



SOF News

Monthly Journal

News, analysis, and commentary about special operations forces (SOF), national defense, military, and conflicts from around the world.



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Special Operations News From Around the World

February 2021

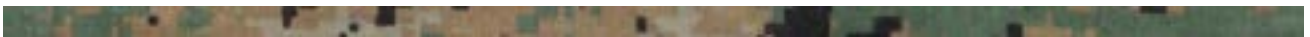
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Front Cover Image. An Air National Guard HH-60G Pave Hawk participates in combat search and rescue training during Noble Defender in Alaska, Jan. 21, 2021. The exercise is a North American Air Defense Command Arctic air defense operation. Photo by Senior Airman Kelly Willett.

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Contents. This publication contains the feature articles and contents of other articles posted on www.sof.news over the past month. Unless otherwise noted all photos are from the Department of Defense.

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Desert Storm - 30 Years Ago the Gulf War Ended



On February 28, 1991, the Gulf War came to an end. A coalition of international military forces, led by the United States, conducted an offensive that removed Iraqi forces from Kuwait. In August 1990, Iraq had invaded Kuwait claiming that the country on its southern border was historically a part of Iraq.

President George Bush assembled a coalition of nations to defend Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States from further aggressive Iraqi action and to eventually oust Iraq from Kuwait. The defense of the Arabian peninsula was called Desert Shield. The offensive military action to relieve Kuwait from Iraqi occupation was called Desert Storm. The air campaign began in mid-January 1991 – lasting over a month. The ground offensive lasted just 100 hours ending on February 28, 1991.

U.S. and coalition special operations forces played an important role in the conflict. Delta Force provided bodyguards for General Norman Schwarzkopf, participated in the hunt for SCUDs in western Iraq, and performed other missions. US Army Special Forces provided coalition support teams (CSTs) to partner nations to improve coordination, minimize fratricide, call in air support, and improve situational awareness. The SF teams also trained Kuwaiti and other coalition forces, conducted border surveillance, strategic reconnaissance, and CSAR missions. US Army Rangers conducted direct action strikes and supported JSOC. Army PSYOP, Civil Affairs, and SOF aviation units worked across the battlespace. Air Force special operations units conducted and supported CSAR, directed action, infiltration, and exfiltration missions. The Navy SEALs and Marine special operations units operated along the coasts of Iraq and Kuwait conducting special operations missions.

Photo: Courtesy photo by Department of Defense.

Desert Storm - SOF Scud Hunting Mission in Iraq



On August 2, 1990 Iraq invaded and occupied Kuwait. The leader of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, claimed that Kuwait was historically a 'province' of Iraq and that Kuwait had been stealing Iraq's oil (by way of 'slant drilling').

Desert Shield. While world leaders condemned the action, President George Bush formed an international coalition in response to Iraq's attack on Kuwait. The intent was to defend Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states from further Iraqi aggression. The US and other nations immediately deployed air assets and ground troops to the Saudi Arabian peninsula in an operation called Desert Shield. Over several months a massive troop buildup occurred with the positioning of military forces in the Gulf region.

Desert Storm. Once it became apparent that Saddam Hussein would not withdraw from Kuwait, the coalition, with appropriate resolutions from the United Nations, began finalizing plans to conduct offensive air and ground operations. An air campaign began against Iraq in mid-January 1991. This air phase of the war would establish air superiority, destroy air defense systems, render ineffective command and control networks, and hit other strategic targets. The coalition ground offensive would begin a month later – lasting only 100 hours.

SCUDs. Iraq lacked offensive options against the coalition and the nations in the region. Its air force was destroyed on the ground, shot out of the skies, or remained hidden. Some Iraqi pilots flew their aircraft to safety in Iran. However, the Iraqis did have an inventory of missiles that could be launched against military and other targets that could reach Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. The SCUDs lacked a sophisticated guidance system but could deliver an explosive payload that could cause damage and casualties. [1] Once the coalition began its air campaign in January 1991 Iraq began launching SCUD missiles toward the Arabian Peninsula. Iraq also launched SCUDs into Israel from western Iraq.

SCUD Facts. The SCUD was first deployed by the Soviet Union in the mid-1960s. It could carry a nuclear warhead or a 2,000 pound conventional warhead. It also was an ideal weapon for chemical or biological agents.

Desert Storm - SOF Scud Hunting Mission in Iraq (cont)

The missile was first used in the 1973 Arab-Israeli Yom Kippur War. It was later used in the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s. The Iraqis modified the missile to achieve greater range – by reducing the warhead weight, enlarging fuel tanks, and other modifications. These modifications reduced the accuracy of the missile.

The Iraqi variant of the Soviet missile carried a 350-pound warhead. It had enough range to hit most of Israel (from western Iraq) and the major cities of Saudi Arabia. The term SCUD came to be used for a variety of surface-to-surface missiles in the Iraqi inventory.

Estimates of the number of SCUDs that Iraq possessed varied – depending on whether it was a pre-war number or an assessment made during the conflict. Some initial intelligence estimates indicated Iraq had a little more than 100 missiles. This was revised to a higher figure of 400-800.



Photo: Members of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) wearing gas masks in a command post. Photo by IDF, 1991.

Israel Targeted. The launching of missiles toward Israel posed a problem for the coalition. The SCUDs landing in Tel Aviv and other cities unnerved the Israeli population. While the overall physical damage from the SCUD attacks were minimal there were fears that Saddam would put biological or chemical payloads on the SCUDs – causing numerous deaths and injuries. Israel informed Washington that it would respond. [2] There were concerns that if biological or chemical weapons were used against Israel by Iraq then Israel would respond with nuclear weapons. Most accounts say that Iraq launched 40 missiles against Israel (46 against targets in Saudi Arabia).

Saving the Coalition. The intent of Iraq was to prompt an Israeli retaliation. This would put the Arab members of the coalition in a bind. Would they then be allied with Israel fighting an Arab nation? If Israel began attacking Iraq the coalition might very well fall apart – making the task of wresting control of Kuwait from Iraq much more difficult. Washington promised Israel that finding and killing the SCUD missiles would become a top priority – which kept Israel on the sidelines.

Desert Storm - SOF Scud Hunting Mission in Iraq (cont)



Air Force Targeting and Kill Boxes. The fixed launch sites in western Iraq had been hit early in the air campaign. Some of the targets associated with the manufacture, storage, and maintenance of SCUDs had been already hit as well; those that hadn't quickly moved up on the target list. It is believed that the Iraqis had moved the SCUDs from the fixed site launch locations prior to the start of the coalition air campaign. The coalition rapidly diverted air assets to searching for and destroying mobile SCUDs in western Iraq that could target Israel. The primary aircraft in the SCUD hunt were the A-10 Thunderbolt II, F-16, F-15E, Navy A-6Es, and British Tornados. [3]

Mobile Launchers – a Vexing Problem. The Iraqis had a number of mobile Transporter – Erection – Launch (TEL) vehicles that had been dispersed throughout western and southern Iraq. The exact number varies depending on which source you use – between 20 to 36 launchers are an approximate guess. They were difficult to find. The electronic signature of the TELs were not distinct enough for location purposes. The TELs were camouflaged and hidden to avoid observation from the air. They were frequently moved at night. Once the TELs launched their SCUDs they moved rapidly from the launch site to a different hide location. Sophisticated decoy vehicles were deployed throughout the region that attracted the attention of coalition aircraft. Coalition aircraft had a difficult time finding and targeting the mobile SCUDs. There was some confusion in obtaining the confirmation of 'kills' of SCUDs by aircraft. [4] The SCUD launches toward Israel continued.

SOF and Desert Storm. A wide variety of special operations units were deployed during the Gulf War. Coalition nations provided SOF to the fight – among these were the British SAS and Syrian Special Forces Regiment. The U.S. provided an array of SOF units to include Army Special Forces, Army Rangers, Army Special Operations Aviation Regiment, Navy SEALs and Special Boat Units, Air Force Special Operations squadrons and Combat Control Teams, Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs units, and Marine Force Reconnaissance.

These SOF units conducted a variety of missions. Navy SEALs were busy with special operations missions along the shores of the Persian Gulf. Army Special Forces units were conducting a number of different missions to include direct action, strategic reconnaissance, unconventional warfare, CSAR, border surveillance, and coalition warfare support. Some SOF units would be assigned a new mission – SCUD hunting. The SOF aviation units were very busy with infiltrations, exfiltration, combat search and rescue (CSAR), and other special operations missions.

SOF Teams Inserted. British Special Air Service and 1st SFOD-Delta teams were inserted into western Iraq to join the SCUD hunt. [5] Their mission in “SCUD Alley” was to search for and destroy the SCUDs, launchers, and associated equipment and vehicles. Some of the SOF teams infiltrated by air (usually helicopter) and others by vehicle. The 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment utilized armed MH-60s to insert SOF teams hundreds of miles inside western Iraq. The Air Force Special Operations squadrons also conducted operations in support of the SCUD hunt. U.S. and British SOF divided the operational area into two sectors – one for the U.S. and one for the British.

Desert Storm - SOF Scud Hunting Mission in Iraq (cont)



Photo: Delta Force on SCUD Hunt. Photo by DoD, 1991.

SOF On The Ground. The means of interdiction of the SCUDS by SOF teams would range from direct action against the targets to calling in air power to destroy the vehicles and sites associated with the SCUDs. The patrols usually moved at night by foot or vehicle and hid during the day. The British patrols tended to be longer in duration. Some of the SOF teams operating in western Iraq had other missions as well as the SCUD hunt. One of the methods for discovering SCUDs was to set up observation sites along main lines of communication (LOCs). US teams would use hand-held lasers pinpointing targets for aircraft to strike.

Bravo Two Zero. A British SAS team that was inserted by a Royal Air Force Chinook helicopter quickly ran into trouble. It was soon discovered and chased by Iraqi security forces. A few of the patrol members were killed. Some were captured. One patrol member managed to move on foot to the Syrian border avoiding capture. A few books were published and a movie made about Bravo Two Zero. [6]

Effectiveness of SCUD Hunt. The effectiveness of the SCUD hunt by both the Air Force and the SOF teams has been a topic of discussion following the war. How many SCUDs were found and destroyed was not immediately known. There were varying estimates of the effectiveness of the air strikes and the SOF teams on the ground. [7] Some sources indicate that many of the aircraft reported kills of SCUDs were in fact decoys or similar looking vehicles. [8]

Finding the SCUDs and their launchers were difficult. The SCUDs moved from site to site at night. They hid during the day. The SCUD crews could move the launchers to a pre-coordinated launch site, fire their missiles, and drive away in ten minutes.

It became apparent in post-war analysis that countering Iraq's mobile short-range ballistic missiles (SRBM) was a time and resource intensive endeavor. Although the SCUDs were highly inaccurate they did have an important psychological and political impact. In addition, they forced the coalition to divert resources to the SCUD hunt that otherwise could have been occupied with the main effort – the ousting of Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

Desert Storm - SOF Scud Hunting Mission in Iraq (cont)

Conclusion. What is known is that the air campaign and introduction of SOF teams into western Iraq to find and destroy the SCUDS kept Israel on the sidelines. The frequency of SCUD attacks against Israel diminished. This kept the Arab nations in the coalition and contributed to the overall success of Desert Storm's objective of removing Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

Top Photo: SCUD launcher, DoD photo.

Footnotes:

[1] On February 25, 1991, parts of an Iraqi Al Hussein SCUD missile destroyed barracks housing U.S. troops. 28 soldiers died and 99 were wounded.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/14th_Quartermaster_Detachment

[2] ["We're going to attack Iraq, Israel told the US. 'Move your planes'"](#), *The Times of Israel*, January 18, 2018.

[3] *The Air Force and the Gulf War*, Air Force Association, December 2009, PDF, p. 22.

<https://www.dvusd.org/cms/lib/AZ01901092/Centricity/Domain/2435/AFandGulfWar.pdf>

[4] *Operation Desert Storm: Evaluation of the Air Campaign*, U.S. Government Accountability Office, NSIAD-97-134, June 12, 1997, page 31, 32.

<https://www.gao.gov/assets/230/224366.pdf>

[5] There is much more open source information about the participation of the SAS in the SCUD hunt than there is about Delta Force's role in the operation. A few sources indicate that the Navy SEALs and U.S. Army Rangers may have participated as well.

[6] Two books have been published that tell the story of Bravo Two Zero – [Bravo Two Zero](#) and [SAS in the Gulf War](#).

[7] RAND paper cited below by Rosenau, page 36.

[8] ["Scud War, Round Two"](#), *Air Force Magazine*, April 1, 1991, by Stewart M. Powell.

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Desert Storm - SF Team Fights for Survival Behind Enemy Lines



SFODA 525:
Fight for Survival

Desert Storm
1991

During Desert Storm several U.S. Army teams of Green Berets were infiltrated deep behind enemy lines to conduct surveillance and reconnaissance missions. Some of these Special Forces teams were compromised by civilians who discovered their location. A few of the SF teams had to fight enemy combatants until they were exfiltrated by helicopter.

On February 23, 1991, SFODA 525, led by CW2 Chad Balwanz, was inserted by helicopter at night and moved to a hide site to observe traffic moving south along Highway 7 at a location north of the Euphrates River. This 5th Special Forces team would soon find itself fighting for survival against an overwhelming enemy force.

On the night of January 23, 1991, the day before the ground offensive of Desert Storm began, Special Forces reconnaissance teams were inserted deep behind enemy lines in Iraq to gather and report intelligence of Iraqi troop movements. Many were put in areas over 150 miles inside Iraq – far from friendly forces. The teams had at least three members – sometimes 8 or more. Each team had at least one communicator responsible for sending and receiving messages from the command and control node.

These Special Reconnaissance (SR) teams were emplaced in enemy territory in support of both the XVIII Airborne Corps and the VII corps. They were on watch for movements of SCUD missiles, elements of the Republican Guard, and other significant enemy activities.

The teams would carry rucksacks that contained water, food, radios, ammunition, batteries for the radios, and more. In addition, other equipment such as a GPS, knife, compass, and medical kit were hung in various configurations on their combat vests. Rucks and other equipment could easily reach over 150 pounds. Add to that the equipment and materials needed to dig and camouflage the hide site.

Most teams would insert via MH-60 or MH-47 helicopters from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) at a location far from the observation site yet within walking distance. Once infiltrated, at night, the team would move by foot overland to the target area, select the hide site, and begin the process to dig in and camouflage the area before early morning light.

