



# TIP OF THE SPEAR

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**PJ Scott Fales  
receives  
2012 Bull Simons Award**

*U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., June 2012*



# U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



**Pararescueman Scott Fales  
2012 Bull Simons recipient ... 12**

## Tip of the Spear



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*(Cover) Retired Air Force Master Sgt. Scott Fales stands in front of "Super 6-8." Super 6-8 was the helicopter Fales fast roped from into the battle of Mogadishu. Fales received U.S. Special Operations Command's highest honor when he was awarded the 2012 Bull Simons Award in Tampa, Fla., May 23. This lifetime achievement award, named for Army Col. Arthur "Bull" Simons, honors the spirit, values, and skills of the unconventional warrior. Courtesy photo.*

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## SOF AROUND THE WORLD - AFGHANISTAN COMBINED JOINT SPECIAL OPERATIONS TASK FORCE – AFGHANISTAN



*Maj. Kent Solheim, Charlie Company commander, 4th Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), defends his position from insurgent small arms fire during a fire fight in Kunar province, Afghanistan, March 7. Solheim was injured July 27, 2007 in Karbala, Iraq, while conducting a raid to capture an insurgent commander. During the firefight that ensued, Solheim was shot four times. Solheim did not initially lose his leg. It was only after he lost function of his lower left leg that doctor's felt there was a slim chance of making a full recovery. Solheim eventually elected to amputate his leg below the knee. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Clay Weis.*

# Warriors stand tall in combat again

*By Gunnery Sgt. Ryan O'Hare  
CJSOTF – A Public Affairs*

Becoming a part of the U.S. Army's elite fighting force takes total dedication and an unwavering fortitude to persevere in the toughest environments. These grueling conditions not only test an individual's physical limits, but the mental capacity to forge forward in the face of adversity when most other men would falter. The few left standing at the end of this arduous gauntlet are known by two words - Green Berets.

For Maj. Kent Solheim, the Charlie Company commander, 4th Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), and Maj. Robert Eldridge, 2nd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne), executive officer, their personal courage, coupled with their desire to continue to serve alongside their Special Forces brothers, was stronger than any challenge that confronted them, including the amputation of their limbs.

Solheim was injured July 27, 2007, in Karbala, Iraq, while conducting a raid to capture an insurgent commander. During the firefight that ensued, Solheim was shot four

times. The barrage of bullets struck both legs and also hit his left shoulder.

His road to recovery was long, taking two years and involving 29 surgeries. This included one year at Walter Reed Army Medical Center as both an inpatient and outpatient.

Solheim did not initially lose his leg. It was only after he lost function of his lower left leg that doctors felt there was a slim chance of making a full recovery. Solheim continued to fight the diagnosis a long time before eventually electing to amputate his leg below the knee.

“I had dealt with my injury at its worst for 18 months, so it was a relief to have the surgery. It marked an opportunity for me to get a new start and end a long and hard chapter of my life,” said Solheim. “I was uncertain, but I saw many other amputees being more capable than I was, so I was confident that it would improve things for me.”

For Solheim, the road to recovery was tough, but overcoming challenges was nothing new to him.

“I did not want to be defeated by my injury and felt that I could still contribute regardless of the fact that I am an amputee.”

Solheim not only felt his quality of life would improve, he also knew others who continued to serve on active duty with a prosthetic. For this warrior, the decision to once again stand tall and fight alongside his brethren was made.

“I still deal daily with the challenges of being an amputee, and with chronic pain,” said Solheim. “But the alternative was certainly worse.”

Although both officers spent time recovering at Walter Reed Medical Center, their paths to recovery were different.

Eldridge was injured while on a combat patrol in Shkin, Paktika province, Afghanistan, Dec. 17, 2004. He was in the lead vehicle when it was struck by an anti-tank mine. In the aftermath of the horrific blast, Eldridge knew he was critically wounded.

“I have a medical background, so I knew I was seriously injured,” said Eldridge. “Our team medic was driving and



**General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, congratulates Maj. Kent Solheim on his team's recent mission and individual team member's accomplishments at Camp Morehead, Afghanistan, April 23. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Clay Weis.**

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*“I had dealt with my injury at its worst for 18 months, so it was a relief to have the surgery. It marked an opportunity for me to get a new start and end a long and hard chapter of my life. I was uncertain, but I saw many other amputees being more capable than I was, so I was confident that it would improve things for me.”*

— Maj. Kent Solheim

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was able to get to me quickly.”

Eldridge’s injuries included severe damage to his left leg, multiple fractures in his right leg, a shattered ankle and damage to his left eye. At one point, a large piece of his leg bone was lying on the floorboard of the vehicle. Upon arriving at Forward Operating Base Salerno, his left leg was immediately amputated in order to save his life.

Within three days of the explosion, Eldridge was stateside beginning his recovery process. Eldridge didn’t waste any time, and quickly began exercising on his bed’s support bars.

“I knew my arms worked, so I just started doing pull-ups,” said Eldridge.

In less than a week, he was in physical therapy working out several hours a day.

Growing up with his Green Beret father, Bob Eldridge, and his brother Eddie, who’s currently serving in Special

Forces, Eldridge understood that quitting, either mentally or physically, was never an option.

Much like Solheim, Eldridge saw other Special Forces members around him recovering from their own injuries and getting back to the fight. He knew with hard work, anything was possible.

“You can get angry and upset, but you can’t get angry and upset if you don’t do anything about it,” said Eldridge. “These guys make it through the (Special Forces) qualification course for a reason. They have the mental capacity to overcome something like this. You see them in the hospital and they’re the guys figuring out what they need to do to get better, not waiting around for someone to do it for them.”

For both these men, having their family and friends surrounding them through rehabilitation made the difference in not only improving their physical capability, but also their spirit and outlook on life.

“There have been many people who have helped me along the way since my injury. Most of these people also had difficult experiences in their lives, but have persevered,” said Solheim. “Every day when I put on my prosthetic leg, it is a sobering reminder of July 27, 2007, but that event has allowed me to connect with people in life that I otherwise would not have been able to connect with. I hope my experience might help someone else overcome a trial they are facing like the people that were able to help me.”

Once again serving in a combat zone for the second time since their surgeries, both Solheim and Eldridge are appreciative of the support to return to duty and pass on their knowledge and leadership to others.

“I appreciate being afforded the opportunity to continue my service in the military,” said Eldridge. “Including the trust showed to me by allowing me to continue to lead our nation’s sons and daughters.”

Although Solheim and Eldridge are not the first service members to be severely injured in battle, their experiences and resolve may inspire others in the future, like those who have motivated them.

“Last year I sat at the bedside of a friend who had just lost both legs in Afghanistan,” said Solheim. “He told me this was the hand he’s been dealt, so he should make the best of it. I took



**U.S. Army Major Robert Eldridge, 2nd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) executive officer, prepares before mounting a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle, in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, May 7. Eldridge was injured while on a combat patrol in Shkin, Paktika province, Afghanistan, Dec. 17, 2004. He was in the lead vehicle when it was struck by an anti-tank mine. Upon arriving at Forward Operating Base Salerno, his left leg was amputated in order to save his life. Photo by Army Sgt. Devin James.**

those words to heart and would like to think this is my mantra also. This is the hand I’ve been dealt, but life goes on and I will make best of it.”

Both men continue to serve their nation to the best of their ability, and hope they may be viewed as positive role models for other injured warriors looking to get back in the fight.

“The most important advice I could give someone is to make an honest assessment and determine if their personal injuries are such that they still have the capability to contribute,” said Solheim.

“At the end of the day, what we do is bigger than any one person, and continued

service needs to be for the benefit of both the individual and the organization.”

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*“You can get angry and upset, but you can’t get angry and upset if you don’t do anything about it. These guys make it through the (Special Forces) qualification course for a reason. They have the mental capacity to overcome something like this. You see them in the hospital and they’re the guys figuring out what they need to do to get better, not waiting around for someone to do it for them.”*

— Maj. Robert Eldridge

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*U.S. Army Major Robert Eldridge, 2nd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) executive officer, waits for his troops before mounting a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, May 7. Photo by Army Sgt. Devin James.*





## SOF AROUND THE WORLD - NICARAGUA SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND – SOUTH



A U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer observes his surroundings as members assigned to the Destacamento Operaciones Especiales Navals (DOEN) and soldiers from the Comando Operaciones Especiales (COE) train with Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen assigned to SEAL Team 18, in support of Special Operations Command South, during a boat interdiction exercise May 9 along the coast in Chinandega, Nicaragua.

# SOCSOUTH and Nicaraguan partners participate in training exchange

*Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Alex Licea  
SOCSOUTH Public Affairs*

Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen assigned to SEAL Team - 18 in support of Special Operations Command South participated in a Joint Combined Exchange Training event in Nicaragua, April 15 - May 15.

JCETs allow U.S. Special Operations Forces to train and hone their skills in foreign nations. This JCET also allowed the SWCC members to train and exchange

techniques with military members from Nicaragua. American and Nicaraguan troops routinely train and work together, but for these Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen, this event represented the first time members from this elite unit participated in a formal military exchange program inside Nicaragua's borders in several years.

This event allowed the SWCC and members of Nicaragua's Naval Special Operation Detachment (dubbed "Destacamento Operaciones Especiales Navals" or

DOEN) and the Comando Operaciones Especiales (COE) to train together and exchange military tactics and ideas. These types of exchanges help U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) maintain their combat readiness while enhancing bilateral relations and interoperability with partner nations through improved military-to-military contacts.

These JCETs are part of Special Operations Command South's Theater Security Cooperation program. The program enables partner nations to better protect their borders and increase their capacity to conduct special operations. SOCSOUTH is responsible for all U.S. Special Operations activities in the Caribbean and in Central and South America; it serves as a component for U.S. Southern Command.

In addition, JCETs allow U.S. military personnel to improve their teaching skills and gain regional knowledge. Members of the Nicaraguan military also benefit from this JCET and view it as a great opportunity to learn from experienced U.S. Special Operations Forces.

Located at the heart of Central American isthmus, Nicaragua is the largest nation in the region, but it has been used as a point of illicit trafficking of narcotics and people. Bordered by Honduras to the north and Costa Rica in the south, the nation is one of the few with oceans on either side of its territory. With the Pacific Ocean to the west and the Caribbean Sea to the east, the nation has many fronts to protect.

This exchange greatly benefited the Nicaraguan troops in learning new techniques as they protect the nation from the threat of Transnational Organized Crime (TOC).

"From the start of this [JCET], we have been training for real-life situations which will help us deter and combat threats such as narco-trafficking and organized crime," said Nicaraguan 1st Lt. Vicente Roberto Baltodano. "This experience has been very good for us because we have learned critical combat skills, such as first aid, communications, and how to conduct boat interdictions. These are tools that will help us protect our nation from these threats. We have a great amount of respect for them [U.S. military], and it has been a good exchange between us."

Throughout the four-week JCET, Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen trained on critical skills such as water survival, tactical casualty combat care,



**Nicaraguan Army Sgt. Marlin Ramon Morales, a member of the Comando Operaciones Especiales (COE), communicates to his comrades on a hand-held radio during a boat interdiction exercise May 9 along the coast in Chinandega, Nicaragua.**

communications, basic maritime navigation, boat handling maneuvers on small tactical boats, weapons familiarization, and tactical boat operations.

"One of the main goals coming into this event was to help us increase our skills and help them [Nicaragua military] increase their interoperability," said a senior SWCC member. "These types of skills will help them protect their borders and waterways."

For the U.S. servicemembers, this JCET allowed them to build upon the strong military partnerships between the two nations.

"Throughout the JCET, we have enjoyed a very solid working relationship, and we would want to come back. It has been a great exchange," said a SWCC member.

