



# Tip OF THE Spear

United States Special Operations Command  
MacDill Air Force Base, Florida

October 2019

Combat controller  
earns Air Force Cross  
for valor in Afghanistan



# United States Special Operations Command



## Combat controller earns Air Force Cross for valor in Afghanistan ... 24

### Tip of the Spear

**U.S. Army Gen. Richard D. Clarke**  
Commander, USSOCOM

**Chief Master Sgt. Gregory A. Smith**  
Command Chief Master Sergeant

U.S. Army Col. Kara Soules  
**Special Operations**  
**Communication Office Director**  
Daniel Wade  
**Command Information Chief**  
Michael Bottoms  
**Managing Editor**

U.S. Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Ryan Scranton  
**Staff NCOIC**  
**Command Information**

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo  
**Photojournalist**

U.S. Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Jacob Johnson  
**Staff Writer/Photographer**

U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Heather Kelly  
**Staff Writer/Photographer**



### Thomas Jefferson Award Winner

This is a U.S. Special Operations Command publication. Contents are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense or USSOCOM. The content is edited, prepared and provided by the USSOCOM Communication Office, 7701 Tampa Point Blvd., MacDill AFB, Fla., 33621, phone (813) 826-4600, DSN 299-4600. An electronic copy can be found at [www.socom.mil](http://www.socom.mil). E-mail the editor via unclassified network at [public.affairs@socom.mil](mailto:public.affairs@socom.mil). The editor of the Tip of the Spear reserves the right to edit all copy presented for publication.

*(Cover) Air Force Tech. Sgt. Daniel Keller, a combat controller in the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, was presented with the Air Force Cross by Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein during a ceremony at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base in Louisville, Ky. Aug.13, 2019. Keller earned the medal for valor on the battlefield in Afghanistan. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Joshua Horton.*

# The Quiet Professionals

## Highlights



**Trojan Footprint brings Green Beret Citizen Soldiers to Black Sea region ... 11**



**Inspiring display of incredible courage: 34 recognized for valor ... 20**



**Headquarters recognizes recent fallen with memorial competition ... 33**

## Departments

### Theater Special Operations Commands

*Special Operators build coalition capacity during Eager Lion 19 ... 4*

*Special Ops, conventional force integration on display at exercise Combined Resolve XII ... 6*

*US, Serbians commemorate 75th anniversary of daring WWII rescue ... 8*

*Trojan Footprint brings Green Beret Citizen Soldiers to Black Sea region ... 11*

*Honey: An elixir for good will ... 14*

*SOCSOUTH, Guatemalan female engagement platoon conducts information exchange seminar ... 16*

*Civil Affairs Team partners with ten Panamanian agencies ... 18*

### U.S. Army Special Operations Command

*Inspiring display of incredible courage: 34 recognized for valor ... 20*

*USASOC receives Congressional Gold Medal recognizing OSS roots ... 21*

### Naval Special Warfare Command

*SEAL military dive operations ... 22*

### Air Force Special Operations Command

*Combat controller earns Air Force Cross for valor in Afghanistan ... 24*

*Special operations RPA pilot returns to Air Force Academy, mentors cadets ... 26*

*A dark night leads to a bright career ... 28*

### Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command

*The warrior's fight: Paying it forward ... 30*

### Headquarters

*Headquarters recognizes recent fallen with memorial competition ... 33*

*USSOCOM deputy commander presides over summer graduation ... 34*

*New Data Engineering Lab opens ... 36*

### Memorial

*Fallen Heroes ... 39*

# U.S. Special Operations Command - Central



## Special Operators build coalition capacity during Eager Lion 19



*A Royal Jordanian special operations forces service member stands guard with an M240B machine gun as part of a naval visit, board, search, and seizure joint exercise during Eager Lion in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Sept. 4, 2019. Courtesy photo.*

*By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Steven Colvin  
U.S. Special Operations Command Central*

Special Operations Forces from fourteen nations joined U.S. and Jordanian SOF teams to participate in multiple training events as part of exercise Eager Lion 19, in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Aug. 26 – Sept. 5, 2019.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan hosted the ninth iteration of EL2019, which is U.S. Central Command's

premiere exercise in the Levant region. Eager Lion is a multilateral exercise designed to strengthen military-to-military relationships, promote regional security and improve interoperability with partner nations. The exercise took place at military training areas and other remote locations throughout Jordan.

During the training scenarios, the special operations forces worked side by side and as one team to build and sustain a collective ability to plan and operate in a complex environment.

One of the first opportunities to show joint capabilities between the partnered nations was the fly away event, which included loading U.S. and Jordanian aircraft into a Qatari C-17 airplane.

“We loaded two UH-60L helicopters and one Royal Jordanian Air Force MD-530 into a Qatari C-17 aircraft,” said Sergeant 1st Class Stafford Cawley, a U.S. Special Operations Command Central non-commissioned officer in charge of the special operations aviation detachment. “This particular exercise helped increase capabilities, increase interoperability and build a stronger relationship with our partnered nations.”

Cawley said this was the first time he experienced performing airlift operations with the two coalition partners. He said the Jordanian and Qatari armed forces were excited to work with the U.S. Special Operations Forces.

“It was a very good opportunity to work with the U.S. and Qatari special operations teams,” said a Royal Jordanian Air Force member. “It was a joint effort to successfully complete the short notice mission in a short time.”

The combined effort and relationship building continued to grow throughout the wide range of military operations during EL2019. Other SOF-related training events included counter unmanned aerial systems training, vehicle interdiction, dive operations, global access and aerial resupply, direct action raids, UH-60 rappel and hoist, naval vessel visit, board, search, seizure and other scenarios.

“The primary goal is to build camaraderie and foster a relationship with our partner nations to further our effort in regional security and stability,” said U.S. Army Lt. Col. John Hake, the Battalion Commander of the 1st Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group. “The bonding and creating of friendships between the Soldiers and officers with our allies is what made this exercise a great success.”

At the end of the two-week exercise over 250 special operations parachute soldiers from ten nations participated in a joint multinational airborne operation, commonly known as the friendship jump. These nations included the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Spain, Belgium, Italy, Brunei, Greece, Cyprus, Qatar, the United States and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Airborne operations provide conventional and special operations forces an advantage in their ability to rapidly insert combat power on the battlefield. Airborne operations require meticulous planning and precise mission execution, the friendship jump was no different.

“Planning both a joint and multinational airborne operation provided a multitude of logistical and safety

challenges,” said U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Eric Carpenter, U.S. Special Operations Command Central Headquarters commandant’s senior enlisted advisor. “The primary concern was safety because we had service members from multiple nations jumping with a parachute that they were not accustomed to.”

Coordinating the logistics of moving personnel from a Jordanian special operations base, to a Jordanian air base while using facilities controlled by disparate units made for complex coordination. This meant the planning team had to work closely with the host nation military to deconflict use of resources that would happen during combat operations.

Coalition partners found that the friendship jump was crucial because it allowed the partner nations to plan, coordinate and execute as one, which is key to building a good relationship.

“The friendship jump was very important because it symbolizes the culmination of the exercise as a whole,” said Maj. Rahimin Anin, the Contingent Commander for Brunei Special Forces Regiment. “Everyone came together and successfully completed the main objective of this specific exercise, which was friendship.”

Participating in Eager Lion delivered a clear message – relationships matter. Being CENTCOM’s largest and most complex exercise, Eager Lion 19 provided an opportunity to integrate forces in a multilateral environment, operate in realistic terrain and strengthen military-to-military relationships.

To view all content from Eager Lion 19 check out the feature page on the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/feature/EAGERLION19>



***A Royal Jordanian Armed Forces explosive ordnance disposal technician uses an x-ray machine to search for explosives attached to a grounded unmanned aircraft system during exercise Eager Lion at the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center, Jordan, Sept. 2, 2019. Courtesy photo.***

# U.S. Special Operations Command - Europe



## Special Ops, conventional force integration on display at exercise Combined Resolve XII

*By U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Whitney Hughes  
U.S. Special Operations Command Europe*

“For what is going on in the East part of my country this exercise is very important,” said a Ukrainian Special Operations team leader referring to the Ukraine’s ongoing conflict with the Russian-led separatist forces in the country’s Donbas region.

He was participating in Exercise Combined XII Resolve which was a biannual, multinational exercise held from August 11-27, and involved over 5,000 participants from 20 nations. Approximately 140 special

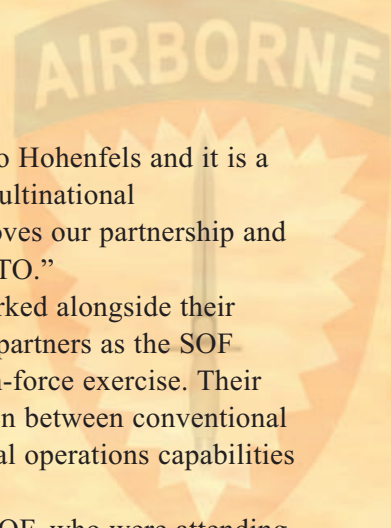
operations forces from five countries participated in the exercise to strengthen the combined, joint war-fighting abilities of NATO allies and partner forces, and improve the readiness of both SOF and conventional forces.

