



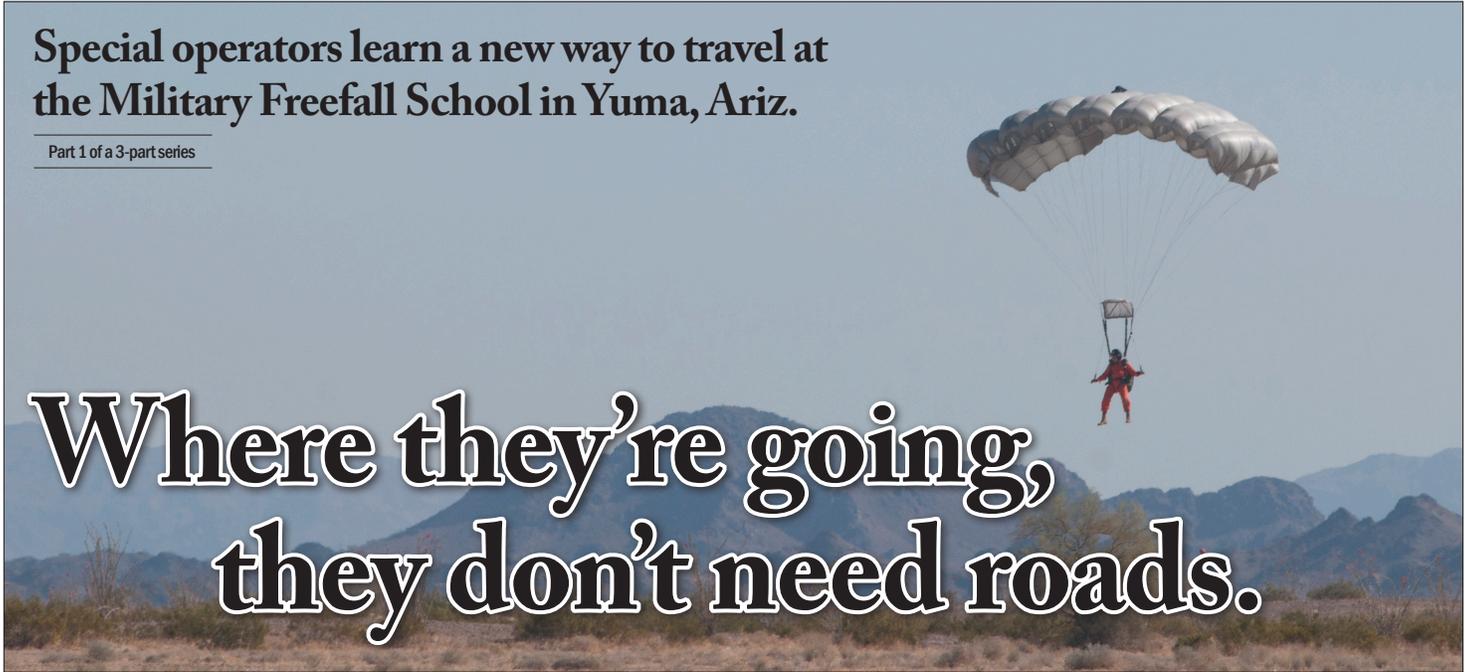
# Inside SWCS

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## Special operators learn a new way to travel at the Military Freefall School in Yuma, Ariz.

Part 1 of a 3-part series



# Where they're going, they don't need roads.

A Military Freefall Parachutist Course student prepares to land from his first-ever high-altitude, low-opening airborne operation April 6 at the Military Freefall School at Yuma Proving Ground in Yuma, Ariz.

Story and photo by Dave Chace  
SWCS Public Affairs Office

Exit an aircraft from up to 17,000 feet in the air. Spend 60 seconds barreling toward the Arizona desert at 120 miles per hour. Then, once you're about 4,000 feet above the ground, open your own parachute and spend another four or five minutes gliding to a designated landing zone.

