

ARSO OF NEXT



A RETURN TO FIRST PRINCIPLES

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By order of the Secretary of the Army:

Raymond T. Odierno
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

Official:

Joyce E. Morrow
Administrative Assistant to the
Secretary of the Army

1505802

Headquarters, Department of the Army



/// FROM THE COMMANDER

After a period of successful but intense transition, it is time to refocus on what is most important to ARSOF: Our people. *ARSOF Next; A Return to First Principles* brings the *ARSOF 2022* vision full circle by defining who we are and where we come from. It reminds us of our principles, which are deeply ingrained in the traits of the ARSOF Soldier, the characteristics of an ARSOF Unit and our Promise to the Nation. It explores our collective shared history, demonstrating that these first principles are not only who we are, but also who we have always been.

ARSOF Next is about similarities; similarities between our ARSOF Soldiers and ARSOF units. The interwoven traits coupled with the unit characteristics generate “One Force, Without Equal.” The U.S. Army Special Operations Command is a force with more than 25 years of history providing the world’s premier special warfare and surgical strike capabilities to protect our nation against its enemies world wide.

On the advent of our 25th anniversary, we sought to do what many thought impossible — rapidly change our organization to adapt and prepare for the future, while maintaining our operational commitment to the geographic combatant commanders. Fiscal year 2015 has been a year of execution, and USASOC can take great pride in the milestones we’ve achieved. For example, we established the 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne)(Provisional), a force of 21,000 that is counted as one of the Army’s divisions. We created the foundation and backbone for SOF operational art and made sound progress in incorporating it into the national defense lexicon. We restored our unconventional warfare focus and deployed revitalized unconventional warfare capabilities in support of geographic combatant commanders and our interagency partners.

I am extraordinarily proud of all that you have achieved over the last two years, but more so of your legacy as warriors. In many ways *ARSOF Next* is a story of recognition that honors these efforts and the people who made ARSOF 2022 a reality. More than this, it is an acknowledgement of the excellence that has been the benchmark of our first 25 years, and a promise to deserve the unbreakable trust of the nation for the next 25 years, and beyond.

“I protect the nation; without fear, without fail, without equal.”

CHARLES T. CLEVELAND
LIEUTENANT GENERAL, USA
COMMANDING



THE FUTURE IS WRITTEN IN OUR PAST

From the Office of Strategic Service's operational groups and the exploits of Filipino guerrillas led by Russell Volckmann in World War II, to the Montagnard Civilian Irregular Defense Groups in Vietnam, to support to counterinsurgency operations in El Salvador, the United States has a rich history of special warfare and surgical strike. Most recently Army Special Operations Forces' storied lineage and unique skill sets were put to the test following the attacks of 9/11. Over the past 14 years, ARSOF warriors have fought on multiple fronts, in surgical strike units carrying out aggressive and successful direct action campaigns and in special warfare units working quietly behind the scenes to build partner capacity, garnering support for host-nation governments and building enduring relationships with partner forces. Regardless of where they fight, they do so operating much in the same way their forbearers did, holding fast to the legacy that has been passed down to them.

The daring exploits of these small units, fighting behind the lines against overwhelming odds, is immortalized in popular culture with photos and news clips of Special Forces Soldiers riding horseback across Afghanistan to oust the Taliban. In reality, these exploits take place in countless countries across the globe. The U.S. Army Special Operations Command's forces are at the tip of the spear in defense of the nation; operating far from the flag pole in complex environments, waging the biggest battle of all: Winning in the Human Domain. As Gen. Ray Odierno, Chief of Staff of the Army, noted when speaking of special operations forces, "We must remain engaged around the world. We must also remember that conflict is a human endeavor, ultimately won or lost in the Human Domain."

To continue winning in that domain, ARSOF must remain true to its first principles, which were defined by the actions of the storied units of World War II — the OSS, the First Special Service Force, the Alamo Scouts, the Jedburghs, the Monuments Men — and were passed down to each successive generation of ARSOF warriors.

ARSOF 2022

For the last two years, the U.S. Army Special Operations Command's future has been guided by the *ARSOF 2022* vision.

ARSOF 2022 focused on the command's tactical units and served as a blueprint for change. It defined the ARSOF narrative by clearly articulating the two forms of special operations — surgical strike and special warfare — while identifying a gap in unconventional warfare as a result of 10 years of counterinsurgency focus. *ARSOF 2022* also acknowledged a lack of capability at the operational level and defined the future operating environment. Further, it set the

commanding general's priorities by defining six concept areas that were required to institute change within the command.

ARSOF 2022 Part II focused on institutional reform and the development of a SOF operational-level capability. It spelled out the complex tasks required to achieve the ARSOF 2022 vision, while providing a method to evaluate and track progress.

Many of the changes were made quickly. Change is never easy and quick change often results in turmoil. Having adapted to large changes in processes and command, ARSOF can now focus on the key to

its success — its people, and live up to the first SOF Truth: People are more important than hardware.

Both *ARSOF 2022* and *ARSOF 2022 Part II* were set in the context of the future operating environment and attempted to predict what the world might look like in the next 10 to 15 years. The ideas articulated in those two publications set in motion changes in USASOC's organizations, processes and operational capabilities. The changes detailed how we fight and the resources we need to fight. The threats we encounter, where we encounter them and how we encounter them become less relevant over time. What remains relevant is that which inspires people to action: Why?

Why does ARSOF fight? Why do ARSOF warriors do the things they do, believe what they believe and have such a unique commitment to the nation? *ARSOF Next: A Return to First Principles* explores the question of "Why?" It does so by defining the characteristics of ARSOF units, the collective attributes of individuals that develop specific traits in ARSOF Soldiers and articulates the ARSOF Promise to the Nation, within the context of a shared, collective history based on

ideals that formed the first special operations units, which have stood the test of time. The ideals that have shaped ARSOF from its beginning and continue to shape it today are the historic first principles.

THE THREAT

Today's ARSOF warrior is faced with threats that are increasingly ideologically based, predicated on hate and extremism. Our enemies target our cognitive and spiritual space in the same way that our former enemies targeted our trucks and planes.

To counter these threats, ARSOF must understand where it came from and who it is as an organization. This self-knowledge and understanding becomes ARSOF's greatest weapon.

Compounding outside ideological threats, USASOC is faced with internal challenges, one of which, collaboration, has improved greatly over the past several years. ARSOF also faces an external crisis of identity fueled by a lack of understanding of who ARSOF is, what the force does and the full range of options and capabilities that ARSOF provides to the nation.

ARSOF NEXT

To address the challenge of collaboration, *ARSOF Next* provides a means of describing what all ARSOF units have in common as a foundational process that matures the profession and evolves the force. As a result, the whole of ARSOF becomes greater than the sum of its parts; creating an organization capable of meeting any challenge, while exceeding the expectations and demands of the nation.

For the external crisis of identity, *ARSOF Next* provides a common language and narrative that explains its function and abilities in an understandable manner; making it apparent to the formations' partners that ARSOF can rise to meet the challenges that our nation is facing and that ARSOF is a key part of the answer. ARSOF's importance doesn't come from its technology, but rather from the character of the men and women who fill its ranks and the unique attributes they possess. These attributes, embodied in each individual, are projected throughout ARSOF; defining the character of the unit, while allowing the force to thrive in the context of the complex and complicated threats it confronts.

Armed with a better understanding of who it is as a force, ARSOF provides the nation with world-class, unequalled special warfare and surgical strike capabilities. As long as the force remains true to its first principles: having the right people, aggregated into amazing teams, rallied behind a unique commitment to the nation, it will succeed.

ARSOF NEXT AT A GLANCE		
THE FIRST PRINCIPLES		
Defined by the actions of the first SOF units and passed down to each generation of ARSOF warriors.		
<p>SOF TRUTHS</p> <p>Humans are more important than hardware.</p> <p>Quality is better than quantity.</p> <p>Special Operations Forces cannot be mass produced.</p> <p>Competent Special Operations Forces cannot be created after emergencies occur.</p> <p>Most Special Operations require non-SOF assistance.</p>	<p>THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ARSOF UNIT</p> <p>The unit culture reflected in the behavior of its people and the meaning people attach to it.</p> <p>Adaptability • Autonomy • Empathy • Expertise</p>	<p>SOF IMPERATIVES</p> <p>Understand the operational environment.</p> <p>Recognize political implications.</p> <p>Facilitate interagency activities.</p> <p>Engage the threat discriminately.</p> <p>Consider long-term effects.</p> <p>Apply capabilities indirectly.</p> <p>Develop multiple options.</p> <p>Ensure long-term sustainment.</p> <p>Provide sufficient intelligence.</p> <p>Balance security and synchronization.</p>
	<p>THE TRAITS OF THE ARSOF SOLDIER</p> <p>The sum of intangible qualities within an individual that develops into a common ethos.</p> <p>Toughness • Audacity • Love</p>	
	<p>THE ARSOF PROMISE TO THE NATION</p> <p>The rally behind a unified commitment to the nation.</p>	
	<p>I PROTECT THE NATION, WITHOUT FEAR, WITHOUT FAIL, WITHOUT EQUAL.</p>	



VISION FOR THE FUTURE

ARSOF 2022 first articulated the USASOC vision for the future.

Popularly known as the “blueprint for change,” it established foundational concepts, detailed the commander’s vision and end state, defined the future operating environment and publicized the results of the commander’s initial assessment. ARSOF 2022 candidly assessed USASOC’s situation in light of more than 10 years of counterinsurgency focus, and described in detail the need to critically review our requirements for the future.

FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS

ARSOF 2022 is built upon four key foundational concepts: 1) a clear command vision and desired end state; 2) the two critical capabilities we provide the nation — *special warfare* and *surgical strike*; 3) an understanding of the operational environment in which ARSOF primarily operates; and 4) an ongoing commander’s assessment.

COMMAND VISION AND END STATE

The USASOC commander’s vision is to “*Provide our nation the world’s premier special operations units, capable of prosecuting the most sensitive special warfare campaigns and executing the most difficult surgical strike operations, while providing seamless and persistent special operations support to joint force commanders worldwide.*” The vision forced the command to consider its global competition, how it develops tactical and operational capabilities for both special warfare and surgical strike to support strategic effects and how to best organize to leverage the capabilities and resident expertise throughout the force.

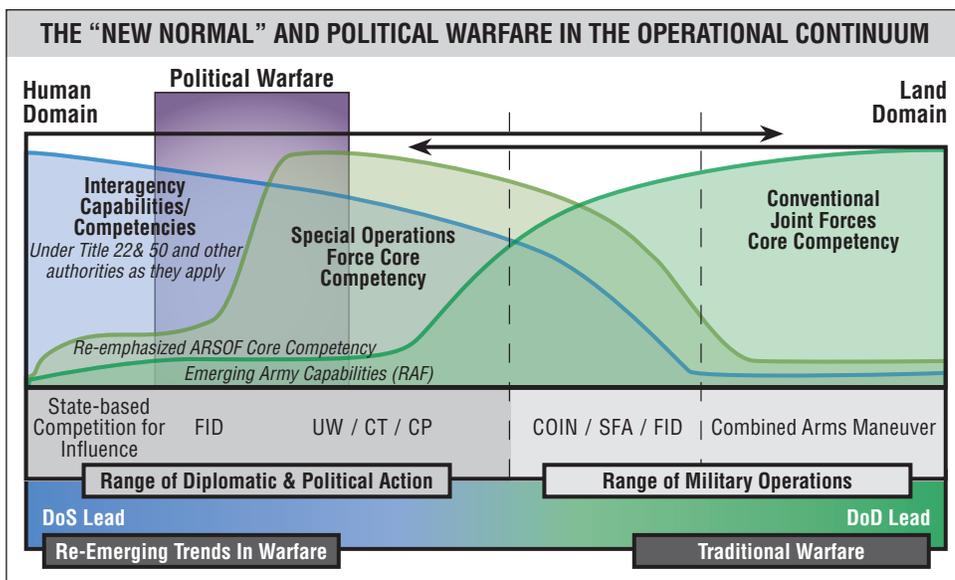
CRITICAL CAPABILITIES

In 2012, Army Doctrine Publication 3-05 *Special Operations* formally redefined the ARSOF narrative as two complementary capabilities: *special warfare* and *surgical strike*. By describing Army special operations in these two different, but mutually supporting forms, USASOC moved closer to a holistic representation of its organization and fully described who its units are to internal and external audiences. The terms *special warfare* and *surgical strike* more accurately describe the force based on its capabilities and enhanced USASOC’s ability to generate, sustain and articulate those capabilities.

ARSOF OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

ARSOF 2022 discussed the future operating environment and framed the future of competition in terms of persistent, emerging and unconventional challenges. It detailed the factors that would influence the way ARSOF operates; geopolitical constraints and a battlespace that contains agile actors in regional, multi-state zones of competition; policy limitations driven by reduced budgets and national war weariness; hostile nation-states with greater capability and greater avarice; and threat networks that are both more sophisticated and maneuverable. Finally, it stressed the importance of nesting future plans with those of national leaders and higher headquarters, with an emphasis on ARSOF’s statutory responsibilities as prescribed by law.

Since this initial discussion, a conceptual exploration of the future operating environment has evolved into an understanding of a world characterized by disorder, scarcity of resources, ecological challenges, toxic ideologies, game-changing technologies, emerging resistance movements and opportunistic competitors employing hybrid warfare capabilities. As the foreseeable future’s “new-normal,” this setting will challenge the effectiveness of traditional forms of power while enabling non-traditional forms. Despite the clear need to effectively engage in



this environment, a reluctance to commit U.S. combat troops is growing.

The United States is facing a strategic inflection point, one which is characterized by an “uncertain strategic security environment framed by diminishing defense resources and an increasing number and variety of potential threats.” Social, political, informational and economic trends in international competition are converging between state and non-state actors and others for superiority over the physical, cognitive, moral security and adequate governance of populations.

These realities will demand new ways of thinking, with unique approaches that broaden strategic options for the U.S. Government. Essential to any new approach is a comprehensive definition of what strategic success looks like in an increasingly disordered world that is punctuated by competitors capitalizing on hybrid-warfare capabilities.

CONCLUSION

ARSOF 2022 called every member of USASOC to “inculcate these changes into the way they do business” and to “move forward in a connected, reasoned manner... in order to face the uncertainty of the next decade and emerge a stronger force.” Two years after *ARSOF 2022* was published, the changes that seemed revolutionary yesterday are now part of how we do business on a daily basis.

COMMANDER'S ASSESSMENT

The initial commander's assessment revealed three specific areas in which USASOC required improvement to better enable seamless application of combat power across the spectrum of conflict: (1) addressing capability gaps; (2) developing SOF at the operational level; and (3) improving coordination, synchronization and integration of SOF at the seams between interagency partners and conventional forces.

In response to the commander's assessment, *ARSOF 2022* introduced six concept areas that became the command's six priorities with associated challenges and proposed solutions. Processes were streamlined and realigned for greater synchronization with both the U.S. Army and the United States Special Operations Command. Additionally, an ARSOF Campaign of Learning was developed and implemented to build and test ideas and concepts that define how ARSOF fights in the future.

ARSOF 2022 PRIORITIES >

INVEST IN HUMAN CAPITAL

USASOC fields a diverse, regionally expert force with the world's best trained and educated special operations Soldiers who are capable of addressing uncertainty.

OPTIMIZE SOF/CF/JIIM INTERDEPENDENCE

USASOC optimizes the force multiplying potential of partnership with the Army and interagency to provide the nation with seamless combat power.

OPERATIONALIZE THE CONUS BASE

Regionally expert forces provide continuous, proactive and responsive support to forward deployed forces.

DEVELOP SOF CAPABILITIES AT OPERATIONAL LEVEL

USASOC forces provide expertise to enable operational-level headquarters in their effort to tie tactical capabilities to regional or national strategies.

FACILITATE SOF MISSION COMMAND

ARSOF has developed and validated flexible, scalable and responsive distributed command and control structures.

OPTIMIZE RESOURCING AND COMMODITY AREAS

USASOC will rebalance its portfolio while getting better, not bigger.



STRATEGIC VISION

While *ARSOF 2022* introduced the blueprint for change, *ARSOF 2022 Part II* discussed results in real terms. It details the studies and concepts that allowed USASOC to continue maturing the ARSOF profession; while providing a progress update on command efforts to reshape the force at the institutional-level and develop new mission command capabilities. *ARSOF 2022 Part II* highlighted changes in the command's approach to doctrine, organization of the USASOC staff and detailed how to improve the force by implementing a strategic vision through an improved strategic planning process.

ARSOF 2022 PROGRESS

In 2014, USASOC continued its effort to mitigate critical capability gaps at the operational level by addressing seams between USASOC, the conventional force and the interagency. While much has been accomplished, continuous improvement, partially summarized here, is critical to USASOC's ability to apply seamless combat power across the full spectrum of conflict.

THE UW GAP

THE SCIENCE OF RESISTANCE

The core science of each military service directly relates to the physical domain in which the force operates. For land forces in particular, this science is predicated on civil engineering, ballistics and physics. Special operations forces, though born from the conventional military, require an education that extends beyond the foundational science of their conventional roots. SOF, although existing in the Land, Sea and Air domains, operates chiefly within the Human Domain. Resistance, which is the core science directly related to the Human Domain, is the human activity that underpins every core SOF task, including unconventional warfare, counterinsurgency, counterterrorism and foreign internal defense.

The SOF imperatives dictate that we not only understand the operational environment, but also that we anticipate and control psychological effects, recognize political implications and master impacts at the tactical, operational and strategic level. Given this, it is imperative that SOF understands the science of our craft. The science of resistance is multi-disciplinary, incorporating elements of sociology, anthropology, history, economics and political science. As the world becomes more sophisticated, ARSOF must stay true to its first principles to remain among the vanguard of the nation's defense by exploring emerging concepts that keep the

force a step ahead of its adversaries and reflect on the unconventional mindset that has always distinguished it.

THE OFFICE OF SPECIAL WARFARE

In *ARSOF 2022*, one of the strategic lines of effort focused on Developing SOF Capabilities at the Operational Level. In *ARSOF 2022 Part II*, the groundwork for this effort was laid through the development of a strategic planning process and the development of the SOF Campaign Plan. These lines of effort further matured throughout 2014, with the creation of The Office of Special Warfare, within the then-U.S. Special Forces Command, what is now the 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne)(Provisional).

The mission of the OSW is to serve as a focal point for all unconventional warfare capabilities, activities and interagency coordination across the SW spectrum.