“No nation can face today’s challenges alone, and as we’ve seen from recent conflicts, we’re stronger as an Alliance and as a coalition,” said U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Kirk Smith, the commander of U.S. Special Operations Command Europe.

The SOF portion of the exercise brought together members of the Lithuanian National Defense Volunteer Forces, and SOF from Bulgaria, the Republic of North



*Two UH-72A Lakota Helicopter pilots U.S. Army Capt. James Keaton (Right) and U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 4 Mike Maggio (Left) conduct checks before taking off Aug. 16, 2019 as part of Exercise Combined Resolve XII. Exercise Combined Resolve XII is a force-on-force exercise that included over 5,000 multinational participants, which took place in Hohenfels, Germany. About 140 special operations forces from five countries participated in the exercise, from Aug. 11-27, to strengthen the combined, joint force on the battlefield, and the readiness of both SOF and conventional forces. Photo by U.S. Army Specialist Patrik Orcutt.*



***Ukrainian special operations forces acts as the opposing force Aug. 20, 2019 as part of Exercise Combined Resolve XII. Exercise Combined Resolve XII is a force-on-force exercise that included over 5,000 multinational participants, which took place in Hohenfels, Germany. Photo by U.S. Army Specialist Patrik Orcutt.***

Macedonia, Ukraine, and the U.S. In addition to working with the conventional forces, they focused on core special operations missions such as surveillance and reconnaissance, direct action on targets, and coordinating operations between multiple small teams operating simultaneously.

For members of the North Macedonian SOF, who attend exercises held at Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany on a regular basis, these training opportunities are invaluable.

“We have the mission of unconventional warfare, and allowing freedom of movement for the conventional forces,” explained a North Macedonian SOF team leader.

A veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, the team leader said the training closely mimicked the combat situations he had seen fighting alongside NATO forces there.

“Every year we come here to Hohenfels and it is a great opportunity to train in a multinational environment,” he said. “It improves our partnership and the way to (become part of) NATO.”

The North Macedonians worked alongside their Bulgarian, U.S. and Lithuanian partners as the SOF contingent of the larger force-on-force exercise. Their goal was to improve coordination between conventional forces and provide unique special operations capabilities to the combined joint force.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian SOF, who were attending the exercise for only the second time, were selected to be part of the opposing force. This decision was made to draw on their recent combat experience, which gave relevance to the battlefield scenario, by giving the opposing force a SOF asset to enhance their capabilities and even the playing field, according to the commander of the JMRC SOF cell.

In addition to the dynamics on the battlefield, the SOF cell introduced its own multinational Observer Coach Trainer academy to prepare for the exercise. This academy helps prepare the OCTs, or embedded trainers on the ground who help facilitate the exercise and coach the soldiers in the exercise.

The academy was the innovation of one of the SOF cell’s newest members, who saw the need to create the academy.

“With the specialized mission set and training that the SOF cell provides at JMRC, it was necessary to have an OCT academy specialized and formatted in a comparably unique way,” said the JMRC SOF cell operations NCO. “This helps the OCTs maximize the training value throughout the exercise.”

The JMRC SOF cell support all U.S. and multinational SOF training at the Joint Multinational Training Center. It promotes interoperability between U.S. and their multinational partners, as well as integrating SOF unique capabilities during training with the conventional forces.

The exercise culminated with a large operation that included all of the SOF elements working together to conduct a raid, as a final test of the skills and relationships they built over the previous 16 days.

“Coming from a country that is about to join NATO, and become a full member, I could not have asked for a better opportunity to strengthen and establish the relationships from past deployments and training, and deepen and increase those relationships,” said Brig. Gen. Hadji-Janev, the commander of the Republic of North Macedonia’s Special Operations Regiment.

# U.S. Special Operations Command - Europe



## US, Serbians commemorate 75th anniversary of daring WWII rescue

*By U.S. Army Sgt. Alexis Washburn-Jasinski  
U.S. Special Operations Command Europe*

American, Serbian, and international dignitaries gathered Sept. 15, 2019 at Galovica field in Pranjani, Serbia in a ceremony to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Operation Halyard, a daring World War II mission in which Serbians helped evacuate downed U.S. and Allied pilots.

During World War II, hundreds of American and Allied airmen were shot down over German-occupied portions of Serbia. The Serbian population in Pranjani and the surrounding communities risked their lives to hide and protect those airmen from occupying forces.

“These Airmen knew extreme risks,” said U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Kirk Smith, the commander of U.S. Special Operations Command Europe, during his address at the commemoration. “But they had no idea what was awaiting them when they crashed or landed by parachute in the fields, forests and hills of German-occupied Serbia. Instead of being killed by German patrols, the Airmen received a hero’s welcome from brave Serbian families.”

Operation Halyard was a mission launched by the Office of Strategic Services – predecessor to both U.S. Special Operations Forces and the Central Intelligence Agency – to rescue more than 500 Allied airmen who were scattered throughout the mountainous region of Serbia after their planes were shot down by the Germans. It remains the largest, most successful, rescue of American airmen in history.

“Operation Halyard is an example of how ordinary people can rise to greatness, of what can be accomplished when we commit to goals which are greater than ourselves,” U.S. Ambassador to Serbia Kyle Scott remarked to the crowd during his speech.

From August 1944 to February 1945, the Serbian population and a small group of OSS operatives built



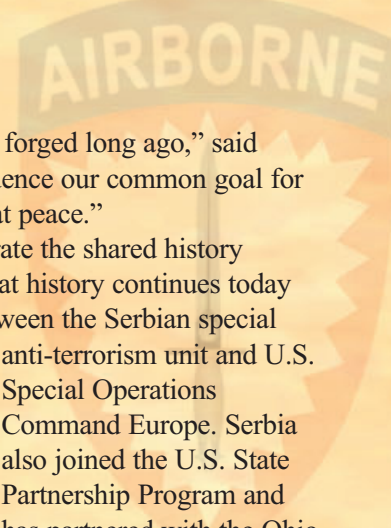
**United States Air Force Maj. Gen. Kirk Smith (front right), commander of U.S. Special Operations Command Europe, and U.S. Ambassador to Serbia Kyle Scott (front left), participate in a wreath-laying ceremony to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Operation Halyard held at Galovica field, Pranjani, Serbia on Sept. 15, 2019. Operation Halyard was the largest rescue of downed Airmen and the largest repatriation effort of World War II. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Alexis K. Washburn-Jasinski.**

improvised runways to land U.S. planes from the 15th Air Force to transport the downed airmen to Allied territory. Pranjani was the main collection center where airmen were staged for movement out of Serbia.

The OSS team involved in Operation Halyard included Army Capt. Nick Lalich, Lt. George Musulin, Master Sgt. Michael Rajacich, and Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Arthur Jibilian.

The main event was a wreath-laying ceremony in recognition of both the partnership between the U.S. and Serbia, and the sacrifices and support the Serbian people made for the Allied airmen. During Operation Halyard, over





8,000 Serbian citizen soldiers surrounded the area around Pranjani, protecting the airmen from German patrols.

“The event that we commemorated today [is] something that brings us much closer to each other,” said Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic in the keynote address. “We speak about the heroic moves from Serbian ordinary people and American, Canadian, and British pilots in 1944. We succeeded to make terrific links between our two nations and I hope that we will be able to renew it and to revive it.”

The wreath-laying ceremony was followed by a tour of the Church of the Holy Ascension in Pranjani, presentation of educational grants, and a community picnic featuring music provided by the U.S. Air Forces in Europe Band.

This commemoration helps to highlight the value placed on the bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Serbia – emphasizing how bonds of the past can help shape a common future.

“These bonds may have been forged long ago,” said Smith. “But they continue to influence our common goal for a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace.”

Smith attended to commemorate the shared history between Serbia and U.S. SOF. That history continues today through a training partnership between the Serbian special anti-terrorism unit and U.S. Special Operations Command Europe. Serbia also joined the U.S. State Partnership Program and has partnered with the Ohio National Guard since 2005.

“This anniversary helps us remember the depth of our relations,” said Scott. “In most of our history, we have been allies, we have been partners. Americans and Serbs stood shoulder to shoulder in World War I,

and we stood shoulder to shoulder in World War II. This 75th anniversary is an opportunity not only to recall that past, but also to begin building the foundations for a new future together as we face joint challenges for the 21st century.”

---

*In most of our history, we have been allies, we have been partners. Americans and Serbs stood shoulder to shoulder in World War I, and we stood shoulder to shoulder in World War II. This 75th anniversary is an opportunity not only to recall that past, but also to begin building the foundations for a new future together as we face joint challenges for the 21st century.*

---

— U.S. Ambassador to Serbia Kyle Scott

---



**Wreaths laid by U.S. and Serbian leaders adorn the monument to Operation Halyard after the 75th anniversary ceremony at Galovica field, Pranjani, Serbia on Sept. 15, 2019. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Alexis K. Washburn-Jasinski.**



*A U.S. 19th Special Forces Group (Airborne) Soldier lands after a military free fall June 19, 2019, in Cincu, Romania as part of Exercise Trojan Footprint 19. Trojan Footprint is an annual U.S. Special Operations Command Europe-led exercise that incorporates allied and partner special operations forces, this year's exercise brought together 1400 SOF from ten nations for training over land, sea and air across Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and the Black Sea. Photo by U.S. Army Specialist Patrik Orcutt.*



# U.S. Special Operations Command - Europe



## Trojan Footprint brings Green Beret Citizen Soldiers to Black Sea region

By U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Whitney Hughes  
U.S. Special Operations Command Europe

When most people imagine the U.S. Army National Guard, they might think of Soldiers responding to domestic disasters, Guardsmen cradling a child through waist-deep flood waters, or blazing through blizzards in HUMVEE's. What isn't typically seen are the pivotal roles Green Berets and Soldiers of the Army's 19th and 20th Special Forces Groups (Airborne) play in special operations around the world.

