

*Heritage of the
Quiet Professionals*



*Air Force
Special Operations Command*

Heritage of the Quiet Professionals

World War II in North Africa and Europe

In the European theater of operations, regular Army Air Force (AAF) units were used to conduct special operations in high threat areas under the direction of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and British Intelligence Service.

The earliest AAF special operations involved the Special Flight Section of the 12th Air Force's 5th Bombardment Wing in North Africa. In October of 1943, this small, ad hoc unit operated highly modified and mission-unique B-17, B-24, and B-25 bombers from North Africa into France and other parts of occupied Europe. The Special Flight Section later became known as the 885th Bombardment Squadron and flew B-24s out of Brindisi, Italy.

Along with conventional AAF troop carrier units, the special operations transports and bombers flew 3,769 successful sorties into the Balkans (79 percent to Yugoslavia). They dropped 7,149 tons of supplies to resistance groups while 989 C-47 landings behind enemy lines brought in another 1,972 tons. These special operations units also assisted in the evacuation of thousands of Allied airmen and wounded partisans between 1944-1945.

The largest AAF special operations effort in Europe was conducted by the 801st Bombardment Group, nicknamed the "Carpetbaggers," based in England. The Carpetbaggers specialized in the delivery of supplies, agents, and leaflets behind enemy lines using highly modified, mission-unique, black-painted B-24s.

Prior to and during Operation OVERLORD the 801 BG and African based units dropped specially trained three-man Jedburgh teams behind enemy lines in France. Once in place the Jedburgh teams coordinated Free French and partisan "Maquis" operations.

Special operations crews became proficient in night, low-level, long-range navigation, often conducted in poor weather and in mountainous terrain.

During early June 1944, the Carpetbaggers dropped six teams into strategic locations in Brittany, France, where

they relayed vital intelligence data critical to the success of the invasion of Normandy. Later, Carpetbaggers airlifted fuel to facilitate General Patton's armored drive out of France and into Germany.

World War II in the Pacific

In August 1943, General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold met with British Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten to discuss plans for American air support of British commando expeditions in the China-Burma-India theater of operations. General Arnold coined the term "air commando" to honor Lord Mountbatten.

After the meetings, Gen Arnold directed veteran fighter pilots Lieutenant Colonels Philip G. Cochran and John R. Alison to build a self-reliant composite fighting force to support British Brigadier General Orde C. Wingate



John Alison and Philip Cochran

and his "Chindits" on long-range penetrations into Burma against the Japanese. By March 1944, this force was designated the 1st Air Commando Group (1 ACG).

These air commandos flew over hazardous mountains and jungles to find and resupply the highly mobile British ground forces in hostile territory. From these missions, the 1 ACG earned its motto of "Any Place, Any Time, Any Where" — a variation of which is still used today.

The 1 ACG's success eventually led to the creation of two more air commando groups, the 2d and 3d ACGs.

Air commandos in the Pacific performed a variety of conventional and unconventional combat and support missions deep behind enemy lines. They used an array of aircraft including C-47 transports, P-51 and P-47 fighters, B-25 bombers, UC-64 utility aircraft, and a glider force of

CG-4As and G-5s, augmented by R-4 helicopters. Air commandos are credited with the first combat aircrew rescue by helicopter, and the first combat use of air-to-ground rockets. They destroyed multiple ground targets and shot down a number of enemy aircraft.

Enlisted pilots were an essential part of the 550-man force, flying resupply and medical evacuation missions with L-1 and L-5 liaison aircraft. The medical evacuation flights were extremely successful and proved to be critical to the morale of the Chindits.

Unconventional War in the Philippines Huk Insurgency

Special operations capabilities were mothballed in the demobilization after World War II.

These capabilities were resurrected in the late 1940s as a means to help eliminate the Communist Huk insurgency in the Philippines.

The airpower used to defeat the communist movement was organized along unconventional lines. Using United States assistance under Lt Col Edward G. Lansdale, who in turn employed a



1 ACG with R-4 Helicopter in Burma.
1Lt Carter Harman and team that made the first Helo combat rescue.



World War II C-47 and CG4 Glider

Foreign Internal Defense (FID) mode of operation, the Philippine Air Force flew C-47s, P-51s, L-5s, AT-6 armed trainers, and a mixture of liaison aircraft against the Huks.

