



THE MORE THINGS CHANGE the more they stay the same. The reorganization of the SF 4th Battalion takes a page out of history. *Department of Defense photo.*

SF Returns to Its Roots with 4th Battalion Redesign

BY MAJOR ANDREW BASQUEZ

As the nation's premier force to confront, contain, degrade and defeat unconventional, asymmetric and irregular threats, the priorities of the United States Army Special Forces Command (Airborne) are to fight the war on terrorism, maintain force readiness and to prepare the force to meet current and future operational requirements. Special Forces continuously face challenges in enhancing or developing capabilities that will enable them to deploy rapidly with agile, flexible and self-contained forces, fully capable of performing the most demanding, sensitive special-operations missions throughout the world.

Special Forces are used across the spectrum of conflict, from peacetime humanitarian missions to full-scale war, and are the most suitable elements to defeat transnational non-state actors that threaten our national security objectives. The principle operational use of Special Forces is its ability to partner with host military or paramilitary forces using the principle of through and with. Using this principle, the force is able to achieve U.S. military and political goals and objectives with a small footprint at minimal cost. As the indirect approach gains more emphasis in cur-

rent and future operations, the ability of Special Forces to have developed capabilities in austere and denied environments is essential. To that end, Special Forces will reorganize, find efficiencies and build more capable Special Forces groups to set the conditions for success.

The intellectual foundational concept for the reorganization of the Special Forces regiment is contained in two documents. *ARSOF 2022*, a special edition planned produced under the auspices of *Special Warfare* by the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School's Office of Strategic Communication and the article "Toward Strategic Landpower," written by Lt. Gen. Charles T. Cleveland and Lt. Col. Stuart L. Farris, *Army Magazine* July 2013 edition. The article addresses the need for an overhaul of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel and facilities (DOTMLPF). It states that "looking to the future, the Army should have the foresight and courage to adapt its structures and prepare its Soldiers for operating in the human domain, supported by a coherent strategy that knits together the proper joint, interagency and inter-

national partners resident within a global landpower network. The changes required are largely **cognitive** and **cultural** in nature. The solutions lie mainly in **investing in people and ideas**, not platforms. Recognizing a **human domain** of warfare, analyzing and producing the associated DOTMLPF outputs and working to create a global landpower network that continually evolves is but a proposed first step."

The most recent capability assessment conducted to make this first step and meet the reorganizational requirements outlined in *ARSOF 2022* involved a complete analysis of the SF group's current task organization and its ability to meet future strategic and operational requirements in prolonged unconventional and irregular warfare environments. Identified requirements necessitate an increase in capacity for Special Forces globally, depth in Advanced Special Operations and an organic sustainment capability for prolonged operations in under developed areas. Specifically, active duty SF group's capability needs include: additional military intelligence assets; mission-tailored, direct support logistics elements for deployed SF-Operational Detachments



SPECIAL WARFARE The men of the U.S. Army Special Forces prove out the SOF Truth that people are more important than hardware. During the early days of Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan, Special forces teams adopted local dress and road across country on horseback. *U.S. Army photo*

Alpha, SF-Operational Detachments Bravo and Special Operations Task Forces; and information operations and technical support elements organic to the groups.

In order to achieve a regiment with an this level of enhanced capability, the U.S. Army Special Forces Command (A) will initiate transformation to the *ARSOF 2022* model progressively over a period of two years, with 3rd SFG(A) beginning immediately with the 4th Battalion redesign. USASFC(A) will continue to command the five active component SFG(A)s. The 4th Bn within each group and the Group Support Battalion will transform to enable the required enhanced capability. By redesigning the 4th Battalions, the group's flexibility, responsiveness and depth for sustained operations globally is increased.

Each SFG(A) will have full command and control responsibilities for its subordinate battalions. Active component SFG(A)s will be comprised of a Group HHC, three line Special Forces battalions, one reorganized 4th Bn and one GSB. Each line battalion will have three line companies. The redesign of the 4th Bn. will transform its organizational focus to its special-warfare capability support-

ing the geographic combatant command requirements. The fundamental redesign will reorganize into three O4 level command elements with specific roles and responsibilities in the special warfare spectrum. These elements will undergo a specific selection and training pipeline and will consist of 18-series personnel with prior Special Forces experience.

To facilitate Mission Command, one of the three O4 level command elements will be focused on answering the theater special operations commands supporting the GCC. This element will remain assigned to the groups while conducting duty at their respective TSOC. It will assist with planning, task development and mission command of Special Forces conducting sensitive operations within their assigned area of responsibility. It will also represent the nucleus for the respective groups interaction with the TSOCs coordinating with Special Forces, interagency and coalition forces through the TSOC to support the campaign plan. It is the persistent, forward Special Forces mission command of the SF groups at the TSOCs.

The Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment of the 4th Bn., will consist of a

command team and staff sections that will support the battalion in day-to-day administrative operations. The HHD will have a robust signal detachment, S2 section, operational fusion cell, Human Engagement Team and logistics cell. The HHD will be a deployable element, capable of providing mission command in the early stages of a potential UW campaign. In the event of deployment, the HHD requires supplemented logistical support from the GSB.

This reorganization will give USASFC(A) the improved ability to posture and network in a manner that enables them to anticipate and prevent threats to the stability of our allies. It allows them to rapidly respond to contingencies and enhance U.S. strategic effects throughout the globe. This is a first step. Continuing to invest in our soldiers and the innovative ideas and plans outlined in *ARSOF 2022* is essential to thriving in a future operating environment characterized by uncertainty. We must realize that this change is **cognitive** and **cultural** in nature. Continuously learning, anticipating and evolving is critical to the success of the change and a cornerstone of Special Forces. **SW**