ODA 525 had infiltrated in two MH-60 Black Hawks from Task Force 160 and moved overland with their heavy rucks (175 lbs) to the target area. The eight team members dug in at a location about 300 meters east of

Desert Storm - SF Team Fights for Survival Behind Enemy Lines (cont)

Highway 7 that offered a good observation point. The highway was one of the main routes that ran from Baghdad south through the Euphrates river valley. The team finished the process of building the hide site before dawn on the morning of February 24, 1991 and settled in to observe the highway.

As the morning sun came up the team could see and hear a lot of civilian activity in the area. There were people tending to cattle and sheep, women were collecting firewood, and children were playing. The area had more people in the area than the team had anticipated and intelligence reports had indicated. The soil was very difficult to dig into so the hide site was less than optimal.

The team was soon discovered by three children – a boy and two girls. The SF detachment reached a critical decision point – what to do with the children. The children left the team's location unharmed. The team decided to change their location and began movement to another area. Not long after that an adult with Bedouin headdress approached the team with children . . . and saw members of the team. The unarmed adult was allowed to leave – which he did in haste.

Before long the team had armed Bedouin tribesmen in their immediate area and which was followed with the arrival of Iraqi soldiers. The team was in a tenuous position – miles behind enemy lines, lightly armed, and vastly outnumbered with no ground mobility vehicles to evade.

Within minutes the team was engaged in a battle with the 150-man Iraq force. In the first ten minutes of the battle 40 Iraqi soldiers lay dead and many more were wounded.

The battle continued through the day. The team leader, Balwanz, called in for air support. The team was supported with air strikes that kept the Iraqi troops from overrunning the team's position. Many of the bombs were dropped 'danger close'. Estimates of enemy deaths were from 100 to 300 personnel due to the SF team and supporting aircraft.

The SF soldiers used emergency PRC-90 radios and signal mirrors to communicate with the supporting aircraft during the battle. Although the fight had lasted hours none of the Green Berets were killed or wounded.

By nightfall the fight was under control – the team and supporting craft had kept the Iraqis at bay. The team moved to an area more suited for a helicopter exfiltration. That evening, after darkness settled in, two MH-60s from TF-160 landed near the team's location and brought the team to safety and to King Fahd International Airport.

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"Voices in the Storm: Against all Odds", *Frontline*, PBS. – The Gulf War. Chad Balwanz, the team leader of SFODA 525, is interviewed about the team's mission.
<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/gulf/voices/2.html>

"Chad Balwanz", *Hazard Ground Podcast*, Episode 140, October 31, 2019. Hear the firsthand account of ODA 525 and their fight to survive from the team leader of the Special Forces detachment.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ksmg0U2ILo8>

Spirit 03 - Downed AC-130H

During Desert Storm



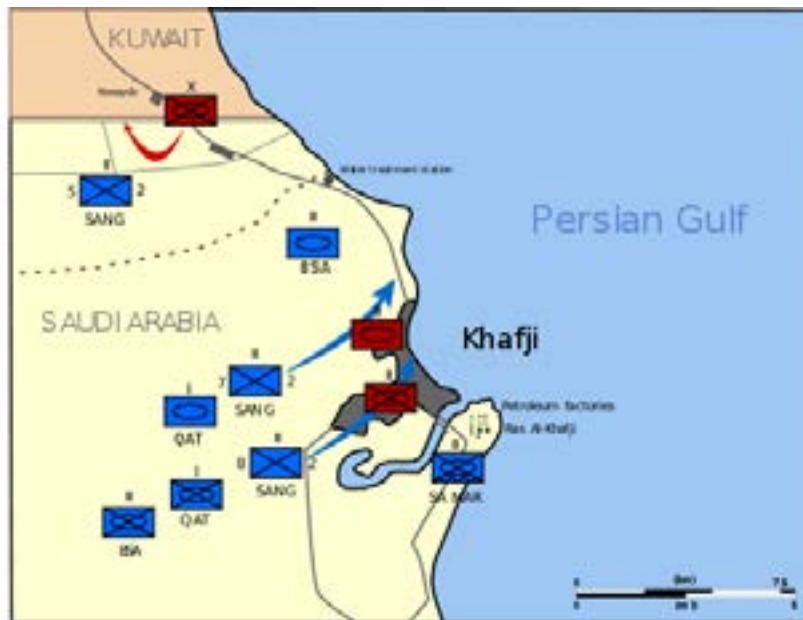
Thirty years ago, on January 31, 1991, an AC-130H Spectre gunship went to the aid of U.S. Marines in contact with the enemy during Desert Storm. The aircraft and its crew of fourteen was shot down by an Iraqi surface-to-air missile during the Battle of Khafji, Saudi Arabia.

Spirit 03 was one of three Spectre gunships that were providing air support at the battle of Khafji. The first two aircraft – Spirit 01 and Spirit 02 – had completed their missions and were returning to base. Spirit 03 was the remaining gunship over the target area as the morning sky was lighting up with the approach of dawn. A man-portable surface-to-air missile struck the aircraft and the aircraft crashed into the Persian Gulf. The loss of Spirit 03 constituted 10% of the AC-130H fleet.

Operation Desert Shield. In August of 1990 Iraq invaded and occupied neighboring Kuwait. The U.S. and other nations formed an alliance and rushed troops, aircraft, and navy vessels to the Arabian peninsular and the Persian Gulf region. The intent was to defend Saudi Arabia and other Gulf nations from a possible Iraqi attack. In addition, the military buildup was in anticipation of military action to liberate Kuwait.

Operation Desert Storm. Once it became apparent that Iraq would not withdraw from Kuwait the Coalition forces prepared for offensive operations. In January 17, 1991 the Operation Desert Storm air campaign against Iraqi forces began – both in Iraq and in Kuwait. During the air campaign strategic targets across Iraq were attacked disrupting the Iraqi command and control system, air defenses, and establishing air superiority. In the ensuing days that air campaign would shift to attacks on Iraq tactical ground units in preparation for the anticipated Coalition ground offensive to liberate Kuwait.

Spirit 03 - Downed AC-130H During Desert Storm (cont)



Battle of Khafji. The first major ground action of the war occurred on January 29, 1991, while the air campaign was less than two weeks old – and weeks before the beginning of the Coalition's ground offensive into Kuwait and southern Iraq. Elements of Iraq's 5th Mechanized Division and 3rd Armored Division began to move south towards Saudi Arabia. A large Iraqi force of 40 tanks and 500 troops entered and occupied the border town of Khafji, Saudi Arabia. It is believed by many that, if successful at Khafji, the Iraqi military would push further into Saudi Arabia – with the possible capture of valuable oil fields in Saudi Arabia.

Two six-man Marine reconnaissance teams from the 1st Marine Division were trapped inside Khafji. A counteroffensive was mounted by American, British, and Saudi forces. While the battle for the city was ongoing the Iraqis were attempting to move more forces south toward Khafji and the surrounding area. These formations were also subjected to air attack by the Coalition. This was the first major ground engagement of Operation Desert Storm and it would last three days – from January 29 to February 1, 1991.

It was during this initial ground battle that Spirit 03 was hit by a man-portable SAM. The missile struck the aircraft just after sunrise on January 31st while it was engaged in attacking targets a few miles north of Khafji. The AC-130 was running low on fuel and minutes away from departing the area to return to base.

This was the largest single loss of life by an United States Air Force unit during Operation Desert Storm. The AC-130H aircraft that carried the crew of Spirit 03 was a modified, 1969 C-130E – carrying the 105mm cannon as well as other armament. The post-Vietnam era aircraft was lacking the advanced systems featured on today's gunships.

During Operation Desert Storm the United States Air Force lost 20 service members due to [hostile action](#). The crew of Spirit 03 constituted the bulk of those losses. Spirit 03 was part of the 16th Special Operations Squadron based at Hurlburt Field.

Remembrance Ceremony. The 1st Special Operations Wing hosted a remembrance ceremony for the fallen crew of Spirit 03 at the Hurlburt Field Air Park on Friday, January 29, 2021. Family members of the fallen and leadership from Hurlburt Field attended the ceremony. A [video of the ceremony](#) can be found on DVIDS, 4 minutes, 1st SOW Public Affairs.

Spirit 03 - Downed AC-130H During Desert Storm (cont)



Photo: Three AC-130J Ghostriders fly over Hurlburt Field during a memorial ceremony for Spirit 03 at Hurlburt Field, Florida, Jan. 29, 2021. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Miranda Mahoney)

Image at top of article: AFSOC, January 29, 2021.

Map: Public domain, Wikipedia.

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<https://www.usmcu.edu/Portals/218/Khafji%20Battle%20Study.pdf>

Naval SOF Exercise in Mediterranean Sea



Story by Sgt. Monique ONeill, SOCEUR.

CRETE, Greece – Naval special operations forces from the Greek Underwater Demolition Team (DYK), Cypriot Underwater Demolition Team (UDT), and U.S. Navy Special Warfare Combatant-Craft Crewmen (SWCC) joined forces to conduct a maritime exercise in Souda Bay, Greece, January 11-29.

The tri-lateral Special Operations Forces (SOF) exercise, which was designed to better enable global operations, included Over the Beach (OTB), Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS), and Small Boat Interdiction (SBI).

“These exercises help keep us sharp, prepared, and consistent. We are able to communicate and integrate fluidly when we train together on a regular basis,” said the U.S. Naval SWCC team leader.

The United States, Greece, NATO allies and partners, continuously train together in the European theater operations to build trust, improve levels of cooperation and combined capabilities. The integration of the Republic of Cyprus is a demonstration of NATO’s commitment to increasing interoperability with regional partners in an effort to promote collective defense and stability.

“The inclusion of Cypriot forces created an opportunity to expand capabilities and relationships with partner nations in the neighboring area. We are all strong nations individually, but we can grow stronger by working collectively, in the context of joint military training activities,” said Nikolaos Panagiotopoulos, Greek Minister of National Defense. “It’s imperative to understand that we can always learn and grow stronger by cross-training together with our partners and allies.”

Although Cyprus has been divided since 1974, the country has a unified military and training objectives.

“We know the importance of joint exercises like this and hope to work closely with partners in the future in order to promote peace and stability in our region,” said Charalambos Petrides, Minister of Defense of Cyprus.

To enhance the VBSS training experience for the SOF participants, the Hellenic Navy added a frigate, HS Kanaris, from their fleet to the exercise.

Naval SOF Exercise in Mediterranean Sea (cont)

“This training was very useful for our ship and our crew. We are very proud to have the Special Forces from all three countries on board,” said Lieutenant Commander George Lykousas, member of the Hellenic Navy.

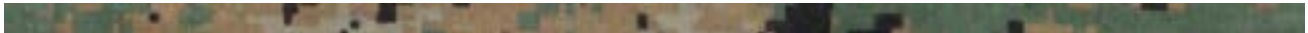
Throughout the entirety of the exercise, the SOF components used Combatant craft-assaults (CCAs) assigned to Special Operations Command Africa.

“The collective efforts enabling global operations increase interoperability in a maritime environment, alongside our NATO allies and partners, helping increase security and stability in the region,” said U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. David Tabor. “We appreciate having this opportunity to build upon already strong relationships while also improving cooperation between Special Operations Command Africa and Special Operations Command Europe.”

Photo By Sgt. Monique ONeill , SOCEUR, January 2021.

This article is a repost of “Greece, Cyprus and the U.S. join forces for naval SOF exercise in the Mediterranean Sea”, by Sgt. Monique ONeill, U.S. Special Operations Command Europe, January 29, 2021. View [original article](#) here. Articles posted by the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS) are in the public domain. View [additional photos](#) of the training by Sgt. ONeill posted on DVIDS.

An [additional story](#) on the same exercise was posted by *The National Herald* (Greece), Feb 2, 2021. Has some good photos.



The Special Operations Warrior Foundation (SOWF) is a non-profit organization located in Tampa, Florida. The SOWF exists to care for the families of fallen and wounded special operations forces. The SOWF was founded in 1980 after the attempt to rescue 53 American hostages in Iran. The operation resulted in the loss of eight special operations servicemen who left behind 17 children.

Read more in [“Special Operations Warrior Foundaton \(SOWF\) - A Good Cause”](#), by SOF News, August 9, 2019.

Inspector General Report on Operation Inherent Resolve



The Lead Inspector General report to the United States Congress on Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) has been published online. The 136-page report covers the period of October 1 to December 31, 2020 – although there are some updates that cover significant events that took place in January 2021.

The report states that Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) continued to contain the Islamic State (IS). The insurgent group has been operating at a low level in Iraq and Syria. It has failed to execute complex attacks, seize territory, or conduct external attacks.

Militia groups in Iraq continue to pose a security threat to U.S. forces and the OIR mission. Iranian-aligned militias have increased violent acts against U.S. interests. The Baghdad regime is caught in the middle between the United States and Iran in attempting to curtail the activities of these militia groups.

In Syria the United States interests are threatened by Iranian and Syrian regime proxies that are operating in northeastern Syria. These groups continue their attacks against the Syrian Democratic Forces and are attempting to gain influence in territory previously held by the Islamic State.

The IG report provides an update on the status of ISIS, reviews major developments in the two countries, and outlines its IG oversight activities. In addition, it has sections (about both Iraq and Syria) on the following:

- Actions conducted against ISIS
- Partner force development
- Role of third parties
- Diplomacy and political developments
- Stabilization
- Humanitarian Assistance

Inspector General Report on Operation Inherent Resolve (cont)

There are several appendices that cover the methodology for preparing the report, Department of Justice activities, actions against terrorist financing, acronyms, maps, and endnotes.

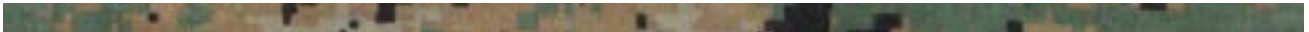
There is very little mention of U.S. special operations forces. One entry on page 60 of the report states that U.S. SOF sometimes accompany the SDF on targeted operations or support from a nearby mission support site. A “Ctrl-F” search of the document (PDF) for [SOJTF](#), [CSOJTF-S](#), or [CSOJTF-I](#) provides zero results. These three acronyms are not even listed in the two-page acronym appendix. Usually there is a classified appendix to this report that would likely provide some insight into SOF activities in Iraq and Syria for Congressional members (and others). However, due to constraints resulting from the coronavirus disease-2019 pandemic, the IG agencies did not prepare a classified appendix this quarter. If you are looking for an update on SOF activities in Iraq or Syria over the past few months you will need to go elsewhere.

