



Inside SWCS

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One wall at a time, SWCS builds Special Forces engineer sergeants

Part 2 of a 2-part series



Left: Two U.S. Special Forces students twist concertina wire around a fence post to build a double-apron fence for Fort Bragg, N.C., Aug. 25. This was part of the Special Forces engineer sergeant military occupational skills phase of the Special Forces Qualification Course at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. Top right: U.S. Special Forces Engineer Sergeant student use hoes to mix concrete for a wall. Bottom right: Aspiring Green Berets build a double-apron fence during the Special Forces Qualification Course. Of the two types of fences the Soldiers built that day, the double-apron is the hardest for an enemy to bypass.

Story and photos by Spc. Cody A. Thompson
40th Public Affairs Detachment

The sounds of hoes plunging into dry earth, creaks from wooden beams being slammed into the ground by mallets, and cement mixing in a wheelbarrow, could be heard throughout an engineering range as potential U.S. Special Forces engineer sergeants worked tirelessly to build walls.

Special Forces candidates from the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School learned to build walls and fences as part of the military occupational skills phase of their qualification course on Fort Bragg, N.C., Aug. 25.

The Soldiers began the sweltering day by building a cement foundation and wall which could be protected from explosives by the next group of candidates.

"We layered some bricks to build a wall [that hypothetically] would be used to protect Soldiers and civilians from actual mortar rounds," Sgt. Caleb Vet, a prospective Special Forces engineer sergeant, said. "After we find out what the locals need, we can help them build their own structures."

Not only do the aspiring engineer sergeants raise walls, but protecting structures through the use of explosives is another skill they learn.

"We're using masonry blocks for the demolition portion of the [U.S. Special Forces Engineer Sergeants Course] in case there's unexploded ordinance (UXO) downrange," Spc. Eugenio Grullon, a U.S. Special Forces engineer student and former XVIII Airborne Corps surveyor, said. "If there's UXO by a building downrange, we

learn how to get rid of the UXO by creating a protective barrier around the UXO and using a block of C-4 to detonate it. If we do this correctly, the wall will stay intact."

Another important section of the training is base-camp construction, which includes teaching the Soldiers how to construct everything they need to survive in a deployed or third-world environment.

"Teams come back after missions and need a place that is safe from the enemy," Staff Sgt. Corey Jacobson, another engineer sergeant candidate, said.

The Soldiers need a place where they can be protected, eat, sleep, plan and conduct maintenance for the next mission, Jacobson explained.

The 18C military occupational specialty, Special Forces engineer, is one of several specialties within the Special Forces career field. Officers, warrant officers, weapons sergeants, medics, and communication and intelligence specialists must each complete individual specialty training to qualify in their field. Once assigned to one of the Army's Special Forces groups, Soldiers from each specialty come together in order to form one 12-man Special Forces operational detachment-alpha.

These teams employ two qualified Special Forces engineers: one apprentice-level Soldier graduated from the Special Forces Qualification Course, and one seasoned Soldier with operational experience as a Special Forces engineer.

These Soldiers are experts in the planning, design and construction of buildings, demolition, mine warfare, special-purpose munitions and explosives, counterboobytrap and UXO clearance operations and improvised munitions and explosives. The construction module of

their training teaches them to read blueprints and design and construct buildings and field fortifications in theaters of operation. Like all Special Forces Soldiers, they are taught to recruit, organize, train, advise or command indigenous combat forces as large as a company.

Keeping the teams safe begins with constructing fences that border the base camps.

"There are two types of fences that we are building, the concertina fence and the double apron fence," Jacobson said. "The concertina fence is a triple strain (temporary) roll of concertina wire and is quick to put up. The double apron is made from short or long pickets, constantan wire and barbed wire. Although the double apron is more labor-intensive, it's also a lot harder for an enemy to get past."

"Eventually, the plan is to get [the base camp] to a permanent state," he added.

One veteran explained how this type of training translates to the real world.

"The world works off of masonry," retired Command Sgt. Maj. Henry Ramirez, the instructors' supervisor, said. "Some of these guys will be able to build villages in other countries to train (host-nation) forces."

