

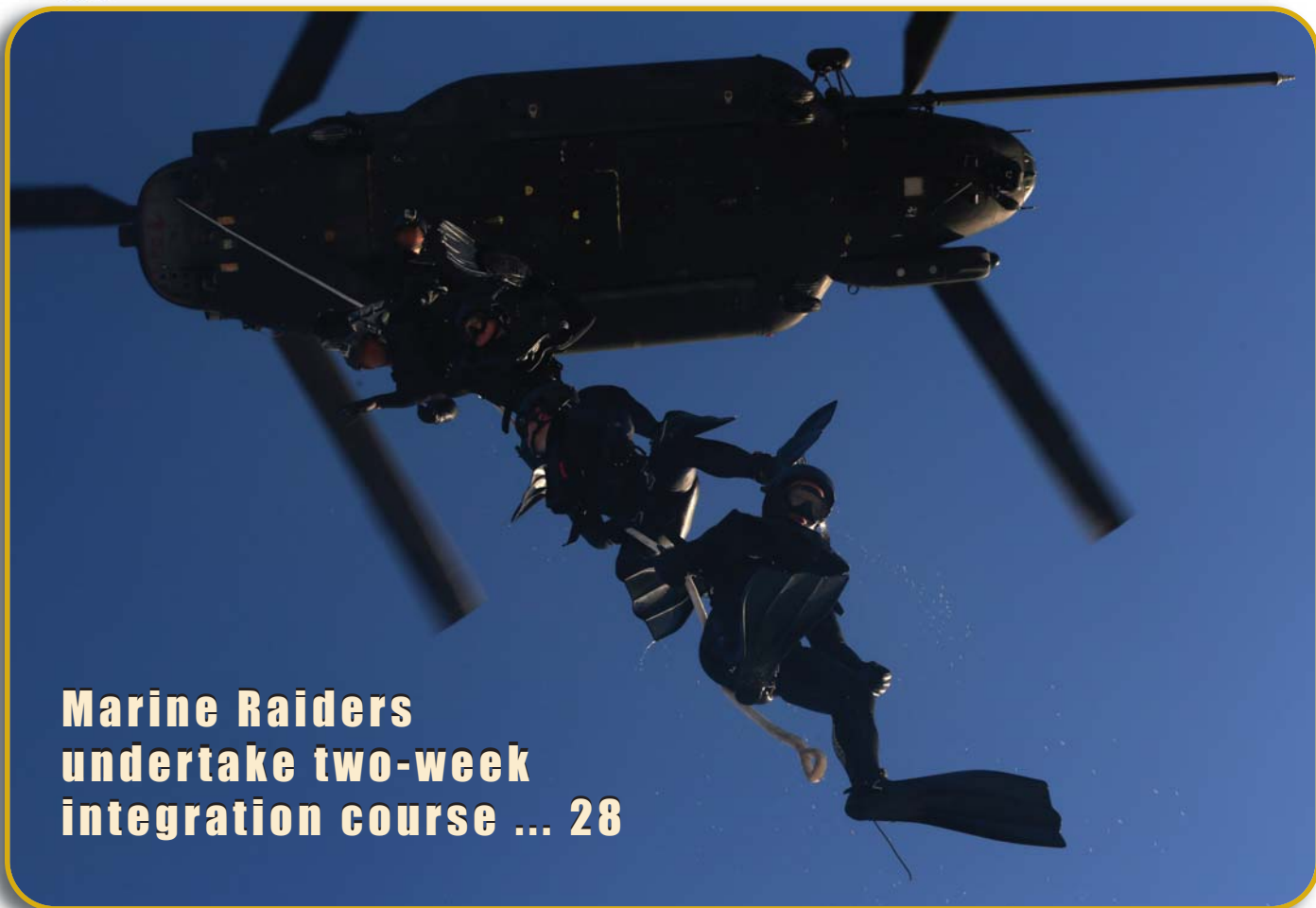


TIP OF THE SPEAR



**MARINE RAIDERS UNDERTAKE
TWO-WEEK AIR INTEGRATION COURSE**

U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLA., DECEMBER 2015



**Marine Raiders
undertake two-week
integration course ... 28**

Tip of the Spear



**Thomas Jefferson
Award Winner**

**Army Gen. Joseph Votel
Commander, USSOCOM**

**CSM Bill Thetford
Command Sergeant Major**

Army Col. Tom Davis
**Special Operations
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(Cover) Marine Raiders with 1st Marine Raider Battalion near the completion of one of their helocast and Special Patrol Insertion and Extraction (SPIE) exercises near Hurlburt Field, Fla., Feb. 6, 2015. The helocast and SPIE rigging training was part of a two-week training exercise called HAVEACE, and part of the participating Marine Special Operations Team's unit training program.

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NATO Special Operations Forces operate together at Trident Juncture 15



A multi-national team of Special Operations Forces fast ropes from a Spanish CH-47 Chinook and Czech Air Force Mi-171 "Hip" during the land demonstration for Trident Juncture 2015 at the San Gregorio Training Site near Zaragoza, Spain on Nov. 4. More than 300 distinguished visitors and 170 media agencies viewed the demonstration of land forces. NATO Courtesy Photo.



Story on next page

By Sgt. 1st Class William Patterson
SOCEUR Public Affairs

U.S. Special Operations Command Europe augmented by nearly 60 personnel from 17 NATO and European partner nations formed the Special Operations Component Command Headquarters for the NATO Response Force during Exercise Trident Juncture 2015 which ended Nov. 6 2015.

Trident Juncture is the largest NATO Exercise conducted in the past 20 years with around 36,000 troops from more than 30 nations, to include both NATO Allies and Partners; the aim of the exercise is to train the troops of the NATO Response Force and other Allied forces.

The exercise served as the certification for SOCEUR to assume responsibility for 2016's NATO Response Force Special Operations Component Command.

"Often seen as a force working primarily in the shadows and isolated from other troops, this exercise saw a strong emphasis from the SOF to execute interoperability with the Land, Maritime and Air Components," said U.S. Navy Cmdr. Erick A. Peterson, Chief of Staff for the SOCC. "Trident Juncture enabled us to execute our core NATO SOF missions with our partners across unique terrain."

Throughout Trident Juncture SOCEUR commanded and controlled more than 1,300 SOF in Spain and Portugal, said Peterson. The Special Operations Task Groups included forces from the U.S., Portugal, Spain, Finland, Poland, The Netherlands, Belgium, Czech Republic, Canada and Slovakia.

Maj. Michael Lanzafama, Joint Air Coordination Element Operations Officer and his joint Multinational team of aviation professionals coordinated and

deconflicted aviation support for the Maritime and Land SOTGs with the NATO Land, Maritime and Air Components in addition to the assigned SOF aviation units, who logged more than 500 flight hours, during the live training portion of the exercise.

"With a Special Operations Air Land Integration Task Unit, five Aviation task units from three different NATO allies, with seven different types of aircraft, spread across five different forward staging bases, it was not without challenges," said Lanzafama.

"Even with many lessons learned, we feel Trident Juncture was a resounding success and that we are ready to assume our role as the SOAC for the Enhanced NATO Response Force for CY 2016," Lanzafama added.

For other fighting forces pulling together such a diverse force may have proved a tremendous challenge, but for SOCEUR this was a familiar assemblage.

"This was business as usual for SOF," stated US Air Force Maj. Gen. Gregory Lengyel, SOCEUR's Commanding General. "Our long history of partnership allows us to quickly pull together an unparalleled team of professionals."

US SOCC will accept stand-by responsibility from the Polish SOF with the turn of the new year to be the NATO Response Force SOCC for 2016, according to Peterson. In this capacity the SOCC will remain based out of Stuttgart, Germany and will have command and control over two Special Operations Maritime Task Groups, five Special Operations Land Task Groups, and one Special Operations Air Component, positioned across Europe.

With the completion of Exercise Trident Juncture the 2016 NRF SOCC stands ready, and proven capable, to confront any new, or old, threats that emerge within or outside of Europe.



Portuguese Naval Special Forces take the beach on the coast of Lisbon, Portugal, Oct 24, during exercise Trident Juncture 2015. NATO Courtesy photo.



(Top left) A SEAL with the U.S. Naval Special Warfare Unit 2 anchors the climbing ladder as his teammates climb up near Lisbon, Portugal, Oct. 24. (Left) SEALs from U.S. Naval Special Warfare Unit 2 prepare to board a ship for Vessel Boarding and Ship seizure training. (Top right) SEALs with the U.S. Naval Special Warfare Unit 2 conduct fast rope training from a CV-22 near Lisbon, Portugal, Oct. 24. (Middle right) NATO Special Operations Forces jump from a tactical airlift to conduct exercise training with a submarine in the Gulf of Cadiz. (Bottom right) During an Air Assault Operation, a member of the Spanish SOF team descends on the spot at the Chinchilla training area, in Spain, Oct. 27, during Trident Juncture 15. NATO Courtesy photos.



