

**UNITED STATES  
SPECIAL OPERATIONS  
COMMAND**



*10th Anniversary  
History*

**SUPPORT / UPHOLD /  
RESTORE DEMOCRACY**

**JOINT ENDEAVOR/  
JOINT GUARD  
DENY FLIGHT  
PROVIDE PROMISE**

**PROVIDE  
COMFORT**

**DESERT SHIELD/  
STORM**

**COUNTERDRUG  
OPERATIONS**

**SAFE  
PASSAGE**

**JUST CAUSE  
PROMOTE LIBERTY**

**EARNEST  
WILL**

**URGENT  
FURY**

**ASSURED  
RESPONSE**

**DEMINE  
OPERATIONS**

**PROVIDE RELIEF  
RESTORE HOPE  
TF RANGER**



## FOREWORD

16 April 1997



Special Operations Forces (SOF) have been remarkably successful over the past ten years, a decade of excellence during which they proved themselves to be the most capable special operators in the world. But, this was not always the case, and SOF's achievements after the establishment of the US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) are most impressive considering how far the forces have come since Desert One in April 1980.

This nation's SOF provide our civilian leadership with highly trained, rapidly deployable joint forces capable of conducting special operations anywhere in the world. Over the past decade, special operations have been conducted along the entire continuum of operations, both in support of conventional forces and as independent missions in support of national security objectives. SOF have been valuable instruments of national policy because they have provided an array of capabilities to meet a myriad of operational requirements.

SOF are particularly effective in operations other than war. The language and regional expertise of SOF is well suited to international and coalition operations, foreign internal defense missions, and other missions where an in-depth understanding of a people and a region is an important component of mission success. As America's security strategy changes to contend with regional uncertainty and instability, SOF give decision makers more options. SOF's strength lies in their versatility and adaptability, as well as the success of their highly-skilled, relatively small-sized teams.

This study, prepared by USSOCOM's History and Research Office, documents what the SOF community has done since the Congress mandated the creation of USSOCOM and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict. As shown in the following pages, SOF are much more capable since the passage of the Nunn-Cohen Amendment to the 1987 DoD Authorization Act, close on the heels of the Goldwater-Nichols DoD Reorganization Act.

The US is increasingly challenged in unconventional ways, and SOF have the skills and leadership to meet tomorrow's challenges. SOF are truly the force of the future.

General Henry H. Shelton  
Commander in Chief  
United States Special Operations Command

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Henry H. Shelton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

# Contents

## *I. Founding and Evolution of USSOCOM*

- Founding of USSOCOM
- Evolution of the Command

## *II. Major Operations, 1987-Present*

- EARNEST WILL/PRIME CHANCE (Persian Gulf, 1987 - 89)
- JUST CAUSE/PROMOTE LIBERTY (Panama, 1989 - 90)
- DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM (Kuwait and Iraq, 1990 - 91)
- RESTORE HOPE/UNOSOM II (Somalia, 1992 - 95)
- SUPPORT/UPHOLD/RESTORE DEMOCRACY (Haiti, 1994 - 95)
- JOINT ENDEAVOR/JOINT GUARD (Bosnia, 1995 - present)

## *III. Future Challenges*

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# Chapter One

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## *Founding USSOCOM*

"I think we have an abort situation," Defense Secretary Harold Brown informed President Jimmy Carter on 24 April 1980. Carter simply responded, "Let's go with his [the ground commander's] recommendation." The mission to rescue 53 American hostages had failed. At a desolate site in Iran known as "Desert One," tragedy occurred minutes later when two aircraft collided on the ground and eight men died. The failed mission struck a blow to American prestige and further eroded the public's confidence in the US government.

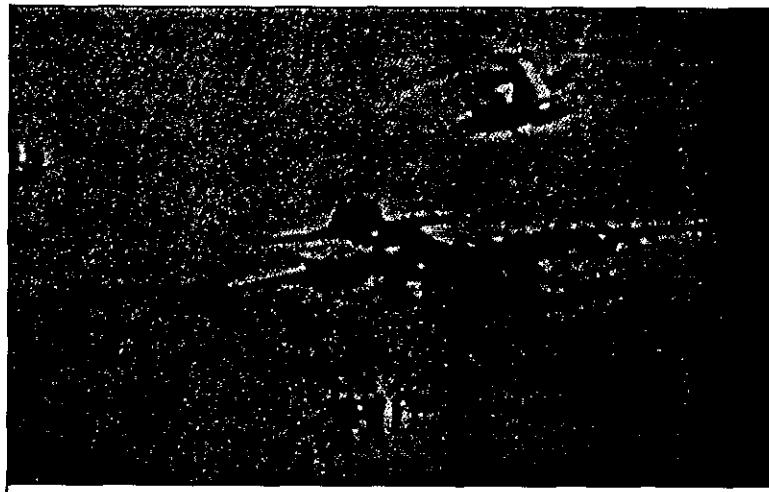
The event culminated a period of Special Operations Forces (SOF) decline in the 1970s. SOF capabilities had deteriorated throughout the post-Vietnam era, a time marked by considerable distrust between SOF and the conventional military and by significant funding cuts for special operations. The Desert One disaster, however, led the Defense Department to appoint an investigative panel, chaired by the former Chief of Naval Operations, ADM James L. Holloway. The Holloway Commission's findings caused the Defense Department to create a counterterrorist joint task force and the Special Operations Advisory Panel.

Desert One did serve to strengthen the resolve of some within the Department

of Defense to reform SOF. Army Chief of Staff General Edward C. "Shy" Meyer called for a further restructuring of special operations capabilities. Although unsuccessful at the joint level, Meyer nevertheless went on to consolidate Army SOF units under the new 1st Special Operations Command in 1982, a significant step for the improvement of Army SOF.

By 1983, there was a small but growing sense in Congress for the need of military reforms. In June, the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), under the chairmanship of Senator Barry Goldwater

(R-AZ), began a two-year-long study of the Defense Department which included an examination of SOF. Two events in October 1983 further demonstrated the need for change: the terrorist bombing attack in Lebanon,



*Wreckage of C-130 at Desert One where eight Americans died.*

which cost 237 Marine lives, refocused Congressional attention on the growing threat of low-intensity conflict, and the successful Grenada invasion was plagued by command and control and joint interoperability problems.

With concern mounting on Capitol Hill, the Department of Defense created the Joint Special Operations Agency on 1 January 1984; this agency, however, had neither operational nor command authority over any SOF. The Joint Special Operations Agency thus did little to improve SOF readiness, capabilities, or

policies--hardly what Congress had in mind as a systemic fix for SOF's problems. Within the Defense Department, there were a few staunch SOF supporters. Noel Koch, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, and his deputy, Lynn Rylander, both became outspoken advocates for broader SOF reforms.

While the Pentagon struggled to come to terms with needed SOF improvements, a few visionaries on Capitol Hill were determined to overhaul SOF. They included Senators Sam Nunn (D-GA) and William Cohen (R-ME), both members of the Armed Services Committee, and Representative Dan Daniel (D-VA), the chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee. Congressman Daniel had become convinced that the US military establishment was not interested in special operations, that the country's capability in this area was not good, and that SOF operational command and control was an endemic problem. Senators Nunn and Cohen also felt strongly that the Department of Defense was not preparing adequately for the threats of the future. Senator Nunn expressed a growing frustration with the Services' practice of reallocating monies appropriated for SOF modernization to non-SOF programs. Senator Cohen became convinced that the US had to establish a clearer organizational focus and chain of command for special operations.



Senator Sam Nunn  
(D-GA)



Senator William Cohen  
(R-ME)



Rep. Dan Daniel  
(D-VA)

In October 1985, the Senate Armed Services Committee published the results of its two-year review, overseen by James R. Locher III, entitled "Defense Organization: The Need For Change." Although the study looked at the entire military structure of the US, it also examined past special operations and speculated on the most likely future threats. This influential document led to the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.

By spring 1986, SOF advocates had introduced reform bills in both houses of Congress. On 15 May Senator Cohen introduced the Senate bill, cosponsored by Senator Nunn and others, which called for a joint military organization for special forces and establishment of an office in the Defense Department to ensure adequate funding for and policy emphasis on low-intensity conflict and special operations. Representative Daniel's proposal went even further--he wanted a national special operations agency headed by a civilian who would bypass the Joint Chiefs and report directly to the Secretary of Defense; this would keep Joint Chiefs and the Services out of the SOF budget process.

Congress held hearings on the two bills in the summer of 1986. Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, led the Pentagon's opposition to the bills. He proposed, as an alternative, a new special operations forces command led by a three-star lieutenant

general. This proposal was not well received on Capitol Hill—Congress wanted a four-star general in charge to give SOF more clout, and a number of retired military officers and others testified in favor of the need for reform.

By most accounts, retired Army Major General Richard Scholtes gave the most compelling testimony. He explained how, as the commander of the joint special operations task force, his forces were misused during the Grenada operation and were not allowed to use their unique capabilities by the conventional forces, causing relatively high SOF casualties. After his formal testimony, he met privately with a small number of Senators to elaborate on the problems that he had encountered as a SOF commander during Grenada.

Both the House and Senate passed SOF reform bills, and these went to a conference committee for reconciliation. While preparing for this conference, members of Congress received a letter from Noel Koch, who had resigned from his position as Assistant Secretary of Defense. He decried the poor state of affairs of SOF and low-intensity conflict in the Pentagon, providing added impetus to secure acceptable SOF reform legislation.

Senate staff members expected a battle with their House counterparts, but the House conferees supported a compromise. The conference resulted in a bill that would establish a unified combatant command headed by a four-star general for all SOF, an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, a coordinating board for low-intensity conflict within the National Security Council, and a new Major Force Program (MFP 11) specifically for SOF (the so-called "SOF checkbook"). The House had conceded on the issue of a new civil-

ian-led agency, but insisted on including MFP 11 to protect SOF funding. The final bill, attached as a rider to the 1987 Defense Appropriations Act, amended the Goldwater-Nichols Act and was signed into law in October 1986.

The law, known as the Nunn-Cohen Amendment to the Goldwater-Nichols Act, passed over the objections of the Department of Defense and the Reagan Administration. For the first time Congress had mandated that the President create a unified combatant command. Congress clearly intended to force the Department of Defense and the Administration to face up to the realities of past failures and emerging threats. The Department of Defense and the Administration were responsible for implementing the law, and Congress subsequently passed two additional bills over the next two years to ensure proper implementation.

The legislation promised to improve SOF in several respects. MFP-11 was meant to provide SOF with control over its own resources, better enabling it to modernize the force. Additionally, the law sought to build interservice cooperation: a single commander for all SOF would promote interoperability among the forces assigned to the same command. The legislators wanted both civilian and military SOF advocates within the Department of Defense and accomplished this by mandating the establishment of a four-star commander in chief and an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict [ASD (SO/LIC)].

Implementing the provisions and mandates of the Cohen-Nunn Act was neither rapid nor smooth. One of the first issues to surface was appointing an ASD (SO/LIC), whose principal duties included

supervision (including oversight of policy and resources) of special operations activities and low-intensity conflict activities of the Department of Defense. The Congress agreed to increase the number of assistant secretaries of defense from eleven to twelve, but the Department of Defense was not eager to fill this new billet. Concerned over the department's motives, Congress in December 1987 passed Public Law 100-189, which directed Secretary of the Army John O. Marsh to carry out the duties until a suitable replacement was approved by the Senate.

For nine months, Secretary Marsh retained both jobs and maneuvered his way through Pentagon resistance to get ASD (SO/LIC) on course and functioning. Finally, the administration nominated retired Ambassador Charles Whitehouse as ASD (SO/LIC). The Senate confirmed Whitehouse who assumed his new job nearly 18 months after the law was passed.

Meanwhile, the establishment of USSOCOM provided its own measure of excitement. A quick solution to manning and basing a brand new unified command was to examine existing commands and reflag one. United States Readiness Command (USREDCOM), an often misunderstood product of an earlier age, did not appear to have a viable mission in the post Goldwater-Nichols era. And its Commander in Chief, General James Lindsay, had had some special operations experience.

In an 8 January 1987 report to the Joint Chiefs, the Joint Special Operations Agency offered two options for establish-

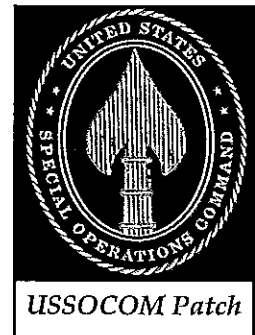
ing a new command: either establish the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) using USREDCOM facilities and resources, or establish USSOCOM without disestablishing USREDCOM. The first option offered the earliest possible operational date by capitalizing on the existing USREDCOM facilities and staff infrastructure. USREDCOM's missions could be transferred to other existing commands. On 23 January 1987, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended disestablishing USREDCOM to the Secretary of Defense to provide billets and facilities for USSOCOM. By law, USSOCOM had to be activated no later than 16 April 1987.

President Ronald Reagan approved the establishment of the new Command on 13 April 1987. The Department of Defense activated USSOCOM on 16 April 1987 and nominated General Lindsay to be the first Commander in Chief (USCINCSOC). The Senate accepted him without debate.

USSOCOM had its activation ceremony on 1 June 1987. Guest speakers included William H. Taft, IV, Deputy Secretary of Defense, and Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr., two men who had opposed the Nunn-Cohen amendment. Admiral Crowe's speech at the ceremony advised General Lindsay to integrate the new Command into the mainstream military: "First, break down the wall that has more or less come between special operations forces and the other parts of our military, the wall that some people will try to build higher. Second, educate the rest of the military—spread a recognition and understanding of what



reflag one. United States Readiness Command (USREDCOM), an often misunderstood product of an earlier age, did not appear to have a viable mission in the



you do, why you do it, and how important it is that you do it. Last, integrate your efforts into the full spectrum of our military capabilities." Putting this advice into action, General Lindsay knew, would pose significant challenges (a "sporty" course, he called it), considering the opposition the Defense Department had shown.

### *USSOCOM Commanders, 1987-1996*

There have been four CINCSOCs since 1987—Generals James J. Lindsay (16 April 1987 - 27 June 1990), Carl W. Stiner (27 June 1990 - 20 May 1993), Wayne A. Downing (20 May 1993 - 29 February 1996), and Henry H. Shelton (29 February 1996 to the present). Each CINCSOC had unique challenges and opportunities, and each left his mark on the SOF community in the course of responding to significant changes on the military landscape. The demise of the Soviet Union and a concomitant rise in regional instability, the downsizing of the US military, the appearance of new aggressor states, and technological advances facilitating the development of weapons of mass destruction, all led to an increased use of SOF by the conventional US military, US Ambassadors, and other government agencies. Through all of this, USSOCOM proved again and again how "special" its forces were.

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing General Lindsay was to make the Command the vital driving force behind SOF revitalization that Congress mandated without alienating a whole generation of

conventional military leaders. This was no mean feat, given the opposition to the Command's mere existence in many military circles. Accordingly, as the first CINCSOC, he developed a hierarchy of priorities to get the Command functioning, which included: organize, staff, train, and equip the headquarters; establish the relationships necessary to discharge its roles and missions; create Major Force Program 11 (MFP-11, the Command's "checkbook")

to ensure SOF controlled its financial destiny; build command and control relationships with the components, ASD (SO/LIC), and the Special Operations Commands assigned to the theater CINCs; define worldwide SOF requirements; and plot the future of the Command. General Lindsay also faced two major operational tests—Operation EARNEST WILL/PRIME CHANCE I in the Persian Gulf, and Operations JUST CAUSE and PROMOTE LIBERTY in Panama. The use of SOF by the theater CINCs (known as the operational tempo, or OPTEMPO) increased significantly during Lindsay's tenure.

The complex, politically sensitive process of establishing a new unified command inevitably took longer than three years and extended into General Stiner's tenure as second CINCSOC. Like his predecessor, General Stiner pushed the Command to fulfill all of the provisions of the Nunn-Cohen

Amendment. Perhaps most important, General Stiner oversaw the implementation of the provision directing the Command to "develop and acquire special operations peculiar equipment, material, supplies, and services." After DESERT STORM, General



*General James J. Lindsay  
USCINCSOC 1987 - 1990*



*General Carl W. Stiner  
USCINCSOC 1990 - 1993*



Stiner devoted a great deal of time to raising public awareness about SOF's accomplishments. Supporting the theater CINCs' and maintaining SOF combat readiness were also top priorities. During his tenure, the Command first submitted fully-supported budgets based on SOF mission requirements. General Stiner also succeeded in convincing the Secretary of Defense to designate Psychological Operations (PSYOP) and Civil Affairs (CA) as SOF. During Stiner's three years as CINCSOC, USSOCOM supported a number of operations worldwide, most notably DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM, PROVIDE COMFORT, PROVIDE RELIEF, and RESTORE HOPE. SOF OPTEMPO rose 35 percent during his tenure.

On 20 May 1993 General Wayne A. Downing became the third CINCSOC; he brought unique qualifications to the position, after having been a past director of



General Wayne A. Downing  
USCINCSOC 1993-1996

the USSOCOM Washington Office and past commander of both the Joint Special Operations Command and the United States Army Special Operations Command. The main challenges of his tenure were to continue the revitalization of SOF and to prepare the SOF community for the 21st century. To these ends, General Downing streamlined the acquisition of SOF-specific equipment, increased the Command's focus on its "customers," and realigned SOF budget requirements with the reduced Defense Department budgets.

In the realm of professional military education, General Downing activated the Joint Special Operations Forces Institute on

1 August 1994. The Institute used a common doctrinal base to integrate SOF training, education, war gaming, and research across the operational spectrum. He instituted changes in how resources were allocated for the future that resulted in a Strategic Planning Process which promised to put the Command's declining budget to best use. During his watch the SOF OPTEMPO again increased. SOF participated in Operation UNOSOM II, SUPPORT and UPHOLD DEMOCRACY, and JOINT ENDEAVOR, as well as many smaller contingencies and deployments.

## *Evolution of the Command*

### Mission and Organization

USSOCOM's mission, as delineated in the 1987 JCS Manual 71-87, was to prepare Special Operations Forces (SOF) to carry out assigned missions and, if directed by the President or the Secretary of Defense, to plan for and conduct special operations. Mission responsibilities were:

- *Develop SOF doctrine, tactics, techniques and procedures.*
- *Conduct specialized courses of instruction for all SOF.*
- *Train assigned forces and ensure interoperability of equipment and forces.*
- *Monitor the preparedness of SOF assigned to other unified commands.*
- *Monitor the promotions, assignments, retention, training and professional development of all SOF personnel.*
- *Consolidate and submit program and budget proposals for Major Force Program 11 (MFP-11).*
- *Develop and acquire special operations-peculiar equipment, materiel, supplies, and services.*

These last two tasks, managing MFP-11 and developing and acquiring special operations peculiar items, made USSOCOM unique among the unified com-

mands. These responsibilities--dubbed "service-like"--had heretofore been performed exclusively by the Services, and it was extraordinary for the command to be given control over SOF force structure, equipping, and resourcing. General Lindsay organized the Command along the lines of a typical unified command "J directorate" structure, with two modifications: he assigned MFP-11 and acquisition responsibilities to the J-8 (Resources) directorate, and created a new J-9 directorate, responsible for PSYOP and CA support, on 15 June 1988.

The Command's mission statement later evolved with the changing geopolitical environment. With the fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of instability around the world, SOF's capabilities were in ever greater demand. To reflect this increased operational tempo, which called for SOF involvement in nontraditional activities [labeled operations other than war (OOTW)], General Downing modified the command's mission statement in 1993. The revised wording read: "Prepare SOF to successfully conduct worldwide special operations, civil affairs, and psychological operations in peace and war in support of the regional combatant commanders, American ambassadors and their country teams, and other government agencies." USSOCOM also added counterproliferation and information operations/command and control warfare to its list of principal missions, and broadened the focus of counterterrorism to combating terrorism to include defensive measures (antiterrorism).

### USSOCOM Forces

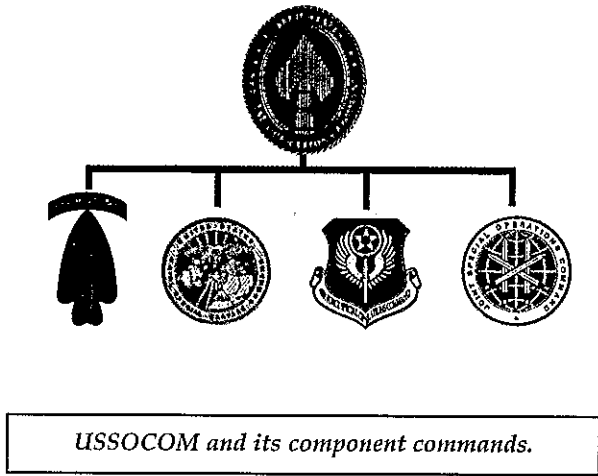
The activation of USSOCOM required the assignment of components

and forces, a task not without controversy. The law establishing USSOCOM said, "Unless otherwise directed by the Secretary of Defense, all active and reserve special operations forces of all armed forces stationed in the United States shall be assigned to the Special Operations Command." For the activation of USSOCOM, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger initially assigned three component commands and most of their forces. He assigned to USSOCOM the 23rd Air Force, located at Hurlburt Field, Florida; the Naval Special Warfare Command, headquartered at Coronado, San Diego, California; and the Army's 1st SOCOM, at Ft Bragg, North Carolina. Weinberger assigned the Joint Special Operations Command on 14 August 1987, after USSOCOM had become fully operational.

