

UNITED STATES
SPECIAL
OPERATIONS
COMMAND



1987 2007

Proven
in the past

Vigilant
today

Prepared
for the future

HISTORY

From the Commander Our Past is Prologue

The year 2007 marks not only the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), but also a time of unprecedented challenges and responsibility for America's Special Operations Forces (SOF). The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 have resulted in a sea change for the United States, and USSOCOM has been assigned a lead role in the the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).

Since its creation in 1987, USSOCOM has supported conventional forces and conducted independent special operations throughout the world, participating in all major combat operations. SOF has also carried out other missions ranging from non-combat evacuations to bilateral training missions. In executing all of these assignments, USSOCOM personnel have demonstrated daring, skill, and versatility. SOF's capabilities were broadly employed in Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM.



President George W. Bush designated USSOCOM as the lead for planning, synchronizing, and, as directed, executing global operations against terrorist networks. USSOCOM's strategic approach is keyed by positioning the limited numbers of high demand SOF at the "right place, at the right time, facing the right adversary." Defeating an adaptive enemy requires dedication to the fights in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as long-term vigilance in places such as the Philippines and Trans-Sahara Africa. USSOCOM also remains committed to force readiness and building SOF's future. The formation of the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC) in 2006 has contributed unique capabilities to the U.S. SOF team. USSOCOM will continue to ensure the highest state of SOF readiness and make certain that the SOF Warrior remains the centerpiece of 21st century special operations.

The Congress mandated the creation of USSOCOM 20 years ago, and over this time, our SOF Warriors have compiled a record of success and achievement. Today's environment demands the skills of SOF more than ever. Our core tasks and adaptive personnel are uniquely suited to engage the irregular and ambiguous enemy facing our nation. Today's SOF Warriors remain on point, armed with the exceptional support of the U.S. government and American people, facing all present and future challenges.


Bryan D. Brown
General, U.S. Army
Commander



1968 - The future home of U.S. Strike Command (1969 - 1971), U.S. Readiness Command (1971 - 1987), and U.S. Special Operations Command (1987 - present).



Artist's rendering of HQ USSOCOM 2006.

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*General Lindsay accepting flag at USSOCOM activation ceremony, 1 June 1987.
Note original USSOCOM flag.*



Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld passes the USSOCOM flag to General Brown at his and General Holland's change of command ceremony 2 September 2003.

Founding and Evolution of USSOCOM

Founding USSOCOM

“I think we have an abort situation,” Defense Secretary Harold Brown informed President Jimmy Carter on 24 April 1980. Carter simply responded, “Let’s go with his [the ground commander’s] recommendation.” The mission to rescue 53 American hostages had failed. At a desolate site in Iran known as “Desert One,” tragedy occurred minutes later when two aircraft collided on the ground and eight men died. The failed mission struck a blow to American prestige and further eroded the public’s confidence in the U.S. government.

The event culminated a period of Special Operations Forces (SOF) decline in the 1970s. SOF capabilities had deteriorated throughout the post-Vietnam era, a time marked by considerable distrust between SOF and the conventional military and by significant funding cuts for special operations. The Desert One disaster, however, led the Defense Department to appoint an investigative panel, chaired by the former Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral James L. Holloway. The Holloway Commission’s findings caused the Defense Department to create a counterterrorist joint task force and the Special Operations Advisory Panel.

Desert One did serve to strengthen the resolve of some within the Department of Defense to reform SOF. Army Chief of Staff General Edward C. “Shy” Meyer called for a further restructuring of special operations capabilities. Although unsuccessful at the joint level, Meyer nevertheless went on to consolidate Army SOF units under the new 1st Special Operations Command in 1982, a significant step to improve Army SOF.

By 1983, there was a small but growing sense in Congress of the need for military reforms. In June, the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), under the chairmanship of Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ), began a two-year-long study of the Defense Department which included an examination of SOF. Two events in October 1983 further demonstrated the need for change: the terrorist bombing attack in Lebanon and the invasion of Grenada. The loss of 237 Marines to terrorism, combined

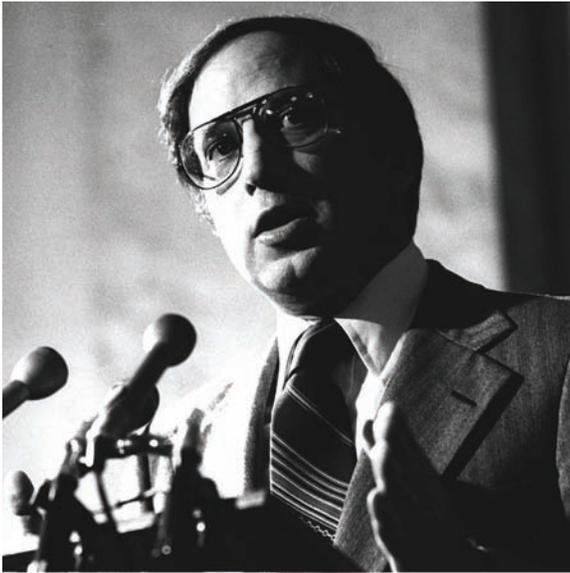


Wreckage at Desert One, Iran (April 1980) where eight Americans died.

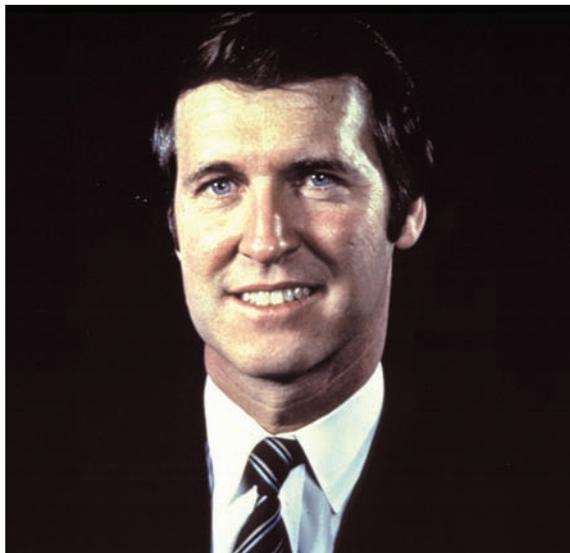
with the command and control problems that occurred during the Grenada invasion, refocused Congressional attention on the growing threat of low-intensity conflict and on the issue of joint interoperability.

With concern mounting on Capitol Hill, the Department of Defense created the Joint Special Operations Agency on 1 January 1984; this agency, however, had neither operational nor command authority over any SOF. The Joint Special Operations Agency thus did little to improve SOF readiness, capabilities, or policies—hardly what Congress had in mind as a systemic fix for SOF’s problems. Within the Defense Department, there were a few staunch SOF supporters. Noel Koch, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, and his deputy, Lynn Rylander, both advocated SOF reforms.

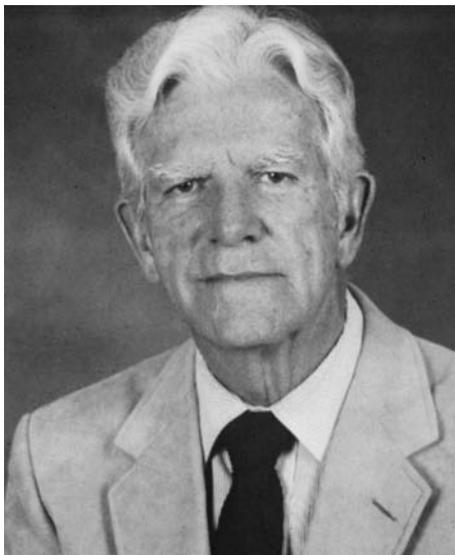
At the same time, a few visionaries on Capitol Hill were determined to overhaul SOF. They included Senators Sam Nunn (D-GA) and William Cohen (R-ME), both members of the Armed Services Committee, and Representative Dan Daniel (D-VA), the chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee. Congressman Daniel had become convinced that the U.S. military establishment was not interested in special operations, that the country’s capability in this area was second rate, and that SOF operational command and control was an endemic problem. Senators Nunn and Cohen also felt strongly that the Department of Defense was not preparing



Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA)



Senator William Cohen (R-ME)



Representative Dan Daniel (D-VA)

adequately for future threats. Senator Nunn expressed a growing frustration with the Services' practice of reallocating monies appropriated for SOF modernization to non-SOF programs. Senator Cohen agreed that the U.S. needed a clearer organizational focus and chain of command for special operations to deal with low-intensity conflicts.

In October 1985, the Senate Armed Services Committee published the results of its two-year review of the U.S. military structure, entitled "Defense Organization: The Need For Change." Mr. James R. Locher III, the principal author of this study, also examined past special operations and speculated on the most likely future threats. This influential document led to the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.

By spring 1986, SOF advocates had introduced reform bills in both houses of Congress. On 15 May, Senator Cohen introduced the Senate bill, co-sponsored by Senator Nunn and others, which called for a joint military organization for SOF and the establishment of an office in the Defense Department to ensure adequate funding and policy emphasis for low-intensity conflict and special operations. Representative Daniel's proposal went even further—he wanted a national special operations agency headed by a civilian who would bypass the Joint Chiefs and report directly to the Secretary of Defense; this would keep Joint Chiefs and the Services out of the SOF budget process.

Congress held hearings on the two bills in the summer of 1986. Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, led the Pentagon's opposition to the bills. He proposed, as an alternative, a new Special Operations Forces command led by a three-star general. This proposal was not well received on Capitol Hill—Congress wanted a four-star general in charge to give SOF more clout. A number of retired military officers and others testified in favor of the need for reform.

By most accounts, retired Army Major General Richard Scholtes gave the most compelling reasons for change. Scholtes, who commanded the joint special operations task force in Grenada, explained how conventional force leaders misused SOF during the operation, not allowing them to use their unique capabilities,

which resulted in high SOF casualties. After his formal testimony, Scholtes met privately with a small number of Senators to elaborate on the problems that he had encountered in Grenada.

Both the House and Senate passed SOF reform bills, and these went to a conference committee for reconciliation. Senate and House conferees forged a compromise. The bill called for a unified combatant command headed by a four-star general for all SOF, an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict [ASD (SO/LIC)], a coordinating board for low-intensity conflict within the National Security Council, and a new Major Force Program (MFP-11) for SOF (the so-called “SOF checkbook”). The House had conceded on the issue of a new civilian-led agency, but insisted on including MFP-11 to protect SOF funding. The final bill, attached as a rider to the 1987 Defense Authorization Act, amended the Goldwater-Nichols Act and was signed into law in October 1986.

For the first time, Congress had mandated that the President create a unified combatant command. Congress clearly intended to force DOD and the Administration to face up to the realities of past failures and emerging threats. DOD and the Administration were responsible for implementing the law, and Congress subsequently had to pass two additional bills to ensure proper implementation.

The legislation promised to improve SOF in several respects. Once implemented, MFP-11 provided SOF with control over its own resources, better enabling it to modernize the force. Additionally, the law fostered interservice cooperation: a single commander for all SOF promoted interoperability among the forces assigned to the same command. The establishment of a four-star Commander in Chief and an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict eventually gave SOF a voice in the highest councils of the Defense Department.

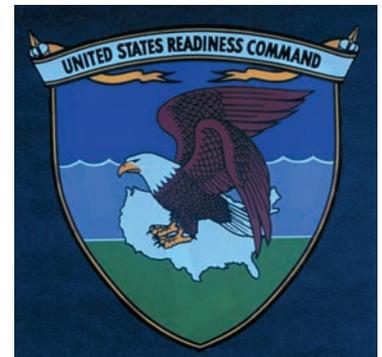
Implementing the provisions and mandates of the Nunn-Cohen Act, however, was neither rapid nor smooth. One of the first issues to surface was appointing an ASD (SO/LIC), whose principal duties included monitorship of special operations activities and low-intensity conflict activities of the Department of Defense. The

Congress even increased the number of assistant secretaries of defense from 11 to 12, but the Department of Defense still did not fill this new billet. In December 1987, the Congress directed Secretary of the Army John O. Marsh to carry out the ASD (SO/LIC) duties until a suitable replacement was approved by the Senate. Not until 18 months after the legislation passed did Ambassador Charles Whitehouse assume the duties of ASD (SO/LIC).

Meanwhile, the establishment of USSOCOM provided its own measure of excitement. A quick solution to manning and basing a brand new unified command was to abolish an existing command. U.S. Readiness Command (USREDCOM), with an often misunderstood mission, did not appear to have a viable mission in the post Goldwater-Nichols era. And its Commander in Chief, General James Lindsay, had had some special operations experience. On 23 January 1987, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended to the Secretary of Defense that USREDCOM be disestablished to provide billets and facilities for USSOCOM.

President Ronald Reagan approved the establishment of the new command on 13 April 1987. The Department of Defense activated USSOCOM on 16 April 1987 and nominated General Lindsay to be the first Commander in Chief Special Operations Command (USCINCSOC). The Senate accepted him without debate.

USSOCOM had its activation ceremony on 1 June 1987. Guest speakers included William H. Taft IV, Deputy Secretary of Defense, and Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr., two men who had opposed the Nunn-Cohen amendment. Admiral Crowe’s speech at the ceremony advised General Lindsay to integrate the new command into the mainstream military: “First, break down the wall that has more or less come between Special Operations Forces and the other parts of our military, the wall that some people will try to build higher. Second, educate the rest of the military—spread a recognition



and understanding of what you do, why you do it, and how important it is that you do it. Last, integrate your efforts into the full spectrum of our military capabilities.” Putting this advice into action, General Lindsay knew, would pose significant challenges (a “sporty” course, he called it), considering the opposition the Defense Department had shown.

USSOCOM Commanders

There have been seven Commanders since 1987—Generals James J. Lindsay (16 April 1987-27 June 1990), Carl W. Stiner (27 June 1990-20 May 1993), Wayne A. Downing (20 May 1993-29 February 1996), Henry H. Shelton (29 February 1996-25 September 1997) Peter J. Schoomaker (5 November 1997-27 October 2000), Charles R. Holland (27 October 2000-2 September 2003) and Bryan D. Brown (2 September 2003 to the present). Each CINC-SOC faced unique challenges and opportunities, and each left his mark on the SOF community in the course of responding to significant changes on the military landscape. One constant throughout this period, however, has been change and new challenges for the U.S. military. The demise of the Soviet Union did not lessen the range of threats to the United States. The appearance of new aggressor states, heightened regional instabilities, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and transnational terrorism, all led to an increased use of SOF by the conventional U.S. military, Ambassadors, and other government agencies. After the ter-

rorist attacks of 11 September 2001, Generals Holland and Brown confronted a new Global War on Terrorism.

The greatest challenge facing General Lindsay was to make the command the driving force behind SOF revitalization that Congress mandated, without alienating conventional military leaders. This was no mean feat, given the opposition to the command’s mere existence in many military circles. As the first CINC-SOC, he developed a hierarchy of priorities to get the command functioning: organize, staff, train, and equip the headquarters; establish the relationships necessary to discharge its roles and missions; create Major Force Program 11 (MFP-11) to ensure SOF controlled its financial destiny; build command and control relationships with the components, ASD (SO/LIC), and the Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs); define worldwide SOF requirements; and plot the future of the command.

General Lindsay also faced two major operational tests—Operations EARNEST WILL/PRIME CHANCE I in the Persian Gulf, and Operations JUST CAUSE/PROMOTE LIBERTY in Panama. The use of SOF by the theater CINC’s (known as the operational tempo, or OPTEMPO) increased significantly during General Lindsay’s tenure.

The complex, politically sensitive process of establishing a new unified command extended into General Stiner’s tenure as second CINC-SOC. General Stiner also pushed the command to fulfill the provisions of the Nunn-Cohen



*General James J. Lindsay USCINCSOC
1987-1990*



*General Carl W. Stiner, USCINCSOC
1990-1993*

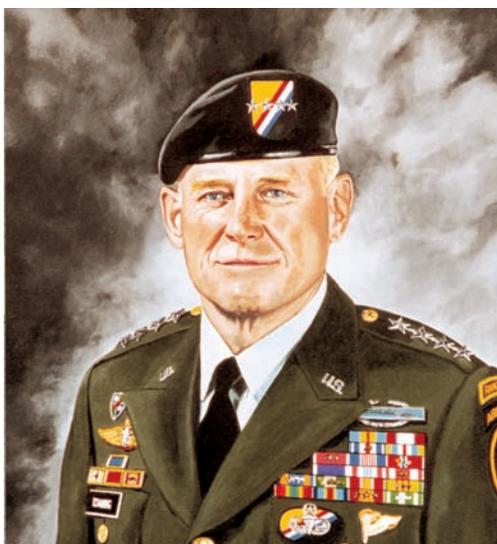
Amendment. Perhaps most important, General Stiner oversaw the implementation of developing and acquiring “special operations peculiar” equipment, material, supplies, and services. After DESERT STORM, General Stiner devoted much of his time to raising public awareness about SOF’s successes. Supporting the theater CINCs and maintaining SOF combat readiness were also top priorities. During his tenure, the command submitted fully-supported budgets based on SOF mission requirements. General Stiner also succeeded in convincing the Secretary of Defense to designate Psychological Operations (PSYOP) and Civil Affairs (CA) as SOF. During Stiner’s tenure, USSOCOM supported a number of operations worldwide, most notably DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM, PROVIDE COMFORT, PROVIDE RELIEF, and RESTORE HOPE. SOF OPTEMPO accordingly rose 35 percent during this time.

On 20 May 1993, General Wayne A. Downing became the third CINCSOC. He brought unique qualifications to the position, having previously been a director of the USSOCOM Washington Office and commander of both the Joint Special Operations Command and the United States Army Special Operations Command. The main challenges of his tenure were to continue the revitalization of SOF and to prepare the SOF community for the twenty-first century. To these ends, General Downing streamlined the acquisition of SOF-specific equipment, increased the command’s focus on its “customers,” and realigned SOF budget requirements with the reduced Defense Department budgets.

He instituted changes in how resources were allocated for the future that resulted in a Strategic Planning Process which promised to put the command’s budget to best use. During his watch, the SOF OPTEMPO again increased. SOF participated in Operations UNOSOM II (Somalia), SUPPORT and UPHOLD DEMOCRACY (Haiti), and JOINT ENDEAVOR (Bosnia-Herzegovina), as well as many smaller contingencies and deployments.

During his 21 months as CINCSOC, General Henry H. Shelton successfully guided the command through a time of extraordinary worldwide demand for SOF support, and a time of constrained resources. From 1992-1997, the USSOCOM budget shrank by more than 6 percent in constant 1997 dollars. At the same time, the number of SOF operations (OPTEMPO) increased by more than 51 percent and personnel deployments (PERSTEMPO) increased 127 percent. In 1996 alone, SOF deployed to a total of 142 countries, and engaged in 120 counter-drug missions, 12 demining training missions, and 204 Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) exercises, among other activities.

Under General Shelton, SOF’s largest operational commitment was to Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR/JOINT GUARD, the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. In addition, special operators assisted in noncombatant evacuations from such crisis areas as Liberia (Operation ASSURED RESPONSE), Sierra Leone (Operation NOBLE OBELISK), and Albania (Operation SILVER WAKE). As a way to improve the deployment process, the command developed “force module



*General Wayne A. Downing, USCINCSOC
1993-1996*



*General Henry H. Shelton, USCINCSOC
1996-1997*

packages” that pre-configured what forces and operating supplies would be needed for a variety of missions, cutting back on preparation time while still offering the correct force mix.

Due to intense mission taskings, several SOF personnel specialties were labeled “low density/high demand assets.” Concerned about the impact on its people, the command carefully reviewed requests for these personnel and tracked their rate of deployment to prevent over-use.

On 5 November 1997, General Peter J. Schoomaker assumed command of USSOCOM, and like General Downing before, he brought a wealth of experience in special operations. In addition to commanding SOF tactical units, he served as commander of both the Joint Special Operations Command and United States Army Special Operations Command. Like his predecessors, he faced unique challenges as the command prepared for the twenty-first century.

General Schoomaker’s top priority was to prepare the SOF community for change—change in order to remain relevant to national security requirements. To that end, he initiated or accelerated numerous projects, to include the headquarters reorganization; planning, programming and acquisition enhancements; and integrating the components into one resourcing and acquisition team. During his tenure, SOF participated in the transition from JOINT GUARD to JOINT FORGE in Bosnia-Herzegovina, DESERT THUNDER in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia (to thwart Saddam Hussein’s attempt to restrict UN inspectors’ freedom of movement), and numerous contingencies and

peacetime engagements. SOF also played crucial roles in ALLIED FORCE, the operation that forced Serbian forces out of Kosovo, and JOINT GUARDIAN, which enforced the Kosovo peace agreement.

General Charles R. Holland assumed command of USSOCOM on 27 October 2000, having served as the vice commander of USAF in Europe. As Commander USSOCOM, he anticipated “staying the course,” to implement changes made by previous Commanders and to continue SOF’s key roles in operations around the world. He emphasized that SOF had to address the seams and friction points with the services that had caused operational difficulties. For example, he instructed AFSOC to continue working with the Air Force to resolve differences observed in the Air War over Serbia. But, 9/11 would result in a sea change for both USSOCOM and General Holland’s priorities.

“On September 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country. Americans have known wars—but for the past 136 years, they have been wars on foreign soil, except for one Sunday in 1941. Americans have known the casualties of war—but not at the center of a great city on a peaceful morning. Americans have known surprise attacks—but never before on thousands of civilians. All of this was brought upon us in a single day—and night fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack.”

President George W. Bush
20 September 2001



General Peter J. Schoomaker
USCINCSOC 1997-2000



General Charles R. Holland, USCINCSOC
2000-2003



MH-53 flying near the World Trade Center site on 11 September 2001.

Following the horrific terrorist attacks of 9/11, President George W. Bush told the nation that “every necessary weapon of war” would be used to disrupt and defeat the global terror network. He cautioned that this war would entail a lengthy campaign, unlike any previous war. Indeed, a sea change would occur because the 9/11 terrorist attacks forced a re-evaluation of U.S. national military strategy, with a focus on combatting terrorism worldwide. This re-evaluation would lead to the greatest changes in USSOCOM’s mission and force structure since its inception. On the battlefields and by other means around the world, SOF countered terrorism and took on even greater relevance, becoming the cornerstone of the U.S. military response to terrorism.

Immediately after 9/11, General Holland and USSOCOM provided SOF to the Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs) in the fight against terrorism, especially SOCCENT and USCENTCOM for Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) in Afghanistan. Support to SOCPAC and USPACOM soon followed as SOF provided assistance in the form of foreign internal defense—training Filipino forces and providing civil and medical assistance.

General Holland cited the SOF successes in OEF to illustrate the quality of SOF personnel.

For example, he recognized the crucial role the SOF had in the overthrow of the Taliban government by affirming that “our people make a difference.” He also noted that the GCCs had requested more SOF because of their professionalism and specialized skills, and he concluded, “When we make a promise, we deliver.” With SOF in high demand, Holland directed USSOCOM to secure approval for transferring some missions (like training the Georgian armed forces) to conventional forces.

USSOCOM reoriented its priorities and efforts to focus on the GWOT. The command created a joint interagency collaboration center and a counterterrorism planning group, as well as supported the counterterrorism missions and activities of the other unified commands.

In 2003, General Holland also provided SOF for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF), the largest SOF deployment since the Vietnam War. During his three years as CDR USSOCOM, General Holland presided over SOF taking on a much larger role in U.S. defense planning, operations, and foreign internal defense than it had in 2000. The JSOTF-P (OEF-P) countered the al Qaeda-affiliated Abu Sayyaf Group by training with the Armed Forces of the Philippines. SOF directed the successful overthrow of the Taliban government in Afghanistan, and SOF played a prominent role in OIF. Thus, USSOCOM during General Holland’s tenure made significant contributions to the GWOT, and set the stage for significant new authorities that would give USSOCOM the lead for planning in the war on terrorism.

After having served as Deputy Commander for a year, General Brown assumed command of USSOCOM on 2 September 2003. During his tenure, USSOCOM continued to focus its priorities and resources on prosecuting the GWOT, and the command secured approval of new authorities and missions that would fundamentally alter how it addressed worldwide terrorism. General Brown pushed the command to shed missions that conventional forces could execute and concentrate on having SOF focus more on their unique skill sets. Thus, not only would Brown push for new authorities for the command, he also insisted that budget and procurement programs and new capabilities and capacities be aligned with the command's priorities for the GWOT.

Evolution of the Command

Mission and Organization

USSOCOM's mission, as delineated in the 1987 Joint Chief of Staff (JCS) Manual 71-87, was to prepare SOF to carry out assigned missions and, if directed by the President or the Secretary of Defense, to plan for and conduct special operations. Mission responsibilities were:

- *Develop SOF doctrine, tactics, techniques and procedures.*
- *Conduct specialized courses of instruction for all SOF.*
- *Train assigned forces and ensure interoperability of equipment and forces.*
- *Monitor the preparedness of SOF assigned to other unified commands.*
- *Monitor the promotions, assignments, retention, training, and professional development of all SOF personnel.*
- *Consolidate and submit program and budget proposals for Major Force Program 11 (MFP-11).*
- *Develop and acquire special operations-peculiar equipment, material, supplies, and services.*

The responsibilities of managing MFP-11 and developing and acquiring special operations-peculiar items made USSOCOM unique among the unified commands. These responsibilities—dubbed “service-like”—had heretofore been performed exclusively by the Services. Congress had given the command extraordinary authority over SOF force structure, equipping, and resourcing.

General Lindsay organized the command along the lines of a typical unified command “J directorate” structure, with two modifications: he assigned MFP-11 and acquisition responsibilities to the J-8 (Resources) directorate, and created a new J-9 directorate, responsible for PSYOP and CA support, on 15 June 1988.

The command's mission statement evolved with the changing geopolitical environment. With the fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of regional instability, SOF's capabilities were in ever greater demand. To reflect this increased operational tempo, which called for a large SOF involvement in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, General Downing modified the command's mission statement in 1993. The revised wording read:

“Prepare SOF to successfully conduct worldwide special operations, civil affairs, and psychological operations in peace and war in support of the regional combatant commanders, American Ambassadors and their country teams, and other government agencies.”

USSOCOM also added counterproliferation and information operations/command and control warfare to its list of principal missions, and expanded the counterterrorism mission to include defensive measures (antiterrorism).

General Shelton continued to refine the command's mission statement, goals, and vision in order to serve SOF's customers more effectively. In December 1996, he approved a slightly revised mission statement:

“Provide Special Operations Forces to the National Command Authorities,

regional Combatant Commanders, and American Ambassadors and their country teams for successful conduct of worldwide special operations, civil affairs, and psychological operations during peace and war.”

After General Shelton became the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 1 October 1997, the new CINCSOC, General Schoomaker, elected to retain this mission statement. He did, however, articulate a new vision for USSOCOM:

“Be the most capable and relevant Special Operations Forces in existence—living personal and professional standards of excellence to which all others aspire.”

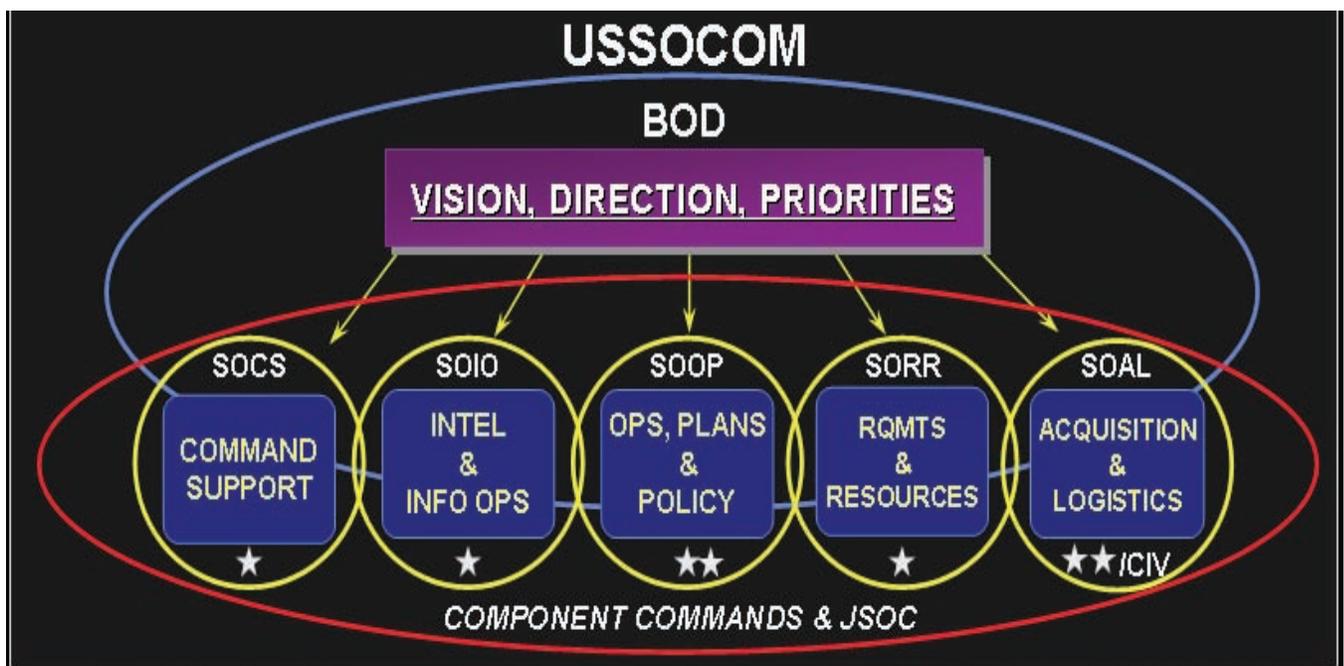
Integrity was his watchword and the command’s as well.

Though the command’s mission statement remained constant, the same could not be said for how General Schoomaker viewed the headquarters’ organization. His predecessor had initiated a review of the organization in hopes of aligning similar functions, streamlining procedures, and redirecting human resources. As a former component commander, General Schoomaker perceived that the headquarters did

not adequately focus on the command’s critical functions, which he defined as resourcing SOF. He, therefore, boldly scrapped the traditional J-staff alignment and incorporated like or complementary functions into five “centers of excellence.” A general officer, flag officer, or senior executive service civilian led each center. The reorganization enabled CINCSOC to concentrate on strategic and operational priorities.

The Operations, Plans, and Policy Center (SOOP) combined functions from the J-3 and J-5 directorates. Merging combat simulations and requirements (J-7) with programming and comptroller functions (J-8) resulted in the Center for Force Structure, Requirements, Resources, and Strategic Assessments (SORR). The Intelligence and Information Operations Center (SOIO) included command, control, communications, computers and information systems (J-6); the intelligence directorate (J-2); and information operations (J-3). The Acquisition Center (AC) and logistics directorate (J-4) formed the Center of Acquisition and Logistics (SOAL). Finally, the Command Support Center (SOCS) included the personnel directorate (J-1) and the special staff offices. This headquarters reorganization promised to strengthen the resourcing functions of USSOCOM—and, ultimately, support to SOF, the theater CINCs, and American ambassadors.

In September 1999, General Schoomaker directed the headquarters to continue its trans-



New Headquarters USSOCOM Organization, 4 January 1998.

formation by further integrating staff functions. The Centers reevaluated how their existing procedures supported the command's core Title 10 responsibilities of equipping, training, and sustaining SOF. The review led the headquarters to transfer its Materiel Requirements Division from SORR to SOOP, aligning it with the validation function. SORR established an experimentation and a joint processes divisions. The Experimentation Division coordinated the testing of new warfighting concepts within USSOCOM and inserted SOF scenarios into Joint Forces Command exercises. The Processes Division served as the clearinghouse for USSOCOM submissions on issues discussed within joint staff forums, such as the Quadrennial Defense Review and the Joint Resources Oversight Council. SOIO began consolidating its functions in 1998 and continued restructuring in 2000 and 2001, all the while retaining its core missions of Intelligence, Information Operations, and C4I. In 1998, it merged the communications and computer support staffs from the former J-2, J-3, and J-6 directorates to form a single C4I infrastructure support team. Also in 1998, SOAL became the sole program manager for C4I system acquisitions, with SOIO providing technical support. By January 2001, the center had completed its evolution from a J-staff structure, with a Chief Information Officer (CIO) coordinating information technology and a Senior Intelligence Officer (SIO) managing the command's intelligence and information security programs. USSOCOM led DOD in developing tests and exercises to ensure no Y2K problems interfered with SOF weapons systems.

Streamlining operations allowed the headquarters to transfer 27 of its personnel billets to the theater SOCs and provided a core staff for another new initiative, the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU). JSOU's mission was to educate future leaders in the art of joint special operations. In establishing JSOU, General Schoomaker noted that the school would leverage and enhance existing joint and Service professional military education (PME) programs. Accordingly, JSOU assumed operational control of the U.S. Air Force Special Operations School and Naval Postgraduate School resident special operations curricula, and

also provided educational material to SOF faculty members at PME institutions.

During General Holland's tenure the mission statement changed to:

“Provide special operations forces to the Secretary of Defense, regional Combatant Commanders, and American Ambassadors and their country teams for successful conduct of worldwide special operations, civil affairs, and psychological operations during both peace and war.”

Holland wanted the command to fix manpower and equipment deficiencies, and add to the force structure. For example, OEF highlighted the need for more PSYOP and CA forces in the active component.

The 9/11 attacks and the GWOT would result in the most far-reaching changes in USSOCOM's mission and organization. To effectively prosecute DOD's efforts against terrorism, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld wanted a single headquarters—USSOCOM—to have primary military responsibility for the Global War on Terrorism. In July 2002, Secretary Rumsfeld directed USSOCOM to develop a plan to find and deal with the international threat of terrorist organizations. For the next three years, during the tenures of General Holland and his successor, General Bryan D. “Doug” Brown, USSOCOM would work to win support for its efforts to be the lead unified command for planning and synchronizing the GWOT. This would not be an easy or quick process.

Some in the Office of the Secretary of Defense felt that the command had not been fully used in the GWOT and that it should have assumed the leading role among the GCCs. General Holland had not been given any new authorities, however, and the combatant commanders were reluctant to relinquish some of their prerogatives to USSOCOM. OSD commissioned a study by the Institute of Defense Analysis (IDA) to evaluate USSOCOM's strategy for the GWOT. After receiving SOF briefings, IDA reported to Secretary Rumsfeld in December 2002 that the command had a viable

strategy, and the Secretary then authorized a \$7.1 billion plus-up for MFP-11 for the FYDP 04-09.

Defeating the terrorist networks required the United States to meet two fundamental challenges that had not been addressed before 9/11. First, to close the seams between U.S. government organizations that the 9/11 terrorists had exploited, and second, to build a global counterterrorist network to counter the evolving terrorist threat and networks. These challenges were addressed in the National Military Strategy, various operational plans, and a host of other documents, as well as through reform of the Unified Command Plan (UCP), which assigned responsibilities to USSOCOM and the other Unified Commands.

The DOD divided the world into geographic combatant commands, where each geographic commander had responsibility and authority for military activities in his area of responsibility (AOR). Under the UCP in effect in September 2001, USSOCOM organized, trained, and equipped SOF, and the geographic commanders employed SOF in their respective areas. In 2001, no single GCC had the lead for countering terrorism, and the 9/11 terrorists had cut across the GCC boundaries by recruiting, planning, and training in the U.S. European Command (EUCOM), U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), and U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) areas of responsibility.

When, in July 2002, Secretary Rumsfeld tasked USSOCOM to develop a plan to deal with terrorist organizations, DOD first had to resolve a number of issues about what USSOCOM's GWOT authorities would be, and what its relations would be with the other unified commands. How and where was USSOCOM to discharge its new GWOT responsibilities with each GCC already conducting counterterrorism operations in its area of responsibility? How would USSOCOM impact the combatant commanders' operations and their theater security cooperation programs? How would USSOCOM's operational role increase, if at all?

Over the decades, the GCCs had developed regional expertise and had formed long-term contacts with host nation militaries, all of which would be invaluable in combating terrorism. Rather than trying to recreate the GCCs' area

expertise, USSOCOM explored a number of concepts that would allow the command to act as the lead in countering terrorists around the globe while capitalizing on the GCCs' capabilities. One option would be for USSOCOM to take command of the Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs). This would transfer regional expertise to USSOCOM, but losing the TSOCs would also hamper the GCCs' efforts to accomplish their regional missions, which also supported the GWOT.

The GCCs also had demonstrated expertise in planning and executing operations. Should USSOCOM deploy a headquarters element forward to command and control specific counterterrorist operations, or was there some way to leverage existing warfighting headquarters to command and control counterterrorist operations?

Moreover, as USSOCOM became more involved in GWOT operations, could it still perform its service-like functions of organizing, training, and equipping SOF, and managing MFP-11? Should those service-like responsibilities revert back to the services or to some other command to allow USSOCOM to focus on operations?

During the review process for the 2004 UCP, the GCCs, Joint Staff, and OSD negotiated these and other points, and the coordination process was long and sometimes difficult. The crux of the issues centered on USSOCOM's position that it should have authority to compel other combatant commands to recognize the lead role of USSOCOM in GWOT plans. General Holland wrestled with these challenges during his tenure as commander, as would General Brown during his. He did benefit from having worked on many of these issues as deputy commander to General Holland.

General Brown knew that the combatant commanders and some on the Joint Staff were not in tune with USSOCOM's proposed role in the GWOT, and he worked to assuage their concerns. He downplayed the possibility of USSOCOM becoming the supported combatant commander for counterterrorism missions and emphasized decentralized execution of GWOT operations by the GCCs. Eventually, he transferred the requirement to train and maintain a deployable headquarters to the components.

When the 2004 UCP was presented to the combatant commanders at the January 2005 Combatant Commanders' Conference for approval, General Brown proposed that USSOCOM "synchronize" combatant commands' plans and operations against terrorist networks. The term "synchronize" was important and contentious because USSOCOM would have authority to compel the combatant commands to mesh their counterterrorist plans and operations with USSOCOM's campaign. With "synchronizing" authority, USSOCOM would be the lead combatant command for GWOT planning and operations. The combatant commanders, however, voted 8 to 1 against this proposal, opting for a version that gave USSOCOM only coordinating authority. After the meeting, Brown convinced the Vice Chairman of the JCS, General Peter Pace, to forward both USSOCOM's proposal and the one approved by the eight combatant commanders to Secretary Rumsfeld.

On 1 March 2005, nearly three and one-half years after 9/11, President George W. Bush signed the 2004 UCP, directing the USSOCOM commander to serve

"as the lead combatant commander for planning, synchronizing, and as directed, executing global operations against terrorist networks in coordination with other combatant commanders."

Facing a worldwide terrorist threat, the President gave USSOCOM unprecedented authority to control what had traditionally been within the GCCs' purview, as long as the command coordinated with the other unified commands. The UCP further directed that

"CDRUSSOCOM leads a global collaborative planning process leveraging other combatant command capabilities and expertise that results in decentralized execution by both USSOCOM and other combatant commands against terrorist networks."

The USSOCOM commander was to integrate

"DOD strategy, plans, intelligence priorities, and operations against terrorist networks designated by the Secretary [of

Defense]" and plan "campaigns against designated terrorist networks."

Thus, the Secretary of Defense would ensure that USSOCOM focused on the high priority transnational and transregional terrorist threats. Commander, USSOCOM was also responsible for

"prioritizing and synchronizing theater security cooperation activities, deployments, and capabilities that support campaigns against designated terrorist networks in coordination with the geographic combatant commanders."

To assist in building counterterrorist networks, UCP 2004 further tasked USSOCOM with

"providing military representation to U.S. national and international agencies for matters related to U.S. and multinational campaigns against designated terrorist networks, as directed by the Secretary."

USSOCOM would be responsible for

"planning operational preparation of the environment (OPE); executing OPE or synchronizing the execution of OPE in coordination with the geographic combatant commanders."

Twice the UCP provided for Commander USSOCOM to be the supported commander, when directed, for

"operations in support of selected campaigns" and for "selected special operations missions."

Now, a single agency, USSOCOM, would write global counterterrorism plans and would "synchronize" with the GCCs in developing regional plans that supported its global plans. The 2004 UCP clearly articulated the Secretary of Defense and the President's decision to designate USSOCOM the lead combatant command for the GWOT. In April 2005, the USSOCOM and component commanders designated "synchronize the Global War on Terror" a core USSOCOM mission.

Secretary Rumsfeld's July 2002 order for USSOCOM to develop a plan to deal with terror-

ist organizations led not only to the overhaul of the UCP, but also marked the start of a collaborative process to write the GWOT plans. However, it would take several years to write, coordinate, and win approval for a family of plans and execution orders so that USSOCOM could discharge its GWOT responsibilities.

Because the GWOT plans would become DOD's campaign plan, USSOCOM had to coordinate its plans with the other combatant commands, the Joint Staff and OSD, and also with the interagency departments and agencies. During the writing phase, USSOCOM briefed Secretary Rumsfeld numerous times, apprising him of the plans' assumptions, mission statements, intent, and revisions. Lieutenant General Dell Dailey also briefed the combatant commands' staffs on the GWOT plans. The UCP made USSOCOM responsible for planning operational preparation of the environment, and during the coordination process, some in the interagency arena expressed concerns over whether this mission would impinge on their responsibilities. Such issues were resolved at the Secretary of Defense level.

During a 2005 Defense Senior Leaders Conference, Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England told the combatant commanders that DOD would use USSOCOM's GWOT plans as guides for resourcing the combatant commands' GWOT programs. In effect, to get their GWOT plans and programs resourced, the combatant commanders had to integrate them with USSOCOM's efforts. Secretary Rumsfeld approved USSOCOM's GWOT campaign plan on 29 March 2006.

As part of this campaign plan, USSOCOM would "synchronize" the combatant commanders' regional war on terror plans to ensure that they met all of USSOCOM's requirements. The coordination was done during global synchronization conferences.

UCP 2004 and related documents and plans resulted in changes to USSOCOM's mission statement. In December 2004, General Brown changed it to read:

"USSOCOM plans, directs, and executes special operations in the conduct of the War on Terrorism in order to disrupt, defeat, and destroy terrorist

networks that threaten the United States, its citizens and interests worldwide. USSOCOM organizes, trains, and equips Special Operations Forces provided to Geographic Combatant Commanders, American Ambassadors and their Country Teams."

In May 2005, he shortened it:

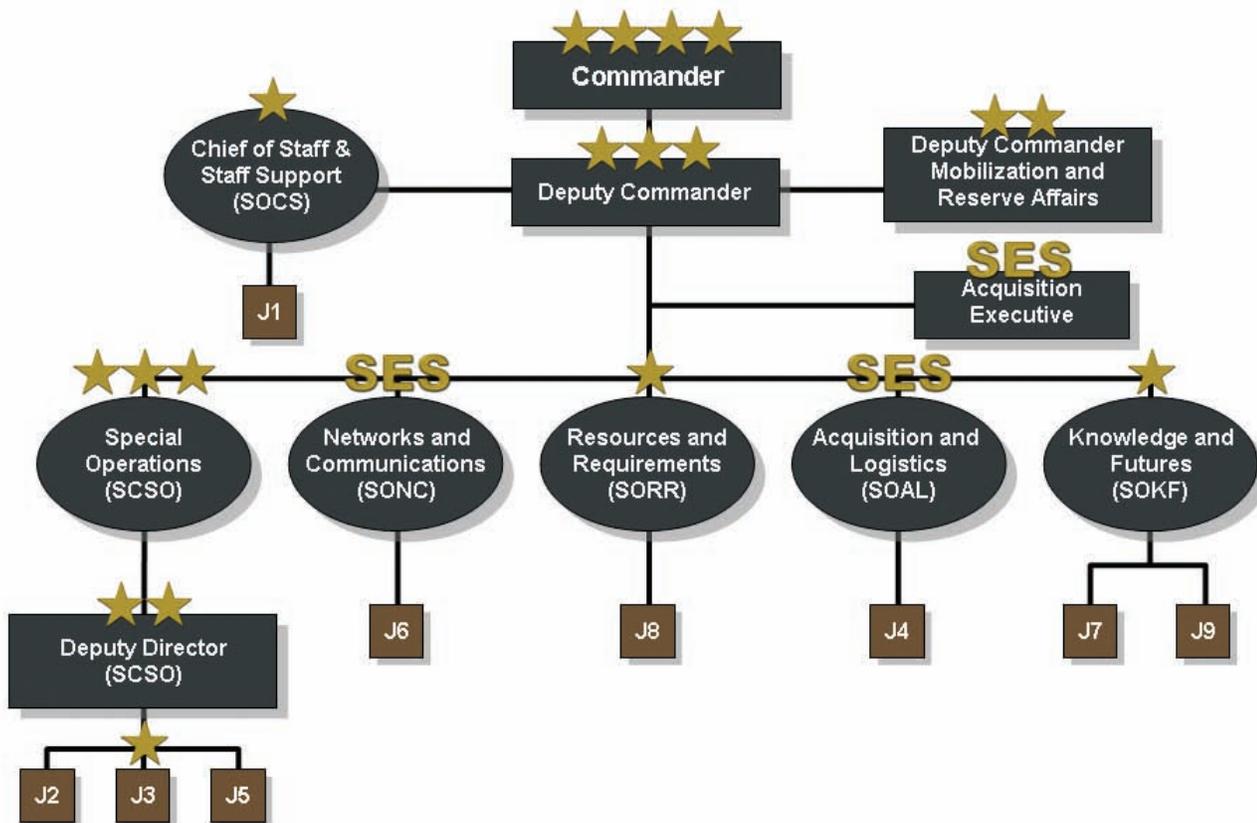
"USSOCOM leads, plans, synchronizes, and as directed, executes global operations against terrorist networks. USSOCOM trains, organizes, equips and deploys combat ready Special Operations Forces to combatant commands."

General Brown also changed USSOCOM's vision statement because the previous one was too broad for the command's new GWOT focus. In the new vision statement, USSOCOM was:

"To be the premier team of special warriors, thoroughly prepared, properly equipped, and highly motivated: at the right place, at the right time, facing the right adversary, leading the Global War on Terrorism, accomplishing strategic objectives of the United States."

The expansion of USSOCOM's mission for the GWOT led to dramatic changes in the organization of the headquarters. General Holland retained the center structure, but to enable the headquarters to conduct operations more effectively, he transferred the SOOP 2-star general to direct a new USSOCOM Center for Special Operations (SCSO).

When General Brown took command, he made more far-reaching changes. In keeping with the command's new GWOT authorities, General Brown revived the J-staff structure but kept the directorates within the center structure. SOCS, SOAL, and SORR retained the J-1 under SOCS, the J-4 under SOAL, and the J-8 under SORR. The SOIO and SOOP, however, were eliminated, and the personnel were incorporated into the SCSO, encompassing the J-2, J-3, J-5, and other functions. General Brown also succeeded in making the SCSO director a 3-star



HQ USSOCOM Organization Chart 2006

position. He created a Center for Knowledge and Futures (SOKF) with a 1-star director that encompassed the J-7 (exercises, joint training, and joint doctrine) and J-9 (future of SOF). Brown placed the J-6 and other C4 functions under a new Center for Networks and Communications (SONC) with a civilian SES director.

USSOCOM Forces

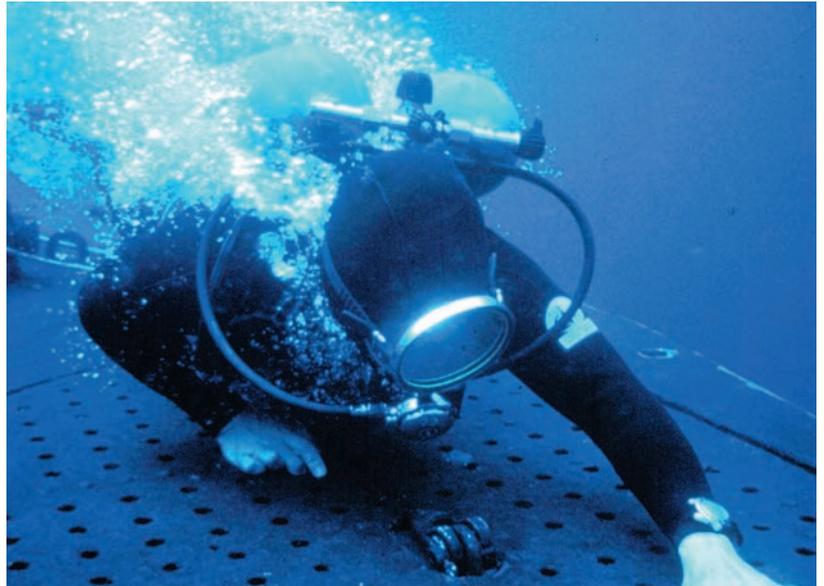
The activation of USSOCOM in 1987 required the assignment of components and forces, a task not without controversy. The law establishing USSOCOM said, "Unless otherwise directed by the Secretary of Defense, all active and reserve Special Operations Forces of all armed forces stationed in the United States shall be assigned to the Special Operations Command." Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger initially assigned USSOCOM three component commands and most of their forces. He assigned USSOCOM the 23rd Air Force, located at Hurlburt Field, Florida; the Naval Special Warfare Command (NAVSPECWARCOM), headquartered at NAB Coronado, San Diego, California; and the Army's 1st SOCOM, at Ft Bragg, North Carolina. Weinberger

assigned the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) on 14 August 1987, after USSOCOM had become operational. Later, JSOC became a sub-unified command of USSOCOM.

At the time of its assignment, 1st SOCOM had charge of all the U.S. Army's special operations units. Its mission was to prepare, provide, and sustain Army SOF to conduct foreign internal defense, unconventional warfare, special intelligence, psychological operations, strike operations, and related special operations. The 1st SOCOM forces included: the 1st, 5th, 7th and 10th Special Forces Groups (Airborne); 4th Psychological Operations Group; 96th Civil Affairs Battalion; 75th Ranger Regiment; 160th Special Operations Aviation Group (Airborne); numerous Reserve and National Guard units; and the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School.

Not all of these units, however, were immediately transferred to USSOCOM. Secretary Weinberger withheld the active duty and reserve PSYOP and CA units, pending a special review. Earlier in 1987, the Office of the Secretary of Defense had proposed creating a separate sub-unified command for PSYOP and CA forces. Like other SOF units, PSYOP and

CA had suffered severe cutbacks during the 1970s and 1980s, and some proponents feared that they would not fare much better under USSOCOM. General Lindsay opposed the plan, arguing that the command could use its authority to safeguard these SOF assets, and Admiral Crowe, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, agreed with him. On 15 October 1987, Secretary Weinberger assigned all Army and Air Force Active and Reserve Component PSYOP and CA units to USSOCOM.