Army opening 19 combat specialties to women

By Army News Service

A total of 19 military occupational specialties in the Army will open to women beginning early next year.

Secretary of Defense Ash Carter announced Dec. 3 that women who qualify will be able to serve in any job, anywhere in the military. He directed the Army and other services to provide an implementation plan by Jan. 1, 2016.

More than 125,000 positions will potentially open for women in the Army's conventional forces, and more than 13,000 positions will potentially open in U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

Inside the conventional forces, the following MOSs will open:

- 11A, infantry officer, 6,296 positions
- 11B, infantryman, 75,115 positions
- 11C, indirect fire infantryman, 7,840 positions
- 11Z, infantry senior sergeant, 2,194 positions
- 13F, fire support specialist, 8,957 positions
- 19A, general armor officer, 403 positions
- 19B, armor officer, 663 positions
- 19C, cavalry officer, 1,165 positions
- 19D, cavalry scout, 15,028 positions
- 19K, M1 armor crewman, 6,828 positions
- 19Z, armor senior sergeant, 829 positions

Inside USASOC, 13,482 positions will open in the following MOSs:

- 18A, Special Forces officer
- 180A, Special Forces warrant officer
- 18B, Special Forces weapons sergeant
- 18C, Special Forces engineer sergeant
- 18D, Special Forces medical sergeant
- 18E, Special Forces communications sergeant
- 18F, Special Forces assistant operations and intelligence sergeant
- 18Z, Special Forces senior sergeant

Since May 2012, the Army had already opened approximately 95,216 positions and nine occupations to women, as it has taken a methodical approach to assessing and removing barriers to women's service,



2nd Lt. Rachel Parker, Field Artillery Basic Officer Leader Course Class 7-13, leads a formation during the Red Leg War, Dec. 11, 2013. Courtesy photo.

officials said.

In September of this year, then-Secretary of the Army John M. McHugh submitted to the Secretary of Defense his recommendations on whether to open -- or to request an exemption to keep closed -- the remaining Army military occupational specialties that have historically been closed to women.

Following a review of those recommendations, and the recommendations of the other service secretaries, the Secretary of Defense announced Dec. 3 his intent that all positions in the U.S. military be opened to women.

The secretary of the Army's recommendations about what positions to open were informed by the studies and the findings of working groups designed to look into the feasibility of women serving in combat arms roles.

The Army additionally prepared for opening the positions to female Soldiers by re-validating the physical standards required for entry into the closed MOSs.

The Secretary of Defense will submit his signed recommendation to Congress. If lawmakers agree with the recommendation the Army can then begin recruiting female Soldiers into the newly-opened MOSs.

CST-2 members share their stories

*By Senior Airman Grace Lee
Air and Education Training Command*

Today, less than half a percent of Americans serve in the U.S. military and of that number, 14 percent are women. Commonly, war stories are told through the eyes of men and it is rarely illustrated from a woman's perspective.

"The purpose of this presentation is to let students ask questions and become familiar with, and educated by these incredible women," said Joseph Brett, Veterans Heritage Project vice president. "The Veterans Heritage Project's mission is to connect students with veterans. Today, we are using film to let veterans tell their stories."

The presentation was on behalf of the Veterans Heritage Project and a collaborative effort with the Scottsdale School of Film.

During the presentation, the service women from Cultural Support Team-2 were asked several questions and each had a chance to share their story.

The questions varied from why they decided to join the military to what training for special operations was like for women at the time.

"First, we were assessed and then we were selected to be trained," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Raquel Patrick, Army Ordnance Training Detachment-Fort Gordon division deputy chief and CST-2 member. "We went to training to specifically support the special operations forces. Overall, I thought the training was a lot of fun, but it was challenging."

For one CST-2 member, the attitude of her fellow Soldiers is what pushed her through.

"I think physically they push you to your limits, as far as how they didn't let you sleep," said Capt. Serena Stagnaro. "But for me, being surrounded by all these women, who were very driven and positive, made the situation bearable."

The women also shared some of the challenges they faced while deployed.

"The missions were difficult because it wasn't really cut and dry," Stagnaro said. "It was whatever the team needed us to do depending on their area of responsibility, and all the areas were very different."

Patrick chimed in and explained the rewards of the job.

"I was also involved in Key Leader Engagements, so I got to meet the town's leadership," Patrick said. "I would

appear every weekend hoping that women would reach out. The biggest deal for me was when a woman presented a grievance at the town hall meeting. For her to feel that she could be represented was a big deal for me and that was the whole point of why we were there, to help them help themselves."

The women were also involved in missions to help women get to where they needed to be safe.

"My first mission was quite unusual," said Rose Mattie, an Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk pilot and CST-2 member. "We got word that a woman had dressed up as a man and made it to a remote base. The guys called us to ask what they should do with her. So we did some research and figured out what course of action we could take with her. We presumed that if she took that extreme to dress up as a man, there must be something she was running from."

"We had two options to either send her back or send her to a shelter in Kabul, Afghanistan. So they put us on a Blackhawk and we went in and got her. We took her to Kabul, and the last thing I heard was she was getting her education there."

The presentation closed following a question-and-answer session.

The women are hopeful they left a positive impact while they were deployed to Afghanistan, and they are thankful for the opportunity to share their stories

"This is a really monumental time in history for us," Patrick said. "We're breaking through a lot of barriers today and I want it to be captured and shared with future generations."



Wearing a black head cover, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Raquel Patrick, Army Ordnance Training Detachment-Fort Gordon division deputy chief and Cultural Support Team-2 member, asks an Afghan child if she was enrolled in school, November 2011, in Afghanistan.



Partnership strengthened as US Special Forces, Colombian Junglas train together in Florida

*Story and photo Maj. Thomas Cieslak
7th Special Forces Group (Airborne)*

One of the Western Hemisphere's most enduring security partnerships strengthened in late fall as counter-narcotic police from Colombia trained with Green Berets from the United States on Eglin Air Force Base in Northwest Florida.

Members of the Compañía Jungla Antinarcóticos trained the entire month of November with Special Forces Soldiers from the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne), improving their capacity to counter narcotic and human trafficking in their home country while reinforcing bonds between the two forces.

"The continued partnership between the Colombian Junglas and U.S. Special Forces is a testament to each country's commitment to increased security and stability in the Western Hemisphere," said Col. Robert Kirila, the group's deputy commander. "The strength of that strategic level commitment finds its foundation in the tactical level partnership training conducted here in the pine forests of Eglin and in the jungles of Colombia."

The partnership was established in 1989 when the first 120 Junglas were trained by the British Special Air Service with support from members of the 7th SFG (A), the Army's Special Forces Group whose Area of Responsibility includes Latin and South America. The Green Berets were given the primary responsibility of training the Junglas early in the 1990s, forming a relationship that continued to develop throughout the decade. Junglas now comprise most of the training cadre as the 7th SFG (A), along with other U.S. agencies continue to sustain the partnership and provide training and advisory support.

Charged with seeking out and destroying narcotic-production facilities hidden beneath the dense canopy of the Colombian jungles, Junglas are experts in jungle



An explosive door-breaching charge detonates during a live-fire exercise as members of the Colombian Compañía Jungla Antinarcóticos stage to assault the doorway inside an Eglin Air Force base shoot house during a joint training exercise Nov. 20. The Junglas, as they are known, are training with Green Berets from the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) as part of the Western Hemisphere's longest enduring security partnership formed to counter narcotic and human trafficking.

warfare. Each member undergoes 18 weeks of training conducted by Colombian, and sometimes American, instructors in the use of small arms, demolitions, first aid and many other skills necessary to fight an enemy who can easily meld into the dense vegetation used to conceal facilities and storehouses. Speed and determination are the two characteristics that best describe assaults Junglas conduct against targets equally determined not to lose a lucrative source of income. Transported to their objectives in armed helicopters, they often must rappel to the ground because there is no area suitable to land the aircraft.

Continuing that partnership between the Junglas and Green Berets of the 7th SFG (A), the Colombians traveled to Eglin Air Force base to train with the Special Forces Soldiers during the month of November. The

Junglas paired with a 12-man team known as an Operational Detachment Alpha whose members' specialties include demolitions, tactics, leadership and planning. Speaking to the Junglas in their native language, the Green Berets immediately developed a rapport with the Colombians and developed a training schedule to improve their capacity to counter the narcotics trade they regularly face.

