



# Inside SWCS

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

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## Alone in the Dark

### Special Forces candidates face night land navigation

A Special Forces candidate plots coordinates as other Soldiers move out during the night land-navigation portion of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School's Special Forces Qualification Course Aug. 25 at Camp Mackall, N.C. Soldiers were only allowed to use their red headlamps to briefly read their map during the 10-hour course. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Derek L. Kuhn, 40th Public Affairs Detachment)

By Sgt. Derek L. Kuhn  
40th Public Affairs Detachment

It takes a certain breed of Soldier to willingly undergo the intense training of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School's Special Forces Qualification Course.

From Special Forces Assessment and Selection to the Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape course, Special Forces candidates are pushed to their physical and mental limits.

Soldiers hoping to graduate the Special Forces Qualification Course must find a way to negotiate through pain, fatigue and hardship throughout their training. Candidates must also negotiate approximately 23 miles of night land-navigation and find five points within 10 hours.

"To move on to the next phase of training, you have to navigate the course without regard to weather and successfully find five points," said Capt. Scott Orr, a Special Forces candidate who was participating in the night land navigation portion of the qualification course Aug. 25.

The five points are determined and placed throughout the course by the cadre. The students must plot each point on their map before tackling the terrain.

According to Orr, the students are only allowed to use red lights and only when they are stopped to check their maps. This makes navigating the course much more difficult, he said.

The course through which the candidates must navigate is typical North Carolina woodlands complete with hills, loose sand, ravines and draws. Such terrain presents challenges to the candidates, Orr said.

"There are a lot of thick draws out here," Orr, a native of Spring, Texas, said. "If you get caught up in one, you could be stuck in it all night before you find your way out. I would rather walk 14 kilometers to avoid a 2-kilometer draw, so I don't waste my night trying to get to one point."

The amount of gear students must carry with them also adds to the difficulty, he said.

"We have a 45-lb. dry ruck sack," said Staff Sgt. Josh Tiffany, another Special Forces candidate. "But with all the water we carry and additional gear like our weapons, we are carrying over 75 lbs."

It is essential for the candidates to carry that much water because of the hot and humid North Carolina weather, Tiffany added.

"When moving out with the weight at these temperatures for the distances we have to move," Orr said, "dehydration can really make things difficult."

Tiffany, of Syracuse, N.Y., said the cadre take the candidates' safety seriously and if a Soldier were to go down the cadre are able to rapidly respond.

"We are given flares, whistles and GPS trackers to use in case anything goes wrong," he said.

Medical professionals are with the cadre to provide on-the-spot medical assistance to injured candidates. This assistance is crucial when Soldiers are pushed to their limits.

"I'm beat," Orr said. "I've been up for over 35 hours [before the 10-hour night land-navigation course], but I know I can make it."

For Orr and the other

members of his class, they want to make it through the navigation course, because completion brings them one step closer to the qualification course's graduation and an assignment onto a Special Forces operational detachment—alpha.

"It's everybody's goal," Orr said. "I don't think anyone shows up to this course just wanting to check it out. We all have a real desire to become Special Forces Soldiers, no matter what it takes."

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**Capt. Scott Orr**  
Student, Special Forces Qualification Course

#### SWCS Factor video feature

Learn more about the SFQC's land navigation standards and Soldiers by viewing this month's edition of the SWCS Factor - simply scan the QR code to the right with your mobile phone, or visit [www.youtube.com/swcspao](http://www.youtube.com/swcspao)



# Make smart, safe decisions during times for holiday travel and time off

By Maj. Gen. Bennet S. Sacolick  
SWCS Commanding General

This month we celebrate two very important holidays.

The first is Veteran's Day, celebrated Nov. 11 with a long weekend continuing through



Sacolick

Nov. 14. It is a day set aside to thank and pay tribute to the men and women in our military services, past and present, who dedicate their lives to

protecting and serving our great nation with honor and dignity.

