heavy enemy fire with two of the casualties critically wounded, Bowen and Able’s leadership, courage under direct enemy fire and the ability to administer lifesaving aid, was the reason three Rangers came home from this deployment.

“Every link in the system worked that night to save these lives. Rangers train casualty care every day, leaders train to handle casualties, and our medics take pride in being the world experts in tactical combat casualty care,” Knight said. “While this is an amazing display of personal courage, medical expertise, and the most incredible saves I’ve ever heard of, it’s also Rangers living the Ranger Creed and is what we expect every day from the 75th Ranger Regiment.”

The 75th Ranger Regiment’s leaders are hopeful that their recent success administering whole blood and executing the ROLO program in combat will inspire units across the Department of Defense to adopt the relatively simple programs, greatly improving medical options for units on the battlefield.

Editor’s note: The ROLO program can be implemented at any unit. It is the fusion of administrative focus and adequate medical training. For further, detailed information contact the 75th Ranger Regiment Medical Section at 75rgrpao@socom.mil.



The ROLO Program allows one Soldier to transfer his or her blood to a wounded Soldier in just a few minutes on the battlefield. The program relies on relatively simple medical procedures and administrative tracking of a unit’s universal donor (group O blood) volunteers, providing huge quantities of whole blood when a situation requires it. When called upon, a blood donor volunteer moves to the casualty and pulls out their issued blood donor pack. Either the unit’s combat medic or a trained non-medical Ranger draws the blood from the volunteer. The volunteer then returns to combat and the blood is immediately administered to the casualty. The whole process takes about 10 minutes. Courtesy U.S. Army Photo.



A Soldier from 2nd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) is decorated for valor at an award ceremony Jan. 9, 2020 held at Liberty Chapel, Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. The battalion was recognized for acts of valor during its recent deployment while supporting Operation Resolute Support. Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Jose Vargas.

U.S. Army Special Operations Command Ceremony recognizes valor, sacrifices of 7th Group Soldiers



By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Christopher Case
7th Special Forces Group (Airborne)

Soldiers assigned to 2nd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne), were honored in an awards ceremony at Liberty Chapel, Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, Jan. 9, for valorous actions while supporting Operation Resolute Support.

Col. Steven M. Marks, deputy commander, 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) presented three Silver Stars, seven Bronze Star Medals with Valor device and 17 Army Commendation Medals with Valor device.

The Silver Star is the third highest medal for valor in combat and reserved for exceptional gallantry in action.

“The valor we are recognizing today happened at the most tactical level – face-to-face fighting, close-quarters combat, hand grenade range,” Marks said. “This is a reminder that even in the modern age, warfare is still about courage under fire, having the mental sharpness to operate with expertise in the worst of times and taking action to protect your brother, your team and your partners.”

During the six-month deployment 7th SFG (A) led Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan during a challenging period. Their actions stabilized the security situation throughout the country prior to Afghan parliamentary elections and set conditions to advance a negotiated peace with the Taliban.

“As a witness on the ground during this time, I can speak for the incredible progress over a six-month period

these brave men achieved to bring stability to an unstable nation,” Marks said.

Their actions prevented enemy forces from seriously threatening or capturing any provincial capital during the deployment, a feat which had not been accomplished in several years.

The battalion operated alongside numerous coalition partner force units, elements from 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), and 717th Ordinance Company, which is located at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

Lt. Col. Edward, J. Sanford, 2nd Bn., 7th SFG (A) commander, recognized the sacrifice of the families present at the ceremony.

The valor we are recognizing today happened at the most tactical level – face-to-face fighting, close-quarters combat, hand grenade range.

— Col. Steven M. Marks, deputy commander,
1st Special Forces Command (Airborne)



Col. Steven M. Marks, deputy commander, 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) awards a Soldier from 2nd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in recognition of valorous acts during the battalion's recent deployment in support of Operation Resolute Support. The ceremony was held at Liberty Chapel, Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., Jan. 9, 2020. Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Jose Vargas.

U.S. Army Special Operations Command

A Cut Above: 75th Ranger Regimental CSM reflects on career spent leading the way



*By U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Jorden M. Weir
75th Ranger Regiment Public Affairs*

No military unit carries more of a modern-day mythical reputation than the 75th Ranger Regiment, and in the Rangers, no man is more mythic than the Regimental Command Sergeant Major.

As he looked back to 1996, and the start of his career in the most elite special operations raid force the world has ever known, Command Sgt. Maj. Michael D. Albaugh, the 75th Ranger Regimental sergeant major, never would have pegged himself for the job.

“When I was a private in the Rangers, I was just trying to keep up with everybody physically and mentally, learn my job, and not get released for standards,” Albaugh laughed. “The RSM? That’s just some mythical creature out there somewhere. You know he exists, you heard about him, but you’re never going to be that guy.”

Yet it’s exactly the position that Albaugh, who started out as an assistant gunner, working his way up through every major leadership position within the regiment, meeting every challenge and rising to every occasion along the way, has held for the last two years.

As he prepares to relinquish his responsibility as the 75th Ranger Regiment’s senior enlisted advisor, he reflected on his time in one of the most professional, well-trained, and deadly special operations units in the U.S. military.

“I came into the Army a little bit later than most,” Albaugh began. At 27 years old he had already gone to college, bouncing from job to job with nothing really catching his eye. But the Army had always been on his mind.

So, he started researching.



Command Sgt. Maj. Michael D. Albaugh, who has spent nearly his entire career as a Ranger with the 75th Ranger Regiment. He relinquished responsibility as the senior enlisted advisor to the commander of the 75th Ranger Regiment Feb. 21, 2020. Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Jonathan Bryson.

