

Ethos

ISSUE 17
NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE



NEED FOR

SPEED

NSW OPERATORS AND MOBILITY PLATFORMS





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The First Year

Rear Admiral Sean A. Pybus discusses his first year at Naval Special Warfare



This month marks the end of my first year in command of NSW. The pace in carrying out our man, train and equip mission has been steadily strong. After

12 months at the helm, I can report that the business of this headquarters is well managed by an experienced, capable team. Among the Force, the quality of our Commodores and Commanding Officers has never been better, and the same goes for our Senior Enlisted Advisors.

Pressures and stresses in our SOF communities and their Families are real. NSW is strongly aligned with Admiral McRaven's priority to Preserve our Force and Families, and we're investing people, programs and facilities into our effort to keep SEALs, SWCCs and Enablers totally fit and formidable for years to come. We've made process adjustments to reduce uncertainty and anxiety, such as firming up deployment lengths; issuing PCS orders sooner; and communicating with the Force and Families more frequently. These measures have been well received by the community. To that end, the Ethos article on page 18 describes the importance of the next step in building a resilient force; overcoming the stigma that suggests it's not okay to ask for help. The current and future health of our force depends on our ability to make that shift.

Our operational elements continue to excel in their missions in Central Asia and around the world. In this issue of Ethos, we're highlighting the progress made since NSW established and led its first Special Operations Task Force in South East Afghanistan (pg. 6). On page 11, we've highlighted Visit, Board, Search and Seizure, a long-standing capability, and how our effort to train partner nations such as the Republic of Korea to conduct this mission is helping to counteract threats on the high seas.

Articles on pages 20-27 take an in-depth look at advances in our ground mobility platform the Lightweight Tactical All-Terrain Vehicle, and the Transportable Reconfigurable Integrated Crew Trainer, a simulator to assist operators in keeping their driving skills on the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles up to speed.

Enablers who support us, such as electricians, logisticians, cryptologists

and intelligence analysts are some of the best the Navy has to offer. On page 8, you can learn about the expertise and critical support we receive from Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians.

In this the anniversary of the 50th year of Navy SEALs, we continue to honor the history and contributions of our brothers who came before us. On page 14, we highlight the SEALs who supported U.S. efforts during the Vietnam War.

This past year we've experienced "a perfect storm, of sorts," for media exposure. Reports of operational successes; the opening of "Act of Valor," a movie made to help Navy and NSW recruiting, added to the public's interest in anything SEAL-related; along with too many of our former operators writing books and raising our public profile even higher.

I'm very proud of what NSW has accomplished this past year, and I'm absolutely mindful that we don't do anything by ourselves—other components and agencies and partners deserve much of the credit for operational successes. I don't want the relationships with our sister SOF components to suffer. NSW cannot be seen to devalue humility and secrecy within the SOF community—we must maintain the trust of our fellow Joint Warriors.

In an effort to reduce our media profile, I've asked Commanders and their PAOs to carefully consider each of their engagement opportunities, and do those that are necessary and proper, but step away from public events that may have little return for NSW. We all have a professional obligation to protect classified and sensitive information, in and out of uniform.

Lastly, this past year, we've also grieved for 24 men who gave their lives on deployments, including the largest-ever loss of SOF operators in one event Aug. 6, 2011. I've never been more proud of NSW, the way our people step forward for their Teammates, Families and the Families of the Fallen. Then they re-focus on their missions. The quality and performance of NSW has made it easy for me to represent this Force in 2011 and 2012. I feel good about where we are and where we're going. The bottom line for me, there is no place I'd rather have been the past year than right here, representing NSW.

-Rear Adm. Sean A. Pybus
Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command

"I'm very proud of what NSW has accomplished this past year, and I'm absolutely mindful that we don't do anything by ourselves—other components and agencies and partners deserve much of the credit for operational successes."

-Rear Adm. Sean A. Pybus
Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command

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USSOCOM Senior Enlisted Leader Discusses POTFF

SAN DIEGO – U.S. Special Operations Command's Senior Enlisted Leader, Command Sgt. Maj. Chris Faris, visited WARCOCOM and its West Coast component commands to speak with operators and their spouses about Preservation of the Force and Families (POTFF) April 10-12.

The four pillars of NSW's POTFF program are improving human performance, focusing on the warrior's spiritual health, tracking sleep patterns and signs of depression in operators and enablers and providing families with unwavering support.

Faris spent the week touring NSW with his wife Lisa, to raise awareness of one aspect of POTFF, the development of inter-disciplinary teams and facilities at component commands that enable operators to seek assistance and receive the best help that's right for them.

"Preservation of the Force and Families is a holistic look at education opportunities, training opportunities, pays and incentives, and all of the things that help keep special operations forces intact within the Department of Defense and out on the battlefield on behalf of our nation," Faris said.

The Faris' unique way of helping to raise awareness is telling their personal story about the trials and issues they faced as a special operations family throughout their 22-year marriage.

"We've been through so many changes and ups and downs in our relationship, that I feel like we would not be acting or reacting as leaders, if we didn't share our story and let others benefit from it," said Lisa Faris. "We hope that it might set a path for others that they might reach out for help and possibly make the progression in their career a little happier, healthier and more family oriented."

According to Faris, the hope is that their experience will initiate conversations within special operation component commands. They also hope to raise awareness about programs such as NSW's Families Over Coming Under Stress (FOCUS) program, which will help operators find ways to balance mission and family life.

"We want to tear down the barrier," said Faris. "We need to get the word out about the programs that are out there to help service members."

MC2 Dominique Canales

NSW Members Volunteer at Community Book Fair

CORONADO, Calif. – More than 20 Sailors, family members and civilian employees from several NSW commands donated their time and muscle to help set up for the Coronado Book Fair April 20.

NSW members assisted The Friends of Coronado Public Library by unloading, sorting and arranging 55 pallets of donated books in preparation for the April 20-22 event.

For the Sailors, volunteering is about giving back to the community where they live and work.

"I just moved here about six months ago," said Electronics Technician 2nd Class (SCW) Christopher Martini, NSW Support Activity 1. "Getting involved in the community feels great and Coronado is a terrific community."

"I'm just happy to be here," said Equipment Operator 2nd Class (SCW/AW/SW) Alain Gbla, NSW Logistics Support Unit 1. "I come from a third world country, so giving is always my main focus and I feel blessed to be here to help."

With thousands of books to prep for the book fair, members of The Friends of Coronado Public Library appreciated the helping hands of NSW volunteers.

"It's always been a wonderful coordination between the community and the Navy," said Sharon Sherman, a Friends of Coronado Public Library board of trustees member. "We love working with them, it's always a lot of fun and we really appreciate their help."

The annual fundraising event benefits the Coronado Public Library.

MC3 Megan Anuci

NSW Supports Sexual Assault Awareness

SAN DIEGO - WARCOCOM and its component commands hosted mandatory educational sessions to promote Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) awareness in April, which is recognized as National Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

The goal of Sexual Assault Awareness month is to reduce sexual assaults through direct, sustained engagement of all hands at all levels and to make personnel aware that sexual assault prevention is everyone's responsibility.

Rear Adm. Garry Bonelli, deputy commander, Naval Special Warfare Command, kicked off the month's events with brief remarks that sent a clear message

to the force, "If you assault one of us, you attack all of us."

After Bonelli's opening comments, training began with a command sexual assault awareness advocate explaining the importance of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) program.

"Getting information out about how and where to get help through the SAPR program is extremely important," said sexual assault awareness advocate, Information Systems Technician 1st Class (AW) Samuel Guevara. "When they (victims) reach out, we go to them, ensure they are in a safe location and we will assist them in any way we can whether it is medically, legally or filing a restricted or unrestricted report."

The topic of restricted versus unrestricted reporting generates the most questions and discussion during SAPR training. As Jeannette Casillas, NSW's Sexual Assault Response Coordinator hammered home during training sessions, understanding sexual assault reporting options and properly executing a victim's wishes is imperative.

Restricted reporting gives a victim time and opportunity to get information about available services and fully explore his or her rights, so he or she can make informed decisions without the pressure of an investigation or any legal processes. Once a victim becomes fully informed about the services available to him or her, he or she may elect to change his or her restricted report to an unrestricted report. With unrestricted reporting, the sexual assault must be reported to the command for all active duty members and to NCIS/military law enforcement for investigation for all active duty members and other beneficiaries. Please contact the Safe Helpline or your local 24/7 SAPR Hotline to preserve your reporting options.

According to the official SAPR website, if you initially make a restricted report, you can change it to an unrestricted report at a later date. However, if you initially make an unrestricted report, it cannot be changed to a restricted report. If you do not initially select the most suitable reporting option, it may result in you having less control over the release of your personal information.

In addition to attending education sessions, NSW Sailors participated in a Sexual Assault Awareness Month 5k run at Naval Air Station North Island April 27.