At the time of its assignment, 1st SOCOM had charge of all the US Army's special operations units. Its mission was to prepare, provide, and sustain Army SOF to conduct foreign internal defense, unconventional warfare, special intelligence, psychological operations, strike operations, and related special operations. The forces belonging to 1st SOCOM included: the 1st, 5th, 7th and 10th Special Forces Groups (Airborne); 4th Psychological Operations Group; 96th Civil Affairs; 75th Ranger Regiment; 160th Special Operations Aviation Group (Airborne), and numerous Reserve and National Guard units. The John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School was also part of 1st SOCOM.

Not all of these units, however, were immediately transferred to USSOCOM--Secretary Weinberger withheld the Active Duty and Reserve Psychological Operations (PSYOP) and Civil Affairs (CA) units, pending a special review. Earlier in 1987, the Office of the Secretary of Defense

had proposed creating a separate sub-unified command for PSYOP and CA forces. Like other SOF units, PSYOP and CA had suffered severe cutbacks during the 1970s and 1980s, and some proponents feared that they would not fare much better under USSOCOM. General Lindsay opposed the plan, arguing that a PSYOP and CA directorate should be established at USSOCOM so that the Command could use its authority to safeguard these SOF assets. Admiral Crowe agreed, and on 15 October 1987 Secretary Weinberger assigned all Army and Air Force Active and Reserve Component PSYOP and CA units to USSOCOM.



Secretary Weinberger's actions,



*Civil Affairs soldier giving humanitarian assistance.*

however, did not settle the PSYOP and CA issues completely. During General Stiner's tenure,

another long-standing issue in assignment of PSYOP and CA was addressed. Reserve and National Guard leaders argued that these forces were assigned to USSOCOM only in wartime, upon mobilization. General Stiner pushed through an initiative that the Secretary of Defense approved in March 1993, designating PSYOP and CA as SOF. This decision enabled USSOCOM to command and control these units in peace-

time as well, which greatly improved the Command's ability to fund, train, equip, and organize.

When the Navy created the Naval Special Warfare Command as USSOCOM's naval component on 16 April 1987, the only organization assigned to it was the Naval Special Warfare

Center (the training command) at Coronado. Naval Special Warfare Groups I and II (and their SEALs and Special Boat Units) were not assigned because the Navy characterized these organizations and their forces as belonging to the Pacific and Atlantic fleets, respectively, and, therefore, not available for assignment to USSOCOM. Secretary of the Navy James Webb and Navy leadership felt the assignment of the



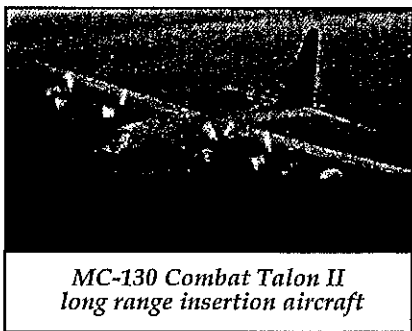
*SEAL during submarine training.*

special warfare assets to USSOCOM would detract from their close relationship with the fleets.

General Lindsay maintained that the special warfare forces rightfully belonged to USSOCOM since they were based in the United States. He reasoned that the Groups' relationships to the fleets were no

different than a Special Forces Group's assignment to a particular theater, and he wanted the shore-based Naval Special Warfare units assigned to USSOCOM in order to integrate them fully with other SOF. On 23 October 1987 Secretary Weinberger ruled in favor of USSOCOM. Accordingly, operational control of the SEALs, Special Boat Units, and Naval Special Warfare Groups passed to the Naval Special Warfare Command on 1 March 1988, and that command assumed administrative control for these units on 1 October 1988.

The 23rd Air Force was a unique organization with two separate but interrelated missions: it was both a numbered air force assigned to the Military Airlift Command (MAC), with worldwide airlift responsibilities, and as USSOCOM's Air Force component, it supported Special Operations Forces of all services. Secretary Weinberger assigned only the 23rd's special operations functions and units to USSOCOM, including its Reserve and National Guard units and the Air Force Special Operations School, which left MAC with oversight responsibility for the 23rd's other mission areas (such as aeromedical airlift, rescue and weather reconnaissance, and operational support airlift missions). Since General Lindsay expected all components to be major command equivalents,



*MC-130 Combat Talon II  
long range insertion aircraft*

this arrangement created problems.

From the outset, USSOCOM had wanted the 23rd "purified" of its non-SOF elements.

MAC went along with this request, reassigning hospital, base support, and aeromedical airlift operations to another

numbered air force, but it balked over assignment of certain Air Force personnel specialties to USSOCOM. This standoff convinced General Lindsay that the current organizational arrangement thwarted his efforts to build the Command that Congress had mandated. The solution, he decided, was to remove the 23rd from MAC's purview and elevate it to a major air command. General Larry Welsh, the Air Force Chief of Staff, accepted General Lindsay's recommendation and, on 22 May 1990, redesignated the 23rd AF as the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC).

### Budget and POM Development

The creation of MFP-11 was an important priority for both General Lindsay and Congress. Addressing USSOCOM's unique budget responsibilities ultimately required supplemental legislation to clarify the Command's authority. Although the Nunn-Cohen Amendment had created MFP-11 to reform SOF funding, the wording of the law permitted varying interpretations, and some officials in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) argued that the new command should not submit its own Program Objective Memorandum (POM). General Lindsay and Ambassador Whitehouse, the ASD (SO/LIC), argued just the opposite and worked extremely hard to win approval of a POM and budget for the command.

This debate lingered until September 1988, when Senators Nunn and Cohen clarified Congressional intent, saying that the sponsors of the law "fully intended that the commander of the Special Operations Command would have sole responsibility for the preparation of the POM." Congress enacted Public Law 100-456 that same month, which

directed USCINCSOC to submit a POM directly to the Secretary of Defense. Subsequently, the Senate Armed Services Committee told USCINCSOC to assume full budgetary responsibilities by fiscal year 1992.

On 24 January 1989, the Assistant Secretary of Defense, William M. Taft IV, signed a memorandum giving USCINCSOC budgetary authority over MFP-11, and soon afterwards, OSD told USSOCOM to take control over selected MFP-11 programs effective 1 October 1990 and take total MFP-11 responsibility in October 1991. These events marked the first time that a CINC was granted authority for a budget and POM.

The command needed to create a new Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS) model which defined how to structure a POM and budget for all SOF. Even with a Congressional mandate, the Command found it difficult to establish MFP-11. Because of a staff shortfall, the command took a measured approach to assuming these tasks. The POM was the first step, with the initial one completed and submitted in 1988 through the Department of the Air Force. Based on Secretary Taft's directive, the Command assumed budget execution authority by October 1990. In 1991 the Command began to submit fully-supported POMs: this was the first time USSOCOM researched SOF mission requirements and developed the analysis for the POM justification instead of "crosswalking" requirements which the individual Services had developed in previous years. The establishment of MFP-11 set up a more focused resource process and ensured a balanced review of special operations requirements and programs.

### Systems Acquisitions and Force Modernization

To the congressional advocates of SOF revitalization, a primary rationale for establishing the Command was the Services' failure to modernize SOF systems. Keen congressional interest in this area continued after the Command was activated, and a 17 November 1987 conference report accompanying the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 1988 and 1989 criticized the Defense Department's lack of progress in procuring "SOF-peculiar equipment," what some on the Hill labelled as "malicious implementation." To correct any ambiguity regarding CINCSCOC's procurement authority, Congress enacted an additional piece of legislation on 4 December 1987 which authorized CINCSCOC to function as a "Head of Agency" for SOF acquisition programs, an authority normally reserved for the Service Secretaries.

The Command took another major step forward when it established the Special Operations Research, Development, and Acquisition Center (SORDAC). As approved by the Deputy Secretary of Defense on 10 December 1990, the SORDAC was to be located in Tampa, Florida, with authorization for a senior executive service (SES) director reporting to CINCSCOC. By early 1991, SORDAC had started performing its acquisition functions and operated within the Resources Directorate (J-8). In 1992 General Stiner consolidated the Command's acquisition and contracting management functions in a new directorate under a Deputy for Acquisition, who was named the Command's Acquisition Executive and Senior Procurement Executive.

To discharge its acquisition responsibilities, the Command concentrated on fielding systems meeting user requirements in the shortest possible time. Emphasizing a streamlined acquisition

process, the Command's procurement strategy was to modify existing weapons or buy "non-developmental" (off-the-shelf



AC-130U Spectre Gunship

technology) systems—an approach which permitted quick, economical improvements to operational capabilities.

In the past decade USSOCOM fielded a number of modified or new systems affecting nearly every aspect of special operations. Some of the more notable ones were the MC-130H Combat Talon II long-range insertion aircraft and the SOCRATES automated intelligence handling system, both used in Operation DESERT STORM, and the Cyclone class patrol coastal ships, used in

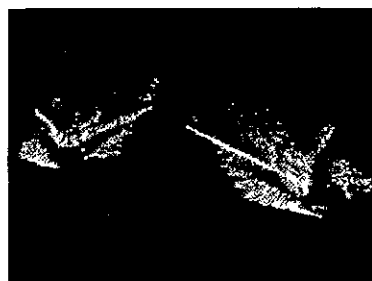


MH-47E Chinook Helicopter

Operations SUPPORT DEMOCRACY and UPHOLD DEMOCRACY. Some other significant acquisitions were the

MH-47E Chinook, a medium-range helicopter designed to conduct insertion operations under all weather conditions; the AC-130U Spectre gunship, used for close air support and reconnaissance; and the Mark V Special Operations Craft, a high performance combatant boat capable of being transported over land and aboard C-5 aircraft.

Moreover, USSOCOM's acquisition capability was used a number of times during contingencies to provide SOF with the latest technology or to accelerate modifications. During DESERT STORM, for example, Chinooks were modified with aircraft survivability equipment before deploying



Mark-V Special Operations Craft

to the medium-threat Iraqi area of operations. More recently, specialized cold-weather gear was procured for SOF being deployed to Bosnia during JOINT ENDEAVOR.

### OPTEMPO and the Need for Quality People

There has been an amazing increase in SOF deployments over the past decade, measured in both personnel deployments and in the number of countries visited. Special Operations, Psychological Operations, and Civil Affairs forces, both Active and Reserve, were employed so frequently that the Department of Defense listed them as "high demand/low density" assets, requiring special monitoring to avoid overuse. During fiscal year 1993, USSOCOM averaged 2,036 personnel deployed overseas per week; by FY 1996 the average had more than doubled, climbing to 4,613. What caused this dramatic increase?

The fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War resulted in (to use General Lindsay's term) a more "violent peace"—regional destabilization, a new round of terrorism, and an increased availability of weapons of mass destruction. Simply put, the changed military threat made SOF more relevant to the National Military Strategy, a trend that has shown no sign of abating.

Why were SOF used so often as an instrument of national policy? SOF were versatile, ready, and uniquely capable of operating in all politico-military environments, skilled at peacetime training, foreign internal defense, and nation assistance

operations, as well as full-blown conventional warfare. The versatility and capabilities of SOF gave them particular usefulness in areas where political constraints prevented using larger, more visible conventional forces. In combat situations SOF were "force multipliers," conducting special reconnaissance, direct action, and coalition support, while in peacetime, they deployed to every continent and performed foreign internal defense missions, supported the theater CINCs' strategy, and did things that conventional forces were not capable of doing.

Another important reason for their increased use was the heightened awareness of SOF capabilities on the part of the theater CINCs and their staffs. Some of this increased awareness was the result of USSOCOM's efforts to involve the other CINCs in such activities as planning and joint mission area analyses, and to support their Special Operations Commands with MFP-11 funding and personnel. Moreover, SOF were the theater commanders' force of choice for operations other than war, for such diverse operations as counterdrug and demining training, foreign internal defense, medical exercises, or handling emergency situations like PACIFIC HAVEN, where CA and PSYOP forces helped Kurdish refugees prepare to immigrate to the US.

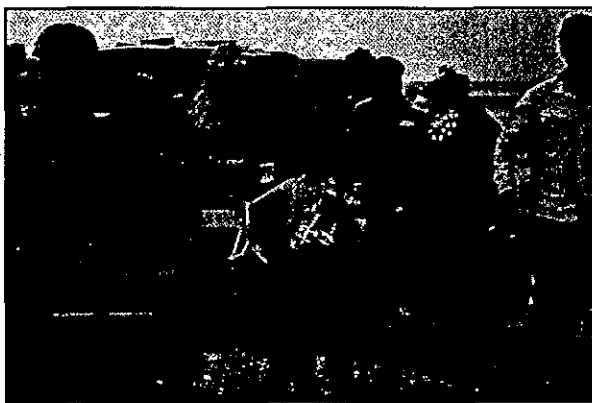
Each CINC SOC has said that one of USSOCOM's basic needs was to continue to attract and retain the type of people who

could not only meet the rigorous warfighting standards of special operations but also adapt to the role of warrior-diplomat.



*AF Special Tactics Patrol on motorcycles.*

in combat, SOF have often gone deep behind enemy lines—for example, in running strategic reconnaissance missions during DESERT STORM—or conducting "tip



*CA soldiers aiding Iraqi Kurds.*

of the spear" H-Hour strike missions in JUST CAUSE. Regardless of their military mission, SOF soldiers, sailors, and airmen have stood out as representing America's finest.

General Downing distilled the need for quality people into the SOF Truths:

- *Humans are more important than hardware.*
- *Quality is better than quantity.*
- *Special Operations Forces cannot be mass produced.*
- *Competent Special Operations Forces cannot be created after emergencies.*

General Downing also instituted a total quality leadership program within USSOCOM. Under his guidance, the command used "total quality" methods to clarify its mission, define a vision for the

future, and combine them into a strategic plan. Moral and professional values were the cornerstones of his strategic plan: courage, competence, creativity, integrity, and belief in people. He focused the command on the needs of its customers--the regional combatant commanders, American Ambassadors and their country teams, and other government agencies.

A senior independent examiner who analyzed organizational climate surveys for USSOCOM indicated General Downing had taken an already good organization and engineered the most dramatic improvement that he had ever seen in or out of government.



*Operation PROVIDE COMFORT (1991-1996): Following DESERT STORM, Saddam Hussein tried to eradicate the Kurdish population in northern Iraq after it revolted against his rule. Kurds sought refuge in the mountains of Turkey, where as many as 2,000 a day were dying. The US and its Allies established safe havens and provided humanitarian assistance. SOF spearheaded this effort. Special Forces, supported by MH-53J Pave Lows, located camp sites and organized the relief effort. CA soldiers provided medical assistance, food and shelter, and managed camp operations. Joint SOF medical teams saved thousands of lives. These efforts were supported by SEALs, Special Boat Unit personnel, and PSYOP units. After the Kurds were repatriated to Iraq, SOF maintained its presence until PROVIDE COMFORT ended in 1996.*



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## CHAPTER II

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### *MAJOR OPERATIONS: 1987 TO PRESENT*

**IRAN:  
OPERATION EARNEST WILL/  
PRIME CHANCE  
1987 - 1989**

From 1987 to 1989, the United States ensured the right of merchant ships to transit the Persian Gulf during Operation EARNEST WILL, an operation designed to protect neutral oil tankers from Iranian attack during the Iran-Iraq War. Because of Iranian attacks, Kuwait asked the United States in December 1986 to register 11 Kuwaiti tankers as American ships so that they could be escorted by the US Navy. President Reagan agreed to the Kuwaiti request on 10 March 1987, hoping it would deter Iranian attacks. Operation EARNEST WILL was planned by the US Central Command (CENTCOM) under General George B. Crist.

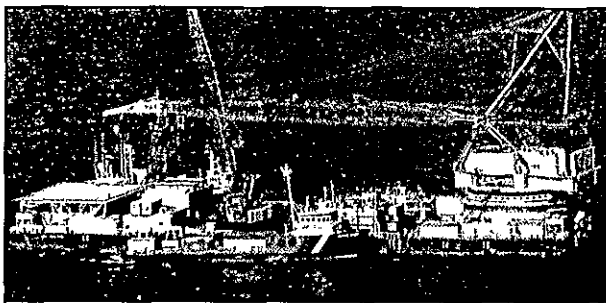
The protection offered by US naval vessels, however, did not deter Iran, which used mines and small boats to harass the convoys steaming to and from Kuwait. To stop these attacks, the US needed more than just surface combatant warships. It needed surveillance and patrol forces in the northern Persian Gulf and bases for these patrol forces. Special Operations Forces, including Army helicopters and Navy SEALs and Special Boat Units, had the best trained personnel and most capable equipment for monitoring hostile activity, particularly at night when the Iranians conducted some of their missions. The Army's special operations helicopter crews trained to fly and fight at night. These helicopters were difficult to spot on radar and were relatively quiet, allowing them to get close to a target. Shallow-draft naval special warfare patrol boats could ply waters that had not been swept for mines.

In late July, RADM Harold J. Bernsen, commander of the Middle East Force, asked for naval special warfare assets. Six Mark III Patrol Boats (PBs), four Mark II Patrol Boats



*Iran AJR, caught laying mines, was disabled by Army Special Operations helicopters and boarded by SEALs.*

Riverine (PBRs), two Seafox patrol craft, two SEAL platoons, and an SBU detachment deployed in August. At the same time, two MH-6 and four AH-6 Army special operations helicopters and 39 men received orders to the region; this deployment was called Operation PRIME CHANCE I.



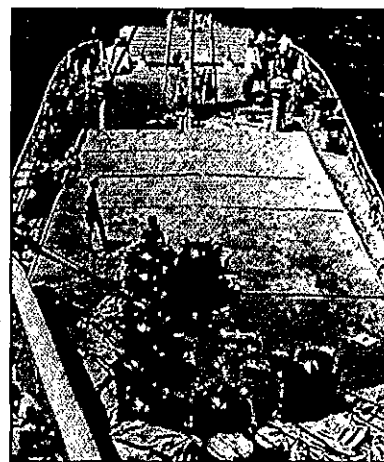
*Hercules was used by Army and Navy SOF as a base.*

Next, Middle East Force planners recommended CENTCOM use two mobile sea bases to house the special operations assets without having to ask local nations for land bases. Two oil servicing barges in the Gulf, *Hercules* and *Wimbrown VII*, were leased for six months on 6 September 1987. The mobile sea bases allowed Special Operations Forces in the northern Persian Gulf to thwart clandestine Iranian mining and small boat attacks. Each mobile sea base housed 10 small boats, three helicopters, and sufficient fuel, ammunition, equipment, and workshops to support their operations, and more than 150 men. In October the mobile sea bases became operational.

In the interim, SOF operated from various surface vessels, including the command ship *LaSalle* (AGF-3) and the amphibious assault ship *Guadalcanal* (LPH-7). On 8 August, the helicopters, designated SEABATs, escorted the third EARNEST WILL convoy and looked for signs of Iranian mine laying. The patrol boats began the escort missions on 9 September.

It was not long before the Special Operations Forces showed what they could do. On September 21, they caught Iranians in the act of laying mines, and the Reagan Administration had its smoking gun. That evening, one MH-6 and two AH-6 helicopters took off from the frigate *Jarrett* (FFG-33) to track an Iranian ship, the *Iran Ajr*. The helicopters observed the *Iran Ajr* reverse course, extinguish its lights, and begin laying mines. Receiving permission to attack, the helicopters fired guns and rockets, stopping the ship momentarily. After the *Iran Ajr* got underway again, the helicopters resumed firing until the crew abandoned ship.

RADM Bernsen then ordered the SEAL platoon from the *Guadalcanal* to board the *Iran Ajr*. The boarding force also included an explosive ordnance detachment and a Marine force reconnaissance team. Two patrol boats went to provide security. Shortly after first light, the SEALs approached the disabled vessel



*Mines found aboard the Iran Ajr.*

in a landing craft, mechanized (LCM). The SEALs boarded the ship and found nine mines and various arming mechanisms. The patrol boats rescued 10 Iranians in a lifeboat and 13 in life vests floating nearby. Documents found aboard the ship showed where the Iranians had laid mines, implicating Iran in mining international waters. The *Iran Ajr* was sunk in deep water on 26 September.

The mobile sea bases entered service in early October in the northern Persian Gulf. Every few days they changed their location to frustrate Iranian targeting. With the bases in service, US patrol craft and helicopters could then monitor Iranian patrol craft in the northern gulf and deter their attacks. Within a few days, patrol boat and AH/MH-6 helicopter patrols had determined the Iranian pattern of activity—the Iranians hid during the day near oil and gas separation platforms in Iranian waters, or at a base on Farsi Island, and at night they headed toward the Middle Shoals Buoy, a navigation aid for the tankers.

