

SPECIAL WARFARE

A GLIMPSE INSIDE THE
SPECIAL FORCES
QUALIFICATION COURSE
CYBER OPERATIONS

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SPECIAL OPERATIONS CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

FORGING SOF

THE OFFICIAL PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL OF U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

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ON THE COVER

A Special Operations Command-Europe Soldier performs a freefall jump out of a Blackhawk helicopter, 12,000 feet above the Malmshiem Drop Zone in Stuttgart, Germany. This is just one of the many specialized skills SF are taught at the U.S. Army Special Operations Center of Excellence.

U.S. Army photo by Jason Johnston



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Views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect official Army position. This publication does

SPECIAL WARFARE

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The U.S. Army's Special Operations Center of Excellence

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VISION Forging experts in special warfare to adapt and succeed in a complex, multi-dimensional world through innovative training and education.

By order of the Acting Secretary of the Army:
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from the COMMANDANT



The U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, the Army Special Operations Center of Excellence, is a truly dynamic institution. Each day, more than 3,500 of the Army's best and brightest are actively engaged on the main SWCS campus and its associated training sites throughout the United States.

Daily, our cadre and staff are working with Soldiers from assessment and selection to advanced skills to graduate-level education to prepare them for success in the complex and ever changing environments in which they find themselves. It is the job of our staff and cadre to take the very best our nation has to offer and forge them into dynamic leaders and thinkers. The Soldiers who leave as graduates of our training will go directly into harm's way. They will operate in remote locations, far from the flagpole. For some, they may be the only U.S. presence in a particular region. They are truly operating at the tip of the spear. That is why what we do here, at the Army's Special Operations Center of Excellence, is so important. We must equip all of our special operators with the tools and skills they need to succeed in a complex world. We cannot fail them.

In this issue of *Special Warfare*, you will read about our training from assessment and selection to advanced skills. On the flip side, you will find the Academic Handbook. As you can see, the numbers of courses are increasing, as are the unique skills they give our special operators, which enables them to successfully navigate through the human aspect of war.

Over the past year, we have taken an even closer look at not only the professional skills we inculcate into our force, but also the personal skills they need to remain in the fight. Our enemies are becoming more sophisticated, and just as the character of war is changing, our training will change and evolve to meet the needs of our force.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James B. Linder".

JAMES B. LINDER
MAJOR GENERAL, USA
COMMANDING GENERAL

“War has an enduring nature that demonstrates four continuities: a political dimension, a human dimension, the existence of uncertainty and that it is a contest of wills.”

— Gen. H.R. McMaster
“The Geopolitical Lessons of the Iraq War.” *Comments, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*
March, 21, 2013

OBJECTIVE - T EFFORT

BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL DAN ALDER AND MS. THERESA BARBOUR

Objective T is the latest Army Sustainment Readiness Model. It is imperative that the force understands the new procedures, including the yet to be published regulatory and doctrinal guidance. This article outlines the changes and the critical information required to conduct assessments and inform the reporting process. Additionally, a monthly training newsletter is published on MILSuite that provides in-depth instructions on the use of the various systems and how they work together.

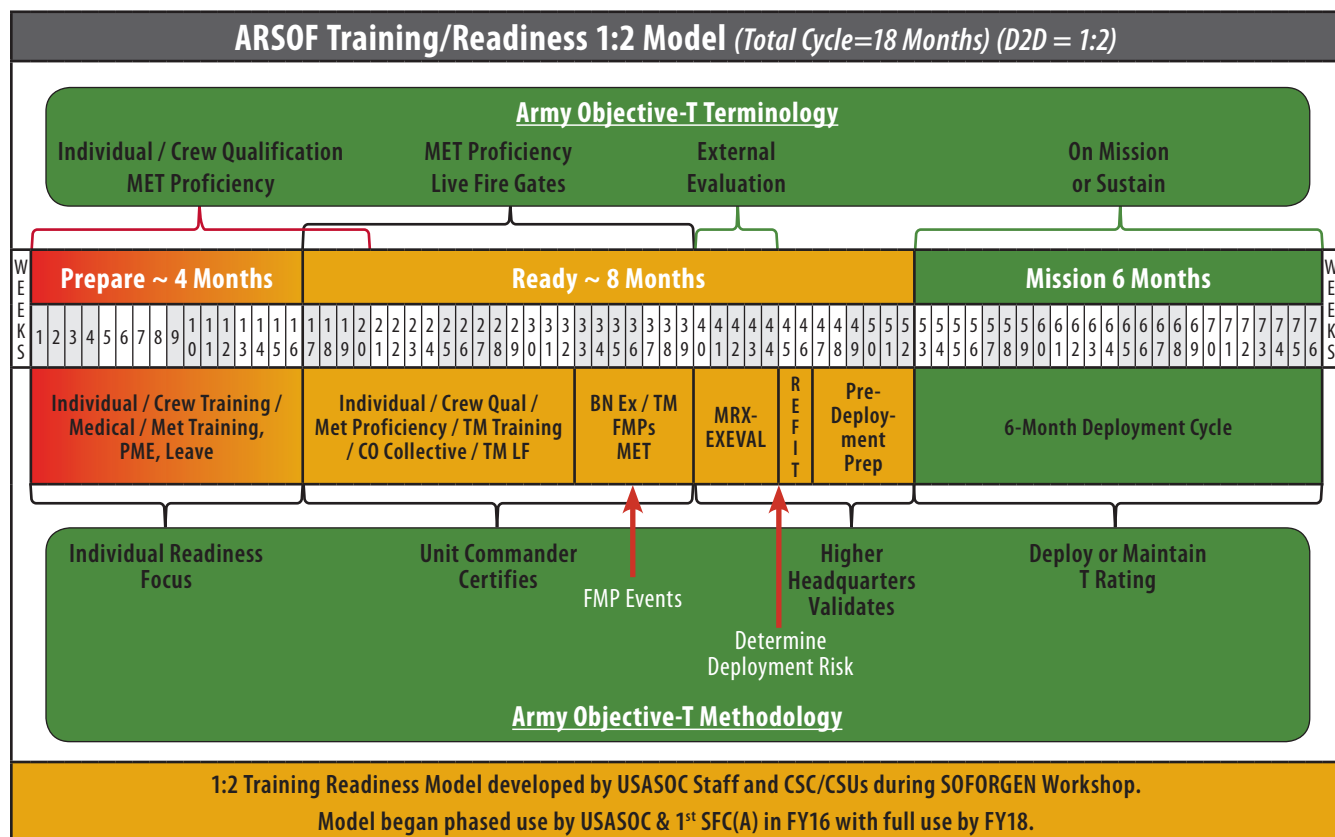
ARMY SUSTAINMENT READINESS MODEL (SRM)

The SRM is a form of risk management the Army uses to manage and balance mission with resources. It informs high level decision-making on which units must maintain high readiness and which units can maintain a lower level of readiness. It also informs the Army on which units are prepared for war immediately and which require a specified amount of time and resources to become ready. The Army defines strategic readiness as a process that assesses the ability of the total force, as well as the operating and generating force, to execute its role to meet the demands of the National Military Strategy. The Army is developing the latest readiness model to meet that need. The Sustainment Readiness Model represents a change in methodology from the previously utilized processes of ARFORGEN and SOFORGEN. Those

terms are now obsolete but the concept is essentially the same with some name changes. The readiness model that applied to the majority of Army forces was the ARFORGEN (now called SRM). Special Operations forces were never a part of the ARFORGEN pool. In fact, at the bottom of each table of organization and equipment narrative there is a statement that reads 'this unit is not a part of the Global Force Pool of operational forces...It does not support or participate in the ARFORGEN model.' That model consisted of Reset, Train/Ready and Available pools. The name has changed, and the pool names have changed but the cycle remains relatively the same for Active Army, Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve. For example, Reset is now Prepare 1, Train/Ready 1, 2 and 3 are now Ready 2, 3 and 4, the available pool is now the Mission module. The USAR still has a five-year cycle, the conventional Army forces are on a three-year cycle and ARSOF is on a 18 months cycle. The U.S. Special Operations Command has directed (USSOCOM 525-25) that all SOF units/personnel must be on at a minimum 1:2 mission to dwell ratio. To meet that requirement the Special Warfare Readiness Model was created (Figure 01).

Certain activities are supposed to occur in each of the phases in order to sustain the readiness of the capability. The Joint Chiefs of Staff use the information from the models (DRRS-S, JTIMS) to inform them on what units

FIGURE 01
Special Warfare Readiness Model



OBJECTIVE - T EFFORT

are prepared for joint operations. Army Special Operations Forces experience an extremely high mission deployment rate when compared to conventional units. Coupled with the fact that it is inherently a much smaller force with a very high demand for services, ARSOF faces serious challenges to maintain a sustained ready force. The readiness models are progressive in that as one team or unit moves forward in the module to month 2, another team or unit moves into the same module at month 1. That means there are now two teams in that module and so on. There are specific activities that take place during each module of the readiness model. Some of the activities are listed in Figure 01. The Army defined activities are explained in depth in the AR 525-30 (currently under revision). Please note on Figure 01 that the Prepare and Ready modules have a three month overlap. By utilizing the readiness model, units are able to shelter time for training, equipping and educating their personnel. It also provides needed rest time between deployments and exercises. While this new readiness model seeks to better manage the force, all the models in the world will not work if they are not used properly. Unit training management is the key to successful training readiness. Multiple courses are available on the ATRRS for unit training managers. The readiness models work hand-in-hand with the objective-T effort.

STANDARDIZED MISSION ESSENTIAL TASK LIST

The standardized mission essential task list was established to provide a more accurate assessment of Army capability readiness. Most Army units are required to be on a standardized METL. The majority of conventional forces have been on the DA Standardized METL for more than 10 years so that part of the process is not new to them. What is new is that now the standardized METLs must be developed from theater level down to company level. Non-deployable table of distribution and allowances units do not have standardized METLs. An example of a non-deployable TDA unit is the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. Standardized METLs are developed by the

proponents with input from the operational force commanders. This input is usually provided during an annual METL review and development working group. Proponents are responsible for developing METLs for the active and reserve components. Each METL consists of mission essential tasks and the supporting collective tasks. All SCTs must be steps in the MET. METLs are developed using a standard set of rules approved by the HQDA G3/5/7. Those rules are as follows:

- METLs are based on the mission the unit was designed to perform as described in the unit TOE narrative and doctrine.
- All METs must be in a training and evaluation outline (T&EO) format.
- The METs must be approved in the Training Development Capability system and on the Central Army Registry.
- No universal joint tasks may be used. UJTs cannot be used because they do not have a T&EO. The proponent must write a T&EO that will reflect the UJT intent and measures. The Army Universal Task List will not be used for the same reason the UJTL cannot be used. The tasks do not have T&EOs.
- No staff tasks may be on the METL unless that is the primary mission of the unit.
- No warfighting functions will be a MET on the METL.
- The METL must contain a deployment task.
- No more than seven METs on a METL unless an exception is granted. There is no restriction for the minimum number of METs.
- Each MET may have no more than seven supporting collective tasks plus the appropriate mission command task for the echelon. There is no minimum number of SCTs for a MET.
- The selected SCTs must be included as steps in the MET and linked to the MET.

There are special additional requirements for ARSOF METs and those are as follows:

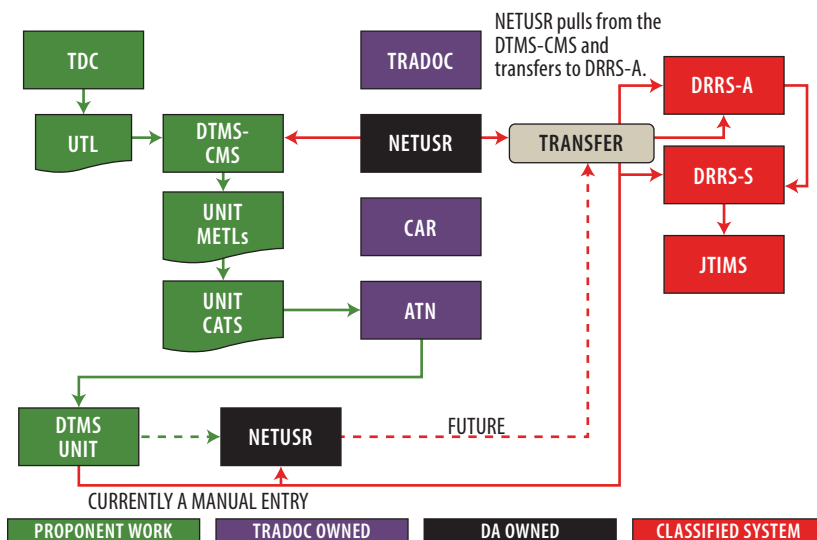
- The METs must be based on a UJT. Except when no UJT is available such as the deployment task.
- The METs and SCTs must be written using joint conditions and joint terminology.
- The METs must also comply with Army TRADOC task technical standards and procedures.

These development requirements clearly demonstrate why it is necessary for the units to coordinate with the proponents for developing their METLs. In all cases the tasks must be analyzed and developed using the appropriate TRADOC systems.

Once the tasks are developed, the proponent will then enter the METL in another TRADOC system called the METL builder in the DTMS-CMS. The Net-Centric Unit Status Report will pull the approved METL from the METL builder and populate the reporting systems. The NETUSR will have several updates before it is fully capable of extracting the approved METLs from the system. *Figure 02* demonstrates the relationship of all the systems in play with this process. Throughout the reporting period the unit will enter the training evaluations in the DTMS. The unit will enter the

FIGURE 02

Systems diagram. This diagrams how the systems communicate. This only shows the communication between the different systems. It does not depict inputs from the operational force for the development of the required products such as the METs and SCTs.



PLAN AND PREPARE			EXECUTE							ASSESS		
Operational Environment			Training Environment (L/V/C/G)	Proponent Establishes Training Environment Standards	% Leaders Present at Training / Authorized	% Present at Training / Authorized	External Evaluation	Performance Measures	Critical Performance Measures	Leader Performance Measures	Task Assessment	
SQD & PLT	CO & BN	BDE & ABOVE										
Dynamic (Single Threat)	Dynamic & Complex (4+ OE Variables & Hybrid Threat)	Dynamic & Complex (All OE Variables & Hybrid Threat)	Night	Proponent Establishes Training Environment Standards	≥85%	≥80%	Yes	≥90% GO	All	≥90%	T	
					75-84%			80-90% GO			T-	
Static (Single Threat)	Dynamic (Single Threat)	Dynamic & Complex (All OE Variables & Single Threat)			Day	65-74%	75-79%	No			65-79% GO	<All
						60-64%			60-74%	51-64% GO	P-	
						Static (Single Threat)	Dynamic & Complex (< than all OE Var. & Single Threat)	<60%	<60%	<50% GO	U	

assessment data, individual training records for mandatory training and qualifications and this information will be entered in the NetUSR and transferred to the SIPRNET reporting systems. The DRRS-A populates the DRRS-S and the DRRS-S populates the Joint Training Information Management System.

Since all the METs were developed with joint reporting requirements in mind and, are available for access in the unit DTMS and the NETUS, there is no need for the units to develop METs or manually enter information in the systems. In the event there is a requirement for an additional task or MET, the unit should contact the proponent for assistance.

All Army units are required to use the DTMS, including ARSOF units. DTMS has a multi-layer security system. Not only must you have a CAC to use it, you must also have an account. Users are only able to access the units the DTMS manager allows. The accounts are all managed by the unit DTMS account manager. Most Brigade level units and above have a DTMS master trainer available to manage the system access and to provide the required training to unit users. Mobile Training Teams are available from TRADOC at no cost to the units. These may be coordinated through the proponent or requested directly from the Army Training Network website.

NEW LOOK TO THE TRAINING AND EVALUATION OUTLINE (T&EO)

The T&EO has a new look with the inclusion of the training evaluation matrix and the identification of leader and critical steps. The measures will look a little different in some tasks as well. In the past, the measures were usually copies of the step changed to past tense. That is no longer the case. The measures will describe the observable and measurable results that the step was written to produce. Steps that are not to be measured will have N/A under the GO/NO-GO/N/A blocks. Only the steps that are critical to the successful completion of the task are measured. An example is located on the *Special Warfare* website.

WORDS MATTER — KEY DEFINITIONS

There are some key definitions that units need to know. During the Sustainment Readiness/Objective T Working Group that took place at Carlisle Barracks in January this year, the Operating Environment (TRADOC G2 lead) working group was tasked with developing the definitions for static, dynamic, complex, hybrid threat and single threat. They developed the definitions and then staffed them for input to the other working groups. The final products will be published in the new FM 7.0, *Train to Win in a Complex World*. These terms are important for leaders and trainers to know and understand because they will have an impact on whether or not the unit will be able to achieve a trained or partially trained rating. These definitions are taken into account when the METs and supporting collective tasks are written. The measures and standards complement the conditions requirements and the Training Evaluation Matrix (Figure 03), setting the unit up for success during training.

Static. Aspects of operational variables (PMESII-PT) needed to stimulate mission variables (METT-TC) do not change throughout the unit's execution of the task.

Dynamic. Operational variables and threat TTPs for assigned counter-tasks change in response to the execution of BLUFOR's task.

Complex. Requires a minimum of four (terrain, time, military [threat] and social [population]) or more operational variables; brigade and higher units require all eight operational variables (PMESII-PT) to be replicated in varying degrees based on the task being trained.

Single Threat. Regular, irregular, criminal or terrorist forces.

Hybrid Threat. The diverse and dynamic combination of regular forces, irregular forces, terrorist forces and/or criminal elements unified to achieve mutually benefitting effects.

These definitions are included in the FM 7.0. Hybrid threat uses the ADRP 1.02 definition. The trainer and the unit leadership will determine what constitutes dynamic and complex based on the unit type and

FIGURE 03
Training Evaluation Matrix. The proponent will adjust the PLAN and PREPARE (highlighted in green) factors for each task. Those tasks that require a live fire will have a special task number ending in "L" specified in the T&EO.

OBJECTIVE - T EFFORT

missions. The proponent determines if it should be trained in limited visibility, MOPP, live fire and the type of training environment that should be used. An example of a conditions statement may be found on the *Special Warfare* website.

OBJECTIVE-T EFFORT

Objective-T is the moniker given to a process for objectively evaluating training readiness. This process applies to all Army units from theater- to company-level. Objectively evaluating training is important because, in addition to saving lives, the Army Readiness Guidance and the Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Manual 3500.03X clearly states that training is the key to readiness. Using an objective method assures senior leaders what units are ready to go to war and what is required to bring other units up to the appropriate readiness standard. Not all units will be resourced to achieve a C2 or C1 level of readiness. This effort requires all Army proponents to completely revise all the collective tasks (approximately 4,700) and write new tasks to meet the mission essential task and the objective T rating requirements. Manpower is a finite resource and this process is time consuming. The decision to postpone the implementation of the objective T reporting was made during the Senior Leader Readiness Forum (June 2016). Once all the regulations (AR 350-1; AR 220-1; and DA PAM 350-1) are revised and published, all units will begin using the new NETUSR reporting processes. The expected date for implementation is the February/March 2017 time frame. The new training metrics are published in the FM 7.0 and the C rating metrics in the AR 220-1.

The metrics in FM 7.0 go hand-in-hand with the training evaluation matrix shown in figure 03. The matrix is developed for each task as the task is developed. In order to use the new T&EOs efficiently it is critical that the unit establishes a training program that addresses

SOF, Army and joint training requirements. That includes using the METL, the CATS and the DTMS. All Army units including ARSOF are required to use the Digital Training Management System and the Combined Arms Training Strategy. The Army uses the crawl-walk-run methodology for training units/elements. Units are not expected to achieve above a P- during a crawl training event. Due to the metrics involved, a class will never achieve above a P-. That does not mean it is not a successful training event.