Soldiers who complete the SFQC as engineer sergeants are not only taught engineer-specific tasks; core elements of the SFQC, such as regional and language education, and small-unit tactics, are universal to all Special Forces training, no matter a Soldier's specialty.

Whether it's building villages, training host-nations, providing a secure base camp, wiring electricity, plumbing, or detonating UXOs, these budding engineers work sunrise to sunset to build a better future—one wall at a time.

SWCS SSI symbolizes core SOF attributes, irregular techniques



By Dave Chace
SWCS Public Affairs Office

The U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School's shoulder-sleeve insignia is a common site around Fort Bragg, and throughout the special-operations community.

Often coupled with Special Forces and Ranger tabs, and always topped by the Airborne tab, the SWCS patch represents the experienced special-operations Soldiers who train and educate their peers and followers, as well as those students striving to join, or progress through, the Army's special-operations ranks.

Originally approved in 1962, this design has followed SWCS through five name changes. Its most prominent feature is an antique lamp, stylized to resemble the Greek letter "Psi", chosen to symbolize the traits, feelings and attributes of the mind; fittingly, SWCS today emphasizes eight core attributes to guide the selection and education of Army special-operations Soldiers. The lamp's flames are meant to simulate the action of arraying for battle.

Two crossed arrows, of Special Forces branch insignia fame, also make an appearance, referring to the stealth of early American frontiersmen, as well as the "wasplike, yet devastating" use of irregular tactics and techniques.

For those Civil Affairs and Military Information Support Soldiers wondering "What about us? SWCS serves three Army branches, not just Special Forces!" you can rest easy - just take a look at the nearest NCO's beret and you'll see that SWCS's distinctive unit insignia feature both the torch from the Civil Affairs branch insignia (and the Statue of Liberty), as well as the trojan horse of the Psychological Operations branch insignia. All three branches are present in SWCS' insignias and symbols, just as they are present among SWCS ranks and priorities.

Military heraldry ties generations of service members together and helps Soldiers identify with their command and those who serve alongside them. To research other military symbols, you can visit the Institute of Heraldry's website at www.tioh.hqda.pentagon.mil



International military servicemembers attending U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School courses pose with Lt. Gen. John F. Mulholland, Jr., commanding general of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, during a reception for international military students Oct. 12 on Fort Bragg, N.C. International special-operations students come to SWCS to attend U.S. Army courses such as the Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Military Information Support qualification courses, as well as advanced skills courses like the Special Operations Combat Medic Course. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika, SWCS Public Affairs Office)

SOCOM welcomes 7th command sergeant major

By Mike Bottoms
SOCOM Public Affairs Office

Adm. Bill H. McRaven, commander of the U.S. Special Operations Command, passed the sword to Command Sgt. Maj. Chris Faris during a change of responsibility ceremony at the command's headquarters on MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. The transfer of the sword from McRaven to Faris signifies the trust and confidence that SOCOM has in the noncommissioned officer corps.

Faris becomes SOCOM's seventh command

sergeant major, replacing Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas H. Smith.

Faris is the personal adviser to the commander on all issues regarding the welfare, readiness, morale and proper utilization of the SOCOM enlisted force.



Upcoming Event Highlight

National Defense University

Distinguished Lecture Series

"Assessing and Ranking the Threats: Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Al-Qaeda and its Allies"

Open to the SWCS, Fort Bragg and Special Operations communities.

1 p.m. - 2:30 p.m., Oct. 21

Kennedy Hall Auditorium

No RSVP required ♦ Please be seated 10 minutes prior to start of the lecture

SWCS Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
16	17	18	"Shred It & Forget It!" Safely destroy personal information at Fort Bragg's destruction facility (CMDP). Make an appointment at: (910) 907-3670	20	MISO QC Graduation 9:30 a.m., JFK Auditorium National Defense University Distinguished Lectures Series 1 p.m., JFK Auditorium	Robin Sage begins
23	24	25	26	27	SWCS Fall Festival 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Special Forces Association	29
30		1	SOF Education Fair Bank Hall	Robin Sage ends	4	5