



Tip OF THE Spear

United States Special Operations Command
MacDill Air Force Base, Florida

February 2022

Sgt. 1st Class
Christopher Celiz

Master Sgt.
Earl Plumlee



Two Special Operations



Forces Soldiers awarded Medal of Honor



United States Special Operations Command



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Tip of the Spear

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Thomas Jefferson Award Winner

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(Cover) In a ceremony at the White House on December 16, 2021, three Medals of Honor were awarded to Soldiers who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan – two of them posthumously. President Joe Biden awarded Medals of Honor to Master Sgt. Earl Plumlee and the families of Sgt. 1st Class Alwyn Cashe and Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Celiz. Photo illustration.

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U.S. Special Operations Command - Africa



Human rights as an operational necessity

By U.S. Army Maj. Andrew Caulk
Special Operations Command Africa

We recognize international Human Rights Day Dec. 10, in remembrance of the UN adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. At Special Operations Command Africa, we strive to uphold human rights in all we do alongside our partners across the continent. We focus on protecting human rights not just because it is the right thing to do, but also because doing so makes us more effective over the long term in countering the

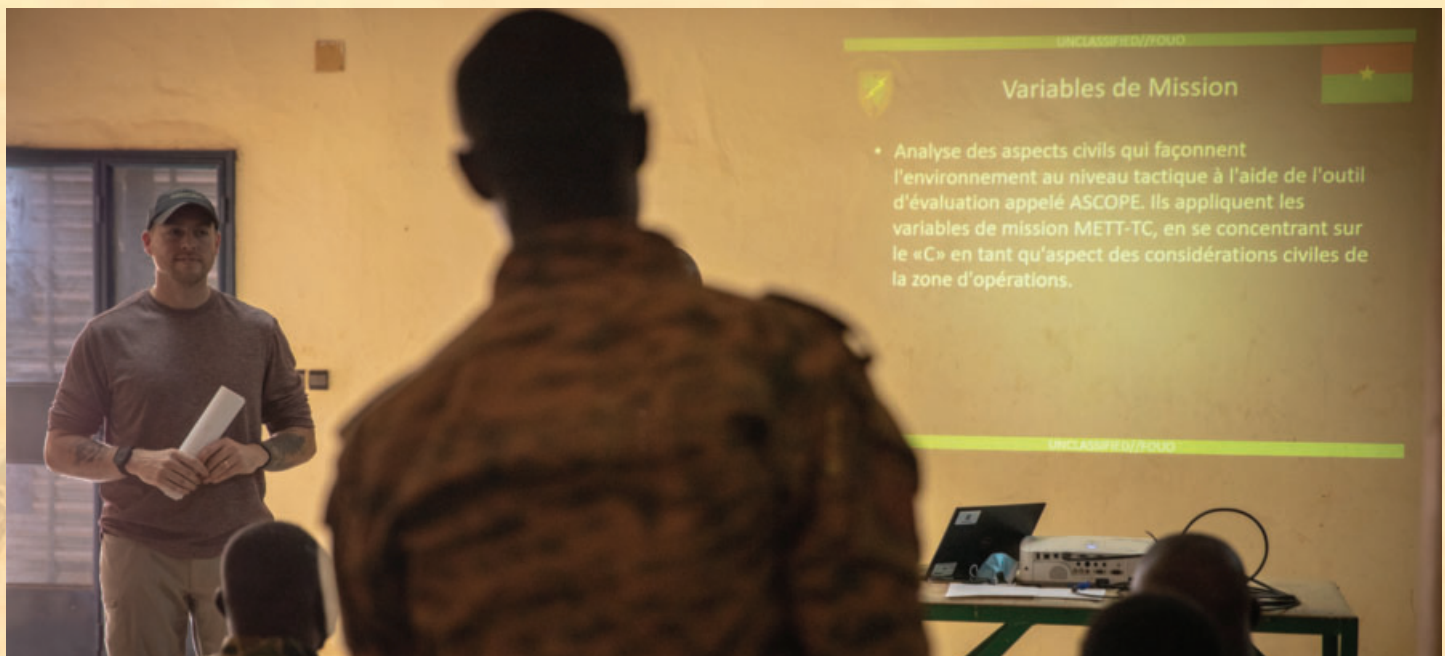
These ideas of rights, credibility, and effectiveness are why we enforce standards of human rights – both for ourselves and when engaging with partners.

forces of chaos such as violent extremists and malign actors.

Successful campaigns require military forces to uphold international and human rights laws. If they do not, those forces lose credibility and then combat

effectiveness. War, sadly, is a human endeavor and not simply a contest of weapons and technology. Therefore, to be successful, we must maintain our honor and reputation as a credible force.

These ideas of rights, credibility, and effectiveness are why we enforce standards of human rights – both for ourselves and



U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Parker VanDeVenter, assigned to Civil Affairs Team 142, Delta Company 91st Civil Affairs Battalion, teaches a Civil-Military Operations class to Burkinabe soldiers in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, Feb. 19, 2021. CMO are activities of a military force to minimize civil interference on and maximize civil support for military operations. CMO is conducted in conjunction with combat operations to become a central part of a military campaign in counter-insurgencies. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Miguel Pena.



Burkinabe soldiers in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, receive a Civil-Military Operations class Feb. 19, 2021. CMO are activities of a military force to minimize civil interference on and maximize civil support for military operations. CMO is conducted in conjunction with combat operations to become a central part of a military campaign in counter-insurgencies Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Miguel Pena.

when engaging with partners. In any training we provide, one of the earliest lessons covered is the law of armed conflict, which helps protect human rights. During our annual exercise, Flintlock, we incorporate lessons on human rights, the law of war, due process, and civil engagement as part of our overall approach to countering extremism.

While no country or force can claim perfection in protecting human rights, we absolutely expect accountability when those rights are violated.

While no country or force can claim perfection in protecting human rights, we absolutely expect accountability when those rights are violated. Throughout our own history, we have failed numerous times. Conflict is confusing and sometimes people choose poorly – but that does not excuse those choices. Regardless of the reason, we have processes in place to hold accountable bad actors and bad processes in accordance with international law. With our partners, we have the same expectation.

Many of our partners across Africa face instability and violent extremism. Some international bad actors and extremist groups advocate for an unrestricted

approach to suppress violent extremism. We advise against listening to these uninformed and short-term approaches. Military action alone cannot defeat violent extremism. While safety and security are important factors in combating terrorism, governance and prosperity are even more important. Those two conditions can only exist under a credible and stable society led by a trusted government – trust built by credible security forces under the government's control.

On this international Human Rights Day, SOCAFRICA salutes our partners across the continent as they fight on the front lines against violent extremism on behalf of the global community. In this fight, they are also the front line in protecting human rights. In their service, they will be faced by difficult choices and may choose poorly from time to time.

However, our sincere hope is that they hold themselves accountable, learn from their mistakes, and continue to be our strong partners as we fight together to make our citizens' future a safer place.

We thank all our partners across Africa. It is an honor to serve alongside you.



U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Parker VanDeVenter, assigned to Civil Affairs Team 142, Delta Company 91st Civil Affairs Battalion, interacts with a Burkinabe soldier in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, Feb. 19, 2021. CMO are activities of a military force to minimize civil interference on and maximize civil support for military operations. CMO is conducted in conjunction with combat operations to become a central part of a military campaign in counter-insurgencies. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Miguel Pena.

U.S. Special Operations Command - Central



First Marine selected as SOCCENT's senior enlisted leader

*By U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Jesula Jeanlouis
Marine Forces, Special Operations Command*

Master Gunnery Sgt. Andrew D. McCurry is the first Marine to be selected as the command senior enlisted leader of U.S. Special Operations Command Central and the second Marine to be selected as the senior enlisted leader for a Theater Special Operations Command. Master Gunnery Sgt. Jerome N. Root served as the first Marine CSEL for U.S. Special Operations Command South.

“Being selected to serve in a nominative CSEL position was something I strived to achieve,” said McCurry. “To serve as the first Marine to represent the Marine Corps as the command senior enlisted leader at Special Operations Command Central is an honor, and I feel very humbled to have this magnificent opportunity.”

A senior enlisted leader acts as an advisor to the commanding officer; as the unit's senior most noncommissioned officer, they serve as the link between the commander and the enlisted service members under their charge. As the CSEL, McCurry will be able to advise the commanding officer on all matters regarding special operations that include issues regarding welfare, readiness, morale, proper utilization of forces and progress within the USSOCOM enterprise.

“The most effective way I can give back to the Marine Corps is through the illumination of my experiences and exposures within the SOF enterprise while simultaneously looking for opportunities to enhance service and SOF integration,” said McCurry. “Given my past and current position, I have the chance to share SOF ideas and perspectives while simultaneously bringing the Marine Corps' assets viewpoint to certain situations.”

Being selected as the CSEL for a USSOCOM command is among the highest positions an enlisted Marine Raider can obtain external to the Marine Forces Special Operations Command due to the limited number of positions available within USSOCOM. To be



Master Gunnery Sgt. Andrew D. McCurry assumes responsibilities as the U.S. Special Operations Command Central Command Senior Enlisted Leader, Aug. 6, 2021. McCurry is the first Marine to be selected as the CSEL of SOCCENT and the second Marine to be selected as the senior enlisted leader for a Theater Special Operations Command. Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Shannon Bowman.

considered for selection as a CSEL for USSOCOM, you must first serve a successful tour as the senior enlisted leader in an O-6 level command, graduate from the Joint Special Operations University Summit and hold a Special Operations Forces identification code or Military Occupational Specialty.