There are some sections of the report that are very interesting and make for good reading if you are looking to increase your awareness of the current state of the conflicts in Iraq and Syria. For instance the map of Syria (page 56) reveals just how much of the territory once controlled exclusively by the SDF is now patrolled by Turkish, Syrian, and Russian forces. Coalition forces, for the most part, are reduced to operating on the eastern flank of northeastern Syria.

The report provides a good update (from the perspective of the DOD, State, and other agencies) on the overall situation in Iraq and Syria. There is a lot of information in the report on the situation and events taking place in the two countries that doesn’t get reported in the media.

Operation Inherent Resolve Lead Inspector General Report to the United States Congress, covers October 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020, published online February 9, 2021, PDF, 136 pages.

View [online or download here](#).



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SOSOUTH Has a Space Force Guardian



Story by Victor Aguirre, SOCSOUTH, Feb 16, 2021.

A young mother turned on the television to entertain her son with the United States Space Shuttle launch twenty years ago. The space launch created a great impression on the child that would influence him for many years.

"Today is special for a number of reasons, as Tech. Sgt. Narain will extend his commitment to our nation through his military service by accepting his reenlistment," said Special Operations Command South (SOCSOUTH) Commander Rear. Adm. Keith Davids. "The uniqueness of this event resides in the service transfer to the newest U.S. Military Service, the United States Space Force (USSF)."

In a reenlistment ceremony at Special Operations Command South broadcast online, Rear Adm. Davids swore in Tech. Sgt. Krishan Narain, a Cyberspace Support Technician, into the Space Force, Feb. 5. Tech. Sgt. Narain is the first Special Operations Command South service member selected for an inter-service transfer into the Space Force.

"It is historic for this command as he becomes the first member of SOCSOUTH to dedicate his service to this new branch," Davids said. "Tech. Sgt. Narain joins the estimated 2,200 service members currently executing initial Space Force operations."

"I did not think I would ever have the chance to be this close to the space mission. I've worked a broad career, and while I knew I could be stationed somewhere that dealt with space, being in the USSF is historic itself," said Narain. "My personal goal is to go work for the private sector in the space realm. The work they do with launching and recovering rockets looks so easy on TV, but the hard work and creativity to get there is what I enjoy."

SOCSOUTH's first airman turned guardian will continue his service at SOCSOUTH as the sole Space Force representative for the command. Tech. Sgt. Narain will explore the future roles and responsibilities Space Command may assume within the Special Operations community.

Inspired by an older cousin who joined the U.S. Air National Guard as a crew chief, Narain enlisted in the U.S. Air Force on May 4, 2010, originally intending to become an aircraft maintenance specialist. Narain's recruiter convinced him to work with cyberspace-based systems instead as it is as critical as aerial weapon systems.

SOCSSOUTH has a Space Force Guardian (Cont)



Photo: In a reenlistment ceremony at Special Operations Command South broadcast online, Rear Adm. Davids swore in Tech. Sgt. Krishan Narain, a Cyberspace Support Technician, into the Space Force on Feb. 5. Photo By Sgt. 1st Class Victor Aguirre

“Perhaps today reflects a bit of destiny as Tech. Sgt. Narain has been passionate about space since watching a shuttle launch on TV as a young child,” Davids said.

“I was so eager to apply that within a day’s announcement of applications being accepted, my paperwork was in routing,” Narain said. “Space is a big deal and I am intrigued by the vast complexity of it.”

Additionally, Tech. Sgt. Narain was selected for promotion to Master Sgt. and will lead as a senior noncommissioned officer (NCO) in the Space Force.

“Tech. Sgt. Narain has already been selected for promotion to Master Sgt. and he will lead our new Space Force as a senior NCO,” Davids said. “He will do so, bringing his many years of experience to bear that he gained from service in places like Afghanistan, Arizona, and Nevada.”

“Space is critical to national security. Everything from bank transactions to global positioning is done through Space-based systems. Our adversaries are gaining capabilities in every warfighting domain, and the Space Force gives us a competitive edge to stay in the fight in Space,” Narain said. “It boils down to providing capabilities anywhere on Earth, allowing our warfighters to protect national security interests. A prime example is when one of our USSF Organizations were able to alert an installation in Southwest Asia of an incoming missile attack saving hundreds of service members’ lives.”

Rear Adm. Davids thanked Narain for his current and continued service in the Armed Forces and his courage as Narain joins Space Force pioneers in developing a robust space presence and expanding this warfighting domain for the U.S.

Author: This story was originally published on February 16, 2021 by the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS) and is in the public domain. The article is by Sgt. 1st Class Victor Aguirre, Special Operations Command South, entitled [“First SOCSSOUTH Airman becomes a Space Force Guardian”](#).

Civil Affairs, ADAPT, and “Soft Power”



By Lisa Litchfield, USACAPOC, Feb 11, 2021.

Maybe this has happened to you. You’ve been friendly with the local farmer near your basecamp, exchanging waves and occasional greetings, when suddenly one morning, without warning, he is unexplainably hostile and his friendly greetings have digressed into exchanges of gunfire.

Participants in the Agricultural Development for Armed Forces Pre-Deployment Training (ADAPT) program know what went wrong.

“The program really came into its own in Afghanistan,” explained Col. Bradford “Brad” Hughes, who is the Functional Specialty Team (FxSP) Chief for the 351st Civil Affairs Command (CACOM) out of Mountain View, California.

“During the training we did in January we had a guest speaker, retired two-star, Maj. Gen. Darren Owens, from the Texas National Guard,” said Hughes. “He’s considered kind of the architect of the ADTs, agriculture development teams ... with respect to Afghanistan, I want to say this went on for about 10 years while things were pretty active there.”

The message of ADAPT is to provide fundamental training in basic agricultural systems in regions where troops are going to deploy or mobilize, whether it be for humanitarian aid, or for long term conflict operations. The goal of the program is to ensure Soldiers have a base understanding of the situation before they leave, some awareness of the landscape and its relationship to food insecurity and stability operations while they are down range, and also some very basic intervention techniques they can use, and have continued to use, to build trust with the local population. This allows them to affect a small amount of incremental change during their mission.

Civil Affairs, ADAPT, and “Soft Power” (Cont)

One of the goals of the January familiarization training was to expose the entire FxSP to the concepts of food security, and ensure each team member had at least some exposure to information about the influence of agriculture on U.S. missions, both abroad and at home.

The 351st CACOM conducted the ADAPT familiarization for personnel across the Civil Affairs and Security Cooperation ecosystems, including personnel from U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, U.S. Army Pacific, the 9th Mission Support Command and its 322nd Civil Affairs Brigade, and units under the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) footprint, including the 350th CACOM, the 351st CACOM the 352nd CACOM, and the 353rd CACOM.

Training focused on quick impact, practical, agriculture and food security intervention techniques in pre/post disaster scenarios, and in under-governed regions. Keynote speaker, Maj. Gen. (R) Darren Owens discussed lessons learned and battlefield effects from the Agribusiness Development Team (ADT) mission and Afghanistan, while Dr. Bill Erysian and Mr. Paul Sommers (ADAPT Program Leads) reviewed triggers for food systems insecurity, framing their insights towards Theater Security Cooperation goals within the USINDOPACOM area of responsibility (AOR).

The FxSPs are a way to leverage our “soft power.” A grouping of highly educated experts with specialized career experience and unique skill sets, the teams are brought together to gain influence through human interactions. The FxSPs currently have command and control over the 38G area of concentration. The holders of the 38G MOS are Military Government Specialists and they have a subset of an additional 18 individual skill identifiers where the real expertise lies.

Amongst those specialties lies the 6U skill identifier: Agriculture, business and food individuals. The ADAPT program is designed to give everyone a baseline exposure to what these 6U Soldiers specialize in, and the January training was part of that exposure.

Hughes considers the January ADAPT seminar to function as a sort of preview for Soldiers.

“The familiarization was just a teaser. The full-blown program is 3-5 days and they teach you enough where you can intelligently enter a conversation.” Hughes went on to add that although the team members obviously don’t know as much as the instructors, a key benefit to the training is having that network of people who are available for you to call on in any given situation.

While the training you get through the ADAPT program may not cover every type of agriculture you may encounter, it gives a base understanding of issues and solutions and allows you the capability to reach back to Fresno State and as part of the institutional alignment to provide that reach back support.

Hughes pointed out that, as Americans, and especially Servicemembers, we have sort of a “fix-it” mentality where we want to go in and put something in, make it work, apply the band aid to the situation. With ADAPT, this isn’t the way to sustainability.

“Culturally with some of these nations, things take time to evolve... technology isn’t always the answer,” explained Hughes. “I think what we would leave behind, if we are able to really be culturally attuned and assist, is that reach back. In Civil Affairs it’s all about relationships. Hopefully, at the end of the day, when we leave... these nations know who to call if there’s an issue.”

Building that bridge, establishing that connection is the legacy that these functional specialty teams leave behind in the areas that they are assigned to.

Civil Affairs, ADAPT, and “Soft Power” (Cont)

“This is a good program,” enthuses Hughes. “It supports institutional alignment, support geo-strategic reach back and supports the efforts of the Strategic Initiatives Group (SIG) and everything that USACAPOC is wanting to do with the 38G program.”

ADAPT instructors are a group of 15 core personnel who together represent 75 countries of experience. The curriculum, made up of 20% classroom lecture and 80% field work, can be taught in three- or five-day blocks, and can utilize partial or full VTC remote learning. Although useful for all Soldiers deploying, the program was specifically designed with Civil Affairs and the FxSP mission in mind.

Because the ADAPT team has such a broad knowledge base with expertise across all AORs and agro-climatic environments, focusing on the specific AOR that the teams are preparing to assist is an easy task. Actual training during the course is focused on building situational awareness of the assigned region. That base knowledge of the relationship between agriculture, food insecurity, and instability in a given theater of operation greatly enhances the ability to engage and build trust in our partner nations.

The SIG is working hard to establish relationships for each one of the 18 special skills, aligning them with academia, with a university or with an organization like the Smithsonian or the Federal Aviation Administration, whichever relates to that ASI. For food security, or agriculture, business and food, that institutional alignment is with Fresno State in California. Bill Erysian, Ph.D., is one of the key instructors for the ADAPT program and brings with him a wealth of experience and knowledge.

Erysian recalls the roots of the ADAPT program going back to approximately 2010 when he and a group of colleagues, who had spent a considerable amount of time overseas working in various agricultural development and rural reform projects, realized that there were just a lot of places they couldn't get to because of conflict.

Tired of being shot at, and having gained exposure to the Civil Affairs mission through a working relationship with a visiting Marine Corps officer on a goodwill mission to the Fresno area, Erysian identified a gap in pre-deployment education.

Erysian and company developed a program, endorsed by the DoD, that allowed them to engage in training various Soldiers prior to their departure and deployment to different parts of Afghanistan.

The message of ADAPT is to provide fundamental training in basic agricultural systems in regions where troops are going to deploy. The goal is to make sure they have a base understanding of the situation before they leave, some awareness of the landscape and its relationship to food insecurity and stability operations while they are down range, and also some very basic intervention techniques which they can use, and have continued to use, to build trust in the local population. This allows them to affect incremental change during their mission.

Once the drawdown of forces in Afghanistan began, the program made a switch to focus on the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) region which aligned geographically due to the institution being on the West Coast.

With most of the instructors for the program being veterans, active-duty members, or civilians with conflict environment experience, the program managers decided that their services, program, training principles, and paradigm would be useful for USINDOPACOM given the expertise most of them had in tropical agriculture. This led to a relationship with the 351st CACOM and their subordinate units.

The same principles apply to USINDOPACOM that applied to Afghanistan. Incremental change, an understanding of the local environment, and particularly, do no harm while downrange. This was the training that Hughes and company attended in January.

With the 351 CACOM aligned with Army Pacific, active with Task Force Oceania and having a presence on several of the Indo-Pacific islands, there is the understanding that food is important.

Civil Affairs, ADAPT, and “Soft Power” (Cont)

“It really has cultural ramifications, we think there is value there to build rapport, establish credibility, and show that we’re interested in helping these nations, these communities and these cultures,” enthused Erysian.

With over 130 attendees from the USINDOPACOM area of operations and heavy participation from the USACAPOC (A) CACOMs, the January training filled an agricultural knowledge gap that defines the relationship between food insecurity and conflict, and laid the groundwork for future mission success.

Oh, and that farmer? The troops took a shortcut across a field of “weeds” late one night destroying his entire wheat crop. An ADAPT graduate would have known better.

For more information about how to join Army Reserve Civil Affairs, contact the USACAPOC(A) Task Force Manning recruiting officer at: usarmy.usarc.usacapoc.list.ca-recruiting@mail.mil

For more information about the [351st Civil Affairs Command](#), Functional Specialty Team (FxSP) contact: Col. Bradford “Brad” Hughes, FxSP Chief, at: bradford.l.hughes.mil@mail.mil

For more information on the [ADAPT program](#) contact: Bill Erysian, Ph.D., [Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences & Technology](#), Fresno State University at: bille@csufresno.edu

Photo: USAR soldiers attend Agricultural Development for Armed Forces (ADAPT) pre-deployment training with representatives from the Jordan College of Agriculture at Fresno State University, in Fresno, CA, in an undated photo. (courtesy photo USACAPOC)

Author: This story was originally published on February 11, 2021 by the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS) and is in the public domain. Story entitled [“ADAPT and overcome”](#), by Sgt. 1st Class Lisa Litchfield, U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne).



Yemen: U.S. Pulling Support



The Biden administration wasted very little time in setting a course correction in the United States role in the Yemen conflict. Citing humanitarian issues (as well as other concerns) it has decided to eliminate support for offensive operations provided to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in their fight against the Iran-supported Ansarallah / Houthi rebels in Yemen. The conflict has raged for many years.

Humanitarian Crisis. The Yemen conflict has resulted in a humanitarian crisis – which the United Nations says is one of the worst in the world. There are widespread food shortages resulting in malnutrition. The economy is in a shambles and government services are operating in a very basic level. The aerial bombardment by Saudi and UAE aircraft has resulted in numerous civilian casualties. There is a significant lack of medical supplies and services for the civilian population. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic and cholera are taking a toll among the population.