"Because of their training and experience in the jungles of Colombia, the Junglas are experts at that type of warfare. They're used to having to deal with heavy vegetation, the tree canopy and the heat and humidity because that's where most of their missions take place," said the ODA's Noncommissioned Officer in Charge, a Special Forces master sergeant. "Members of the ODA realized our shoot house here on the compound would provide the Junglas a great chance to increase their close quarters battle (CQB) skills in complex buildings, so we made sure our training schedule was set up to help increase their skills clearing rooms and breaching doors as a team" he continued.

The Junglas' training began with techniques in basic marksmanship for carbine rifles and 9mm pistols using static targets on Eglin Air Force Base's open-air ranges. From those basic methods, the Green Berets increased the difficulty and intensity of the training by including movement and team-level tactics while still using open-air ranges with static targets. A few days of the month-long training were devoted to familiarizing the Junglas with weapon systems they might not operate regularly, like mortar systems and sniper rifles. The Junglas spent the third week of the month inside the rooms and hallways of a shoot house located on the 7th SFG (A) compound learning CQB. Able to have its layout reconfigured due to movable doors and walls, the shoot house offered the Colombians nearly endless challenges in learning CQB techniques from the Green Berets who took measures to ensure complacency and familiarity did not cloud the Junglas' judgment or learning.

The training conducted at Eglin was a first for both members of the decades-long partnership. In the past, Special Forces soldiers tasked with partnering with the Junglas would prepare at and deploy from their home station of Fort Bragg, North Carolina. or more recently, Eglin after the group's Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission mandated move.

"This is the first time we've hosted the Colombian Junglas here in the United States, so this is a unique

training opportunity for both them and members of my team," said the ODA's team leader, a Special Forces Captain. "While training here, the Junglas get to focus on the development of their skills where if we were training in their home country, they'd sometimes have to leave the training to accomplish a mission. What we are doing here is truly what Special Forces is all about - maintaining partnerships with forces within our AOR and improving their ability to secure their country."

The Junglas conducted a culmination exercise, Nov. 30, requiring them to apply newly-learned skills taught to them by the Green Berets. While ensuring the safety of all participants, the Special Forces Soldiers mostly observed the Colombians' actions and planning, only offering insight or correction when necessary.

The Junglas' final objective of the exercise, gleaned from intelligence gathered at three previous targets, required them to cross Santa Rosa Sound on Zodiac rigid inflatable boats and conduct a nighttime raid on a suspected safe house. Moving quickly across the sand and roads of Santa Rosa Island, the Junglas assaulted the multi-story building intent on rescuing simulated hostages. Observed by their Green Beret mentors, the Colombians quickly swept through multiple rooms and hallways, shouting amidst the chaos to communicate their actions and prevent fratricide. With the building secure and the simulated hostages not apparently present, the Junglas began a comprehensive search of the complex, eventually finding the role-playing victims stashed inside a hidden room.

At a ceremony concluding the training, American and Colombian leaders expressed how grateful they were for the opportunity to train with a force long understood to be their partner. For the Colombians, the ceremony marked one of their last tastes of American culture during the training event and barbeque from a local restaurant was served as Green Beret and Jungla sat down for a final, boisterous meal together.

Members of this team know we will see some of the Junglas we are training during this exercise during our next deployment to Colombia, said the ODA's team leader. Each of us are looking forward to seeing what they picked up during their time here, how well they taught their fellow Junglas what they learned, and how we can continue to partner with them in the future.



U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Paul Barclay: A Special Forces community remembrance

*By Staff Sgt. Daniel Carter
10th Special Forces Group (Airborne)*

Decades later, the memories of fallen Green Berets represent important pieces in the legacies and histories of their units, comrades, and families. Memorials come in many forms, paying tribute and honoring these brave souls, their service, and their sacrifice. One such memorial was recently rediscovered in the form of a geocache located on a mountain peak overlooking Colorado Springs, Colorado, the 'Paul Barclay Stash.'

Geocaching, a popular hobby enjoyed by hikers and outdoor enthusiasts, is a hidden-container, seek-and-find challenge that requires inputting coordinates into a Global Positioning System (GPS) device to find a cache's location.

The 'Paul Barclay Stash' was placed in honor of Army Staff Sgt. Paul Barclay, an 18E Special Forces Communications Sergeant assigned to 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), who perished tragically on April 14, 1994, in Iraq while in support of Operation Provide Comfort II. The incident was a mistake. Barclay and 25 others were flying in a pair of UH60 Black Hawk helicopters when they were shot down by U.S. fighter aircraft, which had mistakenly identified them as enemy over the skies of Northern Iraq.

The tragedy has not been forgotten by the Special Forces community, and the loss remains in the hearts of many who are still within the organization.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Terry Shelton, a fellow Green Beret Soldier and personal friend of Barclay, placed a geocache on Mays Peak in early 2000, in close proximity to the 10th SFG (A) Headquarters at Fort Carson, which was to be Barclay's assignment upon completion of his tour in Iraq.

According to Shelton, the Paul Barclay Stash is one of Colorado's oldest emplaced geocaches. Due to its age and status, the Paul Barclay Stash is a highly desirable geocache to visit among enthusiasts. One such explorer is



An image of Army Staff Sgt. Paul Barclay, a fallen Special Forces Soldier who was assigned to the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), is shown in this photo after he graduated from the Special Forces Qualification Course in 1992 at Fort Bragg, N.C. Barclay tragically perished in Northern Iraq while in support of Operation Provide Comfort II when the helicopter he was riding in was mistakenly identified and shot down by friendly forces on April 14, 1994. Photo courtesy of Katie Barclay.

Michael Crowe, a former Special Forces Soldier who is now a recovery care coordinator with the Special Operations Command Care Coalition. Crowe recently located Barclay's geocache on an afternoon hike with his dog on Mays Peak in North Cheyenne Canyon.

"I like to say, I'm a casual geocacher, and I always have my global positioning system with me with preloaded locations," Crowe said. "There was one in the area named the 'Paul Barclay Stash,' and I had no idea it had anything to do with 10th Group, but when I went up there, found it, and opened it up, there was a heartfelt dedication to Paul from a former teammate and friend."

Given his close connection to the Special Forces community, Crowe decided to share his discovery on social media. He took a picture of the top page of the biography within the cache and posted the photo online. Soon after

the photo was posted, Barclay's sister, Katie Barclay, saw the photo.

"Originally, when Michael had taken the photo, a friend had tagged me in it. At first I was overwhelmed," explained Katie. "When I learn new things about my brother, it gets emotional."

Since Katie recently moved to Colorado, Crowe invited her to come and visit the geocache. She accepted the invitation and brought along her two children, Paul and Luke, and her dog, Nano, for the hike. She was accompanied and supported by several members and employees of 10th Group as they paid tribute to Paul with the climb up Mays Peak on Aug 29, 2015.

"It's pretty wonderful how Michael Crowe guided me, even though he doesn't know me," Katie said. "He invited people from Group, and they came along with us. It was special."

Shelton originally placed the geocache in an accessible location at a modest elevation of just over 8,000 feet. The moderate level of difficulty, along with its majestic views and its status as one of the oldest in Colorado, make the Paul Barclay Stash one of the most visited geocaches in the state.

"I was really honored to know that Paul had such a good friend that would create a memorial in such a beautiful place," said Katie. "It helps educate people around the world, and in the area, about what my brother did."

Katie explained that Barclay was popular throughout high school and he had many friends. He struggled as a student, however, and then surprised everyone when he joined the Army in 1988.

"It was unexpected. My father had been in the Army for several years," said Katie. "But it was not something Paul talked about [joining the Army] when he was younger. It was about him trying to find purpose in his life."

According to Katie, being a part of the Army was something that gave Barclay the purpose in life he was looking for.

"It was something that he was very engaged in. He found it very motivating," Katie explained. "He was very driven. It was the kind of engaged learning that he liked and it really drove him to reach for higher levels."

Although Barclay's life and career were cut short, he left behind a legacy remembered by many.

"From what I can tell, from people like Terry Shelton,

Paul had some amazing friends who are still in contact with me today," said Katie. "It shows the kind of people he attracted, the kind of people that he surrounded himself with. It shows that he was an amazing person."

Katie explained that, not only was it amazing to see the geocache memorial for herself, it also just as amazing for her son, Paul, to learn more about his namesake.

As time moves forward, through memories of Paul's life, his service as a Green Beret, and the unique memorial overlooking the vast plains of Colorado, the Barclay family, his friends, and colleagues continue to remember and carry on the legacy of Paul, who was characterized as a warm and generous person, a Leader, and an excellent Soldier.



Katie Barclay, the sister of fallen Special Forces Soldier, Staff Sgt. Paul Barclay, who was assigned to the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), reads a biography on Paul placed inside a geocache memorial on Mays Peak in North Cheyenne Canyon near Colorado Springs, Colo. Aug. 29. Photo by Army Sgt. Timothy Clegg.

