

# TIP OF THE SPEAR

**Marine Corps Forces SOG activated  
SOF hostage rescue  
20th SOS celebrates 30th anniversary**

On-Line version

*U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLA., APRIL 2006*

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## Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command historic activation

*Gen. Doug Brown, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, passes the MARSOC flag to Brig. Gen. Dennis Hejlik, MARSOC commander, during a ceremony at Camp Lejune, N.C., Feb. 24. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jim Moser.*



# Tip of the Spear

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*Front cover: Marines run out of cover during a short firefight in Ar Ramadi, Iraq. The foot patrol was attacked by a unknown sniper. Courtesy photo by Maurizio Gambarini, Deutsche Press Agentur.*

# Highlights

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## 20th Special Operations Squadron

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# Interview with Gen. Doug Brown part one

*Recently, the Tip of the Spear staff interviewed Gen. Doug Brown, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, about the future of Special Operations Forces. The following is part one of a two part series.*

**TOTS: What is your overall assessment of where US Special Operations Command and Special Operations Forces are today?**

**Gen. Brown:** Special Operations Command and Special Operations Forces are going through the most dynamic time in our history.

I have been in this business a long time and today's Special Operations Forces are the best I've ever seen. That fact is absolutely unquestionable. The guys in the past were great heroes, but today's Special Operations Forces on the battlefield are better than at any time in history and continue to become even more capable.

SOCOM's area of operations is global so I get to visit all of the Geographic Combatant Commands, not just Central Command. No matter where I go and no matter who I see, whether they are Army special operators, SEALs, or aircrew members, they are all better trained, better equipped, more capable and more experienced than ever. Most of our forces have several combat tours and their experience shows. Not only are they trained for the mission and have the right equipment for the mission, they understand the mission, and are dedicated to mission accomplishment.

Prior to the attack on Sept. 11, 2001, U.S. Special Operations Command was predominantly a train, organize, and equip headquarters, and we've always been world-class at it. That hasn't changed. Today, we continue to accomplish our world-class train, organize and equip responsibilities, in fact, they're more important and more robust than ever. What has changed is that SOCOM has taken the lead in planning and synchronizing the Global War on Terrorism.

The Unified Command Plan signed by the President in March 2005 designated SOCOM as the lead planner for the Global War on Terrorism for the Department of Defense. This is a significant change and significant addition to the role of Special Operations Command. The UCP gave us the responsibilities of a warfighting command to plan, synchronize, and as directed, execute global operations against terrorist networks around the world. Directing and executing operations are military terms we're all pretty familiar with, but synchronizing operations is a concept that may be new to many folks. Doctrinally it means we're responsible for arranging military actions in time, space, and purpose to produce maximum effects at the decisive place and time. On a more day to day level it means SOCOM will develop DOD's overall plans for the GWOT, ensure Theater Combatant Command plans support overall global objectives,



*Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jim Moser*

establish global priority intelligence requirements, establish global collection plans against the enemy, and prioritize future capabilities. We'll also provide common situational awareness of global operations, establish a collaborative planning environment, and provide integration and links between all levels of national leadership including the President, Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, GCCs, Service Chiefs, and Interagency partners. It's a tall order, but we've been moving out aggressively to do it. As a command we've reorganized our staff to reflect this mission change. We have reorganized to handle both the normal train, organize, and equip responsibilities and the global warfighting capabilities all while supporting the biggest deployment of Special Operation Forces in the history of the command.

The headquarters has done a phenomenal job. The Center for Special Operations took on the mission as the global planner and synchronizer of the Global War on Terrorism under the leadership of Lt. Gen. Dell Dailey. The CSO will soon move into its new facility designed specifically to integrate the J2 Intelligence, J3 Operations, and J5 Plans directorates with more than sixty interagency and other DoD agency representatives to facilitate our global planning and synchronization efforts. Bringing all these offices and agencies together in a collaborative environment is key. The big piece of the Global War on Terrorism resides with our Interagency partners not just the DOD. I am very happy with the CSO and the way they stood up and have taken this mission on.

**TOTS: The Department of Defense released the Quadrennial Defense Review on Feb. 6. What will be the QDR's impact on USSOCOM and SOF and what was USSOCOM's role in the QDR?**

**Gen. Brown:** The QDR's impact on SOCOM and SOF will be very significant. The QDR acknowledged the fact that the future threat will not try to take on our big Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps in a conventional way. Instead, we'll continue to face an asymmetric threat and an enemy who will use irregular warfare against us. SOCOM is uniquely qualified to counter this type of threat because our nation's irregular warfare and asymmetrical warriors are Special Operations Command's SOF warriors. SOF have the skills necessary for this new battlefield and the QDR acknowledged that. It is also the reason SOCOM and its forces will grow significantly in size and capability in the next six years. I was here for the last QDR, and we participated in that process, but we had nowhere near the level of participation we had this time. In this QDR we were involved just like a service because of our service-like responsibilities.

Prior to the QDR starting, we sat down and did an analysis of what we thought our requirements were for the Global War on Terrorism. We wrote those requirements in a strategic working document intended to be a primer for our QDR team. This gave our team a good basis of knowledge on all the issues before they went up for the QDR discussions. Subsequently, much of what we had in our strategy was validated by the QDR, especially the areas we identified for future growth in personnel and capabilities.

The QDR gives us a mandate to significantly grow the command while maintaining our high SOF standards and simultaneously planning the Global War on Terrorism.

We've been directed to grow by nearly 13,000 people in all the right areas. This will enable us to increase capability in all of our components. Some examples include getting our own Unmanned Aerial Vehicle squadron as part of Air Force Special Operations Command. The "find" piece of direct action is critical for us to accomplish the GWOT mission and UAVs will give us a key capability to find and track terrorist activity. This is a seed change to USSOCOM.

Additionally, it's critical that we put a lot of emphasis on the indirect approach in the Global War on Terrorism. Our direct action capabilities are important, but they are only one part of our overall strategy. Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations are keys to the indirect approach and the real capability to win the Global War on Terrorism. Foreign Internal Defense and Unconventional Warfare are also very important. We have always had a very robust indirect approach capability in our Green Berets and our SEALs and we will continue to increase that. We'll grow five Special Forces battalions. However, that does not necessarily translate to a battalion for each one of the Special Forces groups. We'll have growth in our SEALs, our Civil Affairs units, and our PSYOP capabilities in the active and the reserve forces. We also have an aviation FID squadron in AFSOC but it's too small so we'll double it by 2007. We'll focus it on expanding and improving the capabilities of partner nations' air forces.

**TOTS: With the addition of the UAV squadron and the expansion of the FID squadron will this transformation give AFSOC a broader role than what they have had in the past?**

**Gen. Brown:** That is a great question. All of the components of SOCOM are transforming to be more capable. But, the biggest transformation will be in AFSOC because they have taken on the role of providing airborne manned and unmanned Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance capabilities. AFSOC will also have a squadron of small mobility aircraft that can operate around the world delivering SOF. The CV-22 looks like it's going very well. But we need a plan for our C-130 fleet because the situation with our C-130s worries me. We're flying them at a much greater rate than we envisioned when we bought them which, in turn, accelerates serious issues such as center wing box replacement on our Gunships and Talons. Modernizing the C-130 fleet and transitioning Talons, Gunships and Shadows for the future is essential and will further enhance AFSOC's transformation. In sum, the biggest transformation you'll see is in AFSOC.

**TOTS: What impact will the Marine Corps Forces SOC have on SOCOM and SOF?**

**Gen. Brown:** The MARSOC is going to be a great addition to Special Operations Command. MARSOC is going to be an enabler to all of SOF. They'll add radio reconnaissance with SIGINT capabilities, HUMINT capabilities, dog teams, and additional communications and logistics capabilities that will be available not only to the MARSOC but can be task organized for any SOF unit needing those kind of capabilities. These are enablers that we have been short on for a long time.

The first MARSOC unit that will stand up and deploy will be the Foreign Military Training Unit. The FMTU will give us additional Foreign Internal Defense capabilities enabling Green Berets and SEALs to train more counterterrorism type forces. Enabling partner nations to secure themselves against terrorists is a key to success in the Global War on Terrorism and the spectrum of FID capabilities we'll have with FMTUs, Green Berets, SEALs and AFSOC aviation FID units is significant.

Additionally, the MARSOC will help us alleviate some of our challenges with SOF presence around the world. We're not always able to get SOF into some areas of the world due to lack of SOF bases or other considerations. Marine SOF composed of about one-hundred-men elements will deploy onboard ships with the Marine Expeditionary Units giving us additional forward presence and very, very capable direct action forces in areas where basing is a challenge.

MARSOC will perform direct action missions, and other missions from non-combatant evacuations to joint combined exchange training, all of which will enable SOF to be even more effective.

# U.S. Special Forces, Iraqi army ops:

**Raids result in 102 detainees, large weapons cache, no losses**

## *CJSOTF-AP Public Affairs*

The Iraqi Army's 2/2/5 Battalion, advised by U.S. Army Special Forces Soldiers, conducted assaults on two targets Feb. 12 in Diyala Province, detaining 102 persons of interest, killing two insurgents and discovering a large weapons cache.

The assaults were combined cordon and search missions designed to capture key insurgents and to disrupt multiple insurgent cell operations – especially improvised explosive device production.

The target locations were chosen because intelligence indicated specific locations of individuals wanted for planning and facilitating insurgent activities.

During the raid on the first target, an Iraqi army assault team encountered four armed insurgents when the team began searching a house.

The assault team exchanged small arms fire with the insurgents but was forced to withdraw outside of the house for cover. One of the team's sergeants stayed in the house and in the fight, killing one and wounding two of the insurgents before falling back to regroup with his team and assault the house again. Those three insurgents were taken into custody and two wounded received immediate medical treatment. One wounded insurgent later died enroute to receive additional medical care.

Of the 102 persons detained after the raids on both target areas, 25 were on Iraqi security forces' "most wanted" lists.

A weapons cache discovered at the first objective contained one Katusa rocket, two 155mm artillery rounds, two 120mm mortar rounds, three 60mm mortar rounds, three rocket-propelled grenades, an RPG launcher, three AK-47 assault rifles, and a collection of IED-making materials including electrical wire and fuses.

One Iraqi army soldier was slightly wounded by enemy small arms fire during the operation. He was treated on the scene by Iraqi and U.S. medical personnel.