If you're a student at the Military Freefall Parachutist Course, leave your fear of heights at home. It's not on the packing list.

As the sun rises over the Arizona mountains, more than 60 of these students are dressed in orange jumpsuits, preparing for their first taste of a high-altitude, low-opening airborne operation. Military freefall instructors—experienced jumpmasters with over 200 freefall jumps—look over the students' shoulders as they run through body stabilization drills and parachute control procedures in a hangar on the edge of the airfield at Yuma Proving Ground in Yuma, Ariz.

"Today is the first jump day for the parachutist course," said Maj. Darrell Carr, the commander of the Military Freefall School, also known as Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne).

"This morning, students start off by packing their parachutes, then we go through ground training and emergency procedures," Carr said. Behind him, some students jump off crates to practice parachute-

landing falls, while others follow their instructors through a scale model of their drop zone.

"It's all one-on-one instruction up through jump 13," said Master Sgt. George Bannar, who runs the parachutist course. For each orange jumpsuit exiting an aircraft, there's a dedicated instructor in a gray jumpsuit right behind him to ensure his safety.

"We have one of our instructors within an arm's length of each student," he said.

Having a personal freefall supervisor gives students confidence as they get used to the technique of balancing mid-air, he said.

"Guys go out the airplane, and if they're overwhelmed by all the events going on, or if they're nervous or anxious, they'll ball up," Bannar said. "They'll start flipping and

tumbling through the sky, and the instructors will fly up next to them and stop what they have going on by taking a grip or giving them a signal for what to do."

"When I'm working with students, the first thing I tell them is to trust that guy in the gray jumpsuit," said Sgt. Maj. Timothy Norris, the school's senior NCO and chief instructor. "Whatever he tells you to do, that's what you need to do, because he is going to be there with you every step of the way."

Instructors stay with their students until the parachutes are properly deployed. Then it's on the students to navigate safely to the ground, which they

do, albeit without the cadre members' grace. One-by-one, students hit the ground and roll with the same technique used in standard airborne operations, while the instructors land on their feet.

"Even if a guy's really good, his first 10 jumps he's probably still PLFing out here in the desert," Bannar said. The students' jumpsuits get torn up quickly, but it's better than replacing several sets of ACUs.

Parachutist course students make at least 22 jumps during their four weeks at Yuma; often more, depending on weather and aircraft availability. As the gain

experience, they'll add oxygen systems, combat equipment and weapons to the equation; and then repeat the entire process with nighttime jumps.

"When they graduate this course, they'll be able

to conduct an infiltration at night, with oxygen and combat equipment, landing as a team in a small area so they can move on and do a mission," Carr said.

Graduates leave Yuma with another way to get to their job, Bannar said.

"If their job is to do special reconnaissance, unconventional warfare or direct action missions, they've got a clandestine way to get to their target as a cohesive fighting unit," he said. "[They'll] be able to mitigate early warning detection, and be able to execute their mission to the highest standard in [special operations]."

**"If their job is to do special reconnaissance, unconventional warfare or direct action missions, they've got a clandestine way to get to their target as a cohesive fighting unit."**

**Master Sgt. George Bannar**

*NCO in charge, Military Freefall Parachutist Course*

# SWCS students, cadre assist local Families hit by N.C. tornadoes

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika

SWCS Public Affairs Office

Approximately 50 SWCS Soldiers volunteered to assist in the clean-up of a Fayetteville neighborhood April 21 that had been damaged by tornadoes in the area. More than 60 tornadoes touched down across the state April 16 damaging more than 400 homes and destroying more than 60.

The group of Soldiers spent the morning sorting through the debris and placing it in piles for pick-up by the city. The group was mainly comprised of recent Special Forces Qualification Course graduates awaiting re-assignment.

Many of the Soldiers conducting the clean-up had prior experience with natural disaster recovery, such as Sgt. Luis Gutierrez, a recent SFQC graduate who was sent to assist in the clean-up in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

"It just gives you a good feeling to be able to help out in a time of need," he said.