These groups make up two of the seven Army Special Forces Groups. Their battalions, companies and teams come from across the U.S. From June 10-21 this year, they worked across Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, providing the core Army Special Operations contribution to U.S. Special Operations Command Europe's Trojan Footprint 19.

Trojan Footprint is an annual SOCEUR-led exercise that brings together U.S., allied and partner SOF from across Europe. This year's exercise included 1,400 SOF and armed forces from ten allied and partner nations training over land, sea, and air across Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and the Black Sea.

"Trojan Footprint provided a great venue for our battalion to deploy and train on our mission essential tasks alongside our allies and partners in Europe," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Andrew Chandler, the commander of 5th Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group (Airborne). "The interoperability and shared lessons learned across the joint and multinational spectrum are key to maintaining our collective readiness."

Although many of these countries have trained for years together in Europe, or deployed together in Iraq or Afghanistan, each exercise still provides another chance for individual teams and SOF to build interoperability.

"In the beginning, the different SOF teams were operating as two different elements but as we progress, you start to see them come together more and more as the bigger picture becomes clearer, and they realize it's actually possible to function as one unit," said a Special Forces medic staff sgt. assigned to 19th SFG (A), who served as a special warfare trainer for the exercise.

SOF and conventional forces from Bulgaria,

---

*In the beginning, the different SOF teams were operating as two different elements but as we progress, you start to see them come together more and more as the bigger picture becomes clearer, and they realize it's actually possible to function as one unit.*

---

Croatia, Hungary, the Republic of North Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. took part in this year's exercise, the first time it's been held in the Black Sea region.

"It was difficult for the teams because they didn't really know each other, but this exercise has started breaking down those barriers so they can start to trust each other," said a Bulgarian SOF senior officer. "I've already started to see the relationships build and it's only the beginning. It all starts here."

At the conclusion of a fast rope insertion in which Bulgarian, Ukrainian and U.S. SOF rapidly assaulted an objective via helicopters from the U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne), the Bulgarian officer pointed out a U.S. and a Bulgarian soldier shaking hands and laughing together, and said, "See, you can see the relationships start here."

Story continues on next page

Tip of the Spear



***United States Navy Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen from Naval Special Warfare launch an unmanned aerial system June 20, 2019 during a patrol on the Black Sea as part of Trojan Footprint 2019. Photo by U.S. Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer Jayme Pastoric.***

The fast rope insertion was just one of the many advanced tactical training events the multinational teams performed throughout the exercise. They participated in events including air assaults, military free fall operations, maritime insertions, and close quarters combat.

In addition to the skill, practice, and years of training these events normally require, these combined teams overcame language barriers while learning the nuances of each other's techniques.

"Success isn't a metric in this case, it's that the teams trained, learned, grew, expanded, and actually got something out of it," said a communications sgt. 1st class assigned to 19th SFG (A).

In Bulgaria, the 19th SFG (A) Soldiers acted as the training facilitators, while the 20th SFG (A) Soldiers were the operational unit on the ground training with their Bulgarian and Ukrainian counterparts. In Romania, their roles were reversed so that Special Forces teams from both groups were able to work with allies and partners.

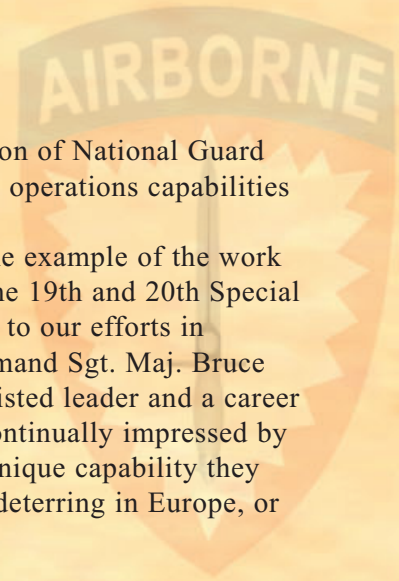
In Hungary, training provided the opportunity for

19th SFG (A) Special Forces Soldiers from Colorado to again work with Slovenian SOF, with whom Colorado has maintained a State Partnership Program since 1993.

"The relationship between Colorado and Slovenia by way of the SPP is one of the oldest," said Chandler. "For many of us we have grown up together with our partners often serving together in training, exercises, combat, and even attending service colleges together. It often feels like a family vacation to see relatives as we try to catch up on the most current stories of our friends and formations. This relationship demonstrates the significance of known partnerships before the need or a crisis arises. Our ability to rapidly assemble and integrate into multinational exercises demonstrates the collective readiness we have built over decades."

However, despite which role, country, or team was involved, the operators echoed the same sentiment.

"Training like this is helpful and helps us meet today's challenges in this region," said a Romanian SOF soldier. "What we are doing here is unconventional warfare and this is what we do these days."



In contrast to their active-duty counterparts, National Guard Special Forces bring a different experience to exercises and operations.

“Being a Guard Soldier is unique because the 19th and 20th Group Soldiers work in civilian organizations the majority of the time,” said a 20th Group company operations warrant officer. “They hold jobs such as physician assistants, police officers, fire fighters, and work in the corporate world. Their everyday experiences in those positions bring different perspectives for problem solving during these exercises and deployments.”

For SOCEUR, the integration of National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve special operations capabilities are critical.

“Trojan Footprint is just one example of the work Special Forces Soldiers from the 19th and 20th Special Forces Groups contribute daily to our efforts in Europe,” said U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Bruce Holmes, SOCEUR’s senior enlisted leader and a career Special Forces Soldier. “I’m continually impressed by their professionalism and the unique capability they bring, whether competing and deterring in Europe, or in combat operations.”



*(Above) A U.S. Air Force CV-22 Osprey assigned to the 352nd Special Operations Wing transports Hungarian Special Operations Forces in Szolnok, Hungary, June 14, 2019 as part of Trojan Footprint 19. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Matthew Young.*

*(Left) A U.S. Army Green Beret, assigned to 19th Special Forces Group (Airborne), participates in a night operation during Exercise Trojan Footprint 19, Ujdorogd, Hungary on June 15, 2019. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Alexis K. Washburn.*



*United States Navy Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewman from Naval Special Warfare conduct a patrol June 20, 2019 on the Black Sea in coordination with Trojan Footprint 2019. Photo by U.S. Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer Jayme Pastoric.*

# U.S. Special Operations Command - Pacific



## Honey: An elixir for good will

*By a Detachment Commander, Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha, 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne)*

In June of 2018, my team and I found ourselves training with our Nepali partners, the Mahabir Rangers, in Nepal's remote Jomsom Valley. The Himalayas towered above us throughout all of our training, and Dhaulagiri, the seventh highest mountain in the world was only miles away.

During an early morning hike, on a rare day of rest and recovery, my medic and I stopped for a quick breakfast of Tibetan bread and honey in a tiny village nestled into the mountainside. Inside, we stumbled across an elderly Nepali man who had recently broken his ankle and received poor medical treatment from a local provider that left the lower half of his leg covered in horrible burns and caused infection to spread. The man would likely lose his leg to the infection if something was not done, so we returned to camp, gathered medical supplies and hiked back up to the village. After hours of debriding the man's leg, my medic applied local honey, the same honey we had consumed in his house earlier that day, to his wounds, and then dressed it up.

---

*Raw honey has antiseptic and antibacterial properties and performs excellently when applied to burns.*

---

Unbeknownst to me at the time, raw honey has antiseptic and antibacterial properties and performs excellently when applied to burns. Our medic, highly trained and intelligent as all Special Forces medics tend to be, was well aware of this. As our job is often to be trainers and teachers, he explained to the man's wife how to properly clean the wound and reapply the honey dressing so that she could do so over the next several weeks.

Eight months later, we returned to the same valley



**A Special Forces medic from 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) examines a Nepali man's badly infected leg in Jomsom Valley, Nepal June 2018. The medic spent hours debriding the wounds and used honey as an antiseptic to treat and cure the wounds. Courtesy photo.**



to once again train with our Nepali partners, and we paid the man a visit. He had made a complete recovery and was overjoyed to see us. We recounted our time together several months prior over a traditional meal of Thakali dal baht and he and his wife thanked us profusely.

Word of the limb-saving treatment made it to the U.S. ambassador to Nepal, who was so intrigued by the story and the resulting relationship we had built that he decided to visit the man himself. He made the trip to Jomsom and hike to Chimang just to spend a couple hours sharing dal baht and tea with this man.

The work of Staff Sgt. B not only saved that Nepali man's leg, it helped build the U.S.-Nepali relationship in the Jomsom Valley and highlights the capability that a SFOD-A brings anywhere we deploy.

