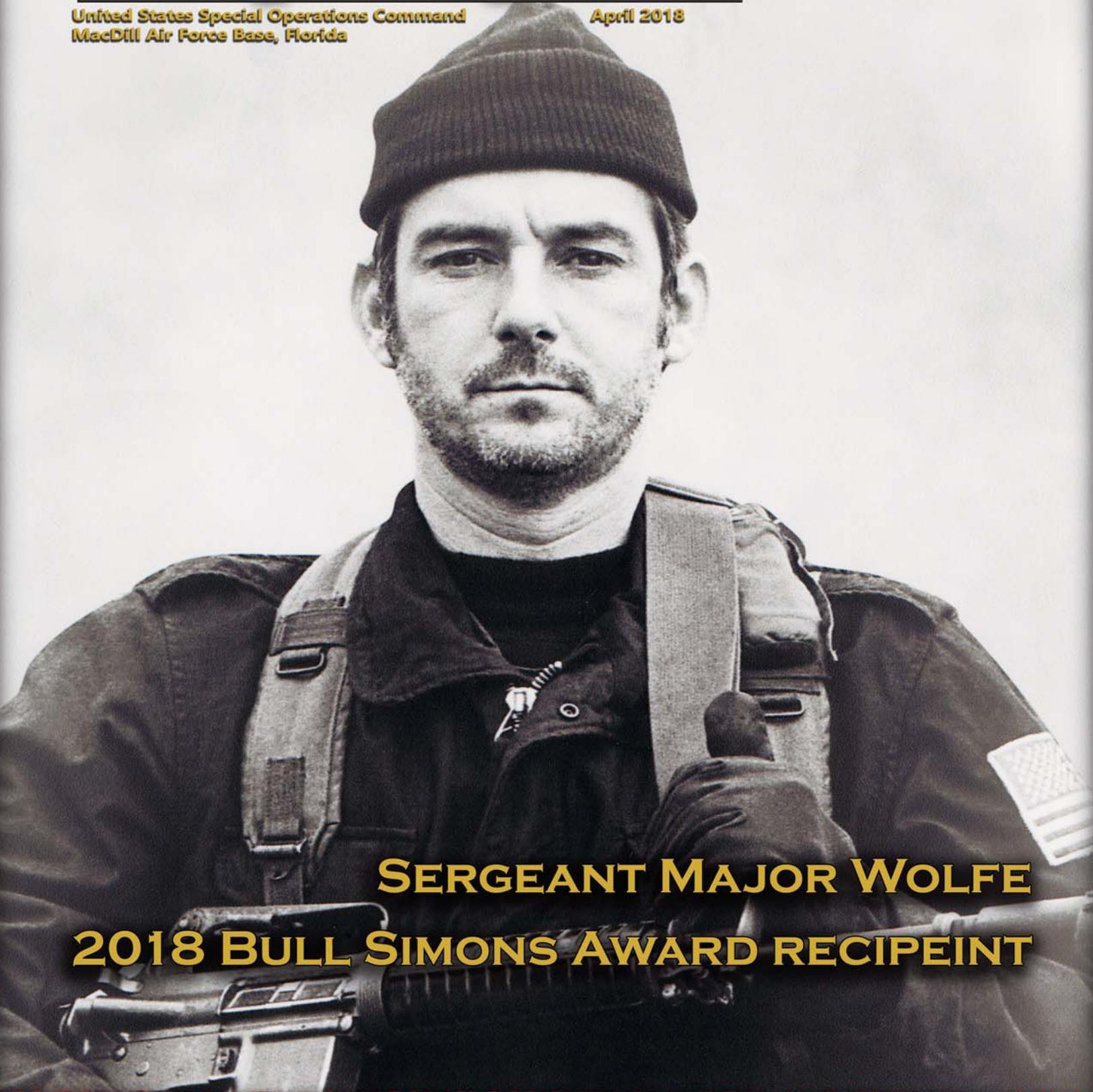




Tip OF THE Spear

United States Special Operations Command
MacDill Air Force Base, Florida

April 2018



SERGEANT MAJOR WOLFE
2018 BULL SIMONS AWARD RECIPEINT





U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



Tip of the Spear

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(Cover) Retired U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Dennis Wolfe received U.S. Special Operations Command's 2018 Bull Simons Award April 18 in Tampa, Fla. His remarkable five decade career in and out of uniform pioneering explosive ordnance and disposal tactics for special operations was the basis for the award. The lifetime achievement award recognizes recipients who embody the true spirit, values, and skills of a special operations warrior. Col. Arthur "Bull" Simons, whom the award is named after, was the epitome of these attributes. Photo courtesy of retired Sgt. Maj. Dennis Wolfe.

Tip of the Spear



Thomas Jefferson
Award Winner

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Joint training boosts US response capabilities in the Americas

*By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Osvaldo Equite
Special Operations Command South*

Within minutes, an elite multinational security force team managed to close with and overwhelm armed groups hiding along Panama’s Caribbean shores and remote jungle locations.

The team’s mission success however, would depend on the next hundred or so split-second decisions made – under fire and stress – between team members that had only met weeks before.

Still, the team freed all simulated hostages, while successfully culminating a month-long training exchange between U.S. special operations forces and Panamanian security counterparts held Jan. 5 - Feb. 6, throughout Panama.

“The Joint Combined Exchange Training improved the readiness of assigned quick reaction forces with Special Operations Command South by developing capabilities needed when responding to a crisis alongside partner nation security forces,” said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Marcus Hunter, special operations liaison officer with U.S. Special Operations Command, in Panama City, Panama.

Participating US SOF units improved their overall competencies in marksmanship, small unit tactics training, air and maritime operations, communications, and sustained interoperability with counterparts by exchanging techniques, tactics, and procedures – while enhancing service members’ language proficiency in Spanish.

SOCSOUTH integrated US SOF units from the Air Force, Army, and Navy to train alongside elite Panamanian counterterrorism units in coordination with the U.S. Embassy in Panama City and Panamanian security forces.

Nothing like back home

Although US SOF train regularly at their home station in preparation for contingencies in the Americas, JCETs provide training opportunities not easily replicated stateside.

“Everyday was about learning something new, even if it was just a small interaction with our counterparts in Spanish,” said U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Gordon Boyer, a radio frequency transmission specialist with the 6th Special



A U.S. Army Special Forces Soldier with Special Operations Command South assigns sectors of fire to a Panamanian police officer during a hostage rescue scenario Feb. 1, as part of Joint Combined Exchange Training in Colon, Panama. The Soldiers gained valuable experiences in leadership, mentorship, instruction, and advisory roles during a month-long training exchange. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Osvaldo Equite.

Operations Squadron, Hurlburt Field, Fla.

For weeks, Boyer, a Michigan native responsible for the maintenance and repair of communications equipment, relied on his working proficiency in Spanish to work side by side with his counterparts on a daily basis.

“We dove into the manuals for hours, figuring things out together,” said Boyer, recalling an instance where he enabled communications between Panamanian air support, U.S. and partner nation ground forces.

“We figured out the best way for us to accomplish our missions everyday using what we had and speaking with the little we both knew,” he said, noting that the interactions really tested his Spanish and his counterpart’s English.

Like Boyer, Spanish is a second language for the majority of the American exercise participants. Only a third of the service members who took part in the training were fluent, with the rest having a minimal working proficiency in

the language.

“That’s why training like this is so important. We get a full language and cultural immersion we wouldn’t get back home,” said Matt, a senior Special Forces weapons sergeant with the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne), out of Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., who for security reasons spoke on condition of anonymity.

The first time many junior service members gain valuable experiences in leadership, mentorship, instruction, and advisory roles is also during joint combined training.

“The first opportunity I had being a team leader was during a previous JCET, where I was responsible for leading a group of partner nation members as we conducted training,” said the Special Forces sergeant, who has deployed eight times, with this trip being his first to Panama.

“It was during a prior JCET that I was also put in charge as a ground convoy commander for the first time,” he added. “With little prior experience in such a position I put together a plan, thought of all the obstacles we might come across, and began to develop contingencies for a two-hour movement. The contingencies included coordination with an air element.”

Additionally, US SOF tackle logistics, communications, and transportation hurdles on a daily basis during joint combined training that begins as soon as they arrive in country.

“That’s another benefit to this training, working through and finding solutions to the day-to-day real-world problems that you do not encounter back home,” said the Special Forces sergeant.

Beyond the training

Aside from boosting U.S. force’s response capabilities in the Americas, this exchange training also strengthened working relationships and built trust between the elite forces. This not only saves valuable time in being able to make split-second decisions during training, but also when working together in the event of a crisis.

“These relationships and trust can help reduce the scope and duration of a crisis and increase the likelihood our partners can respond to crises on their own,” said U.S. Navy Adm. Kurt W. Tidd, U.S. Southern Command’s commander, before a Senate Armed Services Committee last year.

Similarly, the most rewarding aspect of the training for many of the exchange participants was building professional relationships needed if they are one day called to work alongside each other.