Iraqi commanders stated that the combined operation was a success, and is a mark of the effectiveness of Iraqi army forces. They are looking forward to conducting additional missions in the future to deny insurgent groups safe havens in Diyala Province, which insurgents use to regroup, rearm and refit. Additionally, leaders from the Iraqi battalion used the operation to assess the capabilities of the 2/2/5 in order to make "needs-based" assessments on future training opportunities.

Special Operations Forces from the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force – Arabian Peninsula are involved throughout Iraq in training and advising Iraqi security forces, including army and police units.



*A U.S. Special Forces Soldier observes Iraqi troops during an exercise. CJSOTF-AP photo.*

# Iraqi counterterror unit proves its mettle in hostage rescue

*Article and photos by Monte Morin.*

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A retired government official who was kidnapped recently and beaten was rescued from captivity in dramatic fashion Mar. 6 by a little-known unit of Iraqi army counterterrorism soldiers trained by and modeled after the U.S. Special Operations Forces.

The hostage, who was not identified by name, was found shackled to a steel bed in a dilapidated apartment building just east of Taji, about an hour north of Baghdad. Initial reports said that the hostage was a former Iraqi army brigadier general. However, that has not been confirmed by authorities.

“Jackpot!” American advisers shouted after members of the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Force, or ICTF, blew open the building's front door and found the haggard and bruised hostage in a pitch-black, concrete room. The

elderly man threw one free arm into the air and shouted for the Iraqis to free him as other members of the unit chased down and captured three of the suspected kidnappers.

As soldiers used a pair of bolt cutters to snip the handcuffs that bound the man's left wrist to the bed frame, a U.S. Army Special Forces adviser said the rescue was a coup for the 2-year-old unit.

“It's not every day that you rescue someone,” said the Green Beret, who is one of a small number of Army Special Forces Soldiers and Navy SEALs who train and supervise the ICTF.

In a nation known for violent and deadly kidnappings, the rescue of a living hostage is indeed rare. However, Iraqi officials and U.S. military advisers hope the ICTF will improve some hostages' odds of survival. The group, which falls under the 1st Iraqi Special Operations Forces Brigade, is trained and

**See ICTF, Page 8**



*Iraqi Counter Terrorism Force soldiers search the home where a hostage was discovered east of Taji.*

**ICTF continued from Page 7**

equipped as an elite force whose repertoire of skills includes rescuing hostages, sniper shooting, marine and river operations and scouting.

While the ICTF has participated in every major military action in Iraq since the 2004 siege of Fallujah, it is not well known among Iraqis, to say nothing of Americans. Part of this anonymity is because, like the U.S. Special Operations Forces, the ICTF is reluctant to be photographed or identified in the media, fearing that members will be targeted for assassination by insurgents. U.S. advisers say that at least two ICTF soldiers were killed after their pictures appeared in newspapers.

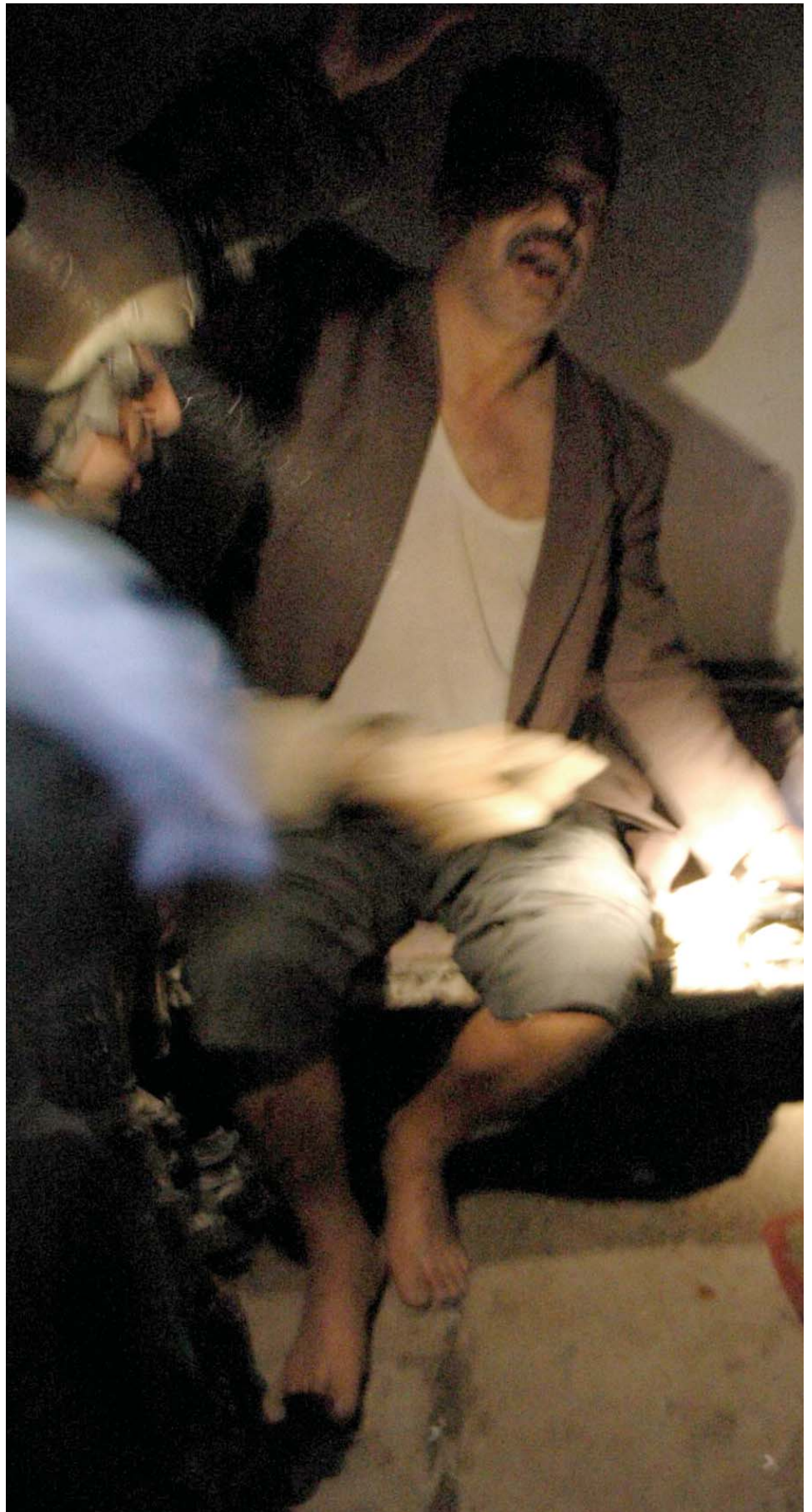
Another reason for its low profile is that up until recently, a portion of ICTF training was conducted in Jordan and not Iraq. Now that U.S. advisers believe that security in Iraq has progressed to the point where they can adequately screen and train recruits, the three-month-long school was moved to Iraq in March.

The ICTF, which is outfitted with state-of-the-art military equipment, wears a uniform entirely different from the Iraqi army's famous "chocolate chip" camouflage pattern fatigues and is better equipped than most U.S. Army units.

While Iraqi army soldiers are armed with AK-47 assault rifles, ICTF soldiers carry M-4 carbines. They are also equipped with night-vision goggles, which allows them to drive their modified Humvee gun trucks to some missions with their headlights blacked out.

The unit is designed to act quickly on tips and information,

***Soldiers cut the handcuffs from the hostage during the rescue mission.***





and such was the case Mar. 6 when ICTF soldiers learned of the kidnapping victim and his possible whereabouts. While regular Iraqi army units will spend days and weeks planning an operation, ICTF soldiers were storming the kidnappers' hideout before the end of the day.

Wearing a variety of knit face masks and Arab head coverings, unit members and U.S. advisers drove with their lights out into a town heavily decorated with posters of Shiite clerics and religious icons. The trucks plowed through foot-deep lakes of sewage runoff and garbage as they navigated the city streets.

Within 10 minutes of reaching the building's front entrance and triggering a door-shattering explosive, the soldiers had cleared the building and found the prisoner.

Since the training and missions they are asked to execute are more complicated and difficult than regular Iraqi army troops, ICTF soldiers are paid slightly more

than regular army soldiers.

U.S. advisers say that instances of desertion are rare, and far below what the regular army sees. They said this was not so much a matter of extra pay, but comes from the fact that the unit represents the demographics of Iraq as a whole. While regular Iraqi army units are more regional—units will usually have a majority of one particular ethnic group—this is not the case with the ICTF. In fact, U.S. advisers said, they were trained to look beyond religious and ethnic differences and view their fellow soldiers as an elite force whose members were dependent on each other for survival.

An Iraqi ICTF captain said this was indeed the case with his men.

“My family is the ICTF,” the captain said. “Let me tell you something. If you ask one of these men what his religion is, he will tell you – ‘I am not Sunni, I am not Shia (Shiite), I am not Kurd. I am ICTF.’”



*U.S. and Iraqi special operations personnel help the kidnapping victim to his feet Mar. 6. The hostage was found shackled to a steel bed in an apartment building east of Taji.*

# Iraqi special ops soldiers graduate,

*CJSOTF-AP Public Affairs*

The last group of Iraqi soldiers graduated from an elite counterterrorism course here Feb. 23, bringing to an end a special operations training partnership between Iraq, Jordan and the United States.

More than 500 elite Iraqi troops attended the course since 2003.



**An Iraqi soldier training to join the Iraqi Counterterrorism Force participates in a live-fire demonstration exercise during the Operator Training Course graduation at the Jordanian army's Counterterrorism Training Center near Amman, Jordan Feb. 23. U.S. Army photo.**

During the graduation ceremony, 77 Iraqi special operators — among them Shi'a, Sunnis and Kurds — became the seventh and final class to graduate from the three-month Operator Training Course, which will now move to a permanent training base in Iraq.

The Iraqi soldiers are now the newest members of the Iraqi Counterterrorism Force, one of two battalion-sized components of the Iraqi Special Operations

Forces Brigade. The ISOF Brigade was created in 2004 and is responsible for conducting special operations missions throughout Iraq.

The role of Jordan and the United States in building Iraq's ability to fight terrorism within its borders is not only important to Iraq's homeland security, but to the stability of all three countries for the sake of peace and freedom, said Lt. Col. Adnan al-Abbadi, commander of Jordan's 71st Counterterrorism Battalion.

Adnan's unit also runs Jordan's Counterterrorism Training Center, which hosted the Iraqis and Americans for the training.