SEAL during submarine training.

Secretary Weinberger's actions, however, did not settle the PSYOP and CA issue completely. General Stiner addressed another long-standing issue in the assignment of PSYOP and CA. Reserve and National Guard leaders argued that these forces were assigned to USSOCOM only in wartime, upon mobilization. General Stiner pushed through an initiative that the Secretary of Defense approved in March 1993, designating PSYOP and CA as SOF. This decision enabled USSOCOM to command and control these units in peacetime as well, which greatly improved the command's ability to fund, train, equip, and organize these forces.

Created by the Navy on 16 April 1987, the NAVSPECWARCOM only had the Naval Special Warfare Center (the training command) assigned to it. Naval Special Warfare Groups I and II (and their SEALs and Special Boat Units) were not assigned because the Navy argued that these organizations and their forces belonged to the Pacific and Atlantic fleets, respectively, and therefore not available for assignment to USSOCOM. Secretary of the Navy James Webb and Navy leadership felt the assignment of the special warfare assets to USSOCOM would detract from their close relationship with the fleets.

General Lindsay maintained that the special warfare forces rightfully belonged to USSOCOM since they were based in the United States. He reasoned that the groups' relationships to the fleets were no different than a Special Forces Group's assignment to a particular theater, and he wanted to integrate Naval Special Warfare (NSW) units with other SOF. On 23 October

1987, Secretary Weinberger ruled in favor of USSOCOM. Accordingly, operational control of the SEALs, Special Boat Units, and NSW groups passed to NAVSPECWARCOM on 1 March 1988, and that command assumed administrative control for these units on 1 October 1988.

The 23rd Air Force was a unique organization with two separate but interrelated missions: it was both a numbered air force assigned to the Military Airlift Command (MAC), and as USSOCOM's Air Force component, it supported SOF from all the Services. Secretary Weinberger assigned only the 23rd's special operations functions and units to USSOCOM, including its Reserve and National Guard units and the Air Force Special Operations School. MAC retained oversight responsibility for the 23rd's other mission areas (such as aeromedical airlift, rescue and weather reconnaissance, and operational support airlift missions). Since General Lindsay expected all components to be major command equivalents, this arrangement created problems.

From the outset, USSOCOM had wanted the 23rd "purified" of its non-SOF elements. MAC went along with this request. General Lindsay's paramount concern remained—he still had to coordinate with MAC to effect changes at the 23rd. The current organizational arrangement thwarted his efforts to build the command that Congress had mandated. The solution, he decided, was to elevate the 23rd to a major air command. General Larry Welsh, the Air Force Chief of

Staff, agreed and on 22 May 1990, redesignated the 23rd AF as the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC).

The USSOCOM most recent component—the Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command (MARSOC) was established on 4 February 2006. Headquartered at Camp Lejeune, NC, the Marine Corps component of USSOCOM started with approximately 1,400 Marines, sailors, and civilian employees and was commanded by a U.S. Marine Corps two-star general. MARSOC includes five subordinate commands: The Foreign Military Training Unit (FMTU), two Marine Special Operations battalions, the Marine Special Operations Support Group, and the Marine Special Operations School. MARSOC was projected to grow to about 2,500 by FY 2010. The U.S. Marine Corps was now a full participant in the special operations community.

Budget and POM Development

The creation of MFP-11 was an important priority for both General Lindsay and Congress. Although the Nunn-Cohen Amendment had created MFP-11 to reform SOF funding, the wording of the law permitted varying interpretations, and some Defense Department officials argued that the new command should not submit its own Program Objective Memorandum (POM). General Lindsay and Ambassador Whitehouse, the ASD (SO/LIC), argued just the opposite and worked extremely hard to win approval of a POM and budget for the command.

This debate lingered until September 1988, when Senators Nunn and Cohen clarified Congressional intent, saying that the sponsors of the law “fully intended that the commander of the Special Operations Command would have sole responsibility for the preparation of the POM.” Congress enacted Public Law 100-456 that same month, which directed the USCINCSOC to submit a POM directly to the Secretary of Defense.

On 24 January 1989, the Assistant Secretary of Defense, William H. Taft IV, signed a memorandum giving USCINCSOC budgetary authority over MFP-11. Soon afterwards, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) gave USSOCOM control of selected MFP-11 programs effective 1 October 1990 and total MFP-11 responsibility in

October 1991. For the first time, a CINC was granted authority for a budget and POM.

The command needed to create a new Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS) process to structure a POM and budget for all SOF. Even with a Congressional mandate, the command found it difficult to establish MFP-11. Because of a staff shortfall, the command took a measured approach to assuming these tasks. The POM was the first step, with the initial one completed and submitted in 1988 through the Department of the Air Force. Based on Secretary Taft’s directive, the command assumed budget execution authority by October 1990. In 1991 the command began to submit fully-supported POMs: this was the first time USSOCOM researched SOF mission requirements and developed the analysis for the POM justification instead of “crosswalking” requirements, which the individual services had developed in previous years. The establishment of MFP-11 set up a more focused resource process and ensured a balanced review of special operations requirements and programs.

General Downing directed the creation of the Strategic Planning Process to allocate the command’s resources in the most effective ways. This prioritization and allocation process continued. General Schoomaker made significant changes in how the command allocated its resources by ending the competition for scarce dollars and melding the headquarters and components into one team. This meant that the priorities decided upon by CINCSOC and his component commanders (the so-called Board of Directors or “BOD”) would be executed without changes being made by subordinate commands. Second, charged by the CINC to ensure “fidelity” in the resourcing process, the Center for Force Structure, Requirements, Resources, and Strategic Assessments (SORR) developed procedures to monitor how the budget was executed in accordance with the BOD decisions. In this way, General Schoomaker aligned the dollars to the command’s most important acquisition programs.

During General Schoomaker and Holland’s tenures, the command completed a number of significant resourcing initiatives. SORR completed three important initiatives: the TSOC’s manpower study that downsized the headquarter-

ters to provide personnel to the TSOCS; creating two joint special operations aviation component commands; and keeping two National Guard Special Forces battalions.

SORR secured the transfer of 1,687 Army spaces and funding to support a variety of readiness and operational requirements. The USSOCOM POMs maintained SOF readiness while modernizing by using off-the-shelf technology. With OSD, the headquarters staff developed and executed the Defense Financial Accounting System, which managed resources through a joint accounting system. SORR got DOD to identify a Service to provide

common support, base operations, and management headquarters support for unified commands and the TSOCS. Other initiatives included increasing the size of the 96th CA Battalion by 30 percent (84 billets) and creating the Navy Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School.

Before 9/11, the USSOCOM budget stood at just under \$4 billion per year. During the Holland and Brown tenures, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and SOF involvement in the GWOT led to a huge increase in USSOCOM's MFP-11. By FY 06, the USSOCOM budget, including supplemental funding, had nearly doubled to \$7.4 billion, and the 2005 QDR and PDM directed further increases for the next five years. In FY 06, the USSOCOM budget accounted for only about 1.5 percent of the total budget for DOD. The nation received a remarkable return from the defense budget that went to SOF.

With SOF deployed around the world combating terrorism, USSOCOM relied for the most part on emergency supplemental funding to

CAPABILITY, CAPACITY, AND THE 2006 QDR

An organization or a weapon system provides a capability. Building more copies of existing organizations and systems increases capacity but does not increase capability.

During the Cold War, much of the force structure debate centered on capacity issues such as numbers of tanks, planes, and ships. When the Cold War ended, many believed that the U.S. had excess capacity and debate shifted to new capabilities that might be needed, such as information technologies. The Global War on Terrorism presented the U.S. with new, adaptive adversaries requiring new capabilities, but sustaining large, long-term deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan also strained U.S. military capacity. To address these two different types of challenges, the 2006 QDR was the first to differentiate between capabilities and capacities.

meet the increased OPTEMPO and resultant requirements for more equipment and weapon systems. It was not until the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) process began in early 2005 that DOD systematically addressed the GWOT requirements and the resources USSOCOM would need for this long-term commitment. The 2001 QDR was published immediately after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and did not address the GWOT.

When DOD started preparing for the 2006 QDR in early 2005, USSOCOM was the lead combatant command for the GWOT. By 2005, after several years of

intense combat experience, USSOCOM had a clear vision of what was needed in terms of capability and capacity to fight and win the GWOT. With the vast majority of SOF fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, the command needed more force structure to prevent terrorist encroachment in other areas around the world. Gaining this additional force structure was one of General Brown's primary goals entering the QDR process.

On 1 March 2005, OSD published the QDR Terms of Reference (TOR) that emphasized special operations more than ever before, and therefore, USSOCOM won approval to be treated like a fifth service during the QDR process. Thus, in the key meetings that the Deputy Secretary of Defense chaired, USSOCOM Deputy Commander VADM Eric T. Olson participated as an equal member. This was first in a series of changes to the QDR process designed to meet the GWOT demands. By the time the QDR report was published in February 2006, not only was USSOCOM being treated as another service, but special operations was addressed as a

separate category on a par with air, ground, and maritime operations.

The 2006 QDR acknowledged that the GWOT was going to be a “long war” and would extend far beyond Iraq and Afghanistan. The review provided strategic guidance for U.S. defense planning in the GWOT, addressed other threats to U.S. national security, and continued the transformation of DOD.

In another departure from previous practice, the 2006 QDR led directly to changes in programs and force structures designed to implement its guidance. These changes were promulgated in the Program Decision Memoranda (PDM) for the FY 2007-2011 Defense Program, and especially in PDM III published on 20 December 2005. The force structure changes included a dramatic increase in the capability and capacity of forces assigned to USSOCOM, including the creation of a new component—the Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command (MARSOC). Indeed, PDM III directed the largest increase in the authorized personnel strength in USSOCOM’s 20-year history.

The Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) would receive a squadron of Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and was slated to double the size of the Combat Aviation Foreign Internal Defense (FID) Squadron charged with training foreign air forces. Each Army Ranger battalion would receive a fourth company of Rangers and a reconnaissance platoon. Every active duty Special Forces Group would receive a fourth SF battalion while the Army National Guard SFGs were slated to grow by almost 20 percent. PDM III directed that Army CA would grow by almost 20 percent and Army PSYOP would increase by more than 50 percent. USSOCOM would retain active duty CA and PSYOP units, and the reserve component CA and PSYOP would be transferred to the U.S. Army Reserve.

PDM III increased NAVSPECWARCOM force structure by 536 personnel, including an increase in the size of the Naval SOF UAV program, additional non-SEAL divers to facilitate SEAL operations, and more personnel for Special Boat Units. The headquarters staffs of NSW units would be increased to meet the



Advanced SEAL Delivery System (ASDS) undergoes testing off the coast of Hawaii.

GWOT workload and incorporate information operations and other capabilities. The PDM directed a study of the desired capabilities for afloat forward staging bases (AFSBs) to support SOF. Once procured, the AFSBs would be a major expansion of NSW capability.

To provide command and control for these additional forces, the TSOCs would grow by almost 25 percent, and USSOCOM headquarters would also expand to handle its GWOT responsibilities over the long term. To house the new component and expansion of the existing structure, USSOCOM and subordinate elements would oversee an expansion in military construction.

As the terrorists change their tactics and targets often, USSOCOM must be equally flexible. UCP 2004, the GWOT campaign plan, QDR 2006, and PDM III, all helped move DOD past crisis management and into a resourced long-term war against terrorism. But, the GWOT would continue to require adjustments to plans, policies, and force structures to meet the evolving threats posed by an adaptive enemy. General Brown promised not to lower standards during the growth of force structure. If subsequent experience showed that the PDM III force structure was not ideal, then USSOCOM would request changes.

Systems Acquisitions and Force Modernization

A primary rationale for establishing the command was the services’ failure to modernize SOF systems. Keen congressional interest in this

area continued after the command was activated, and a 17 November 1987 conference report criticized DOD for the lack of progress in procuring “SOF-peculiar equipment.” Some on the Hill labeled this lack of progress as “malicious implementation” of the Nunn-Cohen Amendment. The Congress enacted an additional piece of legislation on 4 December 1987 that authorized CINCSOC to function as a “Head of Agency” for SOF acquisition programs, an authority normally reserved for the Service Secretaries.

The command took another major step forward when the Deputy Secretary of Defense approved establishment of the Special Operations Research, Development, and Acquisition Center (SORDAC) on 10 December 1990. By early 1991, SORDAC had started performing its acquisition functions and operated within the Resources Directorate (J-8). In 1992, General Stiner consolidated the command’s acquisition and contracting management functions in a new directorate under a Deputy for Acquisition, who was named the command’s Acquisition Executive and Senior Procurement Executive. To discharge its acquisition responsibilities, the command concentrated on fielding systems meeting component requirements. Emphasizing a streamlined acquisition process, the command’s procurement strategy was to



CV-22 Osprey

modify existing weapons or buy “non-developmental” (off-the-shelf technology) systems—an approach which permitted quick, economical improvements to operational capabilities.

Since 1987, USSOCOM has fielded a number of modified or new systems affecting nearly every aspect of special operations. Some of the more notable were the MC-130H Combat Talon II long-range insertion aircraft and the SOCRATES automated intelligence handling system, both used in Operation DESERT STORM, and the *Cyclone*-class patrol coastal ships, used in Operations SUPPORT DEMOCRACY and UPHOLD DEMOCRACY. Other significant acquisitions included the MH-47E Chinook, a medium-range helicopter designed to conduct insertion operations under all weather conditions; the AC-130U Spectre gunship, used for close air support and reconnaissance; and the Mark V Special Operations Craft, a high performance combatant boat capable of being transported aboard C-5 aircraft. In 1997, the Acquisition Center’s Naval Special Warfare Rigid Inflatable Boat (NSW-RIB) Program provided a long-sought capability for a high speed SEAL insertion and extraction craft. The program, which was completed under cost and months ahead of schedule while exceeding every performance objective, won the 1998 Defense Department’s Packard Award for excellence in acquisition.



Rigid inflatable boats

The SOAL set the benchmark for acquisition reform by developing and fielding new systems much faster than the norm. In 1998, the headquarters implemented SOALIS, the primary tool for providing information on all USSOCOM programs and a paperless system that saved money for future investments. In 1999, SOAL developed the Joint Special Operations Mission Planner that provided the Theater Special Operations Commands with a planning and command and control tool. SOCCENT used this planner during two operations. The SOF Intelligence Vehicle, which provided tactical intelligence processing and analysis to deployed units, won the David Packard Award in 1997. In 2000, SOAL was awarded the Defense Acquisition Executive Award for the advanced ground mobility system and for the multi-band intra-team radio.

Moreover, USSOCOM's acquisition capability was used a number of times during contingencies to provide SOF with the latest technology or to accelerate modifications. During DESERT STORM, for example, the command modified Chinooks with aircraft survivability equipment before they deployed to the Iraqi area of operations. USSOCOM procured specialized cold-weather gear for SOF deploying to Bosnia during JOINT ENDEAVOR. SOAL rapidly resourced statements of requirements for SOF going into Kosovo.

In 1998, General Schoomaker designated a few key acquisition programs as "flagship systems," so called because they were deemed essential to the future of SOF. In an era of tightly constrained budgets, funding for these strategic programs would be preserved, even at the expense of other acquisitions. The CV-22 aircraft program and the Advanced SEAL Delivery System (ASDS) were among the first flagship programs. The ASDS has undergone testing in Hawaii.

During General Holland's tenure, USSOCOM enhanced SOF by acquiring more weapons systems. Because of the high OPTEMPO and battle losses, USSOCOM has had to procure more SOF aircraft, fielding more AC-130s, MC-130s, and MH-47s. Moreover, the CV-22 would provide added capability in the near future.

With thousands of SOF personnel involved in daily combat with a resourceful enemy,

USSOCOM's acquisition process needed to adapt to meet the evolving needs of SOF warriors. USSOCOM developed an urgent deployment acquisition process to provide rapid acquisition and logistics support in response to combat mission needs statements from deployed SOF and those about to deploy. The command has acquired and fielded advanced technology systems in as little as seven days once the combat mission needs statement was approved, and most capabilities were delivered in less than six months. The accelerated acquisition process produced mobile electronic-warfare jammers, target video downlink capabilities for close air support aircraft, anti-structural grenades, and unmanned aerial systems. Because UAVs have been so invaluable in the GWOT, USSOCOM developed a roadmap to consolidate ten unmanned aerial systems into five platforms that would reduce cost and improve capabilities.

The GWOT has altered pre-9/11 procurement strategy in order to reprogram funds to enhance SOF warfighting capabilities. USSOCOM improved maritime systems with common infrared sensors, advanced armor protection, and improved creature comforts. USSOCOM funded the AFSB proof of concept by using a commercial High Speed Vessel (HSV), modified to support special operations, to serve as a base for SOF operations in littoral areas. The test went well, and USSOCOM has identified the requirement for a SOF-controlled, high-speed, AFSB. Though the exact form of the future AFSB has not yet been settled, procurement of a satisfactory system would enhance SOF capabilities in littoral areas. USSOCOM programmed for the personnel and equipment needed for a fourth battalion for USASOC's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.

General Brown has shifted the focus of SOF acquisition toward personal equipment critical to the SOF Warrior. In 2004, he consolidated more than 90 acquisition programs into the SOF Warrior System Program and ranked it over other systems. This program included global positioning systems, night vision and optical devices, individual weapons, and body armor. Consolidating them under a single program office has ensured that these vital and relatively low cost items were not overlooked or underfunded. In this way, USSOCOM has continued

to “equip the man.” The shift in funding priorities has been accompanied by an unprecedented increase in SOF funding, resulting in a force that is not only more experienced, but better trained and better equipped as well.

OPTEMPO and Quality People

There has been a steady increase in SOF deployments since USSOCOM’s inception, measured by both personnel deployments and the number of countries visited. At varying times during the 1990s, certain “high demand/low density” specialties within Special Operations, Psychological Operations, and Civil Affairs forces endured repeated, long deployments. Concerns arose within the DOD about the long term impact these absences were having on retention and readiness. During fiscal year 1993, USSOCOM averaged 2,036 personnel deployed away from home station per week; by fiscal year 1996 the average had more than doubled, climbing to 4,613. In fiscal year 1999, the number reached 5,141. From 1998 to 2001, SOF had deployed to an average of 150 countries per year. What caused this dramatic increase?

The fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War resulted in (to use General Lindsay’s term) a more “violent peace”—regional destabilization, a new round of terrorism, and an increased availability of weapons of mass destruction. The changed military threat made SOF’s capabilities more relevant to the national military strategy.

Why were SOF used so often as an instrument of national policy? SOF were versatile, ready, and uniquely capable of operating in all politico-military environments, skilled at peacetime training, foreign internal defense, and nation assistance operations, as well as during full-blown conventional warfare. SOF’s versatility was particularly useful in areas where political constraints prevented using conventional forces. In combat situations SOF were “force multipliers,” conducting special reconnaissance, direct action, and coalition support, while in peacetime, they deployed to every continent and conducted training, supported the theater CINCs’ strategy, and did things that conventional forces were not capable of doing.

Additionally, the theater CINCs and their staffs better understood SOF’s capabilities. This

increased awareness was due to USSOCOM’s efforts to involve the other CINCs in planning and joint mission area analysis, and to support their Special Operations Commands with MFP-11 funding and personnel. Moreover, SOF were the theater commanders’ force of choice for such diverse operations as counterdrug and demining training, foreign internal defense, medical exercises, non-combatant evacuations, or handling emergency situations like Operation PACIFIC HAVEN in 1996, when CA and PSYOP forces helped Kurdish refugees prepare to immigrate to the United States. As the number of peacekeeping missions and small-scale contingencies grew, so also did the need for SOF support.

Each CINCSOC identified as a basic requirement the recruitment and retention of people who could meet the rigorous warfighting standards of special operations and also adapt to the role of warrior-diplomat. Special operators were most likely to deploy to remote locations where, by virtue of being among the first, and often the only, U.S. troops a host nation’s military and political leaders might see, their military mission took on diplomatic responsibilities. When in combat, SOF went deep behind enemy lines—for example, providing special reconnaissance, or conducting “tip of the spear” H-hour strike missions. Regardless of the challenge, SOF soldiers, sailors, and airmen have represented America’s finest.

General Downing publicized the SOF Truths (first approved for use by then COL Sid Shacknow in the mid-1980s) as a way to codify the need for quality people:

*Humans are more important than hardware.
Quality is better than quantity.
Special Operations Forces cannot be mass produced.
Special Operations Forces cannot be created after emergencies.*

All subsequent CINCSOCs have embraced the SOF Truths. To ensure that the force remained professional, General Schoemaker made training and education—“trained for certainty, while being educated for uncertainty”—

one of his hallmarks. SOF often encountered ambiguous circumstances while conducting peacetime operations, circumstances that could have a potential impact on strategic issues. The unique conditions SOF operated under required not only flexibility and mature judgment, but also uncompromising integrity.

General Schoomaker cited the maturity and personal qualities of SOF, coupled with their widespread presence around the world, as reasons why SOF served as “Global Scouts.” During crises, by virtue of their cultural awareness, regional familiarity, ability to respond quickly, or simply due to their presence nearby, SOF were called upon to support American interests. Examples of SOF Global Scout missions included the recovery of casualties after Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown’s CT-43A crashed into a Croatian mountainside in 1996, the evacuation of U.S. citizens from Sierra Leone in 1997, and transporting aid to Vietnamese flood victims in 1999.

The 11 September terrorist attacks, Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, and the GWOT presented enormous challenges and placed heavy demands on SOF. With each combatant commander requesting more SOF, USSOCOM had to manage the competing demands on the force. To do this successfully, General Brown requested and received authority to manage SOF globally and proactively for the GWOT. The new approach was embodied in USSOCOM’s Global SOF Posture Plan.

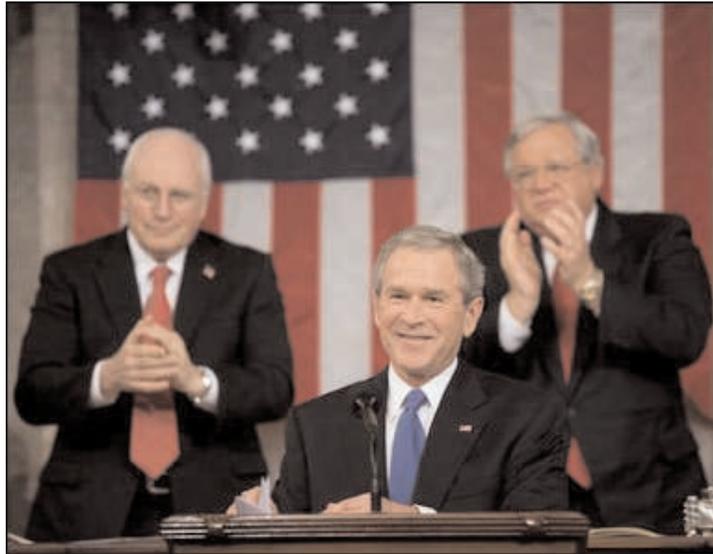
Before 9/11, the geographic combatant commands submitted Requests For Forces (RFFs) to have SOF deploy to their areas; USSOCOM passed the RFFs to the components to provide the forces or request relief from the tasking on a case-by-case basis. By 2004, SOF were in such high demand that USSOCOM began conducting conferences to manage SOF deployments from a global, rather than the regional, counterterrorist perspective. General Brown captured the new vision in USSOCOM’s Global SOF Deployment Posture. The first annual Global SOF Deployment Order (DEPOD) was published in 2006 and covered FY 2007, but only addressed GWOT and named operations. The FY 2008 DEPOD was expanded to cover all SOF deployments overseas, both operations and training

missions. The GCCs could still submit RFFs to meet operational requirements.

By 2007, USSOCOM had the authority and plan to fight and win the GWOT and was “growing” the force structure to do so. However, General Brown and the rest of USSOCOM knew that as the United States continued to fight an adaptive enemy in a world full of uncertainty, requirements would change. The SOF community would have to remain flexible and prepared to change plans and force structure as new challenges appeared.

COMMANDER’S TOP PRIORITIES FOR FY07

1. Take care of SOF Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines; DOD civilians; and their families.
2. Synchronize the GWOT.
3. Manage SOF capabilities for 7500.
4. Implement QDR and programmed resources for FY07.
5. Improve joint SOF interoperability.
6. Ensure continued health of the SOF Force.
7. Immediately implement SOCOM’s Information Strategy.
8. Reduce SOCOM bureaucracy by streamlining staffing processes and rapidly staffing actionable items to the appropriate decision maker.



President George W. Bush signed the UCP which codified USSOCOM's authorities and responsibilities as the lead command in the GWOT.



Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was instrumental in granting USSOCOM new missions and authorities.



Gordon England, Deputy Secretary of Defense, presided over the QDR.



*CJCS
Gen Richard Myers
Oct 2001 - Sep 2005*



*CJCS
Gen Peter Pace
Sep 2005 - present*



1987 - MH-60 Blackhawk landing on Hercules.



2006 - A Predator UAV sits in a maintenance bunker in Afghanistan. AFSOC is scheduled to receive a Predator Squadron.

Major Operations: 1987 to 2001

Since 1987, Special Operations Forces (SOF) have participated in a wide range of military operations—from peacetime engagement, to a major theater war, to a global war on terrorism. The U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has worked steadily to enhance SOF support to the theater Commanders in Chief and the American Ambassadors. Providing this support was not always easy, as it involved doing military operations in different ways. In some cases, theater Commanders in Chief had to be convinced that SOF offered specialized capabilities to them. USSOCOM had just been established when SOF faced an operational challenge in the Persian Gulf, what the Commander in Chief of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) called “guerrilla warfare on the high seas.”

Persian Gulf Operation EARNEST WILL 1987-1989

During Operation EARNEST WILL, the United States ensured that neutral oil tankers and other merchant ships could safely transit the Persian Gulf during the Iran-Iraq War. Iranian attacks on tankers prompted Kuwait to ask the United States in December 1986 to register 11 Kuwaiti tankers as American ships so that they could be escorted by the U.S. Navy (USN). President Reagan agreed to the Kuwaiti request on 10 March 1987, hoping it would deter Iranian attacks. Operation EARNEST WILL was planned by CENTCOM under General George B. Crist.

The protection offered by U.S. naval vessels, however, did not stop Iran, which used mines

and small boats to harass the convoys steaming to and from Kuwait. To stop these attacks, the U.S. needed surveillance and patrol forces in the northern Persian Gulf and bases for these patrol forces. SOF, including Army helicopters and Navy SEALs and Special Boat Units, had the best trained personnel and most capable equipment for monitoring hostile activity, particularly at night when the Iranians conducted their missions. The Army’s special operations helicopter crews trained to fly and fight at night. These helicopters were difficult to spot on radar and relatively quiet, allowing them to get close to a target. Shallow-draft NSW patrol boats could ply waters that had not been swept for mines.

In late July 1987, RADM Harold J. Bernsen, commander of the Middle East Force, requested NSW assets. Six Mark III Patrol Boats, other Special Boat assets, and two SEAL platoons deployed in August. At the same time, two MH-6 and four AH-6 Army special operations helicopters and 39 men received orders to the region in a deployment called Operation PRIME CHANCE I.

The Middle East Force decided to convert two oil servicing barges, *Hercules* and *Wimbrown VII*, into mobile sea bases. Besides obviating the need to ask for land bases, the mobile sea bases allowed SOF in the northern Persian Gulf to thwart clandestine Iranian mining and small boat attacks. Each mobile sea base housed 10 small boats, three helicopters, sufficient fuel, ammunition, equipment, and workshops to support their operations, and more than 150 men. In October, the mobile sea bases became operational.



Army and Navy SOF used the oil servicing barge Hercules as an operating base.



Iran AJR, caught laying mines, was disabled by Army Special Operations helicopters and boarded by SEALs.

In the interim, SOF operated from various surface vessels. On 8 August, the helicopters, designated SEABATs, escorted the third EARNEST WILL convoy and looked for signs of Iranian mine laying. The patrol boats began escort missions on 9 September.

Soon SOF showed what they could do. On the evening of 21 September, one MH-6 and two AH-6 helicopters took off from the frigate *Jarrett* (FFG-33) to track an Iranian ship, the *Iran Ajr*. The helicopters observed the *Iran Ajr* extinguish its lights and begin laying mines. Receiving permission to attack, the helicopters fired guns and rockets, stopping the ship. As the *Iran Ajr's* crew began to push mines over the side, the helicopters resumed firing until the crew abandoned ship.

RADM Bernsen then ordered the SEAL platoon from the *Guadalcanal* to board the *Iran Ajr*. Two patrol boats provided security. Shortly after first light, the SEALs boarded the ship and found nine mines and various arming mechanisms. The patrol boats rescued 10 Iranians in a lifeboat and 13 in life vests floating nearby. Documents found aboard the ship showed where the Iranians had laid mines, implicating Iran in mining international waters. The *Iran Ajr* was sunk in deep water on 26 September.

The mobile sea bases entered service in early October in the northern Persian Gulf. From these bases, U.S. patrol craft and helicopters could monitor Iranian patrol craft in the northern gulf and deter their attacks.

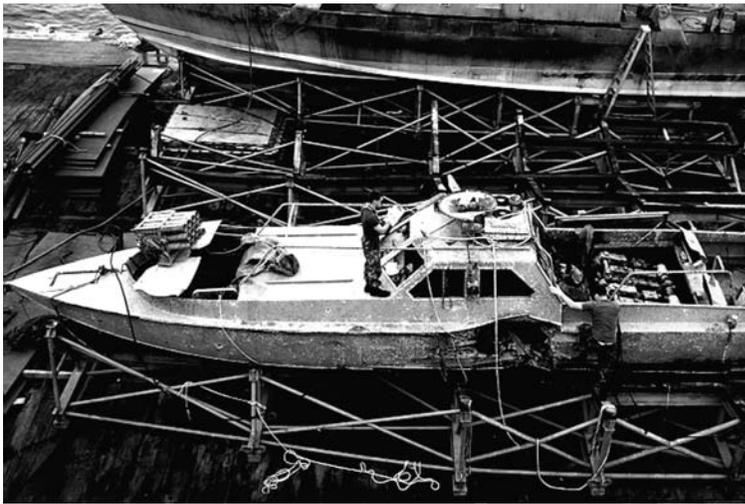
Within a few days, patrol boat and AH/MH-6 helicopter personnel had determined the Iranian pattern of activity—the Iranians hid during the day near oil and gas separation platforms in Iranian waters and at night they headed toward the Middle Shoals Buoy, a navigation aid for the tankers.

With this knowledge, SOF sent three of their helicopters and two patrol craft toward the buoy on the night of 8 October. The AH/MH-6 helicopters arrived first and were fired upon by three Iranian boats anchored near the buoy. After a short but intense fire-fight, the helicopters sank all three boats. The U.S. patrol boats moved in and picked up five Iranian survivors who were subsequently repatriated to Iran.

SOF next saw action in mid-October, three days after an Iranian Silkworm missile hit the reflagged tanker *Sea Isle City* near the oil terminal outside Kuwait City. Seventeen crewmen and the American captain were injured in the missile attack. In Operation NIMBLE ARCHER, four destroyers shelled two oil platforms in the Rostam oil field on 19 October. After the shelling, a SEAL platoon and a demolition unit planted explosive charges on one of the platforms to destroy it. The SEALs next boarded and searched a third platform two miles away. Documents and radios were taken for intelligence purposes.



Mines found aboard the Iran AJR.



AH-6 helicopter fire sank this Iranian Boghammer during a firefight on 8 October 1987.

After NIMBLE ARCHER, *Hercules* and *Wimbrown VII* continued to operate near Karan Island, within 15 miles of each other, and sent patrol boats and helicopters on regular patrols. In November 1987, two MH-60 Blackhawk helicopters arrived to provide nighttime combat search and rescue. As EARNEST WILL continued, SOF were rotated on a regular basis; eventually, some personnel rotated back to the Persian Gulf for second or even third tours. In 1988, the Army replaced the AH/MH-6 helicopters and crews with OH-58D Kiowa helicopters.

On 14 April 1988, approximately 65 miles east of Bahrain, the U.S. frigate *Samuel B. Roberts* (FFG-58) hit a mine, blowing a 30 by 23 foot hole in its hull. Ten sailors were injured. The United States struck back hard, attacking the Iranian frigate *Sabalan* and oil platforms in the Sirri and Sassan oil fields on 18 April during Operation PRAYING MANTIS. After U.S. war-



SEALs approaching the Rashadat Gas/Oil Separation Platform after naval shelling.

ships bombarded the Sirri platform and set it ablaze, a UH-60 with a SEAL platoon flew toward the platform but was unable to get close enough because of the roaring fire. Secondary explosions soon wrecked the platform.

Elsewhere, U.S. forces wreaked havoc on Iranian vessels, sinking two and damaging five others. In the northern Persian Gulf, Iranian forces fired two Silkworm missiles at the mobile sea barges, but chaff fired by the frigate *Gary* decoyed the missiles. Later that day Iranian F-4 jet fighters and patrol boats approached the mobile sea bases, but fled when the *Gary* locked its fire control radars on them.

Thereafter, Iranian attacks on neutral ships dropped drastically. On 18 July, Iran accepted the United Nations cease fire; on 20 August 1988, the Iran-Iraq War ended. On 16 July, the last AH-6 and MH-6 helicopters departed from the theater. In December 1988, the *Wimbrown VII* entered a Bahraini shipyard for reconversion to civilian use. The final EARNEST WILL convoy was run that month. The U.S. Navy had escorted 259 ships in 127 convoys since June 1987. The mobile sea base *Hercules* was not withdrawn until September 1989. The remaining SEALs, patrol boats, and helicopters then returned to the United States.

Special Operations Forces provided the critical skills necessary to help CENTCOM gain control of the northern Persian Gulf and counter Iran's small boats and minelayers. Their ability to work at night proved vital, since Iranian units used darkness to hide their actions. The most important lessons to come out of Operation EARNEST WILL were the need to have highly trained Special Operations Forces capable of responding rapidly to crises anywhere around the globe and the vital need for interoperability between conventional and Special Operations Forces. Additionally, based on EARNEST WILL operational requirements, USSOCOM would acquire new weapons systems—the patrol coastal ships and the MARK V Special Operations Craft.

Panama *Operation JUST CAUSE* *1989-1990*

The invasion of Panama, known as Operation JUST CAUSE, was an unusually delicate, violent, and complex operation. Its key objectives were the capture of Manuel Noriega and the establishment of a democratic government. America applied overwhelming combat power during the invasion, seeking to minimize loss of life and destruction of property, and to speed the transition to friendly relations. The U.S. had bases located there, and U.S. troops had a long-standing relationship with the Panama Defense Forces (PDF). American SOF personnel, having been based in Panama, were acutely aware of the delicate nature of the mission and were instrumental in achieving U.S. objectives.

During Operation JUST CAUSE, the special operations component of Joint Task Force South (the overall invasion force) was the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF). The JSOTF, commanded by Major General Wayne A. Downing, was organized into smaller task forces: TF RED (the Army's 75th Ranger Regiment), TF BLACK (Army Special Forces), and TF WHITE (SEALs and Special Boat Unit assets). These task forces were supported by Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs units, Army Special Operations helicopters, and USAF air commando units.

The Opening Mission

The JSOTF's principal H-hour missions were the capture of Noriega and the destruction of the PDF's ability to fight. As it turned out, the U.S. forces did not know Noriega's location at H-hour; accordingly, the JSOTF focused on the H-hour missions against the PDF. The attack on the Comandancia (the PDF's headquarters in Panama City) and the rescue of an American citizen from the adjoining prison (the Carcel Modelo) were the responsibility of a joint task force that included Special Forces ground elements, SOF helicopters and AC-130 gunships, and TF GATOR [M-113 armored personnel carriers and soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 6th Infantry (Mechanized)]. Because of indications that H-hour had been compromised, the attack

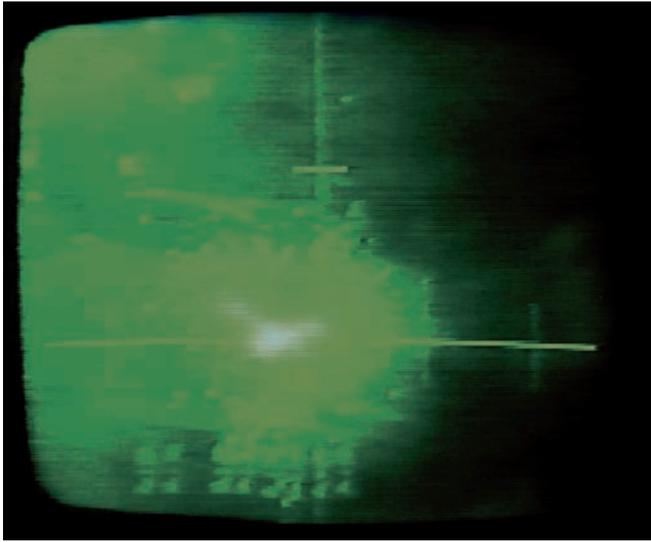
on the Comandancia began 15 minutes early, at 0045 on 20 December 1989.

TF GATOR was responsible for moving M-113s to blocking positions around the Comandancia and the prison, and then, in conjunction with the AC-130 and AH-6 gunships, attacking and leveling the PDF headquarters. Maneuvering to the blocking positions, they came under increasingly heavy sniper fire from PDF soldiers in buildings (including a 16-story high rise) on the west side of the Comandancia and prison complex. TF GATOR suffered some wounded and one killed while moving to their blocking positions. Near the target, TF GATOR encountered roadblocks; the M-113s squashed some roadblocks and went around others. The heavy enemy fire, coming from various directions, continued as the armored personnel carriers began their assault on the Comandancia.



M-113 armored personnel carriers supported SOF's attack on the Comandancia and Carcel Modelo.

At 0045, the revised H-hour, AC-130s and AH-6s started firing upon the Comandancia area. The PDF shot down the lead AH-6, but its crew managed a controlled crash in the Comandancia courtyard. They were in the wrong place at the wrong time as the AC-130s were pounding the Comandancia. By keeping their wits about them, they evaded both enemy



As captured on FLIR tape, an AC-130 pounds the Comandancia with 105mm cannon rounds.

and friendly fire for over two hours, made it to the back wall (where they captured a PDF soldier), climbed the wall, and linked up with a TF GATOR blocking position.

By now, buildings in the compound were ablaze, and the smoke obscured the area for the AC-130 firing. One TF GATOR element was fired upon by an AC-130, wounding 12 soldiers. A second AC-130 volley about an hour later wounded nine more. At first, the soldiers believed that they had been attacked by PDF mortars, but during the second volley, they realized it was coming from the AC-130 and called through the fire support network to end the shooting.

During the attack on the Comandancia, a rescue force had entered the prison and freed the American citizen. The helicopter carrying part of the rescue force and the former prisoner was shot down and crashed in an alley to the north of the prison. Everyone on board, except the former prisoner, was injured to one degree or another, but the rescue force reacted as they had trained, formed a defensive position, contacted a TF GATOR blocking element, and were evacuated by M-113s.

TF GATOR kept the Comandancia isolated during the day of 20 December and continued to receive sporadic sniper fire. That afternoon,

Company C, 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment arrived from Omar Torrijos International Airport to clear the Comandancia. All of these forces then engaged in follow-on missions.

Task Force Red

Task Force RED was the largest component of the Joint Special Operations Task Force. It consisted of the Army's 75th Ranger Regiment reinforced by contingents from the 4th Psychological Operations Group (PSYOP) and 96th Civil Affairs (CA) Battalion, and included Air Force Special Tactics teams and Marine Corps/Naval Gunfire liaison troops. Close air support aircraft included AH-6 attack helicopters from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, AC-130H gunships from the 1st Special Operations Wing, and from the conventional forces, AH-64 Apaches and F-117A fighter-bombers.

The task force was to perform two simultaneous airborne assaults at H-hour (0100 on 20 December 1989). One contingent would parachute onto the Omar Torrijos International Airport/Tocumen military airport complex, while another would drop onto Rio Hato airfield. Upon securing these objectives, TF RED would then link-up with conventional forces for follow-on combat operations.

The Assault on Torrijos Airport/Tocumen Airfield

Omar Torrijos International Airport was the main international airport serving Panama, and



After seizing the Torrijos Airport/Tocumen Airfield, Rangers cleared the Comandancia.

the adjoining Tocumen Military Airfield was the home base of the Panamanian Air Force. Capturing Torrijos/Tocumen was crucial to the JUST CAUSE campaign plan because it would enable the 82nd Airborne Division to come into the country, while preventing the 2nd PDF Company and the Panamanian Air Force from interfering with American operations. The Torrijos/Tocumen complex formed a target area approximately six kilometers long and two kilometers wide.

The TF RED Commander, Colonel William F. "Buck" Kernan, gave the mission of capturing Torrijos/Tocumen to 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, commanded by LTC Robert W. Wagner. The Rangers had a tight schedule to seize this complex—an 82nd Airborne Division brigade was supposed to jump onto the complex only 45 minutes after H-hour to start follow-on missions. First Battalion's three companies were augmented by Company C, 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, PSYOP teams, a Civil Affairs team, two AH-6 attack helicopters, Air Force Special Tactics teams (combat controllers and pararescuemen), and an AC-130H gunship.

LTC Wagner's plan called for the helicopters and AC-130H to attack the PDF positions at H-hour, just prior to the Ranger parachute assault. After parachuting in, Company A would seize the Panamanian Air Force compound and destroy the aircraft. Company C, reinforced with a platoon from Company B, would seize the 2nd PDF compound and destroy the PDF Company. The rest of Company B, reinforced with 12 gun jeeps and 10 motorcycles, would clear both runways and establish blocking positions to prevent other PDF forces from interfering with the battalion's operations. Finally, Company C, 3rd Battalion would clear the smaller buildings near the Torrijos terminal, isolate the terminal building, and then enter the terminal building and destroy PDF resistance there.

Prior to the attack, three combat controllers and one pararescueman placed navigation beacons near the end of the runway. The attack began at 0100, with the AC-130H and AH-6s opening fire on PDF positions on the airfield. The AH-6s eliminated three targets while the AC-130H fired on the 2nd Rifle Company's barracks and headquarters building. It should be



Rangers preparing for airborne assault.

remembered that TF GATOR and other units had attacked the Comandancia in Panama City 15 minutes early, at 0045, which meant the PDF at Torrijos/Tocumen knew of the invasion prior to the Rangers' airdrop. At 0103, the first jumpers left their aircraft.

Company A received only sporadic fire and secured all of its objectives within two hours after capturing virtually the entire Panamanian Air Force on the ground. The company captured about 20 Panamanian Air Force personnel hiding in one of the hangars. Company B also landed on target and quickly secured its blocking positions. Like Company A, it received only sporadic enemy fire and took some prisoners. The biggest problem Company B had was with Panamanian vehicles ignoring its warning signs and barricades and trying to run its blocking positions. Generally these vehicles turned around and fled after the Rangers fired warning shots, but one vehicle had to be disabled by shooting out its tires. One of the vehicles that fled from warning shots contained Manuel Noriega, who had been visiting the Cereme Military Recreation Center. Company C assaulted the barracks of the PDF's 2nd Company and received only ineffective enemy fire; they quickly cleared the area, killing one PDF soldier who had refused to surrender.

Company C, 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment was to secure the international air terminal, and this proved to be the only portion of the assault on Torrijos/Tocumen that was significantly more difficult than expected. First, one-

fourth of the company landed in ten-foot tall cunna grass to the west of the runway and took two hours to join the main body. The depleted Company C had no trouble securing its objectives outside the terminal building, however, and the troops were impressed with how completely the AH-6s had destroyed the guard house outside the terminal and killed the two guards there. The 3rd platoon seized the fire station on the north side of the terminal and then received fire from the second floor of the terminal.

These Rangers entered the terminal from the north, where they encountered two surprises. First, two civilian flights had arrived just prior to H-hour, and about 400 civilians were in the terminal. The other surprise was that the PDF troops defended the terminal more determinedly than anywhere else in the Torrijos/Tocumen complex.

When two Rangers searched one of the airport's huge men's rooms on the second floor, two PDF soldiers jumped out of a stall and shot one of the Rangers several times with a pistol. The other Ranger returned fire and, with the assistance of two more Rangers, dragged his wounded buddy out of the men's room. In the process, the Ranger pulling the wounded man was himself shot twice in the back of the head, but his kevlar helmet stopped both rounds. From outside the men's room door, the unhurt Rangers threw in grenades, but the stalls protected the PDF soldiers. The Rangers then re-entered the



American soldiers the morning after seizing Torrijos/Tocumen.

men's room and waited for the PDF to show themselves. The Rangers got the better of the ensuing hand-to-hand struggle. One of the PDF soldiers was killed in the men's room while the other was knocked out of the window; he fell two stories and almost landed on a Ranger patrolling outside. When the PDF soldier tried to draw his pistol, the Ranger killed him.

Meanwhile, 2nd Platoon entered the terminal from the south and started clearing the building, with one squad on each of the three main floors. Enemy soldiers opened fire on the third floor, but the Rangers' counterattack drove them from the terminal, and they cleared the rest of the third floor without incident.

The situation on the first floor was more difficult; about ten PDF troopers had taken two American girls hostage. When their escape route led them right into the Ranger security detail stationed outside the terminal, they fled back inside, where 2nd Platoon Rangers cornered them after several exchanges of fire. At 0500, after a tense two-and-a-half-hour standoff, the Rangers announced they were going to come in shooting. Rather than face an all-out assault, the holdouts then released their hostages and surrendered.

Later that morning, at about 1100, the 82nd Airborne Division assumed operational control of 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment and began operations out of Torrijos/Tocumen. Likewise, Company C, 3rd Battalion was put



AC-130H Spectre crewmember loading a 105mm round.

under the operational control of TF BAYONET to clear La Comandancia at 1500 on 20 December. The Rangers' extensive training in airfield seizure and building clearing, along with their detailed mission plan, were key factors in their successful seizure of the Torrijos/Tocumen complex with minimal collateral damage and casualties.

The Attack on Rio Hato Airfield

The Panamanian military base near the small village of Rio Hato was located 65 miles west of Panama City. It contained a large airfield and was home to two PDF companies: the 6th Rifle Company (Mechanized), equipped with 19 armored cars, and the 7th Rifle Company, an elite counterinsurgency force known to be loyal to Noriega. In addition, the base housed a PDF engineer platoon and PDF training schools. TF RED's mission was to destroy PDF forces and seize the airfield for follow on missions. The total number of PDF forces was estimated to exceed 500 men; these units, particularly the 7th Rifle Company, were expected to offer stiff opposition to the TF RED forces.

The Rio Hato military base ranged along the coastline of the Gulf of Panama, with the airfield runway nearly perpendicular to the shoreline. The barracks for the 6th and 7th Companies were on the runway's southwest side. There were a number of beach houses along a dirt lane to the south of the runway; Manuel Noriega owned (and occasionally used) one of them. To the west of the runway, and above the 6th and 7th Companies' barracks, was the PDF school complex. The Pan-American Highway bisected the airfield.

The TF RED Commander, Colonel Kernan, led the forces assaulting Rio Hato, which included the 2nd Ranger Battalion, the 3rd Ranger Battalion (minus one company, used in the Torrijos/Tocumen assault), and elements of the 4th Psychological Operations Group, Civil Affairs assets, Air Force Special Tactics teams, and Marine Corps Air/Naval Gunfire liaison troops. Aerial fire support was provided by two F-117A fighter-bombers, two AH-64 and four AH-6 helicopters, and one AC-130H gunship. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions split the responsibility for taking and holding ground: the 2nd was to parachute into the area along the southern edge

of the runway and around the PDF barracks and engage the enemy, while the 3rd was to jump farther north, securing the area from counterattacks and clearing the runway.

Thirteen C-130 transports were cross-loaded with Rangers from both battalions. The aircraft were to approach from the south, with the 2nd Battalion soldiers parachuting first and the 3rd Battalion troops jumping second. The 2nd Battalion's Company A would assault and clear the PDF school complex. Company B, 2nd Battalion would assault the 7th Company from the east, and if it was still effective after destroying that unit (planners had anticipated 30 percent casualties), it would push westward and clear the 6th Company area. If Company B suffered excessive casualties, Company C would take over the assault. If Company B did not need reinforcement, then Company C would seize Noriega's beach house.

Though the Rangers wanted the F-117As to hit the PDF barracks, the bombing targets had been changed to an area near the barracks in the hope of frightening, rather than killing, the PDF. The bombs landed on schedule, at H-hour, although one missed its target and exploded harmlessly near the beach. The AH-6s and AC-130H aircraft immediately followed with attacks on their designated targets. Of particular importance, the AC-130H destroyed two anti-aircraft positions before the Rangers jumped.

In spite of the three minute air attack, the Rangers jumped into effective anti-aircraft machine-gun fire. Eleven of the aircraft carrying Rangers were hit, and one Ranger was hit by anti-aircraft fire while still in the aircraft. The jump, however, went on as scheduled at 0103. Those Rangers who had jumped into Grenada in 1983 for Operation URGENT FURY judged the enemy fire to have been heavier at Rio Hato.

Once on the ground, the 2nd Battalion Rangers saw a lot of tracers, but were able to return fire and assemble without too much trouble. The PDF troops apparently had left their barracks upon learning that the U.S. troops were coming and had either set up defenses on and around the airfield, or fled. As planned, Company A assembled before the other units and moved up to clear the school complex.

As Company A was advancing on the school complex, Company B began its assault on the

7th Company area. After using demolition charges to blow holes in the wall surrounding the compound, Company B moved in and set about clearing each building, room by room. Having cleared the 7th's area without serious losses, Company B continued to push west and had begun clearing the 6th Company area by dawn on 21 December. Company B's success freed Company C to assault Noriega's beach house area two hours after H-hour, and the Rangers cleared the house by morning.

Company B finished clearing the 6th Company barracks area that morning as well and, with all of its initial assault objectives secured, continued to advance west into the small village inhabited by the families of the PDF troops. The Rangers detained all the adult males found there for questioning, assuming the vast majority were PDF troops in hiding.

The 3rd Battalion Rangers, who were loaded first in each of the 13 C-130s, jumped after the 2nd Battalion. By the time they jumped into the warm, humid night, the PDF knew they were coming. The 3rd's airborne assault included heavy "drops" of four jeeps and six motorcycles. Company A's motorcycles were to race north along the runway and screen the Americans from possible counterattacks, while the Company B jeep teams were to establish blocking positions and watch for possible PDF activities.