INSTITUTIONAL REDESIGN UPDATE

HQ USASOC

Over the past year, USASOC took a hard look at how it builds the capabilities required by joint force commanders; identifying the need to more fully integrate special warfare and surgical strike capabilities as well as the need for a more proactive approach in participating in USSOCOM and U.S. Army force-development processes. USASOC internally reorganized and evolved at a pace that matches or exceeds changes in required capabilities.

1ST SPECIAL FORCES COMMAND (A)(P)

ARSOF 2022 identified advantages in consolidating special warfare competencies into a single command focused on operationalizing the CONUS base of special-warfare capabilities and delivering appropriately blended special-warfare and surgical-strike capabilities from each of the various, subordinate elements.

In October 2014, the 1st Special Forces Command (A)(P) became operationally capable, creating a deployable operational-level headquarters. By merging the Army's regionally expert forces (Special Forces, Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations) and the 528th Sustainment Brigade into a single command the 1st SFC(A)(P) more effectively provides training, readiness and oversight to the special warfare units, with immediate and tangible benefits to the theater special operations commands and joint force commanders with campaign-capable support.

By fusing special-warfare capabilities into one entity, training and readiness is further optimized. The 1st SFC (A)(P) will provide the core of a deployable operational command and control node to meet requirements beyond those organic to the TSOC.

CLOSING THE SEAMS SOF-CF INTERDEPENDENCE

In 2014, ARSOF continued to expand SOF/CF Interdependence, Integration and Interoperability initiatives and opportunities. Operations Group Juliet was created within the Mission Command Training Program at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to impact SOF/CF I3 through participation and training in Army Warfighter exercises. Special operations training detachments at the combat training centers are refining and enhancing assessment plans directed at SOF/CF I3. The Special Operations Campaign Artist Program at Fort Leavenworth is creating Army planners capable of developing campaigns that incorporate special operations capabilities at the operational level. SOF Cells at Army Centers of Excellence facilitate the sharing of lessons learned between SOF and conventional forces and development of future SOF/CF I3 doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, education, personnel and facilities solutions.

The USASOC G9 is spearheading multiple CF/SOF initiatives in the conceptual and experimental disciplines including participation in a capabilities-based analysis of the Engagement Warfighting Function, contributions to Army doctrine development, facilitating ARSOF

ARSOF Warfighting Challenges

1] Discrete, Multi-year Campaigns to Shape, Prevent and/or Win

How does ARSOF design, plan and conduct discrete multi-year irregular campaigns that synergize tactical and operational special warfare and surgical strike with the full suite of SOF/CF/JIIM and partner capabilities and objectives to shape the operating environment, counter threats and advance U.S. interests prior to a threat or crisis necessitating large-scale military intervention?

2] SOF Mission Command

How does ARSOF build and maintain modern, scalable C2 structures that ensure SOF Mission Command meets the needs of the future operational environment, from small, technologically-enabled C2 nodes that maximize reach-back to the CONUS base, through general officer-lead SOJTF commands to larger hybrid SOF/CF/JIIM structures?

3] Countering Unconventional Warfare

How does ARSOF covertly, clandestinely or overtly support friends and partners and deter, degrade or defeat global competitors, enemies and aggressors with or through indigenous means in denied areas using extant and future UW capabilities in support of SOF/CF/JIIM operational and strategic objectives?

4] Coherence in Surgical Strike

How do we coherently articulate ARSOF surgical strike within the framework of the SOF enterprise and synthesize the full suite of ARSOF surgical strike capabilities into special operations, conventional and hybrid operational art and design constructs to optimize integration in campaigns.

5] Operation Within and Supporting Global Networks

How does ARSOF establish persistent and distributed human and technical networks, and build human and physical infrastructure in the context of the Global SOF Network and Global Landpower Networks, to enable success in irregular and traditional operations across the Range of Military Options?

6] Army, Joint and Interagency Interdependence

How does ARSOF optimize partnerships and reinforce supported and supporting relationships within SOF/CF/JIIM structural constructs to achieve operational/strategic effects and minimize risk in irregular and traditional operations across the ROMO?

7] Operating Across Joint Interagency and Multinational Seams

How does ARSOF bridge critical seams between JIIM partners to conduct operations under Title 10 Authorities, Title 50 Authorities and the Ambassador's Title 22 Authorities necessary for success in the future complex operating environment?

8] Advancing SOF/SF/JIIM Operational and Strategic Planning and Thought

How does ARSOF socialize and integrate forward-thinking capabilities and concepts regarding discrete, multi-year, high-return campaigns and operations focused on defeating threats, providing physical, cognitive and moral security and/or adequate governance in the Human Domain?

9] Optimize ARSOF Force Generation

How does ARSOF flex and efficiently generate, expand or contract its human and materiel capabilities and capacity to provide joint force commander with capable, scalable ARSOF, which is comprised of the finest, operationally and tactically proficient, culturally aware leaders and operators wielding the latest technologically advanced equipment?

Comprehensive Deterrence

Comprehensive Deterrence is a whole-of-government approach that retains the positional advantage of the U.S. by preventing an adversary's action through the existence of credible physical, cognitive and moral threats by raising the perceived benefit of action to an unacceptable risk level. Deterrence will expand the strategic start point, reframe power projection and impose a cost calculus on U.S. adversaries to prevent large-scale deployments and major combat operations. Comprehensive deterrence will work against both conventional and irregular threats when applied integrated with JIIM partners.

SOF Support to Political Warfare

Political Warfare enables national leaders to undertake proactive strategic initiatives to shape environments, preempt conflicts and significantly degrade adversary hybrid and asymmetric threats. U.S. national objectives can be achieved through a whole-of-government approach and enable JIIM partners to focus on strengthening diplomatic engagements, leveraging economic and legal measures and employing coercive diplomacy and strategic messaging. SOF are ideally organized, trained and equipped to conduct UW, counter-UW, FID, security sector assistance and information and influence activities to support objectives.



participation in Army Force 2025 Maneuver exercises and synchronizing Army and USASOC experimentation.

Of these initiatives, the most significant progress that has been made in SOF/CF interdependence has more to do with ARSOF warriors than with institutional reforms. Operations between SOF and CF have been advanced by a generation of warriors who have lived the reality of SOF/CF interdependence in combat, proving that “most special operations require non-SOF assistance” is not only an acknowledged SOF truth, but is also embraced by the force.

INTERAGENCY

In 2014, the Civil-Military Advisory Group further expanded the ARSOF network in the National Capitol Region. Through persistent engagement, the CMAG enhanced understanding of ARSOF's role in governance and development efforts, while helping interagency partners understand ARSOF's role in shaping political, social and economic factors to counter instability and violent extremism and improving and expanding the U.S. Government's appreciation for ARSOF partnerships.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The USASOC Strategic Planning Process is the command's framework and methodology

for mapping ARSOF strategy to capabilities delivery and assessment for mission requirements. It's designed to provide a means for USASOC to participate in and influence U.S. Army and USSOCOM processes.

ARSOF CAMPAIGN OF LEARNING

ARSOF 2022 priorities coupled with insights from the FY14 Campaign of Learning were synthesized into eight CG-approved ARSOF Warfighting Challenges for FY15. The FY15 CoL supports a sequential and tiered approach to exploring the eight WFCs, with the Silent Quest war game playing a central role.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The goal of the USASOC Science and Technology Program is to “maximize the use of S&T resources from external organizations in order to extend USASOC warfighters' technological and knowledge dominance in support of special warfare and surgical strike operations.”

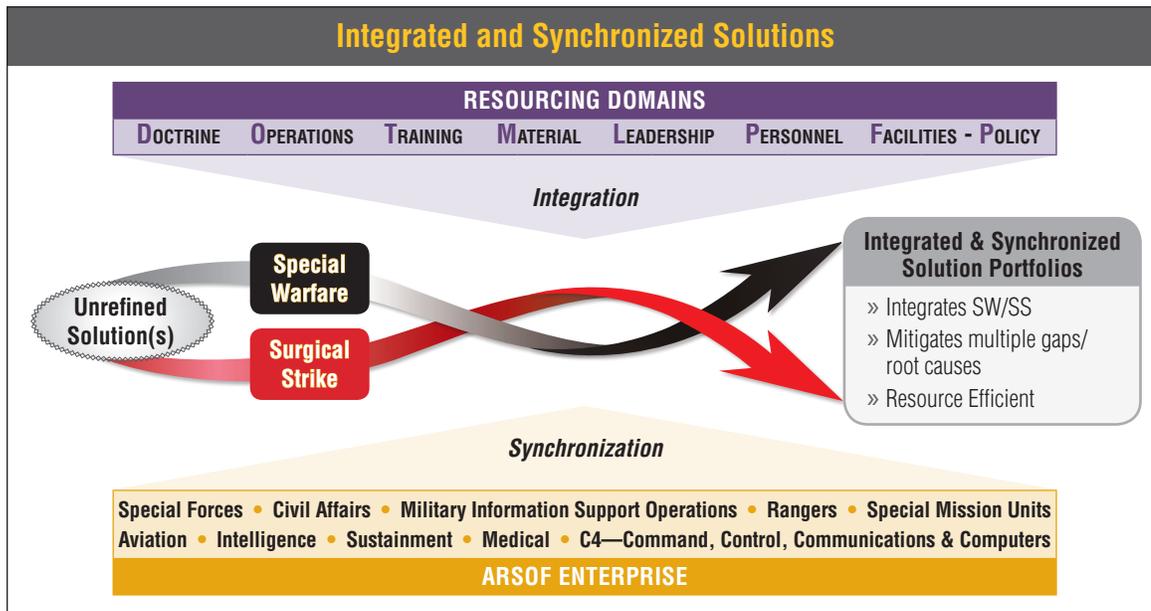
BUSINESS ON THE FRONT LINES

USASOC is working with Notre Dame University to develop methodologies and models that enhance collaboration between SF, CA, PO and external organizations. Once developed, USASOC and BOTFL can use this process to support TSOCs in development of SOF campaign plans and integration of business tenets as planning considerations.

ARSOF 2022 PRIORITIES

The following pages contain a progress report on each of the six ARSOF 2022 lines of effort allowing every Soldier in USASOC to track the progress of the vision in real terms. Over the last year some tasks evolved, some were consolidated, new ones were added and others removed. A percentage bar reflects the progress of each task as it was reported in the quarterly lines of effort update to the USASOC Commanding General.

The USASOC Road Map to 2022 Brief is maintained on the USASOC SIPR portal, and gives the complete picture of our progress. All solutions are managed through the USASOC Strategic Planning Process, with the Roadmap Brief providing routine status reports to the commander.



Proposed solutions are managed by the ARSOF 2022 Roadmap process, which ensures they are integrated across DOTMLPF-P domains and synchronized across all the ARSOF functions and formations. Offices of primary responsibility work to synchronize solutions by keeping every unit involved and integrating solutions by ensuring that every resource domain that applies is addressed. By managing the solutions this way, we save resources and prevent multiple people or organizations from working on multiple solutions to the same problem.

1. INVEST IN HUMAN CAPITAL



1A. ENHANCED EDUCATION AND TRAINING

OBJECTIVE: Our force is the best educated, trained and equipped special operations formation in the world. Our Soldiers are capable of succeeding in the increasing uncertainty of the 21st century battlefield.

DESIRED EFFECTS: Success in the future operating environment places a premium on the mastery of problem solving and highly specialized technical skills; for special warfare units this includes foreign language and cultural expertise.

PROGRESS:

SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS

- » **ARSOF Logistics Education and Training Program:** USAJFKSWCS Directorate of Training and Doctrine with USASOC G-1, G-3, G-4 and 528th are developing and establishing a logistics education and training program. This will further institutionalize the knowledge and training necessary to integrate ARSOF logistics concepts into conventional logistics professional education to improve conventional sustainment support to ARSOF. (45%)
- » **Civil Affairs Advanced Education:** The USAJFKSWCS CA Proponent's Stability Security and Development in Complex Operations Course will compete for \$1.8 million to develop a strategic and



ARSOF EDUCATION INITIATIVES

The U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School's Special Warfare Education Group has developed a number of education programs specifically for ARSOF.

Currently, students completing the Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations and Special Forces Qualification Courses can earn an associate's degree through Fayetteville Technical Community College. Students are awarded 48 credit hours for completion of the course, with the remaining 16 hours earned in a traditional classroom setting. To date, 700 NCOs completed their associate degree in 2014-2015; 281 of those Soldiers have enrolled in a bachelor's program.

ARSOF NCOs, warrants and officers can also pursue a master's degree through the Naval Post Graduate School or the National Defense University. Since the inception of the NDU program, 172 students have graduated, with 47 percent being NCOs.

operationally focused advanced education program for CA officers to optimize support to TSOCs and GCCs. (50%)

- » **Advanced Language:** The Special Warfare Education Group continues to develop plans to send selected Soldiers to advanced language training (existing and newly developed options) to facilitate special warfare activities and optimize the ability to work with and through partner forces and indigenous personnel. The intent remains to achieve a near native language capability in special warfare units, particularly in 1st SFC(A)(P)'s 4th battalions. To incentivize language skills, language proficiency is now tied to reenlistment bonuses, allowing higher bonuses for higher language ratings. (30%)
- » **Enhanced Education and Training:** The SWEG is working to expand USAJFKSWCS education opportunities and to formalize a lifelong-learning model. Initiatives include accreditation of qualification courses so they produce associate degrees and expanding opportunities for ARSOF warriors to earn BA/MA/PhD degrees. (60%)
- » **SOF-Aviation Individual Training Expansion:** The USASOC G3 is broadening the range of special operations aviation-related individual training and education. FY14 milestones: Special Operations Aviation Training Battalion developed and implemented a SOF Gray Eagle Course, an Instructor Operator and Standardization Operator Course and an ARSOAC UAS Familiarization Course is currently under development. (95%)
- » **MISO Advanced Skills:** The USAJFKSWCS PSYOP Commandant is developing and implementing training and education in advanced MISO skills to create master MISO practitioners. In FY14 the Special Operations Military Deception Planners Course was implemented, and the MISO Targeting and Assessment Course POI was developed. (60%)

MID-TERM SOLUTIONS

- » **Enhanced UW Operator Training and Professional Military Education:** USAJFKSWCS SF Proponent is revising SW training and education across the qualification and PME realm to improve asymmetric and UW capabilities. Efforts include expanding SW ODC to include CA and MISO planning considerations, expanding the scope of ASO Level III and supporting OSW with tailored Physical Surveillance and Technical Surveillance training and education. (90%)
- » **Personnel Policies for Clandestine UW Operations:** The USASOC G3 and the 1st SFC(A)(P) OSW is developing and promulgating Army and USSOCOM personnel policies to promote the development of SOF operators with expertise executing clandestine UW operations. This effort includes updating AR 600-3 and expanding training opportunities for women. (30%)

1B. INCREASED ADVANTAGE THROUGH HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVE: USASOC units will represent and capitalize on the nation's broad range of ethnic and cultural composition to enhance ARSOF capability to succeed in the Human Domain.

DESIRED EFFECTS: The wide array of knowledge, skills and attributes necessary for success in the future operating environment requires USASOC to expand the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the force.

PROGRESS:

SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS

- » **Expand the Pool of ARSOF Candidates:** ARSOF primarily recruits from within the Army. There are currently pre-screening tools under development by The Rand Corporation and the USAJFKSWCS with the purpose of reducing attrition earlier in the assessment process allowing for improved results with fewer resources. Future changes to Army recruiting standards may require ARSOF to adjust recruiting efforts from off-the-street to obtain adequate quality. In July 2015, an OPT will look at future marketing and recruitment efforts, possibly exploring partnership with corporations and other government agencies that share ARSOF's recruitment challenges. (50%)

» **Expand Service Opportunities For Women:** USASOC is conducting a review of all special operations jobs and assessing the feasibility of further integrating women into ARSOF to enhance its overall capability. These efforts include expanding opportunities in ARSOF enabler positions, examining the positions that are currently closed to women and developing a future female capability in support of SOF core activities. In September 2014, the first two female pilots graduated from the 160th SOAR(A)'s Special Operations Aviator Qualification Course.

MID-TERM SOLUTIONS

» **Increase Number of Personnel Entering ARSOF Q-Courses with Foreign Language Proficiency Above 1/1 Level:** Current efforts include target language proficiency identification through the Defense Language Aptitude Battery to focus recruiting on Soldiers who possess a 1/1 or better; for in-service recruiting, screening personnel databases for targeted recruitment; expanding into the U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard for Soldiers who possess a 1/1 or better language capability; incentivizing the enlistment bonus for those who contract with a foreign language proficiency. (25%)

» **Recruit Civil-Sector Experts:** The USAJFKSWCS CA Commandant is implementing policies and authorities to recruit civil-sector experts to conduct civil-military operations and enhance stability operations. (15%)

» **Special Warfare and Surgical Strike in the Cyber Domain:** USAJFKSWCS is developing a basic, intermediate and advanced training program for special warfare and surgical strike impacted and enabled by the Cyber Domain. This tiered program will provide a recognized and validated capability to not only mitigate cyber threats to personnel and missions but to utilize the cyber domain for core activities in current and future operating environments. These programs will address both the common ARSOF requirements as well as those of the units.

» **Career Enhancement for USAJFKSWCS Cadre:** USAJFKSWCS continues to pursue policies and programs designed to send cadre back to the operational force better qualified than when they arrived – advanced skill opportunities/language training/advanced degree opportunities, etc.

» **MFF Expansion:** USAJFKSWCS is expanding its Military Freefall capacity to meet the SF Regiment's need to mitigate anti-access and area-denial threat capabilities. By 2017, all active duty SF Qualification Course graduates will attend the MFF Parachutist Course, meeting the requirement for 5 x MFF-capable SF groups.