“This was back in the late 90s, so there wasn’t a lot of information out there,” Albaugh said. “Social media wasn’t a thing, there wasn’t a lot of public press, but I knew that there were these Army Rangers and that they were these elite, tough guys, and did this special mission.”

That was all it took. The allure and mystique of the 75th Ranger Regiment had drawn him in.

“I just said, ‘hey’, if I’m going to go into the Army, I kinda want to try for something a cut above everybody else,” he said. “I want to do something special and make my time in the Army mean a little bit more.”

In an organization that prides itself on being so much more than merely a cut above the rest, Albaugh has managed to distinguish himself.

“The Regiment is a better place now because of CSM Albaugh,” said Col. Todd Brown, the commander of the 75th Ranger Regiment, “not just from his service these past two years, but from his service the past two decades. CSM Albaugh has had a tremendous impact in combat operations, training, and growing the Ranger Regiment. He will continue to make a tremendous impact to the Joint Force in his pending assignment.”

The 75th Ranger Regiment’s culture is founded on high standards and discipline, a long and storied history of courage

in valor in combat, and of course, the Ranger Creed. And while those are all vitally important, Albaugh says that what the culture truly thrives on is its people.

“We hire and assess and bring on and train the best people in the Army,” he said, referring to the Ranger Assessment and Selection Program. “And being here for so many years, they really become family to you. Just about anybody who’s ever left here, they almost always want to get back. They want to be around people they feel comfortable working with, who are like-minded individuals and are kind of all striving for excellence.”

The measure of that excellence is what Rangers know as the “Big Five”: marksmanship, physical training, medical training, small-unit tactics, and mobility. They are the fundamentals that determine each Ranger’s individual success as well as that of the Ranger mission. As a regiment, the Rangers are relentless in their pursuit to constantly improve on each of the five pillars.

It not only makes them better warfighters, but in many cases the benefits carry over.

“The biggest impact we’ve had on the Army as a

whole, I’d say, has been in the medical field,” said Albaugh.

The 75th Ranger Regiment’s Ranger O-Low Titer Whole Blood Program was recognized by the Army Materiel Command as the individual military winner of the annual Army’s Greatest Innovation Award in 2017.

“If you look across the Army, the best trained and most capable medics that we have are in the Ranger Regiment. We’re always training, always trying to stay at the cutting edge of how to best care for our Rangers and increase survivability on the battlefield. If you want to be the best medic you can be, then you want to be in the Ranger Regiment.”

When asked how the 75th compares to other units around the Army, Albaugh was quick to point out his belief that every organization has their camaraderie, their band of brothers. So how are the Rangers different? A few things, he says. The Big Five for one, but also the requirement that every potential Ranger, regardless of rank or

occupational specialty, must undergo a stringent assessment and selection process just to get in.

Everyone must earn the right to wear the scroll and tan beret. And once selected, every Ranger is continuously assessed for the privilege to stay.

“That really kind of elevates the type of people

that come and stay in this organization,” said Albaugh. “I think that’s a little of what sets us apart. This place brings out the best in its members because you’re challenged every day. The good thing is there’s plenty of people around you that are going to help you, they’re not going to let you fail.”

As Albaugh prepares to take the next step in his professional journey as an Army Ranger, there’s one thing he wants past, current, and future Rangers to know.

“No matter whether you stay in the Ranger Regiment four years or 24 years, this will always be something you’ll look back on in your life and be proud,” Albaugh said. “It’s a small portion of your life, but it’ll mean so much.

“As well it should, because this isn’t something that’s easy. This isn’t something that just anybody can do. And that’s why it matters.”

To join the 75th Ranger Regiment, contact recruiters at 75Recruit@socom.mil to begin the selection process. Or visit www.goarmy.com/ranger to learn more about the 75th Ranger Regiment. Rangers Lead the Way!

No matter whether you stay in the Ranger Regiment four years or 24 years, this will always be something you’ll look back on in your life and be proud. It’s a small portion of your life, but it’ll mean so much.

— *Command Sgt. Maj. Michael D. Albaugh*



A SEAL assigned to Naval Special Warfare Group 2 conducts dive operations during Exercise Trident 20-2, Mayport, Fla., Jan. 20, 2020.

Naval Special Warfare Command Exercise Trident 20-2



Photo essay by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Russell Rhodes Jr

Naval Special Warfare Group 2 conducted dive operations during Exercise Trident 20-2. The exercise is a joint-maritime certification exercise designed to meet Joint Staff high interest training issues for special operations and conventional force integration.



(Below) A member assigned to Naval Special Warfare Group 2 conducts military operations during Exercise Trident 20-2, in Mayport Fla., Jan. 23, 2020.

Members assigned to Naval Special Warfare Group 2 conduct visit, board, search, and seizure operations aboard amphibious dock landing ship USS Carter Hall (LSD 50) during Exercise Trident 20-2, in Mayport Fla., Jan. 24, 2020.



A member assigned to Naval Special Warfare Group 2 conducts mortar firing during Exercise Trident 20-2, in the White Sands Missile Range, N.M., Jan. 9, 2020.

Naval Special Warfare Command

Navy EOD chief awarded Silver Star Medal for gallantry



Vice Adm. Scott D. Conn, commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet stands alongside Chief Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician Matt O'Connor, assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 11, during an awards ceremony held at 3rd Fleet headquarters. The Silver Star is the third highest military combat decoration that can be awarded to a member of the United States Armed Forces. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Casey S. Trietsch.



*By U.S. Navy Lt. Kara Handley
Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group ONE*

Vice Adm. Scott Conn, commander, U.S. Third Fleet, presented the Silver Star Medal for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action to Chief Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician Matthew J. O'Connor during an award presentation held on Naval Base Point Loma, San Diego, California, Feb. 13, 2020.