AIRBORNE

U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) (Provisional) held a wreath laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery October 20. The ceremony commemorated President John F. Kennedy's vision of building a special warfare capability that sparked the creation of the U.S. Army Special Forces Soldiers known as Green Berets. Photo by Specialist Nikayla Shodeen.

Green Berets pay tribute to JFK

1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) (Provisional) Public Affairs Office

The 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) (Provisional) held a commemorative former President John F. Kennedy Wreath Laying Ceremony, Oct. 20, at the President's gravesite at Arlington National Cemetery. The event paid tribute to JFK's vision of building a dedicated counterinsurgency force, a vision that helped build the Green Berets into an elite force recognized around the world.

Maj. Gen. James E. Kraft, Jr., commanding general of 1st SFC (A)(P), was joined by Command Sgt. Maj. Brian C. Rarey, 1st SFC (A)(P), senior enlisted advisor and Dr. William Kennedy Smith in presenting the wreath that held a green beret at the cusp of Eternal Flash that rests on JFK's resting place.

Smith, the nephew of JFK, founded Physicians Against Land Mines. The goal of PALM was to permanently ban the

sale and use of antipersonnel land mines. PALM served as an active partner alongside the International Campaign to Ban Land Mines, and in 1997, the ICBL and its partners were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

In October 1961, JFK commended the men of the Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina on their efforts to prepare a force of unconventional warriors to combat growing threats to our nation. Among those 46 Green Berets in 1963, of those designated to guard the President's gravesite, a Special Forces NCO, Command Sgt. Maj. Francis J. Ruddy, respectfully laid his own Green Beret upon the grave of his Commander-in-Chief – who two years prior had ensured that Special Forces would be authorized to wear that same distinctive headgear.

“The challenge of this old but new form of operations is a real one and I know that you and the members of your command will carry on for us and the free world in a manner which is both worthy and inspiring,” Kennedy wrote. “I am sure that the Green Beret will be a mark of distinction in the trying times ahead.”

‘Make every day a masterpiece:’ Green Beret, wounded warrior honored for his military service

By Maj Thomas Cieslak
7th SFG (A)

The service, resolve and resiliency of a Special Forces Soldier was recognized in a ceremony held Dec. 8, on Eglin Air Force Base by members of the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne).

Capt. Benjamin Harrow, a double amputee, received the Meritorious Service Medal in a ceremony marking the end of his service as a Soldier and the beginning of his transition into civilian life.

On May 5, 2012, there were many certainties for the Operational Detachment Alpha that Harrow was leading in Afghanistan, as well as many unknowns, said a Special Forces Captain now in charge of the team Harrow led when he was wounded. Members of the team did not expect they would save a life that day, especially the life of their leader, he continued. Most importantly, said the Captain, each of the members of his team knew that Harrow had the drive, passion and determination to be one of America’s best, even after his injury.

Harrow, a native of Long Island, New York, and a 2005 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, was severely wounded May 5, 2012. While leading a foot patrol of fellow Green Berets in Afghanistan, Harrow stepped on an improvised explosive device. The detonation resulted in the amputation of both his legs below the knee and severe damage to his right arm.

“You came to our team and you were a true leader, approachable, a mentor who listened to your NCOs [noncommissioned officers] and just made our team stronger,” said a senior Special Forces noncommissioned officer who was with Harrow when he was injured in



Capt. Benjamin Harrow, left, is presented the Meritorious Service Medal by Col. Robert Kirila, the Deputy Commander of the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) during a ceremony honoring his service as a Special Forces soldier. Harrow, a native of Long Island, New York, and a double amputee, was wounded while leading a patrol May 5, 2012, in Afghanistan. Photo by Army Staff Sgt. William Waller.

Afghanistan. “Sir, I have seen a change in you ... after the incident in Afghanistan that almost took your life away. I have to say that I am so proud and happy to see you not only with a new daughter, but with your wife Gina and son Peyton by your side, only making you stronger than you were already.”

In the course of his recovery, Harrow has remained active and even served as a goalie for both the United States and Italian Paralympic Hockey Teams. He has also received several honors from the Chicago Blackhawks, the New York Yankees and the Gary Sinise Foundation.

“Make every day a masterpiece, that’s what I try and do now,” advised Harrow to the Soldiers gathered at the ceremony.

“From my perspective, having almost everything taken away from me and then building it back up and not wanting to spend the rest of my life in a wheelchair, I urge you to do the same,” Harrow concluded.



NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND

Technology Experimentation keeps NSW, SOF on the sharp edge of underwater technology

*Story and photos by
Petty Officer 2nd Class Geneva Brier
Naval Special Warfare Command Public Affairs*

Blue-green sunlight filters through chlorinated water and tints the faces of observers as they peer through a window into the Naval Special Warfare Combat Training Tank on Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, California. On the other side of the glass, several divers move silently through the pool, each pausing occasionally to adjust various pieces of gear. The divers are demonstrating the latest underwater innovations at an event called Technology Experimentation 2015 or TE 15 for short, a series of events designed to keep NSW ahead of the curve and introduce new and advanced maritime technology to the community.

The history of Naval Special Warfare and Special Operation Forces in the maritime environment dates back to 1942 when the first specialized naval demolition team was formed with two officers and 17 enlisted men. A year later on June 6, 1943, the Naval Combat Demolition Unit training school was established in Fort Pierce, Florida. Fast forward to present day and the operators within NSW continue leading the way in combat swimmer/diver operations and its maritime requirements.

Among the gear presented at TE 15, were: advanced technology wetsuits, stealth rebreathers, underwater navigation aids, shark deterrents, diver to diver communication systems, and more.

One system presented at the demonstration that would potentially expand NSW diving capabilities was a system that provides an acoustic navigation capability to divers through handheld devices for locating objects of interest on the sea floor, and directing divers. Another

device being demonstrated that caught diver interest was a tracking and navigation system. This technology makes it possible to track and communicate with multiple divers and the ability to direct divers to latitude and longitude locations as well as track a remotely operated vehicle.

TE 15 is sponsored by Special Operations Command's Program Executive Office, Maritime, and coordinated through SOCOM's science and technology office. This effort establishes the TE 15 series as the cornerstone in support of NSW's recently developed "capabilities based assessment" for NSW combat swimmers and divers.

"This series of events keeps NSW at the leading edge of SOF maritime capabilities," said Chief Warrant



Army Gen. Joseph Votel, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command observes an underwater demonstration during a Technical Experimentation event focused on Special Operations Combat Swimmers and Divers and their undersea requirements and capabilities.



A flotation gear demonstration is observed by Army Gen. Joseph Votel, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, during a Technical Experimentation event focused on Special Operations Combat Swimmers and Divers and their undersea requirements and capabilities.

Officer Troy Roat, Naval Special Warfare Command diving program manager, “Getting a first-hand look at developing technologies in the commercial industry is a part of our acquisitions process, which helps us to identify technology that has the potential to advance warfighter capability,” he added. “We look at systems in two ways: either the technology will enhance an existing system or the technology will give us an advantage that we have never had before.”

TE events range from narrowly focused specific technology to broad spectrums that encompass many different types of technologies that the military is seeking to enhance. Events like the one hosted by NSW

are held throughout the year and are repeated as technology refreshes. “All the equipment we are interested in is assessed in a process we call ‘combat evaluation.’ First, we evaluate which technologies can possibly be brought into NSW inventories, then we create training, tactics, and procedures and apply a crawl-walk-run approach to implementation,” said Roat. “We assess current inventories, look at our training pipelines, analyze the impact to the forces and strive for a seamless integration.”

Benefits of the events are obvious Roat explained, “We are able to drive developers toward our warfighting requirements. Our maritime battlespace environment presents a number of physiological and technical challenges. We want to break those barriers down and reinvigorate developers toward overcoming those technological shortfalls. At TE events, operators and divers are able to provide honest feedback and sound, critical analysis about equipment, directly to industry leaders.”

According to Roat, staying ahead of, or on pace with developing technology has always been the role of NSW and continues to be one of the overarching goals. These types of initiatives make NSW and SOF safer and more efficient while

Getting a first-hand look at developing technologies in the commercial industry is a part of our acquisitions process, which helps us to identify technology that has the potential to advance warfighter capability. We look at systems in two ways: either the technology will enhance an existing system or the technology will give us an advantage that we have never had before.

— Chief Warrant Officer Troy Roat, Naval Special Warfare Command diving program manager

dominating the maritime environment and contributing to good stewardship of combat diver/swimmer programs. “This is the arena where the community is able to find the best fit of equipment for the missions at hand.” He concluded, “On days like today we’ll identify a number of sustainable commodities that fulfill

the warfighters’ requirements; systems that give them the ability to get on target safely and accomplish the mission successfully with no loss of life or equipment.”