Military Freefall Facilities

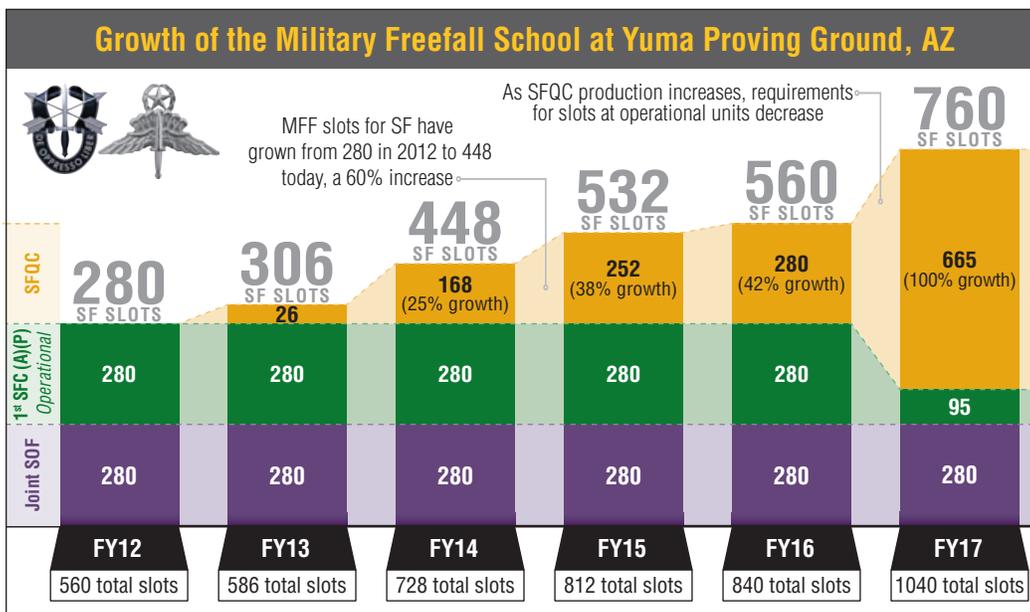
Vertical Wind Tunnel — Completed FY13

The Master Sgt. George A. Bannar Jr. Vertical Wind Tunnel consolidates all phases of training at one location and operates at great cost savings. It increases student safety and training and improves the pass rate of students by utilizing the facility to retrain students in the physical concepts of free fall.

- The 16.5 foot diameter flight chamber is capable of supporting eight simultaneous jumpers; with the capacity to train more than 1,500 Soldiers per year.
- Despite wind speeds ranging from 120 to 175 miles per hour, the probability of fatal or serious injury is nearly zero.

Temporary Facilities — Completed FY14

Four new temporary facilities facilitate the increased student load. Three K-Spans provide space for storage of additional parachutes and rigging equipment as well as packing space and work areas. A new terminal building allows the processing of two classes of the MFF Parachutist Course simultaneously.





THOR3

In 2009, U.S. Special Operations Command provided the U.S. Army Special Operations Command with funds to establish the Tactical Human Optimization, Rapid Rehabilitation and Reconditioning (THOR3) program, an investment reflecting the First SOF Truth: “Humans are more important than hardware.” The goals of THOR3 are to increase the physical and mental capabilities of ARSOF, help wounded soldiers recover more rapidly from injuries sustained in combat or training, and help them stay healthy and able to contribute longer. The program differs from other Army fitness programs in several important ways, including its holistic approach to improving physical and mental performance, its focus on individual and unit needs, and its reliance on a professional staff of program coordinators, strength and conditioning coaches, physical therapists, dietitians, and cognitive enhancement specialists to deliver training and rehabilitation services that are on par with those provided to professional sports teams.

1C. PRESERVATION OF THE FORCE AND FAMILIES

OBJECTIVE: The USASOC Ready & Resilient, Preservation of the Force and Families (R2POTFF) will synchronize, promote and support the optimal performance, longevity and well-being of ARSOF Soldiers and their families, including Department of the Army civilians, through the development of mission-tailored SOF peculiar initiatives. R2POTFF will reduce pressure on the force and families; enhance the resilience of the force and families and reduce stigmas. The program office serves as the focal point for review, issue resolution and validation of resourcing for the Command’s Preservation of the Force and Families/Invest in Human Capital programs. The program will synchronize the Human Performance Program (THOR3), Psychological Performance Program, Spiritual Performance Program, Social Performance Program, PERSTEMPO program, resiliency training, Sexual Harassment, Assault Response and Prevention, suicide awareness and community outreach. This is a commander’s program; each O6 level USASOC command continues to develop, implement and manage its own programs.

DESIRED EFFECTS: The USASOC Protection of the Force and Family program will ensure the integration of the Army Ready and Resilient Campaign and USSOCOM POTFF resources at the O6 command echelon, providing the conditions for commanders to employ embedded assets and gain enhanced access to the full range of wellness and resiliency capabilities located in their footprint.

PROGRESS:

MID-TERM SOLUTIONS

- » **Human Performance Optimization:** The USASOC Surgeon continues to integrate human performance optimization through physical performance, mental/cognitive and nutrition performance initiatives. A Human Performance Optimization Working Group was established to address funding reductions and mitigate degraded program capabilities in training (physical/cognitive performance), treatment (rehab) and metrics collection. (35%)
- » **Ready, Resilient, Preservation of the Force & Families:** The command continues to invest in programs including the THOR3 Program, Behavioral Health, Strong Bonds, Gold Star Family, Operator Resiliency and Unit Ministry to ensure relationships/programs are in place to prevent and respond immediately to negative stressors on ARSOF families. (45%)

2. OPTIMIZE SOF/CF/JIIM INTERDEPENDENCE

PROGRESS

41%

OBJECTIVE: ARSOF will create an integrated training environment to improve USASOC’s ability to provide trained and ready operational-level SOF to ground combatant commanders worldwide, while promoting increased SOF/CF interdependence.

DESIRED EFFECTS: USASOC optimizes the force multiplying potential of partnerships with the Army and interagency to provide the nation with seamless combat power. ARSOF has bridged the critical seams of SOF-conventional force and SOF-interagency relationships effectively contributing to unified action in the 21st century by partnering with the Army to meet its Title 10 collective training responsibilities. We must facilitate the interdependence of SOF, the interagency and conventional forces in support of unified action and unified land operations through the Mission Command Training Program.

PROGRESS:

SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS

- » **Civil Military Advisory Group:** The 95th CA Brigade developed and employed a national-level network for civ-mil collaboration and information sharing to analyze and inform strategies across the spectrum of conflict. Located in Washington, D.C., the CMAG cell reached initial operational capacity on July 1, 2013, and the second rotation of the cell began on Feb. 1, 2014. (60%)
- » **Army Enablers for Initial Entry and Persistent Engagements:** Over the past decade ARSOF has developed organic logistics formations designed to meet the routine needs of our deployed maneuver formations. At times, high OPEMPO or unique missions will require ARSOF to rely on non-SOF assistance for support. USASOC now has a Combat Service Sustainment Battalion aligned, through the Global Force Management process, that readily provides the logistics enabler support not contained in our organic formations. The CSSB rotates each year according to GFM priorities. (35%)
- » **Civil Information Coordination Center:** The 95th CA Brigade is working to purchase five communication nodes (one per TSOC) similar to a SOF Deployable Node Medium with commercial broadband satellite Internet access to share information with other USG departments and agencies, multinational and NGO partners. An authorization of \$850K was made for the purchase of five satellite terminals and one year of satellite service — a final contract is pending. (70%)
- » **Aviation FID:** USASOAC hosted an AvFID symposium in October 2013 that resulted in enhanced synchronization between USASOAC and conventional-force rotary wing SFA entities. Quarterly SVTCs are conducted to identify and exploit opportunities for SOF/CF collaboration in support of world-wide AvFID endeavors. USSOCOM J31 is in the final stages of developing USSOCOM Manual 350-50, Aviation Foreign Internal Defense Global Prioritization and Resourcing Procedures, which emphasizes a whole-of-government approach to building capacities with our partners that support U.S. interests and focuses on synchronizing AvFID activities with CF, the National Guard Bureau State Partnership Program and the broader Security Cooperation Community.
- » **Institute for Military Support to Governance:** The IMSG is competing for approximately \$2.5M (MFP-11) to stand up the IMSG and improve the Joint CA forces (SOF included). Located at Fort Bragg, N.C., the IMSG is currently funded through FY17. (50%)
- » **Joint Civil Information Management Capability:** USAJFKSWCS CA Proponent and USASOC G8 are developing a comprehensive and standardized civil information management capability that is interoperable with CF/SOF Mission Command and intelligence systems to include unified action partners. It was endorsed by a General Officer Steering Committee in April 2014. (15%)
- » **Embed ARSOF Doctrine:** USAJFKSWCS DOTD with DCS and CSC/Us are embedding ARSOF doctrine in all U.S. Army Professional Military Education by contributing products and establishing ARSOF cells at Army Centers of Excellence. (35%)
- » **Increase 75th Ranger Regiment inclusion in TSOC plans, exercises and operations:** USASOC G3 with 75th Ranger Regiment is developing and implementing concepts to expand inclusion of the Rangers. Projected expansion in FY15 includes participation in SOCKOR FOAL EAGLE FY15 in March 2015 and participation in exercises at NTC in July. (20%)



INSTITUTE FOR MILITARY SUPPORT TO GOVERNANCE

The Institute for Military Support to Governance established a new Area of Concentration, 38G (Military Government) within Career Management Field 38 to correct shortfalls in CA's ability to provide functional specialists in a predictable way. USAR Governance Advisory Teams, led by 38A officers and staffed by 38Gs, will meet the need for accredited civil-sector expertise.



Silent Quest

The USASOC Silent Quest Exercise Program was established in September 2012 to advance SOF capabilities at the operational level. The exercise assesses concepts, capabilities and capacities required to meet strategic and operational challenges that ARSOF can expect to encounter. SQ exercises seek to identify existing ARSOF doctrine and capabilities that require updating into the Strategic Planning Processes.

Three enduring SQ lines of effort are:

1. Inform USASOC Strategic Planning Process/ DOTMLPF and future Campaign of Learning efforts
2. Inform SOF/CF/JIIM and partners of ARSOF capabilities
3. Inform Strategy and Policy Considerations

Silent Quest scenarios are characterized by its multi-year, small-footprint, scalable design that nests ARSOF special warfare and surgical strike operations within those of other agencies.

Now in its fifth iteration, Silent Quest successes are due to the continued support and participation of SOF/ CF/ JIIM partners.

3. OPERATIONALIZE THE CONUS BASE

PROGRESS

48%

OBJECTIVE: ARSOF will be capable of providing critical expertise to the TSOCs from CONUS-based regionally expert forces. By physically and virtually synchronizing those personnel and capabilities from across the U.S. government, academia and industry, ARSOF will leverage the nation's CONUS-based regional expertise for continuous support to global special operations mission requirements.

DESIRED EFFECTS: Regionally expert forces provide proactive, continuous and responsive support to joint force commanders, including reach back to appropriately configured special warfare support structures and enabling coordination, intelligence and information networks.

PROGRESS:

- » **ARSOF Gray Eagle PED Capability:** USASOC G2 maintains fiscal support of 14 INSCOM Soldiers on temporary duty at AFSOC to support Gray Eagle Full Motion Video Processing, Exploitation, and Dissemination requirements. INSCOM has agreed to provide personnel if funded by USASOC until it is able to stand up their detachment in FY18. (30%)
- » **SOF Occupational Environmental Health Site Assessment Plan:** USASOC DCS Surgeon fields and develops real-time occupational/environmental health surveillance and testing capability to assess morbidity/mortality threats to Soldier health. FY14 milestones included the completion of USASOC Reg 40-5 and the fielding of new equipment sets to select units. (70%)
- » **Aviation FID Capability Expansion:** USASOAC AvFID program is expanding to reach approved growth to 20 active duty advisers and up to 10 contractors who, along with contributions from SOAR(A), will be able to meet a considerably larger percentage of the global demand signal for SOF rotary-wing Security Force Assistance.
- » **Civil Affairs Force Optimization:** In February 2014 a Functional Solutions Analysis and DOTMLPF Analysis was completed to allow the USAJFKSWCS CA Commandant and USSOCOM to better advocate Army retention of the 85th CA Brigade capabilities and ability to provide forces to meet future demand for USSOCOM GSN Campaign Plan and Joint/Army CA requirements. (50%)
- » **Institutionalize the SILENT QUEST Platform:** USASOC G9 ensures continued ARSOF experimentation on the forces/operational concepts/relationships/planning frameworks and approaches required — to generate better strategic options to advance U.S. interests in the future operating environment. (50%)

4. DEVELOP SOF CAPABILITIES AT THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL

PROGRESS

75%

OBJECTIVE: Develop SOF Operational Art to provide coherent campaign alternatives to traditional military operations and ensure SOF is appropriately integrated in all campaigns.

DESIRED EFFECTS: To improve SOF capabilities to design and plan long-duration, low-visibility, SOF-centric contributions to campaigns that bridge tactical SOF capability to strategic objectives.

PROGRESS:

- » **Directed TSOC Growth:** USSOCOM commander directed USASOC to provide 71 enlisted positions in support of TSOC manpower growth. Additionally a 16-man Special Warfare Planning Detachment will be assigned to each TSOC from each SF Group. The positions will transfer from USASOC to the TSOCs in two phases. In 2016, USASOC will transfer 23 positions and in 2019, USASOC will transfer the remaining 48 positions. (90%)

» **Special Operations Campaign Planners Curriculum:** The Combined Arms Center SOF Cell is implementing an enduring program at Fort Leavenworth that continues to develop more Army operational planners (conventional and special operations forces) to design, plan and execute long duration, low visibility, SOF operations. (75%)

» **528th Sustainment Brigade Redesign:** Redesign 528th SB(SO)(A) to address guidance contained in the 2013 UGDF including the activation of a forward surgical medical team to provide operational flexibility for emerging ARSOF missions, realigning sustainment planners to enhance ARSOF liaison element support to the TSOCs and continued assessment of logistics support capacity for UW, FID and SFA operations. (60%)

5. FACILITATE SOF MISSION COMMAND

PROGRESS

35%

OBJECTIVE: ARSOF will possess a wide array of scalable and deployable command and control nodes, capable of projecting SOF mission command in the most austere and politically sensitive environments, with the requisite level of expertise, experience and architecture to plan, integrate and synchronize SOF operations and SOF campaigns at any echelon of joint command, in an interagency country-team environment or with partnered indigenous forces of any size, including SOF operational headquarters above the TSOC level that are designed to conduct SOF-centric campaigns.

DESIRED EFFECTS: The greatest single challenge facing SOF today is outdated command and control structures. Over the last decade, there have been numerous and diverse efforts to address this critical gap. This includes the establishment of hybrid C2 nodes, such as TSOCs-Forward in Yemen, Lebanon and Pakistan, JSOTF-Trans-Sahel and JSOTF-Gulf Cooperational Council. Ad hoc in nature and tough to sustain for multi-year special warfare initiatives; these efforts have yielded disparate effects, resulting in missed opportunities to effectively integrate SOF capabilities. In addition, some national security challenges increasingly require SOF-centric solutions that require unique combinations of SOF/CF capability and SOF operational level mission command.

PROGRESS:

- » **ARSOF Mission Command Training Program:** USASOC G35 - MCTP facilitates the interdependence of SOF/Interagency/CF in support of unified action and unified land operations. (30%)
- » **Conduct SOF C2 Node Experimentation:** USASOC G9 is working to maintain flexibility in size and composition of C2 nodes below the TSOC to ensure key tenets of Mission Command (military orders, understanding, distributed operations) are upheld and SOF operators are not encumbered with extraneous C2. FY14 milestones included mission command assessments through mission command workshops and Silent Quest events; mission command findings reflected in the solution synopsis of the ARSOF operating concept; insights and outcomes codified through the ARSOF Campaign of Learning Final; and findings incorporated into the ARSOF CoL FY 15 study plan.
- » **Hybrid Structures:** The USASOC G9 is developing an ARSOF white paper and concept. Based on SOF and Department of Defense community acceptance, the G9 will develop a joint concept prospectus for approval. (30%)



528th SUSTAINMENT BRIGADE (SO) (A)

The 528th SB(SO)(A) supports a wide range of operations from persistent Phase 0 to Full-Spectrum Operations with logistics, signal, medical and intelligence. The 528th acts as the conduit between ARSOF units and conventional capabilities in support of the Global SOF Network. 528th Support Operations construct offers a lower signature and enhanced scalability of its deployable support-operations capabilities through tailored commodity sustainment. Through the 112th Signal Bn., the 528th SB provides regional and global support with scalable solutions to complex campaigns. The 112th Signal Bn. ensures support to SOF by bridging the gap between strategic- and tactical-level operations so that ARSOF is globally postured to respond to any crisis.

The 528th SB Forward Surgical Teams ensure critical on-site triage/preoperative resuscitation, initial surgery and postoperative nursing care to all possible operating environments. The Military Intelligence Squadron supports the 1st SFC (A)(P) with operational, analytical and direct reach-back intelligence capabilities to account for Human Domain-centric campaigns set within a JIIM context.



Ground Mobility Vehicle 1.1

The GMV 1.1, based on the General Dynamics Ordnance and Tactical Systems Flyer, is a MH47 internally transportable vehicle designed to replace/augment ARSOF's current GMV fleet. The platform is ideal for deep insertion/forcible entry with the C-130 or H-47 series helicopters and provides fast roll on/roll off capability (roll off- fully loaded with weapon mounted). It has the ability for the operator to adjust the suspension from within the vehicle cab at a system level (all 4 corners simultaneously) for the terrain being negotiated. The operator also has the ability to adjust the suspension independently from within the vehicle cab at each corner for instances when a wheel/tire assembly is damaged. C4ISR is being inherently designed into the vehicle to optimize performance and space and will accept the latest SOF C4I suites. A modular chassis allows for versatility in space claim/load out plans and multiple mission sets, including add-on armor and cold weather kits.

6. OPTIMIZE RESOURCING AND COMMODITY AREAS

PROGRESS

54%

OBJECTIVE: USASOC must begin to realign resources in FY15 to better meet requirements for not only the current global-mission but also for the anticipated future operating environment. The command should embrace an approach to resourcing that is highly agile and encourages regionally aligned forces to be as varied and unique as their areas of operations and missions require, including leveraging commercial off-the-shelf solutions and improved mechanisms to locally procure equipment that is indigenous to the area of operations.

DESIRED EFFECT: USASOC forces are equipped to operate in any environment for extended periods in a low-visibility and clandestine fashion. Instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, formations should be equipped to meet the specific needs of its assigned missions and area of operations, especially regionally aligned special warfare units.

6A. MOBILITY SYSTEMS

OBJECTIVE: ARSOF possesses a wide range of mobility platforms that are able to penetrate denied areas clandestinely by air, sea or land, including the use of stealth technologies. These platforms are designed to allow the force to operate for extended periods of time in denied areas.

DESIRED EFFECTS: The ARSOF mobility fleet is properly balanced to meet SOF global-mission requirements.