In addition, Lansdale initiated a successful psychological warfare campaign of leaflets and airborne speaker operations. Psychological warfare, combined with air and ground attacks, kept the Huks on the defensive and led to their defeat in 1954.

Korean War

Early in the Korean War, US Army intelligence and the fledgling Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), successor to the OSS, needed to deploy intelligence teams and supplies through short- and long-range low-level penetration into North and South Korea.

Initially, the Air Force provided this ad hoc special air support in multiple forms of air, land, and sea assets to support the United Nations Command operations. This involved the use of C-47 and C-119 transports, B-26 medium bombers, and Air Rescue Service crash boats.

The Air Force then activated, equipped, and trained the 580th, 581st, and 582d Air Resupply and Communication Wings specifically for unconventional warfare and counter-insurgency operations. These wings possessed tremendous capabilities using a variety of aircraft such as C-47, C-54, C-118, C-119 transports, B-29 bombers, SA-16 seaplanes, and H-19 helicopters. This revitalization of special operations included the ability to recover downed airmen and the full spectrum of covert air operations. However, while three wings were activated, only one saw action in Korea. After the war, all three were inactivated by late 1953.

Cold War Era

Throughout the rest of the 1950s, the air resupply and communication mission was assumed by four Air National Guard (ANG) units: Maryland, Rhode Island, West Virginia, and California. However, the U.S. used active and reserve air assets in secret operations in Tibet, Iran, behind the Iron Curtain, French Indo-China, and during the Bay of Pigs in Cuba. In the 1960s, this method of operation changed

dramatically when Air Force active duty special operations units were created to counter Soviet support of “wars of liberation” in the Third World.

General Curtis E. LeMay, Air Force Chief of Staff, established the 4400th Combat Crew

Training Squadron (CCTS) in April 1961. Nicknamed “Jungle Jim,” the CCTS based at Hurlburt Field, Florida, held a two-fold mission: counterinsurgency training and combat operations. Aircraft such as U-10s, C-46s, C-47s, B-26s, and AT-28s soon showed up on the Hurlburt flight line.

The CCTS devised FID tactics and techniques for building a counterinsurgency capability in Third World countries from Latin America to Africa, and from the Middle East to Southeast Asia. The first Jungle Jim operation, code named

SANDY BEACH ONE, involved training Malian paratroopers. Then, in November 1961, the 4400 CCTS deployed a detachment to Bien Hoa, Republic of Vietnam, on Operation FARMGATE. Thus, Air Force special operations forces (SOF) flew some of the first US combat missions in Vietnam.



Vietnam



Aircraft used during Vietnam

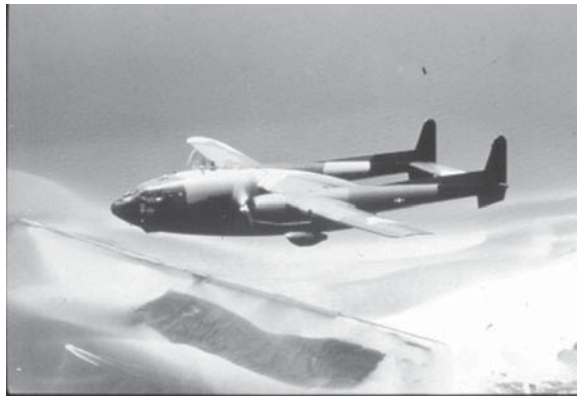
The Bien Hoa operation soon consumed nearly all of the Air Force’s commitment in supporting counterinsurgency operations.

Southeast Asia War (Second Indo-China War)

As the Vietnam War expanded, the Air Force increased its counterinsurgency capability. The 4400 CCTS became a group in March 1962, and the next month became part of the newly activated US Air Force Special Air Warfare Center (USAF SAWC) at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida.

