



Tip OF THE Spear

United States Special Operations Command
MacDill Air Force Base, Florida

October 2022



Naval Special Warfare divers train at altitude



United States Special Operations Command



Naval Special Warfare divers train at altitude ... 24

Tip of the Spear

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(Cover) Sailors assigned to various Naval Special Warfare commands operate a Diver Propulsion Device during high-altitude dive training. NSW is the nation's premiere maritime special operations force that extends the Fleet and Joint Force's reach for collection and lethality, delivers all domain options to undermine our enemies' confidence, and strengthens diplomatic leverage. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Alex Perlman.

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U.S. Special Operations Command - Africa



Special Operations Command Africa returns to annual Silent Warrior Senior Leader Symposium for security cooperation efforts

Conference themes focused on building resilience, regional coordination and the integration of women, peace, and security

**By U.S. Army Lt. Col. Colleen Krepstekies
Special Operations Command-Africa**

August 15 marked the in-person return of Silent Warrior, Special Operations Command Africa's annual senior leader symposium. The unclassified event hosted 20 African partner nation defense and Special Operations leaders as well as 13 western and other special operations country representatives. Senior leaders met to strategize about non-kinetic approaches to countering violent extremism.

"These partnerships and alliances are the foundation of defense and diplomatic engagements," said Rear Admiral Milton J. Sands, III, Special Operations Command Africa commander. "U.S. forces working with our partner nations reinforce our interoperability and dedication to uphold international values of human rights, representative government, and global economic interests."

This year's conference themes built upon the last in-person symposium held in 2019. It dove deeper into human

security, information related capabilities and the crime-terror nexus in Africa. Scene setters Dr. Linda Bishai, Institute for Defense Analyses and Tiffany Hudgins, U.S. Special Operations Command Integration of Women in SOF Program Advisor, opened the conference with a plenary discussion on how special operations forces can leverage the human aspects of security to better plan for and address conflict and insecurity. Keynote speaker Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs Chidi Blyden then dialed in virtually to speak about the new U.S. strategy in Africa and the importance of aligning security assistance with development and diplomatic efforts to promote security in the region.

The conference format combined more traditional panel discussions and small group discussions. The "innovations from the field" segments showcased models and approaches using viable and at-hand

tools ranging from effective social media messaging to leveraging combat camera.

Speakers also focused on illuminating the various factors that fuel violent extremism and expanded into the

U.S. forces working with our partner nations reinforce our interoperability and dedication to uphold international values of human rights, representative government, and global economic interests.

— Rear Admiral Milton J. Sands, III, Special Operations Command Africa commander

drivers of violent extremist organizations, including the role of governance. They shared that governance shortfalls inadequately addressing social, economic and security needs fuel conflict and VEO activity. Other panelists hailing from across academia and the Department of Defense spoke on topics from public mistrust of governments and climate change to other structural factors that contribute to insecurity.

The conference also focused on human-centric solutions to insecurity namely the DoD's Women, Peace and Security initiative. This initiative was interwoven into the daily agenda and highlighted several successful programs on the African continent.

"Silent Warrior '22 hosted the most women in leadership in Silent Warrior history with more than 25 women leaders joining from our African partner and Western partner nations and robust representation of women leaders at SOCAFRICA," said Faye Cuevas, SOCAFRICA deputy chief of staff and gender focal point. "Survey results from this year's Silent Warrior also showed a significant favorable shift over the course of the conference in attendees' opinions to include women in SOF at 78 percent. I think we made a strong case at this conference that women can and do play an important role in security based on the pilot programs already in place in Africa."

On day three of the symposium, Cuevas spoke on Team Lioness, the all-female clan-equitable engagement model piloted with the Kenya Wildlife Service that successfully expanded engagement and advanced trust with women in rural communities. The results included increased community-based reporting on illicit wildlife crime and identification of causal links to organized crime – a factor that drives instability.

"Silent Warrior, brings a variety of senior leaders and



Members of Silent Warrior 2022 hold a conference in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, Aug. 15, 2022. Silent Warrior 2022 is a Special Operations Command Africa directed forum with 37 nations gathered to focus on improving the security, resiliency and prosperity of Africa. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Sean Carnes.

experts together to discuss priorities of effort to not only fight extremism but to home in on the root causes of instability that feed VEOs," said Col. Gary Walenda, SOCAFRICA strategy, plans and policy director. "We accomplished that this week as we fostered relationships as a foundation for diverse teams and kick-started a more whole-of-community approach to fight instability."

Attendees regularly broke into smaller groups to work through notional scenarios designed with a purpose to enhance understanding of VEOs. Considerations included understanding VEO propaganda methods for creating and magnifying security threats and identifying what SOF tools can be leveraged to counter their effects. Facilitators posed questions to stir critical thinking among attendees who offered many community-centric options from engaging women and youth and leveraging different civil-military options. At key points, the groups looked for opportunities where SOF could integrate within countries and across regions to address shared threats.

On the final day, the countries delivered their collective out-briefs from the breakout sessions to the full conference. These small, group-driven solutions served to lay a framework for whole of government security cooperation efforts within each African partner nation.

"Several speakers highlighted the triad of diplomacy, development and defense reinforcing the necessity of collaboration as no single agency can tackle the complex problems on its own," Sands said. "But ultimately, we cannot and will not be successful without diversity in our force – that includes bringing in women along with representatives from organizations of all different backgrounds, experiences and mission sets."



Women from U.S. military and partner nations attend a Women in Leadership Lunch-In during Silent Warrior 2022 in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, August 17, 2022. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Sean Carnes.

U.S. Special Operations Command - Europe



Putting the “special” in “special relationship”: Green Berets train with Royal Marines

*By U.S. Navy Lt. Rob Kunzig
SOCEUR Public Affairs*

The United States and the United Kingdom have long enjoyed a “special relationship” - a phrase first coined by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in 1946 - defined by strong cultural, political and military ties. The U.S. Special Forces recently got a chance to deepen that relationship by training with British Royal Marines in Germany.

Green Berets from U.S. Army 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) teamed up with United Kingdom Royal Marines from 45 Commando for two weeks of training at Grafenwöhr Training Area. They focused on the art of

“direct action” raids, using speed, stealth and surprise to overcome the opposing force. By day, they planned and rehearsed missions at a secluded barracks tucked into a corner of the training grounds. When the sun set, they checked their weapons, strapped on their gear and mounted up in M1288 GMV 1.1s, a light utility vehicle bristling with mounted weapons.

While the missions varied night by night, they were all designed to test the ability of the Green Berets and the Royal Marine Commandos to work together under pressure. The Green Berets pride themselves as being “masters of the basics,” but when you’re fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with soldiers from another country, minute differences in tactics and techniques can create friction.



Members of 45 Commando Royal Marines, conduct Close Quarter Battle training at Grafenwöhr, Germany, Sept. 16, 2022. This special operations forces led exercise is designed to offer advanced combined tactics training in coordination with strengthening NATO Allies’ capabilities, information sharing, and defending against adversaries in the European Theater. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Brandon Julson.

Finding and solving these problems during training exercises means that, should a crisis occur, the Green Berets and Royal Marines will be able to seamlessly fight side by side.

“Early on, we figured out that they were a high-caliber fighting force,” said the Green Beret Master Sergeant running the training. “They’re highly motivated, tactically sound, and they’re in great shape.”

The exercise was just the latest in a string of training engagements designed to help the two forces build off each other’s strengths. Earlier this year, 45 Commando hosted the Green Berets in the rugged hills of Scotland, where the Americans endured the country’s famously foul weather while learning from the Marines’ mountain warfare experts. Later, the Green Berets joined 45 Commando in Bardufoss, Norway, where the Marines have honed their Arctic warfare skills for decades, developing tactics that allow them to thrive in the lethal conditions of the High North.