“SOF, by its nature, is inherently joint,” said McCurry. “A task force normally comprises all branches of services, from other SOF organizations, conventional forces, and sometimes allied partners. What makes Marine Raiders unique to the SOF enterprise is our Marine ethos and understanding. Although some might consider that cliché, it is no secret that Marines are known for their attention to detail and dedication to their mission.”

Prior to being selected as CSEL, McCurry was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment in 2002 after completing embassy duty. In June 2006, he was screened and selected for duty at MARSOC. McCurry has held billets such as the senior enlisted advisor of Marine Raider Support Group and the command senior enlisted leader for the Special Operations Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve.

“Every Marine Raider came from somewhere in the Marine Corps,” he continued. “That means he/she must have proven themselves as a highly competent NCO or officer before even attending selection. Consequently, we get seasoned well-rounded Marines before they even attend SOF-specific training. This is the core foundation of a Marine Raider, which

makes us unique.”

McCurry has deployed all over the world including deployments in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Inherent

Resolve. McCurry also holds a Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership and Master of Science in Strategic Leadership with honors from the University of Charleston.

“Being a CSEL as a Marine Raider is a mixture of science and art,” McCurry concluded. “Our experiences and culture allow us to apply both [science and art]

effectively and appropriately. Thus, we provide the commander the opportunity to capitalize on our Marine background while still gaining years of SOF experience.”

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— Master Gunnery Sgt. Andrew D. McCurry



Master Gunnery Sgt. Andrew D. McCurry accepts the flag symbolizing him becoming the U.S. Special Operations Command Central Command Senior Enlisted Leader, Aug. 6, 2021. McCurry is the first Marine to be selected as the CSEL of SOCCENT and the second Marine to be selected as the senior enlisted leader for a Theater Special Operations Command. Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Shannon Bowman.

U.S. Special Operations Command - Europe



Special Operations Command Europe announces establishment of forward deployed headquarters in Albania



A U.S. Army Green Beret assigned to 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) prepares Albanian Special Forces soldiers for close-quarter-battle drills, Albania, July 23, 2021. Joint combined exchange training enhances interoperability with partner nations and strengthens military readiness, teamwork and joint confidence while promoting peace and stability in Europe. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Devin J. Andrews.

Courtesy Story
U.S. Special Operations Command Europe

As part of an ongoing effort in enhancing Special Operations Forces capabilities as a keystone for regional stability, U.S. Special Operations Command Europe has made the decision to locate a forward-based SOF headquarters, on a rotational basis, in Albania. The location of the forward HQ in Albania will provide increased interoperability with our Albanian allies, important access to transportation hubs in the Balkans and greater logistical flexibility.

Albania remains a strong NATO ally and the U.S. enjoys a strong relationship with the Albanian government and Ministry of Defense, which makes the placement of a forward HQ in the allied nation a natural fit. Plus, this location greatly reduces travel times and increases flexibility of both special operations and conventional forces in the region. This would not be possible without the tremendous support of the Albanian government and the professionalism of the

Albanian military.

“The ability to rapidly move and train within the Balkans, in close coordination with other allied and partner forces, made Albania the best location for this effort,” said Major General David H. Tabor, commander of Special Operations Command Europe. “Albania remains an

important NATO Ally and a valued security partner, both regionally and globally.”

SOCEUR plays an important role in demonstrating U.S. commitment to our allies and partners in the Balkans and this effort is being conducted with the full support of the Albanian government and remains a tribute to the professionalism of the Albanian military. Through ongoing training and close cooperation, U.S. SOF provides an important link

between our allies and partners in the region, thereby enhancing regional stability.

SOCEUR is uniquely postured to galvanize our relationship with allies and partners to counter malign influence, build interoperability, rapidly respond to emerging threats and if necessary, defeat aggression.

The ability to rapidly move and train within the Balkans, in close coordination with other allied and partner forces, made Albania the best location for this effort. Albania remains an important NATO Ally and a valued security partner, both regionally and globally.

*Major General David H. Tabor,
commander of Special Operations
Command Europe*



A U.S. Army Green Beret assigned to 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) observes close-quarter-battle drills conducted by the Albanian Special Forces, Albania, July 21, 2021. Joint combined exchange training enhances interoperability with partner nations and strengthens military readiness, teamwork and joint confidence while promoting peace and stability in Europe. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Devin J. Andrews.

U.S. Army Special Operations Command

Three Soldiers awarded Medal of Honor at White House



By Joseph Lacdan
Army News Service

During a White House ceremony Dec. 16, 2022, President Joe Biden awarded three American Soldiers with the Medal of Honor. Sgt. 1st Class Alwyn Cashe and Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Celiz were honored posthumously with the medal, while Master Sgt. Earl Plumlee received the award in person.

Cashe earned America's highest military honor for actions in Iraq more than 16 years ago. On Oct. 17, 2005, in the middle of the night and with limited visibility, he rescued six of his troops and an Iraqi interpreter from a burning Bradley vehicle. Even while flames engulfed him, he continued to return to the vehicle until all his troops had escaped.

In Afghanistan, Celiz earned the Medal of Honor for his selfless actions on July 12, 2018. During that assignment, he stood between enemy fire and fellow U.S. troops and allies as they carried a wounded ally to safety.

Both Cashe and Celiz would later succumb to injuries sustained while in combat.

During a mission in Afghanistan on Aug. 28, 2013, Plumlee rescued and defended fellow Special Forces teammates as insurgents invaded a forward-operating base's perimeter in a calculated attack. For his actions there, he too was honored with the medal.

"Today we honor three outstanding Soldiers whose actions embody the highest ideals of selfless service," Biden said. "We also remember the high price our military members and their families are willing to pay on behalf of our nation."

Biden praised Cashe for his selflessness and dedication to the Soldiers he served with. The Florida native is the first African American to receive the Medal of Honor since the end of the Vietnam era. His widow, Tamara, accepted the medal on her husband's behalf.

As a platoon sergeant in the 3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry



President Joe Biden presents the Medal of Honor to Tamara Cashe, widow of Sgt. 1st Class Alwyn Cashe, during a White House ceremony on Dec. 16, 2021. Cashe was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for actions of valor during Operation Iraqi Freedom while serving as a platoon sergeant with Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, in Salah Ad Din province, Iraq, on Oct. 17, 2005. Photo by Laura Buchta.

Division, Cashe was in command of a Bradley vehicle during a night patrol near Samarra, Iraq. During that expedition, an improvised explosive device struck his vehicle.

"The patrol [team] was still taking enemy fire but Cashe thought only of his fellow Soldiers trapped in the troop compartment," Biden said. "He pushed his own pain aside and returned to the burning vehicle and pulled four Soldiers free ... His love for his Third Infantry Division ran deep. No Soldier is going to let be left behind on his watch."

The Bradley erupted in flames, and Cashe, drenched in fuel, pushed through the fire to rescue his fellow Soldiers and an Iraqi interpreter. Although Cashe had burns on 72% of his body, he refused medical attention until he carried all his troops to safety. Cashe would later succumb to his injuries at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas.

"Alwyn Cashe was a Soldier's Soldier — a warrior who literally walked through fire for his troops," Biden said.



President Joe Biden presents the Medal of Honor to Katherine Celiz, [left] widow of Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Celiz, and their daughter, Shannon, during a ceremony at the White House on Dec. 16, 2021. Celiz was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for actions of valor during Operation Freedom's Sentinel while serving as a battalion mortar platoon sergeant with Company D, 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, in Paktiya province, Afghanistan, on July 12, 2018. Photo by Laura Buchta.

Near the end of his fifth deployment in July 2018, Celiz led a special operation to clear an area of enemy forces and prevent future attacks in the Paktia Province of Afghanistan. Suddenly a large contingent of enemy forces attacked his unit.

In response to the surprise attack, Celiz immediately went to a heavy weapons system to defend team members from machine gun and small arms rounds. Realizing that the enemy fire prevented his team from mounting a counterattack, the Soldier from Summerville, South Carolina, used his body as a shield while firing his rifle to defend fellow troops as they assisted a critically wounded ally.

“The sergeant knew his time was critical to get his wounded teammate loaded and treated,” Biden said. “So he once again, knowingly and willingly, stepped into the enemy’s crosshairs.”

After a medical helicopter lifted off to carry the wounded to safety, enemy fire struck Celiz. Instead of seeking medical attention, Celiz waved the helicopter off, ignored his wound, and stood between the aircraft and enemy bullets. Celiz later died of his injuries.

The president lauded Celiz for his courage against insurmountable odds. He presented the medal to Celiz’s wife and daughter.

“His legacy lives on in the lives he saved, the teammates he mentored, and the memories he made with his beloved wife, Katie, and especially with their precious daughter, Shannon,” Biden said. “Thank you for sharing your dad with our country, Shannon — we will never forget

the debt that we owe you and your whole family.”

Then-Staff Sgt. Earl Plumlee was already an experienced veteran with years in the Marine Corps when he deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in April 2013.

While serving as a weapons sergeant assigned to Charlie Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), at Forward Operating Base Ghazni, enemy insurgents tore a 60-foot crevice into the wall of the FOB.

Plumlee and five Special Forces Soldiers raced toward the opening on two vehicles. After using his body to shield his driver from enemy fire, Plumlee repeatedly engaged multiple enemy targets, using only his pistol at times. At one point, the force of an enemy detonating a suicide vest pushed Plumlee into a wall.

“Bullets flew by -- sometimes only inches away, and time and again, Staff Sgt. Plumlee closed with the enemy,” Biden said. “[On] multiple occasions during the fight the insurgents detonated their vests right in front of him; at one point hurling him into a wall and injuring his back.”