"Running is a great way to show awareness," said Legalman 2nd Class (SW/AW) Sharon L. Soileau. "It also keeps you stay healthy and builds confidence while showing support. Victims of sexual assault need to know that they have unconditional support in their fight to overcome trauma and

that they are not alone in their struggles."

MC3 Geneva G. Brier

VFW Named After Fallen Navy SEAL

LEMON GROVE, Calif. – Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 2082 renamed its Lemon Grove station after fallen SEAL, Master-at-Arms 2nd Class (SEAL) Michael A. Monsoor, during a rededication ceremony April 21.

More than 100 guests, including six of Monsoor's relatives and leadership from the NSW community attended the ceremony.

During the event, Rear Adm. Sean Pybus, commander, Naval Special Warfare Command, delivered a short speech about Monsoor's bravery and legacy.

"Michael is special to us in the NSW community," he said. "We guard his name and value his legacy. In the years ahead, I ask post membership to commit to demonstrating the values that Petty Officer Monsoor embodies. These being honor, passion, respect, and courage.

"He rests nearby," he added. "You can be sure he'll visit the post from time to time to check in. Understand who he was, because this post now bears his name. Michael will live as long as we remember him."

At the end of the ceremony, two VFW members unveiled the new sign. Monsoor's mother, Sally Monsoor, talked about how her son's actions in Iraq lead to him being respectfully remembered and highly honored.

"Michael's name on this building is wonderful," said Sally. "All the work that the veterans have done to redo their post and name it after my son is an honor for our family."

President Bush posthumously awarded Monsoor with the Medal of Honor during a White House ceremony in 2008.

While engaged in a firefight in Iraq on Sept. 29, 2006, an insurgent threw a hand grenade from an unseen location, which bounced off Monsoor's chest and landed in front of him. Although only he could have escaped the blast, Monsoor chose instead to protect his teammates. Instantly and without regard for his own safety, he threw himself onto the grenade to absorb the force of the explosion with his body, saving the lives of his two teammates.

"His actions in Ramadi on that day led him to all of this," said Sally. "We miss him every day, but we are very proud of what he did."

MC3 Megan Anuci



In recognition of National Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Command Master Chief Patrick Battles speaks to Naval Special Warfare (NSW) Sailors at an educational session to promote Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) April 20.



Two Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2082 members unveil a new sign dedicated to fallen Master-at-Arms 2nd Class (SEAL) Michael A. Monsoor during a post rededication ceremony. Monsoor was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during combat on Sept. 29, 2006 in Ar Ramadi, Iraq.



Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mark Ferguson speaks to Sailors during an all-hands call at WARCOCOM.



Master Chief Special Warfare Operator Shawn Johnson announces the third round draft pick of the 2012 NFL Draft in New York. Sailors from Navy Recruiting Command and the Naval Special Warfare Command were invited to participate in the NFL draft at Radio City Music Hall.

NSW personnel unload boxes of books at Spreckels Park for the 2012 Coronado Book Fair 20-22. More than 20 NSW personnel helped unpack and sort 55 pallets of books for the annual event.



U.S. and Lebanese Sailors participate in Exercise Eager Lion as they climb into a 11-meter RHIB from the pilot boarding station of the amphibious transport dock ship USS New York (LPD 21) during visit, board, search, and seizure drills. Eager Lion is a multinational exercise involving 19 nations from five different continents and more than 11,000 participants.

SEALs, Sailors Attend 2012 NFL Draft

NEW YORK – Navy SEALs from multiple commands and Sailors from the Navy Recruiting Command attended the 77th annual National Football League Draft April 26-28 at New York's Radio City Music Hall, as part of a community outreach program.

The event, officially called the "NFL Player Selection Meeting," is sponsored by the NFL, who invited Special Operators to attend and announce a third round draft pick.

"This is a unique opportunity, and it gives credibility to the Naval Special Warfare community as a force made up of athletic members of the military," said Capt. (SEAL) Duncan Smith, director, Naval Special Warfare Recruiting Directorate. "It gives the coaches, athletes and families an opportunity to meet and talk to some of the active duty SEALs here tonight that would have never otherwise had the chance."

SEALs and Sailors from around the Fleet are attending NFL-sponsored events to inform and educate athletes about potential career opportunities in Navy special programs such as SEALs, diver, EOD, and others.

Master Chief Special Warfare Operator Shawn Johnson, a 23-year veteran who participated in several of the previous NFL scout combines this year, made the live announcement on national television.

"With the 85th pick in NFL 2012 draft, the Detroit Lions select Dwight Bentley, Corner Back, of Louisiana Lafayette," announced Johnson.

The 2012 NFL Draft pick announcement demonstrates the strong, ongoing partnership the Navy, particularly the Naval Special Warfare community, has with professional organizations such as the National Football League.

"It was an honor and great opportunity to have had the chance to make the draft pick announcement," said Johnson. "This is one of those rare, once-in-a-life-time moments. All of these athletes possess many of the same qualities necessary to be successful as a Navy SEAL. They're obviously physically fit, but they're also mentally tough and self-disciplined."

The eight SEALs and Sailors from the Navy Recruiting Command marched on stage to an enthusiastic, standing ovation from the fans and guests in attendance at Radio City Music Hall.

Members of the NFL organization were equally appreciative and offered the Sailors a personal tour of the NFL Headquarters during the three-day NFL Draft.

"Having two sons currently attending the U.S. Naval Academy, I'm obviously a little biased, but this is very special for the NFL too, and were fortunate and excited to be able to have such professional and dedicated athletes as the SEALs here tonight," said Ron Hill, vice president of Football Operations for the National Football League.

*Lt. David Lloyd
NSWG-2 Public Affairs*

NSW Personnel Participate in Motorcycle Safety Standdown

CORONADO, Calif. – More than 30 NSW personnel attended a motorcycle safety standdown held at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado May 8.

The purpose of the event was to help prevent motorcycle mishaps by raising awareness during motorcycle safety month.

Cpl. Kotaro Murashige, a San Diego police officer, gave Sailors a presentation on motorcycle statistics, studies, and motorcycle specific laws.

"Statistically, the numbers of fatal

collisions are going down because of the increase in training and awareness," said Murashige. "The safer everyone is, the less incidents and collisions we will have."

While motorcycle fatalities across the nation are down, numbers are holding steady in the Navy. Last year, there were 16 motorcycle-related fatalities Navy-wide, with one life lost within the NSW force. So far this year, there have been eight motorcycle-related fatalities, two of them from NSW ranks. According to Naval Special Warfare Force Master Chief Stephen Link, any loss within the force is one too many.

"We are a nation at war," said Link. "The admiral and I count noses; you are all precious resources and we need you in the fight. One unsafe act that takes even one of you out of our ranks lessens our nation's combat readiness. Be safe!"

The leading cause of motorcycle deaths are head injuries. During the standdown, NSW personnel were briefed on the importance of wearing a helmet and other safety gear, such as reflective vests, gloves and pants rather than shorts.

"You need to take the necessary precautions

when you ride a motorcycle," said Capt. Kerry Thompson, deputy NSW force surgeon and a 30 year veteran motorcyclist. "A major part of this is making sure gear is donned and fully functional."

Murashige explained how motorcyclists can drive defensively and safely while using the motorcycle's attributes.

One way he mentioned is driving in what is called the right or left wheel. This is when a rider drives on one side of the lane rather than driving down the middle of the lane. Murashige says by doing that, the drivers of surrounding vehicles will have a clear view of the motorcyclist.

Another instance is lane splitting. Motorcyclists should only drive between two lanes and weave through traffic when traffic has come to a stop. He explained that motorcyclists are so small, that vehicles often have a hard time seeing motorcyclists approach from behind, especially at higher speeds.

A field sobriety test demonstration illustrated the physical and mental effects of alcohol and how drinking and riding can impair a Sailor's judgment and motor skills

while operating a motorcycle.

"There are so many repercussions when you drink and drive," said Murashige. "You can't hide when you drink and drive a motorcycle. All you're doing is putting your life and everyone else on the road in jeopardy."

MC3 Megan Anuci

Leap Frogs Jump into Ocean City Air Show

OCEAN CITY, Md. - Members of the U.S. Navy Parachute Demonstration Team, the Leap Frogs, performed at the Ocean City waterfront as part of the city's annual OC Air Show June 8-10.

In addition to parading the U.S. flag to open the ceremonies each day, the five-man jump team also performed a number of canopy formations over the beach.

"To be one of the few shows each year to have this elite demonstration team is a great honor," said Bryan Lilley, the air show coordinator. "The crowds here know them and love them."

After touching down following each

routine, the team members took the time to interact with the crowd. They gave hands-on demonstrations of their jump equipment and answered questions concerning their experiences as SEALs and Navy life in general.