“Our mission is to execute high-risk operations in urban areas and to intervene against sabotage against the canal,”

said police Capt. Javier Bethancourt, deputy operations officer with Panama’s National Police counterterrorism unit known in its Spanish acronym as the UFEC.

Without these working relationships and training, it would be difficult for the multinational forces to work together, said the operations officer. “So building these relationships is important, especially if it comes to protecting the canal.”

“We build a relationship with these guys because they are the best and they might stay in the same unit for years,” said the U.S. Special Forces weapons sergeant. “This makes integration easier, knowing that we speak the same language when it comes to tactics and techniques. At the end of the day, the ultimate outcome for us is to build and maintain steady relationships that prepare us for any type of crisis we are tasked to respond to.”

Other participating units included Panama’s National Police Rural and Maritime Anti-Drug Unit known as the UTOA, and elements from the National Aero Naval Service known as SENAN, in their Spanish acronyms.



A U.S. Army Special Forces reconnaissance team with Special Operations Command South prepares for a patrol Feb. 1, during a Joint Combined Exchange Training exercise with Panamanian security forces in Colon, Panama. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Osvaldo Equite.



SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND – EUROPE

U.S. Army Rangers assigned to the 75th Ranger Regiment assault an objective at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, February 21. Rangers spent 72 hours training at JMRC as the culmination of a winter warfare training which included training with the German military. Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Christopher Brecht.



75th Ranger Regiment wraps winter warfare training in Germany at JMRC

*By U.S. Army 1st Lt. Benjamin Haulenbeek
U.S. Special Operations Command Europe*

The Joint Multinational Readiness Center, the Europe-based combat training center with a world-wide mobile training capability, trains leaders, staffs, and units up to brigade combat teams and multinational partners, to dominate in the conduct of unified land operations anywhere in the world.

“Training here at JMRC gave us a unique environment to train in with a new set of opposing forces and observer-coach-trainers to better enhance our skills and give us a broader skillset,” said a Ranger.

Earlier in February, platoons received mountain warfare training from the German military in Mittenwald, Germany, which led into a 72-hour training exercise at JMRC.

The 72-hour training event at JMRC was supported by the U.S. Army’s 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, who provided air mobility to the Rangers via CH-47 Chinook helicopters.

“Our goal is to be the Army’s premier direct action raid force,” said a Ranger platoon leader. “The more perspectives and different environments we see the better.”

The terrain at JMRC provided unforeseen challenges to the special operations unit.

“The Rangers, as is universal to almost every unit that comes here, initially underestimated the complexity of the terrain and proficiency of the opposing forces,” said the training manager for JMRC’s special operations forces cell, a U.S. Special Operations Command element that integrates SOF activities into JMRC. “The 1:50,000 scale maps they used fail to capture the significant micro-terrain in the JMRC training area.”

As a result, foot marches and other common tasks took longer than expected as the unit maneuvered through the training center to reach their objective.

“I think one of the biggest lessons, and our company commander actually said this at the end of the training course, was that we are learning we can’t always Ranger

through things,” said a Ranger. “That’s always sort of been our mentality that we are able to push through no matter what, just suck it up and get through it and it will be all right. We learned a lot of lessons having to acclimate to the environment.”

As temperatures reached freezing over several days of continuous operations, Rangers incorporated their previous lessons on winter warfare learned in Mittenwald.

“It is all about dealing with mountains and the environment,” said a Ranger squad leader. “It’s about sustainability in the mountains and the cold.”



U.S. Army Rangers assigned to the 75th Ranger Regiment patrol through the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, Feb. 20. Rangers spent 72 hours training at JMRC as the culmination of a winter warfare training which included training with the German military. Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Christopher Brecht.



A Ukrainian special operations medic treats a simulated casualty during the NATO Special Operations Combat Medic course culminating field training exercise near Pfullendorf, Germany, Feb. 27. NSOCM is a 24-week course offered by the International Special Training Centre which provides training on advanced combat trauma management with a special emphasis on clinical medicine and prolonged field care. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jessica Nassirian.

SOF medics from 10 nations increase lifesaving skills at ISTC

*By U.S. Army Sgt. Karen Sampson
U.S. Special Operations Command Europe*

This was the second iteration of the new 22-week course, during which students learn and implement roughly 164 NATO-recognized critical tasks in specialized treatment of trauma and non-trauma injuries, illnesses and study clinical medicine. Students perform in tactical level realistic combat scenarios while attaining these specialized skill sets.

Multinational special operation forces medics and non-medical operators attending the NATO Special Operations Combat Medic course are introduced to a wide variety of lifesaving techniques enhancing their capabilities for unique medical challenges that may arise during special operations forces missions.

“Saving more lives in combat is the NSCOM foremost intent,” said U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Mark C. Schwartz, Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command Europe. “As NSOCM equips SOF Medic Soldiers with more



(Above) A Norwegian special operations medic treats a sick call patient during the NATO Special Operations Combat Medic course culminating field training exercise near Pfullendorf, Germany, Feb. 27. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jessica Nassirian.

advanced abilities; they take away what they learned here at ISTC to build a collective capability from medical and non-medical SOF within their organic unit.”

ISTC is a nine-nation memorandum of understanding based organization that received institutional accreditation from NATO. ISTC provides advanced, specialized training focused on individual and tactical level skills to increase the readiness and capacity of NATO and partner SOF. ISTC allows NATO and partner nations to combine resources and instructors while also ensuring interoperability amongst students.

“Being a small country, Norway has used ISTC to train our soldiers for many years,” said Rear Adm. Jan Sommerfelt-Pettersen, a specialist in public health from the Norwegian armed forces. “We gain more from the quality of education ISTC provides.”

Sommerfelt-Pettersen believes that providing skilled medics alongside units where doctors aren’t available is critical to saving lives. “The crux of the matter is ISTC takes modern medicine and educates military operators on skills to bring to combat in areas where normal medical support is unavailable,” he said.

Medics in future contingency operations may face delayed evacuation times and limited resources. Unit’s realize the need to better equip medics with higher education in medical training and to further add to an organization’s standard medic field training to assist with casualties requiring long-term care.

“In previous operational commitments we discovered we needed a larger presence in medical autonomy,” said Italian Army Brig. Gen. Ivan Caruso, commander of the Italian Army Special Forces Command. “Italy is dedicating

more funds and human resources for our SOF soldiers.”

Highlighting the relevance of the training, Caruso said an NSOCM-trained Italian Army Special Forces medic was recently recognized during a deployment to Iraq for his contribution in saving lives.

“If the intent is to create capable special operations forces working in remote areas away from communication and logistic support, the unit should attend this NATO-recognized course,” stated Caruso.

In addition to the skills learned, students are awarded a diploma and 60 applicable college credit hours.

“Along with ISTC’s NATO accreditation, the NSOCM course is aligned with University College of Cork, Ireland,” said U.S. Army Maj. Jon Christensen, ISTC NSOCM Course Director. “These credentials make the ISTC NSOCM course the only combat medical course that upon completion awards a diploma.”

With the classroom, practical exercises and the high-stress culminated field training exercise complete, the graduates will move on to a final two-week residency in medical facilities in Ireland and Norway before returning to their respective units to put their skills to use and train others in the lifesaving techniques learned at the NATO Special Operations Combat Medic course.



Norwegian and British special operations medics secure a casualty to a litter while training in a simulated chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear environment during the NATO Special Operations Combat Medic course at the International Special Training Centre, Pfullendorf, Germany, Jan. 25. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jessica Nassirian.



US SOF conduct winter warfare training in Sweden

A U.S. Army Special Forces Soldier assigned to the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) conducts snow machine movement and evasive maneuver training near Kiruna, Sweden, Feb. 24. The Arctic winter training included four weeks of basic winter warfare exercises. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Matt Britton.



By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Matthew Britton
U.S. Special Operations Command Europe

There's cold and then there's above the Arctic Circle cold. So cold that frostbite on exposed skin can occur within minutes. Not cold enough to stop special operations forces from operating in the environment.

U.S. Air Force Special Operations Forces assigned to the 352nd Special Operations Wing and U.S. Army Special Forces assigned to 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) conducted an Arctic Winter training course from February to March 2018 in Kiruna, Sweden.

The training consisted of realistic scenarios and classroom instruction that spanned the course of six weeks.

"The course included classes and practical exercises on survival in a cold weather environment," said a USAF SOF operator. "We also trained movement on skis and snowshoes, advanced snow mobile movements and live-fire ranges. In Special Tactics, we need to have the ability to employ and project global access, precision strike and personnel recovery across the globe, regardless of environment."

Combined training and the exchange of information is critical for successful joint military operations.

"Our success relies on interoperability between U.S. and European forces," said a USAF SOF operator. "We use common practices, but it is invaluable to integrate and

train alongside our partners. This allows U.S. forces to gain credibility and build relationships that will continue during future engagements."

