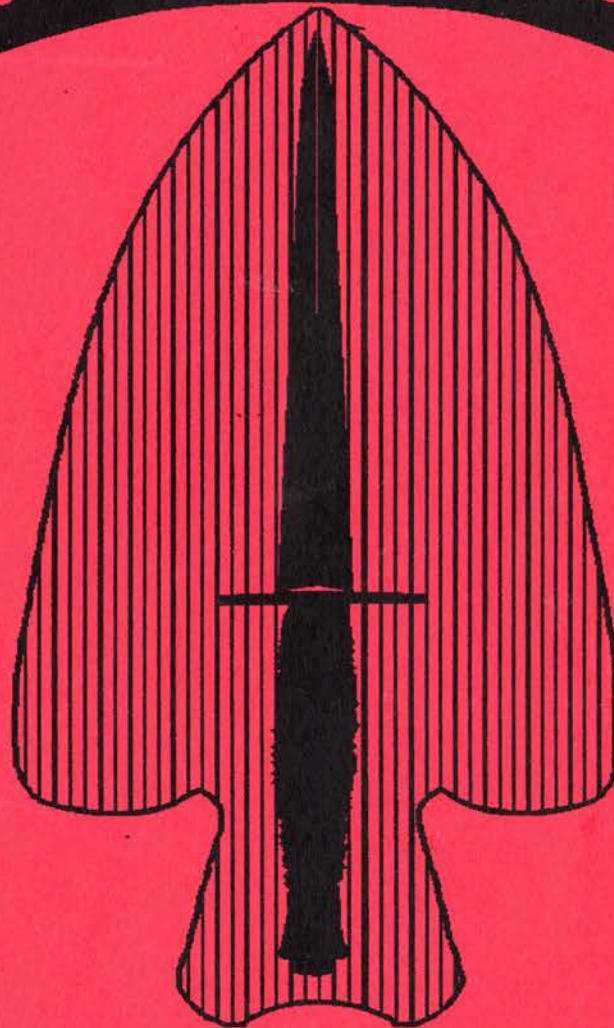


**SINE PARI**  
THE STORY OF ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS

**AIRBORNE**

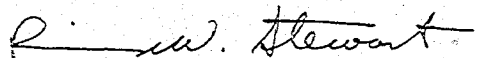


**UNITED STATES ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND  
HISTORICAL MONOGRAPH #1**

**USASOC DIRECTORATE OF HISTORY, ARCHIVES, AOHS, LIBRARY, AND MUSEUMS**

## USASOC HISTORICAL MONOGRAPHS

United States Army Special Operations Command units have a rich and varied heritage stretching back to the birth of our nation. From the woods of New England to the swamps of South Carolina, from the jungles of the Philippines to the hills of Korea and from the darkened skies of Europe to the central highlands of Vietnam, Army Special Operations soldiers have fought their often secret war with quiet valor and deadly skill. The USASOC Historical Monograph series is dedicated to preserving that heritage and passing it on to a new generation of soldiers; a generation that, like its forebearers, is "SINE PARI" -- Without Equal.



Richard W. Stewart, Ph.D.  
USASOC Historian

Other Titles in this series include:

2. "To Free from Oppression", A Concise History of Army Special Operations.
3. "Cease Resistance: It's Good for You": A History of U.S. Army Combat Psychological Operations.
4. "Army Special Operations Forces in World War II"
5. "A Short History of Special Operations Support"
6. (S) "Special Operations Forces in Haiti" (U) (TBP)
7. (S) "Special Operations in Operations Desert Shield/Storm (U)
8. "Standing up the MACOM: The U.S. Army Special Operations Command 1987-92" (TBP)
9. "The History of U.S. Army Civil Affairs/Military Government (TBP)

# SINE PARI

WITHOUT EQUAL: The Story of Army Special Operations

BY

The USASOC Directorate of History, Archives,  
Library and Museums



1997

They climbed the cliffs of Normandy and prowled the jungle trails of Burma. They mastered the hills of Korea and waded through the rice paddies of Vietnam. They weathered the cold political climates of the 1970s and emerged stronger than ever in the 1980s.

They are the Army's Special Operations Forces (SOF), and for more than 40 years they have been America's elite spearhead. They include such fabled units as Special Forces (SF) and Rangers, and such relatively obscure ones as those involved in Psychological Operations (PSYOP) and Civil Affairs (CA). But no matter how famous or obscure they are, they all have one thing in common. They are the one of the Army's main weapons for waging unconventional warfare in an age when conventional conflicts have become increasingly rare.

In the future as in the past, American special operations forces will be called upon to conduct crucial missions in the face of overwhelming odds. It is a task they can look forward to with confidence, because the tradition of Army special operations is one of excellence. It is because of this record that present-day unconventional troops have adopted as their motto the Latin phrase "Sine Pari" -- "Without Equal."



### The Origins of Special Operations

Special operations are nothing new to the American soldier. Before there were Green Berets teaching counterinsurgency to

foreign armies or Rangers jumping out of jet planes, there were grim-faced men stalking the enemy in woods and swamps during the French and Indian Wars.

Known as "Rogers' Rangers" after their commander Maj. Robert Rogers, they were the first of America's unconventional forces. Though the era they lived in was simpler than the present age, the skills necessary to become an elite soldier were the same.



Rogers' Rangers fought in terrain that normal men shunned. They crept up on unsuspecting foes with the stealth of Indians; in fact they modeled their tactics on those of the native Americans. "Move fast and hit hard," and "don't forget nothing", Rogers told his men, and they obeyed, thereby setting the standards for generations to follow.

The tradition continued in the Revolutionary War with Francis Marion, the South Carolina "Swamp Fox", whose troops harassed the British with a success out of all proportion to their small numbers. In the Civil War, John Singleton Mosby formed a band of Confederate partisan raiders that became the terror of Union generals, cutting off communications and supplies behind the lines.



But it was during World War II that special operations troops finally left the shadowy peripheries and came into their own. In quick succession the public soon knew the names of such units as the Devil's Brigade, Darby's Rangers, and Merrill's Marauders.

## Elite Units in World War II

Known more formally as the 1st Special Service Force, the Devil's Brigade was a joint Canadian-American venture that began July 9, 1942, at Fort William Henry Harrison, Montana. Airborne-trained and honed to the sharpness of a cold steel blade, the Devil's Brigade saw most of its action in Italy, but also fought in France, where it was inactivated in 1944. Its forte was close-quarter combat against numerically-superior forces, a task which it accomplished with a raw power that gave the brigade its nickname.



"Darby's Rangers" was the name given to the 1st Ranger Battalion, in honor of its commander, Maj. William O. Darby. The unit was activated June 19, 1942, in Carrickfergus, Ireland. It fought throughout Western Europe, but achieved its greatest fame when it scaled the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc as part of the D-Day invasion of Normandy, thus inspiring the saying, "If it's impossible, let the Rangers do it."

"Merrill's Marauders" was the romantic title given to Colonel (later Brigadier General) Frank D. Merrill's 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), a 3,000-man force that staked out a piece of Burmese jungle and dared the Japanese to challenge it. They did, and wound up losing to the Marauders in five major battles and 17 skirmishes. The Marauders' greatest feat, and the one which made them an inspiration 20 years later when American GIs were once again slogging through Asian jungles, was their march of hundreds of miles through thick Burmese foliage en route to the capture of Myitkyina airfield.