Ending the month-long event, a small ceremony took place where each Nicaraguan servicemember who took part in the event received a certificate of appreciation from their American counterparts.

Baltodano and several other members of the DOEN and COE say they hope they will not have to wait several more years to work with their American counterparts.

"We hope they come back next year and next time stay here training with us for two or three months," Baltodano said. "We have worked well together and look forward to future training events with them."



**SOF AROUND THE WORLD - COLOMBIA**  
**SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND – SOUTH**

# Colombian military, U.S. Army Civil Affairs help Colombian residents along remote countryside

*Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Alex Licea  
SOC SOUTH Public Affairs*

In the small, remote town of La Macarena, Colombia, located 170 miles south of Bogota, residents lack medical services due to the town's poverty stricken, rural location.

Located in the department of Meta, similar to a state in the United States, the town can only be accessed by air travel due to the lack of established roadways. La Macarena is surrounded by farms and isolated from several of the country's main cities, causing the residents to experience a poor quality of life with little or no basic services.

Because of these growing concerns for the people living in this town, the Colombian military, with support from a group of U.S. Army Civil Affairs Soldiers and a Bogota-based nongovernment medical organization called "Patrulla Aerea Civil Colombiana" or PAC, conducted a Surgical Civic Action Program April 27-28.

Commonly referred to as a SURGCAP, this type of event is carried out in order to improve the quality of life for these citizens and provide them with much needed medical services.

Colombian soldiers provided security around the area, while doctors and medical staff from PAC, with the assistance of U.S. CA Soldiers assigned to Company B, 98th Battalion, 95th CA Brigade (Airborne), currently under the operational control of Special Operations Command South, based at Homestead, Fla., provided free medical care and general surgery services to more than 1,000 Colombian citizens during the two-day event. SOCSOUTH is the special operations component for U.S. Southern Command.

Throughout the two-day SURGCAP, hundreds of



**Colombian military members and U.S. Army Civil Affairs Soldiers assigned to Company B, 98th Battalion, 95th Civil Affairs Brigade (Airborne) unload two tons of medical supplies and equipment off a Colombian military cargo plane in preparation for a two-day Surgical Civic Action Program (SURGCAP) April 27-28 in the small town of La Macarena, Colombia, located 170 miles south of Bogota.**

people waited in La Macarena's only hospital and at a nearby school. Medical services included pediatrics, dermatology, general medicine, optometry, ophthalmology, dentistry, and general surgery to remove or correct ailments such as hernias, cataracts, and lipoma, which is a non-cancerous benign tumor that develops from fat cells in the body.

"When we plan events like this, we meet with our task force and members of the U.S. Embassy to determine which regions need these types of services," said Colombian soldier, 1st Lt. Diego Mauricio Quintero Franco, who served as an operations officer

during the event. “We are here to bring solutions to some of the health problems in this community and show the people we care about them.”

In order to put this event together, the Colombian military reached out to U.S. Civil Affairs Soldiers and officials at PAC to provide the medical experts and supplies to conduct this event for the people of La Macarena.

PAC was founded more than 40 years ago by a group of search and rescue pilots. It is an organization of volunteer doctors and pilots who provide medical services to several secluded communities across Colombia. They have been working with the U.S. military for the past 10 years.

Dr. Adriana Piquero Echeverri, who serves as the general director for PAC, said the organization’s mission is to provide medical care to those who need it in the most isolated locations in the country.

“Our organization is based around helping people who don’t have access to this type of medical care across remote locations in the country,” she said. “We have a great relationship with the U.S. Civil Affairs members and without their support, this medical event would have not been possible.”

For Carlos Lopez, this event couldn’t have come at a better time. The middle-aged man has not been able to work because of pain and discomfort. Suffering from an inguinal hernia, which forms in a person’s lower abdomen, Lopez has been unable to work for three years. This SURGCAP was the answer he had been waiting for.

“I am very happy for the services I am receiving,” he said. “We are very poor people, so we can use all the help we can get. I am grateful for this day and all those who are helping us.”

U.S. troops assigned to the CA team, based out of Fort Bragg, N.C., have been working with their Colombian partners for the past eight months. The working relationship between the two has established two substantial benefits. The first is to help plan events like this and assist with the purchase of medicine and basic medical supplies. The second is to continue to enhance the capacity of the Colombian military and show them the positive effects of working with different

government and civilian agencies.

“We have been working with our Colombian partners and planning this event for the past two months,” said the senior U.S. CA planner. “We, as Civil Affairs, have a huge role in coordinating all these efforts because we act as the link between all these different organizations. By working with the Colombian military, and several municipal government leaders, we can all come together and make events like this happen.”

By the end of the two-day event, more than 1,000 citizens received medical screenings and more than 150 general surgeries were conducted by the medical volunteers working for PAC.

Music and activities such as a bounce house and clowns were brought in to entertain many of the area children. The two-day event concluded by the daylong celebration of children, which is held at the town’s main square every year. Festivities included a parade of characters and several animated shows.

Despite the success of the SURGCAP in La Macarena, Colombian soldier 1st Lt. Quintero Franco said more work needs to be done in order to extend the provision of services on a more consistent basis. He hopes to continue to work with the U.S. government and its armed forces on future events.

“The U.S. Embassy assists us with medicine for these events, and the support we receive from the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Army’s Civil Affairs is fundamental,” said Franco. “The relationship we have with the U.S. military and Soldiers with U.S. Civil Affairs is tremendous, and we hope to continue this work.”



***Dr. Diego A. Rodriguez, a volunteer ophthalmologist, uses a slit lamp to check the eyes of an elderly woman as part of a two-day Surgical Civic Action Program April 27-28 in the small town of La Macarena, Colombia.***

*Retired Air Force Master Sgt. Scott Fales in Desert Storm 1991. Fales received U.S. Special Operations Command's highest honor when he was awarded the 2012 Bull Simons Award in Tampa, Fla., May 23. This lifetime achievement award, named for Army Col. Arthur "Bull" Simons, honors the spirit, values, and skills of the unconventional warrior. Courtesy photo.*



# PJ Scott Fales receives 2012 Bull Simons Award

*By Mike Bottoms  
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

Retired Air Force Master Sgt. and Pararescueman Scott Fales received U.S. Special Operations Command's highest honor when he was awarded the 2012 Bull Simons Award in Tampa, Fla., May 23. This lifetime achievement award, named for Army Col. Arthur "Bull" Simons, honors the spirit, values, and skills of the unconventional warrior.

His extensive career in Special Operations has spanned more than three decades both in uniform and as a civilian servant. As a "PJ," Fales was recognized by the Jolly Green's Association for performing "Rescue of the Year" twice and in 1992 he was one of the Air Force's 12 Outstanding Airmen. His combat experiences were on the battle fields of Panama, Iraq and Somalia. His work as a

civilian with the Joint Personnel Recovery Agency has been instrumental in the rescue of hostages around the world.

Fales was born in Hagarstown, Md., and grew up in the Appalachian Mountains of western Maryland. Living an adventurous childhood, Fales would spend entire summers living completely outside.

"We used to call living outside 'running the ridges' and it was great fun," Fales said. "Quite frankly there was not a ton of opportunity for a young fella at that time in his life who is not going to college so I enlisted in the Air Force and became a security policeman."

Enlisting in March 1977, Fales served three years as a security policeman. One day he noticed some men running across a ramp on a flightline at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base.

"I saw these guys running and I said, 'What do you guys

do for a living?’ They said, ‘We dive and climb and jump out of airplanes and rescue people all over the world and we get paid for it.’ I said, ‘Well that’s for me.’”

Fales would become a Pararescuman in October 1980 and spend the next decade being assigned at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz.; Keflavik Naval Air Station, Iceland; and Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M.

In 1982 he received the Jolly Green Association “Rescue of the Year Award” for the rescue of eight victims of an aircraft crash high in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. While in Iceland, he led over 40 rescue missions in the Icelandic mountains, glaciers and the frigid North Atlantic, saving 56 lives and earned the 1986 Jolly Green Association “Mission of the Year.”

In December 1989, Fales would get his first combat experience when he was part of the first wave of assault aircraft in Operation Just Cause, where he made a night combat parachute jump to seize Torios-Tacuman International Airport in Panama.

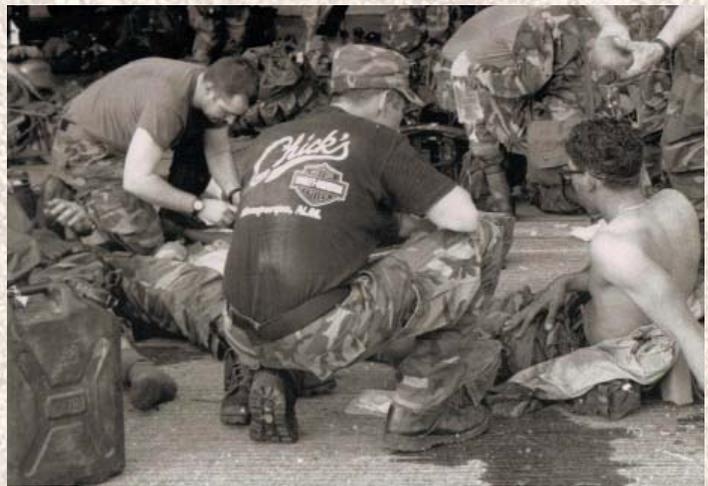
“His role was to get the airfield up and running, be prepared to treat and evacuate the wounded, and be on call for the next mission,” said retired Col. Craig Brotchie, former 720th Special Tactics Group commander. “It was the wet season, we were concerned about ground fog, coming in there at night with C-141 aircraft, so we were concerned about getting a navigation aid in on the ground to assist the airplanes. If we don’t have a successful airdrop at Torios-Tacuman then we are operating from a secondary position.”

Fales whose first job was to set up a navigational aid described how they had practiced extensively for the mission, but there is always a fear of uncertainty and combat situations are often fluid.

“I was jumping with a jump clearing team, which is a team of guys who are out first over the airfield and our job is to make sure the airfield is open,” said Fales. “I remember inside the airplane they came back from the cockpit and yelled ‘Hey, they know you are coming. We intercepted a phone call and they know what time you will be there.’ Everybody is thinking ‘Great, good news for us.’ We figured it would be a little rougher than we anticipated.”

Echoing the fear of uncertainty jumping into Panama, retired Chief Master Sgt. Les Wolfe, a fellow PJ, described the combat night jump.

“As you can imagine, a lot of the things the warriors were faced with in Panama, as with any conflict, couldn’t be anticipated. You know if you step out of an airplane you are going to fall to the ground, but you didn’t know when you were under canopy they were going to pick you off while you were descending,” said Wolfe. “That wasn’t really anticipated, but that is exactly what took place. Consequently, a lot of the war-related injuries took place before the Soldier even hit the ground.”



**Retired Air Force Master Sgt. Scott Fales (far left) treats wounded servicemembers after the invasion of Panama in 1989. Courtesy photo.**

Fales and the American forces would ultimately be successful and depose dictator Manuel Noriega.

In April 1990 Fales was selected for duty at the 24th Special Tactics Squadron, where he rose to non-commissioned officer in charge of an operational Special Tactics team. While there, he fought in Operation Desert Storm where he conducted classified recovery missions in western Iraq.

In August of 1993 Fales was assigned to Task Force Ranger in Mogadishu, Somalia. On the fateful day of Oct. 3, he led the search and rescue of “Super 6-1” a Black Hawk helicopter shot down by a rocket propelled grenade. Fales and fellow PJ, Tech. Sgt. Timothy Wilkinson, who would earn the Air Force Cross for actions at Mogadishu, were flying in “Super 6-8” toward the crash site.