"I think it was cool because they actually wanted to answer our questions," said 13-year-old Grant Barcus. "They didn't have to, but they took the time."

"I think he's my new role model," added his friend, Will Dorey.

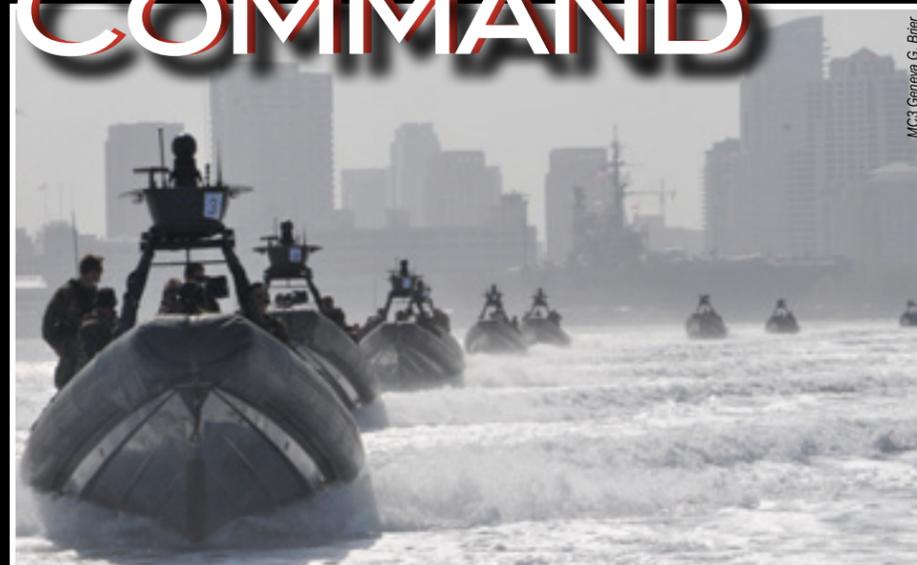
The Leap Frogs performed a number of their routines alongside the Screaming Eagles of the Army's 101st Airborne parachute demonstration team. In addition to the jump crews, the Air Show also featured both military and civilian aircraft demonstrations and static displays.

The Leap Frogs next scheduled performance is July 2-4 at the Boston Navy Week.

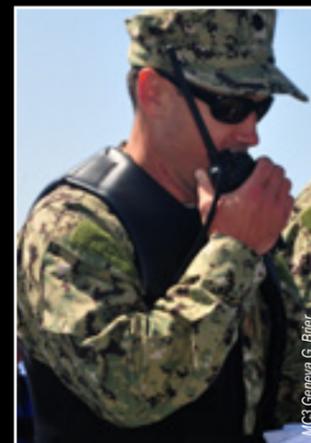
The Leap Frogs are based in San Diego and perform aerial parachute demonstrations in support of Naval Special Warfare and Navy recruiting.

*MC1 Fletcher Gibson
U.S. Navy Parachute Team Public Affairs*

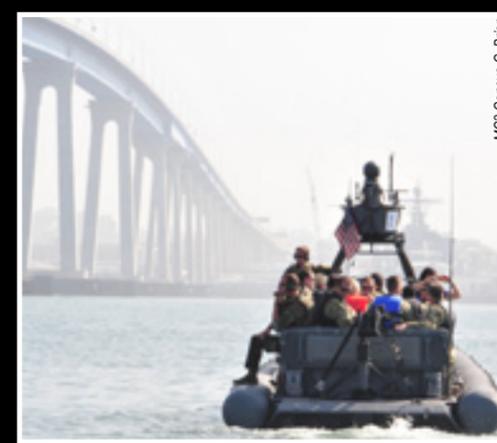
CHANGE OF COMMAND



MC3 Geneva G. Brier



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MC3 Geneva G. Brier

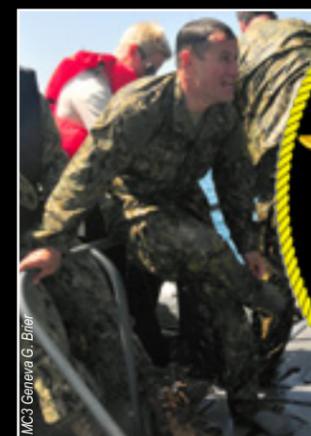
Members of Special Boat Team (SBT) 12 participate in an at-sea change of command ceremony June 7. SBT 12 and guests rode on rigid-hull inflatable boats (RHIBs) through the San Diego Bay to open waters. The team operated 15 boats forming a five point formation for the ceremony, which was broadcast over a radio system. After the reading of orders, presentation of awards and assumption of command, Cmdr. Michael Stull and his wife jumped in the water to signify the end of Stull's tour at SBT 12. Stull was relieved by Cmdr. Shane C. Voudren.



MC3 Megan Anuci



MC2 Dominique Canales



MC3 Geneva G. Brier



1 YEAR LATER: NSW TASK FORCE CONTINUES TO SECURE AFGHAN VILLAGES

2012 marked the 50 year anniversary of the SEAL Teams. Over the span of five decades, many would think the SEALs and NSW have accomplished many “firsts,” and this year NSW commemorates another important milestone in its history. 2012 marks the one-year anniversary of NSW commanding its first special operations task force.

On April 8, 2011, an East-Coast based SEAL team fell into ranks as the first Navy Jack rose above the rugged landscape of Uruzgan province, Afghanistan. The SEALs took over Special Operations Task Force South East (SOTF-SE) from an East-Coast based Army Special Forces group. The Navy-led team continued the mission of its SOF brethren, working alongside the Afghans, conducting Village Stability Operations (VSO) and building organic security forces throughout Afghanistan’s Uruzgan, Zabul and Day Kundi provinces.

The SOTF-SE team focuses primarily on recruiting and training members of the Afghan Local Police (ALP). While Afghanistan has many different types of national-level security forces, the ALP is specifically designed to operate at the village level. As the name suggests, the force consists of local men who volunteer to protect and defend their villages from insurgents.

SEALs have embedded in more than 21 locations throughout the three provinces to create the most optimal conditions for accomplishing this task.



MC1 Matthew Leistikow



MC1 Matthew Leistikow

DEVELOPMENT

Local workers prepare paint for a school renovation project in Tagaw district, Uruzgan province, Afghanistan, April 16. The renovations are one of a number of projects underway in the district as the Afghan government and coalition special operations forces work together to bring improvements to the area.



MC1 Matthew Leistikow

GOVERNANCE

Muhammad Ashraf Naseri, provincial governor of Zabul, speaks with Army Col. John Evans, deputy commander, Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command - Afghanistan, before an Afghan Local Police validation ceremony in Tarnak Wa Jaldak district, Zabul province, Afghanistan, April 28. The ceremony represented the final step in the Ministry of Interior’s official endorsement and establishment of a district’s ALP program. With a validated program, districts are authorized to recruit, train and arm ALP members.



MC1 Matthew Leistikow

MEDICAL/ CULTURAL SUPPORT

An Afghan National Army special forces soldier demonstrates to members of the Afghan Uniformed Police how to treat an abdominal wound with an Israeli bandage in Kajran district, Daykundi province, Afghanistan, Feb. 2.



Air Force Staff Sgt. Ryan Whitney

VILLAGE STABILITY OPERATIONS

A coalition special operations team member scans an area for insurgent activity, as a UH-60 Blackhawk provides air support during an operation to destabilize insurgent drug trade in Kajaki village, June 2. During the operation, more than 1,000 lbs of black tar opium were destroyed by the Afghan led force.



MC1 Matthew Leistikow

AFGHAN LOCAL POLICE TRAINING

Soldiers from the 8th Commando Kandak listen to a debrief from their coalition special operations forces mentor after a live-fire exercise in Tarin Kowt district, Uruzgan province, Afghanistan, Jan. 31. The 8th Commando Kandak partners with coalition special operations forces to conduct operations throughout Uruzgan and Zabul provinces.

WHAT
THEY
DO

Neutralizing the IED Threat

“We are playing chess with the enemy,
we always have to be two steps ahead.”

- Ensign Brian Lehtinen
Assistant Officer in Charge, Platoon 371

It takes a special brand of courage to detect, identify and disarm all types of weapons and ordnance. The Sailors of the Navy's Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) community are not only brave, but extremely calm and cool headed under the most daunting of circumstances – real world scenarios where they are called upon to make improvised explosive devices (IED), underwater explosives or chemical and biological weapons safe. They are armed with extensive training, a thorough compliment of equipment and the skill of a surgeon that keeps them alive and fellow operators safe.

For the past decade SEALs and Special Operation Forces (SOF) operators have been successfully conducting kinetic operations to target terrorist elements and the networks that support them, becoming our Nation's force of choice. Facing an enemy whose weapon of choice is improvised explosives, the expertise of EOD has not only earned them respect, but battlefield preeminence, so much so that SEALs won't deploy without them.