*(Left) A Special Forces medic from 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) pours honey on a Nepali man's badly infected leg in Jomsom Valley, Nepal June 2018. The medic spent hours debriding the wounds and used honey as an antiseptic to treat and cure the wounds. Courtesy photo.*



*A detachment commander (left) and a Special Forces medic (right) from 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) visit with a Nepali man eight months after treating him and found his leg had healed from their treatment in Jomsom Valley, Nepal February 2019. Courtesy photo.*

# U.S. Special Operations Command - South



## SOCSOUTH, Guatemalan female engagement platoon conducts information exchange seminar

*By U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Alex Ramos  
Special Operations Command South*

The role of women has steadily increased in the United States military. Stories of women reaching positions of higher authority with thousands of troops under their command and control are becoming more common. News of females graduating elite courses such as the U.S. Army Ranger Qualification School or the Special Forces Assessment and Selection are starting to be shared throughout different mediums. It seems that slowly the glass ceiling is being broken within the U.S. military.

The process may take a little longer for countries across Central and South America, but the Guatemalan military is making advances by expanding the role of women in United Nations peacekeeping operations with a recently established Female Engagement Platoon.

Special Operations Command South participated in an information exchange seminar focusing on women integration and equality in Coban, Guatemala, at the Centro de Entrenamiento de Operadores de Paz, which translates to 'Training Center for Peace Operators,' Sept. 24, 2019.

"Traditionally, women in the military were employed in domestic roles such as working in the kitchen, laundromat, and used for cleaning," said Guatemalan Sgt. Maj. Denise Marisol Alonzo, Sergeant Major in Guatemala's Estado Mayor de Defensa Nacional. "It has evolved because they (our military) have given us the opportunity to obtain positions within the military like noncommissioned officers and technical specialists."



***Special Operations Command South Civil Affairs Noncommissioned Officer, U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Elizabeth Almonte, talks about lessons learned from CA operations during an information exchange seminar held in Coban, Guatemala, Sept. 24, 2019. The project was produced in support of a SOCSOUTH military information support program aimed at increasing the image of the Guatemalan Accion Integral for female engagement and institutional professionalization. These type of engagements empower SOCSOUTH military information support and civil affairs teams to enable our partners and increase their security proficiencies. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Alex Ramos.***

The information exchange started with a brief history of how the role of women has evolved within the U.S. military. The discussion with the 19 female Guatemalan military attendees was led by SOCSOUTH's Civil Affairs non-commissioned officer, Sgt. 1st Class Elizabeth Almonte.

"From the partner nation capacity side, they are just in the stage in their military where they're starting to incorporate women into different roles other than support and realizing the benefits and the advantages of incorporating women at levels of leadership, at planning,



at different military occupational specialties,” she said. “It’s important to understand that it’ll help them grow to get to a point where they’ll have full integration of women in their militaries.”

Throughout the day topics such as the evolution of the female role in the U.S. Army, lessons learned from civil affairs operations, and Non-Commissioned Officer professional development were discussed.

“I would imagine it’s the same as in any other place, both the men and women have different activities when interacting with people,” said Guatemalan Corporal Sheyly Carolina Chacach, specialist for EMDN. “In this case, women have shared commonality of being a daughter, being a mother, being a sister, and we live in society with this discrimination. Being in the military we receive different tools to develop ourselves in a different manner.”

One of those tools was the opportunity to attend the seminar and how the information will be shared amongst each other, explained Chacach.

“In reality, it’s to reinforce women’s knowledge,” she said. “...It’s one of those tools that not all of us can receive because we understand that every course there is only a certain quantity allowed, but I find this seminar very interesting because we have women who are coming from different commands. Then, obviously, they may go to a different command and we may want to

discuss things a little more or they may want to know ‘What did you go do? You left for two months.’ So this way information is also shared and as well as the knowledge.”

Helping build partner nation capacity in order to increase security and stability in the region is always at the forefront of SOCSOUTH’s priorities. This engagement helped give insight for future initiatives.

“I think the seminar went better than expected,” said Almonte. “I was able to obtain a (level) of understanding on where these soldiers, these female soldiers, are coming from. Where their previous positions and how they’re being utilized now. I felt it was successful in identifying some of the challenges they are currently experiencing in their newly acquired role as civil affairs soldiers and cultural support experts.”

The project was produced in support of a SOCSOUTH Military Information Support Program aimed at increasing the image of the Guatemalan Accion Integral for female engagement and institutional professionalization. These type of engagements empower SOCSOUTH military information support and civil affairs teams to enable our partners and increase their security proficiencies.

The all-female platoon formed in Guatemala will be deployed in the Izabal region to assist with humanitarian and peace operations.



*Guatemalan Gen. Antulio Barrera (left), Centro de Entrenamiento de Operadores de Paz director, thanks U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Elizabeth Almonte and the Regional Psychological Operations Team after an information exchange seminar held in Coban, Guatemala, Sep. 24, 2019. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Alex Ramos.*

# U.S. Special Operations Command - South



## Civil Affairs Team partners with ten Panamanian agencies



*A Civil Affairs team member assigned to Special Operations Command South explains how to properly insert an IV during a first aid training in Provincia de Chiriquí, Panama, Aug. 30, 2019. The seminar is part of a series of civil affairs engagements focused on strengthening partnerships while enhancing readiness and cooperation among first responders, law enforcement and community leaders. Photo by Us. Army Maj. Cesar H. Santiago.*

*By U.S. Army Maj. Cesar H. Santiago  
Special Operations Command South*

Strengthening partnerships and improving critical skills with over ten government and civilian sector agencies were focus areas during a week-long first aid seminar held at Servicio Nacional de Fronteras (SENAFRONT), Batallon Occidental, Provincia de

Chiriquí, Panama from Aug. 26 – 30, 2019.

Civil Affairs team members deployed in support of Special Operations Command South and joined efforts with personnel from SENAFRONT, Policia Nacional de Panama (PNP), Servicio Aeronaval, Enemérito Cuerpo de Bomberos, Sección de Servicio de Atencion Medica de Emergencias y Rescate, Sistema Nacional de Protección Civil, Servicio Nacional De Migración, Ministerio de

Salud, Departamento de Ambiente y Resiliencia, Sistema Nacional de Protección Civil, and Universidad Autónoma de Chiriquí during a seminar aimed at sharing first aid best practices with the purpose of enhancing skills and knowledge among Panamanian safety and security agencies.

The event officially kicked off with welcome remarks by Juan Carlos Muñoz, Governor of Provincia de Chiriquí; Comisionado Rolando Brees, Jefe del Batallón Occidental, SENAFRONT; U.S. Army Col. Steven Winkleman, Security Cooperation Officer, United States Embassy, Panama; Sub-Comisionado Luis Miranda, Jefe Cuarta Zona PNP; Coronel Gonzalo Chang Gil, Comandante Primer Jefe; Enemérito Cuerpo de Bomberos Zona Regional Chiriquí, Panama.

Training participants were exposed to first aid techniques and best practices to respond to and care for injured personnel during emergency situations.

“There is a need for this training,” said Brees. “The knowledge and skills obtained through this course increases the readiness of our security institutions. It will be employed by members of our community, ourselves and our partners.”

The participation of multiple agencies served not only for training alongside partner agencies, but to explore opportunities for cooperation, alignment, and support to each other for the common purpose of serving, preventing, protecting, and responding in a synchronized approach.

“The words cooperate and serve represent what you do daily,” said Winkleman. “Training is part of your ability to do your job. You serve the people daily and this is very important for the safety and security of Panama and the region.”

The training was initiated with an overview of emergency first response procedures encompassing adult, child, and infant cardiopulmonary resuscitation, first aid skills, and use and employment of automatic external defibrillator equipment. Steps taken to ensure proper care for injured personnel were taught including treatment of severe wounds and bleeding, hypothermia prevention, casualty evaluation, patient treatment and movement, and medical equipment and transportation familiarization.

Personnel from the Cuerpo de Bomberos stressed the importance of collaboration and basic first-aid education and time sensitive actions while rendering assistance to a casualty.

“The training allows us to foster good relations with



**First responders and law enforcement personnel from Panamanian safety and security agencies practice first-aid techniques during a first-aid seminar in Provincia de Chiriquí, Panama. The seminar is part of a series of civil affairs engagements focused on strengthening partnerships while enhancing readiness and cooperation among first responders, law enforcement and community leaders. Photo by U.S. Army Maj. Cesar H. Santiago.**

the United States personnel and thus be able to establish strategic alliances of exchange and cooperation between both nations,” said Aliethy Rodríguez, paramedic assigned to Cuerpo de Bomberos, Sección de Servicio de Atención Médica. “It seeks to encourage collaboration and teamwork between security, emergency, and civilian institutions, as well as exchange of training, knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to provide timely assistance.”

The success of the seminar was attributed to the knowledge and expertise shared among instructors and students and the collaboration of the participating agencies during the coordination and planning phase for the seminar.

“It was a critical part of the overall success because they were able to open communications between them for the first time in order to coordinate participation, logistics and equipment requirements to support the training,” said. U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Luis Alvarez, civil affairs noncommissioned officer. “This training coordination and execution stressed the importance of involving the partner nation during the coordination and planning process and how the event contributes to long-term benefits.”

Civil affairs engagements continue to be an opportunity to work beside, with, and through Panamanian partners strengthening partnerships and cooperation in the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility.