The benefits of surviving and operating in the harsh conditions weren't the only lessons learned from the course.

"Joint and combined training has been the most beneficial aspect of our trip to the Arctic," said a USAF SOF operator. "We have learned several tactics, techniques and procedures that we have adopted and trained to. These lessons learned not only add to our survivability, but also increase the lethality of our forces."

Training in the Arctic provides the U.S. and their partners the opportunity for future operations and strategic planning.

"The Arctic Circle holds strategic military, economic and geopolitical value," said a USAF SOF operator. "The intent of our training is to support our European partners across all environments. The High North provides an opportunity for us to collaborate with partner nations in winter warfare exercises and learn from past and present experiences."

The training in the unforgiving environment expanded the capabilities of the tactical teams and left them with a newfound respect for the cold.

"Training in the Arctic is a very humbling experience," said a USAF SOF operator. "In the words of our partner forces, 'In training, the enemy is simulated. The cold is real.'"



U.S. Airmen assigned to the 321st Special Tactics Squadron, 352nd Special Operations Wing conduct movement on skis during Arctic winter training near Kiruna, Sweden, Feb. 23. Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Matt Britton.





U.S. Airmen assigned to the 321st Special Tactics Squadron, 352nd Special Operations Wing conduct freefall airborne operations near Kiruna, Sweden, Feb. 24. Photo illustration by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Matt Britton.



Lithuanian special operations forces operating in Afghanistan. Courtesy photo.



Lithuanian, US SOF coordinate efforts to counter modern-day threats

*By U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo
USSOCOM Office of Communication*

The storied history of Lithuanian Special Operations Forces shares roots with U.S. SOF that continue to this day.

U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Joseph Osterman, deputy commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, recently attended the 10th anniversary celebration of Lithuanian SOF becoming a distinct, fourth branch of their armed forces on April 3, 2008.

Soon after their inception, U.S. SOF began working with them, both in training and overseas operations.

“It’s a long lasting and a very warm, very sort of honest relationship,” said Col. Modestas Petrauskas, Lithuanian Special Operations Forces commander. “And was proven by combat in Afghanistan, proven by the

challenges that now we’re facing in the Baltic region.”

The relationship between U.S. and Lithuanian SOF began in the early 1990s in the form of joint combined exchange training, which included the breaching of barricades and combat medical care. Over time, the training developed into full-scale exercises conducted with Special Operations Command Europe.

Today, both nation’s forces cooperate on a multitude of operations by working through ties at all levels of organization.

“Based on this cooperation, we’re not only able to consume security and consume alliance efforts to deter threats against Lithuanian and the Baltic region,” Petrauskas said. “But we’re also able to export security to the countries that require it.”

I hope, to the level that we’re able to, to contribute to the U.S. interests, to the U.S. goals, to the NATO alliance



U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Joseph Osterman, deputy commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, exchanges gifts with Col. Modestas Petrauskas, commander, Lithuanian Special Operations Forces, during a 10th anniversary celebration of Lithuanian SOF becoming a distinct, fourth branch of their armed forces on April 3. Courtesy photo.

interests and extend the security to those who need it,” he said.

Lithuanian SOF traces its origins to the resistance campaign fought by Žaliukai, or Forest Brothers, against Soviet occupation from 1945-53. By 1945 there may have already been as many as 30,000 partisans in the Lithuanian forests led by former officers, students and teachers. In total, more than 50,000 people were engaged in the armed resistance against Soviet aggression, about 140,000 persons were taken to concentration camps and 118,000 people were deported.

Modern Lithuanian SOF must volunteer, pass a selection process and must complete specialized training. The philosophy that drives their motivation, training and development is readiness to fight the aggressor in a dynamically evolving multidimensional environment through precision strikes (including non-kinetic) on enemy

critical capabilities in an unexpected manner.

After 9/11, relations between U.S. and Lithuanian SOF “took another level of quality because we were fighting together, we were preparing to fight together,” Petrauskas said.

As relations forged in peacetime and in wartime between Lithuanian and U.S. SOF continue to grow stronger, both nation’s forces benefit from organized coordination. USSOCOM’s J3-International, the largest gathering of international special operations forces personnel outside of NATO, serves as one avenue of cooperation.

“It’s also working with the international staff such as J3-I. Being a part of the family with a relationship that will endure afterwards,” Petrauskas said.

Multiple relations forged through J3-I, leader-to-leader and theater special operations command liaisons contribute to shared awareness of global challenges.

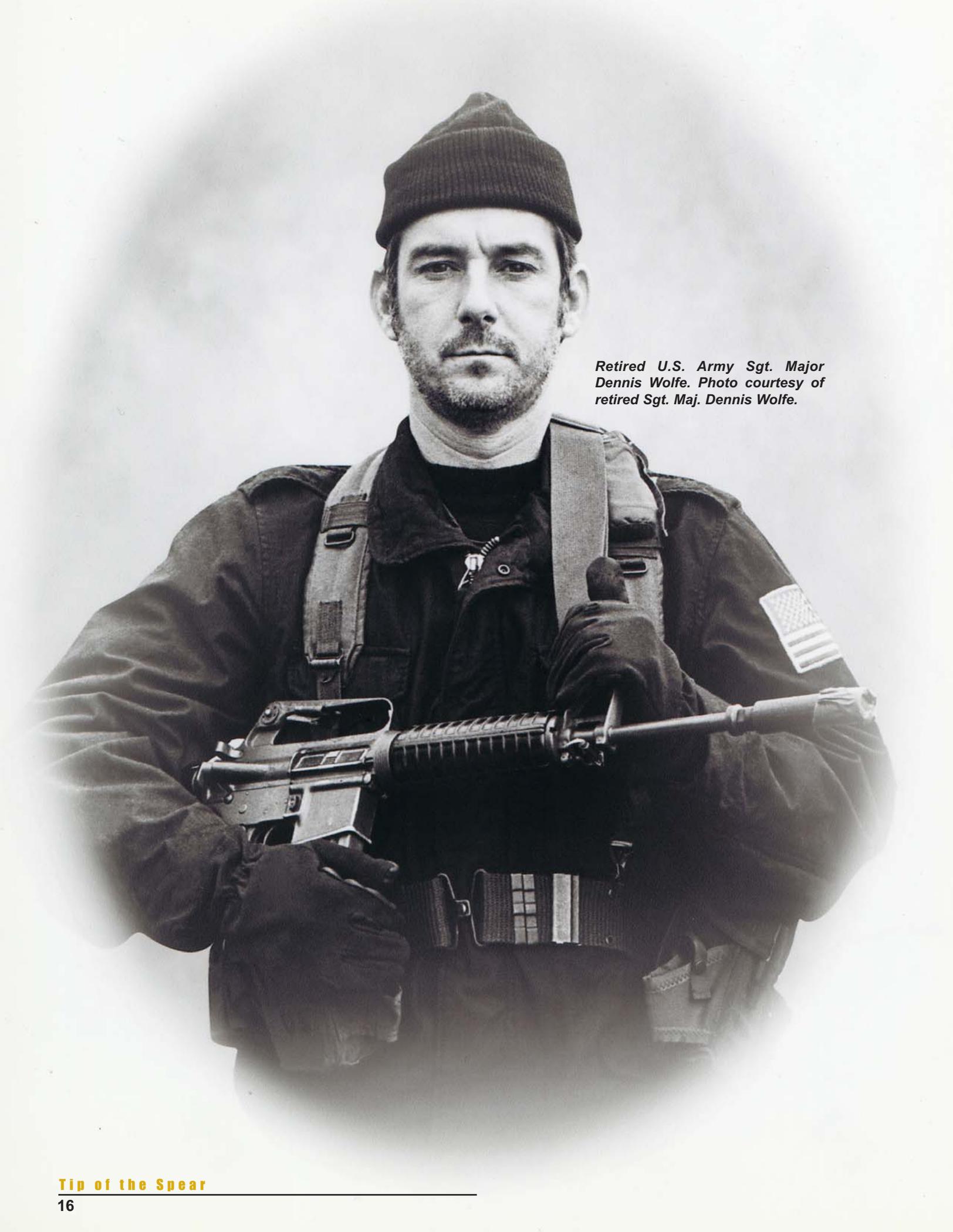
“There was a difficult time when after the second world war when we felt sort of forgotten. We were fighting alone against the soviet occupation and waiting for support from the outside world. It didn’t happen,” he said.

Today the United States, Lithuania and their many other allies and partner nations are prepared to serve as a solution to modern-day threats.

“There’s nothing to fear. Neither Russia nor extremists can challenge us when we’re together, when we’re united, working together against common threats,” Petrauskas said. “So let’s hope our relationship will continue to grow and evolve,” he said.



Lithuanian special operations forces conducting drills. Courtesy photo.