With this knowledge, Special Operations Forces sent three of their helicopters and two patrol craft towing one



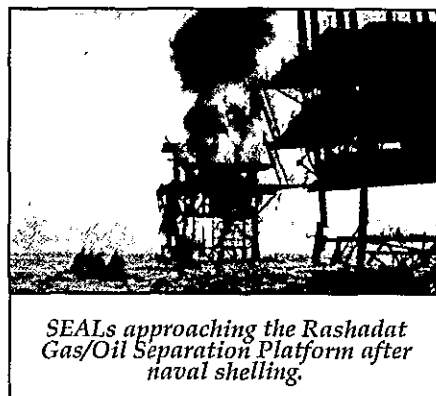
AH-6 fire sank this Iranian Boghammar during a firefight.

Seafox toward the buoy on the night of 8 October. Arriving first, the AH/MH-6 helicopters found three

Iranian boats that opened fire on them. The helicopters immediately returned fire, sinking all three. Following the helicopter assault, patrol boats moved in and picked up five Iranian survivors who were eventually repatriated to Iran.

The Special Operations Forces next saw action on 19 October, three days after an Iranian Silkworm anti-ship missile hit the reflagged tanker *Sea Isle City* near the oil terminal outside Kuwait City. Seventeen crewmen and the American captain were injured by the missile. In Operation NIMBLE ARCHER, four

destroyers shelled the two Rashadat oil platforms in the Rostam oil field on 19 October. After the shelling, a SEAL platoon and a demolition unit planted explosive charges on one of those platforms to destroy it. The SEALs next boarded and searched a third platform two miles away. Documents and radios were taken for intelligence purposes.



SEALs approaching the Rashadat Gas/Oil Separation Platform after naval shelling.

After NIMBLE ARCHER, *Hercules* and *Wimbrown VII* continued to operate near Karan Island, within 15 miles of each other, and sent patrol boats and helicopters on regular patrols. In November 1987, two MH-60 Blackhawk helicopters arrived to provide nighttime combat search and rescue. As EARNEST WILL continued, Special Operations Forces and equipment were rotated on a regular basis; eventually, some personnel rotated back to the Persian Gulf for second or even third tours. In 1988 the Army replaced the AH/MH-6 helicopters and crews with OH-58D AHIP helicopters.

On 14 April 1988, approximately 65 miles east of Bahrain, the US frigate *Samuel B. Roberts* (FFG-58) hit a mine, blowing a 30 by 23 foot hole in the hull. Ten sailors were injured. The United States struck back hard, attacking the Iranian frigate *Sabalan* and oil platforms in the Sirri and Sassan oil fields on 18 April during Operation PRAYING MANTIS. After US warships bombarded the Sirri platform and set it ablaze, a UH-60 with a SEAL platoon

flew toward the platform but was unable to get close enough because of the roaring fire. Secondary explosions soon wrecked the platform.

Elsewhere, US forces wreaked havoc on Iranian vessels, sinking two and damaging five others. In the northern Persian Gulf, Iranian forces fired two Silkworm missiles at the mobile sea barges, but chaff fired by the frigate *Gary* decoyed the missiles. Later that day Iranian F-4 jet fighters and patrol boats approached the mobile sea bases, but fled when *Gary* locked its fire control radars on them.

Thereafter, Iranian attacks on neutral ships dropped drastically. On 18 July, Iran accepted the United Nations cease fire; on 20 August 1988, the Iran-Iraq War ended. Special Operations Forces began withdrawing in the wake of the cease-fire. On 16 July, the last AH-6 and MH-6 in theater departed. In December 1988 the *Wimbrown VII* entered a Bahraini shipyard for reconversion to civilian use. The final EARNEST WILL convoy was run in December 1988. The US Navy had escorted 259 ships in 127 convoys since June 1987. The mobile sea base *Hercules* was not withdrawn until June 1989. The remaining SEALs, patrol boats, and helicopters returned to the United States during summer 1989.

Special Operations Forces provided the critical skills necessary to help CENTCOM gain control of the northern Persian Gulf and counter Iran's small boats and minelayers. Their ability to work at night proved vital, since Iranian units used darkness to hide their actions. The most important lessons to come out of Operation EARNEST WILL were the need to have highly trained Special Operations Forces capable of responding rapidly to crises anywhere around the globe and the vital need for interoperability between conventional and special forces.

**PANAMA:  
OPERATION JUST CAUSE/  
PROMOTE LIBERTY  
1989-1990**

The invasion of Panama, known as Operation JUST CAUSE, was an unusually delicate, violent, and complex operation; its key objectives were the capture of Manuel Noriega and the establishment of a democratic government. America applied overwhelming combat power in the invasion, seeking to minimize loss of life and destruction of property, and to speed the transition to friendly relations. The US had close ties with Panama and had bases located there, and US troops had a long-standing relationship with the Panama Defense Forces (PDF). American SOF personnel, having been based in Panama, were acutely aware of the delicate nature of the mission and were instrumental in achieving US objectives.

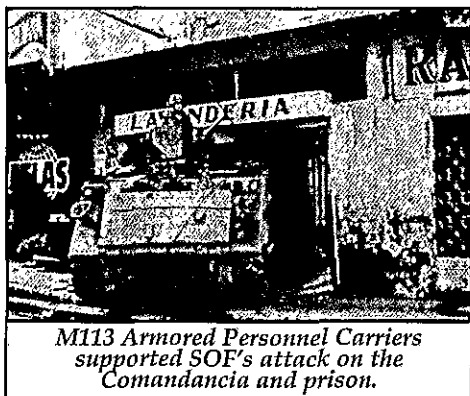
During Operation JUST CAUSE, the special operations component of Joint Task Force South (the overall invasion force) was the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF). The JSOTF, commanded by Major General Wayne A. Downing, was organized into smaller task forces: TF RED (the Army's 75th Ranger Regiment), TF BLACK (Army Special Forces), and TF WHITE (USN SEALs and Special Boat Unit). These task forces were supported by Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs units, Army Special Operations helicopters, and USAF Special Operations Forces.

*The Opening Mission*

The JSOTF's principal H-Hour missions were the capture of Noriega and the destruction of the PDF's ability to fight. As it turned out, the US forces did not know

Noriega's location at H-Hour; accordingly, the JSOTF focused on the H-Hour missions against the PDF. The attack on the Comandancia (the PDF's headquarters in Panama City) and the rescue of an American citizen from the adjoining prison (the Carcel Modelo) were the responsibility of a joint task force that included Special Forces ground elements, SOF helicopter and AC-130 gunships, and TF GATOR [M-113 armored personnel carriers and soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 6th Infantry (Mechanized)]. Because of indications that H-Hour had been compromised, the attack on the Comandancia began 15 minutes early, at 0045 hours on 20 December 1989.

TF GATOR was responsible for moving M-113s to blocking positions around the Comandancia and the prison, and then in conjunction with the AC-130 and AH-6 gunships, attacking and leveling the PDF headquarters. Near the target, TF GATOR encountered roadblocks; the M-113s squashed some roadblocks and others



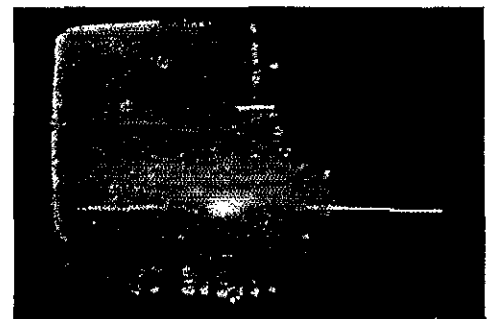
*M113 Armored Personnel Carriers supported SOF's attack on the Comandancia and prison.*

they had to go around. Maneuvering to the blocking positions, they came under increasingly heavy sniper fire from the buildings (including a 16-story high rise) on the west side of the Comandancia and prison complex. TF GATOR suffered some wounded and one killed while moving to

their blocking positions. The heavy enemy fire, coming from various directions, continued as the armored personnel carriers began their assault on the Comandancia.

At 0045 hours, the revised H-Hour, AC-130s and AH-6s started peppering the Comandancia area, but the PDF shot down the lead AH-6, and its crew managed a controlled crash in the Comandancia courtyard. They were in the wrong place at the wrong time, but by keeping their wits about them, they evaded both enemy and friendly

fire for over two hours, made it to the back wall (where they captured a PDF sol-



*As captured on FLIR tape, an AC-130 pounds the Comandancia with 105mm cannon rounds.*

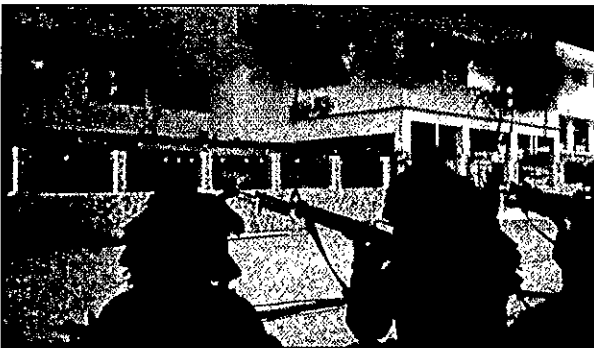
dier), climbed the wall, and linked up with a TF GATOR blocking position.

By now buildings in the compound were ablaze, and the smoke obscured the area for the AC-130 firing. One TF GATOR element was fired upon by an AC-130, wounding 12 soldiers. A second AC-130 volley about an hour later wounded nine more. At first, the soldiers believed that they had been attacked by PDF mortars, but during the second volley, they realized it was coming from the AC-130 and called through the fire support network to end the shooting.

During the attack on the Comandancia, a rescue force had entered the prison and had freed the American citizen. The helicopter carrying part of the rescue force and the former prisoner was

shot down and crashed in an alley to the north of the prison. Everyone on board, except the former prisoner, was injured to one degree or another, but the rescue force reacted as they had been trained and formed a defensive position, made contact with a TF GATOR blocking element, and were evacuated by M-113s.

TF GATOR kept the Comandancia isolated during the day of 20 December and continued to receive sporadic sniper fire. That afternoon, Company C, 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment arrived from Torrijos/Tocumen International Airport to clear the Comandancia. All of these forces then engaged in follow-on missions.



*After seizing the Torrijos/Tocumen Airport, Rangers cleared the Comandancia.*

### Task Force RED

Task Force RED was the largest component of the Joint Special Operations Task Force. It consisted of the Army's entire 75th Ranger Regiment reinforced by contingents from the 4th Psychological Operations Group (PSYOP) and 96th Civil Affairs (CA) Battalion, and included Air Force Special Tactics teams and Marine



*Rangers preparing for airborne assault.*

Corps/Naval Gunfire liaison troops. Close air support aircraft included AH-64 and AH-6 attack helicopters from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, AC-130H gunships from the 1st Special Operations Wing, and F-117A fighter-bombers from the 37th Tactical Fighter Wing.

The task force was to perform two simultaneous airborne assaults at H-Hour (0100 on 20 December 1989): one contingent would parachute onto the Omar Torrijos International Airport/Tocumen military airport complex, while another would drop onto Rio Hato airfield. Upon securing these objectives, TF RED would then link-up with conventional forces for follow-on combat operations.

### The Assault on Torrijos Airport/Tocumen Airfield

Omar Torrijos International Airport was the main international airport serving Panama, and the adjoining Tocumen military airfield was the home base of the Panamanian Air Force. Capturing Torrijos/Tocumen was crucial to the JUST CAUSE campaign plan because it would enable the 82nd Airborne Division to come into the country, while preventing the 2nd Panamanian Defense Force (PDF) Company and the Panamanian Air Force from interfering with American operations.

The Torrijos/Tocumen complex formed a target area approximately six kilometers long and two kilometers wide.

The TF RED commander, Colonel William F. "Buck" Kernan, gave the mission of capturing Torrijos/Tocumen to 1st

Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, commanded by LTC Robert W. Wagner. The Rangers had a tight schedule to seize this complex—an 82nd Airborne Division brigade was supposed to jump onto the complex only 45 minutes after H-Hour to start follow-on missions. First Battalion's three companies were augmented by Company C, 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, PSYOP teams, a Civil Affairs team, two AH-6 attack helicopters, Air Force Special Tactics teams (combat controllers and pararescuemen), and an AC-130H gunship.

LTC Wagner's plan called for the helicopters and AC-130H to attack the PDF positions at H-Hour, just prior to the Ranger parachute assault. After parachuting in, Company A would seize the Panamanian Air Force compound and destroy the aircraft. Company C, reinforced with a platoon from Company B, would seize the 2nd PDF compound and destroy the PDF Company. The rest of Company B, reinforced with 12 gun jeeps and 10 motorcycles, would clear both runways and establish blocking positions to prevent other PDF forces from interfering with the battalion's operations. Finally, Company C, 3rd Battalion would clear the smaller buildings near the Torrijos terminal, isolate the terminal building, and then enter the terminal building and destroy PDF resistance there.

The attack began on schedule, at 0100, with the AC-130H and AH-6s opening fire on selected PDF positions at Torrijos/Tocumen. The AH-6s eliminated three priority targets while the AC-130H fired on the 2nd Rifle Company's barracks

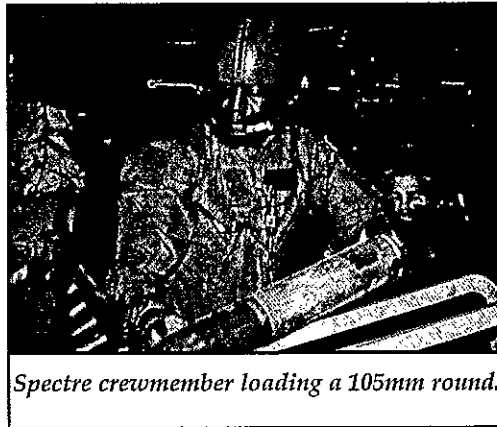
and headquarters building. It should be remembered that TF GATOR and other units had attacked the Comandancia in Panama City 15 minutes early, at 0045, which meant the PDF at Torrijos/Tocumen knew of the invasion prior to the Rangers' airdrop. Three minutes after the firing began, at 0103, the first jumpers left their aircraft.

Company A received only sporadic fire and secured all of its objectives within two hours after capturing virtually the entire Panamanian Air Force on the ground. The company captured about 20 Panamanian Air Force personnel hiding in one of the hangars.

Company B also landed on target and quickly secured its blocking positions. Like Company A, it received only sporadic enemy fire and took some prisoners. The biggest problem Company B had was with Panamanian vehicles ignoring its warning signs and barricades and trying to run its blocking positions.

Generally these vehicles turned around and fled after the Rangers fired warning shots, but one vehicle had to be disabled by shooting out its tires. One of the vehicles that fled from warning shots contained Manuel Noriega, who had been visiting the Cereme Military Reservation Center. Company C assaulted the barracks of the PDF's 2nd Company and received only ineffective enemy fire; they quickly cleared the area, killing one PDF soldier who had refused to surrender.

Company C, 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment was to secure the international air terminal, and this proved to be the only portion of the assault on Torrijos/Tocumen that was significantly



*Spectre crewmember loading a 105mm round.*

more difficult than expected. First, one-fourth of the company landed in ten-foot-tall cunna grass to the west of the runway and took two hours to join the main body. The depleted Company C had no trouble securing its objectives outside the terminal building, however, and the troops were impressed with how completely the AH-6s had destroyed the guard house outside the terminal and killed the two guards there. The 3rd platoon seized the fire station on the north side of the terminal and then received fire from the second floor of the terminal.

These Rangers entered the terminal from the north, where they encountered some surprises inside. The first shock was that two civilian flights had arrived just prior to H-Hour, and there were about 400 civilians in the terminal. The other surprise was that the PDF troops defended the terminal more determinedly than anywhere else in the Torrijos/Tocumen complex.

When two Rangers searched one of the airport's huge men's rooms on the second floor, two PDF soldiers jumped out of a stall and shot one of the Rangers several times with a pistol. The other Ranger returned fire and, with the assistance of two more Rangers, dragged his wounded buddy out of the men's room. In the process, the Ranger pulling the wounded man was himself shot twice in the back of the head, but his kevlar helmet stopped both rounds. From outside the men's room door, the unhurt Rangers threw grenades into the

men's room, but the men's room stalls protected the PDF soldiers. The Rangers then re-entered the men's room and waited for the PDF to show themselves. The Rangers got the better of the ensuing hand-to-hand struggle. One of the PDF soldiers was killed in the men's room while the other was knocked out of the window; he fell two stories and almost landed on a Ranger patrolling outside. When the PDF soldier tried to draw his pistol, the Ranger killed him.

Meanwhile, the 2nd Platoon entered the terminal from the south and started clearing the building, with one squad on each of the three main floors. Enemy soldiers opened fire on the third floor, but the Rangers' counterattack drove them from the terminal, and they cleared the rest of the third floor without incident.

The situation on the first floor of the



*American soldiers the morning after seizing Torrijos/Tocumen.*

terminal was more difficult; about ten PDF troopers had taken two American girls hostage and were trying to escape. When their escape route led them right into the Ranger security detail stationed outside the terminal, they fled back inside, where 2nd

Platoon Rangers cornered them after several exchanges of fire. At 0500, after a tense two-and-a-half-hour standoff, the Rangers announced they were going to come in shooting. Rather than face an all-out assault, the holdouts then released their hostages and surrendered.

With 18 civilian detainees taken from a restaurant just outside the terminal,



the 15 taken at the fire station, and another 30 taken at a rental car facility, the lone squad assigned to guard prisoners and detainees had its hands full even before the Rangers began clearing the terminal building itself. Once inside the terminal, the Rangers found hundreds of civilians in various rooms hiding from the fighting. A whole platoon had to manage the prisoners and civilian detainees. It was not until 0700—six hours after H-Hour—that an 82nd military police company relieved Company C of its responsibilities for the terminal, the detainees, and the prisoners.

Later that morning, at about 1100, the 82nd Airborne Division assumed operational control of 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment and began operations out of Torrijos/Tocumen. Likewise, Company C, 3rd Battalion was put under the operational control of TF BAYONET to clear La Comandancia at 1500 on 20 December. The Ranger's extensive training in airfield seizure and building clearing, along with their detailed mission plan, were key factors in their successful seizure of the Torrijos/Tocumen complex with minimal collateral damage and casualties.

### *The Attack on Rio Hato Airfield*

The Panamanian military base near the small village of Rio Hato was located 65 miles west of Panama City. It contained a large airfield and was home to two PDF companies: the 6th Rifle Company (Mechanized), equipped with 19 armored cars, and the 7th Rifle Company, an elite counterinsurgency force which had proved its loyalty to Noriega (when it helped to quash the October coup attempt). In addition, the base housed a PDF engineer platoon and PDF training schools. TF RED's mission was to destroy the Rio Hato PDF

forces and seize the airfield for follow on missions. Planners estimated the total number of PDF forces in the area might easily exceed 500 men; these units, particularly the 7th Rifle Company, were expected to offer stiff opposition to the TF RED forces.

The Rio Hato military base ranged along the coastline of the Gulf of Panama, with the airfield runway nearly perpendicular to the shoreline. The barracks for the 6th and 7th Companies were on the runway's southwest side near the shore. There were a number of beach houses along a dirt lane to the south of the runway; Manuel Noriega owned (and occasionally used) one of them. To the west of the runway, and above the 6th and 7th Companies' barracks, was an open area and the PDF school complex. The Pan-American highway ran on an east-west path across the base, bisecting the airfield.

The TF RED commander, Colonel Kernan, led the forces assaulting Rio Hato, which included the 2nd Ranger Battalion, the 3rd Ranger Battalion (minus one company, which had been attached to the 1st Ranger Battalion for its assault on Torrijos/Tocumen), and elements of the 4th Psychological Operations Group, Civil Affairs assets, Air Force Special Tactics teams, and Marine Corps Air/Naval Gunfire liaison troops. Aerial fire support was provided by two F-117A fighters, two AH-64 and four AH-6 helicopters, and one AC-130H gunship. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions split the responsibility for taking and holding ground: the 2nd was to parachute into the area along the southern edge of the runway and around the PDF barracks and engage the enemy, while the 3rd was to jump farther north, securing the area from counterattacks and clearing the runway.

Thirteen C-130 transports were cross-loaded with Rangers from both battalions. The aircraft were to approach from the south, with the 2nd Battalion soldiers parachuting first and the 3rd Battalion troops jumping second. The 2nd Battalion's Company A would assault and clear the PDF school complex. Company B, 2nd Battalion would assault the 7th Company from the east, and if it was still effective after destroying that unit (planners had anticipated 30 percent casualties), it would push westward and clear the 6th Company area. If Company B suffered excessive casualties, Company C would take over the assault. If Company B did not need reinforcement, then Company C would seize Noriega's beach house.

Though the Rangers wanted the F-117As to hit the PDF barracks, the bombing targets had been changed to an area near the barracks in the hope of frightening, rather than killing, the PDF. The bombs landed on schedule, at H-hour, although one missed its target and exploded harmlessly near the beach. The AH-6s and AC-130H aircraft immediately followed with attacks on their designated targets. Of particular importance, the AC-130H destroyed two anti-aircraft positions before the Rangers jumped.