The Mission

Navy EOD teams trace their roots back to the first group of volunteers selected to work with the British Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) teams. The teams responded to the initial German attacks in early 1940 during World War II. When these volunteers returned, the U.S. Navy recognized the need for countering advanced weapon systems being deployed by other nations. In June of 1941, the Naval Mine Disposal School and shortly thereafter, the Naval Bomb Disposal School were established. In 1945, the two schools combined to form the Naval Ordnance Disposal Unit. After many years of growth and advancement, the command was renamed Naval Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technology Division.

The mission of the Navy EOD force is to identify, render safe, and dispose of hazardous unexploded conventional munitions, chemical munitions, and improvised explosive devices (IED). Today's EOD warrior can respond to a variety of threats and situations. They work in all terrains and atmospheres, and in many cases, work under extreme pressure.

In Afghanistan, EOD personnel may be asked to don a bomb suit in the middle of summer and dispose of an IED in temperatures in excess of 100 degrees. While conducting mine countermeasure missions around the world, other EOD personnel clear shipping lanes in chilling waters. They also provide direct support to combat forces, including SEALs and assist the Secret Service in protecting dignitaries.

“It has always been our mission to support general purpose and SOF by removing the threat posed by explosive hazards, to enable access and allow supported and follow-on forces to be able to maneuver in the battle space,” said Capt. Edward Eidson, commander, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group One. “We are combat hardened, proven, quiet professionals that fully understand the dangers and ultimate cost of our chosen profession; we wouldn't have it any other way.”

Combating IEDs

In today's battlefield environment, especially places like Afghanistan and Iraq, the EOD force is needed more than ever. Both are considered among the most heavily mined nations in the world and according to The Washington Post, roadside bombs and IEDs are the biggest cause of casualties for U.S. troops. The figures also show that the number of those wounded by the roadside bombs in 2011 nearly tripled to 3,366.

“When an initially conventional conflict in Iraq transitioned into an insurgency, the improvised explosive device became the weapon of choice and the primary means of inflicting U.S. and coalition casualties,” said Eidson. “EOD became one of the most highly demanded skills sets across the Joint Theater of Operations.”

Although SEALs are trained in many areas, including explosives and demolition charges, they are not experts on IEDs and roadside bombs. They possess general knowledge but are not qualified to dispose of these threats, leaving a gap in their safety. To combat this

(Continued)



Dissecting the Badge



LIGHTNING BOLTS

Symbolize the potential destructive power of the bomb and the courage and professionalism of EOD personnel in their endeavors to reduce hazards, as well as to render explosive ordnance harmless.

THE SHIELD

Represents the EOD mission: prevent a detonation and protect the surrounding area and property to the utmost.

THE WREATH

Symbolic of the achievements and laurels gained in minimizing accident potentials through the ingenuity and devotion to duty of its members. It is in memory of those EOD personnel who gave their lives while performing EOD duties.

THE BOMB

Copied from the design of the World War II Bomb Disposal Badge, the bomb represents the historic and major objective of the EOD attack, the unexploded bomb. The three fins represent the major areas of nuclear, conventional and chemical/biological interest.

threat, SEAL platoons since 2001 have integrated EOD experts into their teams.

"EOD is able to fully integrate with SOF from all services; shooting, moving, and communicating," said Eidson.

Currently, two EOD operators are assigned to each eight to ten man SEAL platoon beginning at pre-deployment training and remain with the team until the deployment is complete.

"The EOD operators we work with, integrate and become proficient in our training and technical procedures prior to deployment and they operate and fight side-by-side with us on deployment," said Master Chief Special Warfare Operator Kevin Pope. "We learn to trust each other implicitly and the support provided by Navy EOD is critical to operational safety and mission accomplishment."

EOD members are trained to always be aware of their surroundings, make routes safe and preserve life. Chief Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician Donovan Trost, assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 3 (EODMU 3) explained, while performing NSW missions, EOD techs scout all mission routes and reroute mission travel if necessary. If changing direction is not an option, technicians will detonate, make inert or remove threats while the SEAL Team provides cover, then the group will resume travel to its assigned operation.

"If the SEALs are going on a direct action mission, we are on the team to enable them access to the target, whether it's in a vehicle or on foot, we will clear the area for the team," said Trost.

"We are playing chess with the enemy, we always have to be two steps ahead," said Ensign Brian Lehtinen of EODMU 3. "We are out on foot patrol with the SEALs, walking with them everywhere they go and always thinking about how the enemy is going to employ explosive devices against us."

Training as One

At the Naval School Explosive Ordnance Disposal, students learn about a comprehensive array of explosives over an 18-month period. The training encompasses basic demolition, biological/chemicals, ground ordnance, air ordnance, underwater ordnance, improvised explosives and nuclear

ordnance.

Experienced operators from EOD units are assigned to each SEAL Team six to nine months before a deployment, so they can begin unit level training with the team. This gives both EOD and SEALs time to become accustomed to working together and build a trusting relationship.

"We learn all of the SEALs basic fundamentals and build a relationship with the guys," said Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician 2nd Class Christopher Andrieu of EODMU 3.

"When you train with them early on, they learn who you are and what you're about and vice versa. At that point trust begins and you develop a friendship."

The relationship between the communities is not a one way street; SEALs and EOD operators work together to accomplish a variety of missions. EOD warriors support SEAL Teams with NSW missions and SEALs support EOD experts with EOD related missions.

"We work with each other on direct action missions where we support the frogmen or they get us to a target to take down a bomb making facility," said Lehtinen. "We go back and forth; it's a very symbiotic relationship."

As terrorists continue to use IEDs, the need for EOD remains constant and their close relationship with SEALs continues to be strong.

"I don't see us ever parting from the SEALs; this is a relationship that we are building and growing on every day. I don't think there is ever going to be a time when the SEAL Teams aren't going to need us," said Trost. "We will stay and keep improving on the way we deal with the threats of the future."

EOD is currently destroying post war ordnance and reducing the threat imposed by IEDs while forward deployed. The present day EOD operator has changed greatly from that first Mine Recovery class of 1941. But one thing that has remained constant is the level of professionalism, dedication, and honor found at the core of the program.

"While working as an EOD technician, things never get old. We are able to dive, jump out of planes, use robots; the list goes on," said Trost. "It is such a wide spectrum, it's impossible to get tired of this job."

MC3 Geneva G. Brier

V.A.S.S.

VISIT, BOARD, SEARCH SEIZURE

A look at one of NSW's most complex MISSIONS



Army Capt. Michael Odgers



Counteracting threats on the high seas

Army Sgt. Aaron Rognstad

Oceans make up 71 percent of the Earth's surface. Nearly 80 percent of the world's people live within a few hundred miles of the sea. About 90 percent of the world's commerce travels on the ocean's surface. While oceans connect the nations of the world, they also breed maritime piracy, terrorism, weapons proliferation, drug trafficking and other illicit activities. Through intense practice and smooth interoperability with partner nations, the U.S. Navy is able to successfully deter, disrupt and suppress acts that threaten the security, prosperity and vital interests of America and its allies.

Since the 1980s, NSW operators have trained to perfect their visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) skill set. These missions are recognized as one of the most complex within the NSW repertoire. They require SEAL and SWCC operators, as well as a considerable support package that includes helos, boats, medical support and most likely an afloat forward staging base. With so many moving parts, VBSS is a challenging undertaking. When you add uncontrollable variables such as weather, sea conditions and visibility to the equation, you have the makings for intense and dramatic operations.

Few, if any, are as well trained in the area of VBSS than SEALs. They are sought out experts who have trained the special operations forces of U.S. allies all over the world. Recently, U.S. Navy SEALs teamed up with the Republic of Korea's Naval Special Warfare Flotilla, a special warfare unit referred to as ROKN SEALs, to conduct VBSS drills during Exercise Foal Eagle.

The multi-national, joint-service exercise focusing on tactical-

based warfare throughout the peninsula of Korea began two days before a weather front sopped the southern tip of the peninsula of Jinhae, located on the southeast coast of the Republic of Korea. The ROK Navy steamed the calm seas aboard the Korean fast combat support ship ROK Hwacheon (AOE-59), while the U.S. Army flew the clear skies in MH-47 Chinook helicopters piloted and crewed by soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.

Prior to the official exercise, SEALs from both countries practiced fast-rope drills at a helicopter pad resting on top of a hill overlooking the harbor at Jinhae Naval Base.

"If we do it right, we can get 15 guys onto the ship in 30 seconds or less," said one of the U.S. SEALs named Mike. "It's all about speed and maintaining your distance between you and your buddy below you."