“Normally when you assess a crash site one of our tactics is to turn hard over the top of the site and look down on top of it to see exactly what you have and then come back and set up on an approach and either land or fast rope to the crash,” Fales said. “In this particular case, (Super 6-1) brownout was very bad, the enemy situation was very bad, enemy fire was very high, to include lots of RPGs being fired at the helicopter in the sky, so it was made clear we were only going to have one attempt. So we basically flew straight to the relative vicinity of the crash site.”

“At one point, I distinctly recall looking at Scott as we sat opposite of each other in the cabin and as we were moving and gyrating getting ready to come in with the flare and posture we just looked at each other, made eye contact and nodded, ‘ok here we go,’” Wilkinson said.

“We fast roped into the street. During that fast rope it raised a tremendous amount of dust and you couldn’t see anything. As we collected at the crash the enemy zeroed in on our location and steady rifle fire increased and while all of that was happening I was hit in the leg,” said Fales.



**Retired Air Force Master Sgt. Scott Fales “jocked up” before a mission in Somalia 1993. Courtesy photo.**

Retired Col. Ken Rodriguez, Fales’ former commander, described his tenacity that day and his refusal to stop fighting even after being wounded.

“Some things that strike me about his actions on the third and fourth of October, them going into the fray the way they did, going down the ropes, firefight ensuing, the helicopter they are fast roping from gets hit by an RPG while they are on the ropes and all hell is breaking loose,” Rodriguez said. “After he gets wounded, he continues to care for the wounded and returned deadly accurate fire, and at one point, finally has to give himself an IV to keep from going into shock. Just amazing.”

For his actions that day Fales received the Silver Star and the Purple Heart. Lessons he learned that day would provide the foundation for future combat search and rescue (CSAR) training to both active duty SOF and the Joint Service Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape Agency.

“I can tell we had not done an engagement like that, at that time in 1993, since Vietnam,” said Fales. “We had not done any urban CSAR, a real close-quarter urban CSAR, a downed helicopter being swarmed by enemy personnel. It was a tremendous amount of lessons learned and it drove training programs for us for a long time.”

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*“There are times that sort of sink into your memory and you never forget them. A row of little birds all lined up in perfect alignment and synchronization. One of those nights absolutely pitch dark, but some lights way off in the distance, you never forget the smells, the sounds, the temperature, and what we were there doing and through the fog you think about the awesome power of the United States...And that is SOF...That’s what SOF guys do.”*

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*— Retired Air Force Master Sgt. Scott Fales*

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Retiring from the active duty Air Force in April of 1997 Fales joined the Joint Service SERE Agency as a personnel recovery operations officer. While there, he instructed personnel recovery courses, developed specialized training for sensitive SOF and reconnaissance operators, and assisted the Department of State to develop recovery capabilities in support of counter-drug operations in Central and South America. In 1999 the Joint Service SERE Agency and the Joint Combat Search and Rescue Agency merged and became the Joint Personnel Recovery Agency and is headquartered at Fort Belvoir, Va.

The ingenuity and tenacity Fales had as a PJ was quickly recognized by his colleagues at JPRA.

“Scottie told me a project I was working on would go forward and asked me to write up the requirements for the government acceptance tests. The one thing I didn’t have was an RJ, (Rivet Joint aircraft) a very specific aircraft,” said Brian Healy, JPRA colleague. “It was no more than seven days later I was out in New Mexico and as I was working with this technology, 30,000 feet above me, was an RJ flying overhead. That was a direct result of Scottie. I don’t know how he did it. That was the one big, big hurdle we needed for this test. I still don’t know to this day how he did it.”

In April 2006, Fales returned to the Joint Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, N.C., serving as the JPRA Command

Representative to JSOC, providing personnel recovery, technical surveillance, advice, expertise and assistance to the commander of JSOC. Today, Fales is the Director of Personnel Recovery for the 724th Special Tactics Group.

Fales’ more than 30 years in Special Operations, significant contributions on the battlefield and his dogged commitment to American CSAR training is why he was selected as the 2012 Bull Simons recipient. Reflecting on his memories and experiences

Fales describes the essence of SOF nostalgically.

“There are times that sort of sink into your memory and you never forget them,” he said. “A row of little birds all lined up in perfect alignment and synchronization. One of those nights absolutely pitch dark, but some lights way off in the distance, you never forget the smells, the sounds, the temperature, and what we were there doing and through the fog you think about the awesome power of the United States...And that is SOF...That’s what SOF guys do.”

# Remembering Bull Simons

*By Mike Bottoms*  
*USSOCOM Public Affairs*

USSOCOM presented its highest honor, the Bull Simons Award, to retired Air Force Master Sgt. Scott Fales on May 23. The Bull Simons Award was first awarded in 1990 and has since become an annual tradition. The award recognizes recipients who embody “the true spirit, values, and skills of a Special Operations warrior.” Col. Arthur “Bull” Simons, whom the award is named after, is the epitome of these attributes.

A career Soldier, Simons led Special Operations in World War II and Vietnam. Born in New York City in 1918, Simons graduated from the University of Missouri in 1941 with a degree in journalism and served in the Pacific theater in World War II. He rose to company commander in the 6th Ranger Battalion and participated in several amphibious landings in the Philippines. On one noteworthy occasion, he and his men scaled a steep oceanside cliff under cover of darkness and overwhelmed a garrison of Japanese soldiers at the Suluan lighthouse.

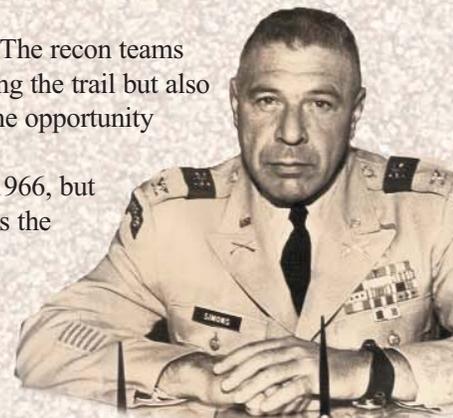
Simons left the Army after World War II but returned to duty in 1951. He completed the Special Forces Officers Qualification Course in 1958 and took command of a detachment in the 77th SF Group (Airborne). From 1961 to 1962, as head of the White Star Mobile Training Team, he served as the senior military advisor to the Royal Lao Army. His familiarity with the region would prove useful a few years later.

In 1965, Simons returned to Southeast Asia as a member of Military Assistance Command Vietnam’s Studies and Observations Group. Serving under then Col. Donald Blackburn, Simons commanded OP-35, one of three operational directorates within SOG. For approximately two years, he led OP-35 on an interdiction campaign against the North Vietnamese Army along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos and Cambodia. OP-35 interdicted the trail by inserting “hatchet” teams and reconnaissance teams. The hatchet teams, composed of Nung or Montagnard tribesmen led by a Special Forces noncommissioned officer, conducted hit-and-

run raids against NVA units. The recon teams ran long range patrols scouting the trail but also “snatched” prisoners when the opportunity arose.

Simons left Vietnam in 1966, but he returned four years later as the Deputy Commander of Joint Contingency Task Group Ivory Coast — the Son Tay Raiders. The task force, commanded by Air Force Brig. Gen. Leroy Manor, was formed in the spring of 1970 after American intelligence had identified Son Tay Prison, near Hanoi, as a prisoner of war detention camp. After six months of planning and rehearsals, the task force deployed to Thailand Nov. 18.

Two nights later, the task force flew into North Vietnam. The assault group, led by Capt. Dick Meadows, landed in the prison compound and killed approximately 50 NVA guards, but found the compound to be otherwise abandoned.



Meanwhile, Simons had landed with the support group in an adjacent school compound, which was teeming with Russian and Chinese soldiers. Simons and his team killed or repelled hundreds of these soldiers, eliminating the principal threat to the assault group. The raiders executed the entire operation in 28 minutes, successfully faced an enemy force of approximately 350 men, and left with only two injuries. Although the raid at Son Tay failed to accomplish

its principal objective, it sent a clear message to North Vietnam, and the treatment of American prisoners improved somewhat thereafter. Simons retired from the Army in 1971, but he was to conduct one more special mission. In 1979, Mr. H. Ross Perot asked Simons to rescue two of his employees; the Iranian revolutionary regime was holding them in a Tehran prison and was demanding a \$13 million ransom. In April of that year, Simons led a civilian rescue party into Iran and safely extracted the American hostages. Just one month later, Simons suffered a massive heart attack and died.

*Previous Bull Simons Award recipients are: Mr. H. Ross Perot, Army Gen. Edward “Shy” Meyer, The Honorable John Marsh Jr., Army Col. Aaron Bank, Army Lt. Gen. Samuel Wilson, Air Force Lt. Gen. Leroy Manor, the Honorable Sam Nunn, the Honorable William Cohen, Army Gen. James Lindsay, Air Force Maj. Gen. John Alison, Army Col. Charlie Beckwith, Air Force Brig Gen. Harry “Heinie” Aderholdt, Army Command Sgt. Maj. Ernest Tabata, Army Maj. Gen. Richard Scholtes, Army Maj. Richard “Dick” Meadows, Air Force Col. John Carney, Army Maj. Caesar Civitella, Army Col. Chuck Fry, Army Maj. Gen. Eldon Bargewell and Army Maj. Gen. John Singlaub.*

# A fight like no other



*Retired Air Force Master Sgt. Scott Fales preparing for a mission in Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1993. Courtesy photo.*

*By Tom Neven  
USSOCOM History Office*

Oct. 3, 1993, Mogadishu, Somalia. The U.S. Special Operations forces of Task Force Ranger had been operating in the city for several months as part of the U.N.'s Operation Restore Hope, bringing relief to the war-torn nation. Task Force Ranger's specific mission was to hunt down Somali warlord Muhammed

Farah Aideed and his lieutenants, who were accused of confiscating U.N. food supplies intended for starving refugees and perpetuating strife for personal gain.

On this day, the task force's target was in the Bakara Market area of Mogadishu, a stronghold for the Aideed clan. The mission, already off to a bad start when a Ranger missed the fast rope and fell from the helicopter to the ground, turned really bad when one of the mission's Black Hawk helicopters, call sign Super 6-1, was shot down by a rocket propelled grenade (RPG).

Another Black Hawk, Super 6-8, raced to the scene carrying the Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) team, including pararescue jumper Master Sgt. Scott Fales and fellow PJ Tech. Sgt. Tim Wilkinson. It, too, became an immediate target, coming under intense ground fire and volleys of RPGs that forced an immediate change in tactics for the CSAR team.

"Normally when you assess a crash site, one of our tactics is to turn hard over the top of the site and look down to see exactly what you have," Fales explained. "You then come back and set up on an approach and either land or fast rope to the crash. In this particular case, brownout was very bad, the enemy situation was very bad, enemy fire was very high, to include lots of RPGs being fired at the helicopter. It was clear we were only going to have one attempt. So we basically flew straight to the vicinity of the crash site."

Despite the danger, they knew they had a mission to accomplish. "At one point, I distinctly recall looking at Scott as we sat opposite each other in the cabin," Wilkinson remembered. "As we were moving and gyrating, getting ready to come in with the flare and posture, we just looked at each other, made eye contact and nodded, 'Okay, here we go.'"

They didn't even make it all the way to the ground before Super 6-8 was rocked by an RPG hit to the engine. The pilot managed to hold the bird steady until the rescuers were all the way to the ground before limping to the airport for a hard landing.

The PJs had fast roped into basically a big brown dust cloud kicked up by the Black Hawk's rotors. "You couldn't see anything," Fales said. "As we collected at the crash the enemy zeroed in on our location and steady rifle fire increased."