Ultimately, Plumlee led American and Polish Soldiers in a counterattack to defeat the insurgents. He also rescued and treated a wounded American Soldier.

“Now-Master Sergeant Plumlee, this recognition has been too long delayed for you and your family,” Biden said. “And no one will ever forget how you sprang into action when the enemy attacked our base. I’m grateful for your continued service and dedication to the country.”



President Joe Biden presents the Medal of Honor to Master Sgt. Earl Plumlee at the White House on Dec. 16, 2021. Plumlee was awarded the Medal of Honor for actions of valor during Operation Enduring Freedom while serving as a weapon’s sergeant with Charlie Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), near Ghazni, Afghanistan, on Aug. 28, 2013. Photo by Laura Buchta.

U.S. Army Special Operations Command

Northern Strike “Ice bath:”

Military, local emergency responders team up for extreme hypothermia training



Massachusetts Army National Guard teamed up Jan. 24, 2022, with local first responders from Muskegon, Roscommon, Crawford and Grand Traverse counties to perform intensive hypothermia training at Lake Margrethe near Camp Grayling, Michigan. The event took place during Northern Strike 22-1 (Winter Strike), a National Guard Bureau-sponsored exercise held Jan. 21-30, 2022, with participants from several U.S. states and partner forces at Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center and Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center, Michigan, which together comprise the National All-Domain Warfighting Center. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. David Kujawa.

*By U.S. Air Force Capt. Andrew Layton
Michigan National Guard*

Special Operations Forces from the U.S. Army’s 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Massachusetts Army National Guard, teamed up Jan. 24 with local first responders from Crawford, Grand Traverse, Muskegon and Roscommon counties to perform intensive hypothermia training at Lake Margrethe near Camp Grayling, Michigan. The event took place during Northern Strike 22-1 (“Winter Strike”), a National Guard Bureau-sponsored exercise held Jan. 21-30 with participants from several U.S. states and

partner nations at Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center and Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center, Michigan, which together comprise the National All-Domain Warfighting Center.

“This rigorous training scenario instills the skill and mental tenacity required to survive one of the most dangerous scenarios posed by Arctic conditions: full submersion into a frozen lake,” said Scott Martzke, emergency management program coordinator for the Michigan Army National Guard. “This event also spotlights the vital importance of emergency management programs and the ability for emergency managers from multiple

agencies to work together and support agency planning, training, and exercise needs.”

During the two-hour training window, participants plunged through a pair of six-foot by six-foot holes in the ice, remaining in the water to ensure breathing control and focus before recovering from the lake on their own. Participants then moved to the shoreline where they began post-exposure procedures to prevent injury. These included application of high-quality cold weather gear and proper techniques to manage body heat and perspiration.

“This Northern Strike ice training was a unique opportunity for our divers and ice rescue personnel to participate in extreme cold weather training, to share information and experience, and to learn and coordinate efforts in a rare collaboration of specialists,” said Roscommon County Undersheriff Benjamin Lowe.

The training, referred to by participants as the “ice bath,” was overseen by survival and winter warfare instructors from the U.S. Army and the Swedish Air Force. A total of sixteen personnel took part.

“The ‘ice bath’ training was a great opportunity for the Northern Michigan Mutual Dive Teams to come together for a training scenario,” said Lt. Chris Oosse, Grand Traverse County Sheriff’s Office. “The training gives us an understanding of each team’s manpower, equipment and capabilities. We are proud to share our cold weather rescue and survival knowledge and experience with our military forces.”

The NADWC encompasses nearly 148,000 acres of training area and is frequently used by law enforcement and emergency management agencies in addition to military personnel from across the Department of Defense and partner nations. Winter Strike and the NADWC both serve as a cost and time-effective way for units to train in extreme cold weather situations.

“This training was invaluable for the first responders. Ice training usually does not include being able to witness participants that are not in any type of protective gear. The training exposed the first responders to the way a person reacts during a cold-water submersion and the initial cold shock effects,” said Deputy John Yax, Muskegon County Sheriff’s Office. “Our ice instructors will be able to take this knowledge forward when they teach and train in the future. The training was also a perfect platform to share and build



Special Operations Forces from the U.S. Army’s 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) Massachusetts Army National Guard teamed up Jan. 24, 2022, with local first responders from Muskegon, Roscommon, Crawford and Grand Traverse counties to perform intensive hypothermia training at Lake Margrethe near Camp Grayling, Mich. The event took place during Northern Strike 22-1 (“Winter Strike”), a National Guard Bureau-sponsored exercise held Jan. 21-30 with participants from several U.S. states and partner forces at Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center and Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center, Michigan, which together comprise the National All-Domain Warfighting Center. Photo by U.S. Army Capt. Joe Legros.

cooperation and teamwork strategies between multiple agencies.”

“The Ice Bath event at Camp Grayling will supply the needed visuals that will help educate and prepare responders in the event that a situation like this ever does occur,” said Doug Pratt, Crawford County emergency management director. “Trainings such as these prepare participants to safely and effectively respond to rescue and recovery incidents on and through the ice, as well as in, on and around cold water. This event will give agencies the ability to pre-plan, so they have the practical skills, self-awareness and resources available to help save lives.”

In addition to enhancing our nation’s defense and readiness capabilities, the Northern Strike exercise series also serves as an important boost to the local economy. It brings an average of \$30 million to Michigan’s economy annually in military pay, travel, and local spending in northern Michigan.

“We’ve never done anything like this in these conditions at Camp Grayling before, with participants from the military and our local emergency management services working together for mutual benefit,” said U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Lee Fuller, Northern Strike safety director. “The ‘ice bath’ event is a true win-win because it enhances both military readiness and the National All-Domain Warfighting Center’s connection to our surrounding communities.”

U.S. Army Special Operations Command

Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company trains with Special Forces during exercise Sage Eagle



By Walter Ham
20th CBRNE Command

A U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company trained with Special Operations Forces at White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, during exercise Sage Eagle, Jan. 24 – 31, 2022.

Army EOD technicians from the Fort Bliss, Texas-based 734th Ordnance Company (EOD) integrated

with Fort Bragg, North Carolina-based 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) Soldiers during ground assault and air assault training missions.

According to a Special Forces operations sergeant, the EOD company bolsters the lethality and flexibility of the Special Forces teams.

“EOD provides a significant capability to our Operational Detachment Alpha teams throughout our exercise evaluation,” the sergeant said. “The level of



Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians from the 734th Ordnance Company (EOD) trained with 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) Soldiers at White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, during Exercise Sage Eagle, Jan. 24 – 31, 2022. The Fort Bliss, Texas-based 734th EOD Company is part of the 3rd EOD Battalion, 71st EOD Group and 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command. Courtesy photo.



Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians from the Fort Bliss, Texas-based 734th Ordnance Company (EOD) integrated with Fort Bragg, North Carolina-based 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) Soldiers during Exercise Sage Eagle at White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, Jan. 24 – 31, 2022. The 734th EOD Company is part of the 3rd EOD Battalion, 71st EOD Group and 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command. Courtesy photo.

importance is substantial as it provides the detachment an additional capability to conduct operations without degrading the detachment's organic personnel."

The 734th EOD Company is part of the 3rd EOD Battalion, 71st EOD Group and 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command. From 19 bases in 16 states, Soldiers and civilians from the Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland-headquartered 20th CBRNE Command confront and defeat the world's most dangerous hazards in support of joint, interagency and allied partners.

From the rear on Fort Bliss to the tip of the spear overseas, Soldiers from the 734th EOD Company have supported operations in the U.S. Army Europe Africa area of responsibility in 2020 and deployed to Iraq in 2018. The company currently has a platoon serving in the U.S. Africa Command area of operations.

When assigned to support domestic explosive mitigation missions, the 734th EOD Company responds to military munitions found in Arizona, New Mexico, nine counties in West Texas and four international ports of entry.

Captain Helvey R. Mackenzie, the commander of the 734th EOD Company, said his EOD Soldiers began training for the exercise during a Special Operations Forces Support Training course conducted by the 71st Ordnance Group (EOD) on Fort Hood, Texas. In August, the entire company also attended an advanced marksmanship course.

"The course was taught by a professional shooting instructor who has over 20 years of experience in special operations and instantly improved their marksmanship abilities," said Mackenzie, a native of Louisville, Kentucky. "The Soldiers continued to push the limits of their training."

An Afghanistan veteran who has served in the U.S. Army for eight years, Mackenzie said Exercise Sage Eagle improved the ability of his EOD technicians to support Special Operations Forces during large scale combat operations.

"This exercise allows them to integrate with the Operational Detachment Alpha teams they will serve alongside," said Mackenzie. "Building these relationships early is crucial due to the inherent danger of our profession and supporting Special Operations Forces. They will create and adapt to their tactics, technique and procedures allowing them to provide better support. This increases lethality and effectiveness of the teams executing their mission."



An Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal technician from the Fort Bliss, Texas-based 734th Ordnance Company (EOD) integrated with Fort Bragg, North Carolina-based 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) Soldiers during Exercise Sage Eagle at White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, Jan. 24 – 31, 2022. Courtesy photo.

U.S. Army Special Operations Command 3rd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) participates in Sage Eagle 22-2



U.S. Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) and Security Forces Airmen from the Air Force Reserve Component conduct vehicle convoy operations during Sage Eagle in White Sands, New Mexico Jan. 19, 2022. Sage Eagle is designed to assist Special Forces battalions on validating subordinate units on pre-mission training by focusing on foreign internal defense. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Kacie Benak.