# U.S. Army Special Operations Command



## Inspiring display of incredible courage: 34 recognized for valor

*By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Daniel Wyatt  
10th Special Forces Group (Airborne)*

Soldiers assigned to Special Operations Task Force 102, were honored in an awards ceremony at McMahon Auditorium, Fort Carson, Colorado, Sept. 26, 2019 for valorous actions during Operation Resolute Support.

Over the course of a six-month deployment, the members of SOTF-102 distinguished themselves through exceptional heroism, valor and dedication, conducting enduring, complex, and sensitive operations.

Lt. Gen. Francis M. Beaudette, commanding general, United States Army Special Operations Command, presented five Silver Star Medals, nine Bronze Star Medals with valor device, 20 Army Commendation Medals with valor device, and 36 Purple Heart Medals, during the ceremony viewed by Soldiers, family members and friends.

“I am incredibly humbled to be here in the company of these Green Beret heroes, who embody all the values and attributes we hold dear in the ARSOF community,” said Beaudette.

SOTF-102 was comprised of special operations Soldiers assigned to 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 19th SFG (A), 9th Psychological Operations Battalion, and 71st Ordnance Company.

During the ceremony, videos played telling the story of valorous acts during combat missions, explaining what allowed SOTF-102 to penetrate the enemy’s defenses and establish a higher level of security throughout Afghanistan.

“We come together as a Family and unit to honor the heroism and sacrifice of our Soldiers and their families,” said, Lt. Col. Justin Hufnagel, 2nd Battalion, 10th SFG (A) commander. “For 170 days of a blistering series of operations, we focused on disrupting the enemy in their strongholds.”

Throughout the deployment, the task force produced unmatched effects against the Taliban, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-Khorasan, Haqqani, and al-Qaeda, which



**Green Berets of 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) received awards for combat action in Afghanistan, during a valor award ceremony on Fort Carson, Colorado, Sept. 26, 2019. Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Cole Erickson.**

contributed to one of the most successful summer fighting seasons in recent history for SOTF-102.

“They earned these awards supporting one another, side by side, in battle,” said Hufnagel.

During the ceremony there were moments of reflection for the SOTF Soldiers lost during the deployment and their valorous actions.

The Bronze Star Medal with valor device was posthumously awarded to Sgt. Joseph Collette and the Silver Star Medal was posthumously awarded to Sgt. 1st Class Will Lindsay. Both Collette and Lindsay’s awards were presented to the Soldiers’ family members.

Army Commendation Medals with valor device were posthumously awarded to Master Sgt. Micheal Riley’s and Sgt. 1st Class Elliot Robbins.

“This ceremony brings meaningful closure to such an incredible group of warriors,” said Beaudette. “This is a warrior battalion, within a warrior formation and we get a sense of their love of country, unit and their teammates.”

# USASOC receives Congressional Gold Medal recognizing OSS roots

By U.S. Army Sgt. Brandon Allums  
USASOC Public Affairs

During an intimate ceremony at the United States Army Special Operations Command, Commanding General, Lt. Gen. Francis Beaudette, proudly received the coveted Congressional Gold Medal on behalf of the command.

The medal was prominently draped under a silky red cloth, in the most appropriate location in the headquarters, the Donovan Room.

Maj. Gen. William Donovan was the first director of the Office of Strategic Services, the precursor to today's Central Intelligence Agency and modern day U.S. Special Forces. In this room, retired Lt. Gen. Charles Cleveland, former USASOC commander and member of the OSS Society, presented the medal to USASOC for its contribution to the OSS.

“Congressional Gold Medals are the highest civilian honor Congress can bestow. Congressional rules require that two-thirds of the House of Representatives and U.S. Senate, respectively, must cosponsor the legislation,” remarked President of The OSS Society, Charles Pinck.

The medal acknowledges and recognizes OSS members' contributions to the security of the nation during World War II. What makes a Congressional Gold Medal unique is each medal is specific to the recipient.

On the front of this medal, the inscription reads “OSS” and reveals three figures -- a woman, a paratrooper, and a man in a suit representing the broad range of work undertaken by the OSS. Each of the figures devoid of detail, highlighting the way OSS agents carried out their duties. The figures also reflect the diversity in the OSS, as its almost 13,000 members were gathered from all branches of the military and civilian personnel. The opposite side of the medal reveals the OSS spear and code words used by former OSS agents.

The OSS mission required extraordinary actions and attitudes from the men and women, which were tasked to carry the burden of mission successes. One of the lasting results of their courage and perseverance is Special Operations Forces.

How does SOF trace their lineage back to the days of the OSS? “The OSS Operational Groups and Jedburghs were the World War II predecessors to U.S. Special Forces.



**United States Army Special Operations Command Commanding General, Lt. Gen. Francis Beaudette shakes hands with retired Lt. Gen. Charles Cleveland, former USASOC commander and member of the Office of Strategic Services Society at a ceremony Aug. 16, 2019, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The award was presented to USASOC for its historic contributions to the OSS. Some members of the OSS would go on to be influential figures in the Special Operations Forces community, becoming what is now known as Special Forces, psychological operations, and civil affairs. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Brandon Allums.**

Both elements are recognized on the OSS Congressional Gold Medal. Team Hugh was the first Jedburgh team to jump into France on June 5, 1944, the day before D-Day. Union I and II were Jedburgh missions to the Haute-Savoie region of France. Peedee was an Italian Operational Group. Its mission marked the only time during World War II the Germans surrendered a major city (Genoa) to irregular forces,” answered Pinck.

The OSS Jedburgh teams organized, trained, and fought with resistance groups in Europe and Asia, playing an important role in America's ultimate victory; World War II. Current SOF maintain this mission set along with others, while applying innovation and a modern twist. The value of organizing, training, and fighting alongside our partners remains a time honored tradition.



# Naval Special Warfare Command



## SEAL military dive operations

*A member assigned to Naval Special Warfare Group 2 conducts military dive operations off the East Coast of the United States Sept. 18, 2019. Naval Special Warfare invests in the training and development of sustainable capabilities, capacity and concepts to sharpen the competitive advantage of U.S. Navy Special Operations Forces. Photo by Senior Chief Petty Officer Jayme Pastoric.*



# Air Force Special Operations Command



## Combat controller earns Air Force Cross for valor in Afghanistan

By U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Joshua Horton  
123rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Air Force Tech. Sgt. Daniel P. Keller, a combat controller in the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, was awarded the Air Force Cross during a ceremony held at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base in Louisville, Kentucky Aug. 13, 2019 for his heroic actions on a battlefield in Afghanistan.

Keller earned the combat award — second only to the Medal of Honor — for gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States during his participation in Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

"Only 10 Airmen since 9/11 have received this honor," said Gen. David L. Goldfein, Air Force chief of staff, who presented the medal in a hangar at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base. "We never know when Airmen like Dan will risk everything for a fellow teammate in a really bad situation, but that's exactly what he did.

"As your chief, it gives me great strength to know that the special tactics community will always make the impossible seem effortlessly possible," Goldfein continued. "This is a great day for our Air Force, and may God bless this nation and those like Tech. Sgt. Keller who always have, and always will, defend her.

"I'd like to say these events and actions are remarkable, because I truly feel that to be the case, but I doubt you'd agree, Dan," Goldfein added. "I think you'd probably say you were just doing your job — doing your job like so many are today who are still taking the fight to our enemies in faraway lands. Congratulations, Dan."

While serving as a joint terminal attack controller attached to a combined joint special operations assault force on Aug. 16, 2017, Keller embarked on a clearance operation in Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan, against 350 Islamic State fighters. After 15 hours of sustained contact, the assault team struck an improvised explosive

device, killing four personnel and wounding 31.

Less than 10 feet away, Keller was knocked over by the force of the blast, resulting in traumatic brain injury. Struggling to his feet, he executed air-to-ground engagements while returning fire, repulsing an enemy assault less than 150 meters away.

"I don't remember much," Keller said. "Initially, I thought I was blind. Everything went black. Then I got up and realized I wasn't blind, it was just a massive black cloud of smoke and debris. Your ears are ringing, but you could just hear screaming — just guys screaming and gunfire."

Keller helped move 13 critically wounded casualties to a helicopter landing zone 'under a hail of enemy fire,' according to the award citation. When medical evacuation helicopters were unable to identify the landing zone, he sprinted to the center of the field, exposing himself to enemy fire in order to marshal in both aircraft and aid in loading the casualties.

Once the helicopter departed, the ground force commander aborted the mission. In spite of his injuries, Keller loaded wounded personnel into vehicles and volunteered to walk 2 1/2 kilometers back to a combat outpost, escorting other wounded teammates. During this movement, he repulsed a three-sided enemy attack by returning fire and simultaneously passing enemy positions



Air Force Tech. Sgt. Daniel P. Keller



to another joint terminal attack controller, allowing friendly forces to break contact. After arriving back at the outpost, Keller was evacuated for his injuries.

“His personal courage, quick actions and tactical expertise whilst under fire directly contributed to the survival of the 130 members of his assault force, including 31 wounded in action, and resulted in an estimated 50 enemy killed in action,” the citation said.

Keller said the experience has provided him with motivation to hone his skills even further.