ASSESSING A MISSION ESSENTIAL TASK

All Army units are required to participate as trainees in an external evaluation on an annual basis. The EXEVAL is used to determine if the unit is prepared to transition to the next module of the readiness cycle. In the case of ARSOF, this will most likely occur about halfway through the Ready module. Actual frequency rates will be published in the AR 350-1 and the DA Pam 350-1. The training event is evaluated by and resourced by the command two levels up. The training event is developed around the commander's training objectives. The training objectives are identified during the commanders' dialogue. The observer controllers/trainers are trained (all must be formally trained) and provided by higher headquarters two levels up as part of the resourcing of the exercise. The training evaluators use the T&EO to evaluate the training. The commander and unit leaders will do the overall training assessment in the DTMS. There is no option to degrade or increase the training evaluation using the T&EO. Commanders may request a degradation or increase of the assessment by one level during the commanders' dialogue based on special considerations. The final assessment is recorded in the DTMS.

The diagram in *figure 04* shows how to use the T&EO to calculate the overall rating for a MET.

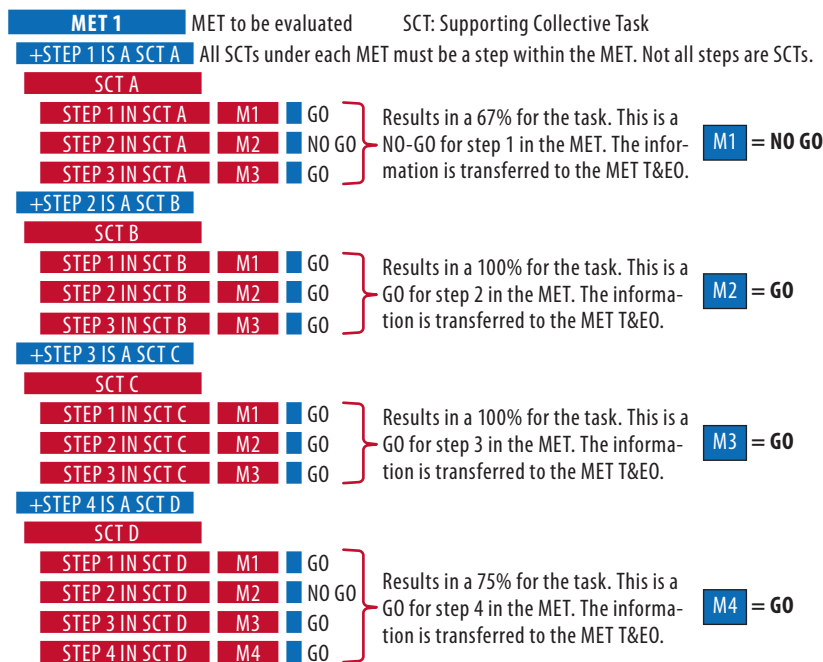
CONVERTING T/T-/P/P-/U TO THE JOINT Y/Q/N

During the Sustainment Readiness/Objective T Working Group the Task Framework and Authoritative Data linkage to Joint Readiness assessments working group (DAMO-ODR and DAMO-TRC lead) developed the methodology for converting the Army MET assessment (T/T-/P/P-/U) to the Joint Y/Q/N. That process is diagramed in *Figure 05*. There is only a slight difference from the existing methodology. If the MET was assessed at a P or P- and there are sufficient resources to successfully accomplish the MET, the commander may choose to downgrade the rating from a Qualified Yes to a No. The downgrade will require a comment for justification. The new methodology will be published in the AR 220-1 that is currently in revision.

SHIFT IN MIND SET

A shift in mindset is required to make this system work. That involves educating our forces on the new processes as well as continuing communication between commanders and leaders. The commanders' dialogue does not occur once or twice a year anymore. The commanders' dialogue must be a routine function of command. There should never be a surprise evalua-

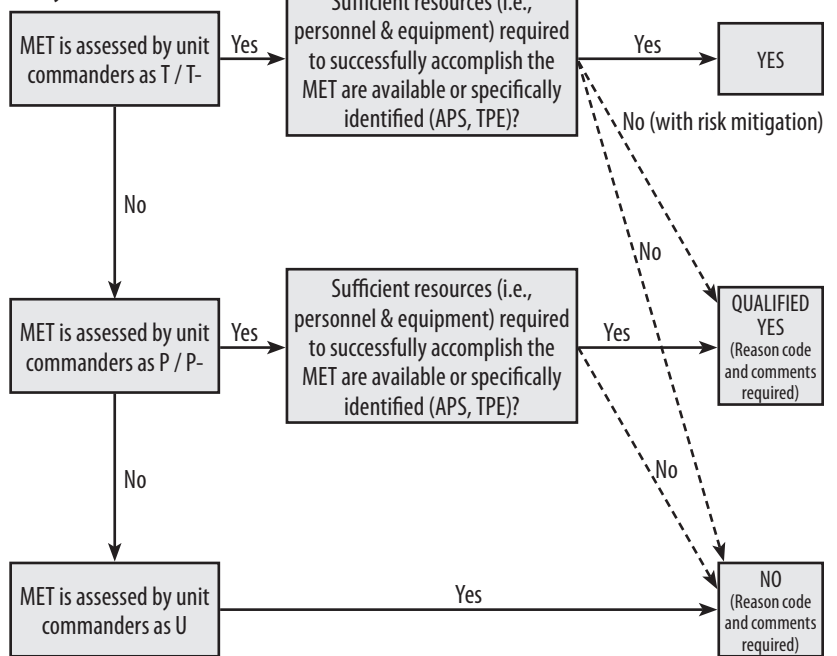
FIGURE 04
This MET has 4 steps as indicated. We train the task under dynamic and complex operating variables and against a hybrid threat. 95% (T) of the authorized strength is present for training. 80% (T-) of unit leadership is present for training. The rating on this task is 75% which equates to a P rating. This task was externally evaluated (T/T-). Using the objective task evaluation criteria matrix at figure 3, the highest rating available in this situation is a P.



tion on a MET to the senior commander or the commander being evaluated. All evaluations must be honest in order to determine where the shortfalls are and what resources are required to achieve the desired level of readiness. The semi-annual and the yearly training briefs should have detailed information on MET assessments to include how the assessment was determined. If a unit must report a P or P- it is not necessarily considered a failure in leadership. It means that unit is only resourced to achieve that training readiness level or there is a situation that must be addressed whether it be a shortage of personnel (training evaluation matrix), too many broken Soldiers in a unit, a lack of funding or equipment that is not properly functioning. Those factors must be acknowledged in order to be fixed. The way this process benefits the ARSOF unit is by objectively identifying what specific resources (time, funding, equipment, personnel, facilities and training) are lacking so that those deficiencies may be addressed with the higher headquarters from company- or team-level up to theater-level units. The commanders' dialogue is now one of the most important conversations a commander will have during his or her command.

Just a quick word regarding out-of-service equipment; when you borrow a required piece of equipment from another unit (or team) in order to meet mission requirements, that other unit is now degraded in readiness. It may relieve the immediate pain but what happens when that other unit gets called to deploy and cannot meet mission because they loaned the equipment to your unit? The answer is not to get in that position by reporting equipment shortages and out-of-service pieces as soon as they become non-mission capable. If you have a team that loses three members on a mission, how long does it take to get the replacements up to the standards of the team? It takes several months of working together to build the team trust and instill the team ethics in new members. Meanwhile that team's readiness is degraded due to the personnel attrition. The degraded team goes into the prepare module. The scenarios presented here are simplistic in nature but they make the point. The Army Chief of Staff wants to know what is broken with an eye towards fixing what is broken. If all the units say everything is great and they have everything they need then there is no need for additional funding or additional personnel or equipment. This is not a new concept. What is new is that it is no longer acceptable to borrow the equipment. It is no longer acceptable to breeze over a MET rating during the STB or YTB and not provide the supporting documentation for the rating. If a unit needs more money or better equipment or more personnel, prove it. Notice on the training evaluation matrix that one of the execute factors is the percentage of authorized personnel present, not assigned personnel present. Demonstrate through the objective reporting processes where the deficiency is and why it is there. This article is about training but you can see how it applies to all areas of readiness reporting.

Army MET Assessment



CONCLUSION

In closing, the OBJ T effort does two things for ARSOF. First, it will allow Commanders at all levels to have a more effective and informed conversation about training proficiency, manning and equipment status as well as provide a standardized process to improve readiness reporting. Every unit must be manned, trained and equipped to perform its mission. Readiness reporting is how the Army allocates resources and prepares units to fight. Training is the key to readiness. Inaccurate reporting limits a higher echelon commander's ability to address readiness shortfalls. It will have strategic costs, financial costs, and most importantly it will cost lives. The new Objective T effort is designed to eliminate or significantly reduce the occurrences of inaccurate reports, providing the Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff a more accurate picture of what units are fully capable now and what it will take, in terms of resources, to make other units fully capable of deploying and winning the fight. This is critical especially now because of the high demand placed on ARSOF. Our ability to maintain a balance between a high deployment tempo and an objective, appropriately standardized training pathway will ensure that we are able to sustain and improve upon the unique capabilities ARSOF provides to our nation.


The MILSuite URL for the monthly training newsletter is: <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/community/spaces/usajfkswcs>. 

FIGURE 05
The T / T- / P / P- / U
Mission Essential Task
(ET) proficiency
assessments are
accomplished IAW the
Task Evaluation Matrix
criteria.



BONUS CONTENT ONLINE <http://www.soc.mil/swcs/swmag/archive/2902/TrainingUpdate>

Want to know more? See additional diagrams and links for more information on our website.



“In the long history of humankind, those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed.”

— Charles Darwin

SPECIAL FORCES WARRANT OFFICER INSTITUTE PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION BUILDING CAPACITY THROUGH THE WARRANT OFFICER TRIBES

In support of Maj. Gen. James B. Linder’s vision of an “adaptive institution characterized by agility, collaboration, accountability and integrity” and capable of “producing the world’s finest special operators,” the Special Forces Warrant Officer Institute recently celebrated its first non-180A warrant officer graduate. In March 2016, a Chief Warrant Officer 3 — assigned to the United States Army Special Operations Aviation Command — graduated the Special Forces Warrant Officer Advanced Course. The decision to make attendance opportunities available to other branched warrant officers within the Special Operations Forces Enterprise is driven by several factors: investing in human capital through advanced unconventional warfare and SOF planning education for subject-matter experts across the SOF warrant officer cohort; increasing the ability of those subject-matter experts to tie tactical capabilities to regional or national strategies; supporting SOF/CF interdependence, interoperability and integration (I3) when those subject matter experts are assigned outside the SOF Enterprise; and increasing the capacity and capabilities of SOF headquarters through better educated subject-matter experts.

Warrant officers from 15 branches assigned to the United States Army Special Operations Command are key enablers who provide critical support and subject-matter expertise required by SOF to execute core operations and activities. Within the SOF Enterprise the majority of those warrant officers are operating in an environment much different than from that which they originated. The SOF Enterprise is unique, with its own language and culture, training and equipment and operations for which it is employed. Perhaps more important is the subject-matter expertise that may be missing during plan development simply due to those warrant officers not being part of the planning process — due to lack of planning knowledge or lack of confidence in planning ability — which the SFWOI endeavors to change. In many instances, those same warrant officers find themselves in non-standard roles. CW3 Saunders highlights that within Special Operation Aviation, “emerging missions require SOA aviators to adopt a more Special Forces-centric method of operation for special operations such as advising and mentoring foreign nation aviation units.” In addition to advising and mentoring foreign forces, other branch warrant officers are employed as part of commanders’ design and planning teams or attached to directly support deployed SOF operational elements.

The SFWOI — an Institute of Excellence established in 2008 — is uniquely positioned to remedy this issue. As an adaptive and collaborative learning institution, the SFWOI provides the most current and relevant lifelong learning requirements for senior Special Forces warrant officers. Two of the courses offered at the Institute, the Special Forces Warrant Officer Advanced Course and the Special Operations Warrant Officer Intermediate Level Education course, prepare Special Forces warrant officers for increased responsibilities and successful performance in senior-level positions. The 10 week SFWOAC produces tactical and operational-level planners capable of engaging multi-faceted and unstructured problems. Graduates comprehend the intricacies of the nine Special Forces Core Tasks and their application in the contemporary operational environment and increase their understanding of the joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational environment. Whereas the seven-week SOWOILE course educates and prepares mid-grade and senior Special Forces warrant officers to serve as leaders, planners and advisers at the Special Forces Battalion and Group levels — as well as Component and Joint Commands. The SOWOILE capstone event inserts students into an actual Theater Special Operations Command headquarters where they spend one week working directly for the TSOC Commander and his staff — analyzing real-world plans. The final evaluation entails an out brief to the TSOC Commander where the students share their analysis and propose recommendations. To date, three iterations of these capstone events — at two distinct TSOCs — have garnered accolades from the TSOC Commanders. During the most recent

TSOC event in June 2016, the J5 expressed his gratitude for advancing several projects months ahead of schedule.


In 2014, the SFWOI Commandant initiated an inquiry on the feasibility of expanding the role of the SFWOI to provide this professional education to select non-180A warrant officers assigned to the SOF community. As a proof of concept, the first SOF Aviation warrant officer attended and graduated SFWOAC class 001-16 and lauded the opportunity as providing unmatched value. CW3 Saunders said, “The opportunity to observe and integrate with Special Forces Warrant Officers as a Special Operations Aviation Warrant Officer was directly relevant to my current position in the Special Operations Aviation Advisor Directorate...the focused instruction of the course is specifically tailored to the customer and therefore paints a sharper picture of the requirements that Special Forces face and how we can better support them.”

In June 2016 — to further the collective level of SOF WO education — the SFWOI hosted two senior Naval Special Warfare chief warrant officers for a SFWOI open-house to provide 180A PME insight and determine the feasibility of creating a shared vision. This type of collaboration will not only increase interoperability but will increase capacity and capability across the SOF Enterprise by providing more joint-capable SOF planners that possess an operational and strategic mindset.

ARSOF 2022 states priority one is to invest in human capital. The SFWOI focuses on training and educating warrant officer candidates and mid to senior-level 180As in the conduct of special warfare, with particular emphasis placed on advanced unconventional warfare and a concentration on resistance planning. An unconventional warfare campaign or resistance plan will require not only a whole-of-government but a whole-of-SOF approach. The education provided at the WOI will enable other branch WOs within the Enterprise to better incorporate their subject-matter expertise into SOF plans.

A final impetus behind opening mid- and senior-level 180A PME courses to select warrant officer attendees is the new Army Warrant Officer 2025 Strategy and HQDA EXORD 196-16, Warrant Officer 2025. Specifically, the WO 2025 Line of Effort II, Development states, “This line of effort is focused on assisting Army institutions to develop new and more agile systems and processes in the education, technical training and development of Army warrant officers that allow them to adjust to a more dynamic set of requirements.” This initiative will serve as another example of the SFWOI (Institute of Excellence) and the USAJFKSWCS (Special Operations Center of Excellence) leading the way in innovative and groundbreaking professional military education for the Army and the Department of Defense where SOF skills are honed.

The SFWOI Commandant and cadre continue collaboration with other SOF Warrant Officer branches to open doors for select personnel to compete for attendance opportunities in the SFWOAC and SOWOILE courses. There is no doubt that this initiative challenges “conventional thinking” and tribal biases, but if the proof of concept is an initial indicator, it will prove beneficial to all.

As of publication, a Naval Special Warfare Command Chief Warrant Officer 2 is attending the course.— CW5 Frazier and SFWOI cadre CW4(P) Michael Varner, CW4 Felix Mosqueda, CW3 James Decker and Mr. Peter Riopel all contributed to this article. 

SPECIAL FORCES WARRANT OFFICER INSTITUTE

ADVANCED COURSES OF INSTRUCTION

SF WARRANT OFFICER ADVANCED COURSE (SFWOAC)

The SFWOAC provides SF CW2s and CW3s with professional military education to increase their capability to support staff operations and planning at the SF company and battalion levels as well as at key developmental assignments outside of SF organizations. The course focuses on officer foundations, duties and responsibilities of mid-grade warrant officers, operational design and planning at the battalion and special operations task force levels; joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational organizations; theater security cooperations planning; and irregular warfare, unconventional warfare, counterinsurgency and special activities. Finally, graduates of SFWOAC possess the ability to interpret and explain campaign-support planning through in-depth analysis of national plans and policy, development of theater campaign plans, SOF-supporting plans and military art and design.

SF WARRANT OFFICER INTERMEDIATE LEVEL EDUCATION (SFWOILE)

The SFWOILE educates and prepares mid-grade and senior SF Warrant Officers to serve as leaders, planners and advisors at the Special Forces battalion- and group-levels, as well as component and joint commands. It consists of three modules of advanced-level education encompassing military history, theory, doctrine and application. Module I (Foundations) focuses on critical thinking, adaptability and effective use of communications which are supported by the conduct of mission analysis on a theater-level contingency plan and SOF-supporting plans. Module II (Military History) analyzes select historical military campaigns and SOF supporting plans conducted during critical times throughout the 20th century. Module III (Campaign Planning) focuses on the mechanics involved in the preparation of campaign plans through the study of doctrine, operational art and design and the joint-operational planning process. Additionally, students complete a mission-planning exercise that focuses on a TSOF supporting plan to a GPF campaign plan.

A History of



“We looked for a dash of the Elizabethan pirate, the Chicago gangster, and the Frontier tribesman, allied to a professional efficiency and standard of discipline of the best Regular soldier.”

— BG Dudley Clarke, British Commandos Founder

ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION

BY MAJOR JOHN FAUNCE



BACKGROUND

Assessing and selecting the right person is nothing new to our military or our society. It was recently explained by author Jim Collins, who, in his legendary book *Good To Great*, explained that organizations had to “...get the right people on the bus and the wrong people off the bus.”⁰¹ Before corporate America put such a high premium on selecting individuals, militaries pioneered selection methods. The way the military does this is through assessment and selection courses.

Earliest evidence of military assessment and selection dates back to post World War I Germany, when, due to the restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles, the Germany Army could only commission a small



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01
The Ball and Spiral Situation. As a test of physical and group coordination, six Office of Strategic Service's candidates were asked to maneuver a ball up a spiral ramp to a shallow platform.

02
The Stress Situation. The OSS selection team developed a procedure to test the candidate's capacity to “tolerate severe emotional and intellectual strain.”

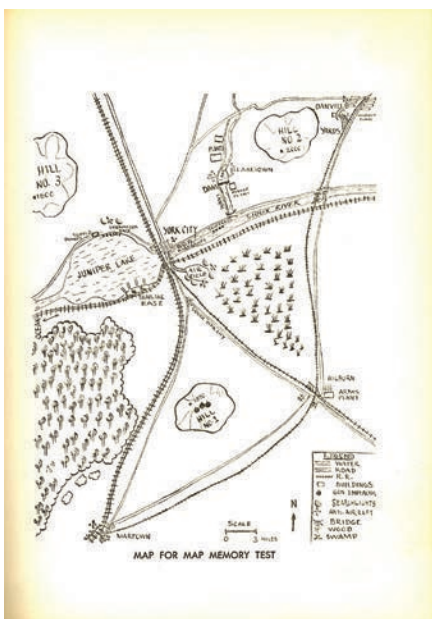
03
The Construction Situation. As a test of leadership OSS candidates were asked to direct two assistants in constructing a wooden structure in 10 minutes.

PHOTOS FROM THE “ASSESSMENT OF MEN”

number of officers.⁰² This caused Germany to be highly selective with those commissions. The second case was pre-World War II England, which, due to the threat posed by Germany had to raise its force from 400,000 to 5 million. The need for the right people to lead such rapid growth led to the formation of the British War Officer Selection Board.⁰³

The American military also first encountered its need for assessment during World War II. In response to the growing need for clandestine and covert operations, the United States sought unconventional thinkers from

their conventional military ranks. The Office of Strategic Service, which handled these operations, commissioned a task force of psychologists to conduct a three-day assessment. They documented their methods and findings in a meticulous report called *The Assessment of Men* written in 1948. This report has since served as a sort of playbook for military assessment and selections. What was found to be predictive of success back then has stood the test of time and is alive and well in the current methodology at Special Forces Assessment and Selection.