The Special Air Warfare Center obtained additional assets in the mid-1960s, to include O-1 and O-2 observation planes, A-26, A-37, and A-1 attack fighters, C-123, and later C-130 cargo aircraft, along with several types of helicopters. In addition to being an outstanding shortfield tactical transport, the C-123s were also modified as aerial sprayers for the Ranch Hand defoliant missions in Vietnam.

In 1964, air commandos deployed to Laos and Thailand on Operation WATERPUMP. This FID-like operation involved



AC-119

training Laotian and Thai pilots and supported the Royal Lao Army against insurgents. Also in late 1964, the Air Force introduced the first gunships into combat with the deployment of AC-47s to Vietnam.

By 1966, the high water mark for

USAF special operations forces deployed in Vietnam reached a total of 10,000 people, 550 aircraft, and 19 squadrons. Additional Air commando deployments worldwide to other countries included Malaysia, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Iran, and the Congo Republic. The following year AC-119 gunships joined in combat, and by 1968 the first AC-130 gunships entered the Vietnam conflict.

In the summer of 1968, the USAF redesignated SAWC as the USAF Special Operations Force (USAFSOF) and became the equivalent of a numbered air force. Subordinate units

were redesignated as special operations wings and squadrons, thus eliminating all reference to air commandos. At this time, the Vietnam War was at its peak and consumed virtually all of the Air Force's special operations efforts.

One of the most notable missions supported by USAF special operations was the Son Tay prisoner of war (POW) camp raid in 1970. The Son Tay raiders trained at Hurlburt and Duke Fields, near Eglin AFB, Florida. Although no prisoners in then North Vietnamese compound, the resulting boost in morale and improved treatment of our prisoners of war made the mission worth the effort.

As the Vietnam War began winding down, SOF capability gradually declined as well. In June 1974, the USAFSOF was redesignated the 834th Tactical Composite Wing (TCW), effectively bringing to a close the most aggressive, far reaching effort by the USAF to support unconventional warfare.

In July 1975, the USAF renamed the 834 TCW as the 1st Special Operations Wing (1 SOW), and by 1979 it was the only SOF wing in the Air Force. The wing possessed AC-130H Spectre gunships, MC-130E Combat Talons, and CH-3E Jolly Green and UH-1N Huey helicopters. Two MC-130 Combat Talon squadrons remained overseas and the Air Force Reserve (AFRES) maintained an AC-130A gunship group and one HH-3E Jolly Green squadron.

Operation RICE BOWL

Operation RICE BOWL, the attempt to rescue American hostages from the United States embassy in Iran, ended in disaster at the Desert One refueling site in April 1980. As a result, the Holloway Commission convened to analyze why the mission failed and recommend corrective actions. This led to the gradual reorganization and rebirth of United States special operations forces.

TAC to MAC

Meanwhile, in December 1982, the Air Force transferred responsibility for Air Force special operations from Tactical Air Command (TAC) to Military Airlift Command (MAC).

Consequently, in March 1983, MAC activated 23d Air Force (23 AF) at Scott AFB, Illinois.

This new numbered air force's responsibilities included worldwide missions of special operations, combat rescue, weather reconnaissance and aerial sampling, security support for intercontinental ballistic missile sites, training of USAF helicopter and HC-130 crewmen, pararescue training, and medical evacuation.

Operation URGENT FURY

In October 1983, 23 AF participated in the successful rescue of Americans from the island nation of Grenada. During the 7-day operation, centered at Point Salines Airport, 23 AF furnished MC-130s, AC-130s, aircrews, maintenance, and support people. An EC-130 from the 193d Special Operations Group (SOG) of the Air National Guard (ANG), played a significant psy-war role. During this crucial combat test of emerging SOF capability, a 1 SOW Combat Talon crew earned the Mackay Trophy and a Spectre crew earned the Tunner Award.

Birth of US Special Operations Command

In May 1986, legislation led to the formation of the US Special Operations Command. Senators William Cohen and Sam Nunn introduced the Senate bill, and the following month Congressman Dan Daniel introduced a like measure in the House of Representatives. The key provisions of the legislation formed the



AC-130

basis to amend the 1986 Defense Authorizations Bill. This bill, signed into law in October 1986, in part directed the formation of a unified command responsible for special operations. In April 1987 the DOD established, the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) at

MacDill AFB, Florida, and Army Gen James J. Lindsay assumed command. Four months later, 23 AF moved to Hurlburt Field, Florida.

