Effective organization and employment of Special Operations Forces (SOF) are the foundation of our national security and strategic interests. The Army’s SOF are a small but vital component of America’s SOF portfolio. As such, they are a critical element of the United States’ ability to compete, contain, and engage in a wide range of missions that support a global strategy of maintaining a balance of power to shape a more stable world. The Army’s SOF are unique in their ability to employ military power across the spectrum of operations, with limited means and near-peer enemy forces. Military operations in the information environment are a key component of the Army’s SOF strategy, with actions in cyberspace an important element of the overall mix. The Army’s SOF are a small but vital component of America’s SOF portfolio. As such, they are a critical element of the United States’ ability to compete, contain, and engage in a wide range of missions that support a global strategy of maintaining a balance of power to shape a more stable world. The Army’s SOF are unique in their ability to employ military power across the spectrum of operations, with limited means and near-peer enemy forces. Military operations in the information environment are a key component of the Army’s SOF strategy, with actions in cyberspace an important element of the overall mix.
Lt. Gen. Francis Beaudette is the commander of United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC).

Beaudette was commissioned in 1989 as a military intelligence officer. In his first assignment, he served as a battalion assistant S-2, M1A1 crew member, and armor platoon leader in Germany, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. He went on to complete Special Forces training in 1995.

His first assignment was to the 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) where he commanded two Special Forces Detachments, commanded the Group Headquarters Company, and served as the Group assistant S-3. He then served as the aide-de-camp to the commanding general of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, and went on to serve as aide-de-camp to the deputy commanding general of Kosovo Forces.

He commanded a Special Forces company at Fort Carson, Colorado, and in Kosovo, as well as served as a battalion executive officer and group operations officer for the 10th SFG (A), both at Fort Carson, and in Iraq.

Following a tour on the Joint Staff in the J3 Deputy Directorate for Special Operations, Beaudette commanded 1st Battalion, 10th SFG (A) in Germany and Special Operations Task Force 10 in Afghanistan. He then served as the G3 and chief of staff for the U.S. Army Special Forces Command (Airborne) prior to commanding the 1st SFG (A) and the Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines. Beaudette then served as the executive officer to the commander, United States Special Operations Command. Beaudette served as the deputy commanding general, 1st Armored Division and Director of CENTCOM Forward (Jordan). He then served previous assignment was with Joint Special Operations Command, where he served as the assistant commanding general. Beaudette’s previous assignment was with 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne), where he served as the commanding general.

Beaudette is a graduate of the Citadel, the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the U.S. Army War College.
ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS VISION

We provide the Nation with the world’s most capable Army Special Operations Forces ever. ARSOF Soldiers excel across the broad spectrum of operations in the most demanding, complex and uncertain environments imaginable. We take the fight to the enemies of our Nation. Our success rests upon the invincible will, utmost professionalism and exceptional competence of our highly trained men and women. SOF operations are inherently joint, and as the Army’s Special Operations capability, we embrace our critical role within USSOCOM for keeping the Nation safe.

To meet current and future challenges, we must invest in the best capabilities, optimize our formations for efficiency and effectiveness, and care for our people and their families. We must continue to evolve to maintain our competitive advantage over any adversary. We will enhance our lethality, strengthen alliances and partnerships, refine joint force interoperability, and expand relationships as we employ our capabilities to win both in competition and in open conflict.

Our Army Special Operations Forces Mission is to prepare for any conflict and arm the joint force with the world’s premiere Army Special Operations Forces. Army Special Operations Forces are vital to the Nation through our unique capabilities - operating with and through indigenous forces, understanding and wielding influence, precision targeting, and crisis response.

The Army Special Operations Vision is our guidepost as we prepare our forces to be more ready every day, with the training, equipment, and confidence to fight and win decisively.

ARSOF will be globally postured and ready to compete, respond, fight, and win against adversaries across the range of military operations, anytime and anywhere, as part of a joint force. ARSOF will leverage adaptive and innovative institutions, empower Soldiers, and integrate units capable of delivering unmatched special operations capabilities in order to provide joint force commanders operational options and an advantage over our Nation’s adversaries.
The U.S. Army Special Operations Command is among the most diverse organizations in the U.S. military, bringing a broad range of competencies and disciplines to support Geographic Combatant Commanders and ambassadors worldwide.

Established at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, on Dec. 1, 1989, to enhance the readiness of Army Special Operations Forces, USASOC also functions as the Army component of the U.S. Special Operations Command, which is located at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida.