BONUS CONTENT ONLINE
<http://www.soc.mil/swcs/swmag/archive/2902/A&S>

Are you up to the OSS standard? Download and take the selection committee's Map Memory Test on our website to see how you might have done.

EARLY ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION METHODOLOGY

In 1926, Germany wanted to select the highest caliber officer with a limited number of officer commissions. Experimental psychology, while viewed elsewhere in the world with a heavy amount of skepticism, was integral to the selection process. The German Army employed nearly 500 psychologists who designed and ran the Officer Selection Program. The explicit aim of the program was to “obtain an evaluation of general intelligence, use of will power (defined as ability to think and persevere under physical and emotional stress and willingness to push oneself) and the ability to manage (command) people, expressive movements (body language and handwriting) and their total personality (their life history told at an interview).”⁰⁴ This initial concept of looking at intelligence, physical fitness, leadership and character would become a cornerstone of all future assessment and selection courses.

The program's success was hard to measure. It was canceled half way

through the war. One reason was that this selection method caused a cultural problem. It allowed too great of a democratic selection that permitted men with the right character traits to become officers regardless of family background. The opposition was raised by current officers who favored the traditional method of selecting officers from prominent Prussian families.⁰⁵ The German Army's decision to place tradition over innovation in terms of talent management may have kept adaptive and capable officers off the battlefields of World War II Europe; a decision that had an immeasurable impact.

WORLD WAR II...IN RESPONSE TO THE GROWING NEED FOR CLANDESTINE AND COVERT OPERATIONS, THE UNITED STATES SOUGHT UNCONVENTIONAL THINKERS FROM THEIR CONVENTIONAL MILITARY RANKS.

The next notable program was the British War Officer Selection Board. In 1939, the WOSB, borrowing many ideas from the OSP and German psychologists who had published their work, set out to select officers for the rapidly growing British Army. They faced a cultural as well as process problem. The cultural problem was similar to Germany. The current officer selection process was for candidates to go before the Regular Commissions Board that was biased towards the elite classes. Questions were asked about the candidate's school, their father's occupation and income.⁰⁶ With the rapid growth in the military, the British needed a great number of officers. This caused a process problem. RCB's were historically a rejection process; with a rejection rate of officers between 20-50 percent.⁰⁷ They couldn't keep being highly selective from their elite class while also filling the necessary ranks for the growing military. While Germany would not give up tradition, Britain realized it had to address this problem and go beyond the elite class.

In 1941, in order to address these cultural and process problems, the British Army commissioned two psychiatrists, Lt. Col. T.F. Rodger and

Maj. E. Wittkower, to create a program to reduce the rejection rate.⁰⁸ The explicit aim of the program was to evaluate the candidate's “quality of social relations with superiors, equals and subordinates; competence in practical situations; and stamina over long periods under stress.”⁰⁹ Candidates were taken in groups of 30-40 to remote locations for three days of evaluation. The evaluation consisted of: a detailed questionnaire of personal history, written tests looking at intelligence and perception, a series of group tests consisting of discussion and outdoor tactical exercises, a physical

fitness test and a boxing competition.¹⁰ This is the same as the OSP in regards to intelligence, fitness, leadership and character. The British model evolved slightly by adding group, not just individual, testing. This program's success, while also hard to measure, could be considered very successful from the standpoint that much of what it conducted is still being used today. The German and British selection boards heavily influenced the OSS A&S of personnel during World War II.

THE BIRTH OF AMERICAN ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION METHODOLOGY

In 1943, hardly a year after the creation of the OSS, many senior leaders felt their recruitment of personnel was conducted hazardously. The head of the OSS, Gen. William J. Donovan, directed his recruiting branch to set up an A&S program after receiving a brief from an OSS officer who recently spent time with the WOSB in London. The task given to the OSS assessment staff was to, “develop a system of procedures which would reveal the personalities of OSS recruits to

the extent of providing ground for sufficiently reliable predictions of their usefulness to the organization.”¹¹ The report was clear to point to the phrase ‘sufficiently reliable’. This OSS team adhered to a truth they believed, which was all efforts to select individuals, at best, could only arrive at “sufficient conclusions from insufficient data.”¹²

The A&S lead was Dr. Henry Murray; a Harvard psychologist who was a pioneer in personality assessment.¹³ His team screened 5,931 recruits and believed, as the name might not suggest, that they were not selecting the fit, but rather the unfit.¹⁴ The nature of the job performed by OSS agents was not and would not be made clear to several of those who were doing the selecting. Therefore, they would not be able to



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01

select based on a certain skill set, but rather a set of general qualifications applicable to all OSS assignments. It was so general that they identified the ideal candidate as a ‘Ph.D. who can win a bar fight’.¹⁵ The general variables looked at by the assessment committee were the following: Motivation for Assignment, Energy and Initiative, Effective Intelligence, Emotional Stability, Social Relations, Leadership and Security. In addition, specific variables were also assessed to help select candidates for certain branches based on performance. Those were: physical ability, observing and reporting and propaganda skills.¹⁶ The theme of intelligence, fitness, leadership and character has continued to exist in each subsequent A&S.

The success of the program was again hard to measure. The war ended shortly

after the selection process. However, in 1952 when U.S. Army Special Forces was made permanent, several initial members were prior OSS members so the influence of selection played a major role in the formation of SF. An exploration of the current selection of SF members shows just how close the methods remain to the OSS roots.

SPECIAL FORCES ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION

In 1987, Col. Richard Potter convinced the Army that a course to select volunteers to attend SF training was necessary. He noted that the attrition rate in the Special Forces Qualification Course was wasting millions of dollars and time. He assigned two project officers, Maj. James L. Velky

and Master Sgt. John A. Heimberger, to establish the course to find candidates that were “reasonably fit, reasonably motivated and reasonably intelligent.”¹⁷ Based on that guidance, the first steps were to define personality traits consistent with successful completion of SF training and effective duty as an SF Soldier. The desirable personality traits were formulated from a two-year study conducted by the Army Research Institute.¹⁸ Next, they determined ways to assess for those traits. Using knowledge from the German, British and OSS selections they designed a program. The project officers and seven senior noncommissioned officers validated the program by going through it themselves and then in June 1988 the cadre (now numbering 48 members) and Maj. Velky, as the first officer-in-charge, conducted the first SFAS.

In the first year they ran nine classes with an average of 190 candidates. SFAS attempted to capture a candidate’s profile by first administering a series of mental and learning tests (Wonderlic and Audio Perception Battery), personality tests (Jackson Inventory and Minnesota Multifaceted Personality Inventory). A second phase further assessed the candidate through a series of field-related assessment activities (military orienteering, an obstacle course, swim tests, short and long runs and other physical tests and problem-solving events).¹⁹

Today’s SFAS is remarkably similar to the first class. There are still physical



01, 02, 03
 For many years Special Forces Assessment and Selection was depicted with imagery showcasing the gruelling log and rifle PT, both of which have been replaced with more functional fitness exercises. U.S. ARMY PHOTOS BY JASON GAMBARDILLA

04
 Today's selection tests the candidates physical and mental toughness, as well as their ability to work under pressure and with a team. U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY STAFF SERGEANT RUSSELL L. KLIKA

03

fitness tests and runs, swim tests, intelligence tests, personality tests, military orienteering and problem-solving events. The problem-solving events have morphed into what is referred to as Team Week. This assesses the candidate's ability to use his attributes to adapt to an ever changing problem set while working in a group. These tests, along with peer and self-assessments, become data points that are combined to assess the Whole Man. The Whole Man concept is arrived at by taking multiple observations from multiple observers over multiple events to ensure the observations are valid and the candidate is balanced. This is perhaps the key addition that SFAS has added to the history of military A&S courses; and it is vital. Former SFAS 1st Sgt. Bobby Sinko, compared it to a stool, "A stool has to be so tall, and that all of its legs need to be tall enough for the stool to remain balanced and functional. We are looking for someone smart, in shape and gets along with others."²⁰ The Whole Man is proving to be a reliable predictor of success. The candidates who are selected at SFAS and move on to the SFQC have a pass rate near 70 percent; it is a reliable but not a perfect predictor.²¹ Some would like to see that number higher, but it is important to remember that OSS found that selection is a sufficient conclusion from insufficient data.



04

THE METHODOLOGY OF ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION

In the Army, there is always a sense of 'improving your fighting position' and therefore SFAS has faced, at times, critics with how little has changed. People question relevance of events or ambiguity of the course. Some question the use of land navigation with a compass in the age of global positioning systems, yet candidates' success in this event highly correlates to successful completion of the SF qualification course.²² While assessing, cadre gives candidates very little training, guidance or feedback. All of these remain in place because they work

and accomplish the task: to screen those that are unfit for the follow-on 66 week qualification course. That is where the training will take place. It is necessary to keep screening and training separate or neither will be done well.²³ The selection must be first and requires very special cadre to assess without bias. The candidates, who are stripped of name and rank, operate in a leaderless, ambiguous environment and many struggle with the lack of guidance or feedback on performance; which they do not get until the completion of the course. This forces them to use their attributes and adapt to the problems they face. However, this is highly correlated to the environments in which SF Soldiers find themselves. The

reason highly elite units need to run such hard selection is because of the amount of autonomy graduates see in their operating environment. Given that operating environment it is imperative to 'select hard, manage easy'.²⁴

CONCLUSION

In the 90 years since the first military assessment and selection, the criteria have remained surprisingly similar. The Germans, British and Americans all valued the attributes of intelligence, fitness, leadership and character. While the Germans and British wanted to draw first from the elite classes, it was the Americans who were first to be completely unbiased by

the class of the candidate and looked instead for a general set of attributes. SFAS further refined the procedure to assess how well the candidates can apply those attributes to adapt to multiple changing problem sets over multiple days. Charles Darwin once said that it is not the strongest or most intelligent of the species that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change. This ability to adapt is the lynchpin to conducting SF missions and makes SFAS vital to the overall goal. The goal of selection and its difficulty was recently summarized by the current Special Warfare Center and School Commander, Maj.Gen. James B. Linder who said at a town hall meeting, "We need that physically fit, intelligent person who possesses social and

cultural awareness permitting them to stand in the middle of a circle of a foreign force, out-numbered, out-gunned and still influence them."²⁵ **SW**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major John Faunce currently serves as the Director of the SOF Captain Career Course at SWEG(A). He previously commanded ARSOF Assessment and Selection. Other previous assignments include Commander of ODA 3113 in 1st BN, 3rd SFG(A) from 2007-2010 with deployments to Afghanistan and Tajikistan as well as a leader development officer at the United States Military Academy from 2011-2014 after earning his Masters in Organizational Psychology from Columbia University.

01 Today SFAS candidates are assessed using the Whole Man concept which takes multiple observations from multiple observers over multiple events to validate that they have the right balance of attributes.

02 (Opposite page) Students in the SUT portion of phase 2 of the SFQC learn the foundational combat skills needed to operate as part of a small team.

U.S. ARMY PHOTOS BY
STAFF SERGEANT
RUSSELL L. KLICKA



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SMALL UNIT TACTICS

A Foundational Skill Set

BY MAJOR ROBERT WEBB



02

AN OVERVIEW OF THE SMALL UNIT TACTICS PHASE OF THE SFQC FROM 2005 TO PRESENT

The Small Unit Tactics phase of the Special Force Qualification Course develops adaptable students who possess the cognitive, tactical and interpersonal skills to serve as effective members of the Special Forces Regiment. Using simulated combat scenarios, Army Special Operations Forces attributes are evaluated as students apply and adapt the principles of patrolling (e.g., planning, recon, security, control and common sense). Overall, this phase of training provides students with a foundational skill set they will utilize throughout their careers.

Over the past 11 years, modifications occurring in 2005, 2008 and 2014 to SUT have been implemented to achieve two objectives: to meet the demands of the force, and to ensure (operational) readiness of newly assigned Green Berets. These modifications came in the form of an enhanced program of instruction focusing on tactical skill development and course length.

In 2005, SUT was built on a five-week program of instruction. Each week consisted of different blocks of training that focused on a specific set of critical tasks. Week one focused on battle drills, standard operating procedures and squad

ambushes. Week two introduced students to the troop leading procedures, cadre assisted reconnaissance and ambush operations. Week three was a field training exercises that required students to demonstrate the skills they learned in a simulated combat environment. Week four trained students to execute an airborne infiltration followed by direct action, special reconnaissance and personnel recovery operations. Finally, week five focused on weapons proficiency and marksmanship skills with the M-4 carbine and M-9 pistol. A detailed article about this five-week model was written by Major Jonathan Blake and published in *Special Warfare* (July 2005).

In 2008, the course POI was redesigned to include three additional weeks of training. The expanded POI added live fire, foreign internal defense and language training to the original course. Language training was emphasized throughout the course and students were expected to engage in self-study on the weekends. The first week of training centered on common skills, call for fire, close air support, medical and bundle classes. The second week of training introduced students to movement formations, battle drills, reconnaissance and ambush principles. The third week of training involved classroom instruction and practical exercises in troop leading procedures and operations orders. The fourth and fifth weeks of training focused on squad evaluations and military operations in urban terrain. The sixth week of training was dedicated to weapons familiarity and marksmanship proficiency utilizing the M-4, M-9 and crew-served weapons in live-fire scenarios. Finally, in weeks seven and eight students executed platoon-level operations and completed a FID FTX.

In 2014, results from a critical task review board led to additional POI modifications, which remain in effect today. The current POI is six weeks. In week one, students demonstrate common skills training on medical procedures and communication platforms. They qualify on the M-4, receive M-9 familiarization, conduct combat marksmanship training and practice military operations in urban terrain. Week one concludes with squad-level land navigation, an event designed to teach basic skills for maneuvering large formations across a challenging terrain.

In week two, students are taught call-for-fire, site exploitation and basic patrolling skills. The Special Operations Mission Training Center leads students through close-air support and call-for-fire training. These blocks of instruction

are designed to teach students the proper procedures for employing fires from various platforms. Following call-for-fire training, students conduct site exploitation at a facility managed by Oak Grove Technologies. During this phase, students are given an opportunity to conduct hands-on training in multiple structures. These structures have hidden compartments and false walls that closely replicate buildings in a contemporary operational environment. Week two concludes with an introduction to basic patrolling skills including: movement formations, battle drills and ambush classes.

Week three begins with the first of three peer evaluations and counseling sessions. Peer evaluations are highly predictive of final training outcomes and considered an integral part of student development (Zazanis, Zaccaro, & Kilcullen, 2001). There are two components to a peer evaluation. First, every student rank orders each member of the team (e.g., 1-20). Second, students rate their teammates and themselves on the SOF attributes using a scale ranging from 1-10 (1 needs improvement to 10 exceptional). During the first counseling session, instructors provide students with feedback on their individual

performance as well as their peer-evaluation ratings. Following counseling, students receive classes on troop leading procedures and operations orders.

Week four is a pivotal week during which students begin platoon-level operations. Students receive training in reconnaissance and conduct practical exercises on sketching, creating and maintaining recon logs and movement techniques. Students also receive classroom instruction on planning and executing a raid. Training culminates with a SR/DA focused FTX. Simunitions are incorporated into this exercise to provide instant feedback and reward sound tactical decisions. This FTX is the final training event before evaluated patrols begin.

In weeks five and six, students are evaluated on their ability to plan and execute squad and platoon operations. Aviation assets from the 82nd Airborne Division, or North Carolina National Guard, support training by allowing teams to plan and execute rotary-wing infiltration operations. The incorporation of these assets into the final evaluation exercise adds a level of realism to the overall scenario.

As mentioned previously, peer and cadre evaluations are a critical component of SUT. Throughout training, students are placed in a variety of duty positions at both the squad- and platoon-levels, two of which are graded leadership positions. At the end of the first evaluation period, students conduct a second peer evaluation and receive another performance counseling. Students must receive a passing grade in one leadership position, pass a written exam and demonstrate they possess all of the ARSOF attributes to continue to the next phase of the SFQC (Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape). SUT concludes with a third iteration of evaluated patrols and peer evaluations. Prior to departing Camp Mackall, students complete end of course critiques and receive final counseling. End of course critiques ask students to provide feedback on the following domains: training objectives and standards, course length, course content, instructor proficiency/preparation, instructor-to-student ratio, performance counseling, practical application exercises, graded events and their overall experience. These critiques have proven extremely useful in refining the POI, identifying best practices and highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the course.

PEER EVALUATIONS ARE HIGHLY PREDICTIVE OF FINAL TRAINING OUTCOMES AND CONSIDERED AN INTEGRAL PART OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT



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01, 02

SUT Students are continuously evaluated by instructors and each other throughout the course.
U.S. ARMY PHOTOS BY THOMAS K. FITZGERALD

01

THE INITIATIVES SUT IMPLEMENTED ISO ARSOF 2022

In support of ARSOF 2022 (Invest in Human Capital), the Master Trainer Cell led by Kenny Young,⁰¹ redesigned and digitized Student Evaluation and Development Forms and Relief Board Summary documents. The revision of these documents eliminated redundant information and organized student data in a clear and accessible manor. Prior to the development of the new SEDF/RBS, no stand-alone document existed to capture student performance and development under the Individual Student Assessment Plan.

The new system reduced instructor workload by 22 hours for each instructor per six-week class, and significantly improved quality of life and morale within the organization. By graphically depicting objective and subjective data, the RBS allows commanders to efficiently access, query and analyze data. Also, it helps commanders make fully informed determinations about student advancement in the Special Forces Qualification Course. At the organizational level, the SEDF and RBS allow U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School psychologists to critically assess important individual and organizational domains. For example, a year's worth of student data allows USAFJKWCS operational psychologists to analyze trends and make recommendations for optimizing unit and student performance. Overall, the redesigned SEDF/RBS documents have improved data management and analysis of individual and unit trends, enhancing performance across a multitude of domains.

Today's conflict requires ARSOF to navigate the Human Domain more than ever. Unfortunately, no data system enables commanders at higher echelons to make critical and timely human capital decisions. Recognizing this shortcoming, Steve Davidson⁰² and Kenny Young collaborated with Horizon Performance⁰³ to develop the Human Capital Decision Support tool. Based on the success of SEDF/RBS, the team is using a grant funded by the Combatting Terrorism Technical Support Office to develop tools that improve commanders' abilities to make critical and timely decisions in support of the human capital strategy.

In broad terms, the benefit of the HCDST is twofold: 1) the tool will improve ARSOF operator force generation in the areas of recruiting, assessment and selection and qualification training and, 2) the tool will improve operator development. By using the HCDST to analyze individual operator data, organizations within USASOC can more effectively manage talent in terms of advanced training requirements, education, organizational retention and career management.

Since project initiation in 2015, SUT master trainers and Horizon Performance have completed initial tool development. Currently, other phases of the SFQC and select advanced skill courses are developing data collection plans and performance mapping models (Organization-Course-Phase-Cadre-Student). Once complete, organizations such as recruiting, assessment and selection and the operational force, will have quick and easy access to student data. Overall, the program will allow leaders to examine and create predictive analytic models, thus supporting ARSOF's 2022 initiative — invest in human capital.

CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Similar to other Army organizations, instructor manning is the biggest challenge SUT faces today. Due to class sizes, hours of instruction, student-to-instructor ratio requirements and the current six-week POI, SUT instructors average 70 hours per week during a class. Over the past five years, instructor authorizations were reduced from 121 to 67 table of distribution and allowance positions without a corresponding reduction in the number of SFQC students trained. Over the past two years, the 67 TDA positions have remained filled at

CURRENT SUT COURSE — AT A GLANCE —

WEEK ONE

- In-process
- Common skills training on medical procedures and communication platforms
- Qualify on the M-4, M-9 familiarization,
- Combat marksmanship training
- Practice military operations in urban terrain
- Squad level land navigation

WEEK TWO

- Close-air support and call for fire training
- Site exploitation
- Basic patrolling skills including movement formations, battle drills and ambush classes
- Students gain hands-on experience in multiple structures that closely replicate buildings in a contemporary operational environment

WEEK THREE

- Peer evaluations
- Counseling sessions
- Instruction on troop leading procedures and operations orders
- Platoon development

WEEK FOUR

- Platoon-level operations
- Reconnaissance training
- Practical exercises on sketching, creating and maintaining recon logs and movement techniques
- Classroom instruction on planning and executing a raid
- SR/DA focused FTX (final training event before evaluated patrols)

WEEKS FIVE AND SIX

- Evaluated patrols: students are evaluated on their ability to plan and execute squad and platoon operations
- Teams plan and execute rotary-wing infiltration operations
- SUT Exam
- Peer evaluations
- Counseling sessions
- Relief/recycle board



02

80 percent. The most critical positions within the Company (i.e., senior instructor) are filled at 82 percent.

Those who have never walked a kilometer under a senior instructor's rucksack may think, "It's SUT, how hard can it be to teach?" Although every member of the Special Forces Regiment should be capable of teaching the fundamentals of patrolling and small unit tactics unfortunately, it is not always the case. Take for example a Special Forces staff sergeant who comes into the Army as an 18X. He spends two and a half years in training before he arrives at the operational force. Fast-forward three years when the same individual is assigned as an SUT instructor. Unless he is an 18B, attended Ranger School or attended Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leaders Course, he is unlikely to

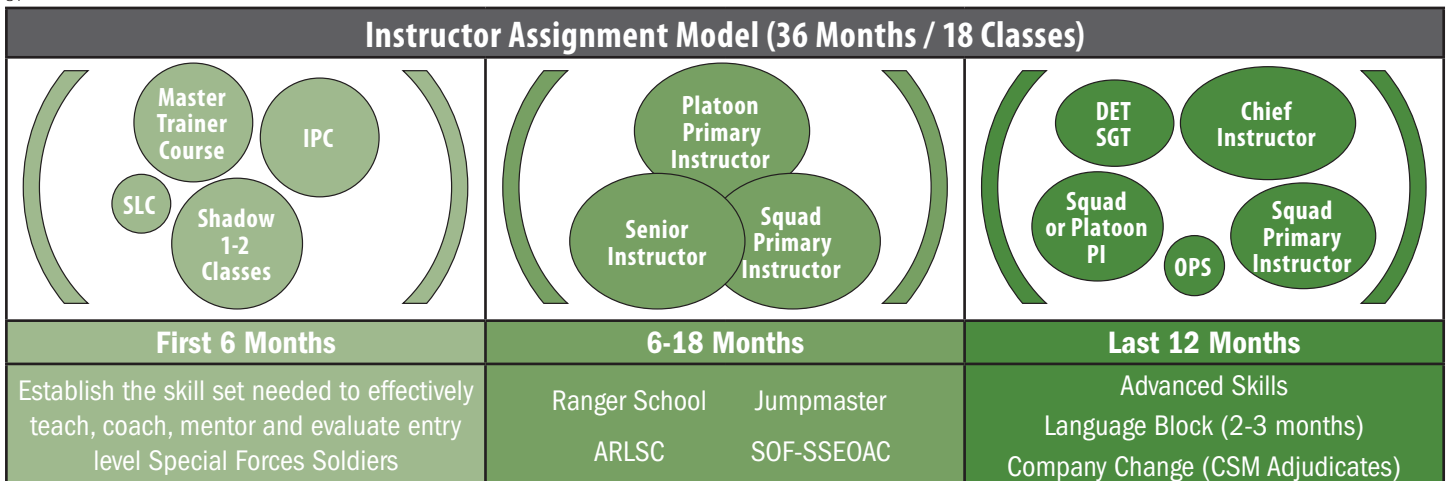
have maintained proficiency in small unit tactics. Regardless, upon assignment to SUT, he is expected to rapidly become an expert instructor.

Preparing new SUT NCOs for their role as instructors requires almost six months of training. Typically, new instructors learn effective strategies for teaching, coaching, mentoring and evaluating SF candidates. Training is conducted in three stages: 1) instructors complete a three-week ARSOF Instructor Preparation Course; 2) instructors complete the six-week senior leader course (if needed) and; 3) instructors complete a company-level training course titled, "The Master Trainer Course."

The Master Trainer Course, facilitated by the company's Master Trainer Cell,⁰⁴ includes four weeks of classroom instruction and practical exercises followed by six weeks of observation (i.e., observing a class from day zero through evaluations). By observing an entire SUT class, new cadre follow senior instructors through all blocks of instruction and practical exercises. In week one of the master trainer course, new cadre receive operational training guidance in their role as an instructor. Additionally, they receive classes on effective after action review techniques, counseling students and effective techniques for completing patrol grade books.

The second week of the master trainer course focuses on operations orders and briefing techniques. During this week, new cadre are given the opportunity

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Over a 36 month assignment, SUT instructors spend more than 7,500 hours training more than 1,080 students in a simulated combat environment.

02, 03
SUT instructors demonstrate ambush tactics to an SUT class. Properly preparing instructors to teach SUT requires nearly six months of training to learn effective strategies for teaching, coaching, mentoring and evaluating SF candidates.
U.S. ARMY PHOTOS BY THOMAS K. FITZGERALD

to serve as a primary instructor for one block of instruction, and as an assistant instructor for another block of instruction. In the third week, new cadre are observed by peers as they teach additional blocks of instruction; new cadre receive peer feedback on their teaching style and effectiveness. In the fourth and final week, instructors focus on planning and briefing skills specifically related to reconnaissance, raid and ambush operations. At the completion of the Master Trainer Course, new cadre are paired with a senior instructor team consisting of two additional instructors. This pairing allows for continued mentoring and development through out their assignment.

THE CHALLENGES AND REWARDS OF BEING AN SUT INSTRUCTOR

Over a 36 month assignment, an SUT Instructor spends more than 7,500 hours training more than 1,080 students in a simulated combat environment. These students will graduate and enter the operational force ready to conduct special operations in support of national objectives. SUT instructors focus their efforts on training students on the principles of patrolling and the ARSOF attributes. One of the greatest challenges for an instructor is remaining flexible and adapting their their teaching style and approach. Instructors must be able to adjust and modify their teaching styles to create an optimal learning environment for students with diverse levels of knowledge and experience. Some students have less than one year in the military, whereas others have significant experience (e.g., the student is a Senior NCO who served as a Ranger Training Brigade Instructor). Additionally, some students are officers and some students are from allied international military programs. Due to varying levels of experience with a class/group, an instructor must be flexible in his presentation of information so that all students understand and feel challenged. Not only do SUT instructors focus on the “how” to accomplish tasks, but more importantly the “why.” By understanding the “why,” and completing this phase of the SFQC, a student learns the cognitive, tactical and interpersonal skills to serve as effective members of the Regiment. Instructors must remain humble and open to learning - they won’t have 100 percent of the answers 100 percent

of the time. Remaining open allows instructors to continue fostering their own personal and professional development. Overall, they will leave SUT better-rounded NCOs.

Many students describe SUT as the first real one-on-one interaction with experienced SF NCOs. Whether the experience is positive, or negative, it is everlasting and critical to the development of future members of the Regiment. The soldiers that begin SUT are extremely intelligent, physically fit and driven. They are high performing individuals with a desire to be part of an outstanding organization. SUT instructors must constantly display the ARSOF attributes and represent the current and past members of the Regiment. **SW**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Robert Webb is the primary advisor to the Headquarters Department of the Army G-8 for Army Special Operations Forces matters. Major Webb served as the Commander of Bravo Company “SUT”, 1st Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) from July 2014 until June 2016.

NOTES 01. Members of the Master Trainer Cell include: Mr. Kenny Young, Mr. Bill Fingerhut, Mr. Tim Kempf, Mr. Tom Spescia and Mr. Dilles Walker 02. Steve Davidson is the 1st Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), Plans Officer 03. Members of the Horizon Performance Team include: Dr. Alex Mullins, Mr. Chris Mills, and Mr. Drew Borsz 04. Members of the Master Trainer Cell include: Mr. Kenny Young, Mr. Bill Fingerhut, Mr. Tim Kempf, Mr. Tom Spescia and Mr. Dilles Walker.

THE CODE OF CONDUCT

ARTICLE I

I AM AN AMERICAN, FIGHTING IN THE FORCES WHICH GUARD MY COUNTRY AND OUR WAY OF LIFE.

I AM PREPARED TO GIVE MY LIFE IN THEIR DEFENSE.

ARTICLE II

I WILL NEVER SURRENDER OF MY OWN FREE WILL.

IF IN COMMAND, I WILL NEVER SURRENDER THE MEMBERS OF MY COMMAND WHILE THEY STILL HAVE THE MEANS TO RESIST.

ARTICLE III

IF I AM CAPTURED I WILL CONTINUE TO RESIST BY ALL MEANS AVAILABLE. I WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ESCAPE AND TO AID OTHERS TO ESCAPE. I WILL ACCEPT NEITHER PAROLE NOR SPECIAL FAVORS FROM THE ENEMY.

ARTICLE IV

IF I BECOME A PRISONER OF WAR, I WILL KEEP FAITH WITH MY FELLOW PRISONERS. I WILL GIVE NO INFORMATION OR TAKE PART IN ANY ACTION WHICH MIGHT BE HARMFUL TO MY COMRADES. IF I AM SENIOR, I WILL TAKE COMMAND. IF NOT, I WILL OBEY THE LAWFUL ORDERS OF THOSE APPOINTED OVER ME AND WILL BACK THEM UP IN EVERY WAY.

ARTICLE V

WHEN QUESTIONED, SHOULD I BECOME A PRISONER OF WAR, I AM REQUIRED TO GIVE NAME, RANK, SERVICE NUMBER, AND DATE OF BIRTH. I WILL EVADE ANSWERING FURTHER QUESTIONS TO THE UTMOST OF MY ABILITY. I WILL MAKE NO ORAL OR WRITTEN STATEMENTS DISLOYAL TO MY COUNTRY AND ITS ALLIES OR HARMFUL TO THEIR CAUSE.

ARTICLE VI

I WILL NEVER FORGET THAT I AM AN AMERICAN, FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM, RESPONSIBLE FOR MY ACTIONS, AND DEDICATED TO THE PRINCIPLES WHICH MADE MY COUNTRY FREE.
I WILL TRUST IN MY GOD AND IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



—SERE—

Doing More and Giving Back

SERE school. Those words can send chills down your spine, conjure up unforgettable memories or bring a shifty grin to the face of anyone who knows what those two words imply.

BY MAJOR ERIC L. JENSEN

If you ever attended the U.S. Army Special Operations Command's Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape course, then you are one of the brave few who volunteered for one of the Army's most rewarding schools: A school you will never forget. Company C, 1st Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) at the U.S. Army's John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School is charged with running USASOC's SERE course and upholds the honorable lineage and reputation of professionalism that Col. Nick Rowe began in 1982. The company's mission is to train Army Special Operations Forces Soldiers in Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape to prepare them to succeed across the full spectrum of captivity to "Survive and Return with Honor." Today's course teaches 65 lessons plans. No small feat, considering the course is only 19 days long. As a result, SERE cadre knows, teaches and does more for the ARSOF Regiment than ever before. For that reason, it is a safe bet that SERE school as you know it has changed. In fact, it has changed quite a lot in the past 10 years alone. Company C accomplishes much more than just teaching Soldiers how to build a friction fire. It graduates a better trained resistor, returns a highly skilled and sought-after subject-matter-expert instructor to the operational force, and sends tailored mobile training teams to train ARSOF units preparing to deploy.



absolutely save their life or the life of the Soldier next to them." Lane has spent nearly 20 years as an instructor at USASOC's SERE course and is responsible for the lion's share of SERE's captivity scenario in the Resistance Training Laboratory. Throughout that time he has witnessed multiple changes to the course and many of SERE's lesson plans are new or updated to reflect the contemporary operational environment and the range of obstacles faced by today's special operations soldiers.

"Years ago we focused on just hammering home the Code of Conduct, and we didn't have the purposeful mindset of teaching resistance like we do today," says Lane. "Now these students graduate with the confidence to survive because they possess and demonstrate the knowledge to do so."

The Code of Conduct is a set of guiding principles for the behavior of a captive Soldier and has remained a primary focus of the course regardless of the many other changes. Of these changes, one of the most significant affected SERE's entire curriculum. In 2007, the SERE course changed from training that focused on a single type of captivity (war time) to training the full spectrum of captivity.

Now all graduates benefit from Peacetime Governmental Detention, Hostage Detention and War-Time Captivity training scenarios. This is important because our graduates deploy worldwide in support of ARSOF objectives in a wide range of threat environments and can encounter various types of threats and enemy exploitation. Giving the ARSOF warrior the basic skills to defeat exploitation by training in various captivity scenarios can greatly improve their combat effectiveness regardless of the landscape. Whether detained by the host-nation police force or the hostage of a violent extremist, the SERE graduate has the knowledge to survive and return with honor.

A BETTER PRODUCT FOR THE OPERATIONAL FORCE

Students at SERE school are flooded with a wealth of vital information, presented in a manner that is impactful and retainable. "It is extremely relevant information", says Bob Lane (a retired sergeant major and one of the most senior instructors of the course), "This stuff can



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In tandem with this curriculum change, students are now deliberately taught to develop situational awareness while captive. They accomplish this by determining: “who my captor is,” “what is my captor willing to do” and “what is my action plan to diminish captor goals?” This mindset is a significant shift from a student just making it through a 19-day “suckfest” to the purposeful learning and practice of real skills that they can apply in any isolating event. By teaching the full spectrum of captivity and developing situational awareness Soldiers have a broader understanding of captivity environments. It also forces them to think critically, exercise situational awareness and perform the appropriate actions to survive or resist a wide variety of captor exploits. Students learn the skills in a classroom setting first, then practice and observe other students practicing these resistance skills through a variety of captivity scenarios. These practice scenarios expose students to an array of enemy exploits and allow students to exercise situational awareness demonstrated by their appropriate responses given during the scenario. For example, a student responds very differently in a hostage detention scenario than if they were detained by host-nation police. Students are required to produce appropriate responses based on the scenario or situation in which they find themselves. This is not an easy task, as often times the correct response may seem counterintuitive, and any physical or environmental pressures applied can cause the surest of students to stumble. However, as the students practice and observe the mistakes of their peers in real time, they begin to develop the fundamental skills required for success.

Another important change took place in the Evasion and Escape portions of the course. The Evasion Detachment is responsible for training students in Personnel Recovery, and all aspects of evasion or escape planning. In 2008, the Evasion Detachment began to expressly train

— C CO., 1ST BN, 1ST SWTG (A) —
C/1/1 SWTG (A) trains ARSOF Soldiers in Survival, Resistance, Evasion and Escape to prepare them to succeed across the full spectrum of captivity to “Survive and Return with Honor.”

- » 19 Day Course
- » 90 Students/Class (Maximum)
- » 17 Classes Per Year
- » Primarily ARSOF Personnel

using the concept of Escape Mindedness. Escape mindedness is established by Article III of the Code of Conduct⁰¹ as a duty to make every effort to escape and is planned prior to, executed during and sustained after captivity. It may seem like common sense to escape your captors, but how do you successfully plan for it? This simple question caused a ripple effect of change in the detachment and the course as a whole. Instructors now steer students to refocus what they do towards a purposeful and successful escape mindset. As a result, this detachment’s field training program evolved from an ad hoc training scenario to today’s Evasion FTX (located on Camp Mackall and West Fort Bragg) that spans three days, three counties and tests all of their new skillsets. From blocks of instruction on locks and restraints to a new Escape Training Laboratory scenario, and from wilderness survival to wartime captivity, students are reminded that escape planning and preparation is central to their survival. Students now must plan and prepare to escape captors before they are captured, and later execute an approved plan of escape. This dramatically improved the

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SERE students learn skills in a classroom setting first, then practice and observe other students utilizing their resistance skills in a variety of captivity scenarios.
 U.S. ARMY PHOTOS BY STAFF SERGEANT RUSSELL L. KLICKA

students' understanding and execution of successful evasion and escape planning.

With the majority of current conflicts being conducted in large cities, the need for urban evasion training has developed. This was another significant addition to the course. Today's ARSOF warrior conducts operations in urban areas more frequently than in recent history. A recent article in *Foreign Policy* noted that 75 percent of the world's population is expected to live in large cities by the year 2050 and as a result, conflicts will become more urban than ever before.⁰² Accordingly, SERE training must adjust to adequately prepare Soldiers to meet an evolving threat and to accomplish the mission. To this end, SERE school incorporated urban evasion classes that focus on planning considerations, disguises, navigation and movement techniques and practical exercises. This is part of the school's larger concerted effort to more closely align course instruction with current and future operating environments. An eventual goal for the company is to develop the Evasion FTX to include an urban evasion exercise through built-up areas and incorporated into the

mental tactics, techniques and procedures to successfully navigate an unconventional assisted recovery mechanism and are evaluated on their ability to incorporate that knowledge during the three-day Evasion FTX. These changes and other additions to the school place USASOC's SERE course at the tip of the spear in training ARSOF Soldiers to persevere through isolating events, while producing a highly competent resistor for the force. Quality SERE training is only as good as the instructor who provides it.

SOUGHT-AFTER EXPERTS FOR THE OPERATIONAL FORCE

Another area of strong focus is training the actual SERE cadre and their professional development. One of the command team's goals is to return highly skilled and highly sought-after instructors back to the ARSOF Regiment and operational force. Each instructor arrives to the company with the obligation to complete a three-year tour of duty at USJFKSWCS. Upon arrival instructors are assigned to one of the company's four

SURVIVAL

- » Shelters
- » Fire Building
- » Navigation
- » Food/Water Procurement
- » Primitive Tools

EVASION

- » Personnel Recovery
- » Evasion Plan of Action
- » Special Purpose Infiltration Extraction System (SPIES)
- » Tracker Awareness (Counter Tracking)

RESISTANCE

- » Code of Conduct / Geneva Convention
- » Legal Aspects of Captivity
- » Organization / Chain of Command
- » Resistance Lab Training

ESCAPE

- » Barriers Negotiation
- » Urban Evasion & Considerations
- » Escape Planning and Implementation

— CAPTIVITY SCENARIOS: Peace Time Government Detention | Hostage Detention | Armed Conflict (Wartime) —

course's overarching scenario. This will be the most effective way to comprehensively test students on their newly taught skills.

In concert with these additions, Evasion Detachment now instructs students on Non-Conventional Assisted Recovery and Unconventional Assisted Recovery mechanisms. Both are:

"...forms of personnel recovery conducted by an entity, group of entities or organizations that are trained and directed to contact, authenticate, support, move and exfiltrate U.S. military and other designated personnel from enemy-held or hostile areas to friendly control through established infrastructure or procedures. NAR includes unconventional assisted recovery."⁰³

These additions are important not only because they expose and prepare students to recognize and enter real-world recovery mechanisms, but also align with a course emphasis to train students to return with honor, as mentioned previously. It is also mandated by the Joint Personnel Recovery Agency⁰⁴ for inclusion in all SERE Level-C training. Students now learn the funda-



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01 SERE instructors guide students during Special Patrol Insertion/Extraction System (SPIES) training.

02 All SERE cadre are graduates of the SERE course and are highly trained. Civilian instructors are retired military with a wealth of knowledge and experience to pass on to students.

U.S. ARMY PHOTOS BY THOMAS K. FITZGERALD

detachments: Survival, Evasion, Resistance Academics or Resistance Training Lab. Once assigned to a detachment, new instructors begin their respective Basic Instructor Training Program. Each training program is tailored specifically to one of the four detachments and follows a unique training regimen meant to create a basic instructor prepared to teach at a minimal level. A basic instructor's training program varies greatly depending on the detachment and can take as long as six months to complete based on the detachment and the new instructor's performance during their training. However, most new SERE instructors can expect to begin teaching students within two months.