In Germany, it was the Green Berets’ turn to put the Marines through their paces. Each training mission was followed by an unsparing after-action review, with every aspect of the raid dissected and scrutinized. One Green Beret Master Sergeant reminded the U.S. and British soldiers that disciplined use of infrared lasers and flashlights would be important in actions against an adversary equipped with night vision optics. The Marines took the critique to heart, and during the following mission, they were able to sneak into the target buildings undetected.

“There’s an attitude of relentless self-improvement throughout their service,” the Master Sergeant said.

For the Royal Marines, direct action raids are a foundational part of their heritage. Established during World War II, the Commando groups pioneered the use of small units to strike targets deep behind enemy lines. The Commandos were so effective that in 1942, the Nazi high command issued the “Commando Order,” which mandated immediate execution for every commando captured.

Now, the Royal Marines are trying to shape their force into something resembling these daring teams. Through an intensive modernization effort called the Future Commando Force, the Marines are transforming their Commando units into small, technologically-advanced, operationally agile forces that can conduct special operations alongside their NATO peers.

“We’re kind of moving back to our origin,” said the Captain who led the Marine detachment at Grafenwohr. “It’s not about small teams taking on large enemies. It’s about small teams wreaking havoc and disruption for the enemy by attacking strategic soft targets.”

The Green Berets are ideal partners for this unconventional mission, the Captain said. Though they’ve



A U.S. Army Green Beret from 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) fires an M240 machine gun during a live-fire exercise with United Kingdom Royal Marines from 45 Commando at Grafenwöhr Training Area, Germany, Sept. 22, 2022. This Special Forces-led exercise is designed to improve their ability to work with the United Kingdom’s commando forces in a time of crisis. Photo by U.S. Navy Lt. Rob Kunzig.

mastered the art of the direct action raid, they’re also able to use cultural savvy to work their way through an increasingly complicated world. For the Marines, it’s not all about kicking in doors; indeed, the commando force of the future might need to conduct a raid deep behind enemy lines and then use diplomacy and guile to work their way back to friendly territory.

“It’s not just about brute force and violence of action,” the Captain said. “This is about intelligence and precision.”

It’s also about building relationships. At Grafenwöhr, the Green Berets and the Royal Marines shared an open-bay barracks that buzzed with banter and friendly ribbing. Every night, they gathered for a Marine tradition called “patching:” whoever committed the most embarrassing tactical faux pas during the day’s training had to wear a humorous patch. For one Marine, the patchable offense was banging his rifle against a metal handrail in a pitch-black house; for an American Special Forces soldier, it was failing to hurdle a fence in spectacular fashion.

Beneath the light mockery, there was an affection forged through weeks of hard work and shared adversity. These are the bonds that, in a time of crisis, could make all the difference.

“Working with Americans, there’s a confidence in each other that allows us to actually push ourselves,” the Captain said. “We’re genuinely out there growing and learning as a force.”

U.S. Special Operations Command - North



SOCNORTH augments Operation Noble Defender with SOF assets



Personnel from a West Coast-based Naval Special Warfare command set security after conducting an over-the-beach evolution during Operation Noble Defender. This Noble Defender operation allows SOF to train in the same terrain and environment where SOF must be able to operate. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Alex Smedegard.

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

Special Operations Command North took part in North American Aerospace Defense Command's Operation Noble Defender Sep. 12-27 in Northern Alaska and the Bering Sea.

The command stood up a Special Operations Command-Forward in Nome, Alaska, while Naval Special Warfare forces conducted operations on St. Lawrence Island, Alaska.

Throughout the operation, West Coast-based Naval Special Warfare operators conducted long-range movements, military free fall, over-the-beach infiltrations,

and exfiltration's, reconnaissance, air to ground integration and interoperability with the U.S. Coast Guard.

In addition, a Special Operations Surgical Team provided medical training and assistance, and the Alaska Army National guard delivered air transport support to the team.

Another integral partner to the operation is the Native Alaskan community, whom SOF learns from to operate in the harsh conditions in the constant changing weather of St. Lawrence Island.

Running operations in austere conditions expands the ability of special operations forces to rapidly deploy and demonstrate the capability to conduct full-spectrum special

operations to protect United States interests, both at home and abroad.

“Noble Defender provides SOF the opportunity to conduct irregular deterrence with partners in varying terrain and situations where we must be able to operate,” said Army Lt. Col. Patrick Collins, the SOC-FWD Commander and SOCNORTH Deputy of Operations.

NORAD routinely conducts Operation Noble Defender

as one of their sustained, dispersed operations in the defense of North America, through U. S. Northern Command’s three regions of Alaska, Canada, and the continental United States.

Training in the Arctic and near-Arctic allows SOCNORTH to demonstrate its resiliency and advance operational capabilities that are critical for irregular deterrence and layered defense to the United States.

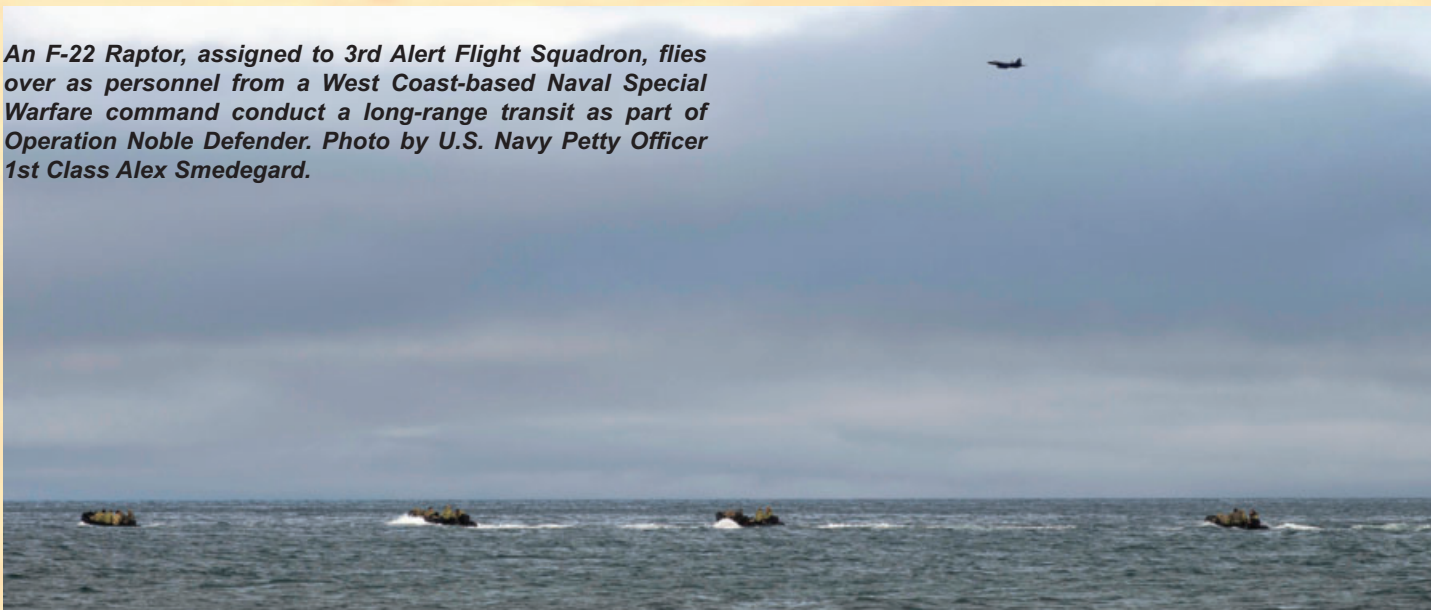


(Above) Personnel from a West Coast-based Naval Special Warfare command conduct an over-the-beach evolution during Operation Noble Defender. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Alex Smedegard.

