

SF JTAC

Awarding of the ASI 1G (Joint Terminal Attack Controller) to Special Forces

BY MASTER SERGEANT DAVID M. NOLAN

In 2003, then Lt. Col. Sean Mulholland the commander of 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group wrote an article titled *SOTACC: Training SF Soldiers in Close Air Support and Terminal Air Control* in *Special Warfare* magazine.⁰¹ The magazine was dedicated to Special Forces and close air support. Doctrinally CAS is defined as an “Air action by fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft against hostile targets that are in close proximity to friendly forces and requires detailed integration of each air mission with the fire and movement of those forces.”

If anyone has ever served down range, you can appreciate the capability that a joint terminal attack controller brings to the fight. Numerous changes have occurred in the operating environment since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom, specifically the employment of CAS in support of Special Forces Operational Detachments-Alpha.

At the start of the Global War on Terror, SFODAs were augmented with Air Force Tactical Air Control Party specialists, but as more teams deployed, the demand for the JTAC capability increased. Mulholland said, “To address the shortage of TACP personnel, the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, in conjunction with the JFK Special Warfare Center and School, has created a training course, the Special Operations Terminal Attack Controller’s Course, or SOTACC.” The SOTACC course is currently held at Yuma, Arizona, and is scheduled to move to Hurlburt Field, Florida, in July 2017. Since inception, it has produced more than 500 Special Forces JTAC qualified personnel. Although every Green Beret learns the necessary skill to “call for fire” during the Special Forces Qualification Course, these basic skills pale in comparison to the training that a future JTAC gets at SOTACC. A fully qualified JTAC is defined as, “A qualified (certified)



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Service member who, from a forward position, directs the action of combat aircraft engaged in close air support and other offensive air operations.”⁰² In 2008, SOTACC transitioned from a USAJFKSWCS program to an Air Force Special Operations Command-controlled school and a Memorandum of Agreement was created.

In 2012, the U.S. Army Special Operations Command’s Fire Support Cell spearheaded an initiative with the Field Artillery Proponent Office to develop an Additional Skill Identifier for JTACs. After a three-year approval process the Army’s 13Fs (Fire Support Sergeants) were awarded the ASI 1G (Joint Terminal Attack Controller) in October 2015. Under the current DAPAM 611-21 the awarding of the ASI 1G is restricted to MOS 13F (Skill Level 2 through 4 only) and 13Z (Skill Level 5 only). Since this was an effort through FAPO (FAPO is the Proponent for the ASI) it inadvertently omitted SF Proponent input.

In July 2016, the exclusion of CMF-18 JTACs from the ASI was brought to the attention of the Special Forces Commandant’s Office. The SF Commandant saw the importance of recognizing the hard work done by CMF-18 graduates and the warfighting capabilities they provide to SF. The SF Proponent office coordi-

01 Special Forces Soldiers work with Syrian Partner Forces on Close Air Support techniques. U.S. ARMY PHOTO

NOTES 01. Mulholland, Sean (April 2003) *Special Warfare: Special Forces and Close Air Support* (Vol. 16, No. 1). 02. Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*.



MOS Smartbook DA PAM 611-21

**Chapter 12: Enlisted Special Qualification Identifiers and Additional Skill Identifiers (ASI)
Table 12-2**

Code: 1G

Title: Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC)

Proponent: U.S. Army Fires Center of Excellence

a. Description of positions. Identifies select Soldiers that are qualified (certified) Service members who, from a forward position, directs the action of combat aircraft engaged in close air support and other offensive air operations. A qualified and current JTAC is recognized across the Department of Defense as capable and authorized to perform terminal attack control.

b. Qualifications. Soldiers must meet all of the following:

- (1) Must successfully graduate a course that is accredited by the Joint Fire Support (JFS) Executive Steering Committee (ESC) as defined in the JFS ESC Action Plan (AP) Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) (Ground).
- (2) Must be designated in writing to serve as a JTAC by their commander (O-5 or higher).
- (3) Soldiers must not fail an initial or recurring evaluation in order to receive or maintain their ASI.

c. Restrictions. For use only with MOS 13F (skill level 3 thru 4 only), 13Z (skill level 5 only), 18B (skill level 3 through 4), 18C (skill level 3 through 4), 18D (skill level 3 through 4), 18E (skill level 3 through 4) 18F (skill level 4), and 18Z (skill level 5 only).

Figure 01 Revised DAPAM 611-21

nated with FAPO and proposed a Military Occupational Classification and Structure change to DAPAM 611-21. They agreed that a change was warranted. Beginning Oct. 1, 2017, CMF 18 (Skill Level 3-5) will be eligible for the ASI 1G.

Every SF Soldier who has graduated from an accredited JTAC course and meets the qualification requirements (see Figure 01, Paragraph B, qualifications) will be awarded the ASI 1G. Documents needed:

- Student must be a graduate from an authorized course (see Figure 02, MOA excerpt)
- Complete JTAC evaluation and be designated in writing by their commander (O-5 or higher).

Students who graduate after Oct. 1, 2017 will see their records updated reflecting the JTAC ASI. SF Soldiers who have graduated an authorized course prior to Oct. 1, 2017 will be grandfathered. In order to receive the ASI, all CMF-18 Soldiers must submit a DA Form 4187 to the SF Proponent office with their graduation certificate, a signed copy of their commander's designation letter and a signed initial JTAC certification evaluation prior to approval. **SW**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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JFS ESC AP MOA 2004-01

**Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) (Ground)
1 May 2015**

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (MOA)

Between

Director, Joint Staff

And

U.S. Army Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7

5. Definitions, Accreditation, Certification, Qualification, and JM TL

5.2.1. Accredited JTAC Schoolhouses/Programs. The following organizations training processes are currently recognized by the JFS ESC as being in compliance with JTAC MOA requirements:

- Expeditionary Warfare Training Group (EWTG) Atlantic/Pacific (LANT/PAC) Tactical Air Control Party Course (TACP).
- Air Combat Command (ACC) Joint Terminal Attack Controller Qualification Course (JTACQC).
- Naval Strike and Air Warfare Center (NSAWC) Joint Terminal Attack Controller Course (JTACC).
- Special Operations Terminal Attack Controller Course (SOTACC).
- U.S. Air Forces Europe (USAFE) Air Ground Operations School (AGOS) JTACQC.
- Australian Defense Force (ADF) 4 Squadron Joint Terminal Attack Controller Course (JTACC).
- Belgian Joint Terminal Attack Controller Program.
- Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Forward Air Controller Course (FACC).
- Czech Republic Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) Program.
- Hungarian Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) Program.
- Latvian Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) Program.
- Netherlands Air Ground Operations School (AGOS).
- New Zealand Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) Program.
- Norwegian Air Ground Operations Section (AGOS).
- Polish Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) Program - Tactical Air Control Party Training Center (TACP TC).
- Swedish Forward Air Controller Training and Evaluation Cell (FACTEC).
- United Arab Emirates Air Warfare Center Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) Certification Course.
- United Kingdom (UK) Joint Forward Air Control Training and Standardization Unit (JFACTSU).

Figure 02 MOA Excerpt