When the Company A Rangers jumped, they scattered from south of the Pan American Highway to well north of it. This company's primary mission was to neutralize the .50 caliber machine gun positioned on the concrete and stone entryway leading to the Rio Hato airfield. By happenstance, the company's executive officer and a few other Rangers landed within 30 feet of the entryway; they killed the PDF gunner as he was firing at the other Rangers parachuting to the ground and took possession of the fortified position.

Other Company A elements had begun to clear the NCO academy headquarters and classroom areas. The Rangers encountered more PDF soldiers than expected, and in the words of LTC Joseph Hunt, 3rd battalion commander, these PDF soldiers "gave them a good run for their money for about 30 minutes." As the Rangers aggressively cleared the NCO academy



Rangers captured a .50 caliber machine gun guarding the stone entryway to Rio Hato.

buildings, the Panamanian soldiers abandoned their resistance and fled from the advancing Rangers. Company A Rangers did capture about 167 cadets. Without their superior fire discipline and training, the Rangers could have easily attacked these cadets before learning that they were unarmed, frightened, and eager to surrender. Within an hour of H-hour, Company A had secured its objectives.

Company B, 3rd Battalion severed the Pan American Highway on the east side of the airfield. There was more traffic on the Pan American Highway than expected, and the blocking element fired warning shots at a few vehicles to force them to turn around. The largest Company B element concentrated on clearing the runway south of the highway so that aircraft could begin landing, and this proved more time-consuming than anticipated. The Rangers quickly removed such obstacles as barrels, barbed wire, and trucks, but needed extra time to pick up the hundreds of parachutes left behind by the airborne assault. Company B Rangers also took control of the air traffic control tower. Approximately 1.5 hours into the operation, the Rangers finished clearing the runway, and C-130s began landing with more people and additional supplies.

The Rangers who were assigned to end PDF resistance north of the Pan American Highway encountered a surprising amount of PDF opposition. Here, as night turned to dawn, some PDF soldiers conducted a deliberate withdrawal,

fighting from building to building through a small built-up area. A Ranger element engaged the PDF and called for fire support from two AH-6 helicopter gunships. The gunships fired on the buildings, but unbeknownst to the pilots, an element of Rangers moved into a tree line to flank the PDF. As the gunships came around for a second pass, one pilot saw movement in the trees and, believing they were PDF soldiers, fired upon the Rangers, killing two and wounding four. The movement of the Rangers into the tree line had not been radioed to the AH-6 pilots.



Rangers used this type of jeep at Rio Hato.

Having secured the military complex on 20 December, the Rangers conducted follow-on missions out of Rio Hato for the next three days. At 2200 on 20 December, Company A, 2nd Battalion left Rio Hato aboard special operations helicopters and, at 0230 on the 21st, took over security for the American Embassy in Panama City. That same day, the Rangers participated in one of the early surrender missions—what became known as the “Ma Bell” Campaign—when COL Kernan brought the PDF leaders of the Penonome Prison and 6th Military Zone Headquarters to Rio Hato to discuss their forces’ surrender. Later, with an AC-130H circling overhead, the 3rd Battalion’s Company A accepted the surrender of the town’s garrison; then, the Rangers demonstrated a “dry run” assault on the prison, showing the Panamanians what would have happened to them if they had resisted. Word of this display of force and surrender quickly spread throughout the remaining

cuartels in the countryside. After relocating to Howard AFB, the Rangers, in conjunction with Special Forces soldiers, conducted the “Ma Bell” surrender of David, a major city in western Panama.

The Rangers also performed stability operations in areas around Panama City. In response to civil disturbances and continued PDF and Dignity Battalion (Noriega’s paramilitary supporters) activities, the 2nd Battalion, 75th Rangers set up operations in Area of Operation (AO) Diaz, an area containing the towns of Alcalde Diaz and Las Cumbres, on 27 December. With the assistance of PSYOP forces, they created a visible American presence by establishing checkpoints and blocking positions, and running “saturation” patrols and night ambushes. While in AO Diaz, the Rangers rounded up former PDF and Dignity Battalion members and seized several caches of weapons. The American presence of Rangers, PSYOP, and Civil Affairs soldiers stabilized the area and allowed the new government to reestablish control.

The Rangers came out of Panama with a number of lessons learned. The tactical plan was well prepared, coordinated, and rehearsed, enabling the successful completion of their missions. JUST CAUSE validated the Rangers’ mission essential procedures and techniques, and their responsiveness to contingencies. Lessons learned included recognizing the importance of intelligence gathering and management; planning logistical support for follow-on missions; emphasizing training and equipping the regiment for military operations in urban areas; and enhancing the regiment’s interaction with conventional and joint forces through the use of liaison elements.

Task Force WHITE

On 19 December 1989, TF WHITE, the NSW component of the JSOTF, established operations at Rodman Naval Station on the west side of the Panama Canal. The task force consisted of five SEAL platoons, three patrol boats, four riverine patrol boats, and two light patrol boats (22-foot Boston Whalers), which were divided among four task units. Each task unit had its own H-hour mission: Task Unit (TU) Papa, the largest unit, was to deny use of the Paitilla Airfield; TU Whiskey was to destroy a Panamanian patrol

boat in Balboa Harbor; TU Charlie and TU Foxtrot were charged with securing, respectively, the Atlantic and Pacific entrances to the Panama Canal.

The Paitilla Airfield assault force, TU Papa, had a 62-man ground force comprised of three SEAL platoons (Bravo, Delta, and Golf platoons), Air Force combat controllers to perform liaison with an AC-130H gunship, and a command, control, communications, and mortar element. A 26-man support team included surveillance forces, a signals intelligence team, a psychological operations team, and boat crews.

At 1930 on 19 December, 15 combat rubber raiding craft, carrying the ground force, launched from the Howard AFB beach, eight miles from Paitilla, while two patrol boats left from Rodman Naval Station. At 2330, with the rubber boats waiting off the airfield, two SEALs swam ashore to reconnoiter the landing site and mark the beach with a strobe light.

At 0045 on the 20th, coming ashore near the end of the runway, the ground force heard firing and explosions from the attack on the Comandancia. The element of surprise had been lost. The SEALs hurried up the trail, through a hole in the security fence, and formed into platoons near the southern end of the runway. Learning of a report that Noriega was about to arrive in a small plane, Delta platoon set an ambush halfway up the runway for a few minutes, before advancing toward the tower. The other two platoons, Golf and Bravo, had moved up the grass apron on the west side of the runway.

By 0105, the SEALs were in front of the three northernmost hangars. Panamanians guarded the middle hangar, which housed Noriega's jet, and the hangar to the north. Golf platoon was in the lead, with one of its squads moving toward the northern edge of the tarmac. After an exchange of demands between the Americans and guards, a SEAL opened fire on a PDF guard who had assumed a firing position. A short but fierce firefight ensued, and within a matter of a minute or two, eight SEALs were wound-

ed, five seriously. The Golf platoon commander called for assistance on his radio, reporting heavy casualties. The ground force commander ordered other platoons to reinforce these SEALs. Two SEAL reinforcements were wounded as they maneuvered to engage the PDF in the hangars. The combination of SEAL fire discipline and superior firepower soon took effect, however, and after three firefights, the remaining PDF defenders withdrew at about 0117.

The SEALs reported the airfield was secure at 0146, and a MEDEVAC helicopter finally arrived at 0205 to recover the wounded. By 0315, the SEALs had set up a more defensible perimeter on the southeast side of the airfield. The reaction platoon from Rodman arrived a few minutes later. An AC-130H gunship, unable to establish reliable communications with the ground force, was replaced by an AC-130A at 0324. At dawn a patrol conducted a reconnaissance of the hangars, while other SEALs dragged airplanes onto the runway to block its use. The relief force did not arrive until 1400 on the 21st, when five CH-47 helicopters delivered a Ranger company. The SEALs left aboard the same helicopters. A planned 5-hour mission had turned into a 37-hour operation. Four SEALs had died and eight others were wounded.

Subsequent to their operations at Paitilla Airfield, TU Papa conducted several search and seizure missions looking for arms caches and Noriega followers. The unit was disbanded on 1 January 1990, and members returned to the United States the next day.



Manuel Noriega's disabled jet.

TU Whiskey's H-hour mission was to destroy the Panamanian patrol boat docked in Balboa Harbor by having SEALs place demolition charges on its hull. Around 2300 on 19 December, two combat rubber raider craft left Rodman Naval Station, cut across the canal, passing vessels, and tied up in a mangrove stand near the docks. The first craft took two SEALs closer to the pier, where they slipped overboard for the swim to the Panamanian patrol boat, *Presidente Poras*. The next swim pair entered the canal five minutes later. The SEALs used the Draeger underwater breathing apparatus which left no trail of air bubbles. Reaching the boat, the SEALs attached haversacks of explosives to the propeller shafts, set the detonators, and swam to their extraction point. At 0100, an explosion ripped a hole in the *Presidente Poras*, and it sank. As the SEALs swam, they passed near a firefight between American and Panamanian forces; despite the hazards, the SEALs returned safely. This mission marked the first successful combat swimmer demolition attack by U.S. forces.

Following the Balboa Harbor mission, TU Whiskey participated in the seizure of Noriega's yacht on 20 December and the capture of the Balboa Yacht Club the next day. On 23 December, TU Whiskey members helped repel PDF forces trying to board the merchant ship *Emanuel B* in the Panama Canal. Its last mission called for it to seize Noriega's beach house on Culebra Island on 25 December. TU Whiskey redeployed back to the States on 2 January 1990.

TU Charlie, assigned to secure the Caribbean side of the Panama Canal, worked closely with TF Atlantic. The task unit had eight SEALs, twelve soldiers, two riverine patrol boats, and two Army mechanized landing craft. On the night of the invasion, TU Charlie blocked all ships from entering the Canal from the Caribbean side and patrolled the shipping channel near Colon, preventing the PDF from commandeering boats and protecting the canal from sabotage.

After conducting patrols all night, at 0930 on 20 December, TU Charlie received a report that about 30 PDF members had boarded a German merchant ship, *Asian Senator*, in Cristobal. Once at the pier, the SEALs saw men in civilian

clothes running down the *Asian Senator's* brow and other men on the ship throwing weapons onto the pier for them. One of the mechanized landing craft and the two riverine patrol boats fired at the brow. The Panamanians on the ship, shaken by this firepower, surrendered. The SEALs came under fire as they searched the PDF prisoners. As the volume of fire grew, the SEALs evacuated the prisoners to their boats. During subsequent patrols of the harbor and coastline, TU Charlie occasionally exchanged fire with PDF on the shore. TU Charlie later detained and searched a Colombian vessel, which yielded a cargo of looted electronic equipment, but no drugs or PDF. On Christmas Eve, the SEALs searched 31 boats moored in the Panama Canal Yacht Club. TU Charlie was deactivated on 26 December.

TU Foxtrot, the fourth task unit, conducted maritime patrols along the Pacific Ocean approaches to the Panama Canal. At H-hour, SEALs in three patrol boats guarded the waters around Howard AFB, and two riverine patrol boats covered the approaches to the Bridge of the Americas. SEALs in a cayuga canoe searched the small islands off Howard AFB for infiltrators. For the remainder of the night, the patrol boats searched and detained Panamanian fishing and pleasure boats found on the local waters.

On 21 December, the SEALs located and searched *Passe Porte Tout* and *Macho de Monde*, two of Noriega's sport yachts, capturing 18 Panamanians and large quantities of small arms and ammunition. TU Foxtrot continued its maritime interdiction operations, and beginning on 26 December, it guarded the waters adjacent to the Papal Nunciature, the last refuge of Noriega. No incidents took place during this mission, and TU Foxtrot was disestablished on 2 January 1990.

NSW forces successfully executed all their missions during Operation JUST CAUSE. Success did not come easily, as four SEALs died and eight more were wounded during the fight for Paitilla Airfield, but TF WHITE accomplished its other missions without casualties. These operations underscored the value of forward-basing these units.

Task Force BLACK

TF BLACK was activated 18 December 1989 under the command of Colonel Robert C. “Jake” Jacobelly, who also served as commander of Special Operations Command South (SOC-SOUTH). Before H-hour, SOCSOUTH personnel and the headquarters unit of 3rd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) [SFG (A)] moved to Albrook Air Force Base and together served as the TF BLACK headquarters and staff.

The 3rd Battalion, 7th SFG (A), commanded by LTC Roy R. Trumbull, formed the core of TF BLACK and was reinforced by Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th SFG (A) from Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. TF BLACK had use of five MH-60 helicopters from the 617th Special Operations Aviation Detachment and two UH-60 helicopters from the 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment. Air Force AC-130s from the 1st Special Operations Wing were available to provide fire support.

H-hour Missions

At H-hour, TF BLACK was to perform two reconnaissance and surveillance missions. The first, conducted by a Special Forces team from Company B, 3rd Battalion, 7th SFG (A), was to observe the PDF’s Battalion 2000 at Fort Cimarron. By the time the team was in place, however, Battalion 2000 had already left the fort. The second mission involved watching the 1st PDF Company at Tinajitas. These Special Forces did not see or hear anything except for two mortar rounds being fired early in the morning.

Another reconnaissance mission was changed to direct action: seize and deny use of the Pacora River Bridge. The TF BLACK element, commanded by Major Kevin M. Higgins, consisted of 24 men from Company A, 3rd Battalion, 7th SFG (A), and 3 helicopters. The bridge was the best place to prevent PDF Battalion 2000 from moving out of Fort Cimarron to Panama City. At ten minutes after midnight, small arms fire broke out at Albrook AFB while the troops were preparing to

load onto their helicopters. Higgins and his troops dashed to the waiting aircraft and departed under fire.

As the helicopters neared the bridge, the lead helicopter pilot spotted a column of six PDF vehicles approaching. It was now 0045, the new H-hour, and the mission had become a race between the SF troops and the PDF convoy to see who would take the bridge first.

After the helicopters landed, Major Higgins yelled orders to his men to move up the steep slope and establish the ambush position by the road, but his men had already seized the initiative. The first man on the road looked straight into the headlights of the convoy’s lead vehicle (which was already on the bridge) and fired a light anti-tank weapon. He missed, but the next two Special Forces soldiers did not. Then Special Forces gunners armed with squad automatic weapons (SAWs) opened up on the column with automatic weapons fire, and M203 gunners started firing grenades into the column.

With the column halted, the Air Force Combat Controller contacted an AC-130 and directed fire onto the PDF column. The AC-130 responded with devastating fire, forcing the PDF soldiers out of the trucks, and this circling aircraft provided vital intelligence on enemy movements. A second AC-130 was called in, providing additional firepower and surveillance, and the Special Operations Forces successfully repelled all PDF attempts to cross the bridge or the river.



Pacora River Bridge.

At daybreak, the TF BLACK quick reaction force arrived to reinforce Higgins' element. Major Higgins and his troops controlled the bridge while the quick reaction force under Major Gilberto Perez cleared the east side of the river. They captured 17 PDF members. The TF BLACK elements returned to Albrook AFB that evening.

The fourth TF BLACK H-hour mission was to take Panamanian TV Channel 2 off the air. The mission was given to Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) 785, commanded by Captain John M. Custer and augmented by technical experts. At 0050 on 20 December, the eighteen-man team fast roped from two helicopters near the TV broadcasting complex in the mountains northeast of Panama City. The PDF guards fled, the team took control of the complex, and the technical experts disabled the station. By 1500, the team had returned to base.

Post H-hour Missions

The first three missions after H-hour focused on stopping pro-Noriega radio broadcasts. After the invasion began, Radio Nacional's AM and FM stations had begun playing a recording of Manuel Noriega exhorting his followers to fight the Americans. Company C, 3rd Battalion, 7th SFG (A), commanded by Major David E. McCracken, got the mission to silence the radio broadcasts. Thirty-three Company C soldiers deployed in three helicopters and arrived at the Controlaria building, the location of the transmitter and antenna, at 1850 on 20 December.

The security element controlled traffic into and out of the target area. The assault teams fast roped onto the roof. One element blew up the electronic junction boxes controlling the antenna, and the rest of the assault force made its way to the 7th floor where they blew the AM station off the air. The assault teams could not find the FM transmitters.

As soon as the force returned to Albrook AFB, they were briefed on their next target: the FM transmission antenna located on the outskirts of town. Major McCracken and his 19 men launched about 2015, and though conducted after dark with very little planning time, the mission went smoothly. By 2045, the Company C element had destroyed the FM antenna, silencing Radio Nacional.

On 21 December, ODA 785 went back to the TV transmission tower it had disabled the day before and replaced its damaged components. About this time, pro-Noriega forces began intermittent radio broadcasts from this area. On 24 December, the rest of Company B, 3rd Battalion, 7th SFG (A) arrived to reinforce their teammates and to search for the phantom radio station. The large number of Spanish speakers in the company and their long experience in Panama helped them to gain the trust of the locals. On the 25th, local civilians led them to a cache site containing weapons, ammunition, and medical supplies. Following up on information received from Panamanians, a patrol found the PDF's radio transmission site and destroyed it on 29 December.

“Ma Bell” Missions

During the initial invasion, U.S. forces had captured Panama City, its airport, the areas near the Panama Canal, and Rio Hato, but in the countryside the PDF still had nominal control. PDF forces were scattered throughout the countryside in small garrisons (“cuartels”); no one knew what these PDF forces would do, as each cuartel was on its own. The Americans could have easily crushed these posts, but this would have produced many casualties, destroyed Panamanian villages, and alienated the populace. The U.S. instead developed a strategy of capitulation missions, with American forces contacting the PDF enclaves and offering them the opportunity to surrender before being attacked. Complicating the situation, PDF officers on the “most wanted” list commanded some of the major cuartels.

The ideal capitulation scenario was for the PDF to remain in position and then surrender to the U.S. forces as they spread throughout the countryside. Once the PDF had surrendered, the Americans would separate PDF members into criminals and non-criminals. TF BLACK played a critical role in this capitulation effort, one of its most significant contributions to the success of Operation JUST CAUSE.

Capitulation missions had not been included in the plans for Operation JUST CAUSE, but from 22-31 December, they dominated TF BLACK's activities. The typical method used was to attach a small Special Forces element



SOF's language skills helped to stabilize the civilian populace and gather intelligence.

(with Spanish speakers) to a larger force (either the 7th Infantry Division or the 75th Ranger Regiment) to coordinate the PDF capitulation. The Special Forces commander would call the cuartel commander on the telephone and tell him to put all of his weapons in the arms room, line up all of his men on the parade field, and surrender to the U.S. forces that would arrive shortly. Because of the heavy reliance on telephones, these missions were nicknamed “Ma Bell” operations.

During this ten day period, TF BLACK elements were instrumental in the surrender of 14 cuartels, almost 2,000 troops, and over 6,000 weapons without a single U.S. casualty. Several high-ranking cronies of Manuel Noriega who were on the “most wanted” list were also captured in Ma Bell operations.

After each cuartel capitulated, the task of rebuilding the town began. TF BLACK generally left small Special Forces elements in each town to support the rebuilding process and assist the U.S. conventional forces. The Special Forces soldiers’ language skills, cultural awareness, and expertise in low intensity conflict proved invaluable in leading U.S. patrols, coordinating with local officials, gathering information on weapons caches, reestablishing Panamanian police forces, and performing a myriad of other tasks that sped the process of transforming Panama into a more democratic nation. These operations were a textbook example of how Special Forces should be used in low intensity conflict.

In the last days of December 1989 and the first days of January 1990, TF BLACK continued its transition from the combat missions of Operation JUST CAUSE to the stabilization missions of Operation PROMOTE LIBERTY. In order to accomplish its new missions, the Task Force was reinforced by the 2nd Battalion, 7th SFG (A), a NSW unit, and an Air Force Special Operations Detachment. With the assignment of SOF units from the Air Force and Navy, TF BLACK became Joint Task Force BLACK.

The commander and staff from 7th SFG (A) also arrived to take command of the Army Special Operations Forces in Panama as a subordinate of the JTF BLACK commander. The additional Army Special Forces battalion gave JTF BLACK enough personnel to conduct stabilization operations throughout Panama. The Air Force Special Operations assets gave JTF BLACK the transportation to get troops into remote locations and support them once they were out there. The NSW unit conducted patrols along the coast and rivers, investigated possible weapons cache sites, and assisted the Panamanians in reestablishing their maritime security force.

Noriega’s Capture

The invasion culminated with Manuel Noriega’s apprehension. Although the JSOTF had missed capturing him at H-hour on 20 December, SOF targeted his known associates and hiding places in Panama; with few places to hide, Noriega sought refuge at the Papal Nunciature on 24 December. JSOTF forces surrounded and isolated the Nunciature and, in conjunction with U.S. State Department and Vatican diplomats, began to negotiate Noriega’s surrender. Over the next ten days, JSOTF units kept watch over the Nunciature and maintained order over the large crowds gathering nearby. On the evening of 3 January, shortly after 10,000 anti-Noriega demonstrators had ended a rally outside the Nunciature, the former Panamanian dictator walked out and surrendered to the JSOTF forces.



Noriega's Surrender: After his apprehension, SOF remanded the former dictator into the custody of U.S. Marshals.

JUST CAUSE: SOF Proves Its Worth

On 16 January 1990, Operation JUST CAUSE officially ended, and JTF BLACK ceased to exist. Some JTF BLACK forces returned to the continental United States or to the control of U.S. Southern Command. The rest remained under the control of JTF BLACK headquarters, renamed Joint Special Operations Task Force Panama, and continued PROMOTE LIBERTY operations. Throughout Panama, SOF continued the difficult and delicate task of restoring

peace, security, and democratic government to Panama one village at a time. JUST CAUSE demonstrated just how far SOF had come since Desert One: not only with regard to internal enhancements to SOF capabilities and command and control structures, but also with regard to the manifest close integration of SOF and conventional forces. SOF were subordinate to the Joint Task Force South, so all SOF plans and operations complemented the theater campaign plan. JUST CAUSE clearly validated how SOF were trained, equipped, and organized. This operation showcased joint SOF capabilities, the high training standards for operators and staffs alike, their quality and professionalism and the value of interoperability procedures. PROMOTE LIBERTY planning, and post-conflict strategy in general, still needed work. In particular, there were problems with integrating nation-building plans into the campaign plan, incorporating CA and PSYOP planning with operational planning, and mobilizing crucial Reserve Component CA and PSYOP forces.



SINTONIZA A A.M. 1160

Ed. V

9 de Enero, 1990

NORIEGA EN MIAMI PARA SER PROCESADO

MIAMI (AP) El depuesto dictador panameño M.A.N. arribó a los EE.UU. donde enfrentará cargos por narcotráfico luego de entregarse a las tropas estadounidenses que rodeaban la Embajada del Vaticano, donde buscó santuario la pasada nochebuena.

Noriega, quien antagonizó a dos presidentes de los EE.UU. hasta que fue depuesto el 20 de diciembre, fue llevado a la base de la Fuerza Aérea Homestead, 25 millas al sur de Miami. Noriega, que dominó como líder militar desde 1983, se declaró inocente de los cargos que lo acusan de haber utilizado su posición oficial para lucrarse brindándole protección al notorio Cartel de Medellín.

En Washington, el Presidente Bush expresó que Noriega se entregó voluntariamente a las autoridades estadounidenses y con el "pleno consentimiento" del gobierno panameño, y añadió en su pronunciamiento a la nación que estaba comprometido a brindarle a Noriega un juicio justo.

Los EE.UU. acordaron tres condiciones exigidas por Noriega: que le sería permitido realizar llamadas telefónicas, que su decisión sería mantenida en secreto hasta el momento del arresto, y que le sería permitido usar su uniforme. Oficiales de la administración acotaron que los EE.UU. también le garantizó a Noriega que no sería juzgado bajo la nueva ley federal que permite la aplicación de la pena de muerte para un "zar de droga". Las fuentes mencionaron que los EE.UU. no trataron directamente con Noriega. Las garantías le fueron notificadas por los oficiales del Vaticano.



NUMERO PRONTUARIO 41586

Psychological Operations Forces supported JUST CAUSE by disseminating newspapers, leaflets, and radio/TV broadcasts.

Iraq **Operation DESERT SHIELD/ DESERT STORM** **1990-1991**

Iraq invaded Kuwait a few hours before dawn on 2 August 1990, easily overran Kuwaiti forces, and massed along the Saudi Arabian border. While the Saudi forces established a thin defensive cordon along the border, the United States deployed air and ground forces to the Arabian Peninsula to deter further Iraqi aggression. The United States Central Command (CENTCOM) had military responsibility for this area and prepared to reinforce the Saudi Arabian forces. Its special operations component, Special Operations Command, Central (SOCCENT), likewise prepared to deploy and conduct combat search and rescue operations and other assigned missions.

SOCCENT personnel deployed to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on 10 August 1990 and moved to King Fahd International Airport (KFIA) on 17 August. Its naval element, the Naval Special Warfare Task Group (NSWTG), arrived in Saudi Arabia on 10 August 1990 and received its second increment of personnel on 9 September 1990. Meanwhile, SOCCENT's Air Force element, AFSOCCENT, established its headquarters at KFIA on 17 August 1990. In late August, the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) [5th SFG (A)] deployed two battalions to King Khalid Military City (KKMC) and retained the third at KFIA. Army aviation assets of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment also deployed to KKMC.

Coalition Warfare

Coalition warfare (warfighting with forces from more than one nation) was arguably the most important of all the SOCCENT missions. With Saudi concurrence, SOCCENT's first coalition warfare mission was given to NSWTG elements, which deployed to the Kuwait/Saudi Arabian border on 19 August 1990 to provide close air support and to serve as "trip wires" in case of an Iraqi invasion. The 5th SFG (A) began replacing the SEALs on 5 September 1990, and provided early warning, coalition warfare training, and communications for close air support.

The number and type of coalition warfare missions grew steadily throughout DESERT

SHIELD and into the early part of DESERT STORM. The Saudis requested more Special Forces teams to train them on the M-60A3 tank, artillery, vehicle maintenance, and in other technical areas. Other allied forces, as they deployed to the Arabian Peninsula, wanted Special Forces to provide close air support and liaison with friendly forces. These increasing requirements for coalition warfare soon absorbed much of the 5th SFG (A).



Coalition Warfare: Arab forces training with U.S. Special Forces.

SOF also trained Saudi naval forces in special warfare. Some Saudis had completed the BUD/S (Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL) training course in Coronado, California, and their commander had worked with SEALs during Operation EARNEST WILL. Instruction, which included combat swimming and leadership training, produced three Saudi SEAL teams. Other NSWTG personnel trained the Saudi high-speed boat operators as well as conventional Saudi naval forces.

Another NSWTG mission was to reconstitute the Kuwaiti navy. Only two gunboats (*Al Sanbouk* and *Istiglal*), some patrol craft, and a motorized coast guard barge (*Sawahil*) had escaped the Iraqis. In September, the NSWTG began training Kuwaiti naval personnel; they used the *Sawahil* to train 35 Kuwaiti sailors in naval engineering, seamanship, and small weapons. To instruct the Kuwaitis in surface warfare, the NSWTG borrowed rated experts from the conventional USN. Beginning in

November, the *Sawahil* and its crew conducted joint training with NSWTG small boats and took part in a combat search and rescue exercise with USS *Nicholas*. During DESERT STORM, the *Sawahil* provided an operational platform for coalition forces, including NSWTG Special Boat Unit detachments, Kuwaiti patrol boats, and SEALs.

Coalition warfare training continued until the eve of the ground war. The Arab forces in the east and north faced formidable military obstacles along their projected areas of advance, including multiple Iraqi minefields, "fire trenches," and above-ground pipelines. A Special Forces team worked with a Saudi engineer battalion to plan for clearing invasion lanes through two Iraqi minefields and over an above-ground pipeline inside Kuwait. On 22 February, the Saudi engineers and U.S. Special Forces easily cleared six lanes because the Iraqis, battered for over a month by allied air power, failed to cover the minefields with artillery fire. In the north, other SF teams worked with the Saudis and the Egyptians to create breaches in the minefields for the passage of their forces. On 25 February, the Egyptians drove into Kuwait against sporadic resistance. The Egyptian corps that the 5th SFG (A) teams supported served as the hinge for CENTCOM's huge turning movement. By the night of 26 February, the Egyptians and their SF advisors had reached their objectives near Kuwait City.

The 28 February cease fire marked the end of most SOCCENT coalition warfare activities. It had been a huge effort, requiring an entire Special Forces Group, SEALs, Special Boat Units, and support elements. SF teams accompanied 109 allied units, from battalion to corps, providing close air support and liaison between forces. SOF eventually trained some 30,000 coalition troops in 44 subject areas.

Kuwaiti Reconstitution and Unconventional Warfare

American Special Forces units helped to reconstitute a number of Kuwaiti military forces, both conventional and unconventional. As a result of meetings between the SOCCENT commander, Colonel Jesse Johnson, and the Kuwaiti Armed Forces Chief of Staff, soldiers

from the 5th SFG (A) began training Kuwaiti soldiers in mid-September at KKMC. The initial mission was to form a Kuwaiti SF battalion and a commando brigade, but the training went so well that the mission grew to include four additional Kuwaiti infantry brigades. Eventually, SOF units trained a total of 6,357 Kuwaitis, who formed an SF battalion, a commando brigade, and the Al-Khulud, Al-Haq, Fatah, and Badr infantry brigades. The instruction included weapons training, tactics, staff procedures, close air support, anti-armor operations, and nuclear, chemical and biological defense.

Colonel Johnson also formed a Special Planning Group to conduct specialized unconventional warfare training for selected members of the Kuwaiti military. About a month before the start of the Air War, 17 Kuwaiti military personnel underwent a rigorous five-week training course, but when DESERT STORM's air attack began on 16 January 1991, the Iraqis closed the border, limiting infiltration options. Out of necessity, training then concentrated on infiltration methods.

From 14-20 February 1991, SEALs trained 13 Kuwaitis for a maritime infiltration onto a beach area south of Kuwait City. They conducted a dress rehearsal on 21 February 1991 and attempted infiltrating five Kuwaitis on the next day. SEAL swimmer scouts first reconnoitered the shoreline and then escorted the Kuwaitis to the pier. Unable to link up with the friendly forces, the Kuwaitis signaled for extraction and were picked up about 500 meters from the beach. The mission was aborted, and the SEALs and Kuwaitis returned safely. Post-war examination of the beach revealed undetected beach obstacles and heavier Iraqi troop dispositions than anticipated.

Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR)

During DESERT SHIELD, SOCCENT established procedures for CSAR, a mission that planners expected would be of critical importance, given the projected losses of coalition aircraft. Before it would launch a CSAR mission, SOCCENT required a visual parachute sighting and a voice transmission from the downed pilot, as well as enemy threat analysis. SOCCENT conducted full scale CSAR exercises before the Air



DESERT STORM's first successful CSAR operation: Navy Lieutenant Devon Jones running towards an MH-53J Pave Low.

War started. To support the CSAR mission, SOCCENT established forward operating bases near the Saudi border, close to the projected areas of operation.

The first successful CSAR operation of DESERT STORM occurred on 21 January 1991. An Iraqi missile had shot down a Navy F-14 60 miles northwest of Baghdad, and the pilot had evaded capture. At 0730, an MH-53J Pave Low helicopter launched from Ar Ar in a fog so thick that even when flying at 100 feet, the crew could not see the ground. They flew 130 miles into Iraq but could not contact the pilot—their coordinates for his location were nearly 50 miles off. The helicopter returned to Ar Ar to refuel and launched again at 1200. With better coordinates, the crew arrived at the pilot's location just as an Iraqi truck was descending upon him. The helicopter copilot directed the two A-10 fighter planes flying overhead to “smoke the truck.” The A-10s destroyed the truck with cannon fire, and the helicopter picked up the pilot.

The next successful CSAR effort occurred on 23 January when a USAF F-16 pilot bailed out over the gulf. A Navy SH-60B helicopter carrying two SEALs launched from USS *Nicholas* and found the pilot six miles off the Kuwaiti coast. The SEALs jumped into the water and attached a rescue harness to the pilot; the helicopter crew retrieved all three and returned to the *Nicholas* just 35 minutes after launching. The rescuers reported the mission went “flawlessly” and described the pilot as “cold, but in good condition.”

On 17 February 1991, an F-16 went down in southern Iraq 36 miles from the Kuwaiti border. Slightly injured, the pilot parachuted into a heavy concentration of Iraqi troops but still established contact with rescue forces. Two MH-60s from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment launched from Rafha, plucked the pilot from the desert, and returned him directly to KKMC for medical treatment.

For a number of reasons, most downed aircrew members were not rescued. The aircrews needed better survival radios, and there were not always visual sightings of open parachutes. Many pilots landed in areas of heavy Iraqi concentrations, and the Iraqis often beat the SOF rescuers to the downed airmen.

Special Reconnaissance (SR)

Special Operations Forces conducted SR missions along the Iraqi border during DESERT SHIELD, providing CENTCOM with timely intelligence and an early warning capability. During the war, SOCCENT's SR efforts supported the ground offensive. SOCCENT forces conducted 12 SR missions during DESERT STORM. One mission included 15 separate near-shore boat operations that the NSWTG conducted in Kuwaiti waters between 30 January and 15 February as part of CENTCOM's deception plan. Another mission encompassed six searches for mines by SEALs in the northern Persian Gulf. Three SR missions continued the early warning network which the SEALs and 5th SFG (A) troops had established with Saudi and Kuwaiti forces during DESERT SHIELD.



Special Tactics Teams train during DESERT STORM.

At the request of VII Corps, SF teams performed a trafficability survey on 18 February, analyzing the terrain and soil conditions along the Corps' planned invasion route into Iraq. Special operations helicopters inserted teams from the 3rd and 5th SFG (A)s into two sites. The teams included engineers who performed penetrometer tests on the soil, as well as combat camera crews, who used low-level light lenses to take still and video shots of the terrain—which later proved to be the most valuable data collected. The teams executed the missions without incident.

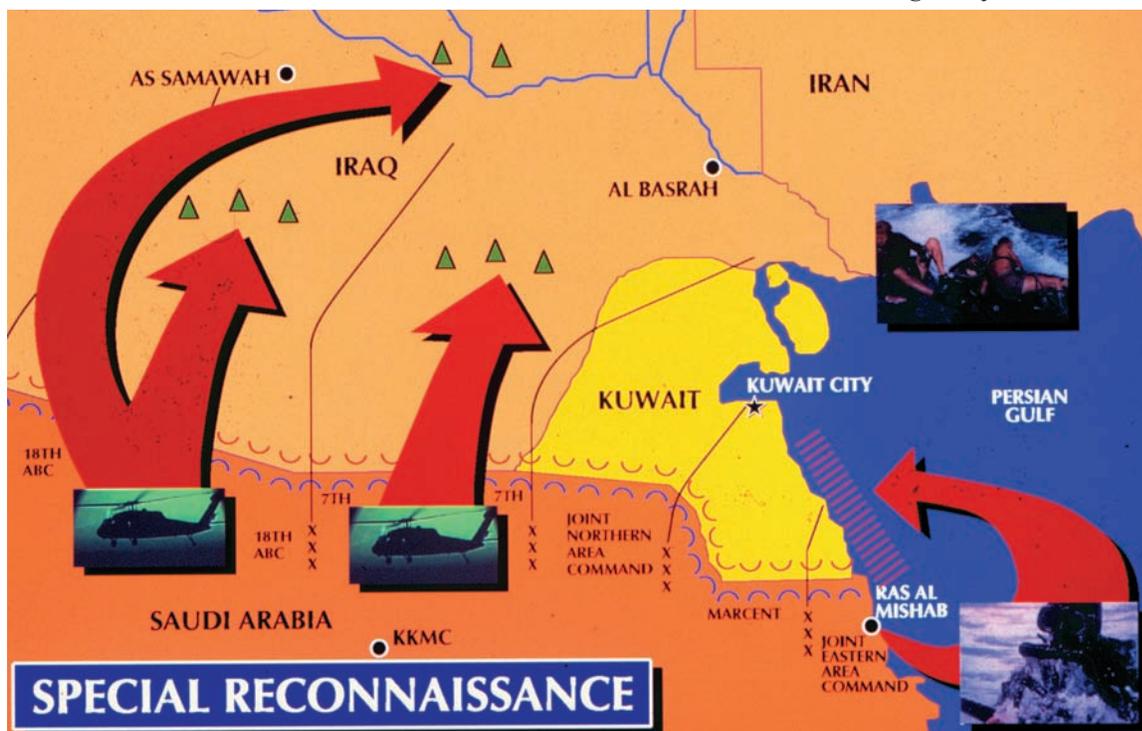
The campaign plan for the ground war called for the XVIII Airborne Corps and VII Corps forces to drive deep into Iraq, flanking and then enveloping the strong Iraqi defenses in Kuwait and southern Iraq. This movement would leave the flanks of both corps vulnerable to counterat-

tack. The corps' commanders requested SOCCENT provide SR teams to go deep inside Iraq, watch important lines of communication, and look for enemy movement toward the exposed flanks. G-Day was set for 24 February 1991.

Three missions provided ground reconnaissance of the main routes that Iraqi units could use to move into VII Corps' area of operations. Two of the missions successfully infiltrated on 23 February; they reported regularly on enemy activity until advance elements of the 1st Cavalry Division arrived on 27 February. The third team, inserted among Iraqi forces, had to be exfiltrated.

Special Forces launched three other SR missions on 23 February, these in support of the XVIII Airborne Corps. One team landed in the middle of a Bedouin encampment and called for an emergency exfiltration. After being picked up, they scouted the area for an alternate site and saw enemy activity everywhere. Coming under anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) and surface-to-air missile (SAM) attack, they aborted the mission. Another team went into the Euphrates River Valley to report on Iraqi military traffic moving along a major highway. During the insertion, one of the aircraft flew so low to avoid Iraqi radar that it tore loose its rear wheel on a sand dune.

By daylight, the team was in place, having dug "hide" holes in a drainage canal about 300 meters northwest of Highway 7. To the horror of



the hidden Americans, the surrounding fields came alive with people that morning, and they were soon spotted by some Iraqi children and an adult. A party of 25 armed villagers, joined by an Iraqi Army company, moved toward the team. Calling for close air support and an emergency extraction, the Americans destroyed their classified gear, engaged in a short but hot firefight with the Iraqis, and retreated to better fighting positions. Using their emergency radio, the team contacted close air support aircraft, which dropped cluster munitions and 2,000 pound bombs within 200 meters of the embattled team until nightfall. During one lull in the air strikes, two members of the team charged down the canal and eliminated an Iraqi element. After dark, the team moved 300 meters from the canal, where a helicopter extracted them without further opposition.

Another special reconnaissance mission sent two three-man teams to monitor an area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Communications glitches prevented one team from reporting what they saw, and the team was picked up early on 27 February. The second team's reconnaissance site put it in the midst of Bedouin encampments, so team members established a hide site along a drainage canal. At daylight, they discovered their "hide" site was near a major thoroughfare. Many Bedouins passed by without noticing them, but they were soon compromised by a sharp-eyed little girl. The team fled with armed Bedouins in hot pursuit. Iraqi soldiers soon joined the firefight. The team held off the Iraqis for an hour and a half until F-16s appeared, followed by a 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment Blackhawk. Although riddled by

small arms fire, the helicopter made a dramatic daylight rescue of the team.

From 29 January until 16 February, NSWTG elements conducted nearshore and offshore reconnaissance missions in support of CENTCOM's deception strategy to fix Iraqi attention on a potential amphibious invasion by U.S. Marines. The SR missions resulted in the collection of information, established a naval presence along the Kuwaiti coast, and faked the initial stages of a possible amphibious invasion. The deception effort culminated in a large-scale operation on the night of 23-24 February 1991, the eve of the ground offensive, which simulated a beach reconnaissance and clearing operation. The deception campaign prevented Iraqi units at the beaches from reinforcing those being attacked in the west.

Direct Action (DA) Missions

During DESERT STORM, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, CINCCENT, relied heavily on allied air power to hit targets which otherwise would have been SOF direct action (DA) missions. Even so, SOCCENT executed some critically important DA missions. SOF's first and most important DA mission involved the destruction of two Iraqi early warning radar sites guarding the southwestern approaches to Iraq at the start of the Air War. Neutralizing these sites allowed allied aircraft to fly undetected toward the SCUD complexes in western Iraq.

Colonel Jesse Johnson, the SOCCENT Commander, turned to AFSOCCENT, his Air Force component, to plan the operation. The concept called for MH-53 Pave Low helicopters to guide AH-64 Apaches to the targeted radar sites, which the Apaches would destroy. On 14



MH-53J Pave Lows led the Apaches to the Iraqi radar sites.



AH-64 Apaches destroyed Iraqi radars prior to H-Hour.

October, Colonel Johnson assured General Schwarzkopf that he and AFSOCENT were 100 percent certain of the success of this mission. The Apache and Pave Low crews quickly worked out interoperability issues, and they conducted a full dress rehearsal in late December with the crews duplicating the formations, routes, bearings, times, and attack tactics. At 1500 on 16 January 1991, SOCCENT informed the Apache/Pave Low task force that the mission was a “go” for that night. H-hour for the start of the Air War was 0300 on 17 January with the opening helicopter strike beginning at 0238 hours. The task force consisted of White and Red teams, with two Pave Lows and four Apaches assigned to each one.

At 0058 on 17 January, the White Team lifted off from Al Jouf and headed toward the border, followed 15 minutes later by the Red Team. Flying less than 100 feet off the desert at 100 knots, the two teams avoided detection and safely reached the initial point, approximately 7.5 miles from the targets, where the Pave Lows dropped chemical lights and returned to the rendezvous point north of the border. The Apache pilots updated their navigational and targeting systems, flew toward their targets, and within seconds of the appointed time, opened fire on the radar sites. All aircraft returned safely. Colonel Johnson then notified General Schwarzkopf of

the mission’s success. At the same time, combat control teams installed radar beacons along the Saudi-Kuwaiti-Iraqi borders to direct allied attack aircraft to the gaps in the early warning radar system. SOF had played a crucial role on the opening night of the Air War.

AFSOCENT conducted two other DA missions. The BLU-82 “Daisy Cutters” were 15,000 pound bombs capable of destroying everything in a three mile radius on the flat desert terrain. Because of the anti-aircraft threat, AFSOCENT planners determined that the bomb should be dropped from 16,000 to 21,000 feet. Accordingly, MC-130E Combat Talons flew five missions and dropped a total of 11 BLU-82s on minefields and Iraqi military positions. These huge bombs cleared wide routes through minefields, and their enormous blast either killed the enemy or acted as a potent psychological operations weapon.

AC-130s flew fire missions in support of ground forces, to attack the SCUD missile sites, and to engage Iraqi troops. Although these aircraft belonged to AFSOCENT, they were under the operational control of Central Command’s air component, CENTAF. This arrangement resulted in the AC-130s being used for inappropriate missions in medium threat areas. After an AC-130H was engaged by SAMs while on a SCUD hunting mission, the AFSOCENT com-



Enormous BLU-82 “Daisy Cutter” bombs had a lethal impact on the Iraqis.

mander was given mission oversight responsibility to ensure these SOF assets were used correctly.

On 31 January 1991, AFSOCCENT suffered the single worst air loss by any coalition unit when an AC-130H Spectre gunship, "Spirit 03," was shot down while providing fire support to U.S. Marines defending Khafji against an Iraqi attack. Three gunships were airborne that morning over the Marines, and the first two had destroyed numerous Iraqi armored personnel carriers. At 0600, "Spirit 03" was due to end its patrol when it received a call from the Marines, who wanted a missile battery engaged. The crew of "Spirit 03" took out the battery, but as darkness gave way to daylight, a surface-to-air missile hit the aircraft. At 0635, the aircraft sent out a "mayday" distress call and then crashed into the gulf. All 14 crewmembers died.

During DESERT STORM, British Special Operations Forces carried out their own missions in western Iraq. One British mission—very close to Baghdad—included four U.S. SOF (three Special Forces soldiers and one Combat Controller) brought along to coordinate close air support. Their goal was to destroy a buried fiber optic cable supposedly used for SCUD command and control. The 20 Brits and four Americans were inserted by two helicopters on the night of 23 January slightly southwest of Baghdad. Digging teams found and cut several cables, but found no fiber optic cable. They then crammed 800 pounds of explosives into the hole and blew up what was left of the cables. After 1.5 hours on the ground, the team returned safely to Al Jouf by helicopter.

NSW units also had direct action missions. On 18 January 1991, when U.S. helicopters came under fire from seven oil platforms in the Durrah Oil Field, NSWTFG elements counterattacked. SEALs boarded and cleared each of the seven platforms, capturing prisoners, weapons, and documents. Eight Special Boat Unit personnel and 32 Kuwaiti Marines also seized Qaruh Island on 8 February, Maradim Island the next day, and Kubbar Island on 14 February—these operations marked the first reclamation of Kuwaiti territory. In the final hours of the war, NSWTFG and Kuwaiti forces seized Bubiyan Island and captured its Iraqi defenders. SEALs also flew aboard Navy heli-

copters for both CSAR and countermine missions, during which they destroyed 26 moored or floating mines.

The Liberation of Kuwait City: Operation URBAN FREEDOM

SOCCENT assisted Kuwaiti forces in liberating their capital city and reestablishing Kuwaiti governmental authority. SOCCENT initiated Operation URBAN FREEDOM when allied forces reached the outskirts of Kuwait City. SOCCENT deployed to Kuwait City International Airport on 27 February, along with 3rd SFG (A) teams and other personnel. Surprisingly, the Iraqis had abandoned the city, and the liberation forces met little organized opposition. As a precautionary measure, SOF units conducted a "take down" of the U.S. Embassy compound in Kuwait City. A ground convoy, composed of SEAL fast attack vehicles and 3rd SFG (A) soldiers, surrounded the compound while a Special Forces assault force fast roped onto the roofs of buildings and searched for Iraqis and booby traps. None were found.



SOCCENT Planning to liberate the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait City.

SCUD Hunting

Coalition forces had air superiority in the skies over Iraq and Kuwait from the war's first air strikes on 17 January 1991. Unable to do battle in the air, Saddam Hussein struck back with a clumsy, unsophisticated weapon—the SCUD missile—which he ordered to be launched at Israel. Tactically, the SCUD would not have a major impact, but its strategic effect was felt

on 18 January when seven SCUDs hit Israeli cities. If continued attacks brought Israel into the war, then the Coalition aligned against Saddam might crumble. General Schwarzkopf's insistence that the SCUD was not a significant military weapon did little to placate the Israelis or ease the pressure on the Bush Administration. By the end of the first week of the war, over 30 SCUDs had been launched at targets in Israel and Saudi Arabia. The air campaign was not working fast enough to eradicate the mobile SCUD launchers.

By the end of January, the diplomatic pressure on the Bush Administration was such that General Powell ordered General Schwarzkopf to use Special Operations Forces to hunt SCUDs and stop them from being fired at Israel. A Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF), made up of special operations air and ground units, arrived in Saudi Arabia by 1 February. Operating from a base at Ar Ar in western Saudi Arabia, the JSOTF had a daunting mission: stop the SCUD attacks on Israel. Reconnaissance and surveillance teams would have to go hundreds of miles inside western Iraq to destroy the SCUD infrastructure.

The first JSOTF cross-border mission, consisting of 16 SOF personnel and two vehicles, occurred on 7 February. It set the pattern for subsequent cross-border operations. Armed Blackhawks, called defensive armed penetrators, accompanied the insertions. Once on the ground, the teams hid during the day and conducted reconnaissance at night. These SOF



SCUD hunting patrol in western Iraq.

operations proved to be so successful—especially the Blackhawk attacks on SCUDs and SCUD-related targets—that on 14 February, General Schwarzkopf approved augmenting the JSOTF with a reinforced Ranger company and more 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment helicopters.

By the time the ground war started, the JSOTF was conducting a wide range of operations. As many as four SOF teams at a time were inside Iraq, conducting operations against the SCUD complexes. These teams called in F-15E, F-16, and A-10 sorties to strike the targets they found. On 26 February, SOF attacked a radio relay site: first, AH-6 attack helicopters peppered the radio relay compound with mini-gun and rocket fire; Rangers then secured the compound and set charges to destroy the 100-meter tall tower. The Blackhawks also conducted “Thunder Runs,” direct action missions on SCUDs, their lines of communication, and other command and control facilities. The JSOTF also

used “Gator” minefields to limit SCUD mobile launcher movement. Because of JSOTF operations, the number of SCUD launches fell dramatically, and their accuracy was greatly impaired.

PSYOP and CA Missions

Psychological Operations (PSYOP) and Civil Affairs (CA) units contributed significantly to the success of the Gulf War. The



MH-60 zeroes in on Scud launcher.



General Schwarzkopf thanks SCUD hunters at Ar Ar.

PSYOP campaign was directed toward individual units and soldiers, and stressed a single theme: the coalition's quarrel was with Saddam Hussein and not with the Iraqi people or its army. In the early phases, the PSYOP themes emphasized "peace and brotherhood;" it later evolved to stronger themes, and finally turned to surrender appeals and threats. Once begun, the PSYOP campaign (in conjunction with sustained air attacks) steadily eroded Iraqi morale. Resistance crumbled quickly when the coalition ground forces attacked. A total of 86,743 Iraqis were taken prisoner, and most of them possessed surrender leaflets when they capitulated. Some 29 million leaflets were dropped from a variety

of aircraft, with a few more distributed by artillery shells and balloons. Three AM and two FM ground stations transmitted "Voice of the Gulf" broadcasts for 72 days, which interspersed 3,200 news items and 189 PSYOP "messages" among sports and music programs.

The Combined Civil Affairs Task Force (CCATF) was created in February 1991 to provide emergency services for Kuwait City once it was liberated. Relief operations began on 28

February 1991 when the first convoy rolled into the city. The CCATF stayed in Kuwait City for two months before turning the relief effort over to the Army Corps of Engineers. During that time, it distributed 12.8 million liters of water, 12,500 tons of food, 1,250 tons of medicine, 750 vehicles, and 245 electrical generators.

Flexibility best describes Special Operations Forces' contribution to the DESERT STORM victory. Initially tasked with providing CSAR, SOCCENT steadily expanded its missions as conventional commanders gained confidence in SOF's unique abilities and resources. The coalition support mission became an important new

SOF capability, used later in operations in Somalia and Bosnia; the new geopolitical environment had made SOF more relevant. The SCUD hunting mission demonstrated SOF's ability to deploy rapidly and start operations with little delay, and to execute missions of the gravest national importance.