The residents were glad to see the Soldiers and had nothing but praise for their presence and assistance, said Sgt. Maj. Douglas K. Kealoha, the senior operations NCO at SWCS.



Soldiers assigned to SWCS help gather and sort through debris April 21 in a Fayetteville neighborhood struck by a tornado April 16.

## 1st SWTG(A) Soldiers win division in Bataan Memorial Death March

By Caroline Goins

SWCS Public Affairs Office

Five Soldiers assigned to the 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) trekked 26.2 miles through blazing heat and desert terrain, reaching elevations of 5,300 feet, carrying 40-pound rucksacks, with 40-mph winds blowing on their faces.

They were not alone. More than 6,500 civilians and American servicemembers participated in the 22nd annual Bataan Memorial Death March at White Sands Missile Range, N.M. last month.

"It was by far the worst march any of us have ever been on," said Maj. Abraham Foster, as team members beside him nodded in agreement.

At the end of this march, eight of the original Bataan Death March survivors were there to shake hands and speak with the participants.

"It was a very humbling experience," said Sgt. 1st Class Ben Harcrow. "Their situation was so much worse, without any of the convenience we had to protect us from the elements."

The Bataan Memorial Death March honors a special group of World War II heroes. These servicemembers were responsible for the defense of the islands of Luzon, Corregidor and the harbor defense forts of the Philippines. For six days, American and Filipino Soldiers walked more than 60 miles in tropical conditions; 21,000 didn't live to see the end of the journey.

"At the end of it, I was limping a little and one of the survivors saw me and asked, 'What are you limping for?'" said Sgt. Adam Kourelis. "I just looked at him, but I had nothing to say."

The team finished first among 38 teams in the heavy co-ed military division.

"The march required determination, intestinal fortitude and motivation from each other to keep us going, especially in the last few miles when we were out of gas," said Sgt. Maj. Abraham Sanchez.

## SWCS staff member wins Air Force award for Reserve service in Afghanistan

Christi Logan is the performance dietician for the THOR<sup>3</sup> (Tactical Human Optimization, Rapid Rehabilitation and Reconditioning) program for SWCS students and cadre.

She's also the U.S. Air Force's company-grade dietician of the year.

A captain in the Air Force Reserve, Logan is assigned to the 440th Medical Squadron on Fort Bragg.



Logan

In December 2009, Logan became the first-ever traditional Reserve dietician to deploy to a combat zone; she served as the nutritional medicine flight commander for the 455th Expeditionary Medical Group at Craig Joint Theatre Hospital in Bagram, Afghanistan.

Logan and her team were the sole nutritional medicine team in the area, providing full-time support to over 100 medical providers and 78,000 beneficiaries across 34 provinces and 11 forward-operating bases.

She was also the nutrition consultant for the detention facility at Panwar, and both the Egyptian and Korean field hospitals at Bagram Airfield. Additionally, she was an instructor for the Afghan

Medical Mentorship program, and provided nutrition education courses on malnutrition and nutrition support to 16 Afghan medical providers, who do not receive nutrition courses in their traditional medical training.

Throughout her tour, Logan relied heavily on her professional and military training to complete the mission and bring her crew home.

"No one completes this process on their own," she said. "It is a team effort every time."

In addition to traditional patient care, Logan and her team were sought out for their expertise on performance nutrition and weight loss. They launched the MOVE! weight-management program for all military branches in theater and implemented tele-medicine nutrition counseling to the outlying FOBs. She also co-led an initiative working through U.S. Army Food Service Advisors, to bring healthier food options to Afghanistan's dining facilities.

Logan brings these skills and experience back to SWCS, where she has a role in counseling and developing Army Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Military Information Support Operations Soldiers.

At SWCS, Logan integrates performance nutrition services and education throughout all levels of training and education.

## Upcoming Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>Robin Sage begins</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Mother's Day</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Civilian Recognition Ceremony 10 a.m. JFK Auditorium</b>	<b>14</b>