The United States Army Special Operations Command mans, trains, equips, educates, organizes, sustains, and supports forces to conduct special operations across the full range of military operations and that spectrum of conflict in support of joint force commanders and interagency partners, to meet theater and national objectives.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, few elements of the U.S. military have been more involved in the War on Terror than USASOC. In Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and numerous other hotspots around the world, USASOC Soldiers have been among the first forces to deploy in support of U.S. and coalition force objectives. Some of these Soldiers are now on their 13th or 14th combat rotation. With an allocated strength of 33,000 personnel, USASOC commands active duty forces and is responsible for training and equipping Special Forces and support units in the Army National Guard.

Reshaping USASOC

In 2014, USASOC fused special warfare capabilities into one entity to optimize training and readiness. First Special Forces Command (A) was created by merging the Army’s regionally expert forces (Special Forces, Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations) and the 528th Sustainment Brigade (A) into a single command.

The operational tempo of Army Special Operations Forces is unprecedented

On any given day, elements of three of the five active duty Special Forces groups, one Ranger battalion, more than 35 Civil Affairs teams, 35 Psychological Operations teams, numerous supporting logistics units and some 34 Special Operations aircraft, are deployed around the world. Concurrently, the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School is training more than 3,400 students a day in the three primary military occupational specialty: Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations and Special Forces from initial acquisition to language to advanced skills.
Our Units

1st Special Forces Command (Airborne)

Soldiers of 1st SFC (A) possess expertise in tactics, combat advisor skills, military deception, sabotage and subversion, foreign language, relationship building skills, cultural understanding, adaptive decision making and cognitive problem solving. Trained in special warfare, 1st SFC (A) units include five active duty and two National Guard Special Forces groups, two Psychological Operations Groups, one Civil Affairs brigade, and one Special Operations Sustainment Brigade.

U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS)

The John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, the Special Operations Center of Excellence, assesses, selects, trains and educates world-class Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations and Special Forces warriors and leaders, and develops doctrine and capabilities to support the full range of military operations and spectrum of conflict - providing our nation with a highly educated, innovative and adaptive force.

U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command (Airborne)

USASOAC provides command and control, executive oversight, training and resourcing of Army Special Operations Aviation assets, units and personnel in support of national security objectives. USASOAC consists of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne), the USASOC Flight Company, the Special Operations Aviation Training Battalion, the Technology Applications Project Office (TAPO), the Aviation Maintenance Support Office (AMSO) and the Systems Integration Management Office (SiMO).

75th Ranger Regiment

The 75th Ranger Regiment is a lethal, agile and versatile Special Operations Force that conducts joint forcible entry operations and special operations across the entire spectrum of combat. Rangers are capable of planning and executing complex, worldwide operations in high-risk, uncertain and politically sensitive areas. They are trained on a wide variety of mobility platforms. Training and combat missions are conducted day or night, during adverse weather conditions, through rugged terrain, using specialized equipment, tactics, techniques, and procedures designed to fit the difficulty, risk and requirement for each combat mission.
1st Special Forces Command (Airborne)

1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) organizes, equips, trains, validates, and deploys forces to conduct special operations across the spectrum of conflict, in support of U.S. Special Operations Command, regional commanders, American ambassadors, and other governmental agencies through an indigenous approach, precision targeting operations, crisis response, and developing understanding and wielding influence.

1st SFC (A) is a division-sized element with corps-like responsibilities that consists of 11 subordinate brigades and more than 22,000 personnel. The command is stationed and deployed in more than 70 countries.

1st SFC (A) is comprised of four distinct regiments, which include Special Forces, Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations, and Sustainment elements. These regiments enable Army Special Operations Forces to provide a wholistic and varied approach to emerging threats.

Soldiers of 1st SFC (A) possess expertise in tactics, combat advisory, military deception, sabotage and subversion, foreign language, (relationship-building skills), cultural understanding, adaptive decision-making and cognitive problem-solving skills.

These unique skill sets make 1st SFC (A) Soldiers the most adaptable and capable enabling force in the United States military, poised to protect the Nation’s interests across the globe at a moment’s notice.

1st SFC (A) provides the capacity for small and local operations to create strategic global impact.
Special Forces (Green Berets) deploy and execute nine doctrinal missions: unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, direct action, counterinsurgency, special reconnaissance, counterterrorism, information operations, counter proliferation of WMD, and security force assistance.

