



# Inside SWCS

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

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## “Quality is better than quantity”

Part 2 in a 5-part series about the SOF Truths: how they're applied in daily life at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School and in the nation's special-operations community



U.S. special-operations forces scan their area from an overwatch position while on a combat reconnaissance patrol in Zabul province, Afghanistan, July 17. Special-operations forces are currently conducting partnered missions with Afghan commandos throughout Afghanistan. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class William S. Parker)

By Dave Chace

SWCS Public Affairs Office

The second of the five special-operations forces truths reflects the fact that, inside the SOF community, a small number of people, carefully selected, well-trained and well-led, are preferable to larger numbers of troops, some of whom may not be up to the task.

In other words: “quality is better than quantity” because quality special operators are always up to the task, whether that task may involve the conduct of direct action, special reconnaissance, unconventional warfare or any other core SOF activity.

As the gateway into the Army's three special-operations branches — Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Military Information Support Operations — the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School is the front line in gauging and ensuring the quality of those Soldiers it sends into these branches' ranks.

“Commanders make decisions based upon the expected capability of their ground forces. These capabilities are acquired in large part during the training they receive at SWCS,” said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mike Sprouse, the operations and safety officer for the Military Freefall School in Yuma, Ariz.

“If SWCS produces an inferior product, commanders will be unable to make these decisions confidently, and may refuse certain missions or take unwarranted risks because of this,” Sprouse said.

“If you have a human operating below standard performance, it will in all likelihood create a negative impact not only in the immediate actions, but potentially beyond even our own command,” said Sgt. 1st Class Gary Bowles,

an instructor in the SWCS Noncommissioned Officer Academy at Fort Bragg, N.C.

This negative impact cannot be present when small teams of elite Soldiers are conducting critical missions autonomously, on small teams in remote environments.

“Whether its leading a unilateral patrol or combined with partner forces, the nuts and bolts required to accomplish a mission remain the same: sound planning, solid understanding of infantry tactics, all combined to develop critical thinking to elicit tactically sound and ethical decisions,” said Maj. David Low, the operations officer for 1st Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), which runs several key portions of

the Special Forces Qualification Course, including specialty training and small-unit tactics.

The second SOF truth isn't only reflected in the quality of the Soldiers serving within special-operations units; it also applies to SWCS cadre members' approach to training. The SFQC may run as long as a year for some specialties, but cadre members work to strike a balance between teaching the necessary skills, and making sure those lessons stick.

“It is widely acknowledged that there is less time [for operational units] to develop Soldiers, especially upon graduation before a combat deployment,” Low said. “We've refined small-unit-tactics course material to a smaller set, to focus and achieve proficiency that will be reinforced across the SFQC, rather than the phase taken in isolation.”

In military freefall training, this means enforcing the school's standards for safety and performance without compromise, and taking extra time when required to get a student trained, Sprouse said.

“It's better for the health of the regiment to ensure that our standards and expectations are unquestionable,” he said.

**“Commanders make decisions based upon the expected capability of their ground forces. These capabilities are acquired in large part during the training they receive at SWCS”**

**Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mike Sprouse**

*Operations and Safety Officer, Military Freefall School, 2nd Bn., 1st SWTG(A)*

# ARSOF officers may apply for early selection to Army's AMSP

This article provides information to the Special Operations community on the Advanced Military Studies Program (AMSP) early selection program. In an effort to increase predictability as well as SOF participation at the School of Advanced Military Studies, the Combined Arms Center and the SWCS leadership offer an early selection process to Civil Affairs, Military Information Support Operations and Special Forces officers.

Pre-selection to AMSP follows the normal selection process, with qualified CA, MISO and SF officers given the opportunity to compete in an earlier selection cycle. Early selects for AMSP can be slated for up to 12 months prior to course start date.

The School of Advanced Military Studies selects the best qualified officers for AMSP with the following criteria:

1. An officer with high potential for future service.
2. An officer with high potential for continuing assignments in key leadership and staff planning positions.
3. An officer's ability to complete a rigorous graduate level academic program in the Military Art and Science of War.
4. An officer with a strong interest in war fighting at the tactical and operational levels.
5. An officer with operational deployment experience. How does the pre-selection process work?

