



# Inside SWCS

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## “SOF cannot be mass-produced”

Part 3 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



A U.S. service member with Special Operations Task Force — South provides security overwatch during a routine patrol in Maiwand district, Kandahar province, Afghanistan, April 1. The SOTF-South team conducts regular patrols in order to bolster security and disrupt insurgent activity. (U.S. Army photo courtesy of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command)

By Maj. David Butler  
SWCS Public Affairs Office

As our nation opened its second front on the morning of June 6, 1944, training camps throughout the United States were running beyond capacity producing what would equate to more than 16 million service members to serve in World War II. Rosie the riveter and her comrades were sweating away long hours in the factories to produce the tools these Soldiers would use. The weapons of war, both human and inanimate, were in mass production.

These patriots were sent forward to execute their duties under the supervision of a chain of command and with the expected support of a conventional force.

As the war waged on, a group of men crossed behind enemy lines to collect and analyze strategic information, train guerrillas, conduct sabotage and provide guides to conventional forces if and when they arrived.

These men were members of the Office of Strategic Services, the precursor to today's special-operations force. These individuals were few and specially selected. They volunteered and were highly trained.

Great care had to be taken to ensure that the right individuals were precisely prepared. They would not be able depend on consistent direction of their chain of command or the support of a conventional force.

“Special-operations is a mind-set as much as it is a

national capability to be leverage, and each Soldier who applies to the community must be able to demonstrate comfort with being effective in an unconventional setting,” said Maj. Pat McCarthy, the deputy commander of the SWCS assessment and selection company.

Due to the nature of their mission, special-operations forces are specially selected. At SWCS, assessment and selection programs are run for each SOF career field to ensure special-operations candidates possess the basic requirements to begin SOF training.

“Assessment and selection safeguards mission accomplishment by ensuring Soldiers possess sound character, a high degree of commitment, and are of the correct level of intellect before they're accepted into the community,” McCarthy said.

The assessment and selection rate averages at about 50 percent of Soldiers who meet the minimum criteria to attend assessment and selection. After being selected, SOF Soldiers must complete many more months of additional training before they become special operators.

“At the end of the day the most important thing SOF brings to any situation is the ability to solve problems and develop nuanced solutions,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Berry, the command sergeant major of 4th Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne).

To build competent special operators, SWCS invests in a student's training and education in many different ways. Each Special Forces student, as an example, is mentored by

a member of an instructor-operational detachment alpha.

This team of experienced Special Forces Soldiers remains with the same group of students throughout their entire qualification course. They guide, critique and advise the students, preparing them for their next assignments.

“Our job on the IODA is to train, teach and mentor the student populace in how to think; not what to think,” Berry said. “In the SFQC we certainly teach procedural tasks, but the biggest thing we teach is the ability to think on your feet and develop courses-of-action based on the information you possess and the persons you are dealing with.”

Each special operator must possess technical, cultural and language skills beyond that of a normal Soldier. The American special-operations force is its only force that is specifically trained and educated to work with indigenous populations. SOF missions inherently require teams to insert and operate undetected as well as conduct offensive operations when necessary.

“Advanced skills training primarily allows special operations forces to conduct different means of clandestine infiltration or conduct different technical aspects of special operations missions,” said Lt. Col. Bill Herbert, commander of the 1st SWTG(A)'s 2nd Battalion.

“We are looking for those who always strive to excel, those who find the thought of quitting to be repugnant, those who will commit themselves to selfless service, honor and courage,” Herbert said.

# Smoke Bomb Hill: Fort Bragg's historical home of the Army's special-operations forces



Left: Bryant Hall, the headquarters of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, stands on Ardennes St. on Fort Bragg, N.C. Right: The portrait of Sgt. 1st Class William M. Bryant, for whom Bryant Hall is named, is unveiled. (Photos courtesy of the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Museum)

By Roxanne Merritt

Director and Curator, John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Museum

The area from Fort Bragg's All-American exit on Gruber Rd. heading north on Ardennes St. to the filter plant is known as "Smoke Bomb Hill," so named in the 1930s when it was the range area for field artillery units and always haloed in smoke. It was also the home to the Army's Special Forces from the late 1950s until today. Some of the most iconic landmarks in the area include the John F. Kennedy Plaza, Kennedy Hall, Bryant Hall, Bank Hall and the John F. Kennedy Chapel.