As a member of EOD Mobile Unit 11, O'Connor was deployed in April 2019 with a special operations task force in support of Operation Inherent Resolve when his team maneuvered into an enemy held village and assaulted a facility known to be producing improvised explosive devices.

After his team came under enemy fire, O'Connor exposed himself in order to carry a wounded teammate to cover where he subsequently rendered lifesaving medical

treatment and coordinated suppressive fire. O'Connor exposed himself a second time to retrieve a wounded U.S. linguist. After moving the linguist to safety and carrying his first teammate through enemy fire and difficult terrain to the casualty collection point, O'Connor returned to the target area, conducted post assault procedures, and guided the remaining combined task force through terrain laden with improvised explosive devices.

"Adversity under fire doesn't test one's character, it reveals it," said Conn. "Chief O'Connor revealed that day that his character, choices, and actions clearly warrant the recognition afforded by a Silver Star."

O'Connor, originally from Bellingham, Washington, said, "I am honored to receive the Silver Star and appreciate the recognition; however, I want people to know that it took a whole group of guys to ensure everyone returned safely. I was not the only one out there, and this is reflective of a team effort."

As one of their primary mission areas, Navy EOD supports U.S. Special Operations Forces against the threat

of explosives, enabling access and freedom of maneuver on the battlefield and at sea. The community's unique combination of military free fall, dive and advanced expeditionary combat skills training ensures Navy EOD technicians can infiltrate and operate in any environment.

"I am extremely proud of Chief O'Connor for his bravery and commitment to the Navy EOD mission," said Capt. Oscar Rojas, commodore, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group One. "His actions in combat demonstrate the culture of operational excellence that our entire community drives toward every day in order to defend America and the

American way of life."

EODMU11 provides operational EOD capabilities to include locating, identifying, rendering safe, exploiting, recovering, and disposing of all explosive ordnance, including chemical and nuclear weapons, while providing access for conventional and Special Operations Forces to maneuver across the full range of military operations.

U.S. Navy EOD is the world's premier combat force for eliminating explosive threats so the Fleet and nation can fight and win whenever, wherever.

Adversity under fire doesn't test one's character, it reveals it.

*— Vice Adm. Scott Conn,
commander, U.S. Third Fleet*

Chief Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician Matt O'Connor, assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 11, stands at attention alongside Vice Adm. Scott D. Conn, commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet after being awarded the Silver Star Medal during an awards ceremony held at 3rd Fleet headquarters. The Silver Star is the third-highest military combat decoration that can be awarded to a member of the United States Armed Forces. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Casey S. Trietsch.



Air Force Special Operations Command



Two pararescue Airmen receive Silver Star Medals for gallantry

*By U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Bailee A. Darbasie
57th Wing Public Affairs*

Two U.S. Air Force pararescue Airmen received the Silver Star Medal in a ceremony Dec. 13, on Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, for gallantry in action against enemies of the United States while deployed to Afghanistan.

Tech. Sgt. Gavin Fisher and Staff Sgt. Daniel Swensen were awarded the U.S. Armed Forces' third highest military combat decoration for saving nearly 40 lives and eliminating more than 100 enemy fighters in two separate combat engagements.

"For some of you, you may ask yourself how these two individuals in the face of such adversity performed so admirably," said Lt. Col. Douglas Holliday, commander of 58th Rescue Squadron. "Airmen like Dan and Gavin are part of a profession that dedicates their lives to a motto 'That Others May Live.' A foundation of that motto is a pledge they made going through selection and years of arduous training. In the face of adversity, when Americans and our allies' lives are on the line, under no circumstance will you quit on them. Never quit."

Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr., Pacific Air Forces commander, echoed Holliday's sentiments while comparing the actions of Fisher and Swensen to those of yesteryear's comic book heroes and the rarity of heroes today.

"We can become so absorbed by the tales and the characters and their abilities that we can lose sight of our real-life heroes – heroes like Tech. Sgt. Gavin Fisher and Staff Sgt. Daniel Swensen," Brown said. "... Only one percent of our service men and women, representing one percent of the population have received this Silver Star. So, these gentlemen are in a very exclusive club."

Tech. Sgt. Gavin Fisher – 350th Special Warfare Training Squadron, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas

Fisher was awarded the Silver Star Medal for his



Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr., Pacific Air Forces commander, presents the Silver Star Medal certificate to Tech. Sgt. Gavin Fisher, 350th Special Warfare Training Squadron pararescueman, in a ceremony at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, Dec. 13, 2019. Fisher was awarded the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action against enemies of the United States while assigned to the 83rd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron, Afghanistan, in 2018. Photo by U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Bryan Guthrie.

gallantry as a pararescue technical rescue specialist while engaged in ground combat against U.S. enemies Aug. 11 and 12, 2018, in Ghazni Province, Afghanistan.

Ultimately, Fisher's actions saved the lives of 10 critically injured Soldiers, medically evacuated 20 casualties and eliminated 118 Taliban fighters.

Prior to the attack, a combined joint special operations task force was conducting a 10-day crisis response mission to fend off Ghazni City from more than 500 Taliban fighters. Fisher was serving as a rear gunner for the lead vehicle of the convoy, when Taliban fighters struck the armored vehicles with rocket propelled grenades and heavy

machine gun fire.

In the midst of the ambush, Fisher was struck by grenade shrapnel; however, he remained focused, firing back at the Taliban and directing his vehicle out of danger. While still fending off two enemy fighters, he provided advanced medical treatment, stopping massive bleeding and administering blood transfusions to two critically injured Soldiers. Fisher then kept his brothers-in-arms stable until a medical evacuation team arrived.

Wounded and refusing to leave with the patients, Fisher was involved in a second ambush. Placing others' lives before his, he treated five additional critically injured partner force casualties and requested a second medical evacuation.

