



SOF News

January 2020 Issue

News, analysis, and commentary about special operations forces (SOF), national defense, military, and conflicts from around the world.



Special Operations News From Around the World

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Image on front cover: Painting of a member of the Indiana Rangers – an Army National Guard unit from Indiana mobilized and deployed to Vietnam. Painting by Mort Kunstler was commissioned by the National Guard Bureau.

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Contents. This publication contains the feature articles and contents of other articles posted on www.sof.news over the past month. Unless otherwise noted all photos are from the Department of Defense.

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<https://sof.news/article-submission/>

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Comprehensive Review of SOF Culture and Ethics January 2020

The United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has released a 69-page report entitled *United States Special Operations Command Comprehensive Review*. USSOCOM was directed by Congress to conduct a review of its culture and report back to it with its findings.

The USSOCOM report, dated 23 January 2020, is the result of a review by USSOCOM “. . . that gathered insights and observations from across the force, at all levels, . . .”

SOF Incidents Involving Crimes

For the last few years the United States special operations community has come under great scrutiny for a number of negative incidents that have put it under the glare. These incidents of misconduct and unethical behavior caused the public and government leaders to question the culture and ethics of the SOF community. The U.S. Congress mandated that United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) conduct a ‘culture and ethics’ review.

There are a number of high profile incidents that have captured the attention of the U.S. public, the media, and Congress. A quick summary of these incidents include:

- an Army Special Forces Major accused of murdering an unarmed Taliban bomb-maker in Afghanistan
- two Army Special Forces NCOs convicted of smuggling cocaine from Colombia into the United States
- a Navy SEAL and two Marine Raiders accused of murder / manslaughter of an Army Green Beret in Mali
- a Navy SEAL accused of war crimes while deployed with his SEAL platoon in Iraq
- Navy SEAL platoon having a drunk fest in Iraq on the 4th of July and getting sent home
- Army Special Forces NCOs stealing money from operational funds
- numerous incidents of sexual assault, sexual mis-conduct, and drug use

(continued)

(USSOCOM Report on SOF Culture and Ethics . . . Continued)

About the Report

There are six Chapters in the report:

- Chapter 1: Executive Summary
- Chapter 2: Structure of the Report
- Chapter 3: Background
- Chapter 4: Method and Approach
- Chapter 5: Findings and Recommended Actions
- Chapter 6: Conclusion

In addition there are several appendices providing information on the Advisory Team and Review Team participants, a *Special Operations Forces Culture and Ethics Memo*, NDAA 2018 Guidance on Assessment of Culture and Accountability in SOF, Cdr's *Guidance on Ethics*, research method, engagement strategy, interview questions and guidelines, results and analysis, and Review Team implementation and recommended actions.

The Review Team was led by a SOF general officer. Assisting on the team was a group of 20 military officers, enlisted, and civilian personnel. An Advisory Team, composed of former SOF, DOD senior leaders, and academia SMEs provided transparency and guidance. [1] Over 2,000 interviews were conducted with all components and at all levels of the special operations forces.

Conclusion

"The Review Team did not assess that USSOCOM has a systemic ethics problem. The Review Team did assess that in some instances USSOCOM's cultural focus on SOF employment and mission accomplishment is to the detriment of leadership, discipline and accountability." [2]

The report recommends 16 actions to address the findings by the review. A strong implementation plan is recommended and the adoption of the will to execute it. The report says that if ". . . implemented correctly, the comprehensive review will make USSOCOM better as a more credible, capable and precise force." [3]

United States Special Operations Command Comprehensive Review, USSOCOM, January 23, 2020, 69 pages, PDF.

<https://sof.news/pubs/USSOCOM-Comprehensive-Ethics-Review-Report-January-2020.pdf>

Letter to the Force – Special Operations Forces Culture and Ethics Comprehensive Review, USSOCOM, January 28, 2020

<https://www.socom.mil/special-operations-forces-culture-and-ethics-comprehensive-review-letter-to-the-force>

Review Finds No Systemic Ethical Problems in Special Ops, DOD News, January 28, 2020.

<https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2067911/review-finds-no-systemic-ethical-problems-in-special-ops/>

Endnotes:

[1] See page 46 for a list of members of the review team.

[2] See page 4 under "Executive Summary".

[3] See page 8.

Link to this article: <https://sof.news/ussocom/ussocom-sof-culture-ethics-report-2020/>



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GAO Report on AFSOC's Use of Guard / Reserve



Photo: Airman Prescott, a pararescue jumper assigned to the New York Air National Guard's 103rd Rescue Squadron monitors a patient during a training exercise conducted at F.S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base at Westhampton Beach, New York. He is participating in a drill to help evaluate a casualty monitoring system being developed as part of the Air Force BAT-MAN program. Photo taken by Staff Sergeant Christopher Muncy, August 25, 2015.

The Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) has been busy the last two decades meeting the demands of operational requirements and mission overseas. The long-running conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and elsewhere – as well as training missions and support to the theater SOCs – have placed all of the U.S. special operations forces in a state of continuing high operational tempo. AFSOC has needed to call up individuals or units from the Air Guard or Air Reserve to meet these mission requirements.

However the process of notifying and mobilization the individuals or units is not smooth and there are some improvements that need to be made. This has been explained in a recent U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report published in December 2019. The GAO report was provided to the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives.

AFSOC relies increasingly on the Air Reserve Component (ARC), which is composed of the Air National Guard (ANG) and the Air Force Reserve (AFR). AFSOC accesses the capabilities of the ARC through either volunteers to specific taskings (referred to as volunteerism in the report) or involuntary mobilization to activate ARC units.

The House of Representatives tasked the GAO to assess the process that AFSOC and the Air Force uses to mobilize units or individuals for deployment. The GAO was instructed to take a look at AFSOC's mobilization process, the communication of timely forecasts of utilization needs, and other aspects of AFSOC's use of the ANG and AFR.

The GAO presents three recommendations in this report:

- AFSOC should have the organizational capacity to effectively initiate, coordinate, and execute Air Reserve Component (ARC) mobilizations, to include ensuring timely and reliable notification of requirements to those units.
- The ANG and AFR should develop a method of providing AFSOC with consolidated information regarding units available for immediate and future mobilizations to support special operations activities, such as the Air Force provides to its units with its force-generation model.
- The ANG and AFR should develop a mechanism for tracking volunteer deployments to better manage ARC force utilization.

Special Operations Forces: Additional Actions Are Needed to Effectively Manage Air Reserve Component

GAO-20-90

United States Government Accountability Office (GAO)

December 2019

<https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-20-90>

Link to this article: <https://sof.news/afsoc/gao-report-afsoc-use-guard-reserve/>

Longtab Brewing - A Gathering Place for Veterans



San Antonio, Texas

Whether you like specialty beer or great coffee there is a place for you to link up with old friends or make new friends. The Grand Opening of Longtab Brewing Company took place in San Antonio, Texas, on Friday, January 17, 2020.

Owned and managed by veterans it provides a welcome atmosphere to those who have served – and those still serving in the military. The brew pub has a Special Forces theme that gives a nod to the present and past Green Berets who have served our country. The atmosphere certainly has a 'team room' flavor to it. The operation has a combination beer taproom, coffee shop, and micro-production brewery. The coffee shop is open in the morning, and the taproom during the afternoons and weekends. Private events can be held on the premises for home-brew classes, yoga classes, and charity.

High-Quality Coffee. One focus for the Longtab Brewing Company is to offer veteran-roasted coffees that are available throughout the United States. For instance, one of the coffee brands available at Longtab Brewing is [De Espresso Liber](#). This specialty coffee is provided by an independent, gourmet coffee micro-roaster focused on fresh roasted coffee.