“It drives me to want to be better at my job,” Keller said. “After living through that sort of stuff and seeing what we can do as the enabler to these special forces teams, I know how important it is for us to be really squared away at our job and to provide service to them at an expert level.”

Keller’s accomplishments on the battlefield are not surprising to Chief Master Sgt. Aaron May, chief enlisted manager for the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron.

“You see it every day here,” May said. “You see him always training harder and looking forward. When he got there, he was ready. When it came time to do that job, he was ready. Dan’s been a top performer the whole time,

and I’m happy that’s he’s being recognized.

“His appetite to just go down range and do what our mission is — it’s really unique,” May continued. “His work ethic, his dedication and his foresight to see what’s coming — Dan’s constantly pushing forward.”

Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin also took the stage to praise Keller during the award ceremony.

“Among us, there are people who step up and do truly heroic things,” Bevin said. “There was within him an innate ability to step up and go above and beyond.

“It’s an honor to know you,” Bevin said to Keller. “As somebody who loves this country, I’m grateful to you for answering the call.”

---

*His personal courage, quick actions and tactical expertise whilst under fire directly contributed to the survival of the 130 members of his assault force, including 31 wounded in action, and resulted in an estimated 50 enemy killed in action.*

---

— *Quote from award citation*

---



**Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein (left) pumps his fist during the playing of the Air Force Song at a ceremony held at the Kentucky Air National Guard Base in Louisville, Ky. Aug. 13, 2019. Earlier in the ceremony, Goldfein presented Tech. Sgt. Daniel Keller (right), a combat controller in the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, with the Air Force Cross, which Keller earned for valor on the battlefield in Afghanistan. Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Joshua Horton.**

# Air Force Special Operations Command



## Special operations RPA pilot returns to Air Force Academy, mentors cadets

*By Jennifer Spradlin*  
*U.S. Air Force Academy Public Affairs*

Air Force Capt. Cristina Kellenbence didn't grow up wanting to become a pilot; she came to the Air Force Academy looking for a quality education.

No one in her immediate family served in the military, and she had no idea what to expect from the Academy or what career to pursue after graduation. Kellenbence said she chose aviation after her close friend convinced her of its merits.

"Fear is something that holds a lot of people back from trying. I was super scared to go to pilot training, and I am so grateful that I did because it became something I enjoy and love," she said.

Kellenbence, a 2010 graduate, is a remotely piloted aircraft pilot for Air Force Special Operations Command. She was a pilot instructor at Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi, before transitioning to unmanned aircraft.

"I would say RPAs have been fantastic; this community is growing. It is the way the Air Force is going," she said. "It has been so rewarding being able to fight the fight downrange and still be able to come home to my family at night."

Earlier this year the Academy reached out to Kellenbence to join its new Rated Mentor Program. The program was launched in support of the National Defense

Strategy and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force's Rated Diversity Initiative to increase engagement with underrepresented groups.

"Our Air Force's rated talent has primarily been sourced from a narrow candidate field," said Jesse Johnson, senior diversity and inclusion analyst for the Academy's Culture, Climate and Diversity office. "Complex global challenges require creative solutions, and diversity tends to increased innovation and creativity."

Kellenbence's parents are Ecuadorian and Argentinian; she identifies as Hispanic. She welcomed the opportunity to mentor cadets and have frank conversations about her mistakes and successes.

"I have zero regrets about going to the Academy because it taught me to make the best of every situation I have been in since," she said. "I know I am exactly where I am supposed to be, and I'm happy to share that with cadets as someone who went through what they're going through not so long ago."

Kellenbence and other RAMPs are projected to attend major Academy events such as the National Character & Leadership Symposium, class reunions and athletic and affinity club events – in addition to mentoring individual cadets throughout the year.

Program leaders are also working to have cadets participate in Air Education and Training Command-sponsored 'Fly-Ins' to increase their exposure to aviation.



*Air Force Capt. Cristina Kellenbence, a 2010 Academy graduate, poses next to an Air Force Remotely Piloted Aircraft that she pilots. Courtesy photo.*

# Air Force Special Operations Command



## A dark night leads to a bright career

*By Airman 1st Class Spencer Tobler  
81st Training Wing Public Affairs*

It was a zero illumination night in a Pave Low helicopter above the New Mexico desert when two pilots experienced a malfunction in their flight controls during a training mission. Normally, protocol is to land immediately. Due to the unique circumstances of that night, the flight crew hesitated to do so.

“We didn’t know what the area below us really looked like,” said Maj. Gen. Timothy Leahy, Second Air Force commander, Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi. “It could’ve been rolling terrain and when we hit the ground, the helicopter could’ve rolled over and burst into flames. Everyone could’ve died.”

Amidst all of the chaos, at the tail of the aircraft, a student gunner on his second flight ever in the U.S. Air Force, squeezed his radio. “Pilot, tail,” he said, trying to reach the instructors.

At that time, Leahy couldn’t have known the following exchange would change how he chose to lead his Airmen.

“Stand-by tail,” the lead instructor replied, but the student was vigilant in getting his message across. “Pilot, tail,” said the student again. “Stand-by tail,” yelled the instructor.

After a lengthy back-and-forth, the instructor became fed-up.

“Dammit tail, if you squeeze that button one more time, I’m unplugging you from the system,” said the instructor.

There was a short pause then the radio clicked back on. “Pilot, tail,” the student replied.

As one of the instructors was about to unplug the student from the communication system, then, Lt. Col. Leahy stopped him.

“Everyone stand-by,” said Leahy. “Go ahead tail.”

“I think we should turn off the number two generator,” said the student gunner.

Immediately, a livid flight chief, who was a systems expert who had plenty of experience on the Pave Low, replied.

“The number two generator has nothing to do with the flight control system. You’re wasting our time,” said the flight chief.



**Air Force Maj. Gen. Timothy Leahy, Second Air Force commander, poses for a photo at his desk on Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, Aug. 14, 2019. Leahy will retire on Dec. 1 with more than 34 years of military service. Throughout his career, Leahy held positions at the major command, sub-unified combatant command and geographic and functional combatant command levels. Photo by Kemberly Groue.**

“Stand-by all,” said Leahy. “Tail, pilot. Why do you think we should turn off the number two generator?”

“Sir,” said the student gunner, “I flew this tail number on my first flight and we had a similar problem. We solved it by turning off the number two generator.”

Leahy instructed the flight engineer to turn off the number two generator and the flight controls came back on. The entire crew returned to base in disbelief. The flight team was stunned and confused, but most importantly, they were alive.

This altered the way Leahy commanded because it showed him that an Airman’s voice should always be heard, no matter their rank or experience. Their input could change the outcome of missions, spark thought for innovation and even save lives.

At that time, Leahy didn’t know that he would one day take command of Second Air Force, which is responsible for technical training, or that he could give all Airmen in training, like the one who saved his life, a voice.

“As a lieutenant, I was just happy to make it into flight school,” said Leahy. “I didn’t know where it would take me after that.”

Leahy commissioned in the Air Force as a pilot in 1986, logged over 3,200 flying hours in 14 different aircraft and commanded at numerous levels in the Air Force. He has served for nearly half of the time the Air Force has been a service and has definitely left his mark along the way.

Leahy has been a part of many teams that have made contributions to the advancement of the world’s greatest Air Force, but no matter what position he held on a team, he never failed to give the ones on the ground-level a voice.

“The Air Force, just like any other organization, is all about the people,” said Leahy.

“As long as you take time to listen to the people, the answer always comes out. Talking with the Airmen who are on the ground doing the job is where I’ve found success.”

Before he took command positions, Leahy was recognized as an exceptional pilot and received various medals for completing a multitude of missions in the MH-53J to aid to the success of Operation Desert Storm in 1991. He flew low level at night around enemy defenses in Saudi Arabia to infiltrate, resupply, and exfiltrate special forces. When attached to the Joint Special Operations Task Force, Leahy planned, coordinated and conducted several Army and Air Force missions.

Later in his career, Leahy was recognized for outstanding achievement in command positions for several Special Operations units. His expertise and dedication were instrumental in ensuring successful outcomes during Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

After numerous years in special operations, Leahy took command at the LeMay Center for Doctrine Development and Education at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. He shaped the future of Air Force doctrine development, education and war-gaming.

Leahy’s current and final assignment is commander of Second Air Force at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi. He has provided oversight of the training and development of Airmen from basic military training through technical training and impacted 90 percent of all Airmen entering the Air Force.

Leahy has done a lot for the Air Force, but he is also appreciative of what the Air Force has done for him.

“The military has absolutely become family to me,” said

Leahy. “I’ve been able to stand in remote areas of the world and visit places a normal kid from New York would never go.”

After he retires, Leahy will put his days as commander behind him and move to Tampa, Florida.

“All of us who serve will take the uniform off one day,”

said Leahy. “Regardless of the purpose, that is not the significant event. The significant event is putting the uniform on. I’m glad that I served, but the fact that I served 34 years isn’t important. The fact that I had the honor of serving, the honor of wearing the proverbial cloth of this nation and going places and doing things that I know have been a source of good for the world is what matters.”

In retirement, Leahy hopes to find a job that will make a difference in someone’s life.

“It’ll be a new challenge,” said Leahy. “A new chance to make a difference, but this time in a different uniform.”