Over time, an instructor can progress to higher levels of proficiency and eventually attain the Advanced Instructor status, signifying the greatest level of expertise in that particular detachment. Some portions of the course's program of instruction require advanced training in order to prepare cadre to become subject-matter experts in their material and to provide critical enhancements to the quality of instruction. While

assigned to the company, cadre attends various civilian and military training venues required to progress within their respective Instructor Training Program and become SME's. Some of these venues include specialized escape or resistance schools taught exclusively by JPRA, tracking and counter-tracking, survival skills in a variety of climates and wilderness medicine. During a cadre member's tenure at the company, he attends mandatory professional development schools and has the opportunity to attend other specialty schools that progress and enhance an instructor's career. On average, a SERE instructor attends 8-10 schools or SERE-specific training events while assigned to the company. This keeps instructors competitive in their military career, and returns highly skilled Soldiers to the operational force with minimal baggage to interfere with their potential to deploy.

Equally important, Company C also provides sought-after experts to the operational force through Mobile Training Teams. The company offers the ARSOF Regiment instant access to its SME's and institutional knowledge through the employment of MTT's to a unit's training location. In 2014, Company C recognized a pattern of increasing demand for SERE-related training. In response, the company began utilizing the MTT with greater frequency, and in doing so, also supported ARSOF 2022 Priority #3 Operationalize the CONUS Base. Since then, the company has provided training support to nearly every SOF group in the ARSOF Regiment and access to its SME's at locations such as the Regimental Pre-Mission Training Facility at Fort Bliss, Texas, the Toro Negro National Forest in Puerto Rico and the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana.

Skills learned during the SERE course are perishable and should be built into periodic detachment-level training to maintain proficiency. SERE MTT's train and refresh Soldiers on these perishable SERE skills; but distinct from the course, this training can be customized to suit the unit's needs or tailored to the unit's area of responsibility. In Fiscal Year 2015, the company conducted more than 30 MTT's and trained more than 500 Soldiers across the ARSOF Enterprise. By mid-2016, the company had already topped those numbers. In all cases, command teams and trainees alike instantly recognized the value of SERE refresher training and the need to maintain proficiency. Though training the operational force is critical, providing training to the civilian sector also has several benefits.

GIVING BACK

While cadre recognize the obvious usefulness of knowledge and experience in training SERE students, they also believe in the value of giving that knowledge back for a worthy cause. Like many members of the ARSOF Regiment, we give back to our various communities, both military and civilian, in many different ways. For years, the Survival Detachment has volunteered their personal time to support a number of admirable causes and events. For

example, 2016 marked the fifth anniversary of the Survival Detachment's voluntary participation in the Children of the Fallen Project. This event allows children who have recently lost a parent in combat to interact with others who have endured a similar loss. The event takes place in a truly unique setting on Camp Mackall, with extraordinary members of the Special Forces Regiment that few ever get to meet or experience. SERE Survival instructors supported and mentored 28 children and their surviving parents during that event, and not only did these children learn survival skills for the outdoors, but coping skills for life as well. Another example is the detachment's annual involvement with Gold Star Teen Adventures Organization. This organization provides outdoor adventure opportunities to Gold Star children of service members from the U.S. military's special-operations communities who also lost their lives in the line of duty. In 2015, the detachment provided survival training for 18 Gold Star teens consisting of reptile handling & identification, field expedient shelters, primitive traps, fire building techniques and primitive archery along with several other classes. The event culminated with archery and rabbit stick competitions, followed by a presentation of awards and certificates.

In 2014, the Survival Detachment completed a Coastal Survival Training Event near Fort Fisher, North Carolina. While preparing and during the conduct of the training, Survival cadre built lasting connections and relationships with prominent members of various state and local agencies, and businesses in the community. These relationships included the curator of the North Carolina Aquarium and North Carolina Park Ranger Service at Fort Fisher, the Cape Fear Serpentarium and the North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission. As a result of these connections and to further bond these informal relationships, Survival cadre volunteered to complete a community service project by removing litter from a five mile stretch of beach along the Fort Fisher State Recreation Area. Additionally, and at the request of the Aquarium's curator, the cadre donated primitive devices made during their coastal survival training event to the North Carolina Aquarium. These devices included various primitive tools, traps and fishing utensils built from debris found in the local coastal area. Some of these devices can now be found on display throughout the Aquarium. Also in 2014, the Survival Detachment undertook a reforestation project at the Little Muddy Training Area on Camp Mackall. Detachment members researched and coordinated with the North Carolina Forest Service and Fort Bragg Forestry Offices to implement a full spectrum solution for the project. This solution included specialty equipment, soil and species analysis, species introduction procedures and a coordinated burn schedule as part of the seedling protection plan and long-term success of the reforestation project.

Ultimately, the detachment planted 350 bare root seedlings provided by the North Carolina Forest Service that mitigate training impacts on the local environment and foster good relationships with outside regulating agencies. These examples knowingly focus on one of the four detachments in the company and yet are only a glimpse of just a few of the many vignettes that exemplify SERE cadre's selflessness and willingness to give back. In their own way, each of the company's four detachments actively support and give back to the ARSOF Regiment, its military families and supportive communities.

CONCLUSION

Today, the company trains about 1,500 Soldiers annually. Although the throughput has nearly doubled since 2001 and the SERE course has undergone many changes over the years, two things remain the same: the quality of instruction and professionalism of its cadre. SERE instructors take special pride in their work, as experts in their field, and in honoring the legacy, preserving the reputation and building upon previous successes. SERE instructors consistently welcome the opportunity to give back to the Special Operations Regiment regardless of ongoing changes and fluctuations in workload or operational tempo; a true testament to their character. **SW**

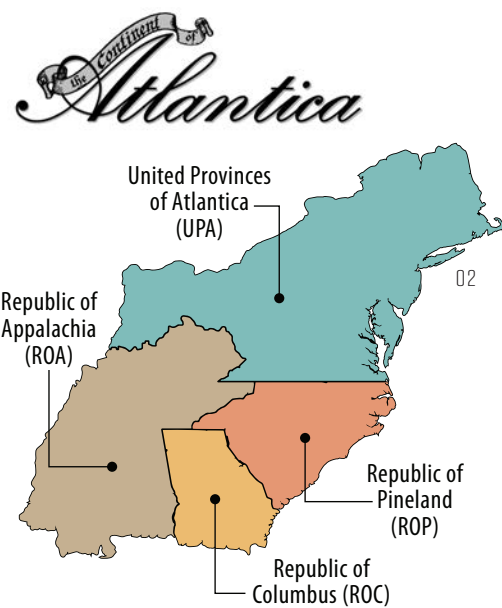
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Eric L. Jensen is a Special Forces officer assigned as the Group S3 Operations at the Special Warfare Education Group (Airborne), USAJFKSWCS. Maj. Jensen's previous assignments were at the 5th Special Forces Group, where he deployed in support of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as other overseas contingency operations.



02

NOTES 01. Article III of the Code of Conduct for Members of the United States Armed Forces states, "If I am captured I will continue to resist by all means available. I will make every effort to escape and aid others to escape. I will accept neither parole nor special favors from the enemy." (IAW Executive Order 10631). 02. Kilcullen, David. *The Future of War?: Expect to see urban, connected, irregular 'zombie' conflicts*. 14 February 2014. 20 April 2016. <<http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/02/05/the-future-of-war-expect-to-see-urban-connected-irregular-zombie-conflicts/>>. 03. *DoDI 2310.6*. Dept of Defense Instruction. Washington D.C.: Department of Defense, 13 OCT 2000. 04. JPRA is the Department of Defense's (DoD) office of primary responsibility for DoD-wide personnel recovery (PR) matters and provides Joint PR training standards, assesses and evaluates all SERE-related training within DoD.



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THE RELEVANCY OF ROBIN SAGE

BY MAJOR ADAM WOYTOWICH



“This is another type of war, new in its intensity, ancient in its origin — war by guerrillas, subversives, insurgents, assassins; war by ambush instead of combat; by infiltration instead of aggression, seeking victory by eroding and exhausting the enemy instead of enraging him. . . . It requires in those situations where we must encounter it . . . a whole new kind of strategy, a wholly different kind of force, and therefore a new and wholly different kind of military training.”
 — President John F. Kennedy, West Point Commencement Address, 1962⁰¹

INTRODUCTION

Since 1952, the U.S. Army has conducted various manifestations of formal unconventional warfare training. Guerrilla warfare-inspired exercises under such names as Gobbler Woods and Cherokee Trail operated over the next two decades in the states of West Virginia, Georgia and North and South Carolina.⁰² By definition, UW consists of “operations and activities that are conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary and guerrilla force in a denied area.”⁰³ In 1974, what is now known as “Robin Sage,” the U.S. Department of Defense’s premier UW exercise, held its first training iteration. While Robin Sage has undergone numerous changes and program-of-instruction modifications since its inception, the Special Forces Qualification Course culmination

exercise remains a relevant and necessary gate for entry-level U.S. Army Special Forces Soldiers in the 21st century.

This article provides an overview of the Robin Sage CULEX, particularly how the exercise trains and assesses its students in the conduct of the U.S. Army Special Forces’ primary mission of UW. This article also links Robin Sage initiatives to the former U.S. Army Special Operations Command Commanding General’s vision outlined in Army Special Operations Force’s blueprint for future operations entitled, *ARSOF 2022*. As a bow to the exercise’s civilian role players, a few vignettes will demonstrate how these patriotic civilians uniquely test the students’ ability to navigate the Human Domain and provide for the overall support of the exercise. Finally, the article offers a snapshot of a Robin Sage cadre team sergeant’s duties and responsibilities, as well as some of the challenges and benefits associated with training SF students.

ROBIN SAGE OVERVIEW

The fictional basis of the Robin Sage scenario occurs in Atlantica, a large island a few hundred miles off the eastern seaboard of the United States. An invasion occurs by the United Provinces of Atlantica against the northern province of the Republic of Pineland, an ally of the United States. As a result, the United States commits to the conflict and obligates forces to help restore the territorial integrity and legitimate government of the ROP. To facilitate a credible backstory to the introduction of Special Operations Task Force-91 into the Pineland theater of operations, members of 1st Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) partnered with the Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Laboratory in 2012 and created a 133-page book, which is distributed to SFQC students, entitled, *Atlantica: A Concise History*. The book covers the history of Pineland, its government, significant events and key persons. It is in the northern province of the ROP that the students will undergo one of their final tests in the SFQC as they infiltrate by various methods to include ground, air and maritime operations, or a combination thereof.

Company D, 1st Battalion, 1st SWTG (A) plans and executes the SFQC CULEX and is overseen by an SF major and sergeant major. The unit is task-organized as a company headquarters, a north and a south field team. Each field team has the capacity to run six student operational detachment alphas and is led by an SF major or captain, chief warrant officer 2 or 3, and a post-SFODA operations master sergeant. The ODAs, comprised of 12-14 students each, are led by two cadre team sergeants, typically an SF master sergeant and a sergeant first class.

The company conducts six Robin Sage iterations annually and the course is currently 30 days in length, with roughly 120-144 students attending per class. While Robin Sage is phase four of the six SFQC phases, it is considered the CULEX for a student striving to earn the Green Beret. The central objective of the course is to take all of the skills learned in the SFQC and apply them to a UW mission set within a non-permissive environment. The future global operational environment is one characterized as a balance of power between state and non-state actors, and less as a fairly predictable pre-9/11, Cold War-era where superpowers competed. Thus, the need for a variety of strategic options, such as UW, should be made available to our nation's senior decision makers.⁰⁴

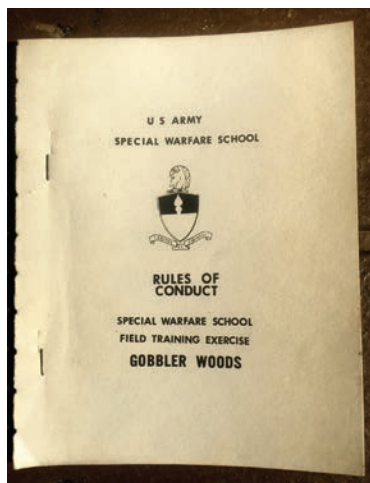
A Green Beret's UW education actually begins in phase one of the SFQC, known as the SF Orientation Course, run by Company A, 4th Battalion, 1st SWTG (A). Following successful completion of Special Forces Assessment and Selection, a student proceeds to SFOC and learns the fundamentals of UW in a classroom environment. To put this introduction to UW education into practice, the SFOC students then serve as members of the guerrilla force that the Robin Sage students work through and with during the field portion of the CULEX. This IUW construct is beneficial for the SFQC students as it provides them with an operational and strategic framework that they will train under for the rest of their time in the course. Moreover, they gain an understanding of the importance of the UW mission set early in their training pipeline.⁰⁵

The Robin Sage exercise is divided into four major parts. The first consists of a series of classes including UW fundamentals, sabotage, subversion, negotiations and cross-cultural communications. The second part of the CULEX occurs at a training location about a mile west of Camp Mackall owned by Oak Grove Technologies, LLC. There, the students conduct their mission rehearsal exercise. During the MRE, the students refine their team standard operating procedures and plan and execute a series of dilemma lanes. Examples include: meet a guerrilla chief, attend a sector command meeting and conduct a key-leader engagement.

The purpose of the MRE is to expose the students to predicaments and altercations that they will encounter in Pineland. The third part of the exercise occurs in the



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01
The Welcome To Pineland Sign has greeted Soldiers vying to become Special Forces for many decades. U.S. ARMY PHOTO

02
A map depicting the territories of the fictional island of Atlantica.

03
The Pineland Resistance Force flag. The PRF is the guerrilla force loyal to the ROP that Robin Sage students work through and with during the CULEX.

04
Atlantica: A Concise History. A 133-page book that covers the history of Pineland, its government, significant events and key persons.

05
Robin Sage traces its roots back to the 1950's when the Special Warfare School conducted Gobbler Woods, a field training exercise.

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detachment's isolation facility at Camp Mackall, where they will conduct detailed mission planning and present a commander's concept brief and a briefback to a guest commander. Finally, the students conduct their 12-day field training exercise in Pineland over a 10,000 square mile area (roughly 1/5th the size of North Carolina), encompassing 19 North Carolina counties and six Congressional Districts. During a Robin Sage class, anywhere from 900-1,150 total personnel (consisting of students, cadre, observers/controllers, contractors, volunteer role players and student guerrilla role players) will maneuver in and around the area of operations.

Key points of the exercise occur at what the cadre refers to as "time warps" which are based on phases four through seven of UW: organization, buildup, employment and transition. These leaps in time help convey to the students that a UW campaign would occur over a much longer period of time than the 12 days allocated in the program of instruction without having to spend additional training time, funds and resources to do so. A caveat to these time warps is that the FTX portion of Robin Sage is an outcome-based training laboratory and very few things happen notionally. The decisions and actions of the students ultimately drive them towards mission success or failure. So, for instance, if the student ODA does not train their guerrilla force on proper emplacement of explosives to sabotage an air defense artillery delivery system, then the guerrillas will not demonstrate any proficiency in that task, regardless of what phase of UW the students are in based on the time warps.



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Throughout the SF CULEX, candid and formal written counseling sessions are provided to each student a minimum of four times from the cadre team sergeants. It is a monumental task for the cadre and critically important for the development of the students. This emphasis on counseling is a vehicle for the "teach, coach, mentor, assess" approach taken by all CTSs. Counseling helps ensure the students have a clear picture of where they stand as the course progresses. The foundation for assessment, beginning in SFAS and continuing throughout the SFQC, lies in the eight ARSOF attributes (integrity, courage, adaptability, capability, personal responsibility, perseverance, professionalism and being a team player). Robin Sage is no exception. Any attribute deficiencies in Robin Sage are identified as early as possible and the student is



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01
Students learn mule packing techniques.

02
An After-action Review is conducted following a mass-casualty event. The Robin Sage exercise requires coordination between many

U.S. ARMY PHOTOS BY
STAFF SGT. JACOB A. BRAMAN

03
A cadre member conducts a performance counseling session during the CULEX.

04
A night airborne infil.

U.S. ARMY PHOTOS



ability to conduct sustained UW, and through the creation of the Office of Special Warfare under the command of U.S. Army Special Forces Command, as well as the redesign of the SF Group 4th Battalions, the force is moving in the right direction.⁰⁹ On the same parallel, the academic underpinning for Robin Sage has and always will be UW, and the mission set nests within special warfare, one of two ARSOF critical capabilities.¹⁰ Furthermore, the SFQC CULEX ties directly into an ARSOF 2022 priority: optimizing special operations forces, conventional forces and joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational interdependence.¹¹

The ARSOF critical capability of special warfare is defined as, “The execution of activities that involve a combination of lethal and non-lethal actions taken by specially trained and educated forces that have a deep understanding of cultures and foreign language, proficiency in small unit tactics, subversion, sabotage and the ability to build and fight alongside indigenous combat formations in a permissive, uncertain or hostile environment.”¹² The conduct of special warfare requires expertise in intangible abilities like relationship

counseled accordingly. This allows for a plan of action to be developed and permits enough time for the student to, hopefully, correct any attribute deficiencies.

A project report published by the Education Support Cell of the Training, Leader Development and Education section, U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, identified that in the past, success in Robin Sage was more about surviving the exercise and not necessarily learning or retaining important elements of UW. The report states that Robin Sage had become more of an “experiential” activity and was not at the “guided experiential” level of learning.⁰⁶ In order for guided experiential learning to occur, “purposeful and deliberate halts will need to be scripted into the lanes to ensure students have the opportunities for discussion and reflection.”⁰⁷ CTSs now take the time for tactical pauses that allow for both the Robin Sage students as well as the IUW student guerrillas to understand and retain what is occurring in their Pineland deployment. These learning halts typically occur at the aforementioned time warps of the ODA’s UW campaign.

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The longer a recurring military training exercise carries on, particularly one specific to a mission as complex as UW, the greater the chance for degradation to its practicality and applicability to real world missions. This can be attributed to the constant changes seen regarding geopolitical constraints, national policy limitations and transnational threats to U.S. security interests.⁰⁸ Considering the amount of time Robin Sage has been in existence, a fair question to pose is, is the SFQC CULEX properly preparing its graduates to overcome the persistent and emerging challenges of the global operational environment as ARSOF continues to move forward in the 21st century? An appropriate litmus test can be found within the pages of ARSOF 2022, the document published in 2013 encompassing the vision and intent of Lt. Gen. Charles Cleveland regarding the future of ARSOF. ARSOF 2022 identifies a gap in the force’s



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building, cultural understanding, adaptive decision making and critical thinking. While in Robin Sage, the students will live, eat, sleep, train and fight with and through their resistance counterparts. The ODA's UW-centric mission becomes a forcing function for the students to exhibit their expertise in tactics, sabotage and subversion because they must advise and assist their guerrilla force in becoming proficient in these areas. If the students are lacking in these capabilities or lack the aptitude to effectively teach these capabilities to their partner force, the ODA's mission is at risk of failing.

As Gen. Ray Odierno, former Chief of Staff of the Army, stated when speaking of SOF, "Conflict is a human endeavor, ultimately won or lost in the Human Domain."¹³ In this context, the Human Domain is about understanding and fostering influence among key persons.¹⁴ Scenarios involving human interaction with various attitudes, education and backgrounds occur constantly in Robin Sage. A student ODA commander might be forced into a discussion with his guerrilla chief and resistance sector commander as to how his detachment will assist with transition following the end of major combat operations. The two might then question the captain's credibility to speak on such matters, and cite the U.S.'s failure to conduct transition properly following Operation Iraqi Freedom. Simultaneously, the weapons sergeant could be discussing means of increasing guerrilla base security with a local gas station attendant who could alert the ODA if UPA vehicles are seen in the area. The communications sergeant might also be speaking with a Pineland radio station employee, determining how resistance propaganda can be broadcasted to assist with recruiting fence-sitters to the resistance force. Scenarios like these happen continually and throughout the exercise, testing the students' ability to communicate cross-culturally, build partnerships and exhibit cognitive problem solving in the Human Domain.¹⁵

A priority for ARSOF is to optimize SOF/CF/JIIM interdependence to "better enable seamless application of combat power across the spectrum of responsibility."¹⁶ Robin Sage has ongoing initiatives that directly link to these three categories. Internally within ARSOF, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Soldiers are integrated into the exercise. They



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provide their respective capabilities briefs to the students during the first week of classes and assist with answering any CA/PO-related requests for information during mission planning. Additionally, PO has aided with integrating information operations into the exercise by creating a series of Pineland newspapers. The newspapers help highlight actions, positive or negative, of the ODA and its guerrilla force, in a manner that remains in line with the spirit of the scenario.