Naval Special Warfare Command

Naval Special Warfare celebrates 60th anniversary of SEAL teams



Courtesy Story

Naval Special Warfare Command Public Affairs

Naval Special Warfare Command rang in the New Year with a celebration of their own as this month marks sixty years since the establishment of the first SEAL teams.

Recognizing the need for an increase in special forces and unconventional warfare during the Vietnam War, President Kennedy directed the Secretary of Defense to increase and reorient U.S. Special Forces and unconventional warfare units in a speech to Congress, May 25, 1961.

“Our nation’s Naval commandos celebrate the 60th anniversary of the SEAL teams this week with President John F.

Kennedy’s order to establish SEAL Team 1 and 2 in January 1962,” said Rear Adm. H.W. Howard III, commander, NSWC. “We’re reminded of the legacy that set our standard and the heroes whose shoulders we stand upon today.”

Within eight months, preexisting Underwater Demolition Teams provided the manpower required to establish the first SEAL teams at Naval Amphibious Base (NAB) Coronado, California, and NAB Little Creek, Virginia, Jan. 1, 1962. Their mission was to conduct unconventional warfare, counter-guerrilla warfare and clandestine operations.

“As we urgently adapt and innovate to meet new threats and missions of greater complexity and risk, we

honor the stewardship, integrity, grit and gallantry that the founding members of our community demonstrated in their service,” said Howard. “In marking this milestone, Naval Special Warfare also celebrates our authentic and timeless team – a team anchored on earned trust, candor, creativity and resilience – a humble team with an ironclad commitment to the nation and all we serve.”

The Naval Special Warfare community’s history pre-dates the establishment of the SEAL teams by twenty years. In August 1942, the Amphibious Scouts and Raiders (Joint) and the Special Mission Naval Demolition Unit were established at Amphibious Training Base Little Creek, Virginia, to perform specific missions during Operation Torch – the allied

invasion of North Africa – in November 1942.

“Our community is built upon the shoulders of the warriors who came before us,” said Capt. David Abernathy, commodore, Naval Special Warfare Group 1. “The high standards, unique

capabilities, strength and diversity found across the NSW community today is a direct reflection of those first SEALs who paved the way.”

Captain Donald G. Wetherbee, commodore, Naval Special Warfare Group 2, said that throughout the community’s 80-year history, naval commandos engaged in operations from the beaches of North Africa and Normandy, the islands of the Pacific, Korea and Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, to countless other areas of the world – on land and under the sea.

Our nation’s Naval commandos celebrate the 60th anniversary of the SEAL teams this week with President John F. Kennedy’s order to establish SEAL Team 1 and 2 in January 1962. We’re reminded of the legacy that set our standard and the heroes whose shoulders we stand upon today.

— Rear Adm. H.W. Howard III

“Today’s SEAL teams, along with other components of Naval Special Warfare, represent a unique ability to access denied environments, providing scalable kinetic and non-kinetic effects that set the conditions to undermine adversary confidence and provide diplomatic leverage in competition, and higher end options in crisis and conflict,” said Wetherbee. “At the same time, the incredible leadership, cognitive attributes and character of our people remain the same as they did from day one of our community’s birth. I’m truly humbled to have the privilege of working with the men and women of Naval Special Warfare every day.”

From Scouts and Raiders, Naval Combat Demolition Units, Operational Swimmers, Underwater Demolition Teams, and the Motor Torpedo Boat Squadrons of World War II to now SEALs, Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen and special development groups, Naval Special Warfare is a

complex and humble community who is proud of its warfighting heritage.

NSW commands will celebrate this milestone all year long by hosting events and ceremonies, as well as releasing stories and social media posts that highlight the rich history of SEAL operators to honor NSW’s proud warfighting heritage, give insight into how special operators integrate with the fleet for distributed maritime operations, and highlight the capabilities NSW assets bring to the strategic competition.

Since 1962, Naval Special Warfare has been the nation’s premier maritime special operations force – a highly reliable and lethal force – always ready to conduct full-spectrum operations, unilaterally or with partners, in support of national objectives, and uniquely positioned to extend the Fleet’s reach, delivering all-domain options for Naval and joint force commanders.

CELEBRATING



60

YEARS OF THE

NAVY SEAL TEAMS

Naval Special Warfare is celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the SEAL Teams this January. Since 1962, Naval Special Warfare has been the nation’s premier maritime special operations force – a highly reliable and lethal force – always ready to conduct full-spectrum operations, unilaterally or with partners, in support of national objectives, and uniquely positioned to extend the Fleet’s reach, delivering all-domain options for Naval and joint force commanders.

Air Force Special Operations Command



2021: AFSOC's year of innovation

By Air Force Special Operations Command Public Affairs

An aircrew with the 492nd Special Operations Training Group Detachment 2, Hurlburt Field, Florida, conducted the palletized munitions platform's first live-fire test from an MC-130J Combat Talon II for the Rapid Dragon program, Dec. 16, 2021, over the Gulf of Mexico.

Air Force Special Operations Command's year of innovative projects started with the creation of mission sustainment teams and leapt to the conceptualization of an amphibious capable MC-130J concept. These pathfinding efforts pave the way for a ready and relevant force of future warfighters.

The final demonstration of the palletized munitions platform showcased a new capability for mobility aircraft that gives any airdrop-capable cargo aircraft the ability to retarget and employ standoff munitions en masse.

"Rapid Dragon is one of our pathfinding efforts that showcases the speed of capability development when the

right teams are partnered together, combined with a rapid iterative design process that builds, tests and refines prototypes as fast as possible throughout the year," said U.S. Air Force Maj. Ryan Pinner, chief of pathfinding and innovation for AFSOC. "We started 2021 by airdropping 15,000lb steel boxes to identify the best parachute configurations during the Emerald Warrior exercise in March. Following a total of 15 flight demonstrations on three different aircraft, we sunk our target on the Eglin Overwater Test Range before the end of the year."

Adding palletized munitions to an aircraft designed as a multi-mission combat transport and special operations tanker enables combatant commanders to increase the number of platforms available to put adversary targets at risk.

"As the weapon system goes back into design to incorporate mixed loads and future weapons, I look forward to integrating this capability with the downrange combatant commands in the near future," said Pinner.

The live-fire exercise is a result of a pioneering partnership between the Air Force Strategic Development



A rendering of an amphibious modification to an MC-130J Commando II is shown here. Air Force Special Operations Command and private sector counterparts are currently developing a Removable Amphibious Float Modification for the MC-130J, allowing the aircraft to take off and land in bodies of water. Courtesy photo.

Planning and Experimentation Office and AFSOC, as well as U.S. Special Operations Command Detachment 1, the Naval Surface Warfare Center-Dahlgren, Standoff Munitions Application Center, Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control, Systima Technologies, Safran Electronics and Defense, Parachutes USA and R4 Integration, Inc.

Earlier in the year, the 27th Special Operations Mission Support Group, Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico, stood up three mission sustainment teams comprised of 60 members who train, operate and deploy together.

“This team trains together, learning operational functions of each other’s career fields and bond together establishing a family-type relationship to deploy in support of Special Operations Forces elements,” said U.S. Air Force Maj. Justin Lukso, chief of plans and integration with AFSOC. “They don’t just speak the lingo of their own [Air Force Specialty Code], but also of those other career fields they train alongside within their SOF force generation cycle as a member of the MST.”

Having a variety of career fields working as one allows AFSOC to incorporate faster movement and sustainment during contingency operations.

“An MST provides the capability to establish, sustain and retrograde from a forward operating base while simultaneously supporting up to three contingency locations and enabling command and control, and mission generation,” said Lukso. “This is incredibly valuable in keeping adversaries guessing and maintaining unpredictability while competing on a global scale. The ability to effectively support SOF operations with a minimal footprint at multiple locations provides a competitive advantage.”

During the Air Force Association 2021 Air, Space and Cyber Conference, AFSOC announced the development of the MC-130J Combat Talon II Amphibious Capability. The removable amphibious float modification allows improvement of the aircraft’s global reach, and survivability of the aircraft and Air Commandos.

“The MAC helps the Air Force and [U.S. Special Operations Command] create cost-effective and complex dilemmas for our adversaries, particularly with runway independence for the Joint Force and our allies,” said



A Deployed Aircraft Ground Response Element Airman assigned to the 27th Special Operations Mission Support Team provides security during a 27th Special Operations Wing operational readiness exercise at Dugway Proving Grounds, Utah, March 22, 2021. The Mission Support Team concept provides a way forward in building small, scattered teams capable of operating independent of main operating bases. Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Vernon R. Walter III.

We need distributed operations. Opening seaborne operations vastly expands options in Joint Operations Areas beyond what adversaries can easily address, which is highly valuable from both conventional and special operations perspectives and logistics under attack requirements.

— Lt. Col. Joshua Trantham

U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Joshua Trantham, deputy chief of science systems, technology and innovation division with AFSOC. “We need distributed operations. Opening seaborne operations vastly expands options in joint operations areas beyond what adversaries can easily address, which is highly valuable from both conventional and special operations perspectives and logistics under attack requirements.”

As the battlefield changes, so will AFSOC as it continues to ‘path find’ new operational concepts and technologies for the Air Force while aligning experimentation efforts with the Joint SOF enterprise.

“We are accelerating change within the command to ensure we are the AFSOC that is needed in the future,” said U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Eric Hill, deputy commander of AFSOC. “These innovative examples demonstrate our ability to turn fast and create new capacity out of existing capability. I am proud of the accomplishments we’ve made this past year and look forward to the many pathfinding efforts our Air Commandos will bring to the future fight.”

