

SOCCENT Culture Statement

1. Introduction: SOCCENT culture is characterized by the shared attitudes, values, heritage, traditions, beliefs, and practices that exist within our organization. Our culture statement helps define who we are, who we want to be, how we treat each other, how we run our organization, and how we serve our nation. It is shaped collectively through our past; by the unique perspectives brought daily by each of our team members, and by the values and decisions of former leaders that continue to influence and inspire our organization to this day. While our past is important, so is our future. It is imperative that our culture adapt as our organization and vision evolves. Our culture is unique and distinct from other TSOCs and Special Operations Forces (SOF) organizations due to the nature of our mission and responsibilities at SOCCENT, our AOR and our adversaries.

2. Our Organization: Our organization is a joint SOF warfighting HQs. We are a sub-unified command that plans, prepares, and conducts special operations 24/7 in the CENTCOM AOR. We work with the U.S. government interagency, allies, regional partners and other individuals to employ SOF capabilities and expertise utilizing an irregular warfare approach across multiple domains (air, land, sea, cyber and space) throughout the region. We do this to achieve cognitive and physical effects at the strategic and operational level to compete against and ultimately undermine our adversaries in defense of our great nation and our way of life. Since the stand up of our HQs on 1 October 1985, our organization has participated in regional conflicts and numerous contingencies requiring our organization to evolve and make adjustments in both our operating approach and structure to remain relevant and capable of meeting the high demands imposed on us by our nation. Today, we stand at the forefront of the greater SOF enterprise and Global SOF Network, ready to meet any challenge thrown our way.

3. Our People and Their Composition: Our people are our greatest asset. SOF Truth #1 states, “Humans are more important than hardware.” The quality of personnel within our organization and ability to work as a team is key to our success as an organization. This has not always been easy. Special Operations is not “better” but it is “different,” and both our manning and mission reflect this distinction. Our evolving mission in a dynamic and complex operating environment places high demands on our personnel and our organization. Whether they are uniformed military (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Space Forces), government civilians, or contractors; or perform as operators, planners, administrators, or support personnel, all of our people come from diverse backgrounds and lifestyles. Like Special Operations, the best way to describe our people is “different.” Different levels of education, knowledge, and experiences. Different mental and physical capabilities. Different ethnicities, religious beliefs, values, and personal interests. Different age groups (Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, Generation Z) and raised in different locations from across the country, if not the world. There are even subcultures within each of our directorates, each with a slightly different mindset, operating dynamic, and attitude on how to perform and get the job done. Despite these differences, we have come together as a team, taking pride in being SOCCENT. Although we value this diversity, what unites us as an organization?

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a. Our Organizational Vision: The vision for our organization is an adaptable irregular warfare campaign headquarters that develops both a deep understanding and a forward-looking, long-term view of the CENTCOM AOR. Our HQs strives to achieve this by collaborating with a network of allies, partners, and other commands, increasing our access and leveraging their placement, cultural awareness and niche capabilities to broaden our understanding and effectiveness. This enables the effective employment of SOF capabilities, technology and expertise to shape the multidimensional operational environment and achieve effects that limit our adversaries' designs and influences in the region while enhancing our own competitive advantage. This methodology not only enables our organization to stretch our resources and maximize return on investment by sharing efforts with partners and allies, but also aids us in influencing relevant populations and enhanced regional partners to protect U.S. national interests.

b. Our Spartan Lineage: In 2008, the “Spartan” and the ancient Greek phrase “*Molon Labe*” (meaning “come and take them”) became the symbol and motto of our command. This is in tribute to the 300 Spartans under King Leonidas that fought the 100,000 Persian Army under King Xerxes I at the Battle of Thermopylae in 479 BC, and King Leonidas’ reply to the demand by Xerxes that the Spartan surrender their weapons. Both the Spartan symbol and motto have resonated positively in our organization for the last 13 years. In keeping with this heritage, the modern day Spartan that we seek to emulate symbolizes the quintessential professional. A warrior, scholar, leader, athlete, critical thinker, campaigner, and a creative innovator. A consummate practitioner that constantly seeks self-improvement for the betterment of the organization and operates under code of honor and value system that is an inherent part of their internal beliefs and identity.

c. Our Work Ethic and Environment: Our work ethic is that of a learning organization whose members are willing to accept and embrace change under the mantra: “Build a little - Test a little - Learn a lot.” We learn from our seniors, our juniors, our peers and partners, and from our adversaries. We are endlessly curious. We are students of our profession and the ancient clash of civilizations in our AOR. For that reason, we seek the best people within our ranks. Those with the desire to be here, motivated to work hard, dedicated to the mission, a humble willingness to learn, and with the right cognitive skills and traits that will enhance the organization’s ability to address complex problems with sophistication and perform in an evolving and ever challenging operating environment. Our work environment is a busy one with long hours. Although each person is assigned to perform certain roles, everyone should expect, at one time or another, “to work out of their comfort zone,” while our top performers can expect to be tasked more and work harder than others due to their demonstrated talent. Understanding the SOF mission and how each person’s efforts fits into achieving it is key to maintaining organizational cohesion and harmony. Our primary focus is to support the Commander’s vision, priorities, and our forward deployed units. At any time, any of our members could be called upon to accept the Baton, go forward, and into harm’s way. Additionally, they may be the only SOCCENT representative in country; if so, they are expected to act professionally as they represent the organization. Despite the long hours, there is a sense of comradery and pride in our organization. The work is interesting and challenging and there tends to be a lot of “repeat offenders” who have extended or returned for another tour.