(Right) A West Coast-based Naval Special Warfare command members operates an R80D SkyRaider drone during Operation Noble Defender. Sensors, artificial intelligence, and machine learning software capabilities coupled with the development of layered denial, deterrence, and defeat mechanisms capable of addressing current and emerging threats are fundamental to national defense. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Alex Smedegard.



An F-22 Raptor, assigned to 3rd Alert Flight Squadron, flies over as personnel from a West Coast-based Naval Special Warfare command conduct a long-range transit as part of Operation Noble Defender. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Alex Smedegard.



U.S. Special Operations Command - North



SOCNORTH hosts SOF in the North American Arctic Symposium

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

More than 200 military, U.S. government, academic, ally, and partner nation personnel traveled to Peterson Space Force Base, Colorado, Oct. 18 -20, for the inaugural symposium dedicated to special operations in the Arctic, developed and led by Special Operations Command North.

The SOCNORTH Arctic Symposium, titled “Special Operations in the Arctic: Countering Conventional & Asymmetric Threats” was executed over the course of three days and identified opportunities and challenges for the employment of special operations forces in the Arctic.

Day one established the commander’s intent for the symposium through senior leader remarks provided by

the North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command Commander, Senior Advisor to the Ted Steven’s Center for Arctic Security Studies, and the SOCNORTH Commander. It further provided a baseline of knowledge via a threat assessment, and various academic presentations which set the scene and established a base understanding of the current operating environment in the Arctic. On day two, a series of panels chaired by Arctic operators, logisticians, academics, and senior leaders identified gaps, points of friction, and lessons for further analysis. The final day consisted of break-out groups aligned with each of SOCNORTH’s vectors and focused upon specific problem sets. The symposium concluded with out-briefs on findings presented by the breakout groups to NORAD and USNORTHCOM, USSPACECOM, Ted Stevens Center, SOCNORTH leadership and other distinguished visitors in attendance.

“I encourage everyone to ask hard questions of our panelists, as well as during the breakout sessions. We must evolve our thinking together, and approach this discussion with a disruptive mindset,” said Brig. Gen. Shawn Satterfield, SOCNORTH Commander.

Some of the desired outcomes of the Symposium included: furthering relationships with the Arctic community of interest, identifying required capabilities and mission-essential tasks, developing Arctic exercise objectives and participants, drafting a SOF Arctic Core Activities framework, and discussion of SOF’s role in integrated deterrence.

The information gathered during the symposium will enable SOCNORTH to increase its knowledge and capabilities for future Arctic planning and activities in support of Homeland Defense.



Members of SOCNORTH and additional guest panelists take questions from Symposium attendees during the SOF in the Arctic Now and Then session, Oct 19, Peterson Space Force Base, Colorado. Photo by U.S. Army Maj. Daisy Bueno.

) Brig. Gen. Shawn Satterfield, Commander of Special Operations Command North, greets the attendees at the SOCNORTH Arctic Symposium, Oct. 18, Peterson Space Force Base, Colorado. Photo by U.S. Air Force MSgt. Benjamin Wiseman.



U.S. Special Operations Command - Pacific



CV-22 ops in the Pacific

Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) Airman Leah James, from Mobile, Alabama, assigned to the forward-deployed amphibious assault carrier USS America (LHA 6), signals a CV-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft from 21st Special Operations Squadron to take off from the ship's flight deck while sailing in the Pacific Ocean, Oct. 4, 2022. America, lead ship of the America Amphibious Ready Group, is operating in the 7th Fleet area of operations to enhance interoperability with allies and partners and serve as a ready-response force to defend peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Cole Pursley.



U.S. Army Special Operations Command

Army Special Operations Forces use Project Origin systems in latest Soldier experiment



*By Jerome Aliotta
CCDC Ground Vehicle Systems Center*

Army Green Berets from the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) conducted two weeks of hands-on experimentation with Project Origin unmanned systems at Dugway Proving Ground. Engineers from the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Ground Vehicle Systems Center were on site to collect data on how these soldiers utilized the systems and

what technology and behaviors are desired.

Project Origin vehicles are the evolution of multiple Soldier operational experiments. This GVSC-led rapid prototyping effort allows the Army to conduct technology and autonomous behavior integration for follow-on assessments with soldiers in order to better understand what soldiers need from unmanned systems.

For the two-week experiment, soldiers with the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) attended familiarization and new equipment training in order to



Army Green Berets from the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) conducted two weeks of hands-on experimentation with Project Origin unmanned systems at Dugway Proving Ground, Utah. Including Special Operations Forces into technology assessments provides more in-depth understanding of what is needed to mature unmanned systems for the Army's Operating Force. U.S. Army photo.

develop standard operating procedures for Robotic Combat Vehicles. The unit utilized these SOPs to conduct numerous mission-oriented exercises including multiple live-fire missions during the day and night.

The live-fire operations employed the M240 and M2 machine guns and the MK19 automatic grenade launcher.

“These live fire operations were critical to determining the military utility of the Robotic Combat Vehicle unmanned technology,” said Todd Willert, GVSC’s project manager for Project Origin. “The unit was successful with integrating the systems into their formation for both offensive and defensive operations.”

The Green Berets incorporated numerous Origin modular mission payloads to assist with long-range reconnaissance, concealment, electronic warfare, and autonomous resupply operations.

A senior medical sergeant with 1st Group said the modularity of payloads provides flexibility for use in a variety of mission sets: “The upscaling of capabilities for a direct heavy-weapon system gives us the advantage we’ve never had before in typical dismounted roles.”

Willert stated the inclusion of special operations forces into technology assessments provides more depth in understanding what is needed to mature unmanned systems for the Army’s Operating Force.

In addition, this experiment supports the continual development of the Army’s Robotic Technology Kernel—the Modular Open System Architecture-based library of software that can be used for ground autonomy—along with the Warfighter Machine Interface, the Army’s library of modular software used by soldiers to control robotic vehicles. This open systems architecture approach will enable common unmanned maneuver capabilities across the ground vehicle fleet.

“We are in the process of tailoring software packages to meet the needs of end users,” Willert said. “Autonomy—at various levels—offers great opportunities for different mission sets that improve Soldier safety and reduce cognitive burden. The professional and thoughtful comments from these Soldiers will greatly assist us with developing behaviors for future unmanned systems.”

The Group Detachment Commander added, “The robots are best employed to maximize the standoff between Soldiers and enemy threats.” He went on to say, “The Project Origin system, for any type of dismounted operations we conduct, would provide us increased capabilities to recognize and identify individuals on target from a much greater standoff while decreasing the risk to the force as our Soldiers



Army Green Berets from the 1st Special Forces Group conducted two weeks of hands-on experimentation with Project Origin unmanned systems at Dugway Proving Ground, Utah. U.S. Army photo by VIDS Corp.

accomplish their mission.”

Maj. Cory Wallace, the RCV Requirements Lead with the Next Generation Combat Vehicle Cross Functional Team, said “Working with an Operational Detachment Alpha enabled us to understand new use cases and consider new approaches to integrating robotic and autonomous systems into future experiments.

“The feedback from the operators gave us a completely new perspective as to how we need to shape our future development efforts in order to provide the most effective unmanned systems possible to Army formations,” Wallace said.

A senior weapons sergeant summed up the event by saying, “The Project Origin system allows us an ability to operate the system outside of enemy fire. This allows an ability to focus on advanced tasks such as terrain analysis, developing enemy courses of action, and thinking ahead of the now, rather than seeking cover and returning fire.”

U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Ground Vehicle Systems Center is part of the Army Futures Command, which leads the persistent modernization of the Army in order to provide future Warfighters with the concepts, capabilities, and organizational designs needed to dominate a future battlefield.

