



Inside SWCS

The official newsletter of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy
Special Warfare Center and School

May 9, 2011
Issue 17, Volume 2

It's not what you jump out of, it's where you jump into

Advanced Tactical Infiltration Course helps SOF get themselves into tight situations



Left: Advanced Tactical Infiltration Course students at the Military Freefall School at Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz. prepare to conduct a high-altitude, high-opening airborne operation in full combat gear. Right: A U.S. military special-operations servicemember exits an aircraft in order to conduct an airborne exercise during the two-week Advanced Tactical Infiltration Course.



Part 3 of a 3-part series:
"Where they're going, they don't need roads"

By Dave Chace
SWCS Public Affairs Office

In operational environments where roads are littered with IEDs, and extensive early-warning networks may update an enemy on troop movements, sometimes special-operations Soldiers need another way to drop by the more remote parts of the globe.

"We like to be able to knock on an enemy's back door without them knowing we're in their yard," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Michael Sprouse. "Military freefall offers a way to discreetly infiltrate into an enemy's territory."

Sprouse is the operations and safety officer for the Military Freefall School, also known as B Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), located at Yuma Proving Ground in Yuma, Ariz.

The school offers four courses to special-operations personnel, each targeted for incoming students with varying levels of experience in the air. There's a progression to working your way through all the courses, and at the top of that progression is the Advanced Tactical Infiltration Course, which is only available to those servicemembers who have conducted at least 100 military freefall jumps, and served as a freefall jumpmaster for at least a year.

"This course is the tactical side of freefall infiltration," said Sgt. Maj. Timothy Norris, the school's ser-

geant major and chief instructor. "Everything is combat equipment, body armor and night-vision."

Students attending the course spend two weeks conducting high-altitude, high-opening jumps as teams over unfamiliar parts of the Arizona desert.

During approximately 19 freefall jumps, these students will learn the latest techniques in conducting computer-guided and compass-driven navigation, rigging non-standard combat equipment, grouping and navigating toward unmarked drop zones, and rigging and deploying autonomous GPS-guided precision bundles. During the day and night.

"[Students] become subject-matter experts, so they can go back and train their detachment on tactical infiltration the way it should be done on the battlefield in the future," Norris said.

The freefall school is always trying to push the envelope and meet the operational force's requests for updated and advanced tactics and techniques.

"We put guys who have actually jumped into combat as cadre in ATIC," Sprouse said. "We put retired Marines in the cadre, Army Rangers, Special Forces, all bringing their own experience from the force back to that course and making it better."

"We like to be able to knock on an enemy's back door without them knowing we're in their yard."

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Michael Sprouse
Operations and Safety Officer, Military Freefall School

The course will continue to grow and develop; cadre members are looking at incorporating rough-terrain landings in the future.

"I haven't seen one guy who's been through ATIC and said he could've done that at home," Sprouse said. "Every guy says it's a great course."

No matter which Military Freefall School course a potential freefaller is at looking at, they know they're going to benefit from the knowledge and expertise of special-operations personnel from across the Department of Defense.

"We are a joint school, and people from other services lend great experience that the Army guys might not have seen," Sprouse said. "I wouldn't want it any other way."

The school not only trains all services; the cadre is made of up them as well.

"It's a melting pot of everything; we put it together and try to take the best of all of them," Norris said.

"We try to build on that team environment from all four branches," Norris said.

Between the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine special-operations communities, the school has visibility on all types of military freefall operations.

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“Godfather of MISO” honored in retirement ceremony

Col. Curtis Boyd, SWCS Chief of Staff, retires after 27 years of service

By Caroline Goins
SWCS Public Affairs Office

One of the Army’s most experienced psychological operations officers officially retired after 27 years of active-duty service during a ceremony May 2 on Fort Bragg’s John F. Kennedy Plaza.

Col. Curtis D. Boyd served as chief of staff for the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School since October 2009. Prior to this assignment, Boyd commanded the 4th Psychological Operations Group (Airborne), now known as the 4th Military Information Support Group (Airborne).

Commissioned as an infantry officer in 1984, Boyd served in the 82nd Airborne Division before joining the Army’s special-operations community. In his 27 years of service, Boyd spent 20 of them assigned to Fort Bragg.