The Houthis. With a strong base in the north region of Yemen the Shia group has attempted to extend its reach south and east throughout the country. It controls the capital city (Sanaa). Other religious, ethnic, and political groups have joined their movement. Most of the civilian population (estimates vary from 70 to 80%) come under Houthi control. The Houthis enjoy a strong position in the conflict – with no sign of their impending defeat in the future.

Iranian Support. The Houthi rebels have been supported by Iran for a number of years. Many observers of the conflict believe that the Houthis are an [Iranian proxy group](#). The Iranians provide

funding, weapons, equipment, trainers, and advisors to the Houthis. Through its Qods Force, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is very involved in the support provided to the Houthis.

Iranian Weapons and Equipment. Weapons, equipment, supplies, money, and personnel are transported to Yemen on international air flights as well as sea movement to Yemen's ports. These weapons include short-range ballistic missiles, surface-to-air missiles, drones, and other sophisticated equipment. The missile systems and components have been used by the Houthis against Saudi oil and infrastructure targets. These weapons shipments are in violation of the [U.N. Security Council Resolution 2216](#).

Yemeni Government. The government of President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi was ousted from the capital city and surrounding areas in a 2014-2015 offensive – dividing the country. The United Nations- recognized Yemeni government has benefited from external support from Gulf nations. However, the government supporters are fragmented and often engaged in internal conflicts.

Saudi-led Coalition. Saudi Arabia and the UAE say that they are actively reducing Iran's regional influence in their intervention in the Yemen conflict. The involvement by the Saudis and their allies began in 2015 after the Houthi rebels ousted the Republic of Yemen Government from the capital city Sanaa in 2014. The Saudi coalition was able to help the ousted government regain some territory to include the major city of Aden but the conflict soon turned into a stalemate.

Yemen: U.S. Pulling Support (Cont)



United Arab Emirates. The UAE has stepped back on its military involvement – although it still conducts counter terrorism operations and provides support to the breakaway [Southern Transitional Council](#). It withdrew ground forces from Yemen in 2019. Other nations that have supported the Saudi action in Yemen in the past include Kuwait and Sudan.

U.S. Support. For the past several years the U.S. has provided intelligence, logistics, precision-guided munitions, and other types of support to Saudi Arabia and its allies involved in the Yemen war. This support was increased after missile and drone attacks against Saudi oil facilities by the Houthis. The U.S. stopped providing aerial refueling support to Saudi and UAE aircraft in 2018. In the last few years U.S. support has been limited to intelligence sharing, targeting support, and training (in an attempt to limit civilian casualties). The U.S. has been criticized for its role in providing Saudi Arabia and UAE with [arms and munitions](#) used in the Yemen conflict.

U.S. SOF. In addition, the U.S. has had [special operations forces advisors](#) on the ground in Yemen providing training, advice, and assistance. U.S. SOF have worked with units from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as well as Yemen governmental security forces. The U.S. has also conducted unilateral [counter-terrorism operations](#) in the country against al-Qaeda and Islamic State affiliates. In January 2017 a Navy SEAL ([Ryan Owens](#)) died during a counterterrorism raid in Yemen. In January 2020 U.S. SOF conducted an unsuccessful operation to kill or capture a key

IRGC-QF operative in Yemen (Abdul Reza Shahlai).

Past activities of U.S. SOF in Yemen include foreign internal defense, counterterrorism, intelligence sharing, surveillance and reconnaissance, maritime interdiction, and drone strikes. U.S. SOF involvement in Yemen has also provided the opportunity to work with and assist in the development of GCC special operations capabilities. This also lends to increased interoperability of GCC SOF with U.S. SOF. In addition, the United Kingdom and France has also deployed its special operations forces to Yemen.

Trump and Yemen. Under the Trump administration the U.S. has taken a strong stance against Iran's activities across the Middle East. This includes attempting to diminish Iran's influence in Yemen. The Trump administration had declared the Houthis as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). It appears that the Biden administration may reverse this designation. The humanitarian implications of an FTO designation are significant. It would become more difficult to get foreign aid and assistance into areas of Yemen controlled by the Houthis.

Biden and Yemen. The Biden administration is likely to give priority to the nuclear talks about the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreement with Iran over concerns about Iranian meddling in Middle East affairs. Some sales of aircraft and munitions to Saudi Arabia and the UAE are on hold and under review by the Biden administration. U.S. activities in Yemen are likely to be curtailed. This prohibition by the

Yemen: U.S. Pulling Support (Cont)

Biden administration does not include the actions the United States will take against al-Qaida affiliates in Yemen – to include al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsular (AQAP).

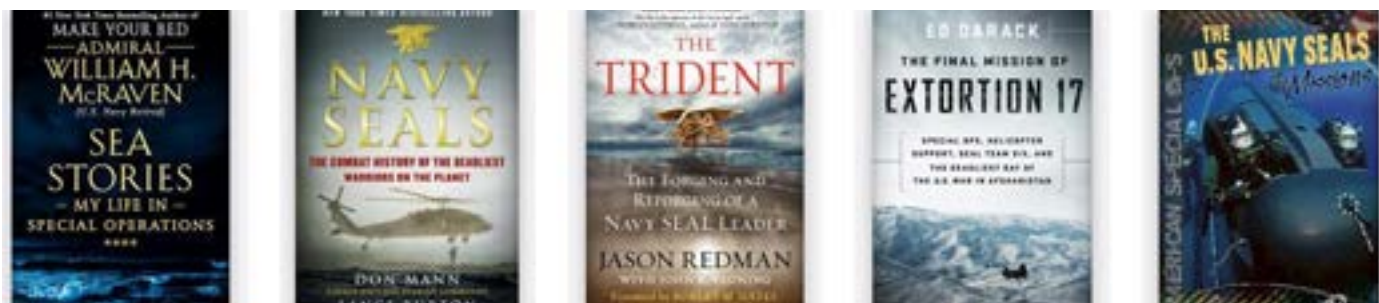
A Diplomatic Solution? The U.S. has now announced increased support to United Nations efforts for a political settlement of the conflict. In early February the United States named [Tim Lenderking](#), a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, as U.S. Special Envoy to Yemen. However, a ceasefire and end to the conflict is unlikely. A [United Nations Special Envoy to Yemen](#) (established in June 2012) has failed in attempts to arrange a permanent ceasefire and political agreement. The Houthis are entrenched in Sanaa and the western highlands of Yemen. However, the opposition (Hadi government) and its supporters in the Gulf Cooperation Council insist that any political solution must include a Houthi departure from Sanaa.

U.S. Interests in the Yemen Conflict. There are reasons for the United States to be concerned with the events taking place at the southern end of the Arabian peninsular. There are fears that Yemen could become a sanctuary for transnational terrorist groups like al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. The vital international shipping lanes near the [Bab al Mandab Strait](#) are at risk. In addition, Iran could possibly use Yemen in the future to threaten Saudi Arabia's southern borders. How the Biden administration addresses these concerns while resetting the relationship with Iran will be watched with great interest.

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<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R45046>





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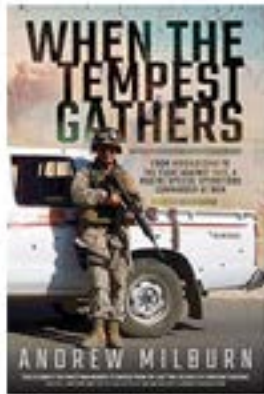
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Book Review -

When the Tempest Gathers



“When The Tempest Gathers”

From Mogadishu to the
fight against ISIS, a
Marine Special Operations
Commander at war

A new book by Andrew Milburn is a war memoir that covers a 31-year long journey in the Marine Corps. It is the story of a Marine who begins his career as an infantry officer with a deployment to Mogadishu, Somalia and ends it as a senior officer in special operations. Much of the book is about the last two decades of fighting in the Global War on Terror.

Milburn recounts his time on deployments to Somalia, Colombia, Ethiopia, Liberia, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, and a few other places. During his career as a Marine, he commanded at the platoon, company, battalion, regiment, and Special Operations Joint Task Force levels. He retired in 2019 as the Chief of Staff of Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT).

His story isn't limited to the war zone – it also provides insight into the training and hard work conducted by members of the military when stateside. He also informs us on the sacrifices and hardships that families endure during a military career.

The book provides a look at Marine Corps culture and the experience of a Marine's career on the battlefield and elsewhere. With three decades in uniform, Milburn has a lot to share. Much of the book's action takes place in Iraq – where Milburn experienced some significant combat time. His detailed accounts of the battles he and his fellow Marines fought in are riveting. In addition, he gives the reader some insight into the formation and growth of Marine Forces Special Operations Command or MARSOC.

Milburn shares his perspective on nation-building in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other places around the world. He addresses the leadership failure of senior military commanders and the elite political class that has guided our political and military strategy over the past two decades. Or, perhaps, the lack of a coherent overarching strategy.

This is a good book to learn about (or refresh your memory) about the Marine Corps, MARSOC, the decades-long fight against terrorism, and life in the military. By the end of the book you will have an appreciation of the hardship of military life for the service members and their families, be exposed to a narrative about the harsh reality of combat, and ponder the need for politicians and senior military officers to be more rigorous in the debate about the purpose of future wars.

When The Tempest Gathers: From Mogadishu to the Fight Against ISIS, A Marine Special Operations Commander at War, by Andrew Milburn, published by Pen & Sword, 2020. [Available here](#).

Video - SOF Center for Medical Integration and Development



The 24th Special Operations Wing launched the Special Operations Center for Medical Integration and Development, a program designed in cooperation between the U.S. Air Force and the University of Alabama-Birmingham to develop and provide advanced standardized training to special operations medics. The training used realistic and innovative techniques including virtual reality, field training exercises and clinical hospital rotations to maintain readiness of Special Operations Surgical Team members, pararescuemen and independent duty medical technicians.

[Watch the video](#) produced by the 24th Special Operations Wing Public Affairs office and Staff Sgt. Ridge Shan, posted on DVIDS February 5, 2021, 6 minutes.



New: House Subcommittee on Intelligence and Special Operations



A new subcommittee under the U.S. House Armed Services Committee has been formed. The Subcommittee on Intelligence and Special Operations will focus on specific activity areas of the Department of Defense. The new subcommittee will be chaired by [Representative Ruben Gallego](#) (D-Ariz.) He is a Marine Corps combat veteran who deployed to Iraq in 2005 for an eight month long deployment. One Republican member of this new subcommittee is [Representative Mike Waltz](#). He served two tours as a Special Forces officer in Afghanistan.

The Subcommittee on Intelligence and Special Operations (ISO) will have the following jurisdiction:

- military intelligence
- national intelligence
- countering CBR weapons of mass destruction, counterterrorism
- special operations forces
- counter-proliferation
- counterterrorism
- sensitive military operations

There are currently seven permanent subcommittees of the U.S. House Armed Services:

- Tactical Air and Land Forces
- Military Personnel
- Readiness Committee
- Seapower and Projection Forces
- Strategic Forces
- Cyber, Innovative Technologies, and Information Systems
- [Intelligence and Special Operations](#)

It appears that the Intelligence and Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee has been replaced by two new subcommittees: Cyber, Innovative Technologies, and Information Systems and the Intelligence and Special Operations Subcommittees.

Afghan Conflict Update



“Afghan Conflict Update - February 2021”

News, analysis, and commentary about the war in Afghanistan. Topics include security, Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF), Resolute Support, peace negotiations, governance, development, podcasts, videos, and more. Each month SOF News does a roll up of the news, commentary, and analysis on the Afghan conflict and provides a comprehensive update at the end of the month. The links to news articles, reports, and publications are grouped by category. Read what you want to read and skip what you are not interested in.

It is becoming increasingly likely that the United States will not have all of its troops withdrawn from Afghanistan by May 1, 2021 according to the terms agreed upon with the Taliban in early 2020. The Biden administration is reviewing the Afghan situation and will likely attempt to modify the agreement with the Taliban. NATO is indicating that it wishes to continue the Resolute Support mission. The Afghan government remains an ineffective institution that fails to deliver government services to its rural population and struggles to defeat to the Taliban.

Read the rest of the article in [“Afghan Conflict Update - February 2021”](#), SOF News, February 26, 2021.

Afghanistan Study Group Final Report

The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) has published its *Afghanistan Study Group Final Report: A Pathway for Peace in Afghanistan*. This 88-page document is the result of work that began in April 2020 – shortly after the United States and Taliban signed the Doha agreement that set the conditions for the US withdrawal from Afghanistan and the current negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

The study group was established by Congress in December 2019 and tasked with identifying policy recommendations for U.S. policy, resources and commitments in Afghanistan.

The report finds that:

“The United States is in a position where effective diplomacy, modest continuing aid levels, and strong coordination across civilian and military lines of efforts against a clear and unified objective can create the conditions for a responsible exit from Afghanistan that does not endanger our national security.”

Afghanistan Study Group Final Report, United States Institute of Peace (USIP), February 2021.
PDF, 88 pages.

<https://sof.news/afghanistan/afghanistan-study-group-final-report/>



Accidental Evils (2017) Vile Means (2014) The Einstein Proxy (2015) Covert Matters (2008)

Novels by Steve Dimodica

Available in print and e-delivery at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Indy book stores.



[Air Commando Foundation](#)



[Boston Frogman Swim](#)



A conceptional overview of all relevant topics of small unit tactics every soldier ought to be familiar with in order to be effective on today's battlefield.

While the book is useful to any one in the Army it is especially beneficial for the prospective Green Beret who is about to or is currently attending the Special Forces Qualification Course. The author was an instructor with the U.S. Army Special Forces Small Unit Tactics course that prepared Army soldiers for attendance at the Special Forces Qualification Course.

Published by Blacksmith Publishing, the book is available through several publishing outlets. You can read more at the link below:

[Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



www.civilaffairsassoc.org



Check out career opportunities
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SOF News



US SOF, Drones, and Project Hornet. US special operations forces have been operating drones of many sizes for a variety of missions. The drone fleet may get a little bit bigger in the near future. Project Hornet is “an advanced, hand-launched unmanned aerial system (USA) that can be used by forward-deployed personnel to interdict and disrupt adversary electronic capabilities in contested environments.” Find out more in [“Pentagon Gives a Glimpse of Special Forces’ Secret Hand-Launched Jammer Drone”](#), by David Hambling, *Forbes*, February 18, 2021.