During those initial moments, Fales was hit in the leg. With the help of a Ranger, he limped back to the

crash site and dressed his own wound. While Wilkinson worked on freeing the bodies of the pilot and copilot, both killed in the crash, Fales set up a Casualty Collection Point and started performing triage on wounded Rangers and helicopter crewmen. At the same time he continued to provide suppressing fire as Wilkinson and others worked inside the downed Black Hawk. At one point he had to give himself an IV to avoid going into shock and was ordered onto a stretcher, where Rangers tied him down to prevent him from compounding his injury. Little good it did. Fales untied himself and quickly got back into the fight.

The battle, begun in the late afternoon, stretched into the night. A beleaguered group of Rangers took shelter in a building, where they were subjected to intense fire from swarming Somali gunmen. At one point those fighters moved up a heavy machine gun, which began blasting large-caliber rounds through the walls. In a June 1994 interview for Air Force magazine, Fales said, “As these tracers [went] through, it lit the room up like a flashbulb going off.” He recalled that scrambling Rangers would appear frozen and debris suspended in the air each time a strobe-like tracer round flashed through the room.

Eventually, as the sun rose the next morning, a rescue force made its way to the Americans. As the Somali fighters melted away into the labyrinth of streets around the battle zone, Fales and his fellow Americans were evacuated.

That fight came to be known as the Battle of Mogadishu and was recounted in the book *Black Hawk Down* and a movie of the same name. For his actions that day Fales received the Silver Star and the Purple Heart. Wilkinson received the Air Force Cross.

There were hard lessons learned that day, but they would provide the foundation for future CSAR equipping and training.

“I can tell we had not done an engagement like that, at that time in 1993, since Vietnam,” Fales said. “We had not done any urban CSAR, a real close-quarter urban CSAR, a downed helicopter being



**A Special Operations team flying on a pre-insertion mission over Mogadishu, Somalia in 1993. Courtesy photo.**

swarmed by enemy personnel. It was a tremendous amount of lessons learned and it drove training programs for us for a long time.”

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*“What I saw with Scott was he continued to look at that Mogadishu mission and how we could improve the CSAR mission. He really focused on and reassessed the [search and rescue] kits. The original system had equipment carried by ambulance crews to deal with car crashes—things like the Jaws of Life. They found on that day in Mogadishu that those tools were not conducive to getting through helicopter debris.”*

— Retired Chief Master Sgt. Mike Lampe

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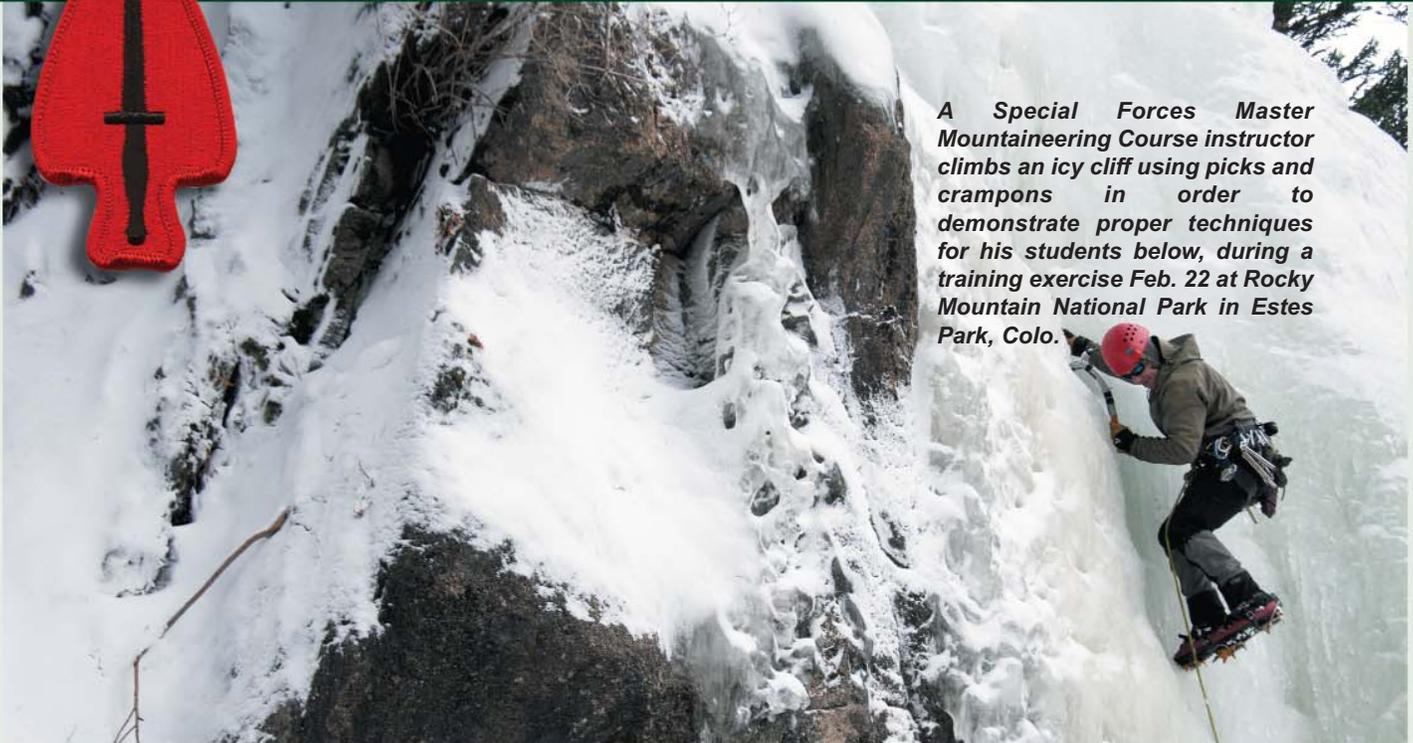
“What I saw with Scott was he continued to look at that Mogadishu mission and how we could improve the CSAR mission,” said a retired PJ, Chief Master Sgt. Mike Lampe. “He really focused on and reassessed the [search and rescue] kits. The original system had equipment carried by ambulance crews to deal with car crashes—things like the Jaws of Life. They found on that day in Mogadishu that those

tools were not conducive to getting through helicopter debris.”

Another retired PJ, Chief Master Sgt. Rex Freriks, remembered, “That really impacted Scott. He realized that we as a unit did not have the training, the tools, or the know-how to address a situation like that. So we went out, found the tools, got the training, and figured out and trained for how not to let that happen again.”

**AIRBORNE**

**U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND**



*A Special Forces Master Mountaineering Course instructor climbs an icy cliff using picks and crampons in order to demonstrate proper techniques for his students below, during a training exercise Feb. 22 at Rocky Mountain National Park in Estes Park, Colo.*

## Climb and Conquer:

*Special Forces Soldiers master the science of gaining the high ground*

*Story and photos by Dave Chace*

*USAJFKSWCS Public Affairs Office*

If you've never experienced negative-40-degree temperatures and 60-mph winds, then no words in this article will make you cringe enough to understand how it feels to wake up in the middle of February on a peak in Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park.

First Sgt. Mike Duncanson just wants you to know that it's mornings like that when it's real tough to climb out of your snow cave and start your day.

In Estes Park, Colo. -- about a half-mile higher than Denver, the mile-high city -- Duncanson and the Special Forces Advanced Mountain Operations School teach Special Operations Soldiers to operate in cold weather, high altitudes and mountainous terrain.

To say it another way: this is where some of America's most elite Soldiers learn to move and survive when the air is thin, the wind is strong, the snow is deep, and the stakes are high.

To say it yet another way: this is where Soldiers come to attend the Special Forces Master Mountaineering Course.

This four-week course is the tip of the Special Operations mountaineering spear: only those who have passed the challenging Senior Mountaineering Course -- hosted in the summer months -- are even eligible. Once the Soldiers have proven their ability to face the cliffs and altitude, they're welcome to return for the Master course to learn how to handle those same cliffs when ice, snow and sub-zero temperatures are thrown into the equation.

The school, from 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), is part of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. The battalion manages special-operations advanced skill training, including courses for combat divers in Key West, Fla., freefall parachutists in Yuma, Ariz. and Special Forces snipers at Fort Bragg, N.C.

The SFAMOS curriculum covers the full gamut of preparing for, and surviving during a Special Forces mission in hard-to-reach, dangerous places. Students learn to select,

maintain and pack their gear with the full understanding that both over- and under-packing could put their entire team in jeopardy. While the summertime prerequisite covers medical emergencies, especially trauma, the Master course delves into cold-weather medical considerations and evacuation.

By the end of this course, the students will have lived through their own multi-day mountain excursion as a team, complete with sleds and snow caves, and will be sent home to lead Special Forces mountain operational detachments as fully qualified trainers. Before students are ready for that, however, course instructors need to start with the basics: planning routes and handling emergencies.

Rocky Mountain National Park's Bear Lake is a prime site for scenic, summertime photo-shoots, according to a Google image search. But it was a much different scene on the Feb. 21 morning when teams of men wearing mismatched Army-issued snow gear trekked over the feet-thick frozen ice and disappeared into the snow.

Broken down into three teams, each with about eight students, the class rotates between classes set up around the shores of the iced-over lake.

At one station, students learn to analyze packs of snow and determine the likelihood of an avalanche. Cleanly digging out a cross-section of snow at least four feet deep, an instructor shows students how to tap a shovel with increasing force, until the top half of the pack slides out and buries their legs and gear. The longer and harder you can tap, the safer this route might be for leading a Special Forces team or partner military force toward an objective.

Across Bear Lake, students are crawling through the snow on their hands and knees, waving a small device as it sounds off with faint chirps. They're looking for remote beacons the instructors have buried in the snow; an avalanche victim's life depends on being found within a couple minutes. These beacons are standard equipment for anyone working on snowy mountains, civilian or military.

The students need to know how to use the beacon to locate a buried teammate, not only for future missions with their own teams, but also in case something goes wrong in the Master course. The instructors know their students are experienced, qualified Special Forces Soldiers, and need to be able to rely on each individual to shift from student to first responder and combat medic in an instant.

"Mountaineering is inherently dangerous," Duncanson said. "There are always going to be risks, but we teach students to mitigate those risks so they can safely move their



***A Special Forces Master Mountaineering Course instructor (right) teaches students to assess a snow pack in order to determine the likelihood of an avalanche during a training exercise Feb. 21 at Rocky Mountain National Park in Estes Park, Colo.***

teams in the mountains." He's seen a trend of Special Forces medical sergeants selected to attend SFAMOS, which is certainly not a requirement, but does give the instructors additional peace of mind. Special Forces medics make up one of seven specialties found on a Special Forces team. In fact, Duncanson is a medical sergeant himself, and a former Special Warfare Medical Group (Airborne) instructor. He also helped stand up the original Special Forces mountaineering course in 1996, when it was started by the members of 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), out of Fort Carson, Co.

At a third station, students set up rope systems for climbing snowy hills and cliffs, as well as hauling equipment and injured personnel. All three stations follow one common theme, albeit one that Master course students already understand too well: military mountaineering is anything but fun and games. There's a science to terrain analysis, route selection and emergency reaction that requires strict discipline.

There are other mountaineering schools within the U.S. military, although SFAMOS is tailored to enhancing the mission of U.S. Army Special Forces Soldiers: unconventional warfare. Special Forces Soldiers are selected and educated to work with regional partners and indigenous populations. Using cultural acumen, these Soldiers can connect with political and military leaders in order to train local forces and stop wars before they happen.

"We want our students to be able to apply their lessons in



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any type of unconventional warfare scenario," Duncanson said. For SFAMOS alumni, surviving and operating in the mountains is important, but they must also be able to train an indigenous force to fight and patrol in their own country -- and their own mountains.

More than 30 percent of the planet's land mass is classified as mountain terrain, and military history is riddled with cautionary tales of attempting to wage war without control of the high ground.