These were the units that received the ink during the second World War, the units that took some of the glamour away from conventional troops. Their philosophy was simple: shock the enemy with quick strikes and deep thrusts, leaving him paralyzed and confused. It was the 20th century application of principles first formulated by Rogers' Rangers, and it became the basis of the modern-day Ranger force.



But at the same time, in areas that even the Devil's Brigade and Darby's Rangers never ventured, there was a whole different ballgame being played by a whole different team. It consisted of small parachute units operating behind enemy lines, developing a network of contacts, giving instructions to local fighters, and waging guerrilla warfare on a helpless enemy.

It was a new kind of special operations, taking a bit of the Swamp Fox and a bit of Mosby, and combining it with new techniques of airborne and guerrilla fighting. There wasn't a name for it yet, but the agency that developed it was called the Office of Strategic Services.

#### Shadow Warriors: The OSS

The OSS was the product of William Donovan, an imposing man-mountain of a visionary whose propensity for freewheeling activity earned him the nickname of "Wild Bill." Donovan was tough and smart, a veteran of World War I who received the Medal of Honor for heroics on the Western Front in October 1918, and who made a fortune as a Wall Street lawyer during the 1920s and '30s. He unsuccessfully ran for governor of New York in 1932, but managed to become close friends with President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt.

When World War II finally erupted in Europe and threatened to engulf the United States, Donovan became convinced that a new type of organization would have to be formed, one which would

collect intelligence and wage secret operations behind enemy lines. He met resistance among traditional-Army types whose thinking was based on conventional concepts of waging war. So when Donovan failed to make headway with the Army, he went to his friend, the president.



In 1941, Roosevelt directed Donovan to form a new agency, the Coordinator of Intelligence. Donovan, who had been a civilian since World War I, was made a colonel.

COI blossomed quickly, forming operational sites in England, North Africa, India, Burma and China. In 1942, the agency was renamed the OSS, and Donovan became a major general.



A Jedburgh

One major operation of the OSS in Europe was called the Jedburgh Mission. It consisted of dropping three-man teams into France, Belgium and Holland, where they linked up with partisan movements, trained them, and conducted guerrilla operations against the Germans in preparation for the D-Day invasions

Another major Unconventional Warfare operation saw the formation of Operational Groups (OGs). OGs consisted of 34 man teams (30 enlisted men and 4 officers) which generally fought as split teams of 15-17 men. The teams dropped behind enemy lines in Italy, France, Greece, Yugoslavia, and Norway to conduct raids, lead and train the local resistance movements and generally create the maximum amount of confusion. They were the direct ancestors of today's Special Forces "A" Team.

Other OSS operations took place in Asia, most spectacularly in Burma, where OSS Detachment 101 organized 11,000 Kachin tribesmen into a force that eventually killed 10,000 Japanese at a loss of only 206 of its own.



After the war, President Harry S. Truman disbanded the OSS, but not before it had left a legacy still felt today. From its intelligence operations came the nucleus of men and techniques that would give birth to the Central Intelligence Agency on Sept. 18, 1947.

From the guerrilla operations of the O.S.S. came the nucleus of men and techniques that would give birth to Special Forces (more popularly known as the Green Berets) on June 19, 1952. This was the result of the labors of such former OSS operatives as Col. Aaron Bank and Col. Russell Volckmann, who remained in the military after the war and did their best to convince the Army to adopt an unconventional guerrilla-style force of its own.

They had an ally in Brig. Gen. Robert McClure, who headed the Army Psychological Warfare Staff in the Pentagon. Bank and Volckmann were assigned to McClure's office after World War II, where they worked on plans for the organization and training of a special operations unit. Thanks to their diligence, they finally persuaded the Army to adopt such a force by the spring of 1952.

Bank and Volckmann convinced the Army chiefs that there were areas in the world not susceptible to conventional warfare --



BANK



MCCLURE



VOLCKMANN

Soviet dominated Eastern Europe especially -- but which would make ideal targets for unconventional harassment and guerrilla fighting. Special operations as envisioned by the two men were a force multiplier: a small number of soldiers could sow a disproportionate large amount of trouble for the enemy. Confusion would reign among enemy ranks, and objectives would be accomplished with an extreme economy of manpower.

It was a bold idea, one that went against the grain of traditional concepts, but the Army was finally ready for it. In 1952, the first permanent MTOE guerrilla warfare unit in the U. S. Army was formed.

### Special Forces: The Early Years

The new organization was dubbed "Special Forces," a designation derived from the OSS, whose operational teams in the field were given the same name in 1944. The Army allocated 2,300 personnel slots for the unit and assigned it to Fort Bragg, N.C.

In the spring of 1952, Bank went to Fort Bragg to choose a suitable location for a Psychological Warfare/Special Forces Center. He chose a remote area of the post known as Smoke Bomb Hill, not knowing that within ten years it would become one of the busiest places in the Army. He then went about assembling a cadre of officers and NCOs who would serve as the hard-core foundation of the new unit, and who would act as a training staff to perpetuate and flesh out the fledgling organization. Bank didn't want raw recruits. He wanted the best troops in the Army, and he got them: former OSS officers, airborne troops, ex-Ranger troops, and combat vets of World War II and Korea.

They were an unusual lot, a motivated bunch, men who were looking for new challenges to conquer -- the more arduous the better. Virtually all spoke at least two languages, had at least a sergeant's rank, and were trained in infantry and parachute skills. They were all volunteers willing to work behind enemy lines, in civilian clothes if necessary. This last item was no small matter: if caught operating in civilian clothes, a soldier was no longer protected by the Geneva Convention and would more than likely be shot on sight if captured.

But these first volunteers didn't worry about the risks: they were long accustomed to living with danger. Many of them had come from Eastern Europe, where they had fled the tyranny of communist rule after the end of World War II. They were admitted to the Army under the provisions of the Lodge Bill, a legislative act designed to allow immigrants from politically-persecuted lands to become U.S. citizens by serving in the American armed forces.

As a result, Bank found himself with a cadre of soldiers ideally suited for organizing guerrilla operations in Eastern Europe, precisely the areas he wanted to concentrate on. "They not only spoke the language of the target areas," Bank said of the Lodge Bill troops, "but also were familiar with the customs, political sentiments and ideology, police system, geography, and industrial setup."

After months of intense preparation, Bank's unit was finally activated at Fort Bragg on June 19, 1952. It was designated the 10th Special Forces Group, with Bank as commander. On the day of activation, the total strength of the group was ten soldiers -- Bank, one warrant officer, and eight enlisted men. But that was soon to change.

Within months, hundreds of the first volunteers reported to 10th Group as they completed the initial phase of their Special Forces training. As the group got larger, it was divided into collections of three types of team detachments -- A, B and C.

"A" teams consisted of two officers and ten enlisted men, and were commanded by a captain. The A teams were the lifeblood of the new Special Forces. They were the men who got down and dirty deep inside enemy territory, making contact with possible resistance leaders and developing the indigenous population into a cohesive guerrilla force. Each team member was trained in one or more of the basic Special Forces skills: operations and intelligence, medical skills, communications, weaponry and demolitions. To this day, the A team remains the basis of Special Forces operations.

"B" teams were more oriented toward management than training. They coordinated the actions of various A teams assigned to specific areas in a target country.