Longtab Beers. All of the company's beer is brewed with 100% American grown ingredients. Even the international inspired beers use American grown hops and grains. Each Longtab beer is titled after some aspect of Special Forces folklore. SF vets will recognize some of the names: Pineland Oppression Pale Ale, JFK American Lager, Long Haired Dictionary, Quiet Professional, . . . and more



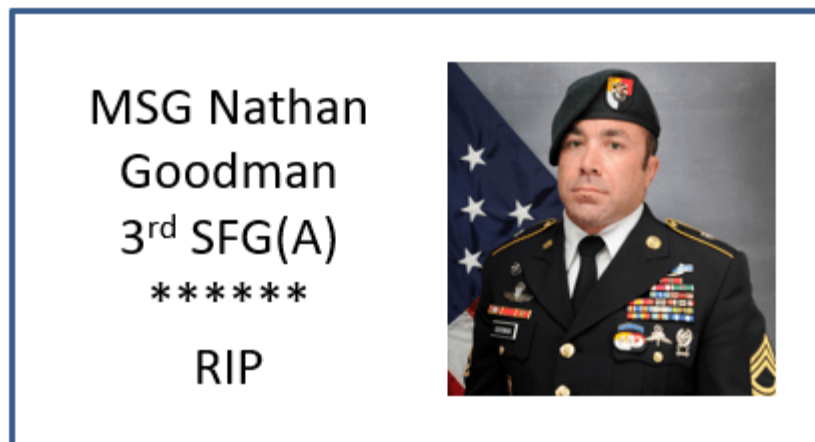
“What’s the name all about?” The members of Special Forces who are “SF qualified” are entitled to wear the Green Beret and the U.S. Army Special Forces tab. Worn on the left shoulder of successful graduates of the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC) is a cloth tab that says “Special Forces”. Other tabs worn by Soldiers (if qualified) include Airborne, Ranger, Sapper, etc. Some soldiers have more than one tab. All SF Soldiers wear the Airborne and Special Forces tabs; while many of these Green Berets also wear the Ranger tab. These three tabs are sometimes referred to as the ‘tower of power’.

The Longtab Team. The Founder and CEO of Longtab is David Holland. He is a Special Forces veteran who served as an SF medic and later retired as an SF Warrant Officer (180A). The Head Brewer is Mike Brown – a retired Colonel who served in 7th SFGA. Mike has been brewing beer for the last 15 years. The brewpub is located in San Antonio, Texas in an area called Lean Valley. It is located off of Bandera Road just inside of loop 410 interstate. The location is near Lackland Air Force Base, Camp Bullis, and other military sites in San Antonio.

Longtab Brewing Company, LLC
4700 Timco West Suite 105
San Antonio, Texas 78238
www.longtabbrewing.com

Link to this article: <https://sof.news/special-forces/longtab-brewing/>
This article has been truncated to fit the monthly journal format.

MSG Nathan Goodman - RIP, 3rd SFG(A)



Master Sergeant Nathan Goodman, age 36, died in a military freefall training event on January 14, 2020. The incident took place during a MFF training exercise near Eloy, Arizona. Eloy is the site where advanced parachute training takes place for special operations personnel.

Goodman was born in Pasadena, California and grew up near Chicago, Illinois. At the time of his death he was stationed with the 3rd Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and lived nearby in Hope Mills. He enlisted in the Army in July 2002 – completing Basic and Advanced Individual Training and Airborne Course at Fort Benning, Georgia. Upon completion of his training he was assigned to 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

He then left active duty and joined the Army National Guard in 2005. He attended the Special Forces Assessment and Selection Course and then the Special Forces Qualification Course where he graduated as a Special Forces Engineer Sergeant in 2007. He was then assigned to 2nd Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group. In 2010 he returned to active duty and was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group. In 2016 he worked at the 1st Special Warfare Training Group as a Senior Instructor and then as a Chief Instructor. In July 2018 he returned to 2nd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group. In July 2019 he was promoted to Master Sergeant and became an Operations "Team" Sergeant on an SF operational detachment alpha. Goodman completed four deployments to Afghanistan, one to Iraq, two to Africa, and one to Kyrgyzstan.

Goodman graduated from the Basic, Advanced, Senior, and Master Leader Courses; Army Special Operations Forces Senior Noncommissioned Officer Fundamentals Course; Basic and Small Group Instructor Training Courses; Special Forces Advanced Reconnaissance, Target Analysis and Exploitation Techniques Course; Basic, Jumpmaster and Advanced Tactical Infiltration Military Free Fall Courses; Special Forces Advanced Urban Combat Course; Advanced Special Operations Techniques Course; and the Small Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Operator Course.

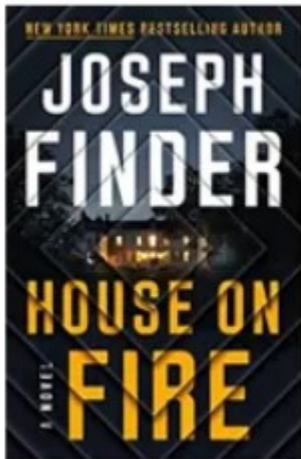
Goodman's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal (2OLC); Meritorious Service Medal; Army Commendation Medal (3OLC); Army Achievement Medal; Valorous Unit Award (1OLC); Meritorious Unit Citation (2OLC); Army Good Conduct Medal (3OLC); National Defense Service Medal; Afghanistan Campaign Medal (four campaign stars); Iraq Campaign Medal (two campaign stars); Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon (Numeral 3); Army Service Ribbon; Overseas Service Ribbon; Armed Forces Reserve Medal with Mobilization device; NATO Medal (1OLC); Special Forces Tab; Combat Infantryman Badge; Expert Infantryman Badge; Parachutist's Master Rated Military Free Fall Badges.

"Nathan was a beloved member of 3rd Special Forces Group and an exceptional leader in the special operations community. Our heartfelt condolences go out to his family during this difficult time and our priority now rests with taking care of them and our soldiers".

Colonel Nathan Prussian, 3rd Special Forces Group Commander

Photo and biographical info provided by USASOC Public Affairs Office. Additional information from online news reports.

Book Review - “House of Fire” by Joseph Finder



Nick Heller, a private investigator and former Green Beret, takes on a dangerous assignment in this new novel published Jan 2020.

In another exciting fiction read, Nick Heller, a private intelligence investigator in Boston, Massachusetts, gets involved in a complex assignment. Heller, a former Green Beret, breaks the rules a few times to get to the truth and solve complex crime mysteries.

This is the fourth book by Joseph Finder that features the former Special Forces weapons man turned ‘private eye’. It is quite common in the ‘Heller’ series by Finder to find our hero Nick getting beat up once or twice and on the receiving end of some gun play. This book is no exception. We also get to observe his ‘unconventional style’ that SF folks would appreciate.

Although his time in Special Forces was cut short due to a war injury Heller suffered in Afghanistan he did learn some skills that help him in his career as a PI. Some of those skills he acquired while serving as a Special Forces Intelligence Sergeant – having been promoted from his weapons position on a SF team. But our hero does not know everything and he is not shy about reaching out to other ‘brothers’ for help with his assignments.

In *House on Fire* our hero lost a close team mate that saved his life in Afghanistan to a drug overdose. Nick is soon immersed into the world of opioids when approached by a stranger about a job. A whistle-blower wants to expose a pharmaceutical company making a lot of money on the misfortune of others addicted to opioids. There is a document that needs to be found – it will reveal the secret behind the danger of the drug sold by the drug company that has killed thousands.

This story takes place in Boston, New York, D.C., a lovely Caribbean island, and a few other spots as well. There is intrigue, suspense, big money, romance, and more in this story. The powerful and wealthy family that owns the drug firm is threatened by lawsuits. But only the document can bring justice. Nick has to find it – even if it means breaking some rules and putting himself in danger.

Joseph Finder is a [bestselling author](#) of fourteen previous suspense novels. He is a founding member of the International Thriller Writers, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Association of Former Intelligence Officers. He is a graduate of Yale College and the Harvard Russian Research Center, and lives in Boston.

This book arrived in the mail and it was read by the end of the next day. When you go through a book that quick it means you put everything else aside. How long do we have to wait for the next Nick Heller adventure?

House on Fire, by Joseph Finder, January 2020
<https://bookshop.org/a/753/9781101985847>

Link to article online: <https://sof.news/books/house-on-fire/>



A conceptional overview of all relevant topics of small unit tactics every soldier ought to be familiar with in order to be effective on today's battlefield. The handbook is categorized into five functional areas; history, doctrine, planning, operations, and common skills.

While the book is useful to any one in the Army it is especially beneficial for the prospective Green Beret who is about to or is currently attending the Special Forces Qualification Course. The author was an instructor with the U.S. Army Special Forces Small Unit Tactics course that prepared Army soldiers for attendance at the Special Forces Qualification Course.

Published by Blacksmith Publishing, the book is available through several publishing outlets. You can read more at the link below:

[Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



The Special Operations Warrior Foundation (SOWF) is a non-profit organization located in Tampa, Florida. The SOWF exists to care for the families of fallen and wounded special operations forces. The SOWF was founded in 1980 after the attempt to rescue 53 American hostages in Iran. The operation resulted in the loss of eight special operations servicemen who left behind 17 children.