West Coast-based SEAL Team's field training exercise

A group of U.S. Navy SEALs clear a room during a no-light live-fire drill near San Diego, Calif. Naval Special Warfare reservists from a Combat Service Support unit attached to a West Coast-based Sea, Air, Land (SEAL) team conducted a field training exercise based on principles from the expeditionary warfare community. Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Daniel Stevenson.





AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Bradley A. Heithold, commander, Air Force Special Operations Command, stands with Capt. Jonathan Seagle, Capt. John Vandembenden, Staff Sgt. Spencer Seymore and Staff Sgt. Daniel Teel and Chief Master Sgt. Matthew Caruso, AFSOC command chief, during an awards presentation Oct. 16, at Cannon Air Force Base, N.M. Seagle, Vandembenden, Seymore and Teel, members of the 20th Special Operations Squadron, received the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with Valor for their heroic actions during a deployment in December 2014. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Matthew Plew.

20th Special Ops Squadron CV-22 aircrew receives Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Valor

*By Staff Sgt. Matthew Plew
27th Special Operations Wing Public Affairs*

The Cannon military flying community, leaders, family, and local supporters gathered in Hanger 196 on Cannon Air Force Base, New

Mexico, to recognize a group of heroes who risked their lives in combat late last year to save the lives of others, Oct. 16.

Capt. Jonathan Seagle, Capt. John Vandembenden, Staff Sgt. Spencer Seymore and Staff Sgt. Daniel Teel, members of the 20th Special

Operations Squadron, received the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with Valor from Lt. Gen. Bradley A. Heithold, Commander Air Force Special Operations Command, for their rapid airpower response to an enemy attack on American forces Dec. 5, 2014.

“On the night of Dec. 5, we got an opportunity to display the full capability of the 20th SOS, and we did,” stated Heithold. “I am humbled to share this stage with these fine Air Commandos.”

While deployed, the CV-22 crew responded to a special operations assault force that had come under heavy fire from enemy combatants. Their timely actions led to the successful evacuation of critically-wounded ground personnel.

“This is a great honor,” said Seagle. “Any member of the 20th would have done the exact same thing. We are all very humbled.”

According to the citation, Seagle and Vandembenden quickly identified access and exit routes, and plotted potential unplanned landing zones in the area. Undeterred by the intensity of enemy and friendly fires, Seagle and Vandembenden identified the Special Operations team, cleared the landing zone and provided critical radio approach calls that led to flawless execution of an extremely difficult 80-foot restricted-visibility landing.

At the same time, Teel analyzed the aircraft’s systems and quickly determined that the CV-22 would be overweight, which would jeopardize the mission. He immediately initiated dumping procedures to ensure the crew had adequate power for a safe approach and takeoff. Meanwhile,

Seymore manned the .50 caliber weapons system while ensuring safety and providing approach calls for a successful dust out landing. Once on the ground, Seymore departed the aircraft, exposing himself to enemy fire in order to aid in loading the critically wounded.

The crew ensured all patients were securely loaded despite receiving distress calls that they were taking direct fire from the enemy, according to the citation. During their flight from the objective, they continued to perform evasive maneuvers, using the terrain for cover, which

enabled them to safely depart the area.

Once clear of danger, the crew coordinated critical aerial refueling to guarantee the safe transport of the wounded to a U. S. Navy vessel for immediate surgery. Upon reaching the vessel, they achieved a first: performing a CV-22 shipboard

contingency landing.

“The individual and team effort made by these men speaks to the character of our Air Commandos,” said Col. Ben Maitre, 27th Special Operations Wing commander. “This is a great moment for the 20th, Cannon, and for AFSOC.”

Editor’s note: Congress authorized the Distinguished Flying Cross July 2, 1926, to award any U.S. military member who exhibits heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial fight against an enemy of the United States. The Air Medal was authorized May 11, 1942, to award anyone who, while serving in any capacity in or with U.S. Armed Forces, distinguishes himself or herself by meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight.

Undeterred by the intensity of enemy and friendly fires, Seagle and Vandembenden identified the Special Operations team, cleared the landing zone and provided critical radio approach calls that led to flawless execution of an extremely difficult 80-foot restricted-visibility landing.

— Text from the award citation





Air Commandos return from exercise Ultimate Archer

*Story and photos Airman Kai White
1st Special Operations Wing*

Airmen and aircraft of the 1st Special Operations Wing returned in early November from an exercise at Hill Air Force Base, Utah.

Ultimate Archer was an exercise designed to test the capabilities of the 1st SOW units in a deployed environment and make improvements to existing procedures when available.

“What we want to do when we land [deploy] is hit the ground running,” said Master Sgt. Ian Cabral, Ultimate Archer MC-130H Combat Talon II production superintendent of aircraft maintenance. “This is a chance for us to iron out the wrinkles in our procedures to make that happen.”

Improving those procedures started with the basics and a crawl, walk, run strategy. For many Airmen who attended Ultimate Archer the exercise doubled as pre-deployment training, putting them in new surroundings with new missions and new complications that can’t be encountered at home.

“We’re getting guys outside of home station training, out of just unilateral training,” said Maj. Dwight Jones, 1st SOW theater plans chief. “Then combining and integrating training, so it ramps up the training level and better prepares our guys for how we execute real-world in a deployed environment.”

Aircrews began with orientation flights before expanding to full mission profiles. Later in the exercise they began working with external units such as the 388th Fighter Wing and 19th Special Forces Group.

A CV-22B Osprey departs for an orientation flight at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, Nov. 2. The exercise allowed Airmen to perform their duties in a simulated expeditionary environment outside of their home stations.





Airmen with the 901st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron finish repairs on a CV-22B Osprey at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, Nov. 2.

“One thing we get to do with this exercise is plan with the ground user, so the 19th Special Forces Group, F-16 Fighting Falcons and AH-64 Apaches,” said Jones. “We routinely find ourselves in air stacks with those players, but hardly ever get to practice with them.”

According to Jones, the ability to plan the day prior, then go out and execute a mission, return and debrief, is going to help develop better practices and lessons learned for the future.

In addition to working with these external units on a tactical level, the Airmen planning and coordinating missions were able to gain experience within a Joint Operations Center. Jones said this helped them understand how a JOC operates and what would be expected of them while working in a deployed situation.

A large focus of Ultimate Archer was running the JOC and how the staff of the Joint Special Operations Air Detachment operates and plans out missions.

“The JSOAD is not a new concept, but it is one that we have identified inside the 1st SOW and really in Air Force Special Operations Command as being important,” said Lt. Col. Aaron Ffrench, JSOAD commander. “We do very good at training aircrew and giving maintainers opportunities to turn wrenches and get aircraft going, but the command and control structure that the JSOAD provides is not exercised nearly enough.”

As flight and mission hours increased throughout the exercise, so did the team’s cohesion according to Ffrench.

“When last night happened, [final scenario] you

could see the motions take place,” said Ffrench. “You could see staff working, all the different entities, whether it was an operator, whether it was current ops, or intel or even a support agency. They all came together for what we needed to do the aircrew and everybody outside flying knew what to do; when to do it and really how to do it. It went very well.”

Hurlburt took eight weapons platforms to Hill, three CV-22B Ospreys, two MC-130H Combat Talon IIs, two U-28As, and an AC-130U Spooky Gunship.

“The ultimate objective here was to give us, the 1st SOW, an opportunity to advance our training, to figure out a way to improve what we do on a daily basis,” said Ffrench. “We did that by getting out of the flatlands of Florida and into the mountains and cold,

where aircraft and people respond differently in these different environments. We should not wait until we are in overseas locations to learn what a different environment does to us. I think we got that just by leaving Hurlburt and doing something a little more complex with a set scenario. I’m pretty happy to say that I think we accomplished what we needed to.”



Airmen with the 1st Special Operations Wing pull a fuel hose to an MC-130H Combat Talon II during exercise Ultimate Archer at the Utah Test and Training Range, Utah, Nov. 3.



Special Tactics Airmen complete DARC training

*Story and photo by Senior Airman John Linzmeier
18th Wing Public Affairs*

Airmen from the 320th Special Tactics Squadron completed Direct Action Resource Center training with a mobile training team on the Camp Hansen range, Okinawa, Japan, Nov. 20.

The training was held locally in order to reduce the costs that were once used to send entire STS teams back stateside.

“The mobile training team made it possible for operators from several organizations to train together at locations that are available to us on a regular basis. This allows us to better build follow-on concepts for future tactical training on-island,” said 1st Lt. Blaze Dunn, 320th STS.