In the past, CF partners from the 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions participated in Robin Sage, mainly in role as the ODAs' guerrilla force or posing as enemy UPA forces. However, the high operational tempo over the last 15 years has diminished CF's role in Robin Sage. Recently, CTSs have capitalized on meaningful opportunities to incorporate CF brethren back into the exercise. Several Robin Sage lanes have helped foster CF interoperability by integrating Infantry platoons, principally from the 82nd Airborne Division, to serve as the spearhead of CF during the transition phase of UW. One example encompasses a combined ODA/guerrilla raid near a UPA airstrip. Following the raid, a platoon of 82nd Infantryman conduct an airfield seizure, representing the introduction of CF into the theater of operations.



SCENARIOS INVOLVING HUMAN INTERACTION WITH VARIOUS ATTITUDES, EDUCATION AND BACKGROUNDS OCCUR CONSTANTLY IN ROBIN SAGE.



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Robin Sage students conduct an illicit weapons negotiation. Scenarios such as this one taking place in a tire store are a common occurrence in Pineland. U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. JACOB A. BRAMAN

02
ODA Meeting with Sector Commander and Guerrilla Chief. U.S. ARMY PHOTO

03
An IUW guerilla renders care to a civilian rolepayer during a mass casualty exercise. U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. JACOB A. BRAMAN

In the joint realm, some CTSs have incorporated U.S. Air Force Tactical Air Control Party Airmen from 14th Air Support Operations Squadron, Pope Army Airfield, into mission planning and through the Robin Sage FTX. This initiative exposes the ODA to working alongside a joint partner. Conversely, the Airmen get a unique opportunity to communicate with aircraft during aerial resupply and lethal operations in a UW training environment.

Robin Sage is also in dialogue with interagency partners through the SF officer detailee program. The intent is for Robin Sage students to receive an interagency capabilities brief focused on UW during the first week of the exercise. The intent is for students to gain basic situational awareness of interagency partners' role in UW, particularly in the early phases leading up to the students' infiltration into Pineland.

Seeking shared security interests and cultivating relationships with partner-nation forces is absolutely key to special warfare.¹⁷ Robin Sage capitalizes on the integration of foreign national partners through a program managed by the command's International Military Student Office. Each Robin Sage class averages six-to-eight international officers and NCOs from such countries as Jordan, South Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Mexico and Colombia, among others. The international students are imbedded on an ODA and serve in the position they would hold based on the military occupational specialty trained in during the previous SFQC phase. They take part in the military planning process and remain with the ODA until the end of the exercise.

CIVILIAN ROLEPLAYERS: THE HEART OF ROBIN SAGE

It is just after 1 p.m. on a busy street in Hoke County, North Carolina. A young stock boy employed at a local market walks into the store's back warehouse to retrieve additional products. The stock boy brushes past a group of three men in the large, dimly lit storeroom. The boy grabs two bags of livestock feed, and quickly returns back to the storefront. Other than a slight smile and a head nod, little acknowledgement is made to the men clearly standing next to a pile of AK-47 rifles, an M240B machine gun, and a half dozen 105mm artillery rounds. One might expect the boy to nervously run to alert authorities and make them aware of the illegal

activity just witnessed. In reality, the boy as well as all of the store's employees are briefed on what training is actually occurring: a negotiation between two students and a role player acting as an illicit gun runner. The students are attempting to purchase weapons for their resistance force in the organization and build-up phases of their UW campaign. In the Pineland scenario, however, the students should key in to the boy's passive and friendly nature and recognize that he is likely a sympathizer to the resistance. This provides believability to the scenario as to why they would be conducting an illicit activity on that particular store's property. Although a relatively simple feature as far as backside support is concerned, the incorporation of the stock boy adds a sense of realism to the exercise that is difficult to replicate in most military training environments. The civilian role players help get the students into the mindset that they are operating in another country and, in turn, help add to the unique nature and profoundness of the exercise.

The spectrum of civilian role players in the exercise extends from salaried independent contractors to middle school-aged children volunteers. One example of the depth of volunteer role players occurs at a mass casualty training event. The scenario is centered on a protest outside a school where students and their families are expressing dissent toward the local authorities. As tempers flare, the police begin firing at the protestors and tossing explosives into the crowd. A few members of

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the ODA's guerrilla force at the rally are injured, and bring as many as 20 victims with varying trauma injuries with them back to the base camp, as government-sanctioned hospitals are not willing to treat them. The ODA has no idea what is in store for them.

Prior to the mass casualty event, the role players meet at the house of Robin Sage volunteer, Patti Freeman. Freeman is highly skilled in medical moulage, the art of creating lifelike bodily wounds to assist in providing shock desensitization and realism to medical professionals in training.¹⁸ Freeman spends the next few hours emplacing fake burns, gunshot wounds and blast injuries onto all of the volunteer casualties.

Following the moulage session, the injured students and family members move by vehicle towards the guerrilla base in groups of three to four persons. Each wave of patients arrives at the G-base with increasingly more severe injuries. With little lead time, the ODA and medically trained guerrillas begin assessing injuries, and treating patients based on level of priority. The role players, particularly the younger children, do their best to exhibit convincing acting skills. One young girl in particular with minor third degree burns is able to draw more medical attention than required due to her uncanny ability to cry on cue. Although the event definitely stresses out the ODA, the primary objective is to test the ODA's medical cross-training, internally and amongst their guerrilla force, as well as validate the medical network the ODA developed in their sector. Following the mass casualty event, the ODA realizes that their base has just been compromised by 20 or so civilians, and must now contend with the decision to remain in place or move to their alternate guerrilla base.

In addition to role playing, civilian volunteers provide use of their private land, which encompasses the vast majority of the property operated on during the CULEX. Additionally, they serve as members of the auxiliary, serving as transportation and intelligence assets to the ODA and guerrilla force of a particular sector. Take Ronnie Parsons (aka "T-Bone") for example. His grandfather allowed the U.S. Army to use nearly 60 acres of his property in the late 1950s; land that is now owned by Parsons and still in use for the SF CULEX today. He recalls observing with absolute astonishment an aerial resupply bundle falling under a parachute canopy from a C-123 aircraft over one of his grandfather's

fields. He attributes that very moment as his motivation to start supporting the exercise into what would become an impressive 58-years of support and counting. As a 9-year-old boy, he served as a member of the guerrilla force, carrying an M1 rifle out on missions which he proclaimed was "better than the Boy Scouts."¹⁹ As a licensed pilot flying a U.S. Air Force U-10, Parsons provided air support to the exercise from 1967-1975, conducting message pick-ups, message drops, resupply bundles and downed pilot missions for students in training. Parsons continues to offer his property for cadre to establish their camps as well as student ODAs to set-up primary and alternate guerrilla bases.

Parsons, the volunteers at the mass casualty scenario and the role player at the market, like so many of the patriots who continually volunteer for the CULEX, do so out of sheer love for their country and military. Without the North Carolina citizens who support the exercise, the quality of training that Robin Sage offers its students would be nowhere near the caliber it provides today.

THE VITAL ROLE OF THE CADRE TEAM SERGEANT

The CTSs are undoubtedly the center of gravity for the Robin Sage exercise. Their experience, knowledge, as well as their creativity, imagination, interpersonal skills and passion for teaching and assessing their future SF brothers ultimately drive the



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Major General James B. Linder (left), USAJFKSWCS commanding general participates in Robin Sage as a role player. U.S. ARMY PHOTO.

exercise. The successful development and sustainment of each of the 12 Robin Sage lanes are directly proportionate to the time and effort expended by the CTSs, and each is given a high level of flexibility and autonomy to do so. A CTS consistently conducts meetings with land owners and learn the personalities of his role player force in order to employ them properly. In essence, that CTS is honing his own UW skillsets in the process. If a CTS fails to maintain rapport with the local population or develop the human and physical infrastructure in the area, then that lane's effectiveness as a training venue will suffer. To do the job correctly, the CTS must build his area complex, a vital subset to the grand scheme of UW. During the tenure of a Robin Sage CTS, he will refine techniques in counseling and mentoring subordinates, an important skill to have as a future SF ODA operations sergeant. Robin Sage CTSs take on an awesome responsibility and carry out their duties to the best of their abilities, recognizing that their efforts are shaping and influencing potential teammates."²⁰


CTSs must be in the grade of sergeant first class or master sergeant and are hand-selected by the company sergeant major. They should be in good standing with the unit they are departing as the company requires a high level of maturity and trust in each CTS. Law enforcement agency coordination and de-confliction is another major part of a CTS's responsibilities, specifically ensuring LEAs are always aware of student movement or lethal operations in a particular area. The company invests in its CTSs by allowing ample time between classes to attend schools such as the Special Forces Network Design Course, the Special Forces Operational Design Course, Special Forces Advanced Reconnaissance, Target Analysis and Exploitation Techniques Course, among others. The intent is for all CTSs returning back to an SF Group be better trained in UW, polished in the military decision making process, well versed in mentoring subordinates and overall a more vital asset to an ODA than they were arriving for their first duty day at Camp Mackall.

CONCLUSION

The Commanding General, USAJFKSWCS, Maj. Gen. B. James Linder, attended the Robin Sage MRE in November 2015. He observed a dilemma involving a member of the resistance pulling out a pistol and threatening to shoot an unarmed non-combatant. The ODA commander was forced to quickly assess and tactfully deescalate the situation before a law of armed conflict violation was committed; an incident serious enough to risk the ODA's ability to work with that partner nation force in the future. As a testament to the validity of the exercise, the CG relayed to the students that he had experienced a situation virtually identical to the one they had just seen. Instead of a training area in North Carolina, his "dilemma" occurred eight months prior while serving as Commander, Special Operations Command Africa. Before departing, the CG left the students and cadre with a powerful message:

YOU WILL RE-LIVE THE SCENARIOS AND DILEMMAS IN ROBIN SAGE FOR AS LONG AS YOU WEAR THAT TAB. IT'S NOT ALWAYS ABOUT RIGHT AND WRONG ANSWERS. IT'S ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES TO THE DECISIONS YOU MAKE. THAT'S ROBIN SAGE.

"You will re-live the scenarios and dilemmas in Robin Sage for as long as you wear that tab. It's not always about right and wrong answers. It's about the consequences to the decisions you make. That's Robin Sage."²¹

Robin Sage is helping to fill the UW gap identified in *ARSOF 2022*, providing trained SF Soldiers to successfully conduct the critical capability of special warfare. Moreover, through ongoing initiatives, the course is helping to build and maintain SOF/CF/JIIM interoperability. The commitment of the Robin Sage cadre, civilians and role players in providing the SF Regiment with elite Soldiers capable of operating in a denied environment is steadfast. Most importantly, the relevancy of Robin Sage in the training of our nation's foremost UW warriors remains intact. 

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OPERATIONALIZING CYBER TO PREVAIL IN THE COMPETITION OF WILLS

BY COLONEL TIM HUENING, U.S. ARMY AND
COLONEL JOHN ATKINSON, U.S. MARINE CORPS

“The conduct of war is fundamentally a dynamic process of human competition requiring both the knowledge of science and the creativity of art but driven ultimately by the power of human will.”⁰¹ – Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication

“Fundamentally, war will remain a contest of wills.”⁰² – U.S. Army Operating Concept

In the wake of a decade plus of war, the nation is attempting to shift its focus to the Asia-Pacific and renew its commitment to a strategy of engagement to prevent war.⁰³ At the same time, the United States must maintain the capacity and ability to respond to crisis and prevail in war. For its part, the Joint Force must have the capabilities, attributes and skills to develop and conduct globally integrated operations.⁰⁴ The planning of these operations must leverage the synergy of a truly joint force in order to generate unified action.⁰⁵ Moreover, history and recent experience teach us that the Joint Force must improve its ability to visualize, understand, and describe the operational environment in order to direct and conduct integrated operations and campaigns. There is no doubt that in a disorderly complex world, the nation will demand more from its instruments of national power, especially its military, irrespective of shrinking budgets and end strengths. In fact, fiscal constraints and force reductions alone substantiate the need for a more efficient, effective and integrated joint force.

There are a number of service and joint efforts underway that will posture the Joint Force and enable it to better link and arrange actions and activities to

protect U.S. interests and achieve national objectives. If successful, these efforts will offer senior civilian leadership a broader array of acceptable approaches to effectively deliver favorable outcomes that contribute to the attainment of strategic objectives. Two efforts with potential synergistic overlap are the Strategic Landpower Task Force and the United States Cyber Command’s initiative to ‘operationalize’ Cyber.

The SLTF is a U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Special Operations Command tri-party effort envisioned to provide an operational description of how Strategic Landpower can contribute to the Joint Force’s ability to more effectively plan and conduct military operations. The SLP initiative is guided by what is commonly referred to as the ‘Clash of Wills’ white paper. This white paper is a seminal document endorsed by the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Commander USSOCOM, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps. The SLTF was initially chartered to, amongst other things, investigate the contemporary strategic nature and qualities of landpower; learn appropriate lessons from the recent past to frame the critical aspects of landpower; integrate a common understanding of achieving

physical objectives that influence human behavior in the formulation/execution of strategy, operational plans and tactical actions; and expand the social sciences dialogue regarding the physical science of warfare's influence on human behavior. Over time, the SLP initiative evolved into a holistic intellectual pursuit transcending landpower. The initiative currently aims to make the Joint Force and DoD more effective instruments of national power.

With this refined, yet more comprehensive approach, the SLTF seeks to re-emphasize the centrality of humans in war and warfare, and examine how the Joint Force thinks about, plans, and executes campaigns. As a first principle, the SLTF postulates that everything the Joint Force thinks and does must be founded on an appreciation of the human aspects of military operations. As a result, two inter-related Joint Concepts, the Joint Concept for Human Aspects of Military Operations⁰⁶ and the Joint Force Integrated Campaigning⁰⁷ spiraled out of SLTF thinking. If properly implemented and embraced, human-centric thinking and a dynamic approach to joint campaigning will allow the Joint Force to plan, direct, monitor and assess integrated operations that shape human decision-making and behavior and deliver favorable operational outcomes.

To this end, the SLTF seeks to identify and collaborate with other joint staff and service efforts that endeavor to better posture the Joint Force. Accordingly, the ongoing efforts to "operationalize" Cyber are of particular interest. This paper examines the confluence of Cyberspace and joint operations within the context of influencing human activity to achieve national objectives. It is intended to be an opening salvo in what the SLTF believes will be a rigorous, forthright, and collaborative examination of what is meant by, and more importantly what is required to, "operationalize Cyber."

Simply stated, without an appreciation for the HAMO, and lacking an operational approach to seamlessly link Cyber capabilities with other domains and functions, the Joint Force will fail to properly "operationalize" Cyber. The corollary, that the Joint Force will never achieve unified action or integrated campaigns without Cyber is also true.

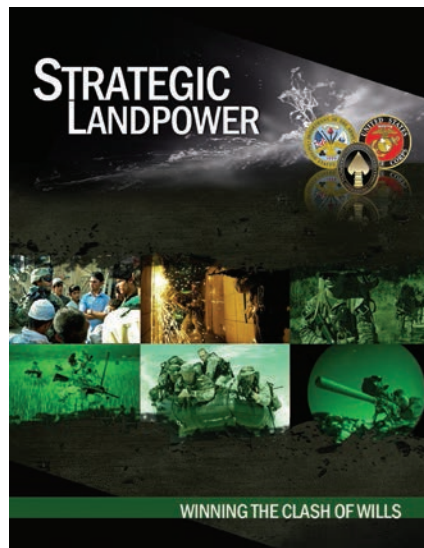
ON TECHNOLOGY AND THE PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF WAR

*"Technology is an enabler. Technology is that aspect of warfare that changes. The human element — war always being a contest of will — is an aspect of the eternal nature of war."*⁰⁸ — Dr. Lani Cass, National Defense University.

A focus of examination for SLP has been the dynamic relationship between human and technological considerations in war and warfare. This examination is informed by reflecting on the nation's post Cold War experience and the Department of Defense's embrace of the ideas offered by the Revolution of Military Affairs. The RMA constitutes an early assessment of the dynamic relationship between the human and technological nature of war the effects of which greatly shaped the U.S. military in the years leading up to 9/11.⁰⁹ In the wake of Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and the overwhelming application and display of American high-tech military might, in keeping with RMA, many of the nation's leaders were convinced that technology had not only changed the character of modern warfare, but also offered solutions to overcome the chaos, uncertainty and other primordial elements of war's immutable nature.¹⁰ Along these lines, Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster recently lamented that advocates of what he called 'the orthodoxy of the RMA' predicted that advances in surveillance, communications and information technologies, when combined with precision-strike weapons, would

overwhelm any opponent and deliver fast, cheap and efficient victories.¹¹ Apostles of the orthodoxy believed that technology enabled the American military to overcome or bypass the human dimension in war, distilling conflict down to a mathematical equation vice a dynamic clash of wills. Recent experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, specifically the failure to understand the human aspects of the operational environment, are tragic reminders, bought and paid for with the blood of American Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines, that Thucydides, Sun Tzu, and Clausewitz were not wrong about the nature of war.

Nonetheless, the RMA drove DoD thinking, processes and policies for decades. Post Cold War budgets and programs were, and continue to be, implemented in a manner that belie a focus on the physical aspects of warfare, and a belief that wars can in fact be won easily and cleanly by way of technical military superiority.¹² Typical investment across the traditional domains — air, land, maritime, and space appear to reflect this thinking. Likewise, operational art has devolved into linear thinking, math-like processes and the rote application of physical capabilities against physical objectives. In fact, this situation caused some to declare that operational art died.¹³ With a few notable exceptions, service and joint doctrine and processes followed suit. The more complex, messy and intangible human aspects of war were set aside, and physical effects were seen as the path-way to operational outcomes.¹⁴ This reliance on technology and processes, when combined with other shortfalls in Strategic Art, has typically resulted in insufficient strategic guidance, a misalignment of ends, ways, and means, wholly military solutions, fleeting military successes and a consistent failure to deliver favorable political outcomes.¹⁵



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Uniformed and civilian cyber and military intelligence specialists monitor Army networks in the Cyber Mission Unit's Cyber Operations Center at Fort Gordon, Ga.
U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY MICHAEL L. LEWIS

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The Strategic Land Power Task Force's white paper commonly referred to as the "Clash of Wills." DoD PHOTO

Lop-sided match ups and victories like Desert Shield and Desert Storm engendered a belief that war had become a clash of technologies. Ironically, while the military outcomes of Desert Shield and Desert Storm were indeed impressive, they obfuscated the shortcomings of American strategy, the misguided discipleship of the RMA and other related initiatives, like Effects Based Operations, that came after. What was lost in the wake of Desert Shield and Desert Storm was the realization that focusing purely on physical targets in order to attain military objectives in the end failed to deliver conditions for sustained political outcomes. The reliance on technology and focus on the physical aspects of warfare within a limited operational context exemplifies a situation where military operations and warfare were confused with strategic objectives and war.