*Retired U.S. Army Sgt. Major
Dennis Wolfe. Photo courtesy of
retired Sgt. Maj. Dennis Wolfe.*

Special operations EOD pioneer 2018 Bull Simons Award recipient

By Michael Bottoms
USSOCOM Office of Communication

Dennis Wolfe, a retired U.S. Army sergeant major, received U.S. Special Operations Command's 2018 Bull Simons Award April 18, in Tampa, Florida. His remarkable five decade career in and out of uniform pioneering explosive ordnance and disposal tactics for special operations was the basis for the award. His expertise established a world class program to counter weapons of mass destruction becoming the standard for the United States government and our international partners.

The lifetime achievement award recognizes recipients who embody the true spirit, values, and skills of a special operations warrior. Col. Arthur "Bull" Simons, whom the award is named after, was the epitome of these attributes.

Wolfe was born in Port Trevorton, Pennsylvania, and raised in humble surroundings where there was not much of a chance to make a decent living and travel.

"It was 1962 following graduation from high school and there was very little opportunity where I grew up and was raised and I always had this dream of seeing the world and knew there was a lot out there and probably the way to do it was to join the service," Wolfe said. "I, of course, had no idea what I was getting into."

During basic training an unfortunate injury would turn out to be a fortunate career opportunity for him.

"My basic training was in Fort Gordon, Georgia and I wanted to go airborne, but I injured my knee so they put me in a garrison unit. The guys in the garrison unit convinced me I should go to explosive ordnance disposal school, which I did," said Wolfe. "In the EOD field I was on presidential support, VIP support, supporting the secret service."

After serving more than a decade, he became a mentor in the EOD career field and was teaching future conventional Army EOD specialists. Then his career took

an unexpected turn.

"One of my assignments in the EOD field was as an instructor at Redstone Arsenal and that is where I got a call to come to Fort Bragg for an assessment and selection process for a unit that was starting up," said Wolfe.

The assessment and selection was for a unit whose mission would be hostage rescue and counterterrorism. During the assessment and selection process he was noticed right away by future USSOCOM Command Sgt. Maj. Mel Wick.

"The assessment and selection process that Dennis went through was one of the toughest mental and physical selection processes in the world," said Wick. "There were several reasons Dennis was chosen. We did some psychological testing. We did a lot of interviews with people he had worked with and he had a very important skill that was missing in the group we were assembling. It

didn't take him long at all to earn the respect of the other more experienced Soldiers that he was in the training course with."

Another famous special operator from that era, former USSOCOM Commander Gen. Peter Schoomaker, and 2016 Bull Simons Award recipient recognized that Wolfe was a unique asset. "Dennis was

a little different than most the rest of us because he came with a specialty [EOD] that wasn't familiar to us which in the long run was fortuitous," said Schoomaker.

It would not be long before Wolfe would take part in some of the country's most dangerous missions, among them the invasion of Grenada, and the failed Iranian hostage rescue attempt known as Operation Eagle Claw.

"We got word that the embassy in Iran had been taken over by terrorists. They said that probably was going to be a mission that this unit was going to be involved in," Wolfe said. "That mission eventually became Eagle Claw where we planned to rescue 52 hostages."

"When we were preparing for Eagle Claw, Dennis was able to provide a lot of assistance there for the planning and preparation for that," Wick said. "He was

In a crisis situation he was also a very steady anchor that people could hang on to, to calm themselves down by looking at Dennis. I mean if Dennis can be calm in this situation, well the rest had to be.

— Former USSOCOM Command Sgt. Maj. Mel Wick



Dennis Wolfe, (back row, second from right) a retired sergeant major, who served with the hostage rescue, counterterrorism unit when it began is seen here at a national laboratory circa the 1980s. Photo courtesy of retired Sgt. Maj. Dennis Wolfe.

heavily involved in figuring out the breaching charges for the walls. He was also going to be key to looking for and disarming booby traps.”

The failed Iranian hostage rescue during Operation Eagle Claw had an impact on many special operators and Wolfe was no exception.

“I think the experiences of Eagle Claw had a deep impact on everyone that was there. I think that was definitely shown throughout the rest of his career with the lessons he learned there,” Wick said. “His ability to analyze things, to anticipate things, to always look forward, and to always be considering the broader picture rather than the small technical piece that he was focused on.”

Wolfe was noted for his calm demeanor in any stressful situation. The years of training dealing with weapons of mass destruction gave him the ability to keep his teams focused.

“In a crisis situation he was also a very steady anchor that people could hang on to, to calm themselves down by looking at Dennis,” Wick said. “I mean if Dennis can be calm in this situation, well the rest had to be.”

Wolfe became much more than an EOD specialist for the special mission unit and learned to master the essential special operator skills.

“Of course when you learn when someone has this extraordinary specialty you figure that would limit what they do. The truth is Dennis ended up being an extraordinary operator as well,” Schoomaker said. “He went through what all of us went through and became an extraordinary operator in the special mission unit. He ended up being a team leader and eventually being the sergeant major of the selection and training detachment.”

Being an operator means you have to take on many

personas and Wolfe was very skilled at going from noticed to unnoticed.

“Dennis was able to fit into whatever conditions he was faced with. He could be out in the mud and two hours later he’s cleaned up in a suit in front of an ambassador or a senator giving a briefing. One hour after that he is with a bunch of scientists going through the very technical details of disarming a nuclear weapon,” Wick said. “I’ve seen him sit on the corner in dirty ragged clothes with a bottle of wine while he is observing a target. He could adapt very rapidly in his speech. He could sound like a redneck or he could sound like a scientist and he could switch from one to the other very easily.”

Retiring from the Army, Wolfe became a civil servant and carried on the special operations EOD mission that eventually would have a global impact.

“Even after he retired we retained him in a civilian capacity where he could put his full time effort into developing a full scale program as the field evolved,” said Schoomaker.

In his civilian capacity, Wolfe would go on and write the tactics, techniques, and procedures that would greatly enhance the security of the United States.

“When Dennis Wolfe and I met the Soviet Union recently collapsed and there was a big concern about the loss of control of weapons of mass destruction,” said James McDonnell, Assistant Secretary for the Department of Homeland Security’s Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office. “Dennis was the guy that brought EOD into special operations. So he had the vision to understand how the terrorist threat was evolving and that vision was absolutely critical because all the planning had to be done in advance. All techniques, tactics and procedures had to be done in advance and they really didn’t exist.”

Wolfe was a master at dealing with people who weren’t in special operations and incorporating their expertise into a special operations mission.

“So for example, scientists had all kinds of tools they thought were great, but you couldn’t necessarily jump out of an airplane with. You couldn’t dive with them,” McDonnell said. “So what Dennis was able to do was bring that into this national laboratory complex and say ‘if you take this tool and modify in this particular way then we can use it.’”

Echoing Secretary McDonnell’s sentiment, U.S. Army Brig. Gen. James Bonner, who today is the commander of the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives Command, and was as an officer who served with Wolfe, thinks he has had lasting, legacy impact on the entire EOD community.

“When we talk about weapons of mass destruction we are talking about chemical, biological, nuclear, it can be radiological, it can have an explosive element to it and

when you look at an explosive ordnance disposal technician it takes about one year to go through EOD school, just to be able to work basic EOD problems. Then if you are fortunate to be assigned to the special mission unit, the training plan Dennis incorporated with the national lab takes another year of training before you are ready for a role in the special mission unit. That is the level of expertise and capability that Dennis was able to build.”

“Dennis was able to bring highly technical skills into the special operations community that it didn’t have before and build that capability literally over decades into a national asset that is globally unique,” said McDonnell.

Reflecting on his fifty years of government and in special operations, Wolfe’s humility is readily apparent.

“I never turned anything down. I never planned anything specifically. The unit said they needed me because of my skills. I couldn’t refuse. I’ll go. I never thought I had all those skills people were looking for. Sometimes they had more faith in me than I had in myself. I felt as a Soldier I couldn’t turn anything down,” Wolfe said. “During my time SOF has gone from reactive to proactive. I think we are still there today. At least I



Dennis Wolfe, a retired sergeant major, is honored by having a building named after him in 2010 at Kirkland Air Force Base in Albuquerque, N.M. The building is used by an Explosive Ordnance Disposal-Weapons of Mass Destruction Company, and houses equipment for rapid deployment. Photo courtesy of retired Sgt. Maj. Dennis Wolfe.

hope we are.”

“He had the courage to do some really amazing things and has made contributions that are just unmeasurable to the security of the United States,” Wick said.



Retired U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Dennis Wolfe receives U.S. Special Operations Command’s 2018 Bull Simons Award April 18, from Gen. Raymond A. Thomas, III, commander, USSOCOM in Tampa, Fla. His remarkable five decade career in and out of uniform pioneering explosive ordnance and disposal tactics for special operations was the basis for the award. His expertise established a world class program to counter weapons of mass destruction becoming the standard for the U.S. government and our international partners. The lifetime achievement award recognizes recipients who embody the true spirit, values, and skills of a special operations warrior. Col. Arthur “Bull” Simons, whom the award is named after, was the epitome of these attributes. Courtesy of retired Sgt. Maj. Dennis Wolfe. Photo by U.S. Air Force Michael Bottoms.