U.S. Army Special Operations Command



The Gray Zone: Green Berets intensify unconventional warfare tactics



A Special Forces soldier with 2nd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), scans for enemies from a Ground Mobility Vehicle turret on Fort Carson, Colorado, July 6, 2022. The 10th SFG(A) Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha conducted training missions to rehearse tactics, techniques, and procedures and standard operating procedures to enhance lethality. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Anthony Bryant.

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

Inside an abandoned base exchange on Peterson Space Force Base, a Special Forces detachment assigned to the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) awaits the arrival of a person of interest with intelligence that could lead to the kill or capture of a hostile target as part of an unconventional warfare training mission.

To maintain a low signature within a population where adversaries could lurk, the Operators are dressed in polo shirts and slacks, use mobile phones, and carry sidearms to remain indiscernible.

The person of interest arrives and after an exchange of pleasantries, it's down to business. While a duo of Operators asks the contact questions about the intended target's habits and whereabouts, their teammates monitor the area for threats.

From the stockroom of the abandoned store emerge



Special Forces soldiers with 2nd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), strap a simulated casualty to a litter during a medical evacuation training lane on Peterson Space Force Base, Colorado, July 6, 2022. The Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha conducted unconventional warfare training in preparation for future deployments. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Anthony Bryant. (This photo has been altered for security purposes.)

men armed with rifles who start shooting at the Special Forces team. The team's been found out by the enemy... This is not a warzone; however, this scenario is a potential reality in unconventional warfare.

From July 5 – 8, 2022, a Special Forces team assigned to 2nd Battalion, 10th SFG(A), conducted unconventional warfare and direct action training to prepare for future deployments.

“We have to think through problems we’ve never encountered before because when we come across these problems for the first time, we don’t want to be doing it for real,” said the 10th SFG(A) Special Forces team leader. “Raising your signature on the spectrum or if the enemy knows you’re there or not can greatly impact your mission and what you can accomplish; sometimes it’s life or death.”

A key task for Special Forces is conducting operations in the gray zone – an uncertain operational environment that falls between the traditional war and peace duality. Early understanding of emerging threats, especially in gray zones, is essential for developing national plans and policies that counter adversarial actions.

“If you’re low visibility with a little bit of scruff, you can blend inside those areas where you don’t need to raise attention to who you are,” the team leader

continued. “[Furthermore,] it makes us think about the vehicles we drive, where we’re going to put our IFAK (Improved First Aid Kit), Glock, and what kind of radios we’ll use.”

Wearing a combat uniform or using other materiel plainly identifies oneself as a Soldier, so a Green Beret will optimize their equipment to mitigate detection in denied, semi-permissive or permissive environments.

“In some battle spaces we rotate into, a conventional military presence isn’t desired,” said the 10th SFG(A) Special Forces team sergeant. “The ability to wear multiple levels of camouflage – from polo shirt to full assault rig – is necessary for certain missions.”

A Special Forces team sergeant supervises, instructs, and serves as the senior enlisted member on a detachment, and is responsible for each teammate’s adeptness at performing individual and collective tasks.

“Once [the team leader and I] give the team purpose, direction, and end state, that should be enough for maneuver elements to move independently,” the team sergeant said. “I want the maneuver leaders to know they’re in charge of their element and to make decisions themselves.”

Part of decision-making is owning up to an error, learning from it, and adjusting accordingly.

“What was most challenging was making a decision in the gray, and managing the second- and third-order effects for that split-second decision,” the team leader said. “We really tested the TTPs (tactics, techniques, and procedures) and SOPs (standard operating procedures) of the detachment, refined them, and built confidence in the fact that we can [quickly] go from low visibility operations to full-scale war.”



A Special Forces soldier with 2nd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), carries a simulated casualty during a medical evacuation training lane on Peterson Space Force Base, Colorado, July 6, 2022. The 10th SFG(A) Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha conducted unconventional warfare training in preparation for future deployments. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Anthony Bryant. (This photo has been altered for security purposes.)

1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) wreath-laying ceremony commemorates President John F. Kennedy's contributions to Army Special Forces



Soldiers from the 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) support a wreath-laying ceremony at the gravesite of President John F. Kennedy in Section 45 of Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia, Sept. 27, 2022. This ceremony is held yearly to commemorate President Kennedy's contributions to the U.S. Army Special Forces, including authorizing the "Green Beret" as the official headgear for all U.S. Army Special Forces and his uncompromising support to the regiment. Photo by Elizabeth Fraser.



AIRBORNE

Naval Special Warfare Command

U.S. Naval Special Warfare establishes Assessment Command



*By U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Alex Perlman
Naval Special Warfare Command*

U.S. Naval Special Warfare Command established Naval Special Warfare Assessment Command (NSWAC) under the Naval Special Warfare Center during an Aug. 18, 2022 ceremony at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado.

NSWAC substantively transforms the Navy's commando force in its ability to compete for talent capable of solving the hardest problems from the maritime domain. It proactively engages diversity in all forms and enrolls future candidates who possess the Force's standards and ethos. This new command accelerates the ways the Force continuously assesses and selects for the character, cognitive and leadership attributes necessary for the highest complexity and risk maritime operations mission to expand national leverage and deterrence options- and win if deterrence fails.

During the ceremony, Cmdr. Aaron Brown, a Navy Special Warfare Officer, assumed command. Rear Adm. H.W. Howard, III, commander, U.S. Naval Special Warfare Command, was the presiding officer of the establishment ceremony.

"Across the spectrum of warfare, the United States and its allies face new challenges and threats. The complexity of the strategic and operating environments demand we evolve quickly and creatively," said Howard. "We're aggressively seeking edge in human capital and technology to expand the margins between mission success and failure. The Assessment Command is at the forefront of our urgent initiatives to deliver the step changes in capability and professionalism across the Force. Modernizing approaches to recruitment, assessment, selection, and training underpin our transformations to be ready for the uncertainties ahead."

Attendees for the event included commander, Special Operations Command, Gen. Richard Clarke; Vice Chief



Cdr. Aaron Brown, commanding officer, Naval Special Warfare Assessment Command (NSWAC), salutes as he is piped aboard the Naval Special Warfare Command quarterdeck during the NSWAC establishment ceremony Aug. 18, 2022.. NSWAC conducts outreach, assessment, selection, and development of future and current Naval Special Warfare operators. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Benjamin K. Kittleson.

of Naval Operations, Adm. Bill Lescher; Chief of Naval Personnel, Vice Adm. Richard Cheeseman; Deputy Commander, Navy Education and Training Command, Rear Adm. Scott Ruston; Commander, Navy Recruiting Command, Rear Adm. Alexis Walker; and the incoming commander of U. S. Naval Special Warfare Command, Rear Adm. Keith Davids.

According to Howard, Naval Special Warfare

initiated this effort in the Fall of 2020 to build the sustainable architecture for diversified outreach, more rigorous pre-assessments for character, cognitive and leadership attributes across the Assessment and Selection pathway and implement the innovative initiatives that strengthen continuous assessment across the continuum of a Naval Special Warfare.

Howard also noted how the Assessment Command conducts outreach and enrollment opportunities across the United States to proactively engage under-represented demographics and geographic areas in the Force.

“The Assessment Command will identify, engage and enroll the next generation of candidates we need to solve the hardest problems from – on – and under the sea,” said Howard. In partnership with CNRC, the Assessment Command will lead candidate assessment programs that deepen our force’s diversity and capabilities.”

According to Capt. Brian Dreschler, commanding officer, NSWAC, over the past year as the team deliberately iterated to build this new command, the team conducted 60 outreach events partnered with local Navy Talent and Acquisition Groups (NTAGs). More than half of the outreach events were specifically focused on increasing Force diversity and inclusivity, with under-represented demographics.