The Taliban continued to strike the task force, eventually striking the mission support site and wounding 12 partner force soldiers. Fisher, without hesitation or regard for his safety, maneuvered through 75 meters of heavy machine gun and small arms fire to treat five of the wounded comrades.

Jumping back into the rear gunner seat of his armored vehicle, wounded Fisher manned the heavy machine gun as his team continued clearance operations of the city. Suddenly, a rocket propelled grenade struck the vehicle, severely wounding Fisher; however, he refused to falter while on guard.

Fisher returned fire and directed his team to safety, before he finally relented to medical care.

“Getting this medal is important because it lets people know the war is still going on, and valiant efforts by men and women are still going forth,” said Fisher. “People are still out there dying and fighting for each other, and it needs to be recognized.”

Staff Sgt. Daniel Swensen – 58th Rescue Squadron, Nellis AFB, Nevada

Swensen was awarded the Silver Star Medal for his gallantry as a pararescueman while engaged in ground combat against U.S. enemies Sept. 13 and 14, 2019, in Farah province, Afghanistan.

Ultimately, Swensen's actions directly saved the lives of nine American and partner force special operators.

On the night of the attack, an Army Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha team was conducting a helicopter assault to reclaim the Anar Darah District Center and police headquarters, which were under Taliban control. Simultaneously, Swensen, who was embedded with the detachment, was leading a ground assault team through a compound, when Taliban fighters initiated an ambush less than 100 meters away.

Within moments, the Taliban were relentlessly sending heavy machine gun fire and rocket propelled grenades into the compound. Eventually, a grenade struck the wall behind Swensen, wounding him and five of his teammates.

Injured, trapped and separated from the support fire team, Swensen remained vigilant as he fired back at the Taliban and directed his partner forces to safety. In the midst of the chaos, he ran through intense enemy fire to rescue a fallen Soldier incapacitated by his injuries. As the gunfire sprayed overhead, Swensen treated the life-threatening wounds before moving him out of danger.

Swensen, continuing to ignore his injuries, grouped the casualties and prepared for extraction. He loaded an injured Soldier onto his shoulders and then directed the team to the helicopter landing zone 800 meters away.

Not long after the group had arrived, the Taliban executed a second ambush with heavy machine gun fire.

With disregard for his safety, Swensen remained exposed to enemy fire to direct the casualties behind cover and then continued treatment of the critically injured. Eventually, the medical evacuation helicopter arrived, and the injured were flown to safety; however, for Swensen, there was still work to be done. He then led the remaining team members back through the city to retrieve four additional casualties before allowing medical attention for his wounds.

“It's weird to receive so much attention for something that I feel anyone else would've done on the battlefield that night,” said Swensen. “I'm honored my peers think I deserve this medal.”



Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr., Pacific Air Forces commander, presents the Silver Star Medal certificate to Staff Sgt. Daniel Swensen, 58th Rescue Squadron pararescueman, in a ceremony at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, Dec. 13, 2019. Swensen was awarded the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action against enemies of the United States while embedded with Army Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha 1215 in Afghanistan, Sept. 13-14, 2019. Photo by U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Bryan Guthrie.

Air Force Special Operations Command



Special Tactics Airmen from the 21st Special Tactics Squadron load onto a Sikorsky MH-53 to infill to an operating location to conduct close air support with F-35 Lightning IIs during Emerald Warrior at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, Jan. 21, 2020. Emerald Warrior provides annual, realistic pre-deployment training encompassing multiple joint operating areas to prepare Special Operations Forces, conventional force enablers, partner nations, and interagency elements to integrate with and execute full spectrum special operations in an arctic climate, sharpening U.S. forces' abilities to operate around the globe.



Special Tactics Airmen take part in exercise Emerald Warrior 20-1

*Photo essay by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Sandra Welch
24th Special Operations Wing*

Special Tactics Airmen participated in Emerald Warrior 20-1, an exercise that provides realistic pre-deployment training in extreme cold weather environments to include Alaska, Michigan and Utah, Jan. 21-31.

Emerald Warrior is a U.S. Special Operations Command directed exercise focusing on irregular

warfare in a joint, NATO combined realistic environment. This training hones Special Operations forces' air and ground combat skills and the development of improved tactics, techniques and procedures, while strengthening relationships for future deployments.

For Special Tactics, Emerald Warrior is a way to execute and demonstrate a range of skills while integrating the capabilities of joint assets and allies, maintaining an edge over the nation's adversaries.



Special Tactics Airmen conduct weapons training during Emerald Warrior at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, Jan. 28, 2020.



A U.S. Marine Corps M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System fires at Utah Test and Training Range on Hill Air Force Base during Emerald Warrior, Jan. 29, 2020.



A loadmaster with the 9th Special Operations Squadron, Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico, guides a M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System onto a U.S. Air Force MC-130J Commando II at Utah Test and Training Range on Hill Air Force Base during Emerald Warrior, Jan. 23, 2020.

Air Force Special Operations Command



Special Tactics operators simulate first extreme cold weather FARP with next generation fighters

By U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Rachel Williams
24th Special Operations Wing Public Affairs

If an aircraft is behind enemy lines and running low on fuel, a forward area refueling point may be necessary to refuel that aircraft and carry out the mission.

Behind those enemy lines, Special Tactics Airmen are relied on to survey the area of interest to ensure the aircraft can land and be refueled. Special Tactics teams can assess, open, and control major airfields to clandestine dirt strips in either permissive or hostile locations, providing strategic access for our nation's military.

For the first time, aircrew with the 27th Special Operations Wing, Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico, along with a team of Special Tactics Airmen carried out a simulated FARP for F-22 Raptors assigned to Pacific Air Forces' 3rd Wing in an extreme cold weather environment during Emerald Warrior at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, January 21-31.