"C" teams were at the top of the Special Forces administrative hierarchy. They worked with the top leaders of indigenous guerrilla movements, and provided overall command and control to other SF teams in the area of operations.

As soon as 10th Group became large enough, Bank began training his troops in the most advanced techniques of unconventional warfare. As defined by the Army, the main mission of Bank's unit was "to infiltrate by land, sea or air, deep into enemy-occupied territory and organize the resistance/guerrilla potential to conduct Special Forces operations, with emphasis on guerrilla warfare." But there were secondary missions as well.

They included deep-penetration raids, intelligence missions and counterinsurgency operations. It was a tall order, one which demanded a commitment to professionalism and excellence perhaps unparalleled in American military history. But Bank's men were up to the challenge.

They had been through tough training before; their airborne and Ranger tabs were proof of that. But working for Special Forces was not going to be simply a rehash of Ranger techniques. If the volunteers didn't appreciate the difference between Rangers and Special Forces when they first signed up, they did when they went through Bank's training. As Bank later put it, "Our training included many more complex subjects and was geared to entirely different, more difficult, comprehensive missions and complex operations." They were the spiritual heirs to the OSS.



One of the visitors to their training, retired Major General William Donovan, stated as much when he saw them.

The Rangers of World War II and Korea had been designed as light-infantry shock troops; their mission was to hit hard, hit fast, then get out so larger and more heavily armed units could follow through. Special Forces, however, were designed to spend months, even years, deep within hostile territory. They would have to be self-sustaining. They would have to speak the language of their target area. They would have to know how to survive on their own, without extensive resupply from the outside.

After less than a year and a half together as a full Special Forces group, Bank's men proved to the Army's satisfaction that they had mastered the skills of their new trade. So on Nov. 11, 1953, in the aftermath of the aborted uprising in East Germany, half of the 10th Special Forces Group was permanently redeployed to Bad Tolz, West Germany. The other half remained at Fort Bragg, where they were redesignated as the 77th Special Forces Group.

The split of the 10th and the 77th was the first sign that Special Forces had established themselves as an essential part of the Army's basic structure. For the rest of the 1950s, Special Forces would grow slowly but consistently into a formidable organization. On April 1, 1956, 16 soldiers from the 77th were activated as the 14th Special Forces Operational Detachment; in June they were sent to Hawaii, and shortly thereafter to Thailand, Taiwan and Vietnam. Special Forces were now casting their glance to the Far East, departing from their previously heavy European orientation.

The 14th SFOD was shortly followed by three other operational detachments, each designed for Asia and the Pacific -- the 12th, 13th and 16th. These were soon combined into the 8231st Army Special Operations Detachment. On June 17, 1957, the 14th and 8231st joined to form the 1st Special Forces Group, stationed at Okinawa and responsible for the Far Eastern theater of operations.

By the time John F. Kennedy was inaugurated as president in January 1961, the three Special Forces groups -- the 10th, the 7th (redesignated from the 77th on June 6, 1960) and the 1st -- had firmly entrenched themselves as the Army's elite. With the

ascension of Kennedy, word of their prowess spread worldwide. But even more importantly, Special Forces grew at a speed unthinkable to Bank and other SF proponents of the early 1950s.



In 1961, Kennedy visited Fort Bragg. He inspected the 82nd Airborne Division and other conventional troops of the XVIII Airborne Corps and liked what he saw. But what he liked even more were the Special Forces. As a student of military affairs, Kennedy had developed an interest in counterinsurgency-- the art and method of defeating guerrilla movements. As he gazed at the ranks of Special Forces troops, he realized he had the ideal vehicle for carrying out such missions.

With Kennedy firmly behind them, new Special Forces groups sprang up with dizzying rapidity. On Sept. 21, 1961, the 5th Group was activated, followed in 1963 by the 8th on April 1, the 6th on May 1, and the 3rd on Dec. 5.

Kennedy's interest in the Special Forces also led to the formal adoption on Sept. 21, 1961, of the green beret as the official headgear of all Special Forces troops. Until then, the beret had faced an uphill fight in its struggle to achieve official Army recognition.



The green beret had originally been designed in 1953 by Special Forces Maj. Herb Brucker, a veteran of OSS. Later that year, 1st Lt. Roger Pezelle adopted it as the unofficial headgear for his A team, Operational Detachment FA 32. They wore it whenever they went to the field for prolonged exercises.

Soon, it spread throughout all of Special Forces. But the Army refused to authorize its official use. Finally, in 1961, President Kennedy planned to

visit Fort Bragg, and he especially wanted to take a look at his Special Forces. He sent word to the Special Warfare Center Commander, Brig. Gen. William P. Yarborough, for all SF soldiers to wear their berets for the event. Kennedy felt that since they had a special mission, SF soldiers should have something to set them apart from the rest. (Even before the presidential request, however; the Department of the Army had acquiesced and sent a message to the Center authorizing the beret as a part of the SF uniform.)

After his visit to Fort Bragg, the president told the Pentagon that he considered the green beret to be "symbolic of one of the highest levels of courage and achievement of the United States military." Soon, the green beret became synonymous with Special Forces, so much so that the two terms became interchangeable. And, indeed, it was fitting that the men of the Special Forces finally had the right to wear their elite headgear because they were now on the brink of proving just how elite they were. Vietnam was beckoning.

#### Special Forces in Vietnam

Nam Dong, Lang Vei, Dak To, A Shau, Plei Mei -- these were just some of the places Special Forces troops fought and died for during their 14-year stay in South Vietnam.

It was a stay that began in June 1956, when the original 16 members of the 14th Special Forces Operational Detachment entered Vietnam to train a cadre of indigenous Vietnamese Special Forces teams. In that same year, on Oct. 21, the first American soldier died in Vietnam--Capt. Harry G. Cramer Jr., of the 14th SFOD.

Throughout the remainder of the 1950s and early 1960s, the number of Special Forces military advisors in Vietnam increased steadily. Their responsibility was to train South Vietnamese soldiers in the art of counterinsurgency and to mold various native tribes into a credible, anti-communist threat. During the early years, elements from the different Special Forces groups were involved in advising the South Vietnamese. But in September 1964, the first step was taken in making Vietnam the exclusive operational province of 5th Group, when it set up its provisional headquarters in Nha Trang. Six months later in February, Nha Trang became the 5th's permanent headquarters. From then until

1971, when it returned to Fort Bragg, Vietnam was mainly the 5th's show, although small elements of other SF groups remained detached in the country in various advisory capacities.

By the time the 5th left Vietnam, its troops had won 16 of the 17 Medals of Honor awarded to Special Forces soldiers in Vietnam, plus one Distinguished Service Medal, 60 Distinguished Service Crosses, 814 Silver Stars, 13,234 Bronze Stars, 235 Legions of Merit, 46 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 232 Soldier's Medals, 4,891 Air Medals, 6,908 Army Commendation Medals and 2,658 Purple Hearts.

It was a brilliant record, one that was built solely on blood and sacrifice. Through their unstinting labors, Special Forces troops eventually established 254 outposts throughout the country, many of them defended by a single A team and hundreds of friendly natives. SF soldiers earned their reputations in places like Dong Xoai and Plei Me, where the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese threw everything they had at them but found out that wasn't enough. They won their Medals of Honor in places like Nam Dong, where Capt. Rogers H.C. Donlon claimed the first MOH of the war for his actions on July 6, 1964, when he led Nam Dong's successful defense against a Viet Cong attack, despite sustaining a mortar wound to the stomach.



