



Tip OF THE Spear

United States Special Operations Command
MacDill Air Force Base, Florida

October 2021

**Marine Raider awarded Nation's
second highest decoration for valor**



United States Special Operations Command



Marine Raider awarded Nation's second highest decoration for valor ... 32

Tip of the Spear

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(Cover) Staff Sergeant Nicholas J. Jones, Critical Skills Operator, was awarded the Navy Cross by the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General David Berger, during a ceremony on Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C. Jones was awarded the Navy Cross for his actions in support of Operation Inherent Resolve in March 8, 2020. The Navy Cross is the highest decoration bestowed by the Department of the Navy, the second highest valor award, second to the Medal of Honor and must be approved by the Secretary of the Navy before being awarded. Marine Forces Special Operations Command courtesy photo.

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U.S. Special Operations Command - Central



US SOF partners with SOF Allies in exercise Bright Star 21

*By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Dean Gannon
U.S. Special Operations Command Central*

United States Special Operations Forces joined their Egyptian and partner nation counterparts for Bright Star 21, a combined military exercise from Sept. 2-16, at the Egyptian Mohamed Naguib Military Base. Egypt has hosted each rendition of the exercise dating back to 1980 in close coordination with U.S. Central Command, after the signing of a U.S.-brokered peace

treaty between Egypt and Israel in 1979.

Last convened in 2018, the multi-lateral exercise requires a wealth of personnel, resources and support to execute.

“This has been a long time in planning,” said Master Chief Petty Officer Euclides Sanchez, U.S. Special Operations Command Central lead planner for the exercise. “It’s been almost two years now since November 2019. Even with the pandemic and real-world operations, we were still able to have all the



Egyptian Special Operations Forces prepare to rappel down and enter the side of a building during multi-lateral Military Operations in Urban Terrain training at Bright Star 21, Sept. 15, 2021, in Mohamed Naguib Military Base, Egypt. BS21 tests the U.S. and partner forces’ ability to work together, addressing realistic scenarios across land, air, and sea domains. BS21 is a multi-lateral exercise allowing full-spectrum military, interagency and ministerial response to near-peer and irregular warfare threats. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Dean Gannon.



U.S. and partner nations’ Special Operations Forces perform airborne infiltration onto a small village during Military Operations in Urban Terrain training at Bright Star 21, Sept. 15, 2021, in Mohamed Naguib Military Base, Egypt. Photo by U.S. Army Maj. Daisy Bueno.

equipment and SOF on the ground to have a successful execution for Bright Star 21. We had more SOF on the ground than in 2018.”

SOF elements took advantage of the training opportunities by focusing on interoperability and cycling through multiple weapon systems using sniper teams, vehicle and dismounted maneuvering, and reflexive fire

Bright Star 21 was a really good experience for me and my men. It definitely demonstrated that there’s a partnership and capability to work with Egypt and other countries in the Levant to counter threats in the region.

techniques. This year’s event also saw SOF investing heavily in a Visit, Board, Search and Seizure scenario, medical training, several airborne operational jumps and a full-scale assault on a village using Military Operations in Urban Terrain training.

The exercise was designed around the premise of bolstering multi-lateral interoperability to counter regional, hybrid and irregular wartime threats. The impacts of BS21 left a marked impression on those participating and stand as a definitive statement of partnership within the region.

“Bright Star 21 was a really good experience for me and my men,” said a U.S. Special Forces team leader. “It definitely demonstrated that there’s a partnership and capability to work with Egypt and other countries in the Levant to counter threats in the region.”

Similar sentiments were echoed from the tactical up to the strategic levels.

“Seeing our partner nations having good ties with the United States, as well as other countries’ SOF like Jordan, Cyprus and Greece, is a big success,” said Sanchez. “We’ve worked with them before and it makes it seamless when they’re here with us, working together.”

Bright Star is generally held in the summer every two years and is next scheduled for 2023.



Egyptian Special Operations Forces and security forces brief senior leaders using a tabletop scale-model during multi-lateral Military Operations in Urban Terrain training at Bright Star 21, Sept. 15, 2021, in Mohamed Naguib Military Base, Egypt. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Dean Gannon.

U.S. Special Operations Command - Central



US Special Forces military free fall operations with Egyptian Airborne Forces for the first time

*By U.S. Army Maj. Daisy Bueno
U.S. Special Operations Command Central*

Two joint combined exchange training events with U.S. Special Forces and Egyptian Special Operations Forces took place in Egypt last month. One team worked with the Egyptian counter terrorism team, at Mohamed Mohamed Naguib Military Base near Alexandria, Egypt, while the other trained with the Airborne Forces military free fall section in Cairo, Egypt. This was the first time that U.S. Special Forces conducted military free fall operations with Egyptian Airborne Forces.

In addition to military free fall airborne operations, the U.S. Special Forces and Egyptian Airborne teams worked on combat marksmanship, small unit tactics, close quarter battle, and other tactical tasks. The training exchange concluded with a culmination exercise which had a 31-man combined assault force, where they infiltrated by military free fall, assaulted an 8-building compound and then withdrew via vehicles.

“Now that the foundation is built, we can continue to evolve in our capabilities by sharing and exchanging tactics, and creating an enduring relationship,” said a Special Forces team leader.

The other U.S. Special Forces team trained with the Egyptian Counter Terrorism team on close quarter battle drills, military planning, reconnaissance and infantry tactics. At the end of their JCET, they also conducted a culmination exercise where they infiltrated and exfiltrated the area after entering and clearing a building using close quarter battle skills they honed during the JCET.



U.S. Special Forces and Egyptian Airborne Forces prepare to breach a door upon entering a military operations in urban terrain village during their culmination exercise of a joint combined exchange training in Cairo, Egypt, Aug. 31, 2021. JCETs increase interoperability with partner nations and strengthens stability in the U.S. Central Command's area of operations. Photo by U.S. Army Maj. Daisy Bueno.

“Training like this JCET, shows how U.S. Special Forces working with partner SOF is way more effective than by just U.S. alone” said a U.S. Special Forces team leader. “Training together helps with interoperability and increased security within the region, as we share our training and tactics, and learn from each other.”

Located in the Levant region of the Middle East, Egypt is not only strategically located, but maintains a

strong partnership with several allies.

“This exercise is big for us. We appreciate all our SOF partners for coming out and training with us in our homeland,” said an Egyptian SOF team member. “It has been great meeting new people and making life-long friends.”

The U.S. Special Forces teams also found the exercise to be extremely beneficial.

“We have a lot of new guys on our team, so the

JCET was a really good opportunity for them to work with other SOF on their language skills, learn their culture, as well as getting first-hand experience on training in an environment where they would generally deploy,” said a Special Forces team sergeant.

JCETs like this, can enhance U.S. SOF relationships with partner

nations by increasing capability and proficiency within the U.S. Central Command’s area of operations.

We have a lot of new guys on our team, so the JCET was a really good opportunity for them to work with other SOF on their language skills, learn their culture, as well as getting first-hand experience on training in an environment where they would generally deploy.



U.S. Special Forces and Egyptian Airborne Forces infiltrate via military free fall into a military operations in urban terrain village during their culmination exercise of a joint combined exchange training in Cairo, Egypt, Aug. 31, 2021. JCETs increase interoperability with partner nations and strengthens stability in the U.S. Central Command’s area of operations. Photo by U.S. Army Maj. Daisy Bueno.



Cypriot Underwater Demolition Team conduct react to contact drills lead by a team from U.S. Naval Special Warfare Task Unit Europe at a small arms range in Cyprus, Tuesday Sept. 7, 2021. Joint training in the eastern Mediterranean is essential in maintaining interoperability and strong relationships with our ally and partner nations, ensuring stability throughout the theater. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Patrik Orcutt.

U.S. Special Operations Command - Europe



US Naval Special Warfare SEALs enhance interoperability through specialized training in Cyprus with Cypriot Underwater Demolition Team

*By U.S. Army Capt. Margaret Collins DuTart
U.S. Special Operations Command Europe*

As part of a bi-lateral training exercise in Cyprus the Cypriot Underwater Demolition Team (MYK) is hosting U.S. Naval Special Warfare Task Unit Europe beginning Sept. 7, 2021. This is one of a series of training events throughout the Eastern Mediterranean directed at building cohesion between NATO allies and partners while increasing readiness in the face of multiple threats to the peace and stability of Europe.

“You can see the very real demonstration of cohesion we build during exercises like this with partners like Cyprus,” said the Naval Special Warfare

Officer-in-Charge. “We simply cannot accomplish the mission alone – by exchanging tactics and ideas, we build cohesion necessary to defeat any challenge.”

NSWTU-E trained with members of the MYK on maritime operations. Joint training in the eastern Mediterranean is essential in maintaining interoperability and strong relationships with our ally and partner nations, ensuring stability throughout the theater.

Special Operations Command Europe participates in multiple exercises within Europe throughout the year not only with the NATO allies, but important partners such as Cyprus, providing an option to commanders allowing for discreet mission sets in any condition, climate, and terrain.