"Throughout all our areas of operation, there are mountainous regions, so it's important for a Special Forces team -- especially dedicated mountain detachments -- to be able to function in those areas," said Sgt. 1st Class Eric Carpenter, a SFAMOS instructor.

Throughout the regiment, some Special Forces operational detachments are designated to maintain proficiency in a particular advanced skill, such as mountaineering, military freefall or combat diving. Mountain teams can give commanders a significant edge when time or terrain might otherwise disrupt the mission. A simple fixed line could help an Infantry platoon reach an objective; a hauling system could bring heavy weapons up to key vantage points; or a team could pull overwatch from above in order to guide a larger formation through mountain paths.

"This capability is significant. We've seen it in the past, and we're trying to be prepared for future operations," Carpenter said. "Look at previous military history, such as the Rangers on Pointe Du Hoc during the D-Day invasion, and the Red Devil Brigade in Italy."

"When I was a private, I was stationed in South Korea," Carpenter said. "It was cold and very mountainous. There are still trenches dug into those mountains; it'd be a very nasty place."

Keeping with the mission of Special Forces units, not everything is about fighting wars. Carpenter's experience using his mountaineering skills on the job has come during joint combined exchange training, or JCETs, where he taught basic mountaineering to members of a European nation's military.

"They had harnesses and things like that, but I chose to not teach that and instead focused on swiss seats, rappel techniques, and setting up improvised anchors in the mountains," he said. "You can use 12 feet of rope for a lot more things. It's light on equipment and it's really field-

expedient."

Back at Bear Lake, the teams complete their training, unstrap their snowshoes and pile into their vehicles to head to the base of the mountain before the sun sets. The work continues into the evening, with classroom training and equipment checks in preparation for the next day's training: ice climbing.

That next morning, Feb. 22, the three teams go in separate directions toward various frozen cliffs in the area.

It's off-season for tourists in Estes Park, but the mid-February cold does bring a share of adventurers to Rocky Mountain National Park. Like

Carpenter -- who's been a climbing enthusiast since he was a teenager -- civilian hikers and climbers come to the area to enjoy the challenge and the scenery.

During a three-mile hike on snowshoes toward an ice-climbing cliff deep in the forest, Duncanson's 10-man team of students passes several groups of civilian hikers, some of whom are also heading to the Falls. At the base of the cliff, students learning to move with their ice axes and crampons are occasionally showered with ice chips from the experienced hobbyists who have already reached the top.

For SFAMOS students and instructors, the Master course is far from a club for Soldiers looking for a thrill. They pride themselves in using an important skill for an important mission.

"Moving through the mountains is hard work," Duncanson said. "There's nothing fun about walking up 12,000 feet -- it's just work."

"But there are smart ways to do it and there are not so smart ways to do it, and hopefully we can educate the guys on the smarter ways so they're able to get to the fight and take the fight to the enemy, wherever that may occur."



*Instructors at the Special Forces Advanced Mountain Operations School, based out of Fort Carson, Colo., wear the insignia of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, the mountain school's higher headquarters, based out of Fort Bragg, N.C.*

# SF Regimental Day marks 50 years of history with the green beret

*By Dave Chace  
USAJFKSWCS Public Affairs*

The past and present of the green beret were celebrated during a Special Forces Regimental Day ceremony April 5 on Fort Bragg, N.C.

Held by the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, the ceremony included a Special Forces Qualification Course graduation and the dedication of a statue honoring President John F. Kennedy and then-Brig. Gen. William Yarborough, who is known as one of the founders of the Special Forces regiment. The statue was commissioned and donated by H. Ross Perot, an honorary member of the Special Forces regiment and long-time U.S. military supporter, who was also the ceremony's guest speaker.

The Kennedy-Yarborough statue commemorates the meeting between the two individuals in 1961 on Fort Bragg, when Yarborough instructed his Soldiers to take their unauthorized green berets out of hiding and wear them proudly before the president.

"We have a photograph of these two men talking about it, right outside this great place," Perot said during the ceremony, while standing behind the same podium that Kennedy used during his Fort Bragg visit in 1961. "With that photograph, we were able to bring it forward and make this statue just the way they were when they were talking."

The statue stands in front of Kennedy Hall, on the corner of Ardennes St. and Reilly St. on the SWCS headquarters campus. Across the street on the John F. Kennedy Plaza stands another statue donated by Perot, honoring Col. Arthur "Bull" Simons.

"During this meeting, the green beret was officially authorized for wear by the men of the U.S. Special Forces by President Kennedy," Perot said. "President Kennedy showed his continued support for Special Forces, calling the green beret, and these are his words, a symbol of excellence, a badge of courage and a badge of distinction in the fight for freedom, and I can't think of a better series of words to describe the green beret."

While the statue commemorates the origin of the green beret in the U.S. military, and honors 50 years of American unconventional warfare, the ceremony gave Family, friends and instructors an opportunity to applaud the 267th graduating class of Special Forces Soldiers.

"Seventy-five percent of the Soldiers who began this course are no longer here today," said Maj. Gen. Bennet S. Sacolick, the SWCS Commanding General. "Not only is [the Special Forces Qualification Course] the Army's most physically demanding course, it is the Army's most intellectually challenging course. Scholastically, each Soldier must master among 1,000 critical tasks specific to his assigned specialty, and hundreds of advanced war-fighting skills, plus demonstrate a proficiency in a foreign language."

Following Perot's official remarks, 127 Special Forces Qualification Course graduates were awarded their course diplomas. Allied service members from foreign militaries -- Afghanistan, Macedonia and Turkey -- were also recognized for completing the U.S. SFQC, through the SWCS International Military Student Office.



**Maj. Gen. Bennet S. Sacolick (left), commanding general of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, speaks during a Special Forces Regimental Day ceremony April 5 on Fort Bragg, N.C. On the right stands a statue honoring President Kennedy and then-Brig. Gen. William Yarborough's 1961 meeting where the green beret was first authorized as the official headgear for the U.S. Army's Special Forces Soldiers. Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Russell Klicka.**



## NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND

# NSW Cultural Support Teams: Females fill critical battlefield role

*Trained by SEALs, in support of NSW, first female cultural support team deploys*

*By Petty Officer 2nd Class Dominique Canales  
NSW Public Affairs*

They travel from village to village in Afghanistan, dressed in Muslim head scarves and Type II Navy Working Uniforms. These female Sailors are armed with weapons, Afghan cultural knowledge and a desire to help Naval Special Warfare win the war in Afghanistan one rural community at a time. The women of NSW's Cultural Support Teams are building rapport and trust amongst the country's women and children and improving counterinsurgency objectives in the process.

For years, forward deployed operators have experienced difficulty connecting with a group that makes up more than half of the Afghan population – its women and children. Due to cultural taboos associated with male soldiers speaking to or searching Afghan women and children, Village Stability Operations suffered. To keep in good standing within the villages, open a dialogue with local women and accomplish the mission, NSW is developing a new type of enabler to accompany operators on missions that could benefit from personnel of the female gender.

### **Meeting the Need**

Cultural Support Teams first came into existence in late 2010 when it became obvious to commanders that having male soldiers pat down Afghani women for weapons and ask them questions about enemy activity was not working, in fact it was seriously upsetting and infuriating to the very people with whom operators were trying to build trusting and productive relationships. Male operators were not bridging the gap between Afghan women and western forces, they were causing a rift. The military solution to this problem was to train women and embed them with special operation forces to communicate and interact with the women within the country.

Drawing from the success and lessons learned by the initial CSTs that deployed with various special operations components over the past year and a half, NSW recognized



***A Cultural Support Team member participates in weapons training to prepare for upcoming missions in Afghanistan. Photo by Karim Delgado.***

the overall benefit of the teams and moved forward to create a training program tailored to its mission set.

“We had seen the positive effects of CST or female engagement teams in the other SOF components and it was obvious that we at Naval Special Warfare would benefit if we had similar capabilities,” said NSW's head of plans, policy and strategy. “Some of the women that have deployed have been able to do things with the locals, especially in a country like Afghanistan, which men could never have done. This has led to greater success on some of the missions, greater amounts of information gathered, reduction in tensions, avoided conflict or civilian casualties and other positive effects.”

According to Lt. Jason Booher, officer in charge of NSW Cultural Engagement Unit and CST, there is a need for women to work alongside SEALs during village stability operations in Afghanistan.

“The mission that was the genesis of the cultural support team is VSO,” said Booher. “The intent of VSO is

to engage the people – to win hearts and minds. Females embedded with SEALs means they will stand next to SEALs in the population and engage with the women and children and truly get access to the 50 or 60 percent of the population that we have missed until now.”

While women deployed with NSW have assisted teams before, the NSW CST program was a year-long work in progress, aimed at training and preparing its CST candidates to seamlessly integrate with SEAL teams.

“Our training is more extensive than that of MARSOC and USASOC,” said Booher. “NSW has specifically taken more time to learn what the other SOF entities have done, improve upon it and tailor it to NSW.”

The NSW policy, plans and strategy team recognized some operators might have mixed reactions about operating with non-SEALs, but the commanders in theater are seeing the positive results of the women’s presence in country.

For the women deployed, it’s a chance to contribute to NSW counterinsurgency missions and broaden their qualification and effectiveness as enablers.

“I wanted to be part of CST for multiple reasons. First and foremost, I believe that female engagement is a key part of public diplomacy and counterinsurgency strategy,” said a deployed CST member. “My other primary motivation to join CST was to broaden my skill sets as a person within the Naval Special Warfare community. A lot of the NSW mission now involves village stability; this is the best way for me to be at the forefront of the mission.”

### **Training for the Mission**

Having an enabler turn into a hindrance rather than an asset is a risk operators take every time anyone accompanies them on a mission. The standards for enablers are set high - CST members are treated no differently.

“The intent is not to make a shooter; it isn’t to make a female SEAL. The intent is to produce an enabler who can stand next to a SEAL in the environment, in the population, who won’t be a hindrance, who won’t get in the way and who can take care of themselves in an extreme situation,” said Booher. “We want to let [operators] know that the enabler we are going to provide them is someone who has a requisite level of training, has been screened, and they are not just getting someone who has been pushed through a very short pipeline.”

The idea of the formalized training for these women was centered on supporting the SEAL operator. Booher and CEU Senior Enlisted Advisor, Senior Chief Special Warfare Operator Daniel Gearhart, both prior BUD/S

instructors and seasoned operators, made it a point to ask the right questions when it came to what training the women receive.

“I am an operator first and foremost, but I understand that there is a need for this capability,” said Booher. “This allowed me to look at the training and say, ‘As an operator, what would I be looking for? As an operator, what do I need to provide other operators on the battlefield that will put them in their comfort zone?’”

Still in the process of being formalized, the future screening process for CST will consist of submitting a written package that includes commanding officer and command master chief endorsements. Applicants will then be evaluated by an NSW psychologist and have to run a “PRT Plus,” a Navy PRT to include dead hangs for women. The CEU staff and a NSW Group 10 representative will then conduct oral boards to determine if the applicants have the required fortitude and mental toughness to be accepted into training.

After a successful oral board screening, candidates will enter the first of three stages of a six-month training program. During the first or “assessment” stage, candidates join the other members of the CEU for two weeks of physically strenuous teambuilding.

“During this time the females are actually earning their spot on the NSW team. To do that, they have to get through this six-month course,” said Booher.

The staff uses some of the same drills and exercises used to train operators. According to Booher, CST members have to be able to understand what operators go through.

“They will experience slivers of what SEALs



*A Cultural Support Team member uses a scope during weapons training to prepare for upcoming missions in Afghanistan. Photo by Karim Delgado.*



## NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND

experience during BUD/s. They will be getting wet, doing pushups, remediation and team building,” Booher said. “The intent is not to make anyone quit, the intent is team building; a rite of passage so to speak.”