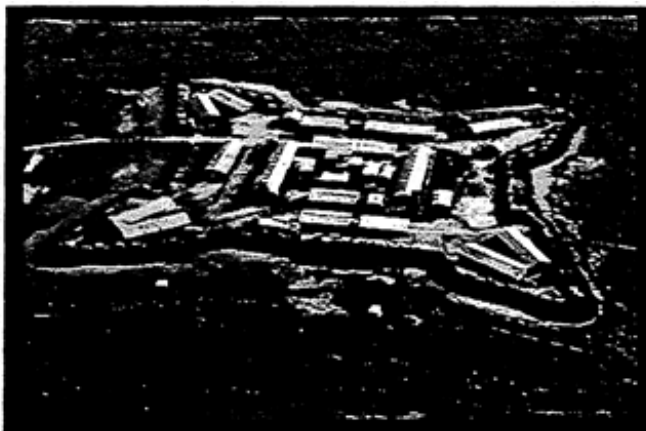
"Pain, the sensation of pain, can be masked by other emotions in a situation like that," Donlon recalled. "I was fighting mad right from the start; I also felt fear from the start ... fear anybody would feel. It got to the point where we were throwing the enemy's grenades back at them. Just picking them up and throwing those grenades back before they could blow."

Back home in America, a confused public searching for heroes in a strange and unfamiliar war quickly latched onto the Special Forces. John Wayne made a movie about them, Barry Sadler had a



number-one hit song about them, and the green beret took its place alongside the coonskin cap and cowboy hat as one of America's mythic pieces of apparel.

But fighting in remote areas of Vietnam -- publicity to the contrary -- wasn't the only mission of the Special Forces. They were also responsible for training thousands of Vietnam's ethnic tribesmen in the techniques of modern warfare. They took the Montagnards, the Nungs, the Cao Dei and others and molded them into the 60,000-strong Civil Irregular Defense Group. CIDG troops became the Special Forces' most valuable ally in battles fought in faraway corners of Vietnam, out of reach of conventional backup forces. (See camp)



Other missions included civic action projects, in which Special Forces troops built schools, hospitals and government buildings, provided medical care to civilians and dredged canals. This was the flip-side of the vicious battles, the part of the war designed to win the hearts and minds of a distant and diffident people. But although the Special Forces drew the allegiance of civilians almost everywhere they went, the war as a whole was not as successful.

President Lyndon Johnson had committed the first big conventional units to the war in March 1965, when Marine battalions landed at Da Nang to provide perimeter security to the air base there. Then in June, the Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade entered the country, followed in July by the 1st Air Cavalry Division. From then on, a continual stream of Army and Marine units flowed into Vietnam, until they numbered over 500,000 by 1968. But although American conventional forces scored successes in every major battle they fought, there was still no clear end in sight to a war many Americans back home regarded as a quagmire.

So in 1969, after President Richard Nixon took office, the

United States began its withdrawal from Vietnam, a process known as Vietnamization. Gradually the Special Forces turned over their camps to the South Vietnamese. On March 5, 1971, 5th Group returned to Fort Bragg. The Special Forces' role in Vietnam was over although some Special Forces soldiers continued to serve in various covert missions as part of the Military Assistance Command Vietnam Studies and Observations Group (MACV-SOG) and other successor units.

#### Special Forces: After Vietnam

The years following Vietnam were lean ones for the Special Forces. The 1st, 3rd, 6th and 8th Special Forces Groups were deactivated, and there was a general de-emphasis of special operations as the Army concentrated once more on conventional warfare, turning its gaze from the jungles of Asia to the well-worn tank paths of Europe.

To prevent a further emasculation of their capabilities, Special Forces leaders adopted a program called "SPARTAN" -- Special Proficiency at Rugged Training and Nation Building. This was designed to demonstrate the multiplicity of talents Special Forces troops possessed, showing that SF was not outmoded simply because the war was over.

Under the aegis of SPARTAN, the 5th and 7th Groups worked with Indian tribes in Florida, Arizona and Montana to build roads and medical facilities, and provided free medical treatment to impoverished citizens of Hoke and Anson Counties in North Carolina.

But however noble SPARTAN was, it was not what Special Forces were originally designed for. They were designed to fight unconventional warfare and perform vital missions as part of our low intensity conflict doctrine.

In the 1980s, defense policy received a renewed emphasis. Special operations in general, and Special Forces in particular, were among the beneficiaries of this new attention. The need for Special Forces capabilities had become apparent with the rise of guerrilla movements in Central America. From 1982-1992, Special Forces and trainers from throughout the Army deployed in small numbers to El Salvador where they worked to professionalize that country's small Army and turn it into an effective counter-guerrilla force. They helped turn around the situation in that war-torn country enough for the holding of elections and the defeat of the leftist insurgency.



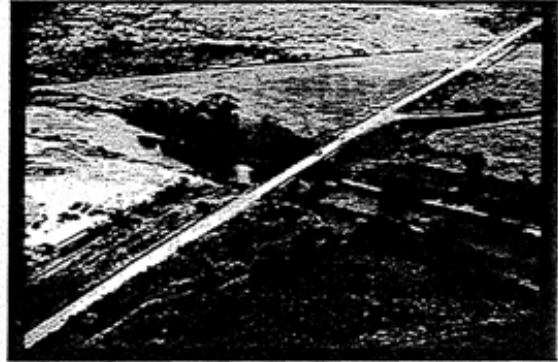
To meet the challenge of new, world-wide commitments, the Army injected a revitalized esprit into the Special Forces. It increased the length of Special Forces qualification courses, to ensure that only the highest caliber soldiers became SF-qualified. In June 1983, it authorized a Special Forces tab to be worn by SF-qualified troops. As a final incentive to attract and retain top-quality soldiers, Special Forces was established as a separate Army career field on Oct. 1, 1984. The warrant officer career field soon followed. And, on April 9, 1987, the Chief of Staff of the Army established the Special Forces Branch for officers.

Today the Special Forces have become an accepted and respected part of the Army. Active Special Forces groups include the original 10th Group stationed at Fort Carson, Colorado, with its 1st Battalion stationed at Stuttgart, Germany; the 1st Group at Fort Lewis, Wash., with its 1st Battalion stationed in Okinawa; the 5th Group at Fort Campbell, Ky.; the 7th Group at Fort Bragg, NC with a company of its 3rd battalion forward deployed in Panama; and the 3rd Group at Fort Bragg.

Reserve forces include the 19th and 20th Groups of the Army National Guard. These reserve component forces are under the training oversight of the new Special Forces Command, activated on 27 November 1990. For the first time, all Special Forces

units, active and reserve component, are being held to the same standard of training by the same command. Special Forces Command is a Major Subordinate Command (MSC) of the U. S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) activated on 1 December 1989, the Army Component of the U. S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) at MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa, Florida.aa

Army Special Forces performed important missions during Operations JUST CAUSE and DESERT STORM. In Panama in December 1989, a small Special Forces team from the 3/7th SFG(A) stopped a Panamanian vehicle convoy in its tracks with a few well-aimed rockets at the Pacora River bridge. Other SF teams neutralized Panamanian Defense units, raided enemy command and control facilities and later accepted the surrender of hundreds of enemy troops in the distant provinces.