U.S. Special Operations Command - Korea



Sharpening the Teak Knife: Kunsan supports SOCKOR, USFK training

Air Force Special Tactics Airmen with the 320th Special Tactics Squadron, Kadena Air Base, Japan, fast rope from a CV-22 Osprey assigned to 21st Special Operations Squadron, Yokota Air Base, Japan, during Teak Knife training at Kunsan Air Base, Republic of Korea, Sept. 9, 2021. Teak Knife is a joint training opportunity focusing on increased combat readiness with joint close-air support. The operators and aircrew from the 353rd Special Operations Wing worked with the Airmen of Kunsan Air Base to conduct critical training in support of U.S. Forces Korea. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff. Sgt. Steven Adkins.







A Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force sailor and a U.S. Naval Special Warfare operator conduct a simulated visit, board, search, and seizure aboard USS Frank Cable (AS-40) as part of MALABAR 2021. MALABAR 2021 is an example of the enduring partnership between Australian, Indian, Japanese and American maritime forces, who routinely operate together in the Indo-Pacific, fostering a cooperative approach toward regional security and stability. Photo by U.S. Navy Ensign Amara Timberlake.

U.S. Special Operations Command - Pacific



NSW wraps up SOF phase of MALABAR with partner nations

*By U.S. Navy Ensign Amara Timberlake
Naval Special Warfare Group One*

U.S. Naval Special Warfare, Indian Navy Marine Commandos, and Japan Maritime Self Defense Force Special Boarding Units completed the Special Operations Forces phase of MALABAR 21 in Santa Rita, Guam, Sept. 5, 2021.

MALABAR 21 is a multilateral naval field training exercise between the Royal Australian Navy, Indian Navy, JMSDF, and U.S. Navy conducted to improve collective maritime capabilities and relationships.

“Our combined forces have a common understanding of a shared working environment at sea,” said U.S. Navy Capt. David Abernathy, commander, Naval Special Warfare Group 1. “Exercises like these provide practical, hands-on training between multinational Special Operations Forces, allowing our forces to share our skills. Naval Special Warfare consistently looks for opportunities to enhance this ongoing professional partnership.”

The two-week SOF phase of MALABAR 21 focused on interoperability and information-sharing, to include practicing high-end tactics in complex maritime

environments. The training scenarios allowed the operators to integrate with traditional fleet assets, both in port and at sea.

SOF teams participated in mission planning and close-quarters battle simulations that tested endurance and incorporated elements of combat-casualty care, hostage rescue, and improvised explosive devices.

The SOF phase of MALABAR 21 also included fast-rope, combat dive operations, maritime strike warfare, explosive ordnance disposal subject matter expert exchanges, and visit, board, search, and seizure drills.

U.S. 7th Fleet’s Task Force 75 (CTF 75) also participated in the exercise, hosting the urban combat training scenario and an explosive ordnance disposal subject matter expert exchange.

MALABAR 2021 is an example of the enduring partnership between Australian, Indian, Japanese and U.S. maritime forces, who routinely operate together in the Indo-Pacific, fostering a cooperative approach toward regional security and stability.

NSW is the nation’s premier maritime Special Operations Force and is uniquely positioned to extend the fleet’s reach and deliver all-domain options for multinational



U.S. Naval Special Warfare operators and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force sailors conduct a simulated visit, board, search, and seizure of USS Frank Cable (AS-40) as part of MALABAR 2021. MALABAR 2021 is an example of the enduring partnership between Australian, Indian, Japanese and American maritime forces, who routinely operate together in the Indo-Pacific, fostering a cooperative approach toward regional security and stability. Photo by U.S. Navy Ensign Amara Timberlake.

U.S. Special Operations Command - South



Special Operations Command

South unique capabilities reimagined

By U.S. Army Lt. Col Roderick R. Cunningham
and Maj. Gregory McElwain
Special Operations Command South

The service members of Joint Task Force-Haiti established by Special Operations Command South have completed their mission of supporting United States Agency for International Development in humanitarian aid and disaster relief in Haiti. They were successful delivering over 570,000 pounds of humanitarian aid to the remote regions affected by the 7.2 magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti on Aug. 14, 2021.

Dr. Jerry Chandler of the Haitian Directorate of Civil Protection (DPC) said, “75,000 people were reached with emergency food and aid. This does not count the relief items including medical kits, plastic sheets, shelter repair kits, blankets, buckets, water containers, hygiene kits, and kitchen sets transported from USAID’s warehouses to the remote areas hit by the quake.”

The lead federal agency for U.S. foreign disaster assistance efforts after a natural disaster is USAID, yet the dynamic and flexible nature of Special Operations was demonstrated by SOCSOUTH’s leadership of JTF-Haiti throughout their mission to bring support and aid to the people of Haiti.

At the direction of U.S. Southern Command, SOCSOUTH responded rapidly to the emerging crisis by sending the SOUTHCOM Situational Assessment Team to Haiti. The SSAT is a quick-reaction team comprised of experts that provided the Combatant Commander, Adm. Craig Faller, an assessment of conditions on the ground, which includes recommendations to request Department of Defense capabilities required to help the



U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Keith Davids, right, U.S. Southern Command Joint Task Force-Haiti commander, and Dr. Jerry Chandler, left, Director General at Direction Generale de la Protection Civile, discuss support at Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Aug. 21, 2021. U.S. Agency for International Development is the lead U.S. federal agency for foreign disaster assistance and USSOUTHCOM is supporting relief efforts. Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Marleah Cabano.

people of Haiti during this disaster response.

The SSAT is a small group of professionals, able to assess the situation and find new ways to accomplish the mission prior to availability of DoD resources. This lead team allowed us to set the conditions for follow-on elements to execute the mission.

— Rear Adm. Keith Davids

“The SSAT is a small group of professionals, able to assess the situation and find new ways to accomplish the mission prior to availability of DoD resources,” said Rear Adm. Keith Davids, the SOCSOUTH and JTF-Haiti Commander. “This lead team allowed us to set the conditions for follow-on elements to execute the mission.”

As all theater special operations commands, SOCSOUTH is subordinate to both United States Special Operations Command and a designated Geographic

Combatant Command. SOCSOUTH is subordinate to SOUTHCOM.

In coordination with SOUTHCOM, SOCSOUTH responds rapidly to emerging crises, to include natural disasters, in the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility, which includes 31 countries and 16 areas of special sovereignty in South America, Central America and the Caribbean. This recent mission gives SOUTHCOM and SOCSOUTH a new perspective on HA/DR and other missions which allow for future opportunities and engagements through SOCSOUTH's unique regional understanding and placement.

SOCOM's mission consists of developing and employing fully capable Special Operations Forces to conduct complicated operations with very short notice.

SOUTHCOM's mission has strengthening partnerships and building the team as two of its key tenants.

JTF-Haiti exemplified both SOCOM and SOUTHCOM's mission statement as it moved into action on Aug. 15, 2021, at the direction of Adm. Faller, to plan and coordinate humanitarian assistance/ disaster response operations and to mitigate the impact of this natural disaster.

"Orchestrating and directing the complex logistics at Port-au-Prince International Airport demanded the ability to coordinate among various U.S. Government agencies, the U.S. Embassy, and Haitian national leadership," said Faller. "JTF-Haiti with a small core command and control team from SOCSOUTH with augmentation from the joint team,

formed an agile, highly effective team."

This type of liaison work is a key tenant of the mission of SOCOM. Conducting civil affairs and foreign humanitarian assistance begins with organizing and

synchronizing separate entities for a common goal.

"This is a task that SOCSOUTH is trained and prepared for," said Davids. "Even though this is the first time that a TSOC led a joint task force for humanitarian assistance, we are prepared to maneuver through the environment and create the relationships needed to be successful and conduct an elegant transition."

Reacting quickly and professionally builds long lasting partnerships with our neighbors in the Western Hemisphere.

SOCSOUTH constantly works with partner nations during exercises that promote military-to-military relationships, planning cooperation, and regional security. The service members and staff at SOCSOUTH work to improve time-sensitive crisis action planning and joint integration with partner nations and governmental agencies.

"SOCSOUTH functioned like a 9-1-1 force, or a quick reaction force, a small, maneuverable, and adaptive team," Davids said. "We are used to operating in an austere environment requiring conventional and non-conventional support from the Department of Defense."

Relationships built through training and shared relief efforts ensure that the U.S. is the partner of choice in the hemisphere.

Orchestrating and directing the complex logistics at Port-au-Prince International Airport demanded the ability to coordinate among various U.S. Government agencies, the U.S. Embassy, and Haitian national leadership. JTF-Haiti with a small core command and control team from SOCSOUTH with augmentation from the joint team, formed an agile, highly effective team.

— Adm. Craig Faller



U.S. Marines and Sailors with Joint Task Force-Haiti wave to locals after helping offload boxes for redistribution in Port of Jeremie, Haiti, Aug. 31, 2021. The Marines and Sailors aboard the USS Arlington (LPD 24) have been working in support of JTF-Haiti for a humanitarian assistance and disaster relief mission. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Jacqueline C. Arre.

U.S. Special Operations Command - South



Unity of US Government efforts bring aid to Haiti after earthquake

*By U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Victor Aguirre
Special Operations Command South*

U.S. Southern Command launched a small command and control element from Special Operations Command South, leading Joint Task Force-Haiti to support humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations Aug. 17, 2021.