In August 1989, Gen Duane H. Cassidy, MAC Commander in Chief, divested 23 AF of its non-special operations units. Thus, 23 AF served a dual role—reporting to MAC, but also functioning as the air component to USSOCOM.

Operation JUST CAUSE

From late December 1989 to early January 1990, 23 AF participated in the re-establishment of democracy in the Republic of Panama during Operation JUST CAUSE. Special operations aircraft included active and AFRES AC-130 Spectre gunships, EC-130 Volant Solo psychological operations aircraft from the ANG, HC-130P/N Combat Shadow tankers, MC-130E Combat Talons, and MH-53J Pave Low and MH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters. Special tactics combat controllers and medics provided important support to combat units during this operation.

Spectre gunship crews of the 1 SOW earned the Mackay Trophy and Tunner Award for their efforts, a 919 SOG Spectre crew earned the President's Award, and a 1 SOW Combat Talon crew ferried the captured Panamanian President, Manuel Noreiga, to prison in the United States. Likewise, the efforts of the 1 SOW maintenance people earned them the Daedalian Award.

Birth of Air Force Special Operations Command

On 22 May 1990, Gen Larry D. Welch, Air Force Chief of Staff, redesignated 23 AF as Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC). This new major command consisted of three wings—the 1st, 39th and 353d Special Operations Wings—as well as the 1720th Special Tactics Group (STG), the US Air Force Special Operations School, and the Special Missions Operational Test and Evaluation Center.

The AFRES components included the 919 SOG at Duke Field, Florida, and the 193 SOG of the ANG at Harrisburg International Airport, Pennsylvania.

Currently, after major redesignations and

reorganizations, AFSOC direct reporting units include the 16 SOW, the 352d Special Operations Group, the 353d Special Operations Group, the 720th Special Tactics Group (STG), the USAF Special Operations School and the 18th Flight Test Squadron (FLTS).

DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM

From early August 1990 to late February 1991, AFSOC participated in Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, the protection of Saudi Arabia and liberation of Kuwait.

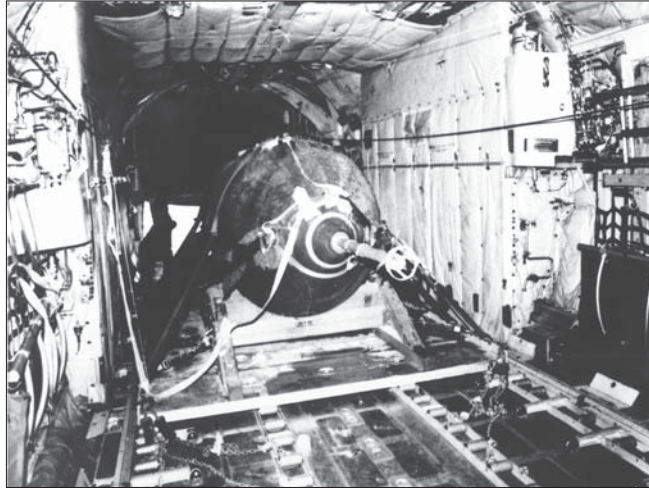
Active duty, AFRES, and ANG components of AFSOC deployed to Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The 1 SOW with its AC-130s, HC-130s, MC-130s, MH-53s and MH-60s; the 193 SOG with its EC-130s; and the 919 SOG with its AC-130s and 71 SOS's HH-3s, all deployed south of Kuwait. The 39 SOW deployed north of Iraq with its HC-130s, MC-130s, and MH-53s. Special tactics personnel operated throughout the theater on multiple combat control and combat rescue missions.



Special operations forces performed direct action missions, combat search and rescue, infiltration, exfiltration, air base ground defense, air interdiction, special reconnaissance, close air support, psychological operations, and helicopter air refuelings. Pave Low crews led the helicopter assault on radars to blind Iraq at the onset of hostilities, and they also accomplished the deepest rescue for which they received the Mackay Trophy. Combat Talons dropped the largest conventional bombs of the war and, along with Combat Shadows, dropped the most psy-war leaflets. The AC-130s provided valuable fire support and armed reconnaissance, but they also suffered the single greatest combat loss of coalition air forces with the shoot down of Spirit 03. All fourteen crewmembers aboard were lost.

