



# Inside SWCS

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Special Warfare Center and School

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## Communication is the key to a happy marriage

Just ask Elena and Dane Hughes, two MISO Qualification Course students studying Indonesian language and culture at the Directorate of Regional Studies and Education



Capt. Elena Hughes (left) and Capt. Dane Hughes (right) review their Indonesian language notes May 19 in Bank Hall on Fort Bragg, N.C. These two officers met in an Army training course in 2006 and have been married for four years. They were randomly assigned to the same Indonesian class for the language and regional education phase of the Military Information Support Operations Qualification Course.

**By Caroline Goins**  
SWCS Public Affairs Office

**S**WCS builds strong minds and strong hearts, which builds a stronger marriage according to two captains in the Military Information Support Operations Qualification Course.

Capt. Dane Hughes and Capt. Elena Hughes have been married for more than four years. For half that time, deployments have kept them separated, but they're making up for lost time during the language and regional studies phase of MISO training.

Thanks to random chance and a little luck, Dane and Elena have been assigned to the same Indonesian class, held in the SWCS Directorate of Regional Studies and Education. Students are assigned specific regions based on their aptitude and the needs of the operational force.

"Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world; it's a strategic location," Dane said. "It's important to our mission to build strong relationships with their government to protect both countries."

During these courses, most students typically pair with a study group or partner to practice proper pro-

nunciation and vocabulary. Dane and Elena didn't have to look too far to find their partners.

"We go home and have everyday conversations in Indonesian while classmates go home and have to practice with flashcards," Dane said.

"We comprehend the vocabulary faster when we put it into everyday use," Elena said.

"It's such a fully immersive course that we find ourselves dreaming and thinking in Indonesian," Dane said. "We even find ourselves translating what's being said on TV and the radio."

In all, Dane, Elena and their classmates will spend 42 weeks studying Indonesian language and regional culture, as well as communications media training, to learn to communicate with and deliver critical information to foreign audiences.

Dane and Elena agree being in the military and going through training together has really strengthened their marriage.

"Being in a marriage you learn to communicate, but being in the Army together, you learn all these things ten-fold," Elena said. "You get first-hand experience on the reliability of your partner when it really matters, not just the little everyday things."

Everyone has their low days, but at least he and Elena are able to have a clear understanding of what each other is experiencing, Dane said.

**"We go home and have everyday conversations in Indonesian, while classmates go home and have to practice with flashcards."**

**Capt. Dane Hughes**  
Military Information Support Operations Qualification Course

"With dual-military relationships, there's an understanding of the job requirements and time demands," Dane said.

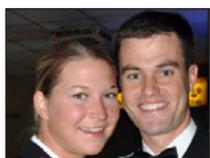
Since they met in an Army training course in 2006, both have served on two year-long overseas deployments with limited access to phones and the Internet.

They recalled the one occasion they were able to meet up during a deployment.

"It was kind of unreal having a bit of normalcy on deployment. It was like we had a secret, being able to have dinner and a movie together like a regular couple," Elena said.

She says experiencing the same training helps her when Dane is on a hard mission because she knows first-hand how well-prepared he is.

"I have confidence in his training and capabilities as a Soldier to take care of his team and himself," Elena said. "I would follow my husband into war, that's a special reassurance when we're apart."



Hughes and Hughes

# Congratulations to the Class of 2011

These college students have spent the last year working in various sections of SWCS as part of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command's Student Educational Employment Program.

In partnership with Fayetteville State University, Methodist University and the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, USASOC and SWCS give students part-time opportunities to gain practical experience as government civilians.

These individuals have been a valuable part of our civilian workforce, having contributed their time and expertise to improving our command. Please join us in wishing these individuals best wishes and good luck in all future endeavors!