JTF-Haiti, established in Port-au-Prince and led by Rear Adm. Keith Davids, provided air medical evacuations, delivered aid, and transported supplies over 660 missions carried out by 27 aircraft from all U.S. military branches. In addition, foreign partners such as the Dutch, French, and British supplemented HA/DR efforts by delivering aid or using naval vessels and aircraft to save lives and alleviate suffering of the Haitian people.

“Less than 24 hours after the earthquake, the U.S. Coast Guard began lifesaving efforts and delivery of aid, a testament to the urgency with which we come to help our partners in their time of need,” said SOUTHCOM Commander Adm. Craig Faller. “Our Task Force worked around the clock to save lives. We had all components on deck: the Coast Guard, the Army, the Puerto Rican National Guard, Navy ships and Marines offshore, and Air Force transport planes all providing support.”

Haiti suffered a 7.2 magnitude earthquake in the nation’s southern peninsula, resulting in more than 2,000 deaths, 12,000 injuries, and 150,000 homes destroyed on Aug. 14.

“Working with the Haitian civil defense and the U.S. responders, we have been able to assist or rescue, through medevac, over 470 people,” U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Samantha Power said. “With U.S. Government assets, we have been able to deliver over 570,000 lbs. of vital aid as part of a broad American response.”

JTF-Haiti comprised of the U.S. Air Force, Army,



Samantha Power, Administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development, meets Joint Task Force-Haiti Commander Rear Adm. Keith Davids at the Port-au-Prince international airport on Aug. 26, 2021. Joint Task Force-Haiti deployed quickly to support U.S. Agency for International Development and enable airlift capability to deliver humanitarian aid to remote locations in the southern peninsula of Haiti. Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Adrian Pacheco.

Navy, and Marine Corps, and partnered with forces from the UK, France, and the Netherlands, created a quick response force to support USAID. With these assets, JTF-Haiti launched a multitude of capabilities and talent from across SOUTHCOM and the Department of Defense to meet the humanitarian challenges in Haiti.

“I would like to thank Adm. Faller and the U.S. military for their tremendous partnership as we worked to save lives and respond to the needs of many people in Haiti,” said Power. “The U.S. Government has come together as one team to coordinate a response that

supports the welfare and dignity of the Haitian people.”

USAID led the U.S. unity of effort through the Disaster Assistance Response Team supported by JTF-Haiti. Working with other multinational partners and non-governmental organizations, humanitarian assistance efforts were coordinated with and in direct support of the Haitian Directorate of Civil Protection (DPC).

“We are here at the request of the Haitian government and working with our federal and international partners, USAID and SOUTHCOM,” said SOCSOUTH and JTF-Haiti Commander Rear Adm. Keith Davids. “Our mission is to save lives, bringing our unique capabilities to the aid of the people here in Haiti.”

The International Office of Migration and the DPC established a field medical hospital on the airfield to quickly treat trauma patients and coordinated transfers to local hospitals. Additionally, local NGOs assisted in finding supplies, separating aid packages, and preparing them for aerial transport with USAID and U.S. military personnel.

“No development agency, army, or diplomatic core can import a perfect humanitarian response from afar,” said Power. “You need local expertise and local leadership to reach

communities in need. The most important aspect is the partnership with the Haitian people.”

“Many people need shelter as they are suffering from the natural disaster,” Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry said. “We thank our friends who came to help us and allow us to find the assistance that the Haitian people need.

JTF-Haiti delivered vital aid with a relatively small footprint of 100 military personnel at Port-au-Prince and under 2,000 personnel in the region. Most forces stood ready outside of Haiti on the USS Arlington, USS Billings, and USNS Burlington, or with aircraft from JTF-Bravo and the U.S. Marine Corps operating from Naval Station Guantanamo Bay.

“We have a large number of helicopters, ships, air transport planes, and most important willing and passionate members of my team are here to help,” said Faller, as the task force mission gained momentum in its first week of operations. “Our focus has been working closely with our Haitian partners to deliver aid as rapidly as possible.”

The U.S. military brings many specialties to a humanitarian crisis: mission coordination and heavy-lift logistical capabilities through airlift and sea-ferrying equipment. These two military abilities allow quick and decisive delivery of essential goods to remote locations.

“The SOUTHCOM Situational Assessment Team] is made up of professionals that are trained to evaluate the conditions of a country after a natural disaster,” Davids said. “They also liaise or work with the U.S. embassy country team to determine shortfalls to create reports that help U.S. Southern Command get a full picture of the aftermath of the earthquake.”

SOCSOUTH personnel that comprise the SSAT have developed relations with interagency partners and U.S. embassies through consistent engagement with partner nations, military-to-military exchanges, and exercises. Developed relations allow for interoperability between nations to rapidly execute operations.

“USAID Administrator Samantha Power and I are here to demonstrate how the U.S. response is truly a whole-of-government effort,” said Faller. “We are here to help.”

Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations

culminated in a large delivery of more than 100,000 lbs. of aid to the city of Jeremie via U.S. Navy vessels, where ground transport of aid had been cut off due to damage to roads and bridges.

“The Haitian government and its partners are working together to face the challenge ahead,” said Henry. “We have the

difficult task of getting these communities back on their feet so the economy can start again.”

The unpredictability of natural disasters requires SOCSOUTH personnel to be in a constant state of readiness to respond quickly to emerging crises in the region. SOUTHCOM components have supported USAID-led disaster relief missions in Nicaragua, Honduras, and Guatemala in the aftermath of previous disasters, most recently in 2020, after Hurricane Eta and Hurricane IOTA struck Central America.

“I am very proud of every person, both military and civilian, involved in providing aid to the people of Haiti,” said Davids. “They are working long hours, coordinating across oceans, across languages and they are making a difference here.”

I would like to thank Adm. Faller and the U.S. military for their tremendous partnership as we worked to save lives and respond to the needs of many people in Haiti. The U.S. Government has come together as one team to coordinate a response that supports the welfare and dignity of the Haitian people.

— Samantha Power

U.S. Army Special Operations Command

Operation Gothic Serpent

Rangers receive Silver Star Medal



“Energetically will I meet the enemies of my country...”

By 75th Ranger Regiment Public Affairs

Operation Gothic Serpent, led by U. S. Special Operations Forces, including Rangers from Company B, 75th Ranger Regiment, took place in Mogadishu, Somalia, from August to October 1993.

On the afternoon of Oct. 3, 1993, two MH-60 Black Hawk helicopters were shot down by armed militiamen while American forces were attempting to capture a

Somali warlord. Most of the rescue forces converged on the first crash site, leaving the second Blackhawk and crew undefended. Two special operators eventually made it to the second crash site but were overrun by local militia. The 18-hour firefight that ensued remains one of the most intense close combat encounters for U.S. troops in Army history.

For the heroic actions of 18 U.S. Army Rangers, the Silver Star Medal was awarded on Oct. 1, 2021, at a



Ten Rangers from the Battle of Mogadishu and three Rangers' family members pose for a group photo following the Operation Gothic Serpent Upgrade Awards Ceremony Oct. 1, 2021, at Fort Benning, Georgia. Photo by Army Sgt. Jonathan Bryson.

ceremony in the George C. Marshall Auditorium, Fort Benning, Georgia.

Gen. Richard D. Clarke, commander of U.S. Special Operations Command presided over the upgraded awards ceremony.

“Few missions have left as enduring a legacy as the mission we’re recognizing today,” Clarke said.

Rangers initially received Bronze Star Medals for valor for their actions in 1994 in the very same auditorium as the Oct. 1 ceremony.

“What I recall is sitting in this auditorium — I was about five rows back on the far-left side — on March 28, 1994, when we first recognized the heroism,” Clarke said. “It is only appropriate that we gather back here today to recognize that same heroism.”

The upgrades are a result of the October 2020 directive from former Secretary of the Army, Ryan McCarthy, who directed the Senior Army Decorations Board to re-evaluate previously approved awards for valor.

“Put this in perspective: Eighteen. Eighteen Silver Stars,” Clarke said. “Our nation’s third-highest award, all being presented for one action, primarily from one company, over one 24-hour period.”

Sgt. 1st Class Sean “Tim” Watson served as a platoon sergeant and Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Struecker served as a squad leader during this mission.

Watson, after conducting a fast rope insertion into the Black Sea district and while under intense small arms and rocket propelled grenade fire, his force successfully sealed the area, preventing enemy reinforcements from entering the objective. He moved his element to a MH-60 crash and secured the site until reinforcements came the next morning.

“I felt very fortunate that I never was in the extreme

position that I was in -- in Somalia ever again,” Watson said. “Was I prepared for it? Yes, I was. I was very prepared. Some would say to extremes of preparation because, yes, it was a lot taken on personally from that experience.”

“It is truly an honor,” Watson said. “I believe that being an awardee is actually a representation of everybody. ... They’re the ones who actually earned it for me.”

Stuecker, led the mounted ground reaction force into Mogadishu three times through heavy enemy small arms and rocket propelled grenade fire. His disregard for his own personal safety and his courage to complete the mission proved invaluable to the task force.