"The ICTF graduates ... are among the best hopes for building Iraq's future," said David Hale, the U.S. ambassador to Jordan, during the graduation ceremony.

"You are the front line in building the defense of freedom and Iraqi unity," Hale said to the graduates. "This class was selected from hundreds of candidates, and now, as graduates, you join the most capable Iraqi unit in the field."

U.S. Army and Navy Special Operations Forces have served as advisers during each class, but most recently functioned largely as observers because four ICTF soldiers — all graduates of previous OTC classes — served as primary instructors, along with four Jordanians.

# end counterterror training in Jordan



*Iraqi soldiers demonstrate their reflex shooting skills at the three month Operator Training Course in Jordan. U.S. Army photo.*

“It was helpful having the ICTF guys step up as instructors, because they know the tactics and techniques and have experience” in fighting terrorists all over Iraq, said one U.S. Army Special Forces adviser.

Hale said that the ICTF training program had been so successful that the time was right to move it to Iraq, where “it will be in the very capable hands” of Col. Fadhil Jameel al-Barwari, the commander of the ISOF Brigade, who also attended the ceremony.

Upon leaving Jordan, the Iraqis will assume control of the OTC’s administration and instruction, with U.S. Special Operations Forces again serving as advisers to assist the ICTF trainers as needed.

The lead U.S. adviser, a Special Forces captain, said the most important education during the course wasn’t on military tactics, but Iraqi-to-Iraqi relationships.

“Many of them had never even held a gun, but right now they can accurately engage threats moving at a fast pace, which is a phenomenal feat,” the captain said. “Here, they have learned advanced (close-quarters battle) techniques, they’ve learned hand-to-hand combat. But above all, they’ve learned trust, and they’ve learned that they can live with each other, whether (they are) a Sunni, or a Shi’a, or a Kurd.”

“None of this would have been possible without the professionalism and competence of the Jordanian and Iraqi instructors, or the help of my fellow American advisers,” he added.

Jordan, whose military includes a robust special operations component, is a key ally of both the United States and Iraq in the war on terrorism.



*An Iraqi Counterterrorism Force soldier (right), now serving as an instructor for the Operator Training Course, talks with a U.S. Army Special Forces Soldier at the Jordanian Army’s Counterterrorism Training Center near Amman. The three-month OTC class, the seventh since 2003, was the final class in Jordan prior to its move to Iraq. U.S. Army photo.*

# Afghan security force demobilized



*The commander of the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–Afghanistan pins the “Heart of a Lion” Medal on a member of the Afghan Security Force which was demobilized Jan. 3 and 4 at a ceremony in the Paktika Province. Photos by Staff Sgt. Jason M. Cauley.*

## *By Staff Sgt. Jason M. Cauley CJSOTF-A Public Affairs*

Nearly 300 members of the organization known as the Afghan Security Force were demobilized in separate ceremonies Jan. 3 and 4 in the Paktika Province, Afghanistan.

The ASF, employed by the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–Afghanistan since 2003, were trained to provide base camp and mission security for coalition forces in areas of operation throughout Afghanistan. The recent history of successes in the stabilization of the Afghan government and the strengthening of the still-growing Afghan National Army has led to the ongoing demobilization of the ASF. The two ceremonies were the second

and third of their kind following a similar demobilization ceremony held November 6, 2005, for ASF members who served in the Nangarhar Province.

“The ASF filled a void in the fight against the enemies of Afghanistan,” said one CJSOTF-A service member who assisted in the planning of both ceremonies in Paktika. “The demobilization ceremonies honor their service while simultaneously reinforcing the aspect of the government of Afghanistan’s ability to stand on its own.”

The ceremonies afforded the coalition and Special Operations Forces leaders the opportunity to personally thank the ASF for their service. Along with their severance pay, ranging from 500 to 2,000 U.S. dollars depending on the member’s

length of service, they were given official documentation of their service, and each member was awarded the “Heart of a Lion” Medal, a symbol of their dedication to duty and the sacrifices made in the war on terrorism.

“Because you have the courage and the ‘Heart of a Lion,’ today we want to recognize you for your courage,” said the CJSOTF-A commander during his speech at the ceremony. “I thank you all for your service. I honor you for your courage. And I know, because you are a river to your people, you will continue to serve the people of Afghanistan.”

As incentive to retain the skilled members of the ASF, a \$500 sign-up bonus was offered to anyone who joined the ANA or the Afghan National Police (ANP) following the ceremonies. The lines to the recruiters’ stations nearby grew instantly after the respective ceremonies concluded.

Looking at the eagerness of the newly demobilized ASF to join the formal Afghan forces, one could assume the bonus was the driving force behind the long lines. A CJSOTF-A service member who trained and served alongside the ASF members said after the ceremony, this assumption would be in error.

“These men aren’t in it for the money,” he said. “All they want is to defeat the enemy. I know these guys. The money is great, but that is not why they’re in line.”

A young Afghan waiting in line to join the ANA, supported the CJSTOF–A service member’s statements saying, “I want to continue to help my country, to make it better.”

When asked how much money he received combining his severance pay and the sign-up bonus for joining the ANA, he said, “I don’t care about money. I only care about my country

being free of enemies and becoming a safe place for our people.”

Of the 292 ASF members demobilized during the ceremonies, 180 enlisted in the ANA and 71 joined the ANP.

This high percentage (89.4 percent) of men opting to continue their service in defense of their nation will certainly benefit Afghanistan’s ability to stabilize its borders and protect its people, said a CJSOTF-A service member. “They bring with them significant combat experience, patriotism and true leadership skills.”

There are an estimated 1,800 remaining ASF members to be demobilized.

If these ceremonies are any indication of the ASF continuing their service in either the ANA or ANP, then the government of Afghanistan could see the addition of a significant number of already well trained soldiers enter its growing military and police forces.



*A member of the newly demobilized Afghan Security Force receives his severance pay following the Jan. 4 ceremony in the Paktika Province.*

## **SOF Soldiers, ANA conduct humanitarian mission**



*Afghan National Army soldiers distribute humanitarian aid items to the victims and families affected by the recent Tarin Kowt suicide bombing. CJSOTF-A photo.*

### *CJSOTF-A Public Affairs*

Soldiers of the Afghan National Army, in conjunction with service members from the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force – Afghanistan and the Provincial Reconstruction Team representative, Mr. Raphael Carland, conducted a humanitarian aid mission in Tarin Kowt located in the Uruzgan Province of Afghanistan.

The ANA, CJSOTF-A and Carland arrived at the Tarin Kowt hospital to offer support to the victims and families affected by the recent suicide bombing.

CJSOTF-A service members met the director of health, Dr. Khan Agha, and were escorted to the various rooms in which the patients were staying. Simultaneously ANA soldiers distributed several hundred pounds of food items, hundreds of blankets and articles of winter clothing. They also handed out soccer balls and various other items to the victims and their families.

The ANA soldiers explained to the people in and around the hospital that the government and local populace have been concerned about the welfare of the victims of this tragedy.

The CJSOTF– A Soldiers assessed the visit made a very positive impact on the victims and their families. According to the service members involved in the mission, the victims and their families expressed a great deal of gratitude and surprise at the official visit.



*Afghan National Army Soldier Mosa Khan speaks with a victim of the Tarin Kowt suicide bombing. CJSOTF-A photo.*

# SF Soldier awarded Silver Star for heroic actions in Afghan battle

By Sgt. Tim Meyer

U.S. Pacific Command Public Affairs

An U.S. Army Soldier assigned to the Special Operations Command–Pacific was awarded the Silver Star Jan. 3 for heroism in a firefight while supporting Operation Enduring Freedom in eastern Afghanistan early last year.

Master Sgt. Sarun Sar received the medal from Brig. Gen. David P. Fridovich, SOCPAC commander, in a ceremony at U.S. Pacific Command, Camp H. M. Smith, Hawaii.

During the eight months he spent on this tour, his second in Afghanistan, Sar and his team were in the Paktika Province along the Pakistan border, which is one of the poorest in the country. They provided security, health care, and construction projects for “shuras,” meetings held with tribal elders to allow them to voice their concerns. On their days off they taught English to local kids and played soccer with them, Sar said.

The day of the attack they were conducting aerial reconnaissance, not one of their normal missions, according to Sar. In fog and extreme cold 9,000 feet up in the snow-covered mountains, the first Blackhawk helicopter landed and immediately came under enemy fire. Sar landed in the second helicopter, dismounted, and rushed to prevent the enemy from damaging the aircraft and harming his team members.

He pursued one of the attackers into a building and was struck in the helmet with a round from an AK-47 assault rifle fired from 7 to 10 feet away. “It felt like I was hit in the head with a hammer,” Sar later recalled. For a moment he was disoriented, yelling “I’m hit! I’m hit!” to the medic, but within a few seconds he established that the wound was not life threatening, and he continued to fight. After the battle, he and his men administered first aid to two injured Afghan civilians, stabilizing them for medical evacuation to a coalition hospital.

Of the 12 personnel, only Sar and another Soldier were wounded; no one was killed that day. “This country has given me so much, and this is a small price to pay,” Sar said. “The hero is the guy in the cemetery right now, he and his family,” referring to his weapons sergeant, who died in a separate battle in June. “He’s the one who gave his life for his country. He’s also an immigrant, from Mexico.”

“Growing up in a war zone teaches you to be immune



Master Sgt. Sarun Sar secured enemy weapons possibly used against his team the night of the fire fight. SOCPAC photo.

to a gunfight,” Sar said as he described his childhood during the Vietnam War. Sar gained his first combat experience in his homeland of Cambodia, where his father was arrested by the communist insurgency during the war, and his brothers and sisters were separated from their family. He joined the anti-Vietnamese guerrillas at a very young age, was wounded in action several times, and was sent to a refugee camp in Thailand to recover. There he was reunited with his older sister and her two children. After the war, they moved to the United States.

Years later, he learned his father survived the Khmer Rouge regime, was imprisoned in Vietnam for subversion, and passed away from disease. His older brother was caught smuggling weapons for anti-government guerrillas and was executed by the Vietnamese. His mother and his two younger brothers died from starvation. Only he and his two sisters survived.

Sar became a U.S. citizen, and was later selected to join the Special Forces, where he has served 15 of his 20 years in the military. He fought in the first Gulf War, and has deployed to Thailand, Cambodia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Africa, Columbia and Afghanistan during his various assignments. He is currently assigned to Special Forces Command-Pacific at Camp Smith, Hawaii.