AIRBORNE

U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



One half of the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) Green Beret sniper team, Master Sgt. David uses binoculars to scan targets during an event at the ninth annual United States Army Special Operations Command International Sniper Competition held at Fort Bragg, N.C. March 18-22. Master Sgt. David and his teammate Sgt. 1st Class Cuong placed first in a field of more than 40 teams from Special Operations Forces around the world. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Jacob Braman.



1st Group takes 1st Place in special operations sniper competition

*By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Christopher Harper
1st Special Forces Group (Airborne)*

There are shooting and marksmanship competitions around the world and then there is the annual United States Army Special Operations Command International Sniper Competition.

A 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) sniper team earned overall first place honors in the ninth annual event after besting more than 20 special operations force teams from around the U.S. military's most elite units and international special forces teams.

According to USASOC, the International Sniper Competition consisted of 22 events over five days and four nights of physically and mentally challenging precision fires. Sniper teams converged on Fort Bragg, N.C., March 18-22, to compete in a challenging and combat oriented competition.

"We started off poorly on the first day due to some sleep deprivation," said Master Sgt. David a Green Beret with the 1st SFG (A) and member of the winning sniper team. "We really started clicking and things began to fall into place after we regrouped and got some rest between events."

Master Sgt. David competed with his teammate Sgt. 1st Class Cuong, also a Green Beret with 1st Group.

The event is distinctive by the high level of world-class teams competing. The United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School and the 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) hosted the competition.

"It is the level of competitors, the cadre, and the competition that make this event so unique," David said. "At this level, all of these guys are the best of the best."

The 1st SFG (A) sniper team outperformed special operations teams from the Naval Special Warfare Command, Marine Corps Scout Sniper School, U.S. Army Sniper School, 75th Ranger Regiment, and international SOF teams from Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, France, Italy, and Singapore.

Master Sgt. David and Sgt. 1st Class Cuong are humbled to have come out atop the competition.

"These guys were so good we knew whoever was going to win was going to need to have a little bit of luck on their side," said David.

"We are proud of Dave and Cuong," said Command Sgt. Maj. Tony Labrec the 1st SFG (A) senior enlisted leader. "Their experience and professionalism will serve 1st Group for years to come as they pass on that knowledge to the Green Berets coming up behind them."

Editor's note: Due to the mission of Special Forces Soldiers, full names of members of the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) are not releasable.

One half of the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) Green Beret sniper team, Sgt. 1st Class Cuong uses communication and teamwork with his teammate Master Sgt. David at the United States Army Special Operations Command International Sniper Competition held at Fort Bragg, N.C. March 18-22. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Jacob Braman.



& Multi-dimensional Platforms

The Navy's SSGN / SSBN submarines can clandestinely deploy and recover U.S. special operations forces providing them with an enormous array of options.

Today's SSGN's are modified to carry up to 66 SOF personnel, support staff, supplies, and provide equipment storage for a multitude of joint operations.

The SSGN's communications capabilities, intrinsic stealth capabilities, and modifications of missile launch tubes allow additional flexibility to transport, deploy, and conduct joint SOF operations and offer a full-strike capability of more than 150 Tomahawk missiles.



USS Ohio - SSGN

USS Florida - SSGN

SOF and Submarines - Warriors and Super Strike Platforms



AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



U.S. special operations forces and NATO forces prepare to load on a NATO C-160 Transall before a mission during Emerald Warrior 18, March 1, at Hurlburt Field, Fla. At Emerald Warrior, the largest joint and combined special operations exercise, U.S. Special Operations Command forces train to respond to various threats across the spectrum of conflict. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Michael Battles.

Special Tactics Airmen lead in EW18

*By U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Victor J. Caputo
24th Special Operations Wing*

Emerald Warrior 18, an annual air-centric, irregular warfare U.S. Special Operations Command exercise, saw hundreds of personnel from across the world gather at Hurlburt Field to exercise special operations tactics, and for the second year in a row, command and control of ground special operations forces were led by Air Force Special Tactics.

Lt. Col. Randall Harvey, commander of the 21st Special Tactics Squadron, was charged with commanding the Special Operations Task Group, leading more than 350 special operations forces personnel from Air Force Special Operations Command, United States Army Special Operations Command and four NATO nations.

A Different Approach

One change in this year's Emerald Warrior was the implementation of a requisite training week, giving SOF a week to train together prior to running full operations.

"The idea was to have our feet underneath us, and understand how we each operated, before we started running," said Harvey.

Ultimately, solving multi-domain, complex problems provided the exercise participants the chance to simulate issues they may experience in the real world.

The Team

Harvey said the SOTG and subordinate units formulated a true combined, joint approach to the exercise, including manning the operations officer position, one of the most vital positions in the staff, with an O-5 NATO partner.

“Training side by side with NATO operators and placing NATO advisors in key positions in our operations center is invaluable,” said Harvey. “It’s enabled us to share our standard operating procedures and formulate blended coalition solutions to tactical problem sets.”

Language and cultural barriers often present a challenge, but the common goal to complete the mission helped cultivate a sense of teamwork, which empowered the team to find creative solutions.

“By fostering teamwork, we created cohesion amongst our subordinate units and forged solid relationships in the joint, coalition SOF community,” said Harvey.

The mixed group quickly became efficient in analyzing courses of action using the NATO military decision making process and communicating to their teams on the ground.

“There was a lot of valuable knowledge exchanged,” said Harvey. “You can’t surge trust, it has to be built proactively. That’s why we are here.”

Joint Leaders

“Emerald Warrior 18 was yet another example of Special Tactics operators showing what they bring to the fight, not only on the battlefield but also in the headquarters,” said Col. Claude Tudor, Jr., commander



A Special Tactics Airman from the 24th Special Operations wing collects his parachute after a static line jump mission during Emerald Warrior 18, March 2, at Hurlburt Field, Fla. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Michael Battles.

of the 24th Special Operations Wing, the Air Force’s only Special Tactics wing. “Working side by side with our joint and coalition partners is invaluable. The experience gained for our senior Special Tactics leaders, both officer and enlisted, only serves to make AFSOC more efficient in our current fights, while we shape future joint combat leaders across a multi-domain lens to lead joint, combined coalition task forces.”



Two NATO EC-725 Super Cougars receive fuel from a U.S. Air Force MC-130H Combat Talon II during a night mission over northwest Florida as part of Emerald Warrior March 5. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Joshua L. DeMotts.



MARINE CORPS FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



A critical skills operator with 3rd Marine Raider Battalion, Marine Raider Regiment, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command prepares to receive the Silver Star from U.S. Army Gen. Raymond A. Thomas III, commander U.S. Special Operations Command and USSOCOM Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick McCauley at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., April 6, for courageous acts of responding to a terrorist attack in Mali in 2015. The Raider was serving as a special operations assistant team leader when terrorists attacked a local hotel, taking more than 170 hostages. The Raider and his team put themselves in harm's way to rescue the hostages and assist Malian security forces in putting down the attack. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Janessa K. Pon.

Raider's valor honored with Silver Star

*By U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Janessa Pon
U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special
Operations Command*

A critical skills operator with 3rd Marine Raider Battalion, Marine Raider Regiment, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command received the Silver Star award on Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., April 6.

The Raider received the award for acts of valor, saving dozens of hostages following a terrorist attack in Mali in 2015.



The Silver Star is presented to service members who display conspicuous gallantry in action while serving the U.S. mission in operational environments and is the third highest award that can be given to a member of the U.S. armed forces.

The Raider was serving as a senior leader of a small special operations team when they received notification of a coordinated terrorist attack on a nearby multi-story hotel. The terrorists had more than 170 hostages under their control. Up to a dozen American citizens were thought

to be located inside. The Raider gathered his team, donned his equipment and set off for the hotel complex while devising a plan en route.

“There was very little time to respond,” said the critical skills operator. “We fell back on what we had prepared for. There were points in which the situation became more intense, ambiguous and scary. At times, the situation we faced was confusing and difficult.

However, our purpose was clear. That clarity and unity of purpose allowed us to navigate the ambiguity and manage our emotions to accomplish the mission at hand.”

The U.S. personnel braved small-arms fire, grenade explosions and acrid, choking smoke to save more than 150 lives. A burst of enemy gunfire caught one team member, dropping him with undetermined wounds. The team laid down a heavy base of fire as they pulled him back to safety.

“It was one of those defining points in life where you realize you are exactly where you belong,” said the CSO. “I knew beyond all doubt what needed to be done and I was completely dedicated to completing the mission. I never thought about failure, I only saw a problem that we could solve if we just worked through it. Every American we found and pulled out of the hotel only increased my desire to keep going. Every time the smoke cleared a little more, I felt both exposed and enabled. When we made contact with the enemy, all of those years of preparation instantly flooded back and I knew what to do.”

During the ceremony, U.S. Army Gen. Raymond A. Thomas III, commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, presented the Marine with the award.