The second stage focuses on soldiering proficiency, known as “green skills,” competencies that will enable them to go out and work with Navy SEALs. This is considered the longest portion of training because unlike Army or Marine Corps CST candidates, the Navy does not teach these skills in boot camp. The members attend the basic soldiering course, direct support course, they learn rope skills and rappel training, fast rope training, and spend a few weeks in the field doing land navigation and field work. In addition, another three weeks is devoted to weapons training and range time, all instructed and supervised by operators.

The final stage focuses on academics; women are trained on NSW and SOF history, irregular warfare theory, theatre operations and NSW mission planning and Afghan culture. After the formal stages are completed, CST members are sent to professional development. Courses include advanced medical training, exposure to child birthing and tactical debriefing. Afterward, if time allows, the members begin integrating with their assigned SEAL team during its work up cycle.

Throughout training, the staff of operators at the CEU emphasize that successful integration with the teams is largely the responsibility of the CST member.

“No one is going to treat them special because they’re female,” said Booher. “It’s their responsibility to show up and be capable of performing. They have to show up and be able to function in that world.”

“I tell them all the time that they have to earn their spot in that truck,” said Gearhart. “If a SEAL platoon is taking a female CST on a mission that means there isn’t a SEAL sitting in that seat. They have to earn that right.”

Although CST members have been thoroughly trained and given the tools to succeed, it is also up to the SEAL

team to assess them. According to Booher and Gearhart, the team assesses an enabler’s strengths and weakness along with training them on the team’s tactics. This is a part of determining whether to take the enabler outside the wire.

While patrolling and earning that seat in a truck is the goal for CST members, operating with SOF comes with inherent risks. In 2011, Army CST member 1st Lt. Ashley White and two Army Rangers were killed when a homemade bomb detonated shortly after their arrival in an Afghan compound.

Acknowledging and fully understanding that risk, the five NSW CST women currently deployed have confidence in their abilities and preparation.

“We are confident in the training we have been provided and the capabilities of the SEALs we will support, but the potential for something to go wrong is always in the

back of my mind,” said a deployed CST member.

“There is always danger for us and we are aware of that, but we know there are a lot of other duties that military men and women perform that are much more dangerous than ours,” said another CST member.

### Hopes for the Future

While Sailors and deployments are synonymous, the five female Sailors of NSW’s inaugural CST class deployed from Naval Air Station North Island with the hope that they will contribute to the force and make a difference during their time in country.

“I hope that we are able to exceed all the expectations placed upon us and that the CST program becomes successful, established, and continues to grow,” said a CST member. “I hope that the NSW units we support recognize our value and create a demand within the community for greater CST support.”

The CEU staff shares the same sentiments.

“I think those five women are trained as good, if not better than any other CST out in that field,” said Booher. “We have provided the SEAL teams down range with a capability that they can work with.”

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*“I tell them all the time that they have to earn their spot in that truck. If a SEAL platoon is taking a female CST on a mission that means there isn’t a SEAL sitting in that seat. They have to earn that right.”*

*– Senior Chief Special Warfare Operator  
Daniel Gearhart*

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# NSW's Tactical Athlete Program

*University of Pittsburgh opens third Human Performance Research Laboratory*

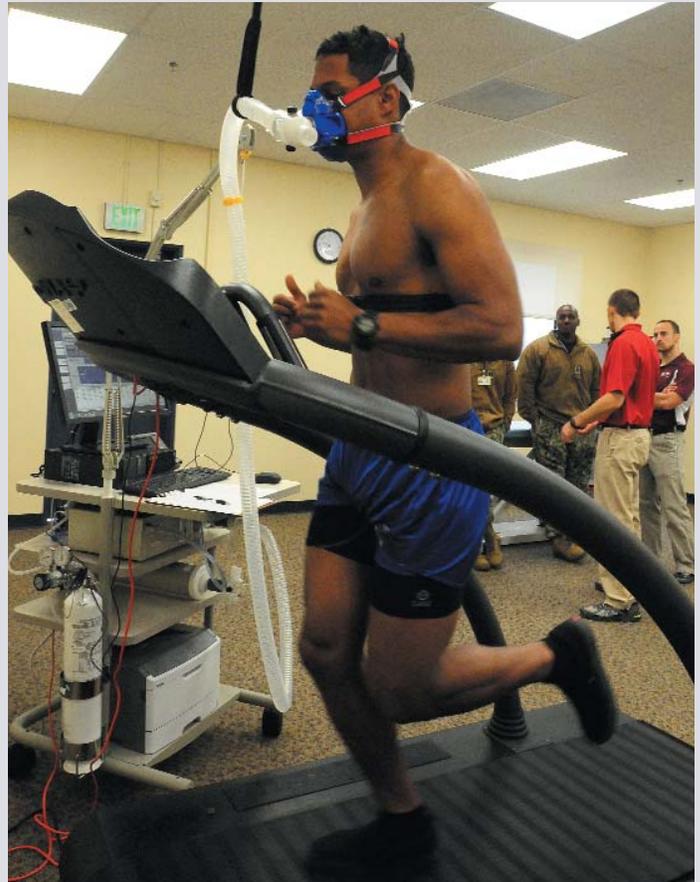
**Story and Photos by Petty Officer 2nd Class John Scorza  
NSW Public Affairs**

Navy SEAL training and missions are legendarily arduous. To even become a SEAL, members must prove they are psychologically and physically tough. Every NSW operator performs physically demanding jobs that require him to maintain fitness levels equivalent to an elite athlete. SEALs, like Olympians or professional athletes, are always looking for ways to improve physical performance and gain a competitive edge to enhance success in missions or competition. NSW's triumph in that effort can be traced to its Tactical Athlete Program and support from the University of Pittsburgh's Human Performance Research Laboratories.

NSW took another step forward in the area of human performance and sports medicine research in late February, when the UPitt Department of Sports Medicine and Nutrition, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences opened a third NSW human performance/sports medicine research lab at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, in San Diego. The new facility is a welcomed addition to the two located at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek, Va. and at the John C. Stennis Space Center in Mississippi.

Since 2007, UPitt has supported NSW's TAP by studying injury prevention and the physical readiness of NSW operators. UPitt's efforts align with the primary objective of the TAP, which is to facilitate preservation of the force and families by minimizing the number and severity of operator injuries, maximizing performance and combat readiness, and enhancing career longevity, and quality of life following service.

"Ultimately, UPitt will help us improve our human performance and sports medicine testing, training, rehabilitation, and nutrition protocols," said Capt. Scott Jonson, NSW command's deputy force medical officer and sports medicine director for the TAP. "They will help us discover where our operators have opportunities for improvement, and assist us in implementing scientifically-based strategies to facilitate resilience and rapid recovery."



**A SEAL participates in a VO2 max test that measures aerobic capacity.**

UPitt's staff, led by Dr. Scott M. Lephart, professor and chairman of UPitt's Department of Sports Medicine and Nutrition, is using an approach that the university has developed over 25 years. It is a four-phase method that will span the next three years.

"Our first phase is to study the responsibilities of and operational demands placed on the operators," Lephart said. "We go out in the field with our instrumentation and technology to study the prevalence and mechanisms of injury. We study the metabolic and physiological demands of various training activities and establish scientifically-based strategies to help prepare the operators for these demands."



## NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND

“The second phase moves into the laboratory. This is our opportunity to take the information from the field and replicate what we can in the lab; replicate the mechanisms of injury and conduct testing to determine what is contributing to the injuries and what strategies need to be employed to help mitigate the injuries. The second phase is also designed to study the nutritional characteristics and needs of the operators.

“The third phase is the most important, and is driven by phases one and two. It’s the development of intervention programs, which are very specific to the operators’ needs. Our primary role is to evaluate scientifically the TAP and help improve its effectiveness. Many human performance programs are not validated in terms of demonstrating their ability to alter injury risk characteristics and optimize performance – that’s our role with NSW’s program in phase three of our research,” said Lephart.

The final phase is to facilitate longitudinal analyses. Operator injuries will be tracked over the course of a career with treatment and prevention recommendations made through TAP. The end goal is to minimize the insidious effects of multiple injuries among operators.

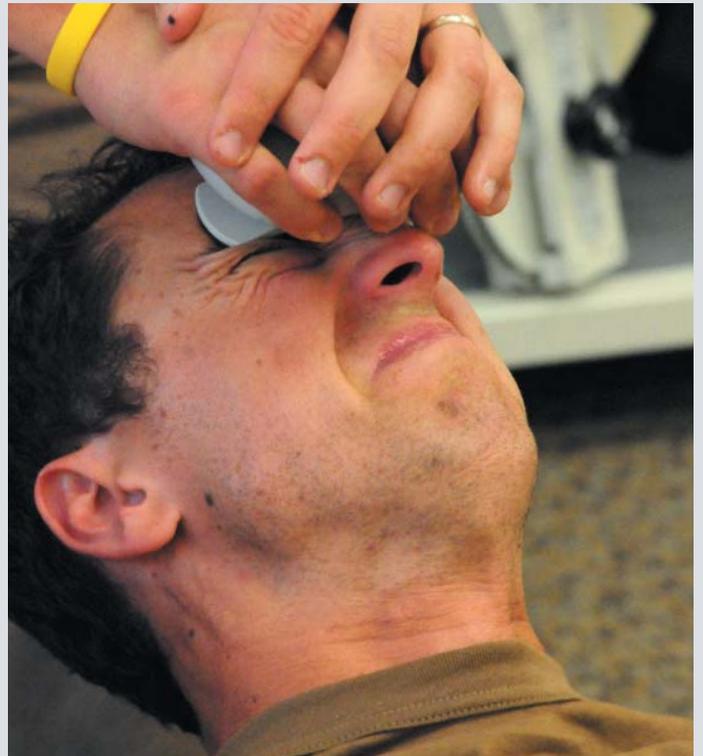
Currently, each of UPitt’s three research laboratories is in a different phase of testing.

The Naval Special Warfare Group 2 lab at JEB Little Creek was the first to be established. Since that time, 302 operators have been tested in phases one and two. Each Sailor underwent a comprehensive human performance assessment to determine opportunities for improvement.

“We will conduct two clinical trials beginning in April to demonstrate the effectiveness of the human performance/sports medicine program that NSWG 2 has employed. We will continue to conduct other long-term research over the course of the project,” said Lephart.

The research conducted at the NSWG 2 lab has already begun to bear fruit. One issue the testing has identified is the correlation between body fat percentage and injuries.

“There seems to be a threshold right around 15 percent body fat. Individuals with body fat higher than 15 percent appear to sustain significantly more injuries than individuals whose body fat is at or below 15 percent,” said Matthew Darnell, project coordinator at the NAB lab. “The general body fat recommendation



***A Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewman performs a neck strength test with a hand held dynamometer.***

for the male athletic population is between five and 15 percent.”

Research specifically designed for Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen is being conducted at Special Boat Team 22 at Stennis. The research is modeled after the initial studies conducted at NSWG 2 and is working to identify injury risk factors that are culturally specific to the SWCC community. The lab, which has been operating less than two years, is conducting research phases one and two and has evaluated nearly 100 SWCC.

The lab will complete phase two and move onto phase three within the next year. Lephart explained that during phase three, he and his research team will make recommendations on TAP development and then validate the recommendations over the next couple of years.

The newest lab, located in San Diego, will focus on SEAL Qualification Training and Crewman Qualification Training graduates.

According to Lephart, the work being done at NAB Coronado is the most meaningful of all activities the university has been involved with during its seven-year

partnership with NSW. The data captured at the NAB lab will provide a physical and physiological baseline for SEAL and SWCC operators as they first enter the NSW Force.