SOF and Cynicism. Anna Simons, a Professor Emerita of Defense Analysis at the Naval Postgraduate School, is a frequent commentator on the special operations community. Her latest article is entitled [“Cynicism”](#), *Small Wars Journal*, February 16, 2021.

USSOCOM – A Model for IO Structure? An article draws an analogy between historical SOF and contemporary information forces and suggests that the history and evolution of SOF could serve as a possible model and provide cautionary lessons for the future development of information forces. [Read](#) “The Evolution of Special Operations as a Model for Information Forces”, *Joint Force Quarterly*, 1st Quarter 2021, PDF, 6 pages.

Rep Murphy in Key U.S. House SOF Position. U.S. Congresswoman [Stephanie Murphy](#) has been selected to serve as the vice chair of the [Subcommittee on Intelligence and Special Operations](#). She previously worked as a national security specialist at the Department of Defense, where she served for a period in the office that oversees [ASD Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict](#) (SOLIC).

Former USSOCOM Official is #2 at Navy. James F. “Hondo” Geurts has been designated as “performing the duties of” [under secretary of the Navy](#). Geurts had previously served as the acquisition executive at USSOCOM. (*Seapower Magazine*, Feb 4, 2021).

SOCOM’s MRAD. The US Special Operations Command will be acquiring the Multi-Role Adaptive Rifle (MRAD) for several of its subordinate components. Manufactured by Barrett it is chambered in three calibers. Deliveries should be ongoing – beginning in early 2021. See [“New sniper rifle for the Army, Marines, and SOCOM”](#), *Army Times*, January 29, 2021.

IG Project Announcement for USSOCOM. The Department of Defense Office of Inspector General has announced that it will [begin an evaluation](#) to determine the extent to which USCENCOM and USSOCOM have developed and implemented programs in accordance with DoD Law of War requirements to reduce potential law of war violations when conducting operations. (DoDIG, Jan 25, 2021).

LMG-M Virtual Industry Day. SOFWERX will be hosting a Lightweight Machine Gun – [Medium Industry Day](#) to foster the development of the new machine gun sought by US Special Operations Command. (*The Firearm Blog*, Jan 29, 2021).

International SOF News



The SAS Reputation. Read an essay on the exploration of the persona of the Special Air Service – Britain’s primary special forces organization. The reputation of the SAS has been built on its past deeds . . . but also on a vast quantity of books, movies, and TV programs. But one thing that stands out is the thing that makes the regiment the best – training. See [“The Badass Series: Part One – SAS”](#), *Forces.net*, December 31, 2020.

Russia’s Spetsnaz. Russia’s highly-trained special purpose force has been conducting operations around the world for the past 70 years. The five Russian special task forces of Spetsnaz “. . . are at the heart of the new Russian way of war that emphasises speed, surprise and deception over massive conventional force . . .” Read [“The Badass Series: Part Two – Russia’s Spetsnaz”](#), *Forces.net*, February 12, 2021.

Belgian SF and Female Soldiers. A [10-page essay](#) details how the Belgian Special Forces Group has developed a new gendermixed capability that includes female soldiers in the operational detachment for the first time. By Nina Wilen – *Expanding the Reach of the Special Forces with a Gender-Mixed Deep Development Capability (DDC): Identifying Challenges and Lessons Learned*, Security Policy Briefs, Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations, February 16, 2021.

Turkish SOF Raid – Gone Bad? An attempt to rescue 13 intelligence and police personnel held by the PKK ended in failure. [Read more in an article](#) by *The Arab Weekly*, February 15, 2021.

HALO Mishap During Covert Insertion into Iraq. A Delta operator and SAS trooper collided in mid-air during a high altitude low opening parachute insertion for a night mission against Islamic State fighters in Iraq in January 2021. Their parachutes became entangled and they both hit the ground hard suffering severe injuries. Fortunately they were quickly recovered by helicopter and were eventually receiving medical treatment. [“Iraq rescue: SAS, Delta Force in Skydiving mishap”](#), *Asia Times*, February 5, 2021

Swedes Now Part of SOF TF in Mali. Sweden has deployed its an element of its special operations forces to Mali to be part of [Task Force Takuba](#). The Swedes are [stationed in the Liptako region](#) close to Mali’s border with Niger and Burkina Faso. (*France 24*, Feb 5, 2021).

JTF-2 Soldier Injured by Pistol. A soldier belonging to Canada’s Joint Task Force 2 suffered a minor flesh wound when his SIG Sauer P320 pistol malfunctioned. The newly fielded pistol has been withdrawn from service pending the results of an investigation and replaced by older SIG Sauer P226 pistols. Read [“Special Forces pulls new pistols from service after soldier injured in misfire”](#), *CBC News*, February 4, 2021.

Iraq’s CTS. The Counterterrorism Service of Iraq is busy hunting down leaders of the Islamic State who have gone underground. The IS is still conducting attacks across the country but at a lower scale than previous years. The CTS continues to get assistance from the U.S. and other nations in the form of advice, intelligence, and other types of support. Read the account of a typical night raid to apprehend a suspected former member of the Islamic State on January 17, 2021. [“Stalking ISIS”](#), by Louisa Loveluck and Mustafa Salim, *The Washington Post*, February 3, 2021.



A Norwegian sniper prepares his equipment for a training event.

Task Force Takuba. A special operations task force formed up by France consisting of units from 7 European nations will become fully operational in 2021. [Task Force Takuba](#) has a three year mandate that will enable more tactical wins against terrorist groups in the Sahel region of Africa. But will it make a difference? Read [“Counter-terrorism in the Sahel: Can Task Force Takuba be a Game Changer for France”](#), *Global Risk Insights*, January 30, 2021.

India’s SF Origins. The first Indian-attributed SF unit was the Meghdoot Force – with its Raising Day on July 1, 1966. However it was actually established in 1965 and is credited with initiating the utilization of unconventional warfare by India’s state forces. Read about the early beginnings of this force and its actions in combat in [“Meghdoot Force: The Birth of the Para SF”](#), by Siddhant Hira, *The Defence Archive*, January 31, 2021.

LTG Wendt Retirement. Lieutenant General Eric Wendt is retiring. His last assignment was as commander of the NATO Special Operations Forces (NSHQ). A [change of command ceremony](#) was held at NSHQ on January 29, 2021. He is returning to the United States to retire after 34 years of active duty commissioned service, including 30 years in the US Army Special Forces. A separate virtual assumption of command ceremony will take place after Wendt’s successor is approved by NATO and is confirmed by the US Senate. (NATO, Jan 29, 2021).

Peer Ranking – SAS Australia. A reality TV show in Australia puts a group of 17 Australian celebrities through various mental and physical challenges – simulating SAS selection. One of the aspects of the show is peer ranking. This article delves into the aspects of peer ranking and its usefulness in the military at large. Read more in [“SAS Australia – Does being ranked against your peers work?”](#), *The Cove*, January 28, 2021.

US SOF in the Maldives. SOF operators deployed to the Maldives for three weeks to train with the Maldives National Defense Force. (Editor’s note: some trips are better than others.) Read [“US Special Operators Flex Their Diplomatic Muscle in Maldives”](#), *Sandboxx*, January 27, 2021.

ARSOF News



Photo: Instructor addressing students during Mountain Phase of Ranger School.

1st SF Cmd and it's Information Warfare Center. Colonel Ed Croot, the chief of staff at 1st Special Forces Command, provided a virtual presentation to a recent AFCEA TechNet event. His presentation provided information about the command's Information Warfare Center. ["Special Forces to build 'influence artillery' for online campaigns"](#), *C4ISRNET*, February 18, 2021.

Jobs for SF Vets. There are some jobs that are tailor-fitted for Special Forces veterans. ["Civilian Jobs After Leaving the Special Forces Club"](#), *Clearance Jobs*, February 19, 2021.

7th SFG(A) Soldier Pled Not Guilty to Murder Charges. Sgt. 1st Class Duke Webb, a member of the 7th Special Forces Group based at Eglin AFB, FL, [pled not guilty to charges of first-degree murder](#) and attempted first-degree murder. His appearance was via video from the Winnebago County, Illinois, jail for his arraignment. His next court appearance is scheduled for March 30, 2021. Three people were killed and three wounded in a shooting at an Illinois bowling alley and bar. (*NWF Daily News*, Feb 19, 2021)

Roger Donlon – MoH Recipient. Green Beret Roger Donlon was in South Vietnam in 1964 when he took part in a fierce firefight that would later lead to receiving the Medal of Honor at the White House in Washington, D.C. Read more in ["Why Roger Donlon was the first Medal of Honor recipient in Vietnam"](#), *We Are the Mighty*, February 16, 2021.

MWI, 10th SFG(A), and Project 6633. The 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), in cooperation with the Modern War Institute and [Project 6633](#), have announced an essay contest to generate new ideas and expand the community of interest for special operations in the polar regions. The essays must address how American special operations forces compete with near-peer adversaries in the polar regions. Learn more in ["Call for Submissions:](#)

ARSOF News (cont)

[Polar SOF Essay Contest](#)", Modern War Institute at West Point, February 17, 2021.

FBNC – Bryant Hall Dedication. A building with a lot of U.S. Army special warfare history attached to it has been rededicated. Medal of Honor recipient Sgt. 1st Class William Bryant was serving with the 5th Special Forces Group when he was killed in South Vietnam in 1969. He was posthumously awarded the MoH in 1971. In 1973 the [six-story building on Ardennes Street](#) on Fort Bragg, North Carolina was named in his honor. (*Fayetteville Observer*, Feb 17, 2021).

Prepping for SOF Selection? Steve Balestrieri, a former Green Beret, writes on the need to push out of your [comfort zone](#) so that you can find out what your absolute limits are. This is an important part of preparing for SOF selection. (SOFREP, Feb 16, 2021). Stew Smith, a former Navy SEAL, provides some advice on getting into [physical shape for a SOF career](#). (*Military.com*, Feb 2021).

USASFC Chats about IW, Cyber, and 'Naked Man' Concept. Maj. Gen. John Brennan addressed an AFCEA function and talked about a number of topics. Read more in ["Special Forces Command Seeks Key Data Aggregation, Cyber Tools"](#), *Signal 75*, February 17, 2021.

Extremist Symbols and SF. The John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School has taken steps to ensure its soldiers are aware of extremist symbols. One of the school house courses had to change its log because it had been adopted by an anti-government militia group. Almost all SF teams come up with an informal design for t-shirts, hats, and coffee mugs – some with use of patriotic symbols. Extremist groups are also using a wide variety of patriotic symbology as well. Read ["Special operations training center warns soldiers of symbols co-opted by extremists"](#), *Army Times*, February 10, 2021.

MH-6 Little Bird Upgrade. The U.S. Special Operations Command is [looking for a contractor](#) for procurement of a replacement Light Weight Plank Systems (LWPS) for use on the A/MH-6m helicopters. The plank systems provide mounting points for the weapons and ammunition cans. (*Defense Blog*, Feb 15, 2021).

SSG Robert Miller – GB and MoH Recipient. A recent DoD article [highlights the career and sacrifice](#) of Army Staff Sgt. Robert Miller, a Green Beret who lost his life during an intense 2008 firefight in Afghanistan. He is a recipient of the Medal of Honor. (DoD, Feb 15, 2021).

CSM Cook to SOJTF-OIR. Army Command Sgt. Maj. James "J.R." Cook, currently assigned as the command sergeant major, 3rd Operational Support Group (Airborne), Fort Bragg, NC, [has been selected](#) to serve as the command senior enlisted leader for the Special Operations Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve.

SF Vet Leads Private Aid Mission in Burma. Former Green Beret David Eubank has been providing medical and humanitarian aid to inhabitants of the eastern Burma Karen State. In 1997 Eubank formed his group – The [Free Burma Rangers](#) – to deliver humanitarian aid to oppressed ethnic minorities in conflict zones in Burma, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, and Kurdistan. (*Just the News*, Feb 3, 2021") See also a story about how the [village health defense](#) concept builds upon and extends health to rural village self-protection techniques in Burma. (*SOF News*, June 2018).

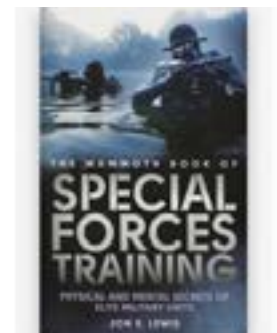
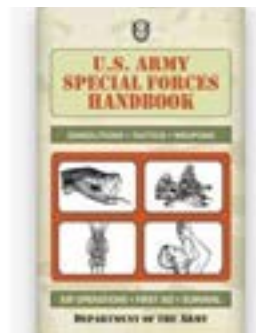
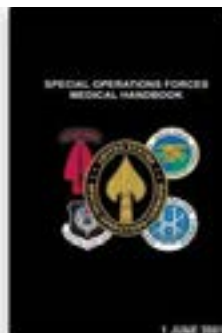
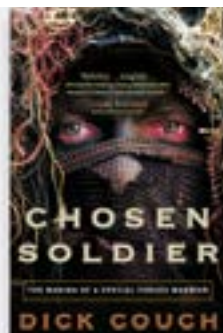
Carstens – Staying on as Ambassador. The Trump-appointed special presidential envoy for hostage affairs, [Roger Carstens](#), is being retained by the Biden administration to continue his role of reuniting Americans who have been detained overseas with their families. Carstens is a retired Special Forces officer.

Silver Star Awarded. Fallen Green Beret James Moriarty was posthumously awarded the Silver Star on Wednesday, January 27, 2021 (his birthday), for his gallantry in which his actions were directly responsible for the survival of another Green Beret. His family accepted the reward. On November 4, 2016 three Special Forces NCOs of the 5th SFG [were killed in Jordan](#).