PROGRESS:

- » **Lightweight Tactical All Terrain Vehicle:** The USASOC G8 fielded the commercially available four-seat variant of the Lightweight Tactical All-Terrain Vehicle. In September of 2013 a Blanket Purchase Agreement was awarded; developmental testing took place November through December 2013; operational testing was completed in January of 2014; approved fielding and deployment release was issued in June 2014. (100%)
- » **Ground Mobility Vehicle (GMV 1.1):** The USASOC G8 is replacing the legacy GMV fleet one for one with the GMV 1.1, which will offer greater mobility and internal air transportability via CH-47. The GMV 1.1 is scheduled for incorporation into the operational fleet starting with 5th SFG(A) in FY15. (29%)
- » **Non-Standard Commercial Vehicle:** USASOC G8 invested in non-standard commercial vehicles to provide a low-visibility and survivable platform that is sustainable in austere environments around the world through locally available parts and service. A contract was awarded and developmental testing completed in August 2014; early user assessment took place in June 2014 and initial operating capability was achieved in September 2014. (75%)

6B. AVIATION

OBJECTIVE: ARSOF will possess a fully functional SOF Aviation Enterprise that synchronizes efforts to generate the world's premier special operations aviation capability.

DESIRED EFFECT: USASOC maintains the pace in modernization of platforms and force structure to provide comparative advantage to execute precision aviation missions in the future operating environment.

PROGRESS:

SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS

- » **Vertical Maneuver (Silent Knight Radar):** Develop, test and integrate a terrain avoidance/terrain Vertical Maneuver/DVE: Resource \$252M to fund development, testing, integration,

procurement and installation of a sensor suite on ARSOF aircraft increasing situational awareness of obstacles and obscurants in order to execute operations in degraded visual environments/IMC during all combat phases. (30%)

- » **Heavy Lift Sustainment:** Compete for resourcing through FY 16-20 POM submission to begin a 10-year MH-47 renewal program for 61 aircraft: \$2B MFP-2 and MFP-11 funding. (50%)
- » **Vertical Maneuver/Counter Measures:** Resource \$48.7M MFP-11 to equip all MH-60 and MH-47 aircraft with SIRFC A kits. Resource \$23M to increase B Kits BOI to equip 60 percent operational fleet. (100%)
- » **Rotary Wing Sustainment (Flying Hour Program):** Couple FHP FOS to the FHP in order to gain O&M funding that resources 100 percent of FOS required to support 100 percent of FHP. (76%)
- » **MELB Block III:** Field approved modernization for the mission-enhanced Little Bird (MELB). (5%)
- » **MH-60M Fielding:** Field approved modernization of MH-60 Blackhawks. (75%)
- » **Persistent ISR/RQ-7B Shadow:** Improve UAS to meet joint expeditionary tactics, techniques, procedures, networking and sensors. (35%)
- » **Ground Force Reconnaissance/Fires Requirements:** Retain flexibility within the acquisition process to explore potential non-POR solutions to support ground-force non-lethal and lethal reconnaissance and fires requirements. (15%)

MID-TERM SOLUTIONS

- » **MH-47G O&M Costs Review:** Evaluate O&M costs in the Heavy Assault fleet. (85%)
- » **Manned/Unmanned Sustainment Field Approved MELB modernization:** Address sustainment of current fleet of manned and unmanned systems. Field approved modernization to keep MELB relevant. (75%)

LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS

- » **Maintain Comparative Advantage Next Gen FLIR:** Maintain the Comparative Advantage over adversaries through the technology application of SOF-unique Mission Equipment Packages in the areas of Navigation/Targeting; Command and Control; and Survivability. Improve vertical maneuver capabilities by developing/introducing technology improvements that enhance aviation attributes of speed, range and payload. (50%)

6G. TARGET ENGAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE: ARSOF will leverage emerging technology to continue development of innovative, low-visibility means and, when required, non-attributable materiel solutions, that enable new means for ARSOF to discriminately engage the most sensitive targets around the globe.

DESIRED EFFECT: ARSOF has available a different set of lethal and non-lethal options with varying levels of discrimination, feasibility and acceptance.

PROGRESS:

- » **Visual Augmentation Systems:** ICW CSC/CSUs, field visual augmentation systems (PVS-31), weapon systems and munitions that are critical to the success of ARSOF in ongoing combat operations. (75%)
- » **RDTE Efforts:** Focus USASOC research, development, test and evaluation on innovative solutions and maximize the utility of other advancements made throughout the Department of Defense and the interagency. Ensure capability gaps identified in ARSOF concepts, as examined through Silent Quest exploration events, are used to inform RDTE priorities. (50%)
- » **Night Vision Goggles:** Continue investments in RDT&E in advanced digital multi-spectral night-vision goggles with color, thermal and wide-field-of view capability and precision sniper rifle. (10%)



SOF Heavy Lift Sustainment

Over the next 10 years, the United States Army Special Operations Aviation Command (Airborne) is updating the SOF MH-47G fleet to replace 61 heavy lift helicopters, some of which have been in service since the Vietnam era. By collaborating with the conventional Army and capitalizing on the Army's H-47 Block II production line, USASOAC will reduce sustainment costs and improve efficiency while satisfying SOF heavy assault/heavy lift requirements. The MH-47G Block II will provide ARSOF warriors with the most modern aviation support available, without placing a disproportionate strain on limited ARSOF acquisition resources.



Family of Tactical Body Armor (FTBA)

Approved by USSOCOM in August 2014, the FTBA system is an ergonomically designed 20 percent lighter weight, less overt next generation body armor system that integrates with all current and future SOF Load Carrying Systems. The system is modular and scalable to enable operators to prepare for various mission requirements and to minimize the operator's load while maximizing the operator's survivability.

The FTBA system consists of Overt Tactical Stand-alone Plates, Less-Than-Overt Tactical Stand-alone Plates to protect the front and rear torso, Modular Supplemental Armor Protection Plates to protect the oblique/groin/shoulders, and Soft Armor Inserts to protect the front and rear torso as well as the oblique/groin/shoulders.

The FTBA system weight reduction increases operator endurance while providing a high level of protection against the most prevalent sniper rifle and assault rifle threat that utilizes armor piercing or AP incendiary ammunition.

6D. COMMAND, CONTROL, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMPUTERS

OBJECTIVE: ARSOF is equipped with innovative systems that provide low-visibility, reliable, secure and seamless video, data, imagery and voice services that provide integrated, on the move, timely and relevant information to enable SOF C2 in any environment with any echelon of joint command or partner force.

DESIRED EFFECT: Increased requirements for secure and non-secure, real-time communications leveraging multimodal, cloud-based mesh-network technology exist to address technological advances and new operational paradigms.

PROGRESS:

- » **Airborne Mission Networking:** Integrated ARSOF aviation C2/data collection and dissemination with the SOCOM C2 architecture providing net-ready joint requirements for all forces on ARSOAC platforms. (16%)
- » **USASOC SOFNET Migration:** Ensure design of SOF C2 nodes facilitate distributed SOF C2, including real-time secure and non-secure communications that enable SOF tactical formations to communicate with GCCs and TSOC headquarters. (30%)
- » **Signal Enhancement (528th SB):** USASOC G3, G6 and 112th, refine and improve communications support requirements to TSOC efforts that lines up signal detachments and CONUS-based 112th assets in order to provide satellite on the move, HD-ISR video distribution and enhanced executive communications support. (40%)
- » **Battlefield Networking:** Utilize a versatile combination of commercial-off-the-shelf and joint systems to provide worldwide C2 support to deployed forces while ensuring the ability to operate with coalition forces. (15%)
- » **Develop Simple, Durable and Disposable Technologies to Provide C4 Solutions:** Develop a wide variety of technologies characterized by their simplicity, durability and disposability that meet C4 requirements from team to Combined Special Operations Task Force operational levels. (50%)

6E. SOLDIER SYSTEMS

OBJECTIVE: The ARSOF Soldier is equipped to infiltrate, operate and survive in denied areas for extended duration in a low-visibility fashion, with a minimal burden of equipment bulk, weight and mass.

DESIRED EFFECT: The ARSOF Soldier system program has invested in non-overt, clandestine and scalable Soldier systems to augment previous investments in combat survivability, including body armor and other personal protective equipment required in the future operating environment.

PROGRESS:

- » **Rebalance Soldier Systems Portfolio Outside Major Theaters:** Major Soldier systems milestones include: fielding of RA-1 Parachute; finalizing a family of tactical body armor capabilities production document; approval of armor purchases in August 2014; Jungle Capabilities Requirement Document for Uniforms and Boots; Clandestine Body Armor Program of Record; Modernization of uniforms/equipment in camouflage patterns consistent with SOF operational areas. (86%)

6F. CYBER OPERATIONS

OBJECTIVE: ARSOF personnel are prepared to utilize the Cyber Domain to enhance operations both with internal means and external support.

DESIRED EFFECT: Mastery of the Cyber Domain will require Army Special Operations to have training in cyber operations, knowledge of supporting systems and organizations and the ability to utilize cyberspace to enable operations while mitigating the inherent security risks.

PROGRESS:

SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS

- » **Formalize Cyber:** USASOC G3 formalizes cyber synchronization, manning, training and capability development across USASOC echelons and units through Quarterly Cyber Working Group Meetings that include social media. (60%)
- » **USSOCOM/Cyber Command Coordination:** USASOC G3 is coordinating a USASOC Cyber Enabling Concept with USSOCOM and Army Cyber Command to ensure ARSOF-unique cyber requirements are included in emerging doctrine, manning and capabilities development. (75%)

MID-TERM SOLUTIONS

- » **ARSOF Cyber Training:** USASOC G3 is identifying and certifying ARSOF personnel through cyber training and education from previously established external organizations. (50%)
- » **ARSOF Cyber SMEs:** USASOC G3 and G2 are introducing cyber experts into ARSOF organizations to enable operations – in 2014 the Cyber Enabling Concept was approved. (50%)
- » **Nesting ARSOF Cyber (Joint/Army):** USASOC G3 and USAJFKSWCS, nest ARSOF requirements and Title 10 responsibilities for cyber within all service and joint governing documents and regulations. (50%)

LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS

- » **Normalize Cyber Operations:** USASOC G3 and G9 normalize cyber operations as part of operational planning, experimentation and operations through monthly focused working groups, participation in joint cyber center and inclusion of cyber-enabled operations in all USASOC and CSC/CSU exercises (60%)

6G. MISO SYSTEMS

OBJECTIVE: SOF is the strategic nexus for all Department of Defense influence activities and recognized as the partner of choice for influence campaigns.

DESIRED EFFECT: Proliferation of smart phones, mobile devices and social media present unprecedented opportunities for both adversary and U.S. MISO efforts.

PROGRESS:

- » **MISO Enterprise Software Solution:** USASOC G8 and MISO integrate suite of software-based capabilities to automate the MISO planning process, execute data analysis to include social media analysis, support data archive and retrieval functionality, provide web-based situational awareness, view MISO units' near real-time dispositions worldwide (COP), and enhance Mission Command capability. (90%)
- » **Long Range Broadcast System (LRBS):** USASOC G8 and MISO are working with USSOCOM, AFSOC and others to conduct analysis on whether to convert the fielded Fly Away Broadcast System into a broadcast pod capable of broadcasting FM, TV UHV/VHF and cellular (SMS, MMS and voice) with the capability to be mounted on a UAV or to acquire a more appropriate system. (45%)
- » **Innovative Methods of Subversion:** MISO Effects Group is developing a capability to identify, assess, enable, connect and exploit opposition-oriented key communicators, organizations and groups to employ as proxy organizers, agitators, and propagandists to generate mass indigenous sedition and political action — all executed remotely from CONUS.(15%)



Cyber Training Initiatives

The U.S. Army Special Operations Command, through the efforts of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, is developing training requirements, exploring existing programs of instruction and tailoring training pipelines to leverage and utilize the Cyberspace Domain.

Key to the success of this effort is constant engagement with both the Department of Defense and other U.S. Government agencies to ensure that ARSOF training meets the national standards and incorporates external expertise.

The current focus on bottom-up requirements is driving multiple emerging development efforts at the USSOCOM and within the Army for use of the Cyberspace Domain at the tactical level. The command's overarching goal is to normalize working in the Cyberspace Domain as part of every operation and mission.

Distributed Common Ground System (DCGS-A-Lite)

- Provides near real-time access to the most relevant data through the Distributed Common Ground System.
- Program is still in development, and focuses on low and limited bandwidth situations as well as stand-alone operations.
- DCGS-A-Lite brings all of the capabilities of DCGS to bandwidth challenged environments in order to move a lot of data.
- Capability to merge blue-force tracking with red-force situational awareness on a single electronic kneeboard, a small wearable device carried by Army aviators that already display blue force tracking.
- Furthers the trend of providing more wearable computing devices for special operators.
- Also capable of analytics, or taking large data sets and extracting relevant data for specific missions.

6H. INTELLIGENCE SENSORS AND SYSTEMS

OBJECTIVE: ARSOF tactical elements will have an unprecedented level of organic and tactical exploitation of national capability, regardless of the austerity or sensitivity of their environments.

DESIRED EFFECT: Intelligence system capabilities enable ARSOF 2022 priorities, fully leveraging the Intelligence Enterprise, maximizing access to Joint, DoD and Interagency multi-disciplined databases and capabilities, while providing access as far forward to the tactical edge of the operating environment as possible.

PROGRESS:

- » **DCGS-A Lite:** Acquire MFP-2 funding for the DCGS-A Lite to be further developed to meet ARSOF requirements for surgical strike and special warfare operations including all seven phases of UW. Advance the DCGS-A Lite system to provide a disconnected/low bandwidth operations capability and total data federation with the Intelligence Enterprise. This solution targets an increase in ease of use/learnable interface and reducing manpower/footprint costs. (90%)
- » **Joint Threat Warning System (JTWS):** The USASOC G2 is developing improved access to national Intelligence capability down to the team level via secure radios tied to Ground SIGINT Kit-Static and existing Silent Dagger capabilities. (65%)
- » **Hostile Forces – Tagging, Tracking and Locating (HF-TTL):** USASOC G8 is overseeing the development, acquisition, fielding and sustainment of state-of-the-art surveillance and reconnaissance systems and tools for SOF to ensure cost-effective and timely acquisition and management. (95%)
- » **SOF SSE (Biometrics and Forensics):** USASOC G8 continues to invest in identity operations systems by having USASOC representation, involvement and voice throughout development, acquisition, fielding and sustainment for the SSE program of record. It is coordinating for continued ETI and life-cycle replacement of SSE (biometric and forensic) equipment. (87%)
- » **DCGS-A/DCGS-SOF:** USASOC G2 is coordinating with DCGS-A PM and PM SORDAC to develop and integrate current and future required capabilities into existing DCGS-A and DCGS-SOF programs of record to provide USASOC elements with an Army-funded intelligence system. (70%)
- » **SOCRATES Workstations:** USASOC G2 is processing a program parameter change for an increase of 211 additional SOCRATES workstations to address unit organizational changes across USASOC. (50%)
- » **SOCRATES Enhanced Imagery Workstations (EIW):** The USASOC G2 is coordinating for continued ETI's and integrating into the SOCRATES Enhanced Imagery Workstation CERP cycle to provide timely GEOINT system updates. (25%)
- » **GEOINT Data Infrastructure:** USASOC G2 is coordinating the effort with USSOCOM to develop an improved GEOINT data infrastructure, including servers, software and data configuration, to achieve a seamless data transition between CONUS and OCONUS based operations. (30%)
- » **F3EAD:** USASOC G9 with USASOC G2 and G6 is exploring emerging technologies to enhance ARSOF organic F3EAD capability. This effort ensures that capability gaps identified in ARSOF Concepts and examined through Silent Quest exploration events are used to inform F3EAD priorities.

6I. MILITARY CONSTRUCTION

OBJECTIVE: USASOC will continue to support ARSOF 2022 priorities through continued modernization and recapitalization of our infrastructure, including sustained investment in the institutional force to realize the USAJFKSWCS Campus vision and provide world-class facilities for our operational units that fully support the mission requirements and capabilities of ARSOF 2022. The command's immediate objectives are to move units out of obsolete legacy facilities, to build out the Yarbrough Complex at Fort Bragg and to develop a transition plan for the 1st Special Forces Command(A)(P) from present to future facilities.

DESIRED EFFECT: ARSOF facilities provide units the optimal operating and force generation/sustainment environments to provide SOF capabilities in support of long-duration, regionally-focused campaign plans, during steady state and in times of crisis. Facility modernization efforts are synchronized with ARSOF 2022 rebalancing and restructuring efforts within existing resourcing levels without deferring the replacement of sub-standard existing facilities.

PROGRESS:

- » **ARSOF 2022 Campus Master Plan:** The USASOC Engineer is integrating a comprehensive Master Plan for the USASOC HQ campus to provide a centralized headquarters for USASOC classified functions. This long-range planning provides a more collaborative work environment, upgraded to current security, technical and environmental standards. The USASOC campus design provides for interaction between all of the USASOC groups as well as their interface with the public. (75%).
- » **Facility Sustainment Restoration and Modernization Programming:** The USASOC Engineer is exploring opportunities to program Facilities Sustainment Restoration and Modernization to reduce the backlog of projects awaiting MILCON funding, and to establish baseline budget funding for sustainment of critically required command and control, mission command and generating force facilities. (100%)



USAJFKSWCS Campus

For the past several years, improvements to the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School have been in the planning phase. In 2015, those plans become a reality as construction on the Special Operations forces Language and Culture Facility gets underway.

The facility, which will be located across the street from the USAJFKSWCS Headquarters Building, will serve as the home to all ARSOF language and culture training.

Construction on the facility cannot take place until many of the outdated facilities, which currently house USAJFKSWCS units have been razed. Demolition on the first of five buildings that must be torn down will begin in May 2015 and continue through December 2015.

Construction on the new facility will begin in August 2015, with the buildings not being occupied until May 2017.

In addition to the new facility, the project will also create a pedestrian bridge across Zabitosky Road. The bridge will ensure the safety of USAJFKSWCS students, cadre and staff as they cross the busy road moving from one facility to another.

Once construction begins, the area surrounding the buildings targeted for demolition will be closed to foot and vehicle traffic. Upon its completion, the project will have widened Gruber Road and improved the Mosby-Gruber intersection by adding a traffic light, as well as a pedestrian bridge signal.