The Silver Star is the Department of Defense’s fourth highest award for valor in combat. Sar has also been submitted for a Bronze Star for heroism in a previous fight.

# Philippine, U.S. SOF sharpen skills

By Cpl. Martin R. Harris

Members of the Philippine Joint Special Operations Group honed their close-quarters-combat skills with members of the U.S. Army Special Forces during Exercise Balikatan 2006, Clark Air Base, Philippines, Feb. 28.

The training is unique because it is a mixture of U.S. Army, Philippine army and Air Force Special Forces, as well as Philippine navy SEALs, explained Philippine Army Sgt. Jason Masa, close quarters combat instructor for 2nd Light Reaction Battalion, Special Operations Command.

“Everyone comes from a different unit and service, we all use different techniques and have different skills,” Masa said. “We are trying to get everyone on the same sheet of music.”

The Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen worked through very important scenarios, which are similar to what they might face in an actual combat operation, explained U.S. Army Warrant Officer Louis Perez, assistant detachment commander for Operation Detachment 134, Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines, 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group.

The service members practiced tactically entering buildings by using teamwork to climb to the second floor and entering through windows, then clearing the building from top to bottom.



**Philippine Airman 1st Class Robinson Dimayuga, U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Richard Van Rickley 1st Special Forces Group and Philippine Airman 2nd Class Ignocio Nuntal practice the proper way to provide security while tactically entering a building during Exercise Balikatan '06 at Clark Air Base, Philippines, Feb. 28. Photos by Lance Cpl. C. Lindsay.**

The service members also had the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences while fast roping together. Small groups simulated exiting a helicopter and descending approximately 30 feet, then assembling a 360-degree security perimeter.

According to Perez, the adaptability and spirit of the Philippine special forces is what makes them successful in small unit operations.

“These guys are very versatile and always willing to teach and learn,” he said. “They are very dedicated to constantly becoming better. All the training they go through is very important when dealing with the kinds of terrorists they have to face.”

For Philippine army Sgt. Arnulfos Bagual, a member of 2nd Light Reaction Company, 2nd LRB, SOCOM, training in a joint environment is imperative to a highly proficient fighting force.

“It becomes almost like second nature to fight with different services, if you’re familiar with the way they operate,” Bagual said. “Training like this helps us become better soldiers because we learn each other’s strengths and weaknesses.”

Cross training to increase interoperability between different services is one of the main goals for Exercise Balikatan 2006. Approximately 5,500 U.S. military personnel and more than 3,000 members of the armed forces of the Philippines have participated in the numerous cross training and field training exercises during Balikatan 2006.

**Philippine Army 2nd Lt. Warren Daroy gets a boost from U.S. Army Warrant Officer Louis Perez and Army SSgt. Richard Santi, 1st Special Forces Group, while tactically entering a building during Exercise Balikatan 2006 at Clark Air Base, Philippines, Feb. 28.**



# First battle-ready Osprey joins SOCOM



*Air Force Special Operations Command's first CV-22 Osprey hovers at Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M. The aircraft will be flown by the 58th Special Operations Wing at Kirtland. Photo by Staff Sgt. Markus Maier.*

## *USSOCOM Public Affairs*

Air Force Special Operations Command accepted the keys for the first combat-configured CV-22 Osprey from Bell Boeing March 1 in a ceremony at the Bell manufacturing facility in Amarillo, Texas.

While earlier versions of the CV-22 tiltrotor aircraft are in use as test assets, this is the first of the "Block B/10" aircraft, representing the configuration that the AFSOC will take into combat in 2009.

Leaders taking part in the ceremony included Gen. Doug Brown, commander of U.S. Special Operations Command; Lt. Gen. John L. Hudson, commander of Aeronautical Systems Center; and Maj. Gen. Donald Wurster, vice commander of AFSOC.

The man to receive the keys to the aircraft, however, was Lt. Col. Jim Cardoso, commanding officer of the 71st Special Operations Squadron, which will get this Osprey to support aircrew training at Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M.

The Air Force is purchasing 50 CV-22s for long-range infiltration, exfiltration and re-supply of Special Operations Forces in hostile or denied territory.

"This aircraft is the single most significant transformation of Air Force Special Operations since the

introduction of the helicopter," Wurster said. "Nearly every mission we have faced in the last 20 years could have been done better and faster with the V-22."

Wurster also spoke of the positive impact the aircraft would have on protecting troops in Afghanistan and Iraq today. "Our ability to move point to point by air, over extended distances at high speed, would reduce our exposure to the roadside attacks that are responsible for so many casualties," he said.

The Osprey can perform missions that normally would require both fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft.

"This gives us global reach," Brown said of the CV-22. "We can reach out and touch bad guys wherever they live around the world."

Brown said his troops would like to have the aircraft in theater today. "I never go to visit them without getting the question, 'When are we going

*"I spent the summer of 2004 in Afghanistan and led 22 direct-action air assaults. Coming in on helos, the enemy would hear us when we were still [minutes] out ... With the Osprey, my experience has been that you don't hear it until it's already over your head."*

*Navy SEAL team leader*

to get the CV-22?"

"I spent the summer of 2004 in Afghanistan and led 22 direct-action air assaults," said one Navy SEAL team leader. "Coming in on helos, the enemy would hear us when we were still [minutes] out. That was time they had to flee or to get ready to shoot at us. With the Osprey, my experience has been that you don't hear it until it's already over your head."

Initial operational capability for the Air Force's CV-22 is in 2009.



# Special Forces drop in for joint training

By Pfc. Daniel Love  
8th Army Public Affairs Office

In order stay on the cutting edge of wartime capability, Special Forces Soldiers are constantly training in different environments.

While this calls for them to frequently travel to training sites, the experience can prove invaluable during combat operations.

Leaders of the Fort Lewis, Washington based, 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group toured and trained in the Korean theater Feb. 6 to 10 after a year of deployment in Afghanistan to re-familiarize themselves with their primary mission.

One of the biggest joint events of the combined training was a balloon-powered airborne jump at Maesori range. U.S. and ROK Special Forces used each other's equipment, jumpmasters and procedures to increase interoperability between the forces. It quickly became apparent that they had a lot in common in the way of airborne training and capability.

"It was good for the guys in the battalion to come to Korea and familiarize themselves with the ROK special forces training apparatus," said Lt. Col. Kirk Nilsson, 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group commander. "They're part of our airborne brotherhood. This builds esprit de corps, camaraderie and confidence between the two forces."

While a balloon jump is not a tactic used during wartime, it is used to maintain airborne Soldiers' insertion capability.

"It keeps our guys comfortable with controlling the canopy and landing," Nilsson said. "The advantage of it is, it's here and we don't need an aircraft, so we don't rely on aircrews. It's a very efficient way to cycle a lot of jumpers through in a short amount of time."

In the Korean theater, space is often a training restriction. Maesari drop zone is not a large target for jumpers, coupled with that was the fact that it was frozen, uneven and dotted with thorn bushes. However, the jumpers took off without hesitation, tackling the terrain with humor and gusto.

"We're glad to have them here and they're doing a good job," said Lt. Col. Bart Shreve, Special Operations Command-Korea director of operations. "A lot of these new captains haven't been to Korea, so they have to get used it."

While the jump itself was standard fare for the battle-hardened Soldiers, the time spent was a valuable opportunity to connect with their brothers in arms. After exchanging their service's jump badges, many of them said that they hope to return and train together again.

"Since we're often busy with other deployments and missions, we wanted to take an opportunity to make sure we're closely connected with the wartime operations plan," said Maj. Ian Rice 1st SFG. "It's very important that we continue to train in Korea and keep a strong connection with our ROK special forces counterparts. Every time we get the chance, we enjoy working with them, continuing to build on the bonds that were made in the past."



# Now there are four — MA

*By Tech. Sgt. Jim Moser  
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

Now there are four.

The Marine Corps officially joined its sister Services in the ranks of U.S. Special Operations Command during an activation ceremony at Camp Lejeune, N.C., Feb. 24.

The event officiated by Brig. Gen. Dennis Hejlik, commander, Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command, drew among others, the attendance of the Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Michael Hagee and Gen. Doug Brown, USSOCOM commander.

“This activation is a milestone,” Rumsfeld said. “It pairs two of history’s most dedicated groups of warriors — the men and women of the U.S. Special Operations Command and the U. S. Marine Corps.”

When MARSOC is fully constituted in 2010, it will add 2,600 Marines and Sailors to wage the war on terrorism. But according to Hagee, MARSOC will be in the fight much sooner.

“We are going to increase the capabilities and capacity of special operations command in three major areas,” he said. “The Foreign Military Training Unit, which will ultimately have 22 teams, increasing foreign internal defense capacity. USSOCOM will deploy three of these teams in April.”

MARSOC also adds a logistics capability, which will increase intelligence for USSOCOM and add a Marine Special Forces Company that will supply maritime raid capabilities off of amphibious decks. The first of those companies will deploy the end of this year.

“We are in a long war facing a global enemy that has openly stated their intention to obtain weapons of mass destruction and take lives of innocent Americans and our allies,”

*Sgt. Maj. Matthew Ingram and Brig. Gen. Dennis Hejlik, commander, Marine Corps Forces Special Operation Command, unfurl the colors at the MARSOC activation ceremony Feb. 24 at Camp Lejeune, N.C. Photos by Tech. Sgt. Jim Moser.*



# MARSOC joins SOCOM ranks

Brown said. “Our special operations Marines will add important capabilities and capacities to the long-term fight. As we build a world that is inhospitable to terrorist — MARSOC forces ... are a powerful, robust and welcome addition (to SOCOM).”

MARSOC is headquartered at Camp Lejeune with subordinate units at Lejeune and Camp Pendleton, Calif.

Along with senators and generals, four very special guests attended the ceremony. Four

members of the 1st Marine Raider Regiment were present and

accounted for.

“This activation is a milestone in Marine Corps history, but it is really not unprecedented,” Hagee said. “Some 46 years ago the commandant at that time, Lt. Gen. Thomas Holkum, stood up the 1st Marine Raider Battalion. These were special commandos trained to go deep into Japanese defenses ... they are a very important part of Marine Corps history.”

Steeped in tradition and grounded in history, MARSOC makes the Fourth Horseman in the terrorist’s apocalypse.