Furthermore, the thinking and by-products of the RMA, when juxtaposed to the Clausewitzian understanding of war, uncovers the broader and more insidious problem. That is, that American RMA operational and strategic thinking and approaches do not reflect a fundamental understanding that war is at its essence a human endeavor, a clash of wills driven by human passions like hatred, enmity, and fear, a competition that emanates from, and terminates in, the minds of men.¹⁶ It is humans that give war and the operating environment operational context. However, it is an understanding of, and a focus on, humans that is both required and lacking across all domains.

This flawed mindset and approach has adversely influenced the formulation of strategy and DoD's thinking and approach to war and warfare. Moreover RMA thinking has impacted how the services pursue their Title X responsibilities to organize, train and equip resulting in Joint Force shortfalls. Despite a National Security Strategy emphasis on engagement and understanding, the military industrial complex is resourced to generate

technical solutions to future challenges. This is troubling as recent and ongoing conflicts reinforce the need to understand the relationship between technology and the human, cultural, and political continuities of armed conflict.¹⁷ Such an understanding is necessary across all domains. This is a cautionary tale for the nascent and necessarily technical Cyber force as it seeks to "operationalize." There is evidence the leadership of U.S. Cyber Command and the service components recognize the danger of only considering the technical and physical aspects of Cyber.

OPERATIONALIZING CYBER

*The moral is to the materiel as three is to one.*¹⁸ — Napoleon Bonaparte

Shortly after taking command of USCYBERCOM in 2014, Adm. Michael S. Rogers identified "properly operationalizing Cyberspace"¹⁹ as USCYBERCOM's biggest challenge. He further articulated, that 'defending networks' is the 'niche' role and means by which the sub-unified Cyber Command will function at the operational level of war.²⁰ The admiral's recognition of the need to "operationalize" Cyber is a positive development, and one that is of interest to operational artists and commanders throughout the wider Joint Force. In fact it is not an overstatement to say that it is impossible to fully employ today's Joint Force without leveraging Cyberspace.²¹ It is

the integration of land, maritime, air, space, and Cyberspace operations that achieves campaign objectives.²²

The possibilities and perils of the Cyber domain are generally understood by military professionals at the rudimentary level. Unfortunately Cyber planning, capabilities development and operational employment are often left to technical experts. This techno-centric expert work is not fully known, understood or overseen by operational planners and commanders. A recent article penned by Brett Williams warned that, "Commanders cannot continue to run the risk of inappropriately delegating key operational decisions because they and their staffs lack an understanding of the (Cyber) domain."²³ Therefore, despite Adm. Roger's effort, the "operationalizing" of Cyber is not merely the purview of USCYBERCOM, service Cyber components or technical experts traditionally assigned to those formations. "Operationalizing" Cyber is a national security imperative that demands the interest, involvement and intellectual effort of the entire Joint Force — especially those who are charged with visualizing, describing and directing integrated joint operations and campaigns. "Operationalizing" Cyber cannot be limited to technological solutions, a singular warfighting function (command and control) or physical operations. What prevents us from taking this approach today is a lack of shared Cyberspace knowledge and an agreed upon operational approach that links



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Joint service members from the U.S. Navy, Air Force and Army analyze a scenario during exercise Cyber Flag. U.S. AIR FORCE
PHOTO BY SENIOR AIRMAN MATTHEW LANCASTER

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Cyberspace missions and actions, and places Cyber activity in the larger context of joint operations. This will prevent the Joint Force from leveraging the capabilities necessary to compete and prevail in the emergent global operating environment subsequently preventing integrated operations and limiting joint force effectiveness.²⁴

The Cyber challenge is similar to the JC-IC and JC-HAMO challenge. The technology focused Cyber force appears to have already strayed from a human-centric understanding of war and military operations and is centered on the technical and physical missions of protecting and defending the nation's networks and infrastructure. Adm. Rogers highlighted the inadequacies of a defensive approach recently testifying a "purely defensive, reactive strategy will be both late to need and incredibly resource-intensive."²⁵ Senator John McCain echoed the admiral's concerns and added, "The failure to develop a meaningful Cyber-deterrence strategy has increased the resolve of our adversaries and will continue to do so at a growing risk to our national security."²⁶ In light of this testimony, it is apparent that USCYBERCOM must take a more proactive, effective, affordable and balanced approach to operations. This would of course include concentrating technical capability on offensive and defensive operations to achieve physical and psychological outcomes that influence human behavior.

Nonetheless, Defense Industry advertisements are an indicator of the persistent power of a false RMA perspective and a defensive approach to Cyber. A recent Northrop Grumman ad extolled the virtue of ubiquitous and dominant technological defense of networks and related physical infrastructure.²⁷ The ad describes a clash of technology with a singular focus on 'things'. There is no mention of humans, human behavior and human decision-making or human will. This is similar to ads seeking investment from the joint and service proponents of other domains – all promote the virtue of technology, the promise of certainty and dominance, and an unwavering focus on physical things, effects and objectives.

Of equal concern, the Cyber force and Cyber domain have become intellectually, organizationally and

IN THE END, IT MUST BE THE HUMAN BEHIND THE KEYBOARD THAT IS THE FOCUS OF ANY DECISIVE CYBER ACTION.

procedurally isolated from the inter-domain and Joint Force planning. This is the result of a reductionist domain-centric approach to joint planning by the broader joint force, that invariably leads to 'stove-pipe' versus integrated solutions. This renders the Joint Force a disjointed force, rather than an integrated Joint Force. In the face of adversaries who operate seamlessly across domains, disjointedness and reductionism will fail to produce unified action or desired operational outcomes.

This domain-centric isolation of Cyber is also driven by the composition of the personnel who comprise the Cyber organizations, most of whom are selected from the communications/signal, information technology and intelligence career fields. Technical expertise is vital for successful Cyber employment. However, experience gained during recent and ongoing conflicts suggest there are limits to the ability of technology to influence human behavior, effect cultural change, and drive political outcomes. The value of Cyber tools resides in their ability to contribute to an integrated campaign within the context of the continuities of armed conflict.²⁸

There is no doubt that networks need to be defended. However, in the context of joint military operations, these activities must be seen as continuing actions conducted to enable unified action simultaneously and in depth across all domains. In the end, it must be the human behind the keyboard that is the focus of any decisive Cyber action, and the action will only be decisive if it is informed by, meaningfully linked to and arranged with other more traditional actions and activities within an integrated joint operation or campaign.

JC-HAMO & CYBER

"The cultural, social, economic, religious and historical considerations that comprise the human dimension of war

*must inform wartime planning as well as our preparation for future armed conflict."*²⁹ — MG H.R. McMaster USA

Lessons learned from the last decade of war reinforce the need to understand social, cultural, physical, informational and psychological issues to influence actors and shape behavior. This understanding not only informs our activities but helps the Joint Force link and arrange military activities to achieve objectives that lead to desired strategic outcomes. The Joint Force is currently reassessing its ability to understand and account for these human aspects of military operations (HAMO) through the development of the JC-HAMO.

The Joint Force must leverage Cyber induced physical and cognitive outcomes more effectively to win the clash of wills. Cyber is one of many operational tools Joint Force planners and commanders must integrate into joint planning, operations, and campaigns. The Cyber Force, like the broader Joint Force, must re-emphasize human behavior outcomes to be effective. It is the integration of land, maritime, air, space and Cyberspace operations, developed in the context of HAMO that will influence human behavior to achieve campaign objectives.³⁰ In this context, efforts to operationalize Cyber and JC-HAMO are inextricably linked, and when understood and considered together provide an important consideration for those examining how the Joint Force should plan and execute campaigns.

JC-IC AND CYBER

*"It is essential to relate what is strategically desirable to what is tactically possible with the forces at your disposal. To this end, it is necessary to decide the development of operations before the initial blow is delivered."*³¹ — Bernard Montgomery

With a human-centric understanding and approach to warfare, including Cyber operations, the Joint Force can

embark on fully integrating Cyber tools, activities and operations into joint operations and campaigns. Moreover, to "operationalize" and integrate Cyber, Joint Force Commanders and planners must effectively link and arrange Cyber tools, capabilities and activities in Joint operations and campaigns. Such outcomes across all domains are exactly the purpose of JC-IC.

Campaign integration is important because our nation's adversaries and competitors operate seamlessly across domains, unbound by arbitrary authorities and boundaries, unconstrained by a reductionist — domain-centric view of warfare, and without legalistic views of whether they are at peace and war. Many state and non-state rivals achieve political, economic, psychological, information and military advantage through well integrated campaigns below United States response thresholds. They have demonstrated their ability to leverage technology, specifically Cyber, to achieve desired outcomes below U.S. response triggers. These rivals excel at offsetting or avoiding U.S. technological advantages while exploiting their advantage, that is U.S. society's ubiquitous dependence on technology. To prevail in or prevent conflict, the U.S. must fully integrate operations into campaigns that are conceived of and conducted in the context of influencing human behavior. The conceptual efforts to

"operationalize" Cyber and the SLTF concept-development efforts must coalesce in common cause.

CONCLUSION

To truly "operationalize" Cyber and integrate campaigns that manifest a full appreciation of HAMO, the Cyber community and broader Joint Force must work together. Linking the efforts of the SLTF and those of USCYBERCOM is an important step towards this goal. The Cyber community, with the assistance of the Joint Force, must render Cyber tools and expertise more accessible. Joint force commanders must insist operational planners understand the capabilities and limitations of Cyber, and develop the skill necessary to apply these tools to the task of changing human behavior. The Joint Force must understand and embrace Cyber as an operational tool, one of many operational tools to be integrated into a dynamic plan or campaign to win in any clash of wills.

It is with an understanding of the clash of wills — not clash of technologies — that the endeavor to 'operationalize' Cyber must begin. This maxim must also serve as the cornerstone of the JC-HAMO and JC-IC development and implementation efforts. Ultimately, if the U.S. is to achieve its' desired political endstates, U.S. strategy and campaigns must acknowledge the

centrality of humans in conflict wherein technical tools are leveraged as means to change the thinking and behavior of humans.

Defending defense networks and enabling command and control is a necessity, but insufficient. The physical and technological aspects of Cyber warfare is not the *raison d'être* of the joint and service Cyber commands, [Cyber's influence on human behavior is]. The Joint Force cannot afford to continue its disproportional focus on technology, systems and physical outcomes. The nature of war is immutable and fundamentally human. The character of the current or future operating environment may be characterized by technology, but the war's outcome will be decided in the minds and behavior of humans. The efforts of the Joint Force and USCYBERCOM to operationalize Cyber into integrated campaigns must be founded in the human aspects of military operations and a fundamental understanding of the immutable nature of war. **SW**

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U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES IN CYBERSPACE

BY COLONEL PATRICK DUGGAN
AND ELIZABETH OREN

Cyberspace is a human space, as dynamic and uncertain as human nature. No longer simply a technical abstraction or man-made domain unto itself,⁰¹ Cyberspace is a growing facet of every-day life that increasingly cuts across all aspects of Special Operations. Cyber is a dynamic space, a global commons of human practice, which embodies the actions, behaviors and decisions of man. Cyber is also an uncertain space; and although, its future impact to our national security is yet to be determined, it is clearly a space where United States Special Operations Forces have an increasing role in shaping the final outcome. Ultimately, Cyber is a human enterprise that empowers and entangles countless global interactions,⁰² and is rapidly becoming a preeminent space where human conflicts, and thus USSOF, must play a part.

CYBERSPACE

The enigma of Cyberspace is in its contradictions. Cyber is both everywhere and nowhere at the same time, casting an invisible, yet powerful influence, which brings both comfort and stress to everyday life. On one hand, Cyberspace helps foster human prosperity by flattening opportunities and improving quality of life. On the other hand, Cyberspace inflames ethnic and religious tensions, sows dissent and causes suffering. It is in these contradictions where Cyberspace is most like human nature, and it is in these same spaces, both challenges and opportunities exist for USSOF.

Cloaking their roles and obscuring their actions, adversaries are increasingly exploiting the shadows of Cyberspace to attack U.S. national security interests. Ranging from lone Cyber-terrorists, to state-sponsored Cyber-units, adversaries use Cyberspace's low barriers of entry, difficult attribution, and lack of clear borders for battle⁰³ to conceal their reckless ambitions. Fortunately, while adversaries may exploit Cyber to strike from the shadows, it is in these same shadows USSOF must pursue, to help illuminate, uncover and counter the growing array of technologically-savvy threats plaguing our nation.

NATIONAL CYBER ROLES

The Commander of the United States Cyber Command and Director of the National Security Agency, Admiral Mike Rogers, recently wrote that "No single entity has all the necessary insight, authorities, capabilities or resources to protect and defend U.S. and allied interests in Cyberspace."⁰⁴ Cyberspace is not just an intelligence or communications thing; it is an 'everybody thing.' This includes the way in which we marshal the talent and intellect of our military, interagency and private sector leaders, to build whole-of-nation strategies to protect the U.S.

The ubiquity of cyberspace means that no single U.S. Agency, Department, or Service Component owns the market on good ideas, so it is imperative that we harness our country's diverse experience, amongst all institutions, to promote ever-adaptive strategies which secure our nation. We must also seek and examine new concepts, processes, and approaches to deal with these dynamic challenges, and each does our individual part, in a collective contribution to our national defense.

⁰¹ A Soldier sets up Low Level Voice Intercept equipment during a cyber integration at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY CAPT. MEREDITH MATHIS

SOFS NATIONAL CONTRIBUTION

Part of SOF's contribution to confronting our nation's cyberspace problems, is asking ourselves how to best harness our own strategic strengths, and do it in a manner which best navigates cyber's dynamic and uncertain human nature. SOF's strategic value for the nation is in its unique small footprint, exercised through a global network of partners, providing persistent engagement and partner enablement, as well as, discreet and rapid response. These same strategic strengths provide new unconventional opportunities and asymmetric options that must be further developed and integrated into our national cyber-strategies.

U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS IN SOF

Whether conducting virtual Foreign Internal Defense to build partner security and capacity, or executing Cyber-enabled direct action to eliminate hostile threats, Cyberspace amplifies "the elemental aspects of what makes a special operation, special."⁰⁵ Meaning, Cyberspace amplifies a DA mission's lethality, precision and discreet nature; while in FID's case, Cyberspace amplifies connectivity, capability and trust.⁰⁶ It is increasingly clear that every USSOF mission must be amplified by cyber so that we can evolve our strengths into new strategic instruments to protect and project our national interests.

SOFS IS DYNAMIC

With every passing day, our hyper-connected landscape seems to produce a new class of threats, more technologically evolved than the last, harnessing the explosion of technology, information proliferation and network connectivity for ambiguous warfare.⁰⁷ This means that "in the not too distant future, every SOF practitioner will be required to understand the basics of Cyberspace, computers and coding; not because they're expected to be programmers, but because they'll need those skills to conduct special operations in an era vastly more interconnected than now."⁰⁸ USSOF must rapidly adapt and evolve, as they increasingly find themselves pitted against tech-savvy adversaries in dynamic situations, where they must employ some of the same Cyber-technologies in unconventional ways. From high-tech to low-tech, and from human-centric to techno-centric, USSOF will employ Cyber-technologies as a means to directly or indirectly strengthen our global network of partners, and amplify our unique capabilities exercised through a wide-array of options.

USSOF will employ Cyberspace as a means to better understand the passions, which drive human action and

behavior, and will use Cyberspace as a vehicle to identify conflicts earlier, seize opportunities to steer and potentially, tamp down violence.⁰⁹ Synthesizing objective technical data with subjective human understanding, USSOF will develop a deeper nuanced understanding of global and regional situations. USSOF will also generate new thinking and unconventional approaches to recruit people to noble causes, and use Cyberspace as a means to engender the positive aspects of human behavior, such as decentralized and participatory action. Using their access, placement and most importantly their influence, USSOF will help build holistic networks, which support national Cyber-strategies, and assist in weighing psychological and technical acts against the competing needs for secrecy and credible action. Just like Cyberspace, USSOF operations are not a monolithic enterprise dependent upon one tightly woven centralized system. Instead, USSOF operations resemble Cyberspace itself, resiliently designed to leverage global networks riding across open architectures.

USSOF can assemble, swarm, disaggregate or even replace one another, without disrupting the rest of the system. As with Cyberspace, USSOF networks are a heterogeneous mix of joint, coalition and other partners whose operations can be scaled up or down to attack and defend human and information networks. Similar to Cyberspace, USSOF operations are not dependent on just a handful of brittle nodes, but operate across vibrant, expansive and living global networks. Most importantly, just like Cyberspace, the true power of USSOF operations are the humans behind them.

SOFS THRIVES IN UNCERTAINTY

In a recent speech, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, stated that Cyber threats to U.S. national security are increasing in frequency, scale, sophistication and severity, and that since 2013, have "bumped terrorism out of the top spot on our list of national threats."¹⁰ Adding that the trend will continue, the DNI underscored the importance of having "the best minds of our nation working this range of cyber problems."¹¹

Making matters particularly acute for USSOF, is that global terrorism and weapons of mass destruction and proliferation perennially top the list of national security threats. This dangerous mix of Cyberspace threats, terrorism and WMD is a volatile brew, and poses serious dangers to the nation, in which USSOF must not fail.

Although these are serious challenges, it is in adversity where USSOF best excel. USSOF is specially trained for ambiguous conflict, and thrive in complex challenges, which do not always lend themselves to obvious approaches.¹² With no clear decisive points or geometries in battle to guide them, USSOF must blaze new trails in an ever expanding wilderness of dangerous

CYBER IS BOTH EVERYWHERE AND NOWHERE AT THE SAME TIME,
CASTING AN INVISIBLE, YET POWERFUL INFLUENCE, WHICH
BRINGS BOTH COMFORT AND STRESS TO EVERYDAY LIFE



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and complex problems. Our national defense requires unconventional approaches to counter unconventional problems, so USSOF will not only employ new cyber-technologies, but more importantly, innovate new concepts and tactics to do it. USSOF will fuse emerging capabilities into time-tested practice to create new solutions and provide new strategic opportunities for the nation.

As an example, envisioning options for future command and control relationships, such as the creation of a Special Operations Command-Cyberspace, as a means to provide national strategic capabilities and specialized expertise no other DoD service can provide.¹³ A SOC-CYBER could enrich perspectives during the development of national cyber-strategies and infuse unconventional insights and asymmetric options during the process.¹⁴ USSOF could also relay observations from the field, derived from their global footprint, to add nuance and context to some of the human-complexities of psychological, cultural and societal dynamics; then, discreetly tie back into ongoing operations.¹⁵ Ultimately, investing USSOF in Cyber-organizations mixes some of the best and brightest U.S. talent, expertise, and the diversity of its spirit is in the best interest of our nation.

KEYS TO A HUMAN SPACE

USSOF operations provide keys to unlocking deeper understanding of human interactions in Cyberspace, and a means to contextualize the sociocultural, political and historical factors which all too frequently fuel strife.¹⁶ Cyberspace provides USSOF new opportunities to leverage culture to build relationships, and deter our adversaries

with a wide array of lethal and non-lethal options. Cultural intelligence equates to influential power¹⁷ and its instrumentality is driven by humans in Cyberspace.

Successfully navigating our hyper-connected world means better understanding its cultural landscape, and requires blending emerging Cyber-technology with unconventional approaches. Using cultural intelligence as an emerging tool, USSOF can better target, influence, degrade and destroy our nation's shadowy adversaries.¹⁸ Whether they operate virtually via social media or through digital communications, an adversary's human networks remain physical, and are susceptible to cross-cultural and transnational targeting. Despite attempts to conceal their actions, USSOF can find points of leverage in the cultural details to influence strategic outcomes with Cyber capabilities.¹⁹ Providing persistent partner engagement is increasingly dynamic, as the convergence of Cyberspace and the physical world cause both partners and adversaries to assume different roles depending on the circumstance.

It is increasingly important to correctly interpret events, information and disinformation, so that USSOF can more accurately influence outcomes in any environment, in any situation, no matter the actor.²⁰ This will require USSOF's unique access and placement, and most of all, their influence, to better understand the increasingly complex cultural cross-sections of human and digital interaction.