ARSOF News (cont)

Scroll or Tab? The discussion about the term “Ranger” is still ongoing in the media. The controversy was sparked by a [Salon article](#) that criticized Senator Tom Cotton for saying that he was a U.S. Army Ranger in his campaign literature. Other media outlets (*Newsweek*, etc.) piled on with the same message. Cotton was not assigned to the 75th Ranger Regiment but he is a Ranger School graduate. Some observers say that the *Newsweek* and *Salon* articles appear to be political attacks to discredit a conservative Senator. It was noted by some media watchers that *Newsweek* edited a [2015 story about female Army Rangers](#) to conform to the information presented about Tom Cotton. One retired officer to [weigh in on the topic](#) is BG James Nixon (Ret) – a former commander of 75th Ranger Regiment. (*Hugh Hewitt Show*, transcript and audio, Jan 25, 2021). Col (Ret) Leland Liebe (former J2 for SOCSOUTH and Ranger School graduate) also [provides his thoughts](#). And then there is the U.S. Army Ranger Association that has provided their stance on the subject in [“Who Is a Ranger?”](#)

20th SFG Evaluation Event. Competitors competed for a number of prizes in an event the provided some [physical fitness competition](#). The event participants took part in push-ups, sit-ups, pull-ups, a run, and a march at the Haw Ridge Trailhead, in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. The event was open for people ages 18 through 35. In addition to offering a chance to compete some of the participants were ‘looked over’ for [possible recruitment](#) into the 20th Special Forces Group. (*Oak Ridger*, Jan 29, 2021).



AFSOC

USAF SERE Training. The United States Air Force is looking to push more students through the Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape instructors course as the focus of the U.S. military turns to great power competition. [“Cracking the Code”](#), *Air Force Magazine*, February 19, 2021.

Role Player for SOF Exercise Enjoys His Time. An Air Force Airman recently had the opportunity to take part in a special operations force exercise. Read more in [“Best Job I Every Had”](#), by Airman 1st Class Marcus Storer, 27th Special Operations Wing, February 17, 2021.

AFSOC Cyber Squadron Initiative. Air Force Special Operations Command hosted a Mission Defense Team Conference in early February that focused on identifying the organic cyber capabilities needed to protect missions against threat in, through, and from cyberspace. [“AFSOC Cyber Squadron Initiative: Arming for the 21st century battle”](#), by 1st Lt. Melissa Crisotomo, 919th SOW, February 17, 2021.

AFSOC and Agile Combat Employment. An experiment is underway to see if AF Special Operations Command can [successfully generate](#) small, deployable teams of multi-capable Airmen to better align with the Air Force’s agile combat employment model. (*Air Force Magazine*, Feb 17, 2021).

AFSOC C-145 Skytruck AC’s in Kenya. In 2009 US Air Force Special Operations Command acquired 18 [C-145A Skytruck](#) / Combat Coyotes. These SOF aircraft are used around the world for infiltration, exfiltration, resupply, and other missions. In 2015 AFSOC announced it was retiring eleven of the C-145A aircraft. Since then the (retired) planes have found (or are promised) their way to Kenya, Estonia, Nepal, and Costa Rica. Read more in [“Kenya receives first C-145 transport aircraft”](#), *Defence Web*, February 11, 2021.

AFSOC Cdr on Armed Overwatch Plane. USSOCOM hopes to be procuring some additional planes in fiscal year 22. The commander of Air Force Special Operations Command, Lt. Gen. James Slife, provided a recent update. Read [“Special ops still bullish on new armed overwatch plane”](#), *Defense News*, February 16, 2021. See also [“New Plane Key to Special Ops Vision for Africa, General Says”](#), *Defense One*, February 16, 2021.

AFSOC Officer Assignments. Brig. Gen. Steven G. Edwards will be assigned as chief of staff, Headquarters U.S. Air Forces Europe and Air Forces Africa, Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Edwards is currently serving as director, strategic plans, programs and requirements, Air Force Special Operations Command, Hurlburt Field, Florida. Brig. Gen. (select) Justin R. Hoffman will be assigned as director, strategic plans, programs, and requirements, Headquarters Air Force Special Operations Command, Hurlburt Field, Florida. Hoffman is currently serving as director, legislative affairs, U.S. Special Operations Command, The Pentagon, Washington, D.C.



AFSOC News (cont)

Training to be one of the Air Force Elite. Logan Nye describes the training events Air Force combat controllers undergo to become qualified. After basic training they attend a two-week screening course. Those selected go on to the Combat Control Operator Course, Airborne School, Basic Survival School, Combat Control School, Special Tactics Advanced Skills Training, Military Free Fall Parachutist School, Combat Divers School, and Underwater Egress Training. Read a description of each course in [“Here’s what training is like for the Air Force’s elite”](#), *We Are The Mighty*, January 29, 2021.

919 SOCES Fire Dawgs. The 919th Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron’s fire fighters trains for wartime deployments. Many of the members of the reserve unit are employees of civilian fire and emergency medical services departments – so their skills are very up to date. See [“919 SOW Firefighters on the flightline”](#), 919th SOW, January 29, 2021.



The Combat Controller (CCT) specialists operate in remote, often hostile areas. Acting as a one-man attachment to other special operations teams, these highly specialized Airmen are trained in a wide range of skills, including scuba, parachuting and snowmobiling, as well as being FAA-certified air traffic controllers in order to establish air control and provide combat support on missions all over the globe. Learn more at the link below.

<https://www.airforce.com/careers/detail/combat-control>

MARSOC News

IW School for Marines. Nathaniel Lambert, a Marine Corps officer, argues that the Marine Corps should establish an Irregular Warfare School that seeks to institutionalize the experience gained during the last two decades. Read [“Fighting Dirty: How the Marines Can Sustain Versatility and an Irregular Warfare Edge Through a Dedicated School”](#), *Small Wars Journal*, February 3, 2021.



NSW News

Retirement of the Mk Vls? One of the Navy's smaller combat vessels could see a short service life. The twelve [riverine and littoral craft](#) could be moth-balled in the coming years. Read [more here](#). (*The WarZone*, Feb 15, 2021).

“Make Your Bed” – Children’s Edition. Retired Admiral (and SEAL) William McRaven continues to be in the news. He has [another book](#) out for younger audiences entitled *Make Your Bed: Little Things That Can Change Your Life ... and Maybe the World*. The former USSOCOM commander is enjoying his ‘second’ career as a book author. (*USA Today*, Feb 15, 2021).

Navy’s Search and Rescue School. Brandon Webb, a former Navy SEAL, started out his Navy career as a member of the SAR community. Read his [account of going through the SAR training](#). (*SOFREP*, Feb 3, 2021).

1st Navy SEAL Passes Away. A man that some recognize as ‘[the first Navy SEAL](#)’ has died. Harry Beal died at [the age of 90](#). He entered the Navy in 1948 and became part of the underwater demolition team in 1955. According to many newspaper accounts he was the first person to volunteer for the U.S. Navy SEALs.

Navy Patrol Boats and SEALs. An informative article about some of the [legacy small boats](#) that SEALs have used in the past for training and operations. (*Naval News*, Jan 30, 2021).

SEAL Training Area Approved. A number of state parks in Washington state have been approved for Navy SEAL training by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. The approval came in a 4-3 vote. There were some opponents to the training concept. One concerned citizen said that the proposal didn’t fit the state parks’ core values of preservation, public enjoyment, excellence, transparency and kindness. See [“Navy gets approval for state park training”](#), *Peninsula Daily News*, January 30, 2021.

SOF History



Reliving the Parachute Jump into Normandy on D-Day. Mitch Utterbak, a retired Special Forces officer, spent one summer attending a ‘civilian’ jump school in Frederick, Oklahoma. The World War II Airborne Demonstration Team’s jump school is a nonprofit living history organization. They run a nine-day jump school that replicates one conducted during World War II – right down to the C-47 Skytrain – Boogie Baby. Read Mitch’s account in [“Jumping Into the Past With the World War II Airborne Demo Team”](#), *Air & Space Magazine*, December 2020.

Story of Ola Mize – MoH Recipient and SF Officer. One of the legends of the Special Forces community is Colonel Ola L. Mize – a Medal of Honor recipient who died at the age of 82 in 2014. Read an account of his life in [“The Story of Sergeant Ola. L. Mize, U.S. Army, Korea, Medal of Honor”](#), Special Operations Association, February 20, 2021.

MACV-SOG. During the Vietnam War, the US created a [highly classified unit](#) that still influences modern special operations. (*Business Insider*, Feb 9, 2021).

Interview – John Stryker Meyer. A former Special Forces NCO who served a total of 19 months during the Vietnam War in the top secret Military Assistance Command Vietnam – Studies and Observation Group (MACV-SOG) is [interviewed about his experiences](#). (*The Falmouth Enterprise*, Feb 12, 2021).

Ukrainian Resistance Through History. A document published by the U.S. Army in 1957 provides some interesting reading. Originally classified SECRET, the document has been [released in a sanitized version](#). Read Resistance Factors and Special Forces Areas Ukraine – posted in the ‘Reading Room’ of the Central Intelligence Agency. PDF, 219 pages.

Maj. Gen. Bargewell. With the Vietnam War heating up, Eldon Bargewell enlisted in the Army in 1967, volunteered for Special Forces training, and then deployed to Southeast Asia. He then volunteered for MACV-SOG. He received his commission in 1972 and later would serve with the newly established Delta Force. Eventually he would retire in 2006. Read the story of his life and career in [“Major General Eldon Bargewell, a Special Operations Legend”](#), *SANDBOXX*, February 8, 2021.

SOE – Polish Section. Read up on the Polish section of the Special Operations Executive. Its members parachuted into Poland in World War II after training in the United Kingdom. Read [“Audley End House, the secret agent ‘finishing school’”](#), *Saffron Walden Reporter*, February 15, 2021.

USS Grayback. This U.S. Navy submarine carried strategic missiles but also had the capability to deliver naval special operations personnel to the coast of North Vietnam. Halfway through its Navy career the sub was modified to carry troops and swimmer delivery vehicles (SDVs). Read [“The Oddly Shaped USS Grayback Was a Cold War Submarine Like No Other”](#), *The Drive*, February 10, 2021.

SOF History (cont)

“Wild Bill” Donovan – RIP. On this date – February 8, 1959 – William Donovan passes away. He was an intelligence officer, diplomat, and served as head of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during World War II. He received some of the U.S.’s highest awards. The Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, the Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star, and Purple Heart. The OSS was the predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency and U.S. Army Special Forces. [Wikipedia bio](#).

Battle of Lang Vei – 6 Feb 1968. A Special Forces detachment’s camp was overrun by North Vietnamese forces. The battle featured the first use of armor by the NVA in the conflict. Of the 24 Green Berets, 7 were KIA and 3 were captured by the enemy. Read [“After Action Report Battle of Lang Vei”](#), 5th SFG, 22 February 1968, PDF, 41 pages, posted on the Defense Technical Information Center ([dtic.mil](#)).

Bryant Hall to be Re-dedicated. A building well-known to members of the SF community will be re-dedicated in February 2021. The hall was named in honor of [SFC William M. Bryant](#) – a Medal of Honor recipient who died in South Vietnam in March 1969 while serving with the 5th Special Forces Group. The six story building was [originally dedicated](#) in his honor in June 1973.

Confederate Rangers and Captured Generals. An audacious rebel raid into Union territory during the Civil War netted two distinguished Union general officers. [“Looking Back 1865: How Cumberlanders Saw McNeill’s Rangers Raid”](#), *Cumberland Times-News*, January 25, 2021.

British Resistance Networks – WWII. A video provides some history about the Auxiliary Units that would resist a German occupation of Britain. The 46-minute long film tells the story about Churchill’s secret resistance army. There were over 5,000 auxiliary units established in the early 1940s. The video is titled [“Welcome to Hitler’s Britain”](#). An introduction to the video is provided by Alan Malcher, a military historian and defence journalist (Jan 26, 2021).

1st Ranger Battalion. On January 31, 1974 the first battalion-sized Ranger unit since World War II was activated. 1st Ranger Battalion 75th Infantry was formed to be an elite, light, and very proficient infantry unit.

6th Ranger Battalion. On January 30, 1945 a combined force of 6th Ranger Battalion, Alamo Scouts, and Philippine guerrillas rescued over 500 prisoners of war at the Cabanatuan POW camp in the Philippines. Read a detailed account in [“Rescue at Cabanatuan”](#), *Veritas*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 2018.

“Ballad of the Green Beret”. 55 years ago (Jan 30, 1966) Barry Sadler [performed this song](#) on television on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. SSG Sadler served with 7th Special Forces Group as an SF medic. It was the number 1 song for several weeks in 1966.

Tet Offensive. In late January 1968 the North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong launched a country-wide offensive that caught U.S. and South Vietnamese troops by surprise. U.S. special operations personnel were active participants in this months-long battle and several lost their lives. Several Special Forces camps were besieged and a few were overrun.

Dissecting Operation Eagle Claw. The attempt to rescue 52 hostages held captive in the American Embassy in Tehran, Iran in 1980 was aborted as a result of mechanical failures with the helicopters. Edward Chang digs into the circumstances of the helicopter failures and says “What if?”. Read more in [“How the Iran Hostage Rescue Was Supposed to Go Down If It Hadn’t Ended Early in Disaster”](#), *The Drive War Zone*, January 28, 2021.

Desert Storm History



Photo: Air Force SOF conducted the first rescue of Operation Desert Storm when an MH-53J Pave Low from the 20th SOS rescued a downed USN F-14 pilot deep within Iraq's borders. In this photo, U.S. Navy Lt. Devon Jones, left, running towards the Pave Low, piloted by U.S. Air Force Capt. Thomas J. Trask.

Thirty Years Ago. The 30-year anniversary of Operation Desert Storm has arrived.

Origins of the Gulf War? James Wharton provides a British perspective on the events that took place 30 years ago that brought about conflict with Iraq. Read ["What Caused the Gulf War?"](#), Forces.net, January 15, 2021.

Air Campaign. In the early morning of January 17, 1991 the United States and other Coalition forces commenced an air campaign designed to destroy the Iraqi Air Force, its air defense network, command and control network, and other strategic targets. Almost 3,000 aircraft took part in the air campaign. Once the strategic targets were hit and air superiority was acquired the air attack on tactical units on the ground near the Saudi – Kuwaiti border began. By early February the air campaign's focus had shifted to attacking Iraq's ground forces in preparation for a ground assault by coalition forces into Kuwait and Iraq. Special operations elements began to infiltrate into Kuwait and Iraq.

SOF and the Air Campaign. SOF air units took part in the air campaign – both rotary and fixed wing aircraft providing vital support. Special Forces units provided Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) support from various air bases in Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations. In addition, an element of the 10th Special Forces Group attached to Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) provided CSAR support from bases in Turkey (Incirlik, Batman, and Diyarbakir).