“It’s going to allow for initial benchmarking of NSW’s operators as they go through SQT and CQT,” said Lephart. “They will then be tested periodically over their careers to give leadership feedback on the combat readiness of their operators.”

Laboratory and tactical testing will be performed on 300 SEAL and SWCC operators upon completion of SQT or CQT. Phase one is currently underway.

Lab assessments include two days worth of 50 tests, taking approximately two hours per day to complete. The assessment battery consists of a body composition analysis, various strength and endurance tests, range of motion and balance tests, a nutritional survey and more.

Upon completion of the testing, the lab provides each SEAL and SWCC volunteer with a detailed report, plotting each Sailor’s profile against college and professional athletes.

“The one thing that I would say about [NSW operators] is they are really motivated, very intelligent and they are really excited about the tests,” said Scott Conger, NAB laboratory coordinator. “They really try to do the best they can at every task, which makes it fun for us.”

“Our experience at both labs (Little Creek and Stennis) is that the guys are anxious to volunteer for testing and come back willingly for a follow-up after a time, to see if they have made improvements. We now have waiting lists. It’s been quite remarkable,” said Lephart.

Many of the SQT and CQT graduates believe there is more to completing this testing than individual tracking and feedback. They also feel a deep sense of responsibility to give an all-in effort while supporting important force-wide research.

“I wanted to come in for testing to see where I’m at, but it’s more than that,” said an SQT student. “This research could ultimately change the future of our community and the way we train in years to come.”

Having motivated test subjects has helped keep research tracking on a productive course and makes the research team’s work that much more enjoyable.

“They are very appreciative of what we’re doing, which is not always the case when dealing with high-

level athletes,” said Darnell. “At the end of the day, when working with some civilian athletes, they may run a little faster or jump a little higher so they can score an extra point or another touchdown. With these guys (operators), this is their life and livelihood. They realize injury prevention and performance improvements can save their life, someone else’s life and make their careers healthier and longer. So, working with them is more meaningful in that aspect.”

The UPitt staff will continue to move forward with studies until all four phases of the research have been completed. At that point, the labs will be turned over to NSW.

“We’ll complete the research at all three of the sites and then there will be a hand off,” said Lephart. “It will be a handoff of the skills, knowledge, and data we have to the NSW Force, so it will have the ability to continue a solid scientifically-based program. Upon completion of the research, all of UPitt’s lab assets will be ‘gifted’ to NSW.”

Until that time, NSW and UPitt will continue to work together in the spirit of maximizing the effectiveness of the NSW TAP, which will ultimately lead to a stronger and more resilient NSW Force.



**Scott Conger (left) and Matthew Darnell (far right) motivate a SEAL as he performs a windgate bicycle test of anaerobic power at the Naval Amphibious Base Human Performance Lab. This 30-second test measures the maximum amount of power a subject can produce and the ability to maintain that power over the course of the 30 seconds.**



## 'Battle of survival:'

*Special tactics officer awarded Air Force Cross*

**By Capt. Kristen D. Duncan**  
*AFSOC Public Affairs*

In a harrowing 10-hour battle amidst more than 100 insurgents, a special tactics officer kept the enemy at bay with a little help from above.

Capt. Barry F. Crawford Jr. was awarded the Air Force Cross during a Pentagon ceremony April 12 for his heroic actions controlling the air space and calling in airstrikes during a 2010 battle in Afghanistan, which allowed his Special Operations team to get out of the kill zone and ultimately saved the lives of his American and Afghan comrades.

While assigned to the 23rd Expeditionary Special Tactics Squadron, Crawford was the Joint Terminal Attack Controller for an Army Special Forces and Afghan commando team.

Crawford called in multiple fixed and rotary wing air assets, allowing for the safe return of all U.S. forces, the evacuation of two Afghan commandos killed in action, and the rescue of three other wounded Afghan commandos.

“Captain Crawford repeatedly and conspicuously disregarded his own safety to assist his United States and Afghan teammates,” said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz shortly before presenting the captain the Air Force Cross during the ceremony. “It is not hard to be utterly impressed by his bravery and inspired by his selflessness.”

According to his citation, “Crawford braved effective enemy fire and consciously placed himself at grave risk on four occasions while controlling over 33 aircraft and more than 40 airstrikes on a well-trained and well-prepared enemy force. His selfless actions and expert airpower



**Capt. Barry F. Crawford Jr. was awarded the Air Force Cross for his heroic actions controlling the air space and calling in airstrikes during a 2010 battle in Afghanistan, which allowed his Special Operations team to get out of the kill zone and ultimately saved the lives of his American and Afghan comrades. Courtesy photo.**

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*“As soon as the sun came up, we started taking extremely heavy enemy fire. Our placement in the middle of the village, and the enemy’s superior fighting positions, required us to ‘run the gauntlet’ of enemy fire no matter where we were in the valley.”*

— *Capt. Barry F. Crawford Jr.*

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employment neutralized a numerically superior enemy force and enabled friendly elements to exfiltrate the area without massive casualties.”

The team of approximately 100 personnel flew into the steep mountains of Laghman Province early May 4, 2010. As soon as they were on the ground, they heard enemy chatter on the radios. Then, within 30 minutes, they found a substantial weapons cache inside the village. The enemy force was apparently dug into defensive positions and just waiting for the sun to rise before beginning their assault on the Coalition Force. “As soon as the sun came up, we started taking

extremely heavy enemy fire,” Crawford said in an interview. “Our placement in the middle of the village, and the enemy’s superior fighting positions, required us to ‘run the gauntlet’ of enemy fire no matter where we were in the valley.”

Enemy fighters were expertly using sniper and medium machine-gun fire to target the friendly force as insurgents were closing in on their location from all sides. As the force closed in, a high-volume of machine-gun and sniper fire initially wounded five commandos.

“Recognizing that the wounded Afghan soldiers would die without evacuation to definitive care, Captain Crawford took decisive action and ran out into the open in an effort to guide the [medical evacuation] helicopter to the landing zone,” according to the citation. “Once the pilot had eyes on his position, Crawford remained exposed, despite having one of his radio antennas shot off mere inches from his face.

“Acting without hesitation, Crawford then bounded across open terrain, engaging enemy positions with his assault rifle and called in AH-64 strafe attacks to defeat the ambush.”

When the weather cleared, the team moved along the steep terrain. To allow his team to freely move in the open and prevent further casualties, Crawford coordinated the delivery of danger-close AH-64 Apache Hellfire missiles, and 500- and 2,000-pound Joint Direct Attack Munition bombs from F-15E Strike Eagles.

“Everyone there was on task and wanted to crush the enemy,” Crawford said. “My teammates went above and beyond, and everyone’s efforts really reenergized the entire assault force’s morale.”

As the U.S. and Afghan commandos left the burned-out village, Crawford’s team once again came under attack. Stuck in an open, narrow valley with 300- to 500-foot sheer mountain cliffs around them, the team was forced to hold their position in poor weather conditions.

With the enemy merely 150 meters away, Crawford repeatedly called for danger-close 30 mm strafing and rocket attacks from AH-64 Apaches overhead. To mark the enemy locations, Crawford ran into the open to engage the enemy while continuing to direct Apache airstrikes.

“The Apaches were our lifeline,” Crawford said. “They were consistently engaging. It was a battle of survival for us, and they unleashed hell on the enemy.”

The original mission was to collect intelligence from a remote village sympathetic to the Taliban. However, the village had been burned prior to their arrival. Their mission quickly turned into a battle for survival, which was remarkably successful. The SOF team suffered two Afghan Commando casualties, but more than 80 insurgents were killed during the engagement, including three high-ranking enemy commanders.

Crawford is currently assigned to the 104th Fighter Squadron in the Maryland Air National Guard's 175th Fighter Wing. He will soon attend pilot training to fly the A-10 Thunderbolt II.

The Air Force Cross is the service’s highest medal, and second only to the Medal of Honor.

The last Air Force Cross was awarded to an Air Force combat controller, Staff Sgt. Robert Gutierrez Jr., on Oct. 27, 2011 at Hurlburt Field, Fla. Previously another Air Force combat controller, Staff Sgt. Zachary J. Rhyner, was presented the medal on March 10, 2009, at Pope Air Force Base, N.C.



***Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz pins the Air Force Cross on Capt. Barry Crawford during a ceremony in the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes in Washington, D.C., on April 12, 2012. Photo by Andy Morataya.***



## AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



**U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Josh Busch, center, carries an urn containing the remains of Tech. Sgt. Allen J. Avery while Senior Airman Jeremy Dotson, background, carries a folded American flag during Avery's burial ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Va., April 6, 2012. Avery was part of a combat search and rescue mission aboard an HH-53C Super Jolly Green Giant helicopter when they were shot down over Quang Tri province, South Vietnam, April 6, 1972. Saluting in the foreground are Chief Master Sgt. Diane Munson, left, and Col. Charles Cornelisse, a chaplain. The Airmen are with the U.S. Air Force Honor Guard. Photo by Val Gempis.**

# Fallen Vietnam War era pararescueman finally brought home

**By Tech. Sgt. Richard A. Williams Jr.**  
**Air Force Public Affairs Agency**

Air Force pararescuemen were able to bring home one of their fallen comrades to Arlington, Va., April 6.

As the ceremonial caisson rolled to a stop in Arlington National Cemetery, Tech. Sgt. Allen Avery, an Air Force pararescueman who lost his life during combat operations in Vietnam, was escorted to his final resting

place by family and more than 60 PJs, past and present, in their traditional maroon berets.

"Honor and service," were the words retired Chief Master Sgt. Cole Panning, a fellow PJ who served with Avery in Vietnam, used as a quick description of Avery's service.

"He had the integrity of the best but wasn't afraid to take a chance," Panning said.

Airmen from the Air Force Honor Guard stood

overlooking Avery's final resting place as they performed the traditional rifle volley. A lone bugler stood apart from the group to play "Taps", a tradition at U.S. military funerals since 1891.

As the ceremonial flag was folded for the last time, the Air Force chaplain presiding over the ceremony quoted the inscription on the John Paul Jones Memorial, "In life he honored the flag. In death the flag shall honor him."

When the service concluded, PJ's past and present lined up to render a final salute, remove the pararescue flash from their maroon berets and place them at Avery's final resting place, a sign of respect shown to a fallen PJ, said Chief Master Sgt. Lee Shaffer, Air Force pararescue career field manager.

"When one of our warriors falls, we want to attempt to give back as much as we can to both the service member who lost his life and the family," Shaffer said. "This beret and the flash that stays on it is probably the single most important thing to a pararescueman. It takes two years to earn it and for us it represents our heart and soul, and we want our fallen warriors to be buried with what is most precious to us and what was the most precious to them."

The maroon beret symbolizes the blood shed by past PJs as well as the blood current PJs are willing to shed to save lives. The flash, which is a guardian angel wrapping its arms around the world, symbolizes the scope and responsibility as a worldwide rescue and recovery professional. At the bottom of the flash are the words "So others may live," the Air Force Pararescue credo.

Avery, along with Capt. James H. Alley, Capt. Peter H. Chapman, Capt. John Hall, Tech. Sgt. Roy Prater and Sgt. William Pearson, were flying a combat search and rescue mission April 6, 1972, to recover the downed air crew of call sign "Bat 21" in their HH-53C Super Jolly Green Giant helicopter over Quang Tri Province in South Vietnam, when they were hit by enemy ground fire and crashed.

During Avery's previous mission, he had been a tail gunner and his helicopter had taken a lot of enemy fire, Panning said.