Bryant

The streets in this area were all dedicated to icons of unconventional warfare such as Col. Francis "The Swamp Fox" Marion, Col. John S. Mosby, Col. Peter Hunt Morgan, Maj. Gen. Frederick Funston, Col. Frank Merrill and Maj. Gen. William "Wild Bill" Donovan.

The construction of Bryant Hall was originally envisioned as the cornerstone of a complex that would have included the chapel, plaza, an adjacent language training classroom facility which is now Kennedy Hall, a closed-circuit television lab and radio station for WCMA 91.5, a swimming pool, a museum, a temporary resident building, a service club, an advanced medical lab and three Special Forces Group headquarters with barracks.

Bryant and Kennedy halls, along with the chapel and plaza, were built and used as envisioned. Moon and Hardy Halls were also completed.

The barracks and headquarters buildings were built across Ardennes St., south of Reilly Rd., but were never occupied by the 3rd, 6th, 5th or 7th Special Forces groups. By the time they were completed, only 5th and 7th SFG(A) were still in existence. Their headquarters buildings were located directly across from Bryant Hall on Ardennes St. and just up from the chapel, respectively.

Kennedy Hall was designed by A.G. O'Dell, Jr. and Associates, a Charlotte-based firm. The building housed the headquarters of U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Center of Military Assistance and U.S. Army Institute of Military Assistance, a dual-hatted command.

It also held a theater, six state-of-the-art language classrooms, a barbershop, a snack bar and a branch post office and the radio station. Twenty months after construction began, it was dedicated by Senator Robert F. Kennedy on May 29, 1965, President John F. Kennedy's 48th birthday. Between 2006 and 2008, Kennedy Hall was totally restructured and is now home to the Master Sgt. David K. Thuma Noncommissioned Officer Academy and the Special Forces Warrant Officers Institute.

John F. Kennedy Chapel was dedicated on Dec. 2, 1965, replacing the small chapel (still standing and renamed Castle Chapel) on Gruber Rd. by the off-ramp from All American Freeway.

The chapel's stained glass windows were manufactured by Pittsburgh Stained Glass Studios in 1965 at a cost of \$25,000, paid for by donations. The inspiration for the seven windows came from the history of Psychological Operations and Special Forces as drawn by the illustrators of the 13th Psychological Operations Battalion.

The windows were constructed by Milcho Silianoff, a weight-lifter from Wilmerding, Penn. whose family had

escaped Romania after World War II. The largest window at the front of the chapel echoes the words of the Special Forces prayer written by Chaplain John Stevey for Brig. Gen. William P. Yarborough in 1961. Above the prayer stands a representation of then-Capt. Roger H.C. Donlon, the Vietnam War's first Medal of Honor recipient.

The chapel's front garden holds several memorials. The two memorials in the very front were dedicated in 1965 as unit memorials for the Soldiers of 5th and 7th SFG(A) who were killed in actions in Southeast Asia.

The large upright tablet in the center of the garden was given to SWCS in 1969 by John Wayne at the 4th of July parade in Atlanta in appreciation for the help he received making the movie "The Green Berets" and in tribute to all Special Forces Soldiers.

In 1964, an effort to solicit funds for a memorial to honor special-operations Soldiers who had lost or would lose their lives in the Vietnam War was initiated. This effort also raised the funds necessary for the chapel's stained-glass windows. A memorial association was formed and, working with the Fine Arts Commission in Washington, D.C., they selected Donald De Lue, an accomplished sculptor famous for his many overseas battlefield monuments to sculpt a 12-foot statue of a special-operations Soldier. Spc. Brian H. Clark of the 13th PSYOP Bn. designed the John F. Kennedy Plaza, a 51,000 square-foot plot, 170- by 300-feet to complement the central figure.

The sculpture, unveiled on Nov. 26, 1969 by then-Capt. Drew Dix, the first NCO to receive the Medal of Honor in the Vietnam War, was the only statue at the time to be of a NCO. It was also the first Vietnam memorial erected in the United States.

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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	CA & MISO Advanced Individual Training Graduation Ceremony 10 a.m. JFK Auditorium	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27