“The Assessment Command is a mission imperative for the Force’s relevance, survivability and lethality to contribute in irregular ways to Integrated Deterrence options,” said Capt. Brian Dreschler, the commanding officer of NSWAC. “Not only are we adapting the way we assess and select our potential candidates, but we are also evolving the assessment and selection of our leadership, officer and enlisted, at all levels of command. The Assessment Command is also charged with learning from the Joint Force, allies and partners, and from private sector innovations to reinforce our culture of continuous assessment – the candid assessments for feedback, self-improvement, and optimal leadership and team formation decisions.”

One of NSWAC’s assessment programs is Naval Special Warfare Leader Assessment Program (NLAP). Enhancing NSW’s culture of continuous assessment, NLAP evaluates and selects NSW operators at every level. During NLAP, operators participate in purpose-filled events to select for officer and enlisted career milestones. Through feedback from peers, leaders, and subordinates, NLAP assesses an operator’s leadership, character, physical, and mental attributes. According to Brown, this program ensures NSW places the right leaders in the right assignments, while offering critical

professional development to guide the force into the future.

“I’m humbled to assume command of this mission imperative,” said Brown. “With this high-performing team of professionals, we will strengthen the precision of candidate identification, assessment, selection, enrollment, training, and development.”

NSWAC is headquartered at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado in Coronado, California with a detachment in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Alongside Basic Training Command and Advanced Training Command, NSWAC will be a subordinate command to NSWACEN.

“With the establishment of the Assessment Command we are in position to compete for talent and more rigorously assess, select, train and retain men and women who embody the courage, integrity, humility, creativity, team-ability, creativity and grit that expand competitive edge to remain the Nation’s preeminent maritime special operations force,” Howard said.

NSWACEN provides initial assessment and selection and subsequent advanced training to the Sailors who make up the Navy’s SEAL and Special Boat operational formations. The Naval Special Warfare mission is to provide maritime special operations forces to conduct full-spectrum operations, unilaterally or with partners, to support national objectives. For more information on the NSW assessment, selection, and training pathways, visit <https://www.sealswcc.com/>.



Rear Adm. Hugh Howard III, commander, Naval Special Warfare Command, addresses the crowd at the establishment ceremony for Naval Special Warfare Assessment Command Aug 18, 2022. NSWAC conducts outreach, assessment, selection, and development of future and current Naval Special Warfare operators. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Benjamin K. Kittleson.

Naval Special Warfare Command



Naval Special Warfare Command holds change of command ceremony

*By U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Destiny Cheek
Naval Special Warfare Command*

Rear Adm. Keith B. Davids relieved Rear Adm. H.W. Howard III as commander, Naval Special Warfare Command during a change of command ceremony at Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado, Aug. 19.

Gen. Richard D. Clarke, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, was the presiding officer and guest speaker of the ceremony. In his remarks, Clarke praised Howard's leadership and mission focus for Naval Special Warfare to be ready for greater complexity and risk – and deliver the substantive and transformational changes for relevance to the Joint Force and Navy Fleets, survivability, and lethality in defense of the Nation.

“Wyman, you've led during a historic two years and you've set this command on an amazing trajectory,” said Clarke. “Over the past year alone, I've visited SEAL teams operating in the Arctic with European partners, and I just recently returned from seeing SEALs in the Indo-Pacific. Over the past two years, Naval Special Warfare Command has continued to experiment in the maritime domain, whether that's with autonomous capabilities, undersea dominance, or many other aspects. You have transformed the elite capabilities within this command by taking them to a new level.”

“As the Naval Special Warfare community returns to prioritize the maritime special operations missions that extend Joint Force reach into denied areas, Howard has unequivocally accelerated the strategic trajectory of our premier maritime special operations force to help our Nation compete and win against any adversary,” Clarke said. “Through his leadership, creativity, and dedication to solving the Nation's hardest problems, Naval Special Warfare is ready to hold our adversaries and their critical military capabilities at risk. He has done this through an aggressive commitment to modernize the way and means the force assesses, selects, trains, and deploys the best



Rear Adm. Hugh W. Howard III commander, Naval Special Warfare Command, speaks before being relieved by Rear Adm. Keith Davids during a change of command ceremony at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado. NSW is the nation's premiere maritime special operations force that extends the Fleet and Joint Force's reach for collection and lethality, delivers all domain options to undermine our enemies' confidence, and strengthens diplomatic leverage. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Keypher Strombeck.

Naval Commandos ever.”

Howard assumed command of Naval Special Warfare Command in September 2020. He focused on strengthening the force and Naval Special Warfare families, commissioning several new component commands, and implementing a culture and sustainable architecture for concept development, experimentation and continuous assessment and development.

“When I had the privilege to assume command of this incredible team, we challenged ourselves with a deliberate, comprehensive, and urgent transformation to meet new threats and create the irregular warfare options that strengthen national leverage and amplify the

Nation's integrated deterrence options," said Howard. "In the imperative to innovate for military advantage and edge at this geo-strategic inflection point, I'm extremely proud of our team, an enrolled and committed team, whose professionalism, capability, integrity, trust, candor and common purpose makes real the new and distinctive missions that only we can do—under, on, and above the sea."

The ceremony marks the end of a two-year command tour for Howard, who graduated from Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL Assessment, Selection and Training with Class 172. He commanded at all operational and component levels of Special Operations, including service as commanding officer of Naval Special Warfare Development Group from 2011-2013 and Special Operation Command Central from 2018-2020. He has multiple tours in command of Joint Task Forces and was among the first to deploy to Afghanistan following the attacks of September 11, 2001.

"I am humbled to have served with our Nation's finest warriors, some of whom made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our great Nation," said Howard. "To our Gold Star families, for their sacrifice, a sacrifice too few understand or comprehend, it is your resilience and sacrifice that leads us and underpins our foundation of honor, courage, and commitment. We will continue to honor you and our Fallen Teammates with our deeds and our actions."

Although he was not able to attend in-person, Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Mike Gilday, recently thanked Howard for his service and commended him for creating a culture and mindset amongst the Naval Special Warfare community that continuously self-assesses, corrects, and innovates.

"Naval Special Warfare continues to improve its lethality and warfighting readiness every day," said Gilday. "Howard has been a vanguard for pushing his teammates to be more self-assessing and more self-correcting and while doing so has accelerated our Navy's competitive edge and maintained our Naval Special Warfare community's elite reputation as the world's premier maritime special operations professionals."

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve with the professionals in our armed forces and alongside our allies and partners," said Howard. "This incredible community of warriors, leaders, and families is a timeless and authentic team; a team that is never intoxicated by success, never hides from failure, is never defeated in loss. Naval Special Warfare is a team always on mission, always resilient, always accountable, with humility and stewardship, for every outcome in defense of our Nation and in service of all Americans. The Deed is All – Not the Glory."

Davids, a native of Miami, and 1990 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, most recently served as commander, Special Operations Command South, Homestead Air Reserve Base, Florida.

Davids expressed his gratitude to the Naval Special Warfare Command staff for a first-class turnover week and change of command ceremony, thanked his family for their unwavering love and support, and praised Howard for his warfighting vision and leaving him a strong and professional Force.

"Wyman has aggressively transformed Naval Special Warfare for the step changes in capability and resourcing to stay ahead of our adversaries," Davids said at the ceremony. "The global threats we face will continue to call on the full extent of our commitment, our creativity, and our adaptability. We will build on the course that Admiral Howard has set for this community."

Over 10,000 strong, Naval Special Warfare includes approximately 3,000 Sea, Air, Land operators; 700 Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen; 4,600 combat support and combat service support personnel, 700 reservists and 1,200 civilian teammates.