Podcast – Analysis in Combat: The Story of Desert Storm. In 1991 22 CNA analysts and field representatives deployed to the Persian Gulf to provide support to the military. They served on Navy ships, Marine Corp forward bases, and Joint command centers. They tell their stories in Episode 78 a CNA who deployed with the Navy discusses his role in the conflict. Center for Naval Analysis (CNA), January 13, 2021, 35 mins.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/cna-talks/id1198761728>

Things That Keep SOF PAOs Busy

More SOF News – But in a Bad Way. The last few months have seen some tragic events take place in the special operations community. Many of these events have put the SOF community in an extremely bad light and have no doubt kept the SOF public affairs officers busy into the evening.

7th SFG(A) Soldier Pled Not Guilty to Murder Charges. Sgt. 1st Class Duke Webb, a member of the 7th Special Forces Group based at Eglin AFB, FL, [pled not guilty to charges of first-degree murder](#) and attempted first-degree murder. His appearance was via video from the Winnebago County, Illinois, jail for his arraignment. His next court appearance is scheduled for March 30, 2021. Three people were killed and three wounded in a shooting at an Illinois bowling alley and bar. (*NWF Daily News*, Feb 19, 2021)

Green Beret Seeks Halt to Extradition. The lawyers for Michael Taylor, a former Green Beret who served with 10th and 11th Special Forces Group, have sent a letter to the new Secretary of State (Anthony Blinken) asking that [extradition to Japan be halted or postponed](#). The former Special Forces NCO is alleged to have assisted in the escape from Japan of Carlos Ghosn – a high-level executive in the auto industry – who was under indictment in Japan and on ‘house arrest’. Taylor’s lawyers contend that their client should not be prosecuted as there is no law against assisting in a ‘bail jump’ and that the Japanese prison conditions are inhuman. (*Reuters*, Feb 17, 2021). The lawyers have [filed another appeal](#) to prevent the extradition of their client to Japan. Taylor is accused of assisting with the escape of former Nissan Motor Co. Chair Carlos Ghosn out of Japan. (*Army Times*, Feb 1, 2021).

Impending Extradition of Former Green Beret to Japan. U.S. Army Special Forces veteran Michael Taylor and his son will soon be handed over to Japan after the U.S. State Department approved their extradition. It is alleged that they were involved in the escape of Carlos Ghosn from Japan. Ghosn is a former Nissan and Renault chief executive who is now in Lebanon. Critics say that Ghosn would not receive a fair trial in Japan and that the case against him was weak. U.S. prosecutors say the Taylors helped Ghosn flee Japan on December 29, 2019 – hidden in a box on a private jet to Turkey. He then took a flight from Turkey to Lebanon. The lawyers representing the Taylors have argued that there is no law in Japan for helping someone “bail jump” and that they would face the prospect of relentless interrogations and torture in Japan. Mike Taylor served with the 10th and 11th Special Forces Group. He served with the 10th SFG in Lebanon. After his service with Special Forces he spent a career in the security industry and was a commentator on Middle East affairs for many years on various news media outlets. See [“U.S. judge allows extradition of two men accused of aiding Ghosn escape”](#), *Reuters*, January 28, 2021.

Atlantic Diving Supply – In the News Once Again. A business that was ranked as the 24th largest federal contractor in fiscal year 2019 with more than \$ 3 billion in sales seems to be able to get Pentagon contracts under the small business contracting system. Atlantic Diving Supply (ADS) was a small outfit that started out as a dive shop near Virginia Beach. ADS has strong ties to the special operations community and works with other firms tied to other members of the special operations community – many from the Navy’s elite Special Warfare Development Group. Read more in [“How a ‘Small Business’ Kingpin Wins Billions in Defense Contracts”](#), *Project on Government Oversight*, February 18, 2021.

Alaska Family Seeks Answer in Shooting on SEAL Base. The family of a man who was fatally shot by at a Navy training base in Alaska by a Naval Special Warfare guard is looking for more information on his death. The shooting [took place in June 2020](#) at the Naval Special Warfare Detachment Kodiak. (*Navy Times*, Feb 16, 2021).

‘MARSOC 3’ to Face Trial. Two Marine Raiders and a Navy corpsman from the 3rd Marine Raider Battalion are facing trial on charges that include involuntary manslaughter and negligent homicide. The charges stem from an incident on New Year’s Day 2019 and the death of a former Green Beret on a contract assignment in Iraq. The trials [are scheduled](#) for March and April 2021. (*The Daily News*, Jan 25, 2021).

SOF and Great Power Competition



GPC



Canadian SOF and GPC. For the last two decades Canadian special operations forces have been focused on counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. During this period SOF has been considered the ‘force of choice’. The emergence of great power competition (GPC) is changing SOF’s role. Some national security observers associate GPC with open conflict with Russia, China, and others – and the associated investment in big ticket items such as ships, aircraft, and tanks. However, SOF may have an even more significant role in GPC than it had in CT / COIN campaigns. A recent paper provides the details. Read [“Special Operations Forces in Great Power Competition”](#), by Colonel Kevin Stringer and H. Christian Breede, *Insights*, Volume 1, Issue 2, Kingston Consortium on International Security, February 2021. For more on this topic [listen to an episode](#) of *The Politics of Special Forces*.

China – and Why You Should Protect Your DNA. The National Counterintelligence and Security Center (NCSC) is warning Americans that the People’s Republic of China (PRC) has been legally and illegally collecting massive amounts of data about the DNA of American citizens. Read a [five-page article](#) (PDF) about China’s history of DNA exploitation and the implications for privacy and U.S. national security. (*NCSC Factsheet*, Feb 2021).

China’s New Enemy? The uptick in China’s assertiveness on the global scene has caught the attention of jihadist movements like al-Qaeda, ISIS, and others. This could mean trouble down the road for Chinese interests around the world. The jihadist realm as well as other non-jihadist groups are now viewing Chinese economic and military activity as intertwined and part of an expansionist grand strategy. Read more in [“Jihadist Perceptions of a Rising Superpower”](#), by Lucas Webber, *Small Wars Journal*, February 21, 2021.

Russia – Still Busy In Ukraine’s East. Russian and proxy forces are continuing their operations along the frontlines in the [Donbas region](#) of Ukraine. The primary tactics appear to be the use of snipers. See [“Russia Calibrating Low-Intensity War in Ukraine’s East”](#), by Vladimir Socor, *Real Clear Defense*, February 19, 2021.

A Russian Strategy Needed by Europe. Russia’s aggressive policies towards its neighbors has solidified the European states toward a common goal of containment. Although there are a mix of European leaders – some seeking engagement while others want to continue containment – there is a more broad convergence of views within the European Union on Russia. However, Europe needs to refine its strategy to contain Putin’s malign influence. [“The Russia strategy Europe needs”](#), *The Strategist*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, February 22, 2021.

Russia in CAR. Violence is intensifying in the Central African Republic at the same time that Russia is expanding its military and diplomatic involvement in the conflict. Read [“Russia’s Strategy in the Central African Republic”](#), by Samuel Ramani, *RUSI Commentary*, February 12, 2021.

Russia and Cyber. Marius Kristiansen and Njaal Hoem, two Norwegian Army officers, explain how Russia has implemented cyber as an integral part of its strategic framework, and demonstrated its effectiveness in the attainment of political objectives. They argue that NATO needs to reassert itself in the cyber domain. Read [“Russian Cyber Strategy”](#), *Small Wars Journal*, February 14, 2021.



A Belgium special operations sniper takes aim at a target. (2018)

“The Russo-Georgian War: Russian Influence”. Four PSYOP NCOs and an editor provide the history of Russian influence efforts and activities during the [Russian-Georgian conflict](#). Posted on *Small Wars Journal*, Feb 14, 2021.

Rethinking China Strategy. The Pentagon is trying to balance the threats from China, Russia, Iran, and terrorism. This is happening in a time of leaner Pentagon budgets. The five-side building is in the middle of a “global posture review” which should determine how to prioritize resources. Read more in [“Pentagon rethinking how to array forces to focus on China”](#), *Military Times*, February 16, 2021.

Russians in Karabakh. The 44-day war between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the fall of 2020 has ended – and Russia has positioned itself within the disputed territories as a ‘peacekeeping’ force. Some observers note that the Russian troops are likely the foundation of a Russian protectorate in this region of the world. Read [“Russian ‘Peacekeeping’ in Karabakh: Old Model, New Features, Mission Creep”](#), by Vladimir Socor, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, January 21, 2021.

The Annexation of Belarus? Moscow’s current efforts to turn Belarus into a platform for Russia’s armed forces are accompanied by moves to accelerate economic integration that could amount to a soft annexation. See [“Is Russia slowly annexing Belarus in plain sight?”](#), *Atlantic Council*, February 10, 2021.

Building Partner Capacity is GPC. Phil Reynolds, a scholar at the Center for Futures Studies at the University of Hawaii and book author, argues that there is a very real deterrent in strengthening small partners quickly and effectively. He maintains that BPC funds should be used for their intended purpose and not for the purchase of expensive military equipment. Read his essay in [“Building Partner Capacity is Great Power Competition: The Future of 333 Funds”](#), *Small Wars Journal*, February 6, 2021.

Update to NDS Needed. The strategic perspective of the 2018 National Defense Strategy correctly identified the threats posed by the Chinese and Russians and the shift needed to counter those threats. However, it did not identify the full scope of GPC and did not place enough emphasis on the cyber, political, and economic domains. Clementine Starling and Matthew Crouch tell us more in [“How the US can regain the advantage in its next National Defense Strategy”](#), *Atlantic Council*, February 3, 2021.

Germany Drawdown on Hold. The reduction of troops strength in Germany [is being reviewed](#) by the Pentagon. The relocation of over 12,000 troops was announced last summer. (*Defense News*, Feb 3, 2021).

Information Operations (IO)

Russia, China, and Estonia – Influence Activities. The Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service (Valisluureamet) has published its annual report entitled *International Security and Estonia 2021*. The 82-page PDF highlights the security issues of Estonia – with great attention paid to its big neighbor – Russia. The report also pays some notice to the activities of China as well. Prevalent through the paper is the use of ‘influence activities’ by both Russia and China.

<https://www.valisluureamet.ee/pdf/raport/2021-ENG.pdf>

GRU and PSYOP. A recent report examines the use of psychological warfare by Russia's GRU. The [report](#) (111 pages, PDF) centers on reports translated from Russia that detail how psychological and information operations were conducted at the tail-end of the Cold War. Read Aquarium Leaks. *Inside the GRU's Psychological Warfare Program*, Free Russia Foundation, December 7, 2020.

Iranian IO Targets US. In the past few years Iran has become increasingly sophisticated and active in online communities targeting the American public. “How to Understand Iranian Information Operations”, *Lawfare Blog*, February 19, 2021.

Russia, Ukraine, Hybrid War, and Tweets. The Russian Federation has exploited the growing importance of social media platforms to diplomacy. This is especially true in the case of Crimea and Ukraine. Read [“Russia's Hybrid War in Ukraine: Historical Revisionism and Twiplomacy”](#), *Small Wars Journal*, February 3, 2021.

China, Hollywood, and Info War. Ziva Dahl describes how China uses movies to burnish its image and advance its ideological worldview. The manipulation of cinema (including the U.S. market) has been an explicit part of Beijing's media warfare strategy for years. Hollywood has been pliable to China's concerns. [“China uses Hollywood in its Information Warfare Campaign”](#), *Newsweek*, February 3, 2021.

Report – Chinese Media in Australia. There are persistent efforts by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to engage with and influence Chinese language media in Australia. Activities such as disinformation, surveillance, and influence activities are occurring daily. Read a [96-page report](#) entitled *The Influence Environment: A survey of Chinese-language media in Australia*, International Cyber Policy Centre of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Policy Brief Report No. 42/2020, December 2020, PDF.



Commentary



CA Identity. Wyatt Huges, a Civil Affairs officer, argues for the development of a Civil Affairs creed that will help establish a clear identity for the CA community. Read [“Developing the Civil Affairs Identity”](#), *Eunomia Journal*, The Civil Affairs Association, February 19, 2021.

Leadership and Organizational Culture. An essay that examines the role of different types of people within an organization. The “moral multipliers” (20%), “organizational insurgents” (10%), and “influenceable intermediate” (70%) all contribute to an organizations culture (and effectiveness). Leadership should isolate the organizational insurgents by investing their time with the moral multipliers. Read [“How to Wage a Counterinsurgency Against Organizational Culture”](#), by Benjamin Ordiway (CA officer), *From the Green Notebook*, February 20, 2021.

CA and Remote Advise and Assist Opns. The US military footprint worldwide is being reduced at the same time that the political will to assume risk on US military operations has decreased. However, one method to continue to conduct operations is through Remote Advise and Assist (RAA) methodology. While the effectiveness of RAA is less than that of a personal presence it still carries some benefits. Read more on how a Civil Affairs Team can still achieve its objectives with a host-nation counterpart from afar in [“Partnered MDMP: Achieving Shared Objectives Through Remote Advise and Assist Operations”](#), *Eunomia Journal*, The Civil Affairs Association, February 21, 2021.

Return of the Irish Guerrilla. Roberg Gilbey, in a three part series, provides the rationale for a reforming of the Irish Reserve Defense Forces to include an Irregular Reserve Force as part of an Irish [Resistance Operating Concept](#) (ROC). This would follow the steps that other countries (for example Sweden and Estonia) are taking to deter and defend against an aggressive foreign force. The ROC has been introduced in recent years by Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) and many European countries. Read [part 1](#), [part 2](#), and [part 3](#) of “Return of the Irish Guerrilla”, *Irish Defence Forces Officer’s Club*, Jan – Feb 2021.

IW and Conventional Warfare Capabilities. Charles Barham, a retired Army O6 and USCENTCOM analyst, believes that the DoD must strike a balance between resourcing conventional and irregular warfare capabilities. He worries that the US government is at risk of under-resourcing DoD’s capability to effectively engage in competition short of armed conflict. He writes “IW represents the best set of capabilities DoD and the USG can employ to win in the competitive space as part of great power competition”. Read his essay – [“Resourcing Irregular and Conventional Warfare Capabilities”](#), *Real Clear Defense*, February 10, 2021.