Civil Affairs soldiers distribute food and supplies to hungry, displaced people.

El Salvador 1981- 1992

In January 1981, the FMLN (Farabundo Marti Liberacion Nacional) launched their “final offensive” to overthrow the El Salvadoran government. Its failure drove the insurrection into the countryside. The U.S. SOF roles in countering the insurrection began with a low-key survey mission in 1981 to assess the security of U.S. interests in that country.

The U.S. Army began training El Salvadoran units, starting with the Atlacatl Immediate Reaction Battalion (IRB) in 1981, which was trained by a Mobile Training Team (MTT) from 3rd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (A). Another battalion (Ramon Beloso) was trained by Special Forces personnel at Fort Bragg the following year. In 1983, the United States established a Regional Military Training Center (RMTC) in Honduras to train Salvadoran units, and teams from the 7th SFG (A) rotated through the RMTC to conduct training in marksmanship, communications, first aid, patrolling, small unit tactics, and a host of other basic skills. Next, U.S. advisers began to train El Salvadoran forces in their own country. Because of these efforts, the El Salvadoran Army expanded from 8,000 men before 1980 to a hard-hitting force of 54,000 by 1987.

At the same time, NSW worked with the El Salvadoran Navy to set up SEAL teams, using the “train the trainer” concept. One four-man MTT also trained garrison troops to act as the guard force.

Special Forces advisers also went to each of the six brigade headquarters where they lived (generally no more than 2-3 officers and NCOs), worked, and trained with

brigade soldiers for six months to a year. With a limit of 55 advisors, a single officer or NCO was assigned to some sites, thus making close cooperation with his El Salvadoran counterparts a matter of life or death because of frequent guerilla (known as “Gs”) attacks. In the most publicized incident, the “Gs” attacked the headquarters of the 4th Infantry Brigade in El Paraiso, Chalatenango. The 31 March 1987, attack killed 64 El Salvadoran soldiers and wounded 79. A soldier from the 3rd Battalion, 7th SFG (A), SFC Gregory A. Fronius, was killed while attempting to organize the resistance to the attack. In 1988 during a similar attack on the 4th Brigade cuartel, El Salvadoran forces and U.S. advisers—Major James Parker, SSG Michael Roth, Captain Gilberto Aguiar, SFC Mario Orozco-Torres and 1LT Byron Castleman— fought back and secured the camp by dawn.

The professional training imparted to the El Salvadoran military led to ultimate success on the battlefield. On 16 January 1992, the FMLN signed peace accords with the government. U.S. advisers can take a large measure of pride in their role in neutralizing the armed forces of the FMLN and forcing them to join the national political process. In 1996, Congress ordered the Pentagon to give Armed Forces Expeditionary Medals to all who served in El Salvador from

January 1981 to February 1992. This allowed for other combat awards, including the Silver Star, Bronze Star, Combat Infantry Badge, Army Commendation Medal for Valor, and the Combat Medical Badge to be awarded to soldiers who served in El Salvador.



SFC Gregory A. Fronius, shown here training a Salvadoran soldier in marksmanship, was later killed in a FMLN raid.

Somalia 1992-1995

Special Operations Forces first became involved in Somalia as part of Operation PROVIDE RELIEF. In August 1992, soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) deployed to Kenya to provide security for relief flights. They formed an airborne reaction force, which included two desert mobility vehicles loaded inside C-130 aircraft. The C-130s circled over Somali airstrips during delivery of relief supplies. In addition, SOF medics and ground observers accompanied many relief flights into the airstrips throughout southern Somalia to conduct general area assessments. In many cases, they were the first U.S. soldiers in Somalia, arriving before U.S. forces who supported the expanded relief operations of RESTORE HOPE.

Operation RESTORE HOPE

To support the United Nation's relief effort in Somalia, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, directed CENTCOM on 2 December 1992 to secure transportation facilities in Mogadishu, Somalia. The operation was designated RESTORE HOPE. An amphibious squadron, consisting of USS *Tripoli*, *Juneau*, and *Rushmore*, with a Marine Expeditionary Unit, a SEAL platoon, and a Special Boat Unit (SBU) detachment, arrived off the coast of Somalia shortly thereafter. To mount an amphibious landing to secure the Mogadishu airport, the Marines needed up-to-date charts for the beaches—charts which did not yet exist. The SEALs and SBU detachment conducted a hydrographic reconnaissance, the classic “frog-man mission” of World War II, to map the beaches.

The first mission occurred on the night of 6 December, when 12 SEALs conducted a hydrographic reconnaissance in the traditional method, swimming in a line toward shore, and taking depth soundings with weighted lines. Upon reaching waist deep water, they each shifted to the right and swam back out, repeating the process. Meanwhile, another five SEALs swam ashore and reconnoitered the beach. The two SEAL cartographers measured the berm and noted the shore gradient and the presence of obstacles on the beach. The SEALs returned to

the *Juneau* where they compiled charts, briefed the Marines, and prepared for their next night's mission.

On the night of 7 December, the SEALs swam into Mogadishu Harbor, where they found suitable landing sites, assessed the area for threats, and ascertained that the port could support maritime prepositioned ship offloads. This was a tough mission: the SEALs swam against a strong current which left many of them overheated and exhausted. Furthermore, they had to swim through raw sewage in the harbor, which made them sick.

When the first SEALs hit the shore the following night, they were surprised to meet members of the news media. Thankfully, the first Marines came ashore soon thereafter, and the press corps redirected their attention to them, freeing the SEALs to proceed with their duties. Four SEALs thereupon conducted surf observations and initial terminal guidance for the Marines' landing craft.

On 17 December, the SEALs surveyed the port of Kismayu from the French frigate *Dupleix*. During this operation, Somali snipers fired at the SEALs, but no SEALs were hit. Later, the SEALs provided personal security for President George Bush during a visit to Somalia and provided snipers to the Marines. Before leaving Somalia in February 1993, the SEALs also conducted joint training missions with Indian naval commandos.

A platoon from SEAL Team 2, with the *Wasp* Amphibious Ready Group, replaced the departed SEALs. On their first mission, these SEALs reconnoitered the Jubba River (a mission which included dodging crocodiles) to gather intelligence on gun smuggling. Based on this information, Marines staged two raids on towns along the river. These SEALs performed many operations in April and May: a predawn shore reconnaissance of Kismayu; clearing a potential beach landing site south of Mogadishu; reconnaissance missions in the Three Rivers region south of Kismayu and at Koyaama Island; and a reconnaissance of Daanai Beach in extremely rough seas.

Meanwhile, on 28 December 1992, the Special Forces assets in Kenya moved to

Somalia and joined Operation RESTORE HOPE. On 12 January 1993, a Special Forces headquarters unit [FOB 52 (-)] deployed to Mogadishu as the Joint Special Operations Forces-Somalia (JSOFOR) that would command and control all special operations for RESTORE HOPE. JSOFOR's mission was to make initial contact with indigenous factions and leaders; provide information for force protection; and provide area assessments for future relief and security operations. The Special Forces under JSOFOR supported the nine humanitarian relief sector commanders. Before redeploying in April, JSOFOR elements drove over 26,000 miles, captured 277 weapons, and destroyed over 45,320 pounds of ordnance. So successful were the Special Forces teams, the commander of UN operations in Somalia, LTG Bir (Turkey), considered them a "must have" asset.

The 96th CA Battalion (Airborne) deployed a CA Tactical Support Team and six CA Direct Support Teams which provided a liaison between Army and Marine commanders, local Somali committees, and representatives of over 40 non-governmental organizations. CA personnel also staffed humanitarian operations centers throughout Somalia, from which they coordinated medical and engineer civic action projects.

The Joint PSYOP Task Force (JPOTF) supported unified operations by integrating PSYOP into all plans and operations, and by hiring more than 30 Somalis to help with the PSYOP newspaper *Rajo* ("Truth") and radio

broadcasting. More than seven million copies of 37 different leaflets and a dozen handbills and posters were printed and disseminated. PSYOP soldiers, including eight loudspeaker support teams from the 9th PSYOP Battalion, with native linguists and pre-recorded tapes, supported both the Marine 7th Regimental Combat Support Team and Army maneuver units.

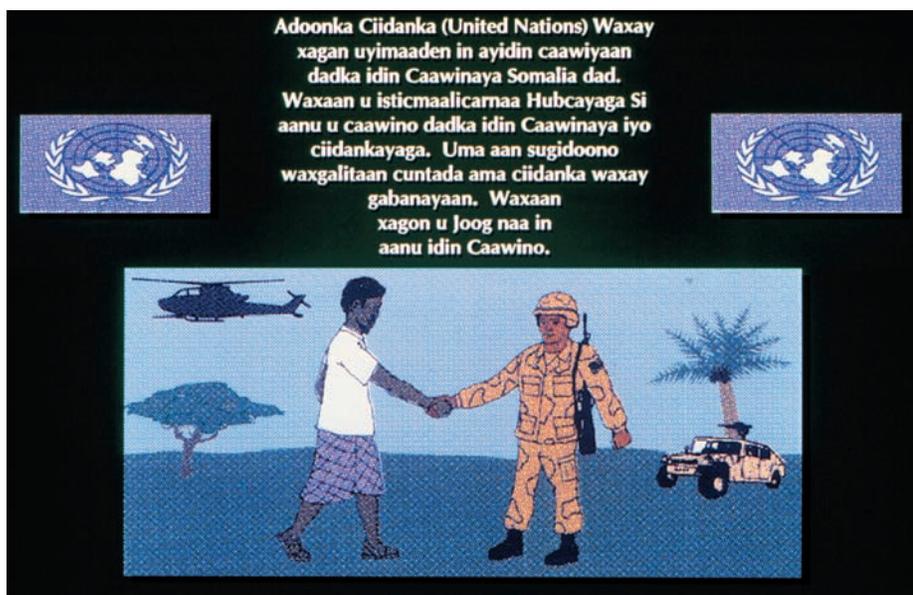
As a complement to *Rajo*, the JPOTF established a radio station in the U.S. Embassy compound, which broadcast a 45-minute Somali language program twice a day. The station featured religious, news, entertainment, and music programs; its broadcasts eventually reached every city and town in Somalia where UN forces were based.

Operation RESTORE HOPE gave way to UN Operations Somalia in May 1993, after having brought an end to starvation and making the lives of Somalis somewhat safer. But the overall success of U.S. Special Operations Forces in Somalia will always be overshadowed by the events of 3-4 October 1993, when U.S. troops found themselves in the fiercest urban firefight since the Vietnam War.

UNOSOM II

On 5 June 1993, General Mohamed Farah Aideed's Somalia National Alliance forces ambushed and killed 24 Pakistani soldiers assigned to UN Operations Somalia (UNOSOM II). The next day, General Joseph P. Hoar, Commander in Chief, U.S. Central Command,

asked the Joint Staff to send four AC-130 gunships to carry out air strikes against the Somalis. Four AFSOC gunships deployed on 7 June and remained until 14 July, flying a total of 32 interdiction, reconnaissance, and PSYOP missions in support of UNOSOM II. Eight of those missions were combat sorties flown over the streets of Mogadishu between 11-17 June. As part of the initial strike against Aideed, three



Over 7 million leaflets were distributed during RESTORE HOPE.

gunships flew over Mogadishu on 11 June and used their 105mm and 40mm cannons to demolish two weapons storage facilities, an armored tank compound, and Aideed's "Radio Mogadishu" propaganda station. The next day, two AC-130s obliterated a second radio station and a weapons factory. On 13, 14, and 17 June, AFSOC crews flew single AC-130 missions that concentrated on destroying weapons storage areas and vehicle compounds belonging to Aideed and his key supporters. During these missions, Air Force special tactics operators provided target guidance. The AC-130 missions and related ground operations together drove Aideed into hiding. The AC-130s redeployed in mid-July, and other SOF later took up the hunt for Aideed.

Task Force RANGER

On 22 August 1993, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin directed the deployment of a Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) to Somalia in response to attacks made by Aideed supporters upon U.S. and UNOSOM forces and installations. The JSOTF, named Task Force (TF) RANGER, was directed to capture Aideed and his key lieutenants and turn them over to UNO-

SOM II forces. This was a challenging mission, for Aideed had gone underground in June, after several AC-130 air raids and UNOSOM II ground assaults on his strongholds.

The command and control structure of TF RANGER still remains of interest. Per the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act, the unified commander (in this case, General Hoar, Commander in Chief, U.S. Central Command) was entitled to organize his forces as he saw fit. General Hoar had the TF RANGER commander, Major General William Garrison, report to him directly. Thus, TF RANGER did not fall under the UNOSOM II commander, and at all times TF RANGER remained under U.S. operational command and control. Major General Garrison did, however, coordinate TF RANGER operations with Major General Thomas M. Montgomery, the commander of U.S. Forces Somalia.

By 28 August, the task force had arrived in country, was conducting training exercises, and was setting up the necessary liaison and communications networks. TF RANGER was made up of special operations ground forces, special operations helicopters, Air Force special tactics personnel, and SEALs. During August and



Rangers taking cover and returning fire during the 3-4 October battle.

September 1993, the task force conducted six missions into Mogadishu, all of which were tactical successes. They ran these missions both by day and at night, and used both helicopters and vehicles to reach their targets. Although Aideed remained free, the cumulative effect of these missions limited his movements.

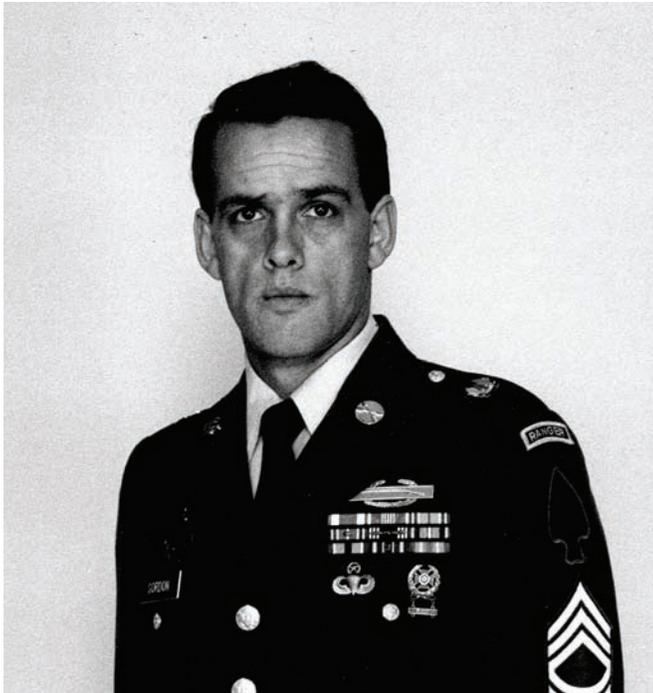
On 3 October, TF RANGER launched its seventh mission, this time into Aideed's stronghold to capture two of his key lieutenants. Helicopters carrying assault and blocking forces launched at 1532 from the TF RANGER compound at Mogadishu airport, with a ground convoy moving out three minutes later. By 1542, the ground forces had arrived at the target location, as the blocking force was setting up perimeter positions and the assault force was searching the compound for Aideed's supporters.

These forces came under increasingly heavy enemy fire, more intense than during previous raids. The assault team had captured 24 Somalis and was about to load them onto the convoy trucks when a MH-60 Blackhawk was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) and crashed about three blocks from the target location. Almost immediately, one six-man element of the blocking force, as well as an MH-6 assault helicopter and an MH-60 carrying a 15-man combat search and rescue (CSAR) team, began rushing to the scene. The MH-6 crew got there first and, amid a firefight, evacuated two wound-

ed soldiers to a military field hospital. Next, the six-man blocking element arrived, followed by the CSAR helicopter. As the last two members of the CSAR team were sliding down the fast ropes, their helicopter was also hit by an RPG, but somehow the pilot kept the helicopter steady while the two reached the ground safely and then nursed the helicopter back to the airport.

The situation only worsened. Ground fire struck two more MH-60s, with one crashing less than a mile to the south of the first downed helicopter. A Somali mob overran this second site and, despite a heroic defense, killed everyone except the pilot, whom they took prisoner. Two defenders of this crash site, MSG Gary Gordon and SFC Randall Shughart, were posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. The other MH-60 was hit broadside by an RPG, but the crew somehow coaxed it to the new port area where they did a controlled crash landing.

Meanwhile, after loading the detainees on the ground convoy trucks, the assault and blocking forces moved on foot to the first crash area, passing through heavy fire that wounded a number of soldiers, and occupied buildings south and southwest of the downed helicopter. They established defensive positions, laid down suppressive fire to hold the Somalis at bay, treated their wounded, and worked to free the pilot's body from the wreckage.



MSG Gary Gordon



SFC Randall Shughart

These soldiers died defending a crashed MH-60 crew and were awarded the Medal of Honor.

With the detainees loaded on trucks, the ground convoy force attempted to reach the first crash site from the north. Unable to find it amongst the narrow, winding alleyways, the convoy came under withering small arms and RPG fire. The convoy had to return to base after suffering numerous casualties, losing two 5-ton trucks, and sustaining substantial damage to the other vehicles. On the way back to base, this convoy encountered a second convoy that had left the airport in hopes of reaching the second crash site.

The second group loaded casualties into its vehicles and escorted the first convoy back to base. About this time, the mission's quick reaction force (a company of the 10th Mountain Division in support of UNOSOM II) also tried to reach the second crash site. This force too was pinned by Somali fire and required the fire support of two AH-6 helicopters before it could break contact and make its way back to the base.

The TF RANGER soldiers at the first crash site were resupplied from a helicopter that evening. Reinforcements, consisting of Rangers, 10th Mountain Division soldiers, SEALs, and Malaysian armored personnel carriers, finally arrived at 0155 on 4 October. The combined force worked until dawn to free the pilot's body, receiving RPG and small arms fire throughout the night.

All the casualties were loaded onto the armored personnel carriers, and the remainder of the force moved out on foot. With the armored personnel carriers providing rolling cover, the run-and-gun movement, known as the "Mogadishu mile," began at 0542. Somalis continued firing at the convoy, but the Rangers only sustained minor wounds. AH-6 gunships raked the cross streets with fire to support the movement. The main force of the convoy arrived at the Pakistani Stadium at 0630. Medical personnel gave emergency treatment to the wounded, and all personnel were prepared for movement to the hospital or the airfield.

Thus ended one of the bloodiest and fiercest urban firefights since the Vietnam War. A total of 16 members of TF RANGER were killed on 3-4 October and 83 wounded (the 10th Mountain Division suffered 22 wounded and two killed). Various estimates placed Somali casualties above 1,000. All told during their time in

Somalia, TF RANGER experienced a total of 17 killed in action and 106 wounded. Task force members had to operate in an extremely difficult environment, which required constant innovation, flexibility, and sound judgment. The task force had more than held its own against a vastly superior enemy that was battle-hardened from years of civil war and urban fighting.

The Withdrawal From Somalia

In the aftermath of the 3-4 October battle, U.S. military presence in Somalia increased significantly. Two AC-130s deployed to Kenya and flew reconnaissance missions over Mogadishu. More Special Forces also deployed as did a platoon from SEAL Team 2 and one from SEAL Team 8.

The SEALs provided security detachments to U.S. and UN troops by occupying sniper positions and guarding allied encampments, by flying on aircraft traveling between Somalia and the carrier battle groups offshore, and by providing VIP protection. Other SEALs aboard rigid inflatable boats provided harbor security for Marine Corps landing boats shuttling between ships offshore and Marine Corps encampments on the beach. Most U.S. forces pulled out of Somalia by 25 March 1994.

To assist the UN forces' withdrawal, the final amphibious ready group arrived off Somalia on 5 February 1995, carrying a platoon from SEAL Team 5. During February and March 1995, the SEALs first conducted hydrographic reconnaissance missions on the beaches around Mogadishu to determine the best evacuation routes, and then performed initial terminal guidance for Marine landing craft and assault vehicles. The SEALs maintained security on the evacuation route, conducting anti-sniper patrols on the beach flanks and around the harbor. Operation UNITED SHIELD, the withdrawal from Somalia, was completed on 3 March 1995.

SOF had made major contributions to the Somalia 1992-1995 operations. They conducted reconnaissance and surveillance operations; assisted with humanitarian relief; conducted combat operations; protected American forces; and conducted riverine patrols. Additionally, they ensured the safe landing of the Marines and safeguarded the arrival of merchant ships carrying food.

Haiti 1994-1995

Haiti had endured unremitting political oppression for hundreds of years. Although the people of this troubled country enjoyed a taste of freedom in 1990 when they elected Jean-Bertrand Aristide as their President, the army took control in a 30 September 1991 coup. Attempting to reestablish the Aristide government, the UN imposed economic sanctions on 23 June 1993; four months later, on 15 October, President Clinton ordered USN ships to help enforce this embargo. Admiral David Paul Miller, Commander in Chief, United States Atlantic Command (CINCOM), activated Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) 120 to plan and execute the multinational Operation SUPPORT DEMOCRACY.

Operation SUPPORT DEMOCRACY

The U.S. and allied warships in CJTF 120 boarded over 600 ships during the operation's first five months. The effectiveness of the big ships soon forced the smugglers into using small vessels to carry contraband along shallow coastal routes beyond the warships' reach.

CJTF 120 selected the *Cyclone* class patrol craft (PC) as the best response to the smugglers' new tactic. The PCs were new to



SEALs in a rigid inflatable boat (RIB) approach a possible smuggler.

USSOCOM's inventory, and needed sea duty certification before assignment to Haiti. After being certified for participating in exercise Agile Provider, USS *Cyclone* and USS *Tempest* departed for Guantanamo, Cuba, on 24 May to participate in SUPPORT DEMOCRACY.

On 30 May, CJTF 120 directed the PCs to begin operations with the warships off the north Haitian coast. The plan to integrate the PCs gradually into the interdiction operation ended when the ships encountered a Bahamian sailing vessel trying to skirt the embargo on their very first voyage. As the vessel headed for Port-au-Prince, the *Cyclone* ordered it to stand clear of the Haitian coast, but the vessel did not heave to

until *Cyclone* fired warning flares and launched a rigid inflated boat (RIB) with SEALs aboard. The vessel attempted to play a waiting game that night, but at first light a combined party from the *Cyclone* and the HMCS *Terra Nova*—six Canadians and three SEALs—conducted a boarding and search operation. They found embargoed goods, and the *Cyclone* towed this vessel to Guantanamo.

By 23 June 1994, the CJTF 120 fleet had boarded over 1,100 ships, but embar-



USS Cyclone (left) and the Bellatrix, a Dominican Republic patrol boat, enforced the UN-approved embargo of Haiti in 1994.

goed goods flowed steadily into Haiti from the Dominican Republic. General John M. Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, approved the PCs conducting patrols with Dominican Republic ships. On 11 July 1994, SEALs from the *Cyclone* boarded and cleared the *Vinland Saga*, a Danish vessel carrying a cargo of wheat flour. CJTF 120 directed *Cyclone* and *Tempest* to patrol the inner areas of the coast. These operations provided an opportunity to check sea traffic and collect information. USS *Hurricane* and USS *Monsoon* patrol craft replaced the *Cyclone* and *Tempest* in September.

Because of the continuing political repression in Haiti, the Clinton Administration sought UN Security Council approval for an invasion and occupation of Haiti if the sanctions failed to restore Aristide to the presidency. The council granted its approval on 31 July 1994. The inva-

sion plan had two phases: first, a 15,000 multinational force would invade, restore public order, and reinstate Aristide; subsequently, 6,000 UN forces would train a new Haitian police force to maintain order.

Accordingly, Army, Air Force, and Navy SOF supported the XVIII Airborne Corps in planning for a full scale invasion of Haiti. The special operations portion of the plan envisioned the takedown of key governmental sites followed by a link-up with conventional forces, similar to what SOF had done for the invasion of Panama in 1989. After the main takedown, Special Forces teams were to secure the countryside. To serve as the SOF mobility and launching platform, an aircraft carrier, USS *America*, was added to the force package in spring 1994. PSYOP played a role in this operation as well. The 193rd Special Operations Wing's (SOW) EC-130Es transmitted radio broadcast of recorded



Special Operations Helicopters aboard USS America off the Haitian coast.

programs that covered all of Haiti. These themes stressed national reconciliation and restoration of democracy to the Haitians.

Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY

On 10 September 1994, the administration authorized General Shalikashvili to execute Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY within the next ten days. On the night of 16-17 September 1994, SEALs conducted a pre-invasion reconnaissance of the coastline along Cap Haitien, collecting intelligence and hydrographic data on potential landing sites for the Marines. The SEALs conducted their missions despite the large number of small vessels and Haitians on the beach. The water was thick with traffic, strewn with garbage, and the SEALs heard Haitians beating drums on the shore. The teams met with varying degrees of success, as there were just too many civilians in some areas to permit a full reconnaissance. Nevertheless, the ensuing landings, which proceeded flawlessly (and uncontested) on the morning of 21 September 1994, verified the accuracy of the SEALs' work.

As the deadline for invasion neared, SOF moved their equipment and supplies to their air and sea ports of embarkation. Rangers, SEALs, and Special Operations aviation assets went aboard USS *America*. Other Rangers moved to their waiting planes, prepared for an airborne assault. All the elements of a complex plan were in place.

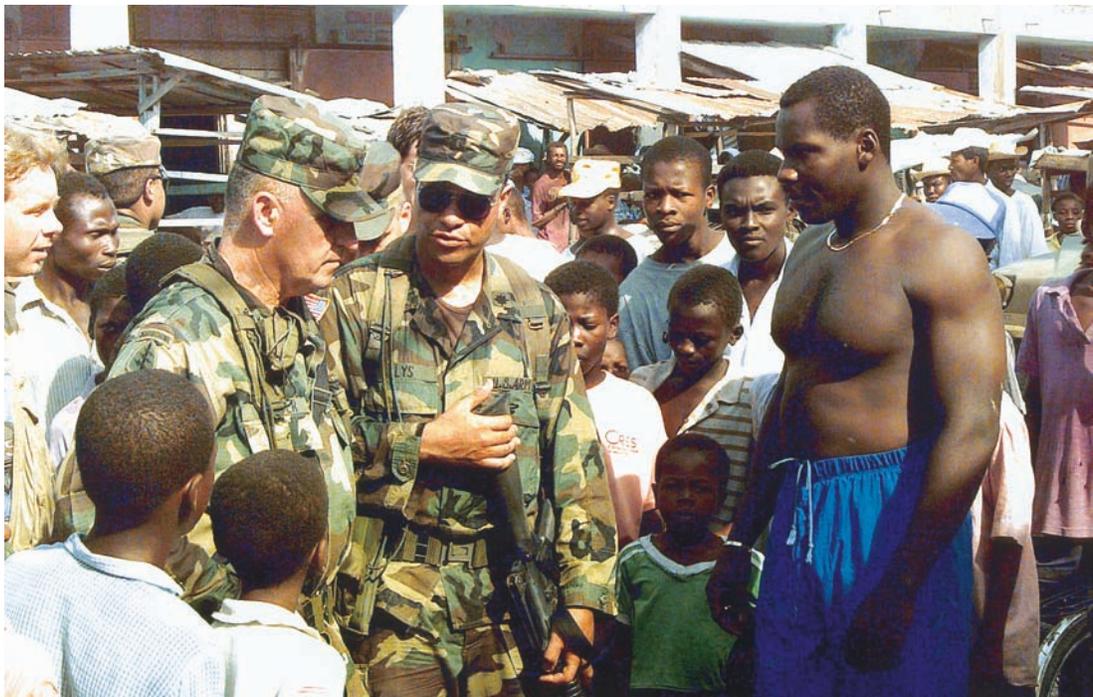
Before the American forces invaded Haiti, however, former President Jimmy Carter, Senator Sam Nunn, and retired General Colin Powell successfully brokered a last-minute deal with the Haitian mili-

tary. Because of these negotiations, all the forces moving toward Haiti on 18 September 1994 were either aborted, diverted, or reconfigured for a peaceful entry. The invasion thus became a large-scale humanitarian mission, with the U.S. forces landing on 19 September. SEALs provided beach security and terminal guidance to the Marine landing forces. The *Monsoon* had the honor of being the first U.S. ship to enter Port-au-Prince Harbor on 19 September. From this point until their departure on 24 October 1994, the PCs maintained harbor patrols.

The Occupation of Haiti

U.S. planners foresaw that Port-au-Prince would be the "center of gravity" for the political and economic struggle that would follow the restoration of the Aristide government. The bulk of the conventional forces from the 10th Mountain Division (and later the 25th Infantry Division) secured and remained in the city. It was also important to maintain stable conditions in the remaining 90 percent of Haiti. For this mission, XVIII Airborne Corps Commander Lieutenant General Henry H. Shelton chose to use SOF.

Brigadier General Richard Potter formed Joint Task Force (JTF) RALEIGH as the Joint Special Operations Task Force under Lieutenant General Shelton. To implement the



BG Potter, Commander JTF RALEIGH, on a crowded Haitian Street.

plan, the three battalions of 3rd SFG (A) set up three forward operating bases; 1st Battalion at Les Cayes, 2nd at Camp D'Application, and 3rd at Gonaives. Using the "hub and spoke" concept of employment, Operational Detachment-Alpha teams ("A-teams") deployed initially to the forward operating bases (the hubs) and then farther out into the countryside (the spokes). SF teams in these villages became the only source of law and order, and the villagers called on SF captains, sergeants, and warrant officers to act as policemen, judges, and juries for a wide variety of disputes.

A well thought out psychological operations campaign orchestrated by the Joint Psychological Operations Task Force (JPOTF), prepared the way for 3rd SFG (A)'s expansion into the countryside of Haiti. The PSYOP campaign, conducted by elements of the 4th Psychological Operations Group, stressed that cooperating with U.S. forces and avoiding bloody conflicts with the existing illegal regime would lead to the reinstatement of the popular Aristide and the establishment of a working democracy. Using leaflets, radio broadcasts, and airborne loudspeaker platforms, JPOTF soldiers blanketed the countryside with their messages, to great effect. In village after village, the Haitians greeted SOF soldiers with open arms.



PSYOP loudspeaker teams supported pacification efforts in Haiti by making public announcements.

While Special Forces soldiers were gaining control over the countryside, Civil Affairs teams from the 96th CA Battalion, augmented by CA reservists, assessed Haiti's creaking infrastructure. The hope was that a new Haitian government, assisted by USAID and various non-governmental organizations and private organizations, would lift the country up from its endemic chaos and poverty. U.S. soldiers from Company A, 96th CA Battalion conducted operation LIGHT SWITCH in Jeremie, Cap Haitien, and other northern cities and towns, restoring electricity to those areas for the first time in years.

SOF operations were notable as a large-scale peacekeeping mission. Even after the UN Mission took over on 31 March 1995 (UPHOLD DEMOCRACY became RESTORE DEMOCRACY), SOF still performed this vital mission. The

peace and order found in the Haitian countryside were a remarkable tribute to SOF, who fulfilled all of their mission requirements and more. In addition, the PCs demonstrated their versatility during both SUPPORT DEMOCRACY and UPHOLD DEMOCRACY; they proved their usefulness in coastal operations and showed they could support both SEALs and Special Boat Unit operations.



Civil Affairs soldiers helped to rebuild Haiti—shown here making a village's well water drinkable.

The SOCCEs sent out Liaison Coordination Elements (LCEs) to the NATO and, most important, non-NATO units within each division's area of operations. The LCEs were assigned to the battalion or brigade commanders. Not unlike the Coalition Warfare Teams of DESERT STORM, the fundamental LCE mission was establishing communications between the division and its non-NATO battalions. The LCEs made sure that the information and instructions passed from the division commander to the battalion or brigade commander were understood, which included explaining the intent and movements of allied forces. If needed, the LCEs could also do laser target designation, call for fire, and request medical evacuations. Importantly, the LCEs had their own vehicles so that they could keep up with their parent units.

LCEs performed the following missions: conducting daily patrols with parent battalions; maintaining reliable communications; assessing the attitudes of local populations and former warring factions; spreading the word on the IFOR mission; providing accurate information on any incidents; and accomplishing route reconnaissance. In addition to their Special Forces members, LCEs were augmented by Special Tactics personnel trained in Special Operations Tactical Air Controller (SOTAC) procedures for close air support. When the battalion or brigade became comfortable with doing its mission essential tasks, the LCEs redeployed. No other forces, save SOF, had the requisite capabilities to do these delicate diplomatic operations.

In the early stages of JOINT ENDEAVOR, SOF's flexibility and specialized capabilities were used to ensure that NATO forces arrived in the right place at the right time. SOF's major contributions included: SOF enabling forces were in place on time; SOF aircraft (capable of flying in the most difficult weather) ensured timely SOF deployments into Bosnia-Herzegovina despite weather that grounded all other aircraft; SOF aircraft flew the IFOR commander through adverse weather to reach meet-



SEALS supported bridging the Sava River.

ings and ceremonies; SOCIFOR provided a quick reaction force; and SEALs supported the bridging of the Sava River.

Civil Affairs forces likewise had important missions for JOINT ENDEAVOR. The CA forces coordinated the reconstruction of the civil infrastructure and organized relief efforts of more than 500 UN, government, and nongovernment organizations. Civil Affairs personnel, assigned to the Combined Joint Civil Military Operations Center (with CA task forces assigned to each multinational division), assisted in restoring basic services such as public transportation, public works and utilities, public health, and commerce, as well as helping with elections and setting up new national governments. CA specialists worked with organizations like the World Bank and the International Police Task Force to facilitate the delivery of their services. CA soldiers also helped to develop plans for, and coordinated the repatriation of, refugees.

PSYOP forces had the important task of disseminating factual information to the populace inside the former Yugoslavia. Assigned to the Combined Joint Psychological Task Force, U.S. Army PSYOP forces used print media (the weekly *Herald of Peace* newspaper and posters), "Radio IFOR" broadcasts, and some television broadcasts to accomplish their missions. They also conducted a mine awareness campaign, aimed primarily at children, and distributed literature (such as coloring books) to stress the dangers of land mines and ordnance.



Distributing Herald of Peace in Bosnia.

Operation JOINT GUARD

Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR officially ended on 20 December 1996, and the IFOR gave way to Operation JOINT GUARD's Stabilization Force (SFOR). Planned to last 18 months, JOINT GUARD built upon the success of JOINT ENDEAVOR—NATO-led forces had separated the former warring factions, allowed the transfer of land, moved heavy weapons into storage areas, and demobilized troops of the former warring factions. In essence, SFOR was a maintenance force responsible for deterring hostilities and contributing to a secure environment which promoted the reestablishment of civil authority.

SOCEUR disbanded SOCIFOR on 20 December and lodged command and control of all SOF inside Bosnia in the revamped CJSOTF. Now commanded by a U.S. SOF officer, the CJSOTF deployed the SOCCEs to each multinational division and LCEs to the Romanian Battalion, Hungarian Battalion, and Russian Brigade. In addition, SOF took on the responsibility of providing Joint Commission Observers (JCOs). These six-man teams roamed the country as "honest brokers" to establish communications between all the factions and the SFOR commanders. SOCEUR still had mission responsibility for combat search and rescue, personnel recovery, close air support, and special reconnaissance. Likewise, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations forces continued accomplishing under JOINT GUARD what they

had done for JOINT ENDEAVOR. Psychological Operations forces worked for the Combined Task Force. All these missions ran until June 1998, when the operation evolved again.

Operation JOINT FORGE

On 20 June 1998, Operation JOINT FORGE began as the follow-on operation to Operation JOINT GUARD. JOINT FORGE had the same primary goal as JOINT GUARD—to maintain peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina and sustain the conditions necessary to

rebuild that nation. To carry out this mission, NATO continued the SFOR, comprised of forces from both NATO and non-NATO nations. SFOR ensured the peace, kept the troops of the former warring factions demobilized, and prevented the revival of hostilities.

The primary changes in Operation JOINT FORGE were in the SOF's command structure and missions. In JOINT FORGE, the CJSOTF consolidated operations with Forward Operating Base (FOB) 103. The combined headquarters exercised command and control over all U.S. SOF in MND-North. The combined CJSOTF/FOB reported directly to COMSFOR. U.S. SOF operated only in MND-North, except for liaison officers attached to MND-SE and



SOF LCE attached to the Russian Brigade. LCEs lived and worked with coalition partners.



SOF Joint Commission Observer teams helped stabilize local areas and provided “ground truth” to senior military commanders.

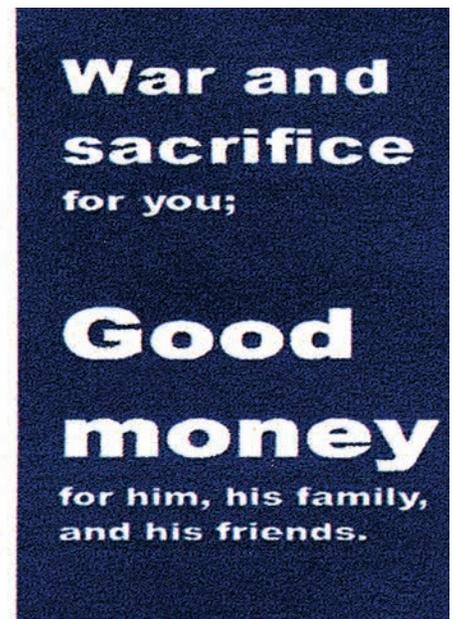
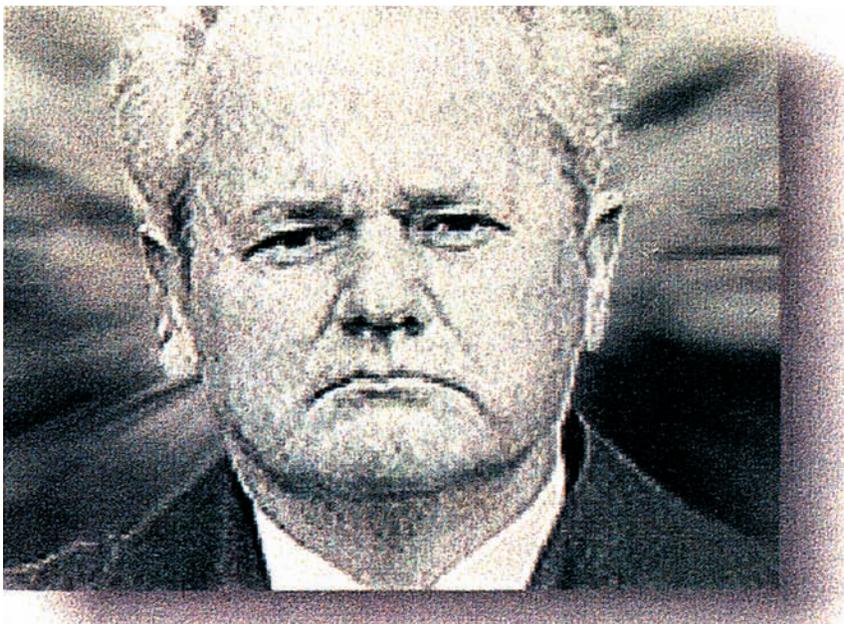
MND-SW and Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations specialists, who operated throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina.

SOF’s missions saw little change in MND-North in JOINT FORGE. The SOCCE performed as it had in Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR, and one LCE was still attached to the Russian Brigade. U.S. SOF in Bosnia-Herzegovina theater worked in eight-man Joint Commission Observer Teams (JCOs) in the MND-North. The JCOs’ critical role was to maintain situational awareness and provide ground truth to the CJSOTF and SFOR com-

manders. To do this, they maintained direct contact with leaders of the former warring factions and key members of the local civil and military leadership. They served as contact points between the MND-North commander and local ethnic leaders and as impartial information brokers between different elements of the populace. They also provided the MND-North commander with information about conditions throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina. U.S. SOF provided a quick reaction force that stood ready to defend any JCOs that were threatened. At the peak of the JCO mission in 1996 and 1997 there were 16 teams covering all of Bosnia. Twice during their time in Bosnia, U.S. JCO houses were attacked by rocket-propelled grenades.

As the environment in Bosnia-Herzegovina matured, the JCO’s contributions were judged to be of less importance as conventional forces increasingly reported similar types of information. In May 2001, the last U.S. JCO house was closed.

The majority of SOF personnel for JOINT FORGE were Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations specialists. They assisted in reestablishing civil institutions and helped prepare for elections that were held in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the autumn of 1998. SOF continued its support to JOINT FORGE throughout 1999, helping to sustain peace in the area during the Kosovo conflict.



The 4th PSYOP Group distributed over 104 million leaflets in Serbia and Kosovo during Operation ALLIED FORCE.

Kosovo

Operation ALLIED FORCE

NATO initiated Operation ALLIED FORCE on 24 March 1999 to put an end to Serbia's violent repression of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. The 19-nation ALLIED FORCE coalition conducted an unrelenting bombing campaign in Serbia and Kosovo for 78 days, eventually forcing Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to withdraw his forces from the province and stop the "ethnic cleansing" of Kosovar Albanians. The bombing strategy did not prevent Serbia from forcing an estimated 800,000 refugees out of the country, however, which produced an enormous humanitarian crisis in the neighboring states of Albania and Macedonia. Furthermore, the air campaign did not eliminate all of Serbia's surface-to-air missiles, which managed to shoot down two U.S. aircraft.

SOF played a strategic role throughout the Balkans region during ALLIED FORCE. In Albania and Macedonia, Civil Affairs units participated in Operation SHINING HOPE, the humanitarian assistance mission to aid Kosovar refugees. CA elements coordinated large-scale humanitarian relief efforts with U.S. government agencies and international relief organizations, arranging food, shelter, and medical care for the refugee camps. SOF helicopters airlifted supplies into refugee areas prior to the conventional forces arriving in theater. Within Kosovo itself, SOF aircraft dropped food and supplies to displaced persons.

SOF also carried out an extensive PSYOP campaign. From beyond Serb borders, EC-130E Commando Solo aircraft transmitted daily Serbian-language radio and television programs into the area, informing the Serb people of their government's genocidal practices and televising photographs of Kosovar refugees in Albania and Macedonia. MC-130H aircraft dropped millions of leaflets that decried the Serbs' untenable situation, warning them against committing war crimes, and pointing out how Milosevic's policies were ruining their country.

SOF also engaged in direct action and special reconnaissance missions. AC-130 gunships attacked Serbian positions. In Bosnia-



F-16 CSAR, Operation ALLIED FORCE Members of the MH-60 aircrew who successfully rescued an F-16 pilot shot down in Serbia.

Herzegovina, a SOF team destroyed a stretch of railroad tracks to prevent Serbian troop movements. SOF deployed near the Albanian-Kosovo border and served as the "eyes and ears" of TF HAWK. These Special Forces soldiers and Combat Controllers called in targeting information, prevented friendly fire incidents, and reported on fighting inside of Kosovo.

SOF successfully rescued the only two U.S. pilots downed during ALLIED FORCE. In separate missions, SOF combat search and rescue teams rescued an F-117A pilot who was shot down near Belgrade on 27 March and an F-16 pilot shot down in western Serbia on 2 May. On each occasion, a mixture of MH-53 Pave Low and MH-60 Pave Hawk helicopters were used to retrieve the downed fliers. These rescues had profound effects on the outcome of the operation by denying Milosevic a potent information operation campaign.

Operation JOINT GUARDIAN

On 9 June 1999, the government of the former republic of Yugoslavia acceded to a "military technical agreement" that ended its army's occupation of Kosovo. Operation JOINT GUARDIAN, the mission led by NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR) to enforce the peace agreement, maintain public security, and provide humanitarian assistance, began immediately thereafter. By June 15, SOF units had entered the American sector in Kosovo to reconnoiter the

area and assess conditions for conventional forces.

These SOF personnel encountered the antipathy between Serb and Albanian Kosovars. SOF applied techniques proven in Bosnia-Herzegovina to Kosovo. SOF soon became KFOR's source for "ground truth" in Kosovo's volatile environment. Special Forces teams patrolled the American sector independently and also as the U.S. liaison element to Polish and Russian units. For example, a SF Operational Detachment-Alpha conducted the first combined operations with the Russians since World War II as they sought to quash nightly attacks by militants. PSYOP personnel worked to stabilize the situation by distributing native-language leaflets that promoted mine awareness and acceptance of the rule of law. Special Forces soldiers also monitored the Serb military's withdrawal from the province and assessed the flow of refugees returning to their homeland.

Civil Affairs soldiers, previously engaged in supporting Operation SHINING HOPE, moved forward to assist in reconstituting Kosovo's infrastructure. One of their first actions was to help establish a civil-military coordination committee, a step toward returning Kosovo to civilian control. CA soldiers soon improved conditions throughout the province, as they helped organize the importation of heating fuel, repairs to electric grids and water systems, the activa-

tion of a civilian-run radio station in the capital city of Pristina, and the reopening of schools. They also coordinated the activities of a number of nongovernmental organizations and helped a UN-sponsored International Police Task Force begin work in Kosovo.

Special Forces liaison teams, including those attached to a Polish battalion and a Russian Brigade, initiated street patrols throughout their areas of operations. To counter ethnic violence, these patrols arranged meetings between local Albanians and Serbs, sought out illegal weapons caches, and assisted war crimes investigators in locating massacre sites. The teams' eyewitness reports gave the JOINT GUARDIAN leadership a clear understanding of local conditions. In another application of SOF's unique capabilities, a Special Forces detachment, skilled in the Arabic culture and language, deployed to Kosovo to serve as a liaison coordination element between KFOR and units from the United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Jordan. In September 1999, SOF integrated these forces into the Kosovo area of operations, further strengthening the KFOR coalition.

SOF provided the TF Falcon commanders with unique capabilities—liaison, ground truth, special reconnaissance, direct action, and peace-keeping. Headquarters USSOCOM provided these SOF forces with the oversight, resourcing, and equipment needed to complete these highly complex and sensitive missions.

During JOINT GUARDIAN, CPT Robert Schaefer and his ODA 056 served as the Liaison Coordination Element (LCE) to the Russian 13th Tactical Group. This ODA supported the Russian Brigade, provided situational awareness for TF Falcon, enhanced force protection, and collected information on the locations and activities of both Serbian and Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) forces. For the first month and a half, ODA 056 had intense nightly firefights with UCK soldiers and Kosovar Albanian militants. The team also conducted presence patrols, distributed PSYOP materials, and conducted quick reaction force (QRF) and MEDEVAC training with the Russians. In late July 1999, ODA 056 called in artillery fire in support of the Russians—the first time that the United States has supported Russia with artillery since WWII. CPT Schaefer, fluent in Russian, helped the Russian brigade plan and execute two large search and raid operations which confiscated UCK weapons. These raids were the largest combined U.S.-Russian operations since WWII. These successful operations demonstrated how tactical success can influence the strategic environment by helping to build better U.S.-Russian relations.

Peace Operations and Crisis Responses

Since the symbolic fall of the Berlin Wall, SOF have had to perform a variety of missions that fall under the category of “Operations Other Than War.” At one time, these operations were considered extraordinary, but during the 1990s, operations other than war became the norm. For example, in its first 40 years, the UN conducted only 13 such operations, but in the years from 1988 to 1994, the number of peace operations more than doubled. Although peace operations were not new to the 1990s, what was unprecedented were the numbers, pace, scope, and complexity of recent operations.

Operations other than war included a wide range of missions, such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, non-combatant evacuation operations (NEOs), humanitarian mine action, peacekeeping operations, crisis response, combating terrorism, enforcement of sanctions or exclusion zones, and show of force. With conventional forces, SOF have participated in these types of operations, often as the lead military organization. Such capabilities as cultural and language familiarity, warrior-diplomat skills, maturity and professionalism made SOF an ideal force for these operations.

Operation PROVIDE COMFORT

SOF’s diverse talents made it a natural choice to support humanitarian assistance efforts. Perhaps the best example of SOF’s capabilities to deal with a large scale disaster was Operation PROVIDE COMFORT. At the end of DESERT STORM, in February 1991, Iraqi Kurds revolted against Saddam Hussein, but his forces quickly crushed the rebellion. Hundreds of thousands of Kurds fled to the mountains in northern Iraq and southeastern Turkey.

In April 1991, EUCOM initiated Operation PROVIDE COMFORT to stop further Iraqi attacks and to establish a safe haven for the Kurds. On short notice, MC-130Es led in other aircraft to drop emergency supplies to the Kurdish refugees in the mountains of Iraq and Turkey. Next, Special Forces personnel, supported by MH-53J helicopters, located suitable sites for refugee camps and worked with refugee leaders to organize and distribute supplies to the populace. Civil Affairs units developed plans for medical assistance, food distribution, and daily camp operations, and then managed their implementation. Joint SOF medical teams provided medical assistance and training, such as camp



Operation PROVIDE COMFORT (1991-1996) Following DESERT STORM, Saddam Hussein put down a Kurdish uprising in northern Iraq. The U.S. and its allies saved countless Kurds by establishing safe havens and providing humanitarian assistance. SOF spearheaded this effort.

sanitation, and were instrumental in dramatically reducing the death rate. SEALs and Special Boat Unit personnel provided medical support and security in camps. Psychological Operations forces supported efforts to end chaotic conditions by producing millions of leaflets and by loudspeaker presentations. Their efforts also helped to convince the Kurds to return to their homes. SOF were credited with saving thousands of lives by providing skilled personnel to rebuild the civil infrastructure, establish supply networks, and furnish medical assistance and training.

Humanitarian Mine Action

Landmines have proven to be one of the most dangerous and lasting problems created by recent conflicts. USSOCOM was a leader in the effort to cope with the humanitarian disaster caused by the 100,000,000 mines buried around the world. SOF conducted humanitarian demining operations first in Operation SAFE PASSAGE in 1988. At that time, over 10,000,000 landmines remained from the Soviet invasion, preventing millions of refugees from returning to Afghanistan. Troops from 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) deployed to Pakistan to work with the Afghan refugees and the UN. SAFE PASSAGE became the test-bed and prototype for subsequent humanitarian demining operations by both the UN and SOF.