"The ability to refuel aircraft at forward airfields and in austere environments is a critical element of agile combat employment," said U.S. Air Force Col. Robert Davis, commander of the 3rd Wing, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. "Practicing this capability with Special Tactics operators enhances our interoperability with the special operations community and increases our ability to generate combat power in a contested environment. Special Tactics operators are uniquely suited to seize and control airfields, and demonstrating our ability to conduct forward area refueling in challenging arctic conditions takes ACE to new heights."

The ACE concept provides Special Operations



An MC-130J Commando II aircrew member with the 27th Special Operations Wing prepares equipment at the first simulated Forward Area Refueling Point for F-22 Raptors in an extreme cold weather environment during Emerald Warrior at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Jan. 29, 2020. Emerald Warrior 20-1 provides annual, realistic pre-deployment training encompassing multiple joint operating areas to prepare Special Operations Forces, conventional force enablers, partner nations, and interagency elements to integrate with and execute full spectrum special operations in an arctic climate, sharpening U.S. forces' abilities to operate around the globe. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Ridge Shan.

Forces an opportunity to produce lethality with a smaller footprint.

"Bringing together [Air Force Special Operations Command] and the [conventional Air Force] capitalizes on the rapid planning cycle and precision lethality of Special Tactics in combination with the overwhelming firepower of the CAF," said a Special Tactics officer and one of the leads for the exercise. "We are able to break

open opportunities not afforded to aircraft, like the F-22, in a major combat operation when we rapidly seize an airfield and utilize it to rearm and refuel air dominance assets to keep them in the fight.”

The training familiarized Special Tactics operators with the Air Force’s fifth-generation aircraft, providing unmatched lethality and adaptability to the warfighter.

“F-22s and F-35s were designed to compete and win against advanced adversaries,” said a Special Tactics officer. “Working with the newest and most advanced fighters in the Air Force provides [Special Tactics] the opportunity to maintain technological edge and develop the tactics, techniques and procedures needed in order to leverage their full capabilities.”

During this exercise, Special Tactics operators integrated with an MC-130J Commando II and F-22 Raptors. The airfield was surveyed, secured and operated by an ST team while the C-130 crew refueled the fighters.

The environment allowed ST teams to train on how to best prepare and pack for an extreme cold weather mission as well as perform certain tasks with decreased dexterity.

“This year’s location pushed our limits on

sustainability in a major combat operation and provided an opportunity to refine and rewrite TTPs for a challenging operational environment,” the STO said.

Emerald Warrior is a U.S. Special Operations Command directed exercise focusing on irregular warfare in a joint, NATO combined realistic environment. This training hones Special Operations Forces’ air and ground combat skills and the development of improved tactics, techniques and procedures, while strengthening relationships for future deployments.

For Special Tactics, Emerald Warrior is a way to execute and demonstrate a range of skills while integrating the capabilities of joint assets and allies, maintaining an edge over the nation’s adversaries.

“The team was thrilled to have the opportunity to work with the professionals in the F-22 and MC-130 community,” the STO said. “We experienced incredible motivation and creative problem solving to push this program forward.”

Special Tactics is U.S. Special Operations Command’s tactical air and ground integration force, and the Air Force’s special operations ground force, leading global access, precision strike, personnel recovery and battlefield surgery operations.



A Special Tactics operator guards an F-22 Raptor with the 3rd Wing as it refuels during Emerald Warrior at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Jan. 30, 2020. This was the first simulated Forward Area Refueling Point for F-22 Raptors in an extreme cold weather environment. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Ridge Shan.

Marine Forces, Special Operations Command



MARSOC to consolidate all Marine Special Operations Forces to Camp Lejeune by 2022

By U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Kristin Tortorici
Marine Forces, Special Operations Command

Marine Forces Special Operations Command will soon begin implementing a phased plan to consolidate all MARSOC personnel and equipment to its headquarters at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, by the end of 2022. This initiative will relocate approximately 900 Marines, Sailors, and civilian employees from 1st Marine Raider Battalion and 1st Marine Raider Support Battalion, which have been located at Camp Pendleton, California since MARSOC's inception in 2006.

"MARSOC has been pursuing numerous lines of effort to increase performance, efficiencies, and capabilities in support of the 2018 National Defense

Strategy's imperatives to build a more lethal force and reform the department for greater performance and affordability. One line of effort is the consolidation of all Marine Special Operations Forces to the East Coast. Consolidation will enhance the command's enterprise level agility to meet the future operating

environment challenges articulated in the NDS, the Commandant's Planning Guidance, and our own vision and strategy, MARSO 2030," said Maj. Gen. Daniel Yoo, MARSOC commander. "It will also position MARSOC for more economical experimentation, testing, and evaluation of future operating concepts and

near-peer offset capabilities, while streamlining organizational learning to enhance component-wide standards, performance, training, and readiness across the force."

The efficiencies gained through consolidation extend beyond performance and training, with significant impacts to time and money. Consolidation will allow MARSOC to gain back almost 2000 man-days per year that would



Maj. Gen. Daniel Yoo

MARSOC has been pursuing numerous lines of effort to increase performance, efficiencies, and capabilities in support of the 2018 National Defense Strategy's imperatives to build a more lethal force and reform the department for greater performance and affordability. One line of effort is the consolidation of all Marine Special Operations Forces to the East Coast.

— Maj. Gen. Daniel Yoo, MARSOC commander

otherwise be lost to PCS and other TAD requirements not associated with deployments. This creates tangible and significant cost savings and increased readiness across the force. In addition, MARSOC will be better positioned to meet the Secretary of Defense's Deployment-to-Dwell guidance, providing greater stability and

increased quality of life to Marine Raiders and their families.