An individual with the desire to attend AMSP contacts their branch manager indicating their intent to apply. Their records are reviewed to ensure they meet the screening criteria before they are identified as a potential AMSP candidate. The AMSP candidate completes the application process as outlined in the AMSP MILPER messages which includes: completing an online application, completing an online personal goals sheet, submitting an evaluator assessment as well as a supervisor letter of recommendation, provide a copy of their undergraduate transcripts, and successfully pass an entrance exam.

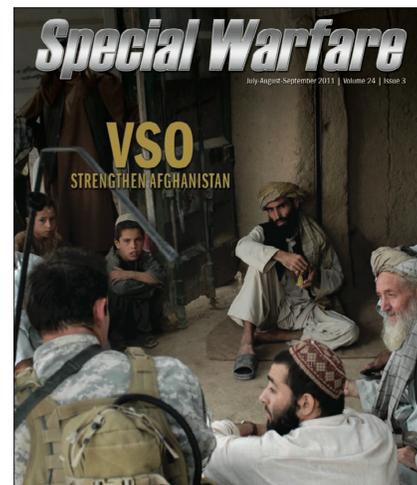
The applicant will also conduct an oral interview with SAMS leadership. Subsequently, the CAC-LDE establishes a local AMSP selection board of three colonels and three PhDs with the responsibility to identify the best applicants and produce an order of merit list. This OML is approved by CAC and Army leadership. If the CA, MISO or SF applicant is on the primary list, that individual will be slated against a future AMSP class.

The pre-selection program requires selected candidates to attend AMSP not to exceed 12 months from their selection year.

The ultimate goal of AMSP early selection program is to increase participation of special-operations officers in one of the Army's premier educational opportunities.

## Special Warfare magazine

The July-September 2011 edition of Special Warfare magazine is now available online and in a special-operations unit headquarters near you. This quarter's edition focuses on the conduct of village stability operations by special-operations units and Soldiers. Read below for brief previews of each article in this edition. To access the magazine online, please visit: <http://www.soc.mil/swcs/swmag>



**Village Stability Operations: More than Village Defense:** The authors explain the critical role that village stability operations play in the International Security Assistance Force's counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan.

**4th and Long: The Role of Civil Affairs in VSO:** When the Soldiers of Company A, 91st Civil Affairs Battalion, deployed to Afghanistan in 2010, they learned to adapt their activities to contribute to village stability operations.

**The Nuts and Bolts of Village Stability Operations:** An overview of the principles and challenges of village stability operations.

**Taking a Stand: VSO and the Afghan Local Police:** Through village stability operations, members of U.S. SOF team with Afghan police to achieve security and stability and pave the way for political and economic improvements.

**The Green Beret Volckmann Program:** The author proposes a strategy for countering multi-regional insurgencies by employing culturally astute SF Soldiers who would serve repetitive rotations to a specific country.

**Regimental Training Facility Brings Unique SOF Resources Together:** A dedicated site at Fort Bliss, Texas, provides realistic pre-mission training for members of special-operations task forces.

## Upcoming Event Highlight

### SWCS Annual Summer Picnic

9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Aug. 12, at Smith Lake

Summer picnic events are free, and include:

- Motorcycle show
- Mountain bike race
- Golf cart course
- Volleyball
- Parachute simulator
- Face-painting
- Tug-of-war
- M-4 simulator
- Combatives demo
- Basketball
- Bouncy houses
- Retention booth
- Horse shoes
- Paintball
- Horse rides

Menu: Southern BBQ

Meal tickets: \$5 for SWCS Soldiers, \$7 for dependants and civilians

Free hot dog for children 10 years and younger (ticket needed for head-count)

For tickets and information:

HHC, SWCS: (910) 432-6001 ♦ SWMG(A): (910) 396-3517 ♦ 1st SWTG(A): (910) 432-8442

## SWCS Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	1	2	Robin Sage ends	4	5	6
7	1st SWTG(A) Support Battalion Truck Rodeo (Through Thursday)	SWCS Newcomer Orientation	10	11	SWCS Summer Picnic	13
14	15	SWCS Off-site Camp Mackall (Through Thursday)	17	18	CA & MISO Advanced Individual Training Graduation Ceremony 10 a.m. JFK Auditorium	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26



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