THE LINEAGE OF ARSOF

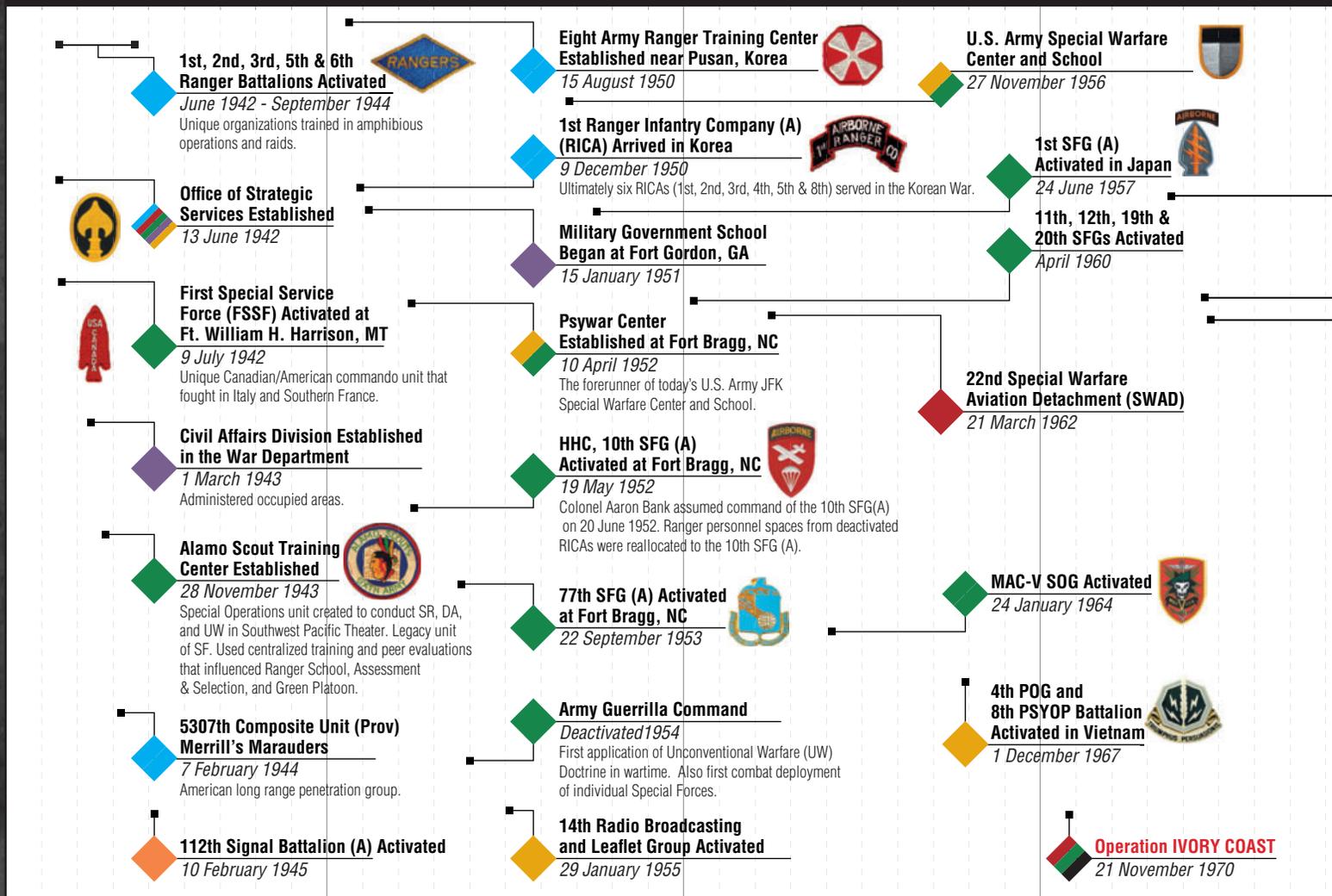
Today's U.S. Army Special Operations Forces trace their history to organizations, ideas and most importantly, personalities that made contributions to ARSOF. They are examples of the seamless navigation between SOF units over the course of a career that has

1942

1950

1960

1970



PLANKHOLDERS FROM ARSOF HISTORY



COL Arthur 'Bull' Simons

CDR, Co. B, 6th Ranger Bn. Instructor at Ranger School, CDR, 8th SFG and led the Army component in the Son Tay Raid.



MSG Roy Matsumoto

A member of Merrill's Marauders in Burma and OSS in China; awarded the Ranger Tab, the Green Beret for World War II service, and the Legion of Merit.



BG Russell Volckmann

Led an Army of 20,000 guerrillas following the fall of Bataan in 1942; instrumental in the development of SF.



CSM Galen Kittleson

Alamo Scout; in the Cabanatuan Raid to free American POWs; served as 7th SFG CSM; Also participated in the Son Tay Raid.



MG Robert Frederick

Commanded the First Special Service Force, a combined American and Canadian Special Operations Force.



CW5 David Cooper

Singlehandedly engaged a large Iraqi enemy force in his AH-6 Little Bird; earning the Distinguished Service Cross.



COL Aaron Bank

Served with Office of Strategic Services in Europe and the Pacific; assigned to Psywar Center prior to the activation of 10th SFG in 1952; Civil Affairs in Korea.



MG Robert McClure

Oversaw psywar during World War II, and information control activities in post-war Germany; established the Psywar Center.

WORLD WAR II

7 DECEMBER 1941 - 2 SEPTEMBER 1945

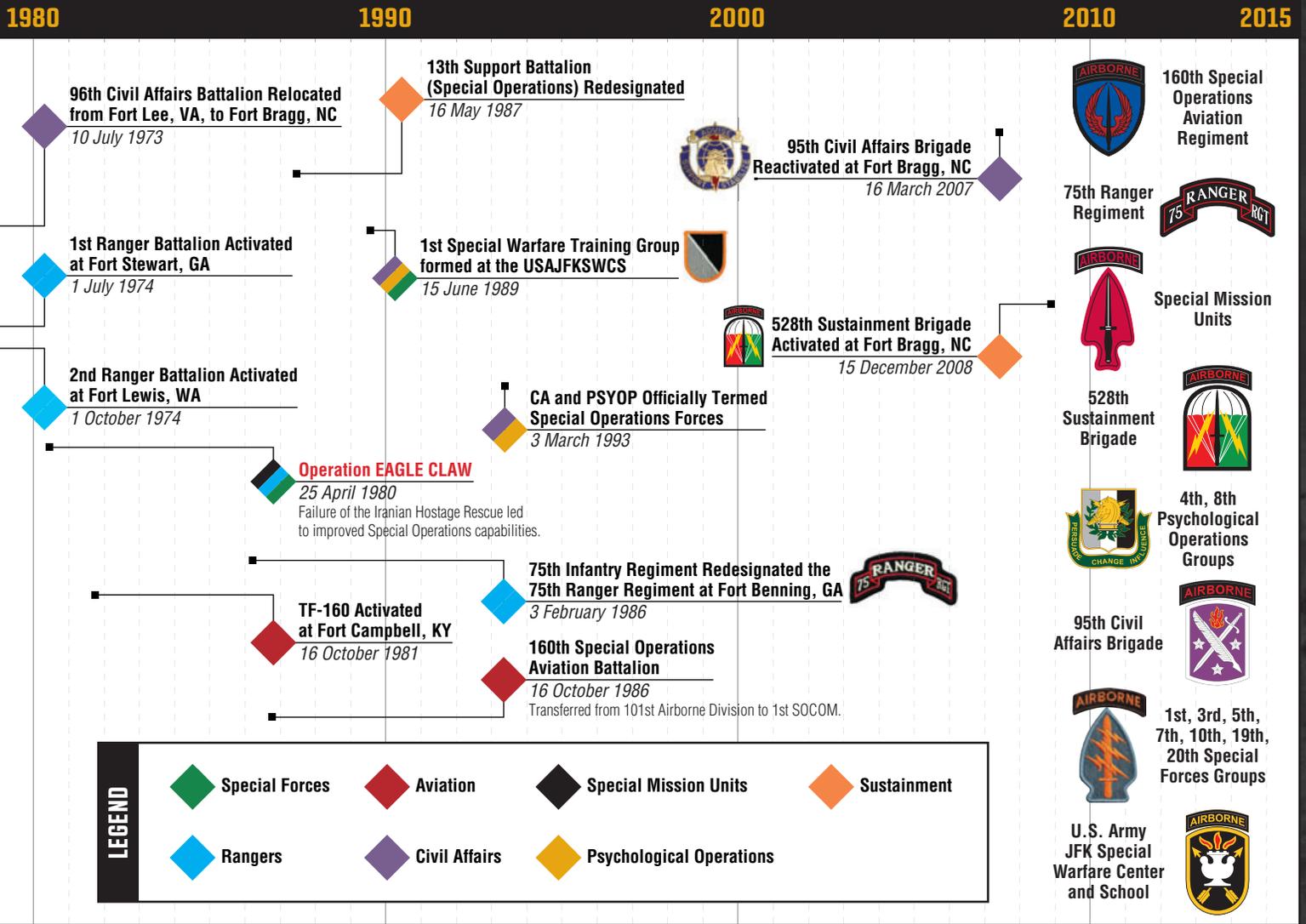
The U.S. Army Special Operations Forces history dates back to elite World War II units including the First Special Service Force, the Alamo Scouts, the Philippine Guerrillas and elements of the Office of Strategic Services; the six Ranger Battalions, Merrill's Marauders and the MARS Task Force; and Military Government and Psychological Warfare elements. With the exception of a small Military Government capability, all special operations units were disbanded at the end of the war.

KOREAN WAR

25 JUNE 1950 - 27 JULY 1953

U.S. involvement in the Korean War led to the rebirth of ARSOF. A new Ranger Training Center created Ranger Infantry Companies (Airborne), and later instructed individuals in Ranger skills. The Eighth U.S. Army created a guerrilla organization to command, control, train and advise North Korean guerrillas, while Civil Affairs units helped alleviate the widespread misery experienced by the Korean people. Tactical and strategic Psychological Warfare units reappeared. The Korean War provided the impetus for creating the Psychological Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg.

been the norm, not the exception. Today, we are much more insulated in our respective formations than we used to be. This graphic, extrapolated from the official ARSOF history, not only draws a line to our forebearers, but also illuminates the shared collective history that makes us — *one force, without equal.*



MG John Hilldring

Chief of the Civil Affairs Division in World War II. Awarded a Distinguished Service Cross in World War I.



MAJ Richard Meadows

Served in Korea; distinguished service in Special Forces in Vietnam; participated in the Son Tay Raid and Iran Hostage Rescue.



MSG Gary Gordon

SF-qualified, 10th SFG; Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta; Medal of Honor, Task Force Ranger, Mogadishu, Somalia.



BG David Grange

SF-qualified; commanded the 75th Ranger Regiment. He served multiple tours with Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta.



MG Eldon Bargwell

Earned the Distinguished Service Cross with MACV-SOG as an NCO; SF, Rangers and Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta.



BG Joseph Ulatoski

Post-World War II Military Government; 5th Ranger Infantry Co.; Army Guerrilla Command-Korea; and Special Warfare School.



GEN Bryan Brown

Commanded the 160th, Joint Special Operation Command, U.S. Army Special Operations Command and USSOCOM.



COL Charlie Beckwith

SF and Ranger instructor before founding Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta; participated in the Iran Hostage Rescue.

VIETNAM WAR
24 JUNE 1957 - 30 APRIL 1975

U.S. Army Special Forces became involved in Vietnam when a mobile training team was sent to Nha Trang in 1957 — culminating with the deployment of the 5th SFG headquarters in 1964 to South Vietnam to control all SF activities in-country. Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations units undermined Communist influence. By the end of the 1970s, post-Vietnam force reductions drastically cut the size and capabilities of ARSOF, including the deactivation or reassignment to the U.S. Army Reserve of most CA and PSYOP units.

TODAY
POST-9/11

Since 2001, ARSOF expansion has included the addition and subsequent redesign of a fourth operational battalion and a support battalion in each SFG; the addition of a Ranger Special Troops Battalion; the activation of the U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command; the growth of ARSOF Civil Affairs and PSYOP; the activation of the 528th Sustainment Brigade (Special Operations); the expansion of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School and the creation of the 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) (Provisional).



DEFINING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ARSOF UNIT

In the business world, it's called a corporate culture. In military units, it's referred to as esprit d'corps. For the purpose of *ARSOF Next*, it is defined as the characteristics of the ARSOF unit.

A characteristic is a feature or quality that belongs to a person, place or thing and serves to identify it. In ARSOF units, those characteristics create the organizational culture, which is reflected in the behavior of people within the organization and the meaning that people attach to those behaviors. In corporate America, that culture is usually defined in a written mission statement. For the ARSOF warrior, the characteristics of the units are defined by the actions of the men and women who make up the force.

Bounded by values-based leadership, the characteristics of the ARSOF unit create an environment in which the individual attributes and collective traits thrive.

The characteristics of the ARSOF unit transcend organizations and permeate every unit — what ARSOF values is important. These shared values motivate each individual to give more, to be more. They are at the heart of what special operations Soldiers do day-in and day-out in garrison or in the most remote locations around the world.

Since the days of the Roman empire, people have been trying to emulate the organizational culture of bonded groups.

In 450 CE, the Roman writer Flavius Vegetius Renuatus wrote *De Re Militare*, a prominent guide to improve small-unit performance for the Roman army, which was an attempt to restore basic discipline to frontline units.

In 1966, psychologist Joseph McGrath wrote a

study titled "Small Group Research: A Synthesis and Critique of the Field" that attempted to classify, validate and explore the implications of small-group performance research.

In 1985, The Rand Corporation wrote a report on unit performance that "presented the results of a review of the psychological literature to determine the characteristics of individuals and groups that predict

These shared values motivate each individual to give more, to be more. They are at the heart of what special operations Soldiers do.

the quality of performance of small groups on tasks requiring ability and skill."

Today, the study of the characteristics that make high-performance teams great is an industry unto itself. Research institutes, academic departments and professional journals dedicated to the field are legion. Psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and self-improvement gurus have built entire careers studying these units. An online search for "the characteristics of high-performance teams" returns more than 8 million results. Logically, in this vast body of research the secret of what makes ARSOF great should be found; however, studies, research, motivational talks and articles

routinely cite one particular type of team as the standard upon which small group excellence is based — special operations.

Where did we turn to understand the characteristics of ARSOF? Simply put, we asked the men and women currently serving in

ARSOF units. From their tremendous feedback, these characteristics emerged. Illustrated by their stories, these characteristics constitute the foundation for successful ARSOF units that have stood the test of time.

ARSOF UNITS ARE ADAPTABLE

ARSOF is a key player in the United States' pursuit of its interests abroad. Special operations units' capabilities have increased considerably in the past decade, as have their formations and budgets. Contemporary funding and personnel growth aside, ARSOF units have always exhibited one inherent, critical characteristic that grows increasingly more important in the U.S. approach to future challenges: *Adaptability*.

From its inception, ARSOF has been skilled at rapidly adapting to the challenges of an uncertain world. Its formations have proven time and again that they can respond to strategic and operational change much faster than other military elements or government agencies by transforming, iteratively at times, to achieve strategic effects.

Respondents to the Characteristics survey had much to say on the topic:

- » “The most important trait for ARSOF in today’s security environment is adaptability.”
- » “ARSOF possesses the ability to rapidly change from one mission, theater or core task to the next quickly based on the changing contemporary operating environment; while executing with a high degree of precision.”
- » “A successful ARSOF unit is flexible and agile. It has to deal with last minute changes constantly. In fact, change is the only constant. An ARSOF unit that can’t handle fluid and rapid change just won’t be successful.”

This skill has been honed over time. In 1942, the forerunners of Special Forces, the First Special Service Force, a joint Canadian-American unit, was the epitome of ARSOF adaptability. Originally organized to support Operation Plough, a mission to destroy

14 hydro-electric dams controlled by the Germans, the FSSF was ultimately faced with not one, but two distinct changes in mission that literally took the unit from one side of the globe to the other.

Operation Plough was designed as a winter crossing of German-occupied Norway via the country’s snow-covered central plateau. The targeted dams supplied nearly 50 percent of Norway’s electricity and were producing deuterium, the “heavy water” vital to the German nuclear program. Planners in the War Department estimated that the mission would cause the Germans to commit half a million troops to occupation duty in Norway; leaving the European coast vulnerable to assault.

In July 1942, American and Canadian volunteers began arriving at Fort William Henry Harrison outside Helena, Montana. By August, the force began training in earnest for its mission, seamlessly blending the troops from both nations.

Col. Robert T. Frederick, the FSSF commander, instituted a rugged training program that stressed rigorous physical training, mountaineering and tactical skills. Conducted in all types of weather, the training developed exactly the right kind of light Infantry force for the mission; however, as training wound down, Operation Plough was cancelled.

Lt. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Allied commander in the Mediterranean, wanted the



Top: The First Special Service Force conducts physical training to cross snow-covered Norway on foot. **Middle:** Switching gears, the unit practices amphibious assaults to invade Sicily. **Bottom:** Adapting yet again, the FSSF loads a plane to invade Kiska, off the coast of Alaska.

unit for the invasion of Sicily. Force training took a 180-degree turn to amphibious beach assaults at the Naval Amphibious School in Virginia Beach, Virginia. There, they learned how to board and exit various Naval landing craft, setting records for the speed with which they could climb fully-loaded down the cargo nets into the landing craft. When the movement order arrived, they found their target and mission had changed again. The FSSF headed to the Aleutian Islands to invade Kiska Island as part of Operation Cottage. On Aug. 15-16, the 1st and 3rd regiments conducted a night landing, only to find the Japanese had already evacuated the island.

In the fall of 1943, the FSSF finally got into the war, moving to the Italian front and joining the U.S. 36th Infantry Division in an operation against the German Winter Line. The Force was tasked with taking two heavily-fortified German positions in the Italian mountains: one at Monte La Defensa and the other at Monte La Remetanea, both of which were controlled by two German armored divisions.

The FSSF conducted a daring night assault up the sheer cliffs of Monte La Defensa putting them behind enemy lines, while earning them the nickname the Devil's Brigade. The weakened German position allowed the British forces to break through at Monte Camino, with a follow-on attack on Monte La Remetana, which cleared the road to Rome.

Today, ARSOF units emulate the adaptability and flexibility of the First Special Service Force. Agile enough to transition from one mission to the next and flexible enough to employ their training in any environment, the First Special Service Force is a monument to the characteristic of adaptability that defines ARSOF.



ARSOF UNITS ARE AUTONOMOUS

Decentralized, empowered, independent are but a few of the words used to describe the characteristic of autonomy. From junior Soldiers to senior leaders, autonomy is recognized as a cornerstone upon which successful ARSOF units are built.

Respondents to the survey noted:

- » “ARSOF units are empowered to act with disciplined initiative within prudent boundaries to leverage their knowledge, expertise and motivation to accomplish the mission.”
- » “Once you have established a positive command climate, immerse yourself in the goal of creating an environment where the best, the brightest and the most creative are attracted, retained and empowered.”
- » “When we empower the individual, the expert and the lowest-tactical-formations and we let people run because we trust them to do the right thing, we exponentially increase the speed and effectiveness of our forces and operations.”
- » “Autonomy has been part of who we are even before we knew we were SOF. The ability to move out, to always accomplish the mission with just your wits and the commander's intent, is what distinguishes ARSOF from every other formation on the battlefield.”