The Special Forces soldiers faced enormous challenges. There was no effective Afghan government, and work with the refugees had to be

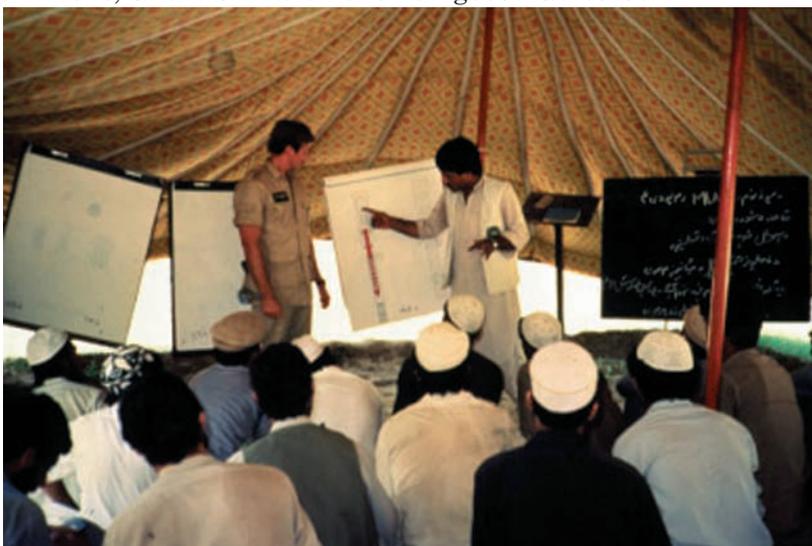
coordinated with the UN, Pakistan, and a vast array of private organizations. In this amorphous situation, the Special Forces troops had to invent humanitarian demining doctrine and sell it to the other agencies. The mutually suspicious Afghan tribes and factions required the Special Forces to use their political skills as well as their technical knowledge.

SOF developed training programs and employed the “train the trainer” concept so the Afghans could run the demining program themselves and continue the program without outside assistance. This technique enabled millions of Afghans to know how to identify, avoid, mark and report mines, and thousands of Afghans learned how to destroy mines. By the time the Special Forces troops left in 1991, the Afghans were conducting effective mine clearing operations.

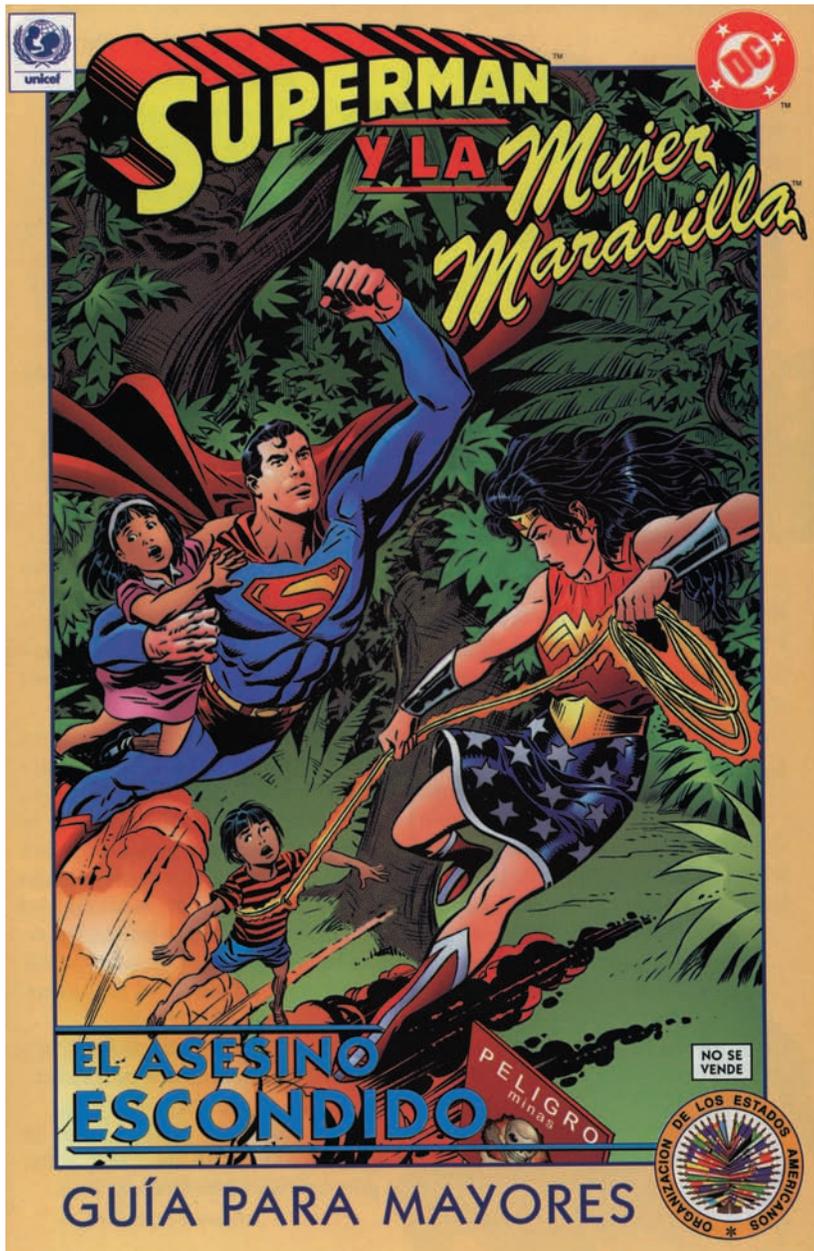
SOF and the UN next conducted demining operations in Cambodia in 1993. Since then, the U.S. humanitarian demining program has expanded dramatically. In 2001, SOF conducted humanitarian demining activities in 19 countries: Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Georgia, Guatemala, Honduras, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Oman, Peru, Thailand, Vietnam, and Zambia. Each situation was very different because of various types of mines—40 different types of mines were found in Afghanistan alone—the multitude of organizations, and the wide ranging terrain and environmental conditions—from the

Sahara Desert to mountainous jungles. Time and again, the knowledge, flexibility, and resourcefulness of SOF enabled them to adjust the program to suit local political, geographic, and technical circumstances.

The humanitarian demining program had three critical elements: mine awareness, mine survey and clearance, and national command and control. Mine awareness reduced civilian casualties by teaching people how to spot mines, how to get out of a mined area safely, and how to mark and report mined areas. The 4th Psychological



Operation SAFE PASSAGE (1989-1991) In a camp in Pakistan, a Special Forces NCO and an Afghan instructor teach mine clearing techniques to Afghan refugees.



In conjunction with the UN, the Organization of American States, and DC Comics, PSYOP soldiers distributed mine awareness comic books to Central American children.

Operations Group took the lead in mine awareness and developed effective programs tailored to the specific needs of each country. These programs used every sort of media from radio and television to T-shirts, caps, book bags, and comic books.

The Special Forces groups developed and taught the mine survey and clearance portions of the program. SOF mine survey teams determined the actual size of the mined area. Mine clearing, the centerpiece of the program, was slow and potentially very dangerous work, so proper training was critical. Special Forces soldiers employed the “train-the-trainer” approach

that trained mineclearers as well as indigenous mineclearing instructors, and eventually led to the establishment of national demining schools.

Civil Affairs troops worked with the host nation to establish a national demining headquarters. In most nations, civilian agencies ran the mine awareness programs. Coordinating the efforts of several different ministries and determining the sequence of demining operations were politically sensitive and critical to the success of the demining operations. Civil Affairs troops, therefore, were ideally suited for helping developing nations solve these thorny problems and integrating humanitarian demining into national recovery and development plans.

In 1997, President Clinton committed the U.S. to eliminating the threat of landmines to civilians by 2010. To achieve this ambitious goal, USSOCOM’s humanitarian demining effort expanded substantially in 1998 and 1999. Whereas in 1997 SOF had deployed to 14 countries to support humanitarian demining operations, by 1999 that figure had doubled to 28. One of the more complex operations occurred in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where SOF worked with the UN, the U.S. State Department, NATO’s SFOR, and the armies representing each of Bosnia’s ethnic groups to establish three demining training centers in the country.

In 1998, SOF trained and equipped instructor cadres for the Bosnian Serbs, Croats, and Muslims and guided them through their first demining classes. SOF also helped the local forces transform their ruined buildings into professional training facilities and taught them how to sustain their training operations. By the end of 1999, the three training centers had graduated more than 500 deminers, who helped to re-

talize the Bosnia-Herzegovina economy by restoring thousands of acres of land to productive use. EUCOM reviewed the program in 1999 and concluded that the SOF-developed training centers continued to produce effective deminers and had become an integral part of the nation's demining operations. The training mission's success was attributed to SOF's ability to develop a rapport with each of the entity armies and to inculcate a higher degree of professionalism in them.

By late 1999, humanitarian demining operations had been conducted by SOCCENT, SOCPAC, SOCSOUTH, and SOCEUR; all five active-duty Special Forces Groups; all six active-duty Psychological Operations Battalions; and the active-duty Civil Affairs Battalion. The reserve components fully supported these operations, as well. In Asia, for instance, SOCPAC, the 1st Special Forces Group, the Psychological Operations Battalion, and Civil Affairs troops worked with the national governments of Cambodia and the People's Republic of Laos, the UN, and many non-governmental organizations to make people aware of the landmine danger and to help clear mined areas.

SOF had conducted humanitarian mine action activities in the following countries for FY2002: Ecuador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Cambodia, Estonia, Honduras, Mauritania, Thailand, and Vietnam.

African Crisis Response Initiative

In 1994, Rwanda experienced human genocide of horrific proportions. As a result of these atrocities, U.S. officials from the Office of the Secretary of Defense visited the Rwandan massacre sites, spoke with refugees, and issued a report that helped to focus attention on the region. The next year, Burundi, Rwanda's neighbor to the south, also experienced political unrest and appeared to be heading down the same road that Rwanda had traveled some months before. By November 1995, the Defense Department had drafted a proposal to deal with the unrest in Burundi, the centerpiece of which was the training of African peacekeeping troops. The objective was to train African

troops to conduct peacekeeping operations within their continent. This initial proposal would become the core for the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), which the State Department launched in October 1996. The U.S., however, worked only with those African countries that met certain prerequisites, including democratically elected governments, civilian control of the military, and human rights policies. SOF, and especially Special Forces soldiers, became an integral part of ACRI.

The African Crisis Response Initiative used military assets from the U.S. and its European allies to train battalion-sized units from various African nations for peacekeeping operations on their continent. The 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) implemented the ACRI plan by developing a program of instruction and sending in teams to conduct training. Drawing from NATO, UN, and U.S. doctrine, Special Forces planners developed common peacekeeping tactics, techniques, and procedures. Training African battalions to common doctrine and standards assured that the different forces could effectively work together if deployed on a peacekeeping mission. As devised by the 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), ACRI training consisted of two phases: an initial, intensive 60-day training period (individual, platoon, company, leader and staff training) followed by sustainment training and exercises. By the end of FY2001, Special Forces teams, along with elements of the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion and the 4th Psychological Operations Group, had con-



Special Forces instructors train Senegalese soldiers in marksmanship and other basic soldier skills for ACRI.



Special Forces soldiers train Nigerian forces.

ducted ACRI training in Senegal, Malawi, Ghana, Mali, Benin, Kenya, and the Ivory Coast. This multinational peacekeeping effort in Africa held out great promise for the future, and was another example of SOF fulfilling the role of Global Scouts.

Operation FOCUS RELIEF

After the collapse of civil authority in Sierra Leone, the United States offered equipment and training to neighboring countries to establish a regional force capable of reestablishing civil order in the country. Under Operation FOCUS RELIEF, up to five Nigerian battalions, one Ghanaian and one Senegalese battalion were to be trained for peacekeeping operations in Sierra Leone under the auspices of UN Charter, Chapter VII, for the purposes of establishing peace and order.

In November 2000, members of the 3rd SFG (A) began the first phase of the operation, training two Nigerian battalions. The training included basic training on the new equipment, combat lifesaver medical training, and infantry tactics. Special Forces medics worked with the host nation medics on advanced lifesaving skills, and leaders were taught how to create combat orders and conduct military decision-making and planning. During this deployment, three SF soldiers were stopped by Nigerian police at a local roadblock. They identified themselves to the police; however, an altercation ensued. Shots were fired, and the ODA members and embassy driver evaded the police and local civilians who were chasing them. One of the soldiers fired warning shots when two civilians attacked

one of the ODA members. After dispersing the crowd, the team made their way to a local gated house, set up security, and notified the embassy. After completing training in December 2000, these troops deployed with the UN Mission in Sierra Leone, to assist in the implementation of the Lomé Peace Accord.

The second phase of training took place in Ghana and Senegal during June to August 2001. The troops were trained in the use of new equipment, small unit tactics, first-aid training, civil-military operations, and human rights. Ambassador Kathryn Dee Robinson said, "Operation FOCUS RELIEF demonstrates the commitment of the U.S. government in assisting the restoration of stability to the West Africa sub-region."

Counterdrug Operations

Illegal drug trafficking was an international threat increasingly affecting all nations. USSOCOM conducted counterdrug (CD) training missions during the decade of the 1990s and beyond. The National Drug Control Strategy, announced in September 1989, significantly refocused the Defense Department's CD effort. USSOCOM provided forces to train and assist host nation forces to enforce their own counterdrug laws. SOF also trained personnel from drug law enforcement agencies. In addition, the command provided forces to patrol and reconnoiter portions of the border with Mexico and supplied communications experts to support other theater CINCs' CD efforts.

In 1992, the CD effort doubled to a total of 233 military training teams, deployments for training and other missions. Support to



Colombian Marines from Forward Riverine Post-93 on graduation day with Counterdrug Mission SEAL Team Four/SBU-22 trainers.

SOUTHCOM and law enforcement agencies accounted for most of the missions, but SOF began to expand CD efforts in the PACOM area as well. The SOF CD effort remained a large part of our national effort. In 1997, SOF began to provide CD training to the Mexican Army and Navy. Another important initiative of the late 1990s, USSOCOM began deploying patrol coast ships to the SOUTHCOM area in order to interdict drug smuggling.

SOF Support to Plan Colombia

At the request of the Colombian government, SOUTHCOM in December 1998 agreed to assist in the formation of a Colombian Army (COLAR) CD battalion (later expanded to a brigade). In 1999, USSOCOM supported a major training program in Colombia, whose goal was to develop units capable of deploying rapidly and conducting independent CD operations in all types of terrain, weather, and visibility. SOF completed training for all three COLAR battalions by May 2001. SOF was scheduled to provide sustainment training to the COLAR CD Brigade on a continuing basis.

Maritime Interdiction Operations in the Persian Gulf

Special Operations Forces (SOF) were key participants in anti-smuggling Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIOs) in the Persian Gulf. On 25 August 1990, the UN Security Council (UNSC) passed UNSC Resolution 665 authorizing “those member states co-operating with the government of Kuwait which are deploying maritime forces to the area to use such measures . . . to halt all inward and outward maritime shipping in order to inspect and verify their cargoes” The purpose of MIOs was to halt vessels smuggling illegal gas and oil from Iraq and to divert them to a port for auction of both the smuggled goods and the vessel.

To date, SOF have participated in hundreds of successful MIOs, significantly curtailing Saddam Hussein’s efforts to fund the rebuilding of Iraq’s mil-



Maritime Interdiction of Russian tanker Volgoneft-147 on 2 February 2000.

itary capabilities. Funds derived from auctions were used to pay for continued MIO missions.

CT-43A Recovery Operation

On several occasions during JOINT ENDEAVOR, SOCEUR had to discharge both its normal theater-wide responsibilities and respond to small-scale contingencies. On 3 April 1996, a CT-43A crashed on a mountainside above Dubrovnik, Croatia, killing all 35 aboard. Included as passengers were Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown, a number of corporate executives, as well as the Air Force crew. Special operations helicopters flew to the crash site in some of the worst flying conditions in the Balkans. SOCEUR completed the recovery operation in four days, despite the extreme cold and wet conditions and rugged mountainside terrain.



Croatia, April 1996. A Pave Low hovers near Secretary Brown’s crashed CT-43A.

Noncombatant Evacuation Operations

Operation SILVER ANVIL

Special Operations Command, Europe (SOCEUR) conducted Operation SILVER ANVIL, a noncombatant evacuation operation (NEO) during a coup in Sierra Leone in Spring 1992. Commanded by BG Richard W. Potter, SOCEUR and its components planned the operation, deployed, successfully conducted an evacuation from a remote location, sustained themselves, and redeployed, without any assistance from conventional forces.

The NEO force consisted of COMSOCEUR, elements from Company C, 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) [1-10th SFG (A)], and the 39th Special Operations Wing (since redesignated the 352nd Special Operations Group). Also included were communications specialists from the SOCEUR Signal Detachment, along with other SOCEUR staff, two MC-130 Combat Talons from the 7th Special Operations Squadron (SOS), two HC-130 tankers from the 67th SOS, aircrews, combat controllers, and maintenance personnel.

On the night of 29 April 1992, Company C was conducting an exercise at Stuttgart, when BG Potter informed them of a coup in Freetown, Sierra Leone, and directed them to begin work on the “real-world” mission. Within 15 hours of notification, SOF performed mission analysis, configured the unit’s equipment, wrote orders, issued war-stocks, loaded the aircraft, and deployed. The coup in Sierra Leone had created an unstable security environment, but SOF quickly developed a rapport with the local military and arranged for a safe evacuation with no incidents. They evacuated over 400 American citizens, third-country noncombatants, and USAF MEDCAP team members in the following two days.

Previously, EUCOM had concentrated on Cold War operations, so SILVER ANVIL signaled a transition as EUCOM focused more on crisis response operations. Because of SOF’s success in Sierra Leone, they became EUCOM’s force of choice for first response in crises. Building on lessons learned from SILVER ANVIL, SOCEUR developed a capability to ex-



Engine Running Onload (ERO) of a group of U.S. citizens departing Lungi Airport on 3 May.

ecute contingency operations anywhere in the theater within hours of notification. The embassy assessment that the JSOTF conducted in Freetown became a model for the EUCOM survey and assessment teams (ESAT) that SOCEUR would deploy to other embassies in later years.

Operation ASSURED RESPONSE

In the Spring of 1996, while SOF were finishing the CT-43A recovery effort, SOCEUR responded to a crisis in Liberia, where a civil war endangered Americans and other foreign nationals. The U.S. had to deploy forces quickly to save lives, protect the American Embassy, and initiate a noncombatant evacuation operation (NEO). The only integrated force with its own airlift and strike force ready and available was SOCEUR. In fact, within hours of redeploying from Dubrovnik to Stuttgart on 7 April, SOF aboard an MC-130H had launched for Sierra Leone, the intermediate staging base for



Operation ASSURED RESPONSE (April 1996) SOF evacuated over 2,100 noncombatants from the U.S. Embassy in Liberia.

Operation ASSURED RESPONSE. Using its Air Force MH-53J helicopters (augmented later by Army MH-47D helicopters), SOCEUR first sent SEALs, on 9 April, and then Special Forces to provide security for the U.S. Embassy and implement an orderly evacuation of Americans and third country nationals. On 13 April, the Psychological Operations Task Force arrived and was ready to conduct force protection loud-speaker operations for ASSURED RESPONSE. SOF had the situation well in hand and had evacuated 436 Americans and 1,677 foreign nationals when the Marines relieved SOCEUR on 20 April 1996.

Operation SHADOW EXPRESS

SOF returned to Liberia in the fall of 1998 after violent civic unrest in Monrovia again threatened the U.S. Embassy. On 18 September, government forces fired on Krahn leader Roosevelt Johnson and his entourage as they were talking to U.S. officials at the embassy entrance. The attack wounded two U.S. personnel and killed four Krahn. The Americans returned fire, killing two policemen. The Americans and the Johnson party retreated into the embassy compound, setting the stage for an extended siege.

The next day, Liberian President Charles Taylor demanded Johnson's surrender, and an attack on the embassy appeared imminent. EUCOM responded by directing SOCEUR to dispatch a 12-man ESAT, which was led by Major Joe Becker, an Air Force SOF helicopter pilot, and Senior Chief Petty Officer Pat Ellis, a SEAL, and included several SOF intelligence specialists. The ESAT team arrived at the embassy on 21 September and, within a few hours, ascertained that an armed force was massing to attack the compound. SCPO Ellis and Major Becker alerted ECOMOG, a Nigerian-led African peacekeeping force then in Monrovia. The ESAT team and the Marine embassy guards devised a defense plan, with the ESAT on the chancery roof and the Marines defending from within the building. Shortly thereafter, an ECOMOG checkpoint stopped two truckloads of men armed with rocket propelled grenade launchers from approaching the embassy. The State Department subsequently arranged for

the Johnson entourage to relocate to a third country. The ESAT team planned the move, coordinated logistical support, and provided security for the Johnson group's departure.

On 26 September, the Defense Department ordered additional U.S. forces into the region. In anticipation of this mission, SOCEUR dispatched USS *Chinook*, a SOF patrol coastal ship from NSWU-10, toward Liberia from Rota, Spain, with an 11-meter rigid inflatable boat (RIB) and four special boat operators aboard. Within 12 hours of notification on the 26th, SOCEUR deployed a SOF command and control element from Naval Special Warfare Unit 2 (NSWU-2), accompanied by approximately 20 SEALs, two Air Force Combat Controllers, and an Air Force flight surgeon, on an MC-130 to a forward operating location in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The force landed in Freetown on the 27th. *Chinook* came into Freetown's port 30 minutes after the aircraft landed, took 17 SEALs on board, and embarked for Liberia, with the remaining SOF staying in Freetown to maintain a tactical operations center. By the 28th, *Chinook* was positioned 2,000 yards offshore from the embassy, ready to provide an in-extremis response force.

From 29 September to 7 October, SOF maintained a highly visible maritime presence off the embassy's coastline. First *Chinook*, and later a second patrol coastal vessel, USS *Firebolt*, surveyed the Monrovia harbor and repeatedly conducted launch and recovery rehearsals of the RIB. The two patrol coastals also stood ready to evacuate the embassy, if



Operation SHADOW EXPRESS, ESAT, ECOMOG, and U.S. Embassy personnel patrolling in Monrovia, Liberia.

necessary. The 10-day “presence operation” provided a calming influence on the situation and reaffirmed SOF’s ability to deploy forces rapidly into an uncertain environment.

Operation SILVER WAKE

In September 1996, a Special Forces sergeant first class was one of a four-person Military Liaison Team that went to Albania. As part of the Joint Contact Team Program, this team coordinated Albania’s requests for military visits that fostered civilian control of the military in a democratic society. This mission, however, was cut short by an incipient revolt in southern Albania. In January, the Special Forces sergeant assisted the American embassy in revising its emergency evacuation plan; this assistance included surveying helicopter landing zones.

After releasing him to the Military Liaison Team in late January, the American Ambassador recalled the Special Forces sergeant to the American embassy in late February, as the Albanian people’s displeasure with their government had erupted again in open revolt. This lone noncommissioned officer became the focal point for NEO preparations. His activities ranged from coordinating a visit from the EUCOM Survey and Assessment Team, to prompting the embassy staff to define what

should be done and when to do it as the revolt approached Tirana, to conducting area assessments that provided the embassy with accurate military judgments.

JTF SILVER WAKE notified the embassy that 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit helicopters would start the evacuation on 13 March. The Special Forces sergeant then went to the evacuation site in the embassy housing area, where he helped to write the passenger manifests and set up “sticks” of approximately 20 persons per helicopter. The helicopters approached the compound after dark. The Special Forces sergeant guided the first helicopter in by flashing “SOS” with his flashlight, despite the risk from random gunfire. For the remainder of the NEO, he provided invaluable service to the embassy staff and Marine evacuation force. The NEO ended on 26 March 1997, and the JTF evacuated nearly 900 civilians safely without incident. The Special Forces sergeant had shown again the maturity and professionalism of SOF. His leadership and expertise reassured the embassy staff and evacuees alike, and he provided a crucial link with the evacuation force.

During the first days of the NEO, an AC-130U from JSOTF2 at Brindisi flew over Tirana and the surrounding area, providing close air support, armed reconnaissance, and intelligence. On at least one occasion, the AC-130U’s mere presence halted a AAA battery’s fire. Its crew also directed evacuation helicopters away from SA-2 surface-to-air missile batteries. The crew ensured that the NEO proceeded safely.

Operation NOBLE OBELISK

In April 1997, an Operational Detachment Alpha or “A” Team (13 Special Forces soldiers) from the 3rd Special Forces Group (A) deployed to Freetown, Sierra Leone, for Joint Combined Exchange Training. Their mission was to train and promote a professional, apolitical military, one supportive of the elected government. On 25 May 1997, rebel forces and military members toppled the government. Once rebel shooting erupted at their training site, Special Forces soldiers manned security positions inside their compound, communicated with



Operation SILVER WAKE (March 1997) evacuees boarding a marine helicopter in Tirana, Albania.

SOCEUR and EUCOM, and established intermittent contact with the embassy.

The next day, the detachment moved the 20 miles to Freetown. The Special Forces soldiers had to pass through two rebel roadblocks and near an army post, but the rapport with their former trainees enabled the Americans to proceed safely to the embassy.

In Freetown, the detachment commander divided his team to secure the two embassy compounds, and team members performed advance force operations, including reconnoitering the helicopter landing zone on the coast. They also defused a tense situation during a meeting of the senior ambassadors and rebel forces at the British High Commission residence. All of these activities required movement through a town torn apart by looting and indiscriminate fire.

On 29 May, team members conducted an early morning patrol through rebel-held areas to secure the landing zone for the Marines from the 22nd MEU. They established sniper positions, security, and coordinated with the Nigerians before the Marine helicopters arrived. The next day, the NEO began, and after escorting official U.S. personnel to the landing zone, Special Forces soldiers served as a buffer by establishing two blocking positions between the Marines and the marauding rebels. They succeeded in turning back rebel forces trying to reach the landing zone. The NEO evacuations ran from 30 May through 3 June, and a total of 2,509 people (including 454 U.S. citizens) were evacuated.



Operation NOBLE OBELISK (May 1997) Special Forces soldiers were in doing PT when a rebel force began shooting in their compound.

SOF played critical but very different roles in numerous NEOs in the late 1990s. General Henry H. Shelton attributed ASSURED RESPONSE's success to SOCEUR having "the right organization, the best equipment and, most important, the finest men and women ever fielded in special operations." SOF operators emphasized that "training as you are going to fight" fully prepared them for this short notice contingency. The NEO in Sierra Leone was ostensibly a Marine operation, but SOF made a critical difference by being in the right place at the right time. A mere 13 soldiers saved the embassy from further looting, protected crucial talks between senior ambassadors and the rebel leaders, and prevented firefights between the Marines and the rebels. Special Forces soldiers' so-called non-military skills—cultural sensitivity and area familiarization—paid large dividends. Likewise, the Special Forces sergeant in the American embassy during SILVER WAKE responded creatively in very fluid and ambiguous circumstances. Also, SOF participated in NEOs in the Congo and in Liberia for a second time. These NEOs demonstrated that SOF were the right force for situations that required independent initiative and mature professionalism to execute U.S. policy.

Operation FIRM RESPONSE

Civil unrest in Brazzaville, the Congo, led EUCOM to direct SOCEUR to prepare to deploy an ESAT and follow-on forces for an embassy reinforcement and possible evacuation. Twenty-two American and six Marine guards remained in the embassy as the security situation deteriorated quickly. The French had approximately 1,500 troops on the ground with armored vehicles and commandeered private vehicles outfitted for mounted patrols.

On 10 June, BG Geoffrey C. Lambert, COM-SOCEUR, sent a 12-man ESAT with six support personnel in a 7th SOS MC-130H to Brazzaville to link up with the Defense Attaché and French at the airport, proceed to the embassy, and assess the embassy's security. Arriving at Maya-Maya Airfield amidst heavy gunfire, the ESAT unloaded the aircraft, and French paratroopers put 56 evacuees on the MC-130. The team moved to the embassy and began to hard-



Operation FIRM RESPONSE, ESAT vehicle at the U.S. Embassy in Brazzaville, June 1997.

en their areas and improve living conditions at the embassy. During their nine days in Brazzaville, LTC David Mamaux led the team on multiple trips outside the compound to retrieve much needed supplies and sensitive materials, and to coordinate with the French military.

On 18 June, the team loaded the 12 remaining embassy personnel, their baggage, all sensitive items, and one dog, onto a chartered DC-3. The ESAT members and one Peace Corps volunteer departed Brazzaville later that same day. The assessment team provided crucial assistance to the U.S. ambassador when rebel forces attacked Brazzaville. The team conducted route reconnaissance, coordinated with the French military, provided communications support, and organized the embassy staff for the NEO. Amidst considerable violence and looting, this SOF team insured the safe evacuation of 69 Americans.

FIRM RESPONSE proved again the obvious value of engagement, area orientation, and situational awareness. FIRM RESPONSE also illustrated the good and bad of command and control. CINCEUR directed that this would be a low profile mission. The decision to deploy only an augmented ESAT on a single aircraft constrained how the SOF ground commander conducted the operation and, ultimately, put SOF at risk on the ground. Moreover, BG Lambert had to accept responsibility for the mission but gave up control to EUCOM J-3. In stark contrast to EUCOM's handling of this operation, BG Lambert picked the team leader for all the right reasons—experience, Africa time, and warrior and diplomatic skills. And, he empowered him to operate in the fluid circumstances in Brazzaville. Lambert's trust and confidence in his subordinates paid off.

Operation FIRM RESPONSE demonstrated what SOF brought to the “fight”—rapid planning and force sizing; an integrated package of air, ground, and maritime capabilities; mature, motivated, and well-trained military personnel; and an ability to operate in an ambiguous environment. FIRM RESPONSE exposed the dilemmas and opportunities confronting SOF leaders and operators as they faced the complex battlespace, which characterized the post-Cold War era and the early twenty-first century. It had a “classic merging of all levels—tactical, operational, strategic and diplomatic,” where a bullet or a word or a gesture could have had ramifications far beyond Brazzaville.



ESAT team leader coordinates with French Legionnaires at Brazzaville. Amidst considerable violence and looting, this SOF team, in the words of Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, “played a vital role . . . in ensuring the safe evacuation of scores of official and non-official Americans. It is a testament to their superb training and talents that this operation was successfully carried out with no American casualties.”

Humanitarian and Other Contingencies



Operation MOUNT HOPE III illustrated SOF's capabilities to do quick turnaround, low visibility operations. In June 1988, MH-47s from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Group (now Regiment) airlifted a Soviet MI-25 Hind helicopter from an isolated desert location to an airfield at night under extremely adverse weather conditions.

Operation FUERTE APOYO

In October 1998, Hurricane Mitch brought near 180-mph winds and approximately 18 inches of rain to Central America. The storm was the worst natural disaster to strike Central America, claiming nearly 10,000 dead and another 13,000 missing in Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Mitch destroyed approximately 60 percent of the affected area's infrastructure, destroying over 300 bridges and 70 percent of crops in the region, leaving 2,000,000 homeless. U.S. SOF responded to the call for aid before the rains had ended.

Phase I of the relief effort focused on the rescue of flood victims and lasted until the end of November. Navy SEALs and Army SOF, working together, used Zodiacs and MH-60 Blackhawk helicopters to rescue an estimated 1,500 victims, including Carlos Flores Facusse, the president of Honduras. Members of the 15th Special Operations Squadron (SOS) were

already in the area for a joint combined exchange training (JCET) exercise when the hurricane struck. They immediately refocused their mission to one of emergency assistance, delivering some 80 tons of oil, rice, beans, and sugar to villages cut off by the hurricane.



MH-60G Blackhawk crew members provide emergency evacuation to stranded villagers in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch.

In Phase II, the relief phase, Civil Affairs (CA) soldiers helped to rebuild some of the infrastructures destroyed by the category five storm. SOF personnel cleaned wells, built roads and bridges, and ferried food, water and medical supplies to the hardest hit regions. Phase III of the operation began in early March with the exercise NEW HORIZONS 99, whose aim was the restoration of the beleaguered region.

Ecuador, May 1999

A test of SOF's warrior skills occurred on the evening of 2 May 1999 in northern Ecuador. A convoy, transporting 37 SOF personnel and Ecuadorian soldiers to a joint counterdrug training exercise, was attacked by local bandits. The six-vehicle convoy was negotiating a hairpin turn on a muddy jungle road when it came upon a roadblock set up by a dozen masked and armed robbers.

The bandits had already stopped two passenger buses and several cars, and were holding about 50 civilians along the side of the road. Two bandits opened fire on the convoy, hitting the lead vehicle. The four Special Forces soldiers in that vehicle and a Civil Affairs soldier in the second vehicle engaged the bandits with their sidearms. Ecuadorian soldiers opened fire as well. After a firefight that lasted several minutes, eight of the bandits fled, leaving behind two dead and two prisoners, one of whom was

wounded. One U.S. and one Ecuadorian soldier suffered minor wounds, but there were no civilian casualties.

When the Ecuadorian soldiers interrogated the prisoners, the crowd turned ugly, shouting for the prisoners' execution. The SOF soldiers took control and protected the prisoners from the angry crowd while a Special Forces medic treated the wounded. The dead and captured attackers were then taken to the training site and turned over to the local police. The government of Ecuador subsequently praised the action as professional and appropriate. This incident reaffirmed SOF's mature judgment, readiness to react to ambiguous situations, and commitment to human rights.

Colombia, July 1999

SOF's ability to support far-flung contingencies was again demonstrated in July 1999, during the recovery of a U.S. Army reconnaissance aircraft that had crashed in the Colombian Andes. The crash killed five U.S. Army and two Colombian soldiers who had been engaged in an airborne counterdrug reconnaissance mission.

A search plane found the wrecked aircraft the day after the crash, but poor weather and rugged terrain inhibited recovery efforts. At the direction of General Charles Wilhelm, USCINCSOUTH, Special Operations Command, South (SOCSOUTH) deployed two MH-60L helicopters



MH-60L helicopters from D Company, 160th SOAR (A) transported SOF personnel to the crash site in Colombia.

and support from Company D, 160th SOAR(A), and a liaison element. USSOCOM provided refueling assets, combat controllers, weather forecasters, and the requisite operational support. Two 16th SOW MC-130E Combat Talon and one MC130H Combat Talon II moved the AFSOC elements from Hurlburt Field to Bogota, Colombia. An eight-man Special Forces element from the 7th SFG (A)—already supporting the counterdrug operational planning mission in Bogota with the U.S. country team—was incorporated into the operation to provide communications, coordination with host nation units, and their unique operational skills. Brigadier General James Parker, Commander SOC-SOUTH, was assigned to lead the effort.

The MH-60L crews had trained in high-altitude operations and were familiar with the region and the host nation forces. The helicopters transported and inserted the Special Forces soldiers and a USAF combat controller into the crash site. These SOF helped Colombian and other U.S. personnel search the wreckage. The MH-60Ls evacuated remains from the crash site to the forward operating location, whereupon an MC-130E and host nation aircraft carried them forward to Bogota. The Combat Talons also provided refueling capabilities at remote airfields that lacked adequate fuel stores.

The crash site proved to be an extremely dangerous environment. The wreckage was situated on a steep mountainside, with much of it suspended from trees and brush. The ground teams made an exhaustive search of the wreckage and surrounding area but were unable to enter the aircraft fuselage or move large pieces of the aircraft. To meet that challenge, a Special Forces team

with mountaineering experience and unique demolitions capabilities was brought in from Company C, 3rd Battalion, 7th SFG (A) in Puerto Rico. The team employed their specialized skills to good effect and completed the recovery of remains and equipment from the crash site. Upon completion of their mission, the Special Forces soldiers destroyed the remaining wreckage with explosives.

Approximately 120 SOF participated in the mission. At the conclusion of the recovery operation, General Wilhelm commended all of the participants, declaring that the “unknown tactical situation, adverse weather, and rugged terrain made this the most difficult and challenging operation of its type that I have seen in my 36 years of service.”

Vietnam Flood Relief

On 9 November 1999, after 60 inches of rainfall, the U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam requested an expedited military airlift of relief supplies. SOCPAC sent an MC-130H and an MC-130E from Okinawa to Guam to pick up relief supplies. Both aircraft were back in Okinawa, awaiting mission tasking three hours before SOCPAC received its orders. The aircraft delivered relief supplies to Hue, Vietnam, and returned to Okinawa by 11 November. The 353rd SOG executed this mission in less than 36



A 353rd SOG crewman helps to unload supplies at Hue.

hours, including the time to pre-position supplies. The U.S. ambassador congratulated the 353rd, saying that they were “the first to deliver aid to their doorstep. No other international donor has made as immediate an impact on the victims of the region as these flights allowed us to provide.”

Operation FUNDAMENTAL RESPONSE

Two weeks of unrelenting rain led to flash flooding in northern Venezuela, roads and bridges were damaged or destroyed, and flooding and landslides isolated many communities. On 16 December 1999, the government of Venezuela declared a state of emergency. By 27 December, officials reported a possible death toll of up to 30,000 with 400,000 people homeless. Soldiers from the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) and the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) were among the U.S. troops who provided assistance to flood and mudslide survivors in Venezuela.

The Special Forces soldiers assisted in the evacuation efforts. The company’s mission was to provide search and recovery and humanitarian assistance in support of the relief effort named Operation FUNDAMENTAL RESPONSE. The team arrived in the area on 17 December 1999 and aided in the rescue and evacuation of approximately 3,000 people.

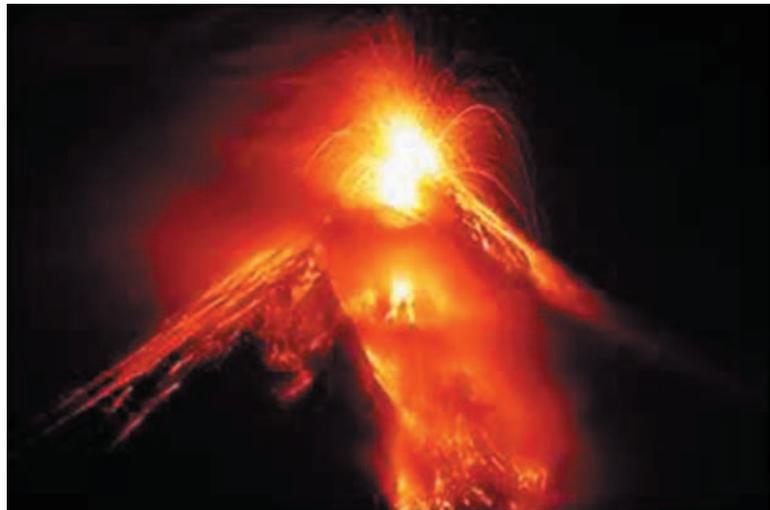
Joint Task Force FUNDAMENTAL RESPONSE was established on 27 December 1999 in response to a request from the American Embassy in Caracas for search and rescue support and humanitarian assistance. The operation was conducted in two phases, emergency and rehabilitation. During the emergency phase, JTF-FR evacuated 5,558 Venezuelans; delivered and distributed over 381 tons of food, medical supplies, water and other supplies; and participated in disaster relief, engineering, medical (to include hazardous materials), and water assessments. During the rehabilitation phase, the JTF mission was to produce and distribute potable water. Reverse osmosis water purification units produced 2,891,686 gallons of potable water and

distributed 2,542,568 gallons of water. Rotary wing aircraft (MH-60 and MH47) flew 344 sorties.

Operation FIERY RELIEF

Special Operations Command, Pacific forces led U.S. humanitarian assistance operations in the southern Philippines following the eruption of the Mount Mayon Volcano. From 19 Feb - 4 Mar 2000, SOCPAC forces transitioned from Exercise BALIKATAN 00 to relief operations to assist the Republic of the Philippines in easing the suffering of over 70,000 refugees. A SOCPAC C2 cell, an Operational Detachment Bravo and two Operational Detachments Alpha from 1/1st SFG (A), and two C-130H Combat Talon IIs from 353rd Special Operations Group aircraft were employed to transport supplies and set up tentage for the refugees in Legazpi City. On 5 March, 23 tents were erected, using the “train the trainer” concept—the Special Forces soldiers taught Filipino personnel to build tents without further assistance. The force reacted within 12 hours of notification and flawlessly executed the mission, delivering 36,000 pounds of tents and dust masks to families staying at evacuation centers. The JTF Commander summarized the operation as follows:

“This was an outstanding example of the responsiveness and flexibility of CINCPAC’s Special Operations Forces. Our operational time line was so constrained that it afforded little room for any delays or failures. It was a series of minor miracles and hard work on the part of the



Mount Mayon volcano erupting.



CAPT Robert Harward, DEPCOMSOCPAC, led the SOF relief effort in FIERY RELIEF.

entire JTF and the U.S. embassy that contributed to the success of the mission. Those miracles were the result of personal relationships developed by JTF personnel during BALIKATAN and relationships established by the US Embassy over the last few years. These relationships were the key to our success.”

Operation ATLAS RESPONSE

In 2000, two tropical storms dumped heavy rain in southeast Africa that left approximately a million people homeless. In Mozambique, hundreds of thousands of residents fled their homes. Germany, France, Britain, Spain, Portugal, Malawi, and the Netherlands responded with a multinational humanitarian relief effort. Working with these nations, the United States sent Joint Task Force-ATLAS RESPONSE (JTF-AR) to provide assistance to the devastated region.

SOCEUR provided the Joint Special Operations Task Force-ATLAS RESPONSE (JSOTF-AR), consisting of a headquarters and a Joint Special Operations Air Component (JSOAC). SOF also worked in the two Civil-Military Operations



SOF Helicopters, like the MH-53M, were crucial to the relief because of the air refueling capability.

Centers (CMOCs). Most important, the JSOTF integrated seamlessly into the JTF structure, enabling SOF to make a number of contributions that were critical to the success of relief efforts in Mozambique.

The JSOTF-AR flew the only helicopters that were air refuelable. These aircraft permitted the JSOTF to extend the range of coverage and duration of flight so that its aircrews could reach outlying areas. MC-130P Combat Shadow tankers provided fuel for these aircraft.

SOF personnel, both CA soldiers and JSOTF staff members, worked closely with individuals from various Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Private Volunteer Organizations (PVOs), and International Organizations (IOs) to coordinate relief efforts. After assessing conditions in the countryside, CA soldiers developed an exit strategy which convinced the government of Mozambique that it could then manage the relief efforts.

The JSOTF used for the first time long haul communications system called the theater deployable communications system (TDC) and this system contributed immeasurably to the JTF's communications requirements. SOF intel-

ligence assets augmented the JTF's capabilities by having SOF intelligence personnel take low-level digital photographs from SOF aircraft of flooded and damaged areas, significantly improving information products.

By the end of the mission, the United States had delivered more than 1.5 million pounds of cargo and had flown more than 1,100 passengers as part of the international relief efforts.

Tsunami Relief

SOF participation in Operation UNIFIED ASSISTANCE, the U.S. military Asian tsunami relief effort, included a group from SBT-20 and 22 that led teams of Thais and conventional U.S. sailors in riverine special warfare boats searching for and retrieving the dead from rivers, swamps, and coastal areas in Thailand.

An assessment team from the 4th Psychological Operations Group helped to broadcast information for local officials and relief organizations. CA teams from the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion assisted in planning and coordinating relief efforts. One of these teams discovered refugee camps in remote areas with unsanitary living conditions and made sure that these conditions were improved. Thus, the refugees could safely remain in the camps. Members of 1/1 SFG(A) assisted with relief efforts in Sri Lanka.

The 353rd SOG, flying five C-130s, was instrumental in the delivery of humanitarian aid and disaster relief to the tsunami ravaged countries of Thailand and Indonesia. All told, they delivered 796,500 pounds of supplies, 591 relief workers, conducted 32 casualty evacuation, and opened 4 airfields. The leadership and

assistance provided by 353rd SOG made a significant difference in improving the situation in Banda Aceh, as relief supplies and workers were pouring into the area creating a chaotic situation.

Hurricane Katrina Relief Effort

After Hurricane Katrina devastated the coastal areas of Louisiana and Mississippi in August 2005, AFSOC forces, led by the 347th Rescue Wing, assisted in emergency rescue operations. From 30 August to 17 September, a total of 20 HH-60 helicopters flew a 1,677 hours, saving 4,283 trapped individuals and delivering 52,598 pounds of cargo. This was the largest rescue operation ever conducted by the United States Air Force.



38th Rescue Squadron airman and a young boy are lifted to safety from the roof of the child's flooded home in New Orleans.

Personnel from 1/19th and 3/20th SFG (A) deployed to Louisiana to support Hurricane Katrina Relief efforts. In Mississippi, 126 personnel from 4th Psychological Operations Group supported relief efforts.



Ramp at Banda Aceh in early January 2005 during Operation UNIFIED ASSISTANCE. A 353rd SOG MC-130 is in the background.

GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM

Operation ENDURING FREEDOM Afghanistan

The U.S. Government quickly determined that Usama bin Laden (UBL) and his al Qaeda (AQ) terrorist network were responsible for the 9/11 attacks. The Taliban regime in Afghanistan harbored Usama Bin Laden and his supporters, and President Bush demanded that the Taliban hand them over to U.S. authorities. When the Taliban refused to comply, the President ordered U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) to eliminate Afghanistan as a sponsor and safe haven for international terrorists. This required removing the Taliban from power and liberating the Afghan people.

Afghanistan is a land-locked country approximately the size of Texas with a population of around 24 million. The massive mountain ranges and remote valleys in the north and east contrasted with the near desert-like conditions of the plains to the south and west. Road and rail networks were minimal and in disrepair. The rough terrain would challenge any U.S. military effort, especially moving large numbers of conventional troops. Because bombing and cruise-missile attacks, which could be launched quite soon, would probably not be decisive, and because a ground invasion might be decisive, but could not begin for some time, even conventional staff officers realized that an unconventional option could fill the gap between the conventional courses of action.

In September 2001, CENTCOM did not have an Unconventional Warfare (UW) plan for

Afghanistan. Initially, CENTCOM only tasked the Special Operations Command, Central (SOCCENT) with Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR), but SOCCENT planners, nonetheless, developed a plan for a UW campaign for Afghanistan in September. Late that month, after SOCCENT briefed its UW campaign plan, the CENTCOM Commander, General Tommy Franks, said, "Okay. Do it." Thus, SOF would

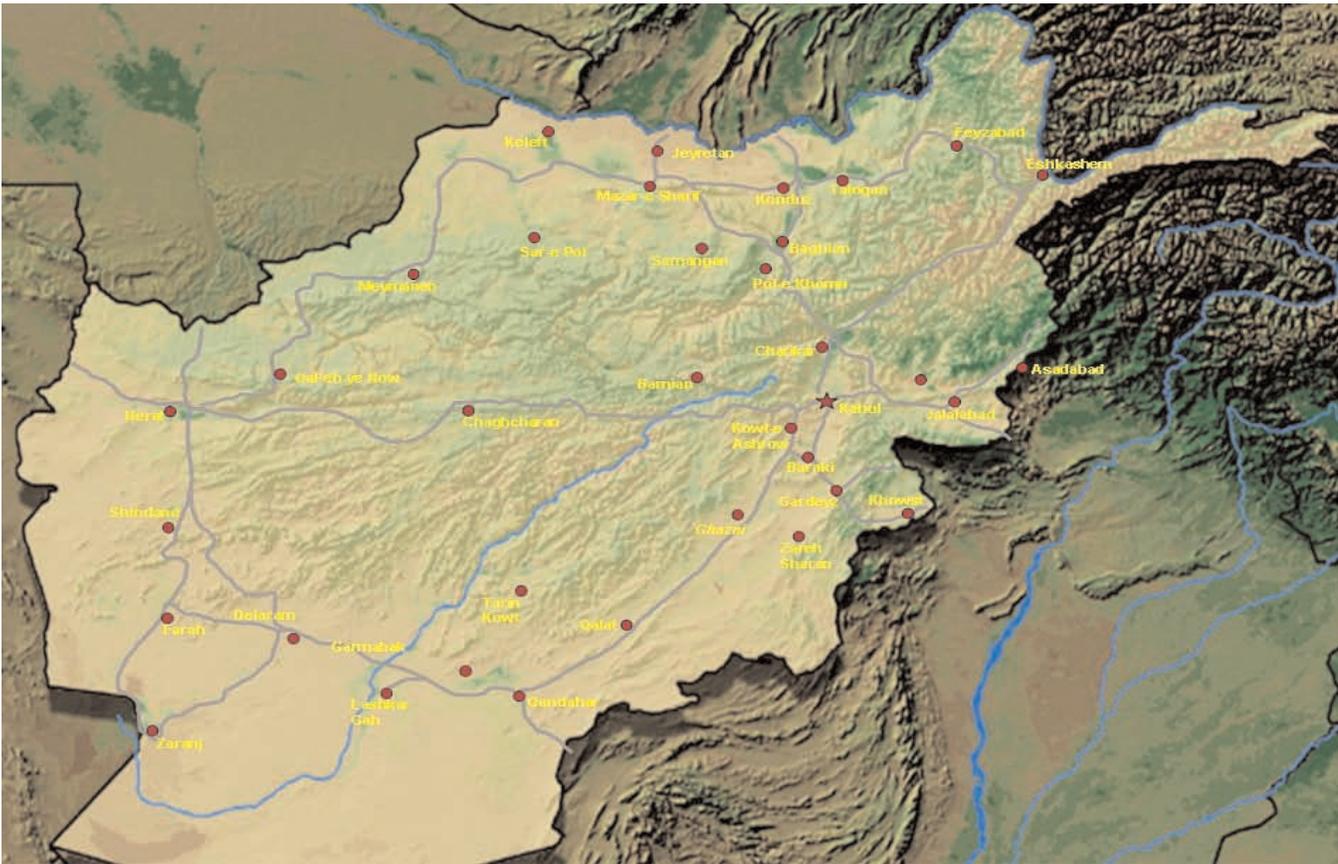
The Taliban (taken from "Tulaba," referring to students of Islam) was a Sunni Islamic, pro-Pashtun movement that ruled most of the country from 1996 until 2001, except for some small areas held by Northern Alliance forces northeast of Kabul and in the northwest of the country.

be his main effort against the Taliban.

U.S. Army Special Forces doctrine described seven phases of a U.S. sponsored insurgency: psychological preparation, initial contact, infiltration, organization, buildup, combat operations, and demobilization. Other government agencies, such as the State Department or the Central Intelligence Agency, took the lead role in the first three phases. U.S. SOF and DOD would typically take the leading role in the next three phases: organizing the insurgent forces; buildup (training and equipping the insurgent forces); and conducting combat operations with the insurgents. The final phase would be demobilization, which would involve a variety of U.S. agencies and the newly-installed government, so the "lead agency" for demobilization would vary depending on the situation.