Naval Special Warfare is committed to its Sailors and the deliberate development of their tactical excellence, ethics, and leadership as the Nation's premiere maritime special operations force fully aligned in support of the National Defense Strategy. Naval Special Warfare is the Navy's special operation force and the maritime component of U.S. Special Operations Command, and its mission is to provide maritime special operations forces to conduct full-spectrum operations, unilaterally or with partners, to support national objectives.



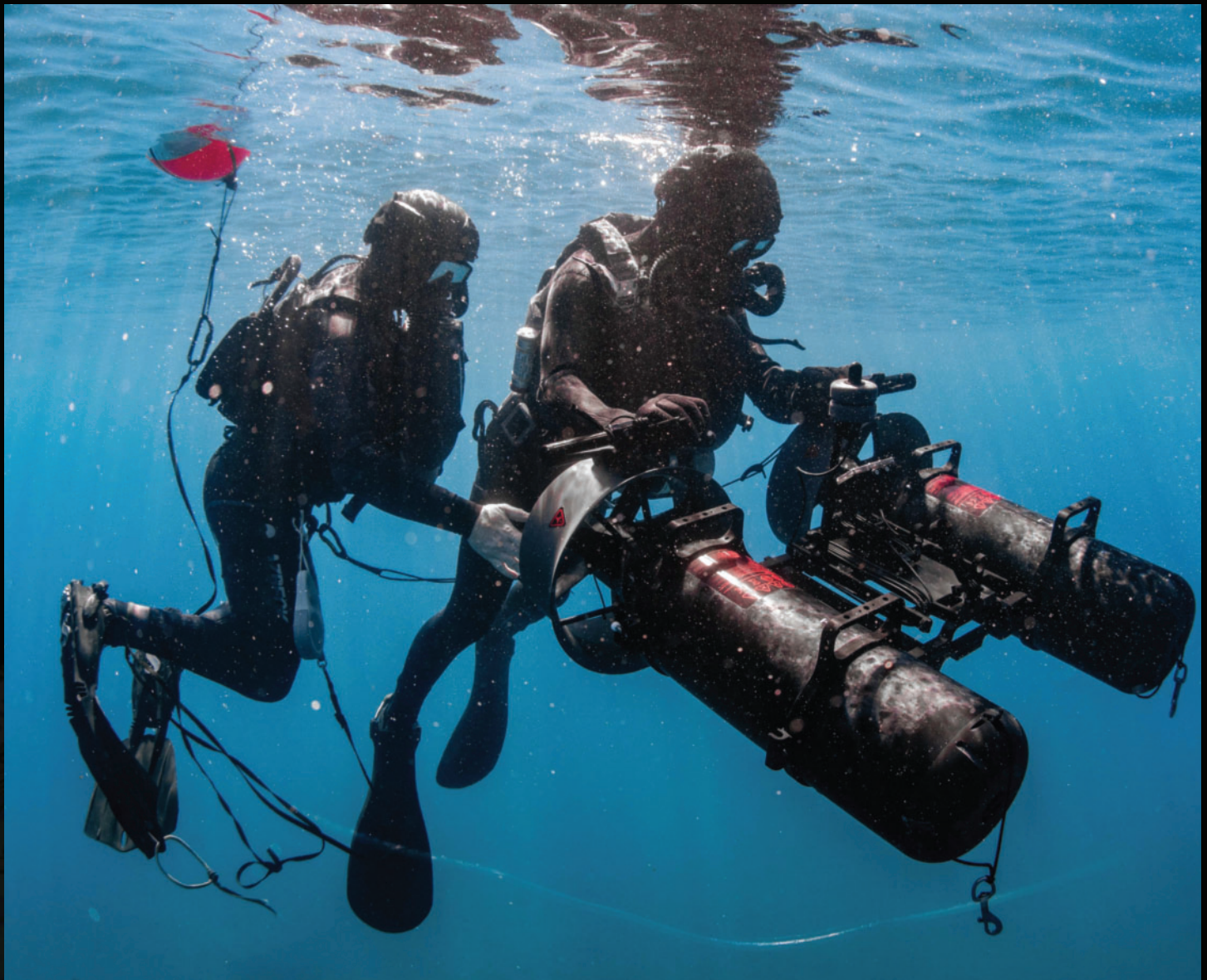
Rear Adm. Keith Davids speaks after relieving Rear Adm. Hugh W. Howard III as commander, Naval Special Warfare Command, during a change of command ceremony at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Keypher Strombeck.

Naval Special Warfare Command

Naval Special Warfare divers train at altitude



Sailors assigned to various Naval Special Warfare commands operate a Diver Propulsion Device during high-altitude dive training. NSW is the nation's premiere maritime special operations force that extends the Fleet and Joint Force's reach for collection and lethality, delivers all domain options to undermine our enemies' confidence, and strengthens diplomatic leverage. Photos by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Alex Perlman.





Air Force Special Operations Command



Draco crew excels despite adversity in Afghanistan withdrawal

*By U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Dylan Gentile
919th Special Operations Wing*

Garbage and signs of carnage lined the runway of Kabul International Airport days after the Afghan government's collapse. American forces and their allies were dispersed across the airfield attempting to maintain security as the remaining troops made their way back home. Intermittent gunfire signified the last gasps of the dissipating governmental order while refugees crowd the tarmac to escape the ensuing chaos.

Amidst all of the movement, a U-28A Draco crew from Hurlburt Field, Florida, circled above the airfield relaying information to friendly forces regarding the situation on the ground. When one Draco lands, another one went up to maintain constant surveillance as enemy forces infiltrated the crowds and the airport.

One Draco aircrew consisted of Lt. Col. Scott Hardman, 5th Special Operations Squadron pilot and aircraft commander, Senior Airman Max Sohlberg, 25th Intelligence Squadron intelligence specialist, Capt. Pedro Barrientes, 319th Special Operations Squadron copilot, and Capt. James Ryan, 319th SOS combat systems officer.

On Aug. 16, 2021, Hardman and his crew unexpectedly woke up at 2 a.m. to relieve another Draco team while the situation on the ground in Afghanistan deteriorated. They drove to the tarmac while gunfire rang out on all sides of the airport. The crew started the aircraft's engine and Hardman taxied through the aftermath of recent attacks.

"There was pretty much no one controlling the airfield anymore," said Hardman. "I think the urgency of trying to get airborne and support the guys on the ground kind of outweighed any nervousness we had."

Insurgents fired on the Draco while they accelerated efforts to climb to altitude. The crew persevered with



From left, Senior Airman Max Sohlberg, 25th Intelligence Squadron intelligence specialist, Capt. James Ryan, 319th Special Operations Squadron combat systems officer, Lt. Col. Scott Hardman, 5th Special Operations Squadron pilot, and Capt. Pedro Barrientes, 319th SOS pilot, stop for a photo in front of a U-28 Draco aircraft at Hurlburt Field, Florida, Sept. 2, 2022. The Airmen were aircrew for a U-28 Draco surveilling the security situation at Kabul International Airport during the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Dylan Gentile.

their assigned tasks while cautiously aware of the bullets that were passing ever close to the airframe. Meanwhile, they ensured their video feeds had the highest resolution and began passing crucial information to command centers below them enabling senior leaders to oversee the operation.

"I was pretty confident we were out of small-arms range," said Hardman. "[The takeoff] was a little bit nonstandard, but the guys on this crew demonstrated why they are true professionals."

As countless unidentified personnel were flooding the airfield, Barrientes focused his efforts on locating

penetration points of armed combatants so coalition forces on the ground could take action as appropriate.

“It was definitely trial and error as we [worked] to try and deter more people from running onto the runway,” said Hardman. “At the same time, some of our technology is easily visible from the ground so it makes you an easy target to shoot.”

U.S. Marines on the ground reported to the crew that they were receiving fire from an overrun air traffic control tower. Barrientes worked feverishly to assist ground forces by leveraging the Draco’s array of capabilities while Ryan monitored the exit points on the Kabul airfield and continued sharing data with coalition forces.