Read more in [“Special Operations Warrior Foundation \(SOWF\) - A Good Cause!”](#), by SOF News, August 9, 2019.

Army Special Operations Museum



Old time Special Forces Soldiers may be forgiven if they feel a little bit of history is slipping away. The John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Museum located on Ardennes Street on Fort Bragg, North Carolina is no more. It has been replaced by the Army Special Operations Forces Museum.

History of the Museum

The John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Museum was established in 1963. The museum was the brainchild of Major General William P. Yarborough in 1961 – the commanding general of the U.S. Army Special Warfare School. It was housed in the one-story Colonel Arthur D. “Bull” Simons Hall located next to the John F. Kennedy Plaza in building D-2502. The building was situated on the corner of Ardennes Street and Riley Road. It was easily recognizable due to the small howitzers and mortars on display outside the building. The museum had a small Gift Shop with the proceeds from sales going to support museum operations.

For years the JFK Special Warfare Museum provided a historical record of Army special warfare units throughout all of this nation’s conflicts. Most members of Special Forces referred to it as the Special Forces museum although from its inception it always included PSYOP and CA. Many SF Soldiers contributed artifacts and donated money for the museum. Those that visited often strolled through the museum’s gift shop to pick up challenge coins, t-shirts, books, souvenirs, and other SF memorabilia. These items are still available through the museum association’s [web store](#).

Exhibits of the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Museum included displays from World War I, World War II, the Korean Conflict, and the Vietnam War. Historical units represented included the First Special Service Force, Office of Strategic Services (OSS), and Detachment 101. ‘Modern conflicts’ were represented as well to include Operations Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom.

The old museum building (D-2502) had a small footprint – 1,800 square feet and could only house 20% of the artifacts. The building has since been torn down to make way for the SWC campus. If you haven’t been to Ardennes Street for a few years you will not recognize it!

The old museum building (D-2502) had a small footprint – 1,800 square feet and could only house 20% of the artifacts. The building has since been torn down to make way for the SWC campus. If you haven’t been to Ardennes Street for a few years you will not recognize it!

Currently the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Museum is located at building D-2815 on the corner of Zabitosky and Ardennes – directly across from the JFK Chapel. Some may recall the building as the old TMC. It has been closed for a few months now for ‘inventory purposes’.

(continued)

(Army Special Operations Museum . . . Continued)

The Green Berets of past eras certainly have some concerns. They fear the history of Special Forces will become diluted as the new ARSOF museum becomes more inclusive of other Army special operations units. There is the strong possibility that many items exhibited that are 'SF' centric will be put into storage to make room for historical items from the Ranger Regiment and Special Operations Aviation Regiment. A brief visit to selected social media sites will reveal the concern expressed by the older generation of Green Berets.

What Is in the Future for the Museum?

The 'new' museum will be reorganized under the United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC). While CA, PSYOP, and SF are trained at the USAJFKSWCS – Rangers and Army SOF aviators are trained elsewhere. Moving the 'ownership' of the museum from USAJFKSWCS to USASOC provides the ability to include the other two organizations. A recent press release by USASOC tells us that the new museum will “. . . fully represent all of USASOC's equities.”

The museum is one of 64 U.S. Army museums in the country and falls under the purview of the [Center for Military History](#). According to an online post (accessed 25 Jan 2020) the museum had “. . . the mission to collect, preserve, exhibit and interpret significant historical property in support of the proponent's, training and educational mission of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School.” This made it the regimental museum for the U.S. Army Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and Psychological Operations regiments – including predecessor organizations from the American colonial period to the present.

The new ARSOF Museum will open at the end of February 2020 once a complete historical inventory is conducted to identify and catalog items. In addition, there will be a reorganization and change of authority taking place. Until a permanent facility can be funded and built the new museum will likely occupy 'several' places on Fort Bragg. USAJFKSWCS issued a statement saying that the exhibits will be “. . . showcased throughout the command; however, instead of only having access to the history in one building, it will be available to our Soldiers, students, retirees and families throughout the command footprint.” Apparently, in the future, if you want to visit the museum you will have to drive to several sites on Fort Bragg. That does sound a bit problematic.

USASOC certainly has the organizational size to support the new ARSOF Museum. The museum will fall under the control of the USASOC Historians Office. If enough funding is available it will likely provide an improved experience to visitors in the future while equally representing the historical record of all five major components of ARSOF.

References:

John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Museum
<https://www.soc.mil/SWCS/museum.html>

US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Museum Association
<https://www.jfkwebstore.com/>

JFK Special Warfare Museum Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Jfk-Special-Warfare-Museum-Ft-Bragg-Nc/212706605444953>

Bruce, Robert, [“Hidden Treasures of the JFK Special Warfare Museum”](#), Small Arms Review, July 2006.

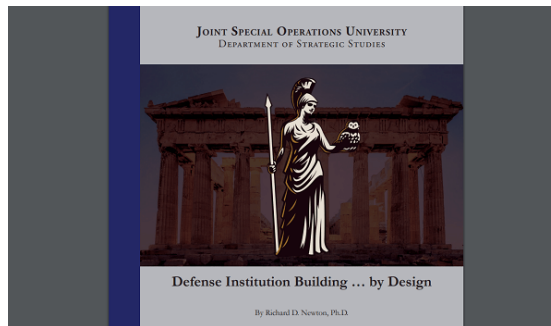
U.S. Army Airborne and Special Operations Museum. This museum is located in downtown Fayetteville, North Carolina. It was privately funded and then donated to the [U.S. Army](#).
<https://www.asomf.org/>

Photo: John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Museum, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Photo credit to U.S. Army.

Link to this article: <https://sof.news/arsof/army-special-operations-forces-museum/>

This article was updated to reflect new information concerning the future museum and truncated to fit the format of the monthly journal. Footnotes and references are in the original article. To read the original article click the link above.

Paper - Defense Institution Building . . . By Design (JSOU, 2019)



Dr. Richard D. Newton, an operational planner at the Special Operations Command Africa, has written a paper about Defense Institution Building (DIB). He describes how DIB helps “. . . to enhance the capacity of allies and partners to sustainably man, train, equip, and independently employ their own military and security forces in support of common strategic interests.

The author notes that Security Force Assistance (SFA), Foreign Internal Defense (FID), and Joint/Combined Exchange Training (JCETS) have a long history in the U.S. special operations community. However, he points out that these missions are often not effective in achieving paradigm shifts that cause organizational transformation.

In his 30-page paper, Dr. Newton describes the purpose of Defense Institution Building and how it is different from SFA, FID, and JCETs. The paper reviews the history of DIB, current literature on DIB, relevant doctrinal publications, and challenges to DIB programs.

He then goes on to recommend taking a design-thinking approach for “designing, developing, and implementing a sustainable DIB partnership with a willing nation.” Newton offers as an example the case study of the transformation of Romania’s special operations forces – which was a priority effort for the Special Operations Command Europe.

In the post 9/11 environment U.S. SOF was focused more at the tactical level (advising combat units) than at the national level (institution building). The author has seen a slow change in approach since 2010 – with an increased focus towards security cooperation intent on institution building. The author concludes his paper with “. . . “Since 2015, design-thinking has offered SOF planners and commanders a practical tool for problem-solving in the human domain.”

Defense Institution Building . . . by Design

By Richard D. Newton, Ph.D.

Joint Special Operations University (JSOU)

Department of Strategic Studies

JSOU Press – Occasional Paper

December 2019

https://jsou.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=51643902

Bio of Dr. Newton. Richard Newton has a long history in the special operations community. He served 22 years in the U.S. Air Force as a combat rescue and special operations helicopter pilot; as well as a combat aviation advisor, planner, and educator. Newton continued his service in the SOF community as a senior faculty member at the Joint Special Operations University. He is an educator, planner, researcher, and curriculum developer in the fields of air-ground integration, irregular and asymmetric warfare, and special operations.

Link to article: <https://sof.news/publications/defense-institution-building-by-design-jsou-2019/>

SIGAR Quarterly Report on Afghanistan

Jan 30, 2020



The January 2020 SIGAR Quarterly Report to Congress is now available for reading. The 222-page PDF is available on the website of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.