Iran and Going Irregular. A U.S. Army Special Forces officer argues that US policy toward Iran should be recalibrated. The last four years the US has had an aggressive approach with Iran – pressuring it via economic, overt military action, and rhetoric. The intent for this policy was to modify Iranian behavior in the region – but it has failed. Alex Deep believes that an irregular warfare campaign would be a more effective means to change Iran’s behavior. Read [“A Super-Max Failure and the Case for Going Irregular: Recalibrating US Policy Toward Iran”](#), *Modern War Institute at West Point*, January 29, 2021.

Books, Reports, and Publications

CTC Sentinel. The February 2021 issue has been posted by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. Articles about al-Qa'ida's next (possible) emir, the Boogaloo movement, a case study of the November 2020 Vienna terrorist attack, and terrorist groups in and around Pakistan.

<https://ctc.usma.edu/february-2021/>

UN Special Forces Manual. The *United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Military Unit Manual on Special Forces* is a guide and reference for UN commanders and staff deployed in peacekeeping operations. There have been instances where UN Special Forces have deployed to peacekeeping operations around the world – including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Sudan, and Mali. This [manual](#) is an attempt to enhance the preparation, operational readiness, and efficiency of UN Special Forces. United Nations, January 2015, PDF, 85 pages.

“Carrying the Gun” Newsletter. There are a lot of newsletters that arrive in the inbox of the SOF News Editor. These provide some of the information that is aggregated into our newsletters and posts. One of the more interesting ones is [“Carrying the Gun”](#). Give it a try.

Book – *The Hitler Progeny*. Book author (and former Green Beret) Steve Dimodica has a new book out. *The Hitler Progeny* is set in the current day. “Europe is at a political crossroads and the German people are about to go to the polls. There is growing dissent within the EU, due mostly to the immigration problem and the Schengen program. Some assassinations take place and the blame initially points to a Middle Eastern nation. Yet there are rumors of the involvement of a domestic neo-Nazi organization led by a suspected descendant of Adolf Hitler. An American intelligence agent goes into deep cover to determine if the claims are true. Available at [Amazon.com](#).

Book Excerpt: *The Daughters of Kobani*. Gayle Tzemach Lemmon, book author and adjunct senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, has a new book out about an all-female militia faced off against Islamic State fighters in the town of Kobani, Syria. It is the story of the women of the Kurdish militia that, with the support of U.S. special operations forces, helped to play a central role in the neutralization of the Islamic State in Syria. Read an [excerpt of the book](#) in an article posted in *Army Times*, February 16, 2021.

“The Force”. A book published in 2019 by author David Saul is the topic of this book review. *The Force: The Legendary Special Ops Unit and WWII's Impossible Mission*. [Review is published](#) in *Studies in Intelligence*, Vol 64, No. 3, June 2020, posted on CIA website. The reviewer, J.R. Seeger, is a retired CIA paramilitary officer and frequent reviewer of books.

ADP 3-05 Audiobook – Army Special Operations. The Army is making it easy to stay abreast of doctrine. Now you can listen to audio and learn doctrine. The SOF professional may be interested in ADP 3-05, Army Special Operations (July 2019). This publication provides a broad understanding of Army special operations and how to achieve unified action by appropriately integrating Army conventional and special operations forces. You can listen [online or download the audio file](#) or read the [print version](#). Army Pubs.

SOF News Monthly Journal – January 2021. Catch up on the new, analysis, and [commentary about special operations forces](#) from the January 2021 time period. (PDF, 62 pages).

Book – *Remote Warfare: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Many Western and non-Western states have shied away from deploying large numbers of their own troops to conflict areas. Instead, they are engaged in ‘remote warfare’ – supporting the frontline fighting of local and regional actors against non-state armed forces through the provision of intelligence, training, equipment, and airpower. A new book published in 2021 by E-International Relations has fourteen chapters by various authors on this topic of ‘remote warfare’. It is free and available for [reading online or download](#) in PDF form, 267 pages.

Books, Pubs, and Reports (cont)

Pub – The Future of Weapons of Mass Destruction: An Update. An updated [report published](#) by the National Intelligence University (NIU) provides detailed information on the shifting roles of the great powers, new pressures on arms control and nonproliferation regimes, roles of chemical and biological weapons, use of financial sanctions as an instrument of nonproliferation, types of delivery vehicles, and other emerging and disruptive technologies with WMD relevance.

(first published in 2014, updated Nov 2020, PDF, 109 pgs).

Pub – Leadership Targeting in CT. This article reviews the existing body of literature concerning terrorist leadership targeting and identifies limitations in the prevailing approaches. The article explains research and policy implications for leadership decapitation in counterterrorism. [“Decapitation Nation: A New Model for Examining Leadership Targeting in Counterterrorism”](#), by Jacob Finn, *International Counter-Terrorism Review*, January 31, 2021, PDF, 80 pages.

Paper – “Fighting ISIS in Syria”. The paper analyses Operation Euphrates Shield (OES) [provides lessons](#) learned from the al-Bab Battle, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Feb 2021. Posted on Taylor & Francis Online. OES started with a mixed force of Free Syrian Army, Turkish special forces, and armoured units – the battle presents tactical and operational lessons for militaries on structure and execution of operations against an irregular adversary employing conventional means.

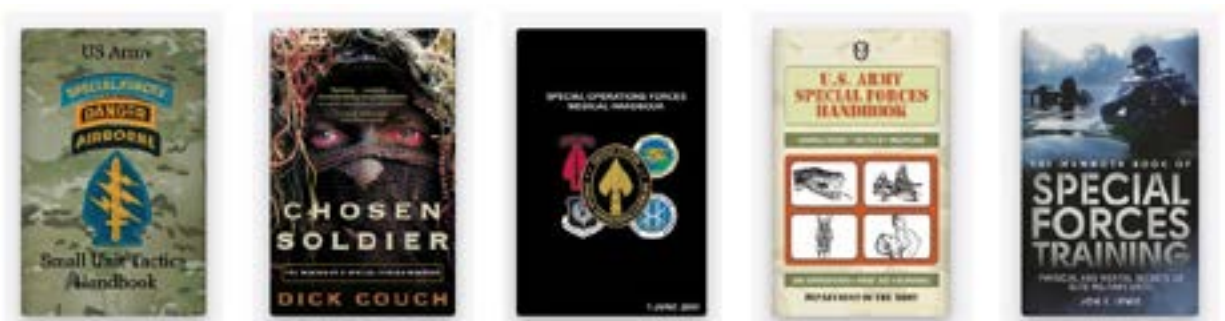
Report – The Air War Against the Islamic State. A host of authors contribute to this 511-page pub that details the [role of airpower in Operation Inherent Resolve](#) (OIR). RAND Corporation, 2021, PDF.

Book Review – Battlegrounds: The Fight to Defend the Free World. H.R. McMaster’s [new book](#) is reviewed by Kyle Staron in *Eunomia Journal*, The Civil Affairs Association, February 3, 2021.

Military Review. The January – February 2021 issue is [now online](#). Some of the topics include China’s maritime militia and fishing fleets, dense urban environments in MDO, sensors in the 2035 battlespace, tactical level open-source intelligence, cultural globalization on soldiering, visual learning tools for soldiers, leadership and military writing, and more. PDF, 140 pages.

Sentinel. Chapter 78 of the Special Forces Association (Southern California) has posted its [latest issue](#) (Feb 2021). Some interesting reading for the SF crowd. John Stryker Meyer provides a perfect example of the Special Forces brotherhood in his profile of Studies and Observations Group (SOG) legend Khanh “Cowboy” Doan and his service with SF during the Vietnam conflict. There is also a book review of *Phoenix Rising* authored by Col Keith Nightingale (Ret). Kenn Miller reviews *The Exile of Sergeant Nen* – the story of a Vietnamese ARVN paratrooper who eventually finds his way to America.

Tip of the Spear. USSOCOMs monthly periodical (Dec 2020). is [available online](#). Some news from SOF events and happenings from around the world. (PDF, 40, DVIDS).



Podcasts, Videos, and Movies

Podcast – *The Background and Framework of the Special Operations Forces*. The Kingston Consortium on International Security has a ten part limited series entitled *The Politics of Special Forces*. [Listen to episode 1](#). (25 mins).

Podcast – Jessica Donati and SF in Afghanistan. Donati, a foreign affairs reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*, joins [podcast host Alistair Taylor](#) to discuss her new book *Eagle Down*. “The role of US special forces in the war in Afghanistan”, *Middle East Focus Podcast*, Middle East Institute, February 19, 2021.

Video – 350th CA Cmd CoC. The [350th Civil Affairs Command](#) (CACOM) took place on December 13, 2021. [Watch the ceremony](#) in this 17 minute clip. Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Pugh takes over from Brig. Gen. Mark Black. DVIDS, Feb 13, 2021.

Video – Mattis and Vickers on Leadership and Strategy. The OSS Society presents a discussion with former Secretary James Mattis and the Honorable Mike Vickers (former SF and CIA). January 28, 2021, 1.5 hours.
<https://vimeo.com/507184513>

Podcast – Spies and Satire with Alex Finley. A former CIA officer Alex Finley is interviewed about her published books, the art of spying, the value of intelligence reports, and more. [Presented by](#) *The Smell of Victory Podcast* of Divergent Options, May 2019, 47 minutes.

Podcast – 1st SFC(A) and SFAC. Maj. Gen. John Brennan, commander of the 1st Special Forces Command, Brig. Gen. Scott Jackson and commander of the Security Force Assistance Command discuss the unique but complimentary roles of 1st SFC(A) and the SFAC. *The Indigenous Approach*, February 11, 2021, 42 minutes.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lprbyi0Ehuk>

Podcast – IW and the Pacific. What role does irregular warfare play in Australian national security strategy? What are the challenges in transitioning from the conflicts of the past two decades to one of great power competition? Listen in for some answers in [“Pacific Gambit: The Role of Irregular Warfare in Australia’s Great Strategic Shift”](#), *Irregular Warfare Podcast*, Modern War Institute at West Point, February 12, 2021, 48 mins.

Video – Innovation Design in Contemporary Defence. Lt. Col. Jeffrey Van der Veer (Netherlands Army) and Colonel Imre Porkolab (Hungarian SOF) take part in a panel event from a 2019 conference about designing in security contexts. Joint Special Operations University (JSOU), February 5, 2021, 46 minutes.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nAkgGcqj7qE>

Podcast – PSYOP and the Shining Path. A PSYWAR podcast recently hosted SF Warrant Officer Jason Heeg who has done some research on the Shining Path’s use of psychological warfare in Peru. Read more about the podcast in [“PSYOP Deep Dive: PSYOP and the Shining Path”](#), *Carrying the Gun*, January 16, 2021.

Podcast – Mitchell on Prioritizing Information Operations. Col (Ret) Mark Mitchell (former SF officer) argues that the Department of Defense [needs an organization](#) that is fully resourced and reports directly to the SECDEF or Under Secretary of Defense and which centrally plans strategic communications and then executes those plans in a decentralized manner. Presented by Information Professionals Association (IPA), Jan 2021, 42 mins.

Video – SOF and Security Cooperation with C4ISR and Cyber. Mr. Andrew Strand discusses previous work in Afghanistan with cyber and automated movement and identification solutions and future implications for SOF security cooperation. *Think JSOU*, Feb 2, 2021, 50 minutes.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-GEWh04S4>

Podcasts, Videos, and Movies (cont)

Video – History of 10th SFG(A). A video production reviewing the beginning of the 10th Special Forces Group highlights the accomplishments of the unit over several decades. Video by 10th SFG(A), DVIDS, Feb 1, 2021, 6 mins.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/video/782199/10th-special-forces-group-airborne-history>

Podcast – SOF and GPC. Tim Ball, a Special Forces officer and fellow in FPRI's National Security Program, presents his views on national security priorities and the role that special operations forces will likely play in great power competition. *Chain Reaction*, January 26, 2021, 25 minutes.

<https://www.spreaker.com/user/foreignpolicyresearchinstitute/jan-26-tim-ball-mixdown>

Video – Psychological Operations – Narrative. Col. Jeremy Mushtare, Dr. Ajit Maan, and LTC (Ret) Brian Steed discuss the concept of narrative and its impact on influence. *The Indigenous Approach*, 1st Special Forces Command, January 29, 2021, 1 hour.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2-m9CHG7sw>

Movie Trailer – Boss Level. A retired special forces officer is trapped in a never ending time loop on the day of his death. This action / Sci-fi film looks to be entertaining (based on the trailer) and comes out in March 2021.

(YouTube, Dec 14, 2020, 2 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=At5FI9wRLII>

Podcast – COIN, Colombia, and Institution Building. Two guests argue that effective US interagency coordination, bipartisan congressional support, and a focus on building institutions and stabilizing the security situation were key to success in Colombia's counterinsurgency efforts against the insurgency. Kevin Whitaker (former US ambassador to Colombia) and Caryn Hollis (DoD official) talk for 42 mins on this topic in "Institution Building as a Counterinsurgency Tool: The Case of Colombia", *Modern War Institute at West Point*, January 29, 2021.

<https://mwi.usma.edu/institution-building-as-a-counterinsurgency-tool-the-case-of-colombia/>



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Guest writers are welcome to submit articles for publishing. Follow the simple and easy guidelines at the above link for more information. A wide range of articles are accepted - to include the topics of special operations news, organizations, training, exercises, and events worldwide. Articles about current conflicts, national security, commentary, and more are welcome as well.



SPECIAL OPERATIONS ASSOCIATION

Unconventional Warriors, The Legacy Endures

The primary mission of the SOA is to unite fraternally, Veterans or members of a branch of the US Armed Forces Special Operations Community who have conducted Special Operations as an operational combat element or provided direct support to that element within an assigned area of operations.

Our members include combat veterans from all wars including WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Panama Grenada, the Balkans, Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan, as well as those from our most recent conflicts in the global war on terrorism.

MEMBER BENEFITS

The SOA Reunion is held in October in conjunction with the Annual Membership Meeting. The reunion, SOAR, fosters an environment for camaraderie and fellowship to strengthen those friendships forged in battle and the opportunity to make new ones. The 4-day event culminates with the annual banquet celebrating our members and honoring our fallen.



We had a special kind of brotherhood. We would have given our lives for each other, and in some cases, we did. -Jim Butler, SOA Founder

Other programs and services include Scholarships, Video History Project, SOA Riders and the POW/MIA Committee working toward a full accounting for missing and unaccounted for personnel.

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Visit the SOA website for detailed information on qualifications, documentation requirements, benefits, and the history of the SOA.

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