There are five active component Special Forces Groups and two U.S. Army National Guard Groups. Each SFG is regionally oriented to support one of the war-fighting geographic combatant commanders.

The cornerstone of the SFG’s capability is the Operational Detachment-Alpha, a highly trained team of 12 Special Forces (Green Berets). Cross-trained in weapons, communications, intelligence, medicine, and engineering, the ODA member also possesses specialized language and cultural training. The ODA is capable of conducting the full spectrum of special operations, from building indigenous security forces to identifying and targeting threats to U.S. national interests.

The U.S. military’s premier unconventional warriors, the Special Forces (Green Berets) provide a viable military option for operational requirements that may be inappropriate or not feasible for large conventional forces. In the last decade, Green Berets have deployed into 135 of the 195 recognized countries in the world. Success in Afghanistan, Iraq, Trans-Sahel Africa, the Philippines, the Andean Ridge, the Caribbean, and Central America have resulted in an increasing demand for SF around the globe. Every day, 1SFC (A) Soldiers remain deployed around the world, living up to their motto: “De Oppresso Liber” - To Free the Oppressed.
The 4th and 8th Psychological Operations Group (Airborne), (4th POG (A), 8th POG (A)) provides scalable, regionally oriented, and culturally astute Special Operations Psychological Operations forces to Combatant Commanders, U.S. Ambassadors, and other agencies. Their mission is to advise, plan, develop, synchronize, deliver and assess military information support operations (MISO) and other information-related capabilities across the range of military operations.

Each group is comprised of three regionally oriented battalions. The 4th POG (A) has an additional battalion focused on media production and dissemination capability, and the 8th POG (A) has an additional tactical battalion.

They are the only two active duty Psychological Operations Groups in the Army and are the Department of Defense's premier capability specifically organized, manned, trained and networked to persuade and influence select foreign target audiences to achieve psychological effect and behavior changes in support of U.S. objectives.

Psychological Operations Soldiers work within the human domain, analyzing potential target audiences, from mass populations down to the individuals, determining those most accessible, susceptible, and capable of acting upon a received message. They are regional and language-trained experts who understand political, cultural, ethnic and religious subtleties, with functional experts in all aspects of tactical communications.

PSYOP is a vital part of the broad range of U.S. diplomatic, military, economic and informational activities used by the U.S. government to secure national objectives. These planned operations convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals in a manner favorable to the U.S. policy and national objectives.

These activities are force multipliers that use nonviolent means in often-violent environments. Soldiers rely on logic, fear, desire or other mental factors to promote specific emotions, attitudes or behaviors. PSYOP supports national security objectives at the tactical, operational and strategic levels of operation.
The 95th Civil Affairs Brigade (Airborne) operates through an indigenous approach in order to understand and wield influence within populations, enable precision targeting and provide governance and counter-governance capabilities. The 95th is prepared to rapidly task organize, fight and win as part of a combined special warfare team in response to crisis.

The 95th maps and analyses the human terrain in order to understand networks of influence and the competition for control of populations. This understanding allows the 95th to detect emerging threats and identify potential partners to deter or control the escalation of crisis.

The 95th enables military commanders and U.S. Ambassadors to achieve national objectives by countering adversary control and improving a partner’s control over populations in complex and dynamic environments worldwide. The 95th accomplishes this as an integral member of the special warfare team and through its special relationships with the U.S. Department of State, government and non-governmental organizations, and local populations.

The 95th deploys to diverse environments, from remote and austere areas to dense urban population centers around the world. The 95th Soldiers are adept at working within foreign cultures and conversing in one of 15 foreign languages with local stakeholders.

The 95th has a rich history dating back to 1945, when the unit first activated to aid Europe and Japan in reestablishing political order and a peacetime society. Since WWII, the 95th has been involved in every major conflict to advance the Nation’s strategic objectives.

Today, the 95th is a team of Special Operations Force professionals committed to providing a unique civil affairs capability globally to advance the Nation’s Special Warfare competitive edge. The 95th supports Department of Defense, Special Operations Command task forces and the five U.S. geographic combatant commands. As of August 2017, the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade (Airborne) consists of more than 1,500 Soldiers, including five geographically aligned battalions (91st, 92nd, 96th, 97th and 98th Civil Affairs Battalions), and currently has more than 240 Soldiers deployed to more than 40 countries around the world.
528th Sustainment Brigade (SO) (A) provides enduring logistics, signal support and medical care to Army Special Operations Forces and joint elements worldwide.