“We were ready to do what our nation asked us to do. When we got out on target, we would figure out what we were really up against and I think most of us just didn’t know the sheer volume of enemy fire,” Struecker said. “We didn’t know the number of enemy fighters that we were up against until we were up against it. And like a classic Ranger operation, you just respond to what’s in front of you and you give it the best you got.”

“I witnessed heroism that day that I’ve never seen before and never seen after,” Struecker added. “And it was an honor to be able to serve next to some of those guys on that battlefield.”

These are just two examples of the heroism displayed Oct. 3 and 4, 1993.

“Our Regiment learned how to lead on that given day, when an operation doesn’t necessarily go according to plan and when Rangers have to display that intestinal fortitude to fight on to the Ranger objective even in the face of adversity,” Clarke said. “Task Force Ranger’s heroic actions in Mogadishu Somalia, inspired generations of Rangers and Soldiers throughout our entire Army.”

Rangers receiving the Silver Star were (ranks at the time of the battle):

Sgt. Alan Barton
Sgt. John C. Belman
Staff Sgt. Kenneth P. Boorn
Spc. James M. Cavaco*
Spc. John M. Collett
Staff Sgt. Michael Collins
Sgt. James C. Joyce*
Pfc. Brad M. Paulsen
2nd Lt. Larry D. Perino
Spc. Robert R. Phipps II

Sgt. Dominick M. Pilla*
Sgt. Randall J. Ramaglia Jr.
Pfc. John D. Stanfield
Cpt. Michael Steele
Spc. Richard Strous
Staff Sgt. Jeffrey D. Struecker
Spc. Joseph F. Thomas
Sgt. 1st Class Sean T. Watson

*Denotes posthumous award to Rangers who died of wounds suffered in Somalia.

Naval Special Warfare Command

Chief of Naval Operations visits Naval Special Warfare Command



Courtesy Story
Naval Special Warfare Command

Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Mike Gilday visited Naval Special Warfare Command Headquarters and NSWC's Naval Special Warfare Group One as part of a visit to the San Diego region Aug. 23, 2021.

During the visit, Gilday spent time with Rear Adm. H. W. Howard, III, commander, Naval Special Warfare Command, and NSW operators to discuss NSW's assessment and selection for leaders with the character, cognitive and leadership attributes required for highly complex and high-risk missions the nation asks of its naval commandos.

Gilday received a brief on how NSW is using the newly formed NSW Leadership Assessment Program for officer and senior enlisted advisor command selection, mental health performance programs, and family support and transition programs to improve the readiness and resiliency of the total force.

NLAP is NSW's newest approach to increasing officer and enlisted selection precision, individual development opportunities, and officer and enlisted leader pairing decisions. Among other criteria, the program consists of peer and subordinate assessments of leader candidates; physical, psychological and writing



Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday talks with Naval Special Warfare Group One physical therapists about the human performance resources available to Naval Special Warfare personnel during his visit to Naval Special Warfare Command and the San Diego region Aug. 23, 2021. During the visit, Gilday spent time with NSW personnel to discuss assessing and selecting leaders with character, cognitive and leadership attributes, strengthening the NSW force and their families, and integrating NSW with the Fleet. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Tobias Levene.

I fully support the transformative approach that Naval Special Warfare has taken to identify individuals with the cognitive, character, and leadership attributes necessary to command in today's Force.

— Adm. Mike Gilday

assessments; and double-blind interviews that assess participants' leadership potential and mitigate cognitive biases that can adversely impact selection decisions.

"I fully support the transformative approach that Naval Special Warfare has taken to identify individuals with the cognitive, character, and leadership attributes necessary to command in today's

Force,” said Gilday. “The NSW Leadership Assessment Program not only assesses for these attributes but also provides candidates with the feedback they need so they can improve and succeed going forward. Providing our Sailors mentorship and training at every level will help ensure a ready force for our Navy tomorrow.”

During his visit, Gilday also toured the human performance training center at the Silver Strand Training Complex, a state-of-the-art facility that brings together the physical and mental resources to develop a more resilient and high-performing Naval Special Warfare force.

“Without a doubt, readiness is all about our people. We know that diverse teams outperform those that are not. And we know esprit de corps, particularly within small units, is incredibly important to our combat effectiveness,” said Gilday. “The high-performing and highly-reliable Naval Special Warfare teams I’ve met here place great emphasis on core values of warfighting, character and ethics, and it makes me proud to serve with these Sailors.”

The tour concluded with a visit to Naval Special Warfare Group One’s combat training tank where naval commandos train to conduct high-risk combat diving evolutions. The force is placing a renewed emphasis on

missions that only NSW can do on, under, and above the sea. The combat training tank improves the training and readiness of NSW operators to carry out highly complex undersea missions that extend the reach of the joint force and the intelligence community.

“It was my honor to share with CNO Gilday how the NSW community is urgently transforming for peer adversary strategic competition and in ways that increase joint force survivability and lethality in crisis and conflict. We recognize the complexities of the future operating environment, and continue to assess, select, and train a force ready to deliver distinctive options that undermine adversary confidence, increase diplomatic leverage, and create access for the joint force,” said Howard. “NSW is focused more closely than ever on the Fleet and the Joint Force to deliver creative dilemmas that strengthen all-domain integrated deterrence and provide irregular warfare options that efficiently and effectively help solve the hardest national security problems.”

Naval Special Warfare is the nation’s premier maritime Special Operations Force – a highly reliable and lethal force – and is uniquely positioned to extend the Fleet’s reach and deliver all-domain options for Naval and Joint Force commanders.



Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday talks with Sailors following a combat swimmer demonstration at the combat training tank during a visit to Naval Special Warfare Command and the San Diego region today. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Tobias Levene.

Naval Special Warfare Command



SEAL Team 1 pays tribute to its first commanding officer, first SEAL

By U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Paolo Bayas
Naval Special Warfare Group One

The crashing waves, sandy beach, and fresh ocean breeze set the stage to reflect on the legacy and historic career of the late Capt. David “Dave” Del Giudice, SEAL Team 1’s first-ever commanding officer.

Members of SEAL Team 1 welcomed Del Giudice’s wife, sons, and roommate-in-training and close friend, retired Lt. Cmdr. Timothy “Tad” A. Devine (Underwater Demolition Team), U.S. Navy Reserve Sept. 16, 2021. They walked the grounds of old and new training areas and shared solemn memories of a man they knew as a husband, father and teammate.

“I was Dave’s roommate during the time we endured and survived [Underwater Demolition Team] Replacement Class 20 in 1958,” said Devine. “Capt. David Del Giudice was the ‘plank owning,’ first commanding officer of the newly commissioned [SEAL Team 1] on January 1, 1962. He was the first SEAL.”

The following morning, SEAL Team 1 led a memorial service to celebrate his contributions to the community. As the chaplain prayed, four members of SEAL Team 1 swam off the coast of San Clemente Island to spread his ashes; a maneuver known in the teams as a “final pick-up line.”

“Now that he has moved out to his final pick-up line for extract, we can say with confidence that his work on Earth is done; he’s run his race well, and his mission is complete,” said Navy chaplain Lt. Cmdr. Stephen Griffin.

The swimmers, in return, emerged back on shore

presenting a customarily-folded United States flag to Del Giudice’s wife with a SEAL Trident and SEAL Team 1 command coin tucked inside.

“We were soulmates, best friends and an anchor for each other,” said Del Giudice’s wife. “Dave may be gone in body, but his spirit is in my heart and is in my soul, and it will forever be there. And it brings me love, happiness, peace and security. I love him with all my heart.”

Del Giudice entered the Navy in 1954 and completed Underwater Demolition Replacement Training with Class 20 in 1958. He was subsequently assigned to Underwater Demolition Team 12 where he served as a platoon commander, officer in charge, and eventually executive officer.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Arleigh Burke officially authorized establishment of the SEAL Teams in

a letter dated Dec. 11, 1961. Del Giudice, assumed command of SEAL Team 1 on Jan. 1, 1962. Ten days after taking the helm of SEAL Team 1, Del Giudice was sent to Vietnam to assess how the capabilities of SEALs could be employed.

During his second deployment with UDT 12, Del Giudice and 10 other UDT members became the

nucleus of the Mekong River Flotilla, where he served as Assistant Flotilla Commander. This little-known mission was to deliver urgently needed landing craft to the Laotian government to bolster its river patrol capability against attacks from communist forces.

Upon his return to Vietnam in 1962, Del Giudice helped train Vietnamese Coastal Force personnel in

I was Dave’s roommate during the time we endured and survived [Underwater Demolition Team] Replacement Class 20 in 1958. Capt. David Del Giudice was the ‘plank owning,’ first commanding officer of the newly commissioned [SEAL Team 1] on January 1, 1962. He was the first SEAL.

— Retired Lt. Cmdr. Timothy “Tad” A. Devine

reconnaissance, guerilla warfare and prepared them to instruct succeeding classes of the Biet Hai [Special Sea Force] Commandos. He also became a member of the Vietnam Delta Infiltration Study Group which helped produce the “Bucklew Report” that warned of the ineffectiveness in halting Vietcong coastal and riverine supplies.