The Pacora River Bridge

In Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait, Special Forcesaa teams conducted deepaa reconnaissance, performedaa direct action missions,aa helped rescue downed pilots, supported the Kuwaiti resistance and trained coalition units. SF Teams performed important



intelligence collection missions behind the lines and served as our first line of defense as they patrolled the borders as part of combined reconnaissance teams with the Saudis. Other teams reconstituted the Kuwaiti army and trained them, and the other coalition partners, in small unit tactics, NBC defense (Nuclear, Biological Chemical) operations, close air support, minefield breaching, urban combat and other vital subjects.

During the ground war phase of Operation DESERT STORM (24-28 February 1991), 109 Special Forces teams accompanied virtually

the entire range of allied forces into battle. They were among the first U. S. soldiers into Kuwait City and provided the deep "eyes and ears" and anti-SCUD forces for the coalition. Special Operations Forces were the "glue" that held the coalition together and made it a practical reality.

Since DESERT STORM, Special Forces soldiers have participated in several highly publicized operations in Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti and now perform an important if unheralded role in U.S. operations to keep the peace in Bosnia. They remain one of the Army's most precious assets in operations other than war.

### The Rangers

While the Special Forces have gotten most of the attention in the years following their inception in 1952, they haven't been the only special operations troops in the Army. Less well known but just as deadly, the modern-day Rangers have spent the last 36 years carving a piece of history for themselves as the rightful successors to the legendary Darby's Rangers and Merrill's Marauders of World War II.



Unlike Special Forces, the Rangers have had an irregular, often interrupted, history in the post-World War II era. They were deactivated in 1945 and remained out of commission until August 1950, when the Army formed 15 Ranger companies for possible use in Korea. Seven companies eventually saw action in Korea from December 1950 to August 1951.

The Rangers fought ceaselessly during their short time there, mostly in the hills, but also in the fields, the streets, the caves and along the riverbanks. By the time the Army inactivated them again in August 1951, they had fought almost every type of battle imaginable. They made combat jumps, river crossings, behind-the-line raids and conventional assaults straight up the gut. They did it all with the dash and elan generic to the Ranger tradition.

But despite their outstanding Korean performance, the Rangers remained out of action throughout the rest of the 1950s and much of the 1960s. Not until late in the '60s were Ranger companies reactivated, eventually coming under the wing of the 75th Infantry Regiment, which was created to satisfy the requirements of the Army's new Combat Arms Regimental System.

The new Ranger companies were sent to Vietnam, where they fought mainly as Long-Range Reconnaissance Patrols -- or LRRPs (pronounced "lurps"). Their dangerous mission was to penetrate the jungles far away from regular American units, watch the enemy and gather

strategic intelligence on enemy strengths, communication lines and unit movements. The LRRPs didn't receive much publicity back home, but within the ranks of the Army, they were considered the most fearsome fighters of the war.



toughened up they became in the war, they still looked innocent compared to the Lurps."

Michael Herr was a reporter in Vietnam, who in his book Dispatches described a LRRP he met: "His face was all painted up for night walking now like a bad hallucination...In the coming hours he'd stand as faceless and quiet in the jungle as a fallen tree, and God help his opposite numbers unless they had at least half a squad along, he was a good killer, one of our best. The rest of his team were gathered outside the tent, set a little apart from the other division units .... The regular division troops would almost shy off the path when they passed the area on their way to and from the mess tent. No matter how

In the aftermath of Vietnam, independent Ranger companies were abolished, and in their place came battalions -- the 1st and 2nd. They were no longer simply Lurps; they were back to being

the full-fledged Rangers of earlier wars. They were once again the light infantry spearhead of the Army. In October 1983, the new Rangers proved their worth by leading the assault on Grenada, jumping 500 feet to capture the Point Salinas air strip and pave the way for the 82nd Airborne Division, which followed close behind.

Nearly a year later, in October 1984, the 3rd Ranger Battalion and the 75th Infantry (Ranger) Regiment were activated at Fort Benning, GA. In 1986, the 75th Infantry (Ranger) Regiment became the 75th Ranger Regiment, indicating that the Rangers were plainly here to stay.



aThe Rangers at Torrijos Tocumen Airfieldaa

The Ranger reputation was only enhanced during Operations JUST CAUSE and DESERT STORM. In Panama, the Rangers jumped in the dark onto the main airfield at Torrijos-Tocumen to take it prior to the airborne operations of the 82nd Airborne Division. At Rio Hato, the Rangers jumped from 400 feet into enemy gunfire to seize the airfield and neutralize the PDF companies based there.

aIn the Persian Gulf, a Ranger Battalion (-) performedaa numerous missions, most still classified, at the request of General Schwarzkopf, Commander in Chief CENTCOM. The Rangers, as ever, lead the way.

āIn Somalia, Rangers of Bravo Company, 3rd Ranger Battalion,aa led the way on a series of operations to capture key leaders of one of the factions which were disrupting the United Nation'saa mission in that war-torn country. On their final mission on 3aa

October 1993, the men of Task Force Ranger came under heavy fire as they rushed to complete their mission to capture some high level leaders of General Aideed's faction. Their mission took an ominous turn as a supporting helicopter was shot down. The Rangers quickly ran to guard the site and rescue the crewmen. Cut off by heavy enemy fire, the Rangers established perimeters of defense and, with the assistance of mini-gun fire from friendly helicopters, held on until morning. Their harrowing ordeal lasted until the next day as they recovered the bodies of the crew of the downed helicopter and of their own unit. They fought their way out of the trap with the assistance of a ready reaction force of the 10th Infantry Division (Mountain). Despite heavy casualties, they came through the ordeal with morale and fighting spirit intact.

### The 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment

While the Rangers were slowly growing into a Regiment, another Special Operations capability was slowly evolving at Fort Campbell, KY. In October 1980, shortly after the hostage rescue hopes of America were dashed at Desert One in Iran, a special aviation unit was formed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. This unit was formed out of some of the best Army aviators of the aviation battalions assigned to the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault): the 158th Aviation Battalion, the 229th Aviation Battalion and the 159th Aviation Battalion. The unit immediately embarked on an intensive training program in low level, night, operations.

#### **160th SPECIAL OPERATIONS AVIATION REGIMENT (AIRBORNE)**



The disparate elements of the special aviation unit became a battalion of their own on 16 October 1981, designated the 160th Aviation Battalion. However, because of the constant attachment and detachment of units to prepare for a wide variety of missions, it was popularly known as Task Force

160, nicknamed "The Night Stalkers."

The training tempo of TF 160th was many times higher than any other aviation unit in Army history. This was not accomplished without a price, however. From its inception in



1980 until October 1983, 9 helicopter crashes resulted in 21 deaths and numerous injuries. A Blue Ribbon panel in October 1983 almost abolished the unit because of its high accident rate. However, a series of training initiatives and higher qualification standards quickly brought the problem under control.