The report summarizes SIGAR's oversight work and provides updates on reconstruction efforts (security, governance, development, etc.) during the months of October, November, and December 2019. The SIGAR quarterly reports tend to have specific themes; this report highlights the danger that corruption poses to Afghanistan and assesses the effectiveness of Afghanistan's anticorruption strategy.

Contents of the Report

Section 1- Afghan Corruption

The first section of the report assesses Afghan anticorruption activities, the threat corruption poses in decreasing donor support, how Afghans suffer the consequences, and what the international community can do.

Section 2 – SIGAR Oversight Activities

This section describes the various audits, inspections, special projects, lessons learned, investigations, and other SIGAR oversight activities. In addition, it provides information on the SIGAR budget and staff.

Section 3 – Reconstruction Update

For many military readers – especially those who served or will serve as advisors in Afghanistan; this is perhaps the most interesting section. It covers reconstruction, status of funds, security, governance, economy, and social development.

Section 4 – Other Agency Oversight

This final section describes the completed oversight activities and the ongoing oversight activities.

Appendices and Endnotes

There are seven appendices that cover various topics to include reconstruction funding, SIGAR investigations, classified material associated with this report, methodological notes in the production of this report, and more. One of the more informative appendices is Appendix G: Abbreviations and Acronyms. There are always new [terms and acronyms for the Afghan conflict](#) produced by the U.S. military and Resolute Support headquarters – it is hard to keep track of them. And last are the Endnotes where SIGAR consistently documents the contents of their reports. This report has 637 endnotes!

(Continued)

(SIGAR Quarterly Report on Afghanistan - Jan 30, 2020 . . . Continued)

“A State of Strategic Stalemate”

Both the U.S. and the Afghan government concede that the only way to put an end to the war in Afghanistan is through a negotiated settlement between the Afghan government and the Taliban. Getting to the negotiated settlement is the ‘wicked problem’. In the meantime Taliban attacks have continued at a high tempo. According to Resolute Support HQs “. . . enemy-initiated attacks during the fourth quarter of 2019 were at the highest level for a fourth quarter of any year since recording began in 2010.” [1]

Reduction of US Forces. The United States ‘quietly’ reduced troop levels in Afghanistan over the past year – probably a 2,000 personnel reduction. The Secretary of Defense, Mark Esper, has indicated that the level of troops may go as low as 8,600. This may likely occur whether or not there is a ceasefire or negotiated settlement to the conflict. Esper says that the U.S. would “. . . still be able to execute its unilateral counterterrorism mission and its role in the multi-national RS mission to train, advise, and assist the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF).” [2]

Some Data Not Available. Data that used to be available to SIGAR for publishing in its unclassified reports have since been ‘classified’ or is now unavailable. Some statistics such as ANDSF casualties, unit-level authorized and assigned strength, ANDSF performance assessments, and district assessments are no longer presented in the unclassified SIGAR reports. [3]

There is some good news. Civilian casualties declined in late 2019. ANDSF personnel strength is reported to have increased by 7% since last quarter. The Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defense are making some progress in accounting for their personnel. Both ministries are making headway in improving their retention of personnel and recontracting those who have separated from service.

ANDSF Casualties. The ANDSF continues to suffer casualties at a high rate – although the figures are classified. Most casualties are the result of engagements of local patrols, attacks on checkpoint operations, [4] or during offensive operations. The rate of insider attacks against ANDSF members was higher than in past years.

Another ‘New’ Assessment Tool. Once again the Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A) has rolled out a ‘new and improved’ ANDSF assessment tool. This ‘new tool’ will replace the current advisor-engagement tool and the milestone tracker previously used. CSTC-A has identified five priorities and objectives for the Afghan security forces that will help advisors assess their train, advise, and assist (TAA) efforts. [5]

Conclusion

Once again SIGAR has provided unvarnished reporting about the Afghan conflict. The quarterly reports by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction tend to present the most accurate (unclassified) picture of how things are going on the ground. Absent from these reports are the skewing of data to reflect the ‘great progress’ being made found in many official Department of Defense reports, press briefings, and ‘feel good’ news releases. [6] If you follow the events in Afghanistan or are involved in the advisory effort then these SIGAR reports are worth reading.

Quarterly Report to the United States Congress

January 30, 2020, PDF, 222 pages

Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction

<https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2020-01-30qr.pdf>

(Continued)



(SIGAR Quarterly Report on Afghanistan - Jan 30, 2020 . . . Continued)

Endnotes:

[1] See page 65 for quote on frequency of enemy-initiated attacks. In the past the summer was typical known as the 'fighting season'. Winter was when the Taliban would return to their homes or cross over to Pakistan to refit, retrain, and regroup. As the years have gone by the optempo in the conflict has increased during the winter months.

[2] Certainly a troop reduction to 8,600 would severely impact the train, advise, and assist mission. This troop reduction would force RS HQs to pull advisory teams off lower echelon tactical units, possibly return to a 'fly to advise' advisory mission for some of the ANA Corps, and reduce the training and advising at the institutional and ministry level.

[3] [District level assessments](#) used to be a key indicator of who was 'winning' the war. However, Resolute Support stopped assessing whether the Afghan government or the Taliban 'controlled' or 'influenced' any of the approximately 34 districts.

[4] For years ISAF and then Resolute Support HQs has been attempting to get the MOI and MOD to reduce the thousands of checkpoints scattered in remote outposts throughout the country. This 'checkpoint mentality' takes manpower from offensive operations, doesn't accomplish much in regards to security, provides opportunity for corruption at the checkpoints (illegal tolls to pass through), and provides the insurgents easy targets to attack.

[5] One could write a book on the various assessment processes used by ISAF and then Resolute Support for the security ministries and the ANDSF. It seems that almost every year new metrics are devised to inform the higher staff on how well or poorly the ANDSF is doing and what areas need attention.

[6] We have "turned the corner" so many times in the past 18 years it feels like we are skating on an ice pond doing figure eights!

Photo: A element of the Afghan National Army Special Operations Command (ANASOC) making comms in the field. DOD photo, April 2019.

Link to article: <https://sof.news/afghanistan/sigar-report-jan-2020/>



Additional articles on Afghanistan published by SOF News in January 2020:

DOD 1225 Report on Afghanistan - Dec 2019. On January 23, 2020, the Department of Defense provided to Congress the DOD 1225 report on Afghanistan. The semiannual report, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, covers events during the period of June 1 to November 30, 2019.

<https://sof.news/afghanistan/1225-dec-2019/>

Afghanistan Conflict Update - January 2020. A sampling of curated news, commentary, and analysis about America's longest war - or the Afghanistan quagmire. Topics include security, governance, Resolute Support, ANDSF, elections, peace negotiations, and more from the month of January 2020.

<https://sof.news/afghanistan/afghan-conflict-jan2020/>



Books, Publications, and Reports

Tip of the Spear. The December 2019 monthly issue of United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) *Tip of the Spear* is now posted online. Articles include Korean / American SOF exercise, Saber Junction 19, Operation Commando Wrath (Shok Valley, Afghanistan), 30th anniversary of USASOC, Rangers and the 30th anniversary of Operation Just Cause, MARSOC certification exercise, and more.
<https://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/51824>

CTC Sentinel. The January 2020 issue of *CTC Sentinel* by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point is now [posted online](#). Articles about the killing of Soleimani, lessons from the Islamic State's 'Milestone' texts and speeches, U.S. Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell, and the Islamic State's strategy of civilian control.

Army History. The Winter 2020 issue is now posted online. There are several articles; a couple may be interesting to some: "Indian Regulars in the U.S. Army in the 1890s" and a book review of *The Spearheaders: A Personal History of Darby's Rangers*.
https://history.army.mil/armyhstory/AH-Magazine/2020AH_winter/AH114.pdf

Headquarters Gazette. The Society for Military History has posted their [Winter 2020 issue](#) (27 pages, PDF) online. Some interesting reading for those who follow military history.

New Book – Trump Bashes the Military. A book to be released on January 21, 2020 by Penguin Press sheds some light on President Trump's relationship with his senior general officers. One wonders how much of the book is true – as the scene painted by the author is very disconcerting. Read "[You're a bunch of dopes and babies': Inside Trump's stunning tirade against generals](#)", *The Washington Post*, January 17, 2020.

Russia's Hostile Measures. A host of authors have contributed to a recent RAND report about combating Russian Gray Zone aggression against NATO. The [116-page report](#), published in January 2020, is available in PDF form online.