In addition to the Silver Star, the Marine received recognition from U.S. Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Diplomatic Security Michael Evanoff.

“The Marine’s swift actions in Bamako prove that you can always count on the Marines,” said Evanoff. “For more than 70 years, the Diplomatic Security Service has worked side by side with the Marines, because no matter the danger or threat, we know the Marines are going to get in there and take care of

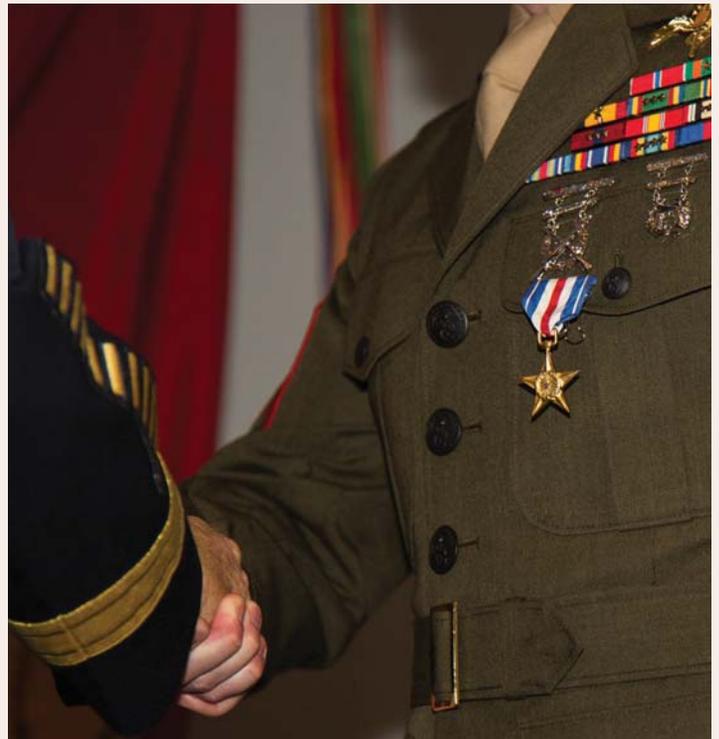
business.”

Upon receiving his award, the Raider addressed the audience of Department of Defense personnel and families.

“My profession gives me the opportunity to serve my country in ambiguous environments where there are multiple right and wrong answers,” said the CSO. “We work and live in a world that has no clearly defined path to success and MARSOC has

given me a venue to make an impact on our world. I thrive on the trust placed in me by our command to do the right thing when it is hard and be the man who can make it happen on the ground. That trust gives me an opportunity to be the very best I can be.”

The U.S. personnel braved small-arms fire, grenade explosions and acrid, choking smoke to save more than 150 lives. A burst of enemy gunfire caught one team member, dropping him with undetermined wounds. The team laid down a heavy base of fire as they pulled him back to safety.



A critical skills operator with 3rd Marine Raider Battalion, Marine Raider Regiment, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, receives the Silver Star at Marine Corps Base Lejeune, N.C., April 6. The Silver Star is awarded to service members who display conspicuous gallantry in action while serving the U.S. in operational environments and is the third highest award that can be given to a member of the U.S. armed forces. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Janessa K. Pon.



Six new members inducted to USSOCOM's Commando Hall of Honor

By Michael Bottoms
USSOCOM Office of Communication

U.S. Special Operations Command inducted six former special operators into the USSOCOM Commando Hall of Honor located at the USSOCOM headquarters, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, April 18, 2018. More than 100 people attended the ceremony and watched as each inductee received a medal from U.S. Army Gen. Raymond A. Thomas III, USSOCOM commander, and Sgt. Maj. Patrick McCauley, USSOCOM command sergeant major.

The award recognizes individuals who have served

with distinction within the special operations forces community. The inductees join the storied ranks of those who preceded them.

This year's inductees were U.S. Army Maj. Raymond P. Ambrozak, U.S. Army Gen. Bryan D. Brown, U.S. Navy Capt. (SEAL) Charles Heron, U.S. Air Force Col. William J. Kornitzer, U.S. Army Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal and U.S. Army Maj. Gen. James E. Rudder.

U.S. Army Maj. Raymond P. Ambrozak

Ambrozak's special operations forces career as a psychological operations officer spanned more than 60 years beginning with his first deployment to Laos in 1961 supporting Operation Hotfoot/White Star. He



U.S. Army Gen. Raymond A. Thomas III, U.S. Special Operations Command commander, and Sgt. Maj. Patrick McCauley, USSOCOM command sergeant major reveal the six newest names added to the Commando Hall of Honor during a ceremony at USSOCOM headquarters, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., April 18. The Commando Hall of Honor was created in 2010 and recognizes individuals who have served with distinction within the special operations forces community. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.

played a key role in the formative years of psychological operations during Vietnam. He helped to stand up the 4th Psychological Operation Group and was an instructor at the U.S. Army JFK Special Warfare Center and School. After retirement, he served as a mentor to upcoming psychological operations Soldiers.

U.S. Army Gen. Bryan D. Brown

Brown commanded U.S. Special Operations Command from 2003 to 2007. He enlisted in the Infantry in 1967 and completed Special Forces training and served in Vietnam in 7th Special Forces Group. Commissioned in 1970 he became a helicopter pilot and returned to Vietnam with the 129th Assault Helicopter Company. Later, he would participate in Operation Eagle Claw, the rescue attempt of the Iranian hostages in 1980. He would go on to command from the company to the regimental level of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne). During his career he would also serve in Grenada, the Persian Gulf, and Iraq. Finally, he would command Joint Special Operations Command, U.S. Army Special Operations Command before commanding USSOCOM. Brown established the SOF Care Coalition charged with supporting wounded warriors and their families during his command at USSOCOM.

U.S. Navy Capt. (SEAL) Charles Heron

Heron served 28 years as a commissioned SEAL culminating as Commodore of Naval Special Warfare Group Two. He left a legacy of tactical, operational, and strategic vision leading special mission units, commanding two Naval Special Warfare Units and one Naval Special Warfare Group. Following his retirement, he led the Navy SEAL Foundation Operations Center helping hundreds of family members affected by the largest mass casualty in the Afghanistan campaign known as Extortion 17. His efforts exemplify USSOCOM's commitment to Gold Star families.

U.S. Air Force Col. William J. Kornitzer

Kornitzer's career culminated by commanding the 2nd Air Division on Hurlburt Field, Florida from 1984 to 1986. During his career he led forces in combat search and rescue operations. He pioneered night vision goggle use for pilots during air refueling missions. He participated in the Son Tay prison raid in Vietnam and Operation Eagle Claw in Iran.

U.S. Army Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal

McChrystal served more than 34 years where he commanded both Joint Special Operations Command



U.S. Army Gen. Raymond A. Thomas III, U.S. Special Operations Command commander, and Sgt. Maj. Patrick McCauley, USSOCOM command sergeant major stand with the six newest members inducted into the Commando Hall of Honor during a ceremony at USSOCOM headquarters, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., April 18. T Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.

and the International Security Assistance Forces – U.S. Forces Afghanistan. McChrystal is credited with changing the way special operations forces are employed and how the nation views those forces in a positive way. Considered an exceptional leader and possessing unequalled professional competence, he is recognized to have directly contributed to the nation's success in the war on terrorism.

U.S. Army Maj. Gen. James E. Rudder

Rudder, an Army Ranger, served in the 2nd Ranger Battalion during World War II. On June 6, 1944, Rudder led three companies of Rangers and scaled the cliffs at Pointe du Hoc during D-Day on the beaches of Normandy, France. After taking the heights, the 2nd Ranger battalion thwarted several strong German counterattacks. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions that day.

The six newest inductees will join an elite group of 63 other special operations warriors who have been inducted into the Commando Hall of Honor since its inception in 2010. Past inductees come from all four branches of service and have served in every conflict since World War II.



USAID's Huger participates in USSOCOM senior leader seminar

*By U.S. Army Master Sgt. Timothy Lawn
USSOCOM Office of Communication*

“First let me tell you why I am here: I believe that 90% of life is showing up,” said Greg Huger, Assistant to the Administrator for the Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs at the U.S. Agency for International Development. Huger was a guest speaker at a week-long senior leader seminar held at United States Special Operations Command, Tampa, Florida, 26-30 March.

The senior leader seminar allowed participants to visualize and share the President’s 2017 South Asia Strategy, which outlines the U.S. government’s military, diplomatic and development strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. The South Asia Strategy is a result of a comprehensive interagency review that the president ordered upon his inauguration. The strategy presents a conditions-based approach toward stability rather than a focus on nation building.

The strategic seminar also provided senior leaders, including the incoming Special Operations Command for Afghanistan, an opportunity to discuss the roles, duties, challenges, and opportunities of special operations forces in the context of the strategy.