Del Giudice subsequent assignments included Naval Operation Support Group Pacific (forerunner to Naval Special Warfare Group 1) as its first operations officer and the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations where he was the budget sponsor for Naval Inshore Warfare Commands. Driving budgetary actions, Del Giudice is credited with strengthening the NSW community by working to permanently establish NSW as a part of the overall U. S. Navy structure, paving the way for the eventual selection

of a Naval Special Warfare Flag Officer.

Del Giudice concluded his naval career as the Commanding Officer of Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado. He retired from active duty after 24 years of service in July of 1978 and was selected by U.S. Special

Operations Command as one of its Commando Hall of Honor awardees in 2010.

“The Naval Special Warfare community lost a treasured teammate and one of SEAL Team’s consummate professionals with the passing of Dave Del Giudice,” said Rear Adm. H. W. Howard, commander, U.S. Naval Special Warfare Command. “He will be remembered as a quiet professional, one who shaped our history, upholding the tenants of our ethos and

serving as an inspiration to those he led.”

Dave Del Giudice passed away May 20, 2021. He was 88 years old.

The Naval Special Warfare community lost a treasured teammate and one of SEAL Team’s consummate professionals with the passing of Dave Del Giudice. He will be remembered as a quiet professional, one who shaped our history, upholding the tenants of our Ethos and serving as an inspiration to those he led.

— Rear Adm. H. W. Howard



A Navy SEAL prepares to present a ceremonial flag after spreading the ashes of retired Capt. David Del Giudice. Capt. Del Giudice was selected as the first commanding officer of SEAL Team 1, assuming command on Jan. 1, 1962. He passed away at 88 years old on May 20, 2021. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Paolo Bayas.

Naval Special Warfare Command

NAVSCIATTS honors semester 21-5 graduates



By Angela Fry

Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School

The Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School recently recognized graduates from Semester 21-5 in a formal ceremony at command headquarters located on the John C. Stennis Space Center in South Mississippi.

NAVSCIATTS Cmdr. Don Speights and Republic of the Philippines Defense Attaché Capt. Salvador Henry Quinto, Philippines Embassy, Washington, D.C.; served as host and keynote speaker as they awarded diplomas to the 49 partner nation security force professionals from the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Guyana, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand.

In opening remarks, Speights, who assumed command of NAVSCIATTS in June, expressed his appreciation for being involved with U.S. Special Operations Command's only security cooperation command.

"I am confident, outside of this command, there are few within the U.S. Department of Defense who have the opportunity, every day, to spend quality time with America's finest partners and allies," he explained. "All of us have heard the saying, 'find a job that you love, and you will never work a day in your life.' How can you not love this job which provides us with the opportunity to build our global family?"

With a primary objective of this international training command being to build and continuing to strengthen relations between partners and allies, Speights, who has served as a U.S. Navy SEAL for more than 28 years, reiterated that strengthening global relations and building partner capacity will continue to be a priority for him and his staff.

"While the forefront of our shared global struggle over the past year has focused on COVID-19, we realize global challenges that threaten the security of all our nations and existed prior to the pandemic such as terrorism, illicit drug



An international security force professional participating in the Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School's Semester 21-5 Patrol Craft Officer – Coastal course prepares to man the M240B machine gun in the iteration's final training exercise. Semester 21-5 featured 49 students from the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Guyana, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand. Philippine Defense Attaché Capt. Salvador Henry Quinto served as keynote speaker for graduation events held on September 24, 2021. Photo by Michael Williams.

networks, human trafficking, organized crime, and great power competition...that those challenges did not disappear," he explained. "We must not forget, regardless of our

situations and where we are from, we can only counter these challenges by working together. Your service and continued dedication to your countries and international partnerships will no doubt ensure our success against these shared global challenges.”

As the Republic of the Philippines and the United States commemorate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, Quinto opened his remarks to the audience, which consisted mostly of students representing the U.S. Indo-Pacific area of operations, by highlighting shared global issues such as natural disasters, specifically the recent devastating impact of Hurricane Ida along the Louisiana Gulf Coast.

“While we are happy celebrating this joyous event, I must admit that it still pains me seeing the trail of damage and devastation caused by Hurricane Ida when it made landfall along this area just a few weeks ago,” expressed the Philippine navy veteran. “My heart bleeds for the people, for I for one, as a resident of a region in the Philippines that lies along the typhoon belt, have had personal experiences of such similar grim magnitude. For what it is worth, experiences of such intensity only make us stronger. Just like your four seasons, the flora and fauna of this place shall recover, and its people will rise again: stronger, more resilient and absolutely better.”

NAVSCIATTS, which was originally formed as a U.S. Coast Guard mobile training team in 1961 in Rodman, Panama, trains and educates foreign special operations, combat support, and combat service support forces across the tactical, operational, and strategic spectrums through in-residence and mobile training team iterations.

This semester, students received training in six of the

command’s 10 formal courses of instruction, including diesel and outboard motor maintenance, tactical communications, welding and applied repairs, coastal patrol, and UAS planning and operations. Quinto stressed to the graduates the importance of education, training, and dedication while pursuing their military careers and how commands such as NAVSCIATTS directly impact those objectives.

“In the profession of arms, especially in these modern times, there are some realities that we need to face,” stressed Quinto, a lawyer and graduate of the Philippine Military Academy. “Gone are the days that men and women turned into soldiers and sailors by the mere display of sheer strength and their willingness to fight,” he continued. “While most of us joined the service driven by a spectrum of reasons - like patriotism, bloodlines, career, rewards, dreams or even adventure; nonetheless, the security of our stay in our beloved organizations, may no longer be secured by that same motivation. Today’s military now needs dedicated professionals, responsible experts, and men and women with various skill sets and competencies.”

With NAVSCIATTS’ ability to assist in U.S. Department of Defense’s efforts to build capacity of strategic partners and allies, Quinto highlighted the importance of continuing to expand technical knowledge and expertise

“Warfare of this new century requires membership in a profession that shares organic unity and consciousness in various disciplines that make us special and distinct apart from the ordinary men,” he explained. “This is where training institutions like NAVSCIATTS are even more essential and indispensable. For they hammer out soldiers and sailors and turn them into a special breed of professionals and experts in various disciplines.”



Philippine Defense Attaché Capt. Salvador Henry Quinto and Senior Enlisted Advisor Chief Petty Officer Oliver Carbonell pose with security force professionals from the Philippines after the Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School Semester 21-5 graduation events held at command facilities located on the John C. Stennis Space Center in South Mississippi. Photo by Michael Williams.



Naval Special Warfare Command

US Naval Special Warfare Command establishes Group Eight, disestablishes Groups Three and Ten

Courtesy Story
Naval Special Warfare Command

U.S. Naval Special Warfare Command held an establishment ceremony Aug. 25 for Naval Special Warfare Group Eight aboard the Silver Strand Training Complex. The establishment of NSWG-8 also signaled the disestablishment of Naval Special Warfare Groups Three and Ten as their headquarters, missions, functions and tasks realigned and combined to form NSWG-8.

During the ceremony, Capt. Walter Allman, former commander of Naval Special Warfare Group 3, assumed command and Capt. David Markle, former commander of Naval Special Warfare Group 10, relinquished command. Rear Adm. H.W. Howard, III, commander, U.S. Naval Special Warfare Command, was the presiding officer at the establishment ceremony.

“Naval Special Warfare is deliberately and urgently transforming to meet new threats and deliver distinctive options that expand our national advantage in strategic competition and increase Joint Force survivability and lethality in

crisis and conflict,” said Howard. “This realignment within NSW integrates distinctive capabilities to create new irregular options to help solve the hardest national security problems, undermine the confidence of our adversaries, and contribute to integrated all domain deterrence.”

The establishment of NSWG-8 accelerates NSW’s transformation by converging undersea operational capabilities and advanced intelligence and communications capabilities. The move to combine command and control for NSW’s unique capabilities is designed to increase maritime capacity and deliver new strategic competition capabilities.

NSWG-8 will be headquartered at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek in Virginia Beach, Virginia with a detachment in Coronado, California and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

NSWG-3, which was formally established in October 2002, was U.S. Special Operations Command’s only undersea-focused

enterprise, operating the Dry Combat Submersible, SEAL Delivery Vehicles, and Unmanned Undersea Vehicles. NSWG-3 oversaw SEAL Delivery Vehicle Team ONE, SDVT-2, a training detachment and a

Naval Special Warfare is deliberately and urgently transforming to meet new threats and deliver distinctive options that expand our national advantage in strategic competition and increase Joint Force survivability and lethality in crisis and conflict. This realignment within NSW integrates distinctive capabilities to create new irregular options to help solve the hardest national security problems, undermine the confidence of our adversaries, and contribute to integrated all domain deterrence.

— Rear Adm. H.W. Howard, III

logistical support unit. NSWG-3's heritage can be traced to Boat Support Unit One, which was established in February 1964, to support the newly formed U.S. Navy SEAL community with surface mobility before evolving to SDVs and other similar underwater delivery platforms.

