



U.S. ARMY JOHN F. KENNEDY
SPECIAL WARFARE CENTER AND SCHOOL
FACT SHEET

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THE SPECIAL FORCES PIPELINE

The **1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne)** at Fort Bragg, N.C., is responsible for all six phases of Special Forces student training, which is referred to as the Special Forces Pipeline. To accomplish this mission, the group divides the responsibility into several of its battalions. The 1st Battalion is responsible for all field training in the SF Pipeline. The 3rd Battalion conducts language training and the 4th Battalion conducts all military occupational specialty (MOS) training, while the Support Battalion conducts the Special Forces Preparation Course.

The **U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School's Noncommissioned Officer Academy**, or NCOA, is responsible for all Army special operations NCO Education System courses, to include Army Common Leader Training. Enlisted students in the Special Forces Pipeline take courses from the NCOA as required by their NCOES needs.

The Special Forces Pipeline requires a commitment of 1-2 years of intensive coursework based on the Soldier's military specialty training. A Soldier is authorized to wear the green beret at the end of Phase IV. Upon successful completion of all six phases of training, the soldier is awarded the Special Forces tab and is assigned to an Operational Detachment – A, or ODA. The six phases include:

- Phase IA – Special Forces Preparation Course
- Phase IB – Special Forces Assessment and Selection
- Phase II – Small Unit Tactics
- Phase III – Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) Specific Training
- Phase IV – Unconventional Warfare Culmination Exercise (Robin Sage)
- Phase V – Language Training
- Phase VI – Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE)

All enlisted soldiers who have not already completed the Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC) must go to Army Common Leader Training (CLT).

In-Service Special Forces Volunteer Prerequisites:

1. U.S. Citizen
2. Male, enlisted/officer volunteer
3. Volunteer for and complete airborne training
4. Minimum GT score of 110; waiverable to 100
5. High school graduate or GED equivalent
6. ENLISTED: Specialist (E-4) through sergeant first class (E-7) / OFFICER: promotable first lieutenant through captain

7. Pass the Special Forces physical
8. Pass a 50-meter swim while wearing the Battle Dress Uniform and combat boots (diagnostic given at SFAS, test upon arrival at SFQC): there is a 2-week swim course offered just prior to SFQC if one fails the diagnostic at SFAS...enlisted only (this 2-week prep course is not mandatory)
9. Pass the APFT with a minimum score of 229 points in the 18-21 year old age group
10. Complete Army CLT before they start Phase II

Initial Accessions Special Forces Prerequisites: Must meet all of the above with the following additions:

1. GT score of 110 or greater (not waiverable)
2. Must be a high school graduate
3. Score an 85 or greater on the Defense Language Aptitude Battery exam

Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC)

Phase IA: Preparation and Conditioning (formally known as Special Forces Preparation Course) 25 days

Support Battalion conducts the SFPC, which is 25 days of physical fitness and land navigation training designed to prepare students for Phase IB: Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS). Both in-service and initial accessions Special Forces recruits attend this training.

Phase IB: Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS): 25 days

Company G, 1st Bn. conducts SFAS training at Camp MacKall, N.C. The SFAS cadre look at nearly 1,800 Special Forces volunteers each year to determine who is suitable for Special Forces training and to determine who may be unable to adapt to the Special Forces environment. Candidates attend SFAS in a temporary duty (TDY) status. Candidates who enter this course find themselves under constant evaluation starting with the day they in-process until the day they out-process.

The SFAS model focuses on student trainability and suitability for service in Special Forces. Teaching, coaching, training and mentoring are important aspects of the program. Land navigation is used as a common medium to judge student trainability. A series of 12 attributes linked to success in the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC) form the basis for evaluating candidate suitability. These attributes include intelligence, physical fitness, motivation, trustworthiness, accountability, maturity, stability, judgment, decisiveness, teamwork, influence, and communications. Though land navigation is an important evaluation tool, other training events such as a one-mile obstacle course, runs, road marches and rappelling are also used to evaluate students.

Special Forces Preparation Course II: 18 days

Students who are selected during SFAS to continue training in the Special Forces Pipeline will next attend the second phase of the Special Forces Preparation Course. Support Battalion also conducts the SFPC II, which is 18 days of training in small unit tactics designed to prepare students for Phase II of the SFQC. Both in-service and initial accessions Special Forces recruits attend this training.

Phase II: Small Unit Tactics: 35 days

All potential students train together regardless of rank. The first few days of SFQC is in-processing, which includes a swim test of 50 meters in full uniform and a combat equipment jump.

Company F of 1st Battalion teaches Phase II of SFQC. Because of the wide diversity of MOSs who volunteer for Special Forces, Phase II trains all students in the basics of infantry small

unit tactics, field craft training and advanced marksmanship. The field training emphasizes squad-size and platoon-size infantry missions. After completing this phase, students move on to their specific training path in Phase III.

Phase III: Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) Skill Training

18A Officer Course: 65 days

Company A, 4th Bn. trains and qualifies officers in the basic skills and knowledge required to perform duties as an ODA commander. This training consists of general subjects, special operations, Special Forces planning (using the military decision-making process), engineer and weapons training, communications and medical training, special reconnaissance, direct action, unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, and counterinsurgency operations.

18B Weapons Sergeant Course: 65 days

Company B, 4th Bn. trains and qualifies NCOs in the basic skills and knowledge required to perform duties as a weapons sergeant on an SFODA. Students become proficient in a wide variety of small arms, antitank weapons, air defense systems, crew-served weapons, and mortars. The cadre focuses on training students with foreign weapons and equipment. This phase concludes with a light infantry, live-fire training exercise.