At 1900, under the cover of darkness, 21 shadows moved stealthily along a trail. They reached their objective at 0200, a small village where 66 civilians were held hostage. Two indigenous guides entered the village to obtain the latest information

on the enemy and the status of the civilians held hostage. With new knowledge in hand, the team leader modified his plan, splitting the team to cover all its bases.

The team leader and six team members, an interpreter and three indigenous guides



Alamo Scouts

The Alamo Scouts was the brain child of Gen. Walter Krueger, Commander of the U.S. 6th Army, a Prussian-born officer who rose from the rank of private to four-star general over the course of a 45-year conventional military career. Krueger proved to be a visionary thinker with respect to the application of special operations.

The Alamo Scouts were formed as a raid-capable special reconnaissance unit to conduct missions behind Japanese lines. Never boasting operational numbers of more than 138 men, they introduced formative concepts that would prove influential to SOF for generations:

- The Alamo Scouts built a state-of-the-art isolated training center and managed their throughput with rigidly-enforced standards.
- The Alamo Scouts created the ODA concept, six to seven man teams commanded by an officer with men who were trained and cross-trained in unique specialties, including foreign language.
- The Alamo Scouts instituted peer evaluations allowing men to both influence whether their fellow classmates would graduate from the course and serve in the unit as well as influence the teams to which men were assigned.
- The Alamo Scouts had 12 operational teams in combat. They would eventually conduct 106 missions behind Japanese lines, including two prison camp liberations. They earned 44 Silver Star Medals, 33 Bronze Star Medals and four Soldiers Medals in less than 17 months in combat, never losing a man throughout the entire war.

Left and Above: Alamo Scouts conduct missions during World War II. **Above Right:** The Alamo Scouts training center was a state-of-the-art isolated facility where standards could be rigidly enforced. This training concept influenced the way ARSOF trains today.

moved on a large building where 18 enemy soldiers slept unaware. Two team members and a guide took up a position near a small building occupied by two enemy intelligence officers and a local official who was being held prisoner. Two miles away, the assistant team leader and the remainder of the team prepared to neutralize an enemy outpost located on the main road into the village, which was manned by four soldiers with two machine guns.

The team leader's element opened fire on the main building at 4:10 a.m., and within three minutes all enemy combatants were killed or wounded. At the second assault point, the two enemy officers were killed and their hostage freed. In the village, the interpreter and the native

guides gathered the hostages, and moved to the pickup point. At the last assault area, the element attacked the guard post, killing the enemy sentries before moving

to the pick-up point and calling for extraction. By 0700 everyone was safely behind friendly lines.

This well-planned, flawlessly executed, hostage rescue could easily have taken place anywhere in the world over the past month. But in reality, this operation took place on Oct. 4, 1944 in Cape Oransbari,

New Guinea. The small rescue team was part of the Sixth U.S. Army's Special Reconnaissance Unit, the Alamo Scouts, who like their modern day counterparts distinguished themselves from other formations by their ability to operate autonomously.

At 1900, under the cover of darkness, 21 shadows moved stealthily along a trail. They reached their objective... a small village where 66 civilians were held hostage.



ARSOF UNITS ARE EMPATHETIC

ARSOF units are acutely aware of their environment: physical, intellectual, political or social. They intuitively identify with the thoughts, attitudes, feelings and ideas of other — both friends and enemies. Every decision they make and every resource they expend is done in consideration of the impact on overall mission accomplishment. Half of the 12 SOF imperatives deal with ARSOF's keen awareness of the operational environment.

- » “The ARSOF mindset goes beyond language and basic cultural understanding; it allows an individual and unit to understand behavior of other cultures, is the end product of a collective intellect built over generations, common history, values, beliefs, assumptions and persistent patterns.”
- » “Characteristics that make ARSOF units operationally relevant and key to accomplishing National Security Strategy goals and directives remain centered around initiative, creativity and perseverance while operating with little or no guidance under adverse conditions.”
- » “To be able to send an element, sometimes as small as a single Soldier, to a foreign country representing not only the regiment but in some instances the United States Government without worry is a significant characteristic of our force today.”
- » “When it comes to the most successful organizations/units, the number one characteristic is truly being able to “understand your operational environment.”

Since the 1980s, the Lord's Resistance Army has terrorized remote areas of Africa, targeting civilians in a brutal campaign of violence. Led by Joseph Kony, the LRA has survived for nearly 30 years by abducting and enslaving more than 25,000 children to fight as soldiers, and by terrorizing civilians through a campaign of brutality. In 2005, the International Criminal Court indicted Kony for crimes against humanity, and in 2011 the African Union declared the LRA a terrorist organization.

In 2010, President Barack Obama signed into law the LRA Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act, which authorized the U.S. military under Operation Observant Compass to advise and assist African Union forces hunting for Kony and the LRA in the

Central African Republic, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, an area roughly the size of California. African Union forces maintained pressure on the LRA, denying them sanctuary through constant patrols and frequent raids but Kony was able to keep one step ahead of them.

Psychological Operations Soldiers from the 7th Military Information Support Battalion (Airborne), deployed as part of Operation Observant Compass, looked at the LRA a little differently. Knowing that Kony had built up his army through coercion and force, and understanding the tribal and family nuances of the Ugandan Acholi community, they determined that there was a better way to undermine Kony and destabilize the LRA.

By persuading members of the LRA to defect, they surmised the LRA would erode from within — but some of the LRA had fought for more than 25 years since their own forceful abduction. The 7th MISB knew that the message would be received better from someone the LRA soldiers trusted and believed, so they enlisted former combatants and senior leaders within the Ugandan Acholi community, as well as non-governmental organizations that were essential to the repatriation, resettlement and reintegration process.

From these engagements, the PSYOP Soldiers were able to create a list of vulnerabilities that would resonate with the LRA.

These vulnerabilities served as the foundation for the main and supporting

arguments that would be used to persuade members of the LRA to leave the conflict and return home. Initially, PSYOP Soldiers relied upon senior leaders within the Ugandan Acholi community to deliver the messages to the LRA; however, as the first groups of defectors began to leave the LRA, they became the new conduit for delivering the messages because of their ability to empathize with their former compatriots. Their voices and images became the centerpiece of a MISO defection program that more than four years later would decrease the LRA's total fighting force by approximately one-third of its total membership.

Once the plan had been solidified, 7th MISB (A) personnel began devising ways to deliver the message to some of the most dense and most inhospitable jungles in the world. Initially, the program relied predominantly on leaf-

lets to deliver the message to the intended targets. The leaflets used images of former LRA combatants, and were designed to stand out against the dark backdrop of the African jungle and endure the long rainy seasons.

In order to maintain consistent and persistent messaging, the PSYOP advisers partnered with NGOs to begin broadcasting defection messages on local radio stations located throughout the tri-border region. They understood that the LRA relied upon FM and shortwave radio for news and entertainment. Moreover, they understood the deep family connections that were the backbone of the Acholi, so "Come Home" messages were recorded by family, friends and former combatants.

In 2013, the PSYOP Soldiers introduced aerial loudspeaker broadcasts into the

region. The loudspeakers were carried on rotary-wing aircraft, and instantly created results for the MISO program. The use of the broadcast system allowed defectors to provide proof-of-life statements to assuage the fears of combatants still in the bush, while encouraging them to leave the conflict.

As LRA defections began to materialize, the 7th MISB recognized that success hinged on acceptance of the combatants by the community. Given the brutality of the LRA, a single episode of retaliation against former LRA

Had the 7th MISB not deeply understood the overall situation in Central and Eastern Africa, they could have missed a single, nearly imperceptible detail that would have derailed the entire effort.

members would undermine the entire program. PSYOP advisers worked with the local communities in order to sensitize them to the idea of receiving LRA members back home. Community gatherings allowed local citizens to express their concerns about the defection process. Training was conducted to ensure neither party harmed the other.

The safe reporting sites,

operated in conjunction with the Department of Defense Rewards Program, saw increased reporting on LRA activities.

The success of the LRA defection program was anything but a foregone conclusion. Had the 7th MISB not deeply understood the overall situation in Central and Eastern Africa, they could have missed a single, nearly imperceptible detail that could have derailed the entire effort. Their empathy for the reality of the soldiers who made up the LRA; coupled with their understanding of the simple but potentially devastating effects of the jungle on printed products and their wisdom in understanding the potential pitfalls of repatriating the defecting LRA allowed them to maintain a persistent and consistent messaging program that resonated with the target audience.



Left: Members of the 7th Military Information Support Battalion collaborate with their African Union partners. **Above:** Leaflet drops into the dense jungles where the Lord's Resistance Army operates, inviting captive combatants to defect; a Military Information Support Soldier coordinates plan with his AU counterpart; a defecting member of the LRA is searched and his weapons are confiscated.



ARSOF UNITS ARE EXPERT

As part of the ARSOF Next research effort, a number of focus groups were held with individuals and groups external to USASOC, ranging from members of congressional staffs, to academics from Harvard and Duke, to Foreign Service Officers from the Department of State and a multitude of other agencies. From these focus groups a constant, recurring theme emerged: ARSOF is regarded as experts in its field. Members of the focus groups believe that whatever ARSOF does, it is the best. ARSOF's expertise is an enduring hallmark.

- » “Due to the selective nature of ARSOF units, the members have a higher expectation for performance and continue to raise the bar based on the collective capability of the unit.”
- » “In ARSOF units, organizational pride pushes individuals and teams to exceed standards and expectations.”
- » “Without mastery of the basics, a unit will flounder when it confronts significant adversity.”

ARSOF units deal with adversity in a professional and expert manner on a daily basis. In November 2013 those skills were put to the supreme test when Super Typhoon Haiyan, the strongest recorded typhoon in the Philippines documented history, swept through the island nation. In its wake, Haiyan left behind total devastation. The islands affected by the storm were left without electricity or phone service. Whole villages were flattened. Airfields were destroyed and thousands of families were left displaced, without shelter or food. It was a humanitarian disaster of Biblical proportions. Within hours of the storm's strike, JSOTF-Philippines provided the first operational 'eyes on' to fully capture the scope and depth of devastation for the Philippine Government, U.S. Country Team and

Pacific Command. The ARSOF Soldiers, which included Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations, Special Forces and sustainers were the first to react and meet the needs of the devastated populace.

Over the next 13 days, ARSOF Soldiers were the key to successfully responding to the storm by:

- » Enabling the rapid mobilization to facilitate relief efforts.
- » Leveraging their 11 years of operational experience in the Philippines and their cultural understanding of Filipinos to form networks between local government units, Philippine Security Forces, relief organizations and U.S. forces.
- » Utilizing their unique SOF capabilities to enable coordination between the

myriad of government, military and nongovernmental organizations.

- » Fielding tailored teams to support humanitarian-assistance operations utilizing ARSOF core skills and expertise operating in the Human Domain.

The morning after Typhoon Haiyan made landfall, JSOTF-P began inserting SOF teams into the affected areas. By 6 p.m. that evening, the first team, consisting of two Civil Affairs NCOs, an Air Force OIC, a Combat Controller and a Special Forces medic and communications sergeant, were successfully inserted into Tacloban Airfield, the epicenter of the destruction caused by the storm. In subsequent days, two similarly organized SOF teams were organized, equipped and inserted into airfields at Guiuan and Ormoc. What they found was total devastation.

Thousands of people who had made it through the storm, made their way to the airfields, carrying what few possessions they had. Families with small children and elderly grandparents sat outside in the blistering heat waiting for relief. The SOF teams became the conduit for that relief as they provided critical leadership and organization for the Government of Philippines, UN, U.S. Agency for International Development, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance and nongovernmental organizations, establishing the initial foothold in the islands.

The opening of airfields allowed for follow-on SOF teams to conduct site surveys, assess the scope of damage and identify the prioritization of follow-on efforts. Upon completion of these initial tasks, SOF teams integrated and developed local networks that facilitated the flow of supplies and the positioning of relief forces.

The SOF teams were comprised of a Special Forces 18A commander, for command and control; two 38 series Civil Affairs Soldiers for assessments; Special Forces 18E communications sergeant, to maintain communications; Special Forces 18D medical sergeant, to ensure life saving skills for team members; and an attached Air Force combat control team.

The CA Soldiers were the workhorse of this operation when it came to assessments, linking in NGOs and IGOs, establishing networks and providing a common operating picture that would help allocate resources. Their familiarity with Government of the Philippines's disaster procedures provided invaluable insight — what to look for and who to speak with — for the post-disaster organization. The CA elements' expertise was lauded by host-nation and senior U.S. leaders for their exceptional handling of the disaster and for bringing organization to chaos.

The Civil Affairs elements were lauded for their exceptional handling of the disaster and for bringing organization to chaos.

Relief efforts could not have taken place without organization, direction and fusion that the expert SOF teams exercised in an environment consumed with chaos.

Dealing with large-scale tragedies like Haiyan requires adaptive, empathetic person-

nel who are expert in their field and who can operate autonomously. The actions of ARSOF in the Philippines demonstrated that there is no substitute for culturally astute operators who can leverage existing relationships and rapidly build new relationships with both individuals and organizations, proving yet again that competent special operations forces cannot be created after emergencies occur.



Left: A member of the Joint Special Operations Task Force - Philippines assists Philippine Military partners in the evacuation of refugees. **Above:** Members of the JSOFT-P work with local government officials to distribute supplies; the devastated Tacloban Airfield served as the hub for evacuation and supply distribution.

CONCLUSION

Adaptable, autonomous, empathetic and expertise are the four characteristics that define all ARSOF units, whether they are conducting surgical strike or special warfare missions. These characteristics enable the ARSOF unit to operate in complex, ever changing environments, building relationships through engagement, while working to prevent conflict.

Just as their adaptability allows them to change missions as the circumstance demands, their expertise makes it possible for them to conduct the new missions while tying up the loose ends of the old one. Often times, the small, autonomous teams may see the need to make changes in the conduct of their mission to ensure success. Their ability to analyze and plan at the lowest level gives them the ability to shift priorities when it becomes necessary. Operating in the Human Domain, their ability to understand their partner force and the local citizenry allows them to build relationships and to sustain them over time, as witnessed in the Philippines, Colombia and even Afghanistan.



HUMANS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN HARDWARE

Attempts to define the attributes of the ARSOF Soldier are met with immediate and impassioned resistance. Some would argue that it is the uniqueness of individual ARSOF operators that make the unit great; however, even in their individuality there are shared common traits and attributes that add to the unique personalities of the individual ARSOF units.

From its inception with the Office of Strategic Service and the Alamo Scouts, ARSOF has cornered the market on assessing and selecting personnel. The process remains in a constant state of evolution and improvement. For decades the world has studied, and to the degree possible, emulated ARSOF's assessment and selection success; the basis of which has been the identification of suitable attributes.

In the science of assessment and selection, the words attribute, competency and characteristic are at best interchangeable and at worst contentious. There is widespread disagreement about what existing attributes are inherent to the individual and what attributes are developed after assessment and selection. These are commonly seen as an individual's potential, and create dissention about the difference between "what is" and "what we build" and which is more important.

Within the ARSOF enterprise there are fundamental differences in how we approach and classify the idea of Soldier attributes.

Within the ARSOF enterprise there are fundamental differences in how we approach and classify the idea of Soldier attributes. For example, the Army Special Operations Aviation Command classifies "professionalism" as a "SOF Leader Characteristic," while the

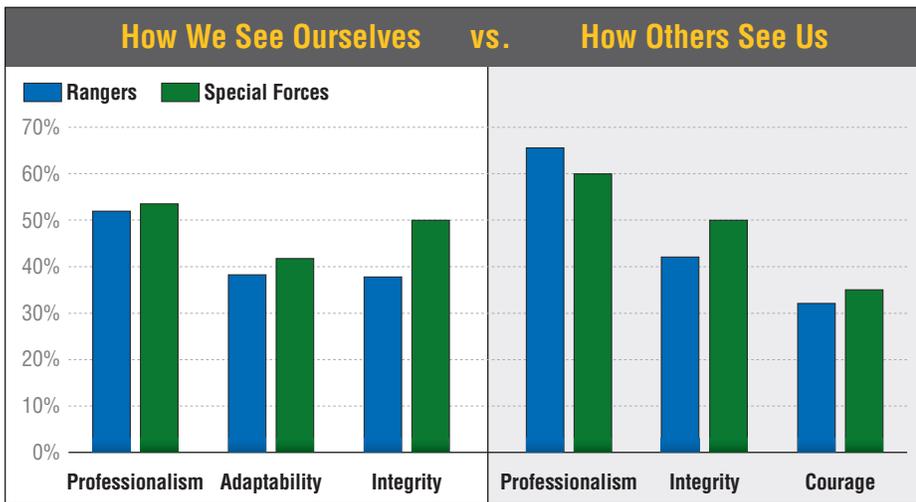
U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School classifies it as an "ARSOF Core Attribute." The 75th Ranger Regiment classifies some of the elements of "professionalism" as a "Ranger Personality Trait." To complicate matters, there are inconsistencies within USSOCOM, which classifies elements of "professionalism" as "enduring competencies."

It's logical that any effort to improve unity starts with a common organizational language; before unit cohesion can be established a common language must be spoken. USASOC has addressed this to a degree through recently published documents such as *ARSOF 2022*, *ARSOF 2022: Part II, ADP 3-05: Special Operations* and the *ARSOF Operating Concept*. Army doctrine, such as *ADRP 6-22: Army Leadership* and the *Army Operating Concept* help the command share a common language externally. For USASOC to understand and articulate what ARSOF has in common, everyone should speak the same language.

DIFFERENT BUT MUTUALLY SUPPORTING ATTRIBUTES

ARSOF 2022 introduced the idea of "two different but mutually supporting forms of special operations," so it is reasonable to expect that there can be "nine different but mutually supporting approaches to attributes."

The content associated with these diverse labels still provides a greater understanding of who ARSOF is, but what it says about its differences is more meaningful than what it says about its similarities.



The review of every Component Subordinate Command's and Component Subordinate Unit's selection and assessment criteria uncovered nine attributes, characteristics or traits that every unit shares: Professionalism, Adaptability, Integrity, Perseverance, Team Player, Operational Aptitude, Intelligence and Courage. ARSOF units look at these as indicators of a Soldier's potential to perform effectively, but the underlying definition of each, and the method of application, varies widely. Units use the same words, but apply different definitions and different applications to them, particularly in assessment and selection, because different skill sets and ways of thinking are needed for each unit.