In spite of the three minute air attack, the Rangers jumped into effective anti-aircraft machine-gun fire. Eleven of the aircraft carrying Rangers were hit, and one Ranger was hit by anti-aircraft fire while still in the aircraft. The jump, however, went on as scheduled at 0103 hours. Those Rangers who had jumped into Grenada in 1983 for Operation URGENT FURY judged the enemy fire to have been heavier at Rio Hato.

Once on the ground, the 2nd Battalion Rangers saw a lot of tracers, but

were able to return fire and assemble without too much trouble. The PDF troops apparently had left their barracks upon learning that the U.S. troops were coming and had either set up defenses on and around the airfield, or fled. As planned, Company A assembled before the other units and moved up to clear the school complex.

As Company A was advancing on the school complex, Company B began its assault on the 7th Company area. After using demolition charges to blow holes in the wall surrounding the compound, Company B moved in and set about clearing each building, room by room. Having cleared the 7th's area without serious losses, Company B pushed its way west and had begun clearing the 6th Company area by dawn on 21 December. Company B's success freed Company C to assault Noriega's beach house area two hours after H-hour, and the Rangers cleared the house by 1015 that morning.

Company B finished clearing the 6th Company barracks area that morning as well and, with all of its initial assault objectives secured, continued to advance west into the small village inhabited by the families of the PDF troops. The Rangers detained all the adult males found there for questioning, assuming the vast majority were PDF troops in hiding. The Rangers cleared the village without incident.

The 3rd Battalion Rangers were loaded in the rear of each of the 13 C-130s and jumped after the 2nd Battalion. So, by the time they jumped into the warm, humid night, the PDF had been alerted. The 3rd's airborne assault included heavy "drops" of four jeeps and six motorcycles. Company A's motorcycles were to race north along the runway and screen the Americans from possible counterattacks,

while the Company B jeep teams were to establish blocking positions and watch for possible PDF activities.

When the Company A Rangers jumped, they scattered from south of the Pan American Highway to well north of it. This company's primary mission was to neutralize the .50 caliber machine gun positioned on the concrete and stone entryway



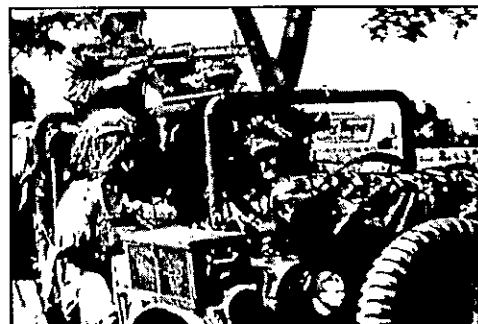
*Rangers captured a .50 caliber machine gun guarding the stone entryway to Rio Hato.*

leading to the Rio Hato airfield. By happenstance, the company's executive officer and a few other Rangers landed within 30 feet of the entryway; they killed the PDF gunner as he was firing at the other Rangers parachuting to the ground and took possession of the fortified position.

Other Company A elements had begun to clear the NCO academy headquarters and classroom areas. The Rangers encountered more PDF soldiers than expected, and in the words of LTC Joseph Hunt, 3rd battalion commander, these PDF soldiers "gave them a good run for their money for about 30 minutes." After the Rangers aggressively cleared the PDF from NCO academy buildings, the Panamanian soldiers finally abandoned their resistance and ran away from the advancing Rangers. In the process of clearing the remaining buildings, Company A Rangers captured about 167 cadets; without their superior fire discipline and train-

ing, the Rangers could have easily taken these cadets under attack without first learning that they were unarmed, frightened, and eager to surrender. Within an hour of H-hour, Company A had secured its objectives.

Company B, 3rd Battalion severed the Pan American Highway on the east side of the airfield. There was more traffic on the Pan American Highway than expected, and the blocking element fired warning shots at a few vehicles to force them to turn around. The largest Company B element concentrated on clearing the runway south of the highway so that aircraft could begin landing, and this proved more time-consuming than anticipated. The Rangers quickly removed such obstacles as barrels, barbed wire, and trucks, but needed extra time to pick up the hundreds of parachutes left behind by the airborne assault. Company B Rangers



*Rangers used this type of jeep at Rio Hato.*

also took control of the air traffic control tower. Approximately 1½ hours into the operation, the Rangers finished clearing the runway, and C-130s began landing with more people and some additional supplies.

The Rangers who were assigned to end PDF resistance north of the Pan American Highway encountered a surprising amount of PDF opposition. Here, as night turned to dawn, some PDF soldiers conducted a deliberate withdrawal, fight-

ing from building to building through a small built-up area. A Ranger element engaged the PDF and called for fire support from two AH-6 helicopter gunships. The gunships fired on the buildings, but unbeknownst to the pilots, an element of Rangers moved into a tree line to flank the PDF. As the gunships came around for a second pass, one pilot saw movement in the trees and, believing they were PDF soldiers, fired upon the Rangers, killing 2 and wounding 4. The movement of the Rangers into the tree line had not been forwarded to the AH-6 pilots.

Having secured the military complex on 20 December, the Rangers conducted follow-on missions out of Rio Hato until 23 December. On 20 December, at 2200 hours, Company A, 2nd Battalion left Rio Hato aboard special operations helicopters and, at 0230 on the 21st, took over security for the American embassy in Panama City. That same day, the Rangers participated in one of the early surrender missions — what became known as the “Ma Bell” Campaign—when COL Kernan brought the PDF leaders of the Penonome Prison and 6th Military Zone Headquarters to Rio Hato to discuss their forces’ surrender. Later, with an AC-130H circling overhead, the 3rd Battalion’s Company A accepted the surrender of the town’s garrison; then, the Rangers demonstrated a “dry run” assault on the prison, showing the Panamanians what would have happened to them if they had resisted. Word of this surrender and display of force quickly spread throughout the remaining cuartels in the countryside. After relocating to Howard AFB, the Rangers, in conjunction with Special Forces soldiers, conducted the “Ma Bell” surrender of David, a major Panamanian city.

The Rangers also performed stabili-

ty operations in areas around Panama City. In response to civil disturbances and continued PDF and Dignity Battalion (Noriega’s paramilitary supporters) activities, the 2d Battalion, 75th Rangers set up operations in Area of Operation (AO) Diaz, an area containing the towns of Alcalde Diaz and Las Cumbres, on 27 December. With the assistance of PSYOP forces, they created a visible American presence by establishing checkpoints and blocking positions, and running “saturation” patrols and night ambushes. While in AO Diaz, the Rangers rounded up former PDF and Dignity Battalion members and seized several caches of weapons. The American presence of Rangers, PSYOP, and Civil Affairs soldiers stabilized the area and allowed the new government to reestablish control.

The Rangers came out of Panama with a number of lessons learned and validations of existing procedures and techniques. The tactical plan was well prepared, coordinated, and rehearsed, enabling the successful completion of their missions. JUST CAUSE validated the Rangers’ mission essential procedures and techniques, and their responsiveness to contingencies. Lessons learned included recognizing the importance of intelligence gathering and management; planning logistical support for follow-on missions; emphasizing training and equipping the regiment for military operations in urban areas; and enhancing the regiment’s interaction with conventional and joint forces through the use of liaison elements.

### *Task Force WHITE*

On 19 December 1989, TF WHITE, the Naval Special Warfare component of the JSOTF, established operations at

Rodman Naval Station on the west side of the Panama Canal. The task force's primary naval elements were five SEAL platoons, three patrol boats, four riverine patrol boats, and two light patrol boats (22-foot Boston Whalers), which were divided among four task units. Each task unit had its own H-Hour mission: Task Unit (TU) Papa, the largest unit, was to deny use of the Paitilla Airfield; TU Whiskey was to destroy a Panamanian patrol boat in Balboa Harbor; TU Charlie and TU Foxtrot were charged with securing, respectively, the Atlantic and Pacific entrances to the Panama Canal.

The Paitilla Airfield assault force, TU Papa, had a 62-man ground force comprised of three SEAL platoons (Bravo, Delta, and Golf platoons), Air Force combat controllers to perform liaison with an AC-130H gunship, and a command, control, communications, and mortar element. A 26-man support team included surveillance forces, a signals intelligence team, a psychological operations team, and boat crews.

At 1930 hours local on 19 December, 15 combat rubber raiding craft, carrying the ground force, launched from the Howard AFB beach, eight miles from Paitilla, while two patrol boats left from Rodman Naval Station. At 2330, with the rubber boats waiting off the airfield, two SEALs swam ashore to reconnoiter the landing site and mark the beach with a strobe light.

At 0045 on the 20th, as the ground force landed ashore near the end of the runway, they heard firing and explosions from the attack on the Comandancia, so the element of surprise had probably been lost.

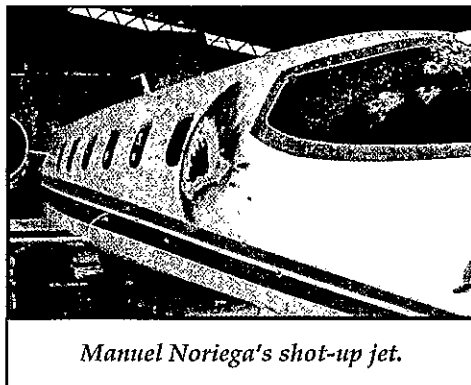
The SEALs hurried up the trail, through the hole in the security fence, and formed into platoons near the southern end of the runway. Reports that Noriega was about to arrive in a small plane led to Delta platoon setting an ambush halfway up the runway for a few minutes, before advancing toward the tower. The other two platoons, Golf and Bravo, moved up the grass apron on the west side of the runway.

By 0105 the SEALs were in front of the three northernmost hangars. They found guards at the middle hangar, which the PDF used to store Noriega's jet, and the next hangar to the north. Golf platoon was in the lead, with one of its squads moving toward the northern edge of the tarmac when, after an exchange of demands between the Americans and guards, a SEAL opened fire on a PDF guard who had assumed a firing position. A short but fierce firefight ensued, and within a matter

of a minute or two, eight SEALs were wounded, five seriously. The Golf platoon commander called for assistance on his radio, reporting heavy casualties. The ground force commander ordered other platoons to reinforce these SEALs. Two SEAL reinforcements were wounded as they maneuvered to engage the PDF in

the hangars. The combination of SEAL fire discipline and superior firepower soon took effect, however, and after three fire-fights, the remaining PDF defenders withdrew about 0117 hours.

The SEALs reported the airfield was secure at 0146, and a MEDEVAC helicopter finally arrived at 0205 to recover the wounded. By 0315, the SEALs had set up a more defensible perimeter at the southeast



*Manuel Noriega's shot-up jet.*

side of the airfield, and the reaction platoon from Rodman arrived a few minutes later to reinforce them. An AC-130H gunship, unable to establish reliable communications, was replaced by an AC-130A at 0324. At dawn a patrol conducted a reconnaissance of the hangers, while other SEALs dragged airplanes onto the runway to block its use. The relief force did not arrive until 1400 on the 21st, when five CH-47 helicopters disgorged a Ranger company. The SEALs left aboard the same helicopters. A planned 5-hour mission had turned into a 37-hour operation. Four SEALs had died and eight others were wounded.

Subsequent to their operations at Paitilla airfield, TU Papa conducted several search and seizure missions looking for arms caches and Noriega followers. The unit was disbanded on 1 January 1990, and members returned to the United States the next day.

TU Whiskey's H-Hour mission was to destroy the Panamanian patrol boat docked in Balboa Harbor by having SEALs place demolition charges on its hull. Around 2300 on 19 December, two combat rubber raider craft left Rodman Naval Station, cut across the canal, avoiding nearby vessels, and tied up in a mangrove stand near the docks. The first craft took two SEALs closer to the pier, where they slipped overboard for the swim to the Panamanian patrol boat, *Presidente Poras*. The next swim pair was dropped off five minutes later. The SEALs used Draeger underwater breathing apparatuses which left no trail of air bubbles. Reaching the boat, the SEALs attached haversacks of explosives to the propeller shafts, set the detonators, and swam to their extraction point. At 0100, an explosion ripped a hole in the *Presidente Poras*, and it sank. As the

SEALs swam, they passed through rocket and small arms fire coming from a firefight between American and Panamanian forces; despite the hazards, the SEALs returned safely. This mission marked the first successful combat swimmer attack by US forces.

Following the Balboa Harbor mission, TU Whiskey participated in the seizure of Noriega's yacht on 20 December and the capture of the Balboa Yacht Club on 21 December. On 23 December, TU Whiskey members helped repel PDF forces trying to board the merchant ship *Emanuel B* in the Panama Canal. Its last mission called for it to seize Noriega's beach house at Culebra on 25 December. TU Whiskey redeployed back to the States on 2 January 1990.

TU Charlie, assigned to secure the Caribbean side of the Panama Canal, worked closely with TF Atlantic. The unit had eight SEALs, twelve soldiers, two riverine patrol boats, and two Army mechanized landing craft. On the night of the invasion, TU Charlie blocked all ships from entering the Canal from the Caribbean side and patrolled the shipping channel near Colon, preventing the PDF from commandeering boats and protecting the canal from sabotage.

After conducting patrols all night, at 0930 hours on 20 December, TU Charlie received a report that about 30 PDF members had boarded a German merchant ship in Cristobal, the *Asian Senator*, perhaps to commandeer the ship. Once at the pier, the SEALs saw men in civilian clothes running down the *Asian Senator's* brow, and other men on the ship throwing weapons onto the pier for them. One of the mechanized landing craft and the two riverine patrol boats fired at the brow. The Panamanians on the ship, shaken by this

firepower, surrendered. As they were searching the PDF prisoners, the SEALs then came under sniper fire. As the volume of fire grew, the SEALs evacuated their prisoners to their boats. During subsequent patrols of the harbor and coastline, TU Charlie occasionally exchanged fire with PDF on the shore. TU Charlie later detained and searched a Colombian vessel, which yielded a cargo of looted electronic equipment, but no drugs or PDF. On Christmas Eve, the SEALs searched 31 boats moored in the Panama Canal Yacht Club. TU Charlie was deactivated on 26 December.

TU Foxtrot, the fourth task unit, conducted maritime patrols along the Pacific Ocean approaches to the Panama Canal. At H-Hour, SEALs in three patrol boats guarded the waters around Howard AFB, and two riverine patrol boats covered the approaches to the Bridge of the Americas. SEALs in a cayuga canoe searched the small islands off Howard AFB for infiltrators. For the remainder of the night, the patrol boats searched and detained Panamanian fishing and pleasure boats in the local waters.

On 21 December the SEALs located and searched *Passe Porte Tout* and *Macho de Monde*, two of Noriega's sport yachts, capturing 18 Panamanians and a large quantity of small arms and ammunition. TU Foxtrot continued its maritime interdiction operations, and beginning on 26 December, it guarded the waters adjacent to the Papal Nunciature, where Noriega had taken refuge. No incidents took place during this mission, and TU Foxtrot was disestablished on 2 January 1990.

Naval Special Warfare forces successfully executed all their missions during Operation JUST CAUSE. Success did not come easily, as four SEALs died and eight

more were wounded during the fight for Paitilla airfield, but TF WHITE accomplished its other missions without casualties. These operations validated the need for special operations forces that were capable of deploying anywhere with little notice and underscored the value of forward-basing these units.

### *Task Force BLACK*

TF BLACK was activated 18 December 1989 under the command of Colonel Robert C. "Jake" Jacobelly, who also served as commander of Special Operations Command SOUTH (SOC-SOUTH). D-Day for JUST CAUSE was set for 20 December 1989, with H-Hour at 0100 local time. Before H-Hour, SOCSOUTH personnel and the headquarters unit of 3rd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) [SFG(A)] collocated at Albrook Air Force Station and together served as the TF BLACK headquarters and staff.

The 3rd Battalion, 7th SFG(A), commanded by LTC Roy R. Trumbull, formed the core of TF BLACK and was reinforced by Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th SFG(A) from Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. TF BLACK had use of five MH-60 helicopters from the 617th Special Operations Aviation Detachment and 2 UH-60 helicopters from the 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment. Air Force AC-130s from the 1st Special Operations Wing were available to provide fire support.

### *H-Hour Missions*

TF BLACK had two types of missions at H-Hour: reconnaissance and surveillance, and direct action. Two reconnaissance and surveillance missions were planned for H-Hour. The first, conducted

by a Special Forces team from Company B, 3rd Battalion, 7th SFG(A), was to observe the PDF's Battalion 2000 at Fort Cimarron. By the time the team was in place, however, Battalion 2000 had already left the fort. The second mission involved watching the 1st PDF Company at Tinajitas. These Special Forces did not see or hear anything except for two mortar rounds being fired early in the morning.

Another reconnaissance mission was changed to a direct action—to seize and deny use of the Pacora River Bridge. The TF BLACK element, commanded by Major Kevin M. Higgins, consisted of 24 men from Company A, 3rd Battalion, 7th SFG (A), and 3 helicopters. The bridge was the best place to prevent PDF Battalion 2000 from moving out of Fort Cimarron to Panama City. At ten minutes after midnight, small arms fire broke out at Albrook AFS while the troops were preparing to load onto their helicopters. Higgins and his troops dashed to the waiting aircraft and departed under fire.

As the helicopters neared the bridge, everyone on all three helicopters saw a column of six PDF vehicles approaching. The helicopters then landed, and the Special Forces soldiers ran toward the bridge. It was now 1245 hours, the new H-Hour, and the mission had become a race between the SF troops and the PDF convoy to see who would take the bridge first.

Major Higgins yelled orders to his men to move up the steep slope and establish the ambush position by the road, but his men were already seizing the initiative. The first man on the road looked straight into the headlights of the convoy's lead vehicle (which was already on the bridge) and fired a light anti-tank weapon. He missed, but the next two Special Forces soldiers did not. Then Special Forces gunners armed with squad automatic weapons (SAWs) opened up on the column with

automatic weapons fire, and M203 gunners started firing grenades into the column.

With the column halted, the Air Force Combat Controller contacted an AC-130 and directed fire onto the PDF column. The AC-130 responded with devastating fire, forcing the PDF soldiers out of the trucks. As the Special Forces soldiers continued to engage the enemy, the AC-130 provided vital intelligence on enemy movements. A second AC-130 was called in, providing additional firepower and surveillance, and the Special Operations Forces successfully repelled all PDF attempts to cross the bridge or the river.

At daybreak, the TF BLACK quick reaction force (a unit held in reserve to augment other TF BLACK forces) arrived to reinforce Higgins' element. Major Higgins and his troops controlled the bridge while the quick reaction force under Major Gilberto Perez cleared the east side of the river. They captured 17 PDF members. The TF BLACK elements returned to Albrook AFS that evening.

The fourth TF BLACK H-Hour mission was to take Panamanian TV Channel 2 off the air. The mission was given to Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) 785, commanded by CPT John M. Custer and augmented by technical experts. At 0050 on 20 December, the eighteen-man team fast roped from two helicopters near the TV broadcasting complex in the mountains northeast of Panama City. The PDF guards fled, the team took control of the complex, and the technical experts disabled the station. By 1500, the team had returned to base.

#### Post H-Hour Missions

The first three missions after H-Hour focused on stopping pro-Noriega radio broadcasts. After the invasion began, Radio Nacional's AM and FM stations had



begun playing a recording of Manuel Noriega exhorting his followers to fight the Americans. Company C, 3rd Battalion, 7th SFG(A), commanded by Major David E. McCracken, got the mission to silence the radio broadcasts. Thirty-three Company C soldiers deployed in three helicopters and arrived at the Controlaria building, the location of the transmitter and antenna, at 1850 on 20 December.

The security element controlled traffic into and out of the target area. The assault teams fast roped onto the roof. One element blew up the electronic junction boxes controlling the antenna, and the rest of the assault force made its way to the 7th floor where they blew the AM station off the air. The assault teams could not find the FM transmitters.

As soon as the force returned to Albrook AFS, they were briefed on their next target--the FM transmission antenna located on the outskirts of town. MAJ McCracken and his 19 men launched about 2015, and though conducted after dark with very little planning time, the mission went smoothly. By 2045, the Company C element had destroyed the FM antenna, silencing Radio Nacional.

On 21 December, ODA 785 went back to the TV transmission tower it had disabled the day before and replaced its damaged components. About this time, pro-Noriega forces began intermittent radio broadcasts from this area. On 24 December, the rest of Company B, 3rd Battalion, 7th SFG(A) arrived to reinforce their teammates and to search for the phantom radio station. The large number of Spanish speakers in the company and their long experience in Panama helped them to gain the trust of the locals. On the 25th, local civilians led them to a cache site containing weapons, ammunition, and

medical supplies. Following up on information received from Panamanians, a patrol found the PDF's radio transmission site and destroyed it on 29 December.