Operation RESOLUTE EAGLE

After 9/11, the first SOF counterterrorism operations were not conducted in Afghanistan or even in the Middle East, but in Europe. Islamic extremists had transited the Balkans for years and had been involved in ethnic warfare in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In late September 2001, U.S. SOF learned that Islamic extremists with connections to Usama bin Laden were in Bosnia. SOCEUR forces quickly put together Operation RESOLUTE EAGLE to capture them. U.S. SOF surveilled the terrorists, detained one of the groups, and facilitated the capture of another group by coalition forces. These raids resulted in the capture of all the suspected terrorists and incriminating evidence for prosecution and intelligence exploitation.



Map of Afghanistan displaying terrain and major cities.

The use of indigenous Islamic, anti-Taliban forces would undermine Taliban legitimacy and reinforce that the fight was between Afghans, and not a U.S. led war against Afghanistan or Islam. In September 2001, the only insurgency opposing the Taliban was the beleaguered Northern Alliance, which controlled about 10 percent of Afghanistan.

To execute the plan, SOCCENT would stand up Joint Special Operations Task Forces (JSOTFs), the first of which would be established in Uzbekistan and would focus on CSAR and then UW. Beginning on 5 October, Joint Special Operations Task Force-North (JSOTF-N) stood up CSAR operations (under command of Col Frank Kisner) at Karshi-Kanabad (K2), Uzbekistan, and the bombing of Afghanistan began on 7 October. The 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) (5th SFG(A)), under the command of COL John Mulholland, deployed to K2 and formed the core of this JSOTF, more commonly known as Task Force (TF) DAGGER. UW became DAGGER's principal mission. This task force included aviators from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) and

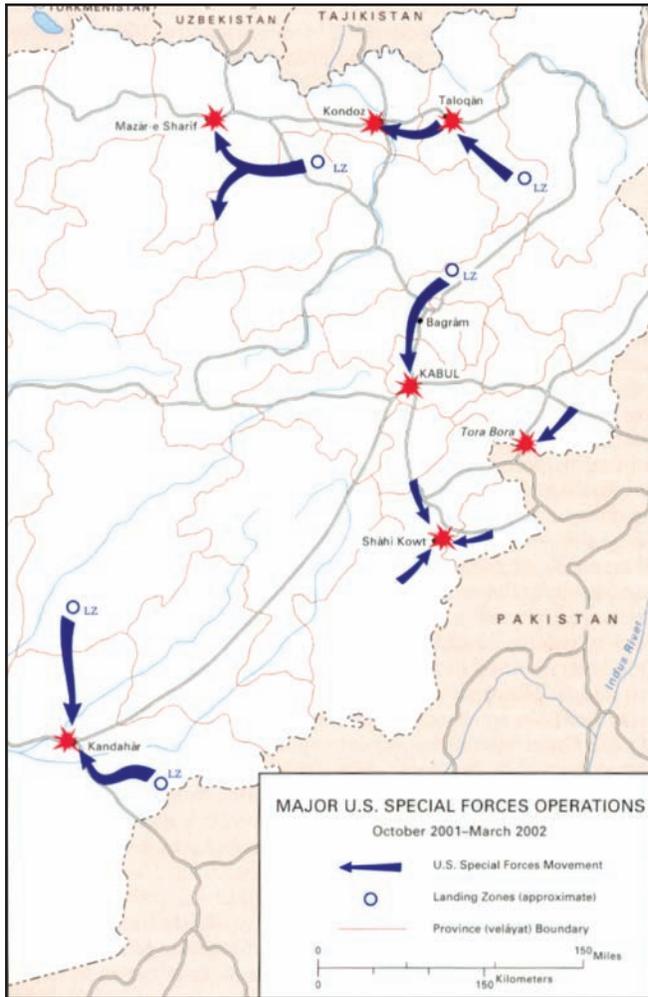
Special Tactics personnel from the Air Force Special Operations Command.

Operations in Northern Afghanistan—Mazar-e Sharif

The UW plan called for SF Operational Detachments Alpha (ODAs), augmented with tactical air control party (TACP) members, to land deep in hostile territory, contact members

Unconventional Warfare: A broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominately conducted by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes guerrilla warfare and other direct offensive, low visibility, covert, or clandestine operations, as well as the indirect activities of subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and evasion and escape. Special operations Forces (SOF) provide advice, training, and assistance to existing indigenous resistance organizations.

*Joint Doctrine Encyclopedia
16 July 1997*



of the Northern Alliance (NA), coordinate their activities in a series of offensive operations, call U.S. airpower to bear against Taliban and AQ forces, and help overthrow the government of Afghanistan. Bad weather in Uzbekistan and northern Afghanistan delayed the infiltration of the first ODAs in Afghanistan until the night of 19 October 2001. This insertion, and the ones that followed, required a hazardous, two-and-a-half hour flight, at night, through high mountains, and in extremely dicey weather.

After the first 12-man detachment, ODA 595, reached its landing zone south of Mazar-e Sharif, it linked up with General Abdul Rashid Dostum, a warlord with a strong power base in this area. ODA 595 split into two elements to better assist Dostum's scattered forces.

“Right off the bat,” RADM Albert Calland, SOCCENT Commander, recalled, “we knew that the Northern Alliance was working, we knew the history that the Soviets had, and that bringing a large land force into Afghanistan was not the way to do business. So, it became quickly apparent that the way to do this was to get 5th Group and put them in place to start a UW campaign.”

Team Alpha began calling in close air support (CAS) from U.S. aircraft, but Dostum initially forbade the team from moving close to the Taliban lines. He told the SF soldiers, “500 of my men can be killed, but not one American can even be injured or you will leave.” Shortly, the team chose their own observation posts (OPs), and their calls for fire became more effective.

The massive close air support, brought down by the team, had a huge adverse psychological effect on the Taliban and a correspondingly positive effect on General Dostum's men. Starting on 22 October, Team Alpha rode on horses with Dostum's cavalry, and from OPs, team members called in CAS missions. In one 18-hour period, they destroyed over 20 armored and 20 support vehicles. At first, the Taliban sent in reinforcements, but all that did was provide more targets for the SOF in the OPs. Numerous key command posts, armored vehicles, troop concentrations, and anti-aircraft artillery pieces were destroyed by air strikes.

Meanwhile, Team Bravo, also mounted on horseback, moved south and interdicted Taliban forces in the Alma Tak Mountain Range, destroying over 65 enemy vehicles, 12 command positions, and a large enemy ammunition storage bunker. ODA 534, who inserted in early November to assist Mohammed Atta's forces allied with Dostum, also directed CAS to similar effect.

Mazar-e Sharif fell to Dostum and the ODA on 10 November. The capture of Mazar-e Sharif was the first major victory for the U.S.-led coalition in the war in Afghanistan, giving it a strategic foothold and an airfield in northern Afghanistan. The victory once again validated SF's UW role as a combat multiplier. This template was used elsewhere in Afghanistan.

Objectives Rhino and Gecko

On the night of 19-20 October 2001, U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) airdropped into Afghanistan, seizing two objectives and demon-

strating America's ability to assault into Taliban strongholds. The plan called for pre-assault fires and then a Ranger airborne insertion on Objective Rhino and a helicopter insertion/assault on Objective Gecko.

Objective Rhino, a desert landing strip southwest of Kandahar, was divided into four objectives, TIN, IRON, COPPER, and COBALT (a walled compound). Before the Rangers parachuted in, B-2 Stealth bombers dropped 2,000 pound bombs on Objective TIN. Then, AC-130 gunships fired on buildings and guard towers within Objective COBALT, and identified no targets in Objective IRON. The gunships placed heavy fire on Objective TIN, reporting 11 enemy KIAs and 9 "squirters."

After the pre-assault fires, four MC-130s dropped 199 Army Rangers, from 800 feet and under zero illumination, onto Objective RHINO. A Company(-), 3rd Battalion, 75th Rangers, with an attached sniper team, assaulted Objective TIN. They next cleared Objective IRON and established blocking positions to repel counter-attacks. C Company assaulted Objective COBALT, with PSYOP loudspeaker teams broadcasting messages encouraging the enemy to surrender. The compound was unoccupied.

A Combat Talon landed 14 minutes after clearing operations began, and six minutes later, a flight of helicopters landed at the RHINO forward arming and refueling point (FARP). Air Force Special Tactics Squadron (STS) personnel also surveyed the desert landing strip, and overhead AC-130s fired upon enemy reinforcements. After more than five hours on the ground, the Rangers boarded MC-130s and departed, leaving behind PSYOP leaflets.

Objective GECKO was the compound belonging to Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar. SOF's mission was to disrupt Taliban leadership and AQ communications, gather intelligence, and detain select personnel. AC-130s and MH-60s delivered pre-assault fires on the objective. Four MH-47s infiltrated 91 SOF troopers onto the compound. Security positions were established, and the buildings on the objective were cleared. While the ground forces were clearing the buildings, the MH-60s provided CAS, and the MH-47s loitered waiting to pick up the force. The ground force spent one hour on the objective.

While Objectives RHINO and GECKO were being assaulted, four MH-60K helicopters inserted 26 Rangers and two STS at a desert air strip, to establish a support site for contingency operations. One MH-60K crashed while landing in "brown-out" conditions, killing two Rangers and injuring others.

Securing Kabul and northeastern Afghanistan

On 19 October, TF DAGGER also infiltrated a second detachment, ODA 555, into northeastern Afghanistan to contact the Northern Alliance forces dug in on the Shomali Plains, where they controlled an old Soviet airbase at Bagram. The Special Forces team met with warlords General Fahim Khan and General Bismullah Khan on 21 October at Bagram Airfield (BAF) to establish a plan to retake the Shomali Plains between Bagram and Kabul. Upon surveying the airfield, the detachment discovered that the air traffic control tower was an ideal position for an OP. The control tower provided observation of Taliban forces across the plains, and 555 began calling in air strikes. The calls for fire lasted through mid-November, and "Triple Nickel" was assisted by ODA 594 which inserted on 8 November.

The bombings so weakened the Taliban and its defenses that the Generals Khan decided to attack south, well ahead of schedule. When the Northern Alliance soldiers attacked on 13 November, the enemy defenses crumbled, and on the next day, to the surprise of the world press, General Fahim Khan's ground forces liberated Kabul without incident. The Taliban and al Qaeda forces had fled in disarray toward Kandahar in the south and into the sanctuary of the Tora Bora Mountains to the east near Jalalabad.

While prosecuting the fight for Mazar-e Sharif and the Shomali Plains, TF DAGGER simultaneously focused on the central northern area around Taloqan-Konduz, to the east of Mazar-e Sharif. ODA 585 had infiltrated into the area on 23 October to support Burillah Khan. On 8 November, ODA 586 inserted and moved quickly to link up with General Daoud Khan, a warlord who had gained fame fighting the Soviet invaders. By 11 November, SF soldiers had established OPs overlooking the defen-

sive positions around Taloqan and were prepared to call in close air support. Daoud launched his offensive that day and by midnight Taloqan had fallen, a major victory for the NA. Daoud and his SF began moving west, toward the city of Konduz.

On 13 November, Daoud met his first heavy resistance, and after receiving both heavy direct and indirect fire, the SF element repositioned to a different OP, called in air strikes, and helped to repel a Taliban counterattack. Daoud relied on U.S. air attacks to weaken the Taliban, and for the next ten days, the ODAs and their TACPs

called in air support to pound Taliban forces near Khanabad and Konduz. Daoud initiated talks with the enemy in Konduz, and the Taliban leaders agreed to surrender on 23 November.

Qala-i Jangi

As part of the terms, the Taliban and foreign fighters would capitulate on 25 November, and the Northern Alliance would incarcerate them in Qala-i Jangi fortress, Dostum's former headquarters. But on 24 November, at a checkpoint near the Mazar-e Sharif airport, NA forces stopped an armed enemy convoy and accepted the surrender of the enemy force, a day early and 100 miles west of the agreed upon capitulation site. Despite warnings by the American Special Forces soldiers, the NA did not search the prisoners and, instead, only simply told them to lay down their arms. The prisoners were taken to the Qala-i Jangi fortress, meaning "house of war." This huge, nineteenth century fortress on the western outskirts of Mazar-e Sharif was divided in half by a 20-foot high mud-brick wall. The enemy prisoners were housed in the southern compound, which contained a stor-

age area for ammunition and weapons and an underground bunker.

As the prisoners were unloaded at the fortress, NA guards attempted to search them, and one prisoner exploded a grenade in a suicide attack, killing himself, two other prisoners, and two NA officers. Later the same evening, prisoners carried out a



An Aerial View of Qala-i Jangi.

ers carried out a second grenade suicide attack against the guards, whom they outnumbered four to one. The next day, two CIA agents went to the fortress to question the prisoners. While they questioned prisoners, the enemy attacked and overpow-

ered their guards, seizing control of the southern compound along with its stockpile of ammunitions and weapons. They killed one of the Americans, Mike Spann, and the second American narrowly escaped but remained pinned down inside the fortress.

The Battle of Qala-i Jangi lasted from 25 to 29 November, and U.S. SOF assisted the NA forces in quelling this revolt. The ad hoc reaction force—consisting of American and British troops, DIA linguists, and local interpreters—established overwatch positions, set up radio communications, and had a maneuver element search for the trapped CIA agent. This



U.S. SOF and NA on the northwest parapet of the Qala-i Jangi Fortress.

American escaped on the 25th. The next day, as the SOF reaction force called in air strikes, one bomb landed on a parapet and injured five Americans, four British, and killed several Afghan troops. The pilots had inadvertently entered friendly coordinates rather than target coordinates into the Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) guidance system. Later during the battle, AC-130s were used to contain the enemy. Ultimately, the NA forces, supported by tank fire, fought their way into the southern compound. An American team recovered the body of the dead American. On 29 November, the last of the enemy fighters surrendered.

The timing of the enemy uprising suggested that the Taliban planned to use the “Trojan Horse” attack to slip armed enemy soldiers into a lightly defended position near Mazar-e Sharif. Had the gambit succeeded, the Taliban could have controlled the main approach to Mazar-e Sharif and the massive munitions stockpile at Qala-i Jangi, and would likely be reinforced by armed enemy forces pre-positioned nearby. U.S. SOF and Northern Alliance efforts at Qala-i Jangi prevented that from taking place.

The U.S. SOF officer who commanded the ground force, MAJ Mark Mitchell, received the first Distinguished Service Cross awarded since the Vietnam War for his leadership. A Navy SEAL, BMCS Stephen Bass, received the Navy Cross for his actions and leadership during this battle.

During the Mazar-e Sharif and Taloqan-Konduz campaigns, the Northern Alliance forces, accompanied by SOF ODAs and joint tactical air controllers (JTACs) directing air strikes, liberated six provinces of Afghanistan. To accomplish this feat, SF and JTAC personnel had traveled by horse, all-terrain vehicle, pickup truck, and on foot along hazardous mountain trails, often at night and in extremes of weather and terrain. They did all of this in about a month with only a few U.S. casualties, while inflicting thousands of casualties on the enemy and completing the destruction of Taliban and AQ defensive positions in the north.

Beside SF and AFSOC, other SOF combat multipliers made significant contributions to the liberation of northern and central Afghanistan. PSYOP leaflets offered rewards for fugitive Taliban and AQ leaders, informed the Afghan



Two SOF operators identify targets.

people about their pending liberation, and warned them of the dangers of unexploded ordnance and mines. Civil Affairs teams with Task Force DAGGER began assessing humanitarian needs even as the fighting was winding down in northern Afghanistan.

Two Approaches to Kandahar

Following the tactical successes in northern Afghanistan, Kandahar, far to the south, was the next U.S. objective. The populous city was of a different ethnic makeup—Pashtuns, not Tajiks—and was the spiritual and political center of the Taliban movement.

Two separate SF elements infiltrated into the region on 14 November, linked up with anti-Taliban forces, and approached the city from the north and the south, with the host nation commanders picking up support along the way. ODA 574 inserted into Tarin Khovt to support and protect the emerging choice as Afghanistan’s future leader, Hamid Karzai. Only two days later, ODA 574 had to act quickly to save Karzai’s resistance group from destruction. Fearing Karzai’s potential power, Taliban leaders sent 500 soldiers north to crush him. In response, Karzai deployed his handful of men and relied on his SF team for CAS. U.S. planes pounded the Taliban convoy, and the Afghan opposition fighters repulsed the attack.

On 5 December, the U.S. effort suffered a setback. While the Special Forces were calling in CAS, a 2,000-pound JDAM bomb landed in the middle of their position. The soldiers were literally blown off their feet. Three Americans were killed and dozens wounded, along with many of their Afghan allies.

As the SF teams were recovering from the bomb accident, Karzai’s negotiators finalized an

agreement for the surrender of the Taliban forces and the city of Kandahar. On 6 December, the force began moving again toward the now open city.

Meanwhile, to the southeast of Kandahar near the Pakistan border, on the night of 18 November, another SF element from TF DAGGER, ODA 583, infiltrated and joined the local anti-Taliban leader, Gut Sharzai, the former governor of Kandahar. His force was heavily outnumbered by the local Taliban and



Hamid Karzai (middle row, third from left) and Special Forces.

in a vulnerable position. The SF team moved quickly to provide weapons and food to support his army of close to 800 tribesmen.

In late November, the ODA's CAS calls drove the Taliban out of the Takrit-e Pol area, and Sharzai's forces seized the town and the main highway from Spin Boldak to Kandahar. These successes allowed Sharzai's forces to man an OP overlooking the Kandahar Airfield, and for the next week, ODA 583 directed CAS on Taliban positions. On 7 December, as his forces moved to attack the airfield, Sharzai learned of the surrender terms Karzai had negotiated. Sharzai gathered his personal security detail and, along with members of 583, sped into the city toward the governor's mansion, his former home. The city had fallen without a shot, and Karzai subsequently confirmed Sharzai as the governor of the city.

Tora Bora

In mid-November 2001, the CIA began receiving reports that a large contingent of AQ, to include UBL, had fled from the area around Kabul to Nangahar Province. Subsequent reporting corroborated AQ presence in the vicinity of Jalalabad and to its south along the Spin Ghar Mountain Range. Analysts within both

the CIA and CENTCOM correctly speculated that UBL would make a stand along the northern peaks of the Spin Ghar Mountains at a place then called Tora Gora. Tora Bora, as it was redubbed in December, had been a major strong-

hold of AQ for years and provided routes into Pakistan. The mountainous complex sat between the Wazir and Agam valleys and amidst 12,000 foot peaks, roughly 15 kilometers north of the Pakistan border. AQ had developed fortifications, stockpiled with weapon systems, ammunition and food within

the jagged, steep terrain. The terrorists had improved their positions over many years, digging hundreds of caves and refuges and establishing training camps. UBL knew the terrain from the time of the Soviet invasion and chose it, undoubtedly, as a place to make a stand prior to the onset of winter and to defeat American attempts both to capture senior leaders and destroy the organization. Estimates of AQ troop strength ranged widely from 250 to 2000 personnel. With large numbers of well-supplied, fanatical AQ troops dug into extensive fortified positions, Tora Bora appeared to be an extremely tough target.

Moreover, the local anti-Taliban forces of the Eastern Alliance (also dubbed Opposition Group—OG—forces), under the command of Generals Hazarat Ali and Haji Zaman, were even more disorganized than those of the NA. Not only were OG forces divided into mutually hostile factions competing for control of Nangahar Province, but each group was also deeply distrustful of American aims. Ali was especially reluctant to ally himself overtly to U.S. forces, given his fears that he would be blamed for introducing foreign occupying troops into eastern Afghanistan. Based on estimates, Ali and Zaman may have had up to 2000 men,

ISAF's Role

Following the fall of the Taliban regime in November 2001, factions from Afghanistan gathered in Bonn, Germany, to develop a plan for Afghanistan's future. The Afghan leaders signed an agreement on 5 December 2001, establishing an interim government and setting milestones for establishment of an army, a constitution, and presidential and parliamentary elections. Six days later, on 11 December, Hamid Karzai was sworn in as Prime Minister of the interim government.

With the Bonn Agreement in place, the international community pledged support to help the new government and committed an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). ISAF was to assist the Government of Afghanistan (GOA) and the international community by maintaining security within its area of operation. Additionally ISAF would support GOA efforts to provide a safe and secure environment for elections, spread the rule of law, and assist in the reconstruction of the country.

Initially, ISAF focused on securing Kabul. In August 2003, the UN Security Council authorized the expansion of the ISAF mission beyond Kabul, and in August 2004, NATO assumed authority for ISAF. Over time, ISAF took over responsibility for security operations from the U.S.-led coalition in the regional commands (RCs) established throughout the country. ISAF would take over RC North in October 2003, RC West in September 2005, RC South in July 2006, and RC East in October 2006.

but whether this force would prove adequate to both assault fortifications and encircle the enemy remained to be seen. Given AQ's orientation, surrounding and cutting off the terrorists' egress routes would also prove a tremendous challenge, especially given uncertain force ratios. Added to these challenges were the advent of Ramadan in December and the fact that AQ was known to have a sympathetic following in Nangahar Province, particularly in the

vicinity of Tora Bora. The likelihood of successfully repeating combined operations that had worked so well in the Shomali Plains, Konduz, and Mazar-e Sharif seemed remote.

American troop levels in Afghanistan were far from robust in late November 2001. In mid-November, the CIA had deployed one of its "Jawbreaker" teams to Jalalabad to encourage General Ali's pursuit of UBL and to call air strikes against the AQ forces. The Jawbreaker element, however, was very small and the operatives needed assistance. Few conventional forces were available. At the time, the U.S. Marines had established a small forward base at Rhino, south of Kandahar, and only a reinforced company of the 10th Mountain Division was at Bagram and Mazar-e Sharif.

TF DAGGER had already committed most of its forces elsewhere in Afghanistan. When approached by the CIA, the Dagger commander, COL John F. Mulholland, agreed to commit an ODA and potentially a few others once the "Jawbreaker" team had established a presence and developed a feasible plan. Even if TF DAGGER—or even CENTCOM—had the forces to commit, the existing logistics infrastructure would likely have proven insufficient to sustain a long fight. Few MEDEVAC and resupply platforms were currently in country.

Thus, a general consensus emerged within CENTCOM that despite its obvious limitations, the only feasible option remained the existing template: employment of small SOF teams to coordinate airpower in support of Afghan militia. On 2 December, ODA 572, using the code-name COBRA 25, convoyed to Jalalabad both to prod General Ali to attack and coordinate air support.

The forces of Hazarat Ali were a heterogeneous mixture of Eastern Alliance soldiers whose fighting qualities proved remarkably poor. Given its resource constraints, TF DAGGER would permit COBRA 25 only to provide the Afghans advice and assistance with air support, not to lead them into battle or venture toward the forward lines. The plan was to send the Afghan forces into the Tora Bora Mountains to assault AQ positions located in well-protected canyons, with the ODA in observation posts. The latest intelligence placed senior AQ leaders, including UBL, squarely in Tora Bora.

Directing joint fires and various groups of Afghans toward AQ positions, COBRA 25 hoped to either capture or destroy UBL and his AQ followers.

The detachment moved south out of Jalalabad to General Ali's headquarters in the vicinity of Pachir Agam on 6 December and completed plans to establish OPs along the high ground northwest and northeast of the canyon. The ODA established an OP on the canyon's eastern ridgeline on 7 December with seven personnel and immediately began directing air support. The detachment called the position COBRA 25A. The detachment then established a second OP, COBRA 25B, with six personnel on the northwestern side of the canyon Bora on 8 December. Small Afghan security elements accompanied each split teams to protect them while they called air strikes. COBRA 25B relieved a "Jawbreaker" element that had been in position calling air strikes for five days. The split teams then coordinated their air strikes, bottling AQ into its defensive positions and preventing it from moving north.

As COBRA 25 established its surveillance positions, CENTCOM committed an additional SOF Task Force, TF 11, to the fight at Tora Bora. On 8 December, TF 11 assumed command and control of the battle. Lacking the restrictions imposed upon the ODA, TF 11 planned to move its elements farther south in concert with Ali's troop movements and along his front line trace. TF 11 could commit a larger number of U.S. SOF personnel, and even employ a small British contingent. Still, the TF 11 force package would total only 50 SOF personnel, and added to the 13 personnel from COBRA 25, the SOF contingent would be up against a much larger force in a mountainous area approximately 9.5 kilometers wide and 10 kilometers long.

Along with General Ali, TF 11's ground force commander conducted his initial reconnaissance of the Tora Bora area on 8 December. He caught a glimpse of just how well-defended the AQ fortifications were during this reconnaissance. After entering the northeastern portion of the main battle area, the reconnaissance party received accurate small arms and mortar fire. Fortunately, the party took no casualties. The TF 11 commander also discovered that General Ali's forces maintained no real front line trace,

but rather clusters of troops in the Agam Valley that were scattered willy-nilly.

The restrictions placed on COBRA 25 prevented them from observing activity in the center and south of the battle area. The TF 11 commander planned on inserting several OPs forward of OPs 25A and 25B during hours of darkness of 10 December, and augment both 25A and 25B OPs with two TF 11 operators each.

In the late afternoon on 10 December, however, General Ali requested that several SOF personnel accompany him to the front to direct CAS in support of a planned frontal assault. With only a five-minute notice, the SOF commander sent two SOF and one translator to support the general and show that Americans would face the same dangers his men did. At approximately 1600 local, Afghan troops reported that they had not only spotted UBL but had him surrounded, and asked for additional help. Changing mission from planning to execution, the TF 11 commander directed his task force (33 soldiers) to move quickly to the front to support Ali. With darkness rapidly approaching, the SOF element spent at least a half-hour convincing Ali's rear echelon to provide guides to the front. Guides secured, the SOF element loaded into six Toyota pick-ups to begin its 10 kilometer trek at approximately 1730 local. Midway en route while traversing a steep, one vehicle trail, the Americans ran into a convoy of Ali and his men departing the battlespace. As the Afghan forces passed by, Ali promised the TF commander that he would turn his convoy around at the bottom of the hill to continue the pursuit of UBL. Neither Ali nor his forces would return that night.

In the meantime, the two SOF operators who had accompanied Ali began receiving effective fire from multiple AQ positions in the northeast quadrant of the battlespace. Upon receiving fire, the remaining Afghan soldiers fled the battlefield, leaving the two special operators and their translator both stranded and potentially surrounded. These SOF personnel radioed their evasion codeword and began moving under enemy fire toward friendly positions. Fortunately, the SOF evaders had communications with the TF 11 soldiers in 25A OP; they sent word to the task force, now mounted and roughly two-thirds of its way to the front.

As the evaders attempted to clear the danger areas, the men of TF 11 tried to locate any Afghan OP with eyes on the AQ front line and UBL specifically. No such position existed. The Afghan guides who accompanied the SOF personnel grew extremely nervous as the party approached known AQ positions and refused to go farther. Faced with the improbable circumstance of Ali's return, much less pinpointing UBL's position at night, the QRF turned its attention to recovering the evaders. After moving several kilometers under cover of darkness, attempting to ascertain friend from foe, and negotiating through "friendly" checkpoints without requisite dollars for the required levy to pass, the evaders finally linked up with their parent element. All returned to base to reassess the situation and plan for subsequent insertion the following day.

Despite what in retrospect may have seemed a comedy of errors, the events of 10 December proved to be the decisive ones of the operation at Tora Bora. The decision to augment COBRA 25A with two TF 11 personnel proved very beneficial. Having observed and recorded the events unfolding at the AQ strongpoint, to include Ali's retreat and the SOF evasion, the TF 11 soldiers successfully identified AQ mortar positions and heavy machine guns. Upon the departure of friendly personnel the night of 10 December, these two soldiers, along with the COBRA 25A JTAC, called air strikes for 17 continual hours on 10-11 December, knocking out principal AQ positions. The decisive point in the battle for Tora Bora, the actions on 10-11 December, caused AQ elements to retreat to alternate positions and enabled the Afghan militia to capture key terrain in the vicinity of UBL's potential location the following day.

Events of 10 December also led TF 11 to revise its plan. It had originally intended to employ several small OPs while keeping the bulk of its forces at General Ali's headquarters to provide a quick reaction force (QRF). The purpose of the QRF was to respond either to sightings of UBL or to employ forces to assist Ali in exploiting an advance. After his experiences of 9-10 December, the task force commander determined that he needed more forces forward to establish a front and thus entice Ali to hold terrain. Additionally, he and his men believed that there would be nothing "quick" about any response from a rearward position, given the difficulties they had encountered and their lack of any rotary wing lift.

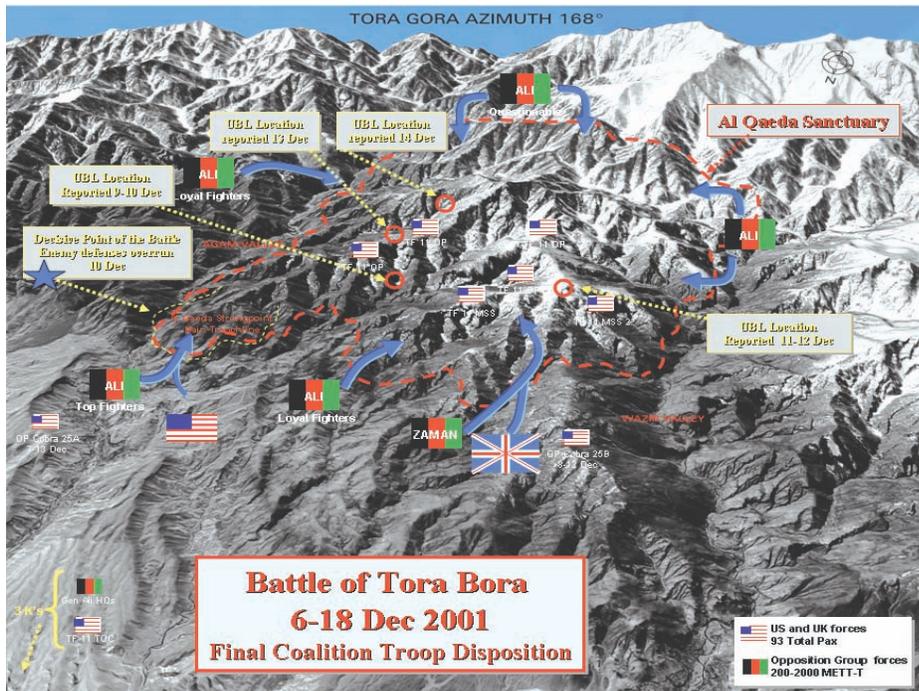
Thus, on the afternoon of 11 December, TF 11 elements began their treks into the Tora Bora Mountains. The task force planned to insert at least four OPs in a northern arc and move them gradually forward as they directed joint fires onto AQ positions. Two mission support sites (MSSs) would deploy just behind the OPs to provide local, dismounted QRF and logistics support and to liaise with General Ali's forces. For the most

part, the movements proved slow and hazardous. After a short trip in the ubiquitous pickup trucks, the various TF 11 teams unloaded and moved forward on foot with burros carrying their packs. Moving into mountains where the altitude varied from 10,000 to 12,000 feet, they progressed slowly over rocky and narrow paths.

From the 11th - 14th of December, the TF 11 teams continually rained fire onto enemy positions as the Afghan forces of Hazarat Ali began moving into the canyons. The teams hit targets of opportunity, to include the suspected locations of UBL, all the while attempting to avoid fratricide in the absence of any semblance of a front



Air Strikes in the Tora Bora Mountains.



terrain from the combined effort, save a nominal Afghan security detail.

Despite the challenges, each day the various TF 11 observation posts would also move forward to call for more accurate fire and support the movement of Ali's forces. Each night, as the enemy forces would light their campfires to keep warm, the teams used their thermal imagers and optics to bring in bombs and fire missions from a variety of aircraft, including AC-130 gunships. Having obviated the need for OPs 25B and 25A, the task force commander

pulled both elements on the early mornings of 13 and 14 December respectively. By 14 December, the task force commander convinced Ali and his men to occupy overnight the terrain that they had captured. The noose around AQ tightened consistently through 17 December, and the enemy pocket shrank accordingly. By 17 December, Ali declared victory. The general consensus remained that the surviving AQ forces had either fled to Pakistan or melted into the local population. TF 11 forces departed the battlefield on 19 December, but without knowing whether they had killed UBL and destroyed AQ in Afghanistan.

On the afternoon of 11 December, in a Byzantine twist, Ali's erstwhile compatriot turned rival, General Zaman, engaged in negotiations with AQ elements for a conditional surrender. CENTCOM refused to support the action, but the negotiation caused TF 11 to pause bombing for several hours to avoid fratricide. For each evening through the 14th, Ali and Zaman's forces departed from the terrain that they had seized to seek shelter and eat. Ramadan had commenced, and Eastern Alliance forces observed religious requirements to fast during daylight hours. The TF 11 operators were frequently the only individuals occupying



An SF Soldier assists Eastern Alliance Soldiers in supervising al Qaeda Prisoners.

The enemy had fought stubbornly; yet, their fortifications proved no match for the tons of ordinance, coordinated by SOF in OPs. Estimates of AQ dead from the battle were hard to determine. TF 11's ground force commander estimated roughly 250. What has since been determined with reasonable certainty was that UBL was indeed in the vicinity of Tora Bora in December 2001. All source reporting corroborated his presence on several days from 9-14 December. The fact that SOF came as close to capturing or killing UBL as U.S. forces have to date makes Tora Bora a controversial fight. Given the commitment of fewer than 100 American personnel, U.S. forces proved unable to block egress routes from Tora Bora south into Pakistan, the route that UBL most likely took. Regardless, the defeat for AQ at Tora Bora, coupled with the later defeat during Operation ANACONDA, ensured that neither AQ, nor the Taliban would mass forces to challenge American troops in the field until 2006. SOF elements proved once again that combining airpower in support of a surrogate force could result in a decisive defeat of a well-fortified and numerically superior enemy force, no matter how disciplined.

With the capture of Kabul and Kandahar and the destruction of organized resistance in Tora Bora, Afghanistan was now in effect liberated. It had taken fewer than 60 days of concentrated military operations and only a few hundred soldiers to seize the country from the Taliban and its terrorist allies. On 11 December 2001 Hamid Karzai was sworn in as Prime Minister of the interim government.

Operation ANACONDA

But, the success of the SOCCENT UW campaign did not mean that all Taliban or AQ had been killed or driven out of Afghanistan. The coalition forces continued to search for underground enemy networks. The focus of U.S. intelligence shifted toward the southeast, specifically the Gardez-Khowst-Orgun-e triangle. Indications pointed to a major concentration of enemy forces in the Shah-i-Khot Valley in Paktia Province. The operation to destroy the enemy there was code-named Operation ANACONDA.

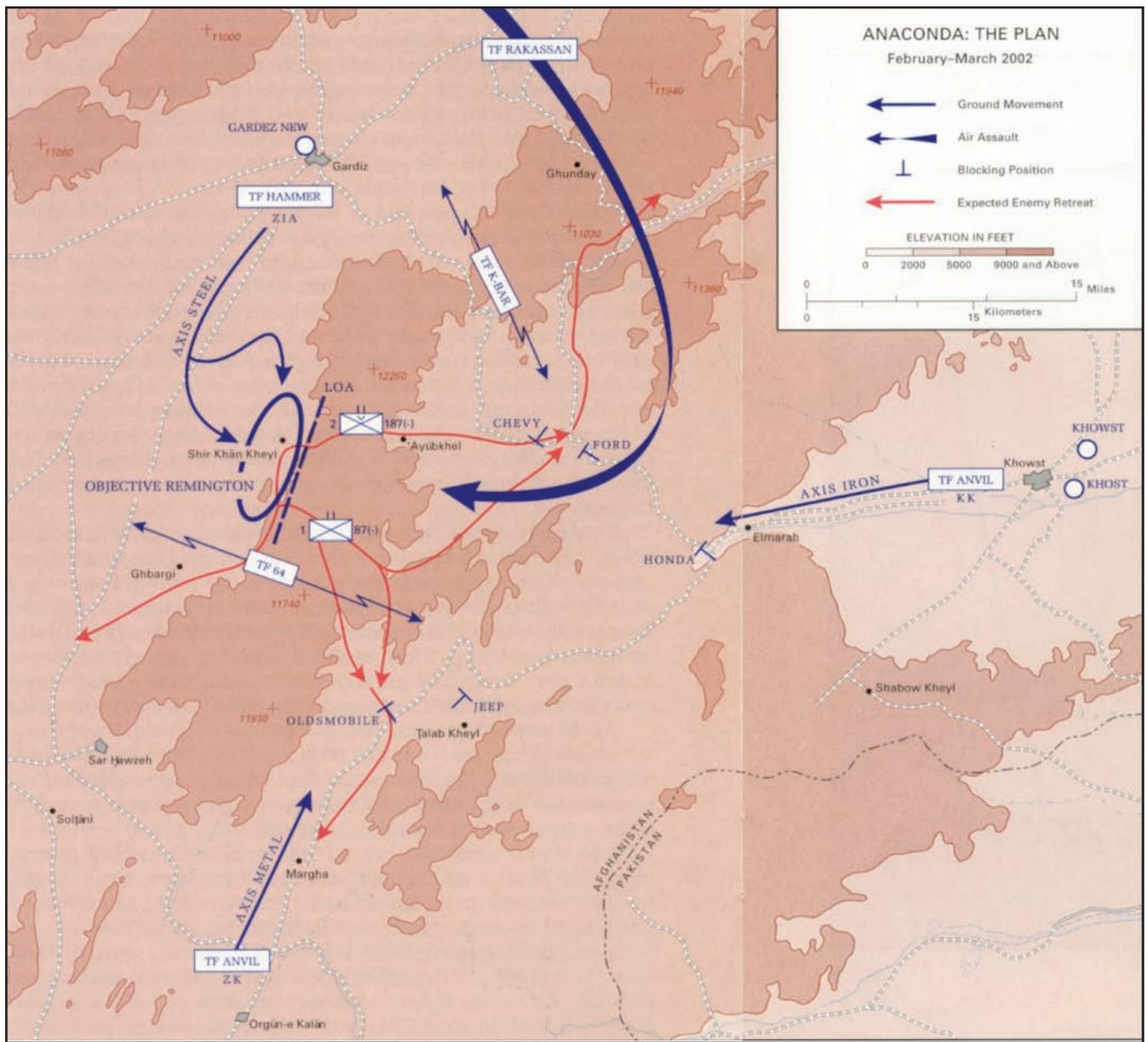
U.S. SOF had been monitoring for well over a month a large-scale pocket of forces in the

Shah-i-Khot valley, southeast of Gardez. TF DAGGER began planning for an operation against AQ and Taliban forces in late January after ODA 594 was told of their existence during a reconnaissance mission. DAGGER initially considered the option of attacking into the valley using ODAs to lead Afghan militia forces. Intelligence, however, painted a daunting picture, indicating potentially 1,000 al Qaeda.

Judging his troop to task ratio as insufficient, COL Mulholland turned to conventional forces for assistance. The planning effort, and command and control of the forces involved in the operation, was assumed by CJTF MOUNTAIN under the command of the 10th Mountain Division Commander, MG Franklin L. "Buster" Hagenbeck, on 15 February. The plan grew to include additional troops from the 10th Mountain Division and 101st Airborne Division. By mid-February, a total of six ODAs, three SOF C2 elements, three other SOF elements, and a U.S. infantry brigade of three battalions were involved, along with nearly 1,000 Afghan Military Forces (AMF) trained by the Special Forces.

The operation called for isolation and encirclement of the valley area, followed by converging attacks to destroy AQ forces. A mixture of Afghan militia, U.S. and coalition SOF (CSOF), and conventional forces would establish three sets of concentric rings astride enemy escape routes before the main strike into terrorist defenses in the valley. JSOTF-S, known as TF K-BAR, would lead the initial reconnaissance effort. At approximately D-3, CSOF from TF K-BAR, to include TF 64 (Australian SAS), would begin occupying infiltration positions to observe enemy movements and direct air strikes. In fact, TF K-BAR would insert 21 SR teams who subsequently called in a steady stream of CAS throughout the operation, arguably saving the day for forces introduced on Takur Ghar.

At D-1, 1 March, about 600 SF-led Afghan militia (TF ANVIL) would move into position along major enemy routes of retreat and CJTF MOUNTAIN would air assault elements of both the 101st and 10th Mountain Divisions into an inner ring of blocking positions along the eastern side of the valley. Finally, TF HAMMER, a 260-man combination of ODAs and Afghan militia, would assault into the valley as the main effort.



TF HAMMER included a secondary effort of 40 Afghans that would establish a blocking position in the vicinity of the Little Whale (a terrain feature).

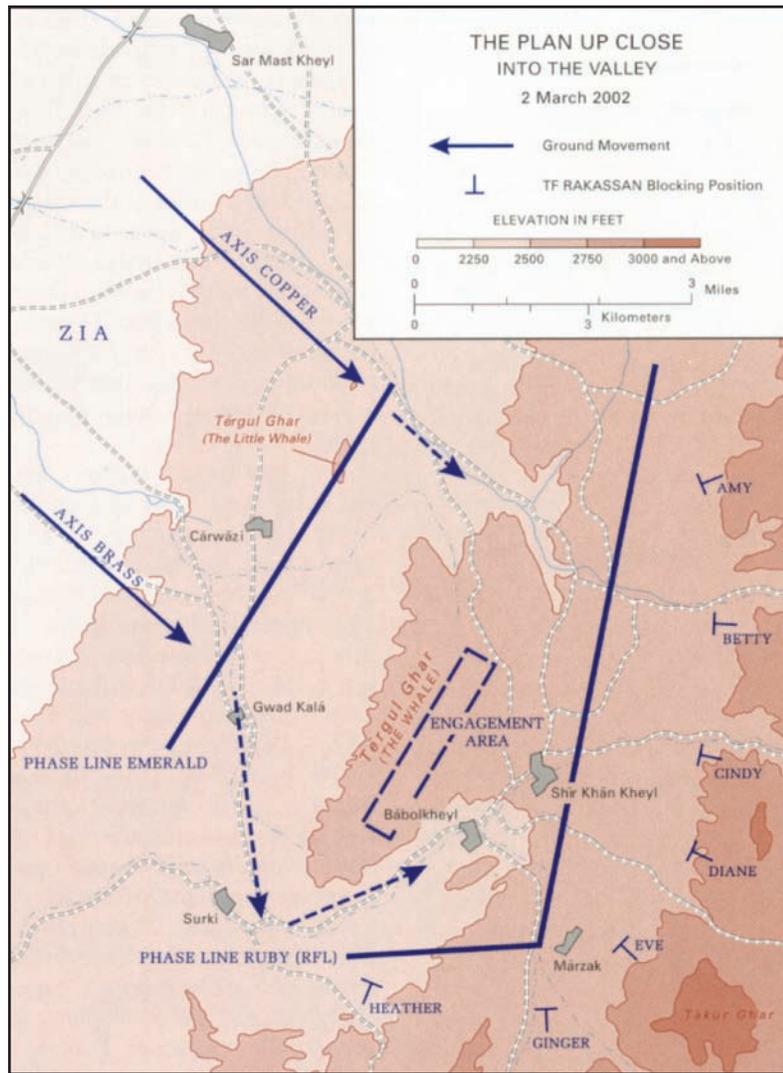
The ANACONDA planners believed that this combined maneuver would clear AQ from the Whale—a distinctive terrain feature southeast of Gardez—and adjacent valleys, forcing them into the blocking positions or into the open where they would be eliminated.

In war, however, things rarely go exactly as planned—the enemy has a “vote.” Operation ANACONDA proved to be no exception. Three SOF teams were inserted into OPs before D-Day to validate TF RAKASSAN’s LZs, verify presence of High Value Targets (HVTs), and provide terminal guidance for CAS. These teams veri-

fied heavy enemy presence and were able to disable a heavy machine-gun covering one of the conventional HLZs. During the operation, they continually called in CAS. Rather than flee, the disciplined and well trained AQ soldiers stood and fought, and at times were reinforced along a series of draws and trails at the southern end of the valley near Marzak, dubbed the “ratline.” While TF ANVIL met minimal resistance on D-1, TF HAMMER met intense resistance on D-Day, 2 March. The enemy halted the Afghan forces pushing east toward the Whale, and the Afghan forces then withdrew to Gardez. Because of a brief period of bad weather and the unexpectedly heavy enemy resistance, only a portion of the TF MOUNTAIN troops inserted into their intended positions on D-Day, 2 March.

Some of those that did insert fought under intense mortar and small arms fire. SOF, well hidden in their observation posts, used direct fire weapons and coordinated close air support bombing onto enemy fighting positions. This provided some relief for the TF MOUNTAIN forces, especially in the south at HLZ Ginger east of Marzak. Due to the collapse of TF HAMMER and the difficulty in holding BP Ginger, MG Hagenbeck decided to reposition his soldiers to the northern end of the Shah-i-Khot valley on 4 March and attack AQ from this direction.

As the battle became more fluid, TF MOUNTAIN recognized the need to put U.S. “eyes” on the southern tip of the valley and the “ratline.” It needed additional observation posts near HLZ Ginger to provide surveillance and to call in U.S. airpower on the numerous concentrations of enemy forces. A 10,000-foot, snow-capped mountain, named Takur Ghar, appeared to U.S. planners as a perfect location for an observation post. It dominated the southern approaches to the valley and offered excellent visibility into Marzak, two kilometers to the West. The mountaintop also provided an unobstructed view of the Whale on the other side of the valley. Takur Ghar was a perfect site for an observation post, unfortunately, the enemy thought so too. The enemy had installed a well-concealed, fortified force, which included a heavy machine gun perfectly positioned to shoot down coalition aircraft flying in the valley below.



On 2 March 2002, U.S. forces began planning to insert forces into two observation posts the following night. Two MH-47Es from 2nd Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) would insert two teams; one MH-47E, RAZOR 04, would emplace a team to the north while the other MH-47E, RAZOR 03, would deploy a team of U.S. SEALs and an Air Force combat controller (CCT) on Takur Ghar. Late the next evening, the two helicop-

ters took off from their base. Originally planned to go in earlier to an offset HLZ, maintenance problems with one of the helicopters and a nearby B-52 strike in support of TF MOUNTAIN delayed the insert.

At approximately 0300 local time, RAZOR 03, carrying the SEAL team, approached its HLZ in a small saddle atop Takur Ghar. On the approach, both the pilots and the men in the back observed fresh tracks in the snow, goatskins, and other signs of recent human activity. Immediately, the pilots and team discussed a mission abort, but it was too late. An RPG struck the side of the aircraft, wounding one crewman, while machinegun bullets ripped through the fuselage, cutting hydraulic and oil lines. Fluid spewed about the ramp area of the helicopter. The pilot struggled to get the Chinook off the landing zone and away from the enemy fire. Petty Officer Neil Roberts stood closest to the ramp, poised to exit onto the landing zone. Roberts and an aircrew member were

knocked off balance by the explosions and the sudden burst of power applied by the pilot. Both slipped and fell out of the helicopter. Other crewmembers pulled the tethered crewmember back into the aircraft. Untethered, Roberts fell approximately 5-10 feet onto the snowy mountaintop below. Roberts survived the short fall from the helicopter, likely activated his signaling device, and engaged the enemy with his squad automatic weapon (SAW). He was mortally wounded by gunfire as the enemy closed on him.

Meanwhile, the crew managed to keep the heavily damaged aircraft aloft for a short time before the pilots executed a controlled crash landing some seven kilometers north of Takur Ghar. Once on the ground, the SEALs did a quick head count that confirmed what they already knew—Petty Officer Roberts was missing. TSgt John Chapman, the team's Air Force combat controller, immediately contacted a nearby AC-130 for protection. A short time later, RAZOR 04, after inserting its "recco" team, arrived on the scene and picked up the downed crewmen and SEALs, taking them to Gardez. The SEALs and pilots quickly formulated a plan to go back and try to rescue Roberts, despite the fact that they knew a force of heavily armed AQ manned positions on Takur Ghar. Knowing how the AQ brutally treated prisoners, Roberts' teammates knew that time was running out on Neil Roberts. RAZOR 04, with its cargo of five SEALs and TSgt Chapman, departed Gardez and returned to Roberts' last known location on the mountaintop. There were no known nearby, suitable landing zones—other than where Roberts had fallen. Inserting the rescue team at the base of the mountain was not an option—they would lose valuable time making the two- to three-hour climb up the mountain. Their only real chance of success was to reinsert in the same proximity of where RAZOR 03 had taken intense enemy fire.

At about 0500 local time, RAZOR 04 approached the HLZ atop of Takur Ghar. Despite enemy fire cutting through the MH-47E, all six members were safely inserted, and the helicopter, although damaged, returned to base. Once on the ground near Roberts' last known location, the team assessed the situation and moved quickly to the high ground. The most

prominent features on the hilltop were a large rock and tree. As they approached the tree, Chapman saw two enemy personnel in a fortified position under the tree. Chapman and a nearby SEAL opened fire, killing both enemy personnel. The Americans immediately began taking fire from another bunker position some 20 meters away. A burst of gunfire hit Chapman, mortally wounding him. The SEALs returned fire and threw hand grenades into the enemy bunker position to their immediate front.

As the firefight continued, two of the SEALs were wounded by enemy gunfire and grenade fragmentation. Finding themselves outnumbered and in a deadly crossfire with two of their teammates seriously wounded and one killed, the SEALs decided to disengage. They shot two more AQ as they moved off the mountain peak to the Northeast—with one of the wounded SEALs taking "point." As they moved partly down the side of the mountain for protection, a SEAL contacted the overhead AC-130—GRIM 32—and requested fire support. GRIM 32 responded with covering fire as the SEALs withdrew.

Back at the U.S. staging base, the Ranger quick reaction force (QRF)—a designated unit on standby for just such situations—was directed to move forward to a landing zone at Gardez. The 23-man QRF loaded on two MH-47Es: RAZOR 01 and RAZOR 02. RAZOR 01 carried 10 Rangers, an enlisted tactical air controller (ETAC), a combat controller (CCT), and a pararescueman (PJ). RAZOR 02 carried 10 Rangers.

Taking off from their base, the QRF had little knowledge about what was actually happening on Takur Ghar due to very limited communications. As the QRF flew toward Gardez, the embattled SEALs requested immediate assistance. Headquarters approved the request and directed the QRF to proceed quickly to Takur Ghar and insert their team at an "offset" HLZ, not the landing zone where RAZORs 03 and 04 had taken fire. Due to intermittently functioning aircraft communications equipment, the Rangers and helicopter crews never received the "offset" instructions, nor did the QRF command, RAZOR 01, receive tactical situational awareness. Communications problems plagued headquarters' attempts to determine the true condition and location of the SEAL team.