In October 2001, 150 Soldiers of the then-Special Operations Support Command (Airborne) were among the first deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Since that time, the unit's Soldiers, known as "Sentinels," have continuously deployed in support of overseas contingency operations embedded with other U.S. Army Special Operations Command comrades in arms around the globe.

Since 9/11, about a third of the brigade's 800 Soldiers are deployed in small teams around the world. The Sustainment Brigade's support to overseas contingency operations provides unique skillsets and valuable support assets to Special Operations Forces in defense of the Nation.

The brigade, based out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina, is task organized with a brigade headquarters, the 528th Special Troops Battalion (STB), and the 112th Signal Battalion. In addition, the brigade maintains a permanent presence in each theater, with Army Special Operations Forces Liaison

Elements based at each Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) and Army Service Component Command (ASCC) headquarters, and with a Signal Support Detachment at each TSOC.

As a forward stationed element of the brigade, Soldiers from the ALE are capable of providing continuous and direct support to the TSOC through planning and coordinating with the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), the Army Special Operations Command, and the Army Service Component Command in direct support of operations and training.

The Brigade Support Operations Section has the ability to deploy the Support Operations capability in support of Special Operations Forces worldwide. The SPO capability can co-locate with a Special Forces Group Support Battalion, an Expeditionary Sustainment Command, and Theater Sustainment and ARSOF with a centralized and integrated in-theater presence for sustainment support.
The U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, located at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, manages and resources the professional growth of Soldiers in Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations.

SWCS builds the only force specifically trained and educated to shape foreign political and military environments in order to prevent war. Special Operations Soldiers do this by working with host nations, regional partners and indigenous populations in a culturally attuned manner that allows them to bridge language barriers, open lines of communication and connect with key political and military leaders in a way that is both immediate and enduring. On any given day, approximately 3,400 students are enrolled in SWCS training programs. Courses range from entry-level training to advanced education and technical skills for seasoned officers and NCOs. In all, SWCS offers more than 65 unique courses that give Soldiers the skills they need to survive and succeed on the battlefield. The 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) qualifies Soldiers to enter the Special Operations community and teaches them advanced techniques as they progress through their careers. Fort Bragg-based training includes the Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations qualification courses, Advanced Individual Training for Army Reserve Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations specialists, and a number of advanced-skills.

The 1st SWTG (A) also maintains satellite training facilities, including the Special Forces Underwater Operations School in Key West, Florida, and Military Freefall School in Yuma, Arizona, as well as satellite sites in Washington State and West Virginia.

The Joint Special Operations Medical Training Center, operating under the auspices of the Special Warfare Medical Group (Airborne), is the central training facility for Department of Defense Special Operations combat medics. The JSOMTC creates well-educated and professionally trained SOF combat medics with a solid understanding of the knowledge and skills required by the force to provide standard-of-care medical treatment, regardless of the conditions. SOF Medics also receive training in urban emergency rooms across the United States.

The Special Warfare Education Group (Airborne) produces agile, adaptive-thinking Soldiers while acting as a hub of emerging thought and creative ideas in regional studies, foreign language, culture, adaptive thinking and leadership, behavioral science and education. Its Foreign Language Initial Acquisition Program, second only to the Defense Language Institute in its throughput, trains more than 1,500 Soldiers annually in the program’s 17 core languages. Additionally, SWCS leads efforts to professionalize the Army’s entire Special Operations Forces through the Special Forces Warrant Officer Institute and the David K. Thuma Noncommissioned Officer Academy. SWCS classes and field exercises are led by more than 400 military instructors, each of whom has operated in the same environments, for the same units as their students will. Their real-world experience enhances instruction and fosters camaraderie built on a shared sense of duty and commitment. Annually, one third of the uniformed instructors rotate back to the operational force from which they came, to maintain operational relevancy in both SWCS and the Army’s Special Operations units. As military personnel rotate between assignments, more than 200 expert civilian instructors and staff members support training, doctrine development and publishing initiatives.
The Army Special Operations Aviation Command (Airborne) organizes, mans, trains, resources and equips ARSOA units to provide responsive Special Operations Aviation support to Special Operations Forces. USASOAC (A) serves as the U.S. Army Special Operations Command Aviation staff proponent.