Air Force Special Operations Command



Cyber Commandos offer unique capability to joint force



Senior Airman Icy Walley, 919th Special Operations Communications Squadron radio frequency technician, connects the antenna cable to a high frequency whip antenna at Duke Field, Florida, Nov. 7, 2021. Cyber professionals like Walley use the equipment to network over satellite communications for long distances. Photo by Michelle Gigante.

By Michelle Gigante
919th Special Operations Communications Squadron

The ability to communicate freely and readily over a secure network is becoming more and more important for combatant commanders in today's world as technology progresses.

To leverage this capability, the warfighter relies on

cyber professionals like those at the 919th Special Operations Communications Squadron to provide seamless communication and agile support in rapidly changing environments.

"This is the only communications squadron in the Air Force Reserve that directly supports special operations," said Maj. Angela Shalduha, 919th SOCS commander.

There are two sides of the mission, Shalduha described—the base support provided to Duke Field day-in



Senior Airman Kimberly Nelson, (left) 919th Special Operations Communications Squadron radio frequency technician and (right) Master Sgt. Cole Watts, 919th SOCS cyber systems operations technician, configures a communications network system at Duke Field, Florida, Nov. 1, 2021. Airmen in the 919th SOCS continually train to maintain skills using video teleconferencing equipment, voice, data, video as well as intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance services. Photo by Michelle Gigante.

and day-out and the other side of supporting Air Force Special Operations Command.

Airmen in the 919th SOCS continually train to maintain skills using video teleconferencing equipment, voice, data, video as well as intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance services. For example, the cyber commandos use broadcast systems at exercises and deployments for downloading commercial and military satellite video feeds.

“Our Airmen continually deliver command and control capabilities at every request,” said Chief Master Sgt. Timothy Thoner, 919th SOCS special missions flight superintendent. “In order to meet this demand, our Citizen Airmen have to coordinate time away from their civilian professions and personal lives to enable the success of exercises and contingency operations around the globe.”

The team conducts cross utilization training to maintain strategic capabilities for contingency operations around the globe. The squadron uses a strategic approach to maintaining unit readiness by deploying equipment and people to support exercises for joint task force efforts throughout the year.

“The partnerships we’ve developed with other Guard, Reserve and active duty units make it possible for us to train at locations around the world,” said Thoner.

Recently, 919th SOCS Airmen provided computer access, as well as phone lines and satellite radio networks

to connect four geographically separated command elements throughout a two-week Air Force exercise, “Rally in the Rockies.”

The exercise was a multi-day training exercise in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. It involved a scenario designed to test the abilities of Air Force Reserve units to execute rapid global mobility missions in challenging, contested scenarios.

“In the past year, we have had members deliver this unique capability in support of 12 exercises across the country,” said Thoner. “Our support to these exercises as well as overseas contingency operations demonstrates 919th SOCS Airmen are always up to the task.”

Many 919th SOCS members have volunteered for training opportunities across the country in the past year and many are Traditional Reservists who volunteer to enhance their individual readiness.

“It is always exciting when we go out to the field because it offers us an opportunity to try new things,” said Senior Airman Kimberly Nelson, 919th SOCS radio frequency technician. “In each case, we are not only enhancing our readiness skills but also building relationships and collaborating throughout the Air Force and even across the Department of Defense.”

Nelson has participated in more than 10 different exercises around the United States in the last two years.

“We are always looking for more opportunities to support AFSOC missions and exercises,” said Shalduha. “There are a lot of very unique missions in AFSOC and we see the experiences our Airmen gain as invaluable steps to maintaining the same capabilities as our active-duty counterparts.”



Senior Airman Kimberly Nelson, 919th Special Operations Communications Squadron radio frequency technician, checks the configuration of a data satellite at Duke Field, Florida, Oct. 14, 2021. The satellite can provide high speed data downloads for special operations missions and gives deployed commanders the ability to communicate around the globe. Photo by Michelle Gigante.

Air Force Special Operations Command



Combat Aviation Advisors participate in airdrop competition

By Nicole King
919th Special Operations Wing

The luxury of readily available gear and resources is not always a reality for Combat Aviation Advisors working with partner nations in remote locations. These unique situations have led CAAs to find innovative ways to help partner nations accomplish their missions with resources and budgets that are realistic for them.

One way CAAs have been innovating is by using

improvised parachute bundles for aerial delivery. While trained riggers normally build bundles with specific materials, improvised bundles can be made from locally sourced items on a smaller budget.

“We have built bundles using water bottles for crush materials where that was the only available material we could find,” said Master Sgt. Christian Becker, a 711th Special Operations Squadron CAA. “Basically, this whole process is using what you have to maximize the benefit for the mission.”



A C-145A Combat Coyote drops a test sand bag at Duke Field, Florida, Dec. 3, 2021. The airdrop was the final part of a full day of training on building, loading and aerial delivery of improvised parachute bundles. Photo by Michelle Gigante.



Master Sgt. Aran Nelske, 711th Special Operations Squadron loadmaster, organizes improvised parachute bundles on a C-145A Combat Coyote before heading to a drop zone at Duke Field, Florida, Dec. 3, 2021. Combat Aviation Advisors built the bundles using cardboard boxes, tape and other non-standard materials during a training class earlier in the day. Photo by Michelle Gigante.

In order to hone these improvised parachute bundle building skills, the 711th SOS aircrew flight equipment team hosted a bundle building course during the December unit training assembly. Some active-duty CAAs and Army riggers also joined the training that included an extra element of competition for creating the best bundle.

“We have done training like this in the past, just more compartmentalized,” said Master Sgt. Juan Acevedo, the 711th SOS NCO in charge of training. “This was the first time we actually built and dropped the bundles that people made that same day.”

During the class, instructors demonstrated the bundle building process and then divided the students into teams to practice what they learned previously. Each team received a kit of limited supplies to build a bundle that included an egg and three soda cans. The competition aspect provided extra incentive to see who could best protect their bundle contents during the aerial drop.

“I love that we are having a competition using skills outside of our normal careers,” said Maj. Daniel Saunders, a 711th SOS CAA participating in the training. “When we deploy as a small team, each of us has our expertise, but we want to learn from our

teammates.”

After the CAAs finalized their improvised bundles, they loaded them on a C-145A Combat Coyote for aerial delivery and headed to the drop zone for the final portion of their training. While at the drop zone, they called in the air drops and watched how each bundle fared in protecting its fragile cargo.

“The training was excellent because it not only allowed us to introduce tactics, techniques and procedures to members of the squadron, it also gave us a chance to practice our advising,” said Becker. “Everyone loved it and mentioned how great it was. We are going to move forward doing more events like this.”

Only two of the eight eggs broke from impact and though some cans faced structural damage, none broke open. All eight bundles landed in their intended zone and the instructors said the training was a success.

“Now we all have a better idea on how to assist our riggers in airdrop operations,” said Saunders. “Exercises like this allow us to resolve team dynamics and help cement how we operate in a deployed environment.”



Majors, Briana Thompson (left) and Daniel Saunders (right), Combat Aviation Advisors with the 711th Special Operations Squadron, build an improvised parachute bundle during a class at Duke Field, Florida, Dec. 3, 2021. Photo by Michelle Gigante.

Air Force Special Operations Command



A catalyst for change: Ghana Air Force Lt. Col. provides international perspective on military aviation

*By U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Natalie Fiorilli
1st Special Operations Wing Public Affairs*

Ghana Air Force Lt. Col. Margaert Kumaka doesn't think much about being the only woman in a room.

For the past two weeks, she has been the sole international female participant attending this year's Building Partner Aviation Capacity Seminar at Hurlburt Field, Florida. Similarly, Kumaka is one of only a handful of women serving at her rank in the Ghana Air Force.

"It doesn't occur to me because you are doing your work, and you have to perform," said Kumaka. "So, my focus is on performance, not male-female anything. I don't consider it to be special."

It doesn't occur to me because you are doing your work, and you have to perform. So, my focus is on performance, not male-female anything. I don't consider it to be special.

Born in Ghana's capital, Accra, Kumaka says she was raised around the military as her father served as an engineer in the Air Force.

After attending university in the Ashanti region of Ghana, where she studied economics and English literature, Kumaka began working as a customer care assistant. Realizing the work didn't quite suit her, she decided to apply to become an officer in the Ghana Air Force.

At the time there weren't many females in her nation's military, however, Kumaka said the military is now recruiting more women.

"Gradually, people are opening up to the idea of women in the service," she said. "Gender mainstreaming has created awareness about women in the world, and people are focusing on it."

Gender mainstreaming has created awareness about women in the world, and people are focusing on it.

Sixteen years into her Air Force career, Kumaka serves as a commander overseeing the supply wing of Ghana Air Force Base Accra in Burma Camp.

At the helm of the base's supply wing, she manages procuring and storing equipment and ensuring quality control of their inventory.

As a participant in this year's BPACS, hosted by the 492 Special Operations Wing's U.S. Air Force Special Operations School, Kumaka is networking with international and U.S. military aviation officials, spanning five continents.

The seminar brings together international military aviation professionals with U.S. service members and civil servants to discuss the core attributes of the aviation enterprise as they relate to the national defense strategy.

The BPACS curriculum includes national security aviation topics, selected as part of the program's overall goals of building mutual respect, facilitating regional consultative mechanisms and deepening special operations forces aviation

interoperability in a contested and unfamiliar battlespace.

For Kumaka, the experience has been an “eye-opener,” as she has noticed several differences in the way Air Forces around the world operate.

Specifically, she said she plans to explore the possibility of providing more education and retirement benefits for service members in Ghana, similar to the benefits offered to the U.S. military.

