

not be overstressed. Advisors from all branches of the Army spent tours in that country assisting the government. It is also important to remember that the success of the government was due in no small measure to the government itself. It reined in the death squads, established land reform and food relief programs and developed a sophisticated psychological warfare campaign. The government told its people what it was doing for them while highlighting what the FMLN were incapable of doing: building a better life for the people. El Salvador even conducted democratic elections in the midst of that war, astounding international observers. The destiny of El Salvador was clearly in the hands of its own government and people and U. S. advisors were only of small, though highly focused, value.

For Special Forces personnel, however, somehow the length of the struggle and the degree to which these "unconventional warriors" were able to adapt themselves into superb trainers and advisors under the strictest U. S. embassy control, served to prove, once and for all, that Special Forces personnel were back. Their skills as trainers of developing world forces made them logical choices for many of the advisory slots. In addition, the lack of incidents or embarrassing moments by those SF troopers helped convince the U. S. military and State Department personnel that Special Forces were not "Rambos" on the loose. Confidence within the Special Operations community and within the Army as a whole, in the ability and restraint of Special Forces personnel increased.

The success in El Salvador, critical though it was, was only one arena in which the revitalization of SOF proceeded apace throughout the 1980s. The following chronological summary may help list some key events in the period of 1972 to 1992 that show the fall and rise of Special Operations Forces.

#### **The Revitalization of Special Operations - 1972-1992**

- 1972        During the Vietnam War, Army Special Forces had expanded to seven SF Groups (1st, 3rd, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 10th). The end of the war steadily sapped the numbers of SF soldiers, prompting the inactivation of 3rd SFG(A) in December 1969, 6th SFG(A) in 1971 and 8th SFG(A) in 1972.
- 1974        The Army inactivates the 1st Special Forces Group (A), establishing a low point in Special Forces organizational history. Only the 5th, 7th and 10th Groups remain active (with the 11th, 12th, 19th and 20th in the reserve component).

In contrast to the decline in the Army's unconventional warfare capability, the 1st Battalion,

75th Ranger Regiment is reactivated at Fort Benning, Georgia.

- 1975 In order to prevent the inactivation of yet another Special Forces Group, the SF community decreases the size of the Operational Detachment "B" (ODB) from 22 individuals to 8. This allows the creation of a sixth "A" Team in each company, improving the "tooth to tail" ratio.
- 1977-78 Plans are prepared for the imminent inactivation of the 7th Special Forces Group. The deteriorating situation in Central America, in part, prevents this from happening.
- 1979 Special Forces reaches a low point in numbers and capability just prior to the need for some national counter-terrorist capability.
- 1980 The Chief of Staff of the Army in 1980, General Edward C. Meyer, determines that the Army needs to enhance its capability to conduct special operations.
- 1981 Task Force 160 is established at Fort Campbell out of elements of the 101st Aviation Group. TF 160 begins high-risk training for the use of Army aviation assets at night in a wide variety of SOF missions.
- 1982 1st SOCOM is provisionally activated on 1 Oct to be the command and control headquarters for all active Army Special Operations units. These units include the 5th, 7th and 10th Special Forces Groups, the 4th Psychological Operations Group, the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion and the 1st and 2nd Ranger Battalions.
- 1983 The Institute for Military Assistance (IMA) changes its name and organization. It becomes the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) and is aligned along the lines of a TRADOC School. This begins the process of the complete integration of Special Operations into Army systems, training and operations. USAJFKSWCS becomes the proponent school for Army SOF.

TRADOC publishes a two volume study on 30 June entitled Low-Intensity Conflict, which broadened the scope of Low Intensity Conflict studies to include diplomacy, guerilla warfare, military assistance, insurgency, counter-terrorism and revolution.

In October, U.S. Army Rangers, Special Forces, Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations and Special

- 1983 Operations Aviation personnel participate in Operation URGENT FURY in Grenada in response to an unfriendly and bloody communist inspired coup. Despite many planning and coordination problems in this hastily executed operation, the mission is overall a success. However, those coordination problems, and some 9 SOF soldiers killed and 75 wounded, prompt further actions to improve the U. S. Army's SOF capabilities.
- 1984 Functional Area 18, the functional area for Special Forces, is established for officers and NCOs. In addition, Special Forces created the Special Forces Warrant Officer program to replace Lieutenants in the "A" teams with more experienced individuals.
- 1 Jul: Activation of the 75th Ranger Regiment.  
4 Sep: Reactivation of 1st Special Forces Group (A).  
SOF Master Plan approved.  
3 Oct: The 3rd Ranger Battalion is activated.
- 1985 PSYOP Master Plan approved.  
TF 160th is transferred from the 101st Airborne Div to 1st SOCOM on 16 Jan.
- 1986 The Army/Air Force Center for Low Intensity Conflict (CLIC) is activated in January. The CLIC has published numerous influential documents in reviving Army-wide interest in Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict.
- In February, TRADOC publishes 524-44, U. S. Army Operational Concept for Low Intensity Conflict.
- Goldwater-Nichols Act with the Nunn-Cohen Amendment provide for the establishment of a four-star unified combatant command for Special Operations with its own MFP-11 funding channel. This establishes, for the first time, a worldwide command and control mechanism for the armed services' Special Operations Forces.
- 528th Special Operations Support Battalion is activated (as the 13th Support Battalion) on 2 Jun and the 112th Special Operations Signal Battalion is activated on 17 Sep.
- On 16 October 1986, TF 160 is reorganized into the 160th Special Operations Aviation Group (SOAG).
- 1987 USSOCOM is established at MacDill AFB, Florida. Special

Forces is established as a Branch of the U.S. Army on 9 April (G.O. 35). The crossed arrow insignia is adopted as the branch insignia.