The second is Thanksgiving, a day to reflect on how grateful we are for the sacrifices made by so many men and women in uniform who continue to fight for the freedoms we enjoy today.

Thanksgiving is typically the heaviest-traveled holiday weekend each year. Holiday periods have an increase in risk exposure, whether from crowded highways or off-duty recreational events with Family and friends.

As you plan your holiday events this November, ensure you manage the risks associated and implement adequate controls.

Understanding the environment you are operating in and maintaining situational awareness adds to your protection both on- and off-duty.

Motor vehicle accidents continue to be the Army's leading cause of loss.

If your plans include travel, make a commitment now to obey the traffic laws, drive defensively, wear seat belts, don't drive when you're tired or fatigued and above all, remember alcohol and operating a vehicle can be a fatal and career-ending combination.

Just say "no."

Commanders will ensure all Soldiers and civilians receive a safety briefing and will make maximum use possible of the Army Travel Risk Planning System (TRiPS).

Command Sgt. Maj. Ledford Stigall and I want to thank you for your service to this command. Have safe and enjoyable holidays.



Children of U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School personnel participate in the command's Fall Festival Oct. 28 at the Special Forces Association in Fayetteville, N.C. Held for SWCS Soldiers, civilians and Families, the event featured apple-bobbing, pumpkin painting, good food and quality time amongst coworkers and friends. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Andy Delvillar, SWCS G-1)

## SWCS to undergo Army's official accreditation process in April 2012; preparation underway now

By Lt. Col. Eurika Jennings  
SWCS Quality Assurance Office

An accreditation is a means to assure that quality training and education is occurring at an institution. The result of that accreditation is the Army's formal assessment of the institution's ability to meet established Army standards that directly correlate with quality training and education.

During the accreditation an experienced team of subject-matter experts from outside the organization observe, assess and evaluate the institution based on a set group of standards related to the institution's defined education and training goals, academic instruction, its processes, policies and functions, the development of and support to training and the institution's overall effectiveness.

In order to prepare SWCS for our accreditation which will occur April 16-20, 2012, a team of evaluators and advisors from the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command at Ft. Eustis, Va. and the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Ft. Leavenworth, Kan. visited SWCS Oct. 11-13. They met with and briefed key leaders and action officers from each of SWCS' staff sections and subordinate units, presenting and explaining the specific Army Enterprise Accreditation Standards by which SWCS will be evaluated.

Here's what everyone in SWCS needs to know: our command is on the right track but there is still a lot to accomplish during the accreditation process.

During the next few weeks every organization in SWCS will be conducting a formal self-assessment that will be forwarded to the Army's accreditation team, and that report will form the basis for their inspection of our institution in April. It is vital that you become familiar with who your unit or section's accreditation action officer is and do everything you can to support their information-gathering efforts as they pave the way for us to receive the absolute best rating possible: "Learning Center of Excellence."

If your section is currently meeting all the standards outlined for the accreditation, you need to stay vigilant and continue to maintain those standards. If there's room for improvement, inform your chain of command, identify solutions, and implement actions necessary to meet or exceed the established standards.

At SWCS, the only acceptable standard is excellence, because the product our instructors produce departs this institution and immediately serves our nation in combat or helps further national objectives through global persistent engagement. There is no doubt that with team-work and focus our accreditation status will reflect SWCS' professionalism and effectiveness.

We have always taken pride in what we do; let's make sure that when the Army takes a long, hard look at our leaders, instructors, students and graduates they will officially acknowledge that SWCS is, in fact, THE Learning Center of Excellence.

## SWCS Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
6	7	Newcomer Orientation	SFQC Graduation 3 p.m. Crown Coliseum	10	Veterans Day	12
13	Training Holiday	15	16	Civilian Advisory Council meeting	18	19
20	Fort Bragg Clean Sweep (through Wednesday)	Civilian Recognition Ceremony	23	Thanksgiving	Training Holiday	26



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