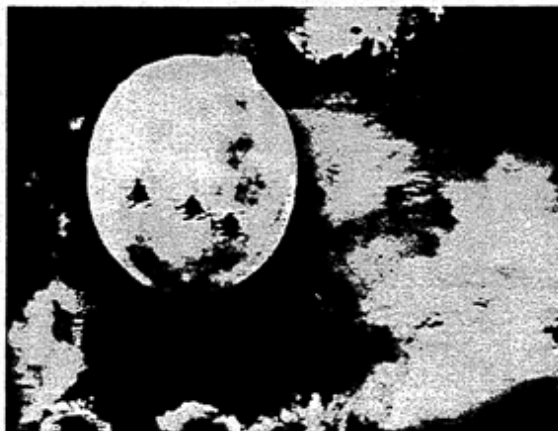
The record of TF 160 includes special operations support in Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf, DESERT SHIELD/STORM and a host of still classified missions. During Operation PRIME CHANCE, 160th helicopter crews flew nightly operations for several years (1987-89) against Iranian speedboats and mine-laying vessels, sinking several small craft and ensuring the capture of one such vessel, the Iran AJR, in the act of laying mines.



In DESERT STORM, aviators from the 3rd Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) performed the vital missions of Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) and border penetration missions to deliver Special Forces teams deep into enemy territory. One aviator rescued a downed Air Force pilot. In another instance, during a deep penetration mission, one 160th aviator flew through a hail of Iraqi gunfire to rescue a SF team which had been fighting Iraqi militia and armed villagers for hours.

The helicopters of the 160th SOAR continued to fly their missions under the most harrowing of circumstances. They supported Task Force Ranger in Somalia, suffering numerous casualties as part of their heroic support of the Rangers. The Regiment was also on hand in Haiti to assist Special Forces and Ranger missions.

Maintaining unparalleled training standards, the aviators of the 160th, reorganized on 16 May 1990 as a Regiment of three battalions, have set the pace for all of Army aviation. Night operations at low-level have become the norm for this unit. Night Stalkers have responded to



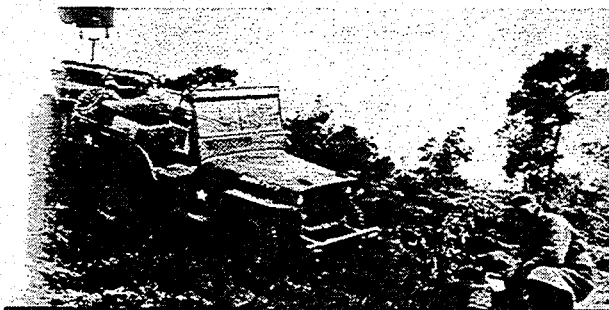
challenge after challenge and met every requirement. Their motto, "Night Stalkers Don't Quit" accurately describes this newest member of the special operations community.

### The Other Side of Special Operations

The shoot-'em up history of the Special Forces and Rangers has often overshadowed other components of the Army's total special operations force. These units rarely see the kind of combat action Special Forces and Rangers do, but their contributions are no less valuable. As force multipliers, they do their job of causing the enemy trouble without having to fire a shot.

### Psychological Operations

The first of these units is psychological operations, or psyop. The purpose of psyop is to demoralize the enemy by causing dissension and unrest among his ranks, while at the same time convincing the local population to support American troops. Psyop units also provide continuous analysis of the attitudes and behavior of enemy forces to the tactical commanders in the field, so they can develop, produce and employ propaganda in a successful manner.



Psyop troops accomplish their mission by disseminating propaganda messages in the form of leaflets, posters, broadcasts and audio-visual tapes. Psyop units have their own intelligence analysts, illustrators, photographers, layout specialists, printers and loudspeaker teams who prepare and distribute propaganda products.

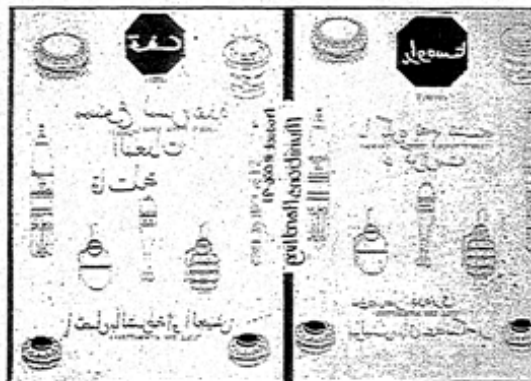
Psyop units were extremely effective during World War II, and later saw extensive action in southeast Asia after the 6th Battalion arrived in Vietnam in 1965. On Dec. 1, 1967, the 6th was reorganized into the 4th Psychological Operations Group, which remained there until 1971. From 1966 to 1971, nine psyop soldiers were killed in action and 36 were wounded.

Throughout the 1970s, 1980s and into the 1990s, the 4th Psychological Operations Group (POG) made its headquarters at Fort Bragg, where it remains today. Currently it consists of the 1st, 6th, 8th and 9th battalions and a dissemination battalion. Each of the line battalions is specially trained to operate in a specific area of the world. The 4th POG is currently one of three PSYOP Groups (the other two are the 2nd and 7th Groups in the U. S. Army Reserve) under the command of the U. S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command, activated on 27 November 1990.

The performance of PSYOP units in Panama and the Persian Gulf has provided the world evidence of the power of persuasion in achieving fantastic results. The surrender of 60,000 Iraqis in Operation Desert Storm



was due in no small measure to the sophisticated and well-orchestrated PSYOP campaign of the 4th POG, ably supported by loudspeaker teams from a wide variety of PSYOP units of the Reserve Component. Their efforts saved hundreds, perhaps thousands, of allied and Iraqi lives.



Guide to mines for the Kurds

In Turkey, Somalia, the former Yugoslavia and Haiti, members of the 4th Psychological Operations Group were in the vanguard of support. In Turkey and Northern Iraq, during Operation PROVIDE COMFORT, Psyop personnel ensured that leaflet drops pointed out safe routes for the Kurdish refugees, drop zones for supplies and



informed the Kurds of the danger of mines. In Somalia, during Operation RESTORE HOPE, they set up radio stations, handed out leaflets, and even published a newspaper: Rajo (Hope). In the crisis in Bosnia and Serbia, in OPERATION PROVIDE RELIEF, Psyop personnel prepared leaflets to assist cut off villages in getting supplies. In Haiti, they stood ready to support possible combat operations by preparing leaflets (see picture) and loudspeaker messages stating the U.S. mission to restore Aristide and asking for public support. In Bosnia today, during Operations JOINT ENDEAVOR and JOINT GUARD, U.S. Psyop soldiers continue to provide a variety of products in support of our peacekeeping role. Wherever the U. S. Army responds to a crisis, the men and women of psychological operations are ready to assist.



US PSYOP PRODUCED NEWSPAPER IN BOSNIA

## Civil Affairs

Another specialty that has often gone unpublicized is that of Civil Affairs (CA). The Civil Affairs structure includes the 96th CA Battalion, the only such battalion in the active Army. Other units, in the reserve component, include the 351st, 352nd and 353rd CA Commands and the 361st and 358th CA Brigades.

The men and women of Civil Affairs have a wide variety of missions. Each unit has specialized teams to: prevent civilian interference with tactical operations, assist tactical commanders in discharging their responsibilities toward the civilian population, provide liaison with civilian governmental agencies, cope with monuments and captured art and archives, help restore a friendly nation's legal or economic system and a host of other functions such as fighting famine, disease and death, feeding innocent victims of destruction, protecting the legal rights of the destitute and ensuring continued education of the young.

The only active duty Civil Affairs unit, the 96th CA Battalion has five companies and a headquarters element. Each company has a displaced-persons/refugee/evacuee team. The battalion as a whole has teams that concentrate on civil supply, displaced persons, refugees/ evacuees, public safety and public health.