"The flight engineers couldn't believe he was still alive, and he had a red fluid all over him which turned out not be blood but hydraulic fluid and he didn't have a scratch on him," Panning said. "To go through what he did, having his helicopter shot up previously, he could



**Maj. Gen. Steven Lepper, Air Force Deputy Judge Advocate General, presents the American flag to Ms. Debbie McBride at her father, Tech. Sgt. Allen Avery's burial at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va. on April 6. Avery was a pararescueman, who along with five others, was killed during a recovery operation in Vietnam on April 6, 1972. Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Raheem Moore.**

have said, 'Hey, I have already been through this. Pick someone else,' but he didn't, he just said, 'Hooah, a chance for another save, I want the mission.'"

It wasn't that he had to take the mission because it was his turn, he wanted the mission because he wanted to save lives, according to Panning.

"That was the type of man he was," Panning said.

The crew, all except for Avery who had not been positively identified at the time, received a full honors funeral and was buried at Arlington Nov. 17, 1997. However, advancements in DNA testing allowed the Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office to officially identify his remains and release them to his family for service at his final resting place.



## MARINE CORPS FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



*Marines with 3rd Marine Special Operations Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, conduct predeployment training in South Carolina, May 22 - 24. During the training, the Marines conducted counterinsurgency operations, which included intelligence gathering and operations planning.*

# 3d MSOB conducts unit-level training

*By MARSOC Public Affairs*

*Photos by Marine Sgt. Anthony Carter*

Marines with 3rd Marine Special Operations Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, based out of Camp Lejeune, N.C., conducted unit-level training May 22 - 24 in Georgia and South Carolina, to prepare them for an upcoming deployment.

The Marines conducted intelligence gathering, operations planning, helocasting and insertion techniques with different scenarios during the exercises. The two-day exercise honed the operators' individual skills to better prepare them for an upcoming deployment. Except for sporadic support for the Afghanistan mission, 3rd MSOB's operators have deployed in small teams to remote locations, without benefit of the established military logistics supply chains and mobility resources in Afghanistan. The 3d MSOB teams' deployments are typically training evolutions that fall under the Joint Combined Exchange Training program, or JCET, a U.S.



*Marines with 3rd Marine Special Operations Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, train at night in South Carolina, May 22 to 24.*

Special Operations Command program in which special operations forces from each service component work and train overseas with foreign military forces, a traditional SOF mission.



*3d MSOB Marines patrol in South Carolina, May 23.*



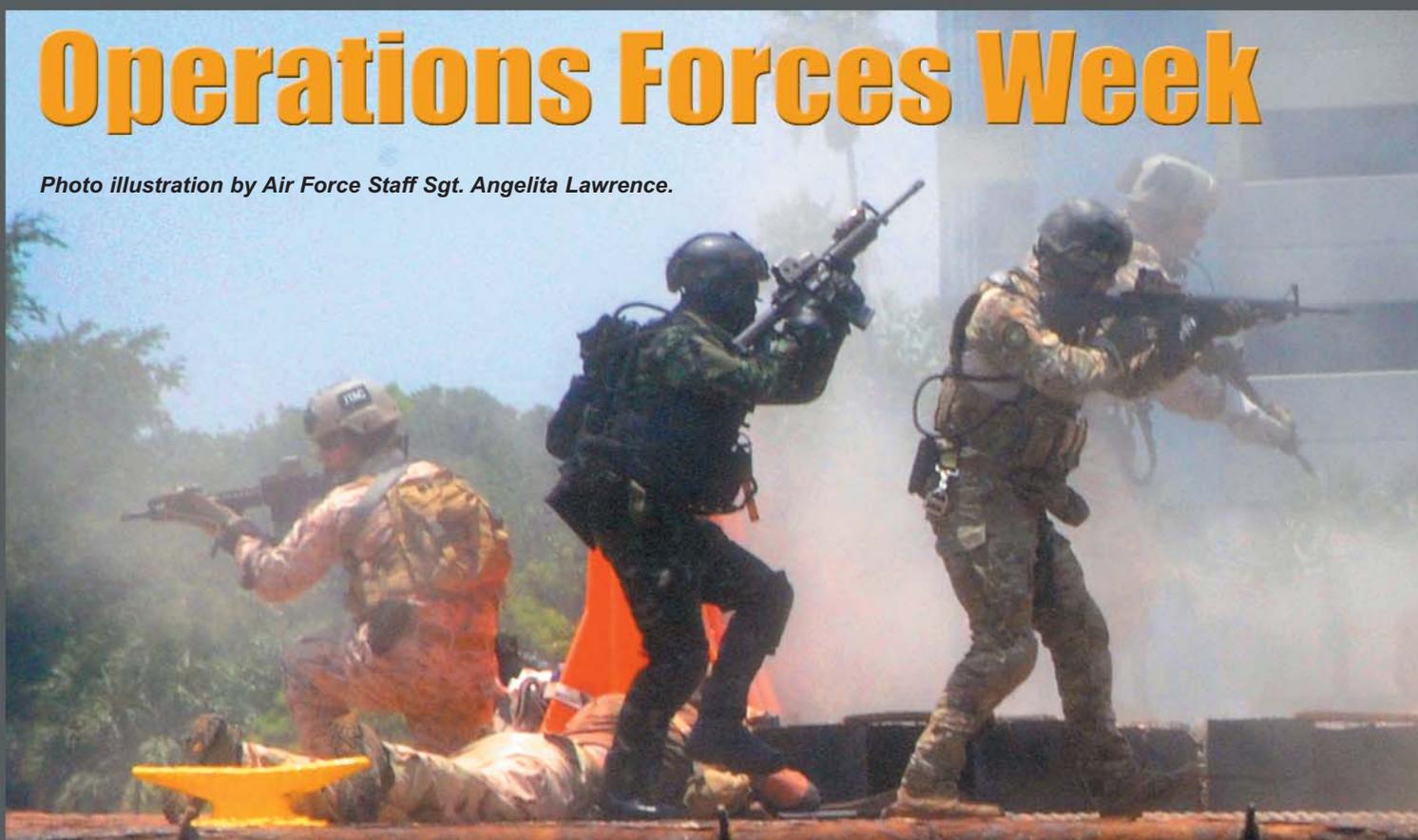
*3d MSOB Marines conducted helocasting drills in Savannah, Ga., May 23.*



*3d MSOB Marines practice helocasting drills in Savannah, Ga., May 23.*

# International Special Operations Forces Week

*Photo illustration by Air Force Staff Sgt. Angelita Lawrence.*





# USSOCOM hosts 2012 ISOF week

*By Air Force Maj. Kelley Jeter  
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

USSOCOM hosted the 2012 International Special Operations Forces Week conference at the Tampa Convention Center May 22-24. With Special Operations Forces (SOF) leadership from over 90 nations in attendance at the three-day conference, Admiral Bill H. McRaven emphasized the importance of international SOF partnership, while attendees discussed the challenges and possible solutions unique to their individual regions.

In addition to the ISOF conference, that same week the Tampa Convention Center was also the center of activity for the annual Special Operations Forces Industry Conference, or SOFIC. This annual

conference brings military SOF leadership together with hundreds of vendors in the defense industry who create products and services specially designed for special operators in the field and in battle. SOF military leadership got the opportunity in this forum to talk to industry representatives about what they need to accomplish their missions.

Two of the highlights of the ISOF and SOFIC conferences were the gala dinner and the SOF capabilities demonstration.

The dinner was punctuated not only with annual SOF-specific awards, but by a keynote address delivered by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. Secretary Clinton's speech emphasized the partnership between the Department of Defense and the Department of State that has begun solving



problems at the local level in several foreign countries, by working together on common goals.

The SOF capabilities demonstration featured a display of combat platforms, weaponry and skills all orchestrated by USSOCOM and executed by international operators from 10 different nations. The demonstration showed how international operators can work together, as they attacked and secured four different objectives outside the Tampa Convention Center, securing a hostage and neutralizing enemy combatants. Blank ammunition and Hollywood-style pyrotechnics and explosions were used to give the impression of a “real” engagement with an enemy who had captured as their hostage, Bob Buckhorn, the mayor of Tampa. In addition to the U.S., the operators in the demonstration were from Poland, Norway, Canada, Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Thailand, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates.

**1) A MARSOC Marine parachutes into the bay near downtown Tampa.**

**2) “Pirates” prepare for an attack on their stronghold.**

**3) A Rigid-Hulled Inflatable Boat performs an assault.**

**4) An international Special Operations team assaults a mock village.**

**5) Secretary of State Hillary Clinton gives her speech during the ISOF gala dinner.**

**6) Admiral Bill H. McRaven, USSOCOM commander, answers questions during a press conference.**

**7) Hundreds of attendees listen to remarks at the opening of ISOF week.**

**8) Mr. James Cluck, USSOCOM acquisition and executive director, gives remarks during the conference.**





**U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - HEADQUARTERS**

# Special Ops team members score wins on land and water to close out 2012 Warrior Games

*Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Heather Kelly  
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

Athletes with the U.S. Special Operations Command team took home eight medals during track, field and swimming events to close out this year's Warrior Games held in Colorado Springs, Colo. The joint service team doubled its awards over 2011 results, bringing home a total of 10 medals during competitions throughout the week.

In track and field events, USSOCOM team member U.S. Army Capt. Ivan Castro garnered three silver medals in the men's 100 and 200 meter dash and 1500 meter run, visually impaired categories. Blinded after a mortar attack in 2006, a simple shoestrapping allows Castro to run tethered to a partner, gauging both direction and speed while competing.

Fellow teammate U.S. Army Sgt. James Pruitt took silver in the men's shot put and bronze in the discus throw, open combined categories, while U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Travis Wilson went on to secure the gold in men's shot put and discus throw in the standing - other categories.

U.S. Army veteran Anthony Radetic took the sole medal for the team in swimming events, securing the bronze in the men's 50 meter freestyle, spinal cord injury multi-class category.

"I was excited and surprised by the win," said Radetic. "Being here with guys who have gone through similar experiences and challenges helps you push beyond limitations. I look forward to coming back next year and competing with the team."

The Warrior Games concluded with awards and a celebration May 5. The U.S. Marine Corps team took home the Chairman's Cup for the third year in a row, and Marine Jonathan Disbro claimed his second consecutive Ultimate Champion award.

Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Mark Clark, USSOCOM



*U.S. Special Operations teammates U.S. Army Capt. Ivan Castro and 1st Lt. Phillip Spaugh race toward the finish line during the men's 200 meter dash at the 2012 Warrior Games in Colorado Springs, Colo. Capt. Castro took the silver medal in the event. Spaugh serves as Castro's guide during the race.*

chief of staff, attended the games, remarking on the spirit and accomplishments of the USSOCOM team and all wounded warrior athletes.

"A saying posted on the wall inside the Olympic Training Center captured the setting of these Warrior Games: Praxis means not only to try, but also to penetrate, to fight, to give in, to win, to lose, to kneel down, to get up, to accept the struggle and fight until the last breath," said Clark. "That saying reflected what we saw - a group of our wounded warriors who came together with a competitive spirit and were determined to not let anything hold them back from doing what they love."

"I walked away from these games feeling they had given me more than I had given them. They are a source of inspiration and motivation to all of us who had the honor and privilege to watch them compete."



*Army Staff Sgt.  
Andrew Trevor Britton-Mihalo  
7th Special Forces Group (Airborne)*



*Army Staff Sgt.  
Brandon Forrest Eggleston  
3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne)*



*Army Sgt.  
Tanner Stone Higgins  
75th Ranger Regiment*

**Editor's note: Honored are Special Operations Forces who lost their lives since April's Tip of the Spear.**

*Retired Army veteran Melissa Stockwell lights the cauldron at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., to officially kick off the 2012 Warrior Games. More than 200 wounded, ill or injured service members from the U.S. Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Special Operations Command competed in the Olympic-style competition May 1-5. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Heather Kelly.*