Additionally, Kumaka mentioned that with

terrorist activity in the regions surrounding Ghana, the need for efficient and effective military aviation, logistics and supply systems is crucial.

“We need to be ready when the need arises,” said Kumaka.

Likewise, she emphasized the importance of international collaboration, adding that BPACS has helped her build lasting partnerships.

“A lifelong relationship has been established,” said Kumaka.



Ghana Air Force Lt. Col. Margaert Kumaka poses for a photo at the Building Partner Aviation Capacity Seminar Feb. 4, 2022, at Hurlburt Field, Florida. Kumaka was the sole international female participant attending BPACS, a Department of Defense seminar incorporating participants from several countries to encourage long-lasting partnerships. Photo by U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Natalie Fiorilli.

Marine Forces, Special Operations Command



Marine Raider awarded Navy and Marine Corps Medal for Valor

*By U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Jesula Jeanlouis
Marine Forces, Special Operations Command*

A Marine Raider was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for his heroic actions during a ceremony at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, Jan. 18, 2022.

The Marine Raider, at the time assigned to the Marine Raider Regiment, and his wife were sitting on Surf City Beach, when two women approached, frantically screaming for help. The events that ensued displayed the Marine's courage in going above and beyond the call of duty to save the lives of a drowning child and his father.

One of the women stated that her son was drowning and pointed to the ocean, where two noticeably distressed swimmers, one being her child and the other being the father of her son, were struggling to stay afloat in a significant rip current.

Having lived near this beach for several years and through his training, the Marine Raider understood the grave danger of the rip currents, but also recognized that the victims would not be able to sustain themselves much longer. Without hesitation, and at the risk of his own safety, he sprinted into the surf and began swimming towards the young boy and adult male.

He first reached the young boy who was crying for help and struggling to stay afloat, and grabbed him under his arms, reassuring him that he was going to be okay. Using his remaining arm and his legs, he kept the boy's head above water as he swam parallel to the shore. He continued to swim this way, fighting to break free

from the rip current that was pushing them deeper into the ocean. Once he was able to clear the dangerous currents with the boy, he swam to the shore and reunited the boy and his distraught mother. Although the Marine Raider was fatigued and now fully aware of the intensity of the current, he immediately turned around and dove back into the waves to rescue the second victim, an adult male who had now drifted significantly far from the shoreline.

The Marine Raider was quoted as saying, "I know that any other Raider would have done the same thing if they were in my shoes."

As he approached the man, he could see that the victim was bobbing below the water. He verbally reassured him, encouraging him to remain calm as he closed the gap between them. The adult male was now completely exhausted and panicked, struggling to keep his head above water. Just as the Marine Raider reached him, the man began to sink, completely

overcome by the rip current. The Marine swam under the water and grabbed the man, returning to the surface while holding the panicked man. Even as a line of crashing waves further complicated his rescue efforts, he swam parallel to the shore to break free of the rip current. Though fighting exhaustion himself, he never let go of the man and continued to swim towards safety. When he was finally able to escape the current, he dragged the now limp man toward the shore. Upon reaching waist deep water, he repositioned himself behind the man and pulled him the rest of the way to the beach. Once ashore, the Marine checked to make sure





A Marine Raider is awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal during a ceremony at photo Camp Lejeune, Jan. 18, 2022. Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Brennan Priest.

the man was breathing and did not sustain any other injuries before sitting in the sand, completely overcome with exhaustion himself. The now reunited family thanked him for saving their lives. The adult male stated that he believed he and his son would have died in the water without his intervention. The Marine Raider knowingly placed himself in harm's way and risked his own life to rescue a family in distress.

For the lifesaving actions that occurred, he was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal. The award signified that the awardee risked their own life during the course of an event and distinguished themselves in a

non-combat environment.

The satisfaction for me was pretty immediate. Once that family was reunited on the shoreline, them embracing and crying in the sand was pretty powerful. Then, turning over to me and thanking me for that, that was all the recognition I needed at that point.

"The satisfaction for me was pretty immediate," said the Marine Raider. "Once that family was reunited on the shoreline, them embracing and crying in the sand was pretty powerful. Then, turning over to me and thanking me for that, that was all the recognition I needed at that point."

His calm demeanor, decisive actions, and bravery in the face of life-threatening danger demonstrated the highest degree of selflessness and directly resulted in the survival of two civilians who otherwise would have perished.

Headquarters - U.S. Special Operations Command USSOCOM deputy commander retires after 37 years of service

*By U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Jason B. Baker
USSOCOM Office of Communication*

The Deputy Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command Vice Adm. Tim Szymanski, retired from the U.S. Navy during a ceremony January 28, 2022, in the historic Hanger 5 on MacDill Air Force Base, Florida.

Szymanski's retirement marks the end of a 37-year-career that began when he graduated from the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, MD., and was commissioned as a Naval Surface Warfare Officer in 1985. A native of Wilmington, Delaware, Vice Adm. Szymanski attended the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School, Newport, RI, before going onto the United States Naval Academy.

Retired U.S. Army Gen. Austin "Scott" Miller presided over the ceremony for Szymanski with the Honorable Joseph D. Kernan, former Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and USSOCOM Commander Gen. Richard D. Clarke also providing remarks. Due to COVID-19 precautions, there was a limited number of people who could attend in person, and it was live-streamed over Zoom to friends and family not attending.

"Let me start off with the bottom line," began Clarke. "Tim Szymanski is one of the finest, one of the most competent men of character that any of us has ever known. I know that all of us would follow him to the gates of hell and back if that is what we needed to do."

Szymanski served 34 years in Special Operations and commanded four times during his career. His previous Naval Special Warfare and operational assignments include platoon and task unit commander at SEAL Delivery Vehicle Team 2. He served as troop and squadron commander and as operations officer and deputy commanding officer at Naval Special Warfare Development Group. He commanded Special Boat Unit 26, SEAL Team 2, O6-level Joint Task Force in Afghanistan and Naval Special Warfare Group 2. He



The Deputy Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command Vice Adm. Tim Szymanski retired from the U.S. Navy during a ceremony Jan. 28, 2022, in historic Hanger 5 on MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. Szymanski's retirement marks the end of a 37-year-career that began when he graduated from the United States Naval Academy. He has commanded at every level of Naval Special Warfare Command to include SEAL Delivery Vehicle Team 2, Special Boat Unit 26, SEAL Team 2, O6-level Joint Task Force in Afghanistan, Naval Special Warfare Group 2 prior to assuming command of Naval Special Warfare. Photo by Michael Bottoms.

served as deputy commanding general for sustainment to Special Operations Joint Task Force-Afghanistan/NATO Special Operations Component Command-Afghanistan.

Prior to assuming the deputy command position at USSOCOM, Szymanski served as the commander of Naval Special Warfare Command and assistant commanding general to Joint Special Operations Command.

Kernan spoke to the audience about Szymanski's role at the end of his career on important issues and

initiatives for the command, such as transformation, modernization, and the implementation of USSOCOM's culture and ethics comprehensive review.

"As the vice (commander) for a period of time here and as deputy SOCOM commander he helped Gen. Clarke address SOF Transformation while petitioning for resources in the Pentagon, successfully I might add, which is maybe one of the greatest successes of your career Tim," said Kernan. "Naval Special Warfare, SOF and the nation are the great benefactors of your service."

During Miller's remarks, the final commander of NATO and U.S. Force in Afghanistan and 14th commander of Joint Special Operations Command, told the story of how two young special operations officers first met and then crisscrossed paths through their decades of service. A story that truly exemplifies the uniquely tight-knit, joint community of special operations.

"If I'm trying to say, what's the essence of this," concludes Miller. "It's just Tim, thanks for always being there. Not just for me, but for all these people sitting here and out there on the Zoom call. There is nobody who's ever served with Tim Szymanski that doesn't know that he authentically cares about every single person in his command, and he cares about their

families; its genuine, its real and it's special. Some people do it well, he does it superbly."

In his closing comments Szymanski described the tradition and symbolism of the Navy retirement ceremony and explained that it is done for two groups, the shipmates and the family.

"It's for shipmates and teammates to see me up here and to say goodbye to me," said Szymanski. "But there is an assurance that you got the watch. You are telling me by attending that you are going to keep the ship sailing. I get the assurance that the mission will continue with great confidence that there will be great competence in that crew that is going to carry on."

"The second is family and friends, and that is really who this ceremony is for," added Szymanski. "Families are the ones who truly sacrifice; the missed anniversaries, missed birthdays, missed school events, missed sporting events, missed vacations, missed births. So, this event is not selfishly for me, but for my family, it is to see me in front of my peers, mentors and leaders and understand what this is all about and to be so proud of me as well."

Upon retirement Szymanski and his wife Marci Szymanski plan to settle in Texas to be close to their son and grandchildren.



The Deputy Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command Vice Adm. Tim Szymanski retired from the U.S. Navy during a ceremony Jan. 28, 2022, in historic Hanger 5 on MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. Szymanski's retirement marks the end of a 37-year-career that began when he graduated from the United States Naval Academy. Photo by U.S. Marine Corp Gunnery Sgt. Jacob Johnson.

Headquarters - U.S. Special Operations Command USSOCOM's Warrior Care Program hosts its 2022 conference virtually

By Michael Bottoms

USSOCOM Office Communication Office

U.S. Special Operations Command's Warrior Care Program (Care Coalition) hosted its Warrior Care Conference Feb. 8-9 virtually from Joint Special Operations University located on MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. Care Coalition leaders and staff discussed topics including impact of VA claims process, adaptive sports, USSOCOM's surgeon research efforts, and the effects of traumatic brain injury during the two-day conference.