In March 1986, the 96th officially became an airborne unit. It is stationed at Fort Bragg and has performed civil affairs missions throughout the world. Its performance in Grenada during Operation URGENT FURY and in Panama during Operation JUST CAUSE were classics of the constructive use of this scarce asset. They were also the first Civil Affairs unit to be sent to Saudi Arabia in August 1990 for Operation Desert Shield. Their planning assistance and host nation support operations were invaluable aids to preparing the theater support structure to sustain the largest and fastest U. S. Army deployment since WW II.

In Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, the active duty 96th CA Battalion was joined by large elements of the Reserve Component Civil Affairs community; some 96 percent of the U. S. Civil Affairs capability resides in the Reserve Component. The 352nd Civil Affairs Command, the 360th CA Brigade, the 354th

CA Brigade and the 304th CA Group were some of the major units activated and sent to Saudi Arabia. They were joined by 12 CA ss Companies, also of the Reserve Component.

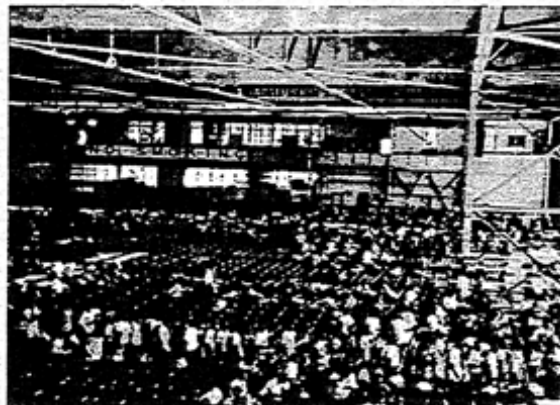
Upon the completion of Desert Storm, several CA units were sent to Turkey and Northern Iraq to assist in Operation PROVIDE COMFORT. They helped establish camps for 452,000 Kurdish refugees, arranged for food drops and worked with other U.ss S.s and allied units to resettle the refugees.ss



Stockpiled food in Turkey

All the U.s.S. Army Civil Affairs units--including the 351st, 352nd, 353rd CA Commands and the 96th CA Battalion--are now under the command and control of the U. S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC). This Major Subordinate Command of USASOC marks the first time all the Active Duty and Reserve Component CA units have been placed under one command.

Civil Affairs personnel continue to support the Army's missions. Teams worked in Somalia as valuable links between the Army units and the many non-governmental aid organizations (NGOs) and private volunteer organizations (PVOs). They stood ready in Haiti to assist in population control during the planned combat operations and then quickly shifted gears to assist in the non-violent resolution of the crisis by U.S.S. negotiators.



Haitian Migrant Hanger at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

Teams from Civil Affairs

units in the active and reserve component worked in refugee camps in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Panama, and Surinam for Cuban and Haitian migrants. With the restoration of the Aristide government, civil affairs experts worked with the new regime to restructure the Haitian armed forces (FAd'H) into a police force, reorganize the judicial structure, prepare for free elections, restore some of the infrastructure and a myriad of other tasks. Today's Civil Affairs soldiers mobilized from throughout the reserve CA structure are on the front lines in Bosnia working with local officials to help build peace in that war-torn land.

The mission of Civil Affairs can be summed up by the motto of the post World War II Civil Affairs School: SEAL THE VICTORY.

### Special Operations Support

Special operations forces historically have been difficult to support. Conventional supply, logistics and signal units in a theater are not equipped to provide the support these units need when they need it. As a result of this shortcoming, the special operations community has recently created two units: a signal battalion and a support battalion. These units are both manned and prepared to provide a wide range of support to scattered special operations units involved in peacetime engagement

missions, contingency operations or full-scale war. They are an important part of the special operations team.

112th SPECIAL OPERATIONS  
SIGNAL BATTALION



### The 112th Signal Battalion

The 112th Signal Battalion was activated provisionally on June 16, 1986, and was formally activated on September 17, 1986. The 112th provides a full range of communications linkage capabilities for deployed special operations forces of USASOC and other special operations units. It is currently organized as part of the newly activated Special Operations Support Command (SOSCOM), a major subordinate command of USASOC.

The 112th traces its lineage to the 512th Airborne

Signal Company which supported special operations and airborne operations of the Allied Airborne Task Force in World War II. It is credited with combat assaults by glider and parachute into Southern France and Northern Italy. From these operations comes its motto, in Italian, "Penetra Le Tembre," or "Penetrate the Darkness." Redesignated the 112th Signal Battalion in 1944, the unit supported the 1st Allied Airborne Army during Operation "Market Garden," and was assigned to XVIII Airborne Corps during the sweep across Germany and the occupation of Berlin before being inactivated in 1945.

The 112th Special Operations Signal Battalion has proved its worth on missions from Saudi Arabia and Somalia to Panama and Haiti. They provide a critical link in ensuring the timely communication of special operations units around the world during actual operations or training missions.

#### The 528th Support Battalion

The 528th Support Battalion, activated as the 13th Support Battalion on June 2, 1986, provides support to a variety of subordinate units. Its companies provide maintenance, supply, transportation and services support to deployed SOF units.



The 528th Special Operations Support Battalion derives its lineage from the 528th Quartermaster Service Battalion, activated in Mississippi on 15 Dec 1942. This battalion served in Sicily, Italy, Southern France and Germany. During Operation Desert Storm, its teams provided a full range of support to Army, Navy and other special operations units in theater. Like the 112th Signal Battalion, the 528th is subordinate to the Special Operations Support Command, a Major Subordinate Command of USASOC. However, its soldiers serve through the Army and Joint special operations communities in small teams to ensure connectivity of our forces throughout the world.