“Today is about change and doing what is right and what is smart,” Brown said. “Two organizations of tremendous capability, two organizations of legendary warriors, two organizations in transition prepared to meet the threats of today’s unique and different battlefields, two organizations who have routinely work side by side on the battlefields of the world today become even more capable as SOCOM stands up its fourth component the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations

Command.” *Original Marine Corps Raiders talk with a Marine before the MARSOC activation ceremony Feb 24. at Camp Lejeune N.C.*





# Honing Skills **MARSOC's Foreign Military Training Unit** teaches vital lessons to fledgling militaries

*By Tech. Sgt. Jim Moser  
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

The first unit to standup and deploy in the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command is the Foreign Military Training Unit.

With orders from U.S. Special Operations Command to hit their area of responsibility in the spring of 2006, the unit has formed a group of skilled Marines to pursue the Global War on Terrorism and to enhance fledgling allies' capabilities.

"In a nutshell what we are about is two mission sets — foreign internal defense and in a few years unconventional warfare," said Col. Peter Petronzio, the FMTU's commanding officer.

To accomplish the FID mission, the unit provides tailored military combat-skills training and advisory support for foreign forces to enhance their tactical capabilities.

According to Petronzio, the mission pays big dividends with a small cost in manpower. "If we can go there today, early and often, with smaller teams and make the environment better, we hopefully preclude the need to go back later with larger teams."

The typical MARSOC training team will consist of 11 Marines, and keep the USSOCOM mantra, specially selected and trained.

"The actual team members are drawn from infantry units around the Marine Corps and typically they are NCOs," he said. "They come to me with three to five years of Marine Corps service. Most if not all, have at least one tour in Iraq or Afghanistan and many of them have at least two."

After selection, the Marines go through a six-month training pipeline focused on instruction and combat skills.

"When they come to the FMTU we talk about the uniqueness of the training mission, in the context of 'now

*A Marine simulates training a foreign military on small arms tactics. Photo by Cpl. Ken Melton.*

you'll be one of an 11-man team as opposed to being one of a company or one of a battalion," Petronzio said. "We sharpen their basic infantry skills and take their other skills, like communications and medical, to an advanced level.

Once their combat and training skills are honed, the Marines enter a second phase of training. This training is specifically mission targeted, teaching cultural awareness and communication skills that are applicable to the AOR they will be operating in.

"We focus heavily on language and culture," he said.

The unit faced tough challenges with the language portion but found a successful balance between civilian instructors, immersion programs and high tech online courses to succeed. "We are doing everything we can to create a language capable and culturally aware Marine at FMTU," Petronzio said.

As MARSOC grows to full operating capacity, the FMTU will also expand in manpower.

"Three years from now, we will have 16 to 20 teams ready for worldwide deployment to answer SOCOM's call," Petronzio said. "We will be much better in our language and cultural abilities. I hope we will be increasingly integrated into the global plans."

Petronzio said standing up a unit from scratch has been very rewarding and very challenging, the SOF community has been very supportive standing up the unit. "I would like to thank all of those in the SOF world for all the help they have provided, and we appreciate all of the help and it makes us better. I think we bring a great additive capability to SOCOM ... we are ready to put our best foot forward and show SOCOM what we have produced for them."

# Navy SEALs receive combat awards

By Petty Officer 3rd Class  
Christopher Menzie  
NSW Public Affairs

Shadowy figures pour silently through the darkness and sweep from room-to-room, searching for their target. They see their objective protected by several well-armed bodyguards. The infiltrators move quickly and quietly, subduing the guards and pursuing their target as he scampers into an unchecked room. As the fighting ensues, the target is brought down in hand-to-hand combat. One of the dark figures sees what appears to be a small body trapped under blankets. Upon closer inspection, he finds a young girl unconscious and not breathing. His quick reaction and medical experience saves the girl's life.

Like a scene from an action movie or novel, this true story was one of many recognized in a combat award ceremony honoring several Navy SEALs.

The commander of U.S. Special Operations Command visited Naval Special Warfare Command in San Diego to present two Purple Hearts and five Bronze Stars to Navy SEALs for their courageous actions while serving in the Middle East.

"Our Nation deserves the very best training and people we can put out on the battlefield to defend our country," said Gen. Doug Brown, USSOCOM commander. "I will tell you they are standing here today."

The awardees were cited for heroic achievement in connection with combat operations in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

One of them directed and supervised every aspect of security for a foreign head of state. He was responsible for protecting one of the most targeted and strategically important men alive in an extremely hazardous environment. According to his superiors, he helped make Mosul safer for Iraqi elections in Jan 2005. His courageous leadership under fire saved the lives of



**Gen. Doug Brown (center), commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, and Rear Adm. Joseph Maguire (far right), commander, Naval Special Warfare Command, present Purple Heart Awards and Bronze Star Medals with Combat Distinguishing Device to nine U.S. Navy SEALs during a ceremony at Naval Special Warfare Command, Coronado, Calif., in recognition of their service in the Global War on Terror. Photo by Navy Lt. Taylor Clark.**

countless U.S. forces. His initiative and courageous actions contributed to the success of the missions.

"The word SEAL denotes courage in my mind. If you listen to those citations, it's easy to understand why," Brown said.

"It's a dangerous job that we do," said one of the SEALs who received the Bronze Star. "At least we're being recognized for the hard work and the contributions we're making towards the freedom of Iraq."

He added that life in Iraq was intense. There is constant pressure from the possibility of attack at any time. Because of the stress and distance from home, any support the SEALs receive is highly appreciated.

"We're proud to be over in Iraq and to serve our country," he said.

Since the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Naval Special Warfare has played a critical role in the war, employing a large number of SEAL, SWCC (Special Warfare Combat-craft crewman), and support technicians.

# Navy recruiters issue special oper

*By Mike Bottoms  
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

Naval Special Warfare Command and Navy Recruiting Command joined forces in January to begin the first of several national recruiting initiatives designed to bolster Naval Special Warfare recruiting.

In one such initiative, a Naval Special Warfare/Special Operations representative will be placed at each Navy Recruiting District. SEAL Petty Officer Second Class Kory Knowles is the NSW/NSO representative for NRD Miami.

He helped to put together a Special Operations Challenge Fitness Assessment event held at Navy UDT-SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce, Fla., Feb. 11. More than 100 candidates from Jacksonville, Miami, Tampa and Gainesville, Fla., took the qualifying physical fitness test to become a SEAL, Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewman or a diver.

“I have been training over a dozen potential special operators with the physical conditioning they will need to get through Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL Training,” Knowles said. “Additionally, I have been giving them insight on the mental toughness they will need to become a teammate in the operator community.”

“This Special Operations Challenge Fitness Assessment event was the first of its kind. The feedback I’ve gotten is pretty positive,” said Lt. Cmdr. Anthony Almon, commanding officer, Naval Reserve Recruiting Area Southeast.

A key to the success of the SEAL challenge held in Fort Pierce was the help and encouragement of retired SEALs.

“It’s my belief that one of the unique qualities about the SEAL community is the level of dedication



**Two SEAL candidates finish the mile and and half run under 10 minutes at Fort Pierce, Fla., Feb. 11. Photo by Mike Bottoms.**

of retirees as demonstrated by their willingness to help with this kind of event,” Almon said. “I think there’s the potential to do similar events involving retired SEALs across the Nation.”

With the Global War on Terrorism still the Navy’s most important mission, more qualified candidates are needed to fill NSWC.



**SEAL Petty Officer Second Class Kory Knowles speaks to a group of candidates after they have completed the Special Operation Physical Fitness Challenge at Fort Pierce, Fla., Feb. 11. Photo by Mike Bottoms.**

# Operations physical fitness challenge

“The reason we are focusing so many resources toward the prospective candidate is because Special Operations Forces are required to combat terrorism,” said SEAL Master Chief Petty Officer Victor Licause, NSW program manager at Commander Navy Recruiting Command. “Operations focused to combat terrorism are not routine deployments. We are going where we can make a difference.”

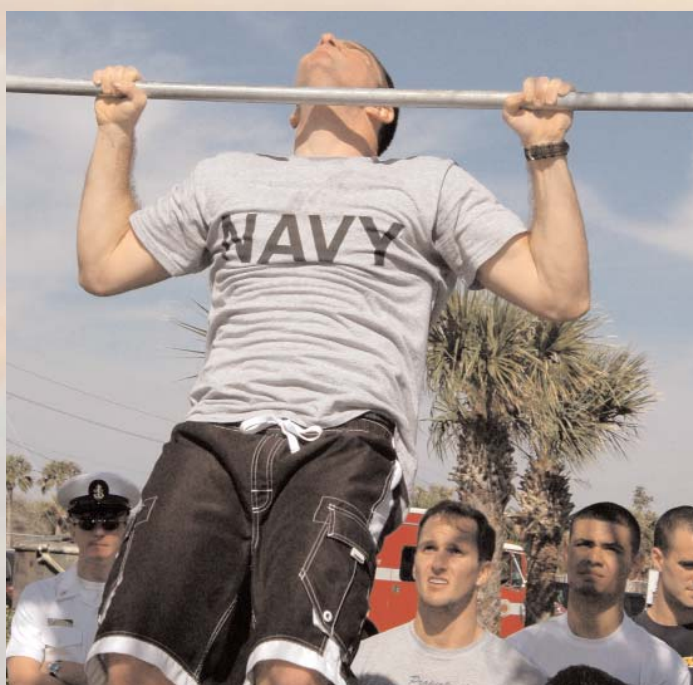
There are financial incentives as well. A \$40,000 entry bonus has been enacted for SEAL applicants entering under the SEAL Challenge program. There are certain milestones along the way (like successfully completing the physical screening test) allowing them to access some of this bonus prior to completing BUD/S. Additionally, if the applicant enters the Navy under the SEAL Challenge, he will automatically be promoted to E-4 upon completion of BUD/S.

About half of the candidates taking the SEAL Challenge at Fort Pierce passed the physical screening test. A ceremony was held where those passing the physical screening test were given SEAL T-shirts and awards from retired SEAL Master Chief Petty Officer Rudy



**SEAL Master Chief Petty Officer retired Rudy Boesch congratulates a young man for passing the Special Operations Challenge Fitness Assessment at Fort Pierce, Fla., Feb. 11. Photo by Mike Bottoms.**

Boesch of the original SEAL Team Two and who also appeared on the television show “Survivor.”