1988 Civil Affairs and Psyop career management field approved.

Initial classes of the Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) program are conducted to screen applicants for the Special Forces Qualification Class. This helps ensure a higher quality SF Qualified soldier and reduces attrition from the highly competitive course.

USAJFKSWCS begins the Special Operations Staff Officer Course (SOSC) to integrate staff training in all the Special Operations disciplines.

In April, USAJFKSWCS receives concept approval for the establishment of Theater Special Operations Support Commands (TASOSCs) to aid in the intelligence and logistical support of SOF in theaters.

In May, USAJFKSWCS and XVIII ABN Corps begin initial testing of the Special Operations Command and Control Element (SOCCE), a planning cell at the Corps to assist in preparing and coordinating Special Operations missions at the Corps. This later turns into the SOCOORD with the SOCCE becoming a temporary augmentation cell from an SF Group sent to a Corps or other element to assist in running a mission.

CA Master Plan approved.

In September, 1st SOCOM functionally reorganized as a separate MACOM staff and two MSC staffs (all active duty units under 1st SOCOM, Command and Control Active or CCA) and all Army Reserve units under USARSOC (Command and Control Reserve or CCR) When the activation of the MACOM occurs in December, the MACOM staff changes name to USASOC staff and continues to function.

1989 Activation of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) on 1 Dec as the Army's 16th Major Command (MACOM). Under USASOC are placed 1st Special Operations Command (1st SOCOM), United States Army Reserve Special Operations Command (USARSOC), 160th Special Operations Aviation Group (SOAG) and the 75th Ranger Regiment.

USAJFKSWCS activates the 1st Special Warfare Training Group to consolidate training management functions in the school. This also reflects the large increase in numbers of soldiers trained over the recent years.

In late December, USASOC deploys Rangers, Special Operations Aviation, Special Forces, Civil Affairs and PSYOP soldiers to Panama for Operation JUST CAUSE.

1990

In April, USAJFKSWCS publishes FM 31-20, Doctrine for Special Forces. Part of this doctrine includes the creation of a Special Operations Command and Control Element (SOCCE) to be attached to a Corps during missions. The SOCCE, along with the SOCOORD as a SOF element assigned to the Corps, is a key element in the integration of SOF operations into conventional unit operations and plans and, working with the SOCOORD, synchronizes SOF operations with Corps intelligence and operational requirements.

On 16 May, the 160th Special Operations Aviation Group is inactivated and is replaced by the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.

On 20 June, the USAJFKSWCS is placed under the command and control (less OPCON) of USASOC instead of TRADOC. USASOC now has all elements of active Army SOF under its command and control except for forward-deployed units.

On 29 June, the 3rd Special Forces Group (A) is reactivated at Fort Bragg.

In August and September, USASOC units begin deployment to Saudi Arabia as part of DESERT SHIELD. SOF revitalization initiatives ensure that all units deployed are fully trained, equipped and prepared for operations across the spectrum in Southwest Asia.

On 27 November, USASOC functionally reorganizes to align all Special Forces under a new US Army Special Forces Command (USASFC) and all Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations units under a new US Army Civil Affairs Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC). (1st SOCOM and USARSOC disappear.)

1991

Special Operations units participate in combat operations before, during and after Operation DESERT STORM. Units conduct Special Reconnaissance, Foreign Internal Defense/Coalition Warfare, Direct Action, Combat Search And Rescue, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations as part of the overall

operation. They are a vital component of the allied victory.

On 1 October, all United States Army Reserve (USAR) Special Operations Forces are assigned to either USASFC or USACAPOC. USASOC now commands and controls all U. S. Army SOF units except for National Guard units. National Guard units only fall under the training oversight of USASOC with command and control (in peacetime) resting with the various state governors.

On 18 November, USASOC creates the US Army Special Operations Integration Command (USASOIC) (Provisional) to serve as the Major Subordinate Command with command of the 75th Ranger Regiment and the 160th SOAR.

1992 USASOC undergoes a major reorganization (planning had begun the previous October) to reduce "layering" between the various headquarters located at Fort Bragg. A number of non-operational and training slots and personnel move from the MSC up to the MACOM.

Of the preceding events, there is little question but that the creation of 1st SOCOM, provisionally in 1982 with an official activation in 1983, was a major step forward in the establishment of a major special operations command and control entity. (See FIGURE 1 for 1st SOCOM initial organization.) However, 1st SOCOM had no direct control of the US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, which published doctrine for special operations, nor did it have a major impact on Army Reserve Component Special Operations Forces. As 1st SOCOM picked up command and control of the newly re-activated 75th Ranger Regiment in 1984 and the constantly reorganized Task Force 160 (which became a Special Operations Aviation Group in Oct 86 and then a Special Operations Aviation Regiment in May of 1990), the span of control for the headquarters grew wider. (See FIGURE 2: 1st SOCOM in 1987.)