Drills continued well into early morning hours over a two-week period as STS Airmen practiced combat marksmanship, close-quarter combat and advanced urban warfare to patrol villages, personnel recovery and securing buildings using night vision goggles and other tactical equipment.

The first week’s curriculum progressed training from pistol and rifle fundamentals into combat applications with weapon systems, said a combat controller from the 320th STS.

During the second week, the class focused on advanced urban warfare using buildings and small mock villages, where students applied the skills learned during the first week.

Throughout the exercises, pararescuemen, combat controllers and force reconnaissance Marines developed skills they will use to integrate with Special Operations Forces and in support of conventional forces.

“This is training focused on close quarters combat and weapons handling which equates to a basic combat lifesaving skill,” said a combat controller. “Training like this has ensured that they have been capable of fully integrating into the various SOF teams to which they have been attached.

“This successful integration allows them to bring the full brunt of air power to bear on our nation’s enemies.”

Airmen from the 320th Special Tactics Squadron gather around their team lead outside a shoot house as he discusses details of an upcoming mission Nov. 19, in Camp Hansen, Okinawa, Japan. Extensive planning and coordination is put into STS operations in order to maximize mission effectiveness and safety.





A Marine with 1st Marine Raider Battalion fires a .50 caliber Special Application Scoped Rifle during a Company Collective Exercise at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 7. Marine Special Operations Company C, 1st Marine Raider Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, spent the first phase of their three-phase exercise practicing Foreign Internal Defense at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 5-8.

Raiders focus on Foreign Internal Defense during deployment work-up

*Story and photos by Marine Corps Cpl. Steven Fox
MARSOC Public Affairs*

Marine Raiders on the West Coast focused on a core competency to kick off an exercise as they prepared for any potential mission they may face in support of Special Operations Command Pacific.

Marine Special Operations Company C, 1st Marine Raider Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, spent the first phase of their three-phase Company Collective Exercise practicing

Foreign Internal Defense at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California, Oct. 5-8.

FID is the participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization, to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to its security. FID activities include host-nation military assistance, population security, counterterrorism, and counterinsurgency.

Much of the company's FID activities will be in the

form of Joint Combined Exchange Training with host nation military forces and the company's Operations Chief said it was important to make FID a priority during the exercise.

"We split our company CCE up into three phases, the first being focused on Foreign Internal Defense, and how we develop points of instruction, how we actually teach live-fire training to the FID forces, and then how we employ them into an operational setting," said the Operations Chief.

On deployment, Marine Special Operations Teams with the company will partner with their SOF counterparts of a foreign nation to teach them various skills, tactics and procedures. The teams worked with supporting element Marines attached to the company who played the role of foreign forces during the exercise.

"This week, we had our support battalion Marines play the role of our partner nation," said the Operations Chief. "Each team had half a squad that they trained – not a realistic number, but it gave them an opportunity to walk it out, and do everything they would do in preparation for a typically sized partner nation force."

MSOT 3's assistant element leader trained the notional FID force on how to safely and accurately fire 60mm mortars at distant targets. He described how the team members benefited from practicing their FID skills during the exercise.

"We were looking to refine how we present classes, and how we evaluate the partner forces," explained the Assistant Element Leader. "You get to find out what possible issues might arise while you're teaching the classes and you can fix them here instead of (during a deployment)."

Training scenarios with the notional FID force spanned three nights. Each team had a designated night they, along with the FID force, raided a training compound at Camp Pendleton. The teams were in search of an individual considered to be a high-value target, but were instead greeted by a hostile rebel force.

What made the scenario unique was the bilateral specification of the operation, explained the Operations Chief. The teams planned and conducted the raid with the FID force they had trained and built a rapport with during the day.

Though the teams had not trained for this particular brand of direct-action raid, their operations chief was very pleased with the performance of both the Raiders and the notional FID force.



A U.S. Air Force Pararescue Jumper prepares to fire a 60 mm mortar round during a Company Collective Exercise on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 7.

"Every one of the teams has been through very difficult training over the past few weeks, so when I see them tired and dirty, I always try to take a minute to be grateful that I have Marines in this company who are unbreakable," said the Operations Chief. "Nobody takes no for an answer, because we all know what the mission is and we all know what we have to accomplish."



A Marine with Company C, 1st Marine Raider Battalion, Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, provides security during a night raid at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 9.



Marine Raiders undertake two-week air integration course

A Marine Raider with 1st Marine Raider Battalion jumps from the ramp of a CH-47 Chinook helicopter into the ocean during helocast training, Feb. 6, 2015, off the coast of Florida. The helocast training was part of a two-week HAVEACE exercise, and part of the participating Marine Special Operations Team's unit training program. Photo by Marine Corps Cpl. Steven Fox.



Story on next page



*Story and photos by
Marine Corps Cpl. Steven Fox
MARSOC Public Affairs*

The image of a Marine Special Operations Team (MSOT) trudging through dense, jungle-like vegetation is probably not exactly what one would envision when considering a team's natural surroundings in an operational setting.

More likely, one would paint a mental picture placing a Critical Skills Operator in a pale-beige desert landscape, at high noon, possibly with a sandstorm brewing in the distance, or something of the sort.

That, predominantly, is due to the region which U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command (MARSOC) personnel have been operating in for the last several years, but also because of the training locations the unit has frequented.

In preparation for future deployments to their regionally aligned Geographic Combatant Command, a team leader with 1st Marine Raider Battalion (MRB) assisted in coordinating training for his MSOT in Florida's panhandle, where the terrain is comparable to that of the team's intended tropical deployment destinations.

"For the last seven years, or so, we'd been fighting a pretty good fight in Helmand province, Afghanistan, and for a lot of us, this is going to be the first time we're reorienting to a different theater of operation," said the Team Leader.

The different theater of operation the Team Leader makes reference to is 1st Marine Raider Battalion's regional shift from U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) to U.S.



Marine Raiders with 1st Marine Raider Battalion practice driving All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) during a two-week training exercise called HAVEACE, held at Hurlburt Field, Fla., Feb. 3, 2015. Marine Special Operations Teams use ATVs during training and on deployments as a means of transporting equipment not easily carried over long distances.

Pacific Command (PACOM), encompassing South America and Southeast Asia.

"Moving to a place like Southeast Asia, where the environment itself can kill you, requires a new way of thinking, a new way of operating, and time to prepare ourselves for those kinds of conditions," said the Team Leader. "Also, the proximity of threats is much closer than maybe we would have had in a place like Afghanistan or Iraq, where you're fighting in a much more open environment. It's very different in the jungle, where you



Marine Raiders with 1st Marine Raider Battalion conduct static-line jumps from a C-130 Hercules near Hurlburt Field, Fla., Feb. 7. The jumps were part of a two-week training exercise called HAVEACE, and were also part of the participating Marine Special Operations Team's unit training program.

can't see 10 feet in front of you. Those are some challenges where we're trying to increase our capabilities."

A training facility at Hurlburt Field, Florida, which hosts a two-week exercise called HAVEACE, proved to be a rather perfect candidate among other training sites due to its location and the sheer volume and variety of training it can facilitate.

HAVEACE is not actually an acronym for anything, but the training evolution, while managing to be remarkably multidimensional, primarily serves to provide air integration training which pulls in a variety of Special Operations Forces (SOF) air assets.

"HAVEACE allows us to integrate those various air and ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) assets into our training packages and training evolutions in an area that more closely resembles the types of environments we'll be encountering," said the Team Leader. "We wanted to take full advantage of everything HAVEACE made available to us, so we've tried to maximize our training days, integrating all of the insert/extract capabilities working with the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, the Lockheed AC-130 Gunships, as well as exploiting some opportunities to integrate all of our intelligence collection."

That's actually how HAVEACE gets a lot of its appeal; the training is easily personalized, and a team has the ability to tailor the evolution to best suit its needs. It's not just convenient, but necessary the training schedule be less-than-rigid because each team going through HAVEACE is at a different stage of its unit training program (UTP).

The Marine Raider Regiment Assistant Operations Chief, who serves as the MARSOC liaison for HAVEACE, is responsible for making sure the visiting MSOT receives training in the fashion it desires.

"If teams tell me they need to focus on their full mission profiles (FMP) because they already knocked their small unit tactics out of the park, they can pack their schedule full of FMPs, and I'm here to facilitate that for them," said the liaison. "Or a team might need to do two weeks of airborne operations with water jumps, free fall and static line. Or they can come down here and do all maritime work. So really, whatever that team needs, based on what portion of the UTP they're in - we can arrange the training around that team, specifically."

Before commencing their HAVEACE work-up, the operators with 1st MRB assessed their strengths, as well as their weaknesses, and developed a comprehensive training schedule which allowed them to focus on areas where they wanted to improve.