NSWG-10, which was formally established in May 2011, was NSW's lead component for providing intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance support to tactical forces. They deployed specialized capabilities – including cyber, electronic warfare and multi-domain unmanned systems – in support of NSW missions. NSWG-10 oversaw Special Reconnaissance

Team One, SRT-2, and the Mission Support Center.

NSWG-8 assumes responsibility for all operational units formerly assigned to NSWG-3 and NSWG-10 and will organize, man, train, educate, equip, support and deploy specialized capabilities to perform intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and preparation of the environment activities and to conduct Naval Special Warfare operations worldwide in support of the Fleet, Joint Force and other mission partners.

Naval Special Warfare is the nation's premier maritime special operations force and is uniquely positioned to extend the Fleet's reach and deliver all-domain options for Naval and Joint Force commanders.



Rear Adm. H.W. Howard III, commander, Naval Special Warfare Command, and Naval Special Warfare Group Eight's Command Master Chief Brandon Barker unfurl the command's new pennant during an establishment ceremony for NSWG-8 onboard the Silver Strand Training Complex. The establishment of NSWG-8 also signaled the disestablishment of Naval Special Warfare Groups Three and Ten as their headquarters, missions, functions and tasks realigned to form NSWG-8. The creation of NSWG-8 accelerates NSW's transformation by converging undersea operational capabilities and advanced intelligence and communications capabilities. Naval Special Warfare is the Nation's premier maritime special operations force – a highly reliable and lethal force – and is uniquely positioned to extend the Fleet's reach and deliver all-domain options for Naval and Joint Force commanders. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Keypher Strombeck.

Air Force Special Operations Command



Answering the call: ST Airmen conclude Haiti earthquake relief efforts

By U.S. Air Force Capt. Alejandra Fontalvo
24th Special Operations Wing

Special Tactics Airmen assigned to the 24th Special Operations Wing concluded their response to augment humanitarian aid efforts in Haiti on Sept. 2, 2021, following a 7.2 magnitude earthquake, which hit the country Aug. 14.

The Special Tactics Airmen were alerted on the morning of Aug. 16 they would augment Joint Task Force-Haiti relief efforts. With the help of C-146A Wolfhound aircrews, assigned to the 492nd and 919th Special Operations Wings, the team touched down in Port Au Prince, Haiti within 36 hours.

“We landed at Port Au Prince and were pretty removed from the epicenter of the earthquake, but once we got out to certain areas that had been cut off by the earthquake and seeing the MEDEVAC patients coming in at Port Au Prince that were suffering from crush injuries ... it definitely hit home,” said the Special Tactics Officer and lead for the ST response team. “It piqued our awareness for the severity of the situation and need for assistance. It made us eager to get out to the landing zones for us to start doing our part and hopefully establish an airfield so we could bring out more supplies to those people.”

The Special Tactics team, consisting of five combat controllers and one pararescueman, were primarily responsible for surveying Jeremie and Les Cayes airfields for suitability of landing fixed wing aircraft. The airfields were in parts of the country that had been cut off by landslides and damaged roads from a storm following the earthquake. The operators quickly assessed the landing zones, conducted a proof of concept by successfully landing a C-146A at one of the airfields and made recommendations to JTF-Haiti. While performing this task, the Special Tactics team was strategically positioned and equipped to assist in an emergency scenario.

“While we were conducting our survey at Les Cayes,



U.S. Air Force Special Tactics operators prepare to hand off an injured patient after an emergency medical evacuation in the western part of Haiti. Special Tactics Airmen responded to a request to augment Joint Task Force-Haiti relief efforts after a 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit the country Aug. 14, 2021. Courtesy photo.

some [non-governmental organization] members came up to us and mentioned there were some patients a 10-minute flight away in the mountains,” said the STO. “There were two children with crush injuries that needed to get medical attention immediately and we were able to task our forces



A Special Tactics operator greets Haitian citizens as he secures the area for a delivery of humanitarian aid supplies as part of Joint Task Force-Haiti. Special Tactics Airmen responded to a request to augment relief efforts in Haiti after a 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit the country Aug. 14, 2021. Courtesy photo.

at that survey site to coordinate with JTF-Haiti, the aircrew and work with the NGO to find the exact location of those patients and evacuate them to a higher level of care.”

In addition to being positioned and ready for medical evacuations, the team worked to assist Haitian air traffic controllers providing advisory calls in different areas and assisted with deliveries of humanitarian aid supplies in more than 10 remote locations across the country.

“You see the kids running up and obviously they’re excited to see you and to see the U.S. military because they know we’re going to help,” said the STO. “I’m super

thankful for the opportunity and proud that my team was a part of it and that we were able to do a multitude of things to help get the aid and supplies needed to the people of Haiti.”

The humanitarian mission also served as a training opportunity for the team in interoperability and how to collaborate with several organizations trying to achieve the same goal by maximizing everyone’s capabilities.

“It was a very educational experience working alongside not only joint partners from the DOD, as well as USAID, the lead agency for the relief efforts,” said the STO. “We got to learn what they did and they got to learn what we do. The big takeaway for Special Tactics is our flexibility and the different capabilities we bring to a problem set like humanitarian aid disaster relief. We were there to conduct surveys and were prepared to establish airfields, receive aircraft, land them and deliver supplies in an expeditious manner. When circumstances changed, we were able to conduct a MEDEVAC as well as go out alongside other entities and help facilitate their mission using our tools and capabilities. We were able to be pretty dynamic.”

In recent years, Special Tactics Airmen alongside other Air Force Special Operations Command units have responded to several natural disasters including Hurricanes Eta and Iota in Honduras, Hurricane Michael in Florida and Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana.

Special Tactics Airmen train constantly to execute global access, precision strike, personnel recovery and battlefield surgery operations across the spectrum of conflict and crisis. As experts in air-ground integration, ST Airmen can assess, open, and control major airfields to clandestine dirt strips as well as lead complex rescue operations in any environment.



U.S. Air Force Special Tactics operators and other members of Joint Task Force-Haiti deliver humanitarian aid supplies to a remote part of the country. Special Tactics Airmen responded to a request to augment relief efforts in Haiti after a 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit the country Aug. 14, 2021. Courtesy photo.

Air Force Special Operations Command



Special Tactics unites with South American partners on training to save lives

By U.S. Air Force Capt. Alejandra Fontalvo
24th Special Operations Wing

United to save lives” or “Unidos para salvar vidas”... is the powerful motto behind exercise Ángel de los Andes Cooperación VII, a Colombian-led search and rescue disaster relief exercise bringing together over 740 participants from across the Americas held Aug. 30 - Sept. 10, 2021, in Rionegro, Colombia.

This year, 32 of those participants included Special Tactics and combat mission support Airmen from the 26th Special Tactics Squadron based out of Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico.

“We had a few objectives for this exercise,” said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Charles Hodges, commander of the 26th STS. “First and foremost, we wanted to build relationships with the partners and allies we have in South America. Due to our persistent presence in the Middle East over the last two decades, we have not focused on our partners to the south as much as we would have liked. Secondly, we want to work on our tactical rescue skills in humanitarian assistance/disaster relief operations.”

The squadron embraced the unique opportunity to train in an unfamiliar environment and with the Colombian partners for the exercise’s third iteration since it started in 2015. Other country participants and observers included Peru, Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia, Brazil and Canada making it the most diverse and largest contingent of personnel in Ángel de los Andes’ history.

“The opportunity to conduct joint and combined operations in a permissive environment is ideal. Thereby, understanding each other before the first time we are working through coordination and communication issues with other partners or services isn’t in a hostile environment or after a crisis occurs,” said Hodges. “Additionally, we learn from their experience and they can learn from ours. It’s a win-win opportunity.”



U.S. Air Force Special Tactics operators from the 24th Special Operations Wing greet their Colombian Air Force counterparts Aug. 29, 2021, before the start of events at Ángel de los Andes Cooperación VII in Rionegro, Colombia. Ángel de los Andes is a Colombian-led search and rescue exercise, while Cooperación VII is a multinational humanitarian aid and disaster response exercise. Special Tactics Airmen are Air Force Special Operations Command’s tactical air ground integration force leading global access, precision strike, personnel recovery and battlefield surgery operations. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Ridge Shan.

“While in Colombia, the team hit the ground running. The ST Airmen were able to train on various critical skills to hone their land and maritime personnel recovery capabilities including medical treatment, patient transport, military freefall, helicopter fast roping, rappelling, collapsed structure and confined space rescue techniques.

“Training on these tactical skills gave us the opportunity to integrate with aircrews from multiple countries, rescue specialists from local volunteer response teams and doctors in field hospitals,” said the Combat Rescue Officer and lead for the ST team. “It really encompassed all aspects of what a true humanitarian



A U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command C-146A Wolfhound assigned to the 492nd Special Operations Wing lands in order to deliver simulated casualties evacuated from an exercise disaster zone Sept. 2, 2021, during Ángel de los Andes Cooperación VII in Rionegro, Colombia. Ángel de los Andes is a Colombian-led search and rescue exercise, while Cooperación VII is a multinational humanitarian aid and disaster response exercise. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Ridge Shan.

assistance event might entail and served as an opportunity to identify what works well and where we could integrate more effectively in the future.”