### "Ma Bell" Missions

During the initial invasion, US forces had captured Panama City, its airport, the areas near the Panama Canal, and Rio Hato, but in the countryside the PDF still had control. PDF forces were scattered throughout the countryside in small garrisons ("cuartels"); no one knew what these PDF forces would do, and each cuartel was on its own. The Americans could have easily crushed these posts, but this would have produced many casualties, destroyed Panamanian villages, and alienated the populace. The US instead developed a strategy of capitulation missions, with American forces contacting the PDF enclaves and offering them the opportunity to surrender before being attacked. Complicating the situation, PDF officers on the "most wanted list" commanded some of the major cuartels.

The ideal capitulation scenario was for the PDF to remain in position and then surrender to the US forces as they spread throughout the countryside. Once the PDF had surrendered, then the Americans would separate PDF members into criminals and non-criminals. TF BLACK played a critical role in this capitulation effort; one of its most significant contributions to the success of Operation JUST CAUSE.

Capitulation missions had not been included in the plans for Operation JUST CAUSE, but from 22 - 31 December, they dominated TF BLACK's activities. The typical method used was to attach a small Special Forces element (with Spanish speakers) to a larger force (either the 7th

Infantry Division or the 75th Ranger Regiment) to coordinate the PDF capitulation. The Special Forces commander would call the cuartel commander on the telephone and tell him to put all of his weapons in the arms room, line up all of his men on the parade field, and surrender to the US forces that would arrive shortly. Because of the heavy reliance on telephones, these missions were nick-named "Ma Bell" operations.

During this ten day period, TF BLACK elements had pivotal parts in the surrender of 14 cuartels, almost 2,000 troops, and over 6,000 weapons without a single US casualty. Several high-ranking cronies of Manuel Noriega who were on the "most wanted" list were captured in Ma Bell operations.

After each cuartel capitulated, the task of rebuilding the town began. TF BLACK generally left small Special Forces elements in each town to support the rebuilding process and assist the US conventional forces. The Special Forces soldiers' language skills, cultural awareness, and expertise in low intensity conflict proved invaluable in leading patrols of US forces, coordinating with local officials, gathering information on weapons caches, reestablishing Panamanian police forces, and performing a myriad of other tasks that sped the process of transforming Panama into a more democratic nation. These operations were a textbook example of how Special Forces should be used in low intensity conflict.

In the last days of December 1989 and the first days of January 1990, TF BLACK continued to transition away from



*SOF's language skills helped to stabilize the civilian populace and gather intelligence.*

the combat missions of Operation JUST CAUSE toward the stabilization missions of Operation PROMOTE LIBERTY. In order to accomplish its new missions, the Task Force was reinforced by the 2nd Battalion, 7th SFG(A), a Naval Special Warfare Unit, and an Air Force Special Operations Detachment. With the assignment of SOF units

from the Air Force and Navy, TF BLACK became Joint Task Force BLACK. The commander and staff from 7th SFG(A) also arrived to take command of the Army Special Operations Forces in Panama as a subordinate of the JTF BLACK commander. The additional Army Special Forces battalion gave JTF BLACK enough personnel to conduct stabilization operations throughout Panama. The Air Force Special Operations assets gave JTF BLACK the transportation to get troops into remote locations and support them once they were out there. The Naval Special Warfare Unit conducted patrols along the coast and rivers, investigated possible weapons cache sites, and assisted the Panamanians in re-establishing their maritime security force.

On 16 January 1990, Operation JUST CAUSE officially ended, and JTF BLACK ceased to exist. Some JTF BLACK forces returned to the continental United States or to the control of US Southern Command. The rest remained under the control of JTF BLACK headquarters, which was now renamed Joint Special Operations Task Force Panama, and continued PROMOTE LIBERTY operations. Throughout Panama Special Operations Forces continued the difficult and delicate task of restoring peace, security, and democratic government to Panama one village at a time.

JUST CAUSE demonstrated just how far SOF had come since Desert One: not only with regard to internal enhancements to SOF capabilities and command and control structures, but also with regard to the manifest close integration of SOF and conventional forces. SOF were subordinate to the Joint Task Force South; so all SOF plans and operations were fully complementary of the theater campaign plan. JUST CAUSE clearly validated how SOF were trained, equipped, and organized; this operation showcased joint SOF capabilities, the high training standards for operators and staffs alike, and the value of interoperability procedures. PROMOTE LIBERTY planning, and post conflict strategy in general, still needed work. In particular, there were problems with integrating nation-building plans into the campaign plan, incorporating CA and PSYOP planning with operational planning, and mobilizing crucial Reserve Component CA and PSYOP forces.

**IRAQ:  
OPERATION DESERT SHIELD/  
DESERT STORM  
1990-1991**

Iraq invaded Kuwait a few hours before dawn on 2 August 1990, easily overrunning the Kuwaiti defense forces and massing along the Saudi Arabian border. While the Saudi forces established a thin defensive cordon along the border, the United States deployed air and ground forces to the Arabian Peninsula to deter further Iraqi aggression. The United States Central Command (CENTCOM) had military responsibility for this area and prepared to reinforce the Saudi Arabian forces. Its special operations component, Special Operations Command Central

(SOCCENT), likewise prepared to deploy and conduct combat search and rescue operations and other assigned missions.

SOCCENT personnel deployed to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on 10 August 1990 and moved to King Fahd International Airport (KFIA) on 17 August. Its naval element, the Naval Special Warfare Task Group (NSWTG), arrived in Saudi Arabia on 10 August 1990 and received its second increment of personnel on 9 September 1990. Meanwhile, SOCCENT's Air Force element, AFSOCCENT, established its headquarters at KFIA on 17 August 1990. In late August, the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) [5th SFG(A)] deployed two battalions to King Khalid Military City (KKMC) and retained the third at KFIA. Army aviation assets of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment also deployed to KKMC.

### *Coalition Warfare*

Coalition warfare (warfighting with forces from more than one nation) was arguably the most important of all the SOCCENT missions. With Saudi concurrence, SOCCENT's first coalition warfare missions was given to NSWTG elements, which deployed to the Kuwait/Saudi Arabian border on 19 August 1990 to provide close air support and to serve as "trip wires" in case of an Iraqi invasion. The 5th SFG(A) began replacing the SEALs on 5 September 1990, and provided early warning, coalition warfare training, and communications for close air support.

The number and type of coalition warfare missions grew steadily throughout DESERT SHIELD and into the early part of DESERT STORM. The Saudis requested more Special Forces teams to train them on the M-60A3 tank, artillery, vehicle mainte-

nance, and other technical areas. Other allied forces, as they deployed to the Arabian Peninsula, wanted Special Forces to provide close air support and liaison with friendly forces. These increasing requirements for coalition warfare soon absorbed much of the 5th SFG(A).



*Coalition Warfare:  
Arab forces training with SF.*

SOF also trained Saudi naval forces in special warfare. Some Saudis had completed the BUD/S (Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL) training course in Coronado, California, and their commander had worked with SEALs during Operation EARNEST WILL. Instruction included combat swimming and leadership training and produced three Saudi SEAL teams. Other NSWTG personnel trained the Saudi high-speed boat operators as well as conventional Saudi naval forces.

Another NSWTG mission was to reconstitute what remained of the Kuwaiti navy. Only two gunboats (*Al Sanbouk* and *Istiglal*), some patrol craft, and a motorized coast guard barge (the *Sawahil*) had escaped the Iraqis. In September the NSWTG began training Kuwaiti naval personnel; they used the *Sawahil* to train 35 Kuwaiti sailors in naval engineering, seamanship, and small weapons. To instruct the Kuwaitis in surface warfare, the NSWTG borrowed rated experts from the conventional US Navy, particularly the USS *La Salle*. During the training period, the *Sawahil*, *Istiglal*, and *Al Sanbouk* were overhauled and rearmed. Beginning in November, the rebuilt *Sawahil* and its crew conducted joint training with NSWTG small boats and took part in a combat search and rescue exercise with the USS *Nicholas*. During DESERT STORM, the

*Sawahil* provided an operational platform for coalition forces, including NSWTG Special Boat Unit detachments, Kuwaiti patrol boats, and SEALs.

Coalition warfare training continued until the eve of the ground war. The Arab forces in the east and north faced formidable military obstacles along their projected areas of advance—

including multiple Iraqi minefields, “fire trenches,” and above-ground pipelines. Accordingly, a Special Forces team worked with a Saudi engineer battalion to plan for clearing invasion lanes through two Iraqi minefields and an above-ground pipeline inside Kuwait. On 22 February the Saudi engineers easily cleared six lanes because the Iraqis, battered for over a month by allied air power, failed to cover the minefields with artillery fire. In the north, other SF teams worked with the Saudis and the Egyptians to create breaches in the minefields for the passage of their forces. On 25 February, the Egyptians drove into Kuwait against sporadic resistance. The Egyptian corps that the 5th SFG(A) teams supported served as the hinge for CENTCOM’s huge turning movement. By the night of 26 February, the Egyptians and their SF advisors had reached their objectives near Kuwait City.

The 28 February cease fire marked the end of most SOCCENT coalition warfare activities. It had been a huge effort, requiring an entire Special Forces Group, SEALs, Special Boat Units, and support elements. SF teams accompanied 109 allied units, from battalion to corps, providing close air support and liaison between forces. SOF eventually trained some 30,000 coalition troops in 44 subject areas.

## *Kuwaiti Reconstitution and Unconventional Warfare*

American Special Forces units helped to reconstitute a number of Kuwaiti military forces, both conventional and unconventional. As a result of meetings between the SOCCENT commander, Colonel Jesse Johnson, and the Kuwaiti Armed Forces Chief of Staff, soldiers from the 5th SFG(A) began training Kuwaiti soldiers in mid-September at KKMC. The initial mission was to form a Kuwaiti SF battalion and a commando brigade, but the training went so well, because of the Special Forces' language capabilities and cultural awareness, that the mission grew to include four additional Kuwaiti infantry brigades. Eventually, SOF units trained a total of 6,357 Kuwaitis, who formed an SF battalion, a commando brigade, and the Al-Khulud, Al-Haq, Fatah, and Badr infantry brigades. The instruction included weapons training, tactics, staff procedures, close air support (CAS), anti-armor operations, and nuclear, chemical and biological defense.

Colonel Johnson also formed a Special Planning Group to conduct specialized unconventional warfare training for selected members of the Kuwaiti military. About a month before the start of the Air War, 17 Kuwaiti military personnel underwent a rigorous five-week training course, but when DESERT STORM's air attack began on 16 January 1991, the Iraqis closed the border, limiting infiltration options. Out of necessity, training then concentrated on infiltration methods.

From 14 to 20 February 1991, SEALs trained 13 Kuwaitis for a maritime infiltration onto a beach area south of Kuwait City. They conducted a dress rehearsal on 21 February 1991 and attempted infiltrating

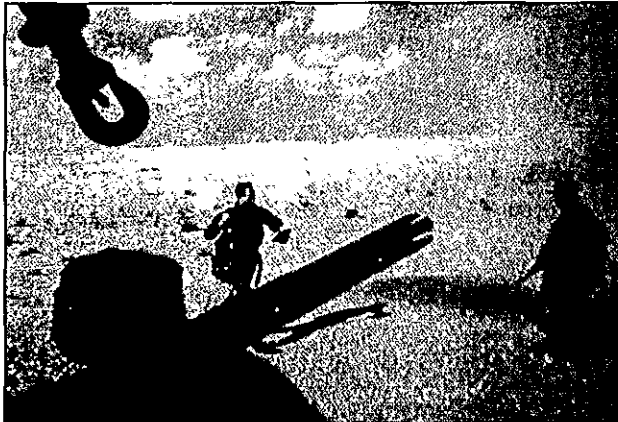
five of the Kuwaitis on the next day. SEAL swimmer scouts first reconnoitered the shoreline and then escorted the Kuwaitis to the pier. Unable to link up with the friendly forces, the Kuwaitis signaled for extraction and were picked up about 500 meters from the beach. The mission was aborted, and the SEALs and Kuwaitis returned safely. Post-war examination of the beach revealed undetected beach obstacles and heavier Iraqi troop dispositions than anticipated.

## *Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR)*

During DESERT SHIELD, SOCCENT established procedures for its CSAR mission, a task that planners expected would be of critical importance, given the projected numbers of coalition aircraft losses. Before it would launch a CSAR mission, SOCCENT required a visual parachute sighting and a voice transmission from the downed pilot, as well as enemy threat analyses. To test these procedures, SOCCENT conduct large, full scale CSAR exercises before the Air War started. There was a mixture of aircraft available—both SOF and conventional helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft—which allowed SOCCENT to tailor its available assets to a particular operational need. To support the CSAR mission, SOCCENT established forward operating bases near the Saudi border, close to the projected areas of operation.

The first successful CSAR operation of DESERT STORM occurred on 21 January 1991. An Iraqi missile had shot down a Navy F-14 60 miles northwest of Baghdad, and the pilot had evaded capture. At 0730 hours, an MH-53J Pave Low helicopter launched from Ar Ar in a fog so thick that, even when flying at 100 feet, the crew

could not see the ground. They flew 130 miles into Iraq but could not contact the pilot—their coordinates for his location were nearly 50 miles off. The helicopter returned to Ar Ar to refuel and launched again at 1200 hours. With better coordinates, the crew arrived at the pilot's location just as an Iraqi truck was descending upon him. The helicopter copilot directed



CSAR: Navy Lt Devon Jones runs for an MH-53J Pave Low.

the two A-10 fighter planes flying overhead to "smoke the truck." The A-10s destroyed the truck with cannon fire, and the helicopter picked up the pilot.

The next successful CSAR effort occurred on 23 January when a USAF F-16 pilot bailed out over the gulf. A Navy SH-60B helicopter carrying two SEALs launched from the USS *Nicholas* and found the pilot six miles off the Kuwaiti coast. The SEALs jumped in the water, attaching a rescue harness to the pilot; the helicopter crew retrieved all three and returned to the *Nicholas* just 35 minutes after launching. The rescuers reported the mission went "flawlessly" and described the pilot as "cold, but in good condition."

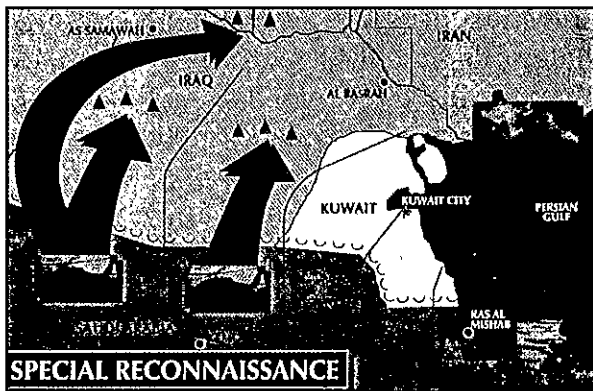
SOCCENT's final successful CSAR mission occurred on 17 February 1991. An F-16 went down in southern Iraq 36 miles from the Kuwaiti border. Slightly injured,

the pilot parachuted into a heavy concentration of Iraqi troops but still established contact with rescue forces. Two MH-60s from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment launched from Rafha, plucked the pilot from the desert, and returned him directly to KKMC where a waiting flight surgeon "sewed him up." Also awaiting the pilot was his wingman who had flown to KKMC after completing his mission to be on hand to greet his buddy.

For a number of reasons, most downed aircrew members were not rescued. The aircrews needed better survival radios, and there were not always visual sightings of open parachutes. Many pilots landed in areas of heavy Iraqi concentrations, and as often as not, the Iraqis beat the SOF rescuers to the downed airmen.

### *Special Reconnaissance (SR)*

Special Operations Forces conducted SR missions along the Iraqi border during DESERT SHIELD, providing USCENTCOM with timely intelligence and an early warning capability. During the war, SOCCENT's SR efforts supported the ground offensive. SOCCENT forces conducted twelve SR missions during DESERT STORM. One mission included 15 separate near-shore boat operations that the NSWTCG conducted between 30 January and 15 February as part of CENTCOM's deception plan. Another mission encompassed six searches for mines by SEALs in the northern Persian Gulf. Three SR missions continued the early warning network which the SEALs and 5th SFG(A) troops had established with Saudi and Kuwaiti forces during DESERT STORM. One of the first SR missions after the war began was to find SCUD complexes. This effort



began on 6 February, when three 5th SFG(A) teams attempted to infiltrate into southern Iraq. One SR team's helicopter turned around after Iraqi radars locked on to it. The second team landed in areas devoid of cover; they found Iraqi movement all around them and called for an emergency exfiltration. The third team found suitable cover where they hid all day. That night, they approached their target, a highway near the Salman Airfield, only to discover they were fully illuminated by the bright moonlight reflecting off the desert floor. They were also exfiltrated.

At the request of VII Corps, SF teams performed a trafficability survey on 18 February, analyzing the terrain and soil conditions along the Corps' planned invasion route into Iraq. Special operations helicopters inserted teams from the 3d and 5th SFG(A)s into two sites. The teams included engineers to perform penetrometer tests on the soil, and combat camera crews, equipped with low-level light lenses, took still and video shots of the terrain, which proved to be the most valuable data collected. The teams executed the missions without incident.

The campaign plan for the ground war called for the XVIII Airborne Corps and VII Corps forces to drive deep into

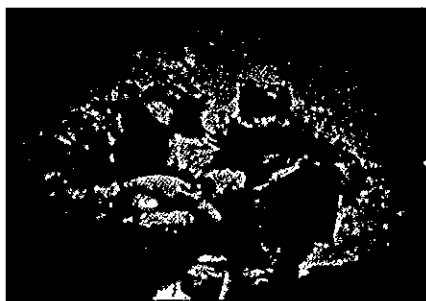
Iraq, flanking and then enveloping the strong Iraqi defenses in Kuwait and southern Iran. This movement would leave the flanks of both corps vulnerable to counter-attack. The corps' commanders requested SOCCENT provide SR teams to go deep inside Iraq, watch important lines of communications, and look for enemy movement toward the exposed flanks. G-Day was set for 24 February 1991.

Three missions provided ground reconnaissance of the main routes that Iraqi units could use to move into VII Corps' area of operations. Two of the missions successfully infiltrated on 23 February, they reported regularly on enemy activity in their area until linking up with advance elements of the 1st Cavalry Division on 27 February. The third team, inserted among Iraqi forces, had to be exfiltrated.

Also on the night of 23 February, Special Forces launched another three SR missions; these supported the XVIII Airborne Corps. One team landed in the middle of a Bedouin encampment and called for an emergency exfiltration. After

being picked up, they scouted the area for an alternate site and saw enemy activity everywhere. Coming under AAA and SAM attack, they aborted the mission. Another team went into the Euphrates River Valley just before the ground war began. It was to report on Iraqi military traffic moving along a major highway

approaching the XVIII Airborne Corps' flank. During the insertion, one of the aircraft flew so low to avoid Iraqi radar that it tore loose its rear wheel on a sand dune. By daylight the team was in place, having



*Special Tactics Teams train during DESERT STORM.*

dug "hide" holes in a drainage canal about 300 meters northwest of Highway 7.

To the horror of the hidden Americans, the surrounding fields came alive with people that morning, and they were soon spotted by some Iraqi children and an adult. A party of 25 armed villagers, joined by an Iraqi Army company, moved toward the team. Calling for close air support and an emergency extraction, the Americans destroyed their classified gear, engaged in a short but hot firefight with the Iraqis, and retreated to better fighting positions. Using their emergency radio, the team contacted close air support aircraft, which dropped cluster munitions and 2,000 pound bombs within 200 meters of the embattled team until nightfall. During one lull in the air strikes, two members of the team charged down the canal and eliminated an Iraqi element. After dark, the team moved 300 meters from the canal where they were extracted by helicopter without further opposition.

Another special reconnaissance mission sent two three-man teams to monitor an area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Communications glitches prevented one team from reporting what they saw, and the team was picked up early on 27 February. The other team had a more exciting but equally frustrating mission.

The second team's reconnaissance site put it in the midst of Bedouin encampments, so team members established a hide site along a drainage canal. At daylight, they discovered their "hide" site was near a major thoroughfare. Many Bedouins passed by without noticing them, but they were compromised by a sharp-eyed little girl. The team fled with armed Bedouins in hot pursuit. Iraqi soldiers soon joined the firefight. The team held off the Iraqis for an hour and a half until F-16s appeared,

followed by a 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment BLACKHAWK. Although riddled by small arms fire, the helicopter made a dramatic daylight rescue of the team.

From 29 January until 16 February, NSWTG elements conducted nearshore and offshore reconnaissance missions in support of USCENTCOM's deception strategy to fix Iraqi attention on a potential amphibious invasion by US Marines. The deception effort culminated in a large-scale operation on the night of 23-24 February 1991, the eve of the ground offensive, which prevented Iraqi units at the beaches from reinforcing those being attacked in the west.

### *Direct Action (DA) Missions*

During DESERT STORM, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, CINCCENTCOM, relied heavily on allied air power to hit targets which otherwise would have been SOF direct action (DA) missions. Even so, SOCCENT executed some critically important DA missions. SOF's first and most important DA mission involved the destruction of two Iraqi early warning radar sites guarding the southwestern approaches to Iraq at the start of the Air War. Neutralizing these sites allowed allied aircraft to fly undetected toward the SCUD complexes in western Iraq.