"With our team, we've been putting a particular focus on maritime operations," said the Team Leader. "Not only from a visit, board, search and seizure standpoint, but also from small boat and scout swimmer techniques, and closed-circuit

diver operations, while working in a riverine environment."

Though the bulk of the HAVEACE package consisted of maritime tactics refinement, the 1st MRB team also allotted time to focus on fundamental infantry tactics. Individuals within the team collectively bring with them an extensive amount of experience and a wealth of knowledge.

HAVEACE proved to be a good opportunity for individuals to forge a tactical relationship, and become fluid and exact in their operational capabilities.

"We thought it essential that we work on tactics such as patrolling, individual moving techniques, and learning to operate silently and effectively in a densely wooded environment," said the Team Leader. "The areas around Hurlburt Field provide an excellent opportunity to do just that."

The lay of the land at Hurlburt Field can be likened to Southeast Asia, so it's ideal for teams at 1st MRB to use HAVEACE as a training venue, but HAVEACE has also standardized the concept of personalized and adaptable training for all of SOF, allowing teams going to CENTCOM and Africa Command (AFRICOM) to benefit just as much from the workup as a team deploying to PACOM.

"One team may be going to a country within Special Operations Command Pacific's area of responsibility, and another team may be going to a whole different country with a whole different set of languages, culture, tactical problems, and environments to deal with, so every team is unique," said the Team Leader. "Our training needs to reflect that."

For (SOF), training never really ceases. There's always room for improvement and there's always more to be learned. Always.

In the operational realm, circumstances are ever changing. New days bring new challenges, thus creating more to improve upon and more to learn.

CSOs and Special Operations Officers with 1st MRB understand this and continue to be flexible and adaptable while settling into the PACOM AO, or whatever latitude and longitude they may come to find themselves.



Marine Raiders with 1st Marine Raider Battalion practice patrolling and individual moving techniques on a live-fire range near Hurlburt Field, Fla., Feb. 9.



U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - HEADQUARTERS



Air Force Maj. Gen. J. Marcus Hicks, chief of staff, U.S. Special Operations Command, presented three service members with the highly coveted Scoty Award, Nov. 17, at the Davis Conference Center, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. The Scoty Award was established by the USSOCOM CIO/J6 in 2012 to recognize an enlisted, warrant officer, commissioned officer and civilian communicator who have demonstrated outstanding leadership, gallantry, integrity, moral courage and significant contributions that have led to improvements in communications within the SOF enterprise. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Angelita Lawrence.

SCOTY award winners recognized

*By Gunnery Sgt. Reina Barnett
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

Within USSOCOM, we are working on operationalizing our efforts to do global synchronization of mission sets, and in the communication field, that's what you all do; we really look to you to help us. You are dedicated and are doing right by the enterprise," Maj. Gen. J. Marcus Hicks, chief of staff, U.S. Special Operations Command, said before recognizing the winners of this year's Special Operations Forces Communicator of the Year (SCOTY) awards.

The awards ceremony took place at the Davis Conference Center on MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, Nov. 17.

Members of the entire SOF enterprise, with attendees from the component commands and the Theater Special Operations Commands, along with USSOCOM headquarters staff were present.

The SCOTY awards were established by the USSOCOM J6/chief of information office directorate in 2012, to recognize enlisted, warrant officer, commissioned officer, and civilian communicators who have demonstrated outstanding leadership, gallantry,

integrity, moral courage, and whose significant contributions have improved SOF communications mission capabilities.

"In total, 26 nomination packages were submitted, so this year's winners are truly the best of the best in the SOF enterprise," said Mary Ann Giese, who works in the J6 strategic planning division.

The 2015 SCOTY award winners are:

Marine Corps Maj. Brent J. Cantrell from Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Robert D. Braun from Fort Benning, Georgia.

Army Sgt. Brian R. Tubbs from MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa.

Robert Rigsby also from MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa.

It is not always easy to operate in a regionally organized world, and it's something that has to be thought through, said Hicks. USSOCOM is already headed in this direction due to the contributions of a few of its all-star communicators.

"You guys do your mission absolutely incredibly," said Hicks, "You're definitely looking good from my perspective."

One man's pledge to students- students pledge to country

*Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Angelita Lawrence
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

Retired Lt. Cmdr. Evangelo Morris had what some may consider a challenging task: teach 100 elementary school students the significance of the American flag while helping them better understand the Pledge of Allegiance and the weight each word carries.

Morris visited Cox Elementary School in Dade City, Florida, Nov. 9, and was met almost immediately by enthusiastic fourth, fifth and sixth graders.

From the beginning, the students were attentive. They raised their hands eagerly hoping to be called on next, offering their own thoughts and collaborated with Morris to come up with a pledge that would help them understand the words they spoke every morning. The end result: "I promise to be nice and to do the right thing so that everyone in America can enjoy freedom and fairness."

"It is our collective duty to shape the minds of our kids in such a manner as to protect the overall health of our society," said Morris, an Information Operations Analyst trainer for Force Management & Development's Joint Capabilities Training with U.S. Special Operations Command.

"Our economy, civil liberties, and national security all hinges on the aggregate core values demonstrated daily by our own citizens," he said.

Morris has spent the last 14 years volunteering his personal time speaking to fourth, fifth and sixth graders at inner city schools and community events. He also travels to prisons to speak to inmates about patriotism. Morris' motivation and dedication to the youth came when saw an increase of young African American males becoming disinterested in furthering their education beyond high school.

"I do not care if they remember my name, just as long as the principles stick. It is important to me to look into their eyes and speak life and hope into them," Morris stated.

Morris feels it's important to speak to these age groups because it is during these stages in a child's life

when they need to have strong influences.

"Schools are the hub for influencing children, and the war of influence is currently being won by unethical, yet strong influencers. I am determined to do what I can to counter this cloaked threat to our society," said Morris.

Morris served 25 years in the U.S. Navy and retired as a lieutenant commander. Speaking to grade-school children is a task that is even greater than himself, Morris said. He also hopes to organize a society of speakers to assist with the high demand of speaking requests.



U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Evangelo Morris, (ret.) information operations analyst with U.S. Special Operations Command, calls on students to answer questions about the Pledge of Allegiance at Cox Elementary School, Dade City, Fla., Nov. 9. Morris explains to 100 elementary school students the significance of the American flag and the weight each word carries.



Enlisted Academy students volunteer to help homeless vets

*By Anna-Marie Wyant
Joint Special Operations University*

Service members attending the Joint Special Operations University at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, took some time to help fellow veterans in the Tampa Bay area, Nov. 7.

Eleven students attending JSOU's Joint Special Operations Forces Senior Enlisted Academy and two faculty members volunteered with Operation Reveille in a local initiative to help shelter homeless veterans. Command Sgt. Maj. Francisco Melendez, JSOU Enlisted Academy commandant, said this was a great way to give back to those who have given so much in service to their country.

"As service members we protect our country every day, and it is in our blood to protect and provide help to those in need," said Melendez, who has served in the Army for 29 years. "It is really gratifying to volunteer for our homeless vets, and actually see firsthand how we can help our homeless veterans."

Operation Reveille provides free services to veterans in need. Their goal for Veterans Day 2015 was to provide housing for 50 homeless vets, and their ultimate goal is to end veteran homelessness. The JSOFSEA students aided this effort by setting up large and small appliances, cleaning apartment units, assembling furniture and more.

Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer Joe Sterret, one of the student volunteers, said he was humbled by the experience and would gladly do it again.

"I can't believe I have never done this before--what a great feeling," Sterret said. "I can't think of a better way to spend a Saturday morning than helping our veterans who have fallen on rough times."

Sterret said when he graduates from JSOFSEA in December, he hopes to organize a similar service day for



Students from the Joint Special Operations Forces Enlisted Academy volunteered with Operation Reveille in a local initiative to help shelter homeless veterans. Operation Reveille is an organization that provides free services to veterans in need. Courtesy photo.

his unit. Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Rob Harrison, a fellow student and volunteer, agreed and added this was a great bonding experience as well.

"We all shared a truly rewarding experience and took comfort in the fact that our veterans would find a little relief because of our humble efforts," Harrison said. "I will share this experience with my home unit and continue to seek out charitable opportunities."

Melendez, who became the Enlisted Academy commandant in August, said he hopes to incorporate a volunteer day during each iteration of JSOFSEA, which is conducted four times per year and includes six months of distance learning and two months in-residence. He said he was proud of the students who selflessly dedicated their time to this noble cause.

"I really commend JSOFSEA service members for their exceptional community support during this event and helping our veterans," he said. "They are clearly giving back and impacting the community."

Breast cancer on my birthday: One woman's journey back to health

*Story and photo by Tech Sgt. Angelita Lawrence
USSOCOM Public Affairs*

Clenching her husband's hand in the waiting area of a doctor's office in Tampa, Florida, is not the way she imagined spending her 39th birthday.