Not all of the exercise training was scenario-based however. During one event, the Special Tactics team took off from a soccer field of an isolated village in a Colombian Blackhawk surrounded by waving local families after helping the international team provide medical care to hundreds of Colombians. This was just one of the impactful moments the team got to experience.

“Another memorable moment was on the final afternoon during a formal jump wing exchange with the Colombian [pararescuemen],” said the CRO. “After pounding his jump wings into my chest, in accordance with strict tradition, my Colombian counterpart looked me in the eyes and said, ‘never forget that we are brothers, we are family, and you’re always welcome here.’”

As the successful large-scale exercise came to an end, the ST Airmen believe the sincerity of the bonds built over the two weeks of training will increase both countries’ ability to respond to any future disaster together if required.

“I’m extremely grateful and proud of the 24th SOW’s participation and execution in ADLA, specifically the 26th STS,” said Chief Master Sgt. Jaime Clark, 12th Air Force (Air Forces Southern) Command Chief and former 24th SOW Command Chief. “Their leadership, professionalism, and performance was exceptional. Despite ADLA being an exercise, ST strengthened partner nation relationships and

countered threats, which directly supports and enhances 12th Air Force’s mission. What ST brings to bear in combat, peacetime, and gray zone operations is second to none.”



Special Tactics operators from the 24th Special Operations Wing participate in a warmup exercise with Colombian humanitarian aid and rescue services Aug. 31, 2021, during Ángel de los Andes Cooperación VII in Rionegro, Colombia. Ángel de los Andes is a Colombian-led search and rescue exercise, while Cooperación VII is a multinational humanitarian aid and disaster response exercise. Special Tactics Airmen are Air Force Special Operations Command’s tactical air ground integration force leading global access, precision strike, personnel recovery and battlefield surgery operations. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Ridge Shan.

Marine Forces, Special Operations Command



(Cover) Staff Sergeant Nicholas J. Jones, Critical Skills Operator, was awarded the Navy Cross by the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General David Berger, during a ceremony on Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C. Jones was awarded the Navy Cross for his actions in support of Operation Inherent Resolve in March 8, 2020. The Navy Cross is the highest decoration bestowed by the Department of the Navy, the second highest valor award, second to the Medal of Honor and must be approved by the Secretary of the Navy before being awarded. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Jesula Jeanlouis.

Marine Raider awarded Nation's second highest decoration for valor

*By U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Jesula Jeanlouis
Marine Forces, Special Operations Command*

Staff Sergeant Nicholas J. Jones was awarded the Navy Cross during a ceremony on Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, Aug. 26, 2021.

The Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. David Berger, presented Staff Sergeant Nicholas Jones the Navy Cross award for his actions in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. The Navy Cross is the highest decoration bestowed by the Department of the Navy, the second highest valor award, second to the

Medal of Honor and must be approved by the Secretary of the Navy.

“It was his quick thinking, his selfless actions, and his decisive leadership, not only that saved the lives of another team member but kept the rest of the team alive,” said Berger. “It was his demanding attitude that forced himself to be ready. It was his demanding leadership that prepared his team. It was his demanding mindset, I would offer, that led his team off that mountain that day,” said Berger.

Opening comments were offered by Maj. Gen. James F. Glynn, commanding general, Marine Corps

It was his quick thinking, his selfless actions, and his decisive leadership, not only that saved the lives of another team member but kept the rest of the team alive. It was his demanding attitude that forced himself to be ready. It was his demanding leadership that prepared his team. It was his demanding mindset, I would offer, that led his team off that mountain that day.

— *Commandant of the Marine Corps,
General David Berger*

Forces Special Operations Command. Also in attendance was Carlos Del Toro, Secretary of the Navy.

“The backdrop is not a mistake... This is our memorial of the names of those that have paid the ultimate price on our behalf, in training and operations around the world,” said Glynn during the ceremony.

Jones, of Olathe, Kansas, encompassed extraordinary heroism while assigned as element leader with Marine Special Operations Company H, 2d Marine Raider Battalion, Marine Raider Regiment, in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

Jones was accompanying Iraqi forces to clear enemy positions, on March 8, 2020, when multiple barricaded enemies opened fire, wounding an allied special operator, and subsequently wounding two Marine Raiders.

Jones’s award cites, “Despite the unfolding chaotic situation, Staff Sergeant Jones seized the initiative and organized a counterattack. Under sustained, accurate enemy fire at close range, he maneuvered to the [allied] casualty, suppressing the enemy 20 meters away with his rifle and grenades while helping to move the casualty to a covered position and subsequent medical evacuation.”

Nearly five hours into the firefight, Jones was struck in the leg after leading a third and final attack on the enemy position. Refusing medical treatment and pain medication, continued to fight until he was medically evacuated.

It is not beyond me how fortunate I am to be alive to accept this award. Thank you all for your support and once again, it is a great honor to receive this award.

— *Staff Sergeant Nicholas J. Jones*

“It is men like Talon Leach, Jon Gifford, Mo Navas and Diego Pongo that contribute to the legendary bloodline of not only Hotel Company, but MARSOC as a whole. It is my hope that the awards given from actions taken on March 8, 2020 will ultimately contribute to the standards set for every Marine Raider,” said Jones.

Staff Sergeant Jones became the eighth servicemember in MARSOC’s 15-year history to be awarded the Navy Cross. His decisive actions, bold initiative, and unconquerable spirit reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

“It is not beyond me how fortunate I am to be alive to accept this award. Thank you all for your support and once again, it is a great honor to receive this award.”

“Never above you. Never below you. Always beside you.” concluded Jones.

The Marine Raider Regiment provides tailored military combat-skills training and advisor support for identified foreign forces to enhance their tactical capabilities and to prepare the environment as directed by USSOCOM as well as the capability to form the nucleus of a Joint Special Operations Task Force. The Marine Raider mantra “Marines are who we are. Special operations are what we do,” points to the foundational experiences that unite all Marine Raiders.



Staff Sergeant Nicholas J. Jones, Critical Skills Operator, speaks after being awarded the Navy Cross by the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General David Berger, during a ceremony aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt Jesula Jeanlouis.

Headquarters - U.S. Special Operations Command USSOCOM marks the 20th anniversary of 9/11 with a four-day series of remembrance events

By Michael Bottoms

USSOCOM Office of Communication

The significance of the 9/11 attacks is not lost after 20 years, especially for Special Operations Forces. Members of the SOF enterprise have been engaged in continuous combat operations for the last 20 years trying to ensure Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, and other locations were not safe havens for violent extremist organizations and used to threaten the homeland. Six hundred and sixty SOF members made the ultimate sacrifice and 2,738 were wounded since that tragic day.

To commemorate the 20th anniversary of 9/11 and honor those who lost their lives that day and pay respect for the contributions made by SOF protecting the homeland, U.S. Special Operations Command hosted a week-long series of events in remembrance of the 20th Anniversary of 9/11 Sep. 7 - 10. The USSOCOM History Office and Joint Special Operations University hosted several virtual panels and forums to explore the role of Special Operations Forces over the last two decades.

There were three virtual panels with the first entitled *The 9/11 Attacks and Immediate Military Actions* with former Army Corps of Engineers New York District Deputy Commander, Army Lt. Col. retired John Lock as the lead guest panelist. Lock spoke about the 9/11 attacks answering questions and sharing his experiences at ground zero after the attacks happened.

The second panel was entitled *Initial Unconventional Warfare Operations* and the guest panelists were retired Army Lt. Gen. John Mulholland and retired Army Col. Mark Rosengard. Mulholland, who was then the commander of the 5th Special Forces Group, discussed how they mobilized U.S. Special Operations Forces to form Task Force Dagger and began the unconventional warfare campaign against the Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan.



Gen. Richard D. Clarke, commander, U.S. Special Operation Command, addresses the audience at the Remembrance Ceremony marking the 20th anniversary of 9/11 at the Special Operations Forces Memorial Sep. 10 on MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. Members of the SOF enterprise operated for the last 20 years ensuring Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, and other locations were not safe havens for violent extremist organizations and used to threaten the Homeland. Since Sept. 11, 2001, 660 SOF and enablers have made the ultimate sacrifice and 2,738 were wounded since that tragic day. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.

The topic of the last panel entitled *Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan* focused on the first large scale operation in the Global War on Terrorism fighting al Qaeda and their Taliban allies in the Shah-i-Khot Valley of Afghanistan.

This panel's guests were retired Army Lt. Gen. Frank Kearney, former deputy commander USSOCOM, retired Navy SEAL Vice Adm. Robert Harward and retired Navy SEAL Rear Adm. Kerry Metz. Operation Anaconda was led by the 10th Mountain Division and supported by more than 400 U.S. and foreign special operations personnel. This panel discussed the initial planning, execution, and challenges of the operation.



Chief Master Sgt. Gregory A Smith, senior enlisted leader, U.S. Special Operations Command, and his wife Tina, pay respect at the Remembrance Ceremony marking the 20th anniversary of 9/11 at the Special Operations Forces Memorial Sep. 10 on MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. Members of the SOF enterprise have operated for the last 20 years ensuring Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, and other locations were not safe havens for violent extremist organizations and used to threaten the Homeland. Since Sept. 11, 2001, 660 SOF and enablers have made the ultimate sacrifice and 2,738 were wounded since that tragic day. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.