Leahy has impacted the lives of many throughout his career. He has inadvertently impacted lives by simply being an example of what an Airman is supposed to be.

After a Special Forces raid in Kuwait during the Gulf War, the U.S. recaptured their embassy, the people of downtown Kuwait were celebrating their liberation. They rushed up to U.S. military members, enthusiastically hugging them.

“One of the young kids wrapped around my leg and was hugging me,” said Leahy. “There was an older gentlemen crying and we asked if he was okay and if he needed any assistance.”

To this day, Leahy never forgot what the man said to him.

“My entire life you have been the infidel,” said the old man. “I have been raised to think you were the enemy, yet my Iraqi brothers have done horrific things to us. That is my grandson on your leg. Up until today, any time he has seen a soldier he ran away and hid under his bed because he has seen what horrible things soldiers do. Today he is hugging you and he is as happy as I have ever seen him in his life because he knows the Americans are here to save us. You gave us the greatest gift one can give, you gave your life to save our lives.”

Leahy explained that stories like this are why we serve: to liberate the oppressed, free those who are enslaved and provide a better life for them.

“How could I not love the U.S. military,” Leahy asked, rhetorically.

---

*Regardless of the purpose, that is not the significant event. The significant event is putting the uniform on. I’m glad that I served, but the fact that I served 34 years isn’t important. The fact that I had the honor of serving, the honor of wearing the proverbial cloth of this nation and going places and doing things that I know have been a source of good for the world is what matters.*

---

# Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command



## The warrior's fight: Paying it forward

*By U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Bryann K. Whitley  
Marine Forces, Special Operations Command*

After years of hearing from his wife that he seemed different and with his marriage in turmoil, Master Sgt. Ryan E. Evans, the operations chief for Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command's Communications Directorate, decided it was time to go speak to a counselor. During the summer of 2018, Evans took the first step on his self-care path by meeting with the command psychologist, one of the many resources available to service members within MARSOC.

"In 2016-2017, I checked back into MARSOC and my pace of life and operational tempo completely slowed down," explained Evans. "When you're always busy or always deployed or doing back-to-back training, you stuff it in your pack and move on, you don't take the time to process how you're doing or what you're feeling."

Evans connected the slowdown in his operational pace as a turning point in his life and when he realized that he needed to do more to help himself. He couldn't just "stuff it in his pack and move on." Seeing a counselor helped him identify the areas he was struggling with, but Evans often found it hard to communicate with the counselor because of their lack of understanding of military trauma, as well as his own fear of being perceived as broken, or worse, a monster.

Evans soon had a friend refer him to a program called the Mighty Oaks Foundation, explaining that the Mighty Oaks Warrior Program helped him talk about and manage his post-traumatic stress. He thought Evans would benefit from it as well. Evans decided to submit an application, but kept his expectations low before attending in the Spring of 2019.

"Before going to the [Mighty Oaks'] Legacy Program, I viewed guys who had PTSD as weak-minded and never understood how some guys could claim having PTSD, who had barely seen combat," said Evans. "After completing the program, I understood that PTS affects people in a multitude of ways and having that understanding now helps me be more empathetic when talking with fellow Marines."

PTS can occur following any life-threatening encounter,



**(Left to Right) Master Sgt. Scott Pettus, Chad Robichaux, Sgt. Maj. Dan Knouse, retired Sgt. Maj. Carlton Kent, and Master Sgt. Ryan Evans, pose for a group photo following a military resiliency training event on Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Aug. 12, 2019. Marine Forces Special Operations Command hosted Robichaux, founder of the Mighty Oaks Foundation, to provide information to Marines and Sailors about the Mighty Oaks Warrior Program. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Bryann K. Whitley.**

such as military combat, natural disasters, terrorist incidents, serious accidents, or violent personal assaults, like rape. Generally, post-traumatic stress disorder is treated as a mental or emotional disorder with medication and psychotherapy, whereas the Mighty Oaks methodology looks at the spiritual resiliency needed to rise and meet the challenges of post-trauma life and move forward to find hope, purpose and a more fulfilling future.

Chad M. Robichaux and his wife, Kathy, founded the Mighty Oaks Foundation in 2011 with the goal to share their story through the trials of PTS and assist others along the path to recovery and success. According to their website, the foundation is a leading military nonprofit, serving the U.S. military active duty and veteran communities, with highly successful peer-to-peer faith-based combat trauma programs and combat resiliency conferences. Robichaux and his team are dedicated to helping America's military warriors and their families suffering from the unseen wounds of

combat such as PTS. Their effort is on the front line to intercede and end the climbing 22-per-day veteran suicide rate and the tragic divorce epidemic in military families.

“I grew up in a church family, but never really had a strong relationship with God,” commented Evans. “Attending Chad’s Legacy Program allowed me to develop the skills needed to manage PTS through faith, with bible readings and having guys to rely on who know what it’s like. It made me realize I wasn’t the only guy dealing with this and that I wasn’t alone; it forced me to take off the mask and be vulnerable. I wanted to share that with fellow military members here at the command, so I organized the resiliency event.”

Evans coordinated with Robichaux to have him conduct one of his military resiliency events at MARSOC on Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, in August. Marines and Sailors across the command attended the event and listened to Robichaux speak on the trials and hardships he and many like him have faced, or currently face, when dealing with post-traumatic stress in their careers and at home while trying to reintegrate into life after combat and other traumatic events.

“This program is a life changing event,” commented retired U.S. Marine Sgt. Maj. Carlton Kent, 16th sergeant major of the marine corps, after Robichaux’s resiliency event at MARSOC. “I’ve participated in the program and it truly opens up a new way of thinking. The program assists these warriors with going through life without needing medications or other medical forms of help. Chad’s aim is to truly help our warriors get better and his program hasn’t lost a warrior to date.”

Mighty Oaks Warrior Program uses a grassroots approach, empowering veterans and active duty members to begin their healing and then be a positive impact on those in their surrounding communities. Through the methodologies used and the evaluation of those who have experienced combat, Robichaux and his team discovered that the same methods used to heal PTSD are equally effective if implemented prior to traumatic events such as those experienced in combat.

“I created this program as my way to pay it forward,” Robichaux stated. “I wanted to give back to others what I experienced and learned despite the many ups and downs I faced throughout my journey to recovery.”

While Mighty Oaks is Christian faith-based in its methodology, the mentors and advisors are all previous combat-experienced military members. Having team mentors that have experienced similar situations allowed the attendees to talk through things easier and connect with each other on deeper levels.

“It was such a moving experience because you were able to reconnect with your faith and you were able to

communicate and share your experiences with people who have experienced the same or similar traumatic events as you,” added Evans. “You got to hear everything that they went through and how they managed it and realized you weren’t alone.”

According to him, reading the bible and reconnecting to his faith helped Evans truly understand what being a man of God means and, in turn, helped him control his anger and irritability. It also helped him manage the guilt he would get from feeling like he wasn’t doing enough, or for not deploying, and helped him understand that he couldn’t control some of the situations.

“I’m not saying it’s a cure all, but it definitely helps you manage everything,” added Evans. “I don’t think you ever recover, I think you just learn how to manage it better.”

Part of the road to recovery is the Mighty Oaks Program’s after care that includes team mentors, also known as corner men, or groups of individuals who reach out to a participant from the program and regularly check-in on them regularly once they leave that environment. Evans commented he has a corner man in the local area who’s a good friend that he talks to all the time.

Evans wanted to pay it forward by providing the Marines and Sailors of MARSOC an opportunity to learn about the Mighty Oaks program and, should they need it, the knowledge on how to utilize this resource.

“I know that there’s a lot of people here within MARSOC that deploy all the time, that consistently have a high operational tempo, and I think a lot of people have PTS related symptoms that affect them greatly, but never talk about it or share those experiences. They just keep everything bottled up inside,” remarked Evans. “I think it’s more in the senior and mid-level leaders who have had multiple deployments and just never talk about it that are the ones affected most. The Mighty Oaks Program is really about creating an environment where these people are more likely to share those thoughts and struggles.”

Other Marines within MARSOC have also attended the Mighty Oaks Program, and praised the program as being “a great resource for anyone struggling to work through any traumatic event that they experienced in their lives.”

Spiritual Resiliency is nothing new to the military; the ethos has always embodied such traits to build the greatest warriors by emphasizing the three pillars of resiliency: mind, body and spirit; however, over the years, the depletion of spiritual resiliency, in his opinion, is partially responsible for the increase in PTS seen in the military members, commented Robichaux during his visit.

MARSOC’s Preservation of the Force and Families program’s mission is to provide multi-disciplinary resources to prepare, preserve, and sustain personnel readiness by focusing on the mind, body, spirit and family.





# Headquarters - U.S. Special Operations Command

## Headquarters recognizes recent fallen with memorial competition

The headquarters sponsored a memorial competition honoring fallen Special Operations Forces who died in combat in the past year. The event was held on MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, Oct. 18, 2019 and included a 5k run, shooting competition and litter carry.

Photo essay by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo, USSOCOM Office of Communication



# Headquarters - U.S. Special Operations Command USSOCOM deputy commander presides over summer graduation

*By Petty Officer 2nd Class Patrick Dionne  
Naval Postgraduate School Public Affairs*

U.S. Navy Vice Admiral Tim Szymanski, deputy commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, presided over the Naval Postgraduate School 2019 summer quarter graduation ceremony as the school bid farewell to 280 graduates, including 18 international students, in King Auditorium, Monterey, California, Sept. 27, 2019.