Review of Book on Snipers. A team of writers collaborate on a book entitled *The Sniper Anthology: Snipers of the Second World War*, 2012. John Plaster (SF) provides the introduction while ten other writers contribute chapters. Christopher Mullins [reviews the book](#) in an article dated January 14, 2020 posted on Argunners.com.

IA Role Players in Army Exercises. The use of military forces by the U.S. around the world requires it to conduct engagement with a host of officials, diplomats, host nation personnel, and members of other U.S. agencies and organizations. This allows the U.S. military organization to leverage other international and US organizations to get to mission accomplishment. During training exercises prior to deployment 'role players' assume the place of members of the interagency world. Read more in "[A Peek Behind the Curtains](#)", *News From the CTC CALL*, December 2019, PDF, 10 pages.

Nationalism and Turkey. RAND Corporation has published a 276-page report entitled *Turkey's Nationalist Course: Implications for the U.S.-Turkish Strategic Partnership and the U.S. Army*, 2020.
https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2589.html

Audiobook – SF in Vietnam. John Stryker Meyer has published an eleven hour long audiobook entitled *Across the Fence: The Secret War in Vietnam*. His audiobook details the deadly and secret war in Laos and Cambodia fought by Special Forces men assigned to the top secret Military Assistance Command Vietnam – Studies and Observations Group or SOG. The [audiobook is available](#) on Audible – an Amazon company.

Journal of Military History. The latest issue is posted online. Must be a current member of the Society for Military History to access.
<https://www.smh-hq.org/jmh/online.html>

(Continued)

(Books, Publications, and Reports . . . Continued)

Book Review – SOE in Malaya. Rebecca Kennelson wrote a book about the SOE in Malaya during WWII. The book is reviewed by Richard Duckett. [Read more](#) about *The Special Operations Executive in Malaya: World War II and the Path to Independence*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019, 256 pp.

Prism. The January 2020 issue of a military journal published by the National Defense University Press is [now online](#). It has a number of interesting articles (but nothing on SOF) in the 184-page PDF. Contents include Cyber, telecommunications, directed energy weapons, neuroweapons, emerging military technologies, UAVs, artificial intelligence, and a lot of other stuff way beyond my comprehension.

Russian PMCs in Africa. Dr. Sergey Sukhankin, a Fellow at the Jamestown Foundation, wrote about Russia's use of private military corporations in Africa. Read ["The Hybrid Role of Russian Mercenaries, PMCs, and Irregulars in Moscow's Scramble for Africa"](#), *The Jamestown Foundation*, Jan 10, 2020.

NCO Guide – TC 7-22.7. The U.S. Army has updated [The Noncommissioned Officer Guide](#) with the history of the NCO, core competencies and attributes, an approved Change of Responsibility script, and more. (*U.S. Army*, Jan 2020).

Pub by CRS on SOF. A [three-page document](#) entitled *Defense Primer: Special Operations Forces* by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) was updated on January 2, 2020 to inform members of Congress on some broad aspects of the U.S. special operations structure, organizations, missions, and more.

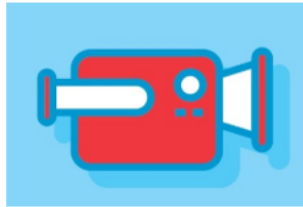
Pub by CRS on Navy IW and CT Opns. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) has updated its publication entitled *Navy Irregular Warfare and Counterterrorism Operations: Background and Issues for Congress* dated December 17, 2019. The pub is [available online](#) in PDF form and is 60 pages long.



Visit the [SOE News Book Shop](#) for popular titles about special operations forces, training, and history.



Videos, Movies, and Podcasts



Hearing on Afghan Strategy. On Tuesday, January 28, 2020 the U.S. House of Representatives conducted a two-hour long hearing entitled *Examining the Trump Administration's Afghanistan Strategy*. The key witness was John Sopko, head of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). The [hearing was held to examine the challenges identified](#) in reports issued by SIGAR.

Video – Russia's Use of PMCs. Professor Ethan S. Burger delivers a presentation about how the Russian government has deployed private organizations such as the Wagner Group to advance its foreign policy goals in Ukraine, Central African Republic, Mozambique, Syria, Sudan, Venezuela, and elsewhere. Hosted by the Institute of World Politics, 49 minutes, January 16, 2020.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4uk2hAA2mY>

Podcast – “How to Enlarge NATO”. A 50-minute long [podcast](#) featuring Douglas Lute (former U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO from 2013 to 2017 and retired LTG) and Mary Elise Sarotee (Professor at School of Advanced International Studies at John Hopkins University). The guest speakers discuss the interesting history and legacy inside the Clinton Administration on how to enlarge NATO. Podcast by “Off the Page”, *International Security Journal*, Harvard University.

COL (Ret SF) Mark Mitchell Podcast. This episode of the Modern War Institute Podcast features a conversation with Mark Mitchell – a retired SF colonel and former acting assistant secretary of defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (SO/LIC). He talks about how the role of special operations forces has evolved over the last twenty years of war and what the future may bring for SOF. Listen to *MWI Podcast: Competition and Conflict in a Changing World*, MWI at West Point, January 10, 2020, 30 minutes.

<https://mwi.usma.edu/mwi-podcast-competition-conflict-changing-world/>

68 Whiskey. James Clark of *Task & Purpose* reviews a new CBS comedy about medics serving in Afghanistan. He says “Don’t bother”. Read [“CBS’s new dark comedy ‘68 Whiskey’ is everything that’s wrong with network military shows”](#), *Task & Purpose*, January 13, 2020.

Video – IS Operations Across the Sahel. A new Islamic State video details the jihadist group’s varying operations across the Sahel over the past few years. The group, known as the Islamic State’s West African Province, is also known as the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). The operations that are presented in the video take place in Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso. Read more in [“Islamic State video details operations across the Sahel”](#), *FDD’s Long War Journal*, January 10, 2020.

Tampa Bay Frogman Swim. Watch a video from the January 12, 2020 event that raised money for the Navy SEAL foundation. (six minutes).

<https://www.facebook.com/RonCollins/videos/10157674298002092/>

1917. This movie is about two young British soldiers who are given a seemingly impossible mission to cross enemy territory and deliver a message that will stop a deadly attack on hundreds of soldiers. Watch the official movie trailer by Universal Pictures, posted December 18, 2019 on YouTube, 3 minutes long.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZjQROMAh_s

Merrill’s Marauders. The 530th Composite Group conducted special operations missions in the Asian theater against Japanese forces during World War II. Watch a 3 minute long video about their missions. USASOC PAO, YouTube, 28 August 2019.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=wacNdAi8OBA

(Continued)

(Videos, Movies, and Podcasts . . . continued)

“Saber Junction: How Green Berets and Paratroopers Will Fight the Next Big War”. A staff member of the *Coffee or Die Magazine*, Marty Skovlund, observes the Operation Saber Junction exercise in the Bavaria region of Germany where U.S. and allied SOF resist a fictional invasion by the Russians. *Coffee or Die Magazine* (YouTube), Jan 10, 2020, 25 mins.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G8rUsKDC7Og>

Dutch Version of Top Gun. This trailer highlights the coming of age of three young cadets during and after their training as fighter jet pilots. Against the backdrop of a changing geopolitical landscape they mature into experienced pilots. Filmed in cooperation with the Dutch Air Force.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=c2Zx4XzIDs4&feature=emb_logo

“Army Riggers”. Parachute riggers from the 7th Special Forces Group are featured in this short video. U.S. Army (YouTube), Dec 4, 2019, 2 mins.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aj2Bs0a5r8w>

“Make Your Move”. A recruiting video for the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. U.S. Army (YouTube), Dec 16, 2019, 30 secs.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSkZw1UrJEY>

“A Glimpse Into an Army Sniper’s Thoughts”. Snipers train and practice for months and years, preparing them to process every unique aspect of a precision shot. This is a glimpse into the things they think about to execute a perfect shot.

U.S. Army (YouTube), Jan 7, 2020, 40 secs.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHAlqf5kgTw>



Novels by Steve Dimodica

Available in print and e-delivery at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Indy book stores.