AFSOC—ALL THE TIME, EVERYWHERE

Following the Gulf War, AFSOC aircraft stood alert for personnel recovery and various other missions in support of Operations PROVIDE COMFORT and SOUTHERN



BLU-82

WATCH. During July 1992, AFSOC units began participation in Operations PROVIDE PROMISE and DENY FLIGHT, the humanitarian relief effort and no fly zone security in the Balkans.

In December 1992, AFSOC

special tactics and intelligence personnel supported Operation RESTORE HOPE in Somalia, followed by the AC-130H Spectre gunships in the spring of 1993 under Operations CONTINUE HOPE and UNITED SHIELD in Somalia. In late 1994, AFSOC units spearheaded Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY in Haiti, and in 1995 Operation DELIBERATE FORCE in the Balkans.

AFSOC Reorganization

The number of deployments following Operation DESERT STORM were only exceeded by the number of organizational changes. The more significant ones included the 353 SOW relocation, under Operation FIERY VIGIL, from Clark Air Base, Republic of the Philippines, to Kadena Air Base, Japan, in June 1991 due to the volcanic eruption of Mount Pinatubo. The unit was supported by temporary duty personnel under Operation SCIMATAR SWEEP for more than a year.

In January 1992, the 39 SOW relocated from Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany, to Royal Air Force (RAF) Alconbury,

United Kingdom (UK). Later that year the 39 SOW was inactivated, and its personnel and equipment were reconstituted as the 352 SOW. In December 1992, AFSOC redesignated both overseas wings as groups.

More reorganization occurred on Hurlburt Field to include the 1720 STG becoming the 720 STG in March 1992; the transfer of ownership of Hurlburt Field from Air Mobility Command (AMC, and formerly MAC) to AFSOC in October 1992, followed by the merger of the 834th Air Base Wing (ABW) into the 1 SOW which

assumed host unit responsibilities. A year later the 1 SOW became the 16 SOW in a move to preserve Air Force heritage.

Meanwhile, the Special Missions Operational Test and Evaluation Center (SMOTEC), which filled the unique role of exploring new heavy frontiers in special operations capabilities, while pursuing better equipment and tactics development, was also reorganized. In April 1994, the Air Force, in an effort to standardize these types of organizations, redesignated SMOTEC as the 18th Flight Test Squadron.

AFSOC High Operations Tempo

In March 1994, a 16th Special Operations Squadron AC-130H gunship, call sign Jockey 14, paid the price of freedom and high operations tempo. Jockey 14 experienced an in-flight explosion, forcing ditching off the coast of Kenya while supporting Operation CONTINUE HOPE II in Somalia. Eight crewmembers were killed, while six survived.

Soon afterwards another tragedy for the Air Force occurred when a pair of US Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters were shot down in a tragic friendly-fire incident during Operation PROVIDE COMFORT III in Iraq. The 9 SOS, 55



Valor

SOS, and 23d Special Tactics Squadron played significant roles in the search, support, and recovery operations.

In the fall of 1994, the US decided to send forces into Haiti. The 16 SOW, 919 SOW, and 193 SOW led the formations of fixed and rotary winged aircraft to complete Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY. Air Force special operations helicopters flew from Navy aircraft carriers during this massive deployment. Most of the AFSOC aircraft operated out of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. This deployment also included the largest gathering of MH-53 Pave Lows to participate in one action, and the last real-world operation for the AC-130As of the 919 SOW prior to their retirement.

Also in 1994, the war in Rwanda, and the number of people victimized because of it, led to AFSOC forces of the 352 SOG becoming involved in a humanitarian effort known as Operation SUPPORT HOPE. It was also referred to as QUIET RESOLVE or PROVIDE RELIEF.