Army Gen. Richard D. Clarke, commander, USSOCOM, and Chief Master Sgt. Gregory A. Smith, USSOCOM senior enlisted leader, sent a letter to the force praising the SOF effort and achievements during the past 20 years.

“We are inspired by the generation of brave Americans who have answered the call to serve over the last two decades – like the courageous generations before them. Many, like us, were serving that morning and approached their service with renewed dedication and resolve,” read a passage from the letter.

Additionally, the command dedicated its bi-weekly podcast – SOFcast – hosted by Green Beret Sgt. Maj. Matt Parrish and Smith to a discussion about the past 20 years of service and a candid dialog about the recent withdrawal from Afghanistan.

“We moved in one week 124,334 people, the largest humanitarian movement in the history of mankind,” Smith said. “Stop for a minute. For all the negative and everything else that is happening. Stop for a minute and think about that. And we lived through this. Stop for a minute and just recognize how many lives that were saved.”

Parrish described the death of U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Nicole Gee, one of the 13 U.S. military service members killed in the suicide attack at Kabul’s Hamid Karzai International Airport on Aug. 26.

“I don’t remember a time where there’s been such a seminal moment, literally the pictures of the people

working the gates like Nicole Gee for example, a picture of her holding a baby went viral, and then she’s unfortunately killed almost immediately after,” Parrish said. “There has never been that much of a flash to bang. It punched everybody in the face.”

The historic week closed on Sep. 10 with a virtual observance ceremony hosted by Clarke and Smith with Army Brig. Gen. Marcus Evans, the last Special Operations Forces commander in Afghanistan, leading the command’s pause to remember the sacrifices and brave actions taken on Sep. 11, 2001.

“Out of tragedy, a generation rose up to answer a call. One heard by freedom-loving nations worldwide, a call that never again should our citizens live under the threat of such an attack,” Clarke said. “Many of us in this generation were already serving and we approached our service with renewed dedication. Many more raised their hands. Nearly nine out of 10 Special Operators in our enterprise today began serving after that September morning.”

“Since Oct 2001, U.S. SOF along with coalition partners in Afghanistan evolved to meet the demands of combatting terrorism to prevent another 9/11 attack. Nearly every major operation in AFG involved SOF formations under some of the most challenging conditions in the history of warfare,” Evans said. “Horse Soldiers, Rhino, Anaconda, Roberts Ridge, Red Wings, Extortion 17 are a few of the unique operations and references accrued over the last 20 years in AFG as a response to 9/11; these and others will be closely measured and studied in the years to come.”



People lay flowers to honor 9/11 victims and fallen first responders and service members as part of the Remembrance Ceremony marking the 20th anniversary of 9/11 at the Special Operations Forces Memorial Sep. 10 on MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. Members of the SOF enterprise have operated for the last 20 years ensuring Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, and other locations were not safe havens for violent extremist organizations and used to threaten the Homeland. Since Sept. 11, 2001, 660 SOF and enablers have made the ultimate sacrifice and 2,738 were wounded since that tragic day. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.

Headquarters - U.S. Special Operations Command

Enabling conventional forces – Special Operations Forces supporting maritime ops

*The Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) / Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU)
Special Operations Forces Liaison Element (SOFLE) Program*

By Mr. Jay Macias, Ed.D.
USSOCOM J33 Directorate

Lieutenant Col. Jason Williams, an AFSOC aviator assigned to USSOCOM, is the fifteenth ARG/MEU SOFLE Officer-in-Charge to return from deployment supporting the USS Makin Island Amphibious Ready Group /15 Marine Expeditionary Unit. As the SOFLE Officer-in-Charge, Williams and his team experienced three firsts for the ARG/MEU SOFLE Program.

Deployment Under COVID-19 conditions

The MKIARG/15MEU deployed at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The SOFLE team joined the ARG/MEU staff a month before deployment to conduct restriction of movement (ROM) in an isolated hotel. Williams capitalized on ROM to forge relationships with the MEU staff. According to Williams, COVID ROM created an opportunity to build relationships between the MEU and SOFLE.

“By the end of ROM, the MEU viewed the SOFLE as an integral part of their team and ensured that we were included in all of their deployment planning,” said Williams.

This was Williams’ first time on a Navy ship. From the time he left port in San Diego, Williams and his team remained aboard the USS Makin Island the entire deployment to avoid “breaking the COVID bubble.” This was the first time that the SOFLE’s entire pre-deployment training and deployment was conducted in ROM conditions, validating the value of a robust SOFLE communications suite that enabled uninterrupted coordination and information sharing between the ARG/MEU and SOF.

“The SOFLE’s ship-board communications suite is an incredibly beneficial capability when it comes to early coordination with TSOCs and downrange Task

Forces,” commented Williams.

Enabling Conventional and SOF integration across four Geographic Combatant Commands

The MKIARG/15MEU SOFLE exemplified the inherent jointness of SOF.

“Our team had a perfectly diverse level of experience. I’m an AFSOC aviator that was deploying from SOCOM Headquarters, my senior enlisted was from MARSOC with significant and recent deployed experience, and my communication chief was from U.S. Army Special Operations Command,” said Williams.

The Marine Corps augmented the team with two communicators. This small, but capable joint team, enabled 10 conventional force and SOF activities across four geographical combatant commands. This was the first time that one SOFLE deployment supported four geographical combatant commands, demonstrating the transregional/global nature of the ARG/MEU and SOF.

Support to Joint Task Force Operations

But the highlight of the deployment was SOFLE support to Operation Octave Quartz, specifically Joint Task Force – Quartz staffed and commanded by Special Operations Command-Africa. The mission of Joint Task Force – Quartz was to relocate U.S. Department of Defense forces in Somalia to other East Africa operating locations while maintaining pressure on violent extremists and supporting partner forces.

This was the first time that the SOFLE was part of a joint task force that included a Joint Force Maritime Component Command comprised of the USS Makin Island, USS Hershel “Woody” Williams (ESB 4), and 15MEU, a Joint Special Operations Component Command, and a Joint Air Component Coordinating Element.

Standing up Joint Task Force – Quartz required the “building of the plane in flight.” The SOFLEs

relationship with the TSOC and placement with the ARG/MEU allowed for immediate information sharing.

“Before the ARG/MEU arrived in theater, the SOFLE team was the primary planning conduit for incorporating the ARG/MEU into Operation Octave Quartz. We slowly handed over primary planning duties to the MEU S-3 and ARG N-3 as we approached the chop line,” said Williams.

Having a SOFLE presence with the MEU made establishing key functional links significantly easier, specifically that the “MEU SOFLE’s familiarity with the ARG/MEU’s capabilities and SOCOM processes allowed for a more rapid integration of the MEU into the joint task force,” commented the Joint Task Force – Quartz operations officer.

The ARG/MEU SOFLE has demonstrated a small team – properly trained and equipped – can have tactical, operational, and strategic impact. Formalizing other efforts whose focus is to enable the joint force and

embody SOF Truth #5 - Most special operations require non-SOF support.

“The SOFLE has been an instrumental asset to the 15 MEU. The essential link between the ARG/MEU and TSOC provided by the SOLFE clearly demonstrates the inherent value of this program, which should be sustained for future MEUs,” said the 15 MEU commander.

The ARG/MEU SOFLE Program provided a unique experience normally not afforded to SOF aviator.

“The SOFLE deployment was an eye-opening experience. I had the opportunity to be the leader of a joint SOF team, and the only Air Force member, attached to a Marine unit aboard a Navy ship that conducted missions

in four geographic combatant commands,” said Williams. “This deployment allowed me the opportunity to view and participate in operations from a completely different angle than is the norm for an Air Force officer.”

The SOFLE has been an instrumental asset to the 15 MEU. The essential link between the ARG/MEU and TSOC provided by the SOLFE clearly demonstrates the inherent value of this program, which should be sustained for future MEUs.

— 15 MEU commander.



The amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island (LHD 8), flagship of the Amphibious Ready Group along with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit conduct operations in support of Operation Octave Quartz. The mission of OOQ is to relocate U.S. DOD forces in Somalia to other East Africa operating locations while maintaining pressure on violent extremists and supporting partner forces. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Jacob D. Bergh.



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S/MSG PVT USA 880125 MSG CPT USA 810120 SMO PVT USA 840922 MSG CPT USA 8
JANISRY WILLIAM C. HAYES ROBERT A. BRADMAN



U.S. Army
Staff Sgt. Paul L. Olmstead
19th Special Forces Group (Airborne)

Editor's note: Honored are those special operations forces who lost their lives in combat or training since the August 2021 issue of Tip of the Spear.

A U.S. Army Green Beret assigned to 10th Special Forces Group displays capabilities with Bulgarian Special Forces to Herro Mustafa, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Bulgaria, Aug. 26, 2021. Joint combined exchange training enhances interoperability with Partner Nations and strengthens military readiness, teamwork, and joint confidence while promoting peace and stability in Europe. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Devin J. Andrews.

