



Inside SWCS

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Renovated and relocated, “Little Nasty” obstacle course keeps special-operations students confident and ready



Soldiers assigned to C Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) at SWCS while awaiting to attend special-operations training and programs face the newly renovated “Little Nasty” obstacle course Oct. 17 on the corner of Gruber Rd. and Reilly Rd. on Fort Bragg. The course, updated and relocated from a previous location, hosts physical training events for these students, including the battalion’s Commander’s Cup challenge, an event to boost Soldiers’ confidence and motivation. (U.S. Army photos by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika, SWCS Public Affairs Office)

By Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Castaneda
C Company, 4th Battalion, 1st SWTG(A)

The summer of 2011 brought with it the usual batch of heat waves, tropical storms and even a tornado. Prepared and able to persevere through uncertain conditions, the Soldiers of C Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) were able to continue their mission of advising, teaching and counseling students who are brand new to the Special Forces Qualification Course.

Charlie Company manages all Soldiers assigned to SWCS awaiting Special Forces training, including 18X students, which are those Soldiers who enlisted in the Army specifically to go directly from Advanced Individual Training to Special Forces Assessment and Selection. Other Soldiers who make up C Company include those awaiting Common Leader Training, SFAS, the Special Operations Preparatory Course, and Special Forces Qualification Course graduates awaiting additional training, such as Ranger School or further language courses.

For some company-level units, managing as many as 800 Soldiers can be intimidating from both an accountability and administrative perspective. Charlie Company, however, is run by experienced special-operations Soldiers who are all too familiar with training large forces with limited resources to produce superior results.

One of the many projects that the company undertook this past summer was the removal and reconstruction of the “Little Nasty” obstacle course. This course has been a beneficial training tool for students,

and this summer they took the time to upgrade and relocate the course to a new training area.

The original Little Nasty featured seven different obstacles ranging from a standard 30-foot rope climb to a 30-foot monkey-bar traverse. The purpose of such a course is two-fold: first, it serves as a tool for assessing the physical condition of students and stressing the importance of endurance training. Second, it mentally prepares candidates for the realities they will one day face as Soldiers on a Special Forces operational detachment—alpha.

“The obstacle course is meant to build Soldiers’ confidence and ability to work as a member of a team,” said Staff Sgt. Paul Lepsch, an operations NCO in C Company. “The new course is still a challenge, and students have responded positively to it.”

Part of that challenge now includes the two miles students must run to reach the course in its new location; it’s one thing to tackle a rope climb when your muscles are fresh, but another to do so when you’ve already built up a sweat. Special-operations Soldiers must be able to face physical and mental challenges safely and thoroughly when they’re already on the move.

The de-construction, transportation and renovation of Little Nasty began in early June under the direction of Sgt. 1st Class Dave Colucci and Sgt. 1st Class Rodney Phipps.

Both cadre members for Common Leader Training were able to put their experience as Special Forces en-

gineer sergeants to good use, while also continuing in their teaching roles by taking a handful of new students, selected to attend Special Forces engineer sergeant training, with them on-site.

Each day for two months, through the heat and humidity, members of Instructor-Operational Detachment—Alpha 9432 began rebuilding the obstacle course at its new location at the intersection of Reilly Rd. and Gruber Rd.

This course was not simply a replica of its predecessor. While it would maintain four of the original events, the new course would also include six new obstacles, many of which are also part of the course’s big brother, “Nasty Nick” located at Camp Mackall.

Even with the added obstacles and resources, Colucci and Phipps were able to keep the course’s total cost under \$5,000 after an original estimation of \$130,000, without sacrificing necessary safety standards.

Construction was completed on Aug. 23; students from IODAs 9431 and 9432 were the first to participate in the company’s monthly Commander’s Cup on the new course.

In conclusion, this summer was truly a remarkable one. Against unpredictable external factors, cadre members were able to safely and proficiently train its students while answering the call to create a more realistic and efficient obstacle course that all of SWCS can benefit from.

“The obstacle course is meant to build Soldiers’ confidence and work as a member of a team.”

Staff Sgt. Paul Lepsch
Operations NCO, C Company, 4th Battalion, 1st SWTG(A)

Major initiatives progress without disrupting courses

By Col. Robert A. Warburg
SWCS Chief of Staff

I joined the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School as its Chief of Staff this past July, and since that time the command's Soldiers and civilians have consistently impressed me with the professionalism, dedication and work ethic.