After both units honed their skills on land, they shifted their efforts to the exercise, which took place in the harbor the following two days. By the light of day and in the black of night using night-vision goggles, men from both countries fast-roped onto the aft deck of the Hwacheon and scattered in their respective squads to search the ship's many spaces for mock "pirates" who were hiding in various decks aboard the ship.

"When people think of pirates, they tend to think of Hollywood movies and Captain Hook – the stereotypical image of pirates in the 16 and 1700s – but the threat is very much still around, not so

much off our [U.S.] shores, but definitely over here and especially off the coast of Somalia in the Arabian Sea," said Chris, another U.S. SEAL. "But this type of training combats piracy and other forms of high-seas threats like drug runners."

"We conduct these drills with our allies because the world is a large and hostile place," said Jack Nash, assistant doctrine officer for Naval Special Warfare Command. "There is contraband, there is piracy and we need to guarantee freedom of navigation because 90 percent of the world's trade is traveled by sea."

There are three VBSS categories: compliant, non-compliant and opposed. Nash explained that compliant means that an order is given and the ship or platform cooperates. If a ship is non-compliant, officials must determine whether an opposed boarding is needed. If so, SEALs or Marines will get the call depending on the mission parameters. In an opposed scenario, operators retake hijacked ships from armed hostiles.

According to a lieutenant assigned to ROK SEAL Team 3, VBSS training evolutions demonstrate the successful interoperability between U.S. and ROK Special Operations Forces and the continued coordination and cooperation between the two allies.

"It's critical to share tactics like this to make sure we're on the same page and I hope to have similar training like this in the future," said the ROK Lieutenant.

Cmdr. Van Wennen, commander, SEAL Team 17 agreed, noting the training not only strengthens alliances, but turns potential into positive performance.

"VBSS has been the primary focus of the last two exercises," said Wennen. "We teach and learn from them – really a two-way street. We've had a long relationship with the ROK Naval Special Warfare community and we hope to sustain that relationship for a long time to come." ☞

MC2 John Scorza &
Army Sgt. Aaron Rognstad

**"There is
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- Jack Nash
Assistant Doctrine Officer for WARCOM



Army Sgt. Aaron Rognstad



Army Sgt. Aaron Rognstad

(Top) Republic of Korea (ROK) SEALs conduct a visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) training mission. VBSS drills are conducted to deter, disrupt and suppress piracy, terrorism, weapons proliferation, drug trafficking and other illicit activities.

(Bottom) A Republic of Korea (ROK) SEAL checks an area for safe entry during a visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) training mission.

Navy SEALs in

VIETNAM

This year, Navy SEALs celebrate two historic events: The establishment of the first Teams, their first missions in Vietnam.

During a speech at the 2011 UDT/SEAL Muster, which kicked off the 50th anniversary of Navy SEALs and the organization's first missions in Vietnam, Vice Adm. Joseph Kernan, a SEAL and deputy commander, U.S. Southern Command, spoke about the sacrifice of SEAL and UDT members.

"Maybe the ironic aspect of combat is that years later, what people remember most are the people we lost, as it should be," Kernan said. "We remember less the successful missions and more the sacrifices that made them possible."

When Vietnamese government elections failed in 1956, it was a turning point in world history that led to a North versus South civil war. In 1958, President Eisenhower began sending military advisors to South Vietnam. Under President John F. Kennedy, armed forces members continued to go to Vietnam and SEALs were sent shortly after their establishment in 1962.

For the first time and shortly after their inception, Navy SEALs entered combat operations in Vietnam. A relatively young and unproven force tested the waters and set the precedent for all Naval Special Warfare operators 50 years past to present.

"We entered country with a certain amount of trepidation," said Charles "Chuck" Chaldekas, NSW range operations manager. "We were fairly certain of what we were going to do and we were confident in our abilities. We heard the stories of predecessor platoons, but we knew that we were in a learning mode when we first got there. The first couple of ops were very edgy for many of us. We were putting on our face paint for real. We were loading up live rounds for real."

In the book "The Men behind the Trident: SEAL Team 1 in Vietnam," Barry Enoch, a SEAL Team 1 plank owner and Navy Cross recipient, said that his 12-man platoon left for Vietnam in March 1963. Once they arrived, they were issued aliases and khaki uniforms without name tapes.

"There was a reason for the fake names," Enoch said. "The first detachment from SEAL Team 1 went over in 1962 and consisted of only two people. The two men worked for the Central Intelligence Agency and some of the people that they trained were captured."

According to the book, the men who were captured disclosed the names of the agents while being interrogated. Soon after, their names

were broadcasted over North Vietnamese radio.

For the safety of the two men, they were transported out of the country and from then on, operators used fake names.

Early on, the primary SEAL mission was to serve as advisors to Vietnamese Special Forces. From 1962-1965, SEALs trained and advised the Biet Hai commandos (or the Vietnamese Coastal Force personnel), the LDNN (Lien Doi Ngouï Nhia) and the Vietnamese Mobile Training Team (MTT). SEALs taught their South Vietnamese counterparts reconnaissance, sabotage and guerilla warfare.

In Da Nang, retired Master Chief Pete Slempa worked singularly as an advisor for the South Vietnamese.

"You ate with them, slept and lived with them, trained them and buried them," Slempa said. "You get to a point where you become hardened. If you let it get to you, it would. I had to think ahead, I completed this mission, I'll come back for another one."

Vietnam was more than just fighting an opposing force. Unlike wars of the past, the opposition was not a different race or wearing different colored uniforms. It was often impossible to tell whose side anyone was on, especially civilians.

"The people in Vietnam saw what was coming before we did. They wanted to be friends with us, but they couldn't. They wanted to help us, but they couldn't. People from the other side would report them and when the North came down and took over, everyone knows what happened," Slempa added.

In 1966, the North Vietnamese military invaded South Vietnam, which marked the beginning of combat operations for SEALs in country.

"Throughout 1966, there was a detachment of SEALs in Nha Be and they operated in a place called the Rung Sat Zone, which means 'Killer Swamp,'" said Don Crawford, a retired SEAL and former Team 1 operator. "The operations that we ran were intelligence gathering, ambushes and direct action. We would get information, usually from Vietnamese that had been captured."

Crawford said that the detachments ran very successful operations and were eventually spread throughout the Mekong Delta, the southern area of South Vietnam, where they engaged in similar operations.

"Eventually they went into operations where they would try to free prisoners of war held in camps," Crawford said. "They also went after the Viet Cong (VC) infrastructure. Not necessarily the guys carrying

weapons, but the political wing of the insurgency."

Larry "Doc" Hubbard, a former SEAL Team 1 member, said the mission was multifaceted.

"We operated on targeted information," Hubbard said. "Our mission was interdiction and denying enemy supply routes."

When combat operations began, SEALs found that they had to make major adjustments to how they carried out their missions. The learning curve was steep and serious, but in war as in life, there is always room for humor.

"A number of very humorous things occurred within the platoon," said Chaldekas, a former SEAL Team 1 member. "One in particular; I was very keyed up in ensuring that we stayed very quiet. I was very diligent about taping up all my gear, so that it didn't have clinks and clanks ... I was very precise about how I entered and exited the boats."

Chaldekas explained that he was so procedurally exact, that habitual steps he followed in training didn't exactly go to plan in an operation. In training evolutions, he would enter and exit boats on their port side, where there was a handle on each side of the bow to help SEALs enter and exit the water with speed and stealth.

"I was really concerned about all of these sounds, because I didn't want to alert the Viet Cong Reaction Forces," he said.

During one of his first operations, the team prepared to exit the boat, only this time, they were on the starboard side. He turned around to step off the boat backwards, reached down for the handle and realized that there was nothing to grab hold of.

"I had already put my right foot in the top rung of the ladder and my left foot in the second rung – and no handle," he said. "Here I was with my hands up in the air, as I fell backward off the bow of the boat and there was a gigantic splash. I ended up in about two feet of water with my right arm sticking out and holding my machine gun above the surface. As I was submerged, I was laying there thinking, 'should I just swallow a whole bunch of water and die right here or do I get up and listen to the disgust, the loathing and ribbing that I was going to take after making all the noise?' It was especially awful after I had been the one harassing everyone else about taping everything down and making sure everything was quiet. Here I am making all the noise out in the middle of the jungle and perhaps within hearing of an enemy reaction force."



"In order to
SURVIVE *they had to*
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They wanted to
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They wanted to be
FRIENDS
with us, but they
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- Pete Slempa
SEAL Team 1 Plank Owner

Water created more problems than just noise for Vietnam vets. Swamp-like areas wreaked havoc across the country.

"We were stationed in My Tho, which is down in the delta where they grow rice," said retired SEAL Master Chief Rudy Boesch, a SEAL Team 2 plank owner. "Your boots would get wet the first day and never dried the whole time you were down there."

Hubbard said that his chain of command found operating in boots hazardous, so they often went without shoes. Operators opted to lose their constantly wet boots and eliminated a noisy safety hazard in the process.