## ***Are you fit enough to be a SEAL, SWCC or Diver?***

Exercise	SEAL	SWCC	EOD/Diver
Pushups	51	42	42
Situps	62	50	50
Pullups	6	6	6
1.5 mile run	11:30	12:30	12:45

***Pushups and situps are each 2 minutes in length. No time limit on pullups.***

***A candidate strains as he goes through the pull up exercise during the Special Operations Challenge Fitness Assessment at Fort Pierce, Fla., Feb. 11. Photo by Mike Bottoms.***

# 'Always prepared': Hornets true to motto for past 30 years

By Jamie Haig  
16th SOW Public Affairs

Jan. 1 marked the 30th anniversary of the 20th Special Operations Squadron.

Thirty years ago, the 20th SOS activated with only one helicopter, a shared trailer and an opportunity to follow in their forefathers footsteps.

The "20th" designation brought with it a prestigious history, including successful missions and humanitarian aid during the Vietnam War and the presentation of the Medal of Honor to one of its members.

Originally established as the 20th Observation Squadron in 1942, it changed designations and names several times until it was consolidated with the 20th Helicopter Squadron in 1956.

In 1967, when joined by the UH-1F/P helicopters assigned to Project Lucky Tiger, they became the 'Green Hornets.' It was on a 20th Helicopter Squadron mission that 1st Lt. James Fleming earned the Congressional Medal of Honor for heroism during combat.

Between 1956 and the deactivation of the squadron in 1972, the 'Green Hornets' were used for both conventional and unconventional warfare missions.

After reactivation as the 20th SOS, it lacked the

necessary manpower and equipment.

"We had to share a trailer with the Combat Controllers," said retired Col. Robert Mayo, the first commander of the 20th SOS. "We were at half our strength and had one helicopter, a CH-3, to our name. We used to stand on the flightline for our turn to fly."

As the new commander, he sent the instructor pilots to the Reserve special operations squadron at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. to be trained on the CH-3 Jolly Green Giant and the UH-1 Huey.

One of the original Hueys assigned to the 20th SOS, tail number 69-6654, is currently in use at the 6th SOS at Hurlburt Field, Fla.

"We had to go to the Panama Canal for our check rides," Mayo said. "We were trying to get realistic training without an accident, and that was hard to do."

As the pilots were trained, more helicopters found their way to Hurlburt Field. By the summer of 1976, they were able to fly the first four-ship formation at night.

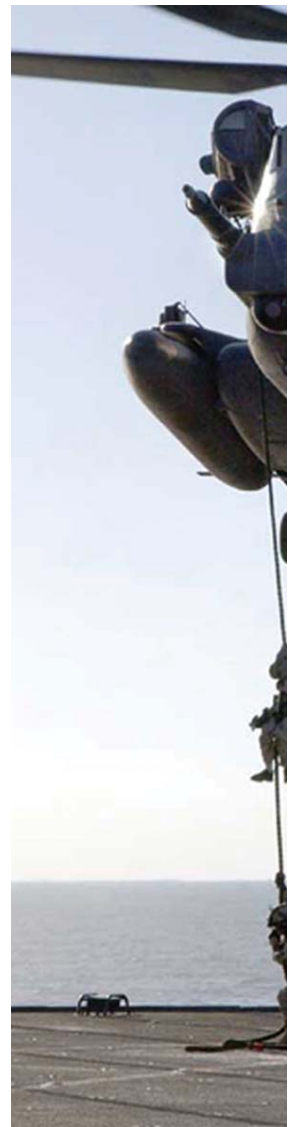
"What put the 20th SOS on the drawing board was the Joint Counter Attack program exercise," Mayo said. "We played the part of the Russians and even painted the helicopters in their color scheme."

A Russian helicopter pilot trained the crews in tactics and procedures. During the exercise, held at Fort Rucker, Ala., the helicopters went up against fixed-wing aircraft.

Every hit was recorded, and by the end of the exercise, the 20th SOS had proven, by a five-to-one ratio, the helicopters were better at defeating almost all other aircraft. Only A-10's, which had a one-to-one ratio of hits, were considered competition for the



An MH-53J Pave Low flies past one of Saddam Hussein's palaces in Iraq. 20th SOS photo.







**Three Airmen fast rope from a MH-53J Pave Low helicopter to the deck of USS Mount Whitney after completing a special operations mission. 20th SOS photo.**

helos.

It was during this exercise the infamous red scarf became a part of the 20th SOS flight suit. While at Fort Rucker, one of the crew chiefs found a bag of rags with red tablecloths inside.

“He stuck the tablecloth on the end of a stick as a flag on the flightline truck, to get our students to follow him,” said retired Maj. John Grove, a former member of the 20th SOS. “The rest were cut up for crew scarves. Since we were playing the part of the Russians, it worked.”

Another milestone for the squadron was the initiation of night-vision goggles.

Introduced to the 20th SOS in the late

70’s, they were the first squadron in the Air Force to use NVG’s in flight. The crews were taught to practice walking at night with the goggles and then riding bicycles.

“After that, we used them full-blown in the cockpit,” Mayo said. “We always carried a roll of tape with us to cover up the panel lights in the cockpit, leaving only the ‘danger’ lights visible.”

Significant changes kept the young squadron learning as the years passed. In May 1980, eight HH-53H Pave Low helicopters found a home at the 20th SOS, providing the squadron with a heavy-lift, long-range helicopter.

According to the squadrons’ history, within a month’s time following the devastating Operation Eagle Claw mission, where five members of the 8th SOS were killed during the Iran hostage rescue, a decision was made that the long-range capability of the Pave Low would be needed if a second rescue attempt was to be successful.

Orders to move the Pave Low helicopters from the air rescue squadron at Kirtland AFB, N.M., were received on a Friday and by Monday morning, personnel and equipment had been transferred to Hurlburt Field. It

wasn’t until 1987 that the squadron replaced the HH-53 Pave Low with the MH-53 Pave Low, the only helicopter used by the squadron today.

In April 1981, while training at Kirtland AFB, they were called upon to aid with rescue attempts during devastating hotel fire in Las Vegas. Their job was to transport the fire, medical and rescue personnel to the roof, to assist an already-taxed local police department.

Also during the 1980’s, the 20th SOS was to support Operation Bahamas, Antilles and Turks, a drug enforcement task force. Using the UH-1, they supported the OPBAT mission for two years, snagging one of the largest drug busts in history in 1985 — more than 1,800 pounds of cocaine, valuing \$300 million dollars.

Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf stated in 1991 “the 20th SOS had the distinction of starting the war (Desert Storm).” Using concepts and tactics never used before, the Pave Low led eight AH-64 Apache attack helicopters into Iraq to destroy the early warning systems.

It was also during this time the 20th SOS did the first combat search and rescue since the Vietnam War, rescuing Navy Lt. Devon Jones.

On Sept. 11, 2001, the 20th SOS was training in North Carolina. The squadron quickly responded to assist with initial recovery efforts in New York and Washington, D.C.

Since then, the 20th SOS has supported operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

“Watching our guys in Iraq; seeing their

**See 20th, Page 26**



**Navy Lt. Devon Jones, left, runs towards the Pave Low that rescued him during Operation Desert Storm. The 20th SOS conducted the first combat search and rescue since the Vietnam War. 20th SOS photo.**

## 20th continued, Page 25

professionalism and mission focus is what I'm most proud of," said Lt. Col. Scott Howell, 20th SOS commander. "They maintain a great attitude despite being deployed all the time."

Today, the 20th SOS is the second most deployed unit in Air Force Special Operations Command.

"We responded within 24 hours after Sept. 11 and continued until August 2004 without a break," Howell said. "After a four-month reconstitution period interrupted by Hurricane Ivan, we were back on the road in CENTCOM in January 2005. Even with our deployments, we were still able to assist after Hurricanes Ivan, Charley and most recently Hurricane Katrina."

Operations weren't the only thing the 20th did well. Their people were considered a more valuable asset.

Col. Tommy Hull, former 20th SOS commander, said the moment he will remember the most was returning Navy Lt. John Alvarez to flying status, after he lost his leg as the result of a crash. Alvarez received an athletic prosthesis that would enable him to manipulate the controls of a helicopter.

One year later, he did his first re-qualifying flight. Since Navy Lieutenant Alvarez was the first-ever Navy exchange pilot with AFSOC, an inter-service transfer was arranged so he could stay on permanently with the 20th SOS as Capt. Alvarez, U.S. Air Force.

"I held a commander's call in the 20th auditorium," Hull said. "I told them about John's status and that he was back. The doors opened, and in walked John. There wasn't a dry eye in the house."

"The teamwork, the brotherhood and the support from the 20th is what made it possible for me to come back," said now Lt. Col. Alvarez, 6th SOS commander.

The squadron history books reflect accomplishments of the 20th SOS are too numerous to mention but its dedication to the mission and each other is evident in everything they do.

One special tactics officer, Capt. Frank Rodriguez, 720th Operations Support Squadron Advance Skills Training commander, has worked with the 20th SOS many times. He shared a journal entry that best describes the relationship the 20th SOS has with other units.

*December 5, 2001*

*War reared its ugly face today, a day I will never forget. As the (MH) 53s arrived, the scene was what one would expect accompanies the plot of war:*



**A Pavé Low releases flares. 20th SOS photo.**

*gruesome, horrid and painful.*

*As I approached the helicopter, I was greeted by one of the Pararescuemen, I gave him a heads up on the EVAC (evacuation) plan. The back of the bird was carpeted with bodies; blood stains soaked through all the bandages and blankets. The U.S. flag drew and commanded your attention, draped over one of the killed in action. The flag was only red and blue, as the white had been overcome by the blood.*

*Amidst the chaos, a sense of pride came over me, because as the madness enveloped the situation, special tactics Combat Controllers, Pararescuemen and AFSOC aviation forces held it together and answered the call making sense out of madness.'*

The 20th SOS had once again lived up to its motto, "Semper Paratus," always prepared.



**Two Pavé Low helicopters conduct nighttime infiltration mission. 20th SOS photo.**

# Seven 20th SOS members honored

By Jamie Haig

16th SOW Public Affairs

Seven members of the 20th Special Operations Squadron were decorated Dec. 16 for their heroic actions in Fallujah, Iraq.

Capt. Matthew Berry, Master Sgt. Randy Kensey, Tech. Sgt. Byron Allen, and Staff Sgts. James Bowling and Christopher Dalton were all presented with the Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor for their efforts during a resupply mission April 12, 2004.

Master Sgt. Robert Colannino and Staff Sgt. Jesse Lee were presented the Bronze Star with Valor for their actions on the same mission.