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d. Our Values and Attitudes: We recognize the importance of key values and attributes that enables us to remain calmly focused and make good decisions during these inevitable times of turmoil. We are **proud** and professional but not arrogant. We are not an entitled organization – working here is a privilege and an honor. We represent the U.S. and everything that our constitution stands for. We are **determined** and focused but not fanatical. We are **innovative**, open-minded, and encourage dissenting opinions with **candor** so that the best idea(s) are given a voice but recognize we have a chain of command that has the final say on decisions. We are selective about who fills our ranks and strive to remain **inclusive** yet diverse. We strive to be representative of our nation’s demographics representing all ethnicities, genders, orientations, religious creeds, and other different groups. Every one of us arrive with a moral code, religious or philosophical belief, political leanings, identities, and a cultural heritage. We do not believe it honest or possible, to ask our members, to “check these at the door” when they serve at SOCSENT. These should remain fundamental and important to each of our identities. However, we do absolutely demand that **mutual respect** be shown to other teammate’s beliefs, values, cultural distinctions; never treating anyone unfairly or with favoritism. Hate or extremism of any kind is intolerable to us and is, in fact, the enemy we seek to destroy, whether prorogated from within or from adversaries. We strive to act ethically, with **integrity and the moral courage** to do the right thing at all times during mission accomplishment.

e. Our Practices: How we strive to behave and act.

- **Leadership.** Leadership is key for setting the tone in the HQs and shaping culture. Leaders at all levels should strive to be visible, approachable, give clear concise direction and guidance, and lead by example. Our organization is a proving ground for those that aspire to become leaders.
- **Organizational Priorities.** Our organization seeks to achieve as much balance as possible between mission and family. No organization accomplishes this perfectly yet we strive to remain aware of this tension and manage it as best we can. We are practitioners of campaigning in a dynamic operating environment supporting SOF in harm’s way on a daily basis so this balance is tested each day.
- **Individual Performance.** Each individual should strive to do their best in their job, improve performance, and understand how their efforts better the organization as a whole. Share the workload and help others improve their performance if they are struggling. The goal of our actions and performance should be for the good of the organization.
- **Heritage and Traditions.** We should strive to know our organizational history to keep our heritage alive in the hearts of all in the organization. Building new traditions and celebrating our heritage with key events for both organizational members and families. Honoring those that have come before us, those that have paid the ultimate sacrifice, and meeting our obligation to support Gold Star families. We should learn from their example and instill their sacrifices into our everyday job performance and service.
- **Communication.** We should strive to communicate relevant information and intent to the lowest level to achieve shared understanding across our enterprise and empower

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subordinate initiative and innovation. Collaboration is key in an ever changing and evolving organization.

- **Build Trust and Transparency.** We should strive to be open and transparent about misconduct within the bounds of privacy so that the organization as a whole can learn and benefit from the mistakes of the individual. Finding out about individual offenses through the “grapevine” risks misinformation that can erode trust in the organization.
- **“Kaizen” Mindset.** Kaizen is a concept where everyone at all levels strive to make small, continuous improvements to all functions in our organization so that we remain efficient, relevant and competitive over the long term. At SOCSENT, we practice this by constantly looking for areas of minor improvement, with a mindset of trying to change one percent each day, rather than starting with an assumption that a complete overhaul is required or even best.
- **Organizational Wellness.** We must preserve the well-being of our people and our families with the Spartan Strength and Honor Program and other means at our disposal if our organization is to remain physically healthy, mentally strong, resilient, and highly motivated over the long term. In that regard, we should recognize selfless achievement and service of our organizational members and honoring families for what they endure.

4. Our Value Proposition: Our value proposition is the incredible SOF professionals, service members, government employees, and contractors that we have in our command. Our commitment is to remain a mission focused, resilient, forward looking, innovative and adaptive organization that remains the premiere SOF headquarters and partner of choice in our region. We are always on the account. Our pledge is to be genuine and always do our part to defend our citizens, our nation, and our way of life. To our forces forward, whom are in harm’s way at the pointing edge of the spear, we are always in support. They are depending on us and we will not let them down.

5. Conclusion: Our culture remains the internal fabric that allows us to achieve all these things.

Molon Labe