18C Engineer Sergeant Course: 65 days

Company B also trains and qualifies NCOs in the basic skills and knowledge required to perform duties as an engineer sergeant on an SFODA. These students learn pre-engineering subjects, field construction techniques, field fortifications, land mine warfare (U.S. and foreign mines), bridging, engineer reconnaissance, target analysis, and demolitions. This phase culminates with an engineering field training exercise.

18D Special Forces Medical Sergeants Course: 322 days

Company D, 4th Bn. is responsible for all medical training at the USAJFKSWCS. The Special Forces Medical Sergeants Course consists of the 24-week Special Operations Combat Medic (SOCM) Course and an additional 22-week training cycle that completes the 18D's medical training.

The 24-week Special Operations Combat Medic (SOCM) course is also taught to enlisted Army personnel from the 75th Ranger Regiment, the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) and the 528th Special Operations Support Battalion (Airborne). U.S. Navy SEALs and U.S. Navy personnel supporting Marine Corps Recon units as well as Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) Pararescue personnel also attend the SOCM course.

Although 19 of the 24 weeks of SOCM training is focused on anatomy and physiology and paramedic training, the remaining five weeks cover such military unique subjects as sick call medicine and environmental medicine. A four-day field training exercise in a simulated combat environment culminates the SOCM course. During the SOCM course students receive American Heart Association certification in Basic and Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) as well as certification by the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians at the EMT-Basic and Paramedic levels. Upon graduation, a SOCM is capable of providing basic primary care for his special operations team for up to seven days and is capable of sustaining a combat casualty for up to 72 hours after an injury, as required.

Special Operations Combat Medic students receive clinical training in both emergency pre-hospital and hospital settings. This training is conducted during a four-week deployment to one of

four major metropolitan areas: Richmond, Va.; Tampa, Fla.; St. Petersburg, Fla.; and Jacksonville, Fla.

U.S. Army Special Forces students attend the 46-week Special Forces Medical Sergeants (SFMS) course. Students in this course must successfully complete the 24-week SOCM curriculum before continuing on for an additional 22 weeks of specialized training in medical, surgical, dental, veterinary, laboratory, pharmaceutical and preventive medicine subjects. Upon completion of this course students are trained to function as independent health care providers. In addition to the four weeks of clinical training provided during the SOCM portion of their training, SFMS students receive another four weeks of clinical experience at selected health care facilities throughout the United States. The focus of this training is on honing student skills as independent, general practice, health care providers.

18E Communications Sergeants Course: 105 days

Company E, 4th Bn. trains and qualifies NCOs in the basic skills and knowledge required to perform duties as a communications sergeant on an SFODA. The training focuses on long-range communications and deals with the most sophisticated communications equipment in the Army. Students also train on the less sophisticated equipment they may find in foreign countries. Each student gains proficiency in Morse code; basic electronics; antenna theory and construction; cryptography; installation, operation, and maintenance of various high frequency, very high frequency, and ultrahigh frequency outstation radio systems; basic computers; and Special Forces communications techniques and procedures. This phase culminates with a long-range communications exercise conducted at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma.

Phase IV: Unconventional Warfare Culmination Exercise (Robin Sage): 38 days

Students are again transported to Company F, 1st Bn. at Camp MacKall where they form student SFODAs and put their knowledge and skills to use in the Robin Sage Field Training Exercise (FTX). Robin Sage is a 19-day problem-solving FTX. During this unconventional warfare exercise, the students are required to apply the lessons learned from previous months of Special Forces MOS training and field training. This exercise involves the students, counterinsurgent and guerrilla personnel (other service members), auxiliary personnel, and cadre. This scenario stresses realism because the student SFODAs must train a mock guerilla force in a hostile environment using civilians in the surrounding community as the auxiliary. This exercise ranges over approximately 50,000 square miles. By the conclusion of Robin Sage, the students have been placed in many situations where they were required to use MOS and leadership skills, and their abilities were tested to work in adverse and ambiguous conditions.

Specialized Training:

Phase V: Language Training:

3rd Bn, 1st SWTG (A) is responsible for all language training at the USAJFKSWCS. The Basic Military Language Course (BMLC) is primarily a performance-oriented language course. Students must show proficiency in speaking, listening and reading. The general purpose of the course is to provide each student with the ability to communicate in a foreign language. For successful completion of the course, the student must achieve at least a 70 percent academic average in all four modules, a 0+ or higher on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) in two of the three graded areas (speaking, listening, and reading). The languages are divided into four categories:

Category 1: Spanish, French, and Portuguese (18 weeks, 3 days)

Category 2: German, Indonesian (18 weeks, 3 days)

Category 3: Czech, Persian-Farsi, Polish, Russian, Serbo- Croatian, Tagalog, Thai and Turkish (24 weeks, 2 days)

Category 4: Arabic, Korean and Japanese (24 weeks, 2 days)

Phase VI: Survival Evasion Resistance And Escape (SERE) Course: 19 days

Company A, 1st Bn., conducts the SERE course at Camp MacKall, N.C. The goal of training in survival, evasion, resistance and escape, or SERE, is to teach personnel how to survive if they become separated from their unit; to evade a hostile force and make their way back to friendly forces; and to avoid capture. In the event that Soldiers are captured, SERE training prepares them to resist the enemy's attempts at exploitation, to escape from captivity and to return home with honor.

- *VERITAS ET LIBERTAS* -