Although it is clearly an uncertain world, USSOF will use their cultural expertise in building Cyber partnerships to better assess partner realities, strengths and vulnerabilities²¹ and ensure USSOF provide culturally attuned security assistance. Additionally, USSOF will evaluate the social and economic factors shaping partner

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Joint Service teammates, including conventional and special operations forces, work together during a NetWar exercise hosted at the U.S. Army's Cyber Center of Excellence in Fort Gordon, Georgia. U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. TRACY J. SMITH

circumstance, to ensure they provide culturally compatible means and solutions for partners to solve their own problems, once USSOF depart. USSOF will also use Cyberspace to understand better their partners' cultural values, and examine where and how our nation's values square against the enduring viability of potential relations²² and better calibrate U.S. support accordingly.

Cyberspace is rapidly changing the world's cultural landscape and will increasingly challenge and redefine traditional concepts of society and national identity.²³ The proliferation of Cyber-technology pressures cultures to change, and requires USSOF to keenly monitor cultural trends, as cultural dynamics steadily shape world events and competing perspectives. Cultural intelligence is a part of USSOF's approach to understand better evolving cultural dynamics, and Cyber is the indispensable space to harness new strategic opportunities for the nation.

CONCLUSION

The contradictory nature of Cyberspace will continue to shape our lives, as it does our national security. Just like the human's Cyberspace emulates, Cyber is dynamic and uncertain, and presents both serious challenges and unrealized opportunities for USSOF and our nation. The U.S. must continue to work together to confront our vast Cyber challenges by increasing our collective institutional efforts, as well as, challenging our respective organizations on ways to improve what we individually bring to the table. Although Cyberspace's future impact on national security is yet to be determined, it is increasingly clear that USSOF will have an expanding role in shaping

the outcome. Ultimately, Cyberspace is a human space; and, it is exactly where USSOF needs to be. **SW**

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Joint service members participate in exercise Red Flag at the Combined Air and Space Operations Center-Nellis at Nellis Airforce Base, Nev. The exercise integrates advanced operational and tactical air, space and cyber training in a live, virtual, constructive environment. U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY SENIOR AIRMAN BRETT CLASHMAN



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01



COUNTER-MESSAGING -DAESH-

Interagency Fellowship Program
support to State Department

BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN WILLIAMS

"We're stepping up our efforts to discredit ISIL's propaganda, especially online. The United Arab Emirate's new messaging hub - the Sawab Center - is exposing ISIL for what it is, which is a band of terrorists that kills innocent Muslim men, women and children. We're working to lift up the voices of Muslim scholars, clerics and others - including ISIL defectors - who courageously stand up to ISIL and its warped interpretations of Islam." — President Obama, September 29, 2015⁰¹

OVERVIEW

Over the last 12 months, I have implemented both my military education and 14 years of experience within Irregular Warfare⁰² as a Department of Defense Strategic Planner participating in the Commanding General Staff College Interagency Fellowship program with the State Department's Global Engagement Center. On March 14, 2016, President Barack Obama mandated the creation of the GEC. Executive Order 13721 marks an intensification of the United States Government's efforts to combat violent extremism on the information battlefield. The GEC leads the coordination, integration and synchronization of government-wide activities directed at foreign audiences abroad for the purpose of countering violent extremism and terrorism. The GEC empowers governmental and nongovernmental partners to speak out and provide alternatives to Daesh's nihilistic vision.

Daesh uses propaganda campaigns to portray life under their rule as utopian, but inhabitants living in Daesh-controlled territories endure oppressive rule and economic hardship. While Daesh pushes videos of its members enjoying lavish meals in looted homes in Mosul, the local population is suffering. Citizens are in urgent need of essential services, including the markets are barren and the universities are abandoned.

Many foreign fighters believe that by fighting with Daesh they are helping to protect Muslims and Islam. However, the majority of Daesh's victims have been Muslims. Further, Daesh continues to exact its evil upon innocents of all faiths – targeting religious institutions and clergy members, including those of Islam, which it claims to protect and defend.

Research and anecdotal media reports suggest that Daesh influences and radicalizes young people – both in Muslim-majority coun-

tries and the West - by tapping into a sense of alienation, loss, loneliness, perceived and real injustice and/or altruistic intentions. In some Muslim-majority countries, corruption, economic necessities and a lack of infrastructure and community support facilities are also factors. Recruitment of women in Western countries also focuses on romance.

While Daesh refines and changes its messages depending on the group targeted for recruitment, the sense of alienation, the desire to do good and be part of something larger than themselves, and a need for companionship and camaraderie figure prudentially in all messaging.

STRUCTURE AND APPROACH

To drive an integrated approach, the GEC draws on an interagency staff from the Departments of Defense, Justice, Homeland Security and Treasury, the Small Business Administration, the National Counterterrorism Center, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Intelligence Community, the Broadcast Board of Governors and USAID to implement new approaches to disrupt extremist propaganda. The GEC's work

⁰²
A reformed Islamic extremist tells an international gathering of government and military cybersecurity professionals how radical Muslim groups use the internet and social media to recruit and finance their operations. DoD PHOTO BY KARLHEINZ WEDHORN

02

falls into five core areas: Network Engagement; Analytics; Resources; Content/Production; and Partnership (see figure 01).⁰³

The GEC is a government-funded interagency organization entrusted to decipher and break the Daesh brand online by empowerment and amplification of locally credible voices that can change the perception of violent extremist groups and their ideology among key demographic segments.⁰⁴ The solution is not obvious and success is surely not guaranteed; however, disruption of the existing violent extremist messaging apparatus diminishes the influence of extremist organizations.

Counter-messaging opportunities are achieved through the GEC's thematic campaigns that promote collaboration under a common, multifaceted and long-term strategy to degrade and defeat Daesh's propaganda. Thematic campaigns amplify Daesh's inability to govern, failure to provide healthcare, inadequate living conditions, the dishevelment of the family unit and *exposing the true nature of the organization*.⁰⁵ Counter-messaging as a line of effort within the National Strategy to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant is critical in the prevention and intervention stages of the life cycle of radicalization. However, State Department communicators are encouraged to share both content and product in order to empower foreign government partners and third party validators for their use in counter-Daesh messaging and outreach. Examples of Thematic campaigns are the Defectors Campaign, Counter Terrorism Bureau/Counter Violent Extremism Office and GEC Youth UNGA Side Event.

DEFECTORS CAMPAIGN: UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (UNGA) SIDE EVENT

The GEC conducted an information awareness campaign in Arabic and English on Daesh Defectors to raise awareness of the utility of former-Daesh members in messaging against Daesh, September 21-25, 2015. The campaign's goal was to highlight the backgrounds, reasons for joining and defecting and methods of defection of Defectors. The campaign's overall objectives were to help raise awareness about the utility of defector testimony in the fight against ISIL, to discourage additional recruits from joining,

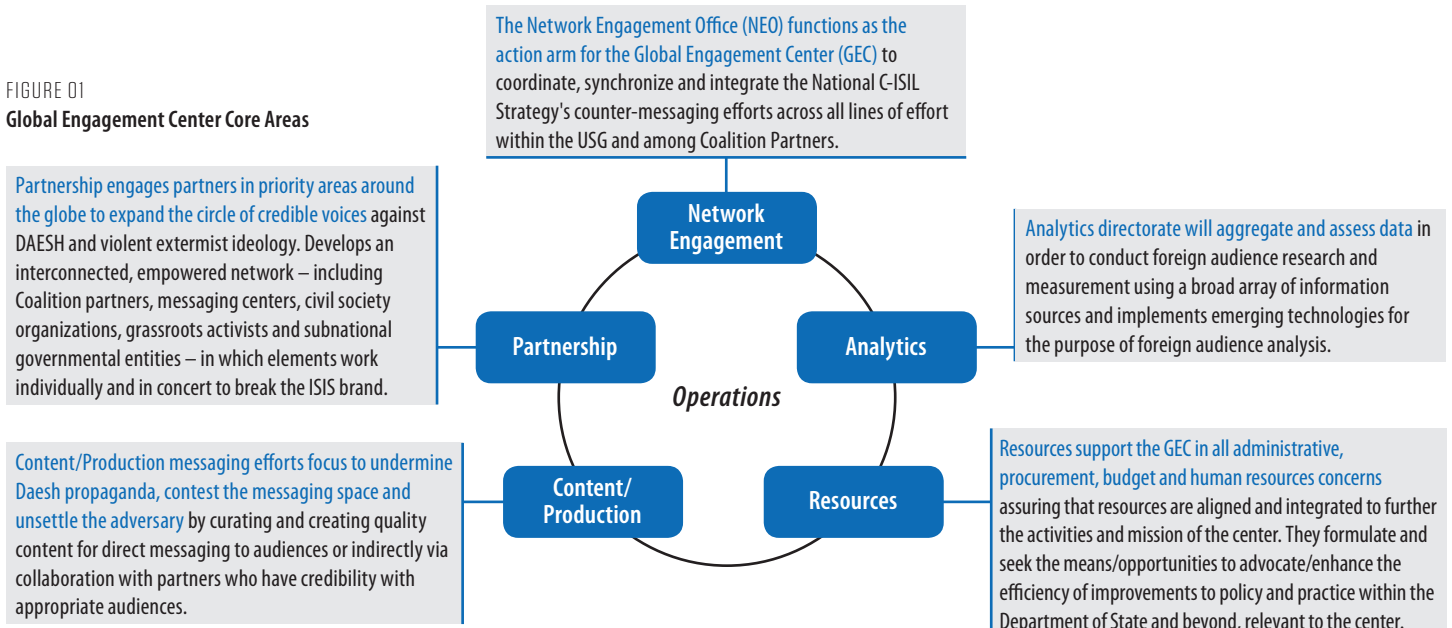
potentially encourage additional Daesh Defectors to speak out to the media and encourage the media to seek them out and compel UNGA and top-level officials to discuss Defectors during the Countering Violent Extremism conference and draw attention to Defectors' stories.

#WhytheyleftDaesh highlights the trend of increasing numbers of Daesh members who have become disillusioned after recognizing that the harsh reality of life under Daesh falls short of their recruiters' promises. The GEC has long seen the utility in amplifying the stories of former Daesh members who have managed to escape, through a variety of means, and have returned to non- Daesh controlled territories. These first-hand accounts expose the harsh reality about what life is like under Daesh- and GEC is working to amplify them accordingly.

Former Violent Extremists' testimonies provide some of the most effective narratives against extremist recruitment efforts. Three topline narratives are: 1) some fighters join because Daesh claims to be the defender of Muslims. In reality, it is massacring them, including Sunnis, whom they claim to protect; 2) many fighters joined Daesh to help individuals they viewed as suffering, only to become disillusioned once they realize they have exacerbated the situation and hurt more people; and 3) upon arrival to the so-called "caliphate" most foreign fighters immediately begin to miss home once they realize the lands of Daesh are not what their recruiters claimed it would be.

Overall, the Daesh Defector Campaign was a worthwhile first attempt at coordinat-

FIGURE 01
Global Engagement Center Core Areas



ed messaging for the GEC, yielding notable accolades throughout. The overall discussion of defectors saw more than 9,400 mentions during the campaign period, while the campaign hashtags saw 3,339 mentions and roughly 5 percent of which was from USG properties. Twitter saw the most activity during the campaign, accounting for 88 percent of the total conversation, including supporting Tweets from high profile users like the United Kingdom's Prime Minister David Cameron. Facebook was the second most popular platform, though with only 354 mentions, it lagged far behind Twitter. The discussion surrounding Daesh defectors was mentioned in 897 news articles and saw positive commentary from several notable journalists, such as Christiane Amanpour and Jake Tapper (via Twitter). The campaign itself, as well as GEC, was mentioned in 30 articles over the course of the campaign.⁰⁶

One of the areas of success worth mentioning was the media coverage generated about defectors during this time frame. The news angle for most stories was the release of the defectors report by the London-based International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence. Most stories highlighted that the number of defectors is increasing and the reasons for defecting include: quality of life under Daesh, the killing of other Muslims, not wanting to be suicide bombers, action/heroism goals not met and corruption and infighting among Daesh.

CNN's "Amanpour" show interviewed ICSR's Peter Neumann, who highlighted these topics, as well as discussed how these defectors could become credible voices to deter potential recruits from joining Daesh. He also discussed how difficult it is for people to leave Daesh-held territory and return to their hometowns. He estimates the 58 interviewees represent hundreds who left but do not want to go public for legal, safety or cultural reasons, as well as people who want to leave Daesh but have not found a way to do so. He also discussed sexual abuse issues related to women in Daesh-held territory. The interview was approximately five minutes and posted to CNN's website.

CT/CVE AND GEC YOUTH SIDE EVENT ON CVE ON THE MARGINS OF THE 2016 UNGA

In the September 2015 UNGA side event on CVE, Search for Common Ground and the Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor entered into an agreement with the overall purpose to co-host the Global Youth Summit on Building Resilience to Violent Extremism. SFCG designed this event to empower young leaders to expand their efforts to counter, prevent and build resilience to violent extremism in their communities through approaches that respect differences and build on commonalities.

CT/CVE and the GEC will build on the momentum of last year's event by holding an additional youth event on CVE, which will be complementary to the high-level event coordinated by the EU. CT/CVE and the GEC will tailor this year's side event to Youth Ministers and delegates and will encourage them to share experiences on what has worked in their countries on community engagement, building resilience, addressing violent extremism and how they have worked together to prevent and counter violent extremism. The youth side event will feature tangible examples of government-youth collaboration on CVE initiatives. Youth officials and their civil society or community counterparts would discuss their efforts – and associated challenges and results – in a roundtable with the CVE Deputy Coordinator, the Special Advisor for Global Youth Issues and a tech sector entity that has developed relevant CVE programs with youth worldwide.

CONCLUSION

The GEC is designed to be as agile and adaptive as our adversary. When fully armed with new authorities, personnel and cutting-edge technology. Again, the GEC is charged with coordinating, integrating and synchronizing all government communications directed at foreign audiences abroad used to diminish the influence of violent extremists.

When fully operational, the GEC will comprise staff from the Departments of Defense, Treasury, Justice, State, Homeland Security and the Intelligence Community. Working across these agencies, the center is identifying efficiencies and opportunities in the messaging space, particularly with the Department of Defense and the Intelligence Community.

The GEC has pivoted from direct online engagement to partner-driven messaging and content. While the U.S. government has a good message to tell, we are not always the most credible voice to tell it. Instead, there is an abundance of credible and diverse voices across the Middle East, Europe and Africa—governments, NGOs and civil society groups—that's the future in leveraging the Countermessaging battlespace.⁰⁷ 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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COMBAT DIVING IN SPECIAL WARFARE

BY CAPTAIN SACHARY GRIFFITHS

The views presented are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the Defense Department or the U.S. government.

On July 9, 2014, a video of Hamas divers infiltrating to attack Kibbutz Zikim in Israel spiked to more than half a million views on YouTube.⁰¹ Diversionary mortar fire suppressed Israeli defenses as wet-suited divers flowed through the low-ground in rebreathers with ready weapons. Now, consider Hamas' March 29, 2004 raid. Two 18-year-olds — in wetsuits and flippers — died outgunned on the beach.⁰² Though the 2014 attack was unsuccessful, Hamas' adaptation is clear.

Israel is taking this innovation seriously. *The Algemeiner* reported in late 2014 that Israel deployed the PointShield system to spot divers 500 meters offshore.⁰³ However, Hamas' divers have not been deterred. Last May, *The Jerusalem Post* reported that the Israel Security Agency and Nitzana border guards intercepted 40 wetsuits being smuggled into Gaza.⁰⁴ This innovation is not confined to paramilitary organizations; drug smugglers and other nefarious groups are operating underwater.

Meanwhile, Special Forces Underwater Operations struggles to stay above the Special Warfare Center and School's cut-line. Recent changes to SFUWO — the proposed underwater advanced infiltration course and the return of equipment testing authority — will improve our maritime infiltration capability. SFUWO's future divers will still be great Green Berets with the same haircuts, the same short-shorts and same equipment as those divers memorialized on my barracks room walls. Twin-80s will crush them and they'll wheeze through the LAR-V. But while they rehearse subsurface swims to resistance linkups, insurgent groups are reinventing combat diving on the cheap. Infiltration isn't enough.

SFUWO was established 52 years ago to train Green Berets in subsurface infiltration. Diving has proliferated and its time to expand beyond infiltration: Let's train combat diving advisors.

The equipment is out there. On May 8, 2008, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam claimed responsibility for destroying a Sri Lankan supply ship. At 2:20 a.m., a Sea Tiger suicide diver punched a large hole in the 60-meter ship's hull, sinking it at anchor in the Trincomalee Naval Station.⁰⁵ *Jane's Navy International* reported in 2009 that the Sea Tigers were hand fabricating four submarines and diving with modern rebreathers.⁰⁶ These capabilities began at home, where the Sea Tigers built a capable irregular navy by leveraging off-the-shelf equipment and local expertise.

Basic human capacity exists in tourist diving guides. The Professional Association of Diving Instructors reports there are certified instructors in 190 countries.⁰⁷ Even Somaliland boasts the Maan-Soor Hotel, a five-star diving resort.⁰⁸ With these trainers, and the penetration of dive shops into coastal areas, future naval insurgents, like the Sea Tigers, have the raw material they need.



01

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

The opinion department is intended to promote professional discussion amongst the force. If you disagree with the contents of this article you may submit a rebuttal article to the *Special Warfare* editor at specialwarfare@socom.mil. Submitted opinions may be run in future editions of *Special Warfare*, or posted on our website. As always, opinion articles on any topic relevant to the force are welcome for submission at any time.

01

A SFUWO student emerges from the water in an LAR-V rebreather. U.S. ARMY PHOTO

02

SFUWO students prepare to jump into the pool during training with "Twin-80" tanks on their backs. U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY THOMAS K. FITZGERALD

03

SFUWO students train underwater with the LAR-V rebreather. U.S. ARMY PHOTO



02

Maritime insurgents have the raw material — but make basic mistakes. Hamas and the Sea Tigers both innovated from weakness, fabricating equipment and refining tactics. However, deadly missteps like Hamas' choice to spring a daytime assault show that irregular groups would benefit from expert advice. Guerrillas need to run messages, reconnoiter, cache equipment and even destroy 60-meter ships. They do not need high-end dive capabilities, but irregular combat divers with Green Beret training could turn the tide on a repressive regime.

Training indigenous forces is our competitive advantage. The Special Forces are unconventional warriors, borne from advising resistance groups in World War II. Lieutenant General (Retired) Charles Cleveland codified our return to first principles with *Army Special Operations Forces 2022* and *ARSOF Next*. Our underwater operations should support efforts to win in the Human Domain.

Some might expect the SEALs to do this, but it's not their job. At-sea rescues of Richard Philips from the Maersk Alabama and stealthy swims to shore against Al-Sha-

bab militants show the SEALs at their best: masters of high-end diving and seaside direct action. While their mission includes developing partner capability, the Special Forces are the nation's choice for irregular trainers. Give us high-end diving; let us train irregular forces.

There are three steps to getting this started:

First, we should study how diving impacts irregular conflicts. Rather than the narrow mission of subsurface infiltration, SFUWO should produce the Regiment's experts in maritime insurgency and foreign internal defense.

Then, we should validate this concept by training diving candidates to be our Sea Tigers in an unconventional warfare Joint Readiness Training Center rotation. A successful rotation would validate this concept like the Louisiana Maneuvers validated modern combined arms before World War II.

Simultaneously, we can test and field foreign equipment. The world doesn't dive the LAR-V and twin-80s. With the recently restored testing authorization at SFUWO, we should prepare our Green Berets by experimenting with Russian IDA-71 and AVM-12-K, the French Amphora and other common rigs. Prepare our Green Berets by packing the prep stations with foreign equipment.

Diving has changed. Let's adapt. **SW**

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Captain Zachary Griffiths, a Special Forces officer, is a Masters of Public Policy candidate at the Harvard Kennedy School, and a graduate of the United States Military Academy.



03

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