Huger participated in the seminar to explain USAID’s role in Afghanistan and Pakistan to the civilian and military leaders in attendance, and to reinforce USAID’s support for civilian-military collaboration. As a result of lessons learned from previous USAID and Department of Defense coordination, and in cooperation between the DoD and Department of State, the Civil-Military Operations Guide was established in 2008 and revised in 2015. USAID recognized that USAID and DoD have



Greg Huger is the assistant to the administrator for the Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs at the U.S. Agency for International Development. Courtesy USAID photo.

overlapping goals, and by collaborating more closely with each other, they could more effectively achieve and sustain those goals with a more unified effort.



Huger’s Background

Huger’s expertise working in the region dates back more than 50 years. It all started when he took a Volkswagen car ride adventure across Afghanistan with a college friend in 1967. Fast forward to today, and he has decades of overseas experience through postings with USAID, the Peace Corps, and private companies.

In the spring of 2010, Huger accepted an assignment to lead USAID’s efforts in Regional Command East, based out of Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan. He represented all of USAID and the programs being implemented in the 14 provinces within the International Security Assistance Force command boundaries at the time, and developed a firm grasp of the

dynamics that shape civil-military cooperation.

His experiences as USAID’s senior civilian representative, working in tandem with the military and State Department leadership and men and women of RC East—the 101st Airborne Division, the 82nd Airborne Division and the 1st Infantry Division— left a lasting impression on him. Huger’s RC-East assignment was to spearhead the agency’s efforts to assist in stabilizing the areas of Afghanistan bordering Pakistan. He found the RC-East assignment quite different from his carefree and fearless experiences as an adventurous student, but nonetheless he appreciated his close military connections and renewed friendships with the Afghan people.

In 2017, Huger returned to USAID as head of the Agency’s Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs in Washington, D.C., upon which his duties immediately returned him to the region.

USAID, State Department, and DoD stability in assignments brings convergence

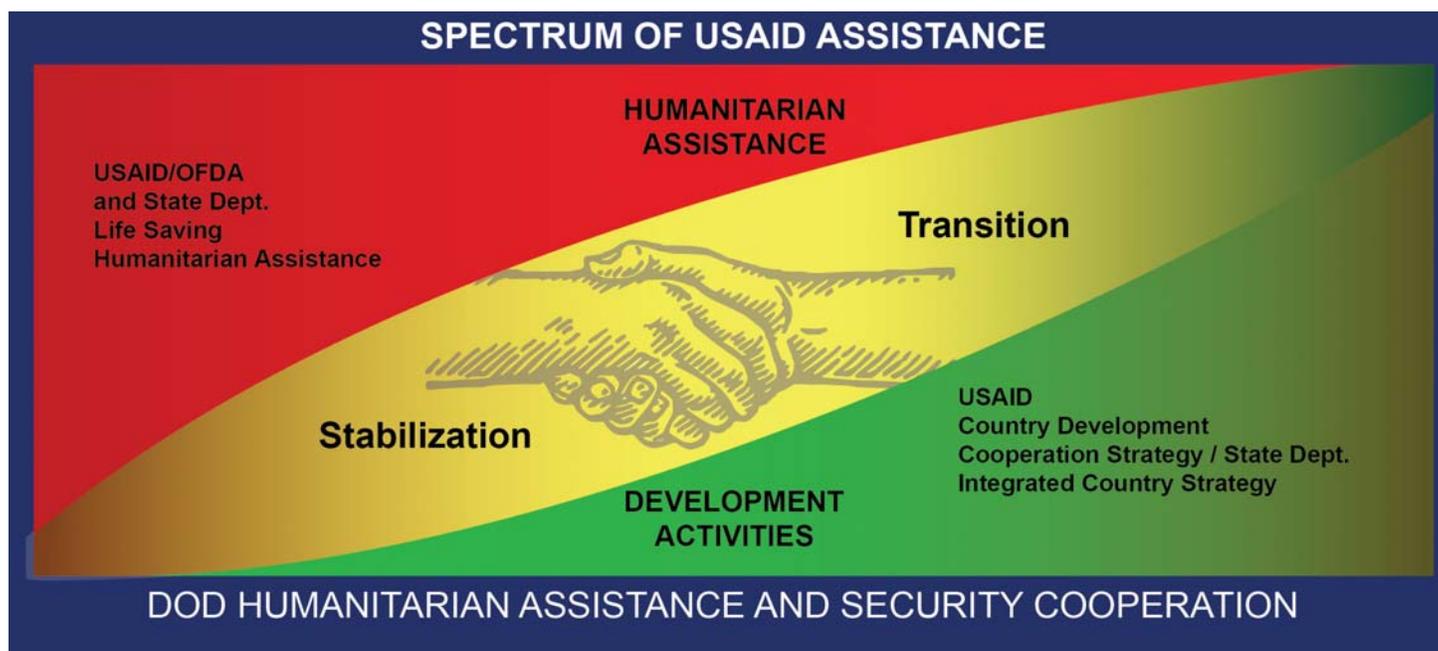
“On each trip, I’ve made it a point to reach out to the Afghan and Pakistan displaced communities,” Huger said. “It’s important to keep in touch with people and events in these two fast-moving theaters.”

Huger places great emphasis on remaining in one place or region for an extended duration of time to ensure stability in the program, adding that he accepted his Bagram posting on the condition that he stay three years in the position, rather than the standard one year tour.



In the Grishk district of Helmand province, Afghan girls hold monthly rations of vegetable oil donated by the World Food Programme, in October of 2017, as part of the Share Humanity campaign, supported by USAID. The WFP, supported by USAID ensures young boys and girls in remote and insecure areas receive the nutrition they need to grow and learn. Courtesy USAID photo.

He recounts the value of his prior engagement with Afghanistan’s President Ashraf Ghani. In his 2010-2013 RC-East assignment, Huger travelled with Ghani to provincial capitals in the process of transferring security





U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - HEADQUARTERS

duties from Coalition to Afghan forces.

“You don’t go into something like this for one year and expect to accomplish a lot,” Huger said. He added that a three to five year mission is when you may begin to accomplish something.

“Having done this work for more than 50 years, I know from experience that it takes a while to get your mind around the complex challenges, opportunities, and relationships in Afghanistan or some of the other places I have worked,” Huger said.

Huger feels efforts critical to unified civil-military success lie with assigned country teams, which is composed of the heads of all agencies, including USAID, and meets at least weekly with the U.S. ambassador. He described how country teams get their individual responsibilities and authorities to carry out assignments from the U.S. ambassador. Huger said the weekly meetings are coordinated so each agency can discuss priorities, activities, and collaboration in context.

Huger feels the meetings promote cooperation and help maintain relationships, allowing focus on issues in the teams’ areas of assignment.

For example, State Department’s Acting Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia Ambassador Alice Wells requested Huger lead the U.S. delegation to the 2017 Senior Officials Meeting in Kabul. The meeting took place a year after the 2016 Brussels Donors’ Conference, which had representatives from more than 38 countries, under the chairmanship of Afghanistan’s President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah. The donor countries pledged more than \$15 billion in political and economic aid through 2020. The Senior Officials Meeting in Kabul provided the representatives an opportunity to review, evaluate and reprise a year’s worth of efforts and commitments. Huger recognized that coordination was key to successful programming.

“Being engaged on the issues, recognizing the primary role and the main contributions of each player on the team, and being able, at the leadership level, to be somewhat interchangeable to respond to the



In 2017, the USAID Afghan Children Read project produced and distributed more than 185,000 textbooks for students in grades 1 and 2 in Herat and Kabul. USAID works with the government of Afghanistan and international donors to sustain achievements in education for all boys and girls. This is accomplished through development of educational materials and conducting and promoting early grade reading reform and assessments. Courtesy USAID photo.

exigencies of the situation,” Huger said. “It was a seamless effort.”

USAID and USSOCOM, supporting each other’s objectives

Huger describes achieving objectives as a patient effort, evolving over time and dependent on circumstances on the ground. In particular, it is important to understand and acknowledge the capacity of the Afghan government and the ability of institutions to handle challenges in their country.

Referencing his earlier tour in RC-East, Huger describes how SOF teams on the ground, in villages and communities in strategic locations, were fostering resilience and stability. In areas where USAID staff could not access due to security concerns, the Agency assigned key personnel in concentric circles around those locations to provide support to the Afghan local and district governments, as well as SOF teams. The USAID staff provided supplemental support to efforts between the villagers and SOF teams in critical communities.



Huger describes this as a large part of early USAID civil-military cooperation in Afghanistan.

“Now we are supporting and will increasingly support much more mature Afghan organizations that themselves are much more capable of working at the village level around the country,” Huger said.

Huger describes how Afghan government and businesses organizations now have the ability to work with rural villagers to help produce high quality fruits, vegetables, nuts, and spices which can be sold in domestic and international markets.

This in turn allows US SOF to have a supporting role through the Afghan SOF, and allows USAID to focus and work more in tandem with their Afghan government counterparts, something that might not have been possible five or ten years ago.