Curated SOF News - ARSOF

8th SFG(A) – Research Assistance Requested. A Special Forces 180A is a PhD student at the University of Cambridge (UK) and is writing his dissertation on the Cuban inspired and supported insurgency in Peru during the 1960s. He is seeking anyone who was a member of the 8th Special Forces Group during the early to mid-1960s who may consider being interviewed or who could possibly point him to documents or publications with relevant information. He is especially interested in anyone who participated in MTTs in Peru from 1962 to 1966. If you can help send an email to staff@sof.news.

New CSEL for SOJTF-Afghanistan. Army Command Sergeant Major Robert Teagle, currently assigned as the 3rd Special Forces Group Command Sergeant Major at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, [has been selected](#) for the position of Senior Enlisted Leader of the Special Operations Joint Task Force – Afghanistan (SOJTF-A).

‘Horse Soldier’s’ Saddle on Display. One of the saddles used by members of a 5th Special Forces Group team that infiltrated Afghanistan to fight the Taliban in the fall of 2001 [is on display in New York](#) as part of a 9/11 exhibit. (*Commonwealth Journal*, Jan 26, 2020).

Civilians Recognized by USASOAC. The U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command named its 2019 Civilians of the Year during an award presentation held January 6, 2020 at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Frederick Williams (USASOAC Engineer Office) and Laura Gates (USASOAC Comptroller Office) [were recognized](#) for their commitment to the organization and mission. (USASOAC, DVIDS, Jan 6, 2020).

Green Berets and MPs. Sorta like Oil and Water. A retired SF Warrant Officer writes about his days in Panama during [Promote Liberty](#) where a little fun was had with the MPs. Read [“There I Was, Special Force Operator vs Military Cops”](#), *SOFREP*, January 19, 2020.

GB Captain Kicked Out of Army. It is against the regs for an officer to commit adultery and highly frowned upon to consort with the wife of an NCO. Yet this case is causing a bit of a s___ storm in the militaryesque Twitter world. The term ‘its complicated’ comes to mind. Read [“Army Gave Special Forces Captain 14 Days to Leave Without Severance Pay”](#), *Breitbart*, January 18, 2020.

MOH Recipients from 3336 Interviewed. Two Green Berets talk about the day they [endured a full day of intense combat](#) in Afghanistan and what the Medal of Honor means to them. (*We Are the Mighty*, Jan 20, 2020).

SF “Day on the Hill”. The Special Forces Association is looking for SFA members to support a planned “Day on the Hill” at the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. on February 5, 2020. The intent is to visit Congressional offices to advocate for the bipartisan passage of the 116th U.S. Congress House Resolution 906 and Senate Bill 743 – “Merrill’s Marauders Congressional Gold Medal Act”. The bill seeks to recognize the valor and contributions of the U.S. Army’s 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional). The unit conducted long-range special operations jungle warfare during World War II in the China-Burma-India Theater against Japanese forces. For more information on how to help contact the [Special Forces Association](#).

Death of 5th Group Officer. Douglas Ndole Odera, a member of the 5th Special Forces Group, died on December 23, 2019 at age 36. He was a graduate of West Point and had completed several deployments with Special Forces. [Obituary](#).

CMO Capacity Building in Africa. James P. Micciche, a U.S. Army Civil Affairs officer, has written a lengthy essay on the need to stay for the long haul in Africa to ensure regional stability. Read [“A Cause of and Solution to Extremism: A Case for Civil Military Operation \(CMO\) Capacity Building in African Partner Forces”](#), *Small Wars Journal*, January 13, 2020.

Nagata Joins CACI. LTG (Retired) Michael Nagata, a former Special Forces officer, [has been named](#) a senior vice president and advisor at CACI International. (*GovConWire*, Jan 7, 2020). Nagata had served in a couple of SMUs and is a former commander of SOCCENT.

(continued)

(Curated SOF News ARSOF . . . Continued)

Golsteyn's SF Tab – Still Revoked. Major Mathew Golsteyn has had his request to reinstate his Special Forces tab denied by [LTG Fran Beaudette](#) – the commander of United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC). Golsteyn had recently been pardoned by President Trump before he went to trial for premeditated murder for an incident in Afghanistan years ago. See [“Army Spec Ops boss won't reinstate Special Forces tab to officer pardoned by Trump”](#), *Army Times*, January 9, 2020.

Valor Awards for 7th SFGA Soldiers. An awards ceremony was held at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida on January 9, 2020 for soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group. A number of Silver Stars, Bronze Stars, and Army Commendation Medals (Valor) were presented. The awards were the result of actions during a six-month rotation to Afghanistan where 2/7th operated along side other SOF elements in the Special Operations Task Force – Afghanistan. See [“Ceremony recognizes valor, sacrifices of 7th Special Forces Group \(Airborne\) Soldiers”](#), *DVIDS*, January 9, 2020.

RS Cdr and his Glock. General [Austin “Scottie” Miller](#), the commander of Resolute Support in Afghanistan (and former JSOC Cdr) is sporting a Glock. Read more in [“Did America's top commander in Afghanistan ditch his 1911 for a \(tricked out\) Glock?”](#), *Military Times*, January 6, 2020.

Former Green Beret Aids in Escape from Japan. Carlos Ghosn, a former auto executive facing trial in Japan, escaped to Lebanon. Apparently he was assisted in the escape by Mike Taylor – a former Green Beret who served with the 10th and 11th Special Forces Group. Mike Taylor has a wealth of experience working in the security field both domestically and in foreign lands. He is apparently not shy in accepting jobs that many security professionals would decline. Read [“Carlos Ghosn Was Aided in Flight from Japan by Former Green Beret”](#), *The New York Times*, January 3, 2020.

CA / PSYOP AIT To Move To Fort Jackson. Apparently the Army is transferring Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Advanced Individual Training (AIT) courses from the Special Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg, NC to Fort Jackson, SC. See [“Columbia's Army footprint expanding with new training school coming to Fort Jackson”](#), *The State*, January 7, 2020.

Army's Sniper School. An NCO at the U.S. Army sniper Course at Fort Benning, Georgia writes about the improvements made to the sniper course in the past few years. Read [“The Army Sniper”](#), *Small Wars Journal*, January 10, 2020.

Laser Countermeasure Upgrades for MH47Gs. The helicopters of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment are [receiving some impressive upgrades](#). (*The Aviationist*, Jan 10, 2020).

Bio of Gary Gordon – 1SFOD-D KIA in Somalia 1993. The official blog of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has published a biography of MSG Gary Gordon. See [“Gary Gordon: A Real American Hero”](#), VA, January 9, 2020.

Former Green Beret Pleads Guilty. A former Special Forces NCO of the 3rd Special Forces Group [will be sentenced](#) in his role in stealing money while deployed to Afghanistan. He faces 15 years in prison. (*Army Times*, January 13, 2020).

New 7th Group SEA. The 7th Special Forces Group has a new group Senior Enlisted Advisor. A [change of responsibility ceremony](#) was conducted on Friday, January 10, 2020 at Camp Simons, Florida with CSM Alexi Ortiz taking the reigns. (*NSF Daily News*, Jan 11, 2020).

Soldierstone. “Hidden high in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, in a remote and unmarked field, is a secret monument honoring war veterans. The lonely pillar of polished granite sits at more than 11,000 feet, in a clearing among majestic peaks.” LTC (Ret) Stuart Allen Beckley, a former Green Beret and Vietnam Veteran, is the man behind “Soldierstone”. Read more in [“Visiting Soldierstone, a hidden memorial in Colorado honoring forgotten war veterans”](#), *CBS This Morning*, December 2, 2019.

Curated SOF News - AFSOC

CoC at 15th SOS. U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. John O'Meara is the new commander of the 15th Special Operations Squadron at Hurlburt Field, Florida. The 15th SOS is home to MC-130H Combat Talon IIs which support special operations forces in unconventional battlefields worldwide.

New SEAC – Eyes and Ears. The new senior enlisted advisor to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (General Milley) will be getting around the force to serve as a 'directed telescope' for chairman. The top command has a special operations background. Ramon "CZ" Colon-Lopez spent most of his career as an Air Force pararescueman. General Milley served, in his early career, as a Special Forces Detachment Commander. Read ["New SEAC to Serve as Chairman's Eyes and Ears to Joint Force"](#), *U.S. Dept of Defense*, January 24, 2020.

Program Manager for Fulton Extraction Passes Away. LTC Robert Stoney died at age 91 on January 3, 2020. He was a leading figure in the development of the [Fulton Skyhook](#) project. The surface to air recovery system could be used to exfiltrate a downed pilot, CIA officer, or Special Forces soldier by a low-flying aircraft. [Obituary](#).