"We operated barefoot a lot, because of the sucking sound of mud against your boots - that actually saved my life," Hubbard said.

Hubbard described a time when he stepped on a punji stake—a sharp bamboo stake covered in excrement and concealed in grass. They were meant to gash the feet and legs of enemy soldiers and cause infection. The punji stake Hubbard encountered was slightly different.

"I stepped on a punji stake one time and as a natural reaction, I jerked my foot back off. If I would have had a boot on, I would have lifted a brick, which had a demolition charge underneath it." Hubbard explained that because his foot was slippery from the mud, his foot slid off the charge rather than planting down on it. He believes if he would have had boots on, he would have certainly detonated the charge.

From 1966 to 1972, SEALs were involved in several programs that were successful in the fight against VC guerillas. The Kit Carson Scout program was one of them.

According to the Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War, the Kit Carson Scout program was enacted by the U.S. Marine Corps and allowed former VC guerillas who surrendered under the Chieu Hoi Program (open arms) to be employed by American military members for tactical, combat and pacification efforts. Chaldekas explained that his platoon often employed Kit Carson Scouts.

"Kit Carsons were used as point men under our control," said Chaldekas.

"They were in the front of the element, so if anyone was encountered, they could identify who the targets were."

Chaldekas explained that they often kept the Kit Carsons in their hometown.

"Many VC were kept in areas where they volunteered for the VC army or where they grew up. It was beneficial, because they knew the area and the local people. They knew who was VC and who was not." Chaldekas said that they were also very good at intelligence gathering, serving as local area guides, ammunition suppliers and platoon guides.

Shannon McCrary, a retired SEAL officer and SEAL Team 1 "Mike" platoon commander in 1971, was assigned to the last SEAL platoon that exited Vietnam in December of that year.

"When I was there, the American military was in the process of transitioning to the Vietnamese military taking over combat operations. They called it Vietnamization," McCrary said. "The First province they did it in was just south of Saigon. As Vietnamization moved ahead, it became harder for us to coordinate unilateral missions, because the Vietnamese were in charge of the coordination. Security was a problem. We didn't know if there were any leaks or spies."

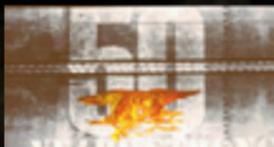
On March 23, 1973, President Richard Nixon declared the end of America's involvement in the Vietnam War and sent all U.S. forces home. All American troops and support personnel withdrew from Saigon April 29, 1975 and North Vietnam took Saigon the next day, leading to South Vietnam's defeat.

Since their first missions in Vietnam 50 years ago, SEALs have earned a reputation as the world's most elite band of SOF warriors. Every SEAL who has worn the uniform has been connected to a focused set of ideals. Courage, humility, honor, discipline and integrity embody every man who has served in the Teams. While they seek challenge, a life of service and being a part of something greater than themselves – NSW's quiet professionals aren't in the game for recognition or praise.

"One thing I do know about the Teams of yesterday and the Teams of today is that we don't go to battle for accolades or for medals," Medal of Honor recipient Mike Thornton said at a 50th Anniversary celebration for SEAL Team 1. "We go to battle for the greatest nation in the world. We go to battle for the man on the right of us and the man on the left of us, we go for the man in front of us and the man behind us – our comrades-in-arms. We go to battle for each other because we want to sustain freedom as we know it, and we want to sustain that same freedom for the future of America. We loved, and we gave, and we understood each other - that's what SEAL teams are about. We would have given our lives for each other."

MC2 Shauntae Hinkle-Lymas

SEALs in Vietnam Video



DESERT STORM TO PRESENT

Naval Special Warfare significant accomplishments

For more than a decade, NSW forces have been successfully conducting kinetic operations targeting terrorist elements and the networks that support them. Given the growing global security challenges our military faces, NSW not only finds, fixes and finishes enemy threats, but has also developed a persistent global presence; on any given day, Special Operations Forces are deployed in up to 70 nations around the world.

2009

December 18, 2011
The last convoy of U.S. forces pulled out of Iraq, ending nine years of war.

April 2009
SEALs rescue Capt. Richard Phillips, American freighter "skipper" of Maersk Alabama, after the vessel was seized by Somali pirates.

July 9, 2007
Adm. Eric Olson becomes the first SEAL to assume command of U.S. Special Operations Command. Olson was also the first three and four star SEAL.

2003
SEALs joined British, Australian, and Iraqi military forces to help protect the Al Basrah and Khawar Al Amaya Oil Terminals.

November 2001
SEALs in Afghanistan conduct special missions that help pave the way for the establishment of Camp Rhino—the first U.S. land base built during Operation Enduring Freedom.

2003
In the 1990's, SEALs completed successful missions in Bosnia and Liberia. They led more than 2,000 people to safety in Liberia when the country erupted into civil war. In Bosnia, they escorted international troops into the country safely.

March 2, 2002
In the wee hours of the morning, SEALs spring into action for Operation: Anaconda. Their mission To destroy and capture Al Qaeda forces operating in the Afghan region of Shahi Kowt.

December 8-28, 1992
SEALs and U.S. Special Forces support Operation Restore Hope in Somalia and Kenya.

1994

September 16-17, 1994
SEALs and special boat units launch from USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20) into Northern Haiti to conduct preinvasion reconnaissance, intel gathering, and hydrographic data collection for Operation Uphold

April 19, 1991
Two SEAL platoons erect refugee camps for Kurdish refugees along the Turkish border, in support of Operation Provide Comfort.

1991

January 5-6, 1991
Once Somalia descended into anarchy, SEALs participated in a rescue effort to evacuate U.S. Embassy personnel for Operation Eastern Exit in the country's capital of Mogadishu.

Asking for Help

POTFF Looks to Remove Stigma

Naval Special Warfare (NSW) operators enjoy a hard-earned reputation as an innovative, adaptable team of physically tough, principled warriors dedicated to accomplishing our nation's toughest SOF missions. They are a far cry from the stereotypical chest thumping, muscle-bound tough guy caricatures found in Hollywood movies and imaginative water cooler conversations.

Make no mistake, today's operators are the best of the best, carrying the nation's insurgency fighting and terrorism trouncing hopes on their collective backs with battlefield skill and bravery. They refuse to quit this task or any other, because they don't want to disappoint or let their teammates and leaders down.

NSW wants and recruits men of this caliber into its ranks. Despite combat zone prowess and an insatiable appetite to accomplish the mission, a chink in our warrior's armor has been identified. Some of our nation's best grapple with other aspects of life, whether recovering from combat related injuries or struggling with the delicate balance of family responsibilities and intense deployment cycles - many refuse to ask for help or show the least bit of vulnerability.

This perceived weakness has pushed many SEAL and SWCC team members to bear the burden of hiding their personal issues to avoid the social stigma associated with their problems. While a Sailor excels in the workplace by repressing stressors, denial often times means they manifest themselves in other aspects of a service member's life, usually at home with family.

Recognizing that no single Special Operations Forces (SOF) operator is immune to stress, and more importantly, that wellness, prevention and resiliency are in step with the warrior ethos, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) leadership showed its commitment to Preservation of the Force and Family (POTFF) with a very intimate form of training and therapy.

On April 2 - 5, NSW operators, enablers and their spouses were invited to attend installments of the "Chris and Lisa Show," as USSOCOM Senior Enlisted Leader, Command Sgt. Maj. Chris Faris and his wife Lisa shared the intimate story of their 22-year marriage as a SOF family. While their personal trials, struggles and imperfections were in the spotlight, so was their message to the Force: If you need help, ask for it and get it!

"One of the things we have to overcome in our culture is a stigma that's placed on people through peer pressure, or whatever the case might be, that seeking help is bad," said Faris. "SOF has this myth about it, that they're not supposed to have any chinks in their armor, but at the end of the day, that's an absolute fallacy. You're still a human being, and a human being can only have 'X' amount of capability for coping with the things going on in their lives, especially as we enter the 11th year of war."

As NSW looks to the future, the demands on the community remain steady. In a message to the Force and families, NSW's commander, Rear Adm. Sean Pybus, shared concerns for his team.

"Our Warriors are smart, tough, and cope well with operational challenges," Pybus wrote. "But after years of rotations into overly demanding missions and situations, I think everyone is affected to some degree, albeit in different ways. How we are assessing and treating our people is only going to become more critical to our long-term health and we are not going to slow our operational tempo anytime soon."

USSOCOM's commander, Adm. William McRaven, has stated that one of his top priorities is resiliency of the force and families. In a Jan. 9, 2012 message to the force and families, McRaven announced that his POTFF Task Force has been tasked with identifying problems and underlying symptoms that cause strain and anxiety for SOF warriors and their families. The POTFF Task Force has also been asked to highlight the best practices of each service component command's POTFF initiatives and general SOF programs designed to support service members and their families.