Given this mission by General Schwarzkopf, Colonel Johnson turned to AFSOCENT to plan the operation. After a visit to an AH-64 Apache battalion, Colonel Johnson confirmed that this helicopter, with its Hellfire missiles and 30mm chain gun, was ideally suited for the mission. According to the AFSOCENT concept, MH-53 Pave Low helicopters would guide the Apaches to the targeted radar



sites, and the Apaches would destroy them. On 14 October, Colonel Johnson assured General Schwarzkopf that he and AFSOCENT were 100 percent certain of the success of this mission.

The Apache and Pave Low crews quickly worked out interoperability issues such as communications and tactical procedures. The Apache pilots became proficient on night vision goggles and conducted livefire exercises on replicas of the radar sites. They conducted a full-dress rehearsal in late December with the crews duplicating the formations, routes, bearings, times, and attack tactics.

On 14 January the Apaches and Pave Lows moved from King Fahd International Airport to Al Jouf in western Saudi Arabia. At 1500 hours on 16 January, SOCCENT informed the Apache/Pave Low task force that the mission was a "go" for that night. H-Hour for the start of the Air War was 0300 hours on 17 January with the opening helicopter strike beginning at 0238 hours. The task force consisted of White and Red teams, with two Pave Lows and four Apaches assigned to each one.

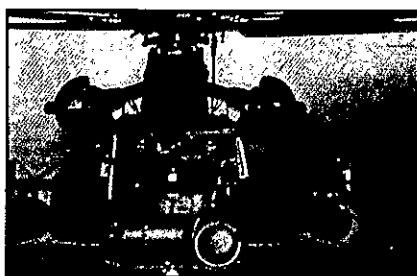
At 0058 hours on 17 January, the White Team lifted off from Al Jouf and headed toward the border, followed 15 minutes later by the Red Team. Flying less than 100 feet off the desert at 100 knots, the two teams avoided detection and safely reached the initial point, approximately 7.5 miles from the targets, where the Pave Lows dropped chemical lights and returned to the ren-

dezvous point north of the border. The Apache pilots updated their navigational and targeting systems, flew toward their targets, and within seconds of the appointed time opened fire on the radar sites. All aircraft returned safely. Colonel Johnson then notified General Schwarzkopf of the mission's success. At the same time, combat control teams installed radar beacons along the Saudi-Kuwaiti-Iraqi borders to direct

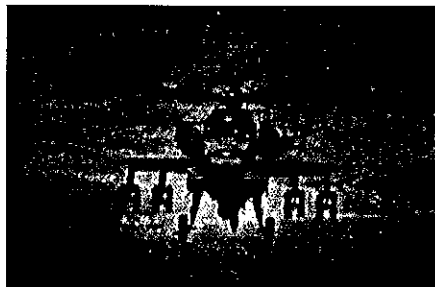
allied attack aircraft to the gaps in the early warning radar system. Special Operations Forces had played a crucial role on the opening night of the Air War.

The Air Force component of SOCCENT, AFSOCENT, conducted two other DA missions: dropping BLU-82 bombs and AC-130 fire missions. The BLU-82 "Daisy Cutters" were 15,000 pound bombs capable of destroying everything in a three mile radius on the flat desert terrain. Because of the anti-aircraft threat, AFSOCENT planners determined that the bomb should be dropped from 16,000 to 21,000 feet. Accordingly, MC-130E Combat Talons flew five missions that dropped a total of 11 BLU-82s on minefields and Iraqi military positions. These huge bombs cleared wide routes through minefields, and their enormous blast either killed the enemy or acted as a potent psychological operations weapon.

AFSOCENT AC-130s flew fire missions in support of ground forces, to attack the SCUD missile sites, and to engage Iraqi troops. Although these aircraft belonged to AFSOCENT, they were under the operational control of Central Command's



*MH-53J Pave Lows led the Apaches to the Iraqi radar sites.*



*AH-64 Apaches destroyed Iraqi radars prior to H-Hour.*

air component, CENTAF. This arrangement resulted in the AC-130s being used for inappropriate missions in medium threat areas. After an AC-130H was engaged by SAMs while on a SCUD hunting mission, the AFSOCCENT commander was given mission oversight responsibility to ensure these SOF assets were used correctly.

On 31 January 1991, AFSOCCENT suffered the single worst air loss by any coalition unit when an AC-130H Spectre gunship ("Spirit 03") was shot down while providing fire support to US Marines defending Khafji against an Iraqi attack. Three gunships were airborne that morning over the Marines, and the first two had destroyed numerous armored personnel carriers. At 0600 hours "Spirit 03" was due to end its patrol when it received a call from the Marines, who wanted a missile battery engaged. Despite the risk of anti-aircraft artillery fire, the crew of "Spirit 03" took out the battery, but as dark gave way to daylight, a surface-to-air missile hit the aircraft. At 0635 hours the aircraft sent out a "mayday" distress call and then crashed into the gulf. All 14 crewmembers died.

During DESERT STORM, British Special Operations Forces carried out their own missions in western Iraq. One British mission—very close to Baghdad—included four American SOF personnel (three Special Forces and one Combat Controller) brought along to coordinate close air support. Their goal was to destroy a buried fiber optic cable supposedly used for SCUD command and control. The twenty Brits and four Americans were inserted by

two helicopters on the night of 23 January slightly southwest of Baghdad. Digging teams found and cut several cables, but found no fiber optic cable. They then crammed 800 pounds of explosives into the hole and blew up what was left of the cables. After 1½ hours on the ground, the team returned safely to Al Jouf by helicopter.

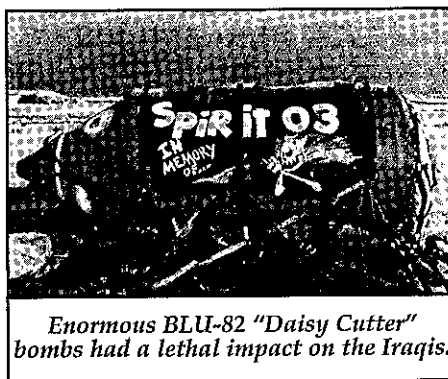
Naval Special Warfare units also had direct action missions. On 18 January 1991, when US helicopters came under fire from seven oil platforms in the Durrah oil field, NSWTC elements counterattacked. SEALs boarded and cleared each of the seven platforms, capturing prisoners, weapons, and documents. Eight special boat unit personnel and 32 Kuwaiti Marines also seized Qaruh Island on

8 February, Maradim Island the next day, and Kubbar Island on 14 February—these operations were the first reclamation of Kuwaiti territory. In the final hours of the war, NSWTC and Kuwaiti forces seized Bubiyan Island and captured its Iraqi defenders. SEALs also flew aboard Navy helicopters for both

CSAR and countermine missions, during which they destroyed 26 moored or floating mines.

### *The Liberation of Kuwait City: Operation URBAN FREEDOM*

SOCCENT assisted Kuwaiti forces in liberating their capital city and reestablishing Kuwaiti governmental authority. SOCCENT initiated Operation URBAN FREEDOM when allied forces reached the outskirts of Kuwait City. SOCCENT deployed to Kuwait City International



*Enormous BLU-82 "Daisy Cutter" bombs had a lethal impact on the Iraqis.*

Airport on 27 February, along with 3d SFG(A) teams and other personnel. Surprisingly, the Iraqis had abandoned the city, and the liberation forces met little organized opposition. Nevertheless, as a precautionary measure SOF units conducted a "take down" of the US Embassy compound in Kuwait City. A ground convoy, composed of SEAL fast attack vehicles and 3rd SFG(A) soldiers, surrounded the compound while a Special Forces assault force fast roped onto the roofs of buildings and searched for Iraqis and booby traps. None were found.

### *Scud Hunting*

Coalition forces had air superiority in the skies over Iraq and Kuwait from the war's first air strikes on 17 January 1991. Unable to do battle in the air, Saddam Hussein struck back with a clumsy, unsophisticated weapon—the SCUD missile—which he ordered to be launched at Israel. Tactically, the SCUD would not have a major impact, but its strategic effect was felt on 18 January, when seven SCUDs hit Israeli cities. There was concern that if continued attacks brought Israel into the war, then the Coalition aligned against Saddam might crumble. The Bush Administration was in a difficult position, and General Schwarzkopf's insistence that the SCUD was not a significant military weapon did little to placate the Israelis. By the end of the first week of the war, over 30 SCUDs had been launched at targets in Israel and Saudi Arabia. The air campaign



*SOCCENT planning to liberate the US Embassy in Kuwait City.*

was not working fast enough to eradicate the mobile SCUD launchers.

By the end of January, the diplomatic pressure on the Bush Administration was such that General Powell ordered General Schwarzkopf to use Special Operations Forces to hunt SCUDs and stop them from being fired at Israel. A Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF), made up of special operations air and ground units, had arrived in Saudi Arabia by 1 February, and the JSOTF commander, Major General Wayne A. Downing, had briefed General Schwarzkopf on the SCUD campaign mission concept.

Operating from a base at Ar Ar in western Saudi Arabia, the JSOTF had a daunting mission: to stop the SCUD attacks on Israel, reconnaissance and surveillance teams would have to go hundreds of miles behind the Iraqi border and attack the SCUD infrastructure. The JSOTF



*SCUD hunting patrol.*

established good relations with SOCCENT (which loaned the JSOTF some of their helicopters) and the UK Special Operations Forces (who had already conducted SCUD searches in Iraq). The JSOTF also assigned liaison officers to CENTCOM headquarters and the Tactical Air Control

Center—the SOF teams would rely on air power to attack SCUDs and provide close air support.

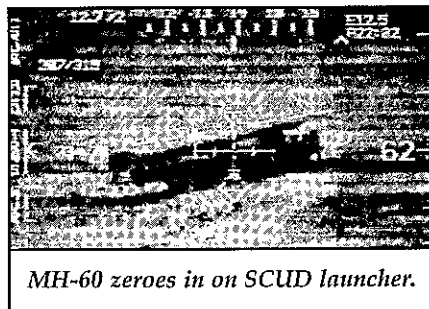
The first JSOTF cross border mission, consisting of 16 SOF personnel and two vehicles, occurred on 7 February. Armed Blackhawks, called defensive armed penetrators, accompanied the insertion. Once on the ground, the teams hid

during the day and conducted reconnaissance at night. These SOF operations proved to be so successful—especially the Blackhawk attacks on SCUDs and SCUD-related targets—that General Schwarzkopf on 14 February approved augmenting the JSOTF with a reinforced Ranger company and more 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment helicopters.

By the time the ground war started, the JSOTF was conducting a wide range of operations. As many as four SOF teams at a time were inside Iraq, conducting operations against the SCUD complexes. These teams called in F-15E, F-16, and A-10 sorties to strike the targets they found. On 26 February, SOF attacked a radio relay site: first, AH-6 attack helicopters peppered the radio relay compound with mini-gun and rocket fire; Rangers then secured the compound and set charges to destroy the 100-meter tall tower. The Blackhawks also conducted "Thunder Runs," which were direct action missions on SCUDs, their lines of communication, and other command and control facilities. The JSOTF also used "Gator" minefields to limit SCUD mobile launcher movement. Because of JSOTF operations, SCUD launches fell dramatically, and their accuracy was greatly impaired.

### *PSYOP and CA Missions*

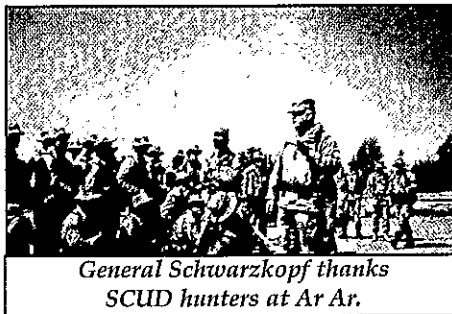
Psychological Operations (PSYOP) and Civil Affairs (CA) units contributed significantly to the success of the Gulf War. The PSYOP campaign was directed toward



*MH-60 zeroes in on SCUD launcher.*

individual units and soldiers, and stressed a single theme: the coalition's quarrel was with Saddam Hussein and not with the Iraqi people or its army. In the early phases, the PSYOP program emphasized "peace and brotherhood;" it later evolved to

stronger themes, and finally turned to surrender appeals and threats. Once begun, the PSYOP campaign (in conjunction with sustained air attacks) steadily eroded Iraqi morale. Resistance crumbled quickly when the coalition ground forces attacked. A total of 86,743 Iraqis were taken prisoner, and most of them possessed surrender leaflets when they capitulated. Some 29 million leaflets were dropped from a variety of aircraft, with a few more distributed by artillery shells and balloons. Three AM and two FM ground stations transmitted "Voice of



*General Schwarzkopf thanks SCUD hunters at Ar Ar.*

the Gulf" broadcasts for 72 days, which interspersed 3,200 news items and 189 PSYOP "messages" among sports and music programs.

The Combined Civil Affairs Task Force (CCATF) was created in February 1991 to provide emergency services for Kuwait City once it was liberated. Relief operations began on 28 February 1991 when the first convoy rolled into the city. CCATF stayed in Kuwait City for two months before turning the relief effort over to the Army Corps of Engineers. During that time it distributed 12.8 million liters of water, 12,500 metric tons of food, 1,250 tons of medicine, 750 vehicles, and 245 electrical generators.

Flexibility best describes Special Operations Forces' contribution to the

DESERT STORM victory. Initially tasked with providing CSAR, SOCCENT steadily expanded its missions as conventional commanders gained confidence in the unique abilities and resources of Special Operations Forces. The coalition support mission became an important new SOF capability, used later in operations in Somalia and Bosnia; the new geopolitical environment had made SOF more relevant. The SCUD hunting mission demonstrated SOF's flexibility, their ability to deploy rapidly and start operations without much delay, and their capacity to execute missions of the gravest importance to the nation.



*Civil Affairs soldiers distributing food and supplies to hungry Iraqis.*

**SOMALIA:  
OPERATION RESTORE HOPE/  
UNOSOM II  
1992-1995**

Special Operations Forces first became involved in Somalia as part of Operation PROVIDE RELIEF. In August 1992 soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) deployed to Kenya to provide security for relief flights en route from Kenya to Somalia. They formed an airborne reaction force, which included two armed desert mobility vehicles loaded inside C-130 aircraft. The C-130s circled over the Somali airstrips during delivery of relief supplies. In addi-

tion, SOF medics and ground observers accompanied many relief flights into the airstrips throughout southern Somalia to determine the enemy order of battle and conduct general area assessments. In many cases, they were the first US soldiers in Somalia, arriving before US forces who supported the expanded relief operations of Operation RESTORE HOPE.

*Operation RESTORE HOPE*

To support the United Nation's relief effort in Somalia, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, directed US Central Command (CENTCOM) on 2 December 1992 to secure transportation facilities in Mogadishu, Somalia. The operation was designated RESTORE HOPE. An amphibious squadron, consisting of USS *Tripoli*, *Juneau*, and *Rushmore*, with a Marine Expeditionary Unit, a SEAL platoon from SEAL Team 1, and a Special Boat Unit (SBU) detachment, arrived off the coast of Somalia shortly thereafter.

CENTCOM charged the amphibious squadron with landing a Marine force to secure the Mogadishu airport, but the required charts for the beaches did not exist. To gather this information, the SEALs and SBU detachment conducted hydrographic reconnaissances, the classic "frogman mission" dating from World War II. On the night of 6 December 1992, the SEALs conducted their first mission; they were to determine whether high or low tide was better for a landing, where the craft could pass over the coral, and what the berm backshore condition was like. The SEAL cartographer was to chart the information.

At 2130 hours, the SEALs left the *Juneau* aboard SBU boats and motored toward shore ten miles away. Twelve

SEALs conducted a hydrographic reconnaissance in the traditional method, swimming in a line toward shore, and like their "frogmen" predecessors, they took depth soundings, using lines with lead weights and knots every foot. Upon reaching waist deep water, they each shifted to the right and swam back out, repeating the process. Meanwhile, another five SEALs swam ashore and reconnoitered the beach. The two SEAL cartographers measured the berm and noted the shore gradient and the presence of obstacles on the beach. The SEALs returned to the *Juneau* where they compiled charts, briefed the Marines, and prepared for their next night's mission.

The night of 7 December, the SEALs swam into Mogadishu harbor to determine the threats, find suitable landing sites, and see whether the port could support maritime prepositioned ship offloads. This was a tough mission: the SEALs swam against a strong current which left many of them overheated and exhausted; then, they had to swim through raw sewage in the harbor, which made them sick. The SEALs found that the harbor could support prepositioned ship operations and that there were good beaches for amphibious landing operations.

The Marine landing occurred on the next night, and the SEALs provided additional shore reconnaissance forces and guides for the amphibious landing craft. When the first SEALs hit the shore, they were met by members of the news media, but after the Marines came ashore, the press focused on them and allowed the SEALs to proceed with their duties. Four SEALs conducted surf observations and initial terminal guidance, and identified obstacles for the Marines' landing craft.

On 17 December the SEALs surveyed the port of Kismayu from the French

frigate *Dupleix*. During the Kismayu surveys, Somali snipers fired at the SEALs, but no SEALs were hit. Later, the SEALs provided personal security for President George Bush during a visit to Somalia and provided snipers to the Marines. Before leaving Somalia in February 1993, the SEALs also conducted joint training missions with Indian navy commandos.

A platoon from SEAL Team 2, with the *Wasp* Amphibious Ready Group, replaced the SEALs from Team 1. On its first mission, these SEALs reconnoitered the Jubba River (which included dodging crocodiles), to gather intelligence on gun smuggling; based on this intelligence, Marines staged two raids on towns along the river. These SEALs performed many operations in April and May—a predawn shore reconnaissance of Kismayu; clearing a potential beach landing site south of Mogadishu; reconnaissance missions in the Three Rivers region south of Kismayu and at Koyaama Island; and a reconnaissance of Daanai beach in extremely rough seas.

Meanwhile, as the SEALs and SBUs were conducting their operations, on 28 December 1992, the Special Forces assets in Kenya moved to Somalia and joined Operation RESTORE HOPE. Special Forces teams went out into the countryside to assess the local situation, provide order of battle intelligence, and defuse potentially dangerous situations with various rebel factions. Special Forces also supported the Canadians, Australians, Belgians and other coalition partners. They identified mine hazards and assisted in planning for expanded refugee support operations. In addition, CA planners, PSYOP personnel, and area survey personnel also went to Somalia. PSYOP personnel prepared and distributed leaflets to the Somalis outlining why US forces were in their country and

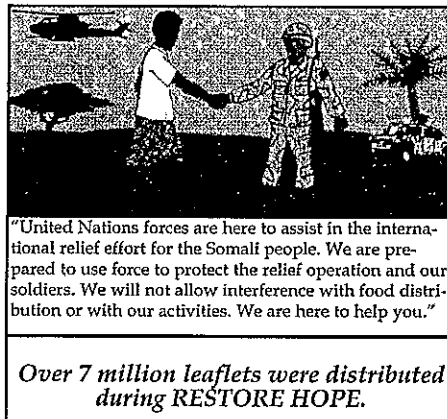
asking them not to impede the movement of troops and relief convoys; they also established a radio station and newspaper to let the people of Somalia know the goals and missions of the US and UN forces in their country.

On 12 January 1993, a Special Forces headquarters unit [FOB 52 (-)] deployed to Mogadishu as the Joint Special Operations Forces-Somalia (JSOFOR) that would command and control all special operations for RESTORE HOPE. JSOFOR's mission was to make initial contact with indigenous factions and leaders; provide information for force protection; and provide area assessments for future relief and security operations. The Special Forces under JSOFOR supported the nine humanitarian relief sector (HRS) commanders. Before redeploying in April, JSOFOR elements drove over 26,000 miles, captured 277 weapons, and destroyed over 45,320 pounds of ordnance. So successful were the Special Forces teams, the Army Quick Reaction Force insisted on augmentation by Special Forces. The commander of UN operations in Somalia, LTG Bir (Turkey), considered them a "must have" asset.

CA and PSYOP forces were also deeply involved in RESTORE HOPE. The 96th CA Battalion (Airborne) deployed a CA Tactical Support Team and six CA Direct Support Teams which supported Army and Marine forces, and served as liaison between military commanders and civilians, such as the local Somali committees and representatives of over 40 non-governmental organizations. They also staffed humanitarian operations centers and humanitarian relief sectors throughout

Somalia, and coordinated medical and engineer civic action projects.

While the CA units were engaged in nation-building missions, Joint PSYOP Task Force (JPOTF) supported unified operations by integrating PSYOP into all plans and operations, and by hiring more than 30 Somalis to help with the PSYOP newspaper *Rajo* ("truth") and radio broadcasting. More than seven million copies of 37 different leaflets and a dozen handbills and posters were printed and disseminated. PSYOP soldiers, including eight loudspeaker support teams from the 9th PSYOP Battalion, with native linguists and pre-recorded tapes, supported both the Marine 7th Regimental Combat Support Team and Army maneuver units.