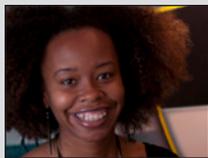
**Queen Colbert**  
Fayetteville State University  
Sociology / English  
Clerk, SWCS



**Andre Debow**  
Fayetteville State University  
Computer Science / Math  
Computer Clerk, NCO Academy



**Caroline Goins**  
UNC-Pembroke  
Mass Communications  
Public Affairs Specialist, Office of Strategic Communication



**Deanne Hendrickson**  
Fayetteville State University  
Criminal Justice  
Legal Administrator, SWCS Staff Judge Advocate



**William Williams III**  
Fayetteville State University  
Computer Science  
Computer Clerk, NCO Academy

Not pictured:

**Sandra Westbrook**  
Fayetteville State University  
Psychology / Criminal Justice  
Legal Administrator,  
1st SWTG(A) Judge Advocate



U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School Soldiers watch a police canine unit demonstration at the SWCS Safety Day events May 17 on Fort Bragg's John F. Kennedy Plaza. The event was held to provide health and safety education to students and cadre members assigned to SWCS.

## SFQC graduate awarded for putting self in harm's way while assisting local police officer

By Dave Chace  
SWCS Public Affairs Office

The streets of Fayetteville, N.C. are a little safer thanks to the quick thinking and initiative of a recent Special Forces Qualification Course graduate.

Sgt. Valentin Birlean was assigned to the 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) awaiting transfer to the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Carson, Colo.

In mid-April, Birlean, his wife and son were enjoying their last weeks in Fayetteville before moving the Family out west, and were driving down Cliffdale Rd. toward a local park when he noticed a police officer in need of assistance.

At an intersection, a Fayetteville police officer had conducted what seemed to be a routine traffic stop. The officer and the car's owner stood nearby.

Suddenly, the owner of the car grabbed his backpack, which they'd been searching through, and started running down the road. The police officer attempted to chase after him, but was pushed onto the ground.

Birlean didn't think twice; he threw his car into park, jumped out and chased after the man, who didn't expect to have to compete with a Special Forces Soldier who could run 5 miles in less than 37 minutes.

Even in flip-flops, it didn't take Birlean long to catch up with and subdue the suspect.

"I saw the fight break out; he pushed her on the ground and grabbed his bag," Birlean said. "After I caught him, I just tackled him."

Birlean said he held the man on the ground until the police officer caught up and put the suspect in handcuffs.

Did the suspect put up much of a fight?

"He couldn't do anything," Birlean said. "I had him in a choke hold, so he couldn't move at all."

During the traffic stop, the suspect had given consent to the officer to conduct a vehicle search. The bookbag the officer had found held 388 grams of marijuana, according to the Fayetteville Police Department.

When the police department called the 4th Battalion, 1st SWTG(A) headquarters, Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Berry, the battalion's senior NCO, held his breath.

Usually, calls from the police to a Soldier's command group are bad signs.

In this case, the phone call was made to recognize and commend Birlean's actions.

Birlean and his 4th Battalion leadership attended the department's annual awards banquet, where he was recognized in front of hundreds of current and retired police officers and city officials.

"Sgt. Birlean tackled the suspect and wrestled him to the ground until he could be handcuffed by a police officer," said a police department spokesperson during the ceremony. "If not for [his actions], the suspect would've eluded the police and escaped custody."

Birlean, who has since reported to Fort Carson as a new member on a Special Forces operational detachment, said any of his peers or classmates would have done the same thing in that situation.

"There were at least three other cars at that intersection, but they just stayed in their cars," he said.

Soldiers are assessed and selected for Special Forces training based on a specific set of character attributes: integrity, courage, perseverance, personal responsibility, professionalism, adaptability, capability and their ability to be a team-player.

**"If not for [his actions], the suspect would've eluded the police and escaped custody."**  
Fayetteville Police Department

## Upcoming Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
22	HHC, SWCS Change of Command JFK Auditorium 10 a.m.	21 Clean Sweep Begins	25	USASOC Memorial Day Ceremony 2 p.m. USASOC Headquarters	26 Training Holiday	28
29	Memorial Day	31	1	1st SWTG(A) Change of Command, 8:30 a.m. NDU Thesis Presentation 4:30 p.m. JFK Auditorium	NDU Class of 2011 College of Int'l Security Affairs Graduation 9 a.m. JFK Auditorium	4
5	1st SWTG(A) Change of Responsibility Ceremony 10 a.m. JFK Auditorium	7	8	9	10	11



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