Two crewmembers, Capt. Steven Edwards, now at the 14th Weapons School, and Airman 1st Class Casey Mabry, were also cited for valor during this engagement, but were unable to attend the ceremony. Tech. Sgt. Christian MacKenzie, who was wounded during the mission, assisted Col. Mark Alsid, 16th Operations Group commander, in



Master Sgt. Robert Colannino, 20th Special Operations Squadron, stands proudly after receiving a Bronze Star with Valor for his actions April 12, 2004. Photo by Senior Airman Heidi Davis.

handing out the medals.

On the night of April 12, the crew flew two MH-53J Pave Low helicopters in formation to resupply troops in contact with enemy forces. They couldn't land on their first approach.

As the second ship, known as Chalk Two, exited the area, a rocket propelled grenade exploded in the nose of the aircraft. The RPG blasted through the windshield, wounding the pilot, copilot and flight engineer. The blast severed communications lines, destroying the instrument panel and automatic flight controls. The gaping hole rendered the aircraft nearly uncontrollable.

Despite his injuries, a severely-damaged aircraft, blacked-out conditions and unfamiliar terrain, Edwards, with the aid of Kensey and Colannino, managed to crash land the aircraft in the hostile enemy territory.

Upon landing, Kensey and Lee secured the damaged helicopter, directed Army Special Forces Soldiers in establishing a defensive perimeter, and returned to evacuate the crew, weapons and classified materials.

Colannino moved the seriously-injured flight engineer out of the damaged cockpit and administered first aid. Then he removed the injured pilots from the cockpit.

The damaged systems didn't allow for a normal shut down of the engines. However, in pitch-black surroundings, under direct enemy fire, Colannino's knowledge of the aircraft system allowed him to find the correct wires and disengage the system.

After Chalk Two was struck by the RPG, the crew of the first MH-53J took immediate, evasive action avoiding a possible mid-air collision. While under fire from enemy forces, Allen and Mabry spotted enemy concentrations and returned accurate fire, while Sgt. Dalton dispensed flares.

Using the navigation guidance system, Bowling quickly located the downed aircraft. Berry then passed along the coordinates to the crew of an AC-130 that engaged enemy forces.

While flying to the damaged aircraft, Dalton talked Berry through the approach, landing 200 feet away from the crash site. Allen set up a defensive perimeter and provided cover for three Soldiers to evacuate the crew from the helicopter.

With all downed crew members aboard and initiating a take off, the helicopter again took fire from enemy forces, prompting Allen and Mabry to suppress the barrage, allowing the crew to fly out of harm's way.

"These warriors define 'cool under pressure,'" said Lt. Col. Scott Howell, 20th SOS commander. "When faced with a difficult situation under enemy fire, they fell back on their training and focused on their mission."

# ISOF Convoy Security Course trains soldiers how to survive

*Story by Spc. James P. Hunter  
MNC-1 PAO*

It is a battle Iraqis deal with everyday. The uncertainty of surviving in the neighborhoods they grew up in is unsettling. Iraqis want the certainty of knowing that their families are safe.

The soldiers of the Iraqi Special Operations Forces Brigade believe they have the capabilities to defeat the terrorists who are attempting to destabilize Iraq, said an Iraqi ISOF instructor.

The ISOF Brigade soldiers continue to specialize and hone the combat skills that make the brigade a driving force in Iraq's campaign for freedom.

The Iraqis continued their progress when nine ISOF Soldiers graduated from the Convoy Security Course.

As the Iraqis continue to train, they move closer to securing their country's freedom.

Initially, U.S. Army Special Forces directly trained the ISOF. From those soldiers, the U.S. SF trainers then selected the best-qualified Iraqi soldiers to become instructors and teach the special operations coursework to their fellow Iraqis.

Now, the American SF Soldiers serve as advisers to the ISOF Brigade on training and operations, helping the Iraqi soldiers on things they can sustain and improve upon, said one of the ISOF's U.S. advisers, a captain from the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force - Arabian Peninsula.

"The course gives the soldiers the ability to protect themselves on the roadway and protect convoys," he said. "As we know, convoys are the most dangerous parts of being in Iraq."

Throughout the course, the Iraqi soldiers learn a variety of skills, starting with basic marksmanship and weapons familiarization.

They then learn infantry movement tactics, such as advancing toward an objective and breaking contact with the enemy. The soldiers then learn to operate humvees.

Finally, they put all the training together, mount weapons on the vehicles

and conduct a mounted tactical movement.

An Iraqi ISOF instructor said that his goal as an instructor is to proficiently train his students, making them skilled soldiers who are ready to defeat the enemy.

"God willing, we will do it. We will fight terrorism, fight the Saddamists, and gain the freedom of Iraq," he said. "We are Iraqi special forces. We shall go on many missions and all the students will be trained and ready to fight in the streets."

Iraqi soldiers are ready to conduct their own convoy operations without the supervision of American forces, said the U.S. adviser. The soldiers are trained, and equipped with modern weapons and armored vehicles. They are skilled, and ready to fight terrorism to take back their country.

Once they are given a mission, they coordinate everything, he said. The soldiers write their own operation order, conduct the mission and survive on their own.

"This training is vital," the U.S. SF captain said. "Not only to survival on the road but to the overall mission."

The ISOF instructor said his overall goal for the Iraqi special operations is to protect their freedom and the people of Iraq.

"For God, for country, and for freedom. Long live Iraq!" he strongly urged.



*An Iraqi special forces soldier practices shooting while going through training during Convoy Security Course Camp Victory, Iraq. Photo by Spc. James Hunter.*

# PSYOP detachment supports CJSOTF-Arabian Peninsula

*Spc. Chris Stump*  
*CJSOTF-AP*

Tactical Psychological Operations Detachment 950 didn't exist before January 2005, but that didn't stop it from deploying to support Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Arabian Peninsula in June 2005.

The 13 men of TPD 950, a detachment from Company B, 9th Battalion, 4th Psychological Operations Group, have completed roughly 200 missions and influenced thousands of Iraqis during their tour in support of CJSOTF-AP operations.

"Successfully executing a mission designated for a full PSYOP company, the detachment moved its teams throughout Iraq and supported nearly every major CJSOTF-AP unit in theater," said TPD 950's commander.

To cover the area they did with only 13 Soldiers was a daunting task, but one the detachment performed very well. Working with Special Operations Forces afforded the detachment the opportunity to support nearly every type of operation in Iraq.

According to the commander, TPD 950 supported everything from direct action missions against insurgent cells to medical assistance missions.

While the Soldiers were active participants in a variety of missions, utilizing a spectrum of skills, their main objective was to persuade, influence and change the behavior of their audience using their tactical PSYOP skill sets with the overall objective of "winning hearts and minds," the commander said.

To successfully win over the Iraqi people, the detachment disseminated and distributed more than 2.8 million products, said one of TPD 950's non-commissioned officers.

"A lot of the missions we've done were specifically for the PSYOP effect," he said. "And we were able to



*Members of Tactical Psychological Operations Detachment 950 talk with Iraqi citizens during a mission. CJSOTF-AP photo.*

integrate well with the (Operational Detachments – Alpha) we worked with throughout the country, too."

All this was accomplished by the first PSYOP unit dedicated to CJSOTF-AP operations.

The detachment's noncommissioned officer in charge said it's been a challenge as the first PSYOP unit dedicated to the special operations mission, but his detachment has performed well above and beyond the standard.

"Everyone is working way above their paygrade and making things happen," he said. "Most of our E5s are doing E7 work to make the missions successful."

"It's really been the attitude of the men," he said. "Without all the NCOs we have with all their years of experience, it wouldn't have worked out so well."

Although the effects of the TPD 950's operations may not be evident the day after a mission, they will be evident in weeks, months and years down the road — and over a large area.

"Some people never leave a 50 to 70 mile radius during their time in Iraq — we've had our men all over the country," the commander said.

Spread thin, but still accomplishing their mission, the commander said. "Changing one mind at a time."

# Interview with USSOCOM's newest command sergeant major

By Mike Bottoms  
USSOCOM Public Affairs

U.S. Special Operations Command welcomed its newest command sergeant major on Jan. 23.

Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Smith has been part of the Special Forces community since January 1978 when he graduated from the Special Forces Qualification Course as a weapons sergeant. His first assignment was to Operational Detachment Alpha 525, 5th Special Forces Group, Fort Bragg, N.C. While at 5th SFG, he cross trained as a Special Forces communications sergeant.

Since, he has served in a variety of roles to include an instructor for the Survival, Escape, Resistance, and Escape course, intelligence and operations sergeant, team sergeant, company first sergeant, company sergeant major, battalion sergeant major, group sergeant major and the senior enlisted leader at Special Operations Command -Pacific.

## How do you see your role in USSOCOM?

My primary role is to serve as the personal advisor to the commander and key staff on all matters concerning morale, welfare, professional development, effective use, and progress of the enlisted force and to ensure the commander's policies are known and understood by the enlisted force and to enforce those standards.

## What will you focus on during your tenure?

There are many things I'll need to focus on, but a few highlighted areas are recruiting, retention, education, training and equipping the force. Operators who are properly trained and equipped have the confidence needed to fight on today's battlefields. We owe that to our warriors. Another area that will take some focus is bringing our newest members of the SOF Force up to speed and into the fold. That of course being our brothers from the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command.

## What quality of life issue do you think is most important?

I am not sure which one is the most important but the USSOCOM's Care Coalition and their mission of taking care of the wounded operator, or if in the event the operator makes the ultimate sacrifice, taking care of their families is very high on my list. Operators in the field take great comfort in knowing their families will be taken



USSOCOM Photo

care of if something happens to them, and it frees them up to concentrate on winning the Global War on Terrorism.

## What is the biggest strength of the NCO Corps?

The NCO/Petty Officer Corps provides both consistency and continuity to their service. When I was a member of an ODA, I served with four different captains. Each captain relied on the NCOs to teach him the true tricks of the trade. The NCOs in the ODA always made sure the team stayed strong and basically served as the backbone of the unit.

## What impresses you about the military today?

I am impressed with the continued and amazing dedication of the men and women serving in the armed forces of our Nation today. Between the many deployments and personal sacrifices made it is remarkable how we have stood up to the longevity of this war's challenge. In fact, this is the longest challenge we have had since Vietnam. The continued commitment of our service members to serve our Nation in this noble endeavor is what will win the Global War on Terrorism.