The physical movement of personnel and equipment from the West to the East Coast will occur over three phases. The phasing plan allows for minimal disruption to normal Marine Corps transition timelines, like those

associated with permanent change of station orders. It also provides a managed population increase to the local area. Personnel and families will begin moving from the West Coast during the traditional PCS cycle beginning in the summer of 2021.

MARSOC and Marine Corps Installations East school liaisons and community plans and liaison officers have been working together to estimate impacts on the local communities and school districts. According to Joe Ramirez, MCB Camp Lejeune director of government

and external relations, MCB Camp Lejeune will continue working with Onslow and Pender County schools and governments to anticipate and plan for increases in student population and to ensure that all students will be accommodated effectively and receive a quality education.

For additional information please contact the MARSOC Communication Strategy and Operations Officer Maj. Kristin Tortorici, at kristin.tortorici@socom.mil.



Marine Forces Special Operations Command is home to Critical Skills Operators and Special Operations Officers who are assessed, selected and trained to solve complex problems and to operate across the full spectrum of special operations under ambiguous, sometimes austere, environments. Courtesy photo.

Marine Forces, Special Operations Command



Special operations capabilities specialists train in advanced tactical skills to support SOF



Special operations capabilities specialists assigned to 3rd Marine Raider Support Battalion, Marine Forces Special Operations Command, conduct frontal assault training on Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, Jan. 28, 2020. The frontal assault training consisted of buddy-rushing drills that advance to squad-sized maneuver and fire drills, where squad leaders were required to coordinate the movement of their squad, while supported by stationary, crew-served machine guns. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Jonathon Wiederhold.



Special operations capabilities specialists assigned to 3rd Marine Raider Support Battalion, Marine Forces Special Operations Command, conduct frontal assault training on Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Jan. 28, 2020. Upon assignment to MARSOC, these SOCS received advanced technical and tactical training to be effective and proficient components in special operations. Photos by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Jonathon Wiederhold.



Marine Forces, Special Operations Command



USSOCOM commander highlights Marine Raider accomplishments at MARSOC's 14th Anniversary

*By U.S. Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Lynn Kinney
Marine Forces, Special Operations Command*

The auditorium of the Marine Forces Special Operations Command Headquarters at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, was standing room only as Marine Raiders gathered to celebrate the 14th anniversary ceremony of the organization, Feb. 21, 2020.

The commander and command senior enlisted leader for U.S. Special Operations Command, Army Gen. Richard D. Clarke and Command Chief Master Sergeant Gregory A. Smith attended the ceremony that also recognized Marines from throughout the component for excellence in their respective fields.

“As we look forward into a future riddled with uncertainty and ever evolving threats, MARSOC will remain an essential part of SOCOM,” said Clarke during his remarks. “You make a difference wherever you are. Time and time again, Raiders have turned the tide on the frontier in faraway places, and all but unknown to most people.”

In the past year, MARSOC has supported 12 named operations across 16 countries, to include support to military actions in Iraq, persistent leadership and coordination for the Special Operations Forces and conventional force efforts in the Southern Philippines, and command and control nodes for SOF operations in Africa.

“A handful of Marine special operators are positively influencing thousands of Filipino Armed Forces members. You are quite literally the force that is preventing another crisis like Marawi,” said Clarke. “In your 14-year history, Raiders have exceeded



Army Gen. Richard D. Clarke, commander U.S. Special Operations Command, addresses Marine Forces Special Operations Command as they celebrated its 14th anniversary with a Battle Colors Rededication ceremony at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Feb. 21, 2020. Clarke and the senior enlisted leader for USSOCOM, Command Chief Master Sergeant Gregory A. Smith, attended the ceremony that also recognized Marines from throughout the component for excellence in their respective fields. In the past year, MARSOC has supported 12 named operations across 16 countries, to include support to military actions in Iraq, persistent leadership and coordination for the SOF and conventional force efforts in the Southern Philippines, and command and control nodes for SOF operations in Africa. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Lynn Kinney.

expectations in terms of capability, and you have out sized impact everywhere you have been. It is Raiders who are among the brave. Who wade eagerly into the chaos and restore order.”

The ceremony included the rededication of the organizational battle colors, with the addition of the

Operation Inherent Resolve Campaign streamer, and a Bronze Star, in lieu of second award for the Meritorious Unit Commendation.

“It is all about honoring the customs and traditions of our Corps and our military,” said Maj. Gen. Daniel D. Yoo, MARSOC commander, in his brief remarks during the ceremony, though he expressed his appreciation and pride to the Marine Raiders that serve in his charge.

“I am thankful for all that you do, day-in and day-out, to support our warfighters, uphold our Marine Raider legacy, and forge our path of providing the nation and geographic combatant commanders a Marine special operations force capable of dynamically adjusting to meet the complex demands of the future operating environment,” said Yoo. “I am incredibly proud of your accomplishments. At times the ultimate sacrifice was made, and we will continue to honor and remember those that have given their lives in support of this great nation. They, and their loved ones, will forever be part of our Marine Raider family.”

Yoo also expressed his vision for the future of MARSOC.

“Throughout 2019, MARSOC made significant advancements in combat development. In the years ahead, we will pursue consolidation, experimentation, testing, and evaluation of future operating concepts and near-peer offset capabilities, and shape the component for continued innovation in support of MARSOF 2030 and the joint force.”

In 2019, Marine Raiders worked with Headquarters Marine Corps to transition optics and enhanced thermal imager as a service-common item. The component is also working to identify a system to better integrate and manage the holistic power requirement of an individual operator.