The conference kicked off with Army Gen. Richard D. Clarke, commander, USSOCOM, giving opening remarks to the virtual audience recognizing Gold Star families and thanking the benevolent organizations for their contributions of the command's Warrior Care Program.

"First, to our Gold Star Family members, your continued commitment and engagement with this community means a great deal. Over the years, you've helped me understand what sacrifice means – in a very personal way," said Clarke. "You know what loss is ... you know what our warriors and their families go through ... and you have important insight on how best to care for them. Your involvement continues to inspire ... your day-in-day-out devotion to our SOF community is invaluable. Thanks for being part of this team."

"To all the benevolent organizations and industry partners, your dedication to our Special Operations community and their families is critical. For many of you and your organizations, that dedication has spanned many, many years," the General said. "We could not provide the exceptional support that we do without you all. Thanks for being Care Coalition partners."

Clarke concluded his opening remarks by commending the Warrior Care Program and its expanding outreach to the command's wounded or ill servicemembers and their families.

"I want to start by correcting a misconception. I've



General Richard D. Clarke, commander U.S. Special Operations Command, gives opening remarks to the virtual U.S. Special Operations Command Warrior Care Program - Care Coalition Conference Feb. 8, from Joint Special Operations University, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. The Warrior Care Program founded in 2005 focuses on wounded, ill and injured USSOCOM service members and their families. Its mission is to help members return to operational status, move into a different field or transition into veteran status. The program provides advocacy and care coordination services to more than 20,000 people. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.

heard some say that as overseas operations have drawn down – like in Afghanistan ... we should see less of a demand to care for our wounded, ill, and injured in the coming years. In fact, it's the opposite," Clarke said. "Over the past year alone, care has expanded from 18,000 to 20,000 active duty servicemembers, veterans, and their families...So I'd argue that today, this Warrior Care community is even more important than ever before."

The next order of business was the presentation of the Patriot Award. The Patriot Award recognizes exceptional and enduring contributions to the welfare of USSOCOM's wounded, ill and injured service members, veterans, and

their families. This year's recipient is Army Sgt. Maj. Juan "Carlos" Herrera from 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne).

Herrera who was severely wounded in Afghanistan himself has mentored the Soldiers and families of many wounded and fallen Soldiers. He has organized numerous morale building events and has helped facilitate relationships between families and benevolent organizations. Carlos aided in establishing the annual Staff Sgt. Alex Viola Memorial Car Show and continues to maintain a positive relationship with the Viola family. Herrera also facilitated the arrival, move, and readjustment for the family of wounded fellow Green Beret Chief Warrant 3 (Retired) Romulo Camargo.

"Sergeant Major Herrera cares deeply because he knows what it's like to battle back from injuries. He's a Green Beret who was himself twice wounded in combat. When he himself was recovering at Walter Reed in 2020 from his second battlefield injury, he was instrumental in morale building for the other wounded servicemembers receiving treatment alongside him," Clarke said.

Clarke went on to explain that Herrera has been taking care of wounded troops for more than a decade.

"When a fellow Green Beret was seriously wounded in 2008, Carlos immediately stepped in. He walked side by side with his teammate's family ... through countless surgeries. And he's still caring for his teammate and his family even today," the General said. "Through organizing the Staff Sgt. Alex Viola Memorial Car Show, Carlos has helped raise hundreds of thousands of dollars ... which all supports some of our benevolent organizations."

Today, Herrera leads 7th Special Forces Group's Human Performance and Wellness program caring for and mentoring countless active duty and retired wounded warriors. During Herrera's acceptance speech he challenged the conference to look at how the operator's injuries affects their families. Also, he emphasized the holistic approach to recovery not only focusing on the physical, but spiritual and psychological recovery.

"Sometimes we forget about the children, we forget about the spouse, and I ask that this conference look into that. I ask that we look for new ways to create and innovate how we care for our families. Me personally that is one voyage, one mission I am on," said Herrera. "The physical state [injury] is easy to overcome. You'll find a new hundred percent. So, I can't run a five-minute mile anymore. I'll settle for a seven. That's my new hundred percent. The psychological, the spiritual, those are the ones unseen. Those aspects we should focus on."

The Warrior Care Program (Care Coalition) founded in 2005 focuses on wounded, ill and injured USSOCOM service members and their families. Its mission is to help members return to operational status, move into a different

field or transition into veteran status. The program provides advocacy and care coordination services to more than 20,000 people.

"The USSOCOM Warrior Care Program, also known as the Care Coalition, strives to provide continuity and coordinate resources from the point of injury through the care continuum to achieve the best possible outcomes for our recovering service members with the primary intent to get them back to their units, preserve their talent, and protect the USSOCOM investment in our most precious asset: our people. The unyielding desire to return to their teammates coupled with the tenacious drive inherent in our service members set the conditions for successful achievement of that objective," said Kelly Ammerman, WCP-CC Director.

The four pillars of the Warrior Care Program are recovery, where medical treatment is the focus; rehabilitation, where optimal medical and operational fitness is achieved; reintegration, where retaining special operations forces on active duty is the priority; and if needed, career transition, where a seamless transition to civilian life will provide for continued medical care, benefits, and career opportunities.

To contact the USSOCOM Warrior Care Program go to <https://www.socom.mil/care-coalition/>.



General Richard D. Clarke, commander U.S. Special Operations Command, presents Army Sgt. Maj. Juan "Carlos" Herrera the Patriot Award during the virtual U.S. Special Operations Command Warrior Care Program - Care Coalition Conference Feb. 8, from Joint Special Operations University, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. The Patriot Award recognizes exceptional and enduring contributions to the welfare of USSOCOM's wounded, ill and injured service members, veterans, and their families. The Warrior Care Program founded in 2005 focuses on wounded, ill and injured USSOCOM service members and their families. Its mission is to help members return to operational status, move into a different field or transition into veteran status. The program provides advocacy and care coordination services to more than 20,000 people. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Barry Loo.

Headquarters - U.S. Special Operations Command

Fighting with fire – Red SOF opportunities at the JMRC

By Christopher Cobb

USSOCOM Operations Directorate

Opposition forces at the US Army Combat Training Centers are drawn from conventional force infantry units. At the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, (JMRC) opposition forces responsibilities fall to the 1-4 Infantry Battalion. The support they provide is suitable for CF Training Audiences, but less appropriate for Blue SOF elements. Encountering a Spetsnaz-like force (Russian Special Forces) is an expected scenario for a SOF element operating in a near peer, great power competitive environment. The 1-4 Infantry Battalion strives to replicate this capability but are not currently resourced with SOF subject matter experts to assist in stimulating this unique training condition.

Necessity is the mother of invention

Leadership from JMRC's SOF Cell recognized this shortfall and identified a solution: Why not have a U.S. SOF unit cover-down on opposition forces functions, allowing them to “fight fire with fire” by properly matching their skillsets with Blue SOF capabilities?

“This initiative has been explored for some time by the Special Operations Training Detachment for implementation at JRTC and National Training Center, and executed the first iteration of REDSOF in 2021,” said Special Forces Maj. Jared Tomberline, Joint Multinational Readiness Center. “Capt. Douglas Somoza, a 1-10th Special Forces Group (Airborne)) team leader and former 1-4 Infantry battalion platoon leader, began pursuing the possibility of serving as a Red SOF entity as JMRC in late 2020. However, operational requirements consistently took precedence over participation in training exercises at JMRC.”

Previous efforts to engage U.S. SOF as an opposition forces element at JMRC had faltered. At first glance, the benefits, from a Blue SOF perspective, appeared to be stacked. Given the choice between operating, on one side or the other, the intuitive answer was to prioritize Blue SOF functions. But closer inspection has dispelled that myth. Operating on the Red SOF side provides all the Blue SOF



Combined Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha and Serbian force conduct vehicle interdiction against a Blue Force. Courtesy photo.

benefits of SOF/CF I3, military decisionmaking process (MDMP), varied mission sets, Foreign Internal Defense (FID) / Military Assistance (MA), Unconventional Warfare, plus occasion to work their missions through the enemy's perspective. In addition, by working with 1-4's world class opposition forces, SOF has the unique opportunity to engage in enemy tactics and to use adversary equipment, as utilized by the 1-4.

JMRC, located in Hohenfels, Germany, is about three-hours' drive from Stuttgart, so 1 10th SFG(A) was a good starting point in the search for a candidate SOF unit. The JMRC SOF Cell was able to clearly articulate the opportunities to the 1 10th SFG(A) leadership. Operational schedules aligned, so teams were sourced for three consecutive rotations. Red SOF participation at JMRC was inaugurated during exercise Combined Resolve XVI (Nov/Dec 21) and was sourced from Special Forces Operational Detachment-A 0122. Note: The proximity of 1st 10th SFG(A) presented an efficient solution for Red SOF involvement at JMRC. SFOD-A 0122's support for Combined Resolve XVI cost less than \$2.5K which, in future exercises, will be covered by JMRC, leaving no cost to 1st 10th SFG(A) for their participation.

The JMRC SOF Cell is undermanned; their personnel strength is currently a fraction of that of either NTC or JRTC. But that has not altered expectations of support for SOF/CF I3 training during each of at least four annual JMRC rotations. Blue SOF opportunities at JMRC have already been reduced significantly, so adding a Red SOF contingent to the SOF Cell's retinue would not have worked. Instead of adding oversight of Red SOF activities during CbR XVI to their already over-taxed team, the SOF Cell chose to cede operational and tactical control of SFOD-A 0122 to the 1-4.