Thus, the Rangers believed that the SEALs were still located on top of Takur Ghar and proceeded to the “hot” HLZ. At about 0545 local, as the sun began to crest the mountains to the east, RAZOR 01 approached from the south. On final approach, an RPG round exploded on the right side of the helicopter, while small arms fire peppered it from three directions. The pilots attempted to abort the landing, but the aircraft had taken too much damage. The right side mini-gunner, SGT Phil Svitak, opened fire but was killed by AK-47 fire. The helicopter dropped ten feet and landed hard; both pilots were seriously wounded as they crash landed their crippled aircraft.

The helicopter nose was pointing up the hill toward the main enemy bunkers—where TSgt Chapman had been killed. The impact of the crash knocked everyone to the helicopter floor. The Rangers, CCT, and the eight-man Chinook crew struggled under intense fire to get up and out of the helicopter fuselage. The rear door gunner and a Ranger opened fire out the back of the aircraft, killing an AQ soldier. SGT Brad Crose and CPL Matt Commons survived the landing but were killed by enemy fire as they exited the rear of the aircraft. Another Ranger, SPC Marc Anderson, was hit while still inside the aircraft, dying instantly. Despite the intense small arms fire, the PJ, Senior Airman Jason Cunningham, and another medic remained inside the helicopter and began treating the wounded.

At the same time, the surviving Rangers quickly assembled at the helicopter ramp to assess the situation and fix the enemy locations. One of the Rangers exited the helicopter and killed two more AQ, including an RPG gunner, enabling the Rangers to form up off the ramp. Using rock outcroppings as cover, they then began maneuvering to better positions. The Ranger platoon leader formulated a plan to assault the bunkers on top of the hill. But after an initial attempt to do so, he quickly realized he would need a larger force. The Air Force combat controller worked to get close air support on station. Within minutes, U.S. aircraft began to bomb and strafe the enemy positions, dropping 500lb bombs within 50 meters of the SOF positions. By 0700 local time, the Rangers were no longer in danger of being overrun. They consol-

idated their position and established a casualty collection point to the rear of the helicopter.

After the shoot down of RAZOR 01, RAZOR 02 was directed to move to a safe area and await further instructions. Later, RAZOR 02 inserted the other half of the QRF with its force of 10 Rangers and one Navy SEAL at an “offset” landing zone, down the mountain some 800 meters east and over 2,000 feet below the mountaintop. The Navy SEAL linked up with the SEAL “recce” element, which was by now some 1000 meters from the mountaintop. The Rangers’ movement up the hill was a physically demanding 2-hour effort under heavy mortar fire and in thin mountain air. They climbed the 45-70 degree slope, most of it covered in three feet of snow, weighted down by their weapons, body armor and equipment.

By 1030 local time, the ten men of RAZOR 02 reached the Rangers’ location, and they prepared to assault the enemy bunkers. As the Air Force CCT called in a last air strike on the enemy bunkers and with two machineguns providing suppression fire, seven Rangers stormed the hill as quickly as they could in the knee-deep snow. Within minutes, the Rangers took the hill, killing multiple AQ. The Rangers began to consolidate their position on the top of the mountain, which the platoon leader deemed more defensible, and safer for their wounded. The Rangers, Army crewmembers, and Air Force personnel began moving the wounded up the steep slope; it took four to six men to move one casualty — it was a difficult and slow process.

As the soldiers moved the wounded, additional AQ began firing from a small ridgeline some 400 meters to the rear of the downed helicopter’s position. The wounded at the casualty collection point were completely exposed to the enemy fire, as were the PJ and medic tending to them. While the Rangers maneuvered to return fire, enemy fire struck the Army medic and PJ at the casualty collection point as they worked on their patients. Rangers and helicopter crewmen alike risked their lives to pull the wounded to the relative safety of nearby rocks. Once again, the combat controller called in close air support, and a few well-placed bombs and Ranger machine-gun fire eventually silenced the enemy fire. The wounded PJ, Senior Airman Jason Cunningham, eventually succumbed to his

wounds. Throughout the ensuing hours, the Americans continued to take sporadic sniper and mortar fire. During the day, observation posts on adjoining hilltops, manned by TF K-BAR coalition SOF, called in fire on AQ forces attempting to reinforce the mountaintop.

At about 2015 local time, four helicopters from the 160th SOAR extracted both the Rangers on Takur Ghar and the SEALs down the mountainside. Two hours later, the survivors and their fallen comrades were back at their base. Medical personnel from the 274th Forward Surgical Team, operating out of the Bagram airfield tower, worked on the 11 wounded personnel. By morning, all the wounded were headed to hospitals in Germany and elsewhere.

On the morning of 4 March, TF RAKASSAN (2-187/101st AA) air assaulted into Battle Position (BP) DIANE and began clearing east of the Whale, specifically the high-ground southward toward BP GINGER. SF elements simultaneously helped Commander Zia's Afghan militia launch a reconnaissance element into the northern portion of the Little Whale to watch enemy movements in the valley as renewed air strikes hit Objective REMINGTON. Because Zia lacked sufficient force to take REMINGTON, TF DAGGER coordinated for additional Afghan militia. These forces arrived on 10 March under the command of General Gul Huidar. On 12 March, both Huidar and Zia's troops, with direction and assistance from several ODAs, began clearing Objective REMINGTON. The Afghan forces seized the objective and nearby villages quickly; all resistance elements had either fled or been destroyed.

Operation ANACONDA would continue for another seven days. TF RAKASSAN would be

replaced by 10th Mountain elements from TF SUMMIT, which cleared the eastern area of the battlefield to BP GINGER on 13 March. Additional elements from 10th Mountain and 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, designated TF COMMANDO, air assaulted onto the Whale on 14 March and conducted a series of sensitive site exploitations while clearing the mountain. TF COMMANDO completed its operation on 19 March.

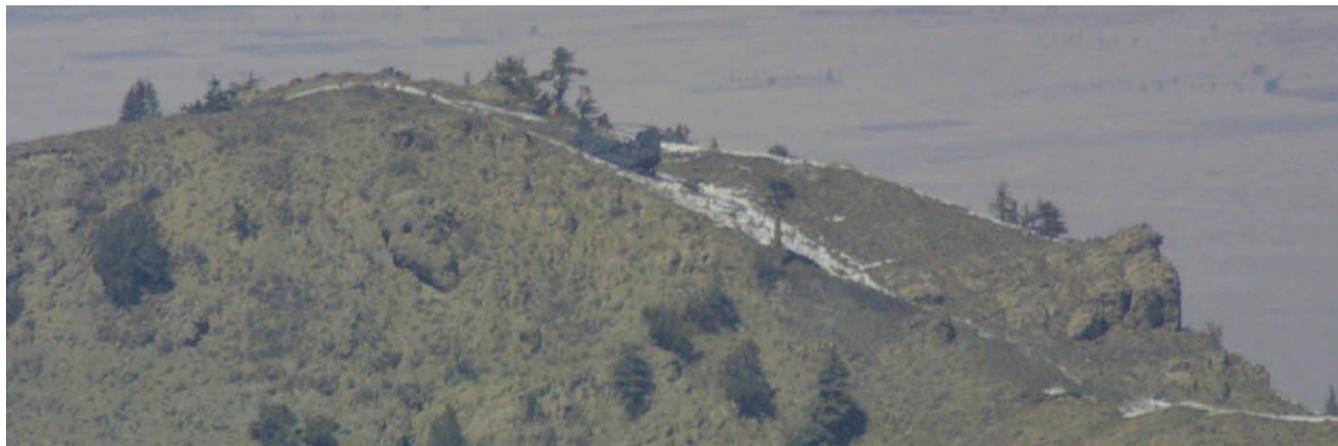
The execution of Operation ANACONDA was far from perfect. Poor weather, difficult terrain, and uncharacteristically poor air-ground coordination contributed to a less than desired outcome. More important, a well disciplined enemy had expected the fight and had prepared his defenses well. Despite initial setbacks, coalition forces adapted and destroyed a significant number of AQ. The terrorists also lost a significant amount of supplies and their last refuge in Afghanistan. Neither SOF nor conventional forces would meet AQ concentrations of this magnitude and aggressiveness again until 2006.

Evolution of Roles and Missions – Through Spring 2004

TF K-BAR

Shortly after 9/11, CENTCOM tasked its Joint Force Special Operations Component Command (JFSOCC) to establish JSOTFs to prosecute UW throughout Afghanistan. TF DAGGER, as previously mentioned, was established at K2 in mid-October 2001.

The JFSOCC also planned to establish another JSOTF, which it would designate TF K-BAR, to conduct operations in the southern portion of the country. The K-BAR element, com-



RAZOR 01 abandoned on top of Takur Ghar.

manded by CAPT Robert Harward, began organizing at Masirah, Oman, in mid-October. TF K-BAR's role would be to conduct special reconnaissance (SR) and direct action (DA) to seek and destroy or capture remnants of the al Qaeda and Taliban networks. It still needed forces and a place to stage to assist TF DAGGER in its prosecution of the UW campaign. But with the UW teams' rapid successes in November 2001, DAGGER was able to infiltrate detachments to secure Kandahar. In essence, DAGGER was about to have its forces in almost every section of Afghanistan and was quickly running out of ODAs to execute emerging operations.

In its efforts to establish the two JSOTFs, JFSOCC had faced two large challenges. The first was basing. Achieving permission from Uzbekistan to use K2 had proven difficult in September and October. JFSOCC experienced arguably greater challenges in stationing elements of CJSOTF-S. Fortunately, the seizure of airfields throughout Afghanistan eased the basing challenge. The second major challenge concerned manning the various JSOTF headquarters. Despite its successes, DAGGER's challenges had proved legion. The Special Forces Group headquarters element was not designed to form a JSOTF. DAGGER lacked planners, joint fires, and logistics personnel needed to sustain current operations, much less plan for future operations. These same challenges applied to TF K-BAR when JFSOCC established the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-South, more commonly known as TF K-BAR, on 15 November.

TF K-BAR initially established forward headquarters at Camp Rhino with the Marines on 22 November. By 15 December, however, it permanently moved to Kandahar Airfield. A number of diverse elements comprised K-BAR: CSOF from Denmark, Canada, Norway, New Zealand, Germany, and Australia; two SEAL Platoons from SEAL Team 3; elements of 720th Special Tactics Group; and A Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), which DAGGER provided. Like DAGGER, K-BAR remained under operational control (OPCON) to the JFSOCC. By the time that it stood up, however, the Combined Force Land Component Commander (CFLCC) exercised tactical control (TACON) over TF K-BAR to syn-

chronize battlespace for the introduction of conventional forces.

K-BAR began executing large-scale direct action missions in January 2002. The first mission of this kind occurred at Zhawar Kili, a C2 complex in Paktia Province located in southeastern Afghanistan. The SEAL platoon, ST-3E, executed the operation in conjunction with the Marine TF-58 out of Rhino. Following an aerial bombardment on 6 January, ST-3E inserted into Zhawar Kili to capture surviving al Qaeda members. They found a series of caves, tunnels, and intricate rooms that required exploitation. The mission lasted eight days. ST-3E and supporting Marines found numerous documents and other items of intelligence value, including one poster of Bin Laden complete with a plane crashing into a building in the background. After eight days on the ground, the force withdrew having dropped 406,000 pounds of ordnance, destroyed a vast tunnel complex, and killed an estimated 10-15 Taliban.

The day after the SEALs and Marines inserted into Zhawar Kili, A/1/5th SFG (A) and a small force of Canadian SOF conducted a raid against Yahya Khehl in the one of the first joint U.S.-Canadian operation since World War II, and one of the largest SOF direct action missions since JUST CAUSE. Transported by seven MH-53s from the 20th SOS, the assault force cleared all four compounds on the target and detained several HVTs. The operation vividly demonstrated the challenges of conducting such DA missions in Afghanistan. Rotor-wash stirred up large clouds of dust and dirt, causing dangerous brownouts obscuring the landing zones. Only luck and the considerable skill of the 20th SOS pilots avoided serious mishaps.

Over the next two weeks, the coalition contingent of TF K-BAR conducted four successive SSE/DA missions, including a joint Australian SAS and SEAL Desert Patrol Vehicle (DVP) special reconnaissance mission and airfield survey. While only one target yielded any significant intelligence, these missions marked the first combat operations by most countries in the war on terrorism and enabled K-BAR to fuse the different SOF forces into a combined team.

The raid against Hazar Khadam, formerly a compound inhabited by Mullah Omar, demonstrated the difficulty of targeting an indistinct

enemy in Afghanistan, especially in the early months of the war when a great deal of intelligence was uncorroborated. Lying approximately 100 miles northeast of Kandahar, Hazar Khadam consisted of two distinct compounds about one and a half kilometers apart. Intelligence suggested that a large number of Taliban still held the compound, but that numerous civilians also resided on the target. TF K-BAR assigned A/1/5 the mission of securing potential HVTs at the compounds.

On 23 January, Marine and Air Force SOF helicopters inserted the detachments of A/1/5 onto the two objectives. While one group moved by foot to the northern most compound, code-named Objective KELLY, the other traveled by two HMMWVs to the other southern target designated Objective BRIDGET. Despite the occasional barking dog, both groups reached their objectives undetected as an AC-130 provided overwatch. When the ground force commander gave the command, the two forces simultaneously stormed both KELLY and BRIDGET.

After blowing a breach through the wall surrounding the compound, two ODAs stormed KELLY and began clearing the nine separate buildings that comprised this sprawling compound situated on the slope of a hill. Several enemy opened fire with AK-47s on the soldiers, who returned fire killing at least two. One American was wounded when an enemy bullet ricocheted and hit him in the foot. Within short order, the A/1/5 detachments secured the objective, capturing 26 enemy combatants and a large stockpile of munitions.

Meanwhile, the other assault force, comprising ODAs 511 and 516, dismounted from the HMMWVs and approached Objective BRIDGET. Having achieved tactical surprise, the ODAs found themselves engaged in extremely close combat upon entering the complex. Hand to hand fighting occurred in several places. Fortunately, the detachments secured BRIDGET without a single casualty. Only one enemy

combatant chose to surrender while approximately 18 others had been killed. As the U.S. forces retired, the AC-130 destroyed both targets and their stockpiles of ammunition.

The intelligence leading to the raid on Hazar Khadam had turned out to be obsolete. After A/1/5 seized the objectives, one of the assaulters identified a flag of the new Afghan government. The soldiers discovered that the Afghan fighters had recently changed sides. This episode was not the fault of A/1/5, which returned fire when fired upon. However, it did demonstrate the complexities of combat operations that the coalition would face for the next several years to come.

In the month following Hazar Khadam, TF K-BAR began a series of raids in the mountains along the Pakistani border. Operating in excess of 10,000 feet, SEALs and coalition forces cleared a number of large Taliban complexes. All told, K-BAR conducted 42 SR and 23 DA missions, not including the various missions that it executed in support of Operation ANACONDA.

CJSOTF-A Emerges

Even prior to Operation ANACONDA, planners at JFSOCC intended to collapse the two CJSOTFs into one headquarters. In March 2002, 3rd SFG (A) arrived to assume that mission. TF DAGGER had started preparing Bagram Airfield (BAF) for introduction of forces in November. By February 2002, DAGGER had



Soldiers from 3rd SFG (A) conduct "tailgate" MEDCAP.

established a sizeable forward headquarters there. Both TFs DAGGER and K-BAR merged into CJSOTF-Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A), for which 3rd SFG provided the headquarters. JFSOCC, coupled with component commands in the United States, did a far better job of enabling the CJSOTF-A to perform its varied functions. JFSOCC sponsored a joint manning document (JMD), which added NAVSOF, AFSOF, and additional Special Forces personnel to execute both operations and planning functions. Additionally, the CJSOTF contained a healthy number of liaison slots to facilitate the operations of the CSOF elements. While the JMD has been tweaked by various CJSOTFs in the last several years, its base structure has survived largely intact.

In addition to the transition of the CJSOTF, the maneuver elements from 5th SFG (A) redeployed as well. The three battalions from 5th SFG (A) fully departed by March and were replaced by two battalions from 3rd SFG (A), FOBs 31 and 33, and FOB 192 from 19th SFG (A). Both FOB 33 and FOB 192 had actually arrived much earlier, with FOB 33 originally providing forces to TF K-BAR and FOB 192 assuming administrative and isolation facility (ISOFAC) duties at K2. The CJSOTF maintained OPCON of the SEAL task unit and the Civil Affairs and PSYOPs teams. It also exercised TACON of the various CSOF elements that remained in country.

With the establishment of an interim Afghan government in the winter of 2001-2002, the CJSOTF's mission changed from UW to FID. CJSOTF elements still conducted a significant number of SR and DA missions through and with various Afghan forces to capture and destroy ACM. The chief assigned task, however, turned to enhancing the security institutions of the interim government, mainly through training and advising Afghan forces. FOB 31 established its headquarters in Kabul and began training the fledgling Afghan National Army. FOB 32 transitioned with FOB 33 in May 2002 and assumed C2 of SOF in southern Afghanistan from Paktika Province west to Herat. FOB 192 occupied K2, but controlled detachments working in the northern half of the country, from Khowst Province to Mazar-e Sharif.

Two conditions, however, would define this first "post UW" rotation for the SF detachments in firebases across Afghanistan. First, most of the SOF firebases remained under CJSOTF control through 2006 and thus defined the CJSOTF's force concentrations along the eastern and southern boundary with Pakistan. Minus a few detachments in Herat, Mazar-e, and Konduz, SOF found itself principally occupied with controlling terrain along the border with Pakistan. Second, ODAs lacked a supply of government-sanctioned and therefore legitimate forces, at least in the eyes of the international community and the emerging Afghan government. Facing an impossible task of securing their respective areas of operation (AOs) themselves, the ODAs had to use the militias of warlords of questionable loyalty to secure terrain and dislodge ACM. In the north, where NA forces were still largely dependent on American sanction for their legitimacy, this challenge proved tough but manageable. In the south, where Pashtuns comprised the majority of the population, the ability to cobble together sufficient Afghan forces proved problematic. Additionally, the ODAs had to secure their firebases by hiring and training additional Afghans for force protection.

In April 2002, CENTCOM also established the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) 180, assigning it responsibility for the entire Joint Operational Area (JOA) that comprised Afghanistan. Interestingly, CENTCOM also "chopped" the CJSOTF OPCON to the CJTF, severing the relationship with CFSOCC. The CJSOTF would take its mission directives and guidance from the CJTF until December 2005. Thus, the history of SOF and its employment in Afghanistan would be significantly characterized by its command relationship with the CJTF.

In summer 2002, 20th SFG (A) assumed the CJSOTF from 3rd SFG (A), marking the first time a National Guard SF Group executed such duties. In the fall, FOBs 201, 195, and 72 rotated into theater, replacing battalions from 3rd SFG (A). The CJSOTF would maintain three battalions for Afghanistan through September 2003, with one battalion primarily aligned in the north and operating out of K2, while a second one continued operating in the south out of Kandahar. The third FOB trained the ANA in

Kabul. FOB 31 handed the responsibility to FOB 195 in October 2002, and then reassumed the training mission in April 2003. In July 2003, the CJSOTF handed over its ANA initial training duties to TF Phoenix, a National Guard headquarters, which assumed responsibility for the management of this training.

Appointed the executive agent for Afghanistan by U.S. Army Special Forces Command (USASFC), 3rd SFG (A) would bear the lion's share of unit rotations from the active duty forces. To provide 3rd SFG (A) battalions some relief, the USASFC, responsible for deploying SF units, had activated several National Guard Battalions from 19th and 20th SFGs through early 2004. While NG battalions certainly provided much needed relief during 2002-2003, their activations meant that they would not be available en masse for several more years. Thus, USASFC, responsible for deploying SF units, developed a long term force rotation that alternated 3rd and 7th SFGs into Afghanistan, beginning in 2004. USASFC also stabilized rotation length to seven months for the SF elements in country. NSW and AFSOC elements conducted rotations of various lengths, but usually for 120 days.

USASFC's changes to the rotation plan coincided with significant changes on the battlefield. Shortly before the transition of ANA training in Kabul, ISAF agreed to assume responsibility for northern Afghanistan. The CJSOTF thus pulled its forces from places like Mazar-e Sharif and also ceased operations out of K2 in September 2003. To align its forces with the future CJTF template, the CJSOTF established an FOB in Bagram during the summer of 2003. By the end of that year, the CJSOTF had reduced its SF sig-

nature from three to two battalions, with the FOB at Bagram commanding forces in Regional Command (RC) East, and the FOB at Kandahar controlling forces in RC South.

CJSOTF-A retained TACON of CSOF, and while many of these forces had redeployed by 2003, some of them made subsequent deployments to OEF. Additionally, other countries joined the coalition, providing SOF to the CJSOTF for various lengths of deployment. The two remaining FOBs, along with NAVSOF elements, found themselves engaging in significantly more DA and SR missions during the summer and fall of 2003 than originally anticipated. Still, the CJSOTF's primary focus was to disrupt the remaining ACM network within the interior of Afghanistan. While forces were certainly positioned to interdict the flow of insurgents from Pakistan, this task remained a local one for the detachments.

During 2003, however, Afghanistan saw a surge in politically related violence and criminal activity. Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan (CFC-A), which was created to oversee both ISAF and CJTF operations, subsequently requested the increase in U.S. forces to secure the interior of Afghanistan. Concerned with the internal security situation, CFC-A had to bolster the Karzai government and to prepare the country for projected transition to ISAF (or NATO) sponsorship in 2005. CFC's request prompted an increase in the number of U.S. conventional forces, raising troop levels in Afghanistan from a low of 7,500 in January 2003 to a high of 18,000 exactly one year later. The increase in forces created command, control, and battlespace synchronization issues largely absent prior to 2004. SOF, previously able to



Special Forces trained the Afghanistan National Army (ANA), beginning in May 2002 at the Kabul KMTC. By July 2003, when this responsibility was handed over to TF Phoenix, a total of seven ANA battalions had been trained.

conduct missions as they saw fit, now had to obtain mission approval at numerous levels to conduct operations. Additionally, SOF would soon see its most significant change of mission since initiating the Afghanistan campaign in 2001.

Evolution of Roles and Missions: February 2004 to Present

The CJSOTF's mission and battlespace orientation changed very little in the broad sense during its first two years in Afghanistan. Minus its initial training of the Afghan Army, its chief role remained the capture or destruction of key personalities within the ACM network in Afghanistan. Arguably, this mission focus prevented SOF from maximizing its FID capabilities, the chief of which was training, advising, and employing government forces to enhance security. A number of constraints existed on both SOF and conventional forces, chiefly a U.S. troop-to-task ratio insufficient to secure large swaths of the country and a corresponding lack of Afghan military forces to fill the gap. SF lacked sufficient, "legitimate" Afghan forces with whom it could work. During the time period from 2004 – 2006, however, both of these factors began to change. Subsequently, the role of SOF changed as well.

In March 2004, the U.S. Army's 25th Infantry Division assumed command of CJTF-180. To capture the historic significance of parliamentary and national elections scheduled for that year, it changed the designation of the CJTF to CJTF-76 and instituted several major changes.

In April 2004, the CJTF tasked CJSOTF-A to focus primarily on border security operations in both Regional Commands South and East. The CJTF intended to halt the flow of ACM and their supplies from Pakistan. In part, the CJTF wanted to align missions based on geography. ODAs occupied the several firebases along the Pakistani border in Regional Command East: Bari Kowt, Asadabad, and Chapman. Even in RC South, the CJSOTF had ODAs positioned in the farthest firebases, including Qalat, Geresk, and Gecko. Furthermore, CJTF-76 intended for conventional forces to concentrate on stability and support operations (SOSO)

within the interior of the CJOA. Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), composed primarily of Civil Affairs personnel, assumed even greater emphasis under CJTF-76, and the headquarters wanted secure conditions to facilitate reconstruction and the fall elections.

The chief challenge for the CJSOTF was its lack of access to Afghanistan National Army forces for employment in combat. In the spring of 2004, the CJSOTF had only two ANA Kandaks (battalions) OPCON to it: the Commando Kandak (SF trained), operating in RC East, and 2nd Kandak 201st Corps. ODAs did employ relatively large numbers of Afghan Security Forces (ASF) to provide local security at their firebases; however, these security elements could not legally conduct operations beyond 10-15 kilometers of the firebase, and these missions had to be directly related to the firebase defense. Additionally, the government of Afghanistan (GOA) and CFC-A both wanted to demobilize the ASF. The GOA viewed the ASF as a militia and wanted to rid the country of all forces that did not belong to the army or police. To place a meaningful dent in the flow of ACM forces and supplies from Pakistan, the CJSOTF clearly needed access to a far larger number of Afghan government troops.

Additionally, the directive from the CJTF ignored the CJSOTF's need for access to the interior to maximize its collection of intelligence concerning the insurgency. The occupation of firebases in the interior population centers, such as Jalalabad, Gardez, Zormat, Deh Rawood, Tarin Kowt, and Deh Chopan, remained essential for ODAs to gather information on the flow of ACM insurgents into Afghanistan. With only 25 ODAs in country, numbering perhaps 250 soldiers, it seemed a tall challenge indeed to cover roughly 750 miles of the Pakistan border and deny movement, much less remain active in the interior of the country. To put this task in perspective, the Soviets could not seal the border two decades previously with over 100,000 troops in Afghanistan.

During its tenure from 1 June - 1 December 2004 as the CJSOTF, 3rd SFG (A) repositioned some of its forces in concert with CJTF-76 directives, especially in RC East. FOB 32, responsible for CJSOTF operations in RC East, directed the occupation of both Bari Kowt, in northern

Kunar Province, and Torkham, in eastern Nangahar Province. It ceased operations in Mazar-e and Konduz, making forces available to re-occupy both Shkin and Lwara, two contentious villages in Paktika Province in which ODAs had worked in during the previous year. The purpose of placing detachments near these border towns was to disrupt the flow of insurgents and materiel into population centers. In the vicinity of Khowst, where infiltration of massed ACM forces was highest, the FOB established another border control point, BCP-6, to augment the five BCPs established by coalition forces in 2002. FOB 32 also conducted a detailed assessment of Chamkani, north of Khowst, where an ODA presence could choke the flow of insurgents and materiel from Parachinar, Pakistan, into the cities of Khowst and Gardez. Despite its requests, however, 3rd SFG (A) could not obtain more ANA forces for the expansion of firebases along the border.

When it assumed responsibilities from 3rd SFG (A) on 1 December 2004, 7th SFG (A) faced the same challenges as its predecessor for its initial rotation as the CJSOTF. It soon inherited the added task of standing up a Crisis Response Element (CRE). CENTCOM intended the CRE to conduct raids against emerging targets any-

where within the AOR. The element would remain in Afghanistan TACON to the CJSOTF, but OPCON to CFSOCC. Lacking additional forces, CJSOTF-A used several of its deployed ODAs, as well as the Navy SEALs, to establish the response force. Additionally, it had to create an operational detachment-Bravo (ODB) command and control element out of hide, and have four ODAs in reserve if additional forces were needed. This requirement certainly conflicted with CJTF-76's emphasis on border security operations and, subsequently, constrained the CJSOTF's ability to meet the CJTF's intent.

The four ODAs of the CRE organized and trained in Kandahar, and were TACON to FOB 71. While it did not perform missions for CENTCOM, it did execute a number of missions for FOB 71 in RC South and succeeded in capturing numerous mid-level ACM personalities.

In RC East, FOB 12 expanded upon FOB 32's changes to the battlespace, especially in Khowst and Paktika Provinces. In December, it constructed a firebase at Chamkani, and one ODA occupied it. Consequently, northern Khowst Province witnessed an immediate improvement in the security situation. In the central part of the province, the ODB commissioned the construction of an additional BCP at Jaji Maydan,

east of the city of Khowst. While both the firebase and the BCP improved the local and arguably regional security of Khowst, each position was protected largely by local security hires, vice ANA. Significant restrictions remained on the ODAs' use of these forces for missions other than local firebase security. More important, these positions were intended to reinforce the legitimacy of the Afghan government along the border with Pakistan. The requirement for government trained forces in these areas was growing larger, even while the CJSOTF could not fully employ those very forces.



In early 2005, Afghanistan experienced its harshest winter in 30 years. Civil Affairs Team 414 identified an urgent need for food, medicine, and blankets to aid villagers in Zabul Province. The CJSOTF-A from 7th SFG(A) and 1st SFG(A) rapidly configured and air dropped containerized delivery systems (CDS) bundles containing sought-after supplies. They hit the mark and saved numerous lives.

FOB 12 continued the expansion of firebases and BCPs along the border. In the late spring of 2005, 7th SFG (A) ODAs that were OPCON'd to FOB 12, constructed new firebases at Gayan and Bermel Bazaar in Paktika Province to enhance security at district capitals. An ODA at Lwara established a long-awaited BCP at Wrice and placed its ANA Company in the position.

The goal of the firebase and BCP expansion remained two-fold: bolster the security environment in select locations and enable the CJSOTF eventually to turn over border security to Afghan forces. The CJSOTF proved largely successful in meeting the first objective. With both firebases and BCPs came security forces, which frequently dampened the flow of insurgents, cut down on local crime, and led to an improved local economy. Afghans built the facilities, manned them, and subsequently spent their wages locally. But in mid-2005, the ANA simply could not field enough forces to man the camps that the CJSOTF had constructed. Even if the ANA could have assumed border security, many within CFC-A and CJTF opposed basing the ANA there for fear of inciting tensions with Pakistan. The century-long dispute over the Pakistani border could have sparked a conflict between coalition and Pakistani forces at any time. While ASF manned many of the firebases near the border, their status as “militia” vice government-sanctioned forces meant that they would not fill long-term security needs. ODAs could not leave them unattended.

A significant initiative that went hand in glove with border security operations was coordinating with Pakistani elements at key locations. To elicit cooperation from the Pakistan military, ODAs from FOB 12 fielded communications equipment to Pakistani forces across from Torkham, BCP-4, Lwara, and Shkin. FOB 12 even fielded SATCOM radios to the Pakistani military in Miram Shah. In return for the radios, the Pakistan military was supposed to report ACM activities and to coordinate operations in the vicinity of the border. While the communications initiative received a great deal



In March 2005, CJSOTF flood relief efforts in Oruzgon Province saved over 200 people.

of attention from the CJTF, Pakistani military officials did not reciprocate to the degree desired. The initiative did reduce tensions during border clashes.

FOB 12 did obtain OPCON of a second Kandak in the spring of 2005. 2-5 Infantry, which had covered Oruzgan Province, shifted its forces to another area within Afghanistan. FOB 71 needed a force to fill this void. FOB 71, operating out of Kandahar, requested and received a second Kandak in March 2005. It was thus able to employ one Kandak in Paktika and a second in the vicinity of Jalalabad. It was in RC South that Kandak employment established a precedent for CJSOTF's eventual return to a sponsorship of the ANA.

After weeks of preparation, FOB 71 elements executed Operation NAM DONG in April 2005 with the ANA Kandak in the lead. The Kandak command post successfully commanded and controlled its 217 soldiers within the area of Cahar Cineh. With 50 SF advisors assisting the Afghans and directing joint fires, the Kandak pacified a heretofore ACM sanctuary. ODAs from FOB 71 proved that a well-advised and resourced ANA force could achieve decisive battlefield effects. Operation NAM DONG was the first ANA led operation in RC South and the largest within the entire country at the time. The operation gave the force heightened credibility in the minds of coalition planners. Most important, the local populace proved more supportive and accepting of ANA presence. The ANA helped to establish GOA legitimacy in previously enemy-held terrain.

Operation NAM DONG significantly influenced the psychology of CJTF-76 and CFC-A and, therefore, the future mission assignment of CJSOTF-A. NAM DONG occurred just after the transition of authority at the CJTF between 25ID and SETAF headquarters. Arguably a watershed moment, the operation influenced CFC-A to make partnering with ANA forces its key task for 2006. It subsequently issued orders to that effect in the fall of 2005. Based on CJSOTF's successes in employing Kandaks and its persistence in requesting them, CJTF-76 would soon assign CJSOTF forces the lion's share of combat advisory duties across Afghanistan.

In July 2005, 3rd SFG (A) and its subordinate battalions transitioned with 7th SFG (A) and again assumed duties as the CJSOTF. Its subordinate battalions, FOBs 31 and 32, geared their initial missions to support the fall parliamentary elections. The FOBs also continued border security operations. Significant changes to mission and command relationships occurred in the fall of 2005. First, CJTF-76 assigned the CJSOTF the mission to conduct combat advisory and employment of ANA Kandaks. The CJTF relieved the CJSOTF of primary responsibility for securing the Pakistani border and assigned the mission to an infantry brigade. Second, in December CFSOCC resumed OPCON of the CJSOTF and placed it TACON to CFC-A. Both changes have had a major impact on SOF

employment in Afghanistan, arguably enabling the CJSOTF to maximize its capabilities in supporting the legitimacy of the GOA.

In October 2005, the CJSOTF issued OPOD VALLEY FORGE, which directed the most significant change to both its mission and footprint since the early months of OEF in 2001. VALLEY FORGE directed the FOBs to conduct FID to advise and employ ANA battalions. The broader purpose of the CJSOTF mission was to expand the operational capacity of the ANA country-wide. FOB 31, in Kandahar, assumed responsibility for ANA 205th and 207th Corps in RCs West and South, respectively. After assessing ANA locations and requirements, FOB 31 co-located three ODAs with three different Kandaks in Shindand, Farah, and Herat, all towns in western Afghanistan. FOB 32 at BAF transitioned its firebases in Bermel, Lwara, and Torkham to conventional forces and began assessing the ANA 201st and 209th Corps in eastern and northern Afghanistan, respectively. It also established permanent liaison officers (LNOs) at TF Phoenix, the national ANA training headquarters, to facilitate the equipping and training of Kandaks. Finally, VALLEY FORGE ordered the FOBs to begin demobilizing the ASF at all of its locations.

The CJSOTF established CMO and IO as supporting lines of operation to VALLEY FORGE. It subsequently requested additional CA and PSYOPs units to promote infrastructure development and train ANA units to do likewise. USSO-COM approved these additions. Thus, 3rd SFG (A) successfully established conditions for 7th SFG (A) to complete the CJSOTF's transition of mission tasks in the winter of 2006.

During 7th SFG (A)'s 2006 rotation, the CJSOTF executed the remaining tasks of Operation VALLEY FORGE. ODAs from FOB 202, operating out of BAF, assumed the combat advisory mission, partnering with Kandaks throughout Afghanistan. The ODAs established a perma-



Afghan and SF Troops are inserted into the Cahar Cineh area during Operation NAM DONG.

ment presence in RC North where U.S. forces had been scarce since 2003: Konduz, Mazar-e Sharif, and Mainama. ODAs from FOB 202 also collocated with Kandaks in RCs West and South. The CJSOTF employed six CAT-As and six TPTs, twice the number of Civil Affairs and PSYOP elements of previous rotations. It also employed CSOF from five different countries. Most of these elements continued to conduct direct action and special reconnaissance; however, several also began executing missions through, with, and by the newly created Afghan border security force, the Afghan National Security Force (ANSF). Six ODAs did remain in RC East to disrupt insurgent flow along border towns. These detachments, still occupying terrain from Bari Kowt to Shkin in support of the conventional forces, were headquartered at Chapman, where an ODB performed the traditional role of SOCCE to the RC East commander. By and large, however, the CJSOTF had fully transitioned to its FID assignment.

The CJSOTF rotation from February – August 2006 witnessed unprecedented interoperability with the CJTF. 7th SFG (A) established conditions for this relationship by conducting pre-mission training with the 10th Mountain Division prior to its assumption of CJTF responsibilities. Processes were worked out, and ideas for implementing operations were shared. The relationship quickly paid dividends for the CJSOTF in the winter of 2006. During planning for Operation MOUNTAIN THRUST, an operation designed to disrupt ACM activity and thereby set conditions for NATO's assumption of command in RC South, the CJTF made the CJSOTF its main effort. The CJTF assigned the CJSOTF an infantry battalion TACON and an infantry company OPCON, and placed both an engineer company and aviation squadron in direct support. What made this arrangement all the more remarkable was that no command relationship existed between the CJTF and the CJSOTF.

FOB 73, operating out of BAF, employed the CJTF forces largely in support of ANA operations. The operation kicked off in April and ran through late May. The results of Operation MOUNTAIN THRUST were measurable: hundreds of Taliban and ACM were killed; the NATO transition of RC South occurred as scheduled; infrastructural improvements, such as bridges over the Helmand River and several new government broadcasting stations, were completed at an unprecedented pace; and ANA authority spread over large swaths of RC South. The ANA employed and permanently assigned nine Kandaks in RC South in conjunction with the operation.

Through the fall of 2006, 3rd SFG (A) continued to execute Operation VALLEY FORGE throughout Afghanistan. While the transition of authority between ISAF and CFC-A have brought changes to coordinating responsibilities, SOF forces have adapted to these nuances and are working not only with the Afghan military, but with other coalition partners to buttress GOA legitimacy.

Despite successes that SOF has enjoyed in Afghanistan, great challenges remain. ACM violence increased during 2006. A great deal of the spike in the insurgency was certainly due to a re-organization of the Taliban within western Pakistan and in southern Afghanistan. However, it is probably a fair assessment to attribute some of this spike to the increased number of coalition forces in certain parts of the country. Permanent coalition presence has engendered both resentment and desperation on part of the ACM to dislodge these forces to prevent the government of Afghanistan from establishing its authority. In the coming years, SOF will undoubtedly play an even larger role in shaping the security environment in Afghanistan to frustrate Taliban resurgence. By advising and employing ANA forces and thereby improving their condition, SOF bolsters the government of Afghanistan.

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Operation IRAQI FREEDOM

Planning

U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) began planning for the invasion of Iraq in January 2002. Dubbed operations plan (OPLAN) 1003V, the plan called for a simultaneous attack from five different directions. Conventional land forces would attack out of Kuwait, led by mounted forces from the U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Division (ID) and the U.S. Marine Corps' I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF). Coalition air forces would attack deep targets from Saudi Arabia and carriers in the Persian Gulf. The plan called for an information operations (IO) campaign that barraged the Iraqi airwaves with surrender appeals. From Kuwait, Naval Special Operations Forces seized oil and gas platforms and secured oil facilities on the Al Faw Peninsula. SOF would execute operations on the two remaining fronts, attacking from Kurdish held areas in the north and inserting into the Iraqi desert.

CENTCOM designated the Combined Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) as the supported force for the invasion. Special Operations Command, Central (SOCCENT) was assigned its apportioned forces and began constructing its campaign plan. It planned to insert a Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF) into Kurdish Autonomous Zone (KAZ) in northern Iraq to leverage Kurdish forces in

tying down several Iraqi Corps in the north. 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) would constitute the crux of this organization, CJSOTF-North, and conduct unconventional warfare through, by, and with the Kurdish forces, the Peshmerga. 10th SFG (A) deployed its two stateside battalions (2/10th SFG (A) and 3/10th SFG (A)) and received 3rd Battalion, 3rd SFG (A) to round out its combat power. 10th SFG (A) also received a robust planning component from the 352nd Special Operations Group (SOG) to perform the mission of Joint Special Operations Air Detachment.

SOCCENT assigned 5th SFG (A) the task of establishing CJSOTF-West, and its three battalions would constitute the bulk of the task force (TF). As operations approached, CJSOTF-W grew to include Australian and British SOF, Psychological Operations (PSYOP) elements from B Company, 9th PSYOP Battalion, and 301st PSYOP Company, with Civil Affairs (CA)



augmentation. The CJSOTF planned to search for and destroy SCUD missiles in the western desert. In previous editions of OPLAN 1003, SOCCENT envisioned CJSOTF-W organizing and employing regime opposition groups in southern Iraq, but CENTCOM's latest plan envisioned a rapid seizure of Baghdad, which would obviate the requirement for organizing insurgent forces against Saddam. CJSOTF-W's mission in southern Iraq subsequently changed to supporting CFLCC's assault north, to include the provision of intelligence and SOF seizing terrain.

To its credit, SOCCENT had learned a great deal from the understaffing of TFs DAGGER and K-BAR during the initial phases of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM in Afghanistan. It determined not to make the same mistake in Iraq, instructing allocated forces to build joint manning documents to reflect their needs. Each SOF headquarters was more sufficiently staffed with air planners, PSYOP, CA, and coalition liaison officers (LNOs). As important, both CJSOTFs had

enough personnel to provide LNOs to conventional force commands, enabling SOF to synchronize its operations with CFLCC forces. Consequently, the various SOF TFs were better prepared to conduct joint special operations.

Other U.S. SOF would also perform essential roles in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF). In late 2002 and early 2003, CENTCOM added additional SOF forces to compensate for the relative paucity of conventional forces. The 75th Ranger Regiment was assigned numerous missions to secure key terrain along the outskirts of Baghdad to facilitate the mounted advance of 3rd ID. Other coalition SOF (CSOF) forces were assigned special reconnaissance (SR) missions deep within Iraq to target Iraqi maneuver forces.

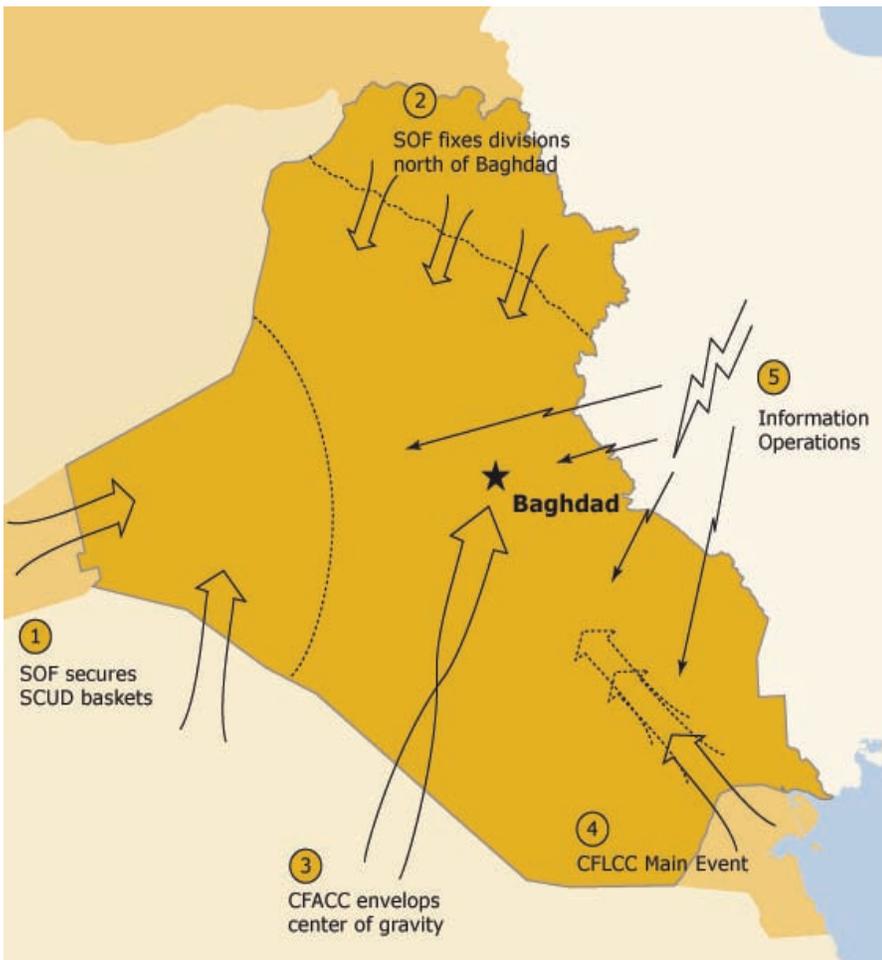
SOCCENT also had operational control of Naval Special Warfare Task Group—CENTCOM (NSWTG-CENT), tasking it to secure oil and gas facilities on the Al Faw Peninsula and two oil platforms off the Iraqi coast; NSWTG-CENT also supported the Combined Force Maritime Component Command (CFMCC) in the execu-

tion of various missions. SOF aviation from both the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment and 352nd SOG would support various infiltrations during the course of the invasion.

As events unfolded, all SOF elements would have to execute numerous inherent tasks that included attacking Iraqi forces, seizing key infrastructure, and preventing the destruction of critical nodes. Although conducting shaping operations in support of CFLCC, SOF often found itself in the supported role during the initial stages of combat.

The Invasion

OIF formally commenced the night of 19 March 2003, and SOF played a critical role in defeating Iraqi forces throughout the battlespace.



Map of GEN Franks' five fronts of attack.

OIF represented the largest commitment of SOF to an operation since the inception of USSO-COM. SOF acquitted itself exceptionally well throughout the campaign.

Operating primarily out of Kuwait, Operational Detachments-Alpha (ODAs) from CJSOTF-W infiltrated into Iraq on 19 March. Their primary purpose remained the prevention of Iraqi SCUD launches, and they accomplished their mission as not a single SCUD was launched against the coalition. Directing U.S.



Karbala Gap hide site.

and allied aircraft, the detachments dominated the vast terrain of the western desert and quickly overwhelmed the Iraqi military. ODAs also secured key terrain, including the airfield at Wadi al Khirr and the line of communication (LOC) on the outskirts of Najaf. In one of the key actions of the invasion, ODA 551 provided SR of the LOC passing through the Karbala gap, keeping it open for 3rd ID's movement into Baghdad. In the early days of the operation, all of the SF teams in the western desert were in contact with the enemy. Remarkably, the ODAs suffered no casualties, a testament to their planning, training, and leadership.

In southern Iraq, the primary tasks of CJSOTF-W remained target acquisition. MH-53s from the 20th Special Operations Squadron (SOS) inserted ODAs deep into Iraq to provide surveillance of Iraqi troop movements. Directing air strikes, the detachments supported the speed of the ground campaign. Additional ODAs in the south worked with Iraqi nationals sympathetic to the coalition cause and were able to identify and root out Fedayeen soldiers (Saddam loyalists), Ba'ath party members, Regime Death Squads, and other terror cells.

CJSOTF-N, dubbed TF VIKING, certainly had a more difficult task staging and inserting its forces. Turkey had denied access to both its air and land space for coalition forces. The forces of TF VIKING would have to insert into northern Iraq under extremely daunting circumstances. While TF VIKING had advance elements in Iraq prior to hostilities, these detachments were probably not sufficient in number to thwart a large Iraqi assault, much less secure key objectives originally tasked to 4th ID. Since

4th ID could not move through Turkey to northern Iraq, TF VIKING would have to fill this void.

Beginning 22 March, MC-130s flew through heavy Iraqi anti-aircraft fire and landed SOF team members. One of the MC-130s took so much fire it was forced to land in Turkey. The incident

did result in Turkey's subsequent lifting of its airspace restrictions. In the meantime, the 352nd SOG managed to insert 51 ODAs into northern Iraq within the next several days.

On 19 March, the initial ODAs in Kurdistan directed air strikes on to Iraqi positions. As CJSOTF-N forces arrived from various parts of Europe, TF VIKING orchestrated an offensive. On 28 March, ODAs from Forward Operating Base (FOB) 103 and 6,500 Peshmerga (Kurdish freedom fighters) attacked Ansar al Islam—an al Qaeda affiliate—in a fortified enclave that



5th SFG (A) resupply site.

housed 700 heavily armed terrorists near Iran. Within 30 hours, the combined force crushed the terrorist pocket. Through a subsequent series of coordinated attacks along the Green Line, the line demarcating the KAZ, SOF and Peshmerga troops steadily advanced against Iraqi military forces, occupying abandoned positions. The effective integration of air and ground forces destroyed the enemy's will to fight



Peshmerga Forces.

and opened the avenues of approach to the two largest northern cities, Kirkuk and Mosul.

As operations progressed, it became apparent that TF VIKING would need additional combat power to seize objectives in the north. To facilitate operations, the Combined Force Commander, General Tommy Franks, assigned TF VIKING tactical control (TACON) of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. This marked the first time that a SOF operational headquarters had been the supported command, complete with a conventional brigade, since the Vietnam War. TF VIKING would later assume TACON of

another conventional unit, the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable).

The 173rd made an airborne assault into the KAZ on March 26 and prepared to support coalition operations. These airborne soldiers conducted an area defense operation around Irbil to deny enemy movement along the major lines of communications between Mosul and Kirkuk. The brigade's actions subsequently freed ODAs to prosecute objectives with the Peshmerga. On 10 April, SOF and their Peshmerga allies attacked Kirkuk from three sides, and the city fell by nightfall. The coalition established their headquarters in a government building. More SOF and elements of the 173rd Airborne Brigade soon reinforced the coalition peacekeeping efforts. Together, the combined force secured nearby oil fields, maintained checkpoints, and conducted joint patrols that calmed the city residents. Meanwhile, other coalition forces negotiated the orderly capitulation and occupation of Mosul.



Preparing to attack Ansar al Islam.

While the two CJSOTFs provided the bulk of the fighting forces, other SOF elements executed equally important operations. These SOF forces gathered vital intelligence, secured numerous high-value targets, attacked terrorist networks,

and assisted coalition forces in accomplishing their missions. While assigning SOF the toughest of missions, CFLCC provided numerous conventional capabilities to SOF, greatly enhancing its lethality. For example, the 75th Ranger Regiment assumed TACON of elements of the 82nd Airborne Division, a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System platoon, and a tank company team to execute its missions in the vicinity of Baghdad. SOF also frequently received the allocation of fixed-wing CAS to support its missions.

Al Faw–Direct Action Missions

On 20 March 2003, a Naval Special Warfare Task Group (NSWTG), consisting of U.S. Navy SEALs, the United Kingdom’s 40 Commando Brigade, and Polish SOF, conducted one of the largest direct action missions conducted in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. The goal was to simultaneously take control of two off-shore oil platforms, Mina Al Bakr (MABOT) and Khor Al Amaya (KAAOT), and secure onshore pipeline support valves for each platform and their metering and manifold stations located on the Al Faw peninsula. By taking control of these targets before Iraqi forces could damage them, the NSWTG would avert an environmental disaster and preserve the only oil export capability in southern Iraq.

The missions crossed several AOs, so planning involved coordination with the Combined Force Maritime Component Command (CFMCC) and Combined Force Land Component Command (CFLCC). A special operations command and control element (SOCCE) was also established to coordinate between conventional and SOF units operating in the I MEF’s AOR.

The overall concept for securing the Al Faw targets and the scheme of maneuver were settled almost five months prior to execution. NSWTG forces would conduct the initial seizure and be relieved by British Royal Marines (3 Commando Brigade). The Kuwait Naval Base (KNB) would serve as the main base of operation. NSWTG forces conducted countless rehearsals and “sand-table” exercises for a four-phase operation, which consisted of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR); pre-

assault fires; simultaneous assaults on all objectives; and speedy relief of NSWTG forces by Royal Marines.