Huger describes the relationship as USAID and SOF being one or two steps removed from direct engagement. The priority is to work with Afghan organizations, businesses, NGOs and government programs to support a bottom-up approach, helping communities provide the foundation to get the country back on its feet and find the path to self-reliance.

Though the relationship between USAID and SOF is different from what it was five to ten years ago, it is still very important.

Previous levels of engagement between USAID and SOF was sporadic. USAID and SOF generally operated separately and coordinated on projects when the need arose.

“And I repeat, that is why I am here with some of my colleagues for this week’s seminar,” said Huger. “This is why there is a team of USAID personnel permanently assigned to USSOCOM.”

Huger said the goal is to interact with our Afghan counterparts at the strategic and planning level, and also to some extent at the operational level to ensure synchronization.

Parting Advice

When asked what can be done to help establish better coordination between SOF and USAID, Huger replies only that he is humbled and would find it

difficult to advise SOF on operational elements. Huger noted it is important to keep USAID priorities and implementation strategy in perspective. Incorporating President Trump’s South Asia Strategy into USAID’s

overall approach for the region is key. Huger adds that USAID’s objectives involve sustaining the gains of the social sector such as, health education and women’s empowerment. “We are helping build the bond between the people and the government, and we are helping support

private sector-led economic growth,” said Huger.

Speaking with the SOF command, Huger adds that USAID maintains awareness of the milestones achieved while operating in the field, and works to create space for Afghan partners, businesses and government to become resilient and sustainable.

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USAID delivered more than \$87 million in humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. Critical aid included shelter, food, nutrition assistance and health and hygiene services. USAID provides timely, targeted humanitarian, disaster and lifesaving assistance to areas effected by conflict, disaster or crisis. This assistance save lives and helps communities develop mechanisms incorporating disaster risk reduction which helps build resiliency. Courtesy USAID photo.



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Davis Celestine, a local charity representative, signs paperwork to receive wheelchairs from U.S. Special Operations Command's Computers for Learning program operated by USSOCOM's Installation Property Book and Central Receiving Point, on MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., March 30. Photo by U.S. Air Master Sgt. Barry Loo.



USSOCOM initiative yields \$6.5 million donation to charities

By USSOCOM Office of Communication

The U.S. Special Operations Command Installation Property Book and Central Receiving Point office receives and accounts for all property in and out of USSOCOM Headquarters. As a part of this responsibility, they also manage the command's Computers for Learning program created and designed by the General Services Administration to encourage the reuse of computers no longer used by the federal government. USSOCOM's CFL program was established in March 2012, but soon lost momentum due to a lack of manpower and command emphasis within the section.

The program received a reboot in 2017 under the direction of the current USSOCOM Headquarters Commandant Air Force Lt. Col. Russell Hunt who asked the team to explore ways to reorganize their equipment distribution and automation efforts to make them more efficient. The team quickly got to work yielding a renewed interest in the CFL program.

"We were challenged with the question of 'Can we get these computers and equipment into the hands of people who really need it,'" said Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Brown, USSOCOM's installation property book officer who helped reinvigorate the CFL program. "We had to assess whether we could work this into our processes and find a way to best recycle and reuse the equipment."

In February 2017, the team discovered they could and had their first donation in the same month - giving more than \$120,000 worth of computer equipment to local schools.

"The whole team was really encouraged by the first donation," Brown said. "We got pretty excited about the possibilities for the program in that first month."

The Property Book and Central Receiving team has distributed to Tampa schools and numerous other non-profit groups located as far away as Illinois and Ohio in the past year. Today, SOCOM has issued more than \$6.5 million in automation equipment since that first donation.

According to Brown, the contributions are the largest donation by one organization over a 12-month period for the CFL program in the history of the GSA program.

USSOCOM's CFL program is managed by a small six-person team of government employees and contractors spearheaded by Shelicka Thacker, a logistics management analyst who runs the Central Receiving Point.

"The CFL program is great, there are a lot of schools in need – they're in need of these computers and laptops," Thacker said. "So it feels good to be able to get this unused equipment out into the community rather than some warehouse where it might just end up being destroyed."

Brown said the team has been encouraged by their recent historic accomplishment and said they are determined to find ways to expand the program's reach beyond computers. Most recently, the team donated nearly 20 unused wheel chairs through the CFL which they received from the USSOCOM Care Coalition. The wheel chairs have since been put to good use, given to a local non-profit organization supporting paralyzed veterans throughout Florida's Gulf Coast.

"The team is very motivated to exceed the standard set during the first twelve months," Brown said. "Our challenge now is finding new ways to surpass what we did in the previous year."



Members of U.S. Special Operations Command Installation Property Book and Central Receiving Point, who run the command's Computers for Learning program, along with volunteers from other parts of USSOCOM, donate wheelchairs to a local charity on MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., March 30. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.



U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - HEADQUARTERS



Attendees for the 16th Sovereign Challenge Conference pose for the group photo at the Council on Foreign Relations after Dr. Richard Haass, president of Council on Foreign Relations, gave a lecture on sovereignty in the information age in New York City, March 20, 2018. The theme of the conference was “Is truth a commodity” with a subtext of “Sovereignty in the information age.” More than 100 individuals from more than 43 countries participated in the conference. Sovereign Challenge began in 2004 when USSOCOM invited a group of defense attachés from Washington, D.C., to Tampa, Fla. to discuss major issues of concern to their respective nations. Since then, conference participation has focused on accredited military, defense attachés and security-related diplomats from D.C.-based foreign embassies. Photo by Michael Bottoms.

Is truth a commodity?

USSOCOM hosts 16th Sovereign Challenge Conference

By Michael Bottoms
USSOCOM Office of Communication

In the mid-2000s, communication technologies merged into platforms or social networks making connectivity and solving complex problems much easier. Billions of people can compete, connect, collaborate and create, in more ways, from more places, cheaply and with greater ease than ever before.

Russian troll farms through Facebook and Twitter tried to divide America and inject fake news into our public life. Communications technologies by themselves are neutral, yet it is bad actors who can hide in plain sight and leverage attacks using fake accounts making the threat very real. In this way, information can become weaponized and threaten a nation’s sovereignty.

In an effort to understand how disinformation can spread quickly through exponentially expanding media platforms, U.S. Special Operations Command held the Sovereign Challenge Conference in New York City, March 20-23, 2018. The theme of the conference was “Is truth a commodity” with a subtext of “Sovereignty in the

Information Age.”

More than 100 individuals from 43 countries participated in the conference. The conference was broken up into panels and keynote speakers as well as a visit to the New York Police Department Headquarters where Dermot F. Shea, Chief of Crime Control Strategies for the New York Police Department, briefed the conference on analytical policing procedures.

Key note speakers included Dr. Richard Haass, president, Council on Foreign Relations, Steve Clayton, chief storyteller, Microsoft and Dr. Ajit Maan, president, Narrative Strategies among others. Each speaker and panel grappled with the proliferation of disinformation, why it works and its effect on societies.

“Television was our chief tool in selling our policy,” Haass said. “Now with Twitter and the other social media platforms, governments communicate in real time.”

“Surveys say seven and ten people worry about false information or fake news being used as a weapon,” Clayton said. “People tend to think fake news is U.S. centric, but clearly it isn’t, countries like Mexico,

Argentina, Spain and Indonesia, that's where the worry is the highest about fake news."

"Why can't we effectively counter disinformation with the truth? Why does disinformation stick even in the face of cold hard facts?" Maan said.

"The human dimension to answer those questions is that we are not influenced by raw data. We are influenced by stories."

Serious discussion took place analyzing the role of today's journalism and how it is being diminished by today's communication technology.

"Technology has atomized everything to meaninglessness. Everything is hyper-charged with emotion. Social media is about thinking fast." said Maria Ressa, chief executive officer, Rappler, an online news site based in The Philippines. "In the end journalists are no longer the gatekeepers. And the gatekeepers today

have no rules. It is mob rule. Good journalism is now bad business."

"We have supported independent media organizations to counter disinformation, promote

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— Maria Ressa

independent media in a space for correct information," said Patience Zirima, director, media matters Zimbabwe. "We launched a fact checking program on a website called Zimcheck designed to strengthen independent media."

Sovereign

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(Above) Attendees for the 16th Sovereign Challenge Conference receive a briefing on analytical policing procedures from Dermot F. Shea, Chief of Crime Control Strategies, at the New York City Police Department Headquarters in New York City, March 21. Photo by Michael Bottoms.



(Right) Steve Clayton, chief storyteller, Microsoft, briefs strategies Microsoft are trying to influence communication platforms at the 16th Sovereign Challenge Conference in New York City, March 21. Photo by Michael Bottoms





U.S. Army
Master Sgt. Jonathan Dunbar
Headquarters, U.S. Army Special Operations
Command

Editor's note: Honored are special operations forces who lost their lives since February's Tip of the Spear.



A U.S. Air Force pararescueman provides overwatch during a personnel recovery exercise at an undisclosed location in Afghanistan, March 6. Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Gregory Brook.