These differences are key to ARSOF's internal problem with unifying its force. The highly specialized nature of ARSOF Soldiers is in direct opposition to unity; unity can undermine the ability to be unconventional. This irreconcilable difference does not preclude being part of a team, and acknowledging them can bring ARSOF closer to a unity of purpose, if not organization.

Despite organizational differences, the individuals who fill the ranks generally agree on the prioritization of the attributes. When surveyed, the majority

of ARSOF Soldiers agree that integrity, professionalism and adaptability are the most important attributes. Moreover, they agree not only on how we see ourselves, but also on how others see us: professional, people of integrity and courage. The survey wasn't designed to determine the most important attribute, and it wasn't to prioritize them per se, rather it was to determine if there was consensus across the formations. ARSOF units may never be fully integrated, but the people who make up the unique units see eye-to-eye on what is important. It is not necessary for the units to be in total agreement on the definitions and applications of attributes. That would not answer the most important question: What makes ARSOF, ARSOF?

The answer cannot be found in scientific selection and assessment criteria or in terms used in evaluations or the ideas that drive our decisions about who does or does not become ARSOF. It is the combination of these attributes within each individual that develops the common ethos and manifests itself in three common traits: toughness, audacity and love.

These traits describe the essence of ARSOF, and demonstrate why they are all drawn to the unique and special calling of special operations.

ARSOF ATTRIBUTES

PROFESSIONALISM

Standard bearer; mature; exercises sound judgment; confidence tempered by humility; forms candid opinions and makes independent decisions; accountable and characterized by honorable service; a steward of the Army profession.

ADAPTABLE

Adjusts thinking and actions to fit a changing environment; creates innovative solutions to complex problems; navigates different interpersonal and intercultural environments; applies what they know in unfamiliar situations.

INTEGRITY

Trustworthy and honest; acts with honor; ethical; upholds moral and legal standards.

PERSEVERANCE

Committed; possesses physical and mental resolve; motivated self-starter; resilient and emotionally balanced; optimistic; internalizes goals and seeks to achieve them without external influence; never quits; confident; balances control with aggression.

TEAM PLAYER

Reliable; loyal; respects others; values diversity; selfless; contributes to a larger cause or purpose; tireless work ethic; dependable in all situations with all tasks.

OPERATIONAL APTITUDE

Physically fit; strong and agile; technical and tactical expert; effective communicator; expert planner; charismatic; understands operational environment.

INTELLIGENT

Thinks and solves problems in unconventional and creative ways; quickly grasps new concepts, ideas and tasks; rational and logical — not emotional; willing, enthusiastic, lifelong learner.

COURAGEOUS

Understands calculated risk; able to overcome fear or failure; sacrifices for a larger cause or purpose; stands up for beliefs; is not intimidated.



OUR BELIEFS, OUR STORIES

When a 19-year-old private reads of the storied lineage of ARSOF and dreams of joining its ranks, he doesn't say "I want to be a professional with operational aptitude." The aged ARSOF veteran reading stories of contemporary ARSOF heroism on the battlefields doesn't say "I used to be a team player with perseverance and intelligence." The ARSOF warrior does not look in the mirror, and say, "I am a monument to integrity and personal accountability." What draws them to the calling, and what binds them in fellowship to each other, is something they can rarely, if ever, find the words to express. It is something they feel in their heart or gut, that defines who they are. It is the soul of ARSOF and is defined by three key traits: toughness, audacity and love.

The best way to understand that bond can be found in the actions of our force, and is handed down in our stories. It would be impossible to cite every story that describes the heart of ARSOF, but there are examples, especially the historical ones, that are well known by ARSOF warriors. In these stories, lies the truth about the soul of ARSOF, which speaks to the heart of who we are. At the end of the day, when hubris is set aside, every member of the force sees themselves in these stories, even if it is only the ideal of themselves, or their memory of who they once were or who they aspire to someday become.

ARSOF SOLDIERS ARE TOUGH

ARSOF Soldiers are mentally, physically, morally and emotionally tough, as demonstrated by passing through the crucible of selection, and throughout the course of their careers and lives. Part of the colloquial language, it is often expressed profanely and always with admiration. It's not codified in doctrine and it isn't screened for, but no warrior can stand without it.

MASTER SERGEANT CHUCK RITTER: "NOT A TOUGHER HUMAN BEING ANYWHERE."

In December 2007, then-Sgt. 1st Class Chuck Ritter deployed with his ODA to Afghanistan for the third time to face a resurgent Taliban that was particularly active in the Helmand Province as evidenced by increased use of IEDs. IEDs were a foregone conclusion in the ODA's area of operations, which made the addition of three RG-33 mine-resistant vehicles to the team's arsenal very important. On March 28, 2008, the team departed Kandahar Airfield under the cover of darkness on the roughly 100 kilometer trip to Forward Operating Base Robinson. In the four months since their arrival in country, three U.S. Soldiers had been killed and three more wounded by IED attacks, with the ODA discovering 55

IEDs; 10 of them the hard way. Minutes into their trip, they found number 56.

Master Sgt. Ritter's memories of that day come to him in bits and pieces, leaving him uncertain if his recollections are real or imagined. The blast from the IED was so large that it threw the 15-ton, supposedly indestructible vehicle, 50 meters, before coming to rest on its side, facing the opposite direction of travel. The driver and one of the rear passengers died instantly. Another crew member was unconscious, the fourth's back was broken. Master Sgt. Ritter hung suspended by his seat belt with a broken nose, jaw, shoulder and ribs. His skull was fractured in seven places. His face, chin and leg were gashed open. The right side of his body was peppered with lacerations;

within 10 days he was in the United States, beginning the long road to recovery.

Two years later, Master Sgt. Ritter conspired to redeploy with his team while not yet fully recovered. The battalion command sergeant major, recognizing his need for more rehabilitation, pulled him from the team and sent him home, where he spent the next two years rehabilitating his wounded body, including 17 surgeries, facial reconstruction and implants throughout his skull. In October 2012, Ritter again took over a team, and seven months later he was riding the tail of a CH-47 into a Taliban stronghold in Bedreau Valley, Kapisa, Afghanistan, a virtual hornet's nest waiting to be kicked.

The ODA and a company of Afghan Army Commandos, was part of Operation Mountain Condor III. The 77-man force expected to face an estimated 300 enemy fighters. Landing in the valley around 2200, the team moved west toward its objective. Navigating a labyrinth of walls and irrigation ditches, the force, which was supported by AC-130 gunships and AH-64 Apache helicopters, moved unopposed through the valley arriving at their objective area around 0600. Establishing themselves in two compounds barely suitable for command and control, they prepared alternating patrols to seek out the enemy, unaware that the enemy was within hand-grenade range before the first patrol set out. As dawn came, the valley erupted.

For the next three hours, the ODA and the Afghan Commandos played a lethal game of cat-and-mouse with the enemy. Groups of Taliban fighters massed together to attack friendly positions, only to be killed or scattered by close-air support. Buildings in the surrounding area were assaulted and cleared, only to be reoccupied when the small force moved to clear a different location. At one point, Master Sgt. Ritter took an element to flank an enemy ambush that had been identified some 300 meters away, only to be engaged by an ambush 50 meters away. While maneuvering against the near ambush, one of the Afghan Commandos was hit. With air support temporarily out of the fight, Master Sgt. Ritter and four Commandos moved to recover the casualty. Ritter killed two enemy fighters and silenced a PKM machine gun with a grenade. As the Afghan soldiers began to drag the

casualty to safety, the PKM started firing. Sure of where the PKM was positioned, Ritter's attempt to take out the gunner was thwarted when the gun was turned on him. Ritter was hit by three 7.62 mm rounds, two through his leg and one through his back, which destroyed his Brachial nerve complex and perforated an artery. Still, he took a knee, demanded his weapon and directed fire against the enemy, allowing the element to return to the command post.

For the next two hours, the team fought to get Master Sgt. Ritter, who was bleeding internally, evacuated. Eleven units of blood and two surgeries later, Master Sgt. Ritter was back in the United States. He was released from the hospital on a Friday and was in the gym the following Monday. While recovering, he besieged his battalion commander with weekly updates of his progress, and within two months, he returned to Afghanistan for the fifth time.

As a team sergeant of an ODA, he once again partnered with Afghan Commandos. On Nov. 11, 2013, the team was tagged for a quick-reaction force mission to Konduz. Within hours, the ODA, with an additional 30 Afghan Soldiers, boarded MI-17 helicopters for the short flight to secure helicopter landing zones adjacent to the battle, which involved linking up with an Afghan company.

As the ramp of the MI-17 opened, Master Sgt. Ritter heard the snap of incoming small-arms fire. Disembarking the aircraft, the first man out, he looked in vain for friendly forces, quickly determining they had not landed in their planned landing zone. Bounding across the open field into a hail of PKM and AK-47 fire, the team

Ritter was hit by three 7.62 mm rounds, two through his leg and one through his back... Still, he took a knee, demanded his weapon and directed fire against the enemy.

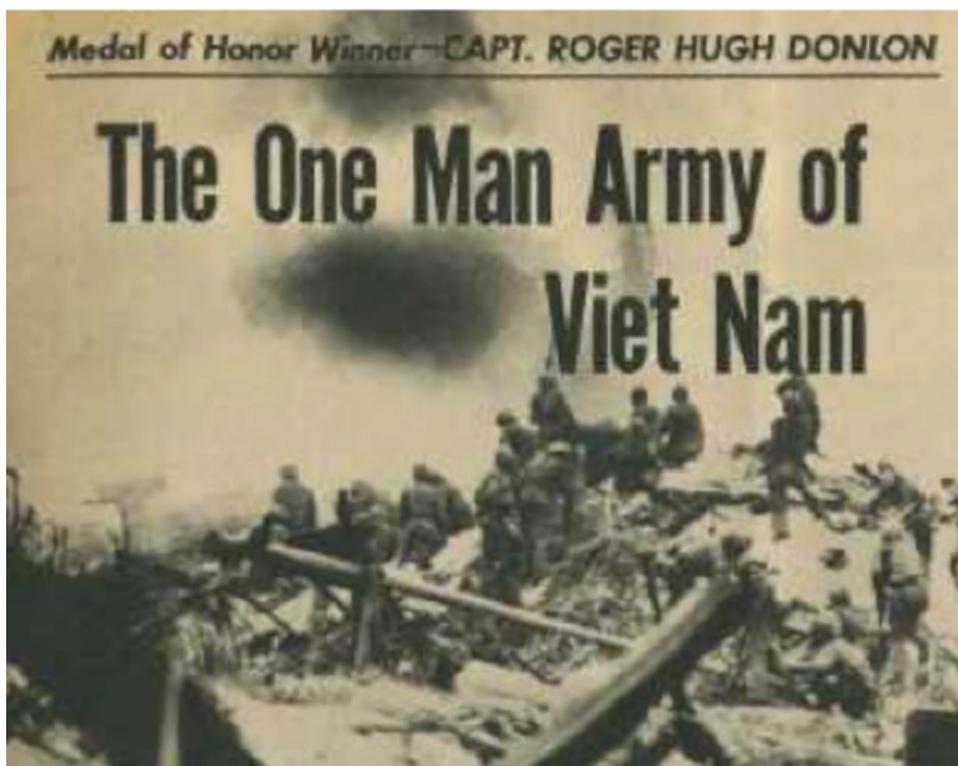


From Top: Shot in the back MSG Ritter directs his team while medics stabilize his wounds; Shot through the hand, MSG Ritter refused pain medication so he could remain lucid and continue to direct close air support; Lt. Gen. Charles Cleveland, Commander of U.S. Army Special Operations Command, awarded Master Sgt. Charles Ritter a Silver Star Medal and Purple Heart in 2014.

maneuvered to engage the enemy. Prior to reaching cover and concealment, a 7.62mm round tore through Ritter's hand, breaking his fingers obliterating two of his knuckles, shattering his metacarpal and perforating an artery.

Master Sgt. Ritter switched his weapon to his left hand and continued to fire, although not effectively. With a PKM gunner focused on his position, he turned his attention to the joint terminal attack controller at his side, and quickly worked up a fire plan. In succession, AH-64s, AC-130s and F-16s were brought to bear, and the ODA and the Commandos gained the upper hand. They linked up with the beleaguered Afghan force over a kilometer away. Turning down an opportunity for medical evacuation, Ritter refused pain medication in order to remain alert staying with the force as it cleared the area. For the next three hours, they methodically moved west, finding only the spent ammunition casings left behind by the fleeing enemy. Based on the seriousness of his previous injuries, Ritter assumed he would be patched up in Germany and returned to his team, but the damage to his hand was greater than he thought, and he was returned to Fort Bragg within a week. With two reconstructive surgeries complete, two more surgeries are needed before he can return to full-duty status.

Today, Master Sgt. Ritter continues physical training and rehabilitation for his hand. He is happy to talk about his experiences, and those yet to come — like attending Ranger School in September.



CAPTAIN ROGER DONLON — “THE ONE MAN ARMY OF VIETNAM”

Capt. Roger Donlon took command of Special Forces Detachment A-726 at Camp Nam Dong in South Vietnam in May 1964. Under his command were 11 fellow Green Berets and one Australian Army adviser, as well as 311 indigenous members of the Civilian Irregular Defense Group.

Though barely an imprint on the land, Nam Dong was one of the many places the United States' attempted to raise resistance groups to fight the Communists. Located just 24 kilometers from the Laotian border and surrounded by infiltration routes from the Ho Chi Minh Trail, Nam Dong was an opportune target for the Viet Cong to overrun and destroy.

As the last patrols came in before sunset on July 5, Donlon sensed trouble stirring just beyond the wire. He kept all the men on alert and made rounds after 2 a.m. to check defenses. He found the perimeter secure, and headed back to the mess hall to

review the guard roster. He never heard the whistle of the enemy mortar round which slammed into the roof, tossing him in the air and destroying the structure. He rolled to a stop on the ground in time to see the command post take a direct hit, sending huge clods of earth through the air.

At the strike of the mortar, over half of the CIDG began stripping off their clothes and donning bright colored loin cloths, while matching sappers approached the wire. To the horror of the Green Berets, the traitors began killing their CIDG comrades. Firing and hand-to-hand combat erupted in Nam Dong's defensive positions, and the night rang with the noise and the flash of AK-47s.

In an attempt to rally the men, Donlon rose and raced for one of the mortar pits only to be flung in the air again as another round landed near him. The impact of the blast ripped one of his boots off. He got up

and started off a second time, and heard the words, "They're over here!" from fellow Green Beret Sergeant John Houston.

As he raced for Houston's position, another round landed next to him, sending shrapnel into his body, ripping off the other boot. He crawled to another pit and could see the outline of three sappers approaching the main gate. He raised his AR-15, but the weapon malfunctioned. He jettisoned the faulty magazine, loaded a fresh one and with three shots, brought down the three men.

With one of his men dead, Donlon moved from position to position exhorting the indigenous troops; finding and issuing badly needed ammunition while tending to the wounded. In the mortar pits, he found

most of the men were wounded. As he ordered them to fall back while he covered them, Master Sgt. Gabriel "Pop" Alamo fell to the ground severely wounded. Donlon grabbed the man and started to drag him to safety. At that moment, another round hit near him tearing flesh from his shoulder. Undaunted, Donlon continued dragging Alamo to safety. Donlon returned to another mortar pit, where he found four of the CIDG badly wounded. He pulled off

a sock and wrapped it around the gaping wound on one of the men. Once he finished, he took off his shirt, and cut it into pieces to use it as bandages for the others. The remainder he stuffed into one of his own wounds, which had split open his stomach. He continued to other positions tending to their wounded and inspiring them to continue fighting.

For the next five hours, against a force of nearly 900 Vietcong, Donlon rallied his men to seal any breach and vanquish the

Firing and hand-to-hand combat erupted in Nam Dong's defensive positions, and the night rang with the noise and flash of AK-47s.

onslaught. By morning a relief force made up of Nungs, led by Capt. Jerry Griffin, arrived to secure the camp and clear the surrounding area. Donlon, weak from loss of blood, was evacuated to a hospital.

They left behind the bodies of 55 South Vietnamese and Chinese fighters, as well as Sergeants Gabriel Alamo, John Houston and Warrant Officer Kevin Conway of the Australian Army.

Donlon survived surgery and was sent home in the fall of 1964 to recover. On Dec. 5, 1964 he was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions at Nam Dong, which had come to be known as "The Outpost Of Freedom." Donlon's medal was the first of 248 to be awarded during the Vietnam War.



Left and Above: Capt. Donlon was the first person to receive the Medal of Honor in the Vietnam War and his story was featured in newspapers and magazines. **Above Top:** Capt. Donlon's official Medal of Honor photograph.

TOUGHNESS though most easily illustrated by the physical challenges that Master Sergeant Ritter and Colonel Donlon faced, is embedded in the ARSOF character, and woven throughout the ARSOF experience from the mundane to the miraculous.



ARSOF SOLDIERS ARE AUDACIOUS

ARSOF Soldiers make the bold decisions that no one else will make because they are too hazardous, too ambitious, too controversial or too unconventional. The very act of volunteering for duty in ARSOF is a bold decision. Soldiers make these decisions and take these actions with discretion and thought because they are smart and experienced. Though daring, ARSOF is never reckless.

160TH SOAR — BORNE OF A LEGACY OF AUDACITY AND COURAGE

In early September 2009, along a road northwest of the city of Konduz, Afghanistan, a vehicle mishap left two fuel trucks mired in mud. Unable to free the trucks, which were loaded with fuel intended for coalition operations, concerns began to mount that the fuel would fall into enemy hands. A decision was made to destroy the trucks, rendering both the vehicles and their precious cargo unusable to insurgent forces.

Immediately following a NATO airstrike to destroy the vehicles, a clamor arose about the death and injury of innocent civilians. In various media outlets, accusations gained momentum and negative impacts from the seemingly mundane event mounted. Information coming from the remote area was inconsistent at best, causing one determined reporter to travel to the area to get to the bottom of the story. A British national, he went without security or a military escort, and upon his arrival, local elders implored him to leave. Despite the admonishment

of the elders, he remained in the area to provide first-hand accounts on the incident. The reporter was taken by a local insurgent leader, who moved his captive through a series of safe houses throughout the city of Konduz. When news of his capture came to

In total darkness, the helicopters pitched and rolled their way north. Flying with open doors to accommodate weapon mounts, the sub-zero winds cut through the cabin.

light, a mixed British-U.S. special operations force assembled in the northern Afghan city of Mazar-E Sharif to plan his rescue.

The British force was already in close proximity to the city; however, the aircraft at MeS were insufficient to meet the requirements of a hostage rescue. MH-47s from the

160th SOAR, which was located 230 nautical miles away, were needed. Normally it would take 24 hours of planning to conduct an operation of this magnitude; the 160th only had four hours to move to MeS, coordinate, plan and carry out the rescue.