Shortly after sunrise, the number of people on the tarmac reached a breaking point as friendly forces struggled to maintain order. The Draco crew opted to stay in the air despite having dangerously low fuel to help allied forces form a new perimeter around the military side of the airport.

“All the people pouring into the airfield looked like a giant black blob taking over empty space,” said Barrientes. “We knew we’d have to land soon or we wouldn’t have a [functioning] runway.”

Another Draco crew on the ground preparing to relieve them had to abort their taxi and takeoff as a mob swarmed the airframe. They chose to shut the propeller down to avoid critically injuring civilians.

Hardman and his crew switched their focus to coordinating ground forces to clear the area around the grounded Draco as their own aircraft was further depleting its remaining limited fuel. Ryan used on-board technology to stay engaged with the Draco crew on the ground while Sohlberg fed information to and requested assistance from outside agencies.

“Everyone went into problem solving mode,” said Barrientes. “There was that feeling where your heart sinks for a moment but then we sprang into action.”

The Draco crew’s below-emergency-fuel level forced them to navigate a precarious landing. Hardman prepared the aircraft to land on a taxiway with fewer obstructions, but with seconds to spare and the help of Barrientes, found an opening in the mass of people on the runway.

“We had to make an incredibly steep landing to make it into the small opening to get the aircraft on the ground,” said Hardman.

He switched courses, made a successful landing and began to taxi the Draco to the hangar. The crew then noticed the swarm of people running towards the aircraft. Hardman put the plane in park and turned off the propeller to avoid injuring civilians. He and Sohlberg braced the door while Ryan monitored the wave outside

and Barrientes coordinated with security forces.

“There was this giant mass of people coming from every direction, the crowd was so dense you couldn’t even tell it was people,” said Barrientes. “They all wanted to get on this plane and get out of there.”

An AH-64 Apache helicopter hovered just feet above the crowd in an unsuccessful attempt to dissipate them. A group of trucks then surrounded the aircraft and used flash grenades to push the mob back, which created a hole for Hardman and his crew to take up arms and escape on foot.

He led the crew to safety in a nearby hangar, ending what they called “the most precarious day in U-28 history.” The crowds overran the Draco hangar and aircraft, which friendly forces immediately recovered.

Hardman received the Aviator Valor Award in recognition of his exemplary actions leading his team to safety. The award, which is sponsored by the American Legion, is presented to a rated Air Force officer for an act of valor or courage performed during aerial flight.

“I think the award was more of a testament to how every guy in my crew handled themselves on the aircraft,” said Hardman. “It required input from the entire aircrew to make safe and informed decisions. It’s never a one man show on any of our missions regardless of whether it’s a benign or a difficult one.”



Crowds fill the tarmac while coalition forces form a security perimeter around the runway at Kabul International Airport, Afghanistan, Aug. 16, 2021. Once airborne, aircrew assigned to the U-28A Draco provided surveillance and reconnaissance of the ground situation at the airport during the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. Photo courtesy of U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Scott Hardman.

Air Force Special Operations Command



From the “AFSOC we have” to the “AFSOC we need”

By Air Force Special Operations Command Public Affairs

This month, Air Force Special Operations Command, AFSOC, is transitioning the way Air Force Special Operations Forces, AFSOF, present to the joint force.

Following September 11, 2001, AFSOC’s force presentation focused heavily on providing crisis response capabilities and countering violent extremist organizations, or CVEO, through the Joint Special Operations Air Component, or JSOAC, deployment model.

This model, while historically successful in

conducting crisis response and countering violent extremist organizations during more enduring operations, does not provide the necessary attributes required to succeed in the new operational environment.

AFSOC’s focus on C-VEO and crisis response has evolved to also include campaigning in the gray zone, employing SOF-peculiar capabilities, and developing and advancing relations with our international partners and allies.

“While the JSOAC model was effective for conducting command and control, or C2, of SOF air assets in recurring fixed deployment locations, the JSOAC was manned through an individual augmentee approach that didn’t properly allow commanders and



U.S. Air Force Special Tactics operators with the 24th Special Operations Wing, Hurlburt Field, Florida, prepare to conduct a military free fall parachute jump during Emerald Warrior 22.1 near Eglin Range, Florida, May 5, 2022. Emerald Warrior is the largest joint special operations exercise involving U.S. Special Operations Command forces training for response to various threats above and below the threshold of armed conflict, while focusing on U.S. and partner nation relationships and emphasized joint force interoperability. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Ridge Shan.

staff to train, certify and deploy specifically for their deployed mission,” said Maj. Gen. Wolfe Davidson, AFSOC deputy commander. “The JSOAC was not trained or equipped to conduct the joint warfighting functions necessary for effective and adequate mission command. We had to take a look at how we were presenting forces and ask ourselves, ‘Does this look right?’ And if it doesn’t, what does?”

Enter the Special Operations Task Group, or SOTG.

“This change in how we present forces is transformative and drastically enhances AFSOC’s ability to present options to compete with and deter our adversaries below the threshold of armed conflict and add more strategic options for our nation’s leaders,” said Davidson.

Adhering to the U.S. Special Operations Command Comprehensive review, as well as Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. CQ Brown Jr.’s, “Accelerate Change or Lose” priorities, these squadron-based, task-focused groups take a significantly different approach than their JSOAC predecessors in a variety of ways.

While deployed, the JSOAC previously provided impromptu support on an “as needed basis.” The SOTG, unlike the JSOAC, will instead offer forces designed uniquely for each mission.

Additionally, the JSOACs provided operational staffs who relied on spontaneous manning that didn’t train or prepare teams for deployments whereas the SOTGs are tactical units that are manned through the force generation cycle, meaning Air Commandos are training together as they prepare for deployments.

“This new construct will allow us to not only accurately articulate our forces but will also enable us to deliberately develop a more credible, capable, and precise force with these purpose-built teams.” said Lt. Col. James Caldwell, AFSOC C2 Implementation Planning Team lead. “Airmen and their families will have much more predictability regarding deployments and the training that’s required before deploying.”

This predictability is due to the design of force generation model, which consists of four, 150-day phases – individual training, unit training, collective training and validation, and the deployment phase. Commanders will also have more deliberate oversight



Members with the 27th Special Operations Wing Mission Sustainment Team Detachment 1 construct a tent during exercise Emerald Warrior 22.1 in Smyrna, Tennessee, May 5, 2022. The MST establishes forward-operating bases by providing initial site security, receiving cargo and personnel, and setting up shelter. Photo by U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Rachel L. VanZale.

on deployment preparations which ultimately will increase mission success and drive down the risk to mission.

In addition to this predictability, this new structure of force presentation will enable commanders to more effectively accomplish mission command, which is key as the operational environment continues to shift.

The SOTG at its core, will be a squadron-based, O-5-led unit that will focus primarily on integrating multi-domain SOF air power into joint operations. Once forward, the SOTG will command flight-based echelons called Special Operations Task Units, or SOTUs. Each SOTU will have a unique capability tailored to that AORs requirement. These units may offer but are not limited to AC-130J, MC-130H, Special Tactics, U-28 or even agile combat support.

“This restructure will bring us in alignment with how all other SOF tactical units present forces,” said Lt. Col. Shawnee Williams, AFSOC C2 Implementation Planning Team lead. “It also ensures that AFSOFs unique multi-domain contributions give the Joint SOF community a competitive advantage.

With the first SOTG set to replace a JSOAC this month, the offerings of SOTG capabilities will likely evolve, as they’re structured to support Theater Special Operations Command’s tailored needs in their respective area of responsibilities.