University president retired Vice Adm. Ann Rondeau bestowed the 290 advanced degrees upon the graduates, and provided insights on how important the graduates are to the nation's future.

"This event is a celebration of individual commitment, perseverance and accomplishment," said Rondeau. "We have immersed you in an extremely competitive academic environment that has enabled you to focus on the challenges that affect your service, our defense capabilities and our national security."

Rondeau went on to thank the faculty, staff and loved ones that contributed to the students' successes, while also recognizing the NPS Foundation for providing the university with an important "margin of excellence." Following her remarks, Rondeau turned the podium over to Szymanski.

"I'm honored to be here this morning to share in your tremendous accomplishment," Szymanski said. "I'm also humbled, and a little bit intimidated, to try to say something meaningful to over 200 graduates of very high intellect, who have honed their analytical critical

thinking skills over the last 18 months.

"The Naval Postgraduate School is where the DoD has invested in its competitive advantage, it has invested in you," Szymanski continued. "You are thought leaders, and your organizations will directly and indirectly lean on you for that leadership."

Commissioned in 1985 as a Surface Warfare Officer, Szymanski transitioned into the SEALs in 1989. His 30 years with the Navy SEALs saw a wide scope of leadership experience leading to his tenure as the Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command in 2016-2018 and his current position at USSOCOM.

---

*One of the elements of critical thinking is thinking differently, and challenging your assumptions and theses, you may not immediately realize your new superpowers, or realize that they are essential when you return to duty, but know that they are.*

— U.S. Navy Vice Admiral Tim Szymanski

---

Szymanski, who himself received a Master's in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy at the Joint Advanced Warfighting School, underlined the value of an NPS education in fulfilling the U.S. National Defense Strategy.

Szymanski highlighted the National

Defense Strategy's three lines of effort: lethality, partners and alliances, and reform, noting that they "describe the changing nature of warfare," where the insights and value of an NPS education are perfectly suited.

"One of the key conclusions in facing these challenges is it will require us to think, compete and flight trans-regionally and simultaneously in multiple domains and dimensions," he said. "While you have been working on your degrees and learning to think differently, the services have been analyzing these trans-regional, multi-domain, multidimensional challenges and have developed globally-integrated operating

concepts. You have probably been studying and following them here.”

Szymanski then went on to highlight the importance of accelerated learning of 21st century skill sets, including space, cyber information, influence decision science, data analytics, algorithmic warfare, noting the Navy’s approach of velocity learning and ready relevant learning.

“One of the elements of critical thinking is thinking differently, and challenging your assumptions and theses, you may not immediately realize your new superpowers, or realize that they are essential when you return to duty, but know that they are,” he continued.

“To me, it is about two things. First, it’s about making a difference in the relationship between leaders and followers, not necessarily a result, or an outcome, but just a positive difference. And second, it’s about inspiring others to make a difference. This incredible

faculty helped you develop the most important skill that will serve you best as you return to your services and parent organizations, and that is not what to think, but how to think.”

In closing, Szymanski referenced the 1939 film “The wizard of Oz” reminiscing on the Scarecrow’s journey to acquire a brain where in the end the Wizard awarded him a diploma.

“As you walk across the podium and receive your diploma, realize that this incredible institution, demanding curriculum and fantastic faculty have further revealed what you have always had – critical thinking,” said Szymanski. “You are thought leaders and your organizations will rely on that leadership.

“Unleash your superpowers,” he stressed. “Make a difference in your organization, in your team and in your relationships. And more importantly, inspire others to make a difference.”



*Navy Vice Admiral Tim Szymanski, deputy commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, delivers remarks during the Naval Postgraduate School 2019 summer quarter graduation in King Auditorium, Sept. 27, 2019. Photo by Petty Officer Nathan K. Serpico.*

# Headquarters - U.S. Special Operations Command

## New Data Engineering Lab opens



U.S. Special Operations Command Chief Data Officer David Spirk, USSOCOM Commander Gen. Richard D. Clarke, and USSOCOM Senior Enlisted Leader Chief Master Sgt. Gregory Smith cut the ribbon to officially open the USSOCOM Data Engineering Lab in Tampa, Fla., Sept. 25, 2019. The lab is an open-concept work environment and is the command's outpost of a larger DoD modernization ecosystem, whose goal is to foster collaboration between Special Operations Forces professionals, data scientists, data architects, software developers, systems integrators and technologists. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.

*By U.S. Army Maj. Jennifer Bocanegra  
USSOCOM Office of Communication*

U.S. Special Operations Command took a notable step toward the realization of its artificial intelligence strategy Sept. 25. Together, U.S. the Commander of U.S. Special Operations Gen. Richard D. Clarke with Senior Enlisted Advisor Chief Master Sgt. Gregory Smith and the command's Chief Data Officer David Spirk, formally cut the ribbon signifying the official opening of the

USSOCOM Data Engineering Lab at the SOFWERX facility in Tampa, Florida.

During his remarks, Clarke discussed the impact data will have on USSOCOM's future operations and investments. He also emphasized the command's desire to attract top talent from the tech world including: data scientists, data architects, software developers and system integrators who could bring cutting edge solutions to improve the efficiency and capability of Special Operations Forces.

“SOCOM is open for business,” Clarke said. “Bring us your partnership, innovative solutions, and big ideas.”

The DEL is housed inside the SOFWERX facility in Tampa, Florida and offers an open-concept work environment modeled after leading technology companies. The work space is intended to be unclassified and accessible with the goal of fostering collaboration among cross-functional teams consisting of SOF professionals, Department of Defense partners, industry thought-leaders and academia.

“The biggest security challenges of the day won’t be solved in closed rooms in our headquarters ... They’ll be solved in spaces like this, together with you,” Clarke told the audience.

The lab will serve as the command’s outpost connected to the larger Department of Defense modernization ecosystem and its projects will focus on the design and development of advanced data techniques, including AI, machine learning, and robotic process automation.

“SOF, along with the Department of Defense, is dedicated to advancing our data architecture and analytical tools,” Clarke said. “We believe this DEL is one of many that will emerge in the future ecosystem across the DoD, the broader U.S. government, and foreign partners.”

Spirk and the USSOCOM data office will supervise DEL production confirming alignment with the USSOCOM AI goals.

“This has been a huge, huge capability improvement for us,” Spirk said. “This is a realization of what this future is for us.”

Spirk initially joined USSOCOM in 2015 as the associate director for the USSOCOM intelligence directorate. He took on the position as the chief data officer in 2018 where he is responsible for leading the integration of artificial intelligence and machine learning automation across the USSOCOM enterprise.

There are around 10 fledgling projects underway. One such project focuses on predictive maintenance and is a collaborated effort involving the Pentagon’s Joint Artificial Intelligence Center and the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) and the command’s data office. The goal of the project is to create an AI-managed program that statistically predicts

engine component failures. By leveraging AI technology, flying hours will be optimized and aircraft maintainer readiness, and efficiency will improve.

Prior to the official ceremony, 50 different companies dedicated to AI, machine learning and data science showcased their organizations to the more than 200 attendees from across the special operations community, DOD, U.S. government agencies and local leaders in technology.

---

*‘SOF, along with the Department of Defense, is dedicated to advancing our data architecture and analytical tools. We believe this DEL is one of many that will emerge in the future ecosystem across the DoD, the broader U.S. government, and foreign partners.’*

*— Army Gen. Richard D. Clarke*

---

SOFWERX is an unclassified, off-campus facility located in Tampa, Florida, designed to bring non-traditional partners from industry, academia and the U.S. government together to work on USSOCOM’s most challenging problems. SOFWERX was created in September 2015 under a partnership intermediary agreement between

DEFENSEWERX and USSOCOM.

While the DEL and SOFWERX are co-located, the DEL will focus on AI, machine learning and data science; however, being in close proximity offers opportunities for both entities to collaborate on projects to further SOF capabilities.



**Fifty-four companies showcase their technologies to U.S. government attendees prior to the grand opening of the U.S. Special Operations Command Data Engineering Lab in Tampa, Fla., Sept. 25, 2019. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.**



CILBERT ALANIZ (S) RALPH L. THOMPSON WESLEY B. AN. DAVID ALAN C. BRY  
S/MSG PVT USA 880125 MSG CPT USA 810120 SMO PVT USA 840922 MSG CPT USA 8  
JANCESS WILLIAM C. HAYES ROBERT A. BRADMAN



**U.S. Army  
Sgt. 1st Class  
Dustin B. Ard  
1st Special Forces Group  
(Airborne)**



**U.S. Army  
Sgt. 1st Class  
Jeremy W. Griffin  
1st Special Forces Group  
(Airborne)**



**U.S. Air Force  
Tech. Sgt.  
Peter Kraines  
24th Special Operations Wing**

*Editor's note: Honored are those special operations forces who lost their lives in combat or training since the August issue of Tip of the Spear.*

*A SEAL assigned to Naval Special Warfare Group 2 conducts donning and doffing dive gear during dive operations off the East Coast of the United States Sept. 18, 2019. Photo by U.S. Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer Jayme Pastoric.*