# SOF leaders speak at WEST 2006

By *Samantha L. Quigley*  
*American Forces Press Service*

Demand for Special Operations Forces capabilities has increased dramatically since Sept. 11, 2001, the deputy commander of U.S. Special Operations Command said.

“There’s been much demand for our capabilities,” Navy Vice Adm. Eric Olson said.

Olson spoke at WEST 2006, a technology, communication and national security conference co-sponsored by the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association and the U.S. Naval Institute.

Olson said in the recent past, nearly 85 percent of deployed Special Operations Forces have operated in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. But, he pointed out, “We still woke up in about 50 non-CENTCOM countries this morning.”

SOCOM’s participation in the Global War on Terrorism has turned the spotlight on the command, bringing it out of the shadows, he said.

This added attention has brought more support, translating into more capabilities.

“I want to emphasize the (importance) we’re placing on ensuring our SOF human weapons systems have the hardware and the training they need to maximize their effectiveness,” Olson said. “It’s a holistic approach we’re taking. The core of our capability will always be the ... individual. We do take seriously equipping the man, not manning the equipment.”

Other SOF leadership at WEST 2006 echoed Olson’s sentiments.

“We’ve got to field a warrior or technician who is culturally attuned (and) linguistically capable,” said Navy Capt. Sean Pybus, commander of Naval Special Warfare Group “Those are key requirements in the years to come.”

Army Col. Edward Reeder, deputy commander, 7th Special Forces, agreed with Pybus, adding interpersonal skills, tactical and technical expertise also are musts.

“The Special Forces operator needs to be a subject-matter expert in unconventional warfare,” he said. “He must thoroughly understand and be competent in the execution of a broad spectrum operations. A Special Forces Soldier is physically fit, mentally tough, politically and culturally sensitive ... and lethal when required.”

“They understand when they go to a country that any inappropriate action has a severe and adverse impact on the way that country looks ... at the United States of America,” said Brig. Gen. Dennis Hejlik, commander of Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command. “They’re more mature,



**Navy Vice Adm. Eric Olson, deputy commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, discusses the demand for Special Operations Forces with a group of WEST 2006 conference attendees in San Diego. Photo by Samantha Quigley.**

they’re more experienced, better equipped.”

And “equipping the man” with the best can be challenging at times.

According to Hejlik, communications is an area in which Special Operations Forces “really hurt the most.”

“We always need enhanced capability in comms,” he said, noting the best available communications gear becomes obsolete in six months.

Current systems don’t always interface, Pybus explained, and can hamper the flow of information from one location to another. Communications systems that can talk to each other are essential, he said.

“We’ve got to figure this out,” Pybus said. “And my opinion is to get away from proprietary ... technology, looking instead to services’ open architecture so we can take those Predator or Raven feeds, present them to the guy in the humvee so he can make decisions that might save his life and certainly help accomplish his mission.”

This holistic approach, through everything from recruiting to training, education and equipment, is creating what Olson calls “multimission humans.” They are physically fit and mentally agile enough to accomplish what no other force is specifically trained to do. “Our force is in good shape and they’re more capable today than at any other time in our history by far,” Olson said.

# Special Operations Warrior Foundation volunteer receives **President's Volunteer Service Award**

By *Mike Bottoms*  
USSOCOM Public Affairs

President Bush presented Joseph MacDougald II the President's Volunteer Service Award Feb. 17 at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., for his work with the Special Operations Warrior Foundation.

An entrepreneur in information technology, MacDougald volunteered more than 2,000 hours reconfiguring and designing the communication systems and website for the foundation.

"I happened to be in my father's office one day when I heard a pitch for donations for the Special Operations Foundation and became intrigued by what they were trying to accomplish," he said.

Since 1980, the foundation has provided surviving children of special operations personnel killed in combat or training missions with a college education. A newer mission added is assisting the wounded special operators with their immediate financial needs and meeting their longterm needs.

"In 2001, we were a small office with only three people and our web based annual donations was only about \$5,000 dollars," said Steve McLeary, executive director, Special Operations Warrior Foundation. "Joe came along and innovatively replaced our antiquated computer equipment through a matching program and made our website easy to use increasing our online donations to \$200,000 annually."

MacDougald has volunteered for the organization for five years now ensuring they have leading edge technology communicating with the families of the fallen. Additionally, his work has located 50 more children who are eligible for the program.

"It is an extremely gratifying feeling knowing you can really impact a young person's life in a tangible, positive way," MacDougald said.

He was also excited by meeting the President. "The President was very kind and sincere to me and thanked me for the work I've done for the community," he said. "I really don't think I deserve all this attention because



**President George Bush is presenting the President's Volunteer Service Award to Joseph MacDougald II, Feb. 17 at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., for his volunteer work supporting the Special Operations Warrior Foundation. Photo by Mike Bottoms.**

the real heroes are the men and women defending our country, but receiving the award from the President is a day I will never forget."

The Special Operations Warrior Foundation originated as the Col. Arthur D. "Bull" Simons Scholarship Fund in 1980 with the intent to provide college educations for the 17 children surviving the nine men killed or incapacitated at Desert One on April 17, 1980, after the Iranian hostage rescue attempt.

The foundation currently has 626 children in the program. Today, 91 children have graduated from college with 97 children enrolled and expecting to have 120 in college next year.

*Editors note: For more information on the Special Warrior Foundation visit [www.specialops.org](http://www.specialops.org).*



# JSOU hosts first SOF Strategic Studies Symposium

By Mike Bottoms  
USSOCOM Public Affairs

The Joint Special Operations University will hold the first Special Operations Forces Strategic Studies Symposium themed “Countering Global Insurgency” May 2 to 4.

“The symposium offers many worldwide key counterterrorism players and experts the opportunity to assemble and collaborate in an academic venue to discuss the issue of terrorism and the applicability of using a global counterinsurgency construct to fight the war on terrorism,” said Brig. Gen. Steven Hashem, president, Joint Special Operations University. “This is part of USSOCOM’s effort to work in unison with our interagency and coalition partners to locate, identify and defeat threats.”

The inaugural symposium brings together experts from across the U.S. government, academic and research communities, and international representatives to share and discuss several topics related to countering global insurgency.

“The symposium is designed for U.S. Special Operations Command, component, and theater special operations command leaders to interact with people from think tanks, academic institutions, coalition partners, and others who not only want to hear from experts in the counterinsurgency field but want to contribute to the dialog as well,” said Lt. Col. Michael McMahan, Department Head, Strategic Studies Department, JSOU.

Three panels will be formed each with a sub-theme, and time for questions, answers, and dialog among the participants.



*The Strategic Studies Symposium is an academic venue to discuss the issue of terrorism and the applicability of using a global counterinsurgency construct to fight the war on terrorism. Photographic by Mike Bottoms.*

“The designated sub-themes for the panels will be countering terrorist networks, counterinsurgency, and international dimensions,” he said.

Another stated goal is the exchange of ideas will generate new approaches to fight the Global War on Terrorism by identifying new synergies, capabilities, and contacts benefiting all.

“We hope this symposium will have a positive impact on the Global War on Terrorism and aid planners with a fresh look,” McMahan said. “By bringing together this diverse group of people who are willing to debate serious issues about how to conduct the Global War on Terrorism I think will pay dividends for aiding the struggle to defeat global counterinsurgency.”

# Counterinsurgency training and Che Guevara's failed revolution

## USSOCOM History Office

On March 23, 1967, a five-man guerrilla unit ambushed a 40-man army patrol in the Bolivian jungle, killing seven soldiers and capturing 14. Ernesto "Che" Guevara's first attack on the Bolivian army was a success. Che, a leader of the Cuban revolution, had established a small guerrilla force of about 60 men in Bolivia's jungle, in hopes of making the country a base for insurrection across South America.

The Bolivian military had learned about Che's force from two deserters in mid-March. They then asked for U.S. military assistance to counter the threat, to include aircraft, jeeps and an assortment of weapons. Although the U.S. ambassador skeptically referred to the request as a "Christmas list," the U.S. government eventually donated automatic weapons and rations to the army.

More importantly, in April, U.S. Southern Command deployed a 17-man Special Forces mobile training team, led by Maj. Ralph "Pappy" Shelton, to teach basic soldier skills and counterinsurgency tactics to Bolivia's 2nd Ranger Battalion. This team was part of the 8th Special Forces Group (Airborne) Special Action Force, which routinely conducted counterinsurgency training, as well as other training, throughout Latin America. When Guevara learned of the planned Special Forces deployment, he wrote in his diary, "perhaps this is the first episode of a new Vietnam." But Bolivia would not become a new Vietnam.

The Special Forces Soldiers set up a training camp in late April about 100 miles from the guerrillas, which was as close as they ever came to Guevara. From May 8 to Sept. 19, Shelton and his team molded the 2nd Rangers into an effective fighting organization. The Bolivians learned the basics of patrolling and shooting, as well as how to move at night, avoid ambushes and detect booby traps. They also learned how to conduct small and large unit operations and counterinsurgency tactics.

In the 1960s, doing good works or

"civic action" was a part of U.S. counterinsurgency strategy, and Shelton's team gathered intelligence on the guerrillas by doing civic actions. The Special Forces Soldiers built a school for the village, held sick call for the community and made friends among the local populace. Before long, area residents were keeping the team informed about anything that seemed suspicious.

While the Special Forces Soldiers trained the 2nd Battalion, the Bolivian army drove Guevara's force out of their operating base and into more barren and rugged territory in the north. On Sept. 25, the 2nd Ranger Battalion entered active service and joined the hunt for Che and his followers, whose numbers by then had dwindled to about 20, ragged, malnourished group struggling to survive. On Oct. 8, the 2nd Battalion trapped the guerrillas in a ravine, killing several of them and capturing a wounded Guevara. They executed him the next day, before the United States could intervene. Guevara's dream of starting a new Vietnam had proved to be as illusory as his guerrilla campaign was disastrous. Thus the battalion that Shelton's team trained in counterinsurgency tactics had put an end to Che Guevara's and Fidel Castro's scheme to start revolution throughout South America.



*Maj. Ralph "Pappy" Shelton, left, is congratulating a Bolivian lieutenant who is part of the unit Shelton trained to track down Ernesto "Che" Guevara. USSOCOM photo.*

# U.S. Special Operations Command...



...accepted the first combat configured CV-22.  
There are missions waiting for the CV-22 in every  
part of the world where special operations teams  
are carrying out the most critical missions to support  
the Global War on Terrorism.