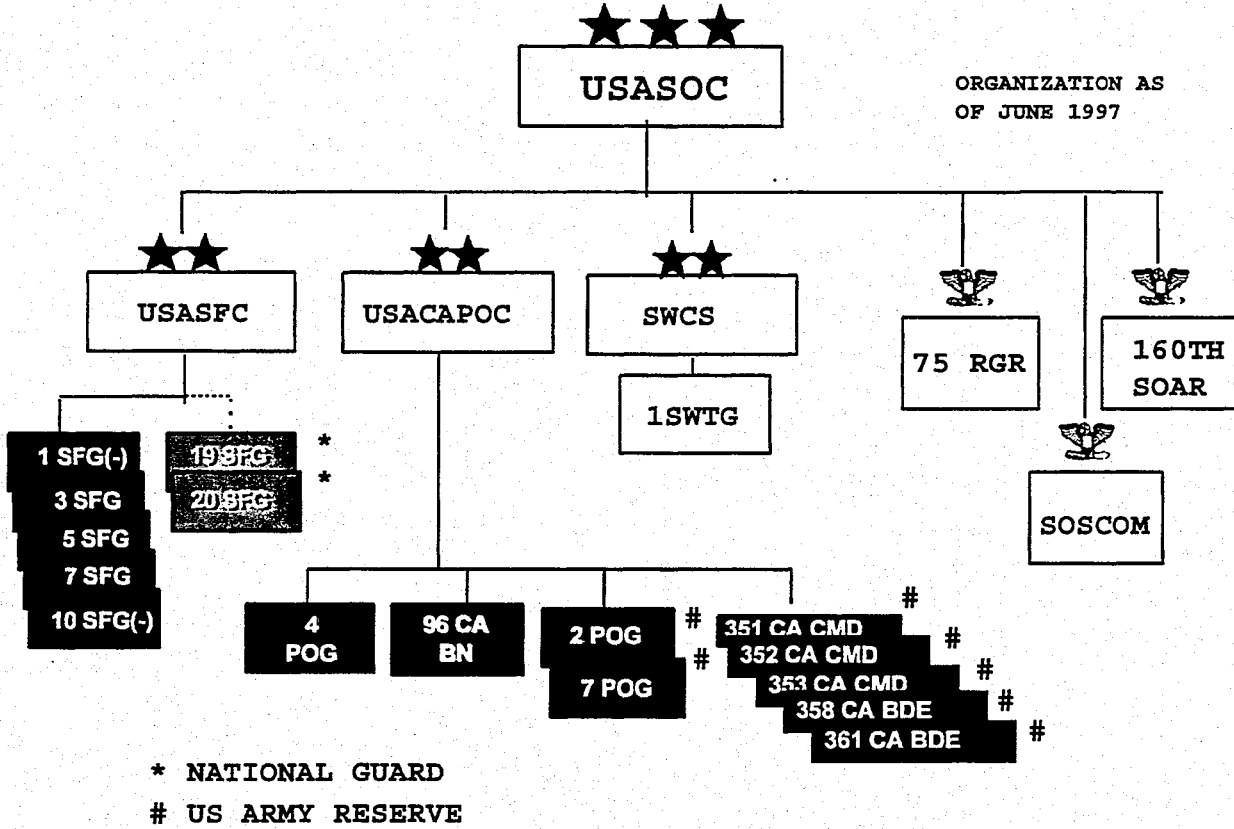
## The Future of Special Operations

Men like Wild Bill Donovan, Ray Peers, Robert McClure, Aaron Bank, Russell Volckmann, William Darby, and Frank Merrill would smile if they could see the state of Army special operations in the 1990s. They were the pioneers of modern unconventional warfare, and many of their ideas have been enshrined in Army doctrine and embodied in Army units. What was once a resistant Army hierarchy has now become a receptive one. Army leadership has now realized that small units of well-trained men can more than pay back the expenditure invested in them.

To formalize this commitment, the Army established the 1st Special Operations Command (Airborne) (Provisional) on October 1, 1982, at Fort Bragg. Then, on 1 December 1989, the Army activated the U. S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC). USASOC is the Army's sixteenth MACOM and commands all Army Special Operations units with the exception of two Special Forces Groups and one aviation battalion in the National Guard. USASOC is the single focal point of doctrine, training, operations and support for the Army SOF community. It gives the diverse elements of special operations a unity of purpose and guidance necessary for warfare in the 1990s and beyond. It is a vital part of the recently established special operations joint headquarters, the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) at MacDill AFB, Florida.

With strong support from the Army and the sustained excellence of its troops, USASOC and its subordinate units continue to live up to the legacy bequeathed it by the OSS, the Devil's Brigade, the Rangers and Merrills' Marauders. Army SOF units continue to be "Sine Pari"--WITHOUT EQUAL.

CURRENT ORGANIZATION OF  
UNITED STATES ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS



## READINGS FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SPECIAL OPERATIONS:

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Geoffrey T. Barker, *A Concise History of US Army Special Operations Forces with Lineage and Insignia*, Anglo-American Publishing Co., 1988.

Robert Burhans, *The First Special Service Force: A War History of the North Americans, 1942-44* Nashville, TN: Battery Press, 1981.

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Kermit Roosevelt, *War Report of the O. S. S.*, Washington, D. C.: Carrollton Press, 1976.

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Stanley Sandler, *To Free from Opression: A Concise History of U.S. Army Special Forces, Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations and the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School*, USASOC Historical Monograph Series, 1994.

Shelby Stanton, *Green Berets at War: U. S. Army Special Forces in Southeast Asia, 1956-1975*, Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1985.

Ian Sutherland, *Special Forces of the United States Army, 1952-1982*, R. James Bender Publishing Co., San Jose CA.

Russell Volckmann, *We Remained: Three Years Behind the Enemy Lines in the Philippines*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1954.

## IMPORTANT DATES FOR SPECIAL OPERATIONS

SPECIAL FORCES BRANCH ESTABLISHED:	09 Apr 87
Special Forces Tab Authorized	17 Jun 83
Green Beret Authorized:	05 Oct 61
Career Management Field 18 est.	01 Oct 84
1st SF Group activated:	24 Jun 57
inactivated	28 Jun 74
reactivated	04 Sep 84
1 Bn Torii Station Japan	19 Oct 84
2 and 3 Bn (Fort Lewis)	04 Mar 84
3rd SF Group	05 Dec 63
Inactivated	01 Dec 69
Reactivated	29 Jun 90
1 Bn	02 Jul 90
2 Bn	16 Oct 91
3 Bn	16 Oct 92
5th SF Group	21 Sep 61
Moves to Fort Campbell	15 Aug 86
6th SF Group	01 May 63
Inactivated	Jun 72
7th SF Group	06 Jun 60
(from 77th Group activated	25 Sep 53)
8th SF Group activated	01 Apr 63
inactivated	1972
10th SG Group:	19 Jun 52
Moves to Carson	1995
11th Group inact.	15 Sep 94
12th Group inact.	15 Sep 94
Son Tay Raid	21 Nov 70
5 POG inact.	15 Sep 94
4 POG activated	07 Nov 67
96 CA Bn activated	Dec 74
(96th HQ and HQ Det.	
of Military Government)	26 Aug 45
1/75 Rangers	28 Jan 74 (Ft. Benning, GA)
1/75 Rangers (con't)	
Moves to Fort Stewart, GA	01 Jul 74
2/75 Rangers	01 Oct 74 (Ft. Lewis, WA)
3/75 Rangers	Oct 84 (Ft. Benning, GA)
Ranger Regiment	01 Jul 84 (Ft. Benning, GA)
160th SOAR Activated	16 May 90

(TF 160 Redesignated a Group)	16 Oct 86
TF 160 assigned to 1st SOCOM	16 Jan 85
3/160th Activated	16 Sep 89
160th Avn Bn Activated	Apr 82
528TH SOSB Activated (13th Sup Bn)	02 Jun 86
as 528th SOSB	16 May 87
112th Signal Bn Activated	17 Sep 86
USASOC Activated	01 Dec 89
1st SOCOM (Prov.) Activated	01 Oct 82
1st SOCOM Activated	01 Oct 83
USASFCMD AND USACAPOC Formed	27 Nov 90
Special Operations Support	
Command activated	1 Nov 95
Psychological Warfare Center	10 Apr 52
USAJFKSWCS Formed	15 May 86
1st SW Training Group Activated	15 Jun 89
US Army Special Warfare Center	1 Jan 57
Visit of President Kennedy	12 Oct 61
US Army JFK Center for Special Warfare	1 Jun 64
(Airborne) Added	1 Nov 64
USA JFK Center for Military Assistance	8 May 69
USA Institute for Military Assistance Created	16 May 69
1st SW Training Bn Activated	01 Apr 83
Out of the Institute Bn	
Military Government units officially redesignated	
Civil Affairs units (Units earlier called themselves Civil Affairs/Mil Gov (CAMG))	26 May 1959 (95 CA Gp)
Civil Affairs School	1 May 42
At Charlottesville	
At Fort Gordon	27 Oct 55
Moves to Fort Bragg	1971