The decision to consolidate all Marine Raider units on the East Coast was also announced this past year. Close to 900 Marines, Sailors and civilian employees from 1st Marine Raider Battalion and 1st Marine Raider Support Battalion will move to eastern North Carolina by 2022, allowing the component to streamline organizational learning, talent management and could save the Marine Corps more than \$55 million dollars in housing and family-move costs alone. Other costs savings will allow the component to continue to make headway in combat development initiatives and explore autonomous ground vehicles to add to the successes it

has accomplished with ground organic precision strike systems and the medium lightweight machine gun.

‘Little Sparta,’ You have blended the martial pride and prowess of Sparta, with the brains of Athens, and the spirit and values of this great American experiment that we all hold so dear.

— Gen. Richard D. Clarke, commander
USSOCOM

“You have a clear and unambiguous vision of the character required to represent our country. The Marine Corps, perhaps better than any other service, has articulated the values that we must hold dear, both day in and day out,” noted Clarke. As he closed out his comments, he recalled having heard MARSOC referred to as, “‘Little

Sparta,’ You have blended the martial pride and prowess of Sparta, with the brains of Athens, and the spirit and values of this great American experiment that we all hold so dear.”



Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Daniel Yoo, MARSOC commander, addresses Marine Forces Special Operations Command as they celebrated its 14th anniversary with a Battle Colors Rededication ceremony at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Feb. 21, 2020. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Lynn Kinney.

Headquarters - U.S Special Operations Command

SOF evaluates new equipment at Nevada Test and Training Range

By U.S. Army Maj. Jennifer Bocanegra
USSOCOM Office of Communication

On Jan. 18 and 19, 2020, the the Special Operations Forces Lethality team executed their 2020 SOF Range Event at the Nevada Test and Training Range near Las Vegas. Over the two-day period, commercial vendors hosted displays and demonstrations while U.S. and international Special Operations Forces participated in testing and evaluating the latest advances in ammunition, weapons and visual augmentation systems.

This is the first year program managers from the U.S. Special Operations Command Acquisition Technology and Logistics directorate hosted the event, which traditionally precedes the annual Las Vegas Shooting, Hunting, Outdoor Trade Show. Previously, USSOCOM service components held the event and were successful in conducting market research and collaborating with industry stakeholders; however, this slowed the process for adopting new equipment. By consolidating the event at the headquarters level, USSOCOM acquisition teams were able to centralize the research and procurement process so equipment can be quickly fielded to SOF operators.

“This event supports national defense priorities of innovation, partnership and fiscal responsibility,” said Army Sgt. Maj. Richard Holman, senior enlisted leader for the Special Operations Forces Acquisition, Technology and Logistics directorate. “This event also offered a unique collaboration opportunity among industry



On Jan. 18 and 19, 2020 the Special Operations Forces Lethality team executed their 2020 SOF Range Event at the Nevada Test and Training Range near Las Vegas. Over the two-day period, commercial vendors hosted displays and demonstrations while U.S. and International Special Operations Forces participated in testing and evaluating the latest advances in ammunition, weapons and visual augmentation systems. Photo by U.S. Army Maj. Jennifer Bocanegra.

stakeholders, international partners and U.S. SOF.”

Ultimately, there were two focus areas for this event. The first was on acquiring products to improve the capability of SOF operators and the second was to collaborate with industry leaders on emerging equipment and technology.

— Army Lt. Col. Marcos Cervantes

Planning for the range event started last year. According to Holman, the range event was executed in a professional, efficient and programmatic manner. The program management team solicited potential vendors who specialize in weapons, ammunition and visual augmentation systems through public announcements. The team then used a formal

selection process to invite close to 50 vendors, who met the solicitation criteria, to come out to the range and showcase their latest equipment. More than 40 SOF operators from USSOCOM components and nine partner nations took part in test fire sessions and observed vendor demonstrations, allowing for real-time feedback on current commercial products from each of the services and the international community. It also helped tighten the acquisition process by enabling the timely selection of equipment that could increase SOF capability on-site.

“Over the past year, we looked at the range concept to get acquisition results out of it. We wanted to refocus from just having SOF operators come out, shoot and conduct market research to providing input toward down-selecting products we were interested in at the range,” said Army Col. Joel Babbitt, program executive officer for the Special Operations Forces Warrior program. “One example of how we changed this range to an acquisition focus took place with the selection of suppressors. We tested eight suppressors on Saturday and after receiving initial feedback, we are going to take

the best three into a combat evaluation.”

The SOF AT&L directorate holds several of these types of events throughout the year to conduct market research on current equipment and technology and to help shape the development of future equipment and technology that will enhance SOF capability.

“Ultimately, there were two focus areas for this event. The first was on acquiring products to improve the capability of SOF operators and the second was to collaborate with industry leaders on emerging equipment and technology,” said Army Lt. Col. Marcos Cervantes, program manager for the Special Operations Forces Lethality program.

Established in 1991, the SOF AT&L directorate is responsible for all USSOCOM research, development, acquisition, procurement, and logistics.

According to Holman, SOF AT&L works closely with government, academia, and industry to accomplish its mission to provide rapid and focused acquisition, technology, and logistics support to warfighters, delivering the most effective capabilities to our Special Operations Forces.



A Special Operations Forces Lethality team member evaluates a suppressor at the 2020 SOF Range Event on the Nevada Test and Training Range near Las Vegas, Jan. 19, 2020. Photo by U.S. Army Maj. Jennifer Bocanegra.

Headquarters - U.S. Special Operations Command

USSOCOM volunteers read to Tinker Elementary students

By *USSOCOM Office of Communication*

U.S. Special Operations Command service members volunteered to read to students at Tinker K-8 School on MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida, Jan. 24, as part of an on-going volunteer program organized by the school and USSOCOM.