In early 1995, AFSOC received taskings to support a number of peace keeping and humanitarian missions. These included Operation PROVIDE COMFORT III (Turkey and Iraq), plus PROVIDE PROMISE/DENYFLIGHT, which evolved into DELIBERATE FORCE and JOINT ENDEAVOR (out of Italy and into Bosnia Herzegovina-Croatia). Pave Low helicopter crewmen received combat wounds while flying as part of a force trying to rescue two French aviators who had been shot down near Sarajevo during Operation DELIBERATE FORCE. The efforts of the Pave Low flight crew during this attempted rescue effort resulted in their receiving the 1995 Air Force Cheney Award. AFSOC also supported Operation CONTINUATION HOPE III (Somalia) which evolved into UNITED SHIELD.

In 1996, Air Force Special Operations Command aircraft were the first on the scene when the CT-43 aircraft carrying US Commerce Secretary Ron Brown crashed near Dubrovnik, Croatia, killing everyone on board. The 352 SOG launched two MH-53Js and one MC-130P as part of the search and rescue effort. Crews of the 16 SOW and 20 SOS also participated. The efforts of these crewmembers, during this highly visible event, resulted in their being awarded the

Air Force Cheney
Award for 1996.

The crews
involved in this
mission were then
quickly rotated
into Operation
ASSURED
RESPONSE,
which provided
support to the
emergency
Noncombatant



ASSURED RESPONSE

Evacuation Operation (NEO) of more than 2,100 US and foreign citizens from Monrovia, Liberia. Operating in a hostile fire environment, SOF personnel conducted dozens of rotary wing evacuation flights using MH-53Js and overhead fire support sorties in AC-130H Spectres, often vectoring friendly aircraft through small arms and rocket propelled grenade fire. For their efforts the Pave Low crews were presented the Lt Gen William H. Tunner Award as the outstanding strategic airlift crew of the year.

AFSOC Matures

With the breakup of the Soviet Union, Air Force Special Operations Command began changing its readiness posture from one geared to countering the Soviet threat to one of cooperative engagements and peace enforcement activities, for which AFSOC forces' capabilities remained in constant demand. As part of Commando Vision, which started in 1994, the 919 SOW would not receive the AC-130Hs from the 16 SOW as had been planned. Instead, the 919 SOW at Duke Field, Florida, retired its AC-130A gunships and gained MC-130P Combat Shadows, flown by the newly stood-up 5 SOS, and MC-130E Combat Talons, flown by the 711 SOS. Both conversions were a success, with the 919 SOW Reservists deploying to Brindisi AB, Italy, by Christmas 1995 in support of Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR. The 919 SOW completed the conversion by 1997.

In February 1997, AFSOC captured the “triple crown” of Air Force Safety Awards for 1996, a feat accomplished only once before by a major command. AFSOC took the Secretary of the Air Force Safety Award for the best overall mishap prevention program in Category I, the Maj Gen Benjamin D. Foulois Award for best flight safety program, and the Col Will L. Tubbs Memorial award for the top ground safety program.

Later in the year, the 16 SOW received the Columbian Trophy for military flight safety achievements in 1996. This marked the first time in the 62-year history of the award it was presented to a non-fighter unit.

In April 1997, AFSOC units on temporary duty to Brindisi in support of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) missions in

Bosnia took on a key support role in the evacuation of Americans trapped by Albania’s civil war. Supporting Operation SILVER WAKE, they assisted State Department officials in the processing of more than 1,000 evacuees, including about 450 Americans rescued from the warring nation.



MC-130 and MH-53

In June 1997, fighting raged in the Republic of Congo’s capital as a result of that nation’s civil war. An AFSOC MC-130H Talon II from the 352 SOG delivered an American military assessment team, then evacuated 56 people from Brazzaville. It earned the Makay Trophy for its efforts.

September 1997 saw three EC-130E Commando Solo aircraft from the 193 SOW deploy in support of Operation JOINT GUARD. The Stabilization Force commander requested the deployment of the aircraft to Brindisi to serve as a NATO resource to counter Serb radio and television broadcasts misrepresenting the Dayton Peace Accords.