For NSW, POTFF asks the question, "What actions can we take to preserve our forces?"

To answer this question, Pybus initiated an executive council to advise him on issues regarding the force and families.

"[The council] is a collection of senior officers, both civilian and military, that can provide Admiral Pybus advice and counsel on how NSW can best meet the needs and support POTFF," said Steve Gilmore, NSW Family Support program director.

Representatives from across the NSW Force were selected as council members, including many headquarters advisors such as the NSW deputy commander, chief of staff, Force master chief, Force medical officer, Force psychologist, Force chaplain, the Tactical Athlete Program manager and family support. The council periodically meets with Pybus to advise him on warning indicators, trends in the community and proposed actions to help preserve the Force. According to Gilmore good examples of the council's proactive approach are recent safety stand-downs and drug, alcohol, and suicide prevention training across the enterprise.

But POTFF does more than offer training. At NSW, POTFF is broken down into four pillars, with tools and programs available to enhance and support family and force resiliency.

The first pillar is human performance. NSW is working to increase the athletic ability of its operators and enablers, by educating them on how to remain fit and take care of their bodies through proper nutrition and optimization of their workouts.

The second pillar is behavioral. It's a psychiatric check of operators and



Click to view NSW's Family Support web site.

"One of the things we have to overcome in our culture is a stigma that's placed on people through peer pressure, or whatever the case might be, that seeking help is bad."

- Command Sgt. Maj. Chris Faris
USSOCOM Senior Enlisted Leader

enablers, which includes making sure that NSW has the means to treat its Sailors for stress related byproducts of the job, such as sleep deprivation and depression.

The third pillar relates to spiritual health. This is led by the chaplains and religious program specialists of NSW, as they take care of the moral-well being of the force and its families.

And the final pillar that holds the NSW Force upright is family support and the resiliency of our children, parents, spouses and significant others.

Gilmore said that asking for help is essential for POTFF to positively affect the NSW family. While some of the pillars overlap, the important takeaway is that personnel get the help that they need, and that, is still up to the individual.

"In the past, operators have had a problem asking for help when needed," said Gilmore. "The experts and counselors will say that this aspect is getting better, but there is a resistance."

Communication about NSW resiliency programs has also increased up and down the chain of command and to families with Facebook pages and websites dedicated to raising awareness about programs, such as Families Overcoming Under Stress (FOCUS) and others that aim to help operators and their families find ways to balance mission and family life.

"We use many different ways to communicate the message," said Gilmore. "There are spouse calls, all hands calls, hearing it at quarters, articles and websites - anything we can do to get the word out."

The programs also seek and welcomes feedback, which is usually gathered through surveys and questionnaires aimed at gathering data on what the Force needs, what programs are working and what needs improvement. They are vital tools and their usage rates are increasing across the board.

In step with USSOCOM's initiative, a self-assessment was developed to keep the NSW Force aware of resources specifically aimed at holistic readiness and health for operators and their families. The questions were derived from a USSOCOM questionnaire then tailored by NSW subject matter experts. The questions involve medical, psychological, family and spiritual

topics targeted to meet the unique needs of NSW forces.

"We need to collect data from operators and get their input on what they feel they need to bounce back and continue to do their missions," said Gilmore. "Our series of assessments is the way to try to get it right and provide accurate information about our active duty and family needs. We face the risk of asking too many questions, but it is important in order to find out what the Force needs."

Meaningful communication is a two-way street and resiliency programs rely on this to succeed. Gilmore said that the only way POTFF and other NSW programs can assist operators and their families, is if they are completely honest about issues they are facing.

"For example, the family resiliency assessment provides instant feedback in the form of links and suggested programs based on the answers given by the operator and spouse," said Gilmore. "If a couple were to not answer truthfully, it would still provide resources, but it won't be exactly what the family would need. If the assessment isn't answered truthfully, it will not help."

Naval Special Warfare leaders are committed to actively fostering resiliency, preventing stress problems as much as possible, recognizing when stress problems have occurred and eliminating the stigma associated with getting needed help. NSW's initiatives to preserve and care for the force and families now and in the future will only get stronger. Feedback will be collected and programs to assist them become more effective. By asking or looking for help - operators, enablers and NSW families will have the tools to remain strong.

"Preserving the Force and Families will require all of us to take an active role in the process," said McRaven. "At the end of the day, you can't get anything done in this command unless you take care of the warriors and families."

MC2 Dominique Canales

Smaller Lighter Faster

NSW'S newest Ground Mobility Platform



Over the river and through the woods ... or just about any other terrain or obstacle associated with ground mobility, Naval Special Warfare (NSW) operators have found the right tool for their driving jobs. Our war fighters operate in some of world's harshest conditions. Thanks to a new rugged and reliable vehicle that can withstand whatever Mother Nature has to dish out, operators will be able to increase mission effectiveness in an unforgiving battlefield environment.

Across the deserts of Iraq and Afghanistan, forward deployed NSW operators have required an array of vehicles for different types of missions. When Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) commenced, there was a specific vehicle needed to complete the mission that lay ahead.

As OEF began, SEALs relied on Ground Mobility Vehicles-Navy (GMV-Ns) and Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles (MRAPs) for mobility and protection in a hostile environment.

These platforms were built to be sturdier – they had to be; GMV-Ns transported troops through urban areas susceptible to improvised explosive device (IED) or gunfire attacks. When the enemy unfurled its barrage of gunfire, if a vehicle was hit, the human cargo inside would remain safe.

Although these types of vehicles were designed to protect personnel, they eventually became enemy IED targets. Since the makeshift bombs are often planted along roadsides where troops are guaranteed to pass at some point, the huge armored GMV-Ns and MRAPs don't stand a chance of evading these types of hidden bombs.

But now, a new vehicle is stepping up to replace the huge, heavy GMV-Ns and MRAPs. SEALs are acquiring a vehicle that matches their operating style – quiet, fast and agile.

The light-weight tactical all-terrain vehicle (LTATV) is a Special Operations Command (SOCOM) funded program that provides SEALs with a commercial base model of the Kawasaki "Teryx," which can be bought by any go-getter with a sense of adventure.

"We went through a lot of testing," said Senior Chief Special Warfare Operator Andrew, a West Coast tactical ground mobility senior enlisted advisor. "We knew this machine needed to be built to withstand the rigors of overseas stress. You name the situation; this vehicle can drive in it."

The LTATV is commonly referred to as the "side-by-side" and can carry two SEALs in addition to 500 pounds of gear. The extra suspension, four-point shoulder harness, roll cage and four-wheel drive make it perfect for rocky or desert-like environments.

Speed Versus Security

The LTATV can travel in excess of 48 mph, has a curb weight of 1,428 pounds and a minimum turning radius of just less than 14 feet. These small, light-skinned vehicles don't compare to the 16 ton steel caged MRAPs when it comes to security, but in terms of mobility, the LTATV is a huge step forward.

When the program first got off the ground in 2007, only a few LTATVs were operating in theater. There are now 167 strategically deployed to forward operating areas.

They successfully navigate nearly any terrain operations throw at them: steep, sandy hills or in a deep, narrow crevices, rocky mountain trails or bumpy desert hills. One feature that aids the vehicle's rugged mobility is its front differential lock system.

Its swift responsiveness allows SEALs to go off-road and avoid the hazards of venturing through towns. By losing the armor and gaining speed, the LTATV provides operators with a more efficient way to travel and complete their mission.

"You can't solve everything with a hammer," said Special Warfare Operator 1st Class Garrett, the West Coast Training Detachment (TRADET) mobility communications lead. "Sometimes you have to be more tactical and precise. By using a smaller, lighter vehicle, you might not be as protected, but you're faster and more maneuverable so you can avoid threats. Just like you have different weapons for different missions, you have different vehicles for different missions."

Another benefit to the LTATV's compact size is the ability to be dropped from the sky by airplane or helicopter. When only the SEALs and their gear are needed they can swoop in silently from above and have their transportation there when they hit the ground.

Not Just Another Driving Course

In order to complete future missions that will include the LTATV, operators must train for the environment and vehicles they'll be working with. One aspect of unit level training is a mobility block where operators are exposed to five different vehicle platforms. After completing the initial mobility school, some operators are selected by their commands to attend the LTATV professional development individual skills driver's course.

This five day course is located at the Ocotillo Wells State Park in Borrego Springs, Calif., and is held six to 10 times a year with a maximum of 12 students per class. The limited numbers mean that only a certain amount of operators can attend, therefore the operators chosen must be in predeployment training and are expected to teach the other



LTATV students get hands on experience driving the vehicles in various environments and situations to prepare them for operations in theater.