Promotion for Cdr 1st SOW. Air Force Colonel Michael Conley has been nominated for appointment to the rank of brigadier general. He is currently serving as the commander of the 1st Special Operations Wing at Hurlburt Field, Florida.

Crash of SOF Drone Cause Revealed. The cause of a September 2018 crash of a MQ-9 Reaper was revealed in a recently released Air Force accident investigation. The aircraft was assigned to the 27th Special Operations Wing at Cannon AFB, N.M. Thirty-four MQ-9s have been destroyed (by various means) during the 2009-2019 time frame. Read ["Report: MQ-9 Crash Caused by Faulty Engine Design"](#), *Air Force Magazine*, January 13, 2020.

MC-130H Radar. The Combat Talon II's nose radar offers capabilities that newer MC-130Js seem to lack. Read more in ["Check Out the Crazy Radar that Lies Beneath the MC-130H Combat Talon's Gonzo Nose"](#), *The Drive*, December 30, 2020.

Upgrades for AC-130 Gunship. The lethal AC-130 is getting important new upgrades to its avionics and weapons systems that will increase the effectiveness of the attack platform and extend its service life into future decades. Read ["Death From Above: The Air Force's Fearsome AC-130 Gunship Is Getting Upgrades"](#), *The National Interest*, January 10, 2020.



<https://aircommando.org/foundation/>

Curated SOF News - MARSOC

Changes for Marine Snipers. There is a need for more snipers in the Marine Corps and some changes to make that happen are on the way. Read [“Marine Snipers May Have a New MOS in 2020”](#), *We are the Mighty*, January 16, 2020.



<https://marineraiderassociation.org/news/raider-patch/>

The most recent issue of *The Raider Patch*, 4th quarter 2019, has several articles of interest about marine special operations - past and present. The magazine is published by the Marine Raider Association four times a year. The latest issue has articles entitled:

"Passing the Torch - Callsign Raider 96"

"Raider Reunion 2019"

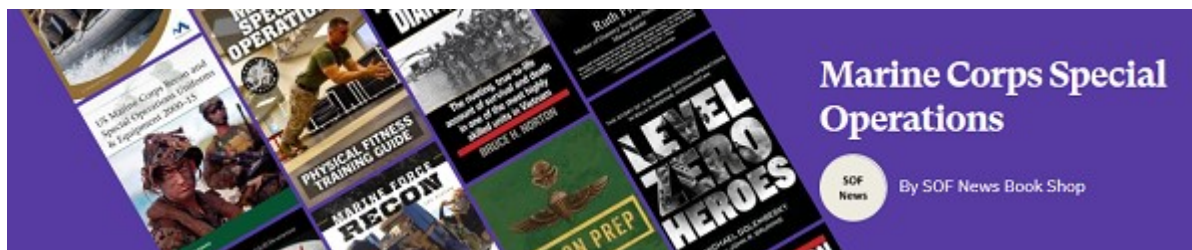
"New Year. Better You"

“Stay in the Fight: Tips & Tactics for Physical Durability”

"Raider Harry J. Haug"

“Incident at Go Noi Island - Quang Nam Vietnam”

“MARSOC Takes Certification Exercise to Next Level”



Curated SOF News - NSW

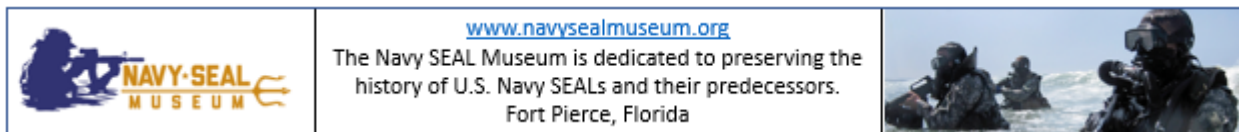
Navy's SDVs. H.I. Sutton has posted another informative article about the U.S. Navy's SEAL Delivery Vehicles. The latest one is on the [SDV-Mk-8-Mod-0](#). (*Covert Shores*, Jan 21, 2020).

Seaman George Preston (WWII UDT). A veteran is spotlighted by a writer for a local newspaper on Cape Cod (Massachusetts). Read the story of a member of the U.S. Navy who served in a Naval Combat Demolition unit as a frogman. See ["Veterans Spotlight – Seaman George Preston"](#), *The Falmouth Enterprise*, January 17, 2020.

New Mini-Subs for SEALs. The Navy is taking a look at two new kinds of small submarines to transport SEALs or Combat Divers short distances near the surface of the water. They would replace the older Mark 8 SEAL Delivery Vehicles or SDVs. Read ["The Navy SEALs Have Plans For Small, Mini Submarines"](#), *The National Interest*, January 19, 2020.

SEAL Becomes an Astronaut. With a resume that reads like fiction, it is pretty clear this man is a prime candidate for a journey into space. Read ["Jonny Kim is the SEAL-Mathematician-Doctor-Astronaut We Desperately Need Right Now"](#), *The Drive – War Zone*, January 17, 2020.

SEAL Heading off to Space. An active-duty Navy lieutenant with an interesting career (SEALs, Silver Star, Harvard Medical School, etc.) finds himself in the astronaut program. Read ["SEAL, Doctor, Astronaut – Navy Lt. Jonny Kim achieves your childhood dreams so you don't have to"](#), *Task & Purpose*, January 13, 2020.



The Never Ending Saga of Eddie Gallagher. This is the story that just doesn't go away. In a video published on social media Gallagher highlights the faces and current units of active-duty SEALs, calls them cowards. See ["Retired Navy SEAL Eddie Gallagher strikes back at SEALs who testified against him"](#), *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, January 27, 2020.

Eddie Gallagher and his "Salty Frog Gear". The SEAL pardoned by President Trump has launched an [apparel line](#) featuring hoodies, t-shirts, and drinkware. Gallagher was acquitted of charges relating to the death of an Iraqi militant while deployed with the Navy SEALs. He was convicted of posing in a photograph with the body of the dead insurgent.

Naval SEAL Accused of Murder Promoted. The U.S. Navy promoted Chief Petty Officer Tony DeDolph, a Navy SEAL, four months after he admitted to choking Green Beret Logan Melgar of the 3rd Special Forces Group to death in Mali in June 2017. See ["Navy SEAL Promoted After Choking Green Beret to Death"](#), *Daily Beast*, January 28, 2020.

Tampa Bay Frogman Swim. The annual fund raising event was held on Sunday, January 12, 2020. It is an official Navy SEAL Foundation fundraiser and has raised over \$3 million for the Foundation. The Foundation has been certified by Charities of America as a 'Best in America' charity. Read more about the [Tampa Bay Frogman Swim](#).



Curated SOF News - Misc

Key SOF DOD Position Filled. Chris Miller, a retired Special Forces officer, has moved from the White House where he worked counterterrorism issues to the Department of Defense. Miller will serve as the [Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Combating Terrorism](#). His office is responsible for developing policy guidance and oversee the implementation of all DOD policies, strategies, and plans related to special operations and combating terrorism. Some of these responsibilities include the oversight of employment of SOF in CT, UW, DA, SR, FID, and counterproliferation. He had served as the National Security Council's senior director for counterterrorism until December 2019. Read more in ["More Officials Leave Pentagon; Special Ops Office Gets Some Needed Help"](#), *Breaking Defense*, January 9, 2020.

ASD SO/LIC Vacancy. There are other important SOF vacancies that need filling including the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ASD) for Special Operations and Low-intensity Conflict (SO/LIC). Read ["The Missing Assistant Secretary of Defense and the Soleimani Strike"](#), by Luke Hartig, *Just Security*, January 3, 2020.

U.S. SOF Base in Kenya Hit by Terrorists. USSOCOM lost a couple of special operations aircraft and three Americans died during an attack by al-Shabaab on the Manda Bay Airfield adjacent to Camp Simba in Kenya on January 5, 2020. Several aircraft were destroyed to include a [Dash-8](#) and [C-146A Wolfhound](#). A [U.S. Army Soldier](#) and two contract pilots were killed during the attack. The facility, on the Kenya coast just south of the Somali border, is used to train up Kenya naval and army forces as well as to provide assistance in the fight against al-Shabaab in Somalia. See ["Somali terrorist group destroyed U.S. spy aircraft in an attack on military base in Kenya"](#), *Defence-Blog*, January 5, 2020.