Two 4 SOS AC-130U Spectre gunships flew to Taegu AB, South Korea, 24 October 1997, on a 36-hour nonstop mission from Hurlburt Field, Florida. The mission brought members of the 4 SOS to participate in FOAL EAGLE 1997, an annual Joint Chiefs of Staff exercise held throughout South Korea. Members of the 6 SOS also participated in the exercise. The 6 SOS made history in February 1998 when, for the first time, it operated both its UH-1 rotor wing and CASA 212 fixed wing aircraft.



EC-130E Commando Solo

Throughout 1998 AFSOC maintained a constant combat search and rescue alert posture as part of Operation JOINT GUARD, with

aircraft and personnel rotating from the 16 SOW and 352 SOG to San Vito, Italy, on a routine basis. This role increased significantly in March 1999 during the crisis in Kosovo and Operation ALLIED FORCE. During the NATO air campaign to remove Serbian forces from Kosovo, special operators conducted two successful CSAR operations to rescue downed American pilots (one F-117, one F-16) in the area of conflict.

In addition, Operation ALLIED FORCE witnessed the employment of the EC-130E Commando Solo aircraft from the 193 SOW to counter Serb radio and television broadcasts, the MC-130H to conduct extensive leaflet drops over Serbia, and the AC-130U to provide armed reconnaissance. All told, AFSOC's special operators and aircraft played a significant role in bringing the conflict in Kosovo to an end. Following the conclusion of ALLIED FORCE, special operations units entered a period of reconstitution, while also supporting humanitarian operations such as Operation ATLAS RESPONSE in Africa.

By the year 2000, the 6 SOS squadron would receive qualification training on several dissimilar aircraft to include

Russian made MI-17 helicopter, AN-26 and AN-32 aircraft, while also seeing its core mission area expanded.

The beginning of 2001 proved relatively quiet by special operations standards. The command's special operations units used this valuable time for reconstitution, training,



SOF in Kandahar 2001

and a variety of other events that the high operations tempo tended to impact.

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City, and the Pentagon, Washington D.C., on 11 September pushed the nation's

special operations forces to the forefront of the war against terrorism.

By the end of September 2001, AFSOC deployed forces to southwest Asia for Operation ENDURING FREEDOM to help confront and remove the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, along with the Taliban-supported Al-Qaida terrorist organization headed by Osama Bin Laden, who were responsible for the 11 September attacks on the United States. AFSOC airpower delivered Special Tactics Forces to the battle ground and they in turn focused US airpower and allowed Afghanistan's Northern Alliance ground forces (pro-US) to dispatch the Taliban and Al-Qaida from Afghanistan. In addition to its support in Afghanistan, AFSOC personnel also deployed to the Philippines to help aid that country's efforts against terrorism.

Through 2002, and continuing in 2003, SOF continued to lead the war on terrorism.

23d Air Force Commanders

Maj Gen William J. Mall, Jr. 1 Mar 83 to 19 Sep 85
Maj Gen Robert B. Patterson 20 Sep 85 to 6 Sep 89
Maj Gen Thomas E. Eggers 7 Sep 89 to 21 May 90

AFSOC Commanders

Maj Gen Thomas E. Eggers 22 May 90 to 21 Jun 91
Maj Gen Bruce L. Fister 21 Jun 91 to 21 Jul 94
Maj Gen James L. Hobson, Jr. 22 Jul 94 to 8 Jul 97
Maj Gen Charles R. Holland 9 Jul 97 to 4 Aug 99
Lt Gen Maxwell C. Bailey 5 Aug 99 to 15 Jan 02
Lt Gen Paul V. Hester 16 Jan 02 to present

AFSOC Senior Enlisted Advisors

CMSgt James R. Robertson 22 May 90 to 31 Oct 92
CMSgt Wayne G. Norrad 1 Nov 92 to 31 Aug 95
CMSgt Michael C. Reynolds 1 Sep 95 to 25 Jan 01
CMSgt Robert V. Martens, Jr. 25 Jan 01 to present

AFSOC Medal of Honor Recipients

Maj Bernard F. Fisher A-1E earned 10 Mar 66
Lt Col Joe M. Jackson C-123 earned 12 May 68
Lt Col William A. Jones III .. A-1H earned 1 Sep 68
1st Lt James P. Fleming UH-1F .. earned 26 Nov 68
A1C John L. Levitow AC-47.... earned 24 Feb 69