Three MH-47s flying at 14,000 feet, using supplemental oxygen, charged through shearing wind and turbulence. In total darkness, the helicopters pitched and rolled their way north. Flying with open doors to accommodate weapon mounts, the sub-zero winds cut through the cabin. The gauges that warned of catastrophic stress on the rotor systems from turbulence repeatedly skirted the red line promising to turn the mission from a hostage rescue to a downed aircraft recovery. Despite the odds, the aircraft arrived safely in Mazar-E Sharif, where the ground force and the aviation task force consolidated. The hastily formed task force consisted of 165 warriors including a troop of British special operators serving

as the assault force, three MH-47 aircraft, three fixed-wing ISR aircraft, three fixed-wing close-air support aircraft, a coalition Infantry company acting as the quick reaction force and a combat search and rescue team.

Routine air-assault missions take time to plan due to a number of variables that must be accounted for. Maps, timetables, coordinating graphics and orders, all precisely created, printed and distributed are required to get aircraft in the sky — but not on this night. With a fix on the hostage's location, the task force had neither the time nor the luxury for such detail. In a small room with none of the technology normally at their disposal, the ground force commander and the flight lead drew on scrap paper, sketching the landing and assault plans, with each pilot copying the plan to brief their respective crews. On the flight line, the co-pilots prepared the aircraft.

Once the order to execute was given, the ground force loaded and the helicopters departed, heading for the objective 45 minutes away. Flying over open desert and around high ground, they avoided populated areas and used the terrain to mask the noise of the helicopters. At the objective area, the enemy force was arranged in concentric circles around the hostage. Approximately five miles from the objective, the aircraft's lights warned the enemy of the approaching assault. Moments later, RPG and machine gun fire began.

As the aircraft touched down, the rate of enemy fire intensified. RPGs and machine gun fire came from rooftops, treetops and prepared positions behind compound walls. Forewarned by a failed rescue attempt the previous night, the enemy had prepared a defense around the building where the hostage was housed. Under fire, the pilots held their position as the assault force disembarked. The second helicopter bore the brunt of the attack, absorbing 7.62 mm rounds, losing

the navigation system and almost losing the crew chief who continued firing his mini-gun as incoming rounds shredded the open door above his head. Despite the enemy's best preparations and intense fire, the helicopters inexplicably avoided catastrophic damage, and within minutes lifted off to return to a nearby friendly airfield to wait for the call to extract the assault team and the hostage. The enemy; however, had different plans.

As the three helicopters raced north through a gauntlet of enemy fire, the ground force called for an immediate casualty evacuation. Hit moments after he departed aircraft number two, an assaulter was killed. The crew could not save his life by turning the aircraft around and returning to the landing zone. Such an action would give the enemy another opportunity to down one of the aircraft; they went back anyway.

As they were developing a landing and fires plan, they received another call from the ground force: The hostages had been secured and they were moving to the extraction site.

It took 30 minutes for the assault force to move from the target area to the extraction point. Distracted by the attacking enemy, the ground force was unaware of additional enemy forces surrounding the landing zone. While inbound, the Air Mission Commander declared the target compound hostile, and called in close-air support to engage the enemy. With the threat from the target area neutralized, the helicopters began their final approach, only to face fire from all sides of the landing zone.

Acting as one, the flight adjusted its approach, landing abreast of one another, training their guns to protect not only the ground force, but each other. Each aircraft covered the nose and tail of the aircraft next to it with insurgents approaching from every side. The helicopter mini-guns held the insurgents at bay, allowing the assault force



Above: Typical air-assault missions take time to plan due to a number of variables that must be accounted for. This mission did not have the luxury for such detail — it was planned and swiftly executed in the dark of the night.

to load. With the hostage in tow, the entire force flew away, while in the cargo hold of helicopter number two, the fallen warrior was held in the arms of his brothers. Within three hours of getting the initial call, the hostage was walking across the tarmac to a waiting jet that would return him to his home.

It was later determined that approximately 40 RPGs and hundreds of machine gun rounds were fired at the helicopters — while the firefight unfolded on the ground. The aircrews expended more than 18,000 rounds, taking only one casualty.

The hostage made it home to his family knowing the best military force in the world saved him. What he didn't know — would probably never know — is that the warriors who flew to his rescue were borne of an unequalled legacy of audacity and courage.

SERGEANT 1ST CLASS JERRY “MAD DOG” SHRIVER

Sgt. 1st Class Jerry M. “Mad Dog” Shriver was a legendary Vietnam-era Green Beret. An exploitation platoon leader with Command and Control South, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam Studies and Observation Group, he served on a joint service, UW task force engaged in highly classified operations throughout Southeast Asia. The secret teams performed deep penetration missions of strategic reconnaissance and interdiction.

In the late ‘60s, the top secret letters, “S-O-G,” were not discussed openly, but everyone had heard of Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Shriver, dubbed “Mad Dog” by Radio Hanoi. Shriver earned his place in SF’s storied history when he spoke the most famous rejoinder in SOG history, radioing his superiors not to worry that North Vietnamese Army

forces had encircled his tiny team. “No, no,” he explained, “I’ve got ‘em right where I want ‘em — surrounded from the inside.”

Mad Dog was a walking arsenal, carrying an imposing array of weapons, which included a sawed-off shotgun or suppressed sub-machine gun, pistols, knives and grenades. Blond, tall and thin, Shriver’s face was chisled, punctuated by piercing blue eyes. Medal of Honor recipient Jim Fleming, who flew U.S. Air Force Hueys for SOG, found Shriver to be, “The quintessential warrior-loner... possessed by what he was doing, the best team, always training, constantly training.”

Shriver rarely spoke and slept with a loaded carbine cradled in his arms. His

closest companion was a German Shepherd he’d brought back from Taiwan. Though he’d been awarded a Silver Star Medal, five Bronze Star Medals and the Soldiers Medal, the 28-year-old Green Beret didn’t care about decorations. He did care about the Montagnard tribesmen who were his comrades-in-arms. He spent all of his money on them, even collecting food and clothes to distribute in the Montagnard villages. He was the only American at Command and Control South who lived in the Montagnard barracks. His commander, Capt. Bill O’Rourke said, “He was almost revered by the Montagnards.”

“No, no,” he explained, “I’ve got ‘em right where I want ‘em — surrounded from the inside.”

The missions Shriver and others were assigned to were dangerous and of strategic importance. These men knew the chance of their recovery if captured was slim to none. By early 1969, Shriver was in his third continuous year in SOG, leading top-secret intelligence gathering teams deep into the enemy’s clandestine Cambodian sanctuaries where he’d teased death scores of times. For every insertion like Shriver’s that was detected and stopped, dozens of other commando teams safely slipped past NVA lines to strike a wide range of targets and collect vital information.

In 1969, as part of the clandestine bombing campaign in Cambodia, a top-secret raid



was proposed against a the Central Office for South Vietnam, the almost mythical Viet Cong headquarters that claimed to run the entire war. The historic COSVN raid fell on Shriver.

On the morning of April 24, 1969, Shriver’s platoon was air assaulted into Cambodia. Upon exiting the aircraft, the

team moved toward its initial target point, coming under heavy enemy fire from several machine gun bunkers and entrenched enemy positions. Shriver was last seen by the company commander moving against bunkers, followed closely by a trusted Montagnard striker.

On June 12, 1970, a search and recovery element from a graves registration unit recovered human remains in the area, but none belonging to Shriver. There remains a popular myth among SOG veterans, that one day Mad Dog will emerge from the jungle and yell, “Hey! Where’d everybody go?” To those who knew him and fought beside him, Mad Dog will live forever.

AUDACITY enables the ARSOF warrior to make tough choices that many would never consider. These choices are based on the Soldier’s advanced skills, cultural understanding and courage built on the strong bond of brotherhood that exists among the operational teams.



ARSOF SOLDIERS LOVE — THE MOST DIFFICULT TO SAY, THE MOST TRUTH TO BEHOLD

Of the things ARSOF shares in common, the most important, the most deeply felt and the most controversial to say aloud is love. The ancient Greek philosophy of “agape” expressed an idea of selfless, brotherly love. In the historical fiction *The Gates of Fire*, the Spartan officer Dienekes questions “What is the opposite of fear?” In the end, he determines that it is not courage, but love. Modern psychology defines companionate love as a personal relationship you build with somebody you share your life with...that is stronger than friendship because of the extra element of commitment. Among ARSOF warriors, that extra element is not just commitment, but a sacred bond that transcends everything...even death itself. No one gives their life for the sake of doing their job well. No one gives their life because they are proud to be an American or because they feel obligated to their peers. They do it because they love their job, they love their country and they love their fellow warriors. So why is ARSOF so reluctant to include love as part of its language, particularly when ARSOF’s intense capacity for love, whether spoken out loud or silently acknowledged, is part of what binds it together.

Start any conversation with an ARSOF warrior about love and the answer is always the same: “It’s all about the love — but you can’t say that...” Yet the idea is never far from the thoughts and words of ARSOF warriors: “I love my job. I love my country. I love my team. I love the mission.” Despite attempts to find a more acceptable word — devotion, commitment, passion, faithfulness, brotherhood — the fact remains that ARSOF warriors have a capacity for love that is unique in its intensity. A warrior who does not possess this capacity for love is not truly ARSOF. It is universally understood that those who lack a genuine capacity for love will make an effort to fake it, because they recognize that they cannot remain without it.

LOVE OF COUNTRY

“I have always been patriotic. I was raised to respect the flag, respect your elders and love your country. Growing up, I never felt a chill crawl up my back when I heard the “National Anthem.” I did not stop mid-stride to stare at a flag waving on a pole. I did not tear up when I watched 4th of July fireworks go off while “God Bless America” played on

the radio. All that changed while returning from my second deployment.

My team was waking up from an Ambien-induced slumber; the plane was on the final approach into Savannah, Ga. We were returning on the evening of the 4th of July...just in time to miss all the festivities. Everyone was excited to go home after

a long trip to Afghanistan. As we started to circle Savannah, someone pointed out that you could see fireworks going off below us through the small porthole on the door of the aircraft. A few of us took turns looking out; much to the dismay of the crew who wanted us to stay seated and buckled. After we returned to our seats, about 90 seconds out,

a staff sergeant started belting out “The Star Spangled Banner.” What ensued was moving to say the least. Every barrel-chested, freedom fighter on that aircraft started singing it with him. I don’t know if words can accurately describe the sights and sounds of 60 of the most lethal men on Earth singing their country’s anthem at the same time. No concert, no musician, no performance will ever compare to the camaraderie and national pride that filled the inside of that aircraft. As we sang our hearts out, I looked at the black and white infrared flags on our shoulders and thought to myself, “There is no place on Earth I would rather be than on this aircraft, with this group of men and this flag on my shoulder.

Patriotism can’t be taught. Patriotism can’t be forced down someone’s throat as something you should ‘feel’ as an American. Patriotism is learned, maybe even needs to be experienced. That night I learned what patriotism truly felt like. That night I was a ‘born again American.’ I didn’t care if we missed the Independence Day festivities, the last few minutes of that flight was a better celebration of America than any cookout or day at the beach. It was like the first time you realized you loved the girl you were dating. I fell in love with America, and remain deeply in love with her to this day. There is no amount of politics, economic woe or reality TV shows that will ever make me fall out of love.”

— Excerpts taken from *Violence of Action, The Untold Story of the 75th Ranger Regiment in the GWOT*.



“NO ONE IN THEIR RIGHT MIND WOULD HAVE GONE IN”

In December 1992, the U.S. military joined the UN’s Operation Restore Hope, a joint mission to restore order in Somalia. The country, in the midst of a civil war, was crippled by a severe famine, made worse by feuding factions. The situation continued to deteriorate as the leading Somali faction leader, Mohammed Farrah Aidid, fomented unrest and incited Somalis to take up arms against international forces.

On June 6, one day after 24 UN soldiers were killed in an ambush in Mogadishu, the UN Security Council issued Resolution 837, calling for the arrest of the ambush perpetrators. Aidid, having declared himself president, remained defiant.

Throughout August 1993, Aidid’s militia killed four U.S. Soldiers and injured seven more. In response, President Bill Clinton

approved the deployment of a Special Operations Task Force, comprised of troops from the 75th Ranger Regiment, the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment and 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta. The mission of Task Force Ranger was to find and arrest Aidid and those who were responsible for the deaths of American Soldiers.

On Oct. 3, 1993, Task Force Ranger entered the city and raided the Olympic Hotel to capture two of Aidid’s lieutenants. Nineteen aircraft, 12 vehicles and 160 men entered the chaotic city, believing the mission would meet with little resistance. What followed was an intense 17-hour battle between the members of the task force and the heavily armed militia that was loyal to Aidid.

When the smoke cleared, 18 U.S. Soldiers were dead, 84 were wounded and

close to 1,000 Somalis lay dead in the streets. From the chaos of the battle emerged many stories of heroic deeds. None speak louder to the ARSOF trait of love than the story of selfless sacrifice by Master Sgt. Gary Gordon and Sgt. First Class Randall Shugart, both members of the 1st SFODD.

The raid on the hotel went south before it really ever began, with the first casualty occurring as the force entered the city on Little Birds. It completely derailed when a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter was shot down. Rangers and Special Mission operators moved to secure the crash site and recover the survivors. When a second Black Hawk went down, no friendly forces were close enough to secure the critically injured survivors, who would quickly be overcome by a large crowd moving in their direction.

A helicopter hovered above the crash to provide cover for the downed crew. On board were Gordon and Shugart, both of whom were snipers. The two instinctively understood that the downed crew needed protection on the ground.

With hostile crowds converging on the site, Gordon and Shugart volunteered for

ground insertion; their request was denied. As the situation around the helicopter deteriorated, they volunteered and were told no a second time. Unwilling to accept the crews fate, they volunteered a third time, and permission was finally granted. The pilot hovered just above the ground, as the duo jumped into the fire fight.

On the ground, Gordon and Shugart fought their way to the downed helicopter and extracted the four survivors; estab-

Unwilling to accept the crews fate, they volunteered a third time, and permission was granted. The pilot hovered just above the ground, as the duo jumped into the firefight.

lishing a defensive perimeter, while placing themselves in the most vulnerable position between the injured crew and the closing Somalis. While inflicting heavy casualties against the Somalis, the two snipers, outnumbered

and outgunned, fell to enemy fire. Before they jumped in, Gordon and Shugart both acknowledged their survival was extremely bleak. The pilot of their helicopter later said that, "No one in their right mind would have gone in."

Heroes like Gordon and Shugart, truly understand the final truth about ARSOF. They make the tough, audacious choices and they do so freely, with hearts full of love for their brothers.



Above: Master Sgt. Gary Gordon (top) and Sgt. 1st Class Randall Shugart (middle) were posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for their actions. **Bottom:** A photo taken from the street during the Battle of Mogadishu.

LOVE It's the love between these elite warriors that breathes life to the words heard too often at the gravesides of ARSOF's fallen heroes, "Greater love hath no man than this: that a man lay down his life for his friends." This is indeed the final truth about ARSOF.

CONCLUSION

For the last 25 years USASOC has worked to create an ARSOF identity that is universally accepted by its formations and recognized by those it serves. Despite great strides toward interoperability over the last 10 years, the command's units have struggled to come together culturally as ARSOF, clinging to individual unit ideals and misguided perceptions that they share little in common other than a headquarters.

ARSOF Next: A Return to First Principles is not the final answer to creating unit cohesion, but it is the beginning of the conversation that will create understanding that the sum of its units' unique identities is, in fact, what makes them an incomparable force. We have discovered characteristics that transcend organizations and traits that reside in every ARSOF warrior. Acknowledging spirited debate between the units is healthy and will continue; the fact remains that the exhaustive introspective and widespread

agreement between all members of the force that derived the conclusions found in *ARSOF Next*, suggest that the force is more unified than it has ever been.

ARSOF 2022 is USASOC's vision for the future of the force. It belongs as much to the private in the motor pool as it does to the commanding general. In the same way, the first principles belong to all of us. The characteristics, traits and promise to our nation, which were forged in the blood of the ARSOF warriors who came before us, are now ours to safeguard and pass on to those who will follow.

Adaptability, autonomy, empathy and expertise are shared unit characteristics that are key to success in operations around the world. They are not part of a program of instruction or mission essential task list. They exist because of the men and women who fill our ranks, proving again that the sum is greater than its

parts. These characteristics are what make ARSOF a force without equal.

People are more important than hardware is the first SOF Truth. We acknowledge that through our rigorous selection process and through the iron-clad bonds that are created between those who serve in our units. It is not their tactical skills or physical prowess that makes them a member of ARSOF. It is a combination that each Soldier possesses of intangible traits: toughness, audacity and love, which are woven into the collective consciousness of our units; unspoken but omnipresent. It is these traits that have drawn every ARSOF warrior to their unique calling of service and purpose. It is what keeps them resolute in the face of chaos and at the tip of the spear in the defense of this great nation. It is the steel behind our commitment to the American people and the covenant we make with our nation.

THE COVENANT: ARSOF PROMISE TO THE NATION

From the earliest times, covenants between individuals have been sealed in blood. Once a covenant sealed in blood is made, it cannot be foresworn or broken. The solemn promise that Army Special Operations Forces makes to the American people and to the nation is sealed in the blood and sacrifice of the men and women who have served, we who are currently serving and those who will follow in our footsteps.

It is a promise that begins the moment we raise our hands to take our oath; one that is tested by fire during the crucible of selection and qualification; cemented in the remote villages and towns of foreign countries around the world; and ultimately refined in battle. The ARSOF Promise to the Nation, our promise, is an unyielding commitment to provide an unconventional global response to the threats that have and will continue to challenge and threaten our way of life, and emphasizes our willingness to answer the timeless call of "Whom Shall I send?" To which, we give a constant and resounding answer of, "Here we are, send us."

The ARSOF Promise to the Nation, defined and articulated by the men and women who are currently serving in ARSOF units — from specialist to general officer — is a living, breathing expression of our ARSOF shared values, beliefs, vision and commitment. It is our way of life; one that is proven by our words and deeds. It is full of love and devotion for our nation and for our brothers-in-arms. It is the unchanging essence of who we are and why we serve. It is our *Raison d'être*.

The service and sacrifice of ARSOF warriors give weight to our vow of unyielding commitment and undying devotion to the American people and to our nation. We will not fail.





**ARSOF PROMISE
TO THE NATION**

**I PROTECT THE NATION,
WITHOUT FEAR, WITHOUT FAIL,
WITHOUT EQUAL.**



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