Special Forces traces its roots as the Army's premier proponent of unconventional warfare from the Operational Groups and Jedburgh teams of the Office of Strategic Services.

The OSS was formed in World War II to gather intelligence and conduct operations behind enemy lines in support of resistance groups in Europe and Burma. After the war, individuals such as Col. Aaron Bank, Col. Wendell Fertig and Lt. Col. Russell Volckmann used their wartime OSS experience to formulate the doctrine of unconventional warfare that became the cornerstone of the Special Forces. In the Army's official Lineage and Honors, the Special Forces Groups are linked to the regiments of the First Special Service Force, an elite combined Canadian-American unit that fought in North Africa, Italy and Southern France.

Special Forces grew out of the establishment of the Special Operations Division of the Psychological Warfare Center activated at Fort Bragg, N.C. in May 1952. In June of 1952, the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) was established under Col. Aaron Bank. Concurrently with this was the establishment of the Psychological Warfare School, which ultimately became today's John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. The 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) deployed to Bad Tolz, Germany in September 1953. The remaining cadre at Fort Bragg formed the 77th Special Forces Group, which in May 1960 became today's 7th Special Forces Group. The intervening years saw the number of Special Forces Groups rise and fall.

Special Forces Soldiers first saw combat in 1953 as individuals deployed from 10th SFG to Korea. These men worked with the partisan forces conducting operations behind the enemy lines. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, teams of Special Forces Soldiers deployed to Laos to work with the Royal Laotian Army. Operation WHITE STAR was the precursor to Special Forces operations in Viet Nam. In Viet Nam, Special Forces teams worked as advisors to the Vietnamese Army and the Civilian Irregular Defense Forces, trained and led quick reaction units called Mike Forces and conducted cross-border operations as the Studies and Observation Group, MACV-SOG. 5th Special Forces Group was formed as the requirement for Special Forces troops grew. In the14 years Special Forces were in Viet Nam, they established a record for bravery and proficiency second to none.

The three decades following Vietnam witnessed Special Forces participation in virtually every campaign fought by the U.S. Army. In Grenada, Haiti, Panama and in the Balkans, Special Forces teams conducted unconventional warfare operations in support of the regular Army. In Operation DESERT STORM, Gen. Norman H. Schwarzkopf described the Special Forces as "the eyes and ears" of the conventional forces and the "glue that held the coalition together." In the post 9-11 Global War on Terrorism, Special Forces teams were instrumental in establishing the Northern Alliance coalition that ousted the Taliban government in Afghanistan in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and were critical to the success of the Coalition ground campaign in Iraq. In Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, Special Forces teams trained and fought with the Kurds in northern Iraq, cleared the western desert of SCUD missiles and provided long-range special reconnaissance to the Coalition ground forces on the drive to Baghdad.

The "Quiet Professionals," Special Forces units are today deployed worldwide displaying their dominance in full-spectrum operations through their unconventional warfare expertise. From humanitarian assistance and training of indigenous forces, to direct action and special

reconnaissance missions, Special Forces Soldiers live up to the Special Forces motto: *De Oppresso Liber*, to Free the Oppressed.