Contingency Operations of the United States since Vietnam

** Indicates Special Operations Involvement*

- *1975 S.S. Mayaguez and Kong Tang Island
- *1975 Evacuation of Cambodia, Operation EAGLE PULL
- *1975 Evacuation of South Vietnam, Operation FRE-
QUENT WIND
- 1976 Lebanon
- 1978 Zaire Airlift
- *1980 Iranian Hostage Rescue, Operation EAGLE CLAW
- *1981 Army General Dozier kidnapping in Italy
- *1983 Grenada Island (Caribbean) Hostage Rescue,
Operation URGENT FURY
- *1983 Honduras (Central America), Operation BIG PINE
- *1983-90 El Salvador (Central America), Operation BILD
KIRK and others
- *1984 El Salvador, President Duarte's daughter kid-
napping
- *1985 TWA Flight 847
- *1985 Achille Lauro, ship highjacking in the Mediterra-
nean Sea
- *1986 Libya (Africa) bombing, Operation EL DORADO
CANYON
- *1986 Bombing of Pan Am Flight 73 over Scotland
- *1987-88 Persian Gulf, Earnest Will, Prime Chance I
- *1988 Honduras, Operation GOLDEN PHEASANT
- *1989 Afghanistan (Middle East), Operation SAFE PAS-
SAGE
- *1989 El Salvador, Operation POPULAR TREE
- *1989 Philippines Coup attempt against President
Aquino
- *1989 Panama (Central America), Operation JUST
CAUSE
- *1990 Panama, Operation PROMOTE LIBERTY
- *1990 Liberia (Africa) US Embassy evacuation
- *1990-91 Saudi Arabia/Kuwait/Iraq, Operation DESERT
SHIELD/STORM

- *1991-Present .. Turkey/Iraq, Operation PROVIDE COMFORT I, II, III, Northern Watch
- *1991 Bangladesh (Southeast Asia), typhoon, Operation SEA ANGEL
- *1991 Saudi Arabia, Operation DESERT CALM
- *1991-Present .. Kuwait, Operation SOUTHERN WATCH
- *1992-1994 Italy/Yugoslavia, Operation PROVIDE PROMISE
- *1992 Somalia, Operation RESTORE HOPE
- *1993 Somalia, Operation CONTINUE HOPE I-II
- *1993 Yugoslavia, Operation DENY FLIGHT
- *1994 Haiti (Caribbean), Operations RESTORE DEMOCRACY & UPHOLD DEMOCRACY
- *1994 Rwanda (Africa), Operation SUPPORT HOPE
- *1995 Somalia, Operation UNITED SHIELD
- *1995 Italy/Yugoslavia/Bosnia, Operation DELIBERATE FORCE
- *1995 Followed DELIBERATE FORCE, became Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR for one year
- *1996 Dubrovnik, Croatia, search and rescue support for Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown T-43 crash
- *1996 Embassy evacuation, Liberia (Africa), Operation ASSURED RESPONSE
- *1997 Embassy evacuation, Albania (Europe), Operation SILVER WAKE
- *1997 Civilian evacuation, Brazzaville, Republic of Congo (Africa)
- *1999 Operation ALLIED FORCE (Serbia/Kosovo)
- *2000 Operation ATLAS RESPONSE, Mozambique flood relief
- *2001 Operation ENDURING FREEDOM
- *2002 Operation ENDURING FREEDOM

**The future...
is
being written**

*The challenges faced in the early days
of Air Force special operations
are still with us today.*

*The proud spirit
of today's
quiet professionals
is best*

*expressed in the
Air Commando motto:
"Any Time, Any Place"*

*For more information on
special operations heritage,
contact:
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229 Cody Ave Bldg 90382
Hurlburt Field, Fl 32544-5312*

*DSN: 579-1743
Commercial (850) 884-2209*

January 2003

Approved for release by HQ AFSOC/PA



AFSOC Mission

*America's specialized air power ... a step ahead
in a changing world, delivering special
operations combat power anytime, anywhere*