In 2002, Virginia Carter, a senior financial analyst for U.S. Special Operations Command, Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, found a lump in her breast during a self-examination at home, prompting her to seek immediate medical care.

"A doctor told me I was too young and it was probably just calcium buildup," Carter said.

The initial diagnosis didn't sit well with Carter, so she went to seek a second opinion. Immediately, the second doctor scheduled her for a mammogram and the results were clear – she had breast cancer. Carter was no stranger to breast cancer since her grandmother had it, and decided to have the lump removed and began to fight back with chemotherapy and radiation.

"Two weeks after I started chemotherapy, I lost every strand of hair on my body," said Carter.

Carter, a woman with an exceptional work ethic continued to work throughout the often arduous and exhausting treatments.

After losing all of her hair, Carter decided to start wearing a wig to work. This was the first time she ever wore one, but that act coupled with everything else she was going through enabled Carter to find the silver lining in her circumstance and strengthened her already strong faith.

"It felt like people were always staring at my wig, so I would always ask, 'is it crooked' just to make light of the situation," Carter explained.

Although she might have felt others were staring at her, SOF AT&L co-workers never treated Carter differently. David Saren, the deputy director of Science and Technology, SOF AT&L, has been a co-worker, mentor and friend to Carter for 15 years.

"I tried to act as if nothing had changed while making an extra effort to do things I knew she liked or that would provide some distraction," said Saren.

She is a woman of strong character, a lot of it is based on her faith and she's a naturally positive person Saren continued.

"It was a long journey," Carter stated.

On that lengthy course, Carter had six surgeries on one breast and three surgeries on the other; much to her relief, only the first lump was cancerous. Carter has since devoted much of her time to the American Cancer Society.

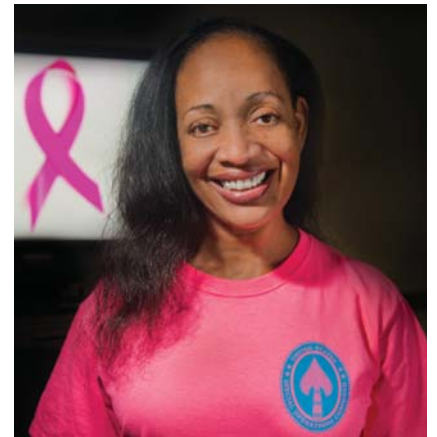
"I didn't know anyone my age that had walked in my shoes; I didn't have anyone to talk to; and I wanted to be that support for others," Carter said.

Carter hasn't been quiet about her journey either. She has counseled people who are experiencing cancer, and supports families of loved ones going through cancer treatments. She also volunteers for fundraising events such as Relay for Life, was featured in several cancer society fundraisers, and participated in the annual fashion show at River Hills Country Club in Valrico, Florida.

Carter received the American Cancer Society Courage Award in 2004 and the American Cancer Society Volunteer of the Year Award in 2009. She continues to stay involved in her community, educating everyone she can about life after breast cancer. Carter doesn't volunteer to seek attention; she just wants to be an example for other women who have to walk in these shoes.

"I've always felt like things could be worse, I have some dear friends who have lost their battle with cancer; I believe early detection is the best protection against breast cancer or any kind of cancer because you know your body better than anyone else," Carter stated.

Today, Carter not only celebrates the day of her birth but the day she beat cancer.



Virginia Carter



The Son Tay Raid and the need for Special Operations Forces

By Gunnery Sgt. Reina Barnett
USSOCOM Public Affairs and History Office

In May 1970, U.S. intelligence analysts learned approximately 70-80 American POWs were being held at Son Tay Prison, located about 30 miles west of Hanoi, Vietnam.

On June 1, 1970, Army Brig. Gen. Don Blackburn, the special assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activity, briefed Air Force Lt. Gen. John Vogt, JCS/J3, and Army Lt. Gen. Donald V. Bennett, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, on options for a rescue attempt.

By mid-July, a study group had developed a plan, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved the concept. Ironically, mid-July was precisely when the North Vietnamese moved the POWs from Son Tay.

Training took place at Eglin Air Force Base in Northwest Florida. Air Force Brig. Gen. Leroy Manor commanded the Joint Contingency Task Group and Army Col. Arthur "Bull" Simons served as his deputy.

At Eglin, helicopter and C-130 crews began a regimen of night flying, refueling practice and close formation work. The crews also practiced negotiating terrain similar to what they would fly in Vietnam to avoid North Vietnamese radar.

By mid-September, the aircrews were ready to train with the ground force, an all-volunteer force selected from Army Special Forces, commanded by Army Lt. Col. Elliott "Bud" Sydnor. The ground troops consisted of a 20-man command and security group, a 14-man compound assault team led by Army Capt. Dick Meadows, and a 22-man support group led by Simons.

On Sept. 17, night training began using a mockup of the Son Tay Prison Compound that had to be taken down during the day to avoid being spotted by Russian satellites.

In mid-November, the force deployed to Thailand to make final preparations. Despite conflicting last minute intelligence reports about the prison's status, the raid was given the green light to proceed.



Col. Arthur "Bull" Simons. Courtesy photo.

The importance of light conditions necessary to conduct the raid led to two prime windows of opportunity – Oct. 21-25 or Nov. 21-25. Unable to get Presidential approval before the October window, leaders decided to execute during November. An approaching typhoon and the resulting weather conditions however, forced Manor to shift the execution date earlier than planned, to Nov. 20-21.

Shortly after 11 p.m., November 20, the helicopters and refuelers took off. As the choppers approached North Vietnam, 116 mission support aircraft took off from bases in Thailand and carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin to conduct diversionary strikes. Upon entering the objective area, the raiders dropped flares, fire-fight

simulators, and a pallet of napalm to create a fire as an anchor point for the medium attack aircraft, the Douglas A-1 Skyraiders.

The helicopter carrying Simons' forces mistakenly landed in a nearby military school. By the time Simons realized what happened, his troops had already breached the wall and were encountering heavy resistance. The helicopter pilot rushed back to the landing zone to pick up Simons and his troops. Within three minutes, they were on the way to the prison compound, leaving behind numerous dead enemies.

The helicopter with Meadows' forces "crash" landed in the compound as planned. Troops rushed out the rear ramp, each running to his assigned objective. Using a bullhorn, Meadows shouted, "Keep down! We're Americans." Within 12 minutes however, all teams had reported no signs of POWs. Sydnor's force had landed, realized they were alone and immediately put an alternate plan in action to search all the buildings and block enemy reinforcements from reaching Son Tay.

Fortunately, they were quickly reunited with Simons' force and conducted the mission as originally planned. The entire raid lasted 29 minutes.

The raid, the diversionary attacks by naval aircraft, and the air cover were executed precisely and almost flawlessly. The fortuitous "mistake" of landing Simons' force at the school may have saved the lives of many of the raiders. Twenty-two of his men killed 100-200 enemy before getting out and moving to the correct position.

Meadows' assault team, Sydnor's ground forces, and the aircrews performed perfectly.

Manor and Simons took a group of volunteer Airmen and Soldiers and trained them together in isolation in order to conduct the raid. The time required to build and train this specific task force was necessary since there was no standing task force at the time. This was just one example used to convince Congress of the need for a standing joint task force that eventually led to the establishment of U.S. Special Operations Command.

This raid demonstrated the definite need for correct and timely intelligence for special operations missions. The Son Tay Raid was a highly classified and compartmentalized operation. However, the strategic importance of the mission was understood at the highest levels, leading to unheard of inter-service and interagency cooperation.

Even though the mission was not successful in recovering American POWs, it showed in no uncertain



Army Capt. Dick Meadows pictured the night of the Son Tay Raid, Nov. 20, 1970. Courtesy photo.

terms, the United States had the ability and the political will to conduct a raid deep in North Vietnam.

Shortly after the raid, all the American POWs were consolidated in two prison complexes in downtown Hanoi where they were held in large groups, as opposed to the solitary confinement they had been forced to live through before the raid. There, the prisoners learned the details of the raid, which along with slightly better living conditions, did quite a bit to improve their morale.

Further reading: Schemmer, Benjamin. "The Raid: The Son Tay Prison Rescue Mission"





*Army Cpl.
Andrew A. Aimesbury
75th Ranger Regiment*

*Editor's note: Honored are Special Operations Forces
who lost their lives since October's Tip of the Spear.*

Marine Raiders with Marine Special Operations Company Charlie, 1st Marine Raider Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, process intelligence and set up a visual telecommunication feed after a notional direct-action night raid, a part of a Company Collective Exercise, Oct. 20, along the Arizona-California state line. Photo by Marine Corps Cpl. Steven Fox.