Russians Replacing U.S. SOF in NE Syria? Russia has been working to develop a local military force in the Kurdish region of northeast Syria. They are primarily recruiting ethnic Kurds. The Russians may very likely have long-term plans for staying in Syria and establishing local military units in the region loyal to the Russians. See ["Russia Seeks to Build Local Force in Northeast Syria"](#), *Voice of America*, December 19, 2019.

PSYOP and Cyber. Dr. Herb Lin, a senior research scholar for cyber policy and security, comments in a lengthy essay about the mixing of PSYOP and Cyber operations by the U.S. Cyber Command. Read ["On the Integration of Psychological Operations with Cyber Operations"](#), *Lawfare blog*, January 9, 2020.

SOF Vets Work as Bodyguards in Hollywood. A firm providing protection to high-profile Hollywood actors relies on former and current members of law enforcement organizations and special operations units of the military. Read more in ["Inside the Secret Service of Hollywood That Guards Stars Like Post Malone and Jennifer Lopez"](#), *The Daily Beast*, January 12, 2020.

The 'New' SOF M110K1 Sniper Rifle. A sniper rifle used by Special Operations Forces is getting an upgrade that will allow it to remain in the SOF arsenal for a few more years. Read ["The U.S. Special Forces 'New' M110K1 Sniper Rifle: The Best on the Planet?"](#), *The National Interest*, January 11, 2020.

New Suppressor for JSOC? A new machine-gun suppressor has been selected for evaluation by Joint Special Operations Command. The device is for the M240 machine gun. See ["US Special Operators Could Use This New Suppressor That Relies on WWI Technology"](#), *Military.com*, January 22, 2020.

\$245 Million SOF Contract for F3EA. A Savannah, Georgia firm, [F3EA, Inc.](#), has been awarded a contract to provide special operations forces requirements, analysis, prototyping, training, operations, and rehearsals (RAPTOR). The contract provides for a [deliverable training support product](#) that can be executed in any AOR.

Human Domain and PSYOP. Some fascinating, [futuristic reading](#) by the Mad Scientist Laboratory (army.mil). Read *Psychological Warfare in the Human Domain: Mixing AI-Powered Technology with Psychosocial Engagement*, TRADOC, January 13, 2020. The plot is about a multifunctional special operations team that infiltrates into the Ad Dali' Province of western Yemen as part of a coalition effort that supports the UN recognized government of President Mansour Hadi, based in the southern capital of Aden in the year 2025.

Delta Force – Staying Elite? Sebastien Roblin explains how the selection and training process prepares its members for the difficult and dangerous missions it conducts around the world. But it also does more. Read ["How does the Delta Force Remain So Elite?"](#), *The National Interest*, January 12, 2020.

Curated SOF News - International

Colombia's 2nd SF Bn in Exercise with 82nd. Members of the 82nd Airborne Division and U.S. Army South parachuted into Colombia this past Sunday (Jan 26). After the jump they began a follow-on exercise. A nearby airfield – Tolima Air Base – is the location of the Colombian National Training Center. Members of Colombia's 2nd Special Forces Battalion are participating in the exercise. Read more in ["Paratroopers jump into Colombia for airfield seizure exercise"](#), *Army Times*, January 27, 2020.

CANSOF Soldier Guilty. A Canadian special forces soldier [admitted to stealing](#) gun parts, a generator, batteries, clothing, and more. (*CBC, CA*, Jan 24, 2020).

RM, FCF, and the 'Grey Zone'. Change is occurring within the armed forces of the United Kingdom as it adapts to the new operational environment. The Royal Marines are working towards transforming into a Future Commando Force (FCF) and must be able to function within the new way of warfare. Read ["FCF and the Grey Zone: Creating Ambiguity"](#), *Puzzle Palace: The Unofficial Commando Think Tank*, January 24, 2020.

CANSOF – Notes of an Operator. Wes Kennedy, a Canadian SOF operator talks about joining the force and what sets an SF apart from the rest of the military community. Read ["Canadian Special Operations: What Does it Mean to be an Operator?"](#), *SOFREP*, January 24, 2020.

UAE Swat Challenge. On February 9-13, 2020 the United Arab Emirates will host an international competition for police SWAT teams. There are five challenge categories in which teams will compete. The event takes place in the Dubai SEAT Training Facility. Almost 50 teams from over 25 countries will compete. <https://uaeswatchallenge.ae/>

Fuerzas Comando 2020 Tryouts. The 7th Special Forces Group is holding tryouts for the team that will represent the United States in the annual event. The special operations competition takes place every summer with about 20 teams competing. The Colombians always seem to have a strong showing – they won [Fuerzas Comando 2019](#). Is this the year that 7th SFGA comes through with 1st place? Or should they farm the event out to a 20th group team?

India's Big Airborne Exercise. The Indian Army conducted its biggest airborne exercise called the ["Winged Raider"](#) comprising of more than 550 special forces troops in the North-Eastern theatre. (*Defence Aviations Post*, Jan 17, 2020).

Israel's Drones. Seth Frantzman, a Jerusalem-based journalist, enlightens us on ["How Israel Trains Its Elite Drone Warriors"](#), *The National Interest*, January 11, 2020.

India's VIPs Losing NSG Security. The government of India has decided to withdraw the security details provided to VIPs by the National Security Guard Black Cat Commandos. Read ["Govt to Withdraw NSG Commandos From All VIP Security Duties"](#), *Indian Defense News*, January 13, 2020.

IDF Establishes New 'Multidimensional Unit'. The Israeli Defense Forces announced the formation of a new unit that will help Israeli 'strike the enemy faster'. Personnel assigned to the new unit will come from a variety of other IDF units to include intelligence, special forces, reconnaissance, paratroopers, air force, and others. The new unit will be led by a former commander of the elite Duvdevan special forces unit. Read ["IDF Launches New Combat Unit"](#), *Arutz Sheva*, January 1, 2020.



SOF History

January 24th, 2019 was the 55th anniversary of the activation of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, Studies and Observations Group (MACV-SOG) in the Republic of Vietnam. Formed in 1964, MACV-SOG functioned as a joint special operations task force (JSOTF) in Southeast Asia.



Read more in *MACV-SOG History*

by Robert Seals

USASOC History Office

January 24, 2019

https://www.army.mil/article/216498/macv_sog_history

More Stories about Special Operations History

World War I Desert Rats. Read about the history of early British special operations by James Stejskal (author of *Masters of Mayhem*) in [“WWI Desert Rats and the Origins of Special Forces”](#), *Forces Network*, January 23, 2020.

UK SOF in Burma in WWII. Read up on some history of how the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) and the Special Operations Executive (SOE) cooperated (sorta) in the Far East during World War II. Read [“SOE / SIS Cooperation”](#), *SOE in Burma*, January 19, 2020.

The Last Full Measure. A film about pararescue during the Vietnam War has had the [technical advise of a retired Air Force NCO](#) who spent 24 years in pararescue. The advisor, John Pighini, was a Silver Star recipient for his actions in Vietnam. (*New York Post*, Jan 23, 2020).



“Preserving the history of the Combat Diver community”

<https://combatdiver.org/>

2020 SOF Events

<https://sof.news/sof-events/>

February 2020

February 12, 2020. Washington, D.C.

[Imperatives Initiative and Forum](#)

Global SOF Foundation

February 20-21, 2020. Tampa, Florida

[USSOCOM / CENTCOM VA Benefits and Disability Claims Seminar](#)

Green Beret Foundation

February 27, 2020. Belleair, Florida

[Charity Golf Tournament](#)

SOWF / UDT-SEAL Association

March 2020

March 27, 2020. Fort Lewis, Washington

[1st SF Group VA Benefits and Disability Claims Seminar](#)

Green Beret Foundation

April 2020

April 2020. Tampa, Florida

[Heroes Unite: SOWF's 40th Anniversary Event](#)

Special Operations Warrior Foundation

April 3-4, 2020. Yuma, Arizona

[Military Freefall Instructor Reunion and Ball](#)

Military Freefall Association

April 22, 2020. Fort Carson, Colorado

[10th SF Group VA Benefits and Disability Claims Seminar](#)

Green Beret Foundation

April 30, 2020. Paterson, New Jersey

[Ronald P. Bucca Horse Soldier Award Dinner](#)

Special Forces Foundation

If you have an event you wish to list send an email to staff@sof.news.



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SPECIAL OPERATIONS NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

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