“I doubt anyone would argue he is the godfather of [Military Information Support Operations], certainly the godfather of his branch,” said Maj. Gen. Bennet S. Sacolick, SWCS Commanding General, during Boyd’s retirement ceremony.

Boyd was officially named a Distinguished Member of the Psychological Operations Regiment during the ceremony.

While distinguished members of special-operations regiments are rarely inducted immediately upon retirement, Sacolick said Boyd deserved recognition, and had been voted in by his peers.

“He laid the intellectual framework for psychological operations,” Sacolick said. “He is a man of profound intellect.”

Boyd has also served in the Joint Special Operations Command and managed special-operations pronency at SWCS in previous assignments.

“You have created a climate of excellence achieved only through our desire for perfection,” said Boyd to Sacolick in his remarks. “You’ve made attributes matter, for trainees and trainers alike.



Col. Curtis Boyd salutes during his retirement ceremony May 2 on Fort Bragg’s John F. Kennedy Plaza.

Army special-operations forces epitomize our Army values and then some.”

“It has been my absolute honor and privilege to have known and served with you at such an important time in our nation’s history,” Boyd said.

As the SWCS Chief of Staff, Boyd has had a hand in managing training and education for three Army branches:

Special Forces, Civil Affairs and MISO. This training includes entry-level qualification and advanced tactical and leadership courses for the Army’s seasoned special operators.

In particular, Boyd has emphasized the importance of higher education by helping introduce new degree programs for special-operations officers and NCOs.

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In Arizona, freefall students have space and weather for safe, consistent training

Regardless of their branch of service, freefall-qualified personnel interested in becoming a part of the Military Freefall School cadre can start with a recommendation from their unit’s sergeant major, Sprouse said.

“In all services, there’s time where you have to give back to the force or community,” he said. “In Special Forces, we call it ‘SWCS time,’ but the other forces have their own versions of SWCS.”

Why would anyone choose to spend their ‘SWCS time’ at the freefall school? Just ask Norris, who is on his third assignment in Yuma as a member of the school’s cadre.

“Arizona is a beautiful place to live, and a great place to work,” he said.

“Here in Arizona, we have almost 330 sunny days a year,” Sprouse said. “Obviously it’s a lot better [for training] than somewhere on the east coast where it rains a lot, because that inhibits our

jump operations.”

“Arizona’s a great place to train, that’s why everyone comes out here,” he said.

Yuma Proving Ground, which is bigger than Rhode Island, is primarily a testing area known for its realistic training facilities; its units conduct a wide variety of military tests, including medium- and long-range artillery, aircraft armament, cargo airdrop systems, unmanned aerial systems, and technology for defeating roadside bombs, to name a few.

Established in 1942, the proving ground hosted training for tens of thousands of World War II infantrymen, as well as tests on bridge designs and boats. Today the proving ground’s workforce incorporates over 3,000 Soldiers and civilians; the freefall school accounts for about 100 of those personnel.

“At this post, we pretty much get anything we ask for, within reason,” Norris said. “We couldn’t ask for any better working relationship, honestly.”



A student in the Advanced Tactical Infiltration Course exits an aircraft to conduct a day-time high-altitude, high-opening airborne operation.

“I love it here, I love Yuma” said Master Sgt. George Bannar, a cadre member at the school. “As you can see, there are mountains you can hike in, and lots of travel points nearby, like San Diego, Tombstone, Vegas and Phoenix. It’s a great place to be.”

“You get to see what goes on with

every branch of service, and I’ve yet to see any other classroom where the main teaching point is about 56 seconds of freefall at 120-plus mph,” Norris said. “It’s a dangerous job, but it’s an exciting job and it’s an enjoyable time in your career.”

“This is an awesome place to be assigned,” he said.

U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School



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Upcoming Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Mother's Day	2	SWCS Blood Drive Kennedy Hall Atrium 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.	4 Robin Sage ends	Civilian Recognition Ceremony 10 a.m. JFK Auditorium	6	7
8	9	SWCS Safety Day JFK Auditorium and JFK Plaza 9 a.m.	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21