As a complement to *Rajo*, the JPOTF established a radio station in the US Embassy compound, which broadcast a 45-minute Somali language program twice a day. The station featured religious, news, entertainment, and music programs, and its broadcasts eventually reached every city and town in Somalia where UN forces were based.

Operation RESTORE HOPE did bring an end to starvation and made the lives of Somalis somewhat safer, and it gave way to UN Operations Somalia in May 1993. But the overall success of US Special Operations Forces in Somalia will always be overshadowed by the events of 3-4 October 1993, when US troops found themselves in their fiercest urban firefight since the Vietnam War and the bloodiest event since the blowing up of the Marine barracks in Beirut a decade earlier.

## UNOSOM II

On 5 June 1993 Somali General Mohamed Farah Aideed's Somalia National Alliance (SNA) forces ambushed and killed 24 Pakistani soldiers assigned to United Nations Operations Somalia (UNOSOM II). The next day, General Hoar, Commander in Chief U.S. Central Command, asked the Joint Staff to send four AC-130 gunships to carry out air strikes against the Somalis. Four AFSOC gunships deployed to the area on 7 June and remained until 14 July, flying a total of 32 interdiction, reconnaissance, and PSYOP missions in support of UNOSOM II. Eight of those missions were combat sorties flown over the streets of Mogadishu between 11-17 June. As part of the initial strike against Aideed, three gunships flew over Mogadishu on 11 June and used their 105mm and 40mm cannons to demolish two weapons storage facilities, an armored tank compound, and Aideed's "Radio Mogadishu" propaganda station. The next day, two AC-130s obliterated a second radio station and a weapons factory. On 13, 14, and 17 June, AFSOC crews flew single AC-130 missions that concentrated on destroying weapons storage areas and vehicle compounds belonging to Aideed and his key supporters. During these missions, Air Force special tactics operators provided target guidance. The AC-130 missions and related ground operations together drove Aideed into hiding. The AC-130s redeployed in mid-July, and other SOF later took up the hunt for Aideed.

## Task Force RANGER

On 22 August 1993 Secretary of Defense Les Aspin directed the deployment of a Joint Special Operations Task

Force (JSOTF) to support US efforts in Somalia. The deployment of SOF was in response to increased enemy attacks on US and United Nations Operations Somalia forces and installations by factions supporting General Mohammed Farah Aideed. The JSOTF, named Task Force (TF) RANGER, had the mission to capture Aideed and his key lieutenants, and to turn over captives to UNOSOM II forces. This was a challenging mission—Aideed had gone underground in June, after several AC-130 air raids and UNOSOM II ground assaults had swept through his strongholds.

The command and control structure of TF RANGER remains of interest. Per the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act, the unified commander (in this case, General Joseph P. Hoar, Commander in Chief, US Central Command) was entitled to organize his forces as he saw fit. General Hoar had the TF RANGER commander, Major General William Garrison, report to him directly. Thus, TF RANGER did not fall under the UNOSOM II commander, and at all times TF RANGER remained under US operational command and control. Major General Garrison did, however, coordinate TF RANGER operations with Major General Thomas M. Montgomery, the commander of US Forces Somalia.

By 28 August the task force had arrived in country, was conducting training exercises, and was setting up the necessary liaison and communications networks. TF RANGER was made up of special operations ground forces, special operations helicopters, Air Force special tactics personnel, and SEALs. During August and September 1993, the task force conducted six missions into Mogadishu, all of which were tactical successes. They ran these



missions both by day and at night, and used both helicopters and vehicles to reach their targets. Although Aideed remained free, the cumulative effect of these missions limited his movements.

On 3 October TF RANGER launched its seventh mission, this time into Aideed's stronghold to capture two of his key lieutenants. Helicopters carrying assault and blocking forces launched at 1532 hours from the TF RANGER compound at Mogadishu airport, with a ground convoy moving out three minutes later. By 1542 hours, the ground forces were at the target location, with the blocking force setting up perimeter positions and the assault force searching the compound for Aideed's supporters.

These forces came under increasingly heavy enemy fire, more intense than during previous raids. The assault team had captured 24 Somalis and was about to load them onto the convoy trucks when an MH-60 Blackhawk was shot down by a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) and crashed about three blocks from the target location. Almost immediately, one six-man element of the blocking force, as well as an MH-6 assault helicopter and an MH-60 carrying a 15-man combat search and rescue (CSAR) team began rushing to the scene. The MH-6 crew got there first and, amid a firefight, evacuated two wounded soldiers to a military field hospital. Next, the six-man blocking element arrived, followed by the CSAR heli-



*SFC Randall Shughart (left) and MSG Gary Gordon died defending a crashed MH-60 crew and were awarded the Medal of Honor.*

copter. As the last two members of the CSAR team were sliding down the fast ropes, their helicopter was also hit by an RPG, but somehow the pilot kept the helicopter steady while the two reached the ground safely and then nursed the helicopter back to the airport.

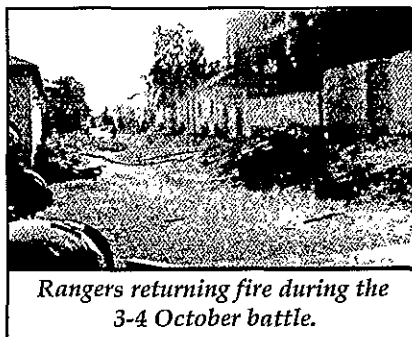
While this was going on, the situation only worsened; ground fire struck two more MH-60s, with one crashing less than a mile to the south of the first downed helicopter. A Somali mob overran this second site and, despite a heroic defense, killed everyone except the pilot, whom they took prisoner. Two defenders of this crash site, Master Sergeant Gary Gordon and Sergeant First Class Randall Shughart, were later awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously. The other MH-60 was hit broadside by an RPG, but the crew somehow coaxed it to the new port area where they did a controlled crash landing.

Meanwhile, after loading the detainees on the ground convoy trucks, the assault and blocking forces moved on foot to the first crash area—passing through heavy fire that wounded a number of soldiers—and had occupied buildings on the south and southwest of the downed helicopter. They established defensive positions, laid down suppressive fire to hold the Somalis at bay, treated their wounded, and worked to free the pilot's body from the wreckage. The fighting around this crash site was fierce.



*Silver Star recipient MSgt Scott Fales directs care of SOF casualties.*

With the detainees loaded on trucks, the ground convoy force attempted to reach the first crash site from the north. Unable to find it amongst the narrow, winding alleyways, the convoy came under withering small arms and RPG fire. The convoy had to return to base after suffering numerous casualties, losing two 5-ton trucks, and sustaining substantial damage to the other vehicles. On the way back to base, this convoy encountered a second convoy that had left the airport in hopes of reaching the second crash site.



*Rangers returning fire during the 3-4 October battle.*

Roadblocks and heavy gunfire had forced this second convoy to the west, where it met the first convoy. The second group loaded casualties into its vehicles and escorted the first convoy back to base. About this time, the mission's quick reaction force—a company of the 10th Mountain Division in support of UNOSOM II—also tried to reach the second crash site. This force too was pinned by Somali fire and required the fire support of two AH-6 helicopters before it could break contact and make its way back to the base.

The TF RANGER soldiers at the first crash site were resupplied from a helicopter that evening. Reinforcements—consisting of a reconstituted quick reaction force consisting of Rangers, 10th Mountain Division soldiers, SEALs, and Malaysian armored personnel carriers—finally arrived at 0155 on 4 October. The combined force worked until dawn to free the pilot's body, receiving RPG and small arms fire throughout the night.

All the casualties were loaded onto the armored personnel carriers, and the remainder of the force moved out on foot. With the armored personnel carriers pro-

viding rolling cover, the run-and-gun movement, known as the "Mogadishu mile," began at 0542. Somalis fired sporadic RPG and small arms fire at the convoy, but only minor wounds were sustained. AH-6 gunships raked the cross streets with fire to support the movement. The main force of the convoy arrived at the Pakistani Stadium at 0630. Medical personnel gave emergency treatment to the wounded, and all personnel were prepared for movement to the hospital or the airfield. Thus ended one of the bloodi-

est and fiercest firefights since the Vietnam War. A total of 16 members of TF RANGER were killed on 3-4 October and 83 wounded (the 10th Mountain Division suffered numerous wounded and one killed). Various estimates placed Somali casualties above 1,000. All told during their time in Somalia, TF RANGER experienced a total of 17 killed in action and 106 wounded. Task force members had to operate in an extremely difficult environment which required constant innovation, flexibility, and sound judgment. The task force had more than held its own against a vastly superior enemy that was battle-hardened in years of civil war and urban fighting.

#### *The Withdrawal From Somalia*

In the aftermath of the 3-4 October battle, US military presence in Somalia increased significantly. Two AC-130s deployed to Kenya and flew reconnaissance missions over Mogadishu. More Special Forces also deployed as did a platoon from SEAL Team 2 and one from SEAL Team 8.

The SEALs provided security detachments to US and UN troops by occupying sniper positions and guarding allied encampments, by flying on aircraft traveling between Somalia and the carrier battle groups off shore, and by providing VIP protection. Other SEALs aboard rigid inflatable boats provided harbor security for Marine Corps landing boats shuttling between ships offshore and Marine Corps encampments on the beach. Most US forces pulled out of Somalia by 25 March 1994.

The final amphibious ready group arrived off Somalia on 5 February 1995, and it included a platoon from SEAL Team 5. The SEALs provided security for the UN forces as they pulled out of Somalia. During February and March 1995, the SEALs conducted hydrographic reconnaissances on the beaches

around Mogadishu, this time to determine the best evacuation routes, and then performed initial terminal guidance missions for Marine landing craft and assault vehicles. The SEALs main-

tained security on the evacuation route, conducting anti-sniper patrols on the beach flanks and around the harbor. Operation UNITED SHIELD, the withdrawal from Somalia, was completed on 3 March 1995.

SOF made major contributions to the Somalia operations. They conducted reconnaissance and surveillance operations; assisted with humanitarian relief; conducted combat operations; protected American forces; and conducted riverine patrols. Additionally, they ensured the safe landing of the Marines and safeguarded the arrival of merchant ships carrying

food. Most notably, these operations proved the wisdom of training SOF in a broad range of capabilities. It demonstrated their flexibility, cultural and language abilities, and the need for highly trained SOF.

**HAITI:  
OPERATION SUPPORT/  
UPHOLD DEMOCRACY  
1994-1995**

Haiti endured unremitting political oppression for hundreds of years. Although the people of this troubled country enjoyed a taste of freedom in 1990 when they selected Jean-Bertrand Aristide as President in a rare open election, the army took control in a 30 September 1991 coup. In an attempt to reestablish the

Aristide government, the UN imposed economic sanctions on 23 June 1993; four months later, on October 15, President Clinton ordered six US Navy ships to help enforce the embargo. Subsequently, Admiral David Paul Miller,

Commander in Chief of United States Atlantic Command (CINCOM), activated Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) 120 to plan and execute the multinational Operation SUPPORT DEMOCRACY.

The US and allied warships in CJTF 120 conducted over 600 shipboardings and inspections during the operation's first five months, and the big ships' effectiveness soon drove the smugglers to change tactics. They began to rely on smaller vessels to carry contraband between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, using shallow coastal routes beyond the larger ships' reach.



*USS Cyclone (left), a USSOCOM PC ship, and the Bellatrix, a Dominican patrol boat, enforced the UN-approved embargo of Haiti in 1994.*

CJTF 120 selected the *Cyclone* class patrol craft (PC) as the best response to the smuggler's new tactic. The PC ships were new to USSOCOM's inventory and needed sea duty certification before assignment to Haiti. Two patrol craft, the USS *Cyclone* and USS *Tempest*, participated in exercise Agile Provider, off Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, from 23 April to 7 May, and received their certification. Barely two weeks later, on 24 May, these ships departed for Guantanamo, Cuba, with orders to participate in SUPPORT DEMOCRACY. CJTF 120 assumed operational control of the vessels upon their arrival in Guantanamo on 27 May 1994.

On 30 May, CJTF 120 directed the PCs to begin operations with the task force's larger warships off the north Haitian coast. While authorized to cruise within three nautical miles of the shore, *Cyclone* and *Tempest* were ordered to avoid internal waters for the time being. Their larger escort, the USS *Simpson*, was to familiarize them on standard boarding procedures.

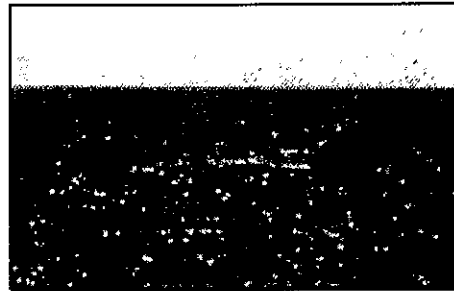
The plan to orient the PCs gradually into the interdiction operation ended when the ships encountered a smuggler on their first voyage, a Bahamian flagged sailing vessel trying to skirt the embargo. As the vessel headed for Port-au-Prince, the *Cyclone* ordered it to stand clear of the Haitian coast, but the vessel did not heave to until *Cyclone* fired warning flares and launched a rigid hull inflated boat (RIB) with SEALs aboard. The vessel attempted to play a waiting game that night, but at first light a combined party from the *Cyclone* and the HMCS *Terra Nova* (0029)-

six Canadians and three SEALs—conducted a boarding and search operation. They found embargoed goods, and the *Cyclone* towed this vessel to Guantanamo.

By 23 June 1994, the CJTF 120 fleet had boarded over 1100 ships. Despite these efforts, a mid-June report indicated that the flow of embargoed goods along the coast from the Dominican Republic into Haiti remained steady. General John M. Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, responded by approving bilateral patrols with the Dominican Republic's navy. On 11 July 1994, SEALs from the *Cyclone* boarded and cleared the *Vinland Saga*, a Danish vessel carrying a cargo of wheat flour, but by then boardings had become rare.

As sea traffic decreased along the Dominican Republic border, CJTF 120 directed *Cyclone* and *Tempest* to patrol the inner areas of the coast. These operations sent a message to the Haitians to abide by the sanctions and provided an opportunity to check sea traffic and collect information. The USS *Hurricane* and USS *Monsoon* patrol craft replaced the *Cyclone* and *Tempest* in September.

The Clinton Administration determined that Haiti's deteriorating economic conditions and growing political repression posed a threat to the safety of American citizens, and began considering a full military invasion. The administration sought UN Security Council approval for invasion and occupation if the sanctions failed to restore Aristide to the presidency. The council granted its approval on 31 July 1994. The invasion plan had two phases: first, a 15,000 multinational invasion force would invade, restore public order, and



SEALS patrol Haitian coast aboard a rigid hull inflatable boat (RIB).

reinstate Aristide; and next, 6,000 UN forces would train a new Haitian police force to maintain order.

Meanwhile, Army, Air Force, and Navy SOF had joined XVIII Airborne Corps in planning for a full-scale invasion of Haiti. The special operations portion of the plan envisioned the takedown of key governmental sites followed by a link-up with conventional forces, similar to what SOF had done for the invasion of Panama in 1989. After the main takedown, Special Forces teams were to secure the countryside. To assist in the movement of forces and their resupply, an aircraft carrier, *USS America*, was added to the force package in spring 1994.

On 10 September 1994, the administration authorized General Shalikashvili to issue the execute order for Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY. The military invasion of Haiti was scheduled to occur within 10 days unless the military junta gave up control of the country. On the night of 16-17 September 1994, SEALs conducted a pre-invasion reconnaissance of the coastline along Cap Haitien, collecting intelligence and hydrographic data on potential landing sites. The information was essential for planning the Marines' invasion points. The SEALs conducted their missions despite the large number of Haitians present on the beach and in small vessels. The water was thick with traffic, strewn with garbage, and the SEALs heard Haitians beating drums on the shore. The teams met with varying degrees of success, as there were just too many civilians in some areas to permit a full reconnaissance.

Nevertheless, the intelligence which the SEALs

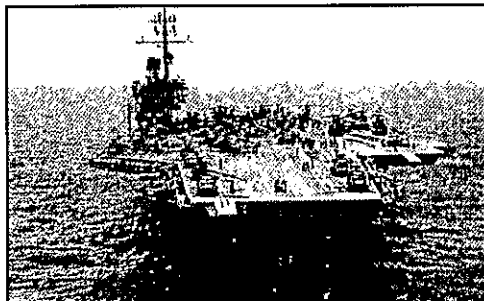
gathered confirmed data from a number of other sources, and the ensuing landings, which proceeded flawlessly (and uncontested) on the morning of 21 September, 1994, verified the accuracy of their work.

All elements of the invasion force moved their units, equipment, and supplies to their air and sea ports of embarkation. Rangers, Seals, and Special Operations Aviation assets went aboard the *America*. Other Rangers moved to their waiting planes, prepared for an airborne assault. All the elements of a complex plan were in place.

The last-minute deal brokered by former President Jimmy Carter, Senator Sam Nunn, and retired General Colin Powell is well known. Because of their negotiations, all the forces moving toward Haiti on 17 September 1994 were either aborted, diverted, or re-configured for a peaceful entry. Using Special Operations Aviation assets freed from the assault forces, the 3rd SFG(A) along with CA and PSYOP assets moved rapidly to Port-au-Prince and then into the countryside where they worked with the local population to keep order and begin the slow task of building democracy.

The invasion thus became a large-scale humanitarian mission, with the US forces landing on 19 September 1994. SEALs provided beach security and terminal guidance to the Marine landing forces.

The *Monsoon* had the honor of being the first US ship to enter Port-au-Prince Harbor on 19 September 1994. From this point until their departure on 24 October 1994, the PC ships maintained harbor patrols.



Special Operations helicopters aboard the *USS America* off the Haitian coast.

## The Occupation of Haiti

US planners foresaw that Port au Prince would be the "center of gravity" for the political and economic struggle that would follow the restoration of the Aristide government; so the bulk of the conventional forces from the 10th Mountain Division (and later the 25th Infantry Division) secured the city. It was also important to maintain stable conditions in the remaining 90 percent of Haiti. For this mission, XVIII Airborne Corps Commander Lieutenant General Henry H. Shelton chose to use Special Operations Forces.

Brigadier General Richard Potter formed Joint Task Force (JTF) RALEIGH as the Joint Special Operations Task Force under Lieutenant General Shelton. To implement the plan, the three battalions of 3rd SFG(A) set up three forward operating bases; 1st Battalion at Les Cayes, 2nd at Camp D'Application, and 3rd at Gonaives. Using the "hub and spoke" concept of employment, Operational Detachment "A"s (or "A" teams) deployed initially to the forward operating bases (the hubs) and then out into the countryside (the spokes).

An active and well-thought out psychological operations campaign, orchestrated by the Joint Psychological Operations Task Force (JPOTF), prepared the way for 3rd SFG(A)'s expansion into the countryside of



*BG Potter, Commander JTF Raleigh on a crowded Haitian street.*



*PSYOP loudspeaker team supports pacification efforts by making public announcements in Haiti.*



*Civil Affairs soldiers help to rebuild Haiti - here making a village's well water drinkable.*

Haiti. The PSYOP campaign, conducted by elements of the 4th Psychological Operations Group (POG), stressed cooperation with US forces and non-violence against their FAdH oppressors in return for the reinstatement of the popular Aristide and the establishment of a working democracy. Using leaflets, radio broadcasts, and airborne loudspeaker platforms, JPOTF soldiers blanketed the countryside with their messages, to great effect. In vil-

lage after village, the Haitians greeted SOF soldiers with open arms.

While Special Forces soldiers were engaged in gaining control over the countryside, Civil Affairs teams from the 96th CA Battalion, augmented by CA reservists, assessed Haiti's creaking infrastructure. The hope was that a new Haitian government, assisted by USAID and various non-governmental organizations and private voluntary organizations, would lift the country up from its endemic chaos and poverty.

Some changes were seen in the countryside. US soldiers from Company A, 96th CA Battalion conducted operation LIGHT SWITCH in Jeremie, Cap Haitien, and other northern cities and towns, restoring electricity to those areas for the first time in years. SF teams in other villages became the only source of law and order, and the villagers

called on SF captains, sergeants, and warrant officers to act as policeman, judge, and jury for a wide variety of disputes. Attempts to withdraw from villages often resulted in a re-occurrence of violence and disorder.

The SOF operations in Haiti were notable as a large-scale peacekeeping mission. Even after the UN Mission in Haiti took over on 31 March 1995 (UPHOLD DEMOCRACY became RESTORE DEMOCRACY), SOF still performed this vital mission. The final chapters to Operation UPHOLD/RESTORE DEMOCRACY have not yet been written, although the operation is officially over and almost all US forces have returned home.

Nevertheless, the relative peace and order maintained in the Haitian countryside to date was a remarkable tribute to the SOF soldiers, who fulfilled all of their mission requirements and more. In addition, the PCs demonstrated their versatility during both SUPPORT DEMOCRACY and UPHOLD DEMOCRACY; they proved their usefulness in coastal operations and showed they could support both SEALs and Special Boat Unit operations.