Air Force Special Operations Command



Osprey recovered in Norway



A U.S. Air Force CV-22B Osprey, assigned to the 352nd Special Operations Wing, is hoisted off of a sea barge and placed on a semi-trailer to be hauled to a nearby Norwegian military base, Norway, Sept. 27, 2022. The Osprey experienced an in-flight emergency nearly six weeks prior, requiring the pilots to land the aircraft immediately on the coast of an island. After it was determined to be un-repairable at the site, plans went into motion to recover the Osprey by sea barge. Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Westin Warburton.

*By U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Westin Warburton
352nd Special Operations Wing Public Affairs*

While participating in a training exercise in Norway, a CV-22B Osprey experienced an in-flight emergency, requiring the pilots to land immediately. After six weeks of being grounded on the island of Senja, the 352nd Special Operations Wing's Osprey was recovered via crane barge, Sept. 27, 2022.

The aircraft is now at a Norwegian military base where 752nd Special Operations Aircraft Maintenance Squadron maintainers will perform repairs to get the aircraft flying once again.

The Norwegian Armed Forces, along with the Norwegian Environmental Protection Office, developed the plans for recovering the Osprey in concurrence with the U.S. Air Force.

"It [was very] demanding," said Royal Norwegian Air Force Command Sergeant Major Odd Helge Wang. "The challenge [was how] shallow [the area was], and

the machine weighs 20 tons."

Many obstacles stood in the team's way to recovering the CV-22, including weather delays and the more sensitive hurdle of preventing damage to the local fauna.

"[We've brought] 430 tons of equipment in to carry this out, so there will be some wear and tear," Wang said. "We have tried to do everything as gently as possible."

Now nestled in a military hangar, the maintenance crews will work to repair the aircraft so it may fly again. When accomplished, the Osprey will return to its home station in the United Kingdom.

"I'm so impressed by all parties involved who came together to make this recovery operation a success," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Jeffrey Westerman, recovery mission commander for the 352nd Special Operations Wing. "This monumental operation wouldn't have been possible without the hard work and dedication from our allies and our Air Commandos, and we are immensely grateful for everything the Norwegians have provided our team during the past weeks."

A U.S. Air Force CV-22B Osprey, assigned to the 352nd Special Operations Wing, is hauled to a nearby Norwegian military base, Norway, Sept. 27, 2022. The Osprey experienced an in-flight emergency nearly six weeks prior, requiring the pilots to land the aircraft immediately on the coast of an island. After it was determined to be unrepairable at the site, plans went into motion to recover the Osprey by sea barge. Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Westin Warburton.



A 413th Flight Test Squadron UH-1 Huey hovers as a 492nd Special Operations Wing Airman gets into the hoist device in the waters near Eglin Air Force Base, Florida Aug. 16, 2022. The 413th FLTS, the Air Force's only rotary wing developmental test unit, provided an extra bit of realism to the survival, evasion, resistance and escape training letting the Airmen experience the feeling of a real water rescue. Photo Samuel King Jr.



Air Force Special Operations Command



Sea 2 Sky: test, special ops units combine for water survival training

By Samuel King Jr.

Air Force Special Operations Command

The 96th Test Wing and the 492nd Special Operations Wing came together Aug. 16 to provide realistic hands-on training that met each unit's unique objectives.

The 96th TW's rotary-wing developmental test squadron, the 413th Flight Test Squadron, conducted hoist training in the squadron's UH-1 Huey. The 492nd SOW's Airmen received water rescue experience as part of the Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape training.

This combination was only the second time the units utilized their resources to accomplish training goals.

The UH-1 Huey crews regularly practice non-live hoists for currency. The live hoists, however, add realism to the training as it forces the pilots to hold a stable hover to maintain precise position over the team, while managing wind gusts and strong currents in the waters below. It also allows them to feel the weight shift in the

aircraft when there is an actual person on the hoist.

For the special mission aviators within the helicopter, it creates more difficult power calculations and planning and allows them to practice coordination with the ground team. They also have to maintain physical control of the hoist cable in more challenging conditions.

Besides testing, one of the UH-1's mission sets here is search and rescue. The real-life scenario creates highly applicable training for potential real world situations.

For the special operators in the water, the hoist provides an experience of what a real water rescue could be like. For most, it will be their first time experiencing that sensation as the water rescue portion of the training is usually simulated due to timing, availability and access to a helicopter.

Water survival is only a portion of SERE training that specific Air Force career field must accomplish every three years. Combat Aviation Advisors and nonstandard aviation aircrew made up the class that received the training here.



A Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape student from the 492nd Special Operations Wing leaps into the waters near Eglin Air Force Base, Florida Aug. 16, 2022. The Airmen completed their water survival portion of SERE training with the help of the 413th Flight Test Squadron's UH-1 Huey's hoist system. The UH-1 lifted each student out of the water hoisting them to the bottom of the aircraft and back down. Photo by Samuel King Jr.

Marine Forces, Special Operations Command



Critical Skills Operators exercise in Surabaya, Indonesia

Indonesian Komando Pasukan Katak and U.S. Marine Critical Skills Operators maneuver towards an anchored ship while conducting vessel board, search, and seizure training in Surabaya, Indonesia, Aug. 20, 2022. The combined VBSS event provided advanced training in boarding and clearing a ship with simulated enemy forces and hostages onboard. Through these engagements, U.S. special operations forces build our collective strength and interoperability alongside Indonesian forces, enabling teams to provide flexible responses to contingencies and supporting a strong U.S.-Indonesian partnership. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Luke Cohen.





Headquarters - U.S Special Operations Command Former CSEL becomes only the fourth Air Force enlisted member to receive the Distinguished Service Medal



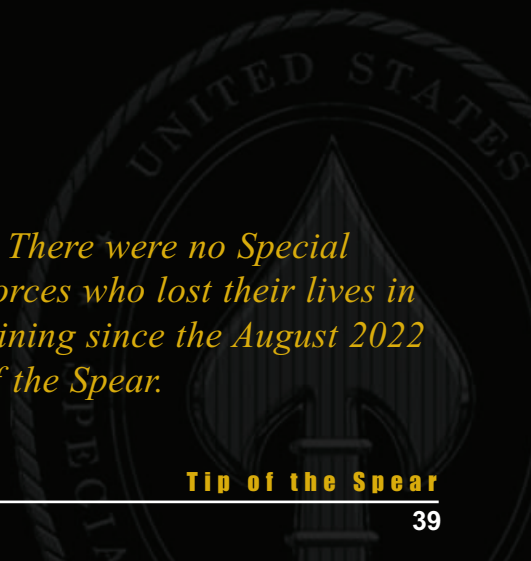
Former Command Senior Enlisted Leader retired Chief Master Sgt. Greg Smith was presented the Distinguished Service Medal from USSOCOM Commander Gen. Bryan Fenton Oct. 18, 2022. Smith is only the fourth Air Force enlisted member to receive this medal with the other three going to Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force. This decoration, established by Congress on July 9, 1918, is awarded to members for exceptionally meritorious service in a duty of great responsibility. Photos by Michael Bottoms.







GILBERT ALANIZ JR. PVT USA 840125 RALPH L. THOMPSON SGT USA 810126 WESLEY B. ALDRIDGE SGT USA 840527 ALAN C. BAY SGT USA 840125
VANCEY WILLIAM C. HAYES ROBERT A. BRANNAN



Editor's note: There were no Special Operations Forces who lost their lives in combat or training since the August 2022 issue of Tip of the Spear.



U.S. Special Operations Command Pacific team members prepare to execute a static line airborne drop above a designated drop zone at Schofield Barracks, Oahu, Hawaii, Sept. 13, 2022. U.S. special operations forces maintain proficiency in completing static line and high altitude free fall airborne jumps. SOCPAC serves as the functional component for all special operations missions deployed throughout the Indo-Pacific region. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Joey Rolfe.