I owe an over-due "well-done" to those individuals who were involved with the SWCS optimization plan design and physical office move throughout the last two months. You have each played an important part in streamlining our organization's structure in order to operate more efficiently and face the challenges of both today and tomorrow.

Furthermore, the optimization called for over 300 SWCS Soldiers and civilians to physically change their work location in order to operate within their redesignated sections, or in closer proximity to their teammates and supervisor. These moves involved connectivity changes as well as the physical movement of furniture and equipment, and I'm happy to say that those involved executed their tasks safely, without sacrificing the conduct of their regular duties.

Earlier this month, SWCS hosted a team of evaluators and advisors from the Army's Training and Doctrine Command and Combined Arms Center to provide initial guidance for the upcoming accreditation of our institution by TRADOC. This is an Army requirement, and I expect nothing but excellent ratings for SWCS.

This visit went well, but it was merely a first step in a process that will run into Spring 2012. Whether or not you are a designated point-of-contact for your unit's accreditation team, I encourage you to understand the standards expected of you and to work toward excellence in everything you do.

SWCS instructors are this command's center of gravity. These are the experienced special-operations servicemembers who are working hard to develop and mentor their future peers and teammates. Whether those instructors are stationed here at Fort Bragg or Camp Mackall, or at one of our satellite training facilities across the country, I want them each to know that the SWCS headquarters staff is working hard to successfully set the conditions for safe and positive learning and training experiences in each of our programs and courses.



A Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape instructor (left) teaches a class of special-operations students to build a fire out of materials collected in the wild during a survival block of instruction Oct. 18 at Camp Mackall in Hoffman, N.C. SERE training is a part of the Special Forces Qualification Course, where students receive intensive training in support of the Code of Conduct. Training includes survival field craft skills, techniques of evasion, resistance to exploitation and resolution skills in all types of environments. The course spans three weeks, incorporating classroom and field training. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika, SWCS Public Affairs Office)

Physical training: the first pillar of special-operations development and preparation

By Maj. Eric Sauer

A Company, 4th Battalion, 1st SWTG(A)

One of the current challenges facing Special Forces Qualification Course cadre members is maximizing student physical performance while continuing to minimize training injuries.

With each phase of the SFQC, a different training approach needs to be taken to ensure the lessons' maximum positive effect.

To meet this challenge, IODAs are using THOR3, the USASOC physical health program formally known as the Tactical Human Optimization, Rapid Rehabilitation and Reconditioning program.

This train-the-trainer program gives cadre members the ability to prepare, plan and implement a physical training program that best suits any phase of training. As part of the 4th Battalion's cadre development, IODA cadre are required to be THOR3-qualified. Once qualified, IODA team sergeants educate their student-teams on how to design their own nutrition and physical exercise plans. To date, the results are positive but individualizing plans remains a challenge.

THOR3 qualification requires a 40-hour, six-day course that enables the quick turnaround from the classroom back to an IODA.

The philosophical approach of the course labels Soldiers as athletes due to the physical demand inherent in today's era of continuous conflict. Thus, SFQC student physical training should reflect that

of a professional athlete.



To maximize performance and reduce injury, it's incumbent upon IODA cadre to equip students with the tools necessary for proper planning and implementation of nutrition and physical training. THOR3 is critical in this area with its ability to help develop physical training plans for future Special Forces soldiers. In addition, it provides the ability to obtain peak performance during physical training.

As required, the IODA cadre throughout the SFQC have attended the course and started implementing the THOR3 philosophy with each new class. One IODA raised their APFT by 18 points, cut five minutes off their 5-mile run, and cut 12 minutes off the 12-mile ruck march. Another IODA has raised their students' APFT average by 10 points within two months.

THOR3 has also proven successful at rehabilitating injured Soldiers in less time and with better physical results than previous programs. This is due to a knowledgeable staff who focus on those injured individuals with personalized recovery plans and a dedicated facility.

Better late than never, THOR3 should have been available to our Soldiers quite some time ago. Being the quintessential professionals, we owe it to our regiments to produce a top-tier Soldier for the Special Forces ranks. With this knowledge as a staple throughout SWCS' physical training program, our future force will be ready for challenges on today's battlefield.

SWCS Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
23	24	25	26	Senior Leader Course graduations JFK Auditorium Special Forces: 11 a.m. CA & MISO: 2 p.m.	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
6	7	Newcomer Orientation	SFQC Graduation 3 p.m. Crown Coliseum	10		12



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