The volunteers comprised mostly of Soldiers from USSOCOM's Army Reserve Element read to nearly 50 elementary students in the K-5th grade.

The volunteers teamed up with students for 15-minute sessions as they cycled in and out of the school's library. Each new session brought between 10-15 new student reading buddies. The children's faces lit up as they matched up with their respective service member partners and were greeted with warm smiles, high-fives, a hug and often a short chat to catch-up on life events before diving into their reading. Arrayed before them were titles like "The Disney Classic Story Book," "The Big Hug Book" and "The Very Hungry Caterpillar."

The program, dubbed the OTTER program - Our Time To Enjoy Reading, started with a chance relationship between Army Col. Scott W. Ward, the officer-in-charge of USSOCOM's Army Reserve Element and Tinker Elementary School Assistant Principal Justin Hutcherson, both local youth baseball coaches in Riverview. Ward approached Hutcherson with the idea for the reading program while they were coaching together. The program wasn't a new concept for Ward, he started a similar program as a battalion commander in Gatesville, Texas at an elementary school there in 2013. The program is still in place today. Hutcherson quickly realized the program's potential and the pair teamed up to pitch the idea to Tinker's principal and other school officials in October 2019. School officials enthusiastically greenlighted the program and didn't take long before the program was underway according to Hutcherson.



Army Col. Scott Ward, U.S. Special Operations Army Reserve Element officer-in-charge, reads to Trenton, 7, at Tinker K-8 School on MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., Jan. 24, 2020. Ward and 11 other service members from USSOCOM volunteered to read to students at the school as part of an on-going volunteer program to help students become better readers. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.

"The school district is always looking for ways to strengthen relationships with the base and the community, so I knew this is something the district would be interested in," Hutcherson said.

Although Tinker is located on MacDill Air Force Base and was originally opened under the U.S. Department of Defense, it has been part of the Hillsborough County Public School District since 1952 serving the families of military members who live on the installation.

"The district has done a great job at collaborating with the base," Hutcherson said. "This partnership is just one more way to extend and strengthen the connections between the base and the school."

In addition to helping further strengthen ties between the school, the base and the military families it serves,

important relationships are also being forged between the students and the service members according to volunteer reader Staff Sgt. Shaneka Ricks. Ricks, who serves as a supply sergeant at USSOCOM's Army Reserve Element, said since volunteering she and others have been able to create bonds enriching the lives of both the students and the volunteers.

"I've seen an improvement in their reading skills and in their personalities." Ricks said. "I've watched them come out of their shells and grow and be more expressive. It's been very personally gratifying to be able to assist in helping these kids improve their reading skills and also grow as young people. I've talked with the other volunteers who have said the same thing."

By many accounts the program appears to have accomplished what Ward initially set out to achieve. Ward said his goal in launching the OTTER program at Tinker was twofold: Firstly, to help children become better readers and secondly to provide an opportunity for USSOCOM's Army Reserve Soldiers to contribute to the MacDill community and to give his soldiers monthly opportunities to bond through collective efforts outside of the normal daily scope of military operations.

Although the program has been running for only a few months, according Katrina Cortez, a Tinker K-8 media specialist who helps run the program, the potential impact on the students could last a lifetime. Cortez said the program's low-stress and fun approach to reading could help inspire students into adulthood by providing an opportunity for them to separate reading from school work and instead focus on the joy of reading itself.

"These opportunities help get the students excited about reading," Cortez said. "This is an experience where they don't associate reading with work - there are no tests or follow-on questions after they read. They are just reading for the joy of reading. This positive experience with reading can in some small way potentially carry with them into adulthood and may keep them reading by choice throughout their lives."

In addition to impacting the volunteer readers and students at Tinker the OTTER program's influence may extend well beyond the walls of the school according to Tinker literacy coach Veronica Schaffner who recently recounted the OTTER program's successes to other literacy coaches from around the Hillsborough County School District.

"I had an opportunity to share some pictures and our experiences here with this program to other literacy coaches in the district," Schaffner said. "There was a lot of excitement from them about the potential to bring something like this to their schools."

Schaffner said she hopes that others who hear about

the OTTER program within Hillsborough County and beyond can be inspired by the program.

"It doesn't even have to be with the military, it could be with a local business or organization who wants to contribute to their community," Schaffner said. "I hope that others who hear about this program can be inspired and see how easy it can be to take an idea and make it happen."

Six-year old Tinker Elementary student and OTTER program participant, Everett, didn't concern himself with what all the adult's intended purposes were for the program, he said the reading program is just "fun" to him.



Army Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Kato, a U.S. Special Operations Command supply noncommissioned officer, reads to Everett, 6, at Tinker K-8 School on MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., Jan. 24, 2020. Kato and 11 other service members from USSOCOM volunteered to read to students at the school as part of an ongoing volunteer program to help students become better readers. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.



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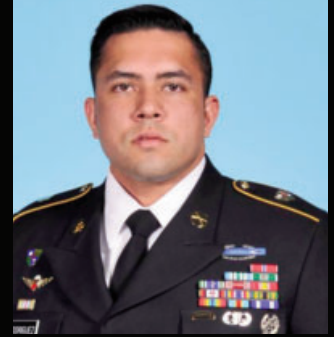
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Editor's note: Honored are those special operations forces who lost their lives in combat or training since the Dec. 2020 issue of Tip of the Spear.



A Burkinabe soldier pulls security before a training patrol during the opening days of Flintlock 20 near Thies, Senegal, Feb. 16, 2020. Flintlock is U.S. Africa Command's premier and largest annual Special Operations Forces exercise, designed to strengthen the ability of key partner nations in the region to counter violent extremist organizations, protect their borders, and provide security for their people. Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Miguel Pena.