Headquartered at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, USASOAC (A) manages three subordinate commands: the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) located at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, and Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia, the USASOC Flight Company at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and the Special Operations Aviation Training Battalion at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

Special Operations Aviation traces its modern roots back to the early 1960s and the formation of Special Warfare Aviation Detachments as Army Special Forces prepared for Vietnam. The 22nd SWAD activated in March 1962 at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and supported Army Special Operations Forces.

In October 1965, the 281st Assault Helicopter Company was activated at Fort Benning, Georgia, becoming the first organized special operations helicopter unit in the U.S. Army.

As a result of the Desert One failed Iranian hostage rescue in April 1980, the Holloway Commission mandated a dedicated Special Operations Aviation force. The Army combined elements of the 101st Aviation Group (Air Assault), Charlie and Delta companies of the 158th Aviation Battalion (Blackhawks), members of the 229th Aviation Battalion (Little Birds), and Alpha company of the 159th Aviation Battalion (Chinooks) to form Task Force 160. Recognized as the Army's premiere night fighting aviation force, the modern-day 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) was officially activated in June 1990.

In July 2010, a Gray Eagle Unmanned Aircraft System element was assigned to Special Operations, branded with the USASOC patch, and deployed with SOF. Following a decade of persistent conflict, USASOC transformed the original rectorate of Special Operations Aviation into the USASOC Aviation staff proponent and command headquarters to separate the combat role of ARSOA from resourcing responsibilities. After a provisional activation in March 2011, the Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA) for the USASOC (A) was approved in March 2012 as a one-star command located at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.
The 75th Ranger Regiment is a unique Special Operations Force comprised of specially selected and well-trained Soldiers constantly tested to continue service with the Regiment. Rangers are a four-time volunteer force that provides the Nation a range of capabilities not found in any other special operations or conventional force. They are capable of conducting large-scale, joint forcible entry operations while simultaneously executing precision targeting operations raids across the globe. Additional capabilities include air assault and direct action raids seizing key terrain such as airfields, destroying strategic facilities, and capturing or killing the enemies of the Nation. The Regiment is an innovative organization that remains true to Abram’s Charter by developing the equipment and technologies that enable the U.S. Army to win the Nation’s wars. The Regiment leads the way for advancements in training and readiness that bridge the gap between special operations and conventional forces.

Today, the Regiment continues to deploy in support of overseas contingency operations while training for any mission they may be called upon to execute next.
The Black Daggers, are comprised entirely of Army volunteers who provide community outreach. They have diverse backgrounds and possess various military specialties. The team represents the professionalism and dedication of Special Operations Forces and performs aerial demonstrations in support of U.S. Army Special Operations Command community outreach and recruiting efforts.

The Black Daggers control a two-mile drop using their hands, arms, legs and shoulders. At a few thousand feet, they deploy their parachutes and land with pinpoint precision, whether it's on the infield of a football stadium or on their training grounds near Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

The principle technique demonstrated by the Black Daggers is the HALO, or High-Altitude, Low-Opening. This form of stealth insertion is used to land troops and equipment behind enemy lines.

To request the Black Daggers email: blackdaggers@socom.mil, Phone: 910-907-2370 or 910-364-1439, Fax: 910-907-2368.
In 1995, the U.S. Army Special Operations Command dedicated its Memorial Plaza and Memorial Wall as a tribute to Army Special Operations Soldiers killed in conflicts from the Korean War through the present. The formation of the Psychological Warfare School in April 1952 became the starting point for honoring the memory of fallen Special Operations Soldiers.

In 2009, USASOC began a project that included refacing the wall, recasting the bronze name plates, and installing an eagle sculpture. Once completed, the redesigned ARSOF Memorial Wall was unveiled at the 2010 Memorial Day ceremony.

Today, the granite Memorial Wall is topped with a bronze eagle designed by Oregon artist Lorenzo Ghiglieri and displays the names of those Army Special Operations Soldiers who have made the ultimate sacrifice. Representing more than 60 years of loyalty, commitment and service to our country, this wall has become the place to pay homage to the bravery, loyalty and honor of the Soldiers whose names appear here and the families who supported them.

This is a 'living' memorial that allows new names to be added to recognize the Soldiers lost during the previous year. As of Memorial Day 2018, when 12 names were added, there are 1,218 names on the wall. This includes 11 posthumous Medal of Honor awardees.
Memorial Plaza

The U.S. Army Special Operations Forces Memorial Plaza at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, was moved in 1994 from the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School to the newly built U.S. Army Special Operations Command headquarters building.