**BOSNIA:  
OPERATION JOINT ENDEAVOR/  
JOINT GUARD  
1995-PRESENT**

In the early 1990s, rival ethnic states within Yugoslavia declared their independence and used force to align their borders to encompass all their ethnic population in neighboring states. In early 1992 the UN sent in a Protection Force (UNPROFOR) to try to bring peace to the former Yugoslavia, but fighting continued. To provide humanitarian assistance in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the US airlifted and air

dropped supplies to enclaves surrounded by warring factions during Operation PROVIDE PROMISE (3 July 1992 to 1 October 1994). NATO conducted Operations MARITIME GUARD (1 November 1992 to 14 June 1993) and SHARP GUARD (15 June 1993 to 18 June 1996) which prevented unauthorized ships from entering former Yugoslavian waters.

During DENY FLIGHT (12 April 1993 to 20 December 1995), NATO enforced a no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in 1994, after a Bosnian Serb mortar attack killed 68 civilians in Sarajevo, NATO airplanes shot down four Bosnian Serb aircraft for violating the no-fly zone, NATO's first combat action ever. Continued fighting led to Operation DELIBERATE FORCE (29 August to 20 September 1995) when NATO bombed Bosnian Serb targets. Finally, a cease fire was agreed to in October 1995, which led to the Dayton Peace Accords, initialed on 21 November 1995, and a formal peace agreement, signed in Paris on 14 December. During Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR, the implementation of the peace agreement, NATO's missions included peace enforcement (separating the warring factions, establishing demilitarized zones, and maintaining security) and support for the withdrawal of UN forces from the former Yugoslavia. To implement the peace accords, NATO vested command and control in the Commander in Chief, Implementation Force, and his assigned forces were known as the IFOR, the Implementation Force.

Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) became involved in these peace efforts in February 1993 when it established the Joint Special Operations Task Force 2 (JSOTF2). Located at San Vito Air Station, near Brindisi, Italy, JSOTF2

had the following missions: combat search and rescue; fire support; air drop; and visit, board, search and seizure. To support the 1995 peace agreement, SOCEUR provided forces to establish the Special Operations Command Implementation Force (SOCIFOR) and superimposed it over JSOTF2 at San Vito. SOCIFOR had several missions, but its most notable one was to provide SOF to the NATO and non-NATO forces in Bosnia. Like DESERT STORM and Somalia before, the emphasis was on SOF's capabilities to interact with foreign military forces. Other missions included the ones from DENY FLIGHT, SHARP GUARD, and PROVIDE PROMISE.

All SOF "in the box" (inside of Bosnia-Herzegovina) were assigned to Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF), the SOF component to the land forces component, Commander, Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps (COMARRC). A British officer commanded the CJSOTF with an American SOF officer as his deputy. Beneath the CJSOTF, SOCIFOR established a US SOF headquarters (known as FOB 101) using 1st Battalion, 10th SFG(A) assets.

Each of COMARRC's three divisions had a Special Operations Command and Control Element (SOCCE) assigned, which worked for the division commanders, controlled SOF in the divisions' areas, and reported to FOB 101. The SOCCE coordinated SOF with the conventional operations; advised the division commander on SOF capabilities and employment options; and provided secure

and reliable communications (this last capability was so critical that COMARRC would have delayed the transfer of authority from the UN to NATO if SOF had not been in place).

The SOCCEs sent out Liaison Coordination Elements (LCEs) to the NATO and, most important, non-NATO units within each division's area of operations. The LCEs were assigned to the battalion or brigade commanders. Not unlike the Coalition Support Teams of DESERT STORM, the fundamental LCE mission was establishing communications between the division and its non-NATO battalions, and the LCEs made sure that the information and instructions passed from the division commander to the battalion or brigade commander were understood which

included explaining the intent and movements of allied forces. If needed, the LCEs could also do laser target designation, call for fire, and request medical evacuations. Importantly, the LCEs had their own vehicles so that they could keep up with their parent units.

LCEs performed the following missions: conducted daily patrols with parent battalions; maintained reliable communications; assessed the attitudes of local populations and former warring factions; spread the word on the IFOR mission; provided unbiased information on any incidents; and

accomplished route reconnaissance. LCEs were augmented by Special Tactics personnel trained in Special Operations Tactical Air Controller (SOTAC) procedures for close air support. When the battalion or



*SOF and Romanian Engineer Battalion counterparts meet.*



*SEALs supported bridging of the Sava River.*



brigade became comfortable with doing its mission essential tasks, the LCEs redeployed. No other forces, save SOF, had the requisite capabilities to do these delicate diplomatic operations.

In the early stages of JOINT ENDEAVOR, SOF's flexibility and specialized capabilities were used to ensure that NATO forces arrived in the right place at the right time. SOF's major contributions included: SOF enabling forces were in place on time; SOF aircraft (capable of flying in the most difficult weather) ensured timely SOF deployments into Bosnia-Herzegovina despite weather that grounded all other aircraft; SOF aircraft flew COMIFOR through adverse weather to reach meetings and ceremonies; SOCIFOR provided a quick reaction force; and SEALs supported the bridging of the Sava River.

CA and PSYOP forces likewise had important missions for JOINT ENDEAVOR. The CA forces coordinated the reconstruction of the civil infrastructure and organized relief efforts of more than 500 UN, government, and non-government organizations. US Civil Affairs personnel, assigned to the Combined Joint Civil Military Operations Center (with CA task forces assigned to each multinational division), assisted in restoring basic services such as public transportation, public works and utilities, public health, and commerce, as well as helping with elections and setting up new national governments. CA specialists worked with organizations like the World Bank and the International Police Task Force to facilitate the delivery of their services. CA soldiers also helped to develop plans for, and coordinated the repatriation of, refugees.

PSYOP forces had the important task of disseminating factual information to the populace inside the former Yugoslavia. Assigned to the Combined Joint Psychological Task Force, US Army PSYOP forces used print media (the weekly *Herald of Peace* newspaper and posters), "Radio IFOR" broadcasts, and some television broadcasts to accomplish their missions. They also conducted a mine awareness campaign, aimed primarily at children, and distributed literature (such as coloring books) to stress the dangers of land mines and ordnance.

Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR officially ended on 20 December 1996, and the IFOR gave way to Operation JOINT GUARD's Stabilization Force (SFOR). Planned to last 18 months, JOINT GUARD built upon the success of JOINT ENDEAVOR—the NATO-led forces had separated the former warring factions, allowed the transfer of land, moved heavy weapons into storage areas, and demobilized troops of the former warring factions. In essence, SFOR was a maintenance force responsible for deterring hostilities and contributing to a secure environment which promoted the reestablishment of civil authority.

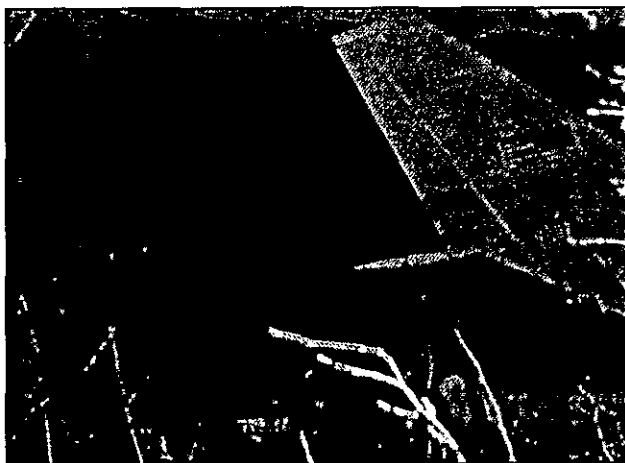
SOCEUR disbanded SOCIFOR on 20 December and lodged command and control of all SOF inside Bosnia in the revamped CJSOTF. Now commanded by a US SOF officer, the CJSOTF deployed SOCCEs to each multinational division and LCEs to the Romanian Battalion, Hungarian Battalion, and Russian Brigade. In addition, SOF took on the responsibility of providing Joint Commission Observers (JCOs). These six man teams roamed the coun-



Distributing "Herald of Peace" in Bosnia.

try as "honest brokers" to establish communications between all the factions and the SFOR commanders. SOCEUR still had mission responsibility for combat search and rescue; personnel recovery; close air support; and special reconnaissance. Likewise, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations forces continue accomplishing under JOINT GUARD what they had done for JOINT ENDEAVOR. Psychological Operations forces now work for the Combined Joint SFOR Information Campaign Task Force. All these missions were scheduled to run until summer 1998.

During JOINT ENDEAVOR, SOCEUR also discharged its normal theater-wide responsibilities and responded to two crises. On 3 April 1996, a CT-43 crashed on a mountainside above Dubrovnik, Croatia, killing all 35 aboard. Included as passengers were Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown and a number of corporate executives, as well as the Air Force crew. Special operations helicopters flew to the crash site in some of the worst flying conditions in the Balkans. SOCEUR then ran the recovery effort under very



*April 1996: a Pave Low makes a tree-level approach to Secretary Brown's crashed CT-43.*



*ASSURED RESPONSE: SOF guarding the US Embassy in Monrovia.*

arduous conditions—extreme cold and wet, and rugged mountainside terrain.

As these SOF were finishing the recovery effort, SOCEUR had to respond to a crisis in Liberia, as the civil war spread to Monrovia and endangered Americans and other foreign nationals. The US had to deploy forces quickly to save lives, and the only integrated force with its own airlift and strike force ready and available was SOCEUR. In fact, within hours of redeploying from Dubrovnik to Stuttgart on 7 April, SOF, aboard an MC-130 Combat Talon II, had launched for Sierra Leone, the intermediate staging base. Using its Air Force MH-53J helicopters (augmented later by Army MH-47D helicopters), SOCEUR sent first SEALs, on 9 April, and then Special Forces to provide security for the US embassy and implement an orderly evacuation of Americans and third country nationals. On 13 April the Psychological Operations Task Force began conducting force protection loud speaker operations in and around the American embassy. SOF had the situation well in hand and had evacuated 436 Americans and 1,677 foreign nationals when the Marines relieved Commander, SOCEUR on 20 April 1996.

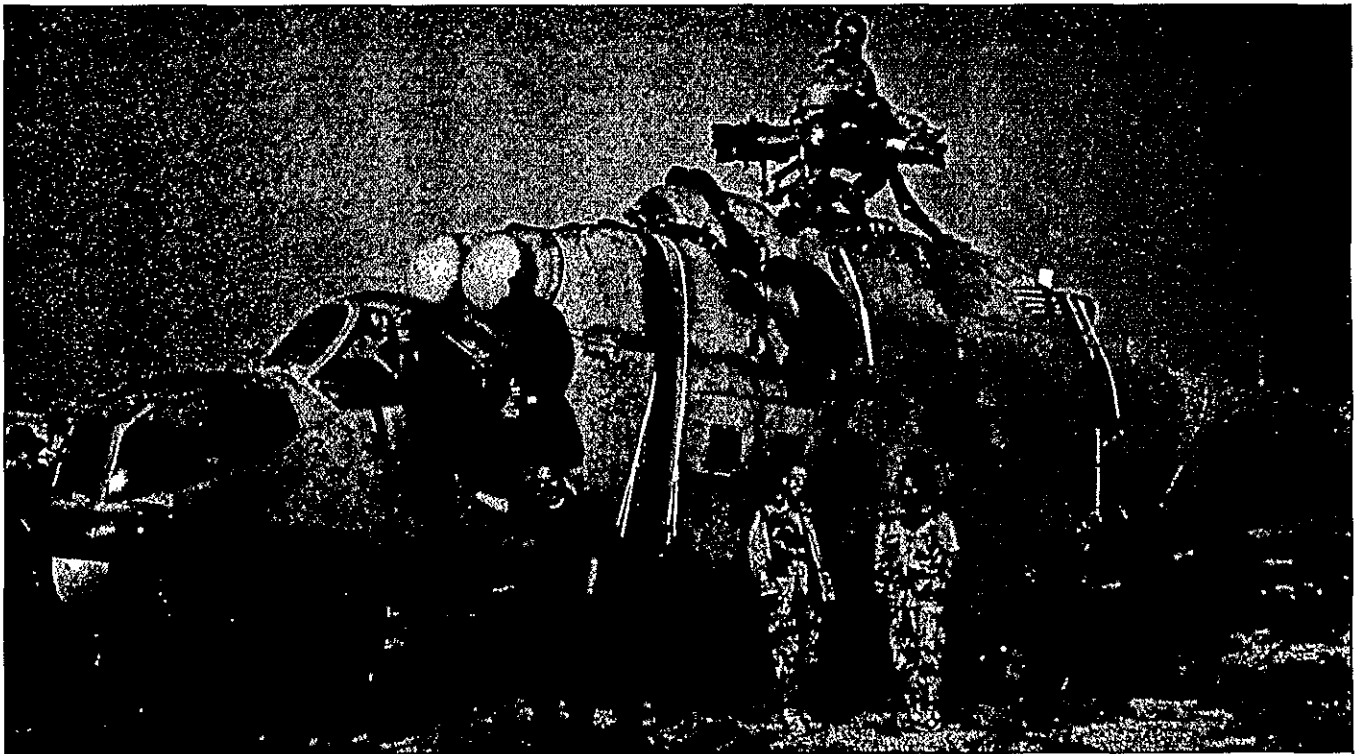
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## CHAPTER III

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### *FUTURE CHALLENGES*

Special Operations Forces redefined themselves over the course of the past decade. The establishment of USSOCOM solved to a great extent the endemic command and control problems experienced during both Desert One and Grenada; SOF commanders controlled force modernization through MFP-11; and interoperability within and outside of the community had never been better. Acceptance of SOF by the conventional military, as measured by OPTEMPO (our measure of utilization), increased considerably since 1987. While the Active Component SOF shouldered a preponderance of the rising OPTEMPO, the Reserve Component SOF, especially Army CA and Army and Air Force PSYOP forces, took their share of the deployments. Clearly, the Congress knew best when it passed the Nunn-Cohen Amendment to the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act--the sparse budgets and hollow force of the 1970s and the operational problems of the 1980s are a reflection of a distant time when compared to SOF capabilities of 1997. These have been a remarkable ten years for all Special Operations Forces during an era of equally remarkable changes in the world order.



*Operation Mount Hope III illustrated SOF's capabilities to do quick turnaround, low visibility operations. In June 1988, MH-47s from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Group (now Regiment) airlifted an MI-25 Hind helicopter from an isolated desert location to an airfield at night under extremely adverse desert conditions. The future challenges for the US will mean that SOF must stay constantly ready to do such sensitive missions on short notice.*

While the upheavals of the past decade seem cataclysmic--indeed, some were monumental--SOF remained faithful to their core values. In the 1997 SOF Vision 2020 statement, General Henry H. Shelton articulated his vision:

*Tomorrow's Special Operations Forces--building on today's successes with:*

- *Quality people who are experienced self-reliant warrior-diplomats;*
- *Versatile and responsive units that are regionally and culturally oriented;*
- *Specialized state-of-the art equipment;*
- *Operating in a volatile and uncertain world while providing unique capabilities across the continuum of conflict.*

These core values are proven traits of highly trained, motivated, and professional special operators and were shared by SOF's lineal ancestors--Major General William "Wild Bill" Donovan of the Office of Strategic Services, Lieutenant Colonel Russel Volkmann of the Philippine Guerrillas, Colonel Aaron Bank of the OSS and early days of Special Forces, Brigadier General Robert McClure of WWII Psychological Warfare and post-WWII SOF revitalization, Lieutenant Colonel Philip Cochran and Lieutenant Colonel John Alison of the WWII 1st Air Commandos, and Commander Francis Fane and Captain Philip Bucklew of WWII naval special warfare.

Moreover, issues that confronted each previous CINCSOC have likewise occupied the attention of General Shelton and his staff. The USSOCOM Board of Directors--CINCSOC and his component commanders--have made tough choices on such vital concerns as SOF acquisition programs and force structure, while continuing to refine the Command's mission state-

ment, goals, and values. In December 1996, General Shelton approved a revised mission statement:

*Provide Special Operations Forces to the National Command Authorities, regional Combatant Commanders, and American Ambassadors and their country teams for successful conduct of worldwide special operations, civil affairs, and psychological operations during both peace and war.*

What gave SOF the "right stuff" during the past decade will be, in all probability, what carries it forward to meet future challenges. General Shelton continued USSOCOM's long-standing emphasis on the recruitment and retention of quality people and on setting and maintaining high professional and ethical standards. Technical and tactical proficiency have remained hallmarks of the Command, along with integration of advanced technology into SOF operations. SOF's technological edge was aptly demonstrated during JOINT ENDEAVOR when the Implementation Force commander traveled



*Over 100 million landmines have been implaced around the world, causing 500 civilian casualties each week. SOF led the way in US humanitarian demining operations, first in 1988-1991 with Operation SAFE PASSAGE, the effort to train Afghans to clear Soviet mines from their country. Since then, SOF have conducted humanitarian demining operations in Cambodia (shown here), Eritrea, Ethiopia, Honduras, and other countries.*



*SOF trained foreign and US law enforcement personnel for counterdrug operations and reconnoitered (shown here) drug smuggling routes along the US borders.*

on special operations aircraft after Balkan weather had grounded all other air transportation.

The fall of the Soviet Union may have been a watershed event, and future threats may very well be much like those of the present. The tenets of our National Military Strategy will still be relevant for the 21st century: the nation's military forces will have to be proficient in peacetime engagement; deterrence and conflict resolution; fighting and winning the war; and winning the peace that follows. As the past decade has demonstrated time and again, SOF were prepared for operations across the conflict spectrum.

To be relevant in the future, SOF must continue to think, react, and operate in unconventional ways--more in line with the dicta of Sun Tzu (the indirect approach) than those of Clausewitz (the direct approach). SOF must be trained and equipped to continue providing unique military capabilities. Mastery of information operations and command and control warfare will make SOF a force multiplier in the future, as Coalition Support Teams did during DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM. Technology will have a promi-

nent role in such missions as counterproliferation, direct action, special reconnaissance, and combatting terrorism.

Moreover, SOF must maintain their regional, cultural, and language orientation, gained through the experience of being deployed around the world. SOF cannot lose sight of what gained them acceptance with the conventional military--interoperability. As was true in the past, SOF's strength in the future will lie in their versatility and adaptability.

SOF will stay relevant for the future geopolitical environment because their strategy will be intertwined with the National Military Strategy, the Joint Vision 2020, and the Services' visions. USSOCOM will stay focused on people and technology to maintain SOF's uniqueness. USSOCOM will emphasize three paths for success: professional development, technological innovation, and proactive acquisition. SOF are truly the forces of the future because they will be highly trained, rapidly deployable, and have a worldwide focus. Today, SOF are the most relevant and ready force for the future.

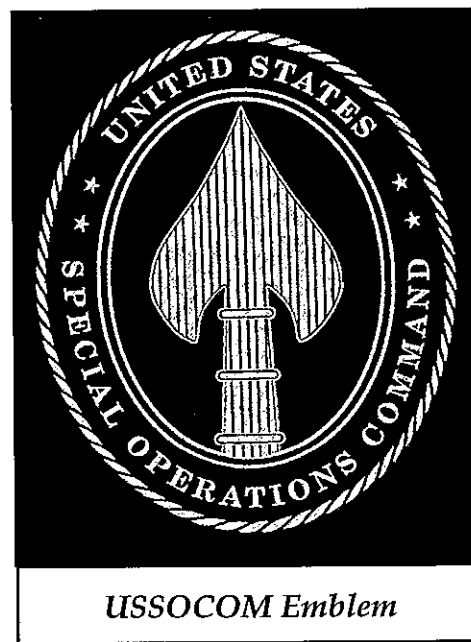
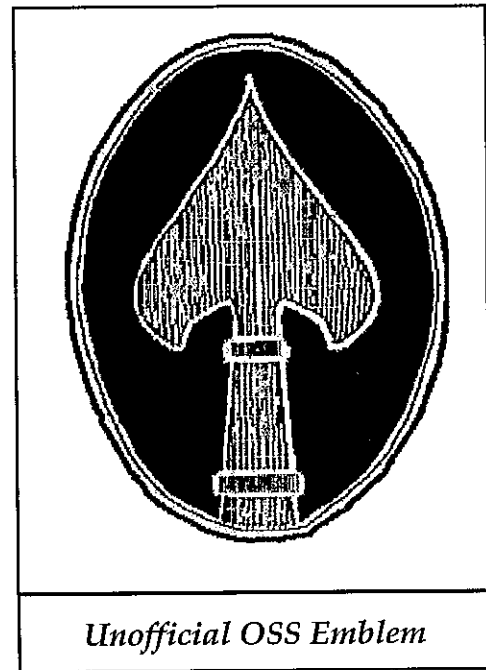
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# USSOCOM HERALDRY



*General James J. Lindsay, the first CINCUSOC, originally chose the Sea Griffin patch pictured above as the command's emblem. This emblem was derived from the Joint Special Operations Support Element's design. The JSOSE served as a standing joint special operations task force that deployed to the theater unified commands to augment their staffs for exercises and deliberate planning. In 1987, General Lindsay was given an "unofficial" Office of Strategic Services patch that immediately caught his attention. He decided to use a modified version of the OSS emblem as USSOCOM's to strengthen our ties with our lineal predecessors.*