“You can’t solve everything with a hammer. Sometimes you have to be more tactical and precise. Just like you have different weapons for different missions; you have different vehicles for different missions.”

-SO1 Garrett,
West Coast TRADET
mobility communications lead

members of their team the skills they acquire.

During the course, operators learn how to drive the LTATV to its limits. A huge part of the instruction is putting students in various situations on the driving course, forcing them to discover solutions. For instance, instructors will lead students down into a huge, sandy pit and then tell them to find a way out. The first instinct of most operators is to back up as far as they can and try to “gun it” up the hill. In this situation, the tires spin out after the forward momentum is lost and they find themselves rolling back down into the pit and in an even deeper hole than before. Students quickly realize that overcoming the many obstacles throughout the course will take more than just stomping on the gas pedal.

During another situational training block, instructors take students down into deep narrow valleys that are only wide enough to accommodate half of the vehicle, which until drivers learn to navigate properly, usually causes the LTATV to tip onto its side. Through trial and error, students learn to keep their vehicles upright by weaving through the narrow valley crevices.

“One time we were at the peak of this cliff and we hit a rock,” said David, a SEAL operator and LTATV course student. “We rolled back and did three summersaults to the bottom. No one was hurt and as it was happening, we were laughing. Now that I’ve been through the course, I know I would have attacked that cliff a different way.”

The students are expected to push their driving abilities to the limit, so if they ever find themselves in a difficult situation, they are able to control and maneuver the vehicle with confidence.

“I think it would serve everyone well to attend the course and learn about these vehicles,” said David. “They show you the extremes and challenge your skills and decision making. If we were on a mission, we would find the easiest and most tactical way, but this course shows what you can and can’t do with these vehicles and how to get out of tough situations.”

Unlike the standard mobility course, students get five days of driving with the LTATVs, rather than a week to learn five different vehicles. Thanks to the extensive training, the level of knowledge about this vehicle is much higher.

“Every SEAL is required to learn basic skill sets, one of those being driving,” said Senior Chief Special Warfare Operator Bobby, the West Coast TRADET mobility senior enlisted advisor. “We train a percentage and that percentage trains the rest.”

Programmed for the Future

Depending on NSW-specific modifications, each LTATV costs between \$27,000 and \$35,000. One advantage of employing the LTATV, is that the basic model is sold commercially. When vehicles need repair, parts are readily available and can be bought straight from the store shelf.

“We’re constantly improving the vehicle with technology,” said Bobby. “These are fairly disposable because they’re cost effective. You can go to an off-road motorcycle store and buy one. In the scope of a military program, this is very cheap. We take a commercial, recreational vehicle and outfit it with the best tires, best suspension and make it the best it can be.”

NSW is looking to increase its LTATV inventory by 35 percent and adding additional seating to the vehicles, so less LTATVs would be needed for each platoon. With the new LTATV, SEAL ground mobility is moving forward down a road of smaller, lighter, and faster capability.

“I think it’s always going to be a huge asset to our troops overseas,” said Andrew. “The machine may change and the mission may change, but the requirement will never change. We will continue to move as the technology moves.”

MC3 Megan Anuci



LTATV students learn a variety of skills required to operate and maintain the vehicle from changing a tire to using a pulley system to pull one LTATV out of a ditch with another LTATV.

MC3 Megan Anuci



MC3 Megan Anuci



MC3 Megan Anuci



MC3 Megan Anuci

A Closer Look



Digital Meter

Multi-functional with speedometer, fuel gauge and oil pressure indicator



GPS

These systems help operators navigate the harsh desert landscape



Shocks

Gas charged for better handling over uneven terrain

THE GROUND MOBILITY'S SECURITY ASSET:

THE MINE RESISTANT AMBUSH PROTECTED ARMORED VEHICLE (MRAP)

Selecting the right vehicle for the right mission is a key component of operational success. Although NSW has added the lightweight tactical all terrain vehicle to its repertoire, the MRAPs are still invaluable life-preserving transportation assets. In 2008 the first MRAPs were deployed forward to SEAL teams in theater. Since that time, mine-resistant models have been developed with V-shaped hulls that increase an operator's survivability from mine or IED attacks. They are used in a variety of missions such as small unit combat operations, ground logistics operations including convoy security, troop and cargo transportation and medical evacuation. In order to keep warfighter MRAP operational skills sharp, the Transportable Reconfigurable Integrated Crew Trainer (TRICT) was brought online to offer operators tactical MRAP simulations.



MC2 Meranda Keller

TRICT

TRANSPORTABLE RECONFIGURABLE INTEGRATED CREW TRAINER



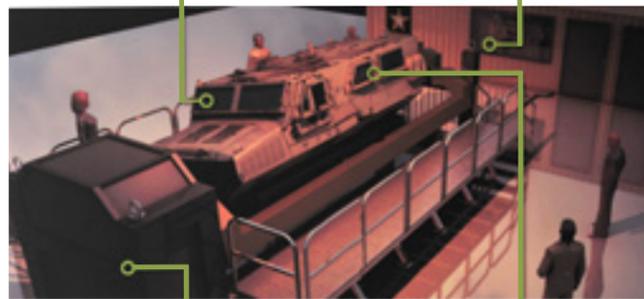
On June 3, NSW installed a TRICT at an NSWG 1 training site for the NSW Force. The TRICT is a fully immersive MRAP crew trainer. Commissioned by United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), the TRICT trains warfighters, both individually and collectively, as a crew, to effectively operate the RG-33 variant MRAP vehicle in tactical situations. The design can be reconfigured for the other joint tactical wheeled vehicles including HMMWV, JLTV, and RG31/MATV MRAPs.

The trainer includes realistic physics, sounds, and thematic feedback, coupled with high-tech graphics to ensure an immersive experience and comprehensive training. The TRICT features a realistic MRAP exterior and interior including all seating, operational doors and windows, vehicle controls for steering, gas, brakes, instrument panels and transmission control gauge.

The main vehicle cradle is integrated with a responsive electric pitch and roll assembly, providing full-motion-based vehicle dynamics and complete rollover capability for egress training. All doors and windows are outfitted with LCD displays that create an immersive, computer generated training environment using leading-edge simulation software.



All eight ballistic windows are replaced with LCD screens that display high fidelity modern quality graphics that aid in fully immersing the operator into the environment. The driver's side and passenger windows display mirrors that enable the driver to back up when necessary.



The TRICT is equipped with electric pitch and roll assembly. This high-voltage unit is currently running off base power, but is also capable of being run off a 250 kilowatt diesel generator.



Within the instructor station, TGM cadre and troop leadership are able to monitor, critique and evaluate vehicle crews in decision making and reactions to combat scenarios.



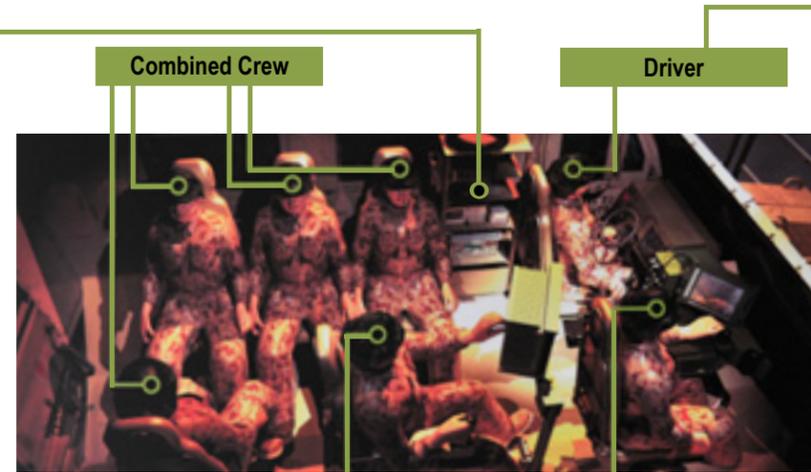
The hull shape is interchangeable to any vehicle or boat that will fit in the cradle assembly. (RG-33 Hull shown in photo)



Equipped with a communications digi rack that includes PSC-5D, 117-F, 117-G, PRC-148x2w/AMPs, FBCB2 CPU and VIC stations.



The TRICT is also equipped with target acquisition from the CROWS II FCU, which provides local training that was not available prior to TRICT.



Combined Crew

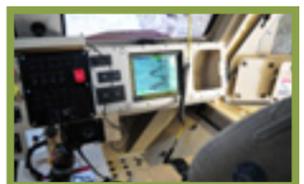
Driver

CROWS II Gunner

Crew Commander



The driver control software was adjusted for accuracy after contactors went to NSW TGM Training Site at Fallon and experienced actual SOCOM RG-33s.



The interior is a near exact replica of SOCOM RG-33 including all monitors, gauges and controls. This can provide critical refresher training prior to deployment.



**To register for motorcycle training, visit:
www.navymotorcyclerider.com**