The plaza features the Special Forces Soldier statue, a parade field, a statue of legendary special operations Soldier Major Richard J. "Dick" Meadows, a field of memorial stones and a memorial wall.

The original plaza, first dedicated in November 1969, was built as a tribute to the more than 550 Special Forces Soldiers who had died up to that time in the Vietnam War. It was the first war memorial dedicated to Vietnam veterans in the United States.

MEMORIAL STONES

The memorial stones in the plaza represent many of the units and associations in Army Special Operations history. It is a 'living' memorial that allows new stones to be added. Initially started with only 11 stones, the number has since grown to its present 32.

The memorial stones include: Guerrilla Command; the Special Operations Association; the "Mike Force"; 1st Special Forces Group; MARS Task Force; 3rd Special Forces Group; 5th Special Forces Group; GHQ Raiders/1st Raider Company Korea; Task Force DAGGER; Task Force VIKING; OSS Detachment 101; First Special Service Force; the OSS Operational Groups; Alamo Scouts; WWII Ranger Battalions; U.S. Army Civil Affairs; Merrill's Marauders; 75th Ranger Regiment; Jedburghs; Ranger Infantry Companies (A); Special Forces Association; 75th Ranger Regiment Association; 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment; Psychological Operations; OSS Maritime Unit; Son Tay Raider Association; Special Forces Panama; 10th Special Forces Group; Civil Affairs Companies; Detachment A. Berlin Brigade; B-52 Project Delta; and U.S. Army Special Operations Support Command.
The Special Warfare Memorial statue, also known as “Bronze Bruce,” was the first Vietnam memorial in the United States and was dedicated in 1969. Since then, the statue has become the centerpiece of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command’s Memorial Plaza at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and is symbolic of all the command’s Soldiers. A Special Forces Soldier was chosen as the model for the statue since nearly all Army special operations Soldiers killed in Vietnam were Green Berets.

The 12-foot statue stands upon a rare green granite pedestal that brings the total height of the statue to 22 feet tall. It is representative of a Special Forces noncommissioned officer, wearing the rank of a sergeant first class, and is a powerful image of what U.S. Army Special Forces Soldiers stand for. The Soldier is dressed in the jungle fatigues worn in Vietnam by U.S. troops. He carries the M-16 rifle, a tool of his profession, in his right hand. His finger is not placed on the trigger of his weapon, but is “at the ready” in preparation for any threat.

His stance upon a rocky ledge with one foot crushing the snake is symbolic of tyranny in the world and the threats and dangers that will instantly bring him to action. While possessing power and extraordinary capabilities, he offers a gentle hand of friendship to the unseen oppressed of the world. He is fully able to exercise his training when it is needed, and he is also fully willing to help those in need. He is the perfect warrior from the past, a healer, a teacher, and an opponent of evil. He serves all over the world today and willingly faces any mission. His is the standard to which all Army Special Operations Soldiers aspire. Inside the base of the statue is a time capsule containing an SF uniform, a green beret, a bust of John F. Kennedy, and Kennedy’s speech presenting the Green Beret to Special Forces Soldiers.
Dick Meadows grew up in poverty and joined the Army in 1947 at the age of 16. By the time he was 20, he was a Master Sergeant assigned to the 187th Regimental Combat Team (Airborne) and volunteered for service in the Korean War.

Meadows joined the U.S. Army Special Forces in 1953. He trained with the British Special Air Service and was the first of only two foreigners at the time to be awarded SAS Wings. He went on to serve as a highly respected team leader of the Military Assistance Command Vietnam - Studies and Observation Group commando teams operating behind enemy lines in Laos and Cambodia during the Vietnam War.

He received a direct appointment to the rank of Captain in 1967. In 1970, he was a key planner of the Son Tay Raid in an attempt to rescue American prisoners of war held in a camp within 65 miles of Hanoi. He was the assault team leader as his team crashed into the center of the camp in an HH-3 Air Force helicopter in order to achieve total surprise, only to discover that the camp no longer held U.S. prisoners.

Meadows retired from the military in 1977, but remained a valued Special Operations advisor and leader for the rest of his life, most notably as a clandestine operative in Tehran, Iran, during the Iran Hostage rescue attempt in 1980. In addition, he helped organize special mission units and was a consultant in efforts to thwart criminal drug trafficking. For his selfless service as a private citizen, he was awarded the Presidential Citizen’s Medal for Distinguished Service. His military awards include the Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars and a Bronze Star Medal with Valor device. He died in 1995.
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