The rehearsals uncovered a vital weak spot in the Iraqi defenses: reliance on radio communications. As a result, electronic warfare was included in the plan to jam Iraqi communications. Additionally, an information operations (IO) campaign was initiated to capitalize on reports that enemy troops suffered from low morale and high desertion rates. Thousands of leaflets were dropped with capitulation instructions as well as phrases dissuading soldiers and workers from destroying oil facilities and equipment — “you’re hurting your family’s livelihood of fishing if you destroy the oil.” This information was also broadcast across the Iraqi air waves from the USS *Constellation* (CV-64) and USS *Duluth* (LPD-6).



One of the IO leaflets dropped on Al Faw.

With numerous Iraqi vehicles, fighting positions, and 130mm artillery guns near its objectives on the Al Faw peninsula, the NSWTG fires cell targeted 24 enemy positions with two FA-18s, four F-15Es, four British GR-4s, six fighters, bombers, and AC-130s.

Finally, on the morning of 20 March, the CFSOCC commander notified NSWTG that the mission was a “go” for that evening. Just before sunset, NSWTG forces departed for their targets: both oil platforms (MABOT and KAAOT) in the Persian Gulf, and the pipeline (Objective



NSWTG-CENT SEALs aboard MABOT GOPLAT.

TEXACO) and metering and manifold stations (Objective CORONADO) on the Al Faw peninsula.

The SEALs arrived at MABOT at approximately 2200, boarded the facility, and were greeted by several Iraqis waving white sheets and t-shirts. The SEALs secured the Iraqis in the platform's dining facility and searched the facility, finding large amounts of ammunition, AK-47s, and RPGs. After about 40 minutes, the SEAL platoon commander radioed that MABOT had been secured. It was turned over to a Royal Marine platoon, and the SEALs returned to KNB.

KAAOT was similar in appearance and scenario. The facility, however, was seriously degraded and not operational. Polish SOF subdued 18 Iraqis who offered little resistance and were very cooperative during interrogation. After turning the Iraqis over to a Royal Marines relief force, the Poles searched the dilapidated structure and found only a few weapons, some loaded magazines, and a small amount of explosive materials. Once the search was complete, the Poles likewise returned to KNB.

Meanwhile, eight MH-53 PAVE LOW helicopters transported the rest of NSWTG and their equipment to Objectives TEXACO and CORONADO. Unexpectedly, the initial landing

zones (LZs) at CORONADO were surrounded by knee-deep, oily mud. The SEALs struggled to unload equipment from the helicopters and trudged 150 meters to their objective. An A-10 destroyed the one enemy vehicle in the area. Once they reached their objective, the SEALs searched the buildings and the manifold, and found nothing. In just over an hour from launch, the NSWTG had established a command post and radioed for British relief forces (40 Commando, Royal Marines).

The commandos cleared a LZ on dry ground, eliminated a lone enemy sniper, and called in fire on 100-plus Iraqi forces gathered north of their area. The SEALs at Objective TEXACO also encountered muddy conditions and lost use of their three desert patrol vehicles (DPVs) to the insidious muck. The SEAL assault team moved out on foot toward their objective and, after a hasty sweep of the area, found no significant weapons or explosives. The SEALs secured the south and east gates to the complex and called for relief forces. The Royal Marines arrived within minutes, took control of the area, conducted a thorough search of all structures, and secured 100 enemy prisoners of war. In one bunker, the Brits found several dead Iraqi officers. The bulk of the SEAL team was sent back to KNB after only two hours on the ground—

mission accomplished. A few SEALs remained with the DPVs until they could be extracted later that day.

The Al Faw missions succeeded because of detailed planning, exhaustive rehearsals, use of overwhelming force, and an IO plan that diminished the enemy's desire to fight. Most important, decentralized execution allowed tactical commanders to make quick and unhindered decisions in seizing the objectives.

Seizing Other Infrastructure

SOF also conducted ground and airborne assaults to seize infrastructure, including airfields, oil fields, and dams. On 1 April, 3/75th Ranger Battalion seized the Haditha Dam to thwart Saddam loyalists who planned to destroy the facility and create a disaster downstream. Ordered to hold the dam by General Franks, the Rangers repelled Iraqi counterattacks and endured heavy shelling. By occupying this objective, 3/75th effectively cut the LOC running west out of Baghdad along the Euphrates River.

1/75th Ranger Battalion quickly followed the mission at Haditha by interdicting and cutting the LOC running north out of Baghdad along the Tigris River. The remaining LOC into Baghdad was to the south, and this route was being used by the main coalition invasion forces. When 1/75th cut the LOC running north, it helped to isolate Baghdad and facilitated the eventual capture of Iraqi troops and leaders trying to flee the city. In mid-April when Iraqi Army units tried to escape Baghdad, the tanks and Bradleys supporting SOF operations proved to be beneficial during fighting along both the Euphrates

and Tigris Rivers. This combined arms effort kept the LOC open for assaulting U.S. conventional forces. By 20 April, maneuver units from 3rd ID linked up with the Rangers along both the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. SOF could now turn its attention to capturing high-priority individuals.

The fall of Baghdad and the collapse of the Iraqi Army led to a deceptive period of calm in Iraq in mid-2003, and most of the SOF in Iraq redeployed in May and June 2003. CJSOTF-N was deactivated, and CJSOTF-W was re-designated CJSOTF-Arabian Peninsula (CJSOTF-AP), having moved to Baghdad in April. By July 2003, CJSOTF-AP had drawn down to the 5th SFG (A) Headquarters, consisting of one NSWTU and one FOB. The FOB commanded 14 ODAs, few of them at full strength. The bulk of these forces remained in Baghdad with outstations covering Al Qaim, Ramadi/Fallujah, Najaf/Nasiriyah, Hillah, Kut/Amarah, Tikrit, Balad, Samarra, and Kirkuk. CJSOTF-AP planned more forces reduction in early 2004.

Chasing High Value Targets

SOF and conventional forces integrated their capabilities as never before during OIF. Both elements cooperated remarkably well at the tactical level by providing forces to the other, often without direction from higher headquarters. The two elements contributed according to their strengths: conventional forces conducted the "heavy lifting," and SOF provided the "surgical" capability.

Reliable intelligence remained the key to counterinsurgency and counterterrorist operations, and SOF took the lead in improving coalition intelligence about the enemy in Iraq. SOF provided a disproportionate amount of the intelligence collected by coalition forces and shared targeting information with the coalition. While SOF provided vital intelligence for conventional forces, conventional forces frequently provided combat power to secure and pacify joint objectives.

Saddam's Capture

SOF and conventional integration would also prove essential to the capture or elimination of several key persons of interest. Initially, the ultimate target was Saddam Hussein al-Majid



Tanks and special operations vehicles refuel at H-1 Airfield.

al-Tikriti, the deposed President of Iraq. In accordance with his importance, Saddam was designated the number one target on the Black List (BL #1) developed by national intelligence agencies. The coalition employed a host of forces and capabilities in its effort to track Saddam and the persons who could provide clues to his whereabouts. In July 2003, SOF and elements from the 101st Airborne Division conducted an operation in Mosul to capture or kill Saddam's sons, Qusay and Uday (BL #2 and #3). After numerous assaults on their well-fortified hide-out, the U.S. forces took the objective and found Qusay's and Uday's bodies. But Saddam remained elusive.

By July 2003, both SOF and the 4th ID leadership concluded that capturing persons on the original Black List would not lead to BL #1. The key to finding Saddam was uncovering the family-tribal ties of those Iraqis who had long-standing relations with him. Both SOF and the 1st Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 4th ID developed link analysis based on information gathered from numerous operations in Baghdad and the surrounding area. The analysis showed which families were supporting Saddam and the insurgency. These families were largely concentrated in and around the Tikrit area where Saddam retained a loyal following. SOF and the 1/4th BCT believed that targeting specific individuals within these families would yield information on Saddam. Once the importance of the tribal or familial tie was established, the U.S. forces targeted the patriarchs of these families.

This systematic approach to finding "enablers" who could identify Saddam worked. In mid-October, a SOF team captured an individual who provided essential information concerning the locations of additional members within Saddam's inner circle. Based on these individuals' subsequent interrogation, SOF and 4th ID units hit a series of targets in December. These raids led to a substantial find in Baghdad on 12 December. Here, SOF detained four individuals, and upon questioning, one turned out to be the person who would lead SOF and conventional forces to Saddam's hide-out.

The source first reported that Saddam was hiding west of Tikrit. SOF alerted COL James B. Hickey, 1st BCT/4th ID commander, and the two forces prepared to act on the information.

By 1300 on 13 December, the individual had changed his story and now claimed that Saddam was hiding southeast of Tikrit. He stated that Saddam would be located at one of two locations near the town of Ad Dawr, southeast of Tikrit. The first location—code-named WOLVERINE I—was the home of Saddam's cook. The second was a nearby farm, designated WOLVERINE II. A SOF team reconnoitered the area.

By mid-December, SOF and conventional forces had perfected their battle drills for cordon and search operations. The SOF commander would control the immediate target area, including assaulters, SOF helicopters, and an AC-130. 1/4th BCT typically sealed the outer perimeter to prevent interference from resistance forces. To execute the WOLVERINE targets, COL Hickey committed a battalion-sized TF to offset any chance of a fight with Saddam loyalists. G Troop, 10th Cavalry would be TACON to SOF to establish inner cordons at the two objectives. The 4-42nd Field Artillery (FA) occupied the outer cordon to stop enemy reinforcements and keep BL #1 from escaping. The 2-99th Engineer Battalion would establish observation posts and screen along the west bank of the Tigris River. Attack helicopters (AH-64s) from A/1-4 Aviation would orbit on the west side of the river to support the outer cordon forces and screen Highway 1 for possible Iraqi reinforcements.

Just after 2000 hours, as the convoy passed the northern outskirts of Ad Dawr, 4-42nd FA setup an outer cordon and checkpoints. The convoy made a right turn, heading toward Wolverine I. The lead elements—SOF and 1st Platoon, G Troop—continued on toward the farm, Wolverine II. The trail elements—SOF and 2nd Platoon, G Troop—peeled off from the convoy and rolled directly into an assault on Wolverine I. The assaulters rushed into the house and found four individuals: the cook, his wife, and two children.

About halfway between Wolverine I and II, the SOF and 1st BCT headquarters elements setup the C2 node. The assault element for Wolverine II proceeded toward its objective. From the lead vehicle, the enabler directed the assaulters to a grove of trees and then a compound surrounded by a six-foot high wall. The assault began immediately. After the target was secure and one Iraqi caretaker was detained,

SOF elements led the source into the compound. He walked over to a flower bed near a concrete patio and pointed at a patch of ground. He started scratching the dirt with his shoe.

While some assaulters began searching this area for a bunker, another SOF team moved westward into the orchard. It cleared several small buildings and then patrolled to the south, but did not find Saddam. Meanwhile, those SOF at the compound questioned the enabler, and he once again walked over to the flower bed and began scratching at the dirt with his shoe. All of a sudden, he uncovered a rope handle. The SOF element recalled the other assaulters, and soon, everyone had gathered around the rope loop.

Two of the assaulters grabbed hold of the handle, and just as they were ready to heave upward, the caretaker began screaming, "Saddam is in there! Saddam is in there!" They easily pulled up the styrofoam block. The assaulters pointed their guns and flashlights into the hole, and a few moments later a pair of hands emerged from the hole. An assaulter pulled the man out of the hole, and then four assaulters grabbed him and got quite a surprise when they saw Saddam's face. They finally had their quarry.

By approximately 2030 hours, the assault element notified the SOF commander that they had detained Saddam. The SOF commander



Entryway to Saddam Hussein's hideout.

ordered the assaulters to take Saddam, the detainee, and enabler to Tikrit. A SOF team secured a helicopter landing zone in a nearby field, and a helicopter landed and picked up Saddam.

The capture of Saddam Hussein culminated six months of painstaking targeting efforts. These forces had steadily eliminated BL #1's support mecha-

nism by capturing and interrogating enablers. Equally important to the capture of Saddam was the integration of tactical intelligence and operations between SOF and conventional forces. Intelligence personnel and interrogators performed key roles in tracking down Saddam. Both conventional and SOF leaders emphasized the need for more interrogators, interpreters, and human intelligence capabilities.

4th ID and SOF leaders agreed that their experience in capturing Saddam should be studied as a model for future joint operations. Both sides benefited from the capabilities that the other force brought to the fight, validating the tenets of joint warfare.

Combatting the Insurgency

By late 2003, however, there were growing signs that an insurgency was building among the Iraqi Sunnis who had been Saddam's most loyal supporters. To meet this new challenge, SOF built up forces and developed a sustainable rotation plan to continue OIF into the indefinite future. When 10th SFG (A) took over the CJSOTF-AP in January 2004, it brought two FOBs (one from 10th SFG (A) and one from 5th SFG (A)). One FOB remained in the vicinity of Baghdad. The second FOB, however, deployed to Mosul to increase the SOF in areas north and west of Baghdad where the insurgency was rapidly growing in strength. In February, the SEAL contingent also increased to a Naval Special Warfare Task Group (NSWTG) with forces located in Baghdad, Mosul, and Haditha.

While the CJSOTF would have certainly preferred to conduct combined operations with Iraqi forces, few such elements existed in early 2004. The Iraqi Army had disintegrated and been dis-



\$750,000 in cash was found with Saddam Hussein at the time of his capture.

banded. Thus, SOF focused primarily on unilateral direct action missions to capture or kill members of Saddam's regime, terrorists, and insurgents throughout the first year of the war.

Operations in urban areas again validated the benefits of the joint approach. Urban warfare was particularly intense in 2004 with major battles for control of Fallujah, Najaf, and other cities. During the battle for Fallujah in April 2004, coalition forces had relied almost entirely on conventional light infantry to retake the city, but the infantry suffered heavy losses. A few months later, Muqtada al Sadr and his Shiite militia took over the holy city of Najaf. To drive Sadr out of Najaf, coalition forces changed tactics. The conventional commanders requested a SOF contingent of SEALs and ODAs from FOB 51 and employed a sophisticated mixture of SOF, light infantry, tanks, and other armored vehicles. SOF conducted reconnaissance and surgical raids, while conventional forces destroyed large pockets of enemy resistance. The integration of SOF into the operation helped defeat Sadr and other radical Shiite elements in tough urban combat. American forces received far fewer casualties than in Fallujah.

Training and Employing Iraqi Forces

Despite the great attention it earned, DA was not the only SOF mission in Iraq. SOF units were among the first to train and equip Iraqi forces for combat. In late 2003, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) wanted to

create a small but highly effective, multi-ethnic unit as both an example of inter-ethnic cooperation and a deterrent to the insurgency. The coalition command turned to SOF to organize, train, equip, and advise the new Iraqi 36th Commando Battalion. The initial recruits were drawn in equal numbers from each of the five most prominent Iraqi political parties at the time.

The 36th Commando Battalion got off to a rocky start when some of the recruits sent by the political parties showed up with ping-pong paddles because they had been told they were going to a sports camp. But once the recruits who did not want to be commandos were weeded out, SOF training and leadership quickly turned them into an effective unit. In early 2004, when many units of the new Iraqi police and military forces broke under insurgent pressure, 36th Commando consistently retained its cohesion and fought effectively.

In late 2003, CJSOTF-AP began building another Iraqi element, the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Force (ICTF). Whereas the 36th Commando was a light infantry strike force, the ICTF would be an even smaller, more clandestine counterterrorist and hostage rescue force with robust intelligence capability. The CJSOTF planned to place the 36th Commando in a supporting role to the ICTF, and to eventually organize a premier counterinsurgency capability around the two forces. ICTF training was conducted initially both within and outside Iraq. By February 2006, appropriate facilities had been built in Iraq, and subsequent ICTF training was conducted strictly in that country.

The 36th Commando Battalion staged its first combat operations in April 2004, and the ICTF entered combat in May. As the best units in the Iraqi military, they quickly took a prominent role in operations throughout Iraq. In addition to operations to eliminate terrorists and insurgents, they also took on extremely sensitive missions, where political considerations dictated that the assaults assume an Iraqi face.

The ICTF and 36th Commando



U.S. and Iraqi SOF returning from a combined operation in Baghdad.

played a vital role in the battle for Najaf in August of 2004, and if Sadr had not surrendered, they would have stormed his hiding place. In September 2004, the ICTF and the commandos conducted offensive operations in Samarra, and in the November 2004 battle to retake Fallujah, 36th Commando assaulted an insurgent stronghold within a hospital. Had the latter operation been conducted by U.S. forces, the enemy could have easily exploited anticipated collateral damage for propaganda.

As two Iraqi units grew in size and scope, it became necessary to build a stronger command and support structure. With SOF assistance, the Iraqi Army created the Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF) Brigade in July 2005. The 36th Commando became the 1st Battalion of the ISOF Brigade, and the ICTF became the 2nd Battalion of the ISOF Brigade. The brigade had both training and support battalions, giving it a total of four. By 2007, the ISOF Brigade had continued to grow and operate effectively under its new organizational structure. ISOF remained arguably the most effective Iraqi forces and the most impressive success story in the American-led effort to build new Iraqi security forces.

Training and Advising Conventional Forces

SOF's training and advisory mission did not stop with the ISOF brigade. Conventional forces took the lead in training and organizing Iraqi police and conventional military forces. American commanders, however, recognized SOF's enormous experience in organizing and training foreign forces. As a rule, SOF not only trained forces, but accompanied them during operations to provide continuing advice, assistance, and assessment. To meet the training needs of the broader Iraqi Army, the multinational command subsequently requested the CJSOTF's assistance in training conventional Iraqi forces in 2004. Thus, SOF grew increasingly involved in training a variety of Iraqi units.

When 10th SFG (A) replaced 5th SFG (A) in command of the CJSOTF-AP in December 2004, SOF began partnering with local Iraqi security forces in their AOs. CJSOTF-AP instructed each operational detachment to build partnership

relationships with the most effective Iraqi forces in its AO. Usually these units were from the Iraqi National Guard (later re-designated Iraqi Army units), but in some places SOF worked with Iraqi police units. SOF have continually trained and accompanied into combat a host of Iraqi conventional units, significantly improving their effectiveness.

SOF's most pronounced effort in training conventional Iraqi forces occurred from June to December 2005. During this 5th SFG (A) rotation, the CJSOTF-AP force structure increased from two to three FOBs to augment the conventional force training capabilities. At that time, conventional forces provided embedded Military Transition Teams (MiTTs) for the Iraqi Army units in their area. Due to force constraints in the United States, the U.S. Army could not provide the MiTTs needed to train forces in northern Iraq. USASOC filled the gap by deploying a third FOB to Iraq.

The SOF training elements were called Battalion Augmentation Training Teams (BATTs) to distinguish them from the conventional MiTTs. Consisting primarily of single ODAs, the BATTs enhanced security across a large part of northern Iraq. During the battles for Tal Afar, the BATTs, Iraqi Army units, and the U.S. 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment worked together in liberating and securing that city. The integration among SOF, Iraqi forces, and U.S. conventional forces proved essential to success.

SOF Foreign Internal Defense activities also included training the new Iraqi Air Force.



BATT personnel conducting combined operation with Iraqi soldiers and U.S. conventional forces.

Members of AFSOC's "FID Squadron," the 6th SOS, started training Iraqi airmen in 2004. The Iraqi Air Force started with few aircraft and personnel. Using light, inexpensive, and easy to maintain aircraft, the 6th SOS enhanced the capabilities of Iraqi forces to conduct intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions. Combat aviation advisors from 6th SOS not only taught the Iraqis to fly and maintain their aircraft, but to plan and conduct effective joint and combined missions.

Training and Advising Iraqi Police

SOF also trained the renowned Hillah SWAT element, one of the most effective police units in Iraq. Located in Babil Province, Hillah lay south of Baghdad in a relative hot bed of insurgent activity. An ODA first linked up with the Hillah SWAT team in March 2004, and U.S. SOF has had an outstanding working relationship with Hillah SWAT ever since. In August 2004, when Muqtada Sadr's militia attacked coalition forces across Iraq and nearly took control of Hillah, its SWAT held out against his militia until coalition forces arrived and drove the insurgents out. Having grown into a battalion-sized force, Hillah SWAT has worked closely with ODAs and coalition forces from El Salvador. Accompanied by ODAs, Hillah SWAT units have conducted highly successful counterinsurgency and counterterrorist operations across Babil Province and all the way to the out-

skirts of Baghdad.

One of the greatest strengths of the unit has been its strong and independent leadership. Though part of the Ministry of Interior, Hillah SWAT has not been accused of supporting a particular sect or political party as have many other police units. Because its leadership has remained professional and impartial in Iraq's political struggles, Hillah SWAT has been particularly effective in suppressing insurgents and terrorists. The leaders of Hillah SWAT, however, paid a price for their impartiality. In October 2006, the respected commander and deputy commander were assassinated. These losses led to a difficult period of uncertainty, but a new leader has since been named. Equally important, SOF training helped develop strong junior leaders who ensured that Hillah SWAT continued conducting successful combat operations.

SOF's relationship with various Iraqi police forces has continued to evolve. In early 2006, CJSOTF-AP assumed the task for providing training and advisory assistance to the Emergency Response Unit (ERU), the premier Iraqi police counterterrorism unit. Prior to SOF involvement with the ERU, a contract company trained unit members only at the ERU compound, but performed no advisory role during operations. This limitation slowed the progress of the ERU.

CJSOTF-AP subsequently tasked its NSWTU and one ODA to train and advise the



SOF training Hillah SWAT.

ERU. The CJSOTF instructed its elements to enhance the ERU's counterinsurgency and counterterrorist capabilities, and to promote its interoperability with Iraqi SOF. By April 2006, the SEALs and Special Forces were fully engaged with training the ERU.

Unlike Iraqi Army units, the ERU and other Iraqi police units executed arrest warrants. Enhancing police capabilities was vital to increasing security in Iraq. The ERU's growing ability to handle the toughest targets, specifically eliminating those terrorists attacking police, had the potential to heighten the security of all Iraqi police forces. Moreover, other police units would then be free to target less dangerous individuals against whom they were more effective.

The ERU has conducted many successful combat operations with SOF assistance and advice. In May 2006, the ERU conducted an effective raid in central Baghdad during which it captured members of two IED cells working out of a university. The ERU detained seven additional individuals, including three foreign fighters. Most impressively, the raid resulted in minimal damage and disruption to the university and innocent students. The impressive performance of the ERU on this mission led the NSWTF commander to affirm: "ERU did an excellent job tonight . . . the operation was well-controlled and efficient. ERU treated the dorm and students respectfully. There was virtually no damage done inside the dorm." The ERU conducted follow-on operations to reduce the enemy's ability to target coalition and Iraqi security forces.

While conducting combined combat operations with the Iraqis, SOF detachments made on-the-spot corrections and remedied any weaknesses in Iraqi planning or execution. The training cycle was continuous. SOF evaluated the effectiveness of the training that the Iraqis received and incorporated appropriate corrective measures prior to the next operation. SOF assisted the Iraqis with their intelligence collection, analysis, and targeting. Subsequent combat operations proved or disproved the validity of the intelligence and the effectiveness of Iraqi targeting and planning processes.

Hunting of Zarqawi

SOF units were also targeting terrorists, to include members of the Ansar al Islam (AI) and

the network of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (AMZ). Prior to OIF, AMZ had built an alliance between al Qaeda (AQ) and AI in northern Iraq. After Baghdad fell to coalition forces, AMZ built his network, al Qaeda in Iraq (AQIZ), into a deadly terrorist organization. AMZ's ultimate goals were to foment a civil war between Sunnis and Shiites, use that civil war to drive out the coalition forces, and create a fundamentalist "Caliphate" in Iraq.

SOF had made significant progress against AQIZ until April 2004, when all coalition forces were pulled out of Fallujah. The absence of coalition forces in Fallujah provided terrorists a safe haven. The coalition determined that it had to control the city to counter both the insurgency in general and AMZ specifically. In the fall, coalition forces reentered that city. SOF provided significant assistance to conventional forces in destroying the Fallujah safe havens in November 2004.

Terrorists subsequently shifted their efforts north to Mosul in late 2004. SOF operations in Mosul increased dramatically to meet the threat, and more SOF were sent there. In conjunction with conventional forces, SOF established enough security to facilitate the January 2005 elections in Mosul. The effort to eliminate the AQ terrorists, however, was particularly long and difficult. In summer 2005, SOF finally captured Abu Talha, the leading terrorist in Mosul. Later that year SOF was able to break the back of the existing terrorist network in Mosul.

Meanwhile, terrorist activity spread to western Iraq and along the Euphrates River, as foreign suicide bombers moved into Baghdad. The fight in the west intensified in early 2005 as additional SOF deployed into the area. The fighting in the Euphrates River Valley climaxed in the fall of 2005 when SOF and conventional forces finally defeated the foreign-fighter networks. The west and Baghdad remained hotly contested into 2006.

SOF maintained the lead in attacking AMZ and his network, but finding AMZ proved difficult as did penetrating the AQIZ network. Relying on a tight-knit network, AMZ and his associates could move about more easily than had Saddam before his capture. This ease of mobility made it very difficult initially to eradi-

cate AQIZ and the terrorist networks associated with it.

SOF had tracked down Saddam by targeting his facilitators, and this methodology nearly led to AMZ's capture in early 2005. To expedite the targeting process, SOF made several key changes. SOF expanded its intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capacity and its analytical capacity. SOF conducted operations to drive the acquisition of intelligence. Perhaps most importantly, SOF brought to bear an inter-agency effort to disrupt AQIZ and capture AMZ. By devoting a variety of intelligence resources and increasing the operations tempo, SOF significantly increased both the speed at which it planned and executed and the number of terrorists it caught. These tactics significantly disrupted AQIZ operations, but even with the added resources, capturing AMZ proved to be difficult.

In spring 2006, a break in the hunt for AMZ occurred when SOF learned the identity and location of AMZ's closest advisor. Instead of launching an immediate raid to capture or kill this terrorist, SOF monitored the advisor and waited for any indication of a meeting with AMZ. On 7 June, SOF learned when and where he would next meet with the head of AQIZ. AMZ, however, had chosen his hideout so well that it would be nearly impossible to prevent him from escaping if SOF conducted a raid on the house. SOF leadership decided to call in an airstrike and then land a ground force to do sensitive site exploitation. An F-16 dropped two bombs, killing both AMZ and his advisor.

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi had terrorized Iraq for years. The follow-on search of the site also uncovered documents that enabled SOF to capture or eliminate

more terrorists in the weeks that followed.

Additional Tasks

In addition to conducting direct action and advisory tasks, SOF also took on a number of other high priority missions. One of the most successful was providing personal security detachments for high-ranking members of the Iraqi government. It was a mission where failure would be highly visible but success would go largely unnoticed. Terrorists targeted key Iraqi government ministers because successful assassinations had political and psychological effects on the Iraqi government. However, the terrorists were unable to assassinate any of the Iraqi leaders who had SOF security details.

When the interim Iraqi government was established in June 2004, the NSWTG-AP assumed the task of guarding key Iraqi government ministers. The mission continued after the Iraqi national elections of January 2005, and the SEALs executed it flawlessly. The SEALs had been training Iraqis to take over the security mission from the start. By August 2005, the SEALs were able to turn the mission over to the Iraqis but remained as mentors until mid-November when the Iraqis took over the mission completely.

In another high-priority, low visibility mission, SOF provided Special Forces Liaison Elements (SFLEs) to other coalition forces. Beginning in 2004, 1st SFG (A) maintained SFLEs with the South Korean elements in northern Iraq, and the 7th SFG (A) sent SFLEs to advise the El Salvadoran elements in the Polish Division sector southeast of Baghdad. The ODAs from 1st SFG (A) chiefly assisted the South Korean Army in its conduct of Civil-Military Operations. The South Korean battalion operated in a relatively secure part of northern Iraq, freeing the ODAs to



PFC Jessica Lynch being rescued.

THE RESCUE OF JESSICA LYNCH

On 1 April 2003, a joint SOF element, consisting of NAVSOF, U.S. Army Rangers, Marines, and SOF aviation, launched a successful raid to rescue PFC Jessica Lynch from a hospital in Nasiriyah. Army and Marine ground forces also conducted diversionary attacks to prevent reinforcements from moving to the hospital during the rescue.

train and advise local Iraqi units as time permitted. The Salvadorans, on the other hand, had a small force operating in a hostile environment and conducted many aggressive combat operations. The ODAs from 7th SFG (A) assisted their Salvadoran counterparts in the conduct of these missions.

SOF also conducted a number of successful hostage rescue missions. The rescue of PFC Jessica Lynch in 2003 was the first and most famous hostage rescue in Iraq, followed by the rescue of several western hostages in 2004, including U.S. citizen Roy Hallums in 2005 and a significant number of local Iraqi citizens. In addition, U.S. SOF facilitated the rescue of other western hostages by coalition SOF forces.

SOF also contributed a variety of innovative approaches to Information Operations connected with OIF. For example, SOF pioneered an IO effort to counter the recruitment of foreign terrorists to fight in Iraq. SOF worked with the Iraqi government and other nations to return captured foreign terrorists to their countries of origin. SOF also publicized these terrorists' apologies for their actions in Iraq, announcing their disillusionment with Jihad, and the AQIZ recruiter's lies that had induced them to go to Iraq.

The Evolving Threat

In February 2006, a terrorist attack on the Shiite Golden Mosque in Samarra provoked a dramatic rise in sectarian violence between Sunnis and Shiites. The worst manifestation of this strife was the startling rise in so-called "extra-judicial killings" conducted by bands of murderers who kidnapped, tortured, and killed people based on their religious sect. SOF had always targeted known kidnappers and murder-



U.S. Soldiers maintain a perimeter during a CA assessment patrol just blocks from the Golden Mosque of Samarra 14 February 2006.

ers, but after the rise in sectarian violence in 2006, death-squad members became a primary target set. In the six months after the Samarra mosque bombing, SOF conducted hundreds of operations against suspected murderers, capturing over 150 known killers, detaining over 500 suspects, and killing another 150 of them in combat operations. At the time of this writing, death squads and sectarian violence were still a large problem for Iraq, and SOF will probably be targeting ethnic militias for the foreseeable future.

As in Afghanistan, the evolution of SOF roles and missions in Iraq continues. SOF will remain at the forefront of targeting specific terrorists in Iraq. While SOF has earned countless accolades for its successes in eliminating specific persons, its chief contribution over time will undoubtedly prove to be its investment in building the Iraqi security forces. As SOF expands the capability of Iraqi units, however, it will increasingly conduct its targeting through, by, and with Iraqi forces. As a combat multiplier, SOF have proven enormously successful in preparing Iraqi units to defeat the insurgency. Continued success most likely hinges on SOF's ability to employ this indirect approach: to apply components of FID, IO, and CMO to legitimize specific security and government institutions in Iraq.

Further Readings

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“Special Operations Forces are in Afghanistan and Iraq defending our nation against terrorism on a daily basis. However, it is Special Operation’s unique, but less visible, ability to help establish the conditions to counter and defeat terrorism through Unconventional Warfare, Psychological Operations, Foreign Internal Defense, Special Reconnaissance, and Civil Affairs that will become increasingly vital to our long-term success in the Global War on Terrorism.”

GEN Bryan D. Brown



JTF-HOA PSYOP leaflet developed for use in Ethiopia.

Operation ENDURING FREEDOM Trans-Sahara Africa

In 2005, the United States government directed an agency-wide effort called the Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorist Initiative (TSCTI). Billed as a 10-15 year effort, the initiative would enable nations across the North African Pan-Sahel region to deny physical and ideological sanctuary to terrorist organizations affiliated with al Qaeda. The Joint Chiefs designated the military’s participation in this initiative as Operation Enduring Freedom-Trans-Sahara (OEF-TS).

The Joint Chiefs made the European Command (EUCOM) the supported commander for execution of OEF-TS. Special Operations Command, Europe (SOCEUR) acts as the executive agent for planning and execution. In 2006, SOCEUR commissioned a detailed assessment of requirements to build the counterterrorist capacity of partner nation forces throughout the Pan-Sahel. Meanwhile, SOF elements from each component continue executing Joint Combined Exchanges for Training (JCETs) and EUCOM sponsored exercises (e.g. FLINT-LOCK) to train with select partner nation units. SOCEUR’s foreign internal defense (FID) initiative to support the TSCTI was scheduled to grow in the coming years, including significant advisory assistance in Civil Affairs, Information Operations, and other activities to improve physical and human infrastructures. SOCEUR’s goal was to separate the terrorists from the population.

The strategic importance of OEF-TS to both American and North African governments was significant. At the end of 2006, OEF-TS remained one of the largest commitments of U.S. government resources to North Africa since World War II. Assigned and apportioned SOF will have an opportunity to shape conditions not only to defeat al Qaeda-associated franchises, but also to establish military-to-military relationships that support U.S. objectives in North Africa for decades to come.

Operation ENDURING FREEDOM Philippines

Even before 9/11, the Commander of Special Operations Command Pacific (SOCPAC) had identified the al Qaeda-affiliated Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), operating in the Philippines, as a significant threat to Filipino and American interests. The Philippines was and still is experiencing several on-going insurgencies, some related to Islamic extremist groups. The ASG—with ties to Al Qaeda, Jemiah Islamiya, and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)—was

infamous for its hostage for ransom and bombing for extortion activities. In response to a request from the Filipino government, SOCPAC deployed a mobile training team (MTT) from 1st Bn, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) between March and July 2001 to develop a counterterrorist capability in the form of a Light Reaction Company (LRC).

The timing proved fortuitous. While the Special Forces detachments from 1/1st SFG trained the Filipino company, the ASG kidnapped two Americans and held them on the island of Basilan. Upon completion of the its training, the LRC deployed to Basilan in July 2001 to assist conventional Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) battalions in destroying the ASG and in rescuing the American and other foreign hostages.

After 11 September 2001, the United States Pacific Command (PACOM) planned to aggressively attack terrorist groups in Southeast Asia, particularly in the Republic of the Philippines. In October 2001, PACOM and the AFP's Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) conducted a combined assessment of troubled areas in the southern Philippines. PACOM's Commander then requested and received authority to deploy a training and advisory package to Basilan Island to assist SOUTHCOM in its efforts to defeat the terrorists.

Brig Gen Donald Wurster, Commander, SOCPAC, commanded the



resulting operation known as Balikatan 02-1 to the Filipinos, but as Operation ENDURING FREEDOM – PHILIPPINES (OEF-P) to the United States. SOCPAC deployed a Joint Task Force (JTF) 510 to Zamboanga City on Mindanao, Philippines in January 2002 to prepare for the introduction of forces onto Basilan.

From February – July 2002, ten Operational Detachments Alpha (ODAs) and three Operational Detachments Bravo (ODBs) of 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) from both 1/1st SFG (A) in Okinawa and 1st SFG (A) at Ft Lewis, Washington, provided training, advice and assistance to 15 AFP Infantry Battalions. Their mission on Basilan, as directed by FOB 11, was to work through, with, and by AFP units to destroy the ASG organization on the island. Prohibited from conducting combat operations and performing advisory tasks below the battalion level, the ODAs focused on denying ASG sanctuary by preparing the AFP to improve security operations by controlling lines of communication, improving the infrastructure for the local populace through civil affairs, and bolstering the government in the eyes of citizens through information operations (IO). Both 96th Civil Affairs Battalion and the 4th Psychological Operations Battalion (POB) deployed forces to facilitate these efforts.



On 1 February 2002, U.S. and Filipino Special Forces began operations on Basilan Island, a jungle stronghold of the Abu Sayyaf guerrillas.

SOF met most of its aims during OEF-P on Basilan. By July 2002, the ASG had fled the island. One of the two American hostages had been recovered. As importantly, enhanced security and public infrastructure (wells, roads,



NSWTU-P personnel conduct VBSS with NAVSOU SIX and EIGHT on a Filipino PG ship.

bridges, etc.) improved economic and social conditions. As of 2006, the AFP assigned only two battalions on Basilan compared to the 15 employed there only four years earlier.

After completing operations in the late summer of 2002, JTF-510 departed Zamboanga; yet, it did leave in place a JSOTF headquarters (JSOTF-P), stationed in Manila, and a SOUTHCOM Liaison Element (SLE) to continue advising and assisting the AFP's efforts to deny sanctuary to terrorists on Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. In 2003-2004, SOCPAC supported the AFP by training a larger number of Filipino forces. Again, 1st SFG (A) deployed two successive force packages, consisting of one ODB and five ODAs, to conduct Security Assistance during 2003, and a third force package in 2004 of one ODB and three ODAs. All told, the ODAs trained five AFP army and one AFP marine battalions. During the same period, 1/1st SFG continued training the Filipino CT force, preparing and outfitting an additional two LRCs. ODAs from 1/1 also assisted in the design of a Joint Special Operations Group (JSOG), including AFP air force rotary wing lift assets.

The purpose of the JSOG was to employ CT forces to capture or kill terrorists. Members of the 6th SOS from Hurlburt Field provided NVG training, helping to create a night infiltration capability to insert and support the LRCs when employed.

Recognizing the need to provide a maritime interdiction capability, SOCPAC tasked NAVSOF elements from Guam to conduct a Security Assistance MTT to train Filipino naval units



NAVSOU SIX and RIB DET FOXTROT conducting coast patrol and interaction in the vicinity of General Santos.

from SOUTHCOM on maritime patrolling and interdiction tasks during 2004. In 2005, NAVSOF shifted to a permanent Subject Matter Expert Exchange (SMEE) effort on Mindanao and at Tawi-Tawi, an island at the southern end of the Sulu Archipelago.

SOC PAC also introduced operations/intelligence fusion teams (O/IFTs) to work with various organizations in SOUTHCOM. The O/IFTs provided advice and assistance on collection priorities and force employment at division and brigade. Beginning in 2004, 1/1st SFG provided two ODAs continuously to serve as O/IFTs, both to the newly created JSOG and to 6th Infantry Division in Central Mindanao. Additionally, NSW TU-1 provided small boat unit and SEAL O/IFTs to the Philippine Navy in Zamboanga and on Tawi-Tawi. The NAVSOF elements provided similar type advisory assistance to NAVSOU in southeastern Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago.

In 2005, SOCPAC and SOUTHCOM pushed for a significant expansion of American assistance to the Filipino CT effort. In the summer of 2005, terrorists from the ASG and JI had moved from Mindanao to the island of Sulu where they sought refuge. Sulu was predominantly

inhabited by Muslims and was the site where Islam was introduced to the Philippines. Many members of both the Philippine and American governments believed that introducing American forces onto Sulu would have been met with intense resistance. Events in Sulu have thus far dispelled both fears.

Based on a PACOM assessment recommending such a deployment, the SECDEF approved a second iteration of OEF-P to combat terrorism in the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility (AOR), specifically on Sulu. SOCPAC established a



Two members of the SOS-T perform advanced trauma management on a Filipino firefighter on Sulu.

larger JSOTF in Zamboanga and deployed a force package to the island of Sulu, conducting operations based on the Basilan model. Using that template, SOCPAC deployed one ODB, five ODAs, and elements of the NSWSTU to Sulu to advise and assist AFP units in their effort to capture key terrorists. The JSOTF developed three main lines of operation: capacity building, targeted civil military operations (CMO), and information operations. SOCPAC had wisely requested a number of combat multipliers: a CAT-B, MIST, PAO, EOD specialists, and even a Special Operations Surgical Team (SOS-T) from Hurlburt.

Like operations on the island of Basilan, JSOTF-P forces conducted advisory assistance and SMEEs down to the battalion level. The goal remained to conduct all operations through, with, and by AFP forces.

From October 2005-July 2006, JSOTF-P units assisted Task Force Comet, the AFP command on Sulu, in setting conditions to deny terrorist sanctuary. ODAs advised their partner army and marine infantry battalions in route and area security to facilitate Filipino sponsored medical, veterinary, and engineer civilian action programs, along with various population engagement activities. These combined efforts succeeded in separating the terrorists from the population. The NSWSTU rehearsed Filipino units in maritime interdiction. AFSOC personnel continued working with the Filipino aviation

units. Special Forces detachments trained and rehearsed select units within Filipino army and marine battalions in collective patrolling tasks.

On August 1, 2006, TF Comet launched Operation ULTIMATUM to capture the ASG and JI leadership on Sulu. Filipino Army, Marine, and Special Operations units succeeded in driving the terrorists from their sanctuaries on the island. Filipino naval units effectively cordoned Sulu Island so that the terrorists could not escape. Most impressively, TF Comet synchronized joint operations for more than 90 days, supplying logistics in the field and maintaining continuous pressure on the terrorists, all without losing the support of the local population.

On both Basilan and Sulu, OEF-P has demonstrated the efficacy of a population-based counterinsurgency fight. Such campaigns can and will work when the local and national governments and security forces of a partner nation remain committed to eradicating conditions for terrorist sanctuaries. By building the capability of host nation forces, developing a combined Information Operations campaign which promoted government legitimacy, and refurbishing physical and human infrastructure, SOF have helped provide options to the Filipino populace and to sever its ties to terrorist ideology. OEF-P currently provides an example where a small SOF footprint has combined with collective resolve to defeat terrorism.



Glossary

ACRONYMS

I MEF.....I Marine Expeditionary
Force (UK)
4th ID.....4th Infantry Division

A

A-10jet aircraft
AAAantiaircraft artillery
ACManti-coalition militia
ACRIAfrican Crisis Response
Initiative
AFPArmed Forces of the
Philippines
AFSB.....Afloat Forward Staging Base
AFSOCAir Force Special Operations
Command
AFSOCCENTAir Force Special
Operations Command, Central
AH-64.....assault helicopter
AIAnsar al Islam
AK-47.....assault rifle (Russian)
AMFAfghan Military Forces
AMZ.....Abu Musab al-Zarqawi
ANA.....Afghan National Army
ANSF.....Afghan National Security Force
AOarea of operations
AOB.....advanced operating base
AOR.....area of responsibility
AQ.....al Qaeda
AQIZ.....al Qaeda in Iraq
ARNGArmy National Guard
ASD (SO/LIC).....Assistant Secretary of
Defense for Special Operations/
Low Intensity Conflict
ASDS.....Advanced SEAL Delivery
System
ASG.....Abu Sayyaf Group
ATFanti-Taliban Forces
AVNaviation
AWACSAirborne Warning and Control
System

B

BAFBagram Airfield
BATTbattalion augmentation team
BCTbrigade combat team
BL.....black list
BN.....battalion
BODBoard of Directors
BUD/SBasic Underwater
Demolition/SEAL

C

C2.....command and control
C4.....command, control,
communications, and computers
C4I.....command and control,
communications, computers,
and intelligence
CA.....Civil Affairs
CAOCCombat Air Operations Center
CAS.....close air support
CASEVACcasualty evacuation
CCATFCombined Civil Affairs
Task Force
CCTcombat controller
CDcounterdrug
CENTCOM.....U.S. Central Command
CFC-A.....Combined Forces
Command-Afghanistan
CFLCCCombined Forces Land
Component Commander
CFMCC.....Combined Force Maritime
Component Command
CIACentral Intelligence Agency
CINCSOCCommander in Chief,
U.S. Special Operations Command
CIO.....Chief Information Officer
CJFSOCC.....Combined Joint Forces
Special Operations
Component Command
CJSOTFCombined Joint Special
Operations Task Force
CJSOTF-ACombined Joint Special
Operations Task Force-Afghanistan
CJSOTF-NCombined Joint Special
Operations Task Force-North
CJSOTF-WCombined Joint Special
Operations Task Force-West
CJTFCombined Joint Task Force
CMOcivil-military operations
CMOC.....Civil Military Operations Center
COLARColumbian Army
COMARRC.....Commander, Allied
Command Europe
Rapid Reaction Corps
CPA.....Coalition Provisional Authority
CRE.....Crisis Response Element
CSARCombat Search and Rescue
CSOFcoalition SOF
CTBMcounter-tactical ballistic missile

D

DA.....direct action

DIADefense Intelligence Agency
DODDepartment of Defense
DPVdesert patrol vehicle

E

EOD.....explosive ordnance disposal
ERUemergency response unit
ESAT.....EUCOM Survey and
Assessment Team
ETACenlisted tactical air controller
EUCOM.....U.S. European Command

F

FAfield artillery
FA-18.....strike fighter jet
FARPforward arming and refueling
point
FBIFederal Bureau of Investigation
FID.....foreign internal defense
FMLN.....Farabundo Marti
Liberacion Nacional
FMTUForeign Military Training Unit
FOB.....forward operating base

G

GCCgeographic combatant command
GMVground mobility vehicle
GOA.....Government of Afghanistan
GWOT.....Global War on Terrorism

H

HIMARSHigh Mobility Artillery
Rocket System
HLZ.....helicopter landing zone
HSVHigh Speed Vessel
HVThigh-value target

I

ICTFIraqi Counterterrorist Force
IDInfantry Division
IDA.....Institute of Defense Analysis
IFOR.....Implementation Force
IMEF.....I Marine Expeditionary Force
IOInformation Operations
IRB.....Immediate Reaction Battalion
ISAFInternational Security
Assistance Force (NATO)
ISOFIraqi Special Operations Forces
ISR.....intelligence, surveillance, and
reconnaissance

J

JACEJoint Air Coordination Element
JCET.....joint combined exchange training
JCOJoint Commission Observer
JCS.....Joint Chiefs of Staff
JDAM.....Joint Direct Attack Munition
JFSOCC.....Joint Force Special

Operations Component Command
JMDjoint manning document
JOAJoint Operational Area
JPOTF.....Joint Psychological Operations
Task Force

J-Staff.....Joint staff
JSOAC.....Joint Special Operations
Air Component
JSOCJoint Special Operations
Command
JSOFOR-SomaliaJoint Special
Operations Forces-Somalia
JSOG.....Joint Special Operations Group
JSOTFJoint Special Operations
Task Force
JSOUJoint Special Operations
University
JTAC.....joint tactical air controller
JTFJoint Task Force

K

KAAOT.....Khor Al Amaya
KAZ.....Kurdish Autonomous Zone
KFIAKing Fahd International Airport
KFORKosovo Force (NATO)
KKMCKing Khalid Military City
KMTC.....Kabul Military Training Center
KNBKuwait Naval Base
KSKKommando
Spezialstreitkräfte (German Special
Forces Group)

L

LCELiaison Coordination Element
LNO.....liaison officer
LOCline of communication
LRClight reaction company
LZ.....loading zone

M

MABOTMina Al Bakr
MACMilitary Airlift Command
MARSOCMarine Special Operations
Command
MEDEVACmedical evacuation
MEUMarine expeditionary unit
MEU(SOC)MEU (Special Operations
Capable)
MFP-11Major Force Program 11
MILF.....Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MIOmaritime interception operations
MiTTmilitary transition team
MNDmultinational division
MSSmission support site
MTTmobile training team

SOIO.....Center for Intelligence and Information Operations
 SOKF.....Center for Knowledge and Futures
 SOLE.....Special Operations Liaison Element
 SONC.....Center for Networks and Communications
 SOOP.....Center for Operations, Plans and Policy
 SORDAC.....Special Operations Research, Development, and Acquisition Center
 SORR.....Center for Structure, Requisitions, Resources, and Strategic Assessments
 SOS.....special operations squadron
 SOSO.....stability and support operations
 SOS-T.....Special Operations Surgical Team
 SOTAC.....Special Operations Tactical Air Controller
 SOUTHCOM.....U.S. Southern Command
 SOW.....Special Operations Wing
 SR.....special reconnaissance
 SSE.....sensitive site exploitation
 STS.....special tactics squadron
 SWAT.....special weapons and tactics

T

TACON.....tactical control
 TACP.....tactical air control party
 TDC.....theater deployable communications system
 TF.....task force
 TIC.....troops in contact
 TLAM.....Tomahawk land attack missile
 TOR.....Terms of Reference
 TSCTI.....Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorist Initiative
 TSOC.....theater special operations command
 TST-W.....Time Sensitive Targeting West
 TU.....task unit

U

UAV.....unmanned aerial vehicle
 UBL.....Usama bin Laden
 UCK.....Kosovo Liberation Army
 UCP.....Unified Command Plan
 UK.....United Kingdom
 UN.....United Nations
 UNOSOM.....UN Operations Somalia
 UNSC.....UN Security Council
 U.S.United States

U.S. SOF.....United States Special Operations Forces
 USAF.....United States Air Force
 USASFC.....United States Army Special Forces Command
 USASOC.....United States Army Special Operations Command
 USCINCSOC.....U.S. Commander in Chief, Special Operations Command
 USN.....United States Navy
 USREDCOM.....U.S. Readiness Command
 USS.....United States ship
 USSF.....United States Special Forces (Army)
 USSOCOM.....U. S. Special Operations Command
 USSTRATCOM.....U.S. Strategic Command
 UW.....unconventional warfare

Y

Y2K.....Year 2000

TERMS

9/11: Month/day terrorists attacked the World Trade Centers, September 11, 2001.

Caliphate: An Islamic federal government.

cuartel: A small garrison.

ECOMOG: A Nigerian-led African peacekeeping force headquartered in Monrovia in 1998.

Fedayeen: An irregular force of soldiers loyal to Saddam.

Jihad: A Muslim holy war.

Operational Preparation of the Environment: To prepare and shape the environment in support of future operations.

penetrometer: A device for measuring the penetrability of semi-solids.

Peshmerga: Kurdish freedom fighters.

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Acknowledgements

The 20th Anniversary edition of the USSOCOM History owes much to the entire staff of the History and Research Office—civil service, contract, and active duty and reserve personnel. Staff who contributed mightily by gathering photographs, editing, researching, and writing portions of this edition include LTC James Burns, Ms. Cristin Daniel, CDR James Fossa, Mr. Rick Green, Ms. Lauren Kata, Ms. Gaea Levy, LTC Tom Searle, Ms. Deborah Seed, SSgt Angela Vazquez, LTC James “Dave” Wood, and Dr. Shawn Woodford. Dr. John Partin performed a myriad of tasks to bring this edition to fruition. Ms. Levy laid out the text and photographs; Mr. Randy Nabors designed the cover. Special thanks go to all involved.

For comments or suggestions, please contact the USSOCOM History and Research Office at:

USSOCOM/SOCS-HO
 7701 Tampa Point Boulevard
 MacDill AFB, FL 33621-5323

Telephone: Commercial (813) 826-4431
 DSN: 299-4431; FAX 299-5528