SFOD-A 0122 arrived one week before the start of the exercise to integrate with 1-4. They were assigned a FID Force (in this instance, a Serbian Infantry unit) and began planning in preparation for missions against CF and SOF units. Integration with the 1-4 was comprehensive. Planning for missions was conducted collectively, and missions were structured to meet SOF unit training objectives and to further the 1-4's main efforts. The team participated in the 1-4's operational order brief, and they had a role in the Combined Arms Rehearsal (CAR). Additional SOF/CF I3 training occurred when members of the 1-4's C Company provided augmentation for several events; and, subsequently, one member of the Detachment was assigned with the 1-4's C Company during an extended reconnaissance mission.

"We knew that this was a great opportunity to refresh on small unit tactics and to give members of the Detachment a chance to lead a partner force element, all while integrating with a conventional infantry battalion," said Green Beret Capt. Matthew Jedras. "What made this rotation really stand out though was working with a partner force that has strategic importance and talking to members of 1-4 who said they would drop SF packets because of their interactions with us. This short training rotation had an outsized impact."

Blue SOF units operating at each of the CTCs routinely face small CF opposition force elements that typically arrive shortly before engagement, expend the requisite number of rounds, and then die-in-place (only to be immediately resurrected and move on to their next assignment). In contrast, the Red SOF team assigned to CbR XVI experienced actions against a robust "enemy" (in this case, Blue Force). Often, when SFOD-A 0122 stacked against Blue SOF, they were able to adopt a shift of mindset, focusing their efforts against a unit that was similarly trained and equipped. They postured themselves as the aggressor, which allowed them to realistically "think like the enemy." When facing conventional blue elements, SFOD-A 0122 was able to call-off a planned raid with their Serbian partner force when it became known that the requisite 3:1 friendly-to-enemy ratio was not in place. Instead, they postponed the mission and initiated the following day with a call for fire strike from the air weapons team. These types of engagements are difficult to replicate, but tremendously beneficial for an SFOD-A to experience.

The benefits accrued by SFOD-A 0122 from their Red SOF involvement at JMRC during CbR XVI were significant. They accomplished SOF/CF I3 training with the 1-4 (OPORD, TLPs and participation in the CAR); they conducted personnel exchange with the 1-4; and they met numerous training objectives (FID, UW, SOF/CF I3 engagements). In addition, the exercise in lateral thinking associated with adopting a mirror enemy mindset for their military activities could alter their considerations when planning for and executing future operations. Missing from this rotation, however, were opportunities for Red SOF to conduct communications in a contested environment, or to exercise medical evacuation procedures. Those capabilities could be added to future rotations.

"With the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan coming to a close, there is little opportunity for conventional and SOF entities to interact, this training venue provides that opportunity," said Tomberline.

Viewed from the perspective of Blue SOF, the opportunity to face a simulated Near Peer SOF element helped create a much more realistic opposition forces environment. The existence of a 'thinking enemy' (Red SOF), targeted specifically against their unit, presented challenges far beyond what might have come from a traditional aggressor unit.

The significant reduction in military operations worldwide has increased the demand for training opportunities. Expanding the SOF footprint also at other joint national training capability venues, to include Red as well as Blue SOF operations, would enlarge and enhance training for SOF, and it would increase the overall opportunities for SOF/CF I3 training. In-line with current efforts at the Special Operations Training – Detachment at JRTC, we can also credit the JMRC SOF Cell for operationalizing this concept and for developing an additional template for future SOF training at other JNTC venues.



American and Serbian Special Operations Forces conduct a raid against Blue Force American SOF element. Courtesy photo.

Headquarters - U.S Special Operations Command

Ralph Johnson Bunche: From Office of Strategic Services to peacemaker

By Sean Williams

USSOCOM History and Research Office



Ralph J. Bunche in 1963 while working with the United Nations. Courtesy photo.

While the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) played a key role in helping the allies win World War II, some of its members went on to become peacemakers in the post-war period. Ralph Johnson Bunche, a political scientist recruited by the OSS in 1941 because of his knowledge of colonial Africa, was one such person. And yet, history remembers him mostly as one of America's most prolific negotiators, accomplished scholars, and lifelong champion of civil rights for people worldwide, and not as much an intelligence

operative for the OSS.

The grandson of a freed slave, Ralph J. Bunche was born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1904 and then moved to New Mexico due to his parent's health issues. His Father, Fred Bunche, was a barber while his mother, Olive (Johnson) Bunche, was an amateur musician. When both of his parents passed away he was at the tender age of ten, his grandmother, Nana, moved Ralph and his younger sister to Los Angeles, California, in 1918. Once in Los Angeles, Ralph started selling newspapers and working as a house boy for a movie star to help with family finances.

At an early age Bunche showcased his intellectual prowess in school. While in elementary school, Bunche won awards in English and History. He excelled not only in academics but also in a variety of sports as well. When in high school he lettered in football, baseball, basketball, and track. Graduating as the Class Valedictorian from Jefferson High School, he accepted an athletic scholarship to attend the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). In 1927, Bunche graduated summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa. During his Valedictorian address to his UCLA class of 1927, he stated

"...If the mission of this education be filled, there is planted in each of us those seeds from which fourth-dimensional personality will spring. We shall have become more altruistic and less selfish. We shall love more, and hate less. We shall have become more internationally-minded -- less insular-minded. ..."

Bunche went on to Harvard University where he earned a master's degree in political science and alternated between teaching at Howard University while continuing to work on his Ph.D. in International Affairs and Government at Harvard.

In 1936, Bunche published his first book, *A World View of Race*, which took a global perspective of how race was studied and perceived. He concluded, "Race is a social concept which can be and is employed effectively to rouse and rationalize emotions [and] an admirable device for the cultivation of group prejudices." He specialized in the

colonial experience in Africa, critiquing how Western European countries took not just land and raw materials through colonialism but the people's culture as well. To Bunche, European colonialists pushed capitalism upon societies that were extremely vulnerable to advancing global competition due to vast difference in educational levels and industrialization.

Bunche travelled extensively for his studies. This led to his conducting postdoctoral research at Northwestern University for his dissertation in comparative colonial administration from 1936 to 1938. His book *A World View of Race* laid the groundwork for Bunche's future with the civil rights movement in the 1960s. With his increased popularity and academic reputation growing, the U.S. government took notice of Ralph Bunche's talents and soon hired him as a political analyst just a few months shy of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The OSS was looking for individuals who had travelled the world and had a firm understanding of international diplomacy. Bunche was the ideal candidate for the OSS, particularly because of his knowledge of North Africa politics including in-depth familiarity of the Vichy French. He joined the OSS in September 1941 and was appointed the role of Social Scientist Analyst OSS, Division of Special Information, Library of Congress. He supervised a team of researchers who compiled data and published manuals on political and economic conditions in Africa for U.S. troops conducting operations in theater. His team was instrumental in providing intelligence used in Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of North Africa in November 1942. Due to his talents and ability to derive key information for operational use, in January 1943, Bunche was promoted to Senior Science Analyst and two months later was again promoted to serve as the Principal OSS Research Analyst for Europe, Africa, and the Near-East Africa.

By late 1944, with World War II beginning to wind down, Bunche found himself with the Department of State, becoming the first African American to hold the position of a Desk Officer. A year later, in 1945, he left the State Department to work directly with former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was completed in 1948.

Bunche played an integral role in the creation of the United Nations and contributed greatly by helping to write its organizational charter. In 1950, his work on a peace treaty between Arab nations and Israel earned him the distinction of becoming the first American person of African descent to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1968, he was appointed Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations for Special Political Affairs. Acknowledging his many achievements in peace making and human rights, a park across the street from the United Nations building in New York City was named



On May 9, 1949, former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt hosted a dinner party in Ralph Bunche's honor. Bunche and the First Lady helped with establishing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Courtesy photo.

after him.

Bunche was deeply involved in the U.S. Civil Rights movement from the 1930s until his death in 1971. In 1963, Bunche took part in the March on Washington with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and actor celebrities like Charlton Heston, and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President John F. Kennedy (later presented to Bunche by President Lyndon B. Johnson). Bunche also helped to organize the 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery march in Alabama which became a touchstone of the Civil Rights movement. Bunche retired due to serious health conditions from the UN and all civil rights activities in 1971 and died in December of that year. In 2003, UCLA renamed their Center for Afro-American Studies building after him, calling it The Ralph J. Bunche Center for African-American Studies.

By the time Bunche retired many opined that he had achieved more for human rights than nearly anyone of his day. *Ebony* magazine tapped Bunche for the most renowned African American for nearly a decade in both the U.S. and abroad. *Ebony* also wrote that he was the most influential African American of the first half of the 20th Century. Bunche's name might seldom be mentioned in today's media or books, but his work and moral leadership continues to echo through the UN and American Civil Rights movements today. The OSS saw not only a political scientist in Bunche, but a warrior and a champion for all of humanity. It was only later in 2004, that Ralph Bunche was posthumously honored with the William J. Donovan Award from the OSS Society.



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**U.S. Navy Seaman
Kyle Mullen
Naval Special Warfare Command**

Editor's note: Honored are those special operations forces who lost their lives in combat or training since the December 2021 issue of Tip of the Spear.

U.S. Army Soldiers from the 20th Special Forces Group, Massachusetts National Guard, conduct snowmobile training through northern Michigan's rough terrain during Northern Strike 22-1 on Jan. 22, 2022. "Winter Strike" is held annually in northern Michigan during the coldest part of the year. Snow, high winds, and single-digit temperatures are commonplace at the National All-Domain Warfighting Center this time of year. Visiting units are able to train in subarctic conditions, so they are better able to meet the objectives laid out in the Department of Defense's Arctic strategy. Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. David Kujawa.

